

The Sunbird's Cage
An Exploration of the Author & Story Concepts Through Ancient Peruvian Legends
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PART ONE

“History is written by the victors”, this statement alone questions the integrity of what we call history. We see it today in our news media as biased forms of communication that warp public images in their favor. It is up to every reader to trust their teacher, author, or lecturer fully or partially, as the present can be warped and lied about. How much can we trust the past? The historians of the past, present, and future can choose to be unbiased; the critic can and will doubt the legitimacy of their narratives. The historian may report findings that they have wanted to prove for so many years. They might make these findings up to justify their work, knowingly and unknowingly. We are asked to trust in strangers. They may rely on narratives from people as so much has passed down orally before the scholar chose to write it all down. And so the historian connects the story to history. Stories, legends, and myths are looked into as the perspective of a human being, their insight, their morals on good and bad, etc. Without an author, myths have evolved to represent the community that accepts and passes it down as their history. So then, even history is created from someone’s perspective--history is a story. History is accepted as fact, while stories are fantasies composed by our minds, yet those two words (history and story) commingle in roots and title. In Spanish, both are called *historia*. As the story is a perspective, it is an extension of ourselves and a foundation upon which history is built upon.

As history and stories, or *historia* change, they reveal and adapt to new findings and new audiences. After the victory and propaganda agenda is a thing of the past, then the transformation of history is not a bias warping, but an evolution for its preservation and survival. The recent trends of evolving history take place through the new historians and authors, but what of myths? What of the things predating pen to paper? Before written history, we rely on the unconventional resource of legends and stories to understand the people of the past. The myths and legends

become a story accepted to represent society. So what is a myth regardless of an author if not something to be treated as the work of a whole people rather than a sole author? And so in researching culture, the storytellers are where both authors and historians converge. The creation of any story, historical or fabled, is the work of an artist, representative of themselves, shaped by the society they were raised in. Within their creations, we interpret meaning from that bookmark of their era and further dissect their work, word for word, and piece together their ancient worlds.

Myth by K. K. Ruthven, a study into the concept of myth and its relationship to literature, also points to the evolution of story. As literature can evolve from generations, so too through language. Ruthven supports the idea in stating: “This [work] is intended for those who are more familiar with English than with any other literature, but who recognize that because English literature is made by people who read other literatures and absorb ideas from a variety of disciplines” (13). Just as the English language is compiled of other disciplined dialects, so too must the speaker of this tongue recognize that composite nature of literature. Before history was transcribed, it was passed down orally.

What may we interpret in the meaning of creative works, be it historical or fictional, even today this is a struggle. Sometimes we try to find meaning where it may not even be. There are times where the work of art outgrows the artist. One example that has stayed on my mind is the racial implications to the ending of George A. Romero’s *Night of the Living Dead* film. Despite the director claiming he cast black actor Duane Jones simply due to his outstanding audition, the subversion of the sole surviving character has resulted in debates and discussion over its racial meaning that has outgrown the directorial intent. So what meaning comes from my myths, the original intent, or our imaginative interpretations? What about the purpose behind some of these stories? Some myths have been created to explain to the unknown but they also were possibly

made just for fun. As we cannot be sure 100%, some bold overthinkers could argue for traces of Marxism in a children's story written in Irish myth. Ruthven puts it best: "[Mythologies] are invented by people who cannot bring themselves to accept [the] view that myths simply mean what they say" (11). It is then possible and even true that I could overthink how to adapt some myths to my story and the reality is that some myths like that of the foxes or moths are not loaded with a deeper meaning of animal or marital abuse, but are just stories told to entertain children. By the work of Ruthven, people tend to "habitually assume that a myth conceals a 'real' meaning beneath its apparent meaning... What a myth means, they tell us, may have been lost accidentally through the hazards of oral transmission; or it may have been hidden deliberately by mythmakers reluctant to tell all they know; or it may have been tampered with by political or religious revisionists who produce what Robert Graves calls 'mytho-Tropic' versions of stories originally quite different in meaning" (12). Ultimately mythology is a heritage. In terms of the Greek poet Homer, Ruthven concludes, "'Homer' is treated as the work of a whole people instead of a single poet" (61). The role between the individual and the society around historia is uniquely explored through this example. The poems; *The Odyssey* and *The Iliad*, though passed down orally long before being written, stand as a unique piece of Greek mythology with a named author attached. So these myths are not necessarily without an author and still adopted by society. And yet, Homer belongs more to his community, than to himself. We are to do as we may with mythology. As for what we that may be, Ruthven also states that "You display your originality by exercising ingenuity in discovering new ways of writing about old myths" (42). Those exercises like this project or for a more professional example, Rick Riordan's Percy Jackson series, give life to old myths while also benefiting the author. Just as *Black Leopard, Red Wolf* by Marlon James is his way of creating something new from African

mythology, this is a story to do the same for Inca legends. Though this is not yet as enriched as the Percy Jackson series or James' Dark Star Trilogy, it is the first step into work like theirs, reimagining the stories. As stated, our reimagining "offers asylum in literature to those gods the world now deems redundant" (56). In the past, this amateur author has complained about how so few resources properly organize the Inca cultures compared with the Greek traditions. It is now understood, thanks to Ruthven, that work like this project can aid in that venture.

As all creation in some sense represents our humanity, my narrative not only depicts my individuality but also how ancient Peruvians are perceived five hundred years after the fall of their greatest empire. By the time their culture reached paper, the identity of the Spanish Christians had mixed in with the original Incas. The paintings and stories that now survive and educate me are bookmarks of one point in the grand history of the world. Even with hatred and invasion of the Spanish Conquistadors, there are still traces of the Inca author to interpret. From the first point of view, the third or even as a frame, there is the author. It is my story and a frame for the surviving culture of the Incas.

Today we delve into protecting stories through copyrights and cry thievery on stolen ideas, yet that ignores the evolution of our creative race. One famous example is *Disney's The Lion King* which recently received a CGI remake of the 2D animated film. Though famously criticized in the past for stealing from a foreign cartoon titled *Kimba the White Lion*, you can argue that it is also a version of the Shakespearean play *Hamlet*. Yet, in looking at works by Danish historian *Saxo Grammaticus* (upon which Shakespeare drew in writing *Hamlet*), it is clear that he understood the importance of all creative work is inherently derivative. Generations have created and reused tropes to adapt their stories to a relatable level for their audiences. In a 2002 publication by Christopher L. Bailey titled, *Saxo Grammaticus: History and the Rise of*

National Identity in Medieval Denmark, he notes that: “Saxo composed the *Gesta Danorum* at a time of Danish strength and national unity and utilized native mythology in order to create a literary monument to Denmark's heritage and declare that the history of Denmark was just as glorious and awe-inspiring as that of Rome” (72). In comparison, this naive attempt at compiling certain Inca myths into a new story is not thievery or bias warping of the culture, rather a continuing tradition of humanity evolving stories through modern tropes for their current audiences. This creative work (whether professionally worked on for years or scraped together over a few months) is inherently derivative in evolving and preserving the original work, while also representing the author, yours truly.

Perspective is key here. Within the narrative, there is the stance taken by the writer on how they deliver their literary work. Be it third-person, or first-person, etc, the author remains present. In this project, the narrative invokes examples of the three mentioned before. The frame narratives serve to maintain the integrity of the Inca cultural stories while my first-person illustrates native attitudes perceivable for the given era. This method is inspired by the reading of texts such as *Pale Fire* by Vladimir Nabokov, *Books and Islands in Ojibwe Country* by Louise Erdrich, and *The Canterbury Tales* by Geoffrey Chaucer. *Pale Fire* challenges the reader on the legitimacy of the many narrators to the point that any of our interpretations could be correct without authorial confirmation. *Books and Islands in Ojibwe Country* compile the many beliefs of the Ojibwe people through the narrative of a mother traveling through the native territory, giving the culture a beautiful narrative as it exists in the modern era while exploring its interpretations throughout previous years. *The Canterbury Tales* are another and more classical compilation of stories that illustrate how many varying tales can come together to paint the many aspects of society with numerous creative characters all meeting at the Tabard Inn. And so, my

narrative as third-person in the first and third part of this project displays how I have observed and interpreted the Inca attitude throughout the last years of its dwindling era as a novice historian. In the story titled, *The Sunbird's Cage*, various myths of the Incas are told through the first-person narratives of an Inca aunt and uncle to their half-Inca half-Spanish nephew Leandro. The narrative of the aunt and uncle, Tia Katari and Tio Kuntur respectively, helps illustrate the attitude of the surviving Incas post-Spanish Conquest as there are legends that point towards frustrations amongst their squabbling leaders at the time of Spanish arrival. The perspective of the nephew Leandro years later serves mainly as a frame to mention the similarities of cultures that were unknown to each other as well as open up discussion on pagan labeling. Offered up with these interpretations is how *historia* is the method of understanding history through story by memory.

