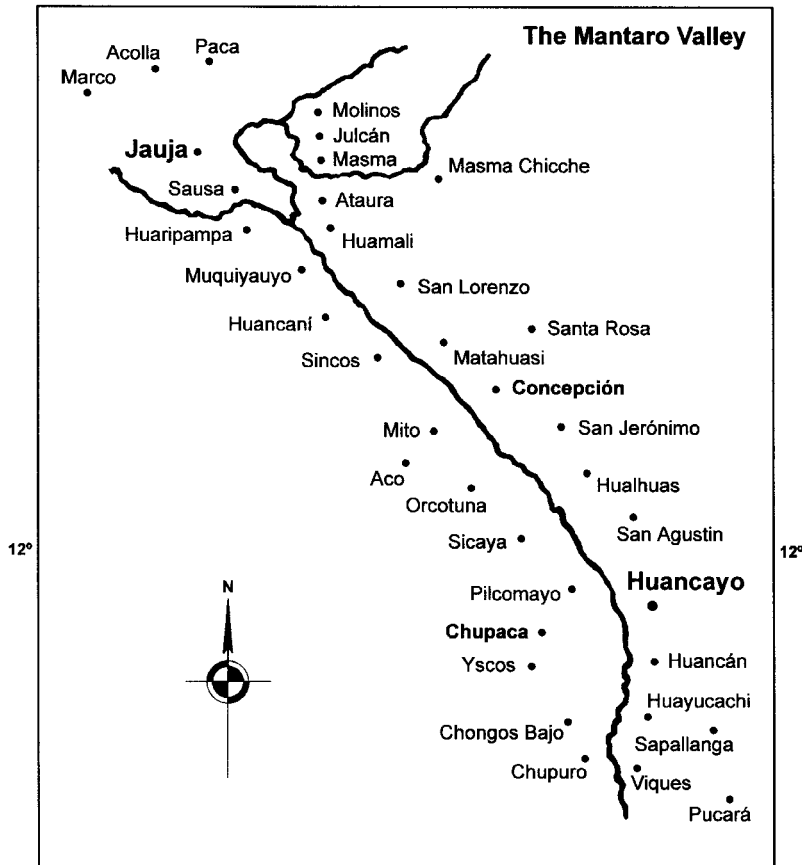


I

REGION,  
CULTURE, AND  
IDENTITIES

*The Mantaro Valley: History and  
Regional Development*

Some colonial sources suggest that when the first Spanish troops arrived in the Mantaro Valley (see map) in 1533 they expected war. Instead, they were surprised to be hailed by thousands of natives who celebrated their coming with songs and feasts (Arguedas 1975:81). It was later that the invaders would realize that the native inhabitants of the valley—the Wankas—had been subdued by the imperial Incas long ago and since then had been their fierce adversaries.<sup>1</sup> Thus, they saw in the arrival of the conquerors an opportunity for revenge and liberation from Inca rule. An alliance, which was considered mutually beneficial, soon followed. The Wanka leaders saw in their collaboration a way of recovering the regional autonomy they had lost when the Incas arrived in the valley around 1460 (Espinoza Soriano 1973:68). The Inca state, while allowing the regional chieftains to maintain many of their privileges, had undermined their political power to a great extent. They were closely supervised and severely punished if they did not comply with the policies of the empire. However, the Spaniards needed the local support to compensate for the greater forces of the Inca army. They were coming from Cajamarca in the north and were on their way to Cuzco, the capital of the Inca empire. For the journey they were in need of provisions and servicemen, which the *caciques*, the native



Map of the Mantaro Valley

leaders, promptly provided. Many natives fought and died with members of the Spanish army. In the military campaign against Quisquis 300 Indians of the Mantaro Valley died in battle. In the expedition from Cajamarca to Jauja 196 Indians and 109 Indian women were lost on the way (Arguedas 1975:83). The alliance seemed to satisfy both Wankas and Spaniards, and eventually the Spaniards chose the town of Jauja as the capital of the new conquered territory.

The town of Jauja is indeed considered the first capital of Peru. It is located at the south edge of the valley, on a site from which the entire valley can be watched. The impression of the first Spaniards on entering the town was illustrative:

It is large and it is located in a beautiful valley, and is a mild land; a powerful river crosses by one part of the town; it is organized like

a Spanish town, very tight and with well-sorted streets. We have seen the people of other towns and there were so many more people congregated as in no other town in the Indias because many Spaniards saw that in the main plaza more than one hundred thousand souls gathered, and there were markets, other plazas and streets of the same town full of people, that such a large multitude seemed marvelous.<sup>2</sup>

A few decades later, when the Spanish armies continued conquering southern territories, they abandoned Jauja as their center of operations. Very few Spaniards remained in the valley in spite of the agricultural richness of the region. It has been suggested by Arguedas that the lack of gold mines—one of the primary goals of the conquerors—and the founding of Lima on the coast were the main reasons the valley was forsaken by the Spaniards (1975:91). This fact was later to prove beneficial for the regional development of the valley, because due to the departure of most of the Spaniards from the valley most of the land remained in local hands. This was unusual in the Peruvian Andes, since in the rest of the former Inca empire agricultural and pasturelands were taken from the Indians and given to Spaniards in the form of *encomiendas*—a colonial system of land tenure by which a landlord was given the rights over portions of land and its residents. Under this colonial system the Indian, with no land or income to survive on his own, surrendered to serfdom and total submission and exploitation by a Spanish authority. In the Mantaro Valley this colonial system was not put into practice, primarily because of the privileged treatment given to the allies, the Wanka leaders who had supported the Spanish armies in their quest for conquest.

