

3 *History and prehistory in Bolivia: what about the Indians?*

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(translated by Olivia Harris)*

Introduction

It might be assumed that Bolivia is a nation with a homogeneous national culture, solidly based on a common historical heritage, in which there are no serious national or ethnic contradictions. However, in Bolivia some 70 per cent of the population is Indian, a term which embraces many different linguistic and cultural groups, of which the largest are the Quechua, the Aymara, and the Guaraní. All the Indians have suffered colonial oppression since the arrival of the Europeans, but in spite of this, Bolivia is presented by our oppressors as a free nation, whose citizens are 'free and equal', and in which civil liberties exist.

Until the Agrarian Reform of 1953, the Indian was not even considered a person, and did not have even the most basic civil rights. Since the so-called 'National Revolution' of 1952 there has been some attempt to neutralize Indian opposition by extending us some of these rights. We were 'integrated' on condition that we renounced our cultural heritage, which was supposed to be relegated to the museums, alienated and converted into a mere souvenir of a dead past.

This chapter is written from the perspective of the colonized Indians. We are struggling to free ourselves, to become ourselves. There must be many errors, which we hope you will forgive: only in the last 30 years have our people had real access to literacy and everything else that could be called science or 'universal knowledge'.

Bolivian archaeology, legitimator of colonialism

In an article in *América Indígena* Rivera criticizes the many failings of Bolivian archaeology, including lack of professional training, inadequate analysis, and ideological manipulation which ignores the Indian descendants of the people who built the monuments studied by the archaeologists (Rivera 1980, pp. 217–24). Nothing has changed since that article was published, except for the recent establishment of a degree in Archaeology at La Paz University.

The systematic study of archaeology in Bolivia goes back only to 1952.

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Before that it was the domain of a few antiquarians and interested foreigners who attempted a first systematization of their researches and observations. It was the triumphant National Revolutionary Movement (MNR) which in the person of one of its young militants first took seriously the task of archaeological research. In this sense the 1952 revolution was the most serious attempt by our white colonizers to form a Nation; archaeology had an important role in this project, since it had the job of providing the new nation with pre-Spanish cultural roots. The object of their concern was to integrate pre-Spanish archaeological remains into the 'Bolivian' cultural heritage, and at the same time to integrate the Indian population into the stream of civilization (another of the main nationalist projects).

Carlos Ponce, the ideologue of Bolivian archaeology, makes a statement that reveals clearly the aims of the Bolivian nationalists:

It must be obvious to everybody that the Indian peasants of Bolivia, Perú and México are related to the high civilizations of pre-Spanish times. Although centuries have passed since the Spanish conquest many traces of the former culture remain. In spite of the intensive production of non-indigenous cultural forms, there is a solid cultural nucleus of pre-Columbian origins and a continuity of traditions. The archaeologist in countries of indigenous ancestry must then decipher the profound roots of the people and *the very foundations of the nation* [my emphasis]. In sum, the archaeologist can by no means hide away and engage with his discipline as though it were cold and detached.

(Ponce 1977, p. 4)

In spite of this pronouncement Ponce is in fact obsessed with creating through archaeology the source of national identity in the sense of white-dominated republican Bolivia, and he does not hesitate to use archaeological data in a manner directly opposed to such statements of principle.

The case of Tiwanaku is the most obvious example. This major site was the centre of one of the Andean 'cultural horizons' between the 6th and 10th centuries. Since it is located in Bolivia near Lake Titicaca, Ponce treats it as the source of Bolivian national identity. He therefore refuses to acknowledge that Tiwanaku was influenced by cultural inputs from the Pacific coast (i.e. what is today Peru) in its early phases, and only admits links between Tiwanaku and the coast in the late expansive phases when Tiwanaku was the centre of an empire (phases 4 and 5 in his periodization). Ponce's distortion goes to extremes; he even claims that 'Bolivia as a nation is witness to the past' (Ponce 1977), whereas Bolivia is a country which actively *oppresses* the Indian majority of its population.

