



Practical and Imaginative Speech in Guaman Poma's *El primer nueva corónica y buen gobierno*: El Negro within the Chronicler's Social Reform and Utopic Agendas

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This paper seeks to resolve the contrapuntal inconsistencies between Guaman Poma de Ayala's practical ideas and imaginative longings in *El primer nueva corónica y buen gobierno*. By focusing on Poma's discourse regarding the newly arrived African subjects in Peru, the essay exposes how "los negros" help the reader identify Guaman's conception of "good government" in the early modern vice regal milieu. Particularly, Guaman's imagined production of "negros buenos" outlines gender-specific Christian economic practices that situate Africans within an idealized colonial hierarchy. Similarly, Guaman's proposals to reform the "negros malos" employ the same orthodox-authoritarian sensibility that contextualizes his desire for a stratified colonial ambient. Beyond these practical measures, Guaman's chronicle has caught the attention of many critics and historians due to his grandiose contemplation of a world separated into four quadrants based on religion and/or race. My paper seeks to palliate the dramatization of this ideal by placing it into an "imaginative register" that is contrasted with Guaman's precise and austere ideas on social organization. In sum, this essay undergirds the African subject position in 16th and 17th century Peru in an attempt to expose a societal landscape that struggled with the organization of its European, Indigenous and African counterparts. The paper also exposes how the African position within the vice regal texture was heavily mediated by dominant social actors, thus creating further questioning and investigation around actual African autonomy and consciousness within the incipient New World experiment.

Keywords: Colonization; Indigenous America; Slavery; Literature

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The dazzling yet unromantic feature of Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala's *El primer nueva corónica y buen gobierno* (*The First New Chronicle and Good Government*) is its political precision that recreates and reorders subjects within the colonial ambient. Guaman's Andean experience during the end of the 16th and beginning of the 17th century had witnessed radically new social, religious and political installments. During these developments, few indigenous people were able to publish their concerns against Spain's colonizing program due to a lack of resources and social capital that could propagate early concerns. Guaman Poma, a descendant of a noble Incan family, ruptured this debilitating silence by articulating specific critiques against the Spanish presence. Within *El primer nueva corónica y buen gobierno*, and what I will take up in this paper, Guaman devotes a chapter to a conspicuous reality of the colonial milieu: the treatment and activities of Africans in Peru. Concerning African peoples, his narrative provides specific reforms directed towards those he deems as "negros malos" ("bad blacks") (Poma de Ayala, 1944, p. 720). These are acculturated, "hispanized" Africans whom Guaman chastised for their miscegenational involvements along with the cruelty that some inflicted upon his indigenous cohort. In reading Ayala's prescriptions for social change, what becomes problematic, and thus has caught the eye of many critics and historians, are his contradictory conclusions regarding the African plight. For example, how do we resolve the tension between his grandiose concept of a world separated into racial or religious quadrants with his practical knowledge of colonial power relations? Furthermore, how do we make sense of his attack against *negros malos* ("*negros mulatos*" y "*criollos*") while he delighted in others—the *negros bozales*? These examples model that a diligent reading of *El primer nueva corónica y buen gobierno* places the chronicle within a liminal category only resolved by how one weighs the import of Guaman's language.

It is within this framework that I aim to magnify the position of Africans in relation to Guaman's 1) practical and 2) imaginative speech. Within these two registers, Guaman chronicles and imagines¹ "*negros*" who represent the central crux by which we can determine a more precise answer to the question 'what was "good government" for Guaman Poma?' Critically engaging with this question from the subject position of the Africans Guaman writes into being, I aim to expose how his argument insists on a reformation of vice regal Peru as opposed to an expulsion of the "other" into one of four segregated kingdoms. Central to the core of my paper is the consideration that Guaman's agenda becomes crystalized through his detailed inscription of Africans into the colonial environment.

