**Fictive *indianismo*: toward a black feminist critique of Álvaro García Linera’s Marxism**

*Indianismo ficticio: hacia una crítica feminista negra del marxismo de Alvaro García Linera*

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**Resumen:**  
Este artículo interroga la manera en la que Álvaro García Linera relata la historia de los movimientos sociales indígenas en Bolivia. Comparo y muestro las diferencias de su explicación de la figura de “lo indio” con el análisis de la figura de la “mulatta” en las novelas de William Faulkner que hace Hortense Spillers, destacada crítica literaria y teórica del feminismo negro de EEUU. Sostengo que el boliviano quiere jugar a ser a la vez crítico, como Spillers, y, con una contundencia ostensible, simpatizante de la disimulación social del capitalismo, lo que Spiller nunca deja de cuestionar. Afirmeo que él intenta absorber la discursivamente ilimitada dispersión de ficcionalidad de las figuraciones de la violencia que critica Spillers, lo cual estimula el masculinismo de la teoría de la forma valor por medio de una fantasía de la virilidad narrativa.  
**Palabras claves:** feminism negro, forma valor, indianismo, narratividad.

**Abstract**  
This article interrogates the way that Álvaro García Linera recounts the history of indigenous social movements in Bolivia. I compare and contrast the explication of his figure of “lo indio” with US black feminist literary critic Hortense Spillers’s reflections on the “mulatta” figure in the novels of William Faulkner. I argue that García Linera wants to play at being both critic of, like Spillers, and fellow-traveler

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WILLISTON CHASE
Fictive indianismo: toward a black feminist critique of Álvaro García Linera’s Marxism

with an ostensible cogency of capitalist social dissimulation that, in contrast, she never stops calling into question. I argue that he tries to absorb the discursively unbounded dispersion of figurations of violence that Spillers critiques, invigorating a masculinism of the theory of value form by way of a fantasy of narrative virility.

Keywords: black-feminism, value-form, indianismo, narrativity.

My topic is the way that Bolivian vice-president and Marxist theorist Álvaro García Linera recounts the history of indigenous social movements in Bolivia. In particular, I consider writing that sets out to mine some epistemic precursors of the meeting of marxism and indianismo in the plurinational state of Bolivia that he takes the 2005 election of Evo Morales to have precipitated. I draw from three essays, published in the collection La potencia Plebeya: acción colectiva e identidades indígenas, obreras y populares en Bolivia (2009), all of which labor to sort out the possibility of such an institutional configuration. They return to moments before arguments about the realization of this state could easily make their way into the semantic fields of debate about the “revolutionary” payoff of the “rise of Evo,” albeit only just before or contemporaneously. In each of these three essays, García Linera engages in a historiographic pedagogy, guiding readers through the stages of indigenous activism in Bolivia that leads up the present. This narration either takes up the bulk of the text or comes up at crucial hinges in his argument. The first, “Narrative colonial y narrativa comunal,” was published in 1998, just after García Linera was released from prison and in the heat of the collaborative publishing venture Comuna. The second, “Autonomías indígenas y Estado multinacional”, was published in 2004, in the wake of the “guerra de gas”. I will pay particular attention to the third, “El desencuentro de dos razones revolucionarias: indianismo y marxismo”, since it was published just months before the 2005
election and makes thematically central the narrative progression the ideological work of which I want to highlight. There may be some interest at our current historical juncture, more than a decade after the publication of each essay, in pointing out the development of García Linera’s thought so as to indicate where his assumption of the vice-presidency leads a radical project with which he began his intellectual itinerary astray.¹ My goal here is distinct. I restrict myself to exploring limitations of the radicalism he espoused before acceding to the halls of national government. To this end, I offer some speculations tying his celebration of social movements to the capitalist fiction of value that his work on Marx’s theory of value seeks to undo.

Rather than taking these essays up systematically, or in chronological order, the thread that holds this scatter together is a series of comparisons between García Linera’s concern for indigeneity and Hortense Spillers’s consideration of the “mulatta,” a “mixed-race” female figure exemplarily portrayed in the novels of William Faulkner, in her 1989 essay “Notes on an alternative model - Neither/Nor.” An extremely rich and provocative piece to which I do not pretend to do justice here, I reflect on how this the mulatta figure’s identity ambiguity resonates with the eruption of “lo indígena” in García Linera’s work. I do so in hopes of bringing the sophistication of the black feminist literary critic’s formulations of the phantasmatic “gathering of social realities” (Spillers, 1987:208) in the fictionalization of the mulatta, a figure of social liminality, to bear on the epistemology of dominant forms of sociality that the Bolivian vice-president labors to solicit. Along the way, I pass by some comments on the state and use-value in Forma valor y forma comunidad: aproximación teórica-abstracta a los fundamentos civilizatorios que

¹ For work that moves in this direction, see: Baker, 2015; Feldman, 2015.
Fictive indianismo: toward a black feminist critique of Álvaro García Linera’s Marxism

precede al ayllu universal, which has received less sustained scholarly attention than it is due.

My hope is that putting this careful study of Marx into dialogue with later essays can elucidate García Linera’s willingness to abstain, at times at least, from overtly representing the vitality of indigenous community. That is, I want to indicate where he tones down the rhetoric of community power ever present in his work and prevalent in many other considerations of indigenous politics in the Andes. I think that it is important to read his study of value form and community form as the stage of his itinerary that preceded his capacity for bringing Marxism and indianism together in an idea of state, an ideal external to his own need - internally, we might say - to solder an intellectual marriage of the two. This essay incorporates some first attempts at this interpretation. I spend the bulk of my time trying to explicate a certain discursive heft of summaries of the history of indigenous peoples’ activism in Bolivia, juxtaposing motley movements to Spillers’s motley figure of racial impurity. More pointedly, I argue that García Linera wants to play at being both critic of, like Spillers, and fellow-traveler with an apparently hegemonic cogency of social dissimulation that, in contrast, she never stops calling into question. What Spillers describes as the “lack of movement in the field of signification” of the “mulatta,” (1989: 315) presumed to resolve a certain need for “success” of the white man of the southern states of the US, always able to “command” a “desire” for the measurability of value according to standards that he comprehends by way of “her,” that is the “mulatta” figure’s, ambiguities (ibid: 312), is, for García Linera, a stillness that he is obliged to narrate in order to scramble the

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2 Although published for the first time in its entirety in 2009, and thus contemporaneously to these other texts, García Linera indicates that “el cuerpo básico del texto estuvo listo más o menos en abril-mayo de 1994” (2009A: 41)
figurality of “lo indio” as a terrain of discursive contestation. A phenomenology of narrativity and analogy parades as a critique of facile political solutions and mindless appropriation. This essay attempts to make sense of this as a distinctive exhibition of state form.

Thinking García Linera’s work through gendered critique is another way to interrogate what it means to be a state intellectual. Anthropologist Andrew Canessa has argued that in Bolivia the “terrain” of female indigeneity is privileged in tussles between criollo power and aspirations to state power by a configuration of “indigenous masculinism.” For Canessa, indistinct writer Fausto Reinaga, whom García Linera frequently cites, epitomizes this masculine ideal. His katarista project seeks to “recover” the “potency” of the Indian man from both economic and racial degradation (2010:181). The configuration of his masculinity depends upon the utility of the Indian women as a “site” on which to recognize colonial violence as a decimation of traditional values. To take the gendered body to be the site of the possibility of political recognition is to presuppose that forms of historical domination and exploitation afford terms and practices of negotiation with the historicity of the Spanish empire.³ In the pages that follow, I try to extend this claim

³ In his 2010 essay, “Dreaming of fathers: Fausto Reinaga and indigenous masculinism,” Canessa ponders the relative absence of women from seat of indigenous movements. This is not to say that they are always subordinate in native communities, he cautions. Rather, it is to point out something particular about reproducing the ethnic group for the modern nation-state. He locates this curiosity in the need to push back on conceptions of female docility and male impotence that came along with colonial domination. However, Canessa is also interested in the extent to which such a conception of domination becomes a key a feature of what passes as indigenous culture. As a sort of godfather of indistinct thought in the latter half of the 20th century, Reinaga’s work is ideal for interrogating the complications of thinking the work that “lo indio” does in the text. That is, insofar as he is an exemplary indistinct, that which vexes or motivates his discourse may shed light on what sort of slip ups an always handy concept of culture may conceal. For, it is too easy to take the question of culture to entail a theory of expression when sometimes it may entail a rejection of expressiveness in search of something else. Reinaga is one of the sole voices of that pushed back on mestiçaje project that emerged in the wake of the 1952 revolution. In a time of assimilationist
Fictive indianismo: toward a black feminist critique of Álvaro García Linera’s Marxism

to what I call the fantasy of genealogical narrativity that promotes the feminine “accessibility” of the “indian subject” in García Linera’s work, providing the terms for recognizing the thought of political struggle in indigenous social movements. While he may in other ways be unfaithful to Reinaga’s revolutionary project, in this aspect of his writing at least, I suggest that he indulges certain bourgeois criollo preoccupations by feeding the appearance of the epistemic radicalism of indianista revolt.

