

# UC Santa Cruz

## Refract: An Open Access Visual Studies Journal

### Title

Land, Water, Explorer: Place-Making “America” in the Early Modern Period

### Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/2r4924w1>

### Journal

Refract: An Open Access Visual Studies Journal, 5(1)

### Author

Laceste, Jillianne

### Publication Date

2022

### DOI

10.5070/R75159687

### Copyright Information

Copyright 2022 by the author(s). This work is made available under the terms of a Creative Commons Attribution License, available at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

Peer reviewed

## **Land, Water, Explorer: Place-Making “America” in the Early Modern Period**

Jillianne Laceste

In 2020, the colonial and violent legacy of the explorer Christopher Columbus and his long-standing association as the “discoverer” of the Americas came under major scrutiny during a time of social unrest in the American fabric. His visualized presence was seen as a symbol of the United States’ historical narrative that glorified colonial figures and systemic issues that led to race-based violence and the deaths of innocent people from BIPOC communities. During this period, the many monuments of Columbus scattered throughout the United States were reevaluated at all levels of society, ultimately leading to the removal of several of them. Some statues were removed through official channels, while others were beheaded or toppled by the public. A number of them still stand as a testament to the explorer’s longevity within the history of the Americas. These acts of removal call into question why the Genoese navigator, as well as similar maritime figures who crossed the Atlantic in the early modern period, became the Western figureheads of American and Atlantic histories.

After his landfall on the Taíno island of Guanahani, Columbus had an important place within the visual culture of the “New World.” The experiences of the Genoese explorer as well as other navigators associated with “discovery”<sup>1</sup> took prominent positions in the European intellectual and visual construction of “America.”<sup>2</sup> Western narratives on the Americas started in the sixteenth century, when Europeans began to address this fourth part of the known world through literature and imagery, creating white-washed idealized views of the Americas as an “exotic” and fertile land.<sup>3</sup> Columbus and his Florentine counterpart Amerigo



Figure 1 Theodor de Bry, Map, from *Americae pars sexta*, 1617. Courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library.

Vespucci, among other navigators and conquistadors, became foundational to the maps and prints produced in the early modern period. In engravings, America was pictured in the moment of the explorer's so-called discovery, and in maps, the names, portraits, and praises of navigators were added next to the lands they sailed upon. A prime example of this is a map (fig. 1) from Theodor de Bry's *Americae pars sexta* (1617 edition; first edition published in 1596),<sup>4</sup> which juxtaposes the figural representations of Columbus, Vespucci, Ferdinand Magellan, and Francisco Pizarro and a cartographic representation of what Europeans thought of as the New World. Surrounding the map, each figure takes up as much space as the representation of America itself, conveying the explorers' importance within the colonial transatlantic world, changing European worldview, and symbolic claiming over the Americas.

Men like Columbus and Vespucci became prominent protagonists in the Western place-making process of the Americas, which began with their own writings and the histories, epic poetry, and biographies that followed. Emphasizing heroism and maritime might, visual imagery of the Americas took a similar route, as it used the explorers to create idealized views of the New World while erasing



*Figure 2 Theodor de Bry, How Hieronymus Benzo first undertook the voyage to [the Americas], setting sail around sunset, from *Americae pars quarta*, 1594. Courtesy of the University of Houston Libraries.*

Indigenous ties. These figures, whose own personal identities were overshadowed by the monumental moment of discovery, became symbolic front men for the threshold of the Americas and Europe. Considering the relationship between three fundamental elements in the intellectual creation of America—explorer, land, water—this essay interrogates how the European navigator became a figure visually bound to green land and blue waters and then bonded to early modern narratives of the New World. Transformed into graphic indicators that complemented geographical representations of a faraway place, figures such as Columbus and Vespucci bridged locality and distance for European audiences and helped envision America as a terrestrial location, but also a place of European potential. Like the erasure, violence, and genocide happening across the Atlantic, early representations of the Americas symbolically and systemically work to erode pre-Hispanic lands and envision them to function within a Eurocentric world. While the navigator may be the figural element in visualizing the Americas, he is typically seen alongside land and water or within a littoral space—establishing a sense of



Figure 3 Adriaen Collaert, after Jan van der Straet, Christopher Columbus on His Ship, plate 2 from *Americae Retectio*, ca. 1585–1592, engraving on laid paper. Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth: Museum Purchase; PR.964.38.2.

movement, place, and time. To investigate the explorer's importance within views of the New World, the roles of the natural world, both green and blue, must also be considered. The first section of this essay engages with the rise of the Blue Humanities, which addresses the long-standing erasure and invisibility of the ocean in historical and cultural studies. Shifting from land to sea, this scholarship works to historicize oceans and investigate waters' cultural and social importance.<sup>5</sup> In the visual discourse of discovery, water is a common sight, typically identifying where the explorer is on his journey. However, its different forms present distinct meanings and understandings of the blue world. The essay's second part is informed by theories of space, place, and the environment, which provide a framework to address the tension between land and explorer in visualizations of the Americas and bring a critical eye to early modern humans' relationships to the green and built environments.

My work here is inspired by Lawrence Buell's concept of place-attachment, which is discussed in his books *Writing for an Endangered World: Literature, Culture, and Environment in the United States and Beyond* (2001) and *The Future of Environmental*

*Criticism* (2009).<sup>6</sup> Buell's concept defines place as something inherently tied to human civilization and human thought. A place exists only because an environment is emotionally bonded to a particular individual, group, or society.<sup>7</sup> The idea of place-attachment is woven throughout the different threads of this essay to probe the power of imagination used to visually define what America looked like to the European viewer. The explorer, I argue, functions as an instrument to make something foreign, wondrous, and dangerous almost familiar and comprehensible even though it was an ocean away. As this essay shows, a working visual relationship existed between the explorer and the bodies of water and land to illustrate a narrative of discovery and weave the Americas into the European worldview. By considering the spatial relationship of land and water and the explorer's connections to the lands he stands on or waters he sails on, my analysis interrogates how images configure the male navigator as an important tether for place-making in the New World—transitioning pre-Hispanic spaces into a place of European potential and use.

### Traversing the Deep Sea and Gentle Shores

The engraving *How Hieronymus Benzo first undertook the voyage to [the Americas], setting sail around sunset* (fig. 2) from De Bry's *Americae pars quarta* (1594) depicts the busy port of Sanlúcar de Barremeda. The urban landscape along the coastline as well as the small boats and large ships scattered throughout the water convey the firm establishment of human activity on both land and sea near the Strait of Gibraltar, where the Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea meet. In this image, as well as other *Americae* engravings, water is a familiar sight and useful tool in dictating the explorers' relationship to the lands of Europe and the Americas. When pictured with a navigator or conquistador in New World imagery, the sea became an important agent for facilitating movement and emphasizing colonial acts of discovery and conquest. There also exists a marked difference between the vast ocean and the shore, which relate to the changing ideas of water in the early modern period.

