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978-0-521-59134-8 — In Search of an Inca

Alberto Flores Galindo, Edited and translated by Carlos Aguirre, Charles F. Walker, Willie Hiatt
Frontmatter

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IN SEARCH OF AN INCA

IDENTITY AND UTOPIA IN THE ANDES

In Search of an Inca examines how people in the Andean region have invoked the Incas to question and rethink colonialism and injustice, from the time of the Spanish conquest in the sixteenth century until the late twentieth century. It stresses the recurrence of the “Andean utopia,” that is, the idealization of the precolonial past as an era of harmony, justice, and prosperity and the foundation for political and social agendas for the future. In this award-winning work, Alberto Flores Galindo highlights how different groups imagined the pre-Hispanic world as a model for a new society. These included those conquered by the Spanish in the sixteenth century but also rebels in the colonial and modern era and a heterogeneous group of intellectuals and dissenters. A sweeping and accessible history of the Andes over the past 500 years, *In Search of an Inca* offers important reflections on and grounds for comparison of memory, utopianism, and resistance.

Alberto Flores Galindo was an acclaimed historian and social critic who died in 1990 at age 40. *In Search of an Inca* won the prestigious Cuban Casa de las Américas Prize in 1986 and the Clarence Haring Prize from the American Historical Association in 1991. It is now in its fifth edition in Peru and has been published in Cuba, Mexico, and Italy. Flores Galindo was the author or editor of numerous other books, director of various scholarly journals, and recipient of many fellowships and honors. He received his doctoral degree from L’Ecole des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (Paris) and taught at the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú in Lima.

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IN THE ANDES

ALBERTO FLORES GALINDO

EDITED AND TRANSLATED BY

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EDITORS' INTRODUCTION

CARLOS AGUIRRE AND CHARLES F. WALKER

ALBERTO FLORES GALINDO:
HISTORIAN AND PUBLIC INTELLECTUAL

“A storm swept the world in 1968.” That is how noted activist and writer Tariq Ali summarized the wave of protests and mobilizations that shook Paris and Berkeley, Mexico City and Prague, London and Chicago in that extraordinary year.¹ Two ideas are most frequently associated with those events: revolution and utopia. Radical and revolutionary change seemed just around the corner, although it was not always the change Marxists and socialists had dreamed about. This time the agenda for change included ideas and practices about sex, religion, culture, gender paradigms, generational relations, art, drugs, and music, not only (or mainly) working-class emancipation, and the pursuit of socialism. Although its importance is hard to deny, the legacy of 1968 is still a matter of dispute: was it truly revolutionary and emancipatory, or merely a frivolous and superficial outburst by spoiled kids in blue jeans?²

¹ Tariq Ali, “Where has all the rage gone?,” *The Guardian*, March 22, 2008.

² For overviews of 1968 and the 1960s more generally, see Mark Kurlansky, *1968: The Year That Rocked the World* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2004), and Gerard J. DeGroot, *The Sixties Unplugged: A Kaleidoscopic History of a Disorderly Decade* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008). For Latin America, Diana Sorensen, *A Turbulent Decade Remembered: Scenes from the Latin American Sixties* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), and Jeffrey Gould, “Solidarity under Siege: The Latin American 1968,” *American Historical Review* 114, 2 (April 2009), 348–75. For the case of Peru, see Eduardo Arroyo, “La generación del 68,” *Los caminos del laberinto* 3 (April 1986), 41–7, and Alberto Flores Galindo, “Generación del 68: Ilusión y realidad,” *Márgenes* 1, 1 (1987), 101–23.

Changes in the world and at home affected a new generation of radicalized students in Peru. The Cuban revolution and the recent death of Che Guevara; anticolonial struggles in Africa; the civil rights and anti-Vietnam war movements in the United States; the writings of Sartre, Fanon, Freire, and Marcuse; guerrilla movements in Latin America; the nationalistic reforms implemented by the Peruvian military government that came to power in October 1968; and the initial formulations of Liberation Theology all helped define the ideological contours of a generation of students and, less often, workers. Heeding the call to “go to the masses” (*acercarse al pueblo*), they engaged in “revolutionary” activities, even if these were often limited to militancy in small, semiclandestine parties, distributing fliers in factories, and endless theoretical debates that deployed the canonical works of Marx, Lenin, Mao, and Guevara as weapons not only to destroy capitalism and imperialism, but also (and sometimes especially) to discredit competing factions on the left.³

A young, relatively shy, and brilliant student at the still small and elitist Catholic University in Lima could not remain indifferent to these developments. Alberto Flores Galindo began his undergraduate education in 1966 and quickly immersed himself in the exciting political and intellectual climate. Born in 1949 to a middle-class family and educated at a private Catholic school, Tito (as he was called by those who knew him) was an avid reader as a child and later developed a deep social consciousness and a seemingly endless intellectual curiosity. He enrolled in the History undergraduate program at the Catholic University, then largely a bastion of political conservatism and historiographical traditionalism. Searching for new intellectual challenges, he took courses with Liberation Theology founder Gustavo Gutiérrez, a relationship that helped him rethink religion, spirituality, and the connection between intellectuals and the oppressed and marginalized sectors of society. The works of Jean Paul Sartre, Antonio Gramsci, and especially Peruvian José Carlos Mariátegui introduced Flores Galindo to Marxism. He participated in reading and discussion groups and established friendships and contacts beyond the walls of the Catholic University and the rather small community of historians and history

