FIRST CONTACT

ZAC ZIMMER

SPECULATIVE VISIONS OF THE CONQUEST OF THE AMERICAS

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Speculative Visions of the Conquest of the Americas

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Acknowledgments

Over the decade plus that's elapsed since I first began research on this book, I've been fortunate enough to live in a time when the power of literary speculation has manifested as both an aesthetic and a historical force. It also means that I've been able to present these ideas to a wide and varied audience; more importantly, it means I have received a decade of feedback, from more folks than I could possibly name, due in no small part to the shortcomings of my own recall. And for that reason, first and foremost, I must dedicate this to the community, and to each and every one of the multiplicity of the communities contained within. In the fear that I cannot name them all, I'll begin with my family.

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First Contact

Introduction

For over five centuries, humans have been trying to make sense of the moment we refer to as the Conquest of the Americas. This book is about some of those attempts, specifically the kinds that use speculative fiction (SF) to reimagine that complex historical occurrence. It is an occurrence that can be understood poetically, and it can be understood scientifically. It can also be understood historically. The premise of this book is that SF is a tool to help us keep all of those threads braided together as we explore narratives not only about what happened, but about our shared world that emerged from such an unprecedented event.[1] For instance, in the case of the Americas understood continentally: how can we come to recognize that the world between the Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans was a complete and independent world in itself before the period called the Conquest, with its own complexities, contradictions, and ontologies? How can we recognize this, while also reckoning with that world-altering event—the Conquest—and the New World it brought into being?[2]

This book takes these questions seriously. They represent a particular dialectic of the Americas: the struggle between continuity and rupture; or between tradition and revolution.[3] Accordingly, this book addresses that dual impulse. First, it is a study of literature and art that reimagines the world otherwise, which participates in the structure of what we can broadly call "alternative futurisms." This reimagining is complemented by a necessary recuperative impulse: rescuing a speculative tendency in

the narrative arts of the Americas, and tracing the genealogy of that tendency forward into the present. The corpus to be rescued is the weird, the speculative, and the fantastic: some of which are the precursors to a contemporary wave of immersive decolonial worldbuilding.[4]

The texts and artworks I gather in this study are heterogeneous by design, as they are all concerned—in one way or another—with limit cases, alterity, and alternative temporalities. This makes it difficult to provide an overarching rubric at the outset, in no small part because these works of art and literature demand their own theorization. I will describe in more detail below why I use "SF" to name the mode which all of these texts share (as opposed to "science fiction," "speculative fiction," "ciencia ficción," or some other more limiting yet precise nomenclature). To enter into that debate right now would be to distract ourselves from what these texts do.[5] Instead, I will use the texts themselves—especially the ones I analyze in the first three chapters of this book—to give a general introduction to the complex process of decolonizing the category of newness in New World SF.

As I will analyze in detail in chapter 5, "*Colombo ex frigata* and the Problem of Firstness," the condensed expression of New World colonial newness is Columbus's Caribbean landfall in the Catholic Year of 1492. That chapter explores the paradoxical role the Columbian exchange has played in the speculative imaginings of the Americas. But to begin this book with that chapter would betray the truth of what I call the *Colombo ex frigata*. Like many schoolchildren, I had been taught—erroneously—that 1492 was the very first contact in the history of the Americas. This historical fantasy, when combined with the centrality that the Columbian exchange hypothesis has played in scientific and speculative imaginings of colonial encounters, has led 1492 to occupy an outsized role in the historiographic imaginary. In this chapter I argue that Columbus's ship has become a deus ex machina of the contact zone. As SF is itself a literature of tropes, one way to contain a bad idea within the genre is to name it, and so I propose "*Colombo ex frigata*" as a way to identify SF's persistent tendency to posit Columbus's voyage as the primordial scene of cosmic exploration and intercultural contact. In this, I build from other scholars of science fiction like Brian Aldiss, who name the tropes of bad SF precisely to halt the spread of overused and now exhausted idioms, and instead redirect authors to more fruitful literary explorations, as in Aldiss's iconic description of the shaggy God story.[6]

More immediately, I've brought the wisdom of this chapter into the organization of *First Contact*. A book about speculative visions of co-

lonial American encounters must not continue the tradition of positing 1492 as some kind of singular beginning. If that point seems more obvious today than it did when I began my research for this book in earnest, that is because the long process of revision overlapped with the toppling of Columbus and Colón statues across the Américas. Those statues came down as part of a larger movement demanding a public reckoning with the legacy of slavery and territorial dispossession across the entire Americas. My study is not about the act of toppling the statues themselves, but rather an investigation into the speculative practices that have allowed such visions to manifest aesthetically. If, in certain cases, some of these SF rewritings of the Conquest have served as precursors to political action, then that is one of the things SF can do.

*

The reason why the texts I analyze in this study might be able to do so is that they all share a key feature: each one reimagines a historical encounter from the early colonial period in the historiography of the entire American continent from South to North, a hemispheric land mass known in Spanish as "Las Américas." I have been well-trained to always refer to Las Américas continentally; this is perhaps the most linguistically concise prophylactic against U.S.-based "American exceptionalism" and the *Colombo ex frigata* it imagines.[7] But there is also a danger in papering over significant asymmetries in the distribution of what John Rieder calls the "mass cultural genre system" across the Americas.[8] The authors and artists I analyze in this book are all aware—to varying degrees, of course—of this complicated dynamic. By using the tools, modes, and tricks of SF, they reimagine the colonial encounter from a historically grounded interpretation of a past, in order to recover erased futurities. In the first half of this book, I have organized my readings and interpretations around three of the key institutional spaces where the historical archive takes shape in public consciousness: the literary anthology, the museum, and the map.

These three spaces or sites are all components of New World colonialism; they are non-exhaustive but emblematic. The anthology, of course, is the most directly literary of the three, since it is nothing more than an editorial organization of previously written materials. The anthology is a tool of canon formation and pedagogical didacticism; in the case of a text like Miguel León-Portilla's *La visión de los vencidos* (1959; translated as *Broken Spears: The Aztec Account of the Conquest*

of Mexico), it effectively placed previously silenced voices into the backpacks and back pockets of students across the Americas. Similarly, the museum structures and organizes the presentation of the material remnants of the colonial encounter in a way that guides popular and even scholarly narratives about the past. In the wake of the cartographic or "spatial" turn in cultural studies and the ubiquity of GPS-enabled devices, the role maps play in projecting hegemonic social relations onto spaces and territories has been well established in the scholarly literature. An archival attention to the old maps of New Worlds can create the kind of strange and generative temporalities that characterize SF, and the authors I study here use this speculative cartography to great effect.

Each of these three institutional spaces—the anthology, the museum, and the map—is foundational for the New World colonial project because each organizes a world-historical event into a coherent narrative. But this archival organization is always a double movement, and each institutional ordering implies the redaction of what does not fit. For as much as they illuminate, these institutions of representation also and always obscure something else: the anthology excludes what it does not include; artifacts that are not preserved in the museum may not persist; and whatever the map does not identify disappears into a representational void. Every positive action intended to achieve archival inclusion implies a consequent negative exclusion. The challenge this study undertakes is to mark a literary passage through the early colonial world of the Americas, territories that simultaneously hosted the most devastating book burning in recorded history (reducing, for instance, the totality of the pre-Conquest Mayan written record to four existing codices), while also perfecting the paper-based colonial bureaucracy—*el papeleo*—that purportedly forms the material basis for the Latin American novel.[9] When the light of cultural illumination comes from the flickering flames of an Inquisition-fueled book burning in sixteenth-century Mesoamerica, the shadows tell their own stories.

This is perhaps the strangest feature of these archives and institutions: they preserve and perpetuate certain silences. An absence in an archive overwrites whatever would have been in its place, and presents what was surely *something* as a preserved *nothing*. This is the paradox that causes "archive fever," and it drives the imagination to recover the very stories, perspectives, and experiences silenced by the dominant narrative that New World colonialism tells about itself. If our shared contemporary world owes any duty to a historical event like the Con-

quest, this book understands it as the duty to imagine that moment's unrealized futurities. Such speculation necessarily engages the ontological realm because it attempts to reimagine other forms of being, in order to project those erased futurities into a narrative present.[10]

Accordingly, all of the narratives and artworks I study in the following chapters mobilize an ontological aesthetics that speculates on the historical legacies of colonialism in the Americas. As a first step, such a project calls for an imaginative disarming of the archive itself.[11] As Angel Dominguez writes in *Desgraciado*—a lyrical epistolary directed toward the "cosmic colonizer" Diego de Landa—the speculative Americas must replace inquisitional tactics with New World magic.[12] In practice, this means engaging the archive through its popular literary manifestations. This leads, inevitably, to those condensed moments of conquest historiography—like the fall of Tenochtitlan and the meeting at Cajamarca—as they are understood through popular historical accounts.[13] But SF also opens other paths, forged by authors who felt compelled to imagine beyond the anthologies. This is the case with the three novelists I study in the first chapter, "Source and Silence: *La revisión de los vencidos*," who all build speculative futurities based directly on their interactions with León-Portilla's anthology *La visión de los vencidos*. Tísner's *Paraules d'Opòton el Vell* (1968; translated to Spanish as *Palabras del Opoton el Viejo*; *The Words of Old Man Opoton*), Carmen Boullosa's *Llanto: Novelas imposibles* (1992; *Wailing: Impossible Novels*), and Hugo Hiriart's *La destrucción de todas las cosas* (1992; *The Destruction of Each and Every Thing*) all engage Léon-Portilla's 1959 anthology as a privileged intertext in their historical rewritings of the encounter between Mesoamerica and the Iberian colonial enterprise. Each text does so, however, in a distinct way. Tísner's novel attempts to invert the global colonial condition; it does so as a novel that is both *profundamente mexicana*—in that it attempts to imagine what Guillermo Bonfil Batalla called the negated indigenous civilizations of *México profundo*—and also written in Catalan. Boullosa tries to account for the voices, especially indigenous female voices, silenced in the historical archive; the archive replies instead by sending her a time-traveling Moctezuma. Hiriart sees a disturbing continuity across Mexican history, and writes a parodic science fiction novel as an aesthetic reply to temporal repetition. Together, these three novels can be understood as precursors to the contemporary interest in alternative futurisms, which builds upon a literary and artistic tradition grounded in the empirical reality of colonial violence. By disarming the archive, these novels open up new futu-

rities while also attempting what Edgar Garcia has described as "casting time as an entity that has Nahua movement in it."[14]

That chapter closes with a discussion of the *Zapatista Space Force*, an artwork that projects indigenous survivance and Zapatista politics into the cosmos. The work is one of the installations in *Mundos alternos: Art and Science Fiction in the Americas*, the paradigm-defining exhibition that brought Latin American SF into North American galleries and museums. As an institution, the museum has long been recognized as a kind of contact zone, which Mary Louise Pratt describes as the space where cultures meet, but also as a place that is never neutral and always already conditioned by the hegemonies and hierarchies contained within the imperialist project.[15] Pratt's concept has been deployed in revelatory ways with regard to the study of museums, allowing critics and artists to approach the colonial museum as the dream narrative that colonialism tells itself.[16] This shift in the critical understanding of the genealogy of cultural institutions, which includes an interrogation of the colonial ties between imperial pasts and contemporary museum spaces, was in many cases preceded by SF narratives and artworks that enlisted the museum itself as a canvas.

Chapter 2, "Strange Objects in the Speculative Museum," analyzes a handful of Latin American artists who use traditional museum spaces—historically associated with colonial-era science—as sites for imagining other museums dedicated to other cosmologies. These artistic sites then become speculative museums that twist and stretch the scale of cosmological encounters, or reverse history to imagine other, reciprocal encounters. Is it possible to truly imagine, artifact by artifact, an inverse of the Conquest? Could the encounter between Iberians and indigenous Americans have occurred in any other way? What would be the scale of that alternative encounter, and how different would the world it created have been? In answering these questions, the chapter travels an interpretive path that leads from Coco Fusco and Guillermo Gómez-Peña's *The Couple in the Cage*, to Ana Luisa Valdés's "Paz de los muertos" and debates over museum repatriation, through Eduardo Villacis's *El espejo humeante* and Adrián Villar Rojas's recent installations, to end up once again at the 2017 *Mundos alternos* exhibition.

This trajectory leads us beyond the colonial museum, to a territory where all maps must be speculative. Critical geographers argue that a culture's maps give us some of the best evidence of its ways of worldmaking. Chapter 3, "Speculative Cartography and the Fabric of the Cosmos," extends that insight to consider the imaginary maps of specu-

lative narratives. The procedures of constructing SF reveal the kind of worldbuilding that goes into the process of mapping a territory and allow readers to approach cartography itself as a speculative yet culturally materialist practice. There is a reason, after all, why so many epic SF and fantasy narratives open with a map: the *imago mundi* creates a textual space for the encounter between cosmography, narrative, geography, and the interpretation of history. At its heart, this kind of speculative cartography asks one persistent and overwhelming question: If the world had been built otherwise, what would those maps look like? The third chapter approaches this question by reading the Mediterranean cartographic traditions of early colonial Latin America against the Andean spatial practices associated with indigenous technologies like *khipu*, as explored by a pair of texts: Daniel Salvo's short story "Quipucamayoc" and Wilson Harris's novel *Dark Jester*.

The ontological aesthetics of the first three chapters open our imaginations by inserting previously silenced voices into impossible anthologies, by inverting temporalities in institutional spaces, and by mapping territories of survivance. By turning the historiographic event of the Conquest into a multiplicity of strange encounters, these narratives and artworks create a pedagogy of strangeness.[17] It would be reductive (and incomplete) to say that the strangeness is the lesson; however, this pedagogy is certainly tied to the SF mode that Darko Suvin memorably called "cognitive estrangement."[18] The texts that most obviously employ this effect—and I will discuss several such examples over the course of this book—invert the directionality of the Conquest: in *Paraules d'Opòton el Vell* (1968), for instance, Aztecs arrive on the coast of Galicia in ocean-faring canoes. This kind of "future history" is one example of Istvan Csicsery-Ronay, Jr.'s *Seven Beauties of Science Fiction*. In his book of that title, he describes SF in part as "a complex hesitation about the relationship between imaginary conceptions and historical reality unfolding into the future."[19] In furthering the spirit of speculative inversion, the present book proposes a slight modification to Csicsery-Ronay's definition with regard to SF about the Conquest. The texts studied in this book all share a complex hesitation about the relationship between imaginary history and conceptual reality unfolding into the future.

In other words, the authors and artists I analyze understand that in order to reimagine the Conquest, the historical imagination must become speculative. This arises from the perpetual lesson that history, as recorded by the archive, has always been incapable of fully capturing the

true breadth of human experience. When these alternative futures enter into critical conversations with indigenous critiques of colonialism, SF can begin to imagine other possible futures while simultaneously recovering forgotten and erased relationships on an ancestral horizon, all within the cacophony necessary to "disrupt the fictions of multicultural settler enfranchisement and diasporic arrivals."[20] These narratives use the techniques of SF to interrogate the process of history-making itself, and to imagine how key moments might have appeared from perspectives for which History has not traditionally accounted. By grounding themselves in these gaps in traditional history, the art and narratives I study here seek to turn archival silence into literary voices.

*

Another felicitous effect of reading early colonial Latin American accounts of the Conquest alongside "first contact" SF is that the pairing can help us imagine a rough categorization of the principal types of interstellar humans our species, as historically constituted, might send off into the solar system and beyond. SF is replete with displaced Columbuses and other conquistadores navigating first encounters in galactic space, alongside richly imagined alterity from all corners of the universe. But no actual material encounter can unfold with the Absolute Other, since the Absolute Other is a pure ontological abstraction. Eventually, the totality of any absolute other must dissolve into some kind of specificity, whether historical, actual, virtual, or fictional. And when that specification occurs, the metonymic effect of the New World colonial encounter pulls the undistinguished colonizer into a handful of non-native subject positions inscribed in the historical record and inked across the pages of SF. Readers of both colonial Latin American and SF literature will immediately recognize these character tropes: the pilgrim and the missionary, the soldier and the mercenary, the cultural and the scientific ambassador, the trader and the entrepreneur, the refugee and the enslaved person.

These identities are more preliminary placeholders, rather than rigorous distinctions, for concepts that will be developed over the course of this study. And lest we get bogged down in the kinds of taxonomic minutiae ridiculed by Borges in "The Analytical Language of John Wilkins," let it be said that many of the works studied in this book thematize the insufficiency of the above categories in narrating a first encounter. Furthermore, by focusing exclusively on non-native identities, the list already lacks borderland identities like the guide, in addition to the many

identities that arise within the contact zone in the immediate aftermath of the encounter. That said, the select groups of humans we can imagine going off-world closely parallels the central non-native identities of the early colonial Americas. All of these categories, for instance, are present in a narrative like Cabeza de Vaca's *Naufragios*, and hints of each can even be perceived already in Columbus's *Diary*.

From a native perspective, however, these various identities can look like distinctions without difference. This is because they all share one overarching trait: they exhibit what Gerald Vizenor calls "manifest manners." For Vizenor, writing in the context of the long native entanglement with the United States empire, "manifest manners" are the social etiquettes displayed by the practitioners of manifest destiny.[21] To say that a political program like Manifest Destiny, so clearly connected to mid-nineteenth century U.S. exceptionalism, can expand to explain native-settler relations in the Américas writ large might seem counterproductive, or even worse, a duplication of the same impulse towards ideological expansiveness that powers all exceptionalism. But Vizenor's framework has a built-in corrective that naturally reorients towards the specific, as it insists on paying attention to the hospitality relations—the manners—that manifest themselves in any colonial relation. As a historical politics of territorial expansion, Manifest Destiny was always about native dispossession and erasure, so it is no surprise that the cultures of manifest manners are profoundly inhospitable.[22] To look for how those patterns of colonial manners manifest across the long history of the Americas is to find structural repetitions in the unfolding of hospitality relations.

Analogous patterns of inhospitable behavior are repeated across SF, as John Rieder documents in *Colonialism and the Emergence of Science Fiction*. Especially prominent in the Anglophone materials Rieder studies are the popular depictions of alien encounters as displaced adventure tales, in which each story rigorously transposes the colonial mind-set onto a new alien landscape.[23] As Miriam Brown Spiers has argued, this pattern of casting the Other across the ontological divide only to reel them back in through SF aesthetics is profoundly ungracious behavior, especially when it comes to narratives that imagine indigenous others.[24] The SF I discuss in the first three chapters of this book is much more attentive to this procedure, and much less invested in blindly reproducing it, although not every work meets Spiers's threshold of successfully imagining an encounter with a sovereign other. The texts I study do have these kinds of colonial encounters on their mind as they use SF to test the hospitality of a cluster of archival spaces, and in doing so

they highlight the inclusions and exclusions in which manners manifest themselves. That these texts mainly engage the archive through a reimagining of the original European *crónicas* (chronicles) of the New World is a testament to the outsized role those documents have played in our understanding of the historiographically overdetermined narrative we call "first contact."

These spaces of archival encounters—anthologies, museums, and maps—derive from a cluster of historically documented "first encounters," with "first" denoting a *kind* of encounter in the Americas, not as a categorically unique experience. At first glance, this formulation might recall Patrick Wolfe's foundational axiom that settler colonialism is a structure, not an event.[25] And as much as Wolfe's formulation describes a structure like settler colonialism as an event—colonization—projected over time, they are indeed similar. The early colonial history of the Americas is filled with events deemed "first" contacts, and the logic of firstness came to dominate European justifications for colonial expansion. That said, in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Americas, there is not just one kind of colonialism, much less one single kind of colonialism named settler colonialism, and it is only by insisting on this point that it is possible to honor the reality of a broad web of experiences.[26] Although there might be a cluster of abstract tendencies which we can today name "settler colonialism," such tendencies ripple backwards in time in ways that confuse our expectations.[27]

Wolfe's settler/franchise colonialist distinction, focused on the Anglophone colonies of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, does not align with the differences between European colonists in the early New World, even if some of the differences that distinguished Iberian resource extraction from the English predilection to enclose lands and plant gardens, as documented by Patricia Seed, find later historical resonances.[28] The New World distinction was multilayered and framed by intra-European rivalries, and contrasted a diligent Protestant ethic against an opulent Catholic viceroyalty, playing directly upon the Black Legend. Within the internal dynamics of European power struggles, the anti-Iberian Black Legend elevated the colonist whose developmental politics were utopian and agricultural (under slogans like "the rain follows the plow") over and against the extractivist demonology of the avaricious mine owner (under slogans like "obedezco pero no cumplo," *I obey but do not comply*).[29]

This is all to say that the structural event we call settler colonialism does not exhaust the full ontological possibilities of colonial relations,

even though it has today become shorthand for that precise thing: a total ontological description of coloniality. This is a point that must be made with care. There is no possible total ontological description of coloniality, because the colonial itself is structured through alterity. Colonialism is a hierarchical way of organizing difference, and no difference can fully articulate itself without an external reference. Any totality that purportedly encompasses difference must accordingly sacrifice the possibility of ontological coherence. And so as there is no universal, singular event called settler colonialism, neither is there a universal, singular structure called settler colonialism. Perhaps we can better understand the colonial as a fractal pattern. Regardless of the point of origin, the pattern will unfold in revelatory ways.

As I've already suggested, there is no singular "first encounter"; the so-called first encounter itself is repeated enough that it has become a pattern, even if such repetition undermines the originary nature promised by the "first" in its name. What unifies these encounters is instead what Jacques Derrida has described as the unlimited demand that they make of hospitality.[30] Furthermore, these are not theoretical encounters, at least in the framework of this book: the encounters are always grounded in archival silences and imagined into concrete form.[31] As it is in history, so it is in SF: at some point, every host must receive the guest and offer hospitality.[32]

Hospitality, as a framework, can explain backwards and predict forwards, and is thus particularly well-suited to analyze these kinds of fractal patterns. So, for instance, the historian Gonzalo Lamana can reread the encounter between the Inca ruler Atahualpa and the Spanish conquistadores in Cajamarca in a historical register that pays attention to protocols of hospitality, and thus finds a way to understand, as the title of his book suggests, domination without dominance.[33] Wilson Harris, operating in a literary register, reimagines the historical meeting in Cajamarca in ways that reverberate across the other metonyms of Latin American Conquest while also opening space for other possible outcomes. In the artistic realm, Beatriz Cortez can speculatively create a machine that will allow for a cluster of painful colonial memories to be received by future generations in a world that will have become hospitable again on a continental scale. In these varied cases, it seems that hospitality is the only conceptual framework flexible enough to include an inversion of each and every "first contact" trope—appropriate for a historical moment when the toppling of monuments to Columbus has become the language of the streets.

Hospitality, then, offers a framework for approaching the "first encounter" that does not immediately fall into the paradigm of manifest manners, the boorish paradigm that incessantly declares "me first, me first" to an audience that necessarily was already previously there. By focusing on these empirical relations as they unfold in speculative worlds, we can engage the imagination while also maintaining a certain fidelity to an incomplete colonial archive. Attentiveness to hospitality enacts a shift away from the dominant periodization obsessed with origin and the manifestation of a colonial destiny, and instead creates space to understand relations "as we have always done," as Leanne Betasamosake Simpson describes the enacting of resurgent Indigenous freedom.[34] In other words, by reading the hospitality relation into stories of first contact, we engage with a critical framework capable of surviving the kinds of dislocations that accompanied the historical unfolding of New World conquest.

We can follow New World hospitality, for instance, in relation to the religious orders that adapted and performed Catholic spirituality as they moved across the Americas. So we can follow the Jesuits into the Francophone borderlands of the Iroquois League, or Haudenosaunee, in the seventeenth century, where familiar patterns of European colonization from the sixteenth century played out again further north, in different languages. This is the background material that Mary Doria Russell rehearses in her reworking of the martyr tales collected in the *Jesuit Relations* (and the *Jesuit Relations* themselves were early precursors of the colonial action/adventure tales that Rieder critiques in *Colonialism and the Emergence of Science Fiction*). Chapter 4, "Cosmic Hospitality, or How Not to Host a Martyr," presents an extended reading of Russell's novel *The Sparrow*, which deserves special attention in no small part because it is a first contact SF novel to which scientists are particularly drawn. The geographic, linguistic, and historical dislocation represented by this jump to French Canada and the Haudenosaunee in the seventeenth century will help test and prove the critical power of the hospitality framework for analyzing first contact SF, in addition to paving the way for the book's final inversion of the Columbus trope in the last chapter.

THE DECOLONIAL NOVUM AND ITS PRECURSORS

As should now be apparent, many—but not all—of the works and texts I discuss in this book are Latin American. Within the tradition of

Latin American literary studies, the critical appraisal of these texts has frequently been overshadowed by other dominant interpretative paradigms like the *nueva novela histórica*, magical realism, and historiographic metafiction; or they have simply been ignored as too weird.[35] This study builds on those interpretive tendencies, but does not take them as a starting point. Instead, the body of narratives, performances, and artworks that I analyze in this book need to be approached first and foremost as SF.[36] When I refer to SF, I principally mean "speculative fiction," but as many critics have argued, SF hosts a gamut of significations, and the acronym can be retroactively applied to many other literary categories: science fiction, structural fabulation, *ciencia ficción*, syfy, and so on.[37] In this, I follow Donna Haraway in her capacious and unapologetic use of "SF" as a literary term of art.[38]

As Rieder explains in his essential *Science Fiction and the Mass Cultural Genre System*, it is seldom useful or necessary to give a concise or taxonomic definition of SF, whether one chooses to render it as "speculative" or "science" fiction. Instead, it is much more helpful for readers to consider SF as an evolving cluster of generic and aesthetic options for creating cultural texts and artworks.[39] Rieder's necessary theoretical corrective allows the critic to understand SF tropes and techniques as existing within a broader network of generic systems which connect with other literary and aesthetic genres like horror or the police procedural. Thus, instead of policing some kind of generic frontier, and zealously guarding SF from what its misogynistic practitioners deem "soft" or "effeminate" forms like fantasy, Rieder's approach instead allows readers to contextualize and historicize cultural production while simultaneously developing critical interpretations of specific authors or texts.[40]

This is only appropriate, since all good SF must always be grounded in something. When the S in SF stands for "science," as in science fiction, that ground is always already a certain territory. It posits "science" as a knowable entity, against which the "fiction" can be measured. But SF has always extended beyond the hegemonic, normative, and instrumental definitions of "Western science." Grace Dillon has made a compelling argument for why indigenous SF can help recover what has been forgotten while also imagining other futures, juxtaposing "western science with what can be thought of as 'Indigenous scientific literacies' . . . to argue that Native/Indigenous/Aboriginal sustainable practices constitute a science despite their lack of resemblance to taxonomic western systems of thought."[41]

This is even more important in the context of SF in Latin America, where the concept of "science fiction," or "ciencia ficción," has always carried a heavy Anglophone connotation, even as more homegrown aesthetic options like *lo fantástico* defined polyvocal tendencies in Hispanic cultural production. This book is not the place to untangle these entwined lineages, but it is nonetheless important to acknowledge their dual presence in the Latin American tradition.

Rachel Haywood Ferreira's *The Emergence of Latin American Science Fiction* offers a deeply researched account of the first lineage via an intellectual history of colonial science in the Americas and its representation in SF.[42] She focuses on the appeal of positivism in the post-independence Latin American nations, as well as the pernicious seduction of eugenics, Darwinism's shameful offspring that ravaged Latin American thought and found its most speculative flights of fancy in positivist science fiction. Haywood Ferreira also highlights the fantastical voyage, an SF theme particularly suited for an exoticized Latin America, which allows fantasy and science fiction to merge more fully there than in much of the Anglophone science fiction world.

And yet to fully understand the history of speculative narrative in Latin America, the positivist science fiction canon that Haywood Ferreira proposes in *The Emergence* must be supplemented directly with *lo fantástico* as its own aesthetic category. Cynthia Duncan, in *Unraveling the Real: The Fantastic in Spanish-American Ficciones*, proposes the fantastical *ficción* as an autochthonous Latin American cultural form practiced by many and perfected by Jorge Luis Borges.[43] Her position is an updated restatement of Ana María Barrenechea's thesis in her 1972 *Revista Iberoamericana* article, "Ensayo de una tipología de la Literatura Fantástica, a propósito de la literatura hispanoamericana."[44]

Barrenechea's article, in turn, is part of the Argentine critic's attempt to open up Todorov's structuralist account of "the fantastic" to the reality of Latin American literature, especially in the wake of the monumental publication of the *Antología de la literatura fantástica* in 1940, by none other than Jorge Luis Borges, Adolfo Bioy Casares, and Silvina Ocampo.[45]

After a concerted effort, Latin American SF has established itself as a field unto itself that draws upon these varied traditions.[46] That is why much crucial early critical work was bibliographic in nature, most centrally the English-language anthology *Cosmos Latinos: An Anthology of Science Fiction from Latin America and Spain*, edited by Andrea Bell and Yolanda Molina-Gavilán, and the "Chronology of Latin American

SF" published in Spanish in a 2000 issue of *Chasqui* and translated/updated in a 2007 issue of *Science Fiction Studies*.[47]

The development of critical approaches to Latin American SF is also illustrated by two special issues of *Revista Iberoamericana* edited by Sylvia Kurlat Ares. The first issue, "La ciencia-ficción en América Latina: Entre la mitología experimental y lo que vendrá," was published in 2012.[48] Many of the articles insist on the legitimacy of Latin American SF as an object of study, and work to build a basic shared bibliography for future critical endeavors. This allowed the contributors to the second collection—published in 2017 and called "La ciencia ficción en América Latina: Aproximaciones teóricas al imaginario de la experimentación cultural"—to develop much more sophisticated analytical frameworks.[49] In its totality, the second issue captures the spirit of Latin American SF that the Cuban critic Ángel Arango referred to as the generic vanguard of the organized imagination.[50] No single essay exemplifies this better than Kurlat Ares's own contribution to the second issue. Instead of retreading definitional debates or proposing distinctions without differences, she prefers to talk about the indiscrete modalities of SF in Latin America:

> El sistema de apropiaciones de la ciencia ficción, lo que Marcelo Cohen llamaba su amoralidad textual, permite una existencia heterogénea de materiales y de discursos críticos, de estéticas y de perspectivas teóricas sobre cómo decodificarla. Lo que tiene de subversivo y de contestatario la ciencia ficción no es tanto su uso de materiales, sino su mirada a contrapelo, su capacidad para hacer transparente aquello que en el resto del campo cultural se oculta. Si estos trabajos hacen evidente algo es, justamente, que allí donde la capacidad para desarrollar proyectos de todo tipo parece colapsar sobre sí misma, la ciencia ficción ofrece a la cultura, una forma de pensamiento crítico.[51]
>
> Science fiction's system of literary borrowings, what Marcelo Cohen has called its amoral textuality, admits a broad and varied list of materials, critical discourses, aesthetics, and interpretative theoretical frameworks. But that heterogeneous list is not what, in itself, makes science fiction subversive and rebellious; that comes from its ability to read against the grain, to expose the truths that normative culture prefers to

> hide. If SF reveals anything, that revelation will always arise at the very point where discourse appears to collapse upon itself; it is precisely at those points that SF offers culture the capacity for critical thought.

SF, then, is an aesthetic tool that allows readers to understand the colonial encounter—"the social practice of human dominance"—as both an empirical historical occurrence and a cultural practice that could always unfold otherwise.[52] One of the things that literary and artistic SF does best is to expand the concept of the "encounter" beyond the realm of the human. The SF I study in this book shares that expansive spirit, while simultaneously expanding our historical understanding of the encounter beyond the traditional colonial archive. Part of opening that literary imagination is meeting De Witt Douglas Kilgore's demand that SF break its "habit of whiteness."[53] For a culture obsessed with chronology and futurity, cultural encounters are usually judged against a standard of development, progression, or other forms of goal-oriented teleology; this teleology is the temporal background against which those habits of whiteness unfold. The growing field of SF criticism has risen to Kilgore's challenge, as it interrogates the colonial structures at the heart of much Anglophone science fiction, taking SF to task for enacting alienation, rather than thinking through its motives and consequences.[54]

In the specific case of conquest SF, the challenge becomes how to think from a subject position that emerges out of a historical event but is not determined by it.[55] This connects directly to what Ariella Aïsha Azoulay means when she claims, in *Potential History: Unlearning Imperialism*, that "the pursuit of the new defines imperialism."[56] Newness is an epistemological bad habit that tethers futurity to an antiquated notion of modernity. Any authentic literary representation of the American reality must account for this history, or otherwise risk reaffirming *longue durée* colonialist narratives that posit the New World as a blank screen for European projection. This is José Rabasa's thesis in *Inventing AMERICA: Spanish Historiography and the Formation of Eurocentrism*: it was more convenient for some of the early colonial chroniclers to spin preposterous yarns than it was for them to consult indigenous sources as they composed their historical accounts.[57] "Wonder" rushed in to fill the void left by the archival absences, working to smooth over the cracks where silenced voices lingered in cultural memory. Accordingly, there can be no redemption for such a history because the Conquest itself is not redeemable, but there is an imperative to work through what

happened, and what could have happened otherwise, with attention to the alternative possibilities for future action that such a perspective can create. Again, this poses difficult questions for SF in the Americas: Is it possible for "wonder" and "imagination" to escape the colonial trap of European representation? Is it possible to claim a speculative tradition beyond the paradigm of insistent, compulsive newness? Is it possible, in short, to decolonize the speculative imagination?

The subjects of colonial violence in the Americas have long cultivated a kind of double gaze in order to negotiate this complex situation, and this double gaze can become a perceptual tool to see anew the Conquest itself. In the Black intellectual tradition, this form of perception reaches back to Du Bois's "double consciousness," while in the indigenous languages of Mesoamerica, Gloria Chacón has described a similar phenomenon known in Maya as *kab'awil*. Chacón ties *kab'awil* to other concepts that negotiate the in-betweenness lived in the contact zone, like border thinking, interstitial spaces, and *nepantla*.[58] Although there is much to learn from *kab'awil* as a concept, I mobilize neither it nor Du Bois's double consciousness as an analytic in the following chapters, in part because of the risk of overextending any single concept as the singular representation of, in this case, indigenous Mesoamerican or Black diaspora thought. This is another risk of speculating about the Conquest, one that Jodi Byrd has diagnosed as post-structuralism's pervasive need to posit the Indian as some universal ontological prior at the expense of engaging actual indigenous thought.[59]

Furthermore, the search for an interstitial in-betweenness beyond assimilationist paradigms has broader resonances across the entire continent, insofar as the double gaze also captures the breadth of what Horacio Legrás calls the essential concepts of Latin American cultural criticism:

> Transculturation (Ortiz, Rama), heterogeneity (Cornejo Polar), hybridity (Canclini), colonial semiosis (Mignolo), third space (Moreiras), tropological mimesis (González Echevarría), auto-ethnography (Pratt), all of which underline, with different intonations, the fissured self of Latin American culture as its ineluctable condition of possibility.[60]

Accordingly, one need not extract an indigenous concept from its cultural context and reify it as an interpretive skeleton key to narrative transculturation in the Americas. Complementarily, many works pro-

duced by indigenous authors or about indigenous relations will propose their own aesthetic concepts that are integral to their inherent meaning. But whatsoever the double gaze in the Americas may be, when it focuses on conquest, it sees the emergence of its own split and, with that, the beginning of a global emergency.

Although we live in the centuries-long wake of that emergency, it can be difficult for some of us, in the twenty-first century, to understand the urgency that accompanied its historical emergence. To do so implies reading the history of ontological rupture into the present. That, to me, is a description of what SF can do at its best, using estrangement as the door through which to access speculative ontologies. Alternative futurists venture beyond the negative/critical to thematize what the future could look like, especially given the hegemonic homogeneity of futures past. The artists and authors I study use their terrestrial grounding to radically rethink time and space, culminating in a cosmological perspective that spins out from the lived past.[61]

The historicization of historical disruption always represents an intellectual challenge, especially since the legal, philosophical, and theological discourses that surround such disruptions are cultural products that supersede conceptual definitions.[62] In fact, such disruptive moments create those discourses. By recognizing the Conquest for the fabulated singularity that it is and then imagining an ontological multiplicity in its place, this interpretive frame can ridicule firstness for the bad hospitality it implies, while simultaneously paying due attention to the risk that such a trope will accompany terrestrial life off-planet. When combined with an understanding of the archival tools of colonial power—like the anthology, the museum, and the map—and a theory of hospitality capable of reading against the archival grain, these critical interventions chart a course for the decolonization of the novum.[63]

Only by considering the many ways things could have been different can we begin to understand the way it really was. This is a clear step towards "breaking the spell of inevitability" that haunts imaginations of our shared future.[64] But it also implies an SF without the possibility of redemption for the violence of the past.[65] So the SF fictive novum must stretch into a shape other than the progressive unfolding of colonialist science's teleological topography.[66] It must ground itself not in the marvelous rhetorical flourishes of empire's stenographers, but rather in the empirical certainty, so eloquently expressed by the early modern chroniclers and archivists of the Americas, that official histories lie, and

in the burdensome realization that our imaginations carry the weight of historical truth.

One possible way to lighten that burden is to find in SF aesthetically pleasurable ways to destabilize the traditional notions of encounter. At its best, this happens on the ontological level: you imagine other worlds with a commitment to living with them. This will always be a failed assimilation, not because of any failure on the part of the reader or the visitor, but because the visitor themself cannot exist with duration in the imagined world.[67] This reorientation towards the archival speculative is one way to answer calls to listen for and amplify silenced voices from between and beyond the colonial archive.[68]

At its heart, the speculative imagining of the conquest of the Americas is expressed in one short affirmation: it could have happened otherwise. For some, this phrase, which condenses an entire worldview based in the concepts of reciprocity and complementarity, is itself unimaginable. What SF can teach its readers and audiences is how to use the tools of worldbuilding to truly imagine other worlds, conversant with other cosmovisions. As Alfredo López Austin has said, the recognition of multiple cosmovisions enables thinkers to break out of the universalist taxonomic straitjacket of the imperial gaze. For instance, a Mesoamerican cosmovision is not some kind of taxonomic anormality that must be resolved in order to fit snugly within a universalist understanding of human thought:

> La realidad mesoamericana no posee una condición especial de ajenidad frente a las demás realidades sociales del pasado o del presente. El problema de aproximarse a ella por medio de la aplicación de modelos 'universales' es que éstos fueron forjados en contextos muy diferentes, sin tomar en cuenta una buena parte de la historia humana en la que se encuentran comprendidas las tradiciones americanas.[69]

> Mesoamerican reality does not possess a special condition of otherness that distinguishes it from other past or present social realities. The problem of approaching Mesoamerican reality from the application of "universal" models is that those same models were forged in very different contexts, without accounting for the large part of human history contained within American traditions themselves.

López Austin continues:

> Debemos pensar que cada tradición . . . tiene como fuente privilegiada de permanente creación el conjunto de vivencias de los miembros de la colectividad en sus interrelaciones y en su actuar en el mundo. El conjunto holístico es un hecho histórico. Debe contemplarse como un proceso en constante transformación, nunca como un producto acabado. Se caracteriza tanto por su fuerte permanencia como por su constante adecuación al devenir. Sus componentes se encuentran en perpetuo reacomodo.[70]

> We must understand that each tradition . . . contains within itself a privileged source of permanent creation which arises from the conjunction of the lived experience of the members of that community, as expressed through their interrelations and actions in the world. This must be conceived of as a process in constant transformation, and never as a finished product. It is characterized as much by its strong persistence as by its constant adaptation in its becoming. The components of every tradition find themselves in a process of perpetual adjustment.

Thus movement and change itself is incorporated into the cosmovision concept; it is neither static nor universalizable. In his formal definition of the concept, López Austin describes "cosmovision" as the intersubjective network of mental acts:

> Hecho histórico de producción de procesos mentales inmerso en decursos de muy larga duración, cuyo resultado es un conjunto sistémico de coherencia relativa, constituido por una red colectiva de actos mentales, con la que una entidad social, en un momento histórico dado, pretende aprehender el universo en forma holística.[71]

> The historical fact of the production of mental processes immersed in very long time scales, whose result is a systematic ensemble of relative coherence, made up of a collective network of mental acts, with which a social entity, within

> any given historical moment, attempts to comprehend the universe in a holistic fashion.

For SF practitioners, the question becomes: How can a cosmovision become a tool for ontological speculation? Is it possible to rewrite the Conquest from other cosmovisions, to reimagine the event without being hypnotized by the imperial gaze that Cosgrove called "Apollo's eye," or fooled by what Haraway calls "the God trick"?[72] And yet these are not unlimited questions; on the contrary, engaging in this kind of speculation must always arise from the kind of ontological humility that Mark Rifkin describes in *Fictions of Land and Flesh: Blackness, Indigeneity, Speculation*.[73] How is it possible, as Edgar Garcia has written, to develop a speculative practice capable of shifting the ontological scale of our understanding, in order to interpret and understand the worldmaking effect of poetic language?[74] To return to our original question: Is it possible to, at once, understand the Conquest as an originary world historical event while also not eclipsing the other cosmologies and cosmovisions that existed (and continue to exist) within the contact zone? This book investigates the question from this ontologically humble position, and through an elevated attention to the worldmaking effects of the strange aesthetics of the contact zone. Those strange aesthetics include Mexican novels written in Catalan and impossible novels that hold space for other voices, as well as indigenous narratives and transhistorical baroque concerts. They arise from sites that are persistently tethered to the colonial world: maps, museums, anthologies, and shrines to martyrdom. They return to the purported scenario of discovery in order to exorcize the *Colombo ex frigata* and the logic of firstness it enacts. In sum, they form a corpus that is strange *a propósito*.

CHAPTER 1

Source and Silence

La revisión de los vencidos

Perhaps no national literary tradition has been more invested in rewriting and reinterpreting the sixteenth-century colonial encounter than that of Mexico. Numerous Mexican examples of historiographic metafiction and the Latin American *nueva novela histórica*, or "new historical novel" (NNH), have employed the early to mid-sixteenth century as the backdrop or primary historical reference point for their postmodern textual pyrotechnics. For instance, reimaginings of the figure of Malinche/Malintzin/Malinalli alone have inspired multiple scholarly monographs, including Sandra Messinger Cypress's *La Malinche in Mexican Literature: From History to Myth* (1992). And while many of these revisionist literary works also engage the broader Latin American phenomenon of *lo real maravilloso* or "magical realism," very few of them engage outright SF tropes like alternative histories or extraterrestrial encounters. This made it possible for the handful of truly SF rewritings of Cortés's campaign against Tenochtitlan (1519–21) to be written off as outliers, either to languish ignored by scholars, or to be interpreted in ways that downplayed their SF elements. But as we enter the third decade of the twenty-first century, a growing literary, artistic, and critical wave of enthusiasm around "alternative futurisms" has given this cluster of SF reimaginings of the Spanish-Nahua encounter renewed importance as precursors and pathbreakers in the field. This chapter will focus on three such novels: Tísner's *Palabras del Opoton el*

Viejo (the author's own 1992 translation of his Catalan novel *Paraules d'Opoton el Vell*), Boullosa's *Llanto: Novelas imposibles* (1992), and Hiriart's *La destrucción de todas las cosas* (1992).

All three of these novels read the story of the fall of Tenochtitlan as if it had been otherwise. This is their shared SF characteristic, and all three novels are particularly well-realized examples of this type of SF rewriting—*bien logrados*, as Cortázar would say. And it is no coincidence that these three authors use generic tropes from SF to reinterpret one of the most consequential transatlantic encounters in recorded history, as even Cortés's sixteenth-century companions seasoned their historical accounts with fantastical flourishes and imaginative flights of fancy. As every reader of Bernal Díaz del Castillo knows, when that old footsoldier needed a point of comparison to describe his first glimpse of the great floating city of Tenochtitlan, he reached for *Amadís de Gaula*, a fantastical chivalrous romance. In other words, when Bernal—one of the principal New World chroniclers and the metasource for every history written since—needs to jolt his readers with a shocking reference to convey the unprecedented scene he is describing, he reaches for a ready-made enchanted spectacle from the pulps of the early European printing industry.[1] These *libros de caballería* (books of chivalry) are the very same books that will drive Don Quijote to madness in 1605, and yet already in the 1560s Bernal sets the scene of the Spanish entrance into Tenochtitlan as if it were a fantasy world.[2]

Perhaps that literary coincidence is what convinced Carlos Fuentes to provocatively and anachronistically read Bernal as the first Hispanic American novelist.[3] In his 2009 book *La imaginación novelesca: Bernal Díaz entre géneros y épocas* (*The Novelistic Imagination: Bernal Díaz Between Genres and Eras*), Oswaldo Estrada takes Fuentes at his word, and proposes a way to read Bernal Díaz as if he were a proto-novelist avant la lettre. Estrada's monograph demonstrates the precise usage of this sharp interpretive tool, called reading *a contrapelo*, or reading against the historical grain.

As Estrada quickly clarifies, his argument is not the anachronistic point that Bernal Díaz wrote a novel, most directly because in 1568, the year the old soldier finally finished composing his *crónica*, the novel as such did not yet exist. Estrada's argument instead is that Bernal draws from the same nascent *imaginación novelesca* that would also soon produce *Don Quijote*, the Spanish language's most celebrated early novel.[4] In this sense, Bernal's *Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España* (*True History of the Conquest of New Spain*) becomes a proto-

novel, written in an exemplary space of transculturation. Instead of Fuentes's strident counterfactual claim that "Bernal is our first novelist," Estrada's vibrant study shows the interpretive power of a historically grounded *what if*: What if we read the *Historia verdadera* as a novel?

After Estrada's detailed analysis of the *Historia verdadera*, he closes *La imaginación novelesca* with a quartet of practitioners of the *nueva novela histórica*: Carlos Fuentes's *El naranjo* (1993; *The Orange Tree*), Carmen Boullosa's *Llanto: Novelas imposibles* (1992; *Wailing: Impossible Novels*), Ignacio Solares's *Nen, la inútil* (1994; *Nen, the Useless*), and Laura Esquivel's *Malinche* (2006). All four of these novels give pride of place to Bernal's *crónica* as the central intertext of their postmodern historiographic metafiction. Fuentes's "Las dos orillas" ("The Two Shores"), one of the stories in his 1993 linked collection *El naranjo*, is an important example of the kind of reciprocal alternative histories analyzed in the current study, and the interested reader should consult Estrada's excellent interpretation of it and his deep bibliography. The only downside in framing all of these contributions narrowly in terms of Bernal is that a sustained focus on the *Historia verdadera* directs the reader's attention away from these novels' other intertexts. And, especially in the case of Boullosa's *Llanto: Novelas imposibles*, it risks inflating Bernal until he fills the spaces and silences that Boullosa's "impossible novels" attempt to trace.

Boullosa, like the other writers and artists discussed in this chapter, relies as much if not more heavily on Miguel León-Portilla as a source for reimagining the Conquest (either directly or through his popularized account of the *Florentine Codex*, as will be discussed below). Boullosa's titular mourning cry, the *llanto*, is the trace of the voices of the vanquished, expressed as wailings and heard as insistence and persistence, which in turn negates their presumed defeat. Accordingly, it is León-Portilla's classic anthology of Náhuatl-language accounts of the fall of Tenochtitlan, *La visión de los vencidos* (*The Vision of the Vanquished*), that is the shared historical anchor that structures these three early attempts to rewrite the Conquest as a speculative inversion.

Each of the three novels I'll discuss employs a basic SF trope to approach—and, perhaps, recuperate—the so-called visions of the vanquished.[5] Boullosa's *Llanto: Novelas imposibles* uses a time-traveling Moctezuma to highlight the negative archival space created by the absent voices of the most marginalized participants in the Conquest. Tísner's *Palabras del Opoton el Viejo* creates a "uchronia," or alternative history, to explore the linguistic and epistemic possibilities of an inverted

conquest, with Mesoamericans arriving at a multilingual early modern Iberian peninsula. Finally, Hiriart's *La destrucción de todas las cosas* parodies the tropes of a pulp alien invasion story to explore the implications of Mexico's cyclical history of violent invasions. All three novels speak lyrically about the confounding political conditions of the historical imagination.[6] Read together, the three suggest imaginative yet historically grounded methods of listening for the traces of silenced voices. Each novel in its own way demonstrates SF's possibility to function as a stethoscopic prosthesis and an imaginary escape hatch. They also orient the reader towards contemporary revitalizations of these marginalized voices, which will be previewed in the chapter's conclusion.

And yet beyond their demonstrated mastery of SF tropes, which will be discussed below, all three novels share a deep literary filiation with León-Portilla. And so we must first begin with a more basic question: How does the editor of the most popular anthology of indigenous colonial literature become the shared interlocutor for these three SF novels?

*

The historian and anthropologist Miguel León-Portilla was perhaps Mexico's greatest popularizer of Aztec literature in the twentieth century. From his earliest published scholarship, a doctoral dissertation (1956) that exhaustively studied indigenous-language sources to describe an autochthonous "filosofía náhuatl," León-Portilla's entire career was dedicated to collecting, promoting, and fomenting Náhuatl scholarship and cultural production. Although his academic treatises proved invaluable in consolidating Nahua studies as a scholarly discipline, it was the publication of *La visión de los vencidos* in 1959 that profoundly reshaped the historiographic landscape of Mexican culture.

La visión de los vencidos, translated into English as *The Broken Spears: The Aztec Account of the Conquest of Mexico*, was designed to be a popular book, a mass-market paperback recording the visions of the vanquished. The anthology collects many of Ángel María Garibay's translations of the earliest transliterated Náhuatl texts, and León-Portilla arranged these sources thematically to produce an accessible tour de force whose influence has reached far beyond Mexico. The book has been translated into twenty different languages, including, finally, a Náhuatl edition in 2016.

Since its initial publication, the anthology has become the principle source for representing the "trauma de la conquista de los autóctonos"

for generations of Mexican writers and intellectuals, although the fact that it framed Náhuatl language and culture as a "legacy of defeat" gave rise to a disputed legacy.[7] In the broad terrain of popular culture, *La visión de los vencidos* became the easiest reference for SF writers—whether amateur or professional—looking for *indigenista* source materials. Of its thirty-plus printings and revisions, many of those have been *ediciones de bosillo*, or "pocket editions" designed for secondary and university study.

While the anthology is certainly not the last word on pre-Columbian Mesoamerican culture, it is quite frequently the first word that students, young scholars, and artists encounter. In the words of José Emilio Pacheco:

> Hasta 1959, cuando apareció por vez primera este libro, el único testimonio sobre la conquista era la crónica victoriosa de los propios españoles. Miguel León-Portilla tuvo el incomparable acierto de organizar textos traducidos del Náhuatl por Ángel María Garibay, para darnos la *Visión de los vencidos*: la imagen que los indios de Tenochtitlan, Tlatelolco, Tetzcoco, Chalco y Tlaxcala se formaron acerca de su lucha contra los conquistadores y la ruina final del mundo mexica. Relato de los presagios que anunciaron el desastre, descripción del avance de Cortés, crónica de la batalla heróica de los antiguos mexicanos en defensa de su cultura y de su vida misma, elegía de una civilización que se perdió para siempre, gran poema épico de los orígenes de nuestra nacionalidad, *Visión de los vencidos* es ya un libro clásico y una obra de lectura indispensable para todos los mexicanos.[8]
>
> Until 1959, when this book first appeared, the only testimonies about the conquest were the victorious chronicles of the Spanish themselves. Miguel León-Portilla undertook the groundbreaking task of organizing the Náhuatl texts previously translated by Ángel María Garibay in order to give us *The Vision of the Vanquished*: the image formed by the natives of Tenochtitlan, Tlatelolco, Tetzcoco, Chalco, and Tlaxcala through their battle against the conquistadores, and the ultimate destruction of the ancient Mexican world. *Visión de los vencidos* is already a classic book and an indispensable text for all Mexicans, as it contains the story of the

> omens that announced the impending disaster, a description of Cortés' advance across the mainland, a chronicle of the heroic battle of the indigenous Mexicans in defense of their culture and their very way of life, an elegy for a civilization that was lost forever, and the epic poem that narrates the origins of the modern Mexican nationality.

La visión de los vencidos continues to be a bestseller. It is a key entry in most basic bibliographies of Mexican literature, and one of the truest examples of revisionist canon formation in the Americas. We can confidently say that all three authors examined in this chapter were familiar with León-Portilla's anthology. Hiriart certainly encountered it at some point early in his formal or informal education, while Boullosa and Tísner mention León-Portilla by name.

At its heart, *La visión de los vencidos* is a mass-market remediation of the twelfth book of the *Códice florentino*, or *Florentine Codex*; it is a paperback edition of that literary treasure produced by the sixteenth-century translation workshop at the Colegio de Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco.[9] (*La visión* also incorporates important additions from three other colonial sources, including the *Anales de Tlatelolco,* along with moving examples of post-Conquest poetic laments of the destruction of Tenochtitlan from the *Cantares mexicanos*.) The editor and supervisor of the *Florentine Codex*, the Franciscan friar Bernardino de Sahagún, was one of León-Portilla's mid-career obsessions. León-Portilla's fascination with that Franciscan intellectual led him to write a deeply researched monograph, *Sahagún: Pionero de la antropología* (1999), which some critics judged near-hagiography. The primary complaint is that in elevating Sahagún to the position of the "father of Mexican anthropology," León-Portilla papers over the conditions under which the *Códice florentino*, also known as *La historia general de las cosas de Nueva España*, was produced. While the *Códice florentino* is the single richest documentary source on Aztec culture both before and after the Spanish invasion, its raison d'être was, in a word, genocidal.

Martin Lienhard describes Sahagún's texts as an early entry in "una larga serie de crónicas, firmadas por eclesiásticos, que transcribe el discurso 'idolátrico' para facilitar su 'extirpación' o erradicación" ("a long series of chronicles, penned by ecclesiastics, that transcribe 'idolatrous' discourse in order to facilitate the 'extirpation' or eradication of said culture").[10] Sahagún's workshop faithfully recorded and represented the richness of Aztec life and culture so as to be able to stamp

it out more effectively, and replace it with Iberian-style Catholicism. If the *Códice florentino* was a field guide to Aztec life, history, and culture, that field was a battlefield, and Sahagún represented it in order to better destroy it.[11]

In his later publications, León-Portilla recognized this predicament more directly. As Earl Shoris, his coeditor of *In the Language of Kings*, acknowledges: "Sahagún became the greatest professional ethnographer of all time, the source. This was no Herodotus swallowing stories about monsters. Sahagún was orderly, skeptical, intent upon learning Nahua culture and religion even though his avowed purpose was to destroy the religion."[12] Even with these acknowledgments, the pride of place given to Sahagún's intellectual legacy is troubling. As Sánchez-Prado provocatively puts it, "the primary reference for studying the whole corpus of Nahau literature is a series of texts produced by a sixteenth-century Spanish scholar."[13] Whatever its enduring literary or intellectual merit, the *Florentine Codex* is also the product of Franciscan missionary work in New Spain. And that project was one of cultural capture in the truest sense of the word, as part of a project of extirpation, not recuperation.

This complicates the legacy of *La visión de los vencidos*. Sánchez-Prado frames it this way: the importance of León-Portilla's anthologies of indigenous visions of the Conquest "rests not so much on their rigor in recovering indigenous textualities, but on the very gesture of recovering those textualities and presenting them as voices silenced by the colonial process."[14] *La visión de los vencidos* is almost content-neutral, in this sense, and merely creates a space from which to insist on the existence of indigenous Mesoamerican culture, irrespective of the accuracy of what is represented and how such representation occurs. Thus, while León-Portilla was a fierce defender of indigenous social movements for autonomy and a source of inspiration for the Zapatista movement itself, his work has also been seamlessly integrated into the national myth of harmonious *mestizaje* (racial mixing) advanced by Mexico's Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) and figures like José Vasconcelos.[15]

From a different perspective, the fact that *La visión de los vencidos* has reached such canonical status that it now stands as an empty cultural signifier to be inflected by whatever transitory hegemony prints the next edition, is in itself quite a feat. In any case, León-Portilla's own subsequent work has not remained mired in such a representational eddy. Canon critique notwithstanding, León-Portilla worked alongside his many collaborators first to legitimize indigenous, and especially Nahua culture, as fields of scholarly and popular interest, and later

to ensure that Mesoamerican culture entered into the printed Western pantheon of great civilizations. He did this in a very concrete way: León-Portilla brought Mesoamerican culture into the anthology. Those early anthologies—his early collection of the *Cantares mexicanos* and the various *Reversos de la conquista*—created a readership, in Spanish translation, for works in Náhuatl and other indigenous languages of the Americas. His distinguished career culminated in a collaborative English-language project, *In the Language of Kings: An Anthology of Mesoamerican Literature, Pre-Columbian to the Present*, the first Norton anthology dedicated exclusively to Mesoamerican materials. In honor of Miguel León-Portilla's death in late 2019, Natalio Hernández printed these words of tribute in the *LASA Forum*: "El Tlamatini Miguel León-Portilla, deja obras fundamentales que visibilizan y ponderan nuestras culturas mesoamericanas, mismas que servirán de inspiración y luz para imaginar y construir la nueva sociedad mexicana del siglo XXI" ("The Wise Man Miguel León-Portilla left an oeuvre that not only raised global awareness about Mesoamerican culture, but furthermore continues to illuminate and inspire new visions for Mexican society in the XXI century").[16]

As alluded to above, Sánchez-Prado's appraisal of the role León-Portilla played in the twentieth-century development of Hispanism identifies two divergent trajectories radiating out from *La visión de los vencidos*: an "encounter of cultures" rubric that merges with the official revolutionary *mestizaje* of the PRI, and a decolonial understanding of "processes of political oppression."[17] Even if León-Portilla's career carried him far down the decolonial path into the very Lacandon jungle, by the dawn of the twenty-first century, *La visión de los vencidos* had been firmly integrated into the hegemonic project of the Mexican state.

To these two trajectories, I would like to add a third, speculative tangent. This trajectory, which could be understood as a line of flight, adapts León-Portilla's *reverso de la conquista* to the speculative mode. It also draws inspiration from the Zapatista slogans that were, in part, inspired by León-Portilla's own scholarship: *otro mundo es posible* (another world is possible), and *un mundo donde quepan muchos mundos* (a world where many worlds fit).

The three novels I study in this chapter all propose SF strategies for confronting the paradoxical inheritance that Sánchez-Prado highlights, and they do so by engaging León-Portilla's legacy directly. Inspired by León-Portilla, they listen for the silenced voice and imagine the Conquest otherwise: one through a geographic inversion, one through a

temporal inversion, and the third as a cosmic parody. Even if these novels from 1968 and 1992 seem, from our contemporary perspective, to have been surpassed in one way or another, they are fundamental precursors to the work of alternative futurisms in the Americas today.

