Decolonizing Indigeneity
Latin American Decolonial and Postcolonial Literature

Series Editor: Thomas Ward, Loyola University Maryland

Latin American Decolonial and Postcolonial Literature features works that analyze and engage with Latin American decolonial and postcolonial literatures. Recent work by Walter Mignolo, Enrique Dussel, Gustavo Gutierrez, Aníbal Quijano, and others has shown how colonial elements were instituted during the colonial period and offer mechanisms and methodologies to overcome the persistence of those colonial forms in literature, philosophy, theology, and society during the post-Independence era. This series focuses on the medium of literature. Decolonial can take the form of resistance to the colonial during that period or it can occur after independence trying to overcome the cultural and political heritage of the colonial interval. Some works in the series may depart from the Anglo-American perspective and use its terminology and thus would prefer the term “postcolonial.” Others may depart from the Mediterranean or Latin perspective a la Frantz Fanon and thus use the term “decolonial.” All decolonial or postcolonial perspectives on literatures of Latin American are welcome.

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Titles in the Series
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by Thomas Ward
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Acknowledgments

Many people and institutions have supported me as I researched and wrote this book. Chapter 1 came together as I began to think about how indigenous peoples were represented in literary criticism and historiography especially with respect to word choices that further colonized them. An early reading of the chapter by my colleague at Loyola University Maryland, Margarita Jácome, helped me to hone some of my ideas there. Regarding Chapter 2, I am grateful to Javier Valiente Núñez for several conversations we had regarding the *Popol Wuj* as it fits into liberation thinking and for his advice on some recent editions of this work. An earlier version of this chapter appeared as “The *Popol Wuj* and the Birth of Mayan Literature,” Chapter 40, in *The Oxford Handbook of Indigenous American Literature*, ed. James H. Cox and Daniel Heath Justice (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 617–637. I am deeply indebted to the volume’s editors for inviting me into the project and to Oxford University Press for allowing me to continue working on the *Popol Wuj* and include the results here.

For chapters 3 and 4, I owe a large debt to the Consortium for Latin American Studies at Duke University and the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill for a Title VI Education Summer Grant (August 2005) which allowed me to study colonial legislation (at Duke) and first editions of sixteenth-century chronicles (at UNC). Specifically, the Bernard J. Flatow Collection of Colonial Chronicles at UNC and the Pérez de Velasco archive in Special Collections at Duke allowed me to jump into colonial chronicles as they were in that period and into rare legal documents now forgotten in time. An earlier version of chapter 3 was published with the title “Sixteenth-Century Philosophical and Linguistic Strategies: Mental Colonialism, the Nation, and Agustín de Zárate’s Largely Forgotten Historia” in *Latin American Literary*
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Chapter 5 resulted from the fortuitous coincidence of my teaching Rigoberta Menchú’s testimony in a culture class on Central America while they read back-to-back with the Menchu/Burgos text. We had some wonderful class discussions from that unforeseen intellectual and cultural encounter. I am grateful to Deborah Poole who co-organized that event with me, to Sara Castro-Klaren who gave the plenary talk, and to David Sobrevilla, the Peruvian philosopher, who kept me on my toes as we conceptualized the conference and who has always been a delightful springboard for my ideas. I am saddened by his passing in 2014. At the colloquium I heard and reflected on his thoughts even though they did not coincide in genre (literary or sexual), country, nor period. I first shared my comparative analysis of González Prada and Menchú at a public presentation, “Manuel González Prada y Rigoberta Menchú: Del indigenismo al pensamiento indígena,” Preliminary Lecture to the International Congress: Discursive and Visual Universes in the 19th-Century Peruvian Press, at the Facultad de Letras, Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos in Lima on the 26 May, 2008. Many thanks go to Marcel Velázquez Castro for the invitation. My thinking on this material eventually appeared in print as an article “Manuel González Prada vs. Rigoberta Menchú: When Indigenismo meets Indigenous Thought.” Hispanic 95.3 (September 2012): 400–423. I would like to mention Hispanic’s editor Sheri Spaine Long for her support and the journal’s managing editor David Wiseman who continued making helpful suggestions right through the galley-proof period of that version. Many of those suggestions stayed in my mind and continued to mold that investigation as it became this book’s chapter 5.

The “Final Thoughts” to this book originates from my participation with Matthew Bush and James Maffie in a book presentation for Sara Castro-Klaren’s The Narrow Pass of our Nerves: Writing, Coloniality and Post-colonial Theory (Iberoamericana/Vervuert 2011) at The Johns Hopkins University in April of 2012. Sara’s book is the spring board for this piece and the conversation we had at that event helped me think of these ideas in new and invigorating ways. This piece was conceived outside of the framework of Decolonizing Indigeneity, but I am acutely aware that my thinking in it was much informed by the research I was doing for Decolonizing Indigeneity. I am pleased that Greg Dawson of the journal A Contracorriente saw the piece fit to appear in that venue (10.2 [2013]: 271–286) and honored that Sara though enough of me to be part of the panel presenting her book. “Final Thoughts” can serve, after chapters 2–5, as a fifth decolonizing approach to Latin American literature. I am in awe of the work of the anonymous readers of the different venues where I diffused these ideas, Oxford University Press, Latin American Literary Review, Studies in American Indian Literatures, Hispanic and A Contracorriente and now Lexington Books. I wanted to mention specially Lindsey Porambo, my editor at Lexington Books. Her initial interest and her going cool-and-calm support through this process is most appreciated. This input based on close and diligent readings of my work helped me improve this book’s reasoning and readability immeasurably. If there are remaining lapses, however, the fault lies with me and not with the readers or editors of any of these journals.

