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Putting Race in Its Place: Order in Colonial and Postcolonial Peruvian Geography*

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THIS ARTICLE discusses the importance of images of order within the social sciences through a close examination of a single case defined by temporal, spatial, and disciplinary boundaries—the geography of Peru. A comparison of the radically different systems of geographical thought in the Spanish colonial and independent republican periods suggests that the distinct images of order in each period can best be understood, not as reflections of the underlying order of geographical phenomena on the earth's surface, but as products of the specific social, cultural, and political contexts in which these geographies developed. Summarized in the briefest terms possible, colonial orderings emphasized historicized racial differences among persons within a relatively balanced and homogeneous space, while postcolonial orderings stressed naturalized regional differences among places within a homogeneous, though covertly racialized, population. Three distinct impulses to order can be noted in both periods. The first, here termed the disciplinary impulse to order, consists of the tendency for specialists in a particular field of knowledge (in this case, geography) to discuss concepts, ideas,

and evidence in a coherent and systematic fashion. The second, the administrative impulse to order, rests on the tendency of government officials (in this case, agents of the Spanish and Peruvian states) and specialists in a field of knowledge to establish long-lasting ties with one another, so that the field is in part shaped by structures of the state. The third, here termed the hegemonic impulse, rests on the importance of such fields of knowledge in shaping cultural debates, both by establishing certain viewpoints as unchallengeable common sense or truth and by challenging and subordinating alternative viewpoints. The disciplinary impulse to order focuses on the aspects of work within a field that are produced for other specialists in that field and received by them; the corresponding audiences for the administrative impulse are state officials, and, for the hegemonic impulse, society at large.

I do not wish to present these audiences—or the notion of audience itself—in an overly homogenized or concretized form, nor do I intend to claim that these three impulses to order can be found in all fields of knowledge in all places and times. The questions of impulses to order are widely debated in a number of areas. In this article, I do not attempt to offer resolutions to disagreements among Foucauldians or among specialists in the burgeoning field of the history and philosophy of science. However, I seek to underscore the coexistence of multiple impulses to order, and, moreover, to suggest that notions of impulses to order may be applied to a variety of fields of knowledge, rather than being restricted to those fields which may be termed “science” or “social science.”

There are a few specificities of the history of Peruvian geography that should be borne in mind, in addition to the great diversity of Peruvian landscapes and people. As I discuss in the next two sections of this article, the transition between the two periods of this field of knowledge overlaps, but does not precisely coincide with, two other changes, the Peruvian instances of global transitions: from colonial rule to the

postcolonial state and—to name a crucial, if elusive, shift—from premodern to modern thought. The three following sections examine these transitions by considering more concretely the representation of three types of objects of geographical study: settlements, mountains, and Indians. These sections demonstrate the complexity of the relations among different impulses to order. In the conclusions, I consider some recent Peruvian geographical discourses in relation to the current national economic and political crisis and to the reconfiguration of global politics in the post-cold-war era.

The Colonial Geographical Ordering: Cosmos, Humors, and Words

The period of “colonial geography” discussed in this article does not correspond precisely to the period of Spanish rule of Peru, conventionally understood as running from the Spanish conquest of the Inca empire in 1532 to Peruvian independence from Spain in 1821. The first decades after the conquest were marked by Indian uprisings and wars between factions of Spaniards; the fragmentary and anecdotal nature of geographical writings in this period reflect the newness and unfamiliarity of the New World.¹ The colonial geography considered here began in 1574 with a series of administrative documents known as *relaciones geográficas* which report about many local features such as climate, rivers, soils, agriculture, mining, and medicinal plants.² These *relaciones*, most of them written between 1579 and 1586, laid the framework for the colonial

¹ Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), pp. 2, 3, 8–14, 22.

² Howard F. Cline, “The *Relaciones Geográficas* of the Spanish Indies, 1577–1586,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 44 (August 1964): 341–374; Pablo Macera and Felipe Márquez, “Informaciones geográficas del Perú colonial,” *Revista del Archivo Nacional del Perú* 8 (1964): 133–247; Walter Mignolo, “Cartas, crónicas y relaciones del descubrimiento y la conquista,” in Luis Iñigo Madrigal, ed., *Historia de la literatura hispanoamericana: Tomo I, Epoca Colonial* (Madrid: Ediciones Cátedra, 1982), pp. 57–116.

geography that continued through the synoptic views (*descripciones*) of the seventeenth century,³ and through the spurt of reports in the second half of the eighteenth century when the Bourbon monarchs sought to establish more effective control over their colonies.⁴ The end of the colonial geography can be dated to the 1790s. At that time, the American-born Spaniards, who were faced with the consequences of a massive Indian uprising in the previous decade and who were increasingly exposed to new European thought, began to question the imperial view of their territory.⁵

An additional set of colonial geographical texts was the *itinerarios* (itineraries), or lists of towns and settlements, with the distances between them given in leagues (*leguas*, the distance a man would walk in an hour). These itineraries in particular convey a sense of the confidence of the geographers and officials: the recording of distance in leagues suggested that the roads were maintained well enough for travelers to make plans for their journeys. Moreover, the entire region was presented as being under imperial control, since these settlements were rarely more than a half-day's walk apart, and, though some of them were quite small, they were all able to receive royal officials and other travelers. Heavily textual in nature, the itineraries were not supplemented by maps; they presumed that visitors would know local roads, or be able to inquire about them. The *relaciones geográficas* and *descripciones* were also often similarly lacking in illustrative material; some included plans (*traças*) of towns or harbors, but very few had general maps of the territories which they described. This textual, rather than visual, emphasis of the geographical reports reflects the methods of collecting information. The

³ E.g., Antonio Vázquez de Espinoza, *Compendio y descripción de las Indias occidentales* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1948 [1628]).

⁴ E.g., Cosme Bueno, *Descripción de las Provincias del virreinato del Perú* (Lima: Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, 1951 [1764-78]).

⁵ E.g., Hipólito Unánue, *Guía política eclesiástica y militar del virreinato del Perú para el año de 1793* (Lima: COFIDE, 1985), pp. ii-iii.

individuals assigned to prepare *relaciones geográficas* were given detailed instructions which consisted of a list of questions to ask the local inhabitants.

Despite its long history from 1574 to around 1790, the colonial geography is strikingly uniform. In this premodern conceptual order, important homologies linked God, the earth, the heavens, and the human body, so that "cosmos" is a more appropriate term than "universe" for the conception of the natural world. The *relaciones geográficas* and other sources drew heavily on the notions, derived from Greek sources, of two pairs of complementary principles, hot/cold and wet/dry. The four combinations of these paired principles gave rise to the four essences or elements of the natural universe (earth, air, fire, and water) and the four humors of the human body (blood, phlegm, bile, and melancholy). In this sense, the field of geography overlapped considerably with medicine, and with what might be called religion or history as well. The Greek principles of hot/cold and wet/dry were assimilated to the days of Creation as portrayed in the Book of Genesis.