By employing the term "practical," I aim to show how the Peru of Guaman's epoch existed in a context that could not simply cast off its newcomers. Due to this reality, "practical writing" by Guaman denotes material solutions that are capable of manifestation *because* they respond to real events. Namely, I refer to the need of indigenous elites to construct a way to co-exist with the land's new inhabitants. Guaman's chronicle, as shown in his chapter on the Africans, demonstrates that the preferred model of cohabitation was the imposition of Christianization and the observance of autochthonous rule. Thus, appropriating Christianity and applying it as a universal elixir became a way to palliate indigenous unrest and maintain hierarchical order in an economically and spiritually vital Peru.

¹ I use this term in reference to Herman Bennett's denotation of imagined African subjects in *Africans in Colonial Mexico: Absolutism, Christianity, and Afro-Creole Consciousness, 1570-1640*. Bennett highlights the Spanish colonial belief that mere physical ascription of Christian labels affected a Christian sensibility within African populations. Stemming from this corporeal-ethereal interplay, the Spanish crown determined to only populate acquired territories with gender specific Christian slaves. By establishing the contours of the African subject *a priori*, the Spanish monarch, and as I append, Guaman Poma, imagined the veneer of colonial African subjecthood.

The imaginative² second register requires a more delicate understanding of Guaman's idea that the world should be divided into four kingdoms based on religion and race (Catholic, Roman Christians, Blacks of Guinea, and Turkish Moors). I call this language imaginative, and its implications oblique, because it represents a drastic divergence from observable conditions. Guaman (1944) asserts:

Que aués de conzederar que todo el mundo es de Dios y ancí Castilla es de los españoles y las Yndias es de los yndios y Guenea es de los negros. [...] Y los yndios son propetarios naturales deste rreyno, y los españoles, naturales de España. Acá en este rreyno son estrangeros (p. 857-58).

There is the need to consider that the entire world is God's and Castile belongs to the Spaniards, and the Indies belong to the Natives and Guinea, the blacks. [...] And the Natives are natural owners of this kingdom, and the Spaniards, natural owners of Spain. Here in this kingdom they are strangers (My translation).

It should be noted that the kernel of this "separatist" seed was nothing more than Guaman's personal belief in geographically relevant native rule. Here, my idea is different from writers who argue that the complaints presented by Guaman Poma are "ligadas a su deseo de que todos los 'estangeros' regresen a sus lugares de origen y que les dejen el Perú a sus dueños legítimos" ("linked to his desire that all foreigners return to their place of origin and leave Peru to its rightful indigenous owners") (Vaccarella, 2002, p. 25). Although Guaman did advocate for indigenous rule, I assert that stark segregation was not implicit in that notion. Moreover, as Guaman identifies "*negros buenos*" (good blacks), one realizes that he champions a certain African subjectivity—an approbation that undermines the logic of a universal separatist doctrine. This group of "good blacks," along with their reformed *ladino* counterparts, I contend, occupied a central space within colonial Andean civilization that corroborated the true motives of Guaman Poma's historical account: a restructuring of Peruvian society and its peoples according to Christian doctrine and economic productivity. With this in view, Guaman's four-kingdom narrative, which has been read as segregationist, may more aptly be understood as an imaginative longing that, when read against the unbending historical components of his writings, over dramatizes his more basic desire for indigenous suzerainty.

The Need for Practical Reform: The African in Peru as Co-Conquistador with the Spanish

In part, Guaman Poma's chief claim about the African presence in Peru maintained that those causing social instability threatened Christian civic development and should be punished accordingly. This language is applied directly to a faction of "*hispanicized*" Africans. Guaman (1944) provides examples of the behaviors he found less than savory:

Cómo algunos negros o negras de las ciudades y de uillas, aldeas de uicio que tienen son grandísimos ladrones y salteadores y las dichas negras por las causas que diré. El primero, porque no le dan de comer tres ueses: almorzar, de comer y senar y de bestir y de calsar. Desto se hazen ladrones; en esto tiene la culpa el amo. Se deue penar para la cámara de su Magestad y gastos de justicia. El segundo, que se hazen grandísimos borrachos. El tersero, se hazen grandísimos jugadores y holgasanes, peresos[os] y acá dan a hurtar hazienda agena. El quarto, se hazen grandes tauaqueros de uicio. El quinto, se hazen putaneros los hombres y las mugeres grandes putas. Se caualgan con

² This is not to be confused with the previously mentioned imagined African subject position. Here, I use "imaginatively" to highlight a specific element of Guaman Poma's rhetorical style. This element, as I aim to defend, eludes a contextual grasp by which we can comprehend it within real time and space.

españoles y le sustenta, hurtando de sus amos o de otras personas, que son dixno de castigo, a otros egenplo [sic] (p. 722).

