

GARCILASO
BETWEEN THE WORLD OF THE INCAS
AND THAT OF RENAISSANCE CONCEPTS

The Spanish conquests of the Americas were not yet completed when famous Humanists already began to appear in the first generation of native-born Spanish-speaking Americans. A mestizo born in 1539 and who liked to call himself “the Indian whose mouth is full” thus published in 1590, in Madrid, the first-fruits of the Humanism of the New World. The son of an Indian woman, he succeeded in very unusual circumstances in writing a superb Castilian version of a classic work of Renaissance Neoplatonism. Its title reads: *The Indian's translation of the three Dialogues of Love by Leone Ebreo, from Italian into Spanish, by Garcilaso Inca de la Vega, a native of the great city of Cuzco, capital of the Kingdoms and provinces of Peru.*

Not only did he achieve here a typically humanistic task, but he also proved himself familiar with philosophical subtleties. The *Dialoghi* are thus connected also with the later works

Translated by Edouard Roditi.

of Garcilaso, in which their influence can be detected. From the time he published his first book, in 1586, until the last pages he wrote shortly before his death, in 1616,¹ the Inca sought to provide an example to his countrymen, as he explicitly stated on several occasions. With surprising intuition, he speaks of the Peruvians as of an integrated nation without racial distinctions: by *patria* (homeland), he not only refers to his native Cuzco—as would have been natural in his age—, but to the entire territory of what had been the Empire of the Incas.² Not only did he thus anticipate centuries of future national developments, but he also, when writing his historical works in Spain, addressed himself to his distant countrymen and to Peruvian readers of the future. He had indeed had good reason to say, in translating the second dialogue by Leone Ebreo, that “writing does not exist in order to serve only those who are present, but also those who shall live in a distant future and those who are far away and not within the writer’s presence.”

During those years, two other Castilian translations of the same work were written, but neither of them is comparable to the one by the “antarctic Indian,” son of a Spanish captain, a relative of the poet Garcilaso, and of the princess Chimpu Ocllo. It has moreover been affirmed that the Inca’s version is superior in style to the Italian text, which does not appear to have been the original version written at the beginning of the 16th century by Yehuda Abrabanel, a Spanish-Portuguese Jew exiled in Italy.³

Everything suggests that this philosophy penetrated the innermost recesses of Garcilaso’s soul. In explaining his interest in the *Dialoghi d’Amore*, he gives, in turn, a reason of love.

¹ The Preface of the *Historia general del Perú*, 2nd part of the *Comentarios*, is addressed “To the Indians, mestizos and *criollos*...by their brother and compatriot.” This was the last page he wrote.

² *Comentarios*, volume IX, chapter 24.

³ C. Dionisotti, “Appunti su Leone Ebreo,” in *Italia Medioevale e Umanistica*, Padua, II (1959), 409 pp.; this excludes the opinion, expressed by S. Caramella in the Preface of his edition of Leone Ebreo, Bari, 1929. The discussion dates back to the 16th century. For Leone Ebreo, *cf.* the well-known books by K. Gebhardt and H. Pflaum; for the Abrabanel of Portugal, *cf.* the books by J. de Carvalho.

He translated them, he says, "overwhelmed by the sweetness and suavity of their philosophy." This metaphysical conception of the world, seen in terms of love and beauty, captivated him because of its own splendor and for the "many beauties with which it deals." Identifying himself with Leone Ebreo, he calls him "our" author. When he dedicates his book to Philip II, he declares: "Herein is taught...what love means, *no matter how universal one's Empire* and no matter how lofty one's lineage." In another dedication, while trying to clarify concepts concerning his own desires, the Inca declares that they will never be fulfilled "until the glory of the Almighty is made manifest" in "the final beatitude of the universe." As in the philosophy of Ficino, whom he had also read, Platonism did not exclude a believing Christian.

A mestizo of the first generation thus entered the world of Florentine Neo-platonism, the flower-garden and orchard of the best Renaissance thought. Deeply concerned with the lost world of his maternal ancestors, Garcilaso was destined besides to write the *Comentarios reales de los Incas*. All his knowledge as a curious Humanist and a learned man is put to use here in order to create a work that might perpetuate the memory of the Incan Empire and reveal its spirit. "The Spanish historians," he states, do not understand its language and traditions because they have not "sucked them with their mother's milk."

But although he constantly refers to himself as an "Indian," the Renaissance is made manifest in every page that he writes. Besides, he is not only interested in his maternal ancestry, but also and no less in his Spanish blood. He tells of the heroic deeds of the Conquerors, one of whom was his father, with undivided enthusiasm in the *Florida del Inca* and in the *Historia general del Perú*. Both an Indian and Spaniard, he has left us writings that are part of Spanish literature. Was he also destined to be the herald of a new cultural mixture?

NEOPLATONISM AND SPANISH LITERATURE

Garcilaso's passion for the Florentine Platonists is surprising. Not only did he read Leone Ebreo, but also Marsilio Ficino and probably Pico della Mirandola. His library contained the Latin and

the French versions of the *Dialoghi*, not to mention many other works of Platonist Humanism.⁴ The *De civitate Dei* is not represented there, but there exists in fact a relationship between this work and the *Comentarios*, as was pointed out by Eugenio Asensio. There can be no doubt that Garcilaso had read the "divine Augustine," as the Inca calls him occasionally. So much Platonism must bear fruit. A reason of love must explain both parts of the *Comentarios*, written out of filial indebtedness, as he says himself in the Preface of the *Historia*. A reason of cordial friendship leads him to praise, in the *Florida*, the heroic deeds of Gonzalo Silvestre, who had been his secret informant, never mentioned in order to be free to praise his heroic wartime prowess with all the more fervor: honor through arms, the highest distinction.

