Ideas In Motion: A Critical Analysis Of The Works And Ideas Of Garcilaso De La Vega

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IDEAS IN MOTION: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF
THE WORKS AND IDEAS OF
GARCILASO DE LA VEGA

HONORS THESIS

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
AND
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

BY
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For My Mother
I Love You.
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INTRODUCTION

Garcilaso de la Vega, El Inca, the historian, should not be confused with Garcilaso de la Vega, the famous Spanish poet. Garcilaso de la Vega, El Inca (1539-1616) was born in Cuzco, Peru, to an Incan Princess and a Spanish conqueror. He moved to Spain at twenty-one. The young mestizo remained in Spain for the rest of life, but his love for Peru endured until his death. This devotion to America was evident in his major historical contributions, The Florida, and his two part Peruvian history, titled The Royal Commentaries. These works discussed the history of America, and gave the first native account published. Vega’s works gained fame after his death and became well known throughout Europe. Today, Vega’s books are still cherished as Spanish classics and staples of American history.

Garcilaso de la Vega, El Inca, had an interesting approach to history. His Peruvian upbringing and Spanish education paved the way for the young mestizo to present the people of the New World to their Spanish conquerors in a humanitarian fashion. His value for both cultures was displayed throughout his works as he tried to synthesize the two diverse world-views. When evaluating the merit of Vega’s historical contributions, it is first necessary to examine the author’s personal and intellectual background. The second chapter of this thesis evaluates Vega’s writings and the knowledge from which they came.
Next, to appreciate the intellectual contribution's of Vega's writings, we must consider his use of cause-and-effect, as well as his historical objectivity: first looking at what caused history to unfold the way it did according to Vega, and then examining whether he was an objective. Vega’s writing reflected the values and ideas of his own time. Living on the cusp of the Renaissance and the Age of Reason, he incorporated beliefs from both periods into his histories. Vega used God to explain the causes of history at times, but at other times he explained the motion of history through individual choice. His objectivity was also a reflection of his time. Vega tried to remain objective throughout his works and he displayed this objectivity through his continuous use of supporting sources. The measure of objectivity, during Vega’s time, however, differs greatly from standards of objectivity today. While he was considered an objective historian in his own time, today his writings are considered to be biased, as he presents a political and philosophical agenda and also incorporates a romantic style not acceptable to today’s historians.

One of the most fascinating aspects of Vega’s writings was their contribution to European thought. These histories were not stagnant books collecting dust on unknown shelves. Rather, Vega’s works were well read throughout Europe and contributed to philosophical ideas of the time. His histories influenced renowned authors such as Washington Irving, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Voltaire. The ideas Vega portrayed throughout his histories probed his readers to ask questions about the state of nature, the origin of the state, and the condition of the ideal society. His works had the ability to inspire thought, as the Peruvian rebellion of 1780 demonstrated. The beliefs promoted in the first part of the Royal
Commentaries became a kind of standard for this rebellion that demanded justice for the Peruvian people.

Vega’s ideas were so powerful and so well received in Europe that they brought up questions of whether Vega was not only a historian, but also a philosopher. In the first part of the Royal Commentaries, Vega definitely set forth a political philosophy. This work presented theories about the ideal state that parallels many of the beliefs set forth by Thomas Hobbes. These philosophers encouraged monarchy as the best form of government and believed that within this social framework, subject and ruler could obtain a relationship where both worked for the good of the other.

Vega’s historical contributions are still important today. As the first American historian, he told the story of New World conquest from a valuable and unique perspective. Vega’s writings provide insight into customs and values of the Incan people that would have otherwise been lost. His struggle between two diverse world views created an original perspective about the role of Spanish conquerors and Incan natives. His works remain as important archival source for Incan history, and well as a graphic narrative for those interested in the American conquest. Vega is especially important because his ideas added to the motion of thought that brought about many theories promoted in the enlightenment that are still influential today.
CHAPTER 1

FINDING A HOME LAND

The Incan Empire began under the leadership of Manco Capac. According to Incan oral tradition, Manco Capac and his wife/sister Coya Mama Oclo Huaco were descended from the sun to bring enlightenment to the savage peoples of Peru. The couple created the Incan Empire, conquering nomadic peoples and bringing them peace and justice. Manco Capac reserved the name “Inca” as a sacred term specifying the ruling class of the empire and signifying their royal lineage. This ruling class established succession through a law of incestual primogeniture, which they believed would guarantee divine lineage and just rule.

The historian Garcilaso de la Vega (El Inca) wrote that Manco Capac was a just and caring ruler, who brought peace and agriculture to barbaric uncivilized people. This Incan authority wrote that the justice and goodness created by Manco Capac lasted for twelve generations until the reign of Huaina Capac. The glory of the empire ended with Huaina’s death and his decision to divide the empire between his two sons, the legitimate heir, Huascar, and his son from an illegitimate relationship, Atahuallpa. Huascar Inca was the legal and proper heir to the Incan throne. Being born from Huaina's sister and wife, he possessed the purity of blood necessary to rule the empire. Atahuallpa won favor with Huaina because he was the son of the king's favorite concubine. Huaina loved Atahuallpa's mother so much that he decided to
break Incan tradition and divide his kingdom. This act was sinful because it broke with Manco Capac's strict instruction regarding the succession of Incan rule. Once in power, greed and envy drove young Atahuallpa to seek control of the entire empire. Laying siege to the Incan capital of Cuzco, he captured its inhabitants and brutally began murdering anyone with Incan ancestry. His goal was to take control of the empire by annihilating the entire Incan class and leaving himself as the only legitimate heir.¹

It was in the midst of this fray that Don Francisco Pizarro and his 160 Spanish followers arrived in Peru. Arriving in the middle of this civil war, Pizarro witnessed Atahuallpa's holocaust and his relentless desire for genocide. In the name of the hundreds of Incans Atahuallpa had already killed, Pizarro executed him in 1531, restoring rule to the rightful Incan King (Huascar's closest relation). Shortly after the Incan rulers execution, a second group of Spanish explorers arrived in Peru to assist Pizarro. Among these Spanish conquistadors was Garcilaso de la Vega.

Garcilaso de la Vega came to Peru to uphold a long and proud heritage established by his great grandfather, the noble Garci Perez, a man who exemplified the qualities of perfect chivalry. Continuing in this heritage, Vega sought to establish the family's prestige in the New World. Garcilaso achieved great success in America and appointed the position of captain in Pizarro's army. In fact, his prestige became so great that, later in life, he was appointed Corridor of Cuzco. As with most of the "honorable" American explorers, Vega received gifts of fame, money, shelter and companionship. Vega chose his prizes carefully, and when selecting a lover, he was no less meticulous. He selected an Incan princess who had escaped Atahuallpa's
wrath, the Incan princess Isabel Yupanqui Nusta, sister to Incan heir Huayna Capac. Isabel submitted to Captain Vega, believing that her service would help her people and satisfy their God (the Sun). On April 12, 1539, she gave birth to Captain Vega's son, Gomez Suarez de Figueroa (later known as Garcilaso de la Vega, El Inca).²

Vega never officially married the Incan princess. Nevertheless, he regarded his new son as his legitimate heir and successor. Gomez was born and raised in his father's house in Cuzco, awarded to him because of his devotion to the Spanish crown. Gomez maintained a deep attachment to this house throughout his entire life. The Royal Commentaries described its beautiful location looking down on the main Cuzco square and up toward the snow covered mountains. Both of Gomez's parents were active in his childhood, even though they parted only a decade after his arrival. After the separation Captain Vega married Luisa Martel. Gomez never liked his stepmother; their conflict intensified with Captain Vega's death and a bitter struggle over his monetary possessions. Vega's mother also married again to Juan de Pedroche, about whom we know little. Regardless of the separation, Vega was raised by both of his parents. His first language, however, was the Incan language Quechuan and his primary culture Incan. His first years of life were spent with his Incan mother and her relatives. These early years played a fundamental part in cultivating Vega's character; they helped to explain his deep devotion to the Incan people and their way of life. Although Gomez grew up within the Incan culture, he made it clear that he was not an Inca, but a mestizo- a person of mixed blood who was never completely accepted in Incan or Spanish circles.³
Gomez's childhood was filled with the opportunity, excitement, and violence characteristic of sixteenth century Peru. These years were times of great political turmoil between the crown, conquerors, and indigenous people. Throughout his youth, Gomez watched rebellions develop against Spanish rule, and because of his father's political prowess, he knew many of the rebels and even witnessed some of their executions. Indeed, Gonzalo Pizarro, a famous Peruvian rebel and the brother of Don Francisco Pizarro, played a key role in Gomez's youth.

Originally a friend of Captain Vega, Gonzalo turned cold when Vega refused to support his rebellion. Conflict with Pizarro began when the throne passed a series of laws called The New Laws. The Spanish government proposed the New Laws which were ratified by Charles V on April 15, 1543. These laws resented the riches given to the conquerors for their hardships, including their decision to come to America. The property was then used to entice natives to accept Spanish rule and convert to Catholicism. The enraged conquerors called on Gonzalo Pizarro to appeal to the crown for the reversal of these laws. Captain Vega supported the growing resistance to the New Laws and Gonzalo's attempts to persuade Charles of the law's dire effects. He became uncomfortable, however, when Pizarro shifted from peaceful negotiations to violent rebellion. Vega realized that Pizarro's actions were bordering on treason, so he decided to flee Pizarro's command, leaving at a time when the Spanish army should have wiped out this clandestine operation. The conqueror prevailed however, and became obsessed with destroying Vega for his "desertion". Pizarro soon gained control of Cuzco, which forced Vega into hiding, leaving his son and concubine trapped in their home. The terror Gomez experienced during this siege
remained with him until the final years of his life. He reflected: “We should have
died of starvation if the Incas and Pallas, our kinfolk, had not succored us, by secretly
sending us food at all hours of the day.” Gomez's situation took a strange twist
when Pizarro captured his father and decided to imprison the Captain rather than end
his life.

Gonzalo Pizarro cherished his previous friend so much that he kept him alive
as a nominal prisoner. Captain Vega was forced to spend all hours of the day at
Pizarro’s side. His treatment was not brutish or inhumane, but the lack of freedom
wore on him all the same. During this time young Gomez became very close to
Pizarro and his son Fernando. Gomez liked Gonzalo and Fernando and spoke highly
of their moral character throughout The Royal Commentaries. One of Gomez’s most
violent experiences occurred with the destruction of Pizarro’s rebellion. John Varner,
a well known Vega biographer, described the violent incident:

Men were hanged, drawn and quartered, tongues were torn from gullets, and
while amazed Indians gazed in bewilderment upon this strange exposition of
fratricidal vengeance, more than a hundred victims were stripped naked, placed on
some lowly beast of burden, and lashed pitilessly through a gauntlet before being
labeled for the king’s galleys.

Gomez's Peruvian experience was not entirely negative. While he witnessed
the inner turmoils of colonial life, he also enjoyed a European education. During
Gomez’s wild childhood he was heavily influenced by two powerful and
contradicting mentors, one Spanish and one Incan. The Inca, Prince Sairi Tupac,
would meet with Gomez, teaching him of Incan tradition and expressing love for the
Incan people. These encounters solidified Gomez’s respect for the Incas and
reiterated his quixotic beliefs about their society. Gomez's relationship with his mother and his Incan relatives heightened his attachment to their stories and customs. He listened intently as his Incan ancestors related their oral histories, which taught lessons of courage, goodness, justice and divine law. At a crucial time when Spanish occupation of Peru threatened Incan culture, Gomez's relationship with the Incas helped him remain bi-cultural.  

