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SPECIAL COLLECTION:
THE ETHICS OF DISCONNECTION IN A NEOLIBERAL AGE

On Devils and the Dissolution of Sociality: Andean Catholics Voicing Ambivalence in Neoliberal Bolivia

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ABSTRACT
In the Andean highlands of Bolivia, people sometimes express their ambivalence over the religious conversion of family and community members through stories about evangelical Protestants who have been possessed by Santuku or the devil. The article analyzes these narratives as part of a larger genre of devil stories and as a window onto the multiple ways Andean Catholics link migration, religious conversion, and death in the context of broader neoliberal transformations. From the perspective of those "left behind"—Catholic family and community members—conversion empties the future. Nevertheless, the necessary labor of dissolving or reconfiguring social relationships is undertaken by both Catholics and evangelical Protestants and sheds light on the production of sociality in 21st century Bolivia. [Keywords: Andes, Christianity, death, devil, narrative, neoliberalism, religion]

On a short field research trip to Bolivia in January 2003, I spent several hours discussing the economic crisis and exchanging news about family and friends with Alejandro and his wife Anacleta before Alejandro asked if I wanted to hear a story about "a Christian brother, a believer (*un*

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hermanu, un creyente, Sp.)," in other words, an evangelical Protestant.[1] Alejandro and his wife Anacleta are getting on in years, their hair graying, their faces creased with wrinkles, and their grandchildren now entering high school. I met the couple in 1995 while doing my first extended fieldwork in a rural highland Andean community in a region called Sullk'ata (Chayanta, Department of Potosí), Bolivia. They soon after migrated to the city of Sucre so that their two sons could attend high school. On my subsequent trips to Bolivia over the past 15 years, I have made a point to visit them. Their sons eventually received degrees (in teaching and dentistry), but neither could find much work and migrated to Argentina and later Spain. For several years, Alejandro and Anacleta have cared for their grandchildren while their sons and daughters-in-law worked in Spain.

Alejandro was a gifted narrator and often told stories—not only to visiting anthropologists but also to his grandchildren, compadres, and acquaintances. I was always a willing listener to his stories and Anacleta's quiet explanations of family and community relationships, but I was particularly intrigued because I was contemplating a project that would explore religiosity and family in the urban Andes. While Anacleta prepared lunch for us, Alejandro told a story, which I relate further below. The short and purportedly true story shocked me for it ended with the revelation that the believer is possessed by *Santuku* (Q.), Satan or the devil.

My confusion apparent, I wondered aloud at the succession of events in the narrative. In Alejandro's interpretation, what happened to the Christian was a punishment.

"A punishment from God?" I asked him.

"No, no! A punishment from the devil," Alejandro emphasized. "God would never castigate people in such a way…Although," he mused, "perhaps God does not protect the evangelical Protestants in the same way as God protects the Catholics." Just why the evangelicos are punished, Alejandro cannot say.

Stories of Satan and contracts with the devil are extremely widespread, prevalent not only in Bolivia, but also throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, the Mediterranean, and Africa.[2] The stories often depict individuals who, having made a pact with the devil, amass wealth rapidly or having been duped by the devil, enter into an exchange (sexual or otherwise) that has dire consequences. Recently converted evangelical Protestants are certainly not the only victims of Santuku. In fact, most stories told in the Andes and other parts of Latin America assume Catholicism; the religious

affiliation of the individual is unmarked. Anthropologists of the Andean region have interpreted stories of the devil as a window onto relations of power and exploitation in daily life. In Michael Taussig's (1980) original formulation of *The Devil and Commodity Fetishism in South America*, (which was partially based on June Nash's [1979] classic ethnography on Bolivian tin miners, *We Eat the Mines and the Mines Eat Us*), Satan stories reflect a peasant view of wage labor as "unnatural" and a moral critique of plantation agriculture and capitalism. Others have interpreted devil stories in the Andes as a subaltern discourse through which women resist the influences of a global political economy (Crain 1991) or as moral tales through which children learn that "expressing desires of wealth at the expense of fulfilling familial obligation makes one vulnerable to devil possession" (Miles 1994:133). Of course, Taussig's (1980) analysis has been criticized for ignoring Andean peasants' very long histories of petty commodity production and market relations.[3] In spite of the similarities in the content of devil stories, political economic structures at particular historical moments may shape the ways individuals and communities view wage labor or capitalist production (Nugent 1996). Although the narratives are not simply straightforward critiques of capital accumulation, the stories often index arenas in which sociality is under negotiation.

In contemporary Bolivia, Christian to Christian conversion is one such arena; moreover, conversion raises particular social dilemmas for those who do *not* convert as well as for those who do. As in other parts of Latin America, religion has become and is becoming increasingly pluralistic. The Catholic Church is no longer the sole centrifugal force of morality, sociality, and politics (Levine 2009). Many of those who convert leave one heterogenous Christian community, that of the Catholic Church, for another heterogeneous Christian community, one composed of multiple evangelical Protestant and other non-Christian denominations. Nevertheless, Catholics and *evangelicos* (evangelical Protestants, Sp.) or *cristianos* (Christians, Sp.), as the members of almost any non-Catholic denomination are referred to in Bolivia, view their religious practices and communities as distinctly different from each other.

Native Andeans often give voice to their subjectivities as Catholics, but most practice a faith that inextricably intertwines a local cosmology of supernatural forces with worship of Catholic saints and virgins, relations of exchange and subsistence agriculture, and Catholic institutions such as *compadrazgo* (spiritual kinship, Sp.). Many native Andeans convert to

evangelical Christianity only after migrating from rural highland communities to urban and lowland regions for work or educational opportunities. Converts often literally leave behind natal communities and rural regions where their Catholicism was tied to a supernatural landscape. Religious conversion is described by practitioners as a rupture or break, for converts often say that they leave behind a previous life in order to seek a future as a Christian in a Christian community.[4] Boundaries between Catholics and evangelical Protestants may be created and maintained even within an extended family or small community.

In this article, I examine Alejandro's stories in which recent converts to evangelical Christianty are the victims of the devil in order to shed light on the micro-politics of social connection and disconnection in the context of neoliberal Bolivia. As Ilana Gershon and Alison Alexy indicate in the introduction to this special collection, bringing attention to the dissolution of bonds simultaneously illuminates the tenuous marking of boundaries. I argue that these stories offer insight into Andean Catholic perceptions of evangelical Protestants as enacting relationships in ways that empty the future, that hinder the elaboration of social relationships, or dissolve the interwoven ties among human beings and between human and supernatural beings. At the same time, these stories offer insights into the ways in which individuals—both Catholic and Protestant—attempt to reconfigure or sometimes regenerate social relationships as much as they work to dissolve them.

