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Author
Lazzara, Michael J.

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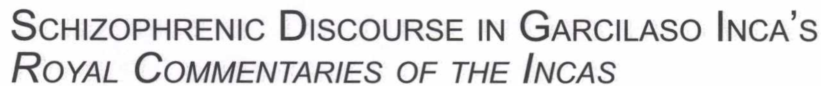

SCHIZOPHRENIC DISCOURSE IN GARCILASO INCA'S *ROYAL COMMENTARIES OF THE INCAS*

Michael J. Lazzara
Princeton University

Introduction

Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of dialogism, a term which refers to the plurality of voices simultaneously present in every speech act, provides a useful framework within which to contemplate Garcilaso Inca's *Royal Commentaries of the Incas* (Bakthin 1981).[1] Garcilaso's re-writing of the history of his maternal ancestors dramatizes the dilemma of his existence as a *mestizo*—a condition which, by definition, reflects a confluence of conflicting subject positions nearly impossible to resolve.[2] As both his biography and his text reveal, Garcilaso's subjectivity is largely determined by his unique position in-between two radically distinct (and largely incompatible) linguistic, ethnic, political and social referents. Consequently, his life can serve as a lucid example of some of the important ramifications of Spanish colonialism in the Americas.

Although one may argue (as Bakhtin suggested) that no speaking subject is entirely coherent—that all are, to some extent, dialogic—it is undeniable that Garcilaso's particular circumstances make his text an exacerbation of the way in which discursive modes compete with one another. Yet interestingly enough, as Antonio Cornejo-Polar and other critics have pointed out, Garcilaso attempts to resist dialogism—to propose a utopian model of representation for his motherland through which the constant antagonisms between mother and father, Indian and Spaniard, Quechuan and Castilian, New World and Old World may be resolved (Cornejo-Polar 1994). His profoundest desire is that his book, as a conservable cultural artifact, be the symbolic space in which this resolution of opposites can occur. Such a desire finds textual expression when Garcilaso affirms in the first chapter of Book One that the "Old World" and the "New World" are but one world without division.[3]

Nevertheless, despite all of his attempts to homogenize the heterogeneous, to achieve a unitary form of expression, Garcilaso's text, as we shall see, manifests itself both linguistically and discursively as dialogism—plurality, ambiguity, discord. Cornejo-Polar concludes:

> ...Mestizaje—which is the greatest indication of Garcilaso's wager in favor of harmony between two worlds—ends up reinstalling itself—and precisely in the discourse which magnifies it—in its precarious, equivocal and densely

> ambiguous position, which does not convert union into harmony but—on the contrary—into forced, difficult, painful and traumatic coexistence. (99) [translation mine][4]

Each side of Garcilaso's being—Spanish and Incan—constitutes a cultural and linguistic entity which resists combination with the other. If on one hand it is true that his "insider's" view of two cultures greatly expands his horizons and permits his compelling history to be told, allowing him, in the process of telling, to experience what Todorov has called the "euphoria of disharmony," on the other hand his entrapment in an extremely unstable cultural space causes his writing to behave schizophrenically.[5] Todorov, in his article "Dialogism and Schizophrenia," writes: "'Unbounded polyphony,' therefore..., leads to schizophrenia, taken in its commonly understood sense of split personality, mental incoherence and attendant distress" (Todorov 1994, 206). It goes without saying that I will not employ the term "schizophrenia" in reference to Garcilaso in its usual clinical sense, but rather as a useful metaphor for understanding competing discursive modes in the *Royal Commentaries*.[6] Clearly when two or more discourses compete within one subjectivity, the threshold of separation between them becomes blurred. Neither is capable of mediating the totality of the subject's life experience; neither is clearly subordinate to the other. Indeed, discursive hierarchies exist and give way to constant fluctuations in registers of speech. Thus, Garcilaso's voice in the *Royal Commentaries* vacillates between his Spanish and Indian identities, dramatizing the complexity of the colonial experience and leading (as we shall see) to such disparate and erratic rhetorical consequences as silence and verbosity. Clinical research in psycholinguistics, as a recent study by Deanna Barch and Howard Berenbaum indicates, has identified both a lack of linguistic production (silence) and an excess (verbosity) as important symptomatic manifestations of the schizophrenic mind (Barch and Berenbaum 1997). An exploration of these "symptoms" as they manifest themselves textually in Garcilaso's *Royal Commentaries* will reveal his text to be a space of negotiation between two cultures which are ultimately incompatible with one another.

My primary goal in this essay, then, will be to articulate the way in which Garcilaso's attempt to construct a utopian vision by crystallizing oral history as written history results in discursive schizophrenia. The methodology I shall follow will be to explore two of the primary rhetorical symptoms born of this effort—namely, silence and verbosity. Having first noted these linguistic instabilities, in a second approximation to the text I will attempt to extrapolate the schizophrenic model to capture the oscillation between the author's Spanish and Indian "voices." Before proceeding, however, it will be useful to reflect in some detail upon the importance of translation (and the frequent misunderstandings it generates) in Garcilaso, since this process lies at the very heart of the Inca's schizophrenic discourse.

Translation and Misunderstanding

Margarita Zamora reminds us that "the narration of the Amerindian past is conceived in the *Royal Commentaries* as an act of translation, in the broadest and most ambitious sense of the term" (Zamora 1988, 4). As translator, Garcilaso strives to preserve the oral tradition of his Incan ancestors by concretizing it in accordance with the rigors of the European Humanist tradition of writing. The magnitude of this task, however, requires that he not only translate, but also interpret Incan history for a very specific audience of educated Spaniards who would be largely unfamiliar with Incan civili-

zation. Moreover, given his Humanistic education and his broad familiarity with both the Incan and Spanish cultures, he is able to negotiate profound cultural differences with astounding facility—allowing his text, on the surface, to appear logical and well-organized.

Yet although Garcilaso offers his book to his readers with great deference to the Spanish chroniclers who have already written on Incan history (i.e. Cieza, Zárate, Gómara, Valera and Acosta), he is sure to differentiate his own history from those of his predecessors by marking his own writing as uniquely "American." Despite the fact that he painstakingly and copiously cites the chroniclers to lend credence to his own assertions—and this was quite necessary by seventeenth century European standards—at the same time he boldly proclaims in his "Advertencias" that he is an Indian and, consequently, he will write like one."[7] Garcilaso writes in an attempt to restore and preserve the purity of the Quechuan language and to eliminate the many linguistic "corruptions," as he calls them, introduced by the Spanish chroniclers. Thus, more than a mere translation, Garcilaso's *Royal Commentaries* must be read as a corrective interpretation of Incan history written from the privileged intellectual vantage point of a truly bilingual and hybrid subject who, through writing, will preserve oral history for the collective memory. Consequently, his project belongs exclusively neither to the Spanish world, not to the Indian world, but rather can only be understood in a colonial (hybrid) context.

