

Solving the Indian Problem

The Genealogy of Autochthonous Discourse

Bolivia underwent a momentous transformation in the first quarter of the twentieth century. In 1899 the Liberal victors in the nineteenth-century civil wars moved the seat of government to their base in La Paz from the old Conservative stronghold of Sucre, which remained the titular capital of the Republic.¹ La Paz changed rapidly. Its energetic people wanted everything at once: streets, tree-lined avenues, public sanitation system, public lighting, anything that might add to an urban aesthetic. A nascent industrial zone sprouted up to the north. Sopocachi and Miraflores became the hot new residential neighborhoods. Avenida Arce was transformed from a rural byway into a European-style avenue and La Paz's most important artery. Print culture, which Benedict Anderson (1983) signals as especially important in organizing the nation-state, first appeared in La Paz at the turn of the century, when newspapers switched from manual typesetting to Linotype. The town's provincial air was invigorated by the more sophisticated atmosphere of global information. The recently built railway multiplied commercial traffic, becoming a symbol of the vigorous free trade promoted by Liberal economics. La Paz still lacked a first-class hotel and a grand theater; it had no model schools, well-equipped hospitals, scientific institutions, or cultural academies. Yet, with its fifty thousand inhabitants, it had ceased to be a large village and had become a city.

La Paz was being transformed for the greater comfort and delight of the new powerholders, the mestizo-criollos, who collectively formed the city's elite. Bolivia's vast indigenous population meanwhile remained in the countryside, forsaken by such urban transformations. This important rural sector, prohibited from so much as setting foot on the main plaza of La Paz, has been considered "pre-political" by social historiography, uninvolved in the national construction of Bolivia. This study disagrees with the traditional view. The indigenous people of Bolivia were not static bystanders in the postcolonial organization of the nation.

The growth of La Paz was the clearest example of the modernizing impulse promoted by the Liberal mestizo-criollo sector, who had powerful motives for moving the seat of government from Sucre to their city. As the larger city, with a more active commercial life and easier access to the Pacific shipping lanes, La Paz was the physical expression of the sharp about-face taken by the nation's collective psychology after three quarters of a century under military rule and Conservative traditionalism. During that era, neither Bolivia nor indeed any of its fellow Andean republics to the north had been able to establish an authoritarian Liberal government along the lines of those in Argentina, Chile, and Mexico. Afflicted by obscurantist caudillo rule, persistent regionalism, and deep ethnic disparities, the Andean nations remained backward in comparison with those important Latin American centers. They lacked the powerful institutions that would make a nation-building program possible. By the late nineteenth century, the Sucre aristocracy had lost its sense of how to organize the nation, and could no longer contain the Liberal movement that demanded that the national leadership take more energetic action. The Liberals of La Paz, imbued with Comtean positivism, daringly climbed to power. Taking advantage of an indigenous Aymara rebellion (which the misnamed Federal Revolution of 1899 swiftly abandoned after achieving victory), this Liberal elite formed a new caste of mestizo-criollos, bourgeois social climbers, demagogues with sufficient creative energy to displace the somnolent aristocrats from Sucre. The first quarter of the twentieth century thus witnessed the rise and consolidation of a mestizo-criollo oligarchy, which sought, not necessarily with success, to organize Bolivia as a modern state, a so-called nation-state.

The first decades of the 1900s were also a crucial time for taking stock

of the nation's backwardness. During this period of "agonizing national self-reflection" (Larson 1998), the rise of the mestizo-criollo oligarchy found contradictory expression in the social analyses performed by a select group of essayists who were based in La Paz and devoted to reflecting on the national situation. These essayists belonged to the dominant mestizo-criollo class, yet they remained on the margins of national government and were not necessarily tied to the oligarchy in power.² For this reason, they lacked the political influence enjoyed by an earlier generation of Latin American *letrados*, lettered or learned intellectuals, such as Argentina's Domingo Faustino Sarmiento and Esteban Echeverría, or Chile's José Victorino Lastarria, whose writings exercised enormous sway over the spheres of power in those nations during the nineteenth century. Despite their origins among the great landowning families and the formative commercial bourgeoisie, the Bolivian *letrados* of the early twentieth century sometimes expressed deep disillusionment and a profoundly critical attitude toward the society in which they happened to live. The self-sufficient attitudes they displayed in their predominately sociological essays allowed them to get at the root of the problems afflicting Bolivia; as a result, their writings, though ignored by politicians, played a significant role in forming the nation's social milieu. An understanding of their disagreements with that milieu, as expressed in their mordant critiques of the Liberal oligarchy, is indispensable for analyzing the social obstacles that the Bolivian elite encountered in these decades.

The main obstacle for mestizo-criollo consciousness was the so-called indigenous problem. The Indian had been (and indeed still remains) a source of constant anxiety for the criollo caste ever since the violent indigenous rebellions of the eighteenth century. Olivia Harris (1995) points to the late nineteenth century as a key historical moment when caste distinctions were being transformed into a complicated set of class relations. In that era, the emergent positivist-Liberal discourse had elaborated the negative image of the Indian, not only as uncultured and alien to Western civilization, but also as situated outside the market economy. By naturalizing the idea that the Indian was incapable of participating in the market initiatives that the mestizo-criollo sector practiced so assiduously, Liberal politics used indigenous "backwardness" as a handy excuse for

continuing to expand the great agricultural estates and for appropriating products once manufactured and marketed by indigenous communities. Nineteenth-century pacts between Indians and criollos for the collection of indigenous tribute were now broken, and the mestizo-criollo intellectuals of the early twentieth century had to find a new way to conceptualize the indigenous problem. They did this by reinventing and updating the nation's racial and ethnic taxonomies and teleologies, adapting them to the political, economic, and ideological climate created by Liberalism.

Like most Latin American Liberals, Bolivian intellectuals conceptualized their ideologies of race and nation by appropriating European theories, which they then combined with their own understandings, based on empirical observations of local cultures. Their discourse on the autochthonous, on the Indian, departed from the standard Liberal discourse. Where Liberal discourse, as molded by positivism and social Darwinism, turned on concepts of civilization and barbarism and predicted the extinction of the autochthonous race, the Bolivian reformist intellectuals constructed a more modern racial ideology in which the vital energy of the indigenous race was seen as infused with the telluric power of the environment. This discourse on the autochthonous generated ambivalent racial sentiments of pride, nostalgia, and fascination with the Indian, while at the same time demonstrating a repugnance for any breaking of racial boundaries that could not be rationalized and strictly controlled by mestizo-criollo consciousness. The idea that emerged was that the Indian race should be studied, disciplined, and exalted under an enlightened, paternalistic, and authoritarian political order.

This discourse on the autochthonous differed from the positivist-Liberal discourse that emphasizes the Indian's innate racial inferiority, and thus it introduced an important variation into the very heart of the reigning Liberalism. Social historians, who tend to classify the entire Liberal-oligarchic period as being under the influence of positivism and social Darwinism, have not studied the discourse on the autochthonous in any depth. This book will remedy that.

The image of the autochthonous was promoted by an incipient nationalist discourse that helped relocate the indigenous race within the mestizo-criollo view of the nation. This discourse, which was at first sub-

ordinated to positivist Liberalism but would become a force of its own in the future construction of nationalism, appeared in the first decade of the century. It became particularly attractive to the reformist mestizo-criollo intellectuals who rose to power with the changing political tides of the 1920s.³ The image of the autochthonous was also a response to the pressure exerted by indigenous movements that emerged beginning in the late nineteenth century.⁴

Elaborated in response to the educational project of the oligarchic elite, who sought to guide “the wretched indigenous race” along the rails of civilization, of Western, positivist, rational thought (Martínez 1999), the discourse on the autochthonous drew on the idealist and irrationalist trends that were having a major impact on European intellectual centers at the time. By attaching value to instinct and spiritual dimensions, these irrationalist and vitalist schools of thought called into question the evolutionary and determinist concepts that guided the thought of the Liberal oligarchs.

There was a double thrust to the discourse on the autochthonous. On the one hand, it was used to criticize the imitative nature of the Liberal elite, who indiscriminately aped positivist models for observing reality. On the other, it was used to promote the formation of a national elite that could channel the creative energies of local culture. From this perspective the Indian-mestizo composition of our Andean nations could be seen as a source of creative energy, while it was also perceived as a danger to the civilized order.