³ Maruja Martínez, *Entre el amor y la furia. Crónicas y testimonio* (Lima: SUR, 1997); Eduardo Cáceres, “Introducción,” in Alberto Flores Galindo, *Obras Completas*, vol. 1 (Lima: Fundación Andina / SUR, 1993), xi–xxxvii.

students.⁴ Not surprisingly, he became an unequivocal militant of the left, first through radicalized but relatively small groups – FRES (Socialist Students Front), MIR (Leftist Revolutionary Movement), and VR (Revolutionary Vanguard) – and later as an independent and critical public intellectual. Socialism in those years, he asserted, “was more a myth than a proposal or a project, but it possessed the mobilizing passion to promote a sort of ‘march to the people’ . . . that took many university students to peasant communities, mining camps, sugarcane cooperatives, urban slums, and especially factories.”⁵

For Flores Galindo, the emancipation of the oppressed and the construction of a socialist society were intimately connected to the intellectual and ideological battles over the knowledge and interpretation of the past. Like Mariátegui, Gramsci, Walter Benjamin, or E. P. Thompson, Flores Galindo saw himself as an intellectual whose mission was to question the status quo, contribute to the forging of a new society, and help rethink the past as a weapon in the ideological and political battles needed to move socialism forward. He viewed history as one of the most important battlefields, and he never ceased looking at the past with a critical eye or engaging in hard-fought polemics against those who, in his view, manipulated it in the service of a conservative agenda.⁶ However, Flores Galindo did not merely “apply” Marxist theory to the reconstruction of the past to produce superficial and ideological accounts to serve a political agenda, as was common in those days. Rather, he was a rigorous and creative historian whose work was grounded in solid archival research and a nondogmatic use of theory, Marxist and others.

The counterpoint between past and present and between theory and archival research was a signature throughout his fertile intellectual career. His first monograph explored the political organization, mobilization, and struggle of Andean mine workers (1900–30). Influenced by recent labor history, Flores Galindo examined not only the exploitation

⁴ Literature was always one of his passions. In the 1970s he coedited a literary magazine with renowned poets Marco Marcos and José Watanabe.

⁵ Flores Galindo, “Generación del 68,” 104.

⁶ On numerous occasions he attacked the view of history as a “dialogue with the dead,” for it would mean that “we stop thinking about the present, we amputate our future, and transform historians into guardians of a cemetery.” Alberto Flores Galindo, “Para una historia inteligente,” *El Caballo Rojo* 157 (April 15, 1983), 15.

of Cerro de Pasco Copper Corporation workers, but also the role daily life and culture played in working-class consciousness.⁷ Next he employed French *Annales* school methodology, including the *longue durée* and the use of the “region” as a unit of historical analysis, in a study of Arequipa. He focused on the economic exchanges and commercial circuits that articulated the “Andean south” between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries, but he also remained mindful of the actors (landowners, merchants, and peasants) behind those processes.⁸ Flores Galindo consciously attempted to de-center the formulation of historical problems in Peru by adopting a regional and rural perspective. “The Andean south” (“el sur Andino”) was central to this effort and informed most of his subsequent work and that of many historians. In addition, *Arequipa y el sur andino* briefly but convincingly critiqued Dependency Theory, still fashionable among Peruvian and Latin American intellectuals and scholars in the second half of the 1970s.

In the years between these books came significant personal and political changes. After completing his undergraduate degree at the Catholic University in 1971, he spent two years in Paris (1972–74) studying under the direction of Italian historian Ruggiero Romano.⁹ He also became acquainted with prominent French historians such as Fernand Braudel and Pierre Vilar.¹⁰ Once back in Lima, he started teaching at the Catholic University and participating in public debates. He developed a close, almost obsessive relationship with the printing and publishing world, writing articles on a variety of topics for newspapers, literary supplements, and academic journals, which reflected his intellectual and political interests and his passionate engagement with debates in the public sphere. He became a public intellectual compelled “to speak truth to power” and used any available forum and space (the labor union and the university podium, the modest student-owned magazine, and

⁷ Alberto Flores Galindo, *Los mineros de la Cerro de Pasco, 1900–1930. Un intento de caracterización social* (Lima: Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 1974).

⁸ Alberto Flores Galindo, *Arequipa y el Sur Andino. Ensayo de historia regional, siglos XVIII-XX* (Lima: Editorial Horizonte, 1977).

⁹ See his personal testimony of this relationship in “Ruggiero Romano, el viajero,” *El Caballo Rojo* 167 (July 24, 1983), 13.

