

The Image of Indians in the Modern Poetry of Andean Region

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Abstract

This paper analyzes the images of Indians and their representation in the contemporary poetic texts of the Andean region. In this article is revealed not only the expressive means but also the sense and the meaning of the images from the philosophical point of view. These images can reveal the value-semantic space of Indians culture. In the proposed study we analyze the images of national leaders, historical figures, and, in whole, the image of the Cholos as strong warriors, brave and wise rulers.

Keywords: *Indians, modern poetry, Andean region, colonization.*

The peculiarity of the modern culture of Latin America is formed on the basis of two cultures: the western (Spain, Portugal) and the national culture of the indigenous inhabitants (Indians). In some countries, there was an influence of African cultures. The rise in the culture of Latin America began in the late XIX century, after the liberation war of the colonies and the creation of independent states. However, information on the indigenous population of Indians, their culture, way of life, traditions and customs are often incomplete.

When the first European ships reached the coast of America, the continent was already inhabited by indigenous tribes who have reached different levels of development. They settled not only in Latin America but also in Mesoamerica. At the time of discovery of America by H. Columbus, all native population can be divided into two large groups: the tribes of hunters and nomads, constantly changing their place of habitation, and tribes who created the whole civilization. The last one includes representatives of three nations: Maya (Southern Mexico, Guatemala), the Aztecs (Central Mexico), Incas (Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Chile and part of Argentina).

From the beginning the conquest of Andean countries there was a mixture of two cultures: the culture of the conquistadors – the Spanish and the indigenous Indians. This was reflected primarily in the way of life, religion and culture.

The history and culture of this ancient nation are represented first of all in modern poetry. The modern author, such as José Santos Chocano, Feliciano Mejía, Antonio Cisneros, and César Vallejo had mentioned the historical personalities, places and events in their work. Moreover, this mentions we can divide into three main groups: the image of Indian at whole, the history of ancient people (especially the period of colonization) and the famous people from the history (different chiefs, warriors).

It is worth to mention that the image of Indian, in modern poetry is the image of a brave and courageous warrior who is willing to defend their land from foreign invaders. This is an image of a wise ruler who honors the tradition, who is endowed with heavenly knowledge, and from the one side has the divine origin, from another he is closely connected with the nature:

*«...Vengo de un cielo, cálido, sin dioses.
De una llanura fértil, casi sin límites.
Soy el sangrante y hablador guaraní,
la pura lágrima, límpida del maya,
el surco abierto, con firmeza, por el inca,
la tristeza, infinita, de lo que no muere.» [1]*

The whole lives of the Indian, his feelings are reflected in the nature. Nature is a kind of mirror of the soul, if the Indian has bad feelings – it is raining, trouble - rock fall, happiness - the sun is shining, tears - the river flows, and so on:

*«Cantando en el cerro
llorando en el río,
se agranda en la noche
la pena del indio ... » [2]*

Special attention we devote to the Indian spirit which is not so easy to break. That is why the poets often compared with Indian spirit with the stone - with its strength and indestructibility:

*«Yo soy, de piedra, el indio americano,
que no mató España en la conquista ... » [1]*

Jose Santos Chocano identifies himself with one of the Indians, and gives next characteristic: *«Soy el cantor de América autóctono y salvaje: mi lira tiene un alma, mi canto un ideal»*. The same author with pride and respect speaks about native people:

*“¡Oh raza antigua y misteriosa
de impenetrable corazón,
que sin gozar ves la alegría
y sin sufrir ves el dolor:
eres augusta como el Ande,
el grande Océano y el Sol!” [3]*

The second group is devoted to the history of the native people. Often the authors refer to the period of colonization of America by Spaniards. In this case, we can see a confrontation. At the one hand, the authors tell us that in their veins the Spanish and Indian blood are mixed up, but still for them the Indians are brave people, emperor, while the Spaniards are still adventure lover or conquistadors, who are strangers to their land.

