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Apocalypse in the Andes: Contact Zones and the Struggle for Interpretive Power

Lecture by

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APOCALYPSE IN THE ANDES: CONTACT ZONES AND THE STRUGGLE FOR INTERPRETIVE POWER*

By Mary Louise Pratt

I wish to thank the Cultural Center of the Inter-American Development Bank for inviting me to give this lecture. I find myself in very distinguished company, having been preceded by Professors Bernard McGinn and Manuel Burga, and I must add that it is a particular pleasure to be lecturing in a space outside the university. There are not enough such spaces, and I am fortunate to be in one today. With this setting in mind, my remarks are aimed at nonspecialists, and I intend to try my best to avoid the worst sins of academe, to the extent that one can do that, having dwelt in academe for as long a time as I have.

The first part of this lecture is concerned in a general way with the production of meaning in what I call "contact zones," places where cultures that have been on historically separate trajectories intersect or come into contact with each other and establish a society, often in contexts of colonialism. I will raise some general issues, especially with regard to the Americas, then move toward a particular moment in Andean cultural history, the great indigenous uprising that took place from 1780 to 1782.

Professors McGinn and Burga both underscored the European and Christian bases for the concepts of millennium and apocalypse that we have been using in this series, and indeed the European and Christian bases for the very calendar that has generated this millennium we are now facing. They caution quite rightly against universalizing in an unselfconscious way these European ideas of millennium and apocalypse. Rather, and I think they are very correct in this, they ask in their lectures for us to inquire where these concepts become useful in the Americas, where they are illuminating, where they enable us to make observations that would not otherwise be accessible to us.

Where, for example, do the concepts of millennium and apocalypse that come out of Christian European tradition intersect with other societies' concepts of epochal upheavals, ends of eras, messianic returns, cosmic catastrophe, prophecies fulfilled? Such constructs abound in the indigenous cultures of the Americas, and they have been used for the last five hundred years by indigenous peoples to make sense, above all, of the European invasion and its aftermath. Even

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novice aficionados of Andean culture are familiar with the concept of the *pachakuti*, a cataclysmic reversal of the world order. No history of the conquest of Mexico neglects to mention the prophecy of the return of Quetzalcoatl which was invoked to make sense of the arrival of Hernán Cortés. Many readers will be familiar with the Aztec and Maya vision of world cycles that are marked off by cataclysmic destructions, and with the Andean myth of the *inkarrí*, the millennial return to power of the Inca dynasty.

Despite our vast ethnographic and historical literatures, however, the historical experience of indigenous peoples of this hemisphere remains, I believe, largely beyond the grasp of western intellectuals. There seems to be an enormous gulf between how indigenous societies are described by western researchers and how indigenous peoples experience themselves and their worlds. The gulf gets filled by the metropolis through endless mechanisms for appropriating indigenous experience, history, and culture. Even our most honest inquiries often involve denials of historical and present reality, insensitivity to consequences and lack of accountability for a historical experience that has been apocalyptic and continues to be so for many indigenous peoples. When scholars like those of us in this series present our work, we must do so with great humility and a sense of limitation that will only be remedied when indigenous peoples themselves become producers of academic knowledge.

For indigenous and tribal peoples all over the world, the end of this millennium does seem to represent something of a historical crossroads. There is no longer an "outside" to the world economic system; there will be no more first contacts or first encounters—those ended in this century. People are experiencing an accelerated penetration now as processes of globalization bring new pressures to bear on space, on ecology, on resources, with an intensified ruthlessness and aggression. Many tribal and indigenous peoples find themselves more vulnerable now than they were 25 years ago.

At the same time, in the communications revolution indigenous and tribal peoples have found new ways to claim agency in these processes, to assert demands and aspirations, insert their values and world views into dialogues and negotiations, and to bring themselves together in pursuit of common interests.

I think for instance of the *Declaración de Quito* in 1991,[1] one of the first documents produced in this century by a coalition of indigenous peoples from across the hemisphere. That document was the result of a convention of indigenous leaders held in connection with the 1992 quincentennial. Of course the quincentennial has been of millennial importance in galvanizing awareness of indigenous peoples.

In the early 1990s, Colombia passed a new constitution in which the rights of indigenous peoples were recognized for the first time, and in which indigenous representation in the houses of government was guaranteed. In Canada's debates over sovereignty, indigenous rights have played a new and central role in determining outcomes, as the country accepts the fact that no solution to its constitutional problems will be legitimate without the consent of the large indigenous minority. Out of the holocaust in Guatemala in the 1980s has emerged a network of Maya intellectuals who are pursuing a cultural and epistemological project that is

quite remarkable and unique. And of course by E-mail and fax the Zapatista Movement in Chiapas is spreading around the globe a quite powerful and fascinating critique not only of local circumstances, but in a broader way of Mexico and global capitalism itself.[2] Bolivia now has its first indigenous vice-president, who is inspiring or creating space for very powerful cultural and political expressions. Last June in Albuquerque the third international congress of indigenous peoples was attended by delegations from Australia, New Zealand, Scandinavia, Hawaii and the Americas.

