

# READING AND RESPONDING TO THE AMOROUS EPISODES OF THE ARAUCANA IN COLONIAL PERU

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The amorous interludes involving Amerindian female protagonists which Alonso de Ercilla weaves into the military action of *La Araucana* have caused a stir ever since the publication of Part I of the poem in 1569. Certainly the episode of Guacolda and Lautaro (*Araucana* 13.43-57, 14.1-3, 13-18) was received with sufficient enthusiasm to encourage Ercilla to include two much more elaborate amorous fictions—those of Tegualda and Crepino (20.28-21.12) and Glaura and Cariolán (27.61-28.53)—into Part II of the *Araucana*, published in 1578.<sup>1</sup> The dalliance of Guacolda and Lautaro further served as the basis for six romances by various authors published, several of them a number of times, between 1589 and 1593; all of which were reprinted in the *Romancero general* of 1604 (Lerzundi 46).

This enthusiastic reception in the Iberian Peninsula was not always echoed in the New World, where during the same decade of the 1590s these representations of indigenous lovers were to have a powerful, although much more negative and complex, impact on some colonial readers. It is my contention that these colonial responses can shed considerable light on some of the on-going critical questions about the nature and function of these amorous passages that have so delighted, bedeviled and perplexed readers of the *Araucana* over the years.

These questions have always revolved around two fundamental issues. The first is raised by Ercilla's apparent rejection of the theme of love at the outset of the poem, and his reiterated insistence on the predominance of the celebration of Mars over that of Venus throughout the text. This explicit repudiation of the intermixing of courtly, amorous fictions with martial narrative in the style of Ariosto traditionally has been read as part and parcel with Ercilla's determination to give a "relación sin corromper sacada / de la verdad" (1.3ef) of the war between the Spanish conquerors and the indigenous inhabitants of Chile, in which the author took part.

The second issue is related to this same supposed *verismo* of the poem and hinges on how we are to read Ercilla's representations of these putatively Amerindian heroines. Although the three amorous episodes mentioned all betray obvious trappings of literary provenance, some prominent critics, up until quite recently at least, have insisted that they must

bear some resemblance to real events either witnessed or heard about by Ercilla in Chile (*La Araucana*, Ed. Morínigo 1: 26). This tenaciously *verista* reading has been pretty much put to rest by Lía Schwartz-Lerner, who convincingly demonstrates that although Ercilla does portray some indigenous women in what may be an ethnographically *verista* manner, these are always anonymous, collectively characterized representatives of their sex among the Araucanians—for instance, the women who follow their menfolk into battle (*Araucana* 10.3-8; Schwartz-Lerner 617-18).

On the other hand, the Amerindian female protagonists of the major amorous episodes of the poem—Guacolda, Tegualda, and Glaura—are purely literary creations who have stepped directly off the pages of European pastoral and chivalric romance, clothed as it were in the idealized landscapes that frame their irruptions into the narration of the war in Chile (616-17). In fact, according to Schwartz-Lerner, the essentially fictive, bookish nature of these amorous episodes should alert us to the fundamentally literary, poetic, as opposed to historiographic, character of the poem as a whole. Much like the *verista* critics she refutes, however, Schwartz-Lerner takes the poet at his word as to the underlying purpose of the amatory digressions: the urgency of providing variety and equilibrium to what would otherwise be an unbearably monotonous litany of warlike deeds (625).

Echoing Schwartz-Lerner, Margarita Zamora remarks that in order to make these female protagonists intelligible and palatable to his European readers, Ercilla had to strip them of every truly indigenous feature except, possibly, their names (Schwartz-Lerner 616-17; Zamora 335-36). Read in this way, the amorous episodes might well pose disturbing implications for those who would like to interpret Ercilla as a sympathetic defender of the rights and valor of the indigenous peoples of the Arauco region, and the *Araucana* as representative of a perhaps irreducible ideological contradiction in the discourse of the conqueror.

Beatriz Pastor, who sustains this last interpretation, explains that Ercilla systematically represents the major indigenous characters of the poem, both male and female, in terms of the modes and codes of conduct and representation then current in the books of chivalry, such as the *Amadís de Gaula*, and the Italian *romanzi*, such as *Orlando furioso* (369). According to Pastor, this chivalric mythification corresponds to a strategy on Ercilla's part intended to "humanize" the indigenous peoples. By representing their violence as honorable and valiant, the poet would raise them from the status of savages to that of noble beings in harmony with their environment in the eyes of European readers. Pastor adds that the female characters, while necessary to balance out the male warriors, cannot be integrated positively into an intelligible system of European values through an exaltation of their honor in war and violence, which would only produce a "monstrous" effect for a sixteenth-century Spanish reader.

Hence the poet is obliged to construct his representation of the female characters around the organizing principle proper to women in chivalric fiction: love (374-75).

One might well object at this point that, far from appearing as hopelessly "monstrous," warrior-maidens were extremely popular with readers during the sixteenth century. Boiardo's Marfisa, notwithstanding her beauty, was capable of giving the knight Ranaldo such a boxing about the ears that only the enchanted helmet of Mambrino saved his life (*Orlando Innamorato* I.18.21), a blow whose impact was still to resonate a century later in Don Quijote's imagination (Cervantes 1:252-53 [chap. 21]). Ariosto says of the maid Bradamante that "Ella è gagliarda, et è più bella molto" (She is as beautiful as she is brave, *Orlando furioso* 1.70), and, clad in full armor, she easily unhorses Sacripante, one of the most skillful Pagan knights, at full tilt in single combat (1.62-63).<sup>2</sup> Her warlike prowess notwithstanding, Bradamante is cast as the dynastic heroine, and therefore plays the key role in the encomium of Ariosto's patrons of the House of Este. This would hardly seem appropriate if her martial accomplishments were to have rendered her "monstrous" in the eyes of contemporary European readers.