¹⁰ In the first footnote of *Arequipa y el sur andino*, he recognized the work of French historians Pierre Vilar, François Furet, and Pierre Goubert as informing his approach to “regional history.”

the more established academic journal) to make his work visible and his voice heard.¹¹

Two historical figures began to attract Flores Galindo's attention: Tupac Amaru, the leader of a massive 1780 anticolonial Andean rebellion, and Mariátegui, the founder of Peruvian Marxism and one of the most important Marxist intellectuals of the twentieth century. It is not difficult to identify some of the motivations behind this interest. The military government that took over in 1968 used Tupac Amaru as a symbol of its alleged emancipatory program, as a "precursor" of its "military revolution," a notion that Flores Galindo and most of the Peruvian left found debatable. Historicizing Tupac Amaru would help demystify his role and legacy by answering a deceptively simple question: "What does Tupac Amaru II represent in colonial history? Or in other words, was the 1780 insurrection a mere rural riot, a hopeless rebellion, a revolution, an ethnic expression, or a national movement?"¹² Flores Galindo also asked why Peru, a tumultuous viceroyalty and country with much insurgency, had never experienced a revolution. From 1975 on he wrote various articles and edited an anthology of essays on Tupac Amaru and began to use the concept of *utopia* to refer to a host of ideas and projects behind insurrectionary movements.

Flores Galindo's interest in the study of Mariátegui, on the other hand, came mostly from his engagement in debates within the Peruvian left. How should the left respond to the military appropriation of "revolution" and "socialism"? What was the place of indigenous peoples in a socialist project? What was the relationship between the construction of socialism and the so-called national problem, that is, the idea that Peru had not "completed" its formation as a nation? And more urgently, what was the "revolutionary agent" that would carry on socialist transformations? Leftist intellectuals passionately debated these issues, all of which concerned Mariátegui in the 1920s. Although many commentators tended to canonize Mariátegui and make him the "precursor" of various branches of the Peruvian left, Flores Galindo aimed to historicize

¹¹ On this, see Carlos Aguirre, "Cultura política de izquierda y cultura impresa en el Perú contemporáneo (1968–1990): Alberto Flores Galindo y la formación de un intelectual público," *Histórica* (Lima) 31, 1 (2007), 171–204.

¹² Alberto Flores Galindo, "Presentación," in Flores Galindo, ed., *Sociedad colonial y sublevaciones populares. Túpac Amaru II – 1780. Antología* (Lima: Retablo de papel ediciones, 1976), 7.

Mariátegui and illuminate the person, his circumstances, and the ways in which his intellectual method might inspire new ways of thinking about Peruvian society. He did that in a series of articles and in two important books, the first with friend and collaborator Manuel Burga – a multilayered study of Peru's history between 1895 and 1930 – and the second a superb intellectual and political biography of Mariátegui.¹³ In the latter he tried to understand Mariátegui's personal and intellectual developments in the context of his struggles against dogmatic Marxism, the Komintern, and APRA's reformist nationalism.¹⁴ For Flores Galindo, Mariátegui offered a guide, not a prescription, for rethinking the relationship between a socialist project, indigenous peoples, and the national question in Peru.

Tupac Amaru and Mariátegui represented, in the eyes of Flores Galindo, attempts to navigate against the current, projects of radical social transformation, and alternative visions of the nation. These ultimately unsuccessful projects most clearly articulated in Peru the related themes of utopia and revolution that characterized the spirit of 1968. Those themes reappeared, widely amplified, when in 1980 a Maoist movement known as Shining Path started an insurrection allegedly under the guidance of Mariátegui's thought.¹⁵ Shining Path promised to make communism a reality – not only in Peru but in the entire world – through the “correct” application of revolutionary violence. Utopian communism, unapologetic revolutionary violence, and the transformation of a small and isolated guerrilla group in the heart of Andean rural societies to a nationwide threat to the Peruvian state challenged leftist intellectuals and parties that once again engaged in urgent debates about the relationship between revolution, socialism, and Andean peoples and cultures. Few intellectuals were better equipped to tackle those issues than Flores Galindo. His most ambitious contribution was the

¹³ Manuel Burga and Alberto Flores Galindo, *Apogeo y crisis de la república aristocrática* (Lima: Ediciones Rikchay Peru, 1980); Alberto Flores Galindo, *La agonía de Mariátegui. La polémica con la Komintern* (Lima: DESCO, 1980).

¹⁴ APRA (American Popular Revolutionary Alliance) was a movement founded in 1924 by Peruvian ideologist Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre. Although initially Mariátegui and Haya de la Torre were ideologically close and collaborated on various projects, a radical rupture took place in 1928 when Mariátegui clearly defined his socialist option.

¹⁵ Although its official name was “Communist Party of Peru,” the movement led by philosopher Abimael Guzmán was widely known as “Sendero Luminoso” (Shining Path). It started its armed insurrection in May 1980.

notion of “Andean utopia,” a concept that he would use as a thread into the fractured history of Peru from the Spanish conquest to the present. We will come back to this.

