

Apu Taytayku

Theological Implications of Andean Thought

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1. Introduction

The numerous essays on Andean religiosity speak practically without exception of the predominantly syncretic character of the theological thought and ritual praxis of the peoples of the Andean region. Though for many, this syncretism can be an impurity and sign of heterodoxy, it is first and foremost a historical fact and has to do with an extremely complex history of imposition, resistance and interpenetration. Religiosity is a cultural phenomenon, and as such it is subject to the organic processes which characterize social and ethnic groups.

Indeed it is well to recall that the Christian religion itself, even in its purest 'Catholic orthodox' form, is an eminently syncretistic product, fruit of the marriage between the Hebrew *ruah* and the Greek *logos*.¹

If we are to speak, then, of Andean religious syncretism, it is surely to be considered as a real synthesis and not simply as some sort of a juxtaposition of two incompatible conceptions. Andean religiosity² is a 'religion of mixed origin' in that there persists neither the thesis of a non-Christian Andean religion (as the ancient Inca religion was), nor the antithesis of a pure Christian religion (if such a thing ever existed). Instead, the Andean elements are Christianized and the Christian elements are Andeanized. Even the most Andean of rites has been penetrated by what is Christian, and the most Catholic liturgy is dyed by Andean colors and reeks of Andean fragrance. Now, of course, Andean religiosity cannot be described simply as a given and precisely defined phenomenon; it is rather what Max Weber would term an ideal type; it is manifested in one way or another, in form more or less complete, in the many separate peasant communities of the Andean region (Quechua as well as Aymara).

There are many works that offer phenomenological descriptions of the mestizo and syncretic features of Andean religiosity, its beliefs and rituals, its social organization and its implicit

¹ This syncretism can be appreciated even in the New Testament, specially in the Gospel of John and in the letters of Paul. The intellectual situation of Palestine and the missionary activity of the first Christians favored strongly the syncretizing of the Christian faith. Indeed it can be argued that Christianity separated from Judaism, at least partly, as a result of its potentiality for inculturation and syncretization.

² It is important to differentiate between 'Andean religiosity' and 'popular religiosity'. While Andean religiosity continues to exist under the influence of the most important conceptions of Andean thought, popular religiosity is the product of a gradual erosion of such conceptions due to the migration and the influence from outside. Theology of Liberation has as its main subject the 'people', defined without reference to ethnic distinction. Hence, the results of a polis on popular religiosity in Peru may tell us not much about Andean religiosity. Further, I prefer to speak of 'Andean religiosity' rather than 'Andean religion' because I deal with a set of practices, conceptions and non-defined of less dogmatized rituals, and not with an established creed within a given institution. Correspondently, the term "Andean thought" is preferable to "Andean philosophy" [in my latter publications, I correct this position: cf. Estermann, Josef (2006). *Filosofía andina: Sabiduría indígena para un mundo nuevo*. La Paz: ISEAT].

ethics. The purpose of this work is somewhat different.

The religious explanation of life and the world corresponds with certain felt needs and existential problems; hence its general framework as a piece of semantic interpretation is a set of values, conceptions and relationships that Germans call '*Weltanschauung*', and which we can translate as 'cosmovision'. Each such cosmovision is a pre-philosophical paradigm determined by a series of cultural, socio-economic and even climatological factors. No religious interpretation can be thoroughly neutral with respect to current cosmovisions; hence inculturation is as much an inevitable cultural event as an exigency of the Gospel. Religion is always inculturated. A certain 'classical' theology wanted to ex-culturate it in order to define its a-temporal and universal conceptual content once and for all. But no religion is a supra-cultural and a-historic entity. And a Protestant thesis of the cultural immunity of the faith is highly disputable.³

The conceptual horizon of the Christian religion in its origins was formed by the Semitic cosmovision, that is to say, oriental thought. However, the theologizing of this religion was accomplished within the Greek cosmovision, and the result was a very distinct westernization. Christian dogma manifest the fingerprints of Greek philosophy, and even today it is difficult to 'deculturize' or better, to '*dehellenize*' Christian theology.⁴

In the case of the indigenous peoples of the American continent, the Hellenic Western paradigm of the Christian religion was from the beginning confronted by several paradigms of native cosmovisions and an autochthonous religiosity. In spite of the fact that the Christian religion (the 'cross') was imposed through political and military power, and was meant to replace gradually the autochthonous religions, this did not quite happen at the level of cosmological paradigms or '*Weltanschauungen*'. Hence Andean religiosity (to limit our remarks to this concrete paradigm) is much more Andean than Hellenic. For example, although the official theological language gives expression to the Greek conceptions of essence, nature, person, substance, soul and body etc., the Andean people understand these terms within the horizon of their own categories. They can speak of the Trinity in these terms, but they understand it differently from the catechism, and European theologians like Rahner or Schillebeeckx.

For the *runa/jaqi*,⁵ the Christian religion has been andeanized in the depths of their hearts. One would speak also of the opposite process; the Andean has been Christianized, although this direction (as a moment of a dialectical movement) seems to be much more in accordance with the historical events of the evangelization. I think that the impact from the other side has been equally strong. Christian religion has experienced a strong reinterpretation from Andean

³ It was certainly an advance in Protestant theology when Barth differentiated between 'religion' and 'faith', to offset the devastating effects of the criticism of religion. However, an inadequate separation is the result, because faith is not an intangible nucleus of religion (that is itself a cultural environment), nor is it found as a platonic idea beyond all historical and cultural determination. Faith (and not only religion) as existential actuality and creed is always a product of a cultural and historical mediation.

⁴ Even Liberation Theology breathes still a strong Greek spirit in spite of its starting point in a different culture.