Of course, it could be argued that what was perfectly acceptable in the tolerant moral climate of pre-Tridentine Italy would have been less well-received in ostensibly austere Spain. Nonetheless, Jerónimo de Urrea, in his immensely popular 1549 translation of the *Orlando furioso*, in spite of taking numerous liberties with Ariosto's text, leaves the warrior maidens pretty much intact. In much the same vein, Nicolás Espinosa weaves Marfisa into his dynastic encomium of the Valencian family of the Counts of Oliva in his *Segunda parte de Orlando* of 1555. Espinosa devotes considerable space to her amorous involvement with Baron Cotaldo—putative ancestor of the house—and even has the enchantress Melissa present her with an ekphrastic prophecy of her future progeny recalling that vouchsafed to Bradamante by the same sorceress in Merlin's cave (Chevalier 108-114).<sup>3</sup> The commercial success of these works in Spain is not in doubt. Espinosa's *Segunda parte de Orlando* was printed five times in the period 1555-1579 (Pierce 329-30), and Urrea's version of the *Furioso* was published at least twelve, and possibly as many as eighteen, times between 1549 and 1583, enjoying an immense popularity (Chevalier 74-75, 74 n. 32).<sup>4</sup>

On the other hand, it is true that Diego Vázquez de Contreras, in his 1585 prose translation of the *Orlando furioso*, eliminated not only what were considered the more licentious passages of the poem, but some of the most egregious examples of female violence as well, such as the scene where Marfisa and Bradamante, deprived of their swords, resort to kicking and punching each other (*Orlando furioso* 36.50). This is intelligible in terms of Vázquez de Contreras's project of post-Tridentine bowdleriza-

tion (Chevalier 101). In contrast, however, it must be remembered that writing only a decade later Bernardo de Balbuena, himself a man of the cloth, was to create yet another memorable warrior maiden, Arcángelica, who plays a leading role in his *Bernardo* (Van Horne 38).

If, then, warlike prowess in women was not necessarily “monstrous” for sixteenth-century readers, it may still have posed a very particular challenge to Ercilla. After all, the ultimate model in the epic tradition for female paladins like Marfisa and Bradamante must have been Virgil’s mounted warrior princess Camilla (Rajna 49). Virgil compares her explicitly to the legendary Amazon queen Penthesilea, and indeed, applies the adjective “Amazon” directly to Camilla herself as she rides in battle wreaking havoc among the Trojans (*Aeneid* 11.647-663), and therein probably lies the problem for Ercilla. The Amazons had been associated in the Spanish imagination with the New World ever since the appearance in 1493 of the first published description of the Caribbean islands (Colón 225). Not long afterward, Garci Rodríguez de Montalvo composed his version of the *Sergas de Esplandián*—a continuation of the most famous “book of chivalry” of all, *Amadís de Gaula*—the first known edition of which appeared in 1510 (Nazak xvi). One of the most memorable innovations in this work is the Amazon queen Calafia and her gold and gem laden island of California, located—according to the author—“a la diestra mano de las yndias . . . mucho llegada a la parte del paraíso terrenal” (cap. 157). Although there is no textual evidence in the *Sergas* to suggest anything other than the traditional Asian situation of the land of the Amazons, by at least 1542 the toponym “California” was being applied in something very like its present-day sense (Leonard 53), thus cementing the confluence of the notions of Amazons, books of chivalric fiction and America.

The theme of the Amazons in the New World was troubling enough in itself, as can be seen in the vacillations, revisions, suppressions and qualified affirmations of their presence that Kathleen Myers has analysed in the works of Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo (167-72). For Ercilla, its association with a widely disseminated book of chivalry of the *Amadís* cycle, as well the Italian *romanzi*, was probably reason enough to avoid the introduction of that type of female character into his poem. This particular category of chivalric romance was frequently criticized as dangerous and immoral, as well as “fictitious” in the most pejorative sense. Both Bernal Díaz (346) and his nemesis López de Gómara (*Crónica* 337-38), for instance, strive to distance their own works from the “libros de mentiras”—as the “libros de caballerías” were called by their detractors—as discursive models.

If, as Rolena Adorno asserts, the model of chivalric fiction presented the chroniclers with a “double code” that permitted them to exploit the exotic aspects of the New World military enterprise while at the same

time rejecting the censurable aspects of "books of lies" ("Literary Production" 17-18), it should be remarked that this same situation posed a dilemma for the epic poet like Ercilla. While it is certainly true that, as Adorno indicates, Ercilla "resorted to chivalric formulation not because he saw the Araucanians as chivalric heroes but because he needed a language of common reference with his readers to communicate his admiration of the Araucanian cultural values of liberty, courage, and the refusal to be conquered" (17), it is equally important to note that "chivalric formulation" was not a monolithic or univocal discursive type from Ercilla's perspective. On the contrary, one of Ercilla's most original contributions was the attempt to redefine sixteenth-century learned epic, taking the best of Ariosto's innovations while at the same time rejecting the most scandalous and reprehensible aspects of contemporary chivalric fiction. It is in this spirit that the poetic gauntlet cast down against the *Orlando furioso* in the opening lines of the *Araucana* should be read.

Furthermore, this attempt to construct an alternative version of the chivalric "formulation" appropriate for his project of representation of his New World experience explains why Ercilla must reject the warrior maiden but can still embrace the pastoral—loosely defined it is true—as a licit discursive mode for the portrayal of individualized female Amerindian characters.<sup>5</sup> Here it is important to bear in mind that even in the books of chivalry, and even more so in the *romanzi*, the theme of love is invariably the site of intersection of the pastoral with the heroic. The fateful dalliance of Angelica and Medoro, for instance, takes place in an explicitly pastoral landscape, replete with shepherd's cottage, verdant glades, pure fountains and shady laurels (*Orlando furioso* 19). The advantage of the pastoral representation of love, of course, is that although it can coexist with the "chivalric formulation," unlike the warrior maiden variety it does not depend on it, but has its own independent tradition as a discursive mode.