We must be wary, though, of Garcilaso's desire to restore purity to his maternal language through translation and to employ translation as a strategy for the containment (or preservation) of knowledge. As Tejaswini Niranjana notes quite adeptly in his article "Colonialism and the Politics of Translation," language itself, in its essence, resists the "containing force" of the translator and implies heterogeneity (Niranajan 1994, 36).[8] By writing his utopian history, Garcilaso strives to erase the difference inherent in his mestizo condition and to impart to history a certain purity—to present Incan history as a unified source of meaning (for which Garcilaso himself acts as "unifier"). In so doing, however, he denies the irreducible and untranslatable heterogeneity of his condition. Indeed his origins, in their irreconcilable duality, are "always already" fissured (37).

Although Garcilaso, perhaps, would like to subjugate the signs of his native Quechua to the grammar of written Castilian and force it to signify as utopia, the task proves daunting, and quite frankly, impossible, because language itself is dynamic. To transition from orality (Quechua) to literacy (Castilian) implies a multitude of possible signifiers that are simultaneously available to Garcilaso, and among which he must choose the ones he believes will most effectively communicate his desired signified. In this sense, in the act of translating, Garcilaso simultaneously performs an act of interpretation. It is quite possible, then, that in trying to make his text "legible" to a particular audience and to himself as a mestizo (which implies a second audience), Garcilaso's attempt to create utopia paradoxically results in a text that is less "legible"—more ambiguous.

Julio Ortega points out the importance of *legibility* for Garcilaso's writings, defining it as the "conversion of diversity into resemblance" (Ortega 1992, 369). Indeed the Inca wants nothing more than to make his work legible to his Spanish audience, and this leads him to describe and categorize every minute detail of the Incan experience. Yet, compelled to generate a discourse of "resemblance," Garcilaso inevitably falls back on the world he describes (the Incan) as a point of departure for his descriptions. The result is discord and vacillation between a discourse accessible to his imagined (Spanish)

audience and a discourse faithful to the oral history of his Incan ancestors as it is recounted to him by his great-uncle, his schoolmates and others.

We should note that the task of translation for Garcilaso goes beyond the level of grammar, vocabulary and syntax and comes to include a host of cultural concepts that lack equivalents in Spanish. As an example, we can cite the case of the Virgins of the Sun (Book IV, Chapter 1) to whom Garcilaso refers as *monjas* ("nuns") so as to make a pagan concept more readily accessible to a Catholic audience. Here, Garcilaso has performed a conceptual substitution which merely approximates the meaning he wishes to convey. This example brings to the fore an often overlooked aspect of the phenomenon of translation: the imagined audience. Todorov notes that when one translates, one changes his imagined audience—and it is in this process that meaning can break down (Todorov 1994, 210). Moreover, even though Garcilaso derives his legitimacy as an author from his deep knowledge of a world of which his imagined audience is ignorant, paradoxically, to speak of a foreign cultural concept to an audience completely unaccustomed to such an idea may result in a loss of legitimacy for the speaker. This reality may provide further evidence to help us to understand why Garcilaso feels it necessary to cite so copiously from the Spanish chronicles.

Because of Garcilaso's keen awareness of the possible difficulties he will face as translator, he tries to *control* schizophrenia from the very beginning of his history by including his "Preface to the Reader" and "Notes on the General Language of the Indians of Peru." Hoping to make his narration appear coherent and legible to his Spanish readers, Garcilaso acknowledges the presence of certain irresoluble cultural and linguistic elements (such as the absence of coined money in Peru and the differences between the Castilian and Quechuan languages) which he intends to clarify from the onset so as to avoid misunderstanding. These initial sections, then, become quite important for understanding Garcilaso's work as a whole because, in them, he essentially attempts to obliterate difference and to make his history appear polished and succinct—that is, utopian. Nevertheless, we cannot deny that his project, in its very essence, presupposes difference.

Perhaps the area in which we most acutely feel this irresoluble difference is in his treatment of language. In the author's "Protest" about his history[9] (Book I, Chapter 19), Garcilaso refers to the "difficulty of language," and laments, as he does on numerous occasions throughout his *Commentaries*, the lack of communication between the Incas and the Spaniards. First, assuming his "native" personality, he chastises the Spaniards for their ignorance of Quechua:

The Spaniard who thinks he knows the language [Quechua] best is ignorant of nine-tenths of it, because of the many meanings of each word and the different pronunciations that a word has for various meanings, as will be seen from some words that I shall have to refer to. (Garcilaso 1966, 51)[10]

Likewise, in other moments of the *Royal Commentaries*, Garcilaso's Spanish voice comes to predominate—crossing over and eclipsing his ever present indigenous voice. Note, for example, how the confusion of pronouns in the passage cited below echoes the identity crisis of the *mestizo*. If in the aforementioned passage, Garcilaso chastised Spanish ignorance of Quechua, here we sense a mild condemnation of his maternal relatives for their lack of writing. At one point, Garcilaso himself directly confronts his great uncle during one of their many conversations, saying:

Inca, my uncle, though you have no writings to preserve the memory of

> past events, what information have you of the origin and beginnings of *our* kings? For the Spaniards and the other peoples who live on *their* borders have divine and human histories from which *they* know when their own kings and their neighbors' kings began to reign and when one empire gave way to another… All this and much more they know through *their* books. But you, who have no books, what memory have *you* preserved of *your* antiquity? Who was the first of *our* Incas? What was he called?… How did *our* heroic deeds begin? (41)[11] [italics mine]

This flurry of questions proffered by the author seems to attack the legitimacy of orality as the most effective means for preserving the collective memory of his people. Clearly Garcilaso believes writing superior to orality for conserving history, but he finds himself once again caught in the double-bind of wanting written history while having to rely on oral history to create it. This is seen when Garcilaso states that his intention upon writing his *Commentaries* is faithfully to "recount what [he] often *heard* as a child from the lips of [his] mother and her brothers and uncles and other elders" about the beginnings of the Incas, since he deems that "it will be better to have it as told in the very words of the Incas than in those of foreign authors" (39) [italics mine].[12] Garcilaso's dual perspective, which vacillates between mild condemnations of both his maternal and paternal ancestors (for their lack of writing and "understanding" respectively), leaves Garcilaso (the *mestizo*) as the *only* subject who can effectively re-write history since he is the only one who has mastered both languages.