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Introduction

The Coloniality of Literary Practice

The usual way to look at indigenous people in Latin American literature is by seeing Latin American literature as an appendage of Criollo or Ladino (i.e., elite) enunciation which itself is seen as an appendage of Spanish (i.e., Peninsular) enunciation. Of course, indigenous people were not Spanish during the colonial era nor were they Criollo in the ensuing centuries, although some in either category were of mixed heritage. In those cases, authors such as the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega (1539–1616), the Nahua Fernando de Alva Ixtlixochitl (1578?–1650), and others freely moved back and forth between categories. Most people, however, remained entrenched in the distinctiveness of their peer group. Even today, if Amerindians speak Spanish, they most certainly would be unfamiliar, and thus “estranged” in the Russian formalist literary sense, to contemporary Spaniards, Criollos, or Ladinos reading books composed in the Spanish language. One way turn this situation around is to read books about and by indigenous people with a methodology that views them as their own center, not as a people residing on the periphery of the Criollos who were themselves considered as peripheral to Spaniards in an empire which had attempted to triumph over them. That is to say, we should represent Amerindians as the people they are, not as subjects twice removed from the perceived paragon of culture and language. There is, however, a long way to go before this becomes standard practice. There are various obstacles.

The case of Inca Garcilaso de la Vega is revealing. He was the son of an Inkan princess and a Spanish conquistador. He is neither Spanish nor indigenous, although he has aspects and allegiance to both. His identity was unstable and he sometimes called himself an Inkan, other times an Indian, and still in another place, he accepts with pleasure the epitaph of mestizo, the term for a mixed-heritage person. We have, however, critical studies looking at Garcilaso’s works in a historiographical trajectory that originates with
the Spanish medieval king Alfonso X, or as integral to European Humanism (González-Casanovas 107–117; Valcárcel). Since he wrote history, and since he resided in Spain after his twentieth birthday, there is value in considering Garcilaso this way and we can learn about him from it. But since he was also a mixed-heritage author, since he lived the first twenty years of his life in Peru, since he spoke Qhueswa, or Quechua, or Qheswa simi with his mother, there is more to him than European historiography or Humanism. This is where we run into a problem with some preeminent Spanish intellectuals who were looking at Garcilaso with the expectations they had for an author who fits nicely into their views regarding being “Spanish.” It is precisely because of their departing solely from a European-oriented horizon that prominent Spanish scholars became disappointed and came up with a negative assessment of Garcilaso. This was the case with the authoritative and canon-building scholar Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo, who compared Garcilaso’s historiography not with other works of historiography but with the genre of the novel. Indeed, an earlier Spanish intellectual Marcos Jiménez de la Espada, who published numerous colonial chronicles during the nineteenth century, responded with glee when he issued the second part of the Spaniard Cieza de León’s Crónica del Perú [Chronicle of Peru] because, as he stated it, it would challenge the Inca Garcilaso’s authority (Introducción n/p). Of course individual authorities would tend to diverge from each other in greater or lesser degree, but there was something about Garcilaso that got under the skin of certain scholars in Spain (and at least one in Peru). The same is true of Alva Ixtlilxochitl, who has received more than his fair share of criticism, as observed by Jerome Offner (85, 108). Curiously, other works such as the Popol Vuh, or Wuj, from Guatemala, or the Huarochirí manuscript from the homonymous province in Peru, do not seem to have attracted such narrow-minded commentary, perhaps because they were not originally written in Spanish, because they did not strive to be Spanish, Criollo, or mestizo. Trying to understand indigenous realities was a problem that occurred in the past, which also informs the difficulties of the present day. Much of what we know about the past comes from the past where it was written down on paper or printed in books. We must evaluate what has been stated in the past about another past relative to that past in light of gains made in how States. This is not merely a problem of historiographical, hermeneutical, or literary perspectives.

Another locus of bias can be found in higher education in the United States. The canon that gives form to undergraduate and graduate university courses on “chronicles” as well as M.A. and Ph.D. reading lists (preparing future teachers and professors) in Spanish are usually oriented toward those works authored by conquistadores or their scribes, not those offered by indigenous or mestizo authors or informants. There are such a number of “rock star” Spanish chroniclers from which faculty must make choices for both their courses and reading lists that indigenous and mixed-heritage works are given equal treatment only with difficulty. To offer just a few examples, how can a course or reading list on chronicles not include Christopher Columbus, Hernán Cortés, Bernal Díaz, Bartolomé de las Casas, and Cabeza de Vaca?