Mirko Lauer’s work on criollo indigenista cultural production in Peru in the early decades of the 20th century can help us to pinpoint about the worries that interest me. Contrary to the common concern - sketched in García Linera’s own work, in fact - that many art and literary projects of this period constituted a perversion of native peoples’s political aspirations, Lauer sees something much more insular and navel-gazing. Not simply a failed aspiration of a leftism unwittingly prone to racializing its encounters with social heterogeneity, indigenismo is an ideology of elites engaged in distancing themselves “del avance de la modernidad internacional” in a particular moment (1997: 26). It is an extraverted ideology, constantly contesting and complicating the bearing of an ontology of globality. A “reversión” of indigenous politics, this discourse mobilizes rhetoric, he advocated returning to reclaim the very core of what had been lost to native peoples by conquest and the criollo republic. He sought to reclaim the “dignity” of the indian. Canessa draws out the gendered implications of this project, making note that the dignity presumed lost in the history of indigeneity is an ahistorical masculine ideal. What is also valuable, though, is the way that this search for dignity had to rely on a conception of the world as imbuing the borders of “lo cultural” with their efficacy. Not just that the fictional, historical, and biographical all blur together in a book like La Revolución India (1969) (to which, regrettably, we cannot devote any analysis here), or that he wants that, but that there is a violence in invoking “la textura del cuerpo colectivo, a la manera de ocupar el espacio, al dramatismo de los gestos, al rumor, al desplante, a la broma, al discurso de asamblea y a los relatos radiales” (Linera, 2000: 416, emphasis mine). It is a violence that “una razón del drama colectivo,” (Linera, 2005: 497) albeit a structurally masculine one, can contest. Or so, I would argue, he and García Linera contend.
reference to indigeneity to push back on what it takes to be burdens on its efforts to theorize political and social conditions of the nation-state project. To be so extraverted is to sidestep a theorization of the assimilation of the globe as a paradigmatic feature of socio-political analysis and explication altogether. What remains is only a question of “la capacidad del criollo” to absorb all aspects of national culture (ibid: 55) in order to confront an ideological advance. This requires that “[l]a cuestión de fondo de este eje sobre el cual se constituye lo indígena es el estado” (ibid: 110); the state becomes the marker not of having accounted for geopolitical positioning but the wellspring of cultural meaning-making, the way criollo letrados “confieren significado” (ibid: 17). I argue that something similar is going on in García Linera’s work. Something happens insidiously, not by cultural appropriation, but by destabilizing the ease with which the political potential of indigenous culture might be recognized. His social movement essays help us to unpack this phenomenon.

**Reading the global text**

Published in the Spring of 2005, on the wings of an era of widespread cocalero roadblocks, in the wake of the social antagonisms surrounding the “guerra de gas”, and just a few months before the national election that would see Morales installed as president in early 2006, “Indianismo y Marxismo” is organized around a complex intellectual chronology. A sober and measure account for a tumultuous time, it offers, on the one hand, a sweeping overview of Bolivian political intellectual history, sociology of political party organization and conflict. On the other, it proposes to index signposts of the relation between shifts in the past and a momentum toward the present complicated by the disjuncture of the timelines of
indianismo and marxismo, conceived as two distinctive theoretical projects. García Linera passes by the “movimiento indigenista” of the first decades of the 20th century, the “marxismo primitivo” that follows after the revolution of 1952 and its “repetición de sencillos esquemas de los manuales”, (2005: 479) the katarismo that virulently rejected the state, the “folclorización de la indianidad” (Ibid.: 488) that evolved therein and thereafter. The essay weaves the two titular undertakings apart from each other until the coincide in the late 90s, opening onto the period of his own rise to power with Evo Morales, arguably the moment of greatest harmony of *indianismo* with marxism, and finally spilling out into a question of whether or not it will be able to capture the state:

[...] este despliegue diverso del pensamiento indianista (...) será una concepción del mundo que tome la forma de una concepción dominante de Estado, o si, como parece insinuarse por las debilidades organizativas, errores políticos y fraccionamientos internos de las colectividades que lo reivindicaron, será una ideología de unos actores políticos que sólo regularán los excesos de una soberanía estatal ejercida por los sujetos políticos y clases sociales que consuetudinariamente han estado en el poder. (Ibid.: 499)

It is worth noting the subtle ambivalence that he asserts here, just a few months before Morales would take office. Either the accumulation of indianist thought will take over the state apparatus, or it will be the guide for actors who help to moderate the excesses of those who traditionally wield the state. Throughout the piece, García Linera avails himself of a vocabulary of world-construction and epocal horizons to describe this or that effort to capture state power, all without losing sight of the historical accumulation that underwrites their político-programmatic
value. However, he is ill-prepared for the complication that could arise in the relation of the state as apparatus to the state’s actors, driven by some ideology.

Picking up on how García Linera elides a more searching consideration of the historicity that supplements what it means to “estar en el poder” “consuetudinariamente,” critical readers, like Alberto Moreiras, intuit the importance of decompressing the presumption of a consolidated heap. What is a world? This question, they suggest, should come first. But instead there are a whole host of others, muddying the promulgation of García Linera’s own proposal. Moreiras seeks to anticipate these other inquiries, on the assumption that their propensity to obscure rather than to clarify would short-circuit any critique of the program that concerns him and others who worry about forms of recognition catalyzed by unexamined fantasies of political or social “function or responsibility”. He writes:

All of us celebrate, and have celebrated, the victory of MAS and the degree of indigenous empowerment it has facilitated; all of us celebrate the Bolivian popular uprising against neoliberalism and the disgraceful Bolivian neoliberal regime that antedated the revolutionary process for many years; all of us hope that the political process in progress now can deepen and even radicalise the already obvious democratic and anti-colonial accomplishments of the last ten years. (2015: 267)

The point of his article, and many of the others collected in the 2015 special issue of Culture, Theory, and Critique, “Democracy in Latin America: Álvaro García Linera,” is not to celebrate these accomplishments. The pathos-laden appeal to all readers - the stipulation that these critical assessments are not, in fact, working against so

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4 Thereby adopting a crucial feature of political theorist René Zavaleta Mercado’s investigation of the Bolivian state.
much as in the same vein that “all of us celebrate” - suggests that what is at stake is sharing a common locus of debate. They want to point out that the object of praise has already made the world that they seek to interrogate by precluding its philosophical thematization. In the end, however, this special issue’s rehearsal of a reputation in need of deflation is often accompanied by an argumentative structure that replicates the very pomp it seeks to demote. It appears that it cannot but rehearse the litany of accomplishments wrought of this worldview. The authors thereby naturalize a domain in which to meet to swap fantasies about social antagonism. It is difficult not to notice a premature dismissal of the state intellectual by relegating him to being a mere figure through which to think the constitution of the political.

