Epilogue: Reflections and Observations on Peru's Past and Present

Ernesto Silva
Kennesaw State University, esilva@kennesaw.edu

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Epilogue: Reflections and Observations on Peru’s Past and Present

Ernesto Silva

The aim of this essay is to provide a panoramic socio-historical overview of Peru by focusing on two periods: before and after independence from Spain. The approach emphasizes two cultural phenomena: how the indigenous people related to the Conquistadors in forging a new society, as well as how immigration, particularly to Lima, has shaped contemporary Peru. This contribution also aims at providing a bibliographical resource to those who would like to conduct research on Peru.

Focusing on Peru

Living over 30 years in the United States has provided me with some critical distance from my native Peru. Such distance has also prompted me to hesitate when considering my viewpoints about all things Peruvian. My position as a culturally hybrid Peruvian-American, on the other hand, has also afforded me the opportunity to explore issues from two perspectives, and that is what is reflected in my approximation to the subject matter of this essay. If it were not for the plethora of the events and presentations afforded me during the Year of Peru celebration at Kennesaw State University, as well as coediting the present volume of essays, I would not have had the opportunity to reacquaint myself with the country I left when I was very young.

The Quechua2 dictum “Ama Sua; Ama Llulla; Ama Qella,” the so-called three Inca3 Commandments, seems a convenient beginning for a brief panoramic reflection

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1 Artidoro Ernesto Silva, in memoriam
2 The Spanish Dominican Friar Domingo de Santo Tomás (1499-1570), who wrote the first book in Quechua in 1560, coined the term “Quechua” to refer to the language spoken by the largest group of indigenous people who lived in the coastal area of Peru at the time. The original name of the language was runasimi, which means “language of the people.” There were about 20 distinct languages spoken in the Inca Empire at the time the Spaniards arrived; such conditions compelled them to train natives to become interpreters, but they could hardly be trusted because their intercultural communication skills were often complicated by fear and apathy. The consequence of misunderstanding and mistrust provoked the first failure to communicate when Atahualpa and the Conquistadors met in Cajamarca in 1532: http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/pizarro-traps-emp-er-atahualpa
3 Throughout this essay the word Inca refers to the ethnic group as well as to the population they were considered the leaders of. The king of the Incas is also called Inca. Confusion with these denominations ensues when considering the Incas as the dominant group that conquered their
about Peruvian society from the perspective of a Peruvian who has lived over half of his life in the United States. The saying points to the moral character of the most important pre-Columbian civilization of South America. Its meaning is straightforward: “Do not be a thief; do not be a liar; do not be lazy.”

It is a saying repeated by tour guides, it appears in textbooks and travel books, and it is taught to school children as part of their heritage. Though this saying happens to be ubiquitous in the Andean region of Peru, hearing it makes the visitor of Inca archeological sites become mindful of the high moral standards held by the inhabitants of the highlands. Thus their code of conduct can arguably be said to be worthy of comparison with the Judeo-Christian Ten Commandments. Yet, upon further consideration, one must come to reject such an otherwise ethical worldview as having been created by the Incas.

The renowned mestizo historian and chronicler Inca Garcilaso de la Vega (1539-1616), who was born in Cusco (Qosqo, or navel of the world) and died in Cordoba, Spain, never mentions it in his writings. Neither does Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala (c.1535-1616) in his long letter to Philip III (1578-1621), King of Spain. Nothing is said about it in the writings of the defenders of the indigenous people, like in the well-known indictments against the mistreatment of natives written by the Dominican Friar Bartolomé de las Casas (c.1484-1566). Nothing about these rules of conduct is found in the copious writings of any of the first wave of chroniclers or the Spanish conquerors of Peru, be it Francisco Pizzaro (c.1471-1541) or his brothers Gonzalo, Juan, and Hernando. No proof for them is found in the art or architecture produced by the Incas, or in their oral tradition prior to the advent of the Conquistadors. Even the Conquistadors themselves do no refer to such dictum until after their control of the Andean region was well-established long after the death of Atahualpa (1497-1533) and the Siege of Cusco in 1533, or by the time of the defeat of the Inca forces led by Manco Inca Yupanqui (1516-1544) in 1537. Since the Incas did not have written records and their quipus were mainly used for bookkeeping purposes, there is no possible way to ascertain unequivocally whether this is a saying that can be verified by finding it in original sources.

Confronted with such lack of evidence, one can safely conclude that the so-called three Inca Commandments were a subsequent creation concocted by the invaders who needed to make demands on the indigenous population after the fall of the Inca Empire. Alternatively, after internalizing the colonization process or to pay lip service and ingratiate themselves to the conquerors, natives could have themselves come up with the dictum. Prior to that, the Inca political system followed an ancestral quid-pro-quo

neighbors. It is a fact that the Conquistadors at first understood all natives to be Incas, but they quickly realized that other groups existed, some of which eventually joined them in defeating the Incas.

