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ENTRANCED EARTH

JENS ANDERMANN

ART, EXTRACTIVISM, AND THE END OF LANDSCAPE

Entranced Earth

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Entranced Earth

Art, Extractivism, and the End of Landscape

Jens Andermann

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Acknowledgments

When I set out, more than a decade ago, to research the transformations of the landscape form in Latin American aesthetic modernity, ideas and concepts such as extractivism, extinction event, or Anthropocene were only just beginning to emerge on the outer fringes of the humanities. At the University of London and subsequently at the University of Zurich, where my research led me to approach colleagues in geography or in evolutionary biology, these conversations would frequently be the first time any of us had been involved in such exchanges across disciplinary barriers, and we would initially struggle to find common vocabularies and frameworks of reference. Much the same happened at the University of Buenos Aires, where, on several occasions, I taught a graduate seminar in the geography program on new configurations of territory and place, attended also by students from literature, film studies, and anthropology, which regularly provoked a generalized sense of unsettlement when we tried (and failed) to pinpoint key concepts—such as the landscape and what lies beyond it—within the confines of aesthetics, ecology, or the social sciences.

This book, then, is my second attempt at giving an account of where this journey has taken me—both intellectually and literally, as it also reflects my encounters with some of the sites the visual or poetic representations or architectural interventions of which will be the subject of these pages, as well as those where I was able to conduct archival research or discuss ideas. The first iteration, published in 2018 in Chile, was *Tierras en trance: Arte y naturaleza después del paisaje*, readers of which will recognize in this volume several of the objects and key ideas (such as the notion of "trance") at the same time as a host of new ones and a certain shift in critical angle and vocabulary. The latter is as much an effect of space as of time. Rather than to translate my work from Spanish into English, in *Entranced Earth: Art, Extractivism and the End of Landscape* I have instead opted to reimagine and reconstellate it for a different kind of audience, with the aim of interesting scholars and activists from emerging fields such as plant studies, energy humanities, new materialisms, or critical climate change theory, in a host of epistemological contributions and departures from the South. Because of the very different relation between cultural and academic production with respect to the Anglosphere, in Latin America these have frequently emerged, as I hope to show, within aesthetic forms of expression—in the widest possible sense of the term, comprising not just works of literature, architecture, or performative arts but also, moreover, modes of imaginative worldmaking proper to Indigenous healing practices or to the transspecies negotiations implied in gardening.

As a result, the theoretical conversations into which I would like to bring these epistemologies implicit in the aesthetic form itself are much more at the forefront here than they had been in *Tierras en trance*. At the same time, and as a way of facilitating such dialogues and exchanges across hemispheres and disciplines, I have opted here to quote my Spanish and Portuguese sources in English rather than in the original, with the exception of poetry or of such kinds of writings that rely crucially on their typographic or phonetic substance (which I quote in the original followed by English translations displayed in parenthesis). Unless indicated otherwise, I have used the most recent published translations in English or, where none had been available, I have offered my own working translations. In the bibliography, I have indicated both the original Spanish and Portuguese editions and the English translations I have worked with.

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Entranced Earth

Introduction

On January 25, 2019, just after 12:00 P.M., the collapse of Dam 1 at the Córrego do Feijão iron ore mine near the town of Brumadinho in Minas Gerais, Brazil, released a tidal wave of twelve million cubic meters of toxic mud into the Paraopeba River, the source of about a third of the provincial capital Belo Horizonte's water supply (fig. 1). At least 250 people were buried alive, among them most of the miners on their lunch break in the company cafeteria just underneath the dam.[1] Dam 1, identical to another that had collapsed only three years prior at the nearby mining town of Mariana, killing nineteen people, was being operated by Vale S. A. (formerly Vale do Rio Doce), the world's third-largest mining company with operations all over Brazil as well as in Angola, Peru, and Mozambique. In 2018, the year before the Brumadinho dam collapse, the company posted a market share of around US$80 billion, outstripping even Brazilian banking and oil giants Itaú and Petrobrás.[2] In fact, to call Dam 1 a dam already requires a stretch of the imagination. The structure was a so-called tailings dam, essentially a hardened cake of solid by-products from strip mining, which are channeled into an artificial basin. This semiliquid mass, loaded with high levels of mercury and other extremely toxic elements, is in turn contained merely by dirt mounds or by dikes built directly on top of the already hardened residues underneath. Tailings dams are highly vulnerable to liquefaction caused by chemical reactions beneath the surface or by the seepage of rainwater into the lower sediments through cracks in the structure.[3]

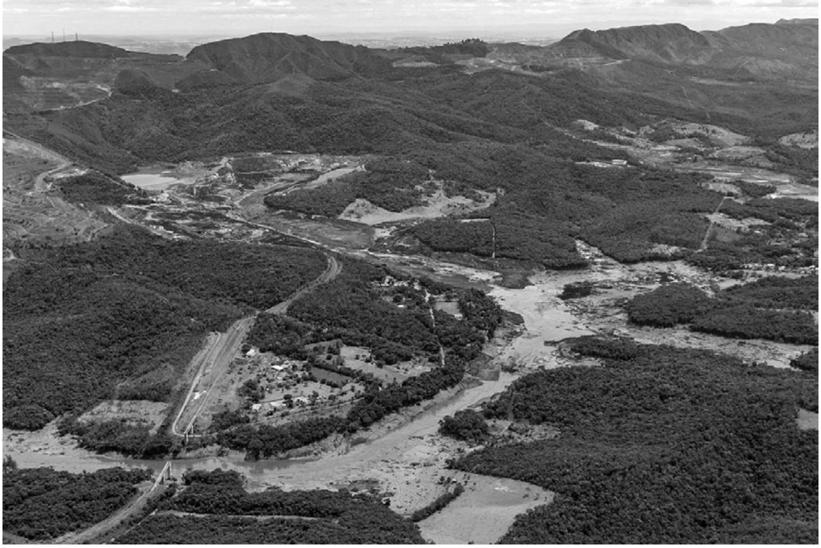


Fig. 1. Brumadinho, Minas Gerais, February 27, 2019. Photograph by Vinícius Mendonça/Ibama. Wikimedia Commons.

According to the BBC, Brazil currently has 790 such mining dams, 198 of which are classified as at the same or higher levels of risk of collapse than Brumadinho. But since almost half the dams operating in the country have not yet undergone any kind of risk assessment, this number in fact amounts to more than 40 percent of all dams inspected.[4]

Brazilian artist-activist Júlia Pontés, herself a native of Minas Gerais, has used aerial photography, shot from remotely operated drones, to document the environmental impact of strip mining and tailings dams, including images of the disaster sites of Brumadinho and Mariana. Over several years, Pontés has researched and photographed over a hundred tailings dams and open-pit mining sites all over Brazil, producing eerily beautiful images that recall the post–WWII "biomorphic abstraction" of the Cobra group or the chromatic fields of North American abstract expressionism in the 1950s and 1960s (fig. 2). What kind of poetics of form, or perhaps even the collapse of form altogether, Pontés's images prompt us to ask, is at work when a central element of nonfigurative Western art makes its uncanny return in the afterlife of landscapes destroyed by extractive capitalism? If abstraction had wagered on the free play of color and volume as expressing the vital impulses of living matter in ways more immediate than mimetic figuration had ever been able to achieve, are the wastelands left behind by extractivism therefore also the cemetery of aesthetic modernity? How to make sense, indeed, of the cruel irony of mining corporations taking to heart the passage from figure to abstraction in the Western art history of the nineteenth and twentieth century—the very same period, of course, that also saw the rise of fossil capitalism—only to force abstraction to become itself the very expression of an earth that can no longer be taken in as landscape? Are the Cézanne-like hues of blue, green, and brown on Pontés's aerial picture of the strip-mined mountains near Brumadinho yet further proof of, as Bruno Latour puts it, "the great universal law of history according to which the figurative tends to become literal"?[5]

This book asks what comes at the end of landscape. I mean this in both a historical sense—in terms of the expressive modes and strategies that emerge at a moment when the landscape form in its pictorial, poetic, or architectural iterations fails to account for the ways in which the environment confronts and responds to human action—and a very literal sense: what kinds of agents, substances, and forces come into play once the ground has, quite literally, slipped from under our feet? What Pontés's images get hold of are, in fact, the very assemblages that living—and dying—things as well as the stuff around them enter into

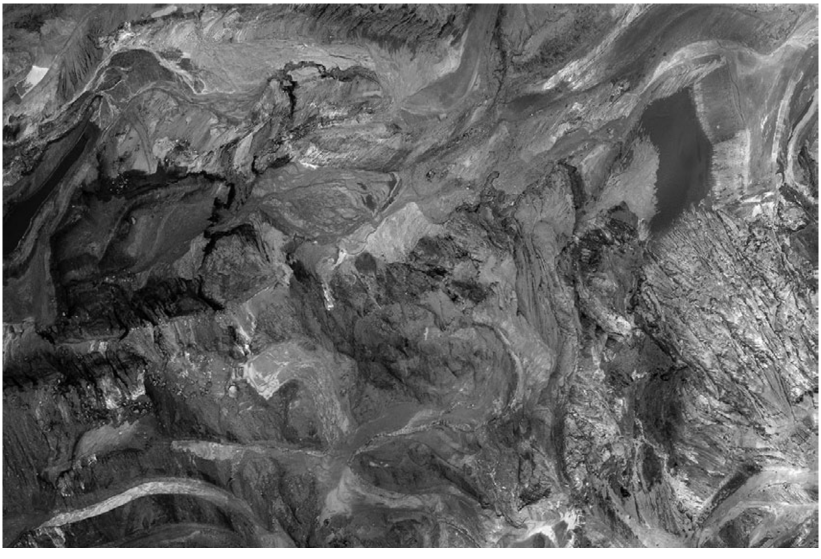


Fig. 2. Júlia Pontés, *Ó Minas Gerais / My Land Our Landscape #6* (2019), showing Serra Três Irmãos near Brumadinho, Minas Gerais, Brazil. Photograph courtesy of the artist.

once the heavy machinery of capital has abandoned the scene of extraction. The physiochemical reactions we see on the photographs as fields of color are, at ground level, the work in progress of bacterial agents, lichens, chemicals, mud, rock, and fungi that manifest what anthropologist Anna Tsing calls the "emergent effects of encounters" in the aftermath of ruination. In the abandoned asset fields of extractivism—the spaces that Steve Lerner calls "sacrifice zones"[6]—new "patterns of unintentional coordination develop in assemblages," as Tsing suggests. "To notice such patterns means watching the interplay of temporal rhythms and scales in the divergent lifeways that gather."[7]

Then again, the mode in which Pontés's photographs catch a glimpse of these emergent assemblages of survival in the afterlife of capitalist ruins is not so much that of abstraction as it is, rather, the shift of the point of view away from that of the landscape form. The latter, in fact, had been no less an effect of artifice than Pontés's drone-based, disembodied camera-eye: its enabling fiction—its "founding perception," in art historian Norman Bryson's elegant expression[8]—had been the evacuation of time and movement and the disavowal of the painted surface as a site of production, as well as the abstraction of the observer's body into a monocular lens mirroring the point of flight of the diamond-shaped visual field thus laid out by the image. The landscape view, in other words, actively erases the "patterns" and "temporal rhythms" in which assemblages express themselves, replacing these with finite, monadic, and mutually separate objects. To unmake this object effect, a change of scale is required, one that unmoors vision from the monocular beholder of landscape and instead "zooms out" (or in) toward the planetary or the fleshly and material, as in Pontés's images, where we never can be completely sure if we are actually too close or too far away to see things as objects. Yet in the place of objects, what surges before us in these pictures, blurring the boundaries between fields of color that bleed into one another, is none other than what ecological historian Jason Moore calls the "Capitalocene": that is, the "double internality" represented, on the one hand, by "capitalism's internalization of planetary life" and, on the other, by "the biosphere's internalization of capitalism."[9] The spillages, blurrings, and juxtapositions between fields of color on Pontés's photographs are the chronicle of this making and unmaking of a "historical nature" fueled by the extraction of matter to produce surplus value, as a result of which existents of various kinds (including deadly toxins) enter into constellations of life and nonlife, of "hyperobjects" that exceed the orderly frame of landscape.

"Hyperobjects," as eco-philosopher Timothy Morton has pointed out, break down the very idea of an "environment" that surrounds "us" in much the same way as landscape's founding perception had arranged the world object around the all-commanding gaze of the subject: "In an age of global warming, there is no background, and thus there is no foreground. It is the end of the world, since worlds depend on backgrounds and foregrounds."[10] We could call this no longer passive but actively and unpredictably responsive constellation of organic and nonorganic beings and materialities acting in concert the "irruption of Gaia"—a name first suggested in chemist James Lovelock's and biologist Lynn Margulis's coevolutionary hypothesis from the early 1970s. Gaia's irruption is a radically materialistic response to the malignant idealism of capital, which, Isabelle Stengers argues, is "a power that captures, segments, and redefines always more and more dimensions of what makes up our reality, our lives, our practices in its service" at the same time as it remains "*radically irresponsible*, incapable of answering for anything" (italics in original). As we face Gaia, Stengers concludes—or the hyperobject that such a name, just as those of Capitalocene, Anthropocene (or indeed hyperobject) struggle to call out—we are no longer "only dealing with a nature to be 'protected' from the damage caused by humans, but also with a nature capable of threatening our modes of thinking and of living for good."[11]

In this book, rather than discuss these questions in the abstract, I want to follow Pontés's lead and turn to the sites of extraction—the violent, messy encounters and overspills that take place between human and more-than-human histories on the commodity frontiers of the Global South—from a vantage point that is both wider and narrower than the landscape view. Let us, then, return briefly to Brumadinho's toxic ground to elaborate on what I mean by the "end of landscape." If you were wondering "what to do in Brumadinho," topping TripAdvisor's list of local attractions (with 8,407 reviews to a mere 79 for the runner-up, the Ostra waterfall) is the Inhotim Contemporary Art Institute and Botanic Garden, billed by TripAdvisor as "one of Brazil's most important contemporary art collections and the largest of its kind in Latin America." Founded in 2004 by mining magnate Bernardo de Mello Paz and spreading out over nearly two thousand acres, about half of which are marked as preservation areas, Inhotim is home to one of the most spectacular contemporary art collections worldwide, featuring pieces by, among others, Olafur Eliasson, Anish Kapoor, Thomas Hirschhorn, Doris Salcedo, and Cildo Meireles, many of them site specific and displayed in more than two dozen free-standing pavilions designed by international star architects. Set in lushly gardened grounds created by Pedro Nehring and Luiz Carlos Orsini after an original blueprint from Roberto Burle Marx, Brazil's premier landscape architect (including his signature monochromatic flowerbeds shaped in "biometric curves"), some of the collection's most spectacular works echo the garden's own interest in the relations between organic forms and the aesthetic legacies of modernist art. Cristina Iglesias's *Vegetation Room* (2012), for instance, a kind of inverted white cube whose stainless-steel walls reflect the surrounding forest, invites visitors into a maze of sculpted artificial foliage at the heart of which they encounter a plumbing-powered waterfall: a reference, if somewhat tongue-in-cheek, to Hélio Oiticica's seminal ambient installation *Tropicália* (1967) replacing the latter's concern for mass culture in a globalized mediascape with a witty reflection on the artifice of nature in a thoroughly technified planetary interior. Perhaps the most iconic of the site-specific pieces, Doug Aitken's *Sonic Pavilion* (2009), subtly acknowledges the extractive historical geography of the location, centering as it does on a seven hundred–feet-deep hole drilled into the ground and spiked with microphones that transmit and amplify the sonic emissions from the subsoil into the glass-sheeted, circular chamber on top.[12]

Inhotim, we might say, pressing our point only slightly, places itself quite explicitly at the end of landscape, the legacy of which it both celebrates and claims to bring to its culmination and apogee. Landscape, in cultural geographer Denis Cosgrove's authoritative account, emerged contemporary to, and in close interrelation with, the twin processes of capitalist primitive accumulation—the expropriation and enclosure of rural commons all over Europe and the violent establishment of overseas colonies tasked with supplying the "raw materials" (foodstuffs, minerals, human work-energy) fueling industrial modernity in the North. As a "way of seeing" that also "represents a historically specific way of experiencing the world,"[13] landscape was both fundamental to the emergence of the autonomy of art—as relieved from its liturgic or courtly functions of conveying founding narratives for Church and Crown—*and* closely interwoven with innovations in engineering, agronomics, and even double-entry bookkeeping (not for nothing, landscape painting first blossomed in overseas trading hotspots such as Venice and the Netherlands that were also pioneering drainage and flood protection technology). Landscape rendered the land (and those inhabiting it) the object of an outside beholder's aesthetic experience or technical expertise. The viewer's visual pleasure in front of the landscape image mirrors the absentee landlord's enjoyment of rent or surplus from harvested produce: both depend on (and, as in the case of the colonial monocrop plantation, often literally lead to) a moment of unsettlement, which also makes landscape—in Jean-Luc Nancy's expression—"the space of strangeness, of estrangement . . . the opening of the space in which this absenting takes place."[14]

Landscape, in short, represents a key ideological apparatus of capitalism and colonialism that naturalizes what are in fact violent and uneven social and political (as well as, we should add, ecological) relations, and it does so through what art theorist Alain Roger calls the "double artialization" of land—the "mobile" and the "adherent" mode of aestheticizing the earth, either rendering land as a visual prospect that can be transported from rural margin to urban site of exhibition or "relandscaping" a parcel of ground in the image of orderly nature devised by the gardener or the landscape architect: "The land, in some sense, is the point zero of landscape, it is what comes before artialization, be it directly (*in situ*) or indirectly (*in visu*)."[15] But this interplay between landscapes *in visu* and *in situ*, between journeying painters and sedentary gardeners, also corresponds to a modern-colonial dialectic of "grafting and drafting," in art theorist Jill Casid's expression, in which "the material practices of transplantation and grafting were part of the ordering and articulation of the Plantation as discourse," at the same time as "the colonial landscape was planted and replanted not only through successive eras of colonial plantation but through forms of reproductive print, visual and textual, that were to serve as prototypical models of colonial relandscaping."[16] By making its own projective (that is, presentational rather than representational) dimension appear as already found in, and emanating from, vegetable-material objects and ensembles deemed natural and orderly, landscape did its ideological work of making us enjoy the space of our own alienation. Yet this very disavowal of the unsettlement that is fundamental to the landscape form also opened up lines of flight, as in Raymond Williams's working-class "counter-pastoral" forms of reclaiming, in a vein of utopian, future-oriented nostalgia, the working earth from which we have been displaced,[17] or in the "countercolonial landscapes" of slave orchards and queer gardenings "contesting the terrain of imperial landscaping" that Casid has analyzed.[18] By taking landscape at its word where it denies the expropriating violence that is at the very origin of the form, these subversive, oppositional deployments of the landscape in situ and in visu insist on the possibility of returning to a reciprocal mode of relating to the land, based on use rather than exchange.

Inhotim, to return to our place of departure, calls on the landscape in situ and in visu in an openly self-reflexive, critical fashion—first and foremost by bringing the beautified, gardenesque "nature" of the park back from the urban space of accumulation to the rural one of extraction that the latter both invokes and disavows. By choosing a high-modernist garden aesthetic, moreover, which finds "natural expression" in the elementary geometries of cells and organisms rather than in the image of a lost Eden preexisting the onset of the mining economy in the region, Inhotim complicates the mimetic illusion of the Western landscape tradition, instead drawing our attention to the complex affiliations and rifts between abstraction and extraction, modernism and modernity. This exercise of self-reflexivity, moreover, also continues to interpellate as we move from the gardens into the artists' pavilions laid out along our path, perhaps most forcefully in the one dedicated to the work of Brazilian painter-sculptor Adriana Varejão (married to Inhotim's owner Mello Paz at the time of the park's creation), which references the region's colonial-baroque tradition as well as the latter's bloody foundations through the use of Portuguese *azulejos* (painted tiles) as its main material, the interstices of which appear to reveal not drywall, brick, and mortar but the crushed, compact mass of guts and flesh that literally supports cultural expression in the extractive zone.

In Varejão's painting *Paisagens* (Landscapes, 1995) a similar simultaneous engagement with the modernist critique of representation and the baroque tradition (the greatest manifestations of which, in Brazil, are found in the eighteenth-century mining towns of Minas Gerais), explicitly singles out the landscape form as a colonial apparatus of extraction (fig. 3). Here, inside an oval (painterly rather than real) wooden frame, a tropical forest landscape is suddenly interrupted by a second, irregular frame of clotted blood surrounding a scar that is visible where the canvas appears to have been ripped open, allowing us a glimpse into the viscous entrails beneath. In the center, a second landscape, different from that of the outer ring, features a coastal scene reminiscent of nineteenth-century watercolors by traveling artists such as Jean-Baptiste Debret or Johann Moritz Rugendas. Again, the illusion of natural beauty available to the viewer is brutally sliced open by a vertical cut running across the center of the image, turning the wounded skins of canvas and landscape into a vaginal opening into the depths of a feminized earth-body. This association, implied here as well as in the sequel painting, *Mapa de Lopo*

Homem (Lopo Homem's Map, 1992)—a ripped-open sixteenth-century Portuguese world map—is instead made brutally explicit in two of the most haunting images of the same series, *Filho bastardo* (Bastard Child, 1992) and *Filho bastardo II: Cena de interior* (Bastard Child II: Indoor Scene, 1995), likewise featuring a bloody, vertical cut at the center, and depicting, in the style of eighteenth-century picturesque travelogues, the torture and rape of Indigenous and Afro-descendant women at the hands of white landowners, military officers, and priests. *Paisagens*, in a canny, erudite game of visual quotations, reveals rape to be the inner truth and foundational moment of beholding earth as image.

Varejão's painting constantly forces our gaze to reverse course as the visual immersion-penetration, fostered by the landscape's own rhetoric of foreground and horizon, is being counteracted by the bursting forth of bodily matter. It is the beach, in fact, the site of colonialism's "first encounter," that is crossed out by the vaginal scar puncturing the image's visible skin and exposing the gutted bodyscape underneath, as if transforming the sonic pit in Doug Aitken's nearby pavilion into a gory, and phallic, intrusion. But can art still get away with gestures like

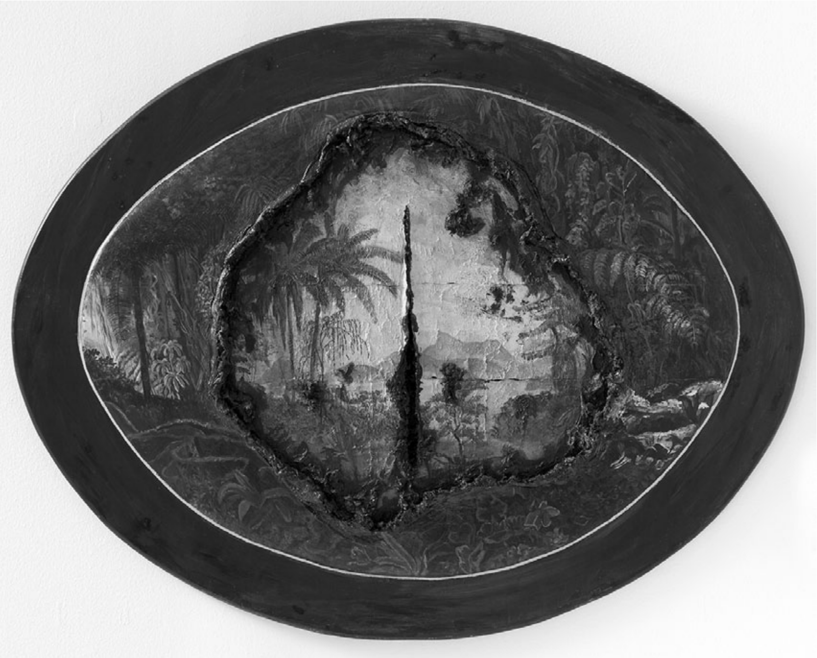


Fig. 3. Adriana Varejão, *Paisagens* (Landscapes), 1995. Oil on wood. Collection of R. and A. Setúbal. Courtesy of the artist.

these that subtly point us—as does, indeed, the Inhotim Institute as a whole—to the artworks' own conditions of enunciation? How, I wonder, can we even begin to reflect on the irruption of an irate, destructive Gaia at a place such as Brumadinho, which calls on nature in the name of art while also continuing to be sustained by a centuries-long cycle of destruction and ruination, by the unsavory convergence, as Moore puts it, "of nature-as-tap and nature-as-sink"?[19] Would visitors of Aitken's pavilion unwittingly have listened to earthly forebodings of the geological movements and chemical reactions in the subsoil long before these led to the collapse of Dam 1? But how do we deal, then, with the way these subterranean rumors could only be heard—or rather, missed—in the mode of indeterminacy associated with the artwork? And, last not least, what to make of the sudden appearance of a bold new landscape architect on, or rather, underneath Inhotim's curated grounds, one that is made of the very assemblages of mudslides and of toxic seepage into soil and ground water that will no doubt permanently alter the park's artified landscape? Is Gaia, in fact, Inhotim's ultimate star artist, the one who at last reveals to us the true face of the collection and botanic garden: material embodiments of the surplus capital generated from the iron ore that these same deadly chemicals had previously separated from its earthly overburden?

Perhaps the critique of landscape is now no longer in art's hands alone. Just compare Varejão's scarred and bruised bodyscape in *Paisagens* with Vinícius Mendonça's press photograph of the Brumadinho disaster site a month after the collapse of Dam 1, featured at the beginning of this introduction (fig. 1). The echo of Varejão's scar cutting through the land-body of the painting, in the reddish-brown tracks of mud cutting through the lush green of the forest, is hard to miss. It is almost as if, in retrospect, Gaia had forced on us a different reading of the image, not so much as a critique of the landscape tradition of past centuries but rather as a foreboding of what is yet to come. The end of landscape, it seems, is also a moment of "return of the repressed": of overspill onto the visible scene of what landscape had banished to the other side of the horizon. What had always been lurking at the "ground of the image," in Jean-Luc Nancy's expression, was an excess of presence of the more-than-human (that is, of the gathering of divergent lifeways and forces) that the landscape form had only been able to contain only by making this ground the founding limit of its time and space of representation—in much the same way as the "extractive eye" of transnational mining companies such as Vale S. A. peers through the layers of overburden (the sand, rock, water, and clay separating the surface from the mineral veins) to get to the commodity underneath. Overburden—what is between the extractive eye and what it sees as value in and of the land—energy humanities scholar Jennifer Wenzel has argued, also offers a way of

> understanding the cost of a resource logic taken to its furthest conclusion . . . If neoliberalism is understood as having largely dispensed with the promise of social good . . . then we might say that the very things that the logic of improvement and enclosure once promised as ends—civilization, civil society, the state, the commonwealth as a social compact to protect citizens and their property—now appear as intolerable commons, as unproductive waste . . . in need of privatization, resource capture, and profit-stripping. It's all overburden.[20]

Late capitalism's throwing overboard of the modern welfare state's arrangements of social reproduction as themselves mere overburden might also be telling an alternative, parallel story of the development from figurative landscape to "abstraction" that differs from the one we are being told by canonical art history or even the one I have been following here through the works of Pontés, Aitken, and Varejão and through the landscaping action of toxic mud in the vicinity of the Inhotim Art Institute. Indeed, what increasingly overburdens landscape's capacity to capture and offer up the earth object, putting it at the disposal of the beholder, is the incremental, physical and undeniable, presence of what representation needs to cast "beyond the horizon." The proliferation of biochemical and nuclear accidents under what Naomi Klein coined "disaster capitalism" is only the flipside of what our imagination of world as landscape can no longer hold together in the face of an encroaching "unclean non-world (*l'immonde*)"—the term Jean-François Lyotard coined to name the earthly matter that landscape must keep in suspension, which it must ab-ject, to render world as object, as picture.[21] But thus, this nonworld—*l'immonde, inmundo, imundo*, which, in Spanish and Portuguese as well as in French, also means the filthy, obscene, reckless—is also what comes at the end of landscape. It is what landscape is itself a threshold toward, what it will usher in once everything has become overburden.

Yet this overburdening of landscape's capacity, as a colonial-extractive apparatus, to produce subjects and objects for capitalist surplus generation, might also offer a moment of possibility, of breaking through the cocoon of landscape and of the world it has built on the back of an incremental *inmundo*. In thrusting human and nonhuman bodies, and even nonliving forms of matter such as rock formations and aquifers, into a shared state of precarity, uprootedness, and enmeshment, the end of landscape also puts us face-to-face with matterings that (as the giant mud wave at Brumadinho) can no longer be witnessed and inhabited as "world." *Inmundo* is my term for calling out the end of the world, the "process of becoming extinction," according to Justin McBrien, already under way with the disappearance of planetary biodiversity and of human linguistic, cultural, and spiritual patrimonies alike.[22] But it is also a way of calling for an art of survival, in which, according to Tsing, "staying alive—for every species—requires liveable collaborations."[23] Earth-wide precarity, as Tsing argues, also urges us to embrace contamination, intermingling, assemblage, as the very conditions of our survival: "The problem of precarious survival helps us see what is wrong. Precarity is a state of acknowledgement of our vulnerability to others. In order to survive, we need help, and help is always the service of another . . . If survival always involves others, it is also necessarily subject to indeterminacy of self-and-other transformations . . . Contamination makes diversity."[24] In this book I will explore through the concept of "trance" some of these self-and-other transformations into which humans and nonhumans enter at the end of landscape, at a moment when they (or "we") have similarly become subject to precariousness and indeterminacy. *Entranced Earth*, the title of the book, also names the framework I propose for reflecting on the "intrusion of Gaia" in her enigmatic and unpredictable responses "to the brutality of what has provoked her."[25] Yet it will also provide us with a conceptual toolkit for understanding some of the emergent forms in which the arts, at the end of landscape, have responded to and embraced the challenge of recasting nonhuman lives and earthly matter as coagents rather than merely as objects or as source material of aesthetic experience.

The end of landscape, I contend, is a radically contemporary moment of the arts responding to the all but undeniable "postnatural condition" of our time,[26] and it has been a hallmark of aesthetic modernity in Latin America for at least a century. As one of the earliest extractive frontiers of the colonial-capitalist world system, the region also produced, in Déborah Danowski and Eduardo Viveiros de Castro's expression, a host of "veritable end-of-the-world experts," faced time and again with "a world invaded, wrecked, and razed by barbarian foreigners"[27]—a world plunged into unworld, into *inmundo*. Similar to the ways in which, over centuries, trance had provided an alternative space and time of gathering for the communities suffering the unworlding violence of extractivism, for some of Latin America's most daring writers, architects, visual artists, and filmmakers of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, I argue, the dimension of trance became a condition for reimagining earth as dwelling, as the journeying poets and artists of Amereida (a radical aesthetic event we will study in chapter 2) put it. Only by embracing the abysmal dimension of a continent ravaged by five hundred years of colonialism, they claimed, could the poetic event once more carve out a gathering ground on which to forge community.

Trance, as Roger Bastide suggests in his classic ethnography of the Afro-Brazilian spirit religion of Candomblé, is the ecstatic state of divine possession in which the community's founding myths are relived, reincarnated, in the bodies of the novices undergoing initiation. The moment of ecstasy—of trance—is the one that separates and connects the first part of the ceremony, in which the heroes and events from the time of foundation are recalled by means of invocatory chanting and drumming, from the second one in which, if the session has been successful, these have yet again turned into companions and contemporaries who accompany and share the daily lives of the faithful. "What we understand as a phenomenon of possession—Bastide concludes—should therefore rather be defined as a phenomenon of transformation."[28] The trance of Candomblé is, for Bastide, a worldmaking practice in the *inmundo* that unfolds in the aftermath of the world-destroying, genocidal violence of the Middle Passage and the Plantation. It turns the survivors' bodies into bodies of resonance that bring back to life what colonialism's necropolitical machine had sought to erase: in the time of trance, the ghosts of history become flesh once again, and this embodiment opens up a threshold of transformation, of reworlding in the *inmundo*.

Gilles Deleuze, in his reflections on postcolonial cinema, returns to this notion of trance to describe how the films of Glauber Rocha—the guiding spirit of Brazil's Cinema Novo movement and director of *Terra em Transe* (*Entranced Earth*, 1968)—trigger the emergence of collective speech acts not by having recourse to myth but, says Deleuze, to "a living present beneath the myth."[29] Similar to, yet also different from, the Candomblé priest in the *terreiro* (whose incantatory song and dance Rocha made the centerpiece of his filmic debut *Barravento* [The turning wind, 1962]), the filmmaker seizes "from the unliving a speech-act which could not be silenced, an act of storytelling which could not be a return to myth but a production of collective utterances capable of raising misery to a strange positivity: the invention of a people." "Third-world cinema," for Deleuze, does not represent the history of the colonized but, rather, actively contributes to their transformation into a people—into a historical agent endowed with speech—by way of entrancement (that is, by mobilizing the living present inside, or beneath, myth): "The trance, the putting into trances, are a transition, a passage, or a becoming . . . which brings real parties together, in order to make them produce collective utterances as the prefiguration of the people who are missing."[30] Trance is the assemblage, in the in between time of ecstasy, of a future language forged from the shards and fragments of what colonial violence has suppressed and erased; a language in which new worldings can be imagined even from the depths of *inmundo*.

Today, at the height of what has been called a moment of neoextractivism in Latin America—one that is characterized, according to Maristella Svampa, by "the over-exploitation of natural goods, largely unrenewable . . . as well as the vertiginous expansion of the borders of exploitation to new territories, which were previously considered unproductive or not valued by capital"[31]—I contend that trance can no longer be considered, as it could for Deleuze at the height of national liberation struggles after World War II, exclusively as the realm of a becoming people. Rather, as the Argentine poet Juan L. Ortiz claims, "the people is nature," or rather, "not nature but natural things."[32] Poetic labor, for Ortiz (whose work we will return to at the end of this book), is "to make man participate in natural things"—that is, to force language itself to reveal how much we are always spoken by the nonhuman: "Any plant whatsoever suggests to me the relations it maintains around it . . . We think that rhythm and voice are totally ours when, in fact, they are also outside ourselves. And our very safety depends on this rhythm."[33]

At heart, then, the question this book pursues is about the work of the aesthetic in keeping us safe—that is, about the ways in which the imagination partakes in "reknitting . . . multispecies stories and practices of becoming-with."[34] In the face of planetary necrosis that extractive capitalism leaves in its wake, including "the disappearance of species, languages, cultures and peoples,"[35] the dimension of pleasurable but also overwhelming and painful opening to the world and the otherworldly we call art (and which, in nonwestern Indigenous cultures, is delegated in different fashion to multiple forms of play, festivity, and healing) acquires a new urgency. Capitalism is anesthetic—it actively induces the proliferation of "unimagined communities" of human and nonhuman lives “viewed as irrational impediments to ‘progress’ [that] have been statistically—and sometimes fatally—disappeared,” as Rob Nixon has forcefully argued.[36] Extractive capitalism relies on *unimagination*, on “the invention of emptiness—emptiness being the wrong kind of presence,” by means of which “‘underdeveloped’ people on ‘underdeveloped’ land can be rendered spectral uninhabitants whose territory may be cleared to stage the national theatrics of megadams and nuclear explosions . . . Emptiness is an industry that needs constant replenishment.”[37]

But is it enough, then, to think of the aesthetic merely in instrumental terms, as a way of “bring[ing] emotionally to life” the long-term environmental and socioeconomic destruction wrought on the extractive zones of the planet, which the short-termism of the media cycle is both unable and unwilling to convey?[38] I do not dispute, of course, that literature, film, and visual arts can and must offer counterrepresentations to the ones advanced by extractivism’s “liberal fortune-telling,”[39] its incessant presaging of future bounty thanks to present destruction of lifeworlds. Yet I wonder if, by making the affective powers of the aesthetic or its unique capacity for self-reflexivity subservient to a political action, the purpose and content of which is already known beforehand, ecocritical approaches don’t risk relapsing into worn-out notions of art as a moral instance or as elevating the audience’s critical consciousness? Put differently, by thinking about environmental damage—or, in a deconstructive twist, by assessing its discursive figurations—as the “subject” of art, are we not still caught in an idea of “external nature” as experienced by a human subject—that is, in what Philippe Descola has referred to as the “great partition” in Western thought, which posited “nature as an ontologically autonomous domain, as a field of inquiry and scientific experimentation” and, we might add, as a source of aesthetic pleasure?[40] At the end of landscape, I contend, might we not need to attempt a different route for thinking about extractivism and aesthetics, which the concept of trance might help us figure out? In trance, there are no longer any subjects and objects: on the contrary, trance is the time and space of the one being possessed by, and becoming coextensive with, the other. Rather than on representation (and thus, on a relationship between “matter” and “form” that is itself predicated on extraction), trance draws on invocation and incarnation, that is, on “a yielding relation to the world, a mastery of non-mastery,” as Michael Taussig has so aptly put it.[41] How, I ask, can we join, as readers and viewers of texts, films, sculptures, gardens, and performances, in such yieldings, and how can these help us reengage with, according to Tsing, the "many world-making projects, human and not human" in which we find ourselves enmeshed even—or especially—at a time of encroachment of *inmundo*, of unworlding?[42]

To yield to the world, I shall argue, also means to let go of the distance landscape had opened between the multiplicity of living and material things and the subject. It means assuming the risk of immersion in the multiple entanglements—the "throwntogetherness" of the "event of place [as] a constellation of processes rather than a thing," in Doreen Massey's powerful expression[43]—to the point of shedding the autonomy and finitude that had been associated with the Western idea of art. In responding to the entranced earth, I claim, art itself becomes increasingly unspecific; it seeps out beyond the institutional circuits of galleries, publishers, and screening venues and instead begins to make common cause with community activisms, lab research, gardening, and therapy. Thus, the process of art's becoming unspecific, which I will be sketching out in this book, also goes beyond the combination of narrative, audiovisual, and performative elements and even beyond "a strategic relationship to political collectives currently in formation,"[44] radicalizing Florencia Garramuño's call for an "ignorant art" that deliberately renounces the knowledge associated with medium-specific styles, genres, and techniques.[45] Unspecificity, as I deploy it here, represents both a critical break with the colonial legacies of specific languages and genres and an opening toward the damaged materialities of world as remainder, in search of novel forms of community beyond the human.

In truth, then, the following chapters are but a diary or transcript of the exercises of yielding to the world in which the works and events I analyze have allowed me to participate: an exercise, as we shall see, at once of *despaisamiento*—of "unlandscaping," of exhaustion of the landscape form—and of transformative crisis, of trance, in listening to the yieldings to the world ushered in by this very exhaustion. *Entranced Earth* is divided into four chapters covering a century of aesthetic production in Latin America in roughly chronological order. Chapter 1 establishes the extractive frontier as a focal point of Latin American cultural production in the twentieth century, focusing on a body of literary narratives classified in textbooks as *regionalismo*. In these stories and reflections, I trace the trope of an "insurgent nature" on the extractive frontier—assemblages of organic and inorganic matter, and of human and nonhuman lives, thrown into turmoil. In the work of writers such as Horacio Quiroga and Graciliano Ramos, this insurgent assemblage speaks back in strange tongues, ushering in a novel kind of interspecies free indirect speech that gives voice to a (bio)politics of *communitas* resisting the immunitary projects of the human colonizers. Here, I compare this "politics of nature" to the one manifesting itself in the narratives of armed struggle produced in the aftermath of the Cuban Revolution. In their different modulations of the spatial scripts of guerrilla warfare in Cuba, Guatemala, and Nicaragua, I argue, these revolutionary *testimonios* also recombine elements from an earlier mode of literary rainforest writing. Subsequently, I trace regionalism's early critique of extractive modernization through a little-studied body of work: the reflections of provincial historians, scientists, and medical scholars on the impact of deforestation, soil erosion, and climate change on musical, linguistic, and material culture in the Argentine Northwest. Produced during a devastating drought, the works of these "minor intellectuals" were mourning a local milieu, the destruction of which they were witnessing firsthand, at the same time as they tried to sketch out the uncertain horizons of life after abandonment.

Chapter 2 turns from the extractive frontiers of rainforest and rural interior to the metropolitan centers of cultural production and to the manifestations of modernist aesthetics in literature, architecture, and gardening. I begin by discussing the ways in which new technologies of locomotion, especially automobility, reconfigured spatial relations and their perception as landscape in the early decades of the twentieth century. Yet, contrary to European futurism's ecstasy of speed, the partial and uneven introduction of transport and communications technology into Latin America was reflected in narrative and poetic accounts of "accidented" movement, where acceleration was always prone to relapse into stillness. This syncopated space-time experience provoked clashes and juxtapositions reflecting the violence of the region's entry into global economic circuits by way of resource extraction. Having analyzed the journey form and its transformations, the chapter moves to the key manifestation of the landscape in situ, the garden. Latin American architecture, I argue, reimagined the garden as a contact zone between the postcolonial city and its ecological milieu, which urbanists no longer aimed to contain or banish from the built environment but rather to reclaim as a ground for conviviality. Starting with Le Corbusier's influential South American journey in 1929, I zoom in, first, on the latter's impact on Argentina's cosmopolitan avant-garde, in particular the work of Victoria Ocampo, where I trace a novel idea of the garden as an interface between self and world, first, in the correspondences between the gardens of her residences at Buenos Aires and on the Atlantic coast, and then in her writings that oscillate between autobiography and translation. Next, I compare Ocampo's gardening aesthetics to the work of Roberto Burle Marx, Latin America's premier landscape architect whose designs are characterized, I argue, by a problematic yet also productive contradiction between his interest in the geobotanical assemblages of a given habitat and the way organic, living forms could enter into dialogue with modern architecture's International Style. The chapter closes with an analysis of the Ciudad Abierta (Open City) of Amereida, a little-known Chilean architectural and poetic collective that, since the mid-twentieth century, has experimented with an idiosyncratic combination of landscape's founding tension between place and movement. In particular, I analyze the ephemeral site interventions and poetic writings created during and after the 1965 *travesía de Amereida*, the Amereida crossing, a transcontinental road trip that aimed to unveil the "enigma of America" through collective navigation of the "Sea Within": a performative inversion, I argue, of the colonial trope of discovery that sought to reassert the radical indeterminacy of continental time and space.

Chapter 3 discusses what, taking a cue from Brazilian art critic Mário Pedrosa, I call "the environmental turn" in late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century Latin American art. In the first section, I analyze a series of individual and collective interventions that share an active interest in the materialities and durations of social and ecological milieus, turning these from objects of representation into material supports that determine the aesthetic event's formal script. At the same time, the works and happenings studied here also share an unspecificity of expressive forms, freely mixing elements from the visual arts and film with those of architecture, music, and poetry, often aligned with constellations of political struggle and resistance. These include the interventions of the Argentine *Tucumán Arde*, the Chilean CADA, and the Peruvian E. P. S. Huayco collectives between the late 1960s and early1980s, as well as site-specific works by Artur Barrio in Brazil. Whereas the former turn the material chronotope of the city and the virtual one of mass media networks into performative conducts, thereby blurring distinctions between the self-reflexivity of art and the transformative action of political struggle, Barrio's distribution of abject materialities (excrement, blood, waste) in the public arena resorts to "guerrilla" strategies of clandestinity and shock as a way of forcing out the obscene that is latent in social life under dictatorship. In the following section, I analyze some of Hélio Oiticica's work during the decade he spent in exile in London and New York City, as well as performances realized after his return to Brazil just before his untimely death. I compare these with the work of Cuban-American artist Ana Mendieta, in particular her *Silueta Series* of earth-body works. Despite their differences, I argue, in both artists the personal experience of displacement is channeled into an exilic, migrant ethos of reembodiment that invites the more-than-human into its queer and precarious placemaking assemblages. The final section of the chapter focuses on the shift in current bioart and ecoart from landscape toward the living organism and toward the habitat-building assemblages into which it enters, as constitutive of aesthetic experience. Having traced the beginnings of this shift to Luis Fernando Benedit's ecological sculptures of the 1960s and 1970s, I fast-forward to recent work by Maria Thereza Alves, Eduardo Kac, Iván Henriques, and Gilberto Esparza where the idea of life and death as the source of form, which Benedit had been among the first to advance, is reevaluated under conditions of genetic engineering and anthropogenic climate change.

The fourth and final chapter explores "new regionalisms" in the aftermath of destruction, that is, in the *inmundo* unleashed on vast areas of Latin America by extractivism and neoextractivism. I begin with a reflection on soundscape as an alternative sensory response to the nonhuman environment, contrasting with landscape's visual capture of the land object. Taking my cues from Alexander von Humboldt's short essay "The Nocturnal Life of Animals in the Jungle" (1849), I discuss contemporary bioacoustic production, in particular Spanish sound artist Francisco López's piece *La Selva* (The Forest, 1998), whose proposition of a nonreferential, "blind listening" I contrast with the acousmatic presence of more-than-human sounds in Tatiana Huezo's documentary film on the aftermath of civil war in El Salvador, *El lugar más pequeño* (The smallest place, 2011). Here, as well as in films by Brazilians Andrea Tonacci and Gabriel Mascaro, Chileans Bettina Perut and Iván Osnovicoff, and Argentinians Verónica Llinás and Laura Citarella, which I study in the following section, "new regionalism" comes about as the stringing together of place after catastrophe, via a multisensory assemblage of human and nonhuman agents that the filmic sound image can gather thanks to its already sympoietic nature. In the final section, I bring Yanomami shaman-activist Davi Kopenawa's testimonial account *The Falling Sky*—coproduced with French anthropologist Bruce Albert and first published in French in 2010—into dialogue with the political memories of disappearance in the aftermath of military dictatorship and civil war in the Southern Cone and Central America. How, I ask, can Kopenawa's "memories of extractivism"—of mining, viral and bacteriological ethnocide, and agro-industrial land grab but, also, of the turmoil unleashed on the forest's fragile equilibrium of bodily and spiritual lives—be heard in a political field constellated around the idea of *human* rights? Kopenawa's shamanic forest memory, I suggest, might offer us a way forward toward articulating new forms of kinship between the biopolitical struggles of the postdictatorship and the challenge of "geontology" (Elizabeth Povinelli's expression), which the present cycle of neoextractivism dares us to face up to.

Entranced Earth is a distant cousin of the homonymous book I published in Spanish some years ago, with which it still shares several subchapters and objects of inquiry. Others have disappeared or have made way for new ones, as have several of the key questions guiding my inquiry. This has come as somewhat of a surprise to me, as I had originally envisaged this book to be an only slightly reworked version of my earlier study, *Tierras en trance*, for an English-speaking audience. Yet in the interim between one book and the next, several things happened that forced me to consider a more comprehensive rewriting. One of these is the publication, in recent years, of several major, book-length studies on the interplay between aesthetics and catastrophic advances of anthropogenic climate change and environmental devastation—including, in the field of Latin American studies, a number of ambitious attempts to extend political critiques of extractivism and the ethics of *buen vivir* (or "the good life") toward the field of cultural production and to bring these into dialogue with an emergent constellation of "environmental humanities" in the English-speaking world. To address, and to make explicit, my own position vis-à-vis this quickly expanding corpus, I have also had to reconsider and update both my primary objects of analysis and the corresponding field of critical references. But at the same time, and perhaps more importantly, the years since I completed an earlier iteration of this work also saw the emergence of climate change denialism as a founding pillar, along with racism, religious fundamentalism, misogyny, and homophobia, of a new globalized fascism that has started to dispute the hegemony of neoliberalism, with the rise of Donald Trump and Jair Bolsonaro in the US and Brazil, respectively, and the proliferation of military-parliamentary coups throughout Latin America as the opening shots of a new round of accumulation, the violence of which will no doubt dwarf even the one unleashed by neoextractivism since the millennium. In response, this is also a more openly political book than its prequel, or at least one in which the question of politics never looms far from the surface, even as I have attempted to honor my commitment to the aesthetic as a harbinger of alternative modes of becoming with. But perhaps this distinction between aesthetics and politics is no longer sustainable in the first place and we have, yet again, reached a point where fascism's "self-alienation has reached such a degree that it can experience its own destruction as an aesthetic pleasure of the first order," as Walter Benjamin presciently put it in the postscript to his 1935 essay "The Artwork in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction."[46] If that is indeed the case, as Benjamin already knew only too well, then only the politicizing of art can save us.

CHAPTER 1

Insurgent Natures

It is a stark image, the photograph of burned-down rainforest on the cover of Orlando Senna's *Xana* (1979), a compilation of reportage-style dispatches from the boomtowns sprawling along the Trans-Amazonian highway, the megaproject launched nine years earlier by the Brazilian military dictatorship (fig. 4). Its visual rhetoric is that of war photography, only the mutilated victims here are not humans but trees. In similar fashion as in the two-minute tracking shot of giant forest fires in *Iracema, uma transa amazônica*, the movie Senna made with Jorge Bodanzky in 1974 (which was prohibited until 1980 in Brazil), the photo inverts the relation between foreground and background as the forest comes center stage. Instead of a setting, we come to see it here as the main actor, the scarred and bruised remains of living matter. In the book as in the movie—the title of which, wordplay on Brazilian popular slang, could be loosely translated as "Iracema, an Amazonian fuck"—the forest has been violated by the same forces that also prey on Iracema, the Indigenous teenager picked up by loud-mouthed white trucker Tião "Brasil-Grande" (Paulo César Pereio), only to be ditched again when they reach the next roadside brothel. The mutual allegorizing of tropical nature and the female body, there for the taking by the white, male invader (not by accident, Tião's truck also carries, apart from Iracema, illegally logged timbers) is anything but new: it merely redeploys as a tale of sexual exploitation, indeed of earth rape, the foun-

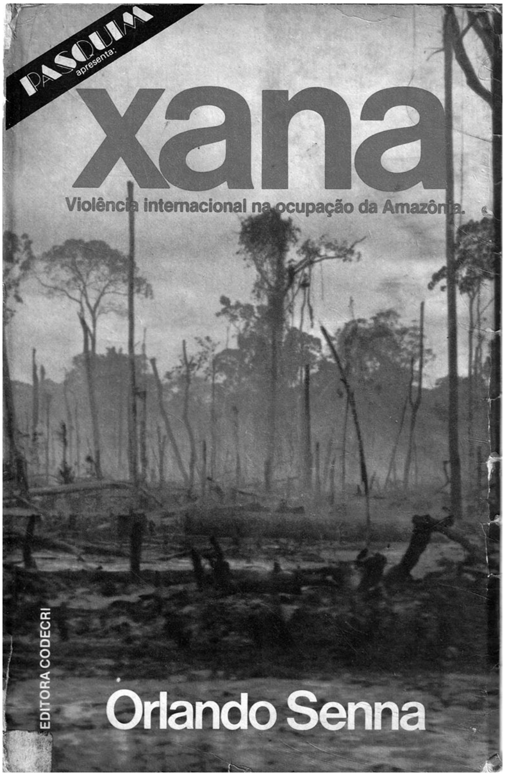


Fig. 4. Cover of Orlando Senna, *Xana: Violência Internacional na Ocupação da Amazônia* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Codecri, 1979).

dational love story of the first *Iracema*, Brazilian Romantic writer José de Alencar's lyrical novella of 1865.

Yet the almost hypnotic frame composition of the sequence, starting a few minutes earlier with Iracema's profile looking into the rearview mirror as the camera dollies past a seemingly limitless plain of dead stumps (fig. 5), does more than just invert the foundational allegory narrating ethnocidal violence as sacrificial love—the theme of Alencar's tearful eulogy for the Indian maiden birthing the white colonizer's child at the price of her own death. Instead, in what is perhaps the film's most extreme instance of collapsing the real and the staged, the forest fire sequence is emblematic of the Capitalocene as a (permanent yet discontinuous) intersection between human and more-than-human histories that defy any conventional narrative chronotope, including the film's own. We cannot possibly know what Iracema—played in a mesmerizing performance by vocational actor Edna de Cássia—is looking at, only that she is looking past what we are seeing on screen. In fact, she might already be peering into a future beyond the inferno of flames she and Tião are about to cross, one that is our own present and vantage point: a time of incremental depletion of an Amazon crisscrossed by vast networks of roads, holed in like a tropical West Bank between soy and African palm plantations, pastures, and oil- and gas-prospecting sites. The 2019 slash-and-burn season alone saw a 77 percent increase in forest fires across Brazil (and almost as much in Bolivia, Paraguay, Colombia, and Peru), incurring an estimated annual loss of almost a million hectares within the Amazon biome.[1] Most of the fires had been deliberately set by an agro-industry still euphemistically referred to by the mainstream media as “farmers.”

Keeping Iracema/Edna’s face in the frame, literally mirroring the destruction of the forest’s assemblage of more-than-human lives, Senna and Bodanzky’s film also reminds us of what, in Macarena Gómez-Barris’s expression, “the extractive view rendered invisible”: the way “colonial visual regimes . . . rupture Indigenous cosmological relationships to land [and] facilitate capitalist expansion, especially upon resource-rich Indigenous territories.”[2] In 2017, the bloodiest year on record till then, almost four environmental activists were murdered each week in Latin America, many of them from Indigenous communities, according to estimates from NGO Global Witness.[3] More than 60 per-

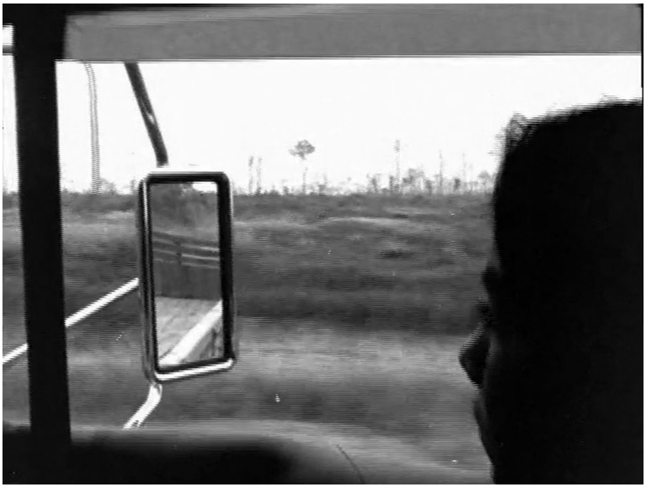


Fig. 5. Film still from Orlando Senna and Jorge Bodanzky, *Iracema, uma transa amazônica* (*Iracema*), 1974). 90 min.

cent of murders worldwide with a link to agribusiness and mining occurred in Latin America, with Brazil registering as the most dangerous country on earth for environmental defenders, with fifty-seven reported killings—numbers that, unfortunately, have only continued to increase since the election of far-right federal and state governments in thrall to transnational agro- and petrocapital.

But simultaneously, the rearview mirror of Tião's truck also maintains, within the forward-moving image, the presence of those spaces and times now thrust into the past. Not unlike Walter Benjamin's angel of history, Iracema/Edna's gaze looks out toward a quickly receding history that "keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage"[4]—the past of her own childhood in the forest, perhaps, a last glimpse of which we caught at the film's outset, but also that of centuries of advancing extractivism and ethnocide that ended up driving her away from a home that may already have ceased to exist. The tracking shot sequence from *Iracema* revealing the scale and violence of deforestation—among the very first images, in fact, to bring into a global audience's view the destruction of the Amazon by industrial logging and roadbuilding[5]—is so stunning for being at once allegorical and literal, at once emblematic of the violence exerted by extractive capitalism and a documentary register of real lives, human and nonhuman, destroyed by the road on which the camera itself travels forward. By means of cinematic composition, the sequence makes the forest speak its own history—not just that of its human inhabitants but also, crucially, the more-than-human assemblage of the living forest.

Similar kinds of oscillation between allegory and the documentary register were already present in a literary movement emerging in Latin America in the 1920s and 1930s, known as *regionalismo*. In regionalist writing, as in the movie, foregrounds and backgrounds are prone to suddenly switch roles, as human diegetic action—what we think of as "history"—vacates the stage or indeed becomes the stage on which a conflict of shifting alliances between living forms is being played out: "the *ambiented* becomes the *ambient* (or 'ambienting'), and the converse is equally the case,"[6] as Déborah Danowski and Eduardo Viveiros de Castro put it. Even more radically than in the "New Latin American Cinema" of the 1970s, in this earlier, literary iteration the "natural world" appears before us as a *cosmopoliteia*, "a multiplicity of intricately connected multiplicities [where] animal and other species are conceived as so many kinds of 'people' or 'societies,' that is, as *political entities*."[7] As situated in what Ángel Rama, in his groundbreaking 1982 study of narrative transculturation in Latin America, already called the "zona extractiva"[8]—the extractive zone—regionalist fiction was unprecedentedly permeable to the multiple voicings of this cosmopolitics, which the modern-colonial frame of painterly or verbal landscape had silenced and contained. Indeed, it was in the "earth-writing" genres of this literary movement, such as the *novela de la tierra* (soil novel) or the *novela de la selva* (jungle novel), that the multiple, lived temporalities of the extractive zone and its racialized biopolitics, as condensed so memorably in Senna and Bodanzky's tracking sequence, first came into view. At the same time, these narratives sketched out a countermovement that rallied human and nonhuman forces to combat extractivism's advance: a biopolitics not of extraction but of contagion, mutation, and community.

Amitav Ghosh, in a fascinating reflection on literary realism's blindness to climate change, claims that the modern novel has been predicated on the "concealment of those exceptional moments that serve as the motor of the narrative," thus ushering in "a way of thinking that deliberately excludes things and forces ('externalities') that lie beyond the horizon of the matter at hand [and] renders the interconnectedness of Gaia unthinkable."[9] Challenging Ghosh's argument, I contend, Latin American regionalist fiction produced a realism of the extractive zone where "external things and forces" are suddenly endowed with a voice and agency of their own in the face of catastrophe. The natural habitats that, in many of these texts, acquire an active agency of their own also map out an ecological history of extractivism in Latin America. The "jungle stories" and "desert stories" that delineate the environmental geography of literary regionalism reflect quite strikingly the "sequence of extraction and depopulation"—deforestation, soil erosion, rural exodus—common to vast areas of Central and South America between the late nineteenth and mid-twentieth century.[10] The destruction of forests through rubber tapping, industrial logging, oil prospecting, and monocrop plantations is the subject of a narrative series stretching from Spanish anarchist Rafael Barrett's *El dolor paraguayo* (The suffering of Paraguay, 1910) to his Portuguese comrade Ferreira de Castro's *A selva* (*The Jungle*, 1930)—a key if somewhat extraterritorial text of Brazilian literature's "rubber cycle"—or from Mexican Gregorio López y Fuentes's *Huasteca* (1930) to Brazilian Jorge Amado's *Cacau* (Cocoa, 1933) and Argentinian Crisanto Domínguez's *Tanino* (Tannine, 1952). Droughts and desertification—in addition to the better known Brazilian "drought cycle," which includes José Américo de Almeida's *A* *bagaceira* (*Trash*, 1928), Rachel de Queiroz's O *quinze* (*The Year 1915*, 1930), and Graciliano Ramos's *Vidas secas* (*Barren Lives*, 1938)—are also the subject of Argentinian Eduardo Mallea's *Todo verdor perecerá* (All greenery will perish, 1941), Costa Rican Carlos Salazar Herrera's "La sequía" (The drought, 1947), or Colombian Manuel Mejía Vallejo's "Tiempo de sequía" (Times of drought, 1957).

Frequently, the narrative dynamic this literature shares is that of a journey: the metropolitan subject's trek to the jungle or desert frontier as in Castro's *A selva* or the native's exodus to the city as in Ramos's *Vidas secas*. Together, these variations also offer an alternative (eco)history of modernity. They confront reading audiences with the reverse of urban "progress," taking stock of extractivism's boom-and-bust dynamics that were responsible for the arrival in coastal cities, at the same time as the literature narrating their fate, of impoverished migrants from the interior taking up residence in the fast-expanding belts of *favelas*, *chabolas*, *barriadas*, and *villas miseria* surrounding the urban core. Literary regionalism gave voice to this radical form of alienation, which forced inhabitants into becoming agents of the destruction of their own lifeworlds. The lumberjacks in the logging stations of Domínguez's Gran Chaco just as the rubber tappers of Ferreira de Castro's Amazon, tasked with reducing the forest to exportable "primary material," are also themselves reduced to a dehumanized, indeed "vegetative" existence. As Clemente Silva, the old rubber tapper who guides the protagonist through the infernal forest of Colombian José Eustasio Rivera's classic jungle novel *La vorágine* (*The Vortex*, 1924), exclaims:

> Around the great trunk, I tie a length of caraná vine to collect the latex tears and channel them to the bucket. A cloud of mosquitoes rises into my face to take my blood while my hands are occupied, and a rising vapor blurs my vision. This is a death struggle. I torture the tree and the tree tortures me, until one of us succumbs.[11]

Effectively, as Giorgio Agamben has observed, "the division of life into vegetal and relational, organic and animal, animal and human . . . passes first of all as a mobile border within living man,"[12] and on this mobile border literary regionalism zeroes in with its stories of an insurgent nature. For "nature," on this limit that, in geographical terms, also coincides with the frontiers of capitalist expansion, rebels, first and foremost, against its own "naturalization." What is most terrifying about it, in fact, are not the forces it hurls against the intruder—climate events, parasites, animal attacks—but how these forces begin to acquire a language of their own. “Nature,” as it were, mobilizes the multiple elements of its *cosmopoliteia* as a way of making a point, of entering an argument with the objectifying discourse of extractivism. Whereas extractivism divides nature from (human) society because of its assumed objectness and thus its incapacity to talk back, in regionalist narratives the setting comes alive to speak in insurgent tongues. And it does so because the very same “anthropological machine” that sets human life apart from all others also thrusts outward, toward the mobile border of capitalist expansion, a zone of alliances where emergent modes of interspecies communication and solidarity become possible. This speech of things and nonhuman beings in regionalism’s stories of insurgent nature, however, is different from animal and vegetal speech in fables. It does not merely anthropomorphize the more-than-human, figuring human values and qualities in emblematic animal and plant bodies. Rather, in listening to the multiple talking back of a more-than-human universe that is urging to express itself and to become a political agent in its own right, regionalist fictions were already taking up the great narrative challenge facing us today, according to Chakrabarty, of “put[ting] global histories of capital in conversation with the species history of humans”[13]—as well as, we might add, with other species and interspecies histories, making us realize that we are in fact “surrounded by many world-making projects, human and nonhuman.”[14] But before returning to this early, literary iteration of more-than-human community that, I argue, emerges in a minor, oppositional strand of regionalist fiction and essayism, we must first consider the predominant aesthetic and political form of engaging with the extractive zone in Latin American modernity, especially with the rainforest: an attitude that, following Roberto Esposito’s reflections on modern biopolitics, I shall analyze as an immunitary, or pharmaceutical, stance toward the powers of the nonhuman.

THE FOREST AS PHARMAKON

In one of the tensest moments of *La montaña es algo más que una inmensa estepa verde* (The mountain is more than just a vast green expanse, 1982), his testimonial account of the Nicaraguan revolution, Omar Cabezas recalls the small platoon’s narrow escape from a National

Guard offensive after the soldiers had killed Tello, the veteran *guerrillero* who had taught the youngsters how to fight and survive in the jungle.[15] The experience is recounted as spurring an intense crisis of faith. If Tello had been the best among the guerrillas and even so, had died without even putting up a fight, then perhaps even "Che had [been] a Quixote like Tello, or like us—the whole Frente Sandinista was probably a Quixote."[16] But in this moment of doubt, the hike itself becomes a rite of passage, in which the hero, imposing his will over the obstacles of the terrain and the pain caused by acute leishmaniasis—the fearsome "lepra of the jungle"—finally triumphs over the treacherous environment. Tello, says Cabezas, was a symbol not just to his comrades but also to the forest itself because

> I'm sure that he lived with her, that he had relations with her; she bore him sons . . . And when Tello died she felt that all was over, that her commitment was gone . . . But when she saw the readiness to fight of the group of men there marching over her, through her heart, she realized that Tello was not the beginning and end of the world . . . She had to realize that Tello was the beginning of the world, because after him came all of us . . . As if she knew she had in fact screwed up, that she ought never to have fallen silent that afternoon when Tello died; she ought to have continued rocking, if only as a show of neutrality. But we bent her over; we shattered the neutrality of the rivers and gigantic trees; we brought her back to herself; the sound of the river changed as we passed, for we possessed the river, had impressed our own sound upon it . . . So, when she had screwed up, there was nothing else to do—we brought her around by force.[17]

The episode recalls another initiation scene, this time involving Marcos Vargas, the modernizing hero of Venezuelan Rómulo Gallegos's regionalist jungle novel *Canaima* (1935): the moment when, at long last, Vargas, having become the station master of a remote rubber camp, ceases to be a stranger and embraces his own savage essence. Stripping down as he runs through the storm-struck forest, the very same that had previously put him in a state of constant anxiety and irritation, Vargas experiences a moment of liberation as he suddenly "realized that the jungle was afraid":

> "Qué hubo! ¿Se es o no se es?—What's happening here! Are you or aren't you?"
>
> Marcos Vargas, the defiant shout in the face of danger, the heart inflamed in the confrontation with such a sovereign power, again as before, joyful and confident . . . The deepest roots of his being were buried in stormy soil, the surging streams of blood in his veins still howled through him, in the depths of his spirit he was one with the nature of the furious elements, and before the overpowering spectacle offered by the satanic earth he found his essential self, cosmic man, stripped of his story, reintegrated into the very first footstep at the edge of the abyss of creation.[18]

One scene mirrors the other: the liberal hero faces down the storm, while the socialist hero stirs it up. Both triumph over the "natural elements" by mimicking, indeed by becoming one with them. Cabezas and his platoon become the children of the mountain, and Vargas imbibes the powers of Canaima, the forest spirit, and "talks to the trees in the jungle and has even turned into one a time or two."[19]

What to make of these continuities and echoes between the two texts and between the series to which they belong: the liberal dystopia of the *novela de la selva*—the jungle novel—and the revolutionary epic of guerrilla *testimonio*, or eyewitness narrative? As critic Ana Pizarro shows in her richly documented study on imaginaries of the Amazon, from the earliest days of colonization, the area of the New World that would become known as the tropical zone was perceived as "a universe of turbulence," a "terrain of mixings and of violent juxtapositions" that resisted and confounded the ordering gaze of colonial power.[20] In fact, colonial historian Serge Gruzinski has argued that this notion of the jungle as a chaotic abyss, a remainder from the earliest days of creation, only reflected back to the Western eye the catastrophic impact of colonization itself, insofar as, by way of direct violence or of devastating epidemics, it caused "a rift in local societies and an accelerated metamorphosis of the social body."[21] Yet whatever its causes, the perceived formlessness of this primal universe also implied, in turn, a sense of unfettered availability of all things imaginable: the continental interior as a "satanic" yet also prelapsarian universe where fabulous riches awaited their discovery on behalf of civilizing agents capable of separating valuable from useless matter. The extractivist utopia of El

Dorado—the golden city at the heart of the forest—which abounds in accounts of the Amazon dating from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century,[22] is only the most striking expression of this essentially pharmaceutical discourse, which dreams of harnessing the forest's savage essence to conquer and transform the world of civilization.

In twentieth-century Latin American literature and politics, this forest *pharmakon* resurfaces in two novel kinds of iterations, both of which call on the jungle as a remedy while also attempting to circumscribe its venomous effects of contagion: the jungle novel, associated with the liberal project of national modernization, and the narratives of guerrilla warfare that proliferate after the triumph of the Cuban Revolution. Each in their own fashion, these series generated narrative mappings of nation and continent that also reconfigured the colonial "immuno-logic" of the forest as *pharmakon*. The heroes of the jungle novel struggle to save the project of liberal modernization by subjecting it to the immunitary trials of a liminal environment. The men and women taking up arms across Central and South America following Fidel Castro's triumphant campaign in the Sierra Maestra, devise a two-fronted struggle: against the "alienated" city, the stronghold of neocolonial power, but also, crucially, against the forest, which the guerrilla fighters must learn to subject to their own will power. For liberal explorer and revolutionary combatant alike, the forest represents a theater of mutual transformation of self and environment. The testimonies of guerrilla struggle update the liberal immuno-logic as they draw alternately on the curative and destructive powers of city and forest. As we shall see, it is precisely their "testimonial" nature as expressed in the close yet also tense translational pact between voice and writing (and thus also between the "voice of the people" and the "letter of the law") where this immuno-logic manifests in the textual form itself.

In his study *Forests*, literary critic Robert Pogue Harrison traces an archaeology of the forest in the Western literary tradition, as the abysmal limit where civilization defines itself in the confrontation with a radical other. He suggests "forests represent an opaque mirror of the civilization that exists in relation to them":[23] from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* to the American Gothic, the shadowy forest is where differences between creaturely forms become blurred and collapse into an indifferent continuity of the living. The cycle from germination to putrefaction and back is the living expression of this unraveling of a differential, qualified life into the formless indifference of the merely living: "The decay of the fallen giant and light from the newly opened canopy combine to encourage germination and sprouting. Pollen swirls in the miasmas of decomposing organic matter. The smell of ferment is the breath of both purification and procreation,"[24] the disgusted hero Arturo Cova exclaims in *The Vortex*. The forest is where *bios*, or qualified, individualized life, is forced to recognize itself as *zoé*, or bare life: it is their own image that the forest's opaque mirror reflects back to the heroes of the jungle novel, leaving them horrified and confused.

The guerrilla *testimonio*, I shall argue, revisits this jungle frontier of literary regionalism, which had figured there as a zone of transspecies *communitas*, of emergent biopotentiality in the "bio-contact zone,"[25] in the form of a translational pact between the voice and writing. Yet this translational pact will also draw the insurgent *communitas* of the forest firmly back into the immunitary fold of humanism. Immunitary alliance, to use Roberto Esposito's terminology, is established here by tracing a limit, a dividing line, inside the community of the living: immunization is achieved by renouncing community. "If *communitas*—suggests Esposito—is that relation, which in binding its members to an obligation of reciprocal donation, jeopardizes individual identity, *immunitas* is the condition of dispensation from such an obligation and therefore the defense against the expropriating features of *communitas*."[26] Paradoxically, indeed, the lines of flight from immunitary alliance opened up by literary regionalism's species boundary–defying voicings of the insurgent forest will be closed more firmly than ever by the revolutionary narratives that claim to succeed them.