While Gomez was becoming infatuated with Incan rule and culture, he was also being inspired by Spanish religion and education. Attending a small parochial school led by Juan de Cuellar, Gomez was instructed in the finer points of a Spanish education. A Canon at the cathedral of Cuzco; Cuellar was a most unusual teacher for the time. He sincerely loved and cared for each of his mestizo students. His teaching code was original because he believed that mestizos could produce important scholarly work. Other instructors of the period did not hold such an idealistic creed and viewed the mestizos as second-class citizens who were inferior to full blooded Spaniards. Cuellar's positive attitude inspired Gomez and encouraged him to look beyond his supposed capabilities to a higher education.  

Captain Vega maintained an intimate relationship with his mestizo son, always treating him as a legitimate heir and equal. Gomez loved his father and was tormented as he helplessly witnessed the disease-ridden captain suffer for two long years before his life finally ended. Gomez left Peru shortly after the death of his father; in January of 1560 he left his Peruvian homeland to immerse himself in the culture and knowledge of the Old World.
Once in Spain, Gomez sought to have the honor of his father, Captain Garcilaso de la Vega, acknowledged by the Spanish crown. Flaunting his rich Spanish heritage, Gomez naively believed the courts would openly accept his father's sacrifices for Spanish nationality. The young Peruvian appealed to the Council of Indies for the accreditation of his father's loyalty. The appeal backfired and Captain Vega's honor was tarnished. His loyalty was rejected because of misconceptions perpetuated by Spanish Chroniclers about his role in the battle of Huarina. According to these false legends, the captain (while under the control of Pizarro) saved Gonzalo Pizarro's life by giving the rebel leader his prize horse, Salinillas. The horse supposedly enabled Pizarro to escape death and defeat from the pursuing Spanish army. Gomez knew of the incident and defended his father: “That is what these authors say of my father. I have written what actually happened in the battle, for Gonzalo Pizarro's taking of my father's horse did not occur during it but afterwards.” The council refused Gomez's story, labeling Captain Vega a traitor. This brutal rejection provoked Gomez to change his name from "Gomez Suarez Figueroa" to "Garcilaso de la Vega". This name alteration clearly displayed Vega's desire to restore his father's honor. His bitterness over this later drove him to write the second part of *The Royal Commentaries*, a book centered around clearing the name of his patriarch. His devotion was so complete that he titled an entire section of the book, the Funeral Oration of a Religious on the Death of My Lord Garcilaso. Throughout this section Gomez proclaimed Captain Vega's glory:

... But the honor that Peru renders Garcilaso de la Vega is much greater, for what tongue can recite the labors he underwent, the perils he faced, the
hunger, thirst, fatigue, cold and nakedness he suffered, the lands not seen before he visited them, and the immense difficulties he overcame?

He would rather be loved than feared. He was slow to anger, and not hasty in affairs, considering anger the enemy of good counsel and haste the mother of error. In speech he was soft and reasonable; in his reproaches restrained and self-controlled, for he was never heard to use an ill-bred or insulting word...

There died the exemplar of military valor; the ornament of peace; the honored of the nobility; the model of judges, of the good; the terror of the wicked and lastly the defender of the natives. But while all are rightly mourning his death he is enjoying eternal life..."12

Vega, however, was not able to write these words of rectification until the end of his life. Trapped in a foreign country, isolated from the honor he believed he should rightfully receive, he turned his interests toward his homeland. After the trial at the Council of Indies, he planned to return to Peru, but conceded his plan when his major rival in the trial, Garcia de Castro, was appointed president of Peru.13

Vega made one last attempt to be accepted and glorified in Spanish society. In October of 1569 when Philip, the king's brother, declared war on the Muslims in Spain, Vega rallied to the call. Vega used his own money to support Philip and fought with his army until they had successfully driven "all the Muslims" from the country. Vega was promoted through the ranks to captain and enjoyed great success throughout his encounters. While Philip recognized the great loyalty and ability of Vega, his praise was only minimal and Vega never felt he was properly appreciated. He was never decorated for his services during the fray and never reimbursed for his monetary expenditures. He was rewarded, however, with two servants who lived with him until his death in 1616.14
The youngest of the two servants, Beatriz, became Vega's concubine and gave birth to his only child, a son named Diego de Vargas. Ironically, El Inca was not as generous as his father and never portrayed any affection toward his illegitimate offspring. The family lived in Cordoba (after he wrote his first book, The Philosophy of Love), where Vega composed the majority of his works and remained for the rest of his life. Diego and Vega had a strange relationship marked by little or no emotional interaction. Vega was concerned about the boy's life, but no sign of affection between the two has survived. Moreover, while Beatriz appeared to be Vega's primary romantic relationship he never took her as his wife (possibly because of her Muslim heritage). After Vega received his servants, he isolated himself in his uncle's house in Montilla.13

Feeling rejected by Spanish society, Garcilaso sought refuge in the Neo-Platonic/Aristotelian philosophy of Leone Ebreo. Ebreo's The Philosophy of Love provided consolation for the outcast mestizo. The Renaissance philosopher reestablished Vega's pride: "... the true end of real virtue cannot lie in the opinion of men, who measure honour and glory by memory and writings, which are monuments of fame. . . ."16 Ebreo's writings helped Vega concentrate on idealistic virtues and forget his humiliation at the trial.

The Philosophy of Love presented ideals that allowed Vega to begin to reconcile his mixed heritage. He was crushed by the council's rejection and confused about his position in the world. Members of the clergy encouraged Vega to use his fascination with Ebreo to produce a scholarly contribution. Ebreo's work provided an idealistic escape from the bitter reality of racial rejection. Ebreo was a Jewish
philosopher who combined religious, astrological, Platonic and Aristotelian ideals into an eloquent expression of Renaissance thought. Obsessed with Ebreo's work, Vega had already begun the translation of The Philosophy of Love when his friends convinced him to translate and publish the opus. His translation was particularly admirable considering that his first language was the Incan language of Quechua and the translation was from Italian to Spanish. During the development of this rendition Vega changed his name again, from Garcilaso de la Vega to Garcilaso de la Vega, El Inca. The addition of El Inca embodied his American ancestry. Vega's name change is significant in understanding his reconciliation with the world. Vega completed his translation in 1590. The book won vast approval in Spain and gradually throughout Europe. This encouraged him to proceed with his historical aspirations. Vega's support helped drive the research and writing of his next work, The Florida. 

El Inca passionately devoted the remainder of his life to writing history. His first work, The Florida, was completed in 1599, but the work was not published until 1605. This book was based on the expedition of Hernando de Soto, the first explorer to significantly penetrate the North American mainland. Vega's primary source was never directly identified, but most experts believed it was Vega's good friend and member of Soto's expedition, Gonzalo Sylvestre.

Following The Florida, Garcilaso focused his energy on composing his next historical record, The Royal Commentaries. A two-part volume, the first book told an epic story of the Incan Empire. The history began with the first Incan ruler Manco Capac (child of the sun), and continued until the betrayal of Atahualpa. This history reflected Vega's desire to dispel negative stereotypes about the Native Americans.
The first part of The Royal Commentaries used Vega’s childhood experiences to recount the oral history of the Incan Empire and its rulers. This book focused not on the brutish state of savages, but on the just laws and wisdom of the Incan rulers.

Vega described the Incan Empire in an exotic fashion, focusing on its glory and prestige.

Throughout the second part, which did not appear in print until after his death in 1616, El Inca focused on amending the history of the Spanish conquistadors. It told of the many rebellions and hardships of the Spaniards. This section also concentrates on the "pacification" of Peru. El Inca used this book to defend the rights of the Peruvian settlers. The Royal Commentaries were Vega's opportunity to proclaim the greatness of his mixed blood and reconcile the diversity of his background.

Vega spent the majority of his time devoted to these literary pursuits, but he found some time to participate in society. Vega was a social man and must have been very well liked, as he was the godfather to many children in his town. Later in Vega's life he joined the priesthood, which allowed him to be part of his Spanish community. He held a job from 1605 to 1608, performing ecclesiastic duties for the Hospital of Immaculate Conception. He left this position in 1608 in order to finish The Commentaries. Vega feared greatly that he would not live to finish his work, and spent all hours of the day working toward its completion.19

Tragically, Vega lived long enough to see the royal Incan lineage destroyed. He had spent the majority of his life preserving the memory of his mother's people, yet at the end of his life not one pure Incan survived. The Royal Commentaries were
finished just before Vega's death and remained a rare symbol of the vast empire's
greatness. The second part was finished in 1616, but published posthumously. The
epitaph around his sarcophagus summarized his life.

The Inca, Garcilaso de la Vega, a distinguished man worthy of perpetual
memory, illustrious in blood, well versed in letters, valiant in arms. Son of Garcilaso
de la Vega of the ducal houses of Feria and Infantado, and of Elizabeth Palla, sister of
Huaina Capac, last Emperor of Peru. He edited La Florida, translated Leone Ebreo,
and composed The Royal Commentaries. 20

Garcilaso de la Vega, El Inca, died on 22, April 1616 with his son and concubine at
his side and was buried at the Chapel of the Blessed souls of Purgatory. His life was
characterized by his desire to find a place in the world. Neither a Spaniard nor an
Incan, Vega faced prejudice and isolation that few understood. His heritage led to
production of The Royal Commentaries that stands today as a hallmark of Spanish
writing and one of the first American classics. 21
To understand the significance of El Inca as a historian, we first need to examine what he writes about and why it is important. For Garcilaso de la Vega, El Inca, history was an interdisciplinary subject, which was not governed by strict guidelines. Vega followed some of the established patterns of previous historians, but he also extended his scope beyond traditional recordings.

Historians in pre-Renaissance periods had traditionally written history from a limited perspective. Early historians such as Homer and Herodotus wrote military histories explaining the actions of heroes and villains in times of conflict. This style of history shaped later historical writing indefinitely, military history became a central theme in recording the human experience. Garcilaso de la Vega, El Inca partook of this tradition throughout all his historical texts. The Florida told of the adventures of Hernando de Soto battling his way across North America to win territory for Spain. The first part of The Royal Commentaries described how Manco Capac and his posterity established an empire and fought to protect and expand it. The second part explained the military struggles suffered by the conquerors who were trying to claim Peru and the surrounding areas, as well as on the internal strife between the
conquerors and the Spanish crown; it depicted the many rebellions trying to rid Spain of its Peruvian colony. All of these works displayed military history on some level.

Vega's history, recorded not only the military activities of groups or civilizations, but facts about all aspects of history. Throughout El Inca's writings he expanded his histories beyond the battlefield to the culture, geography, politics, and rituals of the people. Vega wrote such a broad history because of his inclusive perspective. He wanted his histories to be useful for people of all time periods: "I have written about these matters, though they are not of great importance, because in future times, which is when history acquires most value, people may be glad to know about these beginnings." Vega's incorporation of descriptions and facts not obviously related to military progress provided a better understanding of the time period and the way people lived. Descriptions of landscapes and cultural customs associated a human face with an otherwise dogmatic account.