The *relaciones geográficas* and later colonial sources emphasized the relative heat or cold, wetness or dryness, of particular places in Peru and the consequences of these qualities for the plants (*frutos*) which grew there and for human health and illness. A quality of somewhat lesser significance was the relative evenness of an area, phrased again in complementary oppositions of flat (*llano, raso*) or hilly (*áspero, montoso*). These oppositions were often presented as varying over a small distance, so that a single province could contain hotter and cooler portions, or flatter and hillier ones. A few colonial sources mentioned a division of Peru into three zones, the hot dry coastal plains, the cold wet *sierra* or highlands, and the zone called the "Andes," the hot, wet, forested country toward the Amazon. In referring to these three zones, one seventeenth-century geographer commented: "How divine Providence is, that there should be so much diversity on this earth which [all] lies under the one

Heaven."⁶ The terms for the coast and the highlands were used relatively little, and not presented in a systematic fashion. This admirable "diversity" was more often noted on the scale of particular provinces than for Peru as a whole.

The three impulses to order may be seen in this colonial geography. The disciplinary impulse comes from conventionalized methods of collecting information and from the existence of standard genres of geographical writing such as the *relación geográfica* and the itinerary. The administrative impulse is evident as well in the direct use which imperial authorities made of this information in such activities as collecting taxes and maintaining roads and ports. The hegemonic impulse may be noted in the legitimation of Spanish rule: Peru could be easily assimilated into Christendom, since its lands and inhabitants were governed by the same forces as those in Europe.

The Republican Ordering: Universe, Dimensions, and Vision

The precise date at which republican geography began in Peru is more difficult to establish than the corresponding date for colonial geography. It is possible to see some stirrings of change at the end of the eighteenth century, though Peru was far less active in this regard than other Spanish colonies such as Mexico and Colombia. Several texts written by creoles (American-born Spaniards) displayed an interest in the use of instruments for measurement.⁷ Moreover, the warm reception which the creoles gave Humboldt, the greatest of the nineteenth-century scientific geographers, in 1799–1803, and his successors later in the nineteenth century such as Pentland,

⁶ Vázquez de Espinosa, *Compendio y descripción*, pp. 363–364.

⁷ Unánue, *Guía política*, pp. ii–iii.; idem, *Observaciones sobre el clima de Lima y su influencia en los seres organizados en especial el hombre* (Lima: Comisión Nacional Peruana de Cooperación Intelectual, 1940 [1806]).

Tschudi, and Raimondi contrasts sharply with the suspicion and hostility which they accorded to earlier expeditions which sought to make maps and take measurements, notably the one led by La Condamine in the 1730s. (The number of scientific travelers greatly increased after independence in 1821, since republican governments lifted the Spanish restrictions on travel to the Americas.) However, these first initiatives did not lead directly to a new geography. In general, there was very little geographical writing in Peru during the first decades after independence. The country was caught up in conflicts among regionally based strongmen (*caudillos*).⁸ Central administration of the country was very weak, and economic production and commerce declined.

Much as colonial geography began only several decades after the Spanish conquest, the first major works of republican geography appeared well after independence. Unlike the colonial geography, though, the republican geography can be divided into periods of institutionalization. The first stage is that of the founders associated with the renewal of the central government in the 1850s, in turn a consequence of economic growth which followed the expansion of export production. Some local intellectuals and government officials were concerned with the lack of information about natural resources and with the imprecision of internal and international boundaries. They were also impressed by the determined efforts of foreign geographers to explore Peru. In the 1860s and 1870s, more than four decades after independence, several key works appeared. The first major republican map of Peru was printed in 1862 in Paris, where it won a prize at the International Exposition of that year. It was followed by an atlas in 1865. Important texts in this period include a synthetic

⁸ For a discussion of the partial coalescence of northern and southern Peruvian identities in the decades after independence, see Paul Gootenberg, "North-South: Trade Policy, Regionalism and *Caudillismo* in Post-Independence Peru," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 23 (1991): 273–308.

widely diffused, and form part of the everyday commonsense notion of their country held by the broad segment of Peruvian society that has some education in schools and speaks Spanish.

The republican geography drew heavily on the contemporary notions introduced by Humboldt and the later scientific travelers. These views describe a "universe" in which the earth is located in relation to the sun, the planets, and the stars. In describing the earth, absolute dimensions were used. Considerable effort was expended in the determination of latitude, longitude, and elevation of specific places. These dimensions were measured through the use of equipment rather than being determined by interviews. Geographers observed thermometers to determine temperatures rather than speaking with the local population about the climate. They used rods, cords, wheels, and chains to measure distances rather than counting the hours it took a man to walk.

The results of this research were also depicted in visual form. One of Humboldt's major scientific contributions, for example, had been the discovery that latitude was not the sole determinant of climate, as measured by mean temperature. He showed the effects of other factors such as elevation and proximity to the ocean. To depict the results of his investigations, he prepared isothermic maps of the world, in which points of equal average annual temperature were connected by lines. The fact that these isotherms wiggled to the north and south, rather than following parallels of latitude, demonstrated his discovery convincingly. Peruvian geographers followed such efforts to show the influence of these absolute dimensions by tracing the distribution of wild plant and animal species in terms of latitude, longitude, and elevation.

In the republican geography, the three impulses to order are also apparent. The emphases on measurement, training, and apprenticeship to foreign researchers show the disciplinary impulse. The administrative impulse is evident both in the development of natural resources and transportation and in

the clarification of internal administrative boundaries which supported the expansion of parliamentary regimes at the end of the nineteenth century. As I discuss in later sections of this article, the new focus on elevation supported a hegemonic function as well. It allowed a reconceptualization of mountains, and of the Peruvian nation in general, which in turn supported certain elite projects of rule. Moreover, new theories of the influence of environment on humans permitted a reworking of colonial racial notions.

Developments in Republican Geography: Settlements

One of the key early works of republican geography is Paz Soldán's *Geographical Statistical Dictionary of Peru*,¹³ an alphabetical listing of 33,023 named geographical features (settlements, rivers, mountains, and the like) in Peru, beginning with Abajo, a neighborhood (*barrio*) of the city of Jauja, and ending with Zuta, a town in the department of Amazonas. In preparing this work, Paz Soldán faced a number of problems with the duplication of names, with irregular orthography, and with contradictory claims in which a single district might be listed as belonging to several provinces. The issue that most troubled him, though, and that he took the greatest number of pages to discuss, was the one which he termed "nomenclature," the system of classification of human settlements. He wrote:

The king, and after [independence from Spain] the [National] Congresses have often given the pompous title of city (*ciudad*) to a miserable settlement (*población*); that of town (*pueblo*) to a group of disordered and scattered shacks; and that of village (*caserío*) to a set of huts distributed over a wide territory.¹⁴

¹³ Mariano Paz Soldán, *Diccionario Geográfico Estadístico del Perú* (Lima: Imprenta del Estado, 1877).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. xii.

Paz Soldán's exasperation is evident: at times ruling authorities have given grandiose titles to small settlements, at time these settlements appropriated the names for themselves. Moreover, even the pomposity of the titles was distributed unevenly:

[I]n Peru the nomenclature of settlements often varies between departments and even provinces, and the meaning [of a name of a type of settlement] is completely different from one place to another.¹⁵

He listed several examples of the confusion, not only between types of settlements but between settlements and landed estates (*fundos*). Such mixings could not be allowed to continue:

If a Geographical Dictionary of Peru were to classify certain settlements with these [different] names, nobody outside of Peru and even within Peru would have an exact idea of what it was that these names were trying to express; confusion would grow, and a wrong [*un mal*] would be perpetuated that should disappear in order so that classifications could become uniform. . . . I thought of retaining these old and capricious denominations, placing them within parentheses, but I desisted from my idea, because it would perpetuate an error or vice [*un error ó vicio*] which should disappear in order to increase national unity.¹⁶

He replaced the twenty-odd terms for settlements with two sets of three terms. The first set—city, town, village—classified settlements by size and administrative status; the second classified estates by their major products. Since these two sets were clearly distinct, they could be combined. A number of settlements were listed as a village or town located within a particular type of estate.