In a classic study of the jungle novel's literary cartography, Uruguayan critic Fernando Aínsa argues that the protagonists' itinerary maps out a "system of places," a form of spatial emplotment of the nation as composed by lines of tension and conflict.[27] The jungle, Aínsa suggests, represents the constitutive limit of this system of places since, as a foundational void, it is also where scenes of origin—of naming and inscription—can be staged that ground writing's representational sovereignty over the ensemble of national life. Indeed, the text that fully realizes this aporetic drawing out of a map of the nation traced from its own innermost confines is Cuban Alejo Carpentier's *Los pasos perdidos* (*The Lost Steps*, 1953), a novel that—just as Rivera's *The Vortex*, its most important predecessor—is also the fiction of an impossible voice, a kind of immaterial *écriture* sustaining narrative discourse from a space that is beyond both speech and writing. The forest's biopotentiality as the abysmal limit where qualified life makes way for an undifferentiated life is being mobilized here by a narrative discourse that aims to collapse onto one and the same plane the voice and writing, "myth and archive."[28]

This mythopoetic kernel of a writing that strives toward its own origin scene, Aínsa shows, results in a number of principal traits shared, with surprisingly little variation, by all the great texts of the jungle novel series. There are at least three such traits: first and foremost, a clash of temporalities between the hero's advance, which inscribes into space a vector of modernization, and the environmental surroundings where instead what prevails is a gradual regression. The hero's journey across different space-time units until he joins the primitive tribe among which Marcos Vargas takes refuge or until coming face-to-face, as does the traveling musicologist in *The Lost Steps*, with petroglyphs so ancient they rise from "the diabolic vegetation that surrounded the Garden of Eden before the Fall,"[29] also allows the plot to revisit in reverse the subsequent ages of evolution and of the history of conquest and colonization. Therefore—the second shared characteristic—these novels are also hybrid textualities insofar as each space-time capsule constitutes a separate narrative unit with its own stylistic peculiarities, sometimes also implying a change of narrative voice as in the Russian-doll structure of "stories in the story" in *The Vortex*. Third and finally, transitions between one act and the next are generally triggered by sexual encounters between the protagonist and native women who, in this way, act as guardians of a threshold in addition to allegorizing a natural environment, which resists, gives in to, or seduces the hero into its fold. As Carpentier's narrator puts it: "I had traveled through the ages; I had passed through the bodies and the times of the bodies, without realizing that I had come upon the hidden straitness of the widest door."[30] This double movement of the jungle novel—spatial advance, temporal regression—also inscribes into the genre a tension between history and ecology, as manifest in the constant oscillation in heroes and narrators alike, between denouncing primitive accumulation on the extractive frontier and attributing its violent excesses to the "savage" environment itself. Frequently, passages of acute critique of the hyperexploitative labor regime and its close ties with clientelistic local and national politics give way almost without transition to fatalistic musings about "the jungle, both virgin and sadist" and its insatiable thirst for vengeance against the human aggressors.[31]

Literary critic Lesley Wylie has called our attention to the intertextual as well as metaliterary facets of the jungle novel, as a postcolonial rewriting of the colonial travelogues of discovery. Elements of pastiche, irony, and mimicry, she argues, constantly undercut the attempt to reinscribe an itinerant point of view invested with epistemological authority. The postcolonial heroes of the jungle novel—hybrid subjects that neither fully belong to cosmopolitan modernity nor to the continent's sylvan interior, which they initially see with the eyes of a foreigner—cannot but overact the role of discoverer assigned to them by the generic tradition. At the same time, they are plainly conscious of merely reenacting an already conventional routine: a repertoire of secondhand gestures and actions stripped of any powers of revelation and discovery they might once have held. Their narratives being haunted by inauthenticity and repetition, Wylie contends, the protagonists can no longer face the forest as a silent realm beyond writing's reach but rather enter it as a space of intertextuality. The traveling protagonists of the jungle novel set off toward the "jungle not only as a physical space but also as a symbol of the limits of European writing on the tropics."[32] Yet as Lúcia Sá reminds us, modern Latin American narratives of the rainforest also challenge and counteract their own entanglement with the intertext of the colonial journey by calling on a different citational system, a counterarchive of Amazonian native myths (to which these narratives gain access, ironically, only by way of the European archive of colonial travel).[33] The forest, at this crossroads of archival inscriptions, turns into what Raúl Antelo calls an "obtuse arabesque":[34] a zone within writing itself where both archives—colonial travelogue and Amazonian myth—become juxtaposed and confused, but also where the violence the one exerts on the other becomes a destabilizing force within the narrative discourse. The forest, in consequence, also turns into the origin of a future language of the nation: a language emerging from the confluence of the two archives that, not unlike Marcos Vargas's mestizo son and namesake returning, at the end of *Canaima*, from the innermost heart of the continent, will one day name to the world what the text can only anticipate as its own silent core.

The jungle novel, in short, ironically reinscribes a previous narrative regime at the same time as it denounces the untimeliness of this reinscription, to instead dream up a future voice it can only invoke as a foundational silence. In political terms, this ambivalent stance is closely aligned with the project of liberal modernity itself. On taking hold of the reins of the narrative, the heroes of the jungle novel also dispute sovereignty over the space and time of their journey. Just as the texts themselves usurp a previous narrative regime, their heroes aim to wrest control of the forest's relations of production from the colonizers and their descendants, the "foreign capitalists." National modernity, in the jungle novel, is equivalent to the "good," Creole entrepreneur's taking charge of the extractive regime put in place by colonial primitive accumulation: "The considerable increase in the production of the Guarampín works—compared with that of preceding years—was undoubtedly due to his good treatment of the peons,"[35] the narrator of *Canaima* approvingly refers to Marcos Vargas's tenure at the head of a rubber station in the Guyanas. Yet the property titles underwriting this passage of "liberal fortune-telling" are, in the end, a dud check, relying as they do on a future language that is pushed beyond the text's own limit:[36] a zone of pure presence that will come into being thanks to a convergence of archives that the narrative itself has to postpone the very moment it is announced. Liberal nation making, in fact, revalidates extractivism (including the land's reification as primary resource, as "Cheap Nature," and that of its inhabitants as "cheap labor" to be appropriated or as female bodies invariably at the male protagonists' disposal) even as it offers up the—eternally deferred—promise of its unmaking.

If, indeed, Carpentier's *The Lost Steps* sought to proffer the last word in the narrative series of the jungle—the definite version that would write out, once and for all, the genre's repertoire of tropes, including the foundational silence sustaining it—another text published in Cuba a mere ten years later would make a very different claim to that title. *Pasajes de la guerra revolucionaria* (*Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War*, 1963), Ernesto Che Guevara's account of the Cuban Revolution, replaces the foundational silence projected into the heart of forest by the liberal hero's journey with the epic of wresting power from neocolonial oppression in an inverse movement back from jungle frontier to capital city. The forests of Cuba's Sierra Maestra, for Guevara's account and for the theory of revolutionary action it advances, are a "nonplace"—yet not in the sense of a utopian, imaginary site of "good life" but rather because, as places, they remain entirely absent from the text. The jungle is a site of action but never an object of description. This is because it provides the guerrillas with precisely the opposite of a place: an impossibility of locating the *foco* (the guerrilla platoon), which remains perpetually in motion. In the action as much as in its narrative retelling, this focus in motion has the effect of transforming the enemy's system of places into smooth space, into a surface allowing for the construction of a war machine.

The forest is a nonplace not only because the narrator never pauses to describe it as the stage of the action but also, moreover, because it supplies the liminal zone in time and space where, on an individual as well as collective level, the *hombre nuevo*—the revolutionary new man—is being forged. Jungles, bush, and mountains are out of place not only because they offer almost infinite opportunities for tactical retreat but also, just as importantly, because they are located "between two times": between the exploitative past of neocolonialism, with which the guerrillas have cut relations, and the revolutionary society they are about to usher in. The forest shelters this in-between time of expectation, or as critic Juan Duchesne Winter puts it: "the *not-yet-here* becomes, in Che's narrative, the *out-of-place*, the dialectical *ectopia* through which a new kind of subjectivity is preparing to jump across the place of the established order . . . The foco represents a hiatus, a void, that separates the destruction of one institutional sphere from the construction of another."[37]

Despite the fundamental importance assigned in Guevara's manual of guerrilla warfare, published after *Pasajes*, to "the countryside" (*el campo*), as "the terrain of armed struggle . . . in the underdeveloped parts of America," since "the locations offering ideal conditions for the struggle are rural ones,"[38] there is no room in either text for anything but the most succinct, cartographic description of these locations. Despite the key role attributed to the Sierra Maestra in the Cuban Revolution, lengthy descriptions of its environment would have undermined the text's pragmatic objective. Right from its title, *Passages* aims to be not just an eyewitness account of events for the benefit of readers who had not been present at the time of struggle. Rather, writing itself strives to become but another mode of action, "passing on" a series of military and political lessons to future combatants. Therefore, the vector of transmission between past and future actors must never be cut off by descriptions that might detain the flow. Description, Guevara seems to suggest, is the opposite of action; it is a striation of the smooth space the guerrilla has carved out: "Hit and run, wait, lie in ambush, again hit and run, repeatedly, giving the enemy no rest . . . The fundamental characteristic of a guerrilla band is mobility. Within a few minutes it can move away from a specific theatre and in a few hours, farther still from the region, if that becomes necessary; this mobility allows the guerrillas to constantly change fronts and avoid any kind of encirclement."[39] Therefore, to narrate guerrilla struggle in a form that is true to its essence, one must suspend landscape for continuous action. Remarkably, however, following Che's own disastrous defeat in Bolivia and the frustrated attempts at implementing revolutionary focos in Central America, it would be as suspended action—a pause in motion—that the environment was to make a comeback. In two testimonies of armed struggle written two decades after Che's—Guatemalan Mario Payeras's *Los días de la selva* (*Days of the Jungle*, 1981) and Nicaraguan Omar Cabezas's *La montaña es algo más de una inmensa estepa verde* (*Fire from the Mountain: The Making of a Sandinista*, 1982)—it is the forest that resurges as a protagonist in its own right.

In both texts, those aspects that the narrative structure of Guevara's *Pasajes* had relegated to the margins, focusing instead on the combat as the moment that reveals individual fighters' merits and failures, effectively take center stage. Quite literally, the two Central American testimonies take the time to dwell on the landscapes of forest and mountain as not only narrative settings but also places in their own right. Landscape descriptions, in Payeras and in Cabezas, are the textual correlates of a new temporality of struggle, associated with a shift in guerrilla tactics toward what was known at the time as the "prolonged people's war" (*guerra popular prolongada*). In this revised strategy of guerrilla warfare, a deep, rooted entrenchment in the forest and the forging of close ties with its native inhabitants took precedence over the Guevarian foco's speed and nomadic displacements. Despite these shared traits, the accounts of the Nicaraguan and the Guatemalan revolutionary could hardly be more different from one another. For Cabezas, the mountainous woodlands are first and foremost the space where a new sociability can emerge—the zone, in Duchesne Winter's expression, "of development of an alternative form of power, where the individual and the collective reconstitute on new foundations . . . the framework of human relations."[40] In Payeras's narrative, meanwhile, the pharmaceutic powers of the forest are called on within a framework of immunitary alliances and within a mode of writerly expression that make explicit the text's affiliation with the literary tradition of the jungle novel.

Days of the Jungle recounts the attempt between 1972 and 1976, on the part of the Ejército Guerrillero de los Pobres (EGP—the "Guerrilla Army of the Poor"), to plant a "revolutionary seed" in the Guatemalan border district of El Quiché, in a strategic shift that claimed to have learned the lessons from the previous, still orthodoxly Guevarian guerrillas' defeat a decade earlier.[41] Its narrative temporality could not be more different from the frenetic pace of *Pasajes*: until well into chapter 6, there is not a single instance of combat; and instead of the rapid movement of the Guevarian foco, here the narrative's main interest is with the excruciatingly slow process of the small platoon's "taking root" in the forest. The guerrilla, in Payeras, must first and foremost become one with the jungle, it must learn how to move through the forest and live off its resources. Only then can it begin establishing relationships with other, Indigenous and peasant, inhabitants until finally, once the two initial cycles have been completed, it can leap into armed action. The testimonial account, written and published at a time when the vulnerability of this strategy of entrenchment against the government's scorched-earth tactics had already become apparent, also anticipates the ecoessayism and poetry Payeras would write toward the end of his life, when he revisited the settings of his adventures as a guerrilla commander with the eye of the traveling naturalist.[42] Yet already in *Days of the Jungle*, instead of the unwavering pace of Guevara's *Pasajes*, narrated in an almost monotonous simple past, the predominant verbal tense is the imperfect, invoking lengthy and indefinite durations and associated with a semantics of learning and growth, in which the time of nature becomes synchronous with the gradual blossoming of the first, fragile revolutionary seedling:

> We spent those first days learning the basic truths of the jungle. We found ourselves in a new world, and only time would teach us its points of reference . . . Those who knew the jungle taught the rest of us to differentiate between the various species of snakes. They explained the habits of the deadly coral snake, with its band of red and black rings, and described the velvety appearance of the lethal *barbamarilla* . . . Although we found tapir tracks every day, it was months before some of us saw one.[43]

This "implantation" stage of the guerrilla platoon, lasting several years, represents, in Ricardo Roque-Baldovinos's expression, "a lesson in the experience of time." In Payeras's jungle, "one learns to wait, to live in consonance with other rhythms, yet paradoxically, this asphyxiating slowness, the unnerving exercise of expectation, is also what will enable the unleashing of that great vortex of time, Revolution."[44] Unlike in Guevara, here the acceleration of temporalities requires first and foremost a patient exercise of learning, which eventually allows the guerrilla fighters to articulate the multiple temporal layers inhabited by them and their Indigenous and peasant allies. For Payeras, the different regions of national space are also, and more importantly, sedimentations of multiple temporalities, which only armed struggle will finally collapse into one single, national time and space. The revolution is the great foundry that will melt into one all the singularities so that the Guatemalan nation can finally and truly emerge. Not by chance, then, *Days of the Jungle* is also the most consciously and deliberately "literary" of guerrilla testimonies: its project of national refoundation is directly indebted to the modern-liberal jungle narratives from which the text openly quotes. Payeras likes to allude to the origin narratives of Carpentier and Gabriel García Márquez, literary referents that also feature prominently in the "splendid library" the group insists on carrying into its forest refuge, only to abandon it almost immediately—one could hardly think of a more "marvelously real" gesture—to the ants and the rain:

> From our jungle refuge we patiently cultivated the friendship of the villagers, and hopefully watched the passage of time. The season arrived for building huts in the forest and storing grain, which we did to provide for the winter and for eventual enemy offensives . . . This was a period of great invention and of learning sedentary ways. We invented bread, discovered rubber boots, and learned to sail a raft . . . We bore all this patiently, for by then we understood that the task we had undertaken was a matter of years, and that it was right that it should be so.[45]

The agent capable of fusing the times and spaces of the nation, for Payeras, can thus only be the one who has traveled through them all: the guerrilla. The EGP platoon's itinerary as narrated by Payeras reinscribes yet again the plot of the colonial journey and its taking possession of the very space it learns to navigate. In adjusting its jungle environment to the generic pattern, however, for it to provide "the out-of-place from which . . . the guerrilla utopia is being written," as Duchesne Winter puts it, the narrator of *Days of the Jungle* also has to actively omit the fact that "the dispersed communities of the Ixcán's green desert, in sometimes indifferent, sometimes hostile and sometimes solidary contact with the guerrilla, actually belong to a broad social movement of land occupation and self-organization."[46] The jungle novel's conventional tropes such as the pristine environment and its "primitive" inhabitants, in fact, can make their appearance in Payeras's narrative only thanks to the deliberate omission of processes of colonization and land occupation that had been underway since the 1970s in response to the advancing agro-frontier and to forced displacements of communities in the context of the Guatemalan state's violent counterinsurgency war. In *Days of the Jungle*, this history dissolves yet again into nature, so that it can give birth to the savior-hero, the guerrilla—the one who, having mastered the trials of a liminal space of foundation, will finally lead the community in its great leap toward the future.

In reproducing the tropes and gestures of the colonial discovery narrative, Payeras's text also returns to the forest its immunological role as *pharmakon*, insofar as the guerrilla army, in order to transform into a deadly war machine, first needs to build up defenses against the jungle by immersing itself in it. Yet this immuno-logic of self-fortification conspired against the EGP's proclaimed aim of reaching out toward Indigenous and campesino communities, since the need to preserve the group's immunitary shield also limited opportunities for community building. In Payeras's account, community only comes about by accident, once colonists and Indigenous villagers, on the run from the armed forces' counterinsurgency war, arrive at the guerrilla's encampment asking for protection—which, Payeras explains, puts the entire dispositive at risk: "A constant stream of peasants sought out our local cells, bringing with them their ancient burden of grievances . . . This rapid growth in a sense hurt us qualitatively."[47] To open the organization to its peasant allies is to endanger the efficiency of its immunitary shield—a dilemma to which Payeras's narrator responds by shutting out whatever forms of dialogue these encounters might have yielded, and insistently referring to the guerrilla's unexpected new neighbors with the same folkloric and deindividualizing gaze as the modern narrators of the jungle novel had done before: "One week the camp took on the appearance of a carnival, with men who arrived wrapped in woolen blankets and carrying little harmonicas, coming to hear about the revolution."[48]

The flipside of this increasing literariness of the text, invariably choosing exoticizing imagery over listening to, and incorporating of, other testimonies, is the guerrilla's own "narcissistic self-enclosure,"[49] with the integrity of their immunitary shield becoming more and more an obsession for Payeras and his group. The guerrilla's "learning process" increasingly displays a form of retentive perfectionism that before long takes a murderous turn. For, to "mature" the guerrilla must first get rid of the putrefied seeds in its own midst. To this end, while the season of "inventions and harvests" is in full swing, the group decides to execute a "resentful" fellow combatant who had "cast doubt over the people's support" and had become "a source of demoralization."[50] Payeras's narrator almost relishes the contrast between the surrounding forest idyll and the terrible sacrifice the group has to make to eliminate the contagious element in its midst:

> We shot him one April morning when many birds were singing. This was one of the world's lovely sounds that he would no longer hear . . . He refused the blindfold, then turned his face away from the firing squad. We returned to our posts. A profound silence reigned. The unit had reached maturity. Perhaps from that moment on each of us was a better person.[51]

Here, the jungle novel's traditional association between violence and the forest—which had left unresolved its own founding contradiction between the violence against the forest perpetrated by resource extractivism and the violence of the forest against the human intruder—is both reinscribed and turned on its head. The guerrilla's homicidal self-purging initially appears to be at odds with the pleasant, birdsong-filled world of the forest, yet—as confirmed by the "profound silence" that envelops the camp after the shooting—it is in fact proof of the platoon's successful "assimilation" into its environment, accomplished through the ultimate act of immunization: the amputation of the collective's own "infested" limb.

The notion of the forest as a liminal space also features heavily in Omar Cabezas's account of the Nicaraguan revolution, where it provides the stage for the young student activist's initiation into the armed struggle. Once again, it is in the jungle that, through a series of physical and emotional ups and downs that are disclosed with refreshing candor and self-irony, the—once again, exclusively male—group of youngsters of diverse social and ethnic origins turns into a collective body of action. But in *Fire from the Mountain*, the forest is not, as in *Days of the Jungle*, a "state of nature" into which the guerrilla must assimilate through a prolonged process of seeding, germination, and fruit-bearing. Although, as in Payeras's account, the jungle is a catalyst of transformations, both individual and collective, this is far from the whole story here: "Your legs are getting stronger. You learn how to swing a machete. And as time passes your hair starts to get long . . . Washing so little roughens your skin. Over long periods of time your cuts and scratches heal and new ones come to take their place, until your hands and your arms are a different color."[52] Yet for Cabezas these physical transmutations are but external marks of what is primarily a political rather than military, and an affective rather than physical, experience. They herald the emergence of the *hombre nuevo*, the new man, who rediscovers and intensifies his own selfhood upon giving himself over to the collective. "To say that the FSLN vanguard was solid was not an idle word," Cabezas claims:

> The Frente Sandinista was developing, through action—in city, country, and mountain—a spirit of iron, a spirit of steel, a contingent of men bound with a granite solidity . . . Because, as the Christians say, we denied our very selves . . . We transformed our loneliness into a brotherhood among us; we treated each other gruffly, but actually we loved each other with a deep love, with a male tenderness . . . The new man began to be born with fungus infections and with his feet oozing worms; the new man began to be born with loneliness and eaten alive by mosquitos; he began to be born stinking. That's the outer part, because inside, by dint of violent shocks day after day, the new man was being born with the freshness of the mountains. A man—it might seem incredible—but an open, unegotistical man, no longer petty.[53]

In Cabezas just as in Payeras, the jungle provides the chronotope for a particular kind of bildungsroman: the transformation of urban student leader into guerrilla fighter, steeled by life in the wilderness. In Cabezas's account, however, this process, that is also one of bodily metamorphosis, has its textual correlate in a form of writing that constantly turns into an oral and, more importantly, into a "common voice." Cabezas's is a language that—as one of the book's first readers, the Argentine novelist Julio Cortázar, was quick to pick up—emerges in dialogue, by interpellating and thus creating in its reader, as Cortázar told his Nicaraguan comrade, "an immediate relation of closeness towards you as author and protagonist of the story. There are no barriers nor any distance, from the outset you're my friend and I'm yours, because what you're telling me isn't just a deep and authentic experience, but you're also telling it on a level of total contact and participation."[54] Thanks to Cabezas's own explanations, we know that this interpellation of the reader as listener and confidant (and, thus, also implicitly as male: as yet another member of the homosocial community that was born in the forest) was in fact the deliberate effect of a complex performance of writing. The text is an edited version of oral narratives Cabezas had previously recorded in a series of sessions in which, over food and drinks, he would share his memories with friends. The reader, in other words, is assigned the place previously occupied by a listener, and by one who partakes in a ritual of friendship, just as writing reproduces the oral voice previously recorded on tape. The text, quite literally, recreates the colloquial situation in which it had initially been produced and thus also invites a shared kind of reading, being read out loud, and commented on, in a gathering of friends. What Cabezas aims for is, indeed, a language of friendship, which—as Nicaraguan poet José Coronel Urtecho claimed on occasion of the book's publication in 1982—"ushers in the birth, not of the Spanish language but of the language of the Nicaraguan revolution."[55]

In fact, this language of revolution also resembles the ecstatic fusion of languages the heroes and narrators of the jungle novel had been dreaming of. Here, finally, was a writing that never stopped becoming voice. Voice and writing can finally become one, Cabezas suggests, once they are articulated into a single chain of collective action, once authors and readers, listeners and storytellers, partake in one and the same revolutionary becoming. The text, in fact, is but a performative enactment of this militant temporality. Voice and writing in equal parts, it takes charge of the production of shared historical experience: therefore, it also does not end with the rebels' triumphant entry into the capital Managua but, rather, with the scene of encounter between Cabezas and an old peasant, Don Leandro, who had already fought US occupation alongside General Sandino. In Don Leandro's narrative, Cabezas recognizes the historical meaning of his own actions. There, he says,

> when I met that man, when he told me all of that, I felt I really was his son, the son of Sandino, the son of history. I understood my own past; I knew where I stood; I had a country, a historical identity, with everything that Don Leandro was telling me . . . I embraced Don Leandro with a shudder of joy and of emotion. I felt that my feet were solidly planted on the ground; I wasn't in the air. Not only was I the child of an elaborate theory, but also I was walking on something concrete; I was rooted in the earth, attached to the soil, to history. I felt invincible.[56]

The text ends once it has encountered its own image, once it can finally narrate what, right from the outset, had underwritten its testimonial aesthetics and politics: the move from addressing a listener to embracing a comrade, from stories being shared to an identity being confirmed. It was as he listened to Don Leandro's stories, says Cabezas, that he "wished I had a tape recorder."[57] This is the point when, as an experience of struggle is being passed on, the text marks the end of combat action and the beginning of an act of witnessing. With this final moment of lived histories merging into one, Cabezas's account can deem its mission as accomplished: the establishment of historical community, which even before the final triumph has already ushered in the time of revolution. Cabezas's encounter with Don Leandro—just as, previously, the encounter with an old revolutionary at the end of Guevara's juvenile *Motorcycle Diaries*, or as the Zapatistas' Subcomandante Marcos's encounter with Old Antonio in the Lacandon jungle a decade or two after Cabezas's text—represents an origin story for the very narrative we are reading. From here, the transcribed voice of the narrator can be confident of its own anchoring in a chain of experiences of struggle being passed on from one storyteller to the next, with each act of transmission reconfirming the historical, experiential space and time of a shared becoming.

In what we might call, then, the "biopolitical mapping" of country and continent, first by the literary genre of the jungle novel and subsequently by the accounts of armed struggle, the jungle represents, as Fernando Aínsa succinctly puts it, "the most remote point toward which to *retreat*, amplifying the distance toward the circumference constituted by the big cities. The heart of the continent represents the maximum distance one can move *toward*, as, from here, one is already starting to 'exit' in the other direction."[58] The jungle is a zone of inversion, of erasure and of transformation, as it is also where the living turns indifferent, where the limits of species, races, and genders collapse: where immunitary alliance is confronted by the *communitas* of the forest. But thus, as the liberal explorers of the jungle novel had already suspected, and as the guerrilla's narrators would confirm years later, it is also "more than just a vast green expanse": it is the point of origin of a revolutionary language. Yet this story of initiation of a new subject—of "el hombre nuevo"—also implies in many guerrilla testimonies an equally radical act of erasure: that of the multiple struggles of workers and peasants, women, students, and Indigenous and Afro-descendant communities, whose contributions to revolutionary change remain almost entirely absent from Guevara's and Payeras's (and even, though to a lesser degree, from Cabezas's) accounts. On the sylvan borders of the nation, the guerrilla sought to immunize itself, above all, against history, to be able to usher in a new beginning, a point zero of time itself. Whereas the previous narrative series of jungle novels, with their ironies, bifurcations, and citations—their manifestations of "narrative contagion," in Sylvia Molloy's apt expression[59]—had been staging the failure of the very project of immunization they had set out to chronicle, the guerrilla was, in the end, less receptive to such nuances. While it claimed to usher in national community, the armed struggle in the jungle also strove, more than ever, to finally accomplish modernity's most ambitious project of immunization. This, I would argue, is the tension the narratives of armed struggle never managed to resolve, aiming as they did to "stand on solid ground"—as when Cabezas met Don Leandro—and yet to also keep "hanging in the air": to remain immune against the constraints of human and more-than-human entanglements alike. Perhaps the "hombre nuevo"—the new man—was, after all, the ultimate humanist.

THE ANIMAL ALLIANCE

In a story written in the early 1920s, just after returning to Buenos Aires from his first, ten-year spell as a farmer-settler in the subtropical rainforest of Misiones, on the border between Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay, Horacio Quiroga—one of Latin America's most gifted storytellers, born in Uruguay in 1873 but living and working mostly in Argentina until his suicide in 1937—stages a narrative duel between two environments that compete with one another in their hostility toward the metropolitan traveler. In "El Simún" (the story's title and one of many names, we later find out, for an African desert storm), the struggle between the jungle and the desert manifests itself through a rift inside the narrative voice. The narrator-protagonist is being challenged, at the remotest point of his itinerary, by another voice that wrests narrative authority from him, never to return it again. The first narrator, a young urbanite working, much to his distaste, as an inspector of weather stations for the Argentine Ministry of Agriculture, describes his journey up the Paraná River until he reaches the border with Brazil. There, he meets the Frenchman Briand, the local stationmaster and foreman of a logging company, and is forced by torrential rains to stay with him an extended period. Eventually, monotony and alcohol provoke a nervous outburst in the young inspector, to which Briand responds by telling him of his own trials as a military official in the French Sahara: a calvary of light, heat, and sand that destroyed a long-standing friendship with a fellow officer.

Both stories are really one and the same, then, different only in the intensity of environmental aggression and in the way each narrator translates it into language. The desert, in this narrative duel, triumphs over the jungle not least due to the skillfulness of its narrator who, unlike his sylvan rival working in a more conventional brand of realism, unleashes a firework of devices including ellipsis, discontinuity, and metonymy. Rather than merely asserting the indescribable nature of his experience of desert storms, Briand recreates it in a language that is itself elusive and discontinuous: "I stayed seven months . . . There was just a horrendous light out there, and a horrendous heat, day and night . . . And constant heart palpitations, because one can't take it . . . And that's just when there is no *sirocco* . . . And then there's the *cafard*."[60] But there are, in fact, no winners or losers in "El Simún." Briand and the desert are themselves the ellipsis at the heart of the inspector's narrative journey upriver. Both, jungle and desert, remain entangled with one another through the struggle between their narrators, as do the colonial frontiers they map out and give voice to.

But then, the story could also be read as a forerunner to a more radical strand within literary regionalism where the encounter with an "insurgent nature" forges a novel constellation between body, voice, and environment that goes beyond the stories of collapse and reconstruction of civilization's immunitary shield as told by the jungle novel and the guerrilla testimony. "El Simún," in the way it stages the takeover of one narrative voice by another is also a kind of narrative threshold—a text setting the scene for a literature yet to be written, of which Quiroga, and particularly his Misiones stories, represent no small part: stories of environmental insurgency, the violent eruptions of which respond to a rift within narrative discourse itself.

"El regreso de Anaconda" (The return of Anaconda, 1926) is perhaps the most extraordinary of Quiroga's stories in the way it orchestrates the multiple voicings of nature's insurgency. In the story, the rainforest "rose up, ardently, in a single voice" ("enardecida, se alzó en una sola voz") to protest the way it has been turned over, as "nature," to an extractive eye that only sees it as so many primary resources or as the overburden that must be cleared away. As a matrix of transspecies *communitas*, the entire jungle rises in rebellion, activating its *cosmopoliteia* and rallying the natural elements to join forces against their shared exclusion from the sphere of politics. In the words of the great serpent:

> We're all the same, but only together. Each of us, on their own, isn't worth a great deal. But as allies, we are the entire tropical zone. Let us hurl it against the humans, brothers! . . . Let's throw our entire zone downriver, with its rains, its fauna, its fevers and its snakes! Let's throw the forest downriver, until the stream is blocked altogether![61]

This is not an Orwellian fable of workers' politics in animal guises. As we shall see, the community the story imagines goes far beyond this, precisely because it also includes human proletarians in its horizontal assemblage of living forms, alongside molecular reactions and climate cycles. What is at stake, to return to Roberto Esposito's terminology referred to earlier in this chapter, is nothing less than an alternative biopolitics, a "biopotentiality" that, from a "communitarian" exterior, mobilizes the counterforces assembled through their shared exclusion by the immunitary apparatuses of biopower.[62]

The "returns of Anaconda"—the multiple rewritings, in Quiroga's work, of one and the same narrative core that run from "Un drama en la selva" (A jungle drama), published in 1918, to "The Return of Anaconda," first published in 1926—evince the gradual consolidation of an idea of "animal alliance": the emergence outside human society (but not necessarily excluding humans) of an oppositional, resistant biopolitics based on the community of the living. The story's earliest version had nevertheless made exactly the opposite point. Here the struggle of adders and serpents against the establishment of an Institute of Serotherapy in the jungle had been frustrated by a rift inside the "natural universe" itself. In "Un drama en la selva," the animals' united front collapses once Hamadrías, the giant Asian adder brought along by the scientists, and the native queen of snakes (which is not yet called Anaconda but Musurana) lock heads. Having vanquished her rival and survived the massacre of the snakes, Musurana is adopted by the scientists as "an ally of Mankind, exterminator of pests," in turn receiving "a certain freedom to roam her forest."[63]

The change in ophidic species from one story to the next is of no small importance: the green anaconda (*Eunectes murinus*) is the largest of American boas, a family of nonvenomous serpents whose diet includes fish, mammals, reptiles, and birds; musurana (*Clelia clelia*) is the largest of ophiophagic snakes—snakes that eat other snakes. Although its fangs contain venom, it is largely harmless to humans; by contrast, it can be lethal for its reptile victims. At the same time, the musurana is immune to the venom of the adders on which it feeds. It is, indeed, a "natural ally" of the scientists seeking to immunize humans and domestic animals against the venomous snakes of the forest.

In his genetic study of "Anaconda"—the story's second, intermediate iteration that opens the homonymous volume published in 1921—literary historian Napoléon Baccino Ponce de León shows how Quiroga, while maintaining the ambiguity between the previous version's two conflicting pairs (humans versus serpents and snakes versus adders), also introduces some key elements of the final sequel, "El regreso de Anaconda," to be published five years later. In fact, the very ending of "Anaconda" already announces the sequel yet to be written, while also recognizing its radical departure, quite literally, from the narrative we are reading: "But the story of the long months of this voyage up the Paraná . . . this story of rebellion and assault of the water plants belongs to another story."[64] Yet already in "Anaconda," at the vipers' assembly where the response to the human intruders is being discussed, what motivates the snakes' "struggle to the death" is no longer, as previously in "Un drama en la selva," the defense of "the entire Family" but rather the salvation of "the entire Jungle." Where, before, what was at stake had been the survival of the species family, the latter's destiny is now subsumed under that of the forest. This shift, Baccino Ponce de León argues, "signals an evolution toward a new objective, which is the constitution of myth. The narrator seems to return to the initial dilemma and to suggest . . . that the conflict is of a different order; that the action of Man compromises nature as a whole as it threatens her complex and therefore also delicate balance."[65]

In tracing a line of division within the natural world itself, the story's earlier versions had also continued to advance an idea of "benign colonization," unblemished by the destructive extractivism associated with capitalist greed. As Jennifer French has argued in a pathbreaking study of Quiroga, in the stories set on Argentina's subtropical frontier, the author "vituperates the large-scale industries that rapid economic expansion brought to Misiones . . . but he continues to valorize colonization as a spiritually transformative experience uniquely capable of forming bonds of community among humans and the nonhuman environment."[66] This Robinsonian utopia, based on the rational, nonexploitative use of natural resources, is still predicated on the immunitary alliance emerging at the end of "Un drama en la selva" and "Anaconda" associating the benign colonizers—the ophidiologists—with their "natural ally," the nonvenomous serpent, in their common struggle against "pests." As Anaconda/Musurana regrets at the end of the first two versions, this alliance should also have included her cousin, the serpent Ñacaniná, since—as one of the scientists says—"she'll keep the rats out of the house."[67]

Quiroga's work, then, gradually advances from exposing the fissures in this immunitary apparatus to its outright negation by insurgent *communitas*. The contradictions between these two positions, which, Baccino Ponce de León suggests, weigh down most heavily on "Anaconda," the transitional version of the story, point to the same limitations of the immunitary shield that, in many of the jungle novels we studied in the previous section, drive the protagonists to their death. Yet in Quiroga's stories, what is at stake is not some innate hostility of "nature" toward the human, as existentialist readings of his oeuvre have frequently maintained. Rather, what they expose is the incapacity of the immunitary apparatus (the one constructed by the human protagonists as well as by the narrative voice) to clearly distinguish productive lives from harmful ones, lives to protect from lives to destroy. As the narrator of "Anaconda" reminds us, such distinctions need to be constantly reassessed on the mobile border separating *immunitas* from *communitas*, since a venomous substance can become under certain circumstances a life-saving remedy (a *pharmakon*): "It is known that for a horse that is being immunized, venom is as indispensable for its daily life as water itself, and it dies if it fails to receive it."[68]

"El regreso de Anaconda" tells a radically different story from these narratives of construction and crisis of the immunitary shield. From its very first lines—"When Anaconda, in alliance with the native elements of the tropics, mused and made plans for reconquering the river"[69]—the story enters a time and space outside the historical chronotope introduced by "Los desterrados" (The exiles), the 1926 volume's eponymous story that follows it.[70] This temporality, nevertheless, is not a "prehistorical" or "foundational" time nor does it precede the historical time of the collection's other stories. In fact, it is rigorously contemporary in that both in "El regreso de Anaconda" and in the other stories included in *Los desterrados* what is being narrated are the conflicts stirred up by capitalist frontier expansion into the subtropical rainforest. The difference is, rather, one of exteriority: the narrative time of "El regreso de Anaconda" is a temporality that has not separated from space as an autonomous dimension. Although the "plot" of frontier expansion is overall the same as in the subsequent stories, it is narrated here from a multiplicity of living space-time experiences—animal as well as vegetal and atmospheric—all of which converge on the great river. Time in "El regreso de Anaconda" is first and foremost the movement of the waters in their abundance or their scarcity; it is the meteorological and hydrographic time of heat, rains, and currents of the Paranahyba and Paraná rivers through which Anaconda and her comrades travel. This is also why Anaconda, the river serpent, leads the insurrection, because it is to her, floating at the pace of the flood, that the voicings of different animal species, of floating islets and of the waters descending from the zone of the great rains, are addressed.

This mythical community that surges in response to Anaconda's call for all-out attack against the immunitary shield established in the story's preceding versions nevertheless retains the ecumenic vocation the latter had attributed to the great serpent. Despite having convinced beasts, plants, and rains to hurl themselves against "Man who has been, who is and who will always be the cruelest enemy of the forest,"[71] Anaconda still takes under her wing, to the anger of adders and tigers, a human being: the agonizing *mensú* (the lumberjack identified by his monthly payout, his "mensual") she finds on an islet floating downriver. Anaconda, in other words, reasserts the communitarian bond even when faced with the very element in opposition to which it had been forged—although with a crucial difference regarding the immunitary shields assembled at the end of the story's previous versions. Instead of the biologists in "Un drama en la selva"—the benign colonizers—the human element here is a native man reduced to a condition of extreme abandonment and in his final death throes. Yet Anaconda's protective attitude does not seem to be motivated, as French suggests, by the difference "between the local peoples' use of natural resources and the newcomers," since the dying mensú is found "in a poor shack, organically constructed and so lightweight that it is pulled along by the current upon a raft of *camalotes* (floating islands)" and thus "seems to have integrated his own activities into the natural biological order."[72] In fact, I would argue, the mensú's destitute state does not so much represent his "organic" integration into the local ecosystem as it does, rather, the ultimate consequence of his sequestration into the extractive machine of frontier capitalism, which is organized to violently appropriate "Cheap Nature" in the form of unpaid labor and primary resources alike.[73]

But precisely this condition of radical abandonment also allows the dying mensú to reenter the communitarian assemblage in its shared, agonizing adriftness in the face of an advancing extractive frontier: "He's a poor fellow, just like all the others,"[74] as Anaconda says, just before she herself perishes as she lays her eggs on the islet next to the mensú's still-warm body. In this community of "poor lives"—lives at the edge of death, torn from their alliances of origin—a "minor biopolitics" also makes its emergence, as Gabriel Giorgi argues: "an alternative community, in which these bodies crossed by lines of variation trace alternative modes of commonality, different logics of alliance and of filiation, another demarcation of the space between bodies where there are no 'individuals' nor 'society' but bonds, relational, mobile, and strategic constellations between bodies and species."[75] This opposition between the immunitary alliance and the forest *communitas*, which Esposito associates with the antagonism between biopower and biopotentiality, does not actually run as a border between humans and nature, as Anaconda's returns so eloquently show. Rather, it represents a mobile border within the human itself, resulting either in a division of the living between "bichos malos y buenos"—between pests and pets—or in its con-fusion in the forest's "metamorphic zone" of *communitas*.[76]

The "zona tropical," the tropical zone where these antagonistic alliances and commonalities are being forged and dissolved, is also an "emergency area," that is, a region of "natural disasters" the consequences of which impact all its inhabitants alike, though not necessarily to the same degree. In the emergency area of extractivism's sacrifice zones, the diminishing of the supplies needed to sustain life bring the diversity of living forms into an extreme and dangerous proximity; yet this very proximity also opens up the possibility of new assemblages, "patterns of unintentional collaboration" that emerge in response to a shared struggle for staying alive.[77] Compare the following two passages, the first from Brazilian regionalist writer Graciliano Ramos's classic rural exodus novel *Vidas secas* (*Barren Lives*, 1938) and the second from Quiroga's short story "Yaguaí" (1913). In both examples the climate events reconstellate relations between territory, liquids, and life:

> The branches of the coral-bean tree down by the water hole were covered with birds of passage. This was a bad sign. In all probability the backland would soon be burnt up. The birds came in flocks; they roosted in the trees along the riverbank; they rested, they drank, and then, since there was nothing

> there for them to eat, they flew on toward the south . . . The sun sucked up the water from the ponds and those cursed birds drank up what was left, trying to kill the stock.[78]

> The drought continued; the mountain was left deserted little by little, because the animals were concentrated in the threads of water that had been great streams. The three dogs forced the distance that separated them from the watering hole of the beasts, with medium success, because being this one very frequented in turn by jaguars, the small game became distrustful.[79]

"Emergency," in the sacrifice zones of extractivism, should also be understood in the sense of a Deleuze-Guattarian "becoming-minor"—insofar as all lives become subject here to a shared condition of diminishing supplies in a shrinking world that drives them into dangerous, contagious yet also collaborative proximity. This dangerous closeness, which also triggers frenetic attempts at preserving or reconstructing immunitary shields, is what makes possible a particular narrative device, a free indirect speech of the extractive zone. This kind of interspecies mode of narrative allows for the point of view to shift and oscillate freely between one species and the next, including the human. On the level of narrative form, interspecies free indirect speech makes manifest the way in which human history, in its character as a geological force, seeps into the living worlds affected by it to the point where "history" and "nature" can no longer be distinguished. The beginning of Ramos's novel makes clear how, in the extreme proximity to one another of lives suffering from diminishing supplies, the drama of constantly shifting alliances and of communitarian assemblages under pressure also demands, on the very level of form, the introduction of a transspecies perspective:

> Only the day before there had been six of them, counting the parrot. Poor thing! It had met its end on the sand of the riverbed, where they had taken their rest beside a mudhole. With no sign of food in the vicinity, hunger had been too much for the drought-sufferers. The dog had eaten the head, feet, and bones of her friend and had no more recollection of the matter. Now, standing there waiting, she looked over the family belongings and was surprised not to see on top of

> the tin trunk the little cage in which the bird had struggled to keep a balance. Fabiano [missed it at times, too, but then he] remembered.[80]

The stories of the extractive zone (which is also a bio-contact zone) narrate, from a transspecies point of view, the emergence of a "post-natural" world.[81] The struggles of formation and dissolution of alliances that provide the plotlines of these stories—narratives including food chains, bacteriological and molecular reactions but also intersemiotic regimes, "ecologies of living thoughts"—make themselves manifest, as in the above quote, in a constantly shifting point of view that is itself governed by dynamics of scarcity, of contamination and contagion.[82] The extractive zone is also one of residues and afterlives, as embodied by Ramos's extended family of landless peasants-squatters, including their animal companions and scarce belongings, or by the canine protagonist of Quiroga's short story: "And by the end of January, of the gaze lit, the ears firm over the eyes, and the tall and provocative tail of the fox terrier, there was nothing but a mangy skeleton, ears thrown back and tail sunken and treacherous, which trotted furtively on the roads."[83]

"Yaguaí," one of several stories in Quiroga's oeuvre featuring animal protagonists without abandoning the register of realist fiction, is also one of the first to experiment with this floating, interspecies point of view. Just as Graciliano Ramos's *Barren Lives*, "Yaguaí" represents what I will call a natural history of the Capitalocene: both are narratives of breakup and transformation of interspecies alliances set on the extractive frontier, where nature and history collapse into one. Both "Yaguaí" and *Barren Lives*, furthermore, share almost identical plotlines (both are "drought stories"). They narrate the undoing, carried out by the human associate, of the interspecies alliance with the dog, who is suspected of having betrayed (even if involuntarily) this immunitary alliance to the *communitas* of "wildlife" and thus of having turned into a "pest"—a source of contagion that threatens the immunitary shield humans are struggling to uphold in the zone of emergency.[84] "Yaguaí" recounts the life and death of the homonymous fox terrier who is accidentally killed by his English landholder owner when the latter confounds his mascot with "the dog of the peons."[85] It is, as are so many of Quiroga's stories set in the Misiones rainforest, a narrative of the failure of the immunitary shield. Since, in lending his dog to the *peón* (farmhand) Fragoso, the Englishman had intended to subject Yaguaí to a process of immunization, exposing him to the "wild" life of the servants' dogs to better adapt him to the jungle habitat. The experiment is unsuccessful until Fragoso's orchard is invaded by rats, which only Yaguaí—for once outperforming the native hunting dogs—helps exterminate. Nonetheless, just as he has reasserted his place in the immunitary alliance—as an "exterminator of pests"—Yaguaí is himself "accidentally" eliminated for having been confused with a plague, with the "starving dogs" of Fragoso and the other servants that roam the estate in search of food.[86] Together with the almost unnoticeable shift in point of view (from the dogs to the Englishman, passing through a "panoramic long shot" operating the transition between the two), this confusion of modes of "dogness" also conflates "the species history and the history of capital,"[87] to quote Dipesh Chakrabarty's emblematic phrase. It associates the division between nature and culture, between lives to cultivate and lives to extirpate, with class struggle.

In Ramos's *Barren Lives*, the death of the dog Baleia at the hands of Fabiano, the small community's paterfamilias, is less accidental but no less associated than that of Yaguaí with this immediate articulation between class struggle (the politics of colonial enclosure depriving peasant sharecroppers of fertile soils) and interspecies dynamics:

> The dog was dying. She had grown thin and her hair had fallen out in several spots. Her ribs showed through the pink skin and flies covered dark blotches that suppurated and bled . . . Fabiano, thinking she was coming down with rabies, tied a rosary of burnt corncob about her neck. The dog, however, only went from bad to worse. She rubbed against the posts of the corral or plunged impatiently into the brush, trying to shake off the gnats by flapping her dangling ears and swishing her short, hairy tail, thick at the base and coiled like a rattlesnake's. So Fabiano decided to put an end to her.[88]

Just as "Yaguaí," *Barren Lives* represents a natural history of the Capitalocene: a narrative in which human "history" converges (in a mode of "familiarity" but also in violence) with the more-than-human as it chronicles moments of crisis and reconfiguration of transspecies alliances in the extractive zone. At the same time, both stories are also different from the "returns of Anaconda" analyzed above in the way they approach these dramas of alliance and community—in much the same way as in ecohistorical terms droughts and floods are different yet also complementary geoclimatic events ensuing from deforestation, agro-industrial expansion, and soil erosion.

Yaguaí's and Baleia's lives in these natural histories of the Capitalocene represent lives on a threshold, which may be one of death but also of transformation, of metamorphosis. Theirs are lives lacking a proper place once they have abandoned—or better, have been abandoned by—the immunitary alliance, but are also no longer able to enter the horizontal pact of *communitas*, into the "complicity" forged by "the native elements of the tropics" in "El regreso de Anaconda." The stray dog, outlawed and infected with contagious diseases that the advancing frontier unleashes on the sacrifice zone, is a postnatural hero. It is a life that has fallen outside any kind of immunitary alliance: indeed, it is what actively disarticulates such alliances. Just as the monsters inhabiting the margins of society in popular legends—the pariah, the bandit, the wolfman—it is a being of the threshold that, as Agamben points out, "is neither simple natural life nor social life but rather bare life or sacred life."[89] But thus, as the bearer of a radical negativity, this life is also biopotentiality in its most extreme form: it is what announces the coming of an insurgent and contagious politics, which is neither the politics of native *communitas* as in "El regreso de Anaconda" nor, much less, that of the immunitary alliance of "Un drama en la selva." It is a politics of the Capitalocene, of the biocontact zone of sacrifice, of which these narratives of drought and of human-canine violence offer a first glimpse, and which, in multiple guises and transmutations, underwrites many of the literary and political engagements with extractivism and its legacies in Latin America throughout the twentieth and early twenty-first century.

A NATURAL HISTORY OF THE CAPITALOCENE

The reading I am developing here of Latin American regionalism's stories of immunitary alliance and of insurgent *communitas* as natural histories of the Capitalocene also attempts to bring the extractive frontier into central focus. Rather than, as some of regionalism's preeminent analysts have done, including Argentine historian José Luis Romero or Uruguayan and Brazilian literary critics Ángel Rama and Afrânio Coutinho, to understand the movement's dissidence with regard to the modernist aesthetics of the cosmopolitan city as a nostalgic (though sometimes politically progressive and emancipatory) response to the perceived decline of local traditions,[90] I want to show how this literature is becoming newly relevant to us by making it speak to our own neo-extractivist present with disturbing actuality. When understood as writings on, and of, the zone of sacrifice, where the advance of capitalism's extractive machine manifests itself in the uncertain, mobile border that runs through the body of the earth at the same time as it divides human and more-than-human existents into lives to be shielded or disposed of, regionalist fictions brought into narrative form the entanglements between two histories: those of the colonized, workers, women, and Afro-descendant and Indigenous peoples struggling for the recognition of their "human rights" on the one hand and the species history of the human as a geological force on the other. As Ericka Beckman points out, "regionalism's turn towards 'nature,' and 'the land' marked anything but an escape from commercial culture: instead, the settings examined by regionalism were precisely those at the center of export-led modernization. Under a system organized around the extraction of natural resources, the rural hinterlands are always already marked out as frontiers of accumulation and possible centers of production."[91]

The small province of Santiago del Estero in the Argentine Northwest offers an eloquent case study of how cultural production thrived on, as well as turned against, the commodity boom-and-bust cycle of the extractive frontier. As early as in 1900, a local newspaper celebrated that the logging of the region's quebracho hardwoods was becoming the area's main source of employment and income, calculating the year's total volume of export merchandise at 1 million logs, 900,000 beams, 600,000 tons of firewood, and 25,000 tons of charcoal.[92] In 1915, according to the forest inspector and future governor of the province Antenor Álvarez, 137 *obrajes* (logging stations) were in operation, employing over 15,000 lumberjacks and turning out more than 2 million logs per year, equivalent to the 1,600 kilometers of rail track added within the previous decade.[93] Before the logging companies arrived, the province had been a fairly typical case of what anthropologist Anna Tsing calls a "peasant forest," an area of "interlocking uses" where grass prairies alternated with woodlands, maintained through seasonal, controlled forest fires to contain the spread of brushwood and weeds, which in turn favored the regrowth of young tree shoots.[94] By contrast, the massive logging of dominant tree species such as the red quebracho rapidly led to erosion due to exposure of unprotected soils to heavy rains. Lack of maintenance and irrigation caused by the exodus of the rural workforce to the logging stations also provoked the invasion of grasslands by dry shrubs, worsened still by the deterioration of the local microclimate due to the diminishing forest canopy. In addition to the near total destruction of edible forest fauna (depriving peasants of a crucial ingredient to their diet, as well as of a community-defining social experience), deforestation also produced a new, secondary environment of dry, thorny, and low-growing brushwood steppes and swamps, portrayed in a series of ink and tempera drawings by Argentine artist Antonio Berni (who lived in Santiago in the early 1950s) as a convulsive, hostile jumble of plant and insect life seemingly about to leap out of the frame of the image and at the beholder (fig. 6).

In this section I want to zero in on the frantic debates within Santiago del Estero's small intellectual and artistic milieu at the height of the environmental devastation wrought on the region by the logging industry. More particularly, I will take us into the year of the Great Drought in 1937 that caused widespread famine and rural exodus on a scale that briefly made headlines even in faraway Buenos Aires.[95] That same year, the poet, sociologist, and literary historian Bernardo Canal Feijóo—himself a native of Santiago del Estero—published his book-length study *Ensayo sobre la expresión popular artística en Santiago* (Essay on popular artistic expression in Santiago), which aimed to offer a comprehensive overview of the interactions between environment and creative expressions, the "integral pattern of landscape, customs, accents, localities," which represented the very bedrock of *santiagueño* identity.[96] Santiago del Estero, home to the first colonial city founded in Argentina, Canal Feijóo argued, could claim "a small superiority"

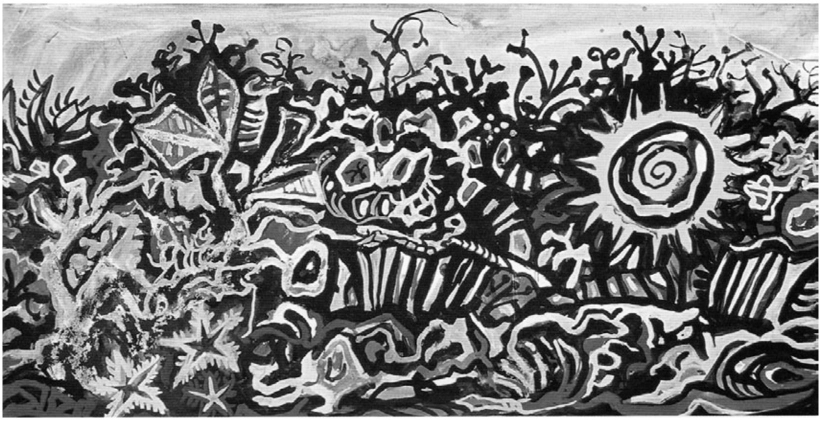


Fig. 6: Antonio Berni, *Sin título* (*Untitled*) (undated, 1950s). Tempera on paper, 29.5 × 58 cm. Private collection. Courtesy of Fundación Antonio Berni, Madrid.

over the rest of the country with its population of more recent immigrants, "emanating from a certain conservative capacity" as manifest in popular craftsmanship and in the persistence of the local Indigenous language, Quichua. These latter features, in turn, spoke to a convivial rather than contemplative attitude toward the environment. The *santiagueño* landscape, he continued, was a constitutive part of this "integral pattern," since it actively denied locals the objectifying detachment that characterized a colonial, extractive relation with the earth and, on the contrary, invited an attitude of immersiveness, of *ensimismamiento* (self-absorption):

> For many, I know, it does not exist as a landscape, for it is neither plain nor mountain. It is forest, scrub, undergrowth, salt flat. Whereas the other landscapes are shaped in distance, in flight, in infinity, as a whole, this one takes shape only in small corners, in obscure, casual details. It is not made to be seen from the train or from an airplane. In a way, it demands the cohabitation of the human subject; not simply its ecstasis. Man is *before* the plain, *before* the mountain, from the point of view of his affective relationship with the landscape; from this same point of view he could never be "before" the forest: he needs to be *in* it, surrounded, immersed in it.[97]

This intense attachment, Canal Feijóo argues, conferred a particular density on the region's culture, all the while making it extremely vulnerable in the face of external forces. Since these could not be incorporated into the "integral pattern" of native society, they were fatally bound to turn into pure destruction. As an economic system that remains "coolly external" to local historical reality, Canal Feijóo contends, the logging of Santiago's hardwood forests may have produced "fabulous wealth." However, the latter never actually belonged to the province: "In a mighty torrent, these riches were transferred directly from the source to other latitudes: away from the Province, to Buenos Aires, to London, to Brussels."[98] None other, he concludes, has been the baseline of provincial history over the last fifty years, the impact of which, "reflected in the native soul," has resulted in "a destruction of the landscape."[99]

Canal Feijóo's reflections emerged in the context of a vibrant cultural and literary scene in Santiago del Estero during the first decades of the twentieth century, fueled to a large extent by the very same logging boom, the disastrous human and environmental consequences of which his *Ensayo sobre la expresión popular artística en Santiago* was decrying. During this period initiatives such as the Archaeological Museum and the People's University of Santiago del Estero sprang to life, popular libraries were being set up, and multiple newspapers circulated throughout the province. The Asociación Cultural La Brasa (Ember Cultural Association), founded in 1925, aimed to gather these cultural and literary undertakings under a common umbrella, despite ideological discrepancies.[100] Important to bear in mind is this context of thriving intellectual activity, as much the effect of an accelerated modernization as of the destruction the latter wrought on the very foundations of local society, to fully grasp the extreme tension that runs through literary and cultural production from Santiago del Estero in the first half of the twentieth century. Writers and artists were faced with the challenge of addressing the destructive character of a modernity that, at the same time, also provided them with expressive languages to name this very process. Regionalist essayism, no less than fiction, had to draw on the philosophical and literary arsenal of modernity to address what this very modernity was in the process of destroying: the *hecho ancestral* (ancestral fact) of an enduring conviviality between material and symbolic regimes of production and their environment, "the phenomenon of permanent impact" of nature within culture.[101]

Orestes Di Lullo, whose work I have just quoted, was a medical doctor and founding member of La Brasa, as well as the author of *El bosque sin leyenda: Ensayo económico-social* (The forest without legend: Economic-social essay), also published in 1937 by a local *santiagueño* printing press. Just as Canal Feijóo, Di Lullo points to the close interaction between environmental devastation and the social, cultural, and political process at large: "Today, the razed earth has become something else, and so have we," he writes: "The logging industry has destroyed the landscape."[102] A truly exceptional work not only for its acute analytical insights but also for its powerful images and epic composition, *El bosque sin leyenda* marks a threshold moment in Di Lullo's oeuvre and career. After training as a medical doctor specializing in regional pandemics such as Chagas disease or the skin infection known locally as *paj* or "quebracho illness" (the focus of his doctoral thesis), Di Lullo gradually developed his lifelong interest in traditional medicine and the curative properties of plants into a more comprehensive engagement with questions of popular nutrition and access to healthcare and other social services. Following studies titled *La medicina popular en Santiago del Estero* (Popular medicine in Santiago del Estero, 1929) and *La alimentación popular* (Popular nutrition, 1935), between 1943 and 1944 Di Lullo also authored the multivolume *El folclore de Santiago del Estero* (Folklore of Santiago del Estero), building on research he carried out in the process of establishing the provincial history museum in 1941, which he directed until his retirement in 1967. Drawing on science and culture alike, *El bosque sin leyenda* anticipates ecoliterary classics such as Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* by several decades, in an unprecedented attempt to understand the multiple intersections between socioeconomic and cultural factors on the one hand, and a "nature" understood on the other, from a vantage point informed as much by Di Lullo's parasitological and epidemiological research as by his fervent Catholicism, as an organic totality: "Because Creation is the organization of the eternal, or better, the perpetuation of life, constantly renewing itself, such that it gains a single physiognomy impossible to unmake, which persists through time."[103]

Combining this holistic scientific vision with highly evocative literary language, Di Lullo's text divides its attention between the ecological effects of deforestation and what we might call the social anatomy of the *obraje*, the logging station, an institution he describes as a tentacular—half organic, half techno-economic—entity (fig. 7). The book is divided into three parts in a gradual movement of abstraction taking us from naturalistic description toward conceptual and historical synthesis. *El bosque sin leyenda* begins introducing in short narrative vignettes the main actors and productive operations of the logging machinery, from the lumberjacks' departure from their villages ("El éxodo" [Exodus]) to their solitary work felling trees in the forest ("La hachada" [Felling]); the storage, loading, and transport of the logs ("La rodeada," "La cargada," and "La acarreada" [Assembling, loading, and moving]), and the cutting up of timbers and carbonizing of firewood at the mill ("La labrada" and "La quemada" [Cutting and burning]). Finally, Di Lullo narrates the lumberjacks' escape from the *obraje*, on the run from the stations' militia-like overseers, the *capangas*, heavily indebted and physically wasted by accidents, disease, and malnutrition ("El regreso" [The return]). Ensuing from this impressionistic catalog of human types and their functions in the extractive machine is a more systematic analysis of workers' enslavement, including the exclusive sale of provisions through the company-owned stores ("La Proveeduría" [General store]) and the complicity of state governments in granting concessions and building railroads for the sole benefit of the logging industry ("El ferrocarril" [The railway]). The survey concludes with an economic, social, and po-

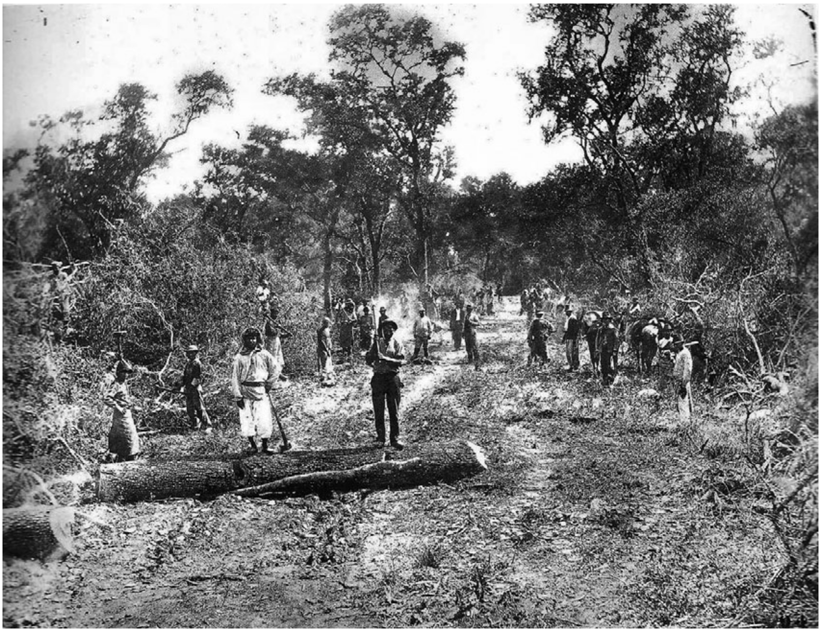


Fig. 7. Lumberjacks at a logging station in northwestern Argentina, ca. 1900. Archivo Fotográfico del Ferrocarril de Santa Fe, Argentina.

litical assessment (“Resultados de la explotación forestal” [Results of forest exploitation]), as well as its effects on the more-than-human (“La madre tierra” [Mother Earth]), before moving on to an apocalyptic vision of the burned-down forest (“El incendio del bosque” [The forest on fire]). Here, however, in a sudden change of tone, Di Lullo sees emerging from the ashes the faint hope of a “truce” (“Tregua”), calling on national government to make common cause with science rather than capital and to reorganize the exploitation and preservation of nature (“Parques nacionales” [National parks]). Technology, he insists, must be employed for the benefit of workers and the environment alike (“El obraje de mañana” [The logging station of tomorrow]).

For Di Lullo, the logging industry was guilty of two major crimes: on the one hand it had corroded the social fabric of the province; on the other it was interfering with the natural rhythms of the earth. The terms in which *El bosque sin leyenda* alerts us to people’s loss of attachment to the native soil carry a strong moral undertone as they invoke a lost golden age of pastoral bliss:

> The farmhands had once been the energy reserve of the land. The logging industry sucked them dry, threw them away . . . No more orchards of blessed earth, no more overflowing, if hard-won, harvests. Gone is the peace and tranquility of germinating fields . . . They had deserted life. And on being called by the forest, they went to their deaths. It was not even betrayal or enslavement that caused the most damage. The worst was losing their vocation for agriculture and for herding. Fifty years of industrial logging have destroyed the tradition of a people reared to work a plow and to tend to the herds.[104]

By interfering with rainfall cycles and thus diminishing the native fauna and flora, Di Lullo continued, deforestation had left the region's soils lifeless and barren. His description of the transformation of razed woodlands into steppes and swamps combines the naturalist's technical vocabulary with the storyteller's sense of drama and attention to the clash of living temporalities: "The humus of the soil, slowly stratified through countless years of exfoliation and moisture, dried up under the intense sunlight, to be pulverized in the arms of the hurricanes crossing the plains with their court of dust clouds in tail," Di Lullo writes: "The fat of the land, once protected by dense canopies, has been buried under gales of sand, and its miraculous, bursting power of germination has been suffocated through immersion in other, more sterile soils, which the whirlwinds carry away into the distance."[105] The logging of the native forests, in short, has given way to a "a postwar vegetation—an all-out war that is being waged against the forest by Man. It is a vegetation that lives with a defensive attitude, as if it were under constant attack."[106]

This shared degradation of men and their environment harks back, for Di Lullo, to a common cause: the perverse transformation, on behalf of extractive capitalism, of human labor into pure, death-driven negativity, into "the labor of the entire being for the sole purpose of killing itself."[107] In the logging forest, even survival is but a prolonged form of suicide: "Working to live as a slave. Working so as not to die."[108] Logging, Di Lullo claims, is a death-sowing activity that leaves the earth "depleted of all life."[109] In *El bosque sin leyenda*, this destructive frenzy culminates in the apocalyptic image of trees being piled up and prepared to be burned at the stake, reduced to charcoal: an industrialized form of murder of nonhuman lives that is described here in an open allusion to the Christian martyrological tradition. At the same time, in this tragic and final moment of suffering, immediately before it is reduced to ashes, the forest's vegetal community is gathered once more in its rich diversity, as witnessed by the long enumeration of tree species that is also a kind of eulogy:

> At last, the furnace, ready once more, raises its lifeless hump. In its entrails, side by side, lie the myrrh tree, the *chañar*, the flowering acacia and the resinous brea, the mistol tree and the oak, the *cina-cina* and the *espinillo*, the *guayacán*, the *quebracho*, the pepper tree, and the *itín*, all the wealth of the earth, after its juices have been sucked out from it. And suddenly the wood burner, flaming torch in hand, sets fire to the pile. The sacrifice has been consummated . . . The plume of smoke shadowing the forest, rising in thick bubbles from the oven's mouth, has a different meaning from the smoke that rises from a factory chimney. It is not smoke that redeems; it is sterile smoke, the smoke of destruction.[110]

In his attempt to identify the structural causes of this intermingling of environmental and historical forces, Di Lullo's essay becomes itself caught in a tension that its author only partially acknowledges. Within the textual form, this tension manifests itself in an alternation between two poetic registers: the pastoral and the epic. In the idealized vision of pastoral memory, the world before the logging companies' arrival resurges full of Edenic associations of bread-yielding fields and fertile plains. Yet, within the same page or even the same sentence, Di Lullo also suddenly switches to an epic vision of history, which sees in the caravans of peasants departing in the direction of the logging stations the tragic heroes of a vast rebellion against the rural *latifundio*, the property regime responsible for concentrating scarce fertile lands in few hands. The tension remains unresolved, driving Di Lullo to call onto the scene, in the role of deus ex machina, science and the state as the supposedly neutral, disinterested arbiters of the contradictions the author cannot seem to resolve. The final pages of *El bosque sin leyenda* thus offer, as historian Adrián Gorelik puts it, "a typically voluntaristic passage, which aims to fix by way of a technological leap a rift that is, in fact, political and cultural in kind."[111] In Di Lullo's book, the contradiction that this techno-voluntaristic leap is trying to conceal is also one between different forms of conceiving the relation between culture and nature. Whereas, from the vantage point of pastoral nostalgia, the lost equilibrium between traditional culture and the environment had been eternal and unchanging and thus also outside of history, the epic vision of peasants struggling to break the chains that tied them to an unforgiving, hostile earth has difficulties in reconciling its narrative with the environmentalism that underwrites *El bosque sin leyenda*'s defense of the forest's community of more-than-human lives.

In Canal Feijóo, this same difficulty faced by Di Lullo of reconciling two seemingly opposite poetic and cultural repertoires of thinking about culture and nature appears in close association with the idea of landscape. In the opening essay of *Ñan* ("path" in Quichua), the journal he edited from 1932 to 1934 (and of which he was, in fact, the sole author), Canal Feijóo queries the meaning of the Santiago del Estero landscape—one that, he asserts, might never actually have merited that title in the first place. For Canal Feijóo, landscape, as a "psycho-geographic event,"[112] neither is purely a natural fact nor does it exist solely in the mind of an observer who projects onto nature his own aesthetic intentions. Rather, landscape emerges as an effect of the *juego* (play) in which both become involved, resulting in mutual affections and transformations. How—Canal Feijóo asks—can we conceive in such terms an apparently formless or even *deformed* spatial ensemble, to all appearances devoid of any ordering principle, if not as a nonlandscape that encourages uprootedness and forges a mentality of passionate extremes: a culture of constant resistance and rebellion against its own environment?

Canal Feijóo introduces us to this cataclysmic nature in a section of his essay titled precisely "El paisaje santiagueño" (The landscape of Santiago), in which he also discusses the forms of popular aesthetic expression triggered by the encounter with this peculiar environment. The local landscape, Canal Feijóo claims, is experienced by its inhabitants with an attitude of fatalistic resignation toward "an earthly constriction . . . an unwelcoming world."[113] Local popular forms of expression are a kind of instinctive attempt at transcending this inhospitable environment: "The *santiagueño*'s soul suffers from secular enslavement to a nature devoid of landscape. Lacking the means, as yet, of dominating the world through intelligence, he entrusts redemption to the musical realm. In music, his soul excuses itself; through music, it takes flight."[114] It is the frailty, rather than the solidity, of people's ties to the earth, Canal Feijóo argues, which accounts for the singularity of the *fenómeno santiagueño*—the numinous or phenomenal identity and cohesion of

Santiago del Estero. The peasant "does not belong within nature, he does not find himself 'in the landscape.' Being in the landscape is to feel dominion over nature, or to be its welcome guest. Neither one nor the other is true for the *santiagueño* who feels like a stranger in his own land, at best its prisoner."[115]

However, in the subsequent issue of *Ñan* published two years later, breaking with his previous environmental determinism, Canal offers a wholly different view of this psychogeography, which he now sees as being shot through with histories of struggle. In the long essay "Imagen de Santiago: Reconocimiento de una provincia desconocida" (Image of Santiago: Survey of an unknown province), he zeroes in on the fateful triad of "El rapto del ferrocarril" (Abducted by the railway), "El asalto de la selva" (Assault on the forest), and "La destrucción del paisaje" (Destruction of the landscape).[116] The bone-dry land where, in the previous essay, Canal Feijóo had sought a clue for understanding the native soul, is now revealed to be but the result of decades-long practices of pillage, which have victimized environment and culture in equal parts. If the railway has uprooted the peasantry and depopulated the countryside, the logging stations arriving on its heels, while satisfying the railroad's insatiable need for timbers and charcoal, are also "a formidable trench" in the war of position waged against the forest, in which "the song of the saws performs a rigorous industrial autopsy."[117] Together, railway and logging stations have provoked the *despaisamiento* (unlandscaping) of the entire province.

Even more than deforestation and rural exodus, and even more than the cumulative effects of both, Canal Feijóo's neologism addresses the withdrawal of any kind of relation between "man" and "nature" other than radical destructiveness. "Despaisamiento"—unlandscaping—is Canal Feijóo's term for thinking through the natural history of the Capitalocene as a human violence entering and spreading through the web of life. The lumberjacks working in the logging stations, he writes,

> found themselves more miserable than they had been at birth, since they had forsaken even their landscape. What other Argentine could weep a tragedy as enormous as the one endured by this *santiagueño*, condemned to carry out the destruction, pure and simple, of his own landscape? And what had he got out of all this? . . . One day, he suddenly found himself alone and unprotected. With the last working day, his landscape had gone, and that day's clearing already

> represented his own exile. It was as if unlandscaping had arrived all of a sudden. And in the uncertainty of this trance, his soul begins to follow the compass of the railway, as if under a spell.[118]

"Unlandscaping" entails, in linguistic, cultural, social, and political terms, the loss of all active forces of autonomy and, in consequence, the very same "integral pattern" to which Canal Feijóo had previously attributed the province's singular cohesion. Even if migration had already been a staple of regional labor regimes long before the rise of the logging industry, only the combined effects of the railway and the logging station transformed this long-standing practice into ceaseless flight: an emigration of between fifty and sixty thousand peasants per year, as Canal Feijóo estimates in "Los éxodos rurales" (Rural exodus), an essay originally written in 1938 and later added to his book-length study *De la estructura mediterránea argentina* (On the structure of inland Argentina).[119]

Part of the unfinished, multivolume project titled "Sociología Mediterránea Argentina" (Sociology of inland Argentina), *De la estructura mediterránea* aimed to focus specifically on the crisis and disintegration of rural communities in the "interior"—a embodied notion of geography that, Canal argues, in Argentina is commonly counterposed to Buenos Aires and the coastal region. The "interior" exists, he argues, only to be labeled the cause of all the country's real or perceived ills: the culprit "of all difficulties, relapses and delays" is always "the 'interior,' standing in for, at different times, hinterland, province, or masses."[120] But this only means that "a spirit of evasion" is undergirding Argentine national discourse, which remains under the spell of the "mirage of the Pampas"—the fantasy of an unlimited fertile plain that has only encouraged estrangement from the material realities of the land. But the day of reckoning has now arrived:

> Nature, over the last fifty years, has lost its generosity and sweetness—possibly in angry response to the foolishness with which it has been treated by Man. Rainfall averages have diminished . . . Insufficiency of liquids is followed, mechanically, by erosion, sterility of the surfaces accessible to subsistence work, and the spread of zoological plagues . . . Whichever relation there may be among these climate events, what is beyond doubt is that today, sanitary conditions in our countryside are horrifying. We are used to hearing about

> malaria in particular, but just as bad and wide-spread is the lack of assistance thanks to which all the other rural plagues are on the rise, too: mountain goiter, trachoma, leishmaniasis, brucellosis . . . venereal diseases, syphilis.[121]

In his 1948 essay, in fact, Canal Feijóo was already reflecting on a climate of history in which the more-than-human assemblages of rainfall and drought cycles, of soil chemistry and erosion, and of bacteriological and viral epidemics must be understood as so many active responses to the *insensatez* (foolishness) of human actions. At the same time as he brings into view this natural history, this entanglement of human actions with more-than-human responses, Canal Feijóo also regrets "the loss of . . . a deep kind of husbandry that has always gone hand in hand with working the earth."[122] Yet, since these ancestral and convivial forms of knowledge have now become lost to the same degree in which the soils they were once applied to have turned sterile—Canal Feijóo concludes—a new, disillusioned and rational, attitude is called for to contain the vicious cycle. Just as in the coda of Di Lullo's book, here the very figures and concepts that had previously made it possible to name the "integral pattern" of provincial life are in the end sacrificed, and the "ancient and, possibly, today merely cartographic concept of Province, [is] replaced with the more vital, reasonable and realistic one of Region."[123]

Yet as regionalism finally hedged its bets on these dreams of technical fixes, of science-engineered damage containment—parallel to the emergence of a popular developmentalist government in which it briefly believed to have found a sympathetic interlocutor—the movement also all but acknowledged that unlandscaping—*despaisamiento*—had already run its course. In Canal Feijóo's 1948 essay *la planificación integral* (integral planning) takes the place previously occupied by the *juego integral* (integral pattern) underwriting his own earlier studies of popular expressions. This movement of abstraction and detachment from a densely interwoven natural-cultural "phenomenon," which had now turned into little more than a "cartographic abstraction" and in which the author himself confessed to have "lost his footing," is not unlike the experience of the tragic hero in Canal Feijóo's projected sociology of the Argentine interior: the rural migrant displaced from his native soil by the effects of *despaisamiento*, of unlandscaping. Indeed, what Canal Feijóo promotes as "a remedy" for the *mal del cuerpo* (sickness of the body) that has befallen the region and its inhabitants alike[124] is yet again an immunitary shield that effectively reinstates, even if to contain the effects of a fallacious modernity, the boundaries and oppositions this same modernity had been founded on.