The presence of liquidity within these images and the blue world's different depictions convey shifting ideas of the ocean itself and its spatial relationship with green spaces. The understanding of water drastically changed over the medieval and Renaissance periods, transitioning from perceiving water as an all-encompassing void to pathways that connected lands.<sup>8</sup> Despite it becoming more familiar, the ocean was still considered a mysterious blue body that incited both terror and wonder due to its impressive physical expansiveness. It also held a wide range of associations that spanned the natural, the supernatural, and the miraculous.<sup>9</sup> In his

*Description of the Northern Peoples* (1555), Olaus Magnus, the archbishop of Uppsala and a cartographer interested in the wonders of the Norwegian and North Seas, describes the ocean as:

a wonderful spectacle [*admirabile spectaculum*] to every nation in its swirling waters. It exhibits its various offspring, which strike us not in the wonderful [*mirabiles*] size and similarity to constellations but rather through their threatening shapes, so that there appears to be nothing hidden either in the heavens, or on earth, or in earth's bowels, or even among household tools, which is not preserved in its depths. In this broad expanse of fluid Ocean, receiving the seeds of life with fertile growth, as sublime nature ceaselessly gives birth, an abundance of monsters is found.<sup>10</sup>

This wonder for ocean waters seen in Magnus's writing is also captured in images of exploration in the early modern period. In Jan van der Straet's *Americae Retectio* (ca. 1594), there are three similar prints that depict and celebrate the maritime feats of Columbus, Vespucci, and Magellan. Each image contains an amalgamation of iconography and literary references to create highly imaginative and fantastical representations of these navigators on their oceanic voyages.<sup>11</sup> In the depiction of Columbus (fig. 3), the Genoese explorer heads westwards while wearing armor and holding a nautical map and crucifixion banner. He faces the shore of the New World and is accompanied by the mythological goddess Diana whose right hand holds a rope attached to the ship to guide the explorer safely across the ocean.<sup>12</sup> In the waters surrounding Columbus, as well as Magellan in his *Americae Retectio* depiction (fig. 4), sea monsters are visible nearby. Functioning as symbols of the margins of the known world and unexplored waters, these fantastical yet fearsome marine creatures were already commonly featured in sea imagery and maps, such as Sebastian Münster's *Cosmographia universale* (1544) and Giovanni Battista Ramusio's *Navigazione e viaggi* (1555).<sup>13</sup>

These marine monsters ranged in purpose and incited different emotional and intellectual responses, as shown by Magnus's studies of sea monsters in his map, the *Carta Marina* (1539), and *The Description of the Northern Peoples*, which were created with the desire to quell human ignorance on monsters. To him, these creatures invoked the marvelous, as they ranged from being materially useful to dangerous and threatening.<sup>14</sup> Depictions of the ocean in the *Americae Retectio* imagery also reflect this concern about the seas. In the print of Columbus, several sea monsters can be seen throughout the rough waters that the navigator sails on. The creatures in the left background are more fishlike, while those in the foreground



Figure 4 Adriaen Collaert, after Jan van der Straet, Ferdinand Magellan on His Ship, plate 4 from *Americae Retectio*, ca. 1585–1592, engraving on laid paper. Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth: Museum Purchase; PR.964.38.4.

nearest to the explorer have more fantastical representations. Their beaklike mouths are gaping, as if they were ready to capture the men who foolishly enter their waters. Despite the rocking ocean and surrounding beasts, Columbus remains standing upright and calm.

Like his depiction, Columbus's own experiences on the seas presented a mixture of terror and the wondrous—he listed sightings of Amazons, cannibals, and exotic races and creatures that were associated with medieval ideas of foreignness and the Orient.<sup>15</sup> A journal entry from January 9, 1493 in Columbus' *diario*, which only exists through Bartolomé de Las Casas' translation, describes the explorer's encounter with mermaids:

The day before, when the Admiral was going to the Rio del Oro, he said he saw three mermaids who came quite high out of the water but were not as pretty as they are depicted, for somehow in the face they look like men. He said that other times he saw some in Guinea on the coast of Manegueta.<sup>16</sup>





Figure 5 Adriaen Collaert, after Jan van der Straet, Title Page, plate 1 from *Americae Retectio*, about 1594, engraving on laid paper. Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth: Museum Purchase; PR.964.38.1.

Secondhand accounts also detail Columbus’s encounters with dangerous creatures. According to Ferdinand Columbus, Christopher’s son, sharks were constantly surrounding his father’s ship: “These beasts seize a person’s leg or arm with their teeth. . . they still followed us making turns in the water . . . their heads are very elongated and the mouth extends to the middle of the belly.”<sup>17</sup> The insertion of sea monsters into Van der Straet’s depiction of Columbus in *Americae Retectio* works to emphasize the navigational feat of the explorer’s journey across the Atlantic. It also establishes deep sea water as foreign and unfamiliar territory, one that is separate from the busy urban ports of the Mediterranean as well as the sandy shores of the Americas.

Despite the ocean’s simultaneous terror and beauty, the Atlantic became an incredibly valuable tool for discourse on the discovery of the Americas. The frontispiece of *Americae Retectio* (fig. 5) brings together different modes of representation—portraiture, cartography, and allegory—to create a complex image that emphasizes the maritime connections between the Italian peninsula and the Americas. At the center, the ancient gods and symbols of Florence, Flora and her husband, Zephyr; the symbols of Genoa, Janus and a pelican; and Oceanus, the



Figure 6 Martin Waldseemüller, World Map (*Universalis cosmographica secundum Ptholomaei traditionem et Americi Vespucii alioru[m]que lustrationes*), 1507. *Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division.*

symbol for sea travel, present a globe of the known world. Columbus and Vesputi appear in two medallions at the top of the composition, while the northwestern coast of Italy appears at the bottom. The combination of these different representations highlights the Genoese and Florentine origins of the two explorers seen in this image.<sup>18</sup> More important, it establishes the Americas as European property in a post-discovery moment and conveys that Spanish colonization of America began on the shores of the Italian peninsula.

In addition to emphasizing Italy's role in the discovery of the Americas, the frontispiece presents an Atlantic that transforms and expands the European world, ultimately developing an ocean that functions and performs for European navigators and travelers. Modern scholarship on the Atlantic has critiqued the construction of its history as a fundamentally Eurocentric concept. In his article about the shortcomings of Atlantic history, the historian Paul Cohen posed the question, "Was there a single Atlantic world, connecting Africa, Europe, and the Americas as a whole, or were there many distinct 'Atlantics,' each linked to a particular European colonial power, and characterized by specific patterns of colonial settlement, conquest, commercial exchange, missionary projects and relationships with indigenous peoples?"<sup>19</sup> This query speaks to a complicated long history of associating the second-to-largest ocean with fraught ideas of European expansion and domination and the ocean's complicit participation in the African slave trade and European colonization of the Americas. By its frequent insertion into images of the discovery, there is a passive claim on the ocean itself.