Meanwhile, García Linera’s lexicon never strays too far from fretting over the capture of intellectual production, epistemic tools for captivating. Insofar as the “incompletitud estructural de la formación estatal Boliviana” (Linera, 2009b: 5) drives his work, he argues that the “apartheid político” that sundered the installation of a liberal constitution from the “autoridad de caciques indígenas” in the 1952 revolution (Ibid.: 6) needs, at least in part, but not an inessential part (incidentally or not, the part that that his writing plays), to generate new language with which to “viabilizar las acciones comunicativos del efecto estatal” (2004: 276). As he will write some years before in Forma valor y forma comunidad, published finally in 2009, the state is a “condensación en nivel crítico” (2009a: 49) that facilitates theoretical elaborations of power, manifesting as their “ámbito común

5 I am thinking of another version of his sense of himself as “‘intermediario’ entre los indígenas y las clases medias urbanas, en favor de una renovada alianza de clases cuya condición de posibilidad es el conocimiento mutuo en un país “abigarrado” –y con escaso grado de auto-conocimiento– como Bolivia.” (Svampa and Stefanoni, 2007: 143)
WILLISTON CHASE  
**Fictive indianismo: toward a black feminist critique of Álvaro García Linera’s Marxism**

activo relacionista-maquinal” (*Ibid.*: 52). Although he makes this point by dramatizing the importance of realizing a truly multi-lingual bureaucracy, he attaches his case for a distinctive state policy on official languages to the “mercado-lingüístico” (2004: 276). The moving pieces in question - rehearsals and terms like “function” and “responsibility” included - cozy up with the pressures of commercial exchange. The state steps in to crystalize knowledge of this discursive pressure-cooker, thereby imbuing his discourse with certain agility of commitment when it comes to the evidentiary promise of sociological forms. La “retnifica[ción] de la dominación” is clear in the statistics, he submits. Work opportunities for people of certain skin colors, for indigenous-identifying folks, are abysmal; indigenous people have “menos oportunidades de ascenso y acumulación cultural”, their habits and customs being sidelined - bulldozed, even - by a racist “sentido común”. For these reason, “no se ha podido construir la realidad de una comunidad nacional” (2005: 457-9). For this reason, he is working to construct epistemic tools - new ways of making the reality that houses accounts of what is known.

If the state exercises a “‘función’ sintética-activa” (2009a: 52), he wants to reveal the phantasmatic dynamic that generates conceptual links between functionality and discursive action. Reading García Linera’s genealogical hinges through this lens, as I will below, throws into relief a horizon on which the realization of an *explicable* oscillation between Marxism and indianismo might take place. That it does by way of the concept of the state is the very object of his immanent critique. Thus, Moreiras and others in tow get wrong that the horizon of his concern is the state; their inclination to strike back first begs the question of the representation of aspiration. This critique assumes that García Linera’s world-making aspires to the epistemological certitude of a statism that pre-determines
WILLISTON CHASE
Fictive indígenismo: toward a black feminist critique of Álvaro García Linera’s Marxism

what sort of world is there to form part of; hence, the importance of keeping it up by way of rehearsals in order to shut it down. However, it precludes the possibility that the “ambición de totalidad autodeterminativa” (Ibid.: 49) might entail something else. Does the gall with which García Linera is inclined to write comprise a totalizing world-picture? And does this amount to the mere pomp and circumstance of the state? Surely, he is more interested in the epoch-making that differing tools for knowing make possible: how to open new horizons, how to commission new visions. There is no better evidence of this than the way that he carefully avoids what Denise Ferreira Da Silva finds to be so problematic about much of the global Left’s enthusiasm for Morales’s election.

In her 2009 essay, “An outline of a global political subject: reading Evo Morales’s election as a (post-) colonial event,” Silva expresses concern for the way that seeing Morales’s election as a global event that demands recognition dilutes the problematic historicity of colonial violence. It “contributes” to the availability of resources with which to produce epistemic paradigmaticity, by way of engulfing it with signifiers of raciality and indigeneity. Rejecting Chantal Mouffe and Wendy Brown’s theories of resistance to neoliberalism that would seek to extol the capaciousness of radical democracy for addressing historical difference, Silva argues that colonial violence thereby becomes an operator in a global political text, without subjecting the ontological construction of a political and social field in which this text appears as such to scrutiny. Ambivalence is seemingly always available for putting the pieces of the globe in their place. In rehearsals of the novelty of this event, then, the figure of Morales ends up mirroring colonial violence and is presumed, at best, to be rewriting the universal, “reflect[ing] the operations of the apparently contradictory dimensions of the ‘global contract’”
Commentators who celebrate the election of the first indigenous president to helm a modern nation-state rewrite social antagonisms through the logic of liberalism without being able to see how they are ethically sustained by a principle of universality. They are unable to see how this signifier - “indigeneity” - itself emerged as political present by way of the history of slavery, of dispossession. If we ask,

How does one make sense of the markers of this global/historical figure, namely, an anti-imperialism/neoliberalism, indigenous/peasant activist [like Morales]? How does one comprehend the unlikely radical political event his election signifies, the "democratic cultural revolution," which captured international media attention? (ibid: 30)

The most common answer, she argues, and the one she seeks to disabuse, is that “dispossession functions as the political operator in the colonial, national, and global contexts” (ibid: 33)

And yet, I would suggest that García Linera is in fact at pains to avoid just this very shorthand - just this very ease of analysis. Having a certain “concepción del mundo” in hand affords both the capacity to assume control of the relation-making “machine” of the state and to resist being bemused by its charms. That is to say, it evades a certain theorist of populism’s bewilderment: to read the appearance of charms symptomatically as the excesses of sovereignty, the means by which “dispossession” becomes a trope, not least among which is to take its leader to concentrate the opportunities for the sublimation of antagonisms that rip through lo national-popular. He brings René Zavaleta Mercado’s conception of Bolivian society as a “sociedad abigarrada” along to cinch the deal; social phenomena in Bolivia must be read. Set against the easy smugness that accompanies most forms
of geopolitical cartography, García Linera is notable circumspect. The real meat of the issue is that this caution works so well that it becomes a liability.

His weighing in on a familiar quibble over nomenclature sets the scene. A question of proper names: “lo indio” or “lo indígena”? A question of the stakes of naming, a question of the phenomenal status of epistemic difference. In *Potencia Plebeya*, “lo indio” comes up only a handful of times in the collection, each amidst a description of the *criollo* expulsion of the “other”. “Lo indio es pues, para la racionalidad estatal, la purulencia social en proceso de displicente extirpación; es la muerte del sentido histórico de lo válido” (1998: 252), he writes. The tendency is to play up the coarseness of the excretion. The goal is to set up what he wants to talk about as somebody else’s foil, so that he can center his concern on disabusing the purchase of the hegemonic dichotomy - lo indio versus the state. Ventriloquizing this state, therefore, he avers that “en nuestros países lo “social” es la perpetua prevención de lo ‘indio’ en el ordenamiento público; el progreso es el exterminio del indio o su doma ciudadanizante” (ibid: 251). The scare quotes in this latter citation are key; for they give García Linera the alibi that will extend into what he takes to be the discursive presence of the political present. He takes himself to be on the right side of an epistemological investigation of the organization of state institutions because he is not synonymous with them. He speaks only to make their sense of “public order” known. As has often been remarked, Evo Morales’s Movimiento al Socialismo or MAS party is surely the state but also remains a social movement in its own eyes. Likewise, for García Linera, to reference “nuestros” grappling with social theory does not preclude the possibility of taking ironic distance from the rhetorical crutches that accompany the “países” in question. By the same token, he wants to challenge the conceptual purchase of “lo indígena” -
WILLISTON CHASE
Fictive indianismo: toward a black feminist critique of Álvaro García Linera’s Marxism

which comes up quite frequently - reinforcing the ongoing elaboration of an alternative to “la civilización del valor, pero en particular el poder del estado” (2009A: 49), an irrepressible will. As he will put it elsewhere, there is a daily battle for “el sentido común” that the “internalización” of “esta horrorización del llamado mundo indígena” has all but required (Linera, 1998: 251). If for Silva a key concern is the way in which the European philosopher’s demand for a “transparent” “I” that can “engulf” otherness as externally determined, thereby retaining a sense of what is purely interior, and Morales fits within this logic as its exception, the “embodi[ment] of contradiction” (Silva, 2009: 39), then García Linera seeks to write the text that absorbs this globalist dialectic. There is a need for the contingency of a genealogy of indigenous thought: tools for “self”-reflection, a parallax in which the indigenous-identifying “self” finds itself in the difference between “self”-conception and conception by, in this case, the “otherness” of the global text. If Gramsci’s meticulous attention to the question of political organization foils the “symbolic arsenal” of the neon-sign version of Morales’s election that worries Silva ( “subject of a radical global event” (ibid)), and thereby bursts the surety that an onto-epistemological context of globality that buttresses what she calls the “analytic of raciality” ever obtains, García Linera’s insistence on the polish of a strategic narrative retort, the reply that I would argue is this very essay “Indianismo y Marxismo”, should give us pause.

