This essay studies the performance and staging of memory in the Comentarios Reales de los Incas by Garcilaso el Inca, from a post-colonial perspective. We also want to analyze Garcilaso’s construction of history based on his individual and collective historical experiences with the goal to establish his authority and erudition and legitimate the Inca Empire as a magnificent civilization comparable to the highest European cultures of Antiquity and Modern times.

Performativity, Staging

In this essay, I would like to continue developing some theories and considerations that I have already approached in two former contributions: “Memoria performativa y escenificación: ‘Hechor y Víctima’ en El Desierto de Carlos Franz” (de Toro 2011a) and “La escritura de imaginación como construcción de memoria. Topografía del dolor y del placer o más allá de la culpa. La vida doble de Arturo Fontaine” (de Toro 2013). This time I would like to work on a historical text, Comentarios Reales de los Incas by Garcilaso el Inca, from a post-colonial perspective. At the center of my consideration are the strategies of constructivity, performativity and staging. The first concept is based on individual or collective historical experiences that are constructed by someone and do not represent a reconstruction due to the fact that this is always the result of idealization and abstraction. The memories saved in the
mind of the individual are distorted and transformed by the flow of time, and this affects the valorization, evaluation and reconsideration of past events and experiences. Subjectivity changes, and with it, the form of representation. Furthermore, the operation of remembering becomes complicated by the process of forgetting and by the mixture of events on the horizon of the passage of time. All of these phenomena are overlapped by the fact that the Comentarios Reales de los Incas were written by Garcilaso with the particular intent to demonstrate and establish his historical authority and erudition and to legitimate the Inca Empire as a magnificent civilization comparable to the highest European cultures of Antiquity and Modern times.

The remembered events and experiences are then mediated by the act of writing, which is determined by a different discursive strategy that we call *performativity* and *staging*. The first term sets the whole semiotic machine in motion, ultimately making particular narrated events representable; the second term refers to the particular representations that convey the message with a specific function and intent. The performance and staging of any kind of remembered event is subordinate to and dependent on the absolute presence of the writing process and the subjectivity of the writing subject, as well as the knowledge, devices and epistemai of the particular moment of writing. In the case of Comentarios Reales de los Incas, performativity and staging also represent the legitimation of Garcilaso’s historical construction and claim of authority. The legitimation is achieved through *eruditio*, and the authority through *memory* and the reports of individual testimonies and direct personal contacts.

The concepts of *performativity* and *staging* that have already been introduced to describe the way in which the real is represented through diverse systems of signs or forms of representation are important and relevant to Garcilaso because he has placed himself at the interface between the empirical-real and the discursive signs. As I have already shown in other publications (de Toro 2006, 2007, 2009), the chroniclers, at the moment of the performative act of the description of the Other and their Otherness, are forced to cross their Western structures of thinking because their knowledge and language are insufficient to describe what they have seen, heard or lived; they lack the appropriate vocabulary to describe this particular reality. So the intent to make a prefigured essentialist discourse is pushed back and the hybrid
structures come to light, usually outside of normative discursive practices. The practice of staging shows, for example, that the chroniclers used particular rhetorical devices such as metonymy, metaphor, comparison, analogy and equivalence as well as intertextuality, elements of suspense and other narratives strategies with the aim of appropriating the object and making it communicable. The result is not only a mere reproduction of the perceived object, but a highly complex, hybrid and drawn performance and staging of the realia.

Staging constitutes the particular plotting (in the sense of Hayden White) of the represented objects; their remodeling and performance in a diegetic, coherent, and causal chain of actions. This is not only typical of the novel, but also of the historical writing of any period, particularly the 19th century (Prescott) and the beginning of the 20th century. Oral and written traditions and events are performed like on a theatrical stage. Chronicles, letters, travel diaries, and testimonies are addressed in a dramatic form (as, for example, in Bernal Díaz del Castillo’s Verdadera Historia de la Conquista de Nueva España (1568), or in Cortés’ Relaciones and Cartas).

Finally, staging means a process of “translatio” (de Toro 2006, 2007, 2008, 2011, 2013, 2013a). As a hybrid process, it naturally includes transmediality, meaning that it considers not only the acts of production and reception of signs, but also the inscription of a mediating or transfiguration process in the act of translation with a very specific intent. Besides that, the act of translation is, in its totality, a staging process that includes iconography, pictures, words, and gestures. “Translatio” means the transformation and recodification of the enunciation through which different cultural systems (like language, religion, knowledge, social structures, etc.) are perpetuated and from which new systems and new interpretations, experiences, and encounters are born.

In the consideration of the relation between memory and history in terms of truth, or in our case in terms of historical truth, we can agree that, in the context of theories coming from the nouvelle histoire and Metahistory that are still relevant today, any expression or enunciation of an era is a valuable and legitimate testimony. It is always a subjective construction that will have a public importance as a result of intersubjective debate.
For all these reasons, we place memory, regardless of whether it is individual, collective or historical memory, at the interface of experiences, subjectivity and objectivity, emotion and rationality, knowledge and invention, conviction and doubt. For these reasons it is not important whether the Comentarios Reales de los Incas refer to empirical historical facts (experts will surely assert that the majority of the events described by Garcilaso are invented). The only important aspect is that they were written in a way that we consider today a monumental contribution to “cultural memory” (J. Assmann 2005 52). They are a memory-history written from the “margins”, from a different and new perspective in cultural construction and identity, and simultaneously in historiographical construction. With this work, Garcilaso creates a new discursive context for a new community and offers a common identity to all mestizos with hybrid cultural personalities. In the tension between eruditio and testimony, his discourse brings up a new vitality, a subversion, and cultural and historical justice.

Following Le Goff, White, and Assmann (2009 133) in the context of the latter’s debate with Koselleck, as well as my reconsideration of Nietzsche’s Vom Nutzen und Nachteile der Historie für das Leben (in Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen) and Nora, we do not see a radical difference between the truth of testimonies and that of historians; we do not give a priority to living witnesses or to historians; we do not believe that witnesses should enjoy a greater legitimacy over historians when referring to a dead and anonymous past; and we do not believe that witnesses are subjective and historians objective. Both constitute simultaneously memory and history (Assmann).³

³Comentarios Reales de los Incas must be seen in the context of Nietzsche’s concepts in Vom Nutzen und Nachteile der Historie für das Leben, where he demands a vital type of history at the service of life:

Clearly we need history, but we need it differently than the spoiled idler in the garden of knowledge does, though he looks down loftily on our rough and charmless cares and woes. This means that we need it for life and for action, not to turn comfortably from life and from action, or even for the glossing over of selfish life and cowardly, evil action. We only wish to serve history as far as history serves life, but there is a degree of doing history and a valuing of it
through which life atrophies and degenerates; a phenomenon which, in light of the strange symptoms of our time, it is now as necessary to acknowledge as it may be painful to do so [...] thus it is first through the strength to use that which has passed for life and to remake history out of this that a person becomes a person. However, in an excess of history, a person ceases, and without the shell of the unhistorical, he would never have begun or dared to begin. (Nietzsche 1981 95, 102; my translation)⁴

Garcilaso’s approach of including experience, memory, and written materials also fits in the conceptions of history of Benjamin and Foucault, and particularly Le Goff’s idea of a vital history:

[...] la “science historique”, par laquelle des professionnels (et, à un moindre degré, des amateurs), les historiens, cherchent à maîtriser cette histoire vécue pour la penser et l’expliquer”. (Le Goff 1988 10)

We have a superposition of ambiguities: on one side, we have the translatological process of memory itself, between “memory” as the place of archiving, of storage, of saving; and remembering as the performance and staging of the archive, that supposes all kinds of transformations (A. Assmann 2009 29). On the other side, we have the process of history carried out by oral and written texts, by all kinds of testimonies and traces. From this springs the constructive and performative character of memory and history, and its prefiguration and pre-structuration, goal and intention, which White defines as an act of fictionalization (White 1985, 55). Both memory and history share the fragility of their production; the first because of the trickling passage of time and of the struggle between objectivity and facticity; the second because of the ever arbitrary structuration of narration in a plot. Le Goff remarks, following Demarne and Rouquerol, that “la mémoire humaine est particulièrement instable et malléable (critique aujourd’hui classique en psychologie du témoignage judiciaire par exemple)” (1988 164). Memory is always a performative, nomadic and translatological act, as Italo Svevo formulated in Zeno Consini (1972): “Il passato è sempre nuovo: come la vita procede esso si muta perché risalgono a galla delle parti che parevano sprofondate nell’oblio mentre altre scompaiono...Il presente dirige il passato come un suonatore d’orchestra i suoi suonatori”, and also, as Vico
understood it in *Principi di scienza nuova d'intorno alla commune natura delle nazioni*: as a dynamic and productive process.

Another aspect that we must consider, mentioned above, is that the “new history” refuses an absolute idea of historical truth, and postulates the legitimacy of diverse truths as a consequence of very different sources and approaches, due not the least to the subjectivity of the historian: “l’histoire est aussi une pratique sociale [...] Toute histoire doit être une histoire sociale” (Le Goff 1988 22-25):

Cette discipline vient d’ailleurs à son tour alimenter la mémoire et rentre dans le grand processus dialectique de la mémoire et de l’oubli que vivent les individus et les sociétés. L’historien doit être là pour rendre compte de ces souvenirs et de ces oubli, pour les transformer en une matière pensable, pour en faire un objet de savoir. Trop privilégié la mémoire c’est s’immerger dans le flot indomptable du temps. (Le Goff 1988 10-11)

Following Nora, Le Goff underlines not only the differences between the process of memory and history, but also their reciprocal interdependency:

L’historie dite *nouvelle* qui s’efforce de créer une historie scientifique à partir de la mémoire collective peut être interprétée comme “une révolution de la mémoire” faisant accomplir à la mémoire un “pivotage” autour de quelques axes fondamentaux: “une problématique ouvertement contemporaine... et une démarche résolument rétrospective”, “le renoncement à une temporalité linéaire” au profit de temps vécus multiples “aux niveaux où l’individuel s’enracine dans le social et le collective” (linguistique, démographie, économie, biologie, culture). (Le Goff 1988 171)

And also the status of memory in historical science:

Histoire qui se ferait à partir de l’étude des “lieux” de la mémoire collective: “lieux topographiques, comme les archives, les bibliothèques et les musées; lieux monumentaux, comme les cimetières ou les architectures; lieux symboliques comme les commémorations, les pèlerinages, les anniversaires ou les emblèmes; lieux fonctionnels, comme les manuels, les autobiographies ou les associations:
ces mémoriaux ont leur histoire”. Mais il ne faudrait pas oublier les vrais lieux de l’histoire, ceux où rechercher non l’élaboration, la production mais les créateurs et les dominateurs de la mémoire collective: “États, milieux sociaux et politiques, communautés d’expérience historiques ou de générations amenées à constituer leurs archives en fonction des usages différents qu’ils font de la mémoire”.

Certes, cette nouvelle mémoire collective se constitue en partie son savoir dans des instruments traditionnels mais différemment conçus. Qu’on compare l’*Encyclopédie Einaudi* ou l’*Encyclopaedia Universalis* à la vénérable *Encyclopaedia Britannica*! Peut-être en définitive retrouvera-t-on davantage l’esprit de la Grande Encyclopédie de d’Alembert et Diderot, fille elle aussi d’une période d’engagement et de mutation de la mémoire collective. (Le Goff 1988 171)

As well as the problems that both share:


When considering Garcilaso’s work, it is also important to note that Le Goff, following W. J. Mommsen, makes clear that memory and history are subordinate to the influences of the present (as Borges demonstrated in “Pierre Menard, autor del Quijote” decades earlier):

Mais on ne peut éviter tout “présentisme” –toute influence déformante du présent sur la lecture du passé– on peut en limiter les conséquences néfastes pour l’objectivité. (Le Goff 1988 195)

This underlines that neither history nor memory can claim exclusive objectivity:

…les faits sont souvent moins sacrés qu’on ne le croit car si des fait bien établies […] ne peuvent être niés, le fait n’est pas en historie la base essentielle de l’objectivité à la fois parce que les faits historiques son fabriqué non donnés et que l’objectivité n’est pas en histoire la pure soumission aux faits. (Le Goff 1988 197)
I would like to go back to Hayden White, who analyses narrative structures in historiography and the novel, on the bases of four operations or strategies: the metaphor, the synecdoche, the metonymy, and the irony that configure the *realia*, putting this in a plot-structure that he calls the previous “poetic act” (1975 30, 31, 50 and following pages; ch. 10) that lends legitimacy, coherence and totality to the represented historical events (1975 22-29 and following pages; ch. 10 ). These diverse “plots” are responsible for the different “truths” because:

Each new historical work only adds to the number of possible texts that have to be interpreted if a full and accurate picture of a given historical milieu is to be faithfully drawn. The relationship between the past to be analyzed and historical works produced by analysis of the documents is paradoxical; the *more* we know about the past, the more difficult it is to generalize about it. (White 1985 89)

And he concludes that:

So too every fiction must pass a test of correspondence (it must be “adequate”, as an image of something beyond itself) if it is to lay claim to representing an insight into or illumination of the human experience of the world. [...] In this respect, history is no less a form of fiction than the novel is a form of historical representation. (White 1985 122)

