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**The Poetics of Demonization: The Writings of Juan de Castellanos
In the Light of Alonso de Ercilla's *La Araucana***

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In the Light of Alonso de Ercilla's *La Araucana***

by

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Dedication

In memory of Emiro Ascanio Martínez Montes

To Heather and Amelia

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In this dissertation I offer an analysis of the ideological significance of Juan de Castellanos' writings in light of the epic model provided by Alonso de Ercilla's *La Araucana*. My main goal is to demonstrate that, unlike Ercilla, Castellanos embraced and manipulated the resources at the disposal of epic poets not only to praise the deeds and defend the rights of the first wave of colonists, but also to challenge the policies of Hapsburg monarchs concerning the administration of the recently established Viceroyalties in the New World. Hence, this dissertation aims to foreground the complexities and ambiguities of a text that bears evidence of an internal ideological fissure that significantly shaped Spain's political and territorial expansion and contributed to the emergence of a new type of literature. If epic, as has been persuasively argued by Elizabeth B. Davis "was invaluable to the ruling circles of the imperial monarchy, who used it to forge a sense of unity and to script cultural identities during the period of expansion and conquest" (10), then the heroic poems written by Castellanos on behalf of the conquistadors and encomenderos represent the boldest attempt to turn the most

prestigious vehicle of Spanish imperial propaganda, epic poetry, into a tool for the expression of colonial political concerns, a project which included but was not limited to the deployment of aggressive practices of poetic imitation, the expression of a new sense of selfhood, and the demarcation of a new sense of patriotism. Nevertheless, from its inception Castellanos' project was also plagued by many contradictions, most of which are the result of his nostalgia for the values and practices commonly associated with the warrior nobility of the feudal era, and by the constraints imposed by simultaneously having to point to and erase the trace of Ercilla's text.

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Si tomamos en cuenta la multifacética realidad social neogranadina, lo que suprime Castellanos es quizás tan importante como lo que escribe. - Luís Fernando Restrepo

CHAPTER 1: LITERARY FORM, IDEOLOGY, AND THE WRITINGS OF JUAN DE CASTELLANOS

The Spanish impetus for imperial expansion during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries served as the catalyst for the creation of numerous works that stand out today as some of the best examples of Colonial and Golden Age Spanish literature.¹ In recent years scholars like Cory A. Reed, James Nicolopoulos, and John Beverly have explored the imperial or anti-imperial significance of works as thematically and aesthetically diverse as Miguel de Cervantes' *Numancia*, Alonso de Ercilla's *La Araucana* (1569, 1578, 1589) and Luis de Góngora y Argote's "Soledades," respectively. The juxtaposition of Reed's, Nicolopoulos' and Beverly's analyses illustrates the almost

¹ Throughout this dissertation I use the terms 'empire' and 'colony' tentatively. Several critics have reminded us that the universal Christian monarchy ambitioned by Spain was not an 'empire' in the strict sense of the term. As Anthony Padgen points out "there never was, of course, a 'Spanish Empire.' Although contemporaries sometimes referred to the territories over which first the Habsburgs and then the Bourbons ruled as an empire, and although in many respects the administration of those territories was an imperial one, they were always in theory and generally in legal practice, a confederation of principalities held together in the person of a single king... The Americas, as the criollos, the American-born Spaniards, were later forcibly to remind their king, were never colonies, but kingdoms, and- and in this case they were unique- an integral part of the crown of Castile." See *Spanish Imperialism and the political imagination*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1990. See also Rolena Adorno's "Reconsidering Colonial Discourse for Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century Spanish America." *Latin American Research Review* 28.3 (1993): 135-145; and the articles about colonial discourse edited by Walter Mignolo and Rolena Adorno in *Dispositio* XIV 36-38 (1989).

unavoidable interest of Spanish writers in the theme of imperialism and the unique ideological and political positions assumed by each author.² Nevertheless, there is still a large body of literature that deals with Spain's process of political and territorial expansion whose ideological ramifications have either been ignored or have not been properly examined. One of such works is a series of heroic poems written by Juan de Castellanos (Alanís 1522 – Tunja 1607) and commonly known as *Elegías de varones ilustres de las Indias* (Elegies for Illustrious Men of the Indies).³ In this regard this dissertation aims to advance the process of restoring the importance of learned epic poetry within the curriculum and canon of Golden Age and Colonial literature, a process set in motion by critics like Elizabeth Davis, James Nicolopoulos, Jorge Canizarez-Esguerra, Elizabeth Wright, and Luis Fernando Restrepo, among others.

In this dissertation I offer an analysis of the ideological significance of Juan de Castellanos' (hereafter Castellanos) writings in light of the epic model provided by Alonso de Ercilla's *La Araucana*. My main goal is to demonstrate that, unlike Ercilla, Castellanos embraced and manipulated the resources at the disposal of epic poets not only to praise the deeds and defend the rights of the first wave of colonists, but also to challenge the policies of Hapsburg monarchs concerning the administration of the recently established Viceroyalties in the New World. Hence, this dissertation aims to foreground the complexities and ambiguities of a text that bears evidence of an internal ideological fissure that significantly shaped Spain's political and territorial expansion and

² See Reed's "Identity formation and collective anagnorisis in *Numancia*" in *Theatralia: Revista de poética del teatro*. 5 (2004): 67-76. Nicolopoulos' *The Poetics of Empire in the Indies. Prophecy and Imitation in La Araucana and Os Lusíadas*. Pennsylvania: Penn State UP, 2000. And Beverly's *Aspects of Gongora's 'Soledades'*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1980 and "Sobre Góngora y el Gongorismo colonial," *Revista Iberoamericana* 57. 114-115 (1992): 33-44.

³ All references to the *Elegías* are to the 1955 edition published by Editorial ABC with a prologue by Miguel Antonio Caro. All references to Castellanos' *Discurso del Capitán Francisco Drake* are to the 1921 edition prepared by Ángel González Palencia and published by the Instituto de Valencia de Don Juan.

contributed to the emergence of a new type of literature. If epic, as has been persuasively argued by Elizabeth B. Davis “was invaluable to the ruling circles of the imperial monarchy, who used it to forge a sense of unity and to script cultural identities during the period of expansion and conquest” (10), then the heroic poems written by Castellanos on behalf of the conquistadors and encomenderos represent the boldest attempt to turn the most prestigious vehicle of Spanish imperial propaganda, epic poetry, into a tool for the expression of colonial political concerns, a project which included but was not limited to the deployment of aggressive practices of poetic imitation, the expression of a new sense of selfhood, and the demarcation of a new sense of patriotism.⁴ Nevertheless, from its inception Castellanos’ project was also plagued by many contradictions, most of which are the result of his nostalgia for the values and practices commonly associated with the warrior nobility of the feudal era, and by the constraints imposed by simultaneously having to point to and erase the trace of Ercilla’s text.

To an extent, Castellanos’ trajectory in the New World follows that of many other colonists who tried their luck in Tierra Firme after the decline of the initial colonies established in places like Hispaniola and Cuba. Sometime after arriving in Puerto Rico around 1539, Castellanos embarked on a series of journeys that took him to the pearl fisheries on the islands of Cubagua and Margarita, off the coast of Venezuela, later to the Guajira peninsula and the port of Cartagena, and finally to Santa Fe de Bogotá and Tunja in Nueva Granada. While traversing this vast geographical area, Castellanos shed his humble background and went on to rise up in the social ladder. He was ordained priest in 1554 and was later appointed beneficiary of the cathedral at Tunja, whose construction he oversaw. Throughout his life Castellanos was able to accrue enough wealth to live

⁴ For a nuanced discussion of patriotism in Habsburg Spain see “Part II: The pattern of society: community and identity in Habsburg Spain” in *Spain, Europe and the Atlantic World: Essays in Honor of John H. Elliot*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002.

comfortably, including owning houses, farms, slaves, and livestock. For someone who had been born into a family of peasants and farmers and who had left Andalucía at a time when a severe drought hit the region and poverty was widespread in the neighboring towns in the Sierra Morena (Ospina 41), Castellanos' life and success in the New World is a story that demonstrates the social mobility that the Indies afforded to those individuals who persisted, particularly to those who made their voices heard through the perfection of the craft of writing.⁵

Castellanos wrote his poems between 1568 and 1600 approximately. He submitted the manuscripts of his poems for publication but only the first installment of the *Elegías* appeared in print during his lifetime. Part I was censored by Agustín Zárate and published in Madrid in 1589 by Viuda de Alonso Gómez, the official printer of the Crown. With the exception of the section entitled "Discurso del Capitán Francisco Draque", Part I, Part II, and Part III were published in 1847 by the Biblioteca de Autores Españoles. Part IV was published for the first time in 1886 in the Colección de Escritores Castellanos under the title *Historia del Nuevo Reino de Granada*. According to the information recorded by Castellanos in his own will, he also wrote a poem in *octavas rimas* about the life and miracles of Saint Diego de Alcalá, but the manuscript of that poem has never been recovered.

The starting point of my approach is David Quint's seminal work concerning the political function of epic poetry as a literary genre. Building on the ideas of theorists like Thomas M. Greene and Frederic Jameson, in *Epic and Empire, Politics and Generic form from Virgil to Milton* (1993), Quint traces the increasing politicization of the epic, starting with the practices established by Virgil's skillful imitation of Homer and the

⁵ For biographical information about Castellanos see William Ospina *La Auroras de Sangre*. Bogotá: Norma, 1999. Mario Germán Romero *Joan de Castellanos: un examen de su vida y de su obra*. Bogotá: Banco de la República, 1964. Ulises Rojas *El beneficiado don Juan de Castellanos cronista de Colombia y Venezuela*. Tunja: Biblioteca de Autores Boyacenses, 1958.

forthright validation of Cesar Augustus' regime in the *Aeneid*, and subsequently appropriated or contested in classic epics such as Lucan's *Pharsalia*, and in Renaissance poems like Luis de Camoens' (1524 – 80) *Os Lusíadas* (1572), Alonso de Ercilla's (1533 – 94) *La Araucana*, Torcuato Tasso's (1544 – 1595) *Gerusalemme Liberata* and John Milton's (1608 – 1674) *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*. At the core of Quint's interpretation is the notion that in the Western epic tradition it is possible to “define an opposition between epics of imperial victors and epics of the defeated”(8). Quint illustrates his thesis by examining some of the most important topical and poetic allusions present on each of the above mentioned works and drawing distinctions between the formal and ideological elements that constitute each of the two rival narrative traditions. According to Quint, the epics written by the winners are texts that follow on the footsteps of Virgil's *Aeneid* and display a more linear, teleological and coherent plot, and that aim to perpetuate imperial politics; while the epics produced by the defeated are texts that exhibit a greater affinity to Lucan's *Pharsalia* and display more random, circular or open-ended plots, and which attack or resist empire and promote less centralized political arrangements.

In regards to *La Araucana* and Alonso de Ercilla's depiction of the protracted Spanish campaign to subdue the rebellion of the Mapuche Indians, Quint recognizes the Spanish courtier's debt to both Virgil and Lucan, as it is palpable, for instance, in *La Araucana*'s depiction of the battle of Lepanto and the episode involving the descent into the cave of the wizard Fitón, which imitate the *Aeneid*'s battle of Actium and the episode of the witch Ericto from book six of the *Pharsalia*, respectively. However, Quint places firmly *La Araucana* within the tradition of the epics of the defeated and argues that Ercilla's sympathy for the Mapuche's desire to reject Spanish colonialism and their unwavering struggle to preserve their freedom led him to “superimpose” Lucan's model

over that of Virgil's.⁶ Accordingly, in his reading of *La Araucana*, Quint establishes a connection between what he views as Ercilla's inability to bring the poem to a definite end (that is, the 'inconclusiveness' of part one, part two, and part three of the poem) and the ever resurging effort of the Mapuches to oppose the Spaniards and rise again after they had been supposedly wiped-out. As Quint himself put it:

Ercilla finishes his poem three times, at the ends of each of the installments, but each case he provides images of aimless confusion, interruption and suspension, cyclical repetition. He does so knowingly imitating and overturning epic models of closure, particularly Virgilian models that equate narrative completion with definite military victory and political settlement. The *Araucana* rather follows the example of the *Pharsalia*, which dismantles teleological narrative structures in the name of a losing political opposition for whom nothing is settled and history remains an open book. With its non-endings and the concomitant sense that the Spaniards are fighting an un-winnable war, the poem and poet incline toward the side of the repeatedly defeated, but unconquerable Araucanian. (168)

On the whole, Quint's theory of epic continuity has had a significant impact among Classical, Renaissance and Colonial scholars, but it has also been the target of criticism. In his book *The Poetics of Empire in the Indies: Prophecy and Imitation in La Araucana and Os Lusíadas* (2000), James Nicolopoulos argues that in *La Araucana* Alonso de Ercilla made explicit allusions to Lucan and established a continuity between

⁶ Quint does acknowledge the complexity of Ercilla's ideological position when he writes: "Ercilla and his poem can be seen once again as divided among several ideological options depending on how they construe the position of the Spanish king as liege lord of the colonist and Indians" (172-3). For a more recent anti-imperialistic reading of *La Araucana* see Ricardo Padrón, *The Spacious Word: Cartography, Literature, and Empire in Early Modern Spain*. Chicago: Chicago UP, 2004. See also José Durand, "Caupolicán. Clave historial y épica de la Araucana" in *Revue de Litterature Comparée*. 52 (1978): 367-389.

his own poem and the *Pharsalia*, not because he intended to “embrace the cause of the politically defeated,” as Quint would have it (133), but to insert himself within a genealogy of prominent Iberian poets that reaches as far back as Lucan, then continues to Juan de Mena (1411 – 1456) and to Garcilaso de la Vega (1501 – 1536) and finds its culmination in Ercilla himself. Accordingly, Nicolopoulos illustrates how the poems written by Lucan, Mena, and Garcilaso served as the privileged subtexts upon which Ercilla wove his own intricate ‘web of [imperial] prophecy’, particularly in lieu of how Mena’s and Garcilaso’s texts welcome and advocate pro-imperialist Castilian aspirations. In addition, and quite apart from Quint, Nicolopoulos argues that the poetic rivalry between Alonso de Ercilla and Luis de Camoens drove the Spanish courtier to shift the trajectory of his narrative, widen the geographical scope of the poem’s action, and make adjustments in his practice of imitation, in order to assert his preeminence over the Portuguese counterpart and celebrate the culmination of Spain’s global imperial aspirations. As such, and despite its seemingly ‘imperfect form,’ *La Araucana* played a key role in the construction of what Nicolopoulos refers to as “a new ‘poetics’ of imperialistic expansion” (ix), a discursive practice which was not limited to the epic genre and whose implications for lyric poetry have been explored by Ignacio Navarrete.⁷

In her book *Myth and Identity in Imperial Spain* (2000) Elizabeth B. Davis, on the other hand, analyzes five epic poems published in Spain between 1569 and 1611, including *La Araucana*, and argues that although in most cases Spanish epics tended to exclude the term “empire” and often critiqued specific aspects of imperialism, such critique was never tantamount to calling into question “the rightness of the imperial enterprise itself” (12) and the poems’ “acceptance of Hapsburg expansionism is everywhere apparent” (13). Accordingly, Davis adds that in sixteenth century Spain:

⁷ See *Orphans of Petrarch: Poetry and Theory in the Spanish Renaissance*. Berkeley, California UP, 1994.

the specific role of the epic was to project an idealized image of the social group to which its writers belonged, a high-ranking group that understood its interests to be compatible with those of the monarchy and with the imperial project. It is in this sense that the epics of the imperial age lay claim to the events that they themselves depict as triumphal. Although they do not extol empire in so many words, they align themselves with imperial power, even when they seem to eschew atrocities occurring within the context of conquest. (207)

Exposing the contradictions that are present in the poem itself, with regards to *La Araucana*, Davis provides a nuanced and multilayered discussion of the different discourses and counter-discourses used by Ercilla to represent Amerindians and to script his own subjectivity. Among those discourses Davis includes the discourses of nobility as service, blood, virtue, lineage, vassalage, and personal advancement. Although Davis concedes that the intersection of these conflicting threads, and ultimately Ercilla's own split subjectivity, allow for discrepant interpretations, she also underscores that the discourse of nobility as service is the dominant discourse of the poem, one that "partially conceals the writer's other discourses" (20). As evidence of her interpretation Davis points to the abundant instances in which the narrator of *La Araucana* uses apostrophe to draw in the presence of the monarch directly into the text and the space where the action of the poem is taking place; a strategy which in turn allows for Ercilla to boost his aristocratic background, postulate himself as a superior kind of Spaniard, and compensate for the poems' absence of a single well defined Spanish hero.

Although Nicolopoulos' and Davis' interpretations of *La Araucana* approach the text from quite different angles, the former from the perspective of the Renaissance practice of poetic imitation, and the latter from the perspective of the contradictory

discourses Ercilla uses to represent Amerindians and construct his own subjectivity, both critics call attention to the imperialistic stance of the poem, and both readings are in alignment with the contributions made by several other Hispanists over the course of the last forty years, many of whom have suggested to different degrees that it was as an imperial poem that *La Araucana* was read and became one of the most successful best sellers of its time. In her article “*La Araucana* bajo el lente actual: el noble bárbaro humillado” Georgina Sabat de Rivers, for example, writes:

El humanista Ercilla estaría en oposición con el militar, pero él no podía negarse a sí mismo: la justificación de la guerra y la superioridad del español, a la postre habían de imponerse. Y ciertamente se impone largamente a través de la obra cuando justifica y glorifica las conquistas y victorias españolas en tierras o mares de Europa, o la imposición de la ley guerrera al vencido, o en ejemplos en los que se destaca la superioridad del español. (110)⁸

Likewise, Frank Pierce and Francisco Javier Cevallos remind us of the praise assigned to *La Araucana* by contemporaries of Ercilla like Díaz Rengifo who wrote in his *Arte Poética Española*: “bien pudiera yo tender las velas de la elocuencia en alabar las ilustres, y elegantes obras de los poetas latinos, y españoles, por las cuales viven, y vivirán hasta el fin del mundo los conquistadores de Arauco;” and of how a few years later Luis Alfonso de Carvallo wrote: “como hizo el excelente don Alonso de Ercilla, que en la historia que hizo de la rebelión de Arauco” (Cevallos 7 Pierce 19-20). Accordingly, Cevallos points out that: “any perception of anti-conquest concepts in the poem would

⁸ See also Isaías Lerner “Introducción” to *La Araucana*. Madrid: Catedra, 2002 and Jorge Canizares-Esguerra’s *Puritan Conquistadors: Iberianizing the Atlantic 1550-1700*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 2006. 45-57.

surely have been brought to the attention of the king immediately, but the work was instead acclaimed *universally* upon its publication” (7 italics are mine).⁹

It would not be far fetched to conclude, therefore, that it was the Spanish Crown’s recognition of Ercilla’s ideological affinity that resulted in Ercilla’s appointment as official censor for some of the poems that followed, including the second installment of Juan de Castellanos’ *Elegías*.¹⁰ Ercilla approved the publication of the second volume of Castellanos’ writing with a rather laconic endorsement:

Yo he visto este libro, y en él no hallo cosa mal sonante ni contra buenas costumbres; y en lo que toca a la historia la tengo por verdadera, por ver fielmente escritas muchas cosas y particularidades que yo vi y entendí en aquella tierra, al tiempo que pasé y estuve en ella: por donde infiero que va el autor muy arrimado a la verdad; y son guerras y acaecimientos que hasta ahora no las he visto escritas por otro autor, y que algunos holgarán de saberlas. (*Elegías*, Part II, 9)

From the contributions made by Nicolopoulos and Davis we can infer that when trying to situate Ercilla’s ideological stance instead of asking whether Ercilla was pro or against Spain marshalling its energy and resources towards the achievement of an empire of global proportions, a more pertinent question would be whether Ercilla considered that the manner in which that project had been carried out so far and the individuals who had carried it out were the best suited to achieve the goal and to perpetuate it. When trying to answer this last question, once again, paying attention to the public response to *La Araucana* becomes instructing, especially since there is an acute difference particularly

⁹ “The only coeval pro-Indian interpretation of *La Araucana*,” Cevallos writes, was offered in a Dutch translation of 1619, and Frank Pierce has suggested that it is more a product of the Spanish-Dutch rivalry than of literary interpretation.”

¹⁰ According to Frank Pierce, Ercilla stamped his approval in a total of nine narrative poems. See *La poesía épica del Siglo de Oro*. Madrid: Gredos, 1968.

among poets depending on what side of the Atlantic they are writing from. Indeed, we can find high praise for Ercilla's poem among writers like Lope de Vega and Miguel de Cervantes who never set foot in the New World and were not personally affected by the way in which the highly aristocratic and royalist Ercilla depicted the affairs of the conquest. In *La Dragontea* Lope wrote: "En Chile surgen, dando a Chile espanto / Chile, de Ercilla celebrado tanto" (73); and in the *Laurel de Apolo*:

Don Alonso de Ercilla
tan ricas Indias en su ingenio tiene,
desde Chile viene
a enriquecer las musas de Castilla,
pues del opuesto polo
trajo el oro en la frente, como Apolo;
porque después del grave Garcilaso
fue Colón de las Indias del Parnaso. (Silva IV)

Cervantes, on the other hand, in the "Canto de Calíope" included in *La Galatea* wrote:

Otro del mesmo nombre, que de Arauco
cantó las guerras y el valor de España,
el cual los reinos donde habita Glauco
pasó y sintió la embravecida saña,
no fue su voz, no fue su acento rauco,
que uno y otro fue de gracia extraña,
*y tal, que Ercilla, en este hermoso asiento,
merece eterno y sacro santo monumento.*

And later in chapter VI of the first part of Cervantes' *Don Quijote*, the priest praises *La Araucana*, together with Juan Rufo's *La Austriada* and Cristobal Virues' *El Monsarrate* when saying; "todos esos tres libros son los mejores que en verso heroico, en lengua Castellana están escritos, y pueden competir con los mas famosos de Italia: guárdense como las mas ricas prendas de poesía que tiene España."

However, the same can not always be stated about the reception of *La Araucana* by poets residing in the New World. Critics like Alicia de Colombí-Monguió and James

Nicolopulos have historicized the used of Petrarchist/Garcilacist poetic code among the poets attending literary gatherings (tertulias) in places like the viceroyalty of Perú and have made it clear that Ercilla's sophisticated representation of the amorous affairs of Tegalda and Crepino (20.28-21.12), Glaura and Cariolán (27.61-28.53), and Guacuolda and Lautaro (13.43-57, 14.1-3, 13-18), received sometimes a cold reception and was even repudiated. The reason for this, Nicolopulos explains, is that in the colonial context, "the cultivation of Petrarchist literary practice became an instrument for codifying aesthetically the supposed cultural superiority that contemporary philosophical and legal doctrines posited as the justification for the colonizers' dominant position at the apex of the pyramid of colonial power" (232). Accordingly, Nicolopulos, points out:

For the colonizers, at least those of literary bent, the refined and exclusive *mundus significans* encoded by Petrarchism/Garcilasism functions as a nostalgic space of communion with the distant metropolitan cultural ambit and a refuge from the potentially menacing alterity of their New World environment. Furthermore, the very exclusivity which served in the Old World to mark Petrarchist/Garcilacist poetic practices as courtly and aristocratic, functioned doubly in the New world to delineate the difference between colonizer and colonized, and to justify the domination of one over the other. (232)

As a case in point of how Ercilla was taken to task by New World poets, Colombí-Minguió and Nicolopulos cite the response of the poet and encomendero Diego Dávalos y Figueroa, author of *Miscelanea Austral* (Lima 1602), who insisted that Guacuolda, the most memorable among all of Ercilla's indigenous female characters, "era una India como las demás" and had this to say about the amorous episodes of *La Araucana*:

El amor de que los indios más participan es la flema, en el qual pocas vezes se enciende el amor...pues como todo esto falte en esta gente no se puede creer sean heridos de la amorosa flecha, con diferencia alguna de las bestias. Aunque sus defensores niegan esto, atribuiéndoles mill dulçuras, que en tiernos requiebros y enamorados cantares dizen y cantan sus amadas. (qtd in Nicolopulos 232)

Moreover, building upon the work of Elide Pittarello, Nicolopulos expands further our understanding of this trend in the reception of *La Araucana* in the New World, by examining how the ideological implications Ercilla's use of prestigious literary models to describe Amerindians also affected the writing of Pedro de Oña's *Arauco domado* (Lima 1596), a poem sponsored by viceroy Don García Hurtado de Mendoza and acknowledged since it first came out as a response to *La Araucana*. In particular Nicolopulos examines how in the scenes of the "Baño de Caupolicán y Fresia" (5.6-42), "Tucapel and Gualeva" (6.106-88.34, 12.46-90), and in his characterization of Guacolda, Oña uses the codes of Petrarchist imitative practice to transform Ercilla's pastoral heroines into monstrous, lascivious, and unfaithful nymphets whose physical beauty has negative effects. By elucidating the depth and originality of Oña's imitative practices, Nicolopulos' analysis also shows how the criollo poet could at the same time fulfill the expectations of his aristocratic patron, while inscribing the description of Amerindians in the dehumanizing rhetoric of the encomenderos (237-243).

As it turns out, Ercilla's criticism of men like Pedro de Valdivia, his condemnation of the excesses committed by the earlier generation of explorers and conquistadors (particularly in Part I of *La Araucana*, which narrates events that took place before Ercilla arrived in Chile), his support of the swift measures taken by the Marquis de Cañete to control the encomendero rebellion in Perú (12.76-13.5), and his use

of the dominant poetic code to represent the heroism of Amerindians, also triggered a contentious response from the hard-line colonists residing in places like Nueva Granada (present day Colombia, Venezuela, and Ecuador). Such response is reflected in works like Castellanos' *Elegías*, the most unapologetic example of pro-encomendero writing ever to come out from that administrative and geographical area, and possibly from anywhere else in the Spanish colonies with the exception of Bernal Díaz del Castillo *Historia Verdadera de la Conquista de la Nueva España*. I shall limit my comments to three separate examples from the *Elegías* in which Castellanos addresses not only the representation of indigenous female characters in Ercilla's epic poem, but also Ercilla's criticism of baquianos and the characterization of the indigenous wizard Puchecalco from *La Araucana*.

The first example I will cite comes from the second canto of "Elegía II" which was written in honor of Diego de Arana, one of the explorers that accompanied Columbus in his first trip to the New World and the person left as leader of the thirty nine men that stayed at the Fuerte de Navidad after Columbus returned to Spain to inform the Spanish monarchs about his 'discovery.'¹¹ The second canto of "Elegía II" narrates events that presumably took place sometime after Columbus had left the settlement at Hispaniola, and aims to provide the reader with an explanation as to what exact motives led to the death of all of the colonists at the hands of local Indians. However, unlike other contemporary historical sources, Castellanos' narrative is quite exceptional, not only because it fuses with considerable liberty information about the historical events with allusions to Homer's *Iliad*, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Jorge de Montemayor's *Los siete*

¹¹ For alternative interpretations of this episode see Giovanni Meo Ziglio *Estudio sobre Juan de Castellanos*. Firenze: Valmartina, 1972. (151-182). See also the section entitled "toda su perdicion fue por amores..." in Mario German Romero's *Joan de Castellanos: un examen de su vida y de su obra*. Bogotá: Banco de la República, 1964. (298 – 302). Isaac J. Pardo *Juan de Castellanos: estudio de las Elegías de varones ilustres de las Indias*. Caracas: Biblioteca de la Academia Nacional de Historia, 1991. 258-9.

libros de la Diana, and Ercilla's *La Araucana*, but also because in essence it proposes that the reason why the colonists were killed is because of an illicit love affair between a young Spanish soldier and a beautiful Indian woman who was the wife of the local Indian chieftain named Goaga Canari. In this sense, Castellanos' version of the events surrounding the massacre at the Fuerte de Navidad has some of the core elements of a foundational myth that encapsulates the transfer of empire through the narration of the conflict that unraveled as a result of an illicit sexual encounter. Somewhat along the lines of Homer's *Iliad*, the roots of war can be traced back to the betrayal of a woman and the jealousy of an affronted husband. At least in part, Castellanos constructs this message using a misogynistic discourse which places the blame for the outburst of the conflict on the behavior of a lustful woman:

Huye de la razón el amor ciego:
y ciegan las lascivias de mujeres;
en todos los principios indecentes
los fines tienen mil inconvenientes. (*Elegías* Part I 136)¹²

Since what is of interest to us here is in how Castellanos used this story to respond to Ercilla's literary and ideological agenda, it is pertinent to point out that like the indigenous heroines of *La Araucana*, the female character Castellanos creates is both the object and the emitter of Petrarchist /Garcilacist poetic discourse. Indeed, in Castellanos' "Elegía II," the entire episode at the Fuerte de Navidad is narrated by an Indian who in turn uses Petrarchist/Garcilacist language to characterize the female protagonist as an exceedingly beautiful woman capable of awakening the desire of all who behold her. I will argue, however, that unlike Ercilla's, the use of such language has primarily an ironic function, which in the case of the following stanzas becomes apparent from the

¹² Immediately prior to the narration of the episode, Castellanos would again remind readers that: "toda su perdición fue por amores andar deshonestísimos caminos." (138)

contrast between the embellished description of the physical appearance of the indigenous maiden and the comments the narrator makes about her temperament:

Una señora principal había
entre todos los nuestros celebrada,
de la cual vuestra noble compañía
era por muchas veces visitada,
a quien Coaga Canari bien quería,
y era del por extremo regalada:
allí tenía puestos pensamientos,
deleites, pasatiempos y contentos.

Entre todas las cosas, la natura
esta ninfa crió por mas lozana;
no sabré dibujaros su figura,
por parecer divina mas que humana;
mas quiero comparar su hermosura
al claro resplandor de la mañana
pues aunque la cubría mortal velo
no parecía cosa de este suelo.

Las gracias de las otras eran muertas
delante dones tan esclarecidos;
suspensos se quedaban por las puertas
pasando, sus cabellos esparcidos:
y aquellas proporciones descubiertas,
cadenas de potencias y sentidos;
ablandan también sus condiciones
los mas endurecidos corazones.

Diana vuestra gente la llamaba,
teniéndola por cosa milagrosa,
*a ella desto nunca le pesaba
ni fue de sus loores desdeñosa,
antes en gran manera se holgaba
que todas la loasen de hermosa:
enamorábanla vuestros varones
con amorosas señas y razones.* (*Elegías* Part I 139-140 italics are mine)

The last of these four stanzas is the most important to appreciate how Castellanos is creating an indigenous female character that is the antithesis of the ones created by Ercilla. Critics like Mario Rodríguez and Nicolopolos have recognized that one of the

most outstanding features of the female heroines of *La Araucana* is their chastity and irreproachable loyalty to their husbands (242). Here we may recall Ercilla's description of the aftermath of the battle of Penco and the pathetic image of the devoted Tegalda looking for the corpse of Crepino to give him proper burial; as well as the intensity with which she insists in preferring death to life without her husband:

Deja buscar su cuerpo a esta alma mía,
después furioso con rigor procede,
que ya el dolor me ha puesto en tal extremo
que mas la vida que la muerte temo. (*La Araucana* 20.31)

.....

Que aunque el cielo cruel no me conceda
morir mi cuerpo con el suyo unido,
no estorbará, por mas que me persiga,
que mi afligido espíritu le siga. (*La Araucana* 20.32)¹³

Likewise, we can recall the exalted joy that overcomes Glaura when she is unexpectedly reunited with her husband Cariolán, whom she thought had been killed:

Oh justo Dios! ¿que es lo que veo?
¿eres mi dulce esposo? Ay vida mía!
en mis brazos te tengo y no lo creo:
¿Qué es esto? ¿Estoy soñando o estoy despierta? (*La Araucana* 28.43)

When read from this viewpoint of the loyalty and chastity of Ercilla's Indian heroines, Castellanos' 'Diana' stands out immediately because if her beauty is sufficient for the narrator to elevate her to the status of a goddess ("no sabré dibujaros su figura / por parecer mas divina que humana"), her conduct is enough for the readers to demote her to the level of a frivolous, licentious, and pernicious woman who disregards the devotion of her husband and is more concerned with the attention she inspires from her foreign admirers and with finding opportunities to succumb to her passion. Such

¹³ After listening to Tegalda's plea Ercilla comments: "firme en su casto y amoroso intento" (*La Araucana* 20.35)

opportunity eventually arises after one Spanish explorer falls madly in love with her and Diana is able to arrange for an amorous encounter to take place while she is bathing nude in the company of her female friends. Since the bath scene takes place in a pastoral *locus amoenus* and is loaded with sexual overtones, the scene recalls some the bath scenes of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Jorge de Montemayor's *Los siete libros de la Diana*. As we shall see later, these allusions are not ornamental:

Tocada pues la ninfa de estas llamas
envió mensajera diligente
avisando que sola con dos damas
se bañaba por aguas de una fuente
cubierta con las sombras de una rama,
secretada y apartada de su gente
si quiere ir, mas es mejor no vella,
pues nada bueno ve que ver en ella.

Porque veais la dama cual estaba
con que querer que mas al claro fuese
que decir el lugar do se lavaba
y la señal en que lo conociese
y con ser lo que mas ya deseaba
decir al amador que no viniese
y cierto muy mejor le sucediera
si de las dos tomara la postrera.

Al fin, la concesión nada dudosa
llego con negación disimulada
por ser ya de mujer, siendo hermosa,
antigua condición y averiguada
que puesto que se muera por la cosa
quiere con ella ser importunada
determinose pues el sin ventura
de no perder tan buena coyuntura.

Hurtóse de su buena compañía,
sin que la dama viese su respuesta,
seria poco más del mediodía
en el resistidero de la siesta;
y viendo que ninguno parecía
emboscose por medio la floresta,
y brevecillo espacio caminando

llegó donde lo estaban esperando. (*Elegías* Part I 140 – 141)

The above cited verses are loaded with a lasciviousness which, as Nicolopoulos pointed out in his analysis of Pedro de Oña's *Arauco Domado*, is completely absent from *La Araucana*. On the other hand, critics like Isaac J. Pardo (214-5) and Giovanni Meo Ziglio (162) have correctly suggested that in the scene that follows Castellanos is adhering closely to a sequence of events narrated in one of the final episodes from book VII of Jorge de Montemayor's *Los siete libros de la Diana*. Indeed, after the Indian nymph becomes aware of the presence of her suitor, she reacts violently and reprimands him, and much like the knight Felis passes out in front of Felismena in Montemayor's story, in Castellanos' poem the startled Spanish soldier passes out in front of Diana. Likewise, just as Montemayor's Dorida throws water in the face of the knight Felis, one of Diana's female companions throws water in the face of the soldier to awaken him.

However, what Pardo and Meo Ziglio did not include in their assessment is that when Diana finally starts speaking, her lament echoes, not the words of Felismena, but Tegualda's and Guacolda's claim to remain united to their husbands even after they are dead. Indeed, the correspondence between Diana's speech and the scene prior to the death of Lautaro is accentuated by the epithet with which the narrator refers to the male protagonist, Ercilla calling Lautaro "hijo de Pillán" and Castellanos' Diana referring to the Spanish explorer as "Hijo de Latona." I cite here, first *La Araucana* and then the corresponding verses from the *Elegías*:

Mas no podré ya ser tan desdichada
ni fortuna conmigo podrá tanto
que no corte y ataje con la muerte
el áspero camino de mi suerte.

Trabaje por mostrármeme terrible,
y del tálamo alegre derribarme,
que si revuelve y hace lo posible
de ti no es poderosa de apartarme:

aunque el golpe que espero es insufrible,
podré con otro luego remediarme,
que no caerá tu cuerpo en tierra fría
cuando estará en el suelo muerto el mío. (*La Araucana* 13.46-47)

.....
[Diana] Decía contemplando su figura:
hermano mío, dime, si me quieres,
¿Por qué quieres sin mí la sepultura,
sabiendo que no vivo si tú mueres,
y quedaré sin ti más sin ventura
que cuantas han nacido de mujeres?
recobra ya, señor, tu bello brío,
pues ya junto tu rostro con el mío.

¿Haces eclipsi, hijo de Latona?
¿No oyes, alma mía, lo que digo?
Oh ninfas de Haities y Saona!
a cada cual de vos hago testigo
de cómo tomaré de mi persona
un más que crudelísimo castigo;
maldad mía será si mas aguardo,
y con razón diréis que ya me tardo. (*Elegías* Part I 141)

When read from this perspective, the scene involving Diana and the Spanish explorer is patently ironic and the force of its irony comes from dismantling what Ercilla had accomplished by using an exquisite poetic register to attribute chastity and loyalty to Tegualda, Guacolda, and Gualda. Therefore, I disagree with Isaac J. Pardo when he assessed the relationship between Castellanos and Ercilla and suggested that the idealized characterization of Amerindians found in *La Araucana* simply “passed” unchanged to the pages of the *Elegías*.¹⁴ Quite the contrary, like Ercilla’s female heroines, Castellanos’ Diana also manages to speak in Petrarchist / Garcilacist language, and even to do so decades before that poetic trend would gain full force among writers in the Iberian

¹⁴ Pardo writes: “Los indios idealizados –peroraciones grandilocuentes cargadas de retórica clásica, patrones morales de cuño europeo, pasiones sentimentales y expresadas a la manera de los caballeros y de las damas en las obras de la moda, la belleza de las indias imaginada según los cánones renacentistas, todo lo cual servirá de modelo para “el buen salvaje” de la literatura europea- pasaron de *La Araucana* a las *Elegías*” (222) and later adds “Castellanos acoge aquella innovación y con relativa frecuencia ofrece personajes más europeos y cortesanos que bárbaros.” (323)

peninsula, but the very utterance of that language surfaces as a contradiction because her words are the ultimate confirmation of her moral turpitude and of her lack of attachment or devotion to her husband. Any reader of *La Araucana*, and particularly those who were reading the text in the New World, would not have missed the fact that Diana is pledging to remain united and follow into the after life, not her husband but a foreigner with whom she is about to have an illicit sexual affair. Read in this manner, the allusion of Jorge de Montemayor becomes very important, because it serves to reaffirm the artificiality of the poetic language that is being put in display. To put it differently, the allusion to Montemayor increases the tensions between Ercilla's and Castellanos' texts by bringing into the scene a comic release which is completely absent from the dramatically charged episodes describing the death of Lautaro and the aftermath of the battle at Penco. Accordingly, while the deaths of Lautaro and Crepino are very much real according to the sequence of events narrated in *La Araucana*, in Castellanos' poem the Spanish soldier merely passes out temporarily, and after one of Diana's female companions throws water on his face he quickly comes back to normal. This turn of events makes Diana's language and promises seem unnecessary and even utterly ridiculous, which is in accord with what encomendero poets like Diego Dávalos thought of Ercilla's use of Petrarquist /Garcilacist discourse to describe Amerindians.

However, the subversion of Ercilla's model is not complete until Diana goes on to make a speech in which she warns her lover of the type of things her husband will do if he were find out of their dalliance. While warning her lover she also describes the customs and practices of her own culture using the same rhetoric employed by the encomenderos to justify the conquest and colonization. It is at this point when Castellanos' disavowal of Ercilla's characterization of Indian heroines becomes ever more piercing because by alluding to *La Araucana* and to Montemayor's *Los siete libros*

de la Diana, Castellanos has cleverly set the stage to present Amerindians as violent and cruel barbarians who enjoy ingenious ways of torture and practice cannibalism:

Que bien sabes que rey es mi marido,
el cual en guarda mía se desvela,
y está de mis amores tan vencido,
que hasta de los aires me recela;
y al rey lo mas oculto y ascondido
por mil vías y modos se revela,
debajo de lo cual es lo mas cierto
que será nuestro caso descubierto.

Sabido ¿dónde piensas asconderte
de flechas y flecheros violentos?
O dó me defender y defenderte,
si tienes de defensa los intentos?
Pues el mayor amparo será muerte
con varias invenciones de tormentos;
porque estos que tú llamas infieles
son cuanto mas cobardes mas crueles.

Oh, cuán alharaquientos, cuan livianos,
cuán alborotadores y apocados
en las ejecuciones inhumanos!
porque te llevarán por sus mercados,
unas veces sin pies, otras sin manos,
asido por los labios horadados,
cortándote los miembros por mitades,
gustando mucho destas crueldades. (*Elegías Part I*, 144)

If we assume that the practice of dismembering human bodies that Diana is attributing to the Indians and describing in a line like “cortándote los miembros por mitades” is a form of writing that is inscribed in the human body through violence, what Diana offers to the readers in following line (“gustando mucho de estas crueldades”) is a reading or an interpretation of the significance of that writing. José Rabasa has reminded us that in the sixteenth century “the mutilation of bodies of the vanquished was hardly and act of barbarism, rather, an acceptable and civilized practice.” Accordingly, Rabasa points out, “the corpses of tyrants, rebels, and mutineers were cut apart and denied

burial” (147). Not surprisingly, in another section of the *Elegías* Castellanos himself will refer favorably to the dismembering of bodies when he describes the punishment given to the tyrant Lope de Aguirre for rebelling against the authority of the king. However, by stressing that Indians mutilated and dismembered bodies merely for enjoyment, Diana is not only denying that when violence is conducted by the Indians it lacks any civilizing purpose, but also suggesting that when practiced by the Indians such a form of writing is merely evidence of their barbarism.

