

RHETORICS OF THE AMERICAS

3114 BCE to 2012 CE



Edited by
Damián Baca and Victor Villanueva



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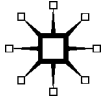
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We have dreamt our past and we remember our future.

Cumbre Continental de Pueblos y Nacionalidades
Indígenas de Abya Yala. Iximché, Guatemala

*Nuestro indio vive todavía: en lo físico, los sentimientos de nuestra gente,
la bondad, y la toponomía.*

*Our Indian still lives: in the physical, the feelings of our people, the
kindness, and in the toponymic.*

Rafael González Muñiz, in a speech delivered
at Roberto Clemente Middle School,
New Haven (Trans. V. Villanueva)

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P R E F A C E

... we must interlace a number of colors without them becoming grotesque or antagonistic, and we must give them brightness and a superior quality, just the way our weavers weave. A "guipil" shirt brilliantly composed, a gift to humanity.

—Rigoberta Menchú Tum

This book is the first work to begin to fill a gap: an understanding of discourse aimed to persuade, rhetoric, within the Pre-Columbian Americas; that is, in presenting the rhetoric that coincided with but was not influenced by Greco-Roman inventions. *Rhetorics of the Americas* provides glimpses into what those indigenous rhetorics might have looked like and, of equal importance, how their influences remain. In his 1999 keynote address to the primary organization for the study of rhetoric and writing in the United States, the Conference on College Composition and Communication, Victor Villanueva pointed to the need for rhetoricians, scholars of the history of literacy, and teachers of writing to examine rhetorical productions indigenous to the Americas, noting the distinctions and overlaps of the study of language use recorded by the Spanish missionaries who had accompanied the Conquistadors and the canonical understanding of rhetoric developed by ancient Athenians and Romans. Since that address, younger scholars have taken the call. Yet to date these ventures into an understanding of rhetorical practice before Conquest have remain scattered. America—in the continental sense—is hardly featured on the map of Rhetoric and Composition studies. This book provides the first collection of original research and scholarship on uniquely Western Hemispheric rhetorics. Such a study should cause readers—students and academics alike—to recognize “the invention of the Americas,” providing other ways of seeing the consequences of racialization, occupation, and colonization,

providing historicized perspectives of the West and of the “Discovered West,” telling us a great deal about material life prior to contemporary capitalism, telling us about the global from long ago to current global capitalism. Bringing together scholars from Rhetoric and Composition studies, American Indian studies, Mesoamerican and Latin American studies, Ethnic studies, and Comparative Spanish Literatures, among other disciplines, this book is the drop that will ripple, creating all new lines of inquiry into understanding language use within the Americas and those uses’ ties to genocide, conquest, and cultural survivance.

Damián Baca

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C H A P T E R O N E

te-ixtli: *The “Other Face” of the Americas*

DAMIÁN BACA

*Are uxe' ojer tzij
waral K'iche' ub'i'.*

*Waral
xchiqatz'ib'aj wi,
xchiqatikib'a' wi ojer tzij,
utikarib'al
uxe'nab'al puch rnojel xb'an pa
ramaq' K'iche' winaq.*

*This is the root of the ancient word
of this place called Quiché.*

*Here
we shall write,
we shall plant the ancient word,
the origin
the beginning of all what has been done in the
land of our people.*

—*Popol Vuh*, Chapter 1

The Americas continue to contain the legacy of classical colonialism and remain tied to the economic dependencies of neocolonialism, so that the “post” of postcolonialism reflects more of a wish than a reality for too many of the Western Hemisphere. Since the time of Columbus, colonial agendas and policies have engendered their own rhetorics of justification and explanation. European modernity presumed a universal

hegemony over political ideology, cultural meanings, and historical narrative. This legacy can be heard today in the discourses of “advanced/primitive,” “development/underdevelopment,” “modern/premodern,” or “citizen/alien,” terms that organize geopolitical locations by their purported relationship to the vanguard narrative of Occidentalism. But rhetorical traditions of the Americas and the Caribbean evidence a rich discourse of critique of Anglo- and Eurocentric ideologies. In a real sense, modernity begins with the encounter of the “New World” and the creation of a new “Other Within,” so that rhetorical practices of the Americas stand in a unique position vis-à-vis the development of that modernity—and its concomitants of colonialism, of racialized subjectivities, of the crisis of European reason, and of late global capitalism. Argentine liberation philosopher Enrique Dussel points out that the more recent metanarratives of Western thought—postmodernism, transnationalism, and globalization—are themselves still mired in an Occidental teleology that imagines European and Anglo-American cultures to be the sources of historical advance, theoretical transformation, and literary vision.¹ Conversations in Rhetoric and Composition Studies that engage in these topics need to take notice and understand this critique.