Where history is for the academics, the story is for the authors. The question then arises, what is an author to myths? Usually unknown, yet the story contains culture, this aspect of *historia* is not so rare. One such famous example being the legends of King Arthur, a ruler that history cannot confirm, but legends do not deny. Yet a more curious figure in Arthurian Legend is that of Merlin the Wizard. From *The Science of Harry Potter* by Mark Brake with Jon Chase we go into account the origins of the myth of Merlin. As stated, “The primary historical account of the Merlin legend stems from Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *Historia Regum Britanniae*... He fused existing stories of Myrddin Wylt... a North Brythonic philosopher... with no link to King Arthur... and rousing leader, Ambrosius Aurelianus. In so doing, Geoffrey created the composite figure he named Merlin” (25). Merlin is then a composite character, previous *historias* of others taken into a new form that is retained today. Thus people like Myrddin Wylt, Ambrosius Aurelius, etc, are still remembered, albeit no longer on the surface. It is how *historia* evolves to

survive. The relationship between the two concepts of history and story is not so black and white. We accept that an author can write stories and myths. In the end, it is a narrative of human creation. History, on the other hand, is written by the academic who accepts reports and findings as fact. They find the truth in all places, from radio transcripts to ancient texts, all pieces of human work. Thus the historian creates their narrative to be accepted as the truth of the past for the future. Even in this accepted fact, there is the human narrative, or room for errors, bias, and things askew. Stories are honest about being created, while history does not want to admit to its possibility for a flaw.

With Inca *historia*, metaphorically the lines are blurred between what the Spanish people mark down as fiction and nonfiction. There are things of concrete proof in life, but there are just as many, if not more, things we cannot fully trust. It is the stuff conspiracy theories are made of! We didn't even think there was anything smaller than a molecule... and then atoms were discovered, facts change. We are constantly discovering the new because we always question everything, not out of disrespect, but for the sake of discovery. We are then free to stop anywhere and trust some things as facts of our existence. This is the personal lesson learned from the blurred lines of history and story; that blur: that is what remains of the Incas, *historia*.

The study of the Incas is not of victors, but surviving stories in the post-conquest rubble. Within *The Incas Have Gone Inside: Pattern and Persistence in Andean Iconography* by Catherine Allen we understand the severity of Spanish conquest over the Andes. "Half a millennium has passed since the Spanish invasion of Peru; firsthand accounts of Inca society and customs come to us from Inquisition-era Spaniards, many of whom were bent on destroying the very society they described. And indeed, that society no longer exists. When Andean populations recovered from the decimation and dislocation of the sixteenth century, they developed in new

ways, producing a cultural hybrid with both Spanish and native Andean roots” (181). Among that rubble, myths and legends of Ancient Peru survive. The legend of *Mayta Capac* preserves a ruler of the Andean realm. *The Messenger in Black* myth illustrates the community and its hatred for the failed defense against the Spanish invasion. *The Macaw Woman* points to possible biblical tales shared between Inca and Spaniard. In the end, the Incas remain today in stories, an extension of themselves that has to be accepted now as history. Whether *The Vanishing Bride* or *The Sunbird's Cage* were ever real is irrelevant for the sake of understanding Inca culture. This journey had delved into exploring how myths evolve and adapt over time, specifically today. Learning about the Incas' culture, traditions, beliefs, one must acknowledge Spanish ideals, manipulation, and conversion to dissect the truth from lies. Who says this person was evil, who says what is right and wrong? In the end, I only preserve what I can understand. Through my work, I will share how we reach through lies and bias to try and preserve the truth for future readers.

In terms of Inca art that survives, major forms of media have explored the cultures of the past. You cannot call the popular films portraying Incas diverse. I have felt, and I'm not alone, general favoritism in contemporary American media towards history from Europe. You can easily find fantasy-based stories reminiscent of the Ancient Greeks or the people of medieval England. Though the Incas do have one major motion picture, Disney's *The Emperor's New Groove*, unfortunately, the film itself does not so much portray Inca culture but instead uses it as a backdrop to the plot. Today, films are becoming more representative such as Disney's *Coco*, which incorporated Mexican culture into the plot, rather than using it as a decoration for the movie. In the case of *The Emperor's New Groove*, however, the plot could happen anywhere; it does not need the Incas. In an issue of *Journal of Social Archaeology*, Dr. Helaine Silverman

argues similarly that: “The legibility sought by Disney is two-fold: that the plot is easy to follow (which it is) and that the supporting iconography be generically Precolumbian or, for the truly uneducated viewer, merely exotic (which it is)” (309). This film, though enjoyable for its humor, lacks any substantial exploration or display of Inca culture. It has become one of many factors that motivated me to seek out this culture.

Since stories evolve between being passed down orally and written and translated, this is a story using the myths of Ancient Peru. Some of their meanings are changed and connections are created where they may never have been before. These myths are now presented as they were before me, but don't forget: it is also after the Spanish influence as well. I do not outright try to change these stories to fit my narrative, my beliefs. If I have done so, I have done so subconsciously. I change things to create a new story while also in a way preserving these ancient stories that, against all odds, still survive. Old myths could always use a new home anyways. It is easy to surmise how people could be first exposed to Norse mythology through the Marvel comics version of Thor, or how kids learned about Greek mythology through the Percy Jackson series; I know I did. The Incas do not get such treatment, however; indeed, not a lot of ancient cultures beyond medieval Europe have such exposure. My goal is to give them this exposure, to contribute just a little to that effort. I do not want to simply recap how Peru was conquered by the Spaniards; it is more than that. In every book or article I search for, the majority only talk about the conquest, as though nothing else is interesting besides that. Though I still mention the conquerors, I do not care about the thieves or traitors or the soldiers who crossed their lands, the lands of the native Andean. My story is an asylum to the stories of Ancient Peru, safety from disappearing.

My background is Peruvian-born and a proud resident of New York Westchester County. I have long experienced a desire to understand my identity. I wanted a solid foundation for my selfhood, and, amid moments of exclusivity and inclusivity, I found the myths and legends of Ancient Peru. They connected me to a past of my ancestors, their history that survives, even after so much destruction by Spanish Conquistadors. Today, the Peruvian does not carry the guilt, shame, or pain of the conquest. We are all descendants of the conquerors and conquered. We are free to be individuals. I simply desire to know who were the originals of the land on which I was born. Sadly, whatever Inca story we read today is up for debate in terms of its integrity and origin. The Spaniards who arrived in the foreign land of the Andes were unwelcoming to the Inca culture and tradition, which they saw as something to be conquered for their King. The Christians saw the Incas as pagan worshippers. Whatever was written about the Incas by these colonizers is warped by the bias against them. Without a writing system of their own, stories are passed down orally, and memory fades and alters. In the mind of the foreign invader and in those of the natives over time, traditions, and history transform. Not just the Incas lived in Peru, other tribes roamed about, but war and conquest would unite them under the Incas until their end. The winners of history, the ruling religion, the Spanish crown, all acted as a filter through which the myths and legends of Ancient Peru traveled before their preservation on paper. Beyond whatever meaning we read in myths, in terms of the Incas, we search through the lies to find the truth. When war sparks or invaders destroy, it is myths that survive. Those stories are the last evidence that the Incas existed.

I have grown to accept that I am not ever going to be one thing; I am many things: Latino, American, a US citizen, Villagomez; I am an individual. Being Peruvian is just one aspect of being Latino. To me being Latino in the United States means being a stranger, and a

stranger gets to see how people treat the different or unknown. I witness the welcoming warmth of many and the cold exclusion of others. Still, I recognize my heritage, my home country of Peru once belonged to the Incas. I am a sentimental Peruvian who has desired to learn more about the origins of my nation beyond its conquest and now share that passion with you the reader.

Latino means stranger

By blood and root, my Peruvian pride

Welcomed without anger

By friends and life, my American side

PART TWO**Leandro**

My mother is Peruvian, my father a Spaniard, I am Leandro Castillo. My Tia (Aunt) Katari and Tio (Uncle) Kuntur come from my mother's side, from the Andes. What remains of them to me are the stories they shared on my last few weeks in Peru, right before my mother and I would leave to join my father here in Spain. I wish someone could tell you presently that this moment that is now a cherished memory is just that before it becomes nothing more than a memory. These stories are a keepsake of the other half of my origins. A son of the Inca and the Spanish, the Sun and the Cross, the Condor and the Ox. I hereby present to you,

The Sunbird's Cage: Historias de Tía Katari, y Tío Kuntur como está escrito por Leandro Castillo.

The Sunbird's Cage: Stories from Aunt Katari and Uncle Kuntur as written by Leandro Castillo.

“What we will say may just be stories now, what you will see, will be history. You will see more than we ever will.” Those were the last words said to me by Tio Kuntur as I left Peru. I can still remember their squabbles of the old married couple, how they could tell the stories they loved but now and then had to interrupt the other over violence or softness. I write down their stories as the cage for the Sunbird. My Tio admires the birds that flew across the heavens while my Tia leaned more towards the slitherers and crawlers by our feet. From these people of the Sun, their fourth ruler, the fourth Sapa Inca was the legendary Mayta Capac, who set the Sunbird free from its cage to see the world again. But then came the people of my father who did not cage the bird; they destroyed it. The birdcage was a prison to be set free, now it is a home where what remains can rest until the world is ready for it again. The Sunbird is wounded but not gone,

just buried, this is your new cage little one, so that you may rest here until it is ready to fly again. Beyond the Spanish Wrath, my Inca Heritage.