Concerned with regularizing typologies, Paz Soldán did not discuss a second sort of title whose removal he did not even

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. xii–xiii.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. xiii–xiv.

deem necessary to mention. The colonial and early republican governments not only granted settlements titles such as "city"—classificatory titles, one may call them—but also accorded them additional titles which may be called honorific. Huánuco, for example, was not merely a city in the colonial period; it was *La Muy Valerosa, Muy Noble y Muy Leal Ciudad de León de Huánuco de los Caballeros*, "the very brave, very noble and very loyal city of León of Huánuco of the gentlemen." It was founded in 1539 as Huánuco, but one royal official granted two additions soon after, León for the portion of Spain from which the city's founder came and "gentlemen" for the conquistadores who accompanied him, and another such official conferred the additional adjectives upon the city a few years later when it backed the Spanish viceroy during an insurgency.¹⁷ Nor were these titles an exclusively Spanish affectation; three official decrees between 1823 and 1845 bestowed on the small coastal town of Moquegua one classificatory title and two honorific titles for its support of Peruvian independence and other national causes.¹⁸ In his disparaging account of the irregularities in classificatory titles, Paz Soldán does not even mention his prior act of stripping away the honorific titles.

How are we to understand Paz Soldán's efforts to replace heterogeneity with order? Several of the impulses to order described at the outset of this article can be clearly detected. The disciplinary impulse appears in Paz Soldán's wish to list all the named places of Peru and to fit them into a set of categories. This impulse is, moreover, a modern scientific one, in that it seeks to derive its categories from a set of

¹⁷ Antonio Vidal, *Historia de Huánuco: primer ensayo histórico-monográfico de la ciudad de Huánuco, en homenaje a la cuarta centuria de su fundación española* (Huánuco: Imprenta El Seminario, 1938); José Varallanos, *Historia de Huánuco: introducción para el estudio de la vida social de una región del Perú, desde la era prehistórica a nuestros días* (Buenos Aires: Imprenta López, 1959).

¹⁸ Luis E. Kuon Cabello, *Retazos de la historia de Moquegua* (Lima: Editorial Abril, 1981), pp. 538–541.

measurements (the size and administrative function of settlements, the major products of estates) and to these categories for further acts of collection of information, such as the establishment of censuses and maps. (The alphabetical listing emphasizes the geographer as the creator of a system of order, in contrast to the colonial geographers, who reflected an order immanent in the world: their *relaciones geográficas* and *descripciones* listed places as the itineraries did, in the sequence in which a traveler could visit them, in their position in a natural and social order.) Moreover, the administrative purposes are clear. For a government to be able to allocate resources, to implement plans, to ensure the enforcement of laws, it must have some notion of the territory and population under its domain. Paz Soldán noted:

Here are three topics of great interest for a Nation: because, without knowing the number of its inhabitants, the [settlements] among which they are distributed and the distances which separate one town from another, nothing can be known or calculated, whether in [international] political negotiations, or in commercial matters, or in local interests.¹⁹

This administrative impulse is a highly general one, common to all states which seek to impose some central authority over a diverse national territory. Specifically Peruvian features, such as those found in republican descriptions of mountains and Indians, seem absent in so general a systematization as an alphabetical listing of geographical features.

The hegemonic impulse is clear as well. Paz Soldán might be seen as privileging the landed bourgeoisie through his attention to a typology of estates, but in this instance as well the estate-owners are silenced; the geographer needed do no more than to cast an eye over the property, noting the cattle or the sugar cane or the potato plants which placed the estate in one category or another. Like the rivers and mines to which Paz

¹⁹ Paz Soldán, *Diccionario geográfico*, p. xxi.

Soldán paid much attention, these estates were noted for their products, for their present and potential contribution to the nation's wealth. It was the state, more than any class, that Paz Soldán supported. His dictionary granted authority only to the officials in the capital. It no longer mattered that a Spanish king or an earlier Peruvian congress gave a title to a particular settlement, or that the inhabitants had become accustomed to speaking of themselves in particular terms. These separate acts led to a "confusion," and hence Paz Soldán was faced with the choice of "perpetuating" this confusion or replacing it with a coherent order. Settlements were distinguished by their administrative functions and their size, not by their histories or by their collective memories. Paz Soldán could conduct much of his work alone, consulting legal documents in Lima to determine the administrative status of settlements. For the size of populations—here tallied as equivalent citizens rather than the distinct castes of colonial society—he drew on a recent census, that is, on the simple countability of houses and human bodies. In his vision-centered geographic program, Paz Soldán simply did not listen to the local voices which tried to retain for themselves the traces of former history contained in their titles. Their cacophonous disorder could not even be preserved within parentheses. In his dictionary, Paz Soldán put Huánuco and Moquegua in their proper alphabetical positions. They both remained cities, though by the observation of the census-takers rather than by the grace of the king. They gained elevations, and more: Huánuco acquired a latitude and a longitude, Moquegua a mean temperature and humidity, and a magnetic declination as well.²⁰ In exchange they had lost their titles—their bases for asking the state to acknowledge their memories of their past.

These impulses to order at work in the foundations of republican Peruvian geography, however, are not simply the

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 413, 597–598.

reflection of independent states or modern societies at large, even though these impulses may be termed modern in that they seek to sever a multiplicity of specific ties to persons and places and to replace them with a single coherent impersonal system. These impulses have specifically Peruvian dimensions. As the following sections indicate, this geography reconceptualized elements present in the colonial geography, particularly mountains and Indians, in a new way which attempted to resolve the dilemmas of the newly independent elites: to administer a diverse territory and population, to justify their rule.

Developments in Republican Geography: Mountains

One of the obsessions of the nineteenth-century Peruvian geographers was measurement: to define settlements by their populations, to distinguish estates by their principal products. Living in a country with many mountains, they became fascinated with elevation as well. The development of portable instruments for measuring height was a necessary, but not a sufficient, precondition for this interest in elevation. (The key instrument for the direct measurement of elevation, the barometer, was invented by the Italian Torrecelli in 1644, and was used to measure the height of a peak in the French Massif Central as early as 1648.) When the French expedition, led by La Condamine, traveled to the Ecuadorian Andes in the 1730s and sought to make maps of highland regions, the local populations "viewed the expedition's mathematical ardour with incredulity and suspicion" and, in a brawl that got out of hand, killed the expedition's physician.²¹ Later generations in the same places and in Peru welcomed Humboldt, who arrived in 1799 with barometers and many other instruments, and

²¹ David A. Brading, *The First America: The Spanish Monarchy, Creole Patriots and the Liberal State 1492–1867* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 422.

supported his efforts to reach the peaks of the highest mountains in order to measure their elevations.