The role of the mestizo-criollo intellectual, then, would be to discipline the ambiguous nature of his own reformist discourse by constructing an ideal image, an exalted spiritual figure, that would solve the problem of authorities in societies like Bolivia's, still rent by unsurmounted colonial relations. Franz Tamayo (1879–1956), the great modernist poet, parliamentarian, and controversial cultural figure of modern Bolivia, played this exemplary role, becoming known as the “great mestizo” by the Bolivian intellectual circles of the twentieth century. His essay *Creación de la pedagogía nacional* (“Creating a National Pedagogy,” 1910), in which he fashioned the mestizo as an ideal type in his own image and likeness, has been identified by recent historical studies on the construction of Bolivian na-

tionhood as drawing on the positivist ideas that guided modernism.⁵ What these studies have virtually ignored is the profound influence of irrationalist thought on Tamayo's essay. That influence is the focus of this chapter.

In this chapter I analyze the rise of the discourse of national identity, which redefined the ties that bound the mestizo-criollo elite to the indigenous theme. Comparing the Liberal oligarchy's proposed "regeneration of the Indian" with the discourse on the autochthonous, I pay particular attention to the way in which the theme of the autochthonous modifies the positivist paradigm of strict opposition between civilization and barbarism.⁶ To the degree that intellectual elites observed local culture more strictly, their reflection on the autochthonous upheld mestizaje as a new cultural synthesis, as yet unexplored by Liberal positivism. The facets of Tamayo's thought that I have discovered in this essay on national pedagogy thus lead me to part ways with historians who conceive of the thinker and aesthetic philosopher as just another positivist, although a less trenchant one than the others (Alcides Arguedas comes to mind) who were also affected by the indigenous problem.

I also look at the autochthonous as a social platform inscribed within a geopolitics of knowledge that privileges an epistemological movement from the outside to the inside, that is, gives epistemological primacy to Western models of observation, over and above local cultural models.⁷ Tamayo did not significantly alter the dominant model of thinking about the Other—that is, the Indian—because he did without the Indian's own point of view. The discourse on the autochthonous was thus based on an exogenous model of observation, through which mestizo-criollo elites distorted and misrepresented the actual nature of indigenous alterity.

Finally, this chapter is a study of the imaginary construction of national identity, in which I relate "the lettered" (*lo letrado*)—that is, the essays written by an elite group closely associated with the problems of the State, and invariably oriented toward the city—with "the visual." Included under the latter category are rethinking the politics of representation, the cultural dichotomies, and the discursive frontiers in permanent tension between the West and the postcolonial Andean world (Poole 1997). Particularly interesting is investigating the role played by Tamayo's essay in the visual construction of mestizaje.

Foundational Ambiguity

In the unstable, racially charged world of postcolonial politics, the debate over the place of the Indian formed part of a broader discussion on how to convert Bolivia into a modern nation-state. This debate, as Marta Irurozqui (1994, 142) has noted, served to conceal the internal competition over the control of power that was taking place within the elite. The tension between the governing Liberal oligarchy and the mestizo reform movement thus points to the difficulty that the sector in power faced in constituting itself as an authentically hegemonic class. Just as the elite failed to establish any clear and convincing domination over the social whole, its discourse was equally ambiguous; this ambiguity was, in my view, the defining fact about Bolivian nation-building efforts since the nineteenth century.

It would be hard to pinpoint the moment when the ideal image of the nation appeared in Bolivia, but it is clear that this image was closely related to the theme of race. Indeed, it arose from the early twentieth-century debate over the nature of the Indian that was begun by such letrado intellectuals as Alcides Arguedas, Franz Tamayo, Bautista Saavedra, Rigoberto Paredes, and Armando Chirveches. This debate responded to the concrete needs of the vigorous free trade economy of the times, and it revealed these intellectuals' conception of race relations. The letrados appropriated Western categories of observing reality that legitimated their social superiority, and therefore their indisputable right to enjoy their social privileges and to exercise authority (Irurozqui 1994, 144). The mestizo-criollo intellectuals' perception of the "Indian problem"—and of their own place with regard to the indigenous people—gave rise to a rethinking, or better, a reinvention of the social place that the races should occupy. This reinvention, in turn, led to a questioning of the prevailing order and to a proposed rearranging of Bolivia's population. Tamayo's *Creación de la pedagogía nacional* played a key role in this debate.

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Though I give pride of place to *Creación de la pedagogía nacional* among the literary meditations on how Bolivia should be organized, the search for nation building has a history that predates the letrado works of the early twentieth century. *Juan de la Rosa*, the 1885 novel by Cochabamba

writer Nataniel Aguirre (1843–1888), delved into the essence of Bolivian nationality long before Tamayo or Alcides Arguedas. With its combination of Western and indigenous aesthetic traditions, particularly the songs and myths from the Quechua tradition, this novel is much more complex than what it seems to be at first glance: a bildungsroman that tells the story of a young boy's growth and education during the wars of independence (1809–25).

Aguirre wrote his novel in the form of a first-person autobiography by a retired colonel, Juan de la Rosa, recalling his childhood in the Andean valley city of Cochabamba during the uprisings against Spanish colonial rule. The fictional colonel writes from a privileged position as an old and experienced combatant, and dedicates his memoirs to “the youth of my beloved country”—the novel's implicit readers. The late nineteenth-century narrator criticizes the adulteration of the patriotic values of the Republic's founders in the decades since independence. His memoir is organized by the periods in Bolivia's variegated and eventful history, allowing the story of his present to coincide with the great national disaster of the War of the Pacific (1879), when Chile defeated Peru and Bolivia and annexed Bolivia's westernmost province, leaving the country landlocked, without an outlet to the Pacific.

In order to construct the ideal image of the nation, Aguirre used the narrator's voice to express the pressing need to introduce new values into the country's history. This legitimization took the form of a new family as a symbol for the nation. Aguirre created a nuclear family around the narrator, providing a sharp contrast with the disorderly colonial family, in answer to the need for a new system of property. Though still patriarchal in structure, the new system is modernized, abandoning the old inheritance system of primogeniture and giving each citizen a chance to acquire property rights to the land through personal effort and paid labor.

If the narrator, Juan de la Rosa, is the father, his wife Merceditas is the mother of this new family, metaphorically comprising the novel's readers, the “youth of my beloved country.” Through this family nucleus, this metaphor of the nation, Aguirre constructed a new social and economic subject with the mission of establishing the Liberal principals of free trade. But, as Alba María Paz Soldán (1998) has noted in her introduction to

the novel's English translation, the narrative play of *Juan de la Rosa* is made more complex by the presence of a second narrator, Fray Justo, who complements Colonel Juan de la Rosa. Fray Justo, who teaches young Juan to read and write, and who serves as the novel's secondary narrator, reveals the entire project of national identity, for it is Fray Justo who discovers Juanito's mestizo origins. As a descendant of Alejo Calatayud, a historical character who led one of the first mestizo uprisings against Spanish rule in 1730, Juanito understands that his background is not Indian but mestizo, and that he has nothing to do with the eighteenth-century indigenous uprisings. Here is the ideological crux of the novel: the point is to set the Indian aside and deny him any possible role in constructing the nation.

Yet even though Aguirre's novel openly rejected the Indian, its narration retained fragments of songs and visual icons that show how autochthonous culture refuses to disappear. I find the persistence of the indigenous to be the most interesting aspect of this novel's ambiguity, its contradictory nature. Fray Justo projects an ideal image of a modernity that excludes the indigenous past, yet the novel paradoxically refuses to let the modernizing project undo indigenous cultural forms that the two narrators, the colonel and the friar, continuously invoke. The narrators bring up representations that include a colonial drama in Quechua, pre-Columbian musical forms, a wide variety of uses of the Quechua language, and numerous descriptions of indigenous visual images. This shows that elitist nationalism, as promoted by the author through his two narrators, was produced at the expense of a vast popular culture that questioned and implicitly participated in the construction of the nation. The novel thus presented an interesting disjunction between mestizo-criollo nation building (which it openly promoted) and local conditions that conflicted with this project. What basis did this discord have in reality?