This nationalist archaeology, in spite of its continuous protests against imperialism and external influence, is firmly rooted in a Western ideological framework and as such carries a strong colonialist ideological load. Take the case of the two Portugals (father and son) who belong to the Ponce school. They claim to have 'discovered' archaeological remains, which the Aymaras have known

for centuries. In the wake of such achievements Portugal writes of Tiwanaku as follows:

Tiwanaku evokes the fields and roads which must have led to settlements situated in the altiplano – the immense space which is the theatre for the extraordinary spectacle of its ruins. It has a special appearance for the traveller or visitor as the outline of a great deserted city, the memory of times long past which call to mind the greatness of other cities of the ancient world: the fortress of Nineveh, the undeniable walls of Babylon overcome by Cyrus, king of the world; the famous palaces of Persepolis, and the fabulous temples of Baalbec and Jerusalem.

(Portugal 1975, pp. 195–6)

This quotation reveals the deep insecurity of the mestizos who constantly seek points of comparison with the great centres of European and Asian culture in order to identify our past with other empires which perhaps had little in common with ours in terms of social and political organization.

The Portugals are intoxicated by this colonialist spirit; they take no notice of the original cultural context of our archaeological sites, and simply rename places whose names a long oral tradition has preserved, as if this was enough to credit them with their discovery. Thus the ruins of *Qalasayaña* (Aymara: lit. upright or standing stone) were changed to *Q'allamarka*, meaning 'origin of the city'. This name fitted their interpretation better, that these ruins were the beginning of Tiwanaku. *Intin Qala* near the sacred Lake Titicaca was also renamed. The name means 'stone which contains sun'; the Portugals called the ruins 'Inka seat' because their shape was like a chair or seat. One after another, 'gallows' and 'baths' of the Inkas appeared in their fever for names, which do nothing to clarify the organization of ancient Andean society and economy.

All the nationalist denunciations of outside domination, all their stress on internal development, have only led to the development of a sort of Monroe Doctrine: they take possession of what is not theirs in order to lay the foundations of their 'nation' in a past which does not belong to them and whose legitimate descendants they continue to oppress.

This appropriation of the eloquent material remains of our past is nothing new; it has been occurring in different ways since the early days of Spanish rule. Tiwanaku was used as a quarry first to build houses for the Spanish in the town of the same name; then its huge worked stones were transported to La Paz in order to build the Presidential Palace, and finally they were used for the railway bridges on the La Paz-Guaqui line. Plundering takes a different form these days; monoliths are carted off on the demands of their 'discoverers' to decorate squares and private houses in the city, for example the Plaza del Stadium and Posnansky's house. The expropriation is not only symbolic but also material: they have built earthworks round the ruins so that today we can no longer get in to Tiwanaku. The Aymara people have to pay an entrance fee to visit the ruins as tourists where they listen to invented accounts of the meaning of our history. The archaeologists completely ignore the fact that for our culture the site is

sacred. It is a *wak'a*, a place where our ancestors lived and through which they communicate with us in various ways.¹

Archaeology, prehistory and history

If our independent historical development had continued, the discipline of archaeology would today be studied with seriousness and scientific rigour. Not only would there be fewer gaps in our knowledge, but since we understand the social and cultural practices which are still alive in our society we would be able to interpret better the central features of the social, economic, and religious-political organization of antiquity.

The traumatic fact of colonial invasion changed our contact with the sacred sites of our ancestors. It was claimed that they were places of 'devil worship'; thus leaving us with only a mythological understanding both of our past and the material remains of the past.

The archaeological ruins left by ancient cultures are not inert or dead objects: they have a reality which actively influences our lives both individually and collectively. They are the link with a dignified and autonomous past in which we had our own government and were the subjects of our own history. In short, they are the source of our identity. This is why many of these sites are held to be links with the past. In many areas the Indians believe that the *gentiles* – that is, our pre-Christian ancestors – still live and walk about in the ruins.² We are thus able to live with our ancestors and share our world with them. By day we live in a foreign time system, and by night we are reunited in secret with our own past, our own identity.