Like some black men or black women in the cities, towns, or villages, the vice that they have is that they are always stealing and robbing. The black women's vices consist of: they are not fed three times—lunch, a snack, and dinner, and lack appropriate dress. They become thieves: in this the master is to blame. He must be punished by His Majesty's chamber and pay justice expenses. Secondly, they become very drunk. The third, they are always playing games and are lazy, thus they steal other people's finances. The fourth, they love to smoke tobacco. The fifth, they are whores. Both men and women are great whores. They ride with Spaniards and sustain themselves by stealing from their masters or from other people. They are worthy of punishment because of these reasons and other examples (My translation).

Despite the list of vices that Guaman magnifies, it is notable that he ascribes a certain culpability to the Spanish slave master. The chronicler aims to diagnose and remedy these social ills while noting that they were incubated by inhumane slave owning practices. Additionally, the observation that "they ride with Spaniards and sustain themselves . . ." adds an important and revelatory practical concern for Guaman—the closeness, and perhaps even friendship, that existed between Africans and Spaniards for nearly three hundred years before Francisco Pizarro arrived in Peru.

This proximity of Africans and Spaniards originated with the Moorish Kings in the 10th century. According to Leslie B. Rout in *The African Experience in Spanish America*, sub-Saharan Africans served the Moors during early campaigns to establish Islamic states in Iberia. After 1250 when the Portuguese defeated the Moors, Africans became the obvious labor source as they had previously "assisted" the enemy's aggressions. Spain experienced similar developments after the fall of the caliphate Yusef ibn-Tashufin in 1249 when Christian traders begun purchasing slaves. The benefits of these investments manifested themselves fruitfully within elite Spanish estates. Rout (1976) explains:

Female captives were almost totally committed to domestic service, but males performed a variety of tasks. Wealthy Spaniards purchased some males and converted them into footmen, coachmen, and butlers, while others functioned as stevedores, factory workers, farm laborers, miners, and assistants to their owner's crafts. Male and female domestics working in wealthy homes lived in relative comfort, and those who learned a marketable skill were sometimes able to purchase their freedom (p. 17).

Due to the nature of their labor, it is readily discernible that African peoples had a productive proximity with colonial masters. It was also this perpetual adjacency that gave rise to the extravagance with which Spanish owners frequented their African slaves and by doing so, created a profuse *mulatto* population. In short, although Africans were considered inferior and even loyal epigones to their Spanish overseers, many had occupied a privileged position within Spanish society. This reality carried itself into the 16th century context that Guaman Poma observed.

In vice regal Peru, this “*negro criollo*”, or *ladino* (a person familiar with Spanish language and customs), was the object of Guaman’s diatribe. As a “friend” of the Spaniard, the African was perceived as a collaborator in the unjust imposition of Hispanic hegemony. For Guaman, this process comprised the decline of indigenous peoples due to disease, cruelty, and miscegenation. Further emphasizing his askance peer at Spanish lordship, Guaman depicts a slave punishing an indigenous



individual for failing to make an appropriate tribute payment to colonial officials. Here, the African slave acts as the disciplinary agent while the master assumes a waggish secondary role.

The visual poignantly depicts Guaman’s unease with the “negro” acting as a surrogate of his master. Deeply upended by these instances, Guaman suggested a practical refashioning of the *ladino* subjective and objective position. Specifically, he claimed that “bad” blacks needed to be reformed by abandoning the characteristically Spanish habits they had absorbed. He proposed that obedient Africans, instead, lead a Christian lifestyle:

Han de estar en una casa, bien casados, sirviendo a Dios . . . estos les dejen libremente si pueden sembrar sementera para ellos, y tener ranchos y criar gallinas, y tener hacienda de sus sudores y trabajos, y saber leer escribir y doctrina y cristianidad y policia, honra, y sea doctrinado. Y si fuere ladron y bellaco, borracho, coquero, tabaquero, embustero, chismoso, castigarlo y quemarlo hasta que se enmiende y sea bueno (p. 705).