El Inca's best examples of his desire to preserve all aspect of life were found throughout the first Royal Commentaries. Although his other works provided examples of cultural, political, geographical and religious description, the book dedicated to the Incas gave vast explanations of the Incan people and their lives. Vega commented on all aspects of Incan life, from the political structures to the cultivation of specific vegetation and animals. His analysis of Incan life even included an entire section dedicated to "Pigs; their great fertility." Other chapters of this book were dedicated to topics such as: "Different kinds of Marriages and Diverse Languages; their use of Poisons and Spells"; "The Priest's Rites and Ceremonies"; "Laws Attributed to the First Inca"; "Houses of Virgins Dedicated to the Sun"; and
Maize and What They Call Rice, and Other Seeds”. Clearly Vega had an encompassing view of history and desired to incorporate all aspects of knowledge into his records. We appreciate his intricacies in retrospect, but do not expect them in a traditional history.

Vega's, El Inca desire to expand knowledge did not end with the secular world; his histories also included religious practices. His works discussed the importance of prophecies, astrology, and religious stories. He did not separate religion and astrology from facts about human life, but seemed to have believed that often-religious interpretation of an event was synonymous with its factual reality. In Vega's writings, miracles and astrological prediction were natural characteristics of human history. Vega recalled, "When the Indians were about to fall on the Christians our Lady appeared in the air with the child Jesus in Her Arms in great splendor and beauty and stood before them all." He noted the importance of astrology in daily decision-making: "Do this, if it is only to avoid spurning the advantages and countenancing the disadvantages of a horoscope the astrologers have cast for your lordship." The chronicler incorporated a religious side of history often rejected by many of today's historians, for he believed this non-temporal view provided insight into the values and mores of his time.

Moreover, Vega also included stories that he knew and admitted were fallacious or exaggerated. In the first part of The Royal Commentaries, El Inca told fables recounted to him about the origin of the Incas. He included these stories to show the perspective of the native people, and to stress the importance of writing in a society. He defended the Incan position stating that, ". . . it is hardly to be
wondered at that people without letters with which to preserve the memory of their antiquity should have so confused an idea of their beginnings. . . "6 El Inca's inclusion of legend displayed his desire to record all aspects of the human experience and portray the way his characters understood the world.

Furthermore Vega's historical depiction was unusual in his conscious decision to omit certain names. Motivated by his own experience, El Inca deliberately omitted the names of individuals who failed to exhibit (what he perceived to be) honorable behavior. He was denied his honor because of historically inaccurate accounts, concerning his father which were presented before the Council of Indies. Vega did not wish to inflict similar pain on others and so he amended his historical record. For example, when speaking of those accused of a crime, Vega rationalized, "I could give their names but it is only proper to respect their reputation and honour."7 Vega assumed this action would spare unnecessary pain to the accused and their families. He was conscious of the effect his works would have on others and deliberately avoided flamboyant accusations. 8 This desire to write a factual account without dishonoring others was a continuous theme throughout his endeavors.

In conclusion we have seen that Garcilaso de la Vega, El Inca had an inclusive and specific idea of history. His histories considered all aspects of the human experience, from military conquest to religious views. This understanding of history led Vega to create a cultural, social, geographic, religious and political picture of his subjects. Vega's broad scope of history broke with the medieval tradition, that primarily examined military and political history. His detailed histories were created
to benefit mankind. History, according to Vega, was written to preserve the past for generation of the future.

**SOURCES**

Garcilaso used three different types of sources throughout his historical presentations. The driving force behind the *Royal Commentaries* was Vega's personal experiences. For both of these books his eye witness experiences accounted for the bulk of his historical analysis. In addition, Vega used written sources produced by other chroniclers. The uses of these literary sources were especially apparent in the second part of *The Royal Commentaries*. Finally, he incorporated oral accounts and legends into his writings. *The Florida* was based primarily on the oral accounts of members of de Soto's expedition, and the first *Commentaries* received information from the oral tradition of the Incan people. It was Vega's personal experience that added originality to his interpretation of Incan history.

*The Royal Commentaries* were written primarily from Vega's first hand experiences. Unlike, *The Florida*, which relied on Gonzalo Silvestre as its primary source of information regarding de Soto's expedition, Vega personally witnessed Peruvian life. Both parts of the *Commentaries* were developed around El Inca's life experiences and were told from a first person narrative. Vega was confident in himself; he sincerely believed that his limited first person account was factual and objective. He touted, "I declare that I shall simply tell the tales imbibed with my mother's milk and those I have since obtained by request from my relations, and I promise that my affection for them shall not cause me to stray from true facts either
by underestimating the ill or exaggerating the good they did."9 Vega's first person accounts were valuable to his histories because of his unique background.10

El Inca provided a different perspective on Peruvian history because of his upbringing. His complete knowledge of the Quechuan language enabled him to explain and amend misconceptions about Peruvian history. The first Commentaries began with a section dedicated to clearing the origin of the name, Peru. Until El Inca wrote the Commentaries the origin of this country's name was a confused mystery. The American's linguistic knowledge allowed him to discover the origin of the word and clear up fallacies previously perpetuated. The word Peru did not occur within the Quechuan language, but Vega recognized its origin to be a Spanish perversion of two Incan words. One of the words was the Quechuan symbol for river and the other was a proper noun associated with the first Incan subject the Spanish explorers contacted.11 He demonstrated the importance of his background as he continually used his linguistic knowledge to explain historical facts that had been previously misconstrued. In commenting upon the problems facing one Spanish linguist, Vega expounded: "This clearly shows how ignorant the Spaniards are of the secrets of the language, for they were unknown to this monk, although he had been a professor of it. Consequently many errors and misinterpretations are written about it. . . ." 12 The chronicler's linguistic capabilities proved to be a valuable asset in his historical writings.

Vega realized the value of his situation and used a first person narrative to enlighten his readers as to the intricacies of the Quechuan language. However, Vega recognized that doubt would accompany a purely first person account, especially from
a lowly mestizo. Recognizing the need to validate his story, Vega also used official sources to confirm his personal accounts. The secondary sources quoted in the history of *The Florida* and *The Royal Commentaries* were extensive, and at some points even bordered on the exhaustive. Concerned about European scholars disregarding his work because of his mixed blood, and feeling a need to confirm his records he explained, "I am very glad to have quoted this in his words, for if I had said it myself, it might have appeared that I was exaggerating and over praising Indian caution and shrewdness." El Inca's mestizo label further burdened him with an obligation to cite passages from Spanish Chroniclers to support his story more extensively than other historians of the period. He feared that prejudices against his race would cause people to question every aspect of his factual records. To compensate for his heritage Vega was thorough in quoting large passages from various writers to support his histories.

The second part of *The Royal Commentaries* typifies Vega's excessive inclusion of confirming sources. During the work he dedicated entire chapters to supporting previously stated historical depictions. These sections are nothing more than excerpts from other chroniclers who support Vega's position. Vega used these authors for a two-fold purpose: first, to gain respect and recognition from his readers; and, second, to amend aspects of other histories that were faulty. These amendments are proposed in a sly and supportive fashion, rather than as an attacking criticism of the author. He does this especially well with his two most cited authorities, Pedro de Cieza and Zarate. Correcting Zarate in one passage, he stated, "When he says that Juan de Rada shot the door, he is making a slip of the pen, for he has already told how
Rada died at Jauja. The man who shot the door was Pedro de Onate. . . .” 15 Vega
used his sources carefully, keeping his criticism to a minimum. He used other sources
primarily as support for his story, although he stated that one purpose of his work was
to fix the mistakes committed by other authors.16

El Inca's historical record also included verification from oral sources. Second
person oral accounts contributed heavily to facts obtained by Vega. He felt these
accounts were more accurate than the third or fourth person accounts received in the
Old World. Critiquing one historian he wrote: "He wrote from far away from the
scene of events, and got his information from those who came and went, and told him
imperfectly many things that had happened. I heard in my own country from my
father and his contemporaries. . . .”17 Again Vega had a unique opportunity to hear
stories and ideas about Peruvian history from the actors and actresses shaping the
story. His father's political position kept him involved in the daily activities of the
conquerors. These experiences provided the author with sources that helped him
develop a full picture of Peruvian history.18

Another oral source Vega used to develop his histories was the oral tradition
of the Incan people. El Inca's knowledge of the Incan Empire came from stories
recounted by his Incan ancestors.19 El Inca believed the Incan perspective had value:
"For everything said about them from other sources comes down to the same story as
we shall relate, and it will be better to have it as told in the very words of the Incas
than in those foreign authors."20 El Inca's American heritage proved to be a valuable
source in formulating the first Commentaries. His personal experiences created an
unequaled historical text that included oral sources not available to other historians.
Vega used a variety of sources to compile his three historical texts. Each history drew upon his research differently. He followed the Renaissance pattern of using personal observation to compile historical accounts. At the same time, El Inca's unique background allowed him to supply his histories with original sources and a new perspective. His heritage, which might lead to skeptical reviews in some circles, also prompted him to confirm his experiences with alternative sources.
Vega's definition of history helped provide deeper insight into his understanding of the forces that move history. Garcilaso de la Vega, El Inca reflected other Renaissance historians; like other historians of the time, he represented both the positivist views, promoted by past historians, and the idealist strain that began originating in the Renaissance. Vega was a positivist because like Medieval positivists, he believed that immutable universal laws determined the course of physical events. He was also an idealist because he included themes of individualism and secularism into his overall explanation of how history unfolded. This combination of positivism and idealism created a history moved by a plethora of causes. His positivist historical view held that God was an omnipotent power of the universe with the ability to intervene in the empirical world. His devotion to the creator incorporated an understanding that the Divine granted freewill. While God's nature necessitated an ability to control history, the Creator did not choose to predetermine all things. Vega was an idealist because free will allowed for human choice and the ability to error, and these human qualities affected the sequence of events.

As was typical for his time, Vega believed that the primary force in history was God. Living near the end of the Spanish Inquisition, Vega was careful to refer to
the all-powerful God continually throughout his works. Vega responded to the religious influence of his time when he commended his works to the Creator as His humble and obedient servant. While explaining Peruvian history, Vega continuously referred to the benevolence of the Creator and attempted to give credit to the Being for any and all positive aspects of the world:

He also displayed His clemency in sending the true light of His Gospel to all the New World which had such need of it, since its peoples lived, or rather perished, in darkness of the most barbarous and bestial paganism and idolatry, as we shall see in the course of our study.

This statement reflected less upon Vega's personal beliefs about the world than upon his desire to be accepted into Spanish society. This becomes apparent and Vega contradicted the statement several times throughout his writings. Vega desired to appease his readers, not necessarily to recount his true beliefs; Vega did not truly feel that all non-Christians were barbaric heathens devoid of virtue. Instead, he recognized that even "unenlightened" civilizations could be prosperous.