Nonetheless, I think it curious to note that despite his condemnation of the Incas' lack of writing, the way in which Garcilaso integrates the voice of his great-uncle with the voices of the Spanish chroniclers he quotes indirectly legitimates oral history. The stories Garcilaso's great-uncle tells serve to correct the pre-established historical record of the Spanish chroniclers, thus, perhaps unintentionally, privileging oral tradition over written tradition as the ultimate font of "truth."

The chorus of Incan voices (and the same can be said of the Spanish voices that Garcilaso "adopts") melds with his own, enhancing the schizophrenia of the text. When, for example, we experience the quiet grief Garcilaso's great-uncle feels for the end of the *Incanato*, we cannot help but sense that Garcilaso, having adopted his uncle's voice, feels a tinge of the same grief, especially since Garcilaso himself is a part of what his uncle calls "*our* lost empire" [italics mine]:

> I think I have expatiated at length on your enquiry and answered your questions, and in order to spare your tears, I have not recited this story with tears of blood flowing from my eyes as they flow from my heart from the grief I feel at seeing the line of our Incas ended and our empire lost. (46)[13]

Nevertheless, schizophrenia manifests itself once again when Garcilaso tries to counteract such emotional passages by stating that he shall try to remain "objective" in what he writes:

> I declare that I shall simply tell the tales I imbibed with my mother's milk and those I have since obtained by request from my own relatives, and I promise that my affection for them will not cause me to stray from the true facts either by understanding the ill or exaggerating the good they did. (51)[14]

Moreover, the very process of translating forces Garcilaso to realize that lan-

guage itself (as a signifying system) presents certain inherent limitations that not even he can overcome—although it is quite possible that he remains unaware of the full ramifications of this reality for his project. Although, as he states, he has tried to translate "faithfully" from Quechua into Castilian, he admits regarding the story of the Incan kings which he has narrated throughout Book I that:

> ...I have not written it in such majestic language as the Inca [his uncle] used, nor with the full significance the words of that language have. If I had given the whole significance, the tale would have been much more extensive than it is. (46)[15]

The anguish Garcilaso feels because of the inadequacy of language becomes even more apparent when he performs his most blatant act of translation in the *Commentaries*: the translation of Quechua verse into Castilian (Book II, Chapter 27). In this memorable chapter, Garcilaso acknowledges the validity of Father Blas Valera's Latin translation of the poem in question although he claims that his translation will attempt to remain more faithful to "the language I absorbed with my mother's milk" ["la lengua que mamé en la leche"] than to the "Latin" ["la ajena latina"] (127). Nevertheless, linguistic insufficiency will force Garcilaso to resort to prosaic exegesis to define certain untranslatable words that appear in the poem. Concretely, he must differentiate between the Quechuan *ñusta*, the Latin *nimpha* and the Castilian *doncella*, each of which carries different linguistic connotations. The prosaic definition of these terms acts as a further control mechanism which the author uses to protect against the inherent schizophrenia of his discourse, another way in which he can protect against his readers' misunderstanding his text.

But despite all of Garcilaso's efforts to protect against misunderstanding, other passages in the *Royal Commentaries* reveal that rupture and discord are at the heart of the colonial experience, and hence, constitute the basis of the cross-cultural translation the author attempts. It is quite significant that one of the first anecdotes that Garcilaso narrates, that which refers to the naming of Peru, has at its core a linguistic misunderstanding. In Book I, Chapter 4, Garcilaso explains that the name *Perú* is a hybridization of two different words uttered by a captured Indian and is based on a miscommunication between the Spanish *conquistadores* and the indigenous. After confirming his version of the naming of Peru with the accounts of certain Spanish chroniclers (Book I, Chapter 5), Garcilaso concludes this section by observing that this same error—misinterpretation—has occurred frequently in the New World and that it "can be observed in many passages of this history" (19).

Cross-cultural misunderstanding again becomes apparent and even humorous toward the end of the *Royal Commentaries* (Book IX, Chapter 29), where Garcilaso tells the story of two Indians commissioned by their Spanish steward to deliver ten melons to Lima with clear instructions not to eat any of the produce. To protect his own interests, the steward sends a letter (symbolic of writing itself) with the two Indians stating precisely how many melons should arrive. But the Indians become hungry *en route*, and decide to eat two of the melons, assuming that no harm can come to them if they hide the letter behind a wall so that it will not "see them eat." Much to their chagrin, when they arrive in Lima and are accused of wrongdoing by the Spaniard who receives the produce, the Indians cannot explain how the letter would have "known" of their misdeed if it were hidden behind the wall. Their only explanation of this freakish occurrence is to conclude

that the Spaniards are "gods" (*Viracocha*) who can penetrate complex secrets.

It cannot be more obvious that the Indians have completely misinterpreted the concept of writing simply because their oral culture has not equipped them with the proper conceptual tools for relating to this phenomenon. Thus, with such blatant differences at stake, we can begin to understand the precarious position of Garcilaso as a translator/ interpreter forced to make sense of two disparate worlds—forced to unite two radically distinct epistemological realities. His text is dual on every level. How could this not result in discursive schizophrenia? With this in mind, let us now turn to a discussion of two of the main rhetorical consequences of Garcilaso's "schizophrenia": verbosity and silence.

Verbosity

One of the most interesting linguistic consequences of Garcilaso's schizophrenic condition is the way in which he often resorts to verbose descriptions for the sake of accuracy and legibility when what he truly desires is linguistic economy. If we accept his text as a space in which the symbolic resolution of opposites should occur, we cannot help but sense that Garcilaso is failing at his task when we read his verbose descriptions of the Peruvian flora and fauna in Book VIII of the *Royal Commentaries*. And even beyond the descriptions themselves, the reader can sense the schizophrenic oscillation of Garcilaso's vocabulary simply by reading the titles that he assigns to his various chapters; sometimes he opts for the Quechuan term, while other times he opts for the Castilian term to refer to a particular fruit.

Severo Sarduy has described the concept of "proliferation" (what I have called "verbosity") as follows:

> [Proliferation is the]... obliteration of the signifier of a given signified without replacing it with another, but rather by a chain of signifiers which progress metonymically and which finally circumscribes the absent signifier, tracing an orbit all around it, an orbit through the reading of which—which we would call a *radial reading*—we can infer it. (Sarduy 1980, 118).

