

**DECOLONIAL BAROQUE: BAROQUE ASPECTS OF INCA GARCILASO DE LA
VEGA**

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This dissertation explores three instances where Inca Garcilaso de la Vega advances a Baroque form of writing. These Baroque instances function as powerful tools for a decolonial approach to Hispanic modernity. Different from other approximations to the Hispanic Baroque, where Spanish American authors are subsidiaries of the European Baroque, I argue that Inca Garcilaso de la Vega is a pioneer of the Hispanic Baroque. Moreover, I argue that this Spanish American Baroque not only has characteristics of its own, but that it also influenced Baroque European works. I claim that Garcilaso uses three Baroque rhetorical strategies to develop a decolonial approach to Renaissance thought, especially to the question of coloniality. The objective of this dissertation is thus to rethink the epistemological impositions of coloniality on Inca Garcilaso de la Vega's work as well as on modern Hispanic letters as. More broadly, this study aims at rethinking the conceptual categories of writing with which we have traditionally understood early modern Hispanic literature.

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PREFACE

This dissertation developed out of my conversations and classes with my two intellectual mentors at the University of Pittsburgh, Gonzalo Lamana and John Beverley. As a student and mentee, I was deeply inspired by Gonzalo's original approximation to colonial texts and incorporation of sixteenth-century Amerindian authors into the hemispheric intellectual conversations about race, decoloniality and resistance. With John, I had long and thought-provoking conversations, both in and outside of the classroom, about the transatlantic nature of early modern Hispanic letters. His historico-material approach to the early modern period planted in me the idea of a necessary conversation about the shared traits and characteristics of colonial texts and Golden Age texts under the banner of the Baroque. In the intersection of these two approximations to early modern authors, I conceived the present reading of Inca Garcilaso's works.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Scholarly studies on Inca Garcilaso de la Vega have always borne an imprint of uniqueness and exceptionality. As the first self-proclaimed author of Amerindian descent, Inca Garcilaso's life and extraordinary circumstances have fascinated academics for decades. The son of an Inca princess (Chimpu Ocllo) and a Spanish conquistador (Captain Sebastián Garcilaso de la Vega), Inca Garcilaso de la Vega—baptized Gómez Suárez de Figueroa—spent his childhood and adolescence in Cuzco, where he learned the language and customs of the Incas and experienced the processes of conquest and colonization from the perspectives of both the colonizers and colonized. This unique perspective becomes even more interesting as one learns that Inca Garcilaso was also a gifted autodidact who was as knowledgeable and skillful as the most accomplished humanists of his time. The inventory of his library (a portion of which is held at the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid) attests to an impressive diversity of subjects (specially history, rhetoric, and grammar) that Inca Garcilaso mastered throughout his life. It is thus unsurprising that scholars have described him as one of the most impressive and unusual of Renaissance writers (Mazzotti 1996 Zamora 1988). Indeed, Garcilaso was well-versed in Neoplatonic philosophy and oratory and highly influenced by humanist historians such as Guicciardini, Botero, Morales, Biondo, and political philosophers like Bodin. He was also deeply moved by humanist literati, such as Petrarch and Occam, as well as classical philosophers, such as Plutarch, Seneca, Cicero, Aristotle, and Plato (Brading; Zamora 1989; Castro-Klaren; Durand 1988).

His knowledge of Andean cultures was equally unparalleled. While growing up among the Incan elite, Garcilaso had privileged access to the orally-transmitted Andean history, languages, and religion (Mazzotti, *Coros mestizos*). But even more impressive than this vast hereditary

knowledge was Inca Garcilaso's remarkable ability to systematize, summarize, and interpret oral the Andean (and Pre-Columbian) past in a concise and elegant written manner. In fact, his detailed description and systematization of Andean history—or the entire New World history for that matter—makes Inca Garcilaso one of the most accomplished New World intellectuals.¹ Such an impressive humanistic vein, however, does not make Inca Garcilaso an American appendix of European Renaissance intellectuality, as some have believed (Menéndez-Pelayo 1946). He is rather its reinvention. Throughout the following pages, I will contend that Inca Garcilaso is not a traditional Renaissance intellectual but rather its transcendence. I borrow the image of thesis-antithesis-synthesis from Hegelian dialectics, where synthesis (*Aufheben*) is not a mere hybrid or composite of two opposing views, but rather the recipient of their tensions. *Aufheben* is a concept that both cancels and preserves all while excluding unreconcilable positions in a process of transcending. On these terms, I argue that Inca Garcilaso is an author who examines the Renaissance intellectual tradition (thesis) to find its cracks and contractions (antithesis) and finally to build upon it by transforming it into a richer and more complex discourse (synthesis).

This tripartite movement of *Aufheben* (thesis-antithesis-synthesis) applied to Hispanic early modern culture is what I denominate the Baroque movement. Specifically, I think of the

¹ Enrique Cortés (2020) has recently highlighted Inca Garcilaso's influence on William Prescott's canonical *History of the Conquest of Peru* (1847). Additionally, he remembers the French Enlightenment's reading of *Comentarios reales*, placed as a fundamental document in the understanding of the Incan past. Even the English philosopher John Locke quoted and praised Inca Garcilaso's *Comentarios* in his famous *Second Treatise of Government* (1691). In spite the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries' shift of historiographical paradigm, which moved Inca Garcilaso's work from historiography to literature, the Peruvian author remains a central figure of Pre-Hispanic and Spanish colonial history and thought.

Baroque as a critical reconfiguration of Renaissance values where literature, history, and theology reach a new level of complexity that problematizes the legitimacy and truthfulness of Europe's core epistemic and spiritual tenets. In this dissertation, I argue that Inca Garcilaso's critical use of the Renaissance academic corpus (history, philosophy, rhetoric, and philology)—especially in its humanistic vein—gave rise to one of the first far-reaching reformulations of Renaissance intellectual values. Consequently, Garcilaso's above-mentioned uniqueness and exceptionality was certainly more than the sheer mastering of Renaissance humanistic subjects. I claim that Inca Garcilaso was a pioneer of the Baroque movement and a crucial piece in the development of the modern intellectual revolution. Particularly, Garcilaso's Baroque was a reconfiguration of the Spanish colonial values rooted in Renaissance intellectuality. This reconfiguration was not only an intellectual appraisal of the Renaissance in the Americas, but also one of the first decolonial critiques of the modern era. Such an intellectual novelty called for new forms of expression that could deliver the difficult decolonial message. Inca Garcilaso thus devised a sharp and witty form of writing that revolutionized the fields of literature and history in ways that have not yet been fully acknowledged. For this reason, I propose a reading of Inca Garcilaso's work through Baroque lenses in hopes of offering a new approach to both Inca Garcilaso studies as well as to Baroque studies.

1.1 Why Inca Garcilaso and Baroque Studies?

Through the Baroque framework, I hope to cast a different light on connections between Garcilaso's texts and different areas of humanistic knowledge, such as political philosophy, semiotic studies, and literary studies. In the past, such connections have been generally understood

in ancillary or exceptional terms: Inca Garcilaso as either a brilliant recipient of the European humanist tradition or a ground-breaking author (partly due to his ethnic origins) capable of translating the Andean cosmology into European (Christian) terms. My take on Garcilaso as a Baroque author frames things a bit differently: Inca Garcilaso as inaugurator of modern Hispanic letters, developer of modern decolonial criticism, and even one of the pioneers of the Spanish Golden Age. Such a bold statement arises from a decolonial trend to move away from the regional boundaries of the colonial divide (Old World vs. New World) that have been traditionally used as categories for studying Hispanic literary history. Consequently, analyzing Inca Garcilaso as a Baroque author and pioneer is, in turn, proposing an alternative view of Baroque studies, which has usually been understood as primarily Eurocentric.

Conventionally, the Hispanic Baroque has been regarded as a European phenomenon (Maravall *Baroque Culture* 1986; Menéndez-Pelayo 1946). It is not difficult to find opinions, ranging from Menéndez-Pelayo's to González-Echevarría's, that render the Baroque as the cultural expression of Spanish imperial absolutism. Closely linked to a Catholic and monarchical framework, the Baroque unfolds as the art of the Counter-Reformation and the modern absolutist state; therefore, it comes to represent the cultural manifestation of an essentially European early modernity.² Nevertheless, within the field of Hispanic studies as a whole, the Baroque has also been traditionally defined as a sixteenth- and seventeenth-century current traversing all corners of

² When I speak of modernity or early modernity, I am using both terms indistinctly. That is, I am referring to the long period of Western historical development that begins in the sixteenth-century. Primarily, my focus is on the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; however, sometimes when I use the term modernity by itself, I am trying to highlight the fact that whatever is happening during the early modern period (sixteenth and seventeenth centuries) has had or still has repercussions beyond those early stages.

the Spanish empire, including subchapters such as the New World Baroque or Baroque of the Indies. Such secondary elements, however, reflect a cultural movement that stems from the center of the Empire (Spain) and then goes on to be reproduced in the colonies (Americas). This type of cultural separation cultural separation has pervasively endured throughout the years and made its way into the conceptual categories with which academics have interpreted (and still interpret) the phenomenon.

Even scholars who think of themselves as being at the forefront of a Baroque postcolonial critique are inadvertently reproducing the same categories that they pretend to question (González-Echevarría; Moraña 1989). Their works, which are meant to cast light upon the New World side of the Baroque movement (i.e., colonial Baroque or Baroque of the Indies), still refer to any literary production of the colonial Americas as either a sequel (revolutionary or not) or subsidiary to the European Baroque. As a consequence, there remains a systematic reproduction of the colonial division in examinations of the Hispanic Baroque (Old World taking precedent over the New World) and an implicit consideration of peninsular writers as forbearers of the movement, while Spanish American authors appear as mere recipients of Baroque forms coming from the peninsula. In light of this, I propose a transatlantic definition of the Baroque that breaks away from the opposing ideas of a dominant European Baroque and a subsidiary (and sometimes revolutionary) Colonial Baroque. I take the Baroque to be an image of Hispanic modernity where Peninsular and American (both Amerindian and Creole) subjects participate in equally modernizing terms. Therefore, my definition of the Baroque is a heterogenous one where cultural dissonance, contradiction, and dissent coexist as its most vital elements.

1.2 The Baroque: A Discourse of Conflict, Contradiction, and Discontent

It is not strange to see that one of the most salient features of Baroque authors is their masterful articulation of dichotomous ideas, such as imperial grandeur alongside elements societal discontent, or subjects torn between aristocratic constraints and a newly found emancipatory consciousness (Maravall 1986; Beverley, *Essays on the Literary Baroque* 2008; Childers 2010). George Mariscal (1991), for instance, has described Góngora, Cervantes, and Quevedo—the Baroque’s most renowned authors—as contradictory subjects, alluding to their paradoxical and multidimensional literary creations. For Mariscal, Baroque authors wrote about the failure of the myth of the *one modern subject*. They come up with characters and ideas that reflect the many discursive systems competing in early modern Spain. For instance, Quevedo’s uncentered and contradictory poetic voices as well as Cervantes’ utopian and archaic personages explore the emergence of a modern individual who experiences a simultaneous attraction and repulsion toward the traditional aristocratic order all while still measuring themselves against those values (Mariscal 102). In the work of both Quevedo and Cervantes, there is an awareness that deeds and virtue might make up for what is lacking in blood, lineage, and class. They portray a literary cosmos where new subjectivities adjust to a shifting system in which the new mercantile economy, the socioeconomic crisis in the Peninsula, the material promises of a New World, and an increasingly skeptic scientific spirit clash with the long-established hierarchical structure of a pious and aristocratic Spain. Cervantes and Quevedo’s works thus advance very complex forms of socio-political and cultural criticism imbedded in novel forms of literary expression. Consequently, their novels and poetry are full of conceptual ambiguity, socio-political parody, and veiled criticism, which constitute some of the most recurrent literary tactics of Baroque works.

Along these lines, Inca Garcilaso's works also depict the competing and contradictory discourses of the early modern Hispanic subject. For instance, Inca Garcilaso's literary persona as well as other characters that appear in his books articulate the complex and paradoxical position of the racialized subjects of the Spanish crown. These characters, for instance, sometimes conform to the social constraints imposed by virtue of their race, and at other times, they surprisingly act contrarily. Furthermore, these characters' relationship to the shifting economic order and, especially, to the legal apparatus of the Spanish Empire reveal a particularly difficult reality where the epistemological worth of *indios* or *mestizos* is shown in its paradoxical essence: as objects of subjugation but also as necessary elements without which the colonial-colonizer equation would not have been possible. As such, Inca Garcilaso's literary discourse functions as a counter-discourse to the pristine picture that the Renaissance painted of racial categorizations as unambiguous standards of cultural and epistemological development. While the Renaissance presents modernity as a triumphant period inaugurated by the European rediscovery of its great ancient past and a period of material and intellectual growth marked by the arrival to the Americas, the expansion of Christianity, the erection of the modern state, and the progressive impulse of early capitalism, the Baroque adopts a definition of modernity that problematizes the European idea of progress.

Baroque works shed light on the Peninsular socio-economic crisis and the processes of extermination of indigenous peoples and cultures in the Americas. From an epistemic perspective, the Baroque movement is a critique of the establishment of a Eurocentric epistemic system that the Renaissance brought about. In this sense, the Baroque appears as a discourse that problematizes

the deep crisis at the heart of the new modern order without necessarily providing a solution.³ This latter idea is important because ambiguity and resistance to closure are central to the Baroque. Through these features, the Baroque channels contradictory discourses—due to their hidden or partially hidden relations to power—and internal divisions between “modern” and “archaic” practices towards a more nuanced and intrepid comprehension of reality. In essence, the Baroque is a hybrid composite made up of competing discursive systems that reflect a blending of old and new practices, technologies, and social structures. In other words, Baroque works present a complex idea of modernity where the supposed Renaissance clarity is met with its darker side.

This Baroque incorporation of the Renaissance’s darker side is an operation of literary conceit achieved by authors who are particularly aware of the flawed philosophical foundations of the Spanish empire. This means that writers like Inca Garcilaso (as well as Peninsular authors such as Cervantes or Quevedo) were especially familiar with the ways in which Renaissance thinking secured a straightforward definition of what was important and what was not and of what was cultured and civilized and what was not. Therefore, they devised strategies that helped them criticize Renaissance values via subreptitious methods of ironic dissent and conceptual parody. Although Peninsular authors like Cervantes are abundantly rich in their critique of a Renaissance dominated reality, it is their American counterparts (especially Amerindian) who are able to capture the contradictions and deceptions at the heart of Renaissance thinking. In *The Darker Side of the Renaissance*, Walter Mignolo shows how the Renaissance Eurocentric ideal is the primary

³ Providing a solution would indeed beg the question. The Baroque is different from the Renaissance precisely because it does not adhere to the Eurocentric impetus of providing precepts and solutions to the social, religious or political problems.

attitude behind the Spanish conquest enterprise. This ideal was an amalgam of strategies of epistemic colonization, such as the dissemination of Western literacy, the advent of Eurocentric historiography in the New World, and the delineation of the colonizer's cartography. These ideas emerge as products of the European rediscovery (or rather invention) of a great mythical past. Thus, the Renaissance appears as the configuration of epistemic values that give relevance to present European forms of knowledge based on a myth of past intellectual grandeur. Mignolo argues, for instance, that in the Spanish colonial context, the Renaissance discourse generated texts that tried to accommodate Amerindian reality to European history and Christian referents. This resulted in an implicit subjugation of non-European forms of knowledge to Christian thought.⁴ Such phenomenon established an epistemic hierarchy that translated into socio-economic misfortune for non-European individuals. This is why the majority of early modern Spanish narratives of conquest in the Americas and reconquest in the Peninsula (*Reconquista*) tend to erase the problematics of racial, religious, and epistemic alterity in both the New World and the Peninsula.

As a Baroque author, Inca Garcilaso reacts against the Renaissance formulation of the colonial reality by problematizing its hierarchical Eurocentric project (specifically that of Catholic imperialism). Contrary to Renaissance intellectuals whose staunch belief in the Renaissance

⁴ In accordance with the precepts of Renaissance Eurocentrism—as well as the political and religious interests of the monarch and the Church—Spanish Renaissance texts emphasize the importance of written (alphabetic) documents as the primary indication of intellectual competence and present the Holy Writ as the one true source of all knowledge (*Darker* 32). Consequently, Spanish intellectuality rejected non-European forms of knowledge, for they lacked both alphabetic writing and knowledge of the Christian God.

Eurocentric impetus, intellectual progress, and imperial expansion leaves them blind to the darker side of the modern project, Inca Garcilaso sheds light on tensions at the heart of Spanish modernity. In this way, he unveils the internal contradictions of the Spanish colonial enterprise (e.g., Christian conversion vs. Indigenous exploitation; humanistic education vs. inquisitorial censorship; technological progress vs. Indian enslavement and extermination). This unveiling, however, neither constitutes an indictment of Spanish brutal and discriminatory acts against Amerindians nor a direct rebuttal of colonial prescriptions. It is rather a deep incursion into the colonial psyche where the reader can observe these contradictions and formulate their own criticism. This means that, in the end, it is the reader—not the author—who completes the Baroque operation of criticizing Renaissance ideals.

This collaborative process of unveiling corresponds with the famous concept of *desengaño barroco* (disillusionment or enlightenment) where the reader experiences a crisis of values: suddenly the sacredness of certain ideals such as blood purity (with its American racial ramifications) is questioned by literary experience. It is like an awakening after a long period of deception, a coming to terms with reality. In other words, *desengaño* is the unravelling of a truth hidden behind a series of mere appearances of the truth. In Garcilaso's context, *desengaño* means a reckoning of the two faces of Spanish colonial reality: the clash that happens when the grandiose rhetoric of the European conquest meets the terrible tales of the Amerindian debacle. Put differently, it means that the heroic narratives of the conquest are the veil that *not only hides but also contains within itself* the threads of Spanish failure and Amerindian ruin and resistance. Now, it should be clear that these contrasts do not make the Baroque an opposite to the Renaissance. It is rather the Baroque's transcendence of Renaissance thought and values what distinguishes the two concepts. As I mentioned earlier, transcendence in this context is similar to the Hegelian

concept of synthesis or *Aufheben*: the Baroque stemming from the heart of Renaissance humanism as its most dear and authentic critic. Therefore, the Baroque is the place where the paradoxes of the Renaissance discourse (e.g., Machiavellian secularism vs. the Catholic Counter-Reformation or Amerindian evangelization vs. the destruction of Indigenous peoples and cultures) find their proper articulation and expression.

Consequently, this Baroque reading of Inca Garcilaso focuses on his capacity for critical transcendence. In this sense, my project questions the traditional perception of Garcilaso as a mestizo author, where mestizaje is largely a New World concern (Mazzotti, *Coros mestizos*; López-Baralt), as well as the idea that Garcilaso is primarily a Renaissance or a Golden Age author (Menéndez-Pelayo; Rodríguez-Mansilla). I am not suggesting that we should overlook the Amerindian imprint on Inca Garcilaso's works (the Andean echoes) or naively reject the idea of Peninsular assimilation. On the contrary, I am looking to reinterpret the Andean and Spanish references in Inca Garcilaso's texts as products of a true modern imagination: as instances of an epistemological and aesthetic reconceptualization of the contradictions, subtleties, and dichotomies of Hispanic modernity.

This approach to Garcilaso means that my research complements and builds upon the work of previous scholars whose thorough examination of Inca Garcilaso's intellectual formation (both as a man of the Renaissance and as a sharp proponent of Amerindian literary resistance) allow me to see a bigger picture of his project and establish previously unexplored connections in the grand scheme of sixteenth-century Hispanic letters. On the one hand, my work provides an alternative view of the first mestizo author. On the other hand, this dissertation reconceptualizes the literary Baroque as a transatlantic and decolonial phenomenon. Such a hemispheric approach to both Inca Garcilaso and Baroque studies dismantles the separation between American (especially

Amerindian) intellectuals and those of the Peninsula, between a Peninsular Baroque and a Baroque of the Indies. This type of separation between Old World and New World epistemologies is one of Inca Garcilaso's major critiques and the central driver of this dissertation. Thus, I propose a reformulation of the Baroque concept as neither American (*Barroco de Indias*) nor European (*Barroco peninsular*) but decolonial. In this sense, I take the Baroque as a concept that transcends the epistemological division between Europe and the New World. This perspective brings about alternative origins to the early modern period's developments (such as the birth of the modern novel or utopian treatises) as well as new and exciting questions and intertextual dialogues among texts and authors who are not traditionally paired together.

1.3 Antecedents: From Renaissance Humanism to a Decolonial Critique

Having outlined a transatlantic perspective of Inca Garcilaso's Baroque, it is now time to explain how I came to entertain this idea: In what ways can we consider Inca Garcilaso be viewed as a Baroque author? And how does his work give a particular meaning to the Baroque? To answer these questions, it is necessary to assess how scholars have previously analyzed Inca Garcilaso's relationship with the different intellectual currents of his time, especially the Renaissance intellectual movement. Most notably, Brading, Zamora, and Castro-Klaren have highlighted the profound connection between Garcilaso's style and method and the precepts and predicaments of Renaissance intellectuality, especially as they relate to Erasmian Humanism.⁵ They argue that the

⁵ Erasmian humanism (or Christian humanism) was an early modern intellectual movement with a strong pedagogical focus and democratization of sacred and secular knowledge. This access to the scriptures and to general

humanists' focus on the political power of language gave Inca Garcilaso tools to create a powerful decolonial discourse through the writing of history, which he conceived of as a process of cultural translation. Specifically, they claim that Inca Garcilaso's main objective was to produce a historiographical work able to reconcile the apparent antagonism between the defeated Inca past and the violently imposed Spanish future. For instance, Zamora suggests that one of Garcilaso's main objectives was to integrate indigenous elements (which Spanish historians and missionaries had previously rendered incomprehensible and therefore unacceptable) with the European intellectual discourse, thus expanding the grand narrative of Western transatlantic history. This, of course, implied "subverting the unflattering and unsympathetic versions of Inca history and culture sanctioned by the Spanish Crown" (Zamora 4), therefore launching a humanist–decolonial attack against the official Spanish intellectual class.

Castro-Klaren gives relevance to Garcilaso's rhetorical affinities with the Neoplatonic tradition, specifically with Marsilio Ficino. She argues that Garcilaso followed Ficino's strategy of rendering a pagan culture intelligible—which is in itself an act of translation—in Christian

knowledge would organically lead to a much-needed reformation within the Church, contribute to the betterment of society, and enhance potential for self-improvement. Desiderius Erasmus, best known as Erasmus of Rotterdam (perhaps the most important humanist and after whom the movement is named), composed numerous treatises where he emphasized the importance of this pedagogical stance, specifically language learning, namely the classics, as a way of taking a radical approach to Christian education and morality. This radical view (in essence, going to the root of the teachings) touched upon the topic of translation and interpretation of the scriptures as Erasmus thought that it was the misunderstanding and ill-manipulation of the scriptures that corrupted society. As will be shown throughout this work, Inca Garcilaso took Erasmus' core values and principles on education and translation to a whole different level in his decolonial approach to the Spanish evangelization of the Americas and New World historiographical endeavors.

terms. She calls attention to the fact that Inca Garcilaso chooses to enter the world of authors and letters not as a historian, but as a translator, as he publishes *La traducción del indio de los tres diálogos de amor de León Hebreo* before any of his other works (“For It’s a Single World” 196-197). This is an interesting point given the fact that Inca Garcilaso’s translation of León Hebreo did not predate any of his other works (*La Florida del inca* and *Comentarios reales*). According to Garcilaso, he worked on all three projects at the same time, which suggests that there was a calculation and a particular interest on Garcilaso’s part to launch his authorial career with a translation.⁶ For critics, this curious fact signals the unveiling of a clear humanistic approach throughout Garcilaso’s entire opera.

In humanism, writing history meant translating the past into the present, as well as making texts about the present intelligible for future generations. Furthermore, writing history primarily meant translating a society’s cultural codes into another’s. In this sense, Garcilaso’s inaugural opus, his humanist interpretation and translation of Hebreo, seems to have imposed humanistic reading of his entire opera. The majority of Garcilaso’s scholars have not questioned the author’s commitment to humanist intellectual values. This is precisely Zamora’s interpretation of Garcilaso’s *Comentarios reales*, which she views as a cultural translation (*Language Authority*). Zamora inscribes Garcilaso’s work within the multiple Christian interpretations of Europe’s pagan classical past. Although I take Zamora’s interpretation to be exceptionally perceptive in detecting Garcilaso’s influences, affiliations, and theoretical leanings, I believe that it falls short in fully acknowledging Inca Garcilaso’s literary innovations. Specifically, Zamora does not see a reconfiguration and ironization of Renaissance political and intellectual values in Garcilaso’s

⁶ *La traducción*, Proemio.

work, but rather a continuation (even if in a decolonial vein). I thus argue that Inca Garcilaso was not only a major figure of Renaissance Humanism, but also one of its main critics and reformers. In my view, Garcilaso's project goes beyond the humanist approximation to history, language, and rhetoric by criticizing, deconstructing, and transforming the Renaissance façade of intellectual modernization and imperial expansion. This process of deconstruction and transformation is precisely what I have come to identify as Inca Garcilaso's transatlantic Baroque.

My argument presents a side of Inca Garcilaso that unravels an undeniable ironization of the colonial reality of the New World and, by extension, of the entire conceptual edifice behind it (i.e., Renaissance Humanism). I interpret El Inca's ironization of Spanish colonial reality as an archetype of Baroque literature, which also constitutes a fundamental and seminal expression of Hispanic literary modernity. Paradoxically, my take on Inca Garcilaso's literary innovation seems similar to the way that Golden Age scholars have previously described the European Baroque: an expression of discomfort and ironic reification of a reality in crisis (Maravall, *La cultura del barroco* 118). The big difference, however, lays in the fact that Garcilaso's reality does not take place in the Peninsular cities, but in colonial Hispanic America. Therefore, my definition of the Baroque is not rooted in the microcosmos of the socio-political crisis of the Iberian Peninsula, but in the great cultural imaginary of the imperial West. This means that my project reformulates preceding views of the Baroque and builds upon their findings. It is a bid for reimagining the literary innovations of modern literature as driven by decolonial practices and not solely shaped by a colonial mentality. For this reason, I will constantly reexamine previous and traditional versions as I point towards a new direction for Baroque studies.

In its original sixteenth-century sense, the Hispanic Baroque encompassed an array of literary works that integrated the contradictions at the heart of a society in crisis. For instance,

Maravall's canonical approach to the Baroque maintained that Baroque works form part of a hegemonic culture (e.g., the Spanish empire) that incorporates the masses, into the system of values of the absolutist and aristocratic society of Hapsburg Spain (Baroque Culture). In a general sense, the Baroque was presented as a tool for power exertion. This definition, however, still recognized that the gap between the general population and the dominant aristocratic culture left some room for rebellion and dissent, which are elements that, at times, make their way into the cultural artifacts of the time (Maravall, *Baroque Culture* 121). In my opinion, overlooking this latter issue has resulted in a superficial appreciation of some works and their early decolonial perspectives. I thus contend that Maravall's definition of the Baroque (as a hegemonic cultural structure) falls short in properly acknowledging the deep conceptual crisis behind the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries' Hispanic social crisis: the contradictions at the heart of the dominant ideology of the time, humanism.

In this work, I hope to delve into the inherent contradictions of humanism, which was the cultural and political framework behind the imperial projects of the West as well as the dominant ideology among the sixteenth-century Western intellectual class. My proposal is to read the responses to this intellectual crisis as Baroque. In a way, this conception of the Baroque could be defined as an anti-humanist humanism or as a deconstruction of humanist thought from within. In this sense, Baroque works are an ideal place to examine the inherent problems in humanist attempts to justify and make sense of the new Western imperial reality. The most salient of these attempts are the Christian processes of mission and conversion as well as the more general European civilizing projects via conquest. With Inca Garcilaso, specifically, I plan to examine how humanism's internal strains and paradoxes reverberate in the rhetorical strategies and epistemic presuppositions of the Spanish conquest. In this sense, my work addresses the gaps and

contradictions pertaining to humanist-inspired theories about the New World and relates them to the deep-seated problems of European intellectuality.

1.4 A Decolonial Baroque

As mentioned before, this transatlantic understanding of the Baroque differs from previous approximations to a Hispanic-American Baroque in both chronological and conceptual terms. Earlier connections between the Baroques of Spain and Spanish America have often revolved around the ideas of a cultural imposition (Moraña 1989) or a cultural continuum (González Echevarría 1993). This means that the Spanish American Baroque was understood either as a stylistic imposition from Spain or as a branch stemming from a larger cultural movement whose original manifestation took place in the Peninsula and, only years later, made its way to the Americas. Even when some critics highlight a notable emancipation and ascendancy of the Spanish American Baroque of later centuries (the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries) with respect to the sixteenth-century Iberian version, the idea of a chronological primacy of the European version somehow remains unaccounted for. This latter idea is epistemologically problematic because it is rooted in the colonial differentiation between colonizer and colonized rather than in a thematic analysis of early modern works. This colonial difference consists of the idea that the colonizer's worldview is essentially superior to that of the colonized. For instance, Maravall's canonical definition is a historically driven study that focuses on peninsular referents as direct recipients of the centralist power structure of the Spanish empire and only at times brings American echoes into the conversation.

Even scholars who have thought of themselves as being at the forefront of a postcolonial critique still inadvertently reproduce the same categories that they pretend to question (González-Echevarría, 1990; Moraña, 1989). Their works, which aim to cast light on the colonized side of the Baroque (i.e., colonial Baroque or Baroque of the Indies), portray an underlying colonial difference where the European side of Hispanicism stands out as the cultural paradigm. In González-Echevarría's groundbreaking definition (1990), the Baroque represents the continuities in the cultural formation of Latin America with respect to certain European referents that originate in medieval times. His contention is that if the Baroque informs peninsular literature of the Golden Age, in Latin America the Baroque idea is not merely a cultural imposition but a continuum, a continuum that not only informs an idea of a Spanish American canon, but also continues to be present in contemporary letters. Thus, the Latin American canon continues to be built, over and over again, upon a Baroque ideal of clear and distinct peninsular origins.

Even Mabel Moraña's work (1989), which offers one of the most "anticolonial" (or rather anti-viceregal) of Baroque readings, is implicitly bound to the ascendancy of a European Baroque over an American one. While Moraña proposes a counter-canonical assessment of the Colonial Baroque on the grounds of cultural autonomy with respect to the Peninsular Baroque, such autonomy is expressed in terms of an American refashioning ("*redimensionamiento*," as Moraña calls it) or reappropriation of the metropolitan linguistic and aesthetic codes by a white creole elite. Though this anticolonial Baroque stems from a need to challenge the formulaic restrictions of the Spanish empire, such a response is necessarily a reformulation of the same hegemonic discourse with which colonized authors (Indian nobility and creoles) were indoctrinated. In this view, there seems to be an implicit acceptance of colonial difference, where the peninsular idea of Baroque literature has both ontological and chronological primacy. This is why, in Moraña's view,

colonized authors can only act in reference to European Baroque (either reproducing it or challenging it). This is to say that despite efforts to carve out an independent place for the Hispanic American Baroque, the movement appears to always stem from the center of the Empire (Spain), and any other Baroque expressions (American) are mere subsidiaries: either reproductions, continuations, or responses. Such a cultural separation between a European and an American Baroque has pervasively endured throughout the years and made its way into the conceptual categories with which a great number of academics have interpreted (and still interpret) the phenomenon.

This conceptual separation, founded on a twofold geographic condition, has set a paradigm of interpretation that establishes one single general framework: an unequal dichotomic view of the New World and the Old. Peninsular literature and Spanish American literature seem to rest on two separate realms, with the particularity that the latter is derivative of the former. This is why, when referring to any literary production of the colonies, most people still describe this work as colonial literature, thus narrowing its scope of interpretation to only colonial issues. The result is that, even today, colonial literature is rarely seen as playing a major role in the shaping of early modern peninsular writing,⁷ while European literature is still at the very center of the conversation. There seems to be an implicit understanding that most literary production of colonial America is subsidiary to peninsular literature. This is evident in the systematic reproduction of colonial categories in examinations of the Hispanic Baroque. Consequently, most canonical readings

⁷ There are a few important exceptions to this rule. In the course of this dissertation, I will engage with critics who have called attention to and built upon their work to better explain my idea of a transatlantic and decolonial origin of Hispanic Baroque letters.

consider peninsular writers as forbearers of the movement while leaving Spanish American authors as mere recipients of Baroque forms coming from the peninsula. This subsidiary condition bears a chronological imposition. In the peninsula, Baroque's archetypical works are those written in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries (Cervantes, Góngora, Quevedo, Gracián, and Lope de Vega, among others) while in the colonies, the archetypical works are those written only in the late seventeenth century and eighteenth century (Sigüenza y Góngora, Juana Inés de la Cruz, and Espinosa Medrano). Anything written by an American (indigenous, creole, or mestizo) author before the second half of the seventeenth century is thus not considered Baroque.

In short, the New World and Old World partition expresses an implicit epistemological disparity favorable to Europeans and hostile to creoles and Native Americans authors. Most assessments of "baroque" works written from and about the colonies are inscribed within this epistemological cartography. By epistemological cartography, I mean the effects that *the colonial difference*⁸ has had over the West's configuration of the world, specifically the conceptual and cartographic differentiation between the Old World and the New: the colonizer's worldview as essentially superior to that of his counterpart, the colonized. In this respect, Colonial Baroque or Latin American Baroque or Baroque of the Indies are generally regarded as a reproduction—albeit with sporadic original features—of the European archetype. This is why the traditional definition of the European Baroque unfolds within a rigid conception of what ought to be the formulaic expressions of empire's absolutism, all while leaving aside the fact that the empire cannot be

⁸ Colonial difference is a term coined by Aníbal Quijano (1996) and later used by Walter Mignolo (2002) that refers to the irreducible difference between *periphery* and *center*, between those who participated in building the modern-colonial world but who have been left out of the discussion and those who are in charge and write the history.

imagined without the intrinsic relationship and tensions between the center and its colonies; in our case, between Spain (center) and Spanish America (periphery).

1.5 Against a Transatlantic Baroque: A Criticism

There are important theoretical approaches that question the epistemological difference between New World and Old World, between Spain and Spanish America (Mignolo 1995; Moreiras). However, while these critical approaches provide acute and strong arguments for a decolonial reading of the production of knowledge on both sides of Hispanic modernity (the American and the European), they do not engage in a decolonial reading of the Baroque as a transatlantic concept. These critics eschew the Baroque's decolonial possibilities over the entire Spanish Empire. For instance, Mignolo (1995, 2002) paradoxically believes in the complete separation between the European and the American Baroques. While he casts light upon these two sides of Western modernity, stressing the idea that one cannot conceive of modernity (and the knowledge production that comes with it) solely in Eurocentric terms, he still thinks that "the Baroque of the Indies [...] cannot be place together as one more chapter of the European Baroque" (Darker 205). For Mignolo, the idea of the modern West and the modern world (from the early modern period to today) rests upon the notion of *coloniality of power* (Quijano 2001), which is a concept that interrelates the practices and legacies of European colonialism across the different social spheres and fields of knowledge. Therefore, according to Mignolo, the coloniality of power "formed a Baroque [colonial Baroque] that emerged out of the colonial difference of a displaced Spanish elite in power and of a wounded creole population" (Darker 53). In other words, the Baroque of the Americas is but a branch of the European Baroque founded on the principles of

colonialism and Eurocentric thought. In essence, “the Baroque of the Indies is but the angered expression, in art and ideas (e.g., philosophy), built upon the colonial difference and the colonial wound” (Mignolo *Darker Side of the Renaissance* 53). In my view, Mignolo’s assessment of the Baroque (both in its European and American expression) still dwells on what, exactly, he is trying to deconstruct: *the colonial difference*. His understanding of the Baroque rests upon the aforementioned chronological gap between two Baroques. In this sense, it would be impossible to locate Garcilaso (or Tito Cusi or Guamán Poma, for that matter) alongside Cervantes, Góngora, or Quevedo as participants of the same literary trend or cultural expression. Therefore, Mignolo’s understanding of the Baroque escapes his own decolonial analysis.

Analogous to Mignolo, Alberto Moreiras (2001) has unwaveringly questioned the possibility of an all-encompassing idea of the Baroque. Moreiras takes issue with this possibility because, for him, the Baroque in Hispanic America was a product of the hegemonic culture and thus could have never been a dissident literary movement or a counter-discourse. In this sense, for Moreiras, an American Baroque was but a creole identitarian expression that was still at the service of a mimetic apparatus of the colonial and neocolonial dominant classes (Moreiras). Such a view of the Baroque is rooted in a deconstructive project—à la Derrida—of Latin American cultural identity, whose primary focus consists in highlighting the pervasive influence of the socio-political hegemon over the cultural sphere. As such, Baroque authors are labeled as dominant figures, incapable of a genuine decolonial project. In my view, Moreiras’ deconstructive theory of Latin American cultural identity still dwells on a canonical view of Hispanic literary modernity (especially a canonical view of what peninsular literature means), which does not allow him to see beyond the “political” ideology of the Baroque (i.e., its seemingly aristocratic and colonialist component). For him, Baroque is a concept that cannot surmount the colonial divide of Peninsular

and New World letters. Remember that, for some critics, Hispanic Baroque literature has been tightly linked to an aristocratic movement of sorts due to the pivotal role that those aristocratic patrons played in supporting the majority of Golden Age writers in the Peninsula. I, for my part, do not consider the aristocratic element as one of the Baroque's main features, but rather view it as a chronological contingency. For me, the Baroque is a broader and much more complex phenomenon. It is the cultural expression of Hispanic modernity, whose inescapable aristocratic language does not preclude non-aristocratic agents from writing in the aristocratic form. I contend that the Baroque articulates the tension between an aristocratic ideal and a heterogeneous society composed mainly of non-aristocratic agents. The acknowledgement of this tension is what Moreiras' view seems to leave aside.

1.6 Contemporary Notions of the Baroque

Unlike Mignolo and Moreiras, contemporary scholars have thought of the Baroque beyond the colonial divide. Ivonne del Valle (2011), for instance, has defined the Baroque as a transatlantic concept that captures the duplicitous and contentious nature of Spanish intellectuality. Her work analyzes José de Acosta's *De procuranda indorum salute* (1588) as a Baroque text that reconciles two opposing philosophical views, Machiavellian politics and humanist morals (the secular and the divine message), before any other European text. Specifically, Acosta's work deals with the problem of reconciling violence with the Christian message in the context of the New World's conquest. Regarding the Indian question, Acosta's *De procuranda* tries to solve the puzzle of squaring the general Christian message of evangelization and conversion and the discourses of violence that justified the Spanish actions against Amerindians. *De procuranda*'s mission was to

reconcile the precepts of Christian morality with the more politically hostile campaigns of conquest and pacification. In her study, del Valle argues that Acosta constructed epistemological allegories to bridge the religious-epistemological crisis at the heart of sixteenth-century Catholic ideals (50-52). According to del Valle, this allegorical language was Acosta's attempt at creating a place where these two discourses could coexist, even as dichotomous partners.

For del Valle, Acosta's Baroque allegory was the Christian-political solution to the problem of dominion, whose most salient example was the New World conquest. In essence, del Valle sees Acosta as the transcendence of the Valladolid debate.⁹ Acosta synthesizes the opposite positions of Bartolomé de Las Casas (representative of humanist morality) and Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda (heir to the Machiavellian rhetoric) in a proposal that makes possible the integration of the rights of the native peoples within the Christian moral code and the Christian "civilizing" enterprise (i.e., the New World conquest). Certainly, del Valle's characterization of Acosta's discourse as Baroque opens up the possibility of thinking of the Baroque in a much broader way, namely as a discourse that not only addressed two opposing views on the Indian question, but also captured the much broader philosophical views behind them. Her argument thus reclaims traditional European debates, such as the one between the Machiavellian and humanist rhetoric, and repositions them within the New World context.

⁹ The Valladolid debate (1550–1551) was the first moral debate in Western history to discuss the rights and treatment of Amerindians by European colonizers. Bartolomé de las Casas argued that Amerindians were free men in the natural order despite records of human sacrifices and other such customs. Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, for his part, argued that Amerindian practices, such as human sacrifice of innocents, cannibalism, and other "crimes against nature," justified waging war against them.

In Europe, the Machiavellian and humanist discourses had long been opposing intellectual positions that never really reached a resolution. The first discourse subordinated religion to the political (the *raison d'état*) while the second endorsed the *Philosophia Christi*,¹⁰ which promoted the observance of the spiritual and the moral over the political. While these two opposing views of morality and politics vehemently clashed with one another, urgency for resolution was not really present, as European powers were all Christian in one way or another. Only when this intellectual debate reached the Spanish American context and heated intellectual confrontations took place with the aforementioned Valladolid debate between Las Casas and Sepúlveda were Baroque discourses such as Acosta's able to bring together these opposing views.

As del Valle's study shows, the New World context sheds a new light on this dichotomy by demanding new discourses that could make sense of the manifest contradictions of the Spanish Empire. How could a Catholic Empire be linked to the extreme violence that was taking place in the American territories? How could the Spanish civilizing enterprise be saved from the moral quandary produced by the violent and unchristian actions of conquistadors in Mexico, Peru, and the Caribbean? Furthermore, how could a Christian message be reconciled with politics of racial and ethnic discrimination against Indians, Africans, Jews, and Moors? How could one reconcile the Spanish imperial grandeur with the material scarcity of its subjects? As mentioned before, these contradictions are not limited to one side of the equation. They are both European and American issues that reflect larger social and philosophical debates. They are the essence of a transatlantic

¹⁰ *Philosophia Christi* is a humanist concept that denotes a form of living in imitation of Christ benevolence and piety in all life activities. Such concept promotes a more practical and direct understanding of the scriptures, as opposed to the dogmatic readings of the scholastics.

Baroque, a cultural discourse that goes beyond the colonial divide and offers new meanings of the early modern period.

1.7 Inca Garcilaso's Decolonial Baroque

In my view, one of the root elements of the Hispanic Baroque, conceived of as one single transatlantic phenomenon, is the transformation of the historiographical discourse into narrative and philosophical strains. This means that early New World historiographical texts are pivotal in the articulation of Baroque discourse, especially the Amerindian—and later creole—responses to the Spanish historical texts of the early sixteenth century. I argue that Inca Garcilaso, an author of Amerindian descent, sharply captured and reshaped the contradictions dwelling at the core of Spanish historiographical discourse and transformed them into novel literary genres. Others, such as Ercilla, Balbuena, Cervantes, Gracián, and later Sor Juana and Sigüenza, among others, also participated in the transformation of the historiographical discourse into modern prose inventions. However, Inca Garcilaso is of special interest because his writings have a strong decolonial imprint. Such decolonial turn is precisely what I seek to highlight as one of the Baroque's most important features. As I will show throughout this dissertation, behind Inca Garcilaso's Baroque innovations dwells a powerful decolonial strategy that stems directly from a critique of Renaissance colonial values. Specifically, he plays with the constitutive tensions and inherent contradictions of Spanish historiographical texts (e.g., the manipulation of Christian and pagan theologies and fictional and exaggerated depictions of Amerindians) to create an ironic critique of Spanish coloniality and, by extension, the entire edifice of Renaissance Eurocentric philosophy.