What people are struggling for now, as indeed in the earlier periods that I will be turning to in a moment, is not the hope of remaining in pristine otherness, in an unchanging universe that is outside of history; that is a Western fantasy that gets projected on indigenous people all the time. Rather, people are very clear that they are struggling for self-determination, that is, significant control over the terms and conditions under which they will develop their relations with the nation-state, the global economy, the communications revolution, expansionist Christianity, and so on.

For peoples and communities engaged in such struggles and negotiations, the commonplace Western idea of culture as "the icing on the cake" is usually incomprehensible. Westerners have tended to work with an idea that culture is what develops after a group has secured subsistence. It is defined as that which exists above and beyond "mere survival." But for contemporary indigenous peoples, an opposition between culture and survival makes little sense. Culture—language, religion, cosmology, ways of everyday life, historical vision, concepts of the self, of education, knowledge, wisdom, relationships with land, space, places, seas, skies, plants, and animals, ethics of production and consumption—these things are at the heart of what is *at stake* in survival. Culture *is* survival, and survival is not "mere." It is what is happening, what one is doing in the course of living. Separations of base and superstructure, or the economic versus the social often make no sense from indigenous perspectives.

This experience of culture as survival is a product of the apocalyptic and genocidal history that indigenous peoples have lived in the modern world. On the one hand it is the task of culture to give meaning to this apocalyptic history; on the other, this history is the context within which groups must seek to reproduce themselves and their humanity This is why what Jean Franco has called "the struggle for interpretive power" can be for indigenous peoples a matter of life and death.[3] It is interesting that some metropolitan intellectuals are beginning to see that this co-articulation of culture and survival is true of their own societies as well. How easily they (we) then forget the role indigenous peoples have played in conveying that message to us!

I have introduced the question of interpretive power and meaning-making, and I want to turn now briefly to these questions with respect to what I referred to earlier as "contact zones," the places where cultures from disparate historical trajectories come into contact with each other.[4] Contact zones are often the result of invasion and violence, resulting in social formations based on drastic inequalities. They often involve what has been called "radical heterogeneity" as well, that is, social structures in which very distinct cultural systems coexist in a space and interact with each other.[5] In such contact zones,

zones, from an indigenous perspective, being the "other" of a dominant culture involves living in a bifurcated universe of meaning. On the one hand, one must produce oneself as a self for oneself; that is survival. At the same time the system also requires that you produce yourself as an "other" for the colonizer. This is an old story in the Americas, this bifurcated universe where the subordinated "other" has to produce itself as a Self and also as an Other. This is the legacy with which indigenous intellectuals and activists grapple today, whether they are the Maya thinkers I referred to earlier, the Zapatista communicators, Aymara film makers in Bolivia, or native ethnographers in Canada.

Let us add some historical depth to this question of struggles over interpretive power in contact zones. I would like to take us back to the beginnings of that legacy, to the initial apocalypse of the European invasion. The year is 1562, some thirty years after Pizarro's landing in Cajamarca, and ten years before the fall of the last dynastic Inca, Tupac Amaru. The text is a petition addressed to the Spanish crown by a group of several hundred Andean indigenous leaders gathered for this purpose. We are going to examine a single sentence in this document, which in Spanish reads:

> *Que se nos guarden nuestras buenas costumbres y leyes que entre nosotros ha habido y hay, justas para nuestro gobierno y justicia y otras cosas que solíamos tener en tiempo de nuestra infidelidad.* (May our good customs and laws be retained that among us have existed and exist suitable for our government and justice and other things that we were accustomed to having in the time of our infidelity.)[6]

This sentence, like almost any sentence from this remarkable text, exemplifies the intricate and agonizing pragmatics of communication under conquest. I am going to offer a brief commentary on it, as a way of suggesting some of the dynamics and complexities of meaning-making in a contact zone.[7]

The language being used here is of course Spanish, which of course is not the native language of any of the addressers of the document. Almost certainly, the text was produced by a bilingual scribe, on the basis of dialogue conducted in more than one Andean language. The mode of communication, alphabetic writing, is also European. There were no systems of writing indigenous to the Andes. The speech act is a royal petition, a European speech act, but which almost certainly intersected with the indigenous speech repertoire. Petitions of this kind flowed with remarkable frequency across the Atlantic throughout the Spanish colonial regime.

Que se nos guarden, the statement begins, a construction quite peculiar to Spanish, that is grammatically neither active nor passive in voice. In English it translates as something like "May it be brought about that our laws and customs are maintained," or "may we be enabled to maintain them." The verb mode is the subjunctive—the mode used to refer to an uncertain future from a known present marked, in this case, by cataclysmic upheaval: a *pachakuti.* It calls forth a possibility, from the position not simply of the conquered subject, but of the leadership of the conquered. These are the people authorized to

address the Spanish conqueror, in his language and discourse, and in tones of supplication. The absence of an agent in the syntax is important. It is not at all clear at this point who will determine the future, who could and should ensure the retention of customs and laws, and how. In the aftermath of the clash between empires, lines of power and legitimacy are not clear. The mutual responsibilities of the conquerors and the conquered to each other are under negotiation.