⁵ *Runa* is the Quechua term for 'people', 'human being', and *jaqi* is its Aymara equivalent. These terms are used either as a name for the Andean people (exclusive use), or for humankind in general (inclusive use).

thought, not only in its ritual and social manifestations, but also in its theological conceptions.

The present work intends to throw some light on this conceptual impact of the Andean cosmovision on the fundamental theological categories of Christianity. The approach is a sort of philosophical analysis applied to the phenomenon of Andean religiosity.

2. General characteristics of Andean thought

Although Andean thought is not in all its aspects opposed to and incompatible with Western thought, we will have a clearer picture of its principal features if we contrast them with corresponding Western conceptions.

The most fundamental and determining feature of Andean thought is 'relationality'. The basic category is not the 'entity as an entity' (*ens inquantum ens*) of Western metaphysics, but relationship.⁶ Western philosophy has as ontological basis the substantiality of all that exists, whether in a realistic sense as 'being in itself', or in a transcendental sense as the autonomy of the subject. Primacy belongs to the separate and monadic existence; the relationship between the particular *entities* is secondary.

For the Andean person the situation is the inverse of this. The universe is above all a system of inter-related entities which depend on one another; anarchical, heteronymous, and non-substantial. Relationship which in the West is really an *accidens*, or an *a priori* form of reasoning, is now the first ontological category; it is so to speak the real 'non-substantial substance'.

This basic conception of universal relationship manifests itself in a series of principles and axioms that at the same time are expressed in a number of cultural, social and economic phenomena.

2.1. The principle of complementarity

Each entity and each event has as counterpart a complement that is for it a necessary condition to be 'complete' and capable of existing and acting. An isolated entity (*monad*) is considered as incomplete and deficient if it is not related to its opposite complement. The opposition does not paralyze the relationship as happens in a Western logic that is governed by the principle of non-contradiction. The opposition rather energizes the reality, such as it is asserted by the dialectical logic and Eastern thought in general. Heaven and earth, sun and moon, man and woman, light and darkness, day and night, kindness and wickedness, coexist for Andean thought in inseparable ways. The real 'entity', that is to say the relationship, is a union of oppositions, a dialectical and dialogical balance.

⁶ Western metaphysics is in reality ontology or onto-theology. Aristotle defined the first principles or the first causes as the material object of metaphysics, in which the substance or essence of a thing occupies a privileged place. At the beginning of the Fourth Book of his *Metaphysics*, Aristotle declares that metaphysics deals with 'being' as 'being' (*ens in quantum ens*). With Christian medieval philosophy, 'being' is identified ultimately with God, who is the Supreme Being: Metaphysics is converted into onto-theology.

We can see here the conceptual implications for theology and Andean religiosity: God cannot be conceived as self-sufficient substance, nor simply as an absolute being; in other words, stripped of all type of relationship. God also participates in the universally valid law of complementarity.

2.2. The principle of reciprocity

This principle is the social and ethical application of the principle of complementarity. Each human act (and also each divine act) gets its integral purpose when there corresponds to it a complementary, reciprocal and equivalent act of another subject. A unilateral action distorts the delicate balance between the actors in the economic, organizational, ethical, and also religious spheres. What the peasant takes from *Pachamama* (mother earth), he must return somehow, even though it is in a symbolic fashion.⁷ The system known as kinship or *compadrazgo* is based on the reciprocity principle.

Religious relationship between man and God is not excluded from this principle; this substantially modifies both the Western theological conception of God's impassiveness as *actus purus*, and also the theological conceptions of grace and justice.

2.3. The principle of correspondence

Complementarity as well as reciprocity is expressed at the cosmic level as correspondence between micro- and macrocosm, between what is large and what is small. The cosmic order of the celestial bodies, seasons, water courses, climatic phenomena, and even what is considered divine have their correspondence in the human being and its economic, social and cultural relationships. The principle of correspondence questions the universal validity of efficient causality; the link between the micro- and macrocosm is not causative in a mechanical sense, but symbolic/representative. Therefore, the phenomena of transition⁸ such as the clouds, rainbows, seasons, solstices, and phases of the moon have a sacred and numinous character. The people represent through symbolic acts what happens in a macro situation, assuring in this way the continuity of the universe and the continuance of the cosmic order. Andean religiosity has its *Sitz im Leben* in these phenomena of transition which always have a dangerous and precarious character.

⁷ Many rituals exist with respect to mother earth which have the purpose of re-establishing the reciprocity between man and nature. With the 'payment', the peasant requests permission from *Pachamama* to open her (to plough and to sow); with the *ch'allay* or *t'inka* (to scatter liquor or *chicha*), he returns in symbolic form something of her fruits, supposing that she is thirsty.

⁸ This term has its origin in ethnology. It plays a decisive role in the description of the religious phenomena of many cultures. Religion wants to be assured in ritual forms that there will be continuity in the discontinuity of reality. The phenomena of transition have an ambiguous character because of their bridge function between two realities or ages: this ambiguity causes fear and insecurity compensated by the rites of transition. Andean religiosity has to do mainly with the transition phenomena in what is cosmic (solstices, moon change) agricultural (sowing, crop), social (marriage, festivities), and personal (birth, death, disease).

2.4 The principle of holism

If the relationship of every being and happening is the basic principle of the Andean thought, we might come to the conclusion that everything is related to everything else. There are no entities which are isolated and atomic events, nor any *autarcic* subsystems. The whole universe is in a sense the only one substance and all its components are mutually related. What is big has to do with what is small, what is far with what is nearby, what is above with what is below, what is divine with what is human. This way, the human work is not limited to its consequences within the radius of individual responsibility, but it is extended to the community, the region, and to the entire cosmos. We can speak of a 'cosmic ethics' that comprises the social and natural as well as the religious relationships. Religiosity in this sense is the symbolic and ritual (re-) establishment of the balance in universal relationships; the Andean person does not personify easily this *totum*, but he conceives it as an essential interrelational network.