VISIONES DE OTROS MUNDOS: SPACE, LANGUAGE, REPETITION

Llanto: Novelas imposibles: History's Place in the Novel to Come

Although Carmen Boullosa's literary beginnings lie in the theater, she has become best known as the author of a series of meticulously researched and energetically imagined historical novels.[18] Many of these novels address conditions in her native Mexico; others treat her adopted home of New York City; and some of the most recent focus on the borderlands. What ties them all together, even those that take place in Cervantes's Mediterranean or among the seventeenth-century pirates of the Caribbean, is an extensive process of historical research and direct quotation of primary source documents. Julio Ortega has described Boullosa's novels as devouring all historical contexts.[19]

Llanto: Novelas imposibles (1992; *Wailing: Impossible Novels*) is part of Boullosa's loose trilogy (along with *Duerme* and *Cielos de la tierra*) that bring a Mexican, *indigenista*, and fantastical focus to historiographic metafiction.[20] These are novels written in the long Mexican 1990s, which complement the aforementioned 1992 Columbus Quincentenary with the coincidental arrivals, two year later, of NAFTA (the North American Free Trade Agreement) and the EZLN (the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional) uprising in Chiapas.[21]

Duerme (1994; *Sleep*) conforms most closely to the historiographic metafictional paradigm, and reimagines a Latin American *Orlando*, as Sánchez-Prado notes.[22] *Cielos de la tierra* (1997; *Heavens on Earth*) most clearly illustrates Boullosa's method by intertwining three overlapping narrative threads from, respectively, the mid-sixteenth-century multilingual translation workshop at the Colegio de Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco; a mid-1990s Mexico City torn between an indigenous rebellion and a colonial amnesia abetted by exploding neoliberalism; and finally a cyborg nightmare set in a post-apocalyptic future.

As these short descriptions demonstrate, Boullosa's novels often overwhelm the reader with the disorienting feeling of being lost in the labyrinth of history.[23] *Llanto: Novelas imposibles* thematizes that

historical—and historiographic—disorientation in the most concrete yet fantastical way possible: it narrates Moctezuma's magical reappearance in Mexico City's Parque Hundido during the dog days of summer in 1989, or rather "nueve veces cincuenta y dos años" ("nine times fifty-two years") after the Aztec emperor's death, as counted by the Nahua calendar of 52-year cycles.[24]

Since *Llanto: novelas imposibles* and its author have been so well studied in the critical literature, I'll restrict my analysis to one component of this multifaceted work: the possibility—or impossibility—of recovering a lost voice from the colonial archive.[25] Boullosa uses time travel in the service of this recuperative project, as a way to explore the literary possibilities of the colonial record.[26] Time travel, of course, is a fundamental SF trope, and one that has particular resonance in Latin America.[27] Time travel can be an aesthetic tool to fantasize a union with an other from across a temporal divide so wide it seems to have become ontological. Or it can be a narrative strategy for unraveling causality and responsibility, in the style of Ted Chiang. Or it can be a hard-edged reflection on the physics of space-time. Boullosa, in her novel, turns time travel into a way to explore absences in the written colonial record, and so her hard-edged gaze focuses on the colonial archive itself.

Thus, instead of a treatise on quantum physics, Boullosa opens her novel by describing the arrival of her ephemeral protagonist in more metaphysical terms. It begins with an "apparition," a theatrical scene influenced by transculturated Mexican passion plays and holiday pageants. The Apparition itself is a giant anthill (*hormiguero*) that emerges from the subterranean bowels of the earth.[28] From its tunnels spring forth innumerable women, who rush out like gusts of wind and explode immediately into ash and dust. Their cries, *llantos*, give shape to Moctezuma, who emerges from the anthill after rushing through a stampede of images. The images, which flash across the page as sketches of Moctezuma's memories, pour into Moctezuma's empty form to complete the teleportation/incarnation. These images are some of Boullosa's most direct textual rewritings of *La visión de los vencidos*, and they are mixed in with more speculative scenes of Moctezuma as an immature adolescent coming to terms with his incomprehensible power as a young emperor.

Moctezuma arrives in modern Mexico as an uncanny stranger in an estranged land. His body materializes, while those of his female companions do not. But he cannot escape their fragmentary traces, and those voices accompany him throughout the text, yearning to take the

shape of ink on the page.[29] If those other voices are to be novelized, they cannot merely be heard under the rubric of solitude, expressed exclusively as the cry of the vanquished. Boullosa wants them to claim their proper space in the novel, but before the narrator can track them all down, there is the pressing issue of the summoned apparition of Moctezuma in Mexico City, 1989.

As to be expected, the native time traveler Moctezuma finds both unimaginable novelty and uncanny familiarity in how his capital city—which was perhaps the most impressive urban civilization on the planet at the time—has changed in the subsequent 468 years. This is most directly expressed in the novel's middle section, when Moctezuma takes a memorable taxi ride through the key 1980s landmarks of DF (the Federal District, as it was known at the time), including the statue of Cuauhtémoc, the Paseo de la Reforma, the Anthropology Museum in the Bosque de Chapultepec, the Palacio de Bellas Artes, and the then-recently excavated Templo Mayor. Yet this memorable sequence ends up as nothing more than a fragment, a narrative thread with frayed strands and an abrupt end. The sequence itself is far from triumphant, and Moctezuma certainly does not respond to these monuments to the Mexican nation with an institutionalized *grito*, or cheer in honor of Mexico's revolutionary independence. On the contrary, it leads to one of the novel's many moments of titular weeping, the *llanto* which wails in the face of the nation's history of colonial violence.

That violence, in turn, is tied to the second half of the title, the "impossible novels." Boullosa's text is full of "novel fragments," and can be accurately described as a notebook of sketches and ideas for writing a novel—the novel—about Moctezuma.[30] One of the strongest narrative voices to emerge from the fragments is the novelist-narrator herself, who, although she yearns to novelize Moctezuma's story, spends pages exploring how she cannot even imagine the possibility of doing so successfully. As she freely admits, the first stumbling block is this novelist's impulse to "correct" history. The frustrated narrator details her draft pages citing and correcting colonial authorities like Bernal Díaz and Motolinia, and engaging popular post-structuralist interpretations of Mexican history like those of Todorov and Gruzinski. In a direct commentary on the "Presagios de la venida de los Españoles" chapter of *La visión de los vencidos*, the frustrated novelist writes a few impassioned corrections to the myth of a cowardly and incompetent Aztec emperor quivering before the European invaders.[31] She instead advances a provisional interpretation of Moctezuma that much more closely matches

contemporary understandings based on indigenous Mesoamerican protocols of diplomacy, hospitality, and warfare.[32]

The frustrated novelist is soon disabused of this historiographic pretension, and realizes that no single narrator could possibly tell the story of the fall of Tenochtitlan. This is true in no small part because of a structural feature of the colonial archive: not every witness who should have left their testimony managed to do so. Missing most prominently are the female voices, the very ones that accompanied Moctezuma in the Apparition but who vanished into smoke and dust. Boullosa wants her readers to share in the frustration of that realization. The narrator's desired protagonist for her novel about Moctezuma seems only to exist in those assembled fragments that make up the archival record. And that record is permanently incomplete. The structure of the novel leads her audience through this dawning realization about the impossibility of any single reconstruction in a step-by-step process. While the novelist pores over assembled fragments from the literary record, Moctezuma's new friends—three contemporary university students—consult with their professors, including the archeologist Eduardo Matos Moctezuma and the philosopher Alfredo López Austin, in order to make sense of the Tlatoani's unlikely reappearance.

In order to raise the stakes, Boullosa waits until the second half of the text to explain to the reader what exactly is going on. By then, we have already digested four previous "novel fragments," each one a false start abandoned for one reason or another. Until, finally, the entire novelistic ambition is cast aside as an idea so foolish it can't even be called stupid.[33] From that point on, the reader understands that what remains of the text is a preliminary, incomplete, and halting gathering of fragments. It would be excessive to call this an outright rejection, but Boullosa's literary intervention is at least in part an open letter to the NNH tradition.

Her presumed novel will never adequately capture a true Moctezuma outside of her colonial-era source materials. And any attempt on her part will simply inflate her character's story with her own novelistic pretensions. Instead of rushing into that void—which seems to be the historiographic metafictionalist's natural response—Boullosa seeks to hold that space for silenced voices to emerge. Her halting, tentative approach suggests that novelization itself might not be up to the task Boullosa sets for it. This, ultimately, is her implicit rebuke of the easy-reading historical romances with predictably postmodern twists, which use mass-market anthologies as their primary historical source material.

For Boullosa the stakes are much higher, because she knows that all of those archived and anthologized fragments, all of those pieces—assembled by Sahagún, translated by Garibay, and anthologized by León-Portilla—are the paper trail of colonial violence, the documentation of an ontological assault. When Boullosa sets these fragments and imagined voices against one another, she is using the novel form to pose a similar thesis to that articulated by Martin Lienhard in *La voz y su huella* (*The Voice and Its Trace*):

> En el contexto de los procesos de enfrentamiento étnico-social, los textos 'alternativos' resultan, de hecho, verdaderos campos de batalla semiótica, espacios donde se redefinen, ficticia o ficcionalmente, los lugares respectivos de los 'vencedores' y de los 'vencidos.'
>
> Within the context of an ethno-social stand-off, the so-called "alternative" texts become true semiotic battlefields, spaces where the positions of the "victors" and the "vanquished" are themselves redefined, whether in fiction or nonfiction.[34]

Lienhard did not mean, by invoking "alternative" texts, to reference SF tropes like alternative histories and uchronias. Lienhard is, instead, trying to develop a method for listening to what Trouillot called the "silenced past." That said, SF is a clearly complementary method to project past silences into the future voice. It is an intrepid method, yes, and with it comes certain risks, as should by now be apparent. Boullosa is aware of those risks, but she deems them necessary in order to even attempt a novelization of Moctezuma, a figure whose historiographic ambiguity is only matched by his most famous female counterpart, known as La Malinche, Malinalli, Malintzín, or Doña María.[35]

Precisely because she knows the risk posed by uchronias, Boullosa identifies a guiding thread that will lead her through the labyrinth of Mesoamerican history. She finds it in Sahagún, and Boullosa matches León-Portilla in her celebration of the Franciscan, whom she thanks first and foremost in the novel's acknowledgments, along with the extraordinary *indios trilingües* (trilingual Indians) of the Colegio de la Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco. (One of *Cielos de la tierra*'s main characters, Hernando de Rivas, is one of those trilingual native translators.)

Boullosa also knows that, notwithstanding its status as an extraordinary achievement in literary transculturation, the twelfth book of the

Códice florentino and its popularized version in León-Portilla's anthologies are necessary but not sufficient components of her literary project. Through Boullosa's rewriting, Sahagún becomes like a wind chime, moved by the *suspiros* (sighs) released upon Moctezuma's Apparition. In one of the fragments of failed novels, the frustrated novelist admits that the only way to move forward in her storytelling is to pulverize the archive, to convert concrete history into a scattering of dust particles.[36] As Anna Reid has said, these pulverized particles of history blow across time, swept up in the gust of the *llanto*.[37] The novel's pervasive *llanto* is the medium in which these lost traces of female voices are suspended. The *suspiros* jostle Sahagún—the wind chime—and Boullosa is able to coax out resonant moments from what are otherwise archival gaps. If it sounds impossible, it is, as the novel's title promised. Impossible, yes, but also plural: impossibilities.

Carrie Chorba reads the novel's fragmentary composition itself as a "metaphor for the piecemeal work that chroniclers like Sahagún performed in the name of documentation; and the utter incomprehension that frustrates both writer and character in *Llanto* is actually that of a present-day Mexican peering back in time to the Others that played out the conquest on the same spot some four centuries ago."[38] And if Sahagún and his collaborators worked with a fragmentary composition, so much more so León-Portilla, whose anthology is an admitted patchwork assembled under the auspices of an *indigenista* perspectivism. While Boullosa's text might not meet her own standards of a successful novel, its great value is to test the limits of the *nueva novela histórica*, to see if a possible novel, any novel, could gather enough fragments from enough sources to finally create a Moctezuma *verdadero*, in the true sense of the many New World *Historias verdaderas*.

For this reason alone, the novel is truly experimental. In this it also anticipates the anti-interventionist lesson that I'll explore in chapter 5: time travel is no way to correct the historical record. Instead of teaching the Other to time-travel and then awaiting his arrival, the narrator must instead learn to listen and to create space for lost voices to emerge. The novel's crowning achievement is that it expresses this lesson through punctuation: specifically, a series of semicolons masterfully placed in an introspective passage that details the novelist's frustration over the impossibility of novelizing Moctezuma:

> Hemos devorado gran parte del planeta con la boca maquillada de la civilización. No hay verdugo. Los conquistadores

somos nosotros. Sabemos que nuestros dioses y nuestras costumbres murieron y que somos hechos de la sangre que nos destruyó y de la sangre que perdió a los dioses, somos hechos de todo, del que ganó y del que perdió, del que triunfó y del derrotado, del que destrozó y del que fue destrozado, de la resistencia y valentía de la parte vencida y de la derrota del ganador, sobre todo de estos dos últimos elementos. Es imposible que entendamos: necesitamos entender. Creemos ver venir nuestro fin; somos nosotros quienes lo hemos trazado. Algo le ha dado guerra a la humanidad; algo somos nosotros. Alguien nos propone una manera distinta de entender espacio, tiempo, cuerpo, idea, representación, imagen; ese alguien somos nosotros.

We have devoured a large part of the planet with the lipsticked mouth of civilization. There is no executioner. We are the conquistadores. We know that our gods and our customs died and we are made from the blood that destroyed us and the blood that lost our gods, we are made of it all, from the winner and from the loser, from the victor and the vanquished, from the destroyer and the destroyed, from the resistance and bravery of the losing side and from the defeat of the winning side, from those two elements above all else. It is impossible that we understand: we must understand. We believe we see our end approaching; we are the ones who devised the scheme. Something has made war upon humanity; that thing is us. Someone proposes a different way to understand space, time, body, idea, representation, image; that someone is us.[39]

The narrator takes León-Portilla's humanizing impulse to showcase "la valentía de la parte vencida" (the valor of the defeated side) and supplements that impulse with the necessary, paradoxical "defeat of the victor." This contradictory concept, which so concisely names the novel's thesis, is punctuated by a series of colons and semicolons, beginning with the Beckettesque resolution "It is impossible for us to understand: we must understand." This phrase is followed by a series of sentences connected by semicolons, which bind finality and continuation together in a punctuated moment. As Beckett would say: somehow nohow on. This proliferation of semicolons leads inevitably back to the colon in

the novel's title. *Llanto: Novelas imposibles*. A plural impossibility, a necessary contradiction: the modern revolutionary Mexican nation, haunted by a past it cannot yet memorialize. And what Boullosa is capable of doing in 1992 is to publish a placeholder for a novel-to-come, holding space for the traces of further silenced voices to emerge.

Palabras de Opoton el Viejo: A Language of Inversion

About a quarter-century before the publication of *Llanto: Novelas imposibles*, another novelist adopted a different strategy for narrating the colonial Peninsular invasion of what was to become Mesoamerica. Avel·lí Artís-Gener has not historically been understood as a Mexican novelist, primarily because the bulk of his literary production was written in Catalan. Artís-Gener, known by his readers as Tísner, spent upwards of two decades living in Mexico during an extended period of exile. He was raised in Barcelona, and in his early adulthood enlisted as a Republican officer in the Spanish Civil War; like so many others, he left his homeland in exile in 1939, after Franco declared victory and inaugurated a 36-year military dictatorship. It is only recently, however, that critics have begun to evaluate Tisner's writing as properly Mexican literature, or more specifically as Mexican literature written in Catalan.[40]

Nowhere is the case for Tísner's status as a Mexican novelist stronger than in his *Paraules d'Opoton el Vell* (1968; *The Words of Old Man Opoton*). This novel was originally translated into Spanish as *Palabras de Opoton el Viejo* by Angelina Gatell in 1977, with a much improved translation by Tísner himself finally published in 1992. This novel is the precursor of almost all of the works discussed in this book, since it spins a tale of a pre-1492 Aztec voyage to the Iberian Peninsula and then the vanquished Aztecs' return to México. The text we read is purportedly a newly found sixteenth-century manuscript, written in transliterated Náhautl by the last living member of that fateful transatlantic journey from imperial Tenochtitlan to a fabled land called Viejo Aztlán (Old Aztlán). Tísner makes the presence of Náhuatl felt within his Catalan prose, which smoothly translates into the Spanish-Castilian edition.[41] He also seasons his faux-Náhuatl syntax with slang words characteristic of Mexican *caló* (like *güero*, *chamaca*, and the infamous *relajo*, as described by Jorge Portilla in 1966) to create a linguistic and stylistic hybrid that is only understandable through Spain, even as it temporarily bypasses Castilian.[42]

The novel's Catalan readers have focused on how the text rewrites subaltern Peninsular exile.[43] Through the displacement he suffered as a Catalan exile, Tísner was well-positioned to understand the Peninsular legacy of reducing Nahau cultural hegemony to the singular subjective experience of our narrator, poor old Opoton.[44] And if Tísner felt himself an outsider observing Mexican culture during a tumultuous quarter-century, he channeled that energy into his narrator's own perspective. Opoton struggles to master the Peninsular *crónica* form, yet he is convinced that in order to relate the unprecedented experience of encountering early modern Spain, he must somehow find his voice as a *coronista*, or "chronicler."[45] Through this confluence of Tísner's literary biography and the novel's stylistic experimentation, Opoton creates a formal structure for recognizing the repetition of history with difference. Tísner follows the trace of the voice, and it leads from Náhautl to Catalan.

Tísner's prolonged stay in Mexico encouraged him to connect the survival and vitality of an exiled language to the ability to find art or humor in narrating defeat. Perhaps this can be viewed in parallel with León-Portilla's shift from rescuing a vanishing "visión de los vencidos" ("vision of the defeated") to celebrating past and contemporary indigenous language cultural production. In any case, León-Portilla's name features prominently in the bibliographic source list of works consulted that concludes *Palabras*.[46] His *La visión de los vencidos* is most clearly recognizable in *Opoton*'s second chapter, which reads as a direct intertext with the "Presagios de la venida de los Españoles" ("Omens of the Arrival of the Spaniards") chapter. Opoton describes the omens in order, following Sahagún's ten portents one by one: the comet, the fire in Huitzilopochtli's temple, and even the strange bird with an obsidian mirror embedded in its head. But instead of predicting the arrival of Spanish conquistadores at Tenochtitlan, these signs are instead interpreted as connected to the experimental seafaring canoes that Opoton's fellow Aztecs are building. And with that, the Aztec leadership understands that their voyage of exploration across the Atlantic has been ordered by the gods themselves. This is yet another twist in Tísner's narrative. His goal is not to correct or revise León-Portilla. *Palabras de Opoton el Viejo* works at a deeper formalistic level to invert the perspective of the global colonial condition, with this reinterpretation of Sahagún's catalogue of omens being simply the most easily identifiable inversion.

The novel creates an overlay not only of historical moments, but also of their linguistic traces. So, for instance, in one of the early scenes

recounting the Mexica expedition along Iberian shores, the Náhautl speakers, "gente azteca tenocha de Aztlán" ("Tenoch Aztec folks from Aztlán"), encounter Galician speakers who inform them that "as Espanhas" are located somewhere else, "over thataway."[47] This entire dialogue of mutual incomprehension is related originally in Catalan: in other words, it is a novelistic staging of Spain without a word of Castilian Spanish!

For all of the multilingual pyrotechnics that make this novel so beloved by translators, its plot is relatively simple. The Mexica cross the Atlantic in 1489, towards what they anticipate will be Viejo Aztlán, on a quest to find Quetzalcoatl. The authorities of Tenochtitlan bless the mission, and charge the voyagers with convincing their deity, once found, to return to Aztlán. The Mexica make landfall, as alluded to earlier, in Galicia, and travel around the Iberian Peninsula in a series of skirmishes, *desencuentros* (disagreements), deceits, conversions, full-scale battles, and haphazard wanderings that all draw upon a heterogenous swath of the Mesomerican colonial archive. Some scenes are inverted and transposed in a way that highlights and satirizes identifiable source materials, while others work on the more abstract level of colonial tropes. In one of the novel's many flourishes of estranged recognition, the arriving Aztecs more or less follow the Camino de Santiago, connecting that saintly pilgrimage with the invaders' own search for Quetzalcoatl. The plot's simplicity allows space for the reader's recognition of moments of estrangement to unfold gradually, even as the story is punctuated by masterful bursts of direct historical inversion.

Importantly, this historical inversion in 1489 does not change our timeline in significant ways: the Aztecs soon enough retreat back to Aztlán, and the Spanish Empire follows quickly thereafter to subjugate what they will claim is a newfound continent. And thus Opoton writes his narrative in a transliterated Náhuatl that he learned in Bernardino de Sahagún's translation workshop at Tlatelolco.[48] This foreknowledge of Tenochtitlan's inevitable defeat haunts the entire narrative, and expresses itself through Opoton's seemingly undisciplined foreshadowing in the early chapters where he freely admits his terror and doubt about telling the infelicitous end to his tale.[49]

The dreaded moment arrives in chapter 17, where Opoton begins to narrate the turn in the Mexica's fortune:

> Ya llegué a todo aquel trecho del relato que hubiese preferido no tener que escribir. La verdad sea dicha, luego que co-

> mencé a pergeñar este escrito sentí terror de cuando llegaría a estas partes en las que ya me hallo y ni modo de echarme para atrás ahorita, que no sé qué pensarían de Opoton y dirían que como coronista valía cacahuate.[50]
>
> I've finally arrived at that stretch of the story that I would have preferred never to have written. Truth be told, back when I started sketching up this tale, I was terrified thinking about how I would feel when I arrived at the very part that I'm writing right now, and there's no way to turn back now, but back then I was worried about what they'd think about Opoton and that they would say that as a coronista I was more worthless than a peanut.

Opoton the novice chronicler finally feels compelled by his newly adopted vocation of "coronista" to tell the difficult part of the story. And we, his readers, also realize that something else had been going on in his previous moments of seemingly crass foreshadowing: the narrator was creating and holding space within his chronicle in order to narrate the traumatic resolution.

In these moments, the reader feels Opoton reach out his authorial hand to rattle the novel's narrative cage, drawing our attention to the many textual layers all bound together in Opoton's search for his *coronista* voice. This in turn redirects the reader's attention to the text's further layers of metatextual framing. In the transatlantic spirit of Cervantes and Borges, Tísner opens the novel with a 23-page introduction that spins an invented textual history for the sixteenth-century manuscript, paired with a loving portrait of the twentieth-century author's friend and Náhuatl tutor, Daniel Ramírez Opoton. It is Daniel who shares his ancestor's manuscript with Tísner, and the text that follows is purportedly a translation of Opoton el Viejo's original transliterated Náhuatl. This is not the only authorial hand to break through the novelistic frame; the prose is peppered with interventions from translators, editors, tutors, and scribes.

The sum of these clashing voices reminds Tísner's readers that in the sixteenth century, the Iberian Peninsula and its overseas empire were multilingual, even if it was Castilian hegemony that imposed itself upon the Americas. This insight adds depth to Nebrija's oft-quoted aphorism that *la lengua siempre fue compañera del imperio* (Language has always been empire's companion). Tísner's novel seems to suggest

another translation of that slogan, in a satirically nationalistic register: The Spanish language has always been Empire's companion. Not that Spanish has any monopolistic claim on linguistic hegemony. The novel makes this point most memorably through its long-running satire of place-names, chief among these the erroneously named Viejo Aztlán itself. Opoton constantly complains about how "Viejo Aztlán" was a silly misnomer, and how it should have been named otherwise:

> Cierto fue que no dimos en hacer tal obra y para la historia ha permanecido quedado el apelativo de Viejo Aztlán en vez de Nepohualco, que indudablemente hubiera sido mejor preferible, mas ahorita ya no lo podemos cambiar y ni modo.[51]
>
> Of course we never got around to changing the name, and so to this day the land is still called "Viejo Aztlán" instead of "Nepohualco," which would have been indubitably better, but we missed our chance so now we'll never be able to change it and oh well . . .

Opoton extends his ridicule to many of the place-names he encounters, and he colorfully complains about how arbitrarily imposed names seem to stick to the land even when they make no sense. At best, they are imposed "de pura vacilada" (on a lark), in the same way that all the Iberian navigators whom the Mexica meet are called Pedroperez.[52] But in the case of the *Fala Castilla* (Galego for the "Castilian tongue"), especially after it arrives in what it names "Nueva Espanha do Máis Allá, Padre, Abuelo y Hermano Mío Venerado" (Galego for "New Spain of the Beyond, My Venerated Father, Grandfather and Brother"), these imposed place-names carry with them an entire colonial and imperial project:

> Y ahora nuestro gran señor viene siendo el Tantomontamontatanto o algunos de sus hijos o nietos, sepa la bola, quien jamás se ha dignado poner sus plantas en esta tierra de indios, que así dan en llamarnos, indios, habida por modo de Conquista.[53]
>
> And now our Great Lord is *Tantomontamontatanto* or one of his children or grandchildren, who even really knows, the only sure thing is that whoever it is they have never set foot

> on Indian land, which is what they continue to call us, Indians, because of the Conquest.

This connects with Lienhard, who in *La voz y su huella* described the role place-names play in colonial power:

> La práctica escritural europea, exploradora, prospectiva y dominadora, proporciona una especie de modelo para la ocupación de un territorio nuevo. Como lo demuestran toda una serie de prácticas colonizadoras, los europeos procedieron como si quisieran inscribir su poder en todas las superficies posibles del Nuevo Mundo. A través de la cristianización de la toponimia autóctona, el poder europeo se inscribe, algo más que metafóricamente, en el paisaje.[54]

> The European scriptorial practice—exploratory, prospective, dominating—offered a model for occupying a new territory. As demonstrated through a long history of colonizing practices, the Europeans proceeded as if they needed to inscribe their power upon every possible surface in the New World. Through the Christianization of the names of the local topography, European power literally inscribed itself on the landscape.

Lienhard also adds that Mesoamericans and other native Americans customarily changed the place-names in newly conquered regions, but these practices more closely resembled a linguistic swap, where for instance a Náhuatl translation would replace a conquered place-name, while maintaining the semantic content of the proper noun. This stands in contrast to the European practices, which involved "la inscripción en el paisaje de categorías de pensamiento tan radicalmente opuestas a las tradiciones locales"[55] ("the inscription upon the landscape of categories of thought radically opposed to local traditions").

Tísner's novel seeks to dramatize this kind of radical intellectual encounter, where what initially appear to be epistemological conflicts boil over into ontological *desencuentros*. Opoton tries to make sense of these encounters which lack an initial common ground in understanding time and space. His ingenuous voice—Opoton rarely misses an opportunity to remind his readers that he is merely a simple potter "del Palmar y Cañaveral de la Gran Tenochtitlan"—adds a certain wide-eyed perspec-

tive that allows his readers to share in his incredulous sense of wonder. An early passage in Opoton's chronicle is exemplary of how this plays out across the narrator's own prose. I will quote it at length, to allow the novel's satirical tone to emerge. The scene unfolds with the Aztecs already aboard their newly fashioned ocean-faring canoes, headed towards the great unknown they name Viejo Aztlán:

> Sólo remar o no remar por causa de que a ti se te acaban las cosas por hacer y la Mar, en cambio, continúa. Y ver el agua que jamás se acaba y comer no mucho y beber aún menor y era el año de mil cuatrocientos ochenta y nueve según la cuenta habida en el Viejo Aztlán, por obra de que ellos dicen mil cuatrocientos ochenta y nueve como nosotros decíamos ce-tecpatl, con la diferencia de que ce-tecpatl se comprende y en cambio mil cuatrocientos ochenta y nueve quiere decir ñudo. No cuentan con casas o conejos o serpientes o tigres ni con ninguna de nuestras cosas sabias. Ellos tienen una como cuerda con ñudos y en lo que sienten llegada la hora de hacer un nuevo ñudo, van y lo hacen y luego dicen mil cuatrocientos noventa. A tal cosa la nombran números y a la reata entera, calendario. Según el decir de ellos, mil cuatrocientos noventa es número, pero carecen de observatorios para sus sacerdotes y los de ellos no saben hacer como los de nosotros, que ahí se pasan el día entero viendo el Sol entre ranuras de piedras y palos cruzados y saben todo cuanto sucederá y cuándo ha llegado un Nuevo Año. Todo esto que voy diciendo, sin embargo, es de otra parte del relato que luego viene y será dicho con mejores palabras en lo que llegue su turno.[56]

> Row or don't row, that's all you can do, and you can always run out of things to do while the Sea, in turn, just keeps on going. And seeing the water that never ends and not eating much and drinking even less and it was the year one thousand four hundred eighty and nine following the count they keep in Viejo Aztlan, and that's because they say one thousand four hundred eighty and nine like we say ce-tecpatl, the only difference being that ce-tecpatl actually means something while one thousand four hundred eighty and nine says knot. They don't count with houses or rabbits or serpents or

> jaguars or with anything else that our people know about. They have something like an imaginary cord with knots and when they get the feeling that it's almost time to make a new knot, they go and do it and then they say one thousand four hundred ninety. They call those things numbers, and the whole imaginary rope they call a calendar. So according to them, one thousand four hundred ninety is a number, but that's not based on any kind of observation made by a priest, and they really have no idea how to do it like we do, our priests who will spend a whole day observing the sun between slots in stones and crossed posts and then know everything that will happen and exactly when a New Year will arrive. All of this that I'm telling you, by the way, is from another part of the story that's coming up soon and I'll describe it all with much better words when its time comes.

The only problem with elevating a single exemplary paragraph like this one is that it freezes Opoton's voice in a static moment, when its development across the novel's 326 pages is one of Tísner's principal aesthetic achievements. Yet this passage still reveals many of Opoton's narrative eccentricities, and showcases the constant movement of his shifting prose. Beyond merely ridiculing the arbitrariness of the Western calendar, Opoton expresses his true bafflement at how time could possibly be measured apart from the observed movement of the planet relative to the sun, and how silly it is to count time as one long static series of uniform ticks. And he says all of this while marveling at his newfound understanding of the vastness of the ocean. Intellectual curiosity rolls into a provincial chauvinism, and Opoton closes the entire digression with a promise to return to that story again and tell it right the next time.

In Guzmán Moncada's estimation, this kind of formal inversion of colonial ontologies hasn't been matched even at the height of the "historiographic metafiction" boom by the more celebrated Latin American authors. Furthermore, Tísner's own experience of civil war and political exile left him especially sensitive to the cultural continuity between Peninsular fascism and colonial expansion, from the Inquisition's bonfires of the pre-Columbian Mesoamerican codexes to suppressing the Catalan language. Behind it all lies a shared cultural logic that is absolutely foreign to Opoton: "Piensa además que ellos no podían comprender nuestra sabiduría por basar ellos su juicio en cosas altamente sencillas y

de fácil comprensión, que luego que las ven complicadas dicen al carajo con ellas y a otra cosa"[57] ("Just think, they could never understand our knowledge and wisdom because they only judged things by how simple or easy to understand they were, and as soon as things start getting just a bit complicated they say 'forget about it, on to the next thing'").

When put in such colloquial terms, an ontological inversion can be easy to grasp. A vicious boredom with complexity breeds contemptuous dismissal. When things get complicated, this is the attitude that says: "Oh the hell with it, let's move on." Tísner proposes that his readers reject such exasperated xenophobia and instead focus on savoring complexity. As Tísner explains in the introduction, the appropriate way to do that is a properly Aztec concept: *tlaelquani*. In the first book of the *Florentine Codex*, Sahagún translates *tlaelquani* as "Mexican confession"; Tísner's narrator-editor defines it more scatalogically: eating one's own shit. As the narrator-editor hastens to add, this word must be understood in the deepest philosophical sense: "En el que está presente todo el deleite inconsciente, todo el morboso placer de revivir, contándolos los pecados"[58] ("An understanding that captures all of the unconscious delight, all of the morbid pleasure in reliving one's sins by telling them out loud").

Tlaelquani is one of the manifestations of Tlazolteot, the fertility goddess associated with filth and purification. This is the form Opoton adopts for his Mexican chronicle, fusing it with his own understanding of cultural confession.[59] His chronicle, fully transculturated and offered as a Mexican novel originally written in Catalan, is a linguistic offering across the wake of the Spanish Empire, forced through exile into the New World. *Tlaelquani*: eating the shitty conquest. The language changes as the wheel turns, and those very displacements are what allow us to recognize historical repetition from the perspective of difference.

La destrucción de todas las cosas: Repetition and Farce

Around the same time as Tísner was drafting his novel, Octavio Paz was developing his far-ranging critique of the Mexican national character. Paz also proposed the "repetition thesis" to explain much of what he rushed to define as *lo mexicano*. In Paz's hands, those historical repetitions were always bound to be unpleasant cycles of violent self-deception. This was most definitively expressed in the essay "Crítica de la pirámide," which was part of Paz's 1969 *Posdata* (*Postscript*)

appended to his deeply misogynistic book-length essay *Laberinto de la soledad* (*The Labyrinth of Solitude*), originally published in 1950. "Crítica de la pirámide" was Paz's attempt to account for the Mexican state's brutal massacre of hundreds of students at the Plaza de las Tres Culturas in Tlatelolco in 1968. His conclusion was that the massacre was "la contrapartida, en términos de sangre y sacrificio, de la petrificación del PRI. Ambos son proyecciones del mismo arquetipo, aunque con distintas funciones dentro de la dialéctica implacable de la pirámide"[60] ("the other side of the petrification of the PRI, expressed in terms of blood and sacrifice. Both sides are projections of the same archetype, although each side serves its own function within the implacable dialectic of the pyramid"). He traces a direct path from the Aztec priesthood to the authoritarian tendencies of the PRI, and the *crítica de la pirámide* is the critique of their shared adulation of blood sacrifice.[61]

These essays proved to be a touchstone for a national conversation about Mexico's entrance into so-called modernity: Paz's essentialist belief in some kind of solitary, melancholy, eternally *traicionera* (treacherous) national being whose ontological currency is sacrifice became the starting point for both reformist agendas and feminist critiques of Mexican machismo. Boullosa, for example, joined many others in directly rejecting this patriarchal historiography, and this position finds expression in *Llanto: Novelas imposibles*.

Hugo Hiriart's novel *La destrucción de todas las cosas* (1992; *The Destruction of Each and Every Thing*) was published in the same year as *Llanto*, and shares Boullosa and Tísner's aesthetic investment in reimagining *La visión de los vencidos,* yet Hiriart was not ready to join Boullosa in directly rejecting Paz's *crítica de la pirámide*. This was due primarily to Hiriart's belief in the primacy of temporal repetition in understanding the long history of Mexico. For Hiriart, born in Mexico City in 1942, the operative aesthetic question in the run-up to the Columbus Quincentenary was: how to account for these temporal repetitions without falling into the morass of Paz's labyrinth? His solution, as expressed in *La destrucción*: wild, unbridled parody.

La destrucción de todas las cosas has been classified as science fiction by Gabriel Trujillo Muñoz and Antonio Córdoba Cornejo, but Hiriart himself was not a science fiction author.[62] If there is one element that ties together his diverse work, ranging from novels to newspaper columns to dramaturgy, it would be his generic promiscuity. His earlier novels parody the chivalrous romances that purportedly drove Don Quijote mad (*Galaor*, 1971), and imagine a fantastic rewriting of the police pro-

cedural (*Cuadernos de Gofa*, 1981).[63] As Teichmann suggests, Hiriart is a genre-spanning parodist, and *La destrucción* allows him to use SF plot tropes to produce a "demoledor ataque contra el sistema político mexicano y la corrompida ética de la sociedad mexicana en general"[64] (a "devastating attack against the Mexican political system and the compromised ethics of Mexican society in general").

La destrucción's main plot line is indeed an alien invasion story, structured as a parodic rewriting of sixteenth-century colonial material set in a future Mexico City. Córdoba's study provides a careful enumeration and comparison of Hiriart's novel with source materials ranging from León-Portilla's anthology to Bernal's *crónica*, and touching on key characters and events like La Malinche/Malintzin and the massacre at the Templo Mayor, which Hiriart transposes to the Palacio de Bellas Artes.[65] Like many other NNH novels, Hiriart's parody blossoms into a full-fledged carnival.[66] Yet this is not the only feature of the novel, whose tone and style vary dramatically from chapter to chapter. If the novel is to be considered a multi-ring circus, each ring must be understood as its own literary genre, as the text moves through generic cycles while narrating the destruction of México/Tenochtitlan. The most prominent of these genre-based cycles, roughly following their appearance in the novel, are a post-apocalyptic frame tale, a series of zany tales from the local cantina, a backstage visit to a regional theater group's rehearsal, a merciless bureaucratic satire, a melodramatic parody, a gritty war memoir, and finally a holocaust finale that cuts off in mid-sentence, returning full circle to the post-apocalyptic opening.

The confusion caused by so many styles helps convey the semantic and epistemological instability of the characters' experience of invasion, siege, and total war.[67] In this way, Hiriart uses literary genre, and especially popular cultural forms, to reveal the structural repetition of colonial violence. *La destrucción de todas las cosas* is ultimately a tale of destruction, as its title says. But it is also an attempt to name and describe the minutia of every single thing that was destroyed and lost.[68] Literary genre becomes a kind of textual shorthand to showcase these many mundane things, all of the trivialities that only gain significance after their disappearance.[69] It is only from the retrospective perspective on the other side of calamity that one could feel nostalgia for the kind of bureaucratic ineptitude satirized throughout the novel. And it is also from that post-apocalyptic perspective that it becomes possible to realize that the dramatic singularity of the destruction of Mexico is itself an event with historical echoes.

Like the other two novels analyzed in the current chapter, Hiriart's text has a fundamentally dual temporal horizon: the violence of conquest, and its sublimation into each author's respective contemporary moment. While Tísner steadied his gaze across the Atlantic to rewrite his experience of cultural exile, Boullosa and Hiriart share a common grounding in the neo-baroque bureaucracy of the modern Mexican state, otherwise known as the "institutionalized revolution." Hiriart's novel foregrounds this dual structure from the very first page, where the novel's pair of epigraphs, both presented in Spanish translation, anticipate the colonial/modern framework, and also gesture towards Marx's famous understanding of the cyclical nature of history which repeats itself first as tragedy, then as farce.

The "tragic" epigraph, translated from Náhuatl, is Nezahualpilli's profound lament *No quedará cosa con cosa* (Not one thing will remain with the other). Nezahualpilli was the son of Tetzcoco's *tlatoani*, the famed warrior-poet Nezahualcóyotl who ruled Tetzcoco as part of the Triple Alliance over four decades in the mid-fifteenth century. Nezahualpilli inherited that position in 1472, and was renowned as a diviner and interpreter of astronomical signs. Although he died several years before Cortés's march to Tenochtitlan, the Spanish chroniclers took a particular interest in Nezhualpilli's theology, as he consecrated a temple that prohibited sacrifice of any kind, and foretold the arrival of the Iberian conquistadores and the downfall of the Triple Alliance. *La destrucción*'s epigraph is excerpted from Diego de Durán's account of Nezahualpilli's interpretation of bad omens preceding the arrival of the Spanish, which the *tlatoani* of Tetzcoco communicated to Moctezuma II: "aurá en todas nuestras tierras y señoríos grandes calamidades y desventuras: no quedará cosa con cosa"[70] ("great calamities and misfortunes will befall our lands: not one thing will remain with the other"). This passage has since been connected to the appearance of a comet in the night sky immortalized in *La visión de los vencidos* as one of the omens and portents that prophesied the coming invasion; or what Hiriart calls the destruction of each and every thing.

The second epigraph, translated from the original Russian, suggests a more modern and ironic relationship to tragic history. The quote is a bit of advice attributed to the experimental theater director Vsevolod Meyerhold: *Un toque ligero, de music hall, le conviene a cualquier forma dramática, hasta a la tragedia* (All dramatic forms, even a tragedy, can be improved with the light touch of a music hall melody). According to Meyerhold, even the author of the most profound tragedy

must occasionally delight the audience with a touch of levity. Together this unlikely pair of epigraphs summarizes Hiriart's goal in writing his novel: to defamiliarize the Conquest and the present in a double move of estrangement which, at a higher level, highlights the cyclical temporality of conquest. The contemporary concerns of a globalizing and neoliberalizing Mexico (circa 1992) are displaced in two opposite directions: backwards into the siege of Tenochtitlan (1519–21) and forward to 2010, the year of the alien invasion of Mexico City in the novel. This entire process must be handled with a deft hand worthy of Meyerhold, capable of finding humor and even moments of pleasure in what had previously been interpreted under the earnest rubric of "the visions of the vanquished."

Obviously Hiriart is not alone in adopting this parodic approach, as it is shared at least in part by Boullosa and Tísner. What Hiriart's novel offers is a deeper engagement with the theme of repetition, once again from a position of parody. He does so most concretely in his depiction of the alien invaders themselves. Alternately called *los Otros* or *los Extraños* (the Others, or the Strange Ones), these extraterrestrial beings remain opaque to the overwhelming majority of the humans who encounter them. The reader gets to know the invaders through Carapanzo 35, although the narrator can never quite explain or fully understand this being's motives other than affirming that the *Otros*' strategy of conquest is one of deliberate disorientation. This is perhaps fitting for a being whose proper name itself appears to be spatiotemporal coordinates, an address in time more than the name of a being.[71]

As the *Otros* attempt to explain to their human interlocutors, they are events, not essences ("No somos sustancia, somos acontecimientos").[72] This metaphysical subtlety is lost on the Mexicans, who struggle to understand the *Otros*' extremely complicated social hierarchy; the generalized traits they are able to distinguish are an insolent authoritarianism, a barely concealed impatience, and a bombastic brutality.[73] Carapanzo 35 and the rest of the *Extraños*, for their part, constantly complain that the Mexicans "tienen muy pobre la idea de fluir, de la sabiduría de fluir . . . hablan y piensan como si todo estuviera quieto"[74] ("they have a very underdeveloped concept of *flow*, the knowledge of how to flow . . . they talk and think like everything is still"). By this point in the novel, the reader is capable of appreciating the dual target of this parody, which both recapitulates the capricious and arbitrary brutality of the conquistadores and reflects the corrupt authoritarianism of the PRI's "dictadura perfecta" (perfect dictatorship).

As the Mexicanos gradually realize, the *Otros* are capable of manipulating time itself as a weapon of conquest. Their coup de grâce is the subtle dis-synchronization of all of the watches and clocks in Mexico City, which creates ripples of chaos and weakens the city sufficiently that the *Extraños* easily seize control of the capital. But this strategy had been anticipated by a series of repetitions and temporal glitches—"cierto efecto de eco"—that the *Otros* wielded to torment and confuse the entire nation. The narrator, like so many of his fellow Mexicans, struggles to reassemble a coherent narrative of the events while still in the midst of an ontological siege.

This "historical echo effect" is clearly the dominant metaphor across the entire novel. The text refracts these echoes of conquest through a variety of literary forms, as if genre itself was a prism. Hiriart's gamble is that this scattering of narrative strategies is the most faithful way to represent the temporal disruption and historical disorganization brought about by the Conquest. Furthermore, by pairing specific literary forms with well-known tropes from the colonial source materials, Hiriart reconfigures the reader's understanding of the seemingly eternal return of corrupt and inept leaders. The parallels between Moctezuma and A. J. Comezón, the Mexican president in the novel, are exemplary in this regard.

At the outset, it is important to acknowledge that Hiriart is not troubled by the "impossibility" that Boullosa concludes is the inevitable result of attempting to novelize Moctezuma as a literary character. Hiriart's intervention is not of the historiographic variety. Instead, he seeks to rewrite the portrait of Moctezuma created by *La visión de los vencidos* using contemporary popular media tropes. Accordingly, Hiriart completely abandons any rubric of verisimilitude, and instead adopts the logic of the telenovela to connect the "cowardly" Moctezuma of León-Portilla's anthology with the stew of political ambition and bureaucratic incompetence that characterized Mexican politics in the waning years of the PRI's total political hegemony on the national scene. As the novel's narrator reflects, this might be the only possible reaction to a situation where "la verdad misma iba haciéndose inverosímil"[75] ("reality itself was becoming unreal").

By taking the image of Moctezuma portrayed in *La visión de los vencidos* for granted, Hiriart is then released to parody that vision across dueling historical echoes: what if Moctezuma had been a PRI president, and what if a PRI president had presided over an ontologically shattering invasion of Others and *Extraños*?[76] These scenes read as if Luis Estrada had directed *Mars Attacks!*[77] Comenzón, the president of Mex-

ico at the outset of the invasion, is a fortunate son who, after spending away his inheritance, has turned to party politics as a lucrative scam to support his lavish lifestyle. He is profoundly, constitutionally corrupt. Although he absolutely lacks any capacity for leadership, his proclivity for swelling, empty rhetoric enables him to captivate the minds of the party intelligentsia, lost as they are in the rarified world of what the narrator calls a "churrigueresco conceptual." His political rise is meteoric, and by 2010, his ascent to the presidency proves to be "la gran tradición mexicana de los políticos de habla desquiciada y sibilina llegó a su nunca soñada Edad de Oro"[78] ("a never-before dreamed Golden Age for the great Mexican tradition of the shrill and unhinged orator"). The results are, obviously, disastrous.

Once the *Extraños* arrive, Comenzón's biography begins to merge with the version of Moctezuma portrayed in *La visión de los vencidos*. As mentioned above, this version has been revealed as partial and in deep conflict with competing narratives. Nonetheless, León-Portilla's anthology is clearly Hiriart's primary source material for his vision of a vacillating, pusillanimous emperor. As Esteban, the narrator, explains:

> Pobre Comezón, después de todo, le tocó una época salvaje, cruel y de tumultos que puso a descubierto sus debilidades. Ahí está su perfil oprobioso resaltado en la moneda histórica. Infeliz, él que, según dicen, era tan quisquilloso, verse completa y definitivamente enlodado en la cobardía, el pasmo, la vacilación.[79]
>
> Poor Comezón, who found himself in a cruel, savage, tumultuous age that highlighted all of his weakness and character flaws. That will be his shameful bust stamped onto our national coin. How unfortunate that this persnickety man found himself smothered in cowardice and muddied by shock and vacillation.

This description directly parallels the anthology's chapter "Actitud psicológica de Motecuhzoma" ("Psychological Attitude of Montezuma"), whose fragments are taken exclusively from book 12 of the *Florentine Codex*. León-Portilla introduces the fourth chapter—which is translated as "Motecuhzoma's Terror and Apathy" in *The Broken Spears*—by highlighting that "el texto indígena nos pinta algo así como un retrato psicológico de la figura de Motecuhzoma agobiado por las

dudas y las vacilaciones" ("the indigenous texts paint us a psychological portrait of Moctezuma as consumed by doubt and vacillations"). Plagued by superstitions and enabled by handlers who would rather see him out of the picture, Comezón organizes a futile expedition to chase a mythical creature called the Mropro which he believes will form the keystone of his defense against the accelerating invasion. And so Comenzón sets off on his wild-Mropro chase, joined by a ragtag group of companions including Esteban, our faithful narrator, who provides a behind-the-scenes glimpse of what he calls an "estupidez creativa" (a "creative stupidity"), an undertaking so patently irrational that it confuses even the *Extraños* and grants the Mexicans a momentary advantage in the war.[80] Comenzón's cabinet commandeers an antique airplane, called the *Patria Linda*, to serve as the mission's mode of transportation; the only problem is that the passenger jet has been grounded, and is unable to take off. And so the Mropro expedition wheels around Mexico on a flightless airplane in search of a nonexistent creature who holds the secret to Comenzón's ultimate defense of the besieged capital. In this indelible image of a *modernidad desviada* (deviant modernity), Hiriart provides a parodic answer to the question of cyclical temporality: how would a corrupt, cowardly, decadent leader confront the existential threat of a lifetime? If the political class has been and always will be a group of shameless knaves, and the results of their incompetent decisions are predictably disastrous, why would these ambitious traitors behave any different in future iterations of the eternal return?

Soon enough Comenzón is dead, through a treachery that mirrors Moctezuma's own fate.[81] With his death, the siege of Tenochtitlan continues, and Hiriart's novel takes another turn, this time towards the gritty realism of a war memoir. The novel's final chapter, its longest, is a detailed and troubling description of Esteban's experience living through one of Mexico City's cyclical destructions.[82] It also reads as a bittersweet love letter to that city, which the narrator remember as "expansiva, argüendera, voluble."[83] And yet this time its destruction is different, total:

> Los Extraños eran diferentes. A través de ellos descubrimos que todo, hasta las cosas que teníamos por más naturales o universales, no lo eran y podían ser diferentes. Cualquier cosa podía ser muy diferente. Ese descubrimiento, tan dramático, podría haber sido libertador y refrescante en otras circunstancias, no en las nuestras. Que muchas cosas que nos parecen naturales no tienen otra base que el acuerdo

> social e histórico, el así somos o así nos organizamos, ya lo había dicho algunos filósofos, pero ¿quién iba a creerles?[84]
>
> The Strange Ones were different. It was through them that we discovered that everything, even those things we thought were absolutely natural or universal, were not so, and could be different. Any single thing could be entirely different. This dramatic discovery could have been liberating and refreshing in other circumstances, but not in our own. If the very things that seemed most natural to us had no other basis than the purely social and historical, if the way we are or the way we organize ourselves is merely contingent . . . sure, a few philosophers might have already told us that, but who was ever going to believe them?

It is here that Hiriart bends his satire toward the questions of what the narrator calls the *límite conceptual*. The *Extraños* are unknowable in innumerable ways, as Esteban begins to catalogue over three dense pages.[85] These later attempts of his are notably less hopeful than the narrator's earlier, more light-hearted engagements with the incompressibility of the *Otros*' artistic practices like the *topata* dance. After months of experience with the *Extraños*' weaponized temporality, and the strange illnesses they unleash upon the population as a form of punishment, Esteban can only experience the ontological novelty of the invasion as empirical suffering.

For all of the parody, and Meyerhold's advised light touch, this is the true revelation of Hiriart's novelization of temporal repetition. Each new cycle represents another chance to do it differently, to remake, to escape anew instead of falling into the same traps. Yet if this lesson is the exclusive purview of the act of invasion and destruction itself, it will never be implemented in the social framework. Each arrival, each new turn in the cycle of violence, can only be met by new incarnations of the same characters. As multiple voices in the novel decry, if only the humans had behaved differently, more compassionately, with collective purpose, perhaps the great destructions could have been prevented. As another character, one of the honorable cabinet members in the Mexican government, laments:

> Así enfrentamos la amenaza de la destrucción total. El otro día, harto del espectáculo repulsivo, me descubrí pensando:

> 'Qué bueno que se lleve de una vez el carajo a todos estos cabrones'. Sí, pero estos cabrones somos todos nosotros, me lleva la chingada, todo lo que he conocido.[86]
>
> And so we face the threat of total destruction. The other day, tired of these repulsive spectacles, I found myself thinking: How nice that all of these *cabrones* are going straight to hell. Sure, but these *cabrones* are all of us . . . fuck me, it's everything I've ever known.

CONCLUSION

Hiriart's conclusion mirrors Boullosa's in theme, if not in punctuation. As all three novelists work through the legacy of *La visión de los vencidos*, their literary revisions show us that history itself is a battlefield, where the weapons are narrative and aesthetic, archival and imaginative. And the task of reimagining a past without erasing its participants or condemning them to a defeated position is a challenge—perhaps the primary challenge—faced by novelists committed to communicating historical truth. The power of the archive has been wielded as an ontological weapon of mass destruction. Disarming that weapon begins by writing cultural continuity and resistance into the history of past struggles, and acknowledging the challenges that such a practice poses. These three novels all use some form of SF to realize that goal. In that, they are exemplary, and have opened new paths for other artists and writers to follow.

Tísner and Hiriart's novels work primarily through strategies of inversion and displacement, turning historical terrestrial invaders into otherworldly aliens, or fabulating a literal inversion of the direction of imperial expansion. Through these formal engagements with the tropes and themes of genre fiction, both novelists find a style and language in which to narrativize the sixteenth-century invasion of Mesoamerica and the siege of Tenochtitlan. These novels were published at a time when simply acknowledging the contingency of the Conquest itself proved challenging, and any imaginative act which insisted that things could have occurred otherwise opened new paths for both aesthetic experimentation and cultural action. It is notable that Boullosa, the one novelist studied here who does not rely on formal inversion, works to create a literary space in which to acknowledge the absence of the native fem-

Fig. 1. Rigo 23, *Autonomous InterGalactic Space Program*, 2000–present. Installation view, weltmuseum, Vienna. Courtesy of the artist.

inine, but she does not herself feel capable or authorized to fill that narrative void with any kind of recuperative gesture. In all three cases, we can say that while the novels cleared out a space within an overdetermined novelistic imagination, none of the narratives fully escaped the colonial horizon. As such, they collectively represent the promise and limits of twentieth-century SF rewritings of colonial contact.

Once these three texts, along with Carlos Fuentes's *El naranjo* and the other novels studied by Estrada, demonstrated the possibility of using speculative tropes to investigate Mexican history from a position grounded in the empirical reality of colonial violence, there flowed a proliferation of other reimaginings in contemporary art and literature.[87] Although *La visión de los vencidos* continues to be a shared reference point for this contemporary work, it is no longer the primary source for historically grounding SF visions of Mesoamerican culture. As the use of SF tropes matures, artists and authors hone techniques for projecting historical absence into future presence—the very techniques that Boullosa herself deemed "impossible" in 1992. These future-oriented engagements with the archive imaginatively speculate about survivance, while also parodying contemporary neoliberal fantasies of multiracial democracy and harmonious *mestizaje*. Coco Fusco, Guillermo Gómez-Peña, and the performance troupe La Pocha Nostra were early and spectacular experimenters in this developing tradition, as will be discussed in the next chapter. In its U.S. manifestation, Cat Ramírez named this tendency "chicanafuturism." Yet it transcends national borders,

as demonstrated by the groundbreaking exhibition *Mundos alternos: Art and Science Fiction in the Americas*. The largest immersive piece in that show, from 2017, is a collaboratively world-built installation of an imaginary EZLN space agency, including an enormous Zapatista space *caracol* (snail) designed to carry other pasts and other futures to the stars and beyond.

This kind of alternative futurity builds from the pathbreaking SF reworkings of *La visión de los vencidos*, but where the twentieth-century novelists struggled merely to open an imaginative space to reconsider the past, the new wave boldly projects a renewed understanding of the colonial past into a different kind of future, oriented towards a decolonial horizon. Even then, it is likely that we might still find a few copies of León-Portilla's anthologies stowed away in the EZLN's autonomous intergalactic vessel, a gesture that the transcultural Tlamatini would have certainly appreciated.

CHAPTER 2

Strange Objects in the Speculative Museum

The previous chapter traced some accounts of the Conquest from the archive to the anthology, and then further beyond, as those narratives became the inspiration for SF rewritings. The SF versions are expansive and experimental, but not arbitrary. They are grounded in historical truth, even while they decry the lies which that history tells.

All three novels discussed in the previous chapter were connected to the year 1992 (two were published that year, and the third was translated into Spanish). That SF rewritings of the Conquest clustered around 1992 was no coincidence. The Columbus Quincentenary loomed large over the alternative futures of the Americas. Moreover, 1992 was also a key year in the history of cultural institutions in the Americas. In fact, James Axtell goes so far as to suggest that museums, monuments, and cultural institutions tended to be the epicenters of Quincentenary activity.[1] These institutions were the spaces where commemorations were both planned and protested. The increased attention invited broader public scrutiny, especially to the role museums play in shaping historical narratives themselves.

The museum is a building block of the colonial world; this truth is now fully recognized by anthropologists, curators, and museum professionals worldwide.[2] As Robin Boast summarizes: "That museums were the premier colonial institutions—institutions that created the ordered

representations that contained, objectified and reduced the colonized world for the paternalistic imperialism that characterized the 19th and early 20th centuries—is beyond dispute."[3] Boast does not describe everything the museum is or might be, but he highlights that the museum itself is a colonial structure. The museum represents the story a colonial society tells itself; as Mieke Bal argued in 1992, "the museum is a product of colonialism in a postcolonial era."[4] This conclusion is emphatically supported by a range of scholarship focused on the nexus of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century colonialism, European scientific and political practices of specimen collection, and the museum as a site of knowledge production.[5] That is why the museum is also a premier institution: it is the high-class story that a colonial system tells itself.[6]

As Fred Wilson's 1994 installation *Mining the Museum* made clear—especially to the participants in the American Association of Museums' annual conference, held in Baltimore that year—historical museums themselves contain dark, hidden truths, stolen away deep in their collections.[7] These truths become undeniable once the museum itself is reassembled: along with celebrating and memorializing human achievement, these institutions also bear fundamental witness to a legacy of violence.