"The good laws and customs that have existed and exist among us," says the second clause. That sequence of verb tenses, the present perfect ('have existed') and present ('exist'), marks the historical watershed of the European invasion, from the point of view of the invaded (albeit in the invader's syntactic system). And of course, on this side of that watershed is the pronoun "us." That "us" is the new Amerindian subject that has been brought into being by the Spanish conquest. In the particular sentence we are looking at, that new collective Amerindian "us," is asserting itself (in the conqueror's language) as a subject specifically of culture: "our laws, our customs, other things it was our custom to have"; and as a subject of history: that which "has existed and exists" and should be maintained. It is the subject of history that speaks those words.

Paradoxically, the indigenous demand for continuity with the past is made in a moral universe that is already acknowledged to be radically altered. The alteration is encoded by two words in the sentence: *"buenas,"* (good), and *"infidelidad"* (infidelity): "May we keep the **good** customs and laws ... from the time of our **infidelity**." The bifurcated basis of Christianity—good/evil, Christian/infidel—is presupposed by the Andean speakers here, or at least invoked strategically as the shared basis for communication between themselves and the Spanish authorities. In other words, the Andean leaders apparently agree to insert themselves into the Christian moral universe. Thus while calling for continuity with the pre-conquest world, they constitute themselves as "other" to their former, pre-conquest selves. At the same time, by calling for a retention of their own customs and laws, they situate themselves outside the Spanish legal, political and social universe. They are making a highly strategic manipulation of the invaders' ideological and linguistic systems, in other words. A potentially challenging one too, because despite the attitude of supplication here, this sentence contains the premise that goodness can coexist with infidelity, something it was in the Spanish interest to deny.

Now of course one of the most interesting things about this sentence is that the subject of the negotiation is culture itself. We students of colonialism often have to remind ourselves that cultures do not just get overthrown like empires, or taken over like capital cities, or razed to the ground like temples and palaces. Cultures do not simply "fall" under conquest. They can't. Under conquest, culture enters a realm of crisis and upheaval—that which, as we read here, has existed and exists, that which continues to be but not at all as it was before. It is an elementary point but it is easy to lose track of as one studies these violent dramas of invasion and overthrow, and of occupation, enslavement and resistance.

Except in the case of outright genocide, conquest does not simply bring down

cultures, societies or languages, the way it brings down political hegemonies. Consciousness, memory and subjectivity cannot simply be put to an end by acts of either force or volition. A person cannot simply be compelled on the spot to forget their language or religion for instance. Under conquest, in what I have been calling contact zones, social and cultural formations enter a long term, often permanent state of crisis that cannot be resolved by either the conqueror or the conquered. Rather, the relationships of conquered/conqueror, invaded/invader, past/present, and before/after become the medium out of which culture, language, society and consciousness get constructed. That constructing, as you can see from a document like this, involves continuous negotiation among radically heterogenous groups whose separate historical trajectories have come to intersect; among radically heterogenous systems of meaning that have been brought into contact by the encounter; and within relations of radical inequality enforced by violence.

In his lecture here a few weeks ago, Manuel Burga traced some of these negotiations in the Andes, from the late 1500s to the mid 18th century. Professor Burga argued that out of the defeat of the Inca empire in the late 16th century, by the early 18th century a new indigenous elite had gained legitimacy and authority in Cuzco by claiming descendance precisely from defeated Incas. This involved Spanish recognition of a glorified Inca past, and of the Inca monarchic tradition. Why would Spain do that? It seems clear that the Spanish colonial structure had to maintain alliances with indigenous elites in order to keep in place the structures by which they were exploiting the indigenous masses.

Professor Burga proposed three historical stages that I will just mention briefly. To begin with, from the moment the last Inca fell in 1572, the Spanish crown agreed to recognize certain specific descendants of Incas. Those people had status as members of a royal lineage that had been cut off but remained in some sense royal. Second, in the 17th century, between 1610 and 1680, the Spanish embarked on a campaign of Christianization which they called the *extirpación de idolatrías* (extirpation of idolatries). Throughout the Andes they attempted to stomp out non-Christian rituals and force Christianization at the level of daily as well as ceremonial life. It was a campaign we might now describe as ethnocide. This campaign in a certain way backfired, Burga argues, in that it eliminated many of the underpinnings of Andean indigenous identity, leaving the Inca genealogy as the main terrain on which indigenous identity could be erected. This genealogy then became the basis for a new indigenous power structure. Burga describes this process as *la constitución de una nueva memoria* (the constitution of a new memory). It involved setting up a new historical narrative in which Inca dynasties became the point of reference for indigenous identity in general in the Andes. This was an invention, Burga emphasizes, but it was an invention that had a basis in fact because in the 17th century, some descendants of the Inca dynasty did know who they were.