Just as for Di Lullo (and perhaps also for Horacio Quiroga), for Canal Feijóo to let go of the promise of an "intelligent colonization" capable of providing humans with a stable and sustainable immunity against an insurgent nature, proved in the end too much of a challenge to be imagined. Here, indeed, was a limit that even the most dissident of Latin American regionalisms hardly ever dared to cross. But to acknowledge these limitations does not mean that we have to forsake the insights of Latin America's literary and intellectual regionalisms into what Jane Bennett calls a "vital materialism": "the capacity of things—edibles, commodities, storms, metals—not only to impede or block the will and designs of humans but also to act as quasi agents or forces with trajectories, propensities, or tendencies of their own."[125] Nothing less than this capacity of things and assemblages for intervening in human affairs is what is being called out in Di Lullo's and Canal Feijóo's writings, precisely because these affairs are never exclusively human ones to begin with. Their essays from the margins of the nation—which, at the same time are also the focal edge of global extractivist circuits and networks—also make a point about the essentially political nature of these more-than-human agencies. Indeed, if the stories of environmental insurgency we analyzed in the previous section of this chapter called on the biopotential capacities of living *communitas* to resist and overturn the immunological biopower of the zone of sacrifice, the essayistic critiques of *despaisamiento* studied in this final section also draw our attention to the coagentiality of nonorganic materialities (soil and climate), as well as their—difficult and contradictory—interwovenness with forms of aesthetic expression on the one hand and with the spiral of "creative destruction" unleashed by extractive capitalism, on the other. Regionalist literature and thought, in short, deserve to take pride of place in the project of marking out, in Héctor Hoyos's apt expression, "Latin American literature as a site of articulation [between] historical materialism and new materialisms."[126]

CHAPTER 2

The Country and the City

How can solid matter be put in motion; how can it be injected with flow? How can architecture become an art of space as well as of place? Flying over the Paraná River toward Asunción had been a revelation, Charles-Édouard Jeanneret—the Franco-Swiss urbanist better known as Le Corbusier—told his Argentine audience in October 1929 upon returning to Buenos Aires aboard a hydroplane facilitated by his friend, the novelist Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's South American airmail company. Suddenly, Le Corbusier went on, the airborne vision of great streams had made him realize how, in the current of liquids just as in that of ideas, the straight line tends to be abandoned in the face of obstacles, only to be regained in the moment of greatest undulation, when the loops reconnect "at the outermost point of their curves . . . It is the lesson of the meander."[1] Just as the waters of a river, when all motion appears to have stalled, finally crush the obstacle that detains them, "thus a pure idea has burst forth, a solution has appeared . . . Moments of 'simplicity' are the unknotting of acute and critical crises of complication."[2]

The issue here then is not just how abstract reason imposes itself on (as well as through) brute force. Rather, the meander's lesson is also about a certain way of seeing, capable of relating the visible surface of things to the laws underwriting their relations with one another. At ground level, Le Corbusier writes in *La ville radieuse* (*The Radiant City*, 1933), when "walking through the maze" of Rio de Janeiro, one easily

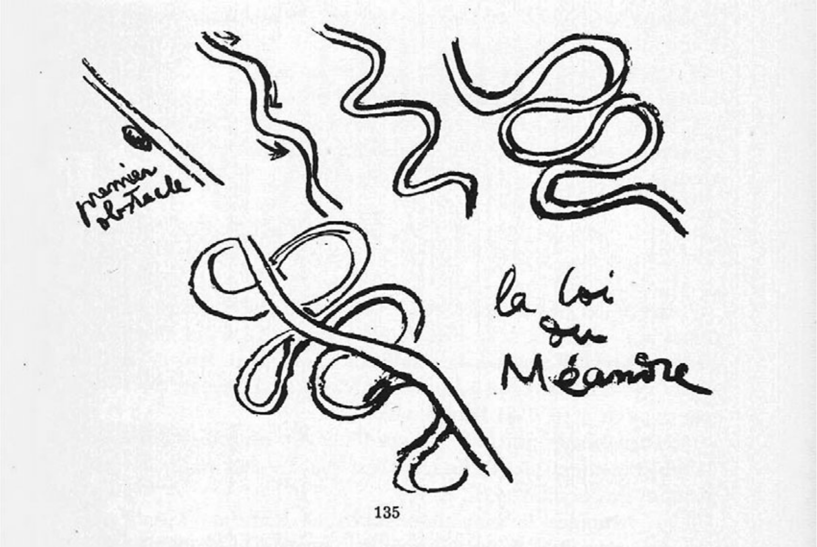


Fig. 8. Le Corbusier (Charles-Édouard Jeanneret), *La loi du méandre* (The law of the meander). Ink drawing. From *Précisions sur un état présent de l'architecture et de l'urbanisme* (Paris: Éditions Vincent, Fréal & Cie., 1930).

loses sight of the real city: "you rapidly lose all sense of the whole. Take a plane and you will see, and you will understand, and you will decide."[3] For Le Corbusier, what the technology of flight offers up is a morphological vision, one that discovers in the play of natural forms the laws of abstract reason and thus derives the transcendent ideal from the material immanence of nature—just as, indeed, the meander eventually gives birth to the straight line.

Le Corbusier's 1929 journey to Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay was a foundational event for Latin American architectural modernism, yet as Graciela Silvestri argues, South America "was also central for Le Corbusier: it is only after this journey that, thrilled by America's great dimensions, he starts experimenting with urbanistic proposals that will change the development of the modern city."[4] What Le Corbusier discovered in the continent's vast expanse was nothing less than the Earth. The planet itself as "a liquid sphere . . . in constant evaporation and condensation" was now to become the canvas for a new, literally planetary, language of architecture.[5] The very idea of the city as an organism with interdependent metabolic functions—circulation, leisure, dwelling, work—was but a transposition onto a different scale of this earth organism seen from the air. The urban machine, says Le Corbusier, must mimic the earth machine in which it remains grounded: "When the solutions are great and when nature comes to join them happily, or better still, when nature integrates itself in them, it is then that one approaches *unity*."[6]

In this chapter, from the disconcerting closeness of the extractive frontier underwriting Latin American regionalism and its literary and political sequels, we shall move to the opposite pole of modernist cultural production: the capital cities and their very different relation with an "interior" that frequently remains what Paraguay had been for Le Corbusier: a flyover state. Yet rather than, as Latin Americanist literary and cultural criticism has a habit of doing, reinforcing these—almost always coastal—metropoles' self-attributed status as "cultural centers" of the nation, here I want to focus on the peculiar kind of anxiety that haunts what Ericka Beckman poignantly calls the "import catalogue" of Latin American modernism.[7] National modernities, as Beckman shows, emerged in close interaction with the customs clearing houses in the immediate vicinity of the principal art institutions: in a tense negotiation of the relative values of local "raw materials" and the formal gadgetry allowing for their refinement into "authentic" art, including audiovisual media and compositional forms from abroad. But to make a bargain, Latin American modernism also had to perform, time and again, a particular kind of disavowal that is brilliantly summed up in the second "mapping" included in *Amereida* (1967), the anonymous, multivoiced poetic report of navigating America's "Sea Within" to which we turn at the end of this chapter (fig. 9). The black dots of urbanization straddling the coastline like mussel banks and leaving the continental interior almost blank are read here as the sign of the fundamental "inconsistency" that is proper to a continent constitutively and persistently misrecognized and disavowed in what it contains: "no vivimos acaso—the poem asks—con ausencia o falta de continente / ni querido ni olvidado / pero apagado y mudo?" (Do we not, in fact, live / with an absence or lack of continent / neither beloved nor forgotten / but turned off and muted?).[8]

Amereida, as we shall see, would respond to these questions by taking poetry itself on the road, by bringing the poetic act of naming and calling out as close as possible to this muted, inner space of "contained" continentality. But even before this late-modernist antiepic of travel that would in time also lead to the foundation of a "city" based on an idea of integrating nature and form very different from Le Corbusier's, dis-

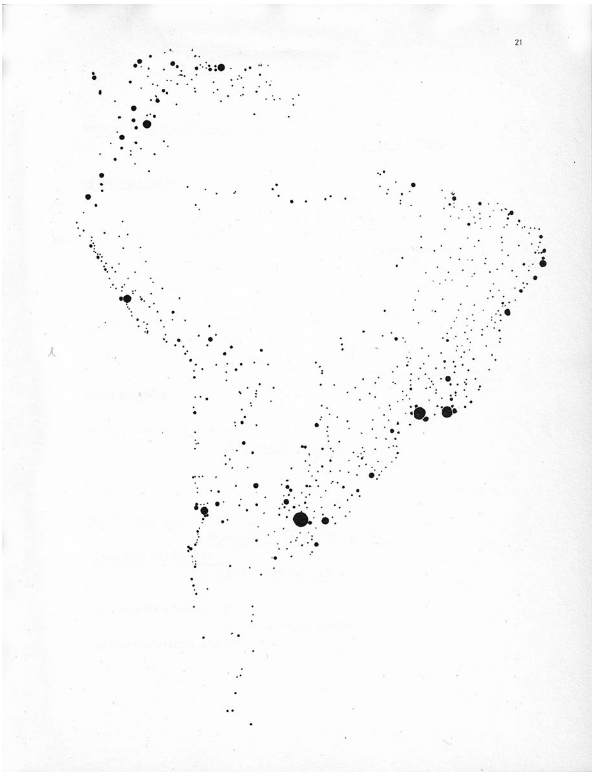


Fig. 9. "Vivir en los contornos de una figura" (Living on the outline of a figure). Map. From *Amereida* (Santiago: Editorial Cooperativa Lambda, 1967), 171.

sident strands of Latin American modernism had already challenged the Franco-Swiss architect's voiding of American space, conducted from the detached and disembodied vantage point of airborne vision, of its messy, meandering entanglements between human and more-than-human histories and worldmakings. The Latin American avant-gardes, I will argue, returned to the double register of landscape in visu and in situ as a way of wresting representational sovereignty from the "imperial eyes" of colonial chroniclers and neocolonial resource prospectors. But in doing so they also had to acknowledge (voluntarily or not) that this effort of reclaiming the legacies of colonial landscaping was bound to run aground, literally speaking, under the weight of the material and living assemblages it was summoning to the scene.

This insistence of a "ground-level" type of locality insistently re-emerging at the very heart of modernist spaces predicated on the abstraction of living ensembles into "forms" and "laws" was embodied, in emblematic fashion, by Roberto Burle Marx's famed roof-garden designed for Rio de Janeiro's Ministry of Education and Health building constructed between 1936 and 1942—the flagship of the Estado Novo's politics of cultural modernization. Based on a blueprint prepared by Le Corbusier himself, subsequently adapted by a team of up-and-coming Brazilian architects helmed by Lúcio Costa, the building inserted a fourteen-story, rectangular-shaped glass, steel, and concrete carcass into downtown Rio, crossed at right angle by a low-rise exhibition wing meeting the main building at the level of the pilotis and thus also turning the remainder of the lot into an open, walk-through plaza interrupting the urban maze. Whereas Le Corbusier had suggested replicating the building's geometry at ground level through palm alleys bordering the access plaza, Burle Marx's intervention substituted these with a design of amoebic-shaped flowerbeds strewn across the plaza and on the roof of the exhibition wing, planted with monochromatic groups of daylilies, philodendrons, heliconia, strelitzia, and other native herbs and shrubs. On the plaza, he also planted native palm varieties and pau brasil trees, echoing as well as breaking up the symmetry of the concrete pilotis sustaining the intersected wings of the building (fig. 10). In its "fluvial iconography," Valerie Fraser argues, Burle Marx's gardenscape also represents an "anthropophagic pun" on Le Corbusier's formal extractivism, which injects the meandering forms of tropical nature (as seen from an airplane) into the rectilinear space of modernist architecture.[9] Burle Marx's undulating designs (which also make their way into the building by way of the amoebic-shaped carpet patterns on the second floor) critically interrupt the functionalist geometry and anchor it in its surroundings: not just the natural backdrop of Guanabara Bay and the coastal mountains that at the time were still clearly visible from the area but also the city itself as a living environment. Countering the building's right-angle frontality, the planted patches at ground level suggest approaches that meander and divert sideways rather than taking the most direct line. But at the same time this rhythmic interplay between nature and culture remains an abstract and nonmimetic kind: in the top-down view from the upper floors (akin to Le Corbusier's aerial vision), the paths and flowerbeds on the plaza and the exhibition roof compose a cartography that could represent microscopic as well as geological forms.

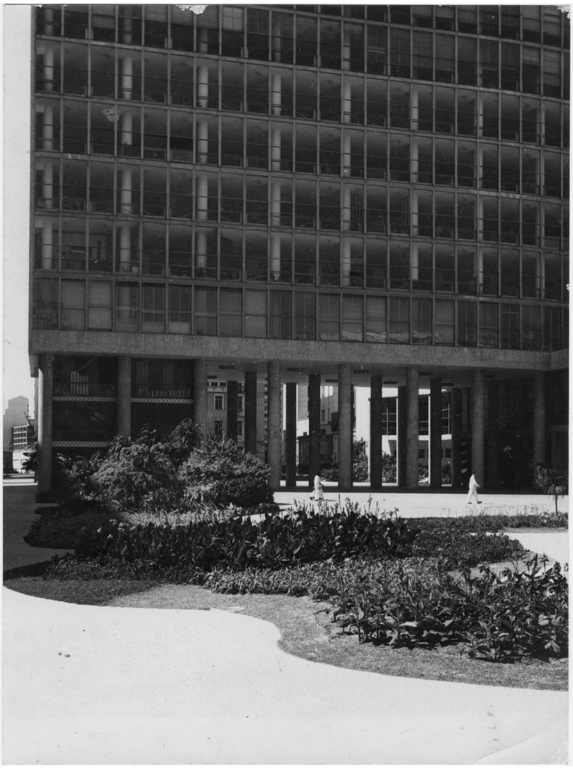


Fig. 10. Ministry of Education and Health, south facade, Rio de Janeiro, ca. 1945. Photograph by Marcel Gautherot. Courtesy of Arquivo do IPHAN, Rio de Janeiro.

In the pages that follow, I want to chart some instances of this new kind of interplay—mediated now by technologies of accelerated transport, communication, and reproduction—between the two registers of colonial landscaping, the landscape in visu and in situ, the journey and the garden. In these, I argue, just as in the jungle novels analyzed in chapter 1, an urge to appropriate landscape's formal repertoire as a way of asserting a—national and postcolonial—sovereignty over nonhuman lives and materialities clashes with (or alternatively invokes and encourages) the reconstellation of alliances inevitably triggered by this postcolonial relandscaping: human alliances (say, between urban avant-gardists and folk artists, artisans, and herbalists from the backlands) but also more complex transspecies and material assemblages. In these crossings between the spaces and places of modernism, two new protagonists will also make their appearance: the accident and the weed.

ACCIDENTAL JOURNEYS: AUTOMOBILITY AND THE AVANT-GARDE

Traveling by car from Bogotá toward the Andes in 1936, Colombian novelist Eduardo Caballero Calderón suddenly realized how, "against the speed of the car's violent advance toward the barrier of fog, the countryside beyond appeared as motionless as an eternal thing, identical to itself, while the road quickly receded beneath the wheels and thus created, and destroyed, within myself, in never-ending succession, realities, memories, dreams."[10] This strange new pleasure Caballero Calderón encountered, "of letting myself go and letting the doors of daydreaming open wide,"[11] facilitated by an environment that ceases to claim even minimal attention, responds to the same "withdrawal of landscape" that historian Wolfgang Schivelbusch associates with the railway passenger. The rail traveler of the European and North American "Second Industrial Revolution," Schivelbusch argues, only perceives the landscape through the machine ensemble—tracks and steam engine—such that the foreground, the area through which painterly landscape had defined the relation between beholder and visual object, fades behind the speed of movement.[12] This disappearance of the in-between—the area where the image had negotiated its own limit and also the space of social interaction between travelers and their surroundings—triggers a techno-ontological separation. From now on, drivers and passengers will perceive surrounding space as pure exteriority. "Seeing the countryside in this way, forever receding, forever different and forever similar, one loses sense not just of space but of time," Caballero Calderón reflects: "Today I have never stopped crying out: What a beautiful tree!—when this same tree had already become lost in the distance, collapsing into the soft line of the horizon, and its fleeting image now drifts in a sea of more recent ones."[13]

This fleetingness of visions results in a smooth space in which the gaze fails to take hold, to the effect that the traveler is quite literally encapsulated in his vehicle: "the superficial nature of the landscape and of my thoughts make me turn inward onto myself," Caballero Calderón concludes.[14] As landscape withdraws into indifference, speed instead allows the traveler access to another, more structural or rhythmic—indeed, a morphological—vision of continental space, not unlike Le Corbusier's aerial view of great natural forces. There is, in early accounts of motorized travel, something of an origin scene of Latin American abstractionism by way of the liberation of aesthetics from the referential function of colonial landscaping achieved thanks to technology. Yet, over the first half of the twentieth century, such flights of fancy actually tended, more often than not, to come to an abrupt halt. "On December 11, at noon, we took off again, with myself in the lead," the Argentine poet, novelist, and physician Juan Carlos Dávalos narrates an attempt, in 1928, to cross the Andes between Salta (Argentina) and Antofagasta (Chile) aboard his Ford Cabriolet,

> but even before we had done half a kilometer, the difficulties started. The trail was nothing but dunes. The wheels span throwing sand clouds into the air. And since the Chorrillos slope involves at least a three-mile climb, these three miles cost us the rest of the day: half a day of marching one step, then another, like a man forced to walk on his knees, working ourselves up incredible gradients on which each car had to be pulled by three or even four mules, with the motor running at full force. Nightfall surprised us still fighting the dunes atop Chorrillos, once again at four thousand eight hundred meters above sea level. A chilly little Siberian wind was blowing.[15]

What I call the "accidental journey" of early twentieth-century Latin American traveling artists refers not just to the continuous experience of the "machine ensemble" breaking down, for lack of passable roads or of supply chains for fuel and spare parts almost as soon as one left the perimeter of the big cities. It also calls attention to the syncopated space-time pattern of acceleration and interruption these experiences brought into being. In fact, syncopation—a rhythmic gesture of bringing acceleration to an abrupt halt or of making apparent stillness suddenly revert into speed—is also the characteristic most readily associated with the new forms of dance music popularized all over Latin America by modern communications media such as the radio. The accidental journey, I suggest, confronted travelers with a striated space-time continuum—to use Deleuze and Guattari's expression—in which the ground, reasserting its presence whenever the "machine ensemble" grinds to a halt, incessantly interrupts and contradicts the smooth space forged by motorized speed.[16] If the Latin American avant-gardes, as Fernando Rosenberg has succinctly argued, developed a critique of modernism's telos by foregrounding their concern with space rather than time, this critique also responded to the aspiration and challenge of forging, in the contradictory chronotope of the accidental journey, a counterrhythm, a syncopated narrative and poetic time, capable of accounting for intersections of temporalities that were incompatible with the frenzy of speed experienced by European futurists.[17]

Yet even in accidented fashion, the journey form of the landscape in visu still provided these artists with a narrative, poetic, or musical framework, from Argentine surrealist Oliverio Girondo's poem "El tren expreso" (Express train, 1923) to Chilean Vicente Huidobro's "Aviso a los turistas" (A warning to tourists, 1925), or from Brazilian Carlos Drummond de Andrade's narrative travelogue "Viagem de Sabará" (Journey to Sabará, 1929) to his compatriot Heitor Villa-Lobos's orchestral toccata "Trenzinho do Caipira" (The little train of the Caipira), first performed the following year. Remarkably, many of these journey-themed works also resulted from a new kind of relationship with European fellow travelers, in a clean break with the previous century's *letrados* (men of letters) and their mostly bookish association with traveling naturalists from overseas. Whereas in postindependence Latin America elite men of letters would sift through foreign-language travelogues in search for literary settings rather than set off themselves toward the rural interior, the avant-garde traveler became an actual travel companion of overseas visitors: an "apprentice tourist" (in Brazilian writer-poet-composer Mário de Andrade's humorous expression) who entered into playful yet also critical exchanges with fellow passengers from Europe and North America. Quite literally, trains and steamers, airplanes and cars, now became what Mary Louise Pratt termed "contact zones"—spaces of conviviality among vernacular and cosmopolitan tourists.[18] In Mexico the frantic, year-long ramblings of Sergei Eisenstein and his crew in 1931 to shoot footage for their ill-fated revolutionary epic *Qué viva México* also became a regular occasion for bohemian outings of visiting artists and intellectuals who occasionally participated in the shootings. In Brazil the presence of Franco-Swiss poet Blaise Cendrars (who visited the country in 1924, 1926, and 1927–28) also became the gathering point for a group of writers and painters from São Paulo who would join Cendrars for a collective excursion-pilgrimage to the Baroque mining towns of Minas Gerais, in an episode known in the annals of Brazilian modernism as the "Second Discovery of Brazil." However precarious, the expansion of transportation networks also conjured up a new, mobile time and space where emissaries of European modernism could rub shoulders with an emergent South American tourist class, offering ample occasions for comparing sketches and notebooks.

In 1933, less than ten years after Cendrars and his Brazilian friends had visited Ouro Preto (where they promptly created a "Society of Friends of the Historical Monuments of Brazil," chaired by poet-playwright Oswald de Andrade), the old mining town was declared Brazil's first national heritage site. Mário de Andrade—unrelated to Oswald—author of *Paulicéia desvairada* (Hallucinated city, 1922), a collection of free verse, cubist hymns to São Paulo's cityscape, drafted the legislation, which was approved by Congress that same year. The national heritage designation, subsequently extended to neighboring Diamantina, São João del Rei, Tiradentes, and Mariana, was passed at a time of extensive, state-funded highway construction (Brazil's first Federal Roads Law had been passed in 1927). Across Latin America, artistic travelogues reevaluating the visual, sonic, and material culture of previously remote regions also dialogued with a push for infrastructural integration spearheaded by modernizing governments, in close alliance with transnational oil and automobile industries. Artists and politicians joined forces with industrialists in the automobile clubs that sprouted all over the region. At São Paulo, the mayor (and future national president) Washington Luís also chaired the local chapter of the Movimento de Boas Estradas (Good roads movement, inspired by the homonymous US lobbying group), with Antonio Prado Júnior, brother of the essayist and art patron Paulo Prado and himself a future mayor of Rio de Janeiro, acting as treasurer.[19] At Caracas, the dictator Juan Vicente Gómez himself attended the inauguration in 1913 of the Venezuelan Automobile Club, a party organized—the magazine *Elite* reported—"by gentlemen who fancy sports and beautiful women."[20] Automobile travel, in contrast to the railway's arborescent grid, promised access to an open network of destinations and connections, putting within reach of city dwellers a vast "interior" that the railway had thus far bypassed.

The Ouro Preto Grande Hotel, designed in 1938 by Oscar Niemeyer and completed in 1944, is emblematic of this reevaluation of the times and spaces of the nation in light of modern technologies of vision and speed (fig. 11). In its audacious combination of allusions to the Baroque (including the tiled roof, the piano nobile housing the reception and cafeteria, and the curved access ramp mirroring the broad stairway of the eighteenth-century government palace across the square) with elements of International Style functionalism, the Grande Hotel offered visitors a modern platform from which to reappraise the past. In a passionate defense of his protégé's project, Lúcio Costa (future author of the urban masterplan for Brasília) singled out the automobile and the modern hotel as complementary elements that jointly allowed the nation's historical monuments to be made available for the appreciation and enjoyment of tourists:

> Just as the latest car model navigates the hillsides of this monumental city without causing visual offense to anyone, and even contributes to bring to life the sensation of "pastness," thus the construction of a modern hotel, in well-accomplished architecture, will not damage Ouro Preto in any way, even taking into account the sentimental touristic aspect, since, when seen next to a structure such as this one, so light and clear, so youthful if I may say so, the old rooftops stumbling over one another, the beautiful traceries of the portals of São Francisco do Carmo church, the Casa dos Contos [Mint], heavy as the stone wedges from the Itacolomy range—everything that makes this little past so full of substance to us—will appear much more distant, it will, so to speak, gain yet another century in age.[21]

Automobility offered access to a novel constellation of national space and time, but in the process also triggered a literary, visual and, most importantly, architectural production entrusted with reframing as

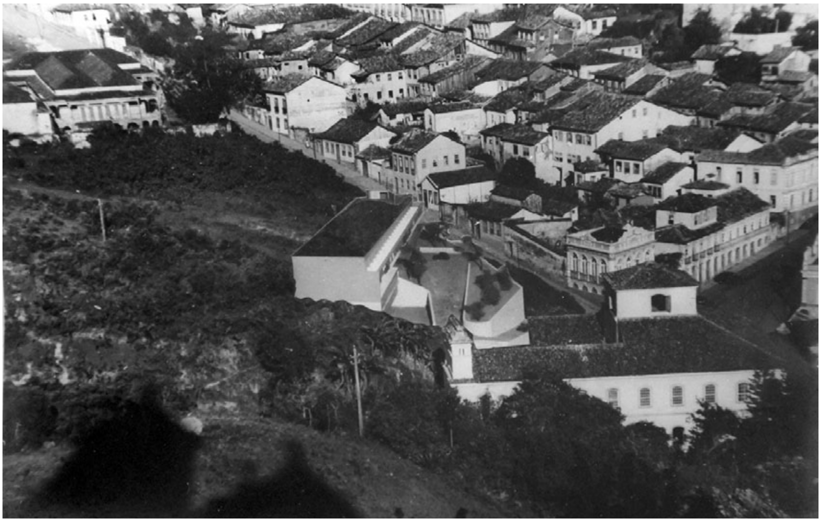


Fig. 11. Ouro Preto, 1939. Black-and-white photograph by Erich Hess. Courtesy of Arquivo do IPHAN, Rio de Janeiro.

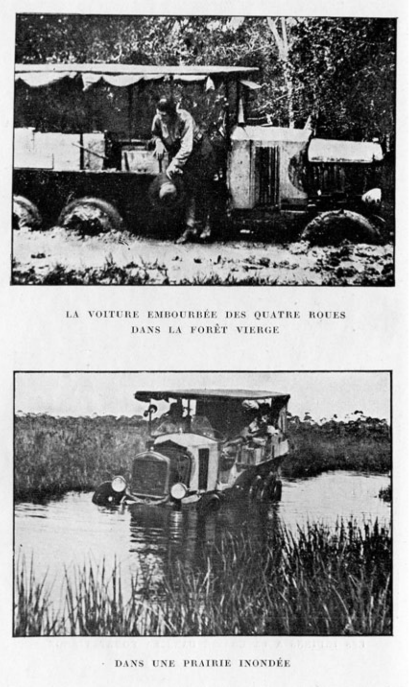
a "system of sights," the places and regions toward which this new, touristic geography was expanding.[22]

Yet the automobile's arrival in Latin America—the first vehicles were unloaded in Brazil and the River Plate even before 1900[23]—also sharply exposed the contradictions between agro-exporting, oligarchic societies with extreme concentrations of wealth and real estate, and Euro-American industrial modernity, which needed to offload into new export markets its surplus production and capital. Because of the lack of spare parts and trained mechanics (often imported to Latin America by wealthy car owners along with their machines), automobility remained, approximately until 1910, an exclusive pastime for a small urban elite, confined to a handful of paved streets in the main cities. Even so, with the first import agencies and repair shops opening shortly after the turn of the century, car ownership began to spread quickly, to the point of putting several Latin American countries level with—or even above—the European average: Argentina went from 9 imported cars in 1900 to 16 in 1901, 28 in 1902, and 62 in 1903; in Brazil, Rio de Janeiro counted with just 6 automobiles in 1903 and 99 in 1907, and São Paulo went from 5 cars in 1901 to 84 in 1904. In Montevideo, Uruguay, there were already as many as 59 cars in 1905 and 109 in 1906. Over the following decade, these numbers would rise exponentially: Argentina reported 4,800 cars in 1910, 75,000 in 1921, and 420,000 in 1931, becoming not just the country with the most cars in all of Latin America but also the fourth-ranking worldwide. Uruguay, during those same years, was the country with the third-highest number of cars per capita throughout the world. Brazil imported a total of 24,475 units from the US between 1908 and 1920, turning it into the fourth-to-fifth most important export market for North American manufacturers. In the region, only Mexico—runner-up to Argentina in the total number of cars—imported more automobiles from the US than Brazil had during the same period.[24]

Throughout Latin America, the rise of automobility also entailed new disputes over the right to public space and who was to enjoy access to a new regime of speed that impacted profoundly the socioeconomic as well as ecological physiognomy of the region. These included violent displacements of bodies in city and countryside, of which the frequently fatal accidents were only the most immediate consequence. Except for a few isolated voices, literary and artistic culture largely shared the enthusiasm with which Brazilian urban chronicler João do Rio celebrated the "automobile, lord of our time, creator of a new life, the enchanted knight of urban transformation."[25] Avant-garde journals such as Brazil's *Fon-*

Fon and *Klaxón* invoked in their very names the honking new soundscape of car traffic as an emblematic expression of their own strident assault on traditional mores, but they also regularly included literary accounts and even technical information on the latest gizmos of automobile technology. Enthusiastically backed by new illustrated magazines such as *Auto-Propulsão* and *Auto-Sport* in Brazil or *Motor* and *Automovilismo* in Argentina, the literary journals fervorously covered the latest feats of pilot-adventurers such as the French count Pierre Lesdain, the first to ascend Rio's Corcovado mountain in 1908 aboard a sixteen-horsepower, four-cylinder Brasier, or the Argentine José Piquero, the first to cross the Andes in 1905 from Las Cuevas, Mendoza, to Santiago de Chile, taking a mere seven days at the wheel of his Oldsmobile. A few years later, between 1913 and 1916, in the company of her copilot Mary Kenny, journalist and travel writer Ada Elflein drove across the plains of Patagonia while keeping her mostly female readers of *La Prensa* abreast of her adventures behind the wheel, which she promoted as "a form of physical and moral education" through which "woman can broaden her horizons, as she gains valuable geographical insights, understands and forms a close bond with the national soul, and develops energies that represent forces of life, which lie dormant in all those women condemned . . . to spend months or even years curled up in the cities."[26]

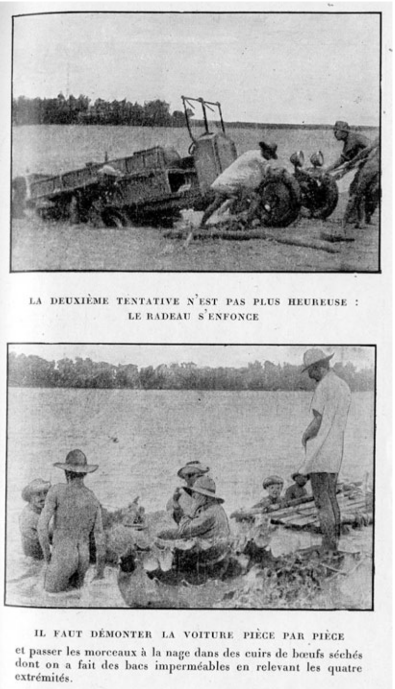
On September 12, 1926 (the same year Elflein's travelogue first appeared in book form), Roger Courteville, military attaché of the French Embassy, departed from Rio de Janeiro aboard a six-wheel Renault *camionnette*, arriving the following August in Lima, Peru, in a car that had little in common with the one that departed from the Brazilian capital almost a year before (see, e.g., figs. 12 and 13). When crossing the plains of Matto Grosso, the engine had broken down and only the chance encounter with a motorized army platoon saved the small party (which also included Courteville's wife, Marthe-Emma, and his mechanic Júlio Kotzent) from dying of hunger in the midst of the savanna. While they recovered at the barracks of Campo Grande, Courteville and Kotzent were able to fit a new Ford Model-T engine and radiator, courtesy of the army, and subsequently set course via Corumbá to Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, where a local blacksmith customized some spares for their broken gearbox. Even so, the engine proved too weak to resist the crossing of the Cordillera, and the travelers had to dismantle their vehicle and send the parts separately across to Tortora on the back of sixty-eight mules. There, during reassembly, the base frame broke and had to be replaced with a wooden chassis improvised by local carpenters.



LA VOITURE EMBOURBÉE DES QUATRE ROUES
DANS LA FORÊT VIERGE

DANS UNE PRAIRIE INONDÉE

Fig. 12. Top, “La voiture embourbée des quatre roues dans la forêt vierge.” Bottom, “Dans une prairie inondée.” From Roger Courteville, *La première traversée de l’Amérique du Sud en automobile* (Paris: Plon, 1930).



LA DEUXIÈME TENTATIVE N’EST PAS PLUS HEUREUSE :
LE RADEAU S’ENFONCE

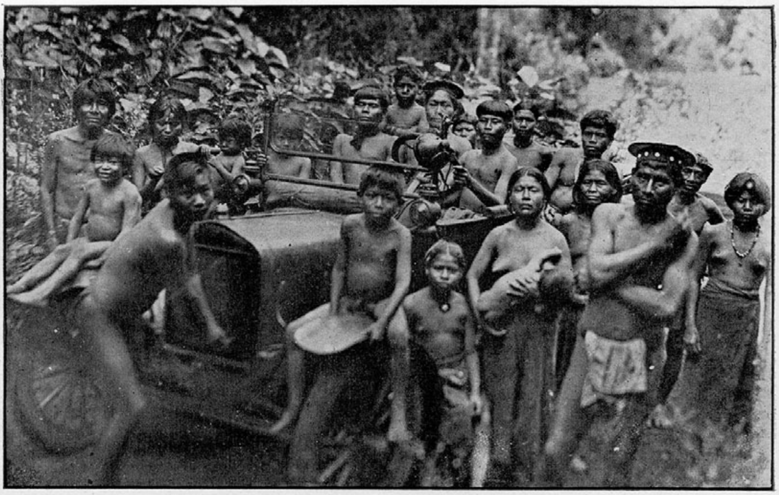
IL FAUT DÉMONTER LA VOITURE PIÈCE PAR PIÈCE
et passer les morceaux à la nage dans des cuirs de bœufs séchés dont on a fait des bacs imperméables en relevant les quatre extrémités.

Fig. 13. Top, “La deuxième tentative n’est pas plus heureuse: Le radeau s’enfonce.” Bottom, “Il faut démonter la voiture pièce par pièce.” From Roger Courteville, *La première traversée de l’Amérique du Sud en automobile* (Paris: Plon, 1930).

The problems did not stop there: on entering La Paz, in the middle of a parade organized in honor of the expeditioners, the brakes suddenly stopped working midslope, and only by making a desperate U-turn into the nearest uphill lane did Courteville narrowly avoid a fatal crash. Upon arriving to Lima—the first time a car had made the journey across South America from ocean to ocean—the gearbox fell apart completely, and the travelers decided to gift what remained of their vehicle to the Peruvian president, who had made a point of welcoming them in person.

Despite—or perhaps because of—the accident-prone nature of their journeys, the adventures of Courteville and Elflein are emblematic of a modernity in continuous expansion toward its own confines. The suspense underwriting their travelogues stems from this same tension—and at times also literally from the clash—between engine power and the spaces and times that the former has not yet entirely co-opted into its machine ensemble. Of this "primitive modernity"—the mobile frontier that regionalist fiction revealed in a different register as the cutting edge of the modern chronotope—the photograph of Courteville's vehicle surrounded by Bororó Indians posing for the camera (fig. 14) is as eloquent an emblem as say the cosmopolitan cannibal imagined in Oswald de Andrade's celebrated *Anthropophagic Manifesto* a mere two years after Courteville's journey. As a mode of techno-graphic writing in and of space, this new and unprecedented kind of avant-garde journey—the automobile raid—also opened a mobile new contact zone where bohemian artists rubbed shoulders with working-class bricoleurs, rural artisans, and Indigenous hunter-gatherers, on whose skills the former relied at various key instances of their voyage.

In the 1930s and 1940s, often under the auspices of national automobile clubs, the trails opened by these driver-adventurers became the spectacular stages of epic, months-long transcontinental car rallies featuring professional star pilots, before eventually becoming the thoroughfares of automobile tourism as a form of leisurely enjoyment of "nature." In these new experiences of leisure time, the point of arrival was less important than the experience of getting there. "¡Conozca su patria: Veranee!" (Get to know your fatherland: Go on a summer holiday!), the Argentine magazine *El Hogar* urged its readers in 1931; "É



EN DIRECTION DE CUYABA, LES INDIENS S'INTÉRESSENT A LA MÉCANIQUE

Fig. 14. "En route to Cuiabá, the Indians show an interest in mechanics." From Roger Courteville, *La première traversée de l'Amérique du Sud en automobile* (Paris: Plon, 1930), 65.

preciso revelar o Brasil aos brasileiros" (Let's reveal Brazil to Brazilians), the Brazilian automobile club echoed its slogan the following year in a campaign to attract car enthusiasts to the country's Northeast.[27] These new ways of seeing, feeling, and consuming the nation's "natural" and "historic heritage"—including the new camping trend promoted by the automobile clubs as a healthier alternative to the traditional, summer-length seaside holiday—required a set of curatorial interventions on behalf of artists, architects, and engineers whose task was to turn the dangerous geographies of the earlier driver-adventurers into leisurely occasions for experiencing picturesque nature. From the 1920s onward, Latin America would see a concerted effort in producing stories, images, and architectures that reinvented the national landscape in accordance with the new, discontinuous territory opened up by automobility. Frequently, as happened at Ouro Preto's Grande Hotel, these curatorial interventions would co-opt and reinscribe as a pedagogics of tourism the earlier avant-gardes' responses to the new technologies of construction and transport: a whole new regime of space and time, in short, which only a few isolated voices dared to challenge by exploring the lines of flight this regime was opening.

The travelogues of these modernist dissidents—including the novelist and playwright Roberto Arlt, in Argentina, or Mário de Andrade, in Brazil—represented, in Fernando Rosenberg's expression, "an effort to distance [themselves] from the *modernista* project as much as from the ethos of the metropolitan traveler," to instead explore "the limits of available narrative strategies to articulate nation, culture, and territory."[28] Their "errant modernism," Esther Gabara suggests, actively resisted the epistophilic desires of metropolitan audiences for firsthand insights into remote locations, thus also "interrupt[ing] the unifying, foundational promise of travel writing."[29] Ironically identifying as "antitravelers" or accidental tourists, Arlt and Andrade in their itinerant dispatches from Argentina's and Brazil's rural interior, respectively, refused to contribute to tourism's and the machine ensemble's regime of territorial accumulation. Instead, their travelogues explored the relations between space, time, representation, and subjectivity triggered by these new technologies of locomotion and communication, by means of self-reflexive irony. They inquired about the modes of spatial knowledge associated with each of the vehicles they boarded, as well as their limitations. Take, for instance, the photograph of his own shadow aboard the steamer *Vitória* in Andrade's 1927 travelogue, projected onto the surface of the river, and captioned "Quê dê o poeta?" (Where's the poet?) (fig. 15).

Fig. 15. Mário de Andrade, *Rio Madeira. Retrato da minha sombra trepada no toldo do Vitòria. Julho 1927. Que-dê o poeta?* (Rio Madeira, portrait of my shadow while standing on the tent of the Vitória. July 1927. Where's the poet?). Mário de Andrade Photographic Collection, Instituto de Estudos Brasileiros, University of São Paulo.

An emblematic visualization of its author's, literally speaking, reflexive stance on travel and its subject, the image also speaks to the way in which dissident chroniclers such as Arlt and Andrade called into question the project of national integration under the auspices of tourism and of the modern machine ensemble. Beyond the latter's glossy horizons, as these probing, ironic, and self-critical accounts of modern travel began to suspect, lay an altogether more complex and painful reality of intensified extractivism along the capitalist frontier.

Arlt's and Andrade's travelogues coincide not just in the variety of means of locomotion, from trains and cars to airplanes and steamboats, they are also themselves wired into a different, informational machine ensemble that dictates their accelerated, almost telegraphic, rhetoric. Arlt's notes from the early 1930s were wired as soon as they had been pulled from his typewriter to the daily *El Mundo* in Buenos Aires, to be published the next day, together with a photograph or sometimes a drawing made by the author himself. Andrade's writing sketches from his 1928–29 trip to Brazil's Northeast (as well as selections from the previous one to the Amazon in 1927) were immediately dispatched to São Paulo to feature in his daily column for the *Diário Nacional*, titled "O turista aprendiz" (The apprentice tourist). In both authors, writerly self-reflexivity often occurs in the form of anticipated captioning of a photograph, which the author has not yet seen in print. Their chronicles are, so to speak, a note scribbled on the margins of an unseen, future image as reconstructed from memory, often limited to a few lines describing the circumstances of the image's production: "We cross Paso de las Ánimas. The sun throws an oblique band of mobile golden sheets onto the chalky waters of the Paraná River, which travel toward the shore. I take pencil sketches in a notebook, sitting on the iron stairs of the pantry," Arlt tells his readers in a 1933 dispatch from Resistencia, Chaco.[30]

For both travelers, what matters is less the impact of speed on the perception of surrounding space than the constant interruptions of this engine-powered movement, as well as the characters and everyday practices inhabiting these interstices of time and space. "Once more on the train," Arlt relates his 1934 journey across the Patagonian Desert, "I decide not to look out of the window. This landscape makes me angry. I already consider it a personal enemy. It's an unbearable bore who repeats the same thing all over."[31] "There are stops aplenty, throughout the journey," Andrade jots down in 1928 aboard the Great Western Express between Recife and Guarabira: "People getting off and on, what a hullaballoo! Northeasterners, in general, they don't just speak in a singing voice, they give concerts. I study the conversations."[32] The photograph illustrating this part of the trip, taken from inside the train, tilts downward on a pair of passengers refreshing themselves in a puddle next to the track, leaving out of focus the landscape in the background (fig. 16). Andrade captions: "Great Western—Rio Grande do Norte, December 14, 1928. People from the train at a stop where there's water, getting off to drink some."[33]

Here, rather than disappearing from the image as a result of machine-powered speed, the foreground returns as spatial interruption of the forward-moving time of travel. It opens a field of interaction between

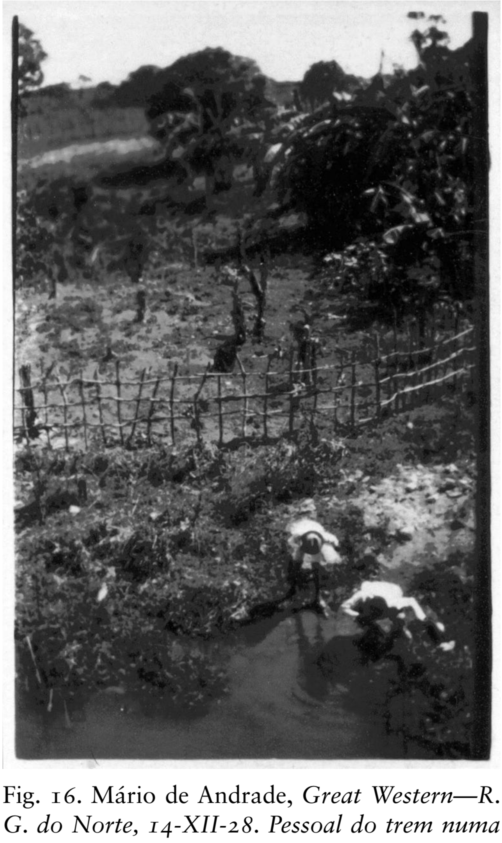


Fig. 16. Mário de Andrade, *Great Western—R. G. do Norte, 14-XII-28. Pessoal do trem numa parada onde tem água, se atira para beber* (Great Western—R. G. do Norte, 14-XII-28. People from the train at a stop where there is water, getting off to drink some). Mário de Andrade Photographic Collection, Instituto de Estudos Brasileiros, University of São Paulo.

the passengers and the landscape that, in Arlt's train ride across the Patagonian Desert, had remained out of reach in the distance. And it is this very moment of juxtaposition, of conviviality, made possible by "accidental" interruptions of the touristic chronotope, which, in Arlt's and Andrade's travel vignettes, not only commands the chronicler's full attention but also actually shapes the very form of his text. Arlt reports:

> I board a coach of the "Ahora . . . Trini" company. Ten minutes later we're on the move. We haven't done ten blocks, when a boy with incredibly dirty legs catches up running and informs the conductor: My mum says if you can wait for her. The driver says yes, and the boy darts off like a greyhound. We wait for the missus. Three minutes go by until, finally, huffing and puffing, the excellent lady arrives dressed in an ash-grey bathrobe. "Ahora Trini" starts moving again.[34]

For Arlt, the time the roaming reporter and his fellow passengers on the bus to Resistencia spend waiting for a poor villager to dress up for her trip to the city is worth featuring in the following day's dispatch because it represents a crossroads of temporalities, rhythms of life: an instant—three minutes on Arlt's stopwatch—of juxtaposition between lives that would never otherwise have coincided. The episode is something like the reverse of the one recorded by Andrade in 1929 while driving across the arid backlands of Brazil's Northeast:

> The backwoodsman was mad with desire to try out a car. When he passed the watering hole, he ran into one, empty. He asked if he could join for a little, the driver let him. He tied the beast to an Oiticica tree and settled down for a leisurely drive. The driver asked if he'd had enough; he asked to go on a little more. Finally it was enough, and the car went its way leaving the thankful backwoodsman behind in the middle of the road, under such a burning sun![35]

Even if only "for a little," in Andrade's account the countryman goes from an object of ethnographic curiosity to become a travel companion. As does Arlt, Andrade actively searches for unexpected encounters and juxtapositions that only the accidented rhythm of his journey, with its many stops and breaks, makes possible. "Antitravel," for both writers, is a way of forging from this accidented rhythm opportunities for unforeseen encounters between worlds the mutual separation of which the machine ensemble was seeking to make into second nature.

In Andrade's first journey in 1927, traveling up the Amazon River by steamboat, the predominant register is still one of irony in its redeployment of the tropes of colonial travel in the mode of pastiche or collage. Comic effect stems here from the deliberate confusion between subsequent historical iterations of this discourse: the colonial chronicle of discovery, the naturalist's expedition journal, and the modern leisure traveler's dandyish onboard diary. Their interplay subverts the generic frameworks of all three, as when the lack of anything worthy of observation, let alone discovery, leads Andrade to invent an object of ethnographic fantasy, the Do-Mi-Sol Indians—a first sketch, Raúl Antelo suggests, of the following year's modernist-mythical novella *Macunaíma*.[36] Elsewhere, relations between the traveling observers and their object are playfully turned upside down:

> I can't bring myself to have dinner with this irony on my mind. The first to spot them called the others. And we spent a long time looking at the piranhas in the water, voracious ashen and flesh-colored lightning rods, eating meat. The meat they devour! Now, I feel the piranhas must all be spying on us from the water, impressed, commenting with one another that we are eating meat.[37]

Yet, when crossing the jungles of Acre toward Bolivia aboard the Madeira-Mamoré railroad, the construction of which, at the end of the previous century, had claimed the lives of "thousands of Chinese, Arabs, Greeks, who came in exchange for a few pounds,"[38] the "apprentice tourist" feels compelled to move from ironic subversion to bitter criticism. Suddenly, what surges between the traveler and the landscape is the violence of capitalist frontier expansion, which the passenger encapsulated in the machine ensemble cannot help but feel complicit with as ghosts of the dead peer into his cabin with "weak, glimmering eyes":

> What am I doing here! . . . Today, the poet is traveling with his lady friends on the Madeira-Mamoré, on a sparkling-clean observation coach, comfortably seated on benches made of *cipó* wood . . . Today the poet dines on grilled tur-

> key prepared by a master chef *de primo cartello*, who came aboard the Vitória entrusted by the Amazon River Company with sweetening our lives. On occasions the train stops, for the landscape to be caught on Kodak, even a cinema has been brought along! . . . What am I doing here! . . . What is the reason for all these international dead being reborn in the buzz of the engine, who come with their weak, glimmering eyes to spy on me through the windows of the carriage?[39]

It is this second kind of traveler—the one who spots, in the blurry in-between space connecting and separating the modern machine ensemble from the land, the ghostly presence of the victims of modern frontier expansion—who will embark on the subsequent trip. At the end of 1928 and through the early months of the following year, Andrade travels first, by steamer, to the provincial capitals of the Brazilian Northeast (Recife, Natal, Maceió, and João Pessoa) and then, by car and in the company of the painter Cícero Días and the journalist Antonio Bento, into the arid hinterlands of Rio Grande do Norte, Pernambuco, Alagoas and Paraíba. "Viagem etnográfica" (An ethnographic journey), as Andrade subtitles his dispatches, his itinerary across a vast region affected by a terrifying drought, along roads seeded with crosses commemorating victims of rural banditry, adopts an altogether more somber tone than the previous year's travelogue. Upon venturing out beyond the coastal cities, the ironic antitourist of the Amazonian journey turns into a surveyor of roads and irrigation works, bitterly denouncing the absence and inaction of the government. It is useful to quote several entries of his diary to get a sense of the monotony and despair that begin to haunt Andrade on his second journey:

> *In the car, January 22* . . . Excellent road cutting through a landscape almost exclusively made of stone . . . The highway, researched with intelligence, follows the watershed between the Seridó and Barra Nova rivers . . . The road's artworks, all rectangular: concrete bridges, iron bumpers. It's monumental.[40]
>
> *In the car, January 27* . . . The flat tire becomes unbearably monotonous, the horrible little road keeps throwing us out of the car. Entering rocky ground doesn't help a thing. The road becomes worse still, strewn with trunks. It really isn't

> fun at all to stop every quarter of an hour to drag some stupid stick out of the way.[41]

> The road from Caicó to Catolé da Rocha, linking Rio Grande do Norte with Paraíba, providing employment for 400 workers—which means 400 families being fed—for a ridiculous daily pay of 2.5 Rs$: national government suddenly shut it all down. This hamlet found itself in complete misery, starving during the drought. There's no assistance whatsoever . . . But national government is building a luxury highway from Rio to Petrópolis.[42]

Here, the sudden end of the road, rather than reconnecting travelers with a pristine realm of authenticity—as in the motorized adventures of Elflein and Courteville—leads only into a space of abandonment, "of sordid, unbearable, hideous misery."[43] Every so often, Andrade and his party run into groups of peasants traveling the opposite way, as they head toward the coast and on to the southern cities, escaping a life of hardship: "I'm outraged. I don't even throw them a dime. This trip has become a disgrace,"[44] Andrade complains. As the trio of artists journeys across the Brazilian Northeast, the loss of orientation is not just geographical; it rather goes to the heart of the narrative form and its subject: "We haven't done an hour of descent, and already the first wrong turn . . . We ramble down each and every oxen trail or footpath."[45] "Gone amiss. Every man, every house, we ask for the way."[46]

Instead of representing a deliberate antitouristic strategy, here the travelers' loss of direction threatens to undermine the text itself, casting doubt on whether it is really worth the writer's and readers' while to keep going: "tudo está errado" (everything's amiss).[47] The backlands of the Northeast reflect back to the "errant modernist" a modernity that has itself gone amiss, and this general loss of direction, undermining both the subject of observation and the landscape object, takes narrative shape in the form of an abyss suddenly opening in the road and the text, threatening to swallow altogether the expeditioners and their vehicle:

> We're climbing up the ridge, and already it's raining on the left, lightning flashes and all! A downpour this thick! Our headlights become worthless . . . And the storm hits us. Lightning flares up inside the car, rain falls, thunder rolls.

> Tree branches hit us. The abyss expands, now on this, now on that side, exaggerated by nightfall . . . We're in serious danger . . . We even had our near-death moment, a classic on these occasions. The car veered straight toward the abyss, unconsciously I twisted left and disturbed the driver's movement, we were almost done with![48]

The abyss, as a sudden, existential threat only narrowly avoided by the travelers, also marks in textual space the uttermost limit of the "accidental journey" as a framework for early twentieth-century modernist travel and its narrative. In fact, as we now realize, the apprentice tourist's playful experimentation with, and even debunking of, machine-driven experiences of the margins of nation and continent had always depended (as in Andrade's own piranha-spotting anecdote) on a safe distance from "wild" nature, guaranteed by the machine ensemble. Self-reflexive irony was possible once travel had turned from a life-and-death "adventure," associated with colonial conquest and imperial resource-prospecting, into a touristic experience of leisure. Even as they criticized the indifference visited upon land and water by tourism's machine ensembles, the metropolitan modernists' accidental journeys never strayed as far from the modern script as did their regionalist counterparts analyzed in chapter 1. Mário de Andrade's terrified look into the abyss on the side of the road is as far as an avant-gardist rewriting of the New World travelogue would go. The sudden cranking of the wheel that saves the travelers from their deadly plunge is therefore also a textual maneuver, steering narrative itself back into the safety of the technological compound on which, for all their playful critiques, modernist travelers had always relied. Yet even as they roamed the confines of national territory aboard the safety of the machine ensemble, these accidental tourists could also not help but glimpse through the cracks of the chronotope of leisure travel some indications of the violent, even deadly, impact inflicted by the uneven new regimes of speed on human and more-than-human bodies, assemblages, and materialities. Their limited understanding of these insights is not necessarily only the travelers' fault: indeed, I would argue, it is also up to us, as twenty-first century readers, to recognize these moments of anxiety as early instances of a disaster writing that we have seen coming into its own in writings and films such as Quiroga's narratives of animal insurgency or Senna and Bodanzky's dystopian road movie shot along the Transamazônica a half-century later.

WEEDED OUT: MODERNISM IN THE GARDEN

If accidents, in some modernist redeployments of the landscape in visu, provided an opportunity for exposing and challenging the neocolonizing effects of expanding infrastructures of transport and communication, weeds—and their "cultivation"—played a similar critical role for avant-gardist landscaping in situ. What to plant—and how—became a point of contention in Latin American architectural modernism, as gardens and parks turned into a zone of negotiation between the built environment and its natural setting—the coagency of which was recognized (at least rhetorically) to an extent not previously seen in modern architecture. Le Corbusier's South American journey of 1929 had provided a new generation of architects with the language and symbolic authority to challenge the prevalent turn-of-the-century eclecticism and to advocate instead for an architecture that would echo, in the built space of the city, the "morphology" of its environment. In his review of Le Corbusier's *Précisions* (the book collecting his South American talks, sketches, and travel notes), published in the first issue of the journal *Sur*, Argentine urbanist Alberto Prebisch saluted the Franco-Swiss maestro's call to open one's eyes to the beauty of anonymous constructions, to "the small popular houses, so pure and simple, uncontaminated by a false urban culture."[49] In the following issue, Prebisch expounded on his idea, counterposing the "absurd varieties of architectonic nonsense" of present-day Buenos Aires, the sign of "the parvenu's labored personal fancy," to the modest and sober constructions of old, which had still composed "what today we can only say with certainty if we give credit to geography: an American city." Humble, "without any boulevards, subways, or pretensions," this earlier city prior to the arrival of European mass immigration at the turn of the century, which—Prebisch held—persisted in some of the suburbs bordering the Pampas, "was still an architecture of men and not of architects; that is to say, its style responded to very concrete needs and to the demands of climate and custom."[50]

A few years later, Brazilian novelist José Lins do Rego, commending the team of young architects in charge of Rio's Ministry of Health and Education (including its resident gardener, Roberto Burle Marx), likewise insisted on the "authentic," vernacular character of the final design, which had "breathed life" into Le Corbusier's merely "formulaic" proposal:

> Le Corbusier was . . . the point of departure that enabled the new school of Brazilian architecture to express itself with great spontaneity and arrive at original solutions. Like the music of Villa-Lobos, the expressive force of a Lúcio Costa and a Niemeyer was a creation intrinsically ours, something which sprang out of our own life. The return to nature, and the value which came to be given to landscape as a substantial element, saved our architects from what could be considered formulaic in Le Corbusier.[51]

Philip L. Goodwin, curator of MoMA's 1943 survey show *Brazil Builds: Architecture Old and New, 1652–1942*, echoed Rego's sentiment. Modern Brazilian architecture, he wrote, "has the character of the country itself and the men there who have designed it; secondly, it fits the climate and the materials for which it is intended."[52]

The emergent consensus, which, as Valerie Fraser has shown, lasted roughly from Le Corbusier's first journey in 1929 to the construction of Brasília (1956–60), held that a vernacular modernity could be found in Latin American architecture's "spontaneous" responses to the conditions of climate, vegetation, and light specific to the tropical and subtropical realm.[53] To be modern, Latin American architects had to look not overseas but within and to the past. They needed to reconnect with an already existing vernacular repository of technical and formal craftsmanship and to simultaneously reassess this unique heritage with an eye trained in contemporary, International Style functionalism, to recognize the analogies between one and the other. Latin American architectural modernity had to literally reembody local skills and traditions in the materialities of industrial modernity yet also extend the reach of modern construction technology toward homegrown materials and forms. In this game of translations among forms, building materials, and techniques, the garden as a mediating interface between the built environment and its wider spatial context gained an importance that was more than just ornamental. The garden (and especially its public, urbanistic expression, the park) was where architecture's environmental eloquence—its ability to engage and establish a relation with the forms and conditions of tropical and subtropical nature while also remaining true to its own expressive script—was being put to the test. Gardens provided a both symbolic and material space of transculturation, a biocontact zone through which architectural space could put down roots and turn into place.

In the southern hemisphere, Grigorij Warchavchik—the Russian-born representative of Brazil at the 1930 International Congress of Modern Architecture—told his audience, "our most efficient ally . . . is tropical nature, which so favorably envelops the modern house with cacti and other superb plants, and the magnificent light, which highlights the clear and bold profiles of constructions against the dark-green background of the gardens."[54] Some ten years earlier, on a visit to Rio de Janeiro's Centennial Exhibition, José Vasconcelos, the Mexican Minister of Culture and patron of muralism, had already reveled in similar visions of "a refined and intense civilization answer[ing] to the splendors of a Nature swollen with potency."[55] In the future, Vasconcelos marveled on contemplating the exhibition's neocolonial pavilions and monuments, "the conquest of the Tropics will transform all aspects of life. Architecture will abandon the Gothic arch, the vault, and, in general, the roof . . . Colonnades and perhaps spiral constructions will be raised in useless ostentation of beauty, because the new aesthetics will try to adapt itself to the endless curve of the spiral, which represents the freedom of desire and the triumph of Being in the conquest of infinity."[56]

But if being "true to nature" could mean, in debates of the 1920s and 1930s, such diverse things as Warchavchik's geometrical functionalism and Vasconcelos's delirious neo-Baroque, can "environmental adaptation" really count as a determining feature of Latin American architectural modernism? Did buildings really "spring out of life," transcribing the mandates of "climate and custom" just as the forms and colors of the surrounding vegetation responded to local conditions of light, humidity, and temperature? Or did these buildings in their "alliance with nature," in which the garden was the key site, not rather construct representations of nature—and of a "nature" in which architecture could claim its place? To what extent were these representations, as champions of the new architecture (from Vasconcelos to Warchavchik and Rego) insisted, the outcome of more reciprocal relations between designers and the forces of "climate and custom" they claimed were their inspiration, rather than just the latest iteration of the original colonial gesture of taking possession of the land? Were the gardens of Latin American modernism really the site of an incipient ecological hermeneutics or a renewed instance of "colonial relandscaping" in the service of neo-extractive nation-states?[57] The question is not whether the gardens of pioneering Latin American landscape designers, such as Burle Marx in Brazil, Luis Barragán in Mexico, or Carlos Martner in Chile, were "ecologically correct" representations of their locations. Architecture—

including landscape architecture—always takes place, a place that only emerges in the moment of the taking. To turn a supposed "truthfulness" to the location into the benchmark of aesthetic judgments is to ignore this intrinsically relational and dynamic nature of places, their character as "space-time events," in Doreen Massey's poignant expression, in which "a here and now" must be negotiated rather than just being out there.[58] Then why not ask a building or a park the questions we would ask a poem or a painting: questions about the histories they tell about this place and about how they accommodate it to our gazes and our bodies so that we can inhabit it?

Among Le Corbusier's earliest South American interlocutors was Victoria Ocampo, the wealthy Argentine writer, editor, and socialite, who had approached the Franco-Swiss urbanist in 1928 about a design for her new townhouse in Palermo Chico, Buenos Aires, "something in the manner of . . . the house at Garches"[59]—the Villa Stein-de Monzie on the outskirts of Paris, which Le Corbusier had designed in 1927. In 1931, the first issue of Ocampo's new journal *Sur* featured, among others, Prebisch's review of *Précisions* and an essay by the editor herself that borrowed its title from one of Le Corbusier's 1929 lectures at the Asociación Amigos del Arte: "La aventura del mueble" (The adventure of furniture). There, after stating her allegiance to the modernist creed of sparse and functional furnishings, Ocampo subtly twists Le Corbusier's question about the relation between beauty and functionality to instead ask about how interiors are linked to external space: "I like houses that are empty of furniture and flooded with light. I like houses with laconic walls that open wide to give voice to the sky and the trees."[60] Having introduced the question of modernism's relation to place, her text goes on to perform a second displacement, finding the answer elsewhere and in another language: in photographer Alfred Stieglitz's Manhattan apartment, over the entrance of which Victoria reads the words "An American Place." And indeed, she goes on, just as Stieglitz had mastered the spirit of the camera and forced reality to unveil its most dreamlike and hallucinatory aspects, his arrangement against the backdrop of the New York cityscape of "the first Cézannes, the first Matisses, the first Picassos" to have reached the New World, also made his home "the only place that plainly deserved such a title . . . on this splendorous island of Manhattan." Here, Ocampo concluded, was a setting that offered "a refuge to those few men and women who suffer the suffocation of Europe because they already carry America inside them . . . I understood that I too *belonged there*, as the yankees say."[61]

Ocampo's notes in the first issue of *Sur* on Stieglitz's Manhattan condo can be read as a statement of purpose not only for her journal that aspired to become an "American place" in its own right—a literary and artistic contact zone between Old and New World—but also for the homes and gardens that Ocampo was in the process of projecting and arranging. Victoria herself authored the design in 1927 for her summer home at Mar del Plata, "the first modern house in Argentina," built "according to my own fancy"—she declared—where "I wanted to restart from scratch everything related to architecture and furnishings . . . I wanted it to be absolutely simple, absolutely naked."[62] The following year, construction began at Ocampo's Buenos Aires townhouse in the upscale neighborhood of Palermo Chico, which she had finally entrusted to her friend Alejandro Bustillo rather than Le Corbusier. Surrounding the building composed of rectangular cubes, the garden featured sculptural cacti planted in concrete flowerbeds—a nod to Gabriel Guévrékian's cubist gardens at the country home of Ocampo's friends' Charles and Marie-Laure de Noailles's at Hyères, Provence—which echoed the sparsely furnished interior where abstract sculptures and cacti served as visual highlights contrasting with the white walls. Toward the street, a gardenia hedge and cypress and palm trees provided a vegetal buffer curtain. Finally, in 1930, this time with Prebisch acting as consultant, Victoria also began refurbishing the Ocampo family mansion at San Isidro, in the northern suburbs and on the shores of the River Plate, which she had inherited that same year. The renovations to the house and gardens—newly subdivided with her sister, the novelist Silvina Ocampo, who moved into a new home next door with her husband, writer Adolfo Bioy Casares—would keep Victoria busy for the better part of the next two decades; the same period, incidentally, during which *Sur* would grow to become the central reference for cosmopolitan literary and cultural modernism in Argentina. *Sur*, wrote Ocampo's friend and collaborator María Rosa Oliver, "was born, baptized, and clothed under shreds of tree bark. The trunks of the eucalyptus trees provided the color scheme for the cover pages."[63] The triangle of homes and gardens located on the seaside, in the city, and on the riverbank, which Ocampo kept refurbishing throughout her life, are thus also a kind of reception room for the project of cultural translation that *Sur* embodied: "Ocampo's houses," as literary critic Beatriz Sarlo puts it, "translate on the level of space the very activity of translation on which she had embarked. Just as the houses represent the frameworks of modernism, they also stand for the practices of translation that would define the space of *Sur*."[64]

Even more than the houses, I would argue, Ocampo's gardens—those at San Isidro in particular, which frequently offered a photo op for illustrious visitors, from Rabindranath Tagore and Igor Stravinsky to Graham Greene and Albert Camus—represented a space of transculturation. Victoria developed these deliberately as a "window" onto the landscape of the river and thus also onto "America" as seen from the viewing platform of the refurbished mansion (fig. 17). Whereas the house's interior combined the family memories of Creole Argentina with the visual and artisanal hallmarks of European modernism, the gardens offered a space of encounter between the aesthetics of modernist landscaping and the vegetal and material assemblages of the estuarine environment. Major inspirations included the gardens of Vita Sackville-West and the Bloomsbury group, as well as the ideas pioneered by English gardeners William Robinson and Gertrude Jekyll for chromatic organization of flowering cycles and for selecting native, site-specific plants.[65] Victoria

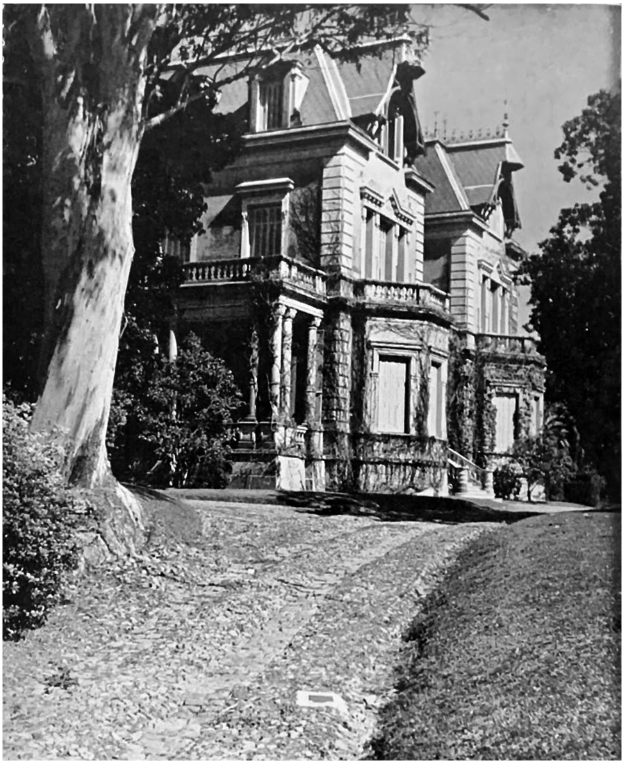


Fig. 17. Villa Ocampo. Photograph by Gustav Thorlichen. From Victoria Ocampo, *San Isidro* (Buenos Aires: Sur, 1941).

also prominently referred to the gardens of Dartington Hall, the progressive boarding school in Devon, England, set in a lushly landscaped sculpture park, to which she had been introduced by Tagore.[66]

Botanical site specificity, the distribution of color and variety in space and time through successive flowering cycles, and the creation of distinctive microlandscapes or "rooms" that extend the home's interior into the open space and vice versa, were the guiding principles of Victoria's garden at San Isidro. To couch the grounds against adjacent properties and to filter out street noise, she introduced new brushes and shrubbery, also removing the tennis courts to create a large lawned area atop the slope, opening views toward the river. A pair of (nonnative) ginkgo trees provided an arboreal threshold for the stairs leading into the area, topped by a small circular viewing pavilion. To the back of the house, rows of large-stemmed palms and eucalyptus enveloped the *pélouse* (lawned area) surrounding the central fountain, creating an exterior vestibule that extended the porch into the garden itself. On the slope descending toward the river, Ocampo planted cacti and several xerophyles to create a small *serranía* (ridge), typical of the dry mountain landscape of northwestern Argentina, which thanks to its low-growing vegetation also kept viewing channels from hillside to river open all year round. The house itself was "dressed" in flowering climbers of different colors (samples of which Victoria would wear on the sleeves of her tailleur): red peppervines at the front; white roses and jasmines at the back; rose and light-blue oleanders, bougainvilleas, and gardenias on one of the sides; and dark-green and orange clivias, hollies, and ferns on the other. Just as in the house itself, historian Fabio Grementieri points out, Ocampo's refurbishing of the grounds, "influenced by an Edwardian garden aesthetics as practiced by the Bloomsbury group . . . takes a typical piece from 1900 and, while respecting its general structure, also recycles it according to an innovative canon, resulting in an integration of modernity and tradition that would become the benchmark in garden design only in the last third of the twentieth century."[67]

Gardening for Ocampo was yet another element of the "cultural machine" she set in motion in the 1920s and 1930s, inspiring, as well as taking cues from, her parallel activities in translation and editorial work, architecture, and fashion. Like her writing of successive volumes of *Testimonios* and *Autobiografías*, gardening was at once an exercise in self-fashioning and in memory. Cutting, pruning, weeding, and rearranging the family gardens at San Isidro is akin to the writing of autobiography in the way it works the adult's experience and formal repertoire onto the childhood past, the presence of which is even more tangible here since, as Ocampo writes, "smell and sound . . . are the most powerful fixes for memory, and because a garden, apart from entering us through the eyes, enters through our noses, those doors of our being that we can never close."[68] The suburban space of childhood, in the way it remains tangibly present in vegetal matter and not just its visual but also haptic and olfactory relationship with the surrounding environment of the estuary, is a kind of earthly *Wunderblock* (the child's toy Freud took as an image of the unconscious as an archive of indelible inscriptions), the meanings of which autobiographical writing draws out and works through:

> San Isidro was the half-open fig amid coarse leaves and the peach still warm from the sun, the coconuts that the inaccessible palm tree would drop now and then . . . it was putting your hand into the black earth where the gardener's hoe had driven from its hiding place an earthworm good enough for use on the fishing hook; it was hiding a soap box among the hortensias, the chest where we kept our precious stones: pebbles collected on the garden paths. The landscape, in those days, did not go beyond these things.[69]

Looking after the family garden is, just as autobiographical writing, a way of valorizing these "small things," the minute details of childhood memories, from the distance of an adult mind and a body already traversed by time and by the displacements and interactions with other spaces and bodies. As Victoria reflects in a review of her sister and neighbor Silvina's *Sonetos del jardín* (Garden sonnets, 1948): "We are talking not just of an exterior but an interior landscape . . . This wealth of details, apparently insignificant, proves that we are actually talking of something more than a landscape: in fact, it is the earth as a sweetheart, which someone has fallen in love with."[70]

Almost as a Proustian trigger of involuntary memories, the garden here represents a space where elements from the past—the individual one of childhood but also the collective past of the family and of a Creole, preimmigration Argentina—remain materially present, placing the lives of those who continue to inhabit it: "Its slopes, its trees, the song of its birds, its river . . . even the smell of the air that we breathe there, are entangled with my entire life, as they were with the lives of those who came before me."[71] Gardening and autobiography are complementary modes of putting in perspective an intimate and personal place, offering them to the reader-visitor as a guide for finding her way through what visual forms such as landscape and photography cannot access. A garden "cannot be photographed by a machine, as perfect as it may be and as skillful the one who operates it," Ocampo writes in her foreword to Gustav Thorlichen's photobook on San Isidro, published in 1941: "It can only be photographed by the magic of words."[72]

The novelty of this idea of the garden—as a local assemblage suspended between intimacy and hospitality, between the native and the cosmopolitan, and between the retrospective time of memory and the open, forward-looking one of formal experimentation—becomes clear when contrasting it to the one that immediately precedes it. In the poetry of Latin American *modernismo*—the turn-of-the century reimagination of European symbolism—the dreamy chiaroscuro of an autumnal, swan-populated garden in decay had been a favorite trope: an eroticized as well as locationally unspecific space. The ornamental props of fin de siècle landscaping, which modernismo took up as its poetic settings—artificial grottos, ruins, pergolas—were the very elements that avant-gardist gardening as embraced by Ocampo would seek to weed out. But more importantly, a difference exists in the relations both aesthetics establish between the garden, writing, and the body. For modernismo, the garden embodies the triumph and tragedy of all artifice. The garden represents the delicate as well as ephemeral sovereignty of form that art imposes on the natural elements, a triumph of beauty that will irredeemably be dragged back into nature's cycle of germination and decay. Thus, for the *modernistas* the garden is also a figure for poetry itself, in the way the latter dis- and relocates erotic pleasure from the body into language: a language that is but the celebration of this very disembodiment, crafting a delicious and fragile instant of beauty always already on the verge of relapsing into the immanence of the flesh and its fatal association with decay and death. "Entre columnas, ánforas y flores / y cúpulas de vivas catedrales, / gemí en tu casta desnudez rituales / artísticos de eróticos fevores" (Between columns, urns and flowers / and domes of living cathedrals / I whimpered in your chaste nudity / artistic rituals of erotic fervor), begins one of the poems in Julio Herrera y Reissig's *Los parques abandonados* (The abandoned parks), first published in 1909.[73] Here the abandoned, ruinous garden offers a setting and counterpoint to poetry's own sublimation of sexuality. Just as poetry eroticizes the body by transposing it into language, the garden has momentarily abstracted nature from the concreteness of place into the space of aesthetic form: “Las nobles fuentes que el jardín decoran / gimen en la abismada lejanía, / con esos balbuceos que ya lloran / y que no son palabras todavía” (The noble fountains that decorate the garden / moan in their abysmal distance / their stammerings that already cry / and have yet to become words), writes Leopoldo Lugones in *Los crepúsculos del jardín* (The garden’s twilights, 1905).[74] Here the time of botany is one of overgrowth and ruination, the time of wild weeds that threaten these gardens visited, as it were, for one last time before they inevitably relapse into natural immanence. Yet it is also this very fragility that—just as in the delicate encounters of young lovers already marked by the shadow of disease and death—brings the intensity of this experience to its climax.

