

INTRODUCTION

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The central idea for this volume on the seminal *Royal Commentaries of the Incas* and *General History of Peru* (1609) by Inca Garcilaso de la Vega (1539–1616) is to bring together, in a single volume in English, key essays authored by some of the most distinguished students of Inca Garcilaso's work. Thus far, most of the book-length scholarship on Inca Garcilaso's work has been published in Spanish, with the notable exception of John Grier Varner's *El Inca: The Life and Times of Garcilaso de la Vega* (1968) and Margarita Zamora's *Language, Authority, and Indigenous History in the Comentarios reales de los incas* (1988). This volume marks the celebration of the four-hundredth anniversary of the publication of the *Royal Commentaries* in 1609. It reaches the reader's hands in time to inform the work that is being done in anticipation of the four-hundredth anniversary of the publication of the second part, *General History of Peru* (1617).

The scholarly perspectives and topics selected for inclusion in this book constitute a serious attempt to bring to the English-speaking academy a sense of the importance of Garcilaso's work on historiography. They also present up-to-date analyses of the maneuvers that he operated on both Andean and Renaissance archives to find appropriate frames of representation for Andean culture. This came at a time when the work of the coloniality

of power had already heaped derision and misunderstanding on the European perspective on Amerindian cultures. This volume highlights recent cutting-edge scholarship in colonial studies with respect to cultural projects and historiography. At the center of this reexamination one finds Garcilaso's wrestling with writing culture as an attempt to produce a book that could encompass and translate the intelligibility of the Andean world to present and future readers all over the world. How to render the memory of the past and a sense of the world kept in *quipus* (the Andean archive), in oral accounts, and in architecture, song, and theater was the task that evidently Garcilaso pondered over the many years that he spent in preparation for the writing of his history of the Inca realm. He realized that a double-stranded textual structure was required to bring forth a text where the recovery of a memory not sifted through a writerly system of organization could come about. Double stranding also provided a venue for the need to find a path to render such a memory within the uncomfortable conventions and dispositions of a discourse already established by writing, such as the European concept of history.

The *Royal Commentaries*, not unlike *El primer nueva crónica y buen gobierno* (1615) by Guamán Poma de Ayala (ca. 1530–1615), displays at least five layers of a cultural analytic that define the colonial/postcolonial locus of enunciation. The first is to confront the seeming impossibility of writing cultures that lacked writing, not only *agrapha* but also nonalphabetic cultures. The second is the portrayal of the now vanquished self in terms of the otherness that the conquering other has imposed. The third is to establish a deconstructing analysis of the epistemological modes of representation of the conquering other in order to master its logics of ensemble so as to penetrate its architecture by way of locating the interstices, edges, and margins subject to the circulation of another reason. The fourth dimension of these emergent postcolonial discourses is the double-stranded, bifurcated, ambiguous, and ambivalent site of enunciation.

Thus in the case of Inca Garcilaso, and also in the case of Guamán Poma, we witness the appearance of the fragment due to its veracity, to its capacity, like the light and small horse, to change directions quickly, to speed up or slow down in a flash, and to navigate in a thicket of obstacles. The fragment, in the postcolonial battle for agency, is the equivalent of the light cavalry in the battlefields of old, where the enemy could be seen and measured in human terms of similitude. The fragment emerges as the textual moment for the establishment of new points of view, unexpected sites of enunciation, sites of contention, and new polemical spaces to speak the now disassembled and estranged memories of the self's past. But the fragment, with its multiple borders, in the infinite crevasses and canyons that it cre-

ates, also offers the opportunity to engage the hegemonic, master discourse only in parts. With the fragment it is easier to polemicize with the likes of Francisco López de Gómara (1511–1564), Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo (1478–1557), and “friendly” authors such as José de Acosta (1540–1600) and even Bartolomé de las Casas (1474–1566).¹

The fourth event that an emergent postcolonial voice like Garcilaso stages is the mounting of a critique of the epistemological ground on which the hegemonic claims to knowledge tread. The underside of this move is that a similar dismounting of the epistemological claims of the subaltern occurs as the two systems lock into battle. Finally, the fifth challenge is to produce a body of writing like the *Royal Commentaries* that at once appropriates writing, deconstructs it, and redevelops it to represent, as Garcilaso himself insightfully puts it, the fact that now “there is only one world.” Understood in this manner, Garcilaso’s work becomes an indispensable point of reference for all postcolonial approaches to culture. Reading Garcilaso now, beyond the confines of a narrowly understood sense of national, regional, or epochal approaches, will go a long way in fostering well-informed and truly critical considerations of the various waves of globalization that the history of European imperial expansion has energized since 1492.