The emphasis on elevation was not simply a consequence of the ability to measure elevation, but part of an entire reconceptualization of Peruvian space and of the Peruvian nation in general. Where colonial geographers depicted mountains as interspersed with lower lands, republican geographers presented them as a single vast barrier, quite literally an insurmountable obstacle that prevented different regions from being connected to each other. In colonial accounts, mountains (*cerros*) were found throughout Peru. The lower hills of the coastal and jungle regions were not distinguished from the higher Andean summits. Indeed, the colonial texts strike present-day readers as unusual in their omission of any reference to specific mountains, including Peru's highest and most famous peaks such as Huascarán and Coropuna. Rather than measuring all mountains on a single dimension such as elevation, the colonial geographers classified mountains into types: the snow peaks that were the sources of rivers and, it seems, cold winds as well; the volcanoes that might erupt or cause earthquakes; the mysterious *cerros de piedra imán*, magnetic mountains. They also noted the relative flatness or hilliness of regions, but did not focus on absolute elevation. There are occasional mentions of cordilleras, in a rather unsystematized way (some cordilleras are described in terms of length or of the presence of branches, while others are not). These textual descriptions of mountains correspond to the use of a simple shape such as an inverted V or a semicircle open at the bottom as a sign for "mountain" on the relatively few maps that were produced. The shapes do not vary in height, and there is no association between a particular instance of the shape and a particular mountain. At most there is a line of such shapes which suggests a cordillera. These shapes are icons of mountainness rather than depictions of specific mountains.

Maps and other visual images were far more central to the

republican representation of mountains. The heights of specific mountains having been measured, it became possible to construct a topographic map of Peru, where points of equal elevations are connected by lines, much as Humboldt's isothermic map connected points of equal mean temperature. On such a topographic map, the western border of Peru (the Pacific Ocean) and the eastern border (the presumably conventional line separating Peru and Brazil) are roughly paralleled by two other lines which run from north to south: one line at an elevation of 2000 meters on the western slope of the Andes and another at 2500 meters on the eastern slope.²² These two lines divide the country into three regions: the highlands in the middle, flanked by the coast on the west and the jungle to the east (see Fig. 1, in which international boundaries are different from those at present).²³ These two particular elevations are thus very important in the division of the country into three zones which run from north to south. Had the geographers selected the 3000-meter contour, for example, the northern third of Peru would contain only a few islands of highland territory, since the passes which separate the coast from the jungle lie between 2500 and 3000 meters in this region. The highland zone in the central third of the country would be narrowed by the deletion of the lands below 3000 meters; only the southern third of Peru would contain a wide highland zone. Indeed, republican geographers disagreed on the precise borders of the highlands, though they all chose limits low enough to depict the highlands as a solid block down the center of the country.²⁴ These choices seem to have

²² Carlos Weisse, *Geografía del Perú para los colegios de segunda enseñanza y las escuelas especiales*, 3rd ed., rev. and enl. (Lima: Rosay, 1921), pp. 18–20.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

²⁴ Raimondi located these elevations at 4000 feet on the western slopes and 8000 feet on the eastern slopes (Paz Soldán, *Geografía*, pp. 132–150); an early text places them at 2000 meters on both sides (Cisneros, *Geografía*, pp. 8–9); a leading twentieth-century geographer, Pulgar Vidal, divides Peru into eight regions, readily arranged into two coastal, four highland, and two jungle regions, with the boundaries



Figure 1. A map of Peru, indicating three natural regions.

been dictated, not by the spatial distribution of plants and animals that might indicate natural regions, but by the conscious or unconscious tendency to depict the regions in terms which would correspond most closely to dominant ideological constructions of the Peruvian nation. These new altitudinal measurements did away with many of the mountains which had been described in colonial Peru, but they gave Peru something new in return: the highlands.

Of particular importance to this tripartite division is a specific form of visual representation: the cross section. Humboldt was the first to prepare such a diagram, around

at 2300 and 1000 meters (Javier Pulgar Vidal, *Geografía del Perú: las ocho regiones naturales del Perú*, 7th ed., rev. and enl. [Lima: Editorial Universo, 1972], p. 12).

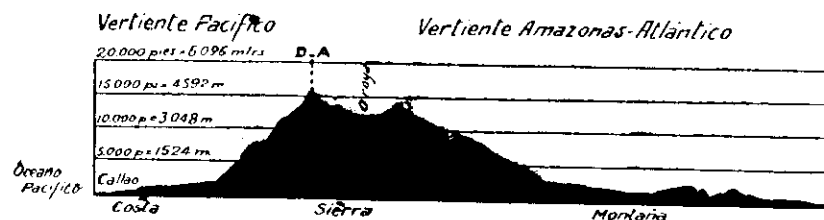


Figure 2. A cross-section of Peru.

1799, on the basis of similar cross sections which he had pioneered in Spain. These cross sections can be seen in a sense as a replacement of the colonial itineraries. Early republican geographical works on Peru often copied the account by Raimondi of an imaginary walk across Peru, what some ecologists and geologists would now term a "transect." Raimondi places the hiker, presented as a solitary European male, on the coast, and then follows his ascents and descents as he passes across the two major cordilleras of the Andes. Raimondi carefully describes the vegetation which he encounters with each change of elevation on his ever-eastward trek.²⁵ This cross section has become widely generalized in Peruvian geography. The reports of the Geographical Society of Lima in the 1890s contain a number of them. They also appear in the geography texts of the early 1900s. As a typical cross section from an early geography textbook shows (see Fig. 2, in which elevation is greatly exaggerated and the three regions are listed at the bottom),²⁶ these visual representations emphasized the solidity of the Andes, as well as the generally undefined and unexplored nature of the jungle that drops off to a somewhat low elevation in the east, so different from the sharp definition of the coast, precisely limited at sea level.

What was it that led republican geographers to reconceptualize mountains, highlands, and regions so broadly? Disciplin-

ary impulses may be evident here, since the wish to record elevations of peaks may have come from an enthusiasm for modern science, from an enjoyment of playing with new equipment, or from the excitement of the climbs themselves. The administrative impulse is present as well, particularly in the connection between mapping and the construction of transportation routes. The debates over the best routes for a road from Lima over the mountains to the rich coffee plantations and rubber zones of the jungle could be resolved by accurate topographical information. Hegemonic impulses are also significant, since the tripartite division presents the highlands as an obstacle to national integration, most immediately because they impede the movement of goods and people from other regions to the coast. These tropes of "obstacle," "integration," and "progress" are central to the hegemonic impulse in republican geography. Where the colonial sources described the richness of Peru in positive terms, as promoting the area's prosperity and as leading humans to admire God's creation, the republican sources emphasized the tasks which needed to be done. Civilization must march inward from the coast, cross the highlands, and reach the jungle. As I discuss in later sections, these images pervade national discourse; they frame many national political projects, and they even strongly influence many oppositional voices.²⁷

Developments in Republican Geography: Indians

The gap separating colonial and republican geographical thought is even greater for the case of Indians than for those

²⁵ Antonio Raimondi, *El Perú* (Lima: Imprenta del Estado, 1874-79).

²⁶ Weisse, *Geografía*, p. 26.