Inca Garcilaso's Baroque reveals a very perceptive and critical understanding of Renaissance historiography as a political practice. Garcilaso knew that historiographical discourse was one of the most valued Renaissance tools used to galvanize power. Controlling the writing of history allowed hegemonic authors to control the past as a means of conquering the present (del Valle 54). This is why humanist intellectuals placed language and rhetoric at the very center of the historiographical endeavor. It was through the mastering of language that history (past, present, and future) could be manipulated and used to make sense of the world according to Eurocentric standards. Furthermore, Garcilaso understood that mastering the art of narrating the past and the present helped the Spanish crown legitimize their grip on other territories, both Christian and pagan, such as Naples and the Americas, not to mention the expulsion of Muslims and Jews from the Iberian Peninsula itself. Therefore, in understanding this logic, Inca Garcilaso was able to study and deliberately transform the European historiographical language of the colonizer into a counter-discursive history in the form of a metahistorical critique, a philosophical appraisal, or a fictional tale of resistance. This counter-discourse, as I will attempt to show, plays with the porous frontier between history and fiction, thus making fictional narrative a locus of decolonial critique and intellectual emancipation. Inca Garcilaso's Baroque thus becomes source of literary renovation and conceptual transcendence. Such transcendence means that Inca Garcilaso engaged directly with the Renaissance's most important current of thought, humanism, and transformed it into one of the first decolonial discourses of our time.

1.8 Inca Garcilaso's Critique of Humanism

Before the newly formed imperial powers of Europe, humanist intellectuals claimed that rhetoric and oratory presided over all intellectual endeavors. Such an assertion suggested that the fate of a good government depended on mastering the art of verbal and written persuasion. By understanding the intricacies of language, one could understand and manipulate the interpretation of what was true and what was real. In this sense, Renaissance intellectuality suggested to the newly formed empires that they could control their own fate through language. The Spanish imperial expansion was certainly a clear example of this tight connection between politics and the study of language. In his 1492 *Spanish Grammar*, Nebrija proclaimed that language was always the companion of the Empire, which is a telling instance of the consolidation of the study of language, especially of the written word, as the main pillar of the colonizer's epistemological superiority. Spaniards believed that the possession of alphabetic writing conferred a superior status over those who did not have it. Mignolo explains that both the imposition of the European vernacular (i.e., Spanish) in the New World colonies and the Westernization of Amerindian languages through grammars written by friars and Spanish scholars signaled the Spanish obsession with language as an epistemological symbol of power (*The Darker Side of the Renaissance* 55-54). It showed that New World natives lacked alphabetic writing and that Spaniards would not only teach them a superior language (Spanish) but also give them an alphabet for languages. In this sense, the conquest of the New World took a special interest in affirming that the military and political conquest were, in effect, also cultural conquests.

This humanist insistence on affirming cultural superiority through language was certainly widespread within the movement. Its adherents were as diverse as Bartolome de Las Casas and Juan Ginés Sepúlveda. The former was the main critic of military conquest and the latter its main

supporter. Such a widespread and diverse acceptance of this formula for cultural superiority rested on one common element: domination. For those seeking a peaceful form of colonization as well as for those willing to use force, language was an instrument of domination. It functioned as a means of influencing, pressuring, compelling, or forcing speakers of indigenous languages to accept the formulas, rituals, and demands of sixteenth-century Spanish culture. In this sense, humanism began its career in the New World not as a current of tolerance and recognition of indigenous cultures, but as the theoretical bedrock for different colonization strategies.¹¹ Given this history, it seems strange to think of humanism as a current of thought that actually cared about indigenous cultures per se. Even las Casas' famous defense of the Indians did not exactly extend its concern to the preservation of indigenous customs, languages, and religions. This is why the New World humanist discourses, which were deeply committed to the project of native

¹¹ It is interesting to note the paradox that this first humanist contact with indigenous cultures poses for the Western approximation of the question of the Indian. In the Latin American tradition, from the late modern period to contemporary times, *indigenismo* is usually considered a branch of humanism. *Indigenismo* is oftentimes thought of as a discourse that takes Indian identity as a crucial and vital element in the definition of modern New World cultures and societies, especially in Mexico, Bolivia, or Peru. Humanistic categories of cultural integration bring to the ideas of "Mexicanness" or "Peruvianness" a distinctive native tone. As such, *indigenismo* serves the purposes of recognition and vindication of the traditionally marginalized ethnic groups of the Americas. This recognition, nevertheless, has often been misused and corrupted by creole nationalist agendas, which makes for an autochthonous idea of a nation that differs from the European powers that once controlled the region but does not really change practices of marginalization and exploitation against native individuals and their direct descendants. Moreover —and this is the crux of the paradox—, the theoretical bedrock of *indigenismo* is actually the early modern strategies of persuasion and subjugation that asserted Spanish dominion over newly conquered territories.

indoctrination and spread of the Castilian vernacular and the Catholic faith, posed a stark contrast to the humanistic roots of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

During the Quattrocento, the humanist movement began as an intellectual effort to assimilate the notion of the human being, or rather of the free man: a political animal who can fully realize his *humanitas* without necessarily reflecting a dogmatic and transcendent order. This is why the humanists' first efforts procured the integration of Europe's classical past into the Christian present. As mentioned above, humanists were translators and thus fierce advocates of understanding difference. The humanist movement was, thus, a reconciliatory perspective of the human with his or her own nature (human *qua* human) and thus posed a clear challenge to the prevailing political values and social visions of scholastic medieval thought that subordinated all human affairs to a transcendental Christian order. For humanists, every human, either pagan or Christian, formed part of the same rational and necessary historical unfolding. In this sense, humanism had a secular character of sorts, despite its clear Christian foundations. This secularism, however, did not translate into an antireligious spirit or a revival of paganism. Instead, it meant a deep intellectual commitment to the examination and inquiry of all things human without the religious or dogmatic constraints that blinded scholasticism. This secular spirit allowed humanists to reconcile the great works of Greek and Roman antiquity with the Christian tradition. A product of this effort was the refurbishing of Eusebio de Cesarea's *praeparatio evanagelica* argument, which explained how Ancient pagan civilizations, such as Hebrews (in Cesarea's original version) as well as Greeks and Romans (in the Renaissance actualized version), formed part of God's great plan for universal Christianity. In this view, pagan cultures played a necessary role in paving the road, either theologically or morally, for the eventual arrival of the Christian message. As such, these cultures were no longer an object of repudiation, but a legitimate source of inquiry.

As such, humanism sought to obtain knowledge through interpretation of the practical world rather than deriving it from a set of abstract truths. In this sense, understanding the world meant deciphering the rhetorical nature of knowledge. Christianity's pagan predecessors had a form of depicting the world that was rooted in their very own languages. According to Yoran, "the humanist discourse perceived human reality as an inherently symbolic human artifact," which means that rhetoric is but "the notion of human reality as a reflection of a metaphysical and divine order of things" and therefore provides the basis for an anti-metaphysical understanding of truth and reality (*Between Utopia and Dystopia* 31). Yoran argues that this feature provides a clearer account of humanism's originality and modernity:

Humanism rejected the assumptions of a culture that positioned the universal above the particular, the eternal above the temporal, the abstract above the concrete, the transcendent above the worldly, and the contemplative above the active. It elaborated a new theoretical language that could account for the temporality, contingency and mutability of the social and political order. It was able to perceive the essential dissimilarities —the historical distance— between different periods of human endeavor. In employing this language, the humanists were also able to affirm the power of human activity to transform reality. (*Between* 32)

This tolerant and accepting depiction of humanism stands in direct contrast to its aforementioned New World version, where humanist ideas evolved to be instruments of cultural subjugation. Thus, according to Mignolo, the Spanish humanists' obsession with language, rhetoric, and, most notably, all forms of written literacy constituted the core justification for the Spanish argument of cultural superiority (*The Darker Side*, 54). This led to the destruction of native

cultures through a Eurocentric notion of language; that is, the constant social reprisal against non-alphabetic forms of writing and communication and the eventual replacement of New World indigenous languages with the Castilian vernacular. In summary, the tension between an original humanist discourse that, in Europe, challenged the dogmatic vision of medieval scholasticism and the rather authoritarian version of humanism in Spanish America created a real conflict at the very core of Western intellectuality.

This tension gave birth to the Hispanic Baroque as a discourse of crisis—here I follow critics such as William Childers (2010) and John Beverley (2008). These literary critics conceived of the Spanish literary Baroque as the allegorical, even ironic, characterization of its historical reality. The tension between the stagnant aristocratism and the liberal thinking of the humanists and the bourgeoisie produced the cultural discourse of what I denominate a “historical impasse.” This impasse consists of a tendency to adequate old forms of aristocratic grandeur with the novel forces of social mobility and religious openness. The Baroque, in this sense, is a discourse of transition from the medieval aristocratic past to the imperial bourgeois revolution.¹² For Childers, the Baroque emerged in the moments where the aristocratic ideals of the Spanish empire —itself a product of the colonial expansion and modern technological developments— ran counter to the humanistic values that had just made possible the religious revolution of the Reformation as well as the religious missions that carried out the linguistic studies of indigenous cultures and languages in the Americas (“Baroque Quixote: New World Writing” 417). At this crossroads, a culture of a

¹² The force of the new mercantile, bourgeois, and conquistador classes of Spanish early modern society saw a clear reaction from the state level against the threat of social mobility that they posed to the inherited hierarchical order of feudal authority that made up Spanish nobility.

nascent plebian humanism was born inside a notably archaic apparatus of aristocratic values. In this sense, the Baroque discourse, according Childers, was twofold; it was used both as an instrument of cultural domination as well as a vehicle for resistance.

Beverley, for his part, gives a more skeptical account of the Baroque's adequacy for anticolonial resistance. In his opinion, the Baroque is more of a discourse of imperial domination that ultimately reproduced the logic of coloniality of the Spanish empire (*Essays on the Literary Baroque*, 53). However, Beverley's take on the Baroque sheds light on a very interesting aspect of the movement: its ambivalent origin. Beverley recalls Beatriz Pastor's suggestion that the origins of the Hispanic Baroque, both in Spain and its colonies, are to be found in those critical moments of "danger, chaos, and breakdown of frameworks that the conquistadors sometimes experienced in their journeys" (*Essays on the Literary Baroque* 140). Beverley's acceptance of Pastor's idea has to do with the fact that the moment of crisis, that is, of cultural breakdown, produces a special kind of discourse where the individual realizes the mismatch between the real and the apparent, between the traditional discourses about the world and what is taking place in the world itself. An illuminating example is the many instances when conquistadors and missionaries could not make sense of their new reality because the New World (the new geography, the unfamiliar animal species, and visibly different bucolic landscape; needless to say, the radically different Amerindians) exceeded the frontiers of the Judeo-Christian framework with which they had been brought up. The long-assumed biblical explanations about the origins of the world, of human tribes, and animal species faced a serious crisis when the American continent appeared on the European radar. Alfred Crosby has called attention to this fact. He states that for centuries, "the Bible was the source of most wisdom, and the book of Genesis told all that one needed to know about the beginning of the heavens, earth, angels, plants, animals, and men" (32). After the

conquistadors' arrival to the New World, the new reality called into question the entire Christian cosmogony: "If God had created all of the life forms in one week in one place and they had then spread out from there over the whole world, then why [were] the life forms in the Eastern and Western hemispheres so different?" (33). Crises like this one propelled the development of the famous Baroque faculty of *agudeza de ingenio*, a discursive skill that is neither traditional rhetoric nor eloquence but instead the ability to combine complexity and wit as a practice of persuasion and surreptitious critique. An ingenious author, in this sense, is one who is able to masterfully and surreptitiously tackle topics that are sensitive or forbidden to be addressed openly.

1.9 Baroque Aspects of Inca Garcilaso

Garcilaso's decolonial Baroque is thus an archetypical example of this *agudeza de ingenio*, as the author advances a critical project of colonial deconstruction through irony. In the following pages, I will show how Inca Garcilaso's sense Baroque irony transforms the fixed concepts and stories of Renaissance coloniality into literary terms and genres of decolonial destabilization. Specifically, I will focus on Inca Garcilaso's transformation of historiographic discourse and political theory into forms of fictional narrative that counter the Eurocentric view pushed by Renaissance letters. I read Garcilaso's works in light of three key Baroque elements that correspond to three crucial aspects of his decolonial critique: i) the authorial self-fashioning: a multiracial author-character whose literary authority questions that of the European subject; ii) a fictional prose or modern novel that destabilizes the epistemological validity of Eurocentric history writing; iii) an Indigenous utopia that functions as a one of the first decolonial forms of political theory.

The first chapter, *The Indian, The Mestizo, and The Impostor: The Fictionality of Race in Inca Garcilaso de la Vega*, focuses on the figure of Inca Garcilaso as a literary character in his own texts. Here, I analyze Inca Garcilaso's complex and somewhat contradictory usage of racial terminology throughout his works. Sometimes, Garcilaso claims to be a *mestizo*, while other times, he refers to himself as an Indian or seems to strongly highlight his Spanish heritage, depending on the situation. Such complexity means that Inca Garcilaso's depiction of his authorial persona is not a straightforward counter-discourse where an Indian or a mestizo directly defies the Eurocentric conception of the author. Instead, the Inca Garcilaso that appears in his texts does not adhere to one specific racial label and is also deliberately inconsistent with their usage. Such inconsistency, I argue, aims to reveal the tensions and conceptual contradictions in each of those labels. This is precisely where the Baroque spirit dwells. It is a literary operation that does not directly refute or engage with colonial definitions, but rather ironizes the traditional meaning of racial labels, thus destabilizing their epistemic status.

The second chapter, *Truth and Fiction in Inca Garcilaso's La Florida del Inca and the Decolonial Origins of the Modern Novel*, focuses on the narrative strategies that allow Inca Garcilaso to advance a critical approach to sixteenth-century historiographical discourse through the writing of a modern novel of sorts. I argue that *La Florida del inca* explores a conscious overstep of the boundaries separating historiographical and fictional discourses. This literary transgression eventually renders a novel form of writing where Inca Garcilaso develops the most fundamental elements of modern novel texts, such as the fictionalization of ordinary life and the creation of a self-aware author-narrator. This literary exploration stems from Inca Garcilaso's critique of the Spanish epistemological divide between Europeans and non-Europeans. This type, which present in Spanish official and canonical texts, stated that Indians could not write (or were

unable to) and that mestizos were untrustworthy, despite flawed arguments, contradictory presuppositions, and made-up mythical generalizations about Amerindians. In order to destabilize such a Eurocentric construct, *La Florida del inca* fictionalizes the second Spanish incursion into Florida, thus destabilizing the New World historiographical discourse (a discourse that placed Amerindians as inferior to Spaniards) and the historiographical concept of truth. In this chapter, I hope to contribute to the debate about the origins of the modern novel, further developing Mary Gaylord's argument about the New World origins of modern fictional writing. I argue that *La Florida* is a work that, much like *Don Quixote*, draws its literary material from New World chronicles and histories and transforms them into a fictional tale that imitates historiographical discourse. Similar to Cervantes' Cide Hamete Benengeli, *La Florida*'s narrator deceives the reader into thinking that they are reading a truthful account all while leaving enough clues through which the fictional trickery is eventually unraveled. However, unlike Cervantes' work, *La Florida*'s fiction is decisively decolonial. Inca Garcilaso uses novelistic fiction to deconstruct and criticize the highly Eurocentric tradition of New World historiography. Through this argument, I offer a different view of the origins of the modern novel, or at least of its most fundamental aspects: the fictionalization of ordinary life and the self-referential narrator. In summary, I claim that the modern novel's most distinct features were partly developed by some authors within a decolonial project against the Renaissance's epistemological Eurocentrism.

The third chapter, *Indigenous Utopia: Fiction, Irony, and Political Theory in Comentarios reales de los incas*, focuses on Inca Garcilaso's incursion in political theory. I argue that his utopian representation of Tahuantinsuyu (the Ancient Incan Empire) in *Comentarios reales de los incas* is a powerful and innovative work of early modern political theory as well as decolonial critique. I contend that Garcilaso's acute perception of Spanish colonial politics and vast understanding of

the humanist political theory behind it produced an ironic critique of humanist political philosophy through a utopian representation of Tahuantinsuyu. Much like its precursor, Thomas More's *Utopia*, Inca Garcilaso's Tahuantinsuyu is a highly ironic representation of the perfect *polis* as conceived of by Renaissance intellectuals. For humanist philosophers, the modern political objective was to outline the rules of a political community that could reconcile the wonders of Europe's pagan past, or the difficulties of Amerindian paganism, with Europe's Christian present through the use of reason. Such a task gave rise to a vast array of works and political treatises based on biased theological interpretations and conceptual contradictions that upheld certain aspects of the Christian ideal all while ignoring others in the quest for political harmony. Utopian texts present an ironic picture of this quest: a pagan society that purges what Europeans recognize as social problems through the adoption of very radical measures inspired by humanist ideals. The irony resides in the fact that this apparently ideal society bases its societal harmony on extreme rules that curtail individual liberty and the overall freedom of subjects. In essence, "civilization" is nothing but a chimera. In this chapter, I thus make a comparison between Inca Garcilaso's Tahuantinsuyu and Thomas More's *Utopia* and argue that these utopian societies are both a poignant critique of Europe's status quo as well as an ironic reaffirmation of the impossibility of their existence on a non-fictional plane.

This reading is inspired by Yoran's interpretation of More's *Utopia*, especially his discussion about an uncharted literary genre that aims to critique the humanist social ideal. Yoran argues that *Utopia* calls out the contradictions at the heart of humanist ideology and thus warns against the humanist alternative to the ills of modern society (*Between Utopia and Dystopia* 162). He highlights how *Utopia* portrays a seemingly "perfect and functional society" —as conceived by humanist ideology— that ends up being a rather dystopian world (165). Following Yoran's

ideas, I focus on Garcilaso's ironization of the contradictions of the humanist political message in the Spanish imperial context. I analyze how Garcilaso's near-to-perfect depiction of Incan society (Tahuantinsuyu) functions as a veiled criticism of both the Spanish administration in Peru and, to a lesser extent, of the European political model of the Renaissance. Furthermore, I show how this utopian Tahuantinsuyu also functions as a critique of the humanist ideas and alternatives that first and second evangelization intellectuals proposed for the problems of colonial Peru. Such a critique exposed the impossibility or un-realizability of these types of reforms by showing that they would inevitably lead to a dystopia. In summary, I argue that Garcilaso's representation of ancient Inca civilization has a twofold objective: 1) to convey a political criticism of the status quo (of both the Spanish administration in Peru and the European political model), and 2) to present a deeper theoretical criticism of the political alternatives advanced by Dominicans and Jesuits of the sixteenth century (heirs of Europe's humanist tradition). It is also important to note that Garcilaso's bid on political theory is one of a kind. In virtue of its decolonial nature, Garcilaso's utopia develops its critique of humanism by targeting its Eurocentric roots. This is something that no other utopian writer of the modern period accomplished. Finally, this multilayered work is another example of Garcilaso's Baroque model. Garcilaso incorporates several rhetorical strategies to articulate a critique of Renaissance political thought, building upon the Renaissance's tensions and contradictions without offering any prescriptive solutions.

Through these three chapters, I hope to delineate a path for larger projects in both Baroque studies and Inca Garcilaso studies. On the one hand, I propose a reconceptualization of Baroque literature from the standpoint of the early modern tensions that coloniality brought about. Thus, my objective here is to overcome the epistemological biases that have narrowed the scope of a decolonial critique not only of colonial works (chronicles and *historias*) but of peninsular texts as

well. My hope is to bring to light unexplored connections among texts that have been thought of as part of two different literary realms (Europe and the New World). In this sense, the origins and meanings of modern literary concepts, genres, and ideas take a new turn. In Chapters II and III, I will show that the origins of both the modern novel and early modern political thought can also be found in works about and from the Americas as well as in non-European authors. In Chapter I, I want to echo Gonzalo Lamana's argument that that modern critical race theory can also be found in the early modern Indigenous intellectuals (2019). I will show how Inca Garcilaso's ironic critique of the racial labels imposed on non-Europeans seems to predate and foreshadow the critical race theory of more contemporary authors. With this in mind, I hope scholars turn back to the question of indigeneity and *mestizaje* with different eyes. I thus want to draw attention to some of the difficulties that an idea of a non-Baroque *mestizaje* poses to fully assess Garcilaso's decolonial project. In this sense, I urge Inca Garcilaso scholars to revisit and reevaluate the essentializing nature of colonial categories like "Indian" or "mestizo" or even "Spaniard" and the uses that Inca Garcilaso and, perhaps, other Amerindian writers make of them.

I present three instances of Inca Garcilaso's Baroque in this dissertation, but this does not mean that future studies on Inca Garcilaso's Baroque should be limited to these examples. On the contrary, I hope that myself and other scholars deepen and expand the archive of his Baroque strategies. In this dissertation, I am only highlighting the Baroque (and, by extension, the fictional and decolonial) nature of Inca Garcilaso's play with Renaissance ideas of race, history writing, and political theory. However, there are already several other suggested topics and themes for a decolonial Baroque analysis, such as the creation of literary characters other than self-referential ones and the literary adaptations of both Christian and Andean cosmologies. I thus hope that this

project paves the way for more assessments of Inca Garcilaso's work through the lenses of a decolonial Baroque.

2.0 CHAPTER ONE. THE INDIAN, THE MESTIZO, AND THE IMPOSTOR: THE FICTIONALITY OF RACE IN INCA GARCILASO DE LA VEGA

Inca Garcilaso de la Vega is perhaps one of the most racially conscious authors of early modernity. In fact, he is the first American-born author and best-seller to self-identify as a direct descendant of a colonized indigenous nation. As mentioned in the Introduction, Inca Garcilaso was the son of an Inca princess (Chimpu Ocllo) and of a Spanish conquistador (Captain Sebastián Garcilaso de la Vega). Throughout his books, he wastes no opportunity to mention his both biracial and bicultural condition. He always reminds his readers that he spent his childhood and adolescence in Cuzco, where he learned the Inca ways, customs, and language, and later moved to Spain, where he fought in Phillip II's army, in the Rebellion of Alpujarras, and finally established himself in the cities of Córdoba and Montilla close to his paternal family. In light of these events, it is not surprising that most of his scholarship has been rightfully concerned with the topic of his *mestizaje* and biculturalism¹³. Most of Garcilaso's critics see his *mestizaje* as a way to unravel key elements of his intellectual production. Some say that El Inca represents a merger of two different worldviews which he transforms into a new polyphonic writing style (Mazzotti 1996), while others label him as a translator of the "*incario*"¹⁴ into the Spanish conceptual scheme (López-Baralt 2011, Pupo-Walker 1984, Zamora, 1988, Jákfalvi-Leiva 2016, Fernández 2016, Castro-Klarén 2016),

¹³ As it would become clearer in the chapter, *Mestizaje* refers to a phenomenon of cultural and ethnic miscegenation where mestizos are individuals are regarded as the product of relationships outside the European conventions: progeny out of wedlock, of Spaniards with non-Spaniards, of Christians with non-Christians.

¹⁴ The history and socio-political structure of the Incan Empire.

thus preserving a lost Andean world within the new Spanish epistemological order (López-Baralt 2011). In short, Garcilaso has been placed at the intersection of a Venn diagram. In other words, he has been studied as a merger, translator, and mediator between two cultures.

Nevertheless, a curious fact about the scholarly focus on Garcilaso's *mestizaje* is how little attention has been paid to his incessant, almost obsessive, reiteration of it. His insistence on his bicultural heritage throughout the texts can, at times, be an overwhelming experience. Not only does he make explicit his dual ancestry in all his prologues, proems and dedications, but he also finds a way to invoke his Andean and/or Spanish origins as tool to authenticate his historical explanations and as an authoritative place from which he develops sardonic philosophical arguments. For instance, in *Comentarios reales de los incas* (1609), Garcilaso relies heavily on having spent his childhood with his Indigenous mother's family in Cuzco to claim the necessary authority (linguistic, cultural etc.) to correct Spanish historians about their version of Inca history, while craftily concealing his "critique" of what Spanish historians got wrong or missed under the less threatening title of "*comentarios*". Analogously, in *Historia general del Perú* (1616), Inca Garcilaso puts a lot of emphasis on his father's Spanish noble lineage as he addresses the intricacies of the tumultuous civil wars being waged among conquistadors in the early days of the Peruvian viceroyalty. Furthermore, the repetition of his Andean and Spanish backgrounds in several key passages of his works aims to counter various conceptual misconceptions that Europeans had of Amerindians and their descendants. In essence, unraveling the intricacies of Garcilaso's self-

fashioning regarding his *mestizaje* is crucial to understanding the construction of his authorial authority which he creates by employing symbols of exotic appeal¹⁵.

Considering these facts, my objective here is to delve into the meaning behind the repeated mention of his bicultural status, and thus perform a new reading of the autobiographical figure of Inca Garcilaso de la Vega as a product of his own literary creation, i.e., as a meticulously crafted literary character whose identity as an authorial figure depends on the reiteration (and sometimes suppression) of certain traits and aspects of his material life. Specifically, I will analyze how Inca Garcilaso constructs a complex and paradoxical literary persona, who sometimes describes himself as an Indian, sometimes as a *mestizo*, and at times overemphasizes his Iberian heritage, depending on the context. I argue that this literary persona enables Inca Garcilaso to question and destabilize the kind of imposture that racial labels usually bear. I also argue that this literary persona provides the necessary material to produce novel forms of fiction that work as decolonial tools in the struggle of Amerindians against European coloniality. In this sense, I suggest that Inca Garcilaso pioneers a form of conceiving of the modern author as an imaginary (not to be confused with unreal) character, who, in virtue of his fictional nature, can question the politics of identity in ways never available for racialized people like him. So, guiding this chapter are the following questions: What constitutes a fictional author? To what extent is the Inca Garcilaso a fictional character? How does he use the racial labels imposed on him as well as his dual cultural heritage to create a literary

¹⁵ As it will become clearer later, these symbols of exotic appeal refer to the subversive use of the colonizer's epistemic values. Inca Garcilaso would reappropriate the Spanish ideas about Indians in order to flip the script, thus affirming his authority on Andean culture and destabilizing the Eurocentric definition of the author.

version of himself? What sort of mestizaje did he develop? In what sense does the fictional construction of a *mestizo* character advance a critical understanding of the term?

To answer these questions, I will divide this chapter into three parts. First, I will consider the idea of a fictional author in the sixteenth-century Hispanic context, its literary function, and its political implications. Second, I will show how Inca Garcilaso uses his own life experience and biography to create a literary persona throughout his texts. Third, I will address the ways in which the literary version of Inca Garcilaso de la Vega works as a conceptual tool for a decolonial critique of: i) colonial labels imposed on Amerindians, ii) sixteenth-century symbols of authorial (literary) authority, and iii) contesting the lines separating historiographical and literary discourses.

2.1 The Author as a Fictional Character

Although my reading of the historical figure of the Inca Garcilaso as a fictional author is new, the construction of fictional authors during the sixteenth century is not. In fact, the fictionalization of the authorial figure was an emergent form of literary subjectivity concomitant with the modernization of European prose. One of the first Spanish (and European) fictional authors, whose rhetoric aimed at resembling real speech, was Lázaro de Tormes, the author-protagonist of *La vida de Lazarillo de Tormes* (1554). This book is an account (a letter) written in the first-person, where Lázaro (the author-protagonist) recounts his life and misfortunes. Although Lázaro's life events are all fictional,¹ to the sixteenth-century reader they must have seemed as real as any other event happening to ordinary people. The occurrences told in *Lazarillo* were not the traditional literary adventures which the sixteenth-century reader was accustomed to read. They were the occurrences of the average beggar in the streets of Toledo or Seville. This semblance to

reality was certainly a new thing since it did not correspond to what was usually thought to be literary narrative (fantastic tales). Here is where the novelty of modern fiction resides: ordinary events could also be fiction. Moreover, Lázaro's manner of speech had dropped the archaisms pertaining to chivalric romances and poetry, to unapologetically use the vernacular dialect of everyday life. This means that there was an epistemological dissonance between the language of truth and the language of fiction. *Lazarillo*'s use of the sixteenth-century Spanish vernacular marks a shift in the epistemic character of the fictional text. The language in which it is written seems to speak truths about the "real world," just as chronicles, histories, letters or memoirs, describe the real world. This literary trick is one of the most salient indicators of modern fiction. For this reason, critics contend that *Lazarillo* is perhaps the first modern novel (Rico 14). The life of Lázaro de Tormes is but a fiction inspired by one of the most common and ordinary characters of sixteenth-century Spanish society, the *pícaro* (rogue or lowborn city boy).

The discourse of the modern novel is, in essence, an objectivist pretense. As Francisco Rico (1987) puts it, the modern novel is but a *superchería* (trickery or sham), because it pretends to present whatever it narrates as truthful and factual, while, in reality, it is but the product of the human imagination. In texts like *Lazarillo*, the fictionality of the real becomes even more apparent as the author betrays the objectivist pretense, precisely because of the first-person narrative style. Here, reality is narrated through the perspective of just one person. Such a literary discourse epitomizes the paradox of historical objectivism: even the most objective of accounts is, at the end, grounded in human subjectivity. This is how the authorial figure appears as a central pillar of the novel's imagined reality. The formulaic expression of the "I" (*yo*) operates as a rhetorical device that situates the text away from the objective measurements of a purely historiographical exercise, and closer to literary narrative. In a similar fashion, Inca Garcilaso uses the author-narrator formula

to produce a comparable effect. The constant reminder and acknowledgement of his authorial presence throughout his texts gives an air of familiarity that makes the reader a participant of another story, the author's story.

Before continuing this analysis, it is important to note that I am not suggesting that Inca Garcilaso's autobiographical figure is an imaginary character (for neither is Lázaro de Tormes), nor am I suggesting that Inca Garcilaso's texts are all a form of the modern novel. The purpose of this chapter is to flesh out the literary construction of Inca Garcilaso de la Vega as a fictional authorial figure, i.e., as a literary subject. This means that I will focus on the ways certain features of the flesh and bone Inca Garcilaso—especially racial and cultural ones—are deliberately altered to produce a specific effect in the author's reality. Namely, the creation of an author whose authority cannot be questioned, whose personal story allows him to carve out his own special place among sixteenth-century writers, and whose literary demeanor delivers a powerful critique of sixteenth-century intellectuality. As such, the elements constituting his literary persona are not mere echoes of Garcilaso's real-life; they are instead meticulously devised strategies that operate as markers of authority as well as spaces for plot composition, where the reader finds a strong critique of Spanish coloniality. Such decolonial critique consists in the playful use of the biases and preconceptions that Spaniards had of racialized individuals in the creation of Inca Garcilaso's literary persona¹⁶. Such fictional authorial figure is, in essence, an irony that aims at deconstructing the labels imposed on Amerindians and their descendants.

¹⁶ I owe the clarity of these ideas to long fruitful conversations with my mentor, Gonzalo Lamana (2019). In his most recent book, *How "Indians" Think*, Lamana highlights the performativity of Indigeneity as a subversive strategy to counter claims of indigenous cognitive inferiority. Based on the notion of the trickster, Lamana signals Inca Garcilaso's sense of doubleness or ironic double vision (where Garcilaso anticipates what Spaniards think about

At the moment of creating his literary persona, Inca Garcilaso knew too well that he was an exotic figure. Garcilaso's cultural hybridity clearly distinguished him from the rest of European intellectuals before him. Such cultural and ethnic peculiarity enabled his texts to appeal to a broad spectrum of readers. Not only were regular European readers captured by the exotic novelty, but also creole patricians and the Indigenous elite found in his works a message that directly spoke to them (Lamana 42; Guibovich-Pérez 132-33). Considering the appeal of a racialized individual, Inca Garcilaso emphasizes his bicultural condition at the opening of all of his works. From the first proem (in his translation of León Hebreo's *Dialoghi*, 1502), where he mentions both his double noble lineage—his father was a hidalgo and his mother an Inca princess—as well as his exotic condition, to his historiographical version of Inca history (*Comentarios reales*, 1609), where he makes several mentions of his own family and upbringing; Inca Garcilaso appears to always make the most out of his “exotic” life-story. Inca Garcilaso did not intend to leave the reception of his life story to chance. He was decisively in control of the kind of literary character he wanted to present. He was determined to be the creator and active narrator of his own story.

The first stage of this process of literary creation is, of course, drawing a distinction between the real or material Garcilaso and the literary one, as this will enable us to understand how the literary character came to be. In the following section I will show that, although Garcilaso's “real” life episodes are present throughout his texts, they are strategically arranged (and sometimes transformed) to put forth a particular narrative. In short, I will explore how Garcilaso utilizes his own personal reality to transform it into literature.

himself and, thus, confirms their ideas only to hide his criticism in them) as the primary tool for a surreptitious decolonial critique.

2.2 From Gómez Suárez de Figueroa to Inca Garcilaso de la Vega

Behind Inca Garcilaso de la Vega there is another name, his baptismal name: Gómez Suárez de Figueroa. Born to an Inca Princess and a Spanish conquistador in 1539, Gómez Suárez spent his early years in Cuzco amid waves of civil strife and political unrest. Despite these turbulent times, the young *mestizo* lived a tranquil and somewhat privileged childhood, due to his parents' high social status. His mother, Ñusta Isabela Suárez Chimpú Oello, was first cousin to Huáscar Inca and Atahualpa Inca, the last two Inca rulers. Through her bloodline, he was also a member of his great grandfather's (Inca Tupac Yupanqui, the eleventh Inca ruler) *panaqa*¹⁷. Hence, his maternal family enjoyed a residual sphere of influence within the remaining cultural elite of the Incas. His father, captain Sebastián Garcilaso de la Vega y Vargas, was the descendant of a long aristocratic line linked to the houses of Feria and Valdesvilla. These nobiliary credentials, as well as a small fortune, granted the young Gómez a better education than the rest of his Peruvian contemporaries. Gómez Suárez's early teaching was entrusted to Juan de Alcobaza, and later to Juan de Cuéllar, whose reputation and passion for pedagogy was reflected in his desire to see his pupils at the University of Salamanca, as Garcilaso would recall later in his *Comentarios* (*Comentarios*, Part I, Book II, Chapter XI).

However, his high-born ancestry was tinged by the fact that he was an illegitimate child. In the deeply Catholic Spanish society, Gómez Suárez was not entitled to the same privileges enjoyed by legitimate offspring. This condition had a profound impact on Suárez de Figueroa's

¹⁷ A *panaqa* was an Incan filial group formed by the descendants of a monarch, only excluding the next monarch's family.

life and intellectual formation. According to a number of testimonies recorded by biographers (Porras-Barrenechea 1955, Varner, 1968, Miró Quesada 1973, Durand 1988), Gómez had to face several setbacks, because of his bastardy. These incidents, which include being denied his father's inheritance, would eventually force him to come to terms with his own reality as a somewhat marginalized individual. When his father died in 1559, young Gómez Suárez was left unprotected in a rather hostile society against *mestizos*. He quickly understood that being both a bastard and a *mestizo* were not very different things. Since most *mestizos* were the product of relationships outside wedlock, the Catholic societal conventions in the Spanish Empire marginalized individuals like him. For individuals like Gómez Suárez, the law and societal conventions tended to work against their favor. Hence, both as an ethnic *mestizo* and illegitimate child (which at the end were similar things), Gómez Suárez was not entitled to inherit his father's fortune, and neither was he able to exercise public offices stipulated by the royal decrees of 1555 (Konetzke, 1946).

Soon after his father's death, Gómez Suárez traveled to Spain to finish his education, and meet his paternal side of the family. Though he was able to conclude his studies, meeting his paternal family did not prove to be a joyous occasion. According to biographers, young Gómez Suárez first arrived to his uncle's house in Córdoba, he received a rather cold welcome. It was no secret that this unenthusiastic family reception was caused by his illegitimate status and racial condition (Varner 1968). His paternal family, were part of the noble household of Vargas, which had a long-established observance of blood purity laws in the Iberian Peninsula. Such laws were primarily conceived to deter non-Christians, and by extension, non-Spaniards, from prominent positions in Spanish religious and governmental institutions. The *estatutos de limpieza de sangre* of the early fifteenth century originally targeted Jews and new converts to disqualified them for public office. Later, in 1492 the Catholic monarchs, Isabel I and Ferdinand II, issued a series of

decrees that hardened the purity of blood rationale, by which both Jews and Muslims were forced to convert or be expelled from the peninsula. Even the new converts faced discrimination, as they required proof of at least four generations of Christian ancestry to aspire to a position in political or religious institutions.

This racist rationale was not new to Gómez Suárez. Although the observance of blood purity laws was perhaps stronger in Iberia, such juridical racism made its way into a series of royal decrees in the New World during the last years of Charles V reign (1549-1555). These New World decrees aimed at reducing the number of *mestizos* in political and religious institutions in the colonies. Ultimately, the world Gómez Suárez left in Spanish America was no different from the one he encountered in Spain. In the peninsula, the young *mestizo* could observe how highly intertwined Iberian and New World racial logic were and how Iberian racist foundations informed the constraints and restrictions imposed against *mestizos* back at home. Racial prejudice was then a persistent and manifest issue that undoubtedly marked Gómez Suárez's life on both sides of the Atlantic.

Gómez Suárez's negative experiences with the Spanish *sistema de castas* (colonial racial caste system) reached a turning-point in 1562. In that year, Gómez Suárez arrived at the Royal Court in Madrid to seek recognition as his father's rightful heir. He asked for the restitution of his father's *encomienda*¹⁸, as well as of his mother's patrimony (Varner, 1968). Both petitions were rejected. In *Historia general del Peru* (1616), Garcilaso comments on these events, arguing that they were the result of a vicious defamatory campaign against his father. Such campaign —he argued— was based on allegations concerning his father's participation in Gonzalo Pizarro's

¹⁸ A grant by the crown, to a Spaniard, of a specified number of Indians for work and extraction of tribute.

rebellion against the crown's government in Peru (1544-1548). He recounts that, after the jurors were already convinced of the proof he presented, the Court's prosecutor, Lincenciado Lope García de Castro, interrupted to dismiss his case, based on the admonishment that he should not have requested any favors from the king at all, given the fact that his father had been a traitor, a rebel in the battle of Huarina (Durand, 1976, 1988; Miró-Quesada, 1948).

Garcilaso denied such allegations, claiming that they were the product of misinformation. He argues that Spanish historians had rendered a corrupt account of his father's participation in the war, due to their lack of knowledge of the real intricacies of the battle. The truth—as told by Garcilaso in *Historia general del Perú*—was that his father simply lent his horse to a friend, who happened to be Gonzalo Pizarro himself, and who ultimately won the battle. Garcilaso thus says that even though his father used to be Pizarro's friend, he was not actively involved in the battle. At any rate, Garcilaso emphasizes it was after García de Castro's intervention, that the court dismissed his case. In light of these remarks, Garcilaso proceeds to tell the reader that he decided to rest his case, renounce any pretensions to his father's inheritance, and finally find solace in living a quiet and intellectually enlightened life:

no me fue possible volver a la corte, sino acogerme a los rincones de la soledad y la pobreza, donde paso una vida quieta y pacífica, como hombre *desengañado* y despedido de este mundo y de sus mudanzas, sin pretender cosa de él, porque ya no hay para qué (*Historia general*, Book V, Chp. XXIII).

The relevance of this passage resides in the transformation that takes place. In the passage, former Gómez Suárez, who is now transformed into the author Inca Garcilaso, remembers the moment when he decided to abandon the preoccupations and aspirations of his previous life to become a different man. Inca Garcilaso evokes the occasion of his literary birthing when his

signature would no longer be Gómez Suárez de Figueroa, but Garcilaso de la Vega, el Inca. In the text, Garcilaso uses the word “*desengañado*” as a way of highlighting this rite of passage. The famous concept of *desengaño barroco* (Baroque disillusionment or enlightenment) acquires here full significance. It marks the realization of a truth that, even though it might be difficult and inconvenient, brings about a special knowledge and awareness of one’s relationship with the world. In this case, Gómez Suárez realizes that the world is but a stage, where one’s performance is based on inherited prejudices and misconceptions. Moreover, he realizes that identity is something that exceeds the individual: it is conferred, imposed, and removable. Therefore, Garcilaso reads the words of Lope García de Castro, as another way in which the system has denied his legitimate identity. Back in Peru it was denied because of his bastardy, and now, in Spain, it was denied by stripping his father of any honorable identity to give. Therefore, when the impossibility of claiming his father’s identity finally hit him, Garcilaso, then as Gómez Suárez, renounced any old pretension of claiming a legitimate identity through the system (i.e., through legal terms), to instead live a life of solitude and erudition as a new man.

According to critics and biographers (Miró Quesada 1973, Durand 1988), it was after the year of 1562 that the signature of Gómez Suárez disappeared to be replaced by the name of Inca Garcilaso de la Vega. However, if we are to take seriously Garcilaso’s testimony in the passage cited above, the name choice seems a rather odd choice. Changing his name to that of his father (i.e., Sebastián Garcilaso de la Vega) seems to be a contradiction given the fact he was trying to move on from his past. i.e., move on from any legal pretensions regarding his father’s patrimony. It thus is ironic that Garcilaso de la Vega is part or half of his chosen name. In this sense, the Madrid incident described above seems to be more of a poetic episode aimed to launch his literary career, rather than a reaction to the legal “*desengaño*” he experienced.

The reason to believe that this is the case is that, in reality, Gómez Suárez's petitions did not have a strong chance of succeeding at court in Madrid. Furthermore, it would be stranger to believe that he had hopes at all for his case. First, on the issue of the restitution of his mother's patrimony, she had none of her own. Anything she had, according to Varner (1968), Gómez Suárez already possessed: i.e., a coca plantation in Havisca, which his father had conferred to him, to his cousin, and to his mother, while he was still alive. Had she had any other properties after marrying Juan del Pedroche, it was clear that Gómez Suárez could not inherit any of them. Second, he did not possess any rights over his father's *encomienda*, since the law unambiguously stated that *encomiendas* were only conferred to the legitimate offspring of an *encomendero*. From a juridical point of view, it becomes apparent that Gómez Suárez's trip to Madrid was a futile enterprise. This becomes clearer when Garcilaso took the decision to join the crown's army to combat in the Rebellion of the Alpujarras (1568-1571), as a way to make up for his father's poor reputation amongst the Spanish establishment. In light of these observations, why were the events in Madrid important at all in Garcilaso's texts?