The town of Jauja, then, went from being the first capital of Peru to a strictly local borough. Arguedas has observed that, as a result, Jauja does not have the Spanish flavor that other colonial capitals, in which the Spaniards settled in larger numbers, have in the southern Andes (1975:100). Notwithstanding the fact that in 1616 the colonial chronicler Guaman Poma described Huancayo as being so poor that he was unable to find lodging, Jauja ultimately yielded to Huancayo—located at the opposite end of the valley—the role of economic and political center of the valley.

Today, “the valley” refers to not only to the actual valley itself—the plains that surround the river—but also to its highland areas. Several districts, located between 3,500 and 4,000 meters above sea level, are located in those areas that emerge on the margins of the Mantaro River’s tributaries. Above them there is an even higher ecological zone rising over 4,000 meters that surrounds the valley (*puna*) and mainly consists of pastures, with little or no agricultural activity (Mayer 1981). The region encompasses four provinces: Jauja, Concepción, Chupaca, and Huancayo. Its population is over half a million inhabitants, of whom nearly 100,000 reside in the city of Huancayo, the main urban and commercial center of



The town of Masmachicche, one of the villages along one of the Mantaro River's tributaries. Photo: Raúl R. Romero.

the valley (Long and Roberts 1978:8). The rest of the population is dispersed throughout the nearly sixty-four towns of the rural areas of the Mantaro Valley. It is in these towns that most of the mestizo peasantry of the valley reside, working in the fields, raising livestock, or turning to small-scale commercial activities for supplementary income.<sup>3</sup>

One of the turning points in the recent history of the Mantaro Valley was the beginning of Cerro de Pasco Corporation activities in the central Andes of Peru in 1901, when it acquired several preexisting small local mining companies. Since then the mining centers have constituted one of the main migration focal points for the peasants of the valley. This was a temporal migration, because the peasants went to the mines only for periods of two to three months and never lost control of their lands (Bonilla 1974:32). This condition has been noted by many authors (Bonilla 1974; Manrique 1987; Mallon 1983) as "resistance to proletarianization," meaning the opposition of the peasants to abandoning their land (means of production) and transforming themselves into a proletariat (miners) who can only depend on their labor for survival. This "resistance" to becoming miners was primarily determined by the fact that, first, the "miner" was at the same time a peasant who owned land and, second, the peasant-miner worked only for supplementary earnings, since his main income derived from agricultural activities. Heraclia Bonilla has reproduced a technical report from 1905 on the state of a mining center in the region that says:



A view of the main street of Huancayo. Photo: Raúl R. Romero.

Morococha did not and does not have a distinct population. The workers in the mines are from Jauja, and they do not come at random but they are hired, usually for two or three months, rarely for five or six months. . . . Most of those who sign a contract have some kind of property which they cultivate and from which they earn their living, thus the wage that they earn in the mines is for additional expenses, the fiestas of the villages encouraged by the priests that are so expensive, and sometimes too to acquire more land.<sup>4</sup>

Bonilla, Florencia E. Mallon, and Nelson Manrique dramatize the mining experience of the peasantry of the valley as tragic, tarnished by exploitation and harsh labor conditions. Bonilla, who describes the mines as “centers for exploitation,” illustrates with *huayno* song texts the blunt testimonies of what he depicts as the peasant’s painful mining experience (“miner, sad miner, cheer your heart, soothe your pain, singing your misery,” in Bonilla 1974:28). Manrique affirms that the nature of mining labor in the central Andes was that of “a brutal capitalist accumulation” and as an example cites the report from 1908 of a public relations manager from the mining company in which it is stated that work in the mines was performed day and night and that most of them worked for thirty-six consecutive hours (1987:253). What I want to highlight here is, rather than the extent to which the mining corporation wanted to capitalize upon the peasants or the relations of exploitation in the mines, how the peasants



The town of Orcotuna, situated on the plains that surround the Mantaro River. Photo: Raúl R. Romero.

utilized the mines for their own convenience, to obtain supplementary wages to further enhance their agricultural operations, and how they managed to migrate and be miners only for a short period of time, after which they would go back to the valley.

While it is undeniable that working in the mines was an unkind assignment, the temporary quality of the mining labor suggests that the mining experience was rude, perhaps brutal, but tolerable because of its short-term span. Systems like the *enganche* (a method of paying for labor in advance) were indeed designed to exercise total control upon a worker over a specific period of time, but by 1918 *enganche* was already being replaced by other employment strategies. Mallon herself explains that the system never worked in the valley because of the high rate of runaways (peasants who received payment but never showed up), the practice of signing up with different *enganchadores*, and the high commissions of the local merchants in charge of *enganche* (1983:220). Finally, the system was abandoned in favor of direct hiring by the mining company. It is possible that for the Mantaro Valley's residents who did not have access to land or other source of income mining labor was indeed seen as a tragic and more permanent destiny, but this seems to have been a rare occurrence. In my interviews in the valley with elder residents, seasonal migration to work in the mines was always referred to as a routine stage in the life cycle of particular individuals, and never in my interviews did I encounter tragic

stories or tales of destruction of lives or families during or after work in the mines.<sup>5</sup>

Tragic indeed were the effects of mining on the ecology of the region. In 1922 the main offices of the Cerro de Pasco Corporation moved to the town of La Oroya and established there one of the largest refineries on the continent for all the minerals (copper, lead, zinc) that came from their mines in neighboring areas (Espinoza 1973:348). Once it started operating, “between 100 and 125 tons of arsenic, sulphur dioxide, lead, bismuth, and other poisons began to fall each day in neighboring villages” (Mallon 1983:226). Livestock had to be moved to higher altitude pastures. In neighboring communities many of the eucalyptus trees died and entire harvests were lost or seriously damaged. People and animals suffered from related diseases and malaise (see Espinoza 1973:347–348 and Mallon 1983:226–229).