*Construction – Legitimating – Authorization of History and Memory*

In what follows I describe the strategies of memory connected with the construction of history, and the strategies of medial-discursive representation as well as their performativity and staging that Garcilaso uses to legitimate and authorize *his* historical narration in *Comentarios Reales de los Incas* (1963). In order to legitimate and authorize history connected with memory and testimonies, Garcilaso uses very effective and persuasive strategies and instruments related to narrative structures:

- He assumes the role of a witness and an active interlocutor, and he writes down what his memory has registered and saved: “*Yo escribo como otras veces he dicho, lo que mamé en la leche y ví y oí a mis mayores*” (1963 114; pt. 2, bk. 3, ch. 11);
• He introduces an Inca-speaker as a narrator who has lived the history. Here, the oral tradition is the main legitimating strategy for the construction of a true history in the tradition of Neoplatonic discourse in modern times. Garcilaso constructs history as a “memory archive”, or as a “real lived testimony”;

• He assumes the roles of mediator and translator, but one who is part of the Inca culture: “pues yo soy indio, que en esta historia yo escriba como indio con las mismas letras que aquellas tales dicciones se deben escribir” (1963, pt. 2, Advertencias). This is a leitmotiv for self-legitimation;

• At the same time, he does not forget to act as an erudite who knows very well the current state of research in history in general and of the Conquest of America in particular. He mainly quotes the Jesuit Blas Valera, Pedro Cieza de León, José Acosta, Francisco López de Gómara and Agustín de Zárate;

• He needs this erudition in order to show scientific competence. The written word –the book– is according to the Aristotelian and Biblical traditions the source of truth and primary authority. In the Proemio al lector, the section Advertencias, and other places, he points out with regular persistence that, on the one hand, he will correct all misinterpretations and misrepresentations of the history of the Incas, and at the same time, he will authorize his report with Spanish historians. Moreover, he underlines that he does not seek to contradict them, but of course he always does. This kind of enunciation is a modesty-topos:

    En el discurso de la historia protestamos la verdad de ella, y que no diremos cosa grande, que no sea autorizada con los mismos historiadores españoles que la tocaron en parte o en todo: que mi intención no es contradecirles, sino servirles de comento y glosa, y de intérprete de muchos vocablos indios, que como extranjeros en aquella lengua interpretaron fuera de la propiedad de ella (1963, pt. 2, Proemio al lector; vid. also “Advertencias”)

• He combines both strategies –an archive of the histories told by contemporary witnesses and the discursive power of historical discourse– in order to transform events into a universal narrative that keeps the oldest time in memory. These are two virtues
and abilities that only he, Garcilaso el Inca, claims to possess. On the basis of a double translation, from Quechua (runa simi, the language of man) to Spanish, and from orality to writing, he seeks to narrate the history of the Inca Empire as a true, universal and immortal history;

- Finally, he is well aware that history must be constructed and all history is a construction. This is why he includes a meta-narrative level in the narrative process. Thus, the history of the Inca Empire is also a metahistory: the art of constructing history at all; the act of dealing with the possibilities of representation in order to persuade. Garcilaso’s narration switches between writing subjectivity and the aim of writing an empirical work from which the persuasive discursive power of his text emerges.

As I already indicated, I am not interested in discussing the constantly reiterated question of whether what Garcilaso says in Comentarios Reales de los Incas (CRDLI) is true, nor whether the text is a history, a personal report, or a mixture between an autobiography, memory, or fictionalized history. My interest lies simply in the analysis and interpretation of the narrative strategies used by Garcilaso to construct history in conjunction with the archive, memory and testimonies. Additionally, I focus my attention not primarily on what he says, but on how he says it.

Garcilaso has many aims, but in the end, he is the main actor and object of the history. He is the only chronicler who knows Quechua is familiar with the oral history, who also masters the written language and is learned in the European/Spanish written history tradition. He bases his authority (the projection of his self as a writing subject) in the novelty of embedding his subject in the history of collective discourse (itself embedded in a greater History).

Garcilaso wants, for example, to transfer the Inca oral discourse to the Spanish written word in order to establish a written memory for the Inca nation, as the Europeans did with their own history:

Inca, tío, pues no hay escritura entre vosotros, que es la que guarda la memoria de las cosas pasadas ¿qué noticias tenéis del origen y principio de nuestros reyes? Porque allá los españoles, y las otras naciones sus comarcas, como tienen historias divinas y humanas, saben por ellas cuándo empezaron a reinar sus
reyes y los ajenos, y el trocarse unos imperios en otros, hasta saber cuántos mil años ha que Dios crió el cielo y la tierra, que todo esto y mucho más saben por sus libros. Empero vosotros que carecéis de ellos, ¿qué memoria tenéis de vuestras antiguallas? ¿Quién fue el primero de nuestros Incas? ¿Cómo se llamó? ¿Qué origen tuvo tu linaje? ¿De qué manera empezó a reinar? ¿Con qué gente y armas conquistó este gran imperio? ¿Qué origen tuvieron nuestras hazañas? (1963 26; pt. 2)

The written memory, transformed in a book, has the capacity to create a universal testimony and represent the effort to construct past history, as part of his own biography and identity in a modern historical written work; in other words: to introduce the Inca Empire within the history practice of the modern age, to transfer the supposed barbarian status of the Inca nation without written memory into the civilization and culture of the book, from the “Khipu” (Quechua) or “Quipu” (Spanish version) to the Western alphabet.

Garcilaso wants to put his personal history in a glorious light: the history of his royal origin, the testimonies, his memory and the history of the Inca emperors.

In the Comentarios Reales, history is also the combination, or better, the interconnection, between individual and collective history, between oral memory and written memory, between langue and parole, and the introduction of a history of difference, a history of Otherness, the history of a Mestizo, the illegitimate son of a Spanish nobleman and an Inca princess, as well as a new type of historian and erudite, a history of the Inca Empire as a new...
antiquity, in which Quechua language used to be like Greek and Latin in Ancient Europe. In the recognition of the Greatness of the Inca Empire—and this is one of the intentions of Garcilaso’s text—lies the possibility of recognizing the New World in the Old, of introducing this New World in modern times.