It is crucial to recognize when speaking of verbosity that the proliferation of meaning, the multiplication *ad infinitum* of signifiers, comes to represent simultaneously both a *loss* and a *presence*. That is to say that the very notion of the sign includes within itself both a lack and an excess. If indeed it is true that a given signified has been "lost" and replaced by a single signifier or a chain of signifiers, a "scar" (a presence) with seemingly infinite signifying power remains in the place once occupied by that "signified." It becomes the task of the reader, by focusing on the metonymic chain of signifiers, to discover the mysterious identity of the absent signified object. This, of course, may or may not be possible; and thus, proliferation can lead either to the production or destruction of meaning.

We read the "scars" of Garcilaso's *mestizo* condition in many verbose passages in the *Royal Commentaires*.[16] Consider that following description of an avocado given in Chapter 11 of Book VIII:

> The fruit the Spaniards call *pears*, because they resemble Spanish pears by their *green color* and *shape*, are called *palta* by the Indians, since they spread from a province of this name to the rest of Peru. They are *twice or three times the size of large Spanish pears*. They have a *thin and tender rind* under which is the *pulp, about a finger in thickness*. In the middle there

is a *stone* or *kernel*, as sticklers for accuracy will prefer to call it. *It is pear-shaped and as big as a common Spanish pear*. No investigations about its uses have been carried out, but the fruit is very *palatable* and *wholesome* for invalids: eaten with sugar it makes a very rich preserve. (Garcilaso 1966, 503)[17] [italics mine].

Here, Garcilaso has created a situation in which three possible descriptions (one Spanish, one Quechuan and one which we might call *mestizo*) are necessary to refer to a single signified object—an avocado. Quite obviously, when read by a Spaniard or an Incan (theoretically speaking in the case of the latter), one description, either *pera* (pear) or *palta* respectively, should suffice to communicate the signified that Garcilaso wishes to convey. It is interesting, then, that from his own *mestizo* vantage point, which lacks stable linguistic parameters, it becomes necessary for him to describe the avocado using a chain of references which he hopes will make the signified (the idea of an avocado) comprehensible to the inhabitants of *both* worlds, and ultimately, to himself. To that end, under the *mestizo* rubric, he is forced to resort to an excess of descriptive language which can merely gesture (although in great detail) at the given signified, but which cannot name it definitively. The descriptions given of the avocado's color, its size, its uses and its constituent parts (highlighted above in italics) help to situate the signified object for the *mestizo* by means of a chain of signifiers when faced with the absence and utter impossibility of a "utopian" universal signifier. It becomes the job of the reader to wade through this proliferation of signifiers, and to decipher Garcilaso's attempt to render his dualistic world meaningful through the creation of a verbose *mestizo* language.

Interestingly, the above quotation also reveals another important area of instability in Garcilaso's *mestizo* identity that is linked to the notion of verbosity, namely, that he deems it necessary to point out that the fruits of the Americas far exceed those of Spain in size, number and quality. He is quick to mention that the American avocado grows to be twice or three times as large as its European counterpart, that its thickness is equivalent, and that its quality is so good that it can even have a certain medicinal value. Julio Ortega has referred to this tendency in Garcilaso to stress the superiority of certain aspects of his motherland in comparison to their Spanish equivalents, as the "topos of abundance"—occasionally referred to as the motive of the cornucopia: viewing America as a land of plenty. He explains that, for Garcilaso, "America signifies the full completion of Spain" (Ortega 1992, 378). He claims that just as the American landscape was ready to multiply the fruits from Spain, so too was it ready for Christian evangelization to flourish on its soil (378).[18] There is indeed, then, great pride in the way Garcilaso describes the Peruvian landscape; yet at the same time, as I have shown, on a linguistic level there exists much instability inherent in his descriptions. Nevertheless, despite the instability, I concur with Ortega that verbosity, hyperbole, abundance and proliferation become metaphors for the way in which Garcilaso hopes that Spain will view his motherland—as a land of plenty where all that is beautiful in Europe flowers to extraordinary new levels of excellence. In this sense, on a thematic level, throughout his descriptions of the Peruvian flora and fauna, Garcilaso confirms his own "utopian" vision. But linguistically, as Sarduy reminds us, proliferation leads not only to production, but also to destruction. How revealing it is, then, that in the very process of "creating" a utopia, the "tools" (language) of the creator simultaneously work to unravel his project. Nevertheless, it remains clear that Garcilaso's impulse to create (i.e. to write utopia) derives from the impossibility of the task; for if utopia were realizable the text need not

exist.

Silence: Self-Censorship and Forgetfulness

If, as we have seen, it is possible for Garcilaso's condition as an "in-between" writing subject to lead to a proliferation of meaning, an excess of language, it is equally possible for schizophrenia to manifest itself as lack, as silence, as self-censorship, as forgetfulness. Tzvetan Todorov, himself a subject torn between two nationalities (French and Bulgarian), has suggested that silence can be understood as a logical consequence of the incompatibility of two competing discursive modes which, within the writing subject, are simply "too close" to one another to coexist harmoniously. He writes:

My twin affiliation produces but one effect: in my own eyes it renders inauthentic each of my two modes of discourse, since each can correspond to but half my being. I am indeed double. And so it is that once again I am locked in an oppressive silence. (Todorov 1994, 211)

One of the most interesting textual manifestations of this "oppressive silence" at work in the *Royal Commentaries* is the way in which Garcilaso often practices self-censorship by leaving certain anecdotes without personal commentary, without "gloss." Garcilaso occasionally feels forced to truncate his stories, leaving his readers to interpret them as they see fit. For example, after noting the existence of many conflicting accounts among the Incas for explaining the origin of the *Incanato*, Garcilaso is left unable to provide conclusive evidence for his own position. In a sense, he is forced to agree to disagree with other historians. Nevertheless, he notes that although versions of the origin of the *Incanato* vary greatly, all concur in what is most important: that Manco Cápac was the first Incan king. It is surprising here that Garcilaso, usually so concerned with historical veracity, is forced to admit his powerlessness regarding the often ambiguous nature of oral history. History itself, places Garcilaso at a kind of impasse, unable to satisfy his "European" desire for veracity, forced to "silence" his own re-telling of history. He must settle for ambiguity rather than harmonic resolution, and consequently, must admit that the "silences" (ambiguities) of history resist exegesis (verbosity). In this case, history has left Garcilaso speechless.