In the following pages, I first describe the ways that recent political and economic policies have shaped Sullk'ata lives and livelihoods, particularly forefronting the migration of Sullk'atas to cities in Bolivia and elsewhere. I then retell the two short stories originally told to me in 2003 "about a Christian brother, a believer." In the subsequent sections of the article, I explore the actions of the characters in these stories against the backdrop of simultaneously circulating texts of other devil stories and ethnographic descriptions of religious conversion and funerary practices among Sullk'atas. I alternately trace those arenas of social fragmentation in neoliberal Bolivia that the narrator points to in his story (migration and conversion) and analyze ethnographic examples of how Sullk'atas maintain and dissolve social relationships among the living and between the living and the dead. Santuku stories are not the only genre through which Sullk'atas and other Andeans express their concerns over religious conversion, or the inexplicable, challenging, or troubling relationships and

events in their everyday lives. Nevertheless, these devil stories illuminate the subjectivities and the intimate anxieties of native Andean Catholics as they labor to reconfigure ties between themselves and loved ones in a context where religious conversion, migration, and untimely death, are aspects of everyday life entailed within 21st century Bolivia.

Political Economies of Subsistence and Migration for Sullk'atas

This analysis is based on my ethnographic research since 1995 with Sullk'atas, Quechua- and Spanish-speaking *campesinos* (peasants, Sp.) who live in the rural region of Bolivia and in the Bolivian cities of Sucre and Cochabamba. The lives and livelihoods of Sullk'atas have been shaped by local discourses and practices of reciprocity, national discourses of modernity, and neoliberal reforms undertaken by the Bolivian government in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Sullk'ata is a collection of several small communities dispersed throughout the mountains surrounding the provincial town of Pocoata, Bolivia. A full day's travel from any major city, the region is marginal to the political economy of the nation. At an elevation of over 11,000 feet above sea level, Sullk'atas' daily life in rural communities is shaped by the demands of planting and harvesting potatoes, corn, and other subsistence crops, as well as herding llamas and sheep. Subsistence agriculture is organized through kinship relationships and through the reciprocal exchange of labor between individuals according to a gendered division of labor. Because most Sullk'ata households cannot sustain themselves solely through subsistence agriculture, many married men and unmarried men and women migrate seasonally for wage work. At the same time, many Sullk'atas who work in the formal and informal economies of Bolivian cities continue to rely on the products of their fields and flocks to supplement their earnings.

Thus, Sullk'atas are tied to national and global political economies that require even campesinos in somewhat peripheral localities to alter how they manage social, political, and economic relationships. Beginning in the 1980s and continuing throughout the 1990s, Bolivian governments imposed a series of neoliberal economic and political policies shaped by the broader political economic context and influencing Sullk'ata lives and livelihoods. In the mid-1980s, the Bolivian economy was plagued by a debt crisis of massive proportions, rampant inflation, and unemployment.

Subsequent neoliberal fiscal policies imposed by the International Monetary Fund as well as policies aimed at fighting the "War on Drugs" exacerbated the already severe economic conditions. The Bolivian government closed down mines in highland regions in the 1980s, leaving tens of thousands of miners and their families without work or housing. Opening markets to cheaper foreign goods, left already vulnerable Bolivian industries unable to compete. In response to a lack of alternative wage work and the increasing demand for cocaine from the United States and Europe, many Bolivians living in highland regions migrated to the eastern lowland regions to contribute to the production of coca leaves. For a few years in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the neoliberal measures undertaken by the Bolivian government had some success, balanced, in part, on the income generated by the coca and cocaine economy.

During the mid-1990s, the Bolivian government under the leadership of President Sanchez de Lozada privatized several previously national industries, continued austerity measures, and worked to eradiate coca, the mainstay of the export economy. Linked to these economic policies were political reforms aimed at decentralizing government and reallocating political power and money to municipalities (called "popular participation"), education reform, constitutional recognition of plural cultures and ethnicities (for example, Wightman 2007:241-242, Postero 2005, Tapias 2006). These political economic policies also resulted in widespread unemployment and underemployment, the loss of political power of labor and syndicate based organizations, and the rapid growth of overcrowding in urban peripheries. By the late 1990s not only was Bolivia's economy faltering—its primary export an illegal crop—but the collapse of Argentina's economy in 1999 had repercussions throughout the continent. By 2000, Bolivians saw the collapse of the few economic gains made by their country in the previous decade.

In neoliberal Bolivia, migration is one arena through which shifting social, political, and linguistic boundaries along with gender, class, and racial hierarchies are played out. Migration for wage work and education are not novel aspects of Bolivian life (e.g., Larson and Harris 1995), but at the turn of the 21st century, discourses valorizing individual advancement were laminated in new ways upon real experiences of political and economic marginalization and social fragmentation. Many Bolivians with few opportunities to work in their own country began migrating to Spain in search of jobs. Sullk'atas, like many other Bolivians who have migrated to Spain,

typically leave children and aging family members behind. Other Sullk'atas move to Bolivian cities with their children in pursuit of educational opportunities and jobs. Both living in a city and speaking Spanish are closely associated with modernity, advancement, and with greater socioeconomic class and social status in Bolivia. Most Sullk'atas speak Quechua as their first language, a language that is both romanticized and denigrated; they learn Spanish in secondary school, urban and lowland jobs, and military service. But increasingly Sullk'atas migrants refuse to teach their children Quechua, preferring that they speak only Spanish. Rural Sullk'ata communities are increasingly populated by the middle-aged and elderly because young families and children have moved away.

The family with whom I lived during 18 months of fieldwork in 1995-1996 in a small Sullk'ata community called K'allpa is a case in point. Like other Sullk'atas, Marcelino, the father, lost work in the highland mines of the Department of Potosí in the late 1980s, and he and his family struggled to regain footing in between rural and urban economies in the 1990s. Marcelino had worked in the mines near the provincial city of Llallagua since he was a young man. Once married, he and his wife, Ilena, lived in Llallagua and eventually had seven children. The oldest children attended primary and secondary school in the city, but after the collapse of the mining sector, the family returned to Marcelino's natal community. Marcelino farmed land that his family gave him and was able to find seasonal work as a laborer in the city of Cochabamba. At the time of my residence, only the three youngest children lived in the rural community, attending primary and middle school. The other children lived in Cochabamba with a relative, attending high school and college. By the end of 1996, Marcelino began building a house on the outskirts of Cochabamba "for his sons" because their oldest children refused to move back to the rural community.

The entire family relocated to the house on the outskirts of Cochabamba in 1998 and by 2000, the four oldest children had migrated to Spain. The house in Cochabamba was significantly smaller, less comfortable, and more vulnerable to theft and vandalism, but Ilena and Marcelino wanted their youngest children to attend secondary school in the city. However, since the family still depended upon the crops grown in the rural community, Marcelino often stayed there to oversee the subsistence agriculture. Ilena cared for her youngest children as well as a grandchild and sold *refrescos*, non-alcoholic homemade drinks, in the Cochabamba market. Over the next decade, the family became accustomed to living in

dispersed locations in Sullk'ata, Cochabamba, and Spain. They communicated by cell phone. They improved the house first with concrete floors and then tiled floors; plastered and painted walls; added a bathroom, a stove, refrigerator, and dining table and chairs, two small televisions, and a boom box. Yet on a more recent visit in 2010, Ilena told me how worried she was about the future. Marcelino had died in an accident in 2005, and she was not sure how much longer she could carry the heavy jugs of refrescos through the market. She was not sure how she would afford the cost for her youngest son's education. Her oldest children had visited from Spain but told her that they would no longer be able to send much money since they needed to focus on their own children and everything in Spain was more costly.