The first book of The Commentaries described the Incas, a non-Catholic society, as virtuous and progressive. El Inca described the Incan rulers not as the vile barbarians suggested above, but as founders of a just and prosperous society. He wrote of Manco Capac, the first Incan ruler, "...this prince did not bring worldly goods but riches of the soul: mildness, mercy, clemency, liberality, justice and magnanimity, the desire to benefit the poor, and good works." These benevolent descriptions were prevalent throughout the first Commentaries, making it clear that El Inca did not see the Incan Empire as a den of barbarous brutality. Rather, El Inca described the empire as a just and merciful state. Describing the other Incan rulers,
he expanded his convictions about Incan goodness: "The Inca was beloved by many people on account of his justice, mercy, and clemency, and for the mildness of his laws and administration, and many of them had come freely and willingly to offer their submission because of reports of his virtues. . . . Vega clearly did not depict the non-Christian Incas in the archaic manner his Christian praise indicated. His writings simultaneously praised Spanish and Incan cultures, reflecting the inner turmoil of a mestizo torn between two different worldviews. Vega, El Inca used his writings to seek a balance between these heritages and find his place in a confused and segregated world.⁷

To understand what forces determined the course of history it is important to grasp the forces effecting Vega. A mestizo alone in Spain, Vega tried to reconcile his ancestry and create a worldview that valued the positive aspects of both cultures. According to Vega, Spain was great because of its religion and education. Vega displayed his belief in Catholicism both in life and on paper. In life he became a priest and performed ecclesiastical duties at the hospital. Vega also portrayed his devotion to the Gospel throughout his writings. Vega, El Inca believed Catholicism was the true faith and the most admirable aspect of Spanish life. He reported his feeling about the goodness of missionary work and the church:

... by whose merits and intercessions the Eternal Majesty has designed to draw so many great peoples out of the pit of idolatry and bring them into the bosom of His Roman Catholic Church, our mother and lady.⁸

El Inca upheld his Christian convictions throughout his works, but these works did not entirely reject his mother's people. While Vega, El Inca disbelieved in the Incan religion he did not wish to discount his mother's people entirely.⁹
... They made many sacrifices, as we shall say further on, and had many superstitions, such as believing in dreams, looking for omens, and other things quite ridiculous as many of the things prohibited, at least they had no other gods than the Sun, while they adored for his excellent qualities and natural benefits, as more rational and civilized people then their predecessors in that first stage.¹⁰

Following the teachings of Catholicism, Vega justified the oppression of the Incan people as the will of God. He believed that God allowed the Incas to be conquered so that the Holy Gospel could enlighten them. Vega reiterated his faith in God when he stated, "The Spaniards suffered these hardships and conquered by the strength of their spirits because God had chosen them and formed them to preach His Gospel. . . . "¹¹ Yet Vega's Christian beliefs did not directly contradict his Incan beliefs. The Incan people had learned to accept their situation and used a prophecy of Incan leader Huaina Capac to explain their fate. The oral history of the Incan people recounted prophecy of Huaina Capac that forecast the Spanish coming to Peru before the actual event. El Inca recorded, "Many years ago it was revealed to us by our father the Sun that after twelve of his sons had reigned, a new race would come, unknown in these parts, and would gain and subdue all our kingdoms and many others to their empire."¹² His description of Huaina's prediction was lengthy showing how important the event was not only to his works, but to his life. This story also explained how his acceptance of the Catholic faith did not conflict with his adherence to Incan tradition.

Both Incan and Spanish tradition accepted an omnipotent Creator who determined history (Sun or God). Vega subscribed to the belief that God moved history, and sometimes he used divine intervention to explain the outcome of events:
“This would in deed have happened, so great was this scourge, had not God in his
great mercy mitigated it when it had reached its peak.” Vega often described history
using God as the actual cause of events. He literally used God's presence or will to
explain the outcome of historical occurrences. Divine intervention played a large part
in Vega's description of history. This influence was more than just coincidental
miracles; El Inca recorded the physical presence of messengers, such as Mary and St.
James, who he described as altering history. This positivist approach to history was
not the only cause operating in Vega's works. He also used individual choice and
error to explain the turn of events.

El Inca used individual choice as a major theme throughout his works. It is
likely that these individualistic and secular ideas originated from his South American
upbringing. American life, removed from the careful watch of a sovereign, allowed
individuals freedom that they were denied in Spain. The mestizo grew up in an
environment where people, like Gonzalo Pizarro, were creating history instead of
reacting to it. He witnessed men create war because of personal passion and watched
greed and selfishness develop into horrific crimes. The effect of the American
experience was not unique to Vega; it aided the individual and secular ideals
developing throughout the Renaissance period in general. Vega's childhood
experiences probably led to his attribution of passions and desires as key factors in
determining the course of history.

Vega's emphasis on individual virtue and vice was also supported in the
writings of Leone Ebreo. The Philosophy of Love devoted its first chapters to a
lengthy discussion of freewill and temptation. The dialogue raised questions about
human nature and how passions affect the human experience. Vega's translation of this work praised Ebreo's insight into the human character, which signified an agreement with its position. Vega, El Inca used this philosophy to explain how individuals and their decisions affected the course of events. Ebreo explained his position about individual choice:

And even as our judgments of things, when, true give rise to the right and virtuous desires, whence springs all goodness, temperate acts and praiseworthy deeds; so such judgements, when false, issue in evil desires and ignoble loves whence springs all human vice and error.\(^{15}\)

In *The Florida*, Vega displayed how freewill affected history through the fighting between French and Spanish explores (that led to decisions about the expedition). He remarked: "Yet all this and more human passions can bring about when they begin to reign."\(^{16}\) The chronicler used the passions of individuals as causes for certain historical events. In *The Florida*, he recounted a story about Juan Lopez, who was sent as a messenger to unite de Soto's divided regiment. His voyage was unsuccessful because he gave in to his physical passions and allowed himself to fall into a deep sleep. As Lopez slept at an unsafe crossroad, enemy Indians discovered him and ended his life.\(^{17}\) Vega's perceptions of individual choice are key to understanding his support for equality and individual rights. This aspect was important because if individuals were devoid of the right to choose than rights would be a mute point; life would be predetermined and not in the control of people. His historical interpretation was also important because it had a profound influence on thinkers of the enlightenment.
El Inca was unique in his emphasis upon linguistic misunderstanding to explain why history occurred the way it did. He understood that accident through linguistic incompatibility was a common factor in determining the course of Peruvian history. Vega's linguistic background and his special ability to not only speak the Quechuan language but also read the Incan "knots" provided an opportunity for a better understanding of Peruvian history. The Incan Empire did not have written letters to record its history, but it did maintain a physical record. The people recorded their lives on a series of knots that explained details about property, law, and history. These knots were difficult to understand and El Inca often commented on his ability to comprehend the knots with ease. His familiarity with Incan language and record made the problems of communication between the Spanish and the Incas more apparent to him.18

Vega proposed that language differences were the cause of many disputes and unnecessary hostilities during the settlement of America. His histories described many occurrences in which the outcome of a given event was the result of linguistic misunderstandings. One example of this was when Spanish travelers first encountered an Incan tribe. Their interpreter was a young boy who could not speak Quechuan (Incan language) at all and had only a minimal understanding of Spanish. The translator inadequately communicated the desires of the Incan leader and created unnecessary hostilities between the Spanish and Incas because of the incorrect translation. Vega explained, "This shall suffice; and it happened because the interpreter did not understand what he was saying and the language he was using was incapable of more."19 His view of human error was not confined to linguistic
misunderstandings alone; Vega recognized that events were often cause by
miscommunication.

Vega used miscommunication as a common theme, describing the reason
why events came to pass in the manner that they did. He acknowledged that often
throughout history decisions were made based on misinformation or an inadequate
knowledge of the situation. Vega cited one example of this in The Florida: “The act
was not committed with evil intent and the Governor’s remarks were not insulting,
but suspicion and anger rule men with powerful force and especially strong men such
as were our two commanders.”

El Inca’s understanding of cause and effect transcended the monocausal view
of Medieval positivism. Vega, however, did believe that a higher power intervened
in history and he explained His role several times throughout his texts. His belief in
divine intervention reflected his Spanish background, but did not necessarily conflict
with the beliefs of his mother’s people. Along with the First Cause of history, Vega
also explained how individual choice and miscommunication shaped the course of
history. This aspect of his historical interpretation had a profound influence on
thinkers of the enlightenment.
CHAPTER 4
RECONCILATION OF HERITAGE

"Truth about the past is the essence of history and historical biography, the thing that distinguishes them from every other branch of literature."\(^{22}\) To evaluate Vega's presentation past truth we must examine his objectivity as a historian. The modern standard for objectivity differs from the standard proposed during the Renaissance. Vega was an accurate and objective historian by the standards of his own time. His objectivity, however, does not meet current standards, but his work is valuable today as an example of Renaissance history and as a historical document in its own right.

To satisfy Renaissance standards of objectivity Vega proved his factual accuracy by comparing and supporting his accounts with other histories. Vega was aware that people of his time would be highly skeptical about the writings of a mestizo. To appease these opinions, El Inca was meticulous about supporting his claims with statements from other authors. He devoted many passages of his histories to quotations from other Spanish chroniclers who supported his record.\(^{23}\) Vega's concern for accuracy was displayed when he confirmed one aspect of his history with accounts from three Spanish authorities. Writing about Atahuallpa's execution, he cited: "Lopez de Gomara says the same in almost the same words. Pedro de Cieza's version is longer and more emphatic."\(^{24}\) El Inca's heavy reliance upon other Spanish chroniclers' records to support his information also reduces reader skepticism. He
was particularly fond of Spanish historian Cieza de Leon and quoted him tirelessly throughout his opus. Vega, El Inca's continuous use of other sources satisfied Renaissance questions of accuracy. Julia Kelly, author of Garcilaso de la Vega: El Inca, noted:

If we read through the Commentarios Reales, we find that Garcilaso must have consulted no fewer than nine historians, for he quotes from each of the following: the Padre Josef de Acosta, the Frenchman Jean Bodin, Juan Botero Benes, Pedro Cieza de Leon, Diego Fernandez de Palencia, Fransisco Lopez de Gomara, the Florentine Francesco Guicciardini, Fray Geronimo Roman, and Agustin de Zarate.25

Even by modern standards, Vega's accuracy regarding facts was acute especially given that his primary source of information in the Commentaries was his recollection of facts encountered as a child. He was the most renowned Peruvian historian until the works of William H. Prescott. Many modern Peruvian historians have conceded that by and large Vega's historical facts are accurate. Vega knew his memory was reliable and he touted, "Memory retains what is seen in childhood better than what happens in later years."26 For most people this statement would appear fallacious, but Vega used his histories to prove that his memory, of childhood, was far from clouded and confused. Louis Baudin, author of A Socialist Empire: The Incas of Peru, confirmed Vega precision, "This Peruvian must indeed have had a very good memory, for he cites the names of no less than three hundred twenty towns and is never mistaken about their location."27 Vega's accuracy was truly astounding not only throughout his political and military recordings, but also in regards to the Incan tradition. Vega correctly recounted traditional uses of herbal medicines, and accompanied his medical explanations with descriptions of the specific plant used for
each ailment. He also properly recorded the attitudes and ceremonies of the ancient
Incan culture. 28

Vega's accuracy only satisfies modern standards if you look past his romantic
style to the simple facts reported in his histories. This romantic writing style led many
modern historians to question the information relayed throughout The Florida.
Underneath his free flowing literary style, Vega surprisingly recounted a mostly
reliable text. His credibility was questioned and confirmed by Spanish historian
Theodore Irving, who remarked several times upon the factual reality that Vega
cloaked in a fiction-like narrative. 29 Most of the facts recorded throughout his
histories are accurate, but the reader must wade through an exciting narrative to
uncover these facts.