The Atlantic's presence in early modern depictions of the New World captures what would become the ocean's significance within the histories of the Atlantic and colonial worlds. Van der Straet's views of ocean waters create a sense of movement that was ultimately tied to discovery and the colonial enterprise in the Americas. Moving away from the old view of the all-encompassing ocean that surrounded Asia, Africa, and Europe, these waters now led to new places, and thus the Atlantic became a means of travel for imperial powers and a space of movement. Its ability to connect lands allowed Europeans to also think of the world in an archipelagic manner. For travel across the Atlantic, the historian John Gillis writes, island thinking offered potential, as "each island could be thought of as a different world, offering new possibilities to a Europe which had for so long been conditioned to thinking according to one model of the universe."<sup>20</sup> This archipelagically ordered world is visually demonstrated in the intellectual debate on the size and shape of the landmass of the Americas, as many maps or map-like images questioned if the New World was an island, a series of islands, part of Asia, or its own continent similar to the Africa-Asia-Europe triad. For example, Martin Waldseemüller's 1507 *World Map* (fig. 6) shows two different versions of the New World. The smaller inset map of America at the top reveals a single landmass, while the larger world map shows a divided one. This cartographic image accompanied Matthias Ringmann's *Cosmographiae Introductio* (1507), which confirms America as a fourth land: "Now truly both these parts [Europe, Asia, and Africa] have been more widely brought to light and another fourth part has been discovered by Amerigo Vespucci."<sup>21</sup>

Understanding the shape of the Americas was a long process full of trial and error that took nearly three centuries to completely grasp, but islands were important markers that shaped European comprehension. Columbus's *diario* of his first journey organizes his search for gold and experiences by the different islands he encountered with statements such as "I will soon depart to go around this island until I have speech with this king and see if I can get the gold that I hear that he wears" and "I should like to leave today for the island of Cuba, which I believe must be Cipango according to the indications that these people give of its size and wealth."<sup>22</sup> The archipelagic landmasses that Columbus and others came across became important sites for speculation and for imagining their potential as territories that support political or economic progress.<sup>23</sup> These islands existed within the early modern understanding of the ocean, adding to the idea that although the sea was expansive and mysterious, it also led to new lands and new opportunities.

Despite the importance of deep waters and islands of the New World, many depictions of explorers on their journeys position these men in a coastal view. *The first voyage of Columbus / year 1492* (fig. 7) from *Americae pars quarta*, for



Figure 7 Theodor de Bry, The first voyage of Columbus / year 1492, from *Americae pars quarta*, 1594. Courtesy of the University of Houston Libraries.

example, depicts Columbus in a moment before he leaves the Spanish port of Palos de la Frontera. Although his head is turned toward King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, his body moves away from them, eager to move down the hill to join his men aboard the ships seen in the harbor in the background. Visible in between a fortified town and the imperial building on the right, the coastal waters are presented as calm, contrasting greatly with the built urban surroundings and a flurry of human activity. Coastal regions along the European shoreline such as this functioned differently compared with landlocked interior urban centers, which were under the control of powerful aristocracies and kingdoms. Overall, littoral sites were not subject to that same control and instead were cosmopolitan and operated in a more independent manner.<sup>24</sup> Because of the coastline's capacity to facilitate movement and trade, Barry Cunliffe described it as a "zone of transition or of transmission, an 'open' frontier to the wider world, far less regulated and controlled than the feudal demesne or the core areas of the bureaucratic-military state."<sup>25</sup> De Bry's depiction of Columbus's departure evokes these coastal values



Figure 8 Theodor de Bry, Columbus, as he first arrives in the [Americas], is received by the inhabitants and honored with the bestowing of many gifts, *from Americae pars quarta*, 1594. Courtesy of the University of Houston Libraries.

of passage, as everyone is in a state of frenzied movement except for the king, the queen, and their attendants, who are firmly footed on Spanish soil.

This image is complemented by another view on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean in *Columbus, as he first arrives in the [Americas], is received by the inhabitants and honored with the bestowing of many gifts* (fig. 8), which depicts an early encounter between Columbus and Indigenous Americans. Neatly splitting the composition in half between ocean and land, the shore in Columbus's arrival plays an important role by emphasizing the explorer's maritime feat and division between the Europeans and Indigenous Americans. Columbus's ships are visible in the background, floating on rocky waters. Compared with the gentle shore seen in the navigator's departure scene, the sea here is choppy and rough, looking similar to the ferocious sea monster-ridden water in the *Americae Retectio*. With a halberd in hand and accompanied by two soldiers, Columbus stands at the very center of the image on the most littoral point of the landscape, where a sliver of land juts into the water. His fine clothing, weapons, and confident posture contrast drastically with the



Figure 9 Theodor de Bry, Columbus is taken prisoner with his brother Bartholomeo and sent to Spain, from *Americae pars quarta*, 1594. Courtesy of the University of Houston Libraries.

group of nude Indigenous Americans, who stand more inland. Bringing gifts to the European newcomers, these figures—about eleven in number—seem to express a mixture of curiosity, fear, and hesitancy. The figure closest to Columbus uses his outstretched arms to keep at a distance and holds several pieces of hanging jewelry. The next closest figure, who holds a vessel and a nautilus cup, leans back as he moves forward. Clustered tightly together, the majority of the group becomes a sea of heads, the beginning of the homogenization and stereotyping of Indigenous peoples. Some are turned to face each other and are thus angled away from Columbus's eyes.

The American shore within this image not only works to divide the two parties but also creates a natural space for new and unusual experiences. Coastal regions such as this were sites where social customs could disintegrate in favor of new economic opportunities and individual freedom. As a result, the historian of early America Christopher L. Pastore describes that “trade (both licit and illicit)

flowed freely among them. Alongshore the conventions of conduct eroded: “saltiness sharpened tongues, loosened restraints on dress, and created, among sailors and port people alike, a persistent, nearly unquenchable thirst.”<sup>26</sup> Within De Bry’s images, the American coastline is presented in a way that functions differently from that of European society and ports. It operates as a place of encounter, but also becomes a place of opportunity and violence, as shown in other images such as *Columbus is taken prisoner with his brother Bartholomeo and sent to Spain* (fig. 9) and *Spaniards, along with some monks, are [killed by Indigenous people]* (fig. 10). Both images emphasize moments of conflict, which take place along the coast. Although relegated to the background, the shoreline is nonetheless present—identifying these coastal regions as important sites for conquest and colonization.