They must be in a house, well married, serving God . . . leave them freely if they can sow seed, have ranches, raise chickens, have an estate from their sweats and labor, know how to read, write, know doctrine, Christianity, order, honor, and can be indoctrinated. And if they are thieves, scoundrels, drunkards, addicts, cigar makers, liars, or gossipers, punish them and burn them until they are amended and good (My translation).

Empirically, Guaman places wayward Africans within an objective Christian position that is domestic and undergirded by the gender roles of marriage. Subjectively, he calls for them to be organically reconstituted by the tenets of Christian scripture. Guaman’s political tact exposes the practical nature of much of his text: to harness the reformatory qualities of Christianity in an attempt to secure Africans in a subdued space within the fledgling vice regal situation. For reasons I will explore later, displacing these reform strategies by imbricating them upon a world divided into distinct quadrants creates a model that is not conceptually consistent. These reformations, instead, were directed towards restructuring a complex and present society.

“El Negro Bozal”: Underpinnings of Guaman’s Imaginative Agenda

Eric Vaccarella's thesis in "Estrangeros, Uellacos, Santos y Reyes: La Representación de los Negros en la Obra de Felipe Guaman Poma De Ayala" maintains that Guaman Poma desired that all foreigners return to their place of origin. The practical weight of this idea is put into question when we consider Guaman’s discourse regarding the “*negros bozales*.” Considering the religious, economic and social changes that the colonial environment underwent forces us to inquire whether Guaman thought that a total rejection of this new social reality was viable. This question may be grazed with the thought that Guaman, in fact, proposed the best outcome for his country, realizing that new implements could not be easily dislocated. Following this line of logic, Guaman seemed to desire a trust in and guidance over the *bozales*. His preference for the *bozales* exposes the sensibility that the

group of Africans should stay in a reformed Peru as imagined and controlled subjects, and in exercising his histrionic gesture, that they were also worthy of forming their own kingdom.

As is well documented, the *negros bozales*, or according to Rout "black ones *azetados* (*literally, blackened blacks*)" (Rout, 1976, p. 24), were the only Africans imported to Spanish America after an agreement of the Royal Government in 1595. The decision arose due to rebellions initiated in Santo Domingo by *gelofoes* (Africans belonging to a small area between the river of Senegal and Sierra Leone) and *ladinos*. To meet the demand for labor in the colonies, the *bozal* became the main source of agriculture industry. This group of Africans was not only in demand because of their "peaceful and obedient" disposition, which had become contrasted with the "jocular" and "disobedient" *ladinos*, but also for other traits mentioned by Rout (1976):

Several other considerations also prompted the choice:

1. As a captive of the New World, the *bozal* could be baptized and molded into the kind of "model" Christian the Spaniards wanted him to be.
2. The *bozal* would be clearly recognized as a slave. Some Spanish *ladinos* were mulattoes and not much darker than white Iberians. In the triracial society to which Spaniards were committed after 1518, the *bozal's* black skin made his status immediately discernible. Likewise, in Spanish America there would be almost no possibility that the white or red man would be confused about the status of the Africans they encountered.
3. The Spaniards believed that the *bozal* could be psychologically intimidated into performing the excruciating manual labor needed.
4. The *bozal* could be bought at a relatively cheap price and in the numbers that would soon be needed (p. 25-26).