6 “Neither can universality comprehend an indigenous, racially political subject, nor can self-determination be extended to a thus named political being. For its distinguishing feature, cultural particularity which, when refigured by the tools of raciality cannot but signify an effect of scientific signification, namely outer-determination.” (ibid) For the philosophical architectonic in which these arguments about Bolivia fit, see: Da Silva, 2007.

7 C.f. Zavaleta, 1986, for whom the question of accumulation is itself caught up with a preoccupation for narratological theory, thus attempting to be commensurate with the
WILLISTON CHASE
Fictive indianismo: toward a black feminist critique of Álvaro García Linera’s Marxism

Genealogical narrativity

Throughout the essay, we find him wrestling to shed light on the appearance of a desire for the explanatory power of political-economy. He calls this “la voluntad de poder” (2004: 278) that underwrites the distinctive historicity of certain capitalist “estructura mental colectiva” (2000: 204). He traffics in something like a familiar sense of indigeneity - a community comprised of non-fetishistic relations - but never without accompanying its reference with the story of its becoming. Notice: this is not to say that the history of indigenous peoples must be told, their ontological bearing revealed. It is, instead, an ontologizing maneuver, and it shows up right along with references to events he takes to be seminal to the longue durée advance of indianist thought-action. “De Katari a los Willcas del siglo XIX,” García Linera writes,

problem of the aesthetic as it figures in the problematic Kantian intersection of narratology and textual theory. (See e.g. Brodsky, 2014 [1987]; Marzoa, 2004; Terada, 2009)

8 He will elaborate on this notion vis-a-vis laborers in the mining industries as a social class in “Los ciclos históricos de la formación de la condición obrera minera en Bolivia (1825-1999). He writes, “La llamada ‘acumulación en el seno de la clase’ es, en este sentido, también una estructura mental colectiva arraigada como cultura general, con capacidad de preservarse y ampliarse. La posibilidad de lo que hemos denominado narrativa interna de clase, y la presencia de un espacio físico de continuidad y sedimentación de la experiencia colectiva, fueron condiciones de posibilidad simbólica y física que, con el tiempo, permitieron la constitución de esa forma de identidad política trascendente del conglomerado obrero, con la cual pudieron construirse momentos duraderos de la identidad política del proletariado, como la revolución de 1952, la resistencia a las dictaduras militares y la reconquista de la democracia parlamentaria.” (2000, 204). C.f. Raquel Gutiérrez Aguilar’s elaboration of “el horizonte de deseo del cálculo de acciones” by social movements, and the “horizonte interior” in relation to the “tipo de subjectividad colectiva”, “perceptibles y formulables como hipótesis para continuar (Gutiérrez Aguilar, 2011: 21-22); “Por horizonte de deseo, entendemos algo así como una metáfora de lo que es colectivamente deseable y posible construir, que habilite un sentido común de las múltiples acciones colectivas.” (ibid: 47)
WILLISTON CHASE
Fictive indianismo: toward a black feminist critique of Álvaro García Linera’s Marxism

... de la república del Qullasuyu a los rebeldes de Ayopaya de 1949; del apedreamiento a Barrientos en Omasuyus al bloqueo de caminos de 1979; de los comités de autodefensa en el Chapare a la última avalancha comunal aimara de septiembre hay un fondo común, que comprime épocas y lugares para destacar el significado concreto cambiante, pero también persistente e irreductible, de lo que se ha acordado llamar “lo indígena”. (1998: 260)

It would be hard to underestimate how many times key events, and often the same ones, mark off the first sentences of paragraphs or comprise transitional sections of these essays, similar to what I’ve just cited. But rather than this betraying a grammatological presupposition of historicist coordinates, García Linera’s commitment is instead to reinforce the fictionality of any straightforward narrative progression of Bolivian social history - any narrative, that is, that would seek to simplify the production of a border between what is internal and external to any class formation. The claim could not be more vehement. Indigeneity is not a structure, so much as it is a way to offer a hook at the end of the tale that points back the complications of its genesis. There is a narratological theory at stake in these essays, an “indigenismo” that persists at the level of the registration of narrative form. What matters is what one does with the eruption of this form. He continues:

Referirnos a un movimiento indígena, a sus propuestas, exige pues ir más allá de los sórdidos acomodamientos urbanos de ciertos estratos dirigentes. Incluso, requiere ir más allá de la pálida traducción escrita con la que los cronistas modernos intentan retratar el sentido propositivo de lo indígena: aquí incluyo tanto a los historiadores de origen nativo, como a las publicaciones indianistas. Es necesario comprender las vehemencias programáticas de la asociación comunal diariamente reinventada, y el lenguaje terrible de la acción común. (1998: 264)
The Colonial period, Revolution of 1899, revolution in 1952, Indigenismo, Katarista movement,

El Estado caudillista (1825-1880) y el régimen de la llamada democracia “cencitaria” (1880-1952),” modifications of “la constitución política del Estado (1826, 1831, 1834, 1839, 1843, 1851, 1861, 1868, 1871, 1878, 1880, 1938, 1945, 1947)...” (2004, 273-4)

“Terrible” as such terms may certainly be, for García Linera they punch open the epistemological maneuverings that accompany the propaganda of “la vigencia de la comunidad.” It is the terror of that about which “no hay duda” - “la historia de la comunidad” - that amounts to a “cuerpo unificado” of a contest between two civilizational logics. It is the unified body of an antagonism and a persistence and a maintenance of a path along which this antagonism, “una conflagración”, travels (1998-264-5). Nothing if not constituting a baroque “no,” he wants there a lot to be going on in his text. ⁹ No wonder, then, that there is no doubt about there being an indigenous history, somewhere, somehow: where would this “duda” fit amidst all the work that he is doing to fill social structure with story?

Turning prattling on into a summary of the case against the need for “la radicalidad” of the objectives of social movements to require “la narración escrita” (1998: 261) is, for him, a politics. He wants the story of the development of indígenismo as a mode of thought to stand against this narratological indígenismo that simultaneously demands to make up a mode of action. He hopes that the genealogical aspect of this rapid-fire gathering of dates and events will engender an anti-state condensation of affects that constitute a “demanda de ser pueblo” que “no tiene representación concreta” (Villacañas, 2015: 68). However, the dialectic

⁹ See: Kraniauskas, 2015.
between demand and representational lack works only because he takes himself to be compelled to channel it. No social phenomenology is required. But a phenomenologist is, provided that this investigator can adequately circumscribe his task. His own need for “lo indígena” to appear, reduced to a textual phenomenon, is there on the page. That there may be a continuity of discontinuities in his story of the sort that Derrida points out in Foucault is, for him, a good thing. Without such a problem, the epistemic transformations that he wants to be there to help him to make a more general epistemological point about reading the globe would evanesce; paragraphs like the one I cite above would cease to stick out.

Above I hinted that García Linera wants to inhabit state discourse to critique the state and distance himself from the articulation of cultural formations in an effort to sponsor them. Lest these undertakings sound to be working at cross-purposes, let me now explain what I mean. I take the eruption of genealogical form of García Linera’s “indigenismo” to incite meditation on the question of state power. He is principally at pains to display the realization of processes that are opaquely violent. Take, for instance, his rhetoric of a “bloqueo cognitivo” (2005: 482), familiar to many a “decolonialist” text. This blockage impedes certain epistemological commitments from even conceiving of indigenous power. García Linera charges folks who do not share an indianista cosmovisión with suffering a sort of epistemological incapacity. Indeed, the notion of a “bloqueo” is, in this way, recuperating a certain symbolic violence of globality. It is not about simply indicating an intellectual difference. That would be odd, especially since the conceptualization of the cognitive is caught up in the history of the idea of race that accounts of the coloniality of power often want to subject to historiographic scrutiny. Rather, his essays get around this problem by going through it, registering
WILLISTON CHASE

Fictive indianismo: toward a black feminist critique of Álvaro García Linera’s Marxism

important spurts of epistemic rupture. However, he is also obfuscatory when seeking to pin down that violence in an act of revelation by way of shared protocols of discovery because without both sides - giving a little and taking back, too - he would lose the temperance of his own presentation. We might say that García Linera wants to shorthand the story of indigenous activism in Bolivia in order to throw the indigenistas who only ever want a shorthand off the scent, to make them think that his pursuit of the state encompasses the totality of his pursuits.