In these images of the New World, the waters present an in-between and liminal space, leading to opportunities where the foreign meets the familiar. While before, the ocean was thought of as all-encompassing, sea waters were now spaces of transition between lands. From depicting him on a journey from the deep sea to a shallow shore, the presence of the navigator and his connection to water conveys an expanded European worldview and the spatial relationship between the green and blue worlds. Both the navigational figure and ocean waters work in tandem to establish a monumental journey toward the moment of discovery.

### **Landing into Place(s)**

Within the European narrative of discovery, the navigator’s movements from Europe to the Americas transform the latter from a space to a place imbued with value to the European world. According to Buell, the shift from space or nonplace, an abstracted environment without meaning, to place requires emotional and intellectual bonding.<sup>27</sup> While spaces exist beyond cultural and social spheres, places, as defined by the geographer Yi-Fu Tuan, are instead “centers of felt value” and “enclosed and humanized space.”<sup>28</sup> Early images of the Americas reflect a desire to create an “America” that functions within a European worldview. The explorers, whether Columbus, Vespucci, or another, act as proxies of colonial or imperial power and as figural bridges, connecting Europe to the New World and visually establishing the latter as a place.

A major example of this construction is in Waldseemüller’s *World Map* (fig. 6), which not only represents America as its own continent in a groundbreaking development but also names the land after Vespucci. Text in the upper left corner of the map establishes the connection between the Americas and the Italian explorers associated with its discovery:



*Figure 10 Theodor de Bry, Spaniards, along with some monks, are [killed by Indigenous people], from Americae pars quarta, 1594. Courtesy of the University of Houston Libraries.*

Many have regarded as an invention the words of a famous poet that “beyond the stars lies a land, beyond the path of the year and the sun, where Atlas who supports the heavens, revolves on his shoulders the axis of the world, set with gleaming stars,” but now finally it proves clearly to be there. For there is a land, discovered by Columbus, a captain of the King of Castile, and by Americus Vespucius, both men of very great ability, which, though in great part it lies beneath “the path of the year and of the sun” and between the tropics, nevertheless extends about 19 degrees beyond the Tropic of Capricorn toward the Antarctic Pole, “beyond the path of the year and the sun.” Here a greater amount of gold has been found than any other metal.<sup>29</sup>

Columbus is mentioned only once in this map; this passage is one of several examples of texts that tie Vespucci to the Americas. Not only does “AMERICA”



appear on the land itself, but Vespucci is again mentioned in the text on the lower left of the map, which highlights his navigational and maritime achievements.<sup>30</sup> The two smaller inset maps are flanked by two figures central to cosmographical knowledge: Ptolemy and Vespucci (identified as “CLAVDII PTHOLOMEI ALLEX ANDRINI COSMOGRAPHI” and “AMERICI VESPVCI”). Shown holding a compass, Vespucci appears on the right and is turned to face the map of America, surveying the land that was named after him.<sup>31</sup>

The identification of the land as America is significant; it is one step in the long colonial process of weaving in the New World under European control.<sup>32</sup> Naming an unfamiliar space, as the historian and philosopher Michel de Certeau describes, brings it into the realm of the familiar as “proper names carve out pockets of hidden and familiar meanings.”<sup>33</sup> Columbus’s voyage was originally diplomatic and commercial in nature. The *Capitulaciones de Sante Fe* (April 17, 1492), the agreement between the Spanish crown and the Genoese explorer, dictates the nature of Columbus’s transoceanic voyage. Divided into five articles, the contract states that he would become admiral, viceroy, and governor-general of the lands he discovered and would receive one tenth of the goods he found, including gold and silver. He would also have certain rights over merchant trade within his territories. While place-naming was not specifically covered, Columbus uses place-names with great fervor in his writings to symbolically show his acts of possession for the Spanish crown.<sup>34</sup> For example, the opening of Columbus’s letter to Luis de Santangel (1493) emphasizes this activity:

As I know that you will be pleased at the great victory with which Our Lord has crowned my voyage, I write this to you, from which you will learn in thirty-three days, I passed from the Canary Islands to the Indies with the fleet which the most illustrious king and queen, our sovereigns, gave to me. And there I found very many islands filled with people innumerable, and of them all I have taken possession for their highnesses, by proclamation made and with the royal standard unfurled, and no opposition was offered to me. To the first island which I found, I have the name *San Salvador*, in remembrance of the Divine Majesty, Who has marvelously bestowed all of this; the Indians call it “Guanahani.” To the second, I gave the name *Isla de Santa María de Concepción*; to the third, *Fernandina*; to the fourth, *Isabella*; to the fifth, *Isla Juana*, and so to each one I gave a new name.<sup>35</sup>

While place-naming takes a prominent position in Columbus's letters and journal entries, the navigator does acknowledge Taíno and other local nomenclature. There are several occurrences where he reveals his knowledge of Indigenous information and place-names.<sup>36</sup> The entry of October 11, 1492, describes the first sight of land, "an islet of the Lucayas, which was called Guanahani in the language of the Indians."<sup>37</sup> Days later, from the entry of October 20, Columbus's ship anchored at the "island of Samoet," which he then named the cape "Cabo de la Laguna" and the island "Isabella."<sup>38</sup> Despite Columbus knowing Indigenous place-names, Tzvetan Todorov writes, the explorer "seeks to rename places in terms of the rank they occupy in his discovery, to give them the *right names*."<sup>39</sup> Columbus's use of toponyms were employed as instruments of conquest and possession, presenting himself not only as a representative of the Spanish monarchy but also as the necessary proxy for the king to seize new territories.<sup>40</sup> In *The Death of Tenochtitlan, The Life of Mexico City* (2015), the art historian Barbara Mundy asserts that the use of place-names was fundamental to the colonial process, as they functioned as "imaginative projections of what they hoped to find, or to create, in territories whose expanse they poorly understood and whose peoples were ciphers."<sup>41</sup> In Columbus's writings, his place-naming gives the effect of control over the islands, a necessary step in seizing power away from the Indigenous people who inhabited them and expanding the Spanish empire's overseas territories.