Of particular interest is Rout's first point as this idea adroitly contextualizes the official policy of the Crown and the strategies promulgated by Guaman Poma. Namely, both made divisions between "good Africans" and "bad Africans" and advanced that the former be imagined exemplifying an acceptable living as colonial Christian subjects. This idea carries resounding weight in Guaman's (1944) chapter on the Africans:

Humilde y cristiano y bien casado negro, como los dichos negros de Guinea bozales, tomando la fe de Jesucristo y cristiandad: Éstos son fieles, cre[e]n en Dios, guardan los mandamientos y las santas buenas obras y ciruen y obedesen a sus amos. Cree más presto la fe y trabaja con sus prógimos. Tienen caridad, amorosos; de bozales salen buenos esclabos pues que San Juan Buenaventura salió de ellos. Dizen los españoles negros bozales no uale nada. No saue lo que se dizen. Lo que a de tener enseñalle con amor y criansa y dotrina. Uale déstos por dos negros criollos un bozal; de bozal salen santos (p. 718).

A humble Christian and well married black, are the said blacks of Guinea-Bozales, taking the faith of Jesus Christ and Christendom: these are faithful, they believe in God, they keep the commandments and the holy good works, and they serve and obey their masters. They believe the faith more quickly and work with your neighbors. They have charity, are loving; bozales make good slaves because San Juan Buenaventura came from them. The Spaniards say that these blacks know nothing. They do not know what they say. What must be done is they must teach them with love, nurture, and doctrine. Two creole blacks equal one *bozal* black; saints come from *bozales* (My translation).

The above description corroborates the reality that, as a native elite, Guaman situated himself comfortably within the dominant cultural narratives of the Spanish Crown and clergy. For Guaman, the *bozales* marked a space of separation from the wanton characteristics of the Spanish slave owning class. Valérie Benoist (2001) highlights this fact in her article "The connection between caste and family in the representation of blacks within the work of Guaman Poma." She writes that the *bozales* represented a subject position "without the Spanish influence" (p. 50). And yet, this blank space cannot be divorced from the interests Guaman shared with Spain's evangelizing elite. While abandoning the perhaps baser influences of the Spanish patrician class, Guaman doesn't hesitate to employ religion to imagine, and thereby, position Africans within a stratified society. Such moralistic gestures may have been instrumental in strengthening Guaman's approval before the Crown while also comfortably positioning his stance within an orthodox-authoritarian optic (Said, 1993). Nevertheless, the acceptance and deployment of the African "blank space", at the end of its trajectory, was the material that Guaman used to build the imaginative construct of the kingdom of the Guinea. At the end of her essay, Benoist (2001) exposes the pith of Guaman's utopian desire:

en efecto, la recomendación final de Guaman Poma de poner a su hijo como dirigente del Perú presentada sólo en la versión alfabética, nos confirma que la prioridad de Guaman Poma era claramente el grupo indígena y sí mismo, y que su caracterización del "otro" negro no se puede separar de su propia identidad indígena y su intento por privilegiar esta identidad frente al lector (p. 53).

in effect, Guaman Poma's final recommendation to place his son as leader of Peru, presented only in the alphabetical version, confirms that Guaman Poma's priority was clearly the indigenous group and himself, and that his characterization of the "other" black cannot be separated from its own indigenous identity and its attempt to privilege this identity in front of the reader (My translation).

Here Benoist accurately pinpoints Guaman's preoccupation with universal autochthonous rule. The *bozal*, for Guaman, legitimizes the African leaders who deserve to manage their own "negro" kingdom. As Benoist mentions, this idealistic base for the African "family" can't be conceptually divorced from Guaman's internal desire for the restitution of indigenous leadership in Peru.

Further complicating the *bozales* subject position, and as I have alluded to throughout the bulk of my essay, Guaman Poma's reformation strategy (Rout's first point) substantiates the imagined, African, and gendered being that Herman Bennett establishes in *Africans in Colonial Mexico: Absolutism, Christianity, and Afro-Creole Consciousness, 1570-1640*. Bennett points out that by dictating in 1518 that all imported *bozales* be not only Christian but "male and female," Charles I, constructed the African subjectivities that he desired to populate vice regal society. Bennett thus provides useful language that can be applied not only to identifying the Crown's legal idealization of Africans, but to also pinpoint how Guaman Poma authored these subjects. In part, Guaman's practical envisioning of "good" government bases itself upon a strict outline of the gendered and Christian subjectivities needed to constitute a reformed society. In answering the question, how would these gendered Christian Africans be situated within the social fabric in Mexico (and by extension, Peru), Bennett (2005) provides a road map: "As the Spanish king sought to impose Christianity on his subjects, royal and ecclesiastical authorities sought to mold those Africans rendered by the enslavement process into slaves – in their image" (p. 43). By and large, Africans in colonial society, Mexico and Peru, as shown by the Crown and Guaman Poma, were specifically valued for the gendered economic productivity they executed within a "Christian" body.