Not simply a set of free market economic policies, neoliberalism is a "political rationality" that organizes the "political sphere, governance practices, and citizenship" (Brown 2006:693). As Cahn notes in his research on religion and multilevel marketers in Mexico, individuals may internalize neoliberal tenets: they assume that "the free market rewards every entrepreneur without limit and individuals should help themselves rather than look to government handouts" (Cahn 2007:430). Sullk'atas responses to neoliberalism are not singular. Like other Bolivians, they have complained that their government "is actually run by the United States," protested against neoliberal policies of free trade and privatization, and decried the dearth of funding for rural municipalities.[5] In spite of the uneven effects of neoliberal economic and political policies, Sullk'atas and other native Andeans are also drawn into discourses of self-discipline, self-directed labor, and consumerism as they seek to alter their status and develop a better life for themselves and their families. They have migrated to seek work, endeavored to accumulate the commodities (including social experiences) that might make someone more "advanced," and attempted to better the standard of living for themselves and their children, to become part of what they view as a more modern Bolivia.

To some extent, neoliberal political discourses that emphasize personal responsibility overlap Andean notions of individualism and labor. In contrast to the products of fields that belong to the household, or minimally to a married couple, Sullk'atas view money earned through wage labor as belonging to an individual. Married men and unmarried youth have been the most likely to migrate and accrue the benefits of wage labor and urban experiences. They may return with food and other gifts for family

members, but they maintain independent control over their earnings. An individual may as easily spend their wages on conspicuous consumer items such as name brand shoes or electronic goods as on food for the household. Although more recently entire Sullk'ata families move to the city to access what they perceive as better opportunities, the benefits accrue unevenly by age and gender. The movement of relatively wealthier families impacts those left behind, and some Sullk'ata communities have discussed closing their primary schools because of a dearth of students. For those Bolivians who migrate to Spain for work, often borrowing money from several people to pay for a plane ticket, returning home is difficult. Parents typically leave young children in the care of relatives, compadres, or friends for months or years at a time. Individuals are able to pursue work or education because of the support of families, but both their recognition of these broader familial relationships and social networks and the networks themselves may deteriorate over time.

Devil Stories, Excess Sexuality, and Empty Futures

Grounded in this ethnographic context and alongside other devil stories, I interpret the two stories that were told to me by Alejandro. In Alejandro's stories Santuku's victims are recent converts to evangelical Christianity. In fact, rather than offering to tell me a "devil story," Alejandro offered to tell me a story about "a believer." Nevertheless, his stories align with a genre in which individuals—whether Catholic or Protestant—are vulnerable to Santuku. He told the story like this:

> There was once a father and son. They just lived the two together because the boy's mother had died long ago. And the father decided to go to Santa Cruz [a big city in the lowland region of Bolivia] to find some work.
>
> While he was there, the father became an evangelist.
>
> Well, then the father became sick. He was *really* sick. So he mailed his son a letter, "I am sick, my child. I'm in a bad way. Please come."
>
> The son already knew that his father had become an evangelical Protestant (*hermanu*). He said to himself, "Carajo! What could be happening with my papi? I will go to see him." So he went to find his father. But when he arrived in Santa Cruz, the hermanus told him that his father had already died. They had already buried him.

> "How did you bury my father! How did you bury my father!" the son cried. "I want to see my papi one last time."
>
> "All right," said the neighbors. So they dug up the coffin so that the son could see his father.
>
> They uncovered the dirt from the coffin and took the lid off of the coffin. But when they did so, the son yelled, "What is this! What demon has done this?!"
>
> What do you think met the eyes of the son? The corpse lay in the coffin with a huge erect penis, a penis so large that it filled the mouth of the corpse.
>
> And the son went back to his village.

There the story ended with no elaboration upon the son's reaction. Alejandro simply concluded with the statement, "I was born a Catholic, and a Catholic I will die."

Then Alejandro turned immediately to a second story. The location and characters of the story changed, yet the basic plotline remained the same. In the second story, a young man returns to his natal community to find that his younger brother has died and that the funeral has already taken place. His brother had previously converted and was an evangelical Protestant at the time of his death. The Catholic man, concerned that the evangelical Protestants in the community failed to bury his brother properly, agrees to have his brother's coffin exhumed. When they open the casket, he finds that his brother has met a horrific fate. The corpse's penis is grossly enlarged and stuffed into his mouth. The man stumbles away, covering his eyes, and leaves his community, never to return. Alejandro presented the stories as true stories about other people, and later when I asked for his interpretation of the events of the stories, he emphasized that Santuku had done this to the evangelicos as punishment.

It is the grossly enlarged penises of the corpses in Alejandro's stories as well as Alejandro's assessment that these men had been punished by Santuku that link them to other devil stories circulating in the Andes and elsewhere in Latin America. In many parts of Bolivia, the devil or *Tio*, is closely associated with silver and tin mines as a guardian of wealth which is produced underground (Absi 2005; Harris 1989, 1995; Nash 1979). Statues of el Tio, often a seated figure with an erect penis, are constructed in the deepest part of many mines where miners daily offer coca leaves, smoke cigarettes, and make libations with alcohol in order to appease him. In other devil stories, those individuals who make pacts with Santuku,

are portrayed as figures of prolific sexuality and great wealth who display similar embodied marks. For example, according to Marc Edelman (1994), stories about a destitute immigrant named Franscisco Cubillo Incer (who became the wealthiest and most powerful man in the region of Filadelfia, Nicaragua at the turn of the 20th century) were saturated with evidence regarding the number of women with whom he was sexually engaged and the number of children he had sired (with speculation ranging from 32 to over 100). Edelman (1994:67, 73-74) suggests that narrators profoundly identified with Cubillo, once a poor man like themselves. Their esteem was mixed with envy and anxiety that his prolific sexuality and unattainable, but somehow, imaginable wealth were dependent upon his relationship with Santuku. Native Andeans and others who tell these stories do not necessarily view capitalism, or more particularly profit, as immoral (e.g., Harris 1989, 1995). However, the devil stories often portray individuals who are in some way morally compromised by greed and selfishness or who repudiate relationships of sociality in some way.