The 1980s were a decade of dizzying intellectual productivity for Flores Galindo. Besides the texts that later made up *In Search of an Inca*, his output included numerous essays, edited volumes, and books on a variety of topics, all while he continued teaching, lecturing, consolidating a center of socialist studies (SUR), and directing *Márgenes*, a journal of cultural and political commentary. He completed his doctoral thesis in 1983, a social history of Lima in the transition from colonialism to independence, which was published as a book in 1984.¹⁶ *Aristocracia y plebe*, a highly innovative study of the class structure and social dynamics of Lima, attempted to explain why, at a time when riots, rebellions, and other social movements shook the Andean region, the capital of the Viceroyalty of Peru remained relatively quiet. He found the explanation in Lima's peculiar class structure and the confluence of vertical forms of despotism, social control, and horizontal manifestations of violence and tension among the lower orders.

By the late 1980s, Flores Galindo had embarked on a major study of José María Arguedas (1911–69), the Peruvian anthropologist and writer who in his view best represented the dilemmas and tensions of Peruvian society. Arguedas, the son of a mestizo lawyer, was raised among indigenous servants, grew up speaking Quechua, and later attempted to depict Peru's fractured reality in ethnographic and fictional works. He also struggled against depression until committing suicide in 1969. As many other authors have suggested, Arguedas's oeuvre offers a fascinating laboratory in which to explore Andean culture and its conflictive relationship with the “western” world, precisely the central theme in Flores Galindo's own historical work, particularly in *In Search of an Inca*. Arguedas, wrote Flores Galindo, “is one of those exceptional characters who, in his linguistic trajectory and his work as a writer, condensed the tensions and preoccupations of a given society.” In addition, Flores Galindo found in Arguedas's work a peculiar “precursor and futurist” content, a sort of visionary “anticipation” of the paths that Peruvian society would (or could) take.¹⁷ Unfortunately,

¹⁶ Alberto Flores Galindo, *Aristocracia y plebe. Estructura de clases y sociedad colonial, Lima 1760–1830* (Lima: Mosca Azul Editores, 1984).

¹⁷ These citations come from one of the two manuscript essays that Flores Galindo wrote about Arguedas and that were published posthumously: “Arguedas y la

Flores Galindo's sudden illness in February 1989 and death in March 1990, at age 40, interrupted this project.

Dozens of publications in Peru and elsewhere mourned his passing and the tragic loss to brain cancer of a brilliant thinker in the prime of his life. Many noted a gaping hole in intellectual and political circles at a critical moment when the Shining Path guerrilla movement was escalating its violent campaigns and targeting union leaders, leftists, and community activists; when leftist parties (and socialism on a world scale) entered into profound crisis; and when Peruvian society began to suffer from Alberto Fujimori's ruthless dictatorship. Flores Galindo's voice had been leading the fight against these forces.¹⁸

ANDEAN UTOPIA AS HISTORY AND MEMORY

Flores Galindo developed the notion of "Andean utopia" in collaboration with Manuel Burga. It emerged in 1978 when the two were discussing millenarianism and messianism in the Andes while working on their respective projects and coauthoring *Apogeo y crisis de la república aristocrática*.¹⁹ Financial support from UNESCO later funded a long-term project on the Andean utopia. In 1982 they coauthored "The Andean Utopia: Ideology and Peasant Struggle in the Andes, 16th–20th Centuries," and although their collaboration continued, divergent interpretations led to the publication of two different books.²⁰ Flores Galindo published *Buscando un Inca. Identidad y utopía en los Andes*

utopía andina" and "Los últimos años de Arguedas," both included in his *Obras Completas*, vol. 6 (Lima: SUR, 2007), quotes from pages 395 and 392, respectively.

¹⁸ His articles and essays of this period are included in volume 6 of his *Obras Completas*, "Escritos 1983–1990" (Lima: SUR, 2007). "Homenaje a Alberto Flores Galindo. 'Otro Mundo es Posible,'" a special issue of *Libros y Artes* (Lima) 11 (September 2005), includes a loving collection of essays about Flores Galindo.

¹⁹ Manuel Burga, *La historia y los historiadores en el Perú* (Lima: Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos/Universidad Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, 2005), 116. An early formulation of some of the ideas connected to "Andean utopia" appeared in Alberto Flores Galindo, "La nación como utopía. Túpac Amaru 1780," *Debates en Sociología* (Lima) 1, 1 (1977), 139–57. The first time "Andean utopia" appeared in print was in Flores Galindo's "Utopía andina y socialismo," *Cultura popular* (Lima) 2 (1981).

²⁰ Alberto Flores Galindo and Manuel Burga, "La utopía andina. Ideología y lucha campesina en los Andes. Siglos XVI–XX," *Allpanchis* (Cuzco) 20 (1982), 85–101.

in 1986, two years before Burga's *Nacimiento de una utopía. Muerte y resurrección en los Andes*.²¹

