

FORUM

**Spaces of exception: The private administration
of populations in the North and the South**

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Unfolding the crease in liberal republican citizenship: An introduction to the post-colonial critique of Andrés Guerrero

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The following article by Andrés Guerrero is an unedited translation of the sixth and final chapter of his recent book, *Administración de poblaciones, ventriloquía, y transescritura* (*Administration of Populations, Ventriloquism, and Trans-writing*, 2010), a remarkable text of political history and philosophy that has been largely inaccessible to readers outside the Andean region.¹ Our publication of that chapter in this issue, with commentaries on it and an interview with the author, reflects the unusually loud “echoes” (to use a *Guerreroism*) we heard in it of *Focaal’s* efforts to promote unorthodox ways of addressing the global and historical composition of political critique. Extracting a chapter such as this from its source cannot but leave scars. Here we aim to fill in some of the missing pieces to the story that follows.

At the heart of Guerrero’s work is a question about how political domination might be selectively advanced over certain populations under regimes of equal, universal citizenship. To Guerrero, at issue here is the way the state passes off to the private sphere the task of administering those populations marked as *alter-* or *extra-pares* and how relations of inequality and strategies of exclusion filter into the common sense world of that group that “historically enjoys citizen rights as a ‘natural historical fact.’”² The term “administration” is important

here. It reflects a managerial relation more than a governmental one, a condition evidencing subjection more than citizenship. At the same time it fleshes out the citizen-construct as defined by its capacity/mandate to manage those who are not (or not quite).

It bears noting that Guerrero is primarily a historian of Ecuador. His writings on the material and symbolic modalities of power operating in the rural Andes, as well as the struggles against them, have been among the most influential works of Andean scholarship over the past thirty years. In the article that follows, Guerrero asks how the micro-political processes he found operating in nineteenth-century Ecuador might “reverberate” with the sorts of tensions presently rising up in certain European states. The article, as a result, is delightfully promiscuous and explicitly speculative. Its attention jumps from asking about the complicated legal status of indigenous people in post-colonial Ecuador, to the removal of two students from a British airplane in 2006, to the Centers for the Internment of Foreigners in Spain, where an increasing number of African immigrants have found themselves detained over the past decade. What brings these cases together?

Obviously, as Guerrero explains in the following interview, this is not a comparative exer-

cise. Neither formalist homologies nor direct lines of causation are claimed to exist between these incidents. Other examples could have been chosen to make the case. That is not the point. The inquiry, rather, is borne directly of Guerrero's own intellectual and physical migration. It reflects the journey of a researcher living in and writing extensively on a topic rooted in one place (Ecuador) reading the tensions erupting around him in a new place (Spain) through curiosities conditioned by his own intellectual and political formation in the first:

“Every day I read the Spanish press, scandalized. I watched the news-programs with horror, I listened overwhelmed to interviews with African immigrants in Spain and Europe. Of course, for a reverberation to be established within me between social situations and processes so distant as those of nineteenth century Ecuadorian Indians and those of twentieth and twenty-first century African migrants in Spain, there had to be an emotive charge, a projection from within me, however small.”

What is the method of an emotive charge? How do the intrigues of a (historically grounded) projection morph into (materially situated) analysis? Guerrero continues:

“The interrogating glance of the operator leaps to other social contexts of different histories. It chooses and uncovers the places of convergence: it alights on them, and this brings about reverberating connections between historical situations and processes without any apparent relation ... The operators seem to me like waves that excite loudspeakers, provoking tensions and intensities in other social processes. It makes them stand out and associate with each other through a community of convergences, a mass of resonances. I think that's how I can tell you what happened to me.”

Multiple itineraries converge in alighting this wave of intensity, overlapping mobilities that are only roughly shorthanded by Guerrero's modest characterization of his analysis as sig-

nalizing a movement of theory from the South to the North. There are, as his commentators point out, perhaps more characters in this story than his chapter admits. To whom, or what, should we credit the central conceptual apparatus of his argument, the private “administration of populations”? What is the trajectory of this idea in Guerrero's work and what sort of empirical evidence do we require of him and of his cases for it to reverberate in us?

The notion certainly carries in it the voices of several European philosophers, an influence Guerrero discusses at length in the interview. But it would be a mistake to hear those voices as the main influences on the model he develops in this article. The real source of inspiration for Guerrero's thinking about modes of political administration and the “intimate exteriorities” of political citizenship seems, instead, to be Ecuador's hacienda system, the focus of much of his writing since the late 1970s (see Guerrero 1977, 1984, 1991a, 1991b), and itself a strange hybrid of trans-Atlantic experimenting with technologies of territorialized rule. One of Guerrero's most basic arguments about the hacienda has been that these estate complexes need to be understood as political as much as economic systems, functioning as much through symbolic forms and ritualized expressions of racial domination as through economic modalities of surplus transfer and imbalanced reciprocity (1991a: 40). Exploring this confluence of economic, political, and discursive power exerted by the hacienda over indigenous society (and indeed over the state itself) was the focus of his brilliant 1991 book, *La Semántica de la Dominación: El Concertaje de Indios*. It also shows up repeatedly in the pages of his 2010 book as forming the “plexus of the private sphere,” the “most evident ... institutionalized modality [involved] in the private administration of [indigenous] populations” in Ecuador (Guerrero 2010: 214, 213).³ As he discusses there at length, the hacienda's central role in indigenous administration was in fact firmly established in the earliest years of the Republic, when indigenous people were still officially marked as *extrapares* by the tribute they alone owed to the state.