4 Pablo Neruda (1904-1973), winner of the 1971 Nobel Prize in Literature, highlighted the stoicism of the Inca people in Alturas de Machu Picchu/The Heights of Machu Picchu, which was inspired by a trip to the citadel in 1943 and written two years later; it appears as Canto II in Canto General (1950).

5 Manco Inca Yupanqui almost succeeded in defeating the Spaniards in Cusco as did his general Quizú Yupanqui in Lima. But the Spanish were victorious, aided by other indigenous groups who were against the Incas, as well as by better weapons and the rapid spread of smallpox.
structure based on redistribution and reciprocity. All work was voluntary and tied to family relations. Refusing to volunteer would immediately ostracize the non-compliant, and being outside of the group meant destitution. This does not mean, to be sure, that during Inca times, there were no thieves, liars, or lazy people. It just goes to show that in an empire that went ostensibly without hunger or need for monetary compensation there was simply no reason for its subjects to engage in the activities that the dictum aimed at deterring.\(^6\)

Why steal if there was food for all? Why try to accumulate objects of value if they were part of the communal experience? Gold, to be sure, did not have the meaning it did for the Spaniards who associated it with wealth and power; for the indigenous people, it had an ornamental or decorative value and only in relation to the Inca and in religious sites, such as the Korikancha in Cusco, for instance. Nothing in the lives of the inhabitants of the pre-Colonial Andes would warrant having criminal codes against such anti-social behaviors. In fact, engaging in such actions was more likely to occur only after the arrival of the Spaniards in the New World.

The consequences of what happened when the two imperial powers clashed in what is known as the region of Cajamarca, where Atahualpa was captured, has been the source of constant debate among the experts. Did a band of brave Spaniards bring down the largest civilization of the Americas, thus ushering a Spanish Golden Age of global domination? The traditionally accepted view provided by the writings of dozens of chroniclers has been challenged by the concerted efforts of historians, forensic scientists, archeologists, anthropologists, ethnographers, and other scholars. One of the pioneers in reevaluating the Incas and the Colonial period by considering many sources and approaches was Raúl Porras Barrenechea (1897-1960), as explained by Mario Vargas Llosa in *Diccionario del amante de América Latina* (2006, pp. 300-302).\(^7\) He was followed by John Victor Murra (1916-2006), who urged researchers to reconsider the traditional view of the Inca period, particularly in his book *Organización económica del estado inca/ The Economic Organization of the Inka State*, published in 1978.\(^9\) He in turn influenced Maria Rostworowski de Diez Canseco, who wrote *Historia del Tahuantinsuyo/History of the Inca Realm* in 1988. Her intent was aimed at rereading and reinterpreting the original sources left by the chroniclers, particularly the writings of Titu Cusi (1529-1571) and Juan de Betanzos (c.1510-1576), both of whom attempt to present the Conquest from the Inca perspective in their writings.\(^10\)

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\(^6\) Arguably no pre-Inca civilization had such saying, nor did any of the ethnic groups that existed at the time of the Incas.

\(^7\) Book originally published in French and translated to Spanish. There is no English translation to date.

\(^8\) [http://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/24/obituaries/24murra.html?_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/24/obituaries/24murra.html?_r=0)

\(^9\) In addition to Murra's contribution, including his collaborations with Rolena Adorno in the edition of Guamán Poma de Ayala's text, there are several books by the Peruvian scholar Edmundo Bendezl1, who is himself of indigenous descent, that are worth considering in connection to the reevaluation of Andean culture and literature, such as his *La otra literatura peruana* (1986).

\(^10\) Read in particular the introduction to *History of How the Spaniards Arrived in Peru*, written by Titu Cusi Yupanqui, edited by C. J. Julien, and published in 2006; there is also an alternate translation: *Titu Cusi: A 16th Century Account of the Conquest* (2006), translated by N. D.
Another source of scholarship focuses on the gravesite where the mummies of Puruchuco were found. The research conducted by archeologist Guillermo A. Cock and his team in the area of Puruchuco, located near Lima in the district of Ate, has shed light on one of the more persistent mysteries of the so-called Inca Rebellion of 1536. How did a relatively small group of Spaniards defending the recently founded city of Lima defeat an army of over 20,000 Incas who had effectively laid siege to it? The answers are found by examining how the mummies of Puruchuco died. They yield an explanation that spawned a reevaluation of the Conquest. The Spanish did not defeat the Incas alone; they were aided militarily by thousands of natives. That is, the explanation of the Conquest of the Inca Empire primarily involved antagonistic issues that concerned the indigenous inhabitants of ancient Peru. The Spanish, to their credit, capitalized on those old rivalries and were keen on being able to tip the balance of power in their favor.

Peru before Independence

The Incas did not originate ex nihilo and immediately proceed to establish their vast empire; their success took time as they built on the experience, ingenuity, and sacrifice of many a pre-Inca civilization and other contemporary ethnic groups. As such, the Incas saw fit to incorporate not only the customs and practical agricultural know-how

Legnani, with forward by J. A. Mazzotti and preface by F. Salomon; and the one by R. Bauer: An Inca Account of the Conquest of Peru (2005), which contains a comprehensive chronology, introduction, and bibliography. For Juan de Betanzos, read Narrative of the Incas, edited by D. Buchanan and translated by R. Hamilton (1996).