Parallel to the process of place-naming done by Columbus and other Europeans to symbolically stake territorial claims on New World lands, there were also efforts made to wrest Indigenous claims to these lands. The Indigenous presence was minimized, and Indigenous groups were turned into a homogenous, singular people or "Indians." While he details the islands' pre- and post-Hispanic names, Columbus's encounters with Indigenous peoples do not refer to specific groups. Rather, in his depictions of Indigenous people, they are typically referred to with generic terms such as "hōbres," "gente," and "yndios."<sup>42</sup> Portrayed as war-like cannibals, timid warriors, and poor and naked people, more attention is given to their physical appearances and mannerisms. These descriptions otherize Indigenous people as exotic and distinct from Europeans, but also make them interesting to read about.<sup>43</sup>

As many scholars in literature and the histories of science and art such as Greenblatt, Mary Campbell, Lorraine Daston, and Katherine Park have discussed, wonder was an important mode of perception that was essential in Europeans understanding the foreign and in the creation of the New World.<sup>44</sup> The use of the marvelous, Greenblatt writes, denotes a "decisive emotional and intellectual experience in the presence of radical difference" from the European perspective.<sup>45</sup> Columbus draws on peculiarity to strategically evoke a sense of wonder for his royal



Figure 11 Theodoor Galle, after Jan van der Straet, *Allegory of America*, Plate 1 of 19, from the *Nova Reperta*, ca. 1600. Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

and aristocratic readers and justify possession and the eventual conversion of the Indigenous peoples. Images of the New World such as De Bry's exaggerate Indigenous Otherness that was introduced in Columbus's writing. In *Columbus, as he first arrives in the [Americas]*, is received and honored with the bestowing of many gifts (fig. 8), the Genoese navigator and two of his men are greeted by a large group of Indigenous Americans at the shores of the Atlantic. The native people's nudity greatly contrasts with the detailed fine clothing that Columbus and his men wear. Their poses of timidity are heightened by Columbus's self-assured and rigidly straight posture. In the background, more Indigenous people are seen running away from the large ships. On the left-hand side, a large cross is planted, suggesting the imminent conversion of Indigenous Americans to Christianity and the future of America as a Catholic land under Spanish control. This image accentuates markers of future European domination—Columbus taking the possessions of the Indigenous Americans and the cross's insertion into the ground—and overall creates a sense of dispossession and possession. Other De Bry images, such as *Spaniards, along with some monks, are [killed by Indigenous people]* (fig. 10), dramatize Indigenous Americans' supposed penchant for violence. The muscular nude native men are seen clubbing and shooting arrows at the European men, who run away or beg for their lives.

These representations are powerful images that function under what the semiotician Walter Mignolo calls the “imperial gaze,” as Indigenous Americans are interpreted through a Eurocentric worldview that establishes a hierarchy. De Bry, Mignolo contends, is an active contributor to this maintenance of the “colonial matrix,” the complicated system of colonial control that emerged in the sixteenth century, since his imagery maintained the external colonial differences between Europeans and “Indians.”<sup>46</sup>

Colonial difference and claims of possession are also visible in Van der Straet’s *Allegory of America* (fig. 11) from the *Nova Reperta* (ca. 1600), a series of twenty engravings documenting early modern discoveries and inventions that include the European founding of the New World, the cure of syphilis, and the production of silk.<sup>47</sup> The Florentine explorer appears twice in the series: in his landfall in the Americas and in *Amerigo Vespucci Discovering the Southern Cross with an Astrolabium*. In the former engraving, Vespucci makes landfall on America and encounters the female personification of the land, who appears as a young woman in a recumbent position on a hammock. This image’s event evokes a transition from space to place. According to French Marxist theorist Henri Lefebvre, abstract space “relates negatively to that which perceives and underpins it – namely, the historical and religio-political spheres.”<sup>48</sup> While Van der Straet’s image was meant to show Renaissance progress and this new land, the representation of America, both the land itself and its personification, was done in relation to Vespucci’s maritime accomplishment. Two important threads in this image, the gender dynamics and the European perception of Indigenous Americans, work together to define space and its transformation while emphasizing Vespucci’s importance within the European worldview. In one hand, he holds a pole with a crucifix and banner with the Southern Cross and in the other, a compass. His presentation, fully clothed and in possession of religious and maritime objects, makes him a representative of the religious, cultural, and political ideology that dominates European civilization. Louis Montrose, an early modern scholar on Elizabethan studies, describes these objects as “empowering ideological and technological instruments of civilization, exploration and conquest.”<sup>49</sup> Vespucci marks the creation of Europe’s New World as well as transition of the land’s possession. The text at the bottom of the composition emphasizes this transformation: “Americus rediscovers America; he called her once and thenceforth she was always awake.”<sup>50</sup>

The comparison between Van der Straet’s preparatory drawing (fig. 12) and final engraving shows the interchangeability of the explorer in colonial rhetoric, as well as the intellectual exchange between Van der Straet, the inventor, Adriaen Collaert, the engraver, and Luigi Alamanni, the patron. On the verso side of the drawing, an inscription states that Van der Straet used Giovanni Pietro Maffei’s



Figure 12 Jan van der Straet, *Allegory of America*, ca. 1587–89. Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

*Historarium indicarum* (1588) as a source for the fauna, showing that he was trying to portray these foreign animals with some degree of accuracy.<sup>51</sup> In the upper left, his signature appears, and although now barely visible in the lower right, “*De Christoforo Colombo*” (“On Christopher Columbus”) is written by Alamanni’s hand, indicating that the image was originally meant to depict the Genoese mariner. This is supported not only by the flag of Genoa, seen in both drawing and engraving, but by the similarity of the image to Giulio Cesare Stella’s *Columbeidos* (1589), an epic poem about the explorer, which describes a Haitian princess named Anacaona falling in love with Columbus. The change in figure and the addition of text at the bottom of the engraving suggest two ideas. The first is that Columbus and Vespucci could both represent the discovery, while the second is that Alamanni, who was an active member of the literary group called *Accademia degli Alterati*, debated the importance of the two navigators.<sup>52</sup> Despite the change in identity from drawing to print, the visualization of America remains the same, as it still emphasizes the act of discovery and the interconnection between explorer, land, and water.

Vespucci, whose clothes cover most of his body, contrasts greatly with his companion, the female America, whose sex and Indigenous origins are emphasized. The meeting between the two figures is ultimately a juxtaposition of difference in all aspects of the body, including gender and race. The female America is



Figure 13 Theodor de Bry, [Indigenous people] pour molten gold [into] the mouths of the Spaniards [to satiate their spirits], from *Americae pars quarta*, 1594. Courtesy of the University of Houston Libraries.

depicted with alluring sexuality, which is balanced with her disposition for violence. The Tupinamba club nearby and the group of cannibals in the background suggest that she is also highly dangerous. Her depiction draws on the visual language of the Indigenous Other, capturing the stereotype of the cannibal that was seen in other New World images. In *[Indigenous people] pour molten gold [into] the mouths of the Spaniards [to satiate their spirits]* (fig. 13), a Hispanic man is tied and tortured in the foreground. What is happening in the background possibly suggests the victim's future as food. The background shows Indigenous figures dismembering a human body and roasting appendages on a large fire spit. This display is one of disorder and extreme violence, which highlights the supposed savagery of the Indigenous Americans (conceived of as feminine, but simultaneously violent and racially inferior) while critically denouncing Spanish greed for gold.