As I have been hinting, to answer this question one should look at the Madrid affair at a symbolic level. This means separating Gómez Suárez's life from that of the new literary persona of Inca Garcilaso. For the former, one could only speculate the real importance of the issue. For the latter, the occurrences in Madrid were repackaged as a symbolic moment, a literary birth. As records show, after 1563, the Peruvian *mestizo* known as Gómez Suárez de Figueroa officially changed his name to Inca Garcilaso de la Vega. He chose to be called after his father, Captain Sebastián Garcilaso de la Vega. With this name, former Gómez Suárez de Figueroa started signing all of his works, thus rebranding himself as his father's legitimate heir. Although this new persona seems to have real correspondence with the real-life *mestizo*, one should observe that, ultimately,

Inca Garcilaso does not conform completely to reality. This new character is not an exact copy of Gómez Suárez's, but is rather the magnification of some of his features. These features, carefully picked and meticulously curated, are developed into strong and vibrant literary qualities, similar to those of the literary characters of Lázaro in *Lazarillo*, *Don Quixote*, or *El Buscón*. All these characters represent a new wave of literary personages that, in modern times, resonate with the growing number of non-aristocratic readers. The difference is that Garcilaso is not a *pícaro*, a member of the bourgeois, or a mad hidalgo, but a *mestizo*. This is why Garcilaso's first act is choosing a name appropriate to his mixed heritage. Hence, he chooses his father's name, Garcilaso de la Vega, with the addition of the title of Inca.

Inca Garcilaso's name choice is clearly ironic for two reasons. First, choosing his father's name seems a blatant contradiction to his previous pledge to let go of any pretensions to reclaim his father's identity and patrimony. Second, adding the title of Inca to his name could be read as both an act of defiance against the rigid aristocratic order, and as a mockery. On the one hand, "Inca" is a defiant label because it designates both an inferior race "the Indians" as well as nobility within the Inca codes. This double entendre seems to make up for Garcilaso's impossibility of aspiring to Spanish nobility by reaffirming his mother's noble background¹⁹. On the other hand, "Inca" is also a mockery precisely because it is a marker of difference from the Spanish pure blood ideal mentioned before. In sum, Garcilaso's act of rebranding himself as a literary character marks the beginning of a number of rhetorical games aiming at disabusing the reader of a treacherous

¹⁹ It also shows how much care Inca Garcilaso puts into choosing his name as also uses the broader more readily recognizable form (to Spanish readers) "Inca" as opposed to his mother's actual Indigenous last name.

and deceitful reality. In Garcilaso's case, the reality he chooses to play with is the New World colonial reality.

One of the key moments in Garcilaso's literary journey happens in 1590 with *La traducción del indio de los tres diálogos de amor de León Hebreo*. This was the first published work by an indigenous *mestizo* from the Americas. In one of its prefaces, the dedication to king Phillip II, the former Gómez Suárez de Figueroa formally introduced his fictional persona, a literary character created from his very own reality. The dedication functions as an instance to counter the juridical episode in Madrid. If we recall, the affair consisted of an audience where Gómez Suárez plead to his Majesty's court for the restitutions of his father's patrimony ("*pidiendo yo mercedes a su majestad*"). The dedication is, paradoxically, a parallel deposition, as if Garcilaso were recreating the court trial in Madrid. As such, he creates a parallel: in Madrid Gómez Suárez was trying to unsuccessfully prove his lineage before the court (i.e., his worthiness as a member of Spanish society); in *La traducción*, Garcilaso is trying to exalt the value and merit of his translation, i.e., his worthiness as an intellectual.

The irony of dedicating his first work to the king, after he swore to abandon any pretense of proving again his family lineage is not only proof of the fictional character of the author, but it is also a warning to the reader, for they will encounter several other instances where nothing seems to be as declared. In this sense, this autobiographical character reshapes many of the features of Gómez Suárez's life in order to create a solid literary persona: Inca Garcilaso, the Amerindian intellectual of aristocratic parentage. In every single one of his works, Inca Garcilaso makes sure to present himself as such. There is a constant repetition of his ethnic and ancestral background, alongside a masterful display of historical, philosophical and philological knowledge. This combination of factors inaugurates the metatextual frame that interconnects all of his works. As

such, each individual text not only bears its own particular meaning or purpose (be it literary, historical, philosophical, or philological), but also forms part of a bigger puzzle. The reader of Inca Garcilaso's opera witnesses a fictional life narrative unfolding before their eyes.

In the proems to *La traducción* —especially in the dedication to king Philip II—, Inca Garcilaso introduces himself as a natural high-born of the city of Cuzco and former captain of His Majesty's armies in the Alpujarras. These two features of Gómez Suárez's life emblazon the ethnic and social character of Garcilaso, the author. The confluence of his aristocratic and mix-breed *mestizo* background not only speaks of his exoticism, but also of a changing world. Sixteenth-century Spain, and Europe in general, witnessed the emergence of new subjects in the political and social arena: subjects with characteristics like those of Garcilaso. More and more people of different backgrounds began to have a public presence in politics, or in the arts. In *Lazarillo*, *pícaros* roamed the streets of Seville; in *Don Quixote*, shopkeepers and students begin to have more prominence and agency. Similarly, Indians and low-born conquistadors also appear in Spain's general imaginary through chronicles and histories. Thus, not only was the arrival to America a game changer for the emerging European states—especially for Spain—but it also produced substantial changes in all fronts, including a new literary tradition that reflected the growing number of these new modern subjectivities.

With the creation of his literary persona, Inca Garcilaso intends to shed light on the tensions, problems and dilemmas of the modern subject. This Spanish modern subjectivity was diverse. It consisted of a plethora of subjects, a large number of them being products of racial and religious marginalization. For New World subjectivities in particular, social identity was a concept marked by a caste system with deep racist undertones. But unlike today's conceptions of race and racism, sixteenth-century racial thought was deeply rooted in religious orthodoxy and social

pedigree conventions, rather than in phenotype. Such conventions were the product of Spain's historical struggle to consolidate a national state around Catholic orthodoxy (Padgen *Conquest*, 164).

As such, in Hispanic Iberia, non-Christian groups were constantly ostracized, and deemed inferior to Christians. Moreover, the statutes of *limpieza de sangre* (purity of blood) which required at least two generations of Christian ancestry to be considered a "real" Christian, added another layer of difficulty to social mobility. Hence, Jews, Moors, and new converts were doomed to either migrate or live a life of social and economic stagnation. After the *Reconquista* years (722 – 1492), there was rationalized prejudice against Jews and Moors distinctively characterized by a form of religious ideology (Padgen *Conquest*, 235). From the fifteenth century onwards, the legal and cultural emphasis of *limpieza de sangre* made Spaniards particularly conscious of racial difference in terms of social behaviors and parental lineage. In consequence, customs (forms of prayer, eating habits, and even personal hygiene) and genealogical trees were highly observed as a method of classifying individuals. The social groups resulting from these racial considerations were called *castas*. In the peninsula, this term was reserved for Moors, Jews or former Jews, but later it would also encompass the different forms of miscegenation in the Americas. So, in the New World, Spanish intellectuals pursued highly intricate and complex arguments to debate the right kind of Indian inferiority, and thus support the Spanish right for conquest, all while preserving the consistency of the Catholic dogma, as well as the divine right of the monarchy to govern. The formulaic essence of these racial considerations made its way across the Atlantic, thus resulting in similar standard prescriptions and prejudices against natives, as well as against *mestizos*. It should be noted, however, that theological and philosophical disquisitions were a rich ground for nuanced

debate about the nature of native peoples. These are precisely the issues that Inca Garcilaso tackles with ironic genius in the presentation of his racialized literary persona.

2.3 Subverting Racial Labels of Coloniality

2.3.1 Inca Garcilaso, the Indian

In the New World, the Indian question was undoubtedly a hot topic. By the late sixteenth century there was already general prejudice among Spaniards about the native's cognitive inferiority²⁰. Such inferiority was rooted more in the Spanish need to justify the missionary enterprise than in their already biased perception. Let's remember that Spain's main ideological concern was the defense and expansion of its self-appointed role as guardian of Christendom and its universal mission to expand the realms of Christianity (Padgen *Conquest*, 238). Thus, the consequences overseas resulted in a theoretical obsession over the issue of the evangelization of the Amerindian other. A well-written missionary agenda for Christian conversion gave purpose to the conquest and provided an infallible justification to Spanish presence in the Americas, and thus to further promote a full colonization enterprise. In this sense, the Spanish evangelizing agenda was paramount for religious and political purposes (238-39). Moreover, since legal writing defined the relationship between the Spanish state and its subjects, including *criollos* (Spaniards born in

²⁰ For a detailed explanation of the different arguments about the nature of Indians, see Anthony Padgen's *Dispossessing the Barbarian: the language of Spanish Thomism and the debate about the property of rights of the American Indians* (1990); and *The Peopling of the World: ethnos, race, and empire in the early modern world* (2009).

the Americas) and Indians, the theorization of a consistent and sound theory about the Indian's spiritual (cognitive) nature (inferiority) was a fundamental issue for Imperial Spain²¹. As such, conversion was, at least in paper, the fundamental objective of Spanish enterprise in the Americas.

However, as it would be expected for any political issue of such an importance, there was heated debate regarding the best method for conversion. There were in particular two forms of thinking about the Spanish religious enterprise in the Americas known as the first and second waves of evangelization. These represented two opposing ways of conceiving the conversion process, of explaining the natives' cognitive nature, and how to proceed in the ministry of the faith. In spite of the differences between the first and second waves of evangelization, there was an underlying idea: if Indians were to be guided and converted to Christianity, they had to be ignorant. Their ignorance was explained as a form of blindness to truth, both worldly and spiritual. The first wave of evangelization was associated with Bartolomé de las Casas and represented a more benign approach to this issue. For its proponents, Indians were thought of as unguided children, who, even without signs of wickedness in themselves, were still incapable of fully grasping the true meaning of God's divine plan for men. The second wave of evangelization was associated with José de Acosta and Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, and often recommended the use of institutionalized violence for conversion. For its proponents, the native's mental deficiency was regarded in conjunction with devilish and wicked practices, because Indians, as ignorant peoples, were easily deceived and

²¹ The Indian question was a way of describing the Spanish need for categorization of Indians as humans capable of conversion (having souls), but in need of constant guidance and mentorship due to their childlike nature, if not correction for unruly behavior. Intellectuals thus quarreled over definitions and compatibility with the scriptures.

prone to act under the influence of dark forces. This conception thus resorted to violence to set an example and effectively extirpate wickedness from the natives' souls.

Whatever the approach, the Indian's cognitive deficiency resulted in the natives acting wrongly, deviating from the true faith, and ultimately condemning their whole progeny to hell. In essence, Indians lacked the cognitive ability to discern what was real, what was true, and what was good (Lamana, 87). Furthermore, both evangelization ideas pinpointed another crucial element of the natives' intellectual deficiency: Indians were not only ignorant of these divine truths, but were also ignorant of their own ignorance. Therefore, the impossibility of recognizing their own cognitive deficiency put the natives in desperate need for external guidance and salvation. These arguments were used as justification for the Spanish political conquest, and to a large degree defined the nature of their presence in the New World as a whole. This is why Garcilaso's decision to portray himself as an Indian and intellectual directly questioned the Spanish belief in their own epistemological superiority. The indication that an Indian could also be a writer (a job mainly reserved for Spanish aristocrats and clerics) purports to a radical dichotomy aiming at dismantling the racist assumptions of Spanish evangelizers like Sepúlveda, Acosta and Las Casas. If there is an Indian who writes, there is an Indian who knows and is therefore capable of governing himself without any external assistance. Through this literary maneuver, Inca Garcilaso contradicts the Eurocentric narrative of Indian inferiority.

What is interesting about Garcilaso's criticism is the way he delivers it. The Indian question was certainly a delicate issue. A direct rebuttal to the idea of Spanish superiority ran the risk of suppression and censorship. In consequence, Garcilaso's critique needed to be performative, rather than a direct logical exposition. This is why he continuously reminds his readership of the things that an Indian *cannot do*, all while doing what he had just claimed an Indian could not do (Lamana,

86). One of the most telling examples of this performative exercise appears at the beginning of *Comentarios* (1609) when introducing the complex topic of post-Columbian cartography (i.e., the explanation of why there is a New World, which had not been accounted for before). Garcilaso warns that he will not engage in this topic, because, as an Indian, he cannot aspire to deal with such complex matters.

Mas porque no es aqueste mi principal intento *ni las fuerzas de un indio pueden presumir tanto*, y también porque la experiencia, después que se descubrió lo que llaman Nuevo Mundo nos ha desengañado de la mayor parte de estas dudas, pasaremos brevemente por ellas, por ir a otra parte, a cuyos términos finales temo no puedo llegar. (*Comentarios*, Book I, Chapter I).

However, a few pages later he ends up extensively talking about it anyways. He engages in a detailed explanation about the origins of the New-World and Old-World division, and even goes as far as to contradict those who believe in such a division:

Se podrá afirmar que no hay más que un mundo, y aunque llamamos Mundo Viejo y Mundo Nuevo, es por haberse descubierto aquél nuevamente para nosotros, y no porque sea dos, sino uno. Y a los que todavía imaginaren que hay muchos mundos, no hay para qué responderles, sino que estén en sus heréticas imaginaciones hasta que en el infierno se desengañen dellas (*Comentarios*, Book I, Chapter I).

So, when Garcilaso uses the word *indio*, he tries to make a point regarding the Indian's cognitive abilities. Since the word *indio* functions as the generic for all New World natives and operates as a marker of distinction, in this case separating cultured Europeans from the savage ignorant, Inca Garcilaso's appropriation of the term contradicts the meaning given by Europeans,

rendering it obsolete as an expression of epistemic disparagement. Such performative usage of the word was already found in the title of *La traducción del indio de los tres Diálogos de amor*, where Garcilaso purposely uses the word *indio* after the word for translation (and a translation represents a highly difficult intellectual task, for it supposes the mastering of not only both an unknown language and the language of the reader but both their cultural repertoires), thus flagrantly defying the supposedly cognitive inferiority of Indians. Finally, the title “*la traducción del indio*”, a translation done by an Indian, produces a surprising and exotic effect on the reader, who recognizes the novelty of the work. With this, Garcilaso highlights the significance of his translation not only as an important contribution to Spanish philosophy (León Hebreo was indeed a respected philosopher), but also because of the fact that it is an Indian who translates it and, therefore engages in complex philosophical thinking, once again contradicting any notion of Amerindian cognitive inferiority.

2.3.2 Inca Garcilaso, the Mestizo

The second label Garcilaso uses to describe himself was “*mestizo*”. While the label Indian was used to refer to ignorance, and mental inability, *mestizo* did not necessarily have a specific cognitive signification. *Mestizo* was a term that, according to Margarita Zamora (2016), spoke about a generalized social attitude against miscegenation (176). *Mestizo* was a term whose theoretical underpinnings are found in the long-established *limpieza de sangre* conventions, whose primary objective was to keep non-Spaniards from positions of power (Nirenberg 76). In this sense, it was a social term designed for discrimination. In practice, this meant that *mestizos* were destined to hold lesser roles and opportunities than Spaniards. For Garcilaso, this meant that it was going to be more difficult to make his way into the world of letters.

The prejudices against *mestizos* resembled those already held against Jews and new converts for decades, in that they were all thought to have of impure blood. After the long Jewish and Muslim purge of the early fifteenth century in the Peninsula, positions in the sciences and letters were reserved for Spaniards and old Christians, in opposition to Jews and new converts, whom were thought of as corrupt and potentially seditious (Nirenberg 76, 83). Similarly, in the American colonies, the Spanish crown feared that *mestizos* could develop a sense of patriotism towards their native land that might lead to rebellion. *Mestizos* were considered congenitally impure and dangerous. Based on this notion, most *mestizos* were actively discriminated against, and thus were kept from holding any real power in colonial administration (Zamora 180, Levillier vol. III, 235-36). As a result, only Spaniards were admitted to important positions, including the role of official historian in any New World Viceroyalty. In Peru, Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa, a Spaniard and former soldier during Charles V reign, was entrusted with the writing of the history of the Incas and their downfall. No native or Inca descendant was given such a task. In light of this, Garcilaso sought to counter the negative image that Spaniards had of Amerindians and their descendants, by linking his unfavorable *mestizaje* with his more favorable and dual aristocratic background: his Inca royal ancestry from his mother's side as well as his father's Iberian pedigree. As such, the image of an aristocrat-*mestizo* aimed to challenge that of an impure, and potentially seditious image imposed on him regarding *mestizos*.

As noted, the *mestizos*' negative image was rooted in the fact that most of them were the product of illicit marriages. According to the sixteenth century jurist Solórzano y Pereyra (1575-1655): "porque lo más ordinario es que [los mestizos] nacen de adulterio o de otros ilícitos y punibles ayuntamientos" (Levillier vol. 1, 445). *Mestizos* were thus poorly regarded overall, precisely because of an association between the negative act of adultery and being an offspring

thought to be inherently prone to vices and corruption. Years before Solórzano, Juan de Matienzo (1520-1579) had already referred to *mestizos* as restless and incorrigible delinquents. As such, these prejudices against *mestizos* prompted the idea that they posed a very real threat to the colonial order (Zamora 184). Thus, colonial jurors and administrators like Lope García de Castro, president of the Audiencia de Lima, warned against possible *mestizo* insurrection and civil unrest in a letter to the king in 1567:

ay tantos mestizos en estos rreynos y nacen cada ora que es menester que vuestra magestad mande ymbiar cédula que ningún mestizo ni mulato pueda traer arma alguna ni traer arcabuz en su poder so pena de muerte porque esta es una gente que andando el tiempo ha de ser muy peligrosa y muy perniciosa en esta tierra (Levillier, vol. III, 235).

Furthermore, during the early colonial period *mestizos* lost their rights to inherit *encomiendas*, to hold positions in the Church or political administration, and to enlist in the military (Zamora 184). This latter point is of special interest to Garcilaso because, in the sixteenth century, writing was still tightly associated to military values. Poets, chroniclers, and historians often participated in European wars or New World expeditions. Their military and intellectual pursuits were driven by the fact that these were activities that conferred name and authority in the highly aristocratic society of the Spanish Empire. Let's remember that, by that time, the majority of non-religious literature was written from, for, or about aristocrats. From the famous *cantares de gesta* (where dukes, counts, and princes were depicted as military champions) to the New World chronicles (where conquistadors tried to win fame and noble credentials through their deeds), there was a strong connection between nobility, military virtues, and writing. This is why Garcilaso purposely highlights his years of military service in the Peninsula (*La traducción*, proem), as a way

of defying the military restrictions for *mestizos* in the colonies, and of negating their supposedly treacherous nature. Moreover, his military career is another way of accentuating the image of the *mestizo* aristocrat for himself. By bringing these elements together, Garcilaso destabilizes the association between the figure of the *mestizo* and the traditional figure of the author.

This association gives rise to a new understanding of the author's authority that is not grounded on strict sixteenth-century conventions of noble lineage or blood purity. This new form of authorial authority rests rather on the illusion of those credential. In other words, Inca Garcilaso's authority depends on the *ingenio* of his own self-fashioning. The fact that Inca Garcilaso did not have Spanish nobiliary credentials (or was denied such credentials), in addition to the fact that he was a *mestizo* and a bastard, contravenes the Castilian notion of the aristocratic author. So, when Garcilaso presents himself as character with aristocratic lineage, despite his lack of it, he is not simply trying to irritate those who rejected his plea, but he is rather playing with the fictionality of those categories. He is drawing attention to the capricious nature of the social assumptions through which nobility was conferred or created. His insistence on claiming that he is both of double noble descent (Incan and Spanish nobility) and a *mestizo* (a bastard) erodes the epistemic foundations of the traditional definition of such terms (aristocrat and *mestizo*). This literary operation ironically reflects on the possibility of Indian nobility and authorial authority. Such operation gives rise to a twofold effect.

On the one hand, Inca Garcilaso demonstrates that a *mestizo* could certainly partake in professions traditionally reserved for Spanish aristocrats, i.e., Garcilaso puts forward the case that there is no real basis to claim what Indians or *mestizos* can or cannot do. Given that he was a *mestizo*, and thus one of the least expected people to be an author, Garcilaso's construction of his literary persona becomes a performative critique of the entire Spanish class and caste system. It

exposed the flimsy and volatile notions upon which racial categories were constructed. For example, faced with the image of an aristocratic *mestizo*, the reader could only be left to wonder: could a person with such noble ancestry still be a *mestizo*? How could a mestizo form part of His Majesty's army in Spain but not in the colonies? Could a mestizo be trusted to tell the truth? As a term, *mestizo* was not ontologically defined, but rather subject to social prejudices coming from the already highly racialized Iberian society. Hence, the difficulties Inca Garcilaso experienced, when he called himself a *mestizo* and not an Indian, were not only a strategy to avoid racial prejudice, but also the result of the clash between economic and political forces. Every time El Inca talks about the impossibility of legally claiming his father's name, he is indeed alluding to the efforts of the traditional ruling class of excluding new modern subjects (and subjectivities) from positions of power that the elite Spanish enjoyed. This is why Inca Garcilaso chooses to transmit feelings of pride regarding his *mestizo* status: "*Mestizo... me llamo a boca llena y me honro con él*" (*Comentarios*, Book IX, Chap. XXXII).

On the other hand, Inca Garcilaso shows that an author is the author of their own life story. In other words, that author's authority does not depend only on external factors. The author creates their own epistemic authority. With this, Inca Garcilaso inaugurates, alongside other works and authors, a new form of writing: modern fiction, where everyday reality and history are also sources of literary fiction. This is why Inca Garcilaso, the author, can be both an Indian writer and a *mestizo* aristocratic, despite traditional opinions concerning the Indian's supposed inferiority and despite the negative decision of the Madrid court regarding his plea to claim his father's name and inheritance.

Seen in its entirety, Garcilaso's opera functions as a self-conscious literary organism, whose constitutive elements do not only operate as individual works (with their particular

objectives), but also as pieces of a bigger puzzle. All prologues and proems opening his works, as well as the frequent self-references among the works, attest to this fact: they all point to an organic system of narration. In several passages of *Comentarios*, he pauses a story or description to remit the reader to La Florida where a more detailed explanation of the matter in question had been given, or vice versa. But one of the most patent examples of Garcilaso's organicity is given in his very first work. In the two prologues to his translation of Hebreo's Dialoghi (the letter to Maximilian of Austria and the dedication to the king), Garcilaso lays out his entire narrative plan: he mentions substantial progress on the chronicle about Hernando de Soto's expedition (La Florida), and alludes to a robust outline of his upcoming work on Peru's history (*Comentarios reales* and *Historia general del Perú*). Through these statements, it becomes apparent that Garcilaso's metanarrative is always at play. His life events and literary exploits become the narrative thread connecting the dots of an allegedly impossible intellectual endeavor. Most missionaries and Spanish historians argued that Indians were ignorant, incapable of intellectual work, and thus in constant need of Spanish guidance. This means that a person like Garcilaso (someone of Amerindian descent) was supposed to refrain from any intellectual activity. But El Inca's story tells us otherwise. Inca Garcilaso himself is both the author and protagonist of the first tale about an Amerindian intellectual. He is a translator, historian, commentator, creative writer, and philosopher. Therefore, Inca Garcilaso's story is actually about what Indians were not expected to do.

One final instance where this feature is particularly patent is the coat of arms that appears in the frontispiece of the first edition of *Comentarios reales* in 1609. This coat of arms was not inherited family heraldry but Inca Garcilaso's own creation. Similar to the way Gómez Suárez endowed his literary persona with a doubly aristocratic name (Inca Garcilaso), he also designed

his personal coat of arms with similar criteria. Once again, he appears bestowing upon himself symbols of nobility without real social sanction. As Christian Fernández points out, these heraldic symbols are proof of Inca Garcilaso's self-fashioning of his own *mestizo* identity (34).

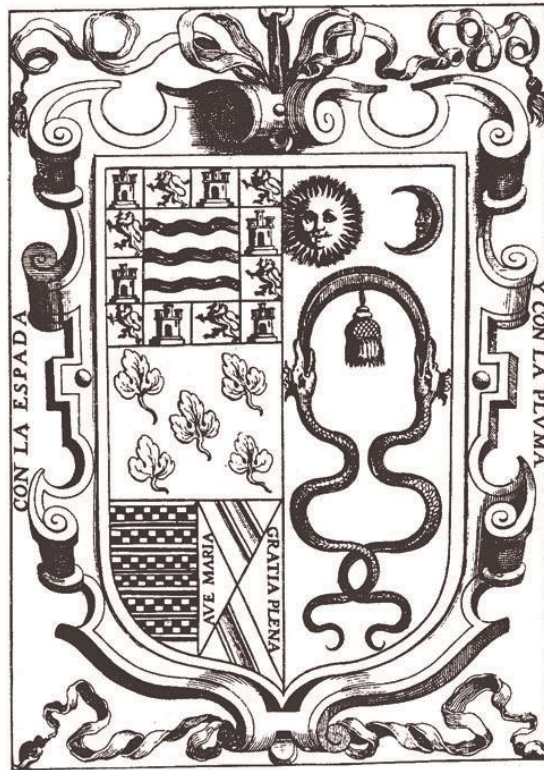


Figure 1. Inca Garcilaso's coat of arms as it appears in the frontispiece of the 1609 edition of *Comentarios reales*.

In a time in which people read heraldic symbols with great ease, and the emblems on coats of arms had direct political connotations for noble families, Inca Garcilaso had to carefully choose his symbolic associations. As the picture shows, the left side is dedicated to his paternal lineage, while the right corresponds to the maternal side of his family. According to Christian Fernández, the paternal side of the coat of arms displays three squares corresponding to three noble houses from which Sebastián Garcilaso de la Vega descended. The top square has waves surrounded by the lions and castles, which represent the Pérez de Vargas family are; in the center square there are

figures of fig leaves representing the Suárez de Figueroa; and, finally, the bottom square has small checkerboard squares of the Sotomayor and triangles with the “Ave Maria Gratia Plena” inscription representing the Mendoza de la Vega side of the paternal lineage (34). On the maternal side of the family, the symbolism is of a more creative arrangement. Since heraldry was in essence a European custom, Inca Garcilaso had to translate his Andean noble lineage into the Spanish heraldic language. At the top, he placed the two most significant deities of Incan mythology: the sun, Inti, and the moon, Quilla. The rest of his maternal side has two serpents facing one another, from whose mouths emerges a rainbow from which hangs the Incan imperial tassel, the *mascapacihua* (35). Finally, there are two inscriptions to the side of each familial group of symbols. The paternal side is accompanied by the inscription “con la espada”, and the maternal side by the inscription “con la pluma”. As I pointed out before, these are the two main elements that make up the archetypical connotation of the sixteenth century writer, author and intellectual: a noble man that showed dexterity with both the sword and the quill.

In light of these heraldic elements, the ironic use of the oxymoronic name of Inca Garcilaso becomes even more apparent. Not only are there two imperial codes condensed and forced together in one heraldic symbol, but they are also arranged in such a way that sword and quill appear on opposite ends: to the Spanish side belongs the sword and to the Inca belongs the quill. This seems to suggest that the intellectual qualities of Inca Garcilaso’s literary persona are associated to his Inca ancestry and to Inca culture rather than to his Spanish background, and that the elements of force and violence seem to be associated only with the Spaniards. In this sense, Inca Garcilaso appears to concede Spain’s military superiority but counter such superiority with an Andean talent for intellectual endeavors. Let’s not forget that his very first work is titled *La traducción del Indio*, which, in addition to subverting the negative image of the Indian, situates Garcilaso’s intellectual

proWess closer to his Amerindian heritage than to his European. In this sense, the title of Inca before the name Garcilaso comes to also imply an intellectual title. This association between the name of Inca and intellectuality is not gratuitous. Inca Garcilaso copied it from León Hebreo. As Doris Sommer has pointed out, Garcilaso learned from Hebreo the suggestive power of nominal resignification. León Hebreo, like Garcilaso, was not the original name of the *Dialoghi*'s author. He was born Yehuda Abravanel and changed his name in exile, after the Spanish expulsion in 1492. Choosing to live as an exiled Iberian Jew, Yehuda Abravanel changed his Hebrew name Yehuda for his Spanish counterpart, León, and then doubled down on his Jewishness by changing his last name to Hebreo (The Jew). This makes for an “uncanny echo system” between León Hebreo and Inca Garcilaso, thus forging a special connection only understood “through a shared history of Spanish reconquest, consolidation, and new conquests (Sommer 392). This is how these two names bear so much meaning. They are both a claim for Hispanic affiliation through an intellectual plea. In this sense, Hebreo comes to mean “the philosopher” while Inca, “the translator”, “the writer”, “the historian” or “the intellectual”.

This idea is further revealed as one examines the rest of the Incan heraldic symbols of the coat of arms. In Fernández's analysis, the snakes also indicate an intellectual symbol as well as an aristocratic emblem. In the Ancient world, serpent is a symbol of the Greek and Roman god Hermes or Mercury (who carried a caduceus or staff with a serpent around it), who is the god of translators, interpreters and thieves, hence the god of interpretation and eloquence, but also of concealment and trickery. Such description of Mercury is found in *La traduzion*, where Garcilaso

specifically translates that Mercury's emblems are "*una vara rodeada de una sierpe*" (106)²². In the Andean world, the snake, *amaru*, was also a symbol of intellectuality. Fernández observes that "people identified with the amaru—and hence with the triadic god Illapa (lightening, thunder, rainbow)—were predestined to become priests and *amautas* or philosophers of eloquence and prudence" (50). This hybrid cultural symbol of *amaru* and Mercury reinforces one of *Comentarios reales*' main arguments: that there is a historical and spiritual resemblance between the Western pagan world and Andean culture, that both Greco-Roman and Incan civilizations form part of the *praeparatio evangelica* that pave the way for the advent of Christianity.

Thus far, these examples show how Inca Garcilaso de la Vega gives a new complex and intricate notion of *mestizaje* that decolonizes the original Spanish meaning of the term, all while elevating his status as a writer. Garcilaso's image of the *mestizo* is thus a clear rebuttal of the negative notion against miscegenation so prevalent in the Iberian tradition, as well as an exotic title of intellectual distinction. Throughout his books, this new image of the *mestizo*, both a racialized individual and an aristocrat, becomes a repetitive model of intellectuality that attracts the reader to know more of the author and his work. Such cultural-hybrid image is one of Inca Garcilaso's most powerful decolonial tools, as he repeatedly reminds his audience of the fictional dichotomy that his name represents, thus cancelling out the traditional signification of being an Inca, a bastard, an impure brood.

²² Complete fragment: "*el cual Mercurio dicen ser dios de la elocuencia [...] mensajero de Júpiter, e intérprete de los dioses: y sus insignias son una vara rodeada de una sierpe.*" (La traducción 106)

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter has aimed to show how Inca Garcilaso constructs a literary version of himself as a fictional author who operates as an intertextual sign, as a metatextual character, and as a decolonial symbol. By introducing self-descriptions and narrating episodes of his life throughout different instances in his books, Inca Garcilaso, the author, connects all the elements of his opera and deconstructs traditional epistemological assumptions regarding literary authority. His life story contravenes deep-rooted Spanish beliefs about Indians, *mestizos*, and their descendants as ignorant and corrupt, and therefore incapable of writing. Furthermore, by embracing the paradoxical label (paradoxical for the Spaniards) of “Indian writer”, Inca Garcilaso negated the idea that Indians lacked both the skill and the authority to write (which thus meant that Indians were in fact capable of telling the truth, and, therefore, had intellectual authority). In short, his literary persona aimed to destabilize both the racist conceptions against Amerindians as well as traditional notions about authorship. By presenting himself as a an Indian and a mestizo who writes, and as a fictional author who is able to make his *believe of his fictional identity as if it were the truth*, Inca Garcilaso calls attention to the fictionality of both race and authorial authority. As such, the entire decolonial operation affirms that Indians and mestizos can indeed write and tell the truth, and authors do not necessarily tell the truth but play with the appearance of truths. Such literary artistry, inaugurates a form of writing where the quotidian and ordinary can be forms of fiction (e.g., the modern novel, utopian texts, metahistorical critiques, fictional autobiographies) that—in a colonial context—foster decolonial interventions against racist concepts and Eurocentric notions of epistemic authority.

In the previous chapter, I analyzed Inca Garcilaso’s creation of a literary persona as a Baroque strategy for a decolonial critique. I argued that the fictionalization of his authorial persona

as an ethnic chameleon of sorts activates a sense of doubleness that allows his texts to speak on two levels. On the surface, Garcilaso's explicit use of the terms "Indian" or "mestizo" seems to convey a sense of exoticism as well as an apparent commitment to the colonial norms needed to avoid censorship or any claims of sedition and wrongdoing. Deeper in the work, however, Garcilaso's deliberately contradictory play with the meaning of those racial labels introduces a decolonial deconstruction of their meaning. In the very act of writing as an Indian or mestizo Garcilaso contravened what was expected from a non-Spaniard. An Indian was not supposed to write, and a mestizo was not to be trusted. Nevertheless, Garcilaso did write and energetically claimed that he was indeed telling a truthful story while constantly (and ironically) acknowledging his racial shortcomings. These tensions and contradictions produced a complex Baroque character that both confirms and defies the Spanish representation of Amerindians and their descendants. In other words, Inca Garcilaso creates an image of himself that seems to consent to the rules of intellectual decorum applied to Spanish letters, all while subverting the Euro-centric prejudices against Indians and their descendants.

Additionally, I showed how the ubiquitous presence of the author's personal story in his entire opera reshapes the meaning and purpose of each individual text. They are no longer seen as texts with a specific objective. *La traducción* is not merely a translation of Hebreo's ideas, and *Comentarios* are no longer notes on previous historiographical works. They become pieces of a larger saga that tells the story of the provocative figure of the first Amerindian writer, who, in turn, becomes a powerful Baroque symbol of decoloniality. In this way, Garcilaso functions as a meta-character that rearranges the narrative conventions that early modern writers were supposed to follow as well as the delineated conventions of each of the literary genres with which he engages. Garcilaso's texts are not the usual or expected translation, chronicle, or commentary. They are

instead a critical approach to the canonical constraints laid upon these genres and to the underlying concepts that sustain the general view of the Western rules of writing. In this sense, Garcilaso tackles a variety of issues concerning the canonical formation of the Renaissance precepts for writing: how history, translations, theology are supposed to be written and who are the subjects of this history. The originality of his work thus rests in his careful deconstruction of the core concepts of Renaissance literary normativity. In short, Garcilaso offers a series of works that reflect upon the nature of their own genres.

In the following pages, I will focus on this latter point, specifically as it relates to the deconstruction of New World historiography. I will build upon Garcilaso's authorial doubleness to introduce another sense of doubleness that blurs the artificial boundaries between historiographical and fictional discourses. This doubleness consists of a discourse that unveils the fictional nature of historiography and introduces metahistorical and philosophical truths through fictional narratives. Such an ironic representation of truthful discourse or historiography is essentially the discourse of the modern novel. My contention is that Inca Garcilaso de la Vega is a modern novel pioneer, not because his writing is more fantastic than factual, but because he was one of the authors that inaugurated the modern form of historiographical criticism through fictional-writing.

The connection between historiography and fiction is not novel, as historians have always borrowed from literary rhetorical figures and strategies.²³ Additionally, the modern novel is not simply defined as a fantastic tale, but as a place where the literary imagination is imbued with

²³ See Hayden White (1973). In his famous work, *Metahistory*, White throws away the notion of objective historical truths by claiming that historical truths are created through a process of literary-imbued strategies.

historical truths and vice versa. However, the idea that fictional literature, especially the modern novel, has anything in common with New World chronicles and histories still seems somewhat counter-intuitive and intriguing. Convention dictates that historiography belongs to the social sciences; hence, it is the historian's task to deliver facts about the past, avoiding any personal considerations. This popular notion finds its roots in the traditional Aristotelian dichotomy between poetry (literary fantasy) and history (accurate reports of reality). According to Aristotle, history and poetry do not differ because of their form, but because of their content: "one [history] tells what has happened, while the other [poetry] tells what would happen" (*Poetics* IX). From this point of view, history deals with facts, while poetry captures the broad spectrum of cogitations and products of imagination (e.g., philosophizing and creative writing). In this sense, claiming that the modern novel bridges the gap between history and poetry purports a radical reconceptualization of the notions of historical truth and literary invention.

Conceptually, the Aristotelian contrast between history (as truthful accounts of the past) and poetry (as the product of the imagination) became a well-established notion throughout Western intellectual history (White, *Metahistory* 46). However, the reality has been quite different. The Aristotelean view excluded the use of the faculty of imagination from the activity of history-writing. History, therefore, was conceived of as an objective exercise of the mind, where any personal appreciation had to be erased from the record.²⁴ Paradoxically, the "standard" historical texts have never been free from subjective appreciations. This is not only true for Herodotus or

²⁴ Despite conceptual efforts to separate "the real" from "the fictional," human imagination has always played a role in the process of history-writing. Even the quintessential poetic or fictional works of Ancient Greece (e.g., the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*) are fundamental pieces of Western historiography.

Thucydides (ironically, Aristotle's archetypes of history-writing), who wrote in the first person (thus, fully disclosing their individual perspective), but also true for New World historiography. Since the arrival of the Europeans in the Americas, conquistadors and their scribes were moved to accommodate their stories to different political and economic incentives. Hence, the boundaries between fact and fiction, history and poetry, began to fade as New World chroniclers used their imaginations to fill in missing historical gaps in the numerous reports that they gathered, edited, or transcribed. They imagined events, conversations, and motives to make sense of highly fragmented pieces of information collected in their journeys (Gaylord, "Don Quixote's New World of Language" 215). However, according to the prescriptivism of the prevailing Aristotelian thought, this imagined material was meant to pass as hard-core facts of objective and indubitable reliability.

Nevertheless, these different versions of the truth did not exactly translate into a conscious scrutiny of the traditional categories according to which history was supposed to be written. The events narrated in New World chronicles and histories—however biased and fantastic—still tried to pass as hard-core facts of objective and indubitable reliability. Rolena Adorno has observed that conquistadors and chroniclers established their literary authority by playing the game of verisimilitude, even though, "deep inside", they knew the intention and art of their deceit (*The Polemics of Possession*, 58). Achieving rhetorical verisimilitude without actually relying on facts became the medium through which Spaniards reconciled their quest for royal reward with history writing. It was common practice among sixteenth-century historians to ignore the limits between history and fiction in their struggle to transform their own personal perspective into a serious and credible historical document.

Unlike the other chroniclers and historians, Inca Garcilaso did not try play this game of purported verisimilitude. His game was different. Rather than trying to simply make the projections of his imagination pass as facts—as Spanish historians did—Garcilaso made sure that his trickery could be spotted. His game involves constructing fiction that looks like reality; throughout the texts, he leaves little bits and pieces of information that allow the reader to see the origin of his invention and deceit. This literary game is especially significant in *La Florida del Inca* (1695), where Garcilaso, for the first time in his works, consciously blurs the classical boundaries between fact and fiction. The real is deliberately fictionalized, and the traditional conventions of historiography are unapologetically mimicked and ridiculed. Here, Garcilaso undertakes the project of confronting history's conceptual prescriptivism writing against its actual real or material development.

The case of *La Florida* is particularly relevant because, unlike Garcilaso's other major work, *Comentarios reales de los incas*, where fiction still emerges from the Incan mythical past as if it were an epic tale, *La Florida*'s fiction stems directly from the everyday vicissitudes of the conquistadors' journey into Florida. The book focuses on the travels of conquistador Hernando de Soto's company through Florida and their interaction with the natives of those lands. In this book, Garcilaso manufactures a fiction by rearranging historical facts to thread his own version of history instead of dwelling on the mythical and supernatural as the primary motives of fictional tales. As such, *La Florida* marks a shift from the mythical and the fantastic as the sole sources of fiction to the quotidian and ordinary. The day-to-day descriptions of the conquistadors' lives as well as the ethnographic depictions of the unknown land of Florida becomes the material from which a characteristically modern form of fiction emerges. Additionally, Garcilaso's version of Soto's

expedition also functions as a decolonial tool that destabilizes the relationship between Spaniards and Indians by breaking away from the Spanish myth of cultural superiority.

In this chapter, I propose an analysis of *La Florida* as a modern novel. I argue that this work is a particularly modern form of fiction that, building upon the sixteenth-century historiographical penchant for ignoring the limits between history and fiction, produces a story that attempts to seem real but reveals itself as a plot of the imagination. To explore this perspective, I build upon the connections that Gaylord makes between New World historiography and prose fiction, paying special attention to her original analysis of the figure of Miguel de Cervantes as a fictionalizer of New World historiographical discourse (“Don Quixote’s New World of Language”, 221). Based on Gaylord’s ideas, I find a similar relationship between Inca Garcilaso and the New World historiographical tradition. However, I go a step further. Not only do I argue that *La Florida* fictionalizes the historiographical discourse as Cervantes does in *Don Quixote*, but also that it attempts to destabilize the colonial categories of cultural superiority with which Spanish historians usually worked. This allows me to suggest that the origins of Latin American fiction and of the modern novel—especially the Latin American novel—are decisively decolonial.

3.0 CHAPTER TWO. TRUTH, AND FICTION IN INCA GARCILASO'S *LA FLORIDA DEL INCA* AND THE DECOLONIAL ORIGINS OF THE MODERN NOVEL

3.1 New World History: Truth, Fiction and the Emergence of the Novel

Gaylord argues that New World history relied heavily on fiction to make sense of the new and often confusing reality that appeared before Europeans (“The True History”, 219-220). Furthermore, she also asserts that Cervantes took a special interest in this phenomenon, which ultimately inspired the writing of his masterpiece, *Don Quixote*. In order to present and connect these ideas, she develops two main points centered on 1) the author’s concern with authority and credibility and 2) fiction as a tool to explain the unknown. On the one hand, Gaylord says that New World histories (usually called *historia verdadera*) activate a dynamic of curiosity in the reader, because while historians try to portray these texts as serious and reliable, in reality they are struggling to sustain the credibility of the information they present (“The True History” 218; “Don Quixote’s New World of Language” 75). Hence, New World histories “necessarily recount two stories: one, the story of the events; the other, the story of how the author has come to know what he knows and to write it.” (“The True History” 218). This phenomenon not only draws attention to the events, but also to “the scene of its writing and to the subject position of the historian” (“The True History” 218). Therefore, any claim of historical objectivity becomes dependent on the author’s credentials. In this sense, historiographical authority does not derive from an objective set of rules, but from the author’s subjective appeal. It is thus not surprising—Gaylord argues—that the rubric of “*verdadera*” (truthful) (*historia verdadera, relación verdadera*) was one of the most

popular labels in the early modern period, portraying the period's angst for truthfulness and credibility as forms to establish textual authority ((“The True History” 218).²⁵

On the other hand, Gaylord observes that there is a close connection between New World historiography and fantastic tales and legends. She claims that the astonishing encounter of new geographies and cultures put pressure on early modern writers to try to make sense of these New World phenomena. This sense of urgency “put the earnest historian and the literary liar in the same boat...for both, after all, had to make things ‘never before heard or seen’ present in the here and now of their audiences’ imaginations” (“The True History” 219-20). Thus, New World history adopted scenes and characters that would have never appeared outside the pages of fictional books. Moreover, New World history started to rely on a mythical past in order to make sense of an extraordinary present. This phenomenon, Gaylord explains, had to do with the idea that historical works were identified by relying on what had already been acknowledged as known (“The True History”, 221).