Intellectuals of the Americas from various arenas of social life—from community coalitions, to academic critique, to religion, to art and culture—have resisted the hegemonic power of colonial discourses in the aftermath of 1492. But what is effective resistance? How is resistance intertwined with modification and accommodation? What are the strategies of adaptation without assimilation? Is it effective to try to “prove” the humanity and rationality of colonized peoples? Can pro-colonial forces be convinced by rational argumentation? When might a “defense” of indigenous cultures become exoticism? Can effective forms of resistance be propagated from commercialized cultural productions (e.g., poetry and popular art)? Given that no indigenous community is today free from Euro-American influence, what kind of autonomy or self-determination is possible? To the extent that diasporic and other new forms of identity are the product of colonialism, what are the “identity politics” of decolonial resistance? If the claims of universalism made on behalf of Occidental macro-narratives are bankrupt, are we left only with “local histories” and particularist politics? In an era of late global capitalism, when colonial power and market fundamentalism are inseparable, what counts as effective rhetoric? Writers of this book consider such questions, exploring new and old rhetorical strategies of cultural resistance to colonial power.

In addition to these guiding questions, we must also consider the predicament of academics presuming to speak for indigenous communities. Who might be authorized to do so? From whom should Rhetoric and Composition scholars learn? Historian Devon Abbott Mihesuah advises, "Non-Natives must take care that the voice they hear actually is Native. Within the academy, numerous 'wannabees' and 'marginal' Natives with little connection to their tribes publish with the claim of writing from an 'Indian perspective.'" ² Documented incidents of ethnic fraud and identity theft are serious matters. Grants, fellowships, conference travel awards, and even faculty positions, for example, are given to individuals with no connection or contact with the indigenous communities of which they claim affiliation. In place of restricting our attention to individual claims of indigeneity, perhaps we might consider a much larger collective of voices: which indigenous nations and communities recognize and claim these scholars as their own? We look forward to further interrogation of these pressing concerns. ³

Ultimately, accounting for historically grounded voices and communicative practices promotes a more inclusive and historically sound theory of how rhetoric is and has been practiced across regions, cultures, and migrations unique to the Americas and the Caribbean. Accounting for such practices, further, provides more accurate understandings of how indigenous artists and writers have responded and continue to respond to imperialist teleology and Western expansion. Urging scholars away from sources that reinforce Eurocentric perspectives of Pre-Columbian history, this collection advances a revision of colonial images of the Americas that have continued over the last 500 years. Focusing on rhetoric outside of the dominant and virtually exclusive Greco-Latin canon, our contributors look to the practices and traditions unique to Mesoamerica, México, Guatemala, Peru, Boriquén, Hawai'i, and the U.S./México borderlands, among other places within the Western Hemisphere.

The timeline referenced in this book's title follows the Epi-Olmec/Maya calendar, thereby evoking indigenous chronologies and cosmologies that our contributors engage. While the ancient 5,000 year calendrical cycle concludes in 2012 CE, the Epi-Olmec/Maya formation of time known as the Long Count certainly continues, just as temporal patterns and cosmologies of indigenous world cultures continue to speak actively to the past and simultaneously to the present. Indigenous temporal patterns can have advantages over linear conceptions of Western history. The discipline's myopic rhetorical history marches across the planet from East to West, from ancient Athens to the

present-day United States. But chronologies and knowledges emerging from the Americas potentially enact “new” possibilities. Grounding ourselves in the soil and soul⁴ of our own continent invites dialogic situations for thinking between co-evolutionary and parallel cultural traditions, without the baggage of Western teleologies.