CAGES AND CRYPTS

This is why Coco Fusco and Guillermo Gómez-Peña made museums (along with several other key sites of the colonial encounter) the backdrop for their 1992 performance *Two Undiscovered Amerindians Visit . . .* , along with Fusco and Heredia's companion documentary *The Couple and the Cage*. That project put the museum itself in a double focus: the piece is about museums, and most performances were staged in museums. Content and form; background and foreground: by any account, their performance was museums all the way down. As such, it was one of the most revealing and poignant performances of the 1992 Quincentenary event.[8]

Fusco and Gómez-Peña reached far back into the history of paternalistic American imperialism, but their spectacle was tied to no single specific historical moment. Their performance brought together a series of images, tropes, rituals, and displays from the long history of colonial encounters, spanning the width and breadth of the Americas. This led to an uncomfortable exhibition of deliberate anachronisms in the per-

formance, as Fusco described in her 1995 essay "The Other History of Intercultural Performance":

> Our plan was to live in a golden cage for three days, presenting ourselves as undiscovered Amerindians from an island in the Gulf of Mexico that had somehow been overlooked by Europeans for five centuries. We called our homeland Guatinau, and ourselves Guatinauis. We performed our "traditional tasks," which ranged from sewing voodoo dolls and lifting weights to watching television and working on a laptop computer. A donation box in front of the cage indicated that, for a small fee, I would dance (rap music), Guillermo would tell authentic Amerindian stories (in a nonsensical language), and we would pose for Polaroids with visitors. Two "zoo guards" would be on hand to speak to visitors (since we could not understand them), take us to the bathroom on leashes, and feed us sandwiches and fruit. At the Whitney Museum in New York we added sex to our spectacle, offering a peek at authentic Guatinaui male genitals for $5. A chronology with highlights from the history of exhibiting non-Western peoples was on one didactic panel, and a simulated Encyclopedia Britannica entry with a fake map of the Gulf of Mexico showing our island was on another.[9]

In the same essay, Fusco cites Fred Wilson as an inspiration; and much like Wilson's book *Mining the Museum*, *Two Undiscovered Amerindians Visit . . .* has since become a shared cultural referent in an expansive discussion about the museum as a "contact zone." For Diana Taylor, Fusco and Gómez-Peña's performance of the jumbled protocols of discovery, conquest, and exhibition revealed the encounter itself as one massive dramatic trope, a ritualized performance whose context far exceeded any particular museum.[10] The artists seduced the audience to join them in performing the encounter itself. This most lasting legacy of the artwork was also the most ephemeral one, but fortunately a wide variety of audience reactions have been catalogued in *The Couple in the Cage*, Fusco and Heredia's video of the performance piece. Taylor's critical sensitivity to theater leads her to emphasize the important distinction between the traveling performance (*Two Undiscovered Amerindians Visit . . .*) and the documentary (*The Couple in the Cage*).[11] The documentary's 31-minute video is what remains of the event for us, and

for future generations to experience. The recording captures the "ritual performances" and some backstage moments with the artists, but principally consists of interviews and reaction shots of a bewildered and confused public. These interviews have been well commented on in the critical literature, with special attention paid to both the aggressively ignorant and the poignantly reflective responses.[12]

For many contemporary viewers, the video is painful to watch, in part because, as Taylor argues, it presents us with a "test" that we are all doomed to fail. But it is a test that each of us will fail differently, and thus it provides a model for reading other scenarios staged in the contact zone. Do we, as Taylor put it, recognize the symbols and signs of primitivism without understanding the meaning?[13] Do we smugly judge the recording's befuddled audience, knowing that we would have reacted "appropriately" to the spectacle? And what—exactly—would that proper reaction be? Would it be different today than it was in 1992? The media environment would indeed be distinct; nonetheless, there is a certain incriminating timelessness in the spectacle of caging and exhibiting the other. This much was clear to Fusco at the end of the run:

> Our experience in the cage suggested that even though the idea that America is a colonial system is met with resistance—since it contradicts the dominant ideology's presentation of our system as a democracy—the audience reactions indicated that colonialist roles have been internalized quite effectively.[14]

Would the correct response still be—as Gómez-Peña affirmed back then—to have opened the cage and set the Amerindians free?[15] Yet, today this gesture can be clearly imagined as an art school prank in itself, another group of ambitious Banksys breaking and entering on an aesthetic rescue mission to liberate the performers. Perhaps these "art liberations" would be so popular that they would have to be scheduled with timed entry tickets, with student groups and wealthy patrons passing a shared pair of bolt cutters back and forth in fifteen-minute intervals . . .

Even if one takes a less cynical perspective, any attempt to imagine the performance staged now, in the era of ubiquitous networked computing and live streaming, is to imagine a very different thing. Not that this would have surprised the artists. As Foster has emphasized, Guillermo Gómez-Peña always invites "a dialogue between the topic of globalization and the thematics of new communications technologies."[16] Would our spectacular mediascape—the infinite mirrors of social media, where

"viral" videos spread via telecommunicative vectors instead of biological ones—make the audience's failure more or less inevitable? Would the predictable live-streamed reactions and flame wars contribute to the artistic intervention, or would they further muddle the artwork and its message? One difference is clear: a social media performance of *Two Undiscovered Amerindians Visit* . . . would not allow the viewers any psychic space to "pause, look, and look again in their attempts to grapple with the colonialism in the heart and soul of Western culture."[17]

Already in 1998, Taylor was worried that *The Couple in the Cage* could breed complacency, or even dangerously reproduce the very epistemic hierarchies the performance was meant to critique.[18] How much riskier does that proposition seem today? If part of the performance's success resided in the mistaken (and perhaps fantastical) interpretation of its Undiscovered Amerindians as "real" or "authentic" natives, such a misidentification also highlights the risk of parody writ large as an artistic mode. This risk has only become more visible across the fabric of internet culture, where a new homespun theorem names the precise phenomenon Taylor describes. Poe's Law states: "It is impossible to create a parody of extreme views so obviously exaggerated that it cannot be mistaken by some readers for a sincere expression of those views."[19] Memetic digital cultures thrive on the cleaving of context and meaning, and what might appear to be a brutally ironic institutional critique of the unresolved legacy of American colonialism can also affirm a triumphant racist fantasy of science, order, and progress. Jodi Byrd has expressed a similar frustration with these possible responses, which reduce the polyphony of the performance to the monotonous dialectic of European racism, empirically enacting harmful stereotypes while abstractly critiquing them.[20]

It matters less that these reactions are ridiculed by the documentary's contemporary audience; what matters is that those reactions were recorded, and are now part of the documented performance. And those provincially supremacist reactions don't just magically sublimate into nothingness because they were caught on video. They persist, and there is always an ignorant audience ready to enthusiastically exemplify Poe's Law.

That's one of the truths about *The Couple in the Cage* that our contemporary media environment helps us understand with more clarity now. The public's experience of museums matters. Once those reactions are captured, they become part of the story. We can call it the media spectacle lesson, and our devices reveal it to us today with extraordi-

nary clarity.[21] The other lesson—that modernity itself casts natives in a fantasy performance—remains more elusive.[22] Like in the video, it would almost certainly be the case today that some viewers of a revived performance of *Two Undiscovered Amerindians Visit* . . . would feel neither guilt nor indignation, and are perhaps oblivious to the historically interpolated déjà vu. These oblivious reactions will never cease to be disturbing, no matter if they are recorded, performed, or experienced in private. In order to combat this malignant kind of planetary amnesia, the viewer only needs to look beyond the performance's frame to notice the backdrop. Many of the institutions where this performance took place—especially the Smithsonian and the various national museums of natural history—are unsanctioned crypts that hold ancestral human remains and funerary items. This is another one of the hard truths that radiates out from the performance: why are so many American museums involuntary cemeteries for unburied human remains? Even as Fusco and Gómez-Peña's parody of first contact deconstructed the colonial legacy of the human zoo, their performance overshadowed those stolen remains from raided tombs that surrounded audience and performers alike.

The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (specifically Article 12), in tandem with a wave of post-UNDRIP national-level legislation, has begun to address that very question through the mechanism of the repatriation of ceremonial objects and human remains. As scholars like Amy Lonetree have chronicled in the North American context, many institutions are now actively decolonizing their collections, with varying degrees of success.[23] Still, many ancestors remain stashed away in archives, and there is much healing left to be done. In that sense, *Two Undiscovered Amerindians Visit* . . . is haunted twice over: first, by the souls of those mentioned on the didactic panels; and then again by the ancestors awaiting repatriation, tucked away in vaults several meters beneath the "golden cage."

As Edgar Allan Poe told us in 1843, telltale hearts never stop beating. That's their tell.[24] By 1993, authors like Ana Luisa Valdés were listening for the deep rhythms of those hearts scattered by a half-millennium of Latin American diaspora, as explored in her anthologized story "La paz de los muertos," or "The Peace of the Dead." Much like the other tales collected in Valdés's *El navegante,* "La paz de los muertos" uses the fantastic as a narrative mode to explore the memories of Latin American trauma; what sets the story apart is that, like the other narratives and exhibitions explored in this chapter, it imagines a museum.

Valdés's tale opens with a first-person narration authored by one of the troubled participants in the early archeological expeditions to Palenque. His name is François Leclerc; neither an administrative clerk nor a religious cleric, Leclerc is a French professor employed by the world's largest anthropological museum. Sooner or later the reader realizes that this museum, which boasts of housing the cultural remains of over 2,000 "disappeared human tribes," is none other than the Musée de l'Homme in Paris.[25]

Leclerc is troubled because he had recently stumbled upon the museum's catacombs on cleaning day, when the huge collections of mummies and skeletons are brought out of storage and meticulously fumigated of moths and insect larvae. Leclerc cannot shake the sight of skeletons surrounded by workers dressed in blue hazmat suits and respirators, and those remains begin to haunt him. He obsessively wonders about what possible purpose they could serve sequestered in storage: What possible scientific reasoning could justify such desecration?[26] Around this point in the story, Valdés's narrative switches from first to third person, and the dead begin to visit Leclerc in his nightmares.

One day Leclerc steps into a movie theater, hoping to calm his turbulent mind, but instead finds himself watching a cowboy-and-Indian western.[27] The actors, many of them likely playing Indian in redface, nonetheless unsettle the professor as they perform the tropes of westward conquest and expansion across the silver screen.[28] Valdés's story is filled with many such details that, taken together, showcase her virtuosic play with generic conventions. In another flourish—this one a nod towards the Freudian framework of uncanny familial strife—the museum professional returns to his perfectly preserved adolescent bedroom, which reveals perhaps too much about his precocious youth and his overbearing parents.[29]

Long after they bought their son his own flat, his parents had yet to pack up the young Leclerc's angst-filled chamber. The narrator opines outright that it appears more museum piece than spare bedroom. It is not an unresolved childhood, however, that haunts the professor. Leclerc is terrified by something of a much larger scale: the seemingly unending catalogue contained within the crypts. He asks, in disbelief: "¿Sabía que en nuestros museos hay más de cuatrocientos mil esqueletos y momias de aborígenes y pueblos primitivos?"[30] ("Did you know that there are over four hundred thousand mummies and skeletons from aboriginals and primitive peoples in our museums?")

Perhaps as a reaction to the immensity of those unnamed and unburied remains, the professor focuses his attention on a group of five Charrúas encased in a nineteenth-century glass cabinet. These bodies, the rare case of remains that were publicly displayed in the Musée de l'Homme, all have proper names, and they torment the professor: "Senaqué, Perú, Tacuabé, Guyunusa, Ramón Mataojo."[31] These same Charrúas appear as entries in Fusco and Goméz-Peña's inglorious catalogue of the history of exhibiting non-Western peoples, as they were part of the Trocadero Ethnography Museum that predated the Musée de l'Homme.[32] Leclerc can't help but imagine the Charrúas on their forced journey from the Río de la Plata to nineteenth-century Paris, and he imagines it with anthropological specificity (Valdés, unlike Fusco and Gómez-Peña, does not work in the parodic mode). The professor's indignation leads him to steal away with the remains of all five, and he carries them back to Uruguay disguised as "anthropological tools."[33] As Leclerc digs a hidden gravesite on the riparian coast, he scornfully envisions the pomp and circumstance of an official repatriation ceremony. The bureaucratic hypocrisy of that image fills the professor with rage, rage which only dissipates during the ecumenical prayer to the Being of all beings that closes his private inhumation of the Charrúas in their native soil.[34]

Valdés's story captures one spiritual dynamic of repatriation, yet Leclerc's response to the pulse of the museum's telltale heart is perhaps as fantastic as that of Gómez-Peña's Godot arriving to open the golden cage. The problem is that the Charrúas needed to be repatriated in the patriotic sense: returned to their people. This is not an individual task, and it certainly can't be a private or anonymous endeavor. On the contrary, it must be experienced by the community, even if that means the kind of bureaucratic pomp that Leclerc fears. And the historical repatriation of Vaimaca Pirú—which occurred a decade after the publication of Valdés's story—did involve international bureaucracy, inaugural celebrations, and complicated intercultural negotiations. It was not without its own scandal, precisely because some Charrúa activists vehemently opposed both his ultimate resting place, sharing the Uruguayan National Pantheon with the architects of his demise, and the sovereignty of his remains, which was violated when scientists took DNA samples from his body.[35]

Leclerc's fantasy of bringing peace to the dead might have been a first step toward addressing the unresolved haunting, at least on the personal scale of individual action. But wildcat internments do not attend

to native and indigenous calls worldwide to heal the wounds of colonialism.[36] Such a task is always about unsettling, not settling accounts. I previously stated that Valdés does not work in the parodic mode; nonetheless, a generous interpretation could read the story as a two-step materialist parody of the science of contact, repeated first as tragedy, then as farce. A self-righteous, self-proclaimed anti-conquistador quixotically rights the wrongs of a cruel world, yet Leclerc's unilateral action reinforces the fantasy of the disappearing native and the legacy of conquest, in addition to patently violating myriad international norms, laws, and treaties. This is probably reading too far beyond Valdés's story, but as Taylor has shown, it can take a speculative performance to push the viewer beyond the epistemological confines of the colonial museum: "The monumentality of most museums emphasizes the discrepancy in power between the society which can contain all others, and those represented only by remains, the shards and fragments salvaged in miniature displays."[37]

In the wake of Gómez-Peña and Fusco's epochal performance, Latin American artists have turned to even more radical forms of speculative and imaginative interventions to think the discrepancy that Taylor names. In what follows, I will discuss a group of artworks and installations which do precisely that: they stage an SF museum in order to speculate about the colonial discrepancy across different scales of space-time.

BEYOND HAUNTING: MEMORIALIZING A COSMOS

Fusco, Gómez-Peña, and Ana Luisa Valdés's fictions are all quite sophisticated and layered versions of the imaginary museum. They challenge the viewer in such a profound way that even their failures can be generously interpreted as illuminating. They highlight what Jennifer González calls the "subject to display."[38] González has written frequently about performances that are designed explicitly to force the audience to consider their actions in relation to a subjugated person. In the realm of an art gallery, these performances have the space to be subtle, as demonstrated by many of the nuanced artworks that she documents. When an artist takes on the museum itself as a cultural institution, the audacious scale of that undertaking demands a fully speculative approach. The goal is to move the viewer, either by forcing a realization of reciprocal perspectives, or by radically modifying the scale of the installation in order to cosmically disorient.

These lofty goals require speculative methods, but the speculative museum does not only manifest on the epic scale. There is another common SF museum that exists in anecdotal form. It is an anecdote frequently invoked by *longue durée* historians, and in a certain sense, it is one of the most basic forms of the SF museum, and can accordingly help us re-ground ourselves. This is the SF museum as a trope to imagine a distant future perspective. The historian Felipe Fernández-Armesto demonstrates:

> I have a vision of some galactic museum of the distant future in which diet Coke cans will share with coats of chain mail a single small vitrine marked "Planet Earth, 1000–2000, Christian Era." The last decade of our millennium may be under-represented, because so much of our significant trash will have biodegraded into oblivion; but material from every period and every part of the world, over the last thousand years, will be seen by visitors as evidence of the same quaint, remote culture: totem poles and Tompion clocks, Netsuke ivories and Nayarit clays, bankers' plastic and Benin bronzes. The distinctions apparent to us, as we look back on the history of our thousand years from just inside it, will be obliterated by the perspective of long time and vast distance. Chronology will fuse like crystals in a crucible, and our assumptions about the relative importance of events will be clouded or clarified by a terrible length of hindsight.[39]

Fernández-Armesto's vision is arresting, and perfectly illustrates a very specific point. The cosmic vitrine, which to us appears to be filled randomly and nonsensically with salvaged fragments, appears to the futuristic museumgoer to be both everything and nothing, memorable trifles and souvenirs of a long-lost era. Scale all the way up, scale all the way down. In Fernández-Armesto's vision, the museum is pure background, as it provides the scale against which to think the curation of Earth's past. Diet Coke cans, Nayarit clays, Benin bronzes and Tompion clocks: they all signify, more or less, the same thing.

But could that museum be otherwise? *Planet Earth, 1000–2000, Christian Era*: Must it, for instance, be dedicated to a Christian millennium? What if it were framed along a different chronological scale? Or a different confessional orientation? Why must the galactic museum be religious at all? Has Fernández-Armesto not simply redoubled the

colonial cabinet of curiosities, and perhaps unwittingly hired Damien Hirst to fill it with speculative "stuff" as a gag?[40] These questions ask us to think in the kinds of speculative terms that Fernández-Armesto mobilizes, but with a more truly cosmic focus that allows us to play with scale and perspective, instead of merely accepting the confessional curation of a catholic collector.[41]

That is precisely what the next group of artists do, all of whom install some form of the speculative museum.[42] Eduardo Villacis's *The Smoking Mirror* uses the blunt rubric of absolute inversion to paint the Aztec conquest of Europe. Adrián Villar Rojas forces his viewers to imagine who exactly will be visiting the kind of galactic-scale museum that Fernández-Armesto casually speculates about. Finally, a groundbreaking 2016 exhibition of Latinx and Latin American art, *Mundos alternos*, brings together a diverse range of artworks all committed to speculating about the "age-old wounds" that Lonetree says the decolonial museum must heal.[43] As the wounds are generational, so too the healing, which must span that generational scale. This chapter concludes by considering what it means to witness the speculative contortions of scale that would allow for healing to begin, or to begin again.

SCALE AND RECIPROCITY

When in 1992 Vine Deloria Jr. proclaimed that archeology museums were "White man speculative fiction," he was not paying them a compliment. He elaborates in characteristically cutting fashion:

> Archaeology has been suspicious for Indians from the very beginning. People who spend their lives writing tomes on the garbage of other people are not regarded as quite mentally sound in many Indian communities. And to define Indian civilizations by watching the change of pottery styles as archaeology once did is not exactly a process of compiling irrefutable knowledge; it is mere White man speculation and fiction and should be regarded as such.[44]

Deloria published his article, "Indians, Archeologists, and the Future," in the context of the debate surrounding the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA). Like many other intellectuals—native, indigenous, or otherwise—Deloria was uncompromising in his

support of repatriation. He believed that tribal sovereignty demanded it, and he ridiculed all who opposed it. He was suspicious of a trend he identified in museum thinking, which had begun to conceptualize the postcolonial museum as a contact zone. His fear was that such "contact zones" would inevitably petrify those institutions into static monuments to history's losers, and that "museums of contact" had no room for Indians as people, only as specimens.[45] Furthermore, Deloria's provocative hyperbole also highlighted an undeniable truth: when it comes to the history and traditions of indigenous peoples, much of what has historically passed as science was clearly fiction: tall tales of the universal and simultaneous adoption of Clovis technologies,[46] myths of the disappearing native,[47] or denials of coeval status.[48]

Deloria argued that the science of native and pre-Columbian America had up to that point been speculative in the most irresponsible sense of the word: it imagined fictional histories out of whole cloth, all the while ignoring the living traditions of indigenous knowledge. In Deloria's reading, if the twentieth-century archeology museum is SF, it is SF of the pulpiest, dime-store variety, filled with colonial tropes and supremacist teleologies.

Museums of colonial encounters can easily and almost naturally reenact the power dynamics they purportedly display. This is why James Clifford, in "Museums as Contact Zones," proposed using Mary Louise Pratt's concept of the colonial contact zone to rethink the museum itself. In *Imperial Eyes*, Pratt acknowledges that the contact zone is a site of hegemony and inequality, and Clifford uses that framework to discuss the relationships between anthropologists, curators, and tribal representatives in the postcolonial museum. Clifford's essay uses the story of the Portland Museum's Rasmussen Collection to illustrate the "uneven reciprocity" that structures those relationships,[49] but it was not until Robin Boast's 2011 rereading of Clifford's essay that anthropologists fully articulated Deloria's earlier point:

> Clifford was showing me that contact zones are not really sites of reciprocity. They are, despite the best efforts of [curators], asymmetric spaces of appropriation. No matter how much we try to make the spaces accommodating, they remain sites where the Others come to perform for us, not with us.[50]

The overarching critique that spans all of these interventions is that there can be no reciprocity in natural history museums as long as they

continue to be colonial contact zones. This is because true reciprocity implies a subjective equality that spans the reciprocal relationship, while the colonial encounter is in essence a relationship premised on hierarchy and difference.[51] This realization was not limited to the fields of anthropology, archeology, or museum studies; it paralleled similar movements in the broader scholarship on colonial Latin America that no longer accepted narratives of "how European Selves (presented as universal Selves) learn to deal with Otherness through the experience of the conquest, destruction, and domination of Mesoamericans."[52] Instead of building up scholarship around a model of universalized European selves, it has now become imperative to think colonial narratives of contact and conquest through reciprocity and multiplicity. If the colonial museum as contact zone constitutively enacts an uneven or incomplete reciprocity, then the museum itself must be brought into the foreground, and explored not as the stage upon which contact unfolds, but rather as the site where otherness can be imagined otherwise.

SF thrives in such conditions, and it can be used to imagine the museum not just as the One Story, but as a stage that contains many possible stories. The SF museums that we will explore in this section are not the kinds of SF museums that Deloria parodies, but they all engage, in some form or another, with issues of reciprocity across different scales. If Fernández-Armesto's thought experiment—the cosmic vitrine—is a basic use of scale to create a simple SF museum, we can similarly begin with a simple inversion of history to thematize reciprocity in the speculative museum. This will be the alternative history museum, and the Ecuadorian artist Eduardo Villacis's *The Smoking Mirror* provides us with an excellent example.[53]

Villacis is a multimedia artist whose work spans illustration, animation, game design, and plastic art. He also directs the "Centro de Investigaciones Fantásticas" at the Universidad de San Francisco de Quito. *The Smoking Mirror* is a full-scale museum installation of the Aztec conquest of Europe, committed to materializing an alternative history of the Conquest in a uniquely tangible fashion.[54] Villacis has described the project as a reflection on racism, religious intolerance, colonialism, and how victors write histories.[55] The exhibition's opening didactic panel, which is reproduced as an introduction to the companion volume (also called *The Smoking Mirror*), welcomes the audience to the Museum of Améxica (A-mexica, "that which is not México," according to the heroic Aztec general Itzcoatl).[56] The museum was first installed in 2003 at the Grand Central Art Center in Santa Ana, California; this

was followed by two additional shows, the first at Bert Green Fine Art in Los Angeles in 2007, and then at the Centro de Arte Contemporáneo in Quito, Ecuador, in 2014. Villacis has continued to explore the same materials in different media, with a graphic novel and an animated feature film in the works.

The viewer of the installation moves through four exhibits, although none are what they initially seem: "The Encounter," "Military Preparation," "Conquest," and "Daily Life in the Colonies." The first exhibit, the "Encounter of Two Worlds," adopts one of the post-Quincentenary names for the Columbian exchange, but it is here that Villacis lays out the backstory for his alternative history, which seems to build off of Carlos Fuentes's 1993 "Las dos orillas," one of the interlinked stories in *El naranjo*; and perhaps Guillermo Gómez Peña's premise as outlined in *Califas* (1987) or the *Codex Espangliensis: From Columbus to the Border Patrol* (2001), a collaborative art book produced with Enrique Chagoya and Felicia Rice.

According to the installation, Columbus's voyage does make landfall in 1492, but he and his crew bypass the Caribbean islands and run aground on the mainland, only to be immediately captured. Once the Aztec authorities confirm that the strangely appointed visitors are not disguised "Mayan terrorists," they are ferried to Tenochtitlan and interrogated by the court. Back in their European homeland, the sailors are taken for dead, and their disappearance delays additional European exploration for a decade. During this time of idle European navigation, the Mexicans are hard at work integrating Columbus's knowledge and technologies into Aztec science. Columbus eventually comes around, and willingly collaborates in the endeavor as an informant. Within eleven years, the Aztecs set sail eastward on their own journey of exploration, anxious to subjugate the pale-skinned folk who call their continent Yiurop or U-rop in the vulgar local tongue.

These events, memorialized in the Museum of Améxica, are long past in *The Smoking Mirror*'s alternative timeline. The museum celebrates the 500-year anniversary of the Conquest, and the objects that fill the "Daily Life in the Colonies" exhibit span that entire history. Some of the installed objects are "historical artifacts," and others are paintings that memorialize past scenes. A tourist bureau poster, apparently from the contemporary period, celebrates 500 years of cultural hybridity while poking fun at the estranged archeological description of Rome as an insignificant village that lies beneath the glorious Amexican capital. Villacis installs several artifacts that work in similar fashion, most notably

the tattered remains of Shakespeare's first folio, now an indecipherable codex displayed under the legend "The Lost Languages." Other objects are much more deliberately anachronistic, like Cristóbal Colón's "detention report" that includes glyphic writing mixed with roman script and a mugshot; the report itself is an artifact of Columbus's detention as an illegal immigrant upon his 1492 arrival.[57] This playful object could have been a prop in a Gómez-Peña performance piece, but as part of *The Smoking Mirror*, it suggests that Villacis is at times willing to sacrifice the continuity in his constructed universe in order to make a pun with political resonances.

But the most lovingly sculptured objects in the exhibition are the weapons and tools of war, which form the bulk of the section dedicated to military preparation. Villacis titles this section "La Armada." The objects and exhibits therein establish the clearest link to science fiction, yet like many of the other artworks and narratives discussed in this study, Villacis's museum approaches the SF tradition obliquely.[58] The artist uses his alternative history as a point of divergence to imagine a different trajectory of technological exchange. Columbus's new role as informant creates a one-time technology transfer based on the salvaged remains of his failed voyage, and Villacis extrapolates from this additive moment to imagine how an autochthonous American technology might have developed. His SF is a speculative imagining of the possible technologies of an alternative Aztec military science. While Villacis's reciprocal museum changes the direction of the encounter, it steadfastly maintains the violence of the event. Carved cannonballs and ornately wrought firearms, feathered battle regalia and terrifying armored caravels adorned with Mesoamerican motifs reminiscent of the codexes and stonework: this is the bellicose technology that most captivates Villacis's Aztecs, and the museum is, above all else, a monument to a wave of war technology crossing an ocean.

Upon their arrival, the Aztec warriors—dressed in that full feathered regalia—are taken for winged angels (inverting images from the poems collected in *Broken Spears*). It is as if, instead of addressing the myths of conquest in order to debunk them (as Matthew Restall has done, for instance, in *Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest*), Villacis inverts them in order to disarm them through parody.[59] In his treatment of disease, Villacis likewise pairs prophecy with coincidence. Fatal microbes precede the Mexican ships, and turn the unexplored shores into a quarantined wasteland. In a moment of spiritual despair, the "Eastern aborigines" viewed the strange arrival as confirmation of the Apocalypse. Beyond

the winged angelic warriors, the natives interpret the other Mexicans spilling onto their shores as other beasts and monsters from the biblical book of Revelations. The End Times had arrived, and the prophecies were confirmed.

As that prophetic turn makes clear, *The Smoking Mirror* is not exclusively a museum about an imaginary tech transfer; in fact, one could interpret the imagined war technologies as Villacis's most versatile tool in the broader project of defamiliarizing the Catholicism of the Conquest. This helps explain why Villacis writes his faux-didactic materials with the flourish of early modern Catholic chroniclers: "Tal descubrimiento fue considerado como acto de gracia, una bendición del todopoderoso Dios de la Guerra, nuestro Señor Huitzilopochtli"[60] ("Such a discovery was seen as an act of grace, a blessing for the almighty God of War, our Lord Huitzilopochtli").

In this, Villacis joins estimable company in his use of purposeful and recognizable distortions and simplifications to parody the hubris of evangelization. Inca Garcilaso, for instance, famously ridiculed Felipillo for his clumsy mathematics in translating the friar Vincente de Valverde's initial attempt to convert the Inca ruler Atahualpa at their Cajamarca meeting:

> Tal y tan aventajado fue el primer intérprete que tuvo el Perú; y llegando a su interpretación es de saber que la hizo mala y de contrario sentido, no porque lo quisiese hacer maliciosamente, sino porque no entendía lo que interpretaba, y que lo decía como un papagayo, y por decir Dios Trino y Uno, dijo Dios tres y uno son cuatro, sumando los números por darse a entender.[61]
>
> This was the "excellence" of Perú's first interpreter; and as for his interpretation, it is well known that it was nonsense and of poor quality, not because of any malicious intent on the interpreter's part, but rather because he simply didn't understand what he was interpreting, and he just repeated words like a parrot, for instance instead of saying "the unity of the holy trinity" he said "three gods plus one more make four," as if he was an accountant adding up sums.

Villacis also flips the conversion script:

> De todas las religiones practicadas por los nativos de la antigua Europa, la más peculiar era un culto llamado Cristiandad. Es la única religión que se conoce, dónde en lugar de practicar sacrificios humanos a los Dioses, el Dios es sacrificado a los humanos. Tal distorsionada visión del orden del Universo indudablemente jugó un rol en el extraño comportamiento de los primitivos. No felices con matarlo, los Cristianos comían su cuerpo y bebían su sangre cada semana al final de las grotescas ceremonias religiosas llamada Comuniones. Esta cultura de violencia perturbó a los primero colonizadores quienes luego establecieron misiones para convertir a los aborígenes a la única verdadera religión Azteca.[62]
>
> Of all the religions practices by the natives of Old Europe, by far the strangest was a cult called Christianity. It is the only known religion where, instead of practicing human sacrifices to the Gods, the God instead is sacrificed for the humans. Such a distorted vision of the order of the Universe undoubtably played a role in the primitives' strange behavior. Not satisfied with killing him, the Christians ritualistically ate his flesh and drank his blood in grotesque weekly ceremonies known as Communion. This culture of violence disturbed the first wave of colonizers, who quickly erected missions in order to convert the aboriginals to the one true Aztec religion.

Beyond these humorous yet telling distortions, what emerges from the museum is an image of Catholic Aztecs run rampant across Europe. The reciprocity posited by *The Smoking Mirror* is reciprocity through a glass, darkly. Catholicism fogs the mirror, so much so that Tezcatlipoca—the Mesoamerican deity whose name translates to "Smoking Mirror"—cannot be seen.[63] A viewer might complain that Villacis's museum never quite captures Tezcatlipoca, especially for an artwork that attempts to bring reciprocity to the thinking of the Conquest. Nonetheless, this kind of artwork forces the issue in intellectually productive ways.[64] An Ecuadorian artist, from the geographical center of everything, attempts to reconcile two distant traditions: western European and Aztec, both equally mythological, both located far away from the equatorial rooftop of the Tawantinsuyu, the "Four Realms" of

the Incan state. Both traditions are equally imagined in the speculative museum, and both are equally stereotyped.

In a different context, Pratt has described true reciprocity as "[reversing] the racial and geographic polarities" of empire.[65] Can true reciprocity arise out of stereotypical representations? *The Smoking Mirror* mobilizes these stereotypes, playing some off of others, with the precise goal of inverting the direction of conquest. In other words, the museum creates the cognitive estrangement typical of SF because it flips and reverses certain stereotypes.[66] But estrangement founded on generalization cannot account for the true scale of difference, nor can it attend to the indigenous knowledge and worldviews that must be present in a truly decolonial museum.[67] If *The Smoking Mirror* uses a simple inversion to suggest that things could have been different, it does not begin to account for the full scale of difference. Villacis's inversion, as absolute as it may be, is a decidedly earthbound reversal. In order to capture the truly planetary scale of conquest, the speculative museum must expand its axis to stretch beyond any particular historical event, no matter how singular that event might be. From reciprocity, we move to another method of the speculative museum: playing with scale.

Neil Smith, in his work on critical geography, has suggested a vocabulary for the kind of political-aesthetic strategies that allow scale to emerge. Smith was broadly known as an author of political slogans, and his most potent rallying cries all dealt explicitly with the politics of space. Perhaps the most condensed summary of Smith's entire theoretical contribution was his slogan "Political liberation requires spatial access"; that political platform, in turn, led to a resistance strategy that privileged the "concrete production and reproduction of geographical scale."[68] This strategy also had a name: "scale jumping," which in his estimation had become the most potent aesthetic intervention into a spatialized politics.[69]

Smith's classic example of scale jumping arose from a historical moment that was near and dear to his activist heart: the struggles over access to Tompkins Square Park in the late 1980s. That struggle jumped scale from a local intervention in one specific neighborhood in New York City's Lower East Side to a regional and perhaps even globally identifiable anthem of resistance; Smith catalogues this jump in the voice of the city itself, as an initial chant heard on a hot August night in 1988: "Whose park is it? It's our fucking park," jumps scale to become an epochal slogan: "Tompkins Square Everywhere."[70] Similar phenomena have been observed more recently, for instance the scale jumps from Zucotti Park and Madrid's Plaza Mayor to Occupy Everywhere; the

jump from Tunis to Tahrir Square to a global Arab Spring; hashtags like Black Lives Matter and Me Too that jump-started justice movements; or in a more frightening vein, the scale jump of fascistic nationalism.

In Smith's vocabulary, capital enacts scale through a two-phase process of differentiation and equivalence; a simple illustration would be a global supply chain that relies on cheap labor in one particular geographical region (differentiation) to sell the same commodities across the entire globe (equivalence). Capitalist scale thus creates boundaries, imposes identities, and excludes the vast majority of the planet from enjoying the riches produced and accumulated by the global economic system. But, Smith contends:

> A politics of scale can also become a weapon of expansion and inclusion, a means of enlarging identities: scale offers guideposts in the recovery of space from annihilation and a language via which the redifferentiation of space can be pioneered on freely argued and agreed-upon social grounds rather than according to the economic logic of capital and the political interests of its class.[71]

Capital, then, annihilates space; and scale jumping is Smith's strategy for reclaiming space for a common humanity. Scale jumping is a strategic intervention that allows thinkers, artists, and activists to move between the material and metaphorical divisions of the world, and to conjugate political activity across different scalar units, from the body and the home to the region and the globe.[72] Smith elaborates: "The importance of 'jumping scales' lies precisely in this active social and political connectedness of apparently different scales, their deliberate confusion and abrogation."[73]

In the case of the conquest of the Americas, however, it would seem that the only adequate scale-jump must exceed any possible capitalistic market, and must, furthermore, exceed the very planet.[74] A commensurate scale-jump would have to replace Smith's economic logic with a logic of sense itself, and whatever "shared ground" might be found would exist beyond the Terran ground of planet Earth. This would be the speculative museum that contemplates the planet itself as a monument to contact. Any such museum would not merely elude human measure, it would positively annihilate it.[75]

For these reasons, Adrián Villar Rojas uses the museum itself to realize this task of scale annihilation. As an artist, Villar Rojas is much

more integrated into the cosmopolitan global art scene than someone like Villacis. He could nominally be described as a sculptor, but that would fail to capture the site-specific nature of his art, and his process-oriented collaborative method. Graciela Speranza, who like Villar Rojas is from Argentina, has classified his work as "titanic-romantic-cybernetic-cosmic."[76] Recently Villar Rojas has begun to talk about his work as a single extended meditation on a thematic cluster of ideas, but it is instructive to view how these clustered themes have emerged and developed over the course of his short yet prolific career.[77] He refers to his earlier sculptural work as the "clay-cement equation"; a productive middle period was dedicated to exploring "the agency of things"; and his most recent work has taken the form of an iterative series of installations all grouped under the title "The Theater of Disappearance." I will discuss each of these three moments or equations in sequence.

Villar Rojas spent the early part of his career producing gigantic, enigmatic installations out of unfired clay and cement, the most iconic being a full-sized whale deposited in a Patagonian forest (*Mi familia muerta*, 2009). The whale's surface blurs into a geological landscape, where barnacles have mutated into volcano cones.[78] These sculptures blended a supra-human scale with a commitment to ephemera: as the denatured whale disintegrated into the natural elements, the sculpture both emphasized and enacted ephemerality while at the same time insisting on its non-belonging. Today, that whale is probably indistinguishable from the forest floor, but nonetheless it is the trace of something—a strange cetacean—that was definitively out of place.[79] Villar Rojas did not like to call these installations "sculptures," especially given that the objects performed decomposition as they dissolved and melted back into the earth. Needless to say, there are scarce physical remnants of these early variables in the "clay-cement equation."

By the early 2010s, Villar Rojas had moved the clay-cement equation indoors, although it would not be accurate to call this a "domestication" of his unruly work. The clay and cement remained unfired and uncured, but their enclosure in museum spaces stretched and twisted their connection with the organic world. These installations, like *A Person Loved Me* (2012) and *Now I Will Be with My Son, the Murderer of Your Heritage* (representing Argentina in the 2011 Venice Biennial), gathered massive crumbling objects that appeared to be an already obsolete and ruined alien technology. The otherworldly giants towered above, while visitors meandered between cracked pillars of concrete and crumbling clay (see fig. 2).

Fig. 2. Adrián Villar Rojas, *Una persona me amó* (A Person Loved Me), 2012. Unfired local clay, cement; 750 × 500 × 500 cm. Installation view, New Museum, New York, 2012. Courtesy the Adrián Villar Rojas and kurimanzutto. Photo credit: Robert Wright.

Strangely enough, it was with this move indoors that Villar Rojas most directly confronted the legacy of land art. Unlike the enduring monuments of land art scattered across the North American west, Villar Rojas's indoor installations continued to seek impermanence. If land art works like Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* or De Maria's *The Lightning Field* strove to create a kind of lasting, massive-scale architecture for a postmodern age, Villar Rojas materializes a question that only emerges as a tickle in the land art spectator's consciousness.[80] Geoff Dyer, wondering about Walter De Maria's *The Lightning Field*, gives voice to this question:

> And what if—as seems possible—"The Lightning Field" were to survive after there were no longer people left to see

> it? How long would it take an alien intelligence to work out what was going on here? How intelligent—how human—would an alien have to be?[81]

Dyer's lingering enigma is the starting point for Villar Rojas's practice, which stages scale across both the spatial and the temporal axis. He explains:

> I tried to imagine how it would be to look at the planet and human culture from the perspective of an alien: absolute horizontality and lack of prejudice. There are no scales of values, but commitment to a deep state of detachment and distance, which is also reflected in the use of time: remote future and absence of humans; remote past and origins of life. A dinosaur and a high-tech robot. The anchor was the decision to exile myself from this time, because I felt there was no longer anything to think regarding art. Therefore, we could only think of the post end.[82]

The objects in *Now I Will Be with My Son, the Murderer of Your Heritage* dwarf all human spectators. The clay motifs that compose each individual object (there are twelve in total) transition from the seemingly organic to the seemingly mechanistic as the eye travels up their massive elevations. Are these things aliens themselves? Are they an anime fever dream, *Neon Genesis Evangelion* come to life? Or are they sculptures shaped by extraterrestrial hands? Any possible answer is provisional, because the crumbling facade unsettles any spirit of transcendence or permanence.

In Dyer's essay on land art, he recalls a painting in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston by Elihu Vedder, *The Questioner of the Sphinx* (1863). In that picture, a dark-skinned traveler presses his ear against the Sphinx's head, as the statue's body lies concealed, buried beneath the accumulated sands of eons. It is, in a sense, a visual riff on Shelley's 1818 poem "Ozymandias," perhaps one of the best-known entries in the English language's poetics of ruins.[83] In Vedder's vision, the questioner does not appear to be inquiring about the Sphinx's mythological riddle, but rather begging this ancient, neglected mound of stone to share the secret of its composition. It is an imagined vision of ruins speaking in a language lost to the present age. The man performs the wonder bred by ignorance, and Vedder captures the mystery of a lost

civilization's monuments. Villar Rojas does not imitate that painting; on the contrary, he attempts to enlist his public in performing it. His most successful installations will drive some perplexed viewers to whimper at their crumbling feet.[84]

His are not the colonial portraits of fallen man begging the ancient masters to reveal their lost wisdom. Villar Rojas wants to make his public *live* that experience. This does not rely, however, on the encounter with permanence, or on a huckster selling tales about the chariots of the gods. Villar Rojas's scale annihilation rips the construct of monumental architecture from its human context and transposes it into a radically different temporal sensibility. If we play along with Villar Rojas, we begin to wonder: Did some extraterrestrial or multidimensional being create these towering monstrosities? We speculate: What kind of time, what temporality would create such things? It is with this spirit of monumentality that Villar Rojas closes the clay-concrete equation and transitions to his middle period, which he dedicated to "the agency of things."

Fred Wilson, whose spirit underlines much of this chapter, has called his own work a still life of a museum. Villar Rojas's "the agency of things" works in a similar mode, although instead of interrogating (or mining, to use Wilson's own vocabulary) the collection archive of a particular institution, Villar Rojas strives to present the human planet itself as a *naturaleza muerta*, a still life, a bodegón.

Emblematic of this goal was the 2013 installation *Today We Reboot the Planet*, staged at the Serpentine Sackler Gallery in London.[85] That project brought together his broadest assortment of materials to date, as the following non-exhaustive list suggests:

> Bricks, clay (unfired), cement, soil, wood, metal, stain glass, soap, seeds, shoes, breads, plants, potatoes, carrots, grass, wheels, jewels, stones, candle, watercolor, markers, pencils, sea shells, glasses, bones, butterflies, soccer ball, plastic.

These are not, of course, the traditional elements of a still life, although the installation itself does have a cellar-like feel to it (bodegón is one of the Spanish words for a "still life"). The scale of *Today We Reboot* does not rely on any singularly overwhelming piece from the clay-cement equation. Instead, it is the accumulation of objects that stretches the imagination. Perhaps the most concise summary would be: "Earth Marginalia. Mixed Media. Anthropocene" (see figs. 3 and 4).

Figs. 3 and 4. Adrián Villar Rojas, *Today We Reboot the Planet*, 2013. Organic, inorganic, human and machine-made matter including unfired clay, cement, hand-made bricks, metal, glass, collected in London and Rosario. Installation view at Serpentine North Gallery, London, 2013. Courtesy of the artist, Marian Goodman Gallery, and kurimanzutto. Photo credit: Jörg Baumann.

Yet this vast collection of things is not immediately available to the spectator. The viewer first encounters a giant elephant burrowing into what looks like a futuristic vault. It is only after passing around the elephant and through that façade that one gains access to the vault's contents, which, as Michael Slenske has suggested, seems to hold the cultural remains of our consumerist civilization: toys, angels, and a clay replica of Kurt Cobain impaled with a plastic bottle.[86] Those bottles are probably the most enduring objects in the entire exhibition, at least from a biochemical and geological perspective. The unfired clay, as has become characteristic of Villar Rojas's work, will deteriorate and decompose over time.

Unlike Fernández-Armesto's galactic still life, Villar Rojas's collections are far from random. He gathers and fabricates his objects with intention; those intentions, however, remain opaque: it is as if a particular extraterrestrial intelligence—one who shared an aesthetic sensibility with Marcel Duchamp—had created this still life of humanity. Human culture, thus, has become a cosmic readymade.[87] While Wilson's *Mining*

the Museum reveals hidden stories and holds the institution accountable for the contents of its archive, Villar Rojas's installations are more detached and otherworldly.

This is not to say that they are lifeless. On the contrary, Villar Rojas seeds almost every crack and crease of this cosmic readymade with life. Many of the objects shaped in decomposing earth have also been planted with seedlings, and green leaves sprout almost impossibly below the former powder magazine's vaulted brick ceiling. Not still life, then, but panspermia. If that is the biological key to the planet's reboot, it becomes clear that the speculative museum is a monument to a lost humanity.

This cosmic museum must have been built by some virtuosic visitor, who memorialized the very aesthetic forms that led to our extinction. That this tribute to a vanished human civilization also smuggles in the seeds of Terran vitality is an acknowledgment of the hubris of the Anthropocene concept itself. Kurt Cobain, SF, and soccer balls may bend the monument towards the personal and the adolescent, but its true scale speaks to the planet's guaranteed post-human endurance.[88] If that is the case, then we arrive at another question: Who are the imagined visitors to such a speculative museum? If the installation is on a nonhuman scale, then humans can't very well be the intended patrons. What dimension of being is capable of actually hosting a Terran museum? What kind of observer peers into Fernández-Armesto's galactic curiosity cabinet?

It would seem to require a nonhuman intelligence in order to decipher this speculative museum's intentionality, to whom the seemingly arbitrary assortment of preserved (yet decomposing) objects would reveal an otherwise imperceivable or imperceptible scale. Although his "agency of things" moniker might suggest otherwise, Villar Rojas does not attempt to flee from the anthropocentric Anthropocene by imagining this world as perceived by a stone or a tick. His installations present urgent scalar disruptions under the sign of an extra-anthropocentric museumgoer, an unearthly visitor whose aesthetic sensibilities or curatorial eccentricities simply exceed our terrestrial comprehension. This is precisely why it is so challenging to describe this particular installation or to enumerate the provenance of the objects contained within the vault.

On the other hand, if we step back from the speculative game for a second, it is not difficult to attribute the artwork to its author. From this point on, Villar Rojas will exclusively talk about his artistic practice

in terms of socializing with his collaborators and "staging" the installations. The authorship is shared among a group, and this collective, his "nomadic studio," forms the second collection of "things" in Villar Rojas's "agency of things" period.[89] Many of his collaborators come from Rosario, Argentina; some have been working with him since his student days, while others have joined up along the way. In order to further foreground the ensemble-like nature of the team, the catalogue for *Today We Reboot the Planet* does not contain a single image of the finished, installed piece, and spends as much time at a brick farm in Rosario, Argentina, as it does on-site at the London gallery.

Villar Rojas even goes so far as to propose his team as a repertory troupe creating a kind of theater experience. In the mid-2010s that troupe, the AVR Company, honed their skills in a period of impressive globe-trotting that led them on a world tour of prestigious galleries and festivals. These installations prized collaboration and on-site interaction. Many of them are extraordinary, and some, like *Poems for Earthlings*, are explicitly SF. Yet the museum-as-subject recedes in this period of rooted aesthetic cosmopolitanism.

The AVR Company returned its speculative attention to the museum in 2017, when they embarked on a multi-part, year-long iterative installation called *The Theater of Disappearance*, which we can understand as a repertory performance of the imaginary museum.[90] This series, uniquely installed at four different sites, returns to the idea of the museum as a cosmic readymade, so much so that the final iteration will include an appropriated Duchamp bicycle wheel.[91] Rojas spins those antiquated spokes, and generates a new speculative readymade with each turn of that cosmological wheel of fortune.

The *Theater of Disappearance* first landed on the roof of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, where the collective captured and scanned objects from the Met's massive collection, digitally manipulated those 3D design files, and finally fabricated the new mashed-up objects that populated the roof's sun deck for the duration of the summer. In Austria, the cosmic readymade took the form of a four-story journey from an archeological cave to a remixed version of the millennium room from the film *2001: A Space Odyssey*. In Greece, the collective occupied the National Observatory of Athens and the surrounding Hill of the Nymphs through a mixture of radical landscaping and objects reminiscent of the "agency of things" equation. Finally, the *Theater of Disappearance* culminated as a duration-based object-collage in the Geffen Contemporary space of MOCA Los Angeles.

Although each individual installation bends and twists scale in wonderful and terrifying ways, taken together this kind of iterative creation presents another way to positively annihilate scale. If each performance forces its spectators to think from an almost impossibly imaginable perspective, the sum total of all these repertory possibilities, both real and imagined, begins to truly boggle the mind. In each iteration of the *Theater*, the abstract-universal reencounters the one example; this is one spin of the cosmological wheel of fortune. Each example is, in turn, endlessly reimagined with each additional spin. Thus the *Theater* is not one thing, but rather a series of cosmological readymades. The sequences make two distinct demands on the viewers: first, that we recognize the multiplicity; and second, that we speculate and iterate, while always grounding each iteration in some material existence.

This process takes concrete speculative work, because each iteration must be staged (by the repertoire) and experienced (by the audience) one at a time. Villar Rojas and his troupe monumentalize each possible world one by one. The massive, post-human scale of the exhibitions places the planet's contingencies along a z-axis. Each time the audience asks: What possible world will have created this monument to our absence? But in order to concretize that speculation, each cosmic readymade must be instantiated. Each scenario must be attended to. As Villar Rojas has stated: "My work is not meant to put a human being before a thing, but to thrust humans into things, to create volume that creates space that creates time."[92]

Perhaps two turns around the cosmological wheel will help to illustrate the idea. The Austrian iteration could be described as the troupe's site-specific performance of Stanley Kubrick and Arthur C. Clarke's *2001: A Space Odyssey*.[93] The spectator ascends through four successive chambers, each one occupying an entire floor of Peter Zumthor's Kunsthaus Bergnez building. Like Clarke and Kubrick's cinematic collaboration, the installation jumps across temporal scales, from the Paleolithic to the Paleozoic, from the Renaissance to 2001. The installation's most radical temporality stretches back 400 million years, to Devonian-period fossils—ammonites and goniatites—embedded in marble. That stone lines the floors of two of the four chambers; the slabs were quarried in Morocco and appropriated as petroglyphic readymades. In the second chamber, the marble is rough and the fossils protrude in high relief.

The space appears to be an archeological site; the walls—one covered in Paleolithic cave art from the French Pyrenees—confirm this suspi-

cion. These reproductions are just the earliest, at 40,000 years old, of the myriad examples of humanity's graffiti that covers all four walls. All of these iconic masterpieces, from Brazilian Pixação to the scribbled tags of generals and sultans, blend into the museum's very skin. The third chamber becomes the cave itself: the spectator enters a dark, warm cavern illuminated by a line of fire across the far wall. As the eyes adjust, another cave painting emerges: it is Picasso's *Guernica*. And the cave further resolves into a bunker, perhaps Dr. Strangelove's war room. From there, one final stairwell beckons, and the spectator arrives in a blinding white chamber reminiscent of *2001*'s millennium room. Four white ramps meet at the center of the room, and "two vast and trunkless legs of stone" rest upon that pedestal.[94] They are David's legs fabricated in Carrara marble. Two cute kittens, 3D-printed in some synthetic polymer, cuddle between the massive toes, an irreverent hat tip to internet culture. The tension between these two objects helps to summarize the incommensurate chronologies contained within the four galleries. The reproduced and decontextualized artifacts transport us across wide temporalities of human creativity, from the highest classical culture to the lowest postmodern kitsch. Yet even this entire chronology, reduced to a dot on a geological timeline, will leave scant fossilized traces of its aesthetic grandeur. Unlike *2001*, Villar Rojas's version offers no transcendental uplift at the foot of an alien monolith. The only thing left to do is to give another turn to the cosmic wheel, and see the next cosmic readymade that the *Theater of Disappearance* brings into existence.

In another iteration, at MOCA Los Angeles, one of Duchamp's own readymades shows up, chilled and kept on ice. Specifically, Duchamp's famous bicycle wheel is encased in a refrigerator, one of twelve dramatically illuminated cases that house a wide variety of objects, organic, original, or otherwise. This *Theater* feels most like a direct return to the SF museum, only now the cooled glass cases slowly yet persistently desiccate the objects contained within them. The museum as *naturaleza muerta* is now a decomposing *vanitas*, a wink to Los Angeles, the global capital of the society of the spectacle.

As would only seem natural, the repertory troupe recycles fragments from previous installations into each current iteration. This continuity links the various *Theaters* in a sequence; Villar Rojas calls this his "compost practice." In this, Villar Rojas has brought his two central concerns—decomposition and germination—into his most recent equation. The collective bends those two extremes, and knots them up together: old materials degrade, and their rot fuels new growth. The decomposing

fragments of each performance become an aesthetic compost, out of which a new iteration sprouts. But this tightly woven organic cycle disappears in the presence of the mute *Orthoceras*, a cephalopod whose fossilized remains stretch temporal scale to its bioterrestrial extreme. The resulting sequence—in its seemingly infinite multiplicity—melts any human scale into oblivion. The *Theater of Disappearance* is an aesthetic machine that annihilates any and all anthropocentric ground. Its effect is powerfully disorienting. And so the question emerges: What ground is left for us to stand on? How do we get out of the galactic museum? Does the speculative museum have an escape pod?

ESCAPE POD

Our escape pod must be some form of vehicle capable of traversing a cosmic scale.[95] A group of just those kinds of vehicles formed the nucleus of *Mundos alternos: Art and Science Fiction in the Americas*. This influential exhibition—curated by Robb Hernández, Tyler Stallings, and Joanna Szupinska-Myers—was presented at the UC Riverside ARTSblock from September 2017 to March 2018, and in 2019 it was exhibited at the Queens Museum in New York City. The far-ranging collection touched on many of the themes explored in this book.[96]

Some of the most striking pieces in the exhibition scale up personal and personalized interstellar vehicles to the proportions of Smithsonian artifacts. The main galleries of the ARTSBlock were strewn with a cosmic variety of parked spaceships and crashed landing pods, like Simón Vega's *Tropical Mercury Capsule* or Rubén Ortiz Torres's frenetic *Alien Toy*. They were speculative only insofar as it is a challenge to imagine a Puerto Rican arriving at the moon before NASA (ÁDAL's *Coconautas*), or that it is mere fantasy to imagine a Zapatista Space Agency (the Rigo 23/EZLN collaboration *Autonomous InterGalactic Space Program*). These are precisely the kinds of spacecraft necessary to displace us across the scalar continuum.

It is Beatriz Cortez's *Memory Insertion Capsule*, however, that seems like the most appropriate escape pod to exit the speculative museum and definitively shatter the cosmic vitrine. Cortez has spent the past decade constructing various machinic installation pieces like *The Fortune Teller Machine* (a 2015 collaboration with Kaqjay Moloj) and more explicitly *The Memory Machine* (2014) which function as memory apparatus (see fig. 5).[97] She elaborates:

> I build memories so I can imagine possible futures. Because of this, there are three concepts that are central to my work: time, simultaneity, and movement. And I'm interested in how issues such as race, class, migration or gender intersect or cut through those concepts.[98]

More recently, Cortez has taken up welding in order to build vehicle-like structures that add a sense of virtual locomotion to her memory-based work; emblematic of this trend are pieces like *The Cosmos* (2015), *The Lakota Porch: A Time Traveler* (2017), and *The Argonaut: After Pakal* (2018, with Rafa Esperza).

Memory Insertion Capsule, one of Cortez's two contributions to *Mundos alternos*, could very well be a piece of material infrastructure for the SF museum. Perhaps not precisely an escape pod, it can more accurately be described as a rescue capsule. It is a speculative pod built for survival, but it is in no way a survivalist fantasy. This is not a bunker where a lone-wolf prepper waits out an apocalypse. This truth becomes clear when the visitor ponders the hearth, one of humanity's most community-oriented architectural achievements. Cortez has welded a stone fireplace out of industrial sheet metal, referencing the Los Angeles

Fig. 5. Beatriz Cortez, *The Memory Insertion Capsule*, 2017. Welded sheet metal and image viewfinder. Photo: Nikolay Maslov, courtesy of the artist and Commonwealth and Council.

Craftsman Vernacular style she memorialized in *The Lakota Porch: A Time Traveler*.[99] In all traditions, the hearth is a place of communal gathering; Cortez's capsule brings that hearth along for the ride.

Repurposed sheet metal also armors the vehicle's walls, forming a protective sheath that will ferry Cortez's craft across spacetime. As Cortez has articulated: since the future is uncertain, the capsule is fortified.[100] The work's title suggests a "memory insertion," which might be an unpleasant procedure, and the viewers will need whatever strength they can muster, especially those brave enough to insert their own heads into the helmet floating at the capsule's center. One by one they approach the goggles, and thus begins the insertion procedure, experienced in solitude while others, waiting their turn, shuffle around the pod's other welded features.

Once the spectator enters the visor's viewfinder, they see a series of images all collected from the United Fruit Company and the CalTech eugenics archives. Together, the images connect the two stories through the Popenoe family. As Cortez has explained, the stereograph viewer concealed within the welded helmet "implants" memories from the Popenoe family into the spectator's consciousness, and it is a harrowing story.[101] Paul Popenoe served as secretary of the Human Betterment Foundation (HBF) in Pasadena in the interwar period; and he advocated the compulsory sterilization of people whom the foundation determined defective.[102] These people mostly consisted of the "insane and feebleminded patients" in California state institutions, and the practice of their forced sterilization was coded into the California penal code from 1909 to 1979.[103] The HBF archives have been part of CalTech's special collections since 1943, when HBF founder Ezra Gosney's family established the Gosney fund for biological research at the university.[104]

It is plant genetics, rather than human eugenics, which links Paul to Wilson Popenoe, his brother. Wilson was trained as a so-called agricultural explorer by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. That program brought Popenoe to Guatemala, among other places, on a kind of grand tour of imperialistic extraction of biological and agricultural materials from around the world (without seeking any kind of traditional knowledge agreement with local authorities). It was in Guatemala that Cortez first encountered the Popenoe name at the Casa Popenoe Museum in Antigua. The surname had traveled widely across Central America: Wilson also directed the United Fruit Company-sponsored Panamerican School of Agriculture in Zamorano, Honduras, and he ultimately became the UFC's chief agronomist.[105]

This is the other thing that the capsule rescues: a forgotten history. A painful history of eugenics, forced sterilization, and agricultural genetics; of banana republics, racial supremacists, and human migration.[106] It is the legacy of colonial science at its worst: state-funded research on involuntary sterilization and federally sponsored biopiracy expeditions. That these two archives emanated from one single family—a family entwined with the United Fruit Company, no less—betrays the dark, provincial side of science. In other words: it is not quite so easy to escape from the museum of conquest. Those painful memories must be ferried forward precisely because of the pain and trauma they implicate.

Luckily, the *Memory Insertion Capsule* wasn't the only vehicle Cortez brought to *Mundos alternos*. *Nomad 13* (2017), a collaboration with Rafa Esparza, offers another exit from the SF museum. *Nomad 13* is an unconventional space capsule. Most importantly, it is seeded. This returns us to Villar Roja's germinated cosmic readymades, yet *Nomad 13* clearly exists in the shadow of racist eugenics and colonial agriculture. Cortez and Esparza explicitly code their nomadic seed ark as representing the biological diversity of the pre-Columbian Americas. The ark imagines a livable future that carries forward the autochthonous roots of pre-Columbian biology. Together, all of these SF vehicles and the *cosmonautas* they imagine present one of the most explicit decolonizing gestures in *Mundos alternos*, and they meet Amy Lonetree's dual challenge to transform sites of colonial harm into sites of healing, and to restore community well-being.[107] The SF museum complements those necessary activities by twisting and inverting cosmic scales in order the imagine other pasts, and to imagine other futures.

CONCLUSION

If Cortez and her collaborators offer the promise of an escape from the colonial museum that will still preserve the cultural continuity of historically colonized peoples, it is worth recapitulating the world that such vehicles leave behind. This chapter opened with Fusco and Gómez-Peña's performance, as documented in *The Couple in the Cage*, which centered their Quincentenary critique of the colonial project in the museum space. The ease with which their spectators interacted with the incarcerated artists highlighted the disturbing persistence of the human zoo as a cultural and scientific framework for encountering otherness. And yet those very performances, as critical and revelatory as they were

in 1992, were staged in and around museum spaces that themselves contained stolen and desecrated human remains of beings that colonial-era science had deemed experimental subjects of inquiry. Valdés's short story "La paz de los muertos" refocused attention on those disturbed bones separated from their homelands and their cultural contexts, while also anticipating a decolonial wave of repatriation that would accompany the growing global framework to address stolen cultural and spiritual artifacts. Valdés's narrative expands the critique of the epistemological framework of the human zoo to read the museum itself as a tool for the ontological capture of the dead, whose remains lie imprisoned beneath the exhibition spaces.