This becomes evident throughout the text, but particularly in the Libro Séptimo, chapter 7 and the following chapters, where Garcilaso—in a very impressive manner—describes the Greatness of the Imperial City of Cuzco, a city that he compares to the Imperial City of Toledo, the Capital of Spain until 1561: “También la llamaron nueva Toledo” (255) and with Rome: “[...] porque el Cuzco en su imperio fué otra Roma en el suyo; o así se puede cotejar en las cosas más generosas que tuvieron” (ibid.). But Rome had one big advantage over Cuzco, according to Garcilaso: Rome was able to immortalize itself in the writing of an expansive literature, which in the Renaissance was performed through the topical mixture between “armas y letras”. Caesar is the epitome of this ideal. Particularly in this chapter, we see on the one side Garcilaso’s pity and disdain for orality, and on the other side, how this handicap pushed him to write the Comentarios Reales, longing for recognition:

En los cuales Roma hizo ventaja al Cozco, no por haberlos criado mejores, sino por haber sido más venturosa en haber alcanzado letras y eternizado con ellas a sus hijos, que los tuvo no menos ilustres por las ciencias, que excelentes por las armas, los cuales se honraron al trocado unos a otros. [...] dejarlas hemos, por decir la desdicha de nuestra patria; que aunque tuvo hijos esclarecidos en armas, y de gran juicio y entendimiento, y muy hábiles y capaces para las ciencias, porque no tuvieron letras, no dejaron memoria de sus grandes hazañas y agudas sentencias; y así perecieron ellas y ellos juntamente con su república. Sólo quedaron algunos de sus hechos y dichos encomendados a una tradición flaca y miserable enseñanza de la palabra de padres a hijos; la cual también se ha perdido con la entrada de la nueva gente [...] Yo, incitado del deseo de la conservación de las antigüallas de mi patria, esas pocas que han quedado, porque no se pierdan del todo, me dispuse al trabajo tan excesivo, como hasta aquí me ha sido y delante me ha de ser, el escribir su antigua república hasta
acabarla; y porque la ciudad del Cozco, madre y señora de ella, no quede olvidada en su particular, determiné dibujar en este capítulo la descripción de ella, sacada de la misma tradición, que como a hijo natural me cupo, y de lo que yo con propios ojos vi, diré los nombres de los antiguos que sus barrios tenían, que hasta el año de 1560, que yo salí de ella, se conservaban en su antigüedad. (1963 225-256; pt. 2, bk. 7, ch. 8)

For this reason, Garcilaso, as an ethnographer, lets his uncle speak as an informant, and so he also performs and stages a modern ethnography process:

Creo que te he dado larga cuenta de lo que me pediste, y respondido a tus preguntas [...] Esta larga relación del origen de sus reyes me dio aquel Inca, tío de mi madre, a quien yo se la pedí; la cual yo he procurado traducir fielmente de mi lengua materna, que es la del inca, en la ajena, que es la castellana, aunque no la he escrito con la majestad de la palabra que el Inca habló, ni con toda la significación que las de aquel lenguaje tienen, que por ser tan significativo pudiera haberse extendido mucho más de lo que se ha hecho; antes la he acortado, quitando algunas cosas que pudieran hacerla odiosa; empero bastará haber sacado el verdadero sentido de ellas, que es lo que conviene a nuestra historia. (1963 29; pt. 2, bk. 1, ch. 17)

This strategy has a double function. First, to legitimate the history report: Garcilaso’s sources presumably deliver the most authentic report because they come from a man who was part and witness of a living history, one that he, Garcilaso, has archived in his memory. Second, Garcilaso is not directly and completely responsible for the content of the report; he cannot be identified with it. This will have consequences for one of his most important goals: to place Inca culture at nearly the same level of Western Christian culture, but it’s a dangerous move. In other words, Garcilaso constructs and describes, whether willingly or not, a valuable Otherness as a result of a translation process, in which language seems to be the key for the successful construction of the Inca’s history. This became evident in 1780, when the Viceroyalty of Peru and Buenos Aires banished the Comentarios Reales, in the understanding that they encouraged the rebellion of Tupac Amaru II on November 4, 1780.
Garcilaso is not only an ethnographer-mediator, but also a participant ethnographer who walks through the streets of Cuzco and narrates—like a film camera or a mobile archive—what he records along the way:

En mis tiempos vivían en aquel sitio, descendiendo de lo alto de la calle [...] Volviendo a lo alto de la calle de San Agustín, para entrar más adentro en la ciudad, decimos que en lo alto de ella está el convento de Santa Clara. [...] Yo no alcancé de ellos más del galpón. [...] Yo la conocí cubierta de paja y la vi cubrir de tejas. [...] Para decir los barrios que quedan me conviene volver al barrio Huacapancu [...]. (1963 259-260; pt. 2, bk. 7, ch. 8-10)

Moreover, we have a highly aestheticized text, an intertextual and hybrid text that results from a network of texts out of which the authority of the historical discourse radiates. Thus, his role as a mere translator is a grandiose performance and staging. One example comes right at the beginning, as the Inca speaker narrates the origin of the Inca dynasty, directly inspired by the Sun God. Garcilaso’s narrator tells the history in the words and style of the *Old Testament* and partly of the *New Testament*, in the tradition of the myth of Adam and Eve and the Jews’ legend of the Promised Land:

Nuestro padre el sol, viendo los hombres tales, como te he dicho, se apiadó y hubo lástima de ellos, y envió del cielo a la tierra un hijo y una hija de los suyos para que los doctrinasen en el conocimiento de nuestro padre el sol, para que lo adorasen y tuviesen por su dios, y para que les diesen preceptos y leyes en que viviesen como hombres en razón y urbanidad; para que habitasen en casas y pueblos poblados, supiesen labrar las tierras [...] como hombres racionales, y no como bestias.

Con esta orden y mandato puso nuestro padre el sol estos dos hijos suyos en la laguna Titicaca [...] y les dijo que fuesen por doquisiesen, y do quiera que parasen a comer o a dormir, procurasen hincar en el suelo una barrilla de oro, de media vara de largo y dos dedos de grueso, que les dio para señal y muestra que donde aquella barra se les hundiese, con sólo un golpe que con ella diesen en tierra, allí quería el sol nuestro padre que parasen e hiciesen su asiento y corte". 
A lo último les dijo: “Cuando hayáis reducido esas gentes a nuestro servicio, los mantendréís en razón y justicia, con piedad, clemencia y mansedumbre, haciendo en todo oficio de padre piadoso para con sus hijos tiernos y amados, a imitación y semejanza mía, que a todo el mundo hago bien, que les doy mi luz y claridad para que vean y hagan sus haciendas [...] (1963 27-28; pt. 2, bk. 1, ch. 14)

The passage is constructed in dialogue with *Genesis* 2-3, *Exodus* 6, the *Prophetic Books* and the *New Testament*. The son and daughter of the Sun God represent Adam and Eve and Jesus Christ, who demands that these members of his community go into the world and announce his doctrine. The bar as a sign of having found the “Promised Land”, like in *Exodus* 6, is also reminiscent of the history of the Aztecs, who found an eagle with a serpent in its beak in the valley-lake of Tenochtitlan. Later on, the speaker also mentions a flood: Garcilaso connects this with Noah.