He appears to be after something truly grand, pushing back on the “decapitación de realidades sociales” (Linera, 1998: 254) by the liberal democratic state’s production of abstract bourgeois subjects. This is an epistemological undertaking; there is something other than the social phenomenological density of community at stake. García Linera’s essays that pass by a series of key moments of indigenous uprising and appeal to state power in the history of Bolivia aim to hold together more than readability, timeliness, and pedagogical efficiency. They are also a didactic exercise too easily confused with concern for effective social critique. They home in on how Marxism, for example, aspires to offer a “concepción tecnicista y estática del socialismo” where language fullfills a certain, fixed role, but finds “las recetas de los manuales” to be precisely where the conceptualization of class encounters “variabilidad en virtud de los autores de cada pronunciamiento” when encountering indianismo’s dynamic advance (1989: 39).

They push Marxism to the brink of familiar forms of political-economical sense-making, of ”precisión conceptual” itself (2009A: 238). He is after more than correcting a perversion of Marx’s creative dynamism. While it is possible to read these essays winning the power of indigenous culture, such a reading elevates the

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10 In this respect his genealogy shares something with Maristella Svampa’s recent charge to get rid of the “déficit” of Latin American thought.” See: Svampa, 2016.
notion of a “moderate articulation” of sociality in flux to a materiality of language that García Linera always links to a worldview. There are other conceptions of the world, and they can be promulgated in order to raise questions about the efficacy of language.

Y, en la medida en que cada idioma es toda una concepción del mundo, esta diversidad lingüística es también una diversidad cultural y simbólica. Si a ello sumamos que existen identidades culturales y nacionales más antiguas que la república, y que incluso hoy reclaman la soberanía política sobre territorios usurpados (el caso de la identidad aimara), es muy claro que Bolivia es, en rigor, una coexistencia de varias nacionalidades y culturas regionales sobrepuestas o moderadamente articuladas. (Linera, 2004: 291)

He makes an effort to resist a certain facile theorization of social movements, preferring an epistemologically ambiguous externality that disfigures the logic of capitalist production. But he does so in order to appear to be anticipating political demands that cannot be met by social movements. This is corroborated by the clichéd shorthand with which García Linera’s work is too often critically assessed. Álvaro Garcia–linera, populist–state–intellectual: Bolivia’s vice–president and an evangelist for the state to serve as meeting ground between Indian social movements, but also a former militant that ultimately went astray, on a long detour en route to state power turned international highway of contradictions to his stewarding a struggle against the coloniality of power. I am in no way the first to make note of inconsistencies in his theoretical work.\(^\text{11}\) Nevertheless, little has been said about how these complicate what I take to be his ongoing theorization of

\(^{11}\) For this, see much of the work on Bolivia over the past decade by Jeffrey Webber, Gareth Williams, Raquel Gutiérrez Aguilar, Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, James Petras, Nancy Postrero, Felipe Quispe Aguilar, Eduardo Guayanás, among others.
political representation. By presuming to buttress the social movements in question, by locating them within a broader framework of discourses that award politicality to social phenomena, García Linera and the indigenous “community” that he invokes would seem to give the lie to any populism’s very need for images of “el pueblo”. Not only does he reject any essentializing assumption about indigeneity, he also pushes back epistemically, as it were, as if to toy with what someone else needs of forms of knowing that are always already beyond epistemological difference. There is no need for such a populist ruse of representation to shore up “el sistema de creencias, prejuicios y valores dominantes” (2004: 271), he argues. For there is no system at all. No chain of equivalence, much less the appearance of articulation - except what “la base estructural de los procesos de exclusión, discriminación y explotación social que caracterizan a los regímenes de ocupación” creates, that is, “la etnización de los indígenas, al disociar la comunidad cultural de la soberanía territorial” (Ibid.: 281). He props up an alternative to charismatic leadership that is neither the vexed proceduralism of bureaucracy, nor an array of prebendal practices. He breaks out of Weber’s schema.

He tries to reconfigure narratological intuition as a fetishized commodity that he can immanently critique. This has little to do with claiming the essential difference of “lo indio”. The crucial matter is to find a discursive anchor for what, in the restrictive Marxian nomenclature of his early work, he calls a theorization of a “relación con la relación” (2009a: 104). His mention of “lo ‘indio’” with the scare quotes I remarked upon above is a crucial clue. He is after the possibility of characterizing a rapid-fire tale that invites varied forms of investment as an object of teleological political theory. He takes it that there must be some way to move
beyond simply assuming “la abstracción absoluta de [la] concreticidad” coupled with the fantasy of an “indiferencia directa” that reads it (Ibid.: 110). He tries to refract the reworking of the economy of desire that facilitates capitalist exchange along the fantasy of globally legible coordinates of non-fetishistic relations of production. We could venture that he houses the idea of unity, of communal action, in the very theorization of narrative propelled by the conviction that the narration at hand contains the historical truth of indigeneity - an idea that he wants to spin in different ways. However, this signaling of a distinctive historical content of the conceptualization of general equivalence, even if it is never explicitly averred, suggests a re-irruption of the racial not in the global positionality of ethnic or racialized socio-political phenomena, so much as in proffering a narrative “content” that depends upon the conceptuality of the cultural aspect of community organization.12 He is daring not because he pushes back phenomenologically on the social events that might qualify to populate the philosophy of history of academicized Marxism. Rather, it is what he keeps for himself as a pedagogical role, insofar as pedagogy is the genre of misdirection of the investigation of the self - the propulsion toward the adaptive value for someone else of the means of reproducing a form of relation. He is not only doing some crucial work of explicating the radicality of the revolution, then, but also “reverting”, to use Lauer’s term, to an indigenista-like position from which to feed on the thrills of the analytic perspicuity that someone else is presumed to have on account of their identification with “cultural” work.

Thus, what is both intriguing and, in the end, limiting for García Linera is the way that he takes himself to be rejecting the association of “lo indio” with criollo

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12 For a similar argument about race and Marxian value-form theory, see: Terada, undated

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availability. The genealogical gestures that pop up throughout his work are not meant to raise anyone to radical consciousness so much as to facilitate a form of argument that would guarantee the possibility of state intellectuality. His indigenismo, like the one that Lauer describes, is the aloofness of the criollo “use” of “unformed” resources from the aims that inform, in this otherworldly sense that interests him, what it ultimately doesn’t need to know for sure. This is the statism that traffics in the discursive fragility of value within a capitalist system in his earlier work. I would go so far as to suggest that we can link the textual “value” of genealogical narrativity to the thematic importance of Marx’s attention to “use” therein. His frequent attentions to a concept of use value are imbricated with burst of argument to deconstruct spatial dimensions of a criollo concept of historicity. He writes:

La forma nación contemporánea, en su basamento abstracto, puede ser vista, por tanto, como el espacio social limitado correspondiente y necesario para la formación histórica del gran espacio esencial elemental del dominio de la relación de valor y de la respectiva distribución de las actividades de los individuos a escala universal que la sostiene. (2009a, 227)

It should come as no surprise that he thematizes “lo indio” in contradistinction to the historical heft of indigeneity in Bolivia in a surgical way. A question mark haunts the need to be able to track how meaning suffuses a world, such that one could discover an “ordenador de los esquemas simbólicos” (2004: 271) - lo indio! - that comprises it. By staging the development of indianismo without fixing the archaeological structure that serves as its logic - but still recounting the “highlights” - he tries to disrupt the “stillness of the time and space” (Spillers, 1989: 302) of capitalist relationality. He wants to raise questions about this stillness, what it might
appear to offer a certain criollo reconsolidation of symbolic efficacy. And he does so by mollifying precisely and exactingly the evasiveness of what Hortense Spillers calls the authenticity of “raw and violent assertions” to a “dominant (and narrating community)” (ibid: 310). He tries to take epistemological evasion on directly. What sort of calm does he think that he is unsettling? This is where Spillers’s depiction of the “mulatta” as a “fiction” comes in to assist, lurking in some interstice between “lo indio” and “lo indígena”.