CH 1. ORIGEN

Leandro

For my father to not be angered and separate us, the beliefs of my mother's family had to become stories, fairy tales. To the first people, it was Inca history; now it becomes a myth. This could not be a history lesson, for my aunt and uncle, it was storytime. Every time my Tio and Tia each had a *story* ready to tell me and would argue over who gets to go first. On this day, there was no argument, out of respect for order, they told three tales in the order of which they *would have* happened. My Tia starts, Tio continues the second, and both share the chapter finale.

They shared tales by no order, whatever favorite story of theirs came to mind came to me, and the other contributed a similar story. With no order, it was surprising to one day hear that both will tell me stories about the beginning, the origin myths. They love each other but without their children to call their own, they often butted heads over me. On this day, no bickering, no marital disputes, just the first stories told in order. Out of respect for the one time they got along from the beginning, I share their tales in order. We begin in the middle of my memories.

The Serpents of Jauja Valley

Their home stood on the side of the mountain with a horizon of overlapping hills going on beyond eyesight. They meet by the outward barrier viewing the Andean scenery and the aunt sits before her nephew and husband to start. Tia Katari chose to begin before the flood with her favorite creatures.

“Before Man ruled the lands we hid in the underground in fear of the great serpents. It was the Valley of Jauja that was home to one snake, then another came to the pass. There was no companionship here, only territory that can only be won in death!” Katari held her arms towards Leandro and Kuntur, arching over them to show the serpents’ meeting and confrontation. “The two great serpents could never best the other and will fight forever, UNTIL! A great lightning bolt came down and struck both beasts dead for their endless tyranny. It may have been Illapa the God of the Weather or, better yet, the Bearded Creator Viracocha who killed them. Either way, it was a trade by the Gods. We rose from the Supay’s underworld to flourish in the valley under Inti as the serpents sank further into the world, into Ukhu Pacha. Supay had a new companion, and we prayed to him for safety when the men go digging and to keep his demons where they belong.”

“We were free from the ruler of the underworld thanks to the gods in the heavens. At least that is how the story goes,” concluded Tio Kuntur.

The Macaw Woman

“Do you see how these magnificent creatures roam across the skies, closer to Gods or God as we could hope to ever be alive!”

Tio Kuntur takes the seat while Katari sits next to her nephew.

Kuntur gazed at the skies, “We moved to these mountains to be closer to our Gods.”

Katari interjects with a smile, “Yet we never leave the ground.”

“That is true Katari, we are closer to the ground than to the sun and clouds, we dig, we mine, we drown. Listen here Leandro, maybe it is a story as your father would say, but perhaps something in it is true. Some many years after the serpents perished, there came a great flood that threatened to drown the world. But two nameless brothers managed to climb the Huacayñán

Mountain high enough to survive the flood. Unfortunately, there was not enough land for farming, they built a hut, but could only find a few shrubs here and there. Night after night they came home exhausted and disappointed, with no hope in sight. And then one day, they returned home to find a feast set out on their table! Food, good for eating, and chicha ready for drinking! This would go on for ten days before the younger brother stayed behind to discover the identity of their caretaker. Hidden from sight, he saw two macaws fly into the home, he saw that they had red feathers and the faces of human women. They were beautiful.”

“I am becoming uneasy,” interrupted Leandro.

“Then it’s a story! Anyways, he tried to introduce himself to the Macaw Women but this upset them and left taking the food. They would not return for three days, by then both brothers waited to ambush them. The larger Macaw Woman escaped but the smaller and younger one was caught. So she stayed with them as their wife. She gave birth to six sons and daughters. The seeds she brought became a harvest for the humans and they survived until at last, the water level sank and the world was open again. From those six sons and daughters are we descended from the Macaw Woman. At least that’s the story. Because of that, the macaw’s feathers are also sacred.”

Tio Kuntur then took out a disheveled red feather, which he gazed at with calm contentment attributed to nostalgia. Leandro found it a strange story with the woman bird so that is what remained to him, a story.

The Rod of Gold

Kuntur then took his place next to Leandro, but Katari stayed where she sat. Katari resumed, “From there, the people resumed wandering the Andes, but we were few and scattered;

we had no organization. And so the god Inti, the sun, took pity on us and sent his two-star children to guide us lost savages.”

“Whoever came,” stated Kuntur, “they were called Manco Capac and his sister Mama Ocllo; it was even said that they had a rod of gold. The first Sapa and Coya (Inca King and Queen). Children of the Sun and Moon. All the people who believed them, followed them to find the fertile land for their new home. Wherever they went, Manco would stick the rod into the ground, but if it would not sink, they continued marching through the mountains. Finally, when they found the most fertile soil, the rod sank into the ground and it was there that the land was called Cuzco. They led the lost and savage into a community, and soon more tribes became part of the people beneath the Sun. The empire became Inca.”

Tia Katari concludes, “We survived the serpents, blessed from the macaw, led by the sun, and grew from Cuzco. From Manco the first, and Mayta the Strong, then the empire blossomed with Pachacuti the Earth Shaker, and Huayna Capac the Listener was the last good one, after him the end was near.”

Leandro

My aunt and uncle left our storytime to end there that day. Truthfully, I confess it is almost a miracle I remember any names of the Inca rulers at all. As a child, I could have sworn they were going through every Sapa and his nickname, and yet I remembered at least four! The imaginations of beginnings are quite a fantastic tale not just in Inca beliefs but my church as well. Both acknowledge the great flood that Noah escaped for humanity to continue, and yet there were people on the other side of the world my father and his people never knew about. Noah needed a boat, and remembering how great and high those mountains are, perhaps that was all they needed, and they chose to stay there, close to God and his blessing of salvation at the

peak. It is only a story now, the husbands of the Macaw, but if their flood was the same as ours then we may be disregarding important history. Then again, there were also massive and great scaled serpent beasts, but we have no record of any such creature existing, at least not to the extent my Tia Katari admired.

CH 2. AMOR

Leandro

This day in particular became one of romance, at least romance in my Tio and Tia's eyes. My Tio presented a love story of a woman torn between her husband and her mother. My Tia had one over the love between brothers and the beauty of women.

The Condor Seeks A Wife

Per my Tio's admiration for the birds, "Among the many birds across the Hanan Pacha, the Condor is the most sacred." Where the sun Inti and moon Mama Killa rule over the heavens and stars. We live here in the Kay Pacha, where people, animals, and plants lie, where the puma roams as the condor does and Ukhu Pacha is the underworld where Supay and serpents live, where the wicked lie. My Tio taught me the Condor, Puma, and Serpent. Of course, it was the Condor himself who has many stories told by Tio Kuntur.

"This is my favorite, back when condors had white feathers.

"There was a beautiful maiden who lived with her mother and loved her life tending to sheep. A Great Condor watched and fell in love with her. Disguised as a young man, he tried to marry her but she loved her life and refused day after day as the condor kept returning under the same false face. One day the Condor, as an old man, asked her to scratch his back. He tricked her using her kindness and he resumed his original form and flew up high to his cave. There the young maiden was greeted by an elderly woman covered in feathers; she was the condor's mother. The young girl was cold so the mother cradled her. She felt the love of the condor, but she was miserable. He could only bring her dead animals and dug up potatoes. She did her best to live here but was ultimately homesick. The Condor's Wife soon grew feathers and even began

laying eggs, who would one day grow to fly as valiantly as their father. All the while, her mother was crying at the loss of her precious *hija*(daughter).

“Then one day a great parrot flew down to the crying mother and told her where her daughter was. He could bring her back and, in return, he may stay in her trees and enjoy her corn. She accepted the offer and while the Husband was away, the parrot came to the rescue and found her quite thin, covered in feathers, and ill-smelling. Nevertheless, her mother was glad to get her back, she washed her daughter, dressed her child in their finest clothing, and they lived happily again.

“The Condor was furious and in grief. He knew it was the parrot who took his wife. He found the parrot, fat and resting on a branch, and ate him where he laid. But the parrot found his way out the other end! Again and again, the Condor ate him until finally, he used his talons to rip apart the parrot and devour each piece. But for each piece, a smaller parrot left the condor’s body. The condor gave up and returned to his peak. There his feathers turned black in mourning for his lost wife. The Condor’s Wife was gone. And now all condors have black feathers. At least that’s how the story goes.”

The Boy Who Rose to the Sky

Tio Kuntur continued, “The Condor I believe is sympathetic to the romantic. There was a young man who fell in love with a star child who visited his family’s crops at night and he kept her on earth as his wife. But the beautiful star child was not allowed to stay. She had to return to Hanan Pacha. So, a Great Condor agreed to fly him to her home so long as the boy fed him during his flight. The boy returned to his wife but love does not always last and she grew to resent him. He left her home and found the Condor there patient and ready to return to Kay Pacha.”

Tia Katari concluded with her comment, “I suppose it was generous of the Condor, both the young maiden and young man got married once. Oh well.”

Utca Paucar

My Tia Katari complemented Tio, “That was a nice story Kuntur, but kidnapping doesn’t get you a wife. A good woman has many pursuers and you earn her against all others!”

Tia presents a story about two brothers who loved the same woman.