This kind of necropolitical analysis of the museum challenges the naive celebration of the cosmic vitrine, as exemplified by Fernández-Armesto's genre of the speculative museum. While the cosmic vitrine imaginary may help viewers and readers comprehend the kind of scale required to present a *longue-durée*, post-anthropocentric perspective, it is based on a kind of universal equivalency grounded in a false and flat reciprocity that would view looted Benin bronzes and discarded Coca-Cola cans as comparable remnants of human culture. A more promising strategy for building a true sense of reciprocity into the speculative museum arises from the logic of inversion, as explored by Villacis's *The Smoking Mirror*. Like the Mexican novels studied in the previous chapter, the novelty of Villacis's inversion quickly subsides, leaving the viewer to wonder if such inversions are simply spinning the modern/colonial world around a preestablished axis.

In order to exit this particular vortex, it becomes necessary to bring the concept of scale-jumping into the equation. And this is precisely what the AVR Company does, with installations that obliterate the anthropocentric scale of colonial anthropology as established by the museum. The museum persists, even if humanity does not. This jump provides little comfort, however, for those subjects whose culture, now stripped of all human scale, remains captured by the post-anthropic museum. It is only by transforming those sites of harm into sites of healing that the museum form itself can be stripped of its colonial architecture. This is the project that *Mundos alternos* attempts to realize, providing the means for moving between scales while simultaneously seeding different futures.

CHAPTER 3

Speculative Cartography and the Fabric of the Cosmos

WORLDBUILDING AND *IMAGO MUNDI*

"Worlding" has become a critical keyword in literary studies, especially in the global postcolonial context.[1] When dealing with speculative fiction in the Americas, and especially the kind of historically grounded SF gathered in this book, I believe that "worldbuilding," a complementary term that comes from SF studies, opens new critical possibilities. It allows for the same kind of ontological engagement with literary texts that "worlding" proposes, but without the Heideggerian baggage, while also following Héctor Hoyos's suggestions that when studying Latin American narratives, the "global" must be understood "from the ground up—that is, from the works themselves, through the internal dynamics of actual cultural products."[2]

In many SF narratives, there is an identifiable place in the text where the work "touches ground": the SF map. There is a reason why so much epic SF and fantasy opens with a map: this *imago mundi*, or "image of the world," creates a textual space for the encounter of cosmography, narrative, geography, and the interpretation of history. In the global context, perhaps no SF map has drawn more attention than Tolkien's map of Middle-earth included in *The Lord of the Rings*. Kim Stanley Robinson's *Mars Trilogy* is a celebration of the U.S. Geological Survey's

topographical maps of Mars and a speculative exercise in imagining how terraforming will change those topographical maps into geopolitical diagrams. And any serious reader of Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Left Hand of Darkness* has either sketched a map of Gethen or consulted one of the versions circulating on the internet.

In SF, successful worldbuilding implies creating a planetary consciousness in the reader. An author's map at the beginning of a story can help this process, because it serves to orient a reader or visitor to the imagined land. Thus there is an entire branch of SF that could be called "speculative cartography." Good SF rigorously worldbuilds, and rigorous worldbuilding requires a cosmic perspective. This is not, however, the exclusive purview of SF authors; examples of cartographic worldbuilding can be found across global literary history. Our own historical moment has provided the technological verification sufficient to map our local corner of our galaxy in less speculative—or at least more scientific—fashion. But from the perspective of the wider universe, on the scale of colliding galaxies and dark matter, or on the frontier of intercultural communication, speculation is still the only viable source of illumination. And ultimately, it is that speculative ambition that sets the parameters for the evaluation of a map.

A quick visit to a historical moment of pre-satellite cartography is illustrative. How did the medieval Iberian cartographers evaluate the maps of their world? As Simone Pinet has argued:

> The impossibility of verifying in situ every detail of [a medieval map . . .] is what left the debate on their reality very much up to the limits of a library that confirmed or denied their existence. The verification of a map was, until very recently, in the absence of images from space, the verification of geography with a fiction: [another] map. This verification depends on a social convention that precedes the production of the image—the map—articulated mainly in a series of texts, of narrations.[3]

As will be explored below, this process of textual verification explains how a culture arrives at Christian theology as the justification for a medieval T-O map, or Marco Polo's journals as the measure against which Ptolemy is cast. It is satellite photography, ultimately, that lends cartography the escape velocity to break free from its speculative, narrative orbit. This is what Carl Sagan means when he talks about the paradigm-

shifting moment in planetary consciousness that arises after viewing the Earth as a "pale blue dot" lost in the solar system.

In truth, that planetary consciousness has been building for centuries. Much like the case of the New World itself, what we want to call a pure eruptive emergence was in fact built up, revealed incrementally, like the slow coming of a rosy dawn. This is the situation that any speculative cartographer in the Americas faces today: a cosmovision that melds scientific accuracy, ecological consciousness, and globe-spanning information networks, and that acknowledges history as the Dark Jester (who we will meet shortly) writes it. And for the SF cartographer who works with historical materials, another question presents itself: What was the *imago mundi* when the Américas were invented?

To answer that question involves unraveling two distinct threads. The first of these is the European/Iberian thread, the cartographic tradition that spanned medieval Mediterranean *mappa mundi* and navigational charts. This will be addressed in the first section of this chapter, tracking an itinerary that runs from a T-O diagram in Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae* to Guaman Poma's *El primer nueva corónica y buen gobierno*. But secondly, in order to understand how Guaman Poma's Andean perspective expressed itself in his map, we have to expand our understanding of mapping and cartography to include Andean media and methods. This includes, but is not limited to, the use of *khipus* and *ceques* to transmit knowledge and organize space.

This is preparatory work, in order to read the two extraordinary texts I analyze in this chapter, each of which speculates a unique *imago mundi* that arises out of the contact zone. Both Daniel Salvo and Wilson Harris are worldbuilders working in mixed media and multiple South American traditions. Daniel Salvo's tale "Quipucamayoc" spins a palace intrigue featuring a *khipu*-computer, while Wilson Harris's novel *Dark Jester* conjures an Atahualpan space-time.

In order to understand these texts on their own terms, we must orient ourselves with their maps, ones that are immanent to their own narrative worlds. When a textile-based computational medium gets infected with a virus in "Quipucamayoc," for instance, our understanding of the fabric of the cosmos changes in very literal ways. Since these encounters occur within a contact zone, our cosmological understanding must be double. It is simply not true that only one side of the Conquest produced maps. So before we can analyze Daniel Salvo and Wilson Harris's strange narrative cartographies, we must ground ourselves in how world maps shifted in the sixteenth century. This is a monumental

task . . . so monumental, in fact, that it must be undertaken with levity, as the title of Harris's novel, *The Dark Jester,* suggests.

And what can we learn from Guaman Poma's map, Salvo's "Quipucamayoc," and Harris's Dreamer? We learn that our map must be imaginative instead of authoritative, reciprocal instead of hierarchical; and it must be capable of scaling from local earth-sky conditions to a planetary consciousness, and from the astronomical to the virtual. A final word of warning: orientation and orienteering are properly cartographic activities, so any kind of speculative cartography will be disorienting by design. In order to ground ourselves, we can begin close to home, with a very terrestrial image: Spaceship Earth.

MAPPA MUNDI AND SPACESHIP EARTH

One particular instance of space-age worldbuilding is the "spaceship Earth" concept. "Spaceship earth" is an older term; nowhere near old enough to impress a medievalist, but old enough to harken back to the early excitement and utopian energy surrounding space exploration, the budding environmental movement, and an ecological consciousness. Buckminster Fuller, perhaps the clearest example of a twentieth-century U.S. technocratic utopian, used the concept frequently, both as the name of his particular *imago mundi* and as the guiding principle for Disney's vision of the future: the central dome of the Epcot Center at Disney World is called Spaceship Earth.[4]

Notwithstanding the Disneyfied utopics, "Spaceship Earth" rose to prominence around the same time as the "pale blue dot" image, and together these concepts created a diagram of our planet—our spaceship—powered as it is by the sun and by gravity.[5] The concept captures a particularly technoscientific interpretation of the Gaia hypothesis, and implies a sense of duty: we are crew members, perhaps unwittingly, on a projectile flinging itself around the sun. As Messeri observes, "From spaceship Earth to the Gaia hypothesis to terrestrial analog research, a past half-century of thinkers remade Earth as always already planetary and alien."[6]

This kind of planetary-scale image falls under the category of the *imago mundi*: a diagram of a particular relationship to our world.[7] These images change over time, and among cultures. "Spaceship Earth" is a particularly technoscientific manifestation, especially when we periodize and situate "technoscience."[8] These diagrams are not monolithic

or hegemonic; it is demonstrably false to say that either "Spaceship Earth" or "the pale blue dot" was the dominant *imago mundi* during the postwar twentieth century, especially when considered in global terms. And yet such images can help observers understand a moment: what the world looked like to a civilization that aimed its rockets at the heavens, convinced that exploration is the surest path to understanding.

In a similar vein, it would be wrong to say that the *mappa mundi*—the Mediterranean "world map"—was the monolithic *imago mundi* during the early modern period, principally because these large-scale, theologically and historically conceived maps were under constant revision.[9] In her study of the *mappa mundi*, Evelyn Edson chronicles the changes and debates that played themselves out on vellum and across trade routes during an especially eventful period in Mediterranean history, from 1300 to 1492. Each *mappa mundi* that she discusses represents a snapshot, a draft *imago mundi* in process, with mapmakers and cosmographers balancing demands from merchants, monarchies, and monotheisms. In its totality, Edson's study is a vivid exhibit in favor of Woodward and Lewis's affirmation that a culture's maps afford some of the best evidence of its ways of cultural worldmaking.[10]

Another way of stating this position—which represents the key insights of the critical geography movement and the editorial policy of the University of Chicago Press's monumental *History of Cartography* series—is that maps arise out of cosmology. Indeed, that truth seemed more obvious during the early modern period, when monarchies employed court cosmographers, than it does today, when "maps" appear to be disembodied neutral voices that give turn-by-turn directions algorithmically arranged to minimize traffic and tolls.

In any case, mapmakers cannot escape from the cultural and historical context in which they create their maps. After a generation of critical geographic scholarship, this may sound either painfully obvious or flippantly relativistic. Yet too often such insights lead to their own forms of blindness, like the progressivist fallacy that condemns imperial maps as hopelessly relativistic documents that merely betray past deficiencies in our knowledge. Such critical cynicisms actually end up furthering a teleological narrative of cartography's ever-improving technoscientific mapping of the planet, presenting as natural and universal the very imperial cartographic practices that critical geographers strive to unsettle. What I propose, instead, is to consider the other side of this cosmological coin, and examine maps as prime cultural documents by which to record the appearance of novelty. We can expand Woodward

and Lewis's thesis, and give it a speculative flavor: maps are a material manifestation of a culture's worldbuilding. To return to Pratt: they are diagrams of the contact zone.

This also brings a dynamic, diachronic concept into critical cartography: the mapping of novel situations, such as those which arise in contact zones, are active attempts to build a post-contact world. Such worldbuilding or worldmaking cuts across asymmetrical power relationships; accordingly, moments of disagreement—where the *imago mundi* seems most unsettled—can reveal the inner workings of those very projects. This is why the sixteenth-century maps of the Americas continue to attract a broad range of critical interest: they graphically represent changes across two broad axes: changes in empirical and spiritual views of the world; and changes in who "counts" as part of the collective body that determines cartographic accuracy. In that hemispheric contact zone, even the most basic geographic truths became ungrounded.[11]

The critical work of locating those maps—culturally, geographically, and historically—unfolds through a two-level methodology; this methodology is the legacy of the critical geography movement, and is plainly visible if not explicitly theorized throughout an anthology like *Mapping Latin America: A Cartographic Reader*.[12] Maps themselves do not like to admit their own contingent conditions of production, so in the first instance, maps must be coaxed into telling their interpreters a bit more about their social origins. Maps naturalize and normalize; they seek to become the unchanging background against which the drama of human politics, economy, and society unfolds. The critical geographer, using a wide and interdisciplinary set of methods, forces the map to dialogue with that background. John Brian Harley insists that maps teach us how to read them, but he also points out that readers can come away with radically differing knowledge, depending on how each reader approaches said map.[13] It might take a detective to slice through those naturalized layers; for instance, "most European maps, manuscript or printed, from Juan de la Cosa's world map of 1500 onward, disguise a hidden stratum of Indian geographical knowledge."[14]

But once that knowledge has been revealed, it makes it very difficult to return to a naive or innocent view of cartography, especially the kinds of cartographic encounters that unfolded across the Americas from the sixteenth century onwards. Harley stated this quite unequivocally in his later work: "Maps have to be seen as part of a wider colonial discourse, one that helped to render Indian peoples invisible in their own

land. Cartographers contrived to promote a durable myth of an empty frontier"; or even more explicitly: "Cartography has thus served to dispossess the Indians by engulfing them with blank spaces."[15]

Furthermore, the cultural background—hiding in plain sight, and naturalized and normalized by grids, legends, and borders—is not itself static. This leads to the second aspect of critical cartographic interrogation: things change, and geographies change. Worlds that were built might fall into discord with empirical geography or with planetary cosmology; it is precisely through cross-cultural and trans-historical examinations of maps that we see the contours of worldbuilding itself emerge. In order to do so, we must think about maps otherwise.

We must think otherwise, but we don't realize how profoundly other this "otherwise" can be. In general terms, maps chart intercultural contact, and accordingly document moments when worldmaking becomes visible and historical. In the SF tradition, speculating from these historical maps helps the reader to ask: Could the world have been built differently? Each speculative narrative itself then tells a story about what one of those possible maps might look like.

I would like to invert that procedure, and use the speculative mode of an SF map in order to think a series of empirical, historical moments of worldbuilding across the colonial Americas. From the SF tradition, we can carry over the artistic, anthropological, astrobiological, and epistemological resonances, along with the speculative play of imagining the world otherwise. I say "play," but it must be acknowledged that the worldbuilding games I'm proposing are not about diversion or entertainment. Wilson Harris best describes this kind of play around traumatic events as the true working of the literary imagination, as the textual manifestation of the paradoxes of creativity in the wake of conquest.[16]

FROM THE TRINITY OF THE T-O MAP TO THE FOUR REALMS OF TAWANTINSUYU

So what were the *imago mundi* circulating in the early Americas? Edson opens *The World Map, 1300–1492: The Persistence of Tradition and Transformation* with a very particular form of the world diagram: the T in O map. The maps of that time period (1300–1492) have attracted much scholarly attention, precisely because it was a period of empirical emergence and challenge to medieval scholastic authority, as

Edson's title suggests. The broad arc of Edson's story is the European shift from T-O cosmological diagrams to navigation-oriented charts; this story pulls from a broader intellectual history of European science that chronicles the shift from a closed theocratic world to an open scientific universe.

The enduring description of the T-O map comes to us from Isidore of Seville's seventh-century *Etymologies*, a proto-encyclopedia that gave definitions for important concepts based on philology, Catholic theology, and Aristotelian philosophy. The T-O map was called the *orbis terrarium*, or 'orb of the lands.' The world's terrestrial geography as depicted in this very crude map consists of three parts: Asia, Europe, and Africa, with the whole encircled by the ocean. The three terrestrial parts are separated from each other by the Mediterranean Sea and the Nile River, and together they form a rough 'T' figure." By the waning years of the fifteenth century, the T-O map had lost some of its potency, as will be discussed; yet it still appears as the first printed map in the European record, in a 1472 edition of the *Etymologies*, published within decades of Gutenberg's invention of moveable type printing (see fig. 6).

Isidore, like other medieval Catholics, sought to make classical knowledge compatible with Christian theology; Edson argues that his influence appears behind many *mappa mundi*, especially since "his work was a standard reference work for medieval libraries" and "his major accomplishment was to integrate classical and Biblical geography."[17]

So what were those T-O maps mapping? What world was Isidore trying to build? As Edson states quite directly, "the medieval mapamundi sets the world and all its wonders in a theological context."[18] Isidore describes this theological wonderworld as sitting within a vast ocean that encircled the edges of the land. Isidore's ocean is living, windswept and thirsty, "disgorging the seas or swallowing them back."[19] This is the "O" of the T-O, or what Pinet describes as the terror-inducing enclosed horizon: "A world terrified by the sea, particularly by those waters from which the shoreline would no longer be visible, produced a cartography of the world within that enclosed horizon."[20]

Back on the land, the Mediterranean flows across the middle of the world. This is one of the purest examples of Isidore's titular etymologies: *medius terra* means "middle of earth," and thus the middle of the world ("quia per mediam terram usque ad orientem perfunditur").[21] That sea splits the land, and the globe is divided into three parts. Asia is half of the globe, and Europe and Africa share the other half. The "T" of the T-O maps are the rivers and the sea that divide the land: the Med-

Fig. 6. Isidore of Seville, *T and O Map*. Public domain via Wikimedia Commons.

iterranean, the Don, and the Nile. Describing what lies beyond that, Isidore continues: "Apart from the three parts of the world there exists a fourth part, beyond the intervening Ocean, toward the south, which is unknown to us because of the burning heat of the sun; within its borders are said to live the legendary Antipodes."[22] The T-O mapmakers rarely illustrate this part, but this legendary continent plays an important role in the post-1492 world view, which we'll arrive at presently.

But what is most striking is the way that theology and geography merge in this world diagram. The three continents, which already mimic the Christian trinity, also recapitulate the biblical descent from Noah to his three sons, each of which corresponds to a continent: Shem in Asia; Ham in Africa; Japheth in Europe.[23] The map is oriented to the east, to highlight the importance of the Holy Land, Paradise, and, also in Asia, a land of gold protected by "dragons, griffins, and human monsters of immense size."[24] Jerusalem resides at the center of the diagram, knotting theology and geography right up at the omphalus. Perhaps that's why the Fourth Continent, the Antipodes, and Paradise slip off

the map and then out of the frame entirely. With monotheism firmly rooted in the Holy Land, and the empirical seduction of a world connected by travel and commerce, it is little wonder, Edson recounts, that paradise is forced out of the *mappa mundi*. "By its very nature," she reminds us, "paradise proved to be unmappable."[25] Yet this does not mean that medieval mapmakers were willing to abandon "the rich historical/theological understanding that had shaped their perception of the world for so long," especially knowing that measuring the world still proved an insuperable obstacle.[26] How could mapmakers justify a break from their profound, theologically authoritative cosmovision, when all they had were some reports from ship captains and Marco Polo's journals?[27] For the enduring evidence of how that world view manifested itself in historical, geographic, and spiritual diagrams, look no further than the oft-cited thirteenth-century Ebstorf map, in which the known world overlays the body of a crucified Jesus Christ.

As mentioned above, the T-O maps were profoundly unhelpful for navigation, and look substantially different than the charts that sailors and merchants were using in their trade between the three continents. In the early fifteenth century, however, another form of world map reappeared on the European scene. Manuscript copies of the Greek geographer Ptolemy's second-century *Geographia* began to circulate in Europe. The 1407 translation of *Geographia* into Latin suggested a grid scheme as the basis for mapping, using coordinate points paired with empirical observations. Although this was a rediscovery, and not an absolute novelty, the timing was nonetheless auspicious.[28] Ptolemy's scheme lent method to the kind of cosmological mapping that motivated the T-O scheme, and opened up a reorientation towards navigation and trade in the very century when ideologically cosmological diagrams begin to falter. Ptolemy's *Geographia* suggested a T-O-scale diagram of the inhabited Mediterranean world that was not principally concerned with biblical authority, and created an opening for navigators to participate much more directly in sketching the *imago mundi*.

As Edson documents, this combination of the influence of sea charts and the renewed interest in coordinate mapping produced a fundamental division between symbolic meaning and the accurate representation of navigable space.[29] There were many squabbles, for instance, over whether the Indian Ocean was enclosed, or the cape of Africa was navigable. The mapmakers tweaked their theological interpretations, and played classical authority and scripture against each other, and both of them against the empirical observation of merchants and traders who

transited the known world. Crown and church become enamored with the wealth flowing from Asia, and accordingly become more flexible with regard to their theologically derived cartography.[30] This was the context in which, all of a sudden, rumors started to spread about a new continent, a New World . . .

The New World's emergence demanded its own place in the world image diagram, and that event forced a theological and ethnographic debate in an era that would rather focus on economy and trade. And at the vanguard of this debate, by sheer accident of history, was the most scholastic and tradition-bound of the major European monarchies, the kingdoms of Castile and Aragon.

Perhaps fittingly, the first European cartographer to represent this novelty on the world map did not hail from the Iberian Peninsula, or from the New World. In 1507, it was the German cosmographer Martin Waldseemüller who drew the map and named the continent not for Columbus or the Catholic monarchs, but rather for the Italian navigator Amerigo Vespucci.[31] In augmenting the European continent count to four, Waldseemüller gave Europe a kind of backwards version of Huidobro's *Altazor: Los cuatro puntos cardinales son tres: el Norte y el Sur* (The four cardinal points are three: the North and the South).[32] An even more speculative way to describe Waldseemüller's contribution to the developing sixteenth-century *imago mundi* is to assert, following the Mexican philosopher Edmundo O'Gorman, that he catalyzed the cartographic invention of America.

O'Gorman, in an essay originally published in 1958, talks about how this fourth continent, "América," was integrated into the European concept of the universe. This shift, which he calls "the invention of América," disrupted the entire European cosmology, and produced a break with the medieval scholastic interpretation of the world based on scripture and authority. O'Gorman's argument parallels Edson's own, although O'Gorman places the motive for this break entirely on the cognitive dissonance caused by the emergent American continent in the European mind. Even though O'Gorman's claims are exaggerated, his thesis at least sums up a certain understanding, from the perspective of the American continent, of the European world view: "The universe was no longer considered a constitutively foreign reality separated from humanity, and instead became an infinite space open to conquest and exploration; guided no longer by divine goodness, but rather by greed and efficiency measured to the scale of man, the former divine subject turned into secular master. Humanity, for the first time, claimed

sovereignty over universal reality."[33] O'Gorman describes this process of "inventing América" as European culture breaking the millennarian chains that it had previously forged for itself. It wasn't by accident, he remarks, that América erupted onto the historical horizon as the land of liberty and destiny.[34]

O'Gorman articulates this theory as a critique of Eurocentrism, and his line of reasoning was picked up and elaborated upon by many theorists of decoloniality. Europe re-codes this event as "discovery," claims possession of the continent, and thus launches a new era of Eurocentric imperialism.[35] But from the perspective of the speculative mode, there is another key point which is frequently lost in this sweeping critique of Eurocentrism and the sixteenth-century roots of the modern colonial world system: reciprocity. As Lewis and Wigen argue in *The Myth of Continents*: "In one sense there is nothing unusual about Eurocentrism; all geographical traditions are rooted in local concerns and ethnocentric conceits, and had China emerged as the hegemon of the modern world system, our meta-geographical concepts would surely reflect Sinocentrism."[36]

We must be careful, and guard against falling into traps that interpret "Eurocentric global geographies as stemming from some sort of grand intellectual conspiracy."[37] Walter Mignolo, who is occasionally guilty of that kind of grand conspiratorial thinking, says that "economic expansion, technology, and power, rather than truth, is what characterized European cartography early on, as well as the national cartography of the Americas at a later date." But what, then, is (or was) the truth of cartography? If the "truth" is not "economics, technology, and power," then what criteria of truth should we apply instead?[38]

I think a more humble and reciprocal position would say this: a culture reckons with novelty using the ideology that it's got. This is not to let imperialist ideology off the hook; on the contrary, the lasting impacts of asymmetries in the contact zone must animate any and every attempt to think contact in the Americas. From an SF perspective, it simply will not stand to grant European cartography a monopoly on technological and economic power. When grounded in the Americas, it is furthermore untenable to pretend that Andean civilizations like Tawantinsuyu—the Quechua name for the Incan State, the "Four Realms of the World"—did not have developed economies supported by some form of territorial mapping. As a variety of essays in *The History of Cartography* and *Latin American Cartography* unequivocally demonstrate, that false belief is simply untrue, and can only charitably be described as springing from a fount of historical ignorance.

When we combine this kind of reciprocal thinking with a recognition of Harley's most radical position—that maps project time and space onto a two-dimensional plane, and thus the mapping impulse extends "to representations of the cosmos"—we can begin to think otherwise.[39] In the spirit of the worldbuilding and reciprocity that animate this book, we can ask another question: What did the world look like from the Andes, for instance?[40]

ANDEAN MAPS

It is a profoundly challenging question: What did the world look like from the Andes in the fifteenth century? As we have seen, these kinds of questions are difficult to answer even in situations with pristinely preserved cultural sources and artifacts. When SF artists turn their aesthetic imaginations towards this theme, they also account for the world-spanning attempt to conquer the civilizations of the Americas.

The Andeans did not leave *mappa mundi* diagrams on animal skins or Ptolemaic grids on folios, so when it comes time for William Gustav Gartner to contribute his chapter on Andean mapmaking to the *History of Cartography*, he opens with a puzzle: how could the Incan state, a civilization that stretched from the equator to southern Chile, that developed intensive terraced agriculture across its famous "vertical archipelagos," that developed a road, post, and inn network that surpassed all other contemporary human creations of its kind . . . how could that culture not have a formal cartographic tradition? This leads to a parallel question: "How does one identify a map from a culture whose conceptions of space, geographic relations, modes of representation, and media are very different from the Western experience?"[41]

When we think about all of the information needed to contextualize the transition from Isidore's T-O map to the fifteenth-century Ptolemaic *mappa mundi*, the scope of Gartner's question takes shape. (This is why true reciprocity involves work, and why many of the most compelling SF authors develop a historical research practice.) In the earlier part of this chapter, we superficially referenced the details of medieval Christianity, Greek geography, and Mediterranean-Asian trade routes in order to merely begin to contextualize a few *imago mundi* . . . And that's just scratching the surface for this historical moment in the fifteenth century when the scale of maps proved insufficient to represent the universe.[42] It is in these moments that cartography truly becomes cosmological SF.

So how do we answer Gartner's question, especially as it relates to the so-called New World, and with the intellectual reciprocity that comparative humanistic inquiry demands? The answer, which seemed impossible only until it became inevitably obvious, is that Andean mapping was a ritualized, performed practice (because all mapping is ritualized, performed practice). Beyersdorff elaborates: "native Andeans have depended upon 'memory mapping' through the *muyuriy* [a circular reconnaissance route tracing cairns and landscape features] to portray, conserve, and manifest their relationship to the landscape."[43] Maps are made, unmade, circulated, and preserved through practice.

The most impressive example of this performed ritual mapping were the *ceque* lines, or ritualized pathways, that radiated outward from the Coricancha, the nucleus and heart of Incan authority in Cuzco. The Inca capital Cuzco (known alternately as "Cusco" in Spanish or "Qusqu" in Southern Quechua), the Coricancha palace within it, and the Tawantinsuyu-spanning *ceque* system without were all linked together in the most concrete fashion, through a combination of rocky outcroppings, shaped stones, and other distinctive landmarks known as *huacas*. The degree to which these elements were ontologically connected has been well documented in Andean scholarship, and McEwan has even suggested that one of the purposes of the *ceque* system was to impose an Inca cosmological order on conquered subjects.[44] Aveni, relying on the fundamental work of Zuidema and Urton, describes the *ceque* system as "the hallmark of urban social organization in Cuzco. One can envision it as a giant cosmographic map, a mnemonic device built into Cuzco's natural and man-made topography, which served to unify ideas about religion, social organization, calendar, hydrology, and astronomy in the Inca empire."[45]

If such a map is truly cosmological, then the uninitiated viewer must look to the stars for orientation, which is to say that we can look to astronomical phenomena to ground this sweeping unity of time and space in the "tangible and patterned elements of place" evident in the archeological and ethnohistorical record.[46] By looking at the sky, we can find the place where calendars and maps converge; where time, space, and theology condense into a world image. Accordingly, we're going to have to do another stint of cosmological groundwork, much like with the T-O map.

In order to understand the *ceque* system, we have to gain at least a rudimentary understanding of the society that produced it, and the local earth and sky conditions under which it was produced. This means

thinking, in what Niño Vargas, writing about the Ette and their hammocks, called "non-Euclidean models of the Amerindian multiverses."[47] This takes Harley up on his challenge to learn a new set of cartographic rules, where "although social concepts rather than Euclidean space are represented, the mapping of cosmic principles and rituals nevertheless embodied rational ordering and careful measurement and often geometrically precise execution."[48]

There are three key terms in this non-Euclidean system of measurement and reason in the Andes: elevation, diagonal opposition, and complementarity. These terms become rules and organizing principles in the Andean connections between society and nature.

According to Gartner and Gary Urton, the first term, elevation, "is terrestrial and is rooted in the contrasting life zones across the Andes."[49] Principal to creating those contrasts are the 4,000-meter peaks that shoot up from the Pacific coast, forming the Andes mountain range's spine, only to drop back down into the massive Amazon river basin, all of this in the width of just several hundred kilometers. John Murra, the pathbreaking anthropologist of the Andes, has described this as the "vertical archipelago" form of social organization. Gartner summarizes it this way:

> The spatial organization of Andean political economies is closely tied to the specific configuration of bioclimatic life zones, since each zone has a unique set of resources and different production potential. Central Andean peoples developed reciprocal relationships with other communities in different vertical and horizontal zones. Such an arrangement maximized access to various resources and production zones and minimized risk. This economic organization of the landscape is termed "complementarity," which is the simultaneous control of several geographically dispersed ecological tiers by a single ethnic or sociopolitical group.[50]

Mumford lends even more specificity to the connection between geographical elevation and agricultural organization in the Tawantinsuyu, going so far as to affirm:

> The landscape of the Andes imposed its own rules on society. In an environment where no single place produced all the necessities of life, communities often controlled scattered

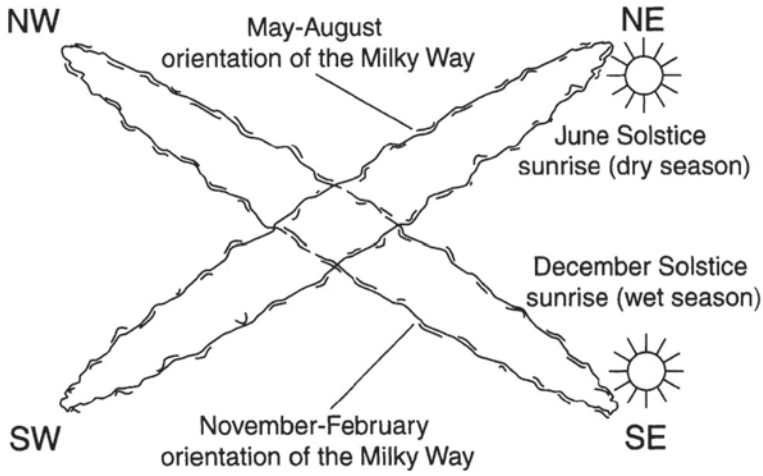

Fig. 7. *The Milky Way's Apparent Seasonal Rotation*. In addition to the Milky Way's nightly rotation, over the course of a year it again divides the heavens into quarters. First appearing in the evening sky during the dry season, the Milky Way (Mayu) stretches from the northeast to the southwest. During the rainy season, its early evening orientation is from the southeast to the northwest. These season rotations find correlates in the terrestrial, social, and cosmological organization. Reproduced with permission from William Gustav Gartner's "Mapmaking in the Central Andes," in vol. 22, part 3 of *History of Cartography* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), after Gary Urton's *At the Crossroads of the Earth and the Sky: An Andean Cosmology* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981).

> settlements dedicated to producing specific things: llamas and alpacas on the high plateau, potatoes at a lower elevation, maize below that, vegetables and coca leaves in the hot lowlands.[51]

If the first term, "elevation," expresses the topography of the Andean terrain, the second term, "diagonal opposition," arises from the "essential connection between Andean systems of spatial reckoning and the movement of the heavenly bodies."[52] It is important to remember that we are talking about the southern hemisphere, and the southern sky, where there hasn't been a bright pole star visible to the naked eye in millennia. According to Gartner, following Urton:

> In the absence of a bright star near the celestial south pole, Quechua peoples and their ancestors organized the sky by

> reference to the Milky Way, called Mayu or the "celestial river," and its apparent cruciform rotations. In a twenty-four-hour period, the Milky Way forms two intersecting intercardinal axes that divide the heavens into quarters. Since the plane of the Milky Way is inclined in relation to the earth's axis, the stars of one quarter will rise as those of the opposite quarter set as the earth rotates. Astronomical phenomena can be tracked with respect to these quarters, which create a systematic means for the spatial and temporal reckoning of the world and its natural and social rhythms. This principle is central to pre-Columbian spatial reckoning. The diagonal opposition mirrors the inferred marriage and residence rules for the Inka settlement of the Cuzco Valley. The quartered circle is a form often replicated in the urban design of the Andean cosmopolis.[53]

Both terms—"elevation" and "diagonal opposition"—imply a form of complementarity where concepts are internally divided into two parts, upper and lower, or *hanan* and *hurin* in Andean terms. And both terms produce a cosmological grounding for spatial and temporal organization. Much like it would be unreasonable to expect someone to understand all of the nuances of Christian cosmology in one day, so too is this sketch necessarily brief and superficial.[54] The important point is that this context of vertical archipelagos, astronomical observation of the Milky Way, and a developed notion of complementarity created an Andean world image based on four units, not three as in the Christian T-O maps. Instead of continents, the Incan state, called Tawantinsuyu, divided the known world into four *suyus*: "sections," or "parts." This is what the name "Tawantinsuyu" means: the "four parts [of the world] together." Thus, the Incas divided the world into a quartered circle with complementary relationships along diagonal axes, and the celestial river helped organize the division of the realm.

This cosmovision, a four-part division of the world based on complementarity, was the background against which the Andeans interpreted the arrival of the Europeans. Some of the most direct evidence we have of this cosmovision, however, comes from a post-Conquest document that includes a hybrid European-Andean *mappa mundi* (see fig. 8).

Guaman Poma de Ayala, the Quechua nobleman who was the author of said map and the 1,200-page chronicle that contains it, has generated much interest in colonial Latin American studies, and he is indeed a

Fig. 8. Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala, *Mapa Mundi of the Indies of Peru*, in Guaman Poma, *El primer nueva corónica y buen gobierno* (1615/1616). Det Kongelige Bibliotek, Copenhagen, GKS 2232 kvart, 983–984 / 1001–1002.

fascinating figure. His manuscript, called the *Primer nueva corónica y buen gobierno* (*First New Chronicle and Good Government*), was produced for King Philip III of Spain in 1615, but it was lost until the early twentieth century, when it turned up in a European library archive. According to Rolena Adorno, the map and the book that contains it aspire to "a new social-political-religious regime superimposed on the foundations of an autochthonous American order."[55] That is, Guaman Poma attempts to synthesize Andean and Catholic Spanish cosmovisions. His manuscript is certainly a document of the *longue durée* contact zone, and it has inspired a series of key interpretations that are fundamental to Andean historiography and Latin American studies generally.[56]

Some recent attempts to recover Guaman Poma as an "authentic" Andean voice, however, sidestep some uncomfortable truths: Guaman Poma was a vocal Christian (although a fierce critic and satirist of the Catholic clergy) and a willing participant in Cristóbal de Albornoz's extirpation campaign against traditional Andean beliefs and practices, although, as Adorno argues, the later chapters of the chronicle shift from enthusiastic support to outright condemnation of the extirpation

campaign once Francisco de Ávila assumed responsibility for it in the early seventeenth century.[57]

Guaman Poma's manuscript makes some extraordinary claims, including that the Andean peoples were Christian before the arrival of the Spanish, and for this reason "there was no such thing as conquest."[58] He makes his "world map of the Indies," itself a complicated turn of the phrase, in order to diagram the fundamental elements of Andean cosmology and geography. It is, ultimately, a cosmological diagram for reparations.

When it came time to make sense of the so-called New World within a cosmologically consistent framework, Guaman Poma had a significant advantage over Ptolemy-inspired reworkings of the T-O *mappa mundi*. As a native Quechua speaker (who wrote fairly fluently in Spanish), he had a readily available quadripartite division of the known world. In his argument, Andean fourfold complementarity replaces the European triple hierarchy: trinity encountered a fourth term.

Adorno has made a definitive argument about how Andean concepts of elevation, diagonal opposition, and complementarity express themselves in Guaman Poma's hybrid chronicle, although her terminology is slightly different. Guaman Poma arranges his pictorial icons—around 400 of them—on a "grid of Andean spatial symbolism."[59] Adorno painstakingly demonstrates how the Andean *mappa mundi* "can be resolved into a single symbolic model: the opposition upper/lower (*hanan/hurin* in Andean terms)."[60] This symbolic model works on diagonals, acknowledges complementary spaces, and privileges upper over lower. Adorno's reading goes on to study the systematic destruction of this Andean model by the unfolding of the Spanish Conquest: "Thus, through the fragmentation and subversion of the original design, [Guaman Poma] shows how colonization turned the autochthonous cultural and social order into chaos and ruin."[61] In other words, the Spanish colonizers entered into that symbolic order and threw everything into disarray.

This destruction leads to Guaman Poma's refrain "no hay remedio" ("there is no remedy"), and his proposal for restitution. As an alternative, Guaman Poma proposes his own universal order based on a quadripartite division of space organized not around Jerusalem, but rather around Cuzco, the heart of the Tawantinsuyu, or the "four realms" of the Incan state. In his book, he recommends a universal just government, divided following the logic of four *suyus*. Guaman Poma does not publish companion *mappa mundi* of the other three parts of his proposed universal monarchy, although he does include a diagram of the "pontifical mundo" that Mignolo and others have glossed.[62]

From the Tawantinsuyu, Guaman Poma extrapolates a new quadripartite world order: Philip III as world monarch, with four sovereign realms, each under the jurisdiction of a local prince: Europe under the "Roman Prince" (the Pope), Africa under a "Black Prince," Asia under the Muslim Gran Turk, and finally the Americas under an Incan prince, hopefully Guaman Poma's own son. Thus Philip III becomes the universal monarch, and the seat of his reign will become Cuzco (which is, of course, the center of the universe). This is a subtle displacement: a universal Catholic monarchy based not in Jerusalem or Rome, but rather in the Sacred Valley of the Andes.[63]

Of course, this scheme did not come to be; that is why I am proposing imagining it as an exercise in speculative cartography, of cosmological SF. It is useful not only as a historical exercise, but also because it can orient us today as we deal, once again, with unprecedented novelty while grounding ourselves in a concrete if unfulfilled demand for restitution. The tendencies that Adorno identifies as crucial to interpreting Guaman Poma's map seem to expand deep into the Andean archive, and ripple across archeological traces into the past, far beyond the Incan horizon. During the pre-European colonial period, these concepts—again, following Urton and Gartner: elevation, diagonal opposition, and complementarity—most clearly and visibly express themselves in specifically Andean media: *ceque* lines and *khipu*.[64]

So, to answer "what mental model may have played the role of a *mappa mundi* for Guamán Poma"—something that shaped his thought, even if it wasn't directly connected to his immediate empirical reality—I think our preliminary answer would have to be the *ceque* system and the *khipus* that formed their material support. Guaman Poma even illustrated dozens of *khipus*, each displayed by its keeper and interpreter, the *khipukamayuq* (see fig. 9).

FROM *CEQUES* TO *KHIPUKAMAYUQ*

The influential intellectual historian Roger Chartier theorized the "material support" presupposed by the rise of European literary intellectual culture.[65] Edson's study of the world map helps us see that, in addition to the requisite material support, the cartographic traditions of the Mediterranean also relied upon a theological framework, which we have expanded to encompass a broader concept of cosmological support. Beyond the borders of monotheistic, Euclidean and Cartesian

Fig. 9. Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala, *Khipucamayuq*, in Guaman Poma, *El primer nueva corónica y buen gobierno* (1615/1616). Det Kongelige Bibliotek, Copenhagen, GKS 2232 kvart, 360 / 362.

space, the cosmological support for Andean cartography looks very different, and includes structures like the monumental *ceque* system.

The *ceque* system was a series of lines—ritualized pathways, really—that expanded outward from the Coricancha and traversed the entire Incan realm. As such, the *ceque* lines presented Tawantinsuyu as a territory which radiates from Cuzco out to the far-flung *huacas*, or sacred landmarks.[66] The *huacas*, in turn, form points and horizons in a cosmological cartography that "enjoins both lived and representational space."[67] The *ceque* lines and the *huacas* that orient them exist within a rich and dense symbolic universe. They are connected in various in-

stances to trade and tribute routes; celestial observations, often paired with astronomical calendars to indicate agriculturally significant dates; ancestors, both regional and of royal descent imposed through conquest; *apus* and supernatural phenomena; and irrigation flows through the folds and valleys of the Andes mountain range, to name but several of the most prominent.[68]

According to Brian Bauer, it would be almost impossible to overestimate the importance of the role that the *ceque* system played in building the pre-conquest Andean world. In his now-canonical study *The Sacred Landscape of the Inca*, he demonstrates how "the Cusco *huacas* and *ceques* served as a means to control space and time, as well as a means through which the social order of the Inca could be reaffirmed."[69] Although we have less direct and archival evidence testifying to the structures of that social order, it is clear that like the Spanish-led colonial Latin American order, the Tawantinsuyu built infrastructure so as to shape social relations. Jeremy Ravi Mumford and Daniel Nemser, among others, have studied the "geometrizing colonial space" of sixteenth-century Latin America, where Spanish and Catholic authorities imposed an architectonic logic tasked with orienting and directing the circulation and extraction of bodies, commodities, and value.[70] The *ceque* system also formed a sort of cosmological monument, one based on non-Euclidean geometry, as opposed to the geometric colonial space of the post-Toledo Indian settlements.[71] According to these scholars, the *ceque* system is the most geographically expansive archeological trace of that Andean system.

A more contested line of interpretation links the *ceque* system to the other grand and opaque artifact of Incan and Andean worldbuilding, the *khipus*. The *khipus*, or *quipus*, were highly structured collections of strings and knots that served as recording devices; the debate over whether they qualify as writing per se or were rather mnemonic aids that were performatively interpreted has come to define the contours of Andean studies.[72] Instead of making a definitive pronouncement on this question, I will focus, instead, on how *ceque* and *khipu* came together, perhaps like how a cross and three land masses around the Mediterranean came together for Isidore. Zuidema himself proposed this cartographic and intellectual superimposition:

> The *ceque* system has been compared to a giant quipu, laid out over the Cuzco valley and the surrounding hills that served in the local representation of the Incan cosmologi-

> cal system, in its spatial, hierarchical and temporal aspects. Not only can the *ceque* system be compared metaphorically to quipu but every local group did in fact record its *ceque* system, that is, its political, religious and calendrical organization, on a quipu.[73]

Khipus have captivated a broad audience, far beyond the world of pre-Conquest and colonial Andean studies. They have a significant cameo, for instance, in Charles Mann's bestselling *1491: New Revelations of the Americas before Columbus*, and one appears in the display case of Silicon Valley's Computer History Museum.[74] *Khipus* have also been a particularly suggestive theme for poetic interventions, most famously by the Chilean artist Cecilia Vicuña.[75] *Khipus* form the Andean locus of a broader debate about writing and civilization in the Americas.[76] Some of the most promising recent *khipu* scholarship, however, sidesteps the vexed theorization of writing and difference to instead propose a diachronic media studies approach to the field. Such approaches begin to consider the *khipu* as a possible cosmological diagram of the Tawantinsuyu (the four realms of the Incan state), as *huacas* knotted up along a string.

Galen Brokaw's *A History of the Khipu* is emblematic of this trend, in that his methodology cuts the Gordian knot of the *khipu*-writing debate. Instead of arguing that "writing" must expand its concept in order to contain the *khipu* as a written form, Brokaw simply declares *khipu* to be a form of secondary media, and that the use of secondary media, broadly conceived, tends to be a hallmark of hegemonic societies. Secondary media are any form of communication that does not rely on direct interpersonal contact; that is, face-to-face speech. The political consequences of this idea are significant: control over secondary media makes hegemony possible; hegemony is delimited by the media in which it operates.[77] Brokaw writes the history of the *khipu* as one would write the history of any distant secondary medium; furthermore, his commitment to thinking *khipu* historically and diachronically leads him to develop a more generalized media theory: "any given form of media develops in a dialogical relationship to the ideological institutions with which it is associated," and "media and their ideological institutions are mutually constituting and interdependent."[78] These declarations might sound like old hat to media theorists or critical geographers, but when Brokaw thinks through their implications in the particular case of Andean secondary media, it leads to some powerful and generative revela-

tions, including ones that suggest thinking about *khipus* and *ceques* as Andean cosmological cartographies.

Although Brokaw does not link the *khipu* to the *ceques*, his media history of the *khipu* suggests certain homologies between secondary media and architectural practice.[79] This is part of his broader argument that *khipus* are semiotically rich media knotted up with complexity and meaning.[80] Three other points are also worth highlighting. First, Brokaw's genre theory of *khipu* provides a corrective heuristic that accounts for differentiated complexity and the uneven distribution of *khipu* literary practices.[81] In short: not all Andeans could read *khipus*. Second, he insists on variations in *khipu* literacy across the Andes and across the history of the region: not all *khipus* functioned the same way.[82] Finally, the *khipu*, as a medium, has trouble signifying outside of the context of Tawantinsuyu.[83] Taken together, these three points help contemporary audiences to "discard the semiotic prejudices imposed on us by an alphabetic mentality."[84] This connects to a larger affordance that is necessary in order to perceive the Andean world of a *khipukamayuq*, as described by Martínez Cereceda:

> Por otra parte, los lenguajes—en especial los visuales, los táctiles y los corporales—a través de los cuales se registraban y se descodificaban los mensajes inscritos en las superficies de las piedras, madera o textil (por mencionar algunos) apelaban a lógicas y universos de significación que parecieran igualmente no haber tenido un referente previo y directo en la experiencia europea.[85]
>
> All of the languages—and especially the visual, tactile and corporal ones—through which Andeans coded and deciphered their messages on stone, wood, or weavings (to just mention a few media) appealed to logics and cosmovisions that had no apparent direct reference point in European experience.

While Brokaw writes a preliminary draft of *khipu*'s media history, Gary Urton's *Inka History in Knots: Reading Khipus as Primary Sources* (2017) is the capstone volume of a decades-long career dedicated to studying those Andean artifacts.[86] Although Urton's book represents the culmination of his life's work, it is still just an early and tentative attempt to write a primary-source account of Tawantinsuyu. This first attempt is based principally on *khipus* read as accounting documents,

the "paper trail" of the state not inscribed in codexes but rather twisted and tied into knots. Unsurprisingly, the figure of the *khipukamayuq* is the enigmatic absence at the heart of Urton's book: they were the makers of the media we study who appear to us in no other form than the knots they tied.

Urton weaves an image of a bureaucratic tapestry, following census threads as the Incan state expands across landscapes and elevations. He suggests an *Annales*-inspired methodology, telling the story of Tawantinsuyu through its records; accordingly, the accountant becomes if not the protagonist, then the whisper of human subjectivity who organizes the records. Urton thus proposes a tentative description of the *khipukamayuc* mentality:

> As we will see repeatedly in the following chapters, from the pairing and opposition of S- and Z-knots to the pairing or copying of entire *khipus*, dualism was deeply embedded in the sign units and structures of the *khipus*. The daily construction, display, manipulation, and performance of these encoded structures by the *khipukamayuqs* continuously reinstantiated those structures not only within Inka society, at the local, regional, and state levels, but also in the minds—i.e., the modes of thought and the construction of meaning—of the *khipu*-keepers themselves. . . . These signs and structures, and their performances, constituted what we could term, after the French sociologist Michel Foucault, the "discourse," or the "discursive formations," in and through which society and its relations of power were continuously constituted and instantiated throughout Tawantinsuyu.[87]

The *khipukamayuq* made and remade Tawantinsuyu through knots and performances, similar to how the census makes and remakes our contemporary society. Thus the *khipukamayuqkuna* were central agents of State power in Tawantinsuyu: through administrative tasks as banal as "categorizing, naming, counting, and recording statistics in knots and colors," the *khipukamayuqkuna* "methodically shaped and reshaped the world of the Inkas and their subjects."[88] Guaman Poma's *Nueva corónica* testifies to their importance in image and in word. Furthermore, Urton argues that the *khipukamayucs* occupied an active, creative role in state governance: "In fact, they served as catalysts of social formation: they actively created and legitimized the social formations

that they recounted from their khipus."[89] In this observation, Urton—following a long-standing tradition in Andean studies—elevates complementarity and reciprocity to an ontological principle:

> I think these structural elements of cord recording would have constituted powerful paradigms for the construction of meaning in cord accounts. In this sense, they represented critical structural features that not only were manipulated by the cord keepers in their constructions of meanings but also, at the same time, shaped those meanings. In short, there was a reciprocity between shaping and being shaped. The structures of empire were not created anew with each new cord account; rather, certain arrangements, patterns, or structures were continuously enacted and reproduced in cord construction and manipulation.[90]

This account makes the *khipukamayuq* sound relatively analogous to the cosmographers of the Iberian empires, whose fortunes were rising at the very moment that the *khipukamayuqkuna* saw their way of life threatened with annihilation. Maria Portuondo describes cosmography broadly, encompassing "what we might recognize from our modern perspective as geography, cartography, ethnography, natural history, history, and certain elements of astronomy"; Christopher Columbus's son, Hernando Colón, was one of the early post-1492 Spanish cosmographers.[91] The European cosmographers were, following Portuondo, true worldbuilders:

> Cosmography was, in short, the science that explained the earthly sphere by locating it within a mathematical grid bounding space and time. Natural phenomena and human actions that defied mathematization were described; words were the tools that took the phenomena from the realm of the unknown into the known. The relatively young discipline of cosmography would strain under the avalanche of new knowledge that resulted from the discovery of the New World.[92]

Could a *khipukamayuq* be considered an Andean cosmographer? Is the *khipukamayuq* a worldbuilder? This is exactly what Daniel Salvo proposes in "Quipucamayoc," his knot-based textile-punk tale, which

extrapolates from Andean media technologies. Salvo is an important figure in the Peruvian SF scene, and was a signatory to the recently launched Qhipa Pacha manifesto of Andean and Amazonian futurism.[93] Already in 2014, Salvo had published an anthology of his collected SF stories called *El primer peruano en el espacio* (*The First Peruvian in Space*). "Quipucamayoc" is the final story in that collection, although it was originally published online almost a decade prior, in 2005, on an Andean website called Cyberayllu.

Cyberayllu was an early online SF community whose name playfully joined a modern buzzword—cyber—with a basic unit of Andean social organization—the *ayllu*. In the words of Cyberayllu's original members, the website meant to "combinar tradición y futuro con su dosis de huachafería"[94] ("combine tradition and the future with a proper dose of *huachafería*"). Like *ayllu*, *la huachafería* is another properly Peruvian concept. In fact, it is such a Peruvian concept that the novelist and Nobel laureate Mario Vargas Llosa published a dense 1,300-word definition of it in a 1983 article in *El Comercio* that does everything possible to resist giving a concise description of the term. In that much-anthologized and now notorious article, Vargas Llosa intentionally defies a summary definition and only explains the concept through class-distinguished examples of ostentatious pretension, like apartments in Miami, telenovelas, and pomade—three of Vargas Llosa's respective examples of upper-, middle-, and lower-class *huachafería*.[95]

Salvo has described his story as a work of "retro Andean science fiction" which imagines a textile version of *The Matrix*.[96] If "Quipucamayoc" is *huachafo*, the *huachafería* resides in the desire for an Andean *Matrix* made out of Peruvian technology. In this sense, "Quipucamayoc" is perhaps exemplary of the SF produced by Cyberayllu: it imagines the title character as an Andean cosmographic worldbuilder. Salvo's story opens with the arrival of a Cusqueño *khipukamayuq* at Cerro Azul, the coastal home of the recently conquered Guacro people. The action is set sometime in the fifteenth century, the conquering state is Tawantinsuyu, and there are not yet any *viracochas* (as the Spaniards would come to be called) on the continent. This is a story about inter-Andean conflict, and the Incan *khipukamayuq* from Cuzco, Kuntur Ñahui, receives an icy but resigned welcome from the local Guacro leadership. Pomacha, a young Guacro prince and previously heir apparent, stews with rage at the forced submission to Incan rule, even though the process is ritualized and pacific.

Pomacha is consumed with a desire for vengeance, but he also realizes that he must play a long game. He volunteers to become Kuntur Ñahui's

apprentice, a *khipukamayuq* in training. He thinks this is the clearest and most unassuming path into the structures of Incan rule. Pomacha's education is long, and he vacillates between the easy embrace of assimilation and the sacred duty to stoke the embers of his rage.

His apprenticeship also reveals to him the secrets of Incan history, truths coded into the knots of the *khipus*; for instance, the clandestine and forgotten massacre of another subjugated culture that had a competing form of recording history. If there is a universal experience of true literacy, it might be this: the moment when the reader first deciphers the horrible deeds encrypted in the archive. In Pomacha's case, the knots betray those deeds' existence and narrate the demise of an entire culture, sacrificial victims to the Incan monopoly on official history. These secrets—the mute traces of previous conquest—are a classified portion of the textile archive, and are only legible to the trained and loyal agents of the Tawantinsuyu.

Pomacha eventually earns the official position of *khipukamayuq*; the last we hear of him, he is preparing to introduce bad knots into the *khipus*, a textile virus tied into the map of Incan authority, some bad fiber twisted into the fabric of the cosmos. Not content for the Guacro to become one more forgotten knot, Pomacha purposefully corrupts the medium itself.

The bad knots spread, multiply and mutate, infecting *khipus* across all four corners of the Incan realm. Pomacha's sabotage creates a supremely unstable situation, where maps no longer function, *ceques* no longer orient, and the entire Tawantinsuyu is adrift, weak, and vulnerable to outside conquest. Guaman Poma's lament repeats, this time with an autochthonous causality: *no hay remedio*.

Salvo's narrative then jumps to a more familiar cast of characters. Atahualpa, the brother of the Inca Huáscar, is the first to fully comprehend Pomacha's vengeance: without the *khipus* as maps of the Tawantinsuyu, the Inca Huáscar has lost his principal instrument of power, and the realm is now spiritually and bureaucratically adrift. The story closes with Atahualpa plotting a coup against Huáscar, in an effort to take advantage of the sociopolitical instability. Thus the story becomes a just-so story of Atahualpa's war of succession against Huáscar, which concluded, coincidentally, in 1532, at the very moment when Pizarro's party advanced toward Cajamarca to capture Atahualpa and set the conquest of Peru into motion. Yet Salvo does not narrate those events; he closes his tale with Atahualpa victorious, and only the faintest rumors of some *viracochas* who had returned after a mythological absence . . .

Pomacha's revenge against his Incan overlords thus has the unexpected result of facilitating the Spanish Conquest, yet Salvo leaves that crucial conclusion uncommented upon. The author instead maintains that suspense in order to linger in a tragic and even cynical assertion of Andean agency: the world's first black-hat hacker wove a virus into a textile GIS, and as a result, Pomacha's knotty Trojan horse ripped apart the very fabric of the Incan cosmos.

Salvo's most unsettling and wildly speculative conclusion seems to be: even if we could decipher the *khipus*, they would tell us nothing more nor less than information is power, and that corruption infects

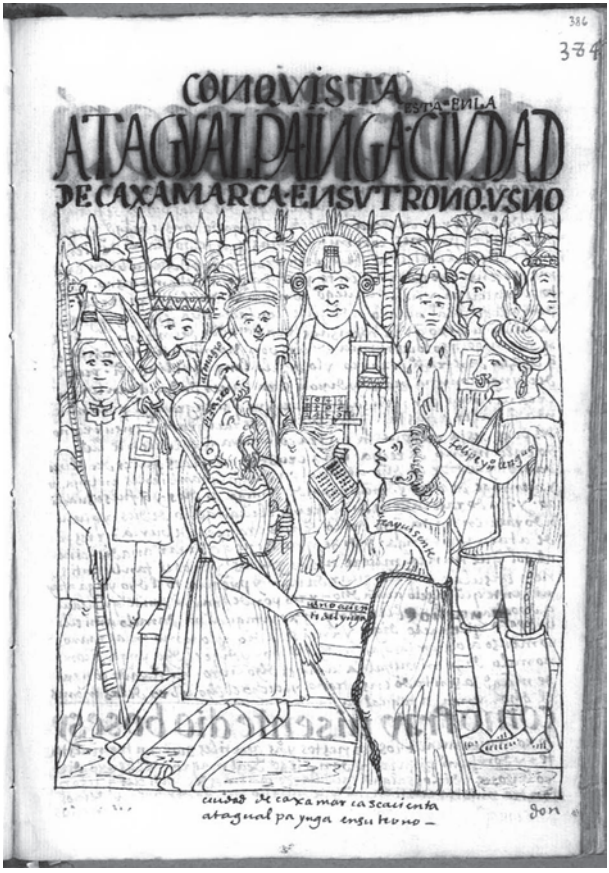

Fig. 10. Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala, *Cajamarca*, in Guaman Poma, *El primer nueva corónica y buen gobierno* (1615/1616). Det Kongelige Bibliotek, Copenhagen, GKS 2232 kvart, 384 /386.

us all. In other words: the *khipus* are another map of humanity itself. Salvo elevates corruption and computation to universal themes, and demythologizes the *khipu-ceque* nexus as a *huachafa* network; for this reason, I think the story will become part of the universal SF canon. Salvo's alternative history even squares with certain aspects of the archival record, as Brokaw recalls: "In 1542, native informants from Cuzco explained to the Spanish governor Vaca de Castro that part of [Atahualpa's] persecution included burning all of the historiographic *khipu* and killing all of the *khipukamayuq* that could be found (Collapiña 1974: 20). Thus, the Incan civil war was waged not only in terms of political influence and military might, but also in the material record of the historiographic *khipu*."[97]

Absent from the story, however, are those key terms that Adorno, Urton and others insist are crucial to understanding Andean cosmovision: complementarity and reciprocity. To return to Urton's frequent point that the *khipu* form itself also participated in Andean reciprocity, and were most likely created in paired sets: Salvo's story only tells half the tale.[98] Would it even be conceivable to imagine an individual intervention into *khipu* media history? Could one single *khipukamayuq* hack an entire medium?

THE DARK JESTER RIDES A TROJAN HORSE INTO CAJAMARCA

Nothing in the archeological or historiographic record suggests that this might be the case. And so Salvo's "Quipucamayoc" must meet its complement, a story that will provide both opposition (to the notion of a single rogue *khipukamayuq*) and reciprocity (to the notion of a rich Andean cosmovision).