2.5. The principle of cycle

Due to the agricultural experience, the Andean person conceives time and space (*pacha*)⁹ as something repetitive. Infinity is not understood as a line without end, but as circular movement or endless spiral. Each circle describes a cycle, whether it be with respect to the seasons of the year, the succession of the generations or different historical ages. The *novum* as something absolutely unknown does not exist for Andean thought. The cyclical sequence is dialectical and non-continuous; each cycle ends with a cosmic cataclysm (*pachakuti*) that causes another return, a new era on another level.

Andean eschatology is not a lineal projection of the present, but a radical break with a real apocalypse; yet without this catastrophic event being the absolute end of the whole cosmic process.

3. God as an organizing Force

In spite of the fact that evangelization has transmitted to the *runa/jaqi*¹⁰ a quite orthodox conception of God, this nevertheless exhibits many features that have to do with the conceptual framework of Andean thought.

In the first place, there does not exist in the Quechua language (*runa simi*: language

⁹ The Quechua and Aymara languages have just one word for 'time' and 'space': *pacha*. This word indicates in the first place the 'space of life', that is the earth and the globe, but also time as present tense (there is no form for the future); that is to say: *pacha* means the here and now, the category time-space of life. For the universe as a whole the Quechua expression used is *teqsimuyu* (round world), *tukuy pacha* (total space).

¹⁰ I employ this term to delimit Andean religiosity to the Quechua and Aymara cultures here, though certainly Urus and Guaranies would share a large part of the proposed ideas. *Runa* (Quechua people) and *jaqi* (Aymara people) avoid pejorative denominations such as 'Indian', 'indigenous' (which are highly ethnic), or peasant (which has economic connotations). One's idiom after all reveals one's view of the world.

of the people) or in Aymara language (*jaqi aru*: tongue of the people) a specific word for God (as a generic name): the Andean uses the Spanish term for ‘God’ (*Dios*), but it always goes together with some other name or title. The more common expression is *Taytacha God* or simply *Taytacha* (daddy), which demonstrates the strong impact of Christian evangelization.

The Andean conception of ‘God’ is far removed from the Western philosophical conception which conceives of God as ‘infinite substance’, *causa sui*, *ens necessarium* and *actus purus*, and which emphasizes the divine attributes of transcendence, eternity, immutability, omnipotence and absoluteness. Andean religiosity does not conceive of God as a transcendent and absolute reality, that is to say, as an entity that exists initially outside of all relationship and beyond universe. Such an extra-mundane God seems like a deistic idea, and has little to do with the Andean conception of God.

God is in a certain manner part of the cosmos, not as an entity among others, but as a definitive part of the universal system of relationships: God is all in all. This Andean panentheism perhaps has more affinity with the monism of Spinoza, who considers one substance as the totality of all the interrelated entities, which is at the same time God and nature (*Deus sive Natura*) — or perhaps with the theology of Schleiermacher, who substitutes creative force for substance, and sees God as the creative force working through all finite forces.

The Creative God as often conceived, therefore, hardly plays an important role in Andean religiosity. The Inca religion did not know of a creative deity: the universe exists from eternity, and the usual idea of a *creatio ex nihilo* turns out to be something not quite intelligible. Everything comes from something; life comes from the ground, humankind comes from the womb of the *Pachamama*, but nothing comes from nothing.

The first missionaries identified the creative God of the book of *Genesis* with the Inca god *Wiracocha*, thus introducing a foreign conception to Andean thought. *Wiracocha* (or *Ticsi Wiracocha Pachayachachi*) just like *Pachakamaq*,¹¹ was not Creator nor Maker, but Organizer and Mobilizer of the universe. He has the task ‘to recreate’ constantly a cosmos out of chaos (not from nothing), a chaos caused by a *pachakuti* (cosmic cataclysm); that is to say, to re-establish the universe in a secure and defined system of relationships. This is also the conception of the Yahwist in *Genesis* 2:5ff. *Wiracocha* as supreme god appears in the drawings of Pachacuti Yamqui Salcamaygua (1613), as a link between the oppositions of the sun and moon, morning and evening stars, that is to say, as the creative representative of the complementary relationship immanent in the universe (*ticsimuyu*).

God is then for the *runa/jaqi* of the Andes the necessary foundation of order in the universe, both natural and ethical. The first theological attribute is not that of omnipotence or creativity, but providence: God is above all care-taker (*arariwa*) and companion. In this sense,

¹¹ Literally this title means ‘Lord of the universe, Teacher of time and space’. *Pachakamaq* (Maker of earth and heaven) is a pre-Inca deity mainly in the coastal region. He was not considered Maker but ‘Mobilizer’ of everything, that is to say, Lord of the celestial movements. He was coupled with *Pachamama*, establishing in this way a complement between heaven and earth.

people dearly call him *Taytacha*: He is like a father who takes care of his children, maintaining the order that makes life possible.