Love for his homeland leads Garcilaso to "acquaint the Universe with our country, people and nation." This affection, in the above-mentioned Preface, leads him to feel that he is a "brother" of all other natives of Peru, regardless of their region and their race. Neo-platonism penetrates his spirit until it transpires in minute details. Abandonment of *hatred* thus becomes, for the Inca, an explicit norm for his ethics as an historian and leads him to respect the honor of others. "Because this note was malicious, I cancelled it," he states after striking out an explanation written by Silvestre in the margin of Gómara's *Historia*. If Garcilaso already did this when his vocation as historian had not yet become definite,⁵ he later took all the more care, on many occasions, not to fail in his mission of love. "We leave this in confusion, because it is a hateful matter," he declares again and again, until the last pages of his work.⁶

The Neo-platonic influence necessarily manifests itself in important parts of his historical writings. But this influence was very prominent throughout the Spanish *Siglo de Oro*,

⁴ I am dealing with the works read by Garcilaso in "La biblioteca del Inca" (The Inca's Library) in *Nueva Rev. de Filología Hispánica* (New Journal on Spanish Philology), II, Mexico (1948); additions in III (1949).

⁵ R. Porras-Barrenechea, *El Inca Garcilaso en Montilla*, Lima, 1955, 219 pp.

⁶ *Historia general del Perú*, end of the second volume; I have dealt with this particular point in "El Inca español", in *Américas*, Washington, May 1953.

above all among religious writers. The Augustinian friar Luis de León, a *new Christian*, thus finds in Leone Ebreo a source for some of his own wonderful poems. Another *new Christian*, the beatified Juan de Avila,⁷ does not mention Leone Ebreo, but Plato; he frequently quotes Saint Augustine as well as *The Song of Songs*—this *Song* which Leone Ebreo brings in harmony with Plato's *Banquet*. On the other hand, the pupil and biographer of the Master of Avila, friar Luis de Granada, waxes enthusiastic in his praise of Leone Ebreo and, in drawing his fine picture of the hierarchy of all creatures almost in terms of emanations, seems to follow him very closely.

We already know of two names that can be quoted with historical certainty in connection with the Inca. Not only did he state that he had read all the works of Granada (which means, above all, the life of Master Avila), but it is also a fact that Garcilaso knew the "apostle of Andalusia" in person. Juan de Avila died at Montilla in May 1567, while the Inca was still living there, one year before he participated in the war of the Alpujarras.⁸ Garcilaso's cultural development, during the thirty years he spent at Montilla, was in fact guided by two circles which were very close to Father Avila: the home of the Marquises of Priego and the Jesuits' College. The Marquis-consort had been a great friend of don Alonso de Vargas, Garcilaso's paternal uncle who called the Marquess doña Catalina, so very close to the beatified master, a "Saint." Love and compassion, as they were preached by Master Avila, were forced to arouse Garcilaso's interest directly or indirectly in Platonic readings. In any case, we know that Granada, speaking of Leone Ebreo, finally asked himself: "Can there be any Christian to whom it does not occur with a shock that these words of Gentiles sum up the essential part of Christian philosophy?"

⁷ The old writings by Menéndez Pelayo on *La estética platónica en los místicos de los siglos XVI y XVII*, Madrid, 1896, is still up-to-date for the influence of master Avila in Andalusia, cf. M. Bataillon, "Jean d'Avila retrouvé," in *Bulletin Hispanique*, LVII, Bordeaux (1955), and also the works of Luis Sala Balust to which the *Bulletin* refers.

⁸ Porras, *op. cit.*, Preface. G. Lohmann-Villena, "Apostillas documentales entorno al I.G.," in *Mercurio Peruano*, no. 375, Lima, 1958.

This was written by the most characteristic disciple of Avila. On the other hand, we see that the preceptors of the Marquises of Priego are among those scholars who encouraged Garcilaso at Montilla to translate the *Dialoghi*; these included an Augustinian, Father Zárate, and a Jesuit, Prado, whose third Father-general, Francisco de Borja, had been converted to religious life by Avila. A friend of Loyola, Master Avila preached on the occasion of the foundation of the house of the Society at Montilla and even contemplated entering it as a novice. We should not forget that several Jesuits were among Garcilaso's best friends, even helping him with his work.

Small-town life in Andalusian was thus varied enough to allow the Inca to participate in the intellectual restlessness of his age, which he did also in other respects. In Spanish literature—in the works of Granada, for example,—a tendency towards the idealization and purification of Nature had developed, under the influence of Neo-platonic currents and of Christian Stoicism which saw, in the creatures, the mirror of the divine Wonder.⁹ Actually, Stoicism and Platonism were already synthesized in Pico and in Leone Ebreo and, on the other hand, Neoplatonic emanation-theories provided a bridge between God and his creatures, down to the very humblest ones; this bridge was built, for Leone Ebreo, of love, Being, and Beauty. Not only because he had read friar Luis de Granada, but also because of his familiarity with Neo-platonism, the Inca Garcilaso felt that, for his sensibility, wide realms had been opened to him, as discoverer of Peruvian Nature. Garcilaso's striking characterizations of landscapes, animals and fruits deserved Riva-Agüero's admiration. He was capable of such achievements thanks to his poetic gift and his literary skill, but also because of his all-round intellectual education.

It is obvious that Neo-platonism in Spain also directly influenced love-poetry. Dámaso Alonso has referred to the mark left on Lope by his readings of Ficino. Other examples are equally famous. Where the pastoral novel is concerned, Leone Ebreo

⁹ A. Castro, *El pensamiento de Cervantes*, Madrid, 1925, IV; he treats the subject again in *Aspectos del vivir hispánico*, Santiago de Chile, 1949; K. Vossler, *Introducción a la literatura española del siglo de oro*, Madrid, 1945, V.

was in harmony with the bucolic classics, of which the most famous are the *Galatea* of Cervantes or the *Diana* of Montemayor, among others. Love and nature lead each other by the hand, not only for reasons of classical literary tradition, but also because of the old relationship between poetry and Stoicism; we need but remember the subject of the *Beatus ille*. Then came Platonism. An author like the Inca, who never wrote any poetry and whose historical themes lent themselves to amatory subjects only in exceptional cases, would rather express his inclination towards idyllic topics in a general atmosphere than in concrete cases. It is thus characteristic of his whole attitude that Garcilaso should indulge in calling his relative Garci Sánchez de Badajoz, whom he believed to be the prince of Spanish poets, "that famous and enamored knight." On another occasion, he refers to the "most illustrious and very enamored Count Matteo Maria Boiardo." Here the chivalrous tradition reveals its presence too.