Cannibalism, like nudity or feathered skirts, became stereotyped attributes of Indigenous Americans. Early modern proto-ethnographic ideas of race and Otherness were ultimately connected to the European structures of “polis” and

“ecclesia,” and were bound to differences in both physical bodies and cultures.<sup>53</sup> In Van der Straet’s image, America is in dialogue with other depictions of the cannibalistic Indigenous Other, including the personification of the New World in the title page (fig. 14) of Abraham Ortelius’s *Theatrum orbis terrarum* (1570). In this image, the four personifications of the continents frame an architectural structure and the title of Ortelius’s work. A recumbent nude America is placed at the bottom. She holds a decollated head in her left hand and a Tupinamba club in her right. Her bow and arrows appear near her legs, with the former seeming to snake toward her pelvic region. Although dangerous and violent, her threatening nature is used against her in order to sexualize her and turn her into a phallically conquered object.

In Van der Straet’s and Ortelius’s depictions, the female America’s potential for violence complements the description of dangerous Indigenous women in the pamphlet *Mundus Novus* (1503), which supposedly contains Vespucci’s letter to Lorenzo de’ Medici. Although its authenticity is heavily debated, the writer states: “Their women, being very libidinous, make the penis of their husbands swell to such a size as to appear deformed; and this is accomplished by a certain artifice, being the bite of some poisonous animal, and by reason of this many lose their virile organ and remain eunuchs.”<sup>54</sup> Resonating with this description, Van der Straet’s image meshes female sexuality, male anxiety of the female sex, and ideas of cannibalism to create a misogynistic and racist narrative that Vespucci awakens America only to claim her after himself.<sup>55</sup> The various aspects of the image—Vespucci, America, the cannibals in the background—create what Montrose describes as “an oscillation between fascination and repulsion, likeness and strangeness, desires to destroy and to assimilate the Other.”<sup>56</sup>

America’s female body adds to and complexifies existing ideas of Otherness. The insertion of sex and sexual difference also establishes a sense of place in an unusual way—resonating with Luce Irigaray’s feminist writings on the intertwining of place, gender, and the body, which draw connections between woman and place. While Irigaray mentions that all bodies have a relation to place, a woman’s body also functions as place because of her role in sexual intercourse and ability to develop life in the womb.<sup>57</sup> The female body has a vessel-like quality and becomes “the container for the child, the container for the man, the container for herself.”<sup>58</sup> At the same time, there is also a sense of female placelessness in which a woman “is assigned to be place without occupying a place. Through her, place would be set up for man’s use but not hers.”<sup>59</sup> Irigaray’s understanding of sexed places complements early modern discourses of discovery and the racialized body

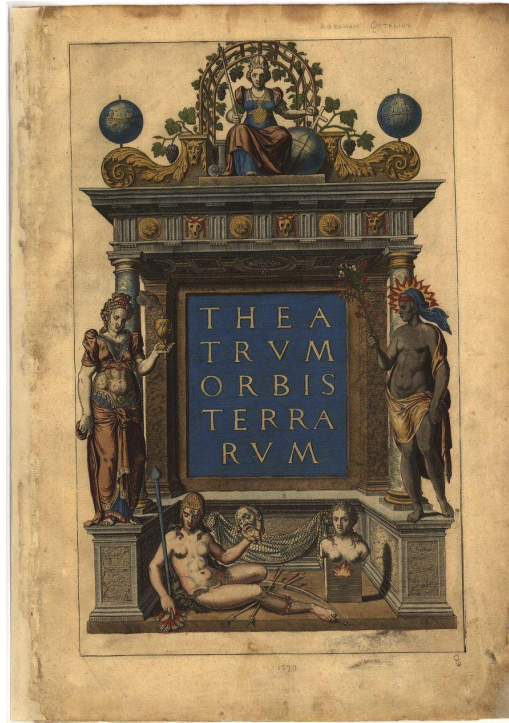


Figure 14 Abraham Ortelius, Title Page, from *Theatrum orbis terrarum*, 1570. Courtesy of Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division.

in early modern depictions of the Americas. In Van der Straet's image, the personified female America is a culmination of differences—female, cannibal, nude, Indigenous—but also a place to be found and used by Vespucci. With his maritime tools, belief in Christianity, knowledge in navigation, and most important, his white male body, Vespucci's depiction suggests he embodies place-making only through the act of claiming and dominating the female body of America. Unlike De Bry's depictions of Indigenous Americans, which emphasizes their nudity and cannibals, these aspects in Van der Straet's depiction are tempered with sex, which ultimately becomes another important marker of difference within the narrative of discovery.

## Conclusion

The early modern visual culture of exploration reflects a process of imperial territorialization, in which spaces, according to the economic geographer David Harvey, are “deterritorialized, stripped of their preceding significations and then reterritorialized according to the convenience of colonial and imperial administration.”<sup>60</sup> Within these images, the figure of the explorer becomes a multifaceted tool in the construction of the history of European imperialism and the establishment



of the Americas within the confines of European cosmography. While the landmass of America was depicted differently in cartography and engravings, the navigators' landfalls were important historic moments that were recreated again and again to weave the New World into a Eurocentric colonial discourse.

As pictorial instruments of place-making, representations of explorers were essential in visually creating the "New World" for the European viewer. However, their depictions were rendered in a way that tethered them to the blue waters or coastal land. The map from De Bry's *Americae pars sexta* (fig. 1) is a prime example. The image divides the flat surface of space equally between the representation of America and the four explorers surrounding it. Grounded on neither land nor water, Columbus, Vespucci, Magellan, and Pizarro stand on thin architectural structures. While the map at the center emphasizes the New World, water takes an important role within this image. In addition to surrounding the landmass, gentle waters with ships appear behind each of the four navigators. This balance between cartographic and figural representation establishes the dynamic between land, water, and explorer—showing that the maritime figure is ultimately tied to both green and blue worlds. In both text and imagery, these navigators functioned as essential instruments of empire necessary for the intellectual place-making of the Americas through a European lens.

\* \* \*

Jillianne Laceste is a PhD candidate in the History of Art and Architecture program at Boston University. Her research focuses on representations of the Americas and Christopher Columbus in seventeenth-century Genoa and their relation to Genoese mercantile and maritime identity and the Republic of Genoa's political position to Spain and Spanish America.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> The term *discovery* and related words are misleading, since they evoke ideas of the unknown prior to a specific moment. Identifying Columbus as the "discoverer" implies that no one knew the lands that he sailed upon despite the rich pre-Hispanic histories of Indigenous cultures. This essay uses terms such as *discovery* and the *New World* with the recognition that these words are fundamental elements of the narrative of the Americas from a Eurocentric perspective. For an analysis on

terminology and the history of the New World, see Eviatar Zerubavel, *Terra Cognita: The Mental Discovery of America* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2000).