Christian Trinitarian theology can of course substantially facilitate rapprochement between these two paradigms with respect to God. Trinity is the synthesis of absolute being and relationship in the Godhead itself, and therefore the Christian God also participates in the principal feature of Andean thought. The Triune God is in himself (*ad intra*) relationship, and is still this in his transcendent aspects (*ad extra*). However, Andean thought does not work along the lines of triads as these are conceived in Western analogous and dialectical thought; but rather in dual polarities. It is a fact that for the *runa/jaqi* the duo of divine persons, Father and Son, has most relevance, while the Holy Spirit practically does not have a place of his own. There is a painting of the Cusco School in which the Virgin Mary occupies in the representation of the Holy Trinity the place of the Holy Spirit. The sexual complement also competes for its place in the deity: God *Taytacha* and goddess *Mamacha* (Virgin Mary) beget the Son, fruit of the intra-divine polarity. Though the *runa/jaqi* very well know of the subordinate position of Mary, in their religious practice they frequently put her alongside *Taytacha*.¹²

4. Jesus Christ as *Chakana* (Bridge)

Andean Christology affirms with the official church that Christ is God-Son made man, who came to earth to redeem us by his death on the cross. However, it has its very own elements that have to do with the background of Andean thought. Firstly, for the Quechuas and Aymaras, Jesus is stripped almost completely of his historical aspects. The two Christological milestones are the birth (Christmas) and the death on the cross (Holy Week); neither Jesus' preaching nor his resurrection play an important role in the Andean religiosity.

Secondly, Jesus is venerated as miraculous *Taytacha* under multiple sacred manifestations or hierophanies, and then he receives different names and titles. In Peru, for example, he is known as Lord of Miracles, Lord of Quakes, Huanca Lord, Lord of Qoyllur Rit'i, and Lord of Achajrapi. Each particular Christ (or each Christ-hierophany) manifests a given feature of the universal Christ.

Thirdly, Jesus is manifested in the symbol of the cross. The cross reveals a most important aspect of Andean Christology, due to the role it fulfils in Andean thought. The cross for the *runa/jaqi* is above all a *chakana*, a bridge between different cosmic regions, between above and below, left and right. The *chakana* is the prototype of a 'phenomenon of transition' that makes possible the relationship between different entities and the encounter between different levels. The cross on the top of the hill establishes symbolically the vital relationship between the micro- and macrocosm, heaven and earth. The crests of the mountains (especially ones on which the snow never melts) have a numinous character because they are the place of contact and transition between *kaypacha* and *hanaqpacha*, earth and heaven.

¹² This Christian theology substitutes for the sexual Andean complement between *Apu* and *Pachamama* that beget conjointly the plants, animals and human beings.

Jesus as universal *chakana* is the mediator or bridge by eminence. His double nature (human and divine) privileges him in this cosmic task. The cross is not so much a symbol of death, but of life that buds, blossoms and bears fruit, due to the cosmic relationship he institutes; crosses are green (a sign of the life) with no corpus. They protect the community, and at the same time establish a relationship with heaven that is indispensable for fertilizing the land.

Though the *runa/jaqi* repeats the formulation of the creed of Jesus Christ's divinity (God Son or *Diospa Churin*), in practice he rather considers him as one of the Saints, though supreme in the hierarchy of these agents of God. Jesus as exemplary Saint is the most important middleman and intercessor of popular religiosity, especially through the symbol of the cross. He is God disguised as a poor and old man, who shows up in the festivities to be taken in and cared for; otherwise he punishes the guilty with flood or other misfortune.¹³

There also exists a strong identification of Jesus Christ with *Inkarri*, a mythical figure of the Inca Empire which survived under Spanish control. According to the legend, *Inkarri*¹⁴ is pursued; he fled to the jungle (*uraypacha*) and continues living there, to come back to life one day among the poor, and to re-establish the great Inca Empire. For many, the revolutionary Tupac Amaru was the incarnation of the *Inkarri*, and the popular myth has many parallels with Jesus Christ: Tupac Amaru was a charismatic leader, fought against injustice and for the development of the indigenous people, he was cut into parts, but will resuscitate one day to gather his members from the four corners of the earth (*Tawantinsuyo*) to bring justice: Christ's parusia in terms of the Andean utopia.

5. The Andean Pantheon

Though Jesus represents the very axis of the mediation between humanity and God *Taytacha*, he is not the only intermediary. The same holistic feature of Andean thought that we have noted presupposes a whole slew of relationships between the different spheres and levels. The mediation is accomplished in hierarchic form according to the importance and vitality of the relationship to be established. The *runa/jaqi* does not simply follow Western philosophy in posing such an ontological distance between a transcendent God and the created world. Such a break or separation is incompatible with the holistic principle and with the essential correspondence among all the spheres of the universe: what is divine is not differentiated *toto coelo* from what is human.

In view of the fact that the vast majority of Quechuas and Aymaras have accepted the androgynous or the straight masculine idea of God *Taytacha*, in the sphere of intermediaries they apply as a consequence the principle of complementarity. Jesus and Mary, the *Pachamama* and the *Apus* are complementary couples. As we have seen, Jesus Christ (with

¹³ The legend about God who disguises himself as poor old man to find out what people think, is very common among the Quechuas and Aymaras. It cannot be determined if this reflects the evangelization (Matt. 10: 42) or if it is something that survived from the Andean tradition. It seems that the Inca gods also used to be disguised as beggars (especially Wiracocha). Many of the existing lagoons are interpreted as consequences of floods and deluges because of the rejection of the disguised God on the part of the people.

¹⁴ *Inkarri* is the Quechua form of the Spanish words "Inca" and "king" (*rey*).

respect to his many particular hierophanies) occupies through the cross the sacred place of the *Apu* or Andean deities of the hills. In the same way we can appreciate a parallel between the Virgin Mary or *Mamacha* with the *Pachamama* (mother earth). The sexual complement in the Andean pantheon is manifested at all levels. Though God *Taytacha* occupies an extraordinary position, but without lacking the intrinsic polarity, the Andean sees him frequently as the masculine counterpart of *Pachamama*. The natural place of *Taytacha* is heaven (*hanaqpacha/alaxpacha*) with all the astronomic and atmospheric phenomena, while the *Pachamama* governs the earth (*kaypacha/akapacha*). However, the *Apu* is the real and effective complement of *Pachamama*, which causes a certain rivalry and incompatibility between the masculine principles *Taytacha* and *Apu*.