I imagine a hermeneutical shift that would locate the colonization of rhetorical production at the center of disciplinary and postdisciplinary thought. Moreover, to comprehend a plurality of rhetorical practices, I advance this book collection as a theoretical paradigm through which competing yet interwoven histories and theories of rhetoric are foregrounded. This book is a textual site where divergent rationalities and memories converge, thereby inviting new ways to understand and perform rhetoric, history, and subjectivity. These admixtures provide a new vantage point to theorize complex cultural legacies of rhetorical practice—especially those rhetorical ancestries that have been excluded and denied by the colonial imaginary of Rhetoric and Composition Studies.

In Nahuatl, a common language throughout the Valley of Mexico and beyond, *te-ixtli* means “other face.”⁵ During the aftermath of the first European Conquests in the mid-sixteenth century, Nahuatl speakers began using this expression to give voice to themselves, to the newly emerging hemispheric legacy of becoming the “Other Within” Western civilization. As the transnational colonial transfer of civilizing missions attempted to eliminate all Pre-Columbian ways of life, such expressions began to materialize. *Nepantla*, another Nahuatl concept, refers to the interspace of feeling in between,⁶ the unique epistemological and textual spaces created between Indigenous, Iberian, and neo-African traditions. This book looks to the “other face,” the alterity of the Americas, the underside of Western Hemisphere, and the survivors of global colonialism.

Despite well-established Western feminist, neo-Marxist, and post-modern critiques of the Greco-Latin canon, Rhetoric and Composition scholarship has yet to engage in sustained investigations of communication practices among cultures unique to the Americas. For Athenian and Roman rhetoricians such as Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian, rhetoric was confined to speech acts aimed at persuading in political, forensic, or ceremonial environments. This edited collection, however, recognizes that every communicative act is tied to rhetorical production, and as such works to influence specific audiences to some action whether material or epistemological. Expanding the Greek-specific *Rhetorike* to include Pre- and Post-Columbian cultures of the Americas

poses numerous methodological obstacles. In *Mestiz@ Scripts, Digital Migrations, and the Territories of Writing* I address this very concern. The Pre-Columbian Americas cannot be conceived as having Athenian *Rhetorike*, yet conceptualizing the Americas as having lowercase “alternative rhetoric” presents a colonial negation. This is the problem with the concept of *Rhetorike* once we move across cultural borders. On the one hand, *Rhetorike* supposedly belongs to the West; on the other hand, lowercase and pluralized “rhetorics” are something that the Americas might have as objects to be studied under Western eyes. In either case, Western categories work to predetermine and fossilize the terms of debate.⁷

If the culturally provincial concept of *Rhetorike* is indeed the historically unavoidable point of origin, I propose the enactment of “thinking between” multiple means of identification, between the colonizing West and *te-ixtli*, the “other face” of the Americas. Crossing between comparative and conflicting communicative strategies creates symbolic spaces beyond the mere coming together of two halves. The strategy implied here involves thinking between the hierarchical tensions of Western and American traditions to embrace different ways of knowing and communicating, where individual and collective expressions merge.⁸ I have no investment in naïve attempts to reconstruct “authentic” Pre-Columbian epistemologies, and thus I cautiously defend the application of the term “rhetoric” while remaining attentive to potential colonial dangers in doing so, dangers that speak directly to current debates on globalization, empire, and assimilation. Contemporary problems related to scenarios of neoliberalism, transnationalism, migration, social movements, and cultural hybridity, moreover, cannot be appropriately analyzed without an understanding of the Americas. In this spirit, I now offer a brief chapter overview.

In “Rhetoric of the First ‘Indians’: The Tainos of the Second Voyage of Columbus,” Victor Villanueva opens the collection by looking to the first indigenous peoples of the Western Hemisphere that Columbus met, the ones he renamed “Indians,” the Taínos of the West Indies. The Taínos of the Greater Antilles thus became the first colonized people of the Western Hemisphere, with Puerto Rico remaining a colony to this day, perhaps the world’s oldest continual colony (although serving several colonizers: the Island-Carib people of the Lesser Antilles, the Spanish, and the U.S. Americans). Yet because of a widely held belief dating to 1540 CE that the Taínos of Puerto Rico (Boriquén) had been exterminated, nothing is known of the rhetorical ways of the original inhabitants of the island of Puerto Rico. But Villanueva asserts that