What is also certain is that the establishment of the large mining industries in the region marked the beginning of a new phase in the lives of the population of the Mantaro Valley. The Cerro de Pasco Corporation, since its establishment in the central Andes in 1901, was directly responsible for the unprecedented expansion of internal and external markets and for the building of the Central Railroad, which arrived in Huancayo in 1908. Over a few years, the peasantry of the Mantaro Valley had encountered the possibility of maximizing their agricultural production for the market—beyond the subsistence levels—and had seen the social and geographical distance to the nation’s capital dramatically shortened by the railroad.

These milestones triggered a rapid modernization of the Mantaro Valley. The city of Huancayo grew in size and in economic importance, and by the 1940s it had already achieved fame as the major urban center in the valley, to the detriment of Jauja, which remained withdrawn from the intense commercial development that affected Huancayo. Seasonal migration also brought changes in the culture and ideology of the peasant, besides providing a major cash flow into the peasant economy. The intense cultural, social, and economic exchange with Lima provided them with new alternative lifestyles, markets, and audiences and exposed the peasantry of the valley to national modernizing trends. None of these changes, however, disturbed the regional consciousness of the Mantaro Valley or inspired a massive migration of the peasantry of the valley to Lima. The reasons for this “resistance,” if I may use this term only in reference to the first decades of the twentieth century in the valley, are solidly grounded in practicality. Because neither the colonial system of *encomienda* nor the republican *hacienda* (large private landholding) pattern was instituted in the Mantaro Valley, most of the peasantry were small landholders, owners of their own means of production. This access to land was

the main reason for the peasants' not becoming full-time miners and not feeling the urge to emigrate permanently from the valley. Of course, access to land was an unequal privilege. For the richer peasants the land meant profit beyond subsistence levels; for the poorer it meant basic maintenance. For the land-deprived, the steady economic growth and intense commercial activity of the valley provided other means of financial support.

However, the process of *mestizaje*, which accelerated after the turn of the century, redressed ethnic inequalities in the valley and obliterated the unresolved conflicts between mestizos and Indians that pervaded life in the southern Andes. Inequality in the Mantaro Valley, through the first decades of the twentieth century, may be assessed by economic differentiation rather than ethnic and cultural considerations. Mestizaje made all Indians equal, reconstructing them into mestizos who preserved their allegiances to Andean society (Quechua language, cultural traditions) and their local and regional differences, especially in regard to the national elites.

The peasantry of the valley, therefore, confronted the impact of the mining industries, migration, new economic challenges, and the closer, yet always threatening, presence of Lima in the valley with the best of material conditions (access to land or commercial enterprises) and relatively stable cultural consciousness regarding their own regional identity and historical past. This past was colored by the Wankas' invincible resistance to Inca



A mural titled *Wanka Identity*, located inside one of the buildings of the University of Huancayo. Photo courtesy Gustavo Reyna.



dominion and even prolonged into the colonial wars and is now rescued as “Wanka identity” in their quest for maintenance of a cultural difference from the “national image” that originated from Lima’s cultural media.

### *Tradition and Modernity*

The notion of tradition as a fixed and timeless convention has recently been subject to reformulation. Since Eric J. Hobsbawn made the indisputable observation that “traditions which appear or claim to be old are often quite recent in origin and sometimes invented” (1983:1), the term *invented tradition* has been widely used in defining perpetually changing cultural practices, in permanent states of negotiation and redefinition. It is now understood that traditions do not have to be old to be claimed by a group of people as “authentic” and part of their heritage. Traditions are invented and claimed because “they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past” (Hobsbawn 1983:1). It does not matter whether this continuity is imaginary or based on hard facts; what matters is the structure it brings to social groups otherwise immersed in constant change and innovation (Hobsbawn 1983:2).

This conception of tradition is very useful in the inquiry into the different ways history is claimed by the people of the Mantaro Valley. They are proud of their cultural traditions, though many of them are of recent invention. The term *typical* (*típico*), itself a synonym of *tradition* in the rural areas of Peru, is applied to a type of musical ensemble considered representative of the culture of the valley (the *orquesta típica*). But in fact, this ensemble achieved its contemporary format only around the middle of the twentieth century (chapter 3). Why is it then considered *típico*? An ensemble that includes clarinets, which were introduced in the valley in the 1910s, is proclaimed as the more “authentic” expression of “Wanka culture” in the town of Huaripampa.<sup>6</sup> What mechanisms are at work when imagining “traditionality” and “authenticity” in cultural practices that are no older than one hundred years? Such a process would not be extraordinary except for the fact that the Mantaro Valley is the site of a culture more than a thousand years old (Peñaloza Jarrín 1995:5). What happened in the Mantaro Valley that made it necessary for its residents to redefine and reinvent their cultural traditions?

In recognizing the usefulness of Hobsbawn’s critique of the concept of tradition, I am also aware of the problems in introducing the notion of invention into the sphere of the Mantaro Valley’s cultural practices. *Invention* is a term too closely related to the idea of discovery. Novelty and originality would seem to be requirements of something “invented.” But in the Mantaro Valley the traditions that we are talking about are not sudden fabrications; they are reelaborations of previously invented and

reinvented cultural practices that go back as far as the pre-Inca colonial and republican periods and extend into contemporary times. The saxophone and the clarinet are reinvented traditions but only within the context of a musical ensemble that also includes the harp and the violin, which were in turn reinvented as traditions during the colonial domination, and whose main musical repertoire consists of colonial genres (like the huayno and the muliza), which have, arguably enough, perpetuated substantial elements from the pre-Hispanic past (pentatonicism, for example).