11 For more on this collaborative investigation, read the National Geographic article “Inca Rescue,” May 2002, pp. 78-91, and visit http://channel.nationalgeographic.com/channel/content/inaa/

others possessed, but they also incorporated their gods and religious rituals. The Incas were an imperial force, particularly since Pachacutec (c.1400-c.1472) unified the empire in 1438 until the arrival of the Spaniards in Cusco in 1533. They were not unlike the Egyptians, Persians, or Romans, yet there is no evidence that they forcibly enslaved entire populations in a system that turned human beings into property. They did, however, force defeated foes into labor, yet such prisoners were given their freedom after some time.  

This does not mean that the Incas were not militaristic and tyrannical with all the ethnic groups they overran, but they would much prefer to form alliances with them. The Tahantinsuyo (four corners of the world) was rife with violence and inequities, as Vargas Llosa reminds us in his *Diccionario* (2006, pp. 371-376). Still, it is important to stress that their success rested chiefly in the curtailment of individual freedoms by enacting what they called Minka, which is the communal work in favor of the Ayllu or community.

The Minka system directed the efforts of the Ayllu towards building and maintaining public works that benefited entire communities, such as the cultivation of terraces on the sides of mountains. Further, the Ayni, which is the reciprocal work maintained among inhabitants of an Ayllu, ensured that everyone helped one another in the construction of houses and local villages. Lastly, there was also the Mita, which is the communal work expected of the Ayllu in favor of the State, namely to build roads or serve as chasquis, the trained runners that made communication possible communication throughout the Tahantinsuyo.  

The concept and practice of active reciprocity and redistribution was destroyed or altered beyond recognition with the arrival of the Spanish Conquistadors, who imposed their own system, which rendered the indigenous population subservient to the wishes of the Crown of Spain. Any and all previous labor systems were replaced by what amounted to indentured servitude or slavery. The Conquistadors, furthermore, were successful in practically eradicating a system of traditional belief based on ancestral and nature worship. 

The Spaniards prohibited the cult and reverence the indigenous people had for their mummified ancestors. These sacred mummies were taken away, supposedly to be buried in Lima, but no one knows what happened to them en route from Cusco. It is unknown if the convoy made it to its destination. Ritualistic burials and ancestor worship was part of what pre-Inca and Inca culture practiced prior to Christianity’s overwhelming presence in the continent. Catholic priests endeavored to eradicate ancient practices and substitute them with Christian rituals and symbolism. In Peru, vestiges of such ancient pre-Inca religious practices are found in several areas. In the region of Arequipa, south of Lima, the mummy dubbed Juanita was found in Mount Ampato; she is a well-preserved young woman that was offered as human sacrifice.

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13 The Incas used several alternatives when adjoining neighboring groups during the expansion of their empire, including the designation of groups as Yanaconas and Mitimaes. For more information, read the Nova-National Geographic interview with Terence D’Altroy: http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/inca/empire.html

14 A distinction must be made between the way the Incas used the Mita and its subsequent adoption by the Spaniards, who called it the same thing, but meant something else.

sometime in the second half of the 1400s. She is one example of many providing proof that human sacrifices for religious purposes were practiced in ancient Peru.16

Religious rituals and sacrifices were also part of what took place at the site named Chavin de Huántar, located in the central Andes, which was built around 900 BC at an altitude of over 3,000 meters above sea level (Vargas Llosa, 2006, pp. 106-109). A few other more ancient sites where religion was considered part of daily existence were: Caral, recognized as the oldest city in the Americas, built about 3,000 BC;17 the Lord of Sipan archeological site, part of the Moche civilization, which flourished 200-700 AD in the northern province of Lambayeque and is considered the richest find predating the Incas by about 1,000 years;18 and southward, in the province of La Libertad, there is another important archeological site named after the mumified body of a tattooed woman. She is known as the Lady of Cao, was a Moche leader, and lived in the area in the fourth century AD.19 Even Sacsayhuaman, located on the outskirts of the city of Cuzco, site of the celebration of Inti Raymi on June 24, is now considered to be a place of worship, as opposed to a fortress. Last but not least, Machu Picchu, built in 1450, is also an important religious site, which has been recognized as one of the Seven New Wonders of the World.20

For all the atrocities associated with the Conquest of America—the death21 of untold numbers of indigenous people—it must be recognized that the conquerors also brought a new lifestyle predicated on a Spanish worldview previously influenced by their interactions with Arab, Turkish, and Jewish cultures. The Spanish brought their language, religion, and political system, and they also began to mix with the natives,