For instance, in other devil stories told by Sullk'atas, the generation of wealth outside of the appropriate relationships among human beings and between human beings and supernatural forces is a prominent aspect of the content. Several Sullk'atas recounted that the owner of a large store near the provincial town of Pocoata "only made libations to Santuku not to Pachamama or to the mountain spirits." After the man died, everything in the store disappeared even though it had been filled "to the ceiling" with inventory. Other devil stories told by Sullk'atas portray individuals who are unaware of Santuku's identity and are taken advantage of (sexually or otherwise) by him. For example, Eulogio, a Sullk'ata migrant to Cochabamba, told me a story on one of his return visits to his natal community in 1996. In this story, which Eulogio localized to a particular town in the mountains east of Pocoata, a very beautiful woman is walking home when she meets a stranger on the road. The stranger asks if he might have a place to stay for the night and she agrees. The stranger takes advantage of her. Several weeks later after the stranger is gone, she finds herself pregnant. Eventually she has a child, who is as beautiful as she is. She dresses him like a little gentleman (*caballero*, Sp.), with a typical Andean knit hat (*ch'ullu*, Q.) and poncho, shirt and pants. When he is old enough, he goes to school. While they are playing one day some other children pull off his ch'ullu—teasing him because he never removes his hat—and reveal two little horns on his

head. He is Santuku's child. The woman and her child eventually leave the community, never to return.

In these devil stories, the individual wealth generated by pacts with the devil does not regenerate like money earned otherwise. The money does not contribute to the wealth of succeeding generations. A store filled "to the ceiling" may become vacant, fields may become infertile when harvested by those who enter devil contracts (Taussig 1980:13, 43, 94), or the wealth generated by an individual may disappear before his descendants may make any use of it (Edelman 1994). Similarly, sexual encounters between Santuku and human beings are ultimately infertile. In Eulogio's story, the woman's child is discovered to be Santuku's progeny, a being who is feared and avoided. Likewise in Andean folk stories, sexual encounters between human beings and (other) supernatural forces are barren. Stories of women who live with foxes and bear fox children (Allen 1983), of condors who steal girls to be their wives (Harris 1994), or of mountain spirits who impregnate women circulate widely in the Andes. These intimate, if coercive, relationships do not result in children who survive—or in fertility that extends into the future. The fox-children are killed by their human siblings; the girl stolen by a condor escapes from him by hiding in a pot, but she turns into a pile of bones. Similarly in Alejandro's stories, the fertility of the penis is denied—it fills the mouth of a corpse. Thus, in Alejandro's story the corpse's enlarged penis at once indexes Santuku and hints that a pact with the devil does not necessarily extend into the future or avert an ugly death. Ultimately, the sexual symbolics of fertility and possession result in barren relationships.

Moreover, the victims of Santuku are marked within the stories, and in Alejandro's evaluative comments, as evangelicos. That the evangelicos had entered pacts with Santuku suggests that evangelical Protestantism and immoral accumulation are associated, at least in the view of some Catholic narrators. The story challenges evangelical Protestant discourses that depict Catholics and others as corrupt and immoral, and instead positions evangelicos as corruptible and unprotected by God, as I discuss further below. In contrast, many evangelical Christians conceive of capital accumulation as God's blessing, a blessing which may be used for individual enjoyment and for attending to those who may be less fortunate (Wightman 2007, 2008). Alejandro's framing of his story leaves little doubt that his critique is directed at evangelical Christianity. "I was born a Catholic and a Catholic I will die," he concludes.

However, Alejandro's story does not detail the believer's rapid accumulation of wealth; rather, it is the association of migration and evangelical conversion that provides a focus for the articulation of concern. It is only after his death that the Christian's pact with the devil is discovered. The father's absence from his son is simply stated and unelaborated. There is no indication that the father has amassed wealth quickly, only that he has gone away to work for wages as do so many Sullk'atas and other Bolivians. But despite whatever success the father may have had in securing a job and earning money, he dies unexpectedly, far from his only son and his natal community. The son returns to his rural community an orphan, without any wealth. Similarly, in the second story, no mention is made of the relative state of wealth or poverty of the brother who remains behind in the natal community and converts to evangelical Protestantism. The brother who had migrated to earn money returns to see him one last time but ultimately leaves his natal community, never to return again. Only when the son and the brother disinter their loved ones in order to pay their last respects, do they discover that something is terribly wrong: after the transformed corpses are revealed, the Catholic relatives suspect that their loved ones have entered into a liaison with the devil.

Alejandro's devil stories juxtapose the religious conversion of kin and neighbors with both the commonplace migration of people for work and the unexpected or untimely death of a loved one, indicating concerns of campesinos and migrants in 21st century Bolivia. Aspects of his personal biography shape these stories: that he and his wife raised their three grandchildren (initially ages two, four, and eight years) while their sons worked in Spain; that one son and daughter-in-law had converted to evangelical Protestantism; that Alejandro and Anacleta themselves no longer lived in the rural community and could not easily return to contribute to community rituals or social relationships of reciprocity. Although the stories are idiosyncratic, these aspects of everyday life in Bolivia are not. In order to further illuminate the ways in which Alejandro's Santuku stories may indicate Catholic anxieties over the religious conversion of their kin and neighbors, I turn to a discussion of conversion among Sullk'atas and of the differing expectations of Catholics and evangelicos about how to maintain and dissolve relationships—both in the context of everyday life and in the more specific case of an unexpected or untimely death of a loved one.

Catholics and Evangelicals in Sullk'ata

In a recent article, Levine (2009) has argued that evangelicals and Catholics are not seen as nearly so distinct from each other as in the past, in part, because of the proliferation and recognition of different types of evangelicals. He writes, "the sheer physical diffusion of evangelicals and their institutions throughout the society has also dampened the edge of alienation and difference between Catholics and Protestants, particularly in large urban areas where most Latin Americans live" (2009:140). To a certain extent, the diffusion of evangelical Protestantism in Bolivia has shifted both public perceptions and individual relationships among Catholics and Protestants. However, in rural communities, as opposed to urban zones, conversions have a direct impact on relationships of sociality within communities and on agricultural and other labor practices. Because many Sullk'atas maintain connections to their natal communities even after living in a city for several years, understanding the navigation of religious practices and ideologies in rural communities is significant more generally.

At the turn of the 21st century, most Sullk'atas are Catholic. Every small community of Sullk'atas boasts a Catholic church in addition to a primary school. In spite of the efforts of the Catholic priest in the provincial capital and a group of missionary nuns in another nearby community, Sullk'ata religious practice inextricably intertwines worship of a Catholic pantheon of saints and virgins with local mountain spirits and Pachamama.[6] Only a handful of people in the region had converted to evangelical Protestantism by 2001, about 5 percent of the households. In some cases, women converted while their husbands remained Catholic and continued to participate in the fiestas, ritual drinking, and cargo system linked to the Catholic Church. In other cases, individuals converted for a period of time but then returned to Catholicism. Other community members had adult children who had converted after migrating to Cochabamba or Santa Cruz. Most of these younger community members occasionally visited their parents and grandparents but did not return to live in the rural communities.