*Cuando me siento inca, le rindo vasallaje
al Sol, que me da el cetro de su poder real;
cuando me siento hispano y evoco el coloniaje
parecen mis estrofas trompetas de cristal...
La sangre es espacola e incaico es el latido;
y de no ser Poeta, quizá yo hubiera sido
un blanco aventurero o un indio emperador. [4]*

Moreover, J.S. Chocano even mentions that the Spanish had another blood, another good, another king: *“otra sangre, otro dios y otro rey” [5]*. The same author describes the beginning of the conquest. He is references to the ancient prophecy. According to this prophecy, the white men with beards and armors, upon the big beasts will come. And so they come to rule them. The references to this prophecy we can see at the poem *“La tristeza de inca”*:

*- Ay, señor! - ciertos días vendran hombres muy blancos,
Ha de oirse en los bosques el marcial caracol:
cataratas de sangre colmaran los barrancos,
y entraron otros dioses en el Templo del Sol. [5]*

But despite the fact that it was predicted that blood would flow, the Inca didn't back down, but he gathered the troops to meet the enemy. The author describes the Inca as a brave, intrepid warrior, who mastered the weapon skillfully, who was ready to fight and protect his own land and home from selva and up to the highest peaks of the Andes:

*Por distraer sus penas, el Inca dió en guerrero;
puso a su tropa en marcha y el broquel requirió;
fue sembrando despojos sobre cada sendero
y las nieves mas altas con su sangre manchó.
Tal, sus flechas cruzaron inviolables regiones,
en que apenas los rios se atrevian a entrar;
y tal fue, derramando sus heroicas legiones:
de la selva a los andes de los andes al mar. [5]*

Speaking about the last group, it is worth to say that it is connected closely with the first one, because the authors of poetic texts often use images of well-known all over the world Indians to show the national spirit, the will, power, they try to tell the story of their lives, try to convey their feelings. The most frequency images in modern poetry are images of the half-brother Huáscar and Atahualpa. Huáscar was Sapa Inca (sovereign emperor) of the Inca Empire from 1527 to 1532 AD, and lead the civil war against his brother Atahualpa who killed him. And Atahualpa became the last Sapa Inca

of the Tawantinsuyu before the Spanish conquest. But Atahualpa didn't remain unpunished. During the Spanish conquest of Inca Empire, the Spaniard Francisco Pizarro captured Atahualpa and used him to control the Inca Empire.

The complicated relationship between half-brothers, the war for power are reflected in the poem of Manuel Gonzales Prado "La sombra de Huáscar". In it Atahualpa had been already captured by Spaniards, and in the prison he saw the spirit of the murdered brother, and caught the deadly cold, when he realized what he had done. The spirit of his dead brother warned him that he will be killed too for his actions. In this poem the image of Atahualpa is an image of despair, feared leader, who hath God, commended his due. Huascar plays a role of the sign of his execution:

*"«Quien te llama y te despierta,
Quien suspira en tus oídos,
Es Huáscar ¡ay!, es tu hermano,
Es el cadáver del río. [...]
La adusta sombra de Huáscar
Se disipa de improviso;
Atahualpa se estremece
De mortal escalofrío.» [6]*

In another poem de Jose Santos Chocano "Caupolicán", the main protagonist is Caupolicán – the military leader of the Mapuche people of Chile, who commanded their army during the first Mapuche rising against the Spanish conquistadors from 1553 to 1558. In the history he was a very strong warrior who defeated his reviles for the post of military leader, demonstrating his great strength, holding the trunk of a tree for three days and three nights. In the poem the author mark this strength and power:

*"Anduvo, así, dormido, vio en sueños al verdugo:
él muerto sobre un tronco, su raza con el yugo,
inútil todo esfuerzo y el mundo siempre igual.
Por eso, al tercer día de andar por valle y sierra,
el tronco alzó en los aires y lo clavó en la tierra
¡como si el tronco fuese su propio pedestal!" [7]*

Pedro Encina Ramos, by his turn describes another two famous caciques Ñandú and Lambaré, who stood against the Spanish invasion in defense of his inheritance.

*Serenos y arrogantes bruñidos de plumaje
tus valientes caciques Ñandú y Lambaré
al frente de su pueblo lucharon como fieros
jurando a TUPÁ triunfar o perecer.*

Summarizing this we can note, that the image of the Indian in the modern poetry has strongly positive connotation. It is represented as a rulers, warriors, defenders of the native land. After lapse of more than five centuries, poets berhyme their courage, nobles, valor etc. All the vocabulary, which are used in the poems, all are positive, and depict the Indians from the favorable point of view.

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