17 For more on this remarkable civilization, read Caral: The First Civilization in the Americas, written by R. Shady and C. Kleihege (2010).
18 The 1995 A&E documentary Blood and Treasure in Peru presents a sobering perspective on the 1987 discovery of the tomb of the Lord of Sipan, which reveals the demise of the pre-Inca Moche civilization and their penchant for human sacrifice. Also, read Royal Tombs of Sipan, written by W. Alva and C. B. Donnan (1993), as well as visit the site of the museum where the findings are kept: http://www.museotumbasrealesipan.pe/
19 http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2006/05/mummy-peru.html; other tattooed princesses from ancient northern Peru were found in an area known as San José de Moro.
21 By all estimates, the Inca Empire had 10 to 12 million inhabitants. Still, an accurate account of the impact of the Spaniards had on the population of Native Americans in Peru is all but accurate. For a more in depth discussion on this topic, read pages 93-96 in The Incas: New Perspectives, written by G. F. McEwan (2006). For an explanation of the number of natives who died during the Conquest, read Las venas abiertas de América Latina, written by Eduardo Galeno (1971), particularly pages 58-59.
thus effectively inaugurating a new way of interrelating ideas, cultural products, and people from the Old with the New World.\textsuperscript{22} Out of such manifold combinations new racial classifications emerged, as well as a new cultural hybridism also known as syncretism.\textsuperscript{23} Churches and public buildings all over the conquered lands began to mix styles and perspectives. This marks the beginning of contemporary Peru with its multi-cultural and multiethnic manifestations.\textsuperscript{24} Still, though aware of the emergence of a new social order, the natives did not accept quietly their subjugation during colonial times; it was a painful process, highlighted by bloody rebellions, like the one led by Túpac Amaru II (1742-1781) between 1780 and 1782.\textsuperscript{25}

The Colonial period ended with the Declaration of Independence by the Argentinean liberator José de San Martín (1778-1850). After liberating Argentina and Chile, he arrived in the Bay of Paracas in 1820 and proclaimed independence on 4 July 1821. Though he had initially defeated the Peruvian Royalist forces, the fight for independence was not over; the final battles were fought in Junín and Ayacucho in 1824. At that time, the liberating army was already led by the Venezuelan Simón Bolívar (1783-1830), after San Martín had left Peru. The celebration of 200 years of Peruvian independence is fast approaching; in all that intervening time the country has undergone dramatic changes in order to become one of the most populated, diverse, and economically stable democratic nations in Latin America.

\textsuperscript{22} Like what his distant cousin Hernán Cortés (1485-1547) did in Mexico, Francisco Pizarro married and had two children with a native woman named Quispe Sisa (c.1518–1559). She was Atahualpa’s sister and he gave her to Pizarro hoping to prevent his execution. After Atahualpa was executed, Pizarro had two more children with Cuxirimay Ocllo Yupanqui (1515-1561), Atahualpa’s wife. Both women proved to be of indispensable value to the Conquistadors. For more on Pizarro, read \textit{Pizarro}, written by T. Castaño García (2004); \textit{Pizarro: Conqueror of the Inca}, written by S. Stirling (2006); \textit{Breve historia de Francisco Pizarro}, written by R. Barletta Villarán (2008); and \textit{Francisco Pizarro: Destroyer of the Inca Empire}, written by J. DiConsiglio (2009). For more on the role of women during the Inca Empire, read \textit{La mujer en el Tahuan-tinsuyu}, written by F. Hernández Astete (2002).


\textsuperscript{24} The essays included in \textit{The Peru Reader: History, Culture, Politic}, edited by O. Starn, C. L. Degregori, and R. Kirk (2005), offer a good sampling of such diachronic cultural transformation.

\textsuperscript{25} The documentary \textit{National Geographic’s Great Inca Rebellion} (2007) focuses on the attack on Lima in 1536 by revealing that the main cause of the victory of the Spanish over the Incas was the help they received from the family of Pizarro’s wife Quispe Sisa, who asked her mother for help to be sent from the nearby area of Huaylas.
Peru after Independence

During the Republic and under the mandate of Ramón Castilla (1797-1857), black slaves were set free by decree in 1854. Africans had come to Peru with Pizarro, and thereafter were brought to work in agricultural fields, where they intermingled with people of other races. Their descendants include several prominent Peruvians, from Saint Martin de Porres (1579-1639)—a contemporary of Saint Rose of Lima (1586-1617), the first saint in the Americas to be canonized by the Catholic Church—to Ricardo Palma (1833-1919), the writer of Tradiciones Peruanas, a collection of literary vignettes about life in Lima that appeared in newspapers and magazines, to a plethora of adroit soccer and volleyball players, as well as gifted singers like Lucha Reyes (1936-1973), Arturo “Zambo” Cavero (1940-2009), and Susana Baca, who until recently served as the first African-Peruvian Minister of Culture. The presence of Africans brought to Peru by the Spaniards has had a positive impact on contemporary Peruvian culture, from art, music, literature, and sports, to culinary masterpieces.

