Introduction

Historian Jorge Basadre used to say that the greatest legacy of twentieth-century Peruvian intellectuals was the growing consciousness about Indians. The assertion is irrefutable. Indians have inspired novelists and poets and motivated vibrant essays, political diatribes, and in-depth research about the past. But this discovery of the obvious, of those who have been the majority in our history, was initially subversive in a racist country that attempted to condemn its peasants to silence. Those who did not share this contested idea had two options: combat it, or attempt to assimilate it. Hard-line Hispanicists, oligarchic and ultramontane intellectuals associated with the Seville historiographical school – products of Francisco Franco's authoritarianism of the 1940s and 1950s – took the first approach. The second option interested a later, more cosmopolitan intelligentsia, one influenced by North American anthropology that sought an alternative to the threatening spread of Marxism. These *indigenistas*, some of whom feared that Indians could invade Lima, converted them into "Andeans": people on the margins of history, static, inward looking, necessarily sheltered from modernity, immobile and passive, singular and abstract. A logical spin-off was the proposed creation of a great museum in which Andean culture would end up as objects, isolated and immunized, inside a showcase.

Not everyone who has used the term *Andean* (*andino*) accepted these concepts. We should not discard it. It allows us, for example, to cast off the racist connotations implied by the term *Indian* (*indio*). It conjures the image of a civilization and includes not just peasants but urban residents and mestizos as well. It encompasses the coast and the Andes, transcends contemporary national boundaries, and underscores connections among Peruvian, Bolivian, and Ecuadorian history. What is the

Andean? Above all it was an ancient culture that should be thought of in terms similar to those used for Greece, Egypt, or China. This requires a new conceptualization that discards all mythification. History offers one path: it is a search for links between ideas, myths, dreams, and objects and the people who produce and consume them, who live them and are animated by them. We should abandon the placid terrain of free-floating ideas and find struggles and conflicts, people and social classes, and problems of power and violence in society. Andean people have not spent their history closed up in an impossible museum.

Indians and peasants are not the only people in this book. The Andean utopia also inspired Creoles and mestizos such as Gabriel Aguilar or José María Arguedas, a writer who lived the problem of identity even more intensely. Neither Indian nor Spanish, these middle sectors continue to see a reflection of themselves in the supposed national face of Peru. From diverse circumstances, Garcilaso de la Vega, Tupac Amaru II, and Juan Santos Atahualpa elaborated different versions of the Andean utopia.[1] We therefore must speak of Andean utopias, just as we must speak of Andean peoples. The plural allows us to abandon abstractions and more effectively approach historical reality. But we should view this reality not only from the outside but from life experiences and subjectivities. For this reason, the characters' dreams occupy a central place in this book.

We must avoid a misunderstanding: Aguilar, Arguedas, and myriad others interest us not as so-called authentic interpreters of the Indian but rather for what they were, thus avoiding the false problem of their representativeness. We cannot write the history of a collective idea such as the Andean utopia, as I understand it, without individuals and their biographies.

[1] There are two historical characters in this book who bear the name Tupac Amaru. The first one, always referred to as Tupac Amaru I, led the resistance against the Spaniards in Vilcabamba and was executed in 1572. The second one, referred to as Tupac Amaru II or simply Tupac Amaru, led the anti-colonial rebellion in Cuzco in 1780. His name was José Gabriel Condorcanqui, although he increasingly added Tupac Amaru from whom he claimed descent. [Editors' Note]

CHAPTER 1

Europe and the Land of the Incas

THE ANDEAN UTOPIA

To Inés and Gerardo

An asymmetric relationship between the Andes and Europe began in the sixteenth century. It can be summarized in the meeting of two curves on a graph: that of the plummeting indigenous population and that of the increasing importation of livestock, which occupied the space left by people. Violence and coercion dominated. But as the historian Ruggiero Romano reminded us, these exchanges were particularly complex: the ships that arrived with sugarcane, grapevines, oxen, plows, and Mediterranean and African people also transported ideas and conceptions of the world that some condemned as heresy in Europe. Alongside the breakdown of their worldviews, Andean people attempted to understand the cataclysm of the colonial conquest, to comprehend the Spanish conquerors and, above all, themselves. Identity and utopia were two dimensions of the same problem.