In Search of an Inca is a sweeping reinterpretation of key developments in Peruvian history covering more than 500 years. In Flores Galindo's view, the relationship between Andean societies and the western world shaped the entire period and articulated Peru's central historical problem. The ways in which Andean people rationalized, coped with, and responded to challenges generated by that encounter are central to his work. Peru's historical and contemporary social, racial, and regional fractures or divisions resulted from an asymmetrical, traumatic, and conflictive relationship between those two worlds. To understand the historical formation of those fissures and contribute to a political project to overcome them, Flores Galindo identified the recurrence of the Andean utopia, that is, the idealized depiction of the pre-Hispanic past, especially the Inca Empire, as an era of social justice, harmony, and prosperity. The Andean utopia functioned not only as a discourse about "the past" but also as the foundation for extremely relevant political and social agendas for the future. Various historical actors imagined the social and political structures of the pre-Hispanic Andean world – or at least what they considered as such – as models for their societies. The ideal society of the future was thus a return to a glorious past. "A distinctive feature of the Andean utopia," according to Flores Galindo, was that "the ideal city did not exist outside history or at the remote beginning of time. On the contrary, it was a real historic fact that had a name (Tahuantinsuyo), a ruling class (the Incas), and a capital (Cuzco)."²²

Flores Galindo found this construction in the writings of Guaman Poma and Garcilaso de la Vega, in religious practices that resisted Catholic evangelization, and among the masses who followed Tupac Amaru's call for rebellion in the 1780s. He identified it as a mobilizing force behind indigenous and peasant unrest in the 1920s and 1960s and as inspiration for various forms of political discourse and agency in the 20th century (including Marxism, Aprismo, and others). And he saw it in José María Arguedas's literary expressions of the beauty and tragedy of Andean cultures and in the messianic and authoritarian undertones

²¹ The first edition of Flores Galindo's book was published by Casa de las Américas (Havana, 1986). The first edition of Burga's book was published by Instituto de Apoyo Agrario (Lima, 1988).

²² See Chapter 1.

of the Maoist movement known as Shining Path. He did not postulate equivalency between these constructions, nor did he suggest that the Andean utopia was a rigid and inflexible set of beliefs uniformly appropriated by different historical agents. In fact, he insisted that it was more appropriate to talk about “Andean utopias,” for the plural reflected the contested and wide-ranging nature of these constructions. But he did see in all those formulations instruments with which “people without hope” (the vanquished, the subaltern, the oppressed) “challenge[d] a history that condemned them to the margins.”²³

In Search of an Inca therefore scrutinizes history and memory in the pursuit of an understanding of past and contemporary Andean people and culture. It looks at myths, dreams, memories, and imaginaries, but also at the ways in which they informed concrete political projects and actions. No other book had ever attempted such an ambitious interpretive framework to understand Andean societies.

Flores Galindo wrote the book not as a scholarly monograph but as a series of connected and independent essays, many of which were first published in journals or collective volumes and later revised for inclusion in this book. The urgency of releasing some of these materials in the context of intense ideological debates and rather dramatic political conditions in Peru explains the peculiar composition of *In Search of an Inca*. But it is also related to the author's following in the steps of many other Peruvian intellectuals and historians – Mariátegui, Jorge Basadre, Pablo Macera, and Raúl Porras Barrenechea, to mention but a few – who made ample use of the essay genre to produce influential works.²⁴ Flores Galindo's use of the essayist style helps explain the virtues and the shortcomings of this volume. It allowed Flores Galindo the freedom to cover hundreds of years of Peruvian history, combine different methodological

²³ See Chapter 11, 247.

²⁴ Flores Galindo highlighted Mariátegui's preference for the essay form: “Mariátegui was not an essayist by default or because he was unable to develop an alternative approach to national reality. He chose that option early on.” Flores Galindo, “Marxismo y religion. Para situar a Mariátegui,” *Obras completas*, vol. 6, 97–103, quote from 98. This tradition extends to other Latin American countries and has been frequently studied as an important genre with its own intellectual characteristics and narrative strategies. On this, see two books by Liliana Weinberg, *El ensayo. Entre el paraíso y el infierno* (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2002) and *Pensar el ensayo* (Mexico City: Siglo XXI, 2007).

traditions (history, ethnography, psychoanalysis, cultural and literary studies), and make ample and creative use of secondary materials. His talent as a historian and writer is displayed in the brilliance of these pages and in the sharpness of his observations about a wide variety of historical topics. As several critics have pointed out, however, the essayist style led to an uneven treatment of the book's many topics and to some flaws in his arguments, as we will see.²⁵

INTELLECTUAL AND METHODOLOGICAL DIALOGUES

The concept of Andean utopia introduced new themes and novel methodologies to Peruvian historical and social scientific circles. Nonetheless, Burga and Flores Galindo built upon and contributed to Peruvian debates of the 1980s or those of the "Generation of 1968." In discussions that varied widely in tone and sophistication, the left debated violence, revolution, and the role of the indigenous peasantry in a class society. Flores Galindo participated actively, stressing the need for the Peruvian left to return to Mariátegui's "heterodox" Marxism. He underlined Mariátegui's sensitivity to religion and culture and his attentiveness to the peculiarities of Peruvian reality, particularly its indigenous majority and pre-Colombian past. Flores Galindo pushed the left to avoid dogma and imagine creative possibilities for political action. With its focus on how Andean people and others conceived of or invented the Incas to rethink and change the present, *In Search of an Inca* addressed keystone issues of the left while nudging the debate toward history and questions of identity, the imaginary, and representation. Flores Galindo never abandoned his quest to reinvigorate Marxism and wrest it from the hands of those who saw it as a fundamentalist doctrine rather than a creative tool for interpretation and change. While challenging Eurocentrism, he sought to use Marxism and other theoretical schools of thought to interpret and transform Peru.