Vega's romantic style was not uncommon for Renaissance historians, and it
did not discredit him to authorities of the time. These historians sometimes included
exaggerations that were designed to please their readers and add eloquence to his
histories. Vega's histories used such exaggerations to make the record reader friendly.
This technique included character dialogue that was rarely factual. However, Vega's
dialogue was created for reader appeal and was not developed to record only rigid
factual information; this was clear throughout all of his histories as he incorporated
dialogue that was not necessarily historically correct, but aided the flow and style of
the story. In addition to his flowing literary style, Vega was a "presentist" (one who
uses the past to pursue a current political agenda) who used his historical studies to
support his philosophical agenda.
Vega, El Inca's use of an agenda was another aspect of his histories that fail to meet the requirements of today's objective standard. Presentism, however, was an acceptable and expected aspect of historian's of his time. Vega's agenda included a desire to amend incorrect history. This aspiration specifically addressed misrepresentations of his father's story. He also wanted to justify the position of the Conquistadors and identify the offenses they incurred. Finally, he desired to alter commonly held stereotypes about the barbarous nature of all Native Americans.

El Inca was dissatisfied with the writings of previous Peruvian historians. He used his works to amend these faulty or misleading accounts. He explained, "Having settled this point, I should like to be able to deal with a great many other errors and omissions which arise in the history of that country, owing to the incorrectness of the accounts given to the historians." However, while he amended incorrect information throughout his work, his primary focus was on retorting the misconstrued story of his father, which was presented before the Council of the Indies and recorded throughout the histories of other Spanish authors.

The second part of the Royal Commentaries was written, in part, to refurbish his father's tarnished reputation. This topic has already been thoroughly discussed; this section will only restate his desire to praise his father and restore family honor. Vega freely admitted to this underlying theme when he stated, "I find myself for this reason compelled by divine, human and natural law to serve my [father's] memory by saying something of his many virtues...." This quote began an entire section praising his father and his many virtues without any supporting evidence. Vega's
historical objectivity was affected by his desire to express one-sidedly his father's perfection and virtue.  

Among Vega’s motives for writing the history of Peru was his desire to defend the conquistadors and denounce the injustice he believed they had suffered. The passage of the New Laws along with the crown's rejection of land to second generation mestizo's added to Vega's belief that Spain mistreated its loyal conquistadors. Childhood relations with Spanish settlers, coupled with his close paternal bond, no doubt inspired his devotion to the conquerors. To Vega the Spanish settlers were chivalrous heroes who sacrificed everything for God and country. His adoration of these men inspired animosity toward the Spanish crown. Vega believed Spain was deficient in its appreciation of the conquerors, not adequately rewarding or appreciating their sacrifices. Vega, El Inca was bitter that the Spanish crown had denied the inheritance promised to the conquistadors and their offspring. His love for the conquistadors and disappointment in Spanish rule was addressed several times throughout the second part of the Commentaries. Vega El Inca's histories were tainted with his bias toward the Spanish conquerors:

...suffer and bear it like a man, and accuse no one, for God will help you and repay you for the struggle your father and his companions made to win this land for Christianity and bring its natives to his Church. Shame on them that all you who are sons of the conquistadors should die in return for your fathers having won the empire.  

Finally, behind Vega, El Inca's writings resided a deep desire to display the probity of his mother's people. El Inca sought to reverse the pejorative connotations that had been associated with America's indigenous people. The very fact that Vega
produced his histories aided in his aspirations to change European beliefs about Indian and Mestizo inferiority. The mestizo’s vast history greatly enhanced European understanding about Peruvian capabilities. This preface to The History of the Florida was developed to remind the reader of its author’s heritage. His comments reflected a double standard of his time and clearly linked his published works and accomplishments to the supposed incapabilities of his race. His writing directly addressed European prejudice against his race:

I plead now that this account be received in the same spirit as I present it, and that I be pardoned its errors because I am an Indian. For since we Indians are people who are ignorant and uninstructed in the arts and sciences, it seems ungenerous to judge our deeds and utterances strictly in accordance with the precepts of those subjects which we have not learned.

The first book in the Royal Commentaries proclaimed the virtue and glory of the Incan Empire. To explain the greatness of his mother’s people, Vega contrasted the Incas to the pre-Incan cultures of Peru. He depicted of these nomadic Peruvians as people devoid of value. Vega used his writing to paint vivid pictures of a strange people, who were at best barbarous. The “others” were described in the following fashion:

. . . they sacrificed men and women of all ages taken captive in the wars they waged on one another. Among some tribes their inhumane cruelty exceeded that of wild beasts. Not satisfied with sacrificing their captured foes, in case of need they offered up their own children.

Vega goes to extensive lengths to make clear that the pre-Incas were atavists devoid of all virtue, “. . . Victims of sacrifice was eaten with the greatest pleasure and relish, and not the less merrymaking and rejoicing, even though it might have been
their own children. El Inca spent four sections of the first part of the Royal Commentaries depicting the unchristian characteristics of these pre-Incan people. He criticized the “other” Peruvians, using the existing European stereotypes of Native Americans that regularly portrayed the Americas’ original inhabitants as an inferior, and perhaps even not human. His critique was specifically tailored to demonstrate a severe contrast between the Christian virtues of Europe and the bestial life of these nomadic people. The chapters that succeeded this “historical survey” of the barbarians were designed to praise the Incan culture, showing how the Incan rulers brought virtue and goodness to the true American savages.

Vega elaborately described the plethora of ways that the Incan rulers brought civilization and justice to a sadly misguided people. Satisfying his Christian morals, Vega carefully explained the superior morality of the Incas: “Huaina Capac appointed teachers to instruct them with his religion and morality: he deprived them of their idols, their blood sacrifices, and their cannibal practices.” According to El Inca, the pre-Incan people were saved from their evil lives by a mentally and morally superior race. Vega recorded that the virtues of the Incas were so great that tribes willingly submitted to their absolute rule. El Inca was determined to establish the Incas as a noble people worthy of European attention.

Vega would not be considered objective by today's standards because he used his history to glorify the Incas by drawing unhistorical parallels. Being a man of the Renaissance, he was nostalgically enraptured with the glory and prestige of Athens and Rome. El Inca used the fame of the Ancients to help Europeans appreciate and relate to the Incas. El Inca drew powerful parallels between Cuzco under Incan rule
and ancient Rome and Greece. While Vega explained similarities between Cuzco and Greece, he focused mostly upon the similarities between Rome and Cuzco.

His comparisons of Rome and Cuzco were so important to El Inca’s writing that he made reference to these similarities in the preface of the Royal Commentaries. He then foreshadowed the comparison by contrasting the pre-Incan people with the Romans. He stated that the pre-Incas had a vile and irrational religion, while the Romans (and later the Incas) believed in abstract and powerful gods that were rational and worthy of respect. Criticizing the nomadic Peruvians’ worship of basic environmental features, such as animals and streams, Vega drew his own judgments. According to Vega, not all non-Christian religions were equally sinful; some deserved more respect than others.44

After he established the pre-Incas as unlike the “gentile Romans,” Vega went on to describe the similarities between the Incas and the Romans. He compared Incan law with Roman law and associated their two capitals:

For Cuzco in relation to its empire was like Rome to the Roman Empire and the two can be compared with one another, for they resembled one another in their nobler aspects. First, and in chief, both were founded by their first kings. Secondly, they added to their empires. Thirdly, they had many excellent laws applied to the good government of the two states. Fourthly, they both bred many famous men and taught them good civil and military doctrine.45

This comparison was expounded upon continuously throughout the first book of the Royal Commentaries.

The similarities between Athens and Cuzco were less obvious than the Roman examples, but nonetheless they were still present throughout his history. One example was his comparison of the Cuzco center of worship to Athens’ “oracle of
Apollo at Delphi. He also described the Incan leader’s virtues in a strikingly similar fashion to the philosopher king described in Plato’s Republic. The primary virtue of the Incan leaders was justice, described as a harmony, which corresponded with the value of justice defined throughout the Republic. He also encouraged basic Platonic virtues of courage, self-discipline, and wisdom. Leone Ebreo, Vega’s favorite philosopher, was a neo-Platonist who advocated many of these virtues. We also know that Vega had a copy of the Republic in his library, which helps strengthen the links between Athenian thinkers and Vega’s productions. He specifically explained the similarities of Indian and Athenian virtues in The History of The Florida. These parallels reflected Vega, El Inca’s philosophical approach to history, which included redefining Native Americans as civilized, intelligent, and capable individuals:

... and when many Spaniards well read in history heard them, they asserted that the captains appeared to have been influenced by the most famous officers of Rome when that City dominated the world with its arms, and that the youths, who were Lords of vassals appeared to have been trained in Athens when it was flourishing in its moral letters.

Vega, El Inca’s works, specifically his record of Florida, displayed biases because of his desire to encourage settlement of the New World. Vega accepted Spanish occupation of America because of Spain’s religious contribution to the natives. He believed that America’s pacification was positive because it allowed its non-Christian people to receive the true faith. The Florida displayed Vega’s intent to inspire the Spanish to settle peacefully in the Americas: “By what we have related concerning the Indian Pedro, one can see how easy it was to convert these Indians and...
all of the others of the New World to the Catholic Faith. . . .”50 His belief that Spanish settlement was acceptable because it brought truth to the natives helped explain his defense of the Spanish conquistadors.51

Vega’s histories were composed with a clear philosophical and political agenda, as John Varner explained: “He made a plea for the poor and oppressed of both Spain and Peru. . . .”52 Although Vega would be considered less than objective today because of his personal slant, Vega’s presentism was not condemned or considered unique in his own time.

Likewise, his free literary style and romanticism were common attributes of the Renaissance historian.53 According to modern standards, however, Vega would not be accredited as an objective historian. Julia Kelly, a Spanish historian explained, “. . . it will seem to modern readers a thrilling romance rather than the scientific document which we expect history to be.”54 Ironically, El Inca believed that his history had escaped this quixotic genre popular throughout his childhood. He saw himself as an objective historian who did not implement romantic exaggerations. In reality, his histories, especially The Florida, did contain unnecessary elaborations. For his own times these exaggerations were not impediments upon the historical record, but today they are looked down upon.55

Vega believed his record was a statement of truthful observations, and he regarded himself as an objective author: “I hope I may be permitted to say truly without offending anyone what I saw, for my only purpose is always to tell plainly what happened without hatred or flattery, since I have no motive for either.”56

Seeking to verify this claim, El Inca deliberately attempted to portray positive aspects
of Atahuallpa, a man he greatly despised. His desire to present both the positive and negative traits of the ruler who killed many Incans, and attempted to murder his mother, is notable.57

Vega’s histories did not meet modern scientific standards because of the presentism and romanticism displayed throughout these records.58 For his own time, however, El Inca was considered an objective historian who preserved his observations for the future. El Inca’s agenda is important because it enlightens us to the dilemmas he faced because of his mixed heritage. Beneath the romanticism and drama of Vega’s record lies a mostly accurate historical depiction that was enhanced by the conflict of its mixed-blood author. Today Vega's histories represent a historical approach during the Renaissance. They also serve as important historical documents with many correct facts that are only mildly tainted by an intriguing author. The biases expressed in Vega's works provide modern readers insight into the past.
CHAPTER 5
THE INFLUENCE OF EL INCA

It is important to study Garcilaso de la Vega not only to understand the history of the Peruvian Empire, but also because his writing affected thinkers of the enlightenment and modern thought. His promotion of individuality and his acceptance of his mother's people had a positive influence on the evolution of thought in Europe. The philosophical proposals located throughout Vega, El Inca's work captivated, either directly or indirectly, the attention and respect of influential philosophers. Cervantes, Hobbes, Locke, Rosseau, and Voltaire all acknowledged the ideas of El Inca. Through their treatises modern readers can begin to understand the importance of Vega's writings. His ideas were so powerful that they helped inspire a Peruvian rebellion and were then banned by Spanish king Charles III on April 21, 1782.¹ Realizing the vast influence of El Inca's writing provides insight into the way ideas develop from one person to the next.