there are ways of coming to understand these rhetorics. With the second expedition to the “New World,” Columbus was accompanied by Dr. Diego Alvarez Chanca, the physician to Isabela and Fernando, and for this trip, the physician to “the Admiral” (Columbus). Dr. Alvarez recorded his eyewitness account of the ways of life of the inhabitants of Boriquén. These accounts were then supplemented by the writing of the well-known Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, whose father had also been on Columbus’s second voyage. Eight years after the second voyage, Columbus commissioned Fray Ramón Pané to return to Boriquén (whose name had been changed to la Isla de San Juan Bautista). Fray Ramón’s charge had been to record the language of the indigenous of the island. It was not until 1508, with the arrival of Ponce de León, that the island was occupied by the Europeans, thereby beginning the radical change in the language and rhetorics of the Taíno (with the renaming, yet again, of the island to Puerto Rico in 1521). Using the work of linguists whose studies of the language and language roots of the Taínos go only as far back as 1965 and the detailed notes of the first linguist, Fray Ramón, and the first ethnographers, Dr. Alvarez Chanca and Fray Bartolomé, Villanueva provides a first glimpse into the rhetorics of the original inhabitants of the world’s oldest colony and the Western Hemisphere’s first named “Indians.”

Following Villanueva, Erika Gisela Abad Merced shifts our attention to the ways in which rhetorics of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Puerto Rican nationalist leaders imitate the ongoing legacies of imperialism. Abad argues, specifically, that narratives of Puerto Rican national origin and origin stories of nation imitate the Judeo-Christian creation story. The propertied males imitate repressive authority figures while placing blame on secondary citizens, often women, for the nation’s limitations. A focus on key nineteenth-century leaders and ideologies demonstrates the essentialist gendered supremacy within dominant narratives of nationalism. Abad questions how these rhetorics fail to address the psychological effects of oppression because of the dissident narratives that are silenced.

“Spanish Scripts Colonize the Image: Inca Visual Rhetorics” examines how sixteenth-century chronicles written by native Andean authors such as Guamán Poma de Ayala uncover systems of record-keeping and communication in the early colonial Andes that combine alphabetic writing and Andean *visual rhetorics*. Studying texts produced by early native authors of the Americas, Rocío Quispe-Agnoli explains how native authors were able to assimilate the European alphabet rapidly and to develop new textualizations of their cultures *vis-à-vis* a rich,

sophisticated, and ongoing development of visual arts in the pre- and post-Hispanic Andean world. These chronicles lead Quispe-Agnoli to an exploration of the relationships between verbal and iconic textualizations found in the dialectics between Western practices such as alphabetic script, painting, sculpture, engravings, and maps and native Andean systems of information such as *quipus* and *tocapus*. Considering the dialectical nature of alphabetic script and Andean *visual literacies*, Quispe-Agnoli reviews two aspects of the rhetorical colonization of Andean societies: (1) the invasion of alphabetic writing in iconic images that depict the early colonial Andes by native authors and (2) the visual nature of alphabetic writing that is revealed in its contact with indigenous systems of communications from the Americas. In the early sixteenth century, European and Andean systems of communications made contact, opening spaces for hybrid textualizations. Examples of these spaces may be found in colonial Andean textiles, ceramics, coats of arms, public signs, and paper/ink. In addition, looking at the alphabetic script as a visual system of signs makes it equivalent to the Andean systems of communication and record-keeping. This approach to visual and verbal textualizations directly challenges the colonial myth that the Incas were a great but incomplete civilization because of their apparent lack of letters.

In "Translating Nahua Rhetoric: Sahagún's Nahua Subjects in Colonial Mexico," Cristián Roa de la Carrera examines fray Bernardino de Sahagún's compiling, collating, and translating of indigenous speeches as samples of Nahua moral philosophy within processes of cultural translation of indigenous rhetorical practices. These speeches came later to inform the development of classical Nahuatl employed by missionaries in sermons and devotional texts for purposes of evangelization. Roa de la Carrera explores the political implications that this study of indigenous rhetoric has within his larger encyclopedic project to produce an all-encompassing source on Nahua life and language and its application to the production of Judeo-Christian texts in Nahuatl. Readers are urged to consider the impact that cultural translation, and more particularly European appropriations of indigenous rhetoric and speech, had in the development of what scholars have termed Nahua Christianity, that is, Christian practice informed by Nahua subjectivity and cultural categories. Roa de la Carrera focuses on the displacements involved in the changing loci of enunciation between Nahua and Christian rhetorical performances to interrogate how cultural categories, beliefs, or forms of rhetorical entitlement are transformed through the process of appropriation and reinscription

of linguistic and rhetorical practices. This work opens possibilities for rethinking how cultural translations of rhetorical practice might enable or foreclose various forms of agency and subjectivity, as well as how we are to assess the political and cultural implications behind such processes.