As it would be expected, when the Indian chieftain Guano Canari learns of the betrayal of his wife, he is blinded with jealousy, and if up until that point he has shown his incompetence by doing nothing to prevent the illicit amorous affairs of his wife, he now shows his recklessness by overreacting and launching a full blown military attack on the Spanish settlement. Here again, Castellanos seizes this juncture to reaffirm Spanish cultural superiority and in particular the bravery and heroism of the Spanish explorers. In effect, the heroism of the Spaniards never slips away and the overarching message of the story is not only that the death of the Spanish settlers was a tragedy, but also that they displayed the utmost bravery and heroism until the last minute and were only killed because of the treachery of the Indian warriors who threw bags of pepper dust into the Spanish fort to force them to come out.

For the next example I will refer to a passage that appears in the first canto of Castellanos’ *Discurso del Capitán Francisco Drake*. This time notice the manner in which the following stanzas the narrator comprises and subverts a well known passage from canto VII of *La Araucana*, in which, as the Araucanians prepare to sack the city of Concepción, a Spanish woman (Doña Mencía de Nidos) courageously arms herself and exhorts the panic stricken colonists that are fleeing to stay and defend their city:

Antes fue tan inútil la campaña

y tan sin tiento que ninguno piensa,
o por fuerza de bracos o de maña,
usar en aquel punto de defensa
ni los incita vengadora saña,
mas ocúpalos turbación inmensa.
una sola mujer me dan sin nombre,
la cual usó de términos de hombre.

Aquesta dueña, no sin voz airada,
a su lengua mordaz soltó las rriendas:
‘A dónde vais los que ceñís espada
dexando vuestras casas y haziendas?
¡O gente vil, cobarde y apocada,
indigna, cierto, de viriles prendas!
¿Dónde se sufre que volváis la frente
sin ver (la que teméis) primeramente?’

Viendo ciertos mancebos sus extremos,
dixeron de vergüenza confundidos;
‘Cómo queréis, señora, que esperemos,
de todas armas desapercibidos,
pues que siquiera mechas no tenemos
para mostrar los hilos encendidos,
y el audace ladrón por ellos vea
que la marina playa se rodea?’

Apenas esto pronunció la boca
y las palabras fueron entendidas,
quando la dueña se quitó la toca
y hizo della mechas retorcidas;
después de hechas, luego las conboca
y fueron por su mano repartidas;
enciéndelas y al fin, por la frontera
velaron por sus cuartos la ribera. (*Discurso 29 - 30*)

Far from being gratuitous, Castellanos’ allusion to the episode of Dona Mencía de Nidos is quite strategic. The location of the scene (the port of Callao near Lima), the narrator’s characterization of the courageous woman, the speech delivered by her, and even some specific lines like “A dónde vais” / “gente vil, cobarde and apocada” all call the attention of the reader to the verses of *La Araucana*. The most salient aspect of Castellanos’ imitation, however, is that the social group associated with cowardice

(chapetones) is directly the opposite group condemned by Ercilla (baquianos), and that by redeploying Ercilla's model in an episode involving the English adversaries instead of the Amerindians Castellanos seems to be suggesting that Ercilla had blown out of proportions the threat posed by the Araucanians and had ignored more significant threats such as the one posed by the English. In effect, the central tenet in Castellanos' narration is that what was at stake during Drake's attack was not an isolated act of piracy in the periphery of empire, but ultimately a threat to the sovereignty of Spain over the New World. This position is developed throughout the entire poem and succinctly summarized in the following stanza in which Castellanos transcribes the reaction of some anonymous bystanders:

Unos dicen: 'tan gran atrevimiento [Drake's attacks]
no puede proceder de flaca lança,
sino que lleva grande fundamento
y es más que de pirata la pujanza".
*Otros, que vienen a hacer asiento
y que de reyes entraron en la dança,
por quitar, si pudieren, a castilla
los aprovechamientos de esta silla.* (Discurso 31 italics are mine)

And last but not least, for the third example I will cite a passage that serves as a confirmation that Castellanos wanted readers to interpret the episode of the courageous woman from Callao in light of the episode of Dona Mencía de Nidos. In effect, a few stanzas after narrating it, Castellanos again includes another unequivocal allusion to Ercilla's poem; but this time to canto VIII of *La Araucana* and the episode of the soothsayer Puchecalco who foretells a debacle for the Araucanians and is subsequently killed by the Indian warrior Tucapel. This time Castellanos does not re-write Puchecalco's prophetic episode per-se, but he uses references to *La Araucana* to dramatize how local colonists responded to the highly poetic language Ercilla attributed the Indian sage. The irony, evidently, is that in Castellanos's text a year prior to Drake's

attacks on the Spanish ports in the Pacific a highly acculturated soothsayer prophesies doom not for the Araucanians but for the Spaniards:

Lo que por indios se nos representa
conozco ser notables desvaríos;
mas endemoniados hechizeros
parece que nos dan malos agüeros.

Un Christobal Ramírez de Montalvo,
que es vezino de el pueblo Calacoto,
dijo: ‘podré juraros a mi salvo
y sobre ello hacer solemne voto,
que el indio don Alonso Pirca Calvo
de los Pacaxes, grande mi devoto,
vino debajo de buena criança
a mí, que le buscasse cierta lança.

Yo le dije: ‘Gentil demanda traes!
¿Para qué quieres tú lanças agora?
respondió: ‘por las mar bienen *aucaes*.
hombres de mal vivir, gente traidora;
son estas cosas en que tú no caes,
mas dízelas personas sabidoras;
y así quiero tener con qué defienda
mis hijos, mi mujer y mi hazienda. (*Discurso* 34-5)

The transcribed dialogue between the colonist Cristobal Ramírez de Montalvo and the Indian soothsayer don Alonso has a clear mocking tone that aims to lampoon the exquisite language attributed to Ercilla to Puchecalco. For Castellanos and the local encomenderos attributing to an Indian soothsayer such a high poetic register must have appeared as an absurdity. And it is precisely this incongruity what is dramatized in the exchange between the Spanish colonist and an Indian soothsayer who emerges as a caricature of Puchecalco. What triggers disbelief and even laughter from the Spanish colonist (and from readers of the poem) is being confronted with an Indian soothsayer named “don Alonso” who refers to the English adversaries with the same term also used by the Spaniards to refer to the Araucanians (*aucaes*) and who acts like a nobleman and

abides by the chivalric code when requesting weapons to protect his children and his family. What Castellanos wants readers to consider by crafting this caricature is the impossibility of using the same poetic code and the same poetic language to describe Spaniards and Amerindians, which is at the core of Ercilla's poem and evident in the ill-omened speech he attributed to Puchecalco:

El aire de señales anda lleno
y las nocturnas aves van turbando
con sordo vuelo el claro día sereno,
mil prodigios funestos anunciando;
las plantas con sobrado humor terreno
se van, sin producir fruto, secando;
las estrellas, la luna, el sol lo afirman,
cien mil agüeros tristes lo confirman.

Mírolo todo y todo contemplando,
no sé en qué pueda yo esperar consuelo,
que de su espada el Orión armado
con gran ruina ya amenaza el suelo;
Júpiter se ha al ocaso retirado;
sólo Marte sangriento posee el cielo
que, denotando la futura guerra,
enciende un fuego bélico la tierra.

Ya la furiosa Muerte irreparable
viene a nosotros con airada diestra
y la amiga Fortuna favorable
con diferente rostro se nos muestra;
y Eponamón horrendo y espantable,
envuelto en la caliente sangre nuestra,
la corva garra tiende, el cerro yerto,
llevándonos al no sabido puerto. (*La Araucana* 8.41-3)

Castellanos' account of what took place at the Fuerte de Navidad, his re-writing of the episode of doña Mencía de Nidos, and his caricature of Puchacalco gives of an idea of how Ercilla's "reformist and royalist approach to the imperial enterprise" (Nicolopoulos "Pedro de Oña and Bernardo de Balbuena read Ercilla's *Fitón*" 104) and the application of the dominant poetic language to describe Amerindians and Spaniards alike was

received among the encomenderos from Nueva Granada, and fueled a poetic agenda anchored on a clearly ideological reading of *La Araucana*. However, until very recently the animosity of Castellanos' and the encomendero's response has been ignored by the majority of post-romantic critics.

Unfortunately for Castellanos, one of the individuals commissioned by Viceroy Francisco Toledo to pursue Francis Drake after the attack to port of Callao, and subsequently to lead an expedition to protect the Strait of Magellan, was Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa.¹⁵ Like Ercilla, Sarmiento de Gamboa was a 'king's man' and had been a member of the entourage who accompanied Viceroy Francisco de Toledo in his tour around the former lands of the Incas. Upon returning to Spain Sarmiento de Gamboa was appointed as member of the Council of the Indies and chosen as censor of the third volume of Castellanos' *Elegías de Varones Ilustres de las Indias*, in which Castellanos included the *Discurso del Capitán Francisco Draque*. As censor Sarmiento de Gamboa prohibited the publication of this section of Castellanos' writings and tore from the manuscript the one hundred and ten folios containing the poem.

I have sketched the circumstances surrounding the writing and reception of Castellanos' *Discurso del Capitán Francisco Draque* and some of the main trends in Castellanos' appropriation of Ercilla in order to emphasize that, although I concur with Quint's overarching assessment of the epic as a preeminently political genre and I consider his erudite and insightful analysis of each poets' practice of imitation impeccable, I also believe that interpreting *La Araucana*, as well as all the other heroic poems written by Iberian poets in imitation of Ercilla (particularly those dealing with or coming out of the New World), in terms of a sharp generic and ideological distinction between epics of the winners and epics of the defeated distorts what is unique about each

¹⁵ Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa is the author of *Historia de los Incas* and the cosmographer of the expedition that sailed from Peru across the pacific and reached the Solomon Islands in 1568.

work in relation to other Spanish Imperial epics, and blurs the elements which set this body of works apart when compared to other epics written before or after.

I would argue that Quint's approach to epic does take sufficiently into consideration the context of production and reception of each specific poem. In this regard, the historical record shows that the circumstances surrounding Castellanos' *Discurso del Capitán Francisco Draque* are not an exception to the norm but an example of a pattern that is also evident in the writing and publication of Lope de Vega's *La Dragontea* (1596). In both cases the promotion of a particular ideological and political position prompted the commission to write each work, influenced the process of including or excluding certain historical episodes, and weighted in to decide if the poems were to be published or censored. In fact, as I will show in chapter III, the key to understanding why the two poems offer contradictory depictions of Drake has less to do with Drake himself and more to do with historicizing the motives and circumstances that could prompt a Spanish writer (in this case Castellanos) to deploy or subvert the tools traditionally associated with the epic in order to magnify the threat posed by Drake and condemn colonial administration, or (in the case of Lope) to convince himself, the group he represented, and their political antagonists that the archenemy of Spain (Francis Drake) had once and for all been defeated. Since Castellanos' and Lope de Vega's poems are the only two extant heroic poems written by Spanish writers and entirely devoted to Francis Drake, furthermore, both works reflect not only that they were written amidst internal political and economic rivalries, but also in the middle of an international enmity that confronted Spain and England, yet at a time when neither nation could unequivocally claim to have defeated his opponent.

I also consider that Quint's diachronic approach to the epic tradition bypasses the porous boundaries that existed between literary genres in the Iberian Peninsula in the

sixteenth century, and the preference among writers and the public in general for works that transgressed across those generic boundaries. As a matter of fact, approaching Spanish Renaissance literary works from the perspective of genre ignores the fact that any text that remained strictly within the normative boundaries of its form was bound to fail to gain the interest of the general public and that the texts that succeeded and became highly popular were those works that breached across such boundaries. Thus the success of Garcilaso's "Eclogues" I, II and III, which are perhaps the quintessential Spanish pastoral poems of their time, but at least one of which (Eclogue II vv. 1169-1747) includes a preeminently encomiastic section typical of the epic. The success of Jorge de Montemayor's *Los siete libros de la Diana*, a pastoral novel which has been deemed by some critics as the most anti-pastoral novel ever written. The success of an epic poem like *La Araucana*, in which the convergence of "poetry, history and autobiography" renders the text "unrepresentative of its genre in some respects" (Davis 20). And last but not least, the popularity of Cervantes' *Don Quijote*, with all its interpolated tales of captivity, picaresque and pastoral novels, stories of adventures, and most obviously its all encompassing parody of the chivalric code and ethos, and of the epic genre itself.

Incidentally, one could argue that, although executed in a radically different but not less imaginative manner, the all encompassing grasp of Cervantes' masterpiece is also very much at work in the writings of Juan de Castellanos. Critics like Luis Fernando Restrepo have pointed out that, in addition to being a collection of heroic poems, Castellanos' *Elegías* are also a repository of many of the literary and non-literary discursive forms popular during the Renaissance, including poetry, historiography, cartas de relación, legal formulas, pastoral poetry and narrative, romances, popular sayings, elegies, epitaphs, etc (32-33).¹⁶ Similarly, about the all inclusive nature of Castellanos'

¹⁶ On this topic see also Isaac J Pardo. (13)

writings Isaac Pardo has suggested that the *Elegías* “podían considerarse como una verdadera suma de la poesía española desde los tiempos del *Cancionero de Baena* hasta los albores del Barroco” (qtd in Romero xiii).

If we delimit the scope of this survey to texts coming out of Nueva Granada we can also cite as proof of the tendency to transgress traditional literary genres a work that is now considered by several critics as one of the most emblematic examples of Early Spanish American narrative and a precursor to the Latin American novel. I am referring to Juan Rodríguez Freyle’s *Conquista y Descubrimiento del Nuevo Reino de Granada* (commonly known as *El Carnero*), a text that overtly defies generic classification and makes patently evident the emergence of a *criollo* subjectivity, but which in no measure translates into the rejection of the imperial enterprise or the defense of the social group traditionally associated with the side of the defeated.¹⁷

To illustrate how Castellanos’ writings exemplify the tendency to breach generic boundaries a bit further, I shall refer to his “Elegía XIV,” a heroic poem written by Castellanos about the colonization of the Island of Margarita and the failed expedition of Pedro de Ursúa in search of the kingdom of Omagua and El Dorado. Ursúa’s expedition and the subsequent rebellion led by Lope de Aguirre captured the imagination of Spanish colonists in the New World and the interest of the most prominent writers who lived in Nueva Granada during the XVI and XVII centuries. Although other expeditions had led to mutiny or had failed calamitously, seldom had one expedition severed so radically the bonds of solidarity among the Spanish soldiers or unleashed such degree of random and self-destructive violence. In a colonial context marked by conflict and crisis, moreover, very few events combined the discontent of those soldiers who felt that they had not been

¹⁷ On Juan Rodríguez Freyle’s *El Carnero* see Julie Greer Johnson *Satire in Colonial Spanish America: Turning the New World Upside Down*. Austin: U of Texas P, 1993. Roberto González-Echaverría. *Myth and Archive: A Theory of Latin American Literature*. Durham: Duke UP, 1998.

properly rewarded for their services, with the overt disregard for the authority of the King of Spain and his representatives.

While there are abundant borrowings and similarities in content between Castellanos' account of Lope de Aguirre's revolt and the account written by historian Fray Pedro de Aguado, Castellanos' poetic rendering stands out because his version that makes no attempt to offer a direct or realistic recount of the events that unfolded during the expedition.¹⁸ Instead, Castellanos added new scenes that do not appear in any of the historical sources, idealized the historical characters and the colonial milieu, and narrated the events using a poetic discourse that is filled with intertextual references and meta-poetic allusions that constantly remind readers of poetic tastes and conventions popular during the Sixteenth century. Notice, for example, how in the following stanzas the narrator appeals to the language and the imagery of pastoral poetry to describe how the surrounding landscape displayed sorrow after listening to the distraught plea of Inés de Atienza, the unfortunate lover of Pedro de Ursúa and one of the victims of the violence of Lope de Aguirre's followers:

El eco va haciendo maravillas,
con acento que al aire se derrama
endurecidos robles hacen blandos;
mas no duros pechos y nefandos.

*Las aves por los árboles gemían,
las fieras en el monte lamentaban
las aguas sus discursos detenían,
los peces en el centro murmuraban;
los vientos con los sonos que hacían
tan execrado hecho detestaban:*

¹⁸ Using Francisco Vasquez's *relación* as his main source, the historian Fray Pedro de Aguado wrote the earliest historiographical account and included it in his *Recopilación Historial*. Aguado traveled from Nueva Granada to Spain to pursue the publication of his book but was unsuccessful. Sometime after Aguado's return to Nueva Granada, Castellanos wrote his poetic account of Ursúa's expedition and inserted it as part of the first volume of his *Elegías de varones ilustres de las Indias* (1589). In the XVII century Fray Pedro Simón wrote a third version and included it in his *Noticias Historiales* (1626). Finally, Bishop Lucas Piedrahita wrote a fourth version.

salió de las cavernas un ruido
que perdieron de los hombres el sentido. (*Elegías* Part I 647)

The personification of Nature illustrated in these verses is a recurrent topos often found in Renaissance literature. The roots of this topos can be traced as far back to the writings of Greek bucolic poets like Theocritus, in whose *Idyll* I, 63 - 142 nature mourns at the death of Daphne. In Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, in addition, Orpheo is said to have been able to move Nature to display emotion by using his musical prowess. In Castellanos' gloss of that topos there is a notable affinity between the elements used to display Nature's grief and the elements that appeared earlier in Garcilaso de la Vega's "Eclogue I." Indeed, the items Castellanos uses to attribute human characteristics to Nature are either identical (aves, árboles, fieras) or come from the same semantic field as the items deployed by Garcilaso to describe how Nature reacted after listening to the frustrated and egotistical Salicio lament his suffering cause for his unrequited love for Galatea:

Con mi llorar las piedras enternecen
su natural dureza y las quebrantan;
los árboles parece que se inclinan;
las aves que me escuchan, cuando cantan,
con diferente voz se condolecen
y mi morir cantando me adivinan.
las fieras que reclinan
su cuerpo fatigado,
dejan el sosegado
sueño por escuchar mi llanto. (144)

After Salicio finishes his song the narrator adds:

Queriendo el monte al grave sentimiento
de aquel dolor en algo ser propicio,
con la pesada voz retumba y suena. (145)

In my view, the displacement from the epic to the pastoral attested in “Elegía XIV” is particularly pertinent to the understand Castellanos’ interpretation of what had occurred during Ursúa’s expedition, especially if we take into account that the death of Inés de Atienza took place in the harsh and insalubrious conditions of the Amazon jungle and the soldiers who participated in the expedition and wrote reports to dissociate themselves from Lope de Aguirre and avoid legal repercussions described at length the negative effects that such conditions had on the outcome of the expedition. Yet, in Castellanos’ version instead of a description of the Amazon Jungle we find a highly literary description of a *locus amoenus*.

In dealing with similar types of incompatibility in poetic discourses Michael Riffaterre coined the term “ungrammaticality” to illustrate how “a deviant grammar or lexicon” can visibly and persistently “threaten the literary representation of reality, or mimesis”(2). In the case of Castellanos’ “Elegía XIV”, the ungrammaticality of the poem is compounded not only by the combination of pastoral and epic topoi but also by the abrupt shifts that occur in the thematic sequencing of the poem, as well as the insertion of some of the constitutive elements of Petrarchism.¹⁹ However, even though the displacement from heroic to pastoral genres and the insertion of elements from Petrarchism defy verisimilitude and make little sense if we read the poem from the perspective of the epic precepts postulated by Aristotle or Torquato Tasso, there is a logic that allowed contemporary readers to make sense of such incongruities and to come to a coherent interpretation of the poem’s significance as a whole. Accordingly, I would argue that Castellanos’ narrative choices respond first and foremost to his intention of juxtaposing the depiction of a ‘Golden Age’ era in the past (the early years of Spanish colonization of the Island of Margarita) with the description of the decay of the heroic

¹⁹ See for instance how the narrator in “Elegía XIV” uses the language and imagery of Petrarquist lyric poetry to narrate the arrival of Inés de Atienza to the expeditionary camp.

values in the present (the revolt of Lope de Aguirre). Needless to say, the idealized depiction of the early colonization of Margarita is as literary and fictional as his *locus amoenus* in the middle of the Amazon jungle. My argument then is that transgressing across generic boundaries, which could also be cited as an example of ‘imperfect form,’ was in effect a common literary practice that had preeminence over theoretical precepts and can be linked to the author’s personal, patriotic, religious, or ideological agenda, while having little or nothing to do with embracing the side of the defeated. When making this assertion, I concur with Elizabeth Davis who argues not only that Spanish imperial epics “themselves recommend an elastic definition of their genre” but also points out that “no matter how impure some of these Spanish poems might seem to us, they evince a conceptualization of epic that is fluid yet precise” (5).

In light of all of the above, in this dissertation I shall not approach the writings of Castellanos from the perspective of genre, but from the perspective of discourse and mode.²⁰ In speaking of the epic as a mode and of the poems written in the tradition of Homer and Virgil, Thomas M. Greene has reminded us that:

The student who wants to pass beyond the historian’s rule of thumb and to speak more searchingly of the epic must not seem to assert too much. Aware of literature’s natural resistance to tidiness, he yet considers the historian’s groups with an intuition of norms less obvious and more essential than the superficial conventions, norms which no single poem ever embodies. He knows that in any exact sense a pure epic has never been written. And yet he intuits an epic *mode* which Homer’s emulator’s approach along with Homer and with the authors of

²⁰ For an analysis of the *Elegías* from the perspective of genre see Elide Pitarello’s “Elegías de varones ilustres de Indias di Juan de Castellanos: un genere letterario controverso.” *Studi di Letteratura ispano-americana*. Milano: Cisalpino-Goliardica, 1980: 5-71.

other heroic poems which attain a certain magnitude and value. To describe the *mode* as he intuits it is not to insist on its full actualization in any one poem, nor even to ignore this fact: that as the *mode* crystallized, it tended to choke poetic vitality; that to perpetuate and renewed it had to be extended or violated. To describe the *mode* then is not to prescribe, with the naïveté of some Renaissance critics, nor to deny that each successive great artist who worked in it left it a somewhat different thing. *The student should not be disposed to quarrel either over the classification of individual works within or without the genre; he knows that works may participate in the mode to varying degrees.* (9 italics are mine)

By proposing to approach Spanish imperial epics from a perspective other than generic boundaries, however, I am not suggesting that Spanish writers shunned the intense discussions their contemporaries were having about epic theory, particularly in light of the challenges imposed over the epic genre after the publication and success of Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*. I think theoretical discussions were relevant to Spanish critics and writers as it is illustrated, once again, by the works of Cervantes, each of which offers an innovative solution to the main theoretical issues of its time, and whose fictional characters in some cases engage in animated discussions about literary theory. Granted, for the writers living in the emerging urban center in the New World there is a belatedness to their reception of the critical discussions; yet such discussions were also taken into consideration when they wrote their poems and were also dramatized in the poems themselves. Take for instance the following episode inserted by Castellanos in Part IV of his *Elegías*, whose main subtext is the ardent debate about the preference of Italian meter over the more traditional Spanish poetic forms and the poetic renewal advocated by Garcilaso de la Vega and Juan Boscán:

Vino también el capitán Lorenzo
Martín, aquel que dio primer cimiento
al pueblo hispano de Tamalameque,
la era de cuarenta y cinco años,
o por el fin del cuarenta y cuatro,
porque por aquel tiempo me rogaba
hiciese yo con él aquel viaje.
Este fue valentísimo soldado
y de grandes industrias en la guerra;
el cual bebió también de Hipocrena
aquel sacro libro que manar hizo
la una del aligero Pegaso,
con tan sonora y abundante vena,
que nunca yo vi cosa semejante,
según antiguos modos de españoles,
porque composición italiana,
hurtada de los metros que se dicen
endecasílabos entre latinos,
aun no corría por aquestas partes;
antes cuando leía los poemas
vestidos desta nueva compostura
dejaban tan mal son en sus oídos
que juzgaba ser prosa que tenía
al beneplácito de las consonancias,
con ser tan puntual esta medida
que se requiere para mayor gracia
huir las colisiones de vocales.
y el Lorenzo Martín, con ser extremo
en la facilidad al uso viejo,
al nuevo no le pudo dar alcance.

Y esta dificultad hallaba siempre
Jiménez de Quesada, licenciado,
que es el adelantado deste reino,
de quien puedo decir no ser ayuno
del poético gusto y ejercicio.
Y el porfió conmigo muchas veces
ser los metros antiguos castellanos
los propios y adaptados a su lengua,
por ser hijos nacidos de su vientre,
y estos advenedizos, adoptivos
de diferente madre y extranjera.
Mas no tuvo razón, pues que sabía
haber versos latinos que son varios
en la composición y cantidades,

y aunque con diferentes pies se mueven,
son legítimos hijos de una madre
y en sus entenas propias engendrados;
como lo son también de nuestra lengua
(puesto que el uso de ellos es moderno),
estos con que renuevo la memoria. (*Elegías* Part IV 350-1)

CONCLUSIONS

In this dissertation I will argue that in the case of Juan de Castellanos it is counter-productive to classify the poem as a crystal-clear example of the epics either of the winners or the defeated, at least not without blurring the nuances of Spanish imperial discourse and disregarding the traits that set Castellanos' poem apart from the ones written by members of the "pro-Castilian upper echelon of the Iberian peninsula" (Davis 13) and in particular by Alonso de Ercilla, Juan Rufo, and Lope de Vega, writers who enjoyed or sought access to the court of the Hapsburgs. After all, Castellanos' poem upholds the ideology of domination and shares in the celebration of the Spanish enterprise of conquest; but it does so from the perspective of a warrior class (conquistadors) that fought zealously against the Spanish Crown for the political and economic control of the Indies.

CHAPTER 2: RECONSIDERING JUAN DE CASTELLANOS 'IMITATION' OF ALONSO DE ERCILLA'S LA ARAUCANA.

Unless we take into account that sixteenth century Spanish epic was not a “monolithic or univocal discourse” (Nicolopoulos “The amorous episodes of the *Araucana*” 231), as well as the fragmentations prevalent in the ideological field due to the ongoing debates surrounding the legitimacy of the conquest and the nature of the inhabitants of the New World, we run the risk of missing the corrosive sarcasm that pervades Castellanos’ confession that it was because his friends (the encomenderos and former conquistadors of the kingdom of Nueva Granada) were enamored with the “dulcedumbre del verso con que Don Alonso de Ercilla celebró las guerras de Chile,” that he was persuaded to write a poem about the conquest and colonization of the Caribbean basin and the territories of Venezuela and Colombia also in *octava rima*. I cite the entire paragraph for further analysis:

pero ya, vencido de persuaciones amigables, y considerando cómo se iban consumiendo con larga edad los vivos originales de donde había de sacar *verdadero* traslado cualquiera que tomase este cuidado y que los que después escriben sin testigos de vista no llevan el camino tan derecho que no hallen dudosas torceduras, porque las cosas cuanto mas lejanas de sus principios se

cuentan, con menos certidumbre se pintan, antes de que este recurso a mi me faltase, puse, como dicen, faldas en cinta, y entré en este *ambagioso labirinto*, cuya salida fuera menos dificultosa si los que en él me metieron se contentaran con que los hilos de su tela se tejieran en prosa; pero enamorados (con justa razón) de la *dulcedumbre* del verso con que D. Alonso de Ercilla celebró las guerras de Chile, quisieron que las del Mar del Norte también se cantasen con la misma ligadura, que es en *octavas rimas*; y así con ellas, por la mayor parte, he procedido en la fábrica de este inexhausto edificio, del cual he compuesto cuatro partes. (*Elegías*, Part IV, 133 italics are mine)

This marginal but explicit reference to the verses of *La Araucana* appears in the letter to the readers (“A los lectores”) that accompanied the last installment of the *Elegías*, and has garnered a great deal of attention especially among critics who comment on the relationship between the *Elegías* and *La Araucana*, regardless of whether they are admirers or detractors of Castellanos’ writing. Ever since the nineteenth century there seems to be a consensus concerning the interpretation this anecdote, and most critics who cite it, allude to it, or paraphrase it, do so based upon a literal interpretation of the passage, and often as a preface to characterize Castellanos either as a feverish admirer or an epigone of Ercilla. José María Vergara y Vergara, author of the first literary history of Nueva Granada (*Historia de la Literatura en Nueva Granada* 1867), condemned Ercilla’s curt approval of the second volume of Castellanos’ poetry and scolded Ercilla for not praising more enthusiastically the work of a fellow writer who had attempted to follow in his footsteps:

Hasta aquí don Alonso [de Ercilla], que no encontró en su fecunda lengua y hábil pluma ni una palabra de elogio o de crítica sobre el mérito literario de las *Elegías*. *Ni agradeció la lisonja de la evidente imitación de la Araucana; pues es indudable que Castellanos la había leído, y más indudable que su lectura fue la que le despertó el deseo de contar en verso las historias de estas tierras.* (55 italics are mine)

Praising the merits of Castellanos' prose and condemning the infelicities of some of his verses, Menendez y Pelayo wrote in his *Historia de la Poesía Hispano-Americana* that:

lo mas doloroso es que Castellanos había empezado por escribir su crónica en prosa, que hubiera sido tan fácil y agradable como lo es la de sus proemios, y luego, mal aconsejado por amigos que habían leído *La Araucana*, y le creían capaz de competir con Ercilla, gastó nada menos que diez años en la estéril tarea de reducir la prosa en verso, 'ingiriendo a sus tiempos muchas disgresiones poéticas y comparaciones y otros colores poéticos con todo el buen orden que se requiere'. Pésimo consejo, en verdad, y malhadada condescendencia la suya, puesto que así, en vez de un montón de versos casi ilegibles de seguida, hubiéramos tenido una de las mejores y mas caudalosas crónicas de la conquista. (418 – 9)

In a manner similar to Vergara y Vergara, in *Juan de Castellanos: tradición española y realidad americana* (1972) Manuel Alvar condemned the indifference of Ercilla's endorsement by stating "bien poca cosa para el hombre [Castellanos] que, al

frente de la Cuarta Parte de las *Elegías*, vertió la prueba fiel de su devoción hacia el poeta vasco” (7). On the other hand, in his book *Joan de Castellanos: un examen de su vida y de su obra* (1964), Mario German Romero, one of the most erudite and thorough readers of the *Elegías*, introduces the quotation of Castellanos’ statement with the following comment: “cuando hablamos de la influencia de Ercilla en Castellanos, no hacemos una conjetura o una afirmación gratuita. El mismo cronista se refiere a los que lo metieron (Dios los haya perdonado) en la dificultad de tejer en verso los hilos de su historia” (125). In *Aspectos Literarios de la Obra de Don Juan de Castellanos* (1978) Romero would recall again Castellanos’ statement when he wrote: “hay quienes no perdonan a los que enamorados de la dulcedumbre del verso de Ercilla, metieron a Castellanos en el *ambigioso labirinto* de hacerle narrar la historia en verso” (2). Likewise, Isaac J. Pardo states categorically in *Juan de Castellanos: estudio de las Elegías de varones Ilustres de Indias* (1991) that “la relación entre las *Elegías* y *La Araucana* la declaró Castellanos al comienzo de la *Historia del Nuevo Reino de Granada*. Indica allí como emprendió la verificación de la obra para dar gusto a sus amigos quienes ‘enamorados (con justa razón) de la dulcedumbre del verso con que Don Alonso de Ercilla celebró las guerras de Chile, quisieron que las del Mar del Norte también se cantasen con la misma ligadura que es en octava rima’ (215 - 222).²¹ Finally, the same approach to the relationship between Castellanos and Ercilla resurfaced more recently in William Ospina’s *Las Auroras de Sangre* (1999), the latest attempt to offer a comprehensive interpretation of Castellanos’ writing published in Colombia.²² In at least two instances Ospina includes remarks that clearly paraphrase Castellanos’ words: “fue la belleza de esa obra [*La Araucana*], y la

²¹ Pardo makes a similar comment on page 64.

²² Willian Ospina is a poet, essayist, and novelist and the author of two historical novels whose setting is the early period of exploration and colonization of Nueva Granada: *Ursúa* (2005) and *El país de la canela* (2008).

insistencia de sus amigos, lo que decidió a Castellanos a darle a su memorial la forma de cantos escritos en octavas reales (63).²³

I find it puzzling that none of these critics seemed to wonder as to why would a writer who was also indebted to Latin poets like Virgil and Ovid, and to Iberian poets like Juan de Mena, Jorge de Montemayor and Garcilaso, feel the need to acknowledge his connection to Ercilla in an open letter to the readers (and possible the censors)?²⁴ And given the complex relationship between the *Elegías* and *La Araucana*, why mention only that aspect of his poem that even the most untrained eye could recognize as an imitation of Ercilla? By taking for granted the sincerity of Castellanos, it would appear as if all these critics were willing to concede that no other type of connection (or intertextuality) between the two poems is possible, and that what is specific about Ercilla's poem and latter replicated in Castellanos' is only the use of *octavas reales*; a much too narrow reading of either text according to what we have already presented in this introduction and evident in episodes such as Castellanos' account of the massacre of the Spanish explorers at the Fuerte de Navidad ("Elegía II"), his reformulation of the story of Doña Mencía de Nidos (*Discurso* 29-30), and his allusion to the prophetic episode of Puchecalco (*Discurso* 35).

In my opinion, the literal interpretation of Castellanos' statement brings a rather low set of expectations to the reading of his poems and can only be made by denying any rhetorical function to this and other references to Ercilla serve within the letter and within Castellanos' poetic discourse at large. Accordingly, critics who interpret the reference to Ercilla at face value seem to overlook the fact that notwithstanding the use of *octava*

²³ Ospina makes the same type of remark on page 109.

²⁴ For the relationship between Mena and Castellanos see María Rosa Lida de Malkiel *Juan de Mena, poeta del prerrenacimiento español*. México: Colegio de México, 1950. (283, 369, 494, 496, 499); and "Huella de la tradición grecolatina en el poema de Juan de Castellanos" in *Revista de Filología Hispánica*. VII (1946): 111-120.

rima, (or as well as the separation of the poems into cantos and the insertion of moral reflections in the exordium of the poems, which Castellanos also learned from Ercilla), almost every time Castellanos borrows from or alludes to Ercilla, he does so precisely through an iconoclastic impulse that calls for the immediate transformation of the model or its flat out rejection. Hence, asserting that Castellanos included the reference to Ercilla simply to admit that he was an admirer or an epigone of Ercilla bypasses the contentiousness of the texts that participated in what Rolena Adorno has called the “polemics of possession,” the cornerstones of Castellanos’ ideological and literary project, and the discursive and narrative strategies he used to convey it, all of which are very much at work in the letter from which the reference is taken.²⁵

Furthermore, taking for granted the literal meaning of this reference also bypasses the fact that Castellanos appealed to figurative and metaphoric language to make that allusion: “enamorados (con justa razón) de la dulcedumbre del verso de don Alonso de Ercilla,” and that by doing so Castellanos is implicitly recognizing the dependency of his rhetorical apparatus on the use of figurative language and metaphors, which as it turns out, are ubiquitous in the letter and tend to evoke relationships and to disseminate meaning rather than to fixate it or suppress it. Here are some examples:

To speak of accepting the commission to write the poem:
“vencido de persuaciones amigables”

To speak of his diligence to write the poem before it was too late:
“puse, como dicen, faldas en cinta”

To speak of writing as the process of weaving different threads:
“que los hilos de su tela se tejieran en prosa”

To speak of writing as a prolonged and intricate process:

²⁵ Rolena Adorno’s argument is that at the core of Spanish American Colonial writings is the issue of the rights of Spaniards to subjugate the Indians and the rights of Spaniards over the New World. See *Polemics of Possession in Spanish American Narrative*. New Haven: Yale UP, 2007.

“entré en este ambagioso laberinto”

To speak of the unfinished nature of his writing as a spatial construction:
“he procedido en la fábrica de este inexhausto edificio”²⁶

I would contend that by entrenching his commentary about Ercilla among this figurative language, Castellanos is precluding readers from giving priority to the literal meaning of his statements. Moreover, at least one of these metaphors in particular should serve as the tell-tale sign that the anecdote and the entire letter should be read at least with a grain of salt. Notice, for example, that before making the assertion about the “dulcedumbre” of Ercilla’s verse Castellanos describes his own writing as a labyrinth (laberinto), a term loaded with political and ideological connotations ever since it was used by Juan de Mena in his *Laberinto de la Fortuna* (also known as *Las trecientas*) to draw a connection between the convoluted nature of the text and the writing process and the current political situation. If indeed Castellanos is using this reference to Mena to admonish that he is writing within a highly contested political context, the merit of his letter and of the reference to Ercilla in particular lies in making explicit that his poems had been commissioned by the conquistadors, but doing so in a rather casual and non-threatening way that implies a sort of analogy between the highly aristocratic milieu of the court (center) and the Spanish colonies in the New World (periphery). Accordingly, with his reference to Ercilla Castellanos also hints that the former conquistadors were capable of engaging in the type of patronage that coupled writing to political will in and around the court. It is precisely in this type of critical myopias that I am interested in this dissertation as I examine Juan de Castellanos’ rhetorical scaffolding. A brief survey of some of the main trends in Castellanos’ writing can shed light on into this discussion and

²⁶ Another example of figurative language in the letter is: speaking of colonization as a pilgrimage: “de muchos que en sus peregrinaciones han envejecido”.

help us see the calculated nature of the reference to the sweetness (“dulcedumbre”) of Ercilla’s verse.

THE MAIN TRENDS IN JUAN DE CASTELLANOS’ WRITING

Juan de Castellanos’ *Elegías de varones ilustres de las Indias* is a series of heroic poems that total more than 113,000 verses, the majority of which were written in *octavas reales* (eight hendecasyllables with a rhyme ABABABCC). The *Elegías* are divided into four installments and cover a vast geographic area that includes primarily the Caribbean basin and the territories of what are now Venezuela, Colombia, Panama, and Ecuador. However, in sections like the *Discurso del Capitán Francisco Draque* Castellanos enhances the reach of his narrative to touch upon events that took place on the coasts of Perú and Chile. On the other hand, Castellanos’ narrative spans from the arrival of Columbus expedition to the Antilles in 1492 to the administration of judge Antonio González in the 1590’ in the kingdom of Nueva Granada. However, the important thing is that the events narrated in these poems do not follow a strict chronological or geographic sequence nor are they limited to any specific person or to a single expedition. In the first volume of the *Elegías* alone, Castellanos writes about prominent figures involved in the early stages of colonization such as Christopher Columbus (“Elegía I” and “Elegía IV”), Diego Columbus (“Elegía V”), Diego de Arana (“Elegía II”), Francisco de Bovadilla (“Elegía III”), Juan Ponce de León (“Elegía VI”), Diego Velazquez de Cuellar (“Elegía VII”), Francisco de Garay (“Elegía VIII), Diego de Ordás (“Elegía IX”), Antonio de Sedeño (“Elegía X” and “Elegía XII”), Jerónimo de Ortal (“Elegía XI”), Bartolomé de las Casas (“Elegía XIII”), Pedro de Ursúa (“Elegía XIV”), and Lope de Aguirre (“Elegía XIV”).

Nonetheless, there are a set of paradigms that resonate constantly across the bulk of Castellanos' writing and that provide a totalizing coherence to what would otherwise appear as an utterly random and disconnected narrative. Among those paradigms we can include 1) the notion that the narrator was a privileged witness of many of the events he is narrating, 2) the defense of the interest of the "old conquistadors," 3) the rejection of poetic adornment in favor of realism, and 4) the construction of a negative portrayal of Amerindians.

THE AUTHOR / PROTAGONIST / NARRATOR AS A PRIVILEGED EYE WITNESS OF THE CONQUEST AND EARLY COLONIZATION OF THE NEW WORLD.

In the same letter to the reader that Castellanos makes the reference to the sweetness (*dulcedumbre*) of Ercilla's verse he also recalls the manner in which and the reason why he was asked by other colonists to put into writing the events of the conquest: "Fui importunado a que yo tomase la mano para ponellas por escrito, *como quien ya que no en todas, a lo menos en muchas de ellas había sido ocular testigo*" (132 italics are mine). This statement is one among myriad examples in which Castellanos lends authority to his writing by attesting that he was an active participant in some of the campaigns of conquest and by appealing to his privileged experience as an eye witness of some the events he is narrating. As part of assuming the position of a privileged protagonist and eyewitness Castellanos states that prior to being ordained as a priest and receiving a royal appointment as beneficiary of the cathedral in Tunja, he participated in expeditions of exploration and conquest, including that of Antonio Sedeño to Venezuela, and that during his participation in campaigns or travels he had met and came to be closely acquainted with prominent figures of this period like Miguel de Castellanos,

Gonzalo Jiménez de Quesada (1495 – 1579), Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdéz (1478 – 1557), Francisco de Orellana (1511 – 1546), and Pedro de Ursúa (1525 – 1561) among others.²⁷

I think the presence of these references across Castellanos' text can serve as a remarkable example of the type of self-fashioning that has been identified by critics like Stephen Greenblatt as taking place during the early modern period, and to some extent of the process of how an individual from very humble socioeconomic background was able to re-shape his own identity and managed to exploit his ability to read and write and to force his way into a position of political and religious power and material prosperity in the mist of a volatile social context.²⁸ Yet the fact remains that the historical evidence that supports many of the statements made by Castellanos about his first three decades in the New World is at best precarious, and that the only portion of his life of which we can speak with some certainty is the period after his ordination to priesthood until his death, of which there are sources external to his own writings.