Consequently, while acknowledging that Hobsbawm's precise definition of "invented tradition," as those cultural practices that emerge "within a brief and dateable period . . . and establishing themselves with great rapidity" (1983:1) appears to match the cases under review in this book, I prefer to avoid whenever possible the notion of the invented, in favor of other terms like *construction* and *building* of traditions. These concepts better express the various and simultaneous processes that go into the making of complex and multilayered cultural practices of people who manipulate and claim different conceptions of their own past. The orquesta típica of the Mantaro Valley, for example, in its current format is indeed traceable to a "dateable period" (turn of the century), but its different components are themselves "invented" instrumental traditions that go far back in time. As far as I know, no one has ever been successful in estimating the exact dates of when the harp and the violin were accepted as Indian "traditions" in the Andes or when the huayno genre was consolidated as the most popular Andean song and social dance.

Tradition is usually challenged by modernization, a concept that assumes diverse meanings and stands for dissimilar practices. In a choice between the academic notion of modernization as a developmental stage, which all contemporary societies must go through in the context of world capitalism (mostly maintained by theoreticians and policy makers), and the more popular understanding of "modernization," I emphasize the latter. My interest falls upon what the people of the Mantaro Valley interpret to be "modern." This "modernity" is understood primarily as "progress," technological innovation, urban services (electricity, running water), global communications (trains, planes, and automobiles, fax machines, and the Internet), and, more broadly, the process of incorporation into the wider national context.

The usefulness of this approach is especially welcome since it avoids the usual preconception that modernity will inevitably bring homogenization to world cultures, bringing them all into a single process, a global system, in which local cultural differences will disappear (Comaroff and Comaroff 1993:xi). The fact is that, notwithstanding the astounding development of capitalism, world markets, mass communications, and mass migration throughout the world, local cultures and ethnic differences continue to exist, struggle, and create novel lifestyles, which are, in turn,

products of both “tradition” and “modernity.” What García Canclini calls “the sociocultural hybrids in which the traditional and modern are mixed” (1995:2) are indeed those societies or populations that continue to maintain their identities while at the same time keeping up with the development of world capitalism.<sup>7</sup>

Sociocultural hybridity certainly appears to be the case in the Mantaro Valley, but we should be aware that those “hybrid cultures” are not, in turn, all the same. Each case is the result of different historical processes, and each displays distinct ways of appropriating modernity. While I recognize that hybrid cultures is a useful concept in referring to societies that cannot be explained through the old-fashioned method of separating “authentic” culture from modern “innovations,” I disagree with the “homogenizing” flavor with which it impregnates all the cultural diversity that exists in the world today. The Mantaro Valley might be categorized as a “sociocultural hybrid,” but so may the Tarascan area in Mexico, which García Canclini himself studies (1993:55). Both cultural areas have, however, different histories, maintain separate identities and worldviews, and relate differently to the state. Every process of cultural *mestizaje*, as of hybridization, is similar in its launching stages, when the forces of tradition however invented, reinvented, or constructed—are confronted with the forces of the modern, but they arrive at very different conclusions and are posited within separate wider national contexts.

The same observation would have to be applied to the Peruvian case. The Mantaro Valley, as a regional culture, is only one of several cases of regional developments in the nation. According to Arguedas, it may be the most successful one in terms of its abilities to maintain certain cultural independence while at the same time achieving some degree of economic prosperity (1957b). But the region of Cuzco—the capital of the old Inca empire—is also a powerful area that struggles to become a cultural alternative within the nation’s complex and unresolved development prospects. Cuzco’s success in institutionalizing its ideological struggle (and its perennial quest for material resources from the national elites) through a strong academic movement, *indigenista* (pro-Indian) organizations, and political regional unity recently has been the subject of serious study (see Tamayo Herrera 1980, 1981, and Rénique 1991).

The rupture between the previous clear division between the traditional and the modern is also crucial to understanding that, first, both concepts are no longer useful in distinguishing different types of societies and, second, every society has a peculiar way of confronting and creating modernity. In this respect there has been a significant development in the studies of “musical change” from a structural-functionalist perspective to the recent studies that have followed Hobsbawm’s critical understanding of the concept of reinvented tradition and the notion of culture as a permanently contested arena in which ethnic and class divisions permeate the

way each segment of society experiences it (Clifford 1986:19). The former trend has been well summarized by John Blacking (1977) and more recently epitomized in Nettl (1985). The latter, more dynamic perspectives can be seen, for example, in recent publications in the field of ethnomusicology (Waterman 1990; Erlmann 1991; Turino 1993; Guilbault 1993, Rice 1994; and Averill 1997). The interference between tradition and modernity has been clearly established by Arjun Appadurai in stressing the consequences of mass migration and the mass media (1996a:9). Both processes have made local cultures no longer exclusively "local" and the "modern" no longer circumscribed by industrialized countries alone. In the context of an increased globalization process, it makes no sense to think of communities existing outside of this dynamic. Tradition and modernity, as Jean and John Comaroff say, "underpin a long-standing European myth: a narrative that explores the uneven, protean relations among 'ourselves' and 'others' in world history with a single, epic story about the passage from savagery to civilization" (1993:xii).

Following the same line of thought, I would also point to the notion of Westernization as another inadequate concept in demarcating differences between industrialized societies and the "other." This is a concept that freezes in time the tangibility of Western thought and science in a fixed geographical milieu—Europe and the United States—and is blind to the fact that globalization is not a recent phenomenon but began centuries ago with colonialism (Appadurai 1990:1). Latin America, for example, has been "Westernized" since the sixteenth century, when the Spaniards stepped down from their ships, mated with Indian women, built in a few decades numerous churches, schools, and plazas, and taught the Bible, the harp, and the violin to all the available Indians. Thus, the West, just like modernity, has been appropriated and reworked by local cultures into newer forms and meanings for centuries ago.