Aguirre, an intellectual and public figure who formed part of the "Generation of 1880,"⁸ personally participated in violence against indigenous communities. As a public figure, he took part in the discussions that gave rise to the 1874 Disentailment Law (*Ley de Exvinculación de las Tierras*), which legally dissolved indigenous communities as official entities and which prescribed the division of communal land into individualized tracts. As a prominent member of the Liberal Party, which was not yet in power when the novel appeared, Aguirre also promoted reform of the tribute

system, with the objective of creating a universal property tax in place of the “indigene tax.” This legislation would give rise to the prolonged, accelerated expansion of the great estates over the next forty years, a process that deeply affected the Altiplano region around La Paz as well as the Inter-Andean Valley region of Aguirre’s hometown.

Aguirre’s open rejection of the Indian and his promotion of a modernizing, exclusive Liberal project coincided with the narrative function of his novel, which expressed the official vision of what the nation should be. This conception of the novel and Aguirre’s politics agrees with Benedict Anderson’s (1983) argument, which also grants to the intellectual elite a primary exclusive role in carrying out cultural nation building. As exemplified by the proposals of the Liberator, Simón Bolívar, Anderson argues that this ideal formulation establishes a close relation between the nation-state and a select group of enlightened citizens born within the nation’s borders. This ideal construction of the nation, which Anderson defines “in an anthropological sense” as a “politically imagined community,” is what establishes the abstract model of relations between citizens extending uniformly throughout the nation’s territory, uniting all its inhabitants. The fact that there may be great diversity among these citizens does not keep them from creating a shared mental image of the nation. This imagined community corresponds to the need for a “brotherhood of equals,” constructed through a necessary disjunction between abstract representation and concrete social practice.

Much as the concept of the “imagined community” overlooks the social and ethnic divisions underlying the historical formation of any nation, the nuclear family contrived by Aguirre in *Juan de la Rosa* significantly disregards the indigenous rebellions. Instead it promotes the elitist memory of mestizaje as represented by Alejo Calatayud. This ideological process thus disregards the constitutive relation between the mestizo model of the nation and its conditions of production and reproduction. The mestizo-criollo elite’s struggle to construct the nation cannot be separated from their efforts to resist indigenous pressures. Aguirre’s elitist construction was therefore one-dimensional, because it maintained the elite’s point of view; yet it was also conflicted, for it did not completely free itself from indigenous culture. This conflict was not an invention of the novel; on the contrary, it corresponded to concrete facts of social reality.

Indigenous experience shows that two relatively independent political camps were involved in constructing the Bolivian nation: the mestizo-criollo elite and the indigenous subaltern movement. The Federal Revolution of 1899 occurred at the intersection of these two camps, a fact too rarely taken into account in explanations of how Liberalism functioned as a governing ideology. If the mestizo-criollo project can be explained in terms of the imagined community and of the importance of letters (*lo letrado*) in nation building, then this project cannot be studied without connecting it to the impact it had on the subaltern population.

Vengeance and *brutality* are the terms most often used to explain the indigenous movements of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Marta Irurozqui (2000) has recently explained that indigenous struggles do not form an alternative project that the subaltern constructs far from the national project. On the contrary, she argues that indigenous people feel a need to take part in the dominant project itself, a fact that undermines the common-wisdom definition of the Indian as a politically pre-modern member of the nation. Neither passive in politics nor inscrutable to the Western mind, the indigenous community took well-defined stands on official discourse throughout the nineteenth century. Indigenous people became politicized through a gradual consciousness raising, no matter how insulated they may have been in their daily lives. The key link between their communities, public life, and national politics was the problem of land. As their political consciousness was raised, indigenous people realized that obtaining citizenship would allow them to hold on to their community land. They therefore demanded that the nation-state recognize their tribute payments (a legacy of colonial rule) as an expression of their loyalty to the republic, and furthermore, that schools be built so that Indians could become literate and participate in elections as citizens.

These demands are not well known, because they have become confused with the ties of *compadrazgo* (spiritual kinship, as between a child's parents and godparents), which Indians commonly held with mestizos and criollos, and through which they came into contact with the state and with state authorities. It is nevertheless the case that interactions between the elite and subaltern were fluid throughout the nineteenth century. It is even conceivable that the lives and aspirations of the indigenous sector

were also influenced by the language and rhetoric of the dominant sectors. These reflections do not contradict the fact that indigenous people used their frequent rebellions in the nineteenth century to exert political pressure. On the contrary, these interactions help explain how the rebellions were not instinctive bestial acts, as they have been portrayed, but were consciously planned political acts. Indeed, indigenous rebellions combined insurrection with other forms of protest and political participation, making demands for such things as better access to education, recognition of the right of access to the judicial system, and the right to vote. All these demands demonstrate the desire of indigenous people to take part in building the nation. As Irurozqui notes, these attitudes were not a political given that indigenous people received like manna from heaven, but were instead a consequence of their struggle to hold on to their land.

It is significant that members of indigenous communities were fully aware of the importance of their tribute payments for guaranteeing their right to participate as citizens. Through paying tribute—a crucial source of public financing—indigenous people demonstrated their civic usefulness to the state and their contribution to the economic development of the nation. In return, they demanded the right to keep their territorial jurisdictions, name their own governmental authorities, and conserve their communal land. These are precisely the rights that contradicted the Liberal principals of citizenship and private property. Thus, while members of indigenous communities saw their communal principals as perfectly compatible with national interests, the Liberal state took the opposite stand. For the mestizo-criollo state, indigenous resistance, the indigenous desire to remain on community lands, and indigenous insistence on maintaining their own identity all constituted impediments to building a homogeneous nation.

Political reality in the first half of the nineteenth century forced the mestizo-criollo sectors to keep their hands off indigenous community lands. The demographic weight of indigenous communities and the significance of indigenous tribute to the national economy made this clear. Therefore, between 1830 and 1860 only a few feeble attempts were made at changing the tribute system. In the 1870s, however, the mining sector became increasingly important, and the share of indigenous tribute in

the public coffers shrank correspondingly. Agrarian reform was then set in motion, and the administrative apparatus of the state went to work on reorganizing the agricultural system through a series of so-called *revisitas*, fiscal commissions that were charged with dividing and distributing communal land. Indigenous uprisings broke out all over the Altiplano region in opposition to these commissions. This process led to the Disentailment Law of 1874, which Aguirre helped promote as a prominent Liberal figure.

The fact that Aguirre's *Juan de la Rosa* ignores indigenous participation in building the nation thus forms part of the historical trajectory just described. Written in 1885, during the first years of the export mining boom, and after nascent Liberalism had threatened to destroy indigenous communities, Aguirre's novel presents an ideological project that is in line with a Liberalism that no longer had any reason to look for support among a debilitated indigenous sector whose right to hold land was on its way to extinction. I think Aguirre's vision of the Indian would have been different if he had written his novel after the events of 1899, when Liberalism had to rely on the indigenous sector to give the final blow to Conservatism in the so-called Federal Revolution.

It is difficult to know what exactly motivated the Aymara ethnic group to participate in the Revolution of 1899. One hypothesis is that the Aymara people expected to regain possession of their original territories. It is also possible that they sought the state's protection in their dispute with the new owners of their former community land, who also controlled the tribute system. Related to the latter hypothesis is the probability that they wanted to reestablish the Republic of Indians, a colonial Spanish political regime under which indigenous communities had exercised limited self-rule during the three centuries of Spanish rule, and to deepen the process of re-Indianizing the population (Platt 1987).

An alternate hypothesis, which is in closer agreement with the postulates I have followed here, concerns indigenous aspirations to participate in building the nation (Irurozqui 2000). This desire would not imply that they had completely abandoned the model of the indigenous community, but rather that they would have it linked more closely with the state. Quick to exert their rights as both community members and as citizens, indigenous people were manipulated by the mestizo-criollo sector, which needed their help to achieve victory, but which afterward denied

them, both in practice and in discourse, any real participation in constructing Bolivian nationality.