“Her name was Yma Sumac and she was the daughter of the old lord Ahuapanti. Her parents cherished the beauty in their daughter and so secluded her in their palace below the mountain peak. Aside from mandatory celebrations of religion and harvests, she was rarely seen. At one harvest, she met and danced with the soldier Utca Paucar. Paucar’s brother was the farmer Utca Mayta who always brought an excellent harvest. He too was smitten by Yma. Both brothers found out about the other’s feelings and so decided to settle the matter with her father. Who would make a better husband for her? Lord Ahuapanti was smart to base his choice on a contest, for both a farmer, a soldier, and himself. He wanted the river that flowed from his mountain to move across his front door and so whoever could accomplish the task first shall have Yma as his wife.

“Utca Paucar was captain of his men and well beyond capable labor. Utca Mayta on the other hand had only his friends but also gained experience in aqueducts. It was Mayta who was able to first create the channel pass across the palace gates. And so Yma was promised to Utca Mayta. But Utca Paucar still felt he was more deserving of her, yet his men were divided on the results of the contest, half sided with Mayta. And so Paucar declared war on his brother.

“The entire region was divided over who Yma should marry, Paucar or Mayta. The war ravaged their region, the townspeople suffered from a lack of food, and rather than lose the war

to starvation, a final duel between the brothers was decided. Brother met brother once again for the last time. But then, the soldier Paucar looked to his adversary in the field and knew he was about to destroy his little brother. So Paucar admitted defeat and finally let Utca Mayta marry Yma Sumac in a grand ceremony that went on for many days! Utca Paucar did not attend, instead, he spent the remainder of his days in the mountains miserable and alone.”

“At least that’s how the story goes.” Finished my Tio.

Leandro

My Tia’s story remained with me all these years. My education led me to Helen of Troy as a prime example of war for beauty. Of course, my Tia was given to my Tio in the old ways of Peru. It has remained to me, an anomaly how two different worlds have such similar stories. While the prospect of a beautiful wife is enticing enough to drive men to war, there remains the polytheists and their gods portrayed as mischievous. It was the Greeks whose Gods would violate women such as Poseidon on Medusa. Be it that the new Spanish law classifies these as stories, there is something to understand about marriage in Peru with the endings to the stories told to me that day. Even more so, Utca Paucar and Mayta stand as the most likely people to have existed. But now they are stories, as my Tio likes to safely remind us all. Even today I bt that, where my Tia holds onto her pride, my Tio accepts on her behalf, history is a story at best.

CH 3. SAPA

Leandro

On this day, I further delve into the “stories” of my mother’s side. These stories strongly stand with half a foot in fiction and the other foot in history. So today is a day for the Sapa Incas. What was closer to the sun but still tethered to the Kay Pacha? For both Tio and Tia, it was the Children of the Sun, the true Incas, the royal rulers of the Andes. Indeed, my mother’s side makes half an Inca subject, but there are no more Incas, only the Spanish Crown. This we have thanks to the efforts of my Spanish father, along with many others who brought their world to the New World in the West. This crossroads between people came when the Inca subjects welcomed the bearded men from Spain. For that, my Tio and Tia have had many words to share about the last rulers just before those who called Peru the New World came over.

Viracocha

My Tia Katari, “Our first Sapa was known as Manco Capac, but to other people, we were personally visited by the Creator of the Universe, Viracocha. He did not stay long because we made fun of his beard, but he promised to return another day. Imagine our surprise when your father’s people came here with lightning in their hands and beards on their faces. We welcomed them for these must have been people of Viracocha.”

Mayta Capac

My Tio took this day to remind me of Utca Paucar, “Those brothers fought for love, but the last Sapa Inca Atahualpa, that man fought only for himself.” For only a moment, I saw Tia Katari bothered by Tio, not for bowing but for discontent with the last true Sapa. My Tio did not relent however, “I am free under the new Spanish Sapa to say what is true about the brother killer. You are right Katari! A woman should be fought for, I dare anyone to take you from me,

but I will not destroy my brother who gave us our nephew. Could you say the same over Atahualpa? No! ”

Tia countered, “The Utca’s are not so much a happy story but about what the heart wants. Paucar did not want to destroy his brother who fought hard against all odds, so Paucar lost. He loved his brother more than Yma, but he still started something he refused to finish. He wouldn’t marry another so he suffered alone and left the town in their celebration. Atahualpa killed his brother and the other half of their subjects. Yes, Paucar did better for his people than the last Sapa; he avoided more bloodshed and let Mayta win!

“But there are no more true Maytas anymore. Mayta Capac was the last one worthy of that name. Oh, you’ll like this one Kuntur; it has a bird!

Who was Mayta Capac? That question of mine pleased my Tia as she told me,

“A proper man dedicates himself to what they begin. A proper man understands his neighbors, his people. His name was Mayta Capac, son of the third Sapa Inca Lloque Yupanqui and his new bride Mama Caua. Yes, the Sapa Inca needed an heir, and with the blessing of Inti, Mama Caua became pregnant and birthed Mayta after only three months, a healthy boy already bearing teeth. He grew blessedly; at one year old, he looked eight years old. At two, he was fighting capable young men. So other tribes near Cuzco feared what Mayta could become, so they banded together to end his life. The Culunchimas and Alcahuizas tribes fought in multiple battles against Cuzco, but Mayta stood in front of the soldiers and fought them off each time. But his father, the Sapa Lloque reprimanded his son for his actions, saying Mayta was being too violent.”

Here is where the new clashed with the old.

Tia continued while looking at Tio for this part, “But the Inca’s subjects preferred war, they were thieves at heart, stood by Mayta, and Lloque’s reprimands meant nothing. Mayta was Sapa Inca in everything but name. Soon after, Mayta and his subjects were enough to fend off both Culunchimas and Alcahuizas. It was the latter tribe who would not give up despite loss after loss.” Katari returned to me, “The gods then sent down a hailstorm against them; still, they did not give up the losing battle. It was Mayta who secured victory and captured their war chief, ending the conflict. Not since the first Sapa Inca Manco Capac, was a leader able to take arms and win. Lloque could not keep his kingdom in check; the struggles bred thieves and savages, but Mayta at least understood them and used them for conquest! Kuntur, you know you can take it from here.”

My Tio had calmed himself and ended this herculean tale. While smiling at Tia, as the story went.

“When Mayta took the throne, he inherited a reed woven birdcage, passed down from Inca to Inca, all were afraid to open it. But not the Sapa Inca Mayta Capac, he opened it and released the Sunbird. He was rewarded by the Sunbird with the ability to see into the future! ...as the story goes. He united his people and could defend them properly, and the sunbird flew free.”

Leandro

Tio sat by Tia as they ended the story. I remember on another day, a later Sapa who not only defended the empire but expanded it to him earning the title of Earth Shaker. My Tio never even assured me that it was how the story went. Perhaps the most real Mayta Capac ever was to both of them in this New World. To my Tia, Mayta was a legend whose name was passed down to the Utca brother and led down to resentment. That is what I remember; we cling to and focus on remembering our pride because our failures are more stubbornly remaining in our legacy.

My Tia then moved on, “No more Sunbirds, no white feathers, only ragged red feathers now. Even Huayna Capac left us. Oh, but you’ll like to tell this one Kuntur!”

The Vanishing Bride

“Yes, though the Condor flies over the Puma, and she walks above the serpents, the Condor rules over another group, a trio of birds! It goes; the condor to the Hanan Pacha, the hawk for Kay Pacha, and the swallow across Ukhu Pacha. It was Huayna Capac who created this, and he was the last Inca to fully rule before the arrival of the Spanish Men.”

The penultimate Sapa.

“It didn’t make sense what had happened until the Christians’ arrival. What happened surrounding Huayna and his Vanishing Bride? So, most definitely, as the rumors go. The creator of the universe Viracocha came to the Sapa and told him to send those made of the great birds to deliver a bride for the Sapa. Another child of the stars? But more and more people say he sent three people to the Underworld. Was it a child of Supay? Or a daughter of the Sun itself? I don’t know; no one does. But Sapa Huayna summoned magicians to carry out his order, if any alive today are hiding, three of them were commanded.”

One said, “I am created of the Condor”, the other was “created of the Hawk,” and the last “flew like the Swallow”.

As the story goes, Tio continued, “it was he of the Swallow who made it to the Underworld first, met the father Inti and retrieved a small box with orders not to open it. It is Huanya who is meant to open it. But the swallow could not resist and uncovered it to find a daughter of the Sun, but he was not Huayna Capac, and so she disappeared. Shamed by the Sapa Inca, the Swallow Man returned to the Underworld again and this time properly delivered the box to the empire. There he met Huayna Capac and the creator Viracocha. The Sapa Inca did not

yet open the box but instead left us, Viracocha called that he would never return to the Incas and that Huayna may leave this world as well. Huayna chose to leave with his Sun Bride and ordered one of his subjects to be an imposter. Then again did the bride vanish, this time with her husband and their creator. Whoever that was that sat on the throne calling himself Huayna Capac died sometime later, and then the children of Capac squabbled amongst themselves over who would rule, and then the Spaniards came after Atahualpa seized victory. This much I know, we were abandoned and the kingdom divided among the inheritors. In the end, they fought for themselves, not the people. You are right Katari, there are no more Mayta Capacs, even then.”