Economic Benefits of Bozales and the Ambiguity of African Autonomy

Rout's third and fourth points listed earlier clarify that surreptitious Spanish empire building existed primarily for the advance of the metropolis. It should be noted, however, that concomitant with peninsular aggrandizement, much of Peru benefitted from the surge of goods on the market. Taking notice of the beneficence Africans produced within the colonial economy, Guaman commended their industriousness while ensuring that they remained within concretely structured moral and physical boundaries.

Vice regal dependence on African labor is well documented. Fredrick Bowser (1974) in *The African Slave in Colonial Peru 1524-1650* opens the chapter "The African and the Peruvian Economy: A General Survey" by commenting: "The increased flow of blacks to Peru in the decades after 1580 benefited most segments of the Peruvian economic system, and perhaps none more than agriculture" (p. 88). With the decline of the indigenous population and the growth of immigration, the increased provision of grains, fruits and vegetables became necessary for all peoples living in vice regal Peru. Before and during the inception of Spanish colonization, the *mita* system, or forced labor, had been the indigenous leaders' preferred economic vehicle. In the same way, Spaniards took advantage of such efficient labor practices. As objections were raised concerning the moral grounds of *mita* labor (that is, concerns over the mistreatment of a "weak" and "helpless"³³ indigenous population), mostly advocated by influential clergy members, the viceroynalty became dependent on African energy.

It was not solely agriculture that experienced the beneficial effects of African toil. Bowser outlines how Africans occupied a specific place in the transportation of materials between coastal cities and large ports. Their vigor allowed them to transport silver, merchandise and animals from land to sea and vice versa. Simultaneously, others worked as sailors in the large fleets that traveled the Pacific and conducted business in the most important hemispheric economies (Garofalo, 2012). According to Bowser (1974), "between 1584 and 1641 the Crown employed at least 926 black sailors at a cost of over 100,370 pesos" (p. 97).

In Lima African slaves also occupied instrumental positions within leading institutions. Many African peoples worked as servants within prominent Spanish and Peruvian estates. Additionally, they held central posts within the city's convents, hospitals, and prisons. Without their involvement in the upkeep of these sites, institutions that promoted order throughout Lima's colonial milieu would have ceased to thrive. Bowser concludes, "However expensive, irksome, feared, or disturbing to the morally sensitive, the African slave and his descendants were above all a necessity" (p. 109).

With these insights in view it becomes evident that *El primer nueva corónica y buen gobierno* was composed at a time when the vice regal economic system was in a nascent state. Writing during this vulnerable period, Guaman was perceptive of the importance that African productivity had for the entire population. In the quote mentioned above where Guaman extols the virtues of the *bozales*, he includes the phrase: "de bozales salen buenos esclabos" (the bozales make good slaves) (p. 704). We can understand this to mean that 1) having "good slaves" was necessary to the overall health of society and 2) that these slaves were to be encouraged and welcomed to thrive spiritually and economically. By the same token, in his preference for slave productivity, Guaman writes, "Uale déstos por dos negros criollos un bozal" (Two creole blacks are worth one

³³ I use "weak" in reference to the early descriptors that colonial officials employed to differentiate "Indians" from "blacks". In *Bound Lives: Africans, Indians and the Making of Race in Colonial Peru*, Rachel O'Toole outlines the construction of an indigenous *casta* that the Crown purported to protect from "predatory colonizers" and "dangerous black men" (O'Toole 18). O'Toole exposes how these descriptors were interchangeable and conformed to the capricious needs of the Spanish economic machine. "Helpless" is used by Brooke Larson in *Trials of Nation Making. Liberalism, Race, and Ethnicity in the Andes, 1810-1910*. Larson explores how stereotypes reverberated within the early-twentieth-century as elites continued to use language to categorize entire groups.