²⁷ For the important case of the movements to favor Indian rights, see José Tamayo Herrera, *Historia del indigenismo cuzqueño, siglos XVI-XX* (Lima: Instituto Nacional de la Cultura, 1980); idem, *Historia social e indigenismo en el altiplano* (Lima: Ediciones Treintatrés, 1982).

of settlements or mountains. Peruvians have almost always disagreed about the characteristics by which Indians may be defined. The criteria have included linguistic and cultural practices, legal categorizations, and self-definition, as well as biological, racial, and phenotypic characteristics. Moreover, the attribute that may be called "Indianness" varies from period to period, much like the "urbanity" by which settlements are defined or the dimensions that separate areas that are more mountainous from others that are less so.

The legal and administrative systems of the colonial period were based on the notion of *castas* or racial categories, which distinguished among Indians, Spaniards, Africans, and mixed-caste types, and which assigned individuals to these categories on the basis of the categories to which their parents belonged. Within this three-race account of Peru, the Indians were a subject people, with a specific administrative status and a series of obligations to the state. Not only did the Indians form the majority of the population, but the colonial Peruvian economy would have been almost unimaginable without the fiscal contributions of the Indian head tax or without the Indian labor service, of particular importance in the mines. Despite this centrality of the Indians, the colonial geographical accounts described them in a rather matter-of-fact way, because of their ubiquity and because of alternate, nongeographical systems of accounting for them. The discussions about different races in Peru tended to be historical rather than geographical. With the emphasis on textual authority in this period, scholars debated over the proper means of identifying the Indians with classical and biblical texts, pondering whether some of the ten lost tribes might have traveled to the Americas, for example, or whether the Ophir described as the location of King Solomon's mines might have been in the Andes, much as the same scholars identified blacks with the Africans mentioned by Herodotus or with the

descendants of Noah's son Ham in the Bible.²⁸ These historical accounts played an important role in the consideration of the proper forms for Christian monarchs to administer pagan peoples whom they had conquered. The bulk of geographical writing began in the last third of the sixteenth century, when these debates were moving toward resolution and when Spanish administration in the Andes was becoming institutionalized. The geographical accounts simply noted the presence of Indians as they described each province, counting them separately, as they did Spaniards, blacks, and mixed-caste individuals. Indians were found throughout Peru, both in the areas under Spanish rule and in the unchristianized, unadministered, and unsettled zones in the Amazon inhabited exclusively by pagan Indians (*indios infieles*).

The republican geographers faced greater difficulties in conceptualizing the Indians. On the one hand, Peruvian governments moved toward abolishing colonial racial divisions among *castas* and replacing them with the universalistic notion of "citizen," a key element of the European models of revolution and nationhood which the republican elites often followed. On the other hand, economic and political pressures led to a series of improvisations which reduced, but did not eliminate, racial inequalities until African slavery and Indian tribute were abolished in the 1850s, and new forms of political domination sprang up, which were based in part on reworked versions of colonial racial discourses.²⁹ Moreover, the elites

²⁸ Antonello Gerbi, *The Dispute of the New World: The History of a Polemic* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1973); Brading, *First America*.

²⁹ Indian tribute remained crucial in the first decades of the nineteenth century (Christine Hünefeldt, "Poder y contribuciones: Puno 1825-1845," *Revista Andina* 7 [December 1989]: 367-409) and influential well into the twentieth century in some areas (Nils Jacobsen, *Mirages of Transition: The Peruvian Antiplano 1780-1930* [Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1993]). In some sense it has not entirely disappeared even in the present (Benjamin Orlove, *Alpacas, Sheep and Men: The Wool Export Economy and Regional Society in Southern Peru* [New York: Academic Press, 1977], pp. 160-161). For nineteenth-century forms of domination, see Florencia Mallon, *The Defense of Community in Peru's Central Highlands: Peasant Struggle and Capitalist Transition*,

had a genuine difficulty in providing a coherent image of their country: how were they to understand this territory and this people which they ruled? As many writers have pointed out, there are strong narrative elements to national discourse, in which different social sectors can be depicted as playing roles in the shaping of the national whole.³⁰ Were the new Peruvians, recently at war with Spain, to be associated with the Incas who had also fought the Spaniards? How were contemporary Indians to be connected to this pre-Columbian past? These quandaries over the representation of Indians were, of course, linked not only to the tasks of forming new national images but also to the numerous immediate issues of economic and political relations between Indians (whoever they were) and non-Indians.

Geography played an important role in giving order to this conceptual haze. Its character as a scholarly and scientific field gave it particular weight in the nineteenth century, when European culture was widely admired in elite circles. Where the colonial rule relied on historical notions to justify imperial control by linking it with the divine task of Christianization, the republican rule drew heavily on geography, and used its apparently firm depiction of the national territory to provide a basis for conceptualizing the nation as an entity in need of centralized leadership.

To represent Indians in geographical discourse, republican writers drew on theories of environmental determinism, which suggested that people were strongly shaped by the specific characteristics of the areas which they inhabited. In many

1860–1940 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983); idem, *Peasant and Nation: The Making of Post-Colonial Mexico and Peru* (Berkeley: University of California Press, forthcoming); Nelson Manrique, *Yawar Mayu: sociedades terratenientes serranas, 1879–1910* (Lima: Institut Français d'Etudes Andines and Desco, 1988).

³⁰ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 2d ed., rev. and enl. (London: Verso, 1991); Homi Bhabha, ed., *Nation and Narration* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990); Brackette Williams, "A Class Act: Anthropology and the Race to Nation across Ethnic Terrain," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 18 (1989): 401–444.

instances these ideas echoed more local notions of Indians and Indianness. The crucial link was the one established between Indians and the highlands: the Indians became the people of the highlands, the highlands the place of the Indians. Some of the founders of republican geography suggested that the Indians directly absorbed the qualities of the environment in which they lived. Paz Soldán, for example, naturalized the Indian as a direct product of the highlands. The absence of trees in the highlands rendered landscapes "sad"; the open vistas suggested an "isolation" of the individual, in contrast to the more social life in lower zones.³¹ Not only the mountain landscapes but their inhabitants, the highland Indians, were themselves sad and isolated; the silence and emptiness of the mountains corresponded to the abject sorrow of the Indians.³² These themes were maintained through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.³³ This equation of mountain landscape and Indian essence also appears in the dominant literary tropes for Indians. Many writers—both those who favored improved conditions for Indians and those who proposed assimilation—compared the Indians to rocks: tenacious and enduring but also silent and immobile.³⁴ By the early twentieth century, Indians were figured as metallic: copper-colored or bronze-colored, they resembled the metals contained in the

³¹ Paz Soldán, *Geografía*, p. 135.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 25–30.

³³ Cisneros, *Geografía*, p. 20. For a discussion of the role of criminology in the development of notions of Indians as a dangerous race and the highlands as a dangerous place, see Deborah Poole, "Ciencia, peligrosidad y represión en la criminología indigenista peruana," in Carlos Aguirre and Charles Walker, eds., *Bandoleros, abigeos y montoneros: criminalidad y violencia en el Perú, siglos XVIII–XX* (Lima: Instituto de Apoyo Agrario, 1990), pp. 335–367; for a discussion of these themes in concrete political events, see Benjamin Orlove, "The Dead Policemen Speak: Mestizo Accounts of the Killings at Mollocagua," in Deborah Poole, ed., *Unruly Order: Violence, Power and Identity in the Southern High Provinces of Peru* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, forthcoming).