The garden’s displacement, brought about by the urban avant-gardes of the 1920s and 1930s, into the temporality of childhood memories and into the specific localities of barrio and suburb, represents a clean break with modernismo’s poetic references to the belle époque gardenscape: “Recuerdo mío del jardín de casa: / vida benigna de las plantas” (My memory of the garden of the house: / benign life of the plants), begins Jorge Luis Borges’s invocation of the family home in Buenos Aires’ Palermo neighborhood.[75] Yet this redeployment of the garden form also proposes a new relation between local spaces and temporalities and those of cosmopolitan modernity. In Borges’s poem, just as in the gardens of Ocampo’s family home at San Isidro, the child’s sensory experience of local vegetal life is evoked and idealized from the vantage point of the adult’s experience and of the larger spatial configuration in which this place is now inscribed. Thus, locality is not reclaimed here as a bastion against cosmopolitan imports; on the contrary, it is itself already a site of exchange, of trans-plantation.

Let me explain this point. In a letter addressed to Victoria Ocampo in 1953, Gabriela Mistral—the Chilean poet and Nobel laureate—asks her friend for botanical assistance in revising her *Poema de Chile* (*Poem of Chile*), on which she would continue working until her death four years later. In her letter Mistral complains that “almost all of our gardens live from pure European botany.”[76] Her own poetic landscapes, Mistral laments, suffer from a shortage of native plant species, due to the lack of attention these have received in the manuals of horticulture: “I barely have a few books with just a few species of flowers . . . ay, from the garden. I need trees, and it’s so aggravating not to find something about indigenous flora . . . Beyond the Chilean palm and the *araucaria* as well as the *maitén*, I don’t have any more, *dear*.”[77] Ocampo’s reply, however, cautions her friend against botanical nativism, instead drawing her attention to the exogenous origins of many apparently indigenous plants. Yet for her, rather than a vegetal reminder of the Americas' extractive and violent colonial histories, these transplantations are instead evidence of a living, embodied cosmopolitanism that, like the translational aesthetics of *Sur*, inextricably juxtaposes the endogenous and the diasporic:

> I'd really like to give you names of plants for your poem. But don't look down on European plants. Don't become a nationalist (*côté* indio), my dear Lucila. What's more, lots of purely American flowers are today much beloved in European gardens, like petunias and zinnias, dahlias and coxcombs. And many have come from Persia and India . . . beginning with the very *répandu* [widespread] jasmine and the *paraíso* (*Melia azedarach*, with its purple flowers that smell of lavender and that grow around the door of every proper farmhouse in the province of B. A.), which, although it is a shade tree, in springtime (right now as I'm writing you) it also produces those marvelous perfumed clusters that fill the air of all the northern suburbs (Vicente López, Rivadavia, Olivos, Martínez, San Isidro, San Fernando, Tigre). That aroma comes in through the windows of the commuter trains when they stop in the stations. It's a smell that has accompanied every one of my springtimes as long as I can remember, and I remember smells (a sense that's as sharp in me as in some animals). Oh! How I have loved and continue to love the pleasures of this land and many others![78]

The scent of the Persian paradise tree invading suburban trains on their journey from the port city toward the Paraná Delta, we might think, is literally an "essence" of the cosmopolitan project that Ocampo pursues through her journal and her gardens: an olfactory emissary from the great contact zone of transplantations that spans the world at large, and in which, she claims, art is teaching us to make ourselves at home.

At the heart of this tension between botanical nativism and the cosmopolitanism of aesthetic forms, however, is a question about ecology. It asks about the capacity of the modern for establishing convivial relations with locality and with the more-than-human or, as Roberto Burle Marx—Brazil's premium landscape architect—put it in 1954, the "problem of the garden" is also about "an application of adequate knowledge of the ecological environment to meet the requirements of civilization."[79] Yet at the same time the garden also offers "a space for recovery and reflection" where "civilization" pauses to reconsider its own relation to the world it is in the process of transforming:

> The garden arranged in today's urban space is an invitation for conviviality, for recovering the real time of the nature of things, as opposed to the illusory speed of consumer society and its rules. The garden can and must be a means to raise awareness about an existence in accordance with the true measure of man, with what it means to be alive. It is an example of peaceful coexistence among various species, a place of respect for nature and for the OTHER, for difference: the garden, in sum, is an instrument of pleasure and a medium of education.[80]

Burle Marx's own work, spanning more than four decades, is perhaps the most ambitious, yet also contradictory, example of a tropical modernism looking not just to balance formal rigor with ecological adequacy but to forge common ground between the morphology of plants and vegetal associations on the one hand and the formal concerns of modern art on the other. In particular, the emphasis on the architectural value of color, in Fernand Léger's famous phrase, will serve both as the organizing principle and subject matter of Burle Marx's painterly gardenscapes. Throughout his work, from the early projects overseen as director of parks and gardens at Recife, Pernambuco, in the mid-1930s (where, to the distaste of local elites, he replanted public spaces with cacti and bromeliads from the arid *sertão*, vegetal forms previously dismissed as weeds, and urban ponds with aquatic flora from the Amazon) to his large-scale park designs at Rio de Janeiro, Caracas, and Brasília in the 1960s and 1970s, Burle Marx was concerned with the properties that modernism's chromatic, rhythmic, and textural values could acquire as living forms, embodied in the organic space and time of the garden. The garden, he argues,

> obeys certain laws, which are not exclusive to it but rather inherent to all manifestations of art. They are the same problems of color, dimension, time, and rhythm. Only that, in landscaping, certain characteristics have greater importance

> than in other forms of art. Three-dimensionality, temporality, the dynamics of living beings have to be taken into account in the composition. Other elements have a peculiar way of participating in the garden. Color, in nature, cannot have the same meaning as color in painting. It is dependent on the sunlight, the clouds, the rain, the hour of day, the place and all the other environmental factors.[81]

Instead of just mimicking the complex "associations" found in any given ecological milieu, the garden must also find an aesthetically pleasing expression to make these meaningful and thus also enable them to claim their place in modern life. Following his stunt at Rio de Janeiro's Ministry of Health and Education building, Burle Marx expanded his experimentations with the "biometric curve" and other elements of organic abstractionism to a larger scale, thanks to a series of commissions in the state of Minas Gerais between 1942 and 1945, arranged by the ambitious young prefect of its capital Belo Horizonte—none other than Juscelino Kubitschek, the future Brazilian president on whose watch the construction of Brasília would be inaugurated and completed. Burle Marx's designs for the city's new Pampulha quarter, made in collaboration with Oscar Niemeyer (fig. 18), explore the chromatic potential of lawns, sand, and gravel as well as bedded plants, each surface adding to the composition's haptic and textural, rather than only visual, complexity. His project for the Parque do Barreiro at the thermal complex of Araxá (constructed between 1943 and 1945) was also his first collaboration with botanist Henrique Lahmeyer de Mello Barreto. Together, Mello Barreto and Burle Marx conducted a geobotanical survey of vegetal associations typical of the local *cerrado* (woodland savanna), based on which they distributed a variety of microenvironments throughout the park's vast, curvilinear layout. Each of the park's segments, grouped around a large, amoebic-shaped artificial lake, represented a discrete subarea of regional phytogeography. Visitors entered the park by way of a small palm forest adjacent to the thermal baths, continuing through a sector of xerophytes (cacti and bromeliads) typical of the arid steppes and, in a rockier part of the terrain, moved into an area featuring mountain vegetation such as arnicas and orchids. At the lake, crossing the bridge to the "island of love," visitors were welcomed by a leafy wood of cinnamon and ipê trees.

Yet, despite this newfound interest in the modes of plant sociability already present in nature, at Araxá the designer's signature also remains

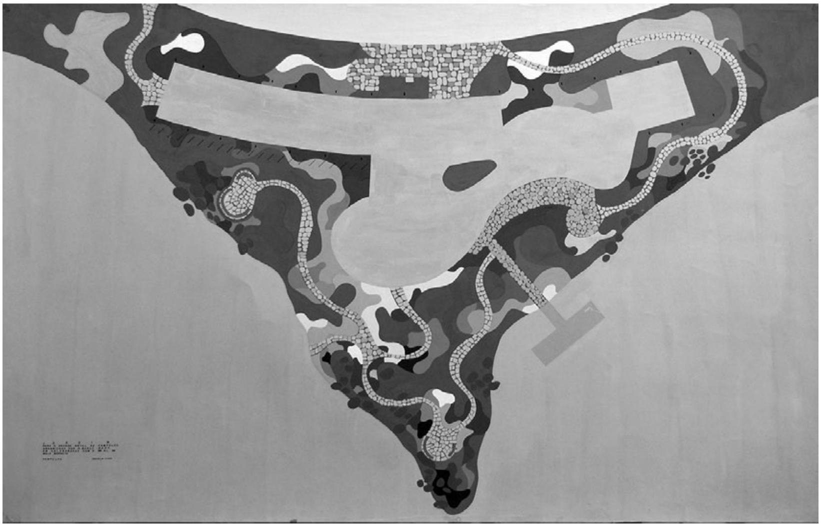


Fig. 18. Roberto Burle Marx, garden design for the Grande Hotel, Pampulha (Minas Gerais, Brazil). Draft for unrealized project, ca. 1943–44. Burle Marx & Cia. Ltda., Rio de Janeiro. Courtesy of Instituto Burle Marx.

clearly legible in the shapes of flowerbeds and the clear-cut borders between lawned and wooded areas. Here as well as in large-scale private commissions he took on over the following decade, Burle Marx explored the benefits of large expanses to introduce a seasonal rhythm of chromatic counterpoints, planting clusters of primary color in different areas of the garden, which intensify or fade according to the flowering and fruit-bearing cycles of individual species. At the gardens of Residência Odette Monteiro, commissioned in 1945 in Rio de Janeiro's mountainous Serra dos Órgãos region, Burle Marx's "symphonic" interplay of colors, interspersed with floral events framed by the light green of the lawns, the dark-green and blue foliage of the surrounding forest, and the black granite of the peaks, succeeds spectacularly—as Jacques Leenhardt puts it—in drawing out the ensemble of aesthetic features peculiar to the location through the introduction of nonlocal elements.[82]

Following his collaborations with Mello Barreto, by the end of the 1940s Burle Marx had already reimagined the landscape gardener's craft as a kind of Humboldtian naturalism adapted to the formal concerns of postwar art and architecture and to geobotany's insights into plant sociability and resilience. Starting in the late 1930s, he would regularly assemble multidisciplinary teams including botanists, architects, and visual artists for one- to two-week excursions into a variety of tropical and subtropical habitats, not only for the purpose of gathering plant specimens but also for observing *in loco* the morphology, ecological associations, and aesthetic effects of individual plants and vegetal ensembles. The purpose of studying botany in the wild (and of sketching and photographing individual plants and ensembles) was primarily an aesthetic one: to amplify the repertoire of tropical landscaping by bringing the weed into the garden. In 1949, together with his brother Guilherme, Burle Marx purchased an old *fazenda*, a former coffee plantation, on a hillside location at Guaratiba, south of Rio de Janeiro, comprising different phytogeographic milieus—a perfect spot for experimenting with the cultivation of native plants for horticultural purposes. Over time, the site, Santo Antônio da Bica, would grow into the largest tropical plant repository anywhere in the world; its collection including 750 species of philodendrons, more than 200 kinds of bromeliads and orchids, and over 120 different banana plants and arrowroots. In creating a feedback loop between his horticultural laboratory—both a commercial plant nursery and an open-air design workshop for observing plant associations and their effects over time—and the practice of regular field trips, Burle Marx also revisited the interplay between the journey and the garden—the landscape in situ and the landscape in visu—that had underwritten colonial landscaping.

But in redeploying the devices and practices of previous iterations of natural history, Burle Marx also twisted their underlying extractivist premise of isolating individual species by inquiring instead about the living associations—the forms of sociability and transfection among vegetal communities—which the garden can take advantage of for aesthetic as well as educational purposes. In Vera Siqueira's expression, the Burlemarxian journey "modifies the underlying picturesque implications of the notion of collecting. It is not about finding the different, rare, or exotic, but rather about valuing those species that are considered weeds in their places of origin."[83] Together with his growing awareness of environmental destruction—making him one of Brazil's earliest and most vocal ecologists—Burle Marx now turned his interest toward phytophysiognomic transition zones and the plant life in post-deforestation areas, seeing in these models of resilience, adaptiveness, and instability yet also living memorials to the fragility and delicacy of plants as living, social organisms. The plant, as he writes in a 1962 essay on gardening and ecology, "has, in its highest degree, the property of being unstable. A plant is alive as long as it changes. It suffers a constant mutation, a lack of equilibrium which is in the end the search of equilibrium itself."[84] Its aesthetic power, its capacity to please and enchant, is therefore inextricably bound up with this very mutability, as well as with the necessarily social being of a plant, the relation it maintains with its habitat. Plants, as philosopher Emmanuele Coccia puts it, point us to the atmosphere as a space of mixture and complicity, in which all living things are submerged,[85] or in Burle Marx's own words: "A plant lives in resonance to its surroundings . . . To make gardens, indeed, means sometimes to 'create' microclimates."[86]

On the other hand, this reimagining of the two great series of colonial landscaping—of the landscape in visu and in situ—also makes manifest in the garden's own space and time the interplay between, on the one hand, the evolving temporality of plant associations striving toward phytocoenosis—or the state of stable community—and, on the other hand, the visitors' embodied, kinetic experience of walking in the garden. Thus, Burle Marx also redeploys the garden form's historical nature as a structuring principle to challenge the "colonial hybrid landscape" of metropolitan gardening, with its legacy of "forced association, comixture, violent enclosure, and territorialization" that are imaginarily "returned to Arcadian innocence."[87] Rather than reperforming the ideological work of colonial landscaping, by effacing the traces of violent intervention and weeding out, Burle Marx's gardens make the artifice of their own designs transparent and legible. Yet at the same time, in the way these designs also echo the expressive forms of organic abstraction—"biometric curves" and amoebic-shaped, monochromatic volumes of color and texture—his gardens seek to educate, in emblematic rather than mimetic fashion, about the histories of plant associations and their conflictive encounters with human social and economic history. His gardens, he claims, assume the "pedagogical task" of "communicating to the masses a feeling of esteem and comprehension of the values of nature."[88]

Let us look at one more example. At Caracas's Parque del Este, Burle Marx chose to intervene a historical working landscape in one of the city's popular quarters—the remains of an old sugar and coffee plantation, partly forested to provide shade for the coffee plants and partly cleared for the drying and roasting of the beans—and used the already existing trees to shelter the growth of new vegetation. Without requiring major interventions, one part of the park, design and construction of which he oversaw between 1956 and 1961, would thus become a sinuous forest landscape crossed by undulating paths, while the opposite area was turned into fluid grasslands for picnics and games, with only sparse arborization along the main walkways. Together, the two sectors also offer a synthetic experience of Venezuela's geobotanical environments, from the *llanos* (prairies) and cordilleras to the lowland tropical forests, interconnected through a series of patios (fig. 19). These shady enclosures by the park's main entrance, each surrounded by walls tiled in simple modernist designs, recall traditional backyard gardens of the colonial city yet also reimagine these for the modern capital of the present age. As Anita Berrizbeitia points out, the park actively precludes the visual detachment enjoyed by visitors of English and French landscape gardens, by withholding belvederes and elevated platforms. Instead, it encourages the active, kinetic immersion of mobile bodies in the diversity of milieus assembled in the park's microcosm: "The visitor's relation with the landscape is not one of detached contemplation but one that concentrates on the material and tactile experience of the landscape. Parque del Este deals not in generalities but specificities—material, visual, tactile, spatial, volumetric and experiential ones."[89]

The park's multisensory experience, then, always exceeds the merely visual apprehension elicited by the landscape architect's blueprint (fig. 18)—yet the formal simplicity and clarity of the latter also ensure the legibility of the design, such that gardened space never conceals its own

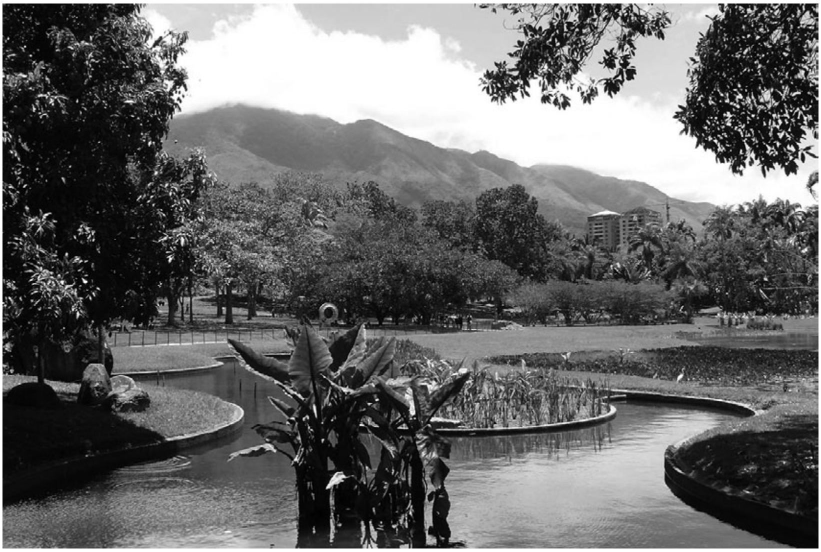


Fig. 19. Roberto Burle Marx, Parque del Este, Caracas, 2009. Wikimedia Commons.

character as a planned and managed, indeed, a social landscape. Even when this signature appears to be rigid, it is highly fragile and requires constant attention and maintenance to contain the effects of seeding out or to maintain the design's overall coherence as plants grow and die over time. Usually, Burle Marx would continue monitoring his commissions long after completion of the initial landscaping work. Each garden represented a dynamic environment in constant need of new interventions and solutions, which is why it is somewhat misleading to date his designs as one would a painting or even a building. Indeed, at large-scale public projects such as Parque del Este, Burle Marx insisted on creating on-site nurseries and greenhouses for staff and visitor training purposes as well as for ongoing maintenance—a wager on the continued existence of the midcentury developmentalist state's commitment to public expenditure that would promptly be dishonored, for multiple reasons, by the latter's dictatorial and democratic successors in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. As Rossana Vaccarino puts it, by "incorporating temporality and change" as a key aspect of the design, Burle Marx sought to generate "projects with the character of a living organism. The delayed construction and the possibility of watching progressive growth provided, in fact, the time for both Burle Marx and the park users to establish a deep relationship with the landscape, in a way very similar to the relationship that humans establish among themselves."[90]

Not unlike Victoria Ocampo's family garden at San Isidro, the public gardens of Roberto Burle Marx sought to establish an affective relationship with place while also inscribing the latter into the cosmopolitan space of modernity. He did so by using an expressive language that replicates this same interplay in fusing the elementary forms of abstract art with the morphology and mutability of plant physiology. The biometric curve, Burle Marx's signature element in the design of so many of his gardens, makes this constitutive tension the centerpiece and organizing principle of spatial organization, at once recognizing and disavowing the limit between the designer's sovereign decision and the already "biometric" shapes of individual plants and vegetal ensembles. The line is thus a porous border allowing for resonances and transpositions between one side and the other, between the elementary forms of nature and those of art, while also keeping intact their separation. Burle Marx would almost certainly have read Rudolf Borchardt's *The Passionate Gardener*, written in exile in 1938, which discusses the notion of order in the garden as an unsurmountable tension between the "prehuman" order of the flower and the "human mode of order," for which the garden as a whole strives as a way of making up for the irretrievable loss of prelapsarian harmony. In attempting once more to "conjugate life and form," as Robert Pogue Harrison concludes, the garden for Borchardt "stands at the center of a human mode of being that stretches between two impossibilities, two irrevocable losses: nature and God."[91] Burle Marx's and Ocampo's attempts at gardening the New World, different as they may be, also bring a historical, postcolonial, dimension to this foundational tension at the heart of gardening: even if only obliquely, they both mourn a preextractivist "nature" of the past at the same time as they attempt to devise modes of human-vegetal conviviality for their own present and future.

AMEREIDA: NAVIGATING THE SEA WITHIN

They must have been quite a sight: a bunch of scruffy, oddly dressed guys hopping off from a weather-beaten Chevrolet van on September 4, 1965, just before noon when everything closes for a long siesta in the sleepy provincial capital of Santiago del Estero, Argentina. Their vehicle packed to the roof with wires, paper, cloth, and aluminum sheets, two of the travelers promptly start performing pranks for the kids gathering at the plaza, while the others, unsuccessfully, try to cash a check at the bank (it's a Saturday). Having made their introductions later that same afternoon to the handful of regulars hanging out at the nearby "Dimensión" bookshop, all go to have dinner together and agree to meet up again at lunchtime the next day at the poet Alberto Alba's cabin at El Zanjón on the outskirts of town.[92] There, continuing the previous night's "improvisations by the poets and games on a piece of paper," the visitors return the locals' hospitality through a host of poetic and sculptural interventions: "Alberto paints the door and one of the front windows. Tronquoy makes a bas-relief on one side of the house. Fabio paints a poem by Edy on a styrofoam sheet. Godo writes a poem, which Tronquoy engraves onto a copper plate. Boulting writes another, which Alberto copies onto a size nine paper thread."[93] Gradually, Alba's little cabin on the outskirts of Santiago del Estero is thus transformed into an early iteration, a blueprint, of the poetic travelogue the travelers would publish some two years later, *Amereida* (fig. 20). There, as we have seen, they would likewise resort to poetic as well as visual cartographies to "invert and redirect" the continental silhouette, in the

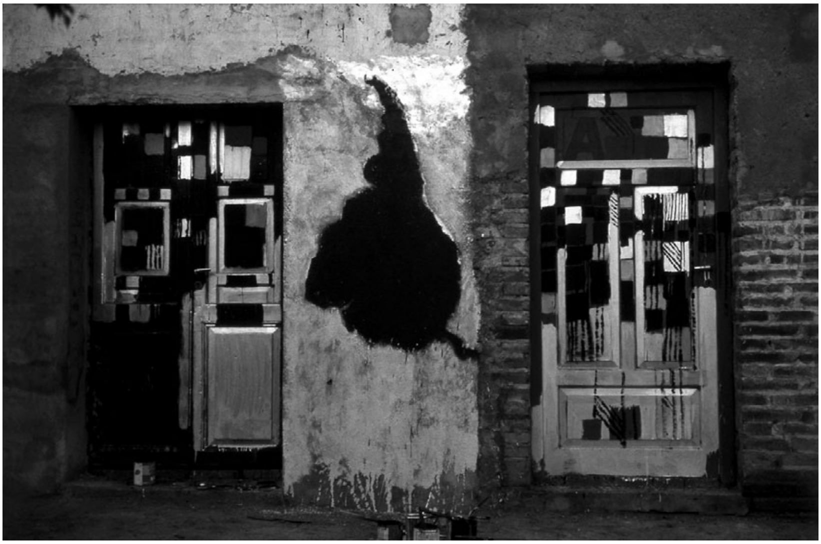


Fig. 20. Travesía de Amereida, Alberto Alba's house, Santiago del Estero, September 5, 1965. Photograph by François Fédier. Ritoque, Chile: Archivo Corporación Cultural Amereida.

process also laying down the foundations for Ciudad Abierta, an experimental site north of Valparaíso, Chile, where some of the travelers would take up residence in 1970. In their *bitácora* (logbook), two of the expeditioners—sculptor Claudio Girola and architect Fabio Cruz—explain the cabin's intervention as follows:

> Our journey: Tierra del Fuego—Santiago del Estero. The location of this town is represented through these painted doors.
>
> The door is what's primordial. The window: view, light. No mere hole, something already more elaborate. Santiago del Estero is in the countryside, here, at El Zanjón, or: at the doors' base. These doors sought to represent, on their surface, the doors to be opened and closed.
>
> A door is opened. A door is closed . . .
>
> Both doors, then, allow to see the plane that extends between them. South is North, our orientation, which is no longer called North or South. The Southern Cross is called the Polar Anchor. The Atlantic contributes the Light. The Pacific is the Adventure. Whereas the tropics and the Antilles

> are the Origin: therefore, 1. Anchor, 2. Light, 3. Origin, 4. Adventure.
>
> Santiago del Estero: Alberto Alba's house.[94]

Alba's cabin becomes home to an alternative, poetic geography. It shelters a new and dissident triangulation of American space, the meanings of which the group was to proclaim on reaching their destination: the Bolivian city of Santa Cruz de la Sierra, where plains, mountains, and forest—the three "rhythms" of the southern subcontinent—converged. Or so the travelers would have done if their journey had not been cut short, only a few days after the encounter at Santiago del Estero, by Bolivian military authorities who suspected them of being in cahoots with the guerrilla force that Ernesto Che Guevara was just then beginning to assemble in the Bolivian interior. Only the intervention of the Argentine consul at Tarija—a university friend of one of the travelers—saved them from further complications arranging their safe passage back to Argentina and, eventually, to their countries of origin.

Who were these men, and what was the meaning of the map they left behind in Alberto Alba's cabin? Alberto Cruz and Godofredo Iommi, the driving forces behind the journey, had first met in 1950 in Santiago de Chile shortly before Cruz was offered the chair for architecture at the Universidad Católica of Valparaíso. Cruz accepted so long as he could bring along a bunch of fellow architects (Arturo Baeza, Jaime Bellalta, Fabio Cruz, Miguel Eyquém, and José Vial) and artists (painter Francisco Méndez and sculptor Claudio Girola) who would collaborate not only in updating the curriculum and in setting up a new research space, the Institute of Architecture, but also in conducting an experiment of communal living that sought to integrate the avant-gardist dream of fusing art and life with the "making of space through Architecture."[95] Godofredo Iommi, an Argentine, had come to Chile to visit fellow poet Vicente Huidobro—only to fall in love with the latter's companion, Ximena Amunátegui, whom he would marry shortly after. In 1939, stuck in Brazil on his way to Europe due to the outbreak of World War II, Iommi had already dreamed up another poetic journey, traveling up the Amazon River in the company of Brazilian poets Gerardo Mello Morães and Abdias do Nascimento, while jointly reading, translating, and performing Dante's *Divine Comedy*. Throughout the 1950s, when he and Amunátegui moved to Paris, Iommi would regularly visit Cruz and his group in Chile, while also making friends with the French poet Michel Deguy (with whom he would cofound the *Revue de Poésie*) as well as a host of artists and writers including the philosopher François Fédier, painter Jorge Pérez Román, sculptor Henri Tronquoy, and poet Edison Simons. All these would later join Iommi after his return to Chile in 1965, along with Cruz's group, on the *travesía de Amereida* (Amereida crossing): a collective, experimental, and largely improvisational journey through the continental interior from its southernmost tip at Tierra del Fuego to Santa Cruz, the "poetic capital of America."

While Iommi was in Paris, Cruz and his fellows had been trying at Valparaíso to rethink architecture not as the mind work, the "master-plan," of a demiurgic individual but rather as a collective, integrated process of revealing place through shared inhabiting, a practice involving both everyday activities and creative events. Inspired by modernist notions of integrating plastic and poetic values—advanced most notably by Le Corbusier in his *Poème de l'angle droit* (*Poem of the Right Angle*, 1955)—Cruz questioned the autonomy and self-sufficiency of architecture, insisting instead on its subordination to poetry as the origin and end of the built environment. "It is the poetic word that provides the foundation for architecture," as Iommi would declare: "Poetry not as an inspiration, which is how everyone else uses it, but as an indicator."[96] If poetry is the invention of the human in language, then architecture is entrusted with "making room" for this inaugural event and thus with "realizing" it as it indicates the latter's "position" regarding the material universe. Architecture endows poetry with a body; it "incorporates" it within the site of emplacement. Architecture is the making of poetic space: "Posición y palabra. Arquitectura y poesía" (Position and word. Architecture and poetry), as Cruz would sum it up on one of the *pizarras* (chalkboards) he used to prepare for classes at the Institute of Architecture (see, e.g., fig. 21).

This idea of architecture as a spatial and material translation of poetic language took as its inaugural moment what the group called a *phalène*—according to Iommi, a word he had stumbled on by chance in a dictionary, and which in French referred to the moth's deadly flight toward the light that attracts it. The *phalène* was a kind of playful poetic exercise through which, in collective associations, card games, or by throwing a dice that would determine the arrangement of a verse, a form of "inscription" was being enacted in a particular location. The *phalène* calls on place by making the act of poetic invention contingent on its material and living surroundings (see, e.g., fig. 22). At the same time, the poetic act also becomes a form of inquiry into the "situation" and "destiny" of this place, a method, according to Pendleton-Jullian, of

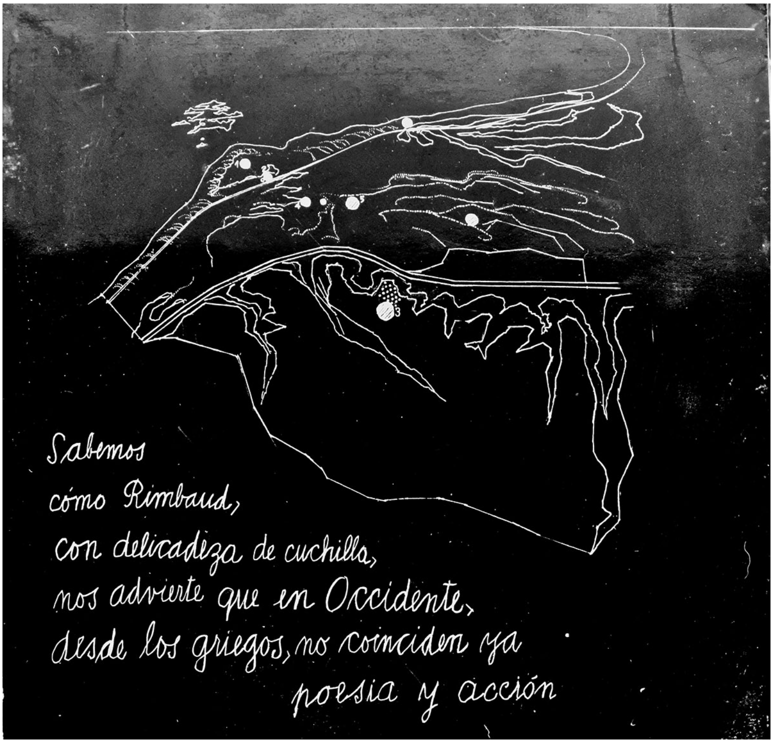

Sabemos
cómo Rimbaud,
con delicadiza de cuchillo,
nos advierte que en Occidente,
desde los griegos, no coinciden ya
poesia y acción

Fig. 21. Alberto Cruz Covarrubias, chalk drawing showing the site of Ciudad Abierta at Ritoque. Photograph taken at the exhibition *Pizarras escritas*, 1972, Instituto de Arquitectura de la Universidad Católica de Valparaíso. Archivo José Vial Armstrong, Viña del Mar, Chile.

"discover[ing] and generat[ing] 'correspondences' between things—the physical site and space, the cultural site and space, form and materiality, space and gesture, gesture and construction, parts, components, and phenomena of each—in place of the singularity of concept making."[97] First put into practice through the regular outings of students and teachers into the urban space of Valparaíso, the seismic topography and patched-up buildings of which certainly contributed to the idea of place as a continuous process of invention, the concept of *phalène* was subsequently also introduced by Iommi into poetic and artistic circles in France where, almost certainly, it would have entered into cross-fertilization with contemporary Situationist ideas of "psychogeography" and the *dérive* (drift).[98] In the way its poetic form, as playfully teasing out the potential meanings of the location, "is integrally linked to the place in which the act unfolds," the *phalène* also "introduces the

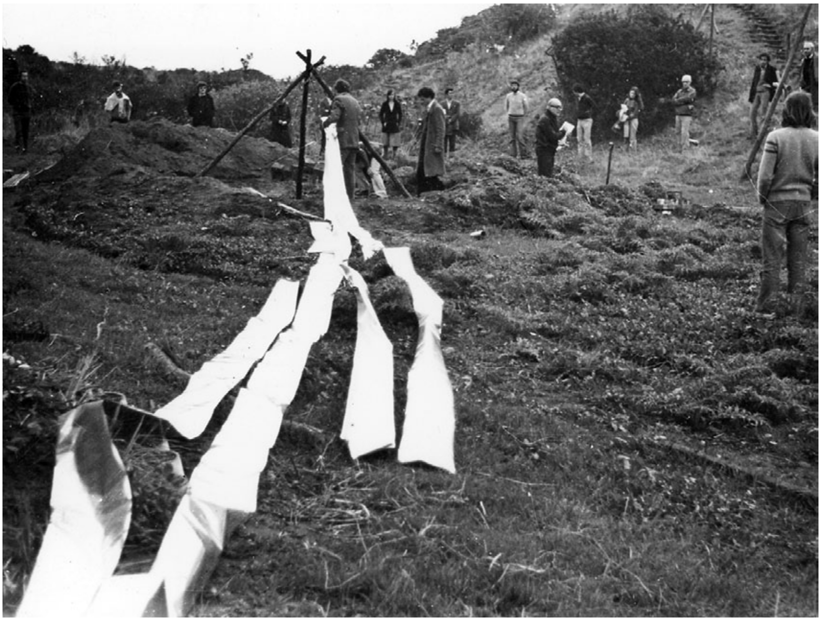


Fig. 22. Phalène de la electricidad. Pozos de luz (Electric *phalène*. Wells of light). Action at Ciudad Abierta, 1977. Archivo José Vial Armstrong, Viña del Mar, Chile.

possibility of *linking poetry to place and space*: to the place in which it occurs and to the space which it configures. It is precisely in service of this that the poetic act achieves its status as initiator of the architectural process."[99]

The *phalènes*, carried out in the streets, stairs, and hillside elevators of Valparaíso by the members of the institute and in French town squares and housing projects in the banlieues by Iommi and his friends, were an attempt to conceive the poetic event as a collective experience, collapsing the exceptional with everyday space and time. As Iommi put it, quoting Lautréamont's famous maxim: "Poetry has to be made by all, not just one."[100] Rather than a complete and definite "work," the *phalène*'s poetic production was the ephemeral and contingent event of collective and spontaneous cocreation of community through shared poetic experience, in which "players" and bystanders alike intervened, if sometimes involuntarily. The Amereida journey of 1965, in fact, was also an attempt at rearticulating the previous iterations of the *phalène* in Chile and France and at inventing, in the words of Michel Deguy, "a superior phalènic event."[101] The journey's poetic program, right from its title that fused the continental name with the title of Virgil's epic of the foundation of Rome, the *Aeneid*, embraced a double logic of foundation. On the one hand the new argonauts aboard the Amereida would perform an inaugural act of naming, while on the other they themselves were to become confounded with, or "traversed by," the living presence of the continent's material geography in the very instance of its "crossing." The travelers set out to reexperience America as a poetic object, the invention of which would also be a way of instituting community—not just among the group of navigators but also among those they would reach out to, as in the intervention of Alba's cabin at El Zanjón. Thus, Amereida also attempted once again to "casar a la tierra con el nombre" (wed the earth to the name), as the collective poem stated.[102] What Amereida wanted to achieve—as a "superior phalènic event"—was nothing less than to conceive of "la poesía como acto para celebrar las bodas del lugar y de la formula" (poetry as an act that celebrates the wedding of place and program).[103]

Amereida also radicalized previous initiatives of dissident, antitouristic travel in Latin American modernist art and literature. At the same time, in its "foundational" relation to Ciudad Abierta, the travesía sketched out a lived alternative to existing relations between place and the urban: it returned to the colonial dialectic of space making between the landscape in visu and the landscape in situ, only to eventually leave it behind. Spearheaded initially by Iommi and his Parisian friends, the initiative was enthusiastically embraced by the Valparaíso group. At the end of July 1965, only a few months after Iommi had returned from Europe, the travelers embarked by plane to Punta Arenas and continued to Puerto Natales at the southern tip of the continent. Their road trip, however, would not remain conflict free. Whereas for the European artists and poets joining from overseas (Deguy, sculptor Henri Tronquoy, philosopher François Fédier, and English poet Jonathan Boulting) the travesía de Amereida also revisited a legacy of modernist travel going back to the South American journeys of Blaise Cendrars, Antonin Artaud, or Henri Michaux earlier in the century, for the Latin Americans (apart from Iommi himself, Chilean architects Alberto and Fabio Cruz, sculptor Claudio Girola and painter Jorge Pérez Román, both from Argentina, and poet Edison Simons, from Panama), it was rather a way of doubling down on previous experiments with poetic emplacement. Their aim was less to venture out into the great unknown and rather to develop, by putting themselves on the move, a new and different notion of architecture as a continuous, creative mode of inhabitation that could even include abandonment and starting anew: to travel, to put themselves in movement, was always already a means of enabling a return and thus, a renewed and different attachment to place, which they would put into practice only a few years later with the foundation of Ciudad Abierta.

Although not clear-cut, this diversity of expectations converging aboard the Amereida's Chevrolet van is reflected in the different modes of textuality, of bearing witness, that the travelers produced—at least in those they chose to make public. The long, 190-page poem *Amereida*, which included contributions from all the journey's participants but was compiled and edited mainly by Iommi, was published in 1967 by a small printers' cooperative in Valparaíso.[104] A second and third edition, under the auspices of the Universidad Católica, were published in 1986 and 2011, respectively. Also in 1986, as if to mark the essentially unfinished, open-ended character of the poetic (re)foundation initiated by the journey, a "Second Volume" was released, adding another 156 pages of poetic testimony as well as a *bitácora* (logbook) in prose, written by Girola and Cruz (although their names are omitted, as in fact are any authors' names in either of the two volumes). In a series of footnotes to the text, the logbook also includes some of the writings composed jointly during the journey and inscribed or painted onto rocks, shacks, and ad hoc sculptures, images of which are not included in either iteration of the poem.[105] The choice of keeping from public circulation, until more than twenty years later, any narrative description of the initial journey of 1965, as well as any of the photographs taken by the participants, speaks to a deliberate rejection of a documentary, mimetic relation between experience and writing. At the same time, the first volume of *Amereida* does contain almost a dozen black-and-white artists' maps, making it unlikely that the omission of photographs would have been due purely to technical limitations. In fact, the poem itself, rather than offering a narrative in verse of the journey, only discusses its motivations and objectives, offering a program for future navigations rather than a reckoning with the one that has already occurred. Each of the writings of the travesía, the poem and the logbook, is predicated on the other's absence: the logbook offers merely an external description of the journey's trajectory, withholding the poetic, material, and gestural content of *phalènes* and recitations, whereas the poem purely consists of reflections on the travel's meaning in the absence of any account of the journey itself. As readers, we are literally at sea in *Amereida*, adrift in a textual interior the geographic referent of which evaporates before our eyes.

In formal terms, *Amereida* is characterized by the alternation between passages written in verse and others in prose-like paragraphs. The latter generally provide self-reflexive, metapoetic commentary on the former, where versification is frequently displayed in a cascading typography suggesting an argument, a mode of poetic reasoning:

colón
nunca vino a américa
buscaba las indias
en medio de su afán
esta tierra
irrumpe en regalo
mero
regalo
surge
contrariando intentos
ajeno a la esperanza
trae consigo
su donación
sus términos
sus bordes[106]
(columbus
never came to america
he was searching for the indies
right there in his eagerness
this land
arose as a gift
a mere
gift
it arose
against all intent
a stranger to hope
bringing along
its offering
its ends
its edges)

America, the poem suggests, appears in Western history as an unexpected gift. But the meaning of this self-offering was never grasped by the colonizers, blinded as they were by their search for ends—gold, spices, trade routes: "¿no fue el hallazgo ajeno / a los descubrimientos?" (was not the finding a stranger / to discovery?) (3), the poem asks right from the outset. "Discovered" but never "found," America came into existence as alienated from itself, and only poetry insofar as it "es signo que vela y desvela el sentido" (is the sign that veils and unveils meaning) (12) can take on "la prueba de ese desierto entre la cosa y el nombre" (the trial of this desert between thing and name) (81): "¿quién sino ella dice de un origen / pues sólo poéticamente se aparece?" (who else would speak of an origin / since only poetically can it appear?) (13).

The poem's entire first section, also including the first two maps—one showing the silhouette of South America rising from the ocean floor, and the other indicating the centers of population dotting its coastline (see fig. 9)—is given over to this "problem of America" as the poetic challenge to which the travesía aims to respond:

américa regalada
¿se ha aceptado a sí misma?
¿cómo respondernos?
¿podemos interrogar poéticamente
el propio desenvolvimiento del signo
tratar de discernirlo
a través
de cómo nos hemos vuelto americanos
quienes lo somos
para que él mismo
nos manifieste en la palabra? (15)

(america gifted
has it accepted itself?
how can we answer ourselves?
can we interrogate, poetically,
the sign's own development
attempt to discern it
through the way
in which we have become american
those of us who
have
such that, of its own
it will become manifest to us in language?)

Poetry is the only mode of speech capable of receiving America's gift, *Amereida* suggests, and thus also of exchanging an objectifying, colonial attitude incapable of grasping anything but surface appearances of bodies and things for one that opens toward "el nuevo mar / de nuestra muda interioridad" (the new sea / of our mute interiority) (19). It is for poetry, in America, to undertake the navigation of this "Sea Within," inverting the colonial chroniclers' approach to the continental land body from the outside.[107] Poetry, on the contrary, must make appear inside language "aquello cuyo don no percibimos / más ¿cómo llamarlo? / ¿cómo provocar su aparición?" (that whose gift we had not perceived / yet, how call on it? / how can we urge it to appear?) (18). By way of the travesía—the continental crossing—the poem replies: by putting into practice an itinerant poetics that navigates this interior land ocean and thus renounces the mere "discovery" of objects and materialities. Rather, what poetic navigation is after is not to discover but to "find"—to unmoor continental reality from objectness by allowing language and its subject to be themselves "traversed," crossed, by what provides them with a body—that is, by materiality: "travesía / que no descubrimiento o invento / consentir / que el mar propio y gratuito nos atraviese" (crossing / unlike discovery or invention / to consent / to being traversed by our own gratuitous sea) (25).

Following these preliminary deliberations, the poetic voice takes "inventario" (inventory—the term that opens the following section, printed on an otherwise white page). The poem inventories the items each of the travelers carries along before offering (in a paragraph displayed in open verse, with the spaces interrupting continuity equivalent to the silences and introjections in a conversation) a first working definition of what the journey is about:

> nosotros tratamos de hallar otra vez la inscripción
> la posibilidad de inscripción que fue durante siglos el gran gesto
> scripturario . . .
> ¿el viaje?
> acaso hay que venir a celebrar en el lugar mismo ver
> marcar inscribir (79–80)
>
> (we are trying to reencounter inscription
> the possibility of inscribing which, through the centuries, has
> been the great scriptural gesture . . .
> the journey?
> perhaps it's necessary to come and celebrate at the location itself
> to see to mark to inscribe)

Maintaining the same, conversational, open-verse style, ten lengthy meditations follow, as many as the journey's participants, unified only through their shared last line: "mañana partimos a recorrer América" (tomorrow we'll set out to roam America). As in a sequence of dramatic monologues, each of the voices that will carry the poem starts out by disclosing their motivations and anxieties as well as, more fundamentally, their state of openness to real experience, their readiness to shed received knowledge.

But, just as we expect it to move, finally, from anticipation to action, the poem leaps not forward but back in time, returning, in versified form, to some key passages from Antonio Pigafetta, the Italian chronicler of Ferdinand Magellan's first circumnavigation of the globe (1519–22). The moment we find ourselves returned to is a crucial one: the fleet's desperate search—at Tierra del Fuego, also the Amereida's point of departure—for the passage from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Here in the colonial navigator's reflection on his companions' incapacity to understand the Native Fuegians' indications, which puts toponymy and the land constantly at odds with one another, the "abysmal" nature of American continentality becomes manifest: "como un monstruo para nosotros y un impedimento para el pasaje" (like a monster for us, and an obstacle to our passage) (158). What makes America monstrous, incommensurable, is "algo irreductible a la unidad de medida" (something irreducible to a unit of measurement), which is therefore "de un orden negativo" (of the order of the negative) (158). As the abyss of representation, America can be apprehended only in a state of trance: "estar en trance no de un antes a un después o de una barbarie a una civilización sino en trance presente" (being entranced, not to move from a before to an after or from barbarism to civilization, but entranced in the present) (163). Entrancement, the poem suggests, requires a language capable of assuming—of making room for—this incommensurable dimension, in the manner of the rainforest people described by a sixteenth-century chronicler, who built their homes and made their paths in the treetops as a way of living safely alongside the wild beasts on the ground:

> sólo se consuela la tierra   sólo se logra suelo   cuidando del
> abismo   sólo es suelo lo que guarda el abismo   lo que da
> cabida a la irrupción y proporción al trance
> estar en trance es vivir con asombro un choque de ruptura y un
> arranque de abismo (160)

> (the earth is appeased only   there is ground only   in looking
> after the abyss   only what can hold the abyss is a ground   what
> gives space to irruption and measure to trance
> to be entranced is to experience with amazement the impact of a
> rift and the opening of an abyss)

Amereida, in short, attempts nothing less than to poetically chart how this ungrounding earth opens an abysmal rift within language itself, which can only be traversed in a state of trance. It aims to forge a poetic cartography that "inverts and turns" the lands mapped out by the chronicles of discovery and to reveal the manifold origins and destinies converging on them (see fig. 23). "¿qué lenguaje pues?" (what kind of language, then?), the last of the monologues preparing for an imminent departure had asked, to which the poem replies: "un lenguaje en que

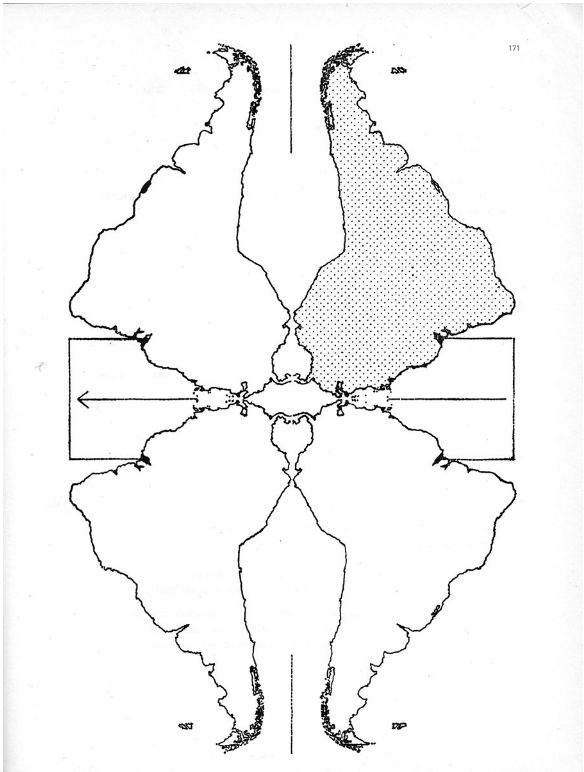


Fig. 23. "América invertida y retornada" (America inverted and turned). Map. From *Amereida* (Santiago: Editorial Cooperativa Lambda, 1967).

paisaje y acontecer comparecen en el mismo rango . . . este lenguaje de lo múltiple debe hablar en américa" (a language where landscape and event coincide in the same capacity . . . this language of multiplicity has to speak in america) (124). Seen from within, from the land, America ceases to be the object of a foreign, extractive gaze and becomes itself an origin for multiple departures and worldmakings:

¿qué es esta américa retornada e invertida?
¡es américa vista a partir de la tierra!
a partir de lo debajo dicho de otro modo

de donde viene dante   y donde están los muertos (174)

(what is this america turned and inverted?
it's america as seen from the land!
from below   or to put it differently

from where dante comes   and where the dead are)

Having laid out the program for a poetic remapping of the continent and still only "setting out to roam America," the poetic voice is already on the return: "todo llegar es un volver   así como el alba es un perpetuo volver" (every arrival is a return just as the dawn is a perpetual return) (184). To return means—at least for the travelers belonging to Cruz's group—to return to Valparaíso and to the task of communal placemaking. Yet it also implies attempting a renewed departure: "mañana partiremos a américa para alcanzar a llegar a ella   para volver a ella" (tomorrow we'll set out to roam america   to finally reach her to return to her) (184). The poem's final passages, in short, sketch out an idea of permanent dwelling in movement, arriving and departing at one and the same time, which already anticipates the Ciudad Abierta's own fluid relation to space and place. This same idea is reiterated by the poem's last verse—a single line on an otherwise blank page following the final pair of maps that show the journey's itinerary (one with and one without the continental silhouette placing the line in its geographical context): "el camino no es el camino" (the path is not the path) (189). There can be no single path in the multiplicity of itineraries opening once America is no longer the destination of (colonial) discovery but a refound origin of spatial as well as aesthetic and conceptual displacements. Indeed, the very inconclusiveness of the journey and of the poem that sings it only corroborates the validity of this idea: that earth must be apprehended in its abysmal dimension, in a state of trance.

Founded in 1970, in the sand dunes of Ritoque bay just north of the seaside resort of Concón, Ciudad Abierta attempted to put into living practice this twofold return: from space to place, and also from poetic experience to its architectural transposition and embodiment. Yet Ciudad Abierta also claimed to be a new departure in its own right, yet another "return to America" of the kind sketched out only a few years earlier by the poetic travesía. The project had emerged in the aftermath of a nationwide struggle for university reform, in which, right after their return from Bolivia, Cruz and his group had vocally participated, suggesting to extend the institute's communal ethos of fusing life and work, research and learning, to the Universidad Católica of Valparaíso as a whole. When their ideas were rejected outright by the university's conservative establishment, the majority of the group stepped down from their teaching posts and in 1968—taking advantage of recent land reform legislation facilitating the collective purchase of uncultivated lands—formed a cooperative to acquire some seven hundred acres of terrain on the Pacific coast. Removed from the constraints of academic duties, the founders of Ciudad Abierta put into practice their ideas of living in "hospitality" toward others and their material surroundings in a distant echo of—among others—Frank Lloyd Wright's desert school at Taliesin West, Arizona, established in 1937.

The inaugural ceremony for "opening the terrain" had initially been scheduled for March 20, 1969, to mark the centennial of the death of Friedrich Hölderlin, a key poetic reference for Iommi and others. But the fatal accident suffered by Henri Tronquoy, one of Amereida's participants, on a trip to the Caribbean in completion of the Southern Cross that the journey begun at Tierra del Fuego had sought to project onto the continental surface, delayed proceedings for more than a year. In these inaugural acts, including *phalènes* in which participants had to walk across the sands blindfolded or reach the shore by boat from the small rocky islets strewn across the bay, "it was all about reaching the terrains of the Open City and in this attempt to stumble and to come up against the limit."[108] Walking through the sandy dunes, where they ate and spent the night, the group playfully discovered, as Iommi puts it, "the endless relapse into not knowing" that became "the foundation, or the statute, of the terrain itself and of the Open City."[109] In their volatile materiality, the sands that "are not firm but rather at the wind's mercy, neither earth nor sea and, thus, also no longer beach," offered a kind of *Wunderblock* in reverse, where every footprint was being erased almost instantly.[110] The dunes were a form without memory, an incessant metamorphosis, which an architecture indebted to poetry had to find a way of translating into a mode of inhabiting that was congruent with this nonplace. As Iommi described it:

> the sands reveal themselves to us as an endless relapse into not knowing, which is not the same as ignorance as opposed to wisdom. Instead of the stability of a form of acquired knowledge, this mere trance of disappearance speaks to us of a continuous return to not knowing, which precludes dwelling in an acquired knowledge with respect to that which is yet to be known and, in consequence, is also not a knowledge to be conquered.[111]

In line with this ethics of inconclusiveness through an active process of collective unlearning of the basic principles of modern urbanism, construction of Ciudad Abierta would begin in an "impuntual" (pointless) fashion.[112] The "city" deliberately lacked any kind of previously indicated center, such that instead "the placement of works derived solely from poetic acts."[113] Instead of plans and blueprints, Ciudad Abierta's archives of individual buildings and sculptural interventions feature watercolors, poems, and transcripts of discussions among builders and residents, as well as photographs of inaugural *phalènes* and of successive stages of construction (see, e.g., fig. 24). In the absence of an overarching goal, as a visiting Argentine architect observed in the mid-1980s, these buildings would frequently "take on an additive aspect of partial inventions and solutions."[114] Work was largely carried out using local materials, including driftwood, cheap bricks, and tiles, often also reusing material from earlier constructions that were being absorbed into later ones to the extent that learning about the location and its requirements progressed.[115] Their "materiality remains attached to the *process of building* as it reveals the hand of the builder."[116]

"The first architectural task to be accomplished, to be invented," as Iommi had written on occasion of the inauguration, "is for the Open City to cease having a reverse or margin [insofar as] on placing itself on the sand, the Open City will allow the ocean to claim presence in its relation to the earth."[117] Instead of treating the site as landscape and thus as an "option" open to intervention, the Ciudad Abierta would

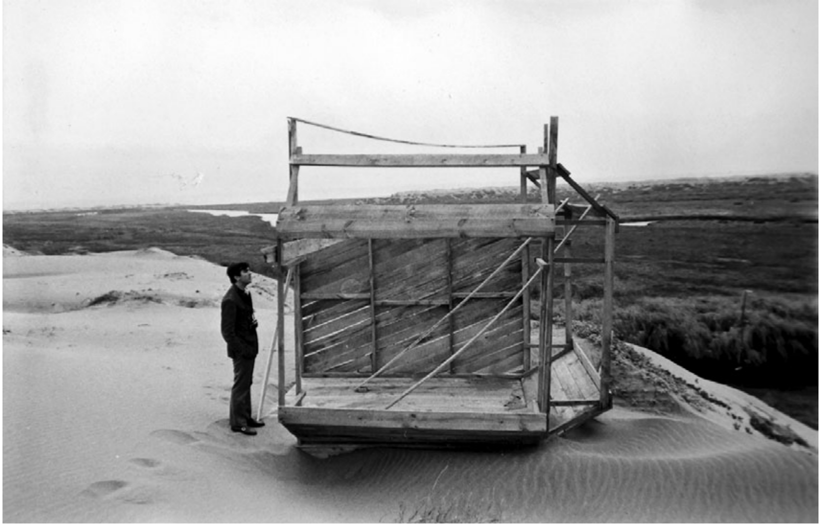


Fig. 24. "Construcción de la Hospedería del Pan" (Construction of the Hospedería del Pan), Ciudad Abierta, ca. 1972. Archivo José Vial Armstrong, Viña del Mar, Chile.

take shape in the "without option" ("lo sin opción") of the poetic geography revealed by Amereida. Its buildings and monuments respond (though not in any direct, calculable fashion) to the idea of "proper North" indicated by the Southern Cross (one of the cardinal points of poetic navigation painted at Alba's cabin), their arrangement following "the new orientation, in the location itself, along the horizontal axis between the Sea Within and the Pacific Ocean."[118] This, of course, was less a geographical than a conceptual and poetic mode of localization. Yet for this very reason, generally speaking, the buildings at Ciudad Abierta turn their backs on the seashore, which, rather than as prospect or visual landscape, is invited into interior space as an aural and luminous presence, as in the beautiful Sala de Música (Music Room), a communal meeting hall centered on a rectangular glass chamber that turns exterior space into the innermost element of the community gathering there. In similar fashion, during one of the inaugural acts, "on the shore, instead of entering the sea, the earth was dug up for the sea to enter as if into a fjord" (fig. 25).[119] "The Ocean," Iommi wrote, "can only become ours by maintaining, manifesting, realizing this relation with the Sea Within."[120]

This idea of place as destiny, to be revealed through poetic acts and through open-ended, "inconclusive" engagement with the location, also

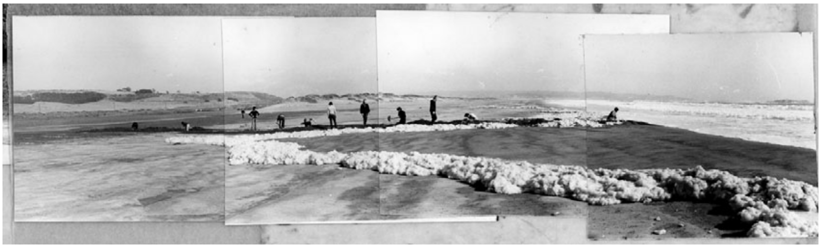


Fig. 25. Digging a fjord at the seashore. Poetic act (*phalène*), ca. 1972–73. Archivo José Vial Armstrong, Viña del Mar, Chile.

underwrote a form of social organization centered on the notion of hospitality. There are only two kinds of buildings at the Ciudad Abierta: on the one hand, the *ágoras*—environments that may be open-air or interior spaces created for the communal assemblies of the same name. It is here that, apart from the poetic acts themselves, the practical, everyday aspects of conviviality are being discussed and decided by consensus. The second kind are the *hospederías* (guesthouses) or life-work spaces. At least initially, there were also meant to be two different varieties of these, even though in practice this distinction never really materialized: *bottegas* (storehouses) and *talleres* (workshops)—the latter reserved for services offered to outside partners (including the university, where some residents continued to teach), the former for the "work the Open City does for itself," where "masters and apprentices" would alternate roles in relation to their "skills" (*oficios*), which would be redefined continuously in the process of their collective (un)learning.[121] The integration of life and work under one roof is of critical importance here, although distinctions persist between "an intimate economy that does not require home ownership of any kind but which is in need of care, tending to its living quarters as well as to the body and soul," on the one hand, and "a public economy where skills have their place,"[122] on the other. The concept of *hospedería* (guesthouse) is to the social organization of the Ciudad Abierta what the notion of the Sea Within is to its relation to the physical location. As Enrique Browne, the visiting Argentine architect, explains: "In every building lives at least one family, which is responsible for protecting it against damage and for making the necessary repairs to its fragile material condition. Although it is their home, no family owns the place, and they practice hospitality. Whoever arrives can come and receive food and shelter, on the sole condition of saying who he or she is."[123]

The coincidence of the Ciudad Abierta's early years with the most convulsive period in modern Chilean history, however, severely limited possibilities of putting into practice this hospitable ethos as well as, more widely, the project's capacity for dialogue with the larger architectural and artistic field. Despite the Ciudad Abierta's largely apolitical stance during the Allende administration, several of its inhabitants had been actively involved with the Urban Improvement Agency, and on various occasions the site was targeted during army raids following the military coup of 1973 in pursuit of dissidents seeking shelter there. After 1974, moreover, the name Ritoque became a synonym not of the Ciudad Abierta but rather of the concentration camp that the Pinochet regime set up in a former seaside resort at the opposite end of the bay. There, the architect Miguel Lawner—former head of Urban Improvement—as well as faculty members of the Universidad Católica such as the playwright Óscar Castro were held prisoners.[124] Responding to this twofold threat, residents at the Ciudad Abierta called on the protection of the university—a traditional stronghold of Valparaíso's conservative elite—and largely refrained from public interventions, let alone political activism. Such self-enclosure, while safeguarding the site's continuity over time, also contributed to its further estrangement from the Chilean artistic field and turned on its head the very program of hospitality on which the community had been founded.

Arguably, once *phalènes* and a series of new travesías including residents as well as university students and teachers were being reintroduced in the mid-1980s, the Ciudad Abierta was able once again to make good on its experimental promise. In 1984, the year travesías were made a part of the architecture curriculum at the university, groups departed from the Ciudad Abierta to the Atacama Desert, to the city of Belém at the mouth of the Amazon, and once more to Santa Cruz de la Sierra in Bolivia; others traveled by boat up the Paraná River, to Robinson Crusoe island in the Pacific, and to Cape Froward at the continent's southernmost tip, performing public readings and making site-specific interventions en route. The following year, the isle of Amantaní inside Lake Titicaca, the Santa Rosa basin in the Argentine Pampas, and Easter Island were among the destinations. Placemaking at Ciudad Abierta had become contingent once more on new departures and on the ways in which these reconnected the site's coastal location to the Sea Within that had underwritten its "founding charter": not so much in the sense of "lay[ing] down structures and laws but instead establish[ing] the foundation for a way of acting."[125]

Poetic foundation—the lyrical voice of *Amereida* had already argued—cannot follow the example of "la palabra real," the royal word: the Crown patents bestowing on European conquerors the rights to “una tierra donde lo desconocido de ella / está de antemano reglado / estableciendo de este modo una unidad” (a land where that which is unknown / is from the outset regulated / thus establishing a form of unity) (90). Instead, only those who traverse the materiality of the earth in search of the real name—“la real palabra”—will ever navigate the Sea Within. To poetically experience the earth amounts to a “búsqueda de la real palabra / la real palabra que permite obrar / se da en el obrar” (search for the real word / the real word that allows to act / that gives itself in the act) (93).

CHAPTER 3

The Matter with Images

Historia de la física (History of physics, 1982), an approximately twenty-minute video installation based on an action-performance by Chilean artist Eugenio Dittborn, offers a radical critique of authorship. Cross-edited with found footage and intimate images—a boxing match, a nightclub crooner, the artist's wife in labor giving birth to their first child, a swimmer training in an empty pool—the video's main thread shows Dittborn in the desert of Tarapacá in northern Chile, turning over a ninety-gallon barrel of used motor oil and attempting, with little success, to spread the sticky substance across the sand with his bare hands (see fig. 26). Together, the thickness of the oil and the sand's dryness and volatility defy and resist the artist's form-giving attempts, literally forcing him aground until his hands and white shirt are soaked in oily matter: the spill refuses to become painting, action gets caught up in stuff. Ironically referencing Jackson Pollock's drip paintings from the 1940s and 1950s, as well as their reprise in Robert Smithson's *Pours* series (1969), the—quite literally—humiliation suffered by Dittborn at the hands of the materialities he seeks to bend to his will also spills over into the video-image sequence, calling into question the author-editor's ability to turn defeat into victory by means of second-degree image making. The associative chain set in motion by the video's montage of attractions, which appears to reinstate the artist's demiurgic powers of formation—and even his phallic power of procreation—clashes with the stubborn refusal of the elements "at the heart of the matter" to yield

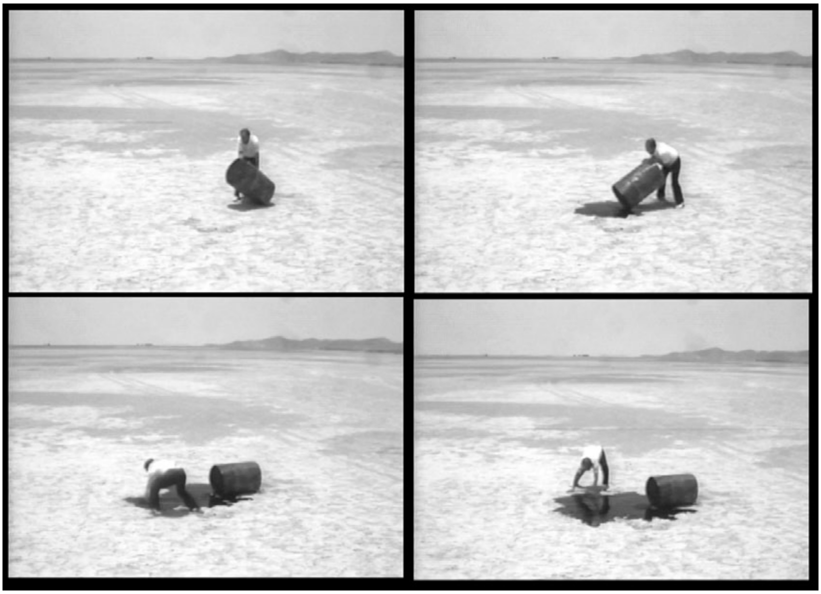


Fig. 26. Eugenio Dittborn, stills from *Historia de la física* (History of physics), 1982. SD video, color and black and white, 13:06 min. Courtesy of Alexander and Bonin, New York.

to their enframing on the video screen: the blob remains a blob however much we look at it.

Historia de la física, in the way it forces us to continuously readjust our attention from the figural to the concrete, from the devices of framing to the entangled agencies of body and matter in the field, also reflects on—as well as enacts—what I want to call the environmental turn in late twentieth- and early twenty-first century Latin American art. The hybrid, unclassifiable nature of the piece—land or video art? Sculpture, painting, or performance?—attests to a major characteristic of this turn, in which, as we shall see, the convergence between a variety of spatiotemporal "acts" is determined not so much by the generic frameworks of photography, theater, sculpture, or film but by the materialities these acts assemble. "Unspecificity" (rather than just "interdisciplinarity" or "mixed media") is the result here of a turning away, or a turning loose from, the institutional circuits and generic protocols of the art system and toward the field of action and of coagency that opens once matter ceases to be a mere support, a "raw material" from which form can be extracted. Even though a political environmentalism is not necessarily on the cards in these interventions, many of them nonetheless participate in a critical revision of the ideas of "work" and "form" as derived from an inert and passive material base, to instead reenvisage them as an open-ended and contingent process of engagements that are by necessity collective, coagential, and inherently more-than-human.

In the field of art history, the Brazilian critic and curator Mário Pedrosa was among the first to notice this emergence of an *arte ambiental* (environmental art), which, in a 1966 essay on Hélio Oiticica, he already proposed to think of as "postmodern." The environmental turn, Pedrosa argued, heralded a new cycle "that is no longer purely artistic but rather cultural" since, in the events and experiences it produced, "nothing is isolated. There is no longer a work that can be appreciated in and for itself, as in a painting. What predominates is instead the perceptive-sensorial ensemble."[1] More than ten years later, in a seminal essay published in the journal *October*, art historian Rosalind Krauss would address in similar terms the dissolution and reconstitution of sculpture in the "expanded field" of postrepresentational practices that also blurred boundaries between architecture and landscape through their interventions into, and engagements with, the materialities and durations of the location. Sculpture, Krauss argued, in its high-modern, post-Rodin iteration, had inhabited the in-between space opening between the fields of architecture and of landscape, and thus also negotiated the relations between them. In the work of artists such as Constantin Brancusi or Henry Moore, sculpture had carved out its own autonomy as the "negative condition of the monument,"[2] no longer marking any place in particular but rather asserting a double negativity in its being neither landscape nor building. Yet, starting with post–World War II neo–avant-gardes such as land art and kinetic art, sculpture as the very form that had acted as the constitutive limit producing the discrete and mutually exclusive fields of "nature" and "culture'"—architecture and landscape—was now itself diluting and amplifying into the "expanded field" of indecision that opens once the boundary between these two collapses.

Krauss's expanded field then is also the space of radical contingency—indeed of "in-formation," of the folding inward of form—that opens once the aporias silently underwriting the bio- and geopolitics of distinguishing nature from culture, bodily matter from expressive gesture, are out in the open. Therefore (even though Krauss in her attempt to define and thus also to integrate these new generic variations into the fold of art history would not yet go as far), the very distinctiveness of art in relation to the larger field of contemporary social and political mobilizations would come under attack. As Kynaston McShine wrote in his catalog essay for MoMA's epoch-defining 1970 show *Information* (which also included works by Oiticica, Marta Minujin, Carlos d'Alessio, and Artur Barrio):

> If you are an artist in Brazil, you know of at least one friend who is being tortured; if you are one in Argentina, you probably have had a neighbor who has been in jail for having long hair, or for not being "dressed" properly; and if you are living in the United States, you may fear that you will be shot at, either in the universities, your bed, or more formally in Indochina. It may seem inappropriate, if not absurd, to get up in the morning, walk into a room, and apply dabs of paint from a little tube to a square of canvas. What can you as a young artist do that seems relevant and meaningful? . . . Art cannot afford to be provincial, or to exist only within its own history, or to continue to be, perhaps, only a commentary on art. An alternative has been to extend the idea of art, to renew the definition, and to think beyond the traditional categories—painting, sculpture, drawing, printmaking, photography, film, theater, music, dance, and poetry. Such distinctions have become increasingly blurred.[3]

Nelly Richard's reflections on the "dimension of social exteriority in the production of art," developed in her groundbreaking catalog essay on the Chilean Escena de avanzada (the "scene of advance") for the 1986 traveling exhibition *Art in Chile: An Audiovisual Documentation*, make explicit this intrinsically social as well as "unspecifying" aspect of Krauss's expanded field.[4] In the context of escalating political tensions across the Americas, Richard was eager to draw attention to the ways in which, beyond the break with the formal rhetoric and genre traditions of high modernism, contemporary artistic practice as "inscribed in the living materiality of the body and its social landscape" also resulted in modes and gestures of intervention that sought "to disrupt the prevailing systems, to infringe the norms and disciplinary techniques controlling meaning, to make an act of dissent."[5] Just as the "use [of] biography as a support for creativity" and that of "voluntary pain [as] legimitat[ing] one's incorporation into the community of those who have been harmed,"[6] the attempt "to exceed the spatial limits of art by moving away from the format of painting . . . toward the use of landscape (the social body as a support for artistic creativity)" was no mere formal or conceptual gesture.[7] What all these elements of post-coup artistic practice in Chile had in common, Richard claimed, was their aim to break free of the institutional confines of art as a way of reflecting and incorporating the wider process of destruction of the institutions, modes, and languages of the social unleashed by dictatorial violence. This unspecification of art came about, Richard notes, in an exercise of "aesthetic reprocessing of the coordinates of social experiences,"[8] in which the spatiotemporal frameworks of sociability and even the boundaries of body and subject had been radically undermined by the comprehensive and capillary presence of dictatorial terror. As a result, "social exteriority" that until then had been a counterpart to and representational object of the autonomous artwork and its institutional space of production and circulation, now became the very dimension into which the aesthetic had to dissolve and in which it could seek refuge. As a clandestine "undercover" form of resistance and survival, art had to find ways of forging alliances and complicities rather than addressing audiences in the monologic and closed mode of the fully fledged "work." The "Chilean in the street," Richard concludes, is "no longer a passive spectator of images but is actively involved in the creative process: he becomes part of the living material of the work through his own interaction with it, by being urged to intervene in the whole network of social conditioning in which he is ensnared."[9]

Yet even Richard's focus, despite her insistence on the dissolution of the aesthetic into gestures, habits, and materialities of the "social exterior," remained fixed primarily on the rhetoric of rupture and refusal that would allow her to inscribe these elements within the wider context of modernist avant-gardism. Right from the title of her essay, "Margins and Institutions," a dynamic of exodus is both celebrated and conditioned on its ongoing relation of negativity toward the institutional field it left behind. Even as they staged, time and again, the rupturing of the institutional realm of art, the margins also paradoxically validated yet again the very centrality of the art institution, as Pablo Oyarzún argues in a contemporary response to Richard's thesis. Oyarzún highlights the "lack of caution regarding the need each and every option for the margin has of recognizing the center, of projecting it, and especially of projecting itself negatively into it, so as to extract from this relation of resistance the negative as discipline, as rhetoric, and as habit in its own practice—as well as, most importantly, as a mechanism of self-confirmation."[10] In a move the art system would be only too happy to adopt and replicate in countless curatorial proposals, the critical commentary in "Margins and Institutions" that offered itself as an ally operated simultaneously as a custodian of artistic practices, the centrifugal gestures of which it tied back once more to the "interior" of the institutional field they had left behind. But the ephemeral and contingent nature of such assemblages was also being submitted once again, Oyarzún warned, "to the consistency of the so-called historical process" when aesthetic practices themselves were opening possibilities for a "displacement and a provocation, of reading the historical from the point of the ephemeral."[11]

Following Oyarzún's suggestion, in this chapter I ask what it means to leave the frame of art and venture into the field of practices, bodies, and materialities in which the aesthetic becomes enmeshed once it sheds its institutional affiliations and dares to become unspecific. In paying attention to the way art actions of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century encourage us, according to Jane Bennett, "to *experience* the relationship between persons and other materialities more horizontally,"[12] I try to forge an *inversión de escena* (inverted scene), to quote the title of a famous intervention by the Chilean group CADA (Colectivo de Acciones de Arte—Art Actions Collective), to be discussed in more detail below. What kinds of alliances and assemblages, I ask, emerge in these acts of exodus, apart from a relation of negativity towards the institutional complex of art? What happens to the aesthetic once it dissolves into and enters association not only with mass media discourse and with political and unionist activisms but also with the things and materialities of everyday routines and even with the stuff of discarded matter and decaying bodies that heap up on the margins of the Latin American neoliberal transition?