These ruins and the myths that they generate, are considered sacred (*wak'a*) but we believe that they are not the same as all the beings called *wak'a*. For example the sacred mountains (*achachilas*) are also thought to be *wak'a*, but are linked directly to religious practice, whereas the ruins are treated in a way more similar to how Western society honours outstanding citizens. Ruins are as it were historical *wak'a* related to social circumstances. An example of this can be seen in my own community in Pacajes Province. There is a ruin called Inka Uyu – a pen in which according to tradition Inka herds were kept. Today the community invokes its help when we have economic difficulties, or conflict either with neighbouring *ayllus*³ or with the State. We make regular offerings, particularly of sweets, fat, and *q'uwa* (an aromatic plant burnt as incense); and in times of crisis we hold a llama sacrifice (*wilani*). Ruins also play a part in rituals connected with the agricultural cycle. For example, in the newly revived festival of Inti Raymi at the winter solstice (21 June) in Tiwanaku we perform propitiatory rites, including llama sacrifices, in order to affirm our faith in the re-establishment of Tawantinsuyu.⁴

Those who have studied the 16th-century anti-Christian millenarian movement of Taki Onqoy suggest that such rites were an escape from Spanish-dominated space and time (e.g. Curatola 1977). This is incorrect, since our colonial oppressors did not effectively wrest from us our control over space. Time on

the other hand is another matter: we need to regain control of our own historical time and end the foreign domination of our history. I do not believe that this counts as 'escapism'. As for ritual time, the writings of Eliade can help us to understand the issue. He states: 'All liturgical time consists in making alive in the present a sacred event which took place in a mythical past at "the beginning"' (Eliade 1959). His next sentence on the other hand does not fit our experience so well. He writes: 'To participate in a religious festival implies leaving normal durational time' (1959). It seems to me that the Aymaras do not need to leave normal durational time, since Bolivian colonial domination is so ineffective that it can be seen as a sort of enclave with partial control only in the cities.

The city is the centre of colonial power par excellence. Nonetheless in the case of La Paz it is in practice dominated by Aymara shamans or priests (*yatiris*, in Aymara literally 'he who knows'). These *yatiris* challenge the power of the official Catholic church from the calvary chapels where they perform their rites. Even the upper classes go to consult them when they have personal or family problems, revealing in this way their fragile sense of identity, and equally their fragile dominion over the country as a whole.

In these ways Indian society constantly reaffirms its links with the past through myth and ritual on both a daily and a calendrical basis. One could argue that in the *ayllus* and in the Indian neighbourhoods of the cities we live in a different time, one in which the 'sacred' and the 'profane' are united. This experience of time is interrupted only by the superficial contact we have to make with our oppressors.

For all these reasons it will be clear that the relationship we have with the material evidence of our past goes beyond a simple 'positivist' attitude which would treat them as mere objects of knowledge. Rather, they are for us sources of moral strength and a reaffirmation of our cultural autonomy. This is why the archaeological *wak'as* are surrounded by a mythical aura and are the object of individual and collective rituals. This proves that the attempt of the colonists to turn our culture into 'devil worship' has failed, and we are still able to approach them with respect, when we seek guidance or healing. The rites and offerings to the *wak'as* are acts of reaffirmation.

Let us compare this attitude with the one adopted by Bolivian archaeology. The statements by Ponce make clear its aims and position. According to him, the mission of archaeology is:

to provide ancestral roots for the national culture. In the case of a people which is testimony of the past, therefore, archaeology uncovers the alienation in national consciousness and regains legitimate possession of pre-Spanish antecedents. [my emphasis]

(Ponce 1977, p. 6)

The use of the term 'antecedents' reveals clearly that for Ponce History only begins with the European colonial invasion.

Historians are no different in their conception of the history of native peoples.

When Adolfo de Morales⁵ was admitted to the Bolivian Academy of History in June 1986, one of the other academicians (who is a history lecturer in La Paz University) announced firmly in his speech of reply:

Here and now we must once again emphasise that Bolivian history began 451 years ago with the arrival of Diego de Almagro and his advance guard to the banks of Lake Titicaca and from there across the altiplano. What happened before is prehistory, or at best protohistory.