It is also crucial to remember that in the sixteenth-century Spanish pastoral, be it found in lyric poem, *libro de pastores*, *libro de caballerías*, or even heroic epic, the dominant mode of discourse is that defined by Garcilaso's adaptation and transformation of Petrarchism. Moreover, as Anne Cruz has shown, Garcilaso emulates Petrarch at a far more profound level than merely retailing the "themes, ideology, stylistic procedures and forms," as Fucilla puts it, of the *Canzoniere* (Cruz 91; Fucilla xiii). In fact, Garcilaso's "necromantic"—to use Thomas Greene's apt metaphor (37-38)—and highly transformative revivification of Petrarch's approach to imitation, defines more than anything else Iberian *garcilasismo*.

Furthermore, Ignacio Navarrete has made it clear that Boscán and Garcilaso deliberately construct the new poetics as the privileged literary discourse of the internationalist court of Charles V, and that consequently Petrarchist/Garcilasist poetic practices become intimately intertwined

with the trajectory of empire and imperial politics throughout Spain's so-called Golden Age (39, 124). This association of the codes of Petrarchism with the dialectic of power in Philip II's empire acquires special significance in the colonial context of the New World. 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/Garcilasist poetic practices as courtly and aristocratic, functioned doubly well in the New World to delineate the difference between colonizer and colonized, and to justify the domination of the one over the other. Institutions like the *encomienda* obliged the colonial elite to live, at times precariously, surrounded by but never able to assimilate completely the otherness of the Amerindians whose labor provided the basis of the colonizers' prosperity and livelihood. In this context, the cultivation of Petrarchist literary practices became an instrument for codifying esthetically 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.<sup>6</sup>

An excellent example of this colonial permutation of Petrarchism can be seen in the pages of Diego Dávalos y Figueroa's *Miscelánea Austral*, written in the viceroyalty of Peru and published in Lima in 1602. *Encomendero* and beneficiary of the obligatory indigenous labor of the *mita* in his mining operations, Dávalos divided the considerable leisure time thus afforded him between his profession of "armas y caballos" and the cultivation of Petrarchist/Garcilasist literary endeavor (Colombí-Monguió 72-3). Dávalos leaves no doubt that, in his view, the elegant and subtly nuanced emotional registers that typify the Petrarchist esthetic operate far beyond the reach of the colonized due to their supposedly "brutish" nature. Dávalos, in fact, explicitly singles out Ercilla as target for the full force of his scorn and ire for having imbued female Amerindian characters in the *Araucana* with such exalted sentiments and codes of expression (Colombí-Monguió 73). Referring to the amorous episodes of Ercilla's poem, Dávalos protests that:

el umor 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 [read Ercilla here] niegan esto, atribuiéndoles mill dulçuras, que en tiernos requiebros y enamorados cantares dizen y cantan sus amadas. (34.154v, qtd. in Colombí-Monguió 73)

Speaking specifically of Guacolda, the indigenous protagonist of the famous amorous passage of Part I of the *Araucana* and subsequently of the six *romances* mentioned above, Dávalos attempts to negate Ercilla's representation by remarking:

... porque su celebrada Guacolda, según muchos que la conocieron afirman, era una india como las demás, no de más partes ni capacidad, y al fin todos los indios son de poca más habilidad que los brutos a quien imitan en cuydar sólo lo exterior y presente, y carecer de todo género de providencia. Sin el qual no se puede cumplir con la obligación de el ser humano. (34.154v-155r, qtd. in Colombí-Monguió 73)

We see a further consequence of Dávalos's reading of Ercilla in the following statement:

... cierto autor moderno a escripto, diziendo que [la india] es gente política, capaz de gobierno y de otras buenas partes. ... Yo ya e visto essa opinión dibulgada con notorio engaño, porque en gente a quien falta peso, medida, letras, verdad, caridad y honra ¿qué cosa buena puede aver? (qtd. in Colombí-Monguió 74)

The closing rhetorical question, of course, is a sardonic gloss of the first verse of the exordium of Canto 15 of the *Araucana*, where Ercilla, attempting to justify his inclusion of the "Guacolda" episode in the preceding cantos, exclaims: "¿Qué cosa puede haber sin amor buena? / ¿Qué verso sin amor dará contento?" (15.1ab). The sarcastic jibe only serves to underline the vehemence of Dávalos's reaction to encountering refined Petrarchist discourse attributed to an Amerindian subject. Of course, Dávalos's own sense of identity, as well as his economic well-being, depended on insisting that the indigenous peoples were possessed of "poca más habilidad que los brutos," as he himself would put it (qtd. in Colombí-Monguió 73). The crucial point is that for Dávalos as both *encomendero* and poet, Amerindians are excluded, not only as emitters or receivers of Petrarchist discourse, but also as objects of representation within the privileged code.

Dávalos's diatribe reminds us that in the continual debates about the justification or lack thereof for forcible conquest and resulting institutions like the *encomienda*, defining the precise nature of the inhabitants of the New World emerged as the principal zone of contention. In general, although perhaps something of a simplification, it is fair to say that the arguments turned on a choice between two diametrically opposed characterizations of the indigenous peoples. On the one hand, those who stood the most to gain from conquest by force and the ensuing, systematic economic exploitation—the *encomenderos* and their apologists at court—insisted on the Amerindians' cultural inferiority and consequent "natural"

subordination to the representatives of a "superior" culture (Adorno, "Los debates" 47-54). In its most extreme form, this rhetoric would portray the indigenous peoples as quasi-bestial beings addicted to sexual vices of the most heinous kinds, as well as human sacrifice, cannibalism and outright devil worship.<sup>7</sup> On the other, the defenders of the Amerindians, like Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas and his followers, sought to portray the indigenous peoples as "gentle lambs," semi-saintly if simple innocents who were ripe for peaceful conversion and utopian experiment, if only they could be shielded from the depredations of the secular colonizers (for instance, Las Casas 71-73).