This complementary narrative must be a story of knots become not machine or media, but the very fabric of the cosmos. It must come from the other side of the tapestry; *hurin* to Salvo's *hanan*; in our case, the other side of the historical event that Pomacha precipitates: the other side of Cajamarca. This, in fact, is the story Wilson Harris tells in *The Dark Jester*: a voyage through the fabric of the cosmos shaped like a *khipu*.[99]

Wilson Harris is not primarily known as a science fiction author, and he has more frequently been claimed by a magical realist tradition. But that is an uncomfortable fit, especially given his complaints that the de-

mand for any kind of realism becomes "a series of explanations which falsify the Latin-American reality." Harris instead seeks to promote a continental American aesthetic that takes the "form of reality which can give something new to universal literature."[100] The American novelty Harris seeks is a properly decolonial novum, one which Jonathan Highfield has suggested combines the critical postcolonial sensibilities of critics like Homi K. Bhabha with South American forms.[101] For Antonio Benítez-Rojo, Harris is emblematic of the kinds of narrative polyrhythms that define Caribbean culture, or what Benítez-Rojo famously called *The Repeating Island*.

Benítez-Rojo presents Harris as a writer who works in the Caribbean tradition of contrapuntal narratives, much like Alejo Carpentier and Fernando Ortiz. What distinguishes Harris was his moment of narrative epiphany experienced in the Caribbean jungle of Guyana. As Benítez-Rojo argues, Harris's early novel *The Palace of the Peacock* was written in the wake of that epiphany, and it provides a form and voice that would accompany Harris throughout his literary career. In Benítez-Rojo's reading of that early novel, a split protagonist reaches El Dorado and returns, carrying with themselves the burden of that vision as a weight inscribed onto an uneasily fused Being.[102] Benítez-Rojo elaborates: "And so we may read Wilson Harris's text as a voyage to establish contact with the Other, who holds a legitimate right to the earth and with whom one has to come to terms before one can have a roomier sort of nationality, one that fits the country's territorial boundaries."[103]

Any such voyage is treacherous, and Harris's literary explorations—the same ones that led him to seek a worldmaking polyrhythmic path for his prose—also led him into exile in London, where *The Palace of the Peacock* became the first volume of his early masterwork *The Guyana Quartet*.[104] In any case, Harris's narratives are "to be read like poetry, to be seized by the imagination in a series of intuitions, not subjected to a rational accounting that would convert moments of revelatory insight to some commonplace of mysticism."[105]

Several critics have interpreted Harris's novels with and against poststructuralist thinkers like Derrida and Lacan; but I think Jodi Byrd's interpretation is more accurate about the author's actual relationship to theory and philosophy: "He seeks to supplement and transform the British novel of empire by existing within the space opened through deconstruction rather than tracing the specter to which deconstruction gestures."[106] Harris's subject is the British novel of empire because he writes in English about Guyana, along with many other places. His nov-

els weave together thematically, and build upon one another to create a unique and otherworldly language.

That language, however unexpectedly, is not theoretical. Harris is not a theorist seeking to describe an "author function," so crucial to Michel Foucault's understanding of the postmodern world order. The author instead channels that function, and his characters dissolve the authorial ego. In an essay important enough that he included it in his public archive at the University of Texas at Austin, Harris describes that process: "The author becomes himself a fiction created by his own characters, the authoritarian model is broken and in breaking it, one has become susceptible to a tradition which one has apparently lost."[107] That tradition is literary and imaginative, but it is also profoundly committed to history and truth. It develops outside of what Walter Benjamin, in his "Theses on the Philosophy of History," called "homogenous empty time."[108] Harris's universe is not hospitable to Kantian subjects displacing themselves across Cartesian planes. It instead is constructed using Francis Yates's *Art of Memory*, and carries the family function as a seed, a past that makes demands on the present.[109] Harris lends voice to the native characters who inhabit that space (a space developed across many of his novels, and called the Void in *The Dark Jester*). Speaking through the Dreamer, the Void's collected songs form a chorus of "innermost, questioning, calling" voices.[110] The venue is Harris's "World Theatre," and the show is a complex dialogue spanning "the roots of tradition."[111]

If all of Harris's novels together form what A. J. M Bundy has called "a single coherent Dreamingbook of culture," *The Dark Jester* might be Harris's densest and most condensed expression of that moral and aesthetic commitment to breaking the "habit of conquest."[112] In this short novel, Pizarro visits Atahualpa at Cajamarca; this immediately poses the question of why Harris decided, late in his literary career, to turn his attention to the 1532 encounter between the Tawantinsuyu and the armed entrepreneurs of Spanish empire. One possible explanation is that Harris had been struck, three decades prior, by his reading of Coulthard's abridged translation of Guaman Poma's *New Chronicle and Good Government*, and felt the need to return to those specific players in the "World Theatre" only once Harris had fully integrated the lessons he learned from the Andean chronicler. What is clear is that Harris's 1969 review of Guaman Poma's enigmatic text already anticipated the major themes of *The Dark Jester*: "Interwoven in [Guaman Poma's] narrative is implied an enduring caveat: the need to digest in the psyche of man the obscure ages of men like seals of fate: inconspicuous as the

seed of a tree but related to fire as the rocks on this planet are related to the stars in and beyond our most distant galaxies."[113]

Jonathan Highfield provides an orienting summary to *The Dark Jester*:

> In this adventure the narrator is guided by the Dark Jester over ladders in time to see the assassination of Atahualpa's weaponless court by Pizarro and his soldiers, the executions of Atahualpa and Tupac Amaru, the arrival of the inquisition in the Americas, and the passage of Cortez through the Yucatan on his way to Tenochtitlan. Throughout the narrative, the specters of Lost Cities haunt the Dreamer, the Lost Cities functioning both as the colonial and postcolonial avarice to plunder the history and wealth of non-European nations, but also as an architectural passage into other histories.[114]

There are other plot points in the novel, but more importantly, as Jodi Byrd has argued, "in Harris's novels, history cannot be accessed through plot, 'fact,' or realism, and responsibility to history has wide-reaching ramifications beyond assigning guilt or innocence, or reconciling victim and oppressor."[115] Byrd describes Harris's style as contrapuntal, complete with themes and variations; his reflection on Cajamarca unfolds as an exploration of responsibility in the aftermath of the Conquest.[116]

In order to capture the expanse of this moral and historical tapestry, Harris sets into motion an intercultural kaleidoscope, spanning African, pre-Columbian American, Greco-Roman, and biblical traditions, in addition to its firm axis in European Renaissance aesthetics. The principal characters, as mentioned, are the Dreamer (our narrator) and the Dark Jester (the Dreamer's own guide). These two characters reside in the Void; all other characters are "shapes of lust" whom the Dreamer observes. For us readers, these lustful shapes appear to be historical figures: Pizarro, Atahualpa, Pakal, Cortés, Tupac Amaru, kidnapped Africans dragged across the Middle Passage . . .

Thematically, *The Dark Jester* explores the unification of opposites, the power of language in human liberation, and alternative levels of consciousness. All of these themes straddle permeable boundaries between, to name the most pressing ones: human and animal, past and present, time and space, myth and history, and imagination and intuition. Harris's principal interpreter, Hena Maes-Jelinek, has described this exploration of ambivalence across universal themes as "the laby-

rinth of universality," a fitting name that connects Harris to the metaphysical and ontological puzzles of his South American compatriot, Jorge Luis Borges.[117]

In *The Dark Jester,* Harris calls his literary art, alternately, Jest and Imagination. That alternation itself must be highlighted, because the literary prose's fundamental rules rely on inversion, reversal, and alternative. The playfulness is apparent in the first pages, the so-called Epigraph to *The Dark Jester* by the Dreamer, where a voice asks: what is Jest? and responds, cryptically, "Jest is miraculously potent in the most serious of arts which depict reverses in accepted habit in exploring the enigmas of universality."[118] Jest, it seems, can only express itself by jesting; somehow, in the reversal and seeming contradiction between playful jest and the "most serious of arts," the Dreamer will express and explore the enigmas of universality. Later on, the Jester himself advises the Dreamer: "To see and to read a mute, indescribable signal, is the art of Jest."[119]

The Dark Jester builds a dreamworld encounter between Atahualpa and Pizarro out of those mute signals. If we read "Quipucamayoc" as a prequel to the encounter at Cajamarca, then *The Dark Jester* becomes a meditation on the mythical contours of that event, and the ripples it sends out across space-time.[120] Harris eases his readers into what he will soon call the world of Atahualpan form, and careful attention to the Dreamer's Fragment will train readers on how to perceive that pseudo-Andean concept. For instance, the Dreamer says, "Clearly it seems to me—in a clarity of Dream that is dark and troubled—the matters of unfinished terminations, resurrections, the oddest re-births, arouse at best a notion of myth that is passive and unexplored."[121] As above, where jest demands serious attention, here clarity expresses a clear understanding of a dark and troubled revelation. Unfinished, odd, unexplored reversals: these are not typically characteristics associated with clarity, yet the Dreamer insists that only through reversals can the unfinished terminations and resurrections make sense. Drake clarifies that such passages are "not an expression of ambiguity but rather a grammatical expression of parallel possibility."[122]

What becomes clear is that Harris loves alternative viewpoints, and the Dreamer speaks the language of "the innermost, questioning, calling voice," as opposed to the "Faustian, conquistadorial tongue."[123] The Dreamer carries that voice across a quantum threshold before reaching our ears. That threshold is myriad, and beyond it lies "history's other doors, to be opened by strangeness."[124] The Dreamer is, indeed, a strange cosmographer.

Or perhaps more appropriately: the Dreamer is a cosmographer of strangeness. The Dreamer has access to the other side of those strange doors, and the way he makes those alternative universes recognizable to us is through a process of "breaking absolutes into partial organs."[125] This quantum-Deleuzean turn of the phrase means that the Dreamer moves freely around the fourth dimension, the dimension that we experience as time. The Dreamer's metaphors are rhetorical hyperobjects that pass through our three-dimensional world, working their magic across the two-dimensional page. *Los cuatro puntos dimensionales son tres: la Hoja y la Tinta* (The four dimensional points are three: The paper and the ink)[126]

In the mathematics of topography, this kind of transformation or deformation between dimensions is called a "projection." For a cartographer, too, projections are a key mathematical problem. Cartographers must turn a three-dimensional globe into a two-dimensional map, and there is no single best practice for doing this. That is why artists and critical cartographers spend so much time analyzing and extrapolating the prior ontological commitments of each and every projection. The cosmographers of the early colonial period actually battled over those commitments in the political, legal, and theological arenas, as Seth Kimmel demonstrates in his study on "The Fiction of Longitude in Early Modern Spain" and Ricardo Padrón does throughout *The Spacious Word*.[127]

But instead of points and grids, the Dreamer must use language to describe the fragments of his dream, and so they come across as mere narrative cross-sections of a multidimensional space. We can view this as analogous to the description of a hyperobject in the precise mathematical sense. These are four-dimensional objects projected into three dimensions, like a four-dimensional sphere imagined as a complex projective line.[128] The hyperobject is also a poetic concept, found in mandalas, kaleidoscopes, and stereographic projections. Timothy Morton, one of the bards of the hyperobject, frequently points out that they will outlive us all, that they "do not rot in our lifetimes."[129] As the cover of Morton's influential book suggests, they move at a glacial pace through our world, seemingly immovable three-dimensional cross-sections of four-dimensional objects. We experience these hyperobjects as a sailor on the deck of a skiff watching a periscope resolve itself—first preposterously, then terrifyingly—into a submarine, as our tiny vessel bounces around randomly in the wake of the nuclear-powered leviathan.

Atahualpa's "garment of fire" is one of those smoldering metaphorical fragments projected into the reader's narrative dimension.[130] Its

embers burn across Latin America's history of blood and fire.[131] The Dreamer tries to convey the heat of that history, but the Dark Jester cannot be revealed in the glimmering radiance of the absolute (that is why, after all, the Jester is dark). But the historical chasms that rive *The Dark Jester* are invisible in the physics of Cartesian form.[132] That is why the Dreamer proposes to break the "seal upon civilization" established by Conquest, to regain access to the intellectual and spiritual resources expressed in Atahualpan form.[133] More than an alternative history, this is an alternative spatio-temporality.[134]

If this Dreamer's dream were to project itself in Cartesian form, the resulting novel would read like Atahualpa's biography, a standard literary form familiar to us lustful shapes of being. It could be charted on a map or plotted on a timeline; but none of these linear options, the straight-edged "normality of material science," will satisfy the poetic demands of a being beyond.[135] A biography would mistake the fleshy "shapes of lust" for "the whole being."[136] Instead, the Dreamer weaves a multimedia and transcontinental tapestry in Atahualpan form. This is precisely why Highfield suggests that Atahualpan form might most resemble a *khipu*, and that the narrator is, in fact, a "Dreaming Quipucamayoq."[137] We know, following Urton and Brokaw, that *khipus* are not mere jumbles of string to be untied and unraveled, and although no character ever mentions one in the novel, I agree with Highfield that the fabric of Harris's Atahualpan cosmos is structured like a *khipu*.

Unlike Salvo, Harris does not want to see *khipus* as material culture software. In fact, he is not interested at all in affirming that "information is power" (which nonetheless remains a very important lesson, and cannot be ignored). Harris instead seeks the power inherent in recovering lost information. The first step in recovering Atahualpan form demands a retelling of the encounter of cosmovisions. The tale of Cajamarca is the story of conquistadorial form capturing and executing Atahualpa. The Dreamer becomes a "living Prophet," a witness to timelessness, whose vision and imagination exceed each being's partial frame of reference.[138]

It is from this perspective beyond that the Dreamer narrates the formal encounter, and what he observes is conquistadorial form sneaking into the Americas through the Trojan horse called Cartesian form. Cartesian form is the measure, it is the military mapping of the world (although as we know, we'd have to include Ptolemy, Iberian navigators, and many others in this class of cartographic warriors). Within it lurk the "mercenary iron cavalries," like iron-hearted Pizarro's band

of horses.[139] Those armies are an enemy of humanity's own making, and they emerge treacherously into the Andes and the Americas, horses within horses rearing and ready to strike.[140]

The Dreamer witnesses, but his prophecy cannot change what has already happened (that is why, for instance, the Dreamer must passively witness Cortés's apocryphal and imagined passing through Palenque in chapter 8); it can only let us know that things were and could have been otherwise.[141] The violence of Conquest may not be inevitable, but it is (and was) empirical. From the Dreamer's cosmic perspective, two different ways of organizing the universe crashed into one another: one joined through knots of twisted memory, the "arteries of space and time"; and the other a vector of modernity tearing through the fabric of the universe and rending chasms across space-time.[142] A rip in the cosmos attacks a knot in the cosmos, although this complex topography of conflict confuses us observers: "Humanity has argued what time and space are as though the Void broke one garment into another to take me backwards and forwards."[143] The Dreamer stands in a higher dimension, contemplating the slow-moving catastrophe of two cosmovisions colliding like spiraling galaxies. The Jester is his interpretive guide, encouraging him to break through "the material of conquistadorial technologies and philosophies," and to understand "Atahualpan form rather than Cartesian form."[144]

But this does not mean that Cartesian form can be ignored. Cartesian form has its own aesthetics (this is why Harris opens his novel with a reflection on the Pietà and the Dormition). Even the Dark Jester shapes symbols in Cartesian form, and the Trojan horse is perhaps most fully representative of the Dark Jester's art. That historical artifact, when viewed from the Dreamer's hyper-dimensional vantage point, becomes a memetic monument. The Trojan horse is Cartesian form's mythological self-portrait, and it repeats itself as a mytho-historical trope, incarnated again in the European cavalry that descend from the Trojan belly onto the Cajamarca plaza in 1532.

So *The Dark Jester* is a perfect complement to Salvo's "Quipucamayoc": both imagine an ontological Trojan horse expressing itself as it ripples through the fabric of the cosmos. Pomacha's Trojan horse—the horse of self-righteous coders and clever hackers—is vengeance for the Incan conquest; the Dark Jester himself travels through Trojan horses to manifest his trickery in human history. Both authors imagine Atahualpan form: Salvo is media-specific and materialist; Harris is mythological and cosmic. Both agree that "technologies have changed across the ages,

but they possess an outer mask that adjusts itself and seems the same in theatre."[145]

Salvo creates an Andean hacker who brings the immediately pre-Columbian Tawantinsuyu civil war into "the material record of the historiographic khipu."[146] Harris understands his Trojan horse in a more metaphorical and aesthetic register. Yet if the horse is Art, it bears within its aesthetic a tendency to reduce all things to universal equivalency. Thus the repeated image of Pizarro's war party melting the gold of pre-Columbian sculptures: "Pizarro saw each work of art as nothing more than a material body which he could melt all together into a monument of quick Money"; this is art rendered into Cartesian form, the universal sameness of specie.[147]

In Harris's triumphant crescendo in chapter 2, the Dreamer reaches to the heavens. Atahualpan form extends to a sacred astronomy linking the sun and moon "across the continent of the Americas, in Maya worlds, in Aztec and Toltec worlds, in the Amazon and elsewhere," to finally culminate in Quetzalcoatl as a spaceship:

> It stood as an animal sailing vessel, feather of a sail and serpent of a Ship. Atahualpan form. Was it Atahualpan animal Ship, was it my Dream of voyages into infinity? It was. It was Atahualpan form. Pyramids of the Moon and of the Sun embraced many hidden seas of space, many hidden stars, in abstract stairways from the Earth to the Moon and beyond. But I knew the Feathered Serpent could not be pinned down. It would always break into new Ships, new pyramids, and reveal how partial it still was. It was a labyrinth that opened the language I used to music beyond, within, my animal spirit.[148]

Like the multiple resonances of the Trojan horse, Harris's Quetzalcoatl extends beyond the plumage of the Mesoamerican quetzal bird, and it wears the feathers of the Andean condor, the bird that lifts the Dreamer from Cajamarca to Tiahuanaco in chapter 6. Is that movement enough to keep the ship from shoaling on the representational reef of universalized equivalence?[149] In the Quetzalcoatl-spaceship, Harris navigates a vessel which travels through the Void while recalling other ships, from sacred cosmonautics to the underworld ships traversing the Middle Passage. Ships that traffic human bodies—works of "art of flesh"—as if they were the same universal money that Pizarro reduced into melted

gold in Cajamarca.[150] As we have seen across the present book, the ship is a complicated and complex vessel. With the Dreamer as pilot and the Dark Jester as navigator, Harris's spaceship Quetzalcoatl is Spaceship Earth in the Jest dimension. In other words: Spaceship Earth is what Quetzalcoatl looks like as it passes through the plane of Cartesian form.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has focused on the speculative power of cartography in mapping the space of colonial encounter in the Americas. In order to enter into the narrative topographies of "Quipucamayoc" and *The Dark Jester*, we engaged in some preparatory work to better appreciate the specifics of Salvo and Harris's Andean worldbuilding. In the broader spirit of reciprocity and complementarity, this involved a comparative overview of European and Andean spatial practices in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Guaman Poma de Ayala's *mappa mundi* in his 1605 *Nueva corónica y buen gobierno* is emblematic of this kind of contact zone cartography.

Salvo and Harris both appeal to the form of the Trojan horse as a way to understand the kind of hybridized space that developed in the aftermath of Pizarro's capture of Atahualpa in Cajamarca in 1532. For Salvo, the *khipukamayuq* controls the principal tool of hegemonic authority in Tawantinsuyu, and through political resentment that figure can be led to corrupt the cognitive map of the entire realm. Harris understands the Trojan horse as the vector through which conquistadorial violence penetrates Atahualpan form. Both authors understand that the aftermath of Cajamarca left the American territory altered at the ontological level. In a pan-American image that recalls the Zapatista Autonomous Intergalactic Spaceship, Harris proposes an Atahualpan animal ship as the proper vessel for traversing this speculative cartographic realm. With the Dark Jester as navigator, this vehicle does not simply exit the colonial realm, but rather it operates as a craft capable of navigating New World forms and communicating between *imago mundi*.

CHAPTER 4

Cosmic Hospitality, or How Not to Host a Martyr

The previous three chapters have studied literary and artistic reimaginings of key spaces of colonial encounters: the anthology, the museum, and the map. These spaces are all archival in some fashion, and the positive constructions that these archival visions enact always imply an inverse side that excludes what was lost, silenced, or destroyed in the contact zone. In the popular imagination of these colonial encounters, the complex unfoldings of unequal relationships are frequently reduced to metonymic meetings of imperial figures. Thus the centrality of Moctezuma meeting Cortés on the causeways of Tenochtitlan, or the paradigmatic "encounter with the written word" expressed in the exchange between Atahualpa and Pizarro's envoy at Cajamarca. The texts that I analyze in this book seek to reopen these seemingly closed-off historical moments to the speculative imagination, and to read reciprocity and complementarity into exchanges that have historically been understood as unbridled moments of hegemonic domination captured in archival materials. In doing so, many of these texts pause at the crucial moment in these early colonial exchanges where the host must receive the visitor. This shifts the aesthetic project of rewriting the Conquest to an ontological realm, where the hospitality relationship itself is the essential question at stake. By turning to SF, authors and artists can explore a different hospitality relation capable of imagining the unrealized futurities

of historical encounters, as opposed to taking for granted some inevitable and essential form of the encounter in the early colonial contact zone. For our own purposes, it will allow us to carry on the theoretical work of exploring a decolonial novum beyond the sixteenth-century encounters between Spain and the pre-Columbian polities of the so-called New World.

Hospitality as a concept bridges multiple understandings, because it's "always about crossing thresholds."[1] On the level of individual understanding, there is the bridge between guest and host, which is hospitality's most immediate concern. The bridge extends beyond this pair of individuals, however, and reaches back and down into the cultural substrate, anchored in a bedrock of belief or ontology. Cross-cultural hospitality can be built up and reinforced over time, through repetitive travel across the bridge once it is established. In the contact zone, where cultural difference proliferates and novelty continuously reemerges, the hospitality relationship is at its most exaggerated: a tentative and provisional bridge that cannot be taken for granted, and which must be thoroughly examined and revised before and after each crossing.[2] As we have seen, this is especially acute in early colonial encounters, where relatively autonomous ontologies negotiated unequally under a developing protocol of conquest.[3] We could even go so far as to say that hospitality is the mutually improvised script of the encounter, guided by two questions: How to welcome the visitor? And how to be received with grace? Although theorists tend to privilege now one, and now the other, the question of proper hospitality is always reciprocal, encompassing both host and guest.[4]

When hospitality is described in these abstract terms, its discourse is downright theological. According to Tracey McNulty, true hospitality always has a theological component, because the guest is always a potentially sacred or divine visitor dressed up in civilian drag: "hospitality is motivated by the potentially sacred nature of the guest, whose true identity must nonetheless remain unknown for authentic hospitality to take place."[5] This kind of paradoxical foundation—a potentially sacred guest whose true identity must remain a mystery if the host's hospitality is to be authentic—is the raw input in much postmodern thought. And indeed, hospitality is a concept Derrida worked with throughout his intellectual life, as a way to theorize and deconstruct the kinds of ethical and ontological demands presented by the encounter with absolute alterity.[6] Derrida's hospitality might be unconditional, but it can also get frozen in time, a suspended moment of

deferral that imagines hospitality without proper names or reciprocal obligations.[7]

This allows the universal to creep into our understanding of hospitality, which looks something like the universalized entitlement of a European gentleman to receive a formal reception in unfamiliar lands. Sixteenth-century Spanish jurists and theologians like Francisco de Vitoria had no qualms about dressing up this particular European entitlement in the garb of natural law. This is the other side of Derrida's absolute hospitality: an unconditional demand that the European traveler be accepted. As one of Vitoria's scholastic critics pointed out at the time, "there is a wide gap between hospitality and an invasion, between the right to travel and the might of the conqueror."[8] Confusing might and right leads to absurd positions; for instance, describing Alexander the Great as a traveler when that sovereign's intention was always conquest.[9] The same must be said of the conquistadores that Vitoria was partially defending: at no moment did Cortés present himself as a mere traveler traversing Mesoamerica; he was a rebellious agent of empire who justified his initial insubordination through his unshakable faith in supremacy, articulated in what Beatriz Pastor memorably called the "discourse of mythification."[10]

As this study has shown, the historical record is full of compelling encounters between Iberian conquistadores and indigenous political authorities that have been interpreted as profound misunderstandings arising from the clash of foreign and indigenous protocols of hospitality. Yet when I have described my project to North American scientists, especially in my conversations with the astrobiological community, it is Mary Doria Russell's *The Sparrow* (1996) that frequently becomes the shared reference. Russell's novel itself acts as a bridge between multiple communities: not only science and faith, but across French, Spanish, and English colonialisms; across SF and "literary fiction"; and across North and South American indigeneities. Russell rewrites the Jesuits' colonial enterprise in the Haudenosanee, or the Iroquois League, as an interstellar morality tale, while pulling inspiration from a wider swath of early modern colonial encounters.

The Sparrow is celebrated for its dual commitment to both exploring the themes of hospitality and spirituality in the face of an encounter with radical alterity, and to recovering the utopian history of Jesuit missions in the Americas as a complicated, ambiguous site of colonial dispossession and radical hope. Russell makes this theme accessible to a broad audience by grounding her story in the framework of a mar-

tyr tale, while using speculative narrative to explore the Jesuits' status as empire's ambiguous vanguard in ways not possible in realist narrative: she transposes a missionary story of New World colonial faith to a planet somewhere in the vicinity of the Alpha Centauri system.[11] Isaac Jogues, one of the Jesuit martyrs of French Canada who became a persistent if unwanted guest in the Haudenosaunee, is Russell's main historical reference. Jogues's hands were famously mutilated by his native hosts, and Russell develops this fact into a meditation on the misapprehension of the unknown.

In the spirit of Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Left Hand of Darkness*, *The Sparrow* imagines an encounter in which the scientists arrive first.[12] Russell also pulls from a wide archive of scientific missionaries who practiced what Ivonne Del Valle calls "devotional empiricism" in the contact zone.[13] In the case of the planet Rakhat, the characters experience what should be a voyage of scientific exploration as if it were instead the trials of an angry cosmic deity. And beyond the extraterrestrial civilizations on that planet, which the crew misinterprets to disastrous ends, they find a true cosmic other, the host who makes incomprehensible demands on the visitors. Russell returns the New World missionaries to a much older encounter with this Absolute Other: the domestic trials of Job suffered on a galactic scale. The protagonist especially reimagines himself as a living martyr of a disastrous first encounter. Such are the risks associated with art and narrative that take a speculative approach to the Conquest: at their most pernicious they redouble the worst tropes and tendencies of the Conquest. Russell's faithfulness to the paradigm of devotional empiricism steers her novel away from this trap, a trap which Jameson, in a different context, has called the "salvational fantasy of counterfactuality."[14] Instead, *The Sparrow* finds in Emilio Sandoz's mutilated hands a misapprehended act of interstellar hospitality. The space-faring Jesuits can only understand the story in terms of frustrated or deferred martyrdom. The Society of Jesus is not, however, the only party to this encounter, and Emilio's mangled hands, much like Isaac Jogues's, come to signify something that far exceeds his own terrestrial concept of faith, grace, and hospitality.

That is not to say that *The Sparrow* lacks elements of a salvational fantasy. To return to Legnani's study of the business of conquest: the Jesuits' very business was salvation. This fact might explain why as the Catholic religious orders go, Jesuits are overrepresented in SF.[15] Because their order paralleled the ascent of the Iberian monarchies that brought the first wave of European colonization to the New World, they make

particularly poignant characters in rewritings of contact and conquest. During a time of religious reformation and scientific study of the material world, the Society of Jesus defined both evangelical missionary expansion and systematic natural history as two of the Jesuit order's principal tasks in their service to the pope. This historical coincidence also makes the Jesuits uniquely suitable models for SF characters struggling with the unprecedented conflict between science and faith that can arise out of extraterrestrial contact narratives.

As a contact novel, *The Sparrow* is especially artful in its thematization of religious faith in an incomprehensibly vast universe; when read with a more sharply critical lens, it suggests a certain porosity between the purportedly separate domains of scientific and religious missions. Emilio Sandoz, the novel's protagonist, plays with that ambiguity to his favor up to a point, until he reaches his limits as both a human and a priest far from his home world.[16]

The Sparrow depicts a non-militarized first contact with an alien world, and casts priests and scientists as the members of humanity's avant-garde beyond the solar system. With contact demilitarized, Russell's tale unfolds at a pace that encompasses hospitality and diplomacy; this also creates space for the competing human rationales of science and faith to dialogue in the context of a world-altering revelation of extraterrestrial life. This non-militarized contact does not mean, however, that Russell's characters are themselves un-militant. Isaac Jogues's faith militancy, for instance, becomes the model for the protagonist Emilio Sandoz. Jogues is known primarily as the most long-suffering of the French Canadian martyrs, who was repeatedly captured and tortured by Mohawk members of the Haudenosaunee. Jogues famously had his hands mutilated and his fingers amputated in Mohawk captivity ceremonies, and for years afterword was considered a "living martyr," notwithstanding the oxymoronic core of that title.

Russell plays deeply with this historical detail, as Emilio's own disfigured hands carry the metaphorical weight of the entire novel. In a clever linguistic flourish that traverses the novel, Russell depicts Emilio's hands as the materialized location of cultural misapprehension, where the priest's unrealized martyrdom fails to grasp the cultural import of his role as a guest on Rakhat. While on the one hand, Emilio cannot apprehend the scene of interplanetary encounter, on the other, his very body is sculpted into a signifying artifact that travels with him back to Earth, a testament to the failed hospitality of the Society of Jesus's encounter with radical alterity.

GOOD BLUEPRINTS AND BAD GUESTS

From the time of their arrival in the Americas in 1549, the Society of Jesus's tumultuous tenure in the continent highlighted many of the contradictory means, modes, and methods of European colonization in the Americas. The order that produced the most impressive sixteenth-century European compendium of New World knowledge—José de Acosta's 1590 *Historia natural y moral de las Indias*—and had a hand in much of the foundational linguistic work across the continent, was at the same time the source of a seemingly endless wave of faith militants yearning for a bloody death in martyrdom.[17] The Jesuits' defining vow—obedience to the pope—worried Catholic and Protestant sovereigns alike as they struggled to colonize the New World, and this additional vow took on further significance in the context of the Reformation and the Black Legend. Perhaps most significantly for Russell's thematic plotting, the Jesuits were the principle European multinational order tasked with the dual mandate of spreading religion and recording science, doing both in the climate of the Counter-Reformation.

That is why the "Jesuit in space" has become a recognizable SF trope.[18] The most directly relevant precursor to *The Sparrow* is James Blish's 1958 Hugo award-winning *A Case of Conscience*, which enlists a Jesuit priest as one half of a first contact tag-team: the Man of Faith to complement the efficiently rational Man of Science on a reconnaissance journey for interstellar colonization.[19] In interviews, Mary Doria Russell says she never read *A Case of Conscience*, which in itself is further evidence of the natural narrative affinity between the Society of Jesus and the astrobiological encounter.[20] Blish pulls from the pulp tradition to shape his novel of ideas; Russell instead sets her aesthetic horizon on the deep characterization that is characteristic of literary fiction.

In the interest of building deeply imagined and internally conflicted characters, Russell expands the Jesuit angle beyond Blish's rigid science/faith dichotomy to include the histories of the New World martyrs. As will be explored below, Isaac Jogues and the French Canadian martyrs structure many of the novel's tragic developments. Furthermore, Russell's dense prose offers a much deeper engagement with her protagonist Emilio Sandoz's conflicted soul, along with the souls of his companions. These are no satirical stereotypes of priests and scientific mercenaries, as in Blish's dueling agents of colonial expansion. Russell is much more interested in exploring the Jesuit's devotional empiricism.[21] Emilio does not represent one pole in a science-faith divide; he rather embodies that

conflict within himself, where his empirically minded inquiry into an unknown world is guided by an at times incomprehensible faith.

It is precisely this devotional empiricism that led the Jesuits to embrace persecution, and to become one of the Catholic orders most closely associated with the tradition of martyrdom. Jonathan Wright explains:

> The trick was to insist that suffering was showered on the godly as often as the reprobate, as a means by which commitment to the truth might be assayed. It offered Christians the chance to share in the carrying of Christ's cross, the opportunity to partake of his passion, to join the long list of martyrs and good confessors who had learned that persecution was the inevitable lot of godly people living in an inimical, carnal world that did not understand them. Jesuits, desperate to prove that their faith was not built upon the sand but upon the immovable rock of Christ, signed up for the test with alacrity.[22]

The Jesuits' empirical suffering proved their devotional righteousness; as should be obvious, this equation risks setting up a disastrous feedback loop, where confirmed faith manifests further and further waves of suffering onto the world.

The propensity towards martyrdom, however, was not the Jesuit order's only calling card in the colonial Americas; their order was also tied explicitly to utopian projects on the continent. This is yet another reason why so many SF authors deputize Jesuits on first contact missions. The empirical manifestation of their devotion also took this other form: a set of planned communities, most famously among the Guaraní-speaking peoples in what is now Paraguay, but also scattered across the western hemisphere.

Martyrdom and utopia; scientific inquiry and fervent belief: the Jesuit order itself was a microcosm of the internal struggles of an early modernity working itself out in the New World. This is why the order is so fundamentally confounding: they erected radical hope atop colonial dispossession. It is no surprise that Jesuits made up a significant portion of the scholastic theologians arguing ex post facto over the justification of the Iberian conquest and its meaning for the developing global order, although the blind spots in their arguments seem to suggest a strange form of European inhospitality.

In his classic volume *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean 1492–1797*, Peter Hulme describes this twisted sense of European hospitality that ruled the first three centuries of New World encounters:

> The colonists made four central claims about the native Americans in justification for their dispossession: that the natives were not properly "settled"; that the land was not cultivated; that the natives behaved in a duplicitous and treacherous fashion; and that they cruelly broke the universal laws of hospitality. These claims were not only false, they were a systematic reversal of the actual state of affairs, since the native Americans were fully settled, farmed the land intensely, acted hospitably until provoked beyond endurance, and behaved in what, even at this distance and without sympathetic evidence, appears as a relatively consistent and comprehensible manner. But even more to the point is that the claims were a systematic projection of European behavior onto native Americans. In those early years it tended to be the Europeans who were not "settled," living from plunder and barter; it was the Europeans who proved incapable of feeding themselves from the fertile soil; it was the Europeans whose duplicity and cunning kept their colonies alive by manipulating the trust of their hosts; and eventually betraying it.[23]

Many of the Jesuits' own writings perpetuated these very inversions. And given the systematic misrepresentation catalogued by Hulme and others, the Jesuits' claims to martyrdom must be viewed with equal suspicion, as further sites for potential reversal. If misapprehended hospitality was one of the principal motors of colonial encounters, then martyrdom was perhaps the most spectacular manifestation of this tendency. It was one of those moments of the "ideological presentation of ideology," as Louis Marin said of utopias.[24] By invoking a so-called universal law of hospitality, faith in fact revealed itself ideologically, demanding a sacrifice in the current moment in order to bring forth a promised coming utopia. These bearers of the good news—the words of the Christian gospel, and also the bearers of the utopian blueprint—justified their own suffering in the name of a coming hope. The coming hope, in turn, eclipsed the enacted violence, which in turn justified what

exogenously appears to be a passive death cult. In any case, the paradoxical nature of the Jesuits in the New World makes them an ideal anchor point for a story of cosmic hospitality gone wrong.

In her study of late colonial Jesuits in Nayar, Sonora, and Baja California, Ivonne Del Valle describes how Jesuits, as the ambiguous vanguard of the colonial encounter, were always troubled operators in the contact zone, profoundly riven by contradictions:

> Su posicionamiento en los límites del mundo conquistado los constituía precisamente en vanguardia del imperio—aun contra su voluntad y a pesar de que muchas veces sus intereses chocaron con los de los colonizadores. Sus escritos proporcionan los materiales que permiten hablar del inicio de la escritura de la historia, la etnografía, la ciencia; son una forma inicial de la toma de posesión textual de territorios y poblaciones que van a quedar integrados en el tiempo y en la epistemología occidental. De esta manera, la sola presencia, por endeble y frágil que fuera, de un misionero en cualquier punto remoto del mapa de la colonización española garantizaba la producción de datos e informes que servirían posteriormente para hacer mapas y escribir historias e informes científicos. Quizá precisamente en razón de su aislamiento, estos representantes del orden letrado en las fronteras, constituían el único lugar que aseguraba un programa futuro de integración.[25]

> Their positioning at the limits of the conquered world placed them precisely at the vanguard of the empire, even if this was involuntary and even though their interests frequently clashed with those of the larger colonizing project. Their writings became the basis for the nascent disciplines of history, ethnography, and science; these writings were an initial instance of how Europeans seized textual possession of their colonial territories and populations, and integrated them into Western epistemologies and temporalities. In this way, the mere fact of a missionary presence in any of these far-flung points on the map of Spanish colonization, no matter how weak or fragile the presence may have been, guaranteed the production of data and field notes that soon enough would be consolidated into official histories and scientific reports.

> Perhaps due to their isolation, these representatives of European literacy on the edges of the empire became the very sites that promised a future program of colonial integration.

Here, in more specific detail, are three examples of paradoxical operations of the Jesuit missionaries on the frontier of the New World. First, their isolation sets into motion the future integration of the spaces they occupy into the Catholic world. Their "devotional empiricism," filled with the passion of the Counter-Reformation, will yield the material and data that fuels the Enlightenment. And finally, their colonial dispossession paves the way for supposed utopian fulfillment.

These tensions were lived in the daily lives of these isolated Jesuits at the frontier of their empire. They survived through a rapid and internal oscillation between two competing mandates, pulled in one moment towards the manifestation of their dominion through a compulsion to study and master their surroundings, and then in the next moment towards a spirit of coexistence that led them to integrate into the communities where they found themselves.[26] The Jesuits managed these two competing and contradictory compulsions—detached mastery versus intimate immersion—through a strategy of supreme adaptability, making culture itself the neutral space of mediation and negotiation before it was the site of conversion. On the frontiers of empire, Jesuits were known to defer deep questions of Catholic theology, and spent long periods discussing a shared understanding of mathematics, astronomy, and music well before ever broaching religious issues in depth.[27]

Religious conversion remained elusive at many sites along the early modern colonial frontier, as Del Valle chronicles for what is now the northern Mexican borderlands. Many missions initially failed in their primary objective of converting natives into a spiritual community dedicated to Christ, yet this failure did not halt the missionary activity. Once mass conversion itself became unlikely, the Jesuits still had two further paths to pursue: advancing their "neutral" scientific inquiry, or degenerating into martyrdom. Both strategies were, in a sense, tacit admissions of having reached an epistemic-ontological limit point.

The scientific route took the shape of natural history, and José de Acosta's *Historia natural y moral de las Indias* is exemplary. That tome, along with Acosta's other writings, created a scientific carve-out for the New World in a providential (Catholic) understanding of the moral order of the universe. This kind of Jesuit scientific inquiry—a seemingly much more "neutral" pursuit than active evangelism—was enthusiasti-

cally consumed by European readers, and anticipated the coming craze for the Enlightenment travel writing so central to modern European scientific development, as studied by Pratt and Pimentel.[28] Acosta's *Historia*, in fact, inspired the opening section of Bacon's 1620 *New Organon*.[29]

If the scientific route described the epistemo-ontological limit, the martyrdom route preferred to etch that limit into the living flesh. These tales of the ultimate sacrifice in the name of their faith filled the *Jesuit Relations*; and those published accounts set a good number of Jesuits on the express path to canonization. The martyrs themselves became glorious examples of the rock of faith, although to outside observers their cases can seem more like glorifications of violence and, perhaps more cynically, celebrations of failure. The Society fed these tales of excruciating suffering on faraway shores back into its own triumphalist missionary narrative:

> Such distressing tales [of martyrdom] did not necessarily have a deterrent effect. Many of the men who opted to be trained up as Jesuits were gratefully seduced by the prospect of a missionary life, especially if it promised to unfold somewhere as suitably distant, exotic, and perilous as China, Japan, or Canada.[30]

It is important to remember, however, that these instances of martyrdom also represent the ultimate failure of understanding at the epistemic-ontological limit. And, as Del Valle cautions, to interpret the death of these Jesuits exclusively following their own early modern Christian logic of martyrdom is to already privilege that epistemology over any possible indigenous semiotic apparatus. What is clear is that, in every case, the Jesuits' death meant something very different to the indigenous folks than it did to the hagiographers.[31]

But how to depict this encounter in a way that bridges this epistemic-ontological divide? Is that even possible? One of Canada's contributions to the great Quincentenial happening, Bruce Beresford's 1991 cinematic extravaganza *Black Robe*, offers a cautionary tale about the perils inherent in realist art that confidently depicts "how these encounters really happened." *Black Robe* is, following its own logic of production, studiously non-speculative, with "realism" as its formal lodestar.[32] Upon its release, the film was prized and praised for its authentic depictions of seventeenth-century life.[33] The film tells the story of a fictionalized

protagonist, Father Laforgue, whose life is an amalgamation of several Jesuits' lives in what they then called New France. Laforgue and his companions, including his Algonquin guides, set off on a journey across Mohawk territory in order to reach a Huron missionary outpost. Along the way, they suffer hardships and captivity at the hands of the Mohawks, the easternmost members of the Iroquois League; by the second half of their journey, Daniel, one of Laforgue's young white companions, has fallen in love with Annuka, daughter of their Algonquin guide Chomina, and abandoned the cloth for a life with her. More harrowing are the scenes of torture—including a forced running of the infamous gauntlet, ripped directly from the *Jesuit Relations*—and the film's tragic conclusion that European disease preceded Laforgue's arrival at the Huron camp and has already decimated the village of Catholic converts.

The film participates in a tradition of maniacal realism, in which the cast and crew's suffering during the cinematic construction of the depicted world guarantee the picture's hard-fought claim to being meticulously realistic; many contemporary reviews emphasized this point. The film's supposed verisimilitude is the object of Ward Churchill's polemic exchange with Kristof Haavik.[34] Churchill offers a warning: be wary when a film—especially a film depicting Indian/white interactions—is "expressly intended to convey a bedrock impression that what is depicted is 'the way it *really* was'"; he cites Vine Deloria, Jr. as an authority on that.[35] And Churchill's assessment of the film indeed contains praise and a warning: magnificent cinema, dangerous propaganda.

Haavik, in his response, glosses the film, alluding to published historical (and occasional modern) sources that describe the represented behaviors which Churchill dismissed as demeaning or stereotypical. The conflict, of course, is the value of the archive itself. Haavik's point that the film takes native dreaming more seriously than many of the colonial sources crumbles away when Churchill recasts those many sources that purportedly render the film "realistic": "Despite their apparent diversity, [those] references are bound together by a rather significant common denominator: with the exception of a passing reference to Wendat historian Georges Sioui's *Huron-Wendat*, there is not a single emic (or 'endogenous')—that is, Native—source among them."[36]

In other words, to the defense "it's strictly accurate according to the European sources," Churchill replies, "that is, in fact, the issue." Can a narrative that bases its criteria for accuracy on European Jesuit accounts ever depict the conflict coded beneath those accounts? Is it not the case that strict fidelity to the European sources guarantees at best a

partial understanding, especially when, as Del Valle shows in her study of Jesuit writings in colonial Mexico, the true moments of epistemic and ontological struggle were rarely represented in the published accounts? In a certain sense, it is Emilio Sandoz, Russell's protagonist in *The Sparrow*, who can best summarize Churchill's critique of *Black Robe*: it's all true. But it's all wrong.[37]

THE SPARROW AND THE WRONG LESSON FROM JOB

Once we abandon a commitment to the kind of colonial realism epitomized by *Black Robe*, it becomes possible to more directly depict the kind of epistemic-ontological encounter that characterized Jesuit-native relations.[38] Unlike many of the other authors I discuss in this study, Mary Doria Russell does not set out to do so by integrating indigenous sources into her speculative novel. Instead, she wants to reimagine a limit encounter that she pulls from the colonial historical archive, by recasting it with a protagonist who seeks understanding, not martyrdom. As Russell explained in an interview: "It just seemed to me that somebody ought to write a story that would put modern, intelligent, well-meaning, well-educated people into that same state of radical ignorance that the early explorers and missionaries experienced here in the Americas."[39]

Emilio Sandoz's tragedy lies in the fact that his desire to know—his opening to the epistemic-ontological limit—leads him to misapprehend it, and his failure to grasp that limit mutilates his body and his faith, even as it traps him in a vicious cycle of unfulfilled martyrdom. Emilio's soul is not formed of the stoic rock of martyrs, but this at least gives him a more sympathetic perspective on his experiences in the contact zone, and the distance to bitterly speculate that his life has become a cosmic punchline.[40] In this sense, Emilio is clearly a historiographically metafictional character, and thus he understands his pseudo-martyrdom from an ironic distance. In order for the reader to fully understand the joke to which Emilio is the punchline, we first need to describe the novel in a bit more detail.

The Sparrow has many characters beyond its protagonist Emilio: Jesuits, Jews and atheists; humans, Jana'ata and Runa.[41] Emilio and his human companions form a family, although none of them have children themselves, and several are orphans. Most relevant to this study is Sofia Mendes. Sofia, a Sephardic Jew "marked by the legacy of 1492," was rescued as a child from a private orphanage by a venture capitalist who

"invests" in her future in a form of predatory libertarianism.[42] This is one of the more techno-dystopian flourishes in Russell's novel, and until Sofia's contract is bought out by the Society of Jesus, she worked as an indentured "AI vulture" who mined human knowledge in order to help her employer-owner develop artificial intelligence systems.

Sofia also becomes a troubling love interest for Emilio, and his professed celibacy leads to much amorous torment.[43] Emilio and Sofia are two of the eight humans who arrive together on Rakhat, a planet in a tri-solar system a bit over four light years distant from Earth, in the vicinity of Alpha Centauri. These eight—four Jesuits among them—are part of the first human voyage to an inhabited world beyond the solar system, and they owe their first-mover advantage to the Society of Jesus. This sequence of the narrative begins in Arecibo, Puerto Rico, at the site of the large radio telescopes made famous by Carl Sagan's novel *Contact* and other SETI-related endeavors.[44] Emilio, a Jesuit priest, is a confidant of the Arecibo employees. Once they confirm the receipt of Earth's first communication of extra-solar origin, the Society jumps into action to organize a reconnaissance mission. The other members of the Arecibo team joke early and often with Emilio that their "mission" is purposefully ambiguous; it is publicly dedicated to science but undertaken by a religious organization. In this, Russell pulls from the Jesuits' documented history as the rapid response team of that corporation rendered flesh, the Catholic Church. Further complicating the situation, the extraterrestrial message itself is musical, and seems to serve aesthetic, not diplomatic, purposes. The priests, steeped in Jesuit history, theorize on the lessons they could draw from the Guaraní missions around the Paraná River, which used music to entice the Guaraní to enter the utopian settlements called *reducciones*.[45]

In a just-plausible enough to get along sequence, the team repurposes an asteroid mining rig as a spaceship, and they set off on their journey towards the source of the music, a planet which they'll learn is called Rakhat. They land in a remote area of the planet on October 13, 2039, five-plus centuries after Columbus's New World landfall. In a sequence that plays out like an expeditionary arrival at the Garden of Eden, the humans undertake the scientific classification of the flora and fauna under the highest possible stakes, where any unstudied object might involve both novelty and mortality. It is during this phase that the crew suffers its first casualty.

It takes two months for the humans to discover the Runa, the first social species on Rakhat that seems capable of having produced the ce-

lestial music that drew the Jesuit mission to the stars. Emilio, sharing the Jesuit gift for linguistic virtuosity, befriends a Runa named Askama, and begins a strange relationship where he is at once his friend's charge and minder, at once pupil and tutor in a situation of unprecedented novelty. The crew soon grow perplexed when they learn that the Runa do not, in fact, enjoy singing.

Although the crew doesn't realize it at the time, this is their first blatant hint that Rakhat is populated by two social species who are entangled in a symbiotic equilibrium. Thus when they encounter Supaari VaGayjur, an ambitious trader from a far-off city, they don't initially comprehend his difference from the Runa.[46] Although Supaari is a Jana'ata, he is not representative of that species, but rather an outlier whose ambition makes him unique among both Jana'ata and Runa on Rakhat. These twin moments of misrecognition—misapprehending both Supaari's intentions and the social-biological organization of Rakhat—lead to Emilio's ruin and the novel's tragic conclusion.

The humans understand none of this when Supaari introduces them to Hlavin Kitheri, the Reshtar of Galatna and Rakhat's foremost aesthete. Unbeknownst to Emilio, Supaari had planned to use the humans and their exotic trinkets as tokens to purchase his way out of the rigid hierarchy that rules social life on Rakhat; the result of this plan is that Emilio ends his time on Rakhat as a captive sex worker, destitute as he realizes that it was his captor Hlavin's song, broadcast across the planet and beyond, that attracted Emilio to Rakhat in the first place.

All of this information is dispersed throughout the novel, and is not recounted in a chronological format. Instead, the story of the ruinous mission is told in chunks, beginning with the contact event in 2019 and presented as spiritual testimony. These narrative chunks alternate with later events, beginning in 2059, that depict a damaged Emilio returned to Terra and recuperating under Jesuit interrogation as the order attempts to unravel exactly what transpired on Rakhat.

Emilio's interrogators are exclusively male Jesuits, and their diverse homogeneity gives a good picture of what happens when Catholicism's "ambiguous vanguard" runs an international space agency in the wake of an unmitigated disaster. The group of them—the stern Germanic zealot, the compassionate leader, the seeker of impartial truth, the ideological contortionist—question Emilio with such ferocity as to break his spirit yet a second time. And so it comes out that the humans bore responsibility for a Jana'ata massacre of the humans' Runa friends, and that Emilio himself murdered Aksama, his Runa companion who had

arrived, in an act of love, to rescue Emilio from the brothel where he was held captive.

Because the Jesuits are Catholic, they get very hung up on Emilio's later prostitution. The Jesuit order considers selling a broken, faithless body as the worst possible behavior, and they struggle to understand how Emilio ended up in that position. (The order also has trouble distinguishing between prostitution and rape.) The reason that unfolds across the novel is that celibate Emilio, inspired by what he thought was intergalactic poetry, was in fact seduced by otherworldly smut, a siren song that set him on the road to the ultimate violation. This is the core of the cosmic punchline: the celibate saint, who was stranded in a foreign land with his beloved yet could not consummate his carnal desire, is finally sodomized by the aesthete who is responsible for the interstellar contact in the first place. What initially seemed to be a revelation develops into a series of unfortunate events, and Emilio longs to be released from his horrific existence. Recalling some of the most extreme stories in the *Jesuit Relations*, Emilio's pain and suffering are too immense to affirm his faith.

Because Emilio is not murdered or assassinated, the Jesuits on Earth need to understand and assign responsibility for the mission's failure; as they admit early on, it would have been much simpler if Emilio had been "safely martyred."[47] Even Emilio himself spent his return voyage hoping for his own death, so as to release himself from the burden of understanding what had happened. That does not come to pass, and Emilio instead comes to the devastating realization that he has been cast as a postmodern Job, conscious of the meaninglessness of his own existence beyond serving as a punchline in a morality tale scripted for others.

JOGUES: FOUNDED IN MISAPPREHENSION

The Sparrow, then, is a tragic story of misapprehension in good faith. Except it is unclear if Emilio's "faith" could be qualified as "good," given his own despair and the demographic-level disruption of a previously unknown biosphere that his faith set into motion. Even though Russell engages very few native intertexts, her portrait of Emilio as an interstellar missionary does thematize the misapprehension that indigenous scholars emphasize is characteristic of settler-native encounters.[48] The key to Emilio's story resides in a series of moments of misunderstood

hospitality, and culminates with his ultimate inability to apprehend a living metaphor sculpted onto his flesh. And that metaphor has a material and literal historical referent: Isaac Jogues.[49]

It seems clear that Russell did not consult seventeenth-century sources beyond Jesuit and Jesuit-inflected ones in her research on Jogues, nor did she plot out her narrative following a contemporary history that considers or centers Haudenosaunee perspectives, although she is very invested in Jogues's encounter with alterity.[50] To be fair, John Parmenter's *The Edge of the Woods*, an extraordinary single-volume academic history of the early colonial period, was published fourteen years after *The Sparrow*, and was thus not available for Russell to consult.[51] Parmenter's eponymous chapter, "The Edge of the Woods: 1635–1649," tells the story surrounding Jogues without making it a story about Jogues. It is the story of peoples and diplomacy, war and peace. These are the stories, broadly, of the contact zone.

Jogues's saga, and especially the second act which unfolded in the 1640s, occurred at the moment when the Jesuit missionaries in New France were casting themselves in a new role, following Del Valle's model, shifting from triumphant evangelists to living martyrs, "despised and menaced by those they came spiritually to rescue, a rhetorical change that shifted the focus from the conversion of native peoples to the suffering servanthood of the missionaries themselves."[52]

Jogues had arrived in North America in 1636, where he joined up with Jean de Brébeuf, the superior of the Jesuit mission in New France. For six years Jogues traveled the area on diplomatic and theological missions, and he was taken captive in 1642 as tensions escalated in the region. After a year of captivity and torture, he was freed and returned to France, only to reenlist in the missionary cause, fatefully returning to New France and Iroquoia in 1646. Despite living among the "natives" for years, Jogues was unable to comprehend the "core Iroquois social values of hospitality, condolence, and the renewal of reciprocal relationships."[53]

Some of Jogues's captured Jesuit compatriots were offered swift and honored deaths in the aftermath of their captivity.[54] Others were ritually adopted and integrated into the Haudenosaunee. During the year that Jogues spent with the Mohawks, he was offered neither of these options, and thus lived through an extended period of torture and abuse. Both Anderson and Parmenter suggest that this deferral was due to the fact that Jogues obstinately (and, in his own mind, righteously) defied Mohawk protocols for adoption and social integration follow-

ing his capture and torture. Jogues himself understood it as a divine denial of what he longed for most: the glorious death of a Catholic martyr.

One particular breach of hospitality protocol, from his second captivity in 1646, was especially disastrous. Jogues used his knowledge of Iroquois language and culture to produce a European-style map, which represented a grave misappropriation of spatial knowledge. Parmenter elaborates: "Jogues's open disregard for Iroquois spatial protocol [ultimately] destroyed the fragile peace of 1645."[55] This event may have delivered Jogues his longed-for martyrdom, but it also scuttled a proposed peace between the Iroquois, the French colonists, and the Algonquins and the Wendats that would have opened free passage and trade between Wendake, New France, and Iroquoia.

It was his first period of captivity, however, that established the Jesuit as a "living martyr of Jesus Christ," a reception that caused Jogues profound embarrassment upon his ransom and return to France in 1643.[56] Jogues suffered from multiple finger amputations and disfigurations which would have lasting effects on his body, and led to breathless descriptions of the "living" martyr's bloody hands staining the manuscript pages of his writings. Even Emilio himself finds inspiration in Jogues's unyielding position as his fingers were "cut off joint by joint with clamshell blades."[57]

This is the key detail from Jogues's hagiography that Russell adapts in her novel. Jogues's mutilated hands become a conceit that highlights Emilio's failure to grasp the socio-cultural framework of Rakhat, and the slow revelation of their true meaning structures the novel's pace and provides the true and correct version of the story, as opposed to what Emilio insisted was all true but all wrong.

EMILIO'S HANDS AND THE MEANING OF HASTA'AKALA

We first learn of Emilio's mangled hands at the end of the third chapter of *The Sparrow*, once Emilio is back from the mission, and convalescing in the Vatican.[58] In this early reveal, Father John Candotti—the most sympathetic of the Jesuit inquisitors, who will eventually construct Emilio's cybernetic prothesis—ponders the "impossibly long, scarred fingers": "Why the hell did they do this to him? John wondered, trying to be careful of the raw new tissue that had only recently reclosed. All the muscles of the palms had been carefully cut from the bones, dou-

bling the length of the fingers, and Sandoz's hands reminded John of Halloween skeletons."[59]

Like the reader, John Candotti must wait until midway through the novel for the next piece of the puzzle. This information comes after the novel's other big reveal, tied to the mission's second misapprehension, this one regarding the sociobiological structure of Rakhat. Russell here reprises the classic SF materialist revelation emblematic of H. G. Well's *The Time Machine:* it's not one uniform society, it's two different classes! In the case of Rakhat, that division is predator/prey, the most seductive of all anthropological relationships.[60] The humans realize that the Jana'ata breed the Runa, in what has evolved over generations to become a stable predatory hierarchy.[61] The Runa populations are managed for intelligence, companionship, and ultimately, for meat, and they accept this arrangement willingly.[62] Emilio and his fellow missionaries had misjudged the society, integrated with the domesticated Runa, and upset the sociobiological order in irreversible ways before they could ever comprehend the effects of their actions. Reflecting upon this misapprehension, Emilio tells his inquisitors: "We had all the information, really. It was all there. We just didn't understand. I think perhaps that even if we had been told directly, we would not have understood."[63]

Through what the missionaries believe to be wholesome, righteous action, they create a state of civil unrest on Rakhat, until the Jana'ata military sweeps in with brutal force, "the martial arm of a sentient predatory species . . . defending civilization as they know it."[64] Emilio is captured in the aftermath of this massacre and marched across the countryside, in a series of events that once again draws from Jogues and the *Jesuit Relations*. Supaari, the Jana'ata trader, tracks down Emilio and pays his ransom, along with his Jesuit companion Marc Robichaux. Once returned to Supaari's domain, Emilio undergoes the hand mutilation procedure, which he later learns is called hasta'akala.

Back in Rome, Emilio explains to Candotti that hasta'akala meant "making hands appear like *sta'aka*," a kind of draping ivy that is common on Rakhat. And yet even after experiencing the procedure, its deeper meaning still remains opaque to Emilio, who painfully realizes that undergoing the procedure in itself was not enough to understand the meaning of the experience. He reflects:

> "It might have been an exercise in aesthetics. Maybe long fingers are more beautiful. Or a way of controlling us. We didn't have to work but then again, we couldn't have. There

> were servants to take care of us. After. Marc Robichaux and I were the only ones left by then. It was supposed to be an honorable estate, I think." His voice changed, harder now, the bitterness coming back. "I'm not sure to whom the honor accrued. Supaari, I suppose. It was a way of showing that he could afford to have useless dependents in his household, I think."[65]

Emilio's body was modified under alien aesthetic conditions that he did not understand. He was made purposefully useless through a cosmetic procedure that aestheticized dependence. And it is not until he returns, disgraced, to Earth that Emilio comprehends his affirmative role in the procedure:

> You can see it, can't you? Hasta'akala: to be made like sta'aka. To be made visibly and physically dependent on someone stronger. [Supaari] offered us hasta'akala. He took me to the garden and showed me the ivy and I didn't make the connection. I thought he was offering Marc and me his protection and hospitality. I thought I could trust him. He asked my consent and I gave it. And I *thanked* him.[66]

In its totality—Emilio's incomprehension, his naive consent, his submission as an aestheticized object of exchange—this experience shatters the purportedly immovable rock of Emilio's faith. The Jesuits, who ground their devotional empiricism in the constancy of belief, cannot provide a framework for Emilio to interpret his hands, which have been pruned into incomprehension. This combination of Jesuit faith and shrubbery-based metaphors recalls Eduardo Viveiros de Castro's essay "On Marble and Myrtle, or the Inconstancy of the Indian Soul," his anthropological study of religious conversion through the metaphor of topiary practices. Strangely enough, Viveiros's essay offers an interpretive framework for understanding hasta'akala, one that not even Emilio could grasp.