The fourth installment of the documentary series Black in Latin America (2011), hosted by Henry Louis Gates, Jr., focuses on Mexico and Peru by stressing that many African descendants prefer not to talk about their race. But the accomplishments of African-Peruvians are the cause of great national pride from at least since the 19th century in connection with the output of the watercolor artist Francisco Fierro (1810-1879). In the 20th century, poet and singer Nicomedes Santa Cruz (1925-1992), whose birthday in June 4th is now known as the Day of Afro-Peruvian Culture, also helped keep African folklore alive. Further, Ronaldo Campos de la Colina (1927-2001), founder of the music group Perú Negro, is another person who brought the presence of African-Peruvians to the consciousness of the country and beyond. As a result, in a remarkable turn of events towards the end of 2009, then President Alan Garcia publicly apologized to African-Peruvians in name of all Peruvians for the centuries of discrimination and exploitation.

Other ethnic groups have also contributed to the cultural richness present in Peru. As with African-Peruvians, large numbers of Asians, primarily from China and Japan, arrived in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In the case of the Chinese, not only did they work in plantation fields in the coastal region under grueling conditions, but they

26 The following is an abbreviated listing of a few noteworthy texts on the subject: Peru's Indian Peoples and the Challenge of Spanish Conquest: Huamanga to 1640, written by S. J. Stern (1993); Breve historia contemporánea del Perú, written by F. Pease (1995); Converging Cultures, written by D. Fane (1996); The World of Tupac Amaru: Conflict, Community, and Identity in Colonial Peru, written by W. Stavig (1999); In Search of an Inca: Identity and Utopia in the Andes, written by F. Galindo Alberto (2010); Latin America in Colonial Times, written by M. Restall and K. Lane (2011); Colonial Latin America, written by M. A. Burkholder and L. L. Johnson (2012); and Bound Lives: Africans, Indians, and the Making of Race in Colonial Peru, written by R. S. O'Toole (2012).

27 These efforts are seen in the research being conducted to vindicate some ethnic groups, as noted by H. Rodríguez Pastor in his edited work: Negritud: Afroperuanos, Resistencia y Existencia (2008).
created a new Peruvian-Chinese culinary style named Chifa.\textsuperscript{28} The Japanese have contributed in a similar fashion with a Japanese-Peruvian cooking style called Nikkei.\textsuperscript{29} Some prominent Asian-Peruvians are the painter Tilsa Tsuchiya (1929-1984), the poet José Watanabe (1946-2007), the chef Javier Wong Chong, and the controversial ex-President of Peru Alberto Fujimori, who is currently incarcerated for crimes perpetrated in an effort to eliminate the terrorist group Shining Path. Further, when it comes to the contributions of Peruvians giving voice to the Andean experience from the Republic till contemporary times, one cannot obviate the writings of Clorinda Matto de Turner (1852-1909), who championed the indigenous experience in Cusco, as well as the poetry of César Vallejo (1892-1938), the ideas of José Carlos Mariátegui (1894-1930), the politics Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre (1895-1979), and the novels of Ciro Alegría (1909-1967), José María Arguedas (1911-1969), and Gamaliel Churata (1897-1969).

The Inca legacy is quite palpable to visitors of the Imperial City of Cusco. The architecture is impressive, particularly in their manifestations during the Colonial period exemplified by buildings that incorporate both Inca and Spanish components. The best examples of such architectural blending can be found in the Korikancha and the Cathedral, for example. Local painters belonging to the Cusqueña School left a number of works in which they incorporated within religious motifs images of mountains, regional produce, and native animals easily recognizable by the local population. Cusco has an array of different local cultures concentrated in the city. Each group has its own dress design and colors. One important Andean photographer tried to capture the multiethnic aspects of the area. Martín Chambi (1891-1973), using a pictorial aesthetic akin to the one shown in the 1961 film \textit{Kukuli} (the first-ever in Quechua) presents impressive examples imitated by other subsequent photographers. The most recent is Mario Testino, particularly in \textit{Alta Moda}, a book based on the exhibit featuring about 1,500 traditional garments from Cusco belonging to Leonardo Arana Yampé, founder of Filigranas Peruanas. To promote Peruvian art, Testino recently founded an organization name MATE.\textsuperscript{31} Another important Peruvian-Spanish photographer is the daughter of Mario Vargas Llosa, Morgana.\textsuperscript{32} Her most recent project is titled \textit{Mirame, Lima}/\textit{Look at Me, Lima}; she worked along with British photographer Jaime Travez and Italian art director David Tortora to put together an exhibit of 50 portraits of families in Lima to display the multicultural aspects of the city.\textsuperscript{33}

\textsuperscript{28} For more on Peruvian-Chinese relations, visit http://asiapacifico-carlos.blogspot.com/2013/07/on-china-studies-in-peru.html

\textsuperscript{29} The Japanese in Peru constitute the second largest ethnic group living outside of Japan; for more on their influence, read \textit{The Closed Hand: Images of the Japanese in Modern Peruvian Literature}, written by R. Riger Tsurumi (2012), particularly Chapter 1.