Indeed, the most logical conclusion one could reach after examining the testimonies of witnesses included in the dossier that was sent to Spain to request Castellanos' appointment as beneficiary of the cathedral in Tunja is that either he had no

²⁷ About Fernandez de Oviedo Castellanos wrote: "el buen Oviedo / que es Gonzalo Fernández, coronista / que yo conocí bien de trato y vista". About his friendship with Jiménez de Quesada: "Don Gonzalo Jiménez de Quesada/ cuyo valor a mí me fue notorio / por la conversación de muchos años" (Part IV Canto I 137). About Francisco de Orellana:

pero dióme las misma relaciones
la boca de Francisco de Orellana,
y ahora me refieren lo que cuento
hombres de no menor merecimiento. (*Elegías* Part II 203)

²⁸ Castellanos' parents were Cristóbal Sanchez Castellanos and Catalina Sanchez who lived in Alanís, a small town some 80 miles north of Seville. Castellanos had an elementary school education and from the petition written by his brothers when they migrated to the New World, we learn that the occupation of Castellanos' family was farming. See Ulises Rojas *El Beneficiado de Tunja*. 1958. For Renaissance Self fashioning see Stephen Greenblatt's *Renaissance Self Fashioning. From More to Shakespeare*. Chicago: Uof Chicago P, 1980.

military experience whatsoever or that any involvement in the campaigns of conquest or exploration was too insignificant even to mention it. Several of the witness attest to Castellanos' piety, to his background as an old Christian (*cristiano viejo*), and to his merits as priest, preacher, and citizen of Nueva Granada, but none of them recalls any specific service provided to the Crown other than working as vicar at the Nuestra Señora de los Remedios parish in the town of Río de la Hacha prior to being assigned to the cathedral in Tunja. Although circumstantial, this evidence speaks volumes, especially when we take into account the frequency with which individuals who actually had been involved in the campaigns of exploration brought up that pretext when requesting some type of compensation from the Crown, and the obstinacy with which throughout his poems Castellanos would argue that participating in the campaigns of discovery, exploration, and conquest had entitled the conquistadors to social and economic prerogatives. Incidentally, three out of the four priests who applied for Castellanos' post after he died mentioned in their applications their connection to that type of service.²⁹ Francisco Vivas, for example, points out that “es hijo de uno de los primeros descubridores y conquistadores de aquella tierra” (Rojas 317); Alonso Gutierrez Escovar, on the other hand, mentions that he risked his life many times preaching the Gospel:

celebraba misa armado y en las entradas y correrías iba entre los soldados animándolos y por su persona prendió un cacique que inquietaba la tierra con que se apaciguó y al presente se halla con el presidente Don Juan de Borja en la jornada contra los indios rebeldes que le llevo por administrador del hospital del ejército y capellán del por su mucha experiencia. (Rojas 316)

²⁹ The testimonies of the witnesses were found by Ulises Rojas at the Archivo General de Indias in Seville. See “Documentos” in Rojas' *El Beneficiado Don Juan de Castellanos, cronista de Colombia y Venezuela*. Tunja: Biblioteca de Autores Boyacenses, 1958.

In my view, the frequent insertion of autobiographical references throughout the *Elegías* and the presumption that the narrator was an eyewitness to the events he narrates, is one of the most important narrative strategies employed in *La Araucana* that Castellanos copied, mastered, and exploited copiously throughout his writing, sometimes even taking it to a whole new level. As several critics have pointed out, one of the central aspects of *La Araucana* is the extent to which Ercilla infused into the epic discourse the elements of autobiography. The autobiographical impulse is immediately evident in the famous prologue to part I of *La Araucana*, in which Ercilla declares to have written sections of the poem while participating in the war against the Mapuches, even at night or after battles:

Y por el mal aparejo y poco tiempo que para escribir hay con la ocupación de la Guerra, que no da lugar a ello; y así, el que pude hurtar, le gaste en este libro, el cual, porque fuese mas cierto y verdadero, se hizo en la guerra y en los mismos pasos y sitios, escribiendo muchas veces en cuero por falta de papel, y en pedazos de cartas, algunos tan pequeños que apenas si cabían seis versos, que no me costó después poco trabajo juntarlos. (69)

Likewise, at the ending of the exordium of *La Araucana*, Ercilla requests the attention of the king by accentuating that the story he is about to tell springs directly from his experience as a witness: “dad orejas, Señor, a lo que digo / que soy de parte dello buen testigo” (*La Araucana* 1.5).

When comparing the role of autobiographical references in the *Elegías* and *La Araucana*, I differ from the interpretation offered recently by Juan Marchena, who argues that while Ercilla “parece ser el héroe de la Araucana, o al menos un personaje central,” Castellanos “se queda al margen de la historia que cuenta” and “apenas si figura en su

obra” (73). To some extent in making this assessment Marchena is re-stating Menendez y Pelayo’s view that in regards to Castellanos’ life “escasamente puede rastrearse por las indicaciones que acá y allá dejó esparcidas en sus *Elegías*, aunque, ya por modestia, ya por otras causas, gusta de hablar de los otros mucho mas que de si mismo” (415). However, my reading of Castellanos’ poem has led me to the opposite conclusion. In my view, in some sections of the *Elegías* the autobiographical elements and Castellanos’ presumably active role in the events serve as the principal element upon which he bases the claim to the historicity and truthfulness of some of the most perplexing descriptions of Amerindian societies and some of the most biased accounts of the early events of the conquest and colonization ever to put into print. Yet, Castellanos’ ability to present himself convincingly as a witness has been so successful among some readers that even today when most critics are willing to recognize the purely literary prominence of many passages of Ercilla’s poem, some critics of Castellanos continue to assert the unmediated accuracy of his writing.³⁰ The two most recent examples of this trend can be found in William Ospina’s *Las auroras de sangre* (1999) and Juan Marchena’ *Desde las tinieblas del olvido: los universos indígenas en los infinitos endecasílabos de Juan de Castellanos* (2005). However, I am by no means suggesting that the historical accuracy of Castellanos’ writing has never been questioned. As early as the eighteenth century, historians of the caliber of Juan Bautista Muñoz have warned readers about the numerous poetic liberties and historical inconsistencies present in the *Elegías*. A similar approach has also been suggested by the work of Enrique Otero D’Acosta and more recently by Luis Fernando Restrepo and Rodolfo Guzmán.³¹

³⁰ For Ercilla’s literary models see Lia Lerner Schwarts “Tradición literaria y heroínas indias en la Araucana” in *Revista Iberoamericana* 38.81 (1972): 615-26. Beatriz Pastor *Discursos narrativos de la conquista: mitificación y emergencia*. 2 ed. Hanover: Ediciones del Norte, 1988.

³¹ Here I would like to call attention to an outstanding work on Colonial Nueva Granada, which in one section deals with the writings of Juan de Castellanos. Rodolfo Guzman’s dissertation “City, Writing and

THE DEFENSE OF THE OLD CONQUISTADORS (BAQUIANOS)

A necessary step in constructing the subject position of a privileged first hand witness is self-describing himself as a baquiano. Throughout his writing Castellanos assumes the role of a baquiano and takes the side of the baquianos in their conflict against the new colonist known as chapetones. For this reason it is quite common to find across the *Elegías* sections in which Castellanos praises the deeds of the baquianos and to criticizes severely the conduct of the chapetones, in many occasions assigning to chapetones the burden of the blame for the disruption of the social order and the abuses committed by Spanish colonists against the indigenous population. The overall thrust of Castellanos' criticism is that chapetones are inexperienced in matters of war but usurp the best positions in the colonial government thanks to their academic formation and their political connections.

One consequence of Castellanos' favoritism for baquianos is not only that it significantly taints the historical authenticity of his accounts, but it also prevents his texts from engaging with real depth into the moral, ethical, or philosophical implications of the arrival of Europeans in the New World, the aftermath of that event, and the violence that accompanied it. In fact, it is almost as if there is callousness, a numbness, and an insurmountable distance that keeps Castellanos as narrator from seriously engaging in any topic other than the exaltation of the merits and achievements of that particular group and the implied exoneration from any responsibility or blame.

Identity: Emergence and consolidation of the Creole in Santafe de Bogotá (1586-1808)." Diss. John Hopkins U, 2002.

Take for instance Castellanos' account of how upon realizing that foreigners had arrived to the shores of the island of Hispaniola chieftain Gaona Canari confesses to having had a dream in which he saw his own way of life destroyed and his people suffering and being subjected by the Spaniards. This episode appears in the fourth canto from "Elegía I," and according to Castellanos' account there was an Indian woman who first came into contact with the members of the Spanish expedition and then returned to her own tribe to persuade chieftain Gaona Canari of the inaccuracy of his presentiment. As narrator, Castellanos seems to empathize with the predicament faced by indigenous people as he uses apostrophe to address directly the Indian woman and validate Gaona Carani's premonitions. What follows are, to my knowledge, one of the few instances in the *Elegías* that Castellanos appears to be making any type of negative judgment about the implications of events related to the discovery, exploration, and colonization of the New World:

¿Qué vas mujer liviana, pregonando,
juzgando solamente lo presente?
mira que con las nuevas dese bando [the Spaniards]
engañas a los tuyos malamente;
el dicho vas agora publicando,
mas tú verás el hecho diferente,
verás gran sin razón y desafuero,
y el sueño de tu rey ser verdadero.

Verás incendios grandes de ciudades
en las partes que menos convenía
verás abuso grande de crueldades
en el mal ninguno merecía;
verás talar labranzas y heredades
que el bárbaro sincero poseía,
y en reinado propio señorío
guardarse de decir es esto mío.

Y así fue que los hombres que vinieron
en los primeros años fueron tales,
que sin refrenamiento consumieron

innumerables indios naturales:
tan grande fue la prisa que les dieron
en usos de labranzas y metales,
y eran tan excesivos los tormentos
que se mataban ellos por momentos.

Lamentaban los más duros corazones,
en islas tan *ad plenun* abastadas,
de ver que millones de millones
ya no se hayan rastros ni pisadas;
y que en tan conocidas poblaciones
estén todas barridas y asoladas,
y destos no quedar hombre viviente
que como cosa propia lo lamente. (*Elegías* Part I 100)

But, is Castellanos really empathizing with Amerindians? Is he really questioning or condemning in any sense the enterprise of conquest? And if so, why did he choose to do so by scolding an Indian woman, when such condescending interpellation prevents her and the side she stands for from appearing as actual interlocutors? In addition, why must it be a woman who is at fault? After all, are readers suppose to think that to some degree she was responsible for their demise? It appears to me that instead of manifesting any sympathy whatsoever for the side of the Amerindians Castellanos is cunningly using an old literary device that allows for the narrator to displace the responsibility and the guilt to an anonymous third party (the female Indian) whose primary function in the story is to appear as nothing more than as a scapegoat. Notice, for instance, that immediately after his diatribe Castellanos inserts a stanza in which the choice of verbs (*recordar* /*contemplar* /*ver*) disassociates baquianos from having actual involvement in causing any suffering and suggests that baquianos were bystanders or spectators at best, but not protagonists or perpetrators.

Los pocos baquianos que vivimos
todas aquestas cosas *contemplamos*,
y recordándonos de lo que *vimos*,
y cómo nada queda que *veamos*,
con gran dolor gemimos y lloramos;

*miramos la maldad entonces hecha
cuando mirar en ellas no aprovecha. (Elegías Part I 101 italics are mine)*

Moreover, after suggesting that there is not even any point in recalling or examining those events (“cuando mirar en ellas no aprovecha”) Castellanos goes on to completely turn his gaze and the gaze of the readers in an opposite direction. He accomplishes this by suggesting that such cruelty simply has no place in his poetic discourse and framing the entire episode as an accessory digression:

Mas no serán razón ir divertido
contando semejantes crueldades
volvamos prosiguiendo la carrera
desde donde dejé la mensajera. (*Elegías Part I 101*)³²

In summary, in his account of the prophetic dream of chieftain Gaona Canari Castellanos leaves intact the imperial implications of the dream. In addition, by characterizing indigenous religious practices as idolatry, Castellanos sanctifies the violence perpetrated against that group and frames violence as something necessary and holy. With regards to the baquianos, moreover, this episode aims to disassociate them from any sense of guilt or responsibility towards acts of unnecessary cruelty, and puts forward the notion that at least on some level the Amerindians themselves were responsible for their own downfall. As such, Castellanos’ text is an outstanding example of a type of representation that “uses its own fictional techniques in order to legitimize, consolidate, and perpetuate an undertaking of imperial aggression” (Pastor 124). In the end, the main message of this episode is the formulation of the conquest as an enterprise to extirpate the devil from the New World (more on this in chapter 4), and the proclamation of the appropriation of the New World as a prerequisite to fulfilling the dream of a universal Christian monarchy. All of these elements are present in Gaona

³² For an alternative interpretation of this episode see William Ospina *Las Auroras de Sangre*. Bogotá: Norma, 1999. 106 – 108.

Canari's prophetic dream and that is what Castellanos as narrator is ultimately proposing and endorsing:

Porque quiero dar cuenta de mi sueño,
según que lo soñé en días pasados
o cosas sustanciales de la historia,
si quiere socorrerme la memoria.

Al tiempo que las gentes de dormidas
están en sus trabajos olvidadas
vi volar dos águilas asidas
con diademas de oro coronadas;
las alas aunque no muy estendidas,
mares y tierras tienen abrazadas,
y por crecida que su presa fuese
faltaba quien las unas les hinchese.

Parecióme volar al alto cielo,
y al tiempo que las alas estendían,
de solo ver aquel umbroso velo,
hasta las bestias fieras les temían:
reales aves de subido vuelo
a estas respetaban y servían,
y muchos gavilanes diligentes
eran sus adalides y sirvientes.

Apuestos sus ministros o falcones
andaban con las alas levantas,
escudriñando reinos y regiones
de sus tierras remotas y apartadas:
y deshaciendo cuantas religiones
están a nuestros dioses dedicadas,
haciendo ser por todo lo criado
un solo Dios creído y adorado.

Entre sueños oí mil aullidos
que dábamos por campos y collados
por ver los santuarios encendidos,
y todos nuestros ídolos quemados;
apuestos naturales destruidos,
sus poderosos pueblos asolados,
y no paraban nuestras compañías
sirviéndoles las noches y los días.

Las águilas asides coronadas,
que yo via volar desta manera,
allí las traen estos dibujadas
por parte principal de su bandera;
los tiempos y las horas son llegadas
si mi revelación es verdadera;
conviene pues que cada cual defienda
sus hijos, sus mujeres y hacienda. (*Elegías* Part I 98)

To return to the comparison between the *Elegías* and *La Araucana*, I consider that it is pertinent to identify Castellanos' excessive favoritism for baquianos because, as David Quint has pointed out, the author of *La Araucana* never "lost the outsider's critical perspective upon the colonial situation" and instead always identified "with the power and interest of the king over those of the colonists" (172). Accordingly, Jaime Concha calls Ercilla "caballero del Rey" and comments:

Ercilla no representa ni puede representar los intereses de los encomenderos. Paje de Felipe II, jinete de don García, gentilhombre de la Compañía de Lanzas del Virrey del Perú, miembro de la Orden de Santiago, caballero de la Boca de los Príncipes de Hungría: es imposible que, con esta formación y función social, no se adscriba el poeta y no se identifique con los intereses de la Corona. (66 – 7)

Another section that summarizes in a nutshell the extent to which Juan de Castellanos embraced the side of baquianos in their struggle against chapetones is the episode of an Indian chieftain named Sugamuxi which is narrated in canto VI of the "Historia del Nuevo Reino de Granada" (*Elegías* Part VI). According to Castellanos, Sugamuxi was the nephew of Nonpanim and was a chieftain at the time of the arrival of the Spaniards in the Muisca highlands. After being baptized, Sugamuxi took the Christian name "don Alonso" and distinguished himself for his good manners and for his ability to get it his way, especially when dealing with judges:

Y este [Sugamuxi] reinaba cuando los cristianos
entraron en la tierra y es llamado
(el nombre corrompido) Sogamoso;
a quien después llamaron Don Alonso,
cuando con agua santa fue lavado.
*Al cual yo conocí, y en muchas cosas
tenía términos caballerosos,
y para negociar sus pretensiones
se daba buena maña con jueces. (Elegías Part IV 244 italics are mine)*

Upon hearing of the death of the encomendero to whom he was paying tribute, Don Alonso visited the widow of the conquistador not only to express his condolences but also to deliver her a warning. Don Alonso cautioned the widow that, even though he had willingly allowed for his people to pay taxes to her deceased husband, and was willing to continue to do so after she inherited the *repartimiento*, he would immediately relinquish paying tribute if she decided to marry with a chapetón:

E yo le vi hablar con una dueña,
mostrando sentimiento de la muerte
de su marido, por esta viuda,
y condoliéndose de su trabajo,
por remate del pésame le dijo:

Entiéndame señora, lo que digo;
yo tuve por amigo tu marido,
y sin amor fingido consentía
que alguna gente mía le sirviese
y dellos recogiese la demora.
Tú los tienes agora, y están dentro
de aquel repartimiento que te deja.
De mi no ternás queja, y a la clara
el guardalle la clara ten por cierto,
tanto después de muerto como vivo,
si tú con buen motivo la guardares;
pero si te casares, aquí cesa
el dar a mi promesa cumplimiento;
pues si tienes intento de otra prenda,
quiero que mi hacienda no la tenga
cualquier otro que venga bigarrado
a lo que no ha ganado ni merece;

pues vemos que acontece muchas veces
entrar aquestas heces holgazanas
en lugar de las canas honrosas,
y con manos ociosas y lavadas
gozan de las ganadas posesiones,
y os dan de bofetones y de palos,
en vez de los regalos recibidos
de los viejos maridos que perdistes.
y ansi lo que hicistes por holgaros,
suele después quitaros dulce vida;
pena cuya medida satisface,
porque la que tal hace que tal pague.”

Semejante palabras en sustancia
fueron las deste bárbaro prudente. (*Elegías* Part IV 245)

This brief anecdote is constructed upon two separate subtexts which are conveniently pieced together into a single narrative by Castellanos. In the first place, the anecdote speaks of the rapid process of readjustment and acculturation triggered by the conquest, and of how crucial it became for Spaniards to identify the preexisting indigenous political elites and to secure their allegiance in order to implement and maintain a new social order that demanded indigenous labor and the collection of taxes in return for their religious instruction. In effect, José Rabasa points out that indigenous elites “facilitated the administration of the empire by fulfilling the role of judges and governors of Indians” (15). From this perspective, Don Alonso is the ‘privileged’ intermediary that connected the Spanish and the indigenous population and facilitated the functioning of the repartimiento.

On the other hand, the episode of Don Alonso and the widow also speaks of the role of marriage as a social institution in early Spanish American society and in particular of how certain marital alliances benefited or weakened the encomendero class. However, these two separate subtexts are woven into one narrative by positing a sequence of binary oppositions in which one side is given ascendancy upon the second:

Don Alonso / Judges
Baquiano / Chapetón
Merits / No merits
Life / Death
Eight months of service (la demora) / No Indian service
Wife / widow
Husband / New husband
Verdad / Fingir
Punishment / Transgression

Through these opposites the essential elements of colonization are presented in terms of courtship. In effect, all of these oppositions function upon one analogy that simultaneously allows the oppositions to exist and or cancels them. This analogy is that colonization is a form of courtship. In other words, according to Castellanos, colonization is allegorized into a type of love affair in which the lover who truly deserves the bride is the same as the colonists who truly deserve to reap the benefits of the conquest. This basic premise was also implied in the relationship between the Spanish explorer and the wife of Guana Carani, and in her resolution to side with the 'better man' even if it meant betraying her husband. Obviously, by building the analogy between colonization and courtship with the Spanish woman at the center, Castellanos is conducting a sort of displacement because for the analogy to work the Spanish widow has to stand for both, the colonizer and the colonized at the same time. Interestingly enough, this impasse and the stern self-determinacy Castellanos attributes to the Indian chief weakens Castellanos' argument and suggests that the binary oppositions are more arbitrary than real.

THE CRITICISM OF JUDGES AND ADMINISTRATORS

Often times Castellanos' favoritism on behalf of the baquianos leads him to criticize, not just chapetones in general, but specifically the functionaries that had been

sent by the crown to administer the colonies and especially magistrates and judges. Such is the case of “Elegía V,” written in honor of Diego Colón, canto I in which the narrator attributes inexperience and licentiousness to the judges when he refers to them as “jueces mocetones”, then ridicules the attire and the tools of their profession: “grandes gorras, largos de vestidos / grandes cofres de cuadernos,” and finally advocates an anachronistic and anti-modern view of government that rejects specialization and bureaucracies and postulates personal judgment, fear of God and conscience as the pillars of good government:

Si fuesen mas al claro mis razones,
venías a taparte los oídos,
tratando de jueces mocetones,
grandes gorras, largos de vestidos,
que salen solemnísimos ladrones,
desvergonzados, sucios, atrevidos,
que no hayan en ley mas fundamentos
que sus antojos gustos y contentos.

Unos vienen con sed de los infiernos,
y tal que cosa no se les escapa,
otros con grandes cofres de cuadernos,
y son de necedades gran solapa,
y acontece tener buenos gobiernos
sin letras un varón de espada y capa,
porque su buen juicio le da ciencia,
con el temor de Dios y su conciencia. (*Elegías* Part I 203)

Singling out the criticism of judges as one of the themes that runs across the *Elegías* is important because it can help us recognize how a literary work encapsulates the tensions between two colonial institutions, one of which executed power from the bottom up (cabildo de Tunja) and one that exerted power from the top down (the real audiencia). In addition, it can also help us narrow down the specific group or individuals provably commissioned the writing of the poem or sections of it. In this regard, it is rather telling that in some sections Castellanos’ criticism against magistrates and judges

reproduces almost verbatim the concerns that the members of the cabildo de Tunja had expressed to the King and the General Council of the Indies as early as 1554 with regards to the perpetuation of the encomienda system, the conflicting jurisdictions of the Real Audiencia, and the local cabildo and the misconduct of the judges:

Otro si- Por quanto uno de los daños mayores y mas notables que hay en esta tierra y Reino como se ha visto por experiencia después que hay audiencia real en él es que esté cargo el encomendar los indios porque los dan a sus parientes y amigos y aficionados y a quien se les dan y se quedan los conquistadores y personas que han servido a su majestad sin repartimientos y muriendo de hambre en lo cual aunque tuviese alguna desorden en tiempo de gobernadores en fin era uno solo y ya que hacia tan gran carga de conciencia hacialo con los parientes y aficionados de uno solo que era el mismo pero agora doblase cuatro veces este daño con cuatro oidores que cada uno de ellos quiere hacer por sus parientes y aficionados de manera que no se provean indios a derechas según la intención de su majestad y pues esto es ansi y de proveer y encomendar los dichos oidores se sigue no solo este inconveniente sino otros infinitos que su majestad se ha servido de proveer en esto de las encomiendas lo que se hace en los beneficios patrimoniales en España en algunas iglesias obispales de ella y que conforme a esto los indios se provean de aquí adelante en esta forma que cuando en algún pueblo bacare algún repartimiento luego el cabildo Justicia y regimiento de tal pueblo ponga edicto para que los que quisieren venir a componer el dicho repartimiento dentro de cierto termino con que los tales opositores sean conquistadores y personas que lo merezcan y hayan servido y tengan las partes

que su majestad manda para poder tener indios y de los apuestos a dicho repartimiento los del dicho cabildo que saben mejor el merecimiento de los que están en la tierra y lo han servido que no los letrados y jueces que vienen frescamente de España, aquellos señalen y escojan entre los dichos o puesta tres o cuatro personas las mas suficientes y de mas meritos y estas presentes ante la Audiencia Real o ante la persona que tuviere poder para encomendar y la dicha audiencia escoja de aquellas dichas cuatro personas una y de esta manera no habrá fraude en las encomiendas y se cumplirá la real intención y no habrá disolución y desorden que hasta ahora ha habido. (*Repertorio Boyacense* “Actas de Cabildo” [de Tunja] 266 -7)

In sum, the criticism of judges and the favoritism for baquianos should help us see clearly how Castellanos, although strictly speaking he was not one of them, placed his pen at the service of a group of individuals who contributed to Spain’s imperial project by exploring the New World and by fighting in the campaigns to conquer it, but later felt affronted by the Crown’s implementation of laws aimed at limiting the old conquistadors’ political and economic power. As such, if *La Araucana*, is ultimately a Spanish poem of the European Renaissance, as Francisco Javier Cevallos and Nicolopoulos have pointed out, the *Elegías* is a text that springs from the experience of colonizing the New World, and it is a product and a reflection of an administrative, generational, and ideological rivalry that confronted local colonist and local forms of government against the representatives of the Spanish Crown.

TRUTH AS THE NEW AESTHETIC CATEGORY

In the closing remarks of the letter to the readers that Castellanos attached to the last installment of the *Elegías*, he boosts the verisimilitude of his account by establishing an analogy between writing and cooking and stating: “que aquí [in his text] no falta el principal condimento que historia requiere, que es *verdad*” (134). Like the presumption that the narrator had been a first hand witness, the assertion that what he is narrating is true-to-life is also a constant thread that runs from the beginning to the end of the *Elegías*. In fact, by inserting that comment about the historicity of his account at the end of a letter that also serves as a preface to the last volume of his writing, Castellanos comes full circle as he devoted a great deal of attention to emphasizing the same aspect of his writing in the exordium to the first canto of his *Elegías*:

Iré con pasos algo presurosos,
sin orla de poéticos cabellos
que hacen *versos dulces, sonoros*
a los ejercitados el leellos;
pues como canto casos dolorosos,
cuales los padecieron muchos dellos,
parecióme decir la *verdad pura*
sin usar de ficción ni de compostura.

Por no darse bien las invenciones
de cosas ordenadas por los hados,
ni los dioses de falsas religiones,
por la via lactea congregados,
en el Olimpo dando sus razones
cada uno por sus apasionados;
ni por mi parte quiero que se lea
la deshonestidad de Citerea.

Ni me parece bien ser importuno
recontando los celos de Vulcano
ni los enojos de la diosa Juno,
opuestos al designio del Toyano;
ni palacios acuosos de Neptuno,

ni las demás deidades de Océano,
ni cantaré de Doris ni Nereo,
ni la varias figuras de Proteo.

Ni cantaré fingidos beneficios
de Prometeo, hijo de Japeto,
fantaseando vanos edificios
con harta mas estima que el efeto;
como los que con grandes artificios
van supliendo las faltas del sujeto;
porque las grandes cosas que yo digo
su punto y su valor tienen consigo.

Son de tan alta lista las que cuento,
como vereis en los que recopilo,
que sus proezas son el ornamento,
y ellas mismas encumbran el estilo,
sin mas reparos ni encarecimiento
de proceder sin mácula el hilo
de la *verdad* de cosas por mí vistas
y las que recogí de coronistas.

Porque si los discretos paran mientes,
de suyo son gustosas las verdades
y captan atención en los oyentes
mucho mas que fingidas variedades:
demás de ser negocios indecentes
matizar la *verdad* con variedades,
la cual no da sabor al buen oído
si lleva de mentiras el vestido.

Así que, no diré cuentos fingidos,
ni me fatigaré pensar ficciones
a vueltas de negocios sucedidos
en índicas provincias y regiones;
y para mis versos ser polidos
faltaren las debidas proporciones,
querria yo semejante falta
supliese la materia, pues es alta. (*Elegías* Part I 50-60)

In these stanzas Castellanos puts forward a literary agenda for from which he would start to depart almost immediately after he had announced it. For now I simply want to point out that while setting the limits of his literary project Castellanos

establishes a correlation between the lack of poetic adornment (“iré con pasos algo presurosos / sin orla de poéticos cabellos”) and truth, and between poetic adornment (“versos dulces, sonoros”) and deception (“fingidas variedades” / “cuentos fingidos”). Castellanos’ rationale is two-fold. In the first place he proposes that the subject matter of his poem (“canto casos dolorosos” / “las grandes cosas que yo digo / su punto y su valor tienen consigo”) waives or supersedes the need for proper style or eloquence. And secondly, he rejects poetic adornment all together by suggesting that when writing about the deeds of Spaniards in the New World, the use of poetic adornment implies the intention to deceive.

As it had been the case of the soldier turned chronicler Bernal Díaz del Castillo and his *Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España*, Castellanos’ rejection of poetic adornment and his assertion that what he is about to narrate is true (“parecióme decir la *verdad pura* / sin usar de ficción ni de compostura”) carries with it not merely a descriptive but also a polemical function.³³ As is well known, by asserting that his version of the conquest of Mexico was truthful, Bernal Díaz intended to correct the accounts provided by polemicists and historians like Bartolomé de Las Casas and Francisco López de Gómara; the first for denouncing the excesses of the conquest and the second for not recognizing enough the role of the troops and magnifying the leadership skills and heroism of Hernán Cortés. When making a similar claim Castellanos is also admonishing that his intention is to correct someone else’s version of the conquest and colonization of the New World, and not surprisingly, Castellanos provides enough references for readers to identify whose account in particular he is referring to. He starts

³³ See Ramón Iglesias’ “Bernal Díaz del Castillo y el popularismo en la historiografía Española” and “Las críticas de Bernal Díaz del Castillo a la Historia de la Conquista de México” in *El Hombre Colón y otros ensayos*. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1986. Robert E. Lewis “Retórica y verdad: los cargos de Bernal Díaz a López de Gómara”. *De la crónica a la nueva narrativa mexicana: coloquio sobre la literatura mexicana*. Ed. Merlín H. Foster y Julio Ortega. Colección Alfonso Reyes 7. México: Oasis, 1986. 37 – 47.

doing just that when he admits that the account he intends to refute had also been written in verse, which he describes simply as “versos dulces, sonoros.”

One way in which readers can quickly recognize that Castellanos is establishing a dialogue with Ercilla is by noticing the similarities between the exordium to the *Elegías* and the exordium to *La Araucana*. After all, by using the exordium to stress his position as witness (“de la *verdad* de cosas por mi vistas”) and to highlight the true-to-life nature of his poem, Castellanos seems to be following the script previously established by Ercilla, who also used the opening of *La Araucana* to comment on the historicity of his account and to present himself as a first hand witness. When examining the relationship between the opening of the *Elegías* and the opening of *La Araucana*, on the other hand, critics such as Isaac J. Pardo, Mario Germán Romero, and Giovanni Meo Ziglio have all pointed out to a similarity between the way in which Castellanos delimits the topic of his poem negatively by stating what he does not intend to narrate: “*ni* palacios acuosos de Neptuno / *ni* las demás deidades de Océano / *ni* cantaré de Doris *ni* Nereo / *ni* la varias figuras de Proteo,” and the manner in which Ercilla had chosen to distance himself from the popular Italian chivalric romances written by Boiardo and Ludovico Ariosto:

No las damas, amor, no gentilezas
de caballeros canto enamorados,
ni las muestras, regales y ternezas
de amorosos afectos y cuidados; (*La Araucana* 1.1)

Pardo, Romero, and Ziglio viewed this type of resemblance under the category of influence (influencia) but did not examine the implications any further. In my opinion, however, when dealing with the connection between the exordium to *La Araucana* and the exordium to the *Elegías* in terms of influence, the three afore mentioned critics overlook the fact that there are also significant differences between what each poet is proposing to do, and that if indeed Castellanos is calling attention to *La Araucana* he is

doing so to propose something quite different, which in part includes disavowing the authority that Ercilla invokes for his poem and setting an standard of truth according to which the one followed by Ercilla carried with it an intention to deceive. Notice, for instance, that while it is true that Ercilla asserted the historicity of his poem he also devoted a great deal of the exordium to request the monarch's approval and to admonish that the authority of his poem would rest ultimately in being accepted by the king:

Suplícoos, gran Felipe, que mirada
esta labor, de vos sea recebida,
que, de todo favor necesitada,
queda con darse a vos favorecida...

no despreciéis del don, aunque tan pobre,
para que con autoridad mi verso cobre.

Quiero señor tan alto dedicarlo,
porque este atrevimiento lo sostenga,
tomando esta manera de ilustrarlo
para que quien lo viere en mas lo tenga;
y si esto no bastare a no tacharlo,
a lo menos confuso se detenga
pensando que, pues va a Vos dirigido,
que debe de llevar algo escondido. (*La Araucana* 1.3-4)

Castellanos, on the other hand, dedicated part I of the *Elegías* to Felipe II, but the king is nowhere present in the exordium to the *Elegías*, and at least in one occasion Castellanos insists that what he is about to write has worth in and of itself: “porque las grandes cosas que yo digo/ su punto y su valor tienen consigo.” Therefore, when we read the opening of the *Elegías* as a rebuttal or a deconstruction of the opening and *La Araucana*, it becomes evident that in Castellanos' poem the king is absent for a reason; which is in part to enhance the worth of the events themselves and of those individuals who achieved them, and to start the process of distancing Castellanos' text from that of his predecessor.

In light of the observations made so far, what should stand out immediately when comparing the introductory section to the *Elegías* and *La Araucana* is the stark difference between what each poem proposes to accomplish with regards to the representation of Amerindians. To my knowledge, the issue of the representation of the indigenous population of the New World has not surfaced in previous discussions about Castellanos' appropriation of Ercilla, whether in the exordium or anywhere else throughout the poem. Yet, I think this particular aspect alone shows that Castellanos was a careful reader of Ercilla and recognized the implications of what Ercilla had accomplished by creating memorable Indian characters capable of acts of heroism. In this regard I concur with Quint, who argues that by casting Araucanians as worthy and heroic opponents and by recognizing the valor of their resistance against the Spaniards, Ercilla was taking sides against the encomenderos (and their spokesman Juan Ginés de Sepulveda) in the ongoing debate about the justification for the conquest, thus undermining the notion that Amerindians were subhuman brutes or inferior beings by nature. That is, in my view, what Castellanos is addressing and attempting to reverse in this stanza from the opening to his *Elegías*:

Veréis romper caminos no sabidos,
montañas bravas y nublosas cumbres.
veréis pocos e ya cuasi perdidos
sujetar increíbles muchedumbres
de bárbaros crueles y atrevidos,
forzados a tomar nuevas costumbres,
do flaqueza, temor y desconfianza
afilaban los filos de la lanza. (Elegías Part I 61 italics are mine)

In my opinion, what Castellanos accomplishes in the introduction to his poem is using some of the very same elements present in *La Araucana* to draw attention to Ercilla's text but precisely to undermine his ideological position. The problem is that despite of Castellanos' insistence that his poem lacks poetic adornment, a 'plain' style

does not translate into the lack of style and there are plenty of sections of Castellanos' poem in which he makes his arguments by appealing to the same poetic language and conventions he had initially rejected. Indeed, in key sections of the *Elegías* the weight of Castellanos' argument is couched upon reformulation of epic topoi, metaphors, literary and biblical allusion, irony, and figurative language, all of which attempt more to persuade the reader and less to demonstrate. On the other hand, in its most infelicitous expression, Castellanos's lack of poetic adornment and craving for realism translates into the total breach of poetic decorum and even vulgarity.

From the outset Castellanos' literary project was hindered by blatant flaws and contradictions, most of which are the result of his effort to denounce and refute Ercilla. To become aware of those contradictions we need not go any further than the stanza that comes immediately after the exordium. In it Castellanos evokes anachronistically a heroic code and a style of warfare based on man to man combat, and suggests that the exploration and conquest of the New World had been accomplished without the assistance of gunpowder or fire weapons. A thesis that not even the most stern advocates of the conquest would have been willing or able to defend:

Vereis ganarse grandes potentados
inespugnables penas, altos riscos,
no con cañones gruesos reforzados
ni balas de fumosos basiliscos;
mas de solos escudos ayudados,
y puntas de acerados obeliscos;
siendo solos los brazos instrumentos
para tan admirables vencimientos. (*Elegías* Part I 61)

THE REPRESENTATION OF INDIGENOUS CULTURES

I have alluded to Castellanos' negative characterization of the indigenous population of the New World a few instances throughout this chapter, and I will expand on the same topic in chapter 4. However, I would like comment briefly one passage from the last installment of the *Elegías* because I think that it can help me advance further the notion that Castellanos' description of indigenous cultures is largely constrained by the ideological implications of the one offered by Ercilla. Taking into account that in the *Elegías* the repression of sexual desire is a central element in the conception of the ideal warrior, Luis Fernando Restrepo has commented on this same episode and has suggested that in it:

se idealiza el guerrero indígena como un hombre sexualmente refrenado y se sugiere que el control del deseo (la esfera privada) es un requisito para el orden civil (la esfera pública). Al mismo tiempo, se refuerza el prejuicio a la mujer como corruptora. (“Somatografía Épica Colonial” 252)³⁴

However, in the reading I am offering the following passage should be read as the antithesis of the episode of *La Araucana* in which the old and wise Colocolo proposes a plan to end the strife among the Indian war lords and to select the new commander that would lead the Araucanian resistance against the Spaniards (*La Araucana* 2.28-62). In Ercilla's poem the episode has epic overtones that link it to the athletic games celebrated in honor of Anchises and narrated in Book V of Virgil's *Aeneid*. In Castellanos' version,

³⁴ After making this comment Restrepo clarifies that “es mas común en las *Elegías* el indígena como un ser no refrenado sexualmente. Antes de las batallas, los muisca mas templados (moderados) se entregan a “sucias” borracheras, bailes y relaciones con mujeres” (252).

however, the sheer athleticism and endurance of the epic heroes of *La Araucana* has been transformed into a bizarre context in which the male Indian nobles compete to display sexual restraint in front of beautiful naked women:

Bogotá lo ponía de su mano,
sin que hiciesen ellos diligencia
en elegir señor que los rigiese.
Mas él una hacia, y es aquesta:
buscaba dos de buenas apariencias,
hombres de buena casta conocidos
y de aquella provincia naturales.
Estos mandaba desnudar, quedando
todas sus partes al descubierto
en plaza pública, y en medio dellos
una grandiosa ninfa sin más ropa
de la que vistió naturaleza;
y estando casi juntos y fronteros
del vaso codicioso de la dueña,
a cualquiera dellos cuya *viril planta*
alteración mostró libidinosa,
desechábalo luego como hombre
de quien se conoció poca vergüenza
y de ningún sostén para gobierno;
y si los dos mostraron accidentes,
entrambos iban fuera de la suerte,
y otros se disponían a la prueba,
hasta topar con uno que tuviese
quietos y enfrentados genitales.

Este quedaba con el señorío
y sucesor perpetuo del estado,
y era del bogota favorecido,
porque le parecía que la cosa
que desconcierta mas al que gobierna
eran inclinaciones sensuales,
y que para defensa de las tierras
convenía ser hombres continentes,
porque las añagazas de mujeres
los hacen descuidados y remisos,
y algunas veces ser acobardados. (*Elegías* Part IV 172 - 3)

There are several links between this episode and the episode of the election of Caupolicán as military leader that are worth commenting upon. In each case the narratives describe a public event which has been summoned by an older noble and which is designed to elect the man who would lead the tribe and oversee the defense of its territory. In both instances, moreover, the men who participate in the contest have to display the qualities that make them stand out above the rest and make them worthy of a position of leadership. Yet if in *La Araucana* the test involves a combination of endurance and sheer physical force, in the *Elegías* the task at hand is to control the sexual appetite. The displacement from physical strength to sexual continence is encapsulated by the focus given to “la gran viga” or the “duro y grave leño” in *La Araucana*, and to the “viril planta” in the *Elegías*; Accordingly, while Caupolicán defeats his opponents by being able to stand erect with the tree trunk on his shoulder for the longest amount of time, in Castellanos’ narrative the new chieftain would be he who can keep his “viril planta” down. Therefore, if with the narrative about the episode at the Fuerte de Navidad Castellanos had suggested that female Indian nobles were disloyal and lascivious nymphets, this anecdote leaves enough room to suggest that male Indian nobles were either incapable of sexual continence or effeminate. In both cases, nonetheless, the allusions to Ercilla’s text lead to emphasizing the “otherness” of the indigenous population of the New World and to their description as culturally inferior and as groups that deserve to be defeated and colonized. Accordingly, if with the description of the election of Caupolicán as war leader Ercilla is, at least on some level, depicting Araucanians as worthy opponents of the Spaniards, in his narrative about the election of war chieftains among the Muisca Castellanos is casting Amerindians as completely antiheroic. Castellanos accomplishes that by literally stripping the Indian nobles of their

clothes and describing them naked. Nudity was something allowed or tolerated when describing the bodies of slaves or for women, but epic heroes could never appear naked.