Flores Galindo's opening to interdisciplinary research, editorship of *Allpanchis* (1978–82), and long-standing position on the editorial board of *Revista Andina* – journals based in the highland city of Cuzco – put him in close contact with anthropological and ethnohistorical studies of the Andes. He was convinced of the need to overcome the unfortunate

²⁵ The reader will also notice a few cases of repetition of certain arguments in different chapters.

divide between Lima and the provinces and between anthropologists and historians. *In Search of an Inca* reflects Flores Galindo's familiarity with scholarship on the Quechua language, rituals, archaeology, and the precolonial period, topics that most Lima historians in this period did not study. At the same time, Flores Galindo sharply criticized the tendency – common among some ethnohistorians and anthropologists – to think of Andean societies and people as homogenous, frozen in time, and trapped in the mental structures of “Andean thought.” In the introduction to this book and in several other works, he chastised some scholars for wanting to put Andean people into an “impossible museum.”²⁶

Flores Galindo did not just build on and recast Peruvian and Andean debates. He also incorporated readings and discussions on memory, utopianism, tradition, and modernity, making his own contributions to each. In doing so, he borrowed from a wide array of authors, intellectual traditions, and academic fields and called upon an eclectic selection of readings to develop his arguments. Besides the *Annales* school, innovative cultural historians such as Italian Carlo Ginzburg, unconventional Marxist thinkers such as Benjamin, and rediscovered authors such as Russian philosopher and semiotician Mikhael Bakhtin (1895–1975) were especially important. The Italian thinker Gramsci (1891–1937) proved influential, particularly as Flores Galindo explored Mariátegui, a Gramsci contemporary with whom he shared a similar unorthodox reading of Marxism and tragic life.²⁷ *Mentalités* studies and the work of English Marxist historians and other members of the New Left also were part of his intellectual repertoire. Flores Galindo built on Thompson to refine views on Andean uprisings, particularly Thompson's critique of interpretations of peasant outbreaks as mere “spasmodic” reactions to material woes. He clearly appreciated Thompson's able pen, political engagement, and effort to create culturalist definitions of class.²⁸ Studies on popular ideologies by historians Christopher Hill, Eric Hobsbawm, and George Rudé were also influential.

²⁶ See page 2.

²⁷ It is important to mention the influence of Argentine writer José Aricó in Flores Galindo's “Gramscian turn” and his rethinking of Mariátegui. See, especially, José Aricó, editor, *Mariátegui y los orígenes del marxismo latinoamericano* (Mexico City: Siglo XXI Editores, 1978).

²⁸ See his article “La historia y el tiempo. Miseria de la teoría,” *El Caballo Rojo* 112 (July 4, 1982), 10, for a brief appraisal of Thompson's historiographical and political contributions.

Writing *In Search of an Inca* in the early and mid-1980s brought Flores Galindo into contact with many of the same subjects as Cultural Studies and Subaltern Studies, two schools of thought then in gestation. His attention to lower-class agency; the cultural dimensions of subaltern experiences; and societal forms of consent, control, and cultural domination paralleled the work of cultural critics such as Stuart Hall, Dick Hebdige, and Paul Gilroy. Flores Galindo was familiar with some of them – through Spanish or French translations – but his work betrayed a confluence of approaches and styles more than a Cultural Studies or Subaltern Studies “influence.” Ranajit Guha published *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India* in 1983, and *Selected Subaltern Studies*, edited by Guha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, appeared in 1988.²⁹ They were not widely read in Peru or elsewhere when Flores Galindo was drafting his ideas and were not translated into Spanish until the 1990s.³⁰ Readers familiar with these and other authors will recognize that Flores Galindo also questioned and reworked Marxism and other western narratives and sought alternative voices, discourses, and paths. Like Guha, Chatterjee, Chakrabarty, and others, Flores Galindo read colonial documentation against the grain to counter conventional interpretations of the Conquest and the “defeat” of indigenous people. He also looked beyond the traditional notion of the archive, incorporating oral traditions, contemporary rituals, and other sources.

THE ANDEAN UTOPIA UNDER DEBATE

When Flores Galindo published the first edition of *In Search of an Inca*, he already enjoyed prestige in Peru and, to a certain extent, in academic circles in Spain, France, and the United States. *In Search of an Inca* consolidated his reputation, especially after he won the prestigious Cuban Casa de las Américas Essay Prize in 1986 and (posthumously) the Clarence Haring Prize in 1991 from the American Historical Association.³¹

²⁹ Ranajit Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983); Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, editors, *Selected Subaltern Studies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

³⁰ The first Spanish translation of some of Guha's and his collaborators' work was Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui and Rossana Barragán, editors, *Debates Post Coloniales: Una Introducción a los Estudios de la Subalternidad* (La Paz: Editorial Historias, SEPHIS, and Ediciones Aruwiyiri, 1997).