Garcilaso finds himself caught in a situation in which he must admit, much to the dismay of his Humanistic mind, that some historical accounts (particularly oral histories of ancient civilizations) resist codification and better lend themselves to more literary or "allegorical" interpretations. He writes regarding the speculations of some Spanish chroniclers on Incan legend that:

> I do not venture on such profound matters: I simply repeat the fabulous accounts I used to hear my family tell in my childhood; let each take them as he wishes and apply whatever allegory he thinks most appropriate. (Garcilaso 1966, 49)[19]

At another juncture, Garcilaso is silenced because of the inadequacy of language itself to convey faithfully the extreme "barbarity" of pre-Incan practices. He becomes so overwhelmed by the crudeness of the idolatry and incest practiced by his maternal ancestors that he simply cannot find adequate words to convey to his readers the severity of the Indians' barbarity. Again, he leaves the completion of history to the reader's imagination:

> And this shall suffice for now about the Indians of that primitive age and ancient barbarism. What I have not described as fully as necessary I leave

> each one to imagine and supply details: however he stretches his imagination, he will not realize how great was the savagery of these gentiles. In short they were people who had no pride and no master but the Devil. (39-40)[20]

Additionally, Garcilaso's role as intermediary or translator of the Quechuan oral "text" for his European readership requires that he act as an "editor" of history. Realizing the impossibility of including the totality of the oral accounts he has assimilated throughout his childhood, Garcilaso admonishes his readers that he has eliminated from his text all of the things "that might have been odious" (46). He is quick to mention that he will omit from the story of Manco Cápac everything that he deems irrelevant and redundant: "Our intention will be to include the most historical deeds and omit others as irrelevant and repetitive" (50). Moreover, Garcilaso chooses to censor the voices of certain "misinformed" Spanish historians by telling their tales only to the extent to which he finds them accurate. In this sense, the very fact that he *chooses* citations from certain chroniclers, while quite obviously ignoring others, constitutes an important act of censorship as well. It is apparent that Garcilaso is quite interested in legitimizing his historical account for his Spanish readers, and consequently, must primarily include *only* historical opinions that concur with his own. Any "dissenting" opinions, so to speak, must only diverge from his account of history insofar as it is possible to "correct" them through an act of "completion"—providing missing information.[21] The author's intention is never to negate what prior historians have said, but rather to "complete" their accounts using the information to which his privileged "in-between" position permits him access.

These acts of self-censorship that I have mentioned constitute examples of "intentional" forgetfulness on the part of Garcilaso. But there are also many silences in the *Royal Commentaries* that are unintentional. Although we cannot deny Garcilaso's penchant for remembering the oral accounts of his ancestors, he is, in the final assessment, human and, consequently, fallible. Despite the fact that he recognizes that his text cannot contain the whole of Incan history, many are the instances in which he laments not having paid closer attention to his ancestors' accounts or not having written down the accounts as they were told to him: "In short, I would say that they told me about everything they had in their state, and if I had written it down at that time, this history would have been more copious" (50).[22] On other occasions, Garcilaso admits that " [he] has forgotten" a certain detail he wishes to recall, or that although he has provided all of the information that he can remember, "the adjective escapes [him]" (505). These scenarios, born of the inevitable connection between orality and memory, cause Garcilaso to reflect on his own "ignorance" and force him to adopt a rather humble attitude regarding the historical accuracy of his text (502).[23] He acknowledges that the accuracy of his writing (both because of the difficult transition from orality to literacy and the sheer distance of his native land from Spain) has not fulfilled his personal expectations: "I for my part have done what I could, though not all I desired. I beg the discreet reader to accept my will to give him pleasure and satisfaction, though the strength and skill of an Indian… may be insufficient for the attempt" (51-52).[24]

Silence, then, becomes an important discursive "symptom" of a writing subject caught in-between two radically distinct cultures whose tools for recounting history (oral vs. written) are equally as disparate. Given his physical distance from Cuzco at the moment of writing—which produces a certain amount of cognitive dissonance due to his emotional closeness to his maternal land—Garcilaso mediates quite well between orality

and literacy, yet he inevitably falls prey to certain difficulties inherent in the transition from one discursive mode to another. At times his memory fails him. Other times, unable to reconcile a certain historical fact with the "utopian" historical record he wishes to create, he merely opts for silence.

Irreconcilable Difference?

Reading Garcilaso's *Royal Commentaries* initially presents the reader with certain irreconcilable contradictions born of the author's position "in-between" cultures. How is it that on one hand Garcilaso can vindicate his native condition by exalting the Incas' civilization as respectful of the rule-of-law, comparing it to such "advanced" civilizations as Ancient Rome and Greece, while at the same time praising the merits of the Spanish conquest and Christian evangelization? The answer to this difficult question, although unconvincing, hinges on Garcilaso's belief in a Providential vision of history. Briefly summarized, he believes his maternal ancestors to be participants in an historical journey upon which they would gradually progress from a state of barbarism and heathendom toward a "civilized" state subject to the doctrines of Christianity. His "Providentialist" philosophy causes him to divide history into three neatly identifiable stages: 1) Pre-Incan (characterized by social disorder and idolatry), 2) Incan (an intermediary stage within the context of which Garcilaso assumes his role as cultural mediator, and in which the rule-of-law predominates but quickly degenerates at the hands of Atahualpa), and 3) Spanish Empire (the final stage in which the cruelties of Atahualpa are quelled at the hands of the Spanish "saviors"). Yet despite his attempts to justify the course that history has taken, and consequently, to reconcile the two conflicting aspects of his being, Garcilaso does not succeed at controlling ambiguity in his text.

How can we explain, for example, that we hear in the *Commentaries* the weeping of Garcilaso's relatives for the end of the *Incanato*, but at the same time believe his claim that the Incas ultimately *accepted* the Conquest? To say the least, it seems something of a hyperbole to claim, as Garcilaso does, that "If the Spaniards… had done nothing more than bring us scissors, mirrors and combs, we would have given them all the gold and silver we had in our land" (55).[25] Such a statement is indeed quite difficult to reconcile with the ultimate violence that the Conquest implies. Curiously, we find the violence that the Spanish inflicted upon the Incas to be largely absent in Garcilaso's history; indeed Spanish violence is eclipsed by the violence of Atahualpa against his own people. The atrocities committed by the last of the Inca kings, Garcilaso feels, necessitate the Spanish occupation of Peru so as to fulfill a divinely ordained civilizing mission. This area of difficulty in Garcilaso's text hearkens back to the question of intended readership that we have already discussed. By portraying the Conquest in this way, Garcilaso creates a "utopian" situation palatable to and comfortable for his *Spanish readership*, yet in so doing he denies the essentially violent nature of the Conquest itself. The displacement of violence, then, becomes another way in which Garcilaso attempts to transform schizophrenia into utopia, but where, again, the difficulty of his task is quite transparent.