In *The Writing of History* (1975), Michel de Certeau has stated that historical and fictional narratives differ in the set of conventions they use to represent the relationship between language and the world. The Renaissance's historical understanding relied on previous notions of what was already taken as fact to produce true historical discourses. However, since the New World reality

²⁵ Bernal Díaz del Castillo's *Historia verdadera de la Nueva España* (1632) was certainly the archetype. Also, Francisco Xérez's *Verdadera relación de la conquista del Perú* (1534) and Miguel de Luna's *Historia verdadera del Rey don Rodrigo* (1592) form part of the many titles and subtitles appealing to truth. In addition to the titles, there are a plethora of works that, although they do not call themselves *historia verdadera*, constantly make references to their privileged access to the truth in the text. Among these texts, one finds famous works such as Cieza de León's *Crónica* (1553), Bartolomé de las Casas' *Historia de las Indias* (partially published in 1600).

was the place of the unknown, fiction was the only way to provide understanding. Thus, New World historians had to rely not only on the already known historical truths of the Old World and the formulas for their representation, but also on the fictional conventions for representing the unknown. This is why “without the benefit of prior tellings, Spanish historians of the New World had to build the conventions of the real and the true virtually from the ground up, with precious little shared ground” (Gaylord, “The True History” 221).

In short, New World historians not only prompted a discourse that leaned heavily on the already accepted historical truths of the Old World, but also on their own fantastic imaginings. Since the New World lacked a specific referent, their minds’ fantastic projections lent some material. This becomes particularly apparent in early accounts, where fables and mythical descriptions fill the pages describing a completely foreign landscape, radically different peoples, and animals never seen before. For instance, Columbus’ benevolent descriptions of helpful native islanders in Hispaniola was a carefully crafted move to sugarcoat his failure at finding riches and reliable trading routes on his first trip. Similarly, Cortés’ exaggerated descriptions of the Aztecs’ sacrificial rituals were aimed at condemning their culture, thus legitimizing his incursion without moral hesitation.

So far, these remarks are a preamble to Gaylord’s next argument. She argues that the act of reflecting upon this fictional character of history-writing was not a task that most authors were capable of undertaking. According to her, it took several years and the genius of a giant to lay bare the fictional nature of sixteenth-century historiography. Gaylord argues that, more than a critique or a re-envisioning of chivalric literature, Miguel de Cervantes’ masterpiece is a critical revision of history-writing, especially of New World historiography (“The True History” 222-23). Unlike the customary analysis of *Don Quixote* as a reinvention of chivalric romances, her argument is that

Cervantes engages with the period's anxiety over truth and historical authority by "endowing his characters and his own authorial persona with the historiographical obsession about the truth of their stories and, moreover, by letting them tell their stories with the counterfeited words of actual historians" ("The True History" 222).

Echoing Gaylord ideas, I argue that one of Inca Garcilaso's main concerns is the literary or fictional nature of history-writing. Furthermore, I argue that it was not only Cervantes, but also—and perhaps more straightforwardly—Garcilaso²⁶ who employed these innovative narrative strategies aimed at mimicking, mocking, and, therefore, criticizing the New World historiographical obsession with truth and verisimilitude. This is clear from the very frame that structures his opera (i.e., the fact that the authorial persona is a literary invention). Building upon this idea of a fictional author, the entirety of Garcilaso's work dwells on the assumption that the truthfulness of the historical record is not infallible but rather open to inquiry. This means that what Garcilaso presents as historiographical is itself open to questioning. In fact, as we will see, Garcilaso *La Florida*'s preface opens with a presentation of Garcilaso's sources, who appear to be more than dubious. These are literary innovations that give *La Florida* an ironic supposed historical verisimilitude: an unnamed author and two dubious informants. Through them, Garcilaso deploys a narrative strategy that highlights the subjective and unacknowledged nature of historiographical authority.

²⁶ Here, it should be noted that other New World authors, such as Cabeza de Vaca, are part of this group of modern novel pioneers, but a joint analysis of Garcilaso and Cabeza de Vaca exceeds the limits of this chapter.

3.2 La Florida del Inca: From Historiography to the Modern Novel

La Florida is not a chronicle or a history (*historia*) in a traditional sense. On a formal level, it resembles the most traditional chronicles and histories of the discovery and conquest period, but its content holds an ironic tone towards the historiographical pursuit of truth and the historian's obsession with veracity and credibility. In other words, while it explicitly aims to narrate the "true" story of conquistador Hernando de Soto and his company of men in the southern coast of North America, it implicitly fosters a critique of the ways in which chronicles and histories are written. *La Florida* is Garcilaso's first attempt at destabilizing the narrative conventions of history-writing. As we will see, it is a narrative model that resolutely seeks to ridicule any attempt at historiographical pretentiousness. Through a carefully crafted narrative structure, *La Florida* mimics the traditional historical formulae while at the same time introducing a series of twists and contradictions that erode the supposed correspondence between the written text and historical truths. Such determination represents a break from a perfunctory form of history writing and the beginning of a "woke" writing of sorts.

This awoken or conscious form of writing is rendered visible through a series of literary tricks and strategies that ironically question Garcilaso's own historical authority as well as the credibility of his sources. From the very beginning, in the proem to the reader of *La Florida*, there is a patent mockery of the period's angst to pursue authority on the grounds of truth and veracity. In this proem, Garcilaso contravenes the expected and formulaic claims for veracity in colonial writing by stating that the main source of his story is but an informal conversation with a friend, whom he never names and, instead, simply calls him "*mi autor*" or "*amigo*":

Conversando mucho tiempo y en diversos lugares con un caballero,
grande amigo mío, que se halló en esta jornada, y oyéndome muchas y muy

grandes hazañas que en ella hicieron así españoles como indios, me pareció cosa indigna y de mucha lástima que obras tan heroicas que en el mundo han pasado quedasen en perpetuo olvido. (*La Florida* 18)

The informality of the setting as well as the author's reluctance to share his informant's name are provocative strategies to ironically question the validity, pertinence, and truth that chronicles and histories were supposed to convey. Although scholars have pointed out that the identity of this informant is most likely Gonzalo Silvestre—a long-time friend of El Inca, whom he met in Cuzco and remained friends with until his death in Córdoba—the active withholding of his identity in the book is very telling of Garcilaso's novelistic intentions. Moreover, Garcilaso's insistent concern with truthfulness indicates that the theme of truth and fiction lays at the heart of his work: “*escribir las cosas que en ella se cuentan como son y pasaron.*” (*La Florida*, Proemio, 19) This formulaic statement seems to reinforce the ironic sense of the text that trots out historiography's traditional procedures. Garcilaso seems to begin with a playful interaction with his readership, where the standard devices of history writing will be cancelled out by his own provocative declarations.

Such rhetorical strategy is further accentuated when Garcilaso writes, “*me pareció cosa indigna y de mucha lástima que obras tan heroicas que en el mundo han pasado quedasen en perpetuo olvido*” (*La Florida*, Proemio, 18). In this quote, he gives us another cue to understand the playful and fictional spirit of his endeavor. When Garcilaso talks about “*obras tan heroicas que en el mundo han pasado*” (18) to describe the Floridian expedition, he is paradoxically talking

about a failed expedition and not a heroic one.²⁷ In this sense, Garcilaso is making manifest his intention to play a literary game. From here on, a number of hints and double-entendres will remind the reader that *La Florida* is not a history in the official and usual way, but rather an invention. Nevertheless, it is of paramount importance to Garcilaso to keep playing the game of writing as if he was constructing an official chronicle:

El mayor cuidado que se tuvo fue escribir las cosas que en ella se cuentan como son y pasaron, porque siendo mi principal intención que aquella tierra se gane para lo que se ha dicho, procuré desentrañar al que me daba la relación de todo lo que vio, el cual era hombre hijodalgo y, como tal, se preciaba tratar verdad en toda cosa. (*La Florida*, Proemio 19; the emphasis is mine)

As mentioned above, this quote is but a formulaic statement in historiography. In reality, however, it is a fundamental piece of Garcilaso's literary game. With this quote, Garcilaso introduces one of the most pervasive epistemological presuppositions among sixteenth-century historians: equating nobility with credibility.²⁸ It was customary that gentlemen of noble descent appealed to their noble status as proof of the veracity and honorable reliability of their statements. This is why many texts of the time beseeched the sponsorship and patronage of clerics and noblemen as proof of their reliability. However, Garcilaso counters the supposed power and reliability of his friend's aristocratic status by withholding his name. More than one's heraldic

²⁷ Florida gained fame as a most hostile and treacherous land, where two of the worst Spanish failures took place (Pánfilo de Narváez's and Hernando de Soto's expeditions).

²⁸ David M. Posner (1999) claims in *The Performance of Nobility* that early modern European nobles held an image of nobility, hence of themselves, as something pure, unmediated, and even innocent. It was an unpolluted image of virtuosity. The noble presents himself as an *actor veritatis*, an advocate of truth.

credentials, the minimum condition for credibility is the disclosure of one's identity as well as the identity of one's informants, as is still expected today. Thus, it is even more paradoxical to cite a nobleman without a proper name. This becomes an oxymoron and an irony of the highest sophistication. The oxymoron of a nameless noble man suggests that Garcilaso is consciously playing a game with his readers where asserting something (e.g., my informant is a noble man) does not mean that it can be proven; he cannot prove that his informant is indeed a noble man while he remains nameless. Garcilaso's markers of truthfulness and reliability are, thus, intentionally at odds. Garcilaso withholds the name of his main informant (as he calls him "*mi amigo*"), but ironically, the nameless character is described as a *hidalgo*, and, as such, he is expected to always tell the truth: "*el cual era hombre hijodalgo y, como tal, se preciaba 86artar verdad en toda cosa*" (*La Florida*, Proemio, 19).²⁹ With this irony, Garcilaso is deliberately stripping his text of the reliability conferred by a proper name. Instead of projecting a sense of truthfulness and veracity, the irony functions as a powerful critique of the period's obsession with nobility as a source of truth and credibility. In a way, it is as if Garcilaso's desired quest for credibility and objectivity is deliberately truncated by his own subjective caprice. We could even go a step further and claim that Garcilaso intentionally denied that his story could be truthful from the very moment he refused to name his main informant. In summary, Garcilaso's literary game consists of a tug of war between an explicit message and its implicit denial. It is a game of

²⁹ It is important to point out here that scholars have identified this nameless informant as Gonzalo Silvestre, who shared his experiences in Florida with Garcilaso in Córdoba for a number of weeks. However, Silvestre is never mentioned in the text. It is this conscious omission that gives rise to my argument.

appearances that opens up the discussion for our appreciation of *La Florida* as a novel form of fiction, one directly connected to the emergence of the modern novel.

But Garcilaso's critique on the matter of authorship and truthfulness goes beyond the aforementioned irony of a nameless noble man. Garcilaso complicates things even further by mentioning two other dubious historical sources. He discloses the names of two Spanish soldiers who accompanied his friend-informant in Soto's expedition. They are Alonso Carmona and Juan Coles. Though they can be seen as an attempt to provide a more credible façade to his claims, their presence in the narrative is mainly a deeper critique of the problem of nobility and truth. Carmona and Coles were but mere soldiers of Soto's company, not hidalgos. This means that they are of little value within the Spanish aristocratic hierarchy, which, in turn, signifies that they are less credible than others who could prove some aristocratic lineage. Instead of providing the honor, solemnity, and aristocratic gravitas that the nameless informant cannot provide, they further accentuate the dubious mark upon Garcilaso's historical sources. Moreover, the fact that Garcilaso discloses Coles' and Carmona's names, but not the name of his main informant posits an uncomfortable yet ironic image related to the unequal hierarchical system of his time; all types of credentials were required from non-nobles in order to prove their worth, while nobles were granted authority by the mere fact of their rank in the aristocratic system. Now, the irony in this case resides in the fact that names were what was required from Carmona and Coles, but not from Garcilaso's main informant, yet names were all nobles had to legitimize their privileges and authority. With this, it is manifest that Garcilaso's project touches upon the most central and fragile issue of the

aristocratic discourse of power.³⁰ In essence, Garcilaso is questioning the epistemological categories upon which of the entire aristocratic regime was established. He is negating that nobility immediately grants credibility and claiming that a name is too much of a fragile symbol for truth and authority.

Past the question of nobility, Garcilaso continues to highlight the issue of historical truthfulness and credibility on another front. In spite of Carmona's and Coles' lack of noble status, they are meant to make the account more credible. Even Castanien notes that El Inca himself stated that using the narratives of two additional eyewitnesses to recount the events of the expedition served to not only fill in gaps of information, but also confirm the veracity of his informants' descriptions (78).³¹ However, this is only a façade. Carmona and Coles are but two additional yet fundamental pieces of Garcilaso's literary game of "fictional historiography," which is nothing else but the creation of a modern novel. By analyzing their function in the text, one can see the transformation of Garcilaso's historiographical account of Soto's expedition into a modern fictional text. Carmona's and Cole's accounts deceive readers into thinking that they are reading a real-life account, all while leaving enough clues through which this fiction is eventually exposed.

³⁰ The criticism of the relationship between nobility and truth could also be adduced on other grounds. When it comes to New World historiography, trying to claim a textual authority of sorts based on noble status seems to be an almost chimerical delusion. The high-ranking members of the Spanish noble class did not travel to the West Indies in search of fortune and goods. In the fifteenth century, these aristocrats were found in the military campaigns against the Turks or in Flanders, and not as part of the American expeditions.

³¹ El Inca himself states that he only acquired Coles' and Carmona's versions after he had already completed *La Florida*. As a general strategy, the narratives of these two additional eyewitnesses not only served to fill in informational gaps, but also to confirm the veracity of his informant's descriptions (Castanien 78).

First, these written accounts have never been found, and some scholars believe that they never existed. Second, and more importantly, Garcilaso himself takes the time and effort to discredit Carmona's and Coles' accounts in the text. He says that Carmona "*no quiso más que sus parientes y vecinos leyesen las cosas que había visto por el nuevo mundo*" (60) and that Coles "*como la obra no había de salir en su nombre, no se le debió dar nada por ponerla en orden y dijo lo que se le acordó*" (60). This intentional refutation not only provides the author enough narrative leisure to construct a fictional account of what happened in Soto's journey, but also allows him to integrate a conceptual criticism of the epistemological hierarchies of the time. Later in the prologue, Garcilaso confirms it:

Algunas cosas dignas de memoria que ellos [Carmona y Coles] cuentan...y otras semejantes no las puse en nuestra historia, por no saber en cuáles provincias pasaron, porque en esto de nombrar las tierras que anduvieron, como ya lo he dicho, son ambos muy escasos...Y en suma, digo que no escribieron más sucesos de aquellos en que hago mención de ellos, que son los mayores, y huelgo de referirlos en sus lugares por poder decir que escribo de relación de tres autores contestes. Sin los cuales tengo en mi favor una gran merced que un cronista de la Majestad Católica me hizo por escrito, diciendo, entre otras cosas, lo que sigue: "Yo he conferido esta historia con una relación que tengo, que es la de las reliquias de este excelente castellano que entró en la Florida"(La Florida, Proemio 61).

Again, by relying on a fictitious informant-author (who is never named, but whose participation in Soto's failed expedition is never questioned) and two *seemingly confirmatory* sources of dubious origin (which are, eventually, discredited), Garcilaso opens up a new mode of

narrating and engaging with his readership. He gives and takes; he upholds one thing and later—surreptitiously—negates that very same claim. Essentially, he is secretly telling the reader that his historical sources might not be more than his own embellished fabrications, that he might just be borrowing from reality the material with which he creates his own version of reality. In other words, the real is but the raw material for his fiction. Here is where I argue that *La Florida* is not meant to be read as a historiographical work, but as *if it were* a historiographical work. In this way, it inaugurates the modern novel tradition because it is a text that tries to deceive the reader into thinking that they are reading a real-life account, all while leaving enough hints and signs through which the trickery is eventually unraveled. Moreover, I argue that the modern novel, as embodied by *La Florida*'s narrative model, fosters a critical view of the sixteenth-century understanding of history and historiography because it implicitly—yet ubiquitously—questions and ridicules any attempt for historical objectivism. Such determination represents a break from a perfunctory form of history-writing, where the correspondence between reality and truth is never really questioned.

Garcilaso's break from the traditional form of history writing is anchored in the aforementioned intermingling of literary genres. This means that these multiple crossings of different genres were not the conscious invention of a creative literary mind, but rather the product of a sense of urgency to explain things never before seen or heard. Thus, my point is not that *La Florida* is the first work where the classic limits of literature (e.g., Aristotle's dichotomy) were crossed. My idea is that Garcilaso's first attempt at *consciously* creating a destabilizing narrative against the established conventions of history-writing amounts to the introduction of fiction as a revolutionary textual device for the transformation of the traditional discourse of history-writing into the modern novel. To further illustrate this point, I would like to mention Gaylord's ideas about *Don Quixote*'s particular form of fictionalization of the historical discourse (Gaylord, "The

True History”, 224). With this, I hope to show how *La Florida* and *Don Quixote* form part of a similar group of works that not only share similar concerns but also similar rhetorical strategies, thus inaugurating a type of literature that, instead of being the antonym of historiography, as Aristotle would propose, is deeply engaged with it—questioning it, deconstructing it, warning against the fallacy of its objectivist pretense.

3.3 The Modern Novel: A Metahistorical Critique

Not only were *La Florida* and *Don Quixote* published in the same year (1605), but, more importantly, they share similar concerns about the problem of historical truths and historical authority. As mentioned above, *La Florida* dislocates the locus of enunciation from where truth is supposedly spoken by questioning the reliability of its own historical sources. In a similar fashion, *Don Quixote* gives an unclear authorial image and therefore an unclear picture of the origins of the information that is being conveyed. In the preface to the book, Cervantes indicates that he is not the original author and that he is merely passing along information found at the historical archives of La Mancha. Specifically, he declares that he is but a scribe, rewriting a story found in some old papers written in Arabic and forgotten in a Spanish bazar. In this way, the author becomes a major topic in the narration. The problems of authorship and truthfulness are at the very core of its message. From this point on, Cervantes, like Garcilaso in *La Florida*, starts playing a literary game where the author of the story saddles someone else with the responsibility of conveying the truth. The story then fuses fiction and truth through various figures of speech filled with double meanings. For instance, Don Quixote is both an old hidalgo and a knight errant, Sancho a peasant and a squire, windmills turn into giants, and, as such, the story, in general, is both a history and a

novel. This latter point means that the historiographical mode of speech in which the novel is supposedly written harbors a double meaning as well: it is also a fiction. These elements of doubleness, Gaylord argues, are a testament to the emergence of the modern novel as a genre that simultaneously articulates the models for truth-telling (or reality-telling) and narrating fiction (Gaylord, "The True History" 224). However, in order to better understand Gaylord's explanation of Cervantes' game of appearances and fictional truths, let's first take a quick look at how Don Quixote's account is presented.

Don Quixote is the story of an old hidalgo, who one day, from the excessive reading of chivalric tales, goes mad and horses around the world pretending to be knight errant like one in the books he so obsessively reads. What interests me here is that the narrator mentions that Don Quixote's story is not fiction, but truth. He explains it by telling how he came to know about the existence of Don Quixote. One day he, the narrator (who could be Cervantes or not), found some old files, which contained the story of the hidalgo. Taken by the amusement of the tale, he began to rewrite it. These initial pages, however, did not have the entirety of Don Quixote's story. Frustrated by this impasse, the author-narrator was resigned to stay in the dark about the rest of the story. But another day, one of the most relevant moments in the narration occurred. The author-narrator found several files in Arabic, where the rest of Don Quixote's story was written. He then hurried to buy them and hired a translator to resume writing down the hidalgo's adventures. With these events, the author-narrator corroborated his initial assertion: Don Quixote's was indeed a true story. Additionally, he found out that it was written not by any man, but by a historian, an

Arabic historian to be precise, named Cide Hamete Benengeli (*Don Quixote*, Part I, Book I, Chap. IX).³²

The resemblances with Inca Garcilaso's narrative strategies are astonishing. Garcilaso uses a similar backstory in order to frame his narrative tale. When he describes one of his written sources, that of Juan Coles, he tells us a story of "lost and found documents" similar to those found by Don Quixote's narrator (*Don Quijote*, Part I, Chapter IX). Coles is a native of the Andalusian town of Zafra who wrote a brief and disorganized account of Soto's expedition at the request of Fray Pedro Aguado, provincial of the Franciscan province of Santa Fe. These documents form part of Aguado's plan to compile a number of reliable and trustworthy accounts about this region. The Franciscan left his documents in the city of Córdoba and deserted them ("*desamparó sus relaciones*"). Garcilaso then tells us that he found these documents in a very poor state. Furthermore, Garcilaso complains that Coles was rather exaggerated in his narration of events and kept no real chronology of them.

³² It is worth mentioning that Benengeli is a name that Sancho confuses with *berenjena* (eggplant) in Chapter II of the second *Quixote* (1615). Such confusion points to the irony of the name, which, in turn, unravels one of the most telling Baroque symbols of the book. First, *berenjena* is a product of Oriental origin brought to Europe by the Arabs. This confirms once more the unlikely origin of such a Castilian story of chivalry and knighthood. Second, *berenjena* also points to the verb "*emberenjenar*" and the adjective "*emberenjenado*," which means something of great complexity and high level of intricacy. Thus, Cide Hamete Benengeli is an all-encompassing symbol of the Baroque of *Don Quixote*: a sense of difficulty, double-entendres, and occult references.

Both Cervantes and Garcilaso seem to be playing a similar metatextual game. There is a backstory where the narrator sets the stage to talk about “history” (i.e., about truths and facts); ironically, though, this backstory also casts doubt on the possibility of speaking truthfully about any historical episode. In Cervantes’ case, it seems like he puts himself and the narrator (it is never clear if he is the only narrator or not) of the story in a marginal position. The narrator is but a shadow narrator (who could be Cervantes’ literary persona or not), and the diffuse figure of the Moorish chronicler Cide Hamete Benengeli (of whom we know nothing else but his name and the fact that he is a historian) is the only one responsible for getting the story right—after all, he is the only historian that the novel mentions. The comparison is thus clear. On the one hand, Garcilaso has a nameless informant as the main source of historical information, along with two dubious sources of first-hand information. On the other hand, Cervantes creates a foreign historian who wrote in a different language as the main historical source for the story. However, just as in Garcilaso’s case, Cervantes’ dealings with truthfulness and authority are even more complex.

In Chapter I, Cervantes intentionally misses or omits information that a historian would deem essential in the writing of a truthful account. The book begins with “*en un lugar de la Mancha de cuyo nombre no quiero acordarme.*” (*Don Quijote*, Part I, Chapter I) With this, the narrator is already urging the reader to question the story’s historiographical reliability. In the “*no quiero,*” Cervantes makes explicit that he is setting the stage for a mockery of the historical discourse. The narrator is supposedly writing the one true and unique history (not simply a story) of Don Quixote de la Mancha, but, at the same time, he is defiantly and willingly breaking with the standard historiographical conventions of seriousness about truth telling. He *does not want* to remember the place in La Mancha where Don Quixote is from, and no reasons are given for this. Furthermore, a couple of paragraphs later, the narrator downplays the importance of accurately

recalling the exact birth name of Don Quixote, while at the same time declaring that he is still committed to telling the truth.³³ There are many other instances where the narrator willingly and openly disregards the rhetorical conventions that would give his narration credibility. Instead, Cervantes puts forth a series of contrasts between the historian's will (a desire for objectivity) and the harsh truth about history-writing. In other words, he draws a sharp contrast between wanting to tell the truth vs. the impossibility of actually finding "the truth." Such a contrast is the crux of Cervantes' criticism to any claim for historical truthfulness.

In a similar fashion, Garcilaso transforms himself into an authorial figure who narrates the vicissitudes of the historian or chronicler in his quest for information. Garcilaso lays out his credentials as chronicler and historian based on his privileged access to information, only to ironically downplay them when he mentions the intellectual shortcomings of an Indian, as seen Chapter I of this dissertation. Moreover, the play with the anonymous source and the two seemingly biased informants adds another layer of confusion. Both Garcilaso's and Cervantes' narrators thus operate as metatextual characters that fictionalize the historiographical discourse through their clear subjective and ironic form of conceiving history. In other words, these early modern literary personae bring to the fore a subjective form of historicism that is tantamount to a *novel* literary discourse—the modern novel—where fact and fiction are hard to differentiate from one another. It thus becomes apparent how these two narrators are especially adamant about

³³ The irony is clear: "Quieren decir que tenía el sobrenombre de «Quijada», o «Quesada», que en esto hay alguna diferencia en los autores que deste caso escriben, aunque por conjeturas verisímiles se deja entender que se llamaba «Quijana»III, 16. Pero esto importa poco a nuestro cuento: basta que en la narración dél no se salga un punto de la verdad" (*Don Quijote*, Part I, Chapter I)

resorting to different forms of speech and rhetorical strategies to imitate historiographical discourse. However, this made-up historiographical discourse is but fiction at its core. In Cervantes, it is a fiction that consists of him (or his narrator) being the scribe who gets a young man to translate Benengeli's supposedly truthful *historia*. It is an open parody of historiographical discourse. In Gariclaso's case, the fiction rests in the historiographical impossibility of a nameless informant, whose credibility relies on an *hidalguía* that no one can actually prove.

In this light, one of the most important features of this new literary genre is its subjective characterization of truth. It questions the objectivist pretense created by Renaissance historiography, whose colonial works relied on the authority of first-person accounts. Then, it is not outlandish to claim that the modern novel, as I have characterized it, could be seen as the epistemological counterfigure to the objectivist pretense with which New World historians seemed to work. In a way, the modern novel is a parody of this angst for objectivism. When a novel (e.g., *Don Quixote* or *La Florida*) claims "objectivity," it is but an irony because the text is continuously negating the possibility of objective truths, as it cannot escape the subjectivism of the narrator and his choices.

Furthermore, there is another element in *Don Quixote* and *La Florida* that makes even more apparent the neutralization of any objectivist pretense in the stories these books tell: the rhetorical or linguistic self-awareness of their characters. In *Don Quixote*, for instance, the characters are highly conscious of their linguistic and literary complexity.³⁴ Gaylord has acutely observed that

³⁴ This is a common feature of most characters, but above all in Don Quixote and Sancho, whose manner of speech reveals 1) an individual consciousness as literary characters, being written and imagined by a wise man ("*sabio encantador*"); 2) a linguistic consciousness about the language that makes them and enables them to be somebody else.

“they think and talk not just about who they are, but about the language which makes them who they are, and about the process of linguistic imitation that will enable them to be what they want to be” (“Don Quixote’s New World of Language” 73). This Cervantine self-awareness is manifest in the story’s proclivity to appropriate and refashion modes of speech and writing, thus giving each of its characters a range of styles and linguistic behaviors (“Don Quixote’s New World of Language” 73). The use of this literary vernacular as the common tongue among characters and readers gives a new dimension to language that does not necessarily appear in real life or in high poetry. Each character’s existence is only possible through their particular style and form of speech. This is why it is not uncommon to see Don Quixote or Sancho painstakingly aware of their manner of speech, for their existence depends on their words. This form of self-awareness, Gaylord argues, stems from Cervantes’ observance of the growing body of writings about America where New World chroniclers and historians “shared a sense that on verbal activity and on *language itself* hung the success or failure of the high-stakes game of territorial appropriation, religious conversion, national history, and personal advancement” (“Don Quixote’s New World of Language” 73). Here, Gaylord proposes an innovative approach to Don Quixote’s language (both of the character and the book in general), where one finds tangible connections to New World historiographical texts.

In *La Florida*, too, it becomes apparent how different forms of speech and rhetorical strategies are central to the book’s argument. Language is certainly central to the existence of each and every one of the characters and events. Each word serves a specific purpose, creating a literary reality in which the linguistic chasm between Spaniards and Indians disappears, and only the cultural disparities drive the plot. A chronicle of this sort where there was complete unintelligibility between the characters would result in literary failure, so in the numerous scenes that remind the

reader of the linguistic chasm between Spaniards and Indians, the narrator makes clear that everyone is assuming what the other means and what he thinks they meant. In this sense, *La Florida*'s modern novelty consists of the fictionalization of historiographical language.

This form of engaging with historiographical discourse translates into a subjective form of conceiving history. Such a form of subjective historicism generates a literary discourse where fact and fiction are hard to differentiate from one another. In the case of Cervantes, Gaylord talks about the modern novel as a representation of the paradoxes of truth telling. Gaylord, paraphrasing Alonso López Pinciano, says that this new literary genre holds "truth in fiction," which in a way "means that concerns itself with the truth, yet it prefers lies" (Gaylord, *Don Quixote's New World* 75). It is a genre, whose subjective characterization of truth functions as an act of defiance to any objectivist claim, even if made later in the novel itself. Furthermore, it is this act of defiance that transforms the truthful assertions into an ironic criticism of objective writing. Now, this defiant operation does not emerge in a vacuum. The modern novel's novelty rests in performing its defiant act as a consciously premeditated operation. This is why Gaylord reminds us that if there is a feature that all critics and scholars seem to find in Cervantes' masterpiece, it is a rhetorical or linguistic self-awareness (73). This self-awareness is manifest on two levels. On the one hand, the characters themselves are highly conscious of their linguistic and literary complexity: "they think and talk not just about who they are, but about the language which makes them who they are, and about the process of linguistic imitation that will enable them to be what they want to be" (73). On the other, the Cervantine self-awareness is manifest in the story's proclivity to appropriate and refashion modes of speech, of dialogue, of writing, of inherited and remembered expressions, of mimicry, of transcription, of play-acting, and of poetic composition (73). This latter form of self-awareness, Gaylord argues, stems from Cervantes' observance of the growing body of writings

about America. In Gaylord's argument, Cervantes captures the spirit of New World chroniclers and historians who "shared a sense that on verbal activity and on language itself hung the success or failure of the high-stakes game of territorial appropriation, religious conversion, national history, and personal advancement" (73). In summary, Gaylord proposes a novel approach to Don Quixote's language (both of the character and the book in general), where one can find tangible historical roots. These roots, according to her, are the historiographical conventions found particularly in New World accounts. In essence, she proposes that the modern novel (as encapsulated by Don Quixote as a founding work) shares many of its features with history and especially with New World history.

With these ideas, Gaylord postulates that the modern novel's foundations originate in a different geographic plane. As mentioned above, she contends that New World historiography plays a key role in the envisioning of modern prose writing. She holds that the modern novel actualizes the angst of New World historiography about the impossibility of accurately conveying historical "truths." In a world of conquistadors competing for the favors of the king and missionaries challenging each other's evangelization strategies, rhetoric became perhaps the most important tool for success. Credibly conveying one's own version (or the version one wanted to give) of events was every man of letters' task. In this sense, giving the impression of truthfulness was the most important narrative trick in the New World context.

Since Columbus, whose letters combine factual data of navigation with fantastic annotations about mythical creatures, this form of history-writing covers everything from serious reports to advertising ploys and poetical revivals of a mythical past. New World texts are then a shifty formula of record-keeping literature unveiling a particular form of historical understanding. Such an understanding swings between ancient and modern times: it revisits classical literary and

historiographical canons to refurbish them according to the needs of the modern man. Furthermore, it is the product of the Renaissance's concern with European past and the political challenges of a new world order. In essence, it is a form of writing and conceiving history that makes use, indistinctly, of the many rhetorical strategies of the past in order to convey the radical otherness of the Americas, with the peculiar caveat of only sharing what best suited each particular author. According to Gaylord, consciousness of this cultural angst (as lived New World literary struggle) propitiates a literary exploration that would expand the limits of rhetorical and generical conventions ("Don Quixote's New World of Language" 75). The modern novel would replicate the New World historians' desperate search of verisimilitude and credibility, but in a fictional tale. In summary, if New World historiography's purpose was to persuade the Crown (and the general readership) that their version of events was indeed the only one, the novel's purpose was to show the reader that fiction could be delivered with the same rhetorical conventions of historical writing. However, the novel's fiction does not stem from a purely fantastic and disconnected dimension (such as the epic), but from the problems of everyday life. It was thus in the novelist's interest to replicate the very same parlance of historians and chroniclers. In the end, the question about verisimilitude is but a guise used by all authors in order to invoke authority and privilege.

3.4 La Florida del Inca and the Picaresque

It should be noted that Gaylord's argument on the origins of the modern novel—though certainly appealing and by no means incorrect—is not the only one. The view of the Spanish picaresque as the first expression of the modern novel is another perspective that helps illustrate my point about the origins of the modern novel. This argument rests in placing the picaresque

novel, specifically *La vida de Lazarillo de Tormes*, at the center of modern prose's transformation. Francisco Rico argues that the author of *Lazarillo* aspired to trick the reader into believing that the text was not fiction but a true story: "el autor del Lazarillo aspiraba a hacer al lector víctima de una superchería [...] una superchería irónica" (15). Rico asserts that *Lazarillo* was intended to be an apocryphal text, a falsification.

Let's remember that *Lazarillo* is, in essence, a letter in which the protagonist Lázaro is a *pícaro* (rogue or lowborn city boy), who recounts his life—mainly misfortunes—to an anonymous man, presumably one of his many masters. The letter, Rico notes, exhibited certain peculiarities that situated it in the realm of the real but still allowed for some doubts. The major doubt stemmed from the language of the type of discourse that the author used. For instance, it was impossible that a person of Lázaro's characteristics would be able to write and express himself in the exquisite manner of speech in which the letter was written. There are other small details that subtly confirm the "*superchería*" or literary trick with which Rico identifies the modern novel. Furthermore, Rico affirms that before *Lazarillo* (1553), there was almost no work of fiction that exhibited its characteristics. Imaginative literature during the first years of Charles V's reign was foreign to the themes and topics developed in *Lazarillo*. Before the 1500's, there were only two labels used to describe a narration in prose: truth or lie. On the one hand, chivalric romances or mythical tales were so conspicuously fantastic that no one doubted that any correspondence between these literary depictions and the real world was nothing more than a lie. On the other hand, chronicles and theological or scientific treatises were viewed as the opposite: the author's most painstaking effort to give a truthful explanation of the world. On this matter, both Rico and Gaylord highlight that the modern novel expanded the limits of prose writing, as it made possible that the specific contents of a narration in prose could be untrue yet not necessarily a lie; thus the novel's ability to

incorporate a seemingly limitless number of components and to assume an unpredictable variety of shapes.³⁵ In essence, the novel's aspiration to trick the reader into believing that the fiction it narrates could be true makes it a polymorphous genre. This means that it is not a radically new invention but the uncovering of new possibilities for the combination of elements that already existed.

The modern novel mirrors the historico-material changes of its time (i.e., early modern and modern periods). According to Beverley, *Lazarillo* reflects the arrival of capitalism to Spanish society and, with it, the birth of a new family of characters that were not deemed worthy of literary fictionalization (*The Baroque in Spain and Spanish America*, 87). There is a shift in the conception of the hero or protagonist of literary discourse. Beverley remembers *Theory of the Novel*, where Lukacs claims that the modern novel's hero "is the product of estrangement from the outside world" (66). This means that the modern novel's hero embodies human consciousness as an entity aware of its own material existence. In the case of *Lazarillo*, Beverley argues that the protagonist is aware of their own material misery. Such misery, Beverley notes, stems from the economic crisis of the Spanish empire, which gave rise to a plethora of characters who found common ground in these material problems. The dynamism pertaining to the modern novel thus emerges from common daily life problems of ordinary people, either in the financial crisis of Peninsular Spain or the arduous deeds and failures of the American conquest.

³⁵ The German Romantics speculated that it was a form of writing in which different discourses were hybridized or mixed. However, the Romantic world had only one absolute work to complete: the spread of Christianity and the continued activity of the Christian community, Christendom. This means that the modern novel, as a modern European product, was, according to the Romantics, the transformation of the pagan forms of antiquity.

This latter point is especially relevant, for it puts colonial histories and chronicles alongside the picaresque. This gives us a broader picture of the new literary reality in the early modern Hispanic world. On the one hand, the picaresque is the result of new historico-material conditions of the Spanish crisis that produced the misery in picaresque tales. On the other hand, American historiography touches upon the backside of the phenomenon: subjugation of Amerindian peoples and their knowledges. Gold and silver extracted from the American colonies on the backs of Indian workers gave rise to the world of luxury and opulence of the new form of aristocratic power (Habsburg absolutism) and provoked the monetary inflation that drove the regular Iberian citizen and peasant into misery. In this sense, the American experience was not so distant from Peninsular reality, and the New World struggle was not so foreign to the urban misery seen in the picaresque. *Pícaros*, the regular foot soldier, and American natives (and later African slaves) were bound together by the same socio-economic reality. Such modern phenomenon prompted the new voices heard in plays (Lope de Vega and Calderón), popular poetry (Góngora, Quevedo, Sor Juana, and Ercilla) and, ultimately and foremost, the modern novel, such as *Lazarillo de Tormes*, *Guzmán de Alfarache* or *El buscón*, and—as I am trying to claim—colonial chronicles and histories such as *La Florida del Inca*.

Another facet of this second element has to do with the sixteenth-century Spanish obsession with legalistic writing. Legal or notarial writing was needed to legitimize any event, from the first Spanish laws enacted in 1492 in Granada and Columbus' claim of Hispaniola for the Catholic monarchs to something more mundane, such as transactions, wills, sales, loans, or dowry. This notarial style reached across other cultural forms. Prose writing was particularly influenced by it. As Roberto González Echevarría reminds us in *Myth and Archive*, “In the sixteenth century, writing was subservient to the law” (45). Echevarría not only mentions *Lazarillo* as a text shaped

by legalistic writing, like a deposition, but the entire novelistic and sixteenth-century historiographical production. He explains that no matter what we make of early modern prose writing, writing became either an act of defiance or a plea. For instance, *Lazarillo* or Cortés' letters are a testimony of a person's life and deeds. This epistolary feature creates an entire category of early modern literature that, I conclude, results in the emergence of the modern novel. Echevarría's argument, however, is more nuanced but directly connects Garcilaso's texts with this entire early modern prose tradition. In summary, early modern Spanish prose was deeply shaped by legal writing, and the reach of these legalistic formulae can be seen more clearly in how much presence this legal language has in New World historiography and the picaresque. Picaresque novels as well as Inca Garcilaso's texts are written in the form of testimonies, and New World chronicles and histories operate as legitimizers of the use of force in conquests, appropriation of territories, and political prominence.

So far, these elements of the modern novel (i.e., its polymorphism, its representation of the historico-material structure, and its legalistic style) show how this new genre transforms the traditional literary genres of the past and also mirrors the underlying social and material structure of the changing times. The transformation that the modern novel represents helps us understand why *La Florida* is not a chronicle or a *historia* in the traditional sense. Far from merely reproducing the basic elements of early colonial writing (i.e., legalistic claims, epic-like scenes, grandiose rhetoric, and the pretense to tell truthful events), Garcilaso transforms them to tell a different story. This story is a particular version of Hernando de Soto's journey filled with imbedded anecdotes, notes, and relations of the conquistadors' daily problems and their relationship with Indians as they struggle to explore their territory. These anecdotes and annotations are more often than not a liberal recreation of the author's imagination, for they consist of the reproduction of entire dialogues

among natives, whose language is unknown, and the description of people's state of mind (something that is, of course, objectively impossible to know). As such, *La Florida* is the poetization of colonial reality into fiction. It focuses on the individual struggle of the average conquistador, thus portraying material difficulties in a creative and poetic manner. In other words, *La Florida* is similar to *Lazarillo* in that they both convert the psyche and material reality of the modern Hispanic subject into literature. In the following pages, I will show how *La Florida* does exactly that. Specifically, I will analyze some instances where Inca Garcilaso transforms the traditional historiographical discourse from the perspective of the narrator, turning history into a novelized narrative tale.

3.5 A New World Novel

As *La Florida*'s preface demonstrates, the narrator's perspective is at the center of the entire narration. This subjectivism makes the reader feel as though they have access to the author's mind. The reader feels like a participant in a story that goes beyond the story. How and when Garcilaso acquired the material becomes of paramount importance to the tale that the author is trying to tell. Such is the modern novel format. Moreover, the fact that *La Florida* is a story about a failed expedition into Florida, which was a region never actually conquered by Spaniards –unlike Mexico or Peru– closes any possibility for a true epic tale. In this sense, the subjective presides both over the objectivist pretense of historiography and over the mythical fantasy of the epic tale. This is why Garcilaso prefaces *La Florida*'s with a story about how he found his sources and initiates the first chapter with the peculiar introduction of Hernando de Soto's unsuccessful past:

El adelantado Hernando de Soto, gobernador y capitán general que fue de las provincias y señoríos del gran reino de la Florida [...] se halló en la primera conquista del Perú y en la prisión de Atahualpa, rey tirano, que, siendo hijo bastardo, usurpó aquel reino al legítimo heredero y fue el último de los incas que tuvo aquella monarquía, por cuyas tiranías y crueldades [...], se perdió aquel imperio, o a lo menos por la discordia y división que en los naturales su rebelión y tiranía causó, se facilitó a que los españoles lo ganasen con la facilidad que lo ganaron (como en otra parte diremos con el favor divino), de la cual [monarquía], como es notorio, fue el rescate tan soberbio, grande y rico que excede a todo crédito que a historias humanas se puede dar [...]. De esta cantidad [...] y con las dádivas que el mismo rey Atahualpa le dio [a Soto] (ca fue su aficionado por haber sido el primer español que vio y habló), hubo este caballero más de cien mil ducados. (*La Florida*, Part I, Chapter I)

Garcilaso introduces Hernando de Soto by mentioning Soto's past experiences in Peru, Garcilaso's homeland, so from the very beginning, Garcilaso makes sure that he, the author, is a central element of the story, just as he does in the preface. In tying Soto's experience with that of the Spanish campaign in Incan Peru, Garcilaso is connecting Soto's story directly to him. In this sense, Garcilaso is not a mere vehicle of Soto's tale as received by his informants. He is an active participant in the conversation. The moment that Peru and the Inca civilization appear in the story, Garcilaso gains authority as a narrator and an author. Through this maneuver, Garcilaso connects the text (Hernando de Soto's life and Florida sojourn) with the metatext (Inca Garcilaso's literary persona). This phenomenon of textual and metatextual convergence puts in motion the transformation of historiographic discourse into novelistic speech, through the particular

decolonial reformulation of the traditional authorial figure: from Spanish intellectuals to Indian writers. In turn, such a transformation confirms, once again, the distortion of any objectivist approach to history writing, even though the text still adheres, although sarcastically, to the same rhetorical formulae of historiographical writing. Here, it is important to keep in mind that this textual doubleness is a distinctively Baroque feature. There is an inherent tension in this double change of discursive paradigms. Moreover, Inca Garcilaso's determination to talk about Peru speaks to the intertextual nature of his entire opera. The chapter anticipates the author's next books, *Comentarios reales* and *Historia general del Perú*, which were already in the making.³⁶ This thus suggests that the events narrated in *La Florida* are connected to those that appear in the other two texts.