Like that of many native Andeans, an integral aspect of Sullk'ata Catholic practice is making offerings or libations to supernatural forces. By whispering a blessing and pouring a few drops of cane alcohol or corn beer onto the ground before drinking the remainder, Sullk'atas make libations to the "baby Jesus" and "*Tata Santisimo*" (simultaneously understood as God the Father and the Sun), as well as to Pachamama and named mountains. They make offerings of alcohol and coca leaves for the fertility of their fields

and flocks, for safe travel, for the completion of a task such as weaving a blanket or building an irrigation ditch. As Allen has reported of native Andeans in Sonqo, Peru, the cosmology is one in which "land is experienced as animate, powerful, and imbued with consciousness—a parallel society of Earth persons with whom one is in constant interaction" (Allen 1988:24). Sullk'atas maintain relationships with these supernatural forces through their daily offerings and also through a more elaborate series of libations that take place during the Catholic ritual cycle of feasts and fiestas.

Rather than Catholicism overlaid upon a primordial Andean religion, for Sullka'tas these beliefs and practices and their attentiveness to institutions such as baptisms, marriages, and compadrazgo *are* Catholicism (c.f. Orta 2004). Moreover, for Sullk'ata Catholics, these offerings are assumed to be the responsibility of married adults and crucial to the well-being of the entire community. Sullk'atas conceive of the universe as constituted through a cycling of energy, in part enabled by a continual series of exchanges between human and supernatural beings. When Sulk'atas drop alcohol onto the ground, whispering an invocation, and then drinking the remainder of the cup, they are feeding the earth and in return the earth feeds Sullk'atas, maintains the fertility of fields, flocks, and people, and sustains the community. Sullk'atas also maintain relationships with each other through these rituals, for drinking always involves a symbolic and practical exchange: in the short term, bowls of corn beer are offered from the sponsor of a fiesta to a community member who *ch'allas*, drinks, and then returns the empty bowls; in the long term, community members take turns sponsoring each annual fiesta, making corn beer and food for the entire community.

Those who convert to evangelical Protestantism eschew the drinking and dancing of Andean Catholics and reject the community-wide feasts and fiestas that Catholics see as crucial to agricultural production, the fertility of animals, and the reproduction of community. Because most Sullk'atas also maintain relationships with each other as they drink and dance together during fiestas, or as they sponsor each other's children in baptism, or exchange labor and food while planting fields, evangelicos' rejection of these practices erodes the avenues through which sociality is maintained between Catholics and evangelicals. Evangelicos in Sullk'ata would watch with disapproval during the community-wide fiestas, particularly criticizing the drunkenness of Catholics. Because they did not baptize their children or accept sponsorships of others' children for baptisms,

graduations, and marriages in the Catholic Church, they were partially isolated from the array of compadrazgo relationships that overlaps kinship in the region. Many converts in Sullk'ata had, however, previously established relationships prior to conversion or were drawn back into these relationships because their spouse remained Catholic.

Policing the boundaries between Catholics and evangelical Protestants within the small communities and extended families of Sullka'ta is, thus, a process that is fraught with potential contradictions. For example, when Ruben and Irma arrived in K'allpa in 1996 after an absence of almost four years, they were awkwardly situated between families and communities because of the social expectations and structures they had to navigate as evangelicos. They had run away together without the blessing of their parents in 1992, worked in the large lowland city of Santa Cruz for several years, and converted to evangelical Protestantism within months of each other. They had returned to visit family and friends, but also to formalize their engagement with their families and to involve them in the wedding planning. In spite, or perhaps because, of their conversion, family members were adamant that they follow local community (and Catholic) expectations of betrothal. Some of the tasks were mundane, though symbolic: a future son-in-law often works in the fields of his wife's family reinforcing ideals of complementarity between husbands and wives, as well as associations between the fertility of fields and human beings. Ruben was taken out on his first morning back in the community to help plow the family's field. Wearing shiny black loafers in the midst of the rutted field, Ruben followed a team of oxen and plowed a few furrows while Irma followed along behind, dropping the seed corn. He had refused to put on a pair of the sandals made from tire rubber that are typical among Sullk'atas and other Andean peasants, but he did participate in the family's day of work. Other events were even more closely tied to Catholic rituals of making libations, and were therefore less palatable for Irma and Ruben but impossible to escape. On their final evening in Sullk'ata, Ruben's family and friends from a nearby community arrived at Irma's parents' house with a band and several liters of cane alcohol to make libations for the betrothal of the couple. Ruben and Irma drank alcohol and danced as sparingly as they could, but were pressed into following through the multiple libations and the families' efforts to bless and formalize their marriage.

For Catholics, certain relationships dissolve through explicit avoidance or lack of attention. In the context of the rural community, Catholics

emphasize the value of maintaining relationships of reciprocity between people and supernatural forces of the universe, as well as among human beings. The exchange of labor, the taking on of religious fiesta sponsorship, or the participation in drinking during a funeral are tied to a moral universe in which one offers with the understanding that eventually the same will be returned. Sullk'atas watch the ways that people do, or do not, fulfill obligations to others in the community and to the supernatural forces of the universe. The evaluation of each other's actions in terms of this particular moral economy has implications for those who convert to, or have family members who convert to, evangelical Protestantism. Converts no longer contribute to the particular and more general efforts at maintaining relationships that are considered crucial to the production and reproduction of fields, animals, and human beings.

Christians in Sullk'ata emphasize their personal transformation in narratives of conversion and discourses such as being "born again." Religious transformation is understood as explicitly personal. In their everyday lives, this means that evangelicos in rural communities and urban areas place themselves against an "other," against those who live by a religion which demands the "worship of idols" rather than the "Truth of Jesus Christ." This "other" may include families, relatives, and community members who are seen to live by a "pagan religiosity" (also see Wightman 2007:245). Because many converts in small rural communities do not have a church nearby, they rely on missionaries who pass through with variable frequency or visits to a larger town for spiritual sustenance. One Sullk'ata woman would visit me occasionally and ask me to read to her the marked passages in her Bible as she could not read herself or attend the religious services in the town of Pocoata. Almost all Sullka'ta evangelicals describe their individual transformation as enabling them to deal with the difficulties in their lives. Similarly among Pentecostals in Cochabamba, Bolivia as Jill Wightman (2007, 2008) demonstrates, conversion narratives emphasize the ways in which personal religious transformations heal individuals and help them navigate poverty, domestic violence, and political exploitation. But because Catholic religious practice is thoroughly integrated into the fabric of daily life, converts often remain separate from many kinds of social, political, and economic relationships in Sullk'ata.