The final stage of Burga's argument involves the early 18th century Spanish and indigenous elites, who negotiated an extraordinary socio-cultural formation based in Cuzco that was called *las doce casas* (the twelve houses of the Incas). This was an indigenous power structure that Spanish and

indigenous leaders worked out, which organized people who claimed Inca ancestry into twelve groups, according to which Inca they were descended from. Through elected representatives these groups accumulated a great deal of social power, exhibited in particular in symbolic and ritual life. This elite had a status within the colonial structure, producing an interconnection of Spanish and indigenous elites. Descriptions of society in Cuzco at the end of the 18th century describe salon gatherings going on bilingually in Spanish and in Quechua, for example. This linkage is exhibited concretely in a fascinating genre of paintings and engravings that indigenous painters began producing in the Andes in the 18th century (fig. 1). These artworks depict the thirteen original Incas in chronological sequence, followed by the Spanish kings who "replaced" them after the conquest. These paintings flourished in Cuzco in the early to mid-18th century. These dynasty pictures suggest a harmonious world created by a continuous monarchic order. The *pachakuti* of the conquest seems to have been erased. It is important that these representations were produced and consumed by both Spanish and indigenous subjects.

At the same time, the social and political structure to which these depictions refer was radically unstable. For one thing, the colonial order was brutal and intolerable for most of its indigenous subjects. For another, the idea of overthrowing the Spanish and restoring Inca rule was still alive, both as a concrete aspiration, and as myth and prophecy. The prophecy is the one we know as the myth of *inkarrí*. In 1572 the last Inca, Tupac Amaru I, was decapitated by the Spaniards in the plaza of Cuzco, and his head buried separately from his body. According to the myth of *inkarrí*, the head underground is growing itself back into a body which will eventually rise out of the ground marking the moment of a new *pachakuti*, when Andeans will rise up and restore Inca rule. That's the myth that was very much present in the Andes in the 18th century at the time that this seemingly continuous lineage was being suggested in the dynasty paintings. Of course these paintings were presiding over continual outbreaks of resistance and rebellion, and the profoundest discontent.

When the Spaniards themselves were fostering the elaboration of an indigenous elite, rebellions and uprisings began to take place throughout the Andean region, and their leaders began claiming the project of restoring Inca rule. From 1742–52, a man named Juan Santos Atahualpa in this role waged a very successful guerrilla campaign that worked between the jungle area and the highlands. The process culminated in the great rebellion of 1780–82 (actually beginning in Bolivia in 1777), in which vast areas of Southern Peru and Bolivia rose up in revolt. The leader of this rebellion on the Peruvian side was a man named José Gabriel Condorcanqui, who took the name Tupac Amaru II, defining himself as the returning Inca. His rebellion was crushed when in late 1781, an army of 7,000 Spanish troops arrived in Buenos Aires. It is not possible here to go into the details of the rebellion, which began with the killing of the hated *corregidores* or colonial officers and escalated into a period of intense violence with a great bloodshed on all sides, including the murder of large numbers of Spaniards and *criollos*. My focus here is on what happened in the domain of meaning.

Popular uprisings have to make themselves deeply and intensely meaningful to people in