In the next two chapters, Inca Garcilaso moves on to talk about Florida properly (though he will later come back with references about Peru). These two chapters are important to my analysis because they underscore the fictional character of *La Florida* and its literary play with the concept of historiographical truth. In these chapters, Garcilaso recalls the other project of conquest that preceded Soto's sojourn into Florida. In a historiographical sense, recalling these failed expeditions that sailed to conquer Florida seems appropriate. History texts sought to establish authority by referencing all the literature preceding them (either to refute it or expand on it), but on a literary level, naming these references is linked to a different objective. What they have in common is that they are all stories of defeat and failure of Spanish conquistadors. Writing a story

³⁶ As I noted in the previous chapter of this dissertation, Inca Garcilaso discloses from the preface of his very first work, León Hebreo's translation, that he had been working on both *La Florida* and *Comentarios reales* simultaneously.

about Florida, where all Spanish expeditions failed, including Soto's, amounts to a literary project of conquest de-mythification. The narrative focus shifts from epic conquest and military campaigns as told by Cortés or Gómara to the vicissitudes of Spanish survival in the treacherous lands of Florida. Therefore, Hernando de Soto's story was not going to recount grand battles and military campaigns but rather instances of hardships and survival. Aside from Ercilla's *Araucana*, tales of Spanish expeditions into Florida were the literary archetype of Spanish defeat. Chief among them was Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca's *Naufragios*, and it is precisely this story that Garcilaso cites in order to underscore the fact that a tale of failure could also be a popular literary story:

Después del oidor Lucas Vásquez de Ayllón, fue a la Florida Pánfilo de Narvaez, año de mil y quinientos y cincuenta y siete, donde con todos los españoles que llevó se perdió tan miserablemente, como lo cuenta en sus *Naufragios* Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca que fue con él por tesoro de la Hacienda Real. El cual escapó con otros tres españoles y un negro y, habiéndoles hecho Dios Nuestro Señor tanta merced que llegaron a hacer milagros en su nombre, con los cuales habían cobrado tanta reputación y crédito con los indios que les adoraban por dioses, no quisieron quedarse entre ellos, antes, en pudiendo, se salieron a toda priesa de aquella tierra y se vinieron a España a pretender nuevas gobernaciones. (*La Florida*, Book I, Chapter III)

This quote is important because it is the first time that Garcilaso mentions another writer, who authored a similar story. This implies two things. First, this quote establishes Cabeza de Vaca as a referent and a predecessor. *Naufragios* was perhaps the most read work about Florida as well as one of the most popular Spanish books of its time. Garcilaso thus makes manifest that he has

documented himself well by reading Cabeza de Vaca's story and works of a similar kind. However, it must be noted that his reading of these works is not exempt from alterations. For instance, Garcilaso changed how Cabeza de Vaca said that Indians adored him and his companions as "*hijos del sol*" by using a plainer and more unambiguous word, "*dioses*." With this, Garcilaso was aiming to adjust the language, as if there were an already established New World narrative, one with common literary tropes and labels (such as "Indian" as a generic name for all natives and tropes such as "dioses" for Spaniards as considered by the simple minds of Amerindians).

Second, the reference to Cabeza de Vaca sets the stage for a specific type of plot. Garcilaso is telling his readership that his Florida story is not unique, but that it forms part of a tradition of stories about Spain's fail attempts to conquer Florida. In this sense, his story is but one among many stories about Spanish failures, as if "narratives of failure" were already a literary genre. This fact is an important breakthrough in New World narratives. It posits a relationship between discourse (or literary representation) and one type of human experience: suffering and defeat. In their respective books, *Narratives de la Conquista* (1983) and *Polemics of Possession* (2007), Beatriz Pastor and Rolena Adorno have spoken of these type of narratives ("*narrativas del fracaso*") precisely in the context of Pánfilo de Narvaez's expedition, as recounted by Cabeza de Vaca in *Naufragios*. Although Pastor gives a broad list of texts that form part of this *narrativa del fracaso*, she takes *Naufragios* as the archetypal and fundamental text of this tradition. Pastor reads *Naufragios* as a narrative where failure that breaks down the hierarchical and teleological assumptions of the epic paradigms (the glorious conquests of Cortés and Pizarro) opens the possibility of a closer and more civilized relationship with the "Amerindian other." (*Narrativas de la Conquista* 336). Borrowing Lukacs's terms, Pastor points at the destruction of the epic hero and the mythical world, as it presents the characters (both Indians and Spaniards) as equally submerged

and bound to face a vast and hostile natural world (336). The *narrativas del fracaso* reveal a particular relationship between all characters as determined by nature. They are all physical bodies burdened with the hardships of the natural world. There is a focus on materiality, including the body and its reactions to a lack of material goods that arises from a critical situation (a shipwreck, a hurricane, a skirmish). Cabeza de Vaca tells us, as does Garcilaso, of episodes of hunger, clothing, the ways food is obtained, even grotesque scenes of cannibalism among Spaniards. All of this puts the Spanish in a position of vulnerability and nearly back to a state of nature where the common goal is not conquest but survival. In such a state, Spaniards interact with the native tribes on equal terms, almost always with a disadvantage. In the end, some of these interactions develop into a form of community akin to a utopian model of Spanish-Indian coexistence.

Adorno, for her part, focuses on the figuration of the immediacy and urgency of cultural negotiation derived from the situation from which Cabeza de Vaca speaks. For her, Pánfilo de Narvaez's failure, as narrated by Cabeza de Vaca, creates a space where fear—one of the most basic feelings when experiencing the unknown—articulates Spanish-Amerindian interactions in a radically different way. For instance, when Cabeza de Vaca and a small number of conquistadors are stranded on the isle of Malhado (the Island of Ill-Fate), fear becomes a distorter of reality. On the island—whose name is already a disturbing omen—the natives are described as monster-looking beings: “*que ahora ellos [the Indians] fueran grandes o no nuestro miedo los hacía parecer gigantes*” (*Naufragios*, Chapter XII). This quote not only underscores the Spaniards'

precarious position, but also suggests that the Spanish were self-aware of their own precarity.³⁷ Fear is not only felt but understood in context. This awareness, she argues, produces profound changes in the Spaniards' attitudes towards natives. In this kind of situation, fear provides insight into the individual's mind and offers an occasion to look at "the other" in a different light. For this reason, the question of fear becomes relevant on two accounts.

On the one hand, fear puts both Spaniards and Amerindians on the same plane as equals. When Spaniards experience fear, Floridians are not cast as inferior, but as fearsome opponents. Through Cabeza de Vaca's narration, the reader can see the precarious state in which Spaniards find themselves on the isle of MalHado and thus catch a glimpse of the representation that they had of Amerindians, not as lesser but as terrifying beings. Other instances of this equalizing operation reverberate throughout the chapters of MalHado. A special episode consists of an incident of cannibalism among the Spaniards. With this, Cabeza de Vaca contradicts the Spanish official discourse that propagated the image of Amerindians as cannibals and ignorant men. In fact, he flips the tables on this issue by depicting Spaniards as human flesh eaters. In this sense, the Spanish man, who was usually paired with reason, military valor, and the idea of civilization, was now identified with fear, barbarism (cannibalism), and material misery. Finally, in another instance that takes place towards the end of the book, the tables turn again, and Cabeza de Vaca and his companions are praised as divine creatures when they are believed to perform miracles and healing rituals. What is remarkable about this episode is that the Spaniards, who gain back status

³⁷ It is worth mentioning here that this is one of the most conspicuous instances where *Naufragios* transforms the traditional epic tale of conquest into the dramatic and more personalized *narrativa del fracaso*. From this point of view, Cabeza de Vaca's text is also a great example of New World writers' novelistic incursions.

and power, do not choose to behave like despotic colonizers but instead try to build a harmonious community; they even serve as intermediaries among rivaling tribes. This behavior is widely praised by the natives, who willingly choose to convert to Christianity. This cooperative spirit is even present in the last chapters of the book when Cabeza de Vaca returns to Spanish settlements. Cabeza de Vaca would become an avid advocate of Indians, thus promoting a different approach to conversion and colonization in general. In summary, Adorno argues that these experiences open up new vistas to alternative models of colonization, which would ultimately inform Inca Garcilaso's narration.

On the other hand, in *Naufragios*, fear is a vehicle for textual and metatextual self-awareness. As previously mentioned, Garcilaso's use of Cabeza de Vaca is not simply a reproduction of a pro-native rhetoric, but more importantly the acknowledgment of a new form of writing. The characters in the story are not merely depicted by an author—in this case, Cabeza de Vaca, who is both the author and also a character—but conscious of their own reality. On a textual level, the story describes moments where the Spanish characters share their thoughts about how they feel in a specific situation (e.g., when they are afraid). On a metatextual level, there seems to be an open dialogue with the reader where Cabeza de Vaca develops the modern character of the "I" (yo) in a testimonial address. In this sense, the narrator's or author's self-awareness becomes a primary element in the composition of the tale. Like *Lazarillo*, *Naufragios* deploys the literary trick that Rico calls "*superchería*." ("Lázaro de Tormes y el lugar de la novela", 14) Just as Lázaro does in *Lazarillo*, Cabeza de Vaca tries to convince his readership of the story's veracity, all while the story is itself filled with fictional episodes. Thus, it is not through written sources, documents, and "serious" historiographical research that *Naufragios* acquires its authority and appeal, but *via*

the eloquent description of the characters' self-awareness and, especially, the character-author's introspection.

Coming back to Ricos's concept of *superchería* in works such as *Lazarillo* and *Naufragios*, La Florida's *superchería* also consists in a game of double-entendres with the traditional conventions of truth-telling. However, Inca Garcilaso's *superchería* also participates in an ironic play with the colonial labels used to describe the New World and its peoples. Inca Garcilaso's use of colonial categories such as Indian or American native is a decolonial maneuver; he reappropriates and twists the original meaning intended by the colonizer. For instance, Inca Garcilaso's depiction of the native Floridians, in Chapter VI of the first Book, is a literary operation that twists and plays with the supposedly general scope of the colonial notion of Indian and Indianness—let's recall that the term "Indian" is an imposed and made-up label used by Spaniards to describe different kinds of New World peoples, often times without any relation to one another, thus pointing out the fictitious character of the colonial terms:

Y antes que pasemos adelante, será bien dar noticia de algunas costumbres que en general los indios de aquel reino tenían...Estos indios son gentiles de nación e idólatras, mas sin ningunas ceremonias de tener ídolos ni hacer sacrificios ni oraciones ni otras supersticiones como la demás gentilidad...Casaban, en común, con una sola mujer, y ésta era obligada a ser fidelísima a su marido so pena de las leyes que para castigo del adulterio tenían ordenadas, que en unas provincias eran de cruel muerte y en otras de castigo muy afrentoso...Los señores, por la libertad señorial, tenían licencia de tomar las mujeres que quisiesen, y esta ley o libertad de los señores se guardó en todas las Indias del nuevo mundo, empero, siempre fue con la distinción de la mujer

principal legítima, que las otras eran más concubinas que mujeres” (*La Florida*, Book I, Chapter VI. Emphasis is mine).

This quote not only confirms the fictional nature of *La Florida*, but also highlights the book’s inherent decolonial power. The quote ironically describes the natives’ customs in no different terms than those of any other European society. The irony resides in the fact that Garcilaso seems to be set to talk about the specific customs of native Floridians (“*dar noticia de algunas costumbres que en general los indios de aquel reino tenían*”), while in reality he ends up giving broad generalizations (“*esta ley o libertad de los señores se guardó en todas las Indias del nuevo mundo*”). This general description of a nonexistent entity (“Indians”, as if all Amerindian nations shared the same cultural and social systems) is but an imitation of the void platitudes with which Spanish historians spoke of Incas, Mexicas, or Taino people. It is but a form of *superchería* with which Inca Garcilaso tries to make his decolonial fiction pass as if it were another regular Spanish history about Indians. Moreover, the ironic operation goes even further as he claims one thing and, subsequently, denies that claim with its description and characterization. First, he says that “*estos indios son gentiles de nación e idólatras*”, then he denies the claim by saying “*mas sin ningunas ceremonias de tener ídolos [etc]*”. And as if this was not enough, El Inca, surreptitiously, describes the Indians’ custom of marriage in such a way that it could very well be a description of Spanish customs. Further in the book, there appear more instances of the Amerindian reconceptualization.

Y volviendo a los de la Florida, el comer ordinario de ellos es el maíz en lugar de pan, y por vianda frisoles y calabaza de las que acá llaman romana, y mucho pescado conforme a los ríos de que gozan...Los que dicen que comen carne humana se lo levantan, a lo menos a los que son de las provincias que

nuestro gobernador descubrió; antes lo abominan, como lo anota Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca en sus *Naufraños*, capítulo catorce, y diez y siete, donde dice que de hambre murieron ciertos castellanos que estaban alojados aparte y que los compañeros que quedaban comían los que se morían hasta el postrero, que no hubo quién lo comiese, de lo cual dice que se escandalizaron los indios tanto que estuvieron por matar todos los que habían quedado en otro alojamiento (*La Florida*, Book I, Chapter IV).

In this quote, Inca Garcilaso, once again, disabuses the reader of the infamy of native cannibalism, and turns the tables on the Spaniards, when he points out that it is they who actually engage in such practices. The rebuttal reveals a very clear intertextual connection with the episode of Cabeza de Vaca's *Naufraños* mentioned above. What is interesting about Garcilaso's use of Cabeza de Vaca's work, especially the episode of the island of Mal Hado—in which Spanish cannibalism takes place—is that Inca Garcilaso seems to recognize in *Naufraños* a text similar to his: not entirely a historical work, but rather a fiction that pretends to be historiography, and, above all, a work that shares a strong decolonial spirit. This means that the dialogue between *Naufraños* and *La Florida* suggests an even stronger basis for a serious study on the special role of non-traditional Hispanic colonial texts in the emergence of the modern novel (especially among New World works) as a decolonial text. Both *La Florida* and *Naufraños* are highly unorthodox in their use of the tropes and notions typically given to both European and non-European peoples; and it is precisely this re-appropriation and twisting of the traditional tropes that gives rise to one of the first distinctive forms of modern fiction.

Another example of this geographical (New World) and conceptual (decolonial) reconfiguration of modern novelistic narration in *La Florida* appears in the reappropriation and transformation of epic tropes into decolonial tools.

Las armas que estos indios comúnmente traen son arcos y flechas, y, aunque es verdad que son diestros en otras diversas armas que tienen, como son picas, lanzas, dardos, partesanas, honda, porra, montante y bastón, y otras semejantes, si hay más, excepto arcabuz y ballesta, que no alcanzaron, con todo eso no usan de otras armas, sino del arco y la flecha, porque, para los que las traen, son de mayor gala y ornamento; por lo cual los gentiles antiguos pintaban a sus dioses más queridos, como eran Apolo, Diana y Cupido, con arco y flechas (*La Florida*, Book I, Chapter IV).

Evoking again Lukacs' *Theory of the Novel*, where he claims that modern novel's main feature is the transformation of the epic discourse, this passage illustrates how Inca Garcilaso utilizes the repertoire of Europe's epic past to portray an apotheotic image of the Indian. Such an image amounts to a deconstruction the Eurocentric epic hero through the reification of those images in the supposedly inferior Amerindians. The irony present here is an impressive decolonial re-mythification of the traditional Spanish misrepresentation of the Indian: the traditional cliché of half-naked Indians bearing bows and arrows is not denied, but rather embellished to such an extent that they reach the status of Roman and Greek deities. As such, Amerindians are described with the same terms and images as the romanticized Ancient Europeans. With this, Garcilaso is implicitly suggesting that Spaniards failed to see what the revered Romans saw: that bows and arrows are aesthetically superior, and therefore are the god's weapons. The joke consists in drawing attention to the traditionally negative characterization of Indians (as epistemologically,

culturally, technologically, and ethically inferior) as a flatly uninformed view, and a little uncultured. Spaniards seem to be lacking some sort of aesthetic refinement in warfare. With quotes like this, Garcilaso's literary bid becomes manifestly twofold: *La Florida* not only is a new literary genre that destabilizes the notion of historical truths—thus surmounting the inconveniences the futile Spanish impetus for objectivism—but also deconstructs the artificial reality imposed on Indians (who had been rendered as epistemologically, culturally, technologically, and ethically inferior) and on the entire New World reality.

In essence, Inca Garcilaso's recharacterization of Indians suggests an inversion of the Spanish colonial description of them. But, as I've mentioned throughout this chapter, this novel characterization of New World natives is not an anthropological or historiographical report, but rather an imitation of a historiographical report. As the quotes above indicate, Garcilaso's Indians in *La Florida* do not correspond to the real Indians Soto and his men might have encountered. Indians in *La Florida* are just characters, specifically modern novel characters that, like Lázaro in *Lazarillo* or Sancho Panza in *Don Quixote*, are a fictional representation of author's imagination. These projections, however, are not fantastic X, but characters based on real subjects taking part in the daily struggles of modern life, in this case the struggle of the American conquest. For Indians, this modern life was one of exploitation and resistance. Since the Spanish began systematically conquering the land and extracting precious metals from their colonies, Amerindians were excluded from the circles of power, often used as labor force (which ultimately decimated their numbers), and above all mischaracterized as culturally inferior. In this difficult reality, Amerindians had to resort to different acts of resistance that were not part of the official historiographical records, precisely because Spanish history writing was but a projection of the colonizer's agenda. New World historiographical texts written by Spaniards unusually portrayed

epic victories over natives, and cast natives as backwards and culturally inferior. The two most notable ones are certainly Cortés' and Pizarro's conquests of Mexico and Peru respectively, where the authors stress the impressive feats of Christians over culturally deviant societies. So, from a decolonial perspective, what Garcilaso achieves with twisting and subverting the colonizer's image of Indians is the unraveling of the fictitious nature of the Spanish description of natives. Read as modern prose fiction, *La Florida* fictional description of the narrator's mind through a mockery of sorts of the European epic tropes as used for describing Amerindians. But what is especially remarkable of Garcilaso's modern pose is his creation of these "Indians" is that he, as another literary character (the author-narrator), also participates in this creation, as he is himself another Indian.

Identifying himself as another Indian, Inca Garcilaso establishes a sense of "yo" (I), like in Don Quixote or Lazarillos, that speaks for an entire group of people³⁸. both indigenous peoples and himself throughout the text. Inca Garcilaso's depiction of Amerindians is far from being passive and docile like in Las Casas. On the contrary, Garcilaso's Indians (who are literary characters) are astutely compared to the fearless, brave, and courageous image that Spaniards had of themselves. In many chapters describing Soto's journey from Florida to Alabama, Spaniards encounter Indian warriors, who often act like Spanish feudal lords. Garcilaso describes them as having direct control over a small town and its inhabitants, as well as displaying pride of lineage, honor, and social class consciousness. Furthermore, in the same way in which Spanish captains and knights make big pronouncements before waging war, the Indian chieftains deliver long and

³⁸ In Lazarillo, the *pícaros* and lowborns; in Don Quixote, it is a more complex symbolism, representing an entire generation of Spaniards living in an aristocratic past unable to grasp the realities of their modernizing present.

elaborate speeches filled with reference to honor, devotion, and loyalty. All these characteristics are the result of a process of self-learning and transformation that natives underwent from their first contact with Spaniards until the arrival of Soto and his men. This latter feature suggests a relocation of the geographical origins of the modern novel, and it unravels an unacknowledged American side of the origins of the modern novel, as well as a distinctive decolonial beginning.

3.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I hope to have shown at least two things in this chapter. First, that the features *La Florida* shares with two of the most salient and early examples of the modern novel, *Don Quixote*, and *Lazarillo*, attest to an organic and transatlantic development of modern fictional literature, as a response to the growing angst about the impossibility of historiographical truth-telling among sixteenth-century writers. Second, that the strategies to cope with this literary anxiety have an important element of decoloniality visible in the ironic treatment of colonial labels in works such as *La Florida*—but also present in other texts, such as *Naufragios*. This is last element, although partially analyzed as part of Latin American literary history³⁹, needs to be further explored from a transatlantic perspective.

To conclude, I would like to point out the issue of the title, which oddly has been absent in most of the critics' remarks. Its title is not *La verdadera expedición de Hernando de Soto en la Florida* or ,simply, *La cuarta expedición al reino de la Florida*, but *La Florida del Inca*. Using the preposition “de” (a genitive that marks possession or precedence) is a radical break

³⁹ See Pastor (1988); Adorno (2007).

from the traditional way of titling New World historiographical works. Here, “de” is a genitive denotes possession or precedence from an Inca. This literary maneuver suggests to things. It is either building upon this Hispanic tradition of truth-telling literary works, and thus pretending to say that truth can also come from an Inca; or it is openly mocking the believe that this particular work, and by extension all other histories and chronicles of the sort, can be objective at all. If we remember Gaylord’s assessments, New World histories and chronicles were titled with adjectives appealing to truth, truthfulness, and credibility, in an attempt to convey seriousness and objectivity. Gaylord speaks of a Hispanic fascination and obsession with the truth-telling capacities of narrative. Contrary to this view, Garcilaso’s title is an open embracing of subjectivity in historical narrations. It marks the existence of a point of view, and thus addresses individuality as the starting point of historical narration. This final remark takes us back to our first remarks about *La Florida* as a novelistic prose text. We speak of the fictional character of historiography as the literary material to create a deliberate fictional narrative A narrative where the development of the first-person character underscores the subjective function of the written language (an entire world emanates from that author-character’s imagination or recollections or “historical research”), and gives rise to the metaphorical narration of the complexities of daily life. In sum, the modern novel is the modern representation of the complexities of daily life, and *La Florida* is the metaphorical representation of complex colonial reality.

4.0 CHAPTER THREE. INDIGENOUS UTOPIA: FICTION, IRONY AND POLITICAL THEORY IN *COMENTARIOS REALES DE LOS INCAS*

“A map of the world that does not include Utopia is not worth even glancing at, for it leaves out the one country at which Humanity is always landing. And when Humanity lands there, it looks out, and, seeing a better country, sets sail. Progress is the realisation of Utopias.”

— Oscar Wilde

“All paradises, all utopias, are designed by who is not there, by the people who are not allowed in.”

—Toni Morrison

The connection between Inca Garcilaso’s *Comentarios reales de los incas* and Thomas More’s *Utopia* has been widely acknowledged, though scarcely analyzed in depth. A handful of colonial scholars has enumerated the similarities between the two texts (Zamora 1986; Bernard 2006; Mercedes-Baralt 2005), though seldom elaborating beyond the specific descriptions of Garcilaso’s version of Tahuantinsuyu (as the Incan Empire was formerly known) and More’s Utopian society⁴⁰. Scholars have particularly focused on the striking similarity of the collective

⁴⁰ For the sake of clarity, it is important to remind the reader that the fictional society that More presents in his book *Utopia* is called Utopia. Therefore, when I refer to that specific society, I will capitalize the first later, as in

forms social and economic of life of both Utopia and Tahuantinsuyu, as well as their respective political and religious models. They argue that these alternative societal models function as a critique of either the English and Spanish societies of the time. Specifically, they mention that both Garcilaso's and More's books aim at critically comparing their respective societies (Colonial Peru and sixteenth-century England) with a better—or at least different—version of them. However, they tend to obviate the fact that these books are more than the societies they describe. Most studies have not really taken up the task of analyzing the full scope of the multilevel connection between *Comentarios* and *Utopia*, especially from an ideological and conceptual perspective. The most striking oversight has been the lack of understanding of the term utopia which connects More's and Inca Garcilaso's works.

Principally, Garcilaso's critics have failed to see that utopian societies are, in essence, paradoxes. The term utopia comes from the Greek word *u-topia*, which means “no-place”. Thomas More coined this term in 1516 to precisely present an ontological paradox of any society bearing that name. So, Inca Garcilaso's scholars have fallen short in recognizing that, much like More's Utopia, Garcilaso's Tahuantinsuyu is a paradoxical society by nature. Therefore, its constitutive elements articulate the contradictions at the heart of an ideal societal model. In other words, both Garcilaso's Tahuantinsuyu and its precursor, More's Utopia, present the ontological impossibility of a perfect or ideal society. In this sense, the paradoxical meaning of utopian societies is, thus, the most fundamental piece of the arguments that More's and Inca Garcilaso's books try to make:

“the society of Utopia”; the same applies to the adjective of place or gentilic, “Utopian institutions”, “Utopian society”, “Utopian citizens”. Conversely, when I refer to the specific literary genre and/or form of political theory that Inca Garcilaso and More advance, I will not capitalize the term, as in “utopian discourse”, “utopian genre”, “utopian criticism”. Finally, when I refer to More's work, it will be in italics, *Utopia*.

that utopian societies are neither *eutopia* (good-place), nor *dystopia* (bad-place)⁴¹. Utopia is a no-place. This means that the alternative imaginary societies of Utopia and Tahuantinsuyu represent the impossible materialization of the political ideals upon which these societal models are supposedly erected. Moreover, this also means that *Utopia*'s and *Comentarios*' criticism of the English and Spanish societies of their time is secondary to the more complex critique that these utopian societies make of political ideals and political thought.

The idea that utopias are a criticism of political ideals is based on Hanan Yoran's brilliant 2010 analysis of More's *Utopia*, where he develops a theory of utopia as an ironic critique of Renaissance political thought. In his book, *Between Utopia and Dystopia*, Yoran claims that Thomas More wrote Utopia not merely as a critique of English political reality, but, more importantly, as a critique of the humanist alternatives to the problems of such reality. He reinterprets *Utopia*'s paradoxical nature as a deliberately ambiguous work of a twofold critique: there is a critique within a critique. The book presents alternative version of European societies, which functions as critique of the political status quo, but such alternative society also contains of itself. Such ambiguity maintains a skeptical and critical stance not only about all the social problems that the texts present, but also about the solutions they provide. This strategy frustrates any attempt to give the text a fixed meaning or circumscribe it within a specific ideology. From

⁴¹ *Eu-topia*'s literal meaning is "the good place"; *dys-topia*'s literal meaning is "the bad place". These two, as well as *u-topia* (no-place), were Greek terms first coined by Thomas More in his book. Although dystopia is often thought of as an antonym of utopia, in no way such opposition is hinted in More's book. In fact, More is very clear at pointing out that the opposition *is* between eu-topia and dystopia and not utopia-dystopia. Furthermore, while More's Utopian society could be thought of as a *eu-topia*, it was not exactly that. This is why Utopia, a no place, contains a profound, complex and puzzling criticism of any theoretical approach to politics.

this perspective, I understand *Comentarios* connection to *Utopia* to be one based on this form of twofold criticism. This form of criticism is, in turn, based on a fundamentally skeptical form of thinking about politics. I contend that the type of critique that these texts develop is a unique and independent literary genre of a highly political import, though explicitly uncommitted to any political doctrine, that I denominate utopian discourse.

As I have been anticipating, this utopian discourse is a reaction to the political ideals of Renaissance humanism. Humanism was perhaps the most important intellectual current of the Renaissance, and very influential in the highest spheres of power. For instance, humanism was present in the English Tudor court through the figures of John Colet and Thomas More himself (during a part of his life)⁴², and was also very prominent in Spain throughout several reigns, chief among them Isabel I and Ferdinand II, Charles V and Philip II. Following Yoran's ideas, I claim that *Utopia's* and *Comentarios'* critical stance on humanist is a response to the crises and contradictions product of the humanist discourses hovering at court. Such response is a critique of humanism from works that are seemingly employing a humanistic discourse. This is precisely what makes these works Baroque. In *Utopia's* case, More appears as a character of his own book in the form of a humanist intellectual. The book depicts More struggling to address the opposition between Erasmian gradual and radical reformers (Yoran 145). In *Comentarios*, the dichotomy is between the first and second evangelization projects in Hispanic America⁴³.

⁴² As it will become clear in the chapter, Thomas More develop most of his theological and political career as a humanist intellectual, but later became a critic of his own work. His magnum opus, *Utopia*, is precisely a critical reflection of the moral and political ramifications of humanism.

⁴³ As it will become clearer later in the second section of this chapter, the first and second evangelization processes in colonial Hispanic America are two approaches to the conversion and ministry of Amerindians. The first

So, my objective in this chapter is to provide a close reading of *Utopia* and *Comentarios* as texts pertaining to an ironic as well as ideologically uncompromised literary discourse that I have denominated the modern utopian genre. Furthermore, I advance the idea that this literary genre is distinctively Baroque, in the sense that it is a highly complex form of literary discourse that counters the straightforward Renaissance impetus to provide simple explanations as well as expedient and idealistic—not to mention Eurocentric— solutions to the political problems of the time. In other words, I argue that *Comentarios*' and *Utopia*'s internal contradictions, pervasive use of irony, and other destabilizing linguistic techniques engender a complex and paradoxical discourse (the utopian discourse) that responds to often incongruous and conflicting humanistic views that permeated the upper echelons of European politics in the sixteenth century.

Example by example, I will show how More's and Inca Garcilaso's utopian works shed light onto the crisis of humanist political values, and advance an innovative critique of the problems emanating from it. The books begin by presenting Utopia and Tahuantinsuyu as the ultimate *humanist* societies, which were believed to be the best alternatives to the precarious state of affairs of European politics. In More's case, the main political referent is Tudor England, and

evangelization vouches for a pacifist method based on syncretic strategies. Nevertheless, this view is extremely infantilizing towards the natives, which Spanish authorities used as justification for ruling the native peoples of the Americas. The second evangelization sees Amerindian cultures as more complex societal forms, though severely influenced by devilish practices that needed to be immediately extirpated. This, in turn, justified the extremely violent strategies for conquest and subjugation.

Although each of these two evangelization projects enlisted a plethora of colonial officials and clerics of different denominations, the first evangelization was mainly conducted by Dominicans with Bartolomé de las Casas at the helm, and the second's main agent was Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda.

the alternative ideology upon which Utopia is founded is More's own version of Erasmian humanism. In Garcilaso's case, the political referent is Spanish Peru, and the Dominican and Jesuit versions of humanism are the alternative ideologies after which Tahuantinsuyu is modeled. However, More's and Garcilaso's detailed description of Utopia's and Tahuantinsuyu's institutions render a less than gracious image of the humanist social ideal. In fact, when examined in detail, the Utopian and Incan states appear disturbingly *anti-human*, therefore paradoxically *anti-humanist*⁴⁴. Specifically, More and Garcilaso draw attention to the contradiction between the political ideologies based on humanist ideals, and their precarious materialization in the extremely coercive laws and political institutions of their fictional societies.

To articulate these ideas, I have decided to divide the chapter in two sections, and a conclusion. First, I will provide a general analysis of More's *Utopia*, in order to establish the basis of my Baroque interpretation of the text. As mentioned above, my reading of More's *Utopia* is based on Hanan Yoran's analysis of humanism and utopia⁴⁵, where he gives an insightful account of the contradictions at the heart of More's Utopian society: "the attempt to construct an ideal humanist social order is ultimately based on antihumanist presuppositions" (182). After reading Yoran's work, I became aware that his analysis of Utopia's contradictory nature confirmed my own intuition about the relationship between Baroque texts and critical political theory: that a

⁴⁴ I am indebted to Hanan Yoran (2010) for this idea. In his book, *Between Utopia and Dystopia*, he concludes that the humanists' attempt to construct an ideal humanist social order is ultimately based on antihumanist presuppositions. Although I take issue with some of his characterizations of the humanist intellectual as well as with a rather reductionist theology behind Utopia's religion, I am extremely indebted to this general idea that unravels the conceptual contradiction at the heart of humanism.

⁴⁵ *Between Utopia and Dystopia* (2010).

radically skeptical form of political theorizing in the sixteenth-century could only be achieved through Baroque literary strategies. This is a semi-original idea that echoes William Childers's broad notion of the Baroque. As explained in the introduction⁴⁶, Childers argues that the Baroque discourse is not an idealized abstraction, but rather a hybrid and uncompromised critical approach to the ideological and social crises of early modernity.

Second, I will offer a close reading of *Comentarios reales* in light of the previous analysis of *Utopia*. Thus, my reading will highlight *Comentarios*' paradoxical representation of the Inca empire, i.e., the impossibility of the humanist model as shown in Tahuantinsuyu, and the book's careful reluctance to commit to any specific ideology. Furthermore, my reading will also focus on how the utopian discourse operates as Garcilaso's chosen Baroque strategy to advance a decolonial critique of the first and second evangelizations' political underpinnings.

Finally, I will conclude with two theoretical observations on what I have denominated the modern utopian genre, and a suggestive commentary about the role of utopian texts in the overall landscape of political theory-philosophy. First, I observe that modern utopian texts are Baroque texts in the sense that they foster contradictory elements that allow for a profound skeptical attitude towards the status quo and its alternatives. Second, I conclude these modern utopian texts (but specially Garcilaso's) are an ideal decolonial approach to political theory, because they shed light on the flaws, biases, and contradictions present in all forms of political ideologies that justify colonial projects. Finally, I suggest that that the modern utopian genre stands both as a precursor

⁴⁶ See Introduction. Also consult: Childers, 2019.

and a counter-discourse to traditional modern political philosophy, more specifically to that which Enlightenment thinkers would later develop.

4.1 More's Utopian Model

Utopia can be considered one of the most influential works in Western literary and philosophical history. Thomas More's book stirred up heated debates among sixteenth-century humanists, left a profound imprint on the Enlightenment philosophers, influenced Marx's thought, and continues to inspire novel political and literary ventures. More's masterpiece bears witness to the modern capacity for imagining a renewed social and political body. However, despite the promising and revolutionary spirit with which it is often associated, *Utopia* is a rather paradoxical text. It neither promises a better version of reality, nor transforms the political arena in any radical way, despite its apparent attempt at presenting the existence of an impossibly perfect society. What it really does is raise questions about theoretical or philosophical approaches to politics. On the one hand, it shows that hoping for a radical transformation of society is futile, that moving an idea from theory into practice ends up corrupting the original idea and eroding the credibility of its proponents. It shows that there is a stark difference between the world of thought and the political sphere, notwithstanding the sixteenth-century efforts to transcend such dichotomy. Concretely, *Utopia* ironizes the humanists' optimistic determination for generating social change through the study and teaching of philosophy and letters. On the other hand, the book remains hopeful in the belief that no social transformation is possible without audacious and intrepid schemes of the imagination. *Utopia* formulates the striking paradox of being a book that reconciles the abstraction of political philosophy and the concreteness of political practice through fiction. The imaginary

society in *Utopia* contains a poignant critique of Europe's status quo, though ironically reaffirming the impossibility of such a place on a non-fictional plane.

As a work of comparative criticism, *Utopia* is a two-part book that opens up with a discussion of current sixteenth-century European issues, in order to prepare the reader for an implicit—though active—comparison with the idealistic land of Utopia in the second part. This two-part structure sets the stage for a rather peculiar contrast of two different sociopolitical systems. Although the book presents an analysis of European societies versus a philosophically ideal version of them, the comparison is never put in a straightforward way. The book asks the reader to take an active role in making the comparison happen. This is so, because, as I have mentioned before, one of the book's main characteristics is its ability to lay out its criticism in an ambiguous and surreptitious manner. Thus, part one and part two of the book are quite different.

Rhetorically speaking, part one can be described as a debate among intellectuals about the most pressing ills of European societies, and their role in remedying these problems. Part two is but a sardonic encomium of a supposedly perfect society (Greenblatt 1980; Skinner 2002; Yoran 2010). As we shall see, both parts display a powerfully ironic tenor in their remarks and descriptions. The irony is no ordinary literary strategy, but a central theme to the unfolding of the book's ideas. In the depiction of its characters, the tone of their remarks, and the detailed description of Utopia's people and institutions, More devises a discourse that encourages an acute reader to see beyond the surface. It activates a critical thinking mode that enables the apprehension of double-entendres and hidden considerations. Chiefly, *Utopia*'s characters embody different critical attitudes towards the sixteenth-century status quo, all while simultaneously representing the mockery of their own criticisms. In the same way, Utopia's institutions are both an

unapologetic critique of Europe's failed social policies, as well as the invalidation of the Utopian alternative.

Thomas More creates a literary character of himself who travels to Flanders, on behalf of Henry VIII to attend to England's diplomatic affairs. In Flanders, he meets with an old friend of his, Peter Gilles—another literary character created from reality—, who introduces Raphael Hythloday, a fictional traveler and philosopher who was said to have accompanied Amerigo Vespucci in three of his voyages around the world. Hythloday had just returned from the New World, specifically from the island of Utopia, where he dwelled for several years, experiencing a completely different society, and bringing a radically singular perspective to the Old Continent. However, the conversation of these three interlocutors does not begin with Hythloday's recounting of his life in Utopia. It opens with Gilles rallying up More to encourage Hythloday to engage in public service. Given Hythloday's credentials and his around-the-world experience, as well as being a famous scholar, he was thus coveted by many European courts. More, being the virtuous humanist that he strives to be, insists that it is the philosopher's moral duty to participate in politics (the *vita activa*), and thus contribute to the betterment of society (Greenblatt 1980). Humanists believed—especially Erasmian humanists—that theoretical knowledge without practice was not worth pursuing. The importance humanists attributed to rhetoric and ethics as practical activities influencing all provinces of knowledge eroded the traditional scholastic distinction between *vita activa* and *vita contemplativa* that Medieval scholars had put in place (Yoran 87).

4.1.1 The Role of the Humanist Intellectual

Humanists were both epistemological and political reformers who understood that the primary role of the intellectual was to be an active participant in political life, rather than an

isolated hermit absconded in an abbey. As such, humanism did not conceive of knowledge as purely contemplative and unaffected by mundane affairs. On the contrary, humanism conceived of knowledge as culturally determined, contingently and historically shaped by society, and thus necessarily circumscribed in political matters. In this sense, Gilles hoped that More would help Hythloday understand the humanist view: that he, as a philosopher, was both learner and producer of knowledge inasmuch as he formed part of society, and therefore morally indebted to the community⁴⁷.

But in practical terms, how was the intellectual supposed to engage in politics? For intellectuals like Hythloday, the most effective way to have a positive impact in society was to serve the king, or any other figure of power. This was so, because of the tight grip sixteenth-century rulers had over their people. In More's words: "the springs both of good and evil flow from the prince, over a whole nation, as from a lasting fountain" (*Utopia*, 5). Thus, serving at court was of paramount importance for humanists, since, as educators, they knew all too well that people were bound to err (even rulers), but were also capable of listening to counsel and thus rectifying their mistakes. Moreover, humanists held the conviction that reality needed to be properly interpreted, otherwise people would come up with wrong opinions, and thus be bound to stumble. For these reasons, humanists saw themselves as mentors exerting positive influence over rulers. They would help them see how they erred in the past, as well as help them dissipate incorrect interpretations of reality. In this way, humanists would contribute to general social improvement.

⁴⁷ In sum, the humanist view claimed that anyone concerned either with knowledge or with the betterment of society was to be an active participant in political life. Trying to escape politics could even be regarded as immoral.

In virtue of these reasons, one of core beliefs of Humanism was about the power of rhetoric in all fields of knowledge. Rhetoric was to be present in academic, technical and spiritual discussions, so the correct opinions would reach the heights of power. This is precisely why philosophers and intellectuals were encouraged to engage actively at the highest spheres of government, be it ecclesiastical or political. In a sense, humanists thought of themselves as shapers of society through their influence over rulers. Thomas More, the living author, was himself an example of this intellectual class being a member of Henry VIII's court. Analogously, it is not outlandish to assume that Inca Garcilaso upheld a similar vision, regarding his role as an intellectual. Not only were his texts dedicated and sponsored by powerful people –as was customary among the Spanish intellectual class–, but they conveyed a provocative and adulatory message that, in spite of its ironic undertones, attempted to carve out a new place for non-Europeans within the world of letters. Nevertheless, just like More, El Inca was skeptical about the real efficacy of the humanistic method. This is precisely why they both resorted to utopian discourses. In this way, they could convey the complexity of their perspective on humanism; one where they were also targets of their very own criticism.

Before turning back to *Utopia* and continuing with Hythloday's reply, it is important to underscore the significance of this brief excursus on humanism. More's portrayal of the traditional humanist –as embodied by himself and Peter Gilles– familiarizes the reader with the most problematic feature of the humanist movement, namely the argument in favor of public service when public service had already proven to be an inefficient avenue towards social progress. Let's remember that Humanism did not hold particular metaphysical or transcendental presuppositions; its only concern was to fashion a moral and responsible citizen. In this sense, humanists welcomed any method or ethical program for social betterment, as long as it originated in active observation

and involvement in human praxis, and did not derive from a transcendental understanding of human reality (like scholasticism). So, because the majority of humanist intellectuals submitted to the power of a traditionally egotistic aristocratic class, the argument in favor of public service comes to be –as Hythloday’s puts it– a contradiction in terms at the heart of the humanist movement (*Utopia*, 25). Dependency upon patronage shaped, more often than not, the humanists’ work and views, causing them to align with the political establishment, whose source of power resided in a transcendental and static conception of the public sphere. This resulted in humanists (More included) flirting with scholastic ideas (e.g., divine rights to power) and engaging deeply with the aristocratic ethos.

In light of these ideas, More, the author, contrives his self-criticism through the voice of Hythloday. As shall be seen in Hythloday’s reply, the efficacy of the intellectuals’ influence over the ruling class is put into question. In this sense, the book presents us with a constant tension between 1) the humanists’ need to influence rulers in order to promote social reform (Peter Giles and Thomas More), and 2) a more radical route for social change (Hythloday). This tension gives rise to the very structure of More’s *Utopia*. Part one of the book presents the traditional humanist vision of reform, its problems, and contradictions; part two offers the utopian alternative, which is but the radicalization of the humanist ideal. This last part, however, is not a solution to the humanist conundrum, but the unraveling of its structural tension, and the further problematization of the movement as a futile intellectual endeavor, despite its seemingly progressive pragmatism. Let’s see how the argument continues.