The Utopia Today

The Andes were the site of an ancient civilization. Between 8000 and 6000 B.C., the inhabitants of the high plains and coastal valleys began the slow process of plant domestication that opened the door to high culture. The first pan-Andean unification effort did not take place until the first millennium B.C., from a sanctuary deep in the heart of the central Andes, Chavín de Huantar. This process, marked by radical independence, was only interrupted by the European invasion. Without any cultural exchange with Central America or other areas, Andean people developed key crops such as potatoes, corn, and coca and camelid livestock (llamas and alpacas) and discovered

ceramics, weaving, stonework, agricultural terraces, and irrigation canals.[1]

Despite their isolation, they did not build a homogenous and cohesive world. Throughout their autonomous history, regional kingdoms and dominions predominated, whereas empires are rather recent. A state did not exercise control over the entire cultural area until the arrival of the Incas, who expanded in rapid yet fragile fashion from Cuzco around the fourteenth century. With the coming of the Spanish and the fall of the Inca state, diverse ethnic groups such as the Huancas, Chocorvos, Lupacas, and Chancas reappeared with different languages and customs and often with deep rivalries resulting from a long history of conflicts.

By reducing all Andean people to the common condition of Indian or colonized, the European invasion unintentionally created a cohesive native society, even as the Spanish administration sought to maintain old conflicts and introduce new ones, such as that between *comuneros* (people who lived in Indian towns) and *colonos* (servants assigned to haciendas). Despite the strict legal boundaries between Indians and Spaniards – who were supposed to form separate and autonomous republics – the relationship between victors and vanquished produced an ambivalent offspring: mestizos, often scorned by both parents. Creoles or Spaniards born in the Americas, multiple ethnic groups of the jungle, and African and Asian slaves and forced labor made this highly heterogeneous society even more diverse. This is one of the most suggestive aspects of contemporary Peru, a country of "all the bloods" in the words of José María Arguedas. These traditions, however, have never cohered and often have not coexisted. Conflicts and rivalries produced a subterranean but effective racism that provoked disdain, suspicion, and aggression among the lower classes, revealed for instance in daily interactions between blacks and Indians. Here, colonial domination found a solid base.[2] The protagonists' social conscience also expressed this fragmentation. For example, despite a common past, peasants today

[1] The reference comes from an unpublished text by John Murra, cited in Luis Lumbreras, *Arqueología de la América andina* (Lima: Milla Batres, 1981), 33: "Andean civilization has developed independently of other civilization centers. This is greatly relevant for the social sciences because there are very few such cases in history."

[2] In a previous book, *Aristocracia y plebe*, I examined these conflicts in Lima, a city that had the discouraging image of a society without alternatives. Alberto Flores Galindo, *Aristocracia y plebe. Lima, 1760–1830. Estructura de clases y sociedad colonial* (Lima: Mosca Azul, 1984).

do not define themselves as Andeans or Indians but instead rely on the name of their birthplace, such as a town or ravine, as Rodrigo Montoya observed in Ayacucho and César Fonseca in Huánuco. Consciousness is local. In the central Andes, anthropologist Henri Favre found three ethnic groups (Asto, Chunku, and Laraw) who lived next to each other but did not communicate because of unintelligible variants of Quechua and Kawki.[3] The idea of an unchanging, harmonious, and homogenous Andean person thus reflects an invented or desired history, wishful thinking, not the reality of a fragmented world.