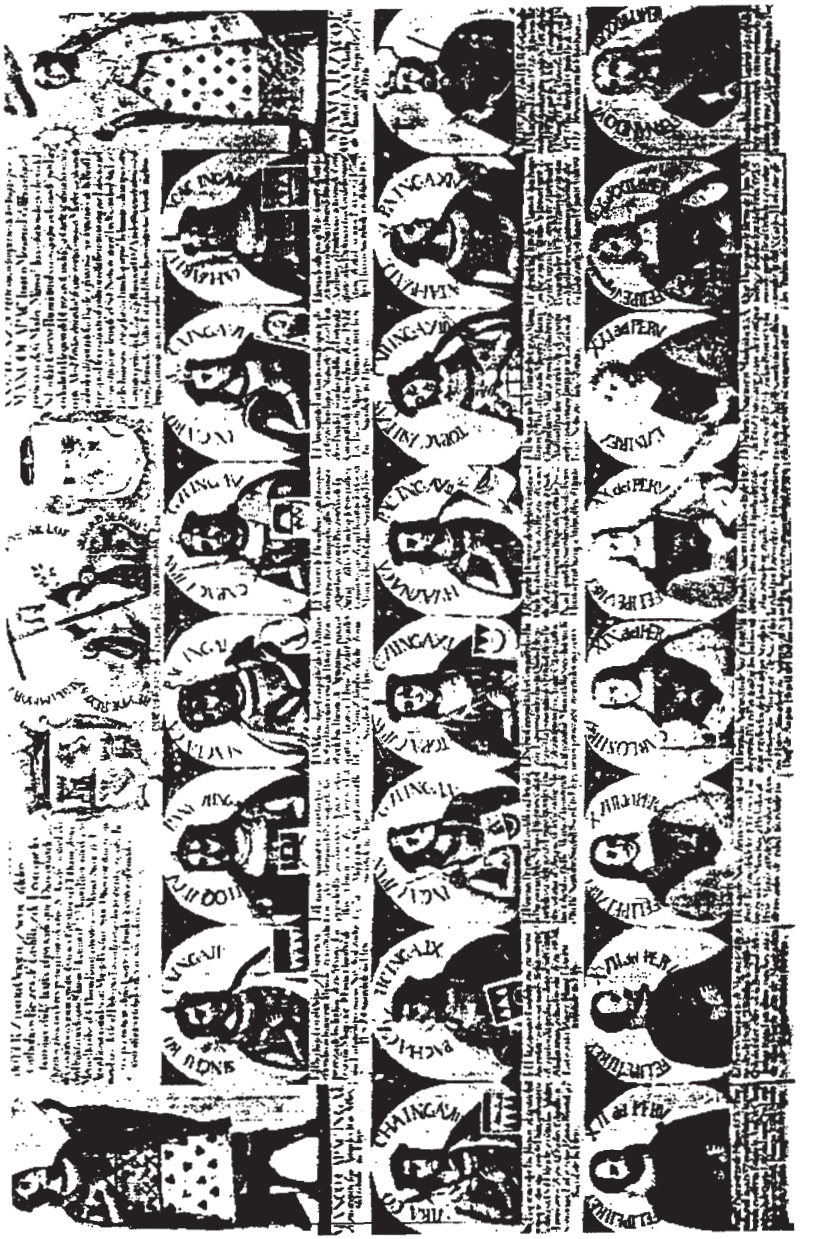

Fig. 1. Painting representing the Inca kings and the Spanish monarchs, Chapel of the Copacabana, Lima, Peru. From Teresa Gisbert, *Iconografía y mitos indígenas en el arte*. La Paz, 1980.

order to mobilize the level of commitment and energy necessary to break with a *status quo*. The rebellion of 1780–82 did so on multiple planes. One was pragmatic: proclamations expressed highly specific criticisms and demands with respect to the colonial system, noting specific practices which must be abolished. This was accompanied, however, by an apocalyptic general call to kill all Europeans—an invitation to a race war. (The Quechua phrase for Europeans was, believe it or not, "red necks.") A restorationist argument was also in play in the vision of restoring the Inca dynasty. Some scholars see this vision as proto-nationalist in character. Finally, the rebellion had a strong cosmic and religious dimension: it was the moment of the *pachakuti*, the cosmic upheaval.

In tracing the emergence of modern nationalism, historian Benedict Anderson identifies three stages in the emergence of the modern nation as what he calls an "imagined community." [8] First, he argues, there were religious communities, followed by dynastic realms, and then the nation-state. Religious communities are held together by a shared concept of a god; dynastic realms are held together by the concept of a monarch and a genealogy; nations are held together by an idea of a secular fraternal bond. When you look at the Andean revolt, all three of these forms of imagined community seem to be operating at the same time. It makes for a very complex and interesting symbolic universe. How in turn did the Spaniards make sense of the revolt? How did they face the fact that it arose out of structures they had participated in making, out of symbolic and political terrain that they thought they shared with the indigenous elites, and thought they controlled? In this final section I propose to look at two documents which fascinate everybody who studies the Tupac Amaru II rebellion. The first is the sentencing report produced by the judge José Antonio de Areche, from the royal court of Lima, in May 1781, which condemns Tupac Amaru and his supporters to death and articulates the official Spanish response to the revolt.[9] The report begins with elaborate instructions as to what should be done physically to the bodies of the rebels:

> I must and do condemn José Gabriel Tupac Amaru to be taken out to the main public square of this city, that is Cuzco, dragged out to the place of execution, where he shall witness the execution of the sentences imposed on his wife Micaela Bastidas, his two sons Hipólito and Fernando, his uncle Francisco, and his brother-in-law Antonio, as well as some of the principal captains and aids in his iniquitous and perverse intent or project, all of whom must die the same day. Once their sentences have been carried out, the executioner will cut out his tongue, and he will then be tied or bound by strong cords on each one of his arms and feet in such a way that each rope can easily be tied or fastened to others hanging from the saddle straps of four horses, so that in this position each one of these horses facing opposite corners of the square will pull toward its own direction, and let the horses be urged or jolted into motion at the same time, so that his body be divided into its many parts, and then once it is done, the parts should be carried to the hill or high ground known as Pichu which is where he came to in-

> timidate and demand the surrender of this city, and let there be lit a fire which shall be prepared in advance and let there be ashes thrown into the air and a stone tablet placed there detailing his main crimes and the manner of his death as the only record and statement of his loathsome action. His head will be sent to the town of Tinta [where the rebellion began—mlp] where, after having been three days on the gallows, it shall be placed on a stake at the most public entrance to the town. One of his arms will go to the town of Tungasuca, where he was chief, where it will be treated in a like manner. And the other in the capital of the Province of Caraballa. One of the legs shall likewise be sent for the same kind of demonstration to the town of Libitaca in the province of Chumbivilcas, while the remaining leg shall go to Santa Rosa, in the Province of Lampa, along with an affidavit in order to the chief magistrates that this sentence shall be proclaimed publicly with the greatest solemnity as soon as it arrives in their hands . . .

And so it continues. What are we to make of this elaborate orchestration of the symbolics of the body? The cutting out of the tongue, it turns out, is one of the few things that both sides in the conflict did to each other's bodies. Apart from whatever symbolic castration is involved, surely this practice has meaning with respect to the problem and power of language in colonial struggles. (In early accounts of the conquest, *lengua* (tongue) was the word for "interpreter.") The cutting up of the body and the distribution of its pieces to the various sites of revolt is of course a way of trying to kill off the idea that there could be a resurrection: this body is not going to be able to pull itself together under the ground and rise again because the pieces are going to be spread all over and they will be deprived of burial. The idea that there can be no resurrection if the body is split into pieces is of course influenced by the Christian narrative of the resurrection in which Christ's body is taken whole from the cross and put in a grave from which the resurrection occurs. The judge is also trying to ensure that the Christian narrative does not apply. He also refers to the need to counteract popular beliefs that Tupac Amaru II simply cannot be killed.