These Neo-platonic visions of Nature, as has been stressed by Vossler, went as far as to be utopian or to evoke reminiscences of the legendary Golden Age. As the father of Utopianism, Plato reappears in the Augustinian *City of God* as well as in Thomas More. It is obvious that the Florentines would be attracted by More, whose *Utopia*, apart from having its sources in Plato's *Republic* and *Timaeus*,¹⁰ was closely allied to the writings of Pico della Mirandola in its own century.¹¹ Furthermore, just as the Greek *Heliopolis* is linked in our minds to Alexander's campaign in India, so does More's work find its source in Vespucci's reports. It is strange to see that, in order to explain the genesis of the *City of the Sun*, we must now remember that Campanella derived his inspiration from the Incan Empire of the Sun, through the writings of the Inca Garcilaso, as if Iamblichus too had needed to know about the Incas! Nevertheless, it is significant that Garcilaso had dealings with the *New Atlantis*, whose expeditionaries left Peru after

¹⁰ E. Imaz, *Topía y utopía*, Mexico, 1941.

¹¹ When Thomas More deals with religions, he also writes, as Pico did, about the subject of human dignity and the old concept of Plotinus, which was revived by Ficino, that God is present in all religions.

having stayed there for one year: furthermore, Bacon quotes the *Comentarios reales* in other works.

As a Neo-platonist, Garcilaso thus appears to have been concerned with utopias. We do not know whether he ever read Thomas More, the master of the famous missionary tasks fulfilled by Quiroga and Zumárraga in Mexico;¹² it is possible, in view of the wide dissemination of the work in Spain. The influence of *The City of God* appears to be more certain, though Garcilaso never quotes Saint Augustin as its author. It was actually the favorite book of the Master of Avila and was also constantly quoted by the Augustinian friar Hernando de Zárate, a retired university professor from Osuna who lived at Montilla and acted there as one of the Inca's advisers.

All this acquires its real importance when we remember that, without referring to Bacon's quotation nor to the probable connection with Augustine, the *Comentarios* have been accused of not being historical, but utopian or fictitious. This opinion of Menéndez Pelayo, contradicted by Riva Agüero and others, can be heard again in our time, if more moderately worded and in different forms. The chosen genre of the "epic in prose" that inspired the *Florida*¹³ and the idealized world of the *Comentarios* situates the subject on a kind of water-shed where it is free to flow in the direction of historical or of poetical values. It would not be proper to deal now with such a complex problem, since it is so easy to betray the author's spirit and the meaning of his work. It is, however, interesting to remember that the alleged Utopianism of the *Comentarios* served the purpose of inspiring the first mention of the Platonic character of the first part of the *Comentarios*. Professor Mariano Iberico, whose interests were philosophical and non-historical, thought

¹² S. Zavala, *La utopía de T. Moro en la Nueva España*, Mexico, 1937; and *Ideario de Vasco de Quiroga*, Mexico, 1941; on Bacon, as a reader of the Inca, R. Martí-Abelló, "Garcilaso Inca de la Vega", in *Revista Hispánica Moderna*, New York, 1950.

¹³ I have dealt with this particular point, and also with Iberico's opinion, in "El Inca Garcilaso platónico" in *Las Moradas*, Lima, 1949, No. 7-8; on the discussion on History and heroic tales with regard to the Inca, as treated by me in these writings, see also A. Miró-Quesada in the Preface to his edition of the *Florida*, Mexico, 1956.

that the *Comentarios* were actually the "ideal vision" of the old Empire in its essence as an archetype. This was an important step forward. For the first time, the problem of the inner influence which the philosophical or humanistic ideas might have had on Garcilaso was being considered. It was certainly still necessary to verify how this Platonism or, rather, Neo-platonism functioned within the *Comentarios reales*.

THE INCA AS A NEO-PLATONIST

A general atmosphere of idealization and ennoblement, in which literature played its part, can clearly be detected. History was still closely related to literature and to Humanism in general. "The life of memory" set out to save past times from oblivion, and this acquired a dramatic meaning in the particular case of the Inca. His own blood was at stake. The literary accoutrement, like an anointment of immortality, perpetuated the past. While he was thus moulding eternities, Garcilaso achieved eternal recognition for himself, as the centuries have now proven. His vision of the Incan world, whether true, false or idealized, has defied time and prevails in the minds of people, regardless of any last word said on the subject.

In order to achieve this miracle, the Inca built up a general atmosphere which was both amorous and esthetic and where even an Indian, as an individual, could serve as an esthetic theme. Besides, we now dispose of concrete evidence of another nature.