Clearly, Ercilla's representation of the indigenous women, if not really evoking the *lascasista* imagery of "ovejas mansas," threatened the foundations of the *encomendero* rhetoric of bestiality. What is most significant here is that it was specifically the representation of Guacolda, Tegualda and Glaura in terms of the Petrarchist discourse of love, especially as emitters of that discourse, that most profoundly upset the *encomendero* poet and his *contertulios* in the viceroyalty of Peru. It is precisely this feature which provides a possible lens for penetrating the enigma of Ercilla's handling of the amorous episodes by viewing them in a coherent ideological context.

Seen from the point of view of an *encomendero* Petrarchist, Ercilla's systematic representation of the Araucanians according to prestigious literary models could only have been intended to undermine the *encomendero* rhetoric of bestiality, while at the same time transforming Las Casas's and his followers' defense of the indigenous peoples into something more in line with the policy of the Spanish Crown. Philip II and the foreign banking houses that underwrote his imperial project had little patience indeed with the *encomendero*'s persistent initiative to set themselves up as semi-independent feudatories with the wealth produced by the obligatory labor of the Amerindians "under their tutelage." By the same token, however, the king and his financial advisers could not, as a practical matter, countenance the widespread realization of Las Casas's dream of the New World remade as a prophylactically isolated Christian utopia. The Spanish Hapsburgs could not hope to maintain their global empire without a reliable stream of precious metals from the New World (Braudel 476-79). This could hardly be accomplished without plentiful indigenous labor, itself unthinkable under the pure *lascasista* model. Nonetheless, certain fundamental aspects of the rhetoric of Las Casas and his disciples lent themselves to use as an instrument for keeping the ambitions and pretensions of the *encomenderos* in check.

Ercilla, raised in the court and sharing its ideological perspective, clearly saw the New World through the eyes of a "king's man" rather than those of the adventurers in search of social mobility who filled the ranks of the early conquerors and the *encomendero* class.<sup>8</sup> Seen in this



light, it is easy enough to appreciate how an *encomendero* Petrarchist like Dávalos would detect a "reformist" approach to the imperial enterprise in the *Araucana* that would be very threatening indeed. Nor would he have been alone in this reading; some of the most penetrating twentieth-century criticism of the poem coincides in interpreting Ercilla's representation of the major Amerindian characters in terms of a strategy designed to undercut both the *encomenderista* and the "pure" *lascasista* visions of the indigenous peoples (Concha 66-73).

Perhaps the problematic tangle of nuances incumbent upon this stance, especially as it is intertwined with Petrarchist discourse, can be appreciated best by reference to the most well-known—if not often read—colonial response to the *Araucana*: Pedro de Oña's *Arauco domado*. The poet's father, Captain Gregorio de Oña, took part in the wars described in the *Araucana* from at least the time of the death of Valdivia in 1553, and by the 1560s had become, first, *procurador*, and then *regidor*, of the prosperous but perilously situated settlement of Infantes de Angol, deep in the heart of Arauco. In 1570, the same year that the future poet was born there in Angol, his father Gregorio was killed in an Araucanian ambush near the town (Dinamarca 15-19). The young Pedro's widowed mother, doña Isabel de Acurcio, then married one of the twenty odd *encomenderos* who availed themselves of the labor of some four thousand *indios de paz* in the local mines, Cristóbal de la Cueva, himself a long-time veteran of the Araucanian wars (Dinamarca 18, 21, 22-23). Thus it is fair to assume that the future poet was raised in close contact with the day-to-day realities of colonial economic exploitation—the *encomienda* with its *indios de paz*—as well as the on-going violence and insecurity of the conquest—the raids and skirmishes that characterized relations with the *indios de guerra*.<sup>9</sup>

In 1590, at the age of twenty, Pedro de Oña entered the university in Lima, and two years later was one of the first recipients of a scholarship established by the current viceroy, Don García Hurtado de Mendoza. It was probably at this time that he began work on his response to the *Araucana*, the *Arauco domado*, an epic poem of nineteen cantos published in Lima in 1596. Oña's sponsor in this project was none other than Don García Hurtado de Mendoza, the same viceroy from whom the young poet had recently received his "financial aid" (Dinamarca 24-27).

While serving under Don García in Chile, Ercilla had become involved in an altercation which gave personal offence to his commander. As a result, Hurtado de Mendoza had Ercilla clapped in irons, and eventually exiled him from the zone of operations (Medina 78-9). For this reason alone, then, it is understandable that Ercilla does not construct the *Araucana* around a fulsome encomium of Don García and his family as Ariosto had done for the House of Este in his *Orlando furioso* or Garcilaso for the Dukes of Alba, for instance, in the *Egloga II*. The viceroy and his family seem to

have been particularly irked by Ercilla's portrayal of the young Don García that appeared in Part III of the *Araucana*, first published in 1589, and then again in 1590 as the final section of the first complete edition of the entire poem (Iglesias 17). Coincidentally, Don García took office as viceroy and the young Oña entered the university in Lima in the same year of 1590, and it was at this time that the Mendoza family first became active in commissioning revisionist versions of the material treated in the *Araucana* (Iglesias 17, 56). This was to result in an impressive number of poems and plays by noteworthy writers of the day, including Lope de Vega, that cast the future viceroy in the heroic central role that Ercilla had not been moved to write for Don García (Menéndez y Pelayo 2:237-38). Despite the luster of the reputations of some of the writers involved, Oña's *Arauco domado* has always been considered the foremost of these revisionist works, and most readings of Oña's dialogic relationship with Ercilla have focused on the representation of Don García in the poem.

Upon close reading, however, the *Arauco domado* proves to be a highly polysemous text rent by contradictory discursive and rhetorical currents. The fractured ideological perspectives of the poem are reflected in the radically divergent critical analyses of the representation of the Amerindian protagonists that have been put forward in recent years.<sup>10</sup> At one extreme, for instance, Mario Rodríguez sustains the view that Oña rewrites the indigenous characters in such a way that all of the undecided ideological tensions of the *Araucana* are resolved in a ringing affirmation of the conquest and its institutions that leaves no space for questioning or counter-discourses. Rodríguez specifically finds a systematic suppression or silencing of the *lascasista* currents of Ercilla's poem in the *Arauco domado* (80-82).