It is unclear whether Areche was aware of the significance in Andean symbolism, of the drawing and quartering of Tupac Amaru's body in the square at Cuzco. The judge's prescription of four horses pulling toward the four corners of the square intersects in a peculiar way with the basic spatial symbolism of Andean cosmology. According to that cosmology, Cuzco occupied the center of a symbolic universe bisected by two diagonals which marked out the four quadrants of the Inca empire (see fig. 2). The city of Cuzco was divided physically by those diagonals which met at the center, the very plaza where the executions were to take place. Those two symbolic diagonals mark the major lines of meaning and power in Andean cosmography, the main line descending diagonally from the sun, and the secondary line from the moon. It is impossible to present this system in detail here, but it must be observed that when the judge prescribed this particular diagonal, a four-cornered configuration for the destruction of Tupac Amaru II's body, the prescription, whether

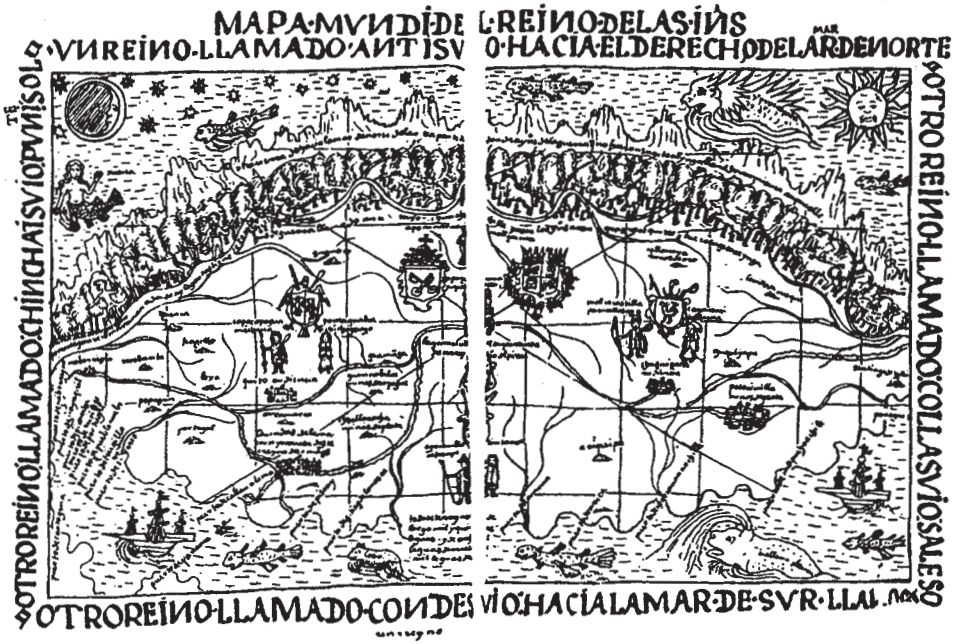

Fig. 2. This map of the Inca Empire by Guaman Poma de Ayala (1612) shows the diagonal spatial symbolism, whose center is the city of Cuzco.

he knew it or not, read directly into Andean cosmography in ways Areche undoubtedly did not control. Were the Spanish authorities knowingly drawing on indigenous symbolic systems? Nobody knows.

The sentencing document also prescribes a more generalized process intended to destroy the neo-Inca power structure by destroying its symbolic capital. Again the document goes into great detail, and in so doing reproduces the structures of meaning and value it is trying to destroy (emphases mine):

> It is prohibited for the Indians to wear heathen clothes, especially those who belong to the nobility, since it only serves to symbolize those worn by their Inca ancestors, reminding them of memories which *serve no other end than to increase their hatred toward the dominant nation.* Not to mention that their appearance is ridiculous and very little in accordance with the purity of our relics, since they place in different parts, images of *the sun, which was their primary deity.* This prohibition is to be extended to all the provinces of this Southern America, in order to completely eliminate such clothing, especially those items which represent the bestialities of their heathen kings, through emblems such as the *unqu*, which is a kind of vest,

> *llacollas* which are very rich blankets or shawls of black velvet or taffeta, the *maskapacha* which is a circle in the shape of a crown from which they hang a certain *emblem of ancient nobility* signified by a tuft or tassel of red colored alpaca wool, as well as many other things of this kind and symbolism. They must surrender whatever clothing of this kind exists in the province as well as all the paintings or likenesses of their Incas which are extremely abundant in the houses of the Indians who consider themselves to be nobles and who use them to prove their claim or boast of their lineage.