(Siles 1986)

The message of both archaeology and history in Bolivia is clear: the evidence of our past, the age-old historical development of our societies and the Indians are for them only prehistory, a dead and silent past.

Prehistory is a Western concept according to which those societies which have not developed writing – or an equivalent system of graphic representation – have no history. This fits perfectly into the framework of evolutionist thought typical of Western culture. All we can say by way of reply is that writing was only one among many of the great inventions which regulated both relations between human beings, and with the natural and supernatural worlds. While it has the advantage of leaving traces for posterity, writing is not the only, or even necessarily the best, form of knowledge and transmission of a society's historical experience.

On the other hand, we know that in Tawantinsuyu there were specialist historians, as there are today in our Indian communities. Even a chronicler openly hostile to our forms of social organization was forced to register the indigenous means of recording history:

In addition there used to be, and still are, particular historians in these nations whose craft is inherited from father to son. We must also mention the great diligence of Pachacuti Inca who called together all the old historians from each of the provinces subjugated by him and of many others in this country. He kept them in Cusco a long time questioning them about ancient times, the origins and the notable things in the whole country. And when he had properly ascertained all the most important elements of their antiquities and history, he had everything painted in order on great wooden boards, and arranged a large room in the Temples of the Sun where they placed these boards decorated with gold. They were like our libraries; he established learned people who knew how to interpret them and tell their meaning. Nobody could enter the place where these boards were except the historians themselves or the Inca unless by express permission of the King.

(de Gamboa 1942, p. 54)

This specialist, independent development of a historiographical tradition, universalized as 'official history' under direct State control, stagnated and went backwards as a result of the colonial invasion. In a way, we were condemned to

inhabit prehistory, and to know our own past only in a clandestine way in the darkness of the night, that is, by oral tradition, which is transmitted from one generation to the next, and especially by myth, which has become the vehicle for our history and archaeology. These academic disciplines as practised by our oppressors treat us as part of prehistory, and undoubtedly they see in myth one more example of our 'backwardness'. We cannot, however, afford to abandon myth since it is a form of knowledge of our past, and a deposit of our own modes of thought and historical interpretation. Myths form the main basis of our historiography and philosophy of history.

The myth of the world ages: liberty and order in our autonomous history

History, not only in the (Andean) Indian version, but also as a universal human concept and heritage, can be understood as a process of transforming and ordering the internal relations of society and the relations between society and nature which nourishes it.

In the mythical account of the world ages (*pacha*) independent Indian society passed through four distinct ages.⁶ The first, the time of darkness (*ch'amakpacha*) was the origin of human life. That long night of birth has left no record; it develops without internal differentiation in total darkness (*ch'amaka, tuta*). This age was succeeded by the *sunsupacha*, the age of silliness or the nebulous age of childhood. Human beings were not distinguished from animals and other creatures of nature, and animals intervened actively in social life. We are still living out the consequences of many of these interventions today. In the *sunsupacha* a distinction between society and nature also begins to emerge.⁷ It is the time of confrontation between humans and animals, revealed in many myths which show how society and nature re-establish a new balance.

An example of this is the myth of the 'Son of Jukumari', a type of bear which inhabits the tropical frontiers of the Andean world. The bear gathers wild pepper (*ulupika*) to exchange with humans and has a son by a girl whom he seduces. The boy when he grows up is extraordinarily strong, and kills people with a flick of his finger. He is able to defend himself against the attempts of the local people to get rid of him, but in the end he is killed in the forest. All versions of this myth end with the question: 'What would have happened if the Jukumari's son were still alive?'

The first two ages are obviously mythical. They are followed by two more which represent civilization and include more directly historical elements. The third age or *pacha* is that of the *chullpa*, the population living before the expansion of the Inka state which practised burials known by the name *chullpa*. These people practised agriculture and had domesticated animals; they left behind burials and remains of pottery and metalwork, and also numerous food plants which are thought to be the predecessors of those grown today. Thus the *q'apharuma* is the previous form of the potato, *ajara* of quinoa grain, and *illamankhu* of *kañawa* grain.