The Andean utopia was the project – or, better yet, projects – that confronted this reality, an attempt to reverse dependency and fragmentation, to search for an alternative path in the encounter between memory and the imaginary: the rebuilding of Inca society and the return of the Inca ruler. It was an effort to find in the reconstruction of the past a solution to their identity problems. That is why in Peru, to the surprise of a Swedish researcher, "it has been considered useful to employ the Incas not only in ideological discussions but also in contemporary political debates."[4] References to the Incas are common in speeches. No one is surprised when people offer ancient technology or presumed moral principles as answers to contemporary problems. There is a predisposition to think in terms of *la longue durée*. The past weighs on the present, and neither the right nor the left is free of its grip. The conservative Acción Popular party based its doctrine on an imaginary Inca philosophy. Parties on the left almost invariably begin with an energetic debate over what pre-Hispanic societies were and how to define them in Marxist terms. Everyone feels obligated to begin there. A different rhythm seems to operate in the Andes, one that stresses continuities. Although it is evident that the Inca Empire collapsed upon its first contact with the west, the same is not true of culture.

The *indigenista* historian Luis E. Valcárcel contended that Andean civilization "transformed a country ill-suited for agriculture into an agricultural country, a tremendous enterprise that persisted through Spanish rule up until today. That is why the study of Ancient Peru is so relevant today and why what we are studying are things that still exist and

[3] Henri Favre, "Introducción," in Danièle Lavallée and Michéle Julien, *Asto: curacazgo prehispánico en los Andes Centrales* (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 1983), 13 ff.

[4] Ake Wedin, *El concepto de lo incaico y las fuentes* (Upsala: Scandinavian University Books, 1996), 21.

which we learn through ethnological studies. There is a rigorous link between ancient and contemporary Peru."[5] No European could describe Greece or Rome in the same terms. Historian Friedrich Katz pointed out a noteworthy difference between the Aztecs and the Incas: in Mexico there is no equivalent historical memory to that of the Andes. There is no Aztec Utopia.[6] In Mexico, the Virgin of Guadalupe has the place held in Peru by the imperial past and ancient monarchs. Perhaps this is because Mexico is more integrated than Peru, the percentage of mestizos is higher, and peasants have directly intervened in the national project, first during the Wars of Independence and then in the 1910 Mexican Revolution. In contrast, although revolts and rebellions were common in the Peruvian Andes, peasants never entered the capital or took over the Governmental Palace. Except for the Tupac Amaru project (1780) and Juan Santos Atahualpa's adventure in the jungle (1742), no guerrilla movement emerged in Peru to rival those of Villa and Zapata. Subjected to domination, Andean peoples used memory as a mechanism to preserve (or build) their identity. They had to be more than peasants. They were also Indians with their own rituals and customs.

Is this pure rhetoric? Are these ideological constructions, in the most negative understanding of the term, or intellectual mystification along the lines of Valcárcel? The Incas have an important place in popular culture. Despite what some textbook authors write, teachers and students in Peru are convinced that the Inca Empire was an egalitarian society with no hunger or injustice, and thus a paradigm for today's world. This explains the popularity of Louis Baudin's *A Socialist Empire: The Incas of Peru*, published in French in 1928. The title was essential to its reception. Although Baudin was a conservative lawyer who wrote the book to criticize socialism as an oppressive regime, Peruvians who spoke of Inca socialism obviously did so from a different perspective.

A sociological study of the teaching of history in Lima found that most interviewees had a clearly positive view of the Inca Empire. The students were from prosperous sectors (children of businessmen and

[5] Luis Valcárcel, *Etnohistoria del Perú Antiguo* (Lima: Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, 1964), 17. *Indigenismo* refers to an artistic and political movement that aimed at defending Indians' rights and promoting the defense of their culture. *Indigenistas* were almost always not indigenous [Editors' note].

[6] Friedrich Katz, *The Ancient American Civilizations* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1969), 332.

Table 1.1. *Perceptions of the Inca Empire among Lima Students (1985)*

Characteristics	Answers	Percentage of Surveyed Students	Percentage of Responses
Just	272	55.96	26.00
Happy	151	36.06	14.43
Tyrannical	155	31.89	14.81
Injust	187	38.47	17.87
Harmonious	283	58.23	27.05

Source: Survey conducted by the research team on "Teaching and Representation of Peruvian History," directed by Gonzalo Portocarrero, Universidad Católica, Lima.

well-paid professionals) as well as poorer groups (the marginal and unemployed). The nine schools studied were located in the urban core as well as in shantytowns and other poorer areas of the capital. Students could select one or more of five possible characterizations of the Inca Empire. Table 1.1 indicates the total number for each term, the percentages of students who selected it, and the percentage of the total.