This volume is an attempt to put the work on Garcilaso with its excellent English translations in circulation in departments of English, comparative literature, ethnic studies, translation studies, and postcolonial and cultural studies. Garcilaso’s work should prove of great interests for all cultural theorists, be they in anthropology, literature, history, or departments of area studies. This book includes studies that range from historiography, translation, and political theory, engagement with Renaissance rediscovery of the ancients, to Garcilaso’s Andean rhetorical and cultural sources. Other essays are devoted to an assessment of Garcilaso’s impact or reception history in Europe by way of translation, in Spanish America by way of a continuous readership, or the translation of the book into oral versions in both Spanish and Quechua. The *Royal Commentaries* is the kind of book whose importance was recognized from its inception not only because it was widely read by Garcilaso’s contemporary audience but also because the Spanish imperial state sought to curtail its dissemination. The French encyclopedists recognized the thrust of political secular thought imbedded in it, and Tupac Amaru II (1738–1781) and his followers found in it the inspiration for a possible blueprint for good government.

The *Royal Commentaries* have not ceased to be an influential text since its publication in 1609. I need to clarify here that, following Jorge Luis Borges’s theory of intertext, when I use the term “Inca,” I refer to what Michel Foucault has later called the author function. The many symposia associated

with the celebration of the four-hundredth anniversary of the publication of this classic only confirmed the status earlier conferred upon Garcilaso as a classical writer of the Spanish language. This retrospective has also expanded the specificity of Garcilaso's influence on the establishment of a Latin American tradition of art and thought together with a historiographical proposal that has remained provocative and suggestive throughout the centuries both in the Americas and in Europe.

While the existing scholarship on Garcilaso is rather voluminous and mainly developed under the aegis of philological criticism, substantive work on Garcilaso's intertextual and intellectual history has begun to appear. Exemplary in this regard is the work of David A. Brading in his *The First America: The Spanish Monarchy, Creole Patriots, and the Liberal State, 1492–1867* (1991). Much remains to be done, however. For instance, the relation of the *Royal Commentaries* to Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516), explored by Arthur E. Morgan in his *Nowhere Was Somewhere* (1946), represents a beginning of an inquiry into the crucial issue not just of utopia, but rather on whose utopia. In this volume Gonzalo Lamana's essay probes anew into Inca Garcilaso's political theory and yields answers regarding his polemics with Acosta on barbarism and his own project for a colonial polity led by a mestizo elite. This project as depicted by Lamana is sure to enter with vigor and heat into the current polemics around the term *mestizaje*, itself critically discussed by John Beverley in the afterword to this volume. Margarita Zamora, in her contribution in this book, problematizes the question of "hybridity" by entering in the records Garcilaso's subtle views on "race" and the coming, as companions of the Spanish empire, African slaves.

Furthermore, Garcilaso's influence on the eighteenth-century French encyclopedists is just beginning to attract serious consideration. It is clear, but not yet well understood, that the *Royal Commentaries* left a strong and undeniable trace in the dreaming and envisioning of utopian communities in eighteenth-century Europe. Among others, one can point to the well-received, protofeminist epistolary novel by Madame de Graffigny, *Lettres d'une peruvienne* (1748). Exemplary in the nascent scholarship on Garcilaso's work (and its keen presence on multiple modes of representation attempting to enlarge, enrich, or simply make more accurate our understanding of the world) is the chapter on the appropriation of the *Royal Commentaries* by the curators of the exhibit for the Jardin Royal by Neil Safier in his *Measuring the New World: Enlightenment Science and South America* (2008).²

A new translation into French appeared in 1744. The text produced under the direction of Charles-Francois de Cisterni du Fay, Safier (203) informs us, entailed, according to this new translator, not only a new translation but "an improved organization." The text, as reconfigured by a group of

naturalists at work in the “King’s Cabinet d’histoire naturelle” (Safier, 202), highlighted topics that “reflected contemporary concerns” on agricultural policy and social and political debates in France (Safier, 203, 213). In the process, as Safier shows, the *Royal Commentaries* were mutilated as the full import of Garcilaso’s pages were redeployed to serve as description of the flora and fauna collected by the new scientific explorations led by Charles Marie de La Condamine (1745, 1751) and Alexander von Humboldt (1804). This scientific gathering and accumulation of new knowledge had begun to redefine the reach of empire and to transform the coordinates of possession, for territorial control of colonies began to cede space to knowledge control of products and commodities and populations. In this context the inquiries into the circulation of Garcilaso’s work calls for an investigation of the many ways in which worlding extricates texts from their original moorings of meaning and redeploys them at the service of new and unimagined matrices of meaning.