<sup>2</sup> In this essay, *America* and *the Americas* are both used. While *the Americas* refers to the contemporary and continental understanding of lands within the Western Hemisphere, the term *America* functions within the European narrative of discovery and indicates the intellectual invention of America, which homogenized the lands now labeled North America, South America, and the Caribbean. This is based on Edmundo O’Gorman’s interpretation of America, which was “the *idea* that America appeared as a result of its discovery by Columbus” (*The Invention of America; An Inquiry into the Historical Nature of the New World and the Meaning of Its History* [Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1972], 11).

<sup>3</sup> Prior to the discovery, the known world within European cosmography consisted of Europe, Africa, and Asia (Lindsay Starkey, *Encountering Water in Early Modern Europe and Beyond: Redefining the Universe through Natural Philosophy, Religious Reformations, and Sea Voyaging* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2020), 120).

<sup>4</sup> Published between 1590 and 1596, De Bry’s *Americae* was a six-volume series collected and read by educated Europeans, including wealthy merchants as well as those of the elite class who had a deep interest in the New World. Engraved New World images accompanied different accounts of the Americas, including Thomas Harriot’s *A Brief and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia, directed to the investors, farmers and well wishers of the project of colonizing and planting there*, Hans Staden’s *True History of his captivity*, Jean de Léry’s *Histoire d’un voyage fait en la terre du Brésil*, and Girolamo Benzoni’s *Historia del Mondo Nuovo*. For the last source, which were the last three volumes of the series, De Bry embellishes the woodcuts published in Girolamo’s book and also creates new images. See Patricia Gravatt, “Rereading Theodore de Bry’s Black Legend,” in *Rereading the Black Legend: The Discourses of Religious and Racial Difference in the Renaissance Empires*, edited by Margaret R. Greer, Walter D. Mignolo, and Maureen Quilligan (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 225–27.

<sup>5</sup> Ian Buchanan and Celina Jeffery, “Towards a Blue Humanity,” *sympleke* 27, nos. 1–2 (2019): 11–12, <https://doi.org/10.1353/sym.2021.0041>.

<sup>6</sup> Lawrence Buell, *The Future of Environmental Criticism: Environmental Crisis and Literary Imagination* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005); Buell, *Writing for an Endangered World: Literature, Culture, and Environment in the United States and Beyond* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001).

<sup>7</sup> Buell, *Writing for an Endangered World*, 55.

<sup>8</sup> Many medieval writers divided the landmasses of the known world into three continents: Europe, Asia, and Africa, which were surrounded by a circumambient

and unnavigable Ocean. This worldview was challenged in the fourteenth century with the provocative and contentious travel writings by Marco Polo, Sir John Mandeville, and others who argued that there was a larger amount of dry land than previously thought. Fifteenth- and sixteenth-century intellectuals followed these controversial ideas, as many of them also believed that there was more land than early maps suggested and more landmasses that were clearly previously unknown to their medieval and ancient predecessors. With the increase of trade and exploration, the early modern maritime experiences of Portugal and Spain confirmed this idea and also showed that circumnavigation and exploration in these waters was both possible and beneficial to their empires. See Lindsay Starkey, *Encountering Water in Early Modern Europe and Beyond: Redefining the Universe through Natural Philosophy, Religious Reformations, and Sea Voyaging* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2020), 120–30, 219.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>10</sup> Translated into English by Starkey, the original reads: “Admirabile spectaculum vastus Oceanus in suo gurgite cunctis nationibus offert: diversos partus ostendit, hosque non tam magnitudine et comparatione syderum mirabiles, quam forma minaces adducit, ut nec coelo, nec terra, aut eius visceribus, aut domesticis instrumentis aliquid abscondi videatur, quod non adsit in sua profunditate retentum. In eo namque Oceano tam lato, supine, molli, ac fertili accremento accipiente semina genitalia, sublimes semperque pariente natura, pleraque esse monstrifica reperiuntur” (Lindsay J. Starkey, “Why Sea Monsters Surround the Northern Lands: Olaus Magnus’s Conception of Water,” *Preternature: Critical and Historical Studies on the Preternatural* 6, no. 1 [2017]: 31, 56, <https://doi.org/10.5325/preternature.6.1.0031>).

<sup>11</sup> Lia Markey notes that many textual sources contributed to Columbian iconography, including Peter Martyr’s writings on Columbus’s Journey, Girolamo Fracastoro’s poem about Syphilis, Oviedo’s *History*, Las Casas’s writings, and Giovanni Battista Ramusio’s *Navigazioni e viaggi*, among others. See Lia Markey, “Stradano’s Allegorical Invention of the Americas in Late Sixteenth-Century Florence,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 65 (2012): 413, <https://doi.org/10.1086/667256>.

<sup>12</sup> Markey connects Columbus’s depiction to an allegorical poem about Columbus and syphilis by Fracastoro—arguing that the poem served as an inspiration for Van der Straet’s visual depiction. First published in 1530, the poem describes how Diana gives the central character Ilceus syphilis. While Columbus’s name is never mentioned, Fracastoro captures the explorer’s arrival: “It was night and the Moon was shining from a clear sky, pouring its light over the trembling ocean’s gleaming marble, when the great-hearted hero, chosen by the fates for this great task, the leader of the fleet which wandered over the blue domain, said ‘O Moon whom

these watery realms obey, you who twice have caused your horns to curve from your golden forehead, twice have filled out their curves, during this time in which no land has appeared to us wanderers, grant us finally to see a shore, to reach a long-hoped-for port” (Ibid., 414–15).

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 415–16; and Starkey, “Why Sea Monsters Surround the Northern Lands,” 31–62.

<sup>14</sup> Starkey identifies that Olaus’s understanding of sea monsters divided the creatures into four different types: (1) monsters that were dangerous and threatened human life, (2) monsters that appeared monstrous but actually protected people, (3) monsters that acted as portents, and (4) monsters that could be used as commodities (“Why Sea Monsters Surround the Northern Lands,” 36–39).

<sup>15</sup> Elvira Vilches, “Columbus’s Gift: Representations of Grace and Wealth and the Enterprise of the Indies,” in “Hispanic Issue,” *MLN* 119, no. 2 (March 2004): 208, <https://doi.org/10.1353/mln.2004.0104>.

<sup>16</sup> Christopher Columbus and Bartolomé de las Casas, *The Diario of Christopher Columbus’s First Voyage to America, 1492–1493*, translated by Oliver Dunn and James E. Kelley Jr. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989), 321.