They were succeeded by the culminating moment of the *inkapacha*, a time when humans, personified in the Inka himself, ordered both society and space. For example, one myth tells how Mount Illimani grew too tall and was threatening to unbalance the earth; the Inka decided to put a stop to its growth so he made it fall down and sent the highest peak to the western part of the cordillera, where today it has become the volcano of Sajama. The Inka age is also remembered as an age of plenty, of agricultural production and social order. Nobody died of hunger, there was enough of everything and the earth's wealth was at the disposition of humanity. When anybody committed a wrongdoing the Inka as a punishment made them pull up *wichhu* grass, and under it silver appeared. People also say that the huge buildings of the Inka period were created as a result of his power over nature: he gave orders and the stones moved into place of their own accord.

This independent historical development, representing a progressive ordering and differentiation of human society, was violently brought to an end when foreign forces burst onto our civilization and invaded Tawantinsuyu. The Inka was killed by the Spanish and order was broken and eroded. This event is also recounted in myths: the Inka used his control over natural forces to order the sea to enclose the Spanish. The Spanish were saved by the treachery of an Indian; this enabled them to take the Inka king prisoner, and to justify their rule because he was unable to read the letter brought to him from the King of Spain by the soldiers. Before he died the Inka ordered that all the wealth should be hidden, and put all his cities, fortresses, and sacred places under a spell. As a result they are all underground and frozen in time. The spell will last until Indian society frees itself from its oppressors.

Jichhapacha: the present colonized age

While historiography was rigorous, scientific, under the Inkas, the rupture that resulted from colonization condemned our forebears to orality and illegality. Myth, an 'underground' means of transmitting and reflecting on history, was used to keep alive our memory. In Andean thought, there is a concept – *pacha* – which unites the two dimensions of space and time; *pacha* was unified so long as our society controlled both dimensions. Colonization meant for us the loss of control over time, that is over history, but not over space; one of the ways we think of our fight against the rupture of colonialism is through mythical thought, for example our aim is to reunite time and space in the unity of *pacha*.

Although our lands suffered one incursion after another under the colonial order, we still basically control them and thus our own space. History on the other hand was stopped in its tracks: Tawantinsuyu was cut off in 1532 and history will only recover its coherent course by going back in time to when that rupture occurred, truncating our historical development. This in turn can only be achieved within the forms and spaces in which our collective life is lived, the *ayllus*. *Ayllus* are the social units on which Andean society is based; although

quite fragmented today they remain the vital centre of our cultural and social life, of our relationship with nature and with our forebears.

What has occurred in the course of the long period of colonialism? Have we just become part of nature, part of the land? Have we just vegetated? The answer is no; in a clandestine way *pacha* and the historical development of our autonomous time are maintained. From the moment of the colonial rupture, Tupac Amaru I and all the Incas of Willkapampa took up the struggle to recover continuity of time, and preserve the unity of *pacha*.⁸ Since then, intermittently anticolonial movements flower on the surface, like flashes in which we momentarily regain control over our history and our identity as historical subjects. This process continues through movements like that of Tupac Amaru II, the Katari brothers, Zárate Willca and Santos Marka T'ula, violently bursting into the world of civilization in an attempt to overturn and thus restore the course of history.⁹ In the most recent bursting forth (1952-3) we managed to destroy the feudal estates and restore our identity as historical subjects, but in that case only as individual subjects. Meanwhile Bolivian historiography merely treats us as a background – part of the landscape – except during times of war when we become useful as cannon fodder, for example the Chaco War (1932-5).

Chukir Qamir Wirnita: savagery and freedom versus civilization and colonial subjugation

Let us follow the lead of myth in order to examine the ways in which the Indians confront the colonial order. The myth of Chukir Qamir Wirnita tells of an event that supposedly occurred in colonial times, but it is also reproduced again and again in contemporary history. The myth is well known in my community, which is located along the frontier between the high Andes and the tropical forest to the east.