STUFF MATTERS: MATERIALITY AND POLITICS IN LATIN AMERICAN ART ACTIONS

The crowd gathering in front of the old townhouse at Calle Córdoba in downtown Rosario, on the evening of November 3, 1968, must have caught the attention of more than a few passersby: some standing on the sidewalk or even the street only a few yards down from an army post and the municipal police's headquarters, chatting or having a smoke while they waited for others, in single file or in pairs of two, to climb over the sacks of sugar blocking the entrance to the headquarters of the CGT de los Argentinos (CGTA)—the most combative of the country's trade unions—where the "First Biennale of Avant-Garde Art" was opening that same night (see, e.g., fig. 27). According to some of those present, more than a thousand people attended inauguration night alone—some of them, we can assume, not quite aware that they were about to enter an art show and attracted, rather, by the enigmatic graffiti, posters, and stickers that had popped up all over town in recent weeks, emblazoned with the slogan that was also spray-painted on one of the exhibition walls: "TUCUMAN ARDE"—Tucumán is burning. Tucumán, a province in the Northwest of Argentina, had been a focal point of labor conflicts in the country since the military coup that had installed the Onganía dictatorship two years earlier, due to the shutdown of several large sugar plants—a calculated attempt on behalf of the local oligarchy to drive up prices by hoarding stocks while simultaneously crushing the organizing capacity of the labor movement through mass layoffs. In response, the regime had launched "Operativo Tucumán"—Operation Tucumán—a sinister precursor to its near namesake, "Operativo Independencia" (Operation Independence), launched in Tucumán only seven years later on the eve of the 1976 military coup, the opening shot of the "Dirty War" that left thirty thousand dead and "disappeared" and

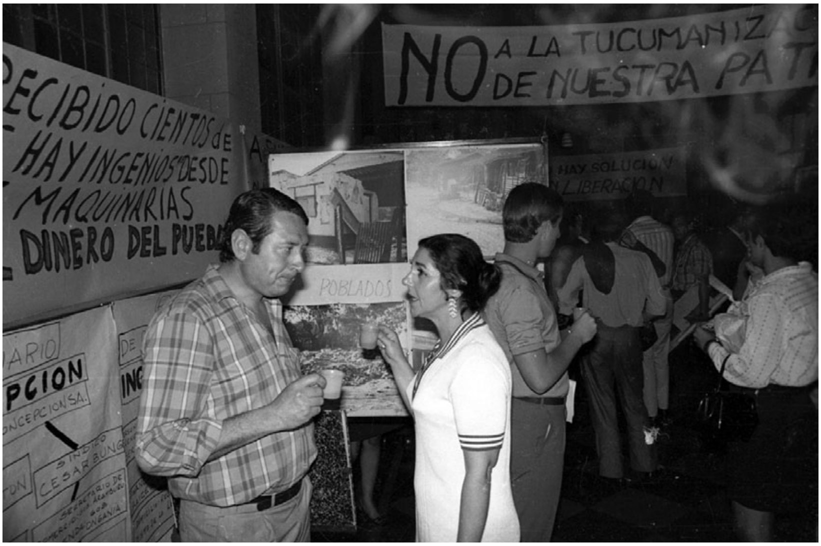


Fig. 27. Inauguration of Tucumán Arde, regional headquarters of the CGT de los Argentinos, Rosario, November 3, 1968. Photograph by Carlos Militello. Archivo Graciela Carnevale, Rosario, Argentina.

countless others tortured, abducted, and exiled. In addition to supporting the sugar barons' lockdown of the plants through police and military repression of workers and peasants, the Operativo Tucumán also included a nationwide media campaign to promote the benefits of economic "diversification," to which the CGTA was responding through mass mobilizations and a solidarity campaign to sustain the laid-off sugar workers in their struggle.

The surprise of those entering the show—union activists, art connoisseurs, and curious onlookers alike—would have continued past the entrance. The corridor leading to the offices and meeting spaces transformed into exhibition rooms was carpeted in packing paper on which the names of Tucumán's sugar factory and plantation owners had been painted. Throughout the building, including in the staircases and kitchen, walls were covered entirely with blown-up photographs of plantation and factory workers and of shantytown inhabitants in Tucumán, as well as posters with the exhibition's title and placards emblazoned with political slogans, imitating those displayed in the photographs hanging across an occupied sugar factory. More patient visitors would also have stopped to ponder the graphs and texts tacked on the walls next to the images, explaining in more detail the exploitative structure of sugar production in Argentina and providing statistical evidence of the alarming sanitary, nutritional, and educational standards in the province celebrated by government propaganda as the "Garden of the Republic." One of the meeting rooms was packed floor to ceiling with large sacks of sugar, while visitors being served cups of bitter, unsweetened coffee could literally taste the effects of hoarding. In another room, boxes with food donated for the workers of Tucumán were piled up, to be driven up north by union activists the following day. Loudspeakers were blasting out interview footage of workers and union leaders recorded in Tucumán over the previous month by the artists and activists responsible for the show. In another room, slides and short films were being projected—interrupted every few minutes by a blackout cutting electricity throughout the building to illustrate the rate at which children were dying in Tucumán on any given day. "Bienvenidos al jardín de la miseria" (Welcome to the garden of misery), a large placard hung across one of the main rooms on the ground floor greeted visitors.

Tucumán Arde, perhaps the most emblematic manifestation of the Latin American 1968—"the most accomplished attempt to formulate a collective program for continuing to make art outside of art,"[13] in historian Ana Longoni's expression—forced visitors to immerse themselves into poverty and struggle as lived, embodied experiences. On entering the building that had been "squatted" in its entirety, "people were getting inside the world of poverty," as one of the artists involved in the show, Rubén Naranjo, described it.[14] Exhibition visitors were incited to become actively involved in a process of struggle to change their position—as had the artists, by moving out of the gilded spaces of galleries, museums, and academic centers and into that of unionist militancy, and also by renouncing their role as individual author-creators of "works" in favor of a collective, mediating function that supported workers' self-organization through the construction of a counterinformation network to the government's propaganda campaign, a *circuito sobreinformacional* (super-information circuit). Through the "art biennale" secretly sheltering a bold act of political resistance but also in the preceding campaign that used the public space of Rosario to generate a climate of expectation and curiosity, as well as in the months-long work of documentation and networking undertaken in Tucumán itself, the collective of artists, academics, and journalists behind the event sought to "activate a process of de-alienating the image of Tucumán's reality elaborated by the mass communication media."[15] In this way, the manifesto circulated at the inaugural show explained, the very notion of "aesthetic creation" would be reframed as a "collective, violent action destroying the bourgeois myth of the artist's individuality . . . Revolutionary art acts on reality through a process of capturing the elements of which it is composed, drawing on lucid ideological concepts based on the principles of materialist reason."[16]

Tucumán Arde, then, was not so much a singular event—a "cultural-political happening," as literary critic Beatriz Sarlo claims[17]—but rather a multistep process, aimed at blending two endeavors: the avant-gardist idea that from aesthetic experience the radically new and unexpected can emerge, on the one hand, and the political avant-gardism of direct action, base organization, and guerrilla struggle, on the other. Rather than a manifestation of politicized art, it was an attempt to push art itself beyond its institutional confines to make it a form of political action in its own right. Understandably, most analyses of *Tucumán Arde* have focused primarily on its idiosyncratic and subversive use of media and communications, the "super-information circuit" put together in subsequent "phases."[18] Following the decision, at an encounter of avant-garde artists from Rosario, Buenos Aires, and Santa Fe in August 1968 to join forces in a collective act of resistance against the dictatorship, contact was made with the CGTA, where some artists had already been active, and the struggles in Tucumán were chosen as the intervention's focal point. In early September a small group of artists traveled to Tucumán to reach out to local labor and student leaders, at the same time as they garnered support from the province's secretary of culture, whom they had convinced of the potential benefits of hosting a group of renowned metropolitan artists creating a collective piece of "information art." Protected by the authorities—whose goodwill was further consolidated by a press briefing on avant-garde art at the provincial capital's public library—a larger group visited Tucumán in September and October to collect documentary materials in the factories and cane fields. One part of the group remained in the provincial capital to keep the local press and authorities busy with interviews and visits to local art spaces, thus maintaining a smokescreen of fashionable avant-gardism that allowed the others to carry out their evidence gathering. They also collected, classified, and dispatched daily to Rosario the photographs, super-8, and taped audio recordings made in the field, to prevent them from being seized by police if the group's cover was blown. In parallel, another part of the collective, which had remained in Rosario, were processing the material sent from Tucumán for use at the show in November (subsequent ones had been scheduled to open at the union's headquarters in Buenos Aires, Santa Fe, and Córdoba, but the closure of the Buenos Aires sequel by police only hours after its opening on November 25, 1968, upended the sequence for good). Through October, posters and graffiti with the words "TUCUMAN" and "TUCUMAN ARDE" started appearing across Rosario, including on stickers left in bars and on public transport and on the margins of cinema tickets. Just before leaving Tucumán, the artists gave a second press briefing revealing the true aims of their project—a surprise coup that only partly succeeded, since provincial authorities in Tucumán had already begun to suspect the visitors' motives and had warned the mainstream press against attending the briefing.

Deploying alternating tactics of exposure and deceit that mimicked the combat strategies and even the military discipline of guerrilla warfare, as artist and critic Luis Camnitzer argues,[19] *Tucumán Arde* also hijacked and inverted the spatial and temporal dynamics of (neo)colonial extractivism and its aesthetic correlate—the landscape form—of which Tucumán's sugar industry was only the latest incarnation. The avant-gardist travelers' material-gathering expeditions from coastal metropolis to agrarian interior and subsequent showcasing of their findings in a miniature environment—a diorama—in the country's urban centers closely followed the script of colonial landscaping in visu and in situ.[20] *Tucumán Arde* turned into its own formal script the mode of production sustaining colonial landscaping. As in the colonial landscape tradition, the event compressed "resources" into "immutable mobiles" (Bruno Latour's term for images, plant samples, or refined cane sugar made ready for transport from margin to center[21]), and subsequently assembled these into an urban, miniature environment, an "imperial nursery" staging the extractive frontier in the midst of the metropolis itself.[22] Yet *Tucumán Arde* also challenged this extractive apparatus by turning the image itself into raw material that could be hoarded, withdrawn, and multiplied at different ends of the production chain, in ways that not only drew attention to its own materiality but also to the alienating function this image (and the mass media apparatuses that generated it) had been performing as part of the general regime of production. *Tucumán Arde* forced the image to speak its truth hidden in plain sight: not just through the piled sacks of sugar that brought into view the hidden truth of abundance behind the bitter taste of lack palpable on visitors' palates but also, more importantly, through the materiality of images (and of writings, sound, and film recordings) as themselves part of the same uneven and exploitative relations of production they are in the business of disavowing.

Rather than "happening" or "antihappening," perhaps the term that comes closest to describing *Tucumán Arde*'s "processually, temporally, and spatially discontinuous" sequence involving bodies and materials, is the notion of "assemblage."[23] I am thinking here of how political scientist Jane Bennett deploys Deleuze and Guattari's term in her analysis of the 2003 blackout across an area affecting Canada and the US, which despite the vastly different frame of reference nonetheless also provides a pretty neat description of *Tucumán Arde*'s patchwork of elements:

> Assemblages are ad-hoc groupings of diverse elements, of vibrant materials of all sorts. Assemblages are living, throbbing confederations that are able to function despite the persistent presence of energies that confound them from within. They have uneven topographies, because some of the points at which the various affects and bodies cross paths are more heavily trafficked than others, and so power is not distributed equally across its surface . . . The effects generated by an assemblage are, rather, emergent properties, emergent in that

> their ability to make something happen . . . is distinct from the sum of the vital force of each of materiality considered alone. Each member and proto-member of the assemblage has a certain vital force, but there is also an effectivity proper to the grouping as such: an agency *of* the assemblage.[24]

I am acutely aware, of course, of the awkwardness with which Bennett's Spinozian "vital materialism" of conative substances turning into confederate bodies through mutual affection sits with the straightforwardly historical materialism of *Tucumán Arde*'s 1968 manifesto. But I also agree with Héctor Hoyos's assertion that Latin American cultural production affords us a "site of articulation of these two strands"—of new materialisms and the Marxist critique of extractivism—and thus also an opportunity "to show that the study of things as a means to reveal the true nature of social relations should counterbalance appraisals of objects as autonomous, nonhuman entities."[25]

Reading Latin American radical art of the late twentieth century in terms of the emergent properties unleashed in assemblages of bodies and materialities affecting one another might be productive for two reasons. On the one hand, it enables us to uncover the ongoing relevance of this art, produced in a context of struggle against neoliberal transitions administrated by military dictatorships and their "democratic" successors. It makes these experiences continue to speak to us today with their emphasis on the body as medium rather than as the object of expression and on the materiality of media as themselves already objects and commodities. On the other hand, it also brings politics and history back into vital materialism by insisting that body-affect assemblages are not outside relations of power but are in fact themselves enmeshed in the extractivist matrix that puts bodies and things in motion in a context of neocolonial capitalism. Latin American artists and critics amplified and radicalized Mário Pedrosa's observations from the mid-1960s on how an emergent "environmental art" was breaking down the boundaries of the art system and dissolving into the wider field of "culture," by taking up his notion of the aesthetic and reassessing it under conditions of clandestine resistance and guerrilla struggle. In 1970—only two years after *Tucumán Arde*, and one after the underground publication of Brazilian revolutionary Carlos Marighella's *Minimanual of the Urban Guerrilla*, launched months before its author was killed in a police ambush—Brazilian critic and curator Frederico Morais likened the role of the artist to that of the guerrilla fighter. In an article titled “Against Affluent Art: The Body as Motor of the Work,” published in the journal *Vozes*, Morais argued that, just as the urban *guerrillero*, the contemporary artist, drawing on their own body as material support, created through their actions or interventions a critical opening in everyday space and time that forced spectators to take position, to renounce their passive role as consumers of ideology and make the leap into action:

> Today, the artist is a kind of guerrilla fighter. Art is a form of ambush. Acting out of nowhere, in the least expected time and place, and in surprising ways (since anything can be transformed today into an instrument of war or of art), the artist creates a state of permanent tension, of constant expectation. Everything can become art, even the most banal everyday event. Constant victims of the art guerrilla, the spectators are forced to sharpen and activate their senses.[26]

The body and things are transformed into instruments, together unleashing a state of tension found to have been always already at work in everyday spaces and times: here we already encounter, in a nutshell, the very notion of political assemblage I am trying to describe. The “state of tension” Morais refers to, I suggest, frequently emerges in relation to the affective impact of materials torn from their typical mode of circulation as commodities, thus also unveiling their exploitative regime of production and bringing into view (and into hearing, touch, and smell) the obscene real of scarcity and abundance under extractivism.

Already since the beginnings of the 1960s, in Venezuela, the artists gathered in the collective El Techo de la Ballena (The whale’s roof) had started challenging the slick surfaces and geometries of petrol-fueled modernism (such as the kinetic sculptures of Carlos Cruz-Diez and Jesús Rafael Soto) with an insistence on the abject, deadly, and form-destroying nature of the fossil matter sustaining such modernizing fantasies. In 1961 the group launched its first collective show titled “Para la restitución del magma” (For the restitution of the magma), accompanied by the first issue of their journal *Rayado sobre el techo*. It pages were illustrated with black ink drawings by Ángel Luque that materialize the gush of mineral matter in the ink splatter running across the page.[27] The poem-manifesto opening the journal and framing the show proclaimed:

> Es necesario restituir el magma   la materia en ebullición   la
> lujuria de la lava
>   colocar una tela al pie de un volcán   restituir el mundo   la
>   lujuria de la lava . . .   la materia se trasciende   la materia
>   se trasciende[28]
>
> It is necessary to restore magma   the boiling matter   the
> luxury of lava
>   to place a piece of fabric at the foot of a volcano   to
>   restore the world   the luxury of lava . . .   matter
>   transcends itself   matter transcends itself[29]

Also in 1961 the sculptor Daniel González—one of the group's founding members—exhibited at the National University's School of Architecture and Urbanism a series of objects made from used oil barrels, scrap metal, and machine spares, including *Tótem de Petróleo* (Petrol totem) and *Rescatador de tuberías muertas* (Dead pipeline rescuer). Other actions and pieces, including the group's rabble-rousing second show *Homenaje a la necrofilia* (Homage to necrophilia, 1962) and Carlos Rebolledo's 1968 film *Pozo muerto* (Dead well), also revisited the theme of dead or rotting matter animating the spectacle of "national development" while simultaneously being disavowed and abjected by highbrow art and commercial mass culture alike.

In their call to embrace the abject matter of extractivism and thus for deriving pleasure from what modernist "export reverie" had to disavow for this same materiality to be "refined" and reimported at profit, El Techo de la Ballena was an early precursor to the "environmental turn" of the following decades.[30] Yet in the group's work the power and agency of material substances are still largely a theme or point of reference rather than themselves providing the embodied support and expressive framework for aesthetic experience. Even more than in *Tucumán Arde*, by contrast, the affects unleashed by matter in its abundance and scarcity—exposing what political economists call the resource curse of extractive capitalism—are at the core of two groundbreaking art actions of the late 1970s and early 1980s in Chile and Peru carried out by the collectives CADA and E. P. S. Huayco, respectively. Beyond their near coincidence in time—CADA's *Para no morir de hambre en el arte* (For not dying of starvation in art) and *Inversión de escena* (Scene inversion) took place within two weeks from each other in October 1979, Huayco's *Arte al paso* (Takeout art) and the unnamed Sarita Colonia shrine painting were assembled on May 14 and October 26, 1980, respectively—both groups' actions also display striking similarities in using an elementary food staple (milk) as their material support. At the same time, just as *Tucumán Arde* had done with sugar more than a decade before, both were taking milk's economics and politics of production and circulation as the spatial and temporal framework of a multipronged, performative approach that forced everyday locations, moments, and things into acting out the violent state of permanent exception they had thus far been functional in disavowing.

CADA—short for Colectivo de Acciones de Arte (Art Actions Collective)—sprang into action in 1979, to become one of the central protagonists of Chile's Escena de avanzada when Chile was under the dictatorship of Pinochet. Its members included visual artists Lotty Rosenfeld and Juan Castillo, writers Diamela Eltit and Raúl Zurita, and sociologist Fernando Balcells. The group became perhaps best known for its interventions *No+*, undertaken from 1984 to 1985, in which they would cover public spaces with graffiti that could be read as "No more . . ." and which anonymous user-collaborators would quickly complete with antidictatorship slogans and messages—so much so that the formula (including its design with the "más"/"more" indicated by a plus sign) became an official slogan of the anti-Pinochet campaign in the 1988 referendum that finally brought down the dictatorship. Other actions included the monumental *¡Ay Sudamérica!* (1981), in which the group had four hundred thousand leaflets (the text of which was simultaneously published in an illustrated magazine) printed and thrown out over Santiago from six small airplanes, as well as *Residuos americanos* (American residues, 1983), an installation at a gallery in Washington, DC, featuring used clothes from the US that would normally have been sent to Chile for resale, and *Viuda* (Widow, 1985), the portrait of a woman whose husband had been murdered by the dictatorship, published simultaneously in several newspapers and magazines with a short text exhorting readers to "look at her gesture, extreme and popular. To pay attention to her widowhood and survival. To understand a people."[31] E. P. S. Huayco—a Quechua term for the flash floods and mudslides occurring in the high Andes (but also in the *barriadas* [shantytowns] surrounding the coastal capital of Lima, inhabited mostly by Andean migrants), combined with the acronym standing for "Estética de Proyección Social" (approximately, socially conscious aesthetics)—was a relatively short-lived Peruvian art collective active between 1980 and 1981.[32] It consisted of Swiss-Peruvian Francesco Mariotti, who together with his partner María Luy had already been active in community projects in Cuzco under the Velasco Alvarado government's Sistema Nacional de Movilización Social (National System of Social Mobilization, SINAMOS), as well as Charo Noriega, Juan Javier Salazar, and Mariela Zevallos, and also counted the on-off support of the poet and critic Mirko Lauer. In addition to *Arte al paso* and *Sarita Colonia*, the group also conducted in January to February 1981 a public poll of urban audiences' aesthetic preferences, carried out simultaneously at the Parque Universitario in downtown Lima, the upmarket neighborhood of Miraflores, and the working-class neighborhood of Óvalo Balta de El Callao.[33]

Likewise, CADA had turned the segregated social geography of Santiago, exacerbated further by the dictatorship's neoliberal shock-doctrine politics, into the extended canvas of its first two actions in October 1979. *Para no morir de hambre en el arte* (For not dying of starvation in art), the first of the two, consisted of "four simultaneous occupations" in different parts of the city on October 3.[34] At the Comuna La Granja shantytown, the artists distributed rations of powdered milk among residents; at the Centro Imagen art gallery in downtown Santiago, thirty liters of milk were being deposited in an acrylic container (within a few days, a rotting smell would emanate from them, pervading the space). On the transparent cover sealing the box the artists had engraved two lines of verse: "Para permanecer hasta que nuestro pueblo acceda a sus consumos básicos de alimentos / Para permanecer como el negativo de un cuerpo carente invertido y plural" (To remain here until our people gain access to their basic food needs / To remain as the negative of a suffering, inverted, and plural body). Subsequently, outside the suburban headquarters of the United Nations' Economic Commission for Latin America (CEPAL), a speech was delivered denouncing the adverse effects of the dictatorship's policies on public health and nutrition, as well as on human and civil rights, which simultaneously appeared in *Hoy*, the only remaining opposition newspaper. Even though, of necessity, only the speech-manifesto's publication in *Hoy* occurred, strictly speaking, in simultaneous fashion with the three site-specific components of the intervention, the artists' own video documentation splices footage from all three together in nonchronological fashion to suggest a spatial rather than temporal relation between them, urging viewers to focus on the material and symbolic transmutations of the most elementary of food staples—milk—between opposite margins of urban space (the outward-facing, high-modernist architectural complex of international institutions and the wood-and-tin-shack neighborhood populated by rural migrants, with the downtown spaces of arts and media caught in the middle). As Rodrigo Cánovas has noted, the intervention's symbolic efficacy also derived from its easily understood allusions to the Salvador Allende government's campaign only a few years earlier to provide every Chilean with at least half a liter of milk per day. References to "cultural values put forward during the Unidad Popular—the half liter of milk, the artists venturing out into the shanties—involved a symbiosis between the new and that which had once been desired, an attempt to re-signify old categories that remained valid from the vantage point of notions produced in the here-and-now of dictatorship."[35] The work of CADA, Cánovas suggests, used to its advantage the confusion between a still-fresh memory of "public art" in the service of democratic socialism and its promises of wealth redistribution, and the language, media, and routines associated with dictatorial neoliberalism—including the use of video and advertising, commissions and contracts with private enterprise, and a rhetoric that drew on both the previous, revolutionary utopianism and the entrepreneurial messianism of the present.

Cánovas is referring in particular to *Inversión de escena* (Scene inversion), the sequel to *Para no morir en el arte*, realized on October 17, 1979. Once again, the action conjoins the commodity chain of milk as a way of mapping out the uneven and unjust social geography of the city, with the physical and symbolic place of art as sanctioning (in its institutional, literally static or place-bound form) social injustice and renouncing its capacity to speak out. This time, the collective hired eight milk trucks from the Soprole dairy company to make the journey from the milk factory situated on the city's outskirts to the National Museum of Fine Arts in downtown Santiago where they remained parked in line for several hours, while the artists covered the museum's front entrance with a large white cloth (fig. 28). The color white referred both to the matter in question (milk) and to art's incapacity of addressing the appropriation of basic nutritional needs by the visual languages of branding and advertising. The group's video of the event concludes with the stark image of a Soprole truck parked in front of the museum's cloth-covered neoclassical facade, emblazoned front to back with the company logo and slogans ("Soprole—Natural Products"; "Gift yourself with Soprole"), as well as with a photograph of a young boy flexing his muscles framed by two yogurt containers and the slogan "Da tanto por tan poco" (Giving so much for so little). As if to substitute for the art institution's—quite literally—blank-faced response, the video con-

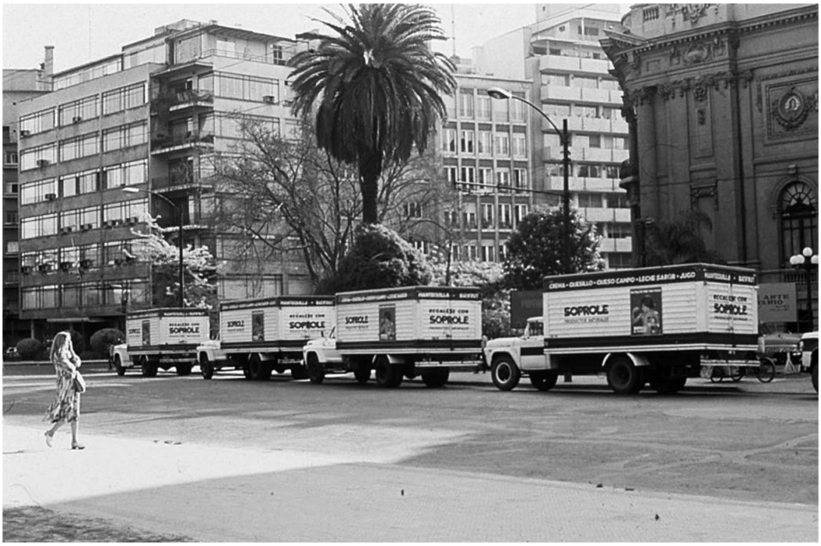


Fig. 28. CADA (Colectivo de Acciones de Arte), *Inversión de escena* (Scene inversion), 1979. Video still. Biblioteca Nacional de Chile, Santiago. Courtesy of the artists.

cludes with a black screen featuring the sentence “El arte es la ciudad y los cuerpos ciudadanos desnutridos” (Art is the city and the citizens’ undernourished bodies).

E. P. S. Huayco’s similarly two-pronged action the following year also juxtaposes the commodity chain of food production with the uneven geography of the city—Lima—which, even more than Santiago de Chile in CADA’s interventions, also stands in here as a microcosm of Peru’s neocolonial ethnic and class divisions. Just as with *Para no morir* and *Inversión de escena*, the sequence running from *Arte al paso* (Takeout art) in May 1980 to the monumental installation of a Sarita Colonia memorial—reproducing the iconic image of a popular saint—near the Pan-American highway south of the capital in October that same year, performs a double movement. At the same time as the Huayco collective introduced into the physical and institutional space of art the disavowed material realities of malnutrition, it also took the concerns and formal expressions of contemporary cosmopolitan art into the “dimension of social exteriority,”[36] into the city and even the surrounding landscapes of rural-urban migration and of peasant memory and spirituality. But in addition to challenging the apolitical snobbery and quietism of the *limeño* art scene, much like CADA had challenged the *santiaguino* art scene in its “occupations” of the Centro Imagen gallery and the National Museum, Huayco's approach to commodified matter also took into consideration the multiple forms of recycling, refunctionalization, and appropriation—symbolic as well as economic and political—to which the discarded and abjected materialities of extractive capitalism are being subjected on the part of what sociologist Verónica Gago, in her analysis of the "informal economics" of Latin America's urban margins, terms the "baroque transactions" of "popular pragmatics."[37]

Arte al paso (Art to go)—also known as *Salchipapas*, or "sausage and fries," the city's best known takeout dish at the time—was a group show at Lima's Galería Fórum, featuring silk-screen prints by Luy, Mariotti, Noriega, Salazar and Zevallos (many of them loosely referencing the visual rhetoric of pop art while also adding a particularly Peruvian iconography, such as the effigy of poet César Vallejo or that of the Inca Manco Cápac as a rural migrant traveling by minivan), as well as photographs of urban garbage collectors and texts by critics and writers on the disencounter between Peruvian art and socioeconomic realities in the country. The following year the group also incorporated into its leaflet documenting the event a contribution from economist Manuel Lajo discussing how Peru's nutritional emergency was being caused by an export-oriented production model and the increasing reliance on expensive imports of elementary foodstuffs controlled by transnational megacompanies. But the show's centerpiece was a mosaic image of a salchipapas dish painted on ten thousand recycled cans of powdered milk from urban junkyards that covered the entire floor of the showroom, forcing visitors to walk across their edgy surfaces. Before the show's opening, the piece had also been briefly on display at an open-air space in nearby Parque de Barranco.[38] The use of the cans as monochrome base units immediately recalls the Ben-Day dots of Roy Lichtenstein's paintings. Yet whereas the US pop artist imitates an industrial printing technique in the manual, single-author medium of painting (just as his subjects imitate the image content of industrial publishing, comic books), the *Salchipapas* floor mosaic literally grounds modern industrial mass production in the local recycling and repurposing economy based on the former's leftovers. Indeed, just as the powdered milk they had contained in their previous incarnation, the cans themselves had also been imported from overseas rather than made in Peru. In a multileveled game of recyclings and appropriations, the installation brought the glamorous cosmopolitanism of pop art down to the material realities of an import-dependent, colonial-extractive margin and to a commodity fetishism of the poor, in which cheap, second-hand materials are made to celebrate an equally cheap, derivative offspring of global fast food: a neocolonial hotdog. In the words of Lauer's essay flyer written for the show, "Arte al paso: Tome uno" (Takeout art: Help yourself to one), the exhibit represented an "ecological exercise revealing the umbilical cord linking the city's discards to the city's art, from the cans that arrive at the shantytown empty and that now return to the gallery all painted over, and tomorrow will return all painted to the shantytown so that one day they may arrive full at the shantytown. Between the discards, food, and art, an ecosystem needs to be revealed ever more clearly."[39]

Even though the show made quite a few waves—not least for the aggressive use of sexually charged language and imagery in some of the silk-screen prints—some critics, Lauer included, also challenged E. P. S. Huayco for having limited its intervention to bringing trinkets of urban poverty into the space of art, which ran the risk of turning them into just another fashionable quotation easy to absorb into the very export economy the show was railing against (in fact, the gallery had even hired a salchipapas vendor to attend the inauguration). In response, the group started to think about recycling *Salchipapas* itself, thus also inverting (as Lauer had already suggested in his exhibition commentary) the cans' recycling itinerary—from import commodities to rubbish collected and recycled on the urban margins to "raw material" for cosmopolitan art—by taking them back into the space and time of everyday experience. Discussions about the new image content to be painted onto the cans (which the group would subsequently share with urban residents in the form of the public survey on artistic preferences carried out the following year) quickly yielded an agreement: the image would be a blown-up version of the widely circulating effigy of Sarita Colonia, an Andean migrant woman who had died in Lima at a young age after a life of hardship (according to some versions owing to the consequences of rape) and became a popular, noncanonical patron saint not just among migrants but also taxi drivers, prostitutes, street vendors and the LGBQT+ community. Adding another 1,600 cans to *Salchipapas*'s original 10,000, the monumental "mural brought down to earth"[40] was first painted collectively at the group's workshop in Lima, and then its parts were transported on October 26 to a barren hillside in view of the Pan-American highway fifty kilometers south of town, where they were assembled that same day (fig. 29).

This time, rather than maintaining the dotted structure used for *Salchipapas*, the group opted for painting over the previous image with a true-to-source reproduction of a popular vignette blown up to scale, in what thus amounted to a double gesture of erasure: not just of the

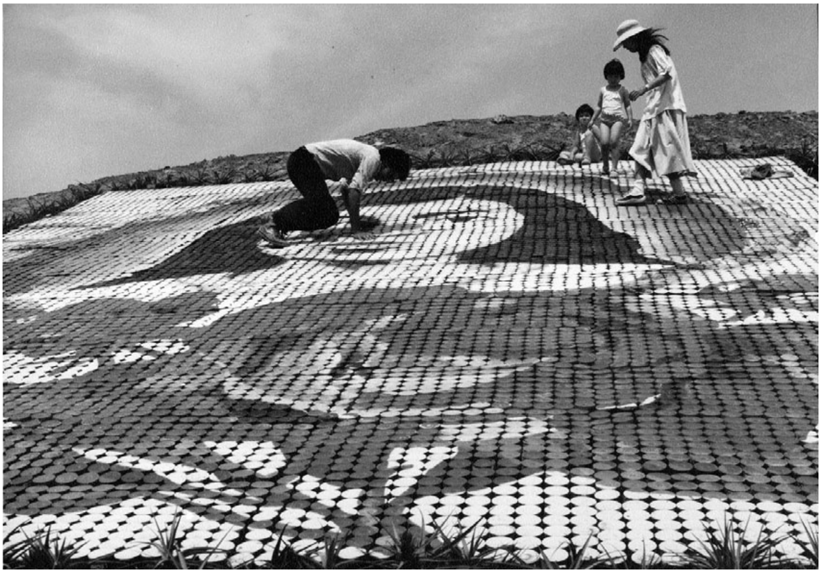


Fig. 29. E. P. S. Huayco, installation of *Sarita Colonia*, October 1980. María Luy with daughters Patricia and Laura, and Herbert Rodríguez. Photograph by Marianne Ryzek. Courtesy of Archivo Mariotti-Luy, MALI, Lima. Courtesy of the artists.

previous, pop art–derivative image but also of its material support—the cans—the shapes of which no longer coincided with those of the religious icon they were made to carry. Yet at the same time (just like the other shrines to Sarita Colonia and other popular saints that proliferate on the sides of the Panamericana) the recycled and repurposed nature of the materials remains clearly visible even from a distance, their "poor" and makeshift character standing out even more clearly in the tension with the "noble," painterly shapes of the iconic content. Having been installed without previous notice and omitting all the art system's rituals of inauguration, the work—which, incidentally, is also situated in proximity to Pachacámac, one of Peru's most important "huacas," or Inca sanctuaries—would quickly become incorporated into the devotional practices of migrants and travelers, as evident from the cacti planted by anonymous worshippers in its proximity over the following years forming the shape of Sarita's name. As Gustavo Buntinx argues, in the cans' rerecycled and anonymous installation, "painting" a popular religious icon into a deserted site that is simultaneously a through route for rural migrants and a ritual center of preconquest spiritual practices,

> the work acquires a fundamentally twofold nature. *Political art*, *avant-garde art*, for an illustrated audience accessing it upon finding out about the peculiarities of its material support—including the disguised presence of *Salchipapas*—by way of leftwing publications or specialized works . . . But also *religious icon* for the migrants seeing it from the highway on which they travel toward the great *criollo* city they are about to turn into their own, *mestizo* city . . . This exchange, this tacitly established communication, carries a political and cultural charge that had been absent from artistic experience in Peru. In the successful ambivalence of *Sarita Colonia*, petty bourgeois radicalism finally accomplishes, at least figuratively, its articulation with an emergent popular universe.[41]

In both CADA's and Huayco's actions, then, the circulation of "raw material" through multiple situations acts out the city's and nation's inscription in, and subordination to, the political economy of extractivism. Both collectives adopt a double movement, reflective of the two different audiences they address: on the one hand their actions interpellate the institutional circuit of art, forcing it to acknowledge the stuff it had been complicit in disavowing; on the other hand, it reaches out into the "social exteriority" of everyday spaces and times where their interventions attempt to turn spectators, as Richard puts it, into active coparticipants of the creative process, into "part of the living material of the work through [their] own interaction."[42] In the actions of both collectives, elementary nutrients and their manufactured scarcity through commodification provide the material link between these two fields of intervention—as they were already doing before their incorporation into art actions, as mobile matter connecting (in a commodity network of production and consumption) all the different parts of the city. But whereas CADA's milk distribution in the shanties and parading of Soprole vans through Santiago's main thoroughfares aimed to trigger Brechtian public performances of (de)alienation in the here and now of everyday situations (showing these to be shot through with historical memory and trauma), Huayco made a different aesthetic and political wager, premised on the long term. In "abandoning" the final iteration of their can-mosaic assemblage for it to blend in with popular cultures of devotion—which it comes to coincide with on the level not only of the image itself but also of the recycled and repurposed matter providing the former's basis of support—the group was also putting its faith in the material afterlife of the assemblage, and its capacity for turning itself into the object of new, contingent appropriations and generations of meaning over time.[43]

If CADA's and Huayco's interventions, as well as those of El Techo de la Ballena in the previous decade, also coincided in returning to the scene the discarded, or abjected, materialities sustaining commodity production and consumption in a context of extractivism, perhaps the artist who, in late twentieth-century Latin America, went furthest in exploring the political affects of abjection was Artur Barrio. Born in Portugal—where he would briefly return following the 1974 Carnation Revolution—Barrio had moved to Rio de Janeiro at age ten and had attended art school at a moment of peak social and political mobilizations, shortly before the 1968 "coup within a coup" that suspended civil liberties and inaugurated the bloodiest period of Brazil's decades-long military dictatorship. At the 1969 *Salão da Bússola* (Compass salon) at Rio's Museum of Modern Art (MAM)—a landmark exhibition that also featured major works by Antonio Manuel and Cildo Meireles—Barrio contributed the piece *Situação . . . ORHHH . . . ou . . . 5.000 . . . T. E . . . . EM . . . N. Y . . . . City . . . 1969*—approximately "Situation . . . ARGHHH . . . or . . . 5.000 . . . B. B . . . . IN . . . N. Y . . . City . . . 1969," with "T. E." (B. B.) standing for "trouxas ensanguentadas" or "bloody bundles." In using "perishable, cheap materials . . . such as: garbage, toilet paper, urine, etc."—as he proclaimed in a manifesto composed that same year—Barrio sought to confront "elite art" and its material and institutional supports, through "momentary situations with the use of perishable materials, in a concept from the bottom to the top."[44] As the *Salão da Bússola* intervention made abundantly clear, "bottom to top" here literally meant the invasion of the cerebral space of art by excremented, abjected materialities—the dirty leftovers of social production and of bodily digestion alike. The piece consisted of paper bags, hanging from the ceiling as well as piled up on the floor, filled with old newspapers, garbage, and concrete, which Barrio had doused in red paint and bundled up with string. At the show's closing, Barrio left his "bloody bundles" behind in the museum's gardens—one of the iconic spaces of Brazilian public landscape, designed by Roberto Burle Marx—where the next morning they were removed by police after failing to obtain a response from the MAM's authorities as to whether this stuff was art or trash.

Barrio's intervention posed a radical challenge to the show's and the museum's role as agents of canonization and safeguards of art's autonomy, by invading their space and time with a type of matter that was the mirror opposite of the artwork: similarly withdrawn from circuits of production and consumption, yet not as an effect of institutional consecration but, on the contrary, because of their abjected nature as nonrecoverable surplus: as remainder, discard, excrement. In an act of "poetic terrorism," art critic Lígia Canongia argues, Barrio's interventions introduced into the temple of aesthetic modernism in Brazil an impulse of radical de-formation, a collapse of meaning echoed in the titles' breaking down of linguistic continuity surrendering, as it were, to retching from nausea: "The *T. E.* were incongruent, terrible, and menacing things, and their unexpected and violent apparition would unfurl quite disturbing moods or psychic states"[45]—including faintings and vomitings from shocked visitors, which Barrio considered to be spontaneous contributions from the audience.[46]

As would CADA and Huayco a decade later, Barrio also adopted a two-pronged approach to take his abject assemblages and their violent forcings out of bodily, impulsive, and subconscious reactions among "spectator-contributors," from the museum interior into "social exteriority"—an everyday that, in the case of Brazil under dictatorship, was already awash in violence and terror of a different but not unrelated kind. Similar to how *Direct Cinema* filmmakers would actively tease out social interactions so that the camera could observe them, Barrio's "situations" triggered impulsive reactions from passersby that could range from indifference to physical violence, and which he would frequently (though not always) register with the collaboration of photographers and cameramen. In 1970 Barrio prepared and distributed throughout Rio de Janeiro some five hundred plastic bags filled with excrement, tampons, toilet paper, hair and nail cuttings, bones, and food waste, about a fifth of which also had the artist's signature taped on them. Left behind in urban space, the work aimed at a "transformation of the environment, desanctifying it,"[47] and effectively lasted at least until the last of the bags would have been picked up by municipal rubbish collectors or would have merged with the landscape of urban residue. Also in 1970 Barrio took part in *Do corpo à terra* (From body to earth), a legendary open-air exhibition at a public park in Belo Horizonte curated by Frederico Morais, for which he purchased forty pounds of meat and bones from a local slaughterhouse, which he bundled up in white sheets and left behind in marginal areas of the park such as sewer drains and parking lots (fig. 30). As documented by Barrio's collaborator, the photographer César Carneiro, on more than one occasion these bloody

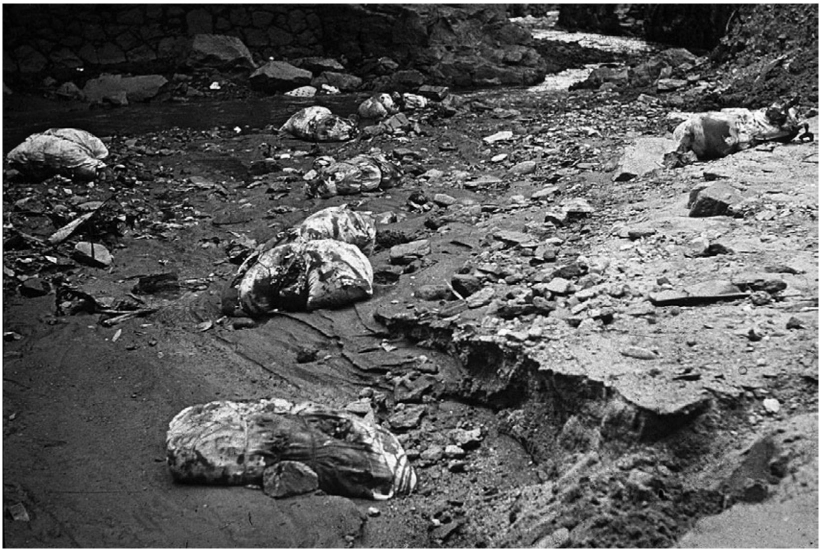


Fig. 30. Artur Barrio, register of *Situação T/T1*, April 20, 1970, Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, Brazil. Photograph by César Carneiro. Courtesy of the artist.

bundles provoked violent standoffs between police and the multitudes gathering around them, when the former aimed to remove the "evidence" (on order from the municipal police headquarters, all bundles were picked up and sent to a forensic lab for analysis on the very day of their "installation").

Just as CADA's actions a decade later in the context of the Pinochet dictatorship, Barrio's abject installations forced people into unsolicited encounters with the excremented and obscene play on the pervasively uncanny nature of everyday experience under state terrorism. They forced into view a latent violence, which had already inhabited the places where the bloody bundles made their appearance, only to be recognized by passersby as that which they had always expected to appear there—an expectation of which, paradoxically, they only became aware on stumbling across Barrio's bundles. Barrio's work forced out, as a physical reaction from a body affected by the powers of matter, what a politics of fear and complicity had kept people from speaking or even thinking. The abject is the stuff of politics and is what had already lingered in a ghostly fashion at the borders of consciousness: what has not been fully expelled and removed from the physical and social body. It is—as Julia Kristeva has so forcefully argued—the limit that becomes object, neither "I" nor "it," neither past nor present, neither dead nor alive: it "is what disturbs an identity, a system, an order. It disrespects limits, places, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous: the mixed up."[48] In this sense, the materialities engaged by the late-modern art actions discussed here are all rendered abject after being stripped of their objectness as everyday commodities (or, in the case of Barrio, by contaminating objectness with the deformed, shapeless yet still recognized abjection of remains and excrements). They straddle the boundaries between object and thing, between matter and stuff, to paraphrase Bill Brown.[49] But in doing so, they also reveal extractivism to be a process of simultaneous, and interdependent, production of objects and of the abject, which is in turn related to the (local and global) distribution and movement in space of bodies and things.

SHELTER IN PLACE: MIGRANT EMPLACEMENTS AND THE BODYSCAPE

Composed of shacks, tents, and "nests" made of straw, leaves, plastic sheets, and fabric, *Éden*, the centerpiece of Hélio Oiticica's "Whitechapel Experience" (1969), was to be experienced, according to his own program notes, as a *taba*—the communal "Great House" of the Indigenous nations of the Amazon—and thus also as "an area open to myth."[50] Even though the exhibition, Oiticica's first and only major overseas show in his lifetime, also included key pieces from his previous trajectory such as the seminal ambient installation *Tropicália*—premiered at MAM Rio only two years earlier—the new, purpose-made materials also sought to reinscribe these within a comprehensive, seamless "experience" in which, rather than walking through an art show to take in successive individual works, visitors would immerse themselves in a sensorial continuum of their own choosing, navigating the spaces and objects at their disposal. Returning to some of the forms and materials already used in *Tropicália* (such as the sand on the gallery floor visitors were invited to touch with their bare feet and the "penetrables," cabin-like structures for people to immerse themselves in a space of color), Oiticica's show at the Whitechapel Gallery offered passersby not so much a playful and ironic allusion to Brazil but rather a space for experiencing *crelazer* ("creation-leisure")—an experimental form of nonproductive freedom, self-care, and togetherness. In Hélio's own words, "those arriving from the cold of London's streets—repetitive, closed, monumental—when they examine the created environment, their behavior opens up and they reinvent themselves as if returning to nature, to a childlike candor that allows itself to be absorbed, to the uterus of a built yet open space."[51] The artist himself was "inhabiting" this experimental space-time almost continuously for the length of the show, sometimes taking naps in the *bólide-cama* (fireball bed), listening to music inside the *carpa Caetano-Gil* (Caetano [Veloso]–[Gilberto] Gil tent), or scribbling notes while hanging out in the sand or in one of the "penetrables."

As Guy Brett suggests, different from US land art, which Oiticica dismissed as a "belated expression of the landscape ethos, with the implication of a detached gaze inspecting and turning the earth neutral and available,"[52] *Éden* was bringing things and materials into tangible, intimate closeness, creating possibilities for experimental practices and sensorial assemblages between the body and its environment. The space and time of the show, Brett argues, offered an instance "of protection, of shelter, which envelops both the material and the human, encouraging a harmonious kind of exchange between both."[53] In this way, the "Whitechapel Experience" also represented an important turning point in Oiticica's career, at once the most fully fleshed-out version of the *programa ambiental* (environmental program) he had been busy elaborating since the breakup of the Neoconcretists in 1961 and the beginning of its radical reformulation. As Oiticica himself put it years later in an interview with Iván Cardoso, if *Éden* represented the ultimate "mythification of the street, of dance, of Mangueira" (the Rio shantytown where Oiticica had joined the local samba school), the experimental experience of *crelazer* also meant taking a step further, "of demythification, together with mythification, one already comes mixed up with the other."[54] With *Éden*, Oiticica explained in one of his working notes, he had set out "to transform a synthetic image—the *Tropicália*—then passing through the formulation of the 'Super-Sensory' until I arrived at the idea of *Crelazer* (Creation-Leisure)."[55] The Whitechapel intervention represented, in short, a leap from the *programa ambiental* toward a *programa pra vida* (program for living).[56]

In this reformulation, Oiticica also shifted gears from his previous "tropicalist search for ways of engaging with the 'raíz-Brasil' (Brazilian root)" and toward an exilic ethos of "nonunifying entanglements between locations, concepts, and gestures" the manifestation and support of which was to be found less and less in the artwork-object and rather in lived, everyday experience itself.[57] *Crelazer*, creation-leisure, also meant breaking down distinctions between artistic production as "work" and the leisure time of "imagination." In the cosmopolitan underground of London and New York, Oiticica found an opportunity for exploring a sense of self and of community cut free from linguistic, sexual, and conceptual moorings. As Hélio himself put it in "Subterrânia" (approximately "Underground Earth"), a short poem-manifesto penned in London in September 1969, "tropicália é o grito do Brasil para o mundo => subterrânia do mundo para o Brasil" (tropicália is the scream of Brazil toward the world => subterrânia that of the world toward Brazil). Subterrânia, he concluded, "é a glorificação do sub . . . como consciência para vencer a super—paranoia—repressão—impotência—negligência do viver . . . desapareçamos, sejamos o não do não" (Subterrânia is the glorification of the under . . . as consciousness that defeats the over—paranoia—repression—impotence—neglect of aliveness . . . let's disappear, let's become the no of the no).[58]

In what follows I want to explore the aesthetic and conceptual shifts and reformulations that the experiences of exile and migration unleashed in Oiticica's work. Although plans for his Whitechapel show predated the explosion of military repression in Brazil following the Institutional Act suspending civil rights on December 13, 1968, Oiticica's decision not to return to the country until ten years later was certainly informed by politics at home, not least by the months-long incarceration of his "tropicalist" fellow travelers and friends Caetano Veloso and Gilberto Gil only weeks after the dictatorial regime had dissolved congress.[59] After discussing Hélio's exilic reassessments of his previous "environmental" work in terms of a mobile and itinerant ethos of self-liberation, I move on to compare these to the near-contemporary performances of exilic reemplacement by Cuban-American artist Ana Mendieta. In Mendieta's *Silueta Series*, I argue, relations between locality and the migrant body in motion are similarly a key theme. But whereas, in Oiticica, uprootedness is celebrated as a liberating experience of selfhood that can be turned against the agents of repression, in Mendieta what returns to the fore is the wound that exile inflicts on body and ground alike, which makes the migrant experience an extreme, even prophetic, example of the more general, and traumatic, separation between the human and the earth under a colonial-capitalist patriarchy.

In 1970, initially thanks to a Guggenheim scholarship, Oiticica moved to New York City, where, in his loft on Second Avenue in the Lower East Side, he started assembling a communitary living structure of semitransparent nesting units—the *Babylonests*—which he shared with a varying cast of friends and lovers, and where, in addition to producing a vast amount of writings, drawings, and maquettes, he also experimented with photography and recording in Super-8 and sound. Yet instead of "wanting to create an aesthetic world, an art-world, by juxtaposing a structure onto the everyday," as he characterized the projects of Mondrian and Schwitters, the impact of which he still acknowledged in his previous work, what Oiticica now claimed to be looking for were the "elements of this same everyday life, of human behavior, to transform it through its own laws, through open propositions without any preconditions."[60] Although often compared negatively to the "optimistic, utopian period of the 1950s,"[61] Oiticica's eight-year stay in Manhattan as well as his return to Brazil shortly before his untimely death in 1980 could actually be read more productively as an analytical reworking of his own individual and artistic trajectory up to that point, to then double down on its wager: "vigília de mim mesmo" (caring for myself), as Hélio calls it in a fragment from 1970.

Self-analysis as a mode of exilic reconnection with the underground earth takes shape in multiple forms: from the proliferation of writings that in themselves take on an increasingly experimental—fragmented and translingual—character to the invention of new, public as well as intimate modes of intervening the body and space (including the *Block-Experiments in Cosmococa* or the *Parangolé-Situations* staged on street-corners or in the subway) and to their image and sound recording as in the *Quasi-Cinema* Super-8 reels and the *Heliotapes*. Also, while living in downtown Manhattan, Oiticica produced a great number of maquettes for new "penetrables"—often accompanied by detailed plans and notes—loosely grouped together as *Subterranean Tropicalia Projects*. These were to be constructed in neuralgic spaces of cities worldwide, including New York's Central Park and São Paulo's Praça da República (only a small number have been realized after the artist's death, and in art spaces such as Rio de Janeiro's Museu do Açude or the Inhotim Contemporary Art Institute, Minas Gerais, rather than in the urban centers originally intended by Oiticica).

As in Oiticica's previous work, these projects were usually also accompanied by an intense conceptual reflection, including new notions-objects such as the *Barracão* and the *Conglomerado* (conglomerate). *Barracão*—approximately "big shack'"—was a term Oiticica had started developing while still in Brazil, initially for a planned community on the outskirts of Rio ("a wooden house just like the ones in the favela"), an idea he discarded as dictatorial repression intensified after 1968. As the political context in Brazil would have "made this experience impossible and suicidal," Oiticica reconceived the *Barracão* as an "adaptable structure . . . open to circumstances: a circumstantial project."[62] Here an environmental form was being reinvented as a mode of lived, improvisational ethics—as *programa pra vida*—which also productively turned the experience of exile into the very condition for experimental self-experience freed from the bonds of routine. *Conglomerado*, on the other hand, was how Hélio thought about the discontinuous yet not therefore unrelated or aleatory order of the great number of writings (working notes, essays, poetry, manifestos) he churned out and meticulously archived during his time in London and New York, and which he intended to publish as *blocos* ("building blocks" but also a type of carnival street party), parts of a book bundle or fascicle series he planned to publish under the title *Newyorkaises*.[63] Exile for Oiticica provided a context that allowed him to rethink and redeploy some of his previous work's fundamental stakes and to turn this exercise of self-analysis into the catalyst for an experimental life-work practice. At the same time, it was only by analytically reworking his own previous production from the exilic standpoint of spatiotemporal remove that Oiticica could eventually envisage a possibility of returning to Brazil without therefore having to renounce exile's existential freedom: a return that does not imply going back to the roots. "The roots have been ripped out and burned a long time ago," as Oiticica told the *Jornal do Brasil* shortly after his arrival in Rio in 1978.[64] Return, for Oiticica, only became possible once he had figured out a way of bringing uprootedness home.

A key text of his time in New York, "Mundo-Abrigo" (World-Shelter), dated September 1973, is exemplary for this new, conglomerate mode of thinking and the resultant experimental shift from environmental location specificity (associated with the popular forms, sounds, and materiality of favela culture) to an exilic ethos of "subterranean" self-exploration, playfulness, and global commons.[65] The text's reflexive movement is anchored in a cascade of associations between terms in Portuguese and in English. It constructs a translational system that incorporates, along with the etymological and semantic properties of terms highlighted in capitals and italics, numerous philosophical, literary, and musical references (including several from Oiticica's own work). Thus, the ideas of *abrigo* (shelter) and *casca* (shield)—which could also be associated with two key forms of Oiticica's environmental oeuvre, such as the *penetrable* (cabin) and the *parangolé* (cape)—are put in relation here with the English term "shelter": "do ANGLO-SAXÃO *scildtrum*: a troop of men with shields . . . *shelter*: da casca-proteção primeira do corpo / à SHELTER coletiva-total em que o mundo / é guarida" (from the ANGLO-SAXON *scildtrum*: a troop of men with shields . . . *shelter*: from the body's first protective shield / to the collective-total SHELTER when the world itself has become / refuge).[66] This idea of the world as shelter segues into a close reading of the Rolling Stones' 1969 song "Gimme Shelter," approached from the vantage point of Marshall McLuhan's *Understanding Media* (1964) where housing and clothing are conceived as so many human modes of protection and refuge. Oiticica looks to the Canadian theorist's "ALDEIA GLOBAL TVizada" (televisual GLOBAL VILLAGE),[67] to find a global, high-tech equivalent of his own *Tropicália* and *Barracão*: a virtual space of life experimentation the most comprehensive manifestations of which he sees in the great rock festivals: "WOODSTOCK é o ambiente planetário / TERRA tornado / SHELTER" (WOODSTOCK is the planetary environment / EARTH turned / SHELTER).[68] Shelter, as demanded in Mick Jagger's voice and as practiced at Woodstock, does not refer to place as a refuge protecting us from the exterior world's contingencies but rather, Oiticica argues, to the very instance of self-opening toward a space of potentiality and freedom. The world becomes shelter in the moment it is embraced in its openness, when "postos de lado todos os hang-ups que nos ligam ao ambiente-terra imediato onde 'crescemos' e o convívio compulsório q daí advém (família etc.) e nos lançamos on our own numa condição de explorar (nem q por um instante) e *conhecer o q não se conhece* e nesse instante o MUNDO torna-se SHELTER" (when we put aside all the hang-ups binding us to the immediate world environment where we "grew up" and to the ensuing, compulsory conviviality (family, etc.) and plunge on our own into a condition of exploring (not just for an instant) and of learning what isn't known, in that very moment the WORLD becomes SHELTER).[69]

The idea of exile as an opportunity for embracing "Subterrânea," the underground earth of global counterculture and that of aesthetics as experimentation with, and care for, the self thus reinforces one another mutually. For, says Oiticica, "assim como JOYCE ter-se desligado da terra IRLANDA pra q pudesse experimentar MUNDO e tornar a IRLANDA do dia-a-dia simultânea à ÍTACA odisséica" (just as JOYCE separated himself from the land IRELAND so he could experience THE WORLD and make every day IRELAND simultaneous with the Odyssey's ITHACA),[70] so the Stones' chorus (the "multitude scream / loud, ecstatic") also does not ask for shelter as refuge but, on the contrary, it demands "MUNDO como campo experimental" (THE WORLD as a field of experimentation).[71] “Grita pedindo SHELTER / q não é família-casa-namorada / é SHELTER-mundo” (It screams out for SHELTER / which isn’t family-home-girlfriend / it’s the world as SHELTER).[72] Yet this world-shelter of the “children” of Woodstock—who, in refusing to abide with the alienated adult life of home and family, are collectively putting into practice the experimental exercise of freedom Mário Pedrosa had associated with Oiticica’s work—is also under threat from a repressive violence the Stones’ song decries right from its opening lines (“Oh, a storm is threat’ning / My very life today”). This threat, Oiticica concludes, is not directed at just “uma vida: ‘a minha’ . . . ameaça LIFE em geral: a vida-children coletiva” (one life: ‘mine’ . . . it threatens LIFE in general: the collective child-life).[73] Repression threatens the experimental exercise of freedom the multitude has embarked on as it abandons an alienated regime of subject production in exchange for “o mundo tomado como PLAYGROUND e *onde o comportamento individual (-coletivo) não quer se adaptar a patterns gerais de trabalho-lazer mas a experimentações de comportamento mesmo q essas nasçam fragmentadas e isoladas*” (a world taken as PLAYGROUND *where individual (-collective) behavior no longer conforms to general patterns of work-leisure but, instead, to behavioral experiments, even if these emerge only in isolated and fragmented fashion*).[74]

Oiticica’s own return to Brazil in 1978, shortly before his sudden death in March 1980, would see an intense effort to bring these reflections on displacement and freedom to bear on the very place of origin. Especially the two *acontecimentos poético-urbanos* (urban-poetic events) organized by the artist—*Programa in Progress Cajú*, which took place on December 18, 1979, and *Esquenta pro Carnaval* (Warm-up for Carnival), staged at Mangueira on February 9 the following year—can be seen as attempts to tie back together the concepts of *Barracão* and *Crelazer* with the social geography and popular culture of Rio. For the first of these, Oiticica contributed *Devolver a terra à terra* (approximately “Returning the soil to the earth”), also referenced as the “contra-bólide 1,” the “first antifireball,” returning to a term the artist had previously used for a series of container or recipient-type objects filled with a variety of materials, to be experienced in haptic as well as visual fashion. The antifireball complicates this idea by adding to the function of “containing” that of “unloading/displacing.” Similar in kind to the almost simultaneous material mobilizations of CADA and Huayco, the action performance started by digging up soil from the swampy region of Japarepaguá south of the city, for it to be transported as well as unloaded and regrounded, in the shape of an 80 × 80 cm square, in the Cajú neighborhood to the north, in the vicinity of Rio de Janeiro's municipal landfill. Earth, the very element into which roots grow, was here being put on the move across the city and discarded into the urban junkyard. But in this moment of radical estrangement and uprooting, it also acquired form—a black square that, not by accident, references Kazimir Malevich and the apex of abstraction—one that it would gradually shed again as it dissolved into the new ground, as the soil became one with the earth. The second "contra-bólide," which was dropped off at a central meeting place in the Mangueira shantytown on the eve of Carnival and returned (similar to a carnival float or a processional shrine) to the artist's home after the end of festivities, was called *Ready Constructible* (fig. 31). To the ideas of displacement, unloading, and regrounding, it added the notion of *blocos* and the *Conglomerado*,

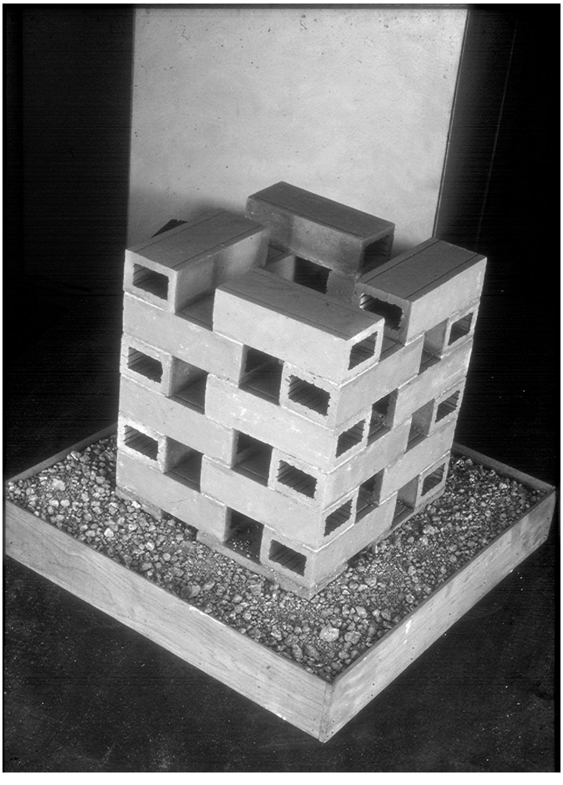


Fig. 31. Hélio Oiticica, *Ready Constructible no. 1*, 1978–79. Mixed materials. Projeto Hélio Oiticica, Rio de Janeiro.

which Hélio had previously conceived of as a spatial image for writing and archiving. Here, on a square of pebbles and rubble of similar dimensions as the first antifireball's square of soil, Oiticica constructed with industrial bricks a walled second square open at the top and at the sides, the "windows" of which alternatively led into the interior "courtyard" or into an individual brick and thus also toward the adjacent "window" interrupting the wall sequence.

A wordplay on the Duchampian *Readymade* as well as the construction materials that comprised it, the *Ready Constructible* gave tangible form to Oiticica's project of bringing home the very experience of displacement and its ensuing exilic ethos and life practice. In its complex, self-contradicting structure of openings and closures, the *Ready Constructible* produced as well as defied space, or as Hélio put it in his working notes, it "FUNDA ESPAÇO/ (EM) ABSOLUTO / herd o IN-OUT / o dentro e o / huis-clos / aberto-fechado / aberto-aberto / fechado-fechado" (FOUNDS SPACE / IN (THE) ABSOLUTE / [in]herits the IN-OUT / the inside and outside / huis-clos / open-closed / open-open / closed-closed).[75] This simultaneous opening and closure is also echoed in the structure's itinerant emplacement/displacement before and after Carnival as well as in the way it reverts back into its constituent materials after failing to cohere into a stable and definite kind of form: "o sólido e o arenoso / e quem sabe o q / poderia vir a ser / lama líquida!" (the solid and the sandy / and, who knows, also what / might even become / liquid mud!).[76]

Crucially, both "antifireballs" were also challenging the concept genre of the *bólide* from Oiticica's own preexile work and career in that neither of them was supposed to be experienced as a single, self-contained object and rather within the context of the "urban-poetic events" for which they had been designed and which, it is reasonable to assume, were supposed to remain their exclusive time and space of "exhibition." Also incorporating public poetry readings, performances, and video shootings by artists Lygia Pape and Ana Maria Maiolino, samba dancer Miro da Mangueira, filmmakers Júlio Bressane, Sonia Miranda, and Iván Cardoso, and poets Jorge Salomão and Heloisa Buarque de Hollanda, among others, *Programa in Progress Cajú*—also known as "Kleemania" in homage to the centenary of Paul Klee—and *Esquenta pro Carnaval* were largely improvisational, collective gatherings-happenings that reunited Hélio's friends and followers in similar fashion as *Apocalipopótese* (the landmark 1968 happening at downtown Aterro do Flamengo) had done a decade earlier.[77] Now, however, the act of displacement from city center to urban margins also sought to tie back together the “environmental turn” of the 1960s and its explorations of the “dimension of social exteriority in the production of art” with the following decade’s exilic explorations of the self and of itinerance as an aesthetic and experimental experience in its own right.[78] In the garbage-dump neighborhood of Cajú, the space of urban discards and of scavenged matter, Oiticica found an ideal context in which to stage the reinscription of “Mundo-Abrigo” (World-Shelter)—of a migrant ethos of self-liberation through uprooting—within the very geography of his home city. As he proposed in the “Cajú Manifesto,” a handwritten notepad in which over several months he collected stage directions for the event: “o *programa in progress* CAJU propõe aos participadores abordar-tomar o bairro do CAJU como um *playground bairro-urbano* . . . O CAJU É O GROUND: A PARTICIPAÇÃO DOS PARTICIPADORES FAZ O PLAY” (the *program in progress* CAJU suggests that its participants engage with and take the CAJU neighborhood as a *playground-urban neighborhood* . . . CAJU IS THE GROUND: THE PARTICIPANTS’ PARTICIPATION PROVIDES THE PLAY).[79]

Ana Mendieta’s earth-body works, roughly from the same time as Oiticica’s New York exile and ultimate return to Brazil, similarly register the transhemispheric (and thus also geopolitical) itinerance of a body—her own—in the way they trace the spatial markings this body leaves behind, as well as the coagential processes that bodily presence unleashes in the materialities with which it comes in contact. Just as it had for Oiticica, furthermore, addressing her exilic condition allowed Mendieta to quite literally lay the groundwork for a return to Cuba in 1980 where she produced her series of petroglyph-like *Rupestrian Sculptures* in a park outside Havana. Yet, whereas in Oiticica’s exilic performances and reflections space is turned into an extended world-shelter or nesting unit for the experimental practice of selfhood, Mendieta’s markings of a seemingly endless variety of places with the physical imprint of her own presence, “like a dog, pissing on the ground,” stages an almost obsessive return to a body and self that can neither completely assert nor erase itself.[80] Its presence/absence therefore takes on the character of a wound that prevents matter from fully cohering into place. Even though from 1975 Mendieta ceases to use her own body as an earth-marking device and rather resorts to a generic female form alternately fashioned onto or “found in” different materials including mud, pebbles, or a grassy plain, this ominous bodily trace nonetheless never ceases to remain closely attached to the artist herself, to this particular body and the way it is itself marked by the biopolitics of race, gender, and class.

Although never quite as emblematically as in *Isla* (1981) (fig. 32), a persistent tendency nonetheless runs through much of Mendieta's work, in particular her *Silueta Series* created between 1973 and 1980, to reconcile and suture through a body that becomes ground and through earthly matter that strives to become body, the uprootedness this same body incarnates in its exilic condition. Yet, again and again, each successive iteration of the gesture also defers the act of suture it invokes beyond the work's own space and time. The very out-of-placeness of a migrant female body is entrusted, in these acts of (un)grounding, to material assemblages that are almost always fragile in the extreme: a hollow in the sand where the surf hits the beach, some flowers and leaves floating in a stream, the bent leaves of a grass meadow still bearing the shadowy trace of a body lying down. If exile is present here as a symbolic dimension, it is only in the classical sense of the *symbolon*, as the fragment or remainder of a piece of ceramic that has been broken, to be rejoined (*symballein* in Greek) only when those carrying its pieces

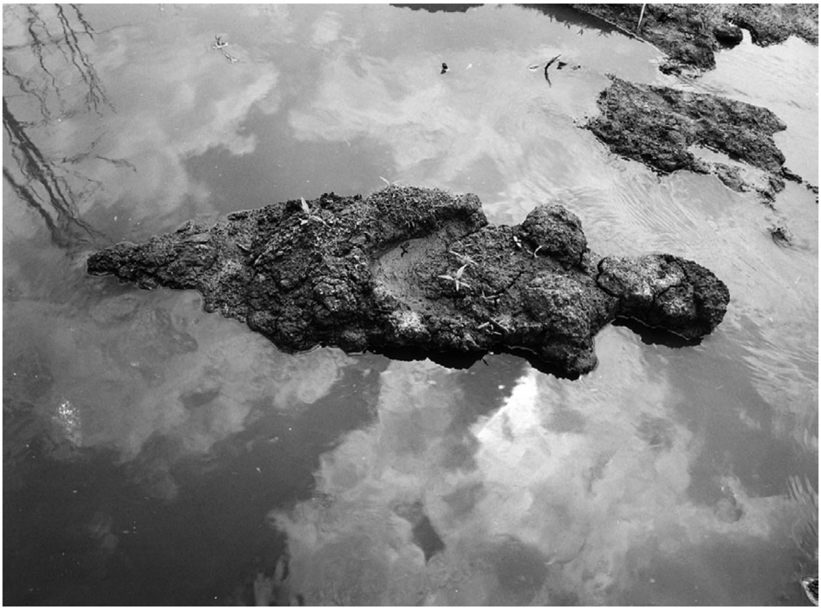


Fig. 32. Ana Mendieta, *Isla (Silueta Series)*. Black-and-white photographic print (1994) from negative (1981). © 2022 The Estate of Ana Mendieta Collection, LLC. Courtesy of Galerie Lelong & Co. / Licensed by Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York City.

meet again. In Mendieta's earth-body encounters, however, the earth to which the body returns and in which it takes shape is not the missing ground of an origin. Rather, the marked earth becomes symbolic here only as the ruin, the wounded stump, which calls out for its missing counterpart. As Jane Blocker has suggested, "by engaging the contradictions of identificatory practice relative to the female, the primitive, earth, and nation, Mendieta occupies the discursive position of exile, and she uses this position to produce in us a sense of the uncanny. She uses, in other words, exile performatively to question the limits and fixity of identity."[81]

Mendieta's harrowing childhood experiences—her forced US exile at age twelve, when her fiercely anti-Castro family sent her on an odyssey of foster homes and orphanages as part of the CIA-sponsored Peter Pan "rescue" operation—as well as the never clarified circumstances of her violent death, have perhaps unduly overshadowed the formal complexities of her work, read instead as the literal inscription of personal trauma. The more than a hundred works comprising *Silueta Series*, initiated in 1973 during a University of Iowa summer residence in Mexico (which offered Mendieta a chance to return to Latin America only on condition of previously acquiring US citizenship, thus renouncing her own Latin Americanness) certainly follow closely the artist's own biography and self-reflection on her personal as well as political, ethnic, and gendered affiliations. They accompany this biography, as Luis Camnitzer has suggested, in the way of a constantly retraced and modified self-portrait, yet they thus also complicate it:[82] not just because of Mendieta's break with her own family background on taking up an openly third-worldist, anti-imperialist stance but also because of the way she reframes the violent uprooting experienced in her own flesh within the larger context of racist and patriarchal violence of which—and this is a crucial point—the scar inflicted on the maternal earth-body is a constitutive part. In their oscillation between a form that emerges before our eyes and its dissolution, forcing us to constantly shift attention from figure to matter and back, Mendieta's *Siluetas* also reiterate time and again this body's insistent belonging to, as well as irreversible separation from, the earth.