The dominant sector had two responses to the indigenous aspirations arising from the Federal Revolution of 1899. The first response, which is well known and widely accepted, was the Liberal Darwinist position that saw the Indians as filled with a full range of hereditary defects, disqualifying them from any possible role as agents of social progress. The second, more temperate and more attuned to local cultural needs, was the discourse on the autochthonous, which recognized the Indians' vital force while denying them a capacity for governing or for self-determination. Both responses sought to prevent the Indians' social ascent, the transformation into cholos—that is, “Indianized” mestizos who follow indigenous cultural norms, as opposed to the “criolloized” Westernized mestizos—and thus halt any political advancement, forcing them to remain silent guests in the nation-building project. It is clear, then, that the discourse on the autochthonous was a response to the dominant mestizo-criollo sector's effort to stop the “threatening” social mobility caused by the Indians' conversion into cholos. Tamayo explicitly denied such mobility in his foundational essay.

Racial Regeneration and the Feigned Authenticity of the Autochthonous

The discourse on the autochthonous, which appeared in print in Tamayo's 1910 essay, *Creación de la pedagogía nacional*, had its origins in the debate between Tamayo and the Liberal oligarchy about national education. In his critical response to the pedagogical proposals of two prominent defenders of civil rule, Daniel Sánchez Bustamante (1870–1933) and Felipe Segundo Guzmán (1879–1933), Tamayo also dissented from the mechanistic determinism of Alcides Arguedas (1879–1946), who saw Bolivian social reality in an extremely pessimistic light.

On coming to power with the Revolution of 1899, the Liberal Party took up the task of “educationally regenerating” society. These boom years for political Liberalism witnessed the rise of a veritable cult of physical education (Martínez 1999, 362) and of improving the human body, which

was seen as a microcosm of society. Victorious Liberalism developed an ideology of progress inspired by evolutionary and social Darwinist schools, which proposed to show societies the path to take in order to attain modernity. It fell to the “teaching State” promoted by Liberalism to carry out the task of “regenerating” the social body, in order to overcome the “cultural vacuum” of the nineteenth century. Thus, the fundamental task was to cure the nation and overcome the social ills that afflicted the unhealthy social body.

While the Liberal press used the image of the nation languishing on its deathbed, Arguedas published his essay “Pueblo enfermo” (“An Unhealthy People”) in Barcelona in 1909, causing an enormous and not entirely favorable impact on the nation’s elite. In his essay Arguedas assumed a mechanistic relation between man and environment, leading him to postulate a basically fatalistic vision of Bolivia’s reality. Geography, seen as determining the constitution of human groups, and race, determining the collective psychology of peoples, were the two axes along which Arguedas developed his rather prejudicial analysis of Bolivian society. To be Indian, from this point of view, was to be stamped by fate, for the Indian’s being had been determined by the purely mechanical and immutable action exerted on him by the high plateau of the Altiplano region. “The pampa and the Indian are but a single entity,” Arguedas wrote. “The physical aspect of the plateau . . . has molded the Indian’s spirit in strange ways. Note, in the man of the Altiplano, the hardness of his character, the aridity of his feelings, his absolute lack of aesthetic emotions” (Arguedas 1937, 180). This deterministic relation between man and environment, which Arguedas extended to an explanation of the backwardness of the republic, based on its broken geography, of course ignored all the historical, economic, and social factors that outweighed the geographic ones on which he fixated. According to his vision, man had lost any ability to transform nature. Similarly, Arguedas saw a profound disequilibrium between the nation’s territory and the quality of its population. Because of this, Bolivia lacked the stability and harmony required to produce progress. If Europe was a vast, uniform plain, Bolivia was a wild, chaotic landscape. Geography thus determined development.

As for the weight that race had on the nation’s historic composition and collective psychology, Arguedas set it apart from class interests, economic

forces, and demography. Though his ethnocentrism in *Pueblo enfermo* does not seem to draw on Spencer's evolutionism, Arguedas was influenced by LeBon's psychosociology, and he regarded mestizaje with repugnance. He saw the most negative aspects of the Iberian and Indian races combining to give birth to the mestizo, a being incapable of playing a unifying role for the nation and whose most representative type was the cholo. Whether he became a politician, a soldier, a lawyer, or a priest, the degenerate mestizo, with his smallness of spirit, never stopped to wonder—according to Arguedas—whether or not his acts were moral or in keeping with the general welfare. The learned cholo, though freed from ignorance, remained prey to contradictory emotions, still childishly credulous or savagely skeptical. Bolivia had generally evolved in the opposite direction from all other human groups, due to the predominance of mestizos, who by displacing the Iberian racial core had made it lose its qualities and instead inherit those of the defeated race. In this way the white man had become *encholado*, “choloized.”

In a word, Arguedas left nothing standing. The country—majestic but primitive, uncouth, and savage—would become morally diminished as Indians and mestizos came to form the majority. The Indian was all but irredeemable, but deserving of protection; the mestizo was a degenerate, a cholo, an heir to the worst work habits of both whites and Indians. The criollo minority in power also tended toward *encholamiento* (choloization) and allowed their social institutions to degrade and gradually become sapped of any positive virtues. But Arguedas also proposed political, moral, and pedagogical solutions. Like a memory aid for the governing Liberal oligarchy, *Pueblo enfermo* argued that more adequate attention be paid to instruction by opening normal schools, centralizing the universities, educating the Indians, sending students abroad for specialized training, all of which would be important in molding the national character. He also called for the adoption of a national policy of selecting civil servants according to their qualifications and for constant vigilance against demagoguery.

The Liberal elite apparently agreed with his diagnosis. The nation's endemic ills should be treated with the regenerative cure of awakening its inner energy, which would begin by remodeling the physique of the Bolivian populace. Thus, in order to “endow the pupil with a healthy,

vigorous, and beautiful body; a sensitive, generous heart; an intelligence rich in practical ideas” (*La Mañana* 1910, 2–3), the Liberal rulers placed particular emphasis on physical education. It was not simply a matter of creating strong and physically healthy bodies. The aim, above all, was to forge a strong will through the acquisition of the moral virtues of more advanced Western societies. To achieve this goal, the ideal of education had to be understood as molding the body’s physique so that it would in turn condition the individual’s spiritual and psychic transformation.

Integral education, a foreign model that the Liberals copied from the teachings of Herbert Spencer, influenced the thought of Daniel Sánchez Bustamante and Felipe Segundo Guzmán, who each traveled to Europe to study the most appropriate educational systems for regenerating the indigenous race. From 1905 to 1908, Sánchez Bustamante presided over a commission charged with creating a system of teacher training, which did not exist in Bolivia until the 1909 opening of the Advanced Normal School of the Republic under the directorship of Belgian educator Georges Rouma. As head of the commission, Sánchez Bustamante traveled to France and Germany to observe their pedagogic models in person; he paid close attention to physical education in the schools he observed, and he decided that the most appropriate model was the Swedish gymnasium or high school.

The Swedish gymnasium, more than either the French or the German, was based on the theory of integral education. It aimed not only to make the body strong and agile, but to develop intelligence and to forge a sense of morality in students. The Bolivian elite admired the French and German models for their military discipline, but felt that the time had come for an educational model that would wean their citizens from the military *caudillismo* (dictatorship) that had plunged Bolivia into chaos in the nineteenth century. In separate articles in the *Revista boliviana de instrucción pública*, Sánchez Bustamante and Guzmán each expressed their admiration for the Swedish, “a beautiful, graceful, serene, hardworking race, who seem to have fused in their veins the richest remnants of the primitive Germans and the valorous Vikings” (Guzmán 1907, 40). The foreign solution that they found in the Swedish gymnasium seemed to be the key to resolving the “indigenous problem” and regenerating the

race, both physically and mentally. Sánchez Bustamante (1910, 15) declared that “one cannot imagine a healthy spirit in a feeble body, nor a placid soul in a base, sluggish casing.” In other words, it was time to transform the Indian’s base, sluggish casing into a graceful body like that of the Swedish race.

Franz Tamayo responded to the Liberals’ proposal for regeneration in a series of fifty-five editorials that he wrote in the newspaper he edited, *El Diario*. Collected and republished in 1910 under the title *Creación de la pedagogía nacional*, these articles sharply criticized the Liberal impulse to imitate European pedagogical models indiscriminately.