Chukir Qamir Wirnita was the daughter of the most noted citizen of a Spanish town, which like all colonial towns was an enclave within a large territory beyond its control. Although many suitors came to court her, she accepted the suit of one called Katari, which in Aymara means snake. This personage appeared as a human being (as in the age of *sunsupacha*) – a fair-skinned Spaniard with elegant clothes and covered in jewels. He only came at night, and by day after visiting her would slither back as a snake to sleep in his cave (*chinkana*). The girl's parents realized that she was being wooed by a stranger and tried to find out who he was. By a trick they discovered that he was a snake living deep in the most dense part of the forest. (As is well known, for Christians the snake is the personification of the devil.)

However, the affair between Katari and the Spanish maiden had already gone far, and she was pregnant. Her children were also born as snakes, and her parents decided to burn these offspring of the devil and exorcise their daughter. But when they tried to do so they were cast under a spell. The area which had been controlled by the Spanish was invaded by snakes who brought darkness to the light of day. Ever since the town has remained under this spell. When an

Indian goes there without bad intentions Wirnita herself looks after him, but people who go there in search of gold or to try and undo the spell lose all their wealth. The bewitched town is guarded by snakes and the Spanish and whites try to set off the church bells by firing their rifles in order to break the spell and return to civilization.

Other versions of this myth say that the snake children of Wirnita still live in particular church towers, for example, in Sicasica, Peñas and San Francisco in La Paz. All these places are of central importance to Aymara colonial history.¹⁰ In the case of La Paz there is a belief, or a hope, that one of these days the whole city will be bewitched by the *kataris*, that is, that civilization will be invaded and taken over by darkness and 'savagery'.

This myth is constantly re-created. For example, between August and October 1979 people said that a new Wirnita had appeared in the town of Viacha and she had given birth to her children in the public hospital in La Paz. The news was even broadcast on the radios, although they added that since it was only a 'superstition' no one need worry about it. Nonetheless, many people went in search of her and many claim to have seen her. People said that the city of La Paz would soon be bewitched by the *kataris*. The fact is that in November of the same year, the whole country was convulsed by a series of peasant mobilizations of which the most radical centre was among the Aymaras of the altiplano. Road blocks were established and lasted over two weeks, repeating in a way the siege of La Paz by Tupac Katari in 1781. No agricultural produce could reach the city and people were terrified by the prospect of an Indian invasion. These events are another indication of the historical power of myth. The ideological climate of anticolonial resistance and the hope of victory over our oppressors contributed to this historic mobilization of the Aymara peasantry, and was an important ingredient in this apparently spontaneous action.

Cyclical vision of history

It seems clear that a cyclical vision of history is typically found in societies affected by profound crisis. This it seems is why Toynbee (1946) offered a cyclical philosophy of history at a time when the West was plunged in crisis and looking for some divine plan to save it from the Depression of the interwar period. It also explains Carr's (1961) refutation of Toynbee at a time when Europe was emerging from the mire (see also *Who needs the past?*, also in the One World Archaeology series).

Since 1532, Tawantinsuyu has been in crisis. It seems likely that our concepts of history have not always been cyclical, and that Indian culture developed this vision under colonial domination as a defence mechanism and as a means of recovering its historical destiny. In any event, it is clear that colonial oppression has been a major factor in shaping our own ideology.

While our process of development started from darkness (the first age of *ch'amakpacha*), the arrival of the colonial power forced on us a foreign light which turned our own light to darkness. For this reason, as can be seen in the

myth of Chukir Qamir Wirnita, the victory of darkness over light is also the victory of our own freedom over a light which for us has meant oppression and disorder.

Our freedom movements are therefore orientated around the theme of return, and of the positive value of 'savagery' as a means of liberation from colonial oppression. The leaders of Indian movements give up their civilized Christian names and adopt names which to Western eyes conjure up the spectacle of the devil. Often they become snakes in order to uproot a 'civilization' which is pernicious and chaotic. For example, of the leaders of the great uprising against the colonial order in the late 18th century, those of the Chayanta region already bore the surname Katari; Julian Apaza, leader of the uprising round La Paz took the name Tupac Katari, and José Gabriel Condorcanqui, the leader in the Cusco region, was called Tupac Amaru (*amaru* also meaning snake in Quechua). At such times, often the use of Western clothes is forbidden by Indian insurgents (see for example Lewin (1957) in the 18th century, and Condarco (1977) for the Aymaras at the end of the 19th century).