“Practicing Methods in Ancient Cultural Rhetorics: Uncovering Rhetorical Action in Moche Burial Rituals” asserts that when studying nonverbal cultural artifacts from beyond the Greco-Roman rhetorical traditions, scholars must listen to the embodied discourse in the ancient practices themselves to uncover the rhetorical actions of those very practices. Extending W. J. T. Mitchell’s theory that images have a meta-language of their own, Laurie Gries contends that we can hear those artifacts speak to us if we listen close enough and that in the hearing we are able to render the terms with which we can begin to uncover rhetorical actions contained within the meta-language. To illustrate, Gries turns to ancient royal tombs of Moche elite rulers, tombs constructed on the northern coast of Peru between 100 and 800 CE. She describes the ritual symbolic construction of the burial chambers evident in the intentional placement of certain artifacts, such as human bodies, earthenware, and gold and silver ornaments. Gries argues that the tombs comprise a rhetorical genre containing tropes of *duality*, *concealment*, and *inversion*. The chapter ends with a caution on the degree to which rhetoricians can appropriate the purposes and meanings of these ancient rhetorical traditions, asking that we move slowly and carefully so as to let those traditions reveal their rhetorical function.

In “Rhetoric and Resistance in Hawai’i: How Silenced Voices Speak Out in Colonial Contexts” Georganne Nordstrom asserts that in a colonized locations such as Hawai’i, rhetorical strategies not easily identifiable in “classical” rhetorical frames have been employed as acts of resistance to dominant Euro-American discourse. While indigenous peoples have been most obviously oppressed and disenfranchised in Hawai’i, immigrant settlers brought in to work on the plantations also experienced marginalization. Thus Nordstrom examines the ways in which the three authors writing at different periods over the last 150 years in Hawai’i have consciously employed particular rhetorical strategies to disrupt colonial narratives of the dominant culture. Looking to *The Queen’s Songbook* by Queen Lili’uokalani, the last reigning monarch of Hawai’i, Nordstrom points to the traditional Hawaiian rhetorical strategy of *kaona* in songs written during the last four decades of the nineteenth century to send messages of resistance

to her people before and after the overthrow of the monarchy. Next, Nordstrom provides an analysis of Milton Murayama's *All I Asking for Is My Body*, written in 1959, which establishes a particular ethos by using Pidgin English—Hawai'i's creolized English—to affirm the experiences and identity of plantation-era immigrant workers in Hawai'i. This is followed by a discussion of Hawaiian scholar Noenoe Silva's 2004 *Aloha Betrayed: Native Hawaiian Resistance to American Colonialism*, which demonstrates how her book works rhetorically to resist the dominant discourse in both content and form—both her analysis of the ways Hawaiians used Hawaiian literary traditions to resist the encroachment by Western settlers as well as her own act of writing about these forms of protest as resistance. Particularly in colonized locations, the kinds of resistance recognized in Western epistemological frames, the essay or physical protest for example, can be impossible either because of the fear of physical violent repercussions or because cultures operating within ideological frames other than the dominant traditionally negotiate resistance differently.