Nevertheless, at times in his description of pre-Incan Peru Garcilaso's Spanish voice of condemnation becomes eclipsed by his "native" voice. By way of example we can cite at least three important moments of "forgiveness" of the Indians' idolatrous practices that signal the sharp ambiguity present in Garcilaso's discourse. First, Garcilaso admits that the natives of Peru are to be admired because, despite their pagan ways,

they were not given over to vice: "… they never adored pleasures and vices like the olden gentiles of antiquity who paid worship to admitted adulterers, murderers [and] drunkards…" (80).[26] Second, he suggests that unlike other pagan civilizations, the Incas were superior because they did not practice human sacrifice. Garcilaso wishes to correct the historical record regarding this point: "I have gone into all this to rebut the opinions of those who say the Incas sacrificed men and children, which they certainly did not" (92).[27] And finally, in a grandiose pro-Indigenous gesture, Garcilaso completely removes (or displaces) the blame for their idolatry from the Incas themselves, claiming that the Devil "tricked" them into such behavior. He asserts that Satan was the "author" of the Indians' "abuses" (92). Even within the *Incanato* itself, the stage upon which Garcilaso primarily focuses throughout his *Commentaries*, idolatry is sometimes eclipsed by other virtues of Incan society. Such is the case, for example, when Garcilaso praises the "virgins" of the Inca kings for their chastity: "The Inca kings had in their vain and heathen religion some great things worthy of much consideration. One of these was the profession of perpetual virginity…" (195).[28]

Yet in other ways, within the same sections of the text that I have just referenced, Garcilaso's Spanish voice—the flip-side of his schizophrenia—comes to the fore. We notice this, for example, in the author's discussion of the rule of Manco Cápac, the first Inca king, which is developed in Books I and II. Clearly, Garcilaso's attitude toward Manco Cápac, though largely positive, oscillates between high praise and occasional condemnation. Although it is abundantly clear that Garcilaso holds the first Incan king in great esteem for his just and orderly rule, he also indirectly criticizes Manco Cápac for having taught his faithful vassals idolatrous practices:

> We have said too how he taught them the natural laws and precepts for the moral life for their common good, so that they should not give offense to one another either in their honor or in their possessions. He also taught them their idolatry and bade them hold and worship the Sun as their chief deity, persuading them to do so on account of his beauty and brightness. (Garcilaso 1966, 67).[29]

Because of the recurrent condemnation throughout the text of the Incas' idolatry, here it becomes impossible not to extrapolate this mild critique to Manco Cápac himself. Later in the *Commentaries*, at the conclusion of his discussion of the reign of Manco Cápac, Garcilaso, who, as I have noted, evidences a constant preoccupation with historicity, quite unexpectedly reduces the entire story of the King to a fable invented by "some Indian of good understanding," giving it the status of a mere myth fabricated to explain the unknown origins of the Incas to an uneducated indigenous population (61).[30] Undoubtedly, Garcilaso offers this last comment from a Spanish viewpoint concerned with privileging historical veracity (truth) over myth (falsity).

Thus, we have seen that although on the surface Garcilaso strives to create "utopia" in the *Royal Commentaries*, stressing the parallels between the Old World and the New World, the attentive reader of his impassioned account cannot help but sense that difference ultimately prevails. Throughout the text we can tell that Garcilaso experiences both the euphoria and despair of his *mestizo* condition, and these qualities manifest themselves as discursive schizophrenia. The transition from orality to literacy, from Quechua to Castilian and between two sets of cultural referents radically distinct from one another, results in "symptoms" as diverse as verbosity and silence (both intentional and unintentional). Garcilaso is, without a doubt, a writing subject torn between two

worlds and embroiled in an historical process, the Conquest, fraught with contradictions. It is logical, then, that his sympathies (although largely skewed toward his maternal side) must reflect the duality of his condition. Despite all his attempts to control it, Garcilaso's discourse inevitably bears the marks of his schizophrenia.

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1 Elsewhere, in his *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, Bakhtin renounces the unity of the "I," positing "the self of the other not as an object but as another subject…." He notes that within any speaking subject there exists a "plurality of consciousnesses, with equal rights, each with its own world, combining in the unity of an event but nonetheless without fusing" (Bakhtin 1973, 14).

2 Norma Alarcón has reflected upon the contradictions implicit in the *mestizo* condition: "A bi- or multi-ethnicized, raced or gendered subject-in-process may be called upon to take up diverse subject positions which cannot be unified without double binds and contradictions" (Alarcón 1994, 136).

3 "Mas, confiado en la infinita misericordia, digo que a lo primero se podrá afirmar que no hay más que un mundo. Y aunque llamamos 'mundo viejo' y 'mundo nuevo' es por haberse descubierto aquel nuevamente para nosotros y no porque sean dos, sino todo 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 de ellas" (Garcilaso 1991, I: 9). ["But trusting in God's infinite mercy, I will say at the outset that there is only one world, and although we speak of the Old World and the New, this is because the latter was lately discovered by us, and not because there are two. And to those who still imagine there are many, there is no answer except that they may remain in their heretical imaginings till they are undeceived in hell" (Garcilaso 1966, 9).]

[4] "...el mestizaje—que es la señal mayor y más alta de la apuesta garcilacista a favor de la armonía de dos mundos—termina por reinstalarse—y precisamente en el discurso que lo ensalza—en su condición equívoca y precaria, densamente ambigua, que no convierte la unión en armonía sino al revés—en convivencia forzosa, difícil, dolorosa y traumática" (Cornejo-Polar 1994, 99).

[5] By the expression "euphoria of disharmony" Todorov wishes to describe a utopian situation in which no one discourse among those competing within a given speaking subject comes to dominate the other definitively. All discourses co-exist democratically within the speaking subject, and manifest themselves according to circumstance. In Garcilaso's case, for example, a certain "euphoria" emerges from the ability to act as an Inca when with the Incas and as a Spaniard when with the Spaniards. We must realize, though, that such euphoria is linked more to an excess (i.e. of identity, of expanded social possibilities) than to any sort of equilibrium or harmony. As Todorov indicates regarding his own "dual" personality—part French and part Bulgarian—although euphoria may indeed result from a dis-equilibrium between competing identities, an equally likely consequence of disharmony is silence, lack, or, in Todorov's words—"malaise and psychological oppression" (Todorov 1994, 209).