\textsuperscript{30} Directed by L. Figueroa, E. Nishiyama, and C. Villanueva.

\textsuperscript{31} MATE stands for the coca leaf used for infusions to prevent altitude sickness, among other maladies, as well as for the two first letters of Mario Testino's first and last names.

\textsuperscript{32} Her father, along with photographer P. Corral Vega, co-authored a very interesting book titled \textit{Andes} (2001), in which Vargas Llosa uses a literary device he also put into effect in his controversial novel \textit{El elogio de la madrastra}/\textit{In Praise of the Step Mother} (1988).

\textsuperscript{33} In a similar style as the series of books titled \textit{A Day of America}, \textit{A in the Life of Africa}, \textit{A Day in the Life of Spain}, and so on, there are important texts focusing on Peru and Latin America: \textit{The
With close to 10 million inhabitants, Lima is the largest city and the capital of Peru; such exorbitant growth is the result of waves of immigrants from both within Peru and from abroad. In contrast with newcomers from earlier generations, waves of new immigrants arrived in Lima around the middle of the 20th century. This rapid growth provoked harsh criticism from writers, so much so that it inspired first the poet and painter César Moro (1903-1956) and then the writer Sebastián Salazar Bondy (1924-1965) to describe the City of Kings as “Lima la horrible” or “Lima the horrible.”

The essay by that title, written by Salazar Bondy in 1964, has in turn inspired many other artists. Lima then represents ground zero for the idea of the so-called Peruvian Melting Pot. Many writers, singers, painters, and poets who were born in the city use it as inspiration and leitmotif in their works. Their creative output has made it possible for Peruvian art to be internationally recognized as the product of a place in which many cultures merge.

But the most internationally recognized Peruvian of the past 50-plus years has been Mario Vargas Llosa, who after being considered a finalist for years, finally received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2010. In his work he has been critical of Lima (Diccionario, 2006, pp. 233-235). His writings and notable interviews on the subject have also been analyzed in a recent book on architecture titled Mario Vargas Llosa: Cuidad, arquitectura y paisaje, edited by Víctor Mejía Ticona (2013). Already in the second sentence of Vargas Llosa’s novel Conversación en la catedral, published in 1969, Zavalita, one of the characters who functions as the author’s alter ego, exclaims: “En qué momento se había jodido el Perú/When had Peru gotten screwed” (my translation). The context of the comment was Lima and it amounted to a direct indictment of Manuel Odria (1897-1974), who ruled the country from 1948 to 1956. Throughout his illustrious literary career, Vargas Llosa has been a staunch supporter of democracy, and his books delve into political issues, as well as...
into areas concerning multiethnic experiences. To be sure, not all of his books are about Lima or Peruvian topics. Of the ones in which Lima becomes one of the characters it is worth mentioning the one that provided the inspiration for a film by Francisco Lombardi, which premiered in 1985: *La ciudad y los perros/The Time of the Hero* (1962). The unstable nature of ethnic and racial relations in Lima, which represents a microcosm of the entire country, is transferred to an Andean locality and problematized when represented in another film by Lombardi: *La boca del lobo/In the Mouth of the Wolf* (1988).38

Cinema is an ideal medium to depict realistic as well as romanticized images of a city and its citizens, as proven by the popularity of critically acclaimed films like *Paris, je t'aime* (2006) and *New York, I Love You* (2009). Like the works by Woody Allen featuring cities like New York, Paris, Rome, and Barcelona, Lima is also depicted in a number of films made by Peruvian filmmakers: *Gregorio* (1982), directed by the Chaski Group; *Ciudad de M/City of M* (2000), directed by Felipe Degregori; *Dias de Santiago/Days of Santiago* (2004), directed by Josué Méndez; *La teta asustada/Milk of sorrow* (2009), directed by Claudia Llosa; *Las malas intenciones/The Bad Intentions* (2011), directed by Rosario García Montero; and *Octubre* (2010), directed by Daniel and Diego Vega Vidal. Unlike what is depicted in the films about first-world cities mentioned above, where the unifying theme is love, in Peruvian films, Lima is shown in all of its chaotic complexity as the center of societal conflicts.39

As a result of rapid urban growth, Lima suffers from a number of problems associated with cities its size. Aside from considerations on public safety, traffic is the main concern for city dwellers. Since one-third of the population of Peru lives in Lima, improving the infrastructure of the city is a priority. Old pictures published in a collection of different books about Lima currently being offered as a bonus to the readers of the newspaper *El Comercio* are an eye-opening experience in terms of displaying the exponential growth of the city. A similar experience can be had perusing through a book of photographs edited by Testino titled *Lima, Peru*(2007), which includes a forward titled “Parque Salazar,” written by Vargas Llosa. This well-known essay also appears in *Diccionario* (2006, pp. 335-338). The array of pictures shown in Testino’s edited volume serves as a reminder of how much the city has changed due to rapid growth and a construction boom where the resulting density of the population is such that no

38 *Madeimusa* (2006), directed by C. Llosa, also shows a similar conflict between different worlds.