Damián Baca's "Rhetoric, Interrupted: La Malinche and *Nepantlisma*" proposes decolonial possibilities of La Malinche, Hernan Cortés' sexual slave and translator. La Malinche, more accurately known as Malinalli and Malintzin Tenepal, has become a dominant historical figure of sexual betrayal and Christian assimilation, placed at the center of the defeat of the Aztec empire. Baca builds upon Chicana and Chicano scholars who have reinvented Malinche as an empowering symbol of agency and resistance. In this context, Malinche's rhetorical exchanges of intermediacy and border crossing may be intertwined with *Nepantlisma*, the Nahuatl articulation of being torn between ways and the space between two oceans. Baca synthesizes key movements and symbols that are enacted within colonial structures of power with attention to resistance and revisions of the hierarchical logic of imperial Christendom. Specifically, he examines how Malinche strategically employs both Aztec and Roman Catholic cosmologies, thereby signifying adaptation and survival—not betrayal—of Mesoamerican cultures. Presenting Malinche's *Nepantlisma* as rhetorical strategy provides a revised account not only of the practices at the time of the conquest, and before, but also of the evolution of mestizaje, a "gradual and cautious syncretism" that has been practiced ever since. This revised history reads both the differences and similarities that exist between Mesoamerican and European worlds.

There are but a few surviving examples of the Mesoamerican books of fate, the graphic texts that diviners used to understand time and

the world of the supernatural entities that controlled it. The books of fate were deemed a threat to the religious aims of the Spanish friars, and they were among the first books to be burned. Unlike those that accounted for historical events, these books spoke of the “invisible world,” or the world of “cosmic and spirit forces” (Hill Boone). The word *invisible* is central to the following chapter, “In Search of the Invisible World: Uncovering Mesoamerican Rhetoric in Contemporary Mexico,” insofar as contemporary rhetorics of Mesoamerican cosmologies seek to make the invisible visible. The works Tracy Brandenburg discusses include the painting of the Martyrs of Cojonos, a portrait of two Zapotec martyrs who were beatified by Pope John Paul II in 2002. This portrait, which is currently displayed in the cathedral in Oaxaca City, appears to be a straightforward representation of the two men: they wear humble clothing and each carries a cross, illustrating their allegiance to the Catholic Church. The artist of this work, however, serves as a modern-day diviner, revealing layers of rhetorical meaning, including a reading that views the two martyrs as the deities Tezcatlipoca and Quetzalcoatl, each represented respectively by a small black and red circle in the center of each of their crosses. Much like the books of fate that illustrated the forces of the cosmos with rhetorics that concealed meaning, the Oaxacan artist obscures meaning as well. Brandenburg traces the painting from its commission to its reconfiguration for mass-consumption, where we find that the image has been altered so that the red and the black (a Mesoamerican metaphor for rhetoric) are replaced with a Spanish cross. The chapter illustrates how the struggle for symbols, souls, and writing systems persists, and that some books are still dangerous.

Building upon Brandenburg’s chapter, Dylan A. T. Miner’s “‘When They Awaken’: Indigeneity, Miscegenation, and Anticolonial Visuality” investigates the way in which visual practices of indigenous projects are always entwined in multiple discursive fields. Therefore, aboriginal visual rhetorics transgress the limitations of disciplinary knowledge and the coloniality of biological racism through a particular visual language. By focusing on visual rhetoric, Miner provides a critical analysis of the discourses of *mestizaje* (*métissage* in the Francophonie) and indigeneity, while critically looking at the efficacy of using racializing discourses to discuss cultural practices. Although migrating throughout the environs of Turtle Island (or Ixachilan in the Nahuatl), Miner pays particular attention to the rhetorical practices of the Chicana/o and Métis (Mixed-blood Canadian) communities. He approaches contemporary visual rhetorics among detribalized aboriginal populations

and demonstrates the manner that the rhetorical arts function as an anticolonial device. Evoking the seminal texts of Frantz Fanon as well as Howard Adams and Taiaiake Alfred, Miner discusses the rhetorical strategies apparent in these objects and practices. Using indigenous methodologies and epistemologies, the chapter is divided into six sections based on the cardinal directions (east, west, north, south, underworld, and skyworld). Overall, Miner provides an investigation of contemporary indigenous visual rhetoric as a dialectic and dialogic site where colonialism may be confronted, disavowed, and overcome.

Laura E. Pérez’ “Spirit Glyphs: Reimagining Art and Artist in the Work of Chicana Tlamatinime” advances an extensive discussion of Post-Columbian “hybrid spiritualities” and their decolonizing politics and aesthetics. Providing a rich interpretive framework, Pérez describes how indigenous Chicana artists invoke a culturally hybrid spirituality to challenge present-day forces of racism, bigotry, and misogyny. Such decolonial spiritualities make use of, and often radically rework, pre-Columbian Mesoamerican and other non-Western notions of writing/art/art-making, and they struggle to create liberating versions of familiar iconography such as the Virgin of Guadalupe and the Sacred Heart. Filled with representations of spirituality and allusions to non-Western visual and cultural traditions, Pérez shows how the work of these Chicana artists is a vital contribution to a more inclusive canon of rhetorical arts across the Americas.