The *Comentarios reales* contain hidden propaganda in favor of the Incan Empire, which had been accused by certain Spanish chroniclers of having been "tyrannical." What is more, at the time of the Viceroy Toledo, the Inca race was being persecuted, including the mestizos. At the time, Garcilaso was already in Spain, where he had gone "to study" when he was twenty, obeying the stipulations of his father's will. In Montilla and Córdoba, the Inca knew very well what was happening in Peru, and he even helped a mestizo fellow-student, Juan Arias Maldonado, to escape to Spain. The accusation of *tyranny* is prominent within the framework of these polemics that were still raging about the legitimacy of the Spanish domination in

Latin America: Sepúlveda, Las Casas, Vitoria, Soto, etc. In order to prove their sovereignty, it was necessary to prove that the Incas had also been good rulers. Garcilaso said so with absolute certainty, though he did not mention the polemics themselves: the fact that he was a mestizo made him refrain from it. This polemical or apologetic element certainly colors his golden vision of the old Peru or Tahuantisuyu, and his exaggeratedly optimistic view of it is partly due to a logical reaction. Riva Agüero offers, on the other hand, his own explanations for the threefold idealization of Tahuantisuyu that is proposed by Garcilaso. Nostalgia and memory combine and are reinforced by the favorable versions he had heard from his Indian relatives, who had nothing but the highest praise for their lost dominion as compared to Spanish rule; all this is also stressed by the fact that Garcilaso obviously has recourse to the *official* Inca version, which had been diligently deprived of any unfavorable elements. To this threefold idealization, we must still add the polemical element which has been mentioned and also the influence that his abundant Neo-platonic readings had on Garcilaso.

This complex tangle of ideas and motives appears to be natural, at first sight, but one later recognizes that it contains the secret of life in general. Behind the gentle prose and the pleasant personality of the author, infinite problems are surreptitiously concealed.

Throughout the *Comentarios*, Tahuantisuyu is depicted as an organization that is politically and economically perfect, capable of ensuring social felicity. There is abundance everywhere, quite obviously and without its being necessary to discuss it or to seek to show what equipment was available to the Incas, who were clement and righteous kings. Cuzco was "another Rome", which providentially prepared the way for Christianity;¹⁴ finally, the Inca people is never qualified by Garci-

¹⁴ E. Asensio, "Dos cartas desconocidas del Inca Garcilaso," in *Nueva Revista de Filología Hispánica*, VII, Mexico, 1953; R. Menéndez Pidal, *El P. Las Casas y Vitoria*, Madrid, 1958, p. 28 and 44; and "La moral en la conquista del Perú", in *Seis temas peruanos* (Col. Austral, No. 1297), Madrid, 1960; M. Bataillon, in *Annales du Collège de France*, 1956, p. 371; E. Moreno Báez, "El providencialismo del Inca Garcilaso," in *Estudios Americanos*, No. 35-36, Sevilla, 1954; etc.

laso as being *barbaric*, but always as *gentle* (this, too, is stated as a fact, without any explanation). In this idealized world, love could not hesitate to take its place among the attributes of the sovereigns. When reviewing the surnames of the Incas, Garcilaso stresses that one of them was "*huacchacúyac*, which means lover and benefactor of the poor." He reminds us several times of this virtue, as if of a real historic fact which he enjoyed being able to bring into harmony, very much in his own way, with a philosophy which was agreeable to him. Thus, for example, the Inca Maita Cápac grants favors to his subjects as an expression of "his liberal and magnanimous mind, both gentle and loving." What is more, Garcilaso begins to develop this theme out of the legends of the first Inca, Manco Cápac, Son of the Sun, so that all his argument then coincides with the most sublime traditions. According to the wonderful tale he narrates, the *Inti* or Sun says to his son, the founder of the dynasty: "When you have subjected these peoples to our rule, you shall govern them with reason, justice, piety, clemency and gentleness, acting in everything like a pious father with his small and *beloved* children, exactly in my image and likeness and as I too bring benefits to all of them, giving them my light and splendor.... I warm them when it is cold and make their pastures and crops grow...and I take care to turn round the earth once in every day in order to see what the needs of the earth may be." The fulfilment of the divine order rewards the imperial family, and later we see the Indians from Chucuito subject themselves to Lloque Yupanqui, "with all their love and determination, because he was the Son of the Sun, whose clemency and gentleness they cherished."¹⁵

Garcilaso gathers various such fables, but he takes care always to characterize them as such and is prudent enough not to venture to interpret them. There is no doubt that he knew, through Dante, the existence of the four levels of meaning: the literal, the moral, the anagogical and the allegorical. Leone Ebreo moreover gives, in his second dialogue, lengthy explanations to clarify the meanings of ancient mythology and also of the Bible. Afraid of arousing suspicions, the mestizo

¹⁵ *Comentarios*, I, 24; III, 1; I, 15; II, 20; for Valera, VIII, 5.

prefers to refrain from doing this. In his process of conscious or unconscious idealization, he does not follow these paths. But this idealization is nonetheless manifest in the way in which he collects and develops the elements which tradition offers to him, taking as his point of departure some tradition or piece of information available to him. When finding in the papers of a mestizo Jesuit, who was a Peruvian but not from Cuzco, a surname for the Incas similar to the one of *huachacñac*, he reminds the reader that the concordance with his own information is not perfect. He writes: "Very appropriately, Father Master Blas Valera calls them *father of families and zealous tutor of pupils*; perhaps he gave them these names by interpreting one of those which, we said, had been given by the Indians to their Incas, that is to say when they called their rulers *lovers and benefactors of the poor*."

Garcilaso did not derive all this from his imagination. Our problem consists in discovering whether the Incan spirit that reigned in his maternal home had helped him turn to Neo-platonism, or whether Neo-platonism gave form to his historical material. Actually, one solution does not exclude the other. It is possible to harmonize both possibilities, just as the Inca proved to be eclectic again and again, thus following, among others, the doctrines of Leone himself. If syncretism triumphed during the whole period of Renaissance, Leone availed himself of it in order to reconcile Plato with Aristotle, the Greeks and the Romans with the actual truth revealed in the Bible. The old Arabic and Jewish tradition which he followed went back to Philo Judaeus and Plotinus and was still rich. Garcilaso himself had translated, in the third dialogue: "as one truth cannot be the contrary of another truth, it is necessary to make room for both and to harmonize them." This is really the same as what the Inca does when he providentialistically harmonizes the Inca world and his father's world of the Conquerors. Leone's hypertrophied eclecticism had thus provided Garcilaso with a path which could lead him to overcome the conflict of his bloods and, by way of idealization, render as sublime as possible the solution which Christian providentialism offered to him.