39 These Peruvian films are not unlike, for instance, what is shown in a film like *Slumdog Millionaire* (2008), directed by D. Boyle. Closer to what happens in Lima is shown in the film *Siete dias en la Habana/Seven Days in Havana* (2012), which follows the formula of the two films mentioned at the beginning of the paragraph, but within the realities of a city supposedly isolated from the influence of capitalism. The concept for a message-driven film about contemporary Lima is very appealing, and perhaps it should be made with a focus on a few of its major problems, like security and transportation. A couple outstanding examples of how this is done within the complex historical background in South America, where the legacy of the Incas and the colonial period is still very much present, are the Mexican-Bolivian film *American Visa* (2005), directed by J. C. Valdivia, and the Spanish-Bolivian film *También la lluvia/Even the Rain* (2010), directed by I. Bollain.
one can deny that taking a taxi during peak transit hours can become a dismaying experience in which reaching a nearby destination could very well take hours.

Undoubtedly, due to waves of migrants coming from the provinces to the capital city of Peru, Lima represents the entire country. With that, some racial and ethnic conflicts also are apparent. Two works that study such phenomena and its representation in popular culture, from literature to art, are *Los muros invisibles: Lima y la modernidad en la novela del siglo XX*, written by Peter Elmore (1993), and *La mirada de los gallinazos: cuerpo, fiesta y mercancía en el imaginario sobre Lima (1640-1895)*, written by Marcel Vázquez Castro (2013). In other words, as it is for the entire country, so it is for Lima.

Peru is a land of many wonders. Vargas Llosa reminds readers about such abundant variety by quoting an old-saying that put a value on something by comparing it with Peru. “Vale un Peru”/"It is worth a Peru" is a phrase associated with value judgments: “Ce n’est pas le Pérou!” (2006, p. 293). Its connection to the idea of El Dorado is also included in Voltaire’s *Candide* (1759), chapters 18 and 19, in terms of the search for the mythological place. El Dorado inspired Spanish explorers in their adventures looking for a place of unimaginable riches. In 1540, Francisco Pizarro’s younger half-brother Gonzalo (1502-1548) began an expedition leaving from Quito eastward. Only a small group led by Francisco de Orellana (1511-1546) made it all the way to a region he called Amazonas in reference to the mythological women the Conquistadors claimed to have seen in the area. This extraordinary historical episode has been brought to the screen by Warner Herzog in *Aguirre: The Wrath of God* (1972) and by Carlos Saura in *El Dorado* (1988). The Amazon region of Peru remains isolated by the impenetrable nature of the jungle. As a result of multiple visits to the region, Vargas Llosa has written extensively about it and serves as the exotic background in several of his novels. The region is known for its rich biodiversity, as well as for it contribution to the Peruvian economy.

Peru is divided into three main geographic regions: coast, where Lima is located; highlands, where Cusco is located; and jungle, where the city of Iquitos and the Amazon River are located. Peru is the fifth most populated country in South America, with about 31 million inhabitants. The country has 84 of the world’s 103 possible ecosystems and 28 of its 32 climate types. It is among the most biologically diverse countries on earth, which is home to about 25,000 species, with about 30% of them being endemic. Peru is the second country in the world with the most bird species; there are 1,834 species, only Colombia has more with 1,897. The country also boasts of having 3,000 species of butterflies. It is, in part, because of such biodiversity that the economic growth of Peru averages between 6% and 7% annually since 2006, which is very

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40 The city was named World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1991.
41 *Alzire, ou les Américains* (1736), written by Voltaire (1694-1778), inspired Françoise de Grafigny (1695-1758), to write *Letters d’une Périvienne/Letters of a Peruvian Woman* (1747). The same play also formed the basis for the opera *Alzira* (1845), composed by Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901).
promising. In his recent first-time visit to Washington, D.C. at the beginning of June 2013, President Ollanta Humala stressed the important role that a revitalized and dynamic Latin America is playing in helping stabilize the world's economy. The United States is Peru's most important business partner, and the existing free trade agreement is essential in helping that such business relationships will continue to be strong.

In his meeting with President Obama on June 11, 2013, President Humala declared that Latin America will help solve the global crisis in collaboration with Asia and the United States. Additionally, the following day, in a presentation given at the Organization of American States, the President of Peru emphasized that social inclusion is a key component in his vision for Peru. As explained above, Peru is a multicultural nation of vast untapped natural resources including important agricultural products such as potatoes—first farmed thousands of years ago—and coca plants used for medicinal purposes especially in the management of pain. Notably, Coca-Cola's main ingredient is an extract from the coca leaf. Indeed, the soft drink giant has quite an interesting place in Peruvian popular culture, from its legendary competition with its rival beverage Inca Kola, to the story children are told about the shape of the bottle in which the beverage is contained. It is said that the shape of the bottle was inspired by the silhouette of a Tapada Limeña, the emblematic woman during the colonial period in Lima who dressed in the arabesque style in vogue at the time in the South of Spain. Peruvians also comment that the red and white symbolic colors of Coca-Cola are a reference to the Peruvian flag.