³⁴ Alberto Flores Galindo, *Buscando un inca: identidad y utopía en los Andes* (Lima: Instituto de Apoyo Agrario, 1987), p. 314.

ores which they extracted in the highland mines, then undergoing an expansion.³⁵

These Indians, then, were not defined as members of a *casta* in a Christian and colonial order. They had become the inhabitants of a particular region. One of the most striking aspects of this reconfiguration is that it led to the disappearance of coastal and jungle Indians from geographical discourse. Though European linguists still found significant populations of speakers of indigenous languages on the coast at the end of the nineteenth century, and ethnographers in the 1940s and later found populations with distinctive indigenous customs, the geographers in the middle of the nineteenth century did not discuss them as ethnically or racially distinct.³⁶ In some geographical works the native peoples of the Amazon, who had been considered Indians in the colonial period, were redefined into new, more ethnographic categories, such as "aborigenes" or "primitive tribes." On other occasions, they were simply erased, and the jungle became an entirely unpopulated region—a place of mysterious allure, containing "exuberant" vegetation and untold wealth, a "zone on which the human foot has not stepped."³⁷

There is a good deal that could be said about the new study of Indians in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: the appropriation of what can be termed the "scientific racism" of Europe; the development of visual forms of representations, such as engraving and, later, photographs; theories of Indian inferiority based on physiological differences or addiction to

³⁵ Efraim Kristal, *The Andes Viewed from the City: Literary and Political Discourse on the Indian in Peru* (New York: Peter Lang, 1987). These metals may also be taken as a reference to pre-Columbian traditions of metalworking.

³⁶ Ernst W. Middendorf, *Die einheimischen Sprachen Perus* (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1890–92); Spanish translation of section on coastal Indians as *El muchik; o, Lengua de los chimu* (Lima: Peruanística, Sociedad Académica de Estudios Americanos. Serie Antropología, No. 1, 1960); John Gillin, *Moche: A Peruvian Coastal Community* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1945).

³⁷ Paz Soldán, *Geografía*, p. 147.

coca leaf. There was some serious medical research as well: Peruvian biologists and physicians were at the forefront of the study of human physiological adaptation to high elevation.³⁸ The principal contribution of geographical representation of Indians to the national elite discourses, though, was the association between the highlands and the Indians. Precisely like the highlands, the Indians became an "obstacle" which impeded "integration" and thus retarded national "progress," a virtual obsession of Peru after its defeat by Chile in the War of the Pacific. Many Peruvians attributed the defeat to the fact that Chilean soldiers, presumably of mixed Spanish and Indian origin, were superior to the Peruvian Indian soldiers.³⁹ Reviewing the defeat a few years after the war in 1888—the year of the founding of the Geographical Society of Lima—Manuel González Prada, a leading Peruvian intellectual said, "Indians of the highlands, mestizos of the coast . . . we did not win nor were we able to win." He continued: "The real Peru is not made up of the groups of creoles and foreigners who inhabit the strip of land located between the Pacific and the Andes; the nation is made up of the Indian masses spread along the . . . side of the cordillera."⁴⁰ This view represents a shift from the colonial descriptions, in which Indians and Spaniards were distributed throughout Peru, and the cordilleras were neither obstacles to travel nor themes of much interest. This instance of the hegemonic impulse seems to outweigh the administrative impulses described in earlier

³⁸ Marcos Cueto, "Andean Biology in Peru: Scientific Studies on the Periphery," *Isis* 80 (1989): 640–658; idem, "Entre la teoría y la técnica: los inicios de la fisiología de altura en el Perú," *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Etudes Andines* 19 (1990): 431–441.

³⁹ Jeffrey L. Klaiber, "Los 'cholos' y los 'rotos': actitudes raciales durante la guerra del Pacífico," *Histórica* 2 (July 1978): 27–37.

⁴⁰ Manuel González Prada, "Discurso en el Politeama," in *Páginas Libres y Horas de Lucha* (Lima: Biblioteca Ayacucho, 1976), pp. 45–46; cited in Florencia Mallon, "Nationalist and Antistate Coalitions in the War of the Pacific: Junín and Cajamarca, 1879–1902," in Steve J. Stern, ed., *Resistance, Rebellion, and Consciousness in the Andean Peasant World, 18th to 20th Centuries* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), p. 267.

sections, and the disciplinary ones as well. Peru was now faced with regional and racial separation which must be overcome: geography could measure these cordilleras and demonstrate them to divide the nation, much as it could measure the skulls of Indians and demonstrate their innate differences from other Peruvian races. The cross section came to be read in ways different from what Humboldt intended. It was not simply a picture to be examined at a single glance but one to be understood as a narrative, and read from left to right as the eye has been trained. The sequence of coast, highlands, and jungle is the story of national progress, an undertaking that had nearly been completed on the coast, that was underway in the highlands, and that had scarcely begun in the jungle. This process could be understood as the spread of civilization, as the integration of people and places into the nation-state, or as some combination of the two. The big obstacle in the middle of the picture was the mountains, the big obstacle in the middle of the narrative of progress was the Indians. At times the picture was reduced to a roughly triangular shape, an eternal mountain: was Peru the unchanging and unchangeable Indian, backward, brutish? This thought seemed to haunt elites. It served to limit and to constrain other voices, which would propose the Indians as actors to be involved in the shaping of national agendas rather than as obstacles to be transformed from outside.⁴¹ The spatialization of the Indian became a way to speak safely of race in an era of citizenship: the overt topic could be the integration of the highlands into the nation, while the subtext continued to be Peru's Indian problem.

The discourses of obstacles, integration, and progress have often taken concrete form as political projects. I will examine only a few examples, of which concern for the construction of

⁴¹ For an account of alternative indigenous visions of space and nation, see Benjamin Orlove, "Mapping Reeds and Reading Maps: The Politics of Representation in Lake Titicaca," *American Ethnologist* 18 (February 1991): 3-38.

railroads and roads is one. It might appear that road-building is part of the administrative function of states rather than part of its hegemonic domination. It may be difficult to separate these out, yet Peru offers a clear example of the latter, in which road-building occupied a key role in national imagination. One project in the 1950s and 1960s, for example, involved Fernando Belaúnde, an architect, who argued that his profession made him better prepared to lead the nation than conventional politicians. He spoke grandly of a second conquest of Peru, not by the Spaniards but by the Peruvians themselves. Drawing on a tradition of road-building schemes that dated back at least to the 1890s, he developed a blueprint for Peru's progress which rested on a set of roads. What was striking about his particular program, though, was not the location of these roads in relation to natural resources or populations, but rather the homologies between the roads and the tripartite division of Peru. During the periods when he proposed his grand road-building schemes, Peru had a number of two-lane dirt roads throughout the coast, highlands, and portions of the jungle, and only one paved two-lane road, the Panamerican Highway, that ran through the major cities of the coastal departments. The appeal of Belaúnde's proposal lay not only in his plans to build new roads but also in his scheme to rename existing ones. He proclaimed the paved coastal road or Panamerican Highway to be the Longitudinal Coastal Highway; he traced a line from north to south along the two-lane dirt roads in the highlands and declared it to be the Longitudinal Highland Highway; and he used the term penetration highways for the numerous roads which went to the highlands, and in some cases the jungle, from the coast. The roads that linked these penetration highways with each other and with the longitudinal highways were to be called interconnection highways. His particular contribution was to see the need of the missing piece, which he termed the Marginal Highway, a third highway which would parallel the Coastal and Highland Longitudinal highways but run entirely

through the jungle. This road would connect up with other such marginal highways in neighboring countries. Belaúnde spoke of the material advantages of this highway, particularly its ability to open new lands to settlement and to promote international trade. In fairly racist terms, he also spoke of the hope that this highway would redirect highland migration away from the coast and into the jungle:

One of our more pressing problems is to create new lands to work and homes for the growing wave of highland dwellers who are being slowly squeezed from their natal soil and overflowing across the peaks into the coastal valleys already saturated with humanity.⁴²

In fact, the contribution of the Marginal Highway was to the national self-conception: national integration would be completed when all three regions had their own longitudinal highways and when the highland and jungle highways were connected with the coast.