Leandro

This omen of rumors puzzled me. My Tio could not make sense of the contradictions and so told the most common of commoner talk he heard in his youth. But then my Tio knew of another omen. The next one, harsher and for all to see.

The Messenger in Black

Tio Kuntur, “Be it a condor, a swallow, or even a moth. Those who fly will always be closer to the heavens no matter how far we climb up these mountains. Someone called Huayna Capac was still Sapa Inca then when the moths came to warn us. While holding back a raid, the Sapa Inca saw bolts of lightning strike the ground as he considered advancing his army or returning home. He chose to return home for the Capac Raymi festival in Quito. At the festival, there came a messenger in a black cloak. He kissed the Sapa Inca and handed him a small chest that was meant only for him to open. Upon its release, there came out a great many moths and butterflies, in a matter of only two days all his army captains were dead with scabs covering their faces. This is where the imposter rumors began.

Tia then concluded the tale, “The man calling himself Sapa Huayna then ordered the construction of his sepulcher and stayed there to die. In Quito, it was the last ruler who took the city, Atahualpa. Then the bearded men arrived carrying lightning by their waists. I still remember how Cuzco stayed strong and kept fighting despite the declining borders of the empire. Tupac Amaru was the last ruler of the city Cuzco. Atahualpa was the last to rule over the empire at its peak if even for a moment. And Huayna Capac ruled from his youth to his end, leaving by his own choice in the prime of the Incas.

Leandro

Amidst the rumors that fly around of Herculean strength and travels to the Underworld, with Spanish around, that is how the story must go. All that history says is in order; Huayna Capac, Atahualpa, the end. Why was Inti in the Underworld? Was this a child of the sun? If so, a sister to Huayna? Or a child of Viracocha, then of the stars such as the Boy Who Rose to the Sky? Where the beginnings seemed so knit down, by the end everything is scrambling.

CH 4. BÁRBARO

Leandro

For women, religion, family, royalty, dreams, children, and even power, everyone is loyal to something to keep on living. When that is threatened, violence ensues, fears are spread, and all of it is mixed in with all the goodness of people. And yet, memory fades harshly. These are the last stories I can offer with integrity and accuracy in my remembering. What makes something so memorable? The chase for what people are loyal to; the fascinating origins of things to rise, the lover's chase, the fantastic tales near the end, but there is also brutality. That is something about Tia Katari I will never forget; she loved the land she trod on for she was above the underworld. She was loyal to her world and her family. Today only one barely remains. She always respected her old world though, to show the ones higher than her that she could be respected as well. She taught me the circle of fear that Incas truly hoped never to meet. And yet even with offerings to Supay outlawed, she made sure to teach me what happens when the big boss destroys what we love. My Tio did not want to be left out of the day and brought his tale of brutality, of barbarism.

Rainbow & Amaru

My Tio began this day, "My Doves are better than your Mouse! I will begin."

Tia Katari retaliated, "Watch yourself Kuntur, you talk to me like this, but cannot stand against others! Do not leave with your precious Moths and wind up all alone!"

Just as my Tio used the Serpents to stop Tia Katari from loving the snakes too much, Tia used the Moth to stop Tio Kuntur. It was a short tale of a friendly moth who kept company with a lonely wife while her husband left for days. Then the husband killed his wife without a word when their son told him of "Momma's lover." Upon meeting the friendly moth and his son's

reminder, the husband learned his mistake and spent his remaining days in misery. And so Tia Katari began after stopping Tio Kuntur from taking over.

“There are no more Incas; we are Spanish; everyone else was killed or enslaved. No more Sapas; no more Maytas. What happened to my rainbow? To my Amaru, why was the last Sapa called Amaru? Even though he is gone now and has taken my serpent underground.

“It is true as Kuntur believes the heavens can be our friends, a moth can keep a lonely wife company, a Condor can offer up a flight, just don’t be too pretty, and the Sun grows our crops. But as they are powerful, there are things to be concerned about. We exist between heaven and the Underworld; we are in the middle of their conflict. As the seven colors arch over the sky, we have feared this thing. People got sick in the pursuit of their feet; it was something entirely out of our control. But your father’s people do not fear it; they dismiss it, and no one is fearful anymore.”

I have to sympathize here; when you don’t know what something is, what it may want, it can be scary. It shows and leaves on its own with no care or attention to anything else. But my father, if he couldn’t reach it, and it did not pursue him, I suppose there was no point in doing anything about it.

Tia continued, “Yes. Those colors arched over the horizon, the top half of a circle over the heavens. But, what about the bottom half? That is called Amaru, ever since the Inca people first came, we knew of a two-headed beast, a giant serpent. Some have called the beast winged, others say it had the head of a llama or a puma! I preferred to imagine the serpent with a second head at its tail. I believe that the great serpents of the valley who ruled before man were transformed into the Amaru. Supay took his offerings and kept his demons at bay, but the serpents who were born in Kay Pacha belonged here. The Gods made the trade, Man over

Beasts. So Supay took the beasts and made them share a body to end their fight! Now they torment us all around! At least they used to, now those *misioneros*(missionaries) say we cannot give offerings to the *diablo*. To trust in *Dios* to protect us.”

Before my interruption, Tio Kuntur mentioned, “I have always trusted in the heavens to watch over us, but we’ve suffered no harm in trying to keep the demon ruler at bay”. Instead of arguing, I decided to support my Tia, “Maybe Supay took back his creation.” I said. Of course, my interest cheered her up and added, “Yes! And is amassing his demons to attack! Amaru and the Rainbow. The two halves of a vicious circle, Hanan and Ukhu Pacha around Kay.”

The Mouse Husband

“Katari please watch yourself, please!” Tio exclaimed. “How about your mouse?”

Tia responded to her husband’s sudden interest in her next story as a sign that she did go too far. She gathered herself and moved on to her next story. A story of family and brutal vengeance.

Tia began, “I always wanted to see the Amaru, I believed it as a punished creature, brought to us by the ruler of demons, that he was proof of Supay. Proof of the Gods. Those weapons, lightning arms, have destroyed Cuzco, just like it did the serpents. Maybe your father chased away Amaru; it would have been nice if I could have seen it just once. Tupac Amaru is named after the Serpent, and he fought valiantly to the end, but again I never saw him.”

I further supported my aunt, “Still, it is amazing to have a ruler named after the ferocious beast. Maybe things will never be like that again, but I am glad you know them; I know them now too. Can you tell just one more story, another favorite? Perhaps ‘The Mouse?’”

Tia Katari turned to me, “Aha, I see you now. Very well. Here is another tale of a vicious beast, this is ‘The Mouse Husband’!

“There was of course a mouse, and like Tio’s favorite bird, he could transform into a human as he too loved a young maiden. He stayed human for her, but he feared her mother for she had a face similar to a cat; so the mouse never stayed long. Eventually, they had a son, small and squeaking. The young wife was happy, whatever she needed, such as corn, her husband would come back at night with lots of it, thanks to his many mice friends. But she was still sad whenever he left. One day, he tried to reveal himself to her, he called her outside and as she set the baby down a mouse came and kissed the baby on the face. But she did not notice the signs, her mother did though...

‘So, you married a mouse! I knew it myself by his shrill little voice!’

“She then proceeded to claw her grandson; proceeded to crush and strangle him! When the mouse returned as a human to confess his true identity, she told him what happened to their son after her mother discovered his secret. The mouse cried and buried his dead son under a magic tree of these mountains and watered it with his tears so it would always flourish.

“He then amassed his army of mice and they took away all the mother's food until nothing was left. They then surrounded her, toppled her, and gnawed at her flesh. They ate her until nothing but her bones remained and never came back again!”

Both my Tio and I remained silent after she concluded her story. That was haunting, and one of the favorites of my Tia. The mouse did not return for his wife. The loss of a child and mother on the same day can be hard on a marriage. Tio wanted to understand how her affinity for snakes had led Katari to its prey. But Tia Katari knew, “Alone, we can crush every mouse, but together even the tiniest creatures can doom us all. If we weren’t so busy fighting we might have given your *Papi* a bigger fight.” Again my Tio urged caution to Tia, but we all came to

understand the truth of it. The Incas were an empire; the Spanish were strangers wandering the mountains; our strength left us with the gone Sapas. Even Tio agreed.

The Grateful Dove

“Alright, just one more and it is yours Tio Kuntur.”

“Very well then, ‘The Grateful Dove’! Where two brothers eat the eyes of their little brother!”

“Why!”

“Well, everyone has the opportunity to be cruel or merciful, whether they live among the Gods or crawl under our feet. But where we kidnapped the Macaw Woman, put the Condor in eternal mourning, and caged the Sunbird, we can still redeem ourselves through the tiniest of acts of kindness. Three sons lived on the farm; the two oldest hated their life; they did not want to work; they did not love their parents. They ran away one day but took their littlest brother too as a trick against him and their parents. They ran until they were tired, no home, no food, no knowing the mountains. The little one, Lanchi, sad and tired, fell into a deep sleep. The other two were hungry and hated his complaining. So, as he slept, they thought, ‘Let's kill him so he won't talk!’, the other said, ‘No let's take out his eyes! We can eat them too since we've eaten all our food anyway.’