Garcilaso’s position is ambivalent: in order to be accepted as a competent Western historian, he has to win the favor of the Spanish chronicler, but at the same time he earns this recognition by distancing himself critically from such chroniclers by unmasking their chronicles as mere inventions that contrast with his own history, based in testimonies and memory.

[...] y no hay que espantarnos de que gente que no tuvo letras con que conservar la memoria de sus antigüedades, trate de aquellos principios tan confusamente; pues los de la gentilidad del mundo viejo, con tener letras y ser tan curiosos en ella, inventaron fábulas tan dignas de risa, y más que estotras [the oral Inca tradition] [...]. (1963 30; pt. 2, bk.1, ch. 18)

It is particularly interesting that Garcilaso characterizes the origin of the Incas, of which there are many versions, as “fabulosas” (or fables), but these are no less invented than the stories in the *Old and New Testament*, structurally and semantically. Implicitly (and surely unintentionally), and by means of comparison, Garcilaso put both *Grandes Historias*, that of the origin of the Incas and that of Man, on the same level.

Garcilaso’s authority and legitimacy lies in his long experience in receiving history: as a boy, his relatives told him the story as legend; as a young man, in another form; and as an adult,
in a more serious form. We have in the two first cases a vitalistic notion of history based on oral tradition and experience; the last case represents an academic-narrative concept of history based on knowledge, research, and debate within the parameters of the chronicle genre. Thus, Garcilaso’s history report is born within a certain perception of history: as a history that was experienced and received in different emotional and psychological phases and was completed by direct experience of what “he saw” (religious rituals and different kinds of celebrations that were still practiced in his days) (1963 31; pt. 2, bk. 1ch. 19). Thus, Garcilaso insists that his sources come not only from an oral tradition, but also from a very selectively written tradition that his informants make available to him and to his Indian brother, and from what he calls “archivos”, a mixture of oral and written references:

Sin la relación que mis parientes me dieron de las cosas dichas y sin lo que yo vi, he habido otras muchas relaciones de las conquistas y hechos de aquellos reyes; porque luego que propuse escribir esta historia, escribí a los condiscípulos de escuela y gramática encargándolas que cada uno me ayudase con la relación haber de las particulares conquistas que los incas hicieron de las provincias de sus padres [...]. Los condiscípulos, tomando de veras lo que les pedí, cada cual de ellos dio cuenta de mi intención a su madre y parientes; los cuales sabiendo que un indio, hijo de sus tierras, quería escribir los suceso de ella, sacaran de sus archivos las relaciones que tenían de sus historias y me las enviaron. (1963 31; pt. 2, bk. 1, ch. 19)

But he also indicates that his history has the status and qualities of the Spanish Chronicles: “y así tuve noticia de los hechos y conquista de cada Inca, que es la misma que los historiadores españoles tuvieron” (1963, 31; pt. 2, bk. 1, ch. 19), the only difference consisting in that his history will be longer: “sino que ésta será más larga [...] Y porque todos los hechos de este primer Inca son principios y fundamentos de la historia que hemos de escribir” (1963 32; pt. 2, bk. 1, ch. 19).

At first glance, these two observations seem to constitute a contradiction, but they do not. What we have is a very intelligent strategy of apparent modesty and respect for the established chronicler and the Latin written works of the Chachapoyano Jesuit Valera Blas, that
seem to serve as the main model for Garcilaso’s history, but also of La Crónica del Perú by Pedro de Cieza de León or the Historia Natural y Moral de las Indias (1590) by another Jesuit, Acosta. He has some exclusive information that gives his history the character of a myth and a national foundation. This information, which the other chroniclers do not have, plus his knowledge of Quechua and the fact of having heard the history from his Inca uncles, allows him to realize a sort of deconstruction of the history concerning the Inca Empire that was written at the time. This deconstruction shows that history is a construction based on language; that the representation of history is the result of language, of the diegetic construction of the events, in the sense of an arbitrary selection of historical materials in order to build a histoire totale, according to Le Goff, or a Metahistory in White’s words:

L’essentiel pourtant, est cet appel à une histoire profonde et totale. [...] Comme tout homme de science, celui-ci doit, selon le mot de Marc Bloch, «face à l’immense et confuse réalité», faire «son choix» - ce qui, évidemment, ne signifie ni arbitraire ni simple cueillette, mais construction scientifique du document dont l’analyse doit permettre la reconstitution et l’explication du passé. [...] Mais non, du créé par l’historien, combien de fois? De l’inventé et du fabriqué, à l’aide d’hypothèses et de conjectures, par un travail délicat et passionnant. (Le Goff, Chartier, and Revel 41-42)

Moreover [...] if historical facts are constituted rather than given, so too are they “selected” rather than apodictically provided as elements of a narrative. Confronted with a chaos of “facts”, the historian must “choose, sever and carve them up” for narrative purposes. In short, historical facts, originally constituted as data by the historian, must be constituted a second time as elements of a verbal structure which is always written for a specific (manifest or latent) purpose. This means that, in his view, “History” is never simply history, but always “history-for”, history written in the interest of some infrascientific aim or vision (White 1985 55).
Garcilaso tries very hard to deliver an objective narration of history, but at the same time he underlines the aspect of the construction and manipulation in a process of fictionalization of history, and he includes the discursive process as part of the narration of history:

 [...] que yo protesto decir llanamente la relación que mamé en la leche, y la que después acá he habido, pedida a los propios míos y prometo que la afición de ellos no sea parte para dejar de decir la verdad del hecho, in quitar de lo malo, ni añadir a lo bueno que tuvieron, que bien sé que la gentilidad es un mar de errores, y no escribiré novedades que no se hayan oído, sino las mismas cosas que los historiadores españoles han escrito de aquella tierra y de los reyes de ella, y alegaré las mismas palabras de ellos, donde conociere, para que se vea que no finjo acciones a favor de mis parientes, sino que digo lo mismo que los españoles dijeron [...] Otras muchas [historias] se añadirán, que faltan de sus historias y pasaron en hecho de verdad, y algunas se quitarán que sobren por falsa relación que tuvieron por no saberla pedir el español con distinción de tiempos y edades y división de provincias y naciones, o por no entender al indio que se la daba, o por no entenderse el uno al otro, por la dificultad del lenguaje, que el español que piensa que sabe más que él, ignora de diez partes las nueve, por las muchas cosas que un mismo vocablo significa, y por las diferentes pronunciaciones [...]. (1963 32; pt. 2, bk. 1, ch. 19)

His text becomes a deconstructing supplement (“comentario”), a sort of grafted palimpsest or plait with a recodification function. It is really an act of perlaboration of writing (“declarar y ampliar”) in which he, Garcilaso, has the function of translating languages, culture, and history in the Spanish European context. He oscillates tactically between criticism and acceptance, distance and proximity, in order to increase his authority and legitimacy: “sólo serviré de comento, para declarar y ampliar muchas cosas que ellos asomaron a decir y las dejaron imperfectas por haberle faltado relación entera” (1963 32; pt. 2, bk. 1, ch. 19).