The striking point in this regard is not simply the notion that roads lead to national integration. There was, after all, great enthusiasm for the construction of the interstate highway system in the United States in the 1950s. The depiction of roads in the United States, though, consisted simply of giving even numbers to the roads that went from east to west and odd ones to those that ran north and south. Belaúnde's grandiose naming of roads resembles the bestowing of titles to settlements that Paz Soldán had termed "pompous"; both were successful efforts to create images of order, to make the inhabitants of poor and remote portions of the country believe that they had a connection to the centers of power. The Marginal Highway is a kind of counter-honorific title, because it was the highway that ran closest to the center of the country. In purely spatial terms, the Coastal Longitudinal Highway was

⁴² Fernando Belaúnde, *Peru's Own Progress* (Lima: American Studies Press, 1965), p. 141.

the marginal one that ran along the nation's periphery. The Marginal Highway was very expensive to build, since it ran through rugged zones subject to floods and landslides. In addition, it was highly impractical, since it ran through a good deal of territory unsuitable to colonization. It was never completed, though it led to an increase in the national debt because of Belaúnde's efforts to finance it. Perhaps it fulfilled only its most important tasks: to offer Peruvians the allegory of an architect as president, to persuade them to vote for this figure, and, more generally, to have them think, as Belaúnde wrote, that "the irascible and redoubtable conglomerate of mountains that is Peru's heritage will, in time, wear a web of roads as never before and, thus tamed, bow to inevitable progress."⁴³

The left-wing nationalist military government that replaced Belaúnde in 1968 also spoke of tripartition. This geographical image was particularly evident in its maneuverings to extend national control over Peru's offshore waters. Like many other third-world nations in the 1970s, Peru became involved in the international diplomatic efforts culminating in the 1982 United Nations Law of the Sea, which extended territorial waters from the established twelve-mile limit to 200 miles. This increase in national territory was very popular in Peru, and may well have gained the military government a good deal of support. The popularity of this measure was due in part to its depiction as the wresting of Peru's "fourth natural region" from the domination of the foreign fishing fleets which had previously controlled it. Many other nations received a similar increase in territory at this time, but this increase had a unique resonance in Peru. What was it that allowed people who had not previously considered abstractly the question of the defining attributes of natural regions of Peru to recognize the 200-mile swath of Pacific Ocean as such a region? Many

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 145.

features come to mind. The fourth region ran from north to south; it was homogeneous rather than diverse; it was defined by nature rather than by history; it was as different from each of the other regions as they were from each other; it could be integrated into the nation; it contributed to national progress. In this nationalization of the sea, as in the other projects, the multiple impulses to order coexist: a disciplinary impulse to measure nature, an administrative impulse to plan undertakings, and a hegemonic impulse to convince a nation of its character and destiny.

Conclusions

To most Peruvians, it seems quite self-evident that their country is divided into the three natural regions of the coast, the highlands, and the jungle, or, counting the sea, into four such regions. This division is not merely learned in elementary-school geography lessons but appears in everyday conversations about the country. In this sense, one specific geography has become a part of commonsense reality. This order has emerged from several impulses, some of them internal to the discipline of geography, others that are constructed when geographic study serves immediate state ends and when it offers a coherent vision of the nation. This order, too, is involved in challenging or obscuring other visions: those that claim that Indians are not simply an obstacle to the unfolding of national destiny, or those that question the transformative power of jungle roads.

I have argued that this order is not the only possible one to describe Peruvian territory. The colonial geographical order was quite distinct. It located Peru within a cosmos organized along complementary principles of hot and cold, wet and dry, and, to a lesser extent, hilly and flat. This order emphasized the position of Peruvians as Christians and as subjects of a Christian king. This cosmos was suffused with meaning: its diversity demonstrated the glory of God. This colonial

geographical order thus demonstrated the disciplinary, administrative, and hegemonic impulses characteristic of its age.

The republican geography also reflected the age in which it developed. It located Peruvians within a universe susceptible to absolute environmental influences such as elevation and temperature. Peruvians were citizens of a state, members of one nation in a world of nations. These nations were placed within history: the dominant narrative was one of progress, and geography could reveal the regional and racial obstacles to this progress.

How can these two ages, with their very different commonsense versions of Peruvian space, be defined? A simple divide between colonial and postcolonial regimes is not adequate, in part because of the imperfect fit between the timings of transitions between political and geographical systems, in part because some fundamental concerns in the histories of culture and science are involved, as well as issues of national politics. It is tempting to characterize the colonial geography as premodern, the republican geography as modern. The colonial geography resembles the sixteenth-century discourses and practices in a variety of fields of knowledge described by Foucault in *The Order of Things*: an examination of similitudes and correspondences between different realms; an emphasis on signification in the natural world as well as in the world of human activity; a focus on language and textuality, in which names were not arbitrary signs but a kind of thing in their own right; a reliance on human sensations (appearance, temperature, sound) to determine the qualities of objects. The postcolonial geography seems a clear instance of his description of nineteenth-century fields: an effort to account for the differences among classes of entities (social classes, regions, species, etc.); a heavy reliance on notions of temporal succession, especially on narratives of progress; an interest in genetic inheritance, on which new racial theories were based; a distrust of human sensation and a corresponding reliance on scientific instruments. How simple it would be to say that the

lingered for centuries, and that the nineteenth century arrived late as well, around 1860, and also lasted well into the twentieth century; how simple to attribute to a peripheral region such as Peru a tardy replication of Western modernity.

The case of Peruvian geography demonstrates the difficulty of applying so universal a notion of modernity. Europe, after all, did not leap from the traditional sixteenth-century order to the modernity of the nineteenth century, but passed through what Foucault termed the classical episteme of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The properties of this intermediate age seem to have been parceled out to Peru's two geographies, with the colonial period obtaining an emphasis on hierarchy and the republican period receiving a larger number of features: the reliance on vision and simple measurement, the efforts to prepare encyclopedic summaries of natural phenomena. The colonial and republican geographies, though, were not simply agglomerations of elements from different periods, but possessed a high degree of coherence, of what surely may be termed order. Rather than questioning whether Peru was truly modern, it seems more appropriate to question whether European countries such as France should provide the only instances of modernity. The Peruvian example, then, opens up the examination of the range of modernities.