As Susan Best has pointed out, the female figure's serialization effectively counteracts the ephemeral character of each individual iteration: "Repetition works to assert the present and the appearance of the figure alongside disappearance. The sheer quantity of repeated actions . . . insists upon the presence of the body in nature."[83] Each of the figure's new "reencounters" in different materialities thus cancels out its disappearance staged in the previous one. Unlike, say, in Andy Warhol's silk-screen and offset reproductions, seriality in Mendieta's works does not seek to eliminate individuality and originality. Rather, each new echelon of the series celebrates the resumption of continuity thanks to the discovery of "yet another silhouette," different from all previous ones in the way it marks out a location by imprinting it with the ephemeral presence of a human, female figure. As Anne Raine observes, Mendieta's silhouettes thus also provoke an uncanny effect of déjà vu "because of the ordinariness of the scenes, and because of the continual recurrence of the silhouette, whose roughly anthropomorphic shape evokes a sense of something utterly familiar yet made strange by its repetition across a variety of materials and sites."[84] At the same time, however, each reappearance of the silhouette not only allows for the series' continuity to resume but also, through its own eventual dissolution into elementary matter, reactualizes the threat of ultimate interruption of seriality, of the exhaustion of possibilities and materialities in which to recompose the vanishing figure and thus of the end of the connection between body and ground it so desperately upholds. The disappearance of the re-appeared figure, be it in the anticipatory mode of the photograph recording it as a moment that has already passed by the time we see it or in the ghostly reperformance of the silhouettes' appearance and dissolution caught on Super-8 film, also carries an implicit threat of extinction—that of the dispositive and its author but also more widely of human presence and even of the earth recording its imprint.

Rather than merely documenting the physical performance of the earth-body works, Mendieta's photographs and short films also contribute themselves to their mise-en-scène by inviting our gaze to become haptic, to immerse itself in the ground rather than to contemplate landscape as object. It is almost as if, on "finding" the figure in the ground, we could repeat the artist's own gesture registered on Super-8 in *Corazón de roca con sangre* (Rock heart with blood, 1975) where Mendieta lies face down inside the muddy cast of a silhouette excavated on the edge of a creek. But this pleasurable experience of (con)fusion, of body and earth becoming one, is always counterpointed by the anxiety of indecision, of not being able to decide clearly whether the anthropomorphic shape still belongs to, or is in fact set apart from, the materialities from which it emerges. And this ambiguity of a figure performing its own appearance from and disappearance into the ground is also what challenges the landscape form as the prevalent mode of imagining the earth. Susan Best has rightly pointed us to the way Mendieta's photographs frequently delete the horizon line by adopting a tilted, ground-facing camera angle. Instead of providing us with a distant vanishing point that would allow placing the figure as a landmark organizing the surrounding territory, in most of Mendieta's images "the picture plane is tipped upwards, allowing nature to appear on the same plane as the body: horizontal earth versus vertical body is rarely in evidence. Nature in this tight framing then ceases to be landscape and becomes figured more as matter, force, growth, decay (mud, ice, fire, waves, water, or growing things)."[85]

During Mendieta's own lifetime, and even after her sudden and tragic death, critical reception of her work has oscillated mainly between Kleinian and Lacanian psychoanalysis on the one hand and Gaia-feminist approaches on the other. For Anne Raine, for instance, the "utopian fusion of self and landscape/maternal body" plays a *fort-da* game, at the heart of which "is both the ambivalent substitution of images and signifiers for the absent mother and the potentially absent self, and also the impossible signified of the self's inevitable disappearance in the real, material dissolution of the body."[86] Gaia-feminist readings, by contrast, take their cues from Mendieta's own assertions of "becoming one with the earth" through her performances, resulting in a "reactivation of primeval beliefs . . . in an omnipresent female force, the after-image of being encompassed in the womb."[87] In this reading, Mendieta's earth-body works reperform the embrace of nature, womanhood, and Afro-Latinx ethnicity not just in their common condition of being oppressed by a colonial-extractive patriarchy but also restoring in their (physical as well as political) reunion a lost primordial bond. Thus, for instance, Jane Blocker claims that "for Mendieta, the earth symbolizes the essence from and against which subjectivity is inevitably constructed—not just her own, not just Latin America's, but everyone's. By obsessively staging a ritual of return, Mendieta exposes the privilege of dominant culture to represent its own identity as untroubled."[88] Undoubtedly, Mendieta's earth-marking performances call into question dominant claims to land coded in terms of gender, race, and class, invoking a maternal bond to challenge the immobilizing and objectifying discourse of *patria*, the fatherland. But this lost, umbilical nexus her performances stage as both wound and suture also needs to be articulated with the uprootedness, the exilic—or better, migrant—condition of the body at once at the center and absent from, the majority of the *Siluetas*.

A silhouette is first and foremost what separates (rather than connects) a body from its surroundings. It is neither figure nor ground but merely the line that runs between the two. Indeed, the very name Mendieta chose for this kind of earth-body work, *Silueta Series*, could also be seen as replicating on the level of language the in-between space whose reiteration it describes. *Silueta Series* combines a Spanish noun in the singular with an English one that could be read as either singular or plural, thus calling attention not just to a self that oscillates in the transhemispheric, geopolitical border space of the Americas but also to the tension between the singular and the generic that underwrites both the series as a whole and each of its individual iterations. It is not by accident that *Silueta*, the term referring to the particular, unrepeatable nature of each performance, is in Spanish, and *Series*, the one referring to its serial and generic character, is in English. *Silueta Series*, I suggest, names the metonymic displacement occurring in the space and time between one silhouette and the next, erasing the previous marking act even as it reinstates it elsewhere. Thus, it also insists on migration as a (geopolitical as well as postcolonial) condition of the work's own making.

In the way they mark out, as a mobile, transhemispheric border space, the uncertain limit between body and ground, Mendieta's *Siluetas*—as well as Oiticica's antifireballs in their mobilization of earth and brick as ungrounded, migrant places—might thus be reapproached today from what Elizabeth Povinelli calls the question of geontopower. Rather than concerning itself, as does Foucauldian biopower, merely with the governance of the living (with "making live" and "letting die"), late-capitalist geontopower polices the boundary between Life and Nonlife even as it is sustained by an extractivist matrix that treats both as exploitable resources. For Povinelli, geontopower is therefore haunted by threshold figures and scenarios including the Desert, the Animist, and the Virus, all of which challenge in their own fashion the foundational fiction of an inert, nonagential Nonlife and threaten to pierce "the skin of life," the "final membrane that links and separates it from its environment."[89] Oiticica's and Mendieta's exilic performances suggest that we add another figure to Povinelli's arsenal of characters threatening late-capitalist geontopower in their violent yet also pleasurable collapsing of body and environment, of animate and inanimate matter: the migrant—and in particular the female or queer migrant of color. The female or queer migrant's going aground, I suggest, defies late-capitalist geontopower at the extreme point of life's becoming dispensable, the point where, in its dimension as "Cheap Nature," the work/energy of the human becomes undistinguishable from that of other living and nonliving forms. As the excess or remainder of life and at the same time as insufficiently alive, the female or queer migrant represents, as Jill Casid puts it, "a life gone to seed"—a derogatory expression to name "forms of plant matter that become no longer harvestable or extractable because their energy has gone into the making of seed."[90] But this life gone to seed also defies the sovereignty of geontopower in the way it insists on the "unsettled and unsettling processes of decay and alternative forms of resistant generation," which it projects as a potential, future outcome of the close encounter between body and ground representing the violent horizon of the migrant experience. The migrant body as an earthly trace—which also means as a body always already fallen out of place, erased, faded, decomposed: a cadaver—is therefore also one that, "rather than staying still, roil[s] with the mixed means of making something out of contacts and contamination that draw together the differences—sexual, racial, gendered, geopolitical—that make up rather than dissolve into the horizontality of necrolandscaping as connective transversal exposure to mortality."[91]

AFTER NATURE: BIOART, ECOART, AND UNSPECIFIC LIVES

In early 1968, only a few months before Hélio Oiticica first showcased his labyrinthine, immersive *Tropicália* installation at Rio de Janeiro's ground-breaking *Nova objetividade* (New objectivity) exhibition, a very different kind of environment was on display at Buenos Aires's Galería Rubbers. *Microzoo*, a solo show by architect and visual artist Luis Fernando Benedit, featured artificial habitats for living organisms (e.g., fig. 33). These included "labyrinths" for mice, cockroaches, and ants as well as a "vegetable labyrinth," in which a germinating plant had to choose its way between two plexiglass tubes leading, alternatively, toward a light bulb or toward darkness and death. The concept of the labyrinth, of such key importance to Oiticica's work, was being transferred here to nonhuman organisms and combined with the notions of the zoo and of microscopy as modern, disciplinary forms of human spectatorship on nonhuman life. In the catalog of his show *Projects and Labyrinths* at London's Whitechapel Gallery in 1975—the same venue, incidentally, where Oiticica had displayed his immersive *Éden* environment seven years earlier—Benedit described his "animal and plant habitats [as] biological sculptures," adding: "There is a definite relationship between the forms and their inhabitants (mice, ants, fish). They reflect both the forms I wish to create and the needs of the plants and animals

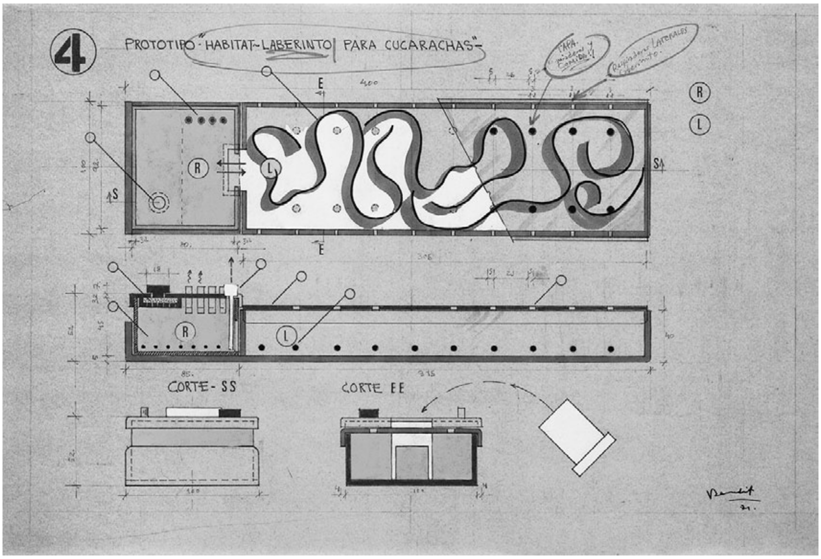


Fig. 33. Luis Fernando Benedit, *Prototipo: Habitat-laberinto para cucarachas* (*Prototype: Habitat-Labyrinth for Cockroaches*), 1971. Varnish paint and felt pen on blueprint. Photograph by Peter Schaechtli. Daros Latin America Collection, Zurich.

for which they have been intended and thus each work can be seen on several levels . . . I think of them as ecological objects where the balance of interacting elements is created artificially."[92]

Benedit's statement begs an intriguing question. What are the mice, ants, and cockroaches inhabiting (or learning to make their "habitat") in these biological sculptures? Do we still recognize them as natural beings or are they, rather, themselves assembled into the artifice—and if so, how? As living objects or as coauthoring the "forms" to which they adjust their "needs"? And, finally, who or what is the bearer of an aesthetic experience in relation to these peculiar kinds of sculpture: the human spectators, who can observe through them the adaptations of animal or vegetable behavior to manmade circumstances (provided, of course, they change their viewing habits from the one-off mode of visual consumption of the art gallery visitor to the laboratory scientist's repeated observation at regular intervals)? Or is it the nonhuman participants of the assemblage, whose lives are being transformed, quite literally, by the experience of art? In fact, I suggest, in the microzoos the species form of life itself emerges as the effect of a machinic assemblage. Mice, ants, lizards, and cockroaches make themselves known through the specific modes of use each invents for the labyrinth setting: the mode of existence each forges from the artifice. Indeed, the synthetic materiality of Benedit's habitats (polystyrene and acrylic plexiglass) is no minor detail; it highlights and reflects the plasticity of the living as it enters the artifice to make its home there. Hence, "labyrinths *for* mice, ants," etc.: the manmade setting is of a *propositional* character, the "nature" of which will only be known after its adoption on behalf of an animal performance: a becoming mouse, ant, cockroach.

This notion of the living machine undoubtedly owed much to Benedit's collaborations with fellow members of the Group of Thirteen, including Víctor Grippo, Jacques Bedel, and Clorindo Testa, with whom he also participated in the Centro de Arte y Comunicación (Center of arts and communication [CAyC]), a Buenos Aires–based hub for artistic research founded in 1968 by Jorge Glusberg. The group's first show, *Arte de sistemas* (Art of systems, 1972), expressed a shared interest in cybernetics—the "scientific study of control and communication in the animal and the machine," according to Norbert Wiener's founding definition, which explores the self-governing, systemic functions of living and artificial organisms as well as their machinic assemblages.[93] For the artists working at CayC, cybernetics also provided the conceptual scaffolding for a contemporary aesthetics short-circuiting art and life (a survey exhibition organized by Glusberg in 1969 at Galería Bonino, Buenos Aires, was explicitly called *Cibernética y arte* [Cybernetics and art]). Grippo's installation *Analogía 1*, for instance, featured a large pile of potatoes interconnected through electrodes and wires, such that the electric emissions (an average 0.7 volts per unit) generated alternately by the sprouting tubers or by the gases emanating from dead and putrefying potatoes entered a circuit that also powered a voltmeter. The latter, Grippo argued, was "analogous" to human consciousness: it provided a disembodied, mechanical stand-in for the mind as itself wired into energetic circuits it translated into information, into data. "Sistema," the system, the show suggested, is the mode of reality that can be perceived by collapsing onto one and the same plane energy, matter, and thought.

Benedit's own *Biotrón*, an installation developed in collaboration with biologist José Núñez and first shown at the 1971 Venice Biennale, likewise puts forward a notion of life as an "autopoietic system," a concept coined by neuroscientists Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela only the year before. Just as in Grippo's installation, here the relation between the living and the realm of aesthetics is no longer of the order of *imitatio*, of the latter representing the former, but rather of *co-agitatio*: of assemblage, circuitry, cross-pollination. The work consisted of a transparent plexiglass and aluminum structure with a tube at one end, which, perforating the wall of the exhibition building, opened toward the adjacent gardens of the biennale, and on the other end a plexiglass-encased honeycomb with four thousand live bees. Inside the *Biotrón* an "artificial plain" with "electronic flowers" secreting a sugary solution at regular intervals provided a source of nutrition. The bees were free to "decide" whether to venture into the gardens in search of organic nourishment or to remain inside the artificial structure. Yet, contrary to predominant readings of the work, *Biotrón* was not so much a reflection on how to manage the superseding of nature by technology. Rather, it turned the bees into the agents of a historical investigation, into time travelers between successive regimes of technological administration of the living: the landscape garden and the electrochemical "artificial plain." In fact, both are artificial natures, but they function according to different principles of grafting living organisms into the labyrinth of manmade forms: a notion of representation as *imitatio* in the first case—of reproducing surface appearances into an *imago veritatis* (the garden as an enhanced and improved image of nature)—and of functional equivalence in the second (the electrochemical circuit as a machinic surrogate for metabolic processes occurring in nature). The work, in short, makes manifest a shift in the very notion of life, from the world picture of gardened and visual landscapes toward an algorithmic calculus of machinic layouts and energetic loops and feedbacks.

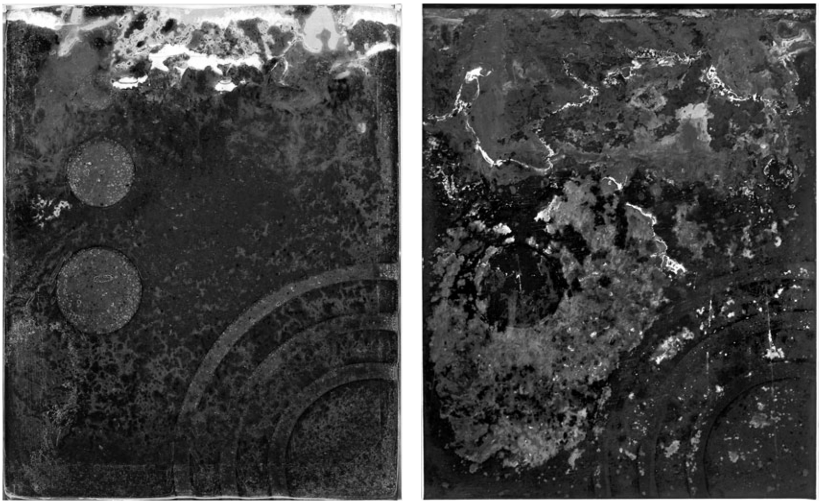
The living assemblages of Benedit and Grippo are among the earliest examples in Latin American art to reflect on, as well as embody, a transition from what art historian Daniel López del Rincón calls "biothematic" to "biomedial art"[94]—from a notion of art as the mirror of (and ideal for) life to an art that, in Brazilian bioartist Eduardo Kac's oft-quoted statement, "works in the living."[95] In what has been called the "age of biocybernetic reproduction," the phrase "after nature" that once defined practices of still-life and plein air painting and that underwrote Western notions of art since the Renaissance as *imitatio vitae*, has taken on a radically new meaning.[96] Not only does it call out the existential chasm that separates us from the notion of nature as the primary object of perception and target of the mimetic faculty, now that "hyperobjects such as global warming and nuclear radiation surround us, not some abstract entity such as Nature or environment or *world*."[97] To the extent that life itself is always already enmeshed with technology and artifice in its very materiality and reproductive processes—in its "plasticity," to borrow a concept from philosopher Catherine Malabou that Benedit himself might have applied to his labyrinth-habitats[98]—it can also no longer supply the "primary material" for art, be it in the mode of mimetic *imitatio* or even (as in kinetic and earth-body art) as embodied, sensory-motor support of the aesthetic event. Rather, if (our) living bodies are already techno-organic assemblages—we ourselves are, literally speaking, no longer "100% organic" but contain in our bodies numerous artificial ingredients such as plastic fiber—then the question, as contemporary bio- and ecoartists might put it, is no longer about whether art and life should become one but how.

There is no longer any life that is not already artificial, and this is also why Kac's assertion that "bio art uses the properties of life and its materials, changes organisms within their own species, or invents life with new characteristics" is actually less scandalous than it might appear.[99] "Bio art is in vivo"[100] but is also, more importantly, in vitro: bioart enters the laboratory, the space and time of techno-scientific production of the living, which it contaminates with the indeterminacy and autoreflexivity it carries over from an older, Kantian notion of the aesthetic as the coming into its own of truth freed from necessity (fundamentally, from the need for survival). Bioart and ecoart, despite their somewhat different political and aesthetic genealogies and affiliations—the former emerging from the cross-pollinations over the final decades of the twentieth century between arts, computing, neuroscience, and genetics, and the latter from environmentalist and alter-globalization movements—also share common ground in the way both set in motion a process of unspecification of the aesthetic. By bringing the artist into the lab or into the field, by cross-contaminating the instrumental reason of science, the political dynamics of community organizing, and the aesthetic reflexivity of the artwork, bioart and ecoart are two rival but also frequently overlapping modalities of a new *ars vitae*.

Brazilian ecoartist and critic Louise Ganz has associated these new, unspecific practices taking place on the uncertain boundary between art, science, and politics with Theodor Adorno's notion of the essay as a form of reflexivity characterized since Michel de Montaigne by its ability to bypass the emergent division of labor between the arts and sciences.[101] The essay turned on an emergent, modern politics of form through a mode of supplementary writing, taking hold of something already written to rearrange its components and make explicit the modes of mediation previously hidden underneath the protocols of artistic genres and scientific reasoning. We could conceive of bioart and ecoart then as essayistic practices in the age of biocybernetic reproduction, which take hold of not only expressive languages but also hybrid materialities—hard, soft, and wetware—to dis- and reassemble particular modes of capturing, administering, and intervening in the living. Bioart and ecoart inscribe into the regimes of art, science, and politics a vector of unspecification, introducing not only an aesthetic mode of reflexivity alien to the lab's procedures but also itself subject to mutation once it sheds the artwork's foundational autonomy and exemption from instrumentality.

This space-time of generic hybridity turns, literally, into a living environment for hybrid organisms. Bioart emerges in the cross-fertilization between the lab's protocols of experimental verification and the studio's aesthetic self-reflexivity—an encounter that engenders "monstrous" hybrids and chimeras such as Kac's phosphorescent green rabbit, *GFP Bunny* (2000), bioart's scandalous poster child conceived in vitro by adding a bioluminescent protein found in Northern Pacific jellyfish to the DNA of an albino rabbit. In Kac's earlier "telepresence" work, this dimension of hybridity had still been associated with the interface between living flesh and computational extensions of the mind, before gradually moving into the realm of interspecies assemblages. In *Teleporting an Unknown State* (1994–95), for instance, internet users were invited to live stream light recorded by webcam through a video projector to a plant seed inside a darkroom, allowing it to photosynthesize and thus literally transforming the web into "a life-supporting system."[102] With *Genesis* (1999), Kac advances from physiological engagements with computing technology to the level of the genome itself. The biblical sentence mandating human mastery over the forms of Creation is being "translated" here, first into Morse code and subsequently through a system of "rules of equivalence" devised by the artist, into a sequence of the four nucleobases—adenine (A), guanine (G), cytosine (C), and thymine (T)—which in combination compose the double helix of DNA molecules. The "artist's gene" thus generated is subsequently inserted into *E. coli* bacteria identified by the addition of a bioluminescent protein. Exhibited in a petri dish that is also filmed and projected onto a wall as well as live streamed over the internet, these transgenic bacteria are also highly photosensitive: they react and mutate when exposed to ultraviolet light, which visitors must switch on if they want to actually see this "living scripture." The irony of Kac's installation—made manifest by "retranslating" the sentence at the end of each show—is that the divine mandate will only (potentially) prevail if it is being renounced, if spectators refrain from taking (visual) possession of the bacteria. Otherwise, Man's enactment of divine entitlement will trigger a contingent and unforeseeable process of mutations and transspecies interactions.

In what Kac himself has referred to as an instance of "performative ethics," his transgenic artworks dramatize some of the fundamental aporias of biotechnology, which are normally occluded from view thanks to the at once ordinary and pervasive presence of transgenics in our everyday experience.[103] In Kac's own words, "the physical reality of the human body, for everyone, is that you have ten times more bacterial cells than you have human cells. As a physical mass you are more bacterial than human . . . So Rimbaud was right. 'Je suis un autre.' In reality, we are never alone."[104] At the same time, however—and this sets Kac's "biomedial" artworks apart from "biothematic" ones, which address biotechnological issues from the vantage point of representational media that are not in themselves "alive"—the position of a detached and unimplicated "critical" spectatorship is also immediately withdrawn here. In *Genesis* as well as other transgenic artworks such as the microenvironment *The Eighth Day* (2000–2001) or *Specimen of Secrecy about Marvelous Discoveries* (2006), a series of paintings/biotopes based on microbial forms living in a medium of earth, water, and other materials (figs. 34 and 35), spectatorship always already implies *co-agitatio*. By taking the *E. coli* bacteria as an object of aesthetic appre-



Figs. 34 and 35. Eduardo Kac, *Oblivion* from the series *Specimen of Secrecy about Marvelous Discoveries*, 2006. Living artwork composed of microscopic organisms, photographed in 2006 and 2010, respectively. Courtesy of the artist.

ciation, as a visual form submitted to my gaze through reflected light, I am also contributing to the transformations this object undergoes. Yet, even by renouncing my spectatorship, by deciding that I will not switch on the lamp, I won't necessarily stop transgenesis from happening but merely slow down the biochemical process. My decision not to interfere would thus amount to a deliberate act of irresponsibility, one that is uncannily similar to my everyday acts of consuming transgenic products. Kac's transgenic artworks force us to make explicit our modern-day Bartleby stance: we would prefer not to know. Transgenic art, as Kac puts it, can "contribute to reveal the cultural implications of the revolution under way and offer different ways of thinking about and with biotechnology. Transgenic art is a mode of genetic inscription that is at once inside and outside the operational realm of molecular biology."[105]

Yet this paradoxical interpellation of the spectator as the subject of an ethical decision also runs the risk—as critical theorist Nicole Anderson cautions—of reinstating the same Kantian subject of reason that transgenic art allegedly seeks to unravel and disseminate into the hybrid assemblages in which it is shown to have always been enmeshed. What if not an autonomous, reasoning spirit present in and unto itself reemerges and directs the action through which "I" contribute—or not—to the bacteria's mutations or the plant seed's growth? Bioart, Anderson argues, "attempts . . . to use the interactivity of the exhibits to foster affective responses that challenge the normative perception that humans stand outside of, or apart from, the biological system."[106] Yet by soliciting spectators' critical reflection on their own agency, bioart itself also "perpetuates [not only] a humanist form of agency but, in turn, a humanist notion of political action and criticism, one that further perpetuates the hierarchical opposition between the human and the animal."[107] Art itself then becomes the *Kippfigur*—the reversible figure or point of inflection—which, once invoked, also reinstates the species order of being. Yet at the same time, only through the critical interruption of the lab's routines thanks to the invocation of the aesthetic can the bioartistic moment of unspecificity become possible.

How can an art that works in the living harness the "living thought" that extends through the organic assemblages the artwork co-opts as well as sets in motion?[108] How can the coagentiality of nonhuman lives be accounted for as a form of coauthorship, thus pushing the very notion of aesthetic experience beyond the confines of the human? Where Kac's works, for all their self-reflexive irony and provocativeness, nevertheless run the risk of reinstating a demiurgic and human-centered notion of authorship and authority, other recent bio- and ecoartistic projects have foregrounded instead those areas that, as living forms, remain inaccessible or only partially commensurable to human design and spectatorial experience. Instead, coauthorship is present here not just on the level of artist-scientist collaborations but also on the one of "symbiopoietic" chain reactions involving human, organic, and material agents in collaborative "speculative fabulations, string figures" and storyings that amount to a communitary "sowing [of] worlds."[109]

Several art actions by Brazilian artist-activist Maria Thereza Alves, carried out around the same time as Kac's transgenic artworks, focus on the dissemination and germination of plants as a chronotope mirroring yet also preserving a degree of autonomy and exteriority toward human histories of modernity, coloniality, and diaspora. In *Wake* (2000) Alves took earth samples from various construction sites across postreunification Berlin, which then were placed in a greenhouse offering optimized conditions of light, temperature, and humidity for the "dormant seeds" preserved in the soil to sprout. In parallel, Alves also embarked on an in-depth archival investigation into Prussian commercial and migratory history, the botanical traces of which resurfaced in the vegetal remnants of exilic trajectories from French Huguenot or Eastern European refugees, yet also from the nonhuman historicities and mobilities that accompanied these remnants, some interrelated with, some independent from human migrations. As Alves writes in her project notes, "I see *Wake* as a story that we have involved ourselves in simply by walking around Berlin. Each step links us to mini-stories of a passer-by, or of a bird flitting from a bush to a rooftop, perhaps on its way to Africa from Siberia."[110]

As she was researching *Wake*, Alves also initiated a long-term, multimedia project titled *Seeds of Change* (1999–ongoing). The series—realized, just as *Wake*, in consultation with Finnish botanist and ecologist Heli Jutila—explores the ballast flora of port cities including Marseilles (1999–2000), Reposaari (2001), Exeter-Topsham (2004), Liverpool (2004), Dunkirk (2005), Bristol (2007), and, most recently, New York City (2017). Ballast flora (as Jutila had shown in her 1996 doctoral thesis) is a compendium of plant material, some of which has sprouted and metamorphosed with local flora, while some has remained "dormant" in seeds that can remain in latency for decades or even centuries. Ballast is the mud and clay that was being carried from the Americas and the Caribbean to Africa and Europe (and vice versa) in the cargo holds of ships transporting slaves and colonial staples across the

Atlantic. Often, this earthly matter, along with the seeds it comprised, was being disposed of in the middle of night, on the shores of river mouths and outside harbor entrances, to avoid paying tax duties. Unearthing these violent histories of colonial transplantation from the soil of port cities and bringing back to life the dormant vegetal archives of human as well as more-than-human uprootings, Alves's art also turns plants into dissident storytellers capable of gathering hybrid communities around them. The "rescuing" of dormant seeds in each iteration of *Seeds of Change* effectively includes reaching out to contemporary migrant communities who are invited to contribute culinary or pharmaceutical advice on the uses and perils of germinated plants that are native to their own countries of origin yet which, at the same time, are also found to have been long-term coresidents in the very ground of diasporic destinations.

Colonization, as Alves insists in the notes to her Vera List Prize–winning *Seeds of Change: New York—a Botany of Colonization* (2017), "is built into the very soil of New York"; therefore, "a process of decolonization must begin in the ground."[111] First in Bristol—where, together with landscape architect Gitta Gschwendtner, she created a floating ballast seed garden on a reclaimed river barge—then in New York City—in a multisite installation at Manhattan's High Line as well as the Weeksville Heritage Center and the Red Hook Pioneer Works at Brooklyn—Alves's earth-revolving archival work is subsequently turned into ballast seed gardens designed, planted, and tended to with the help of local communities. "The gathering force of the project," as Jill Casid succinctly puts it, "lies in its rousing of the dormant."[112] It not only calls on ballast seeds as a counterarchive to chronicle the violent histories of uprootings and transplantations but also draws on plants' resilient, worldmaking powers to forge new, future-oriented assemblages. As Anna Tsing has written, "[a]ssemblages don't just gather lifeways; they make them. Thinking through assemblages urges us to ask: how do gatherings sometimes become 'happenings,' that is, greater than the sum of their parts? . . . Assemblages drag political economy inside them, and not just for humans."[113]

Many recent ecoartistic actions have similarly drawn on the gathering potentials of plants and on a community-driven and nonfinalistic idea of gardening as "countercolonial landscaping."[114] In Argentina, the Ala Plástica collective founded by artist Silvina Babich, botanist Rafael Santos, and legal scholar Alejandro Meitín has over the last twenty-some years developed a sustained reflection on rivers as ecological and geopolitical connectors of “bioregions” under threat from environmental devastation as well as from the social and demographic effects of extractivism. In one of Ala Plástica’s earliest interventions, *Junco/Especies emergentes* (Reed/Emergent species, 1995), designed in collaboration with environmental scientists as well as local fishing and basketmaking communities, the group created beds for semiaquatic plants (called “emergent species” because of their capacity to thrive below as well as above water) near Punta Lara on the River Plate. Because of their unique, rhizomatic root structure, reeds can bring about sedimentation, creating an amphibious environment that also supports a host of other animal and vegetable organisms while also cleansing water of chemical pollutants. In their work, subsequently expanded into the storytelling and cognitive mapping-based *AA Project* (2000–ongoing), Ala Plástica links “the ‘emergent’ characteristics of aquatic plants producing the conditions necessary to sustain a diversity of life forms to the ‘emergent character of creative ideas and practices’ and ‘a corresponding rhizomatic expansion of community.’ ”[115] Meanwhile, in Brazil, the group show *Jardinagem: Territorialidade* (Gardening: Territoriality [2015]) held in Curitiba echoed some of Alves’s earlier work in creating an inventory of herbs growing in urban wastelands (based on an idea by Faetusa Terzelli and Gabriela Leirias) as well as creating a “Banco de sementes crioulas” (Creole seed bank) based on the community orchard of the Bairro Taquara shantytown (the work of Coletivo Municipal), the individual gardens and orchards of which were also transformed into destinations of a walking tour for residents and visitors (hosted by Faetusa Terzelli and Iracema Bernardes). Some of these collectives have made common cause with anti-GMO groups promoting forms of militant resistance against agro-pharmaceuticals such as Monsanto’s infamous Roundup herbicide. These include actions such as the Puesto Amaranto encampment at Córdoba, Argentina, started in 2013 in protest against the local factory of transgenic seeds (some species of amaranth weed have proven to be glyphosate resistant and have been used by anti-GMO activists to invade transgenic soy plantations, reducing yields by more than half). Yet whether in openly politicized or more subtle fashion, all these actions seize on the garden as a modern-colonial apparatus, only to turn it against the extractive matrix in which it had been inscribed, to instead draw out the assemblage-gathering, community-forging potential that had always been latent in practices of sowing, growing, and harvesting.

Recent biorobotic art, on the other hand, has attempted to close the gap between bioart's lab-embedded use of scientific protocols and organic materials for nonutilitarian purposes and ecoart's appropriation or co-optation of botanics and ecology for the purpose of gathering communities human as well as more-than-human. Art critic Daniel López del Rincón puts forward the useful distinction between three different attitudes towards the lab: in his terms, between bioart's use of the lab as an artist's studio and ecoart's deliberate choice of "amateurism as a rejection of the laboratory," biorobotic art might be understood as drawing on the "laboratory as a source of techniques and materials."[116] Mexican artist Gilberto Esparza's project *Plantas nómadas* (Nomadic plants, 2010–ongoing), for instance, stems just like Ala Plástica's work from a concern with the deleterious impact of human activity on aquatic environments, but, rather than conceptually and metaphorically, the project literally attempts to counteract the former by forging an autonomous, machinic species consciousness. The nomadic plant is a hybrid, mobile robotic system sustaining a species of Gramineae, developed in collaboration with bioengineer Carlos Godínez and mechanical electronics specialist Alejandro Rodríguez Ángeles (fig. 36). The biorobot, approximately the size of a cat, is powered by a combination of photovoltaics and biocombustible energy, sourced from microbiae native to contaminated water. The robot, then, is also a minimachine for bioremediation: thanks to a rodlike sensor fitted with a hose, it can de-

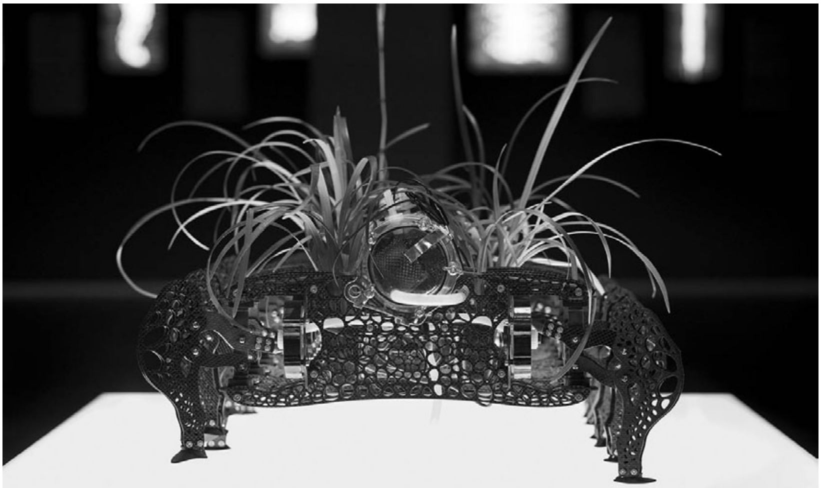


Fig. 36. Gilberto Esparza, *Planta nómada* (*Nomadic Plant*), 2008–13. Vegetable-machine hybrid. Photograph by Edi Hirose. Courtesy of the artist.

tect and move toward water sources and load up the cylindrical-shaped microbial fuel cell inside its body, where, through a process of biodegradation, pollutants are absorbed by the bacteria and transformed into electrical energy, while the decontaminated water nourishes the plants and thus contributes to oxygen release. During resting periods, the robot offsets surplus energy though the emission of tiny, birdlike sounds. During its existence, the biodegradant body/brain powering the robot's movement increasingly acquires and memorizes experience in operating and fine-tuning its signals to the robotic components of the assemblage. Thus, in gradually becoming self-sustainable, Esparza's hybrid organisms—as art critic Karla Jasso observes—effectively "acquire a consciousness both of themselves and of their surroundings and of the 'well-being' gained thanks to self-supply."[117]

Working in the Netherlands, Brazilian artist Iván Henriques has likewise explored the "action potential" of vegetal organisms, a concept originally forged in the field of neurobiology to describe the principle enabling transmission of nerve impulses among neurons and other forms of animal tissue. In a series of "prototypes" collectively titled *Plants & Machines* (2011–14), Henriques and his botanical and engineering collaborators investigate the possibilities of vegetal-powered autonomous movement based on the sensory-motor capacities of plants. *Jurema Action Plant* (2011), for instance, connects a "hacked wheelchair" to a *Mimosa pudica*, also known by its vulgar name "action plant" or "touch me not," thanks to its capacity for recoiling from touch and for reacting to the movement of nearby bodies by capturing and translating their electromagnetic emissions into an electric signal traveling through the cells inside the plant. By way of electrodes connected to the plant's leaves as well as a signal amplifier, these signals can be registered and, via a custom-made circuit board (similar to Grippo's voltmeter wired into the potatoes' energetic circuit), transmitted on to the engine powering the wheelchair, whose response thresholds are set for the plant to move away whenever an approaching person touches it (fig. 37). *Prototype for a New Bio-Machine* (2012) exchanges the *Mimosa pudica*—a plant species with exceptional action potential yet only limited interface options due to its relatively small leaves—for a large-leafed tropical Homalomena plant. Although less responsive to environmental stimuli than the leaves of the *Mimosa pudica*, the large leaves of the Homalomena allow for bioelectrical energy levels and signal frequencies to be analyzed over a much greater surface, to be subsequently transmitted to an electronic plaque operating the wheelchair on which the plant lives.

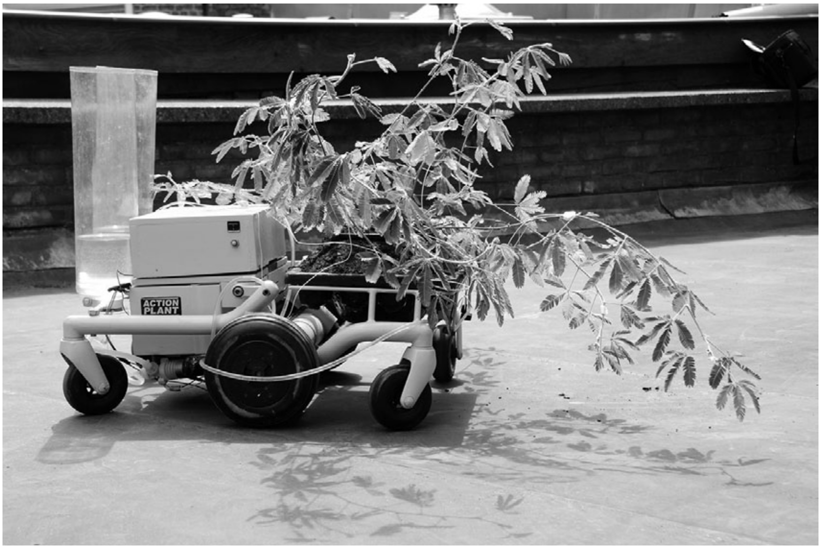


Fig. 37. Iván Henriques, *Jurema Action Plant*, 2011–12. Mixed media. Mimosa pudica plant, hacked electric wheelchair, customized electronic board, water reservoir. Verbeke Foundation collection. Courtesy of the artist.

Another "prototype," *Symbiotic Machine* (2014), is a solar-powered, floating kinetic structure that extracts additional energy from the algae it absorbs and crushes into photosynthetic particles, thus also, as it were, vacuum-cleaning water surfaces and removing the vegetal curtain that blocks access to light for subaquatic microorganisms, which can result in a proliferation of harmful toxins.

Henriques's and Esparza's mobile plant-machines are, on one level, just a clever pun on Norbert Wiener's limited understanding of cybernetics as restricted to "control and communication in the animal and the machine,"[118] by making manifest the ways in which plants are just as complex communicative agents as animals, as well as plugged into machinic circuits in which they are not merely base material but are themselves in charge of the control tower. As Emmanuele Coccia has pointed out, "if the world is a garden, plants aren't (or are not really or not just) its *content* or its *inhabitants*. *They are the gardeners themselves*. We as all other animals are the object of the gardening action of plants,"[119] insofar as it was only through plants' machinic (photosynthetic) operations that an oxygen-rich atmosphere sustaining aerobic life came into being in the first place. Mobility, in other words, has always been reliant on the active contributions of nonmobile vegetal machines, and all Esparza's and Henriques's biorobotic contraptions do is turn the tables on an assemblage in which "we" and our vegetal associates have always been cross-wired: they expose us, as Henriques puts it in the program notes to his 2016 show *Repaisagem*, "to the possibility of thinking nature not as a wild substrate to be returned to its originality, but as a hybrid environment inhabited by living beings and machines."[120] Although they may be opening themselves to accusations of reproducing the technical fix narratives of green capitalism—just as bioart has incurred the scorn of critics accusing it of mobilizing the artwork's indeterminacy for purposes of "airbrushing the ethical image of biotechnology"[121]—Henriques's and Esparza's biorobotic models, as T. J. Demos rightly cautions, "given their small scale and isolated occurrences, acknowledge the limited effectiveness of their techno-fixes, yet still try to operate within the world and ameliorate its dysfunctional conditions."[122]

Yet perhaps this difficulty of pinning down what remains properly artistic, as opposed to "scientific" or "activist," in an "art after nature," also provides a cue to this most recent of environmental turns.[123] Since just as the living matter providing them with their very form of expression, these current manifestations of bio- and ecoart thrive on a generic unspecificity that is at once key to their aesthetic power and always at risk of falling over into any of the fields on the borders of which they set up shop. Whereas the danger lurking behind the bioartworks of Eduardo Kac is precisely that of relapsing into "art," thus also reinstating the subject-object ontologies of Kantian "correlationism"—in Quentin Meillassoux's expression[124]—to therefore demand that "human art . . . has to actually *be* a science, part of science, part of cognitively mapping . . . the biosphere touched by global warming"[125] would be to fall into the opposite trap. "Becoming science" (or, for that matter, "becoming engineering" or "becoming community politics") is an option that Esparza's, Henriques's, or Alves's works at once invoke and resist. Their symbolic efficacy is predicated on the degree in which they cease to be easily identifiable as art yet without fully converging with any of the adjacent fields (science, engineering, horticulture, activism) into which they venture out. Whereas for Walter Benjamin in his 1935 essay on the artwork in the age of mechanical reproduction, the response to fascism's aestheticizing of the political could only be the politicizing of art, in the age of biocybernetic reproduction, relations between art, technology, science, and politics appear to be less clear-cut. Rather than fully "becoming" politics or science, art is now in the business of calling into question their boundaries. Perhaps for now we need to settle for unspecificity as a mode of addressing a threshold moment in relations between life and matter, the very continuity of which appears to be at stake.

CHAPTER 4

The Afterlives of Landscape

Can art help us survive the end of the world? Absurd as the question sounds, it may be the most pressing one we in the humanities are facing today. By "end of the world," I am referring not only to the breakdown of geophysiological conditions for human survival as a real historical prospect but also to the surge of "precarity as an earthwide condition," in anthropologist Anna Tsing's expression, which ensues from the collapse of symbiotic relationships between humans and nonhumans, which are the driving force of all "world-making projects."[1] End of the world is the "process of becoming extinction,"[2] which is already under way with the disappearance of planetary biodiversity and of human linguistic, cultural, and spiritual patrimonies alike. It is a moment of earthly trauma, when "holobiomes"—the "entire" or "safe and sound beings" assembled from the "sympoietic" relationships of reciprocity and care between different kinds of organisms—break apart; the moment, as Donna Haraway puts it, "when a partner involved critically in the life of another disappears from the earth."[3] The current, so-called Sixth Extinction Event—the first to be triggered mainly by anthropogenic action and, according to biologists, probably also the most quickly accelerating one in planetary history, with species disappearing at a rate of fifty to five hundred times the estimated "background rate" of extinctions in the Holocene[4]—is resulting in a proliferation of singular lives orphaned from their holobiomes and thus also stripped of their capacity for establishing meaningful, communicative relationships with those around them. Earthly trauma thrusts the living remainders of holobiontic relationships into a space and time of radical solitude where there is no longer an "around," a realm of resonance where cries of despair could be shared and cathected into languages of collective mourning. The withdrawal of world—or, indeed, the event of becoming unworld, *inmundo*—also calls for a new art of survival, one that can "bring the dead into the present, so as to make more response-able living and dying possible in times yet to come."[5]

Jean-François Lyotard calls *l'immonde* (translated as "unclean nonworld") that which lurks beyond the world rendered as landscape to the sovereign gaze of a human subject. Yet a landscape, Lyotard writes, is always already "an excess of presence. My savoir vivre is not enough. A glimpse of the inhuman, and/or of an unclean nonworld (*l'immonde*)."[6] Excess and lack, Lyotard claims, are simultaneously in play insofar as the experience of one's surroundings as landscape "always requires something that is TOO . . . (if only too little)."[7] Experiencing one's surroundings as landscape, for Lyotard, is the opposite of a sense of place: "ESTRANGEMENT [dépaysement] would appear to be a precondition for landscape."[8] Lyotard proposes a paradoxical relation between landscape's worldmaking and its unworlding capacities, in which the very cultural form that bestowed on the (Western) human subject the power to command "surrounding" space to its all-encompassing apparatus of visual capture also displaces this same subject and keeps her from inhabiting any place whatsoever. Landscape suspends "savoir vivre" because it has drawn a radical separation between the subject and the living. It thrusts its beholder into "a TEMPLUM, a neutralized space time where it is certain that something—but what?—might perhaps happen."[9] Landscape offers a space of pure presence, a "temporality outside *durée*" addressing a gaze similarly removed from history into the transcendental time of a "founding perception,"[10] but only at the cost of casting the beholder into radical uncertainty about what is to come from beyond its horizon. The landscape form, then, foreshadows *inmundo*—the unworld—not just because its very mode of composition is based on the inclusive exclusion of history, of the time and space of productive relations that landscape makes obscene and abject, expelling them beyond the horizon line while also keeping them within the picture as a marked absence. More importantly, it also anticipates the mode of radical estrangement (*dépaysement*), which—as Bernardo Canal Feijóo, the Argentine regionalist thinker we studied in chapter 1, already described in the same terms—becomes the shared yet also uncommunicable experience of solitary afterlives in the aftermath of *despaisamiento*, of unlandscaping.

In this chapter I want to explore this encroachment of *inmundo* onto landscapes that are not so much painterly as aural, haptic, and mnemonic ones. This turn away from vision and toward sensorial dimensions that are more directly connected to bodily rather than just cognitive experience, I argue, are also part of a process in contemporary Latin American aesthetic and epistemological production (even though, as we shall see, this shift was already in evidence from the very outset of modernity in the region) that reflects and responds to the effects of *despaisamiento* driven by the expansion of the extractive frontier. By using the Spanish equivalent of Lyotard's term—*inmundo*—which just as the French *immonde* connotes filth and revulsion, I also want to call attention to the colonial-extractive *longues durées* that have a habit of remaining conspicuously absent from French (and European) grand theory. Perhaps—following Dipesh Chakrabarty's provocative suggestion more than two decades ago—we should therefore start considering the latter as a "provincial" thinking in and of the *inmundo* I am trying to constellate here, contrasting with the epistemologies implicit in Latin American (or Global South) aesthetic production that theorize the latter in its universal, indeed cosmo-logical dimension.[11] To fully grasp this unlandscaping dimension that is always already at the heart of the landscape form, we also need—to stay in the image—to broaden the horizons of the European landscape tradition toward the Americas, and especially toward the circum–South Atlantic, the space of Iberian colonial expansion from the fourteenth century onward. A colonial-extractivist matrix first developed here through a series of "world-ecological revolutions" ensuing from successive cycles of opening and exhaustion of commodity frontiers.[12]

Coinciding with the introduction of slavery-based plantation regimes to Portuguese-occupied Madeira and subsequently Cape Verde and São Tomé, Ibero-colonial expansion also brought about on the level of planetary imaginaries a key shift in the *mundus-immundus* tropology the Renaissance had inherited from early Christianity. For medieval theologians, drawing on St. Augustine, only those renouncing the material trappings of an unclean (*immundus*) world (*mundus*) would be granted access to God's kingdom.[13] With the advent of colonial-capitalist globalization, the valences of this wordplay on the double meaning of *mundus* as both noun ("world") and adjective ("clean") would undergo an actualization as well as a transformation. On the one hand, colonialism now claimed to be cleansing the "new worlds" into which it expanded from previous, "immund" conviviality between beast-like non-Europeans and their wilderness habitats by imposing moral order—that is, patriarchal-extractive "husbandry" of the land and its mineral and organic "flesh."[14] Yet, on the other hand, the Ibero-American sixteenth and seventeenth centuries also witnessed an emergent critical strand identifying colonial extraction-accumulation itself with a planetary turn away from virtue and toward the *mundane*—a movement, indeed, of "world constitution through world rejection."[15] These shifting tropologies of the (un) worldly in the metropolis reflect as well as disavow the very real unworldings wrought on Amerindian societies and on Africans and Afro-descendants in the Plantationocene. What we have started to explore through the concept of trance also aims to mobilize for a critique of present discourses of planetary crisis, the embodied, incantatory, and hallucinatory, responses to Indigenous and Afro-descendant experiences of afterlife under the sign of a radical destructiveness, after an "end of the world [that] has already happened—five centuries ago."[16]

As the colonial-extractive matrix nears its exhaustion, *inmundo* now names both our incapacity of relating to world as place and, at the same time, the state of unrelatability this very attitude has wrought on the *geos* in its planetary dimension. The "immund" in contemporary art is not limited to the scatological or the abject,[17] or only insofar as these partake of a more general, "mundane" attraction to the fleshly and the material: to the realm of interminglings and assemblages which Christian-colonial-capitalist unworldings have for centuries negated, exploited, and abstracted into exchange value. Only an arts addressing the *inmundo* in its disarrayed resilience, its damaged materiality—thus the aesthetic as well as political wager of the concept—can help us turn the afterlives of colonial-extractive unworlding into alliances of survival.

NOCTURNAL VOICES: SOUND MATTER AND ACOUSMATIC GHOSTS

La Selva (The forest, 1998), Spanish sound artist Francisco López's seventy-minute compilation of "sound environments from a neotropical rainforest" that he made from field recordings in the homonymous Costa Rican lowland forest reserve during two successive rainy seasons, is on one of its many levels a nod to one of the founding texts of acoustic ecology: Alexander von Humboldt's short essay "Das nächtliche Thierleben im Urwalde" (The nocturnal life of animals in the jungle). Added to what was perhaps the German naturalist's most popular work, *Ansichten der Natur* (*Views of Nature*, 1808), only from its third edition published in 1849, Humboldt's essay compels us to join its narrator in an act of immersion that gradually penetrates and replaces the "noise" of anonymous animal cries ringing through the forest with a more structured listening. As we shall see, López's sound piece, made with hardly any off-location editing other than the arrangement of individual fragments into a temporal sequence imitating (in much-condensed fashion) "a prototypical day cycle of the rainy season beginning and ending at night,"[18] nevertheless also departs radically from Humboldt's effort to transcribe the noisy wilderness into an orderly soundscape: an orchestral score of animal voices cuing in and out at the prompt of the naturalist-conductor's wand. Instead—thanks to, crucially, the mediation of digital recording technology—López's soundwork aims to trigger a different kind of "revelation" in the listener: "the unfolding of the non-representational layers of sonic reality" and thus to force out the emergence of sound as body, as a mode of objectuality and materiality in its own right.[19]

In Humboldt's essay, the sleepless naturalist bivouacking in the upper Orinoco Delta eventually learns, aided as usual by his Indigenous guides, to break down the noise of the forest into individual sound patterns associated with different animal species and to recreate their ebbs and flows in his own narrative tapestry. Or better: Humboldt invites us to read his text as a verbal score, an evocative notation of the rhythms, pitches, and timbres of animal voices that, just like individual instruments in an orchestral work, rise above the basso continuo of the forest's incessant ground hum. I quote from Elise Otté's and Henry G. Bohn's first English translation published in 1850. "Among the many voices which resounded together," writes Humboldt,

> the Indians could only recognize those which, after short pauses, were heard singly. There was the monotonous, plaintive cry of the Aluates (howling monkeys), the whining, flute-like notes of the small sapajous, the grunting murmur of the striped nocturnal ape (*Nyctipithecus trivirgatus*, which I was the first to describe), the fitful roar of the great tiger, the Cuguar [*sic*] or maneless American lion, the peccary, the sloth, and a host of parrots, parraquas (*Ortalides*), and other

> pheasant-like birds . . . Sometimes the cry of the tiger resounded from the branches of a tree, and was then accompanied by the plaintive piping tones of the apes, who were endeavoring to escape from the unwonted pursuit.[20]

Humboldt's account of the "education of his senses"—in Oliver Lubrich's apt expression—also sketches out, and puts into experimental practice, an alternative project to *Views of Nature*'s overall, visual-ekphrastic framework of transcribing life into text.[21] Instead, "The Nocturnal Life of Animals in the Jungle" proposes to zero in on the sonic manifestations of life's invisible forces and on their interplay of mutual affections. The text gradually develops a technique of "close listening," which, once established, will also be deployed by Humboldt on the only seemingly silent diurnal forest:

> but if, in this apparent stillness of nature, we listen closely for the faintest tones, we detect a dull, muffled sound, a buzzing and humming of insects close to the earth, in the lower strata of the atmosphere. Everything proclaims a world of active organic forces. In every shrub, in the cracked bark of trees, in the perforated ground inhabited by hymenopterous insects, life is everywhere audibly manifest. It is one of the many voices of nature revealed to the pious and susceptible spirits of man.[22]

It is as if the absence, in the nocturnal forest, of visual purchase on reality as landscape had suddenly alerted Humboldt to something that had always been copresent in, but also in excess of, the former's apparatus of capture, and which is therefore also in need of a different kind of mediation to be both sensually and rationally apprehended. As Lubrich points out, in Humboldt's account of nightly listening, "*Ansichten der Natur* have become *Stimmen der Natur*—voices of nature—as if Humboldt had spontaneously changed the character of his project. He has thus learned to convey the character of a place not solely as *vision* bus also as a *symphony*: *land*scape as *sound*scape."[23]

Of course, we should keep in mind that this symphonic transcription of the forest soundscape implies not one but two previous instances of translation. It is not the naturalist but his Indigenous guides who first single out, and put a name to, the animal sound that is being recognized. This first name, produced through an act of collective memory making, is the native or "vulgar" one that is still relatively close to the sound source itself, which (as in "parraqua") it may even mimic through onomatopoeia. Humboldt's original German version of the essay does something similar in the way it proceeds to transcribe this native term into a German noun—"aluates" becomes "die Aluaten"—after which, in parenthesis, are usually added either the German vernacular name or its Latin taxonomic equivalent. Moreover, each of these double acts of naming is also accompanied by a short description of the sounds emitted by each of the animals, generally by likening them to musical instruments or vocal timbres. What Humboldt is inventing here is a recording technology avant la lettre, or perhaps rather avant la machine: a methodology of ekphrastic note taking that approximates in the medium of writing the capture and classification of sounds that would only become possible some thirty years later using Thomas Edison's phonographic cylinders first patented in 1877.

For "noise" to turn into "voices of nature" revealing themselves to the "pious and susceptible spirits of man," it must also undergo a multistep process of translations and transculturations, first in the field and then at the desk.[24] All these steps are necessary as "nature" must reveal itself to the human "spirit," in equal measure, through feeling and through reason: hence, the language of classification must never overwrite but merely bestow order on the original, physical sensation of listening. Humboldt's point in "The Nocturnal Life of Animals" as well as in *Views of Nature* as a whole is twofold. On the one hand, he is reflecting about the differences between how nature can be apprehended visually as landscape or prospect and how its sonic and rhythmic texture can make manifest to the sensorium the interplay of living forces—indeed, how it turns the human body into an instrument resonant with these. Yet on the other hand, framing this discussion of the differences between visual and aural purchase on one's surroundings, a more general argument arises concerning the relation between language and the senses—that is, the degree of proximity to and of detachment from the *Naturgefühl* or "feeling of nature" as opposed to the latter's abstraction and capture by way of taxonomic classification. The wider question Humboldt is after in "The Nocturnal Life of Animals" is about how erudite, scientific language can hold on to the felt "liveliness" of natural elements ("Lebendigkeit des Naturgefühls") that remains present, he asserts, in the native languages of the inhabitants of steppes, deserts, and jungles. Indigenous languages, Humboldt claims, literally bear the imprint of close, daily contact with nonhuman organisms and materialities and thus remain concerned with use rather than exchange value, with the hunter-gatherer's or herdsman's need for interspecies channels of communication rather than the naturalist's abstract, orderly naming of living organisms. "Speech acquires life from everything which bears the true impress of nature," writes Humboldt, "whether it be by the definition of sensuous impressions received from the external world, or by the expression of thoughts and feelings that emanate from our inner being."[25]

But then language itself is in fact a crossroads of "animations," a kind of membrane that is permeable from both sides. Language is an exchange medium between the "impressions" of environmental stimuli on the one hand and the ideas and feelings emerging from inside the mind on the other. The trick of naturalist description—not unlike that of shamanic invocation—is to facilitate this in- and outflow through a technique of controlled suspension of thought. "That which is written down on the spot," Humboldt claims, "or soon after the impression of the phenomena has been received, may at least proclaim to possess more freshness ("Lebensfrische") than what is produced by the recollection of long past events."[26] The art of writing in the field is to preserve the plasticity of language received from an environment's native inhabitants. This requires an exercise of self-limitation on the part of the observer to maximize the mind's permeability as a kind of embodied recording device. Making language amenable to the "impressions" of the location, the naturalist concludes, "will be the best attained by simplicity in the narration of whatever we have ourselves observed and experienced, and by closely examining the locality ("durch die beschränkende Individualisierung der Lage") with which the subject matter is connected."[27]

By subsequently moving from these general considerations on writing in the field to the "sample case" of the nocturnal forest transcribed into a textured as well as textualized soundscape, Humboldt also appears to single out sound, rather than vision, as a shortcut from life to language. Because language itself is sonic, the insistent humming or stirring ("Regung") of the living that, in the final scene of the naturalist pressing his ear to the bark of a tree, manifests the ever-present interplay of the great vital forces, also remains materially present in the linguistic sign, in much more vivid fashion than ocular impressions do in the landscape view. For Humboldt, then, soundscape has to supplement landscape for the latter to be able to convey a "living image." The space and time of sound complement those of vision because they exceed, rather than coincide with, the visual tableau's scope. Therefore, at night, when vision is suspended and the naturalist does not have to busy himself with the exercise of visual capture and composition, he can at last lend his ear to the sonic matter around him. The "voices of nature" are the supplement emerging in the space and time of the suspended image: exactly the position that "The Nocturnal Life of Animals" occupies within *Views of Nature* as a whole.

In fact, Humboldt's prescient reflections on the translational ethics and affects of field notes and on the relations between language and the sonic environment are also no far cry from one of the most influential discussions on music in Latin America: Mário de Andrade's *Ensaio sobre a música brasileira* (Essay on Brazilian music), published in 1928 just before the author's journey to the Northeast we discussed in chapter 1, during which he avidly collected and transcribed for piano samples of popular rhythms such as Alagoan *coco* and Pernambucan *caboclinho*. The piece, written at a time of fervent artistic and cultural debate about "national expression" triggered by the São Paulo "Modern Arts Week" of 1922 and the legendary *Revista de Antropofagia*, published between 1928 and 1929, discusses how a "Brazilian soundscape" that is already latent in popular forms can be "elevated" to the level of art without clashing with either the Scylla of ornamental exoticism or the Charybdis of empty formalism. Whereas Humboldt had speculated about the impact of environmental sound patterns in Indigenous languages, to the effect that the more-than-human remains indexically as well as symbolically present in these, Andrade sees in the hybridization of musical forms a direct reflection of the development of the "Brazilian race." Because music and dance (discussed in terms of rhythm, melody, instrumentation, and voice) are expressive forms that draw on the body as a performative device and support, they are also immediately connected to the physiology of the Brazilian people: "A national art," Andrade asserts, "is already being made in the unconscious of the people."[28] Rather than literature or the visual arts, "Brazilian popular music is the most complete, the most totally national, the strongest creation as yet of our race."[29] But this very proximity to the—itself miscegenated—popular body, Andrade continues, also means that music in Brazil is still a "social" rather than an "aesthetic" phenomenon: Brazilian music remains at a "primitive" stage, in a "phase of construction"[30] because, to become available to the erudite composer's sensibility that will individuate "social," collective forms of expression and thus transcend national particularity into universal meaning, popular forms first need to be patiently sourced, transcribed, and classified. It is, Andrade suggests, "through intelligent observation of the populace and by making use of it, that artistic music will develop" in Brazil.[31] "Artistic music" emerges when the unconscious, embodied expression of the race—sampled, analyzed, and archived by folklorists such as Andrade himself—is drawn on by the inspired, classically trained composer, shorn of any documentary or representational purpose and serving as base material available just as any other to the creative impulse: "The artist only has to give to the already existing elements an erudite transposition that would make popular music into artistic music, by turning it immediately disinterested."[32]

Whereas, throughout his text, Andrade argues against the self-exoticizing use of Indigenous motives as a shortcut towards national musical expression—variously snubbing Antônio Carlos Gomes's Indianist folly *Il Guarany*, an opera based on José de Alencar's homonymous novel, which premiered (with an Italian libretto) at La Scala in Milan in 1870—a composer he frequently singles out is Heitor Villa-Lobos. Although Andrade is more interested in the latter's inspired combination of popular syncopated rhythms in pieces such as the diptych for piano *Saudades das selvas brasileiras* (Longing for the Brazilian forests, 1927) than in the personal myth of the composer-adventurer that sprung from these, he nevertheless sympathizes with Villa-Lobos's early interest in ethnomusicological research. Indeed, as early as in 1919, for his collection of short choral works *Canções típicas brasileiras* (Typical songs of Brazil)—the fourth movement of which, the Afro-Brazilian macumba chant "Xangô," Andrade discusses at some length—Villa-Lobos also incorporated field recordings made of Pareci ritual chants by anthropologists Edgar Roquette-Pinto and Elsie Houston in 1912 for the two opening movements "Môkôcê-cê-máká" and "Nozani-na," which also maintain the pentatonic scale of the original Amerindian source. Another orchestral piece, *Uirapuru: The Enchanted Bird*—begun in 1916 but not performed until 1935 when it was incorporated into the ballet *Amazonas* (originally from 1917)—draws on a Pareci myth about an enchanted Uirapuru, or tropical musician-wren, which Villa-Lobos claimed to have heard during his own travels through the Amazon in 1910. Here the bird's call becomes a leitmotif performed by a violinophone (a violin mechanically amplified with a metal resonator and a gramophone horn attached to its body, a contraption sometimes used in early twentieth-century salon music). Maria Alice Volpe attributes Villa-Lobos's Uirapuru theme to the birdsong transcription made by British botanist Richard Spruce during his 1849–50 expedition to Brazil.[33] Villa-Lobos would continue to use Indigenous rhythms, scales, and percussive instruments in a range of works evoking the forest landscape, including *Erosão (Origem do Amazonas)* (Erosion: Origin of the Amazon, 1950) and the orchestral overture *Alvorada na floresta tropical* (Dawn in a tropical rainforest, 1953). Previously, in a series of pieces including *New York Skyline Melody* (1939) and *Melodia da montanha* (Mountain melody, 1942), as well as the sixth symphony *Sobre a linha das montanhas do Brasil* (On the outline of the mountains of Brazil, 1944), Villa-Lobos had also been experimenting with the "millimetrization" technique for environmental sonorization invented by Russian theorist-composer Josef Schillinger, in which the contours of a landscape image are condensed into a graph, to be subsequently transcribed into musical pitches and melodic lines.[34] Here the geological morphology of the land is not so much evoked (as in *Erosão*) as "embodied" in the melody and pace, and in the crescendos and diminuendos of the orchestral pitch.

Not unlike Humboldt, then, Andrade and Villa-Lobos were looking to mobilize the indexical as well as the symbolic capacities of sound. Or, to put it differently, sound for them was both an archive capable of maintaining present its source or origin (the land, the animal, the native, the racial unconscious) and a mode of representation, through which the local and particular can be transposed and restaged in metropolitan or universal forms: the ballet and the symphony are to their field-recorded source materials what the naturalist's essay, for Humboldt, is to the first notes "written on the spot" and still afresh with direct, aural memories of animal cries. Both, moreover, are underwritten by the same distinction between the base material of "raw" sonic matter and the "refined" final product, the soundscape. Modern-day acoustic ecology—inspired initially by Canadian composer R. Murray Schafer's 1969 manifesto "The New Soundscape," followed by his seminal book *The Tuning of the World* (1977)—has attempted to close the gap between these two modes of transcription (Humboldt's textual writing out and Villa-Lobos's instrumental rescoring of more-than-human sonorities). Situated ambiguously between sound art and ecological science, acoustic ecology has moved on from its earlier focus on isolating and classifying the sound patterns emitted by individual (especially bird) species, and toward a more holistic attempt at capturing the composite structure of particular sonic environments or soundscapes. It assumes—in the words of two prominent contemporary practitioners—"that natural soundscapes consist of a combination of biophonies and geophonies—the acoustic examples that typically originate within the landscape . . .

Biophony and geophony together make up the voice of what remains of the untrammeled natural world."[35]

Note that to recover an "untrammeled natural world," ecoacoustic recording and rendering of "natural soundscapes" as advocated here still requires a subsequent instance of cleansing or filtering: namely, that of human aural presences, including any sounds that cannot be attributed to natural organic ("biophonic") or inorganic ("geophonic") sources. Moreover, in its distinction between biophonies and geophonies, soundscape also remains ekphrastically predicated on landscape and on its distinction between figure and ground, adopted here for the purpose of rendering the "composite structure" of a particular environment. Against such attempts at modeling aural on visual space, the work of Francisco López has instead sought to mobilize the modernist French composer Pierre Schaeffer's concept of acousmatics—"a sound that is heard without its cause or source being seen"[36]—to bring about "a perceptual shifting from recognition and differentiation of sound sources to the appreciation of the resulting sound matter."[37] Acousmatic experience—which, López insists, is akin to the way animals in environments such as rainforests live day-to-day, hearing but not seeing their conspecifics, predators, or prey—rather than to soundscape's ekphrastic sonic image, "can contribute significantly to . . . 'blindness' or profound listening."[38] In contrast with Humboldt and Villa-Lobos but also with acoustic ecology, in what López calls environmental acousmatics, "nature is not present as a reference, symbol or nostalgic evocation, but rather through the sound itself. [His] recordings do not consist of *soundscapes* . . . but of *sonic milieus*."[39] This is because, in *La Selva*—but also in the two other pieces released alongside it in the *American Trilogy* series, *Buildings (New York)* (2001) and *Wind (Patagonia)* (2007)—"the presence of the noisy milieu/medium is not minimized. Rather, signal and noise, foreground and background, event and context are presented together, alluding to the notion that what is heard stems from the combination of sound source and its environment."[40]

Listening to *La Selva* is in many ways an experience surprisingly close to that of a classical symphony, bringing back to mind Humboldt's analogy of the orchestral forest. Beginning with a percussive chatter that may or may not be the composite sound of cicadas, frogs, and bird cries (but which also sounds a lot like electronic noise in industrial techno music), the more than hour-long piece takes us through the accelerandos and rallentandos of multiple animal voices as well as their reverberations and those of nonorganic forces such as rain and thunder through the tree canopy and the underbrush. Long periods of relative stillness, alerting us to the occasional bird or insect sound piercing the low-level rhythmic tapestry of the cicadas, suddenly give way to the dramatic crescendo of thunder welling up from a distant murmur to full-blown banging on the timpani, and of a storm agitating the treetops before torrential rain hits and literally drowns out all other voices. At different times of the day—compressed into short, movement-like sequences—a variety of animal voices or of combinations of these take the lead, from the stirring up of bird cries and insect sounds as the storm recedes to the trancelike huffing and howling sounds that may or may not be those of monkeys. Sometimes, the low buzzing of an insect flying close to a microphone assumes the role of soloist although, most of the time, there is no clear distinction between lead and supporting voices in the intricate call-and-response structure of animal and environment sounds cuing in and out of the niches left by others. Unlike most ecoacoustic soundscape recordings, *La Selva* does not include a glossary of species for listeners to refer to as they patiently unravel (as Humboldt does in "The Nocturnal Life of Animals") the sound tapestry to distinguish and identify individual threads. Rather, *La Selva* entices us to take in the forest as a single, composite, and nonunitary *objet sonore* (as Schaeffer in his writings on *musique concrète* called the sound that is heard independent of its originating source and thus allows listeners to focus exclusively on its inherent sonic characteristics[41]). In López's recording, "many 'natural' sounds are rendered abstract, their sources elusive: there are electronic-sounding chirrups and abrasive buzzing of unidentifiable origins. Some sounds move gradually between background and foreground, while others rapidly appear and disappear."[42]

This "formalist" rendering of the forest as corresponsive sonic body of resonance chimes with anthropologist Eduardo Kohn's notion of forests as composite, semiotic networks of "living thoughts" where morphodynamic processes of form-giving play themselves out in interspecies communications. "The biosocial efficacy of form," Kohn argues, "lies . . . in the way it both exceeds and is continuous with its component parts. It is continuous in the sense that emergent patterns are always connected to lower-level energetics and materialities."[43] Form, as perceived in the rhythm and sound patterns of multispecies or vegetal-climate interactions in *La Selva*, is but the semiotic manifestation, as sign, of energetic and material modes of exchange, at the same time as it *in-forms* these: life is always already networked and at once material and semiotic. Coevolution, of which the forest is the composite expression, is “a reciprocal proliferation of regularities or habits among interacting species. The tropical forest amplifies form in myriad directions thanks to the ways in which its many kinds of selves interrelate.”[44]

Yet before we hurry to commend López for producing a more truthful representation of this signifying forest than ecoacoustic soundscape recordings, his own warning against the “illusion of place” and his assertion that “*La Selva* (the music piece) is not a representation of La Selva (the reserve in Costa Rica)” should give us pause.[45] Although his own professional background is in entomology and ecology, in *La Selva* as well as in other soundworks recorded in tropical rainforests such as *Belle Confusion 966* (1996)—mixing materials sampled in Central and South America as well as Africa and China—and *Untitled 308* (2013)—recorded in Mexico—López has made a point of distinguishing his scientific from his musical work, even as he acknowledges the former’s influence on the latter. “I consider *La Selva* to be a piece of music, in a very strong and profound sense of the word,” he writes in the liner notes to the album: “I believe in an expansion and transformation of our concept of music through nature . . . music is an aesthetic (in its widest sense) perception/conception of sound. It’s our *decision*—subjective, intentional, non-universal, not necessarily permanent—what converts nature sounds into music.”[46] Music is in the ear of the listener, López claims, and it occurs whenever an aesthetic—that is, a purely sonic, concrete, nonrepresentational—relation to sound as object in and for itself is being forged. In this sense, recording itself is not only a representational but also a presentational, or sound-producing, technology, insofar as it generates a sound object that is no longer (as is listening in the field) related to any particular purpose such as seeking shelter from the advancing storm or the growl of a predator. As López has argued, “along with the semantic, the symbolic, the iconic . . . , another layer of musical ‘reality’ sneaked into the sound recordings: the sonic, the phenomenological, the Schaefferian *concrète*. That, and not ‘music,’ is what became materialized for the first time in history. Or, we could say, music . . . *as heard and memorized by machines*.”[47]

Indeed, López provocatively suggests, we might also listen to *La Selva* as a concrete jungle, one of aural signals registered and digitalized by high-sensitivity tech wizardry: as “nature” in the machine age and thus also as irreducibly entangled with technology. As sound-recording machines are by definition incapable of perceiving the sound-emitting body, sound becomes itself the body object, its own materiality coming to the fore. But let us stay for a moment with the idea of “decision” on the part of the listener whether to hear in *La Selva* this material concreteness of sound matter or rather the (indexical or metonymic) representation of "La Selva" the place. If the nature of sound is in the ear of the listener, this also means that (as Humboldt had already begun to realize) the sound-image relation always hangs in the balance. It has the character of a suspended presence. Machines may be capable of what Schaeffer called a "reduced listening" (López prefers "blind" or "profound" listening), but for the human listener acousmatic sound also inevitably calls back one of the formative experiences of subjectivity, the infant's aurally continuous perception of the mother who meanwhile moves in and out of the visual field. This same relation of sound to an image both remembered and potentially yet to materialize—actively embraced in Humboldt's ekphrastic note taking and also in nature-evoking program music à la Villa-Lobos—is also still at work, I would argue, in the human listeners of López's *La Selva* who have to actively force themselves to suppress the mental images that inevitably pop up in the echo chamber of blind listening (try for yourself!). It is also, of course, a founding principle of sound film, the narrative grammar of which is to a great part built on the on-off relationship between sound and image that electronic composer and film theorist Michel Chion calls the *acousmêtre*. As Chion reminds us, the uncanny nature of acousmatic sound in film is not so much the absence on screen of an identifiable visual source but rather the sudden revelation propelled by this sound-image fissure that all sound is "out of frame." Because a film's soundtrack never fully coincides with the flow of visual impressions, there is really no such thing as an "on-screen voice." Sounds constantly enter and exit the image, which also means that cinema constantly hovers over what Chion calls the acousmatic zone: "a place that has no name, but which the cinema forever brings into play."[48]

The acousmatic zone, "neither inside nor outside" the image, and thus instead "defined as fluctuating, constantly subject to challenge by what we might see,"[49] is therefore also what takes the place writing had held for Humboldt at the interstice between image and sound, but it does so in an entirely new fashion. Whereas Humboldt's project of notation in the field proposed the voluntary suspension of reason as a way of turning the mind itself into a resonating chamber (a recording device avant la machine), the cinematic *acousmêtre* as theorized by Chion triggers an even more radical lapse of selfhood that threatens to dissolve the spectator-subject as she gives in to its temptation: "Being in the screen and not, wandering the surface of the screen without entering it, the acousmêtre brings disequilibrium and tension. [It] invites the spectator to *go see*, and [it] can be *an invitation to the loss of the self, to desire and fascination*."[50]

I want to conclude this part of the chapter by reconnecting Chion's idea of *acousmêtre* to the question of the presence or absence of the human in the soundscape, which we briefly touched on above. The way I see it, the notion of *acousmêtre* can add some welcome nuance and purpose to the somewhat stale discussion in ecoacoustics as to whether anthropogenic sound (such as airplane engines or electric chainsaws) should be maintained or filtered out from "nature recordings." Rather, I suggest, acousmatics might offer us a way of understanding what ecological historian Jason Moore calls the "double interiority" between the histories of nature and of capitalism on a planetary scale, or between "capitalism's internalization of planetary life and processes" on the one hand and "the biosphere's internalization of capitalism" on the other.[51] To understand this "world-ecological" relation between interdependent, coconstitutive spheres (or "bundles," in Moore's vocabulary), I shall briefly comment on documentary filmmaker Tatiana Huezo's ravishingly beautiful as well as intensely moving debut feature *El lugar más pequeño* (The smallest place, 2011), in which she revisits the Salvadoran highland village from which her mother and grandmother had to escape to Mexico before she was born, in the midst of a genocidal counterinsurgency war waged by the national army against real or perceived guerrilla hideouts. In a radical break with the compositional conventions of narrative *testimonio* and of postdictatorship cinemas of memory, two modes of remembrance widely practiced across Latin America, Huezo's film separates the stories told by survivors on the soundtrack (who returned to the abandoned village after the end of the civil war) from a visual sequence dominated instead by tracking shots and close-ups taken during hikes through the surrounding forest or through the still half-ruined village of Cinquera where traces of past lives and deaths abound—sometimes literally in the form of human remains found in the underbrush or else in the form of treasured belongings, photographs, and murals recalling loved ones brutally murdered by the military. The simple but highly efficient principle of separating the narrators' voices from the bodies of survivors who appear on screen toward the end, looking silently at the camera when all stories have been told, generates, as Kaitlyn Murphy observes, "a sense of haunting and in-betweenness in the film, resulting in a testimonial space that feels more affective than transactional, and unlocks the commonly understood relationship between testimony and witness."[52] Rather than anchoring the voice in the survivor's body (who is simultaneously the guarantor as embodied evidence of the narrative's veracity), here it is instead spread out across, and intermixed with, the aural manifestations of the fields and forest surrounding the village, including the grunts and clunking bells of cows driven out in the morning, the cries of birds and the croaking of frogs in the forest at nightfall, and even the tiny crackling eggshells of chicks being hatched. Indeed, the human voices themselves, with their unmistakably Central American accent, verbal and propositional forms and their penchant for diminutives, contribute to the impression of a testimonial milieu that is aural rather than visual in kind, and where human and more-than-human lives and deaths respond to and reinforce one another. In a way that recalls literary classics such as Juan Rulfo's *Pedro Páramo* (1955), acousmatic testimony separated from the body and "reflected back" from the sonic milieu of the forest not only fashions a dimension of ghostliness onto the voices of the living but also, more importantly, makes those of the dead matter.