[6] For our purposes, then, we shall understand schizophrenia to be a condition that results from the coexistence of disparate or antagonistic qualities or identities. I would remark, however, that a schizophrenic individual does not really have two personalities (a common misconception regarding the schizophrenic condition) but rather one personality with various facets that come to the fore sporadically.

[7] "Para atajar esta corrupción me sea lícito, pues soy indio, que en esta historia yo escriba como indio con las mismas letras que aquellas tales dicciones se deben escribir" (Garcilaso 1991, I: 5). ["To avoid further corruption, I may be permitted since I am an Indian, to write like an Indian in this history, using the letters that should be used in these words" (Garcilaso 1966, 5).]

[8] Tejaswini Niranjana writes: "My concern is to discuss the political as well as the linguistic aspects of translation and to show how translation, overdetermined by violence, law, and subjugation, becomes a strategy of containment in the colonial context" (Niranjana 1994, 36). Consequently, he suggests that we must rethink the very idea of translation if we are to make sense of "subjects' living already 'in translation'—if we are to make history 'legible'" (36, 50).

[9] Harold Livermore's English translation of the title given to Book I, Chapter 19 ("The Author's Declaration about his History") loses the idea of a "protest" which is present in the chapter's original Spanish title ("Protestación del autor sobre la historia").

[10] "Que el español que piensa que sabe más de él [el lenguaje], ignora de diez partes las nueve por las muchas cosas que un mismo vocablo significa y por las diferentes pronunciaciones que una misma dicción tiene para muy diferentes significaciones, como se verá adelante en algunos vocablos, que será forzoso traerlos a cuenta" (Garcilaso 1991, I: 50).

[11] "Inca, tío: pues no hay escritura entre vosotros, que es la que guarda la memoria de las cosas pasadas, ¿qué noticia tenéis del origen y principio de nuestros reyes? Porque allá los españoles y las otras naciones, sus comarcanas, como tienen historias divinas y humanas saben por ellas cuando empezaron a reinar sus reyes y los ajenos y el trocarse unos imperios en otros... todo esto y mucho más saben por sus libros. Empero vosotros, que carecéis de ellos, ¿qué memoria tenéis de vuestras antiguallas? ¿quién fue el primero de nuestros Incas? ¿cómo se llamó?... ¿qué origen tuvieron nuestras hazañas?" (Garcilaso 1991, I: 40).

[12] "...me pareció que la mejor traza y el camino más fácil y llano era contar lo que en mis niñeces oí muchas veces a mi madre y a sus hermanos y tíos y a otros sus mayores... Y será mejor que se sepa por las propias palabras que los Incas lo cuentan, que no por las de otros autores extraños" (Garcilaso 1991, I: 39).

[13] "Creo que te he dado larga cuenta y razón de lo que me la pediste y respondido a tus preguntas. Y por no hacerte llorar no he recitado esta historia con lágrimas de sangre derramadas por los ojos, como las derramo en el corazón del dolor que siento de ver nuestros Incas acabados y nuestro imperio perdido'" (Garcilaso 1991, I: 45).

[14] "Que yo protesto decir llanamente la relación que mamé en la leche y la que desde entonces acá he tenido, pedida a los propios míos. Y prometo que la afición de ellos no sea parte para dejar de decir la verdad del hecho, sin quitar de lo malo ni añadir a lo bueno que tuvieron..." (Garcilaso 1991, I: 50).

[15] "...no la he escrito con la majestad de palabras que el Inca habló ni con toda la significación que las de aquel lenguaje tienen: que por ser tan significativo pudiera haberme extendido mucho más de lo que se ha hecho" (Garcilaso 1991, I: 45).

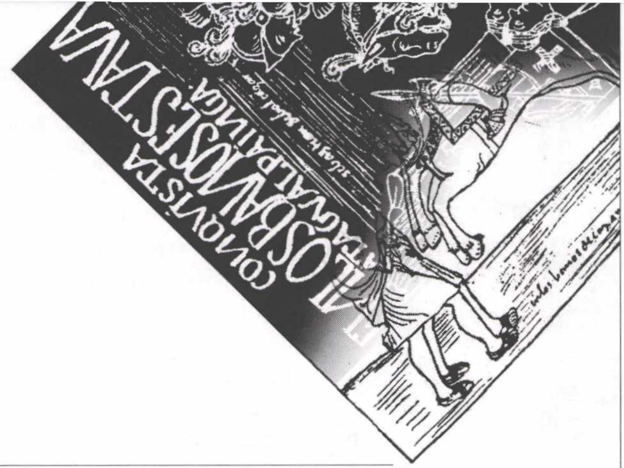
[16] The presence of such passages marks Garcilaso as "in-between" in yet another way: as a transitional figure between the European Renaissance and the American Baroque. If it is true that like the Renaissance man Garcilaso wanted to be an American with a universal vocation, which he proves in his text by citing philosophers, Humanist historians and Classicist writers whom he discovered in Spain, at the same time his writing reflects the impending dawn of the Baroque in the New World, later developed more fully by such prominent figures as Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora and Juan del Valle y Caviedes. Among Garcilaso's "American Baroque" tendencies we can cite his verbosity, his integration of Quechua with Spanish and his interest in accurately portraying the realities of the New World. Of course, I do not wish to classify Garcilaso as a "Baroque" writer, but merely suggest that in his *mestizo* condition we can recognize a forerunner of the *sabio criollo* of the eighteenth century.

[17] "La fruta que los españoles llaman peras, por parecerse a las de España en el color verde y en el talle, llaman los indios *palta* (porque de una provincia de este nombre se comunicó a los demás; son dos y tres veces mayores que las peras grandes de España). Tiene una vaina tierna y delgada. Debajo de ella tiene la médula, que será de un dedo de grueso. Dentro de ella se cría un cuesco—o hueso, como quieren los muy mirlados. Es de la misma forma de la pera y tan grueso como una pera de las comunes de acá. No se ha experimentado que sea de provecho para cosa alguna. La fruta es muy sabrosa, muy saludable para los enfermos. Comida con azúcar es comer de una conserva muy regalada" (Garcilaso 1991, II: 519).