In a similar vein, there seems to be no simple way to apply the category of modernity (and its possible variants, late modernity and postmodernity) to the current geographical discourses in Peru. As Peru faces a host of crises—the most severe economic decline in its recent history, the extreme violence of the Shining Path and the military, and other problems ranging from epidemics to the drug trade—a variety of new images of Peru are coming forth: the neoliberalism that proposes a dismantling of much of the state and an integration into the world economy; the Shining Path doctrines of revolutionary autarchy; the “Andean” programs of left-wing parties and popular organizations which propose drawing on highland utopian visions for national political ideologies; ethnic resurgence in the Amazon on the part of groups which

link up with indigenous movements elsewhere in the Americas and indeed in the whole world.⁴⁴ The neoliberals and the Shining Path oddly coincide on the erasure of regional differences within Peru and, ultimately, on the erasure of boundaries which distinguish Peru from the rest of the world: are these to be seen as highly self-conscious late modern visions of the acceleration of history, or as postmodern improvisation, Jamesonian pastiches of different discourses? Are the new Andean visions of the left and the Amazonian revivals to be taken simply as reshufflings of the three regions, established in the nineteenth century, or as postmodern improvisations which emphasize spatial characteristics over master narratives, which jumble elements from different cultural orders, and which reflect an extreme self-awareness about the constructed nature of identity?

These questions do not seem to admit facile answers, but they are important questions nonetheless, since they propose ways of linking Peru's transformations with those in other parts of the world. It would be arrogant to speak with confidence about the present as a time in which a third era of Peruvian politics was opening, and with it a third era of Peruvian fields of knowledge, including geography; it would be equally presumptuous to dismiss the magnitude of suffering and turmoil in Peru. At most one can draw modest lessons from the history of Peruvian geography, in which a comparison can be drawn between Peruvian and European transitions in fields of knowledge, showing some parallels and some distinctive features. (The relation between Peruvian and European geographies is, of course, a dialogue rather than an apprenticeship, since Peruvian geographers influenced the images which European travelers took back across the

⁴⁴ For a brief summary of neoliberalism, the Shining Path, and the left, see Deborah Poole and Gerardo Rénique, *Peru: Time of Fear* (London: Latin American Bureau, 1992); for the Amazonian Indians, see Xavier Albó, “El retorno del indio,” *Revista Andina* 18 (December 1991): 999–1000.

Atlantic.⁴⁵) In the current shifts as well, then, one may attempt to draw on concepts of late modernity and postmodernity without applying them rigidly. One can note, too, that issues of space and of geographical order are at stake in the current struggles over power in Peru and over the definition of Peru itself, much as they had been in the past. The enduring images of cities, of mountains, of Indians, so massively reformulated in the transition from colonial to republican geography, are once again the subject of profound debate.

Other Latin American countries are undergoing national questionings as well, even if they do not face at present such extreme political violence or increases in poverty as Peru. The definitions of national politics and societies must be reworked to accommodate the end of cold-war polarities and the collapse of the image of the revolution, the confrontation with images of "dirty wars" of the 1970s and 1980s, the opening to new trade relations, the dismantling of state economic sectors, the expansion of the drug trade. Nor are these dilemmas unique to Latin America, in a world which calls into question the most basic elements: Europe, the Middle East, China; markets, refugees, democracy; in a word, order, an order that is the product of multiple impulses, an order that exists within the framework of the fields of knowledge termed social science and outside them as well. The case of Peruvian geography demonstrates, if nothing else, the deep historical roots of these searches for order and the great persuasive capacity of images of order.

⁴⁵ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 111–197.

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description of Peruvian geography and a geographical dictionary which listed such named geographical features as rivers, mountains, towns, and provinces.⁹

There was another delay before the influence of these works spread. A crisis of national identity followed the disastrous War of the Pacific (1879–83), in which Chile defeated Peru and seized a number of coastal provinces with rich mineral deposits. After several years of disorder following the war, a strong central government was reestablished under Cáceres. He stimulated the second phase of republican geography, here termed the stage of consolidation. Cáceres encouraged the foundation of the Geographical Society of Lima in 1888, the first such organization in Peruvian history. Its founding members included a number of leading political figures and intellectuals, as well as several foreign geographers who had been active in Peru. Luís Carranza, who served as president of the society from 1888 to 1898, was representative of the society's members in several regards: the broad scope of topics which he studied, his concern with scientific observation and measurement, his interest in expanding commerce, and his wish to overcome the racial and environmental factors which he saw as limiting the prosperity of Peru. Carranza studied yellow fever and malaria in the jungle, with the expressed hope of developing means for white men to acclimatize themselves to this zone and to settle in it; he investigated the reasons for the aridity of the coast; he examined boundary disputes with Ecuador; he corresponded with French astronomers on meteor showers; he measured the heads of highland Indians as part of his effort to determine their physical, intellectual, and moral state and to find means of bringing them toward "progress" and away from their "hereditary vice" of laziness; he contacted English manufacturers about the possibility of developing new types of cloth from plants native

⁹ Mariano Paz Soldán, *Geografía del Perú* (Paris: Librería de Fermin Didot, 1862); idem, *Diccionario Geográfico Estadístico del Perú* (Lima: Imprenta del Estado, 1877).

to the jungle; he traced the courses of several jungle rivers.¹⁰ Other members of the society focused on additional tasks, such as the projection of routes for roads and railroads, archaeological surveys, and the ethnography of the Amazonian Indians.¹¹ As the Geographical Society of Lima expanded, several other societies split off it to focus on particular areas of geographical research. These new societies include the River Transport Board (1901), which developed steamship travel on the large rivers of the Amazon basin, and the College of Mining Engineers (1902), which oversaw the expansion of prospecting and development of mines. In this period of consolidation, new geographical images began to appear in political discourse as Peru addressed its concern over the recently diminished national territory and over the nature of the citizenry which suffered so humiliating a military defeat.

The third institutional phase of republican geography, diffusion, began around 1900. At this time, more than eighty years after independence, the first textbooks of geography appear, and geography began to be taught widely at all levels from primary schools to universities.¹² Some of these texts were heavily illustrated with photographs as well as charts and maps. Detailed maps of Peru began to be distributed more widely. The four-sheet map at the scale of 1:1,500,000 produced by the Geographical Society of Lima in 1912 was one of the first to have a mass circulation. This phase of diffusion continues to the present. Exposure to geographical texts may have been restricted principally to Spanish elites in the colonial period; republican geographical texts and images have become

¹⁰ "El Dr. D. Luís Carranza," *Boletín de la Sociedad Geográfica de Lima* 7 (September 1898): 121–136.

¹¹ "La Sociedad Geográfica de Lima," *Boletín de la Sociedad Geográfica de Lima* 33 (December 1917): 361–378; *La reorganización de la Sociedad Geográfica de Lima* (Lima: Sociedad Geográfica de Lima, 1944).

¹² Carlos Weisse, *Lecciones de geografía del Perú: estudio político, económico-industrial, administrativo* (Lima: Editorial Rosay, 1902); Carlos B. Cisneros, *Geografía del Perú, ilustrada con 75 láminas zincográficas y ocho mapas para enseñanza primaria* (Lima: Librería Gil, 1904).