From the opening story of an old woman narrating the survivors' return to Cinquera, punctuated by bird cries, the song of the cicadas, and the nightly croaking of frogs as she tells of a ruinous, hellish place strewn with bones and inhabited only by snakes and bats, the more-than-human environment is present not only as an aural background but also as an acousmatic witness in its own right. It "backs" the narration, yet not in ornamental fashion but as entering in dialogue with it from other living temporalities that have always overlapped with those of the human inhabitants of Cinquera (just as the lives of the families sheltering for months in forest caves before being discovered by the army had overlapped with those of bats and lizards). The acousmatic zone, in Huezo's film, as an area of encounter and exchange between human and more-than-human becomings, is also where the dead and disappeared remain present as ghostly matter but matter no less: it forges—as Murphy rightly points out—a time and space *between historia* and *ambiente* (history and environment) which is of an affective rather than representational kind. More-than-human witnessing is summoned forth, *The Smallest Place* suggests, by the historical storytelling of human witnesses but it also exceeds and complements these through a mattering of absences that is not representational but rather presentational. Indeed, as we have seen, "The Nocturnal Life of Animals in the Forest" (or, for that matter, the *Dawn in the Rainforest* or "Sound Environments from a Neotropical Rainforest") are the stuff of music, a composite *objet sonore*—but that does not mean that they cannot also be (as Romantic composers of program music knew well) a particular kind of storytelling. Hearing, as cultural geographer Yi-Fu Tuan pointed out decades ago, is closer to touch than vision, not least because as listeners we are on the receiving end rather than in charge of the action: "The sound of rain pelting against leaves, the roll of thunder, the whistling of wind in tall grass, and the anguished cry excite us to a degree that visual imagery can seldom match . . . Why is this? Partly, perhaps, because we cannot close our ears as we can our eyes. We feel more vulnerable to sound."[53] Unlike visual landscape, which renders our surroundings into an object at the behest of our gaze—which is thus always at least potentially an "extractive eye," to slightly twist Mary Louise Pratt's expression—the aural environment undermines this kind of subjective self-entitlement. We are ultimately not in control of the sounds that address and enter us, whether we "decide" to hear in them the music of nature or the ghostly voices of history. As Huezo's film so beautifully reveals, the two may not be separate from one another in the first place, and it is us who they make resonate with their nocturnal voices, who they turn into their sonic object, making sound matter.

THE NEW REGIONALISM: REENACTMENT AND THE MORE-THAN-HUMAN

The year could be 1978 though this is not how time is being measured in memory and in dreams. Nor is it how the women, men, and children would have remembered it had they survived that fateful day. Perhaps for them it would have been the time they had arrived at (or maybe returned to) the creek, some putting up shelters with palm fronds and others starting a fire from the embers while the little ones were taking a nap or playing with the pigs and the monkeys before taking a plunge into the shallow stream. All we know is that this is how the warrior remembers it who, meanwhile, gathers his spears and goes out into the forest to hunt: it is to him that the scene returns, in dreams, for it is he whom we have seen, just moments before, in black and white and as an old man, once again piling up palm leaves to rest on before he has a smoke and lets the mind drift. We know this because in the dream it is he who arrives at the end of the world where the forest is suddenly cut off by railway tracks, on the other side of which the trees disappear and the farmlands of the cattle ranchers begin—the space, too, from where the gunmen have departed who at this very moment are setting the shelters on fire and shooting at random into the bush as they advance, leaving behind, when Carapiru finally catches up with his people (that's his name, as we later find out), only a newborn baby who will die soon after. *Serras da desordem* (The hills of disorder, 2006), the late Andrea Tonacci's last feature release, bar the compilation film made together with Cristina Amaral and Patrícia Mourão, *Já visto jamais visto* (Seen once seen never, 2013), is a story about the afterlife and the end of the world, which, as a radical discontinuity first in space and then in time, is present right from the very beginning. The cruel paradox here is that Carapiru survives the massacre of a community that had already been one of survivors even before then, holding on to life in the forest, even as the forest had come to an end and ceased to be the "world." Survival for Carapiru and for the baby alike, only for a shorter or longer period, is *to live on after the world has ended.* To survive is to turn into the excess or into the remainder of absent community, to inhabit "the rubble of broken symbionts," of human as well as more-than-human togetherness and community.[54] Survival is the becoming extinction in an unworlded space and time where world depends—as the following sequence of superimposed footage of Carapiru makes clear, who is running down a dirt road as if only partly (or ghostly) present there—on the survivor's constant effort of keeping together the shards and fragments of material and spiritual surroundings always on the verge of fading into nothingness (fig. 38). Survival in the *inmundo* means to reenact worldings from what remains after the world has come to an end.

No wonder then that Tonacci's film deploys reenactment in what could be considered a docufiction of Carapiru's life story on the basis of a constant oscillation between modes of narrative. On the one hand, passages in black and white show Carapiru and the villagers and FUNAI officers (Brazil's Indian Affairs Agency) reperforming key moments from the past when, after ten years of roaming the backwoods of northern Brazil in solitude, they had offered Carapiru shelter and eventually reunited him with other Awá-Guajá survivors of subsequent massacres and epidemics. On the other, sequences in color usually provide a "documentary" outer frame where, as in a Brechtian alienation effect, the "actors" let down their guard and comment on the original story and their emotions on reencountering Carapiru more than two decades later. Yet, as the opening sequence of Indigenous community life (in color) remembered from the (black-and-white) vantage point of the elderly Carapiru indicates, it is actually far from clear what is fact and what is fiction,

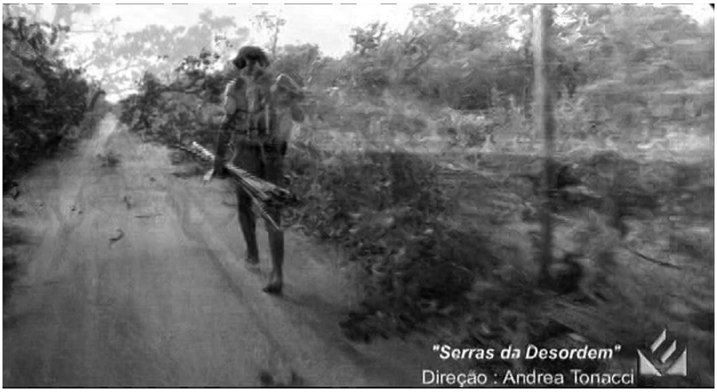


Fig. 38. Carapiru running. Film still from Andrea Tonacci, *Serras da desordem* (The hills of disorder), 2006, 135 min.

where experience ends and reenactment begins, with the predominant feeling being that of "a permanent ambiguity between the documentation of the present and the reconstruction of the past, and with a suggestive contamination between fiction and documentary ensuing from the duplication of temporalities."[55] This cross-contamination stems not only from Tonacci's editing but also crucially from our incapacity of telling performance from experience in Carapiru's engagements with the camera. Tonacci himself, when asked about the nature of Carapiru's collaboration in *Serras da desordem*, has insisted that, while always responsive to his own (or rather his interpreters') instructions during the shooting, Carapiru had seen little sense in replaying a story that concerned him alone and performed his part in the film "only as presence."[56] But then, as Ivone Margulies has asked, "if testimony is based on the transmission of a person's past experience, what happens once the film's central character's consciousness is inaccessible, when Carapiru's memory and sense of self remain opaque throughout the film? What then is the function of the reenacted presence if he cannot speak or be understood?"[57]

Similar to the effect of disembodied, acousmatic testimonial voices in Huezo's *The Smallest Place*, then, in *Serras da desordem* the mute, speechless bodily presence of Carapiru denies us access to individual and collective experience, the traces of which we are instead urged to seek out in his physical interactions with the material world that surrounds him. Environmental witnessing comes about here as an effect of suspended testimony. It is called on by withdrawing not just speech but also the way in which narrative cinema usually articulates speech, face, and body in relation to the setting as a way of constructing (and suturing the spectator's gaze into) diegetic space and time. Instead, the silent, impermeable body of Tonacci's protagonist appearing in front of camera "only as presence" requires us to pay intense heed to his interactions with the physical environment—usually depicted in medium-length shots as if to make sure that nothing escapes our attention—insofar as animals, objects, and materialities often take the place here of the human addressee and physical interactions stand in for verbal dialogue. The effect of this minimal performance, of this enigmatic self-reenactment by an Indigenous nonprofessional actor replaying what may or may not be his own everyday experience, is the transformation of what we initially take to be a background setting into a kind of surrogate character: an actor-witness. In what I call the "new regionalism" in Latin American contemporary cinema, boundaries between action and setting as well as between the human and the more-than-human become blurred, similar to but also different from the way they had already come under challenge in the literary regionalism of the previous century that we studied in chapter 1.

The new regionalism's challenge to figure-ground relations I have in mind here should not be confused with the Deleuzian opposition between action-image and time-image, even though I draw on its critique of narrative suture in the name of place to think about uprootedness and dislocation, about unworlding and the sympoietics of survival in the *inmundo*. Cinematic landscape has been theorized as interrupting the narrative topography of what Tom Conley calls a "cartographic cinema," one that "plots and colonizes the imagination of its spectators . . . A film, like a topographic projection, can be understood as an image that locates and patterns the imagination of its spectators."[58] Similar to the way in which—in Laura Mulvey's classic analysis—the star's iconic body and the visual pleasure it unleashes interrupt (yet thereby also underwrite) diegetic continuity, landscape emerges when the continuity of narrative space is being challenged by the breaking forth of place as material presence and as real duration that exceed the diegetic chronotope.[59] As film scholar Martin Lefebvre suggests, landscape flickers in the instant audiences switch from "narrative" to "spectacular" viewing, tearing through cartographic cinema's narrative mapping to instead zero in on the nonhuman, organic, or material presences on screen:

> [Landscape] is subjected simultaneously to the temporality of the cinematographic medium and to that of the specta-

> tor's gaze, which is given to shifting from the narrative to the spectacular mode and back again from one moment to the next. This doubled temporal existence results in the precariousness of a landscape that more or less vanishes when the narrative mode takes over and the cinematic space resumes its narrative function as setting.[60]

Now let us remember here that landscape—even as it interrupts the setting's subordination to the diegetic chronotope—stands itself in an already precarious relation to place, which is simultaneously one of excess and one of lack. This precariousness of the landscape in cinema ensues not just from its always already imminent relapse into the continuity of diegetic form but also from its no less imminent withdrawal prompted by, as Lyotard puts it, the "estrangement that landscape procures" and which "is absolute, it is the implosion of forms themselves, and forms are mind."[61] The landscape form is perched not just on the edge of narrative space but also, more importantly, on the verge of a breakdown in mind-world relations, in the imminence of unworlding or of the *inmundo*; this fragile and threatening (indeed "monstrous") limit of the world and the human alike is, I suggest, where the new regionalism takes us.

My notion of the new regionalism is less concerned with the political geography of province versus capital, with the emergence of new filmmaking hotspots such as Recife and Contagem in Brazil, or Córdoba and San Luis in Argentina, or even with the conflicts and crisis of rural or Indigenous life as a narrative theme. Even though many of these elements are present in the films I discuss here, my notion of the new regionalism attempts to highlight instead the continuities with (or reimaginings of) literary regionalism's formal, expressive challenge to the active exclusion of more-than-human agencies by the narrative apparatuses of modernity. Just as. in *The Smallest Place*, the acousmatic weft of disembodied voices emerging from the forest also redeployed in novel and unexpected fashion Juan Rulfo's narrative construction of the rural backwater of Comala in *Pedro Páramo*, the new regionalism I have in mind here takes up again, in the medium of film, the ways in which, in the earlier literary regionalism, the more-than-human background setting intrudes into human foreground action. And just as it had in literary regionalism, this intrusion of the more-than-human also inscribes the impact of an escalating cycle of neoextractivism in Latin America on the level of film form rather than as an object of representation—sometimes more directly and sometimes more as an effect of "precarity as an earthwide condition" ushered in by late-liberal neoextractivism.[62]

The ways in which, in the new regionalism, more-than-human kinds of actor-witness encroach on and permeate cinematic storytelling, performance, and actorship do not just interrupt diegetic continuity by prompting spectatorial engagement with place, as Lefebvre claims the landscape does: they also actively call into question whose, and which, stories are being told and for whom. In Huezo's and Tonacci's films as well as in a host of other recent work from Latin America, reenactment and acousmatic sound-image relations, as well as the foregrounding of haptic interactions among bodies, things, and materialities, are key elements of a formal and expressive arsenal that speaks to the forging of new alliances under conditions of precarious survival. As anthropologist Anna Tsing has argued, "precarity is a state of acknowledgment of our vulnerability to others . . . If survival always involves others, it is also necessarily subject to the indeterminacy of self-and-other transformations. We change through our collaborations both within and across species."[63] The new regionalism is thus a form of storytelling and of performing the adventures of making and unmaking alliances of survival through self-and-other transformations in the *inmundo*, forcing us to engage with the unexpected, "monstrous" liveliness proper to the "abandoned asset fields" of neoliberal extractivism as they "yield new multispecies and multicultural life."[64]

Take the two most recent films by Chilean documentary filmmakers Bettina Perut and Iván Osnovikoff, *Surire* (2015) and *Los Reyes* (2019). Both are named after their location that, so to speak, becomes the story or is all there is left to tell: a salt lake in the high Andes on the border between Chile and Bolivia in *Surire* and a skater park on the outskirts of Santiago in *Los Reyes*. But this becoming story of the location in both films is also the result not of the empowerment of place through the prevalence of spectacular over narrative viewing but, rather, of the crisis of place, which suspends the very opposition between narrative and spectacle. As a result, animals, things, and materialities become themselves agential and turn into characters in their own right. The two signature shots of the documentary duo best known for their 2011 feature *The Death of Pinochet* are on frequent display in both films, often to the point of eliminating all others: the extreme close-up, shot with a microlens that focuses in detail on the pores of skin, the lice infesting an animal's fur or the bubbles emerging from a mineral source in the desert, and the wide panoramic shot, often in long, still frames in which, literally, we lose sight of things and people in the sheer vastness of city and countryside. There is in both films a difficulty both for those in front of camera and for us spectators as we face the screen to inhabit and make sense of the middle ground, which is where classic, narrative cinema had placed its action-image. This vacating of the scene of action comes about as the effect of a clash between spaces and times that are simultaneously too large and too small to fit into the action-image's chronotope. The action-image was made to fit, as we begin to understand some way into both films, an exclusively human affair when the story (if indeed there is one) would also have to include flies, tectonic plates, global trade networks, donkeys, and the devil. More explicitly in *Los Reyes* and in more subtle fashion in *Surire*, Perut and Osnovikoff challenge us to follow the story even when the lead role is passed on from humans to dogs, mountains, and minerals.

In *Surire* the alternation between panoramic shots and extreme close-ups, usually held for long periods to allow us to perceive the beings and elements that move in the midst of an intense quietness, gradually reveals the eponymous Andean salt flat to be a space in which two temporalities violently intersect and clash: the pastoral time of Aymara llama herding that over centuries has accommodated itself to and thus also coproduced this austere environment, and the time of late-liberal resource extraction in the form of lithium mining under the salt surface, for export to East Asian factories where it will be transformed into mobile phones to eventually be reimported to Chile at profit. The use of a telescopic angle lens is highly effective here in the way it flattens the depth of field when shooting the vast salt plain from a distance, bringing llamas, rocks, and native herdsmen into close proximity with the mining trucks incessantly crossing the background of the image. In a particularly impressive shot, a flock of flamingos standing in the shallow water gradually moves out of focus as the wide-angle lens zeroes in on the source of what had previously appeared to be acousmatic noise: the long line of trucks in the distance, exceeding the limits of the image at both ends, as they queue at the border post. These shots, for all their apparent simplicity and stillness, are highly analytical. They perform, so to speak, a political economy—or perhaps we should rather say a historical ecology—of late-liberal primitive accumulation in the form of what anthropologist Gastón Gordillo, drawing on the work of David Harvey and Ann Stoler, calls "destructive production." What we see in the coincidence and clash of spaces and times on screen is a sample case of capitalism's creation of "vast amounts of wealth, objects, and places . . . through what Stoler calls a ruination that 'lays waste to certain peoples, relations, and things.'" This destruction of space by way of its transformation into a zone of sacrifice, Gordillo concludes, "disintegrates not just matter but the conditions of sociality that define a particular spatial node."[65]

The extreme close-up, on the other hand, is where the effects of such macroecological processes of disintegration make themselves felt—literally speaking, as it is in the pores and blisters of people's skin (affected by the toxins seeping into the soil as well as the extreme dryness of the climate) and the disintegrating fabric of wool garments and straw roofs that these larger processes become embodied. It is where extraction matters. The scene of action—the middle ground, the space of interpersonal ("social") relations—is being vacated, or rather is present only in the form of an ellipsis, because what matters is what goes on in the panoramic long shot and in its microscopic, literally molecular effects, both of which are similarly out of reach for human action and its cinematic grammar, the shot/reverse shot. If the old Aymara couple—the last, it seems, not to have abandoned the plain—feels stripped of all force by the work of the devil (as the old woman mutters while disemboweling a young llama), this is effectively what *Surire* is all about: "the main measure of [productive destruction]," as Gordillo says, "is its impact on human bodies and practices as well as all forms of life."[66]

The world ecology of late liberalism, as Jason Moore calls the "real bundle of human and extrahuman natures" emerging at the juncture of "capital, power and nature,"[67] ushers in "precarity as an earthwide condition."[68] Yet the ways in which this condition makes itself felt as well as the forms of togetherness (of survival alliances) that it ushers in, and the modes of aesthetic expression these call forth, vary from one instance of destructive production to the next. Such is the wager of Perut and Osnovikoff's *Los Reyes*, which takes *Surire*'s arsenal of documentary expression to a space that could hardly be more different: a skating park in a lower middle-class neighborhood of the capital Santiago. Once again, the filmmakers decide to take their leave from human interaction, in this case from the youths hanging out at the park to play, talk, and flirt—or better, they remain present only through their conversations providing a constant aural background to the on-screen story the protagonists of which are instead the park's two resident dogs, Football and Chola. As so many of Santiago's sizable population of *quiltros* (street dogs), the two playmates (a grizzly old male and his much younger, pitch-black female companion) survive on the residues of cheap street food as well as occasional offerings of animal foodstuffs from park visitors and the youths they spend their days with (one of Chola's favorite pastimes is to drop and catch an old rubber ball from the asphalt trough of the skating rink). By following the dogs through the seasons and in their day-to-day interactions with the skaters as well as with domestic dogs being taken for their daily walk or with the donkeys pulling a ragpicker's cart, Perut and Osnovikoff chronicle life on the urban margins as, once again, an extended event of alliance making, of assemblage, between multispecies bodies and materialities. What the extreme close-up reveals are the bacterial and metabolic effects of precarious living, as Football (so named by the filmmakers for his fondness for an old, airless leather ball) gradually succumbs to illness and old age, his fur becoming infested with sores full of lice and flies.

Its counterpart, the panoramic long shot of the illuminated skating rink at night, an island of light in the darkened neighborhood far away from the luminous clusters of the city center and the motorways in the distance, provides viewers with a macroeconomic (or an urban-ecological) framework in which to situate these, literally, microhistories. But differently from *Surire*, the space and time of human, social interactions are not so much absent here as only acousmatically present, in much the same fashion as nonhuman life usually is in "action movies" (think of the omnipresent song of the cicadas in any self-respecting Western). *Los Reyes* narrates nothing less than an urban ecology, including (as background noise) the adventures and misfortunes of young marginals and castaways whose experience of precarity is, in the end, not so different from that of their nonhuman neighbors with whom they form (as does the film by editing together their sounds and images) an assemblage, a "real bundle of human and extra-human natures."[69]

In one way or another, the films I have been analyzing all appear to be set in times and spaces marked by radical destruction and unworlding—sometimes violent and sudden, as in *Serras da desordem*, and sometimes everyday and inconspicuous as in *Los Reyes*—to the effect that their "adventure," the only one there is left, tells of the forms of community and alliance that nevertheless continue to reemerge from the rubble. Yet these resilient modes of togetherness often lack a common language, whether they are among humans or across species boundaries, and therefore also resort to other kinds of affective transmission such as touch. Either because speech is altogether absent (as in Tonacci) or because it turns into disembodied, acousmatic background noise (as in Perut and Osnovikoff), in Latin American neoregionalist cinema we find ourselves confronted with an aphasic unworld (*inmundo*) in which all characters experience infancy as a shared condition, whether they are children or grown-ups, humans or animals. Yet theirs is not the child's point of view as sustaining a "pure optical and sound situation which takes the place of faltering sensory-motor situations," as Gilles Deleuze famously analyzed the role of the child actor in Italian postwar neorealism, whose passive gaze offered access to the real itself beyond the action-image's diegetic suture.[70] Instead, we are closer to Giorgio Agamben's idea of infancy as suspended communication, not merely "something which chronologically precedes language and which, at a certain point, ceases to exist in order to spill into speech" but a dimension that "coexists in its origins with language—indeed, it is itself constituted through the appropriation of it by language in each instance to produce the individual as subject."[71]

Infancy, unlike the child's gaze with which it can sometimes coincide, does not refer here to unmediated access to "real experience." Instead, it describes a relation with the world as *inmundo*, as no longer or not yet accessible to verbal communication and thus also no longer to be made sense of in terms of subject-object, foreground-background relations. Deleuze referred to this mode of filmmaking as "naturalism" or the impulse-image, one that grants access to "originary worlds" recognizable by their "formless character": "It is a pure background, or rather a without-background, composed of unformed matter, sketches or fragments . . . which do not even refer to constituted subjects. Here the characters are like animals . . . They are human animals. And this indeed is the impulse: the energy which seizes fragments in the originary world."[72]

I am also thinking here, in the realm of narrative, of a take from the beginning of Gabriel Mascaro's *Boi Neón* (*Neon Bull*, 2015) where we see the cowherd Iremar (Juliano Cazarré) scavenging a muddy plain where the leftovers from a *vaquejada*—a Brazilian rodeo—have been thrown out (fig. 39). Eventually Iremar comes across a heap of mannequins' body parts—a torso, a pair of legs, an arm, finally a head—which he picks up to (as we find out further along in the film) add to his back-of-a-van sewing workshop where, using pieces of fabric likewise picked up from the rubbish and a colleague's used copy of a porn mag as a design template, he assembles costumes (*fantasias* in Portuguese) for Galega (Maeve Jinkins), the owner-driver of the truck transporting a motley bunch of farmhands and oxen from one rodeo festival to the

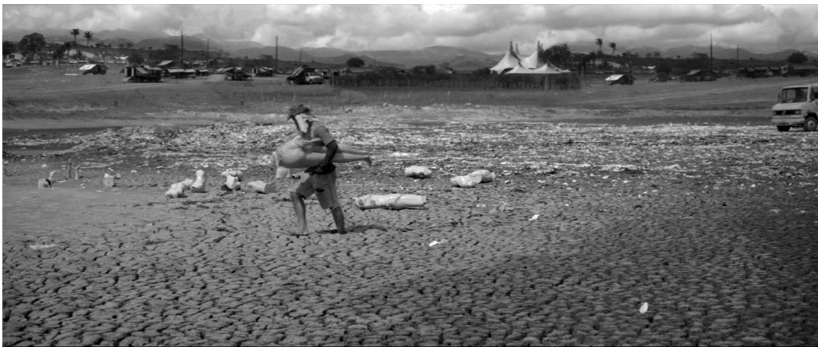


Fig. 39. Iremar (Juliano Cazarré) sifting through the leftovers from the *vaquejada* (Brazilian rodeo). Film still from Gabriel Mascaro, *Boi Neón* (*Neon Bull*) 2015, 101 min.

next. Galega, in her spare time when she is not cooking for the crew or looking after her young daughter Cacá, moonlights as a go-go dancer, dressing up in a pair of boots ending in horse hoofs and wearing an eerily realistic horse mask on her head ending in a blond mane not unlike her own. In a fashion almost too literal to be true, the body offering itself to our gaze and that of the cowboy audience in the film is that of a horse-woman, a she-mare—the centauresque opposite and mirror image of "Lady Di," the prize mare who is auctioned off at the same festival to turquoise stage lighting and cheesy, romantic background music, having been coiffed for the occasion by similarly blond-maned horse hairdresser Valquíria (Abigail Pereira).

The ruinous, apocalyptic universe of landscapes devastated by strip mining and monocrop agro-industries through which *Boi Neón*'s small cast of characters (human and animal) navigate has turned its back on the social and political geographies of the nation prevalent in previous instances of Brazilian Cinema Novo. Here these only appear as vestiges and remainders, as in the rocks painted with ocean waves amid the dusty plain, promoting a nearby beachwear outlet—all that is left now of popular mystic Antônio Conselheiro's prophecy that the "Desert will turn into the Sea and the Sea into the Desert," revisited in Glauber Rocha's 1964 landmark film *Deus e o Diabo na Terra to Sol* (*Black God, White Devil*). Filmic space is "off the map" and can no longer be placed in relation to the cartographies of the nation and its narratives, though vestiges of these abound—not least in the spectacle of the cattle rodeos to which the characters travel, full of glitzy evocations of cowboy manliness and of a bygone, rural golden age that is constantly belied by the dirty, unheroic backstage labor of cleaning, feeding, and preparing the oxen for the show. Men, women, and beasts live in intimate, even erotic closeness with one another because they also share the earthwide condition of precarity: in one sequence, Iremar and other cowherds hose off cows and horses outside the stable before they themselves shower inside; in another, Galega and the cowherd Júnior make love by a corral, next to the oxen lining up by the water trough. The "animalization" attributed to cinematic naturalism by Deleuze, which the film's characters experience as a day-to-day proximity and even an interchange of features with a host of animal bodies, imposes on Mascaro's film a syncopated rhythm of languishing takes interrupted by sudden discharges, a temporality governed not by a relation between the verbal sign and its confirmation by the sound image as in human-centered narrative cinema. The characters are indeed "like animals" (when they are not in effect animals) because their very language has ceased to be altogether human and opens toward other species, as in the huffing and grunting sounds the *vaqueiros* (cowboys) make to chase the cattle in and out of the corral. It is a language that relapses into the body and toward the dimension of haptic, physical encounters, dragging the camera along with it. In neoregionalist cinema, the making of the human subject in and through language, which in narrative cinema had also provided the gaze with orientation inside the image in terms of distinguishing foreground action from background context, is always at least potentially suspended through this brutalization of speech in which the body is becoming *infans* and the human makes way for the "human animal."

La mujer de los perros (*Dog Lady*, 2015) by Verónica Llinás and Laura Citarella offers a fascinating counterpoint to *Boi Neón* but also to *Serras da desordem*, insofar as it foregrounds—as does *Los Reyes* in the register of documentary—the sympoietic nature of the interspecies intimacies that arise in the *inmundo* as alliances of survival. In the film, Llinás plays a homeless woman living on the outer margins of Greater Buenos Aires in conditions of extreme precarity with the pack of dogs she has rescued from abandonment. Even more than in *Boi Neón*—where constant physical closeness had likewise incited forms of tenderness and reciprocity across species boundaries—the human-animal relation in *Dog Lady* comes across as a form of mutual care (fig. 40). The film portrays an economy of affects in which all partners have an equal stake: the woman shares with the dogs the food leftovers she scavenges and the water she collects in buckets and barrels around her makeshift shed, while the dogs help her hunt nutrias and foil in the meadows

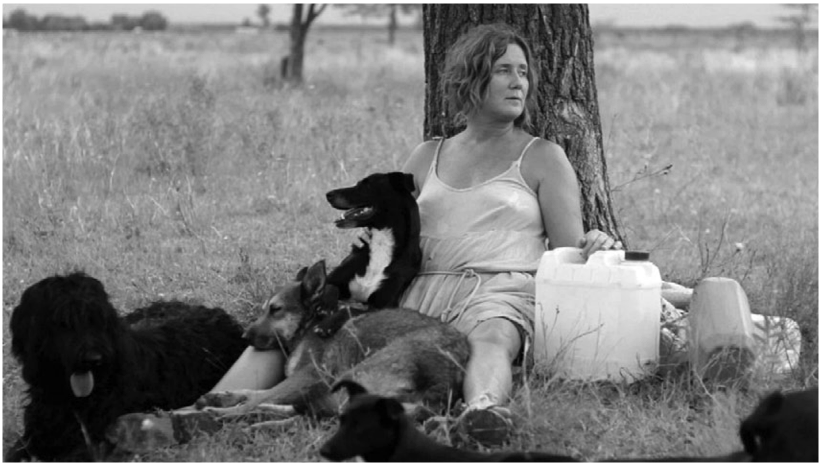


Fig. 40. The woman (Verónica Llinás) and her dogs providing shelter for one another. Film still from Laura Citarella/Verónica Llinás, *La mujer de los perros* (*Dog Lady*) 2015, 98 min.

nearby, as well as providing warmth and protection to the woman and each other through the cold and rainy seasons. Indeed, we could think of the film's woman-dogs assemblage as a holobiont or "safe and sound being," a term Donna Haraway borrows from evolutionary biologist Lynn Margulis. Rather than, as biologists had traditionally held, an economic relation of mutual benefits—a zero-sum game—we should think of holobionts as primarily an affective constellation, Haraway suggests. The idea of holobiont, she claims, "does not designate host + symbionts because all the players are symbionts to each other, in diverse kinds of relationalities and with varying degrees of openness to attachments and assemblages with other holobionts."[73]

Haraway's notion is intriguing since Llinás and Citarella's film seems to be oscillating between this sympoietic notion of radical horizontality—present for instance in a sequence in which the woman falls ill and is being cared for by the dogs who take turns at her bedside—and another more "vertical" understanding of the same relationship, in which mutual care for each other maintains woman and dogs in their places. In this second reading, it is the animals' gaze, with its charge of responsibility and confidence, that helps the woman hold on to her humanness, forcing her to maintain a rigorous discipline of self-care even in the most adverse of circumstances, always remaining busy repairing and safeguarding her little shelter against the hazards of the changing seasons. The animal gaze, paradoxically, also humanizes the woman, countering and unmaking the adverse effect of her animalization by the youths by the water fountain or the health workers at a medical office where the woman checks in on one of her visits to town, all of whom reduce her to the condition of an excedent, monstrous, abjected life—"una vieja bruja" (an old witch). In return, the woman also imposes order on the pack and keeps individual members out of harm's way—as when, in a particularly moving sequence, she prepares a makeshift set of leashes to tie up her pack and sits by an old, abandoned dog she finds agonizing near the edge of the wood.

Dog Lady also ties the question of infancy and of more-than-human alliances of survival back to the one of reenacted experience we considered at the outset of this section. In a way that is not altogether unlike the relationship between Carapiru and the Bahian villagers in *Serras da desordem*, the gestures of trust and affection between the woman and her dogs betraying a relation of intimacy is playing out in front of a camera a sympoiesis based on real experience. Just as, years before Tonacci made his film, the solitary Awá-Guajá warrior roaming the backlands had in fact been adopted into the village community (even without being able to "understand" each other's language), the canine characters of *Dog Lady* follow the lead actress around and respond to her and to each other's gestures because they are the dogs that Verónica Llinás, the codirector/actress, picked up from animal shelters. I am not, of course, attempting to equate Carapiru and the pack of dogs—rather, what I am after is a dimension of indeterminacy that is common to many of the films discussed here, where "real life" and its "reenactment" overlap yet also crucially differ from one another. Thus, the dogs in *Dog Lady* are certainly Verónica's animal companions yet are also those of the dog lady, the character she plays in the film. The dogs enter into the game their "lady" plays, perhaps—although who can be sure?—without fully understanding its rules. The dogs' actorship in *Dog Lady* (and also in *Los Reyes*) is an act of faith, a display of trust—yet it is also a game—an act of "playing," and of playing along to the actress's act as she "gets into character" and of keeping her company as she inhabits the wastelands and brownfields the film chooses as settings. And it is, we can imagine, precisely the renouncement of speech on behalf of the human symbiont that during the filming would have been the cue for the dogs to follow her into the world of fiction, of playacting. By withholding her voice—the same which, we can assume, would have been "calling by their names" the dogs in a context of everyday conviviality, placing them in the territorial and species-distinctive order that in the film is restricted to the domestic (acousmatic) dogs barking from the other side of a garden fence—Llinás also grants her dogs the freedom to roam the space of fiction on their own terms and to respond to her gestures "in character" in ways that may or may not be those of real life. Indeed, gesture and play turn out to be in the end the "common form"—to use Gabriel Giorgi's expression—humans as well as nonhumans have recourse to imagine a becoming with, a mode of community as survival alliance.[74] Sympoiesis is a form of reenactment of community that playfully invents new functions and assemblages for modes of expression that have lost their communicative meanings. But it is also a form of embodied storytelling—of making history extend beyond the human.

FALLING SKIES: EXTRACTIVISM, MEMORY, AND MATTER

The forest—*uhiri*—says the shaman, does not grow for no reason. It is where, at the beginning of time after the old sky *Hutukara* fell and its flesh and skin became the earth on which we now live, Omama placed *në rope*, the value or principle of all that grows, whose image has danced by the Yanomami's side ever since, accompanied by her noisy troop of bird *xapiri*, the animal ancestor spirits that announce her coming. At the beginning, when the forest was still young, there were only humans on the new earth but eventually many of them would turn into peccaries, deer, agoutis, and turtles, and "it is ancestors turned other that we hunt and eat today . . . the images that we bring down and make dance as *xapiri* are their form of ghosts. These are their real hearts and true inner parts. And so these animal ancestors from the beginning of time have not disappeared. They have become the game that lives in the forest, but their ghosts also continue to exist."[75] Animal bodies are but the multiple metamorphoses of a shared human essence, the ancestral embodiments of which continue to visit the shaman in dreams, when he himself becomes *xapiripë* and is dis- and reassembled so that from his throat the true words can rise. The forest, in fact, has the form of a crystal where bodily appearances and spiritual essences—including those shattered fragments of the fallen sky that continue to live underground and that whites call minerals—intermingle and watch one another both through their ghost and their real or spirit eyes: "Wherever human beings live, the forest is populated with animal spirits . . . The animals we hunt only move through the parts of the forest where the mirrors and paths of their ancestors' images that become *xapiri* are. [White people] must think the soil and the mountains are placed there without reason and that the forest is just a great quantity of trees. But the shamans know it belongs to the *xapiri* and that it is made of their countless mirrors! There are far more *xapiri* than humans in the forest, and all its other inhabitants know them!"[76] This is why, to speak truly, in *hereamuu* mode, the shaman elder must begin by naming the "old forests where his fathers and grandfathers lived as . . . they came down from the highlands" and eventually also "recall the time of the *yarori* animal ancestors."[77] What the whites call politics, the shaman says, "for us is something else. It is the words of Omama and those of the *xapiri*, our elders' *hereamuu* speeches, and our feasts' *wayamuu* and *yãimuu* talks."[78] This, he concludes, is why "our memory is long and strong . . . Our words are ancient and numerous. They are the words of our ancestors . . . We do not need to draw them, like the white people do with theirs . . . for they remain fixed inside us."[79]

I have been quoting at some length from *The Falling Sky*, a series of stories and reflections by the Yanomami shaman and activist Davi Kopenawa translated and edited for print by French anthropologist Bruce Albert, for the insights it offers us into the forest as an amalgamated living entity. More than a mere "environment," the forest is itself agitated: it is "vibrant matter" animated by multiple layers and modalities of past being, which must be engaged by way of their recall or literally their (re)presentation in the shamanic trance. Shamanic invocation of these ancestral layers that continue to sustain the living forest is first and foremost a politics of memory, a translational exercise that allows the Yanomami to stay on diplomatic terms with the more-than-human in the forest's complex *cosmopoliteia*. The forest, just as much as it is a spatial entity, a territory, is also an interface or a crystallization of temporal layers, a mnemonic ecology; Kopenawa says, "the words of 'ecology' are our ancient words, those Omama gave our ancestors at the beginning of time."[80] Kopenawa, as Peter Gow points out, "knows this because the forest comes to his home to tell him." In *The Falling Sky*, he argues, "things are not spoken about, *they* speak. The central character in this book is *uhiri*, 'the forest,' which Kopenawa is clear is not the Yanomami equivalent of our notions of nature or the environment, but rather a livable world for the Yanomami people."[81] How, I ask, can we bring this shamanic forest memory into conversation with the politics of memory in Latin America as these have been constellated over the last half-century by experiences of dictatorial state terrorism and prolonged civil war, forced displacement and ethnic cleansing at the hands of counterinsurgency states and paramilitary actors?

Indeed, my wager here is to bring *The Falling Sky* in dialogue with two canonic genres of political memory in Latin America: on the one hand, the witnessing—in survivors' accounts but also in verbal, visual, and architectural forms of monumentalization—of the dictatorial state's clandestine (yet not therefore less "public") system of abducting, torturing, and killing suspected "subversives" and, on the other, the Indigenous or peasant *testimonios* of community suffering and resistance against structural violence unleashed by counterinsurgency warfare. How, I ask, can Kopenawa's memories of extractivism—of mining and agro-induced land grabs, massacres, and the wiping out of entire villages by epidemics but also of the turmoil unleashed in the forest's fragile equilibrium of embodied as well as spiritual temporalities—be heard in a cultural, political, and juridical field that has so far been configured exclusively around the notion of "human rights"? As Idelber Avelar has noted, the "primacy of the human and the exclusivity of the human species as the only subject of rights" has lately come under criticism from the proponents of *buen vivir* (in Quechua, *sumak kawsay*) in the context, for example, of constitutional debates in Ecuador and Bolivia and of the struggle against open-sky mining, oil and gas prospecting, and hydroelectric megadams in the Andes and Amazonia.[82] In the same vein, I want to suggest, if the horizon of life on a planetary scale is now increasingly one of "becoming extinction," shamanic forest memories such as Kopenawa's may be our best bet yet to return the politics of memory to the center of public struggles as the memories of the victims of state terrorism and Indigenous and peasant *testimonios* had done in the aftermath of dictatorship and counterinsurgency wars. In listening to shamanic forest memory, can we return agency and presence in the public arena to those humans and more-than-humans the advancing extractivist matrix of late liberalism is making disappear, in the same way political memory had done to the disappeared of state terrorism?

Human rights memory in Latin America had already come under fire from a different angle in the wake and aftermath of the millennium, as biopolitical critiques emerged under the conceptual umbrella of the "postdictatorship." Rather than as a monstrous and unprecedented interruption of democratic continuity, these critiques recast state terrorism as a mode of reconfiguring the social as a state of permanent exception that could usher in the neoliberal "transition'"—in other words, as the ongoing foundation and horizon of the political. Yet the cycle of neoextractivism triggered by the global commodity boom of the 1990s and 2000s—around the same time that challenges to the Washington Consensus opened up a new threshold for progressive politics in Latin America that became known as the "Pink Tide"—also contained this biopolitical critique of the neoliberal transitions within the limits of the contemporary regime of governance that anthropologist Elizabeth Povinelli calls "geontopower."[83] Geontopower, as pointed out earlier, characterizes a mode of sovereignty founded not so much on the decision to make live or let die—the domain of Foucauldian biopower—but rather on the fundamental separation between life and nonlife. Even as the effects of anthropogenic climate change, ocean acidification, or chemical residues of the mining and pharmaceutical industries "take us to the increasingly unavoidable entanglements of Life and Nonlife in contemporary capitalism,"[84] Povinelli argues, the sovereign people of geontopower are those who continue to abide by their ongoing separation, even if they accept the need to recompense those Indigenous "animists" who, for reasons of "cultural difference," can claim exemption from the geontological doxa. For Povinelli, "what is sovereign is the division of Life and Nonlife as the fundamental ground of the governance of difference and markets. Where Indigenous people agree to participate as an Animist voice in the governmental order of the people they are included as part of this sovereign people. Where they do not, they are cast out."[85] Thus, for instance, during the cycle of the Pink Tide, at the same time as Brazil's federal government under Dilma Rousseff finally forced the military to acknowledge human rights violations committed under the dictatorship, it also rammed through congress the Belo Monte project of a hydroelectric megadam, with disastrous ecological and human consequences in the Alto Xingú, the very same region where some of the most abhorrent massacres committed by the armed forces had occurred. Such tensions speak eloquently to the geontological foundation of national-popular developmentalism in Latin America as well as to the difficulties of human rights memory and biopolitical critiques alike to challenge its basic assumptions and to avoid conscription into the geontological consensus.

Critiques of extractivism emerged in Latin America as a result of the fracture, around the millennium, of the contingent "resource-radical" alliances that had united peasant and Indigenous activists with miners' unions and urban residents struggling with exorbitant tariffs. Yet policies under the Pink Tide renationalizing of primary resources, combined with a massive hike in demand for commodities, especially from China, effectively entailed what economists refer to as the "reprimarización," or primary resource dependency, of the region,[86] bringing about "further fiscal dependency on the extraction and export of natural resources and, in many cases, a territorial expansion of the extractive frontier, subjecting Indigenous communities to displacement and fragile ecosystems to contamination."[87] Postextractivism, as a critical discourse and as activist practice, diverged from neodevelopmentalism in aiming not at maximizing revenue to create conditions for the leap toward autonomous industrialization but rather at a societal transformation, fostering "a life that puts the self-sufficiency and self-management of human beings who live in communities at the core of its existence."[88] In this view, extractivism is found to be the fundamental fact subtending a modern-colonial as well as racialized world capitalism based on a predatory relation to the living: "the reproduction of capital can only take place if it destroys human beings to the same extent as nature," in the words of Ecuadorian philosopher Bolívar Echeverría.[89] Postextractivist critique, then, in the way it seeks to counterpose the "good life"—as "a life-system based on the communion of beings (human and otherwise) and nature"[90]—to the destructive impulses of extractivism, enters into productive but also controversial dialogue not just with geontology (i.e., the critique of late-liberal sovereignty as grounded in the divide between life and nonlife) but also with Capitalocene theory, for which capitalism does "not act *upon* nature but develop through the web of life."[91] For Capitalocene theory, it is not the destruction but rather the constant production of nature (including human work or energy) as appropriable resource outside the commodity system that is the condition of successive regimes of accumulation. Shamanic forest memory, I argue, in its capacity to summon and gather multiple kinds of existents, also hints at a way in which we might articulate postextractivist critiques with geontology and Capitalocene theory.

A final element I want to bring into my discussion of shamanic forest memory as a memory of extractivism is Rob Nixon's notion of "slow violence." The concept alerts us to a representational difficulty shared by human rights memory, among others, to account for "the long dyings" unleashed by extractivism, the violence of which, according to Nixon, "is neither spectacular nor instantaneous, but rather incremental and accretive, its calamitous repercussions playing out across a range of temporal scales."[92] Because slow violence—including long-term medical conditions, genetic modifications, and species extinctions caused by resource extraction and industrial pollution—often takes effect only over decades or even generations and across spatial extensions far beyond the original source, it does not conform to an idea of violence as a sudden, radical alteration inflicted on individual bodies and places, such as murder, mutilation, rape, or carpet bombing. Yet this difficulty also calls attention to the way slow violence operates as a mode of representation insofar as it engages in not only "a struggle for crude, material dominance but also (threaded ever closer into that struggle) a battle for the control over appearances."[93] The problem, in short, is not that slow violence is invisible but rather that it is constantly and actively erased from modern apparatuses of representation. Slow violence "creates and sustains the conditions of administered invisibility" that result in the production of "unimagined communities."[94] Extractivism, Nixon argues, is also a mode of representation that incessantly manufactures emptiness and renders native communities of resource-rich areas (humans as well as more-than-humans) into "virtual uninhabitants,"[95] whose statistical removal precedes and makes possible their always already imminent physical disappearance.

I have sketched out the wider political and conceptual frame of enunciation in Latin America—which, I suspect, could at least in part be extended to the Global South at large—between the proxy effects of the Cold War and the present, neoextractivist scramble for resources, to better understand the wager of Kopenawa and Albert's project of translational activism. *The Falling Sky*, we can now see, is in fact a constant balancing act, a slipping in and out of character, which counteracts how the Yanomami are unimagined into virtual uninhabitants of the forest by developmentalist resource nationalism—to say nothing of the unabashedly genocidal racism of the Bolsonaro regime that has succeeded it in Brazil—by seemingly "agreeing to participate as an Animist voice in the governmental order" of geontopower.[96] Kopenawa, in other words, skillfully wields his shamanic credentials to get a hearing in the courts of geontological sovereignty: "I am a shaman and I see all these things with the *yãkoana* and by dreaming. My *xapiri* spirits never remain still . . . Through their words, I can understand all the things of the forest."[97] Yet, in a bold and cunning move, Kopenawa also claims that the very same "spirits" who thus authenticate and authorize his own "animistic" representation of them in the courts of geontology also foreclose any space of negotiation this speech act might open: "They constantly make words grow in me, words that refuse to open our forest to the white people."[98] Having been granted a hearing, as animist or interpreter of "primitive beliefs," Kopenawa immediately renounces—in fulfillment of his "representative" mandate on behalf of the *xapiri* spirits—the logic of "compensation" to which his voicing of the character of the animist would have entitled him:

> I do not know how to make *accounts* like they do . . . All the white people's merchandise will never be enough to exchange for [the forest's] trees, fruits, animals, and fish . . . Everything that grows and moves in the forest or under the waters, as well as all the *xapiri* and human beings, has a value far too *important* for the white people's merchandise and money. Nothing is solid enough to restore the sick forest's value. No merchandise can *buy* all the human beings devoured by the epidemic fumes. No money will be able to return to the spirits their dead fathers' value.[99]

The point here is not just that money cannot bring the dead back to life (and even less restore their earthly dwellings to the spirits orphaned from their human and more-than-human hosts). Rather, the all too obvious absurdity of such an equation points to a deeper problem concerning the limits of translatability between different orders of being. When Kopenawa says "What we call *xawara* are measles, flu, malaria, tuberculosis, and all those other white people diseases that kill us to devour our flesh,"[100] he does not mean that *xawara* is the Yanomami name for infectious diseases brought to the forest by whites nor that it is the "animistic" form in which the Yanomami imagine what is really the work of different viral agents. Rather, while fully conscious that a measles epidemic, which had wiped out almost his entire family, was triggered by Protestant missionaries unaware that their daughter had caught a virus infection, and that his own near-fatal tuberculosis resulted from sharing a room with a gravely ill person at a FUNAI outpost, Kopenawa also insists that, in dreams, he has seen "the image of the epidemic beings, the *xawarari* . . . They are the *tʰokori* beings of the cough, which slit our throats and chests, and the *xuukari* diarrhea beings, which devour our guts, but also the *tuhrenari* nausea beings, the *waitarori* scraggliness beings, and the *hayakorari* weakness beings."[101] These beings "look like white people, with their clothes, their glasses and their hats" and "live in houses overflowing with merchandise and food, like gold prospector camps."[102] They thrive in places where goods, food, and amenities abound and travel in the white people's footsteps and aboard their machines: “They come to settle in our houses like invisible guests by escorting the white people’s objects. Merchandise has the value of *xawara* epidemic.”[103] Just as the *xapiri*, as anthropologist Eduardo Viveiros de Castro explains, are not representations of animals’ real, humanoid spirit bodies as opposed to their only apparent material ones but rather “non-representational images, ‘representatives’ that are not representations” and therefore point toward “the disjunctive synthesis which connects-separates the actual and the virtual, the discrete and the continuous,”[104] so the *xawarari* are not the “true,” essential representations of measles, tuberculosis, and so forth. Rather, they mark out a zone of “disjunctive synthesis,” an area of indiscernibility that is accessible only to shamanic becoming-other and where the cosmo-logical (or world-historical) struggles of what manifests itself on a different level of being as medical emergencies, are being played out.

What Kopenawa—and Bruce Albert, his anthropological editor-collaborator—aim for in *The Falling Sky* is a form of cultural translation that eschews the logic of equivalence (which, in the discursive regime of geontological sovereignty, grants a limited form of citizenship to the “animistic” other) and rather tries to force open a space of disjunctive synthesis as its own arena of negotiation across cultural and linguistic boundaries. This arena of negotiation is also akin to the one the Yanomami themselves have carved out to deal with the various classes of otherness—human, animal, and spirit—with which they share the forest. *The Falling Sky*, more than an autobiography or eyewitness account yet also more than a book of shamanic teachings, enacts an Indigenous cosmopolitics, an experimental diplomacy that uses the “paper skin” to invite us into a new and radical form of agreement. Even though the success of the operation may not be unanimous throughout, we cannot but admire Kopenawa’s acute awareness of the difficulties involved in “talking to white people,”[105] as well as his courage in facing these head-on. If learning the “good speech”—*hereamuu*—is among the Yanomami a central aspect of the lifelong formation of shamans, who have to call on certain animal ancestors and on the memories of community elders passed on to them, to keep alive the history of the village as interwoven with the larger, cosmic history of the forest world, the catastrophic impact of white society’s advance into Yanomami territory—in particular the Roraima gold rush of the 1980s—meant that Kopenawa “had to learn to discourse in front of outsiders when [he] was very young.”[106] That is, long before he had learned the basic skills and acquired the spirit powers necessary for "speaking well," Kopenawa decided, he says, "to make [white people] hear the thoughts of the forest inhabitants and speak to them firmly all the way into their own cities. I was angry. I did not want my people to continue dying, devoured by their *xawara* epidemics."[107] Talking to white people, then, is an emergency measure, which presents a double challenge to a Yanomami: to address the catastrophe that has befallen his people, he cannot draw on the truth value of accumulated experience that guides *hereamuu* speech, yet he nevertheless needs to mobilize this spirit power to make his words persuasive. In talking to white people, he will have to both "translate" and "reinvent" *hereamuu*, turning a mode of cultural memory into a way of addressing a moment that is radically new in kind.

On returning to his work at FUNAI and beginning to travel the country as a spokesperson for his people, Kopenawa begins to master the almost impossible task of speaking to white people in *hereamuu* thanks to a twofold learning experience. On the one hand, he starts attending gatherings of the Union of the Indigenous Nations, as well as community events of neighboring native people, during which a new, political and public voice emerges, in the construction of which Kopenawa takes an active part. On the other hand, and while he learns the white people's language and travels to their cities, Kopenawa also continues his apprenticeship as a young shaman and, when drinking the *yākoana* (hallucinogenic snuff), starts being visited by "the white people ancestors' *napënapëri* spirits" as well as those of the animal ancestors who were already trading with them at the beginning of time, and eventually "*Remori* and *Porepatari*'s images placed their spirit larynx into my throat so I could imitate the white people's talk . . . They put their *napënapëri* ancestors' language into me. If I had been alone, I would never have been able to make speeches in this outsiders' language!"[108] What Kopenawa sketches out here is nothing less than a theory of "narrative transculturation," to borrow Angel Rama's notion, which likewise attempted to conceptualize a mobilization of "traditional" modes of storytelling to convey a radically new experience—the advance of the modern-capitalist extractive frontier on the "traditional" lifeworlds of the provincial interior.[109] But Kopenawa's transculturating practice, improvised on the hoofs of a catastrophic moment of emergency, also goes further than the mid–twentieth-century literatures Rama has in mind since it does not bring its constitutive "disjunctive synthesis" into the formal cohesion of a genre such as the novel or the autobiography but, on the contrary, leaves it in suspension as a space of enunciation that is akin to shamanic practice itself and thus also one where a Yanomami voice can be heard. As Viveiros de Castro explains:

> If shamanism is essentially a cosmic diplomacy devoted to the translation between ontologically disparate points of view, then Kopenawa's discourse is not just a narrative on particular shamanic *contents*—namely, the spirits which the shamans make speak and act—it is a shamanic *form* in itself, an example of shamanism in action, in which a shaman speaks about spirits to Whites and equally about Whites on the basis of spirits, and both these things through a White intermediary.[110]

Viveiros de Castro's observations on the mediated character of *The Falling Sky* are important since—as Bruce Albert makes clear in his editorial postscript—the narrative's first person, more than an autobiographical subject-witness is really a conduit for an intensely intersubjective process. The text was not just the outcome of successive recording sessions of Kopenawa's storytelling, transcribed and edited by Albert as well as subsequently "proofread" together at the village of Watoriki, it also included other Yanomami participant-listeners (such as Kopenawa's father-in-law and shamanic mentor) and, last but not least, also "embod[ied] the voices of many shamanic 'images' of animal ancestors and cosmological beings."[111] "The message—as Gow puts it—has been very clearly thought through and is presented in a form of language far removed from those of normal Yanomami speech,"[112] which, as it enters the global public arena in the objectual and institutional shape of a "book," also puts *The Falling Sky* in conversation with the field of political memory.

But important differences also complicate the text's inscription into this field. On the one hand, just as the testimonial voices of victims of clandestine imprisonment and torture under the military dictatorships and just as the Indigenous or peasant witnesses of counterinsurgency warfare, the first person of *The Falling Sky* is that of a survivor of violent acts against a much larger community. Just as the one of *testimonio*, moreover, his is also a mediated voice, at the same time as the collaborative and consensual terms of this mediation exemplify a mode of transcultural exchange based not on violent coercion but on values of solidarity and mutuality, which the narrative offers as an example of the political and activist response it exhorts us to give as readers-turned-secondary witnesses. Indeed, many of the survivor memories of intellectuals-activists abducted and imprisoned by the dictatorships in Brazil and the Southern Cone also draw, just as does the shaman-narrator, on particular knowledges and skills to move from their own individual suffering to the level of a collective experience: architecture and draftsmanship in Chilean urbanist Miguel Lawner's account of his journey through the detention and torture camps of Pinochet; literary storytelling in Argentine Nora Strejlevich's novel *Una sola muerte numerosa* (A single multiple death, 1997); and video installation and performance in the work of Argentine visual artist Julieta Hanono, to mention just a few. Just as these camp survivors find in aesthetics a way of moving from personal experience to an impersonal, or better, transpersonal knowledge, shamanic practice is for Kopenawa—who more than once compares it explicitly to book-based study and learning—a way of introducing into his narrative account of personal and collective sufferings a second, analytical point of view. The visions and messages conveyed by the *xapiri* also offer insight into the "mechanisms and technologies of repression" insofar as they "reveal the nature of power itself,"[113] to quote from Argentine sociologist and camp survivor Pilar Calveiro's seminal analysis of the Argentine dictatorship's concentrationary apparatus.

Shamanic forest memory, deploying the tools of critique proper to Yanomami epistemology, effectively turns in the hands of Kopenawa into an analytic of the rationality of extractivism. It becomes a way of understanding the ultimate, cosmo-political purpose of the interplay between armed violence, germs, and merchandise that materializes in the convoluted image of the *xawarari*. The use of memory (which, let us recall, is also paramount to the capacity of *hereamuu*) does not just demand the recognition of past sufferings but, much more urgently, is the condition for understanding the designs for the present and future of the community that past violence already held in store. In this way, with the help of the *xapiri*—that is, in putting to work the virtual multiplicity of *xapiripë*, the space and time of indiscernibility activated in the shamanic trance—Kopenawa is able to develop the critical systematicity that he brings to the analysis of extractive capitalism as it enters and transforms the *cosmopoliteia* of the living forest. In this process of thrusting a world into turmoil, of ushering in what I have been calling *inmundo*, or the unworld, white people are but the mindless instruments of the *xawarari*'s plottings, while it is the more-than-human forces unleashed by their foolish actions that are the real—or maybe we should say the hyperreal—actors on this cosmic stage:

> The things that white people work so hard to extract from the depths of the earth, minerals and *oil*, are not foods. These are evil and dangerous things, saturated with coughs and fevers . . . The forest is the flesh and skin of our earth, which is the back of the old sky *Hutukara* that fell in the beginning of time. The metal *Omama* hid in its soil is its skeleton, which the forest surrounds in its humid coolness. These are our *xapiri*'s words, which the white people do not know. That is why these outsiders continue relentlessly digging the earth like giant armadillos . . . they do not think they will be contaminated like we are. They are wrong . . . Having become ghost during my sleep, I also saw the white people working with these minerals. They tore out and scraped big blocks of them with their machines to make pots and tools. Yet they did not seem to realize that these fragments of the old sky were dangerous! They did not know that the thick yellowish fumes emanated from them are a powerful epidemic smoke that thrusts like a weapon to kill those who come near and breathe it.[114]

At the same time as, in the way it alternates between first-person remembrance and self-removal (by way of dreams and of *yãkoana*-induced trance), it echoes some of the discursive strategies of postdictatorship memory in Brazil and the Southern Cone, Kopenawa and Albert's text also dialogues with the enunciative structures of *testimonio* as defined, among others, by accounts of guerrilla struggle in Central America such as the ones we studied in chapter 1 but also by Indigenous and peasant life accounts. In *The Falling Sky*, just as in Indigenous women's life narratives such as the *testimonios* of Guatemalan Rigoberta Menchú or Bolivian Domitila Barros de Chungara, the first person produced in the interplay with the non-Indigenous mediator is only a vehicle through which experiences of not only the narrator but also other members of the community, which is the real protagonist, can be channeled.

Yet, as we have seen, unlike Rigoberta's and Domitila's testimonial voices that assume this collective speech act thanks to their political status as activists, Kopenawa's speech is also a transculturated form of *hereamuu* or more-than-human forest memory as mobilized by the shaman. Shamanic forest memory further radicalizes *testimonio*'s generic challenge to the conventions of auto*bio*graphical writing, since it refuses to abide by the geontological divide between life and nonlife and instead gives expression to what Anna Tsing calls the "polyphonic assemblage" of human and nonhuman worldmaking projects.[115] If, as Donna Haraway has suggested, "to renew the biodiverse powers of terra is the sympoietic work and play of the Chthulucene," a term aiming to think our present living and dying together that "unlike either the Anthropocene or the Capitalocene . . . is made up of ongoing multispecies stories and practices of becoming-with,"[116] how can such narrative community be put in effect today and how can it begin to gather communities of mourning in an act of political memory work in the present? Shamanic forest memory, I contend, effectively calls on the "chthonic ones [as] beings of the earth, both ancient and up-to-the-minute," to the effect that "human beings are not the only important actors . . . with all other beings able simply to react. The order is reknitted: human beings are with and of the earth, and the biotic and abiotic powers of this earth are the main story."[117] Yet how can this narrative's summoning of the chthonic ancestors as conarrators be brought into the arena of political memory, challenging its own geontological bias, its fixation up until now with the human? And conversely, can we really draw on the memory struggles of state terrorism survivors and their relatives as well as those of the Central and South American counterinsurgency wars to devise a politics of memory for the more-than-human disappearances and the forms of slow violence coming to the fore in our own present?

In a lecture originally given in 2011 under the title "The Equivalence of Catastrophes: After Fukushima," Jean-Luc Nancy argues that, once technologies such as the civil and military use of nuclear fusion, deep-sea drilling, or the transgenic modification of crops and animals have irrevocably enmeshed social and political issues with geophysical phenomena, "natural catastrophes are no longer separable from their technological, economic, and political implications or repercussions."[118] We can no longer distinguish between natural disasters and historical catastrophes, says Nancy, given that the new regime of radical immanence under which we now live has not only put to rest the concept of nature but also that of the human itself as at least partly removed from the natural realm. What can no longer be sustained, Nancy claims, is a notion of the human as the subject of judgment, as invested with critical self-consciousness and thus capable of transcending its own subjection to the realm of *physis* and of imposing its will on it. None of this persists since rather than being confronted with a world image that surges in front of and around us—a land and sea to be scaped—we now find ourselves immersed in the maelstrom of "a generalized transformability that, at the same time, does not provide the unity of some principle or law of transformation, but that on the contrary never ceases diversifying and multiplying the modalities, directions, causalities of all forms of transformation, transport, transposition, or transmutation."[119] In this liquefied unworld into which the human dissolves, the true catastrophe—still according to Nancy—is the impossibility of attributing a tragic dimension to ongoing and comprehensive de-formation. We can no longer address, he argues, the intolerable pain and suffering that such unworlding brings about by drawing on the idea of the incommensurable, which had once provided the abysmal horizon of tragic meaning. Orphaned from the latter's threshold of (negative) transcendence, which nonetheless still upheld and reinstated the presence of the divine amid despair over earthly loss, "we are being exposed to a catastrophe of meaning."[120]

If, indeed, tragic *katastrophein* ("overturning" in Greek), in its abysmal opening toward the incommensurable, also reaffirmed the subject's founding tension between determination and transcendence and thus allowed to reinscribe pain and defeat in the continuity of a narrative time open toward a meaning yet to appear, the catastrophe of radical immanence only points to a loss that is incalculable. This is because, paradoxically, due to the very same "generalized transformability" to which *bios* and *geos* have likewise become subject, "the regime of general equivalence henceforth virtually absorbs, well beyond the monetary or financial sphere but thanks to it and with regard to it, all the spheres of existence of humans, and along with them all the things that exist."[121] Catastrophe here no longer refers to the tension between individual will and cosmic forces, which the human subject could still inhabit as the origin and addressee of tragic meaning. Instead of the incommensurable as tragic harbinger of a meaning yet to emerge, the incalculable ushers in an infinite metonymic chain of mutant equations devoid of any ultimate meaning or reason:

> Marx uttered more than the principle of mercantile exchange: He uttered the principle of a generalized reabsorption of all possible values into this value that defines equivalence, exchangeability, or convertibility of all products and all forces of production . . . This is the law of our civilization. The incalculable is calculated as general equivalence. This also means that the incalculable is calculation itself.[122]

This annihilation of meaning, Nancy claims, was ushered into the world under the names of Auschwitz and Hiroshima, both of which refer to "a crossing of limits . . . the limits of existence and of a world where humanity exists, that is, where it can risk sketching out, giving shape to meaning."[123] Ushering in does not imply here a relation of temporal succession but one of rupture, since the radically new dimension of this "unworld after the end" is unlike anything that came before it. The rupturing of time opens the space for infinite, incalculable equivalence: "what Fukushima adds to Hiroshima is the threat of an apocalypse that opens onto nothing, onto the negation of the apocalypse itself."[124]

The end of the human, for Nancy, is concomitant with the end of the world—the same idea already sketched out by Lyotard in his meditations on the landscape form discussed earlier in this chapter. But if the threat looming on our horizon—"looming so as to abolish our horizon, or any horizon," as Timothy Morton puts it[125]—is indeed thrusting us today into a horizonless unworld where neither our distinctiveness as humans nor the worldliness of world hold up any longer, do we necessarily have to think of this moment as an apocalypse opening onto nothing, as Nancy claims? Is the radical immanence into which we—whoever this we might be—find ourselves thrown only imaginable as the nonevent of infinite and incalculable equivalence, in the absence of any transcendental referent that might invest this space with meaning? Or is this, as Morton urges us to consider, rather the moment "of something beginning . . . of discovering yourself *inside of something*" such that we would finally "have the prospect of forging new alliances between humans and non-humans alike, now that we have stepped out of the cocoon of *world*"?[126]

None other is indeed the suggestion of Donna Haraway for whom "making oddkin" ("the colloquial term for other-than-conventional biogenetic relatives") is the only way in which a "people of the Chthulucene" can still be imagined to emerge. In Haraway's words,

> it is past time to practice better care of kinds-of-assemblages (not species one at a time). Kin is an assembling sort of word. All critters share a common "flesh," literally, semiotically, and genealogically. Ancestors turn out to be very interesting strangers: kin are unfamiliar (outside what we thought of was family or gens), uncanny, haunting, active.[127]

Haraway's "geostories" of extractivist slow violence in Latin America and the Global South, as brought to us, say, by Kopenawa, Albert, and the journeying *xapiri* of the shamanic trance, in their contradictory yet also close interwovenness with the *longue durées* of colonialism as well as the contemporary histories of dictatorship and counterinsurgency wars in the region, make us see more clearly than Nancy's reflections on the impossible yet also inevitable thinking together of Auschwitz and Fukushima, that the political question posed by this intersection of temporalities is one not of equivalence but of kinship, of making oddkin. It is a question of "stringing together"—Haraway's term—the storytellings of "the two histories" between which, as Isabelle Stengers puts it, we find ourselves suspended today: storyings of the struggles of victims of state terror and counterinsurgency wars as well as of displaced people, women, Indigenous, and LGBTQ+ people for their "human rights," yet also of the "irruptions" of *uhiri*—or of Gaia, or the chthonic beings—as a consequence of the long-term ecological and geological impacts of deforestation, open-sky mining, oil and gas prospecting, or the transspecies consequences of proliferating epidemic agents. It is this new testimonial community (new to us non-Yanomami readers but also to Yanomami listeners who have never heard *hereamuu* or the voicing of the spirit-ancestors' advice deployed in such a fashion) into which, I argue, Kopenawa and Albert's book wants to invite us.

As Danowski and Viveiros de Castro remind us, the Indigenous peoples of the Americas are "veritable end-of-the-world experts" who "have a lot to teach us now that we are on the verge of a process in which the planet as a whole will become something like sixteenth-century America: a world invaded, wrecked, and razed by barbarian foreigners"[128]—invaded by "humans," to be precise, by that foreign species that continues to abide by the geontological division between life and nonlife and by the species boundary between the human and the nonhuman. But for these Indigenous storytellings to be heard beyond specific, disciplinary fields such as anthropology, and for their multispecies communities of memory and mourning to be heard in the arena of political memory, they will first need to be convoked and recognized—as oddkin, as uncanny yet oddly familiar relatives—by the memory communities that have preceded them. The (re)presentations of those whom dictatorial and paramilitary violence had absented from the space and time of the polis had always possessed a dimension of political entrancement, in materializing, through photographs, *siluetazos*, chantings, headscarves, and street parades, the absence of the disappeared and thus also turning this absence into a gathering space for emergent communities of resistance and mourning. They forced people to look and listen to the actively silenced and unseen of city and nation, to acknowledge its active yet also haunting and uncanny presence there. In a similar but perhaps even more difficult way, shamanic forest memory urges us today to acknowledge the presence within our own space and time (which for most of us readers tends to be located in the metropolitan center of command that appears remote from the extractive frontier), of the more-than-human assemblages called on to story the slow violence, the multiple unworldings, to which they have been subjected over time. A new kind of storyteller, of testimonial witness, says Stengers, is urgently needed today to account for such intersected yet not therefore analogous or equivalent experiences of survival at the end of time: "We need, we desperately need to fabricate such witnesses, such narratives, such celebrations. And above all we need what such witnesses, narratives, and celebrations can make happen: the experience that signals the achievement of new connections between politics and an experimental . . . production of a new capacity to act and think."[129] Shamanic forest memory, as a political memory of extractivist slow violence, extends an invitation for inventing, for stringing together, such experimental thought and action in the present. It is up to us in the end to listen and to act on what we are hearing.