The two most selected options were "just" and "harmonious." The Inca Empire is a sort of inverted image of Peruvian reality: it appears to be the opposite of the dramatic injustice and inequalities of Peru today. The three options that could be deemed positive add up to 68 percent, the vast majority. It is likely that the percentage would be even higher in provincial and rural schools. The survey allowed students to make an ethical assessment from the present, which is not such an unusual invitation in Peru. On the contrary, it is a common attitude among students and professors who regard the past as something quite close.

Different historical memories exist in Peru. Professionals – university graduates interested in erudite research – write one type. There is also a sort of informal history practiced by self-taught provincial authors who write the history of their town or place of origin. Finally, there is oral remembrance, in which memory takes on mythical dimensions. Between 1953 and 1972, researchers found fifteen versions of the Inkarri myth in Andean towns. According to this myth, the Conquest figuratively chopped off the Inca's head and separated it from his body. When head and body are reunited, the period of disorder, confusion, and darkness that Europeans initiated will end, and Andean people, *runas*, will recover their history. Informants between the ages of twenty-five and eighty – the majority elderly – from Ayacucho (8), Puno (3), Cuzco (2), Arequipa (1), and Ancash (1) told the story

in the Quechua language.[7] Similar accounts circulated among the Shipibo and Ashani in the Amazon (stories about the beheaded Inca or the three Incas) and among fishermen in coastal Chimbote (visions of the Inca).

The Inkarri myth appears in other manifestations of Andean popular culture: Inca dances such as those performed in the high plateau; representations of Atahualpa's capture or death in the towns of Pomabamba, Bolognesi, Cajatambo, Chancay, and Daniel Carrión provinces in the central sierra; the dance of the Pallas (the Inca's women) and the Captain (Pizarro) in Huánuco, Dos de Mayo, Huamalíes, and Cajatambo; ritual battles between the defenders of the Inca and those who personify Pizarro and his forces, such as those in the Morochucos area (Ayacucho); and bullfights called Turupukllay, which take place mainly in highland communities in Apurímac and Cuzco, in which the bull enters the ring with a condor tied to its back, symbolizing the encounter between the world of above and the world below, between the west and the Andes.[8] These locations provide an idea of the geographical diffusion of contemporary Andean culture. Dances, bullfights, and performances form part of popular festivals celebrated over several days in honor of a patron saint or the town's anniversary, often during July and August, the dry winter in the Andes. Mapping these popular expressions indicates that they take place in the most backward parts of the country, areas where most of the indigenous population and the highest number of peasant communities persist. There is a clear correlation between Andean culture and poverty.

An idea similar to the Inkarri myth appeared to inspire a Quechua story entitled "The Pongo's Dream," translated and published by José María Arguedas. An hacienda peon, humiliated by the owner, imagines himself covered in excrement. The story ends with the landowner licking the peon. It is the old and universal peasant dream in which reality is

[7] Rodolfo Masías and Flavio Vera, "El mito del Inkarri como manifestación de la utopía andina," unpublished ms. Other versions of the Inkarri myth have been found since 1972. For some examples, see *Anthropológica* (Lima) II, 2 (1984), particularly the articles by Juan Ossio, Alejandro Vivanco, and Eduardo Fernández.

[8] Carlos Mendívil, *Los Morochucos y Ayacucho tradicional* (Lima: Editorial Litográfica La Confianza, 1968). See also Fanni Muñoz, "Cultura popular andina: el Turupukllay," BA thesis, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 1984. Professor Víctor Domínguez Condeso of the Universidad Hermilio Valdizán in Huánuco furnished information.

inverted, but in the Andes, where class conflicts are mixed with ethnic and cultural clashes, it appears to be infused with intense violence.[9]