Tamayo was an intellectually restless young man who had accompanied his father, Isaac Tamayo, on a long trip around Europe following the Federal Revolution of 1899. The young Tamayo was profoundly marked by his father’s solitary criticism of the nineteenth-century Bolivian elite, to which he himself belonged. Averse to the Francophile tastes of the elite, the elder Tamayo instilled in his son the need to see Bolivia with his own eyes. According to Roberto Prudencio (1977, 31), a highly original Bolivian essayist whose aesthetic theories are treated in the next chapter, Isaac Tamayo was the first Bolivian intellectual to understand the value of the autochthonous, as well as the first to realize that the Indian and the cholo are Bolivia’s deepest reality, “the flesh of our reality.” The younger Tamayo’s 1910 book was deeply influenced by his father’s essay “*Habla Melgarejo*” (“Melgarejo Speaks”), written in response to Mariano Melgarejo, one of the most savage caudillos of the nineteenth century, whose government officially dissolved indigenous communities as legal entities. Writing about Melgarejo gave Isaac Tamayo a chance to explore the natural results of republican life, in order to “reassess our autochthonous values and build upon them a life of our own” (Prudencio 1977, 39). Isaac Tamayo eschewed Francophilia and put ideas in Melgarejo’s mouth that would reappear in Franz Tamayo’s book, above all the idea that Western progress could be studied and exploited, as Meiji Japan exploited it, so long as it does not run counter to the true strengths of Bolivian reality, that is, counter to its autochthonous culture.

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Isaac Tamayo made an abiding impression on his son’s intellectual work. Tamayo’s mother’s influence was of a quite different nature. Little

is known of Felicidad Solares except that she was descended from a line of caciques (Indian nobles and community leaders). The only information we have is the short filial homage that Tamayo rendered to her in a scathing rebuttal to essayist Fernando Diez de Medina, who had wounded Tamayo's sensitivities by referring to his alleged cholo origins in *Franz Tamayo, hechicero del Ande* (1944). Rejecting the notion that he was of cholo blood, Tamayo (1944) wrote: "On my mother's side, there is no *birlochaje* [the process of forming cholos] in my race nor in my blood. Every virtue of the ancient American woman, further embellished by the light of Christianity, shone brightly in the proud Indian woman who was my mother." An interesting way to define himself: exalting the indigenous while suspiciously regarding the mestizo, who could so easily become degraded and choloized.

The editorial series that Tamayo wrote in 1910 and then compiled as *Creación de la pedagogía nacional* formed an open debate with Felipe Segundo Guzmán, whose *El problema pedagógico en Bolivia* was published the same year. In his counterarguments, Tamayo argued that the nation's educational problems should not be addressed by contemplating European models, but only by looking to the vital strengths of Bolivia itself. What needed to be studied were not foreign methods or models, but the soul of Bolivia's own race. The intimate aspects of his own inner life were what a man of action needed to uncover. Departing from the Liberal positivist concept of civilization, Tamayo proposed that local culture be more closely studied. If civilization is the stage one reaches through instruction, Tamayo argued, it should be subordinated to the exercise of the will. Education is not a matter of accumulating the baggage of facts in our brains, but rather what we can forge with our own wills. More than ideas and knowledge acquired through intelligence, the important thing is to learn our own customs. Thus Tamayo placed two orders of knowledge in opposition to one another: education and instruction. Instruction is objective, rational, but not transcendent, because it does not allow us to discover the nation's essence. Conversely, education is subjective and transcendent, because it leads us to discover the depths of our characters and our souls, the vital strengths of our existence. In *Creación de la pedagogía nacional* Tamayo sought to discover this will, this national character. If this is our goal, Tamayo argued, we will not get far by sending pedagogical com-

missions to Europe so that they can study alien models that will be of no help in discovering our own vitality. The conclusion that Tamayo reached in his comparison of instruction and education could not have been more paradoxical: rational instruction leads to mummification, whereas education in one's own vitality leads to the discovery of existence. It is not by thinking but by acting that we reach a true comprehension of existence. This disdain of reason led Tamayo to the irrationalist suspicion that intelligence, divorced from the vital strengths of existence, falsifies reality (Albarracín 1981).

Education consequently means the wakening of national vitality, which is the same thing as wakening the energies of the Bolivian race. In his first editorials, Tamayo gave primacy to the internal, endogenous aspects of culture. Bolivian national culture could not be found in the criollo nor in the mestizo, both of whom too often turned into the unruly cholo, but rather in the subjugated Indian. The Indian had virtues that both the mestizo and the white man lacked. He was autonomous and strong, concrete and disciplined. He had the strength of will, undeveloped though it may still have been, that organized social life demands. All his labors were fertile and productive, despite the hostility that surrounded him and the scorn he faced from the other sectors of society. In sum, the Indian was the repository of the nation's energy.

As Tamayo continued writing his articles, however, he began to put an interesting twist on his argument for the primacy of action over reason, and his text ends by giving first place to mestizo intelligence, which may be disorderly, infantile, incipient, yet a factor for progress. Tamayo's discourse thus began to accommodate the inner factors of culture to the external factors of Western progress that indigenous vitality would not consider, or openly disdained. Hard as the environment he inhabited, the Indian withstood the slings and arrows of Western civilization as if that were his strange vocation. His resistance to change and to passive acceptance of the foreign elements in the civilization that defeated him was both a virtue and a defect in his racial character. The Indian was a body and a will that endured. His soul, withdrawn into itself, explained the Aymara's psychology. Deprived of intelligence, the Indian was pure will and character, untouched by aesthetic imagination or metaphysical thought. It was thus pointless to search in the Aymara race for any hint of a higher

intelligence. That was a quality of the mestizo, who displayed quick understanding, intellectual liveliness, and an aptitude for understanding aesthetic forms. The mestizo, however, lacked the European's will. Worker or artist, writer or architect, his acts had no personality. He therefore lived a life of volunteering and of imitating what is not his own. Good at copying, but lacking sufficient willpower to create anything truly his own, the mestizo was incapable of putting the imprint of his will on things.

These sharp differences between Indian and mestizo could be overcome, Tamayo argued, by applying different pedagogical roles to each race. The Indian's education called for a pedagogy of love and patience, the mestizo's instruction for a disciplined pedagogy that would develop his intellect. The two pedagogies would take different paths: the Indian's would work from his will and regal physique; the mestizo's, from his head and his intelligence. Tamayo's proposal fashioned an ideal image relating the Indian to the Westernized, criolloized mestizo, but at all costs avoiding the Indian's devolution into a cholo.⁹

Tamayo's essay interferes with and controls the Indian's social mobility, erasing the fact that at the time he was writing the community heads of "aboriginal lands," the literate Indians sometimes known as "cacique-representatives," were attempting to recover their communities' lands by creating political and social alliances with lower-class urban mestizos. The goal of the cacique-representatives' political movement was to create patron-client relations that might supplant the domination of the ruling mestizo-criollo sector (Irurozqui 2000; Rivera 1984). The politics of these literate Indians and their lettered cholo allies, acting as pueblo lawyers (commonly dismissed as shysters), as subversive politicians, or as members of craftsmen's unions, was deliberately overlooked in Tamayo's essay. His book eliminated the *real* possibility that the Indian might transform himself into a lettered cholo, replacing it with the *ideal* metaphor of the Westernized, mestizoized Indian, in keeping with the interests of the land-owning mestizo-criollo sector.

We should not confuse Tamayo's concept of a national pedagogy with a literacy campaign. If some sectors of the nation overcame illiteracy, Tamayo argued, that might even be a regressive factor, an impediment to national consolidation. Take the cholo, for instance. He knew how to read and write, and after a twisted, mediocre bit of schooling had man-

aged to become a politician, a lawyer, a provincial judge, a village priest, a bureaucrat in the state apparatus. For Tamayo, the cholo was all this and more: a social climber, an upstart, someone we should guard against. Socially speaking, the cholo was a parasite; politically, a present danger; economically, someone who got far more than he gave. The cholo was the product of education with all its ills. Tamayo felt that even the criollo had been choloized.