In this regard, Safier’s observation on Diderot’s understating of the value of the new collections of American fauna and flora are very much worth keeping in mind as we considered fresh aspects of the recodification and commodification of texts as world literature. Safier (205) points out that for Diderot, “the establishment within the domain of the royal gardens of a ‘universal meeting place for all the productions of nature,’ was a gesture aimed at centralizing power by bringing back to the metropole the disparate pieces of useful natural knowledge from throughout the globe.” In a radical difference with the epistemologies of the Spanish conquest and exploration of the Americas, for an encyclopedist such as Diderot, “knowledge revealed by indigenous populations in the Americas” was especially treasured (Safier, 205).

Expeditions such as La Condamine’s and spectacles such as the botanical exhibition at Jardin Royal “provided an opportunity to vaunt French capacities vis-à-vis the Spanish, whom the French saw as incapable of harnessing the benefits of indigenous knowledge” (Safier, 205, 215, 216–24). Voltaire, the author of *Alzire* (1736), who had already drawn on the earlier (1633) French translation of the *Royal Commentaries*, fully concurred with Diderot’s analysis of this cultural and political opening for France. Moreover, he took care, as Safier (207) has pointed out, to portray the Incas “as an ancient polity with overtones of classical civilization.” Curiously enough, I do not believe that Garcilaso would have quarreled with any of the French appropriations of his work. In his desire for his work to operate as “comento y glosa,” Garcilaso indeed set out to provide the reader with an accurate guide to empirical knowledge. His constant comparisons of Cuzco to Rome point unmistakably to a desired palimpsestic reading of Inca civilization in

friendly comparison to this Mediterranean classical realm. And, of course, the so-called utopian rendition of Inca political and social organization is the central point to Garcilaso's claims not to utopia but to a history and civilization other than Europe's own, but located in the same and only world.

In this volume Pedro Guibovich Pérez traces how Garcilaso has been glossed, cited, and paraphrased in Spanish. The continued reading, interpretation, and appropriation of Garcilaso's rendition of the Inca empire's material, social, and cosmological frameworks are due to a couple of salient aspects of the *Royal Commentaries*: the elegance of the prose (reader friendly) together with the fact that up until the end of the nineteenth century, Garcilaso's work remained as the only published text entirely dedicated to the representation and history of the Inca realm. The partially published chronicle of his contemporary Pedro de Cieza de León (1520–1554) had faded out of memory, and the *Nueva crónica y buen gobierno* (1615) by Guamán Poma de Ayala would not be discovered until 1908 in the archives of the Royal Library in Copenhagen. It is thus not surprising that the *Royal Commentaries* underwent a wave of appropriations by others, beyond the encyclopedists in France in search of a secular utopian model for a simple, rational, and orderly society. Garcilaso's rendition of Inca just social order resonated powerfully with the oral colonial Andean archive. The chaos and misery of the colonial and republican order, together with the lived experience that, though intercepted and dismembered, struggled to maintain the material and social preconquest practices, was the loudest megaphone for Garcilaso's rendition of the order and rationality of the past.

The influence of Garcilaso's cultural thinking cannot be overstated when it comes to the history of Latin American thought. While it is generally acknowledged that the *Royal Commentaries* were well read and pondered upon by the two great liberators of South America—José de San Martín (1778–1850) and Simón Bolívar (1783–1830)—it is less well-known how the book circulated and evaded Spanish censorship. In *The First America*, David Brading narrates in detail how the *Royal Commentaries* came to be banned after the Tupac Amaru II rebellion of 1780 and the connection was made by the Spanish authorities between the book's rendition of the Inca past and the colonial regime's desire for a freedom that would enable them to rule and restore the principle of the *sumac kawsay* (good living). Drawing on the work of such ethnohistorians as Alberto Flores Galindo and Manuel Burga, Guibovich Pérez (see his chapter in this volume) has been able to document how Garcilaso's text has been used as a reference for historical performances of the Inca past in theatrical performances common during the eighteenth century.³ This reconstruction of the Inca past as an option for the present and future was not at all just dreamworks. While it is true that the *Royal*