Garcilaso is obviously dealing with the science of history: how can a true history be built? He is sorting the instruments of historical discourse and, at the same time, he is
constructing the Other by attributing the Inca informant with a greater knowledge than the Spanish Chroniclers. Thus, Garcilaso becomes the agent, a new type of erudite for the Inca dynasty: the *mestizo*. His *mestizo* status guarantees the new anthropological construction of truth by a testimonial witness and archivist.

His comparisons between the history of the Incas and European history are brave and risky, and they underline both similitudes and differences with the Other. Garcilaso cleverly denies any similitude between the two cultures, but at the same time, he lets the reader realize inner similitudes. This ambiguity is what makes his discourse hybrid, and it is this strategy that stages his new concept of a history of the Other:

Demás de esto, en todo lo que de esta república antes destruída que conocida, dijere, será contado llanamente lo que en su antigüedad tuvo de su idolatría, ritos, sacrificios y ceremonias, y en su gobierno, leyes y costumbres, en paz y en guerra, sin comparar cosa alguna de éstas a otras semejantes que en las historias divinas y humanas se hallan, ni el gobierno de nuestros tiempos, porque toda comparación es odiosa. (1963 32; pt. 2, bk. 1, ch. 19)

However,

El que las leyere podrá cotejarlas a su gusto, que muchas hallará semejantes a las antiguas, así de la santa escritura como de las profanas y fábulas de la gentildad antigua; muchas leyes y costumbres verá que parecen a las de nuestro siglo, otras muchas oirá en todo contrarias. (1963 32; pt. 2, bk. 1, ch. 19)

We have very subtle nuances: he indicates that idolatry, rituals, sacrifices and ceremonies are similar to those of holy and ancient human histories; or he emphasizes the good governance, laws and customs of the Incas in order to convey that all comparison is disgusting or revolting. In the second quotation, on the contrary, he underlines the similarity between the laws of the two cultural systems.

Manco Capac, the founder of the Inca Empire, is described as a mixture between Moses, who introduces laws and regulates everyday behavior, and Jesus Christ (1963, 32-40; pt. 2, bk. 1, ch. 20-26). He, as the son of the Sun, and his sister Coya Mama Ocllo, the Sun’s daughter, are deities whom Garcilaso compares also with Jupiter, Venus and Mars (1963 42; pt. 2, bk. 2, ch. 1).
It is significant that Garcilaso constantly indicates that the Incas worshiped only one God, the Sun, and the extension of him, his son, Manco Capac. In this way, he wants to point out that they were monotheists like the Christians, and he remarks that Coya Mama Ocllo was not adored. In this point, according to Garcilaso, the Spanish Chroniclers who propagated the idea that the Incas worshiped all kinds of natural phenomena like plants and animals as gods, were wrong. Following the Book of Pedro de Cieza (chapter 72 and the following chapters which he frequently quotes), Garcilaso accepts that the Incas also worshiped Pachacamac, a God that is very similar to Yahweh in that the name signifies “he who gives life to the universe” (43; ch. 2). However, he was invisible, and so the Incas made no religious cult to him.⁶ Garcilaso narrates that the Incas then ascribed the name Pachacamac to the Christian God, that is only One, as Pedro de Cieza and Jerónimo Román wrote. The only difference between his narration and that of de Cieza and Román lies in the interpretation: the two Spanish Chroniclers did not understand Quechua (which is incorrect in the case of Cieza de León) and this is why they considered Pachacamac to be a demon (called Zupay in Quechua):

[...] hablando ambos (...) por no saber la propia significación del vocablo se lo atribuyeron al demonio. El cual en decir que el Dios de los cristianos y el Pachacamac era todo uno, dijo verdad; porque la intención de aquellos indios fué dar este nombre al sumo Dios que da vida y ser al universo, como lo significa el mismo nombre. (1963 43-44; pt. 2, bk. 2, ch. 2)

The correction is important: while the Spanish Chroniclers consider all Inca religious practices and beliefs demonic because as Indians they are supposedly unable to conveniently relate their traditions, Garcilaso is able to translate and interpret correctly as an expert in both cultural systems. He accepts the name of Pachacamac as a name that has the same attributes for both the Inca and the Christian gods:

Pero si a mí que soy indio cristiano católico por la infinita misericordia, me preguntasen ahora, ¿cómo se llama Dios en tu lengua? Diría: Pachacamac, porque en aquel general lenguaje del Perú no hay otro nombre para nombrar a Dios, sino éste; y todos los demás que los historiadores dicen son generalmente impropios porque o no son del general lenguaje, o son corruptos con el lenguaje
de algunas provincias particulares, o nuevamente compuesto por los españoles.

(1963 44; pt. 2, bk. 2, ch. 2)

Garcilaso finds similarity with the Christian religion not only in the common name of God, but also, for example, in the use of an Inca cross as a holy symbol taken by Pizarro into his own church (45; ch. 3) and in the God Chuquisaca, who is described as “three in one and one in three” (49; ch. 5). This last equivalence, however –Garcilaso makes this clear– is an ulterior invention of the Incas who mix their religion with Christianity.

In this translation context, there is great importance placed on the construction of difference and Otherness that Garcilaso –in a manner similar to that of las Casas– sees. He believes that the deep religiosity of the Incas, despite their worshipping many more gods than the Christians, finally led them to virtue:

[...] que en tanta diversidad y tanta burlería de dioses como tuvieron no adoraron los deleites ni los vicios, como los de la antigua gentilidad del mundo viejo. (49; ch. 5)

There is another astonishing parallel to Western philosophy and to Christian Anthropology: according to Garcilaso, the Incas divided the human being in the mortal body, which returned to earth, and the immortal soul. Then, they divided the universe into three Worlds: the high world, or Hanan Pacha, for the virtuous; the underworld, or Hurin Pacha, for the corrupted; and the middle of the earth, or Ucu Pacha, for those who were very evil and possessed by the demon (52; ch. 7). This classification is nearly equivalent to the Christian taxonomy of afterlife (Hell, Purgatory and Paradise). On top of that, the Inca, according to Garcilaso, believed in “universal resurrection”. He quotes several chroniclers, like the Jesuit Blas Valera, Pedro Cieza de León, Francisco López de Gómara and Agustín de Zárate in order to authorize these similar aspects with the Christian religion, in order to prove that they are not a product of “his inventions”. Garcilaso does not, in any case, renounce his originality as a historian, and he says that he does not “follow” the Spanish Chroniclers, and underlines that after he has written everything down, he rereads and sees his remarks confirmed (53; ch. 7 or 125; bk. 4 ch 4). In this context, he cannot help –like Bernal Diaz del Castillo– indicating that the famous López de Gómara got his information without having been in the Indias at all (53; ch. 7).
Garcilaso thus makes another important correction with regard to human sacrifice. He denies the sacrifices in the Second Age (the age of the Inca kings) and in Cuzco. He means that the claim that sacrifices were performed in the Second Age is the result of the ignorance of the Spanish Chroniclers who were unable to distinguish between different epochs and territories (54; ch. 7).