Viveiros's essay is a close reading of the Jesuit chronicles from seventeenth-century southern Brazil, in the Xingu River basin, which most prominently feature encounters with Tupi-speakers. Since the Jesuits interpreted the encounter beforehand as an evangelical event, they naturally recorded their interactions through a religious lens. Since conversion occurred rather quickly, the Jesuits did not present the en-

counter in itself as a theological challenge. The more distressing fact to the chroniclers was that conversion was not sufficiently revelatory to the natives, who merely added Catholicism as some new cultural flourish to their existence. This easy and ephemeral conversion meant, consequently, that the Amerindians necessarily lacked a true concept of religion, which, in the Jesuits' view, must be sculpted from a bedrock of faith.

Viveiros continues this lithographic metaphor to describe marble as the primary material of early modern Catholic faith: "The being of a [marble] society is its perseverance: memory and tradition are the identitarian marble out of which culture is made."[67] The problem was not just the ease of the Amerindians' public and enthusiastic conversion, but rather how seamlessly they incorporated these new practices into their own lives without giving up what the Jesuits found most offensive, namely their ritual practices that the Europeans abhorred.

The Jesuits contrasted their marble-sculpted faith with the metaphor of myrtle, the shrubbery that was the raw matter of topiary practices. Like the shrub itself, the Amerindians could be "pruned" and manipulated into the pleasing shape of pious Catholics, but this status was only temporary. As inevitable as the growth of vegetative matter in the South American jungle, the natives' souls bloomed out beyond the superficial sculpted forms given to them by the black-robed groundskeepers. Unlike the marble, which resists mightily the initial blows of the sculpture's hammer only to stay "firm and constant" once given over to their ultimate figuration, these topiary statues descended into "a green confusion of myrtle" if not attended to constantly: "They are statues of myrtle that, if the gardener lifts his hand and his scissors, will soon lose their new form, and return to the old natural brutishness, becoming a thicket as they were before."[68]

The other side of this metaphor posited that, in their need of constant spiritual guidance, the natives themselves were inconstant souls. Although the anthropologist Viveiros de Castro does not endorse this Jesuit trope, he does attempt to extract an ethnographic kernel of truth from the seventeenth-century writings, and thus he inverts the colonial Jesuit interpretation of this spiritual metaphor. Viveiros elevates "inconstancy," which is associated with the pliant yet prodigious myrtle as the cultural essence of these folks, into a native way of being founded in openness and exchange.[69] In this ontology (which fits quite nicely with Viveiros's Deleuze-inflected anthropology), a concept of stable and persistent identity—being as a statue—is doubly ridiculed. First, for being

so dense or silly as to posit a stable identity in an ever-transforming world; and second, for being incompetent enough to mistake stone itself as dead, constant matter.

Russell's fictional recasting of the colonial Jesuit encounter in the New World does not go so far. Instead of the wise revelation of the anthropologist who finds in native "inconstancy" an ontological hospitality open to absorbing alterity and changing oneself in the process, Emilio comes to the painful, existentially obliterating realization that he himself was not even the missionary in his own tale.[70] Emilio was not made of marble, nor was he the sculptor, and he certainly was not the gardener. He was, in fact, the myrtle, and his hands bore the scars of his pruning. Furthermore, he consented (and gave consent on behalf of another) to an aesthetic procedure he did not comprehend, and in the end his body was made to represent Rakhat in ways he was not prepared to recognize.

The encounter played out on Emilio's body, and his flesh itself became a contact zone, the "theater of apprehension" of colonial relations.[71] This is precisely what Emilio could not grasp in the moment, and Russell develops this hand-based metaphor for intercultural cognition to its ultimate consequences. In misapprehending the connection between Supaari's offer of dependent hospitality, Emilio naturally misunderstands the connection between the aesthetic procedure of hasta'akala and the ontological world in which such a procedure has meaning.

CONCLUSION

In the end, Emilio's misapprehension should come as no surprise. Emilio's own model is perhaps the most deranged example of hospitality in the historical records: the New World martyr. This is the model of the guest who accepts the host's hospitality, and reciprocates with passive, unconditional militancy. So how would it ever occur to Emilio that his body and actions might represent something other than the constancy of his own faith? Emilio himself is no militant, but his story certainly suggests that a serial living martyr makes for a particularly noxious cosmic houseguest. Russell's reimagining of Jogues creates a fictional body open to malleable inscription, while at the same time mutilating the very tactile organs that Emilio would need to apprehend the Rakhatian world in its sociobiological plenitude.[72]

In the tradition of anthropological SF, Russell's novel searches for something like a cosmic background humanity, some form of mutual recognizability that will span the abyss between solar systems and interstellar speciation.[73] This cosmic background humanity will be the common object for both conversion and science, the object upon which evangelism is enacted and upon which the scientific method unfolds. Whatever that background characteristic—that shared commonality that will transcend Earth and bind us to the cosmos—it will not be found by martyrs of either the scientific or religious variety. And if there is any hope in *The Sparrow*, it is this: let us hope that the martyrs are not the ambiguous vanguard of our interstellar diplomacy to come.

CHAPTER 5

Colombo ex frigata and the Problem of Firstness

The previous four chapters have revisited sites and concepts associated with the conquest of the Americas in order to imagine a decolonized novum: the anthology, the museum, the map, and the hospitality relation. But there is another tendency that looms large over the SF novum in the Americas: the specter of the Almirante, or Admiral, known as Christopher Columbus in the English-speaking world, and as Cristóbal Colón in the Spanish-language records. The Mexican poet Amando Nervo's "El gran viaje" (1917; "The Great Voyage") most clearly expresses this tendency in the poem's oft-quoted refrain, "¿Quién será, en un futuro no lejano, / el Cristóbal Colón de algún planeta?" ("Who will be, in some not so distant future, / the Christopher Columbus of an unknown planet?").[1]

As Nervo's verse demonstrates, the figure of Colón captivates the SF imagination, and for many, Colón/Columbus is the first place to start any account of first contact. In more recent history, Colón has become the nexus for a less speculative reckoning with the colonial past, and Nervo's hopeful verse from 1917 reads differently today as statues of Columbus come down and billionaires finance colonization missions in the solar system.

The statues of Colón pose another lingering question even after the Almirante's likeness has been ripped down from the pedestal. How is it

that these statues stood for so long, when their counterfactual essence had been thoroughly revealed by indigenous communities, scholars, and activists in the wake of the Quincentenary? It has been a quarter-century since Michel-Rolph Trouillot warned us about this in "Good Day, Columbus!"[2] That essay, a chapter in his masterful *Silencing the Past*, is a concise revision of Columbus Day's strange history in North America. Trouillot tells an alternative origin story about the October 12 celebration. The crux of his essay locates, like many of the other essays in the volume, moments of shifting power dynamics in the historical record, and then studies those moments by listening for silences and erasures. This leads him to focus, mainly, on the 1892 Quadricentenary, and how North American Catholics used Columbus, a Genoese empresario who sailed under the banner of the Castilian monarchs, to naturalize a group of European Catholic immigrants, mostly Italians and Irish, into the U.S. national identity in the late nineteenth century.

That story is now well known, in no small part due to Trouillot's essay, but even in the 1990s it was no news for Latin American writers, artists, and thinkers who had long ago recognized "America" itself as a recently invented concept. This was the legacy of Edmundo O'Gorman, who told an entire continent that it had not been discovered but rather invented. By 1992—in the midst of the global Quincentenary celebration of Colón's landfall in the Caribbean—this critique had joined up with a general critique of Eurocentrism, as evidenced by the title of José Rabasa's study *Inventing AMERICA: Spanish Historiography and the Formation of Eurocentrism*. Rabasa's monograph was both timely, published in the immediate aftermath of the Quincentenary, and "strategically designed to debunk a contemporary complacency with the historic, geographic, and cartographic rudiments underlying our present picture of the world."[3]

Rabasa's book was exemplary of a newly ascendant decolonial interpretation of the past that overwhelmed the previously existing consensus, and the Quincentenary—which was originally conceived of as an international celebration of Discovery—was the historical moment that snapped those preceding four decades of Latin American, American Indian, and anticolonial thought into a recognizable critical orientation. And yet it was not until a global movement for Black lives—articulated in the United States under the demand that Black Lives Matter—began tearing down monuments to white supremacy connected to the seditionist Confederacy that the material infrastructure of the North American Columbian legacy truly became subject to revision.

The coincidence of toppled statues of Colón and the Confederacy highlights a certain tendency in what Catherine Gallagher has called the "counterfactual imagination," which is a key component in the kinds of SF alternative histories this book has studied.[4] In Gallagher's study of Anglophone uchronias, she finds that the majority cluster around one of two key moments: "(I) the American Civil War and (II) the period of World War II when Great Britain was Nazi Germany's sole undefeated opponent."[5] In the SF tradition, these points of divergence in an alternative timeline are called "jonbar points" (on that, more later), and serve as temporal nodes that assist us in our frail and vulgar attempts to think historical causality. Colón's 1492 arrival can certainly join Gallagher's list as a key moment in the counterfactual imagination.

As Nervo says in "El gran viaje," Colón's arrival on distant shores is at once advanced as an absolute singularity while also sharing the inevitable and necessary structure of a repetition to come. The result is a nonliterary anachronism that projects Colón into the future while at the same time projecting a certain "modernity" back onto Colón: a cosmic Almirante constantly arriving in a scene of absolute novelty, the vanguard of the exploratory impulse. Thus, even after the statues come down and our world haltingly crafts a language to reckon with the disastrous consequences of continental conquest, Colón enjoys an SF afterlife as the Ur-voyager who sails on. El Almirante, on the prow of his vessel, cuts across space-time as an emblem of modernity, for better or worse.

For these reasons, the figure of Colón must be understood as a structural problem that expresses the connections between exploration, novelty, and conquest, and accordingly is a key site for the critical task of decolonizing the novum. We can name this image of the Navigator, always and once again as the first to arrive: it is the *Colombo ex frigata*, or "Columbus from the frigate." This procedural narrative device, consolidated as a cliché yet revelatory in its application, continues to operate as a conceptual wellspring not just for the SF imagination, but for more generalized accounts of modernity and exploration.

Colombo ex frigata, then, is the tangled knot at the heart of the colonial novum. It is Abel Posse, in his Columbus novel *Los perros del paraíso* (1983; *The Dogs of Paradise*), who most keenly focuses on this Gordian knot at the heart of the New World colonial encounter. Posse seasons his novels with a refrain, *tanto monta desatar o cortar*, that was both the Spanish-language summary of the myth of the Gordian knot, and the mantra the Catholic monarchs emblazoned on their heraldic

shield. Literally, the phrase expressed that any other solution to untying the Gordian knot is moot after a sword has hacked through the tangle ("whether untangled or sliced, it's all the same thing"); for Isabella and Ferdinand, it embodied an impetuous and audacious theory of governing.

Posse's portrait of Columbus is satirical and multifaceted, and culminates in a vision of the Genoese admiral as a farcical loafer. Another important historiographic detail that Posse speculates upon to great effect is the *piloto anónimo* thesis, the long-standing rumor (documented by the first Iberian *cronistas* in the early sixteenth century) that Columbus had secret pre-knowledge of the American continent. In making such a speculation, Posse is not alone among the Latin American *novelistas de Colón*. Alejo Carpentier's *El arpa y la sombra* (1978) also uses that trope to depict a subversive revision of Colón himself as an *embustero*, or a deceitful rogue. Together, these speculative portraits help to estrange Colón, but they do not provide sufficient velocity to escape the narrative pull of the *Colombo ex frigata*. In order to do so, this chapter concludes with a literary analysis of Gerald Vizenor's attempt to slice the Gordian knot called "firstness" by imagining a radically different Columbus. Vizenor's writings, especially his novel *Heirs of Columbus* (1991), connect to revisionist indigenous and American Indian scholarship that suggests pre-1492 transatlantic circulation, a historiographic intervention that undermines the claim to singularity at the heart of the *Colombo ex frigata*. This archeological and anthropological research opens new perspectives on alternative and indigenous futurisms, and provides a paradigmatic American transculturation of the figure of Colón as a trickster. If *Colombo ex frigata* is a bad loop, Vizenor's Trickster Columbus breaks that loop open into a multitude of different futures, none of which relies on a disoriented Admiral robbing one of his crewmates of the prize for the first sailor to sight land.

THE PERSISTENCE OF THE COLOMBO EX FRIGATA

In a certain sense, to have named the thing after the deus ex machina is already to have spoiled any future surprise, so instead of enumerating the many stories that partake in the *Colombo ex frigata* trope, I'll instead share a single masterful example.[6] It is "Persistencia," a short story by the Peruvian SF author and *mago de lo fantástico* José B. Adolph.

Adolph relies on his recognition as an SF author to set the scene for this short story. He unfolds over three pages the philosophical and pseudoscientific reflections of a spaceship captain, thinking about the war and destruction he left behind, the future that his ship and his crew will open up through its journey, and the trials and tribulations they have faced on what clearly seems to be an interstellar voyage; and he concludes his captain's log this way:

> Me siento solo, y no me siento solo. ¿Habrá alguien que pueda comprender esta atracción por un abismo que para mí no es sino una ruta más? Es cierto que a veces tengo miedo, como todos. No soy sino un hombre frente a fuerzas desconocidas; las intuyo, pero no las domino; las comprendo, pero no son mías. Pero sin miedo no hay esperanza.
>
> Y, sin embargo, el tiempo es largo, sobre todo para [la tripulación]. El viaje se les aparece infinito. Empiezan a sentirse privados de toda realidad; se creen fantasmas de sí mismos. Sus ojos me amenazan, porque siempre hay un culpable. La nave cruje y se mece, la inmensidad es cada vez más aplastante, pese a esos signos que, desde hace un par de días, nos aseguran que no hay error, que mis cálculos son correctos.[7]
>
> I feel alone, and yet I don't. Is there anyone who could understand this attraction towards the abyss that I feel is nothing more than just another route? It's true that sometimes I am afraid, like anyone else. I am nothing more than a man facing unknown forces; I feel them, but I cannot control them; I understand them, but they are not of my own making. But without fear there can be no hope.
>
> And yet, time drags on, especially for the crew. For them, this journey appears infinite. They are gradually losing their grip on reality; they are beginning to believe themselves to be mere ghosts of themselves. Their eyes threaten me, because in the end, someone is always to blame. The ship rocks and groans, and the immensity grows more crushing every day, even though we've been seeing signs for a few days now that our journey is not in error, that my calculations are correct.

And here, in the very last paragraph, all of the talk of planetary travel, the crews' reduction to "criaturas desnudas, flotando en la creación"

("naked creatures floating in the creation") and the captain's terrified, selfless cosmology crash back into a mundane yet estranging revelation:

> Debo anotar, pues, que ojalá se cumplan los pronósticos favorables antes que el temor termine totalmente con la confianza. Rogaré al Señor para que tal cosa no ocurra. Danos, pues, Señor, la gracia de poder cumplir nuestra misión antes que finalice este octubre de 1492.[8]
>
> It is my duty to record my hope that these favorable prognostications come to fruition before a generalized fear destroys our remaining confidence. I pray to Our Savior that such a thing does not occur. Deliver unto us, Almighty, the grace needed to complete our mission before the end of October in this year of our Lord 1492.

And with this final twist, we see revealed the *Colombo ex frigata*, a *deus ex machina* trope that finds structural resonance in repetition, a persistent fixation that expands well beyond the Navigator's titular "persistencia." Colón's empirical ship becomes tropological, but that trope then collapses again upon itself, in a cycle of colonial revelation. It is a blade that slices two ways: one edge cuts what Mario de Andrade called "a imensa e sagrada dor do irreconciliável humana . . . que viajara na primeira vela de Colombo" ("the immense and sacred pain of irreconcilable humanity that traveled on Columbus's first ship"); while the other opens a wound that bleeds biopolitical potentiality.[9]

Deus ex machina has traditionally been the name for a contrived, unearned, and unsatisfactory resolution of a story's plot. In its essence, it is the laziest way to cut the Gordian knot of a tangled narrative; it is a way to end the damn thing. But in its metahistorical manifestation as the *Colombo ex frigata*, the trope is instead concerned principally with originary moments, and accordingly places the emphasis on beginnings instead of endings and resolutions. Once we have named this phenomenon of using Columbus as the metonym of the American origin story, we can understand its attractive force. It is the condensed node of continental anxiety about firstness: the compulsive need to ground a history or a tale in genesis.[10] *Colombo ex frigata* becomes a metatrope: not merely another moment for uchronic speculation, but perhaps the continental American jonbar point, the birth of the New World.

A "jonbar point" is the SF way to name what Jorge Luis Borges would call a waypoint in the garden of forking paths. In a Shakespearean sense, it is a misaligned hinge in a time out of joint. The term was developed in part by Brian Aldiss in a review of *Legions of Time*, and it has become one of the key components of alternative history narratives.[11] As Gallagher has argued, the most popular jonbar points in Anglophone SF—set during either the American Civil War or World War II, and asking what if the South had won? or what if Hitler had been victorious?—are inextricably tied up with racial anxiety, linked as they are to the transatlantic slave trade and fascist genocide, respectively.[12] Jerng calls this SF tendency the "racial counterfactual," which instead of actively building antiracist worlds, presupposes racism in order to make any imagined world coherent.[13]

Even when he coined the term, Aldiss was already worried about jonbar points themselves becoming reified, of being reduced to a "fairy tale of foreignness and power" which ultimately collapses into the "boring xenophobia" of bad SF.[14] Indeed, at its worst, a reified jonbar point serves as a generic excuse to not talk about the true burden of historical memory.[15] Instead, the reified jonbar point creates a deus ex machina intervention, the illusion that there is one quick socio-technical fix to right history's wrongs.

Trouillot connects this to his broader thesis: any historical moment that becomes singular and simplistic in the historical imagination does so at the expense of the messy process of what actually happened, and of the multiplicity of meanings that have rippled outward from that moment.[16] This process of singularizing and simplifying is the very process of Power silencing other true versions of the past in the production of History. This is the aforementioned salvational fantasy of counterfactuality.[17] And no single Columbus novel better exemplifies the Almirante's decision-making as a reified jonbar point than Orson Scott Card's 1996 *Pastwatch: The Redemption of Christopher Columbus*.

Card's novel is clearly an SF Columbus novel, in that it stages a time-travel war centered on Christopher Columbus, among other historical figures, although it differs profoundly from the Latin American *novelas de Colón* that I will be discussing shortly. This is due to that fact that Card writes in an interventionist model of time travel, whereas Latin American authors like Carpentier and Posse are much more committed to using anachronism to trace political and ontological genealogies across Latin American history. I follow Alcocer in defining an "interven-

tionist" time-travel narrative as one that focuses on returning to specific jonbar points in order to intervene strategically and surgically to change the fate of past, present, and future.[18] As Card's subtitle indicates, his narrative seeks the "redemption" of the Columbus figure; but neither intervention nor redemption are on the horizon of possibility for authors who seek to exit from the *Colombo ex frigata*. Card structures this redemption around the sublimation of barbaric human sacrifice into a syncretic Christian salvational theology via angelic-like interventions from alternative timelines; he cites Todorov's *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other* as his primary inspiration and source. Card's novel is marred by a casual Eurocentrism and a boorish white supremacy; this flaw expresses itself structurally in the novel when the author can only possibly imagine Amerindian supremacy in the aftermath of an interventionist transfer of European technology.[19] *Pastwatch: The Redemption of Christopher Columbus* conclusively demonstrates that when directed at the conquest of the Americas, narrative attempts to change or redeem the past will always be inadequate. The gravity of the *Colombo ex frigata* is inescapable when the navigational horizon is the redemption of the historical Columbus. SF that truly reimagines the Conquest does so by learning to think about it otherwise, not by conjuring apocryphal salvation for empirical expressions of historical trauma.[20]

So how to disarm this trap which operates in the very colonial inception of the New World? This difficult task has tied even the most virtuosic thinkers up in knots. Early in his collaboration with Wallerstein, Aníbal Quijano developed the concept of Americanity to express these problems of origin at the heart of the continent's existence. It is no coincidence that the article where the two collaborators develop their argument, "Americanity as a Concept, or the Americas in the Modern World-System," was published in the Quincentenary year of 1992. Throughout the article, these world-system theorists use aphorisms to express the entangled problems of causality and temporality, presenting such paradoxical formulations as "It was decolonization that fixed the stateness of decolonial states."[21] Their dense prose requires unpacking: in order for former colonies to be recognized as sovereign states, these autonomous entities were already forced, at their very moment of inception, to enter into a project that had previously dedicated itself to their subordination, exploitation, and erasure. To become a modern decolonial state, they had to first acknowledge the colonial state as legitimate. Decolonial, of course, is not the same as decolonized. The decolonized

can recognize the empirical historical existence of the modern colonial state without acknowledging the legitimacy of that enterprise.

The aphorism is one way to express this complicated point. Another is to employ a provincializing perspective, as when the two authors remind their readers that what became the United States of America was just thirteen of over thirty British crown colonies that "fought together a war of independence and came to form a new state."[22] How different would things have been if one of those colonies had not joined up, or if several of the other noncontiguous colonies had allied themselves to the cause?

Quijano and Wallerstein's argument is sweeping: the emergence of the Americas changes the world itself, because the modern world begins with America. Specifically, four new things happen (they call this the "four-fold newness"). The first three newnesses—coloniality, ethnicity, and racism—are the core components of American colonialism in its settler and extractivist guises. The fourth, which they call Americanity, explains the newness of the Americas themselves. Americanity is the continent's auto-mythology based on a claim to absolute—or perhaps permanent—novelty.[23] Americanity folds the other three novel modern concepts—coloniality, ethnicity, and racism—into a world system called "modernity."

Before we spend too much more time unraveling Americanity, it's important to say that Quijano eventually abandoned Americanity, along with several other historically ungrounded ideas from that article, in the later development of his thought.[24] Nonetheless, Quijano still views America itself as firstness, and the historical event as "unprecedented."[25] This is perhaps most concisely expressed in a late-career article, "Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism and Latin America," where Quijano summarizes a life's work of opening up world-systems thinking to account for America.[26] America is a Eurocentric creation that fixes its temporality by denying coevalness: "the Europeans generated a new temporal perspective of history and relocated the colonized population, along with their respective histories and cultures, in the past of a historical trajectory whose culmination was Europe."[27]

Once again this revelation takes a complicated and self-reflexive form, like the aphorism about decolonial statehood. America's emergence changes "the world as such," and the thing that changes is the concept of novelty itself. After 1492, modernity thinks of itself as the expression of the new space-time of the New World.[28] This has racial and ethnic consequences, and it also has economic consequences: America's

emergence provides the scaffolding against which capital constructs its hegemony. Among other things, it is the moment when capital transforms into the system called capitalism.[29]

Notwithstanding the critical efforts of scholars like Quijano, "novedad/novelty" has become one of those seductive universals that Trouillot was so worried about in *Silencing the Past*. The singular logic of firstness forms part of the ideological infrastructure of so-called New World colonialism, and works its way into even the most radical or progressive interpretations of the continent's history.[30] It is not just the legacy of the Columbian moment that suffers. The novelty of the New World casts a dark shadow that eclipses all other moments of previous contact. That shadow ultimately obstructs our past, whether our shared past as inhabitants of the continent or the particular pasts of indigenous-oriented groups whose existence reveals continuity where Terran amnesia fabulates a rupture.[31] And that shadow obstructs our imagining other futures. This is why SF is terminally attracted to Columbus as a literary figure.[32] Authors peek into that darkness and sketch shadow Columbuses. And no single shadow has been more inspirational to revisionists than the so-called *piloto anónimo*.

ANONYMOUS PILOTS AND ESTRANGED COLONES

The *piloto anónimo* (anonymous navigator) thesis presupposes that Colón had prior knowledge of the transatlantic route to the Caribbean islands, and furthermore that he deliberately hid this knowledge from the world. In this, the thesis is the perfect historiographic anchor point from which to estrange the Almirante. The story, with its air of maritime espionage and navigational dissimulation, has enticed historians as long as the New World has existed. Many of the principle sixteenth- and seventeenth-century chroniclers include some version of it in their writings. Regardless of any evaluation of the merits of the claim, its inclusion in the historical record plants a seed of doubt that things might have been otherwise. And it certainly undermines the claim that the Columbian exchange was a single, unitary, never to be repeated moment.

The details of the thesis vary, but the general idea is that a European navigator was carried by an anomalous storm from the eastern Atlantic all the way to the Caribbean basin, where the crew was received with warm hospitality by indigenous inhabitants until the sailors were ready to undertake the return voyage. The hypothesized return voyage usually

passes through the Canary Islands, and it is here that Colón purportedly encounters one of the crew members, who shares the good news of the western sea route with the ambitious Almirante. Oviedo includes the story in his *Historia general y natural de las Indias* in 1535 only to deny it as a spurious rumor, while Las Casas and Gómara later affirm Colón's secret liaison in their mid-sixteenth-century volumes. Inca Garcilaso finally names the so-called *piloto anónimo* in 1609: Alonso Sánchez.[33]

Two Latin American novels, both entries in the canon of historiographic metafiction, are emblematic in their use of the *piloto anónimo* in the novels' estranged depiction of Colón: Alejo Carpentier's final published novel, *El arpa y la sombra* (1979; *The Harp and the Shadow*), and Abel Posse's *Los perros del paraíso* (1983; *The Dogs of Paradise*).[34] Carpentier and Posse both include the *piloto anónimo* hypothesis as a significant plot point in their respective novels: for Carpentier it is a rumor told by Colón's friend Maestre Jacobo; for Posse it is an entire subplot. Both use a light SF touch (Meyerhold's *toque ligero de music hall*) to great effect in estranging Colón, which allows them to avoid the redemptive trap so characteristic of the *Colombo ex frigata*.

Carpentier's novel casts the Almirante himself as ambitiously duplicitous, and reveals his historical persona to be a screen against which subsequent historical passions have been projected: he is a self-mythologizing con man of no confessed nation or faith, and a cipher for others' fantastical projections. *El arpa y la sombra* reimagines the Columbian myth in three moments, each explored in one of the novel's three sections. In the first section an aging pope, Pius IX, reflects on a youthful trip to South America, and hatches a plan to elevate Colón to sainthood in order to stem the rising tide of secular modernity in the nineteenth-century Americas. In the second section we hear directly from Colón himself as he surveys his accomplishments in the twilight of his life, as he hallucinates on his deathbed. Finally, the third section sees the unsuccessful resolution of Pius IX's plan, in the form of a papal tribunal attended by a transhistorical group of witnesses, ranging from Colón's contemporaries like Bartolomé de Las Casas to his nineteenth-century pseudo-hagiographers like Léon Bloy, along with many other witnesses who testify for or against the Almirante's proposed beatification.[35]

Crucially, Carpentier suggests that Colón had secret information about previous Scandinavian voyages to North America, and he was willing to cheat, steal, and perhaps even murder to advance his deceptive claims.[36] This fits more broadly with Carpentier's depiction of Colón as an *embustero*, and ties the *piloto anónimo* thesis to the plotting of a

nefarious huckster. The most definitive portrait of Colón the *embustero* emerges in the second section of Carpentier's novel, where Colón confesses his truth to an audience of no one. The Admiral of the Ocean Sea flips through his many letters and diaries on his deathbed, revealing his intimate secrets in a self-gloss on his own previously published fabrications and exaggerations. This leads to the novel's classic revisionist moment of the *Descubridor-descubierto*, the "Discoverer discovered," that is, unmasked.[37] Yet this decolonial crescendo is not the conclusion of the novel; it's not even the conclusion of the second section. The final scene of Colón's so-called autoconfession ends immediately *before* the confessor arrives, when Colón once again puts on his mask, and becomes the *Descubridor-encubierto* (the Covered-up discoverer), to put it in Aníbal Quijano's terms.[38]

Since Colón reserves his intimate reflections for his unpublished scribblings, the reader knows more than Colón's own confessor. In rereading his oeuvre on his deathbed, we relive the most nefarious accomplishments of his New World adventure as if they were scenes in a *retablo de maravillas* (pageant of marvels):

> Cuando me asomo al laberinto de mi pasado en esta hora última, me asombro ante mi natural vocación de farsante, de animador de antruejos, de armador de ilusiones, a manera de los saltabanco que en Italia, de feria en feria—y venían a menudo a Savona—llevan sus comedias, pantomimas y mascaradas. Fui trujamán de retablo, al pasear de trono en trono mi Retablo de Maravillas.[39]
>
> When I with trepidation peer into my labyrinthian past at this late hour, I surprise myself upon seeing how naturally I played the part of the pretender, the carnival barker, an itinerant illusionist, like those Italian *saltimbanci* who traveled the villages fairs—even occasionally reaching Savona—to stage their comedies, pantomimes and masquerades. I was a puppetmaster, traveling from court to court with my marvelous tableau, my Pageant of Marvels.

Carpentier's anachronistic mention of Cervantes's *El retablo de maravillas* is a crucial reference.[40] Cervantes's early seventeenth-century *entremés* (short one-act play) ridiculed the folly of blood quantum and the Iberian racial obsession with *limpieza de sangre* (purity of blood).[41] Cer-

vantes's two *retableros*—puppeteers in an itinerant theater company—view their vocation as capturing the public's imagination through that shared racial delusion, and proudly call themselves *embusteros*. In Carpentier's novel, Colón refers to his own exploits in "inventing" America as a traveling *retablo de maravillas*, an illusory spectacle that convinced monarchs and conquistadores to undertake a previously unimaginable colonial exploit. And yet Colón's American *retablo*—much like that of Cervante's *retableros* Chanfalla and Chirinos—was based on deception and the manipulation of expectations. In his non-confession, Colón boasts of a series of particularly spectacular *embustes*, or scams: using Andalusian dance ("moriscas y zapateados") to convince the Caribbean natives that the Spaniards came in peace and friendship; passing off his astronomical foreknowledge of a lunar eclipse as proof that he was a powerful necromancer; and using the threat of torture and bodily mutilation to force his crew to admit that the island of Cuba was indeed *tierra firme*.[42] These three *embustes* are all stagings of what Diana Taylor calls scenarios of discovery, each one representing a key trope of the American speculative imagination: culture, astronomy, and cartography, respectively.[43]

In *Los perros del paraíso*, Abel Posse also builds off of Carpentier's depiction of Colón as a shrewd and duplicitous *embustero*. He dedicates an entire subplot of the novel to Columbus's supposed prior secret knowledge of the Viking Vinland settlements. If Carpentier sketches the tragic portrait of an *embustero*, Posse pushes the *novela de Colón* to its most extreme and farcical limit. The novel jumps between the Catholic monarchs, Isabella and Ferdinand, during their lustful late fifteenth-century courtship; Columbus's preparatory voyages to Iceland and the Canary Islands, where the *piloto anónimo* plot develops; the transatlantic voyage itself; and the unfolding of his American landfall. Further anachronisms invite other guests to the carnival: Nietzsche, the Nazi secret police, and even a footnote cameo by Alejo Carpentier.

Yet compared to *El arpa y la sombra*'s *embustero*, Posse's Colón is a figure at once more sinister and more absurd. This is most apparent in the novel's final pages when an obliviously triumphant Almirante "se entregaba sin prudencia al ocio de la hamaca"[44] ("recklessly gave himself over to the idleness of the hammock"). Lounging in his "newly discovered" Caribbean forest, Colón loses all pretense of European reason and becomes the first hippie South American, "el primer sudamericano integral."[45] Or so it seems, except that Columbus cannot but totalize his particular understanding of paradise. Accordingly, he promulgates the

Ordenanza de Desnudez (Nudist Proclamation) and the Ordenanza de Estar (Chillness Proclamation), and turns his post-conquest repose into the law of the land. By the novel's final scene, Colón has been reduced to an obsessed buffoon, a shackled prisoner of the cult of the paradise-seekers, one so solipsistically enthralled by the "curse of paradise" that he is oblivious to the world-making and world-destroying processes his voyage set into motion.[46]

Caroline Houde sees in all of this another parodic target: Rodolfo Kusch and his American metaphysics that proposes a split between a Eurocentric *ser alguien* (being someone or something; identity) and an Amerindian *estar presente* (being present; situation).[47] The Chill Almirante has successfully conquered the foreign *estar*, and then codified it into law via his Ordenanzas, proclaimed from the depths of the *ocio de la hamaca* (idleness of the hammock). It is not so much that Posse parodies Kusch's philosophy as that he places it in the mouth of Colón, whose recently acquired understanding of the American *estar* only comes in the wake of his voyage of conquest and colonization.

For Gustavo Verdesio, Posse's image of Colón is a reified, uncritical stereotype, and the novelist's satire of Kusch's philosophy is trivial to the point of offense, merely repeating discredited European tropes and perpetuating irresponsible myths of the Conquest.[48] But the novel concludes precisely with this satirical image of the original Discoverer-gone-native punished and in chains, both castigated and yet somehow still responsible for setting into motion a future history of New World fascism. It is in the Chill Almirante's misapprehension or perhaps misappropriation of "Americanness"—inhabiting an already essentialized ontology of *estar presente* from within the architecture of an Amerindian hammock—that Posse captures the irredeemable nature of the *Colombo ex frigata*. Colón's New World is a fantasy of his own making, aided by the *piloto anónimo*, and yet his invention ends with its own kind of deus ex machina.

In narrating how Colón's fever dream ends in chains, Posse puns with the classic line that opens so many Spanish-language fairy tales, *érase una vez*, or "once upon a time": "El almirante, pacientemente sentado en la hamaca, observaba cómo cerraban a martillazos las argollas en torno a sus tobillos. Le maravilló que sólo errasen una vez"[49] ("The admiral, patiently seated in his hammock, observed how they hammered closed the irons around his ankles. He was amazed that they only erred once [upon a time]"). As El Almirante "abides" in his rapidly degenerating paradise, the Inquisition sets up shop in the Americas, and the continent

experiences its first taste of fascist repression: "Desde entonces la represión en América tendría ese sabor profundo de tortura salvacionista, pastoral, exorcizante"[50] ("From then on American repression bore the deep flavor of pastoral, salvational, exorcizing torture"). Posse's novel ends with paradise destroyed, Colón a prisoner of the first European-inspired fascist coup in the continent's history, and the titular barkless dogs of paradise (the endemic and now extinct Taíno dog) replaced by the German shepherds of the SS. As Pellicer has argued, the dénouement is fundamentally about the entwined arrivals of utopianism and fascism in the Americas.[51]

Many of Posse's anachronisms help highlight that historical point, and connect his literary critique of colonial Latin America to his contemporary South American moment of torture, dictatorship, and repression. Yet Posse's most extreme anachronisms spill over into uchronias, or outright alternative histories.[52] He includes speculative temporalities from Andean and Mesoamerican calendars in the chronologies that open each of the novel's four sections, most spectacularly an Incan blimp superhighway between Nazca and Düsseldorf.[53] Much as the *piloto anónimo* had ventured out from Europe prior to Colón's voyage, Posse's New World empires had also initiated transatlantic explorations in the decades preceding 1492. One particular voyage gives rise to a terrifyingly prescient vision of today's oceanic garbage patches, when oceanic Aztec navigators stumble upon an Atlantic cesspool of human jetsam.[54]

The most radical version of the *piloto anónimo* thesis, however, has been advanced by Jack D. Forbes in his *The American Discovery of Europe*.[55] Forbes is no novelist; he bases his argument principally on oceanographic evidence and close readings of archival documents.[56] In short, Forbes argues that a marginal notation in one of Colón's books mentioning a husband and wife from "Katayo" that the Almirante observed in Galway were, in fact, Native Americans who had been swept up by the Gulf Stream and carried to the shores of Galway Bay, Ireland. Forbes elaborates:

> This, then, is perhaps the most exciting piece of writing ever composed by Columbus and one of the most significant paragraphs in the history of the Atlantic world. With this we have solid, indisputable evidence that Columbus and others had seen Native Americans at Galway on the west coast of Ireland and that the Americans had arrived from the west

> going towards the east. Columbus probably saw the Americans in 1477, and it seems very likely that this was the event that compelled him, a few years later, to begin actively preparing for a voyage to the west.[57]

Forbes changes the current and inverts the causality, postulating the Gulf Stream (the very current that shipwrecked Álvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca in 1528) as the medium that transported indigenous folks across the Atlantic generations before the great age of European navigation. This interpretation relies, in part, on Forbes's knowing identification of a moment of colonial misrecognition: already in 1477, Colón was mistaking Amerindians for Asians, in this case as people from Cathay. This anecdote, which Forbes oversells as "indisputable evidence," is merely the introduction to Forbes's encyclopedic history of American contact with Europe and the East, which recovers an ancient history of American seafaring and navigation.[58] Forbes, like the *novelistas de Colón*, spins out a speculative Colón from a particular archival detail. And it is Forbes's version that most clearly showcases an extreme version of the *embustero*'s fabricated novelty.[59]

Together, Forbes, Posse, and Carpentier unravel the seductive logic of the *Colombo ex frigata*. Like most seductive acts, the *Colombo ex frigata* relies on a performance; in this case, it is a play that gets restaged every time a European explorer needed to advance a claim of sovereignty in the continent.[60] Picture here not simply a single originary Colón, but rather a multigenerational, multinational series of Europeans, all repeating a mythological scene that Colón himself never precisely enacted.

As this performance spread across the entire New World, European colonial powers adapted their own localized versions of what Patricia Seed broadly called *Ceremonies of Possession*.[61] According to Jean O'Brien, this colonial script was perfected in New England, as detailed in her study *Firsting and Lasting: Writing Indians Out of Existence in New England*.[62] Although temporally and geographically distant from Colon's fifteenth-century Caribbean landfall, the ritualized performances that O'Brien studies relied specifically on a language of "firsting" in organizing New English settler colonialism, and thus express the logic of firstness in its most material form.

According to O'Brien, the general contours of "firsting" are as follows: New England colonists are the "first" modern people to inhabit the land, and thus they claim—insidiously—to form the first towns and societies in that land.[63] O'Brien continues:

> The result of their political and cultural work is to appropriate the category "indigenous" away from Indians and for themselves. The overarching device in this construction is what I will call "firsting," a straightforward scripting choice that subtly argues for the sole legitimacy of New English ways. Furthermore, the practice of firsting implicitly argues for the inherent supremacy of New English ways, as the institutions and practices of New Englanders are posited as the epitome of modernity.[64]

It is, in essence, a double move that argues for supremacy at the same time that it erases prior indigenous presence.[65]

As we have seen throughout this study, the concepts of firsting and firstness are relevant to a basic structural or conceptual understanding of the Americas and to the unfolding of European colonialism generally. This explains why 1492 has become such a canonical jonbar point: the Columbian moment is profoundly entangled with the very concept of first contact itself, and all of the *Colombo ex frigata* tales are first contact stories by their very nature. And yet, if these tales are nothing more than imaginative reenactments of an already artificially scripted colonial encounter, is it even possible to unravel the problem of *firsting* itself from the continent's own Columbian exchange?

To address this question means to demand new possibilities for imagining radically different encounters. It requires an aesthetic framework for the "many 1492s" that Shohat and Stam argue are so central to their project of *Unthinking Eurocentrism*.[66] It requires the kind of temporal multiplicity that Rifkin suggests is necessary to get *Beyond Settler Time*.[67] In order to inhabit this temporality, one must first recognize that dismissing indigenous origin stories has been a pillar of colonial practice. Following Lopenzina, it is only by actively interrupting firstness that we can begin to perceive continuance:

> In Native American studies the concept of "continuance" offers the rhetorical materials of healing traumatic rupture or unwitnessing. . . . Rather than regarding the moment of contact with Europeans as the locus of an irrevocable epistemological split or fragmentation, Native scholars like Robert Warrior, Jace Weaver, Lisa Brooks, and Craig Womack have succeeded in recent years in focusing instead on the unbroken materials of culture, tradition, and history that

> can be made a part of a continuing narrative of Native presence on the North American continent both before and after contact.[68]

This is precisely why Annette Kolodny closes her book *In Search of First Contact: The Vikings of Vinland, the Peoples of the Dawnland, and the Anglo-American Anxiety of Discovery* with a survey of Mi'kmaq storytelling against firstness, and concludes that many indigenous stories "of a supposedly *first* arrival both *fore*told and also *told* all the ensuing European arrival moments to follow. It was all the *same* story, over and over again."[69] She unpacks these accumulated layers of oral tradition bound up in a tale attributed to a Mi'kmaq storyteller named Jeremy, and kept alive through centuries of encounters with arrivants of all sorts. Kolodny continues:

> Over time the story grew and changed, preserving several phases in the process by which seriatim Mi'kmaq storytellers systematically reinterpreted and restructured the meaning of contact so as to rationalize, after the fact, their people's current experiential reality. The concept of a discrete and identifiable first contact was thereby blurred within a symbolically paradigmatic narrative that came to encompass the events of at least three centuries. And by Jeremy's day, the story performed yet another kind of cultural work. It confirmed that there was wisdom in the old ways and that dreams needed to be attended to. . . . The story thereby confirmed the power of the old ways as an important conceptual weapon in the ongoing struggle between Mi'kmaq belief systems and invasive European worldviews.[70]

What Kolodny describes is very different from a jonbar point. Instead of a temporal node open to imaginative intervention that will change the course of History, she describes a story that carries an entire history within itself and creates its own future in every retelling. That future interrupts, necessarily, Nervo's *futuro no lejano* (not so distant future). It also provides another perspective on the decolonial novum, one which responds to the monologue of conquest with a deceptively simple solution: "We need to learn new origin stories."[71]

The phrase "new origin stories," of course, proposes a temporal paradox, although that paradox has not prevented the kind of excellent and

necessary scholarship that Lopenzina highlights. In the North American context, for instance, King Philip's War has become one of those "new origin" stories. Metacom's story is not a *new* story; it's one of those silenced stories that some of us were unable to hear within a settler colonial paradigm.[72] What these "new origin stories" do is testify to the lie of the firstness deception. This lesson is applicable across the entire temporal terrain of the New World, and is a key component in the struggle to decolonize the historical record of the Americas.

It is at the Columbian moment, however, that this paradox of "new origin stories" becomes most complex. The Columbian moment is overleveraged—as Bahng or Legnani might say—in the singularity of its occurrence. When it is demanded that this origin story accommodate "new origin stories," the story experiences what Kolodny calls the "anxiety of first contact." And rightfully so: next to any multiplicity, a mere singularity will look quite provincial, if it is not simply engulfed by its neighbor's plurality. How, then, to allow for other newnesses in the moment when novelty itself supposedly emerges?

Perhaps this is a more abstract way of describing what we've already identified as the Gordian knot.[73] Analyzed from this perspective, we can now name a few of the threads that are knotted up within the Columbian figure: novelty, multiplicity, firstness, erasure, removal. All of these paradoxes, it seems, have been woven together into an intellectual trap, in the sense that Alberto Corsín Jiménez talks about.[74] If that is the case, then these new stories about the origin of the New World must concern themselves with disarming the ontological trap of firstness. This is where SF and the literary imagination can be most welcomed, and can open doors to other temporalities that are not bad loops of ships and islanders meeting on a beach, once again for the very first time.[75]

TRICKSTER ONTOLOGIES

Instead of the moment as a jonbar point with the same old actors dressed up in multicultural drag, we can look instead at an ontological transposition of the Columbian figure. What does the *embustero* become when transposed to a more New World ontology? Not the doubtful hero who duplicitously slices the Gordian knot, nor the con man who tied it in the first place, but rather the trickster who looped together the shoelaces of the conquistadores' boots. This is, clearly, the famous Trickster, the many-faced character who inhabits many strands of indigenous Amer-

ican oral traditions. Unlike the *embustero*, the trickster is not a moral category, although this does not stop Gerald Vizenor from putting his Stone Columbus on trial in his 1991 novel *The Heirs of Columbus*. Although equally imaginative and anachronistic, this is a different sort of trial than Carpentier's proposed Catholic beautification of Colón that dominates *El arpa y la sombra*, but that is because Vizenor's Stone Columbus is a different sort of being.

Vizenor is a prolific writer, renowned for both his novels and his nonfiction essays. If his fiction is characterized by the presence of Native American trickster figures, his essays are characterized by his insistence on native "survivance," his neologism combining both "survival" and "resistance" into an integral indigenous concept. These two key terms in Vizenor's own work have become foundational concepts more broadly in the field of native and indigenous studies. Vizenor published *The Heirs of Columbus* in 1991, and it was accompanied by a multitude of the self-declared "crossblood Chippewa of French descent's" nonfiction and journalistic reckonings with the Quincentenary from an indigenous North American perspective. Vizenor's entire Quincentenary corpus worked to juxtapose the mainstream account of El Almirante—whether as a European champion or as the original villainous transatlantic slave trader—with a more humorous, subversive, and irreverent portrait that drew upon the traditional aesthetics of native storytelling.[76]

Nowhere was this more perfectly realized than in the character of Stone Columbus, a trickster figure who, in mocking the scenarios of discovery, refounds a "crossblood" American nation in humor and healing.[77] Stone Columbus is one of the many titular *Heirs of Columbus*, and the leader of their group of native and "crossblood" descendants. They proclaim their ancestor's New World origins, run heists to repatriate tribal objects, and develop genomic and gaming technology to heal the world. David Higgins has already made an authoritative case for reading Vizenor as an SF author in *Extrapolation*, a flagship journal in SF studies; in the same article, Higgins also broadly argues that Indigenous SF serves as a corrective to "the fetishization of victimry that has become prevalent in mainstream contemporary SF."[78] Furthermore, as Grace Dillon makes clear in the introduction to *Walking the Clouds: An Anthology of Indigenous Science Fiction*, Vizenor himself is the source for the critical SF term "slipstream."[79]

That said, like many of the Latin American texts discussed so far, *The Heirs of Columbus* also resists straightforward summary as an SF novel. This is mainly because the novel's aesthetic is one of repeti-

tion, doubling, and wordplay. The title is exemplary in this regard. The titular "Heirs" conjure up the legal struggle over Columbus/Colón's hereditary legacy, but also the promise to hold the historical record to account: the errors of Columbus. The plot is kaleidoscopic, with historical figures that shape-shift into different forms, and scenes that alternate between expansive storytelling and genre-formulaic narrative action. For this reason Vizenor's novel has frequently been read—much like the Latin American *novelas de Colón*—as postmodern historiographic metafiction.[80] Although Vizenor clearly plays with popular forms like the courtroom drama and the heist plot, the novel's strong themes of indigenous sovereignty and repatriation disrupt that categorization from the beginning. As Irmscher has outlined in an essential article, Vizenor's "allusive and elusive" references go far beyond generic literary tropes to include references to tricksters, native culture, and a broadly eccentric bibliography of Columbus-themed literature.[81] By retelling Columbus's story using the hallmarks of oral tradition like repetition, "'Discovery' turns into narrative performance."[82] As Vizenor himself describes it in the novel's postscript, "Columbus arises in tribal stories that heal with humor the world he wounded; he is loathed, but he is not a separation in tribal consciousness. The Admiral of the Ocean Sea is a trickster overturned in his own stories five centuries later."[83]

I would not go so far as to say that temporality becomes irrelevant in the novel, precisely because Vizenor disrupts European genealogies by positing Columbus/Colón's Mayan ancestry, which finds its contemporary expression in Stone Columbus's trickster ways and the many sacred blue objects that grace the novel.[84] Vizenor's spiral prose ensures that every Columbian arrival is also lived as a return. And if Vizenor's Columbus/Colón inhabited a mixed world that blended Amerindian and European cosmologies, then his Heirs also return again to a new world, this time an SF universe, where native life exists in a world of genomics and virtual reality. In 1991, Vizenor was already constructing a Gibsonesque virtual reality space, and his characters were bending and jamming that tech in the interest of native survivance:

> The laser shows and wild presentations of virtual realities as evidence would have impressed any jury, and might have been admissible at a trial, or at least the denial of such computer technologies, as the new source of tribal realities, could be used to appeal a conviction.[85]

This tribal tech is not actually accommodated in the novel's courtroom drama, which unfolds in "Bone Courts," the concluding chapter of the novel's first section. The sequence opens as Stone Columbus and his people are served with a subpoena: "Then and there, with taut tongues, the trickster poacher and the heirs were subpoenaed to appear at a hearing in federal court to answer questions about the shamanic repatriation of medicine pouches and human remains."[86] The heirs' alleged crime: not only repatriating sacred objects from a museum, but also stealing Columbus/Colón's remains from an illicit antiquities dealer, in a caper led by the fantastic Felipa Flowers. Those recovered remains also incidentally confirmed Columbus/Colón's Mayan ancestry. But because "there was no material evidence to establish a crime, no evidence that the pouches and bones ever existed, and there were no documents to constitute the partial remains of Christopher Columbus," the trial is moved to a different, non-criminal jurisdiction.[87] The hearing, which reads like a set piece and occupies the rest of "Bone Courts," thus becomes a way for Vizenor to infuse debates over cultural patrimony and native repatriation with the drama and rhythm of a courtroom procedural.

Although it would be fair to call the hearing depicted in "Bone Courts" carnivalesque, it is not the Catholic carnival in *El arpa y la sombra*, whose trial unfolds under a papal authority terrified of its own irrelevance to a secularizing world. Vizenor's hearing instead deals with the tragic farce of tribal-nation-state relations, which unfolds within a judicial apparatus that is structurally incapable of recognizing native agency or ontology. But Stone Columbus does not respect the "manifest manners" of the judicial system, and he rejects the etiquette of manifest destiny and settler colonialism, both of which demand unlimited hospitality while denying just reciprocity.[88]

In order to defend themselves from the spurious (but also, factually accurate) charges of stealing their own ancestors, the heirs must present evidence that comes from shadow realities not visible to the court, and they respectfully request that computer simulation be used to allow them to communicate their truth.[89] Denied the use of this new technology, which possibly could have mediated the epistemic-ontological divide, Stone Columbus's defense team turns to an expert witness in order to define the trickster to Judge Lord, the presiding justice in the case. That witness is a private investigator named Lappet Browne; Browne's dense, intentional prose blends trickster discourse with the lexicon of postmodern language games. In a memorable section of her testimony,

Lappet formally complains about the court's indifference to indigenous ontologies:

> "The rules of a legal culture rule out tribal stories and abolish chance in favor of causative binaries."
>
> "Even languages must have rules," said Lord.
>
> "The languages we understand are games," said Lappet.
>
> "Language can be a prison," said Lord.
>
> "Trickster stories liberate the mind in language games," said Lappet.
>
> "Touché," said the judge. Lappet so impressed the judge that she announced a recess and invited the witness to meet with her in chambers. "You should study the law, your mind is too bright to waste on investigation," said Lord. Lappet told the judge that she was a law school graduate, but that she was not interested in the service of male institutions. "I choose to be a private investigator, to discover stories my way and avoid male domination."[90]

Lappet's extraordinary rejection of a justice system that only allows trickster discourse when spoken through the patriarchal language of the law is also exemplary of the trickster discourse it seeks to explain.[91] When asked to define the trickster in more explicit terms, Lappet obliges the court:

> "Tricksters, the court must strain to understand, are not real people, tricksters are figures in stories, no more than the language games of a rich and wild imagination, and in our tribe the trickster is unleashed with a dash of priapean sexism," said Lappet.
>
> "Tricksters have no families?" asked Lord.
>
> "No tribes, no presence," said Lappet.
>
> "Stories, then, are at the core of tribal realities, not original sin, for instance, or service missions," said the judge. Lord was cautious; at times she pretended not to understand the cultural ideas raised by the witnesses.
>
> "Stories and imagination, your honor, but of a certain condition that prescinds discoveries and translations," said Lappet. "Comic situations rather than the tragic conclusions of an individual separated from culture, lost and lonesome in a wilderness."[92]

Stone Columbus, then, is the opposite of the protagonist in Adolph's story "Persistencia," the stoic Admiral of the Ocean Sea, crossing the lonesome wilderness of the unknown. In any case, Stone Columbus differs from all those other Colón-protagonists because his speculations on inheritance and chance are self-reflective (not redemptive), and focus on healing. Stone Columbus himself articulates this in the novel's second part, where a fake *Requerimiento* is playfully read as the heirs establish a community at Point Assinika, inaugurating "the first nation in the histories of the modern world dedicated to protean humor and the genes that would heal."[93] In the words of yet another one of the novel's two-faced tricksters, Chaine Riel Doumet, it is the humor which allows the heirs to weave their sacred stories "with the politics of genes and bingo."[94] When Stone Columbus speaks of genes and bingo, however, he does not mean boondoggle casinos, blood quantum, and tribal registries. Those concepts, so entwined with North American imaginaries of native life, are repurposed within other ontologies. "Bingo" becomes a way to teach guests at Point Assinika the true nature of community and contingency (what the novel calls the Moccasin Game). And the genomic therapy offered to those guests is done not to classify or exclude based on identity, but rather to heal holistically, engaging the lived experience of physical and psychological trauma in restorative therapy. In other words, Vizenor offers two alternative ontologies for grappling with contingency and inheritance: not the tragic mode of the suffering hero or the helpless victim, but rather the comic mode as it unfolds in bingo and genomics.

CONCLUSION

As to be expected from a self-proclaimed trickster discourse, the ontological displacement of the *embustero* into the figure of Stone Columbus does not resolve into a tidy conclusion. What it does propose is a narrative model capable of escaping the *Colombo ex frigata* and salvaging what appeared to be a hopelessly tangled knot of firstness. No longer a three-dimensional object to be fumbled over or mindlessly sliced, Vizenor blasts the knot into a four-dimensional space, animating the problem of firstness with alternative temporalities. He does so by grounding his speculative imaginings broadly in the material experience of the American continent. This mobilization of story, trope, and history guides the reader in imagining temporalities beyond the frontier of firstness.

As Kolodny argues in the case of North America: someone was always already first. This creates a paradox: the seemingly first cosmopolitan act is to honor the ancestors. It is only when we forget that there have always already been others that invasion, conquest, and colonialism become possible. Unfortunately, we are a forgetful species, and we suffer from Terran amnesia. Those of us who still continue to awaken once again as captain or crew on the *Colombo ex frigata* must complement that constitutive act of the colonial deus ex machina with strong and grounded ceremonies to counter those willful vagaries of Terran amnesia. For every *embustero*, speculate a trickster; imagine a community prior to every ontological claim of firstness. Excavate the *Colombo ex frigata* and find a dugout canoe arriving on the shores of Galway, or upon the shores of the galaxy. In any event, firstness it was not.

Coda

I began working on this project over a decade ago. The long process of revisions unfolded in one of those moments when history treads heavily, and sounds like it's catching up to you. Accordingly, this book has been marked by profound disruptions, which is only fitting for a book that seeks to disrupt the originary logic of the conquest of the Americas. COVID-19 was described as a novel coronavirus, but there is little novelty in the destruction and suffering brought about by epidemic disease in the New World.[1] Historical familiarity with the ravages of a pandemic is little comfort to the afflicted, especially when the distribution of suffering followed the well-worn grooves of colonial violence and dispossession.

The pandemic disruption came during an already tumultuous period in the composition of this book. Academic critiques of racialized violence and the carceral state met a mass popular movement in support of Black life in the aftermath of the police murder of George Floyd in the United States and other state-sanctioned violence. This wave crashed against public monuments to white supremacy. In the United States, its force toppled statues celebrating the slaveholding Confederacy; in the broader world, monuments to the enduring structures of colonial violence also tumbled, including statues of Christopher Columbus. As I mentioned in the introduction, it became clear that this book was about some of the literary and aesthetic antecedents to those actions of historically materialist revisionism. Even though this book works in the

literary realm of the imagination, it has been animated by the spirit that proclaims: topple false monuments!

And yet, the continental myth of American exceptionalism is built into the very base that displayed the now overturned figure known as the *Almirante del mar oceano*. In the literary realm, that base is represented by three chunks of prose that have accompanied this book from the very beginning. As that sequence captures a particular concept of the exceptionality of the Americas, it has been impossible for me to discard it from my own study. And so this book will end where I once thought it would begin: with a particular historiographic sequence of three text fragments that all emphasize the exceptional nature of the New World. These fragments, taken together, tie the conquest of the Americas to a new worlding, and for that reason they represent the literary monument that this book seeks to topple. And this is the same old false beginning, though steeped in a spaceship theology I learned to call the *Colombo ex frigata*. Originally, these three fragments of text, and the authors' ideas they represent, were the starting point of this project, an introduction to the literary New World monument to newness. I now understand that my impulse to structure this book's introduction around this sequence of texts linking Francisco López de Gómara, Alfred Crosby, and Carl Schmitt was a flawed one, and the intellectual work of this book has labored to undermine the theological, scientific, and political mobilization of New World newness represented by this textual trinity. It is precisely SF that has allowed me to re-situate my own critical position with respect to the kind of canonical newness of American exceptionalism, and it is in that spirit that I return to this study's original false beginning.

The first fragment is the most concise representation of the onto-theological stakes of the so-called Discovery: the words of Francisco López de Gómara, chronicler of the Indies and author of the *Historia general de las Indias*. Gómara's 1553 dedication of that volume to the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V makes clear that any sixteenth-century attempt to theorize the disruption of the New World within hegemonic European thought also developed within an explicitly Catholic framework:

> "Muy soberano señor: La mayor cosa después de la creación del mundo, sacando la encarnación y muerte del que lo crio, es el descubrimiento de Indias; y así, las llaman Mundo Nuevo. Y no tanto le dicen nuevo por ser nuevamente hallado, cuanto por ser grandísimo, y casi tan grande como

> el viejo, que contiene a Europa, África y Asia. También se puede llamar nuevo por ser todas sus cosas diferentísimas de las del nuestro. Los animales en general, aunque son pocos en especie, son de otra manera; los peces del agua, las aves del aires, los árboles, frutas, yerbas, y grano de la tierra que no es pequeña consideración del Criador, siendo los elementos una misma cosa allá y acá."[2]
>
> "Most sovereign lord: After the creation of the world itself, the greatest thing to happen (except the incarnation and the death of the One He created) has been the discovery of the Indies, and thus they are called the New World. And it is not only called new because it is newly found, although it is huge and almost equal in size to the Old World that is made up of Europe, Africa and Asia. It is also called new because everything in it is as different as can be from our world. The animals in general, although few in number, are absolutely different in this vast land; different also are the fish in the water, the birds in the air, the trees, fruits, plants and livestock, not an insignificant consideration of the Creator, given they are both here and there constructed of the same elements."