<sup>17</sup> Markey, “Stradano’s Allegorical Invention of the Americas in Late Sixteenth-Century Florence,” 415.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 403–4.

<sup>19</sup> Paul Cohen, “Was There an Amerindian Atlantic? Reflections on the Limits of a Historiographical Concept,” *History of European Ideas* 34, no. 4 (2008): 388, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.histeuroideas.2008.08.002>.

<sup>20</sup> John R. Gillis, “Islands in the Making of an Atlantic Oceania, 1500–1800,” in *Seascapes*, edited by Jerry H. Bentley, Renate Bridenthal, and Kären Wigen (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2017), 25.

<sup>21</sup> Starkey, *Encountering Water in Early Modern Europe and Beyond*, 137.

<sup>22</sup> Christopher Columbus, *The Diario of Christopher Columbus’s First Voyage to America, 1492–1493*, translated by Oliver Dunn and James E. Kelley Jr. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989), 107, 111.

<sup>23</sup> Gillis, “Islands in the Making of an Atlantic Oceania,” 26.

<sup>24</sup> John R. Gillis, *The Human Shore: Seacoasts in History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 75.

<sup>25</sup> Barry Cunliffe, *Facing the Ocean: The Atlantic and Its People, 8000 BC–AD 1500* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 563.

<sup>26</sup> Christopher L. Pastore, “The Science of Shallow Waters: Connecting and Classifying the Early Modern Atlantic,” *Isis* 112, no. 1 (March 2021): 124, <https://doi.org/10.1086/713566>.

<sup>27</sup> Buell, *Future of Environmental Criticism*, 63.

<sup>28</sup> Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), 4, 54.

<sup>29</sup> John W. Hessler, *The Naming of America: Martin Waldseemüller's 1507 World Map and the "Cosmographiae Introductio"* (London: Giles, 2008), 13.

<sup>30</sup> The passage reads: "A general delineation of the various lands and islands, including some of which the ancients make no mention, discovered lately between 1497 and 1504 in four voyages over the seas, two commanded by Fernando of Castile, and two by Manuel of Portugal, most serene monarchs, with Amerigo Vespucci as one of the navigators and officers of the fleet; and especially a delineation of many places hitherto unknown. All this we have carefully drawn on the map, to furnish true and precise geographical knowledge" (Hessler, *Naming of America*, 17).

<sup>31</sup> The representation of America in the inset map is different when compared with the larger map. In the smaller map, what we now think of as North and South America are connected lands. This is different from the larger map, which pictures two nearly connected but still disjointed continents (Hessler, *Naming of America*, 25).

<sup>32</sup> Other instances of place-naming as a type of colonial tool can be seen in the naming of Ciudad de México and Virginia. See Louis Montrose, "The Work of Gender in the Discourse of Discovery," in "The New World," special issue, *Representations* 33 (Winter 1991): 1–41, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2928756>; and Barbara Mundy, *The Death of Tenochtitlan, the Life of Mexico City* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015).

<sup>33</sup> Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, translated by Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 104.

<sup>34</sup> Gene Rhea Tucker, "Place-Names, Conquest, and Empire: Spanish and Amerindian Conceptions of Place in the New World" (PhD diss., University of Texas at Arlington, 2011), 107; Evalina Guzauskyte, *Christopher Columbus's Naming in the "Diarios" of the Four Voyages (1492–1504): A Discourse of Negotiation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 3–4.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>36</sup> Guzauskyte, *Christopher Columbus's Naming*, 14–16.

<sup>37</sup> Columbus, *Diario*, 63.

<sup>38</sup> Columbus, *Diario*, 103.

<sup>39</sup> Tzvetan Todorov, *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999), 27.

<sup>40</sup> A thorough examination of this can be seen in Greenblatt's book.

<sup>41</sup> Mundy, *Death of Tenochtitlan*, 130.

<sup>42</sup> Columbus, *Diario*, 68, 114.

<sup>43</sup> For example, in his letter to Luis de Santangel, Columbus takes great care to describe the inhabitants the island of Juana: “The people of this island, and of all the others that I have found and seen, or not seen, all go naked, men and women, just as their mothers bring them forth; although some women cover a single place with the leaf of a plant, or a cotton something which they make for that purpose. They have no iron or steel, nor any weapons. . . . They have no other weapons than the stems of reeds in their seeding state, on the end of which they fix little sharpened stakes. Even these, they dare not use; for many times has it happened that I sent two or three men ashore to some village to parley, and countless numbers of them sallied forth, but as soon as they saw those approach, they fled away in such wise that even a father would not wait for his son” (“Letter from Columbus to Luis de Santangel,” in *Letter from Columbus to Luis de Santangel*, Document No. AJ-063, American Journeys Collection, Wisconsin Historical Society Digital Library and Archives, 2003, 265); Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions*, 72–74.

<sup>44</sup> See Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions*; Lorraine Daston and Katherine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature, 1150–1750* (New York: Zone Books, 1998); Mary Campbell, *Wonder and Science: Imagining Worlds in Early Modern Europe* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999).

<sup>45</sup> Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions*, 14.

<sup>46</sup> 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): 175–76, <https://doi.org/10.1215/10829636-2010-016>.

<sup>47</sup> Markey, “Stradano’s Allegorical Invention of the Americas in Late Sixteenth-Century Florence,” 385.

<sup>48</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1991), 50.

<sup>49</sup> Montrose, “Work of Gender in the Discourse of Discovery,” 4.

<sup>50</sup> “Americen Americus retextit, & Semel vocavit inde semper excitam” (ibid.).

<sup>51</sup> Lia Markey, “Introduction: Inventing the Nova Reperta,” in *Renaissance Invention: Stradanus’s Nova Reperta*, edited by Lia Markey (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2020), 31.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 31–33; and Markey, “Stradano’s Allegorical Invention of the Americas in Late Sixteenth-Century Florence,” 428.

<sup>53</sup> Ivan Hannaford, *Race: The History of An Idea in the West* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press; Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1996), 147.

<sup>54</sup> Montrose, “Work of Gender in the Discourse of Discovery,” 5.

<sup>55</sup> Another example includes Sir Walter Raleigh’s depiction of Guiana: “To conclude, Guiana is a country that hath yet her maydenhead, never sacket, turned, nor

wrought, the face of the earth hath not bene torne, nor the virtue and salt of the soyle spent by manurance, the graves have not bene opened for gold, the mines not broken with sledges, nor their Images puld downe out of their temples. It hath never bene entred by any armie or strength, and never conquered or possessed by any christian Prince” (Montrose, “Work of Gender in the Discourse of Discovery,” 12).

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>57</sup> Luce Irigaray, *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, translated by Carolyn Burke and Gillian C. Gill (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984), 36.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>60</sup> David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), 264.