Commentaries pointed to a utopian vision of the Andean past, a vision that, despite the harsh realities of the oppressive extracting colonial regime, remained alive in the strong remnants of the postcolonial lived experience. Flores Galindo shows in detail how Garcilaso's memory of the preconquest Andean order entered popular culture by way of dissemination practiced in conversation in Quechua by the surviving indigenous aristocracy (see Guibovich Pérez's chapter).

The Andean oral translation of Garcilaso into Quechua and the mutilating French translation of 1744 are but two of the transformations and reformattings in which the *Royal Commentaries* reached readers beyond its original pathbreaking publication in Lisbon in 1609. Garcilaso is the first person of American birth to publish a book in the metropole and to be read not only beyond the confines of language but also of local or national territory. Translations into several European languages, especially French and English, followed rather quickly.⁴ Although Garcilaso's claims to high civilization in the Andes did not command the respect of English political theory, his *Royal Commentaries* are known to have been read and deployed by none other than John Locke, as James W. Fuerst's chapter in this volume shows. Locke found in Garcilaso support for his theory of limited government as well as fodder for the thesis that outside Europe what one finds is always barbarism.

One can safely say that whatever the mode of circulation, Garcilaso's history of the Incas and the Spanish conquest of the Andes (the second part published in 1617) has remained the indispensable source on the matter as well as on the historical operations necessary to textualize a past that had heretofore not been confined to the memory of the written word. The *Royal Commentaries* has retained its place as a classic in the Spanish language and a foundational text in the construction of Latin America as a distinct culture. It also has managed to stay current for all debates on imperial policies, intercultural analysis, and communication as well as the redeployment of both the archive of the royal *panacas* and European discourses on the past as difference. Garcilaso's decided and determining interest in the recovery of the pagans by the Italian Renaissance, and especially the Neoplatonist Marsilio Ficino, has just begun to elicit new work on his reading and appropriation of the European arts of narration and even the political theory of his time.

Garcilaso's historiographic project—how to make intelligible the radical differences in Inca culture to a European mind entrenched in seeing otherness from the exclusive perspective of the self—has attracted the continued interest of cultural historians. Even the points of resistance to a historiographic understanding of some dead ends in Garcilaso's narrative of Inca rule have attracted keen interest. Such is the case with the inquiry that Fran-

cisco A. Ortega Martínez mounts on the question of “enplotting catastrophe” (see his chapter in this volume) as “Garcilaso organizes Inca history as the preparation for the arrival of Christianity [and] proposes the Spanish conquest as the result of prophesy by the Inca Huayna Capac.”

This inquiry into mutual intelligibility across differences and epochs continues to engage Garcilaso’s modern readers. Furthermore, Garcilaso’s humanist drawing on the pagan Roman historians enables him to inaugurate a secular sense of history that differentiates him from other mere “curioso” Spanish chroniclers and allows his work to travel across the centuries. The postmodern and postcolonial turn has brought Garcilaso’s historiographical operations new attention. In his own sly, soft rhetoric, Garcilaso formulates questions that shake the European historiographical understanding of the time and even our modernist assumptions. Indeed, he questions the terms of linguistic and cultural translation necessary to be able to speak and understand across the incommensurability of the cultures in question. In Garcilaso’s writing of Inca history he devises, via the fragment, the commentary and the gloss, a structure capable of sustaining a bifocal cultural logic indispensable to solutions raised in the problematic of asymmetric voicing, appropriation, and constructions of sites of enunciation at the core of “orientalism” as theorized by Edward Said (1978).

Garcilaso speaks directly to the problem of linguistic competence as the matter of utmost importance in any cross-cultural transaction. This problem had been systematically and commonly glossed over by Spanish chroniclers and historians since the first day that Columbus set eyes on the Caribbean islanders. He reported to the Queen on how he had obtained information by talking to Tainos and Caribs alike, despite the fact that the translators that Columbus had carried on board were unable to understand any of the languages in question. Garcilaso foregrounds these conditions of impossibility throughout the *Royal Commentaries*. Keenly aware of the burning debates on the translatability of the Bible into the European vernaculars, Garcilaso posits the entire problematic of mutual intelligibility across linguistic and cultural barriers that affect the panoply of conquest weapons, although he does not go as far as to question the possibility of evangelization and its dependence on an appropriate, effective translation.