Vega lived at the same time as the Spanish author Cervantes, who was best known for his satire, Don Quixote. Vega and Cervantes rose to fame within the same historical period and there can be little question that they were aware of one-another's writings. John Varner claimed that Cervantes and Vega shared certain friends, although no personal contact between them can be established.² Both authors were raised with the chivalrous literature of an expanding Spain. Absorbed in heroic epics
and stories of inconceivable feats, both scholars vowed to create more realistic interpretations of the world.

Cervantes criticized the romanticism of Spain with his insanely noble knight Don Quixote, who rode through the countryside mocking Spanish ideals of honor and chivalry. His satires depicted his realistic approach toward life as he mocked the image of the "knight in shining armor." Vega also presented mock-heroes throughout his history that some believe directly affected Cervantes.³

In Vega's childhood, he was enraptured with books about chivalry. In adulthood, however, he changed his approval of this literary style to "almost hatred," claiming that there were better things than romance to write about.⁴ Even though Vega believed his writings abstained from romanticism, most of his audience would disagree. Overall, Vega incorporated the quixotic style popular in Spain throughout his works.⁵

Some aspects of his record, however, did challenge the unreal literature of the time. Varner subtly purposes that El Inca's portrayal of the struggle for control of Cuzco between La Gasca (a representative of the king) and Gonzalo Pizarro (a well-known rebel) was satiristically written. He argued that Vega deliberately attempted to mock ideals of honor through a comical struggle, ending with a real and graphic portrayal of the rebels' deaths. Published before Don Quixote, it is possible that certain aspects of Vega's histories could have affected Cervantes. In Jack Weatherford's work, Indian Givers, Weatherford attempted to establish their relationship through Cervantes's use of the word "potosi". This is an Incan word meaning wealth of Peru that is found in Vega's writings.⁶ The likelihood that
Cervantes was directly influenced by Vega, however, is problematic given the lack of proof that the two were personally acquainted.

The *Royal Commentaries* was especially important in influencing and supporting many aspects of political theory that arose during the Age of Reason. Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau all proposed political philosophies that paralleled Vega's history of the Incas. They recognized the value of a society that originated from the consent of its people. These philosophers also advocated that the primary goal of all societies should be the good of the people. Vega's first book in the *Commentaries* continually reiterated the importance of good government, which he defined as the ruler making laws for the good of the people. This aspect typified the political theory of the fast-approaching Age of Reason. Vega described the Incan rulers as ruling primarily for the good of the people, suggesting the theory that political philosophers would encourage. Indeed, Hobbes and Locke made direct reference to Vega's work directly.7

Vega's work then was able to stimulate the philosophy of these diverse authors because it fulfilled a different purpose for each of them. Hobbes was able to incorporate Vega because he wrote about a just society governed by absolute monarchy which supported Hobbes' political theory. Locke drew upon the circumstances that created the Incan society and the role of individual rights within it. Rousseau was more of an indirect recipient of the ideals of El Inca. Vega's popular writings worked to counter of negative European stereotypes about Native Americans; this aided the noble "savage ideal" that would later be adopted by philosophers like Rousseau.8
In the *Leviathan*, Hobbes commented on the good government of the Incan people and how their leader was wise, claiming that his power came from a divine source. The *Royal Commentaries* claimed that Incan society practiced a Divine Right monarchy. The Incas ruled the empire not because they were just men selected by the people, but because they descended from the Sun God. Vega explained that the Incan people participated in a monarchy where just rulers, who were descended from the sun, cared for their subjects above all else, therefore creating a just and good society. This was the aspect of Vega that most appealed to Hobbes. Hobbes referred to Vega's work, commenting on heathen cultures whose leaders wisely claimed their power from a given supernatural force, usually God. Hobbes referred to the Incas as a culture that used religion to create a common pastime. He believed this was valuable because it pacified the common people and promoted unity. Vega influenced the political theory of Hobbes and consequently the ideas of the emerging Renaissance.

The *Royal Commentaries* also affected the famous British Empiricist, John Locke. In his famous work, *Two Treatise of Government*, and also throughout his journal, Locke explained his attachment to the Peruvian mestizo. Locke used Vega's historical record to develop his theory of the natural man. The history of Peru also affected Locke's beliefs about individual rights and their relationship to the government. It is probable that Vega's history also supported Locke's theories about the rationality and good of Christianity. Locke's contributions on this matter, however, never directly made reference to the "inferior" religion of the Incas and/or its relationship to Christianity.
In the Second Treatise of Government, John Locke commented upon his contemplation of Vega. Throughout this text he used Vega's writings to support given aspects of his political theory. He referred to the Commentaries to prove that the state of nature can and had existed. Locke recounted Vega's history of two men trapped on an island, who enter into a social pact, displaying how the state of nature can include agreements that do not constitute a civitas. The incorporation of Vega's philosophies during this section was important because it supported a broader belief that "... it is not every compact that puts an end to the state of nature between man, but only one of agreeing together mutually to enter into one community, and make one body politic."12 This reference should be noted because it recounted Locke's belief that the Incas were not nomadic barbarians or members of the state of nature, but members of a society that they willingly joined. Locke's recognition that the Incas were part of a society helped support his theory about man's original state. Since Locke understood that the Incas were not living in the state of nature, Vega's writings did not contradict his theory that the state of nature was not as "good' as a society.

Vega also affected Locke in their mutual promotion of individual rights. Throughout Vega's writings, he advocated individualism and emphasized the role that individual choices and rights played throughout history. His theory of individualism was woven into the dialogue of his works: "We should be accepted as we are."13 Locke acknowledged this strain of individualism and commented upon it throughout his journal. The incorporation of individualism in Locke's philosophy correlated with ideas presented in Vega's histories.14
From Locke's journal entries it can be inferred that Vega was one of his favorite authors. The regular references to his works and the fact that he read little other philosophy encourages the idea that Vega affected Locke in more areas than just his political theory.\textsuperscript{15} It is probable that El Inca's comments toward the Incan religion influenced Locke's beliefs about Christianity. His philosophy can be detected especially in Locke's comments on the rationality of Christianity. The authors used similar arguments to justify the truth of Christianity. Locke's belief in religious tolerance and his desire to encourage peaceful missionary work might be one example of Vega's influence; it at least signifies areas of agreement between the authors and one reason that Locke might have enjoyed reading Vega.\textsuperscript{16}

Vega's writings also contributed to the philosophies of the famous French author, Jean Jacques Rousseau. The \textit{Royal Commentaries} were one of the first books that promoted respect for the Native Americans. Vega applied his endorsement of the Incas as virtuous people to all Indian groups, as stated in \textit{The Florida}. Vega's works challenged negative stereotypes about the natives and their quality of life. As the first America-born writer, El Inca joined a mere handful of Europeans who believed that America's indigenous people were capable of rationality and virtue. Vega's histories contributed to the idea of the noble savage that would be actualized in beliefs of Rousseau.\textsuperscript{17} Castanien explained the relationship between Vega and Rousseau: "Garcilaso's Incas represented the Natives of America, untouched by the corrupting influence of European civilization, who managed to create a society very much like the one dreamed of by Rousseau and his associates."\textsuperscript{18}
Vega's version of the noble savage was more pragmatic than the Frenchman's idealist perceptions. El Inca portrayed the Native Americans in an idealistic fashion for his time, but his understanding of the indigenous people was not as romanticized as Rousseau's. He described Incan society as just and good, but not flawless—they were devoid of the true Faith. Vega might have been more reserved about the natives because, unlike Rousseau, he lived with them and had a firsthand experience with the day-to-day life in America. Rousseau's experience was limited to romantic legend. Vega encouraged an idealist perception of the natives, but his writings were moderate when compared with future writers like Rousseau, who exaggerated the perfection of original American life. Rousseau viewed the Native Americans as living in a pure state of nature, which he nostalgically referred to as noble. His understanding of the condition in America was somewhat misconstrued since it simplified their governmental procedures and overlooked the fact that tribal societies had different social structures. He nonetheless was influenced indirectly by the Commentaries, which had been altering perception about the New World since its publication.

El Inca influenced many aspects of the enlightenment, and Voltaire’s writings were no exception. Voltaire was reading the Royal Commentaries during the creation of his famous work, Candide. In this satire he addressed the optimism of Leibnitz and Vega. The story saw its main character, Candide, travel the world, promoting the optimistic philosophy that everything happens for the best. As Candide and all of his friends suffer one unjustified tragedy after another, Voltaire questions if there can be any good in the world.
Candide finds a perfect country isolated from the rest of the world in Voltaire’s reconstruction of the Incan Empire. Voltaire made his association clear: “The kingdom where we live use to be inhabited by the Incas. . . . ” He referred to the Incas as he described the perfect city’s religion, abundance of resources and government. He described the paradise: “How much better off I should have been to stay in Eldorado, which seemed like paradise, instead of returing to this confounded Europe.”

Voltaire’s incorporation of this perfect state and its association to Vega’s works can be understood two ways: first, that no place is perfect and that Vega was irrationally optimistic; and, second, that if the perfect place did exist it would be isolated from the foul ways of Europe. The first point is shown as he demonstrated again and again the complete horror of the world, “. . . that men have always massacred each other, as they do to-day, that they have always been false, cozening, faithless, ungrateful, thieving, weak, inconstant, mean-spirited, envious, greedy, drunken, miserly, ambitious, bloody, slanderous, debauched, fanatic, hypocritical, and stupid.” The entire story of Candide was aimed at questioning how someone could believe there was good in a world whose reality was pain and suffering. This interpretation would clearly suggest that Voltaire intended to criticize Vega, and his romantic history of the Incas.

Voltaire, however, might have used the work primarily to show how horrible Europe was. The book discussed the greed and pride of Europeans in contrast to the mild Peruvian people. Voltaire’s social comments were aimed toward European countries that unnecessarily exploited the New World. He stated that Europe
contained "... nothing here but illusion and one calamity after another." The purpose of his ideal state and its association with the Incan Empire could have been to show that Europe did not promote values that were beneficial to human progression. The purpose of the Incan association could have been to show that if the perfect state did exist, Europe would destroy it and exploit all its virtue. Whether Voltaire used Candide to criticize Vega's optimism or condemn the greed of the Europeans, his point relies on the Commentaries.