Writing from the opposite pole of interpretation, William Mejías-López characterizes Oña as an early exponent of Indigenism thoroughly grounded in Las Casas's critique of the abuses of colonial power (87-90). In terms of textual support for this thesis, Mejías-López focuses primarily on a passage in the *Arauco domado* (3.15-35) which details how, upon arrival in Chile, Don García instituted a vigorous reform of the most flagrant excesses of the *encomienda* system (Mejías-López 85-90).<sup>11</sup> Despite the undeniable impact of this particular passage, it is important to bear in mind that its ideological content is presented in the context of an especially explicit encomium of Don García's virtues as an administrator, and that it stands in dire contrast with the poet's treatment of many of the indigenous characters in the poem (Alegría 59-60).<sup>12</sup>

Nonetheless, as Mejías-López points out with abundant documentation, there were a number of articulate critics of the *encomienda* system and its abuses active in Lima during the period of Oña's studies there (87-89, 93-94). Given the fact that he was almost certainly studying law and philosophy at the time (Iglesias 17), it would be difficult to argue that

some elements of this intellectual environment would not have had an impact on the young poet. Set against these ideological trends current in the relatively urbane milieu of militant friars, *letrados* and viceregal functionaries, however, we must remember Oña's formative years in the beleaguered *encomenderista* world of Infantes de Angol. To the extent that it is valid to seek an explanation for the apparent ideological fragmentation of the *Arauco domado* by reference to what little is known about the details of Oña's life, it seems probable that these early experiences were to play the determining role in conditioning his response to the employment of Petrarchist/Garcilast discourse in various episodes of the *Araucana*.<sup>13</sup>

Turning back to the text of the *Arauco domado*, careful reading reveals that the orphaned son of one *encomendero*, and consequently stepson of another, does indeed portray a number of important Amerindian characters inherited from Ercilla's poem in a manner far more consistent with the *encomenderos'* rhetoric of Amerindian cultural inferiority than with that of their *letrado* critics. In an article that complements the theme of the present discussion, I have demonstrated how Oña systematically engages in a highly competitive—what George Pigman III would call “eristic” (15-16)—imitation and emulation of the central prophetic passages of the *Araucana*.<sup>14</sup> Not only does Oña grapple with Ercilla in terms of “necromantic” imitation (to borrow again Thomas Greene's term) of established, prestigious poetic models, he also specifically employs the familiar rhetoric of the *encomenderos* to deconstruct Ercilla's painstakingly elaborate representation of the Araucanian wizard Fitón as a Renaissance mage.<sup>15</sup> It is not surprising, therefore, to find a similar, although perhaps at times more subtle, assault on his predecessor and rival in Oña's responses to the pastoral and amorous passages of the *Araucana*.

The first and most well-known of the episodes of *amor indio* in Oña's *Arauco domado* is the frequently anthologized scene of the “Baño de Caupolicán y Fresia” (*Arauco domado* 5.6-42). Caupolicán, described by Ercilla as the dour and doughty war-chieftain of the Araucanians—a one-eyed “bárbaro sagaz” (*Araucana* 2.52a)—is introduced into Oña's poem in a totally uncharacteristic—for the reader of the *Araucana*—, idealized pastoral *locus amoenus* engaged in amorous dalliance with his Amerindian beloved. Elide Pittarello has demonstrated how Oña's rendering of Caupolicán in this scene plays a constitutive role in the encomium of Don García. While the Spanish/Christian leader has previously been portrayed as exemplarily virile, chaste and dutiful, a baroquely exaggerated if somewhat colorless, Counter-Reformation shadow image of Virgil's “pius Aeneas”, the Araucanian/Pagan commander emerges from the bath scene as effeminate, lascivious, and consequently, derelict in his duty. In particular, Pittarello points out how the sensuously detailed description of Caupolicán's nude body transgresses the dominant codes of

male representation, and, despite the explicitly heterosexual nature of the amorous rendezvous, serves to codify at the visual level the implicitly feminized gender role that Oña assigns to Caupolicán in the encounter, and by extension to all the Araucanians in their war against Don García (Pittarello 254-59).

One could argue that Oña has only intensified, albeit drastically, elements already latent in Ercilla's representation of Caupolicán, rather than constructing an absolutely antithetical rendition of the Araucanian war chief.<sup>16</sup> Nothing of the kind, however, could be said of his consort Fresia, whom Ercilla had depicted as the stern matron who would cast down their child in scorn before Caupolicán upon his surrender to the Spaniards towards the end of the *Araucana* (33.77-82). In stark contrast, Oña's Fresia is a hyperbolically sensual woman who arouses desire in all who behold her; the sight of her naked body:

las mismas aguas frías enciende  
al ofuscado bosque pone espanto,  
y Phebo de propósito se para  
para gozar mejor su vista rara. (*Arauco domado* 5.35gh)

The scene is charged with flagrant eroticism entirely absent from the *Araucana*; Fresia's sport and embraces with her lover in the fountain are described in "loving" detail, reinforced with direct Ovidian allusions (*Arauco domado* 5.39-42). As Pittarello observes, the excessively explicit description of Fresia's anatomy and her amorous frolic with her lover transgresses the canonic norms and serves not only to insinuate the "sinful" nature of the encounter, but also to underline her "otherness" in respect to a female European subject (261).<sup>17</sup>

Ercilla's portrayal of Fresia was emblematic of heroic virtues—she reminds us of the Spartan women who demanded that their menfolk return either with their shields or on them. Oña's rendition of her as lascivious nymph is clearly designed to undermine the image of her that Ercilla had planted in readers' minds. In fact, this proves to be Oña's procedure throughout the *Arauco domado* with virtually all of the most memorable indigenous characters originally created by Ercilla. In the case of Fresia, in spite of Oña's deconstructive transformation of her fundamental qualities, the *criollo* poet nonetheless relies on the codes of Petrarchist discourse to sketch his portrait of her, engaging in highly emulative competition with Ercilla's pastoral heroines in this regard. Furthermore, Oña's Fresia is not only an object of Petrarchist representation; in the dialogue between her and Caupolicán immediately preceding their erotic plunge, she is unmistakably an emitter of refined poetic discourse as well (*Arauco domado* 5.29-30).