Garcilaso is one of the few intellectuals in this new single “one world” who seems to understand the weight and complexity of the translation conundrum for the conquest of one world order by another. As Susana Jákfalvi-Leiva argues in her chapter in this book, Garcilaso’s work establishes a paradigm of the possible answers to the political void created with the cancellation of indigenous knowledge with a colonial project that denies the possible truths in the cultural architecture of the vanquished. In these

circumstances, one can say that Garcilaso anticipates Walter Benjamin's notion of translation as a creative act on the part of the translator who, knowing both sides of the operation of intelligibility, interprets and renders one world as readable by another.⁵ Today, one cannot help but wonder how Garcilaso would have fared as a translator into Quechua on his own historiographic maneuvers of setting into the epistemology of Renaissance writing the memory of the precontact Inca realm. Significantly, Jákfalvi-Leiva advances the idea that Garcilaso's "thesis about the function of writing is gathered around the concepts of freedom and fidelity, violence and corruption, be it writing the translation of someone's work, the rewriting of someone else's memories, or the autobiographical discourse."

As comparative literature today recognizes its own vexed engagement with translation and moves on to fully embrace the problematic of translation studies, the *Royal Commentaries* constitutes a necessary point of inflection. Susan Bassnett in *Comparative Literature: A Critical Introduction* (1993) discusses Derrida's attack on the primacy of the original. While she leaves out Borges's more ironic take on the question of the original, Bassnett (151) reminds us that "the source text, according to Derrida, is not an original at all, it is the elaboration of an idea, of a meaning, in short it is in itself a translation." The subsequent abolition of the dichotomy between original and translation is of course an idea that Borges advanced with his own notion of an intertext that is always already there. However inclined to make this dichotomy operative when we see the words-concepts *panacas*, *ayllus*, and *wakas*, I wonder if Garcilaso would have contemplated or accepted such an abolition given that his whole endeavor was to correct (fidelity to an original) and to prevent the misunderstanding that resulted from bad translations as well as to produce the difference in coevalness that he sought for Inca civilization. Notwithstanding this problematic at the heart of translation theory, the elaboration of Garcilaso's translation and its after life with the corrections and disputations that he leveled against the Spanish texts did render comprehensible within the European writing system that which the Spanish could not grasp.⁶ Garcilaso created and established a new life for Inca culture, one that has affected our understanding of it to this day, albeit in translation.

Garcilaso's decision to translate *Dialoghi d'amore* (1535) by León Hebreo (ca. 1460–1530) at the same time that he was working on the writing of the commentaries (see Sara Castro-Klarén's chapter in this volume) has puzzled his biographers as well as other scholars. Clearly Garcilaso was preoccupied with many theoretical problems embedded in the contemporary public debates on translation swirling around him. Great figures of the Italian Renaissance, such as Marsilio Ficino, were totally immersed in the translation

of the newly available texts by Plato. For Garcilaso, the translation of pagan classics (whose work we know was familiar to him given his own knowledge of Greek, Latin, and Tuscan as well as the books listed in his library) held an unusually close parallel to his own task of translating from a pagan text a pagan civilization.

Garcilaso's assiduous cultivation of his knowledge of the pagan classics directly in Latin was not just a matter of curiosity or expansion into necessary knowledge and credentials for a renaissance humanist, which Garcilaso was. His interest in classical Greece and Rome can be linked to the idea, often lost on us secular moderns, that the classics were also pagans and that like the Incas they had attained all kinds of knowledge by virtue of natural reason alone. It followed then that a comparison of two pagan civilizations could be more productive and more persuasive to a European intellectual of the time rather than the constant differential and detrimental comparison with Christian monotheism and the Judeo-Christian story of creation as biblical cartography and ethnography. With genial understating, Garcilaso realizes that the comparison of incommensurables—Incas and Spain—is unyielding, whereas the comparison of two pagan civilizations stood a better chance of yielding commensurable units of understating for the establishment of a conversation among equals with a difference. Thus Garcilaso should appeal to translation studies as well as comparative studies as the world turns, yet one more time. He envisioned what Susan Bassnett (153) has asserted in the light of contemporary postcolonial theory: "postcolonial culture involves a dialectical relationship between systems."