When it comes to “Indian” viewpoints, beyond the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega and Bernardino de Sahagún’s documents there may be selections from the Popol Wuj, Miguel León-Portilla’s anthology Visión de los vencidos [Broken Spears], and more recently Guaman Poma de Ayala’s Nueva crónica y buen gobierno [First New Chronicle and Good Government]. León-Portilla’s anthology was a great advance that came in the middle of the twentieth century, but it is, after all, an anthology. Matthew Restall views the anthology as problematic for another reason. It emphasizes the “loss” and “destruction” of native peoples as if they no longer existed (Seven Myths 102). Even worse, and put another way, the anthology portrays Nahua people as victims. Despite the great advance that León-Portilla’s text epitomized at that moment for bringing indigenous voices to the debate, a mere anthropological tome of indigenous authors back-to-back with entire books by Spanish authors sends an ambiguous message of inclusion and exclusion to students, some of whom will become tomorrow’s teachers, professionals, and business leaders. The message transmitted is that the conquerors have more value than the conquered. Certainly there are exceptions to the rule, but they are infrequent. I suspect that few courses or reading lists boast a coloniality-free balance between conquerors and conquered.

Spanish authors obviously do discuss indigenous people. We will see this with Agustín de Zárate in Chapter 3. But unfortunately, they are usually grouped into a catch-all category called “Indians” making it difficult to cull accurate anthropological information from them. This should not be surprising if we consider that we are reading an account about a Western colonialist war. For example, when we read about US wars in Vietnam, Afghanistan, or those seemingly being waged against the Sunni peoples of Iraq, we see more about the US soldiers than about the Vietnamese, the Afghans, or the Iraqis. This is because the authors who write what we read are usually from the United Kingdom or from the United States, but not from Vietnam, Afghanistan, or Iraq. The conquerors become the official historiographers who tend to set the frame of the discussion, even in those cases of authors who criticize their own countries actions. There are still other dimensions to the problem.

Even libraries reveal a biased classification of knowledge. Books and the cataloging of them are another aspect worthy of scrutiny. The Library of
Congress cataloging system forms a template that disadvantages and even continues to colonize the literatures of Latin America. While French, Spanish, and German literatures (PQ1–3999, PQ6001–8929, and PT1–4897, respectively) get their own categories, their former colonies each get a small subset range titled “Provincial, local, colonial, etc.” (PQ3800–3999, PQ7000–8929, PT3701–3971). Admittedly, “Spanish America” does get a named subset of “Provincial, local, and colonial” (PQ7081–8560), which is not the case with French and German colonial regions. There is also an issue of nomenclature which has to do with the proper nouns of countries and languages. While my home institution Loyola University Maryland has modified the general German category to become “Germanic,” it leaves “French” as “French” and “Spanish” as “Spanish.” This begs the question if Austria and other German-speaking places are placed in “Germanic literature” allowing for nation-state deviations, why cannot Spanish and Latin America come under the inclusive rubric “Hispanic” instead of the culture-crushing designator “Spanish”? One logical argument for the hegemonic paradigm at least for French, Spanish, and German is that these literatures are written in those languages respectively and the general heading refers to the language in which these literatures are written.

This argument is challenged, however, if we take into account literature written in English. The Library of Congress gives “English literature” its own category (PR1–9680) as it does with the French, German, and Spanish, but it also allows for the category of “American literature” (PS1–3576), which excludes American literatures written in Spanish, French, or Portuguese. Thus, for the imperial center of the world, special classifying treatment is given to that writing done in the language that came out of England, while Spanish American literature inscribed in a language that came from Spain does not merit its own header uncoupled from the colonial pigeonhole. The various reasons for this are probably obvious when we think of centers and peripheries. Latin America was conceived as the periphery of France, Great Britain, and Germany. Indigenous languages and literatures actually fare a little better with respect to categories than does Criollo expression written in Spanish. They all come under a general grouping, “Hyperborean, Indian, and artificial languages” (PM1–9021), which allows for “American languages of British North America” (PM231–355), “American languages of the United States (and Mexico)” (PM401–501), “Languages of Mexico and Central America” (PM3001–4566), and “Languages of South America and the West Indies” (PM5001–7356). (“Library of Congress”) Notably, the designation “literature” is not used in these “aboriginal” categories. Literature written in indigenous languages from Central or South America or Mexico is minimalized in the category “language.” The central point I would like to make here is that the learned expression of indigenous writers is subordinated by these kinds of Western prescriptive bibliographic templates for Criollo and Ladino expression, which itself is subsumed under the category of “Spanish” literature. This subordination of a subordination means that these kinds of works are twice removed from what is considered important, that is to say, they are sidelined in the canon.