bozal black) (p. 704). Reflecting on the prevalent myths used to describe African labor prowess in the 16th century, the belief that one slave could do the work of many was common in colonial literature. Here, Rout (1976) explains a letter written by colonial governor Nicolás Ovando:

The Indians were still not adjusting to the Spanish labor demands; in addition, the ravages of overwork, influenza, and smallpox were annually depleting the indigenous population. Thus, in 1511 he wrote that the Indians appeared to be “very frail,” and that “one black could do the work of four Indians.” In this fashion another myth soon was born, the total of effects of which are still apparent (p. 23).

These remarks made in 1511, almost a century before Guaman published his chronicle, expose the perennial value and nomenclature that encircled African labor. Considering his construction of the *bozal* subject position apart from imaginative longings provides a basis for understanding the difference between the rational scope of Guaman’s program and its more creative elements. Exemplified by his more direct language, Guaman advocated for the stratification of society that licensed a Peru governed by its native citizens. The central place of Africans in this program is evident in his preference for Christianized *negros bozales* and their economic contribution to his homeland.

Engaging with the more abstract aspects of Guaman’s writing, it is apparent that “separate kingdoms” do not equal absolute segregation. This is illustrated by considering Vaccarella’s idea that Guaman never advocated for the eradication of slavery—a fact which brings us to ask, how is it possible that Guaman did not emphatically reject slavery but advocated for the “autonomy” of blacks? Vaccarella (2002) resolves this problem by asserting that “la preocupación central de Guamán Poma tocante a los negros es, más que la abolición de la esclavitud, su autonomía, concepto que por sí solo implica la libertad” (Guaman Poma’s central concern about blacks is, more than the abolition of slavery, their autonomy, a concept that alone implies freedom) (p. 23). By scrutinizing Guaman’s language, the problem reveals itself to be slightly more complicated. For instance, without appropriately weighing “autonomy” as a charged and unsteady signifier within early modern social, political and ecclesiastical networks, we are left with a vacuous and decontextualized symbolic node. Casually equipping this determiner to proclaim a sense of unbridled liberty elides to whom, for what purpose, and by whom nuanced renditions of autonomy were allocated. African autonomy, for example, may aptly be upheld in what Guaman recognized as indoctrinated and married Christian Africans left alone to manage their own land. As has been shown, Guaman inscribed these “autonomous” Africans through his gendered production of imagined *bozales* and reformed *ladinos*.

An example of this “limited autonomy” may be further indicated by Karen Graubart in her article “‘So color de una cofradia’: Catholic Confraternities and the Development of Afro-Peruvian Ethnicities in Early Colonial Peru.” Graubart analyzes the development of *cofradías* in Lima as sites where Africans appropriated Eurocentric color signifiers to create a sense of identity and difference within their own communities. Furthermore, the *cofradías* gave Africans a base to litigate cases before ecclesiastical judges. In these cases, typically rallied against other African confraternities, Africans leveraged the stature implicit in colonial labels (*moreno* vs. *negro* to denote slave vs. free, and the lengthy list of mixed African blood titles—*mulato*, *mestizo*, *zambaigo*—against the unmixed African blood denotation—*negro*). Graubart pointedly notes that many of the *cofradia* members were slaves, showing us a nuanced social arrangement where, positionally, slaves exercised “autonomy.” Although this autonomy was a prescribed agency that subordinated Africans to the elite’s discursive boundaries, several *cofradías* showed their ability to navigate the symbolic realm by appropriating language that would confer status within the social sphere. Graubart’s evocation of African’s limited autonomy within Catholic *cofradías* seems to more suitably approximate Guaman’s ideal of black “freedom.”