Modern readings of this humanist in the widest sense of the term continue to reveal his brilliant and unique mode of finding solutions that enabled him to speak difference guided by the Inca principle of reciprocity rather than the European principle of hegemony in authorizing truth claims. It is the dialogic aspect of the *Royal Commentaries* that this volume seeks to bring forth. To this effect, José Antonio Mazzotti's chapter in this book establishes Garcilaso's sources and construction of a dialectic disposition and rhetoric beyond the European archive. Mazzotti's painstaking research locates the rhetoric of the commentary—that is to say, the disposition of the fragment of the choral Andean modes of communication. Critical perspectives such as Mazzotti's enrich and correct the much debated notion that the subaltern cannot speak because when he/she does manage to do so, it is always already in the language of the master. In this dichotomy there is no room for the creativity of cultural translation nor for agency of the conquered in the refashioning of the tools inherited from his precolonial tradition, such as choral performances in the Cuzco court. Garcilaso, with his sagacious destabilizing comparisons that question the dichotomies of colonization and

oppositionally based hierarchies, clearly does triangulate the terms of the comparison.

As comparative literature engages in a postmodern reflection on its object of study as constituted by the Eurocentric idea of writing and literature, an opening to other literary traditions has developed recently. Not that Latin American literature with its many Nobel Prize winners should be the best candidate for “other” traditions, but the fact it has never been one of the points of comparison in comparative literature canon casts it as the role of “other” or “marginal” traditions. One of these new openings to consider “other” traditions is present in the discussions addressing “world literature.” These debates wrestle with the problem of establishing either a canon or criteria for inclusion/exclusion. Rather than engage in any form of selection, David Damrosch in *What Is World Literature?* (2003, 4) has proposed the idea of considering “world literature” as a method of reading. Damrosch (5) states that his claim consists in seeing world literature not as “an infinite, ungraspable canon of works but rather a mode of circulation and of reading.”

I bring up the idea of reading Garcilaso today in a frame similar to Damrosch’s suggestion, but I would like to highlight some of the issues attached to the question of comparison that Natalie Mellas has explored in her chapter on “Grounds for Comparison” in her *All the Difference in the World: Postcoloniality and the Ends of Comparison* (2007). Mellas (3) problematizes the question of the terms of comparison in a way that pertains to Garcilaso’s own reflection on the “anxieties of comparison” suffered by the chroniclers that his work debates. Following Foucault in *The Order of Things* (1973), Mellas reminds us that when the classical episteme “breaks utterly with the system of resemblances as a form of knowledge, consigning it to the realm of error, illusion, and the deception of the senses . . . comparison now emerges as the central function of thought, not in the service of tracking resemblances but rather of analyzing them in ‘terms of identity, difference, measurement and order the order of things’ [from *The Order of Things* (51–52)].” In a way, Mellas describes Garcilaso’s deployment of comparison not as a system or as resemblances, but precisely, and in contrast with the *cronistas* as a paradigm of analytical differences, identities, and nonexcluding distinctions. In this framework for theorizing comparison, postmodern comparatists working with the anxieties of multiculturalism might find Garcilaso’s work illuminating.

Citing “Traveling Cultures” (1992) by James Clifford, Mellas (29) argues that the “spatial chronotope associated with imperial expansion would in the end dislodge anthropology from its constricted locations and lingering colonial vocation, and humanist disciplines from their national and canoni-

cal grounding.” She goes on to say that in the grid of the postcolonial world of travel, whether undertaken by the conquered to the new center or by the conqueror to their new domains, all cultures begin to appear coeval or truly simultaneous. Mellas (29) advances the notion that, as noted by Borges, “simultaneity, itself is a temporal category, becomes a kind of degree zero of equivalence.” Such equivalence, such degree zero of *coetaneidad* is not at all lost on Garcilaso, who attempts to challenge European chorocentricism of imperial conquest as evangelization. He determines that by way of natural reason alone, the Incas arrived at the notion of single God and constructed a civilization by themselves from the ground up.