“So one pinned Lanchi down and strangled him to make his eyes bulge, the other began working on picking them out! They were crueller than jaguars and their hands acted like the talons of a vulture. They did not care for his cries of pain; they were not disturbed by their actions, even after the deed was done. They gobbled up his eyeballs so that no reflection of their crime remained as far as they were concerned. They then left forever. Who knows where they wound up?

“The little Lanchi stayed there, blind and bloody. His sockets were shut with pain as he did nothing but lay there helpless for the longest time. The deadly silence was broken by a sweet melody that soothed his pain. Lanchi got up and stumbled towards the melody.

“Urpái . . . cucúy . . . tanrán!”

“Urpái . . . cucúy . . . tanrán!”

“It was a dove Lanchi heard, he bumped against the tree and began to climb. Happily, he managed the task and could reach for the dove. Caught! The dove began to sob and begged for his freedom. ‘What harm have I done to you? You humans are cruel! You murder your brothers! Let me go, and I will soothe your pain with my cooing.’

“Urpái . . . cucúy . . . tanrán!”

“Urpái . . . cucúy . . . tanrán!”

“Touched by his plea, the boy set the dove free but asked if it would guide him to food and drink. Surprised by this compassion from a human, a child, the little dove instead offered the boy a white powder to sprinkle and heal his wounds. The dove then brought a small stick and two crystals to fill out where his eyes used to be. Each day the boy was to tap them gently with the stick. As Lanchi obeyed, day by day, darkness became light. At last, he saw the sun that hangs in the sky and the lights in the world. Filled with gratitude he begged the dove for what can be done in return. The Dove decided to remain with the boy wherever he went, so long as he could remain free, each dawn and dusk Lanchi would hear it sing.

“Urpái . . . cucúy . . . tanrán!”

“Urpái . . . cucúy . . . tanrán!”

“I liked that one.” Finished Tia Katari.

Leandro

Even in the barbaric, my Tio and Tia remain attached. Culture survives in fear of the circle. The small can still be inspired, to rise or to be compassionate, depending on who you ask, Katari and Kuntur say differently with attachment to everything that started from Cuzco. Are these tales of new world Indian savages or just proof that deep down we are all monsters? It was the Spanish who enslaved the ones who never even had slaves. Yet my Tia and Tio belonged to people who made offerings to the devil. But not of worship, instead of fear.

PART THREE

In current history, it is warped by the winners and the writers, intentionally and/or subconsciously, we are the judges of that. Not just the individual author but the society of its origin both shapes it and alters the narrative as part of its evolution. Thus details are lost, mixed, and additions are assumed. This transformation is better classified as adaptation. For better or for worse, historia is always changing, with new contexts, translations, and intentions to survive for the next generation, lest it fades to oblivion.

Do not forget the warping of Spanish influence on Inca culture. The actions of American colonization by the European nations are a scar in cultural history for the many aspects lost in their arrival. *The Huarochiri Manuscript* by Frank Salomon is a summation of native livelihood and belief that focuses beyond the Incas. It is a collection of stories summarizing the natives of the Andean region as it was before the 16th century. Lost in a library until it would be rediscovered and translated to other languages including English, its importance lies in its detailed descriptions of the native life. Ironically the manuscript is believed to be compiled by a clergyman known as Father Francisco Avila who is notorious for destroying pagan idolatry. Yet it is his name on this manuscript the structure of which seems aimed at preservation of *pagan idolatry*. In the first English translation of *The Huarochiri Manuscript*, it is stated, “One gets a strong impression that the creator of these lines was engaged in reconceptualizing the Andean mythic tradition, rather than destroying its memory” (17). As the collection expresses an Andean belief that coincides with other collected pieces of work, the amount influenced or warped by the Christian beliefs of Avila is possibly minimal. As there are many similarities to the Christian Bible, not only in its stories but structure as well. Among these similarities are depictions of world-ending floods, averted sacrifices ordered by a deity, and original relationships with gods

compared to today. It is then noted that “Much European opinion of the time held that pagan myths... reflected ancient traces of [the true Bible]... which Satan’s deceptions had distorted in intervening centuries” (19). How much then is truly original or altered to be closer to the *truth*, as with any other colonized history, is left to assumption.

What has survived or warped by hate? Per the Incas, labeled pagan by the Spanish, their culture was nearly destroyed. As part of this conquest, offerings to their horned deity known as Supay were forbidden. In the research of Inca culture, Supay is rarely discussed, which can be attributed to the religious opposition to images of the Devil. However, the Supay deity did not appear to be worshipped by the Inca subjects; rather he was given offerings to keep demons at bay. In modern-day literature, Louise Erdrich contributes to this history with *Books and Islands in Ojibwe Country: traveling through the land of my ancestors*. In the chapter, *The Horned Man*, Erdrich clarifies how a painting of a horned man was similarly attacked as Supay was. Erdrich writes, “He is not a devil, and he isn’t throwing away a Christian cross—the local white Christian interpretation of the painting, which has led to its close call at defacement” (35). The author personally believes the painting is a self-portrait in a culture that valued horns as spiritual. *Books and Islands in Ojibwe Country* is a fascinating coincidence that I discovered months into this project. Both works compile myths and beliefs from Native American culture and tackle the purposes of stories and books. Erdrich closes off *The Horned Man* chapter with the topic of surviving art, “Contemporary native art is not just influenced by the conventions invented by the rock painters, it is a continuation, evidence of the vitality of Ojibwe art” (36). Through their influences, including the work of Erdrich, Ojibwe art continues. Through Inca myths that are written, the historia continues in compilations.

In focusing on literary change, we delve into the fifth volume of the *New Literary History* published in 1974, the article, *How Myths Die* examines the evolution of myth. The article defines a myth as that which “undergoes transformations as it passes from tribe to tribe becomes in the end attenuated, without, however, disappearing” (280). Just as Louise Erdrich compiles her knowledge of Ojibwe culture, the myths transform, or adapts, and remains in the present world for the future. *The Sunbird's Cage* is a passing down of historia. Among short stories in Latin America, *How the Devil Lost his Poncho* is exemplary of historia warping for commingling. It presents a story of Jesus visiting the city of Ica, Peru with his disciples. Not mentioned in the Bible, yet may be understood as a means of converting the native Andean people in a more peaceful approach by integrating the religion into their history. Instead of force or persecution, this story is a kinder approach in making Andean history part of the bible. It is a lighter note on the conflict between Spanish and Inca while also displaying how stories are adapted and utilized for society.

Where confirmable history ends, story is ever reliant to find the details of cultural beliefs. As a tool, it serves greatly to find the little details of culture such as foods eaten, animal symbolism, and the relationships between their gods. The Inca culture carried a unique cross known as the Chakana, believed to be representative of a worshipped animal trinity; the condor, puma, and serpent. As research is not as diverse on this subject compared to its historia, it is barely mentioned in my narrative. Through mentions of the Condor and Serpent and the Tio Kuntur and Tia Katari characters, it is pieced together how significant these animals were to Inca beliefs. The stories presented in my *The Sunbird's Cage* serve that purpose: to retell myths in a way that expresses Inca culture while also addressing the unreliability of accurate information

through memory. Stories are thus retold together as an expression of their evolution and an example of modern adaptation.

Of course, given the numerous myths of the Incas that have survived, rather than be an encyclopedia, I chose to keep these select myths to a theme of the Chakana Cross. The Snake, Puma & Condor are meant to represent how the Incas saw the spectrum of their worldly existence. The Snake slithers below the other two, the Puma is taller than one but beneath the other, and the Condor flies above the rest. Respectively, these animals represent; the Underworld, Earth & Heavens also known as the Ukhu Pacha, Kay Pacha, and Hanan Pacha accordingly. Additionally, there was the theme of time to the trio, past, present, and future. It should be revealed that the names of the aunt and uncle, Katari and Kuntur, translate from the original language of the Incas: Quechua, as Snake and Condor. The nephew character is named Leandro Castillo, Spanish names that go to mean Lion and Castle, reflective of the Puma and Spanish royalty. It is a fun fact that before the word Puma, the Spanish Conquistadors named the predatory felines of the Andes as a variant of the lion. As the story takes place after the fall of the Incas, the Puma and city is now a Lion and a royal castle, Leandro Castillo. The Tia and Tio as the Ukhu and Hanan Pacha, underworld and heaven, therefore represent people who no longer own the present. Tia Katari, her name meaning snake is thus associated with stories of the snake and the underworld or Ukhu Pacha, she lives in the past unhappy to relegate her culture to fiction or stories. Tio Kuntur, his name meaning condor is then associated with the Hanan Pacha and the birds, he accepts his actions rely on the future, i.e. giving his culture, stories to Leandro. Leandro who is associated with the puma and Kay Pacha represents the generation in control of the present, the new nation of Peru.

As Leandro inherits the Inca tales, we wonder why these stories exist. Myths or legends can come to exist out of sheer boredom, and yet also out of curiosity. Perhaps the original author, the vocal storyteller wondered Why does the condor of Hanan Pacha has black feathers? So *The Condor Seeks A Wife* explains, he is mourning, he is not an agent of Ukhu. From myths like that, we may learn how they thought and saw the world. Through *The Boy Who Rose to the Sky* and *The Vanishing Bride*, the Pachas are introduced to the reader.