But return is not simply going backwards; it means the recovery of our independent history. Since colonial times the wheel of our own history has not moved on; time has stagnated, damaging and imprisoning us. We wish to move on in pursuit of our own vision, a vision which is both in the past – before 1532 – but also in the future. For this reason it is essential to return to the past. This does not mean to push the wheel of history backwards, but that we ourselves set it turning once again.

This idea of history, rooted in the experience of anticolonial resistance, can be clearly illustrated by means of two concepts, one which we have used throughout this chapter – *pacha* – and a second, *nayra*, meaning both the eye and the past.

Pacha as time/space

Let us start with the most concrete uses, such as the seasons: *jallupacha* means the season of rains (Aymara: *jallu*, rain); *juyppipacha* is season of frost, *awtipacha* dry season, and *lapakpacha* the season of scarcity. These seasons are linked to agricultural tasks and to different spatial locations (sowing, harvest, making *ch'uñu*, journeys to other climatic zones), and they follow on from each other through the annual cycle. *Pacha* refers to a specific time: *ukapacha* means that time, that period. *Ukapachay ukhamanx*: at that time things were like this.

Longer time periods, and historical stages which refer to less specific time-spans, are also expressed by the concepts of *pacha* as we have already seen in discussing the mythology of world-ages. According to Szeminski (1985) these ages each last a millenium; for Chukiwanka (1983) they are spans of 500 years. Each span has a spatial referent or *suñu*. In Chukiwanka's reckoning we are today living in the fifth world-age, which is the age of disorder and chaos. It will soon be ended, and will be replaced by a cyclical return to the independent temporal order of Indian society.

Pacha can also designate a spatial orientation. The sky can be called *pacha*;

when it is cloudy we say *pacha q'inayataway*, and as a joke we call very tall people *pacha k'umphu*, which means 'holder-up of the sky'. Probably through the impact of Christian ideas the cosmic division of space acquired a value distinction; thus *alaxpacha* is heaven, the upper space, and also the most venerated; *akapacha* is the world we inhabit, and *manqhachacha* is hell or the underworld.¹¹

Another well-known context in which the concept *pacha* is used is the living space of *pachamama*. White Bolivians translate this concept as 'the earth mother', but according to Aymara tradition it is related more to the principles of fertility, nourishment, and protection, and is a cosmic category distinguished from the physical earth (known in Aymara as *uraqi*). *Pachamama* has a relation of correspondence and reciprocity with Indian society, offering food as the fruit of labour, which for us is a source of pride not a curse. The agricultural cycle is marked out by ritual offerings and libations to *pachamama*. The sowing is a propitiatory rite, a feast both for humans and for draught animals, which are decorated with vicuña skins, flowers, and flags. *Qhachwa* and *anata* are ritual dances performed to ensure a good harvest and offered to *pachamama* at specific moments in the agricultural calendar. In August too there are rituals in order to renew the reciprocal relationship with *pachamama*. This celebratory and festive spirit has been turned into 'devil worship' by Christianity, so that today the month of August is said to be the 'devil's month', a time when the earth's mouth is open and hungry for sacrifices.

Then there is *akapacha* which means both the present time and the space inhabited by humans, the 'here and now'. It can be called 'our space-time' (*jiwaspacha*), which also means 'we ourselves'. Thus the term *jiwaspacha* expresses the unity between humans and the space around them, in a harmonious relationship which was broken by the chaos of colonial time.

Nayra

In its basic and restricted sense this word means the eye, the organ of sight, but it also means the past. The past is as it were in front of our eyes. By contrast the word *qhipa* which means literally the back, is used to refer to time after, i.e. the future. We thus reach a concept of time in which the future is behind our backs and the past before our eyes, both in time and space. The present brings together this conjunction between past and future, and between space and time.