After Hythloday was exhorted to take active part in European politics, he refuses Gilles’ and More’s appreciations. His reply is based on a rather pessimistic argument of the psychology of those in power. Hythloday says that kings do not listen to good counsel, but to flattery; that

those in power think only of their own personal gain, and the expansion of their dominions, rather than of increasing the public good. Furthermore, he supports his claims by signaling how the European social and political order is set up in such a way that its problems cannot be solved. Specifically, Hythloday talks about how the rampant economic corruption, and general poverty are intensified by the inequality of the economic hierarchy and the brutality of the judicial system. Hythloday further explains that the failures of European rulers in addressing these issues are indeed proof of the poor counsel they receive or, rather, of the impracticality of philosophers serving as counsel: there is an insurmountable tension between the philosopher's point of view and the princes' interests. The failure of the philosopher as political advisor is a direct product of the existing order. The conversation about Europe's social problems and their solutions reaches no final conclusion. Only one thing comes to be agreed upon: that limited reforms aiming at the solution of small problems prove to be useless in the end. *Utopia's* famous example is that of theft. Hythloday recounts that at a dinner party offered by Cardinal Morton, archbishop of Canterbury, one of the guests was puzzled about the increasing number of thieves, despite the harsh punishment against theft. Hythloday replies by saying that the capital punishment for theft will always be ineffective because it is neither just nor addresses the root of the problem. Therefore, the harsh punishment for stealing does not prevent stealing from happening; if anything, it reinforces social discontent. Moreover, he speaks of the overwhelming unemployment in England as another cause for increased theft, which itself stems from land seizure by avaricious monarchs and aristocrats, in their quest for imperial expansion and power holding. For these reasons, Hythloday argues that the ultimate solution to the problem of theft needs to be a radical one; namely, the abolition of private property. His contention is that the elimination of private property is the only possible solution to the social ills of his time. The communal enjoyment of resources eliminates all material

unhappiness and dissatisfaction. Avarice, pride in one's possessions, and envy of others' property would cease to exist. Urged by More and Gilles to expand on this idea and anticipating any skepticism, Hythloday described how just such a successful communal model was possible in Utopia, from where he had just arrived.

4.1.2 Utopia: A Humanist Society

Part two of the book is a very detailed description of what Hythloday has ascertained to be a perfectly functioning society. But besides its efficient modes of production, accessible welfare services, and social equality, one of the most important features of Utopia is that it is described to be a real place. Hythloday has just returned from living among the islanders, and can attest to the viability of Utopia's social structure amongst real human beings. This is of the outmost importance because otherwise it could be argued that such a society was but the fantastic portrayal of a city of gods. Utopia, being located in the American continent, is surrounded the savages traditionally depicted in sixteenth-century New World chronicles. The contrast between the perfect society of Utopia and the barbaric Amerindian nations that surround it offers the most dramatic representation of the long-lasting tension between the concepts of civilization and barbarity. Utopia is the most advanced and progressive of modern civilizations. It is a nation characterized by stable democratic institutions, communal ownership of the land, cooperative economy, and relative religious tolerance. Furthermore, its foreign policy consists in peace-seeking politics: self-protection and of its allies, and peaceful conquest campaigns, where an invitation is extended to other nations, who are, more often than not, seduced by the just and fair ways of Utopian society. Finally, its domestic policy consists in the formation of equal, and law-abiding citizens, and in the advancement of social unity, *via* a pedagogical program focused in ethics and morality. Overall,

Utopia is a society that embodies the humanist ideal of social improvement through the education of its citizens, as well as the cultivation of tolerance through the exercise of reason.

The realization of this ideal society requires immense planning and the deployment of a carefully crafted social and political apparatus. Since the Utopian guiding principle is a moral one, its social structure proceeds from a material arrangement that encourages the proliferation of virtuous actions⁴⁸. As mentioned above, communal property ensures that the vital needs of the majority are met (which eliminates theft), as well as the institution of a fair justice system and the encouragement of virtuous behavior in its citizenry. Thus, communal ownership of the land, of the means of production, and of all material goods requires that citizens be given a specific role in both economic and political domains. As such, citizens are placed together into households, which are in turn grouped into a bigger group of thirty households. Each group of thirty households elects a public official called a Syphograntus. Every ten Syphigranti elects another representative called a Traniborus to rule over them. Now, the two-hundred Syphogranti of all cities elect the Prince, who holds life-tenure. In this government, every individual participates in public life, but the way in which they participate –although granted and mandatory– is seriously predetermined. In the economic sphere, every person is taught to work and live in the countryside: farming for two years at a time, women doing the same work as men. Furthermore, every citizen has to learn at least one other essential trade: weaving (mainly done by women), carpentry, metalsmithing, and masonry. Usually, people only work for six hours a day, although many work willingly for more. Slavery is only used as a form of punishment; therefore, slaves are either foreign prisoners or domestic criminals. A curious fact about Utopian slaves is that they wear chains made out of gold, the purpose

⁴⁸ One of Utopia's most important policies was to eradicate pride, a monstrous sin and of most social evils.

of which was 1) to reflect how much Utopians despise mundane material wealth, which they consider offensive, and 2) to mark them with a sign of their shameful deeds. Utopian law is very simple. There are certain enumerated offenses, among them, adultery, suicide attempts, traveling outside the city without permission, and even discussing political affairs in private settings. These crimes are punishable by slavery. There are no lawyers, precisely because the law is simple. Therefore, citizens are expected to know the difference between right and wrong. This means that Utopia is certainly an unambiguous reflection of humanist ideals, i.e., a society in which morality is explicit and unequivocal, and taught to its citizens so that they will all live accordingly, and become true moral subjects.

Other noteworthy features of this society are its welfare policies and its apparent religious tolerance. These are perhaps the most progressive of the humanist prescriptions portrayed in *Utopia*. On the one hand, the Utopian state provides each citizen with its daily sustenance, free healthcare, and even access to supervised euthanasia. On the other hand, religious tolerance permits the peaceful coexistence of moon-worshippers, sun-worshippers, planet-worshippers, and ancestor-worshippers on the island⁴⁹. Only those who consider themselves atheist are discriminated against, although allowed to live among believers. It is worth pointing out, however, that, in spite the diversity of religions, there is a prevailing monotheistic trend among Utopian cults:

There are several sorts of religions, not only in different parts of the island, but even in every town; some worshipping the sun, others the moon, or one of the

⁴⁹ It should be noted, however, that only monotheistic peoples are tolerated. This fact puts the Utopian attitude towards religion very close to the humanist attitude of Concordia among the three religions of the Book: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

planets: some worship such men as have been eminent in former times for virtue, or glory, not only as ordinary deities, but as the supreme God: yet the greater and wiser sort of them worship none of these, but adore one eternal, invisible, infinite, and incomprehensible Deity; as a Being that is far above all our apprehensions, that is spread over the whole universe, not by His bulk, but by His power and virtue; Him they call the Father of All, and acknowledge that the beginnings, the increase, the progress, the vicissitudes, and the end of all things come only from Him; nor do they offer divine honors to any but to Him alone. And indeed, *though they differ concerning other things, yet all agree in this, that they think there is one supreme Being that made and governs the world, whom they call in the language of their country Mithras*. They differ in this, that one thinks the God whom he worships is this supreme Being, and another thinks that his idol is that God; but they all agree in one principle, that whoever is this supreme Being, He is also that great Essence to whose glory and majesty all honors are ascribed by the consent of all nations (71-72. *Emphasis mine*).

According to this passage, Utopia's practical religious tolerance only applies as long as there is an underlying monotheistic notion of the supreme good. This evinces that Utopia is modeled after two of the most important tenets of the humanist project. First, that there is indeed one objective and unique concept of the supreme "good" and of the "divine", in spite of the many cults present in Utopia: no matter how different the Utopian cults are, they all still "agree" on the existence of one supreme being. Second, given the common belief in one supreme being, each citizen can recognize in one another a similar concept of goodness, therefore a similar moral code.

In this sense, Utopia gets closer to a Thomistic conception of the ethical realm⁵⁰, which sets an example for a more benevolent handling of undogmatic representations of the “good life” and the divine. This point suggests, once again, how deeply committed Utopia is to a firm position about morality and civility as conceived by humanists. Let’s not forget that humanism did not conceive of morality outside the provinces of religion and faith. Humanism, especially in its Erasmian vein (which, by the way, had a profound imprint in the Iberian Peninsula), had a theology focused on the idea of the Christian *pietas* or Christian love. This means that, for humanists, Christianity was less dogmatic and more spiritual, which allowed for a more open continuity with classical pagan beliefs. As shall be shown later, this openness made its way into Spanish colonial thought. Intellectuals such José de Acosta, Bartolomé de las Casas, and Domingo de Santo Tomás, propounded evangelization projects —although different from each other— that reflected a disposition to assimilate non-Christian theologies within the Catholic project⁵¹.

⁵⁰ Thomas Aquinas argued for the natural law theory in ethics, which says that we all, despite whatever be our upbringing (Christian or not), are able to recognize the good from the bad, the right and the wrong. This is to say that morality did not necessarily come from revelation of the scriptures but from the exercise of reason. This natural moral discernment, however, was indeed a creation of God, who created us in his image. Therefore, even moral discernment without revelation was still the proof of God existence within us, proof of his omnipresence: as knowledge of his divine law was already present within us through our knowledge of morality.

⁵¹ It is not irrelevant to anticipate here that Spanish evangelization efforts are also reflective of the humanist rejection of the distinction between the *vita activa* and the *vita contemplativa*, and, therefore, reflective of the importance of the political dimension of the Christian faith, whose ultimate objective was, indeed, expansion. Based on the Humanist principle of inclusion and conception of Christianity as a civilizing religion (this is the application of Erasmus’ *Philosophia Christi*), Spanish evangelizers were as close to Erasmus’ desire for reforming society and culture, but within an imperial context, which means that expansion does not merely entail an invitation to non-

These progressive features resulted in the advancement of a self-aggrandizing ideal that consisted in the belief that they, Utopians, through the exercise of reason, had arrived at the best possible society. This means that they developed a “superiority mindset” that favored political imposition over integration. When utopian cities grew too big, and it was necessary to expand their territories, companies of men and women would settle and colonize new regions, without considering any legal or moral implications. They believed that they already had the answer to all moral questions. When Utopians stepped out of their island to settle other territories, they invited the native populations to join, with an almost assured belief that no one in their right mind would reject such an invitation. This is where it gets tricky: If the natives were to decline, they would be

Christians to participate in the Christian faith, but arguments in support of the “just war” argument, which included a plethora of obligations, constrictions, and violent acts. In this sense, it can be a little ironic that Humanism, the most progressive branch of Christianity in the sixteenth century (the religious and philosophical current that rose in direct opposition to scholasticism and monasticism), was used, at the end, as the justification for the ominous enterprise of Spanish colonialism. In other words, Erasmus’ conviction that “the good life (Christian life) was everyone’s business”, and that “Christ wished it to be accessible to all men” (Letter to Paul Volz), was later used as an instrument to legitimize the European enterprise of subjugation and dominance.

It should be noted that the question of “just was” was contested issue within the humanist tradition. This is so because Erasmus himself opposed such a notion, while a large number of his fellow humanists widely embraced and contributed to the “just war” argument, most notably the Spanish humanist Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda. In his meditation on the subject of war, *Dulce bellum*, Erasmus explicitly rejected the Church fathers’ and popes’ efforts in propagating the just war doctrine. Sepúlveda, for his part, wrote *Democrates, sive de justi belli causis*, a philosophical dialogue where he exposes the just causes for waging war against inferior civilizations, which, in essence, were meant to be non-Christian ones.

free to go (losing their territories); but, were they to resist, they would be met with force. Utopians imposed their will on others, because they could conceive of no better sociopolitical system than their own.

From this standpoint, it is not difficult to see the similarities between this Utopian mindset and that of the proponents of Spanish imperialism. Spaniards (as well as the rest of European nations) would project a rosy picture of their conquest methods. Spanish lawyers and theologians contrived an official narrative of superiority in both a divine and an epistemological sense that legitimized their actions in the name of the most absolute good: the spread of Christianity as a civilizing mission⁵². Although Spaniards and Utopians shared a similar sense of superiority, the state of Utopia did not have an explicit imperialistic purpose. Despite the differences in scale and extent, these two societies each thought of themselves as having a civilizing mission. Just as the sixteenth-century European myth of historical supremacy –in today’s terms, Eurocentrism– rose from the Renaissance belief in the philosophical superiority of the Ancient world and the uniqueness and universality of the Christian message⁵³, the Utopian foundational myth appeals to its own unique sense of superiority in the figure of an extraordinary man of immense wisdom, Utopus.

⁵² In 1512, the Spanish jurist Juan López de Palacios Rubio, was commissioned with writing a legal document that would set forth the basic tenets of the Christian faith, and thus justify a request of vassalage from the American natives in the name of the Spanish crown, which represented in the Pope, this one, in turn, represented Christ (the source of infinite wisdom and goodness) on earth. This document was to be read out loud to the natives in every first encounter, in order to ensure that the legality of the ordeal had taken place.

⁵³ To inquire further upon the advent of Europe’s idea of “racial” supremacy, see Pagden (1982).

Utopus that conquered it (whose name it still carries, for Abraxa was its first name) brought the rude and uncivilized inhabitants into such a good government, and to that measure of politeness, that they now far excel all the rest of mankind; having soon subdued them, he designed to separate them from the continent, and to bring the sea quite round them. (*Utopia*, 28)

Utopus is revered as a source of absolute wisdom, who, like a self-appointed prophet, bestowed upon himself the task of enlightening the barbarous Abraxians. As such, Utopus is not merely a supreme figure of goodness and wisdom, but also a colonizing force. Utopus appears amid barbarous peoples who have not yet been exposed to virtuous ways of living. His arrival, then, marks the beginning of a new era of hope and enlightenment. In more than one way, Utopus and his enlightened society resemble the image that Renaissance missionaries had of themselves, especially those who had a humanistic approach to the ministry of the faith. Humanist missionaries in the Americas, for instance, thought of themselves as bringing both the one true faith and a better form of living to a continent where obscurity and ignorance had presided over all of human affairs. Similarly, *Utopia* casts the same dichotomy between the notions of civilization and barbarity, clearly elevating Utopian society as the archetype of civilization⁵⁴.

4.1.3 Utopia's Irony and Contradictions

Although the aforementioned description of Utopia is true, it is also misleading. In order to succeed in creating a peaceful, egalitarian, and just society, Utopian norms, customs, and

⁵⁴ It is ironic for Utopia to be located in the Americas, the continent that Europeans thought to be peopled by brutes and barbarians.

institutions tend to be extremely oppressive and restrictive. In order to ensure the elimination of private property –and, with it, the purging of corruption, theft and poverty–, to maintain an orderly functioning economy, and to uphold a peaceful social coexistence, the Utopian state must resort to an oppressive system of control. Uniformity, strict discipline, extreme supervision, and control over every element of its citizens' lives constitute the core tenets of Utopian order. For instance, all of Utopia's fifty-four cities, including the capital, Amaurot, look the same in almost all respects. Each city is divided into four equal parts, consisting of no more than six thousand households, of ten to sixteen adults. All citizens dwelled in three-story houses, with the same number of people, and "except for the distinction between sexes, and between married and single individuals" all dressed almost exactly alike (Utopia, 126). Thus, citizens are not allowed to choose where or with whom they live. Moreover, laws regarding interpersonal relations, and the institutions of family and marriage are particularly restrictive. The Utopian state denies the free expression of one's individuality as well as freedom of association. In Utopia, citizens are not allowed to choose what friends they can visit.

All these are signs give us an image of a state that supersedes its citizens and their particular interests, in order to pursue an abstract social ideal. The state instrumentalizes the individual and conditions him or her to perform a preconceived role. To preserve order, any assertion of individuality is overruled by the state's rigid structure. In this sense, the states' rigidity is the prerequisite of a perfectly functioning polis. In this light, the seemingly perfect social arrangement of Utopia exposes its darker side.

The dark side of Utopia, far from being a marginal topic, reverberates throughout the book, creating an integrated and self-contained criticism of the utopian alternative. In this sense, the book not only criticizes England's or Europe's status quo, but also the utopian alternative Hythloday

describes. The perfect functioning Utopian institutions come at the expense of its citizens' ability to assert themselves as individuals. The dark side of Utopia can be summarized as the imposition of the community over the individual. In a sense, Utopia resolves the classic moral conundrum of "means versus ends", by prioritizing the latter. Now, in order to illustrate the dark side of this equation, and how it operates as an internal criticism (that is, Utopia criticizing Utopia), it is necessary to look in detail at a few instances of tension between the oppressive state and the individual. But before looking at examples, I find it important to note here that this is one of most striking and interesting parallels between More and Inca Garcilaso. It is a testament to the fact that both authors engage in a deeply critical inquiry about sixteenth-century society: its problems, potential solutions, and the risks that those solutions entail. They advance a comprehensive and critical study of both reality and its abstraction, i.e., of the current political systems in which they live, and of the theoretical alternatives proposed by the most important philosophical current of the time.

The first instance that illustrates how the tension state-individual reveals a dark side of Utopia is the regimentation of Utopians' daily lives. Governmental control and supervision are ways to ensure that the structure of the perfect state is not altered by unexpected expressions of individuality. This is why Utopians have predetermined almost everything in their lives, from the work they do to the games they play in their leisure time (*Utopia*, 34). For instance, they are supposed to eat together in public venues, and never at home. There is a communist argument behind this, which states that, since there is no private property, food and all products for the citizens' daily sustenance must be produced, cooked, and consumed communally. But this communal meal sharing hides a more complex issue. Even though it could be argued that communal dining tables attest to the successful elimination hunger, and of theft and insecurity, its

primary purpose is to ensure that nothing goes unsupervised, that meals do not become an occasion where factions and parties emerge. In Hythloday's words, the state makes sure that "there are no taverns, no alehouses nor stews among them; nor any other occasions of corrupting each other [...] or forming themselves into parties: all men live in full view, so that all are obliged, both to perform their ordinary task, and to employ themselves well in their spare hours" (*Utopia*, 42). These measures are signs of a higher level of control, and reveal how much the state values transparency in order to prevent the formation of factions or any sort of civil plotting against the current order. Such control is so deeply engrained in Utopians that even households and families are subject to state control. Houses' doors are never locked, thus symbolizing the state's power and its all-penetrating gaze; which gives rise to the complete erasure of the private realm.

The seizure of the private sphere is further seen in the state's almost complete control over the institutions of family and marriage. Married couples consist of a man and a woman, who are supposed to work together, manage one household, and procreate children. Children, however, are not required to stay with their parents⁵⁵. Children might be moved to other families in order to preserve the correct number of people in each household, or they are allowed to be raised by people who align more with their personalities. In the same fashion, married couples are not supposed to stay together because of a religious precepts or love, but because the union preserves the carefully

⁵⁵ Although the Utopian notion of family is also patriarchal like its European counterpart, it also greatly from it, because familial proximity and relations are not as important. Here, it is important to note that the European notion of family, as a legitimate social unit, largely depends on the existence of private property. The succession and preservation of estates as well as titles and goods have to rely on a social institution that clearly determines the familial bonds. To further explore the history of the Western family, see Anderson, 1980.

crafted Utopian order⁵⁶. Maintaining order is so important that the Utopian state dictates that both grooms and brides undergo a nude inspection before their future spouses, previous to officializing their commitment. This measure tries to prevent the risk of separation due to surprise physical shortcomings or other defects. In this sense, Utopians seem to give up their agency even in the most intimate affairs. This elimination of the private sphere is nothing but a radical State doctrine, from which no individual is able to escape. The inescapability of this reality is patently displayed in an even more literal sense: the strange Utopian attitude towards traveling.

If any man has a mind to visit his friends that live in some other town, or desires to travel and see the rest of the country, he obtains leave very easily from the Syphogrant and Tranibors, *when there is no particular occasion for him at home*: such as travel, carry with them a passport from the Prince, *which both certifies the license that is granted for travelling, and limits the time of their return* [...] while they are on the road, they carry no provisions with them; yet they want nothing, but are everywhere treated as if they were at home. If they stay in any place longer than a night, every one follows his proper occupation [...] but if any man goes out of the city to which he belongs, without leave, and is found rambling without a passport, he is severely treated, he is punished as a fugitive, and sent home disgracefully; and if he falls again into the like fault, is condemned to slavery (41).

⁵⁶ In this sense, those who are not happy in their marriage could possibly divorce, as long as they find suitable spouses and leave the union in amicable terms.

Evidently, this domestic policy seems particularly strange to us, since it is easy to spot the contradictions within the general argument laid out in the book. Moreover, the discrepancy between our understanding of traveling and its meaning in Utopia gives us a sense of conceptual incompatibility that, in the end, amounts to an ethical discrepancy. Hanan Yoran (2010) describes it as “the gap between the rhetoric of the text and the reality it depicts” (168). Let’s examine the passage in detail. First, the biggest contradiction resides in the fact that the punishment for traveling without permission far outweighs the crime itself. This is particularly unsettling since Hythloday had previously remarked that the punishment for theft in England (death) was way too severe for the act of stealing, and that it did more harm than good. It thus seems like Utopia is not that perfect a society after all. Harsh punishments for relatively minor crimes are not only common practice in the “flawed” European nations, but also in the Utopian state. This gap between the punishment and the crime suggests –just like it did in the case of England– that there are some structural problems that are mitigated rather than properly dealt with. In England, the difference between theft and its punishment suggested that there was a structural element preventing the actual elimination of the problem. Greed and, above all, pride were the source of all social evils, among which was theft. Pride’s root cause (and by extension theft’s root cause) was private property; therefore, a communist society was the radical solution. In Utopia, the logic behind the discrepancy between traveling without permission and the hard punishment for it is similar to that for theft in England. It suggests that there is an unresolved (and unnamed) structural problem at the heart of Utopian society. But this unnamed problem is better elucidated in light of the second contradiction of the paragraph.

The particularly ironic use of the word “*easily*” is where the second contradiction lies (Yoran 167). The quote says that permission for traveling is *easily* granted, nevertheless such a

request has to be transmitted all the way up to the Prince, who sets strict limits on the time of departure and return. This policy, Yoran argues, is “an indication of a repressed problem”. He says that “Utopia finds it hard to cope with an inexplicable desire to travel” (168). It is inexplicable because Utopia’s strict rules on traveling suggest that there is almost no need for traveling at all. Since all cities look alike, and everything looks the same both at home and elsewhere, Utopians have no real incentives to see anything new or different outside from where they live. This uniformed world that Utopia creates ensures that the current order is not easily disrupted. Indeed, the ideal state is all about the preservation of routine and regulations. The Utopian state then creates self-image of the good political body. However, the fact that this image of the best possible society is imposed upon its citizens, and not the product of each citizens’ exercise of their own reason, seems to betray humanism core beliefs.

Utopia’s theoretical bedrock is the humanist belief in the understanding of the good as an evident, rational, and attainable concept, from which correct behavior and, subsequently, the formation of the ideal state will follow. Then, the fact that Utopia has such restrictive rules for its citizens contradicts its own rational foundation. If individuals can arrive at a good moral code through the use of reason, why do Utopians need to be told what is best for them? Why do Utopians need such restrictions if, theoretically, they are already in the know of what is best for them? Moreover, why is the punishment so harsh? The answer to these questions resides, I think, in an unacknowledged fear of the fallibility of the project itself. In other words, Utopia’s strict rules condemning all behavioral deviation attest to the impossibility of believing in the universalizability of the humanists’ optimistic logic. With this, *Utopia* suggests that it is impossible to draw a programmatic and institutionalized plan out of a purely rational understanding of politics. Never can one expect that all members of a specific community would

attain moral clarity at the same pace and in the same way. Moreover, never can a political plan be drawn expecting the sphere of politics to remain unaltered. Here is where *Utopia* presents one of the most profound assessments of the contradictions in the humanist view politics. Let's remember that humanism conceived of knowledge as socially and culturally determined, as well as historically shaped by society; therefore, knowledge was politically contingent. Thus, if knowledge comes from and is shaped by politics, how can reason pretend to determine alone the course of good political institutions and morals? This is, of course, an aporia that *Utopia* brings to light and does not presume to resolve. Instead, *Utopia* suggests the dangers associated to it.

This coercive social structure reflects a deeply engrained belief—mostly present in colonial societies and, in its most extreme version, in totalitarian regimes—that there cannot be a better society than the one established by Utopus (or by a colonizer or a totalitarian leader). Moreover, according to this principle, the citizens' identities could only be asserted as members of the community, and never outside of it. As such, Utopia's unreflective subjects are devoid of all individuality, and are subjects that exist only as constitutive parts of the greater unit of Utopia⁵⁷. If Utopians were good people, it was because they were members of Utopia and not because they had individually come to the understanding of the good through the exercise of their own reason. Contrary to a strict interpretation of Aquinas' rational argument, in which individuals use their God-given reason to assert their goodness in the world, the Utopian social order produces "good" citizens and morals through the unreflective repetition of certain practices and rules, which, in the

⁵⁷ Stephen Greenblatt (1980) argues that More had a concealed wish for self-cancellation, which was grounded on the ambivalence between More's commitment to his humanistic ideals and the aristocratic ethos (he was, after all, counselor to the king). This personal ambivalence, Greenblatt argues, reverberates in the tension between the Utopian subject's lack of agency and the fundamental characteristics of the Utopian order.

end, represent an unreflective notion of the supreme good. According to this notion, the understanding of Utopia as a totalitarian society is not an outlandish claim. Shlomo Avineri (1962) has already made this argument. He claims that the Utopian state assumes a complete control over the idea of the supreme good, and, thus, presupposes a confrontation between Good and Evil in absolute terms. As a totalitarian state, Avineri argues, Utopia holds a view of the human nature as intrinsically corrupt, and that only Utopian institutions can correct (103-104). Although a few are prone to goodness, the majority need to be guided and be kept in line, by punitive restriction. This is why the Utopian state exhibit such ruthlessness towards its deviants. Paradoxically, though, the harshness of Utopian laws contradicts Hythloday's criticism of England's harsh punishments against theft, which was which initiated the entire conversation about Utopia in the first place.

Now, while Avineri's interpretation accounts for the contradictory coexistence of a rational society with extremely punitive laws, his argument is based on a notion of human psychology that is, in no way, explicit or even hinted in the text. In fact, the book clearly states that Utopia tries to root out evil from the external causes, and not from internal elements within the human mind⁵⁸. This is why the Utopian state is so adamant in eliminating things such as private property, instead of sponsoring psychotherapy programs. From Utopia's objectivist perspective, eliminating private property is the most effective and rational solution to eradicate pride, greed, and corruption from society. This means that Avineri's psychological explanation of Utopia's totalitarian nature is a bit of an overstep. He presupposes a psychological dimension that is not present in the text. However,

⁵⁸ Yoran (2010) makes very insightful comments on Avineri's argument point out that the totalitarian argument comes full circle, and does not resolve the contradiction between "the implicit assumptions of the Utopian social order and the explicit argumentation of the text" (175).

his thesis points in the right direction, in the sense that Utopia is a place without politics. Only in that regard is Utopia a totalitarian state: a place where debate and argumentation are completely absent from the public sphere⁵⁹; a place where politics are driven out of society.

But how and why did Utopia become such a totalitarian state, if its ideological pillar (humanism) was so politically driven? Yoran answers this question by analyzing Utopia against the background of its own explicit argumentation, i.e., against the background of Erasmian Humanism and the humanist general discourse. According to Yoran, *Utopia* tries to represent the rift between the ideal subject of humanism and the humanist plan for social reform. While the ideal humanist subject is an extremely inquisitive and educated individual (More himself is an example), Utopia's obsession with "extremely rational" institutions and practices produces subjects deprived of all individuality and self-determination. In order to preserve the rational rules that govern the perfect state, Utopians are devoid all inventiveness, imagination, and interpretive skills. In other words, the ideal state produces blank subjects. However, this end result seems a little strange in light of the fact that Utopians are supposedly exposed to all branches of learning. How can the Utopia produce blank subjects when the state is fully committed to the education of its citizens? The answer lies in very subtle characteristic of the type of education imparted in Utopia. Out of the seven liberal arts, only five are properly studied: arithmetic, geometry, music, dialectic, and astronomy. Little attention is paid to the other two disciplines that, according to humanists, are distinctively political: grammar and rhetoric. These were political disciplines because their main purpose was to train people for public life, either in making speeches and debating, or disputing

⁵⁹ To further explore this hypothesis, it would be interesting to look into Hannah Arendt's (1951) definition of the totalitarian subject, who, in essence, is described as a nonentity or nonperson.

the law. In Utopia, however, citizens “are not obliged to work in reading, and this they do through the whole progress of life” (46). Furthermore, since their most important developments are in music, logic, arithmetic, and geometry, Utopia seems to relegate education to a mere contemplative form of learning. In this sense, Utopia contradicts the humanists’ belief in the political nature of education and learning. Let’s remember, once again, that humanists believed that education played a crucial role in the betterment of public activity. For instance, if laws were to improve for the betterment of the general society, public debates were necessary and had to be carried out by informed rhetoricians, who conveyed clear and sophisticated arguments. Thus, while humanists argued that knowledge was to be used for the *transformation* and *betterment* of the public good, the Utopian state argued conversely. Utopian laws were *static*. Therefore, Utopia was a no-place (a-utopia) for the study of *studia humanitatis*, i.e., the humanist philosophy of education, whose central premise was to prepare the individual for the changing and agonistic character of the public sphere.

So, the lack of rhetoric in Utopia amounts to the elimination politics in a society that is supposed to thrive with an active political sphere. In this sense, *Utopia* performs a radical humanistic critique from within. By exposing the risk, dangers, and contradictions that emerge from the application of a purely rational (seemingly tolerant, and efficient) political ideal, More casts light on the contradictory nature of the humanist logic if taken to the extreme. Yoran traces the roots of this contradiction to what he calls the fundamental problem of humanism: the impossibility of reconciling the identity of the humanist intellectual with the doomed fate of a

programmatic humanist political project⁶⁰. While the sixteenth-century humanist intellectual was convinced of the transformative and universal power of rhetoric (as a tool available to everyone), that very same humanist⁶¹ could not escape the extremely narrow space for action he had. If he was to have any impact in the world of politics, he was bound to be in a close relationship with those in power, to eventually persuade them to do good, using his rhetorical prowess. However, more often than not, humanists at court had to resort to adulation, or to simply forgo their plan for political reform when faced with stubborn and selfish monarchs. So, despite their firm belief in reason and the power of rhetoric, humanist intellectuals had to make a lot of concessions, sometimes even relinquishing their own ideals when the stakes were too high⁶².

This problem is announced from the very beginning of the book, when More and Gilles exhort Hythloday to put himself at the service of the crown; and, in turn, Hythloday refuses arguing that persuasion is futile. More and Gilles represent the great majority of humanists, who were timid reformists and had close ties to the ruling classes, but whose political projects were often frustrated by the stubbornness of rulers. Hythloday, for his part, represents a radical embrace of a rationalist perspective, which later, in the age of the Enlightenment, would be swung in full force as a rationalist

⁶⁰ It could be argued that, by extension, *Utopia* contains also the seminal criticism of any programmatic enterprise of political theory.

⁶¹ E.g., Erasmus, Picco della Mirandola, More himself, Peter Gilles; in Iberia: Juan de Valdés, José Acosta, Bartolomé de las Casas.

⁶² Let's not forget intellectuals at court constantly ran the risk of death or imprisonment. More himself was sentenced to death by the very same monarch he served for more than four years.

humanism⁶³. According to Yoran, the stark opposition between these two forms of interpreting the humanist ideals stems from the disconnection between humanist ideals and the concrete socio-political reality. This scission “opens a rift between his [the humanist intellectual’s] social role, on the one hand, and the ethical convictions and epistemological premises of his discourse, on the other” (185). What is interesting about Yoran’s analysis is that the contradictions at the heart of Utopia’s humanism stem from the impossible realization of the humanist intellectual *qua* humanist. Yoran argues that the scission between the ideal humanist plan to reform society and the failed materialization of such a plan (as is the Utopian society), mirrors an internal split within the humanist intellectual himself (More-Hythloday). This is why Utopia has two parts. The first part addresses the problems of humanist pragmatism in Europe (as seen in Hythloday’s critique of the intellectual in European courts); and the second addresses the equally problematic picture of the dangers of a purely rationalist view: the quasi-totalitarian state of Utopia. In sum, paraphrasing Yoran’s words, this split at the heart of the humanist movement shows that both Utopia and the humanist intellectual are located in the same place, a humanist no-place (186).

In the next section, it will become clear how this split in humanism is also present in the Hispanic colonial world. Inca Garcilaso’s portrayal of the Ancient Inca society casts light on this issue. El Inca’s version of Tahuantinsuyu is based on the conflicting views that humanist intellectuals had of non-Christian societies. The split is between the first and second evangelization programs that Spanish humanism had for Americas. Although his version of

⁶³ Rationalist humanism came to be in the Enlightenment the end result of Hythloday’s perspective on ethics and politics as purely guided by reason. Although *Utopia* draws a rather grim picture of a purely rationalist view, Enlightenment thinkers, such as Tocqueville or Montesquieu, expressed a much more nuanced form of humanist rationalism that still bears great influence today.

Tahuantinsuyu does not paint a clear-cut picture between the two currents of Spanish humanist thought, Inca Garcilaso does point out to the conceptual and ethical inconsistencies of each of these views. He does so, by producing an allegorical reification of the conflicts that haunt the ethical predispositions of religious tolerance within humanism. Like in *Utopia*, where the Utopian order eventually betrays the very principles upon which it is supposedly founded, Garcilaso's Tahuantinsuyu also ends up transforming its apparently tolerant essence and pedagogical spirit, into a uniform and strictly controlled societal order.

4.2 Inca Garcilaso's Utopia Narrative

The similarities between Inca Garcilaso's and Thomas More's masterpieces are astonishing. This, of course, has not escaped the critics' eyes. Juan Durán Luzio (1976) completed an exhaustive study, confirming the unmistakable imprint of More's *Utopia* in Garcilaso's work. Luzio points to three structural elements that constitute the basis of the *Utopia-Comentarios* resemblance. The first is the distinction between an initial state of barbarism and its subsequent eradication by an enlightened individual. The second is the elimination of private property and the establishment of a communal economy. The third is a patent effort to reconcile a pagan society with the Christian tradition. However, Luzio's perceptive descriptions do not offer an explanation about why Garcilaso's Tahuantinsuyu operates as a utopian work⁶⁴. Margarita Zamora (1988), for

⁶⁴ Luzio's only objective is to clearly establish the relation Inca Garcilaso-Thomas More: "Aunque entre sus libros no figure Utopía, aunque entre sus menciones no aparezca Moro, la relación señalada es básicamente correcta: la obra de Tomás Moro era ejemplo ya clásico de una organización social casi perfecta, y la descripción de algo muy

her part, does address the question, and gives an astute, yet unsatisfactory answer. Zamora argues that Garcilaso uses More's Utopian model as a semiotic mediator between the Inca world and the European understanding of other polities and societies. In other words, she contends that Garcilaso's Tahuantinsuyu takes after More's Utopian society, in order to make it intelligible to a European readership. The problem with her argument is that it is still subsidiary to the main argument of her book. Ultimately, she reduces the complexity of the utopian narrative to the very narrow objective of cultural translation. In her book she argues that Garcilaso's main purpose in *Comentarios* is that of cultural translation and linguistic correction. In this sense, Zamora does not really examine El Inca's political theory or acknowledges the philosophical repercussions of his use of More's referents in *Comentarios*. The lack of this type of analysis is what moved me to understand the nature of the utopian discourse in both More's and Garcilaso's works, in philosophico-political terms.

My contention is that not only *Utopia*'s and *Comentarios*' societies are remarkably similar, but more importantly that they offer a complex, unique, and multifaceted approach to political

similar se proponía Garcilaso" (Revista Iberoamericana, 250). Although Luzio does an excellent job at setting the comparison straight, I take issue with two points of his work. First, his own interpretation of More's Utopia does not acknowledge the complexity of the work. It seems as though Luzio takes for granted the superficial interpretation of Utopia as a perfect (and not as a *seemingly perfect*) society against the warnings of More himself. Luzio ends his comparative study still with a naïve tone regarding both Garcilaso's and More's utopias as good: "el Tahuantinsuyu recrea un imperio donde la razón y la ley natural dominan imponiendo condiciones óptimas [...] No de otra manera ha procedido Tomás Moro al recrear su isla Utopía" (360). Second, Luzio does not explore beyond the similarities; furthermore, he does not really ask why Garcilaso seems to imitate More, or if there is an ulterior objective in writing a utopia.

philosophy. I argue that More and Garcilaso deliver an innovative and radical critique of their political realities and the ideologies behind them, all while never taking a particular stance that gives away the authors' political affinities. Instead, *Utopia* and *Comentarios* share a particularly ironic mode of expression that gives rise to a radical and uncompromised form of politico-philosophical criticism. Different from Zamora, I contend that Garcilaso's and More's most striking commonality is that they are both similar political thinkers, who form part of the same current of political thought, what I denominate a "utopian political theory". This branch of political philosophy—I argue—is a particular mode of engaging with political philosophy that does not provide a specific outline for social improvement, but is rather a very sophisticated form of conceptual skepticism. Instead of dealing with moral imperatives or policy programs, utopian political theory explores the tensions, flaws, and contradictions within the different forms of political thought converging at a given time. In a way, More's and Garcilaso's message is the ultimate form of politico-philosophical skepticism.

Now, in addition to these big structural commonalities between the authors and the texts, *Utopia* and *Comentarios* are specifically related by their engagement with humanism. As mentioned before, humanism was the most popular and active political current of the sixteenth-century, flaunting a vast array of intellectuals of all sorts. Indeed, humanists were behind almost all of the big political changes of the time, despite the intense intellectual quarrels with each other. Perhaps the most notorious disputation was between Reformation and Counter-Reformation scholars, where Martin Luther based a great deal of his plea on Erasmus' writings, but Erasmus himself fiercely argued against Luther's interpretation. Similarly, the secession of the Church of England was greatly influenced by the humanist movement. In the Hispanic world it was no different. In fact, humanism played a fundamental role in the formation of the two evangelization

projects that took place in the Americas and the rest of the empire from the sixteenth-century onwards. The first evangelization was led primarily by Dominicans, whose most notable name was Bartolomé de las Casas; and the second evangelization, with Juan Ginés de Spúlveda, at the helm⁶⁵. While these two projects shared the conviction that reason should play a central role in the teachings of the faith, they held seemingly different views on the way natives should be approached, ministered, and converted. The first sustained the idea that the Amerindians were child-like creatures, who were to be converted through patronizing and oversimplifying methods, including strategies of syncretism and immersion. This meant that, under any circumstance, Indians were to be kept under the tutelage of Europeans, no matter how far their education had improved them. Put differently, thinking of natives as child-like creatures, allowed Spaniards to maintain control over them at all times, as long as they remained “Indians”. The second was based on a more nuanced approach to the issue that maintained a categorized scale of paganism and idolatry. In this scale, New World natives were either completely uncivilized and unruly (hence, force was needed) or less barbaric but corrupted by the devil (hence, regular methods of conversion were rendered obsolete, giving way to the elimination of native cultures instead). This approach proved useful to Pizarro and other conquistadors, who needed to legitimize their dominance over highly advanced cultures.

However different, both evangelization methods share the belief in the perfectibility of non-Christian societies: the improvement of mores and civic behaviors independently from faith.

⁶⁵ A less aggressive second evangelization appeared with the Viceroy Toledo in Peru. Later it will be shown how the Jesuit José de Acosta introduced a revised version of the second evangelization method, where he reconciled the Christian message with the right amount of force needed to subdue the natives.

Such a belief was grounded on the idea that Greek and Roman cultures, as pagan cultures, could be assessed independently from their pagan beliefs, thus salvaging their philosophical, legal, and literary contributions to the world. Greek and Roman societies were highly praised by humanists, recognizing in them the ideal social context for the arrival of the Christian faith. According to this argument (the *praeparatio evangelica* argument⁶⁶), Christianity thrived in Europe precisely because Greek and Roman culture had prepared the continent for the reception of Christian message. This underlying idea was, nevertheless, modified by the Spanish intellectuals according to the political and economic interest of the conquest. Most of the first and second evangelization intellectuals deemed Amerindian pagan cultures less civilized than their Greek and Roman counterparts, thus asserting European intellectual and moral superiority⁶⁷. This served the purposes of the conquest and colonization, because it legitimized the methods physical and cultural domination that ensured complete control over resources and work force of the Americas. This means that the Spanish evangelization processes were essentially of a contradictory nature: while they promised an eventual conversion of the Amerindian peoples based on the *praeparatio*

⁶⁶ As explained in the last section, the notion of *praeparatio evangelica* maintained that some pagan civilizations were closer to the true ideas of goodness and righteousness, despite the lack of revelation. According to this doctrine, pagan civilizations like the Greeks and Romans were seen in a favorable light. It was claimed by Renaissance theologians that they contributed to the understanding and teaching of divine truths, in spite their lack of knowledge of the scriptures.

⁶⁷ Las Casas was an anomalous exception to this general claim, as he sometimes claimed differently, putting Amerindians on an equal footing with Greeks and Romans.

evangelica argument, they also sought to preserve European superiority even when assessing their own pagan past⁶⁸.

In response to this modified view of the *praeparatio evangelica* argument, Inca Garcilaso constructs a fictional Inca past based on the underlying humanist social ideal of Greek and Roman societies. Garcilaso presents Tahuantinsuyu as an already ideal society, perfectly fit to receive the Christian faith. In fact, El Inca goes even further, as he argues that the Incas were closer to the Christian theology than the Greeks and Romans were. He argues that while Greeks and Romans had a multiplicity of deities, the Incas had already understood the concept of one single and supreme god, maker and author of all things, Pachacámac. Therefore, Spanish evangelization methods were rendered partially obsolete. Since the Incas already possessed the concept of one true God and the ethos that ensued with such a knowledge, many of the conversion policies did not make much sense anymore. For instance, Spanish propounded the idea of uprooting certain ways and customs among the Indians, because they further cemented their idolatry, as it was the case of the Incan *huacas*⁶⁹ that Spaniards thought to be shrines dedicated the many of gods of the Incan pantheon. However, Inca Garcilaso tells us that the term *huaca* was in fact misunderstood by Spaniards, and that it had multiple significations ranging from a noun that meant shrine (which

⁶⁸ Is important to note that all policies concerning Amerindians were closely examined, and weighted to the effect of considering the political and economic repercussions of any action that concerned them. Natives were of paramount importance to Spaniards, because i) through native leaders, conquerors could assert their dominance in new territories, and ii) Indians also represented work-force at the service of the crown. Therefore, all conversion policy needed to be evaluated in light of the economic and political interest of the crown and conquistadors.