Apu, due to his mediating function between *hanaq/alaxpacha* and *kay/akapacha*, is responsible for the fertilization of *Pachamama* through the rain and sun, and also for natural disasters in the case of the breaking down by humans of the ethical order. *Pachamama* has a mediating function between *kay/akapacha* and *uray/manqhapacha*, and gives the fruits as a result of the fertile relationship between her and the corresponding *Apu*. For the *runa/jaqi* life is always the product of a complementary relationship of two opposite forces; a totally transcendent and self-sufficient God is sterile and impotent, and he cannot be Lord of life. The theological reinterpretation of Christian orthodoxy through Andean conceptions revindicates with much force the feminine element of God in the figure of the Virgin-*Pachamama*.¹⁵ It is significant that Andean religiosity has developed a feminine trinity as counterweight to the standard Christian Trinity with its strong masculine features. *Pachamama* is *Pacha* Earth, *Pacha Ñusta* [Princess Earth] and *Pacha* Virgin; the third person represents the Virgin Mary in her different hierophanies (Virgin of Carmen, Candelarias, Nativity, Asunta, Remedies, and Belén). There is an interesting relationship with Jesus Christ in the sense that during the Holy Week *Pachamama* does not listen because she is concerned about the fate of her partner Jesus; for this same reason she cannot control the evil spirits or *soq'a*.

The *Apus* as well as *Pachamama* occupy a strategic place with respect to the mediation between different levels of reality (*pacha*). This gives them the function of keepers and protectors with relationship to the multiple phenomena of transition (rain, lightning, thunders, springs, rainbow, etc.) that for the Andean are hierophanies of inferior deities. A large part of Andean religiosity is devoted to protective rituals with respect to zones of danger and insecurity.

These inferior intermediaries have to do with atmospheric phenomena such as lightning (*illapa*), rainbow (*k'uychi*) and fog (*phuyu*); with astronomic entities such as the sun (*inti*), moon (*killa*), the morning star (*qolqa*) and the evening star (*qoyllur*), but also they have to do with agricultural entities such as springs (*pukyu*) and the round stones (*muyurumi*). Each one of the inferior deities has their sexual complement: sun and moon, morning and evening star, lightning and fog. Only the rainbow due to its bridge function (*chakana*) incarnates in itself the 'bipolarity'.

The Catholic tradition of the Saints has found here an auspicious and very user-friendly framework. In Andean religiosity, the concrete hagiographies of the Saints are not known; the

¹⁵ The peasant thinks *Pachamama* is virgin as long as she is not cultivated. In order to work the land - that is like the act of deflowering - he must request her permission (*licenciaykuwan*) through an offering.

whole emphasis is on the specific functions of each one. Each Saint is an intermediary with his own specialty for the resolution of problems and difficulties, as the Andean inferior deities are. To maintain the principle of complementarity, many of the Saints have their partner (for example, Saint Mark is accompanied by Saint Marcella).

In Cusco the Saints replaced the mummies of the Incas in the Corpus Christi procession. Two Saints deserve special attention due to their function of guarantors of the cosmic continuity in the precarious moments of the June and December solstices: Saint John, and the Child (Jesus). As dawn and the late afternoon are critical moments of transition, so are the winter solstice (21 of June) and the summer solstice (21 of December). On these dates, *Pachamama* is untouchable. It is interesting that Quechuas and Aymaras venerate the different hierophanies of Jesus Christ as if he were differentiated into different Saints: the Child (or *Niñucha*), the Holy Cross, Easter Resurrection, and even the Holy Trinity are sacred characters. The festivity of Saint John (also the Day of the Peasant) replaced gradually the Inca festivity of the *Inti Raymi* whose objective was to assure that days began again to lengthen. Christmas or the Child's feast took the place of another Inca holiday, *Qapaq Raymi*, the celebration of the great Easter of the sun.

Some Saints were incorporated as members of couples of an already existing Andean deity, as James with *Illapa* (lightning), or the Holy Cross with *Pachamama*. Others were inculturated as 'brothers/sisters' along the ones of the autochthonous deities, as the Virgin with *Pachamama*, or Jesus with the *Apus*. God is the synthesis of Father and *Apu*: *Apu Taytayku*.

6. Religious Relationships

In light of the fact that relationship is the fundamental characteristic of Andean thought, in a sense relationship is also religion (*religio*), an indispensable link with the universal order. The Western separation between secular and religious (numinous) spheres corresponds to the logic of exclusion (either-or), but it does not fit the holistic principle of incorporation (both-and). For a *runa/jaqi*, even agricultural labor has a religious character: to work the land is a form of prayer.

From the family, productive and communal relationships, to the cosmic and religious ones in a strict sense, all are governed by the principle of reciprocity that serves as guarantee to preserve universal justice through the established order. On the countryside, social security operates on the basis of reciprocity: parents raise the children, but these have the obligation of returning this effort by taking care of their parents when they get old. In relationship with *Pachamama*, reciprocity is an indispensable condition for life and survival: for what mother earth gives us, peasants must pay back, hence the symbolic price in the form of *despachos*, and they must strictly observe the untouchable days.¹⁶ In all work, reciprocity of the *ayni* is a vital mechanism in the

¹⁶ The terminology of 'payment' (*despacho* means 'deliver') to the *Pachamama* indicates that there is a reciprocal transaction involved. The generosity of the land has its price that one must pay in caring for it, hence the symbolic offering. The untouchable days of the *Pachamama* are from 1 to 6 of August (before sowing), 21 of December to 1 of January (summer solstice), and 21 of June (winter solstice), Sunday of the Trinity and Holy Tuesday.

precarious economies of the High Plateau.