I consider that tracing Castellanos' negative representation of Amerindians to a model that offered a much more positive view of indigenous cultures is important because it establishes Castellanos as the initiator of a tradition (at least among the literary works produced in the Kingdom of Nueva Granada) that would be perpetuated for centuries. Incidentally, only a generation after Castellanos the criollo writer Juan Rodríguez Freile would offer in his *Conquista y Descubrimiento del Nuevo Reino de Granada* the description of an Indian ritual that serves as the antithesis of the one offered by Castellanos, while still casting Amerindians as consumed by lust and inclined to sexual vices. The episode maintains the notion of context that Castellanos borrowed from Ercilla, but this time the winner (and the holiest among the tribe) is the person who can engage in the greatest number of sexual acts during four days of bacchanalia:

En aquella llanada, que había entre los dos ríos que dividían los campos, con mucha fiesta y regocijo se mostraban los unos con los otros, convidándose, comiendo y bebiendo juntos en grandes borracheras que hicieron, que duraban de día y de noche, a donde el que mas incestos y fornicios hacia, era mas santo: vicio que hasta hoy les queda. Por tres días continuos dura esta fiesta y borrachera y al cuarto día se comienza a correr la tierra que era la mayor ceremonia que hacían a su dios. (Rodríguez Freyle 30)

In my view, one can explain the coincidences and the differences between Castellanos' and Rodríguez Freyle's narratives by pointing out the fact that, eventhough both writers shared a pejorative view of Indian civilizations, Castellanos was interested in offering a heroic portrayal of the conquest, while Rodríguez Freyle was more inclined in

creating parody of the heroic versions of the conquest such as the one offered by Castellanos.

CONCLUSIONS

Chapters 1 and 2 have had three overlapping purposes. The first one is to problematize the applicability of David Quint's view of the epic (epics of the winners / epics of the losers) to sixteenth century Spanish epics. Secondly, to clarify that if indeed in his writings Juan de Castellanos offers what we could call a 'Spanish outlook' on the events related to the enterprise of conquest and colonization, his account provides a highly skewed and partial version of the events that is closely intertwined with the worldview and the interest of a particular social group, the *encomenderos*. And third, to highlight the creative ingenuity Castellanos displayed in appropriating, manipulating, and rearranging passages written by Alonso de Ercilla. All in all, it has been my hope that this brief survey of the main trends in Castellanos' writing will prompt the readers of this dissertation to go beyond what has been restated by other critics in the past and engage in a different type of reading when it comes to the relationship between the poems written by Castellanos and those of Ercilla. I am proposing in these pages a type of interpretation according to which the literal meaning is certainly not the most stimulating or relevant, and one that recognizes Castellanos less as a servile follower of Ercilla and more as an unapologetic contestant, even if a less consistent but far more prolific poet.

In regards to the interpretation of the anecdote in which Castellanos' alludes to the sweetness of Ercilla's verses specifically, I doubt that the reason why Castellanos decided to switch from historiography to the epic was such a subjective and capricious motive. Accordingly, I consider that interpreting the anecdote literally imposes over

Castellanos' writings an immediacy, a transparency, and an stability his texts do not possess and constantly strive to avoid. Taking into account the centrality of censorship at this time, a more plausible explanation would be to suggest that Castellanos was aware of the fact that the subject of his writing was the site of highly contested controversies and that one way in which authors could navigate through sensitive topics and even avoid the constraints of censorship was by switching from historiographic and ethnographic accounts into epic and heroic poetry, a genre that enjoyed great demand in the sixteenth century and could be the beneficiary of Royal endorsement more easily.³⁵ Adorno has examined the trends in censorship and its relationship to genre and has pointed out that:

Epic dramatization of the Indian served the dominant ideology not merely because it kept from sight the politically sensitive effects of military conquest but because it offered an alternative interpretation. The escape into fantasy and the reaffirmation of chivalric values represented –simultaneously- the desire to flee from harsher realities and the effort to come to grips with them. The use of old fictions was at once a discursive, interpretative effort to bring under a single purview of control the historical past and historical destiny. It was at once a political and a linguistic phenomenon: to make the European (Spanish Reconquest) past rule the European-in-America (Spanish colonial) present and to establish a language of external reference which could communicate wonder – human and natural- of the New World. In this light, the celebration of the heroic Age of Reconquest becomes the strategy by which to ‘read’ and interpret the present, rather than to reproduce the past as such. The epic poets on America, and

³⁵ I have in mind the problems with censorship faced by Hernán Cortés, Bernardino de Sahagun, Francisco López de Gómara, Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, and Fray Pedro de Aguado.

the ethnographic writers too, deliberately exploited the chivalric romance in creating and presenting their own literary efforts. (“Literary Production and Suppression” 19)

Hence, by alluding to the most prestigious and popular Spanish epic of his time, Castellanos offers the readers (and the censors) an outside reference with which to judge his work, one that conveniently situates the *Elegías* within the realm of literature, thus distancing them from controversy. As Restrepo has explained,

visto en el contexto de las crecientes restricciones imperiales respecto a la escritura sobre otras culturas en la segunda mitad del siglo XVI, la estructura de la épica le permite a Castellanos abordar exitosamente un tema espinoso. La evidencia de tal éxito es la sanción favorable de la mayor parte de su obra por parte de la censura oficial. La estructura del discurso épico le permitía posicionarse estratégicamente ante su objeto (las culturas americanas) y su audiencia. Esto diferencia a las *Elegías* de las etnohistorias de los misioneros neogranadinos como el franciscano Fray Pedro de Aguado, cuyas *Noticias Historiales* fueron suprimidas por la censura. (*Un Nuevo Reino Imaginado* 215)

However, readers familiar with the parameters set by Castellanos in the opening of the *Elegías* can also interpret the reference to the sweetness (dulcedumbre) of Ercilla’s work as a disqualifying remark, inasmuch as in the exordium to the *Elegías* Castellanos had announced that sweetness (dulcedumbre) was the one characteristic readers would not find in his poem. At least that much we can infer from his statement that he intended to write: “sin orla de poéticos cabellos / que hacen versos *dulces*, sonorosos.” Accordingly, it is in this disqualifying sense that the encomendero poet Diego Dávalos

would also use the term “dulçura” a few years after Castellanos to chastise Ercilla’s use of Petrarchist / Garcilacist poetic discourse to describe Amerindians: “Aunque sus defensores niegan esto, atribuiéndoles mill *dulçuras*, que en tiernos requiebros y enamorados cantares dizen y cantan sus amadas.” In my view, therefore, what has been read by some critics as a complement and as a transparent gesture of subservience and servility had in the context of the literary production of early Spanish America a clear pejorative connotation that carried with it an immense amount of animosity and of personal and political ambition. To put it more succinctly, through a rather casual anecdote Castellanos can actually have it both ways. In my view, it is through this ambiguous and highly contradicting lens that we have to approach and measure the boldness with which Castellanos levels himself against Alonso de Ercilla in his *Elegías de varones ilustres de las Indias*.

When combined, Adorno’s and Restrepo’s comments allows us to see how Menendez y Pelayo missed the mark in condemning Castellanos’ choice to write in verse and in proposing that Castellanos would have produced a much better text if he had chosen to write in prose (“hubieramos tenido una de las mejores y mas caudalosas crónicas de la conquista” 418). I think this type of comments strive to divorce Castellanos’ texts from the context in which they originated, and in the end are nothing more than a reflection of an inability to cope with certain aspects of the colonial past, and a smokescreen or a distraction that allows Menendez y Pelayo to formulate interpretations of the discovery and colonization of the New World, and of the history of Nueva Granada in particular, which are simply historically unsubstantiated.³⁶ In effect, in

³⁶ I find a similar tendency to disassociate Castellanos’ writings from their original context in William Ospina’s argument that Castellanos “no tiene nada que ver con el poder, no parece obsesionarlo la riqueza, no está luchando por su prestigio personal, no está luchando por la gloria de España, no está tratando de consolidar la gloria de Carlos V sobre los nuevos reinos; está tratando de salvar de la memoria de unos hechos que sabe extraordinarios, tratando de redimirlos (como él mismo lo dijo) “de la tiranía del olvido” y de convertir a su idioma en el guardián de ese tesoro.” (132)

the same chapter that Menendez y Pelayo belittles Castellanos' abilities as a poet, he goes on to suggest a teleological reading of the past according to which Santa Fe de Bogotá was "destinada a ser la Atenas de América del Sur" and to erase any sense of conflict, contestation, or violence from the colonial past by presenting sixteenth century Nueva Granada as a model or ideal colony:

A lo selecto de esta población, que no había manchado su conquista con ninguna de las ferocidades y excesos de sórdida codicia que anublaron la gloria de la del Perú, correspondió desde el principio la paz inalterable en que vivió aquella colonia, la moderación de su gobierno, la templanza de las costumbres y lo arraigado de las tradiciones domésticas, más fáciles de conservar en una población agrícola y sedentaria, aislada en la meseta de los Andes y separada de la costa por inmensos desiertos y ríos caudalososísimos, que en la muchedumbre abigarrada y levantisca que acudía a los puertos o a las grandes explotaciones mineras. (413)

In my view, a closer reading of the patterns, paradigms, and priorities that govern the writing of the *Elegías* should demonstrate that what Castellanos depicts is but a pixel of a much wider and far more complicated picture. With this in mind we can now proceed to examine some emblematic sections of Castellanos' writing. In chapter 3 I will explore the representation of British adversaries and baquianos in Castellanos' *Discurso del Capitán Francisco Draque*, and in chapter 4 I will comment on the literary tropes, models, and subtexts that allowed Castellanos to construct a demonic portrayal of the indigenous population of the New World.

Cuando el pirata Francis Drake asaltó a Riohacha, en el siglo XVI, la bisabuela de Úrsula Iguarán se asustó tanto con el toque de rebato y el estampido de los cañones, que perdió el control de los nervios y se sentó en un fogón encendido. Las quemaduras la dejaron convertida en una esposa inútil para toda la vida. No podía sentarse sino de medio lado, acomodada en cojines; y algo extraño debió quedarle en el modo de andar, porque nunca volvió a caminar en público. Renunció a toda clase de hábitos sociales obsesionada por la idea de que su cuerpo despedía un olor a chamusquina. El alba la sorprendía en el patio sin atreverse a dormir, porque soñaba que los ingleses con sus feroces perros de asalto se metían por la ventana del dormitorio y la sometían a vergonzosos tormentos con hierros al rojo vivo. Su marido, un comerciante aragonés con quien tenía dos hijos, se gastó media tienda en medicinas y entretenimientos buscando la manera de aliviar sus terrores. Por último liquidó el negocio y llevó la familia a vivir lejos del mar, en una ranchería de indios pacíficos situada en las estribaciones de la sierra, donde le construyó a su mujer un dormitorio sin ventanas para que no tuvieran por donde entrar los piratas de sus pesadillas. En la escondida ranchería vivía de mucho tiempo atrás un criollo cultivador de tabaco, don José Arcadio Buendía, con quien el bisabuelo de Úrsula estableció una sociedad tan productiva que en pocos años hicieron una fortuna. Varios siglos más tarde, el tataranieta del criollo se casó con la tataranieta del aragonés. Por eso, cada vez que Úrsula se salía de casillas con las locuras de su marido, saltaba por encima de trescientos años de casualidades, y maldecía la hora en que Francis Drake asaltó a Riohacha. – Gabriel García Márquez

CHAPTER 3: PIRACY AND THE EPIC IN THE DISCURSO DEL CAPITAN FRANCISCO DRAQUE

The *Discurso del Capitán Francisco Draque* is a short heroic poem written by Juan de Castellanos soon after an English fleet sacked the port of Cartagena in 1586.³⁷ Francis Drake departed from Plymouth on September 14 the previous year as commander

³⁷ For a different interpretation of this section of Juan de Castellanos' writings see Álvaro A. Rodríguez's "La ficcionalización en el 'Discurso del Capitán Francis Drake' de Juan de Castellanos." *Revista de Estudios Colombianos*. 21 (2000): 26-36.

of a state-sponsored expedition that aimed to disrupt Spanish trade, and arrived at Cartagena in February 1586 after raiding the cities of São Tiago (Cape Verde) and Santo Domingo on the island of Hispaniola. Drake was able to stay in control of Cartagena for two months, during which he extracted a ransom of 110,000 ducats from the local authorities before sailing north across the Caribbean to capture St. Augustine, Florida. Although the financial rewards of the expedition were meager compared with the original expectations, Drake's raid on the West Indies bestowed a significant military humiliation to Spain and soured the already strained relations between Spain and England.³⁸

Castellanos worked expeditiously on his poem in the months following Drake's attack on Cartagena, and when he finished it he sent a copy to Melchor Pérez de Arteaga, Abad of Burgo Hondo in Spain, who in several ways was an ideal reader for this poem. Pérez de Arteaga had met Castellanos while working as a judge for the Real Audiencia in Nueva Granada and had been commissioned to oversee the rebuilding of the port of Cartagena and the reorganization of its defenses after an earlier attack by French pirates in 1561.³⁹ In the letter of dedication that accompanied the poem, moreover, Castellanos suggests that while in Nueva Granada Pérez de Arteaga had granted him "mercedes" (favors) and, out of concern for the fate of his poem, Castellanos decided to appeal to his former benefactor with the hope that Pérez de Arteaga would extend to the text the same consideration he had offered to Castellanos in the past:

Al tiempo que el corsario inglés Francisco Draque tomó la ciudad y puerto de Cartagena, tenía yo ocupadas las manos en la historia della; y por ser caso

³⁸ The expedition lost of approximately 25% of the money pledged by the investors. See Harry Kelsey, *Sir Francis Drake: The Queen's Pirate*. New Haven: Yale U.P., 1998. 281 – 283. See also Geoffrey Parker, "David or Goliath? Philip II and his world in the 1580s" in *Spain, Europe and the Atlantic World, Essays in Honour of John H. Elliott*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002. 264.

³⁹ See Fray Pedro Simón, *Noticias Historiales de las Conquistas de Tierra Firme en las Indias Occidentales*. Bogotá: Biblioteca de Autores Colombianos, 1953. Vol. 6th. Chapter XIII. (244 – 6).

notable, como los demás allí acontecidos desde su primero fundador hasta la presente hora, fue forzoso ponerlo por remate: para lo cual, con la posible solicitud, procuré las más ciertas y verdaderas relaciones que de la costa enviaron a este Nuevo Reino, consultando así mismo muchas personas que presentes se hallaron; de las cuales unos dicen más y otros menos, según el sentimiento de cada uno, como en semejantes cosas acontece. Y así concluso, tomando lo menos sospechoso y más autorizado, trabajé tejer este discurso cuan de raíz me fue posible, con información de hombres graves que dicen conocer a ese pirata, no solamente después que comenzó a ser molesto en estas partes de Indias, pero mucho antes de pasar a ellas; e ya concluso, lo menos mal que mi pobre talento pudo, algunos me importunaron que desmembrase este nuevo suceso de su lugar, para que a solas pasase en España, adonde así él como quien lo crió es cosa notoria que no podrán hallar buena acogida, careciendo de valedor; y buscándoselo, ocurrióme a la memoria quien está bien arraigado en ella por las mercedes que me hizo, gobernando este Reino y aquellas provincias de la costa, adonde, aunque no faltaron de estos acontecimientos, sobró valor en el que gobernaba para quedar libres de semejante zozobra: este es Vuestra Merced, a quien suplico sea servido, si hubiere tiempo desocupado, de leer mis vigiliyas, y, si tales fueren que merezcan luz, no les falte la del esclarecido entendimiento de V. M., a quien Dios nuestro Señor guarde largos años. (xv)

I have chosen to transcribe the contents of the entire letter because I consider that it illustrates Castellanos' skill to overcome one of the most challenging impasses at the

core of early Spanish American writing as a social practice. That is, a writers' ability to intimately entangle the presumably expository narration of a historical event, with the effort to establish his authority to write history.⁴⁰ Accordingly, I consider that recognizing Castellanos' careful rhetorical maneuvers would help us identify early on one of the main traits of his poem: the narrator/protagonist' oscillation between loyalty and outrage, between compliance and rejection.

Castellanos' letter to Pérez de Arteaga is organized around several topoi that were used widely in prologues by medieval and Renaissance writers, and which have been studied by Ernst Robert Curtius and A. Porqueras Mayo, among others.⁴¹ Some of those topoi include affected modesty: "lo menos mal que mi pobre talento pudo"; the author's dedication of the text to the implied reader: "este es Vuestra Merced, a quien suplico sea servido, si hubiere tiempo desocupado, de leer mis vigiliass"; and the author's request that the reader may bring the text to light: "y, si tales fueren que merezcan luz, no les falte la del esclarecido entendimiento de V. M. a quien Dios nuestro Señor guarde largos años." Despite its conciseness and customary formality, however, the letter also contains several references that extend beyond the primary function of the prologue merely to capture the reader's attention and request his benevolence for the subject of the writing.

The introductory remarks of the letter ("y por ser caso notable... fue forzoso ponerlo por remate") and the allusion to some anonymous individuals who pressured him to send the poem to Spain ("algunos me importunaron") make apparent that Castellanos considered it necessary to justify why he had written such a poem in the first place, and why he had decided to send it to Spain, in the second. In both instances, Castellanos

⁴⁰ On this subject see Rolena Adorno's *The Polemics of Possession in Spanish American Narrative*. New Haven: Yale UP, 2007.

⁴¹ See Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1952. 82 – 89. A. Porqueras Mayo, *El prólogo como género literario: su estudio en el Siglo de Oro español*. Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1957. 140 – 144.

appeals to justifying strategies that aim to dilute his responsibility and suggest that he accomplished both of those tasks not of his own volition, but because a set of circumstances forced him to do so. In my view, Castellanos' justifying strategies reveal the self-consciousness and uneasiness of a subject who has chosen to write in the most prestigious literary genre of his time about the defeat of Spanish forces by the nemesis of the Spanish empire.

Another important aspect that surfaces in this letter is that there are other accounts of Drake's attack on Cartagena, and that some of those accounts might differ significantly from the one given by Castellanos. This particular topic comes up when Castellanos gratuitously details the steps he took to write the poem and fashions his own image as that of a competent, truthful and scrupulous writer. These metatextual references are important not only because they postulate the preeminence of Castellanos' poem in relation to other texts (most of which were official legal documents), but also because internally they establish Castellanos' exemplarity as a citizen of Nueva Granada and a writer, two aspects that would gain increasing relevance in the most dramatic section of the poem. It is also important to notice that by referring to the previous attacks on Cartagena and the measures taken by then Judge Pérez de Arteaga, Castellanos places the threat of foreign piracy as an issue to be dealt within the realm of good and proper government; thus setting the tone for the sharp criticism he will deploy against the Crown's administrative policies in the New World, particularly concerning the security of the ports and the appointment of colonial administrators.

And last but not least, in light of the argument I will develop in this chapter, it is also pertinent to point out that in his letter Castellanos presents his own subjectivity as that of an outsider, a person who had been born in Spain but felt that there was no place for him there anymore ("en España, adonde así él [the text] como quien lo crió

[Castellanos] es cosa notoria que no podrán hallar buena acogida careciendo de valedor”). In addition to being an explicit reference to the polemical nature of his poem, Castellanos’ characterization of himself and his text as outsiders, albeit indirectly, constitutes the first reference to the poem’s unique place of enunciation (the New World and more specifically Nueva Granada) and the first step in delineating an imperial cartography where Europe moves to the periphery and the Colonial space to the center. It is in this sense that throughout the poem the New World would be depicted as a disputed frontier and as the privileged space where the economic and geopolitical rivalries among European nations will be decided.

In this chapter I analyze the themes and narrative structure of the *Discurso del Capitán Francisco Draque* paying special attention to the representation of two separate groups of people that are depicted as “others.” The first group is composed of English adversaries and embodied by Francis Drake; and the second group includes Spanish bureaucrats, merchants, and recently arrived colonists, also known as ‘chapetones.’⁴² It is my contention that by examining the way in which the narrator constructs the alterity of internal and external antagonists, we can best grasp how Castellanos seized the opportunity of recounting Drake’s attack on Cartagena to postulate a foundational myth that asserted the interests of the encomendero class from Nueva Granada. Unlike critics like Angel González Palencia, Manuel Alvar, and Nina Gerassi-Navarro, therefore, I do not consider that the main goal of this poem is to offer a historically accurate depiction of Drake’s sack of Cartagena, but to foreground the genealogy of a homogeneous warrior class that is united in their religious and patriotic zeal and eager to defend their sovereignty over the territory they had usurped from the Muiscas. As such, and incurring in a manifestly fragmented and idiosyncratic selection and arrangement of materials,

⁴² The impact of the rivalry between baquianos and chapetones in Spanish epic poetry has also been studied by José Durand. See “El chapetón Ercilla y la honra araucana” *Filología* 10 (1964): 113-134.

Castellanos' poem purposely irons out and distorts key aspects of the ongoing struggle for political and economic hegemony in early Spanish-American Colonial society, and assigns Castellanos and the encomendero class from Nueva Granada a textual authority that was actually being contested in the text of society.

By exploring the way in which the poem constructs a set of religious, national, and ideological "others," moreover, we can better appreciate how the text not only responds to the criticism that authors like Bartolomé de Las Casas and Alonso de Ercilla had launched against the conquistadors and the encomienda system, but aims to indirectly refute the complaints that a local mestizo chieftain, Don Diego de Torres Cacique de Turmequé, had been instigating against the encomenderos from Nueva Granada at the court of Philip II. Indeed, while the poem engages overtly with the positions assumed by Las Casas and Ercilla, its dialogue with the controversy surrounding the Cacique de Turmeque is only postulated obliquely. In fact, there is no direct mention of Diego de Torres or of any other mestizo in the text, but when we read the third canto of the poem in light of what is stated in the documents and maps produced by Diego de Torres, we can clearly see the silences and omissions left in Castellanos' text. It is in those silences and omission that I am interested as a colonialist. In this regard I share Beatriz Pastor's views that "firmly anchored in the Eurocentric world view, formulated in accordance with European categories of perception, analysis and exposition, the history of the discovery and conquest of America was, to a great extent build on silence, omission and absence" (123).⁴³

⁴³ For the controversy surrounding Don Diego de Torres, Cacique of Turmequé see Luis Fernando Restrepo's "Narrating Colonial Interventions: Don Diego de Torres, Cacique of Turmequé in the New Kingdom of Granada" in *Colonialism Past and Present: Reading and Writing about Colonial Latin America Today*. Albany: State U of New York P, 2002. 97-117. See also Ulises Rojas' *El Cacique de Turmequé y su época*. Tunja; Imprenta Departamental, 1965.

Based on my findings, at the end of this chapter I will highlight the main ideological and aesthetic similarities and differences between Juan de Castellanos' poem and Lope de Vega's *La Dragontea* (1598), the only other heroic poem written by a Spanish writer in the sixteenth century and entirely devoted to Francis Drake.⁴⁴

THE POEM

The *Discurso del Capitán Francisco Draque* is composed of five cantos and seven hundred and fifteen stanzas.⁴⁵ The bulk of the poem was written in *octavas reales* (eight hendecasyllables ending with a rhymed couplet, ABABABCC) with the exception of a short section written in *tercetos* which appears in the third canto and transcribes the contents of a letter that Juan de Castellanos supposedly sent to judge Francisco Guillén Chaparro, who was serving as the highest administrative authority in Nueva Granada at the time of Drake's attack. Although there are no exceptional breaches of the laws of nature and the majority of events narrated in the poem appear verisimilar, the poem does not follow the precepts outlined in Aristotle's *Poetics* with regard to the action (one action and that a whole), the protagonist (higher types of character), or the structure of heroic poems (the structural union of the parts being such that, if any one of them is displaced or removed, the whole will be disjointed and disturbed. For a thing whose presence or absence makes no visible difference, is not an organic part of the whole) (14 – 17).⁴⁶ In light of the preeminently political thrust of the poem, however, it would be

⁴⁴ Other Spanish literary accounts of Francis Drake also appear in Martín del Barco Centenera's *La Argentina* (Lisboa 1602) and Juan de Miramontes Zuázola's *Armas Antárticas* (Lima 1605).

⁴⁵ The manuscript of the poem is at the library of the Instituto de Valencia de Don Juan in Madrid. All the references to the poem correspond to the edition made by Angel González Palencia in 1921.

⁴⁶ Although Aristotle had suggested in his *Poetics* that "the plot of *tragedy* should offer a unified whole, consisting of a single action," "late sixteenth-century theoreticians applied the prescription to all literary

shortsighted to interpret Castellanos' departure from Aristotle's and Tasso's precepts as an aesthetic flaw and not as an ideological necessity, which is reiterated throughout the entire five cantos. In effect, the poet's intent to question the subserviant role of the epic genre in relation to the imperial project and the triumphalistic representation of recent Spanish Imperial history offered by a number of Spanish poets are key structural and thematic elements of the poem as important as his personal grudge against chapetones, the unabashed promotion of the merits of baquianos, and the documentation of the aggressions perpetrated by Drake.

THE FIRST CANTO

Un caso duro, triste y espantable,
un acometimiento furibundo,
una calamidad que fue notable
en ciertos puertos deste Nuevo Mundo,
canto con ronca voz y lamentable,
que el flaco pecho de lo más profundo
embía por sus vías a la lengua.
¿Más, quién podrá sin Hespañola mengua?

Dame tú, Musa mía, tal aliento
que con verdad sincera manifieste
alguna parte de mi sentimiento
en trago tan acerbo como éste,
y aquella destrucción y assolamiento
que hizo con su luterana hueste
el capitán inglés, dicho Francisco,
en *éste nuestro rezental aprisco*. (1-2)

The above cited verses constitute the two opening stanzas of Castellanos' *Discurso del Capitán Francisco Draque*. In them the narrative voice states the topic of the poem and requests strength from the muse to sing in a truthful manner. With regard to

forms, including epic." See Timothy Hampton, *Writing from History: The Rhetoric of Exemplarity in Renaissance Literature*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1990. 86.

the attacks conducted by Drake to Spanish ports the narrative voice proposes to sing, not about the courage or heroism of Spaniards faced with a daunting challenge, but the degree of destruction caused by the enemy. The abandonment of topics traditionally compatible with epic poetry is further conveyed by the rhetorical question: “¿Más, quién podrá sin Hespañola mengua?” which aptly blends the affronts committed by Drake with the poet’s embarrassment for singing about them, as if they were one and the same. The theme thus stated and the absence of a well-defined Spanish hero to rival the stature of the English adversary discloses the logic with which the poet has arranged his narrative. From the message conveyed by these two stanzas the reader knows from the start that inasmuch as the poem circumscribes to pirate attacks on Spanish ports, the poem will deal with defeat and not with victory.

Despite the absence of a Spanish hero, however, the narrative voice is able to convey an initial sympathetic depiction of Spanish colonists in the New World by staking out a clear place of enunciation. The poet highlights the uniqueness of the place from where he is singing by referring to that place with the metaphor “éste nuestro rezentel aprisco,” which refers both to the New World as a whole, and the territory of Nueva Granada in particular. In this regard, I share Restrepo’s view that the writings of Juan de Castellanos have a distinct “geographic and narrative axis, the New Kingdom of Granada (present-day Colombia), where Castellanos writes and lives” (“Sacred and Imperial Topographies” 84 – 101). Indeed, in a key section of chapter three Castellanos would again strategically remind readers, not only of his own presence in the text, but also of the place from which he is writing: “aqueste Nuevo Reino donde [yo] piso” (*Discurso* 128).

The term “*rezental*” comes from the Latin *recens* and is akin to ‘new’ or ‘recent’ and can be used to refer to a new born lamb, particularly one that is born after its due date (*Diccionario de Autoridades*). On the other hand, “*aprisco*”, is related to the verb

apriscar and refers to the place where shepherds gather their sheep to protect them from harsh weather (Covarrubias).⁴⁷ In the writings of Castellanos, there is at least one example of the literal use of *aprisco* as a place of refuge for animals: “Y ansi por las cabañas y el *aprisco* / do pastan los ganados de esta gente” (252); but there are several instances in which Castellanos uses this noun metaphorically to refer to the Catholic Church, both as a whole or to a small portion of it. Castellanos had used the term *aprisco* in this sense in his description of an initial period of harmony between Dominican and Franciscan friars and the indigenous population of Cumaná, prior to an Indian rebellion that he blames on the greed and abuses of colonist Hojeda:

Pues como fuesen indios muy famosos
los moradores de estas poblaciones,
de nuestra santa fe menesterosos
y de defensa ya de sinrazones,
acudieron algunos religiosos
movidos de cristianas intenciones,
procurando traellos al *aprisco*
Dominicanos y de San Francisco. (*Elegías* Part I 563)

In a similar fashion, Castellanos uses the noun *aprisco* metaphorically in Part III of his *Elegías*, when he complains about the lack of effort made by local authorities in Nueva Granada to continue the exploration and colonization of the territory on behalf of the Crown of Castile:

pues hay por descubrir varias provincias,
inmensidad de campos y naciones,
algunas de las cuales estuvieran
debajo del dominio y obediencia
de la Real Corona de Castilla,
si por los que gobiernan se tuviera
más esforzado celo del aumento
del *aprisco cristiano*, mayormente
habiendo tanta gente holgazana

⁴⁷ Aprisco: “el cercado o la estancia donde recogen los pastores su ganado” o “todo el lugar donde se abriga el ganado y se separa del viento y frío y las inclemencias del tiempo”.

que podría fundar nuevos albergues
aun en lo descubierto, pues hay tierras
baldías, provechosas y dispuestas,
para se socorrer del fruto de ella, (*Elegías* Canto IV, 669).⁴⁸

The metaphor “éste nuestro rezentel aprisco,” therefore, has positive religious connotations that aim to effectively present the Spanish colonists in the New World as the victims of aggression. Inherent in its meaning is the Gospel analogy that presents the followers of Christ as sheep and Christ’s spiritual adversaries as wolves.⁴⁹ As such, the success of this metaphor lies not only in trying to align the reader with the perspective of the narrator, but in reversing the rhetorical cornerstone of Bartolomé de Las Casas’ criticism of conquistadors and encomenderos. As is well known, in *A Brief Account of the Destruction of the Indies* (1552), Las Casas inverted the Gospel analogy to portray Christians (Spanish colonists) as hungry wolves and the gentiles (Amerindians) as “gentle lambs.” In the section dealing with the conquest of Nueva Granada, for example, Las Casas stated: “Dan los tigres y leones [the Spaniards] en las ovejas mansas [the natives] y desbarrigan y matan a espada tantos, que se pararon a descansar: tantos eran los que habían hecho pedazos” (78). And later in the same section Las Casas would add: “Y porque sea verdadera la regla que al principio dije, que siempre fue creciendo la tiranía e violencias e injusticias de los españoles contra aquellas ovejas mansas... (80). Castellanos rejected Las Casas’ criticism of conquistadors and encomenderos and in a section of his *Elegías* written prior to the *Discurso del Capitán Francisco Draque* overtly mocked Las Casas’ rhetorical strategy by inserting the following quotation coming from a Dominican friar (Fray Pedro de Palencia) in his description of an Indian attack on a Spanish settlement:

Ovejas del obispo de Chiapa,

⁴⁸ Another instance of the metaphorical use of aprisco can be found in Part II, “Elegía III” canto IV, 250.

⁴⁹ “Behold, I send you forth as sheep among wolves”. See Matthew 10: 16 and Luke 10:3.

ningún gusto me dan vuestros balidos,
pues que por fuerza nos quitáis la capa
sin darnos un vellón para vestidos;
y así de lana que tan mal se hila
renuncio para siempre la desquila. (*Elegías* Part I 664)

In summary, by referring to the New World as “éste nuestro rezentel aprisco” Castellanos redeploys the Gospel analogy in favor of the Spanish settlers and restores its use to the one it was assigned in medieval Spanish texts describing the Muslim invasion of the Iberian Peninsula, in which the Spaniards are referred to as sheep and the enemies of Christendom (Moors) as wolves.⁵⁰

After announcing the topic of the poem and establishing a clear place of enunciation, in the first canto Castellanos tightly condenses the description of several historical events that took place over a period of approximately fifteen years. The poet begins by offering a short biographical sketch of Drake as a relative of John Hawkins (Juan de Acle) and a former page to the Duchess of Feria. Then he quickly moves on to describe some of Drake’s earliest incursions into the Spanish Main, the confrontations between English and Spanish forces that took place during Drake’s expedition to circumnavigate the globe (1577-80), and the initial phase of Drake’s raid to the West Indies (1585-87). While narrating these events, Castellanos alludes to Drake’s willingness to make alliances with French pirates, Amerindians, and runaway slaves, and points out the geopolitical implications of Drake’s actions by describing the warm welcome his accomplishments had at the court of England, and the support Drake received from Queen Elizabeth I. The recurring theme of the first canto, therefore, is the ease with which Drake and his men have been able to attack Spanish ports and vessels and successfully collect sensitive intelligence information and large amounts of wealth to take back to England. Having said this, however, it is important to underscore that for

⁵⁰ One example of a similar use of this metaphor occurs in Alfonso X’s *Estoria de España*.

Castellanos Drake's success is not due to an inherent superiority of the English over the Spaniards, but to widespread administrative flaws that have boosted the confidence of individuals like Drake and have allowed heavily armed vessels to take advantage of the element of surprise and launch attacks when and where the Spaniards least expected it. Among those preventable flaws Castellanos includes the absence of a more reliable system of communication between Spain and the colonies and amongst the colonies themselves, the lack of forethought by local authorities, and preeminently the military incompetence of newly arrived merchants and bureaucrats.

Castellanos' assessment of Drake's success prior to attacking Cartagena is particularly revealing for at least two reasons. In the first place, it essentializes a distinction between two segments of the Spanish population living in the Indies and links the threat of piracy exclusively with one those segments. As such, Castellanos' assessment reveals that the group who claims ownership over the New World and who asserts itself through the metaphor "éste nuestro rezentel aprisco," does not include all Spanish colonists in America indiscriminately, and only refers to those Spaniards self-labeled as *baquianos*. The distinction between *baquianos* and *chapezones* is not immediately clear in the two opening stanzas of the poem, but it would become evident later on in the first canto when the narrative voice quotes a group of anonymous colonists from Lima who react to Drake's attack to the port of Callao by praising the heroic deeds accomplished by the first wave of colonists (in essence the discovery, exploration and conquest) and chastising the alleged misconduct and negative influence of those who had arrived more recently. Although it is not completely improbable that such a reaction ever took place, Castellanos's poem is the only contemporary account of Drake's attack to the port of Callao that includes a depiction of that incident. Consequently, it is safe to assume that what the following stanzas offer above all is a biased dramatization of the rivalries

between two segments of the Spanish population, and an opportunity for Castellanos to raise controversial political views he could not otherwise express:

Otros, [Spanish colonists in Lima] como si fuera cosa cierta,
davan confirmación a la sospecha,
diciendo: “Muchos saven ya la puerta
que para sus intentos aprovecha;
y, al fin, vienen a tierra descubierta,
a mesa puesta y a la cosa hecha;
no vienen a buscar tierras no vistas,
ni las penalidades de conquistas.

El áspero camino hallan hecho,
a quien cumple que vele, descuidado,
con poco riesgo principal provecho
y sin que pueda serles perturbado,
pues todos duermen con quieto pecho
y roncan sobre el uno y otro lado,
pensando que no hay quien mueva guerra,
sino flacos indios de la tierra.

Ya hallan blandos los trabajos duros,
los indios más soberbios, abatidos;
pólvora traen, trahen pasamuros,
vienen de municiones proveídos;
nosotros, no con cercas ni con muros,
sino de todo desapercibidos,
pocos que sepan militar officio
por carecer del uso y exercicio. (*Discurso 32*)

In his 1921 edition of the *Discurso del Capitán Francisco Draque* Angel González Palencia noted that the negative appraisal of Spanish residents of Lima expressed in lines such as “pocos que sepan militar officio / por carecer del uso y exercicio” is in stark contrast with the views expressed by Rodrigo de Castro, Cardinal of Seville, who wrote a letter to the President of the Council of the Indies regarding the threat of pirate attacks on South America and stated that the Spanish colonists from Lima were among the most disciplined and experienced soldiers in entire the world (LXXXV). After pointing out the contrast between the views expressed in Castellanos’ poem and the

opinion of Cardinal Rodrigo de Castro, nonetheless, González Palencia did not pursue his analysis further. Nina Gerassi-Navarro, on the other hand, cites some of the verses included in the diatribe launched by the anonymous colonists against chapetones and argues that the lust of “merchants, letrados, and notary publics” is a “recurring theme” in the poem and “reflects Castellanos’ moral critique” (41):

Todos los usos son de mercaderes,
letrados, scrivanos, negociantes,
convites y lascivias de mugeres,
exercicios de lánguidos amantes;
y para los presentes menesteres,
diferentes de los que fueron antes,
de manera que las personas todas,
o los más, son de fiestas y de bodas.

Falta prevención, falta consejo,
falta a todas partes las tutelas,
y la comodidad y el aparejo
suelen al enemigo ser espuelas;
si destas cosas trata el sabio viejo,
piensan los ignorantes ser novelas,
y el daño hecho, su respuesta para
en dezir a los otros “quién pensara”.

Mas el governador sabio y entero
a todas partes según Argos vea,
que bien hará si caso venidero
con ojos de prudencia lo tantea,
adivinando cierto paradero
de lo que puede ser antes que sea,
pues anticipación en coyumptura
no da mucho lugar a desventura.

Sea, pues, por ingleses o por Francia,
o por otras naciones extranjeras,
otro cuydado y otra vigilancia
requieren estos puertos y fronteras;
y aquellos que del Rey tienen ganancia
tomen estos negocios más de veras:
no sea todo rehenchir el xeme
y lo demás siquiera que se queme.

Por avenidas grandes o tormenta
se mudan las carreras de los ríos,
y por hazer de cosas poca cuenta
se vienen a perder los señoríos.
lo que por indios se nos representa
conozco ser notables desvaríos;
más endemoniados hechizeros
parece que nos dan malos agüeros. (*Discurso* 32-34)⁵¹

In my opinion, however, the reference to lust in verses like “convites y lascivias de mujeres, / ejercicios de lánguidos amantes;” is not necessarily a moral condemnation of lust per se, but simply part of Castellanos’ strategy to delineate sharp differences between baquianos and chapetones in order to argue that chapetones are militarily inept and incapable of deterring the English. After all, in the other instances when Castellanos mentions lust in the poem he does not examine it in abstract terms or as a matter of principle, but specifically indicates that lust is one among many traits that demonstrate the inability of those who have arrived recently to run and defend the colonies. In addition, in regards to references concerning lust in Castellanos’ writings, Giovanni Meo Zilio points out that in several instances the author:

se detiene complaciente y hasta complacido en la descripción naturalística de las gracias de las indias y de los juegos, mucho menos que castos, que los españoles entablan con ellas. Mas aun, en tales casos, el tono poético de la narración suele elevarse, lo cual sugiere tratarse de un tema que de por si, lejos de ser objeto de rechazo, de censura por parte del afable cura tunjano, es vivido inmediatamente

⁵¹ Although many of the events narrated in this canto can be traced back to actual historical events, there are several scenes for which there is no corroborating historical evidence and they appear to be the product of anecdote or reformulations of epic topoi. In addition to the verses cited above, those sections include a description of Drake serving as a witness and signing legal documents while in Panama; the prophesy of a future attack made by an Amerindian a year prior to Drake’s arrival; Drake’s overt challenge of Spanish sovereignty over the New World based on Papal Bulls; and the episode of a courageous woman who stood up in defense of the port of Callao while most colonists cowardly ran away to Lima.

como bien acepto, como materia legítima y gratamente susceptible de poetizarse.
(154)

Hence, given that Castellanos places the group of anonymous colonists voicing their concerns in front of the house of Viceroy Francisco Toledo and that this section of the poem appears immediately before the description of how the viceroy responded to Drake's attack, it is clear that Castellanos' main concern is not necessarily lust (sexual desire), but the examination of reasons why kingdoms such as the viceroyalty of Perú could be lost to the enemies of Spain (colonial desire), and particularly the practical issue of who are the individuals that deserve to be appointed to administer the colonies. It is precisely these two issues to which lines like "y aquellos que del Rey tienen ganancia / tomen estos negocios más de veras" and "y por hacer de cosas poca cuenta / se vienen a perder los señoríos" allude.

Once we establish that Castellanos is more concerned with politics than with morals, it is easier to recognize the steps that he takes to outline a political doctrine in favor of baquianos by offering a skewed and oversimplified assessment of the current administrative situation of the colonies. The complaint expressed by the anonymous group of colonists, for example, starts by aligning baquianos with hard work, caution, abnegation, wisdom, and military experience, while simultaneously aligning newly arrived colonists with lust, lack of military experience, laziness, sleep, and meaningless celebrations. After establishing this contrast, the group of colonists go on to suggest that administrative virtues like caution, prudence and foresight are lacking in the current administration (*falta prevención, falta consejo, / falta a todas partes las tutelas*"); and their plea finally reaches its peak by describing the ideal colonial administrator as Argos

Panopte, a mythical creature that can stay alert at all times thanks to having one hundred eyes.

Even though in texts like Book I of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* Juno assigns Argus Panopte the role of guardian of Jupiter's lust, I would argue that by explicitly stating that "otro cuidado y otra vigilancia / requieren estos puertos y fronteras;" Castellanos is clearly stripping the reference of its most immediate sexual connotations and displacing it from the context of sexual desire to colonial desire in order to suggest that the ideal colonial administrator should guard constantly, not the lust of colonists, but internal and external military threats. In this sense Castellanos' use of the reference to Argos Panopte is quite different from the way Cervantes employs a reference to the same mythical creature in his short story "El celoso extremeño," in which the comparison of the protagonist (Carrizales) with Argos Panopte has clear sexual references. Paradoxically, while recasting the New World in the role of Io and Hispania as the jealous Juno, there are no characters in the poem that display the administrative zeal and the panoptic vision required to assume the role of Argus Panopte, with the exception of Castellanos himself (both as narrator and a protagonist of the events). When read from this perspective, therefore, the allusion to Argos Panopte allows the narrator to imbue his text with the impermanence that characterizes Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, while also serving a self-referential purpose that establishes Castellanos himself and the group that he represents (baquianos) as the outlets that truly express Spanish colonial desire.