⁶⁹ Huacas were usually described living shrines that that represented the origin of dwelling place of a particular deity, either major or minor.

was used when describing the shrine dedicated to the one true God, the Sun) to a verb and an adjective meaning that something was impressive or great. Therefore, the multiplicity of things that Spaniards thought the Incas adored as divine, as *huacas*, were merely great things, like a big mountain or a lake (*Comentarios*, Part I, Chapters V, VI). This revealed the Spanish ignorance of the complex Incan culture, thus rendering the humanist pedagogical approach useless in this case. In essence, Garcilaso is pointing at the Spanish misunderstanding of the Incas' cosmology and, in consequence, their conceptual preparation to receive the Christian message.

In light of these remarks, Garcilaso claimed that the Incas only awaited the revelation of God's words, for which they were already undoubtedly prepared to receive. With this, Inca Garcilaso gives shape to his indigenous utopia. Tahuantinsuyu thus appears as the materialization of the "perfect" pagan society, thus ridiculing the missionary efforts to introduce the core concepts of Christianity into a society that already possessed these divine notions. In the end, as Margarita Zamora points in her book, Inca Garcilaso would show how this cultural misunderstanding led to confusion instead of conversion (Zamora, 131-132). However, like in *Utopia*, Garcilaso's image of Tahuantinsuyu is not as pristine a society as it might seem at first sight or as it was needed to be within the *praeparatio evangelica* argument. Tahuantinsuyu is rather a caricature of the ideal humanist society. There are a number of episodes that describe the harsh and authoritarian institutions upon which the utopian Inca order was founded. Through them, El Inca will make manifest the humanist split at the heart of the Spanish evangelization spirit: from a view of tolerance and integration, to one of strict and even violent methods.

In order to explain Garcilaso's utopian project, I will proceed in a twofold manner. First, I will draw a comparison between More's and Garcilaso's utopian societies, in order to establish Garcilaso's use of the utopian rhetorical model functions as a form of political criticism. Second,

I will address how Inca Garcilaso develops, like More, an ironic form of political criticism of the two humanist approaches to Hispanic colonial politics. Specifically, I argue that the Inca Garcilaso adopts, reappropriates, and twists the first and second evangelization notions of “a civilized culture” in his utopian recreation of Tahuantinsuyu, in an attempt to provide a critical assessment of the Spanish evangelization enterprise. I will show that his version of Tahuantinsuyu is an ironic picture of the humanist polis, because it unravels the contradictions within the humanist view of the Other. Specifically, I will try to show how the utopian genre proves useful to the type of criticism that colonized individuals can make of the colonial system and its theoretical underpinnings. With this, I hope to show that Garcilaso’s utopia, alongside More’s, is an example of the distinctive power of Baroque rhetoric as a critical tool that help these authors conceal a form of political criticism that is neither normative nor descriptive.

Along these lines, it should be mentioned that this Inca utopia is not only a satirical depiction an ideal humanist society⁷⁰. It is also one of the most profound contributions to sixteenth-century political theory ever made by a New World author. *Comentarios* offers one of the most profound politico-philosophical assessments of the Spanish evangelization projects, and, as such, offers one of the most complete decolonial forms of criticism to the nascent Eurocentrism of early modernity. Inca Garcilaso develops a decolonial approach that deconstructs the Eurocentrism present in these conversion projects and, by extension, all colonial practices. This decolonial move makes visible the inconsistencies and contradictions within the entire European colonial mentality,

⁷⁰ It is indeed sardonic and satirical, because Spanish humanist did not see, in any way, an Amerindian society as the epitome of civilization as they conceived it. Otherwise, there would be no need for the evangelization plans Dominicans and Sepúlveda’s followers proposed.

and lays out the theoretical foundation for a critical and uncompromised reading of the vast array of political theories that would ensue throughout the following four centuries of Western modernity. Finally, in *Comentarios*, Garcilaso sets the basis for a form of political theorizing that integrates both traditional philosophical thinking with the power of literary imagination. Inca Garcilaso's ironic and ingenious way of doing political theory —*via* the utopian fictionalization of the past— is yet another Baroque instance of his work. *Comentarios*' ironic take on Spanish humanism —perhaps the most significant intellectual movements of the Renaissance— is an original form of criticizing the Renaissance from within. This means that *Comentarios* is unmistakably Baroque in the sense that it distorts Renaissance forms, and insists on a skeptical approach to its predicaments. This is why—I argue—reading More and Garcilaso together allows us to understand a Baroque mode of thinking and writing, for it presents a complex and uncompromised approach to political theory that reaches deeper levels of criticism as well as astute forms of rhetorical concealment.

4.2.1 Utopian Tahuantinsuyu

Scholars have described the Incan society of *Comentarios reales* as either a fictional or very peculiar description of the Ancient Inca Empire or Tahuantinsuyu (Meéndez-Pelayo 1958; Durán 1976; Zamora 1988). Much like More's Utopian society, Garcilaso's Tahuantinsuyu is the epitome of civilization and development in the Andes. Like Utopus, Manco Capac, the first Inca, began a civilizing enterprise that culminated in the establishment of an almost perfect society. Before the arrival of the Incas, there was a period of barbarism where the Andean natives were nothing but brutes with the most abhorrent customs and practices: indiscriminated murder, adultery, cannibalism, and sodomy. Manco Capac was described to be a morning star ("*lucero del*

alba”) bringing the Andeans out of the shadows of barbarism and immorality. Similar to Utopia, the newly formed Inca empire established an extremely efficient society and the best moral system that reason alone could provide. On the one hand, Tahuantinsuyu eliminated private property, and its economy was based on a minutely planned division of labor and distribution of wealth, in order to eliminate theft, pride, greed, and provide for all its citizens. On the other hand, Tahuantinsuyu’s moral system was founded upon the belief that good customs derived from Manco Capac as an example and source of reason. The description of Manco Capac as a “*lucero del alba*” signifies –based on the Christian terminology Garcilaso intentionally uses— a source of reason, and wisdom⁷¹. In essence, El Inca is appealing to Christian concepts, in order carve out a place for the Incas within the Christian framework⁷². More concretely, Garcilaso is adapting the *praeparatio evangelica* argument to Incan history (Durán 1976, Zamora 1988). Just like More did in his *Utopia*, Garcilaso builds upon the humanist embrace of natural law theory —as coined by Aquinas— to suggest that the Inca civilizing enterprise, its customs and laws, did not contradict Christianity, but instead prepared the Andeans to eventually receive the Christian message. In fact, Garcilaso goes a step further suggesting that there was an even closer relationship between Christianity and Tahuantinsuyu’s religion and morals. He claims that not only were the Incas a civilizing force in the Andes, like the Greek and Romans had once been in Europe, but also that the Incas were

⁷¹ “Conforme a lo que la razón y la ley natural les enseñaba” (*Comentarios*, Part I, Book I, Chapter XXI).

⁷² As mentioned before, the notion of *praeparatio evangelica* held that some pagan civilizations were closer to the true ideas of goodness and righteousness, despite the lack of revelation. According to this doctrine, pagan civilizations like the Greeks and Romans were seen in a favorable light. It was claimed by Renaissance theologians that they contributed to the understanding and teaching of divine truths, in spite their lack of knowledge of the scriptures.

already part of God's divine plan for the civilization of the region. In the following quote, Garcilaso portrays Manco Capac as chosen by God to conduct his own divine plan for the Andean peoples.

Viviendo o muriendo aquellas gentes [the Andeans before the Incas] de la manera en que hemos visto, permitió Dios Nuestro Señor que de ellos mismos saliese un lucero del alba [Manco Capac] que en aquellas oscurísimas tinieblas les diese alguna noticia de la ley natural y de la urbanidad y respectos que los hombres debían tenerse unos a otros [...] para que el mismo Dios, sol de justicia, tuviese por bien de enviar la luz de sus divinos rayos a aquellos idólatras, los hallase no tan salvajes, sino más dóciles para recibir la fe católica y la enseñanza y doctrina de nuestra Santa Madre Iglesia Romana (*Comentarios*. Part I, Book I, Chapter VI).

There are two important elements in this passage. One is that Garcilaso introduces the Christian God as the supreme force in the Inca cosmology, although the Christian God is never explicitly acknowledged as such. The other element is that Manco Capac—as the Incan civilizing force—did not come from outside (like the Spaniards did), but came from within the Andeans themselves (“*de ellos mismos saliese un lucero del alba*”). These two points put Incan history into a European perspective, as they translate the Incan past into Christian terms. The first element reinforces the the *praeparatio evangelica* logic, by Christianizing Inca cosmology: they already had the notion of a one true God, subsequently deriving a good moral system⁷³. The second element

⁷³ It was customary to think that holding the idea of a one true god (instead of many) usually corresponded with a better form of moral system, where the concept of “one the supreme good” helped the individual discern between right and wrong with clarity and without hesitation.

suggests that God granted the Incas control over their own historical path, by way of legitimizing Manco Capac's rule over the Andeans. As such, Manco Capac appears as the Incas' messianic figure, much like Christ who was not an outsider but a Jew, chosen among his own people to deliver them, and universalize God's message.

Of course, Manco Capac's and Jesus Christ's stories were not exactly alike. Manco Capac married his sister, Mama Ocllo, with whom he advanced his pedagogical mission in the Andes, and established a new age. However, it is in the establishing of a new age that Manco Capac and Christ are very similar. They symbolize renewal and rebirth. The second age or the age of the Inca marked the arrival of a new set of customs and rules intended to improve the lives of all Andeans within a new civilized order, just as Christ's teachings symbolized the renewal of the Old Testament ways. Additionally, it is also worth mentioning that, while the image of Manco Capac and Mama Ocllo, as coupled siblings does not really coincide with Christ's story, it does fit of another Judeo-Christian mold: Adam and Eve, first couple of the same blood and flesh. Like Christ, Adam and Eve also represent the genesis or the beginning of a new divine order. With this, Garcilaso brings together two of the most representative mythical Christian referents of renewal and rebirth, thus signaling the proximity between the Inca mythical past and the Judeo-Christian tradition. In this respect, Inca Garcilaso goes further than More in bringing closer his utopian society to the Christian dogma⁷⁴. This becomes even more clear in the following passage where

⁷⁴ This specific point allows me to take issue with Margarita Zamora's view of *Comentarios* and *Utopia*. She argues that Garcilaso used More's *Utopia* as a model for his version of Tahuantinsuyu, in terms of a semiotic mediator between the Inca world and the European understanding of non-Christian societies. I argue differently. First, I do not believe that Garcilaso's main strategy to make Tahuantinsuyu intelligible to Europeans was More's *Utopia*, but rather his clear effort to integrate Judeo-Christian elements in Andean mythology. Second, I contend that if More's *Utopia*

an old Manco Capac speaks of a universal message of love —again, just like Christ—, which suggests an even deeper connection between the essence of being an Inca and that of being a Christian:

A lo ultimo, viéndose el inca ya viejo, mandó que los más principales de sus vasallos se juntasen en la ciudad del Cuzco, y en una plática solemne les dijo que él entendía volverse presto al cielo a descansar con su padre el Sol, que le llamaba [] quería dejarles el colmo sus favores y mercedes, que era el apellido del nombre real, para que ellos y sus descendientes viviesen honrados y estimados de todo el mundo [...] y así para que vieren el amor que como a hijos les tenía, mandó que ellos y sus descendientes para siempre se llamasen incas, sin ninguna distinción ni diferencia de unos a otros (Part I, Book I, Chapter XXIII).

It is difficult to ignore the overtly Christian symbolism of this passage. Manco Capac speaks as the son of God, and extends that privilege to his people. This promise is articulated in terms of love (*el amor que como a hijos les tenía*), just like the promise that Jesus Christ makes in the most cited passages of the New Testament⁷⁵. From passages like this one, it becomes apparent

is a model for Garcilaso's Tahuantinsuyu, is not exactly a semiotic one. *Utopia* and *Comentarios* are political treatises that use fiction in order to convey a criticism of both the status quo as well as of alternative forms of government and social configuration. So, Utopia functions rather as a rhetorical model for writing political philosophy.

⁷⁵ The theme of Christ's love played a central role in the humanists' theory of *Philosophia Christi* (explained in the note below), whose X of Christ humanity brought about a more universal and less restrictive understanding of Christ message. Moreover, the theme of love was widely expounded by many other prominent Christian figures, such as Augustine and Aquinas, from whom the Renaissance refurbishing of the *praeparatio evangelica* argument derived its more salient conceptual underpinnings. Finally, the love of Christ was of immense interest to Garcilaso throughout

that the mythical Inca past is featured in a very Judeo-Christian fashion, and exalts the principles of primitive Christian thought, expounded by the Erasmus in his *Philosophia Christi*⁷⁶. In a way, Garcilaso is telling his readers that God chose these particular Andeans as his people, and gave them a messiah. But different from the Christian messiah, Manco Capac's teachings materialized in actual political institutions within a specific territory, the Andes.

The materialization of Manco Capac's social and moral ideals gains a particular draconian tenor, since it was Manco Capac's primary mission to eradicate the barbarisms of the Ancient Andeans savagery. Thus, Incan institutions strived to ensure a peaceful coexistence, moral decorum, and universalized wellbeing for all people, through a series of radical and somewhat extreme measures. The Incas created very robust state that oversaw the correct unfolding of the idea of a perfect society (i.e., a society that had reached the ultimate level of moral and social civilization): laws were extremely rigid, each citizen had a specific function, the population was mathematically organized, and the state was in control of the land and its resources. For instance, the population was structured in groups of ten people, and then those groups in other conglomerates of ten groups, in order to guarantee order and the general wellbeing. Now, maintaining order needed vigilance as well. So, for a group of ten individuals (these groups are called "*decurias*"),

his entire career as an intellectual. Not only is it present in the *Comentarios*, but it is implicitly all over León Hebreo's *Dialoghi d'Amore*.

⁷⁶ *Philosophia Christi* is an all-encompassing and welcoming concept of piety that addresses the individual's spiritual relationship with God as well as with the rest of society, according to the teachings of Christ in the New Testament. This philosophy stressed on the importance of the new covenant with Christ, which far superseded the Old Testament observance of archaic rules. *Philosophia Christi* is also an aspect of the larger concept of *pietas*, the moral conscience governing the proper relationship between individual and God as well as the individual and society.

there was a foreman (“*decurión*”) who supervised that each person performed their role according to law, and that no one would commit a crime or be idle without a job. In turn, for each ten *decuriones* (in charge of their respective *decurias*) there was a superior decurion who supervised them too. This vigilant structure was also paired up with rigid and severe laws that aimed at preserving the perfect system that Manco Capac had instituted.

Mirando el rigor que sus leyes tenían, que por la mayor parte (por liviano que fuere el delito como hemos dicho) era la pena de muerte, se puede decir que eran leyes de bárbaros; empero considerando bien le provecho que de aquel mismo rigor se le seguía a la república, se podría decir que eran leyes de gente prudente que deseaba extirpar los males de su república (Part I, Book II, Chapter XII).

Extirpating the ills of the republic was the main objective of these laws. For this reason, laws were not up to interpretation, but meant to be religiously executed. This ensured that no one would step out their role, and the order be kept. Now, in addition to the *decuriones* mentioned before, there was another special kind of vigilantes who watched over the public officials as well.

Para que los gobernadores y jueces no se descuidaran en sus oficios, ni cualesquiera otros ministros menores, ni los de la hacienda del Sol o del Inca en los suyos⁷⁷, había veedores y pesquisidores que de secreto andaban en sus

⁷⁷ The Inca economic system collected two types of taxes: those that belonged to the Inca (the king), and those that belonged to God, the Sun.

distritos viendo o pesquisando lo que mal hacían los tales oficiales (Part I, Book II, Chapter XVI).

These secret agents were called *Tucuy rioc* which means one-who-watches-all. The term is very telling of the nature of the Inca hypervigilant state, where no one (but the Inca) seems to be exempt from a constant and threatening watch. Like in Utopia, the Inca vigilant state is a fundamental piece for the “correct” functioning of society, as well as one of the major points of contradiction between humanist theory and its practical materialization. Let’s remember that the basic premise of the humanist approach to social harmony was the rational understanding of the good, according to the natural law argument. This means that anyone, through their exercise of reason, could arrive at the *summum bonum* of ethical and political truths. However, this premise seems to be at odds with the prescriptive laws and hypervigilant state of Tahuantinsuyu. This tension becomes even clearer when Inca Garcilaso describes the Inca intellectual pursuits.

In Tahuantinsuyu, the contrast between contemplative and practical arts was stark. Intellectuals did not concern themselves with abstract subjects. Incas primarily focused on practical matters. Therefore, much like in Utopia, the Incas were highly versed in geometry, arithmetic, and music, due to their practical use. Furthermore, they excelled in the study of morals (“*filosofía moral*”), although not exactly in a critical way. Their study of morals was more of an observance of the social rules through which a peaceful coexistence could be ensured. This latter feature established the preeminence of a humanism of sorts in Garcilaso’s version of the Inca empire.

Sólo en la filosofía moral se extremaron así en la enseñanza como en usar las leyes y costumbres que guardaron, no sólo entre los vasallos como se debían tratar unos a otros, conforme a la ley natural, mas también cómo debía obedecer

servir y adorar el Rey y a los superiores y cómo debía el Rey gobernar y beneficiar a los curacas y a los demás vasallos y súbditos inferiores.

En el ejercicio de esta ciencia se desvelaron tanto que ningún encarecimiento llega a ponerla en su punto, porque la experiencia de ella les hacía pasar por delante, perfeccionándola de día en día y de bien en mejor, la cual experiencia les faltó en las demás ciencias (*Comentarios*, Part I, Book II, Chapter XXVII).

Similar to Utopia, the Incas advocated for a type of education that emphasized the importance of praxis over theory. Again, like More's Utopian society, Tahuantinsuyu is a very humanist society in the sense that it held in higher esteem the benefits of the practical life than of the contemplative life. As such, Tahuantinsuyu was founded upon a system of values that did not derive its understanding of the world from transcendental forms of reasoning, but rather from simple and very strict norms governing everyday life. For example, geometry, geography, and arithmetic were big among the Incas because these sciences helped them govern the vast extension of the empire⁷⁸ (*Comentarios*, Part I, Book II, Chapter XXVII). But this scientific and minutely planned form of territorial management also needed a solid governmental basis that ensured a long-lasting life to the system. This is why all political power and authority resided solely in the figure of the Inca. The emperor or Inca was the embodiment of the entire community. The Inca government did not have factions and parties that might cause power struggles if the power were

⁷⁸ Geometry was useful to measure the land (which was divided into four quarters, and these quarters, in turn, divided into kingdoms, and these kingdoms subdivided in communities called *allyus*); geography was useful to recognize the heterogenous territory (Tahuantinsyu encompassed a vast territory of jungle, mountains, seashore and valleys); arithmetic was especially useful because it was the bedrock of the Incan system of taxation.

to be shared. Thus, all the land strictly divided into three parts: Inca king, God-Sun, and collective settlement of peasants. This meant that private property and personal economic quarrels did not exist in this empire. It should be noted here that the humanist tradition largely revered the communist model (which, as shown above, was also present in Utopia), because it resembled the early Christian commonwealth referred in the Acts of the Apostles⁷⁹. As conceived by humanists, the communist model embodied an ideal state of nature where the social ideals of the Judeo-Christian tradition⁸⁰ still stood unpolluted from the economic quarrels of feudalism and of early capitalism. Such was the esteem for this ideal this was one of the most remarkable instances when José de Acosta praised the Inca civilization:

Ningún hombre de consideración habrá que no se admire de tan noble y pródigo gobierno, pues, sin ser religiosos ni cristianos los indios, en su manera guardaban aquella tan alta perfección de no tener cosa propia y proveer a todo lo necesario y sustentar tan copiosamente las cosas de la religión y las de su Rey y Señor (*Historia natural y moral*, Book VI, Chapter XV, 241).

⁷⁹ “All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. [...] Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. [...] There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.”

(Acts 2:44–45, Acts 4:32–35)

⁸⁰ To further explore this topic, see: Houlden (2003); Miranda (1982).

Scriptural evidence is copious: “The land must not be sold permanently, because the land is mine and you reside in my land as foreigners and strangers” (Leviticus 25:23).

All of these elements tend to build a perfect society in terms of autarchy, efficiency, and peaceful coexistence. In both Utopia and Tahuantinsuyu, judiciousness and practicality regulate the exchange and trading of products, and the lack of currency attests to the apparent economic harmony that gives to each according to his needs.

Every father goes and takes whatsoever he or his family stand in need of, without either paying for it, or leaving anything in exchange. There is no reason for giving a denial to any person, since there is such plenty of everything among them; and there is no danger of a man's asking for more than he needs; they have no inducements to do this, since they are sure that they shall always be supplied. (Utopia, Book II, Chapter IV) (Dover Thrift Editions) (p. 38).

[Manco Capac] mandó que los frutos que en cada pueblo se cogía se guardasen en junto para dar a cada uno de los que hubiese menester (*Comentarios*, Part I, Book I, Chapter XXI).

The texts' ideological uniformity orbits around the scriptures as a common source of authority and symbolism. This shows how Inca Garcilaso, as well as More, ensure that the Incan or Utopian social stability is indubitably connected to the one textual source of moral goodness and righteousness in the Christian world. But this implicit agreement upon an underlying Christian morality does not merely aim to portray Utopia and Tahuantinsuyu in accordance with Christian teachings, but rather to reverse the Christian precepts against European social orders. Let's recall that *Utopia* begins by giving a grim account of England's social ills, among which greed and pride push people to steal and covet other people's property. In *Comentarios* and later in *Historial general del Perú*, Inca Garcilaso touches upon the conquistadors' lust for gold and favors from the king, thus jeopardizing their Christian mission of expanding the horizons of the Christian faith. In

this regard, both Utopians' and Incas' disregard for gold and riches symbolizes the ultimate blow against European imperial projects, whose main driver was the finding of riches all while claiming to expand Christian civilization.

Thus, they take care, by all possible means, to render gold and silver of no esteem. And from hence it is, that while other nations part with their gold and silver, as unwillingly as if one tore out their bowels, those of Utopia would look on their giving in all they possess of those (metals, when there were any use for them) but as the parting with a trifle, or as we would esteem the loss of a penny [...] The ambassadors of the nations that lie near Utopia, knowing their customs, and that fine clothes are in no esteem among them, that silk is despised, and gold is a badge of infamy. (*Utopia*, Book II, Chapter V, p. 44)

El oro y la plata y las piedras preciosas que los reyes incas tuvieron en tanta cantidad, como es notorio, no eran de tributo obligatorio, que fueran los indios obligados a darlo, ni los reyes lo pedían, porque no lo tuvieron por cosa necesaria para la guerra ni para la paz, y todo esto no estimaron por hacienda ni tesoro, porque, como se sabe, no vendían ni compraban cosa alguna por oro ni por plata, ni con ello pagaban la gente de guerra (*Comentarios*, Part I, Book V, Chapter VII).

Quotes like this reveal the constant and implicit attack that utopian works against their respective sociopolitical realities. Here, these works call out Europe's greed for money, consequently pointing out the ensuing socio-economic inequality that was rampant all over Europe, but that was particularly apparent in Spanish society. In Spain, this economic crisis was

particularly apparent in the extremely opposite lives that aristocrats and the general populace had. aristocrats enjoyed a lifestyle of pure idleness, and the rest of the population starved and suffered the effects of an ever-growing inflation. This is why Book V of *Comentarios* devotes several chapters to the description of a very ordered and equal socio-economic system, where poverty was non-existent. Chapters I to II of this book explain the agricultural (therefore economic) system of the Incan empire. It becomes apparent the type of welfare state that Tahuantinsuyu is. In this system, the law guaranteed to those who need the most (people with disabilities, widows, among other) that the lands assigned to them were to be cultivated and harvested first by the farmers of their towns. Moreover, the Incan state had already developed a notion of minimum living conditions. The Incas gave all of their subjects whatever was necessary to live with dignity: “Daban de vestir a sus vasayos. No hubo pobres mendigantes”, and “lo necesario para la vida humana, de comer vestir y calzar, lo tenían todos, que nadie podía llamarse pobre ni pedir limosna” (*Comentarios*, Part I, Book V, Chapter IX).

Behind the implicit critique of Europe’s love of gold and riches —achieved through Tahuantinsuyu’s ideal laws and institutions—, there is an even deeper element in Inca Garcilaso’s critique. As anticipated with More in section 1 of this Chapter, Garcilaso also points to a crisis within the values of his supposedly ideal society. The radicality and strength of Utopia’s and Tahuantinsuyu’s laws and institutions show another face of this supposed social ideal. In the case of Utopia, it has been already mentioned how More pointed to the contradictions within the humanist model of Erasmus, by erecting of his Utopian model based on these humanist ideals. In a similar fashion, Garcilaso adopts and reappropriates the humanist model of New World missionaries and evangelizers to provide a criticism from within the model itself. In the next section, I will present the humanist foundations of the New World evangelization theories, and

how Inca Garcilaso used to model his own version of Tahuantinsuyu. This will provide the basis for assessing, later, how Garcilaso's representation of Tahuantinsuyu's laws and institutions is in itself a criticism of the humanist model for the Spanish colonial project.

4.2.2 Tahuantinsuyu's Humanist Underpinnings

As it has been anticipated, the imprint of humanism in *Comentarios reales* is widely studied (Zamora 1988, Mazzotti 1996, López Baralt 2011, Castro-Klaren 2016). Scholarship has traditionally focused on the question of translation, specifically cultural translation, as the most fundamental issue of Garcilaso's engagement with the humanist tradition. For instance, Zamora has pointed out that the Lorenzo Valla's and Erasmus's theory of translation must have influenced Garcilaso's search for a method for writing a semiotic translation of the Inca culture into European (specifically, Christian) terms (12-14). In this sense, Garcilaso's concern with historiography has very much to do with humanist theory, which considered the act of translation and interpretation as an indispensable mediation for writing about history. Moreover, translation and historical interpretation was conceived by humanists as an act of rectification, of going back to an original text to decipher an original meaning. This is why translation, philology, and textual interpretation were the central elements in any humanist intellectual development. Thus, more than just being an art of converting words from one language to another, translation was seen as a form of poetics that addressed both problems of knowledge and communication. In this regard, other scholars have suggested that Garcilaso's use of translation as a method to write history resembles Marsilio Ficino's approach to translating Plato, who conceived of translation as a foundational step in the attainment of truth. In Garcilaso's case, translation helped him unravel the one true meaning of history (Castro-Klaren, 2016). This interpretation of Garcilaso's thought has delivered important

scholarly considerations about the verisimilitude of his texts (especially of *Comentarios*), the counter-discursive strategy that he employs, and his decolonial move on Spanish historiography. Nevertheless, this focus on history and truth has overshadowed other aspects of his work, where humanism plays a key and fundamental role.

My contention is that Inca Garcilaso detected that the same humanist notions and concerns (chief among them, translation) that shaped Spanish historiography also informed the political underpinnings of the Spaniards strategies for cultural colonization and dominance. Furthermore, Garcilaso not only recognized these humanist strategies but also used them to his own advantage. He used them in the writing of his own experimental version of Inca history, where he advanced a critique of the politico-theoretical foundations of the Spanish colonial enterprise. *Comentarios*, then, is not only a work of humanist historiography or cultural translation (Zamora, 1988), but also a modern political treatise in the form of an indigenous utopia. This Incan utopia, just like More's Utopia, has very distinct humanist foundations. While More's text has Erasmus' works as its conceptual bedrock, *Comentarios* uses the theories expounded by Spanish humanists, specifically the theorists of New World evangelization. This means that *Comentarios'* version of Tahuantinsuyu is highly permeated by the political ideals of European humanism. As Zamora has shown, such portrayal corresponds to a cultural translation of the Inca past into a form of Western intellectual model (Zamora 1988). However, different from Zamora's argument, I contend that Inca Garcilaso's cultural translation of Tahuantinsuyu into a European format, was not simply a project aiming at resolving cultural unintelligibility. It was rather a critique and caricature of the humanist political ideal into which Tahuantinsuyu was translated.

From a humanist standpoint, historiography was understood as a form of translation. The historian Peter Burke (2007) observes that, for humanists, writing history meant translating the

past into the present, which, in turn, carried a huge intellectual responsibility: controlling the transformation of the cultural codes of the past into those of the present (7-8). In other words, historians possessed a tremendous tool of political power. They could shape the image the past and thus influence the practical consequences of the past in the present. For example, it is not surprising that Spanish intellectuals were adamant about controlling both the narrative of the conquest as well as the Amerindian past. Creating a specific image of the Indians and their traditions served the purposes of further cementing the colonial practices of the empire, thus securing the purposes of the Catholic evangelization and economic exploitation.

This emphasis on translation was also key to understanding not only the humanists' approach to historiography but also their approach to politics of the Church. For instance, one of the most important missionary figures in sixteenth-century Peru was the translator and grammarian the friar Domingo de Santo Tomás. This Dominican friar was a staunch advocate for educating natives in their native tongue. In 1560, Santo Tomás published the first Quechua grammar and dictionary, with the objective of helping missionaries advance their evangelization enterprise among the native Andeans. After Santo Tomás came the Jesuits, who were already known in Europe for their profound humanist convictions, and missionary work. They too were known for their unparalleled commitment to education through translation. In the New World, Jesuits devoted themselves to the mastering of native languages, in order to better conduct their missionary work. For instance, José de Acosta, who acted as Provincial of the congregation in Peru in 1576, ordered mandatory courses of native languages for all of his missionaries. Additionally, Acosta wrote extensively on this matter in his famous work *De procuranda indorum salute* (On the best methods for the salvation of Indians), where he argued that religious instruction was better conducted in the natives' tongue. He was convinced that this would play a key role in the salvation of Indian souls.

Furthermore, the figure of the Jesuit erudite Blas Valera, a Peruvian mestizo who helped in the development of grammars, dictionaries, and catechism in both Quechua and Aymara, consolidated the Company of Jesus' commitment to the understanding of indigenous languages for the expansion of Catholicism among natives. The emphasis on these policies within the Company attests to their deep belief in grammar and rhetoric as pillars of the practical life, i.e., the foundations of ethical and political realm. In essence, the Jesuits, like More or any other humanist, believed in the *studia humanitatis* as the primordial foundation politics and ethics⁸¹. Thus, echoing these ideas, Garcilaso highlights the fact that one of Tahuantinsuyu's major accomplishments was the establishment of an official language that united the different regions of the empire. This is a special remark in *Comentarios*, because it appears at a moment where Inca Garcilaso seems to be criticizing the poor results of the conversion efforts made during Viceroy Toledo's time, who contributed to the disappearance of a general language of Peru, making it harder for missionaries to reach the natives, who now spoke in a plethora of regional languages and were unable to understand one another (Book II, Chapter V. p 70.). Thus, one of Garcilaso's veiled recommendations through his description of a utopian Tahuantinsuyu is that the Spanish government in Peru should model itself after the Ancient Tahuantinsuyu, if they wished to conduct an effective form of evangelization (Zamora 117-120; Fuerst, 202-203). Therefore, seeking to recuperate an official native language (*lengua general del Perú*) to unite the different tribes who were now dispersed and gone astray after the Spanish conquest should be of paramount

⁸¹ Let's remember that the *studia humanitatis* were a set of academic subjects on oratory, rhetoric, philology and linguistics, whose central premise was to prepare the individual for the changing and agonistic character of the public sphere.

importance. In this sense, Garcilaso argues that the general language of Peru has the same value as Latin to Europeans, a language that once unified the entire continent (Fuerst 203). This is an excellent example of Garcilaso's use of humanism against its own colonial predicaments. Here, Garcilaso resorts to the core values of the humanist movement—specifically and specially in its Spanish Jesuit version—to point out the contradictions that resulted from applying the values of humanist philosophies to colonial practices.

Garcilaso's core use and critique of humanist politics is directed to the main humanist-inspired policies in sixteenth-century Spanish America, i.e., the two forms of Amerindian evangelization. Throughout the sixteenth century, humanists debated the procedures used in the New World conquest through which Spaniards asserted their supposed cultural superiority and secured Amerindian conversion to the Catholic faith. This debate consisted in a theoretical quarrel between two theories of the evangelization enterprise in the Americas, commonly known as the first and second evangelizations. The dispute reached its height with the famous Valladolid debate (1551-1552) between Bartolomé de las Casas, known as the "defender of the Indians" (first evangelization), and the representative of the conquistadors, Juan Ginés de Spúlveda (second evangelization). Each of these humanist intellectuals developed highly complex and quite different theories of the "Other" and of conquest, based the similar core humanist principles.

The first evangelization method vouched for a pacifist method based on syncretic strategies. Although this view seemed to be a more benevolent one, it was extremely infantilizing towards the natives. Spanish authorities used this latter point very effectively in their justification for ruling the native peoples of the Americas, who, as child-like creatures, were in desperate need of guidance and good government. Bartolomé de las Casas wrote extensively about a benevolent approach to the conquest. Las Casas's writings in favor of the Indians expressed a highly exalted

ideal of the crown, which coincided in all fundamental points with the traditional medieval notion of monarchy: kings were appointed by divine providence for the common good of their kingdom⁸². This Lascasian doctrine was founded on the idea that the king's political authority was derived from God, thus the monarch inherited some divine responsibilities. These responsibilities involve governing and instructing the Indians according to the Christian faith, so they could eventually participate in the communion of the faith. It is important to note that, even though governing according to the Christian faith implied that Indians were to be respected as subjects to the crown, therefore never to be exploited or enslaved, they remained under the tutelage of Spaniards as children. Thus, Spaniards played the role of parents to these child-like creatures, because Amerindians were deemed incapable of correctly governing themselves.

The second evangelization, for its part, sees Amerindian cultures as more complex societal forms, though severely influenced by devilish practices that needed to be promptly extirpated. Of course, this sort of demonic corruption justified the extremely violent strategies for conquest and subjugation enacted by figures like Francisco de Toledo, Viceroy in Peru between 1569 and 1781. Among the most prominent humanists of the second evangelization was Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, a humanist intellectual and staunch defender of the Catholic counter-reformation. Sepúlveda wrote perhaps the most virulent and aggressive treatises and theories of just war, and narrated histories of the conquests that made up the foundations of the second evangelization approach. His theory of just war, based on rather generalized and misconstrued accounts of the state of cultural

⁸² This argument goes back to a long tradition of medieval scholars that has its origins in Saint Isidore of Seville (560-636 A.D.).

development of the peoples judged, reduced Amerindians to corrupt creatures unable to organize proper social institutions.

In the Andes, these two opposing views had a mixed participation in politics, establishing different—and sometimes contradictory—notions of who the Indians were. But, in spite of their stark disagreements among themselves about the nature of Indians, both evangelization theories agreed that Indians and Indian cultures were limited and inferior with respect to Spaniards (Lamana 4-7; 30). This common ground allowed Spaniards to assert their superiority over Indians, no matter which of the evangelizations methods they followed. But this was not an easy task. The Inca Empire was certainly a formidable state with a well-established government, impressive infrastructure, and a complex social body. So, the key questions in the Spanish theory of cultural superiority resided in a very special cognitive definition of superiority. As Lamana (2019) points out, all Spanish colonial theories—this includes, of course, both evangelization methods—argued that Spaniards had a more sophisticated understanding of the world, of reality and of truth than Amerindians ever did, due to their specific theology and historical background. Christianity and Christianism were thus the uncontested landmarks of civilization and true knowledge. This underlying idea in both the first and second evangelizations served as the primary justification for the Spanish presence in the New World.

No matter how much Spanish intellectuals wrote about the inferiority of Indians, in one way or another they always struggled with numerous experiences that showed that Indians were not really as inferior as they thought. This was the case from the very beginning of the Conquest. As mentioned above, the Inca empire was so formidable that even the first Spanish historians could not hide their bewilderment. In fact, Pedro Cieza de León wrote a rather encomiastic account on Tahuantinsuyu, and even advanced a comparative critique of Habsburg Spain, based on his

descriptions of the Inca political model (232). José de Acosta also described the Incan government as beneficial to Indians, as seen in the Acosta's quote in the last section where he praised the Incan communist economy: "*ningún hombre de consideración habrá que no se admire de tan noble y pródigo gobierno...*" (177). In addition to the Incan past, Spaniards also knew that even after their arrival and defeat of Atahualpa (the last Inca emperor) in 1532, Indians still posed a major threat to them. For years Andeans took advantage of the quarrels and skirmishes among conquistadors, which led to a feeble colonial order that rendered indigenous leaders essential for managing the territories that the new Spanish government needed to control. This is why figures like Acosta advanced a very complex and somewhat convoluted description of the Incas, in order explain why Indians were inferior and, therefore, needed Spaniards to govern them. In sum, humanists like Acosta attempted to reconcile the discrepancy between the greatness of the Incan Empire and their supposed cultural and moral inferiority. Furthermore, as Ivonne del Valle (2013) has suggested, Acosta functioned as a mediator between the two clashing evangelization efforts in the Andes⁸³. Similarly, Lamana (2018) has suggested that Acosta functioned as a theoretical bridge or unifying alternative to the two clashing evangelization efforts in the Andes (29-30). This is why Inca Garcilaso would make of Acosta his most important referent in *Comentarios*. El Inca used Acosta's alternative view as the humanist bedrock after which he would model his utopian version of the Incan Empire.

⁸³ In the introduction of this present dissertation, I mentioned Ivonne del Valle's Baroque approximation to José de Acosta (2013). In her study, she argues how Acosta's argument on Indian salvation and Spanish conversion policy was a Baroque amalgam that transcended the first evangelization and second evangelization quarrels and was able to mediate between these two currents of theological thought.

Acosta's works *De procuranda indorum salute* and later *Historia natural y moral* were perhaps the most significant theoretical works for Inca Garcilaso, as they considered the moral legitimacy of the Spanish incursion in the Americas, as well as the Indians' moral worth. Such works would be crucial for Garcilaso's critique of the humanism depiction of the Americas, precisely because they try to articulate the tensions and clashes between the first and second evangelizations in colonial Peru. In these works, Acosta threads a very careful approach to the Indian question as he attempts to reconcile the progressive Lacasian message of Christian persuasion with Spúlveda's argument for a just war. Specifically, Acosta argued for Spanish intervention (a second evangelization tenet), based on the natives' incorrect understanding of God (a point shared by both evangelization efforts), all while still admitting that great empires, such as Tahuantinsuyu, had well established social and economic order (a point primarily sustained by first evangelization proponents like Las Casas). Acosta's text argued that the Incan insufficient understanding of the true divine concepts posed a fundamental problem for the correct establishment of a Christian nation. This meant that the Indians' deviant understanding of the one true concept God—visible in their clear confusion of the one true God for celestial bodies such as the sun—, reverberated in an immoral way of living. So, though Acosta recognized certain aspects of pre-Columbian societies could be politically and socially efficient, the Indians grasp of moral virtues presented a big problem. Incan moral inadequacy was grounded on the fact that Indians were ignorant of what was good and right, and what was bad and wrong. Acosta points out that while they had seemingly good form of government, they did not know it. Indians didn't know the difference between knowing and doing (Lamana 44). While they seemed to act rightly and justly, they did not do it because of a firm belief and conviction, but to due mere habit and routine. For instance, in *Historia natural y moral*, when Acosta says that Incas were not greedy a people, he

says that it was not because they wanted or chose to, but because they simply did not know differently:

Cada uno acudía a lo que había menester en su casa, sin que uno pagase a otro para esto de manera que ninguno ha menester a otro para las cosas de su casa y persona, como es calzar y vestir y hacer una casa, y sembrar y coger, y hacer los aparejos y herramientas necesarias para ello [...] A la verdad ellos son gente poco codiciosa ni regalada, y así se contentan con pasar bien moderadamente: que cierto, si su linaje de vida se tomara por elección y no por costumbre y naturaleza, dijéramos que era vida de gran perfección (*Historia natural y moral*, Book VI, Chapter XVI).

The highlighted passage means that Indians could not differentiate right from wrong. In this respect, Lamana observes that this cognitive insufficiency explained the need for a radical and aggressive Spanish presence in the Indies in order to ensure the correct understanding of God's ways and laws (30; 183). Otherwise, Indians would have completely dismissed or ignored the Christian message. Hence, Acosta's particular method of conquest and evangelization, which takes the Indian's cognitive inferiority as the cornerstone of his philosophy, thus mediating between the predicaments of the first and second evangelizations. This conceptual operation was key, as it encapsulated and reconciled the differences between the two currents of evangelization. He writes in his famous *De procuranda indorum salute*, a treatise that calls for evangelical reforms in Colonial Peru:

Dos cosas que parecían entre sí tan dispares, como son la difusión del Evangelio de la paz y la extensión de la espada en la guerra, no sé por qué nuestra

época ha hallado no sólo la manera de juntarlas, sino aun de hacerlas depender necesaria y legalmente una de otra (*De procuranda*, 1: 247-9).

As such, *De procuranda* seeks to provide the theoretical foundation for a Christianly justified politico-economic colonial regime in the Indies, as well as and for the natives' integration into the world of Christianity and Western civilization. It aimed at solving the critiques of first evangelization scholars like Las Casas and correct the demands of hard-core second evangelization proponents like Sepúlveda. Las Casas, for instance, criticized the harsh treatment of Amerindians in the hands of Spaniards, thus arguing that such violence rendered the obtained riches were illegitimate. In the *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias* (1542), Las Casas demonstrates that the Spanish expansion amounted to a cruelty grounded on greed, which, in turn, depicted Spaniards as deliberately cruel and anti-Christian. Later, in the *Tratado de las doce dudas* (1564), Las Casas contended that, because of such cruelty, no property or wealth gained by Spaniards could be deemed legitimate. In sum, the first evangelization, as led by Las Casas, advocated for the child-like innocence of the indigenous people and, along with it, the illegitimate nature of the violence perpetrated against them by Spaniards who, then, were seen as the guilty party (Del Valle 55). The second evangelization, in Sepúlveda's terms, took a different view. Sepúlveda argue for the concept of just war to be applied to the Spanish conquest of the Americas. Such opinion was grounded on the Aristotelean argument of natural slavery to Indians, which depicted Amerindians as a part of mankind destined for a life of servitude under virtuous masters, the Spaniards. Moreover, Sepúlveda also sustained that Amerindians were not only inferior but also rude and brutal being against whom war was not only lawful but expedient (Hanke 1959, 13).