How then does this representation accord with the *encomendero* re-

sponse expressed by Dávalos? I believe that the answer lies in the encomiastic nature of Oña's poem. Sponsored as a response to the highly successful *Araucana*, the *Arauco domado* cannot fail to challenge its rival on every ground. To have created a showcase amorous episode featuring an "ugly" or "bestial" heroine would not have pleased Oña's patron. Furthermore, Don García belonged, at least ideologically, more to Ercilla's courtier world than to that of the *encomenderos* whom he was trying to bring under control in the name of the crown. Nevertheless, although Oña was himself a *letrado*, he belonged to that estate precisely because his *encomendero* father had died at the hands of the Mapuches, and because his mother had long since remarried. Furthermore, Oña frequented the same literary *tertulias* in Peru as Dávalos and his *encomendero* friends (Colombi-Monguió 85-86).<sup>18</sup> It would be truly surprising if we did not find some indications of their rejection of the Petrarchist representation of the Amerindian in the "Caupolicán and Fresia" passages.

Indeed, the episode as a whole is a complex web of interlocking imitations, and accordingly provides space for a multiplicity of discursive currents. Thus the *locus amoenus* at the outset (*Arauco domado* 5.7-24) is a direct response to Ercilla's most ambitious essay of that topos—a passage of the *Araucana* (17.44-50) that is completely divorced from the theme of "amor indio." Oña, by placing it where he does, achieves the effect of outshining the very brief sketch of the topic in the "Tegualda" episode of the *Araucana* (20.42). The dialogue between Caupolicán and Fresia (*Arauco domado* 5.26-32) is a direct imitation of that between Lautaro and Guacolda (*Araucana* 13.44-56)—as we have seen, the most successful of the *Araucana*, and something that Oña would not have dared to fail to offer to his patron.

Furthermore, as Pittarello points out, the allusion to the Lautaro and Guacolda episode serves a constitutive function as well. Lautaro, by disarming to engage in lovemaking with Guacolda, not only exposes himself to death and defeat, but reveals his moral turpitude. As a consequence, his heroic status is allowed to slip away, and his ignominious end seems well-deserved (250-51). By alluding to this passage of the *Araucana* at the outset of the bath scene, Oña insinuates the same moral defects and their consequences into his characterization of Caupolicán.

The imitation of the Salmacis and Hermaphrodite passage of the *Metamorphosis* (4.285-388) that comprises the scene of the "baño" itself was clearly intended to eclipse Ercilla's brief but poignant portrayal of Lautaro and Guacolda. But even here we can detect Oña's underlying *encomendero* stance because, like the recollection of the dialogue between Ercilla's Amerindian lovers, the Ovidian allusions play far more than a merely ornamental role. Ovid tells us that Salmacis's fountain was notorious for its power to strip men of their virility, and not only the youth Hermaphrodite loses his masculinity there in the nymph's arms, but so

will all men after him unfortunate enough to bathe in that pool (4.285-288, 380-388). Pittarello observes that where Ovid's Hermaphrodite loses his manhood in a concrete, medical sense, Oña's Caupolicán loses his "moral virility" as a result of his amorous plunge (262). It should be added that, in the same way, Fresia is implicitly imbued with Salmacis's qualities as described by Ovid. No careful reader of the *Metamorphosis* could forget how the nymph's embrace is compared to that of a serpent entangling the head and wings of a struggling eagle or to an octopus engulfing its prey with its tentacles beneath the waves (4.361-367). The explicit allusion to Ovid's Salmacis (*Arauco domado* 5.40g) permits Oña to render Fresia's exaggerated beauty truly monstrous.

In the one stanza that describes Fresia's body in detail, Oña uses no less than five adjectives or metaphors for the color white. Thus, for instance, her midriff is a "coluna a quien el Paro parias debe" (5.37f)—a characteristically *conceptista* reference to Parian marble: the very whitest kind—, and "su tierno y albo pie . . . al blanco cisne vence en la blancura" (5.37gh; emphasis mine). This insistence on the extreme whiteness of her skin is repeated in several other stanzas as well. Critics of the poem have not failed to pounce upon this as an exaggerated case of falsification of the American reality, a sort of extreme literary colonization (Alegría 71-72). While that may well be so, it certainly serves to enhance the reader's sense of disproportion—again to invoke the extreme, the monstrous—in Fresia's beauty and sensuality. Furthermore, it cannot fail to deliberately underline the literary and artificial nature of the passage, and thus by distancing the representation from any possibility of *verista* interpretation, avoid offending *encomendero* sensibilities.

This analysis is bolstered by the denouement of the "Caupolicán and Fresia" episode. The Fury Megeira arrives upon the scene while the lovers are still at their sport in the pool, and in what Oña may well have considered the crowning imitative exercise of the whole passage, perhaps of the entire poem, the demonic deity lets loose two of her snaky locks, which proceed to slither, spitting venom, into the breasts of the two lovers (*Arauco domado* 5.45-46). Oña's readers would have recognized instantly this reprise of the celebrated Allecto passage of *Aeneid* 7 (346-405)—one of the most spine-chillingly vivid in all of Virgil. Like the Latin matron queen Amata, Fresia and her lover are transformed into rabid zombies. Fresia is now "colérica, linfática, furiosa" (*Arauco domado* 5.60c), and the fires that rage in her breast are now no longer those of amorous passion, but of bestial and violent fury. The languid nymph has been revealed as Maenad; Oña did not need to remind his readers that Amata, infected by the Fury's venom, proceeded to lead the women of Latium in the terrible dance of the Bacchantes, abandoning hearth and home for orgiastic rites in the woods (*Aeneid* 7.385-405).