A second conclusion we can draw from Castellanos' assessment of Drake's success prior to attacking Cartagena is that for Castellanos Drake's aggressions, and particularly the most recent ones committed during the circumnavigation of the world (1577 – 1580), are not necessarily side effects of the personal ambition and greed of a band of outlaws, but serious provocations that justified Spain's armed retaliation against

England. In this sense, the portrait of Drake that emerges by the end of the first canto would come closer to that of a privateer authorized by a sovereign nation to attack enemy property during a time of war, than that of a sea-robber trying to make a profit for personal reasons and recognizing no allegiance to any monarch. Castellanos' point of view surfaces clearly in his description of Drake's assault on the ship *Nuestra Señora de la Concepción* off the coast of the viceroyalty of Perú in March 1579. At the time of this attack Drake's flagship was one of the most heavily armed vessels in the Pacific Ocean, while *Nuestra Señora de la Concepción* was a merchant ship on her way to Panama and laden with silver and gold. In Castellanos' poem Drake is favorably depicted as an alert and experienced captain ("buen capitán, vivo y esperto") sailing quickly to reach the best suited place to engage the Spanish vessel in battle. The narrator compares the swift movements of Drake's ship to those of a dolphin, and points out to readers that sailors on the Spanish side were slow to react even after they realized a foreign vessel was approaching, and that the Spanish ship had no weapons or soldiers to defend itself. This last piece of information is particularly useful to grasp Castellanos's perspective because, unlike Lope de Vega in *La Dragontea* (1598), Castellanos does not include it to condemn Drake for attacking an unarmed ship, but to reiterate the point that at least some of the blame should rest on the Spanish side for not taking any precautions.

The main difference between Castellanos' poetic version and the accounts offered by actual witness, on the other hand, is that through descriptions like the ones mentioned above and several explicit references to a prevalent state of war, Castellanos is able to transform the predatory nature of Drake's attack into a pseudo-naval battle, which is over before it begins owing to the inadequacy of the Spaniards to defend their cargo, and in which the actions of the British sailors are partially validated inasmuch as they appear motivated by patriotism and honor. Notice, for example, that in Castellanos' version

Drake' ship approaches the Spanish vessel defiantly displaying the flag and the military emblems of England ("flámulas, gallardetes y vanderas / que por diversas partes van pendientes"). Even the lowest members of Drake's crew, whose energy and daring is exalted by Castellanos by referring to them as "jóvenes loçanos," seem to be aware of the nationalistic scope of their actions as they demand Spaniards to strike sail in the name of England: "Amayna, amayna, por Inglaterra." This particular verse comes straight out of eye-witness accounts; yet what is unique to Castellanos' version is the suppression of the response from the Spanish sailors and the magnification of their passiveness and willingness to surrender:

Los nuestros no se pasan a contienda
antes están turbados y sin bríos"
como faltase, pues, quien lo defienda,
ocupan los contrarios el nabío;
pide Francisco Draque su hazienda
diziendo: "Dame luego lo que es mío";
porque llevar pillage quien más puede
el derecho de guerra lo concede. (*Discurso* 41)

In the second half of this stanza, Drake's and the narrator's voices' come into unison to explain that as the winner of the battle Drake is entitled to seizing the ship's cargo based on the right of the victor to take possession of the lawful spoils of war, thus clarifying how the word "pillage" is being used in this section of the poem. In Castellanos' description of the aftermath of the assault, moreover, Drake goes on to situate the circumstances of this attack in the larger context of confrontations between Spain and rival European nations by stating that he has taken possession of Nuestra Señora de la Concepción's cargo as retaliation for what Phillip II (through his representatives) had taken from John Hawkins at the port of San Juan de Ulúa back in 1568, at a time when Spain and England were supposedly not at war. In addition, Drake

challenges the legitimacy of Spain's right over the New World based on the bulls of donation issued by Pope Alexander VI in 1493:

Bien veis como venimos gran distancia
con gran riesgo, buscando vuestros dones,
de los quales tenéis gran abundancia
sin los poder gozar otras naçiones.
Quépanos parte, pues, de la ganancia.
y no perdamos estas ocasiones,
que también son acá hijos de Eva
para gozar lo que esta tierra lleva.

Pues que tenéis tan buen entendimiento
hace[d] me desta duda satisfecho:
¿Adán mandó por algún testamento
a solos Hespañoles el provecho?
la cláusula mostrad y ordenamiento;
haré rrenunciación de mi derecho,
porque de lo contrario desto fuere
avrá de llevar más quien más pudiere. (*Discurso 42*)

My point then is that, although it is true that Castellanos qualifies Drake's assessments by commenting that Drake is a cocksure and exceedingly arrogant individual, it is also true that nowhere in this section or in any other section of the poem would Castellanos actually refute Drake's line of reasoning. Castellanos certainly refers to Drake as a pirate, a corsair, a thief, and a tyrant, but he also shows a tremendous admiration for the boldness of Drake's actions, and repeatedly comes close to endorsing at least some of those actions by suggesting that Drake acted as any astute and diligent commander should do when carrying out a mission, whereas Spanish colonists and sailors acted as if they had forgotten they were at war. Accordingly, as narrator, Castellanos concedes the validity of Drake's arguments by indicating that the wealth taken by the Drake could be spent more wisely waging war against him, and therefore against England:

Y hasta oy, con ser bien importuna

esta plaga por índicas regiones,
pareçe que se mide la fortuna
siempre con sus dañadas intenciones,
sin le poder dañar fuerça ninguna
de todos los opuestos trompiçones
y, al fin, él [Drake] saca de remota tierra
caudal con que le pueda hazer la guerra. (*Discurso* 45)

Moreover, the sporadic references to Drake's boastfulness are outweighed by entire sections in which Castellanos magnifies Drake's stature and foreshadows the type of attacks Drake will conduct against Spanish possessions in the future.

THE SECOND CANTO

The second canto deals with the first half of Francis Drake's expedition to the West Indies, starting with brief references to the English incursions in Bayona (Galicia), the Canary Islands, and the Cape Verde Islands, and culminating with a detailed description of the devastating effects of Drake's attack on Hispaniola. In accord with the criticism of colonial administrators postulated in the first canto, Castellanos stresses the vulnerability of the port of Santo Domingo owing to the lack of ammunition, fortifications, and properly trained soldiers, and specifically criticizes the performance of Cristóbal de Ovalle, president of the Real Audiencia, who allegedly received news of the imminent attack but ignored the warning and imprisoned a Portuguese man who had sailed from São Tiago to Hispaniola to alert the residents. Unlike the first canto, however, in the second canto Castellanos places far greater emphasis on the religious aspects of the antagonism between Spain and England, and gives free rein to demonizing Drake and his troops. The narrator uses numerous epithets to convey the godless and evil nature of the

enemies⁵² and vehemently condemns Martin Luther for leading an entire nation (England) to the depths of hell:

Llora de compasión el pecho tierno
y el ánima compuesta y alumbrada,
de ver tan sin cathólico gobierno
esta ciega nación desventurada, [England]
guiados al profundo del infierno
por una bestia falsa desalmada:
aquel gran charlatán y mostro fiero
que fué Martín Luder o mal Lutero. (*Discurso* 93)

Castellanos' use of the discourse of demonology against the English adversaries adds a new layer to the already complex characterization of Drake, since in the previous canto Castellanos had dismissed as unfounded the rumor that Drake's success was due to the fact that he was hosting some sort of demon. In this canto, however, the ubiquitous state of conflict underlying Castellanos' narrative acquires the character of a religious war against a demonic enemy, and the main differences between the English and Spaniards are predicated on their adherence or disdain for the Catholic faith.

A second rhetorical move that allows Castellanos to increase the urgency of Drake's threat and advance his criticism of newer colonists and bureaucrats is the use of biblical references. In effect, in the second canto the argumentative weight of Castellanos' poetic discourse is carried by a biblical allusion which likens the circumstances surrounding the attack on Santo Domingo to God's punitive destruction of the city of Nineveh in the book of Jonah from the Old Testament. Thus, the violence inflicted by the English upon the Spaniards appears as a punishment allowed by God for the iniquities committed by the colonists, and an opportunity for devout Christians to gain

⁵² "profanos" (59), "gentes malas" (70), "ejército maligno" (73), "ministros del infierno" (78), "bestias fieras" (79), "basiliscos fieros" (81), "luteranos infernales" (85), "miembros del demonio" (86), "pérfida nación, ciega maligna" (88), "protervas gentes", "abominables delinquentes", "sacrilegos sin Dios", "canalla vil" (90), "capitán cruel", "insensato", "ladrón traidor, herege, furibundo" (92), "hijo de perdición y hombre perdido", "ciega nación desventurada", "contagiosa pestilencia" (93), "furiosísima demencia", "pérfida canalla" (95), "gente fementida" (97), "ladrón herege fementido" (102).

salvation.⁵³ Concomitantly, the narrator introduces the warning delivered by the Portuguese messenger to local authorities in the form of a prophetic announcement that condemns ‘vices’ similar to those listed in the complaint launched by local baquianos after Drake’s attack on the port of Callao seven years earlier as faults worthy of divine punishment:

!O corazones ya poco robustos!
¡O presumpción de más que flaco buelo!
¿Pensais que sois tan sanctos y tan justos
que no merezcáis más duro flagelo?
todos tienen que ser lascivos gustos
sin temer punición del alto cielo;
saraos an de ser todos y fiestas,
requiebros y pisadas deshonestas.

“Ya que huis los ciliçinos sacos,
ásperas disciplinas con ayunos,
no se huyan los jazerinos jacos,
alístense los tiros importunos;
animen los más fuertes a los flacos,
huya la cobardía y el desmayo
y dense çevos al ardiente rayo.

“Todas an de ser galas y coronas,
gorras con cavos y con cresta luenga,
y no conoceréis que viene Jonás
con el aviso de fiel arenga
para que repareis vuestras personas,
antes que el golpe del castigo venga;
tened, pues el aviso no os despierta,
la subversión de Nínive por cierta.

“Pues no lo recibís en vuestra tierra
ni quereis admitir su diligencia,
otro Jonás vendrá de Ingalaterra,
ministro desta dura pestilencia,
intérprete de la cruenta guerra;
quando hagais forçosa penitencia,
este predicará con voz horrenda

⁵³ The words used by Castellanos are ‘flagelo’, ‘punición’, ‘castigo’.

cosa que los oydos os ofenda. (*Discurso* 62-3)

Incidentally, in his *Noticias Historiales de las Conquistas de Tierra Firme en las Indias Occidentales* (1625) Fray Pedro Simón (1574-1628) also included a description of Drake's 1586 attack on Santo Domingo and used a reference to the second book of Maccabees to argue that the assault had been God's punishment against his chosen people for straying from the righteous path.⁵⁴ However, Fray Pedro Simón's version shifts the emphasis of Castellanos' narrative by spreading out the blame among all Spaniards who had been residents of Hispaniola, and by singling out as their greatest sin, not necessarily lust, laziness, lack of prudence and lack of military competence, but the utter decimation of the local indigenous population. According to Fray Pedro Simón, all that was lost or destroyed during the attack had been violently taken from the Indians by the ancestors of the current residents, and as such Drake's assault had been God's judgment on their descendants (270).

It is also important to point out that in the second canto Francis Drake steps up to the role of general and commander of a large military operation and personally supervises the execution of an attack that is carried out with efficiency and precision. The night before the assault Drake gathers his troops and delivers a speech outlining the strategy for a simultaneous naval and ground attack, and subsequently orders eight hundred of his men to disembark two leagues north of Santo Domingo and start advancing slowly towards the city. Drake's speech deserves particular attention, not only because it establishes a sense of camaraderie, order, and readiness lacking in the Spanish counterpart but also because through his speech Drake emerges as a confident and perceptive commander who can balance the concern for the troops under his command

⁵⁴ Fray Pedro Simón dedicated the entire sixth *Noticia Historial* to Francis Drake's pursues in the New World. See *Noticias Historiales*. Bogotá: Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 1953. Volumes 7th and 8th. See also G. Jenner, "A Spanish Account of Drake's Voyages" in *The English Historical Review*. Vol. 16, No. 61. (Jan 1901).

with the resolve to deal with practical issues such as desertion. Moreover, given the stark discrepancy between the narrator's adamant denunciation of the English as demonic heretics ("demonios luteranos") and the more favorable traits that emerge from the words attributed to Drake, it is equally pertinent to highlight the fact that there are several key issues mentioned in Drake's speech that erase any sense of foreignness from his words and reconcile Drake's point of view with that of the narrator. For example, at a time when Santo Domingo's economic and administrative preeminence among Spanish colonies had eroded, both Drake and Castellanos exaggerate the financial rewards of the attack and share the view that Santo Domingo still constituted the principal seat of Spanish government in the New World: "la tierra destas partes fundamento" according to Drake (70), and "la matriz del indio suelo" according to Castellanos (97). In addition, Drake, like Castellanos, shows disdain for individuals profiting from commerce and assures his followers of an easy victory, taking for granted that the residents of Santo Domingo were mostly merchants with little or no military experience:

No receleis belígeros poderes
en aquestos marítimos lugares,
porque todos los más son mercaderes,
agenos de los usos militares,
y en tales casos son sus paresceres
buscar las acogidas singulares;
los demás, como mal aperçebidos,
o serán luego muertos o rendidos. (*Discurso 72*)

In short, the speech delivered by Drake replaces the traditional gathering of furies commonly described in the epic tradition with an exaltation of martial values and military life that contributes to the discrediting of the current residents of Santo Domingo. Furthermore, the overlapping between Drake's and Castellanos' perspectives also occurs in the opposite direction when the narrator, like a ventriloquist repeating the words previously uttered by his own dummy, expresses slightly modified versions of the same

arguments previously uttered by Drake. An example of this occurs when Castellanos points out to readers that the residents of Santo Domingo were not prepared to defend what was in essence a frontier territory: “faltavan las industrias y maneras / que se suelen tener en las fronteras,” and subsequently issues an argument similar to the one pronounced by Drake after his attack to the ship Nuestra Señora de la Concepción. However, instead of asking for a deed signed by Adam that would guarantee Spain’s right to the New World, Castellanos alludes to a deed signed by God that would guarantee that Spain would never be attacked by any of its enemies:

De guerra la ciudad muy olvidada,
quantos en ella son, mal advertidos,
como si para ser asegurada
de casos en el mundo subçedidos,
tuvieran una cédula firmada
de Dios para no ser jamás rompidos;
como quiera que en tierras como estas
siempre deven estar deffensas prestas. (*Discurso* 65)

This stanza not only reveals a deep-seated siege mentality on the part of Castellanos, but also serves the rhetorical function of postulating the need of a warrior class that would be willing to defend any threat to Spanish sovereignty. Like Drake’s reformulation of Francis I “Adam’s will” argument, the narrator’s complaint takes for granted that Spain’s primacy over the New World would be challenged, and that as such sovereignty over the colonies had to be anchored on military strength and decisive military victories.

Be that as it may, when the English ground forces reach the outskirts of Santo Domingo, their unexpected presence immediately starts causing pandemonium. The widespread reaction among local residents ranges from pusillanimity to consternation, and single, married, widowed and nuns rush to abandon the city leaving their belongings behind. There is no sustained opposition to the attack and even though a small group of

men (“nobles caballeros”), whose names are individually recorded by Castellanos, makes an effort to face the incoming forces, the inadequacy of their weapons (“lanças y adargas”) is no match for the strength of the English fire power. As a result, Drake’s troops sweep through the city like a violent storm, leveling buildings, burning ships, pillaging everything in their path, and placing the English flag at the top of the cathedral. The narrator augments the dramatic efficacy of his descriptions by limiting the number of markers that indicate the progression of time, thus creating the impression that several of the events narrated take place at the same time. In addition, Castellanos describes with vivid details how, while ransacking and destroying a monastery, the English troops capture, ridicule and hang two elderly Dominican friars and later proceed to desecrate religious statues and paintings. Although the specific names of the friars are not mentioned, the narrator illustrates how the friars patiently endure the abuses committed against them, and march willingly to their deaths, gaining strength and inspiration from the example of Christian martyrs and saints who had died under similar circumstances.

A scene describing the execution of two Dominican friars also appears in two English sources dealing with Drake’s attack on Santo Domingo, albeit not staging it as an episode of Christian martyrdom, nor depicting the behavior of the English as acts of random and unnecessary violence, but as retaliation against Spaniards for murdering a black boy who was serving as messenger for Drake.⁵⁵ Irene Wright has argued, however, that the story describing the execution of the two friars is apocryphal, given that the documents sent to Spain by local authorities after the attack make no mention of any such incident (xxxvii). I concur with her assessment and propose that, inasmuch as in Castellanos’ poem the episode of the murder of the two Dominican friars aims to depict the English, particularly Drake, as utterly diabolical, Castellanos’ version is a poetic

⁵⁵ See “A summary and True Discourse of Sir Frances Drakes West Indian Voyage” and “The *Primrose* Journal” in *Sir Francis Drake’s West Indian Voyage*. London: The Hakluyt Society, 1981.

reformulation of an episode involving Lope de Aguirre which appears in Pedro de Aguado's *Recopilación Historial*.⁵⁶ In chapter X of his book, Aguado narrates how Lope de Aguirre murdered two Dominican friars who, like the friars that appear in Castellanos' poem, also accepted their death willingly and went on to become martyrs. Within Castellanos' poetic discourse, nevertheless, the scene serves a pivotal purpose because it is out of empathy for the suffering of the friars and outrage for the desecration of religious images that the narrator feels compelled to insert himself in the middle of the action and to launch his sternest condemnation of the English:

!O fiera crueldad, furor insano,
nefando crimen, infernal motivo!
la pluma se me cae de la mano
con un frío temblor cuando lo escribo.
Aquel Juez, inmenso, soberano,
llueva sobre vosotros fuego bivo,
y a todos os abraze y os consuma
sin que quede de vos hueso ni pluma. (*Discurso* 91)

In this stanza the narrator is able to simultaneously call attention to the abhorrent nature of the acts he is describing and to his own emotional distress through the alliteration of the phoneme /f/ in words like: "fiera," "furor," "nefando," and "infernal" which are distributed across four hemistiches in the first two verses. Accordingly, the simultaneity evoked through alliteration and the exclusion of any verbs from the same two verses foster the impression of direct approximation to the action and heighten the sense that events are actually taking place as they unfold across the page. By the same token, the narrator synchronizes further the time and place of the attack with the time and place of narration by introducing a meta-textual reference whose two verbs are both conjugated in the present indicative: "la pluma se me cae de la mano / con un frío temblor

⁵⁶ Pedro de Aguado was the first historian of Nueva Granada but his writings were never published during his lifetime. In the article "Odyssey of a Sixteenth Century Document – Fray Pedro de Aguado's "Recopilación Historial" Orlando Fals-Borda traces Aguado's failed attempt to publish his works from 1576 to 1582. See *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 35 No. 2 (May 1955): 203 – 220.

cuando lo escribo.” Even though Castellanos did not witness the events and he wrote his poem months after Drake had attacked Santo Domingo, these strategies allow him to establish a concrete presence within his own narrative and to delineate a subject position whose piety and fervor matches the sacrifice made by the two Dominican friars. In effect, the correspondence between the scene describing the friars’ execution and the scene describing the narrator’s reaction is also manifested in the fact that each scene discloses the reverse side of the same economy of salvation. After all, the friars’ expectations for heavenly reward: “Al coro celestial ambos anhelan / dó rreyna la bondad que ellos estiman” (90) go hand in hand with the narrators’ expectations for heavenly vengeance, and the same deity that privileges and rewards the conduct of the friars is summoned by the narrator to annihilate the enemies of the Spaniards. Moreover, the same correspondence is succinctly expressed with the oxymoron “llueva sobre vosotros fuego vivo” which calls for a rain of fire to descend upon the English as the souls of the two friars ascend onto heaven. However, the main difference between the two responses described in this section of the poem is that while the pious passiveness of the friars sublimates the violence inflicted by the English into a form of religious mysticism, the narrator’s angered diatribe appears as the proper outlet for the expression of the frustration of Spaniards in dealing with Drake and as a call that summons them to take action.

Finally, after 31 days of occupation and the payment of a ransom, the narrator closes the second canto describing the untimely arrival of a judge sent from Spain to conduct an inquiry about the attack and assign responsibility to the persons responsible for the losses. In addition, the narrator predicts that the attack on Cartagena will replicate the one in Santo Domingo:

Dexo, pues, esta gente con su llanto

de restaurarse *penitus* a gena,
y quiero ya contaros otro tanto
de los de la ciudad de Cartagena,
donde veréis en el futuro canto
pusilanimidad no menos llena;
y haremos principio de jornada
desde este Nuevo Reino de Granada. (Discurso 102)

I have cited this stanza not only because it discloses Castellanos' interpretation of what had taken place in Cartagena as early as the end of the second canto ("donde veréis en el futuro canto / pusilanimidad no menos llena"), but also because from a structural point of view it provides a rather artificial connection between the events narrated in the first two cantos and the events Castellanos will narrate in the third. In effect, within the same stanza Castellanos practically contradicts himself by first stating his anxiety to start describing the attack on Cartagena ("y quiero ya contaros otro tanto / de los de la ciudad de Cartagena"), and then switching altogether the direction of his poetic discourse to clarify that he will do so by first talking about Nueva Granada ("y haremos principio de jornada / desde este Nuevo Reino de Granada"). As it turns out, the events Castellanos will narrate in the third canto of the poem had little or no bearing at all on the actual fall of Cartagena, and readers interested on that event could go on to the fourth and the fifth cantos without missing anything of substance. Indeed, one could argue that the only concrete connection between the third canto and the events narrated in the rest of the poem is that it provides several alibis as to why the residents from Nueva Granada did not mobilize more promptly to assist in the defense of Cartagena. Ironically, it would be in his depiction of how local colonists reacted (or not) to the news of an imminent English attack, that Castellanos would construct the poem's locus of enunciation (Nueva Granada) as a stronghold of Spanish military prowess and repository of the values that he claims are absent from the rest of the colonies. Accordingly, it is precisely in the third

canto where Castellanos articulates more forcefully a foundational myth that lionizes baquianos in general and the encomendero class from Nueva Granada in particular.

THE THIRD CANTO

There are three salient and intimately connected changes that take place in the third canto. First of all, Castellanos turns his attention, and that of the readers, to the internal situation of Nueva Granada proper, an area that was approximately three hundred miles away from Cartagena, and was never the target of Drake's attacks in this or any other expedition.⁵⁷ Secondly, the geographical displacement that allows Castellanos to bypass Cartagena is accompanied by the reorganization of the temporal parameters of the narrative sequence. Thus, if up until that point the main action of the poem has advanced diachronically according to the progression of Drake's itinerary, in the third canto the narrator focuses synchronically in the events that unraveled during the short span of time that elapsed between Drake's attack on Santo Domingo and the fall of Cartagena. As a result, Castellanos is able to arrange a parallel or alternative sequence of events that moves forward, not necessarily according to the moment in which the events involving Drake's attacks take place, but according to the time when information or misinformation about those events actually reaches Nueva Granada. By doing this, Castellanos is able to

⁵⁷ "El término [Nueva Granada] se comenzó a usar sólo a fines del siglo XVI y su área geográfica no incluía las regiones correspondientes a la costa atlántica, [read here Cartagena] el occidente –área entre la Cordillera Central y el Océano Pacífico- ni el Alto Magdalena. En la época que nos ocupa (siglos XVI y XVII) había en el territorio que hoy es Colombia cuatro jurisdicciones independientes: La gobernación de Santa Marta (concedida inicialmente a Rodrigo de Bastidas) y comprendía desde el río Magdalena al Cabo de la Vela; la Gobernación de Cartagena (asignada inicialmente a Pedro de Hereida) comprendía desde el río Magdalena hasta el río Atrato; el Nuevo Reino de Granada que corresponde a la región central conquistada por Gonzalo Jiménez de Quesada; y la gobernación de Popayán (cuya capital Popayán fundó Sebastián de Belalcázar)." See Álvaro Felíz Bolaños *Barbarie y canibalismo en la retórica colonial: los indios Pijaos de Fray Pedro Simón*. Bogotá: Cerec, 1994.

take issue with the limitations imposed by the system of communication among the concerned administrative centers, and to imbue his description of the internal situation in Nueva Granada with the sense of awe and disbelief caused by the news of the recent attack to Santo Domingo. The title of this canto (“Donde se cuenta la confusión y sospecha que causaron las preñadas nuevas...”) and the first two stanzas speak of the consternation that vague or exaggerated reports about Drake’s attack caused among the local colonists:

Ningún caso de suyo fue tan grande
de todos quantos an aconteçido
que, como por diversas bocas ande,
no se haga muy más engrandescido,
siendo cosa común que se desmande
a dezir algo mas quien no lo vido;
y ansí, por largas vías discurriendo,
los encarecimientos van creciendo.

Desta suerte, después de muchos días
que dieron la contada pesadumbre
a las mal advertidas compañías,
la fama, como tiene de costumbre,
traxo las nuevas, no se por qué vías,
al Nuevo Reyno con incertidumbre,
pero no tanta que por evidencía
de verdad no tuviesen apariencia. (*Discurso* 103-4)

However, the most important change that takes place in the third canto is that the authority of the poetic discourse tilts significantly from the narration of recent historical events to the first hand account of a presumably privileged witness. In other words, since Castellanos is no longer narrating what has happened somewhere else (i.e. Panama, the port of Callao, Lima, Santo Domingo or Cartagena) in the third canto he emerges not simply as narrator but as an actual participant of the events that unraveled in Santa Fé de Bogotá and Tunja, the two administrative centers of Nueva Granada. The change from narrating recent history to providing a witness account is nowhere more evident than in

the synecdoche through which the transcription of a letter written by Castellanos occupies the center piece of the third canto (and of the entire poem) and speaks for him.

The textual authority Castellanos gains in the third canto is so evident that one might say that in what is perhaps the most dramatic section of the poem the infamous English anti-hero, Francis Drake, is literally relegated to the background of the action while the narrator himself moves to the forefront and temporarily takes over the role of protagonist. Incidentally, Castellanos places himself in the middle of the action at a junction when contradictory reports have led the local colonists to suspect that Drake's upcoming attack is not just on the port of Cartagena but upon the entire Spanish Main and to the territory of Nueva Granada proper, in particular. According to the more recent information that arrives to the cities of Santa Fé de Bogotá and Tunja, the English have sent ships around the strait of Magellan in order to conduct a simultaneous attack both on the Atlantic and the Pacific coasts, and there is an army of 20,000 English troops who have taken control of the coast north of Nueva Granada and are ready to build fortifications and to move up the mountains until they reach and destroy that 'monarchy':

Pero la mala nueva no embargante
que no salía bien de entre los dientes,
después pasó su voz tan adelante
que nacía temblar a los oyentes,
diziendo ser ejército pujante
y sobre veinte mill los combatientes;
y que, pues tanto número venía,
era por ganar esta monarchía.

Y que tenían de marinos puertos
los mas acomodados y mejores
para permanecer después de muertos
todos los españoles moradores,
y así, por los caminos descubiertos,
de lo demás adentro ser señores;
y que entraron también por el estrecho
otros del mar del sur al mismo hecho; (*Discurso* 105)

To make matters worse, the news of an English invasion have also reached the indigenous population and have raised the possibility of a general Indian uprising throughout the entire territory of Nueva Granada:

Mas con las estampidas y los truenos
que davan de tan terribles males
por este Nuevo Reino, sus terrenos
que tienen cantidad de naturales,
no se mostraban con intentos buenos,
así ladinos como los bocales;
y por vellos andar tan inquietos
no presumíamos buenos efectos. (*Discurso* 111)

It is, then, when faced with the possibility of an external and internal attack, that Castellanos assumes his role as protagonist and decides to write a letter to Judge Francisco Guillén Chaparro, president of the Real Audiencia, with suggestions as to how best to secure the territory.

Castellanos' letter to Guillén Chapparo is by no means the only letter mentioned in this canto. Before transcribing its contents at length, in effect, the narrator has built up anticipation by alluding to several other letters that either reached Nueva Granada or should have been sent there from adjacent cities. In a matter of a few stanzas Castellanos crisscrosses the (textual) territory of Nueva Granada in several directions to include references to letters sent from Spain with information about Drake's upcoming expedition: "por cartas embiadas de la corte, / del potente pirata, que venía" (104); to a letter the governor of Venezuela never sent to the Real Audiencia in Santafé de Bogotá: "pues al Audiencia no se lo escribía / el que es gobernador en Veneçuela"; to letters that should have been sent to Nueva Granada from Hispaniola by way of Cabo de la Vela: "siendo de la Hespañola tan vezinos / y siempre frecuentados los caminos" (105); to a letter sent to Antonio Joven, Regidor of Tunja, by Baltasar Soler, a resident in Venezuela (107); to a letter that arrived from the town of Mompox with information about the fall of

Cartagena: “de Mompox escribieron ser tomada / la próspera ciudad de Cartagena” (108); to a letter that should have been sent by the Governor of Cartagena: “El Gobernador Bustos no screvía, / deviendo ser su carta la primera” (110); and finally, to a detailed report sent by Lucas de Espinosa from the town of Mompox:

Estava, pues, la gente congoxosa,
tanto que ya perdía la paciencia,
hasta tanto que Lucas de Espinosa,
un receptor de la Real Audiencia,
embió relación compendiosa
de lo que colligió de cierta sicencia
de cierta gente que se recogía
a Mompox, donde entonces el bivía (*Discurso* 110)

In my view, the abundant references to all this correspondence (or to the lack thereof) and to the exasperation that spread among the local colonists due to rumors, delays, and miscommunication suggest that at least on some level Castellanos considered that Nueva Granada did not react more promptly because the neighboring administrative centers did not inform them in a more timely fashion. However, if rumors and delays lessened the impact of all this correspondence and led local colonists to extrapolate the magnitude of the threat, Castellanos suggests that at least his own letter accomplished its intended goal by commenting that Judge Guillén Chaparro responded favorably to his concerns and wrote back to him to inform him of the measures the Audiencia had already taken to secure the territory of Nueva Granada:

Vido mi carta y, aunque mal compuesta,
como sabio varón y comedido,
vino muy comedida la respuesta;
y dixo que tenía proveído
pues mandava tener su gente presta
a las justicias de qualquier partido,
haziendo lista de armas y de gente,
y que diessen avisos brevemente. (*Discurso* 125)

Given that the amicable exchange recalled in this stanza is perhaps the only instance in the poem when the perspectives and attitudes of local colonists and official representatives of the Spanish crown come together into (almost) perfect alignment, it would appear that Castellanos is suggesting that the security of the colonies would improve significantly if more administrators were as receptive as Judge Guillén Chaparro to the input offered by baquianos. Especially if we take into account that in his letter to the judge Castellanos characterizes himself as a baquiano and justifies sending his unsolicited advice with claims to his previous military experience: “pues muchas veces como baquiano / e visto pesadísimas rehiertes” (123). In this regard, it is also telling that Castellanos goes as far as explicitly declaring Nueva Granada as his new ‘patria’ (homeland):

Si para resguardarlo no ay olvido,
aqueste reyno, *por natural juro*,
a ninguno podrá ser ofendido. (*Discurso* 116)

I would argue, nonetheless, that by making metatextual references to a letter he sent to the president of the Real Audiencia and then transcribing the contents of the letter in the poem Castellanos is not only drawing attention to the performance of judge Guillén Chaparro but actually problematizing the awkward position of writers in colonial settings and the subservient relationship of writing (particularly the genre of epic poetry) to the dominant imperial ideology. In effect, by transcribing what he had written to the highest ranking official from Nueva Granada Castellanos not only reveals the specific contents on the letter but also unveils the social and political function of writing by mimicking some of its conventions.⁵⁸ By doing so, Castellanos creates a more ambiguous discourse that at the same time offers a *mise-en-scène* of those writing practices and exposes the

⁵⁸ On the topic of mimicry in colonial discourse see Homi Bhabha’s “Of Mimicry and Man: The ambivalence of Colonial Discourse”.

encomiastic function of epic poetry as nothing but narcissistic flattery. To be sure, once embedded into the discursive context of the poem the letter starts serving completely new narrative functions and its contents have to be interpreted in relation to what is expressed or silenced in the rest of the canto. In this sense, the most immediate effect of transcribing the letter is enhancing the ironic aspects of this section of the poem by inserting the letter in a context that leads readers to interpret it in a manner different to that of the first recipient.⁵⁹ To put it more succinctly, if Judge Guillén Chaparro had the chance to read the letter in the context of the poem his response would have provably been less amicable than that described by Castellanos. I shall illustrate this hypothesis by way of three separate examples.

Castellanos introduces the letter into the poetic discourse by way of recalling the initial act of writing it and confessing the apprehension he experienced for overstepping the administrative prerogatives of the Real Audiencia of Santafé de Bogotá:

Tanto que yo, debaxo buen intento,
por tener algún curso y experiencia
de quanto mal y cuánto perdimiento
suele causar la mucha negligencia,
tomé (no sin temor) atrevimiento
de dar alguna voz en el Audiencia
al que tenía vez de Presidente;
y lo que le screví, fué lo siguiente. (*Discurso* 111 italics are mine)

The disclaimer “*tomé (no sin temor) atrevimiento*” not only foregrounds the connection between politics and writing and the disparity between the original recipient of the letter (Judge Guillén Chaparro) and the implied audience of the poem (Melchor Perez de Arteaga, and possibly the members of the Council of the Indies and Philip II), but also positions Castellanos as vulnerable to the authority of Guillén Chaparro and

⁵⁹ The transcription of letters for dramatic and ironic purposes was a literary recourse widely used in the sixteenth century. For another example of its use see the exchange of letters between Don Felis and Celia in the second book of Jorge de Montemayor’s *La Diana* (1558).

cautions readers of the poem that due to such a disadvantage he might not have been at liberty to express openly any disapproval of the judge's authority. It goes without saying, therefore, that Castellanos' letter lacks the accusatory tone of the bitter tirade launched by baquianos against chapetones in the first canto or second canto, and this time he deploys his criticism instead amid a mixture of submissiveness and condescension. By the same token, in at least two instances throughout the letter Castellanos goes out of his way to maintain a conciliatory tone and to indicate that the warnings and recommendations outlined in his letter should not be interpreted as an indictment of Guillén Chaparro's leadership, but as the result of his own local pride and religious zeal:

Esto digo debaxo de buen zelo
y no porque de vos conozca falta,
pues sois de buenas partes el modelo. (*Discurso* 119)

.....

Destos avisos no reçibais pena,
ni lo tengais a mal, pues sé deziros
ser embiados con voluntad buena
y ninguno mejor para serviros. (*Discurso* 124)

Nevertheless, readers of the poem cannot avoid making note of the ambivalence of Castellanos' remarks because throughout the letter and the rest of the canto the narrator also makes repeated references which put into question Guillén Chaparro's credentials as a leader and seek to undermine his authority. In fact, the dwarfing of Guillén Chaparro's authority begins precisely in introductory remarks of the letter in which Castellanos appears to be paying lip service to the judge by apologizing in advance for not writing exclusively to praise his virtues, and subsequently pledges to make up for this lapse in an indeterminate future:

Señor doctor Chaparro: si mi rithma
en os loar cumpliera su deseo,
ninguna fuera de mayor estima,

y no hiziéramos encuentro feo;
pues si buenos mereçen alabanza,
era la buestra prinçipal empleo.

*Tiempo podrá venir de más bonança
para que, fuera destas confusiones,
paguemos con emmienda la tardança.* (*Discurso* 112 italics are mine)

The problem with choosing to defer the occasion when he will use his writing to praise the deeds and virtues of Guillén Chaparro (“Tiempo podrá venir de más bonança / para que... paguemos con enmienda la tardança”), is that Castellanos dedicates a disproportionately large section of this canto to bolster the merits and express his utmost respect and admiration for those individuals who gained initial control of the territory of Nueva Granada through sheer physical force and determination. As a matter of fact, almost the entire canto, with the exception of the introductory stanzas and the transcribed text of the letter, is devoted to this task. In this regard, it is also particularly telling that immediately before evading praising the merits of Guillén Chaparro, Castellanos had already started to praise the former conquistadors, starting with Antonio Joven, a former soldier who participated in the campaigns of conquests and was then serving as corregidor in Tunja. In the first of these stanzas Castellanos comments on the diligence displayed by Joven when preparing for the defense of Nueva Granada, and in the second Castellanos attests to the courage and prudence Joven will display if (hipotetically) he were to reach Cartagena prior to Drake’s arrival:

Antonio Joven, pues, hombre rompido,
lleno de toda buena suficiençia
de qualquiera recado reçebido,
daba prestos avisos a la Audiençia
y procuró destar aperçebido
con biva y admirable diligençia,
buscando neçesarias municiones
para las venideras ocasiones. (*Discurso* 107)

.....

Pero, caso supuesto que pudiera [Antonio Joven]
ir a los puertos antes del aprieto,
de su valor se cree que hiziera
y de su buen gobierno gran effecto;
ánimo fuerte no le falleciera
ni promptitud de capitán discreto,
sin faltar en ardidés importantes
que demandan negoçios semejantes. (*Discurso* 108)

Another way in which Castellanos undermines the authority of the current president of the Real Audiencia and enhances his own textual authority, as well as that of the baquianos, is by clarifying (not just to Guillén Chaparro but also to the readers of the poem) that his only concern is how best to protect the territory of Nueva Granada proper and discarding as impractical the option of sending troops to assist in the defense of Cartagena:

No para dar socorros [to Cartagena] digo esto
que sería notorio desvarío,
mas porque vele cada qual su puesto.

Mal pueden ir soldados por el río
con armas y bastantes alimentos,
por careçer de todo buen avío.

Otro camino llevan mis intentos
y es que del Nuevo Reino las entradas
estén con los pusibles munimentos. (*Discurso* 113)

Castellanos' clarification is necessary because it establishes that even though local colonists had temporarily assumed that the English forces were large enough to launch an attempt to invade the Spanish Main, at least Castellanos and the former conquistadors were confident that Nueva Granada could still repel their assault if the correct defensive measures were taken. By making explicit the purpose of his letter and particularly his confidence that the colonists from Nueva Granada could deter the English, therefore,

Castellanos is indicating to the readers that from a narrative and thematic point of view his letter serves as a counterpoint to the speech delivered by Drake before his assault upon Santo Domingo (and later in the fourth canto before the attack on Cartagena). As it was practiced among Renaissance writers when creating dialogues, the speech attributed to Drake and Castellanos' letter to Guillén Chaparro provide an indispensable tool for interpreting "the intentions of the protagonists as well as the significance of their deeds" (Zamora 338). Accordingly, each of these two sections of the poem addresses directly the issue of forcibly exerting colonial desire to gain or retain control of a particular territory. However, if in his speech Drake (the poem's anti-hero) makes explicit English colonial desire by typifying his attack to Hispaniola as the rape of a woman: "vais a gozar ciudad questá donzella / de todo vellicoso rompimiento" (70) in the letter Castellanos plows over Guillén Chaparro's preeminence and emerges as the true Spanish hero of the poem by taking the initiative and assuming the responsibility for asserting the local colonists desire to resist any type of intrusion. Like his counterpart, Castellanos also sexualizes the colonial space by insisting on the need to shut all the entrances where Nueva Granada could be penetrated and by detaching the vulnerability conveyed by the original metaphor he had used to refer to Nueva Granada in the exordium of the poem ("este nuestro rezentar arpisco"), for a new metaphor that attributes more martial characteristics to the same territory: "Es todo él inexpugnable muro" (116).

In my view, however, the most interesting aspect of how Castellanos diminishes the stature of Judge Guillén Chaparro is the manner in which in a section of the third canto he rewrites a central passage from Alonso de Ercilla's *La Araucana* in order to highlight the merits and the services of the men who had conquered Nueva Granada. In effect, the narration of the preparations taken by the colonists from Nueva Granada to defend their territory and assist in the defense of Cartagena provides Castellanos with

ample opportunity to re-write the ordered and meticulous description of the parade of Araucanian heroes included in Canto XXI from the second volume of *La Araucana*. Using Ercilla's catalogue of Amerindian warriors as a model to emulate is particularly convenient for Castellanos because, as Rodolfo Guzmán has pointed out, Castellanos is not interested in representing the Kingdom of Nueva Granada in the sense of *urbus*, but in the sense of *civitas*; in other words, as a human conglomerate:

Desde luego que la ciudad [or in our case the entire Kingdom of Nueva Granada] no puede representarse apelando solamente a uno de su componentes, sin embargo si se le puede representar realzando uno de ellos y esto es lo que hace Castellanos. El prolífico catalogo de capitanes, adelantados gobernadores, corregidores, religiosos, soldados, y demás personalidades destacadas que discurren a los largo de las *Elegías*, ciertamente corresponde a los temas de la ciudad entendida como *civitas*. (Guzmán 48)

Here we can recall that in Canto XXI of his poem Ercilla had offered two adjacent descriptions of the preparations taken by the Spanish and the Araucanian troops prior to the battle of Andalicán. Most of what Ercilla had to say about the Spanish side is included in the following two stanzas, which, much as Castellanos would do later in his own version, aestheticizes warfare and transforms the violent confrontations involving the events of the conquest and colonization into a sort of exciting sporting contest. I cite first Ercilla's and then Castellanos' amplification. The most important verse from Castellanos' stanzas is "y acude cada cual a su vandera" which is a reformulation of Ercilla's "cada cual acudiese a su bandera."