Padrón and others have emphasized that a reading of Gómara and the other New World chroniclers that fetishizes newness eclipses the strong Asian influence in the very genesis of the New World concept.[3] This is an important correction (it was no accident that the Caribbean was originally called the "Indias" or the Indies . . .), but Gómara's prologue inescapably frames the entire *Historia general de las Indias* within a dual context of theological and geographical novelty. The idea of the exceptional nature of the New World did not, however, remain captured within the theological conceptions of the Holy Roman Empire. By the twentieth century, the catholic spirit of Gómara's unprecedented proclamation to the emperor had been transposed to an extraterrestrial mode. This leads to the second and third fragments in the historiographic sequence, pairing Alfred Crosby and Carl Schmitt—the strangest of bedfellows—who together mark the definitive passage of the *Colombo ex frigata* into the speculative imagination. Each of them does so through an appeal to potential extraterrestrial voyages of discovery in order to understand the biological and political repercussions of the emergence of the New World.

Crosby, the biological historian who gave us the term "Columbian exchange" to name the event that brought diseases to the New World and staple foodstuffs to the Old, says:

> This wild oscillation of the balance of nature happens again whenever an area previously isolated is opened to the rest of the world. But possibly it will never be repeated in as spectacular a fashion as in the Americas in the first post-Columbian century, not unless there is, one day, an exchange of life forms between planets.[4]

If Crosby highlights the biological side of the biopolitical event, Carl Schmitt—an unsettling presence in geopolitical thought if there ever was one—highlights the political side in his *Nomos of the Earth*:

> [The traditional Eurocentric] order arose from a legendary and unforeseen discovery of a new world, from an unrepeatable historical event. Only in fantastic parallels can one imagine a modern recurrence, such as men on their way to the moon discovering a new and hitherto unknown planet that could be exploited freely and utilized effectively to relieve their struggles on earth.[5]

The superposition of these three fragments together—Gómara, Crosby, and Schmitt—forms the world that Aníbal Quijano and others have named modern/colonial, and it coincides with the arrival of transatlantic slavery in the recently named Americas, as Sylvia Wynter and others remind us.[6] From this temporal crossroads, the writers of each of the three fragments will build an entire logic out of the Conquest. Gómara's theological project culminates in a campaign of extirpation and conversion; Crosby's biological novelty expresses the irrepressible flow of evolutionary exchange; and Schmitt's political ideology celebrates imperial expansion.

As I argue over the course of this book, an exclusive focus on the Columbian moment as foundational for a global or world system can blind us to previously known or suspected transatlantic encounters, transpacific journeys on outrigger canoes, and a longer timeline of human migration.[7] The "firstness" of first contact is seductive, and it explains the myriad forces aligned against native survivance. And it calls into question whether any ontology that is identified primarily as American—no

matter how continental this term is understood to be—can truly integrate survivance into the core of American being. If it can happen, such a concept will certainly allow us to recognize complexity as an essential ontological element.[8] To do so, however, will require imagining those "first encounters" of the Americas as events that rippled across multiple historical generations, in waves and ways that befuddle deterministic historical accounts. America emerges from the Conquest into a modern/colonial world marked by migration, occupation, and enslavement. But the story that the selfsame modern world tells itself about its own emergence always comes back to a voyage of discovery stumbling upon strange shores. In this book, I have argued that recognizing and naming the *Colombo ex frigata* as a literary trope is a concrete step towards breaking the habit of using Columbus as the exceptional American origin story. If I was not myself going to topple a statue of Colón, I could at least scuttle his metaphorical vessel.

If there is a hangover from the shipwrecked *Colombo ex frigata*, it is this: many of the chapters of this book are structured like an intellectual journey. Each chapter moves through different forms of aesthetic responses to the so-called first encounter. All of the texts studied speculate on scenarios of discovery. Some of the texts, like *The Sparrow,* are more grounded in what Rifkin calls "settler time," while others, like *The Dark Jester* and the works collected in *Mundos alternos*, are grounded in the cosmovisions of other temporalities. As a child of two migrant white settlers who grew up in suburban California, settler time seemed natural to me, even if I perpetually experienced that time as out of joint. For as much as I knew within the core of my being that firstness is a knot, I have also learned that my own literary sensibility has been marked by colonial and imperialist reading practices. Unlike many of the authors studied in chapter 1, my adolescent cosmology was not punctuated by *La visión de los vencidos*; I learned of that book at university, when I began to study Latin American literature. It took long, hard years of intellectual work to come to what appears to be a very simple revelation: the *Colombo ex frigata*'s innate claim to firstness is a constitutive component of continental American exceptionalism. That truth did not breed confidence that it would indeed be possible to decolonize the novum.

One powerful thing I've learned in writing this book is that if a decolonial novum will be anything, it must be something new for the colonial encounter. The "newest" thing would be the thing that never happened the "first" time. And my study of colonial Latin American literature has assured me that the most novel activities in the colonial

contact zone continue to be healing, reparation, and repatriation. As for SF visions of the Conquest, they must not mistake Terran amnesia for some kind of truth. In order to cast wide the net which might contain the future, the roots of the speculative imagination must deeply grip the past. As the authors and artists gathered in this study have shown, there are paths to imagine American futures that understand the exemplary if not unique role the long conquest of the Americas plays in the past, present, and future of the continent.

A truly speculative understanding of the long history of the Americas will contradict Nervo, who pines for a future Columbus to discover faraway planets, as it proclaims: neither interstellar Columbus nor interplanetary martyrs! The anthologies, maps, and museums of the future must not ground themselves in a misrepresented firstness of yet another colonial novum. The authors and artists studied in this book have offered us multiple pathways that diverge from the SF tropes which perpetuate false understandings of New World history. As terrestrial life ventures beyond our shared planetary system, let us challenge the speculative imagination to think beyond the armed entrepreneurs and the faith militants that Legnani calls the "businessmen of conquest." If the novum is to be decolonized, we must understand both the future and the past as different from those same old tired stories of business as usual.

Notes

INTRODUCTION

1. On braiding knowledge, see Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants* (Minneapolis, MN: Milkweed Editions, 2020).

2. As this book will show, the very act of naming the sequence in question creates its own set of troubles; for the purposes of this introduction, I will use the term "Conquest of the Americas" as a first approximation because it captures the violence of that multigenerational historical encounter. Matthew Restall, *Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). Nicole Legnani further elaborates on the notion of the Conquest: "In the sixteenth century, the partnership of crown, church, and entrepreneurs in profitable violence was known as the conquista, whose successes were accounted for materially and morally with a push to expand new subjects for trade and labor, on the one hand, and Catholic neophytes, on the other." Nicole Legnani, *The Business of Conquest: Empire, Love, and Law in the Atlantic World* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2020), 23–24. Legnani provides a detailed analysis of the 1573 Ordenanza proclaimed by Philip II that banned the use of the word "conquest" to describe the Iberian imperial venture in the New World. Legnani, *Business of Conquest*, 30–33.

3. José David Saldívar, *The Dialectics of Our America: Genealogy, Cultural Critique, and Literary History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1991).

4. In English, this trend is most visible in recent international SF anthologies like *Lightspeed: People of Colo(u)r Destroy Science Fiction!*, *Walking the Clouds: An Anthology of Indigenous Science Fiction*, and *Cosmos Latinos: An Anthology of Science Fiction from Latin America and Spain*.

5. Sherryl Vint, *Science Fiction* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2021), 1–2.

6. For Aldiss, the emblematic shaggy God story—the definitive hack pulp trope of bad SF—relies entirely on the impact of the revelation that two strange alien life forms—a couple, of course—have been released into an empty world to populate it, and their names are some variation of Adam and Eve. See David Langford's "Shaggy God Story" entry in the *Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*.

7. I agree with Dimock's proposal in her article on reading the deep time of the planet that America must be read as a continent, not as a nation. Wai Chee Dimock, *Through Other Continents: American Literature across Deep Time (*Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 4. From a Latin Americanist framework, "America" is always already continental: las Américas.

8. John Rieder, *Science Fiction and the Mass Cultural Genre System* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2017).

9. Roberto González Echevarría, *Myth and Archive: A Theory of Latin American Narrative* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998).

10. Walter D. Mignolo and Catherine E. Walsh, *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018), 1–14.

11. Queer theorists like Jonathan Goldberg and Carla Freccero have been drawn to conquest narratives as a specific site of archival discourse ripe for queer interventions focused on opening up alternative futurities from grounded and recuperative readings. See Goldberg's "The History That Will Be" and Freccero's "Queer Spectrality" chapter in *Queer/Early/Modern*.

12. Angel Dominguez, *Desgraciado: The Collected Letters* (Brooklyn, NY: Nightboat Books, 2022). Dominguez continues: "I use new world magic the way you used inquisitional tactics; I'll torture you with what you don't know." Dominguez, *Desgraciado*, 46.

13. For example, in the field of Latin American literary studies, Antonio Cornejo Polar structured his *Writing in the Air: Heterogeneity and the Persistence of Oral Tradition in Andean Literatures* around the Cajamarca encounter as a way to thematize five centuries of cultural heterogeneity.

14. Edgar Garcia, *Signs of the Americas: A Poetics of Pictography, Hieroglyphs, and Khipu* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020), 53.

15. Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturaltion* (London: Routledge, 2008).

16. Pratt's concept of the contact zone also extends to contemporary fields such as memory studies, which explore the literary resonances of twenty-first-century museums and memorials in post-dictatorial societies; for example, Ximena Briceño's reading of the Argentine museum in a pair of early twenty-first-century novels, "La memoria en exhibición: El pasado y el Museo de la revolución desde el boom del museo," *Nuevo Texto Crítico* 23, no. 45/46 (2010): 337–47. On this topic, Andres Huyssen's *Presents Past: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory* (Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003) continues to reward careful study. Pratt's recent essay collection *Planetary Longings* gathers her post-*Imperial Eyes* writings on modernity and the contact zone, where she repeatedly returns to what I call the problem of firstness in the contact zone: "what kind of concept both needs a moment of beginning and yet constructs a multiplicity of beginnings spanning centuries?" Mary Louise Pratt, *Planetary Longings* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2022), 36.

17. My capacious understanding of pedagogy is indebted to Paulo Freire and, more recently, M. Jacqui Alexander. Alexander, *Pedagogies of Crossing: Meditations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory, and the Sacred* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006). SF is one of humanity's few shared cultural resources that is capable of thinking the encounter in its manifold strangeness. Sara Ahmed, *Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality* (London: Routledge, 2000).

18. Darko Suvin, "Estrangement and Cognition," in *Speculations on Speculation: Theories of Science Fiction*, ed. James Gunn and Matthew Candelaria (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow, 2005).

19. Istvan Csicsery-Ronay, Jr., *Seven Beauties of Science Fiction* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2008), 4.

20. Jodi A. Byrd, *Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 53.

21. Gerald Vizenor, *Manifest Manners: Postindian Warriors of Survivance* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1994).

22. Anders Stephanson, *Manifest Destiny: American Expansionism and the Empire of Right* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995).

23. John Rieder, *Colonialism and the Emergence of Science Fiction* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2008).

24. Miriam C. Brown Spiers, *Encountering the Sovereign Other* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2021). Spiers's book focuses exclusively on native and indigenous narratives, and analyzes the demand that any colonial other must be imagined in their full sovereignty. As Spiers explores in her study, this means a right to a full ontological rationality, even if it is an alternative reasoning. In fact, it is only by recognizing the ontological multiplicity of the past that it is possible to imagine alternative futurisms. Brown Spiers, *Encountering the Sovereign Other*, xxxv.

25. J. Kēhaulani Kauanui, "A Structure, Not an Event: Settler Colonialism and Enduring Indigeneity," *Lateral: Journal of the Cultural Studies Association* 5, no. 1 (2016).

26. Samuel Truett, "Settler Colonialism and the Borderlands of Early America," *William and Mary Quarterly* 76, no. 3 (2019): 435–42.

27. Jane Carey and Ben Silverstein, "Thinking with and beyond Settler Colonial Studies: New Histories after the Postcolonial," *Postcolonial Studies* 23, no. 1 (2020): 1–20.

28. Patricia Seed, *Ceremonies of Possession in Europe's Conquest of the New World, 1492–1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

29. The *Leyenda negra*, or Black Legend, is the historical phenomenon of the displacement of all blame for the atrocities documented by Fray Bartolomé de las Casas and beyond onto the Spanish conquistadores.

30. Jacques Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, trans. Rachel Bowlby (Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000).

31. For an important early consideration of this point, see Margarita Zamora's essay "'If Cahonaboa Learns to Speak . . . Amerindian Voice in the Discourse of Discovery," *Colonial Latin American Review* 8, no. 2 (1999): 191–205.

32. Michael P. Oman-Reagan, "How to Host an Extraterrestrial," *Sapiens*, February 7, 2017, https://www.sapiens.org/culture/extraterrestrial-hospitality/.

33. Gonzalo Lamana, *Domination without Dominance: Inca-Spanish Encounters in Early Colonial Peru* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008), 27–64.

34. Leanne Betasomosake Simpson, *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom through Radical Resistance* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2021).

35. Latin American narrative boasts a long-standing tradition of rewriting histories, which is why "historiographic metafiction" has become such an important critical category. Linda Hutcheon, "Historiographic Metafiction: Parody and the Intertextuality of History," in *Intertextuality and Contemporary American Fiction*, ed. P. O'Donnel and Robert Con Davis (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 3–23. Spanish-language readers—which is another way to say readers of Cervantes's *Don Quijote*—have always been primed for historiographic metafiction, regardless of their relationship to modernity. Perhaps that explains the ease with which Hutcheon's vocabulary has slipped into the Latin American critical lexicon. But it also explains its own limits. Isn't Bernal Díaz del Castillo's description of Tenochtitlan as a scene from *Amadís de Gaula* (almost a century prior to the little inquisition in Don Quijote's library) the most historiographically metafictional event in the Spanish language? So what, then, of the postmodern part? Certainly, one could call this historiographic metafiction, but only if "historiographic metafiction" includes Cervantes. And if "historiographic metafiction" includes Cervantes in its periodization, it isn't much of a periodization of postmodernity.

36. Another *desencuentro* between "world literature" discourse and Latin American narrative is the "world literature" paradigm's preference for the realist-inflected concept of "magical realism" that dominates much comparativist scholarly production. Magical realism has never been a principal literary concept in Latin America; it has always been as much a part of the global marketing efforts of multinational publishing houses as it has been a descriptor of novelistic practices. Erna Van der Walde, "Realismo mágico y poscolonialismo: Construcciones del otro desde la otreadad," in *Teorías sin disciplina: Latinoamericanismo, poscolonialidad y globalización en debate,* ed. Santiago Castro-Gómez and Eduardo Mendieta (México: Porrúa, 1998). When Latin American magical realism is discussed in the context of world literature, it is most often in reference to the novels and authors associated with the epochal concept of the Latin American Boom. On that note: the recent anthology *Teaching the Latin American Boom*, which boasts an all-star list of contributors, does not even list "magical realism" as an entry in the index. This is, of course, strategic, as several essays do directly address "magical realism" in the section labeled "Disseminating the Boom," most notably María Helena Rueda's essay "Branding Latin America: An Introduction to Magical Realism," in *Teaching the Latin American Boom*, ed. Lucille Kerr and Alejandro Herrero-Olaizola (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2015).

37. "Retcon" is an SF term for "retroactive continuity," and is an important concept in popular culture and genre fiction more generally. It refers to a sub-

sequent literary work adjusting a perceived continuity break in the plotline of a previous narrative. For readers to whom this concept is unfamiliar, I recommend either the "Turkey City Lexicon" (originally complied by Bruce Sterling and Lewis Shiner) or Sherryl Vint's *Science Fiction: A Guide for the Perplexed* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2021).

38. Donna Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016). Haraway's deliberate fuzziness with the term in *Staying with the Trouble* allows SF to stand for, among other things, science fiction, speculative fabulation, string figures, and speculative feminism. Hartman's concept of "critical fabulation" also connects to Haraway's speculative fabulation; see Hartman's "Venus in Two Acts," *small ax* 12, no. 2 (2008): 1–14.

39. Rieder, *Science Fiction,* 162.

40. Mark Bould also addresses the ugly SF history of gendered rejections of fantasy literature. Mark Bould, "The Dreadful Credibility of Absurd Things: A Tendency in Fantasy Theory," *Historical Materialism* 10, no. 4 (2002): 51–88.

41. Grace Dillon, ed., *Walking the Clouds: An Anthology of Indigenous Science Fiction* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2012), 7. In addition to *Walking the Clouds*, Dillon coedited an important special issue of *Extrapolation* (57, no. 1–2, 2016) dedicated to indigenous futurism and survivance.

42. Rachel Haywood Ferreira, *The Emergence of Latin American Science Fiction* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2011).

43. Cynthia Duncan, *Unraveling the Real: The Fantastic in Spanish-American Ficciones* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2010).

44. Ana María Barrenechea, "Ensayo de una tipología de la literatura fantástica, a propósito de la literatura hispanoamericana," *Revista Iberoamericana* 38, no. 80 (1972): 391–403.

45. Tzvetan Todorov weighs heavily in Latin American SF rewriting of the Conquest: the structuralist literary critic published two important but flawed books—one on the fantastic, the other on the conquest of the Americas—that continue to cast exaggerated shadows over Latin American literary criticism. Both of these books, as influential as they have been, fail to understand the political conditions of the historical imagination, as Coronil expressed at the conclusion of his review of Todorov's *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other.* Fernando Coronil, "Discovering America Again: The Politics of Selfhood in the Age of Post-Colonial Empires," *Dispositio* 14, no. 36–38 (1989): 315–31. Latin Americanists, whether working in the United States or in the broader Americas, should not uncritically adopt Todorov's structuralist taxonomy of the fantastic, especially when Todorov's book on the conquest of the Americas is what we might call a methodological horror show.

46. Beyond the authors cited in this introduction, other important studies include Luis Cano, *Intermitente recurrencia: La ciencia ficción y el canon literario hispanoamericano* (Buenos Aires: Corregidor, 2006); Antonio Cornejo Córdoba, *¿Extranjero en tierra extraña? El género de la ciencia ficción en América Latina* (Seville: Universidad de Sevilla, 2011); and Fernando Aínsa, *Reescribir el pasado: Historia y ficción en América Latina* (Mérida: CELARG, 2003). Pablo Capanna's writings on SF are extensive, stretching back to his 1966 mono-

graph *El sentido de la ciencia ficción* (Buenos Aires: Columba, 1966). Mark López-Lozano's *Utopian Dreams and Apocalyptic Nightmares* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2008) and Curtis Marez's *Farmworker Futurisms* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016) are examples of transnational borderlands scholarship on SF. M. Elizabeth Ginway and Andrew Brown's anthology *Latin American Science Fiction: Theory and Practice* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012) collects a variety of essays in English; and Lockhart's *Latin American Science Fiction Writers* (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood, 2004) is a useful reference and guidebook. Joanna Page's recent book *Decolonizing Science in Latin American Art* (London: UCL, 2021) engages a science-art-anthropocene constellation in ways that complement the present study.

47. Andrea Bell and Yolanda Molina-Gavilán, eds., *Cosmos Latinos: An Anthology of Science Fiction from Latin America and Spain* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2003); Molina Gavilán, Fernández Delgado, Bell, Pestarini, and Toledano, "Cronología de la SF latinoamericana 1775–2000," *Chasqui* 29, no. 2 (2000): 43–72; Molina Gavilán, Bell, Fernández Delgado, Ginway, Pestarini, and Toledano Redondo, "Chronology of Latin American Science Fiction, 1775–2000, *Science Fiction Studies* 34, no. 3 (2007): 369–431. The "Chronology" opens with a provocation: "Any foray into the speculative that comes from Latin America runs the risk of being classified as either magical realism or the fantastic, as if those genres were somehow endemic and unavoidable." Molina-Gavilán et al., "Chronology," 369.

48. Silvia Kurlat Ares, ed., "La ciencia ficción en América Latina: Entre la mitología experimental y lo que vendrá," special issue, *Revista Iberoamericana* 78, no. 238 (2012).

49. Silvia Kurlat Ares, ed., "La ciencia ficción en América Latina: Aproximaciones teóricas al imaginario de la experimentación cultural," special issue, *Revista Iberoamericana* 83, no. 259–60 (2017).

50. Many of the contributors to those two volumes appear in the recent *Peter Lang Companion to Latin American Science Fiction*, edited by Kurlat Ares and Ezequiel de Rosso (New York: Peter Lang, 2021).

51. Silvia Kurlat Ares, "La ciencia ficción en América Latina: Entre la mitología experimental y lo que vendrá." *Revista Iberoamericana* 78, no. 238 (2012): 260.

52. Raúl Marrero-Fente, "Human Rights and Academic Discourse: Teaching the Las Casas–Sepúlveda Debate at the Time of the Iraq War," *Hispanic Issues On Line* 4, no. 1 (2009).

53. De Witt Douglas Kilgore, "Breaking the Habit of Whiteness," *Los Angeles Review of Books*, January 20, 2018.

54. Mark C. Jerng, *Racial Worldmaking: The Power of Popular Fiction* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2018).

55. Tiffany Lethabo King describes a similar phenomenon in *The Black Shoals: Offshore Formations of Black and Native Studies*, where she proposes the critical concept of literary "shoaling" to unsettle what she calls conquistador humanism. Tiffany Lethabo King, *The Black Shoals: Offshore Formations of Black and Native Studies* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019), 44.

56. Ariella Aïsha Azoulay, *Potential History: Unlearning Imperialism* (New York: Verso, 2019), 17.

57. José Rabasa, *Inventing AMERICA: Spanish Historiography and the Formation of Eurocentrism* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993).

58. Gloria Elizabeth Chacón, *Indigenous Cosmolectics: Kab'awil and the Making of Maya and Zapotec Literatures* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018), 20.

59. Byrd, *Transit of Empire*, xxxv.

60. Horacio Legrás, *Literature and Subjection: The Economy of Writing and Marginality in Latin America* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2008), 6.

61. Marisol de la Cadena and Mario Blaser, eds., *A World of Many Worlds* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018).

62. Padrón understands "the Pacific" an an analogously disruptive concept. Ricardo Padrón, *The Indies of the Setting Sun: How Early Modern Spain Mapped the Far East and Transpacific West* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020). Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic* is an early and paradigmatic example of the scholarly mobilization of race to disrupt a previously stable concept. Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).

63. Suvin uses the word "novum" to name the "new" thing in a narrative that in part makes it SF. Suvin, "Estrangement and Cognition." As will be explored in chapter 5, this kind of novelty might be a necessary ingredient for SF, but it also runs the risk of reinscribing the incessant demand for newness that powers the modern/colonial world.

64. James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 328–29.

65. For a complementary perspective that focuses on the link between financial speculation and speculative fiction, see Aimee Bahng's work on decolonizing futurity in *Migrant Futures: Decolonizing Speculation in Financial Times* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018), 9–12.

66. Csicsery-Ronay Jr., *Seven Beauties*, 82.

67. Kimberle López's *Latin American Novels of the Conquest* investigates this archival impulse through narratives that are specifically and rigorously grounded in the Conquest period. López's corpus features "novels that deconstruct the rhetoric of conquest from within by representing this critical historical moment through the eyes of the conquerors and using irony to point to the gaps in that imagined perspective." Kimberle López, *Latin American Novels of the Conquest: Reinventing the New World* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2002), 2. An early version of one of López's chapters appeared in Santiago Juan-Navarro and Theodore Robert Young's seminal anthology *A Twice Told Tale: Reinventing the Encounter in Iberian/Iberian American Literature and Film* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2001), which—like López's later monograph—focuses on narratives that reconstruct the Conquest from a marginalized European perspective and privileged fifteenth- and sixteenth-century historical sources. SF has been a much more hospitable modality for what Cat Ramírez, in her pluralization of the Afrofuturist impulse, has called

alternative futurisms. Catherine Ramírez, "Afrofuturism/Chicanafuturism: Fictive Kin," Aztlán 33 (2008): 185–94. Ramírez's more recent scholarship has engaged the question of assimilation from a different but nonetheless speculative position, as expressed in the title of her 2020 study *Assimilation: An Alternative History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2020).

68. Rocío Quispe-Agnoli makes this call in terms of a specifically feminist attention paid to archival silences. Rocío Quispe-Agnoli, "Las minorías coloniales y la Nueva Novela Histórica Latinoamericana," *Revista Monográfica* 19 (2003): 329. Rolena Adorno provides a virtuosic reading of Gonzalo Guerrero via the colonial archive, where "literary authority can overpower and erase, paradoxically, the lack of historical evidence," although Adorno seems less interested in Gonzalo's own reason for *renegando*. Rolena Adorno, *The Polemics of Possession in Spanish American Narrative* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), 220.

69. Alfredo López Austin, "Sobre el concept de cosmovisión," in *Cosmovisión mesoamericana: Reflexiones, polémicas y etnografías,* ed. Alejandra Gámez Espinosa and Alfredo López Austin (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2015), 24.

70. López Austin, "Cosmovisión," 34.

71. López Austin, "Cosmovisión," 44.

72. Denis Cosgrove, *Apollo's Eye: A Cartographic Genealogy of the Earth in the Western Imagination* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003); Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (London: Routledge, 1991).

73. Mark Rifkin, *Fictions of Land and Flesh: Blackness, Indigeneity, Speculation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019), 10.

74. Garcia, *Signs of the Americas*, 48–49.

CHAPTER 1

1. Stephen Gilman, "Bernal Díaz del Castillo and Amadís de Gaula," in *Studia Philológica: Homenaje ofrecido a Dámaso Alonso*, ed. Dámaso Alonso (Madrid: Gredos, 1963).

2. The classic references are Irving A. Leonard's *Books of the Brave* (New York: Gordian, 1964) and Ida Rodríguez Pampolini's *Amadises de América: La hazaña de Indias como empresa caballeresca* (México: Junta Mexicana de Investigaciones Históricas, 1948). Rolena Adorno's essays on Leonard in *De Guancane a Macondo: Estudios de literatura hispanoamericana* (Seville: Renacimiento, 2008) provide a wider bibliography on the topic, within the context of book history in colonial Latin America and revisionist approaches in Latin American historiography.

3. Oswaldo Estrada, *La imaginación novelesca: Bernal Díaz entre géneros y épocas* (Berlin: Iberoamericana/Vervuert, 2009), 38.

4. Estrada, *La imaginación novelesca*, 40–45.

5. Pestarini describes a plagiarism claim made in the Argentine legal system about the "invention" of the idea of an inverted conquest, focused on a dispute between two novels, Agustín Cuzzani's *Los indios estaban cabreros* (1958) and

Federico Andahazi's *El conquistador* (2006). That reasoning—in which Cuzzani's son argued that an inverted conquest is so outlandish an idea that it could only have been conjured up by some solitary genius in Argentina—was not persuasive. Luis Pestarini, "Las ucronías en la literatura argentina," *Revista Iberoamericana* 83, no. 259–60 (2017): 425. Wladimir Chávez Vaca traces a broader history of conquest uchronias in his article on Eduardo Villacís, which will be discussed in the next chapter. Wladimir Chávez Vaca, "When the Aztecs Conquered Europe: Literary Tradition and Criticism of Society in the Art of Smoking Mirror (2012)," *International Journal of Comic Art* 16, no. 2 (2014): 192.

6. Domínguez wrote an early review of Boullosa and Hiriart's novels for *Vuelta* magazine. Christopher Domínguez, "Profecía, Sueño," *Vuelta* 193 (1992): 42.

7. Martín Lienhard, *La voz y su huella*, 4th ed. (México: Ediciones Casa Juan Pablos, 2003), 99.

8. Eduardo Matos Moctezuma, "'Visión de los Vencidos' a cincuenta años de su publicación," *Estudios de la cultura Náhuatl* 40 (2009).

9. David Jay Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT University Press, 2000).

10. Lienhard, *La voz y su huella*, 79.

11. Jodi Melamed, *Represent and Destroy: Rationalizing Violence in the New Racial Capitalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011).

12. Miguel León-Portilla and Earl Shorris, *In the Language of Kings: An Anthology of Mesoamerican Literature, Pre-Columbian to the Present* (New York: Norton, 2002), xxiv.

13. Ignacio M. Sánchez-Prado, "The Pre-Columbian Past as a Project: Miguel León-Portilla and Hispanism," in *Ideologies of Hispanism*, ed. Mabel Moraña (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2005), 42.

14. Sánchez-Prado, "Pre-Columbian Past," 48.

15. Sánchez-Prado, "Pre-Columbian Past," 50–51.

16. Natalio Hernández, "Cinco lienzos para mi maestro Miguel León-Portilla," *LASA Forum* 51, no. 2 (2020).

17. Sánchez-Prado, "Pre-Columbian Past," 47.

18. The following paragraphs are reworked from my previous article on Boullosa, "Archive Failure? *Cielos de la tierra*'s Historical Dystopia," in *Blast, Corrupt, Dismantle, Erase: Contemporary North American Dystopian Literature*, ed. Grubisic, Baxter, and Lee (Toronto: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2014).

19. Julio Ortega, "La identidad literaria de Carmen Boullosa," in *Acercamientos a Carmen Boullosa: Actas del Simposio Conjugarse en Infinitivo*, ed. Barbara Dröscher and Carlos Rincón (México: Edición Tranvía, 1999), 32–33.

20. Oswaldo Estrada, "(Re)constructions of Memory and Identity Formation in Carmen Boullosa's Postcolonial Writings," *South Atlantic Review* 74, no. 4 (2009).

21. Chorba, in her monograph *Mexico, from Mestizo to Multicultural: National Identity and Recent Representations of the Conquest*, traces how Mexi-

can cultural production "moves towards multiculturalism" in the 1990s, using Boullosa and Fuentes as her two of her primary examples. Carrie C. Chorba, *Mexico, from Mestizo to Multicultural: National Identity and Recent Representations of the Conquest* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 2007).

22. Ignacio M. Sánchez-Prado, "Carmen Boullosa: Strategic Occidentalism as Position-Taking," in *Strategic Occidentalism: On Mexican Fiction, the Neoliberal Book Market, and the Question of World Literature* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2018), 149.

23. Estrada, *La imaginación novelesca*, 162.

24. Carmen Boullosa, *Llanto: Novelas imposibles* (México: Ediciones Era, 1992), 13.

25. Over 100 master's and PhD theses have been dedicated at least in part to Boullosa's work, along with dozens of monographs, one of the more recent being Ute Seydel, *Narrar Historia(s): La ficcionalización de temas históricos por las escritoras mexicanas Elana Garro, Rosa Beltrán y Carmen Boullosa* (Berlin: Iberoamericana/Vervuert, 2007). Some of the key works on *Llanto: Novelas imposibles* read it as experimental historiographic metafiction (Chorba; Cummins Muñoz; Underwood-Holbrook; Taylor), while others focus on the "impossibility" of the enterprise (Mato; Shaw; Quinn-Sánchez) or the silences the novel attempts to voice (Ferrero Cárdenas; Reid).

26. Claire Taylor, "Time Travel and History in Carmen Boullosa's *Llanto: Novelas imposibles*," in *Latin American Science Fiction: Theory and Practice*, ed. M. Elizabeth Ginway and J. Andrew Brown (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 35–59.

27. Rudyard J. Alcocer, *Time Travel in the Latin American and Caribbean Imagination: Re-reading History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

28. Boullosa, *Llanto*, 11.

29. Boullosa, *Llanto*, 36.

30. This style of novel, expressing a kind of exhaustion of postmodern historiographic metafiction, was common in Latin America at the time; Gutiérrez's *Poderes secretos* is another example from Perú, published in 1995.

31. Boullosa, *Llanto*, 37.

32. See Restall's 2018 study *When Montezuma Met Cortés: The True Story of the Meeting That Changed History* for an example of this revisionist tendency, which presents "an argument for seeing the traditional narrative of the 'Conquest of Mexico' as one of human history's great lies, whose exposure requires us to better grasp both what really happened at the time and why the traditional narrative has prospered." Matthew Restall, *When Montezuma Met Cortés: The True Story of the Meeting That Changed History* (New York: Ecco HarperCollins, 2018).

33. Boullosa, *Llanto*, 76.

34. Lienhard, *La voz y su huella*, 33.

35. For an encyclopedic bibliography, current to 2002, see Kimberle López's endnote 26 in her *Latin American Novels of the Conquest: Reinventing the New World* (183). The subsequent two decades have seen a further revisionist explosion surrounding that figure.

36. Boullosa, *Llanto*, 40.

37. Anna Reid, "La re-escritura de la conquista de México en *Llanto: Novelas imposibles* de Carmen Boullosa," *Espéculo: Revista de Estudios Literarios* 23 (2003).

38. Carrie C. Chorba, "The Actualization of a Distant Past: Carmen Boullosa's Historiographic Metafiction," *INTI* 42 (1995): 309.

39. Boullosa, *Llanto*, 97–98.

40. Marcela Junguito Camacho, "Narratives of Detachment and Literary Transculturation: Catalan Exiles in Mexico" (PhD diss., Stanford University, 2018), 103.

41. Throughout this chapter, I'll quote Tísner's Spanish translation of his Catalan original of *Palabras de Opoton el Viejo*. This is unfortunately another instance where my own limited linguistic capacity is most notable. My preliminary side-by-side comparison indicates significant revisions in Tísner's autographic 1992 translation; it is at least worthy of further study, building from Moncalda and Junguito Camacho.

42. Avel·lí Artís-Gener, *Palabras del Opoton el Viejo*, trans. Avel·lí Artís-Gener (México: Siglo Veintiuno, 1992), 24.

43. Joan Ramon Resina, "Transatlantic Reversals: Exile and Anti-History," in *The Ghost in the Constitution: Historical Memory and Denial in Spanish Society* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2017), 159.

44. Resina, "Transatlantic Reversals," 160.

45. Tísner deliberately follows the archaic spelling popularized by Guaman Poma.

46. Other prominent authors on the 21-entry list are Sahagún, Garibay, and Laurette Séjourné, the author of the 1957 FCE Brevario *Pensamiento y religión en el México antiguo* who also gets a mention in a separate footnote; Bernal Díaz's name is conspicuously absent.

47. Artís-Gener, *Palabras*, 108.

48. Artís-Gener, *Palabras*, 235–36.

49. Artís-Gener, *Palabras*, 250.

50. Artís-Gener, *Palabras*, 254.

51. Artís-Gener, *Palabras*, 119. In the introduction, the editor also ridicules the cruelty of toponyms with the story of Cuernavaca, a name he rejects with repugnance: "Sin sentido alguno, otorgada a un pueblo que jamás había vista vacas—tosca corrupción española de *Cuauhnahuac*, 'al lindero del bosque,' poética y exactamente descriptivo del lugar y que el incongruente toponímico ha sustituido definitivamente." Artís-Gener, *Palabras*, 17.

52. This is of course similar to how the first generation of Portuguese Jesuits in Brazil were all called Peró, "a name probably derived from the personal name Pero or Pedro." Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, *The Inconstancy of the Indian Soul: The Encounter of Catholics and Cannibals in 16th-Century Brazil*, trans. Gregory Duff Morton (Brooklyn, NY: Prickly Paradigm, 2011), 27.

53. Artís-Gener, *Palabras*, 298–99.

54. Lienhard, *La voz y su huella*, 64.

55. Lienhard, *La voz y su huella*, 64.

56. Artís-Gener, *Palabras*, 87–88.

57. Artís-Gener, *Palabras*, 295.

58. Artís-Gener, *Palabras*, 10.

59. It helps explain Opoton's surname, which translates as "stench."

60. Octavio Paz, *El laberinto de la soledad; Posdata; Vuelta a El laberinto de la soledad* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1993), 14.

61. Paz, *El laberinto*, 317.

62. Antonio Córdoba Cornejo, "México con x de galaxia: La CD del DF," in *Extranjero en tierra extraña: El género de la ciencia ficción en América Latina* (Seville: Universidad de Sevilla, 2011).

63. Darrell B. Lockhard, ed., *Latin American Science Fiction Writers: An A-Z Guide* (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood, 2004), 104–5.

64. Reinhard Tiechmann, "La destrucción de todas las cosas de Hugo Hiriart," *Revista de literatura mexicana contemporánea* 1, no. 3 (1996): 48.

65. Córdoba Cornejo, "México con x de galaxia," 185.

66. Elzbieta Sklodowska, *La parodia en la Nueva Novela Hispanoamericana 1960–1985* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1991).

67. Hugo Hiriart, *La destrucción de todas las cosas* (México: Ediciones Era, 1992), 111–12.

68. Hiriart, *La destrucción*, 39.

69. Hiriart, *La destrucción*, 19–20.

70. Manfred Höhl, "Ensayo de biografía de un soberano de Tezcoco: Nezahualpilli," *Revista española de antropología americana* 13 (1983): 59–95.

71. Hiriart, *La destrucción*, 97.

72. Hiriart, *La destrucción*, 52.

73. Hiriart, *La destrucción*, 151–52.

74. Hiriate, *La destrucción*, 97.

75. Hiriart, *La destrucción*, 215.

76. It must be mentioned that this approach is much less successful in Hiriart's rewriting of La Malinche/Malintzin as La Jitomata, which might be counted as among the more flippant reimaginings of that historical figure. Better instead to read the explicitly feminist reimaginings, from Anzaldúa to those gathered by Margo Glanz in *La Malinche, sus padres y sus hijos* (México: UNAM Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, 1994).

77. Estrada is known for dark comedies that parody Mexican media in different periods and genres. Estrada's *La lay de Herodes*, for example, rewrites *Río Escondido* (1947), a classic example of party-line revolutionary romantic drama, into a murderous farce of petty bureaucratic ambition. Jesús Guillén, "*La Ley de Herodes*: Parodia de *Río Escondido* y sátira del PRI," *Revista Consenso* 4 (2016).

78. Hiriart, *La destrucción*, 28.

79. Hiriart, *La destrucción*, 29.

80. Hiriart, *La destrucción*, 130.

81. Hiriart, *La destrucción*, 142.

82. For a more detailed interpretation of the novel through the lens of trauma theory, see Manickam, who reads the novel as the trauma of Mexico's history of foreign invasions, expressed as a posthumous post-apocalyptic memoir. Samuel Manickam, "Trauma and Historiography in Hugo Hiriart's *La destrucción de todas las cosas*," *Hispania* 103, no. 3 (2020): 383.

83. Hiriart, *La destrucción*, 115.
84. Hiriart, *La destrucción*, 119.
85. Hiriart, *La destrucción*, 207–11.
86. Hiriart, *La destrucción*, 200.
87. Alberto Ribas, "Carlos Fuentes' 'The Two Shores': Between Counterfactualism and Cultural Allegory," *Romance Notes* 49, no. 3 (2009): 301–11. Álvaro Enrigue's *Tu sueño imperios han sido* (Barcelona: Anagrama, 2022; translated as *You Dreamed of Empires* [New York: Riverhead Books, 2024]) is one of the most recent and exciting examples, published after I had completed the present book.

CHAPTER 2

1. James Axtell, "Columbian Encounters: 1992–1995," *William and Mary Quarterly* 53, no. 4 (1995): 649–96.
2. Anthony Alan Shelton, "Cabinets of Transgression: Renaissance Collections and the Incorporation of the New World," in *Cultures of Collecting*, ed. John Elsner and Roger Cardinal (London: Reaktion, 1994), 177–203.
3. Robin Boast, "Neocolonial Collaboration: Museum as Contact Zone Revisited," *Museum Anthropology* 34, no. 1 (2011): 64.
4. Mieki Bal, "Telling Off, Showing Off," *Critical Inquiry* 18, no. 3 (1992): 556–94.
5. Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum* (London: Routledge, 1995).
6. Already in 1992, Bal could affirm that "the critique of nineteenth-century collecting as being rooted in the colonialist conquest of foreignness has been sufficiently carried out." Bal, "Telling Off," 560. Bal cites Donna Haraway's *Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science* and James Clifford's "On Collecting Art and Culture" as seminal to her own critical framework. A recent anthology, *Museum Making: Narratives, Architectures, Exhibitions* provides a useful critical panorama of the contemporary state of museum studies, suggesting that even if Bal's critique has been assimilated into academic production, museum professionals are still grappling with the consequences of that revelation. Macleod, Hourston Hanks, and Hale, eds., *Museum Making: Narratives, Architectures, Exhibitions* (London: Routledge, 2012).
7. Fred Wilson and Lisa A. Corrin, eds., *Mining the Museum* (New York: New Press, 1994).
8. A non-exhaustive list of the locations where Fusco and Gómez-Peña staged their performance: Columbus Plaza in Madrid, Covent Garden in London, Minneapolis, the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History, the Australian Museum of Natural History in Sydney, and the Field Museum in Chicago. The tour concluded in the Whitney Museum in New York, the only site where the performance was recognizably contextualized as artwork. Coco Fusco, *English Is Broken Here: Notes on Cultural Fusion in the Americas* (New York: New Press, 1995), 39.
9. Fusco, *English Is Broken Here*, 39.
10. Diana Taylor, "A Savage Performance: Guillermo Gómez-Peña and Coco Fusco's 'The Couple in the Cage,'" *The Drama Review* 42, no. 2 (1998): 163.

11. Following Taylor's insightful categorization, the video *The Couple in the Cage* is an archival documentary, while *Two Undiscovered Amerindians Visit . . .* is a repertory performance. Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 1–52.

12. Fusco, *English Is Broken Here*.

13. Taylor, "A Savage Performance," 166.

14. Fusco, *English Is Broken Here*, 48.

15. Taylor, "A Savage Performance," 169.

16. Thomas Foster, "Cyber-Aztecs and Cholo-Punks: Guillermo Gómez-Peña's Five-Worlds Theory," *PMLA* 117, no. 1 (2002): 45.

17. Taylor, "A Savage Performance," 169.

18. Taylor, "A Savage Performance," 167–68.

19. Emma Grey Ellis, "Can't Take a Joke? That's Just Poe's Law, 2017's Most Important Internet Phenomenon," *Wired Magazine*, June 5, 2017. For an in-depth study, see the research of Whitney Phillips and her collaborators, especially *This Is Why We Can't Have Nice Things*. Whitney Phillips, *This Is Why We Can't Have Nice Things: Mapping the Relationship between Online Trolling and Mainstream Culture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2015).

20. Byrd, *Transit of Empire*, 75–76.

21. The canonical reference on the society of the spectacle is the heterodox thinker Guy Debord's *Comments on the Society of the Spectacle* (London: Verso, 2011), itself a sequel to his original 1967 volume.

22. Taylor, "A Savage Performance," 171.

23. Amy Lonetree, *Decolonizing Museums: Representing Native America in National and Tribal Museums* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012).

24. See Poe's story "The Telltale Heart" (Edgar Allan, not to be confused with the Poe of Poe's Law). One of Poe's great readers, Jacques Derrida, caught the "archive fever," a sickness which he blamed on a cursed being. He said that cursed being's world was "haunted." He called the study of the world a "hauntology." Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (London: Routledge, 2006). I read Derrida's *Archive Fever* with *Specters of Marx* in my analysis of Boullosa's *Cielos de tierra*. Zimmer, "Archive Failure?"

25. Ana Luisa Valdés, "La paz de los muertos," in *El navegante* (Montevideo: Ediciones Tirlce, 1993), 8.

26. Valdés, "La paz de los muertos," 13.

27. Valdés, "La paz de los muertos," 14.

28. Philip H. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004).

29. Valdés, "La paz de los muertos," 15.

30. Valdés, "La paz de los muertos," 16.

31. Valdés, "La paz de los muertos," 19. Of the five, all of whose names appear in the historical record, the first four arrived in Paris together in 1833, while Ramón Mataojo arrived in Europe separately in 1832. All were transported against their will in the wake of the 1831 Uruguay state-sponsored massacre of

the Charrúa known as "La campaña de Salsipuedes." Valdés takes some liberties in her story, as only two of the Charrúas, Vaimaca Pirú and Senaqué, ended up in the Parisian museum after their deaths. Tacuabé and Guyunusa managed to escape that fate, along with Guyunusa's daughter, who had been born after her arrival to Europe. Ramón Mataojo did not even disembark when the ship which carried him across the Atlantic docked in Toulon, and it is assumed that he was buried at sea. Grupo Indígena Guyunusa Tacuarembo CONACHA, "Ramón Mataojo: Primer Charrúa que cruzó el Atlántico, Enero de 1832" (2006). The mortal remains of Vaicama Pirú were repatriated from France to Uruguay in 2002, to repose in the Panteón Nacional del Cementerio Central. The repatriation was not without controversy, and proved the worst fears that Vine Deloria, Jr. speculated about; see below.

32. Fusco, *English Is Broken Here*, 42.

33. Tools go out, specimens come back. Juan-Navarro writes about a museum repatriation subplot in Ishmael Reed's *Mumbo Jumbo*. Santiago Juan-Navarro, *Archival Reflections: Postmodern Fiction of the Americas (Self-Reflexivity, Historical Revision, Utopia)* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2000), 135–93. Vizenor's *Heirs of Columbus*, discussed in chapter 5 of the present study, also features a repatriation narrative.

34. Valdés, "La paz de los muertos," 28.

35. Jeff Erbig, *Where Caciques and Mapmakers Met: Border Making in Eighteenth-Century South America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2020).

36. Carmen Boullosa, *Cielos de la tierra* (México: Alfaguara, 1997), 67.

37. Taylor, "A Savage Performance," 164.

38. Jennifer A. González, *Subject to Display: Reframing Race in Contemporary Installation Art* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008).

39. Felipe Fernández-Armesto, *Millennium: A History of the Last Thousand Years* (New York: Scribner, 1995), 11.

40. In the 2017 Netflix-sponsored boondoggle *Treasures from the Wreck of the Unbelievable*, Hirst seems to have done just that. Fernández-Armesto does not appear to have collaborated on that project, but he does have a delightfully curmudgeonly presence at the reactionary website thecritic.co.uk, where he publishes erudite short essays on food culture.

41. A "catholic" collector, of course, in the sense of *catholicus*: universal in his collecting.

42. Jameson, in "The Aesthetics of Singularity," nominates the installation artwork as "paradigmatic of postmodern artistic practice." Fredric Jameson, "The Aesthetic of Singularity," *NLR* 92 (2015): 108–9.

43. Lonetree, *Decolonizing Museums*, 125.

44. Vine Deloria, Jr., "Indians, Archaeologists, and the Future," *American Antiquity* 57, no. 4 (1992): 596.

45. Deloria, "Indian, Archaeologists, and the Future," 595.

46. Paulette Steeves, *The Indigenous Paleolithic of the Western Hemisphere* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2021).

47. Jean M. O'Brien, *Firsting and Lasting: Writing Indians Out of Existence in New England* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

48. Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object*, 2nd ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014).

49. James Clifford, "Museums as Contact Zones," in *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 193.

50. Boast, "Neocolonial Collaboration," 63.

51. Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 81.

52. Fernando Coronil, "Beyond Occidentalism: Towards Nonimperial Geohistorical Categories," *Cultural Anthropology* 11, no. 1 (1996): 60.

53. In addition to the galactic museum, historians use other forms of reciprocity in practicing comparative historiography, as exemplified by Gary Urton: "When Francisco Pizarro arrived on the shores of Tahantinsuyu in 1532, the Incas possessed an astronomical and cosmological system which was as complex and sophisticated as any that existed at that time anywhere in the world. The men who destroyed the Inca empire seem, by comparison, superstitious, rude barbarians who stood at the vanguard of an expanding, militaristic, and technologically superior continent which had achieved very little significant advance in its own system of astronomy and cosmology since the time of Aristotle and Ptolemy. It must be remembered that the *De Revolutionibus* of Copernicus, which became known to the public (but not published) by about 1531, had little significant impact on Western cosmological thinking until almost a half century after Copernicus's death in 1543." Gary Urton, *At the Crossroads of the Earth and the Sky: An Andean Cosmology* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 198. Urton continues, paraphrasing a historian of Western science, that in the Western world astronomy actually regressed in the centuries between Ptolemy and Copernicus.

54. Chávez Vaca gives a brief bibliography of narratives of American Indians who traveled to Europe in the fifteenth century, and Alcocer studies narratives that send travelers back in time "to rewind the clock and undo the Conquest and its effects." Alcocer continues, "In so doing they seek to reconfigure human activity in the region so that in it, history can begin to move forward." Alcocer, *Time Travel*, 8. But it is only artists like Eduardo Villacis, Chávez Vaca argues, who succeed in creating an entirely new world. Chávez Vaca's list: *Los indios estaban cabreros* (1958), a play by Agustín Cuzzani; *Palabras de Opoton el Viejo* (1968), discussed in chapter 1 of the present book; *Crónica del descubrimiento* (1980), a satirical novel by Alejandro Paternain; "América descubrió Europa" (1988), a narrative essay by Alejandro Carrión; *La verdadera historia del descubri-miento de América* (1988), a play by "Koldo"; and *El Conquistador* (2006), a novel by Federico Andahzai. Chávez Vaca, "When the Aztecs Conquered Europe." For a global survey, see the vibrant bibliography at http://www.uchronia.net/intro.html.

55. Eduardo Villacis, "Más allá del Espejo humeante," *Loop*, December 30, 2008.

56. Eduardo Villacis, *El espejo humeante* (Quito: Xupuy Ediciones, 2003), 5.

57. Villacis, *El espejo humeante*, 7.

58. Chávez Vaca, "When Aztecs Conquered Europe."

59. In this he adopts Hugo Hiriart's strategy; see chapter 1.

60. Villacis, *El espejo humeante*, 5.

61. Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, *Historia general del Perú*, vol. 3 (Madrid: Real Academia Española, 1960), 48.

62. Villacis, *El espejo humeante*, 19.

63. For a study of a more fully realized speculative invocation of Tezcatlipoca, see Micah Donohue's "Sci-Fi Ain't Nothing but Mojo Misspelled: Latinx Futurism in *Smoking Mirror Blues*," *Chiricú Journal* 5, no. 1 (2020): 5–22.

64. Alexandra Astudillo Figueroa, "Identidades refractadas en *El espejo humeante* de Eduardo Villacis," *Arte y Sociedad: Revista de Investigación* 16 (2019): 225.

65. Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 81.

66. Brown Spiers, *Encountering the Sovereign Other*, xxx.

67. Lonetree, *Decolonizing Museums*, 25. There is no space for stereotypes in the decolonial museum as Lonetree defines it: "My main concern is to explore how museums can serve as sites of decolonization. I argue that they do this through honoring Indigenous knowledge and worldviews, challenging the stereotypical representations of Native people produced in the past, serving as sites of 'knowledge making and remembering' for their own communities and the general public, and discussing the hard truths of colonization in exhibitions in an effort to promote healing and understanding."

68. Neil Smith, "Contours of a Spatialized Politics: Homeless Vehicles and the Production of Geographical Scale," *Social Text* 33 (1992): 60.

69. Neil Smith, *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital, and the Production of Space*, 3rd ed. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008), 230.

70. Smith, "Contours," 60.

71. Smith, "Contours," 78.

72. Smith, "Contours," 61–62.

73. Smith, "Contours," 66.

74. This is the scale of what Martín Arboleda has called the "planetary mine."

75. Morton's hyperobjects are primarily about scale, and I take inspiration from his writing. But I'm not going to call these aesthetic experiments in scale "*hyperobjects*," because I use that term to refer to a specific category of topographic objects in my discussion of speculative mapping and cartographic projection. Elisa Gabbert, in her essay on thinking the scale of global warming, tries to put Morton's hyperobjects in direct conversation with a tesseract. Elisa Gabbert, "Big and Slow," *Real Life Mag* (June 25, 2018). This is more appropriate: hyperobjects differ from three-dimensional objects not in terms of scale, but in terms of dimensionality. A tesseract is a four-dimensional cube, or rather, a cube is the three-dimensional shadow cast by a tesseract.

76. Graciela Speranza, "Lo que Adrián Villar Rojas nos trae," *Otra Parte Semanal,* November 28, 2013.

77. Adrián Villar Rojas, "The Battle for Intimacy," Engadin Art Talks, 2018.

78. Adrián Villar Rojas, *Films Before the Revolution* (Zurich: Museum Haus Konstruktiv, 2013), 50.

79. Adrián Villar Rojas, *The Theater of Disappearance* (Los Angeles: MOCA, 2018), 109.

80. Robert Smithson, *Spiral Jetty* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); Walter De Maria, "The Lightning Field," Dia Art Foundation, 1977.

81. Geoff Dyer, "Poles Apart," *The New Yorker*, April 18, 2011, https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2011/04/18/poles-apart.

82. Adrián Villar Rojas, "Two Suns: Press Release" (New York: Marian Goodman Gallery, 2015).

83. Percy Bysshe Shelley, "Ozymandias," in *Shelley's Poetry and Prose* (New York: Norton, 1977).

84. Villar Rojas has been know to channel the trickster's aesthetic use of incomprehensibility. He deems his most successful early installation to be a second whale, like that from *Mi familia muerta* (2009), deposited in the dry desert near San Juan, Argentina, precisely because this sculpture didn't disintegrate, and was later "rediscovered" by drone pilots who mistook it for some prehistoric remains of a lost species. Villar Rojas, *The Theater of Disappearance* (MOCA), 109–10.

85. In a 2019 show at the Serpentine Sackler, Hiro Steyerl brought attention to the connections between the London gallery's named benefactor and their OxyContin empire of misery; since that intervention, the gallery has severed ties with the Sackler family's money.

86. Michael Slenske, "The Nomad: On the Road with Adrián Villar Rojas and His Traveling Circus," *Blouin Artinfo*, 2016.

87. I borrow the term "cosmic readymade" from Graciela Speranza.

88. In a sense, "Today We Reboot the Planet" dialogues with David Wilson's *Museum of Jurassic Technology*, which, in the words of Lisa Corrin, leads "the museum visitor from the familiar to the unfamiliar by presenting quasi-scientific exhibitions that redefine the concept of what knowledge is. It achieves this by caricaturing traditional scholarship and re-invoking the slightly sham oddness and exhibitionism of early museological ventures. . . . Wilson has shrewdly contrived to so thoroughly conflate the boundaries of his institution as a museum of science and as a postmodern art installation that the Museum of Jurassic Technology defies critical language." Wilson and Corrin, *Mining the Museum*, 6.

89. Speranza, "Lo que Adrián Villar Rojas nos trae."

90. Villar Rojas, "The Battle for Intimacy," 24:00.

91. For Duchamp's influence in Argentina, see Graciela Speranza's *Fuera de campo: Literature y arte argentinos después de Duchamp* (Buenos Aires: Ariana Hidalgo Villar, 2006).

92. Adrián Villar Rojas, *The Theater of Disappearance* (Bregenz: Kunsthaus Bregenz, 2018), 148.

93. Villar Rojas, *The Theater of Disappearance* (Kunsthaus Bregenz).

94. Shelley, "Ozymandias."

95. Smith, in "The Contours of a Spatialized Politics: Homeless Vehicles and the Production of Geographical Scale," talks about a very different scale-jumping vehicle. The artist-designed homeless vehicles that he studies function as scale-jumping devices that offer the possibility of escaping the contradictions of neoliberal urban development, and provide an interesting complement to Beatriz Cortez's unconventional space capsules, discussed below.

96. In the exhibition catalogue, the curators invoke a few guiding ideas, like "slipstream" art, "queer futurity," and the "nuevo weird," along with Alex Rivera's 2008 film *Sleep Dealer: Mundos alternos: Art and Science Fiction in the Américas*, ed. Robb Hernández, Tyler Stallings, and Joanna Szupinska-Myers

(Riverside, CA: UCR ARTSblock, 2017), 131–32. But the most immediately visible inspiration for the show is Cat Ramírez's words, from her essay "Afrofuturism/Chicanafuturism: Fictive Kin," which greet the visitor upon arrival: "More than mere escapism, science fiction can prompt us to recognize and rethink the status quo by depicting an alternate world, be it a parallel universe, distant future, or revised past." Ramírez, "Afrofuturism/Chicanafuturism."

97. Cortez's website, beatrizcortez.com, maintains an active list of all past projects, including archival images and descriptive text.

98. Beatriz Cortez, "Beatriz Cortez Cranbrook Lecture" (Cranbrook DeSalle, 2018), 3:13–3:33. Cortez also frequently cites Claire Colebrook, especially on humanity as the author of its own extinction. For a suggestive example of Colebrook's deconstructionist critique of the Anthropocene, see *Death of the PostHuman* (London: Open Humanities, 2014).

99. On her website, Cortez explains: "'The Lakota Porch: A Time Traveler' evokes a Craftsman Vernacular porch built by Apache Mescalero master stone builder Dan Montelongo about 100 years ago." https://beatrizcortez.com/the-lakota-porch-a-time-traveler/.

100. Cortez, "Cranbrook Lecture."

101. Cortez, "Cranbrook Lecture."

102. Mike Anton, "California Confronts Its Eugenics History," *Chicago Tribune*, July 17, 2003.

103. Rebecca Onion, "How Proponents of Forced Sterilization Convinced Everyday Californians to Support Their Cause," slate.com, May 6, 2015.

104. Jill Briggs, "Human Betterment Foundation (1928–1942)," July 10, 2013, https://embryo.asu.edu.

105. Some of the images are visible in a Cranbrook artist's talk available on YouTube from minutes 50–55. Cortez, "Cranbrook Lecture."

106. Kency Cornejo, "Decolonial Futurisms: Ancestral Border Crossers, Time Machines, and Space Travel in Salvadoran Art," in *Mundos alternos: Art and Science Fiction in the Americas*, ed. Robb Hernández, Tyler Stallings, and Joanna Szupinska-Myers (Riverside, CA: UCR ARTSblock, 2017), 26.

107. Lonetree, *Decolonizing Museums*, 173.

CHAPTER 3

1. Pheng Cheah, "Worlding Literature: Living with Tiger Spirits," *Diacritics* 45, no. 2 (2017): 86–114. UC Santa Cruz produced an important intervention in the development of the keyword "worlding" in Rob Wilson and Chris Connery's *The Worlding Project: Doing Cultural Studies in the Era of Globalization* (Santa Cruz and Berkeley, CA: New Pacific Press and North Atlantic Books, 2007). I arrived at the university well after that volume was published, but had the great fortune to work with many of the people involved in it as colleagues and collaborators.

2. Héctor Ayala Hoyos, *Beyond Bolaño: The Global Latin American Novel* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 5.

3. Simone Pinet, *Archipelagoes: Insular Fictions from Chivalric Romance to the Novel* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 66. In addition

to Simone Pinet, the opening paragraphs of this chapter are in debt to Bruno Bosteels, Mary Gaylord, Ricardo Padrón, and many others, listed in the acknowledgments and bibliographies of Pinet and Padrón's books. I, in turn, am indebted to them all, especially a comparative medieval-contemporary seminar on mapping co-taught by Bosteels and Pinet at Cornell.