It should not surprise us that also the religious relationship in a more specific sense, as the relationship with God and the intermediaries, is to be understood within the framework of reciprocity and complementarity. All the sacramental economy obeys this principle. A mass or sacramental that is for free, in which nothing is offered by participants, is not worthy, in other words it does not achieve the intended effect because of its lack of complement on man's part. Many authors speak of a negotiating religiosity or blackmail and manipulation of God on man's part. And yes, if we do not pay attention to the conceptual backgrounds, the ritual behavior of the Andean man can appear as such.

In the first place one must reiterate that the Andean conception of God nullifies many of the theological attributes of Western philosophy, such as absolute self-sufficiency, impassiveness and utter transcendence. As integral to the cosmic system of relationships, the Andean God is subject to the universally valid logic of reciprocity and complementarity. God suffers, feels sorry, gets sad and angry; the pains and injustice of the world affect him. He is not a transcendent and imperturbable substance, superior to all events in the universe, but he actively participates in worldly occupations. In a certain sense he needs his counterpart, he needs humanity to become the complete 'creator'; he is not sufficient in himself, but only by and through multiple relationships with the universe.

In the second place it is necessary to be accurate and clear concerning the principle of reciprocity: it does not coincide with the mercantile attitude of negotiating in order to obtain the maximum profit. Those who criticize it from this perspective simply reveal their own individualistic philosophy of societies, both human and divine-human, in which individuals come first, and relationships between them are so often truly dehumanized by treating all things as commodities until eventually human beings themselves become commodities. In the relational philosophy of the Andes, on the contrary, the universal reciprocity is nothing else than the accomplishment of the universal justice, the fulfillment of a mutual duty, cooperative creativity that encompasses the whole of reality. The breaking of this principle would cause serious balance distortions in the natural, social and religious systems.

Andean ethics is not based on altruism, as this is defined on the Western conception of individual and autonomous responsibility. According to the principle of holism, each human act affects the whole net of relationships: the responsibility radius is greater than that of any individual's freedom. A non-reciprocal behavior severely distorts the social, natural and cosmic order; natural disasters and familial misfortunes have their respective consequences. The ancient Inca's code: *ama suwa*, *ama llulla*, *ama qella* is based on the reciprocity principle. Robbery (*suwa*) is the lack of reciprocity in the exchange of goods; lying (*llulla*) in the exchange of information; and idleness (*qella*) is the lack of reciprocity in the workforce. We should add incest as a fourth breach that represents the lack of reciprocity in the exchange between sons and daughters, and that takes the form of the most serious distortion of the ethical and social order in the Andean world.

Religious relationship of reciprocity may still, of course, seem to be incompatible with some basic conceptions of Christian theology. Firstly, it may be said to exclude the grace concept as a unilateral divine initiative, and one which envisages no reciprocal contribution on

man's part. But grace, however it is further defined, may well be entirely a divine initiative, yet not be such as not to request a reciprocal response. As one theologian puts it: "grace may be free, but it is never cheap". In any case, something free of charge, something which 'costs' nothing in response, violates the reciprocity principle in social relationships, and returns us to the individualistic, not to say consumerist model of community. In sacred society, then, grace as any act disinterested in reciprocal response, and in that sense a unilateral action, does not exist (or should not exist) for the Andean, because it severely distorts the cosmic and social order. This view may be more compatible with the Catholic theology of grace, and may involve some confrontation with a certain Protestant *theologumenon* in the Christian tradition.

The *runa/jaqi* in any case does not think so much about categories of 'grace' as of 'justice' and 'ethical balance'. Jesus' main commandment, interpreted as the disinterested love of the neighbor and even of the enemy, appears to him not only as a danger for the social and cosmic order, but as something irrational and absurd. Pure altruism in its individualistic mode destroys that universal justice that is achieved by reciprocity between the different actors, and causes chaotic situations that Quechuas and Aymaras fear so much.

It does not surprise us then that the Andean conception of God has much more affinity with the just and zealous God of the Hebrew Bible than with the benign and altruistic God sometimes presented as the contrary picture of the God of the New Testament. One of the indicators for such affirmation is the very strong and common idea of a God who punishes in the creation he governs from within. In itself this does not imply the conception of a revengeful and violent God, but it envisages simply the possible ways to re-establish the victory of order over chaos, after a violation of that order which consists after all in the reciprocity principle. Some illustrations of this may need discussion: If God is said to punish a community with hail for a cattle theft, then 'guilt' will be removed and the relational and reciprocal order re-established, in a continuous creation. This will always entail an inevitable link under God's universal providence between what one party does and another suffers. Universal justice through the reciprocity principle and the respective alteration of its deficiencies by a providential God is also, then, the Andean's response to the problems of evil and suffering.

An interesting fact in connection with this theology is this: while the classic Protestant churches achieve fewer acceptances, churches that make so much of the Old Testament - the Jehovah's Witnesses, the Mormons and Adventists - find a very fertile ground among peasants of the Andes. A very special example, particularly in Peru, is that of the *Israelites* or the *Evangelical Association of the Israelite Mission of the New Universal Agreement*, that is based on many of the Old Testament rites, and that at the same time contains some of the features of the Andean world. Its Quechua nationalism and the emphasis in a just and zealous God, in addition to the apocalyptic ideas, are of great acceptance among the peasant population of Peru.