Building on Peru's rich cultural and biological diversity, Gastón Acurio, chef extraordinaire, has revolutionized how Peruvian cuisine is approached within and outside of Peru. His main contribution has been to devote renewed attention to the producers of ingredients for the preparation of Peruvian dishes, as well as to emphasize careful sustainability of the environment where ingredients are cultivated. With him, cooking is a holistic process carried on in a global scale; from the hands of the farmers to the tables at his chain of restaurants. He has written books on such topics and has been asked to write for business publications. His latest contribution appears in La empresa y la gerencia, post crisis, de una época de cambios a un cambio de época (2013), written by Ben Schneider, a Harvard-educated Peruvian contributor to the newspaper El Comercio. In the prologue, Acurio emphasizes change as one of the characteristics of modern Peru, which he says started in the 1980s. According to him, the new informed consumer demands social responsibility and creativity to secure freedom (Schneider, pp. 10-13).

He insists in this formula as he opens a Tanta restaurant in Chicago in summer 2013 and another in Miami in fall 2013. There are two of his La Mar restaurants already in the United States, one in San Francisco and the other in New York City. Acurio is part owner of Inca Kola. The international success of Acurio has inspired many books on him as well. Two worth considering are Gastón Presidente, written by N. Chiesa (2010), and Gastón Acurio: La marca del movimiento gastronómico peruano, written by J. Luque (2010).

The emphasis on strategies to become an entrepreneur was also the subject matter in the writings of Hernando De Soto, particularly in his El otro sendero/The Other Path (1987). The title ironically refers to the terrorist group in pointing to a different way to get out of poverty.
rio, moreover, is now exploring the Italian influence in Peruvian culture as manifested in delicious recipes available at his Los Bachiche restaurant in Lima.46 Having explored the inheritance of several groups that came into Peru, it is worth mentioning the contributions of the Italians, who came to the port city of El Callao by the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century. Just to cite one example, we can mention one Fortunato Brescia Tassano, originally from Genoa, Italy, who founded the Brescia-Caffierata conglomerate, one of the richest business groups in Latin America.

Aside from being recognized by the Guinness Book of World Records as having the greatest variety of dishes in the world, and now having many world renowned chefs, it is important to note how dining out is fueling a vibrant and growing restaurant industry in Peru.47 This popular trend is due particularly thanks to Mistura, the biggest food fair in the country, which takes place every year for two weeks early in September. The branding of Peru as a favorite tourist destination is a priority for the government, as seen by the publicity produced by PromPerú/MarcaPeru.48 Food and drinks prepared with pisco,49 an alcoholic beverage made of fermented grapes, are front and center among the reasons people visit Peru. And the richness of Peruvian textiles, particularly those made of alpaca and vicuña, are among the best in the world.50 But let us not forget that visitors also come to Peru to explore Machu Picchu, the Nazca Lines, the Amazon River, the shamanist traditions,51 the Andes, and the many of the other rich cultural and geographical attributes described above.52

From the pre-Incas to present-day Peru, there is something that has remained all throughout, and that is the multi-cultural aspects of an area of the world that has been in constant change, while also maintaining its uniqueness. My own development, as a descendant from families that immigrated to Peru at some point and now being myself an immigrant to the United States, has shaped the way I have approached Peru in the paragraphs above. My personal involvement in the Year of Peru at Kennesaw State University, as well as coeditor of the present volume, has made me more aware than

46 The new Italian dining experience currently also offered at the Astrid & Gastón restaurant in Lima is noteworthy: http://astridgastonz.com/en/
47 For an overview of Peruvian cuisine, read Los sabores del Perú: Confesiones de un comensal, written by R. Vargas (2010).
48 Some of the most recognizable Peruvian celebrities of today are featured in these videos: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-r_xBZcVEH11&sns=fb and http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2YcGSiHF6jE
49 To learn more about pisco and its connection to the United States, read Wings of Cherubs: The Saga of the Rediscovery of Pisco Punch, Old San Francisco’s Mystery Drink, written by G. Toro-Lira (2007), and The Pisco Book, written by G. Dicum (2011).
51 There is renewed interest in ancient healing practices and religious rites. For more read The Andean Codex: Adventures and Initiations among the Peruvian Shamans, written by J. E. Williams (2005); The Jaguar Within: Shamanic Trance in Ancient Central and South American Art, written by R. R. Stone (2011); and Light of the Andes: In Search of Shamanic Wisdom in Peru, written by J. E. Williams (2012).
52 For more on Peru and its international image, visit http://internacional.peru.info/
ever of the importance of Peru on the world stage. In trying to provide a panoramic view of all things Peruvian, I aspired to inform the reader about how diverse Peruvian society is. With all the historical ups and downs the country has experienced, I can only remain optimistic that its future is more promising than ever.

References