¿Quién pudiera pintar el gran contento,
el alborozo de una y otra parte,
el ordenado alarde, el movimiento,

el ronco estruendo del furioso Marte,
tanta bandera descogida al viento,
tanto pendón, divisa y estandarte,
trompas, clarines, voces y apellidos,
relinchos de caballos y bufidos? (*La Araucana* 21.19)

.....

Ya pues, en aquel sitio recogidos
tanto soldados, armas municiones
todos los instrumentos prevenidos,
hechas las necesarias provisiones,
fueron por igual orden repartidos
los lugares, cuarteles y escuadrones,
para que en el rebato y voz primera
cada cual acudiese a su bandera. (*La Araucana* 21.26)

.....

Estando, pues, los pechos inclinados
al bélico furor que en todos arde
llegáronse los días disputados
en que se tiene que hazer alarde;
andan unos y otros negociados,
cualquiera brevedad se haze tarde,
aquí y allí la gala reverbera
y acude cada cual a su vander.

Ya las bastardas trompas dan clamores
que mueven corazones y con ellas
suenan incitativos atambores
bolando van sulphureas centellas;
llenos están los altos miradores
de bellas damas, dueñas y doncellas;
estiéndense las séricas vanderas
y pónense por orden las hileras.

Pasan con ordenados movimientos,
a los unos y otros acudiendo
la gran solicitud de los sargentos
que las hileras yvan componiendo;
ay de los arcabuces violentos
retumbo furioso, son horrendo;
continuando salitrosas cargas
entre la selva de las picas largas. (*Discurso* 142)

Ercilla's brief and anonymous description of the excitement and anticipation that overtook the Spanish troops is followed by a more elaborate and individualized description of the parade of Araucanian warlords marching in front of Caupolicán's gaze.⁶⁰ One by one, Ercilla introduces each warrior by his name, then describes his weapons and highlights their athleticism and skills. Thus we see chieftan Pillilco, the strong Leucotón, the arrogant Rengo, the robust Tulcomara, the conceited Caniotaro and the tancamavidas, the young Millalermo, the proud Mareande, Lepomande, Lemolemo, Gualemo, Talcahuano, Tomé, Andalicán, the young Orompello, Elicura, the illustrious and wise Ainavillo, Cayocupil, Purén, Lincoya, Peycaví, the grave and saddened Caniomangue, and the proud Tucapel.

As we can imagine, Castellanos does not offer a parade of Indian heroes; quite the contrary, as I will show later, Castellanos' appropriation of Ercilla is at least partially designed to symbolically erase the indigenous legacy and presence from Nueva Granada. However, there are enough correspondences between the two passages for the reader to conclude that Castellanos had chosen Ercilla's text as the privileged subtext to be emulated. In fact, what Castellanos does is to take some of the essential elements present in Ercilla's descriptions and disseminate or expand them, first to create a catalogue of heroic conquistadors, and then to describe an ostentatious display of military prowess that takes place simultaneously in all the towns that constitute the kingdom of Nueva Granda. As such, Castellanos' appropriation of the parade of Araucanian heroes from Canto XXI of *La Araucana* is not the type of necromantic imitation (to use Thomas Greene's terminology) that wants the previous text to speak and to make it relevant in the present; but instead an imitation that aims to allude to the precedent with enough force in order to

⁶⁰ For Silvestre de Balboa's appropriation of the same passage in his *Espejo de paciencia* (1608), see Raul Marrero-Fente *Epic, Empire, and Community in the Atlantic World*. Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 2008. 38-47.

silence it. Here I cite the catalogue of troops from Santa Fé de Bogotá for further analysis:

En el interin pues, que de los mares
venían relaciones resolutas,
el Audiencia por todos los lugares
embió provisiones y conductas,
dadas a las personas singulares
en estos ministerios bien instructas;
y en cumplimiento destes mandamientos
alféreces nombraron y sargentos.

El General (en Santa Fee) ser quiso
aquél por quien entonces se regía
aqueste Nuevo Reino donde piso,
que el cargo justamente merescía,
pues suplican las letras y el aviso
el uso que de guerra no tenía;
y deste cargo se quedó vazío
el capitán Antonio de Berrío.

.....

Por Maese de Campo fue nombrado
illustre cavallero de contía:
este fue don Francisco Maldonado,
y el mismo capitán de Infantería;
fue Juan de Villanueva collocado
en otra principal capitanía,
y sargento mayor, por consiguiente,
el mismo, por ser hombre sufficiente.

También fue capitán Juan de Montalvo,
para tal ocasión varón entero,
honrado viejo, venerable calvo
y de descubridores el primero,
que ya con muy poquitos queda salvo
del remate fatal y postrimero;
sobróle merecer, falto ventura
para poder tener la vida más segura.

Fue capitán Luis de Colmenrares
que de virtudes es rica colemena;

también fue capitán Pero Suárez,
digo Pero Suárez de Villena;
de los ginetes hombres singulares
de quien no se me dio la copia llena,
Lope de Céspedes, como quien era,
los gobernó debaxo su vandra.

Colmenares y él son sucesores
y hijos de quien es cosa notoria
ser entre todos los descubridores
los que no merecieron menor gloria,
sigún que manifiestan mis sudores
en diferentes partes de mi Historia
no fenecida, nada más la mano puesta
para decir después lo que me resta.

Fueron allí de bien puestos infantes
ciento y noventa y cuatro los piqueros
y, diestros para trances semejantes,
hasta ciento cuarenta arcabuceros;
treinta con alabardas y montantes,
ciento y algunos mas los rodeleros,
los ginetes pasaron de sesenta
hombres de bien para cualquier afrenta.

Fueron escuadras breves y summarias,
aunque de lista muchos mas avía,
no que tuviesen opiniones varias
pues cada qual salir apetescia;
mas faltaron las armas necesarias
según a tal intento convenía
y no se dio lugar a que saliesse
el que de buenas armas careciese. (*Discurso* 128-130)

There are several noteworthy elements in these stanzas. First of all, Castellanos is clearly interested in transmitting a sense of order and hierarchy. This is palpable by his choosing to start the catalogue with the description of the organization of the militias in the city of Santa Fé, which was the seat of the Real Audiencia, before moving to describe what happened in places like Tunja, Vélez, Pamplona, Mérida, San Cristóbal, and Muso. Similarly, a sense of hierarchy can also be perceived in the catalogue starting with the

highest military commander and then advancing to officers of lower rank: “General,” “Maese de campo,” “capitanes,” “jinetes,” “piqueros,” “arcabuzeros,” “rodeleros,” and so forth, until finally ending his description with references to the specific military formation: “esquadras breves y summarias.” In my view, the hierarchical arrangement of the catalogue proves particularly useful for Castellanos inasmuch as it allows him to convey a sense of discipline, compliance, and order in relation with a territory that for the most part had been associated with administrative chaos ever since it was founded in 1538 and well until the end of the sixteenth century.

However, I would argue that although to the obvious hierarchical structure that results from the military organization of the troops is helpful to recall the parade of Araucanian heroes described in *La Araucana* and to present Nueva Granada as an ideal colony where civilization has been transplanted, there is also another order or guiding principle, if you will, that underlines Castellanos’ narrative; one which actually makes it possible for Castellanos to undermine the authority of Guillén Chaparro and to violate and transcend the very sense of discipline that characterizes the parade described by Ercilla. This underlying arrangement does not follow necessarily a vertical scheme but functions, instead, according to references to “deficiency” and “surplus” or “lack and “excess” that are embedded throughout the poetic discourse and transform a mere list of names into the stuff of the epic.

The opposition between “deficiency” and “surplus” is nowhere established more poignantly than in the verses devoted to Captain Juan de Montalvo: “*sobróle merescer*[excess], *faltó ventura* [deficiency]/ para tener la vida mas segura” (129). Castellanos refers to Montalvo (and later to several other colonists) with the epithet “descubridor,” a term Ercilla had employed in the same canto he describes the battle of Andalicán. However, Ercilla used that noun strictly limiting its meaning to the currency it

has within military jargon. As such, for Ercilla “descubridores” are those soldiers who scout the territory and lead the troops: “nuestro[s] descubridores, que la tierra/ iban corriendo por el largo llano” (*La Araucana* 22.8). Castellanos, instead, transforms “descubridor” into a euphemistic title that means scout or troop guide but is also in alignment with the motto of Habsburg Spain: *Plus Ultra*. By using this term, therefore, Castellanos not only avoids using the always controversial “conquistador,” but also conveys the notion that to discover, to explore, to conquest, and to colonize are the highest forms of service a vassal could provide to his king. According to Castellanos, the injustice committee against individuals like Montalvo is accentuated by the fact that even in their old age (“honrado viejo venerado calvo”) these “descubridores” continue to show eagerness to serve the Spanish Crown, even while having received insufficient compensation.

On the other hand, the tension between “lack” and ‘excess” also plays a part in the references Castellanos makes concerning his own writing: “en diferentes partes de mi Historia / no fenecida, mas la mano puesta / para dezir después lo que me resta (130). Castellanos’ statement that he has not yet finished writing about the glories of the conquistadores conveys the notion that there is a “surplus” of deeds that have not yet been put into writing. At least on some level, this reference should be read as a confirmation that Castellanos’ letter to Guillén Chaparro is only emphasizing the judge’s “lack” of military competence. Finally, the last stanza I cited above also depends heavily on the interplay between “lack” or “excess”: “fueron escuadras breves y summarias / aunque de lista *muchas mas avía*” (excess); and latter, “*más faltaron* las armas necesarias / segun a tal intento convenía” (lack).

However, the most important allusion to any type of “lack” or “deficiency” in the catalogue of troops from Santa Fé appears as soon as Castellanos starts to narrate the

organization of the local militias. Castellanos devotes six lines to point out that judge Guillén Chaparro assumed the role of General, but the actual name of the judge is nowhere found in that stanza. Castellanos instead refers to the judge as “aquel por quien entonces se regía.” Likewise, when Castellanos clarifies that he is referring to the person who is in charge of Nueva Granada the judge still remains absent while Castellanos brings his own presence into the text by reminding readers, once again, of the poem’s place of enunciation: “aqueste Nuevo Reino donde [yo] *piso*.” Furthermore, even though Castellanos places Judge Guillén Chaparro at the top of the military hierarchy, he does it in a way that reminds readers that the judge has education and wit, but no previous military experience: “pues suplican las letras y el aviso / *el uso que de guerra no tenía*” (128 italics are mine). When read from this perspective, it is clear that Guillén Chaparro’s symbolic absence from the opening stanzas of the catalogue and the allusion to his “lack” of military competence are intended to postulate an alternative order; one in which there is barely any room for bureaucrats like Guillén Chaparro or in which men like him should not be promoted to positions of authority. In this sense, although the judge is the first to “appear” or to be “named” and stands at the pinnacle of the hierarchy of power; readers can not help but notice his “deficiencies,” especially in light of the “surplus” or “excess” of merits Castellanos will attribute to the local colonists such as Captain Juan de Montalvo. Accordingly, it is equally telling that in a poem where there are several speeches by anonymous bystanders and where Castellanos cedes the word to Drake on several occasions there is never an intervention by Guillén Chaparro.

After completing the catalogue of troops from Santa Fé de Bogotá Castellanos goes on to describe the diligence of the colonists from Tunja to enlist in the troops. In this section Castellanos continues to present the local colonists as outstanding paladins ready to engage in individual combat. In effect, as narrator Castellanos has nothing but praise

for each one of them and serves as guarantor that all of these individuals are prudent, trustworthy, loyal, courageous, experienced, disciplined, and honorable vassals who are ready to serve their king:

En Tunja, dó se tuvo gran cuydado
por el Corregidor, varón entero,
por Maese de campo fue nombrado
Don Christóbal de Rojas, cavallero;
fue capitán Juan Prieto Maldonado,
de tiempos atrasados el primero;
fuélo Martín de Rojas, cuya lança
a sido de segura confiança.

También lo fue Bartolomé Camacho,
descubridor, de cuyas valentías
podría yo hablar muy sin empacho
e ya hablaron las vigiliás mías;
hiziéronle tomar este despacho
ya sobre largos y cansados días;
así mismo fue Juan de Villanueva
que siempre dio de sí vastante prueba.

Destos también fue Castro, lusitano,
fuerte descubridor, de los primeros,
el qual tiene con ser honroso cano
bivos y juveniles los azeros;
Francisco de Velandia, cuya mano
no suele recelar encuentros fieros,
manifestando la prosapia clara
de los illustres Manriques de Lara.

Este mismo poder se le dio luego
de mandar y regir guerrera gente
a Rodrigo Suárez Savariego,
hombre reconocido por valiente
y a quien se puede bien hazer entrega
de cualquier alto cargo y eminente,
así por grande curso y experiència
como por su valor y su prudencia.

Nombróse también Alvaro Suárez
y su primo Francisco de Avendaño,

ambos a dos patricios singulares,
prestos a resistir publico daño;
tuvieron de sus padres los lugares,
de quien sabré decir sin mal engaño
aver sido personas de momento,
según en otras partes represento.

Nombrando fue también Juan de la Fuente,
patricio joven de cabal talento,
el qual al tiempo vino conveniente
a la necesidad que represento;
pues antes (a su costa) fue con gente
a los Llanos, en un descubrimiento,
porque devía de tener indicio
para hazer al Rey algún serviçio.

Capitán de cavallo fue con lleno
poder, el joven Don Miguel Suárez,
cuyo padre prudente fue tan bueno
que su muerte causó luengos pesares;
el qual fue fundador deste terreno
de Tunja, y otros más particulares,
capitán primitivo deste Reyno
y después General en su gobierno.

Faltónos un varon en quien cabía
aquél primor de sabios cortesanos,
virtud, bondad, honor, cortesía,
agudos dichos y consejos sanos,
honestidad, modestia, hidalguía
y para guerra no tardías manos,
grandes industrias en las ocasiones
y concluyentes todas sus razones. (*Discurso* 131-3)

If we read this section with an eye to the catalogue offered by Ercilla, at least one aspect in particular stands out: the references to the type of bonds that link some of the warriors included on this list. In his parade of Indian warriors in *La Araucana*, Ercilla had also pointed out that some of the warriors were related to each other (i.e.: Mareande and Lepomande are cousins) and that some warriors had taken the place that once was occupied by their father (Caniomange, for instance, has taken the place once held by his

father). Accordingly, the inclusion of these types of family connections allowed Ercilla to introduce the anecdote of Guacol, Gualemos' father, who is said to have fought against a dolphin to save his wife. In his catalogue of heroes from Tunja Castellanos is striving for realism and is not interested in digressing into such literary or mythical anecdotes. However, the mention of genealogical connections also proves useful for Castellanos to go beyond what Ercilla had accomplished. Castellanos does that by introducing references that enhance the historicity of his account and portray colonists from Nueva Granada as the true heirs of the knights who had fought in the campaigns to expel the Moors from the Iberian Peninsula. In this sense, the allusion to the Manriques de Lara is of particular importance, not only because it suggests that the local colonists have an ascendancy as illustrious as that of one of the most distinguish noble families of Spain, but also because it allows Castellanos to reach past Ercilla and to connect his parade of Spanish warriors with the catalogue of heroes included by Jorge de Manrique in his "Coplas por la muerte de mi padre." As such, Castellanos use of genealogical references is essential part of the reconfiguration of the former territory of the Musicas into a kingdom organized according to the codes of blood (lineage), faith and military service.

In the rest of the description of the organization of the militias from Tunja Castellanos will continue to exploit the opposition between "deficiency" and "excess" as almost every single individual who enters the catalogue is introduced by his proper name and often with references to his "excessive" merits:

Fue Pedro Recerón, mayor sargento,
a causa de tener militar uso,
por cuyo singular entendimiento
un esquadrón cuadrado se compuso
con orden tan a punto y tan atento
que en el ensaye nada fue confuso,
pues pareció (con ser tan repentina)
gente de muy cursada disciplina.

Martín de Luzuriaga nombrado
fue por alférez, en el qual afecto
manifestó ser tan exercitado
quando demanda militar aprieto.
También Antonio Bravo Maldonado,
alférez fue del capitán Juan Prieto;
sacó Gregorio Suárez de Deça
vandera del hermano, rica pieza.

Por Francisco de Castro se movía
la de su padre, venerando cano;
la del Velandia, Sebastián García,
que meneava vigorosa mano;
lo mismo con buen zelo se hazia
por Joan de Otalora, joven loçano,
el qual con singulares bríos lleva
la del capitán Juan de Villanueva.

Alférez de Martín de Rojas era
Antonio Ruiz, principal vezino;
llevava de Camacho la vandera
Miguel Ruiz Corredor, su sobrino;
de la de Savariego, que pudiera
romper por el mas áspero camino,
alférez era Félix del Castillo:
ninguno de ellos de valor senzillo.

Del fuerte joven Don Miguel Suárez
alférez era don Juan de la Cerda,
por quien gloria de hechos singulares
de sus antepasados se recuerda.
Yo quisiera poner en sus lugares
otros algunos, porque no se pierda
lo que pide su lealtad notoria;
pero no me los dieron por memoria.

Los soldados de Tunja recogidos
serian pocos menos de seiscientos,
todos gentiles hombres, proveídos
de varios vellicosos instrumentos;
ochenta de caballo, guarnecidos
de ricos y lustrosos ornamentos:
gente gallarda, de quien es tenuta
en mucho más la honra que la vida. (*Discurso* 131-135)

In summary, when read from the perspective of the interplay between “lack” and “excess” or between “deficiency” and “surplus,” Castellanos’ poetic discourse appears more as a highly rhetorical political pamphlet crafted on behalf of the conquistadors rather than an objective description of a historical event that the narrator had witnessed. Furthermore, the sense of discipline and structure that characterizes Ercilla’s description of the Araucanian heroes is here reconstituted to postulate an alternative hierarchy that presents Nueva Granada as a homogeneous chivalric utopia. As such, Castellanos’ appropriation of Ercillas’ parade of Araucanian heroes goes beyond what the model had offered because the description of a military parade gives way to the symbolic and textual construction of an entire kingdom.

Perhaps the most interesting irony of the description of the parade of paladins from Nueva Granada is that while disregarding the dramatic potential of the fall of Cartagena, Castellanos arranged the sequence of events so that from a dramatic point of view the climax of the poem corresponds with events where no actual confrontation take place. By doing so, Castellanos presents the eagerness of the Spanish colonists from Nueva Granada to defend their territory and to march into battle, not as something completed in the past, but as something that continues to linger in the present and projects into the future. In this sense, the foundational myth offered by Castellanos aims to erase or replace in the imaginary of the local colonists the quasi-disastrous campaign that Jiménez de Quesada led from Santa Marta to the territory of the Muisca.

Finally, I also want to point out that in his catalogue Ercilla pays particular attention to the description of the attire of some of the Araucanian warriors; but in *La Araucana* the references to clothing at best only serve to strengthen the complete communion of the Indian warriors with nature, or at worse they serve to reinforce the utter “otherness” of the Araucanians. Such is the case of the description of Tulcomara,

whose ferocity is likened to the tiger he had killed and whose skin he is now wearing. Notice that in this stanza Ercilla uses the same adjective to describe Tulcomara and the tiger:

Tras él con *fiero* término seguía
el áspero y robusto Tulcomara,
que vestido en lugar de arnés, traía
la piel de un *fiero* tigre que matara,
cuya espantosa boca le ceñía
por la frente y quijadas la ancha cara,
con dos espesas órdenes de dientes
blancos, agudos, lisos y lucientes. (*La Araucana* 21.30)

The description of the attire is also indispensable for Castellanos but for a different reason. For Castellanos the reference to the clothing wore by the warriors during the parade attempts to convey their inner worth and to link local colonists with all the attributes that Spaniards and Europeans alike associated with culture and civilization. Although it is not clear how the beautiful (and expensive) clothes described by the narrator would prepare the aging soldiers to go into battle, it is clear that the luminosity of the description is meant to attest in the eyes and the minds of the readers the type of people who had conquered and were now residing in Nueva Granada:

Al lado va la hoja fina
que muchas tienen guarnición dorada;
sale (como piedra cristalina)
fulgente resplandor de la çelada;
ostentase la malla jazerina,
la rica vestidura perfilada,
la bordadura, la librea nueva,
muestra del corazón del que la lleva.

Cevan la vista trages variados,
telas de seda fina diferentes,
las calzas y jubones recamados,
capeletes con plumas eminentes
la mayor parte de ellos estampados
con perlas y esmeraldas excelentes;

aumentan capitanes su decoro
con rricas joyas y cadenas de oro.

En un caballo blanco regalado
salió Guillén Chaparro bien guarnido,
en Santa Fee, con el bastón dorado,
que por su dignidad le era debido.
Antonio Joven iba de brocado,
en Tunja lo mejor de su partido;
y el día que se hizo la tal *muestra*
también tuvo bastón su mano *diestra*. (*Discurso* 143 italics are mine)

This last stanza is pivotal to understanding Castellanos' imitation, not only because it unequivocally links Castellanos' parade to Ercilla's parade of Araucanian warriors, but also because it intensifies the sharp contrast between the deferment of praise for the head of the Real Audiencia and what the narrator has to say about the former conquistadors, and about men like Antonio Joven particular.

Horses were an essential component of the Spanish style of warfare ever since the Middle Ages and as such played decisive roles in the campaigns to expel the Moors from the Iberian Peninsula, as well as during the exploration and conquest of the New World. In his letter Castellanos builds upon the importance of horses as military assets to persuade Judge Guillén Chaparro of the risk of an Amerindian uprising across Nueva Granada by pointing out that Amerindians have now become great horsemen themselves and are no longer afraid of horses as they had been in the past:

Sabed, señor, que ya pasó solía (sic)
quando se desmembrava con temblores
qualquier indio que cavallo vía;

Agenos estáis ya de estos temores
del stasis y fríjido reçelo
que ponían cavallos corredores,

Pues juntavan el rostro con el suelo
quando, corriendo con furor, asoman,
cubierto de armas el sudado pelo.

Ellos agora son los que los toman,
les ponen los cabestros y collera
y los que los amansan y los doman.

En ellos andan, pasan la carrera,
como si fuesen diestros andaluces
de aquellos de Xerez de la Frontera. (*Discurso* 122)

However, if the allusion to Amerindians being able to ride horses is included to boost the imminence of their threat, the reference to Judge Guillén Chaparro riding on a horse that he had literally received as a gift (“En un caballo blanco regalado”) aims to puncture the judges stature because it is a pun built upon the expression “caballo de regalo,” which was another form of saying battle horse (“caballo de batalla”). But how could the judge have a battle horse if he had no military experience? In addition, within the same stanza Castellanos continues the discrediting of Guillén Chaparro by pointing out in the last four verses that the day of the parade the former conquistador was just as elegantly attired as Guillén Chapparo: “Antonio Joven iba de brocado / en Tunja lo mejor de su partido;” and was holding the baton of authority, not because that privilege had been conferred upon him by a higher authority, but because he earned it with his experience: “y el día que se hizo la tal muestra / también tuvo bastón su mano diestra”. Incidentally, in the opening stanza of the parade of Araucanian warriors, Ercilla uses the same rhyme between ‘muestra’ and ‘diestra’ to refer to the baton of authority chieftain Pillilco was holding while marching in the parade.

Era el primero que empezó la muestra
el cacique Pillilco, el cual armado
iba de fuertes armas en la diestra
un gran bastón de acero barreado. (*La Araucana* 21.28)

In this sense, through his imitation Castellanos is literally and figuratively taking the baton from chieftain Pillilco and putting it in the hands of the former conquistador: “y

el día que se hizo la tal muestra / también tuvo bastón su mano diestra” (143). By doing this Castellanos is restoring the textual authority old conquistadors never received in *La Araucana* and, at least in this instance, surpassing his prestigious predecessor.

THE FOURTH AND THE FIFTH CANTO

In the last two cantos of the poem Castellanos focuses for the first time on events that take place at the port of Cartagena exclusively. The city had been forewarned about Drake’s upcoming attack at least in two separate ways. First, by messengers sent from the Crown who also inform the local authorities of the arrival of help from the royal navy in the near future. Secondly, by a colonist named Francisco Maldonado, who had been present during Drake’s attack on Hispaniola, and brings with him a message from the governor of Santo Domingo.

In the opening stanzas of the fourth canto, Castellanos inserts a list with the name and rank of some of the men that have been recruited to defend the city, and then proceeds to give credit to the governor of Cartagena, Pedro Fernandez de Bustos, and the commander of the Spanish vessels, Pedro Vique, for overseeing the organization of the city’s defense. Likewise, Castellanos commends Bishop Joan de Montalvo for taking the initiative to organize the clergy and for vigorously exulting priests to fight for “honra de dios, del Rey y su hazienda” (*Discurso* 152).

As part of preparing the city for the attack, women and valuables have been taken to safety, and a militia of approximately 450 men has been gathered, including troops that have arrived from the neighboring towns of Mompós and Tolú. In addition, five hundred Indians are assigned to protect the beach with their bows and arrows. However, while describing all the preparations taken in Cartagena Castellanos also makes plain that the

city's defenses are far from adequate, and more importantly, he repeatedly frames his descriptions with comments that insist that there was very little that could have been done to change the outcome.

For instance, when Castellanos mentions that a colonist by the name of Blas de Herrera diligently helped to dig trenches, he also takes that opportunity to point out the futility of that effort:

Dellas el artillero mayor era
un cierto hijodalgo lusitano,
el nombre del qual es Blas de Herrera,
que mostraba sollícita la mano;
*aunque le sucedió de tal manera
que todo su trabajo salió en vano. (Discurso 146)*

Likewise, when Castellanos attests that Captain Alonso Bravo de Montemayor had the experience demanded to succeed in that type of situation, Castellanos also suggests that when fate has already determined the outcome of an event there is very little that can be done to change it:

Fue otro capitán Alonso Bravo
de Montemayor, hombre de experiencia,
el cual pudiera bien guiar el clavo
en esta rigurosa competencia;
*mas, donde la fortuna da trasmano,
poco vale la buena diligencia. (Discurso 148)*

Moreover, when the local authorities instruct the messenger who has arrived from Santo Domingo (Francisco Maldonado) that it would be better not to disclose the exact number of troops that accompany Drake so that the local militias might not be discouraged, Castellanos indicates that Maldonado followed that suggestion but then clarifies that this trick also proved to be useless:

Rogáronle que quando se tractase
algo que cerca desto se moviese,
aquella multitude aniquilase
y con algún desdén la deshiziese;

porque la gente no desanimase
si tanta muchedumbre percibiese.
*Hízolo bien, como varón astuto,
mas el astucia fue de poco fructo. (Discurso 157)*

Furthermore, when Castellanos describes the numbers of troops assigned to the Spanish vessels, he again foretells the defeat at the hands of the English by declaring that admiral Pedro Vique would eventually order the sinking:

Tenían ansí mismo las galeras
poquitas mas o menos des seisçientas
entre personas libres y remeras
para tal ocasión prometas y atentas:
*porque su General don pedro Vique
con tiempo las mandó poner a pique. (Discurso 149)*

All in all, the comments inserted by Castellanos at the end of several successive stanzas serve to remind readers of the outcome of Drake's attack even before the attack actually happens. In addition, in stark contrast with the sense of anticipation that characterized his description of the preparations taken in Nueva Granada, Castellanos dispels whatever heroism can attributed to his account by remarking that, when the local militias finally learned of the size of Drake's threat, the overall mood among the troops was somber and many soldiers complained that they lacked weapons and training and had not received enough food or pay:

Uno con gran desdén y sacudida
dezia “¿Qué dineros o qué prenda
me dan a mí por arriscar la vida,
porque a vecinos libre su hacienda?
Otro que tiene cassa proveída
esse sera razon que la defienda,
que mi pillage no será de corto,
pues omnia bona mea mecum porto.”

Otro dezía: “¿Qué piensan los ricos
que tengo que hacer con escopeta,
haziéndome las tripas villancicos
y sin hallar quien en compás las meta?

Y un dizen que me limpie los hoçicos
como cosa de precio se entremeta,
pues yo rriendo de tan buen donaire
salir a pelear con papo de aire.”

Otro: ‘cada qual dize ser amigo
sin acudir con algo que convenga,
pues agora no es tiempo del higo
para que la Mayorga se detenga;
cumplido vemos el refrán antiguo
‘servíme a mi, buscá quien os mantenga,
provéase de çevo la garganta,
que el abad donde canta d’ ai ayanta.’ (*Discurso* 158)

In response to the apathy and pessimism of the troops, Fernández de Bustos and Vique deliver a spirited speech to the soldiers and incite the troops to fight for higher goals such as their honor, their king and their faith. But although within the specific description of this event the militias seem to respond favorably to the call for heroism, on a higher narrative level the voices of the local authorities cannot override the more authoritative voice of the narrator who insists that all the efforts taken during the preparation for the defense of Cartagena are bound to go to waste.

In the fifth and final canto Castellanos narrates the actual clash between Spanish and British forces for control of Cartagena, and describes the factors that played unfavorably against the Spaniards to cause their defeat. In a similar fashion as he had done prior to the attack on Santo Domingo, Drake addresses his troops and assures them of victory, given their courage, good fortune and the poor defenses of the city. Yet Drake also threatens to hang any soldier who attempts to escape from the battlefield and offers his previous experience as a soldier as a model for courage:

Pues el que por acá se me volviere,
sepa que me dará crecida pena;
lancha ni cosa que se le pareciere
no tiene de hallar en el arena,
y de cualquiera calidad que fuere
lo tengo de colgar en un entena,

sin que hora ni punto más aguarde
por ser justo castigo de cobarde.

También como vosotros fui soldado,
más tal que nunca supe ser inerte,
y las honras y premios que he ganado
fue por no hacer caso de la muerte;
pues cada cual de vos es avisado,
o ya sea de más o menos fuerte,
haga por heredar tales honores,
y si posible fuere, muy mayores. (*Discurso* 185-6)

After his speech, Drake divides his forces and instructs a portion of his troops to launch a ground attack from the north. Relying on information extracted from two black slaves, Drake warns his soldiers to advance with their feet in the water in order to avoid the traps placed by Amerindians on the shore. In this section of the poem, Pedro Fernández de Burgos and Pedro Vique reappear leading their troops diligently, but their efforts are futile owing to the cowardice of soldiers who prefer to escape under a thick cloud of darkness. Concurrently, Castellanos suggests that the unusual darkness that covered Cartagena during the attack also affected the performance of the Spanish vessels by preventing them from properly aiming at their targets. To make matters worse, when Pedro Vique finally releases the Spanish ships from the harbor and orders them to counter attack, one of the vessels starts to flounder in the low tide, and Vique is compelled to order the sinking of all three Spanish ships as their crews (mostly prisoners) start to escape or join the English adversaries. In a rare display of heroism, individuals like Juan Cosme de la Sal and Juan Rodríguez Rico engage in one-to-one combat with the British and end up losing their lives. Furthermore, when a Spanish colonist named Martín Polo desperately attempts to prevent the invading forces from entering the city and courageously charges against them, his defensive efforts fail partly because by the time he confronts the British most of his own men have abandoned him. By early the following day, the local authorities of Cartagena start heading to the neighboring town of

Turbaco while Drake and his troops take over the city and begin to confiscate goods and weapons. When the negotiations for the amount of the ransom stall, Drake responds by burning some ships, houses and a section of the cathedral. To prevent more damages the Spanish chief negotiator agrees to pay 110,000 ducats, some of which are borrowed from the Royal treasury.

It should be clear that Castellanos' *Discurso del Capitán Francisco Draque* is a highly slanted and ideologically driven text that portrays the recent maritime history of Spain in the New World as a progression of unpunished affronts by the English (namely Francis Drake) and a series of administrative misjudgments on the part of the Spanish Crown and its representatives. To gauge the significance of this assessment, we need only to remember that while Castellanos emphasized the vulnerabilities of Spanish ports in the New World, poets like Alonso de Ercilla were praising Habsburg naval dominance and the consolidation of Spanish imperial aspirations by narrating the Battle of Lepanto (1571) as a reenactment of the epic battle of Actium described by Virgil in book VIII of the *Aeneid* (Quint 158).⁶¹ On the other hand, in his dramatization of the rivalries among the Spanish population residing in the colonies, Castellanos clearly favors the side of the baquianos and assumes that readers would conclude that if more baquianos were appointed as governors and administrators, problems such as piracy would not arise or would be dealt with appropriately. At face value this argument suggests that Castellanos viewed piracy not only as the result of Spain's monopoly over intercontinental trade or of England's effort to get a share of the wealth coming from the Indies, but primarily as side effect of Spain shifting its imperial paradigm from an empire of conquest to an empire of

⁶¹ Other Spanish poets who followed Ercillas' lead are Juan Rufo in *La Austriada* (1584) and Cristóbal de Virués in *El Monserrate* (1587). See Elizabeth Davis' *Myth and Identity in the Epic of Imperial Spain*. Columbia: U of Missouri P, 2000. For an analysis of Ercilla' description of the Battle of Lepanto see James Nicolopulos' *The Poetics of Empire in the Indies: Prophecy and Imitation in La Araucana and Os Lusíadas*. University Park: Pennsylvania UP, 2000.

commerce, and more precisely to the Crown's policy of appointing nobles and aristocrats to the most coveted posts in the administration of the New world. Accordingly, at the root of Castellanos, assessment of English piracy vis-à-vis colonial politics is the conviction that by not rewarding the deeds and merits of the first wave of colonists, Philip II was forfeiting his prudence, which was one of the emblematic attribute of monarchs in the sixteenth century. And prudence, more than any other trait, is the quality that Castellanos and the rest of the colonists from Nueva Granada display in the third canto in their unwavering desire to defend their territory.

THE DISCURSO DEL CAPITAN FRANCISCO DRAQUE AND LOPE DE VEGA'S LA DRAGONTEA

At this point a comparison between Castellanos' poem and Lope de Vega's *La Dragontea* (1598) becomes instructive. For *La Dragontea* Lope also chose to write about current events and relied heavily on official documents to formulate a narrative about Drake's incursions into the Spanish Main.⁶² But the topic of Lope's poem is the last and least successful campaign of an "aging" and "diminished" Drake, the destruction of his fleet, and his subsequent death after capturing the trading town of Nombre de Dios, near Panama (Fuchs 141-42). Interestingly enough, while Castellanos exaggerates the financial losses that resulted from each pirate attack, Lope avoids in his depiction of Drake's final venture the commercial aspects of the rivalry between Spain and England

⁶² Lope's poem is by no means an 'accurate' account of the events, especially because Lope wrote a very partisan version in favor of Diego Suárez de Amaya, Mayor of Nombre de Dios, but diminishing the role played by Alonso de Sotomayor the military commander sent by the viceroy of Peru to protect Panama. Because of its historical inaccuracies Antonio de Herrera, Cronista Mayor de Indias, opposed the publication of *La Dragontea* in the Kingdom of Castile and Lope had to go to Valencia to publish his book. See A.K Jameson, "Lope de Vega's *La Dragontea*: Historical and Literary Sources" in *Hispanic Review* 6.2 (April 1938): 104 – 119 and Elizabeth Wright's *Pilgrimage to Patronage: Lope de Vega and the Court of Phillip III, 1598 – 1621*. Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 2001.

and instead magnifies the providential mission of Spain as a defender of the Faith (Fuchs 140, 144). Accordingly, and unlike Castellanos, Lope lays over the factual aspects of his narrative an allegorical framework with overt apocalyptic motifs, which allows him to superimpose a “teleological code on the political events of recent history” (Fuchs 143). Thus, signaling for the attack to Nombre de Dios and the Spanish victory to be interpreted as a “capsule metaphor” for a besieged but steadfast Spain predestined to prevail over its rivals in the Mediterranean, Northern Europe and the Atlantic (Wright 28). This triumphalism is precisely the first layer of meaning conveyed by the image in the frontispiece of the 1598 edition of *La Dragontea*, which depicts an eagle (the archangel Michael/Philip II) slaying a dragon (the Dragon of the Apocalypse/ Drake) (Cañizarez-Esguerra 25).⁶³ As such *La Dragontea* is a poem that fully embraces imperial ideology and whose ultimate goal is to exalt the might of the Spanish forces and their definite triumph over its adversaries, particularly the English.

However, it is equally as relevant to point out that in some sections of his poem Lope often emulates the language and narrative structure of sixteenth century official historical accounts and chronicles like the ones written by historians such as Ambrosio de Morales and Jerónimo de Zurita who wrote on commission from Philip II and the Crown of Aragon respectively (Wright 30). In her book *Pilgrimage to Patronage: Lope de Vega and the Court of Phillip III, 1598 – 1621*, Elizabeth Wright argues that the publication of *La Dragontea* signals a change in Lope’s patterns of publication and sets in motion an aggressive campaign to gain access to the court of the newly crowned king, Philip III, with the ultimate aim of becoming the official Chronicler of the Habsburgs, an ambitious goal which Lope was never able to accomplish. Thus, notes Wright, this is precisely what

⁶³ For a more in-depth analysis of the symbolism of the dragon and an interpretation of *La Dragontea* as a mirror for princes see Elizabeth Wright, *Pilgrimage to Patronage: Lope de Vega and the Court of Phillip III, 1598 – 1621*. Lewisburg: Bucknell U P, 2001.

Lope offers to do when during a description of a battle scene in *La Dragontea* the narrative voice is interrupted by an authorial intrusion that transposes the action to a distant future in which Lope as a royal servant would “sing in another lyric, with a different instrument, if God is willing, of Spanish valor that the world admires, with the force of love for my *patria*’s soil” (Wright 30).⁶⁴ In short, behind the writing of *La Dragontea* lies not only Lope’s ambition to win a bureaucratic post that was simply far out of Castellanos’ reach, but Lope’s eagerness to write the same type of official imperial history that Castellanos was willing to subvert as a colonial subject. Moreover, if as the above cited verses demonstrate, Lope’s place of enunciation is the Iberian Peninsula and the outskirts of the Royal court, Castellanos had found a new *patria* in the New World and it is from this distinctive place of enunciation he would present the conquistadors and the *encomendero* class from Nueva Granada as the worthy successors of the Christian knights who fought during the Reconquista.

FRANCIS DRAKE AND THE DEMONIZATION OF THE ENGLISH ENEMIES

In his biography of Francis Drake Harry Kelsey has argued that the process of elevating Drake to a figure of mythical proportions was started not by individuals who knew him personally back at home in England but by Spanish settlers in the New World who “embarrassed at their own ineffectual response to Drake’s raids... reported to the Crown that Drake was a man of such agile mind and such great military ability that only the greatest show of force would be sufficient to withstand him” (394). As evidence of

⁶⁴ Tiempo vendrá que cante en otra lira
Con otro plectro, si lo quiere el cielo,
El valor español que al mundo admira,
Con fuerza del amor del patrio suelo. (Drag., 240)

this trend Kelsey cites, among other examples, a letter sent to Philip II by a local government official from Santo Domingo insisting that during the 1586 attack Drake had “fought so fiercely that if he and his men had been at the gates of Seville, the citizens [of that city] would have fled in panic” (394). Within the corpus of texts dealing with Drake and written by Spaniards in the second half of the sixteenth century, Castellanos’ poem represents a unique stage in the development of Drake’s myth, not only because it offers the most exorbitant formulation of Drake as the ‘embodiment of English military might’ and the ‘personification of English sea power’, but also because Castellanos appeals to the same rhetorical tool used by colonial administrators to justify their inability to deal with piracy (hyperbole), and uses it as a weapon to discredit them.

This is not to suggest that Castellanos did not attribute any negative traits to Drake as a literary character, which he did, particularly greed. But to highlight the fact that at a time when Drake was still a very controversial figure in England, Castellanos selectively excluded from his poem the least favorable incidents in Drake’s career and chiseled his description of the English enemy in order to exaggerate Drake’s talent as a military commander and undermine the abilities of the administrators who were running the colonies despite their lack of previous military experience. Given that throughout the five cantos Castellanos aims to cover the entire span of Drake’s life, and that the first canto provides a summary of Drake’s ventures prior to the attack on Cartagena, it is surprising that Castellanos makes only a passing but favorable reference to Drake’s participation in John Hawkins’ attack upon San Juan de Ulúa in 1568, during which Drake allegedly abandoned his superior and peers and returned separately to England.⁶⁵ Nor is there any mention of the command problems that arose during the expedition to

⁶⁵ According to Harry Kelsey, the charge of desertion “haunted Drake for the rest of his life, for John Hawkins was forced to abandon a hundred of [his] men on the Mexican coast, and most of them never saw England again” (39).

circumnavigate the world, or of Drake's display of sheer ruthlessness by trying and executing onetime friend Thomas Doughty, for supposedly attempting to incite mutiny among the crew. Neither is there any mention of the multiple problems regarding logistics, discipline and command that arose during Drake's raid on the Caribbean (1585 – 87), some of which can be traced back to Drake's "lack of talent for planning and conducting an extended military or naval campaign" (394).