7. Andean Eschatology

Andean thought differs considerably from Western thought in the conception of time. The

Quechua and Aymara word *pacha* not only means ground (*Pachamama*), but also space or level (for example, *kay/aka pacha*) and furthermore, time. This indicates to us that the Quechua or Aymara does not think in the categories of ‘the beyond’ and ‘this side’. As everything is mutually related in an ordered universe, so is time. Something that has happened is still present today, and the future is already anticipated and manifested in the present. The Quechua language does not know of a verbal form for the future and uses the form of the present tense. Time (*pacha*) is as an eternal present, a periodic repetition. This cyclical conception is based on the agricultural (ploughing, harvesting, sowing), astronomic (sun and moon), climatological (rain and drought times) and generation cycles (succession of the generations).

Western concepts of progress as unidirectional towards the future, the irreversibility and uniqueness of each moment and the perspective of what is absolutely new (the *novum* of Ernst Bloch), result in very strange impressions for the Andean. Linearity, continuity and progressivity of time (from *alpha* to *omega*) is a conception with Judeo-Christian roots, secularized by the philosophy of history in the nineteenth century, and popularized in a technological and economic sense in the twentieth century.

For Andean thought time is not linear, nor continuous or progressive, but cyclical, non-continuous and static. There are breakings in time, decisive moments (*kairoi*) and qualitative jumps that are known as *pachakuti* (cataclysm).¹⁷ This is a dialectical movement, but without the feature of inherent progress.

Andean utopia is not located in an unknown and distant future, but rather in the past; it is a retrospective utopia. Many of the indigenous movements (*Taki Onqoy*, *Tupac Amaru*) intended the return to the Inca Empire.

Further, although Andean thought considers different levels of reality (*kay/aka*, *hanaq/alax*, *uray/manqha pacha*), it does not assent in any way to the Christian-platonic theory of two worlds (the world beyond and this world). The missionaries found in the tripartite Andean universe a perfect mold to fill with the Christian conception of heaven-earth-hell. But the two models are not compatible in spite of their similarity. For a *runa/jaqi*, the three levels of *pacha* belong to the same *pacha* (spacio-temporal whole). *Hanaqpacha/alaxpacha* (space above) is not referred to a transcendent beyond, but to the area of the atmospheric and astronomic phenomena. *Kaypacha/akapacha* (this space) is the natural and social area of life, the area of what is sensitive and concrete. And *uraypacha/manqhapacha* (space below or inside) is referred to what is inside the *Pachamama* that is both the area of life (many myths tell how animal and men come from caves and holes *paqarina* of the earth) and of death too. For the Incas, the *uraypacha/manqhapacha* was the jungle that harbors the paradise of *Paititi*, far from being identified with the Christian hell.

The great acceptance of the apocalyptic preachers by the *runa/jaqi* is explained above all by the affinity with the Andean apocalyptic conception. A new age can only begin after a

¹⁷ Literally it is considered a return (*kuti* means to return) of the universe (*pacha*). That is to say, a cosmic revolution by which the established order is turned into chaos; cosmos turns back into chaos again. Though *pachakuti* represents a break and a dialectical jump, it does not imply the progressivity of Western dialectical thought.

cataclysm, a cosmic revolution (*pachakuti*) that turns cosmos into chaos, so that the cosmos can emerge from it yet again. Millennial ideas have a rich tradition in the Andes, and sometimes they are Christianized, for instance, by the theory of Joaquin de Fiore.¹⁸

Though the great majority of Quechuas and Aymaras accept Christian conceptions of eternal life, final judgment and God's Kingdom, they certainly have their very own ways of interpretation. The Andean anthropology does not fit the Platonic dualist conception that has strongly influenced Christian theology. According to the Andean idea, humans consist of body and *animu* (Quechua/Spanish for "soul") or *ajayu* (Aymara) that very much resembles the *nefesh* (life breath) of the Old Testament anthropology (Gen.2:7). This *animu/ajayu* is very weak until the age of ten, and can easily be disturbed by fright (*mancharisqa*). With death, the force of life (*animu/ajayu*) leaves the body and it is just right after the burial that the dead becomes soul. But this borrowed expression from Western anthropology does not coincide with the idea of 'soul' as incorruptible spiritual substance. "Soul" (*alma*) is the human person that continues living (though invisibly) near by the place of earthly existence, who has powers that before it did not have. Some can cause evil things (the *hatun kukuchi* or 'condemned'), and others accompany their loved ones as protective spirits. In any case, the principle of reciprocity continues valid until beyond death, which explains the countless rituals that have to do with the departed 'souls' (who can become ancestral spirits: *achachilas*), especially on All Saints' Day.

For Andean religiosity, judgment does not take place in a world beyond, but will take place in this world (as is the case of Judaism). God judges with punishments and remunerations, but not always in personal and individual mode. The events of judgment can only be understood and interpreted within a collective context of cosmic relationships.

9. Sacramentalism of the World

Due to the panentheistic conception (God is in all) of the Andean thought, the world is not a place purely profane and secular. Though there certainly are animist features, the Andean cosmovision is not animist in a strict sense; rather we might speak of 'sacralism', an effective omnipresence of what is 'numinous' and divine. Parallel to the hierarchy of the Andean pantheon, there is also a hierarchy of the sacred and sacramental. In a wide sense, the whole universe is sacred because in each one of its parts the divine order is present through the system of relationships.