This issue is particularly relevant to Latin America and the case of the Mantaro Valley. Despite the common practice of situating Latin American indigenous and mestizo cultures as part of the non-Western world, Latin America is indeed part of the Western Hemisphere. I have already mentioned the colonization of the region in the late sixteenth century. Da Matta and David Hess in trying to transcend this dichotomy have highlighted the mixture between Western and non-Western cultures that has been going on for centuries after the arrival of the colonizers. For them, "Latin America is something else": the reality of Latin America is one that combines and merges traditional and modern, precapitalistic and capitalistic systems, democracies and dictatorships, Western and non-Western world-views, all along the same national frontiers, simultaneously or taking turns along the passage of time (see DaMatta and Hess 1995:3). The authors also observe that in the Latin American nations "the upper classes are mostly descendants of Europeans, and the language, high culture, and formal in-

stitutions are all Western.” They also mention the presence of democratic constitutions and a capitalist economy as common traits. In spite of the ambiguity implicit in their phrase “[Latin America] is something else,” I prefer it to the simplistic consideration that local Latin American cultures can be “Westernized,” as if the distinction between the culturally fixed and the culturally invasive would be a clear-cut operation by the ethnographer working as a field surgeon.

In the Mantaro Valley the issue of Westernization is particularly applicable, since most of its popular culture is comprised of Western-derived elements, designs, objects, and organizations: the fiesta system built upon the Catholic saints and the Virgin, the *orquesta típica* with its harp, violins, saxophones, and clarinets, the dances that mock the French *contredanse* (Sp. *contradanza*), the clothes and hats loosely based upon sixteenth- and seventeenth-century European fashions; the political structure derived from Western models with a municipality, a mayor, police officers, national identification cards, Peruvian citizenship, schools, universities, hospitals, and a universal health care system. Who can say when and how the culture of the valley is being “Westernized” nowadays? Yet it “is something else”: the Andean deity *wamani* comes to mind, the *wakrapuku* trumpet, the chewing of coca leaves, the *huayno*, pentatonicism, communal reciprocity, racial and cultural *mestizaje*, the Quechua language, and the vigorous claim of a unique Wanka historical past as well as a self-reliant regional politics.

### *Resistance and Hegemony*

The facts that residents of the Mantaro Valley are still claiming their Wanka identity over any other cultural alternative and that the participating components in this identity are reinvented cultural forms of pre-Hispanic and colonial origins suggest that some kind of “resistance” has occurred throughout the centuries of colonial domination and peripheral development within the nation-state since the nineteenth century. Certainly the Mantaro Valley has gone through many crises over time. The Incas stormed the region, subduing the Wankas and incorporating them into the Inca empire. In the process of disentangling themselves from that oppression, fierce battles were fought by the Wanka and their new Spanish allies against the Inca armies. Despite this early alliance, the region nonetheless suffered from the devastating effects of the European invasion. Previously unknown diseases like influenza, smallpox, and typhus affected the population (Stern 1982:44–45). New political systems disrupted previous social structures. Ideological struggles against indigenous religious practices were also enforced, such as the “extirpation of idolatries” campaign conducted by the Spanish clergy in the seventeenth century (Arriaga 1920). And the wars of independence of the nineteenth century, like the war with Chile

some decades later, brought the regional economy to near-destruction (Manrique 1987:25). Early into the twentieth century, the expansion of the North American-owned Cerro de Pasco Corporation in the region was achieved at the cost of small local mining entrepreneurs (see Manrique 1987:250–254) and dislocated as well the political, economic, and cultural practices upheld until then.

Despite all odds, the regional culture of the Mantaro Valley remained, not unchanged, but unique and distinct from other cultural paradigms that floated around within the context of the modern nation-state. How does one explain such persistence in a context of intense changes that were forced upon the region? As Michel Foucault reminds us, “Where there is power, there is resistance” (1978:95), and indeed the Mantaro Valley has experienced external power more than once (the Incas, the Spaniards, the Chileans, and the North Americans). But *resistance* is often translated as *passive reaction*, suggesting a portrait in which the subaltern suffers from external pressure and defends himself clinging to his most precious cultural treasures, having lost control over his material existence. This image corresponds to James Scott’s version of “everyday forms of resistance” in which people apparently “conform to” forms of external power but in the way of “hidden transcripts” (1990). These “hidden transcripts,” manifested through such prosaic actions as dissimulation, false compliance, and feigned ignorance (Scott 1985:29), constitute forms of resistance different from the explicit social movements in which people revolt physically against the dominant rule.<sup>8</sup> Thus, the former is a “passive” form while the latter is an “active” one.

I favor, however, a broader view of resistance that does not separate the popular reaction to domination into two different and opposed sets of behaviors. Following Foucault’s notion that resistance is not outside power itself and that the concept broadly includes “resistances that are possible, necessary, improbable, spontaneous, savage, solitary, concerted, violent” (1978:96), I believe that the Mantaro Valley has not only ideologically but also physically revolted through the more effective forms of expressive culture such as the festival, the music, and the ritual dance. Moreover, since these expressive forms are not only private but also public ways in which people demonstrate openly their worldviews, opinions, and cultural alternatives, these are not “hidden transcripts” but exposed ones. At the same time, I suggest that the residents of the valley have opposed the status quo through a mixture of “passive” and “active” forms of defiance, which may be present at different moments but may also coexist in expressive culture. Underneath a public, outspoken dance-drama there is a private, concealed oral discourse. In between the notes of regional musics there are discourses of authenticity and identity being sorted out, and beneath the festival’s external religious organization there are meanings and symbols that are interpreted in oppositional and alternative terms.