This discussion of indigenous languages and literatures brings us to another topic. Modern or Foreign Languages departments tend to not offer classes in indigenous languages, which can oftentimes be found in Anthropology departments. This is meaningful work that Anthropology departments undertake since Modern Languages department seems mostly uninterested in indigenous languages, revealing yet another form of bias. Yet because of the way “Anthropology” is formed there is yet another possibility of a mixed message in Anthropology departments. Edwaro Restrepo notes that in courses that teach the discipline of Anthropology’s history, “certain European and US authors and discussions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are repeatedly referenced,” if as there were no anthropologists from Latin America. Restrepo concludes his thought when he writes, “This manner of telling history tends to obliterate or relegate to simple footnotes the disciplinary trajectories of countries in the Third World or the Global South” (301). If Latin American anthropology is subordinated to French, English, or US anthropology, it follows logically that Latin American languages must be subordinated to European languages. And indeed, what happens with respect to disciplinary history in Anthropology departments also happens to literary history in Modern, Foreign, and Romance Languages departments. With regard to literary theory, Foucault, Derrida, Gadamer, and Bhabha are privileged over Cornejo Polar, Fernández Retamar, and Angel Rama. There is an idea that literary theory can come out of the Anglo, French and German traditions, even in postcolonial guises (Bhabha), but less so out of the Spanish tradition, and even less out of Latin American national traditions. It is true, and should be acknowledged, that indigenous-authored texts present problems of language, of translation, of conceptual time, and other difficulties from which European and North American texts escape. But it does not seem that level of difficulty is the issue we are facing here. Here we are confronting a tilit in the hierarchies of knowledge.

There have been many European literary movements over the centuries including the baroque, neoclassicism, romanticism, realism, and modernism (called Vanguardia in Spanish). These bring us to the next concern: when literary movements are exported from Europe into the Americas. Peruvian literary scholar Carlos García Bedoya warns against just such a practice when he writes, “Making reference to cultural épokes formulated from European experience hinders awareness that cultural processes are not a simple reflection of what happened in the metropole but also a creative
response to clashes of cultures” (el hacer referencia a épocas culturales formuladas a partir de la experiencia europea torna difícil el dar cuenta de procesos culturales que no son simple reflejo de los ocurridos en la metrópoli sino respuesta creativa ante el choque de culturas) (20). I would add that cultural processes are also largely the result of local phenomena even if they are in contact were larger networks of culture and commerce. For no other reason are romanticism, realism, and naturalism spread uniquely across the fabric of Latin American national literary activities and for no other reason tendencies such as Indigenismo and Negritismo spring up as a counterpoint to Romanticism in the Americas, but not generally in that movement’s incarnations in Europe. While there are exceptions, such as Victor Hugo’s Bug Jar­gal, generally European romanticism was concerned with Europe.

The kinds of views and paradigms that come with importing European categories are reinforced when academic departments that teach literature in the United States are organized as English, German, French, or Spanish departments, or as Romance Languages, or Modern or Foreign languages. In such configurations, languages are seen as coming from the “mother countries” and thus Guatemalan literature is perceived as emerging from the Spanish tradition just as Senegalese literature is seen as a form of French expression. Again, there is some value to this. After all, it makes sense to compare contemporary works written in the same language, even if from different cultures. There could be wonderful opportunities so for comparative folkloric in the roughly contemporary authors Federico García Lorca (Spain), Miguel Angel Asturias (Guatemala), and José María Arguedas (Peru). But given that the African or South American literary piece is seen as something like a stop along the way of French or Spanish literary evolution, there is always room for disappointment (as will be seen in chapter 1) since these works are not produced in the same socio-politico-ethnic environments.

Another feature is the presence of an ideology that the Conquest was good because it brought Spanish to the Americas and along with it, Catholicism. The Nobel Prize-winning novelist and essayist Vargas Llosa, who is from Peru, takes a position, in this regard, that, could be understood as a pro-Western Hispanism. He writes:

Pizarro and that which arrived with him to our shores—Cervantes’s language, Western culture, Greece and Rome, Christianity, the Renaissance, the Enlight­enment, the Rights of Man, the democratic and liberal democracy of the future, etc., is a component of Peruvian-ness just as essential and irreplaceable as was the Inkan empire.

[Vargas Llosa is not alone in this. There is another South American example, a scholar, who in 1944 claimed that the Conquest was nothing more than “the execution of an highly and judiciously prepared plan and in whose motives there is nothing that could shame the people who undertook it and who brought it to fruition” [la ejecución de un plan alto y justamente pre­parado y en cuyos móviles nada hubo que pueda avergonzar al pueblo que la acometió y la llevó a su término] (Carbia 63). In the United States, the view is the same, but perhaps not for the ideological reasons that caused Professor Carbia to make such an assertion. The positive take on the Conquest in the United States results more from the conviction that European culture is the summit of all cultures and a nonreflexive view that Spanish is good, cool, helpful for business, or may be a friend’s language, without unpacking the baggage that comes with it.

Spanish, after all, is the language of many of the United States’ neighbor­ing nations and, for countless US residents; it is the language of the people who live right across the street. Or it could be the language of a US resident himself or herself, or of his or her parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, and so on. Certainly, if the Conquest had not taken place, there would be no Spanish American literature today at all, at least not in the form we know it. Furthermore, in the United States, but perhaps becoming more the case in the United Kingdom, taking Spanish courses is trendy. In the United States, more than a trend, it is a paradigm shift with Spanish dislodging French and Ger­man as a primary second language to learn. By 1995, the study of Spanish had outpaced all other modern languages together, a drift repeated in the years following (Furman, Goldberg, and Lusin 14). This is great for diffusing Latin American (or Spanish) literature. However, because the idea is “Spanish,” and not “Latin American,” students are known to refer to Isabel Allende or Gioconda Belli’s works as Spanish literature, not Chilean or Nicaraguan liter­ature. They also sometimes refer to their Latin American literature courses as “my Spanish class.” Given this way of viewing written expression in Span­ish, it is a challenging endeavor to represent the Conquest and the people it enveloped objectively as well as their descendants.