At the same time, evangelicos also emphasize communal, and even national, transformation and advancement through personal diligence and faith. For instance, Pentecostals in Cochabamba often see themselves

as having been healed through conversion and as having a "Christian mandate to 'heal the nation' (*sanar la nacion*)" (Wightman 2007:245). The "other"—defined as pagan, non-Christian, and Catholic—may include family, community members, or people unfamiliar to a convert such as members of "the elite classes who control the dominant discourses of the nation-state—not only political discourses, but also discourses of tradition, nationality, education, and morality" (Wightman 2007:245, also see Tolen 1999). Proselytizing or "carrying the Word of God to (and sharing their personal experiences with) as many people as possible so that those people might also 'come to know God' (*conocer al Senor*)" (Wightman 2007:245) is the primary method through which evangelicos seek social transformation. Rather than interpreting problems—poverty, lack of educational or professional opportunity, familial and state violence, political corruption—as socially and historically structured, evangelicals view the problems and their solutions as based in certain (personal) relationships, practices, and beliefs—in particular, a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Conversion, thus, incorporates a facet of ambiguity into the lives of rural Andeans. At the same time, affective, social, and economic relationships do not simply disappear when an individual's spouse or child, compadre or neighbor, converts. Individuals must undertake some effort in order to dissolve, maintain, or reconfigure their relationships with each other. The social, emotional, and political work that individuals take on to rearticulate relationships is evident in Ruben and Irma's return to their natal communities, as well as their family and community members' efforts to reintegrate them into proper social relationships. This mutual attempt is also implicit in Alejandro's story about the death of the father—the father attempts to contact his son and the son attempts to go to the father. I turn, then, to a different arena in which Sullka'tas dissolve and reconfigure social relationships in order to make sense of Alejandro's stories and to further illuminate the ambiguities of sociality in the context of neoliberal Bolivia.

Death, Presence, and the Dissolution of Individuality

Death is often emblematic of the dissolution of social relationships, and both migration and religious conversion, among other neoliberal transformations in the Andes, may shift relationships in ways that can be metaphorically experienced as death.[7] Moreover, death is an arena in which

the dilemmas of conversion become clear. Over the course of Alejandro's first story, the son realizes that his father has died. Although the son's subjectivity as a Catholic overlaps only partially with that of his father, a "believer," the premise of the story is that the son cared for his father, and the father cared for his son, in spite of the real and metaphorical distance between them. The father sends a letter letting his son know that he is ill and requesting his son's presence. The son sets off immediately to see his father. Opening his coffin in order to see his father "one last time," the son is far from finding his father buried in a "good way." Instead, the son discovers the malleability of material bodies and the inexplicable violence of encounters with Santuku. In the story, the son leaves without burying his father again: it is no longer possible to transform those bonds.

In spite of the finality of physical death, anthropologists have long recognized that social relations may continue even after an individual's heart ceases to beat. In Sullk'ata, death does not result in a complete severing of social bonds; rather sociality is transformed gradually. In Sullk'ata, the ones "left behind" labor to dissolve and rearticulate social, economic, emotional, and political relationships among the living, and between the living and the dead. Death, from this perspective, also points toward different publics—kin and not kin, living and ancestral, evangelicos and Catholics. Thus, how Sullk'atas constitute or reshape those publics when a loved one dies is a final aspect of the ethnographic account that requires elaboration. Death and bereavement rituals as understood and enacted by individuals in Sullk'ata may shed light on Alejandro's stories and on conversion as a potential disconnection prior to death.

As much as the image of the corpse with an engorged penis in his mouth may shock the listener (or reader), the actions of the young men who dig up the bodies of their male kin also require consideration. Although I have heard Sullk'atas voice the sentiment that they would want to see a relative "one last time," most would not consider disinterring a body. In Alejandro's story, the son suspects that the evangelicals did not "properly" bury his father, but it is also clear that the son is distraught over his father's death. In the Andes, those left behind by a death are often emotionally and economically bereft (e.g., Allen 1988, Van Vleet 2008). Sullk'atas and other Bolivians often struggle with the practical concerns of maintaining their families and the social and affective shifts necessary to continue their lives without the one who has died. During funerals and religious feast days such as *Todos Santos* (All Souls Day) family and community members

recognize, reiterate, delineate, and dissolve their affective and social relationships with the deceased and with each other.

For example, when Marcelino died unexpectedly in 2005, his wife and children were dispersed. He had been in K'allpa, attending to the harvest. Late one night while walking home alone he fell into a ravine, hitting his head on a rock. His body was discovered the next day when neighbors went to water their oxen. Ilena was in Cochabamba, working in the market and taking care of their three children and a grandchild. They left for the rural community as soon as someone was able to contact Ilena by cell phone. The four oldest children were in Spain.

I heard the news from their youngest daughter, Marisa. As I describe above, I lived in Ilena and Marcelino's household in 1995-1996 and had visited the family three times since that long-term fieldwork. From Bolivia, Marisa sent me an e-mail, telling me of the tragedy. She wrote, "Lamentably, we are orphans. We no longer have a father. I don't know how it happened because until just one week ago I was in Spain. I heard the terrible news that my father fell from a cliff and hit his head on a rock. It was that which provoked his death. So immediately I went to Bolivia, wanting to see him one last time, but I did not arrive in time to be at the funeral. Now all of us find ourselves in a terrible confusion."[8] Marisa's heartbreak over not arriving home in time for her father's funeral is evident in this e-mail and in our conversation nearly a year later, when I finally managed a return trip to Bolivia. Marisa was the sibling who had most recently migrated to Spain—she had only been working for a few months as a caretaker for an elderly woman, a job she had struggled to find. So badly did she want to see her father "one last time," she shrugged off the length of the trip and the likelihood that the funeral would have to take place before she arrived.

Several days after receiving her email, I spoke with Marisa's sister, who called collect from Spain to tell me of her father's death and of her and her brothers' plans to return to Bolivia and arrive in the community in time for Todos Santos. Each of the children, who had scraped together plane fare, would be giving up the jobs they had secured in Spain to return to Bolivia, visit their father's grave, and comfort their mother. The significance of my potential presence during Todos Santos did not occur to me until too late. That Marisa and her siblings were not only informing but requesting my presence at the grave of their father indicates both their understanding of my past relationship with them and the ways in which those relationships might be acknowledged and reinforced for the present and future.

Thus one aspect of Sullk'ata Catholic funerary practices that is particularly relevant to the stories told by Alejandro is the *presence* of loved ones in reconfiguring the bonds of someone who has died. The presence of loved ones—usually children, siblings, and spouse—initially reinforces the uniqueness of the deceased and the strength of the bonds between people. As in other locales in the Andes, Sullk'atas say that having sons is important specifically because they will bury their parents. Traditionally, sons live in their natal communities, participating in the annual round of fiestas and taking on roles as community authorities, and daughters marry outside the community and live elsewhere. Yet in contemporary Bolivia, the daily presence of sons and daughters in rural communities is no longer a given. Many sons (and daughters) migrate to distant cities to earn a living and are not at hand to help with agricultural or household tasks, or with funerary practices. Elderly Sullk'atas, especially those whose children have moved to distant cities, worry about whether or not their children will return to bury them when they die. That Marisa wanted to see her father before his burial echoes the young men (a son, a brother) in the stories told by Alejandro, who also wanted to see their loved ones and to make sure they were buried properly.