Instead, what we find in Castellanos' poem is a very ambiguous and often openly sympathetic characterization of Drake that in accord with the ethos of the Counter-Reformation depicts Drake as a heretical and greedy Lutheran demon (*demonio luterano*), but also as a loyal servant to the queen of England, a successful commoner who was able to ascend the social ladder, a well spoken and courteous captain who could show mercy on his adversaries, and above all an exemplary military commander who could conduct flawlessly both naval and ground attacks. In my view, Castellanos tailored Drake's depiction to indicate, first, that despite the arbitration of Rome and the promulgation of Papal Bulls legitimizing Spanish possession over American territories, the control over the resources and sovereignty over that land was ultimately to be decided by military victory; and second, that to accomplish that victory the Spanish Crown needed to summon the support of those individuals that it was systematically alienating by excluding them from the administration of the colonies. It is because of this reason that across the poem Castellanos describes the English aggressions as consistent with the measures taken by soldiers during war and purposely refers to the wealth taken by the British as the spoils of war ("pillages").

CONCLUSIONS

The metaphor “*éste nuestro rezentel aprisco*” discloses a fondness for the New World that is seldom found in the writings of sixteenth century Spanish authors. The historian John H. Elliot has noted that “with the exception of those [writers] who had a professional interest in the enterprise, Spanish writers were reticent in dealing with the New World during the century that followed the discovery.” As a result, to properly gauge the significance of this metaphor we need to take into account that by the time it was formulated Spanish intellectuals like Juan de Mariana had already started to convey in their writings the increasingly ambivalent feelings of their “generation towards the acquisition of... American possessions” (Elliot 26). As Spain’s internal and external problems became exacerbated, incidentally, ambivalence ceded in some cases to overt rejection and dislike towards both America and the Spaniards who moved there as settlers. Such was the case of Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, who despite his ability for critical scrutiny, went on to suggest in his short-story “The Jealous Estramaduran” (1613) that America was above all “the refuge of the despairing sons of Spain, the church of the homeless, the asylum of homicides, the haven of gamblers and cheats, the general receptacle for loose women, the common centre of attraction for many, but effectual resource of very few” (106). By referring to the New World as “*éste nuestro rezentel aprisco*,” Castellanos suggests, nevertheless, that contrary to the trends and attitudes of contemporary Spanish writers and intellectuals who never set foot in America, by 1586 there were Spanish writers who had found a new *patria* in the New World and were shifting their loyalties and subjectivities. By inscribing such a clear sense of local pride across his text, furthermore, Castellanos was establishing himself as the forerunner of a tradition whose continuity would immediately be assured by the first generations of local *criollo* writers that emerged in Nueva Granada in the seventeenth century. To be sure, it would not have been hard for the first descendants of the conquistadors to establish a link

between the political impulse that sustained verses like “este nuestro resentido aprisco” and their own re-appropriation of the American territory made explicit in lines such as “esta, de nuestra América pupila,” as it was expressed in the writings of the most distinguished Baroque writer from Nueva Granada, Hernando Domínguez Camargo (1606 – 1656).⁶⁶ As such, the most productive way to read Castellanos’ *Discurso del Capitán Francisco Draque* is as one of the earliest testimonies of the emergence of a new type of personal and collective consciousness that would in turn serve as the paradigm for the development of a new type of literature.

On the other hand, even though in his introductory letter to Perez de Arteaga Castellanos attests to the truthfulness of the story he is about to narrate by alluding to cartas de relación (“procuré las más ciertas y verdaderas relaciones”) and the accounts of worthy individuals (“con información de hombres graves”), in reality his poetic discourse is organized around rhetorical (the speeches delivered by Drake before each attack, hagiography, the transcript of the contents of a letter he had written) and symbolic (the arrival of Drake to Cartagena on Ash Wednesday, God allowing the assault to Cartagena as a punishment to the colonists, the Portuguese messenger, the military parade of colonists from Nueva Granada, etc) elements which have clear antecedents in the Bible, the classics or the epic tradition. As such, instead of assuming that the vivid descriptions included in the poem provide an ‘objective’ rendering of what took place during Drake’s assault on Spanish ports in the New World, (which will result in imposing an

⁶⁶ In 1657 Hernando Domínguez Camargo became rector of the Cathedral of Tunja, the same post Castellanos held for more than thirty years. With regards to Domínguez Camargo’s knowledge of Juan de Castellanos’ text Giovanni Meo Zilio writes: “es dable suponer que Camargo en sus años mozos, en la casa de probación de los jesuitas, ubicada en aquel mismo pueblo de Tunja del que Castellanos fue Beneficiado, se haya empapado del poema de su antecesor, publicado en su primera parte unas décadas antes [1589] y seguramente poseído por la biblioteca de aquel colegio. Mas aún, si tenemos en cuenta que el poema del alancense es la primera obra literaria del Nuevo Reino, no podemos dejar de suponer que fuese archiconocido en Tunja por aquellos años, a pesar de que su continuador lo ignora altivamente desde lo alto de su trono gongorino”. See *Estudio sobre Juan de Castellanos*. Firenze: Valmartina, 1972. 139.

anachronistic horizon of expectations for the writer and the text) it is more appropriate to decode the set of tropes around which Castellanos ensembles the (textual) truth of his arguments.

Finally, the rivalry between baquianos and chapetones and the distinctive traits attributed to each of these two segments of the Spanish population serve as the main axis around which the narrator organizes his own narrative and the overall geography of the New World: Lima, Santo Domingo and (to a lesser degree) Cartagena as places associated with chapetones, bureaucrats, and vice, and the kingdom of Nueva Granada as place associated with order, efficiency, and loyalty and the location where baquianos display all their virtues.

Al despuntar el siglo XVI, en las costas colombianas del Caribe asomaron los primeros galeones. El demonio desembarcaba con ellos. Este invisible pero también tangible personaje, se encontraba atrás, detrás de los cascos. Se había alojado en la conciencia y en las creencias forjadas en los últimos tres mil años. – Jaime Humberto Borja Gómez

CHAPTER 4: EPIC AND THE DEMONIZATION OF AMERINDIANS

In December of 1563 the Audiencia of Santafé de Bogotá commissioned Judge Melchor Pérez de Arteaga to conduct a judicial inquiry into the purpose of a public religious ceremony sponsored by the Muisca chieftain from the town of Ubaque. Judge Pérez de Ateaga visited Ubaque and after conducting the inquiry he ordered the destruction of the sanctuary where the ritual had taken place, the confiscation of the religious objects used during the ceremony and the arrest of some of the indigenous people who participated in it. Pérez de Arteaga also produced an extensive legal report, which includes transcripts of the interrogations he conducted and reveals some of the main challenges faced during the evangelization of the native population from Nueva

Granada.⁶⁷ Chief among those challenges is the notion that ceremonies like the one organized at Ubaque resembled the religious rituals performed by Amerindians before the arrival of the Europeans to the New World, and that the reversion of the natives to their pre-Columbian religious rites was a direct result of the influence of the Devil. In effect, the scribe who recorded the proceedings noted down at the beginning of the document that when Judge Pérez de Arteaga was informed of his assignment he established a connection between the timing of the indigenous ceremony and the date of the celebration of the feast of the birth of Christ, and concluded that this correlation must have been something induced by the Devil himself:

En la ciudad de Santafé, a veinte y seis días del mes de diciembre del dicho año, [1563] yo el escribano de Cámara yuso escripto notifiqué la dicha comisión al ilustre señor licenciado Melchor Pérez de Arteaga, oidor en esta Real Audiencia, el cual dijo que el entiende ser este negocio en que si la dicha junta hubiese efecto y en ella los bailes e idolatrías, borracheras, adulterios e incestos que suelen suceder se deserviría a Dios y su Majestad, especialmente en la sazón presente, a donde los dichos indios habían de entender la conmemoración de los cristianos de tan sumo ministerio como es la natividad de Nuestro salvador y las fiestas de los mártires presentes por donde se entiende ser inducimiento del diablo que conmueve a los dichos indios en deuso y burla de los dichos ministerios de Nuestra Santa Fe que tantas veces están predicados a los dichos indios. (53)

Far from being an anecdotic digression, the scribe's remarks about Judge Pérez de Arteaga's initial reaction constitute an important narrative marker that provides a context

⁶⁷ "El proceso contra el cacique de Ubaque en 1563" [1563 – 1564] 2001. Transcripción de Clara Inés Casilimas y Eduardo Londoño. *Boletín Museo del Oro* . 49 (2001): 49-101.

for the events he is about to narrate and situates them within the discursive and institutional practice of demonology. As such, the explicit reference to the Devil is instrumental not only to characterize the indigenous religious rituals as a form of idolatry, but also to add legitimacy to the acts of violence and repression committed against the Amerindians and to inscribe those acts as an episode in the cosmic confrontation between good and evil, as well as within the triumphant narrative of universal Christian salvation. Accordingly, throughout the entire legal document the validation of the measures supported by the Spanish colonists, in general, and carried out by Judge Pérez de Arteaga, in particular, is accomplished by detaching the indigenous religious rituals from their original symbolism and purpose and depicting them as “abominable excesses,” which went against the principles of natural law and were prohibited by royal decree. In this regard, it is pertinent to point out that each of the questions asked by Judge Pérez de Arteaga⁶⁸ and the answers provided by the Spanish colonists at Ubaque render the indigenous religious ritual as an act of open defiance against Spanish rule by aligning with meticulous precision the description of the ceremony with the precepts given by Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda as a justification for war. As noted by critics like Rolena Adorno and Jaime Humberto Borja Gómez, Sepulveda justified war against Amerindians using a fourfold argument:

La primera es que siendo por naturaleza siervos los hombres bárbaros, incultos e inhumanos, se niegan a admitir la dominación de los más prudentes, poderosos y perfectos. La segunda causa que hace alegado es el desterrar las torpezas nefandas y el portentoso crimen de devorar carne humana, crímenes que ofenden a la naturaleza, para que sigan dando culto a los demonios. [The third] es de mucho

⁶⁸ One of the recurring question during the interrogation was: “sabe que el dicho cacique de Ubaque es

peso para afirmar la justicia de esta guerra, el salvar de graves injurias a muchos inocentes mortales a quienes estos bárbaros inmolaban todos los años. En cuarto lugar, que la religión cristiana debe ser propagada por medio de la predicación evangélica siempre que se presente ocasión para ello. (qtd in Borja Gómez 51)

Accordingly, in the records of the interrogation the Muisca chieftain from Ubaque is described as a despotic ruler, and the indigenous ceremony is reduced to ‘idolatry,’ ‘adultery,’ ‘drinking,’ and ‘human sacrifices.’ As a result, the commission assigned to Judge Pérez de Arteaga and the “exemplary punishment” of the indigenous population appear as justified on the grounds that the indigenous religious rituals involved acts considered abhorrent according to European cultural norms and commonly associated with the Devil or its agents. All in all, the concerns of the members of the Real Audiencia and the measures taken by Judge Pérez de Arteaga are expressions of two widely held beliefs among Europeans during the sixteenth century: on one hand, that the Devil was a real historical actor, and on the other, that in some instances colonization was understood as a religious struggle aimed to extirpate idolatry and the devil from the newly acquired territories.⁶⁹

Among the texts written by Spaniards during the sixteenth century the most detailed exposition of the belief in the Devil and its influence in the New World can be found in José de Acosta’s description of Inca and Aztec religion which he included in book V of his *Historia Natural y Moral de las Indias* (1590). Relying heavily on scriptural references, Acosta attempted to explain the existence of idolatry among Amerindians by arguing that the Devil, out of false pride and hatred for human kind, had

malo y perverso e idólatro e que ha muerto y mata muchos indios” (61, 64, 65, 67).

⁶⁹ This mentality and its use among British and Spanish explorers to justify imperial expansion during the sixteenth century and seventeenth centuries are the subject Jorge Cañizarez-Esguerra’s book *Puritan Conquistadors: Iberianizing the Atlantic, 1550 – 1700*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 2006.

been able to dupe the natives into worshipping natural phenomena, man-made images and statues, and the deceased bodies of their ancestors and was responsible for all the forms of ‘sinfulness’ and ‘absurdities’ practiced by the indigenous people of Mexico and Perú. For Acosta the Devil was a deceitful tyrant who enjoyed uncontested sovereignty over the people and territory of the New World, and who strove constantly to mock Christian sacraments and beliefs (254 – 328). Fernando Cervantes has indicated, nevertheless, that José de Acosta’s negative assessment of Inca and Aztec religion should be interpreted as part of a change of attitude among Europeans concerning the nature of Amerindians. Although initially there had been two competing views, one portraying Amerindians as primeval innocent and noble savages, and one representing them as bestial and demonic creatures, by the middle of the sixteenth century, argues Cervantes, “a negative demonic view of Amerindian cultures had triumphed and its influence was seen to descend like a thick fog upon every statement officially and unofficially made on the subject” (8).

In a manner similar to the legal document produced by Judge Pérez de Arteaga and the texts written by the Jesuit José de Acosta in Perú, the texts written by the earlier generations of Spanish historians and poets who described the exploration and colonization of Nueva Granada during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries all share a predominantly negative and demonic view of Amerindians. Jaime Humberto Borja Gómez has reminded us how in his *Recopilación Historial Resolutoria de Santa Marta y el Nuevo Reino de Granada* (1575) Fray Pedro de Aguado wrote that he had spent many years of his life in:

la predicación y conversión de los idólatras que como bestias vivían en el Nuevo Reino de aquellas Indias en servicio del demonio. (2)

Accordingly, in *Conquista y Descubrimiento del Nuevo Reino de Granada*, the seventeenth century *criollo* writer Juan Rodríguez Freyle describes the Spanish conquest as a triumph over the monarchy the devil had established over the Musicas Indians:

La monarquía que el demonio tenía establecida en este mundo desde el pecado de Adán hasta la muerte de nuestro Redentor quedó destruida, pero no le dejaron de quedar a este enemigo común algunos rastros, particularmente entre gentiles y paganos que carecen del conocimiento del verdadero Dios, y estos naturales estuvieron en esta ceguedad hasta su conquista, por lo cual el demonio se hacía adorar de ellos, y que le sirviesen con muchos ritos y ceremonias. (Rodríguez Freyle 36)

Furthermore, in another section of his *Historia* Rodríguez Freyle writes:

En ser lujuriosos y tener muchas mujeres y cometer tantos incestos, sin reservar hijas ni madres, en conclusion bárbaros, sin ley ni conocimiento de Dios, porque solo adoraban al demonio, y a éste tenían por maestro, de donde se podían conocer que tales serían los discípulos. (17)

In the past decade critics like Jaime Humberto Borja Gómez and Álvaro Félix Bolaños have studied the rhetorical scaffolding of the texts written by Fray Pedro de Aguado and Fray Pedro Simón respectively, and have shown at length how demonization was embedded in the discourses constructed to represent Amerindians.⁷⁰ Likewise, the

⁷⁰ For the study of demonology in Nueva Granada in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries see Jaime Humberto Borja's *Rostros y Rastros del Demonio en la Nueva Granada: Indios, negros, judíos, y otras huestes de Satanás*. For the representation of Amerindians in Aguado's *Recopilación Historial* see *Los indios medievales de Fray Pedro de Aguado* by the same autor. For the demonization of Amerindians in Fray Pedro Simón see Alvaro Felix Bolaño's *Barbarie y Canibalismo en la retórica colonial: los indios Pijaos de Fray Pedro Simón*. For the demonization of Amerindians in Rodríguez Freyle's writings see chapter I – VII of *El Carnero*.

historian Jorge Canizares-Esguerra has recently pointed out the presence of demonology in the heroic poems written by Juan de Castellanos. In his book *Puritan Conquistadors: Iberianizing the Atlantic, 1550 – 1700*, Canizares-Esguerra places Castellanos' writings under the category of "satanic epics," a term he uses to refer to epic poems written in Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, and English during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and whose plots revolve around the portrayal of Christian heroes fighting satanic enemies.⁷¹ More specifically, Canizares-Esguerra contends that Castellanos' heroic poems are "organized around the premise that the discovery and settlement of America pitted the forces of evil against the conquistador Christian heroes" (40).

To support this interpretation, Canizares-Esguerra provides a typological and allegorical interpretation of the frontispiece of the first volume of Castellanos' *Elegías de varones ilustres de las Indias* (1589) and eloquently argues that the image "makes explicit the Biblical inspiration for the holy violence unleashed by the Spaniards on the natives [of the New World]" and "colonization becomes a fulfillment of Biblical, apocalyptic prophesies, [and] an act of liberation and wrathful divine punishment" (35). According to Canizares-Esguerra, moreover, the frontispiece exalts the navigational prowess of Habsburg Spain and their definitive triumph over the Devil, who "had prevented Europeans from crossing the Atlantic and had kept America's native people tyrannized and the resources and marvels of the New World hidden" (32).

⁷¹ In the specific case of Iberian satanic epics the author traces the use of the discourse of demonology, not only in canonical works like Luis Vaz de Camões' *Os Lusíadas* (1572) and Alonso de Ercilla's *La Araucana* (1569, 1578 and 1589), but also in lesser known poems like Jose de Anchieta's *De Gestis Meude de Saa* (1563), Gabriel Lobo Lasso de la Vega's *Mexicana* (1594), and Lope de Vega's *La Dragontea* (1598), among others. It is clear that the author's goal is not to historicize each source, but to highlight the overarching motifs that are present in the normative Spanish poems and later resurface in British texts like Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queen* (1590), John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667) or William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (1623).



Frontispiece to Juan de Castellanos' *Primera parte de las Elegías de varones ilustres de las Indias* (1598).

Chief among Cañizares-Esguerra's contributions in his exploration of the satanic epics, and of the circulation of the discourse of demonization in the larger Atlantic world in general, is the compilation of abundant concrete examples that show how Iberian and Puritan colonizers alike thought of the devil as a deceitful tyrant who enjoyed uncontested sovereignty over the New World and ruled despotically over Amerindians at the time of the Europeans' arrival. In effect, Canizares-Esguerra demonstrates how this particular worldview combined with a sense of providential national election led Iberian

and British colonists to view their efforts ultimately as an act of liberation. Incidentally, as colonization progressed, the same religious mentality and the setbacks caused by indigenous resistance, storms, earthquakes, epidemics, pirate attacks, and the loss of political and economic autonomy led colonists to develop a siege mentality and to cast the aggressions against their enemies in eschatological terms.

However, there is to date no in depth analysis of the demonization of Amerindians in the actual verses written by Castellanos. Therefore, taking Fernando Cervantes, Jaime Humberto Borja Gómez and Jorge Canizarez-Esguerra's insights as my starting point, in the pages that follow I will explore the demonization of Amerindians through the analysis of several episodes in which Castellanos employs different types of literary models or tropes in order to demonize Amerindians, sanctify the violence perpetrated against them as holy, and praise the deeds accomplished through the colonization effort; thus, framing the enterprise of conquest as a sacred war to defeat the Devil.

THE STORY OF CAPTAIN JUAN DE SALAS AND IBERIAN TALES OF CAPTIVITY.

The first example I will cite to illustrate the demonization of Amerindians in Castellanos' writing is the story of the abduction and imprisonment of Captain Juan de Salas at the hands of Carib Indians. This narrative appears in a two canto poem entitled "Elegía II," which deals with Columbus' second trip to the New World and with the death of Diego de Arana,⁷² the explorer appointed as leader of the thirty-nine men who stayed at Fuerte de la Navidad while Columbus returned to Spain and who were killed by

⁷² Castellanos mistakenly refers to Diego de Arana as 'Rodrigo de Arana,' but most sources agree that the name of the sailor who served as alguacil of Columbus fleet and who was left in charge of the Fuerte de la Navidad was Diego de Arana. See Bartolomé de las Casas' *Historia General de la Indias* and Hernando Colon's *Historia del Almirante*.

local Indians. I consider that “Elegía II” and the narrative about Captain Juan de Salas are emblematic of Castellanos’ literary and ideological agenda not only because they provide the first detailed references to Amerindians ever written or published by Castellanos, but also because, to construct a preeminently negative representation of Amerindian cultures, Castellanos deploys for the first time several narrative strategies to which he would return repeatedly throughout the rest of his writing. These strategies include the use of digressions to create suspense and illustrate specific aspects of the larger narrative thread, and the inclusion of autobiographical references to lend verisimilitude to his accounts:

Y pues quiero tratar de cosa cierta,
si con buenos alguna cosa valgo,
no te pese lector que me divierta,
para que deste pueda decir algo
pues casi nos estamos en la puerta
y de las dichas islas no me salgo;
recogeréme bien en el estilo,
y volveré después a nuestro hilo.

Este que padeció fortunas malas,
y el hado por allí le fue siniestro
sabrán que se llamaba Joan de Salas,
antiguo capitán, soldado diestro;
y en medio de los tiros y las balas
En mocedad fue compañero nuestro,
Ejercitándonos por tierra y agua
En las crueles de Cubagua

Año de tres quinientos y cincuenta,
estando Joan de Salas en Guayana,
puerto del Burinquen, con mas de treinta
mancebos de valor y buena fama;
esta caribe gente vil, sangrienta,
a hacer sus entradas se derrama,
para hartar de carne razonable
aquella hambre toda detestable. (*Elegías* Part I 127)

In effect, even though the events surrounding the abduction and imprisonment of Juan de Salas supposedly took place in 1550, Castellanos inserted the story at the heart of

a poem dealing with events that had taken place almost sixty years earlier to suggest that the experience endured by Salas encapsulates the experience faced by Diego de Arana and the rest of the men who stayed at the Fuerte de la Navidad. But, since the authenticity of the narration is anchored in the narrator's claim to have known personally the protagonist and to have participated with him in campaigns of exploration ("en mocedad fue compañero nuestro"), readers are urged to see Juan de Salas as a double of Diego de Arana, and the narrator as a sort of double of both of these two characters as well. Two interpretative problems that arise from the use of these narrative strategies are that the information included in what is preeminently a rhetorical move has been used to reconstruct the trajectory of Castellanos' life and that a purposely distorted image of Amerindians created to justify external colonialism continues to be used today to feed prejudices against indigenous communities in Colombia and justify internal colonialism.

In its conception of the protagonist, plot, language, theme and narrative structure the tale of colonist Juan de Salas reproduces the same lax generic framework of the captivity tales that became popular in Spain during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Captivity tales dealt primarily with the tribulations endured by Christians who were abducted by Barbary corsairs and later sold to the highest bidder in the slave markets of Algiers, Tunis, or Constantinople, or kept as prisoners until ransomed. Such narratives were often narrated in the first person, appeared embedded within larger narratives, and were typically organized around key episodes which included the initial abduction of the Christian, the description of the physical and spiritual ordeals endured while kept as a prisoner or as a slave, the attempts to escape, the requests for ransoms, the miraculous intercession of God or the Virgin Mary which usually resulted in the liberation of the captives, the journey home, and the reunification of the former captives with their families. Some additional elements which could heighten the intrigue of this

basic plot arrangement would be the description of ravaging storms, the development of complicated love stories, and the description of the temptations that sometimes lured captives to abandon Christianity and convert to Islam.

When read from the perspective of the narratives described above, it is clear that Castellanos had in mind the sensationalist stories that describe Ottoman-Islamic captivity when he wrote the story of colonist Juan de Salas. The tale begins with the imprisonment of Salas after an 'armada' of Carib Amerindians launches an attack on the port of Guayana on the island of Borinquen (present day Puerto Rico) and proceeds to raid the vessel where Salas had been sleeping. Salas' first reaction is to escape but eventually he puts up a heroic fight until most of his companions are dead and he is left with no other option but to turn himself in. Subsequently, the story reaches its climatic stage with the description of the protagonist's dramatic escape one night when his captors have passed out after engaging in a decadent ceremony involving heavy drinking, debauchery, and cannibalism. At this point in the narration the exemplarity of the role assigned to Juan de Salas acquires an even greater significance because he not only manages to free himself but also leads a group of Indian captives into freedom. Finally, the tale concludes with the successful return of the protagonist to his community and the reunification with his distraught mother, who is also a colonist on the Island of Margarita.

While narrating this story Castellanos deliberately draws the attention of the readers to the captivity narratives by using the epithet 'cautivo' (captive) to refer to Salas and by having the Carib Indians refer to their prisoners in the same way. As is characteristic of Iberians' captivity tales, furthermore, the protagonist and his mother are portrayed as exemplary pious Christians and the narrator gives a great deal of consideration to the role played by God and the Virgin Mary in the protagonist's ability to remain alive and to achieve his final liberation. However, while it is obvious that

Castellanos reproduced a script also used by several other writers, what remains to be explored are the implications and consequences of the author's choice, and particularly the unique image of Amerindians that results from casting them as the new Moors, and from dislodging and shifting the setting where the war against the infidels was taking place, from the shores of the Mediterranean and North Africa, to the newly discovered islands in the Caribbean basin.

Several other writers before and after Castellanos appropriated a similar generic structure and seized on the great opportunity this genre offers to explore the intricacies of cultural contact and exchange, reflect on the lasting scars of intense trauma or explore the inadequacies of language to express it. Miguel de Cervantes, for instance, arguably the most famous captive of them all, was the first author to dramatize the experience of captivity on the theatrical stage and throughout his career he returned often to the theme of captivity to create texts that even today continue to inspire readers to reflect on boundaries of human freedom or on the effects that a prolonged and close contact with foreign societies has on a person's sense of religious, cultural and national identity.⁷³ However, if Cervantes' attempts are by and large successful, Castellanos' captivity tale falls short not only because of the lack of psychological depth of the characters but primarily as a result of the burden placed by the weight of the author's own cultural and ideological biases. To put it in other words, in Castellanos' captivity tale the protagonist (Juan de Salas) as well as his antagonists (the Amerindians) emerge as rigid and one-dimensional characters owing to the authors' insistent effort to inscribe each group within

⁷³ The Barbary captivity was staged by Cervantes in *El Trato de Argel* and *Los baños de Argel* and different approaches to the theme of captivity also appear in the novelas: *El amante liberal*, *Los baños de Argel*, and *La gran sultana*. On the topic of captivity in Cervantes' works see Maria Antonia Garces' *Cervantes in Algiers: a captive's tale*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2002. Cory Reed's "Harems and Eunuchs: Ottoman-Islamic Motifs of Captivity in "El celoso extremeño." *Bulletin of the Hispanic Studies* 76 (1999): 199-214.

absolute and opposing categories in order to anchor the righteousness of the conquest on the notion that the Spanish explorers (Christians) were culturally and morally superior than the (idolatrous and demonic) Amerindians. In this sense, even though at the time Castellanos' strategy must have seem bold and original, in hindsight the narrative emerges as a perversely clever appeal to some of the most deeply rooted fears and cultural prejudices of contemporary Europeans in order to make known what was unknown to them (the New World) and clear the name of some of the individuals who were accused of improprieties and excesses while carrying out the enterprise of conquest.

Interestingly enough, Castellanos wrote "Elegía II" and the tale of Juan de Salas at a time when the indigenous population of the Caribbean basin had already been drastically decimated through disease, killings or excessive work, and Spaniards had been able to gain the upper hand in securing military control of that geographic area and were well on their way in the process of colonizing the former lands of the Aztecs, the Incas and the Muisca. Yet, this period coincided with a heightened interest in the war against infidels due to the constant threat of the advance of the Ottoman Empire.

Critics like Giovanni Meo Zilio have argued that in writing "Elegía II" and the story of Juan de Salas, Castellanos' main concern was not the proclamation of Spain's superiority but the accurate rendering of historical events.⁷⁴ Taking for granted that strict historical accuracy was something demanded by sixteenth and seventeenth century readers and a constraint by which contemporary epic poets were bounded, Meo Zilio cites as evidence of Castellanos' historical impartiality the fact that the narrator begins the first canto of "Elegía II" with invocations to Clio and Melpomene, the Greek muses of history and tragedy respectively. According to Meo Zilio, moreover, in the tale of Juan de Salas

⁷⁴ See *Estudio sobre Juan de Castellanos*. Fierenze, Valmartina, 1972. 137 – 182.

Castellanos “se limita a presentar lo real, con rápida y enérgica pincelada de poeta, con discreción y recato de historiador” (146):

Cante Clío los hechos soberanos
de la gente segunda vez venida,
Melpómene los casos inhumanos,
desastres de españoles y caída.
Y la primera sangre de cristianos
que en este nuevo mundo fue vertida;
ponga su caudal pobre mi memoria
en el banco común que es la historia. (*Elegías* Part I124)

In reaching his conclusions, however, Meo Zilio overlooks the fact that references to Clío and Melpomene were common topoi that reappear often in the exordium of epic poems and that if such invocations can be cited as proof of anything, it is only of postulating obliquely Castellanos’ conviction that deeds like the crossing of the Atlantic and the exploration and colonization of the New World were tantamount or superior to the deeds accomplished by the Greeks and the Romans while carrying out their imperial expansions.⁷⁵ Concomitantly, what is made apparent by the allusions to Clío and Melpomene is not necessarily the narrator’s commitment to historical accuracy, but the belief that the exchange between Europeans and the inhabitants of the New World was in essence an encounter between civilization and barbarism, a premise embedded in the blueprint of the genre of epic poetry and patently evident in classic poems like Virgil’s *Aeneid* and Lucan’s *Pharsalia*; and a premise that would ring true to many writers and intellectuals both in Latin America and in Europe, and which Meo Zilio embraces wholeheartedly.

For those readers who make their way through the exordium without grasping the formulation of the encounter between European and Amerindian societies as a clash of

⁷⁵ The same conviction is expressed in the encomiastic sonnets written by Castellanos’ friends to accompany the first volume of the *Elegías*.

civilization against barbarism, Castellanos makes it even more explicit with a self-proclaimed statement of purpose in which he lays out that the intended purpose of the tale is to illustrate the nature of the Amerindians:

Esta ferocidad que se recita,
porque no la juzguéis por desvarío,
la certidumbre della nos incita
a deciros de un amigo mío,
vecino de la isla Margarita,
a quien tomaron estos [the Caribs] un navío,
todos su hombres muertos y cautivos,
pues él y otro no mas quedaron vivos. (*Elegías* Part I 127)

By making this assertion, Castellanos reduces the ambiguity of his poetic discourse and begins to narrow the possibility that readers might interpret the initial phase of the discovery and conquest as anything other than an armed confrontation instigated by the brutish and ferocious Amerindians against the chivalric Christian knights that Providence had chosen to civilize them. The line “esta ferocidad que se recita” refers to the statements made in the two previous stanzas in which the narrator defines the Carib Indians as bellicose and utterly cruel tribes whose cultural and social inferiority when compared to Spaniards is illustrated by their custom of cannibalism:

son tan bravos, feroces y tan diestros
que hacen poca cuenta de los nuestros (*Elegías* Part I 126).

Y todos ellos *comen carne humana*
mejor que la de puercos y venados;
acometen con mas atrevimiento
que tigre que a la caza va hambriento (*Elegías* Part I 127).

As it turns out, by asserting that the story of Juan de Salas is intended to illustrate the ‘ferocious’ nature of the Caribs Indians the narrator also postulates by default that their cultural and social aberrations are to be interpreted in reference to the virtues displayed by Spaniards, particularly to the extent that those virtues are embodied by colonist Juan de Salas. It is for this reason that the narrator goes a great distance to

characterize the protagonist as a courteous, generous, well spoken Christian who embraces all the virtues of the chivalric code, but does not hesitate to vilify the Indians with some of the same epithets that became common clichés also used to refer to Turks and Moors: “Infieles,” “feroces,” “gente vil sangrienta,” “abominable pestilencia,” “salvajes inhumanos,” “bestiales gentes y naciones,” “bestias tan crueles,” “vulgo bestial horrendo,” “gentes llenas de cien mil maldades.”

The stark differences the narrator attributes to the two groups, moreover, are also reinforced through the spatial categories he uses to describe the islands that form the Caribbean basin. Thus, the territory that is still under control of the Caribs is described as “infames islas,” “islas peligrosas” and “tierras de costumbres inhumanas” (131), while the territory where the Spaniards have been able to establish colonies is described as “tierras de cristianos” (131). Accordingly, it would be to the “tierras de cristianos” that Salas would eventually return after regaining his freedom, and taking with him a group of Indians:

Vista por todos esta desventura
de los indios cautivos cuarteados,
vio Juan de Salas buena coyuntura
para persuadir a sus aliados,
diciendo: “no tenéis hora segura,
y todos *moriréis despedazados*,
huyámonos a tierras de cristianos,
que buen tiempo tenemos en las manos.

Vámonos esta noche venidera,
que mucho bien podéis sin ser sentidos,
pues en la fiesta desta borrachera
todos están tan embebecidos;
e yo tengo piragua bien ligera,
comida y aparejos prevenidos”.
respondió la compañía temerosa,
que ya no deseaban otra cosa. (*Elegías* Part I 131)

Be that as it may, the main point I would like to argue is not merely that by inserting the tale of Juan de Salas Castellanos is framing the exploration and colonization of the New World as a continuation of the war against the infidels, and as an event that confronted honorable, heroic, generous, pious and civilized Spaniards against treacherous, selfish, idolatrous and barbaric Amerindians. Nor am I simply indicating that by including this story Castellanos is suggesting that the death of Diego de Arana and the men who stayed at the Fuerte de la Navidad was in essence a tragic event, assuming that they, like the protagonist of the tale, had done nothing to deserve the aggression they received from the natives. Rather more importantly, I am arguing that the main subtext of the tale of Juan de Salas is the notion that the conquest and colonization of the New World is an endeavor underwritten by God and a gratuitous act inscribed in the ever unfolding history of salvation. Accordingly, since the main theme of this tale is not a reflection on the experience of captivity itself but the illustration of certain premises about the discovery and colonization of the New World and the individuals carrying it out, the narrator can skip over the descriptions of the specific ordeals that accompanied the protagonist's imprisonment (beatings, insults, hunger, torture, inclement weather, etc) and focus instead on aspects that highlight God's approval of the conquest and his constant participation on behalf of the Spaniards. As a result, readers can see God's presence and direct intervention at several stages in the narrative. As was noted earlier, for instance, it is God who intervenes so that the Indians treat Salas in an uncharacteristically benign way by not exceeding in their punishments and by giving him preferential treatment. In addition, it is left to the virgin and God arrange the circumstances that allowed for Salas' his release. When read from this perspective, the narrative of Salas' escape and the liberation of the Indian captives aim to express

figuratively the triumph of Christianity over idolatry and the notion that colonization is a selfless salvific act:

Con esta diligencia que replica,
acabo de tres días o cuatro días,
llegaron a San Joan de Puerto Rico
donde vieron cristianas compañías,
y donde no quedo grande ni chico
que no hiciese grandes alegrías,
desterrando la pena recebida
con ver su libertad y su venida.

Y así como milagro descubierto,
que tal les parecía lo que escribo,
infinidad de gentes van al puerto
a ver libertado de captivo,
habiéndolo llorado como muerto
y ahora lo gazajan como vivo,
cada cual ofreciendo su posada
con una caridad bien ordenada.

A todos ellos Salas respondía
hacienda cumplimientos cortesanos;
y con la fatigada compañía
que se escapo de las crueles manos,
a la iglesia se fueron recta vía
a dar gracias a Dios como cristianos,
y en ellas se quedaron nueve días
en santas oraciones y obras pías. (*Elegías* Part I 134)

THE TROPE OF COLONIZATION AS SPIRITUAL GARDENING

Challenging widely held assumptions about the origin of ‘Modern science’ and the role of scientific thought in Early Modern England and Spain, in his book *Puritan Conquistadors* Canizares-Esguerra draws a connection between the discourse of demonology and the way in which Iberian and Puritan colonists interpreted the American landscape. In his view, learned Europeans shared a similar logic for explaining natural

phenomena, and often thought of the American territories as a false paradise that needed to be destroyed in order to be saved. The economic aspects of the New World ‘plantation’ notwithstanding, Canizares-Esguerra contends that the metaphor of sacred gardening permitted colonists to imagine their communities as well-tended gardens amid a hostile and demonic environment; this mentality in turn played an important role in the efforts made by *criollos* to exalt the holiness of local saints and *beatas* like Saint Rose of Lima in Peru, Mariana de Jesús in Ecuador, and Felipe de Jesús in Mexico. Concurrently, Canizares-Esguerra places the colonists’ drive to transform a demonical landscape into a New Jerusalem and their desire to highlight the bountifulness of their respective kingdoms at the core of his interpretation of texts like Bernardo de Balbuena’s *La Grandeza Mexicana* (1604) and Carlos Sigüenza y Góngora’ *Paraiso Occidental* (1683).

The trope of spiritual gardening also proved a very fitting metaphor for Castellanos, and throughout the *Elegías* we can find several different variants of it, including references to the cross as a sacred tree (“planta de santidad, arbol de vida”), planting the cross in the soil of the New World, or referring to the colonists themselves as plants whose roots are firmly attached to the new soil.

One of the earliest examples of the use of the trope of spiritual gardening appears in “Elegía II” and informs Castellanos’ description of the battle that ensued after chieftain Gaona Canari discovered the illicit sexual affair his wife had with one of the Spanish explorers, as discussed in Chapter 1. In effect, the narration of the assault upon the fort begins with the description of an Indian soothsayer invoking the Devil and requesting information about the outcome of the battle:

Consultando con humo de tabaco
al demonio que diga los sucesos,
gozando de tan buena medicina
con una ceremonia tan maligna. (*Elegías* Part I 146)

Once Castellanos has established that the Indians and the Devil are allies, he then moves on to describe the first wave of Indian attacks on the palisade that the Spaniards had built for protection:

Llegados donde estaban, al momento
que vimos el lugar y palizada,
hacen arremetida los que cuento
con furia de temores olvidada
.....

Comienzase la guerra de tal suerte,
que no se vio jamás igual braveza,
juntándonos de golpe con el fuerte
do parecía menos fortaleza; (*Elegías Part I 148*)

The last two verses are particularly important to recognize how Castellanos has set the stage to introduce the trope of colonization as spiritual gardening. The Indian warriors have come close enough and are actually pushing against the wall of the Spanish fort. Yet, in the following verses Castellanos switches from the description of the strength of the fort to endure the attack to the description of the fortitude of Diego de Arana. By doing this Castellanos can literary and symbolically convey the notion that the actual fort that is being built (or better yet, the actual garden that is being planted) is the actual presence of the colonists in the New World, which is what in the end will lead to the expulsion of the Devil from that region:

Arana sacó fuerzas de flaqueza,
Teniendo sanos, cojos y tuyidos
Por orden y concierto repartidos.

Bien ansi como *planta* que derrama
sus *raíces* con poco fundamento
que suele de la más subida *rama*
enviar mas *raíces* y sustento,
para poder con semejante trama
valerse contra gran fuerza de viento,
y al fin padece casos y desmanes
con los tempestuosos huracanes; (*Elegías Part I 148 italics are mine*)

In summary, in his description of the Indian attack upon the Spanish fort Castellanos uses the trope of gardening to symbolically transform the colonists themselves into the palisade that is preventing the Devil from entering. In other words, by comparing the dogged determination of the leader of the explorers (Diego de Arana) to survive the attack to a plant facing a fierce storm, Castellanos encapsulates the notion that colonization was a form of spiritual gardening. Accordingly, the colonizing enterprise becomes both literally and figuratively, the process of deepening the roots in the new ground. As such the choice of metaphor is quite effective, not only because it carries with it the vulnerability that comes from being exposed to harsh weather, but also because it conveys the fierce attachment of the colonist to the new territory.

Likewise, in the fourth canto of “Elegía I” Castellanos strategically employs imagery related to planting to inscribe colonization as the processes of (trans)planting Christianity to the soil of the New World. In this case the use of the trope of gardening is particularly effective because it allows Castellanos to transform what was in essence a mistake and a failure into a success story that prefigures the success of colonization.⁷⁶ The passage involves the narration of the wreck of one of Columbus ships (the Santa María) off the coast of Hispaniola in 1492. Castellanos first describes the shipwreck and then the gloomy response of the sailors who see in this event an ominous foreshadowing of more bad things to come in the near future. However, when Columbus finally intervenes he offers an allegorical interpretation of the shipwreck that transforms it into a pre-figuration of the arrival of Christianity and of the subsequent defeat of over the devil. Accordingly, Columbus inscribes the events surrounding the arrival of Europeans into the New World and the shipwreck itself as part of the unfolding of Christian history.

⁷⁶ On the topic of the presentation of failure as success in Colonial Spanish American writing see Beatriz Pastor *The Armature of the Conquest: Spanish Accounts of the Discovery of America, 1492 – 1589*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1992.

Incidentally, the entire allegory is constructed upon the notion that the submersion of the ship in the waters of the Caribbean Sea and the arrival of the Church in the New World are somewhat akin to the planting of a seed in good soil:

Colón puesto que pena recibia,
con un raro valor disimulaba
y con aquel calor que convenía
a los desconsolados consolaba,
dando reprehensión al que temía
y al que por mal anuncio la juzgaba.
Diciéndoles: “Yo puedo dar razones
con que confunda lustres opiniones.