Another aspect resides in Latin American literary history traditionally beginning after the Conquest with the aforementioned chronicles that glorified those glorious deeds by those glorious Spaniards who brought Spanish and Christianity to the Americas. However, in the Andes, for example, the Conquest was not a lightning-like event. It took forty years (1532–1572) in that region to subdue it enough to consider it “subdued,” and, as we will see
in chapter 5, it was still feverishly and fiendishly at work as an element of
the "conquest" as it permutes, amplifies, ricochets, and reaccommodates, while all the while accepting new vertices emanating
cross those barriers called the Conquest as it permutes, amplifies, ricochets, and reaccommodates, while all the while accepting new vertices emanating
from places like Spain, France, and, later, the United States. The same could
be stated in Central America. Mark Zimmerman and Raul Rojas in Voices
from the Silence hold the trajectory of Guatemalan cultures to be a longue durée process:

There may be at least some continuities extending from the original Mayan cul-
ture through the subsequent indigenous cultures of the area to those dimensions that, while turned inward and transformed by oppression and accommodation, have persisted to this day, even in the face of state-building, Protestant revival, and all the phenomena marking Guatemala's latest, and now postmodern, forms of social being and becoming (41).

Part of that process for the precontact K'iche's was resistance and accommoda-
tion to Follevrødt, a cultural ideal imported from the Nahua of Central
Mexico that we will consider in chapter 3. It also had to do with how the
diverse groups of Mayans and non-Mayan peoples in the Guatemalan region
also accommodated, reformed, and resisted Hispanic culture after its arrival.
We will take up this longue durée in Chapter 2 where the millennium-long
plus pluriform trajectory of some of the stories of Mayan Popol Wuj is
suggested.

Awareness of these processes is not simply a pedagogical problem in the
United States or other English-speaking countries. It also has to do with para-
digms and literacy within Latin American itself. Cornejo Polar, commenting
on the preference for written over oral literature, notes a paradox: "Many of
the conquistadores who were at Cajamarca were illiterate; the others recre-
ated the medieval habit of reading out loud. As a consequence, although it
seems paradoxical, Atahualpa and his circle were not an exception or a rarity
with respect to the former" (muchos de los conquistadores que estuvieron
e n Cajamarca eran analfabetos, y los otros todavía reproducían el hábito
medieval de leer en voz alta: por consiguiente, aunque parezca paradójico,
Atahualpa y su séquito no eran una excepción o una rara cepa con respecto a
los primeros) [Escribir 38]. This is more than a seeming paradox because this
group of illiterate Spaniards was proud of having "the book" while absorbed
in the processes of executing a sovereign leader. They did this during the
exact period of high-status Golden Age literature in Spain. Obviously, Span-
ish displaced the Inkan languages, Qheswa and Aymara, as elite languages in
the Andes, as it did with Nahuatl and K’iche’ in Mesoamerica.

While some autochthonous people did achieve a certain degree of literacy in
Spanish, the Andean kuraka Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala falls into this
category, the vast majority endured within the realm of orality, cut out and
excluded from transatlantic globalizing culture. This was the case with their
lives and it was also the case with the typecasting of their lives in Spanish-
authored documents. Within the historiographical genre, as Stephanie Mer-
rim has thoughtfully observed, authors injected their own worldview into it,
"endowing it with an autobiographical dimension" ("The First Fifty Years"
61). This dimension, however, when constituted within a soldier of an invading
army would tend to misrepresent the people being overrun in order to
justify the incursion (e.g., the famous just-war arguments). In the generations
after the first Spanish chroniclers, what could be known as Criollo elites
came to control Latin American writing. Jose Antonio Mazzotti has written
at length about the Criollo consciousness in which Criollos develop certain
characteristics that differentiate them from Spanish-speaking people from
Spain. For example, he explains how during the colonial interval, Criollos
became unique in language usage, courtliness, moral high ground, form of spirituality, and relationship to exceptional geography ("Introduc-
ción," 8–16). Spaniards and their mind-sets typcast indigenous peoples in
the first works classified as "history," and Criollos, later, also took up the pen
and began to write within that frame. These Spanish and Criollo texts became accepted as the first wave of Latin American literature, sometimes described as colonial discursive production (see, for example, Mignolo, The Darker Side of the Renaissance). Spaniards and Criollos may have been different, but neither could adequately speak for the indigenous.

Most certainly, Spanish-language discourse has not taken into account all the varieties of expression that came before. This certainly did not happen during the colonial era, and then after the nineteenth century, progress has come in fits and spurts. Cornejo Polar talks about how nineteenth-century historiography nationalized colonial expression and how twentieth-century historiography did the same with respect to pre-Hispanic literary traditions (Escribir 13). Naturally, there would not be too much indigenous expression to embrace in an inclusive ideal of national literature without so many indigenous and mestizo authors being revealed for the first time during the second half of the nineteenth century (see, for example, the chapters on the Popol Wuj and on Alva Ixtlixochitl). The most momentous find was not “discovered” until 1908, Guaman Poma de Ayala’s thousand-page chronicle. The problem with these well-intentioned integrations into the literary fabric is that they were done by means of the Positivist method that penetrated the intellectual strata of Latin America starting from the 1840s. As Cornejo Polar points out, this method interpreted these processes as omnidirectional, perfective, and annulling, as if indigenous culture became extinguished with the so-called Conquest (Escribir 13–14).