**Fiction and discursive dispersion**

Noting a certain anachronism that accompanies the “thematic of the ‘tragic mulatto/a’” that for so long figured at the center of a “vocation of naming, perceiving, and explaining to themselves,” a figure “stranded in cultural ambiguity” (Ibid.: 301) in the critical field, Spillers proposes to study “the Grand Lie about which novels are written and for which cause history hurts”. Neither a definitive “historical subject,” nor simply an “idea form,” (ibid: 302) the mulatto/a figure,

(...) provides a middle ground of latitude between ‘black’ and ‘white,” the customary and permissible binary agencies of the [US] national adventure, mulatto being, as a neither/nor proposition, inscrib[ing] no historic locus, or materiality, that was other than evasive and shadowy on the national landscape. To that extent, the mulatto/a embodied and alibi, an excuse for ‘other/otherness’ that the dominant culture could not (cannot now either) appropriate, or wish away. (Ibid.: 301)

This figure, she argues, is suggestive of the stakes of circulating an array of mythological resources. These tools, made available by novelistic creation, “alerts us to the subtleties that threaten to transform the living subject into an inert mass and suggest the reincarnations of human violence in their intellectual and symbolic...
array” (Ibid: 302). Her concern is not so much on how, but simply to register that, “in the text of fiction” (ibid: 304, her emphasis) some “inaccessible female property that can be rendered, at his behest, instantly accessible”, (Ibid: 309) some “flesh”, as Spillers will call it, is rendered “a site of cultural and political maneuver” (Ibid: 308).

She takes up the fiction of Faulkner’s stories, but also the fiction that Faulkner’s white characters conjure up within the page, maintaining the awkwardness of that syntax, that “within”. By way of the page: she is after not just what Faulkner’s fiction has to say about race, violence, and the historical impact of racial slavery, nor what world constituted by the effects of these may be portrayed in his novels, nor even the imaginary of the same represented by novelistic technique that “constructs” characters like the various members of the Compson family that feature in his major works. She is pursuing “configurations of discursive experience about...that appear dispersed across a range of public address and (...) may or may not find their way to topics of the historical discipline”. She is interested in “configurations, embedded in public consciousness” that “enact a symbolic behavior that is actually metatextual in its political efficacy, in its impact on the individual life-narratives of historical subjects” (Spillers, 1989: 312). We might be inclined to say that she takes aim at a version of the reality, the efficaciousness, of the fantasy of dominant class, group, identity formation that deploys the term “mulatta” to cover over a multitude of sins. Not least among these: the disguise of metaepistemology as comprehension. And yet, this would miss the delicacy with which she formulates the “mulatta”’s fictional “function” within the fantasies of dominant culture.

In contrast, García Linera takes figures of indigenous rebellion too often to install a Manichaean grammar of bolivian civil society, the “customary and permissible binary agencies” of the Bolivian “national adventure”. To combat this
reductive outlook, he takes himself to be an arbiter of fantasies of social understanding. Where Zavaleta Mercado lands on the question of the “óptimo social” only by way of times of social crisis, and only as a harbinger of the imminent defeat of said social configuration (1986: 22), García Linera locates “la autodeterminación en marcha” (Linera, 1998: 276) of indianist revolt, if only to tempt the brusque understatement of the subtleties of certain forms of communal life that he knows that he himself is resisting. His metaepistemological optimism leaps over alibis and cover ups in a single bound. He takes himself to shirk the historical determinants of “el vaciamiento ideológico” of the “porvenir modernizante” (2005: 497) with great success. He is hip to the experience of knowing that these determinations have long been motored by an *indianismo* for which “la base material de esta ubicación histórica [de la modernidad]...es la capacidad de sublevación comunitaria” (*Ibid*: 495). The terms of the “dominant” criollo “culture” can, in fact, be wished away if you have at your disposal the right sort of faculty. If for Spillers the spurious social function of the mulatta consists of a “false body, ventriloquized through a factitious public discourse” (*Ibid*: 313), García Linera’s service to indigenous social movements trims the psychic model. In a sense, he pares down Spillers’s twisted phrase, helping us to understand it.

Crucial to the overlap of Spillers’s faulknerian family romance and García Linera’s weaving in and out of being a champion of indian people and an expositor of the accumulated cognitive potency that allows someone else strategically to champion themselves is a worry about the critical payload of homing in on textual figures. Figures that appear to prompt “historic fear” - in García Linera’s case, not so much of the “binary ‘races’,” white and black, that “might come together in the spawn of the ‘miscogenous’” (*Ibid.*) but the figure of “la etnificación de la
Fictive indianismo: toward a black feminist critique of Álvaro García Linera’s Marxism

explotación” (Linera, 2004: 272) - must be read differently. No doubt, they are both “assured and pursued” (Spillers, 1989: 310) on a meeting ground of “narrative energies” (Spillers, 1987: 210). Both the mulatta and the wedding of Marx and “lo indio” contain a messy expenditure of narrative energies. Nevertheless, it is important also to note how García Linera relocates the question of a concentration of narrative energies that exceeds the discursive-boundedness of considerations of racial hierarchy and the fantasy of social matrix-making. Where Spillers labors over the mulatta’s contribution to comprehending US white supremacist’s phantasmatic relation to proper names, the speciousness of the feel for varied relations to the discursive instability of racial categories, García Linera instead cordons off a little story. A prompt to account for narration while simultaneously refracting any yearning to pin down the essence of “lo indio”. The nested layers that churn up Spillers’s formulation, the compounding of points of view at stake and complicating each other’s stakes, are absorbed by the Bolivian vice-president, who recenters attention on the operativity of their dispersion. Complications to the “grid of associations...the semantic and iconic folds buried deep in the collective past” (Ibid) feature as the fault lines of the political present, shaped by stages of an epistemic ground-clearing of hegemonic historiography. The totality of positionalities that García Linera may “want” so badly to critique emerge as an “enormous struggle to ward off a successfully willed and willful compulsion” (Spillers, 1989: 311) in order to produce the appearance of a social text. When it comes to the narration that appears to buttress this negotiation, it remains to be seen whether or not García Linera has any room for assessing the “terministic program” (Spillers, 1984: 160) that Spillers takes to be infrastructural to the recognition of narrative as such. Or does his narratological trick depend...
WILLISTON CHASE
Fictive indianismo: toward a black feminist critique of Álvaro García Linera’s Marxism

ineliminably on some metaphysical ruse? I contend that we ought to grant that García Linera may be after something that fits within the robust intricacies of such a careful formulation. If we miss this, we run the risk of reading him too quickly. We read him as doing a service or disservice to a community, having or not having articulated some revolutionary potential, epitomizing or not epitomizing the evils of the state, infiltrated or not by the epistemic desire of Eurocentrism.

In mobilizing Spillers’s work, I am gambling on the importance of recent attempts to think globality, or the thought of the ontological production of such a socio-historical field, by way of the example of African American history and culture. The operative contention of a host of recent scholarly ventures that circulate perhaps primarily in the US, but also more easily, it would seem, in nation-states where the exploitation of black slave labor was especially intense - such as Cuba or the US - is the exploitation of slave labor in the cotton and sugar economies. This is the operative paradigm for thinking critically and paradigmatically about the production of commercial relations that make globality the regnant spatial horizon on which varied and contestatory conceptions of historicity intersperse and conflict. Moreover, it may advertise a general mode of evading complications to the way that critical objects are given to theoretical reflection to the end of writing in solidarity with political action. Specifically, I am trying to think this complication by way of the historical recounting marked with genealogical irony in García Linera’s work. I am curious about how this marker "stabilizes the very sense of what is internal to capitalism," and, thus constrains the “fuera emancipativa” that “sólo puede ser entendible desde la comprensión de la fuerza que la comprime o la destruye a lo largo de estos siglos” (Linera, 2009a: 39).

It would be misguided, to say the least, to conclude that Spillers’s work can serve as theoretical frame for thinking political theory in the Andes simply because I have invited her formulations to preside over some distant challenge to the paradigm of analysis that she is representing. For her work alludes to a level of “originary displacement” (Chandler, 2014: 129-170) of socio-historical exposition - a complication that García Linera labors fervently to ignore.