When, in the history of ideologies, we come across authors who have no systematic intention whatever and who resort to

different philosophical currents according to their needs, it is convenient for us to begin by drawing up a provisional "theory of preferences." The Inca Garcilaso is at the same time a Spanish classic and an American classic. At twenty, he leaves Peru for good, but he keeps thinking about it and writing for his people. It would be most unjust to deprive him of either his native Indian or his Spanish component. The man Garcilaso is a Humanist who, when he was older, wrote about Peru in Andalusia, after first translating the eclectic *Summa* of the *Dialoghi*. He was held in high respect by the scholars who knew him. The pages written by his copper-coloured hand were soon the subject of admiration. Two worlds had united here, and we do not refer to their racial, but to their cultural aspect. As early as in the last chapter but one of the *Florida*, Garcilaso says: "With regard to the Incas, and also in general, I will tell what I heard from my mother and her uncles and older relatives, and from all the other common people of my homeland, and what I saw myself in the form of testimony of the past, *which had not yet entirely vanished during my childhood, but some shadows of which could still reach me.*" He knows that he has "reached" that world which manifested itself during such an important period as had been his childhood, one of its protagonists being his own mother, Princess Chimpu Oclo. We would not go so far as to say that this cultural heritage proved to be predominant, but it certainly conditioned his later preferences as a Humanist. The fruit of cultural cross-breeding revealed itself.

PROVIDENTIALIST HISTORY

Scholars are aware of Garcilaso's obvious intention to harmonize the native and the Spanish elements. The cultural mission of the Incas providentially prepared the arrival of the Gospel. The repeated similarities Garcilaso discovers between the *Gen-tilis* of Cuzco and Rome support such an interpretation. Ever since the Early Middle Ages, the Roman Empire had been justified in those terms, as a stage which served to prepare the Barbarians for the arrival of Christianity.

Menéndez Pidal reminds us of this theory in Prudentius

and in Saint Augustine, and later it reappears in Dante's *De Monarchia*. Eugenio Asensio mentions that the same ideas were advanced by Otto von Freising, in the 12th century. There can be no doubt that Garcilaso had read *De civitate Dei* and his library proves that he was an avid reader of Dante. A tutor of the Inca at Montilla, father Zárate, quotes Prudentius as one of the authorities he recognized. The application of historical providentialism to the *Comentarios reales* leaves room for no doubts; it can be proved by a multitude of quotations from the author himself, quite apart from the arguments already put forward by several scholars and also by ourselves.¹⁶

The gentle Incas civilize the rude Barbarians and providentially prepare for the arrival of the Gospel which is brought by the Spanish Conquerors. However, all this is only one of the aspects, if an important one, of Garcilaso's historical considerations. We must admit that it is actually also part of his eclecticism: due to this way of thinking, he is on good terms with both Neo-platonism and Senecan Stoicism. Many of these providentialist ideas actually developed by way of the Christianization of ancient concepts of the Stoics of the Portico. This is a process so old and well-known that, already in the Spanish Golden Age,—as it happened in other countries too—the manifestations of Christian Stoicism were a common-place. This is even more true for History, which claims to be the "model of life". There was a "moralizing zeal," as Américo Castro calls it, which should not always be taken too seriously. But it also happens that not only Christian Stoicism, but also Seneca himself, gain a surprising importance in the historical works of the Inca.

The providentialist notion of the *Chastisement of God* was widespread in that age, as we know, and still is today. It was regarded as a tacitly accepted fact which needed no reasoning or philosophical support. Furthermore, this can be seen in very different civilizations and must be considered as a spontaneous human reaction. For the moment, we see that Divine Chastisement assumes the greatest importance for the Inca, so that

¹⁶ B. Sánchez Alonso, *Historia de la historiografía española*, Madrid, 1946, II, pp. 254 and 266; and "El Inca Garcilaso platónico," *loc. cit.*

Riva Agüero arrives at the somewhat exaggerated conclusion that the Inca « substitutes, for the marvelous Indian element, the marvelous Christian element. He narrates every day miracles accomplished by the Virgin and the Apostle Saint James with profound sincerity and a very vivid satisfaction, as well as the providentialist chastisement of the sacrilegious, the excommunicated and the blasphemers, » which is what happened to the Viceroy Toledo and captain García de Loyola, who were guilty of the execution of Túpac Amaru.¹⁷

The Inca's credulity is no greater than was common in his age, even among scholars, if we exclude a small group of Erasmusians. There can be no doubt that he exaggerated his belief in miracles, but, with regard to other aspects, his mind proves to be more critical than that of other chroniclers, as for example when he rejects certain exaggerated analogies between Christian sacraments and native religious practices. An author read by the Inca, such as the Jesuit Ribadeneyra, limits himself to offering a large choice of admirable chastisements for excommunicates or unfrocked ecclesiastics. If we look at them in the right way, these providentialist chastisements, as depicted by the Inca, do not seem to be the result of pure imagination, but are supported by the ideas of serious men. The Augustinian Zárte, an adviser of the Inca, wrote a treatise in which chastisements and calamities have a hidden meaning; they are hardships imposed by the Almighty in order to make men more modest. There is also an esthetic aspect involved, related to the moral aspect of ancient Stoicism.