El Inca's influence was not limited to Europe alone, he also had a powerful affect on Peru; the Royal Commentaries played an essential role in a Peruvian rebellion. The Inca, Jose Condorcanque, led this uprising of 1780, which was the last before Peru gained its independence from Spain. The rebels rallied around El Inca's works, as if they were holy books, proclaiming the Truth of Incan glory. The rebellion occurred after the holocaust of the Incan people started by Atahualpa (in the civil war) and finished with the Spanish execution of the last of the pure Inca, Tupac Amaru. Therefore the revolution included no pure Incan people, but was master-minded by the closest Incan heir, Jose Gabriel Condorcanque. His plot was to re-establish Incan glory in Peru and remind the government of its duty to rule for the good of the people.

The rebellion used Vega's philosophies to establish a creed that attacked Spanish administration, while supporting the Church. Passages from the Commentaries expressed the opinions of the rebels: "This land belonged to the Incas, its natural lords. ... Now by restoring it to the Inca you are simply doing what you should by natural law! And in seeking to govern it yourself as its conquerors and not
as the vassal and subject of another, you are doing what you owe to your
reputation." This rebellion was brutally suppressed. The crown recognized the
power Vega's writings had to inspire Peruvian nationalism and Incan pride, and so
they outlawed the Commentaries. A few years after the suppression of the revolution
Peru gained its independence. El Inca's works are still used today in South America
to rally support for nationalism.

Vega's record on Peru was considered the most important work in Peruvian
history until the writings of William Hickling Prescott. Washington Irving and his
grandson Theodore were particularly fond of Vega and believed that he was one of
the greatest historians ever. Even today, however, his writings are considered
classics in Spanish history. South American historians still consult his work and often
use his history as a supporting source. Sir Clement Markham a historian of South
American affairs and an authority on El Inca, explained the significance of studying
the mestizo, "... the Inca will continue to be an important authority, while the
charm of his personal reminiscences must ever have a fascination for his readers from
which no criticism can detract."  

El Inca was an important writer to the thinkers of the enlightenment. Hobbes,
Locke and Voltaire used aspects of Vega's history to support their political
philosophy. Other great thinkers such as Cervantes and Rousseau were indirectly
affected from the literary contribution of Vega. His writings not only inspired
thought, they motivated action. Rebellions throughout Peru, Brazil, and Argentina all
suggest that El Inca's writings have relevance for the suppressed South American
people. It is important to recognize the influence the Commentaries had on the
motion of ideas. His writings were not merely historical facts recorded and stored away. His histories brought alive a real story with philosophical undertones that inspired great thinkers.
The careful study of the life and writings of Garcilaso de la Vega begs the question, do Vega’s works present a coherent and intentional philosophy? In other words, are they promoting a specific set of political, social or moral ideals? As chapter five demonstrated, his works contain issues that have probed philosophical questions about the nature of man, the ideal state and the true condition of the American continent before the Europeans arrived. Vega’s history encourages thought about many philosophical subjects, but does that mean there is a philosophy present in his works. For Vega’s works to have philosophical merit in their own right they would have to establish and rationally support a specific set of political, social, or moral ideals.

The Florida and the second part of the Royal Commentaries do not present a coherent philosophical agenda. Rather, the works record a narrative history that explain the expeditions of Old World conquerors. A case can be made, however, that the first part of the Royal Commentaries is more than just a history. This book records the oral tradition of the Incan people, but it also upholds certain religious, social, and political beliefs that support a theory about an ideal state. Vega's ideal state parallels the political theory of Hobbes. Both authors present the idea of a monarchy where subject and ruler achieve maximum security, peace, prosperity, and
justice. The ideas present throughout the first book of the Royal Commentaries comprise an idealistic political philosophy that believes ideal government is attainable through the cultivation of human virtue.

The first book of the Commentaries is different from the other two histories because it is not based on "historical data," that is, a written record. The first book explains the history of the Incan people before the coming of the Europeans. Since the Peruvian people were devoid of a written language capable of handling historical data, the story of their origin was passed down orally from generation to generation. This story, because of its oral lineage, left more room for interpretation and an incorporation of the author's opinions, unlike his other documented histories, allowing the author to mold the past in a fashion desirable for the present and future. This type of history could easily be adjusted to fit the morals and needs of the Incas telling the story or El Inca recording the history.

Vega wants his readers to believe that the entire history came directly from the Incan people. Presenting his political beliefs as part of the Incan culture, Vega desires to be an objective historian whose accounts should not be questioned. Wanting to be seen as nothing more than a messenger, Vega writes: "I have undertaken the task of writing these Commentaries, in which everything in the Peruvian empire before the arrival of the Spaniards is clearly and distinctly set down, from the rights of their religion to the government of their kings." Attempting to remove himself from the history, Vega does not directly entice the reader into questioning his role as anything more than a recorder. He states continually that he is merely writing down the stories that his ancestors had recounted to him. Regardless of his passive claim, however,
Vega was an active participant and not a mere recorder. Throughout the first book of the Commentaries he continually passes value judgments on the Incan people and their practices, thus promoting certain ideals. His promotion of these ideals exempts him from the role of detached historian and instead establishes him as a religious and political philosopher.

It is impossible to distinguish how much of the political theory of the Royal Commentaries is added to or elaborated on by Vega. El Inca claims to be merely recounting the political structure of his mother’s people, but his unquestioning enthusiasm and defense of certain practices could indicate that much of this ideal state is created or at least supported by its Incan author. Vega's approval of the Incan government is displayed through his deliberate and forward appraisal of their laws and customs. Vega uses his political philosophy about the ideal state to explain the existence his ancestors' romantic record. He records an idealized oral tradition, but explains it through his own political ideals.

In this text, he provides his reader with insight into the philosophical side of his personality that is enraptured with Leone Ebreo's Philosophy of Love. El Inca incorporates ideas present in Ebreo's book to explain certain aspects of the Incan Empire. Ebreo's work deals with philosophical questions regarding the difference between love and desire. It also attempts to explain how humans are torn between virtue and vice and how a wise person acts always with virtue as their desired end.³ Ebreo's idea's about a virtuous person are incorporated into El Inca's explanation of the good qualities of the Incan kings. The kings are wise, effective rulers only
because they govern with virtue and goodness as their goal and never with their personal motives as the paramount factor of their decisions.

Garcilaso de la Vega, El Inca, advocates a political philosophy that trusts mankind to be inherently good. He believes that monarchy can be a benevolent society where the ruler and his subjects work together for the good of all. El Inca does not have faith that the common people can make good political decisions; he believes that the country's leaders must have absolute power to guarantee security and peace. He believes that leaders, if raised properly, will be wise and unselfish, ruling for the good of the people even above their own needs. Vega's political philosophy is centered around an understanding that humans can live the ideals of justice, mercy, and love.

Vega set forth his own theory about the state through his value judgments about Incan culture. The Commentaries uses the political form of a monarchy to embody his ideal state. This state is ideal because all of its people are well cared for and the society exists in harmony between its leaders and subjects. Vega deliberately informs his reader three times that the Incan society should be regarded as a monarchy.4 He is also careful to display that the Incan king was the sole decision-maker of this society and through his wisdom all things are decided. "They called their kings Capa Inca, which is 'sole king' or 'sole lord'. . . ."5 The good society, according to Vega, can only be achieve actuality through the rule of one over the many.

As the ideal state is ruled by one king who subdues the people to bring safety and a better quality of life to a "savage," misguided people, Vega clearly believes that
one person is capable of maximizing good for an entire society. Vega explains that the Incan Empire helped the tribes it conquered by "...deliver[ing] them from the savage life they had led and bring them the advantages of human existence they now enjoy." The Incan Empire is founded because the people sought protection from war and violence and found their security in the benevolent Incan monarchs. The monarchs accept their role as protector of the peace and promoter of a better quality of life, instead of ruling the land for their own personal benefit. The Incan kings pride themselves on bettering the peoples' quality of life--teaching their subjects to till the soil, build homes, make better clothes and enhance industry (helping better all aspects of Incan life). Vega optimistically states the ruler's job is to teach the people "all things necessary for human life."

Vega believes that a good state only occurs when its king rules with the common good as his first priority. He explains that the kings loved their subjects like children and worked for the good of all social classes. Even the poor were important to the monarch, as he is titled "... Huacchacuyac, 'lover and benefactor of the poor,' and this title also is not given to any other but the king, by reason of the special care they all had, from first to last, to benefit their subjects."

A king should desire to benefit all of his subjects; it is the benevolence of the Incan rulers that causes their empire to be great. Other tribes willingly join the empire because they witness its goodness and desire to be under its care and protection. He explains, "When the Indians of these and later times contrasted their descent with that of the Inca and saw the benefits he had confessed on them ... [they] promised to observe and comply with what he ordered. ..." This as well
indicates Vega's belief that human beings form societies based on the benefits they receive from these societies, and not because of other more automatic reasons.\textsuperscript{11}

Vega advocates that subjects should be grateful and obedient, following the king's rule faithfully. Thus the working relationship between king and subject depends upon the subservience of the subject. Vega believes that the people were obedient when they saw that the king was concerned with their well being: ". . . and the Indians, believing this, gladly accepted all his orders and his treatment of them . . . they experienced the benefits that ensue from obeying him. . . ."\textsuperscript{12} Vega believes that a monarch's virtue produces complete obedience in his people.\textsuperscript{13} "Pride in being children of the Sun was what mainly stimulated them to be good, so as to stand above the rest both in goodness and in blood and persuade the Indians that both things were hereditary in them."\textsuperscript{14}

Subservience is necessary for a just society, and Vega emphasizes the importance of strict laws that would guarantee submission from the people. The Incas solicited work from all people in their society, requiring their subjects by law to work together in "law of brotherhood" to produce the materials needed for life. The empire assigned specific amounts of work to each person, and all people worked together for the benefit of the society. Even the children did light work to assist the common good of the tribe. The leaders of each district monitored this production with strict punishment: "Those who were regarded as careful and neat were rewarded with public commendation, while the careless were flogged on the arms and legs or punished in such other ways as the law established."\textsuperscript{15} Vega believed that justice is
upheld because of the strict laws the empire enforces, and that human nature requires such punishment to ensure the peace and prosperity of the whole:

Because of this all that was necessary for human consumption was so abundant that it was practically given for nothing, even things which today are greatly prized. The remaining moral laws and ordinances which they all observed singly and communally were based on reason and can be deduced from what we shall say about their life and customs. We shall also speak at length in ch.viii and ix of the reasons for the disappearance of these laws and rights, or the greater part of them, and of the administration of the Incas, which was so politic and worthy of praise, and of how the Indians now live in greater barbarism and with a greater lack of citizenship and in greater want of everything necessary for human life than they had in former times.16

Vega believes severe legal enforcement is a necessary attribute of a just society. He agrees with strict policy and allows the king to determine the form this punishment should take. According to his theory, the king acts out his position effectively by enforcing relentless rules.17

Vega's political philosophy is valuable because of its optimistic assessment of the human condition. Vega promotes virtues of compassion and consideration that are necessary to create a prosperous, peaceful community. He recognizes that humans are not perfect and must constantly work toward being virtuous, but he believes people can enjoy a happy existence (even with harsh laws) in a society where people work together to ensure the good of all. Vega's political proposals lead to many questions about a just state. What are the virtues of love, justice, mercy and clemency that Vega uses to describe his ideal state? He uses these virtues as a common part of reality, but in fact such virtues are hard to define. It is even more difficult to explain how these ideals can be actualized. Another problem, as Voltaire pointed out, is how an extinct society can be recreated or properly evaluated.
Perhaps the most apparent problem with Vega's philosophy is its consistency. Vega advocates, on the one hand, that a just ruler would enact harsh laws to maintain justice and peace in his society. Yet he also advocates that a monarch be merciful and caring for the people. He explained that through mercy and good deeds people would obey the law, "mild and merciful, subduing the Indians with love and attracting them with good works." How does a ruler support harsh punishments for small crimes and remain merciful? Vega never specified any guidelines that explained how the two could exist simultaneously, but he did state that it was better to be merciful and good to the subjects than cruel. And yet he advocates harsh laws to keep peace, and mercy to keep respect. The problem arises as the Incan monarchs change instantaneously from a caring rulers to cruel protectors of the law. At times the rulers use mercy to gain respect, while at others they kill entire tribes. Vega never explains when it is appropriate to be merciful and when it is appropriate to be harsh. Instead his histories encourage both virtues, with no way to distinguish when one should be implemented. His histories are especially inconsistent because they portray the kings as merciful and the laws as harsh.