Tamayo would check the Indian's devolution into cholo, and would discipline social facts with a bodily metaphor, which we will explore below. This metaphor was an ideologically ambiguous proposal. Tamayo appears not to have noticed the conflict it created between the internal and the external, between life and reason, a conflict that came to characterize the discourse on the autochthonous. Let us look at it more closely before returning to the irrationalist construction of his *mestizaje ideal*.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of *Creación de la pedagogía nacional* was the anticolonial tone that Tamayo gave to his discourse. Refusing to imitate the rationalist methods of European positivism, Tamayo aimed to reclaim the vital indigenous energy of Bolivia. Tamayo's anticolonialism, a precursor to the nationalist rhetoric of later decades, assumed the necessity of constructing an original identity. This presumption fused the notion of the autochthonous with the idea that Bolivia's indigenous roots were the source of its energy and vitality. The discourse on the autochthonous, in searching for the indigenous will, repudiated the degeneration into which the criollo had fallen.

But this discourse, which sought to recuperate the indigenous, at the same time recreated the social fractures of the colonial order, for it could not resolve the contradictions between the indigenous "interior," with its particular communitarian vision, and the mestizo-criollo "exterior," ruled by European models of observation. Tamayo's discourse on the autochthonous reflected these contradictory impulses. By referring to the Indian's vital energy, Tamayo showcased his differences with European positivist models. However, when he advocated the development of the mestizo's intellect, he combined this indigenous difference with Western forms, which, though deriving from a European irrationalism that contradicted positivism, nonetheless added up to yet another foreign gaze on the local culture to which Tamayo hoped to return its strength and originality.

This double discourse had an interesting characteristic. It fervently argued that spiritual or cultural dominion is a sovereign territory that should never be handed over to Western civilization, yet on the other hand it crafted a new cultural model that only deviated in appearances from the Western imaginary. It was not French-style positivism that guided Tamayo's imagined community, but the German irrational vitalism that he borrowed from Nietzsche and Schopenhauer. It is therefore hard to argue that Tamayo imagined a truly autochthonous community. His double discourse did not promote a "double critique," as Walter Mignolo (2000) has called the "border epistemology" from which the colonized thinker learns the consciousness of the colonizer and the colonized at once, while the colonizer only knows his own monotopical consciousness and can only visualize events from his own, exclusive, Eurocentric perspective. In other words, even though Tamayo insisted he had corrected the positivist, Liberal observer's gaze, his point of view was still that of the European colonizer. Tamayo was not a peripheral thinker who thought from the standpoint of colonial reality itself, but a moderate metropolitan thinker who continued to see the colonized reality through the lenses of European methods of observation. We will study this aspect of his thought in more detail in the next section.

The search for a discourse on the autochthonous did not express the point of view of indigenous subalternity, but rather reproduced that of mestizo-criollo reason, which manipulated the people's energy and was capable of dominating society. This discourse proposed a different path than that of nineteenth-century Liberalism, which had divided reality into European civilization and American barbarism. Instead, the discourse on the autochthonous exalted indigenous culture and the telluric strength of the environment, both of which, guided finally by mestizo intelligence, would overcome mechanistic determinism and social Darwinism.

The Irrationalist Construction of the Nation

Tamayo constructed Bolivian national identity by interweaving a European hierarchical model of spiritual evolution and moral authority with the local, subjective content of the indigenous. Presented here are analy-

ses of the construction of this relation model for identity formation and of the details of the bodily metaphor that expressed this model.

At the close of the nineteenth century, the Liberal horizon of visibility modified the racial classification system known as the *sistema de castas* that had governed colonial society. Based on the presumed superiority of the criollos who dominated the indigenous people and who considered them culturally and racially inferior, the sistema de castas never took into account a division of society into economic classes prior to the triumph of Liberalism. The colonial racial system made a Manichean division of society into those who should be considered superior and those who should be seen as inferior. It discriminated against the mestizos to a greater or lesser degree, depending on how close their social group was viewed as being to one pole or the other. The slow process of social ascent, which occurred over a period of generations, eventually led eighteenth-century colonial society to discriminate between mestizos proper—those who tended toward the dominant criollo pole, adopting Western cultural norms—and cholos, the mestizos who remained culturally linked with the subjugated indigenous pole. With this differentiation between mestizos and cholos, the mestizo group consolidated the social position they had won by repudiating those below them and appropriating the social and cultural values of those already at the apex of the sistema de castas. By the end of the eighteenth century, colonial society comprised a dominant mestizo-criollo pole, and a subaltern cholo-Indian pole (Rivera 1993, 67; Barragán 1992, 17–44).

Liberalism partially modified this colonial framework by adding economic and class ingredients to the bipolar racial division between mestizo-criollos and cholo-Indians. By the late nineteenth century, the mestizo-criollo elite had become partisans of free trade, and were viciously opposed to the pro-cholo-Indian protectionism that had propped up inherited internal market systems since the mining heyday of colonial Potosí. The mestizo-criollos repudiated this internal opposition to their free-trade politics, insisting on the cultural backwardness of Indians and reviling the cholos as an undesirable element of society.

In their introspective search for the nation's soul, the intellectual elite attacked *cholaje*, the process of forming cholos. Arguedas had argued for redeeming the Indian and freeing society from the social scourge of the

cholo. Tamayo, too, looked down on the cholo with profound disdain, but was much more cautious in promoting the Liberal civilizing project. In *Creación de la pedagogía nacional* he criticized French-style positivism, which he termed “Bovarysm,” as well as the rationalist premises that supported evolutionary determinism. The concept of material progress that both ideologies shared, and which was promoted by the will of a European spirit imposed upon the barbarian body of Indo-American reality, was precisely what Tamayo rejected and countered with his utopian, irrationalist vision of mestizaje. Since, as he argued, material progress can only be promoted at the expense of impoverishing local culture, Tamayo directed his pedagogical efforts at the mestizo-criollo elite who would receive his discourse, in order to free them from the weight of the “civilized barbarity” that was overwhelming the world and diluting the energy and vitality of autochthonous civilizations. Therefore the mestizo-criollo elites had to be made aware of the need to overcome their aping of the Western models of progress and civilization, for that sort of imitation was so dangerous that it would leave public affairs at the mercy of the lettered cholo’s twisted intelligence.

Creación de la pedagogía nacional cannot be judged through the lens of the positivist ideas that guided progress and modernity. With the important exception of a few Bolivian researchers who have noted Tamayo’s antipositivism,¹⁰ critical studies on his foundational essay have paid little attention to the irrationalist trends on which it was based. Not only was Tamayo’s essay part of the redefinition of the relations between mestizo-criollo and Indian ways; it was also engaged in the search for authenticity, which Julie Skurski (1994) has insightfully explored in the case of Rómulo Gallegos. In his search for the authentic, for the autochthonous, Tamayo aspired to present the indigenous potential of the elite as a source of vitality and energy that could overcome the opposition between civilization and barbarity. According to this reformist vision, the nation could only overcome the limitations of the present when its elite changed morally and culturally and put all the efforts into redeeming the Indian and giving him a new form.

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Influenced by German irrationalist thought, particularly by Schopenhauer,¹¹ Tamayo argued that Bolivian backwardness could be overcome through self-perception and through intuiting the national will. This

complicated and rather unclear procedure followed Schopenhauer's idea that the world can only be known through the self-reflexive gaze of the observer. This was a form of knowing that Tamayo applied to his conceptualization of mestizaje. Tamayo thus reflected on his own physique before constructing the bodily image of the nation. This form of perceiving reality is an optical, visual process that follows Schopenhauer's revolutionary principal that the understanding of the objective nature of the exterior world must first pass through the construction of subjectivity. In other words, it is through one's own self, one's own inner microcosm, that one apprehends the social world, the external macrocosm. The key is in self-reflection, coming to understand one's own will.¹²

Given that Schopenhauer's intuition of the will takes place beyond any empirical reality, the kind of social construction that he promotes is a real problem for researchers who wish to interpret essays like Tamayo's through rational methods of observation. While social historians look for objective explanations, texts like *Creación de la pedagogía nacional* can only be "productive" when they are studied as cultural interpretations, as "meta-understandings" that have little to do with empirical studies of reality, and even less to do with the methods of the social sciences. Such texts thus create ideal types that make no pretension of being empirically verifiable. One of these ideal types is the bodily metaphor that allows us to visualize the irrationalist construction of the nation.