Instead of demonizing the Indians like Sepúlveda or defending them like Las Casas, Acosta recognizes that the failure of the evangelization enterprise was partly shared with an inefficient

Spanish government that needed to immediately change course. In order to propose his reform, Acosta builds upon the previous denunciations made by some Spanish intellectual regarding the abuse of force and power against natives⁸⁴, and thus call out the dystopian reality that the conquest unleashed during the first half of the fifteenth century. His works propose a system that allows for the co-existence of Indians and Spaniards, all while advancing strict disciplinary measures that would extirpate the barbarity of indigenous people. In this sense, Acosta anticipates what Inca Garcilaso would later advance with his utopian version of Tahuantinsuyu.

However original Acosta's method of restoring legitimacy to the Spanish enterprise was, Peru's political reality presented a rather dark picture, reflecting a convoluted mix of both evangelization approaches. The lack of clear definition in policy resulted in a rather complicated political panorama, where neither natives nor Spaniards could know which direction to take. During the first half of the sixteenth century, legal battles over lands, legal limitations of the *encomiendas* and *repartimientos*⁸⁵, and pleas for royal protection inundated the courts. Moreover, even though conquistadors were declared as victors, power was not really centralized conquistadors fought each other for control, often times resorting to help form caciques in order to gain power over certain territories. In fact, a civil war among conquistadors brought a shadow of illegitimacy to the whole Spanish enterprise, which put even more pressure on the crown to

⁸⁴ The most famous denunciations were made by the Friar Antonio de Montesinos, with his sermon in the island of Hispaniola in 1511; and Bartolomé de las Casas, in 1552, with his famous work *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias*.

⁸⁵ These were estates of land inhabited by Amerindians, which were granted to Spanish colonists or adventurers in America for purposes of tribute and evangelization.

promptly solve the political problems in Peru, including the role of Indians in society. This is why by the end of the sixteenth century, colonial legislation defined natives as children, who needed constant guidance from Spaniards. Furthermore, when Viceroy Toledo arrived to Peru in 1569, he pushed for a reassessment of Ancient Incan history, in order to revert the ideas that they were indeed great lords, and still had chance of returning to power. His objective was to prove the illegitimacy of the rule of the Incas and claim that they governed as tyrants. This would further justify the Spanish firm grip on the entire population, and counter any criticism against the Spanish colonial system. He entrusted Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa with this responsibility. Gamboa thus wrote his *Historia de los incas*, which indeed tried to present the Incas as usurpers and tyrants, undeserving of ruling the Andes.

As Toledo's efforts consolidated his grip on power, the ideas of Amerindian inferiority took hold of Peru's political and economic policies, resulting in the establishment of an economic system in which Indians were moved around in the Andean territory (Toledo's *reducciones*) and legally forced to work in mines controlled by Spaniards. Work was then seen as a solution to keep Indians from indulging in vices and further corrupting themselves and their offspring. As such, work was also used as a tool in missionary work. Furthermore, missionary work turned rather aggressive, as campaigns to extirpate Indian idolatry traversed the entire territory searching for deviant practices, and thus punishing those engaging in them. By the end of the century, the extent of the Spanish abuses was very clear. In this sense, it seemed like the second evangelization efforts prevailed over the first. Nevertheless, consensus among missionaries and other ecclesiastical powers was never reached. For example, Hanke (1949) highlights the fact that friars—fueled by Las Casas's works and ideas—were in constant opposition to Toledo's efforts of controlling both the political as well as the religious projects in the Andes. Peru's political and ecclesiastic clashes

were a clear testament of how deeply divided humanism was among Spaniards. Similarly, perennial disputes about baptism for Amerindians and arguments for and against priesthood for Indians were heightened divisions between the two evangelizations. For instance, friars Domingo de Betanzos and Juan de Zumárraga held very different views about the ordinance of priests of Amerindian descent. Betanzos believed held the view that Indians were mentally incapable of being priests and even applied the term *bestias* to reference them (Hanke 1959, 23-24). Zumárraga, for his part, declared that he did not see why Indians could not be ordained (24). With this, I want to point out that the Spanish colonial enterprise provided a picture of how the values of humanism were far from being consistent with each other, and that, although Acosta's work is an attempt to reconcile those tensions⁸⁶, they nevertheless persisted. This is why Inca Garcilaso would focus on the Jesuit and his works in his efforts of creating an Incan utopia. Garcilaso uses Acosta's alternative view as the humanist bedrock after which he would model his utopian version of the Incan Empire, precisely because, as Lamana (2019) points out, Acosta is the unifying alternative to the two clashing evangelization efforts in the Andes, one embodied by Toledo's authoritarian adoption of Sepúlveda's ideas and the other embodied by the friars who defended Las Casas' views (27). Just like in More's *Utopia*, the use of Acosta's humanism will eventually reveal that the split within the movement as a whole, and therefore unravel a rather unflattering side of humanism as a political alternative.

⁸⁶ This split in New World humanism bears a resemblance with the one that surrounds More.

4.2.3 Utopian Tahuantinsuyu and Garcilaso's Political Theory

As mentioned in section 2.1. of this chapter, Tahuantinsuyu's social and political institutions have a two-faced nature. On the one hand, they seek to provide wellness, justice, and a security to the all of the Empire's population, but, on the other hand, they reveal a quite authoritarian, restrictive, and even totalitarian side of the Incan state. These two sides of the Incan utopia come to light at various points of the text. In section 2.1., it became apparent how the orderly functioning of the state was dependent upon a hypervigilant and punitive state. Anyone who did not follow the rules was subject to severe punishments. These elements suggest that Tahuantinsuyu was a society where questioning authority was not allowed. As such, the Incan society revealed a structure that lent itself to authoritarian forms of government, just like Utopia did, as described in section 1 of this chapter. In this sense, the political institutions that seemed to have solved the problematic issues of the Spanish administration in Peru appear in a different light. They, too, reveal another set of problems. Like Erasmian humanism in *Utopia*, Spanish humanism also appears completely split and excinded from its core values. Remembering Yoran's words: if "the ideal humanist social order of Utopia is ultimately based on antihumanist presuppositions", so is the ideal humanist society of Tahuantinsuyu. In this sense, since More's Utopia and Garcilaso's version of Tahuantinsuyu are both based on humanist moral and political ideals, exposing the contradictions within these societies amounts to a critique of the political ramifications of humanism.

Humanism, as a political project, reveals a double and contradictory nature: a hopeful impetus for social improvement, and an ineluctable regime of Eurocentric and strong authoritarian undertones. Similar to *Utopia*, this double nature can be found in multiple instances of Tahuantinsuyu's laws, customs and institutions. One of the main contradictions of Tahuantinsuyu are its laws. In books I and II, Garcilaso tells his readers that i) all Incan laws came from Manco

Capac's teachings, that ii) such laws were in accordance to natural reason, and that iii) they were not necessarily perfect or set-in stone. This means that, in the beginning, the Incan model was flexible: "Él [Manco Capac] las había ordenado todas [las leyes], unas que había dejado hechas y puestas en uso y otras en dibujo, para que en adelante sus descendientes las perfeccionasen [...] según que sus tiempos y las necesidades las pedían" (Part I, Book II, Chapters IX). This means that these laws were not meant to remain stagnant. On the contrary, Manco Capac himself urged his descendants to perfect his laws as the times required. However, this perfectibility of the Incan law seems to be short-lived, because chapters latter Inca Garcilaso alludes to a number of legal contexts where one finds a rather unchangeable and sacred pattern of laws, customs and behaviors. This fact is most apparent Tahuantinsuyu's in core economic and political principles, such as the elimination of private property, or the severity of their punishments, or in the fact that in the Incan judicial system judges could not even decide or "interpret" the law, but merely execute it.

Another contradiction has to do with the Incan colonization enterprise. It is first mentioned that Manco Capac's civilizing project was founded on a spirit of tolerance and its method of conversion was persuasion and example, just like the Spanish evangelization project firstly began. However, sooner than later, the Incas resorted to violence and force to assert their authority whenever their persuasion campaign was not as effective as they thought. Thus, first, in Chapter XVI of Book II, upon Manco Capac's death, his son, Sinchi Roca, continued with the task of colonizing the rest of Andean peoples and bring them under the Inca banner, using the art of persuasion and example:

En cumplimiento de lo que su padre, cuando se quiso volver al cielo, le dejó mandad, que era la conversión de los indios al conocimiento y adoración del Sol, tenía propuesto salir a convocar las naciones comarcanas [...] que tanta

necesidad tenían de que los sacasen de las bestialidades y torpezas en que vivían. [...] En todos ellos hizo lo que su padre en los que redujo, que fue cultivarles las tierras y los ánimos para la vida moral y natural, persuadiéndoles que dejaran sus ídolos y las malas costumbres que tenían. [...] Convocaron a los indios, persuadiéndoles con buenas palabras, con el ejemplo, a que se sometiesen al vasallaje, al señorío del Inca y a la adoración del Sol [...] Los indios le obedecieron, y cumplieron todo lo que se les mandó y vinieron muy contentos con el nuevo gobierno del Inca Sinchi, Roca, el cual, a imitación de su padre, hizo todo lo que pudo en beneficio de ellos, con mucho regalo y amor (Comentarios, Part I, Book II, Chapter XVI).

This chapter describes an idyllic form of conversion and colonization. From this quote, it becomes clear that forceful submission of the new vassals was out of the question in Manco Capac's civilizing mission, as it was similar in the early stages of the Spanish own conquest and conversion efforts. Let's remember that, in 1523, the Laws of Burgos laid down specific rules to prevent the abuse of Indian workers⁸⁷. The great apologists for the Indians often regarded these laws as proof of the Spanish crown's kindly intention towards their proto-vassals (Padgen, *The Fall*, 35-36). However, no more than two years later, Juan Palacios Rubio drafted the infamous *Requerimiento*, which was a formal proclamation of war against the natives, despite its façade of

⁸⁷ The Leyes de Burgos were a set of rules that regulated the Spanish treatment of Indians, giving the natives humane treatment and protection against abuses. These laws were a consequence of the Dominicans' denunciations of the ill-treatment of Indians by Spaniards in the Antilles. The most famous of these accusations was Fray de Montesinos' sermon on Christmas 1511. However, these laws still procured that the Spanish crown preserved its territories and that the Church could impose the Catholic faith among natives.

an invitation-like document. The *Requerimiento* offered the Indians the choice of peacefully submitting to the Spanish king's authority or being subjected to a war that would either end with their death or enslavement. The similarity with the Incan history in *Comentarios* could not be more apparent in this regard. Only two chapters later, one generation down, Manco Capac's grandson, Inca Lloque Yupanqui, the Incas also resorted to violence when their persuasion efforts were not enough and their ambition outgrew their peaceful methods.

Habiendo tomado el Inca Lloque Yupanqui la posesión de su reino y visitándolo por su persona, propueo extender sus límites, para lo cual mandó levantar seis o siete mil hombres de guerra para ir a su reducción con más poder y autoridad que sus pasados, porque había más de sesenta años que eran Reyes, y le pareció no remitirlo todo el ruego y la persuasión, sino que las armas y la potencia hiciesen su parte, a lo menos con los duros y pertinaces (*Comentarios*, Part I, Book II, Chapter XVIII).

This quote seems to be directly inspired by the second evangelization fine tunings, where violence is justified in some cases. And to make the resemble even more telling, the Incas had their very own version the the *Requerimiento*:

“Luego de que el Inca salió de su territorio en una gran provincia llamada Cana, envió mensajeros a los naturales con requerimiento que se redujesen a la obediencia y servicio del hijo del Sol, dejando sus vanos y malos sacrificios y bestiales costumbres” (*Comentarios*, Part I, Book II, Chapter XVIII).

Once this Incan requerimiento took place —says Garcilaso— some Indians submitted to the Inca (“así salieron a recibir al Rey y se entregaron por vasallos obedientes”), but others did not; hence a terrible destiny was to befall them: “estuvieron tan duros y rebeldes que no

aprovecharon persuasiones ni promesas ni el ejemplo de los demás indios reducidos, sino que obstinadamente quisieron morir todos defendiendo su libertad” (*Comentarios*, Part I, Book II, Chapter XVIII). This was the first time that the Incan colonial enterprise faced uncomplying people. The Incas reaction was, therefore, unprecedented to say the least:

“El Inca, porque las demás naciones no tomasen mal ejemplo y se desvergonzasen a tomar las armas, quiso castigar aquellos pertinaces. Envío por más gente, más para mostrar su poder que por necesidad que tuviese de ella, y entre tanto apretó a los enemigos por todas partes, que no los dejaban salir por cosa alguna que hubiesen menester, de que ellos se afligieron mucho, y mucho más que les iba faltando comida [...] con el cerco los apretaron por que se rindiesen de suyo” (*Comentarios*, Part I, Book II, Chapter XVIII).

These actions were so desperate and excessive that reached high levels of cruelty. As such, not only do they mark a stark contrast with the initial intentions of peaceful colonization, persuasion and cooperation, but they also introduce an implicit comparison with the Spanish colonial advance in the Americas. This time Inca Garcilaso seems to allude to Hernán Cortés’ siege of Tenochtitlan, when he was said to starved the Aztec population for weeks, in order to weaken and force them to submit. In the next Chapter, Garcilaso addresses even more directly this patent contradiction by calling the civilizing/evangelizing project of the Incas a mere cover-up.

Pasados algunos años, aunque pocos, volvió el Inca Lloque Yupanqui a la conquista y reducción de los indios, que estos Incas, como desde sus principios hubiesen echado fama que el Sol los había enviado a la tierra para que sacasen los hombres de la vida ferina que tenían y les enseñasen la política, sustentando esta opinión tomaron por principal blasón el reducir los indios a su Imperio,

encubriendo su ambición con decir que lo mandaba el Sol. (Comentarios, Part I, Book II, Chapter IX. Emphasis mine).

This sentence is a powerful irony that brings to mind Bartolomé de Las Casas' denunciations of the conquistadors' greed and ambition. In his famous *Brevísima relación*, one of Las Casas' most powerful accusations was that Spaniards pretended to act in the name of faith, when, in reality, they were but covering up their own greed for gold. Analogously, the Incan civilizing enterprise is but a cover up for the Inca king's ambition and thirst of power⁸⁸. As such, the Incas appear in a similar light to the Spanish. To be precise, Inca Garcilaso condenses in his version of the Incas the humanist ideal form of government, and the actions Inca king represents the corruption of that idea. The contradiction between the initial plan of idyllic colonization stands in stark opposition to its violent implementation. Echoing More, Inca Garcilaso illustrates the profound difference between theory and practice; between the humanist envisioning of an idyllic social order and the inevitable corruption that comes with the exercise of power. But more than More, Garcilaso goes a step further. While More hints at the impossibility of a humanist colonial project (Utopia is, after all, a no-place), Inca Garcilaso fully develops a decolonial critique, by actually addressing a specific colonial model (the Spanish colonial project via Garcilaso's utopian Tahuantinsuyu). Garcilaso engages directly with the fundamental concepts and notions of Spanish humanism in his version of Tahuantinsuyu, and weighs them against its nefarious colonial

⁸⁸ On this point, Margarita Zamora (1989) interprets this episode as a literary mocking or mimicking of the Spanish greed and ambition. Similar to Zamora, I also see a parallel between the Incan colonial enterprise and the Spanish as a critique to Spanish ambition and greed. The difference between her reading and mine is that the parallel I see is not between Tahuantinsuyu and the Spanish empire, but the political ideal of that empire, as envisioned by humanists.

implementation. His historiographical version of the Incan empire gives a clear account of the empire's tensions and contradictions downfall, just as the contradictions pointed out by Las Casas and that Acosta tried to reconcile. Let's not forget, once again, that Inca Garcilaso's version of the Ancient Inca empire is inspired by humanist ideas that empowered European colonialism. In this sense, Garcilaso's utopian discourse is deeply decolonial. His politico-philosophical argument is that the humanist arguments that give rise to colonial projects would be ultimately cancelled out and contradicted by their own material implementation.

The crux of Inca Garcilaso's decolonial argument rests upon the fact that the highly elaborated arguments of Spanish humanism in favor of native conversion eventually turned into theoretical justifications for cultural subjugation. What might have begun as an evangelization plan, founded on the spirit of humanist tolerance and common understanding, immediately adjusted its rhetoric to align with the material interests of the Spanish empire. In this sense, the parallel with Inca Lloque Yupanqui's corruption of Manco Capac's initial model is very telling of Garcilaso's genius. No matter who Garcilaso criticizes (Spaniards or Incas), his critique is always aimed at the corruptible nature of the humanist foundations of the colonial discourse.

But there is a more specific side to Garcilaso's decolonial argument. Through his depiction of the Incan society, Garcilaso also advances his deconstruction and cancellation of the Spanish discourse of coloniality. However contradictory and however similar to Spanish mores, the Incan moral code presents a fundamental difference with the Spanish. Like Utopians, Incas did not need the Holy Writ to confirm their righteousness or to demonstrate any sort of superiority. But, unlike Utopians, the Incas did not have any sort of writing. Therefore, writing did not form part of their ethical, political or philosophical repertoire of referents. With this, Inca Garcilaso is directly calling out of the Spanish obsession with the law of the letter as an indicator of civilization.

The tipping point comes when Garcilaso describes the Incan moral philosophy: “La filosofía moral la alcanzaron bien, y en práctica la dejaron escrita en sus leyes, vida y costumbres, como en el discurso se verá por ellas mismas” (Comentarios, Part I, Book II, Chapter XXI). With this Garcilaso implies that Incan morality was not a matter of interpreting scriptures, but rather a matter of habit and custom. This means that morality was not a prescribed notion, but rather a customary occurrence. There were not moral treatises or manuals of behavior (let alone an supreme holy text), only custom and habit. In this sense, Garcilaso contradicts the Spanish notion of moral prescriptivism, where correct moral behavior was to be found and confirmed in the written Scriptures. This idea was subsidiary to another one that maintained that a sign of any sophisticated forms of knowledge (be it moral, philosophical or otherwise) was a society’s development of a culture around the written word.

This firm believe in the power of the written word, as an imperial tool, dates back to the early months the infamous year of 1492, when Antonio de Nebrija, a Spanish humanist, dedicated the first grammar of Castilian language to the Queen, Isabel I⁸⁹.

El tercero provecho deste mi trabajo puede ser aquel que, quando en Salamanca di la muestra de aquesta obra a vuestra majestad, y me preguntó para qué podría aprovechar, el muy reverendo padre Obispo de Ávila me arrebató la respuesta; y respondiendo por mí dixo que después que vuestra Alteza metiese debaxo de su iugo muchos pueblos bárbaros y naciones de peregrinas lenguas, y con el vencimiento auquellos tenía necesidad de recebir las leies aquel vencedor

⁸⁹ On the written word as an imperial tool of Spanish conquest see Padgen 1987, Mignolo 1995, Seed 1995, González-Echevarría 1990.

pone el vencido, y con ellas nuestra lengua, entonces, por esta mi arte, podrían venir en conocimiento della (Nebrija, Gramática castellana, Prologue).

Furthermore, Nebrija stresses on the idea that the written word, more than anything else, would secure the riches of political unification, thus bringing peace and prosperity under the tutelage of one tongue and one culture. Of course, at the time, Nebrija was not thinking of a colonial project in the Americas, but rather in the unification of the Iberian Peninsula. Nevertheless, the ideas laid out in his grammar introduced the notion of the written word as an instrument of domination, thus foreshadowing all subsequent justifications for conquest and colonization, including the first and second evangelization arguments.

Assí que después de repurgada la cristiana religión, por la cual somos amigos de Dios, o reconciliados con él, después de los enemigos de nuestra fe vencidos por guerra y fuerza de armas, de donde los nuestros recibían tantos daños y tenían mucho maiores; después de la justicia y essecución de las leyes que nos aiuntan y hacen vivir igualmente en esta gran compañía, que llamamos reino y república de Castilla; *no queda ya otra cosa sino que florezcan las artes de la paz. Entre las primeras es aquella que nos enseña la lengua, la cual nos aparta de los otros animales y es propia del ombre, y en orden la primera después de la contemplación, que es oficio propio del entendimiento* (Nebrija, Gramática castellana, Prologue. Emphasis mine).

The idea that language distinguishes human beings from other beings gives rise to all Eurocentric intellectualism—including humanism—. A such, this idea was i) a main aspect of the

humanist academic curriculum, the *studia humanitatis*⁹⁰, ii) and of all the emerging theories of Christian superiority during the early modern European expansion (from the Spanish Reconquista to the consolidation of the empire in Asia and the Americas), including the first and second evangelizations. In sum, Spaniards thought of the written word as the supreme sign of knowledge and wisdom, and of the lack of written characters as a sign of barbarism. This is why, ultimately, all precepts of good morals were derived from written texts, the Holy Writ. Thus, the fact that Garcilaso argues that the Incan moral philosophy does not derive from a written text, as it would be expected from the highly sophisticated empire, certainly destabilizes the Spanish fundamental belief in the written word as an instrument of dominion and superiority. In other words, Tahuantinsuyu's social sophistication in combination with its lack of a written text makes the Spanish epistemological edifice crumble. With this, Garcilaso takes morality from the domain of the European tradition of the written word and asserts that even other colonial projects, like the Incan, could be carried out without the written word.

Garcilaso's last point is of the outmost importance because it provides a decolonial perspective. With this, he takes morality from the domain of the European tradition of the written word, and calls out the humanist moral duplicity in their famous *praeparatio evangelica* argument. Such a duplicity consists in the fact that humanist intellectuals advocated for a practical approach

⁹⁰ Philology, grammar, rhetoric, and translation made up the core subjects of humanist education, because the good Christian citizen had to have a firm moral grounding in the written texts. In the highly civilized Thuantinsuyu, however, morality did not come from a written text. Instead, Incan morality dwelled in the day-to-day laws, lives and customs of its citizens. This is why morals codes were not studied, but rather learned through example and passed on oral tales.

to pagan morality and politics (over a theoretical or contemplative one), in order to bring closer non-Christian cultures to Christianity, when in reality they always held the Scriptures as their ultimate reference of moral standards. Let's remember that, through the *praeparatio* argument, humanists advocated for a more universal notion of morality, one that were not directly dependent on the teachings of the Holy Writ. This is how Renaissance intellectuals engineered the rebirth of the Ancient European past as referents of civilization. The Renaissance overlooked Greece's and Rome's paganism, and focused instead on their philosophical, political, and military achievements. In light of this, Garcilaso's Tahuantinsuyu points to an unspoken premise at heart of the the *praeparatio evangelica* argument: that not all pagan cultures could aspire to be seen with benevolent eyes, no matter how sophisticated they were; they needed master the art of the written word. This undeclared caveat reduces what was one of the most "progressive" tenets of the Christian evangelization movement to yet another instance of Eurocentric and colonial justifications.

4.3 Conclusions

Throughout this chapter I have argued that Thomas More and Inca Garcilaso engage in a similar literary enterprise that consists in using fiction to provide a radical critique of early modern political theories. Specifically, I have argued that *Utopia* and *Comentarios* point at the flaws and contradictions present within the political ramifications of the humanist movement. In order to offer such criticism More's and Garcilaso's works advance a form of political critique anchored in fiction. They are exponents of a literary and philosophical genre that I denominate, utopian narrative. I contend that Utopian narratives are the Baroque ironic alternative to the Renaissance

idealism, thus countering the the prescriptive and clear-cut claims about theology, morals, and politics. More precisely, *Utopia* and *Comentarios* give a response to the Renaissance idealistic ideas of Humanism: objectivity and plain and simple argumentation, as forms of conceiving and ordering the socio-political realm. Furthermore, I have argued that Inca Garcilaso's interest in More's utopian model responds to the English philosopher's heightened capacity for conceptual and narrative irony. But, beyond More, I contend that Garcilaso's utopian argument serves the purpose of decolonizing the Renaissance ideals of epistemological superiority.

Although, irony is not a new recourse in El Inca's rhetorical arsenal—in fact, ironic images and stories appear throughout the entirety of his opera (his very own literary persona is a kind of irony) —, the utopian model is the literary consolidation of his political ironic turn. The question of Garcilaso's recourse to irony has been analyzed from various perspectives: linguistic (Zamora, 1988), a philosophical (Fuerst, 2018), or with regards to a critical race theory (Lamana; 2019). However, irony, as a generic literary formula, in the form of a utopian society, has not been a topic of inquiry as such.

The specificity of a utopian literary, in contrast with other literary genres, consists in a deep grounding on the idea of society and of envisioning other political forms different from the ones present in real-world society. While other fictional literary genres like the modern novel anchor their fiction in the daily vicissitudes of particular characters (like Don Quixote or Lázaro de Tormes), the utopian genre is specifically centered around the notion of community. As a genre, the utopian literary discourse focuses in the society as a whole, thus provoking a theoretical discussion about topics touching upon political and economic issues. This is why both *Utopia* and *Tahuantinsuyu* make constant references to the political realities from which their authors speak (Tudor England and Spanish Peru, respectively). But, as repeated throughout this chapter, *Utopia*

and Tahuantinsuyu are not merely a criticism of existent social orders, but also of alternative ones, specifically the alternative social orders proposed by humanist intellectuals.

There are several features that locate these works under the same literary label, the utopian genre. Here, I will call attention to one that I think encapsulates the method through which a radical political criticism is deployed. Utopias, however different in each author or society, are ultimately a critique of both the status quo and its most popular alternatives. Utopias are always located at some distance, either geographically or temporarily or both, from its intended readership's location and time. Utopias do have an intended readership, for the ultimate purpose of its ironic contents requires an audience that appropriately fills in the necessary gaps in order to unravel the irony's full meaning. The physical distance of the Island is a symbol of a separate world, with unique norms and ethics that can be explored in a fictionalized and thus unthreatening manner. The island of Utopia is located in a distinct geographical plane, and Tahuantinsuyu is located in the historical past. Thus, both societies give enough fictional leverage to the author to tacitly question and mock both the official social order, as well as the alternative forms of governing proposed by the most prominent humanist intellectuals.

This last point is of paramount importance because it shows how the utopian genre is radically committed to be an intellectually destabilizing and discomforting work. It aims to point out difficult relationship between the intellectual class (in this case, the humanists) and the ruling establishment. Put differently, it questions the possibility of really transitioning from theory into political practice, given the power structure of the early modern world. In a way, it underscores the economic and professional dependence of the humanist on the patronage of the powerful, especially the aristocrats. In the case of More, it becomes apparent how Erasmus' ideas (as well as More's) ultimately succumb to their political positions, thus readjusting their ideals to the liking

of the rulers. In Garcilaso's case, *Comentarios* shows how the underlying ideas of the Incan ideal state (founded on Acostas, Las Casas, among others) are ultimately corrupted when these ideals compromise the political expansion or economic viability. In essence, I argue that these works engage with the ideological currents and countercurrents of their time in a critical way. Namely, after More and Garcilaso had put in place a utopian society based on a Humanist ideal (More resorts to Erasmus and Garcilaso to José de Acosta and to a lesser extent to Bartolomé de las Casas), they are quick to point out to the impossibility of these societies' full realization.

Finally, it is important to note that, despite the claims made that *Utopia* coins and, with *Comentarios*, inaugurate the *modern* utopian genre, they are preceded by other speculative works of antiquity. As such, the Utopian genre, understood as an imaginative and hypothetical form of political theory, is as old as Western political theory itself. Plato's *Republic* may be said to have inaugurated both at the same time. However, its modern version and the actual coinage of the term was effectively done by Thomas More. Moreover, the modern renewal of the genre—I argue—articulates two elements that give it its distinctiveness. First, the modern utopian genre has a deep-rooted connection to the New World in different ways: the encounter, the discovery, the conquest, and, of course, the *critical rediscovery* of the land, its peoples, and their history. The New World provided a real place for the projection of practical or analytical exercises of political theories and social dreaming. It was also the symbol or the material that stirred up the wheels of the literary imagination, thus suggesting that the supposedly fictional narrative that utopias portray could/could have eventually exist/ed in real life. Furthermore, the New World provides the most fitting narrative material for the Renaissance's growing concern with the dichotomy between barbarity and civilization. Indeed, the American theme is used in both More's and Inca Garcilaso's texts, in order to introduce such a dichotomy, although they reproduced it in a highly ironic

manner. The second feature is the centrality of religion, particularly Christianity. Historically speaking, Christianity is a dominant topic in modern utopian texts, due to the fact that the long temporal stretch from Plato's *Republic* to More's *Utopia* and Inca Garcilaso's *Comentarios* was filled with religious visions of heaven and hell, which are but the theological robes of the utopian structural dualism: *eu-topia* and *dys-topia*⁹¹. In other words, the common Christian framework that reigned in Europe at the dawn of the modern era made possible the establishment of a basic moral code and, more or less, undisputed core moral beliefs –at least in paper. This meant that the once abstract and Ancient notion of the “good” or the “just” was given a face, a proper name, and even a sacred text –however crypted, heterogenous, and contradictory the Bible can be– from which to extract the ultimate meaning of the terms. Given these considerations, it is not outlandish to suggest that modern utopias condense the very foundations upon which the Enlightenment political theorists founded the core ideas of their treatises.

But it is important to note that political treatises of the Enlightenment period do not really maintain the radically skeptical vein of utopian works. Although texts such as Hobbes' *Leviathan*, Locke's *Second Political Treatise* or Rousseau's *Social Contract* do have a fictional component, in the sense that they envision better forms of government, they ultimately end up providing a

⁹¹ We have already shown how the theoretical complexity as well as the crux of the irony of these modern utopian works (More's and Garcilaso's) reside in the combination and articulation of both *eutopian* and *dystopian* elements. But a relevant point worth raising here (although not answerable in this thesis) is the question of how much these *eutopian* and *dystopian* elements relate to a general understanding of the influence of the Christian notions of heaven and hell in medieval and early modern European politics. This is to suggest that a conscientious interdisciplinary study of the modern utopian genre opens up new vistas to novel considerations of the relationship between religion and politics in the late medieval and the early modern periods.

prescriptive and normative view on how the social body should work. Utopian texts, on the contrary, are politically uncompromised. As Baroque works, they are multilayered and surreptitious. They always conceal a double meaning that it is necessarily deciphered at first glance. They have the capacity to overreach contradictions and include oppositions within one single aesthetic form. In this sense, utopian works, as forms of Baroque political theory appear as useful alternative to articulate the excluded and marginalized points of view that do not adhere to the mainstream intellectual currents of a given time. This means that Inca Garcilaso's understudied trait as a political theorist opens up new vistas not only to the study of his opera from a politico-philosophical perspective, but also to the entire landscape of early modern political theory. Moreover, Inca Garcilaso's bid on political theory is particularly unique because of its decolonial component. While More's critique tangentially hints at the topic of European colonization, Inca Garcilaso directly engages with the humanist ideal of a colonial project and deconstructs it. In this sense, I hope to have presented Inca Garcilaso as a referent of early modern political philosophy, and as one of the main exponents of the utopian current of political theorizing.

5.0 CONCLUSION

Throughout these three chapters, I proposed a comprehensive approach to Garcilaso's opera through the lenses of the concept of decolonial Baroque. As I explained in the introduction, this concept emerges in the intersection of Hispanic Baroque studies and decolonial thought. On the one hand, the Baroque signals an aspect of modern letters that responds to and questions the precepts and values of the Renaissance. These values range from an objectivist pretension of history writing, a Christianization of the pagan past, to a prominent rise of Eurocentric thinking. On the other hand, decoloniality means precisely an active demarcation from Renaissance Eurocentrism. I contended that this decolonial aspect of the Baroque is one of its most important features. The Baroque, as Childers (2010) asserts, is not an idealized abstraction—like the Renaissance (let's not forget that the Renaissance is a rebirth, an idealized image of Europe's grandeur, the modernization of a glorious Ancient past), but rather a hybrid and uncompromised critical approach to the ideological and social crises of early modernity⁹². So, what larger social

⁹² As stated in the introduction, For Childers (2010), the Baroque emerged in the moments where the aristocratic ideals of the Spanish empire—itsself a product of the colonial expansion and modern technological developments—ran counter to the humanistic values that had just made possible the religious revolution of the Reformation, as well as the religious missions that carried out the linguistic studies of indigenous cultures and languages in the Americas. At this crossroads, a culture of a nascent plebian humanism was born inside a notably archaic apparatus of aristocratic values. In this sense, the Baroque discourse, according Childers, was twofold: it was used both as an instrument of cultural domination, as well as a vehicle for resistance.

and ideological crisis than coloniality⁹³? What could be more of an uncompromised and critical take on modernity than a decolonial approach?

I presented Inca Garcilaso's decolonial Baroque in three parts. I chose three instances where Inca Garcilaso questions the intellectual practices of the Renaissance Eurocentric discourse. First, the refashioning of the figure of the author. Through the creation of a flamboyant and exaggerated multi-faceted character (an author narrator who is Amerindian, Spanish, mestizo, bastard and aristocrat, depending on the situation), Inca Garcilaso questions the authority of the European author and elevates characters of Amerindian descent in a story. His creation of his own literary persona (from Gómez Suárez de Figueroa to Inca Garcilaso de la Vega) along with his literary biography in the form of a meta-story (scattered throughout the books) are Baroque strategies of concealment and *agudeza de ingenio*⁹⁴ that inaugurate novel forms and genres of prose and narrative, and also offer a critique of Renaissance writing practices.

Second, I proposed a reading of *La Florida del inca* as a modern novel of sorts, in order to call attention to Inca Garcilaso's critique of the Renaissance historiographical discourse. Most of Spanish histories and chronicles about the Americas were expressions of a Eurocentric discourse that rewrote the Amerindian past, catering to the needs of the Christian and Imperial interests of the Catholic church and the Spanish empire. In consequence, these discourses not only suppressed the memory of pre-Columbian peoples and aggrandized the image of the Spaniard, but actively

⁹³ Coloniality is a concept that captures the meanings of the practices and legacies of European colonialism in social orders and forms of knowledge. Here, we've analyzed how practices of colonialism, such as the exclusion of Amerindians from positions of power or a Eurocentric historiography. See Quijano's (2000) and Mignolo's (2002, 1995).

⁹⁴ This concept is one where the author advances a critical project of colonial deconstruction through irony.

negatively distorted the figure of the Indian. In *La Florida*, Inca Garcilaso tackles such prejudices by equalizing and inverting the qualities, features and behaviors of both Indians and Spaniards. In this book, the author deliberately fictionalizes history, thus achieving an ironical effect, like *Lazarillo de Tormes* or *Don Quijote*. The only difference with those two books is that Inca Garcilaso's fictionalization of history contains a harsh critique of the Spanish conquest and colonization project as well as a rebuttal of the distorted image of Amerindians that Spanish historiography manufactured. Although Inca Garcilaso was not the only early modern author contriving a new literary genre with the characteristics of the modern novel, he was one of the few who conceived of prose fiction as an avenue for decolonization of colonial historiography. Here is where the value of my contribution resides: I point to decolonial elements in the emergence of modern novel narratives.

The third example of Inca Garcilaso's decolonial Baroque is the invention of an Indigenous utopia that functions as a decolonial form of political theory. In this third chapter, the longest and more ambitious one, I presented a facet of Inca Garcilaso that had not until recently been studied, his political theory (Fuesrt 2018). Different from Fuesrt who makes very valid points about a potential political program of Inca Garcilaso, I focus on a less programmatic and more theoretical aspect of Garcilaso's political thought. I focus on the intersection between fictional literature and political thought. I claim that Inca Garcilaso writes, just like Thomas More, a utopia, a politico-literary genre that is highly skeptical and politically uncompromised. But different from the traditional assessments of More's work, I follow Hannah Yoran (2010) interpretation of More's *Utopia* as a critique of Renaissance humanism. I thus make the case for Garcilaso's utopian version of Tahuantinsuyu as a critique of the humanistic ideals behind Spanish theories and practices of colonization. Specifically, I argued that Inca Garcilaso exposes the tensions and contradictions at

the heart of the first and second evangelization approaches to Amerindian conversion and government. I argued that Inca Garcilaso models his utopian Tahuntinsuyu on humanist political ideals, hence the similarity with More's utopian society. Different from More, however, Inca Garcilaso engages specifically with humanist colonial ideals, as exposed by Spanish humanist intellectuals. As such, Garcilaso gives the utopian genre a decolonial twist.

Each of these chapters is an instance of Inca Garcilaso's particularly decolonial use of Baroque writing. They are moments where Inca Garcilaso's sense irony transforms the fixed concepts and narratives of Renaissance coloniality into literary terms and genres of decolonial destabilization. They are instances that bring about of novel forms of narrating, conceiving and asserting oneself in the literary space⁹⁵. Instances that give rise modern and experimental literary genres as well as new modern subjects. In Inca Garcilaso's case, an author of Amerindian descent. However, these three instances analyzed here are not the only ones in Garcilaso's work. Throughout his opera there are several other moments where a the decolonial Baroque can be detected, thus opening up new vistas and contributing to a broader understanding of Inca Garcilaso's opera. For instance, the topic of authorial self-fashioning addressed in chapter one can be further explore through studies that analyze the intersection between legal history and literature. González-Echevarría (1990) and Rodríguez Mansilla (2019) have explored the legalistic style of Inca Garcilaso's work as mark of a Baroque writing style. However, these studies do not explore sufficiently (Echevarría) or do not engage at all (Mansilla) with legalistic writing as a tool for

⁹⁵ Let's not forget that it is a moment in history where controversial figures like Teresa de Jesús (1515-1582), Juan de la Cruz (1542-1591) and Juana Inés de la Cruz (1648-1695) also made an appearance in the literary scene through Baroque strategies of concealment that help them advance poignant themes like eroticism, mysticism and feminism.

decolonizing the legal language of the time, which imposed a caste system on colonial subjects. This approach can benefit from the analysis of Inca Garcilaso's unpublished work *Relación de la descendencia de Garci Pérez de Vargas* (which I did not analyze in this present work), which opens new avenues for exploring the intersection between a modern fictional authorial figure and a critique of imperial legalistic writing.

Additionally, critical race theory is another topic that can be further explore through Baroque lenses. In the first chapter, I questioned the idea of Inca Garcilaso's mestizaje as traditionally studied by critics. My contention was that such mestizaje should not be read in essentialist terms, but rather as a rhetorical tool in a Baroque literary project. Such rhetorical tool consists of the creation of a literary character, a fictional author, whose meta-story traverses all of his works. However, this perspective of racial self-fashioning as a Baroque trope still needs further exploration. The connection between Inca Garcilaso's self-fashioning and other early modern authors who advance similar forms of self-fashioning (Cervantes, Quevedo, Sor Juana, Thomas More, Shakespeare, among others). Most of my ideas on Inca Gacilaso's critical race thinking are informed by my mentor, Gonzalo Lamana, and his work. His theory provides insight into how the marginalized felt and perceived the world around them, and their methods for changing the dominant Spanish narratives. He shows that Indigenous intellectuals like Inca Garcilaso exposed the tensions within the emerging Spanish thinking of race, which was at the very center of colonial forms of discrimination. Lamana successfully shows how Inca Garcilaso was able destabilize the racial concepts imposed by Spaniards, aiming to alter the way colonial actors saw each other and, as a result, to change the world in which they lived. Lamana's work is an original take on Inca Garcilaso's studies on race as Lamana's ideas connect contemporary critical race scholars, such as Gerald Vizenor and James Baldwin, with Gariclaso's work. In this sense, an exploration of early

modern self-fashioning in connection with critical race theory can open up new vistas to a new history of early modern letters where the thinking of race take is a main driver. This would therefore encourage the analysis of new transatlantic dialogues between authors who have not yet been studied in tandem. I, thus, see a very promising avenue for future research of my own and other Inca Garcilaso scholars.

Throughout chapter two and chapter three, I focused on Inca Garcilaso's transformation of the historiographical discourse into forms of fictional narrative and political theory. These fictionalization of history functions as a way to counter the Eurocentric conceptualization of the world that Renaissance intellectuality fabricated. La Florida and Garcilaso's Tahuantinsuyu are counter-discourses to Renaissance values and institutions, specifically the Renaissance attempt to give a Eurocentric account of all spheres of knowledge and human affairs, especially ethics and politics. In this dissertation I focused particularly on the epistemological consequences that the Renaissance brought about in a colonial context (Mignolo, 1995). I showed how colonialism and colonality are central in the humanist discourse in the Americas. In this sense, I read Inca Garcilaso's works through the lens of this definition of the Baroque. I contended that Inca Garcilaso's Baroque consists in the formulation of a multilayered work full of ironies and double-entendres that allow for a decolonial view of Hispanic history of colonality in the Americas. I thus suggested that such multilayered transformation of history writing inaugurates a modern understanding of prose, where fiction can be use as instrument of political theorizing and metahistorical critique. On this topic, there are multiple roads for future research. Not only does Inca Garcilaso's decolonial Baroque lends itself to an even more profound critique of the hegemonic political thinking of early modern (colonialism), but also speaks of a very particular form of speculating about political government and organization. Such personal form of political

theory includes the tight connection that Inca Garcilaso threads between civilized societies and complex religious systems, especially regarding provocative ways of interpreting divine words (both Spaniards and Incas). Furthermore, there are other areas of exploring Inca Garcilaso's transformation of the historical discourse such as the decolonization of the Ancient European past as presented by Renaissance intellectuals. Such decolonization resides in the many ways in which Inca Garcilaso combines pagan historical referents of the Ancient World (Greece and Rome) with Indigenous and Spanish ones. This mythological miscegenation could very well open Inca Garcilaso to the theology and meta-theological theories. These are all ways in which Inca Garcilaso's works continue to amaze his readership and stays relevant in the conversations of today.

These reflections are thus a small contribution to rethinking the Hispanic early modern period. This is to say a broadening of the meaning of the intellectual and cultural currents of the time, which continue to be very Eurocentric at heart. My reading of Inca Garcilaso as a pioneer of Baroque thinking or the transcendence (*Aufhebung*) of the European Renaissance suggests an important transformation of a larger reconceptualization of Western cultural history. With this, Inca Garcilaso is not only a foundational moment of Latin American culture, but also—and perhaps more importantly—a new pillar in the definition of (the Hispanic) West is and of who Westerners are. The traditional claim that Inca Garcilaso only pertains to Latin American culture as an anticolonial figure or as a recipient of European ideals is thus challenged with more radical reading of his pioneering force. The theme of Inca Garcilaso as the creator of a kind of historicism that combines the enlarging successions of Inca rule with a historiography and with the universalizing telos of Christianity should not be seen as a mere intellectual reconciliation of the Hispanic or European and the American. Neither should it be seen as the main figure of cultural

transculturation or *mestizaje*, and thus the symbol of an independent Latin American “identity” and Independent national states. What I have proposed in this work is to read Inca Garcilaso as the (provisional) starting point of a radical revision of Hispanic transatlantic relations. I thus encourage early modern scholars to explore beyond the limits of Eurocentrism to find some of the most important Western cultural and intellectual developments in non-traditional works, such as Inca Garcilaso’s pioneering and ground-breaking work in modern prose (authorial self-fashioning and the modern novel) as well as political theory.

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