Thus we can see that once Oña had complied with his duty as "court poet" of the viceroy by spinning the lyric beauties of the "baño" scene, he is quick to restore the balance of representation in favor of the dehumanizing rhetoric of the *encomenderos*, all of which is accomplished within the codes of Petrarchist imitative practice. Read in this way, Oña's Fresia not only subverts Ercilla's character of the same name, but his Guacolda as well.

This subversive approach to the theme of "amor indio" is even more apparent in Oña's treatment of Gualeva, a putatively indigenous heroine of his own invention. The episode of "Tucapel and Gualeva" (*Arauco domado* 6.106-8.34, 12.46-90), coming as it does immediately after the assault on the fort at Penco, and centering on Gualeva's frantic search for her gravely wounded lover in the aftermath of the battle, obviously recalls the "Tegualda and Crepino" passage of the *Araucana* (20.28-21.12). As in the case of "Caupolicán and Fresia," however, Oña develops his treatment with considerable liberty, focusing the crucial moment on yet another well-known subtext not present in Ercilla's poem—the Ovidian tale of Pyramus and Tisbe (*Metamorphosis* 4.55-166). As readers of Góngora, it is all too easy for us to see only the satiric possibilities in the story of these most inept of lovers, and it is necessary to remember that a number of apparently serious Spanish versions were current in Oña's day (Cossío 517). Nonetheless, Oña, like his Cordovan contemporary, seems to have been aware of the essentially ludic tone of the original, and gives us a deliberately grotesque and bizarre rendering. One example will have to suffice here. Unlike Tisbe, Gualeva does not flee from the lion she encounters in the woods; rather she runs it through with her wounded lover's scimitar, while he bounds up as if from the dead, and bashes the beast with a great oak limb (*Arauco domado* 12.55-68). After a sensuous embrace, the two then engage in an elegantly *conceptista*, but patently comic, debate over who has saved whose life (12.73-80). The mere fact that Oña has chosen Tucapel to be Gualeva's lover should alert us to the comic nature of the passage. Rodomonte and Ferrau, Tucapel's antecedents in Boiardo and Ariosto, are always portrayed as burlesque lovers.

Oña puts the seal on his subversion of the amorous episodes of the *Araucana* with his representation of the most famous and successful of Ercilla's indigenous heroines, Guacolda herself. The ghastly shade of Lautaro appears and announces that Guacolda's vaunted beauty has been the true cause of his own untimely death. Ercilla had only recounted that after Guacolda's premonitory dream and the tender, Petrarchist dialogue between the two, the Spaniards had attacked without warning, and that Lautaro, enjoying his night of dalliance without his armor, died transfixed by an arrow in the first assault (*Araucana* 14.13-18). Guacolda disappears unheralded here from Ercilla's narrative, and this lacuna creates the space for Oña's own attack on the Petrarchist representation of the

indigenous heroine. According to Oña, the "male gaze" of a secret rival was drawn irresistibly to Guacolda's beauty, and driven by indomitable desire, the treacherous *cacique* let loose the fatal shaft in the confusion of the Spanish surprise attack (*Arauco domado* 13.69-76). Thus Oña transforms Ercilla's insistence on Guacolda's physical charms from a positive to a negative quality. But this is not all. Lautaro continues his sepulchral harangue, and informs us that even the traitor was cheated of the enjoyment of the object of his desire, because in the aftermath of the Araucanian defeat Guacolda had become the willing concubine of a Spaniard (*Arauco domado* 13.81).

Chastity, particularly in the sense of constancy, is perhaps the central thread that binds together all of the amorous episodes of the *Araucana* (Rodríguez 85-86). Particularly in the famous scene between Lautaro and Guacolda, it is her repeated insistence that if death is fated to carry off her lover, she will immediately throw herself on the same blade with fervent brio. Thus, for instance, she cries "que no caerá tu cuerpo en tierra frío / cuando estará en el suelo muerto el mío" (*Araucana* 13.47gh); she swears that if her premonitions prove true "la espada que hará el apartamiento / hará que vaya en vuestro seguimiento" (13.55gh). Thus Oña's Parthian shot, put in the mouth of the putrefying spectre of Lautaro, is all the more telling:

"Mas, ¡ay amor de hembra, burla y juego!  
de qué te sirve, di, mujer aleve,  
tener con uno el pecho tan de nieve,  
teniéndole con otro tan de fuego?  
¿Qué importa haber amádome, si luego  
en viéndome acabar la vida breve,  
deseosa de hacer la tuya larga,  
buscaste nuevo amor y nueva carga?"

"Al yugo de un hispano sometiste  
el cuello, de que siempre me colgaste:  
¿así la prometida fe guardaste,  
y lo que aquella noche me dijiste?  
En vida solamente me seguiste,  
y en muerte, como sombra, me dejaste:  
que dura mientras luce el sol dorado,  
y acabase en habiendo algún nublado.

"Si fue, que no pudiste, flacamente,  
acompañar mi muerte acerba y cruda,  
quedaras como tórtola viuda  
guardando soledad perpetuamente;  
mas fuiste golondrina diferente,  
la cual, mudado el tiempo, se nos muda,  
pues viene con el mozo del verano



y vase cuando ve el invierno cano." (*Arauco domado* 13.80-82)

This can only remind us of Dávalos's acerbic remark that "[la] celebrada Guacolda . . . era una india como las demás" (34.154v-155r, qtd. in Colombi-Monguió 73). It is obvious that among the Petrarchist poets of the *encomendero* class of the 1590s, even the *letrado* in service of the viceroy, Ercilla's highly successful literary representation of indigenous women as chaste and articulate speaking subjects who dominated the privileged codes of Petrarchist/Garcilasist discourse was interpreted as a direct assault on the rhetoric of dehumanization that underlay the economic foundation of the colonizer's aristocratic lifestyle.