Before delving into the hidden bodily metaphor of *Creación de la pedagogía nacional*, let me make some observations on Tamayo, the observer. By asking his hypothetical reader not to be guided exclusively by books and other structured forms of looking, Tamayo directed our attention to the centrality of visual experience in everyday life. He noted that we should "deal with life and not with the dead letter" (26), and argued that we "should close our books and open our eyes" (27). *Creación de la pedagogía nacional* constantly reminds us that "Bovarysm" means losing a vigilant spirit able to "see" life directly. Following Goethe's maxim, *Glaube dem Leben* (47), Tamayo's belief in life invites us to reject the mechanical appropriation of artificial models of progress. "Our Bovarystas are convinced that European models can do anything. . . . This illusion robs us of energy and time" (35). Moreover, Tamayo, the observer of national reality, understood that national consciousness is "a moment of reflection

on ourselves, an opening of our eyes to our own nature, and then to the external world” (183). This self-reflexive movement from the internal to the external is precisely what led Tamayo, under Schopenhauer’s influence, to construct his bodily metaphor.

The movement of self-reflection allows us to ask the following: What happens when the anatomical parts of the observer’s body—the musculature, the cranial measurements, the fat content, and so on—are the necessary conditions for making observations? Tamayo’s own corporeality, as reflected in his essay’s metaphor, became the privileged place for observing the entire project of national culture. His project, tied to the nineteenth-century visual science that had investigated the physical composition of the human, was particularly influenced by the narcissistic visions of Goethe, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche, who were thus fundamental to his subjective vision.

Tamayo located Bolivian morality and vitality in its indigenous people’s hardy physical constitution: indigenous muscle contained “ninety percent of our national energy” (72). “The builder of his own house, the worker of his own land, the weaver of his own clothing, the maker of his own work tools, . . . the Indian is the storehouse of national energy” (71). But their great moral and physical “will” was not accompanied by intellect. “Intelligence is what the mestizos have inherited from their white forebears” (113). Tamayo even stated that, before entering into contact with Western thought, mestizos were already endowed with “natural intelligence.” Mestizo intelligence nevertheless lacked will. This was why the mestizo head, bereft of character, had to join the indigenous musculature. Only that physical vigor could infuse mestizo intelligence with passion and determination. For Tamayo, then, the mestizo ideal, the ideal mestizo, was the synthesis of indigenous will and mestizo intelligence. This ideal man would require rigorous guiding and control, for just as bodies accumulate excessive fat when they are sedentary, so mestizos tend to overimagine rather than reason. The function of pedagogy was to control these excesses, these accumulations of fat, so that they would not endanger the project of national construction. Thus subaltern cholaje, the excess fat of the social body, had to be eliminated. The mestizo ideal, then, is not the cholo, who is erased from the social imaginary. Tamayo thus constructed the fascinating bodily image of the ideal Bolivian, capable of introducing to

society the changes needed for constructing the nation. This ideal being would have the Indian's physique, but the educated mind of the mestizo, on whom the function of directing the nation-building project would fall.

The model for Tamayo's visual reflections on will and intelligence was foreign to Aymara culture: it was the optic regime of Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Representation*, which the German philosopher wrote when the European science of optics was moving from Cartesian perspectivism to an observational model that emphasized anatomy and the perceptual separation of the senses (Crary 1998). For Schopenhauer, the observer was not a purely cognitive subject but a human body rooted in the world. Rejecting the Cartesian mind-body distinction, Schopenhauer argued that the observing subject was not simply a "place" of intellectual production but a body forging a will. How could we recognize such a will? It is only by virtue of the fact that the human body is subject to sensations of pain and pleasure that we can attribute something more than intellect to it. Will is thus the indispensable counterweight to cognitive reason. It is through the human body that we become aware of ourselves. Through the distinction between intellect and will, Schopenhauer reached the irrationalist postulate that we respond to will before intellect. Of course, he went beyond the sensations of pleasure and pain to find inner manifestations of lived experience, of the natural world.

Tamayo depicted a surprisingly similar relation between intellect and will. Where Schopenhauer summed up this relation as that of "a robust blind man who carries a seeing cripple on his shoulders" (2:421), we could say that Tamayo's mestizo ideal was a muscular Indian carrying an intelligent mestizo inside his head. The will, like the muscular but blind indigenous body, carries the intelligence, which, like a crippled mestizo, can only see and serve as a guide from the shoulders of the indigenous body. Schopenhauer's truly revolutionary visual theory anticipated modernist aesthetics; Tamayo made it possible to observe the man of the Andes in a new, subjective way, without relying on the distant, coldly objective Cartesian mind's eye. Dividing the human body into distinct functional systems allowed him to create his metaphor of mestizaje ideal as a discursive representation of transcendental nationalism that unified the fragmented body of Bolivian social reality.

As we have seen, Tamayo borrowed the concept of the inner will of

modern man from Schopenhauer. His vitalism was not based on Schopenhauer, however, but on Nietzsche's more dynamic and positive philosophy. Schopenhauer had insisted, with a pessimism that Tamayo never shared, that the will had no social aim. The Bolivian essayist abandoned this view of the will, and instead followed the social goals proposed by Nietzsche.

Just as Nietzsche drew on Darwinian thought to depict human evolution in positive terms (see Simmel [1907] 1991), Tamayo found in the evolution of Bolivia the possibility of roundly saying, with Nietzsche and Goethe, "yes" to life. The Nietzschean proposition to endow life with a *telos* is distinctly different from Schopenhauer's pessimistic will, his *ennui*. The essence of Schopenhauer's pessimism derived from a profound rejection of life; Tamayo instead took up Nietzsche's energy to argue for the triumph of his *mestizaje* ideal. Nietzsche thus played a particularly important role in Tamayo's thought. Nietzsche saved Tamayo from Schopenhauerian "bitterness" and kept him from accepting Schopenhauer's idea that will acts upon life in the same way that pain marks human behavior. Tamayo believed that life's inner worth depended on neither pleasure nor pain, but on a governing energy that is born, like an "anonymous and powerful will," in nature. Based on this theory of energy, which resembles Nietzsche's concept of will, Tamayo recognized the land itself as holding the world's vitality. Will is the vital nexus that ties man to the land, and man must try to capture all the virtues and determination of the land's will. Tamayo saw this vital energy not as a hostile force but as a positive impulse that was responsible for the existence of the man of the Andes. This would become the source of the telluric mysticism of Tamayo's followers (see chap. 2).

The motto *Glaube dem Leben*, which Tamayo took from Goethe, is an affirmation of life, a way of overcoming the imperfections of the present. In other words, whereas Schopenhauer had no faith in the possibility of human redemption, Tamayo escaped such pessimism, which takes away the meaning of life, and affirmed the possibility of an ideal *mestizaje* that would make national construction possible. His *mestizaje* ideal was the bridge that let Tamayo cross over from the chaos of the past into the order of the future. His thought never broke with the notion of progress that is at the base of Western historiography. By combining his round rejection of early twentieth-century Bolivia with an equally forceful affirmation

of its future promise, Tamayo hoped to cast light on the path to social perfectibility. Despite his arguments against cholaje, in his book Tamayo projected a much more positive view of the nation than Arguedas had in *Pueblo enfermo*.

Tamayo had a vital and mysterious relationship with the land of Bolivia. This sense of mystery, which can be found in both his pedagogical ideas and in his modernist poetry, separated him from the existence-denying emotional abyss of Schopenhauer. Given that Tamayo's thought was motivated by moral themes rather than metaphysical problems, his bodily metaphor in *Creación de la pedagogía nacional* makes us look at Bolivia through a vitalism that does not derive from a rational explanation of society, but from a Schopenhauerian "all-in-one" optic that harmonizes the races. With his metaphor of mestizaje ideal, Tamayo thus transformed empirical reality into an imaginary representation of life.