The unity of this book is the theme of Amerindians in nonfiction prose, mostly self-represented and at times represented as the “Other.” With the different approaches employed in this book, the people who are the referents of this genre of prose enter into a posthumous process of decolonization. If progress is realized, then we can say that present-day readers of those texts and their referents may also enter into a process of decolonization. The task is a difficult one because coloniality resides in the mind of the colonizer and the colonized, and can also reside in the mind of the reader of colonial documents. In the end, whether these were composed as history, chronicle, epistle, response to a questionnaire, literature, or other category, they are all texts, a category Walter Mignolo proposes as a way around the uneven literariness of some of these compositions (“El mandato” 451–3; see also Pease 265). Even if some scholars do not consider these texts “literature,” the tools of literary analysis, philology, close reading, discourse analysis, contextualization, and theorization can all be applied, not only with decolonial ends but also with the goal of appreciating the texts aesthetically, ethically, artistically, as we would with any work of literature, different works having different results.

Rolena Adorno argues in the influential Cambridge History of Latin American Literature that texts such as the Popol Wuj may not belong to the great Judeo-Christian tradition, but there is no purpose in “excluding it from the great achievements of humanity’s collective interpretations of diverse and regional cultural experience” (Adorno, “Cultures” 36–37). As will become apparent, I hope, in the pages of this book, it is also possible to take a position, much as I do, that we can expand the notion of “literature,” make it more inclusive. Even if an informant, an epistler, or a testimonist in our time did not have the intention of literariness, we can still subject works written by these kinds of authors to stylistic and discursive analyses. Indeed, our notion of literature is expanding as our notion of “society” is expanding, as the achievements of literature itself are expanding. Just to offer an example, in a 1971 conversation between Gabriel García Márquez and the Nobel winning poet Pablo Neruda, the former asserted that journalistic reportage could be included in the category “literature.” One might argue that the intention of the reporter is to inform, not to be literary, but the author’s intentions do not matter because readers are the ones who enjoy and interpret a text, not authors. The same can be true for autobiography, testimonio and even certain chronicles. This is because, as the twentieth-century New Critics argue, a work changes meaning with each successive generation of readers. René Wellek and Austin Warren recognize in their influential Theory of Literature that there are many possible readings of a particular text: “There are then not only one or two but literally hundreds of independent, diverse, and mutually exclusive conceptions of literature, each of which is in some way ‘right’” (42). This thought is concluded with the following maxim: “The meaning of a work of art is not exhausted by or even equivalent to, its intention. As a system of values, it leads an independent life” (42). Northrop Frye builds on this idea when, talking about poetry, he states that the poet’s intention “is directed towards putting words together, not towards aligning words with meanings” (1126). David Daiches frames the significance of the multiplicity of a work’s meanings over time this way: “The capacity of a literary work to be different things to different generations may be a sign of its greatness” (172). The merits of what counts as literature is constituted by what resides on the page, on the side of a vessel, and on stelae (or comes from the mouth) and how we interpret those elements. The evaluation resides in the eye of the critic. What is important is the interpretation, not the category.

Commenting on traditional forms of understanding literary history Adorno has explained how indigenous cultural forms tend to be “seen as complementary, not antecedent, to the development of Latin American literature.” She deems this approach as insufficient and rightly argues that the legacy of autochthonous culture is not something confined to the period before 1492. For her, it is revealed in “the processes of cultural exchange in colonial times.” I would like to add to Adorno’s noteworthy assertion that those processes continue in our time because colonial situations, as suggested above,
for places like Peru, Guatemala, and El Salvador continue to endure. In order to realize decolonial approaches we should adopt a critical perspective, such as Adorno's, and see "indigenous American culture ... as one of native adaptation, survival, and innovation in a complex polycultural environment" ("Cultures" 37). Another approach equally innovative and helpful for getting at the crux of the matter was Cornejo Polar's insistence on the persistent qualities of orality that he finds in Andean literature from the Comentarios reales (1609; Royal Commentaries of the Incas, 1966) to Gregorio Condori Mamani: Autobiografía (1977; Andean Lives: Gregorio Condori Mamani and Asunta Quispe Huamán, 1996). In this "polycultural environment" (Adorno's term) that Cornejo Polar explains we have oral literature, lettered literature, lettered literature with some degree of oral characteristics, and why not, oral literature with some characteristics we normally think of as pertaining to written literary expression. As the chapters on the Popol Wuj, Alva Ixtilxochitl, and Manuel González Prada/Rigoberta Menchú show, these traditions may have begun long before the period of first contact and are anything but extinct.