The myth of Inkarri travels from popular culture to the city and academic circles, where anthropologists disseminate it. After 1968, when a nationalist military government erupted on the political scene, Inkarri became the name of a festival and appeared in handicrafts, in posters, and on book covers. For contestatory painter Armando Williams, Inkarri was a funereal mummy about to be untied; in the eyes of artist Juan Javier Salazar, it was a microbus (a peculiar form of transportation in Lima) descending from the Andes within the incendiary frame of a box of matches.[10] Intellectuals read the myth as the portent of a violent revolution, like the sound of the underground river that emerged at the end of José María Arguedas's novel *All the Bloods* (1964). The only way to compensate for the terrible injustice of the conquest was to transfer Indians' fears to whites. According to Arguedas, "Social classes also have a particularly deep cultural foundation in Andean Peru. When they fight – and they do it barbarously – it is not just economic interests that drive the struggle; other deep and violent spiritual forces inflame the different sides, agitating them with implacable force, with incessant and unavoidable violence."[11] Is this a description of Andean reality or the sentiments of a mestizo such as Arguedas? In most of his texts about peasant communities and popular art, Arguedas seems to be inclined to think about progress, modernization, and slow change achieved harmoniously: the mestizos of the Mantaro Valley became the prototype of the future. But in his fiction, where the narrator allows himself to unleash his imagination, mestizos seem to fade away, leaving only Indians and whites, with violence becoming the only available language. No change other than a true social cataclysm is possible. In this last case it is a matter of transforming quotidian and inner hatred or fury into a gigantic fire, a transforming force. Arguedas, thus, presents two images of Peru.[12] This ambivalence also appeared in Arguedas's political

[9] José María Arguedas, "The Pongo's Dream," in Orin Starn et al., eds., *The Peru Reader* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 2nd edition, 273–8 [Editors' note].

[10] Gustavo Buntinx, "Mirar desde el otro lado. El mito de Inkarri, de la tradición oral a la plástica erudita," unpublished ms., Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, Graduate School in Social Sciences.

[11] José María Arguedas, "La novela y el problema de la expresión literaria en el Perú," in *Yawar Fiesta* (Lima: Editorial Horizonte, 1980), 9 [Editors' Note].

[12] See Chapter 9, "The Boiling Point."

sympathies: sometimes he supported reformist options, but at other times he sided with the more radical tendencies of the new left.

The history of the Andean utopia is a conflictive narrative, similar to Arguedas's soul. Complex and diverse like the society that has created it, the Andean utopia emerges at the intersection of popular and elite cultures, writing and oral stories, hopes and fears. It is a question of tracing not only the lineage of an idea, but above all the passions and practices that have accompanied it. In the Andes, utopia alternates between intense periods when mass movements converge, followed by moments of marginalization and oblivion. It is not a linear history; on the contrary, it is several histories. The image of the Inca and Tahuantinsuyo depend on the groups or classes that create it. Thus, for a large landowner such as Lizares Quiñones it was a way to conceal local power groups under the banner of Inca federalism (1919), whereas in the work of Valcárcel its content favored peasants.

Andean Utopia

What is utopia in the Andes? Let's clear up one misunderstanding. In common language "utopia" and "impossible" are synonyms, ideas that can never be achieved, distant from everyday life. The less realistic they are, the more closely they fit the definition. The term "utopia" is a neologism but, unlike many others, it has a birth certificate. It was born in 1516, when Thomas More published *Utopia*. Another misunderstanding is to link More's book with the Incas. In 1516 Pizarro had not even set foot on the Peruvian coast. Moreover, when writing his book, More did not refer to an existing society but instead to one that had no grounding in time or space. His book does not refer to a happy land but to a city that is outside history, the product of an intellectual construction. For some, his notion of a country without a location constituted a useful model to understand their own society through contrast; for others, it was an instrument of social criticism that signaled the errors and deficiencies of their time.

Utopia inaugurated a literary genre. After More came Tomasso Campanella, Francis Bacon, and other authors who wrote texts with three fundamental features: an imaginary storyline with no reference to a concrete place, a global and totalizing depiction of society, and the development of ideas or proposals through daily life. A city, an island, or a country was depicted through a meticulous and fictitious description of customs, streets, schedules, and day-to-day living. As