To my eye, the stakes are fairly straightforward: what does it take to complicate the “reality” of explanatory gestures? In spite of the acrobatics to vex the narrativity of Bolivian nationalism, García Linera consistently returns to the “núcleo genético” (Ibid: 40) of the nation in order to stabilize his feel for the social model that his pedagogical adventures produce. He is pushing back on the “formas históricas de la relación entre las personas con la naturaleza” that, since the “génesis” of the interaction between European (proto-)modernity and the traceable occupation and social formation of native peoples in the Americas, have served as forms of the sort that could crystalize into a stable symbolic economy (Linera, 2009a: 67). Whether or not he buys the model is beside the point. The “terministic problem” that preoccupies Spillers is, for García Linera, in the end, an explanatory horizon:

(...) una forma secundaria de organización social, ahora sí nacional, producida sobre un producto previo, semicompacta, de territorialidad social completa, que abarca ya un tipo de fusionamiento político y cohesión lingüística, his tónica y cultural de estos espacios básicamente similares. (Ibid: 216)

Instead of posing a problem for very thinkability of politics, there is a turn on the infrastructurality of the paradigm of European philosophy: García Linera fingers its
Fictive indianismo: toward a black feminist critique of Álvaro García Linera’s Marxism

secondary forms. Could these not also emerge out of the disclosability of absolute difference harbored by the “literal shades of human value” afforded by “American Africanity” (Spillers, 1989: 313)?

Feminizing the contingency of value

It is my hope that comparing and contrasting his efforts to Spillers’s might suggest the merit of such a far-reaching question. Moreover, I would argue that it is warranted, as well, by the reality that García Linera seems to take these “secondary forms” indelibly to furnish to a critique of capitalism. This is due in part to the way that the theory of value form as a theme in his early work serves to restrict accounts of the ways that people can relate and on what terms (2009a: 46). Both in its universalist, capitalist guise and its indianista foil, where value is a “componente directo” of social form of product of work (229), García Linera makes slippery some traction that the theory of value appears to afford. If, as I have argued, his social movement essays try to pique the commodity fetishism that subtends intuitions about the narrativity of the history of indigenous peoples, then in this prior work use value becomes his way to prop up an ironic distance from the social text that dodges the same concern.

He is trying to excise what may possibly buttress the conceptualization of capitalist “use values” in the era of real subsumption. Deconstructing the conceptual differentiation of exchange and use that drives the analytic precision of Marx’s theory of the commodity is the mark. He is also pulling away from the putative facticity of an activist’s recounting of the history of indigenous social movement’s evasions: the instances where some steadfast conception of historicity is put in play. Just where an “unironized view of any human and social scheme” (Spillers,
1989: 310) would appear to come into view - lo indio! - he suggests instead that, if not irony, there is at least a production of metaepistemological criteria of the felicity of symbolization by way of the temporal structurality of narrative. In this way, however, he reads more into the globe that he seeks to reject than he needs to.

Although I cannot wholly make good on my allusion to a racial capitalist analytic framework that might subsume the vice-president’s critical viewpoint, in this final section I want to emphasize the importance of Spillers’s feminism to what I am trying to draw out. My hunch is that the similarities between mulatta and motley social movement that interest me are underwritten not by analogous socio-historical structures the causal force of which we could argue for or against, but perhaps a variation on a shared phantasmatic plane, being contested or embraced by distinctive viewpoints. I take his essays from the turn of the century to be efforts to prove his earlier points about how capitalism works. García Linera’s toys with the contingency of indigenous social movements to serve his “deconstructive” retort to the ubiquity of capitalist relations of value. This is not the same as celebrating community ties - a certain vitality, a collaborationist spirit. Rather, it amounts to a negative claim on community: indigenous community is a social configuration that is not suffused with relations of value. These essays are regressive, or “reversionist”, therefore, because they are caught up with the reproduction of a position that always holds - a “globalism” reliant not so much on an ever present world-picture, but on the omnipresence of the possibility of politically productive explications of social conditions. In this way, García Linera is actively pursuing a “cultural vestibularity” - Spillers inimitable phrase - that underwrites an abigarrada Bolivian society, a sort of traffic between and around conceptual vocabularies facilitated by
WILLISTON CHASE
Fictive indianismo: toward a black feminist critique of Álvaro García Linera’s Marxism

some deeper discursive infrastructure. He is trying to make knowable the dispersion of symbols that come to count, often far too hastily and without regard for their transformational potential (especially as regards the state apparatus), as the sovereignty of native peoples, their ineliminable ties to the land. In the vein of advocates of an Andean “moral economy” such as Tristan Platt who depict the litigious savvy of indigenous people in order to deflate the metaphysics of the positivity of the law, García Linera wants to claim explanatory traction over a movement of social thought that is set beside “culture, whose state apparatus, including judges, attorneys, ‘owners,’ ‘souldrivers,’ ‘overseers,’ and ‘men of god,’ apparently colludes with a protocol of ‘search and destroy’” (ibid). He’s after a “despliegue diverso del pensamiento indianista” - the sort that can fill up the “influencia reducida y círculos de producción aún limitados” (Linera, 2005: 477) of marxism.

It’s all a question of discursive volume and mass,14 it would seem. What matters is “una vigorosa intelectualidad letrada indígena e indianista” (Linera, 2005: 500) that inattention to such density passes by. Or, at least the sort he has in mind does not exist at the time he is writing in 2005. Even so, it is unclear whether the

14 Consider the ubiquitous trope of “densidad” in Forma valor y forma comunidad. It would seem that he has few bones to pick with what Silva calls the “ontopistemological context” of globality (Silva, 2007: 4) so long as he can remark on the processual way in which it came to be. “De esta forma quedó redondeado el esquema interpretativo del libro. Estudiar la estructura civilizatoria del capitalismo en su proceso de den- si cación material y de extensión territorial universalizante, por un lado y, por otro, complementariamente, la estructura civilizatoria de la comuni- dad en su forma histórica local y crecientemente subsumida por la lógica mercantil-colonial (la comunidad colonial y pre-colonial), esto es, en su densidad material primaria y territorialidad fragmentada, tal como se ha dado históricamente hasta hoy, mostrando que la clave de la comprensión de la dinámica interna de las comunidades contemporáneas se halla en sí misma y en su subsunción a la dinámica interna del capitalismo.” (Linera, 2009a: 39). See also: Linera, 1998: 253-255.

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San Fernando del Valle de Catamarca
“creciente intelectualidad” that would surely only have grown in the decade since 2005 would not still lack this dimensionality afforded to the analytic task by rebellion, stuck in its “acuciosidad reflexiva” (Linera, 2005: 499). For the crispness of making sense by way of colonial concepts of “sense” and a series of bankruptings of the version of the human that accompany the defensive necessity of communitarian thickness of analytic scene make his case.\(^\text{15}\) The indigenous community gives a certain hope that there are resources with which to revitalize or remake this image of the anthropos, insofar as their resistance crystalizes the repleteness of value. The citation of community thereby establishes the metatextuality of rhetorical efficacy. A metatextuality that parades as the ample degree to which the figure of “lo indio” does not set the social matter to be complicated or simplified so much as whether or not a form of critique is satisfactory, felicitous, or simply enough. Nevertheless, in so doing, I would argue that García Linera’s genealogy feeds the fantasy that desire can be commanded. In other words, he takes as fiction the very fiction that Spillers claims is laden with historical effects in the case of the black woman in North American literary discourse. To arrive at the political principles of indigenous social movements, by whatever circuitous means, is to deploy analytic parameters that are “immersed in the principle of desire in the dominant Other” (Spillers, 1989: 310) which García Linera can simply take to be a communitarian desire. For him, the fact that there is some other sense being made is deconstructive task enough. This to say that

\[^{15}\text{See: Endnotes 2, "Communisation and Value-form theory" on communisation theory within a French-Anglo context. Thinkers such as Jacques Camatte seek to stave off the epistemological bemusement of capital’s illusory promise of equivalent communal density that may sneak into any “gradual way to communism”; as if by seeking to refuse the principiality of use and exchange value as they figure into a theory of capitalism - even into an immanent, marxist critique of capitalism - meant taking this mass to adequately theoretically elucidated.}\]
García Linera loses himself, or at least occludes his ambition, in finding his role in projecting a “subject community” that “refracts the oppressive mechanism just as certainly as the authoring forms put them in place,” (Ibid) except that his subject is the very text of the possibility of value.