It is probable that few could have understood better than Oña and the *encomendero* poets the full implications of Ercilla's rendering of these still controversial episodes, and that far from taking the poet of the *Araucana* to task for his fictionalization of these ostensibly indigenous women, we should seek to comprehend the reformist and royalist initiatives that drive the entire representation of the "other" in this flagship epic of the conquest of America. Finally, although it is undeniable that, as Francisco Javier Cevallos points out, we must read "*La Araucana* for what it is—a Spanish poem of the European Renaissance" (17), the virulence of the *encomenderista* reaction to precisely the "literariness" of Ercilla's representation of the Amerindian underscores the irreducible relevance of his poem to the study of colonial literary culture.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup>All references to the text of the *Araucana* are to Isaías Lerner's Cátedra edition unless otherwise indicated.

<sup>2</sup>The translation is Barbara Reynolds'.

<sup>3</sup>Chevalier notes that despite her relatively recent, Italian origins as a literary figure, Marfisa had little trouble being accepted into the legendary Carolingian material so popular at the time in Spain. In addition to Espinosa, Francisco Garrido de Villena included her in his 1555 *Verdadero suceso de la famosa batalla de Roncesvalles*, and Cristóbal Suárez de Figueroa did the same in his *España defendida* of 1612 (114). Garrido has his hero Albert, of both Trojan and Austrian ancestry, marry Marfisa and engender the line of Edward III of England, grandfather of both Philip II of Spain and Mary Tudor (116).

<sup>4</sup>There are also at least 4 subsequent printings up to 1595 (Pierce 367).

<sup>5</sup>It could be argued that the story of Glaura and Cariolán in the *Araucana* (27.61-28.53) stretches the boundaries of the pastoral, but certainly no more so than the episode of the wild men in Book II of Montemayor's *Siete libros de la Diana* (87-91) where the "shepherdess" Felismena even bursts upon the scene armed as an Amazon and the "wild men" appear to be armed not unlike Mesoamerican "jaguar knights."

<sup>6</sup>As Rolena Adorno points out, it was the concept of cultural superiority that formed the crux of Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda's arguments in favor of the subordi-

nation of the Amerindians to the "tutelage" of the Spaniards ("Los debates" 52-54). As Adorno makes clear, these debates did not take place in a purely abstract or "ivory tower" context; on the contrary, the right of conquest and rule, and the shape of institutions such as the *encomienda* were at stake (47-48). For a somewhat different view of the relationship between Petrarchism and late-sixteenth-century colonialism, see Roland Greene's article.

<sup>7</sup>For a concise and representative example of this *encomenderista* rhetoric, see Fray Tomás Ortiz's speech to the Council of the Indies as reported by the historian Francisco López de Gómara in chapter 217 of his *Historia general de las Indias* (310). Adorno puts Ortiz's views into perspective by demonstrating that, in general, it was Las Casas and other defenders of the Amerindians who perhaps over-emphasized the theme of bestiality in the rhetoric of their opponents ("Los debates" 50-52). Nonetheless, although this may have been true in the case of Sepúlveda and other learned participants in the debates, we can find similar examples of an almost obsessive focus on the "bestial" and/or "diabolical" nature of Amerindian cultures in the works of other writers who favored the *encomienda* such as, to name only one, Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo (Merrim 180).

<sup>8</sup>For a cogent exposition of some of the conflicting interests that arose between, on the one hand, some of the early conquerors and *encomenderos*, and on the other, more recent arrivals of higher social station in the context of Ercilla and the *Araucana*, see Durand (113-121).

<sup>9</sup>According to Dinamarca, the four thousand *indios de paz* were outnumbered by some six or seven thousand hostiles in the immediate region. Significantly, the settlement of Infantes de Angol was completely destroyed by the hostile Araucanians in 1600, only ten years after the young Oña had left to study in Lima (18).

<sup>10</sup>For a brief overview of earlier criticism, see Alegría (56-60).

<sup>11</sup>All references to the text of the *Arauco domado* are, unless otherwise indicated, to the critical edition prepared by Victoria Pehl Smith as her doctoral dissertation and published by University Microfilms International. In this edition, both the cantos and the stanzas are numbered, and consequently references will be identified by canto and stanza as in the case of *La Araucana*.

<sup>12</sup>In addition to the points that Alegría and others have made in respect to this passage, I would add that of the twenty some stanzas involved, at least three are devoted to the most unctuously explicit and direct solicitation of Oña's patron (*Arauco domado* 3.32-34).

<sup>13</sup>In all fairness, it should be noted that Mejías-López draws the opposite conclusion in the sense that, in his view, Oña's early contact with the *encomienda* and its abuses would have inspired the young poet with sympathy for the colonized (81-83).

<sup>14</sup>"Pedro de Oña and Bernardo de Balbuena Read Ercilla's Fitón," in press with LALR.

<sup>15</sup>For the concept of "necromantic" imitation, see Thomas Greene (37-38).

<sup>16</sup>Some recent criticism of the *Araucana* has challenged the traditionally accepted view of Ercilla's positive portrayal of the major Amerindian protagonists (e.g. Cevallos). In the specific case of Caupolicán, Georgina Sabat de Rivers has made a convincing argument for a trajectory of systematically progressive debasement

in the representation of the Araucanian war chieftain. According to her, Caupolicán is introduced in *Araucana* 2 as an admirable figure, but by the time he reaches his death in canto 34, a cumulative series of unheroic mistakes and revelations of character flaws has prepared the reader for his "ritual humiliation" (117-121).

<sup>17</sup>Oña's description of Fresia is, in my experience, only rivalled by Camoens's portrayal of Venus as seductive suppliant (*Lusiadas* 2.36-37). The explicit sensuality of this passage obviously caused extreme discomfort in the commentator Manuel de Faria e Sousa, who expends considerable ink in an unconvincing attempt to explain the whole thing away as a Christian allegory of the Church (1: 427ff).

<sup>18</sup>While there is no proof that Oña and Dávalos would have met personally before 1601 when the latter went to Lima to publish his *Miscelánea austral*, it is undeniable that many of the same local poets contributed paratexts to both Dávalos's book and the *Arauco domado* (Colombí-Monguió 85-86; Iglesias 86).

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