THE SUBJECT OF PATIENCE

There is evidence that, while the 16th century was progressing, the Spanish felt a more and more pronouncedly particular predilection for the Biblical Job. The aspects of Stoic ethics that had already supplied the background of mediaeval philosophy for a long time had inspired a whole flood of literature, in different European countries, which owed its existence to

¹⁷ Riva Agüero, *La historia en el Perú* (History in Peru), Lima, 1910, I; and *Elogio del Inca Garcilaso de la Vega*, in A. Rosenblatt's edition of the *Comentarios*, III, Buenos Aires, 1944.

the influence of Petrarch's *Remedies against Good and Bad Fortune*. At the time of the Renaissance, Stoicism began to blossom again, in a form more faithful to its origins, thanks to Pico and Pomponazzi.¹⁸ In Spain, religious authors combined Seneca's authority with that of Job, and resignation was transformed into patience. Already in the works of friar Luis de León, the *Comentarios del libro de Job* suffice to illustrate our point. Later on, in the 17th century, Quevedo suggested that the Stoics and the Cynics derived their attitude from the Biblical Patriarch because the Cynics, as he says, "boast to be natives of the lands that border on Judaea, from where all the nations received their wisdom."

In his style and ideas, Quevedo is already redolent of the Age of Enlightenment, which is typical for the 17th century in Spain and, in the same way, for the Baroque. At the end of the 16th century, a whole series of essayists had linked Job with the Stoics, as can be seen in the *Tratado de la tribulación*, by Ribadeneyra, or in the *Discursos de la paciencia cristiana*, by friar Hernando de Zárata. In the same way in which the Jesuit dedicates one chapter to "Some ideas of Seneca with regard to the miseries of this life and how to vanquish them," the Augustinian monk concludes his work by mentioning side by side the Stoic philosopher and the Biblical patriarch. In view of the innumerable calamities of life, "Seneca says it would be sheer folly to regret or to fear what must inevitably occur;" and, as "Job says that we are born in order to toil incessantly," let us make, as Zárata concludes, "an honest and positive virtue out of this inevitable calamity."

At that time, Spain had already suffered the loss of the Invincible Armada, and such subjects were gaining popularity. Another friend of the Inca, the Jesuit Juan de Pineda, published in 1597 and 1601 two volumes of *Comentarios al libro de Job*. This is by no means strange, for a member of the Society, which, starting with Saint Ignatius, had developed close ties with certain principles of Stoicism. The Inca narrates that, in the middle of 1594, he had suggested to Pineda that they combine their efforts

¹⁸ The influence of Petrarch's Stoicism in Spain has been stressed by A. Castro ever since his publications on the subject of honor, in 1916; for Pico and Pomponazzi, cf. L. Zanta, *La renaissance du stoïcisme au XVI^e siècle*, Paris, 1914.

in order to render "divine" some poems by Garci Sánchez de Badajoz, wherein the latter had conveyed a "human" attitude to Job's sacred text. The Inquisition had prohibited these verses, which fascinated Garcilaso to such an extent that he called Garci Sánchez, the knight who made his readers burn with love, the "Phoenix of Spanish poets, who had never been equalled and who would hardly find his peer in the future."¹⁹

They finally did not carry out this work, but this episode should illustrate how much Garcilaso was attracted by such a subject, at a time when Enlightenment was gaining ground in his mind and in his writing.

The power and richness that fascinate us in the *Florida del Inca* are due, among other things, to the fact that this work was already virtually finished when the *Dialoghi* appeared. At that time, the *Comentarios reales* were well under way. Very characteristically, the sombre words that sometimes appear in the *Florida* are the result of later additions. This may explain why we discover, in the *Comentarios*, which were rewritten within the same framework during the long period necessary to compose them, very different tones that range from bitter complaint to joyous complacency; the changes in the author's mind are thus reflected. We might almost conclude that, while the Inca's life progressed, the Neo-platonism of the Renaissance gave way to Enlightenment or Stoicism which was later the favorite theme of writers during the Baroque. Personal biography thus coincides with the changes of the age. It would be just as wrong, on the one hand, to resort to too simple explanations, in this context, and refer everything to biographical reasons, as, on the other hand, to think that everything is due to the influence of the age. Garcilaso Inca, a prismatic personality, lived on several different levels at the same time, between the Old and the New World, between the Renaissance and Baroque, between the heyday and the fall of Spain, between the humanistic and the native Indian worlds. That is why he is of such great symbolical and concrete interest, why he is so difficult to understand and why his works have a symptomatic character, as the first testimony of occidental culture in Latin America.

¹⁹ In the *Genealogía de Garci Pérez de Vargas*.

"In the retreat of solitude and poverty," he writes in the Preface of the *Florida*, "I can lead a quiet and peaceful life, thanks to the King of kings and Ruler of rulers, and the wealthy envy me more than I envy them." He calls his retreat the "haven and shelter of those who have been enlightened," and he then speaks of his writings as being more valuable than anything that a "very benevolent and favorable" fortune might have given him. We cannot imagine any better review of Seneca's and Petrarch's code of ethics, drawn up by somebody like the Inca, who was a devoted reader of Petrarch. Here already, and until the last days of his life, he founds his hopes on the works he is writing, with resignation and patience. A typical state of mind of the Peruvian Indian of the past and of the present appears to shine through this unreasoning hope.

We do not yet know much, scientifically speaking, about how the Incas conceived the world at the time of their Kingdom. There exist some observations and studies, however, that throw some light on this problem, but the subject has not yet been discussed fully. Still, it is not possible to refrain from referring to this world, since we are dealing with a man who was born and brought up in it.²⁰ Let us speak, now, of the Indian virtue of unreasoning resistance to adversity, which manifested itself at first in the form of huge stone monuments that were erected without the help of the wheel and which is still present today in those Indians who bear their century-old humiliation in silence. Other features may have changed in the Quechuan soul, but this one has certainly remained intact, reflecting neither Stoic resignation nor Christian patience. But, as the Christian Stoics managed to harmonize resignation and patience, so was the Inca able to express his ancestral virtue just as clearly, though with the help of other doctrines.