Yet another reference is particularly interesting. According to Garcilaso, the Incas also established the “casa de vírgenes”, a convent for nuns (monjas de claustro) and a monastery for priests, like in Europe. Thus, Garcilaso shows how highly civilized they originally were. He also does this when, for example, he describes the ingenious and efficient irrigation and sewage systems that, at his time, no longer functioned because the Spanish conquerors had killed the elites and were themselves unable to maintain and operate them. Similarly, the social system was rebuilt in similar form to that in Europe at the time. The royal elites were obliged to protect the purity of their blood and, according to this rule, they were to marry people only from their own caste, the “Inca caste”. Thus, the Incas built a real aristocracy (1963 116; pt. 2, bk. 3, ch. 23 and following chapters, and 121; bk. 4, ch. 1):

Y porque las vírgenes de aquella casa del Cozco eran dedicadas para mujeres del sol, habían de ser de su misma sangre, quiero decir, hijas de los Incas, así del rey, como de sus deudos, los legítimos y limpios de sangre. (1963 121; pt. 2, bk. 4, ch. 1)

These virgins were married to the Sun God just as the convent nuns in Spain were married to Jesus Christ:

Todas estas cosas hacían las monjas de sus manos en mucha cantidad para el sol marido de ellas; y porque el sol no podía vestir ni traer aquellos ornamentos, se los enviaban al Inca como a hijo legítimo y natural, y heredero… (1963 123; pt. 2, bk. 4, ch. 3)

It is really astonishing how Garcilaso appreciates the position of P. Blas de Valera concerning the politics of languages (1963 249; pt. 2, bk. 7, ch. 3). Blas de Valera, just like Garcilaso, demands the removal of the Babylon of languages in Peru, the result of the destruction of the Inca Empire, and the reintroduction of the language of the court as the
general language of the Empire. The purpose is namely to better evangelize the Indios, but at the same time, to regain the nearly forgotten language of Cuzco and to reject the demand that the Indios learn Spanish. The argument is ingenious and elegant: the Spaniards are so wise, the Spanish language so difficult, in contrast with the simple Indios and their noble but very natural language, and yet the Spaniards and the monks and priests should learn Quechua in order to better evangelize the indios, and at the same time re-establish language unity. He demands the reintroduction of an old Inca practice: that teachers go from village to village teaching Quechua, as it occurred during the Empire:

No faltan algunos que les parece sería muy acertado que obligasen a todos los indios a que aprendiesen la lengua española, porque los sacerdotes no trabajasen tan en vano en aprender la indiana. La cual opinión ninguno que la oye deja de entender que nació antes de flaqueza de ánimo que torpeza de entendimiento. Porque si es único remedio que los indios aprendan la lengua castellana, tan dificultosa, ¿por qué no lo será que aprendan la suya cortesana tan fácil y para ellos casi natural? Y al contrario, si los españoles que son de ingenio muy agudo y muy sabios en ciencia no pueden como ellos dicen aprender la lengua general del Cozco, ¿cómo podrá hacer que los indios no cultivados ni enseñados en letras aprendan la lengua castellana? [...] Luego no hay para qué impongamos a los indios dos cargas tan pesadas como mandarles olvidar su lengua y aprender la ajena por librarnos de una molestia tan pequeña como aprender la lengua cortesana de ellos. (1963 249; pt. 2, bk. 7, ch. 3)

Blas Valera and Garcilaso describe how the Incas understood that the linguistic unity of the country was the most important instrument of power for spreading the power of the Inca monarchy, for the unification of the territory, and in the end, for building the empire (cf. Garcilaso 1963 250-251; pt. 2, bk. 7, ch. 4).

In the second part of his *Comentarios Reales* he gives three reasons for writing the books. First, to introduce the world to his native country and his monarchs, which were comparable to “los Daríos de Persia, Ptolomeos de Egipto, Alejandros de Grecia y Cipriones de Roma” (Garcilaso 1960 11; pt. 3, Prólogo); indeed, some of their heroic acts were as marvelous
as those of Hector and Achilles. The second reason is to describe the greatness of the Spanish conquerors. The third is the will to dedicate his time to honorable work, meaning to the “letras”, in the Renaissance erudite tradition (12-13).

**Garcilaso, or the Beginning of Modern History?**

With constant reflection on the construction of historical discourse and his constant discursive ambivalence, Garcilaso is one of the first chroniclers to make an enormous contribution to contemporaries’ notions of history as a result of testimonies, oral tradition, experience, lived history, and textuality.

In this context, we now seek to investigate the nexus between Garcilaso, le Goff, and particularly Hayden White in order to potentially answer this question. However, we do not pretend to make Garcilaso a post-modern historian, nor a representative of the Paris School of “new historical writing” or the Stanford’s School of Metahistory. Such an approach could be qualified as a scientific distortion. I am also very aware of some key epistemological differences between the formulation of history during the Renaissance, wherein Man was concerned with the construction of a coherent general system of knowledge, and the post-modern deconstruction of the subject that represents the opposite of this. My aim is to show how some similarity persists in the difference between systems. I emphasize that I do not refer to modern or post-modern historical writing in talking about Garcilaso, but to modern historical concepts, from the Renaissance onward.

But we find the link to both post-modern historians mentioned above in some fields that are fundamental to a modern historical consciousness and its written representation. One, for example, is the notion of *transtextuality*, understood not only as a simple and direct intertextual relational dialogue, but beyond that, as a deconstruction, transformation and recodification from which the ambiguity of Garcilaso’s discourse, its innovating character and the construction of a history of difference flows. Second is *auto-referentiality* and *auto-reflection*, understood as the performativity and staging of an internal process of discursive construction, an awareness about how the process of historical representation is connected to and dependent on both the semiotic process of writing and the subjectivity of the writer. Third
is the *metatextuality*, understood as the reflection, commentaries, and consequences (in this regard the title *Comentarios* is very significant) of the process of historical construction: the questioning of the historical materials and sources, the problem of references and linguistic competence, the relation between orality and writing, or reality and imagination, and the evaluation of cultural systems.