A phrase which vividly expresses this is *qhiparu nayaru uñtas sartañani*. Literally it means 'let us go backwards looking in front of our eyes', but translated meaningfully it is 'let us go into the future looking into the past'. The authorities of the ayllu, when they hand over office to their successors, end their speech of advice to the new authorities (*iwxá*) with this phrase. To look into the past, to know our history, to know how our people have lived and struggled throughout the centuries, is an indispensable condition in order to know how to orient future action. *Pacha* and *nayra* thus incorporate notions of both past, present, and future. The two words together (*nayrapacha*) mean the past, former time, but former time is not past in the sense of dead and gone, lack-

ing any renovating function. *Pacha* and *nayra* imply that this world can be reversed, that the past can also be the future.

If we were to talk of an Aymara philosophy of history, it would not be a vision of forward progress as a simple succession of stages which develop by the process of moving from one to the next. The past is not inert or dead, and it does not remain in some previous place. It is precisely by means of the past that the hope of a free future can be nourished, in which the past can be regenerated.

It is this idea which makes us believe that an Indian archaeology, under our control and systematized according to our concepts of time and space, could perhaps form part of our enterprise of winning back our own history and freeing it from the centuries of colonial subjugation. Archaeology has been up until now a means of domination and the colonial dispossession of our identity. If it were to be taken back by the Indians themselves it could provide us with new tools to understand our historical development, and so strengthen our present demands and our projects for the future.

Notes

- 1 *Wak'a* is a concept of the sacred which embraces the works of humans as well as the deities. Thus Mount Illimani which dominates the city of La Paz is a *wak'a mallku*, which in Aymara means high god. Below Illimani in rank come other intermediate deities in more accessible, even everyday, locations which are called *katxasiri* and may be individual as well as collective. Finally there are the *illas* materialized in an object which may be kept in the house or carried around. 'Historical' *wak'as* on the other hand are not deities nor created by deities, but are the work of human hands.
- 2 A point confirmed to me recently in an interview with two Bolivian archaeologists – Roberto Santos and Juan Faldin – from the National Institute of Archaeology (INAR).
- 3 *Ayllus* are the basic units of Andean society; in the Aymara region they are in principle endogamous and territorially based.
- 4 Tawantinsuyu is the Quechua name for the Inka state, meaning literally the 'four divisions'.
- 5 Adolfo de Morales is known mainly for his genealogical researches in the Archivo General de las Indias in Seville, where he concentrates on demonstrating the noble ancestry of members of the Bolivian ruling elite. As a result of his 'researches' it has been 'proved' that almost all of them are direct descendants of El Cid!
- 6 The concept *pacha* has multiple resonances in Andean languages. These will be discussed below (see the final section of this chapter).
- 7 *Sunsu* is a Spanish word – *sonso* – which has been incorporated into Aymara. It may have replaced the Aymara term *q'inaya*, which means a cloud or fog, and is used to refer to children in that they lack the faculty of reason. If this is the case, it would support my argument that the early mythical ages reflect the stages of human growth.
- 8 The Andean forces of resistance to the Spanish withdrew under Manco Inka to the forests of Willkapampa (written Vilcabamba in Spanish) after their unsuccessful siege of Cusco (1536). The Inka state in Willkapampa maintained its resistance to the Spanish until 1572, when Tupac Amaru, the nephew of Inka Atawallpa, was captured and beheaded.

- 9 Tupac Amaru II and the Katari brothers were leaders of the great Indian uprising of the late 18th century. Zárate Willka led the Aymara forces against those of the Bolivian republic in the so-called 'Federal War' of 1899 (see Condarco 1984); Santos Marka T'ula led a massive resistance movement against the attack on Indian land rights in the first decades of the 20th century (see THOA 1984).
- 10 Sicasica was the birthplace of Zárate Willka; Peñas was the centre of his resistance to the republican armies; and San Francisco was the first 'Indian church' built after the city of La Paz was founded. It remains a neighbourhood particularly dominated by the Indian population.
- 11 See also Bouysse-Cassagne & Harris (1987) for a further discussion of the concept *pacha*, and Platt (1983).

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