Given that the majority of Ecuador's indigenous people (75% or more in some areas, see Ramón 2003) were then bound to haciendas, the new republican state simply passed responsibility for its collection over to hacienda owners (*hacendados*). This "delegation of republican sovereignty to a 'master citizen' (*patron ciudadano*) for the administration of indigenous persons" living on his private property set in motion a much broader privatization of indigenous political relations within the confines of the hacienda, a system continuing well after tribute was abolished in 1857 (Guerrero 2010: 185).⁴ The elimination of tribute initiated the process Guerrero takes up in his article here—the paradoxical processes by which "natives thus become invisible in the public-state sphere" and yet found themselves perpetually administered by white-mestizo citizens in their everyday encounters with them (Guerrero 2010: 214)—a displacement of rule "particularly toward the territorial power of propertied citizens who own haciendas" (Guerrero 2003: 293). As Guerrero summarizes,

The delegation of power to the haciendas offers an example of the most evident and institutionalized modality in the private administration of populations. Besides constituting a geographical space, the hacienda is, in effect, a consolidated power formation with symbolic codes, rituals, and mechanisms of repression and consensus making. Moreover, it unambiguously belongs to the private and patriarchal sphere: landlords conserve a jealous autonomy in the management of their properties, which is a "private affair." (2010: 212).⁵

Guerrero's 2010 book is replete with more details than he can provide in the following article of how these private-administrative relations played out in haciendas and outside them.⁶ Again, as a concluding chapter for a book addressing just that, its aim was to push these insights into provocative explorations of implicit processes of rule operating alongside principles of citizen equality, which they at once contradict and reinforce. "Implicit processes,"

Guerrero stresses in his interview, "are not 'invisible' as such. On the contrary, they are social facts that enjoy an excess of visibility, they are saturated in light." In chapter 1 of his 2010 book, Guerrero shows how such almost spectral hyper-visibility continually confounded *teniente políticos* (political lieutenants) sent into the countryside to recruit indigenous people for mandatory labor drafts on state infrastructure projects in the mid-1800s. Indians were everywhere, in fact making up nearly the entire rural population, and yet could not be found by state officials, at least not in the quotas demanded. They were shielded from the state by the *hacendados*, who had set Indians to work on their own infrastructural projects on their haciendas—a clear absorption of the state's modes of rule into the private sphere.⁷ Justice, Guerrero shows, followed a similar pattern, with most instances of dispute resolution involving indigenous people being conducted within the hacienda (Guerrero 2010: 186, Guerrero 1990: 32).

To take another example, chapter 3 of Guerrero's book is devoted to examining how the end of indigenous tribute provoked riots in major towns across Ecuador. These riots were led not by hacienda owners (who knew quite well that their "delegated sovereignty" over indigenous society would unofficially continue) but by urban mestizos, who rejected their status equalization with indigenous people promised by the new codes of citizenship. In some instances, the violence of these urban uprisings was in fact directed against *hacendados*, who were often accused of supporting universalized citizenship (which also implied universal taxation) and harboring pro-indigenous (and thus anti-patriotic) sentiments.⁸ Similar sorts of protest surfaced in the mid-twentieth century on capital-intensive textile mills in the highlands. Urban mestizo workers, drawn into the factories under the aegis of forming the vanguard of capitalist modernization, refused to work alongside indigenous laborers whose contact with such high-tech machinery was considered too anachronistic to bear. Mestizos demanded that indigenous workers be sent back

to the haciendas where they belonged (Ibarra 1992).

Such examples of the private administration of populations, all drawn from nineteenth- and twentieth-century Ecuador, should help readers better appreciate the model Guerrero is developing in the following article and its intellectual and historical trajectory. They should also help us understand why Guerrero considers the Ecuadorian case so provocative for thinking about such things as the containment of undocumented immigrants in Spain or the extraction of suspect passengers from British airlines. In all cases we are tacking between the insides and outsides of the state, between the official idiom of equal citizenship and the common sense world of inequality, and between rather systematic modes of public government and rather spontaneous eruptions of private administration. The archive for such an inquiry is necessarily heterodox. It demands the sort of off-centered attention that Guerrero speaks of in reading into the silences found in correspondences among minor government functionaries in Ecuador, documents in which functionaries address one another not as agents of the state but as *neighbors*, and who speak not about the tasks of public office but about their own “private, specific, and material interests” (Guerrero, this volume). By adapting this method to other times and places, to disconnected realities that yet seem to vibrate at a “similar wave-frequency,” Guerrero pushes us to pry apart the “internal ‘crease’ of an exclusion” and to enter into the “extimía” or “other side of citizenship” in liberal, democratic states.

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Notes

1. Readers of English can find earlier versions of chapter 2 in Guerrero (1997) and chapter 3 in Guerrero (2003). An earlier version of chapter 1 appears in French in Guerrero (1992).
2. This and all citations, unless otherwise noted, come from Guerrero’s interview with Tristan Platt that follows.
3. Translation taken from Guerrero (2003: 296).
4. Translation taken from Guerrero (2003: 284).
5. Translation taken from Guerrero (2003: 295–6).
6. “Although,” Guerrero notes, “the example of the haciendas is the most perceptible for the researcher, as much because of the centrality it held in the control of populations as the documentary visibility it offers,” other “less consolidated institutions” operated in much the same way, including fictive kinship (*compadrazgo*) and sharecropping relations between Indians and whites, the indebteding of Indians to mestizo tavern owners, and rituals performed in the honor of saints (Guerrero 2010: 213, author’s translation).
7. Scholars following Guerrero’s lead have shown how decrees mandating indigenous education and evangelization were similarly foiled by hacendados building churches and schools on their own lands, at once fulfilling the governmental objectives of the theocratic state but privatizing those under their own administrative orbit (Krupa 2010; Williams 2001).
8. See, for instance, the case of Adolfo Klinger, owner of hacienda Gauchalá, who was killed by a large group of mestizos from the town of Cayambe under such premises (Krupa 2011).

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