³¹ This is a prize awarded to the “Latin American author who has written what is considered the best book in Latin American history in the previous five years.”

The book has appeared in five editions in Lima and has been published in Cuba, Mexico, and Italy.³²

Reviewers in Peru and elsewhere have lauded *In Search of an Inca* for its originality, breadth, importance, and style. They applauded Flores Galindo's search for utopias in the plural and his broad notion of messianic, millenarian, and other counter-hegemonic movements. Although this ample interpretation of Andean utopias made writing (and reading) *In Search of an Inca* more challenging, it allowed him to explore a variety of uses and inventions of the Incas and avoid a restrictive definition that overlooked the creative and heterogeneous invocation of the pre-Colombian past.³³

In Search of an Inca had a great impact in Peru, and virtually every Peruvian intellectual considers it to be one of the essential books, if not *the* essential book, on Peru in recent decades. Nelson Manrique, a historian and close friend of Flores Galindo, cited its "surprising reception" in terms of the passion it provoked and the "amplitude" of the debate it prompted.³⁴ In a review of key works of Peruvian historiography and sociology since the 1960s, Sinesio López – after calling Flores Galindo "the greatest historian of the 1970s generation" as well as "the historian of the vanquished" – praised *In Search of an Inca* as "the most serious attempt" at understanding Andean world dynamics through the study of "internal social and political changes and the enormous repertoire of its cultural imaginary, which gave it its unity and identity."³⁵ Peruvian sociologist Gonzalo Portocarrero called Flores Galindo's work

³² After the initial Cuban edition that consisted of six chapters, there were two subsequent enlarged editions in Lima (Instituto de Apoyo Agrario, 1987, and Editorial Horizonte and Instituto de Apoyo Agrario, 1988), with eight and eleven chapters, respectively. The book was reprinted in 1993 in Mexico (Grijalbo/Conaculta) and in 1994 and 2005 in Peru, by Editorial Horizonte and SUR, respectively. The Italian translation appeared as *Perù: identità e utopia. Cercando un inca* (Firenze: Ponte Alle Grazie, 1991), translated by Maria Antonietta Pecianti and with a preface by Ruggiero Romano.

³³ Magdalena Chocano, "Presentación," Alberto Flores Galindo, *Los Rostros de la plebe* (Barcelona: Editorial Crítica, 2001); Eduardo Cáceres Valdivia, "No hay tal lugar': Utopía, ucronía, e historia," *Márgenes* (Lima) 17 (2000), 11–27.

³⁴ Nelson Manrique, "Historia y Utopía en los Andes," *Debates de Sociología* (Lima) 12–14 (1986–88), 201–11, quote from 202.

³⁵ Sinesio López, "La reinención de la historia desde abajo," *Libros & Artes* (Lima) 22–3 (2009), 1–12, quotes from 8, 9, and 10.

on Andean utopia “an intellectual tour de force” that built upon and continued earlier contributions by Mariátegui and Arguedas.³⁶

Not surprisingly, the book generated intense debates even among intellectuals close to Flores Galindo's own political and academic circles. Much of the criticism targeted his treatment of the most recent periods in Peruvian history. Anthropologist Carlos Iván Degregori, for instance, contended that the argument lost power as it moved into the 20th century. According to Degregori, Flores Galindo found few examples of the Andean utopia in recent decades, specifically after the weakening of the peasant movement in the 1960s. Degregori faulted his characterization of tradition and modernity as polar opposites and his failure to understand how vast societal changes since the 1960s, with the spread of technology, modern media, and markets, affected or weakened “the search for an Inca.”³⁷ In contrast, anthropologist Enrique Urbano questioned his understanding of the early colonial period. Ever critical, Urbano censured Flores Galindo for overlooking the European roots of Andean messianism, which led to a misunderstanding of key figures such as Guaman Poma and Garcilaso de la Vega, and for an overly capacious definition of utopia. On this latter point, Urbano argued that if any idealization of the past is utopianism, then virtually every author in early modern Europe created utopias.³⁸ Manrique questioned Flores Galindo's evidence for the “pan-Andean” nature of the Andean utopia and argued for a more geographically restricted understanding. In addition, Manrique found that after the Tupac Amaru rebellion, which he describes as the “apotheosis” of the Andean utopia, its traces are more difficult to document.³⁹

The political undertones of the book also generated heated discussions. Flores Galindo vehemently denied promoting the Andean utopia

³⁶ Gonzalo Portocarrero, “La hazaña como deber: perfil de Alberto Flores Galindo,” August 7, 2005 (<http://gonzaloportocarrero.blogspot.com/2005/08/27/la-hazana-como-deber-perfil-de-alberto-flores-galindo/>).

³⁷ Carlos Iván Degregori, “Otro mundo es posible,” *Libros & Artes* (Lima) 11 (2005), 11–13.

³⁸ Enrique Urbano, “Representaciones colectivas y arqueología mental en los Andes,” *Allpanchis* (Cuzco) 17, 20 (1982), 33–83, esp. 48–52. See also his review in *Revista Andina* 4, 1 (1986), 282–4.