A multiplicity of codes and value systems are at work simultaneously and incoherently within this text. Ironically, the Spaniard is forced to describe the very things he proposes to suppress. For instance, in referring to the ability of traditional clothing to revive memories that "increase their hatred toward us," Areche reproduces the logic of indigenous memory, and the very rationale of indigenous hatred. The very next sentence shifts to a vocabulary of ridicule and derision, but this moves in the description of the shawls and emblems into a rhetoric of representation and respect. Even the powerful Quechua words for key symbolic items are displayed: the *unko*, the *llacolla*, the *maskapacha*. The descriptions are vivid and glowing. Indigenous values and language are speaking through the Spaniards, speaking through the voice of colonial authority. How do you read a text like that? In contact zones it is common for multiple codes to be working at the same time, and the colonizer never controls the meaning systems that he uses or must use to say what he wants to say.

The document goes on to prescribe the erasure of Andean community culture. Ministers and magistrates should ensure that (emphases mine):

> In no town of their respective provinces will be performed plays or other public functions that commemorate the former Incas. In like manner shall be prohibited and confiscated the trumpets or bugles that the Indians use for their ceremonies, which they call *pututos*, being seashells with *a strange and mournful sound* that celebrates the *mourning and pitiful memorial* they make for their antiquity. There shall be prohibited the custom of wearing black clothing as a sign of mourning, a custom that drags on in some provinces, in memory of their deceased monarchs, and also of the day or time of the conquest, which *they consider disastrous and we consider fortunate,* since it brought them into the company of the Catholic church and of our kings.

Here the customs being condemned are simultaneously honored with explanations that acknowledge their meaningfulness. The power of the *pututus* is evoked in a way at odds with the proposal to suppress them. When Areche speaks of the wearing of black for mourning, he evokes a point of intersection of Spanish and Andean values. In the very next sentence he codifies their absolute opposition—"that which they think is unfortunate and we think is fortunate." The very heterogeneity of meaning systems in play in a contact zone can make it impossible to create a coherent text.

Areche's sentencing report is complemented by a second text from the 1780–82 rebellion. It is an eyewitness account of the actual executions of the rebels, produced by a local official named Manuel Espinarte López. Here again the problem of heterogeneity, ambiguity, and the impossibility of controlling meaning are displayed dramatically.

> Friday 18 of May 1781, with the gallows fenced in on all four sides by the corps of *mulatos* and *huamanguinos*, the following eight individuals emerged from the company: José Berdejo Andrés Castelo, a *zambo*; Antonio Oblitas, who started the revolution with the killing of a *corregidor*; Antonio Bastidas; Francisco Tupac Amaru; Tomasa Condemayta, a woman chieftain of the Acos; Hipólito, son of the traitor; Micaela, his wife; and the insurgent, José Gabriel. They all came out at the same time, one after another, in shackles and handcuffs, dressed in sacks of the kind in which they haul *mate* from Paraguay behind the saddle of the horse; accompanied by the priests and appropriate guards, they all arrived at the foot of the gallows where the executioners meted out the following means of death.

In that first paragraph, note the ethnic and the gender diversity of the rebel leadership (a *zambo* is a person who is half Black and half indigenous). It's not an Inca dynasty there, but a group of post-conquest Andeans. The prisoners, we hear, are wearing sacks used to carry tea from Paraguay. The reference recalls Tupac Amaru's personal past as a muleteer who got to know the Andean region well by transporting such goods as tea from Paraguay. The allusion to Paraguay might have resonated politically with readers of this document, for Paraguay had been the scene a few decades earlier of a large rebellion by the indigenous Guaraní. So the sacks allude not only to a broader world of trade but to a broader world of indigenous resistance. The document goes on (emphases mine):

> Berdejo Castelo —the *zambo*— and Bastidas were simply hanged. Francisco, uncle of the insurgent, and his son had their tongues cut out before being hurled from the stairs of the gallows. The Indian woman, Condemayta, was garroted on the small platform that had been equipped with an iron vise for that purpose and which we had never before seen here. The Indian and his wife witnessed with their own eyes the execution of these punishments, even on their own son who was the last to stand the gallows. Then the Indian woman Micaela climbed up to the platform where likewise in the presence of her husband her tongue was cut out, and she was garroted *which lasted a seemingly infinite amount of time since she had a very small neck and the clamp could not strangle her, and the executioners were forced* to put ropes around her neck and pull them in opposite directions in order to finish killing her.

Micaela Bastidas was the co-leader of the rebellion and the spouse of Tupac Amaru. Her body is depicted defying European technology of death. As we will see again in the next paragraph, it proves very hard according to this narrative for European technolo-

gies to kill these Andean leaders. Though the text is written by a European-American or *criollo*, this account of technical failures undoubtedly reflects the widespread indigenous belief that the leaders indeed could not be killed. The indigenous meaning system infiltrates the *criollo's* discourse. Let us go on:

> The rebel José Gabriel ended the spectacle. He was taken out into the middle of the square, where the executioner cut out his tongue, and then, freed of his shackles and handcuffs, he was laid on the ground, to his hands and feet were tied four ropes the ends of which were fastened to the saddle straps of four horses, which four mestizos were pulling in four different directions, a spectacle that had never before been seen in this city. *I don't know if it was because the horses were not very strong, or if the Indian really was made of iron,* but they couldn't completely split him apart, even after they had been tugging at him for some time. So much so that the inspector, moved to compassion, sent an order decreeing that the executioner cut off his head so he did not suffer anymore, and so it was done.