Drawing from the U.S.–Mexico border of El Paso, Texas, and Juarez, Mexico, John Scenters-Zapico shares the results of a four-year study of the social, economic, cultural, and political factors that have shaped the ways 118 participants born between 1920 and 2001 have learned to use technology. The rhetorical notions of sponsors—those who teach, grant, and restrict access to an education involving technology—and gateways—the actual sites where people have access and learn technology—become critical in understanding how an array of exigencies influences who becomes electronically literate and where.

From U.S.–Mexico stories and data on literacy, literacy access, and border education gathered over the last four years by surveying and interviewing some of the 118 Latino/a participants, two important issues came to the forefront: gateways and sponsors are complex variables that shape how people here learn to become electronically literate. In addition, traditional formulations of gateway and sponsor are not as clear-cut as we may assume and are in need of expansion. Scenters-Zapico begins to shed light on how these Latino/as born between 1920 and 2001 learned and had access—or not—to electronic literacy

sponsors and gateways over the last 79 years both in and around the Mexico-U.S. borderlands.

Finally, in the spirit of “in xochitl in cuicatl,” the Nahuatl phrase for poetics, Rafael Jesús González closes this book collection with “Las Cobijas/The Blankets,” a bilingual narrative that illustrates a wise humility that is at once matrilineal and material, born of a cuencentenary of difficult survival. Collectively, these chapters make the case that rhetorics of the Americas significantly challenge the vanguard narrative of Occidentalism. Beyond European modernity, a plurality of rhetorical strategies and points of origin are possible. Yet neocolonial powers continue to de-authorize the Americas within a largely unquestioned intellectual dichotomy in higher education: that of “high” and “low” theory. For example, “high” theories that inform “Classical Rhetoric” and “Modern Rhetorical Theory” hold an institutional and historical ethos that is denied to those of the Americas. Likewise, in rhetoric curricula at every level, the Americas hold little academic importance when placed next to modes of Athenian and Roman argumentation. Rhetoric and Composition’s macro-narrative “from Ancient Greece to Modern America” continues to imagine the origins of rational thought and communication in the minds of Western thinkers. This foundational myth signifies a colonial supremacy that is incompatible with the very possibility of achieving cultural pluralities. At the same time, a mere inclusion of the scholarship in this book would only add to the content of an Occidentalist narrative and not reform the construction of the narrative itself. Even the very concepts of “alternative rhetorics” and “rhetorics of difference” are already embedded in the Anglo- and Euro-centered idea of modernity. Therefore, moves toward decolonizing the field’s horizons, toward moving beyond its cultural and epistemological flaws, require rhetorical mediations that operate out of Western reason, mediations that originate from *te-ixtli*, from the voices, testimonies, communicative strategies, and perspectives of the colonized. These strategic moves not only affirm our own ideologies, cultural meanings, and historical narratives; but they also assert that the colonial foundations of the West and its presumptions of universal hegemony must be rethought and retold. These are the activities that may bring us toward “new” rhetorics and rhetorical inquiries across the Americas, the Caribbean, and beyond.

The *Popul Vuh*, possibly the oldest “book” in the Americas and the one that many understand as part of their collective ancestry, records that the Maya feared a scarcity of fire. A mid-sixteenth-century Quiché interpretation of the ancient text was more recently given an English translation:

And they did not have fire. Only the people of Tohil had it. He was the god of tribes which first created fire . . . “Ah, we have no fire yet! We shall die of cold,” they said. Then Tohil said to them: “Do not worry! Yours shall be the lost fire that is talked of. Yours shall be what is spoken of as lost fire,” Tohil said to them.⁹

Our often concealed, slow burn; *te-ixtli*, the “other face” of the Americas, will not perish.