As Mellas (29) notes, following Clifford (1992) and Foucault’s “Of Other Spaces” (1986), the claim to equivalence is crucial to the establishment of comparability. Thus “comparability, in the form of a ground or a space of comparison, remains,” and it does “without discrimination” (Mellas, 29). It follows that “non-teleological comparisons no longer point to a method but rather to scope and a disposition toward knowledge that clearly aims to displace the Archimedean view of the traditional comparatist, with transversal practices of comparison” (Mellas, 29). Future comparatists operating from a perspective grounded in the thesis of the coloniality of power as conceptualized by Anibal Quijano (1992) might find, as they read the *Royal Commentaries*, an anticipation of this transversal mode of comparison, itself theorized by Foucault in his “Other Spaces” (1986).⁷

The cultural dialectics that constitute the *Royal Commentaries* call for thick description on both sides. While the European “sources” have been plumbed well (for they exist in abundance), his local, Andean “sources” have been more difficult to locate due to the obvious absence of writing. The work of modern archeology, ethnography, botany, anthropology, ethno-astrology, and linguistics has more often than not come to vouch for the accuracy of Garcilaso’s memory. It would be unfair to expect that all the information in the *Royal Commentaries* could stand the test of modern scrutiny. Some of Garcilaso’s “factual” reports have been found wanting. María Rostworowski, a Peruvian historian and author of *Historia del Tahuantinsuyo* (1988), an account of the Inca realm based on Spanish chroniclers and new archival research, has found several inaccuracies in Garcilaso’s work. Margarita Zamora in *Language, Authority, and Indigenous History in the Comentarios reales* (1988) explains how Rostworowski’s archival empirical approach to history misses the point. However, digging into archives and sources can also have other effects.

Such is *Inca Garcilaso: Imaginación, memoria e identidad* (2004) by Christian Fernández, for instance. Fernández finds that Garcilaso’s several name changes represent not only a quest for identity in new and uncertain imperi-

al social spaces, but also the now displaced but still reenacted ritual performance of noble Inca youth coming of age. Fernández shows that Garcilaso's uncertain position in a postconquest world does not come to rest when he claims for himself the name "Garcilaso de la Vega, Inca." With this rebranding, as we would say today, he can continue to swing between at least four possible but all mutually negating and yet complementary positions: Indian, Spaniard, mestizo, and Inca. His invention of a middle position charged with a double valence enables him to encapsulate the desire of many postcolonial subjects who, loath to "choose" between the identity positions offered to them by the hegemonic power, search for the possible ways of occupying all possible combinations in a world that is now but one. Fernández's work on the mestizo symbology on the Inca coat of arms (see "Inca Garcilaso's Biography" by Fernández in this volume) follows the same ideas and theoretical and critical approach.

The political and discursive history of *mestizaje*, a finding attributed to Garcilaso by many who in the past have valued the term as a place of harmony and mediation, is too complex to rehearse here. Suffice to say, that term is now in disrepute because, among other reasons, it hides the violence of rape as well as many other asymmetrical power relations (see John Beverley's afterword in this volume). The Peruvian novelist Luis Nieto (1955–) has succinctly expressed his frustration with the widespread and historically acritical use of the term. At the ceremony in which Nieto presented his novel *Asesinato en la gran ciudad del Cuzco* (2007), he declared: "I detest Garcilaso. . . . He is an emblem of a mestizaje that only exists discursively" (*La república*, February 21, 2007, quoted by Julio Ortega in this volume). Ortega insightfully observes that Nieto should have added that mestizaje, as deployed by the Peruvian state today, "assumes the conciliatory model of mestizaje as the unitary ideal of the nation." Perhaps it should be noted that mestizaje as advanced by Garcilaso owes more to the Andean principles of reciprocity than to any sense of "unity" fostered by the Peruvian state, which of course condones and practices all kinds of exclusions and mimics, the latter in Homi Bhabha's sense of the word. In Garcilaso's sense of reciprocity and doubling, *mestizaje* would stand for a sum, an addition. In the Peruvian state sense of the term, as well as in hybridity and mimicry, *mestizaje* or "half and half" stands rather for a subtraction that merely mimics. When reading Garcilaso, it is always important not to neglect the possible Andean source of his concepts or solutions.