Garcilaso thinks and writes about the fragility of historical discourse and makes this problem, the ambivalence of writing, and perception, parts of his historical project. Thus, he understands himself to be a translator, and history to be an act of *translatio*, a gigantic palimpsest where history is the result of writing and re-writing, reading and re-reading, so that history is created by the historian, although the historian himself is constantly claiming to do nothing other than reproduce historical fact.

It is important in this Modern Time concept of history that Garcilaso amplified written and privileged sources through the oral sources and a large variety of other sources, just as Le Goff demands for post-modern history (we must remember that Garcilaso criticizes López de Gómara for using only written documents):

[…][L’]histoire nouvelle a élargi le champ du document historique; à l’histoire de Langlois et de Seignobos essentiellement fondée sur les textes, sur le document écrit, elle a substitué une histoire fondée sur une multiplicité de documents: écrits de toutes sortes, documents figurés, produits de fouilles archéologiques, documents oraux, etc. Une statistique, une courbe des prix, une photographie, un film ou, pour un passé plus lointain, du pollen fossile, un outil, un ex-voto sont, pour l’histoire nouvelle, des documents de premier ordre. (Le Goff, Chartier, and Revel 38)

But Garcilaso’s interest in writing a complete history from its mythical origins to the present, and to write about all aspects of the society, religions, social and familiar practices, everyday life, food and clothes, laws and urban systems, etc. –all that makes Garcilaso an exception in comparison to other chroniclers. He is perhaps the first historian of a “histoire totale”: “Le désir de l’histoire nouvelle de construire une histoire de l’homme total, avec son corps et sa physiologie situés dans la durée social…” as Le Goff writes (57).
Garcilaso constructs history not only through what we call objective materials, but also through psychology, anthropology, ethnology and subjective elements. This is precisely the location where –according to White and Northrop Frye– we find the mythical moment and the fictionalization of history. Garcilaso’s approach would be very eclectic from Le Goff’s theoretical perspective, but he tries very hard to deliver a systematic and complete history through a strong plotting of the historical object that he is representing. In White’s words, Garcilaso “...performs an essentially poetic act, in which he prefigures the historical field and constitutes it as a domain upon which to bring to bear the specific theories he will use to explain ‘what has really happened’ in it” (1975 30 and the following pages, ch. 10).

And with this “what has really happened” Garcilaso always has the reader in focus, who is, after himself, the main addressee as White underlines:

A historical interpretation, like a poetic fiction, can be said to appeal to its readers as a plausible representation of the world by virtue of its implicit appeal to those “pregeneric plot-structures” or archetypal story-forms that define the modalities of a given culture’s literary endowment. Historians, no less than poets, can be said to gain an “explanatory affect” – over and above whatever formal explanations they may offer of specific historical events – by building into their narrative patterns of meaning similar to those more explicitly provided by the literary art of the cultures to which they belong (White 1985 58).

**Conclusions**

Garcilaso’s purpose was to construct the “other history”, the “history of difference”, the “mestizo history”, in order to give the Inca history the same status as the Spanish and European ones. He attempts this through *legitimation* based on an oral tradition founded in memory, testimonies, archives, and lived history, through *authorization*, based in part on *eruditio* and rhetorical intelligence. He unmaskes historical discourse as a linguistic construction. Garcilaso shows a new consciousness, that of a new type of Man, that of a Renaissance mestizo. This does not represent a disadvantage for him; on the contrary, he uses this status as a weapon, because: “Sin la relación que mis parientes me dieron de las cosas dichas y sin lo que yo vi, [...]
y yo protesto decir llanamente la relación que mamé en la leche [...] Yo escribo como otras veces he dicho, lo que mamé en la leche y ví y oí a mis mayores” he never could have succeeded to legitimate his Commentarios Reales (31; bk. 1, ch. 19; see also 25; bk. 1, ch. 14 and 27; ch. 15, 29; ch. 17).

He gets his authority, once more, through eruditio, through the “plotting” of Inca history, which he transforms into a universal history, a history of a New Antiquity. No chronicler before him has reached such a vast objective.

Perhaps the value, or the effect, of such historical discourse at the time has been less extensive due to the reduced reception of the text, but for that, the yield is immense: on one hand we experience how Man thought at the time and which problems have survived from colonial times to the present, and how important the archives, the testimonies and memory are for building a new history.

Therefore, in my reading of Garcilaso’s work, the facts are not the most important issue, but rather the grandiose performance, staging and representation of an extinct Empire and Civilization, because:

So too every fiction must pass a test of correspondence (it must be “adequate”, as an image of something beyond itself) if it is to lay claim to representing an insight into or illumination of the human experience of the world. [...] In this respect, history is no less a form of fiction than the novel is a form of historical re-presentation (White 1985, 122).

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Notas
2 After Krzysztof Pomian, Nora is the first historian after Braudel to bring together history and memory (Assmann 2009, 142).
3 “[...] es keine Geschichtsschreibung gibt, die nicht zugleich auch Gedächtnisarbeit wäre, also unhintergebar verquckt ist mit den Bedingungen der Sinngebung, Parteilichkeit und Identitätsstiftung“ (Assmann 2009, 133).
4 Gewiß, wir brauchen Historie, aber wir brauchen sie anders, als sie der verwöhnte Müßiggänger im Garten des Wissens braucht, mag derselbe auch vornehm auf unsere derben und anmutlosen Bedürfnisse und Nöte herabsehen. Das heißt, wir brauchen sie zum Leben und zur Tat, nicht zur bequemen Abkehr vom Leben und von der Tat, oder gar zur Beschönigung des selbsstüchtigen Lebens und der feigen und schlechten Tat. Nur soweit die Historie dem Leben dient, wollen wir ihr dienen: aber es gibt einen Grad, Historie zu treiben, und eine Schätzung derselben, bei der das Leben verkümmert
und entartet: ein Phänomen, welches an merkwürdigen Symptomen unserer Zeit sich zur Erfahrung zu bringen jetzt ebenso notwendig ist, als es schmerzlich sein mag (Nietzsche 1981, 95). ... also erst durch die Kraft, das Vergangene zum Leben zu gebrauchen und aus dem Geschehenen wieder Geschichte zu machen, wird der Mensch zum Menschen: aber in einem Übermaße von Historie hört der Mensch wieder auf, und ohne jene Hülle des Unhistorischen würde er nie angefangen haben und anzufangen wagen (ibid., 102).

5 But we must note that some of the Spanish Chroniclers were also mestizo and spoke Quechua like the Jesuit Blas Valera.

6 Garcilaso (43; ch. 2) quoted in this case by Agustín de Zarate (ch. 5).