The authors of these myths are then the trinity, Katari, Leandro, and Kuntur. The past and present are interpreted through the present. Between two generations of Andean-born people, this societal transition adopts the myths into their transformation. Leandro's chapters in this take place many years later to further add his influence to the narrative. Due to human memory, especially over many years, the reader has to question the legitimacy of the narrative and its integrity. Leandro is trying to remember his elders as they told the stories. It is not always brought into the discussion, especially with omnipotent narrators, but with any author, readers must analyze the intent of the narrator. What do the characters in the story say about themselves through the way they say things, and what does this say about the author? In terms of *The Sunbird's Cage*, Leandro remembers, a phrase that goes without saying is in front of every statement by Kuntur and Katari, how he wants to remember them. It may be rose-colored glasses that tone down any rudeness on their part or over emphasizes their small moments of kindness. Nonetheless their interactions, through Leandro, brings up how we as readers must always question the narrative for nothing is truly pure.

Based on these examples, the purpose of the Leandro frames serves to illustrate this censorship of so-called pagan culture. Though the stories are told through his aunt and uncle, it was an oral passing of culture. The Leandro labeled paragraphs are meant to take place years

afterward, the young nephew has left Peru with his Spanish father and native mother, now writes these myths as an adult recollecting the stories. As myths are a part of the culture they are seen as containing a partial bit of truth as well as its fiction. The aunt and uncle, or Tia and Tio, recite their cultural stories to Leandro while having to reluctantly clarify they are fictional stories entirely for their safety in a now Spanish ruled nation. Through Leandro as a framing narrative, it calls into question the legitimacy of his writings. Just as many works, such as the epics by Homer, are written long after it was verbally created and so the texts we know today cannot be accepted as completely accurate. It is history and story, *historia*. Thus, through the faulty memory of the nephew character, he is an expression of the destruction of pagan-labeled cultures in a lighter tone. It is an adaptation of the faulty truth that dared disguise itself as history, now in a nephew simply trying his best.

Returning to the topic of narrative and framing devices, the title of the story is addressed. The mythical sunbird as told in the *Mayta Capac* story was caged before the titular character's rule. Of course, going back to the Leandro section after that story, he notes how his aunt laments on the declining Inca culture, stating, 'No more Sunbirds... only ragged red feathers now'. Thus the title of this project works as a new metaphorical cage for the Sunbird, or Inca culture. Where once the Sunbird was caged during the reign of the empire, in its ruin the cage changes to a necessity for survival. The story evolves, and the cage is now an asylum for the dying stories of the Andean people.

Looking at the history of imperialism and colonization of Latin America as a whole, we find the struggles between Spaniards and Native Americans. In the article, *Civilization and Barbarism: Cattle Frontiers in Latin America* by Silvio R. Duncan Baretta, and John Markoff the history of civility and barbarism between the imperial and lower class. This aftermath of the

Spanish conquistadors' takeover is then justified as such, "The Spanish Crown professed the conversion of [natives] to be the main reason for its presence in America. The new society was seen as composed of two distinct groups, Christians and [natives]... they should dress like Europeans, acquire disciplined habits, and learn the Catholic faith" (594). The Christian influence on Inca culture is then seen as a conversion about reinforcing the Spanish hold while erasing the culture of the original people. Eventually, Spanish and Inca have both mixed into Peruvian, the point stands that tensions continue between settlers, lawmakers against people rooted in their land. The orders by the Spanish crown may simply be classified as European colonization over the Americas. As stated in the article by Baretta and Markoff, "European expansion... turned displaced [natives] into warriors,... an important part of this process was the inevitable formation of ties between natives and white or mestizo vagrants. The latter were men who knew the Spanish much better than the [natives] did and had no bonds of loyalty to the political center" (592). There was a compromise in turning frustrated natives to the use of the lawmakers, and the bridge of communication was used to the individuals' advantage. A study into Latin American stories reveals the barbaric nature that clashes with the new civility, not between classes, but within people themselves. In Latin literature, barbarism is simply a display of the inner frustrations of the Latin community.

In *The Sunbird's Cage*, however, the barbarism is downplayed. Through favoritism by the author, the shocking aspects of Inca life are omitted from even mentions in the story. More specifically, mentions of mummy preparations, Spanish enslavement of Inca rebels as well as human sacrifices (both willing and forceful) are left out. As there is cruelty by both sides in the conflict of Inca and Spaniard, *The Grateful Dove*, and *The Mouse Husband* dips into the barbaric nature of Latin America. With *The Moth* in *The Sunbird's Cage*, the author uses this as guilt

towards Kuntur about his anger just as *The Serpents of Jauja Valley* reminded Katari that humans are above serpents. Her affinity to Ukhu Pacha is meant to be wrong and creatures of Hanan Pacha can mislead men like Kuntur. Both those myths contradict the nature of the person and their Pacha. Barbarism is then used with *The Moth* to remind Kuntur to watch his anger. Tales such as *Mayta Capac* or *The Mouse Husband* celebrate a violent conclusion, even as a symbol of Inca strength, *The Moth* is a reminder of Inca failings.

With both sides in the Inca/Spanish conflict guilty of barbarism as is humanity, it is understandable that stories against the Spanish are not easily spread under their rule. As such any biased portrait of Inca brutality is better maintained to survive. Looking into the selected stories in *The Sunbird's Cage*, both *The Grateful Dove* and *The Mouse Husband* illustrate through Kuntur and Katari a reason behind barbarism. Katari views strength in numbers against a single force, just as the mice ate the mother, the Incas outnumbered the Spanish invaders. Of course as the Spanish found the Incas post-war-torn, the outcome of the meeting was disappointing for the Inca populous. Barbarism can illustrate a desire for strength, as well as unity, against a crushing enemy. Kuntur uses *The Grateful Dove* to follow Katari's *The Mouse Husband* with a take on barbarism as something to redeem yourselves from. The little brother endures the pain of his older brothers and shows human kindness to the Dove. Where the beginning of these stories had the birds victimized by humans, here both are humbled and learn to coexist. In this way, Kuntur, who had only one outburst against the old way of life, considers the benefits of cooperating with the new way of life. His culture relegated to stories, Kuntur gets to share it with his nephew, passing it down to the next generation. Through frustrations is born unity. Things are not perfect of course, but new bonds form in the next generations and then the past survives.

With what could not be found in myth such as laws, governments, or communications, the historians discover outside myth. In *Inca Culture at the Time of the Spanish Conquest* by John Howland Rowe we learn that “Village betrothals were publicly solemnized by the curaca [or lower class nobility]; the marriageable boys and girls were assembled in the square in two lines, and the curaca gave a girl to each boy in the name of the Emperor” (269). Marriage was not optional but a necessity to provide for the community and empire. It was not a forceful marriage, couples often recognized each other as they kept pairings within the village and if they had not paired up by a certain age, then their parents would choose a partner for them. Marriage was mandatory but not always against your will. What this context provides to us is a new understanding of the Inca Romance.

In *Utca Paucar*, he could not be Yma Sumac and so left the village otherwise he would have to marry someone else. This detail adds to the heartbreak of Utca Paucar, who in choosing brother over bride, outcasts himself as he would rather leave than have to marry as a contribution to the village. Before one may read this story ending with an overreaction, that Utca Paucar could not even bear to live in the same village as Yma not married to him, is now his escape from the mandatory pairing. If it could not be her, then no one, and if you marry no one, you cannot contribute to society. Before knowing marriage law in the Inca empire, the reader can understand an entirely new understanding of the conclusion. Within the context of the story as it first started, the oral storytellers felt no need to explain marriage law, it was common knowledge to the first hearers and so it remained that way, told with context assumed. If not Yma, then no one. It adds a tragedy to Utca Paucar, that he loved his brother and would not destroy him, but loved Yma too much to settle for anyone else, settling to leave Inca society.

Within historia, history, and story share a relationship of codependence. Story can provide context to history, and just as well, history can provide context to stories. In Historia, myths contain history by human observation or imagination. *The Serpents of Jauja Valley* are seen as an origin of man, though not of creation but simply ascendancy towards the status of dominant species. More interesting is *The Rod of Gold* that features the first Sapa Inca Manco Capac as he led his people to found the capital of Cuzco. Historia interwinds, fueling both sides of itself. It is already observable that the cultural context of food is given in *The Macaw Woman*, information of Gods in *The Serpents of Jauja Valley*, etc., myths/stories provide the historian with context on Who were the Incas?

In terms of recognition, there are shifts of change throughout history. One such historical example, Nikolai Tesla is receiving more recognition for his significance. Where history textbooks could accredit his contributions to Thomas Edison, today is now being dismissed for the advantage of a growing society. One such fictional example, though based on an actual castaway, is the novel *Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe was adapted into a narrative in *Foe* by J. M. Coetzee. *Foe* acknowledges its continuation of the *Robinson Crusoe* narrative by emphasizing the importance of truth and historia. Two castaways converse on the legacy they leave behind should they never escape the island. As stated, “The truth that makes your story yours alone, that sets you apart from the old mariner by the fireside spinning yarns of sea-monsters and mermaids, resides in a thousand touches which today may seem of no importance, such as: When you made your needle... ‘I will leave behind my terraces and walls,... They will be enough’” (18). It is natural to forget, to not document everything we do, forget to create the narrative, yet in *Foe* at the very least, true human work remains. The only consequence of leaving every other work besides the narrative is that someone else is free to shape the

narrative later. For better or for worse, the authenticity remains in every other aspect of the world built in that narrative. The biggest example lies in all mentions of Amaru.