Coda

Dense, thick, fibrous, enmeshed: there is no exact equivalent in English for *espesso*, the term João Cabral de Melo Neto, one of Brazil's great modernist poets, associates with the living in "O cão sem plumas" (The Dog without Feather, 1950), the first part of a poetic trilogy centered on the Rio Capibaribe, the river that meanders through the cane fields of his native Pernambuco until it meets the sea at Recife. Thomas Colchie, in his 1971 translation for the *Hudson Review*, settles for "heavy": "What is living is heavy / like a dog, a man / like that river. // The way everything real is heavy."[1] Although Colchie's solution is powerful in the way it evokes the burden life has to bear, it sacrifices the sensation of a thick, viscous, even deadly interconnectedness, which the Portuguese original implies, because "O que vive fere" ("what is living wounds") and "choca com o que vive" ("collides with what is living"): "Viver / é ir entre o que vive. // O que vive / incomoda de vida / o silêncio, o sono, o corpo" ("To live / is to go into what is living. // What is living / discommodes life's / silence, the sleep, the body").[2] Life is both heavy and prickly, both sharp and soft, it slices and seeps into other lives and into itself. Or life has no "itself" and thus also no other, and is at once inside and outside (as is the river in relation to the city). Life (human life, city life) is never alone; it always vibrates with the foreign bodies it carries within itself—migrant, animal, vegetal, bacterial, mineral bodies—lives the river carries in and out of the city and which also wash through and across a variety of bodies. Life inhabits us the way a stray dog inhabits the street: “A cidade é passada pelo rio / como uma rua / é passada por um cachorro” (“The city is entered by the river / the way a street / is entered by a mongrel”).[3] But then there is also no vantage point, no “poetic I” capable of surveying this mesh of organic and inorganic matter from the safely detached preserve of the mind. Because of life’s viscous, heavy stickiness, every “in itself” of beings and objects immediately unleashes and turns into the affect that “goes into” something else, in an unending series of interminglings with no unifying principle—no “Mother Nature”—other than this very contingency. This is also why, in Cabral’s *poème-fleuve*, there is no landscape, at least not in the conventional sense of the sensory perception of an exterior, material universe (*Umwelt*) on behalf of a subject of cognition that is therefore at least partially removed from this same plane of objectuality and materiality. Even though, nominally, the poem alternates between the “landscape of the Capibaribe” and the “discourse of the Capibaribe”—cinematographically speaking, between shots of the river from the city and reverse shots of the city from the river—in reality these games of perspective never really take hold because both river and city are bodies without organs. Neither is capable of “beholding” the other except through their mutual overspill into one another, their becoming city and becoming river. Instead of a landscape, predicated on the possibility of distinguishing a subject of perception from the thing it perceives, what we get in Cabral’s poem is more akin to a material assemblage of the kind new materialist thinker Jane Bennett has in mind, in which “each member and proto-member . . . has a certain vital force, but there is also an effectivity proper to the grouping as such: an agency *of* the assemblage.”[4]

In this book I have explored the notion of trance as an aesthetic relationship in which agent and object become intermingled, confused, to the point of indiscernibility. Trance is the harbinger of a world relationship where, instead of the detachment separating viewer from landscape, a suspension of boundaries takes place between bodies and minds allowing for mutual visitations, possessions, alliances, and contagions among living forms and their constituent materialities. Trance is a threshold ushering in what Michael Taussig calls “a yielding relation to the world, a mastery of non-mastery.”[5] It is not an easy or passive attitude but, as in the Ciudad Abierta of Amereida’s “return to not knowing,” one that requires effort, patience, and discipline: “Mastery of non-mastery is built on resistance to abstraction and tilts towards sensuous knowledge which perforce includes desublimation of the concept into body and image." It requires, as Taussig suggests quoting from Hegel's *Phenomenology*, "yielding to the very life of the object."[6]

Entranced Earth has interrogated Latin American aesthetic production of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries based on two assumptions: one, that decolonization in the arts, literature, and film, has come about as a moving away from landscape, in its character as an imperial and extractive form of relating to earth and the living, and a moving toward multiple "yieldings to the world" by way of the entrancement of aesthetic experience, in the course of which the latter and its bearer turn unspecific. And, second, that entrancement and unspecificity in the realm of the aesthetic also emerge as modes of addressing what I have been calling the *inmundo*—the real and ongoing event of unworlding that extractive-colonial capitalism has unleashed on the web of life and whose effects are most keenly felt in the "zone of submergence":[7] the strip-mined, deforested, pesticide-sprayed, megadammed, precariously housed, and monocrop-planted extractive frontiers of the Global South. By unspecificity, I am not referring only to the kinds of transdisciplinary practice employing and cross-fertilizing different kinds of aesthetic expression (such as theater and cinema, or poetry and photography) that have recently proliferated in Latin American art practice but which, as we have seen in chapters 3 and 4, have also been an important aspect of the process at least since the late 1960s. Rather, I am interested in the way these "transgressions and expansions of a variety of media and supports," as Florencia Garramuño puts it, "imagine diverse forms of inhabiting the world."[8] How, I have been asking, does unspecificity call into question the exclusively human purchase on aesthetic experience? Indeed, as I have discussed in the final sections of chapter 4, in the *inmundo* the human is itself but a standing reserve, a form of extractible work-energy, but this downgrading—which, as postextractivist critiques and Capitalocene theory alike remind us, has already been at work from the very onset of modern-colonial expansion—also has the unintended side effect of "enabling entanglements," in Anna Tsing's intriguing formulation.[9] Because (certain kinds of) humans partake in precarity as an earthwide condition, they also have no choice but to enter into novel kinds of alliances of survival with other forms of living and nonliving matter, which, as we have examined in Davi Kopenawa's and Bruce Albert's powerful memory work, draw on but also depart from, traditional Indigenous, Maroon, or peasant worldmakings. Extractivism's creative destruction leaves behind abandoned asset fields—yet "these places can be lively despite announcements of their death;

abandoned asset fields sometimes yield new multispecies and multicultural life."[10]

The point *Entranced Earth* has been making is that such entanglements always contain an aesthetic dimension. Aesthetics derives from the Greek αἰσθάνομαι (aisthanomai: "I perceive, feel, sense")—that is, from a relation in which selfness is always already bound with, indeed indiscernible from, the sensory experience of others. Aesthetic production is always relational and even symbiotic, as Donna Haraway has forcefully argued. Poiesis, the aesthetic function, she says, is never autopoietic or self-centered but rather "symchthonic, sympoietic, always partnered all the way down, with no starting and subsequently interacting 'units'"[11]—which is why Cabral's *The Dog without Feather*, like all great poems, is also at heart a reflection about poetry itself. What I am saying is that the arts can tell us a great deal about sympoietic worldmakings—not because they are removed from these, which would make it possible for us to grasp their structuring protocols from a position of critical exteriority, or at least the language games at play in our own (mis)understandings of them, as hermeneutic, poststructural, and deconstructive approaches have variously told us. My point has been exactly the opposite: because worldmakings are themselves sympoietic, each and every aesthetic event is also a worldmaking project—especially so whenever it allows itself to be entranced and to become unspecific, to enter into a yielding relation to the world.

This is what, in radically different ways, the transspecies free indirect speech of Horacio Quiroga and Graciliano Ramos and the "blind listening" of Francisco López's *La Selva*, the *phalènes* of the Amereida, and the ballast gardens of Maria Thereza Alves, are after: unspecificity is the forging of sympoietic worldings, regardless of whether it draws on a single mode of aesthetic expression or combines multiple media and forms of support. Indeed, unspecificity as yielding to the very life of the object can also stem from an effort of working at the very core of an aesthetic form such as poetic language, when words, prosody, and rhythm themselves turn into living matter. Let me explain this point by briefly returning to João Cabral, and by comparing his work to that of another great Latin American poet similarly obsessed with rivers as poetic earth beings, the Argentine Juan L. Ortiz.

Unlike Cabral, whose poetic engagements with the earthly and aquatic matter of Pernambuco over the course of a long diplomatic career were almost entirely written from afar, Ortiz only left his native Entre Ríos—a small Argentine province north of Buenos Aires, whose name derives from its geographical position squeezed between the Paraná and Uruguay rivers—for a short escape to France, just before the outbreak of World War I, and for a trip to China in 1957, the landscape art and poetry of which he profoundly admired. Except for a series of short impressions from his Chinese journey, Ortiz's entire poetic oeuvre could be read—just as Cabral's—as a single, uninterrupted meditation on the interplay of time, matter, and perception as manifest in the tension between river and earth, flow and place. Like the Capibaribe in its passage from the arid backlands of Pernambuco to the Atlantic coast for Cabral, the innumerable rivers and streams that cross Entre Ríos's estuarine landscape for Ortiz sustain a materialistic idea of language as itself alternating between the liquid and the solid, between flow and assertion, between vocals and consonants. A centerpiece of his oeuvre—just as the Capibaribe trilogy is for Cabral—is the long poem "El Gualeguay," first published in 1971 as part of the collection *En el aura del sauce* (In the aura of the willow tree), which made the reclusive poet's work up until that point available to a national audience and immediately established him as a leading voice of literary modernity in the region as well as of the Spanish language tout court.

The Gualeguay River, on the shores of which Ortiz was born and where he lived until moving to the provincial capital of Paraná in 1942, is an affluent of the Paraná River that runs across the entire territory of Entre Ríos from its northeastern to its southwestern limit, receiving, in the course of its trajectory, a host of minor affluents cutting through the *cuchillas* (rolling hills) that together form the geomorphology of the province. It is, indeed, a minor river—literally speaking, an *entre ríos*, a river between rivers—yet also a main axis of the network of water and sedimented earth that constantly makes and unmakes the space of Entre Ríos. Different from its more powerful neighbors, the Uruguay and the Paraná, which transcend the boundaries of nation and continent in their course from rainforest to ocean, the Gualeguay is an "intimate river,"[12] one that is born and dies (as, by implication, will its author and companion) within the province's confines. On one of its many levels, "El Gualeguay"—the first poem in Ortiz's work to address the river by name—is the writing of a "natural history" of Entre Ríos from its remote geological origins to a vaguely defined point in the final decades of the nineteenth century—that is, just before Ortiz's own birth in 1896, which is the moment the writing is striving toward, marked by the note "continua" (continues) added in parenthesis after the last line (the last word of which is "destino" [destiny]). The final parenthesis, in turn, refers us back to the one at the beginning of the text, immediately following the title: "Fragmento" (fragment). Like the river (which is born from the convergence of two minor affluents and merges into the Paraná Delta) the poem is open at both ends: of the announced but never completed continuation only a single line survives: "cuando el río me ahogue" (when the river shall drown me).[13] The impossible limit that writing is moving toward is the becoming one of the river and of the poet's own lifetime—or, better, of the river's material storyings of Entre Ríos through the ages and the time of its song, the moment when the latter will be submerged, drowned, to join the forward-moving stream. It is not so much death, or silence, the poetic voice longs for but must defer beyond the limits of the text but, rather, the becoming matter of language itself as it joins the lived manifestations of time as chronicled by the river. As Cabral puts it, in almost identical terms, in "Os rios de um dia" (The rivers of a single day): "a vida mais definida e clara / . . . é viver com a língua da água" ("the clearest, most well-defined life / . . . means to live with its watery tongue").[14]

The river is for both authors not just a body of water but a being of and in time, and even the foundation of time: "El río era el tiempo, todo . . ." (The river was time, everything . . .).[15] It comprises all the singular, lived temporalities that converge on it, being at one and the same time sustained by the river in their living substance and reflected by the aquatic surface. The river is the common measure of all things: "Mas su divagar, al fin / sólo, sólo podía ser el del espejo que se corre frente a todas las escenas" (But its ramblings, finally / only, only could be those of a mirror moving in front of all the scenes).[16] Thus, in "El Gualeguay" we see rising before us, as does the river, the trees, birds, reptiles, and mammals, including the human inhabitants of Entre Ríos, each in their own time of lived experience (of growth, decay, movement, and stillness). The river is not just a metaphor for time as flow but the very element that contains all temporal forms of life and even the nonliving in their singular modes of duration or ephemerality: "Todo nacía de él, o venía evangélicamente / a él" (everything was born from him, or strove evangelically / toward him).[17] Yet it does not subsume these singularities into a greater whole, as this verse—quoted on its own—might suggest: neither river nor poem make any effort to suture the particularities of lived times into a single, abstract progression. Rather, poetic language takes shape as the always peculiar coagentiality that each of them establishes with the river and its song, just as every sentence, verse, and figure also has its own rhythm and duration in space and time, which the poem admits into its own course without forcing them to adhere to any overarching structure of rhyme, prosody, or strophe.

Indeed, when we are only three strophes into the poem, Ortiz has already impressed on us a highly complex system of images and analogies binding language to matter and vice versa, where the "arpa ciega" (blind harp) of the rain—but also of poetry—is linked first to "juncos de vidrio" (reeds of glass) and then to the "ramillas rápidas" (swift branches) of "un ligero árbol de plata . . . ahogado de cortinas" (a light silvery tree . . . drowned by curtains)—that is, to the willow tree, *el sauce*, which at the same time mirrors in its shape the entire arborescent system of streams forming the Gualeguay's own basin, from which the tree has grown. Just as rain and river materialize (and are themselves refigured) in the tree's growth, and as the latter secures the sedimentation of earth that shapes the river's course, so does poetic language at once sing and emerge from this configuration as yet another of its emanations: the harp's vibrating strings are both the willow's branches and the watery arteries striating the land because both of these are already in a resonant, signifying relationship with one another.

Addressed alternately in the second- and third-person singular, as a listener and witness to the poetic voice and at the same time as the "mirror" that sees, hears, and dreams with the "tintilaciones"—the titillations or ticklings—it receives from the embodied materialities and living forms converging on it, the river encounters history itself as one more "rumor" ruffling its surface: "Mas la 'historia,' lo advertía nuevamente, tenía sus caminos, / y él, otra vez, latiría bajo ellos" (But "history," he realized once more, had its ways / and he would, yet again, throb below them).[18] Unlike in Pablo Neruda's *Canto general* (1950), where even the "coming of the rivers" never suspends the top-down view from mountainous or even stellar heights onto earthly becomings, in what amounts to a cosmic, providential idea of history, here, by contrast, the vantage point is a doubly "minor" one. History is encountered here at once from below (from "la hondonada" [the riverbed]) and from within (from the province or the interior). As poet and critic Sergio Delgado observes, "the landscape program of 'El Gualeguay' is at the antipodes of a project such as Pablo Neruda's *Canto general*, which originates as a 'Canto de Chile' only to be projected onto a continental scale . . . 'El Gualeguay' can be thought of as an anticanto general or, more properly, as a 'canto particular.'"[19] In "El Gualeguay," the relation between geography and history is not, as in *Canto general*, an allegorical one, in which the continent's revolutionary future is already forecast in the landscape's natural sublime. Rather, human history itself is grounded, humiliated, on becoming the object of a bodily kind of perception—the river's—which, counter to the visual purchase of colonial-capitalist landscaping, comes from within and from below and is constantly in flux, being the nonplace of an incessant becoming. In the "palpitations" throbbing underneath the "ways of history," the river senses a string of lowly forces struggling for recognition and survival to which it is drawn as if by "natural" proximity and identification: in this way we witness the struggles not only of Native Americans, gauchos, and anarchist landless workers but also of nonhuman forms and forces threatened by extractivism in its subsequent iterations from colony to nation. Although "El Gualeguay" is thus one of the greatest historical poems in Argentine literature, the river is to human history, first and foremost, an antiepic impulse, a constant becoming minor that reopens the historical record toward its implicit virtualities, toward what might have been or has been omitted. Throughout the text, Ortiz engages in a radical critique of the noun as a weapon of the oppressor, using quotation marks not just for toponyms, animal and plant names, and markers of social or class identity, which are thus forced to reveal their subservient relation to power, but also for numerous popular expressions and even some verbs and adverbs, as if to question the ability of any kind of language to get hold of the thing or action it refers to. Poetic language, as one that becomes itself minor and strives to converge with the river's sensual and embodied perception becomes a virtualizing force that swaps historical fact for rumor, possibility, palpitation: indeed, for the very kind of enigmatic interpellation that we have only recently learned to associate with the irruptions of Gaia or the hyperobject.

In Cabral, relations between history and nature likewise provide the founding tension of his poetry, alternating between the liquid and the solid as it sings the Capibaribe's course through Pernambuco, first rapidly as it descends from the arid *sertão*, and then slowly as it meanders through the lowland cane fields before reaching the sea through the mudflats around Recife, where thousands of *mocambo* (slum) dwellers have been forced to seek refuge. In *O rio* (The river, 1954) and *Morte e vida Severina* (Death and life of Severino, 1954), this journey downriver is told twice: first in the river's own voice who, as a distant, first-person narrator, describes with "simpatia calada" ("mute sympathy") the social worlds it traverses,[20] and then in a multiplicity of voices, featuring a variety of verse types all inspired in the traditional Iberian redondilla, representing the rural migrant Severino's successive interlocutors on his ultimately deadly journey to the coast. Here, but especially in *The Dog without Feather*, the trilogy's first part, the river's song is at the same time a poetological reflection on movement and stasis, fluidity and petrification, in language, a reflection that also extends to other parts of Cabral's oeuvre such as "O poema e a água" (Water and the poem) or "Pequena ode mineral" (Little mineral ode). For Cabral, poetic labor is the search for the word as pure object stripped of all lyricism, akin to the thing in its mineral essence: "São minerais / as flores e as plantas / as frutas, os bichos / quando em estado de palavra" ("Mineral / the flowers and plants, / fruits and animals, / when in the state of words").[21] But poetry cannot but string these word objects back into the fluidity of the "rio-discurso de água" ("river discourse of water").[22] Poetry surges in a tension between the solidity of words and the liquidity of the sentence, it resembles "a rocky path" of word stones washed over by the waters of syntax and verse.[23] Conversely, the flow of verse also thickens on encountering the word, to the point of turning itself into an object: it is remarkable how prominently the word "pedra" (stone) features among "as mesmas vintes palavras" ("always the same twenty words")[24] to which the poet, according to his own confession, returns again and again. In Portuguese and in Spanish, "p(i)edra" is a word that in its own phonetic (a vowel forcing the tongue to get caught in between consonants, to be eventually released into an exhaled "a") performs the thickening, the "becoming mineral" of language that is also its referent. "Pedra" is itself a threshold of "becoming thing,"[25] which puts in relation body and landscape, air and anatomy; it is language "procura[ndo] a ordem / que ves na pedra" ("search[ing] for the order / you see in a stone").[26] The Capibaribe itself is water-discourse confronted, at opposite ends of its course, with different modes of becoming mineral: from the drought-stricken, dusty world of the *sertão* in its upper course where "a água se quebra em pedaços / em poços de água, em água paralítica" ("cut, the water breaks into pieces / into pools of water, paralyzed water") to the swamps surrounding the river mouth where, with "fecundidade pobre / grávido de terra negra" ("poor fertility / pregnant with black earth"), the agonizing river crawls toward the ocean.[27]

This tension between syntactic liquidity and lexical minerality is also indicative of how poetry inscribes the environment in the body and vice versa: poetic language, indeed, is one of the dimensions of coagentiality between these two. Just as for Ortiz, poetry for Cabral is a way of "going into," and in-between, the two histories between which, as Isabelle Stengers asserts, we all now live suspended: between the intraspecies history of humans, which the news cycle insists is the only one that matters, and another, more ominous one that "could be called distinct with regard to what is in the process of happening, but it is obscure with regard to what it requires, the response to give to what is in the process of happening."[28] In Cabral's work, the tension between the liquid and the solid, the watery and the mineral, which underpins the "river discourse," also reflects the struggles of the migrant population that moves along the river's margins, from slaves escaping to the *sertão* from the lowland plantations to the rural *retirantes* (peasants migrating to the cities) fleeing the "grande sede sem fundo" ("great, bottomless thirst") of the drought and heading for a life of hardship "no nivel da lama e de água" ("at the level of mud and water").[29] Mineral scarcity and muddy thickness: between these "two waters," in which the plight of humans and nonhumans becomes enmeshed, Cabral's "negative poetics" plays out (*Dúas águas* [Two waters] was the title of an anthology of Cabral's work released in 1956 by the publisher José Olympo, prior to which it had only been available in artisanal, self-published editions).[30]

The "rio-discurso de água," the river discourse of water, we might conclude, is what embodies, with the contribution of multiple lifetimes and languages converging on it, this intercourse of histories. River time, in Cabral and in Ortiz, brings the time of human history to the level of matter where it intersects and clashes with other temporalities in a dense mesh, the thickening of which is akin to that of the river itself: "Como todo o real / é espesso. / Aquele rio / é espesso e real" ("The way everything real / is heavy. / That river / is heavy and real").[31] "Discurso do Capibaribe" (Discourse of the Capibaribe), the fourth canto of *The Dog without Feather* with which I began these final reflections, is itself a dense, thick text with its recurrence of the adjective "espesso," which, just as the mud that adheres to huts, feet, oars and fishing nets in the *mocambos*, spills out across every verse and sticks to multiple word objects ("man," "dog," "apple," "blood," "dream") and even to reality itself. "The concept of 'espesso,'" as literary critic Solange Rebuzzi observes, "is used to the extreme in this poem, where it also functions as a way of awakening the reader's sensorial perception."[32] Just as in Eugenio Dittborn's oil stain in the desert analyzed in chapter 3, the thick of the real in Cabral's and Ortiz's poetry forces our senses aground, from the detachment of visual landscape to the haptic, olfactory, and auditive involvement with an *Umwelt*, an environment, no longer separate from us but rather enmeshed, stringed together, with our own stories. Poetry is a way of making the rumors and titillations of this living mesh heard, of giving them a name, at the same time as this "speaking of the rumor" corrodes the fixity of nomenclatures and makes language itself fluid. This book, however hesitantly, has been trying something similar in the realm of concepts: to name the vibrations, impulses, and rumors unleashed in various kinds of artworks as these enter a state of enmeshment, of trance, with the worlds they are involved in making. To name not in the sense of pointing to an inner truth but, as Isabelle Stengers signals, to make a call for an action: "To name is not to say what is true but to confer on what is named the power to make us feel and think in the mode that the name calls for."[33] To call life "heavy" does not in this sense oppose, contain, or qualify the supposed lightness of entrancement but rather names its very condition. Trance itself is the becoming heavy of the senses with contested experience but also with possibility: "Espesso / porque é mais espessa / a vida que se luta / cada dia, / o dia que se adquire / cada dia / (como uma ave/ que vai cada segundo / conquistando seu vôo)" ("Heavy, / because heavier is / the life which is fought / every day, / the life which is gained / every day / [the way a bird is / striving every second / to conquer its flight"]).[34]

Notes

INTRODUCTION

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37. Nixon, *Slow Violence*, 165.

38. Nixon, *Slow Violence*, 14.

39. Ericka Beckman, *Capital Fictions: The Literature of Latin America's Export Age* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 16.

40. Philippe Descola, *Par-delà nature et culture* (Paris: Gallimard, 2005), 107.

41. Michael Taussig, *The Corn Wolf* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 141.

42. Tsing, *The Mushroom*, 21.

43. Doreen Massey, *For Space* (London: Sage, 2005), 140.

44. Grant H. Kester, *The One and the Many: Contemporary Collaborative Art in a Global Context* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 28.

45. Florencia Garramuño, *Mundos en común: Ensayos sobre la inespecificidad en el arte* (Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2015), 38.

46. Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), 20.

CHAPTER 1

1. INPE (Instituto Nacional de Pesquisas Espaciais), "Programa Queimadas," 2019, http://queimadas.dgi.inpe.br/queimadas/portal. Forest management by fire, as anthropologists Anna Tsing and Gastón Gordillo have pointed out, has been a common feature of the symbiotic relationship between Indigenous and peasant populations and the forest's more-than-human commonwealth of vegetable and animal lives. Examples include the ponderosa forests of Oregon's eastern Cascades (most of which have disappeared since the forced displacement of the native Klamath Tribes) or the Pilcomayo grasslands in northern Argentina maintained, until the arrival of white colonists in the early twentieth century, by Indigenous Wichí-Toba fire management. Indeed, archaeological finds of Amazonian Dark Earth (ADE) have shown how preconquest native foresters used controlled fires to produce nutrient-rich soils. Yet to therefore take native fire regimes as forerunners to present-day agro-industrial slash-and-burn practices, as "climate skeptics" and agro-lobbyists like to do, is as preposterous as it is factually wrong. See Tsing, *The Mushroom*, 95–197; and Gastón Gordillo, *Landscapes of Devils: Tensions of Place and Memory in the Argentinean Chaco* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 21–23. See also *Science Daily*, "Ancient Farmers Transformed Amazon and Left and Left an Enduring Legacy on the Rainforest," July 23, 2018, https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2018/07/180723142845.htm.

2. Macarena Gómez-Barris, *The Extractive Zone: Social Ecology and Decolonial Perspectives* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017), 6.

3. Global Witness, *At What Cost? Irresponsible Business and the Murder of Land and Environmental Defenders in 2017* (London: Global Witness, 2018), 8.

4. Walter Benjamin, "On the Concept of History," in *Selected Writings, Volume 4: 1938–1940*, ed. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings, trans. Edmund Jephcott et al. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 392.

5. Ismail Xavier, "*Iracema*: O Cinema-Verdade vai ao Teatro," *Devires* 2, no. 1 (2004): 72.

6. Danowski and Viveiros de Castro, *Ends of the World*, 14.

7. Danowski and Viveiros de Castro, *Ends of the World*, 68. Italics in original.

8. Ángel Rama, *Transculturación narrativa en América Latina* (Buenos Aires: El Andariego, 2007), 87.

9. Amitav Ghosh, *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 17, 56.

10. Antonio E. Brailovsky and Dina Foguelman, *Memoria verde: Historia ecológica de la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 1991), 185.

11. José Eustasio Rivera, *The Vortex: A Novel*, trans. John Charles Chasteen (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018), 148.

12. Giorgio Agamben, *The Open: Man and Animal*, trans. Kevin Attell (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004), 15.

13. Dipesh Chakrabarty, "The Climate of History: Four Theses," *Critical Inquiry* 35, no. 2 (2009): 212.

14. Tsing, *The Mushroom*, 21.

15. Published in English as *Fire from the Mountain: The Making of a Sandinista*, trans. Kathleen Weaver (New York: New American Library, 1986), which is the edition I will be quoting from.

16. Cabezas, *Fire from the Mountain*, 121.

17. Cabezas, *Fire from the Mountain*, 126–27.

18. Rómulo Gallegos, *Canaima*, critical edition, coordinated by Michael J. Doudoroff, trans. Will Kirkland (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1996), 218–19.

19. Gallegos, *Canaima*, 253.

20. Ana Pizarro, *Amazonía: El río tiene voces* (Santiago: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2009), 75.

21. Serge Gruzinski, *Images at War: Mexico from Columbus to Blade Runner (1492–2019)* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001), 73.

22. Charlotte Rogers, *Mourning El Dorado: Literature and Extractivism in the Contemporary American Tropics* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2019), 27–30.

23. Robert Pogue Harrison, *Forests: The Shadow of Civilization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 108.

24. Rivera, *The Vortex*, 153.

25. Londa Schiebinger, "Prospecting for Drugs: European Naturalists in the West Indies," in *Colonial Botany: Science, Commerce, and Politics in the Early Modern World,* ed. Londa Schiebinger and Claudia Swan (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 119–33.

26. Roberto Esposito, *Bios: Biopolitics and Philosophy*, trans. Timothy Campbell (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 50.

27. Fernando Aínsa, *Los buscadores de la utopía* (Caracas: Monte Ávila, 1977), 90–91.

28. Roberto González Echevarría, *Mito y archivo: Una teoría de la narrativa latinoamericana* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2000), 23.

29. Alejo Carpentier, *The Lost Steps*, trans. Harriet de Onís (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 205.

30. Carpentier, *The Lost Steps*, 277.

31. Rivera, *The Vortex*, 154.

32. Lesley Wylie, *Colonial Tropes and Postcolonial Tricks: Rewriting the Tropics in the Novela de la Selva* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2009), 3.

33. Lúcia Sá, *Rain Forest Literatures: Amazonian Texts and Latin American Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 39–40.

34. Raúl Antelo, "La aporía amazónica," in *La naturaleza en disputa: Retóricas del cuerpo y el paisaje en América Latina*, ed. Gabriela Nouzeilles (Buenos Aires: Paidós, 2002), 127.

35. Gallegos, *Canaima*, 196.

36. Beckman, *Capital Fictions*, 17.

37. Juan Duchesne Winter, *La guerrilla narrada: Acción, acontecimiento, sujeto* (San Juan: Ediciones Callejón, 2010), 38–39. Italics in the original.

38. Ernesto Che Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare* (Melbourne: Ocean Press/Centro de Estudios Che Guevara, 2006), 14, 51.

39. Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare*, 20, 26.

40. Duchesne Winter, *La guerrilla narrada*, 145–46.

41. Guatemala's first guerrillas had been organized in the early 1960s by former military officers loyal to the constitutional government of Jacobo Arbenz, overthrown by a CIA-sponsored coup in 1954. Under the impact of the revolution's triumph in Cuba, they attempted to put into practice the "focus theory" advanced by Che Guevara and later systematized by Régis Debray in his *Revolución en la revolución* (1967). After the defeat of this first wave of armed resistance and the assassination of its leaders, some of the survivors exiled in Mexico and other Central American countries would reorganize, the most important of the new groups being the Ejército Guerrillero de los Pobres (EGP)—under the command of Ricardo Ramírez, a.k.a. Comandante Rolando Morán, who would also write the prologue to *Los días de la selva*—and the Organización del Pueblo en Armas (Organization of the People in Arms [ORPA]) under the lead of Rodrigo Asturias, who adopted as his nom de guerre a literary character from his father's, the novelist Miguel Ángel Asturias, work: Gaspar Ilom. Both groups, offshoots from the more orthodox Marxist-Leninist Fuerzas Armadas Rebeldes (Rebel Armed Forces [FAR]) under Jorge Soto, a.k.a. Comandante Pablo Monsanto, which would spend most of the 1970s in "tactical retreat" before taking up arms again in 1978, sought to construct a base of support among Indigenous and peasant communities: the EGP in the northern area of Ixcán and the ORPA in the volcanic highlands of San Marcos, Quetzaltenango, Sololá, and Chimaltenango. From the outset, both groups ran into tensions with parallel projects of peasant organization in the area sponsored by Catholic and Protestant missionary organizations, which also came to bear the brunt of the genocidal counterinsurgency war waged by the national army. For a detailed analysis of the Guatemalan civil war, see Yvon Le Bot, *La guerra en tierras ma-*

yas: Comunidad, violencia y modernidad en Guatemala 1970–1992 (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1996); and Santiago Santa Cruz Mendoza, *Insurgentes: Guatemala, la paz arrancada* (Santiago: Ediciones LOM, 2004).

42. See, for instance, his books *Latitud de la flor y el granizo* (1991) and *Poemas de la zona reina* (1997). In *Los fusiles de octubre* (1991), a collection of "military essays" written after his break-up with the EGP, Payeras himself would offer a more critical view of the "prolonged popular war" he still staunchly defended in *Days of the Jungle*.

43. Mario Payeras, *Days of the Jungle: The Testimony of a Guatemalan Guerrillero, 1972–1976*, introduction by George Black (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1983), 23.

44. Ricardo Roque-Baldovinos, "Prohibido decir 'yo': *Los días de la selva* y la voz de la vanguardia revolucionaria," *Istmo* 16 (July–December 2008), http://istmo.denison.edu/n16/articulos/roque.html.

45. Payeras, *Days of the Jungle*, 46–47.

46. Duchesne Winter, *La guerrilla narrada*, 96.

47. Payeras, *Days of the Jungle*, 71.

48. Payeras, *Days of the Jungle*, 70.

49. Duchesne Winter, *La guerrilla narrada*, 108.

50. Payeras, *Days of the Jungle,* 69.

51. Payeras, *Days of the Jungle,* 49.

52. Cabezas, *Fire from the Mountain*, 84.

53. Cabezas, *Fire from the Mountain*, 85–87.

54. Cortázar in Cabezas, *Fire from the Mountain*, back cover.

55. Coronel Urtecho quoted in Jorge Narváez, *Esencia del testimonio en el sistema literario nacional: 1972–1982* (Santiago: Ceneca, 1982), 194.

56. Cabezas, *Fire from the Mountain*, 221.

57. Cabezas, *Fire from the Mountain*, 218.

58. Aínsa, *Los buscadores*, 269. Italic in the original.

59. Sylvia Molloy, "Contagio narrativo y gesticulación retórica en *La vorágine*," *Revista iberoamericana* 53, no. 141 (1987): 489.

60. Horacio Quiroga, *Todos los cuentos* (Madrid: Colección Archivos, 1993), 367–68.

61. Quiroga, *Todos los cuentos*, 613.

62. Esposito, *Bios*, 85–93.

63. Quiroga, *Todos los cuentos*, 358.

64. Horacio Quiroga, *The Decapitated Chicken and Other Stories*, selected and trans. Margaret S. Peden, introduction by George D. Schade (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1984), 141.

65. Baccino Ponce de León in Quiroga, *Todos los cuentos*, 357.

66. Jennifer French, *Nature, Neo-Colonialism and the Spanish American Regional Writers* (Hanover, NH: Dartmouth College Press, 2005), 52.

67. Quiroga, *The Decapitated Chicken*, 119.

68. Quiroga, *The Decapitated Chicken*, 137.

69. Quiroga, *Todos los cuentos*, 609.

70. J. David Danielson's English translation, published under the same title—*The Exiles and Other Stories* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987)—contains

only a small selection of stories from Quiroga's 1926 volume and does not preserve the original order (incredibly it also does not include "The Return of Anaconda"). The effect is, unfortunately, representative of Quiroga's only belated and partial reception in the Anglosphere as a minor forerunner of magic realism, which is a grotesque misconception. Not only does the rearrangement of the stories destroy their unity of time and place (or rather, out of time and place) signaled by the appearance of one story's protagonists as minor characters in another. It also dispenses altogether with their shared relation of antagonism towards the more-than-human assemblage of forces in "The Return of Anaconda," which had framed the original's frontier chronotope within the wider one of the living forest.

71. Quiroga, *Todos los cuentos*, 611.

72. French, *Nature*, 67.

73. Moore, *Capitalism*, 53.

74. Quiroga, *Todos los cuentos*, 619.

75. Gabriel Giorgi, *Formas communes: Animalidad, cultura, biopolítica* (Buenos Aires: Eterna Cadencia, 2014), 55, 58.

76. Latour, *Facing Gaia*, 58.

77. Tsing, *The Mushroom*, 23.

78. Graciliano Ramos, *Barren Lives*, trans. and with an intro. byRalph Edward Dimmick (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1965), 109.

79. Horacio Quiroga, *Tales of Love of Madness and of Death / Cuentos de Amor de Locura y de Muerte*, trans. Daniel Bernardo (Middletown, NY: Sojourner Books, 2019), 155–56.

80. Ramos, *Barren Lives*, 6.

81. Bill McKibben, *The End of Nature* (New York: Random House, 2003), 8.

82. Eduardo Kohn, *How Forests Think: Toward an Anthropology Beyond the Human* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), 16–17.

83. Quiroga, *Tales of Love*, 155.

84. Another drought story, Colombian novelist Manuel Mejía Vallejo's "Tiempo de sequía" (Times of drought, 1960), in which a campesino sacrifices his beloved dog to provide food to his famished family (all the while pretending to his wife that he has successfully shot a hare) is a different version of this plot of violent breakup of the more-than-human "family" in the zone of emergency, with the dog's death representing the ultimate act of sacrificial love. See Manuel Mejía Vallejo, *Tiempo de sequía* (Bogotá: Ediciones Nuevo Mundo, 1960), 37–48.

85. Quiroga, *Tales of Love*, 159.

86. Quiroga, *Tales of Love*, 159

87. Chakrabarty, "The Climate," 212.

88. Ramos, *Barren Lives*, 86.

89. Agamben, *The Open*, 108.

90. See José Luis Romero, *Latinoamérica: Las ciudades y las ideas* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1976); Rama, *Transculturación narrativa*; and Afrânio Coutinho, "O regionalismo na ficção," in *A literatura no Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: José Olympio, 1986), 234–312.

91. Beckman, *Capital Fictions*, 158–59.

92. Raúl Alen Lascano, *El obraje* (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1972), 81.

93. Brailovsky and Foguelman, *Memoria verde*, 180.

94. Tsing, *The Mushroom*, 190.

95. Although droughts had been a cyclical phenomenon in many of Central and South America's arid zones since precolonial times, their impact steadily increased with an extraction-based postconquest regime of production, population, and land tenancy. See, for the case of Mexico, Enrique Florescano, *Breve historia de la sequía en México* (Mexico City: Conaculta, 2000); and for that of Brazil, Durval Muniz de Albuquerque, *The Invention of the Brazilian Northeast*, trans. Jerry Dennis Metz (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014). Santiago del Estero's 1937 drought met with considerable repercussions in political and cultural milieus in Buenos Aires, part of a wider debate that questioned export-led modernization and eventually contributed to the rise of Peronism in the following decade. On representations of the drought in the literary journalism of the 1930s, including chronicles by Roberto Arlt, Homero Manzi, and Ernesto Giúdici, see Jens Andermann, "El infierno santiagueño: Sequía, paisaje y escritura en el Noroeste argentino," *Iberoamericana* 12, no. 45 (2012): 23–43.

96. Bernardo Canal Feijóo, *Ensayo sobre la expresión popular artística en Santiago* (Buenos Aires: Compañía Impresora, 1937), 11.

97. Canal Feijóo, *Ensayo*, 11. Italics in the original.

98. Canal Feijóo, *Ensayo*, 16.

99. Canal Feijóo, *Ensayo*, 14.

100. Beatriz Ocampo, *La nación interior: Canal Feijóo, Di Lullo y los hermanos Wagner* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Antropofagía, 2004), 74–75; Ana Teresa Martínez, "'La Brasa,' un 'precipitado del ambiente': Leer, escribir, publicar, entre la provincia y el pago," *Políticas de la Memoria* 14 (Summer 2013/14): 110–12.

101. Orestes Di Lullo, "Grandeza y decadencia de Santiago del Estero," *Boletín del Museo de la Provincia* 10 (1959): 3–4.

102. Orestes Di Lullo, *El bosque sin leyenda: Ensayo económico-social* (Santiago del Estero: Tipografía Arcuri & Caro, 1937), 56.

103. Di Lullo, *El bosque*, 11.

104. Di Lullo, *El bosque*, 34.

105. Di Lullo, *El bosque*, 62.

106. Di Lullo, *El bosque*, 62.

107. Di Lullo, *El bosque*, 14.

108. Di Lullo, *El bosque*, 33.

109. Di Lullo, *El bosque*, 15.

110. Di Lullo, *El bosque*, 21.

111. Adrián Gorelik, "Mapas de identidad: La imaginación territorial en el ensayo de interpretación nacional, de Ezequiel Martínez Estrada a Bernardo Canal Feijóo," in *Miradas sobre Buenos Aires: Historia cultural y crítica urbana* (Buenos Aires: Ariel, 2004), 67.

112. Bernardo Canal Feijóo, "El paisaje y el alma," *Ñan: Revista de Santiago* 1 (1932): 10.

113. Canal Feijóo, "El paisaje," 20.

114. Canal Feijóo, "El paisaje," 24.

115. Canal Feijóo, "El paisaje," 22.

116. Bernardo Canal Feijóo, "El rapto del ferrocarril," *Ñan: Revista de Santiago* 2 (1934): 59–60; "El asalto de la selva," *Ñan: Revista de Santiago* 2 (1934): 60–61; and "La destrucción del paisaje," *Ñan: Revista de Santiago* 2 (1934): 61, respectively.

117. Canal Feijóo, "El asalto," 60.

118. Canal Feijóo, "La destrucción," 61–62.

119. Bernardo Canal Feijóo, *De la estructura mediterránea argentina* (Buenos Aires: López, 1948), 20.

120. Canal Feijóo, *De la estructura mediterránea*, 12.

121. Canal Feijóo, *De la estructura mediterránea*, 113.

122. Canal Feijóo, *De la estructura mediterránea*, 81.

123. Canal Feijóo, *De la estructura mediterránea*, 142–43.

124. Canal Feijóo, *De la estructura mediterránea*, 142.

125. Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), viii.

126. Héctor Hoyos, *Things with a History: Transcultural Materialism and the Literatures of Extraction in Contemporary Latin America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019), 4.

CHAPTER 2

1. Le Corbusier, *Precisions on the Present State of Architecture and City Planning: With an American Prologue, a Brazilian Corollary Followed by the Temperature of Paris and the Atmosphere of Moscow*, trans. Edith Schreiber Aujame (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), 142–43.

2. Le Corbusier, *Precisions*, 143.

3. Le Corbusier, *The Radiant City*, trans. Eleanor Levieux (New York: Orion Press, 1964), 223.

4. Graciela Silvestri, *El lugar común: Una historia de las figuras del paisaje en el Río de la Plata* (Buenos Aires: Eudeba, 2011), 281.

5. Le Corbusier, *Precisions*, 5.

6. Le Corbusier, *Precisions*, 245. Italics in the original.

7. Beckman, *Capital Fictions*, 42.

8. *Amereida: Volumen primero* (Santiago: Editorial Cooperativa Lambda, 1967), 23.

9. Valerie Fraser, "Cannibalizing Le Corbusier: The MES Gardens of Roberto Burle Marx," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 59, no. 2 (2000): 187–90.

10. Eduardo Caballero Calderón, *Caminos subterráneos: Ensayo de interpretación del paisaje* (Bogotá: Editorial Santafé, 1936), 29.

11. Calderón, *Caminos*, 29.

12. Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), 31.

13. Calderón, *Caminos*, 34–35.

14. Calderón, *Caminos*, 35.

15. Juan Carlos Dávalos, *Obras completas*, vol. 2 (Buenos Aires: Senado de la Nación, 1996), 175.

16. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia II*, trans. Brian Massumi (London: Athlone Press, 1988), 353.

17. Fernando J. Rosenberg, *The Avant-garde and Geopolitics in Latin America* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2006), 2.

18. Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992), 4.

19. See Joel Wolfe, *Autos and Progress: The Brazilian Search for Modernity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 34.

20. César Bátiz, *La desgracia de ayer: Los primeros accidentes del automovilismo en Venezuela* (Caracas: Fundación Empresas Pomar, 2007), 74.

21. Costa quoted in Carlos Eduardo Comas, "O passado mora ao lado: Lúcio Costa e o projeto do Grand Hotel de Ouro Preto, 1938/40," *Arquitextos* 11, 122 (2010), https://www.vitruvius.com.br/revistas/read/arquitextos/11.122/3486.

22. Dean McCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York: Schocken, 1976), 44–45.

23. The first car to arrive in Latin America was a 3.5-horsepower Peugeot brought in 1891 to São Paulo from Paris by Henrique Santos Dumont (brother of Alfredo, the famous aviator). Almost simultaneously, Álvaro Fernandes da Costa Brava, a Rio de Janeiro chocolatier, had a 6-horsepower Benz shipped to Rio de Janeiro as a way of promoting and delivering his sweet produce. In Argentina, the first import was a Benz Victoria shipped to Buenos Aires in 1895 by Delmiro Varela Castex, earning his owner the nickname "Señor Cacerola" (Mister Frying Pan). Uruguay saw the arrival of its first engine-powered tricycle in 1900, and Venezuela that of its first car—a Cadillac Ávila—in April 1904.

24. Álvaro Casal Tetlock, *El automóvil en América del Sur: Orígenes, Argentina, Brasil, Paraguay, Uruguay* (Montevideo: Ediciones de la Banda Oriental, 1996), 20, 92; Melina Piglia, *Autos, rutas y turismo: El Automóvil Club Argentino y el Estado* (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 2014), 17; Wolfe, *Autos and Progress*, 16, 26.

25. Paulo Cézar de Azevedo and Vladimir Sacchetta, *O século do automóvel no Brasil* (São Caetano do Sul: Brasinca, 1989).

26. Ada María Elflein, *Por campos históricos: Impresiones de viaje* (Buenos Aires: Talleres Gráficos Argentinos L. Rosso, 1926), 60.

27. Piglia, *Autos, rutas y turismo*, 185; Wolfe, *Autos and Progress*, 97.

28. Rosenberg, *The Avant-garde*, 78.

29. Esther Gabara, *Errant Modernism: The Ethos of Photography in Mexico and Brazil* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008), 40.

30. Roberto Arlt, "Horizontes ribereños," Aguafuertes fluviales, *El Mundo*, August 14, 1933.

31. Roberto Arlt, *En el país del viento: Viaje a la Patagonia* (Buenos Aires: Simurg, 1997), 57.

32. Mário de Andrade, *O turista aprendiz* (São Paulo: Duas Cidades, 1983), 227.

33. Andrade, *O turista aprendiz*, 229.

34. Roberto Arlt, "Camino a Resistencia," *El Mundo*, September 4, 1933.

35. Andrade, *O turista aprendiz*, 299.

36. Antelo, "La aporía amazónica," 118–19.

37. Andrade, *O turista aprendiz*, 182.

38. Andrade, *O turista aprendiz*, 151.

39. Andrade, *O turista aprendiz*, 151–52.

40. Andrade, *O turista aprendiz*, 299–300.

41. Andrade, *O turista aprendiz*, 306.

42. Andrade, *O turista aprendiz*, 294.

43. Andrade, *O turista aprendiz*, 295.

44. Andrade, *O turista aprendiz*, 290.

45. Andrade, *O turista aprendiz*, 290.

46. Andrade, *O turista aprendiz*, 292.

47. Andrade, *O turista aprendiz*, 299.

48. Andrade, *O turista aprendiz*, 291.

49. Alberto Prebisch, "'*Precisiones* de Le Corbusier," *Sur* 1, no. 1 (Summer 1931): 181.

50. Alberto Prebisch, "Una ciudad de América," *Sur* 1, no. 2 (Fall 1931): 218–20.

51. Rego quoted in Alberto Xavier, *Arquitetura moderna brasileira: Depoimento de uma geração* (São Paulo: Cosac Naify, 1987), 179.

52. Philip L. Goodwin, *Brazil Builds: Architecture New and Old, 1652–1942* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1943), 102.

53. Valerie Fraser, *Building the New World: Studies in the Modern Architecture of Latin America, 1930–1960* (London: Verso, 2000), 253.

54. Warchavchik quoted in Guilherme Mazza Dourado, *Modernidade verde: Jardins de Burle Marx* (São Paulo: Senac/Edusp, 2009), 53.

55. José Vasconcelos, *The Cosmic Race: A Bilingual Edition*, trans. and annotated by Didier T. Jaén, afterword by Joseba Gabilondo (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 24.

56. Vasconcelos, *The Cosmic Race*, 24.

57. Casid, *Sowing Empire*, 51.

58. Doreen Massey, *For Space* (London: Sage, 2005), 131, 140.

59. Ocampo quoted in Jorge Francisco Liernur and Pablo Pschepiurca, *La red austral: Obras y proyectos de Le Corbusier y sus discípulos en la Argentina, 1924–1965* (Bernal: Universidad Nacional de Quilmes/Prometeo, 2008), 67.

60. Victoria Ocampo, "La aventura del mueble," *Sur* 1, no. 1 (Summer 1931): 171.

61. Ocampo, "La aventura," 173–74.

62. Ocampo quoted in Sonia Berjman, *La Victoria de los jardines: El paisaje en Victoria Ocampo* (Buenos Aires: Papers, 2008), 242.

63. Berjman, *La Victoria de los jardines*, 60.

64. Beatriz Sarlo, *La máquina cultural: Maestras, traductoras y vanguardistas* (Buenos Aires: Ariel, 1998), 185.

65. Robinson, the editor of the journal *The Wild Garden* and a friend of John Ruskin, was an early promoter of the use of vernacular, habitat-specific plants and environmental coherence in the garden; Jekyll, also a painter and photographer, was the author of *Colour in the Flower Garden* (1903), a central reference, among others, for the Jugendstil gardens of Josef Maria Olbrich in Germany and those of André Véra in France.

66. Dorothy and Leonard Elmhirst (Tagore's personal secretary and friend who had accompanied him on his South American journey in 1924) purchased the medieval mansion at Dartington, Devon, in 1925 and, with the help of landscape architects Beatrix Farrand and Percy Cane, redeveloped the grounds in accordance with the principles of modern wildlife gardening. The house and gardens, which also featured an important collection of modernist sculpture including works by Henry Moore and Wilhelm Soukop, from 1928 onward became home to Dartington Hall School, a progressive education institution that counted the painter Lucien Freud and the actor Igor Moffat among its alumni. Victoria Ocampo, whose library included a copy of Dorothy Elmhirst's *The Gardens of Dartington Hall*, only visited the grounds herself in the 1960s; an essay of hers, "Dartington Hall," appeared in *La Prensa* in 1968.

67. Grementieri quoted in Berjman, *La Victoria de los jardines*, 171.

68. Victoria Ocampo, *Testimonios: Tercera serie* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 1963), 162.

69. Victoria Ocampo, *Testimonios: Sexta a décima serie* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 1963), 52–53.

70. Ocampo, *Testimonios: Tercera serie*, 56.

71. Victoria Ocampo, *Testimonios: Sexta serie* (Buenos Aires: Sur, 1946), 188–89.

72. Ocampo, *Testimonios: Sexta serie*, 188.

73. Julio Herrera y Reissig, *Poesía completa y prosa selecta* (Caracas: Biblioteca Ayacucho, 1978), 41.

74. Leopoldo Lugones, *Los crepúsculos del jardín* (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1982), 10.

75. Jorge Luis Borges, *Obras completas* (Buenos Aires: Emecé, 1990), 1:84.

76. Gabriela Mistral and Victoria Ocampo, *This America of Ours: The Letters of Gabriela Mistral and Victoria Ocampo*, ed. and trans. Elizabeth Horan and Doris Meyer (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003), 209.

77. Mistral and Ocampo, *This America of Ours*, 209.

78. Mistral and Ocampo, *This America of Ours*, 212–13.

79. Roberto Burle Marx, *Roberto Burle Marx Lectures: Landscape as Art and Urbanism* (Zurich: Lars Müller Publishers, 2020), 88.

80. Roberto Burle Marx, *Arte e paisagem: Conferências escolhidas* (Rio de Janeiro: Nobel, 1987), 25.

81. Burle Marx, *Arte e paisagem*, 87.

82. Jacques Leenhardt, *Nos jardins de Burle Marx* (São Paulo: Perspectiva, 2000), 23.

83. Vera Beatriz Siqueira, *Burle Marx* (São Paulo: Cosac Naify, 2001), 7.

84. Burle Marx, *Roberto Burle Marx Lectures*, 136.

85. Emmanuele Coccia, *La vida de las plantas: Una metafísica de la mixtura*, trans. Gabriela Milone (Buenos Aires: Miño y Dávila, 2017), 58–59.

86. Burle Marx, *Roberto Burle Marx Lectures*, 140.

87. Casid, *Sowing Empire*, 64.

88. Burle Marx, *Roberto Burle Marx Lectures*, 143.

89. Anita Berrizbeitia, "Roberto Burle Marx and the Parque del Este, Caracas," in *Roberto Burle Marx Landscapes Reflected*, ed. Rossana Vaccarino (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Architectural Press, 2009), 236.

90. Rossana Vaccarino, “The Inclusion of Modernism: *Brasilidade* and the Garden,” in *The Architecture of Landscape, 1940–1960*, ed. Marc Treib (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 228.

91. Robert Pogue Harrison, *Gardens: An Essay on the Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 47.

92. Dimensión was an offspring of the regionalist literary and artistic movement from the 1930s and 1940s as well as an early gathering point for the radical leftists who would go on to form the People’s Revolutionary Army (ERP) a decade later. The homonymous journal, directed by Francisco René Santucho between 1956 and 1962, included collaborations from the likes of Bernardo Canal Feijóo and Orestes Di Lullo as well as younger *santiagueño* intellectuals such as Mario Roberto Santucho and Ana María Villareal, future members of the Revolutionary Workers’ Party (PRT) and cofounders of ERP. Alberto Alba’s *La casa de la poesía*, published in 1990, offers a roman à clef of the group’s convulsive history.

93. *Amereida: Volumen segundo* (Viña del Mar: Escuela de Arquitectura de la Universidad Católica de Valparaíso, 1986), 189.

94. *Amereida: Volumen segundo*, 217.

95. Ann M. Pendleton-Jullian, *The Road That Is Not a Road and the Open City, Ritoque, Chile* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996), 49.

96. Iommi quoted in Margarita Serrano, “Godofredo Iommi: La vida peligrosa,” *Mundo* 105 (1991): 11.

97. Pendleton-Jullian, *The Road That Is Not a Road*, 89.

98. The *dérive* was an experimental, poetic exploration into urban space developed by the Situationist International (1957–72), in particular by Guy Debord and Asger Jorn, who collaborated on a “psychogeographical guide to Paris” in 1957. Around this same time, Iommi and his group of French and Latin American artists also staged their *phalène* outings into the Parisian suburbs and to small towns of the French countryside. On Situationism and the *dérive*, see Carl Lavery, “Rethinking the *Dérive*: Drifting and Theatricality in Theatre and Performance Studies,” *Performance Research* 23, no. 7 (2018): 1–15; and also Greil Marcus’s superb *Lipstick Traces: A Secret History of the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989); on Iommi’s time in Paris, Javier Correa’s film *Amereida: Sólo las huellas descubren el mar* (Amereida: Only the Footprints Discover the Sea, 2017) offers a spectacular selection of rare archival footage.

99. Pendleton-Jullian, *The Road That Is Not a Road*, 71. Italics in original.

100. Javier Correa and Victoria Jolly, *Amereida: La invención de un mar* (Barcelona: Polígrafa, 2019), 10.

101. Correa and Jolly, *Amereida*, 12.

102. *Amereida: Volumen primero*, 78.

103. *Amereida: Volumen primero*, 78.

104. For reasons of clarity, I shall write “Amereida” in italics whenever I refer to the homonymous poem and without italics when referring to the 1965 journey.

105. In 1991 the university’s School of Architecture—successor to the institute—published a further volume collecting the visual and written accounts of other travesías carried out between 1984 and 1988.

106. Pages hereafter cited in text and refer to *Amereida: Volumen primero*.

107. Inspired by Mexican philosopher Edmundo O'Gorman's provocative thesis about the colonial "invention of America" and Chilean historian Mario Góngora's ideas about postcolonial America's lack of a foundation myth, the Amereida's navigators playfully cast themselves as reenacting the foundational epic of Greco-Roman antiquity. Indeed, just as Virgil's *Aeneid* had provided imperial Rome with a poetic origin of its own by anchoring it in Homeric mythology at the same time as it rewrote the latter, the *Amereida* would force out the New World's poetic nature by both re- and unwriting the annals of colonial discovery. See Enrique O'Gorman, *La invención de América: Investigación acerca de la estructura histórica del Nuevo Mundo y de su sentido y devenir* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1958); and Mario Góngora, *Los grupos de conquistadores en tierra firme (1509–1530): Fisonomía histórico-social de un tipo de conquista* (Santiago: Editorial Universidad de Chile, 1962).

108. Godofredo Iommi, *Los actos poéticos de apertura de los terrenos* (Corporación Cultural Abierta, Ritoque: Biblioteca de Amereida, ca. 1971), 7. Available at http://amereida.cl/Apertura_de_Terrenos.

109. Iommi, *Los actos poéticos*, 23–24.

110. Iommi, *Los actos poéticos*, 19.

111. Iommi, *Los actos poéticos*, 20.

112. Iommi, *Los actos poéticos*, 17.

113. Enrique Browne, "La Ciudad Abierta en Valparaíso," *Summa* 214 (July 1985): 76.

114. Browne, "La Ciudad Abierta," 76.

115. An up-to-date list of buildings and other works constructed at the Open City, some including photographs and short historical reviews, is available on the Corporación Cultural Amereida's website: http://www.amereida.cl/obras.

116. Pendleton-Jullian, *The Road That Is Not a Road*, 7. Italics in original.

117. Iommi, *Los actos poéticos*, 43.

118. Iommi, *Los actos poéticos*, 40–41.

119. Iommi, *Los actos poéticos*, 17.

120. Iommi, *Los actos poéticos*, 32

121. Godofredo Iommi, "Notas sobre la Ciudad Abierta: Agora—Hospitalidad—Riqueza—Bottega—Gerencia," undated manuscript, ca. 1971, tome 1, p. 4, Corporación Cultural Amereida, Biblioteca de Amereida.

122. Godofredo Iommi, *Notas a propósito de vida, trabajo y estudio y el real sentido contemporáneo de la hospitalidad como forma de vida cotidiana en la Ciudad Abierta* (Corporación Cultural Amereida: Archivo Hospedería de la Entrada, February 5, 1971), http://amereida.cl/Notas_a_propósito_de_vida,_trabajo_y_estudio_y_el_real_sentido_contemporáneo_de_la_hospitalidad_como_forma_de_vida_cotidiana_en_la_Ciudad_Abierta.

123. Browne, "La Ciudad Abierta," 76.

124. Ana María León, "Prisoners of Ritoque: The Open City and the Ritoque Concentration Camp," *Journal of Architectural Education* 66, no. 1 (2012): 90–91.

125. Pendleton-Jullian, *The Road That Is Not a Road*, 87.

CHAPTER 3

1. Mário Pedrosa, “Arte ambiental, arte pós-moderna, Hélio Oiticica,” in *Dos murais de Portinari aos espaços de Brasília*, ed. Aracy A. Amaral (São Paulo: Perspectiva, 1981), 205, 207.

2. Rosalind Krauss, “Sculpture in the Expanded Field,” *October* 8 (Spring 1979): 31.

3. Kynaston L. McShine, “Essay,” in *Information*, ed. Kynaston L. McShine (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1970), 138.

4. Nelly Richard, *Márgenes e institución: Arte en Chile desde 1973 / Margins and Institutions: Art in Chile Since 1973* (Melbourne: Experimental Art Foundation, 1986), 53.

5. Richard, *Márgenes*, 18.

6. Richard, *Márgenes*, 68–69

7. Richard, *Márgenes*, 53.

8. Richard, *Márgenes*, 54.

9. Richard, *Márgenes*, 54.

10. Pablo Oyarzún, “Sobre el libro *Márgenes e instituciones* de Nelly Richard,” in *Arte en Chile desde 1973: Escena de avanzada y sociedad*, ed. Nelly Richard (Santiago: FLACSO, 1987), 50.

11. Oyarzún, “Sobre el libro *Márgenes e instituciones*,” 49.

12. Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 10.

13. Ana Longoni, “El mito de Tucumán Arde,” *Artelogie* 6 (June 2014), http://cral.in2p3.fr/artelogie/spip.php?article308.

14. Quoted in Ana Longoni and Mariano Mestman, *Del Di Tella a “Tucumán Arde”: Vanguardia artística y política en el 68 argentino* (Buenos Aires: Eudeba, 2008), 201.

15. María Teresa Gramuglio and Nicolás Rosa, “Tucumán Arde,” manifesto, mimeograph (1968), International Center for the Arts of the Americas, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, http://icaadocs.mfah.org.

16. Gramuglio and Rosa, “Tucumán Arde.”

17. Sarlo, *La máquina cultural*, 239.

18. Insightful readings of Tucumán Arde, apart from Mariano Mestman and Ana Longoni’s seminal and well-documented book-length study, also include John King’s groundbreaking history of Argentina’s neo-avantgarde *El Di Tella y el desarrollo cultural argentino en la década del sesenta* (Buenos Aires: Gaglianone, 1985), as well as more recent contributions in Sol Arrese, ed., *Tucumán Arde: Eine Erfahrung; Aus dem Archiv von Graciela Carnevale* (Berlin: B Books, 2004); Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (London: Verso, 2012); and Claudia Kozak, *Contra la pared: Sobre graffitis, pintadas y otras intervenciones urbanas* (Buenos Aires: Libros del Rojas, 2004), among others.

19. Luis Camnitzer, *Conceptualism in Latin American Art: Didactics of Liberation* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007), 44.

20. Roger, *Court traité du paysage*, 16.

21. Bruno Latour, “Visualization and Cognition: Thinking With Eyes and Hands,” *Knowledge and Society* 6 (1986): 7.

22. Casid, *Sowing Empire*, 95.

23. Longoni and Mestman, *Del Di Tella a "Tucumán Arde,"* 209.

24. Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, 23–24.

25. Hoyos, *Things with a History*, 4.

26. Quoted in Clarissa Spigiorin Campomizzi, "Arte, guerrilha e experiência: Frederico Morais e suas propostas em *Do corpo à terra*," paper presented at the XXVIII Simpósio Nacional de Historia (Florianópolis, Santa Catarina, 2015), http://www.snh2015.anpuh.org.

27. Sean Nesselrode, "Defining the Aesthetic(s) of Negation in El Techo de la Ballena," *Caiana: Revista de Historia del Arte y Cultura Visual del Centro Argentino de Investigadores de Arte (CAIA)* 4 (2014), http://caiana.caia.org.ar/template/caiana.p hp?pag=articles/article_2.php&obj=153&vo l=4.

28. Quoted in Juan Calzadilla, *El Techo de la Ballena: Antología 1961–1969* (Caracas: Monte Ávila Editores Latinoamericana, 2008), 3.

29. Jessica Lack, *Why Are We "Artists"? 100 Art Manifestos* (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 2017), 9. I quote from Lack's published English translation despite some inaccuracies: "lujuria" does not mean "luxury" in Spanish but rather "lust," and "una tela al pie de un volcán" should be rendered as "a canvas at the foot of a volcano" rather than just "a piece of fabric."

30. Beckman, *Capital Fictions*, 4.

31. Sophie Halart, "Cogs and Clogs: Sabotage as Noise in Post-1960s Chilean and Argentine Art and Art History," in *Sabotage Art. Politics and Iconoclasm in Contemporary Latin America*, ed. Sophie Halart and Mara Polgovsky Ezcurra (London: I. B. Tauris, 2016), 116.

32. As Gustavo Buntinx explains, the acronym was simultaneously an inside joke referring to the cooperatives set up during the progressive military administration of General Velasco Alvarado (1968–75), known as "Empresas de Propiedad Social" (Socially-Owned Enterprises [E. P. S.]). See Buntinx, "Estudio introductorio," in *E. P. S. Huayco:* Documentos, ed. Gustavo Buntinx (Lima: MALI/Institut Français d'Études Andines, 2017), 101.

33. *Arte al paso* (1981), Mariotti's own video balance of E. P. S. Huayco's activities made in collaboration with Lorenzo Bianda is available on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ke16GYqF14s&list=PLbo3q_6y7AywyLretbFLkVoyb2c8HKmRQ&index=3&t=273s.

34. Quotations from CADA's own literature produced on occasion of their interventions (leaflets, videos, and magazine ads) are taken from the CADA collection accessible at New York University's Hemispheric Institute Digital Library, http://hidvl.nyu.edu.

35. Rodrigo Cánovas, "Llamado a la tradición, mirada hacia el futuro o parodia del presente," in *Arte en Chile desde 1973*, 21.

36. Richard, *Márgenes*, 53.

37. Verónica Gago, *La razón neoliberal: Economías barrocas y pragmática popular* (Buenos Aires: Tinta Limón, 2014), 31.

38. Francesco Mariotti, personal communication, June 15, 2020.

39. Mirko Lauer, "Arte al paso: Tome uno," exhibition flyer (Lima: Galería Fórum, 1980), n.p.

40. Mirko Lauer, "Opina Mirko Lauer," in *E. P. S. Huayco: Arte al paso*, ed. Francesco Mariotti (Locarno: Edizioni Flaviana, 1981), n.p.

41. Buntinx, "Estudio introductorio," 104.

42. Richard, *Márgenes*, 54.

43. A short video made by Mariotti of a visit to Sarita in 1999, almost twenty years after its installation, shows the image to have deteriorated (in part due to rust and in part to cans having been removed) but also surrounded by small altars and offerings from traveling pilgrims. Apart from the cacti planted in the shape of Sarita's name, a more recent addition on an adjacent hillside—dwarfing the Sarita memorial—is the giant logo of a paramilitary force used, during the Fujimori regime, to combat the insurgent Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) movement, and responding to the latter's campaign of terror with even more widespread human rights abuses. See Francesco Mariotti, *Sarita, 20 años después*, Micromuseo Perú, on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kgk1nacyHbE&list=PLbo3q_6y7AywyLretbFLkVoyb2c8HKmRQ&index=6&t=5s.

44. Ligia Canongia, *Artur Barrio* (Rio de Janeiro: Modo Edições, 2002), 145.

45. Canongia, *Artur Barrio*, 196.

46. Claudia Calirman, *Brazilian Art under Dictatorship: Antonio Manuel, Artur Barrio, and Cildo Meireles* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 87.

47. Canongia, *Artur Barrio*, 145.

48. Julia Kristeva, *Pouvoirs de l'horreur: Essai sur l'abjection* (Paris: Seuil, 1980), 12.

49. Bill Brown, "Thing Theory," *Critical Inquiry* 28, no. 1 (Spring 2011): 4–5.

50. Hélio Oiticica, *Aspiro ao grande labirinto*, ed. Luciano Figueiredo, Lygia Pape, and Waly Salomão (Rio de Janeiro: Rocco, 1986), 115.

51. Oiticica, *Aspiro ao grande labirinto*, 130.

52. Guy Brett, *Brasil experimental: Arte/vida, proposições e paradoxos* (Rio de Janeiro: Contracapa, 2005), 71.

53. Brett, *Brasil experimental*, 34.

54. César Oiticica Filho, *Hélio Oiticica: Encontros* (Rio de Janeiro: Azougue, 2010), 231.

55. Oiticica, *Aspiro ao grande labirinto*, 114–15.

56. Hélio Oiticica, "Mundo-abrigo," manuscript, July 21, 1973, 11, *Programa Hélio Oiticica*, http://54.232.114.233/extranet/enciclopedia/ho/home/dsp_home.cfm.

57. Hélio Oiticica, "Barracão," manuscript, August 19, 1969, 1, *Programa Hélio Oiticica*, http://54.232.114.233/extranet/enciclopedia/ho/home/dsp_home.cfm.

58. Oiticica, *Aspiro ao grande labirinto*, 125.

59. Roberto Schwarz, in an article first published in French in Jean-Paul Sartre's journal *Les Temps Modernes*, was among the first to discuss *Tropicalismo*'s stance as a countercultural response to dictatorship. See Schwarz, "Cultura e política, 1964–1969," in *As ideias fora do lugar: Ensaios selecionados* (São Paulo: Penguin / Companhia das Letras, 2014). For an insightful overview of the cultural politics of *Tropicalismo* in late 1960s Brazil, see also Christopher Dunn, *Brutality Garden: Tropicália and the Emergence of a Brazilian Counterculture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999).

60. Oiticica, *Aspiro ao grande labirinto*, 120.

61. Mari Carmen Ramirez, *Hélio Oiticica: The Body of Colour* (London: Tate Publishing, 2007), 18.

62. Oiticica, "Mundo-abrigo," 10.

63. In a 1978 interview, Oiticica also described the conglomerate as his way of working through the layers of his previous work, as an archival production of self: "In the Seventies, in Brazil, I was producing a lot and I felt the need for giving a sense of direction to all this. This ordering of ideas, the *Conglomerado*, has as its general title *Newyorkaises* and it is divided into *blocos*." Paula Berenstein Jacques, *Estética da ginga: A arquitetura das favelas através da obra de Hélio Oiticica* (Rio de Janeiro: Casa da Palabra, 2003), 127.

64. Oiticica Filho, *Hélio Oiticica*, 170.

65. Oiticica, "Mundo-abrigo," 4.

66. Oiticica, "Mundo-abrigo," 2.

67. Oiticica, "Mundo-abrigo," 4.

68. Oiticica, "Mundo-abrigo," 5.

69. Oiticica, "Mundo-abrigo," 2.

70. Oiticica, "Mundo-abrigo," 3.

71. Oiticica, "Mundo-abrigo," 6.

72. Oiticica, "Mundo-abrigo," 3.

73. Oiticica, "Mundo-abrigo," 7.

74. Oiticica, "Mundo-abrigo," 7. Italics in original.

75. Hélio Oiticica, "Ready-Constructible," manuscript, August 21, 1978, 199, *Programa Hélio Oiticica*, http://54.232.114.233/extranet/enciclopedia/ho/home/dsp_home.cfm.

76. Oiticica, "Ready-Constructible," 201.

77. Cauê Alves, "*Cosmococa*, *programa in progress* e cinema: A instauração do artista trágico nietzscheano," *Aurora* 3 (2008): 49.

78. Richard, *Márgenes*, 53.

79. Hélio Oiticica, "Acontecimento poético-urbano," manuscript, undated (1979), n.p, *Programa Hélio Oiticica*, http://54.232.114.233/extranet/enciclopedia/ho/home/dsp_home.cfm.

80. Mendieta quoted in Susan Best, *Visualizing Feeling: Affect and the Feminine Avant-Garde* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2011), 100.

81. Jane Blocker, *Where Is Ana Mendieta? Identity, Performativity, and Exile* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), 73.

82. Luis Camnitzer, "Ana Mendieta," *Third Text* 3, no. 7 (1989): 48.

83. Best, *Visualizing Feeling*, 75.

84. Anne Raine, "Embodied Geographies: Subjectivity and Materiality in the Work of Ana Mendieta," in *Generations and Geographies in the Visual Arts: Feminist Readings*, ed. Griselda Pollock (London: Routledge, 2009), 239.

85. Best, *Visualizing Feeling*, 74.

86. Raine, "Embodied Geographies," 244.

87. Mendieta quoted in Petra Barreras del Río and John Perreault, *Ana Mendieta: A Retrospective* (New York: New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1987), 10.

88. Blocker, *Where Is Ana Mendieta?*, 58.

89. Elizabeth A. Povinelli, *Geontologies: A Requiem to Late Liberalism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016), 40.

90. Jill H. Casid, "Necrolandscaping," in *Natura: Environmental Aesthetics after Landscape*, ed. Jens Andermann, Lisa Blackmore, and Dayron Carrillo Morell (Zurich and Berlin: Diaphanes, 2018), 245.

91. Casid, "Necrolandscaping," 245.

92. Luis Fernando Benedit, *Plant-en dierhabitaten* (Antwerp: Internationaal Cultureel Centrum, 1976), 20.

93. Norbert Wiener, *Cybernetics: Or Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1948).

94. Daniel López del Rincón, *Bioarte: Arte y vida en la era de la biotecnología* (Madrid: Akal, 2015), 17–20.

95. Eduardo Kac, "Art That Looks You in the Eye: Hybrids, Clones, Mutants, Synthetics, and Transgenics," in *Signs of Life: Bio Art and Beyond*, ed. Eduardo Kac (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007), 18.

96. W. J. T. Mitchell, "The Work of Art in the Age of Biocybernetic Reproduction," *Modernism/Modernity* 10, no. 3 (September 2003): 481.

97. Morton, *Hyperobjects*, 129.

98. Catherine Malabou, *Plasticity at the Dusk of Writing: Dialectic, Destruction, Deconstruction*, trans. Carolyn Shread (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).

99. Kac, "Art That Looks You in the Eye," 18.

100. Kac, "Art That Looks You in the Eye," 19.

101. Louise Ganz, *Imaginários da terra: Ensaios sobre natureza e arte na contemporaneidade* (Rio de Janeiro: Quartet, 2015), 24.

102. Eduardo Kac, *Telepresence and Bio Art: Networking Humans, Rabbits, and Robots* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 222.

103. Kac, *Telepresence and Bio Art*, 254.

104. Kac quoted in Jens Andermann and Gabriel Giorgi, "We Are Never Alone: A Conversation on Bio Art with Eduardo Kac," *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies* 26, no. 2 (Spring 2017): 282.

105. Kac, *Telepresence and Bio Art*, 276.

106. Nicole Anderson, "(Auto)Immunity: The Deconstruction and Politics of 'Bio-art' and Criticism," *Parallax* 16, no. 4 (2010): 105.

107. Anderson, "(Auto)Immunity," 106.

108. Kohn, *How Forests Think*, 71.

109. Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*, 2, 117.

110. Maria Thereza Alves, "Wake for Berlin, 1999–2001," project notes, http://www.mariatherezaalves.org/works/wake-for-berlin?c=.

111. Maria Thereza Alves, "Wake in Guangzhou: The History of the Earth," *Transfers: Interdisciplinary Journal of Mobility Studies* 7, no. 2 (Summer 2017): 10–11.

112. Jill H. Casid, "Doing Things with Being Undone," *Journal of Visual Culture* 18, no. 1 (April 2019): 37.

113. Tsing, *The Mushroom*, 23.

114. Casid, *Sowing Empire*, 191.

115. Kester, *The One and the Many*, 141.

116. López del Rincón, *Bioarte*, 25, 27.

117. Karla Jasso, "Autosustentabilidad energética y vida simbiótica: Plantas-en-nomadismo," *Plantas nómadas* (February 2010), http://www.plantasnomadas.com.

118. Wiener, *Cybernetics*, 1.

119. Emmanuele Coccia, "The Cosmic Garden," in Andermann, Blackmore, and Carrillo Morell, *Natura*, 19–20.

120. Iván Henriques, *Repaisagem-Relandscaping* (Rio de Janeiro: Centro Municipal de Arte Hélio Oiticica, 2016), exhibition flyer.

121. José Albelda and Serena Pisano, "Bioarte: Entre el deslumbramiento tecnológico y la mirada crítica," *Arte y políticas de identidad*, 10–11 (July–December 2014): 121.

122. Demos, *Decolonizing Nature*, 149.

123. Demos, *Decolonizing Nature*, 101.

124. Quentin Meillassoux, *After Finitude: An Essay on the Necessity of Contingency* (London: Continuum, 2010), 4.

125. Morton, *Hyperobjects*, 133.

CHAPTER 4

1. Tsing, *The Mushroom*, 4, 21.

2. McBrien, "Accumulating Extinction," 116.

3. Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*, 69.

4. Ursula K. Heise, *Nach der Natur: Das Artensterben und die moderne Kultur* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2010), 19.

5. Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*, 69.

6. Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, 187.

7. Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, 187.

8. Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, 183.

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