This bodily visualization was to become important not only for the group of aesthetic thinkers who followed Tamayo's tellurism, but also for the intellectuals who were critical of his ideas. One way or another, whether it was accepted or rejected, Tamayo's thought became fundamental to the elaboration of the aesthetic discourse on the autochthonous as an irrationalist expression of the nation.

Franz Tamayo Awakens the Nation

Tamayo, "the nation's epistemological gatekeeper,"¹³ drew upon the mystical principles of German irrationalism, which he related with the vital energy of the Indian and of his native soil. Deriving from European irrationalism, this casting of the Andean essence constituted a complete rejection of Bolivian rationalism as promoted by the Liberal oligarchy. Tamayo accused their rationalism of being an inert doctrine, a dangerously alienating, Frenchified aping. As sociologist Juan Albarracín (1981, 10) has noted, "Tamayo believed in a national awakening based on the natural supports of land and blood, mythified by a prodigious vital energy that nurtured everything existing on Andean soil, giving it strength and power."

But this theory of energy, through which Tamayo made irrationalism

a fixture of Bolivian thought, explained social reality from an epistemological “outside” that transformed the Indian into a redeemable value, something useful for constructing modernity. Located squarely in the center of the imaginary of modernity/coloniality—that is, of the capacity of letrado intellectuals for integrating Western epistemological systems with local histories of dependent and even colonized peoples (Mignolo 2000)—Tamayo constructed his *mestizaje* ideal as a metaphorical articulation around which he could organize and reorganize racial differences. The defiance of reason that he proposed, as part of his break with Liberalism, praised the Indian’s bodily nature, which he immediately rearticulated with his proposed *mestizaje* as the happiest expression of Bolivian nationality.

A moderate metropolitan thinker, Tamayo can only be understood if we link his thoughts to Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and Goethe. Foreign models of observing Bolivian reality were never really questioned at any point in the twentieth century. It is interesting to note, however, that Tamayo and the irrationalist movement of the first half of the century insisted that they had nothing to do with European thought, that they were entirely motivated by their enthusiasm for autochthonous originality. Indeed, both Tamayo’s Indianism and his follower’s “tellurism” and “mysticism of the land” (see chap. 2) conceal their European intellectual sources. In clear contrast to its pose of painstakingly searching for autochthonous authenticity, irrationalism was actually exploring within European philosophy to explain its Andean roots. Thus, energy is a universal principle that acts autonomously, despite the national content that Tamayo gave it. But his ability to present it as his own doctrine hid its German provenance while defining it “as a local affair, and not as it was, a philosophy elaborated in Germany to get that country out of its European subordination” (Albarracín 1981, 52–53). Thus Tamayo was able to pass off German irrationalism as his own “national pedagogy.”

62 The fact that Franz Tamayo was, epistemologically speaking, a European thinker who proposed his regenerative project for *mestizaje* from Bolivia should not lead us to think that his discourse on the autochthonous made no cognitive improvement over positivist Liberal thought. At a recent conference at a U.S. university, I was told that there were no appreciable practical differences between Arguedas’s positivism and Tamayo’s

irrationalism, since both theories are tied to the interior discourse of the mestizo-criollo elite. I argue that there are fundamental differences between these two Bolivian letrados. Tamayo's discourse on the autochthonous is important, not only for twentieth-century Bolivia but for Latin American thought in general.

Tamayo was one of the first Latin American thinkers to counter the Eurocentric model of civilization and barbarism that had undertaken to destroy local cultures. He was a precursor of the critics of the deterministic theories of racial evolutionists, and one of the first boosters of mestizaje as a contribution to the advancement of Western civilization. His theory of a mestizaje ideal modified the geographical determinism that was based on the civilization-and-barbarism paradigm. His theory that the Indian and his environment had interacted historically to construct the nation's soul became the basis for a view of race that, separated from biological determinism, refused to conceive of the Indian as an unredeemable barbarian.

Tamayo transcended the notion of race that had developed in European determinist theories. His rejection of the biological concept of race, as part of his criticism of the rationalist premises underlying evolutionary determinism, was also a way of criticizing the idea of civilizing progress, which had divided human beings into mind and body, sought the unlimited development of materialism, and valued the notion of progress above those of morality and spiritual development. Tamayo opposed unrestricted civilizing progress, which he counterposed to the vital energy of autochthonous culture. He was thus one of the first letrados to contrast the notion of culture (German *Kultur*) with the civilizing paradigm of positivist Liberalism.¹⁴ This aspect of Tamayo's thought has only been noted by Bolivian political sociologist René Zavaleta Mercado (1986: 211–15), who points to Tamayo's defense of Japan's Meiji dynasty.¹⁵ In effect, Tamayo argued, "The foolish and the naïve are those who speak of the Europeanization of Japan. . . . Japan has a European civilization; but its whole culture, that is to say its heart and core, are Japanese." Tamayo was perfectly aware that Europe's "civilized barbarism," which initiated the social convulsions of the twentieth century, had undertaken to displace all other cultures. The indiscriminate aping of such a devastating *Gemeinschaft*, as carried out by local elites in belittlement of their own

cultures, was, for Tamayo, the worst enemy. His book thus viewed with great apprehension the expansionism of European civilization, which local elites admired and were determined to follow.

Creación de la pedagogía nacional was one of a group of works written in search of new spiritual dimensions, far from the materialism of civilizing progress. Significantly, the intellectual movement that linked nation building with mystical beliefs and metaphysical theories was headed by intellectuals who did not identify with positivism. Tamayo was a founding member of the Latin American schools of thought opposed to positivism and in favor of emphasizing the spiritual value of local cultures. Whether inspired by Nietzsche's "will to domination," Schopenhauer's "cosmic will," Fichte's "national will," or Goethe's "will to dominate one's self," the European self-questioning of civilizing progress was part and parcel of the redefining of Latin American identity. Even before World War I, Tamayo and other thinkers began expressing their conviction that the West had become paralyzed and that the barbarism of the periphery could revitalize Western civilization with a fresh dose of vital energy. The same societies that had been considered "barbarian" in the nineteenth century were no longer seen as sources of anarchy; rather, they were viewed as having a creative and imaginative power once denied them.

Tamayo published his book well before Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset founded his *Revista de Occidente*, a journal that deeply influenced other Latin American thinkers who problematized rationalism. Rooted in the identity crises that Spain suffered after its defeat at the hands of the United States and the final loss of its colonial empire in the War of 1898, the *Revista de Occidente* carried articles on the German idealists that left a deep imprint on Spanish-American writers. Influenced by Hegel and Nietzsche, Ortega y Gasset himself stated that the intellectual elite are called upon to guide the masses and organize the vital impulses of the nation. Tamayo's writings also predated those of Keyserling, the German philosopher who, being more of an optimist than Spengler, predicted the birth of a vigorous civilization in South America. Tamayo himself revitalized the encounter with indigenous culture as the only way to reach the self.

Tamayo is little known in Latin America, and he has not been given the attention he deserves for his celebration of mestizaje as the contribu-

tion of autochthonous culture to world philosophy. Tamayo wrote about his mestizaje ideal long before Ricardo Rojas created his nativist metaphor “Eurindia” in 1924 as a synthesis of Argentine culture; long before Mexican thinker José Vasconcelos wrote *La raza cósmica* in 1926. I would even venture to hypothesize that Vasconcelos had access to Tamayo’s ideas before he wrote his paean to mestizaje, for he had frequently met with Alcides Arguedas when they both lived in Paris.

Finally, Tamayo first created the metaphysics of the Bolivian nation that, under the influence of European irrationalism, proposed the self-realization of the subject known as the mestizo. This was a monadic construction like those studied by Terry Eagleton (1990, 28) in the case of nationalisms that have arisen in the shape and image of the intellectuals who created them, and that preexist with their own human personalities, the process of their materialization. A miraculous, spiritually exalted discovery, the mestizaje ideal that Tamayo forged in his mind continued on its long aesthetic trajectory throughout the twentieth century. We will trace it in the chapters to follow as it is affirmed in the telluric mysticism of an important group of Bolivian intellectuals, corrected by the nationalist thinkers leading up to the Revolution of 1952, and ultimately refuted by the most recent indigenous movements, which have interfered with the mestizo-criollo construction of the nation.