I am not relying exclusively, though, on the notion of resistance in interpreting the Mantaro Valley because of its strong tendency to be identified with a particular social class, sector, or ethnic group. The danger of localizing these notions in particular social groups is real: the subaltern resists; the dominant sector exercises power and hegemony. Instead, Foucault favors the blurring and omnipresent attributes of power and resistance in saying: "Just as the network of power relations ends by forming a dense web that passes through apparatuses and institutions, without being exactly localized in them, so too the swarm of points of resistance traverses social stratifications and individual unities" (1978:96). Accordingly, and as we will see in the course of this book, resistance is indeed being exercised in the Mantaro Valley but is not fully articulated into the practice of an entire social class. There is controversy, discussion, and conflict among the different attitudes toward what is to be continued or incorporated, where and when one has to resist, and where and when to concede. There is no single stance of resistance among the residents of the valley, and the current debates, at the level of everyday life, on what is culturally "authentic" and what is "modern" are a reflection of this disension.

I could make the same observations on power and hegemony in the Mantaro Valley. In most instances in this book I will use these notions in relation to these forces that come from the elites of the modern nation-state of Peru. Elites who are centralized in Lima, the nation's capital, and who control economic resources and political systems determine the directions of the mass media and its themes, elaborate national policies (legal, educational, economic), and national symbols (the national flag, the national anthem). It is in relation to the cultural, hegemonic models generated from these locations that regional cultures like that of the Mantaro Valley emerge as alternative worldviews, as counterhegemonic endeavors. But it would be wrong to dismiss power and hegemony from this alternative model in itself. If, as Raymond Williams attests, following Gramsci, hegemony is "a culture" and countercultures imply as well the creation of "alternative hegemonies" or "counterhegemonies," Wanka identity must also be seen as the source of power and hegemony (Williams 1977:110). From this perspective, the expansion of the *orquestra típicas*, the main musical ensemble of the valley and the renowned emblem of Wanka presence, into neighboring areas such as the Ayacucho region in the south and Cerro de Pasco in the north is revealing.

### *Ethnicity and Mestizaje*

The well-known Peruvian writer José María Arguedas was captivated with the process of *mestizaje* that had developed in the Mantaro Valley in central

Peru, because, as he observed, the mestizos, instead of being individual outcasts caught between the worlds of Indians and whites (as the mestizo has been usually defined in anthropological literature), in the Mantaro Valley had evolved, since the turn of the century, as a social class. The mestizo of the valley was not the tormented and tortured individual many authors had presented to us as the prototype of the Andean mestizo but a proud, cheerful, and even financially successful individual, with a highly dynamic and creative popular and traditional culture (see Arguedas 1953: 122).<sup>9</sup>

Mestizaje is a fundamental factor in the understanding of the regional identity of the Mantaro Valley. The term itself carries strong colonial and racial connotations, but studies in the social sciences have long argued that mestizaje in the South American Andes is not a racial but a cultural process, which I introduce here as the gradual appropriation of modernity by the Andean Indian peasant.<sup>10</sup> In the context of the imposing and violent presence of modern capitalism in the region, I view mestizaje in the Mantaro Valley, following Arguedas, as a sovereign regional initiative, a result of the sheer determination of the peasants of the valley to integrate their local household economies into the larger national system in a creative, imaginative way, for which, as a group, they seize the necessary tools to negotiate with the market in the best of terms. Thus, the valley's peasantry embraced bilingualism, learning Spanish while maintaining Quechua, adopted the basic precepts of the state-promoted Western-oriented protocol, and enrolled their children in the public primary schools.

Around 1910, the process of mestizaje in the valley had already consolidated, and the "Indian" (that representation that consisted of the Quechua peasant), living in what Eric Wolf called an isolated closed corporate community (1966), on a subsistence economy, who could only establish ties with the external world via cultural brokers, had disappeared as such from the Mantaro Valley (see Adams 1959:85). However, what anthropological literature identifies as Indian symbols, rituals, festivals, and music did not disappear, because the mestizos of the valley, despite their solid integration into the national economy, continued carrying, developing, innovating, and re-creating regional cultural traditions, some of which were previously promulgated only by Indians.<sup>11</sup> Today all the mestizos of the valley celebrate archaic rituals like the branding of the animals and offering symbolic homages to the wamani, a precolonial Andean deity; maintain one of the most dynamic fiesta systems in the Andean region, displaying more than forty different ritual dances; have preserved their Quechua language in addition to Spanish; and speak openly about their Wanka identity.

In the Mantaro Valley ethnicity has gone through numerous historical transformations, the last of which has been mestizaje as a process by which Indians reelaborated their ethnic consciousness and practices in the context