THE GOLD OF PERU

The subject of wealth is treated in a similar way in the *Comentarios*: the interpretation of the native element coincides again, as was the case for the "amorous Inca," with the human-

²⁰ L. Monguió, *La poesía post-modernista peruana*, Mexico, 1954, is a useful review of the "indigenous" ideas of Mariátegui, Uriel García, Luis Valcárcel, L. A. Sánchez, etc.

istic way of thinking. The fabulous treasures of Cajamarca and Cuzco were admired by the Old World, and Garcilaso, as all other Peruvians, was proud of this admiration. Various chapters of the beginning of the *Historia General* contain remarks on how the whole world was shaken when the Peruvian fleet arrived at the coast in front of Sevilla. In the same way, Garcilaso rejoices in describing, in the first part of the *Comentarios*, the gold and silver garden of the Incas. Together with this common attitude, Garcilaso develops humanistic ideas. Finally, his friend, father Zárate, referring to one of Seneca's letters, wrote: "if you want to live in peace with your conscience, you will never be rich; if you obey Nature, you will never be poor;" after which, the good monk tried to corroborate the pagan philosopher even more by also quoting the opinion of Saint Cyprian. Garcilaso never abused of quotations and limited himself to quoting Spanish historians. Good taste and his ambition "not to be diffuse" discouraged him from quoting authorities. He refrains from referring to them even when discussing the "name of *Peru*, so famous in the world, and for good reason, because Peru distributed its gold and silver and precious stones over the whole world:" nor does he quote any authorities when he says, on another occasion, that, "for all the wealth and abundance hidden in the soil in the form of gold and silver and precious stones, which everybody knows, its people are the poorest and most miserable in the whole world." What is more, this misery was "caused by the misfortunes of that Kingdom and its great wealth."²¹

Garcilaso experienced in his own life great changes in matters of wealth, property and social standing. An illegitimate child, though recognized by his father, he lived together with the latter who possessed a princely fortune. He could not inherit it and, when he was already in Spain, he tried in many ways to obtain a position that corresponded to his noble Spanish descent and to his status as an Indian prince. He received a rich inheritance from his uncle, Don Alonso, but he could only benefit fully from it when he was already very old. He thus considered himself poor in comparison with the position that he should

²¹ *Comentarios*, I, 5; VIII, 24; *Historia General del Perú*, end of volume III.

have enjoyed and for which he longed for so many years. For this reason, his disappointment was increased by the failure of his dedication of the *Dialoghi* to the King, an obvious petition for money. Almost at the same time, he quarreled with the Marquis of Priego and, according to Porrás, was obliged as a result of this to move to Córdoba, where it proved difficult for him to collect his income. Porrás states that the Inca complained about narrow circumstances in daily life, and not only in his writings²². This has been historically proven, but, even if it were not true, we might ask ourselves whether the old Stoics always lived according to their doctrine. The Inca finally enjoyed plenty in his old age, when he had no more economic problems and basked in the fame that he certainly deserved. Such was the end of a life which had developed on the ruins of a broken past, an existence that had survived the vanished worlds of Conquerors and Incas. Everything he wrote was meant for the future of which he knew that it would not be his own, but that of his distant homeland. For this reason, he wrote in great earnest: "those who see through other eyes than that of common men the wealth which Peru has sent to the Old World and which is no longer at its disposal are of the opinion that this wealth had been a curse and not a blessing, and that riches give rise to vices rather than to virtues," and "the misery of the poor increased... because of the high prices brought about by so much money." Finally, "they conclude by saying that the wealth of the New World, justly considered, did not increase the supply of those things that are necessary for human life (such as food and clothing, which are vital necessities), but rendered these more expensive."²³

Garcilaso implicitly agreed with this opinion, though the opinions of the masses—"inappropriate investigators of the truth," according to Seneca—deserve his disapproval in other contexts. Garcilaso adopts the same attitude, in accordance with Stoic traditions, in so far as, for him, honor is not a matter of

²² Don Diego de Córdoba, a friend of the Inca, remembers that "he usually said that his property was not brilliant" (R. Vargas-Ugarte, "Nota sobre Garcilaso", in *Mercurio Peruano*, Lima, 1930, No. 137-138.

²³ *Historia General del Perú*, I, 7.

fame or reputation, but a question of genuine virtue.²⁴ The mestizo Humanist who set out to write about the value which the old Peruvians attributed to stones and precious metals does not neglect his studies of Stoicism. One chapter of the *Comentarios* has the following heading: "Gold and silver, and other precious items did not constitute obligatory contributions, but gifts." The Incas did not use actual money in order to govern their state, but secured the subsistence of their vassals without it. They liked jewels, but did not allow themselves to be blinded by their splendor. And Garcilaso adds: "The Peruvians did not use pearls, although they knew them; the Incas were always more concerned about the well-being of their vassals than about the increase of so-called riches, because they never considered them as such; in view of the effort and danger involved to win the pearls from the sea, it was forbidden to search for them, which explains why they were not used."²⁵ As far as his secret intentions are concerned, the mestizo Humanist limited himself to teaching the Old World that his own vanquished people had a more just idea of wealth than their European Conquerors. Even if the Gospel and the Stoics corroborated the opinions of the Incas in this respect, Garcilaso wanted his reader to arrive at this conclusion on his own and therefore, with a truly Latin candor, he intentionally dropped the apparently casual remark: "because they never considered them as such."

STOIC FATALISM

The philosophies of antiquity secretly agreed with realities which are foreign to the Western world. It is impossible to decide, for every individual case, to what extent the Inca was aware of the ultimate implications of his words. It is of greater interest to interpret them candidly and to avoid controversy. We have already seen that it is wiser to explain the Indian's ideas concerning men of his race quite openly. The Inca always observes

²⁴ Cf. my essay, "La idea de la honra en el Inca Garcilaso," in *Panorama*, Washington, 1952, I, 1.

²⁵ *Comentarios*, V, 7; VIII, 23.

this cautious approach, which is typical of Indians and mestizos; besides, in spite of his frequent confidential remarks, he remains absolutely mute on other subjects, so that intimate observations alternate with elusive silence.