With this in view, Guaman's preference for Africans having their own kingdom does not preclude the possibility, and liberality, that some blacks could and should remain autonomously (namely, behind the veneer of prescribed Christian auspices such as belonging to a *cofradia*) in a Peru governed by natives. This position-specific autonomy cannot be understood on an equal footing with the seemingly transcendent, no-holds-barred, autonomy that Vaccarella espouses.

It should be noted that Guaman's inclusivity of Africans in Peru is not analogous with the assertion that he advocated for social, political, economic, or gender equality for that group. The inclusivity I invoke here merely pertains to African incorporation within Peru's geographical location. Extending this point, Tamara Walker, in her article "The Queen of los Congos: Slavery, Gender, and Confraternity Life in Late-colonial Lima, Peru," points out that presence in a region does not expressly evidence equality. Walker presents a well-deserved slave woman, Maria Santos Puente, who was denied access to the Queenship of her confraternity. Instead, the seat was given to the free wife of a free man who sat on the confraternity's governing board. By and large, cultural, political, and social "autonomy", in their varying degrees, depended largely on one's ability to appropriate a point of stature within the dominant narratives' honorific chain of signifiers.

Conclusions

Despite Guaman Poma's contradictory determinations in *El primer nueva corónica y buen gobierno*, his production of the African subject manifests a desire for social reformation as opposed to an expulsion of all foreigners. First, his idea that each indigenous group should govern their own kingdom does not necessarily portend that all who shared a common identity must relocate to an enclosed location. Rather, considering the context and practicality of Guaman's chronicle, it does evoke the idea that disparate races should remain within foreign jurisdictions through acculturation to the locale's dominant legal and social mores. Thus, the African subject as mediated by Guaman Poma positions the separatist theory as not only misguided but also blithely imaginative.

Guaman Poma was capable of such psycho-fantastical ambulation given his penchant for imaginative tropes. In the introduction of *Guaman Poma: Writing and Resistance in Colonial Peru*, Rolena Adorno (2000) mentions Guaman's "imaginary dialogue with the King of Spain" (p. 7) in which he invented "not only his own compliance but also the official request" (p. 8). Here, Adorno refers to a chapter in the chronicle where Guaman creates an "official" inquiry on the history of Peru made by the King of Spain. Guaman seeks to fulfill the directives of the missive by positioning himself as the knowledgeable counsel to an unknowing King. The four-kingdom approach, along with its separatist doctrine, seem to take root within this same style of imaginative traipsing.

Contrapuntal to her stance on the dubious nature of Guaman's writings, Adorno in her article "Colonial Reform or Utopia? Guaman Poma's Empire of the Four parts of the World," maintains that Guaman's separatist design relied on historical ideas while managing to reuse them in new times with a new king. Adorno mentions the arguments of Bartolome de Las Casas in his *Tratado de las doce dudas* in which he campaigned against the *encomienda* system—a system by which the *conquistadores* had the right by decree to the people and their land after an invasion. Las Casas arduously rejected this law since its initiation in 1555 and Guaman, reading Las Casas, reiterated such disgust towards unfair wars. Following Las Casas, Adorno holds, Guaman also advocated for a future in which the colonizers restituted all their gains to the Andean people.

Given that Guaman observed the outcomes of Las Casas' initiatives, and that history had endured further conquest and cultural heterogeneity, his own separatist ideas became a further extension of a society that had failed to materialize itself within the confines of the actual colonial world. In other words, a reapplication of Las Casas struggles to exhibit Guaman's hardheaded political astuteness; rather, it intimates shock-value and imaginative heft by means of its symbolic gesture. Knowing that a racial and religious separation of the world could not be practically carried out, Guaman employed a stagey ideal to scaffold his more simplistic urge for the preeminence of indigenous rights and rule. Thus, for Guaman Poma de Ayala, the most practical approach, and where

he dedicated the bulk of his diplomatic strategy, was to identify and eliminate indigenous oppression by strengthening the fabric of a multiracial Christian society. This proposed society permutated the social hierarchy, relegating Africans to a subordinate position imagined by Eurocentric subject narratives. Providing stylistic overtones to his otherwise politically austere sensibility, Guaman imaginatively created a framework by which each society would exalt its native inhabitants.

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