of the modern nation-state. Mestizaje in this sense has been the result of historical processes and of reactions to other groups that have imposed their habits through coercion, manipulation, and intimidation. But today the specific character of mestizaje, as the current ethnic configuration of the valley, distinguishes the residents of the valley from other groups in the nation, whether these are the controlling national elites or the other regional cultures that emerge in other latitudes of the national territory. Wanka identity is declared as unique and as the “natural” ethnic character of the valley, a marker for cultural difference. While specific economic and social forces have shaped the current configuration of ethnicity in the valley, mestizaje once developed takes on a life of its own and moves the regional culture of the valley into new spaces and national domains. This understanding of the nature of mestizaje, consequently, has recently caught the attention of scholars who view it as a process of ethno-genesis, as a liberating, counterhegemonic discourse, in opposition to the view of mestizaje as the political discourse that fosters the “assimilation” of the Indian as citizen of a newly built nation-state (Mallon 1996:180–181). But the debate on the issue of ethnicity and mestizaje in Andean scholarship already pervaded the literature from the 1940s until the 1970s. In all the ethnographies of this period considerable space was dedicated to locating, defining, and comparing the different ethnic categories in the Andes, particularly the main categories of Indian and mestizo. Who was and what characterized an Indian? What was the role of the mestizo in Andean society? The emergence of an intermediate group labeled as *cholo* contributed to obscuring the debate in the midst of innumerable local and regional variants and transformations. Indians were generally described as monolingual Quechua peasants, carriers of ancient traditions, and situated at the bottom of the social and economic hierarchy in the Andes. Mestizos were portrayed as bicultural, Quechua-Spanish bilingual merchants, professionals, and administrators, with links to the national culture to which Indians could never have access. The mestizos lived off of Indian production, acting as intermediaries with the regional and national markets, establishing patriarchal and sometimes exploitative relationships with the Indians. The group called *cholo* arrived on the scene, later defined as the Indian ex-peasants who originated from the peasant community and traveled to the urban centers, familiarizing themselves with the national culture yet never losing membership with the original village (Mayer 1970:120).

The previous passage constitutes a very condensed summary of the positions, controversies, and endless discussions on the issue since the 1940s.<sup>12</sup> But what seems to be the center of the debate? Mainly that the ethnic terminology used by scholars, borrowed from local usages, gives rise to a degree of variety impossible to consolidate into satisfactory generalizations. It was soon observed that ethnic terminology diverged from village to village and that the notions of Indian, mestizo and *cholo* were

more relational concepts than discrete classifications in themselves (see de la Cadena 1995 and 1996). In a seminal article Fernando Fuenzalida reminded us that the Indian would call himself a *llajtaruna* (townsman), a *lugareño*, or a “natural” (native), but never an Indian. It is the mestizo who uses the term *Indian* or *chuto* when referring to peasants and in turn calls himself a *vecino* instead of a mestizo or *misti*, as he is called by the Indians themselves (1970:29–30). Both terms, *Indian* and *mestizo*, have been charged with pejorative attributes as well. The Indian viewed from the higher hierarchies has been depicted as a degenerated being, drunk, indolent, a liar, and a thief. The mestizo and the *misti*, as a *yanacona*, is viewed as a traitor to his race and an unstable individual (Fuenzalida 1970: 17). Such is the diversity of intentions and meanings suggested by the authors who deal with ethnicity in the Andes that the denotation of who is an Indian, a mestizo, or a cholo, can be said to be totally dependent on the social position of the adjudicator and the traditional criteria used to define who is an Indian become useless when we try to apply it to different cases. As Bernard Mishkin phrased it: “The same individual can be considered Indian from a certain point of view and mestizo from another” (1963:413).

This apparent ambiguity in distinguishing ethnic profiles is explained because ethnicity in Peru is not defined by ancestry but by social and cultural criteria (Kubler 1963; Fuenzalida 1970; Murra 1984). If, in fact, race has been the official indicator in census and national statistics (the population has been classified until the 1940s in terms of whites, Indians, mestizos, *raza amarilla* [Asians], and blacks), it is the cultural practice that actually defines who is “white,” Indian, and mestizo in everyday life. That is, the social position of the individual affects the social perception of races. Social and cultural mobility in Peru is so intense that “the race of an individual may change throughout his lifetime” (Fuenzalida 1970:26). The concept of social race proposed by Charles Wagley for the case of Brazil is in this case highly relevant as well (1965).

In the end, ethnic concepts such as Indians, mestizos, *mistis*, *cholos*, and *creoles* have survived in the narratives of Andean scholars to today despite the reciprocal condemnations and self-denunciations of those involved. The consensus today is that ethnic differentiation in the South American Andes has to be assessed in each local setting, rather than attempting to search for futile and confusing generalizations. The Mantaro Valley constitutes a case that demands such a specific treatment. Through intense interviewing and revision of historical documents Richard Adams determined that at about 1880 substantial differences still existed between Indians and mestizos in the region. They were distinguished by the traits that were usually found in other areas of the Andes: language, clothing, surnames, occupation, education, economic status, and so forth. To transcend the subjectivity of the procedure of classifying peoples Adams asked

four “informants” to judge the ethnic affiliation of 457 individuals of the town of Muquiayuyo. The results confirmed the volatility and inconsistent ethnic differentiation based on systematic, “scientific” methods, since nearly 40 percent of the people under review went undefined. The “informants,” acting as “judges,” were hesitant to categorize themselves as either Indians or mestizos (1959:83–84). But in the valley a unique process began to develop around the turn of the century: “People from both castes began to participate jointly in more affairs; together with this, there was a simultaneous borrowing of some culture traits and a merging of others. The result has been, in effect, to blend the two previously distinct sub-cultures of mestizos and Indians” (Adams 1959:85). The mestizo in the valley became not a group that denied its Indian heritage based on the destruction of its agents but one that blended both legacies in an uncommon mechanism for the Peruvian Andes. This unique process was the one that appealed to José María Arguedas and prompted him to view it as an alternative action to the annihilation of Indianness.