For many Sullka'ta Catholics who go to great lengths to return to their natal communities in the event of an illness or death in the family, demonstrating their care and their relationship with the dying person (and with his or her close kin) and ensuring that the soul (*alma*, Sp.; *aya*, Q.) of the person is "at rest" are most crucial. When someone dies, Sullk'atas say that their spirit (*espiritu*, Sp.), rises to heaven, their body is empty and buried in the ground, and their soul walks among the living for eight days. During a funeral, family and community members gather in the house of the deceased and later in the cemetery for the burial. Since Sullk'atas fear the soul because it may cause misfortune, illness, or even death in close kin, most Sullk'atas leave the cemetery as soon as possible after a corpse is dressed, put into the coffin with food and beloved possessions, and covered with handfuls and then shovelfuls of dirt. After libations are made and prayers recited in the cemetery, additional libations are poured in the house of the deceased. Not only is it important for family members to be present at a funeral, but most Sullk'atas prefer to be buried in their community graveyard near their family members who have died before them.

Ilena and Marcelino's children returned from Spain a few weeks after Marcelino's death in order to build an altar for their father during the Todos

Santos celebration. During Todos Santos, families and community members spend the day in the cemetery, praying, smoking cigarettes, decorating the grave sites of their loved ones, offering libations, and visiting with each other. The atmosphere is at once sad and festive: children run about and offer to recite prayers in return for pieces of fruit or bread shaped in the form of babies, flowers, and snakes while adults cry, drink, and remember their kin and compadres. Immediate family members initially bear the burden of mourning a death, but after three years this obligation is, at least, formally completed—families no longer build an altar around the grave or travel long distances for the ritual.

The feast of Todos Santos also marks the socialization of the souls of those who have died recently and marks the movement of community and family members from mourning individuals to recognizing and celebrating a collectivity of ancestors (Harris 1982:56). Sullk'atas say that the dead, once buried in the earth, release the water from their bodies, become incorporated into the earth, and regenerate the water that cycles under the ground and back into the heavens (also see Ferraro 2008, Gose 1994, Harris 1982). Literally and figuratively, those who die are returned to the earth, becoming the ancestors who contribute to the fertility of the community.

Sullk'atas worry that those who are buried far from their natal communities will be without the proper libations and prayers and will lack the appropriate recognition and attention from the living. Sullk'atas recognize that when a person is buried in another community or city (or even country), family and community members will not be able to gather to remember them and to acknowledge the significant social bonds that must be reconfigured between the living and the dead. Sullk'atas are also preoccupied by deaths that occur far from the community or by religious conversions because the dead are not buried with the attention and care of their close kin. Those who are not buried in the community cemetery are not incorporated into the collectivity of ancestors. Their bodies do not dry up, releasing water, nor do they contribute to the fertility of the earth and the continued viability of the community.

As Harris (1982:62) has noted, few native Andeans share "Western preoccupations with the transcendent unity of the individual subject." Andean Catholic rituals reconfigure the bonds between people so that the living may grieve for the individual, but still recognize the deceased's fundamental sociality. These funerary rituals are linked to Andean

notions of social relationships more generally. For example, many native Andeans assume an essential sociality of the body. Andean relatedness or kinship is materially and metaphysically constituted through exchanges: Sharing food, intimate physical spaces, emotional states, work, and material goods all transform social relationships.[9] Significantly, these physical exchanges of food, breath, blood and other bodily fluids, and even clothing, constitute and transform physical bodies as well as social relationships. This orientation toward social relationships is one that Andrew Orta (1999) has termed "transsomatic." Thus, over a long period of time as a woman eats food grown in the same plot and cooked in the same pot as her in-laws, as she sleeps in the same bed with her husband, as she bears a child nurtured with her blood and milk, her body and her self are transformed so that she becomes more like her in-laws. Siblings, married couples, and parents and children come to share similar constitutions and close social bonds because of the permeability and transformability of bodies. If certain kinds of lived social relationships impact the body, the practices which maintain relationships with supernatural beings—feeding a mountain through libations and eating the food grown on that plot of land—are also embodied in particular ways. Because bodies are not essentially bounded, they may be transformed as social relationships are reconfigured. In turn, bonds are dissolved through physical/social processes: the refusal to share food and drink, the avoidance of sleeping in the same bed or room, the lack of empathy, the denial of sameness.

Many Sullk'atas speculate that evangelicos do not bury people in the same way and that private rituals in the home are not completed, meaning that the deceased will not be integrated into the collectivity of ancestors. Most Catholics do not know the details of evangelical beliefs and practices. However, they do recognize that converts reject certain practices that are foundational to religious practice, communal life, and social ties in Sullk'ata communities: the libations and prayers offered to the Virgin Mary, Pachamama, saints, and mountains; the outlay of cash and labor associated with sponsoring religious fiestas and life course rituals (baptisms, weddings); the drunkenness and dancing that are physical embodiments of the offerings made to the supernatural. For evangelical Protestants, leaving behind the "traditional" religious practices of their families and communities enables their personal healing and religious transformation. Conversion constitutes a way to forge through the challenges of everyday

life, often resulting in the betterment of oneself and one's family life. Nevertheless, converts must choose, sometimes on a daily basis, to quite explicitly hold themselves apart. If evangelical Protestants in Bolivia often "define themselves in relation to an 'other'—variously defined as the non-Christian, the unsaved, the pagan, the corrupt" (Wightman 2007:245), they also see teaching those others about "the Truth" of El Señor as a means of healing and showing concern not only for their own family but also for strangers. Thus, although social ties may actively be dismantled or simply dissipate over time, individuals might also make special efforts to maintain relatedness or reconfigure bonds in spite of conversion or migration. From this perspective, the devil stories offer a sketch of people's attention to and ambivalences about each other's efforts to get along in daily life and in the afterlife.

Conclusion: Neoliberalism, Conversion, and Reconfiguring Subjectivities

The stories told by Alejandro allow further reflection on religious conversion in relation to other aspects of social fragmentation that have occurred in Bolivian families and communities in recent years. These stories are part of a much broader genre of devil stories, but are unique in linking migration, conversion, and death. I have analyzed the devil stories as narratives told by those who have been "left behind" by the conversions (and migrations and deaths) of others and, in doing so, I have forefronted Andean Catholic perceptions of evangelical Protestants. At least from this perspective, evangelical Protestants act in ways that empty the future, stymieing the continued interweaving of relationships across generations and dissolving the social ties among individuals within households and communities as well as those between people and the ancestors and forces of the earth. This is clear in the sexual imagery of the story, which at once indexes masculine potency and represents that force as ultimately unproductive. The enlarged penis that fills the mouth of the corpse draws attention to the impossibilities of regeneration.