As scholars continue to delve into the many discursive areas yet unexamined or only barely touched upon in *Royal Commentaries*, Gonzalo Lamana in his chapter in this volume focuses on the apparent absence of a political project in Garcilaso's general condemnation of the conquest. Lamana

departs from the abundance of veiled meanings or doubleness in the text's semiotics to advance a theory of practice in the writing of the book. Much has yet to be examined in Garcilaso's political theory. His decision to label his book *Royal Commentaries* has elicited an important body of research that illuminates the medieval and renaissance textual practices available to Garcilaso's intertext. These involve ideologies of classification of which he was unmistakably aware. In the *Royal Commentaries*, Garcilaso does indeed comment from explicit, veiled, contrived, ironic, contending, hidden, and praising positions. He never fails in eloquence, elegance, or seeming fluidity. In his disputations Garcilaso leaves clear and also hidden traces of his reading—that is to say, his “sources” such as the Roman historians, the Spanish *cronistas* of the conquest, Spanish poets, and Renaissance humanists.⁸

Nevertheless, what remains as the hallmark of the *Royal Commentaries* is precisely its capacity to dismantle and weave a new text out of the strands of the standing textual classifications. The reception history of the *Royal Commentaries* has yet to be written, although it is plain that readers have been puzzled by the text's appeal to be read as history, with its unique relation to “truth” and as literature with its own unique relation to knowledge, wisdom, and exploration of the plausible, as Aristotle would have it. Walter D. Mignolo's essay in this volume opens the way for thinking about the question of reception and interpretation of the complex semiotic multiplicity in texts such as the *Royal Commentaries*. It is as “literature” that the *Royal Commentaries* is chiefly read today. The historical readership of the *Commentaries* clearly exceeds the historical and logical deployments of systems of textual classification and valorization inherited from at least the inceptional moment of the coloniality of power. The theoretical crisis of modernity's systems of interpretation, the linguistic system of classification into national literatures (cum its colonial outcrops such as “Hispanic” literatures, Francophone literatures, Luso-Brazilian literatures, Commonwealth literatures, and so on) and the rise of “world” (globalization) literatures, all accentuate the crisis of the nineteenth-century paradigm still present in our academic system of classification and understanding. Somehow, the work of Inca Garcilaso, classified by Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo, the Spanish critic only too predisposed to doubt the possibility of historical truth in the text and equally only too ready to preserve it as one of Spain's colonial possessions, ended up canonized as a “classic” of the Spanish language.

In a way, one could say that the poetics of Garcilaso's writing practices account for the bifurcating receptions accorded to the text. His poetics allow the text to circulate in a variety of contexts and inquiries. In this sense, Garcilaso's temporal and spatial reach—“it is but one single world”—

inaugurates the kind of worldly circulation that Damrosch speaks of in his sense of “world literature” as a phenomenology of reading or reception rather than an ontology of the text. Damrosch (4) writes that he takes world literature to “encompass all literary works that circulate beyond their culture of origin, either in translation or in their original language.” And yet, one cannot say that any and all texts lend themselves to this kind of circulation, for we have been making a case centered on the poetics of Garcilaso’s texts and not his contemporaries Las Casas or José de Acosta. This is a distinction that Goethe too, in his assertions on “world literature” as cited by Damrosch (1–36), certainly find indispensable. The question of classification, its ideologies and deployments in the creation and validation of an interpretative community, remain not only crucial for the reading of Garcilaso but an open invitation to continue to theorize along with his suggestive and incisive text. Garcilaso’s double voicing and agile polemics remains as an invitation to dialogue across cultures and epochs.

NOTES

1. For an account of the Spanish historians and chroniclers that Garcilaso cites and with whose work he either authorizes his own or establishes a disputation, see Crowley.

2. The Jardin Royal originally opened in 1640 (Safier, 232). The new highly edited translation of the *Royal Commentaries* was prepared for the exhibition that was to commemorate the return and results of the La Condamine expedition to measure the world.

3. See Flores Galindo; Burga; Durand; Rowe.

4. For further references on edited printings and translation of Garcilaso’s work, see the same chapter in Safier. See also Macchi.

5. See Benjamin.

6. See Benjamin.

7. In 1992, Anibal Quijano published his seminal “Colonialidad, Modernidad/Racionalidad,” an essay whose central thesis eventually would come to be referred to as “la colonialidad del poder” in Spanish (“the coloniality of power” in English). In refined or amended forms, Quijano has published this thesis several times as it has circulated the world over. For an English version of “the coloniality of power,” see Quijano, “Colonial Nature of Power in Latin America.” See Clifford, *Predicament of Culture*. Also see Foucault, “Of Other Spaces.”

8. Besides the above cited work of Garcilaso, for his engagement of Roman historians, see MacCormack.

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