The ideal monarchy promoted throughout the Royal Commentaries was strikingly similar to the political philosophy set forth in Thomas Hobbes's work the Leviathan. Both texts advocate an ideal monarchy, where the ruler makes laws for the good of the people and the people obediently submit to the will of the monarch. The works explain a governmental structure where safety and security are regulated by the rulers. In gratitude, the people willingly obey their rulers and work for the good of the society as a whole.
The Leviathan and the Royal Commentaries both use monarchies to define just
government. Thomas Hobbes said that monarchy was the superior form of
government because the private interest of the monarch correlates with public
interest. According to Hobbes, human nature demands that men look out for their
own interests. Therefore, the best form of government (monarchy) is one where the
private and public interests are separate. A monarchy is also superior because one
person can be a faster, more decisive decision-maker than a group deliberating for too
long. Vega also uses monarchy to portray the just and merciful state of the Incan
society where everyone was happy and cared for.

The role of the monarch in both works was to rule for the good of the people
in all matters, to protect safety and to promote a higher form of living. Hobbes
explained this:

And in him consisteth the essence of the commonwealth, which is one person,
of whose acts a great multitude, by mutual covenants one with another, have
made themselves everyone the author, to the end he may use the strength and
the means of them all, as he shall think expedient, for peace and common
defense.

Like Vega, Hobbes believed that the ideal state was a monarchy and that the monarch
should rule for the good of the people. He also believed that this ruler had the right to
determine what laws and customs should be practiced by the society and determine
punishment for violations of such rules. Hobbes and Vega both promoted a state
where the people gave their rights over to a sole ruler, who in return would govern for
the good of all. They believed that the king would work to provide justice, peace, and
security for all the people, thus creating a commonwealth beneficial to all.
Consequently, both political theories are susceptible to some of the same criticisms. They both assume that the king will not abuse his power. Hobbes believes that the king would rule for the good of the people because theoretically that is what benefits the king most. Vega also believes that kings of vast political empires would rule justly, though his motives revolve around upbringing and human nature. He uses all the Incan rulers to show that with proper upbringing rulers will naturally be just and concerned with the common good. The problem with their theory is that often, as history shows, the personal motives of the ruler conflict with the well being of the commonwealth—especially the poor.

However, Vega takes an optimistic approach to the state, whereas Hobbes is more pessimistic. Vega believes that society can maximize human good, creating a paradise on earth. Hobbes explains that a society is needed because it is better than the state of nature, not because it creates a perfect life. One example of Vega's optimism is his belief that rulers will put the good of the people before their personal interests. Hobbes, however, believes that individuals will always serve their own interests first. Hobbes emphasizes the brutish state of nature and man's natural affinity for disorder. This is a major reason why Hobbes rejects any utopian thinking.

Vega's political philosophy optimistically assesses humankind. Vega believes that all people naturally work toward being virtuous, and with the proper upbringing, rulers can govern a country for the common good. Vega advocates a compassionate and supportive relationship between ruler and subject. The Peruvian is an intriguing philosopher since his ideas are masked in the historical account of the Incan people. He is a valuable philosopher because, like Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau, he addresses
the true nature of man and why a state should be constructed and maintained. He also attempts to explain how humankind can work together to enhance their earthly existence.

Vega's reconciliation of his two diverse heritages brought about a culmination of individualism and collectivism inherent in his histories. Vega's philosophy is centered around balancing the role of subjects and rulers in a society. His works are optimistic about human nature and encourage the possibility of men existing happily in an ideal state. The strongest point of his philosophy is his belief in human virtue and the manner in which his rulers balance reality and ideals through universal human virtues.
Chapter 1


3 Varner, The Life and Times of Garcilaso de la Vega, 39-40, 45; Vega, Royal Commentaries, part 1, 429-430.


5 Varner, The Life and Times of Garcilaso de la Vega, 51, 61; Vega, Royal Commentaries, part 2, 982.

6 Varner, The Life and Times of Garcilaso de la Vega, 91.


8 Varner, The Life and Times of Garcilaso de la Vega, 170; Vega, Royal Commentaries, part 2, 1444.

9 Kelly, El Inca: Garcilaso de la Vega, 7; Markham, The Incas of Peru, 265.

10 Kelly, El Inca: Garcilaso de la Vega, 21; Vega, Royal Commentaries, part 2, 1447-1448.

11 Vega, Royal Commentaries, part 2, 1153.

12 Ibid., 150-162.

13 Varner, The Life and Times of Garcilaso de la Vega, 211, 216-217, 242-250; Vega, Royal Commentaries, part 2, 1153.

14 Markham, The Incas of Peru, 276; Vega, Royal Commentaries, part 2, 651-652.

15 Varner, The Life and Times of Garcilaso de la Vega, 273, 300.


18 Kelly, *El Inca: Garcilaso de la Vega*, 36-44.


20 Markham, *The Incas of Peru*, 284.


Chapter 2

1 Vega, *Royal Commentaries*, 606.


3 Vega, *Royal Commentaries*, part 1, 585.


5 Ibid., 182.

6 Vega, *Royal Commentaries*, part 1, 47.

7 Vega, *Royal Commentaries*, part 2, 810, 924.

8 Ibid., 1278.

9 Vega, *Royal Commentaries*, part 1, 51.

10 Ibid., 49-53.

11 Ibid., 15-16.

12 Ibid., 79-80.


Chapter 3

1 Positivists will be defined as a historian who believes that immutable laws move history. An idealist focuses on data gathered from the empirical world to explain the forces that move history.

2 Vega, Royal Commentaries, part 1, Preface. See also prefaces of his other writings including the translation of The Philosophy of Love.

3 Ibid., 12-13.

4 Ibid., 19-38.

5 Ibid., 59.

6 Ibid., 382.


8 Ibid., Preface to the Readers.

9 Ibid., 67-73.

10 Ibid., 68.

11 Ibid., 890.

12 Ibid., 577.

13 Ibid., 590.
Chapter 4


2 Vega, Royal Commentaries, part 2, 1439.

3 Vega, Royal Commentaries, part 1, 623.

4 Kelly, El Inca: Garcilaso de la Vega, 57

5 Vega, Royal Commentaries, part 2, 1164.


7 Markham, The Incas of Peru, 151, 158, 238.

8 Theodore Irving, Conquest of Florida by Hernando de Soto (New York: George P. Putnam and Son, 1869), viii.

9 Vega, Royal Commentaries, part 1, 593; Vega, Royal Commentaries, part 2, 1316.

10 Vega, Royal Commentaries, part 2, 1449.

11 Castanien, El Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, 92; Vega, Royal Commentaries, 1012.

12 Vega, Royal Commentaries, 636, 845-55, 865, 1434.

14 Ibid., 1475.

15 Varner, The Life and Times of Garcilaso de la Vega, 299.

16 Ibid., 298, 300.

17 Vega, Royal Commentaries, part 2, 1485.

18 Vega, The Florida, XVI.

19 Vega, Royal Commentaries, part 1, 33.

20 Ibid., 33.

21 Ibid., 494.

22 Ibid., 111, 339, 382.

23 Ibid., 31.

24 Ibid., 417.

25 Ibid., 380.

26 Ibid., 96-99.

27 Castanien, El Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, 46, 97; Varner, The Life and Times of Garcilaso de la Vega, 142.


29 Ibid., 281.

30 Ibid., 483, 593, 643.

31 Varner, The Life and Times of Garcilaso de la Vega, 344.

32 Vega, The Florida, xxiii.

33 Kelly, El Inca: Garcilaso de la Vega, 47.

34 Baudin, A Socialist Empire, see his text; Hemming, Conquest of the Incas, especially 455; Irving, Conquest of Florida, viii.

35 Vega, Royal Commentaries, part 2, 1078.

36 Vega, The Florida, 159, 161; Vega, Royal Commentaries, part 2, 671.
Chapter 5

1 Weatherford, Native Roots, 248.


3 Cervantes Don Quixote; Varner, The Life and Times of Garcilaso de la Vega, 37.

4 Kelly, El Inca: Garcilaso de la Vega, 64-65.

5 See chapter 4 of this thesis, 37-38.


10 Vega, The Royal Commentaries, part 1, 45-51,359.

11 Hobbes, Leviathan, 70.


13 Weatherford, Native Roots, 244; Varner, The Life and Times of Garcilaso de la Vega, 220; Vega, The Florida, 386,465; Vega, Royal Commentaries, part 2, 664, 933.

14 Castanien, El Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, 104; Chappell, The Cambridge Companion to Locke, 5-6, 10-12; Varner, The Life and Times of Garcilaso de la Vega, 220; Vega, Royal Commentaries, part 2, 664,691.


17 Vega, Royal Commentaries, 691,727.

18 Castanien, El Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, 140.

19 Vega, Royal Commentaries, 53-59.


22 Ibid., 75-79.

23 Ibid., 78.

24 Ibid., 112.

25 Ibid., 96.

26 Ibid., 76-84.

27 Ibid., 110, 112.


29 Varner, The Life and Times of Garcilaso de la Vega, 379.

30 Bushnell, Ancient Peoples and Places: Peru, 147.

31 Vega, Royal Commentaries, part 2, 1073.


35 Markham, The Incas of Peru, 280.
Chapter 6

1 Vega, Royal Commentaries, part 1, preface to the reader.

2 Vega, Royal Commentaries, part 1, 15, 41, 49, 50, 51.

3 Ebreo, Philosophy of Love, 4, 14

4 Ibid., preface, 51, 67.

5 Ibid., 62-63.

6 Ibid., 54.

7 Ibid., 52-55, 57, 67.

8 Ibid., 54-55, 63, 98-100.

9 Ibid., 63, see also 243-246.

10 Ibid., 55.

11 Ibid., 40, 55, 59, 119.

12 Ibid., 57.

13 Ibid., 101.

14 Ibid., 102-3.

15 Ibid., 262-264.

16 Ibid., 264.

17 Ibid., 94-97.

18 Vega, Royal Commentaries, part 1, 60.


20 Hobbes, Leviathan, 120.

21 Ibid., 119-121.

22 Ibid., 51, 67.

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