Even when they have absolute power, the Spanish cannot retain control, either of events or their meaning. The uncertainty as to whether the horses were not strong or the leader was really made of iron suggests the ambiguity in the situation for this *criollo* observer for whom both Spanish and indigenous readings of the situation are coherent. The ambiguity takes over completely at the end of the account:

> This day was assembled a large number of people, but no one shouted or raised a voice. Many noticed, and I among them, that in such a crowd there were no Indians, at least not in the costume that they normally use, and if they were present, they were disguised in capes and ponchos.

Again there is ambiguity as to how to interpret the spectacle. If there were no Indians present, then the intended effect of this spectacle is lost. No Indians are present to be terrorized by it. If on the other hand Indians were present in disguise then *they* are determining the spectacle's meanings for themselves. Above all they control the meaning of their own presence or absence. Either they have refused to attend and be terrorized or they are able to be there without the Spanish being able to detect them. Finally, in this account, indigenous interpretive power seems to win out, with a little help from Christianity:

> It seems that the devil schemes and arranges certain things to confirm these Indians in their abuses, omens and superstitions. I mention this because after a period of dryness and very quiet days, this particular day dawned so overcast that the sun's face was hidden and it was threatening to rain everywhere, and around twelve o'clock when the horses were pulling on the Indian, there arose a strong gust of wind, and after it a downpour which forced all the people, even the guards, to withdraw in haste. This has resulted in the Indians saying that *the sky and*

> *the elements all felt the death of the Inca, that the humane and the inhumane and ungodly Spaniards were killing him with such cruelty.*

The document ends right there with that judgment, the account of what the event means to the Indians. This writer adds nothing to counteract that interpretation. The interpretation intersects in a very powerful way with the story of the death of Jesus Christ, an analogy which puts the Spaniards where they would not have put themselves: in the position of the Romans, who killed the savior with excessive and horrible cruelty.

The epilogue of the story is that the rebellion went on for several months after the execution of Tupac Amaru II, and a peace accord was reached in January of 1782 when the Spaniards sent a large army to quell the uprising. The indigenous power structure indeed dissolved in the wake of the Spanish reprisals discussed here, but the results were not exactly what the Spaniards would have expected. The Andeans adopted a new form of dress which expressed Andean indigenous identity, paintings were often hidden and not destroyed, and the dances and dramas that were to be abolished continued.

The Inca restoration as a political project, meanwhile, was taken over by *criollos* and mestizos, two of whom in 1805 led another revolt to restore the Inca monarchy. The myth of the return of the Incas persisted among indigenous communities, however. In the 1920s, for example, one visitor recalls being in a village when an announcement came that the Inca had returned. Everyone, the visitor reported, immediately knew what to do. And of course in the 1950s, José María Arguedas, the great Peruvian ethnographer and writer, collected versions of the story of the return of the Inca in Andean towns.[10]

The struggle for interpretive power continues to define the lives of Native American people today. Often the struggles are local. At the institution where I work, Native American graduate students have undertaken the task of going around to local high schools that use Indian symbols as their mascots, to negotiate their abolition. The resistance they encounter comes less from peoples' attachment to the symbols than from the pain and guilt whites must experience if they acknowledge the racism of the symbols. It is an anguishing process that resonates with the one undertaken by those elders in 1562. It involves encounters where the Native Americans have to break open traditions of denial and trivialization and force dialogues which cause great pain to all the participants. In the process something very powerful often happens: white participants come to experience knowledge not as power but as pain, the way indigenous peoples have often experienced it. As we approach this next millennium, that space of pain, sad to say, may be the most constructive space in which the struggle for peace and justice can go forward.

Mary Louise Pratt

ENDNOTES

[1] *Declaración de Quito y Resolución del Encuentro Continental de Pueblos Indígenas.* Quito, s.n. 1990.

[2] A collection of these documents has been published as *EZLN documentos y comunicados.* México: Ediciones Era, 1994.

[3] Jean Franco, "La lucha por el poder interpretativo," Casa de las Americas, Havana, 1984.

[4] For further elaboration of this concept, see Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation,* NY: Routledge, 1992.

[5] This concept has been developed by the distinguished Peruvian critic, Antonio Cornejo Polar. See for example, his *Literatura y sociedad en el Perú,* Lima: Hueso Humero, 1981.

[6] Quoted in John Murra, "Introduction" to Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala, *Nueva crónica y buen gobierno y justicia.* México: Siglo XXI, 1980.

[7] Discussion of this quotation appears in an earlier form in "Autoethnography and Transculturation: Peru 1562–1992" in Francis Barker, Peter Hulme and Margaret Iverson, eds. *Colonial Discourses: Postcolonial Theory,* Manchester: Manchester UP, 1994.

[8] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism.* London: Verso, 1993.

[9] The literature on Tupac Amaru and the rebellion is vast and fascinating. The documents discussed here can be found in the Appendix to Boleslao Lewin, *Tupac Amaru: Su época, su lucha, su hado.* Buenos Aires: Ediciones Siglo Veinte, 1973.

[10] See José María Arguedas, *Mitos, leyendas y cuentos peruanos.* Lima: Dirección de Educación Artística y Extensión Cultura, 1947.

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