The author of *The Sunbird's Cage* hereby admits that the original myths of the rainbow and amaru as presented throughout Inca texts have been modified as an example of modern adaptation. *The Serpents of Jauja Valley* was presented as originally read in *Black Rainbow* by John Bierhost. What was added is the fate of the serpents, that Supay would take them and create the amaru creature. The author simply saw two dots that could connect which serves as a minimal explanation towards story modification. As a result, *The Serpents* introduces the reader to the rarely mentioned deity Supay of Ukhu Pacha as well as gives origin to the mythical beast. The Rainbow was delivered as a short poem in *Black Rainbow*, yet it painted it as something of concern in Inca culture. So with an arch over the Hanan and a serpent from Ukhu, a circle of fear is created for a new Inca adaptation. The Rainbow & Amaru chapter is then a piece that adds a new story to the scattered library of ancient Peruvian legends, presenting the circle of fear above and below Kay Pacha. That is the evolution of story, a modern adaptation of Inca legends.

As connections are made throughout these readings, there remains the importance of the original narrator and their feelings. The Sapa Chapter covers the Inca attitude. The attitude of the author, be it a myth, book, or poetry, they are human. In the myths of *The Vanishing Bride* and *The Messenger in Black* we can observe the attitudes of the conquered Peruvians as well as the conquering Peruvians. As presented through the aunt and uncle characters, the original myth is preserved with its similar attitude. There is a disdain for the Sapa Incas, especially after the disappearance of Huayna Capac. Though the original narrative of *The Vanishing Bride* is rampant with contradictions such as Inti in the domain of Supay rather than in Hanan Pacha. I decided to retell the myth with Tio admitting to hearing multiple rumors that collectively become

The Vanishing Bride. In this way, it demonstrates how many stories in human history are not just one account or one author, but a complement of many people with contradictory or differing views, just like Merlin.

The Messenger in Black continues the narrative but with a higher focus on superstitious omens, just as the original myth presented itself. The end game to observe here is that the author, one or many, displays a resentment for the false Inca, and what remains after he is gone is the last line, “This Inca left behind him in Quito a son named Atahualpa” (45). With context, it is understood that Atahualpa left the nation war-torn when the bearded Spaniards came over. Looking into the *Handbook of South American Indians. Vol. 2* by Julian H. Steward, we can apply the state of the Inca empire around this time as well as the reactions to the Spanish arrival. In terms of unity and strength it is stated, “population density decreased after 1531... which probably characterized the period of warfare between Huascar and Atahualpa before 1531” (339). As mentioned in the myths; *Viracocha*, *The Messenger in Black*, and *The Mouse Husband*, the Spanish were regarded as carrying lightning by their waists to the fascination of the Incas. It is stated that the Incas, “regarded the Europeans as marvelous curiosities. The horses were thought to have feet of silver, and the firearms were regarded as animate thunder-bolts” (380). From the admiration of Spanish advancements and their post-war conditions, the great empire fell before the conquistadors. The myths that include their lightning arms then regard how mythical their arrival and strength are seen even by the natives Kuntur and Katari. The *Viracocha* myth then explains how and why the meeting of two worlds occurred, what follows is the antagonism as displayed through *The Sunbird's Cage*.

This resentful tone of the last few Sapa Incas is juxtaposed by the admiration for Mayta Capac, as well as mentions of other Sapas. And so in a display of multiple myths, it is an

authorial decision to have the characters miss leaders like Mayta Capac who possessed legacies of strength and victory. Of course, we are also free to assume that any positive talk of fallen rulers was not fairly tolerated in a Spanish-controlled Peru. So the Incas chose to remember Atahualpa but reluctantly through his failings, that is one theory. Of course, as expressed in *The Sunbird's Cage*, I chose to make it a tale of resentment over the loser. As stated by Leandro after the Mayta Capac story, 'we cling to and focus on remembering our pride because our failures are more stubbornly remaining in our legacy'. It is all up to interpretation by the new author, this is mine.

Though initially, he was a plot device to carry the myths into an educated mind years later, Leandro is nonetheless the asylum for Inca historia. Where children are cherished even in the Andes, his aunt and uncle love him as they would their children had they been blessed with that fortune. For the sake of this story, Ancient Inca passes to the future through Leandro, the half Inca half Spanish. With the last interactions in the Barbarism chapter, there are feelings of abandonment through Tia. Even her so-called pagan beliefs are cherished pieces of Inca culture just like *The Horned Man* in *Books and Islands in Ojibwe Country*. It continues through her nephew, Leandro Castillo. He is the bridge, he is the present, Kay Pacha. For that importance, by the end, Leandro comes to question the actions of his father as the stories by his elders become understood as the history and culture of Ancient Peru.

Between the Americas and the rest of the world, it wouldn't be until the 1400s that they would famously meet through Christopher Columbus. As the next century was followed by Spanish Conquistadors, rather than fully overthrow the natives as had happened in the North, cultures intertwined. Of course where *How the Devil Lost his Poncho* is a story post-meeting of the old and new world, there are similarities in stories before the meeting. Notably, *The Macaw*

Woman features a world-ending flood similar to the biblical story of *Noah's Ark*. Though we can estimate that some parts of Inca myths adopted aspects brought on by Spanish faiths before being written down, it cannot be an excuse for every myth. There must be other reasons for this phenomenon of cultural mythologies, separated by centuries, being so comparable. We may call back to myths as early as Gilgamesh, it may be that before the lands split that all myths are rooted in the dawn of human evolution. Perhaps deep down in our psyche, we all desire a story about God(s), oceans, heroes, and villains that eventually originality repeats by coincidence. With an internal need to understand the world is shaped through our story-making and the fact that it repeats across different worlds may just be another reminder of our humanity regardless of nationality.

For the sake of pointing out some similarities; may you interpret from your curiosity.

-*Mayta Capac* was said to have been born with a full set of teeth, the same was also said of Richard III of England. Of course, one is a symbol of strength and the other desperation, both barbaric.

-Additionally, *Mayta Capac* is famous for his superhuman strength similarly seen in the Greek hero Hercules.

-Perhaps *The Macaw Woman* story exists as an explanation as to why there are people across the world when some may be raised under believing the Bible as history. The Eastern side of the world says they owe Noah, and in the West, some say they are from the macaw.

-To a lesser extent, just as the supernatural *Messenger in Black* delivered a box of chaos to the Sapa Inca, the greek gods sent down a similar box over to the lady Pandora.

-Between imagination and scientific history, *The Serpents of Jauja Valley* is, by coincidence, an illustration of humanity inheriting the world from the reptilian rulers, be it dinosaurs or serpents.

-Less popular depictions of the Amaru creature portray it as a composite of three animals. Animal variations usually include; one beastly, one serpent, and one winged. Puma, Condor, and serpent, or instead of a puma, a llama!

Through this evolution and relationship across nations and centuries, the past, present, and future, shows how histories survive. Returning to *The Incas Have Gone Inside: Pattern and Persistence in Andean Iconography* by Catherine Allen, first-hand accounts of modern Peruvians declare their traditions surviving today. From first-hand accounts with them, “‘We are Inca!’ they said, and then they told me that the Incas were hiding in the jungle. In so doing they expressed an ironic mixture of faith and despair, putting themselves in the position of ancestors, the living-dead, waiting for their time to come around again” (200). This title of the living dead is exemplary of not only the modern Inca but the state of their native mythology. They wait for their time to come around again, it is already there for their histories. With Andrew S. Wilson and their research in the article, *Archaeological, Radiological, and Biological Evidence Offer Insight into Inca Child Sacrifice*, we find the defiant Inca today. As stated, “they continue to chew coca leaves and on special occasions they consume vast quantities of soft drinks like Fanta and Pepsi Cola. They share them according to the old ritual forms, but they omit the libations and invocations to divinities in the landscape. One wonders whether the old patterns are being forgotten, or whether they will resurface yet again, transformed and reinterpreted” (200). Though no longer in its original form, the Inca spirit remains alive in tradition and literature.

Historia in its nature cannot be honest, from oral storytime to being written and transcribed, we today know to question. Returning to *Groovin' to Ancient Peru*, Silverman concludes, “every image of the past that is not recognized by the present as one of its concerns threatens to disappear irretrievably” (319). Keeping culture around requires it to be accepted, beyond hatred and beliefs, through skepticism and interest it remains a contribution to human history. History is warped by the winners and writers. Yet that is how the story evolves for survival's sake. At a certain unspecified point, the truth is free to come out. At least the ugly side of it. Even here, the story evolves into history. Perspectives can and do change, yet in preserving history and culture, contribute to preserving the past for tomorrow. This artistic license to adapt stories not only cherishes the past but advances it to the present. It is the writers who leave their present selves while learning about historias. As an extension of themselves, stories survive beyond death.

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