The historical construction of mestizaje in the Mantaro Valley constitutes an example that disavows the long-standing views that understood ethnicity as being “primordial” and “essential” to specific and localized social groups. More than twenty years ago Fredrik Barth criticized these postures as inadequate for the understanding of ethnic groups in the context of intense social interaction and mobility and in the presence of market pressures and an imposing and mediating nation-state (1969). Analyzing Narroll’s classic definition of ethnic groups as biologically self-perpetuated, with shared cultural values, in constant interaction, and self-identified, and externally identified as “different” (Narroll 1964, cited in Barth 1969:10–11), Barth concluded that this definition was not far from the blend of race-culture-language that had permeated much of the past anthropological literature on ethnicity (1969:11). Isolation, localization, and an unproblematic reproduction of culture were taken for granted in defining ethnic groups. This ideal characterization changes, of course, in the context of modern pluriethnic nation-states, in which relationships of power, domination and subordination are sources of struggles, conflicts, and resistance. Against these “primordialist” views, which essentialized the cultural contents of ethnic “units,” are those who maintain that ethnicity does not contain unique cultural essences but is historically constructed, fluid, and constantly invented.<sup>13</sup>

Barth’s emphasis on the notion of boundaries clarifies this point further. For him the cultural contents of an exclusive group may change through time, but the ways in which this group maintains its difference (“boundaries”) with other groups are what ultimately constitute the core of its ethnic consciousness or identity (1969:14). In other words, ethnicity may not be “primordial” with regard to its initial formative stages, but once it has been historically constructed it may appear, act, and function

as a “natural” cultural reference of the people involved in the dynamics of that group. As the Comaroffs suitably stress, “While ethnicity is the product of specific historical processes, it tends to take on the ‘natural’ appearance of an autonomous force, a ‘principle’ capable of determining the course for social life” (1992:60). The tendency of “all discourse about culture to embrace some form of essentialism” is also relevant to my point here (Herzfeld 1996:277). If indeed the contemporary identity of the Mantaro Valley is the product of particular historical forces, the current competing discourses on identity in the valley are elaborations and presuppose the existence of “essential” traits that characterize the different conceptions of “authentic” regional cultures.

### *Region and Nation*

My insistence on the regional space as a site for cultural contention is related to the vision of the modern nation of Peru as an aggregate of “internally differentiated regional spaces” (Lomnitz-Adler 1992:17). That is, that the nation is divided not only into social classes, ethnic groups, and languages but also into regions that serve as centers of cultural production. As the foremost Peruvian anthropologist José María Arguedas noted, regions in Peru commonly coincide with broad ethnic boundaries (1975). He distinguished major regional divisions, or cultural areas, in the Andean region of Peru, each of them erected upon the pre-Hispanic sites of ethnic kingdoms. Arguedas showed that in the case of the Chanka region (named after the pre-Hispanic ethnic group that lived there and encompassed by the regions of Ayacucho, Huancavelica, and Apurímac) the population still maintained a distinct cultural identity, as expressed in their architecture, arts, and language. Arguedas portrayed the Inca (currently coinciding with the department of Cuzco) and the Wanka regions (referring to the area that corresponded to the department of Junín) in similar ways, the latter including the Mantaro Valley as a major cultural center.

The region as a major culture-producing center, therefore, is a primary factor in assessing the formation and dynamics of the nation-state. In the quest for hegemony the nation-state constitutes the highest level of spatial integration, but hegemony is “modified and worked out in each local context” (Lomnitz-Adler 1992:26). This notion is particularly fitting to the case of the region of Junín and the Mantaro Valley because since the conquest of the Wankas the contemporary inhabitants of the region have maintained a unique status and cultural identity that has distinguished them not only from their neighbors (other regions, other peoples) but also from mainstream national styles (see Tschopik 1947; Hutchinson 1973; Arguedas 1975; and Long and Roberts 1978, 1984).

A particular case that illustrates the cultural distinctiveness of the inhabitants of the Mantaro Valley is conveyed by Mallon in analyzing how the peasants of the Mantaro Valley formulated a project of nationalist ideology and consciousness in the war with Chile at the end of the nineteenth century (1995:2). In the war the peasantry of the Mantaro Valley continued fighting against the invaders from another nation even when the national bourgeoisie had decided to surrender. For Mallon the idea of nationalism not only is circumscribed to bourgeois ideology and the development of an internal market in its transition to capitalism (Hobsbawn 1990; Gellner 1983) but also has to be understood as a “project for collective identity” capable of being proposed by any segment of society, not necessarily the hegemonic one. In this sense different groups within a nation (peasants as well) can present different nationalist projects that are to be understood as “competing discourses” in constant formulation and negotiation (Mallon 1995:3).<sup>14</sup>

Following this line of thought, I view the regional culture of the Mantaro Valley (the Wanka identity) as a “competing discourse,” an “alternative hegemony” to the cultural trends practiced by the national elites. As I will explain in chapter 5, the national elites consisted until the 1970s of a small group of peoples who based their power on large landholdings (haciendas) and large-scale commerce and mining industries. Their cultural alignment was with Europe and, in recent years, with the United States. The Peruvian elites always managed to avoid “nationalist” trends (except occasional interludes during which pro-Indian policies surfaced) and failed to incorporate the political and cultural demands of Andean Peru into their agendas. The absence of a “national project,” that is, the lack of concern of the elites in representing other social classes, regions, and cultures besides their own, has been recurrently mentioned by political analysts (see Cotler 1978).

The notion of “imagined community” (Anderson 1991) is only partly useful in conveying the particular case of the Mantaro Valley within the national context, since it suggests a “false,” or constructed, perception of feelings of a common territory and heritage. Although this “image” of community is said to ultimately induce the formation of national units, it does not adequately explain the intricacies of regional cultures with “real” histories of war, confrontation, and resistance (Lomnitz-Adler 1992:317). Arguedas’s interest in Wanka regional culture as an example of how a cultural mestizo alternative could arise forcefully from a nonelite, nonstate source, with actual chances of spreading into other spaces and locations within the nation-state, was indeed appropriate (1975).