However there are special places, events and times (*kairoi*) in which the deity is revealed in a dense and comprehensive manner. These hierophanies already had their importance in the Inca religion (*wak'as*, *intiwatana*, *Inti Raymi*, *Qapaq Raymi*). Moments and places preferred for such 'numinous' revelations are without doubt the countless phenomena of transition in personal life, community, agricultural cycle, and in the astronomic events. These phenomena always have caused a certain preoccupation, and therefore require an accompanying ritual to avoid the

¹⁸ The Andean overlapped the classic structure of five historical periods with the Christian tri-partition of history, successively governed by the three persons of Trinity, coinciding with the ideas of Joaquin de Fiore. There are many millennial testimonies to the effect that this world should have ended in the year 2000, when the era of the Holy Spirit would begin, in agreement with the teaching of some modern apocalyptic missionaries.

irruption of chaos. Sacramentalism has a great importance in Andean thought, and Christian theology has only channeled this religious condition of the Andean. The result is that those Christian sacraments that have greater acceptance correspond with Andean sacraments and rituals that already existed. These are in this order: baptism, marriage and the Eucharist.

Baptism finds among Quechuas and Aymaras the greatest acceptance of all sacraments. In the countryside, emergency baptism (*ununchachinku*) immediately after a child is born is very common, in spite of the fact that its life may not be in danger. Christian baptism has many parallels among the different autochthonous rituals that have the function of ‘rituals of passage’.

One of them is the first hair cut (*chukcha rutuy*) that is frequently done after the Catholic baptism, which highlights the passing from being a ‘breast child’ (*nuna wawa*) to an independent one (*puqllaq wawa*). At the same time, the child is assigned a star as sign of special protection by a given *Apu*. The ceremony is accompanied by a *despacho* and a detailed list of the economic transactions for the good of the child.

Baptism then fulfils different functions. It is an initiation rite that commissions the child to the protection of *Taytacha* (to avoid the child to be turned into *kukuchi*); it’s a health ceremony, and at the same time (through the *compadrazgo* or kinship) it fulfils an economic function of survival.¹⁹ Catholic marriage also finds wide acceptance among the *runa/jaqi* although it is not done for economic reasons. Almost for all couples, the Catholic religious marriage or *kasarakuy* is only the definitive commitment after they have lived together for some length of time in *sirvinakuy*, the Andean marriage. This is not a ‘trial marriage’ but a firm commitment of mutual help (reciprocity), implying economic transactions between two families. In a marriage (Andean as well as Catholic), not only the couple is involved but the whole set of family and godfatherhood relationships. It is the nucleus and cell of reciprocity, representing the fertile cosmic complement in a small scale.

The Eucharist or mass has as Andean background: the ‘table’ (*mesa*) or *despacho* to the *Pachamama*. To ‘perform a mass’ and ‘to prepare the table for *despacho*’ are expressed by the same Quechua words (*misata churay*). Like the payment to the *Pachamama* or the *despacho* for the *Apus*, mass is also performed on special occasions and with a very particular purpose: suffrage of a deceased, good health request, invocation of the Virgin or a Saint, or the celebration of a *Santo Patrón* festivity. The commemoration of Jesus’ life, death and resurrection is secondary as compared to these personal intentions of the participants; benediction prevails over communion. Like the *despachos*, mass also has for the Andean the character of reconciliation with *Taytacha*, the Virgin and the Saints, in order to avoid misfortunes; although it also represents a ‘rite of passage’.

The other Catholic sacraments find much less acceptance among the Andean population, due to their conceptual and ritual distance from the Andean world. The confirmation has in certain ways its counterpart in the Inca *warachikuy*²⁰ or the fifteen-year party. The priestly ordination is

¹⁹ In *compadrazgo* of baptism the links of reciprocity are established which in the rural areas are vital for the future of the child. Normally the godfather gives an animal (lama, sheep) as investment for the future. The *chukcha rutuy*’s godfather ‘pays’ for each hair chunk in the form of money, candies and something else from the modern world.

²⁰ Literally: “to put on the trousers”. It was a male initiation ceremony that marked the passage of the boys to the fullness of manhood, which enabled them to exercise the occupations and functions of an adult man. As a sign

comparable to the ritual initiation of the Andean priests (*altomisayoq*). But priestly celibacy definitely results in incomprehension and remains incompatible with the basic Andean principles of complementarity and polarity.

9. Conclusion

Trying to understand Andean religiosity in the Andean culture from the Western philosophical and theological points of view, may seem an impossible task, only because of the complexity of the phenomena involved. But many of the conceptions, rituals and attitudes of the Andean can result in a good semantic and a more consistent hermeneutic interpretation, when one takes into account the characteristic conceptual horizon (*Weltanschauung*) of Andean thought. The inculturation and incarnation of Christianity in this cultural and conceptual framework is not without friction, incoherence and even inconsistencies. The Western and Andean thought-patterns represent in many respects two diametrically opposite world-views.

However, Quechua and Aymara people experience in their own ways this difficult synthesis, this religious and conceptual mixture, and on the whole they manage it without being either schizophrenic or unduly eclectic. Andean religiosity has acquired in these last 500 years a *sui generis* identity, an authentic Andean theology which is at the same time Christian.

In the development of Western theology a similar problem occurred when the Semitic religion of the first Christians fully faced the world of Greek thought. From that deal emerged one of the most impressive syntheses of the Western history, the medieval Christian theology. In spite of seeming incompatible on many points, the two paradigms were assembled into a very effective unity.

The same could be true for Andean religiosity if we do not think in terms of eternal conceptual purities. Even these apparent 'inconsistencies' could be fruitful, not only for the Andean's own indigenous Christian identity, but also for Christian theology in general,

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of the new responsibility they put on special trousers (*wara*).