³⁹ Manrique, “Historia y utopia en los Andes,” 205, 207. In a commentary written in 1988, Flores Galindo actually concurred with these observations. See “La utopía andina: esperanza y proyecto,” in his *Tiempo de plagas* (Lima: El Caballo Rojo Ediciones, 1988), 248–54.

for socialist or neo-indigenista projects.⁴⁰ He noted its limitations as a foundation for transformative alternatives and underlined the authoritarian impulses behind some of its variants. Although he clearly sympathized with some of the people who embraced the Andean utopia, he recognized that it could not sustain an alternative project for contemporary Peru: “It should be clear, therefore, that we are not advocating the Andean utopia. History should liberate us from the past, not seal us off – as Aníbal Quijano argued – within ‘longue durée’ prisons of ideas.”⁴¹ Thus, despite the title, *In Search of an Inca* pushed social scientists, intellectuals, and readers to abandon the pursuit of a pristine Inca past, its remnants in the present, or a project for the future inspired by its traces. Instead, they should explore the creative appropriation, re-creation, and synthesis of the multiple cultural influences that make up Andean societies. It was time to stop searching for an Inca, Flores Galindo asserted, and to embrace instead “modern socialism,” the only way to channel passions and dreams toward the construction of a better future.⁴²

Indeed, Flores Galindo never retreated from his socialist convictions. At a time when the left was in crisis and many leftist intellectuals were abandoning socialism, he remained stubbornly loyal to the ideals that inspired him and his generation two decades before. “I continue to believe that the ideals that gave rise to socialism – justice, freedom, humanity – are still alive,” he stated in his final intellectual manifesto. But socialism, he warned, had a future only “if we are capable of rethinking it and imagining it with new contents.” For him, socialism should not be confined to just one path, one already traced; echoing Mariátegui, he saw socialism as “a challenge to creativity” (“un desafío para la creatividad”). In addition – and here the influence of thinkers such as Thompson is clear – socialism meant forging “a new morality and new values.” He questioned intellectuals and militants who had lost their capacity to “feel the rage” (“sentir la indignación”) when confronted with the injustices of capitalism or the violence of authoritarian

⁴⁰ See, among others, Mario Vargas Llosa, “Una crítica marxista de la utopía andina,” in *José María Arguedas y las ficciones del indigenismo* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1996), 289–95.

⁴¹ See page 248.

⁴² His views are clearly stated in the interview “Redescubriendo lo andino,” in Carlos Arroyo editor, *Encuentros. Historia y movimientos sociales en el Perú* (Lima: MemoriAngosta, 1989), 139–44; see also his prologue, “El rescate de la tradición,” 9–21.

solutions such as *Shining Path*.⁴³ Many pages of *In Search of an Inca*, especially in the later chapters, can be read as an enraged indictment of the fallacies of Peruvian democracy, the various forms of social and racial discrimination inflicted upon the most vulnerable sectors of Peruvian society, and the egregious violations of human rights committed in the name of counterterrorism efforts.

Was Flores Galindo a utopian thinker? No doubt. He founded his entire intellectual project on the pursuit of a utopia – not the Andean utopia but a socialist one. That was his lifelong project. As anthropologist Nancy Postero has written, “If we think of utopia as a consciously constructed political vision for the future, rather than a fruitless return to a fictitious past, then perhaps utopias are just what are needed in the Andes.”⁴⁴ Flores Galindo would have agreed.

Flores Galindo’s work has proven fertile and inspirational in different fields – history, literary and cultural studies, anthropology – even if authors do not always agree with his premises. The notion of Andean utopia has served as a framework to understand different historical moments, literary trends, and contemporary political developments in Andean societies.⁴⁵ Twenty-five years after its first edition, *In Search of an Inca* continues to awe the reader with its brilliance, scope, and depth, as well as its magisterial combination of historical analysis and political commentary. It will continue to inspire students of the Andes for decades to come. We are certain this translation will help attract wide attention among English-speaking readers.

⁴³ The quotes are taken from his farewell letter, “Reencontremos la dimensión utópica,” reproduced in Flores Galindo, *Obras Completas*, vol. 6, 381–90.

⁴⁴ Nancy Postero, “Andean Utopias in Evo Morales’s Bolivia,” *Latin American and Caribbean Ethnic Studies* 2 (April 1, 2007), 1–28, quote from 21.

⁴⁵ Wilfredo Kapsoli, *Ayllus del Sol. Anarquismo y utopía andina* (Lima: Tarea, 1984); Miguel Angel Huamán, *Poesía y utopía andina* (Lima: Desco, 1988); Rodrigo Montoya, *De la utopía andina al socialismo mágico: antropología, historia y política en el Perú* (Lima: Instituto Nacional de Cultura, 2005); Carlos García-Bedoya, “Garcilaso y la utopía andina” (unpublished manuscript); Miguel Giusti, “¿Utopía del mercado o utopía andina? Sobre la filosofía y la comprensión de la realidad nacional,” *Areté* (Lima) 1, 1 (1989), 147–63; Postero, “Andean Utopias.”