It is, however, erroneous to consider these approaches as "post-colonial" since the structures that give space and form to literary analysis are still colonial, based on the colonial, or on the heritage of the colonial. Thus these models are ongoing processes that can be described as decolonial approaches to appreciating Latin American literature. In a recent interview with Ignacio López-Calvo, Walter Mignolo has explained that "Decolonial research is research, to advance advocacy for decolonization, which is a form of liberation among many others in process nowadays" (in López-Calvo 175). These models can be part of decolonizing methods that, even with the advances they may make, are a long way from culminating in nondeformative racial fear or condescension can still pervade societies. Only with slow, careful, detailed analysis, concern, and empathy can there be liberation from the old ways of seeing.

It would be arrogant for me to suggest that I am the first to call for this intellectual reorganization. There have been plenty of voices in the desert before me, and I will certainly consult them. I seek to listen to Amerindian and mestizo voices, to read deeper between the lines in the Spanish chronicles, letters, and other prose documents such as the essay and testimonio, to strive to establish deeper connections between the meanings encapsulated in these genres that expand our notion of literature. This process will be achieved by...
focusing on different forms of indigenous enunciation, dedicating special attention to the Popol Waj, Alva Ixtlixochitl, and Rigoberta Menchú.

I cannot pretend to suppose that this book could be a decolonizing model for all forms of Latin American literature, for only a very small sector of what we consider Latin American literature (or discourse) is herein examined. Indeed, this book studies works that fall into the category of what today we might call nonfiction prose. It does not include fiction, there is no study of poetry (although an essay by an author who was also a poet is interpreted, and one of the prose works studied has also been translated into Spanish as poetry), and no theater pieces are incorporated. Again, the focus is on nonfiction prose, and not all varieties of nonfiction prose. I have included nonfiction works by Amerindians or, in two cases, which is about Amerindians. There are five chapters. The first sets the stage for scholarly pitfalls to be avoided in historiography and literature. The second examines the Popol Waj, the first recorded work of Latin American literature (much before there was such a category), the product of collective Maya and K’iche’s literary expression. The third and fourth chapters explore two works, one written by a Spaniard, Agustín de Zárate, the other by a Nahua, Alva Ixtlixochitl; both included in the genre commonly called “chronicle,” classified as historiography, but whose form and content lend themselves to literary interpretation, even if the intentions of the authors were not necessarily literary.1 Regardless of genre, these nonfiction prose pieces represent Indigenous people and as such they can be studied as historiography, literature, discourse, or simply texts. There is no categorical conception of them that can exclude the other categories. The fifth chapter compares the Indigenismo, or Indigenism, of the Criollo essayist Manuel González Prada with the indigenous thought expressed in a testimony coauthored by an indigenous woman, Rigoberta Menchú, and an anthropologist, Elizabeth Burgos. The Final Thoughts section explores notions of history and how archaeology can challenge the historiography of both Spaniards (Cieza de León) and Andeans (Guaman Poma de Ayala). There is also a chronological progression between all these works. The Popol Waj was imagined millennia ago and was transfigured in the middle of the sixteenth century almost contemporary to Zárate’s writing. Alva Ixtlixochitl was active in the first half of the seventeenth century and González Prada at the turn of the twentieth century. Menchú was active toward the end of the twentieth century (and is still active today). In all these diachronic and multigeneric cases, I am interested in analyzing discourse as it explores conditions of indigeneity, what a nation is, how nations view themselves and each other, how “civilization” can be considered, how the problems of the hacienda are not limited to one nation, and how the condition of nationness can be denied, or affirmed. These conditions inform the long arc of indigenous experience as represented in the diverse body of texts examined in the pages that follow.

NOTES

1. I use the Spanish word Criollo instead of the English Creole to avoid the racial connotations that inhere in the latter term.

2. There is variance in accepted spellings of the proper noun Qheswa including Quechua, Quichua, Kewcha, and Kewsa. The term refers to the people and the language, this despite the fact Qheswa simi, or Qheswa speakers, refer to their language as Runu Simi (“The Language of the People”). For this proper noun, Qheswa, and other words from the language, I have opted to use the spelling preferred by the Qheswa Simi Hamut’ana Kurak Suntur, the “Academia Mayor de la Lengua Quechua,” Dicionario quechua-espariol-quechua, with the exception of variants in published authors’ names and in their works. Thus, we can refer to Inka culture, but to the author Inca García. Spelling reflects the Cuzco form of the language since the “Academia Mayor” resides in the former Inka capital. I take note that the norms codified by the Kurak Suntur are contested from other locations in Peru such as Lima and other provinces. Peruvian spellings may also diverge from those used in Bolivia or Ecuador.

3. As noted by Franklin Pease, chronicler and historian are different professions, but chronicler has come to have a specific kind of meaning inasmuch as we apply the term “chronicle” to many of the works written during the colonial period, even if they were relaciones, informes, or other categories of colonial writing discussed by Mignolo (See Pease, G.Y., Las crónicas de los Andes. 265 and Mignolo, “El mandato y la ofrenda”: 451–484).

4. Offner writes, “Ixtlixochitl has borne the brunt of criticism by modern critics, sometimes verging on scorn and ridicule, for local bias, while Torquemada has remained largely immune from the same lines of attack regarding his portrayal of major periods of the same history. This uneven evaluation of the mastizo versus the Spanish historiography by these critics is a defect arising from modern historiographic prejudices that should both give historiographers pause and invite investigation and self-examination of these persistent biases of our own time” (108).