[18] Ortega brings to light another passage which may be useful for our discussion, for in it, we see "proliferation" at work once again. In Chapter 29 of Book IX, Garcilaso writes the following: "All the flowers and herbs we have mentioned, and others I have failed to recall, now exist in such abundance that many of them are regarded as weeds, for example, turnips, mustard, mint, and chamomile, which have thrived to such an extent in some valleys that they have defeated human effort and ingenuity in every attempt to extirpate them. They have in fact multiplied so much that they have overgrown the original names of the valleys and imposed their own as in the case of the Mint Valley on the seacoast, which was formerly called Rucma, and others" (Garcilaso 1966, 601). Regarding this passage, Ortega comments: "This time, the discourse of abundance erases the object itself, as though performing a secretly poetic and almost baroque hyperbolic demonstration" (Ortega 1992, 377).

[19] "Yo no me entremeto en cosas tan hondas: digo llanamente las fábulas historiales que en mis niñeces oí a los míos. Tómelas cada uno como quisiere y deles la alegoría que más le cuadrare" (Garcilaso 1991, I: 48).

[20] "Y esto baste para lo que por ahora se puede decir de los indios de aquella Edad Primera y gentilidad antigua remitiéndome, en lo que no se ha dicho tan cumplidamente como ello fue, a lo que cada uno quisiere imaginar y añadir a las cosas dichas. Que por mucho que alargue su imaginación no llegará a imaginar cuán grandes fueron las torpezas de aquella gentilidad, en fin, como de gente que no tuvo otro



guía ni maestro sino al demonio" (Garcilaso 1991, I: 38).

21 José Durand's study, "Los silencios del Inca Garcilaso," in *Mundo Nuevo* (Paris, 5, 1966, 66-72), concentrates on the importance of intentional omissions in Garcilaso's work. Paul Firbas offers the following summary in his appendix "The Inca of Durand: Annotated Bibliography on Garcilaso Inca and Other Topics in the Work of José Durand" in *Garcilaso Inca de la Vega: An American Humanist*, edited by José Anadón. These observations expand upon the discussion I have intiated here with regard to the *Commentaries*, placing them in the wider context of Garcilaso's works: "Garcilaso conceals some unpleasant facts about his family (marriages between brothers and sisters in his maternal family, and dishonored relatives on the side of Garci Pérez); he is reserved about Peruvian rebels and about his sources... He adheres to certain aesthetic rules such as quoting sparingly (he mentions neither Petrarch nor León Hebreo, although their influence is obvious in his writings) and avoids unnecessary discussions (he does not engage Cieza and Palentino concerning pre-Inca history and minor Inca rulers). Some silences are inexplicable, for example, his failure to mention Leonor de Soto or Tocto Chimpu, or Hernando de Soto's and Huayna Cápac's daughters respectively... There seem to be moral reasons for not mentioning those who have been dishonored. As an historian, Garcilaso shows respect for the honor of others and holds high 'the concept of the historian as a minister of fame'... Condemnation through forgetfulness was also usual among the Incas, and the Quechuan language is especially rich in elusive terms. Garcilaso's silences therefore contain features from both the Andean people as well as from the culture of the Renaissance" (Anadón 1998, 198-199).

22 "En suma, digo que me dieron noticia de todo lo que tuvieron en su república. Que si entonces lo escribiera fuera más copiosa esta historia" (Garcilaso 1991, I: 49).

23 "Mis parientes los indios y mestizos del Cuzco y todo el Perú serán jueces de esta mi ignorancia y de otras muchas que hallarán en esta mi obra" (Garcilaso 1991, II: 518). ["...my relatives, the Indians and *mestizos* of Cuzco and the whole of Peru, shall be the judges of this piece of my ignorance on my part and doubtless of many others in my work" (Garcilaso 1966, 502).]

24 "De mi parte he hecho lo que he podido, no habiendo podido lo que he deseado. Al discreto lector suplico que reciba mi ánimo, que es de darle gusto y contento, aunque ni las fuerzas ni la habilidad de un indio...no pueden llegar allá" (Garcilaso 1991, I: 51).

25 "Si los españoles... no hubieran hecho más de traernos tijeras, espejos y peines, les hubiéramos dado cuanto oro y plata teníamos en nuestra tierra" (Garcilaso 1991, I: 54).

26 "Que en tanta diversidad y tanta burlaría de dioses como tuvieron no adoraron los deleites ni los vicios como los de la antigua gentilidad del mundo viejo—que adoraban a los que ellos confesaban por adúlteros, homicidas [y] borrachos..." (Garcilaso 1991, I: 80).

27 "Hase dicho todo esto por ir contra la opinión de los que dicen que los Incas sacrificaban hombres y niños. Que, cierto, no hicieron tal" (Garcilaso 1991, I: 94).

28 "Tuvieron los reyes incas, en su gentilidad y vana religión, cosas grandes dignas de mucha consideración. Y una de ellas fue la profesión de perpetua virginidad..." (Garcilaso 1991, I: 205).

29 "Asimismo dijimos que les enseñaron la ley natural y les dijeron leyes y preceptos para la vida moral en provecho común de todos ellos, para que no se ofendiesen en sus honras y haciendas. Y que juntamente les enseñaron su idolatría y mandaron que tuviesen y adorasen por principal dios al sol, persuadiéndoles con su hermosura y resplandor" (Garcilaso 1991, I: 68).

30 "Lo que yo, conforme a lo que vi de la condición y naturaleza de aquellas gentes, puedo conjeturar del origen de este príncipe Manco Inca—que sus vasallos, por sus grandezas, llamaron Manco Cápac—es que debió de ser algún indio de buen entendimiento, prudencia y consejo y que alcanzó bien la mucha simplicidad de aquellas naciones y vio la necesidad que tenían de doctrina y enseñanza para la vida

natural. Y con astucia y sagacidad, para ser estimado, fingió aquella fábula diciendo que él y su mujer eran hijos del sol: que venían del cielo y que su padre los enviaba para que doctrinasen e hiciesen bien a aquellas gentes" (Garcilaso 1991, I: 61). ["From what I saw of the state and character of these Indians, I suppose that the origin of the prince Manco Inca, whom his subjects called Manco Cápac on account of his greatness, was that some Indian of good understanding, prudence, and judgment, perceiving the great simplicity of these tribes, realized the need they had of teaching and instruction about the natural life, and wisely and cunningly invented the fable to win their esteem, saying that he and his wife were children of the Sun, that they had come from heaven, and that his father had sent them to teach and help those tribes" (Garcilaso 1966, 62).]

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