4. Buckminster Fuller, *Operating Manual for Spaceship Earth* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1969).

5. Carl Sagan, *Pale Blue Dot: A Vision of the Human Future in Space* (New York: Random House, 1994).

6. Lisa Messeri, "Gestures of Cosmic Relation and the Search for Another Earth," *Environmental Humanities* 9, no. 2 (2017): 332.

7. Sheila Jasanoff and Sang-Hyun Kim, eds., *Dreamscapes of Modernity: Sociotechnical Imaginaries and the Fabrication of Power* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015).

8. Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women*, 183–202.

9. Evelyn Edson, *The World Map, 1300–1492: The Persistence of Tradition and Transformation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 15.

10. David Woodward and G. Malcom Lewis, *History of Cartography*, vol. 2, part 3, *Cartography in the Traditional African, American, Arctic, Australian, and Pacific Societies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 10.

11. As Coronil has provocatively asked, "Since space too is located in time and is changing constantly, how could a map represent geography without apprehending its movement?" Coronil, "Beyond Occidentalism," 53.

12. Jordana Dym and Karl Offen, eds., *Mapping Latin America: A Cartographic Reader* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

13. John Brian Harley, "Rereading the Maps of the Columbian Encounter," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 82, no. 3 (1992): 525.

14. Harley, "Rereading the Maps," 526.

15. John Brian Harley, *The New Nature of Maps: Essays in the History of Cartography* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 188; Harley, "Rereading the Maps," 531. John Rieder has detailed a similar cartographic operation in Anglophone "lost race" SF in *Colonialism and the Emergence of Science Fiction*, 21–25.

16. Wilson Harris, *The Dark Jester* (New York: Faber and Faber, 2001), 89.

17. Edson, *The World Map*, 28.

18. Edson, *The World Map*, 29.

19. Isidore of Seville, *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, ed. and trans. Barney, Lewis, Beach, and Berghof (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 277.

20. Pinet, *Archipelagoes*, 31.

21. Isidore of Seville, *Etymologies*, 277.

22. Isidore of Seville, *Etymologies*, 293.

23. Isidore of Seville, *Etymologies*, 286.

24. Isidore of Seville, *Etymologies*, 286.

25. Edson, *The World Map*, 228–29.

26. Isidore of Seville, *Etymologies*, 203.

27. Isidore of Seville, *Etymologies*, 203.

28. As we'll see in chapter 5, emphasizing firstness can blind us to significant reemergences.

29. Edson, *The World Map*, 145.

30. Edson, *The World Map*, 145.

31. John Hébert, "America," in *Mapping Latin America: A Cartographic Reader*, ed. Dym and Offen, 29–32.

32. Vincente Huidobro, *Altazor* (Madrid: Cátedra, 1994), 114.

33. Edmundo O'Gorman, *La invención de América* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2014), 179.

34. O'Gorman, *La invención de América*, 180.

35. Walter Mignolo adopts O'Gorman's overstatement, ignoring the Ptolemaic tendencies in sixteenth-century European mappa mundi. See Mignolo's *The Darker Side of the Renaissance* and, more recently, "Crossing Gazes and the Silence of the 'Indians,'" where he describes Ortelius's 1570 mappa mundi Typus Orbis Terrarum as a "subsumed" T-in-O map, even though Ortelius clearly and significantly adopts a Ptolemaic-inspired grid. In earlier work, Mignolo took a more relativistic position: "What is important to remember is that each culture put itself at the center of the world, and whoever belonged to that culture 'naturally' believed so." Walter D. Mignolo, "Putting America on the Map (Geography and the Colonization of Space)," *Colonial Latin American Research Review* 1, no. 1–2 (1992): 34.

36. Martin W. Lewis and Kären E. Wigen, *The Myth of Continents: A Critique of Metageography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 10.

37. Lewis and Wigen, *The Myth of Continents*, 10.

38. Walter Mignolo, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance: Literacy, Territoriality, and Colonization* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), 281.

39. Harley, "Rereading the Maps," 525.

40. As explored throughout this book, the point is not to replace a particular "European" cosmology with a better or more authentic "Andean" one, but rather to incorporate reciprocity and complementarity into our understanding of encounter itself, especially in the speculative mode.

41. William Gustav Gartner, "Mapmaking in the Central Andes," in *The History of Cartography,* Volume Two, Book Three (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 258.

42. See, for instance, Sharon Kinoshita's critical edition of Marco Polo's *The Description of the World* (Cambridge: Hackett, 2016).

43. Margot Beyersdorff, "Covering the Earth: Mapping the Walkabout in Andean Pueblos de Indios," *Latin American Research Review* 42, no. 3 (2007): 130–31.

44. Meddens, Willis, McEwan, and Branch, eds., *Inca Sacred Space: Landscape, Site and Symbol in the Andes* (London: Archeype, 2014).

45. Anthony F. Aveni, ed., *The Measure and Meaning of Time in Mesoamerica and the Andes* (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 2015), 106.

46. Donna Nash, "Pre-Columbian Studies of Ritual and Religion: Place, Power, Practice, and Ontology," *Latin American Research Review* 52, no. 5 (2017): 894.

47. ". . . modelos no euclidianos de los universos amerindios," Juan Camilo Niño Vargas, "El tejido del cosmos: Tiempo, especio y arte de la hamaca entre

los Ette (Chimila)," *Journal de la Société des Américanistes* 100, no. 1 (2013): 102.

48. Harley, "Rereading the Maps," 525–26.

49. Gartner, "Mapmaking in the Central Andes," 259.

50. Gartner, "Mapmaking in the Central Andes," 260.

51. Jeremy Ravi Mumford, *Vertical Empire: The General Resettlement of Indians in the Colonial Andes* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 3.

52. Gartner, "Mapmaking in the Central Andes," 260.

53. Gartner, "Mapmaking in the Central Andes," 259–61.

54. See Nash's review essay "Pre-Columbian Studies of Ritual and Religion: Place, Power, Practice, and Ontology" for an overview of the challenges of describing ontology and cosmology in the autochthonous Americas.

55. Adorno, *The Polemics of Possession*, x.

56. Castro-Klarén suggests a basic bibliography: Ossio, Watchel, Pease, Burga, Adorno, and her own monograph. Sara Castro-Klarén, "Historiography on the Ground: The Toledo Circle and Guamán Poma," in *The Latin American Subaltern Studies Reader* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001), 169.

57. Rolena Adorno, "Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala: An Andean View of the Peruvian Viceroyaltiy, 1565–1615," *Journal de la Société des Américanistes* 65 (1978): 136.

58. Rolena Adorno, *Guaman Poma: Writing and Resistance in Colonial Peru* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000), 15.

59. Adorno, *Guaman Poma*, 89. It is important to ground the current discussion in a particular time and space, to avoid the kinds of transhistorical abstractions that led Gordon Brotherston to talk about a monolithic Fourth World spanning the entire continent in the anthology *Book of the Fourth World: Reading the Native Americas through their Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). León-Portilla warns of just this tendency, which he calls *temeraria*, in his "Palabras liminares," a preface to the Spanish translation of Brotherston's 1992 book, published as *La América indígena en su literatura: Los libros del Cuarto Mundo* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1997).

60. Adorno, *Guaman Poma*, 91.

61. Adorno, *Guaman Poma*, 92.

62. Walter Mignolo, "Crossing Gazes and the Silence of the 'Indians': Theodor de Bry and Guaman Poma de Ayala," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 41, no. 1 (2011): 203–5.

63. Adorno, *Polemics of Possession*, 46.

64. There is a developing body of scholarly literature that also considers textiles, monumental architecture, and the assortment of quotidian or sacred objects uncovered by archeological research. Galen Brokaw, *A History of the Khipu* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

65. Roger Chartier, *The Order of Books: Readers, Authors and Libraries in Europe between the Fourteenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Cambridge: Polity, 1994).

66. For a visual studies-focused exploration of Andean huacas, see Carolyn Dean's *A Culture of Stone: Inka Perspective on Rock* (Durham, NC: Duke Uni-

versity Press, 2010). Dean argues that "the Inka's culture of stone placed value on rocks of all sorts, whether they were carved or not, or integrated into masonry walls or not. To separate out carved stone as worthy of special attention, or to separate out for study stones in architecture while ignoring stones apart from it, is to prioritize non-Inka understandings of rock. It is to take those rocks that most closely align with 'sculpture' and monuments that most closely align with 'architecture' and extract them from the Inka's culture of stone, awkwardly cropping the picture of Inka visual culture." Dean, *Culture of Stone*, 17. Dean's basic sketch of the Andean cosmovision—"the recognition of a profound reverence for ancestors, a belief in the basic complementary structure of the cosmos, and a fundamental reliance on reciprocity"—entails precisely the terms that must be integrated into a speculative cartography. Dean, *Culture of Stone*, 19.

67. Aveni, *Measure and Meaning of Time*, 109.

68. Aveni, *Measure and Meaning of Time*, 106; Peter Gose, *Invaders as Ancestors: On the Intercultural Making and Unmaking of Spanish Colonialism in the Andes* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008); Marisol de la Cadena, *Earth Beings: Ecologies of Practice across Andean Worlds* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015). See also Tamara Bray, ed., *The Archaeology of Wak'as: Explorations of the Sacred in the Pre-Columbian Andes* (Boulder: University of Colorado Press, 2014); and Claudia Brosseder's *The Power of Huacas: Change and Resistance in the Andean World of Colonial Peru* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015), which is based primarily on Jesuit sources. I consider the problem of what Rivera Andía calls the "equivalencia inadvertida" that impregnates the Jesuit sources in chapter 4.

69. Brian S. Bauer, *The Sacred Landscape of the Inca: The Cusco Ceque System* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998), 160.

70. Daniel Nemser, "Primitive Accumulation, Geometric Space, and the Construction of the 'Indian,'" *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies* 24, no. 3 (2015): 340. Nemser expands upon this argument in his monograph *Infrastructures of Race: Concentration and Biopolitics in Colonial Mexico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2017).

71. Mumford, *Vertical Empire*.

72. Castro-Klarén's article is an excellent overview of the "writing" debate and literary historiography in the Andes, including concise summaries of major scholarship (Boone, the Ashers, Urton, Brokaw, Salomon, Abercrombie, Brotherston, Cummins). Sara Castro-Klarén, "Memory and 'Writing' in the Andes," in *A Companion to Latin American Literature and Culture* (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 106–16.

73. Quoted in David Turnbull, *Mason, Tricksters and Cartographers: Comparative Studies in the Sociology of Scientific and Indigenous Knowledge* (London: Taylor and Francis, 2000), 31.

74. Charles C. Mann, *1491: New Revelations of the Americas before Columbus* (New York: Knopf, 2005).

75. Garcia, *Signs of the Americas*. Although Edgar Garcia doesn't use the language of cosmography, his book pushed me to expand Brokaw's media theory to encompass the khipu as a medium of cosmic multiplicity.

76. Elizabeth Hill Boone and Walter D. Mignolo, eds., *Writing Without Words: Alternative Literacies in Mesoamerica and the Andes* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994).

77. "Primary media depend on the presence of, or some form of contact between, the participants in the communicative interaction, whereas the communication made possible by secondary media may take place without such contact." Brokaw, *A History of the Khipu*, 6–7.

78. Brokaw, *A History of the Khipu*, 11.

79. Brokaw, *A History of the Khipu*, 19.

80. Brokaw, *A History of the Khipu*, 13.

81. Brokaw, *A History of the Khipu*, 37, 95.

82. Brokaw, *A History of the Khipu*, 21.

83. Brokaw, *A History of the Khipu*, 23.

84. Brokaw, *A History of the Khipu*, 99.

85. José Luis Martínez Cereceda, "Manifestaciones materiales de la cultural intelectual en la zona andina, pre- y postconquista," *Latin American Research Review* 48, no. 1 (2013): 206.

86. During the composition of this book, Gary Urton was stripped of his professor emeritus status at Harvard University for the sexual harassment of his students.

87. Gary Urton, *Inka History in Knots: Reading Khipus as Primary Sources* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2017), 18–19.

88. Urton, *Inka History in Knots*, 21.

89. Urton, *Inka History in Knots*, 22.

90. Urton, *Inka History in Knots*, 249.

91. María M. Portuondo, *Secret Science: Spanish Cosmography and the New World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 1.

92. Portuondo, *Secret Science*, 59. Portuondo's monograph explores the re-emergence of the European cosmographer and the subsequently prompt split in cosmography between the narrative-chronicler faction and the mathematic-cartographer faction, a split which anticipates elements in Harris's *Dark Jester*.

93. The "Qhipa Pacha Peruvian Andean and Amazonian Futurism Manifesto" was launched in February 2022, very late in the process of writing this book. Salvo is one of the fifteen original signatories listed on the Blogspot version of the manifesto, which also features other authors from the present text's bibliography, including Rocío Quispe-Agnoli and José Güich Rodriguez. Qhipa Pacha, as the manifesto elaborates, is "the Quechua word that expresses a range of possibilities about the future." AAVV, "Qhipa Pacha: Peruvian Andean and Amazonian Futurism Manifesto" (February 2022). One of Qhipa Pacha's most notable features is that it locates the future behind the present, not in front of it. An article about a similar concept in Aymara (another Andean language) states: "The Aymara language has a major static model of time wherein 'future is behind ego' and 'past is in front of ego.'" Rafael E. Núñez and Eve Sweetser, "With the Future Behind Them: Convergent Evidence from Aymara Language and Gesture in the Crosslinguistic Comparison of Spatial Construals of Time," *Cognitive Science: A Multidisciplinary Journal* 30 (2006): 401–50.

94. AAVV, "¿Cyberayllu?" 1996, https://andes.missouri.edu/andes/ciberayllu/sobrenombre.htm.

95. Mario Vargas Llosa, "La huachafería," *El Comercio* (Lima, Perú), August 28, 1983.

96. Daniel Salvo, "Entrevista en El Diario de la República," *La República* (Lima, Perú), August 27, 2016, https://danielsalvo.wordpress.com/2016/08/27/entrevista-en-el-diario-la-republic.

97. Brokaw, *A History of the Khipu*, 116.

98. Urton, *Inka History in Knots*, 151–52.

99. Jonathan Highfield, "The Dreaming Quipucamayoq: Myth and Landscape in Wilson Harris' *The Dark Jester*," *Atlantic Studies* 1, no. 2 (2004): 196–209.

100. Harris, *The Dark Jester*, 174.

101. Highfield, "The Dreaming Quipucamayoq."

102. Antonio Benítez Rojo, *The Repeating Island: The Caribbean and the Postmodern Perspective* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996), 187.

103. Benítez Rojo, *The Repeating Island*, 189.

104. Benítez Rojo, *The Repeating Island*, 196.

105. Zulfikar Ghose, "Review: Wilson Harris's *The Mask of the Beggar*," *The Review of Contemporary Fiction* 24, no. 1 (2004): 144.

106. Byrd, *Transit of Empire*, 89. See also Sandra E. Drake, *Wilson Harris and the Modern Tradition: A New Architecture of the World* (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood, 1986).

107. Wilson Harris and A. J. M. Bundy, *Selected Essays of Wilson Harris: The Unfinished Genesis of the Imagination* (London: Routledge, 1999), 82.

108. Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings, Volume 4: 1938–1940* (Cambridge: Belknap, 2006), 394.

109. Francis A. Yates, *The Art of Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974).

110. Harris, *The Dark Jester*, 95.

111. Harris and Bundy, *Selected Essays*, 83.

112. Harris and Bundy, *Selected Essays*, 263, 86.

113. Wilson Harris, "Book Review: Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala," *Caribbean Quarterly* 15, no. 2 (1969): 121.

114. Highfield, "The Dreaming Quipucamayoq," 199–200.

115. Byrd, *Transit of Empire*, 85.

116. Byrd's description of Harris's contrapuntal style recalls Benítez-Rojo's argument in *The Repeating Island*.

117. Hena Maes-Jelinek, *The Labyrinth of Universality: Wilson Harris's Visionary Art of Fiction* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006).

118. Harris, *The Dark Jester*, ix.

119. Harris, *The Dark Jester*, 18–19.

120. Gianluca G. Delfine, *Time, History and Philosophy in the Works of Wilson Harris* (Stuttgart: Ibidem-Verlag, 2012), 162–70.

121. Harris, *The Dark Jester*, viii–ix.

122. Drake, *Wilson Harris*, 177.

123. Harris, *The Dark Jester*, 95.

124. Harris, *The Dark Jester*, 1.

125. Harris, *The Dark Jester*, vii.

126. See *Altazor*, where Huidobro states *Los cuatro puntos cardinales son tres: el Norte y el Sur*; see also footnote 32 above.

127. Seth Kimmel, "Interpreting Inaccuracy: The Fiction of Longitude in Early Modern Spain," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 40, no. 2 (2010): 299–323; Ricardo Padrón, *The Spacious Word: Cartography, Literature, and Empire in Early Modern Spain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

128. Jos Leys, Étienne Ghys, and Aurélien Alvarez, *Dimensions: Un promenade mathématique* (2010).

129. Timothy Morton, *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology after the End of the World* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 130.

130. Harris, *The Dark Jester*, vii–viii.

131. John Charles Chasteen, *Born in Blood & Fire: A Concise History of Latin America* (New York: Norton, 2016).

132. Harris, *The Dark Jester*, 16.

133. Harris, *The Dark Jester*, 2–3.

134. Barbara Mundy's rigorously archival *The Mapping of New Spain* offers a different, more documentary-based speculation of how non-Cartesian and non-Euclidean mappings manifested themselves in the hybrid cartography of the contact zone; she focuses on Mesoamerica. Barbara E. Mundy, *The Mapping of New Spain: Indigenous Cartography and the Maps of the Relaciones Geográficas* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

135. Harris, *The Dark Jester*, 3.

136. Harris, *The Dark Jester*, vii.

137. Highfield, "The Dreaming Quipucamayoq," 196.

138. Harris, *The Dark Jester*, 43.

139. Harris, *The Dark Jester*, 10–11.

140. Harris, *The Dark Jester*, 14–15.

141. Samuel Durrant, "Coming Home 'Upon Threads of Desolation': The Reversal of Prophecy in Wilson Harris' *The Dark Jester*," in *Theater of the Arts: Wilson Harris and the Caribbean*, ed. Hena and Benedicte Ledent Maes-Jelinek (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2001), 213.

142. Harris, *The Dark Jester*, 11.

143. Harris, *The Dark Jester*, 57.

144. Harris, *The Dark Jester*, 16.

145. Harris, *The Dark Jester*, 49.

146. Brokaw, *A History of the Khipu*, 116.

147. Harris, *The Dark Jester*, 52.

148. Harris, *The Dark Jester*, 22–23.

149. King, *The Black Shoals*.

150. Harris, *The Dark Jester*, 99–101.

CHAPTER 4

1. Judith Still, *Derrida and Hospitality: Theory and Practice* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 2010), 7.

2. Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*.

3. Restall, *Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest*.

4. Still, *Derrida and Hospitality*, 9.

5. Tracy McNulty, "Hospitality after the Death of God," *diacritics 35*, no. 1 (2005): 72–73.

6. Still, *Derrida and Hospitality*.

7. Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, 25. For an extraordinary exploration of the limits of Derrida's concept of hospitality in a world of nuclear and climatological entanglements, see Karen Barad's essay "After the End of the World: Entangled Nuclear Colonialisms, Matters of Force, and the Material Force of Justice," *Theory and Event* 22, no. 3 (2019): 524–50.

8. Georg Cavallar, *The Rights of Strangers: Theories of International Hospitality, the Global Community, and Political Justice since Vitoria* (London: Routlege, 2002), 112.

9. Cavallar, *The Rights of Strangers*, 112.

10. Beatriz Pastor, *Discursos narrativos de la conquista: Mitificación y emergencia* (México: Ediciones del Norte, 1988).

11. We now know that the star Proxima Centauri does not have the kind of habitable planet depicted in the novel, but *The Sparrow* was published before the boom in exoplanet research.

12. This is perhaps the single best explanation I've found for the novel's popularity among scientists, especially the ones who consider proper science fiction to be fiction about scientists . . .

13. Ivonne Del Valle, *Escribiendo desde los márgenes: Colonialismo y jesuitas en el siglo xviii* (México: Siglo XXI, 2009).

14. Fredric Jameson, "In Hyperspace," *London Review of Books* 37, no. 17 (2015).

15. David Heckman, "The Estrangement of Emilio Sandoz, S. J.: Othering in Mary Doria Russell's *The Sparrow*," in *Between Human and Divine: The Catholic Vision of Contemporary Literature*, ed. Mary R. Reichardt (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2010), 226–29.

16. In an erudite article, Worden postulates that anamorphosis is the aesthetic category best suited to describe the novel's obsessive manipulation of metaphor and its preference for ostentation. Daniel J. Worden, "A Neo-Baroque Tale of Jesuits in Space: Mary Doria Russell's *The Sparrow*," *Image & Narrative* 13, no. 2 (2012): 95–116.

17. Jonathan Wright, *God's Soldiers: Adventure, Politics, Intrigue, and Power, a History of the Jesuits* (New York: Doubleday, 2004), 77–78.

18. It is most likely that "Jesuits in space" derives its zing from Mel Brooks's 1981 gag-trailer *Jews in Space*; Russell does not cite that bit or Brooks's *History of the World Part I*, but does name-check the filmmaker on p. 136.

19. Jo Allen Bradham, "The Case in James Blish's *A Case of Conscious*," *Extrapolation* 16, no. 1 (1974): 79–80.

20. Mary Doria Russell, "The Sparrow FAQ," 2015, http://marydoriarussell.net/novels/the-sparrow/faq/.

21. Wright, *God's Soldiers*, 129.

22. Wright, *God's Soldiers*, 129.

23. Peter Hulme, *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean 1492–1797* (London: Routledge, 1987), 166–67.

24. Louis Marin, *Utopics: Spatial Play* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities, 1984), xiv.

25. Del Valle, *Escribiendo*, 12–13.

26. Del Valle, *Escribiendo*, 25.

27. Del Valle, *Escribiendo*, 78. In this, the colonial New World Jesuits behave much like the sages responsible for the Golden Records included on the NASA Viking missions . . .

28. Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*; Juan Pimentel, *Testigos del mundo: Ciencia, literatura y viajes en la ilustración* (Madrid: Marcial Pons Historia, 2003).

29. Ivonne Del Valle, "From José de Acosta to the Enlightenment: Barbarians, Climate Change, and (Colonial) Technology as the End of History," *The Eighteenth Century* 54, no. 4 (2013): 440.

30. Wright, *God's Soldiers*, 77–78.

31. Del Valle, *Escribiendo*, 21.

32. Bruce Beresford, *Black Robe* (1991).

33. Ward Churchill, "And They Did It Like Dogs in the Dirt . . . an Indigenist Analysis of Black Robe," in *Fantasies of the Master Race: Literature, Cinema and the Colonization of American Indians* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1998), 228.

34. Ward Churchill's own complicated relation with indigenous identity gives contemporary scholars pause. The exchange with Haavik continues to be an important reference point in the critical appraisal of realism and "authenticity" in indigenous representations, although Churchill's claim of indigenous identity has become tied up in broader litigation surrounding alleged research and academic misconduct.

35. Churchill, "Dogs in the Dirt," 225–26.

36. Kristof Haavik, "In Defense of *Black Robe*: A Reply to Ward Churchill," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 31, no. 4 (2007): 107; Ward Churchill, "Reasserting 'Consensus': A Somewhat Bitterly Amused Response to Kristof Haavik's 'In Defense of Black Robe,'" *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 31, no. 4 (2007): 126.

37. Mary Doria Russell, *The Sparrow* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1996), 165.

38. Russell has been critiqued for making of Emilio a disavowed colonial subject who depoliticized the encounter. Jamil Khader, "Race Matters: People of Color, Ideology, and the Politics of Erasure and Reversal in *Left Hand of Darkness* and *The Sparrow*," *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts* 16, no. 2 (2005): 112. I do not read the novel this way, although one can certainly question Russell for using Richard Rodriguez's memoir as a model for Emilio's upbringing as a "scholarship boy." Russell, *The Sparrow*, 207.

39. Mary Doria Russell, "Of Prayers and Predators: An Interview with Mary Doria Russell," interviewed by Nick Gevers, *infinity plus,* 1999.

40. Russell, *The Sparrow*, 137.

41. Although "Runa" is the Quechua word for Quechua-speaking people, and Russell uses additional Quechua pronunciations in developing the Runa

language in her novel, that seems to be the extent of her authorial engagement with the Andes or the Amazon.

42. Russell, *The Sparrow*, 62–64. This is not the novel's only reference to 1492, which are sprinkled throughout the novel. Most notable are: the asteroid ship as a sixteenth-century Spanish galleon (94); the "greatest voyage into the unknown since Magellan left Spain in 1519" (144); landfall occurs on October 13, one day after Columbus's historical arrival (189); Sofia Mendes's Sephardic ancestry is discussed several times in relation to the Expulsion of 1492 (40 and 62–63); "the negative example of their predecessors' disastrous interactions with technologically simple cultures on Earth" (276); and the lack of Taino or Arawak or Carib historians to narrate what León-Portilla calls *la visión de los vencidos* (327).

43. Russell highlights the Society's misogyny in the first pages of the novel, when Vincenzo Giuliani, the Father General of the Society of Jesus, blames "the girl" for the human downfall on Rakhat. Russell, *The Sparrow*, 12.

44. The Arecibo radio telescope tragically collapsed in the winter of 2020.

45. Russell, *The Sparrow*, 184.

46. Russell, *The Sparrow*, 334.

47. Russell, *The Sparrow*, 11.

48. Audra Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life across the Borders of Settler States* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014).

49. Emilio, gifted linguist that he is, learns French specifically to read the *Jesuit Relations* in the original language. Russell, *The Sparrow*, 20.

50. Worden's article works through the novel's many biblical references. Worden, "A Neo-Baroque Tale."

51. Jon Parmenter, *The Edge of the Woods: Iroquoia, 1534–1701* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2010).

52. Emma Anderson, *The Death and Afterlife of the North American Martyrs* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 20. This shift might explain why the novel does not sustain a discussion about the soul of the inhabitants of Rakhat, their obligation to convert, or the question of original sin, topics that have historically dominated Jesuit narratives of their encounters with alterity.

53. Parmenter, *The Edge of the Woods*, xlix.

54. Anderson, *Death and Afterlife*, 23–24

55. Parmenter, *The Edge of the Woods*, 70.

56. Anderson, *Death and Afterlife*, 15.

57. Russell, *The Sparrow*, 133–34.

58. Russell's other descriptions of Emilio's body are less subtle, a collage of incongruous stereotypes: a stoic, deeply lined Indian face (*The Sparrow,* 9) and a "conquistador beard" (16). Later in the novel, one of Emilio's companions describes his face as "mutable, ever changing between the profile of a Hollywood Spaniard and the portrait of a dignified Taino (56). Worden interprets this as part of Russell's broader literary anamorphosis. Worden, "A Neo-Baroque Tale," 105–6.

59. Russell, *The Sparrow*, 26–27.

60. In this aspect of her novel, Russell appears most distant from Ursula K. Le Guin's critique of the patriarchal tendencies of SF, especially Le Guin's ar-

gument in "The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction" that hunting metaphors often overlook women and other genders. For a similar critique of contemporary anthropological discourse, see Julie Velásquez Runk, "Decolonizing More-Than-Human Scholarship, Building Collaboration," *LASA Forum* 51, no. 2 (2020): 95.

61. Russell, *The Sparrow*, 330.

62. Russell, *The Sparrow*, 376.

63. Russell, *The Sparrow*, 375.

64. Russell, *The Sparrow*, 380.

65. Russell, *The Sparrow*, 210.

66. Russell, *The Sparrow*, 212.

67. Viveiros de Castro, *Inconstancy*, 17. In what might be a strange affirmation of this position, Las Casas calls Pánfilo de Narváez "made of marble" for his role in a Taíno massacre in Cuba.

68. Viveiros de Castro, *Inconstancy*, 2.

69. Viveiros de Castro, *Inconstancy*, 30–31.

70. Viveiros de Castro, *Inconstancy*, 31–32.

71. Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus*, 24. Simpson's monograph ties Parmenter's historical work to contemporary indigenous concerns. She develops the "scene of apprehension" as a key concept in indigenous critical thought: "we have to think in terms of scenes of apprehension—materially and symbolically shaped spaces of discernment that distill into 'representations' or renderings of difference that govern the way that we know things" (102).

72. López Austin, "Cosmovisión," 44.

73. Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, *Cannibal Metaphysics*, trans. Peter Skafish (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 70.

CHAPTER 5

1. Amado Nervo, "El gran viaje," in *Poesía reunida* (México: UNAM, 2010).

2. Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon, 1995).

3. Rabasa, *Inventing AMERICA*, 8. Although Rabasa does not endorse the kind of intentional literary reimaginings that I gather in this book, he does acknowledge the powerful role speculation plays in Latin American historiography when he affirms: "The history of Latin America can be read as the constant construction of alternative histories and subjectivities." Rabasa, *Inventing AMERICA*, 14.

4. Catherine Gallagher, *Telling It Like It Wasn't: The Counterfactual Imagination in History and Fiction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018), 2.

5. Gallagher, *Telling It Like It Wasn't*, 4.

6. Although Rachel Haywood Ferreira does not call it *Colombo ex frigata*, her overview of Latin American first contact SF describes several additional examples of the trope, most of which come from the 1993 Mexican SF anthology *Sin permiso de Colón: Fantasías mexicanas en el Quinto Centenario*. Rachel Haywood Ferreira, "Second Contact: The First Contact Story in Latin American Science Fiction," in *Parabolas of Science Fiction*, ed. Brian Attebery and Veronica Hollinger (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2013). In

the same article, Haywood Ferreira also interprets the Adolph short story "El falsificador," anthologized in *Cosmos latinos*.

7. José B. Adolph, *Cuentos del relojero abominable* (Lima: Editorial Universo, 1974), 93.

8. Adolph, *Cuentos*, 93.

9. Luciano Costa Santos, "'Eu vos quero alterados por um propical amor do mundo': Atre moderna, Pove e espiritualidade no intinerário de Mário de Andrade," *Perspectiva Teológica* 54, no. 2 (2022): 407. This is even visible in Cixin Liu's recent *Three Body Problem* series, where a Colombo ex frigata image acts as the hinge at the midpoint of the trilogy: "The ship of human civilization floated alone in the vast ocean, surrounded on all sides by endless, sinister waves, and no one knew if there even was an opposite shore." Cixin Liu, *The Dark Forest*, trans. Joel Martinson (New York: Tor, 2015). (Later in that volume, some of these Colombo ex frigatas become *Ships of Darkness*. Liu, *The Dark Forest*, 459.)

10. Jodi Byrd has explicitly theorized the impulse to link New World colonization with epistemological novelty: "There must be the possibility of the originary in the new world, and it is located within the historical experiences of new world colonizations, genocides, and violences." Byrd, *Transit of Empire*, xiv. Audra Simpson has expanded on this linkage in the North American context: "For a particular colonial state, one possessing such spectacular power of self-definition and moral turpitude that it can define itself as a revolutionary (postcolonial) and simultaneously immigrant state—one that is innocent of the violence and dispossession that got it to its apparent point of newness—there is a need for an aggressive regulatory fixation on demarcating, through time, the boundaries and the content of the 'we' of community." Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus,* 25.

11. Brian Aldiss, "Judgement at Jonbar," *SF Horizons* 1 (1964): 13–37.

12. Gallagher, *Telling It Like It Wasn't*, 4.

13. Jerng, *Racial Worldmaking*, 162–63. Jerng distinguishes between "racial counterfactuals," where racism makes the imagined world coherent, and "antiracist counterfactuals," with regard to which, "instead of assuming what counts as probable, for me the more 'affirmative' speculation of these works lies in engaging precisely those limits of what is thought to be probable, especially the particular role of racial meanings in this determination." Jerng, *Racial Worldmaking*, 177.

14. Aldiss, "Judgement at Jonbar," 30.

15. For a post-structuralist defense of "counterhistory" as a theoretical method, see Gabriel Rockhill's "Foucault, Genealogy, Counter-History," *Theory & Event* 23, no. 1 (2020): 85–119. One always runs the risk, when speaking of counterhistory in the theoretical register, of leaving the counter-historical method itself ungrounded. And historically ungrounded thought easily elides the historical origin of territorial dispossession, and can fall into the kind of interventionist aesthetics that Wilson Harris warns us against.

16. Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 113.

17. Jameson, "In Hyperspace."

18. Alcocer, *Time Travel*, 34–40.

19. Orson Scott Card, *Pastwatch: The Redemption of Christopher Columbus* (New York: Tor, 1996), 343.

20. Ted Chiang makes a similar point in "The Merchant and the Alchemist's Gate": "My journey to the past had changed nothing, but what I had learned had changed everything, and I understood that it could not have been otherwise. . . . Nothing erases the past. There is repentance, there is atonement, and there is forgiveness. That is all, but that is enough." Ted Chiang, *Exhalation* (New York: Knopf, 2019), 35–36.

21. Aníbal Quijano and Immanuel Wallerstein, "Americanity as a Concept, or the Americas in the Modern World-System," *International Journal of Social Sciences* 134 (1992): 550.

22. Quijano and Wallerstein, "Americanity," 550.

23. Quijano and Wallerstein, "Americanity," 550.

24. Acosta develops a similar critique based on another of Quijano's concepts, "reoriginalization," that similarly collapses into an original indeterminism, "a reversal of coloniality that is . . . equally grounded in another coloniality." Abraham Acosta, "(De)Colonial Sources: The Coloniality of Power, Reoriginalization, and the Critique of Imperialism," Forma 1, no. 1 (2019): 33. Tiffany Lethabo King, following Sylvia Wynter, shifts the birthplace of New World modernity back to the 1440s and across the Atlantic to the coast of Senegal, and she does so by introducing the critical concept of literary "shoaling," another term borrowed from oceanic navigation. In her Columbus chapter, "Errant Grammars: Defacing the Ceremony," King reads Junot Díaz, Morrison, Silko, and Wynter in a critique of White settler colonial studies. King, *The Black Shoals*.

25. Aníbal Quijano, "Don Quijote u los Molinos del viento en América Latina," Ecuador Debate 73 (2008): 160.

26. Aníbal Quijano, "Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America," *Napantla: Views from the South* 1, no. 3 (2000): 533–80.

27. Quijano, "Coloniality of Power," 541.

28. Quijano, "Coloniality of Power," 546–47.

29. Quijano, "Coloniality of Power," 550–51.

30. González describes the early twentieth-century Latin American doctrine of firstness like this: "Para los escritores hispanoamericanos de la primera mitad del siglo veinte, desde José Vasconcelos y Fernando Ortiz hasta Pedro Henríquez Ureña, el rasgo más sobresaliente de América era su novedad histórica, su capacidad de ser un nuevo comienzo para la humanidad, en el que no se repetirían las etapas de la historia europea." Aníbal González, "Imágenes de la conquista y la colonia en la novelística hispanoamericana contemporánea: Notas para una interpretación," *Revista de Estudios Hispánicos* 19 (1992): 434.

31. There is a robust deconstructionist bibliography on this topic; see Colebrook, *Death of the Posthuman*. A more materialist understanding of the problem of firstness can express itself in a pithy slogan: the New World, which must claim to be New, was never any such thing! Not from the human perspective, and certainly not from an earthbound perspective. The very concept of the New World is one of the most radical manifestations of Terran amnesia: we don't remember our common ancestors! Terra's populations migrate, sometimes in

massive terrestrial waves, other times on oceanic flows. Even the crust of the very planet conspires in this amnesia, as the tectonic plates shift, subduct, erupt, and erode. Terra's surface turns over, *borrón y cuenta nueva*.

32. Perhaps it is no coincidence that Columbus makes an appearance in one of Suvin's several definitions of science fiction as "the literature of cognitive estrangement": "The approach to the imaginary locality, or localized daydream, practiced by the genre of SF is a supposedly factual one. Columbus's (technically or genealogically nonfictional) letter on Eden he glimpsed beyond the Orinoco mouth, and Swift's (technically nonfactual) voyage to Laputa, Balnibari, Blubbdubbdrib, Luggnagg, 'and Japan' represent two extremes in the constant intermingling of imaginary and empirical possibilities. Thus SF takes off from a fictional ('literary') hypothesis and develops it with totalizing ('scientific') rigor—the specific difference between Columbus and Swift is smaller than their generic proximity. The effect of such factual reporting of fictions is one of confronting a set normative system—a Ptolemaic-type closed-world picture—with a point of view or look implying a new set of norms; in literary theory this is known as the attitude of *estrangement*." Suvin, "Estrangement and Cognition," 25.

33. Juan Pérez de Tudela y Bueso, *Mirabilis in altis: Estudio crítico sobre el origen y significado del proyecto descubridor de Crisóbal Colón (*Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Instituto Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, 1983), 29. As Vargas Martínez has argued, it is significant that Sánchez's name first appears in print in one of the earliest recorded Spanish-language appeals to the oral tradition of the indigenous Américas, and that Inca Garcilaso names the piloto anónimo while recalling stories that he overheard as a child. Gustavo Vargas Martínez, "De como el Inca Garcilaso no creyó en el cuento de Colón," *Revista Histórica de América* 110 (1990): 38.

34. Seymour Menton outlines a preliminary version of his NNH argument in a 1992 essay titled "Christopher Columbus and the New Historical Novel," Hispania 75, no. 4 (1992): 930–40. His definitive statement on the topic was published one year later: Seymour Menton, *La nueva novela histórica de la América Latina 1979–1992* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1993).

In addition to the critics I cite in this chapter, many others have read Carpentier and Posse's novels together and separately under the NNH rubric. See, for example: Klaus Müller-Bergh, "The Perception of the Marvelous: Paul Claudel and Carpentier's El Arpa y La Sombra," *Comparative Literature Studies* 24, no. 2 (1987): 165–91; Donald Shaw, "Columbus and the Discovery in Carpentier and Posse," *Romance Quarterly* 40, no. 3 (1993): 181–89; Viviana Paula Plotnik, *La reescritura del descubrimiento de América en cuatro novelas hispanoamericans contemporáneas: Intertextualidad, carnaval y espectáculo* (New York: New York University Press, 1993); Alejandro Enríquez, "The Bitch of Paradise: The Representation of Queen Isabel in Abel Posse's *Los perros del paraíso* and the Politics of Gender in Historiographic Metafiction," Chasqui 38, no. 2 (2009): 79–93; Ilan Stavans, *Imagining Columbus: The Literary Voyage* (New York: Twayne, 1993); Gustavo Verdesio, "The Literary Appropriation of the American Landscape: The Historical Novels of Abel Posse and Juan José Saer and Their Critics," in *Colonialism Past and Present*, ed. Álvaro Félix Bo-

laños and Gustavo Verdesio (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2002; Gustavo Verdesio, *Indigeneity and Time beyond the Tropes of Modernity* (London: Routledge, 2013); Eliseo Lara, "Las formas de la historia: Del discurso histórico del poder a las expresiones contrahistóricas en América Latina," *Universum* 30, no. 1 (2015): 137–51; Bruno Andrés Longoni, "El ángel melancólico del descubrimiento Americano: Una lectura benjaminiana de El arpa y la sombra de Alejo Carpentier," *Cartaphilus: Revista de investigación y crítica estética* 14 (2016): 90–98; Caroline Houde, *El imaginario colombino: Egoescritura, creación literaria y memoria histórica en Carpentier, Posse y Roa Bastos* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Biblios, 2017); and, finally, Roberto González-Echevarría, who seems to agree with Tudela y Bueso: "Si Colón es el origen, lo es no por su singularidad, sino por su pluralidad." Roberto González Echevarría, "Últimos viajes del Peregrino," *Revista Iberoamericana* 57, no. 154 (1990): 130.

"Columbus's Egg" was also the title of an important anthology of translated Spanish-language stories that reimagined the Columbian legacy, including "La paz de los muertos," which I discuss in chapter 2. Nick Caistor, ed., *Columbus's Egg: New Latin American Stories on the Conquest* (New York: Faber and Faber, 1992). In the Anglophone world, Helmbrech Breinig dedicates two chapters of *Hemispheric Imaginations: North American Fictions of Latin America* to English-language Columbus novels (Lebanon, NH: Dartmouth College Press, 2017), 55–82. Anthony Reed reminds me that Kamau Brathwaite's 1993 poem "I Cristóbal Colón" has a vibrantly speculative theme running through it, as it reorients Colón towards a transatlantic lineage that acknowledges African entanglement. Kamau Brathwaite, "I Cristóbal Colón," *Wasafiri* 9, no. 18 (1993): 6–12.

35. In the end, hypocrisy defeats hypocrisy: Colón's beatification is rejected due to his personal peccadillos, not for his responsibility in global atrocities. Sylvia Wynter's "Columbus, the Ocean Blue, and Fables That Stir the Mind" explores the Columbus figure from the perspective of Black studies, using the trope of the "Janus-faced effects of 1492." Silvia Wynter, "Columbus, the Ocean Blue, and Fables That Stir the Mind: To Reinvent the Study of Letters," in *Poetics of the Americas: Race, Founding, and Textuality*, ed. Bainard Cowan and Jefferson Humphries (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997), 149.

36. Alejo Carpentier, *El arpa y la sombra* (México: Siglo XXI Editores, 2006), 70.

37. Julio Zárete, "'El descubridor descubierto' o cuestionar a Cristóbal Colón en *El arpa y la sombra* de Alejo Carpentier," *Anales de Literatura Hispanoamericana* 44 (2015): 41–54.

38. Quijano, "Coloniality of Power."

39. Carpentier, *El arpa y la sombra*, 178.

40. González gives a detailed and illuminating reading of the novel's Cervantine connection and its manifest theatricality. Aníbal González, "Ethics and Theatricality in Alejo Carpentier's The Harp and the Shadow," in *Killer Books: Writing, Violence, and Ethics in Modern Spanish American Narrative* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001), 106–16. Benítez-Rojo ties Carpentier's dressing-down of the "descubridor descubierto" to the spectacles and perfor-

mances so constitutive of the "mystery of Caribbean identity," and ultimately reads *El arpa y la sombra* as Carpentier's own confessions that his signature "real maravilloso" was itself a farcical performance of Caribbeanness. Antonio Benítez-Rojo, *The Repeating Island: The Caribbean and the Postmodern Perspective* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996), 240.

41. E. Michael Gerli, "El retablo de las maravillas: Cervantes' 'Arte nuevo de deshacer comedias,'" *Hispanic Review* 57, no. 4 (1989): 477–92.

42. Carpentier, *El arpa y la sombra*, 178–80. Colón's prediction of the eclipse was based on Zacuto's *De las eclipses del Sol y de la Luna*. Abraham Zacuto was a Sephardic Jew from Salamanca who relocated, post-1492, to Lisbon to become the court astronomer for the Portuguese crown until his expulsion from Portugal in 1497. Shakeah Calluccie, "How Contributions from Christopher Columbus' Sephardic Astronomer Illustrate Complex Legacies of Exploration and Conquest," Stroum Center for Jewish Studies, University of Washington, 2021.

43. Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 53–78.

44. Abel Posse, *Los perros del paraíso* (Barcelona: De Bostillos, 2003), 289.

45. Posse, *Los perros del paraíso*, 288–89.

46. Posse, *Los perros del paraíso*, 244.

47. Houde, *El imaginario colombino*, 134–35.

48. Verdesio, "Literary Appropriation," 243.

49. Posse, *Los perros del paraíso*, 297.

50. Posse, *Los perros del paraíso*, 297.

51. Rosa Pellicer, "Colón y la busca del paraíso en la novela histórica del Siglo XX (de Carpentier a Roa Bastos)," *América sin Nombre* 5–6 (2004): 182. This revisionist Columbian moment would then represent a deception at the heart of the Columbian exchange. This is why José David Saldívar argues that Colón and Americanity are the curse at the center of Junot Díaz's *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, and why Octavia Butler's character Olamina objects when the first Earthseed ship is named *Christopher Columbus*. José David Saldívar, "Conjectures on 'Americanity' and Junot Díaz's 'Fukú Americanus' in the *Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*," *The Global South* 5, no. 1 (2011): 120–36; Gerry Canavan, "Eden, Just Not Ours Yet: On Parable of the Trickster and Utopia," *Women's Studies* 48, no. 1 (2019): 59. In both cases, the SF authors infuse Columbus with evil tendencies, and the figure of El Almirante becomes a new kind of negative origin: a piloto malévalo instead of a piloto anónimo.

52. Sklodowska, *La parodia*, 38–39.

53. Posse, *Los perros del paraíso*, 39–40.

54. The scene invokes an aquatic version of the cosmic vitrine: "Los aztecas, modestos navegantes, se los cruzaron repetidamente. En particular en los viajes de investigación que hacían hacia ese punto a quince jornadas de Guanahani donde se produce la confluencia de vientos y corrientes. Una laguna inmóvil dentro del mar donde flotaban desechos de ambos mundos: una pipa ceremonial, un perro fox-terrier inflado como un odre, un bastón de curaca, varias de esas tripas anudadas que inventara Lord Condom y que los amantes veraniegos arrojaban a la corriente del Támesis, una cabeza de caballo sacrificado

seguramente por los sarracenos en una innoble venganza, una tanga de piel de venado con sus cuerdecillas ondulando entre aguas, un rosario con cruz y bolas de madera, perdido por algún cura gallego en el día de la Virgen de las Rías." Posse, *Los perros del paraíso*, 39. "The Aztecs, competent navigators, crossed the ocean repeatedly. Most frequently in the research trips they made towards a known point of confluence between wind and ocean currents, a fifteen-day voyage from Guanahani. There they found an immovable lagoon within the ocean filled with flotsam from the two worlds: a ceremonial pipe, a distended fox terrier floating like a wineskin, a magical staff, a bunch of those knotted intestines that Lord Condom invented that summertime lovers cast off into the current of the River Thames, the head of a horse most likely sacrificed by the Saracens in some act of ignoble vengeance, the stringy undulating remains of a deer pelt, the cross and balls of a wooden rosary, lost by a Galician priest on the feast day for the Virgen of A Lanzada."

55. In 1998, Gayatri Spivak had called Forbes's earlier book *Black Africans and Native Americans* a watershed piece of scholarship, comparing it to Edward Said's *Orientalism*. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Race before Racism: The Disappearance of the American," *boundary 2* 25, no. 2 (1998): 37.

56. Forbes has given *Colón malévalo* an indigenous name, a wétiko, although Forbes's depiction of Columbian psychosis differs significantly from Vizenor's windigo (see below). Jack D. Forbes, *The American Discovery of Europe* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007), 22.

57. Forbes, *The American Discovery of Europe*, 8. Forbes's revisionist account has made for some strange bedfellows, including Juan Pérez de Tudela y Bueso, a Spanish historian and member of the Real Academia. In Tudela's 1983 monograph *Mirabilis in altis,* he dismisses the possibility of a European piloto anónimo only to painstakingly argue that Colón did indeed find uncredited inspiration in a fifteenth-century transatlantic voyage: "A lo largo de este libro trataré de evidenciar que, efectivamente, fue el mundo antillano el que trajo a Colón la posibilidad de convertirse en el Descubridor del Nuevo Mundo." Juan Pérez Tudela y Bueso, *Mirabilis in altis: Estudio crítico sobre el origen y significado del proyecto descubridor de Cristóbal Colón* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Instituto Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, 1983), 39. As he elaborates throughout his 400-page study, Tudela imagines that the encounter was most likely with an oceangoing canoe filled with indigenous Caribbean females, who the Almirante interpreted as incarnations of the mythological Amazonians. Tudela's method is to create a unified and consistent image of Colón's ideological universe, where a marineer's salty practicality meets the prophetic delusions of a millennial pilgrim, and this possible empirical experience of fantastical resonance becomes the compass rose of El Almirante's personal imago mundi. Tudela recognized that his unorthodox interpretation would be ridiculed by his fellow members of the Spanish Academy, and his preemptive response in the book's "Proemio" makes him sound more like a novelista de Colón than a distinguished historian: "Mira, con Colón, o tratas de saber lo que hay detrás de sus aparentes chilfladuras y milagrerías, y te toman entonces por chiflado, o te conformas con saber lo que hizo, sin saber por qué lo hizo." Tudela y Bueso, *Mirabilis in altis*, 15.

58. As Kehoe reminds us, "Contemporary archeologists are way more fearful of the ocean than ancient sailors ever were." Alice Beck Kehoe, *Controversies in Archeology* (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast, 2008), 58.

59. Even as late as 2003, Deloria was making this argument: "The reluctance of scholars to consider the possibility of pre-Columbian visits to the Western Hemisphere is but one example of the stranglehold that the one interpretation of history has had. There is, to a certain extent, a political justification in refusing to accept the pre-Columbian discoveries. The land title of the United States relates back to the famous doctrine of Discovery, whereby Christian nations were allowed by the pope to claim the discovered lands of non-Christian peoples. To accept a series of pre-Columbian visitations would mean that the lands of the Western Hemisphere were hardly 'discovered' by Europeans. It would call into question the interpretations and justifications given to colonization, exploitation, and genocide committed by Europeans during the last five centuries." Vine Deloria Jr., *God Is Red: A Native View of Religion,* 30th anniv. ed. (Golden, CO: Fulcrum, 2003), 111.

60. Margarita Zamora, "Gender and Discovery," in *Reading Columbus* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 152–79.

61. Seed, *Ceremonies of Possession*.

62. Jean M. O'Brien, *Firsting and Lasting: Writing Indians out of Existence in New England* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

63. O'Brien, *Firsting and Lasting*, 52–53.

64. O'Brien, *Firsting and Lasting*, 6.

65. In O'Brien's study, "firsting" is followed by a second, parallel script, one not universally applicable in the historical Latin American context yet imitated in many American localities: *replacing*. The final act in that script is *lasting*, "a rhetorical strategy that asserts as a fact the claim that Indians can never be modern." O'Brien, *Firsting and Lasting*, 107. This is best understood in the oft-repeated colonial trope of the so-called last Indian of his tribe.

66. Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2014), 371.

67. Mark Rifkin, *Beyond Settler Time: Temporal Sovereignty and Indigenous Self-Determination* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017). Rifkin writes: "The variability of Native responses to conquest, choices made when faced with its imperatives, and social practices and visions while living under it, can be understood as *temporal multiplicity*. While this phrase might mean the copresence of various stages of being and becoming modern existing side by side, it also opens the possibility for considering the copresence of varied ways of living time, the coexistence of temporal formations that cannot be assessed against a presumptively modern present—a singular background for a necessarily shared history." Rifkin, *Beyond Settler Time*, 16.

68. Drew Lopenzina, *Red Ink: Native Americans Picking up the Pen in the Colonial Period* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2012), 11.

69. Annette Kolodny, *In Search of First Contact: The Vikings of Vinland, the Peoples of the Dawnland, and the Anglo-American Anxiety of Discovery (*Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 293. In this monumental work, Kolodny blends the study of the eleventh-century Norse sagas, their nineteenth-

century North American reception, and the traces of those historical encounters in American Indian culture, encompassing both literary and oral traditions. The result is, as a reviewer so eloquently put it, an interdisciplinary masterpiece centered on "the widely accepted but historically elusive tradition of early Viking contact with the North American continent." Margaret Reid, "Review of in Search of First Contact (Annette Kolodny)," *American Historical Review* 119, no. 1 (2014): 165–66. Central to Kolodny's argument is the concept of the Anglo-American anxiety of discovery, which helps explain how the Norse Vinland sagas became the centerpiece of nineteenth-century New England arguments for northern European supremacy. In short, the Viking settlement narrative became part of the very colonial script that O'Brien outlined in *Firsting and Lasting*: that story was enlisted to erase a Native American past and replace it with an ancient northern European presence in the New World. Notwithstanding this cynical and racist mobilization of the Norse literary tradition, Kolodny ultimately concludes that all of her sources, whatever their provenance, should be considered foundational parts of the continent's narrative history. The Vinland Sagas and indigenous oral traditions must themselves be considered part of any New World canon, and native claims of survivance and persistence give the lie to expedient European claims of *firstness*.

70. Kolodny, *In Search of First Contact*, 293–94.

71. Drew Lopenzina, "Recontextualizing Contact: American Origin Stories," *American Quarterly* 66, no. 1 (2014): 234.

72. Lisa Brooks, *Our Beloved Kin: A New History of King Philip's War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2018).

73. This, again, is why Colón has been such a central figure in the NNH paradigm: Columbus and the Gordian knot stand in metonymy for all imperial encounters.

74. Alberto Corsín Jiménez, "Spiderweb Anthropologies: Ecologies, Infrastructures, Entanglements," in *A World of Many Worlds*, ed. Marisol de la Cadena and Mario Blaser (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018), 53–82.

75. There is a risk inherent in this kind of intellectual framing, as deconstructionist catachresis can easily become a tool of conceptual removal, so I supplement this ontological point with Axtell's axiomatic observation: "no matter how early a European ship is known to have touched on New England's shores, Indian reactions or possessions suggest that it had been preceded by others." Quoted in Kolodny, *In Search of First Contact*, 278.

76. For more on humor in Vizenor's *Heirs of Columbus*, see Ami, who connects the novel's post-Indian warrior utopia at Point Assinika with the RPM's occupation of Alcatraz Island from 1969 to 1971. Christine M. Ami, "De Alcatraz a Point Assinika: Survivance de la imagen Indígena." García's description of Vizenor's poetics is equally helpful in orienting the reader towards his prose: "In casting the colonial mediation of his poetry as ironic, Vizenor prompts us to see—as Hutcheon likewise does for ironic distance—the whole circuitry of his poems as a verbal problem that resolves into neither empire nor indigeneity. Instead, the poems voice their author's complex multitemporal position, situated in the traditions, representations, projections, and creative acts of indigeneity yet never removed from the contexts of imperial alienation." Edgar Garcia, "Pic-

tography, Law, and Earth: Gerald Vizenor, John Borrow, and Louise Erdrich," *PMLA* 34, no. 2 (2019): 273.

77. Gerald Vizenor, *The Heirs of Columbus* (New York: Fire Keepers, 1991), 119. In a strange way, this move anticipates Octavia Butler's unfinished and unpublished *Parable of the Trickster*. As Canavan has argued, Butler's previous parable concludes with the first ship of the Earthseed mission, christened *Christopher Columbus*, departing Earth on its extrasolar colonization project. It was to be the *Parable of the Trickster* where Butler would work out, as Canavan argues, "whether the utopian break in history promised by the Earthseed project has been squandered or compromised by whatever Powers-That-Be have circumvented Olamina and given the ship its macho, retro-conquistador branding." Canavan, "Eden, Just Not Ours Yet," 60.

78. David M. Higgins, "Survivance in Indigenous Science Fictions: Vizenor, Silko, Glancy, and the Rejection of Imperial Victimry," *Extrapolation* 57, no. 1–2 (2016): 65.

79. Dillon, *Walking the Clouds*, 15–16. Most critics trace the concept of "slipstream" writing to Bruce Sterling's provocative column in *SF Eye* no. 5 from 1989. Bruce Sterling, "Slipstream," *SF Eye* 5 (1989). In that article, Sterling somewhat patronizingly calls slipstream a collection of "little tokens of possibility" that he essentially wanted to banish from SF not for being bad SF, but for simply not being SF. But as Dillon makes clear in *Walking the Clouds*, Vizenor published "Custer on the Slipstream" in 1978, a decade before Sterling began dismissing the term as "essentially alien to what I consider SF's intrinsic virtues."

80. Breinig, *Hemispheric Imaginations*.

81. Christoph Irmscher, "Crossblood Columbus: Gerald Vizenor's Narrative Discoveries," *Amerikastudien* 40, no. 1 (1995): 90.

82. Irmscher, "Crossblood Columbus," 91.

83. Vizenor, *The Heirs of Columbus*, 185.

84. Chacón describes the sacred practice associated with blue Mayan hands that inspire Vizenor. Gloria Chacón, *Indigenous Cosmolectics*, 33. Cox works through the multiple references to Mayan culture in Vizenor's novel. James H. Cox, *Red Land to the South: American Indian Writers and Indigenous Mexico* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), 175–83.

85. Vizenor, *Heirs of Columbus*, 65.

86. Vizenor, *Heirs of Columbus*, 63.

87. Vizenor, *Heirs of Columbus*, 64.

88. Gerald Vizenor, *Manifest Manners: Postindian Warriors of Survivance* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1994). See also Ron Sakolsky and James Koehnline, eds., *Gone to Croatan: Origins of North American Dropout Culture* (Brooklyn, NY: Autonomia, 1993), 351–63. The theme of hospitality in SF is discussed in chapter 4.

89. Vizenor, *Heirs of Columbua*, 87.

90. Vizenor, *Heirs of Columbus*, 81–82.

91. Andrew Uzendoski, "Speculative States: Citizenship Criteria, Human Rights, and Decolonial Legal Norms in Gerald Vizenor's The Heirs of Columbus," *Extrapolation* 57, no. 1–2 (2016): 21–49.

92. Vizenor, *Heirs of Columbus*, 80–81.
93. Vizenor, *Heirs of Columbus*, 119.
94. Vizenor, *Heirs of Columbus*, 165.

CODA

1. Noble David Cook, *Born to Die: Disease and the New World Conquest, 1492–1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

2. Francisco López de Gómara, *Historia general de las Indias*, ed. Jorge Gurría Lacroix (Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes, 1999), 7.

3. Ricardo Padrón, "(Un)Inventing America: The Transpacific Indies in Oviedo and Gómara," *Colonial Latin American Review* 25, no. 1 (2016).

4. Alfred W. Crosby, *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492, 30th Anniversary Edition* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2003), 113.

5. Carl Schmitt, *The Nomos of the Earth in the International Law of the Jus Publicum Europaeum*, trans. G. L. Ulmen (New York: Telos, 2003), 39. Schmitt was a court political theorist of the Third Reich, or in other words, a literal Nazi.

6. Wynter, "Columbus, the Ocean Blue, and Fables That Stir the Mind"; Quijano, "Coloniality of Power."

7. As Paulette Steeves concisely summarizes in *The Indigenous Paleolithic of the Western Hemisphere:* "The historically embedded boundary of recent (on a global human history scale) time frames for first human migrations to the Western Hemisphere is not simply based on the archeological record; instead, it is a political construct maintaining Colonial power and control over Indigenous heritage, material remains, and history." Steeves, *The Indigenous Paleolithic of the Western Hemisphere*, 15.

8. As mentioned in the introduction, Cornejo Polar interpreted the meeting at Cajamarca as representing the constitutive heterogeneity of the Americas. Cornejo Polar, *Writing in the Air*.

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