Is this not another version of the way in which the ideological struggle of indianismo is taken to be about rectifying a subordination of indigeneity on the principle of Indian masculine impotence in the tradition of which Reinaga forms part? For Spillers, the mulatta only has “value” insofar as she is instantly accessible.

Teasing himself with her presence, the dominant other re-intersects the lines of sexuality and ‘civilization’ forced to diverge by the requirements of the family, the private property, and the state. ‘Virility’ reveals itself in the whorehouse as the scandal that is not only sufferable, but primarily applauded as the singular fact and the privilege of the phallus (Spillers, 1989: 309).

Meanwhile, the vice-president would seem to have his finger on what it looks like to refute this accessibility, to harbor as a critical tool the femininity of the story of indigeneity, or to take on debunking it as a scholarly project. He takes this “teasing” so seriously, we might say, that it becomes his very best estimation of the vitality of community and nothing more. But does that vitality need someone or to dance on pins and needles around it, let alone to promote it?

Simply put, why does the sort of account that García Linera develops need to be developed at all? Could it not tell us more about the limits of certain critical gestures of solidarity? Perhaps even unsettle us by the perversion that may give them traction and appeal? In Spillers’s reflections on Compson, this is where history as “that which hurts” finds the cause for which hurt is conceptualized just so. It is this “cause” that the “mulatta” helps to expose. The mulatta “tells us little or
nothing about the subject buried beneath the epithets, but quite a great deal more concerning the psychic and cultural reflexes that invent and invoke them” (Ibid). Likewise, I would argue, the structurality of “estructuras mentales” that subtend the putative shifts in episteme that García Linera’s essays are purporting to track. For the “narrativa de resistencia” that he suggests has been emerging from an ideology of indianismo, this construction “poco a poco” as an “opción auténtica del poder,” (Linera, 2005: 477) is also a fiction. It also signals what Spillers calls “those boundaries of discourse that fix and determine belief, practice, and desire”. To the extent that these boundaries are, in Spillers’s account, caught up in forms of “‘gendering’activity,” (Spillers, 1989: 309) - and not because they conform to a ready-made conception of patriarchal domination - I suggest that they are informative of the fantasy of a certain virility of narrative form in García Linera’s work. However, this “virility” is about imbuing the way that he can take ambivalently, take as merely text, a sense for how the community’s cooperative potential makes fictional the arbitrary coordinates of “‘higher’ and ‘lower’ reaches of human society” (Ibid: 310) that go under the heading of Bolivian “culture”. The sense that the relations made visible by a theory of the state could be dismantled if there were not a fantasy radiating through a “vestibular cultural formation” that promotes its invasion “at any given and arbitrary moment by property relations” as Spillers depicts the blackness from which the “mulatta” distracts the characters of fiction and a fantasy of the reality of that fiction alike (Spillers, 1987: 218), is, for García Linera, stuck in the affirmation that what makes fictional indigeneity the always already real bite of the strategic materiality of the state to which this fiction grants access.
WILLISTON CHASE
Fictive indianismo: toward a black feminist critique of Álvaro García Linera's Marxism

Genealogical form as a narratological thesis, then, works for García Linera like the black “flesh” that the “mulatta” character in Faulkner’s novel offers its white character-reader-author a chance to avoid. While he may be interested in sussing out strange forms of commodity fetishism, he is also trying to “tame” the promiscuity of value, making the “negative resource” of blackness into a positivity.\footnote{In effect, he is looking for a tool with which to textualize force. On the promiscuity of value, see: Barrett (2009): “No matter how overwhelmingly value seems to impose itself as a normative design, a noncontingent form, a singular objective validity, it nonetheless reserves for itself an Other a negative resource and, from the perspective of the reserved Other, the force and promiscuity of value are, with equal invariability, discovered. Invariably and paradoxically, value reserves for itself an Other perspective from which “value as form” bursts forth as “value as force.” (Barrett, 2009: 27-8)} This fictional figure – a totalizing genealogy of indigenous thought – effectively elides questions of discursive reproduction and discourse’s reliance on always having at its disposal a “zero degree of social conceptualization” (ibid: 206) in order to do whatever political work it is argued to do. It requires “an accretion of signs that embody the ‘unspeakable’ of the very thing that the dominant culture would forget” (Spillers, 1989: 301), insofar as speech is always already writing and writing already invokes a crisis of presence that access to strictly oral, or pre-writing, forms of communal binding belies. It is not that there is no writing, but that the indigenous community being able to avail themselves of “otros medios más elocuentes de la comunicación” ensures “la existencia de un programa de acción histórica alternativa al predominante, la sola interpelación al Estado a través de una acción social tampoco es suficiente para hablar de la emergencia de una propuesta de superación del ordenamiento vigente” (Linera, 1998: 260). However, in not being a “term,” like “mulatto/a,” that designates a disguise, a cover up – so much constituting the epistemological device of the state as constitutively disguised – this genealogy confirms by its consistency as a prompt to theories of narrative that “la
Fictive indianismo: toward a black feminist critique of Álvaro García Linera’s Marxism

carencia de narración escrita no es obstáculo” (Ibid: 261) for an accumulationist theory of the state. The genealogical intuition, as discursive infrastructure, carries the “lacerations, woundings, fissures, tears, scars, openings, ruptures, lesions, rendings, and punctures” (Spillers, 1987: 207) that are one and the same, for García Linera, as “la narrativa colonial”. Little does it matter that, in contrast to Spillers, the command of this fantasy of narration is dispersed, nestled into trackings of social dynamism of the "measures" that index diversity of values. This is an "as though" parading as an "as if". García Linera’s essays encourage the very "behaving as though the fictive text were ‘real,’ that it ought to give the reader valuable information about the historical sequence" (Ibid: 311). The irony of a dispersion making clear what is teeming with alternatives is not lost on him. On the contrary, it breathes life into his own feel for the state.

He is expressly not interested in “what might be abstracted from” this misstep, long ago “contravene[d]” by the deconstructive “assumption[s] of our present critical practices” (ibid). If indigeneity is not elevated to a certain degree of generality, the lesson that his fiction seeks to convey languishes, offering only prismatic possibilities to universalist epistemologies. García Linera is not after a critique of a “zero degree of social conceptualization”. While he may be thrilled by the intransigence seemingly promised by taking on what Spillers calls the “concentration of ‘ethnicity’” (Spillers, 1987: 207) as a technique in the production of positionality, he struggles not to need to be the savior of marginality from “total objectification.” In the face of a certain white globalist demand for putting

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17 Cf. Zavaleta Mercado in response to the problematic of the “excedente” in dependency theory, for whom the status of the “excedente” as socio-political phenomenon remains importantly at stake in his epistemological conception of the state as synthesis. (Zavaleta, 1986)
everything in its right place, he really wants to rescue the “captive community” that concerns him from “becoming a living laboratory” (Ibid: 208). In contrast to Spillers then - and crucially so - his scholarly advocacy, in its very insistence on the organicity of the people whom it takes as objects, their natural resistance to certain forms of totalization, needs there already to have been an epistemic disruption to how naming figures into the stabilization of a logic of value as a rhetorical ploy. He needs for this instability always already to be available. Much more than having available the fodder for social concepts, he presumes to have a vast warehouse of rhetorical possibilities to register “the zero degree” for carving out a domain to which his discourse never belongs as symbolic configuration. And he likes sitting on top of such a heap. For it offers the chance to demote what is puffed up by showing it never to have been what it took itself to be. Never more than “la divinización de las jerarquías ventrílocas,” (Linera, 1998: 258) he is not simply pushing back on hierarchies being accumulated - hierarchies that are there, somehow and somewhere, even if only in fantasy - so much as this ventriloquism: the way that some reality is obscured. The problem, however, is that he loses track of reality itself as a theoretical project. Or perhaps he hasn’t settled his stakes enough to make that his concern.

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Fictive indianismo: toward a black feminist critique of Álvaro García Linera’s Marxism

WILLISTON CHASE
Fictive indianismo: toward a black feminist critique of Álvaro García Linera’s Marxism

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