5. The spelling of the Popol Waj has evolved. The Huarochirí manuscript did not have a fixed title thus it has been called Dioses y hombres de Huarochirí by José María Arguedas and “A Narrative of the Errors, False Gods, and Other Superstitions and Diabolical Rites in which the Indians of the Province of Huarochirí lived in Ancient Times” by Clements Markham.

6. I have utilized italics for Spanish terms not included in Webster’s New World College Dictionary, and removed them from terms included. Thus, conquistador and conquistadorese are not italicized, but encomenderos is.

7. I have noticed when teaching Vision de los vencidos how my students tend to view the book as an integral whole, not differentiating between the diverse informants/authors included (i.e., Florentine Codex, Muñoz Camargo, Codex Ramírez, Alva Ixtlixochitl). Such a reading does not take into account political and social differences among each altepetl, which was a distinct political entity, nor distinctions between the informants of the codices and authorial individuality of the writers Muñoz Camargo and Alva Ixtlixochitl.
8. Two obvious examples of this are Bartolomé de las Casas who framed his arguments in accordance with Aristotle and Christian theology during the Spanish conquest and Thomas E. Ricks whose *Fiasco* is more about the Bush Administration’s blundering than it is about Iraqi concerns. Both authors are concerned with lofty ideals, but they both operated within the cultural and political frames of their respective times.

9. Spanish American *Modernismo* did make it to Spain, to a degree, but not to France or Great Britain. Only in the 1960s when the Latin American Boom was invented in Barcelona and other places, did Latin American literature begin to be considered as World Literature.

10. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are mine. Also pertinent to the difficulties of exporting and importing regional categories is a concern raised by Damrosch who, when discussing national timelines, writes, “our customary periodizations become problematic when we attempt to set the world’s literatures in historical perspective” (“World” 2).

11. Lovell and other scholars view the Maya as resisting the conquest that has lasted for five hundred years (Lovell, “Surviving Conquest”).

12. A *kuraka*, spelt *curaca* in Andean Spanish, was a hereditary leader in the Andes, oftentimes a non-Inka hereditary lord. The more general term used in Spanish was *cacique* which was derived from Taino. The denotations and connotations of the term *cacique* do not perfectly coincide with the denotations and connotations of the term *kuraka*.

13. This decade is earlier than commonly accepted. I base my belief that positivism began to filter into Latin American writing during the 1840s based on the fact that Comte began publishing his *Cours de philosophie positive* in 1830 and the Cuban author Gertrudis Gómez de la Avellaneda who was residing in France and Spain mentions it in her 1841 novel, *Sab*. In this novel written shortly after her arrival in Europe, she writes of two businessmen, “dos hombres pegados a la tierra y alimentados de positivismo” (*Sab* 2: 121).

14. Mignolo of *f* *ers ways to decolonize philology itself* (The Darker Side of Mod*ernity* 8-9) as does the Lockhart school with its focus on Amerindian philology (Restall “A History of the New Philology”).

15. A good place to begin to understand Spanish-language sub-Saharan literature would be Ngom Faye, *Diálogos con Guinea*.

16. Mignolo explains that “post-colonial” is a term that comes from South Asian theorists and that it gives form to Anglo-American cultural paradigms, while “decolonial” comes from thinkers in the “Latin” tradition such as Fanon. He proposes “decolonial” for the Latin American cultural studies (The Darker Side of Modernity xxiii–xxxiii).

17. The same is true with many of the texts that constitute the canon of early colonial literature, Columbus’s *Diario*, Cortés’ *Cartas de relación*, and Las Casas’ *Brevisima relación de la destrucción de las Indias* did not have literary aspirations, but today are read in colonial literature classrooms.

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**Chapter 1**

**Colonial Force**

**Word Choices, the Denial of Nationness, and the Coloniality of Mind**

In this chapter, I would like to explain three varieties of colonial force, outright colonialism, intracolonialism, and neocolonialism to then explain several of the historiographical and literary mechanisms in the colonial process. I am also interested in resistance to the colonial force, which can be understood as decolonialism. While there are many aspects that shape the colonial force, in this book, we are interested in the written aspect that justifies colonizing people, their identities, their lives, and their minds. Indeed, beyond the economic, the political, and social processes of colonization, writing in and of itself can teach coloniality to both the conqueror and the colonized. With respect to the latter, Aníbal Quijano talks about “a colonization of the imagination of the dominated” (“Coloniality” 169). With respect to the former, the writers who colonize with their texts have (unwittingly?) been colonized themselves, a process that had to happen for them to assimilate colonial attitudes so that they could then transmit them to their readers. In general, we can say that people affected by the colonial force, whether outright colonialists, neocolonialists, intranational colonialists, or colonized subjects suffer from what I like to call “coloniality of mind.” Such a condition implies that the colonialists, neocolonialists, intracolonialists, or colonized subjects are not necessarily aware of the fact they are repeating colonial cultural paradigms, motifs, and justifications. Before going further we must first understand the different varieties of colonial force.

**COLONIALISM AND ITS VARIETIES**

There has always been colonialism and colonialism will probably always exist in one form or another. The powers of the great colonialisms of the past