Alejandro's stories, in other words, incorporate imagery of a violation in how sexual and reproductive capacities *should* work. The sexual imagery that links Alejandro's stories to other devil stories also ties them into a broader array of social, cosmological, and political economic relationships within rural communities and between rural and urban networks in

Bolivia. The family and community members who no longer make libations to mountains and Pachamama, refusing to share in the sponsorship of religious feasts; who do not become spiritual kin (godparents, compadres) to other community members; and who live (and sometimes die) in urban and lowland regions far from their natal homes also hinder the regeneration of the community as a whole. Although Alejandro does not elaborate on the events of the stories, or on why an evangelical convert is so grotesquely changed, he makes clear his inclination to stay a Catholic until he dies. His stories highlight Catholic emphasis on their own loyalty to religious practices and their anxieties around the conversion of others.

Understanding the preoccupations and social discourses of Andean Catholics requires attention to the processes through which they may critique the kinds of social relationships that evangelicals pursue, dissolve certain bonds, and yet reconfigure the possibilities for sociality among each other. The ways in which people dissolve and resolve social relationships becomes clearer through attention to funerary rituals and understandings of death. Even after someone has died, Sullk'atas extend a sense of connectedness, of sociality, to them though the sensibility of attachment is different. Funerary rituals literally (through the sharing of substance) and figuratively reproduce sociality among the living as well as between the living and dead, allowing the individual to become integrated into a collectivity of ancestors. Marcelino's children, who traveled far to attain jobs and earn money, returned to their natal community to bury Marcelino and to celebrate the anniversary of his death at Todos Santos. This reinforces their relationships of sociality with relatives and friends, extends work and exchange relationships among community members, and recognizes the continuing impact of supernatural forces on lives and livelihoods. The anxieties around funerary practices expressed by Alejandro and the characters in his story point to the hardships of distance and religious pluralism entailed in neoliberal Bolivia. From an ethnographic perspective, analysis of these devil stories offers the important insight that religious conversion and migration, two processes associated with neoliberalism, make it difficult for children (especially sons) to accomplish an important aspect of cultural life: to bury their parents.

The analysis also points to a particular array of social and political economic conditions in neoliberal Bolivia that shape the processes through which evangelicals and Catholics may consolidate or dissolve social relationships. Anthropologists and others have argued that evangelical

Protestantism is linked more closely to neoliberalism than are other forms of Christianity (Elisha 2008:158, Kintz 1997, Wightman 2008). At times, this association has more to do with the historical context in which evangelical Protestantism has spread rapidly throughout Latin America (and indeed the world) than with the particular beliefs and practices of evangelical Protestantism. If, under neoliberal political economies "the project of navigating the social becomes entirely one of discerning, affording, and procuring a personal solution to every socially produced problem" (Brown 2006:704), then evangelical ideals that insist upon personal revelation and individual transformation might allow for, or prohibit, different arrays of practices than Andean Catholic ideals of reciprocity. It is not simply that profit may be viewed as an indication of divine blessing rather than as satanic contract or that evangelical Protestants are neoliberal capitalists while Catholics are not. Rather, evangelical and Catholic religious beliefs and practices may enable different ways of working through the neoliberal transition, with its concomitant framing of the world.

Thus, my analysis of these stories offers insights into the ways in which individuals in Bolivia—Catholic and evangelical alike—attempt to disarticulate and sometimes regenerate social relationships, in spite of social, religious, political, and affective ambiguities, and in the context of a broader social fragmentation entailed within the neoliberal economy. Although the stories do little to envision evangelical understandings of sociality and relatedness, death or dissolution of social relationships, it is clear that Sullk'atas themselves attempt to sustain significant relationships in spite of their differences in religious affiliation: marriages remain intact, brothers work together, parents call for their children, and children bury their parents. Of course, conversion to evangelical Protestantism is not simply a rational decision about how to best navigate a neoliberal social and economic milieu. Conversion is also a felt experience, incorporating emotionality, social connection, and sensibilities of sacredness, faith, and personhood. For those who have converted to evangelical Protestantism, burying a parent or sibling according to Catholic rituals may not be imagined as possible even if bonds of affection and love are strong. Evangelicals may, however, expend a great deal of effort in attempts to save their family members and friends through proselytizing. When individuals do convert, the ways in which they relate with others in the community—human and supernatural—may be radically transformed on some levels but not others.

Just as conversion might erode some of the social relationships between community members who no longer work or make libations together, conversion may reinforce other kinds of relationships. Because of the significance of family bonds, children may return to their natal community in spite of knowing that they will be asked to drink. A parent may request a son's presence because of his affective ties, his love for his son, and the desire to see him again, as much as he may reject what he considers are pagan beliefs. A brother may disinter his brother in order to make sure that he has everything he needs in order to go to the afterlife only to turn away at the sight that meets his eyes. Community members, friends, and family may mourn the untimely death of a loved one and request that prayers be recited for him whether or not he considers himself Catholic or evangelico. The stories, finally, give voice to not only Catholic ambivalences about conversion and migration, and more generally the changing landscape of social relations, but also to the ways that individuals practically dissolve and reform bonds and subjectivities across the boundaries of these collectivities. ■

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ENDNOTES

[1]Except for the names of provincial towns and cities, these and all other names of people and places are pseudonyms. Quechua (Q.) and Spanish (Sp.) words and phrases are italicized at first use only; all translations are the author's unless otherwise indicated.

[2]As Marc Edelman (1994:58) has noted, "Satan has been haunting anthropologists in rural Latin America" for decades. Among many others see Crain 1991; Harris 1989, 1995; Miles 1994; Nash 1979; Nugent 1996; Taussig 1980.

[3]On this point of critique, see Abercrombie 1991, Crain 1991, Harris 1989. On globalization and commodity exchanges see, for example, Larsen and Harris 1995, Topik et al. 2007.

[4]Among others see Elisha 2008; Engelke 2004; Keane 2002; Robbins 2003, 2007; Smilde 2003; Stoll 1990; Tolen 1999; Tomlinson 2007.

[5]In Latin America people have displayed a wide range of actions and reactions around structural adjustment policies and neoliberal reforms. Certainly in Bolivia the forced resignations of President Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada in 2003 and President Carlos Mesa Gisbert in 2005, as well as the election of Evo Morales in 2005 were linked to the popular perception of neoliberalism. On neoliberalism in Latin America among many others, see Cahn 2007, Harris 2000, Harvey 2005, Nash 1994, Phillips 1998, Postero 2005, Sawyer 2004.

[6]At the time of my original fieldwork in 1995-1996, and since, a British priest presided over the Catholic Church in Pocoata and a group of Canadian nuns maintained a residence in a nearby town, running a clinic, teaching in the local high school, and offering the classes in baptism and marriage that were required of Sullk'atas before undergoing any of these church rituals. See Van Vleet 2008.

[7]Among many others see Conklin 2001, Corr 2008, Crain 1991, Ferraro 2008, Tomlinson 2007, Vitebsky 2008.

[8]The text of this message along with a more extended discussion was originally published in Van Vleet 2008:191-192.

[9]On the constitution of kinship in the Andes see for example, Van Vleet 2008, Walmsley 2008, Weismantel 1995. Also see Conklin 2001; "Overing and Passes 2000" on personhood and sociality in the Amazon.

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