Puesto tengo por suceso placentero
aqueste que tenéis por lamentable,
y lo que sospechais ser mal agüero
aqueso juzgo yo por favorable;
después lo contareis por admirable;
*porque nave quedar en este suelo
no fue sin provisión del alto cielo.*

Desto daré razón no mal fundada,
sino mejor zanjada que la vuestra,
pues la nave que vemos encallada
quiere decir que con felice diestra
*habemos de tener aquí plantada
la nave de la iglesia madre nuestra*
y queda sobre piedra por indicio
de que es lo principal del edificio.

De manera, que si para lo visto
católicos sentidos dan la llave,
diremos ser la piedra Jesucristo
y el reino de la iglesia ser la llave
y ansí será pesar con placer misto
o por mejor decir todo suave,
pues se pierde navío de madera
y se gana la vida verdadera

A la cual con la lumbre recibida
veremos acudir en nuestros días
*aquesta gente bruta, divertida
en diabólicas idolatrías;*

y acá no la veremos combatida
con las olas de las falsas herejías,
por caer estas tierras en las manos
de reyes fidelísimos cristianos. (*Elegías* Part I 93-4 italics are mine)

The last four verses of Columbus' speech reinforce the notion that Spain had been selected by providence to defend and spread the faith, but by doing so Columbus' words anachronically bestow upon the events surrounding the 'discovery' a religious and imperial rivalry that would only gather full force decades later after the advent of Protestantism.

However, there are several other episodes throughout the *Elegías* in which Castellanos offers far more elaborate and developed versions of this trope. The first episode in which Castellanos uses the trope of spiritual gardening at length is in his narration of the foundation of the town of Concepción de la Vega, one of the earliest settlements established by Spanish explorers in Hispaniola. According to most sources, in 1494 Columbus built a fort that was intended to guard the route to the gold deposits that had been discovered in the Cibao valley. A Spanish settlement known as Concepción de la Vega gradually was established around the fort, and after 1508, when gold was found in significant quantities there, Concepción de la Vega became the first gold boomtown in the continent. By 1510 it was one of the largest and most important European cities in the hemisphere. The town was destroyed and buried by an earthquake on December 2, 1562, and the survivors relocated to the present site on the banks of the Camú River.

Castellanos wrote his account of the foundation of Concepción de la Vega after the town had already been destroyed and he makes no mention of the gold rush. Instead, in "Elegía V" Castellanos offers an allegorical account of the foundation of the town by constructing a narrative that justifies the forceful and violent evangelization of the Indians and inscribes colonization as a battle between Christian forces and the devil.

The passage narrating the foundation of the town of Concepción de la Vega tells the story of how in his second trip to the New World Christopher Columbus ordered the erection of a cross so that the Spanish colonists would worship it. The passage that describes the erection of the cross (“planta de santidad, árbol de vida”) has typological overtones inasmuch as the twelve ‘devout’ sailors appointed by Columbus to construct and to plant the cross are meant to figuratively represent the twelve apostles. On the other hand, by pointing out that the cross was made with wood from a beautiful local tree, Castellanos suggests that the arrival of Columbus on the shores of the New World was not a serendipitous event but something that was already included in God’s divine plan:

En estes sobredichos hemisferios
y por aquellos tiempos venturosos,
se fundaron insignes monasterios
con santos y con dotos religiosos
en parte no vacante de misterios
pues sucedieron casos milagrosos
y mas en esta Vega que señalo
noble por devoción del *santo palo*.

Y ansi fue la verdad, que en estos llanos
por ser población enoblecida
mandaron el Colón y sus hermanos
en la segunda vez de su venida
levantar una cruz a los cristianos,
planta de santidad, árbol de vida
 fueron a ellos doce marineros,
con otros tantos nobles caballeros.

Señaloles Colón una ladera,
opuesta por delante de su viso,
do se manifestaba muy afuera
un árbol bien compuesto, limpio, liso,
de una hermosísima madera,
y tal en proporción cual él lo quiso;
y dicen muchos que después ni antes
no se hallaron plantas semejantes.

El Cristóbal Colón mandó a hacella

a honestos y devotos oficiales;
salió después de hecha cosa bella
plantáronla los hombres principales;
postrándose después delante de ella
presentes muchos indios naturales
adorabala nuestra compañía.
después que la pusieron, cada día. (*Elegías* Part I 204-5)

Not surprisingly, this clear act of spiritual gardening (“plantáronla los hombres principales”) triggers a response from the Devil and eventually leads to a violent confrontation between the forces of good (Christian explorers) and evil (the Devil and the local Indians). One day, after an Indian wizard invokes the devil several times, the Devil informs him that the cross has prevented him from returning to that site and that if they wish for him to come back they will need to completely destroy it. The scene describing the Indians’ violent attempt to fulfill the wishes of the Devil, reminds readers of the suffering and affronts faced by Christ prior to and during his crucifixion. In addition, the notion that the devil has been displaced by the cross conveys not only the sense that the devil was capable of geographical mobility, but also that the edges of the imperial cartography are traced according to the locations where Christians are able to plant the cross:

Después de muchos días, cierto día,
un indio hechicero y adevino
quiso, según costumbre que tenía
hablar con el espíritu malino
allí, como la cruz reconocía
a sus invocaciones nunca vino
hasta tanto que por camino vario
pasó después a otro santuario

Hizo sus ademanes y semblantes
con un nefando y execrable canto,
quejóse del por no le venir antes
habiéndolo llamado tiempo tanto

el diablo le dijo “no te espantes,
que aquella cruz me da muy gran espanto;
por tanto quien contento me desea
póngala donde nunca yo la vea”.

El infiel bestial incontinente
oída del demonio la respuesta
hizo juntar gran número de gente
para quitar la cruz que estaba puesta
en lo cual trabajaron grandemente
pero su vehemencia nada presta
pues cuanto más trabajo se ponía
mucho menos efeto se hacia

Pues como no pudieron arrancalla,
tan grande muchedumbre como era
determinaron luego de quemarla
con cantidad de leños y madera
mas vianla quedar desta batalla
mas sana, mas lucida, mas entera;
al fin como bestiales engañados
pecaban con quedar maravillados

Después que por los nuestros fue sabida
reliquia de tan grande magnificencia,
hiciéronle capilla recogida,
adonde se guardó con gran decencia
y en estos nuestros tiempos es tenida
en gran honor y grande reverencia
y corren por el mundo cantidades
para salud de mil enfermedades. (*Elegías Part I 205-6*)

In the closing stanzas of this episode Castellanos blends the spiritual and the physical conquest into one by extending his gaze over the urban centers erected by the Spaniards on American soil and describing the bountifulness of that garden:

Destos regalos pues están gozando
los desta isla ya bien proveída,
con el justo gobierno del Ovando,
medido por justísima medida;
y la ciudad entonces era cuando
se vido mucho mas engrandecida;
está su población tan compasada

que ninguna se yo mejor trazada. (*Elegías* Part I 206)

In summary, in his narration of the foundation of Concepción de la Vega Castellanos monumentalizes the events surrounding the early phase of the discovery and colonization of Hispaniola, and stresses the notion that colonization is a gratuitous act planned by God to liberate the Indians from an arrogant tyrant (the Devil) who has duped them into worshipping him. Accordingly, the overt message of this narrative is the notion that, through the colonizing effort Spaniards have been able to transform Hispaniola from a bulwark of the devil into an enclosed utopian garden or spiritual plantation where the Christian faith has been able to be transplanted and is now firmly rooted. As such, the plantation of the cross is not only a re-enactment of Christ's battle against the devil at the crucifixion, but also a prerequisite for the flourishing and success of the colonization effort.

THE USE OF THE CROSS AS A WEAPON AGAINST THE DEVIL

For the most part throughout the *Elegías* Castellanos does not provide detailed descriptions of the physical appearance of the Devil, and prefers to describe either the indigenous priests who serve as intermediaries between the Devil and the Amerindian population, or the rites practiced by the Indians when worshipping the Devil. Accordingly, for instance, in the episode of planting the cross at Concepción de la Vega when the Indian soothsayer invoked the Devil he referred to him as an evil spirit (“espíritu maligno”); in this next episode, one of the characters would again refer to the Devil in the same fashion, but the narrative signals a change because Castellanos confronts readers with a Devil that has taken an Indian name (Sobce), appears in human form, and wears the typical attire of the local Indians. As such, this next narrative is particularly poignant,

not only because it shows a progression in Castellanos thought about the Devil and its representation, but also because it attests to the belief that the Devil could enjoy great mobility.

The episode is part of a poem entitled “Elogio de Gaspar de Rodas” which is included in the third installment of the *Elegías*. In the opening verses Castellanos justifies the insertion of this passage by alluding that it would illustrate how the Devil was essentially a trickster who was constantly coming up with new ways to deceive the Indian population. Accordingly, throughout the narrative Castellanos would characterize the Devil as a tyrant who despised and mocked Christian traditions and rituals, and Amerindians as gullible and practically devoid of any free will (“en sus entendimientos torpes” / “gente ignorante vidriosa”). In this regards, Canizares-Esguerra has commented that “it is clear that the way available to the Europeans to explain why the devil had been capable of enslaving the Amerindians as a whole was to claim that the latter were constitutionally naïve and simple minded” (97):

Me pareció ponello por escrito
por decir algo de las invenciones
tramas embustes quel diablo tiene
para cazar las almas miserables
desta gentilidad prompta y atenta
a recibir cualquier desvarío
en el valle de Penco, comarcano
y a la villa de Santafe subyector,
cierto demonio, que por su nombre Sobce
era nombrado, se mostró patente
a todos cuanto vello deseaban,
vestido según indio de la tierra
todo de negro y el cabello largo,
una manta revuelta sobre el hombro. (Elegías Part III 668)

There are three main reasons why the story of the evil Sobce stands out in particular. First, according to Castellanos in his incarnation as an Indian the Devil had a particularly hideous appearance (“pues no podía ser sino tiznado / o por mejor decir fiera

y horrible”) yet, the only people who can see Sobce’s face are those who have not been baptized. Second, Sobce’s latest deception involves mocking the biblical story of Noah’s flood and threatening to put an end to the Spanish subjugation of the Indians by triggering a flood that would drown all Spanish colonists. In this sense, it as if the tyranny of the Devil over the Indians unfolds as a bizarre inversion or the reverse side of the Christian history of Salvation. In effect, much like in the story of Noah’s flood, Sobce instructs the Indian population to gather seeds and roots to be planted after the flood and sends three (false) prophets to warn the Indians where they will need to go to take refuge and to announce the imminent end for the Spaniards:

tres hombres viejos, grandes hechiceros,
los cuales fueron por la tierra toda
apuestos desvaríos predicando,
cuyas palabras fueron admitidas
no menos que si fueran pronunciadas
con aquel celo del profeta Jonás,
en tal manera que de los ladinos
que estaban en la villa de Antioquia
el año de setenta y seis, a doce
del mes de marzo, no se halló indio
ni india que del pueblo no huyese
a las alturas yermas donde Sobce
les había mandado que subiesen
lo cual visto por nuestros españoles
la mañana que los echaron menos,
desta gran novedad inadvertidos
y con sospecha de levantamiento
siguieron el alcance por el rastro
hasta tanto que ya dieron con ellos,
gran cantidad de lágrimas vertiendo,
los unos y los otros lamentando;
y preguntándoles porque huían
y cual era la causa de su lloro
les respondieron “!pobres de vosotros,
cuan ayunos estáis del mal futuro
y de la muerte que tenéis cercana
pues antes de tres días a lo largo
ninguno de vosotros terna vida

en aguas inundantes ahogados!”
al fin les declararon el misterio
del horrible diluvio que esperaban,
contra los españoles destinado
que celebraron ellos con mas risa;
y aunque por muchas vías procuraban
ponellos en razón y desengaño
me dice Juan de Vargas que tenían
aquella vanidad tan arraigada
en sus entendimientos torpes, como
si vieran los efectos ya presentes. (*Elegías* Part III 670-1)

Nevertheless, the most remarkable aspect of this story is the fact that it develops at length the colonists’ belief that the cross (“santo palo” / “aguda daga”) was actually a powerful weapon that could be used against the devil. The trope of using the cross as a weapon surfaces when the news of Sobce’s threat spread across the area and reached a colonist named Juan Baptista Vaquero, who had learned to speak the indigenous language and had gained the trust of the local Indian population. Upon hearing the news Baptista laughs at the prophecy of a “new” flood, and rebukes the “infame, sucio, vil y fementido” Sobce, and demands that the three soothsayers who are disseminating his message be brought into his presence. Holding the cross in his hands (“una cruz en las manos ansi dijo”) Baptista reprimanded the three foolish and startled men (“a los tres tontos asombrados”), who were shooting fire out of their eyes (“lanzaban fuego por los ojos”), and resembled something coming from hell (“parecían infernales bultos”):

Ministros de maldad, engañadores,
revestidos de espíritu malino,
porque venid a ser predicadores
de tan desvariado desatino
ciegos embarbascados en errores,
y ajenos del católico camino?
En llegando la hora de esa ira
conoceréis al claro ser mentira.

El que tenéis por dios es un tirano
bajo, suez, de condición horrenda;

y si quien lo crió no le da la mano
seguros estaréis que no os ofenda:
el verdadero Dios y soberano
quiere que por aquí su fe se estienda
y a los que lo creemos y adoramos
nos ha de conservar donde estamos
Y la cautelas frívolas y engaños
que en vuestros corazones Sobce planta,
no serán parte por eternos años
para desarraigar la gente santa:
vernán sobre vosotros esos daños
si no creéis lo que nuestra fe canta;
pero si lo creyerdes con bautismo,
escapareis del infernal abismo. (*Elegías* Part III 672)

As it turns out, with this speech and the power of the cross, Baptista is able to persuade two of the false prophets of the Devil's deception, but the oldest of the three men remains steadfastly allied to the Devil and challenges Baptista to a sort of duel to determine who was the most powerful, the Christian God or the Devil. The competition proposed by the old shaman involved displaying control over nature and lifting some rocks from the ground and sending them flying up into the air:

Pues dices que tu dios es verdadero
en nombre suyo quiero que delante
desta *gente ignorante, vidriosa,*
hagas alguna cosa tal que crea
que milagrosa sea, pues yo fío
en el nombre mío, que desdeñas,
mover las grandes peñas deste suelo,
y dejen, dando vuelo, su cimiento
bailando por el viento con zumbido;
y ansi será creído quien hiciere
aquello que dijere: yo ya salgo;
di tú que harás algo, Juan Baptista,
porque desta conquista claro quede
quien es el que mas puede destes dioses. (*Elegías* Part III 673 italics are mine)

At this juncture, the Indian sorcerer starts to make offerings and to invoke the forces of the Devil to raise the rocks from the ground but he fails miserably. When faced with this outcome Baptista does not challenge the notion that the Devil could display a

tremendous power, but instead mocks the ceremony performed by the Indian soothsayer and explains that the true miracle that has taken place is that the greater power of the cross has defeated the Devil:

Da grandes voces porque no te entiende,
que debe reposar y estar durmiendo;
conoce las mentiras que te vende
ese falso, traidor, sucio y horrendo;
mira cuál es y a quien haces regalo,
pues siempre huye deste *santo palo*,
por ser similitud de la *cruz santa*
vencedora del infernal alarde,
bandera que do quiera que se planta
no para con extremos do cobarde,
y siempre que la ve della se espanta,
dando la vuelta sin que mas aguarde,
porque la *cruz* le dio golpe terrible,
y tal que sanar del es imposible,
y como perro que padeció llaga
que sin la mano de quien fue herido
hace meneos y otra vez amaga
vuelve huyendo de temor vencido,
ansi viendo la *cruz*, *aguda daga*
con que fue lastimado y abatido,
el mal aventurado por no vella
a grande priesa va huyendo della. (*Elegías* Part III 674)

THE TROPE OF CANNIBALISM

In this section I am not interested in participating in the debate over whether cannibalism was a widespread practice among Amerindians or not, or over whether if it indeed existed, cannibalism was nothing more than an aberration or a ritualistic practice with religious significance. I am simply stressing the fact that the references to cannibalism that appear in Castellanos' text are, for the most part, in association with a religious sensibility which attributed to the Devil the blame for instigating such a

practice. As such, according to Castellanos, the practice of dismembering bodies and eating human flesh was further evidence of the tyranny of the Devil over the Amerindians and a justification for the conquest as a holy war. In this regard, the evidence gathered by Castellanos is nothing short of overwhelming.

In his comments about the use of the trope of cannibalistic consumption by Iberian and English colonists, Canizares-Esguerra highlights the startling descriptions of cannibalism that appear in Pedro Cieza de León's *La crónica del Perú* (1554). According to Canizares-Esguerra, Cieza de León "spares no detail as he describes how town after town, the Amerindians [from Nueva Granada] ate their neighbors as if the latter were farm animals." Moreover, they "killed pregnant women, sliced open their bellies, and ate their babies roasted... [and] also had human slaughterhouses, with trunks, legs, arms, heads, and entrails dangling off the roofs like 'bratwursts' (morcillas) and 'salami' (longanizas)" (90). I am not aware whether Castellanos ever met Cieza de León or ever had the chance to come across some of his writings. However, there are several passages from the *Elegías* that dwell on the most gruesome details of cannibalism and describe this practice using a very similar language.

One episode involving cannibalism that is worth highlighting is the story of a female character named La Gaitana, which was included in Part III of the *Elegías* in an eleven-canto poem written in honor of Sebastián de Benalcázar. At first Castellanos characterizes La Gaitana as a distraught widow whose suffering is compounded by having to witness the death by burning of her son for refusing to concede vassalage to the Spaniards. Yet as the narrative progresses La Gaitana eventually emerges as an anti-heroine and she is described by Castellanos as an evil and accursed old woman ("mala vieja macilenta" [422] "vieja maldita" [438]) who rejoices in drinking Christian blood: "perdida por beber sangre cristiana" (435). In my view the most noticeable aspects of the

story of La Gaitana, and particularly the references to cannibalism, should be read as a response to the ideological implications of Tegulada's dramatic search for the dead body of her husband in cantos XXI and XXII of the second installment of *La Araucana*.⁷⁷

In "Épica, Fantasma y Lamento: la retórica del duelo en *La Araucana*" Raúl Marrero-Fente analyses the episode of Tegualda and highlights the ideological implications of her lament within a poetic discourse that is already highly fragmented. According to Marrero-Fente, by ceding the word to a member of the opposing camp, Ercilla not only affirms the heroism of the Spaniards by presenting them as capable of lending a hand to a distraught widow, but also (and perhaps more importantly to understand Castellanos' imitation), Ercilla:

muestra una visión del enemigo araucano como seres humanos que sufren y que viven la guerra desde la experiencia del dolor de la muerte de sus familiares. Es precisamente la representación de estos sentimientos en el personaje de Tegualda- en especial el sentimiento del dolor humano ante la muerte por medio de la retórica del duelo- el recurso de interpelación universal que por su capacidad de apelar a todos los seres humanos crea una empatía favorable en los lectores. Ercilla crea por medio de la retórica del duelo del personaje de Tegualda una experiencia estética capaz de generar emociones contradictorias porque a la misma vez pueden originar sentimientos de pena, de dudas o de rechazo a la guerra. ("Épica, Fantasma y Lamento" 15-6)

⁷⁷ For the importance of the representation of the conduct of Amerindians during and after battles see Rolena Adorno's "The Warrior and the War Community: Constructions of the Civil Order in Mexican Conquest History." *Dispositio* 14.36-38 (1989): 225-246.

As we shall see, however, in Castellanos' imitation of the story of Tegualda there is an unvarying and total absence of empathy for the side of the Amerindians and there are no references that question or undermine the necessity or the validity of war. Quite the contrary, the key to understanding Castellanos' characterization of La Gaitana as well as the significance of her story is the fact that the narrative of La Gaitana appears embedded in a poem in which the references to cannibalism are ubiquitous and in which the violence inflicted by the Spaniards upon the Amerindians is sanctified by God's endorsement. In the following three stanzas Castellanos first describes how the local Indians harass day and night the outpost built by the Spaniards, and then comments on how every time the ferocious Indian warriors ("bárbaro traidor, feroz y crudo") are able to capture one of the Indians serving the Christian explorers, they kill, dismember, and devour the victim:

Matábanles los indios de servicio
al descuido menor que se tuviese
y en un momento, ya varón, ya hembra
por la cruel canalla se desmiembra.

Partiéndolos pedazo por pedazo
y dividiendo cada coyuntura,
el uno lleva pierna, el otro brazo,
otro las tripas sin el asadura
otros riñones, hígados y vaso
si no podía más por la presura
y revuelta de la gente malina
andando todos a la rebatina.

Sus bocas son no menos carniceras
que las de bravos tigres y leones
antes aventajados a las fieras
hienas cocodrilos y dragones
exceden en crueldad a las panteras
y tienen muy peores condiciones
y aun el día de hoy gente de España
no les puede quitar aquella maña. (*Elegías* Part III 367-8)

Accordingly, after establishing that the Christian forces are fighting against demonic cannibals Castellanos cites a speech by Sebastián de Benalcazar, the leader of the expedition, who in turn frames colonization as a descent to hell:

Será pues la primera nuestra lanza
que tome posesiones en la tierra
donde demás del aprovechamiento
terneis para con Dios merecimiento.

Pues no cebará tanto su garganta
en estas tierras de infernal abismo,
dándoles mandamientos de fe santa,
y el agua de católico bautismo;
haremos de ciudades nueva planta
en medio deste rudo barbarismo,
para que vengan en conocimiento
de aquel que les dio y les da sustento. (*Elegías* Part III 370)

I think that recognizing the overall context in which Castellanos introduces the figure of La Gaitana is important because otherwise we may be tempted to lose sight of the traits that link her or set her apart from Ercilla's Tegualda. Notice, for instance, that when La Gaitana first appears in the poem Castellanos establishes a connection between her and Tegualda by characterizing La Gaitana as a woman who is experiencing intense suffering owing to the death of a close relative at the hands of the Spaniards. However, even though the circumstances and even some of her words remind us of Tegualda, unlike Ercilla's heroine La Gaitana turns her intense suffering into a call for violence and vengeance against Spaniards. Therefore, within the overall scheme of the poem, the figure of La Gaitana only serves to confirm the validity of Spanish colonialism:

Pertinaces en este mal motivo,
juntose luego cantidad de rama,
traen después del mísero captivo
en presencia de aquella que lo ama:
de fuscos humos rodeado vivo
su vida consumió la viva llama;
y ya podéis sentir que sentiría

la miserable madre que lo vía.

Decía: “!Hijo mío! Cuan incierta
es a los confiados confianza!
¡Para cuantas borrascas abre puerta
un brevesillo rato de bonanza!
hijo, que sin tu vida quedo muerta,
mas no lo quedaré para venganza:
bien puedo yo morir, pero tus penas
de pagármelas han con las septenas.’ (*Elegías* Part III 386)

Another important indicator that Castellanos tailored the figure of La Gaitana as an antithesis of Tegualda is the fact that, like his predecessor, Castellanos splits the narration of the story of La Gaitana into more than one canto, and that in the opening stanzas of one of those cantos he re-introduces La Gaitana by offering a catalogue of famous women that is meant to recall the opening of canto XXII from *La Araucana*. Nevertheless, while Ercilla associates Tegualda with a long and prestigious list of noble and virtuous women, Castellanos uses a misogynistic discourse to associate his female heroine with a genealogy of cruel and violent women from antiquity. Among them Castellanos includes Medea, who not only killed and dismembered the body of her own brother and scattered his remains in distant places, but also stabbed to death her own children to avenge the affronts of her husband Jason. Tulia who ran over the dead body of her father with her chariot; Scila, who in the mist of a siege betrayed her father after falling in love with the commander of the enemy army; and Procne the wife of Tereo, who is said to have murdered and prepared a meal with her own nephew in order to avenge her husband’s rape of her sister Filomela. When combined, all these references aim to prepare readers for the equally gruesome description of the abhorrent conduct of the Amerindians with respect to the dead bodies of the members of their own group. Moreover, in a manner similar to how Ercilla invites the readers to see the actions of Tegualda as surpassing any of those of virtuous women from the past, Castellanos hints

that since what is at stake (the conquest) is far more compelling than the circumstances that triggered the violence of women like Medea, Tullia, Scyllia and Procne, (“y si por causa débil y liviana / aun suelen concebir odios mortales”) the demonic nature of La Gaitana should allow readers to place her at the pinnacle of her violent lineage:

Ningún animal hay de cosecha
tan cruel, tan protervo ni tan fiero,
cuanta flaca mujer si se pertrecha
(para vengarse) de furor severo;
y aun con matar no queda satisfecha,
siendo de las venganzas lo postrero,
pues muchas de ellas con los cuerpos muertos
usaron detestables desconciertos.

Estas costumbres son de largos años
entre mujeres varias insolentes,
no solamente para con extraños
en nación y linaje diferentes,
pero también se estienden estos daños
a los padres, hermanos y parientes,
porque su crueldad y su demencia
caminan sin que hagan diferencia.

Destá bestialidad testigo sea,
sin que de mas hagamos escrutinio,
el torpísimo hecho de Medea,
o de Tullia la hija de Tarquino,
o Scyllia que por apetencia fea
quiso quitar al padre su dominio,
con otras cuyo pecho furibundo
causó notables daños en el mundo.

Y si por causa débil y liviana
aun suelen concebir odios mortales,
¿Qué podremos decir de la Gaitana
revestida de furias infernales?
contra la poca gente castellana
convoca multitud de naturales,
y para que mayor venganza vea
a todos los aguija y espolea.

Nunca jamás siguieron al de Tracia

tantos absortos en su dulces sones,
cuantos a ella vistos su desgracia,
querellas, lloros y lamentaciones:
no faltaban razones y eficacia
que mueven los humanos corazones;
y ansí tanto valió con estas gentes
que de su voluntad están pendientes. (*Elegías* Part III 421-2)

In summary, when we highlight the context in which the story of La Gaitana appears and recognize the steps Castellanos takes to imitate and distance himself from Ercilla, we also recognize that in the end the story of La Gaitana (particularly the references to cannibalism) is also a rewriting of the epic topos involving the fate of the anonymous warriors who die during battle; it is in reference to that topos that Castellanos highlights in the above cited catalogue that cruel and violent women like La Gaitana “con los cuerpos muertos / usaron detestables desconciertos.”

To set the stage for the actual description of the aftermath of a battle, Castellanos first comments how one occasion La Gaitana is said to have instigated the Indian chieftain Pigoanza to fight against the Spaniards. Chieftain Pigoanza heeded her advice and after summoning his troops Pigoanza delivered a speech in which he enticed his troops to fight with the hope of not only defeating the Spaniards but also drinking their blood and eating the flesh of Christians:

Ea pues, valerosa compañía!
poned los pies en orden y las manos,
y caminemos por secreta vía,
no por campos abiertos ni por llanos;
saldréis mañana, porque esotro día
hemos de beber sangre de cristianos,
y de la carne mísera vencida
ternéis a vuestro gusto la comida (*Elegías* Part II 425)

Castellanos then goes on to describe in detail the violent confrontation between the Christian forces (“católico bando” 431) and an army of Indian warriors that seems to be coming out from the depths of hell:

El ruido fue tanto de los cuernos
o caracoles grandes engastados,
que parecía que de los infiernos
salían rebramando los dañados
gritos de mujeres y clamores,
y roncós sonés de atambores. (*Elegías* Part III 431)

Accordingly, when the Spanish troops finally defeat Pigoanza's army, Castellanos points out how the Christian soldiers attributed their victory to divine intervention:

Quedó victoriosa nuestra gente
y libre de tan áspera zozobra,
reconociendo, como fue patente,
haber sido de Dios aquella obra,
porque con su favor al impotente
virtud, valor y prontitud le sobra
para poder vencer con flaca lanza
a quien estriba sobre gran pujanza. (*Elegías* Part III 434 italics are mine)

Hence, after reinforcing numerous times that the Christian army is fighting a demonic enemy, we finally arrive at the climatic scene of the episode of La Gaitana. According to Castellanos after the battle the Amerindians, including those serving the Spaniards, proceeded to devour the bodies of the dead soldiers who were lying on the ground. One old man in particular requested permission from the Spaniards to eat one of the prisoners, and surprisingly enough, the Spanish soldiers granted his request. The old man then consumed the body of an entire person in one single day, but only to die a day later:

A los opresos de fatal yactura
que les encaminó su propia ira,
en las entrañas de la tierra
ninguno los encubre ni retira
por dalles en la suya sepultura
los bárbaros que estaban a la mira;
porque gran cantidad desta canalla
esperaban el fin de esta batalla.

Gente de quien la nuestra se servía

en lo que suelen los subyectos siervos
amigos por la mucha cercanía,
mas en voluntad falsos y protervos;
los cuales a la carne que yacía
acudieron como voraces cuervos,
y en breves horas los campos cubiertos
quedaron libres de los muertos.

Destos de paz un bárbaro doliente
que sobre báculo se sostenía
pidió para comer un delincuente,
diciendo que con él engordaría
concediéronselo liberalmente,
y dio fin del en un tan solo día;
hinchó del vientre tanto los lugares
que luego reventó por los ijares. (*Elegías* Part III 434)

As we can see, there is a series of similarities and asymmetries that link and differentiate Castellanos' story of La Gaitana from that of the one told by Ercilla in relation to Tegualda. In the end the most important ideological difference between the two episodes is that while Ercilla brilliantly guides readers to be nauseated by excessive acts of violence and by the war itself, Castellanos unapologetically redirects the attention of the readers to feel repulsion toward the acts committed by Amerindians, and by the alleged nature of the original inhabitants of the New World themselves.

In this next passage concerning the practice of cannibalism Castellanos does not describe the actual act of eating human flesh, but he narrates how an Indian warrior challenged a Spanish colonist to invoke God to come and rescue him from being killed and eaten. The passage comes from a poem entitled "Historia de Antioquia" included in the third installment of the *Elegías* and is particularly interesting because it combines in a single episode references to the Christian sacraments, to the presence of the Devil in the New World, to the campaigns of evangelization, and to Amerindian resistance to colonization, all in a matter of a few verses. In addition, this passage also speaks of the

fear among the Spanish colonists that Indians would eat the flesh of men who had already received the sacrament of baptism:

Durante la tiniebla se quedaron
gran trecho de la casa desviados
pero velándolos, porque hacían
cuenta que ya llegaba la mañana
*con carne de la gente bautizada
habían de hacer solemne fiesta.*

Y así cierto cacique que Tirrome,
era su nombramiento desdeñado
del Dios que les había predicado
con otras amenazas le decía:

¡Ah Velasco! ¿Que tal está tu seno?
y los de tus amigos y parientes
ahora que de angustias estás lleno
quiero con gran aviso parar mientes
*si tu dios que predicas ser tan bueno
te libra de mis manos y mis dientes:
dile que te de alas con que vueles
antes que desollemos vuestras pieles*

Porque si no mi dios se determina
que tú con esos pocos compañeros
desollados entréis en mi cocina
para saborear nuestros gargueros
y satisfecha nuestra golosina
manda henchir de paja vuestros cueros
y que por vuestro dicho temerario
estén colgados en nuestros santuarios (*Elegías Part III 596*).

Finally, although with the majority of the references to cannibalism that surface in the *Elegías* this practice is attributed to Amerindians, there is at least one instance in which it is a member of the expedition of Nicolas de Ferdeman who eats human flesh, albeit unintentionally. The episode is narrated in a poem written in honor of Miser Ambrosio, who was the first German governor of the province of Venezuela, and the

strong repulsion cannibalism triggered among the all the Christian explorers reinforces the Europeans' rejection of such a practice:

Despedidos por términos urbanos,
dieron muy lejos ya desta frontera,
en un pueblo de chispas en los llanos,
gente brava, feroz y carnicera.
Carne hallan asada los cristianos
comieron sin que sepan de quien era;
más ojos propios los hicieron
hallando pies y manos de hombres muertos.

Luego vereis estar imaginando:
unos que ven y no quieren creyó
otros en otra parte basqueando
otros para bosar mueven el cuello
otros o los más dellos vomitando
otros meter los dedos para ellos
otros quisieron con aquellas sañas
abrirse con las manos las entrañas. (*Elegías* Part II 82-3)

CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter I set out to explore the presence of demonology in the writings of Juan de Castellanos. I first established the belief in the Devil as a historical actor among the colonists from Nueva Granada, and then proceeded to comment on some of the models, tropes, and subtexts that inform Castellanos' demonization of Amerindians: Iberian tales of captivity, the trope of spiritual gardening, the trope of using the cross as a weapon to fight the Devil, and the trope of cannibalism. The result is the production of a complex poetic discourse that, given its deployment of a number of preexisting aesthetic, religious, literary models, offers an interpretative challenge to readers seeking to find in it the traces of the customs and practices of societies which up until then were completely unknown to Europeans. Like Columbus' letter of discovery and Hernán Cortes's letter to

Charles V, Castellanos' demonization of Amerindians "rather than revealing the American reality" systematically obscures it and distorts it (Pastor 3). In making this remark, I am alluding in particular to Castellanos' use of the trope of cannibalism and to what would appear to be his obsession with presenting the most horrid, morbid, and monstrous depiction possible of Amerindians.

On the whole, Castellanos' extensive and systematic filtering of Amerindians through the discourse of demonology aesthetically codifies the alleged cultural superiority of the Spaniards and constitutes a reaffirmation of the arguments articulated by legal theorists like Ginés de Sepulveda and employed by the encomenderos to justify forceful conquest. Concomitantly, Castellanos' characterization of Amerindians as idolatrous and blood-stained barbarians should be interpreted as a response to and a rejection of what Ercilla had attempted by describing Araucanians as "superior humans, on a par with Spaniards in terms of values and merits;" and particularly by constructing his encomium of empire, as Nicolopulos has demonstrated, around the figure of an indigenous character (the wizard Fitón from Canto XXIII Part II of *La Araucana*) who was a "Renaissance mage of the Merlin type," (104) and therefore, a source of "wisdom and mastery of Neoplatonic equilibrium" (106).

La narración de Castellanos tanto como la sociedad encomendera neogranadina caen en la siguiente encrucijada: ambas necesitan lo que destruyen, el indígena. – Luís Fernando Restrepo

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

In the second half of the nineteenth century Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo set out to write a historical survey of poetry in Colombia and described Juan de Castellanos' *Elegías de varones ilustres de las Indias* as perhaps: "the work of most monstrous proportions in its genre in all of world literature." Menéndez Pelayo's negative assessment of the poem stemmed not only from his sheer disapproval of the extraordinary length of the poem (more than 113,000 lines), but also from his rejection of the insertion into Spanish hendecasyllables of so many: "barbarous and exotic" words from indigenous languages. Menéndez Pelayo was referring to words like 'hamaca' (hammock), 'huracán' (hurricane), 'canaoa' (canoe), and 'jaguar' (jaguar), which made their official entrance into Spanish as a literary language in the heroic poems written by Castellanos. The preeminence of Menéndez Pelayo as a literary critic, combined with the erosion of the historical context that justified their existence, and the increasing rejection of learned epic poetry from the curriculum and cannon of Golden Age and Colonial literature, has resulted in the neglect of Castellanos' contribution to early Spanish American literature, particularly among Hispanists in the United States.

This dissertation thus endeavored to bring light into the discursive complexity of the *Elegías de varones ilustres de las Indias*, and to show how Juan de Castellanos strove rigorously to employ epic and heroic poetry in a radically different way than it was being used by Spanish writers close to the court of the Habsburgs, particularly Alonso de Ercila.

To accomplish this goal, in the first and second chapters of this dissertation I problematized the applicability of David Quint's theory of the epic to sixteenth century Spanish epics, as well as the existing understanding of Castellanos' 'imitation' of Ercilla. In this regard I emphasized how Castellanos and his contemporaries preferred to create literary works that transgressed generic boundaries and I highlighted the differences between the types of reception *La Araucana* encountered in the Iberian Peninsula and in the New World. Moreover, I surveyed some of the themes of Castellanos' writings and I explored several passages in which Castellanos appropriated and subverted models created by Ercilla's poem; including the story of an Indian maiden named "La Diana" (Part I), the rewriting of the story of Doña Mencía de Nidos in the episode of an anonymous coragous woman from Callao (*Discurso*), the parody of the episode narrating the selection of an Indian warlord for the Araucanians in the story of the selection of an Indian chieftan among the Muisecas (Part IV), and the allusion to the opening of *La Araucana* in the opening stanzas of Castellanos' poem (Part I).

In the third chapter I studied one specific section of Castellanos' writing entitled *Discurso del Capitán Francisco Draque*. In this section of the dissertation I focused on the representation of two separate groups of individuals who are characterized as "others": English pirates and newly arrived colonists (also known as chapetones). Through this reading of the *Discurso* I demonstrated that, even though the poem is supposedly about Francis Drake's attack to Cartagena in 1586, a closer look reveals that

Castellanos' main objective is to provide a foundational myth that praises the merits and defends the interest of the old conquistadors from Nueva Granada. In my view, this particular section of Castellanos' writings carries with it a tremendous emancipatory potential inasmuch, as it gives literary form to the local colonists claim over the territory and to their yearning for political and economic autonomy; all while subverting, once again, what Ercilla had accomplished in a section of *La Araucana* (the parade of Araucanian heroes in Canto XXI), interrogating the encomiastic function of epic poetry, and, hence, taking the hegemonic poetic code to its limits.

Although I talked at some length about piracy, the pirate that I have written about is not the type of rambunctious and adventurous individual that we have recently encountered in summer blockbusters such as *Pirates of the Caribbean* or the type of fearsome but seductive foreigner who triggers unconscious sexual desires in the female characters of novels such as Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*; nor have I written about the type of pirate created by romantic poets like José de Espronceda to represent the embodiment of individual freedom or about the pirate as a sort of despicable outlaw capable of jeopardizing the lives of children from children's classics such as *Peter Pan*. Instead, I have written about a pirate that is above all an instrument of empire, but that also serves as the mouthpiece for the promotion of the interest of a group that in the Spanish colonies in the New World came to be commonly known as *baquianos*.

In the fourth chapter I approached Castellanos' text from the perspective of demonology. To do so I applied the concept of 'satanic epic' coined by Canizarez-Esguerra and I focused on the demonic representation of Amerindians offered by Castellanos throughout the bulk of his writings. In this regards I showed the subtexts and models used by Castellanos to consistently offer a pejorative image of the indigenous

population of the New World. In addition I found that, while Ercilla had chosen to inscribe the alterity of Amerindians using the recourses of pastoral, epic, and chivalric literature, Castellanos preferred models that allowed him to cast Amerindians as another version of the longtime enemies of Spain and Christendom: the Devil and the infidel Moors. As such, in Castellanos' poems the exploration, conquest, and colonization of the New World appear as a continuation of the religious campaign to drive the devil and the Moors out of the Iberian Peninsula.

All in all, throughout this dissertation I showed that Juan de Castellanos was intimately familiar with *La Araucana* and understood well the implications of Alonso de Ercilla's literary and ideological agenda. Accordingly I demonstrated that even though Castellanos did use several of the passages written by Ercilla as his model, every time he did so Castellanos strove to refute, undermine, and reject what Ercilla had accomplished. Therefore, while it is still true that Castellanos was one of a number of Spanish writers who wrote in "imitation" of Ercilla, it is equally true and perhaps more important to underscore the fact that as an imitator Castellanos was not willing to concede much or to barter with his predecessor. Quite the contrary, Castellanos' deconstruction of Ercilla's models displays a significant amount of creative impulse that is propelled by his own prejudices against the Indigenous population, his understanding of colonization as a holy war, and his alliance with the interest and values of the *encomenderos*.

Finally, this dissertation has benefited from recent studies in theories of historiography, and from the perspectives of transatlantic studies, theories of Renaissance poetic imitation, and demonology, all without embracing fully any of them in particular. However, throughout this dissertation I have strived not to disconnect the poems written by Juan de Castellanos from the context that produced them and to recognize the written

text, as Rolena Adorno puts it, as something: “not merely reflective of social practices, but in fact constitutive of them” (139).

In light of current trends in early Spanish American literary criticism and Colonial historiography two avenues for research may prove rewarding to future scholars of Castellanos’ writings. First of all, Castellanos’ approach to the relationship between genders and the issue of misogyny. In this regard the characterization of ‘La Diana’ and ‘La Gaitana’ offer dismaying evidence that Castellanos shared an unequal view of the sexes and had internalized a patriarchal ideology and a prejudice against women that is neutralized or lacking from the pages of *La Araucana*. On the other hand, readers of the *Elegías* may consider worth commenting on Castellanos use of typology, particularly on his account of Gonzalo Jiménez de Quesada’s expedition to the territory of the Muisca and the foundation of the Kingdom of Nueva Granada. The historian José Ignacio Avellaneda has demonstrated that Jiménez de Quesada did not have the legal authority to establish a new colony and that the main objective of his expedition was to find a route that would allow the colonists from Santa Marta and Cartagena access to the riches of Perú. However, in his poetic account of the expedition Castellanos uses biblical typology to depict the ordeals faced by the Spanish explorers during their journey and the foundation of Santa Fe de Bogotá as a reenactment of the Israelites’ conquest of the Promised Land narrated in the Old Testament. By doing so, Castellanos frames the foundation of Nueva Granada as an act preordained by God, but silences the act of disobedience committed by Jiménez de Quesada and the contribution of the local indigenous population without whose assistance the Spanish expedition would have been a complete failure.

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Vita

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