A feeling of disappointment thus becomes manifest later in the Inca's work, sometimes accompanied by a commonplace, "that is what you have to expect in this world." As the years went by, this state of mind gained the upperhand. References to providential intervention or unstable fortune appeared already in the *Florida*, but are more frequent in the first part of the *Comentarios* and culminate in the humiliation of the Inca rulers and of their whole race. In the second part, in the *Historia general del Perú*, the misfortunes of the Conquerors dominate, not only from a dramatic point of view, but also within the general framework of the book, because great adversities serve as supports for the architecture of the story. Fatalism is transformed into the belief that the Devil is at work, "employing all the means at his disposal" to stir up civil wars and "to prevent the Christianization of the Indians; and, though he could not prevent it altogether, he retarded it at least for many years." The reason for the Conquest of Latin America, which was its evangelization, was thus prevented from bearing fruit. An endless series of misfortunes struck the Spaniards too, until the last of the Incas, Túpac Amaru, was executed by the Viceroy Toledo. Garcilaso informs us that he reserves this episode "for the end of the tale, as it is the most disgraceful thing that has ever happened on our soil and must be told; it is *a tragedy*, in every respect, as is shown at the end of every book of this second part of our *Comentarios*. May God be praised for everything."²⁶

The Christian attitude of the last sentence palliated this gruesome narrative which had obviously been inspired by Stoicism. Every book had actually ended with a misfortune, and the whole structure of the story seems to be more in tune with the old type of Senecan pessimism than with any kind of providentialist Christianity. The latter would have been inter-

²⁶ I deal with this subject in "El Inca Garcilaso, historiador apasionado", in *Cuadernos Americanos*, Mexico, July-August, 1950.

esting, as it would have meant a metaphysical Stoicism instead of the merely moral Stoicism which was so frequent in that age. One thing is certain, however: that the "tragedy" to which Garcilaso refers is by no means Hellenic, but influenced by Seneca, who was a citizen of Córdoba and from whom Garcilaso draws his inspiration as he himself writes in Córdoba. A copy of Seneca's *Tragedies* was found in the library which the Inca left after his death. It had probably belonged to one of his ancestors, the Marquis of Santillana, who had had the text of the *Tragedies* translated into Spanish.

Garcilaso's profound Christianity is present in all that he wrote, from the first to the last line. Providence appears frequently in his stories and his Christian point of view is beyond any doubt. But the unfortunate circumstance of his double descent from Incas and Spanish Conquerors acquires a providential and supra-rational meaning, the flavor of which suggests to us both Seneca, among the Ancients, and the Peruvian Indian. The "chastisement of God," which was inflicted on the Conquerors of Peru, was frequently quoted in the Americas by the people for a long time. Father Molina hears it mentioned in Mexico, and Gómora repeats it in Spain, before Garcilaso thought of settling there. For Gómora, everything was providentialistic, but the Inca develops these ideas intentionally until they condense into a "tragedy." In this tragedy, the Enemy becomes more and more powerful, and his "Cabinet" is composed of the seven capital sins. Human passions thus have a part to play as historical powers, deep within the philosophy of the Renaissance. The diabolical element prevails and is made responsible for all adversities. *Fate* strikes the Peruvians.

This vision of Disaster—regardless of whether it was brought about by the Enemy or by Fate—inspired an enormous literary output, which was also characteristic for the personal situation of the author. After having completed the edifice for the dramatic parts of his work, the Inca wrote the Preface, shortly before his death, and therein addressed all Peruvians, who symbolize all his hopes. The noble mestizo suffered disappointment and bitterness; he actually felt that he was an exile, knowing that the world of colonial Peru was different from

his own world. He always displayed fortitude in all calamities, a good Indian after all, and the gloom of his writings does not exclude an irrational fortitude, an obstinate hope. Luis Varcárcel refers to those qualities when he says: "the great Indian inertia will prevail."

Again, we become aware that we are sailing very deep waters, with unknown currents. The American Indian's fatalism, and in particular that of the Peruvian Indian, frequently gives rise to commonplace comment. When we are discussing Indian fatalism as it existed among the Peruvians of the 16th century, we should not forget this commonplace that always recurs in the writings of Huaman Poma, a pure Indian and a contemporary of Garcilaso: "There is no remedy!" "The Evil cannot be cured!" Poma was first to state that this principle guided the ancient Indians throughout his *Nueva crónica y buen gobierno*. The knowledge that every effort would be in vain did not prevent Huaman Poma from continuing, even if it was contrary to good reason. What an admirable obstinacy! Something very similar happens to Garcilaso, who keeps in mind the inexorable image of the fate of the Incas and their Conquerors, while concentrating at the same time on the future with all his perseverance.

From the European point of view, it is very easy to negate the native element in the Inca and to refer everything to his humanistic education. This would mean rejecting his colorful personality as a whole, without there being any reason for doing so. Garcilaso, as a man, was a nostalgic mestizo of whom even his compatriots of the present say that he correctly expressed the native mentality. Americanists like Prescott, and many more, shared this opinion. As we see it, Garcilaso Inca de la Vega symbolizes the first attempt to merge, partly unconsciously but partly too in a conscious way, the American native world and the Occident. Not only is he the first to discover artistically the character of his homeland and the atmosphere in which its people lived, as he did in the famous episode of the *mamacoma*: above all, his writings hail the future of which he imagined himself to be the first representative. Already in 1586, when he sent the *Dialoghi* to the King, and later in a new letter to Philip II, in 1589, he asked him to accept the

book which "I offered and still offer in the name of the whole of Peru."

Considering that even the Conquerors changed their social forms and habits of life in Latin America, it is obvious that the change that took place in their sons, mestizos like Inca Garcilaso, was much greater. It is perhaps not wrong to suggest that, while he was absorbing European Humanism, he instinctively searched for some notes that might sound in harmony with those which he had brought with him from his distant Peru.