Notes

1. See Dussel.
2. Mihesuah, 7.
3. We are naturally attentive to the lived experiences and perspectives of scholars with tribal enrollment and affiliation. See the Association of American Indian and Alaska Native Professors, Ellen Cushman, P. Jane Hafen, Gordon Henry, and Devon Abbott Mihesuah.
4. See Anzaldúa.
5. León-Portilla, 13.
6. See Anzaldúa, Baca, and León-Portilla.
7. Baca, Chapter 1.
8. Baca, Chapter 2.
9. Tedlock, 153.

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CHAPTER TWO

Rhetoric of the First “Indians”: The Taínos of the Second Voyage of Columbus

VICTOR VILLANUEVA

This isn't an essay, not a full-blown chapter. It is an opening, Introduction-Part-Two. It tells very little of the rhetoric of the first “Indians.” We cannot know it, really. But this opening tells of the language, the memory that lives on, the people lost and nearly forgotten but for the language, and the people who call each other ¡Boricua!, memory of an Island's first name. And even in exile, victims of diasporic disappearance, we hold on to this identity. Some have said that we have a common language heritage with the Chican Ostionoid, the ancestors of the Chicanos; some say we have a common language with the Hopi and the people of the U.S. Southwest.¹ Maybe. But the language of Americans is tied to the language of the Taínos. We are—all of us of the globe these days—tied to the Taíno in our language. And as we enter into the influences of the peoples of this hemisphere, we must remember the first the Europeans met, kidnapped, enslaved, and announced as dead. These are my people.

The first indigenous peoples of the Western Hemisphere that Columbus met, the ones he named “Indians” were the Taínos of the West Indies, those of Hispaniola (which the Taínos named Haiti) in the first voyage, and those of Puerto Rico (Boriquén) during the second.² Columbus' second trip was a huge affair, with 17 ships and 1200 all-male passengers. Among those passengers was Dr. Diego Alvarez Chanca, the physician to Isabela and Fernando, and for this trip, the physician to “the Admiral” (Columbus).

Dr. Alvarez recorded his eyewitness account of the ways of life of the inhabitants of Boriquén. These accounts were then supplemented by the writing of Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, whose father had also been on Columbus's second voyage. Eight years after the second voyage, Columbus commissioned Fray Ramón Pané to return to Boriquén (whose name had been changed to la Isla de San Juan Bautista, in contemporary Spanish—Sanct Juan Baptista in the Spanish of the time). Fray Ramón's charge had been to record the language of the indigenous of the island. What follows relies on these documents.

What follows, then, is a brief story. It is drawn from research that traces the Taínos from their linguistic birthplace in the Amazons, where a proto-Arawakan language first appears, up through the continent now called South America, to the Northeast corner of South America, into the Antilles. There, several linguistic and cultural groups form: The Island-Caribs, the Eastern Taíno, the Classic Taíno, Western Taíno, and the Guanahatabey of Western Cuba. The Classic Taíno occupied the greater windward area of Cuba, all of Hispaniola, and Puerto Rico.

The stories are told of the people from what would be Florida escaping to the islands of their East. And that story appears true. Deep within the ground of the Greater Antilles are the remains of the Northern People and the remains of people of Africa. It is a commonplace that Columbus knew of African presence in the "New World." The Americans of the Southeast portion of what is now the United States and of Africans before the slave trade are a part of a story of this hemisphere. But it is not the story of the Taíno.

The language roots of the Taíno tell of a people of the Amazon basin. Biological remains tell also of features in common with the Taíno. The people who believe they were born of Sun and the Moon in a cave on the island of Hispaniola carried a word, *Shingu*,³ which refers to the Amazon River. So a people of the Amazon ventured by the Río Negro, through the Casiquiare Canal, down the Orinoco River, eventually coming to the northeasterly tip of the continent, to a string of islands that Columbus would name The Eleven Thousand Virgins. The language of these people would be Arawak, and later, Lokono, the language of today's Guyana and Trinidad. Yet some would not stop there. They built boats of hollowed trees, *kanoa* in Taíno, took them up the islands, pass the Islands of the Virgins to Puerto Rico, Hispaniola, and Cuba, with a few venturing up to the Bahamas. And these people's language broke from the Arawak/Lakona and became Taíno, about the time of the break from BCE to CE, the time Europe marks as the birth of Jesus.

The people, Taíno, created a culture. There was an origin story: how the people were born in a cave, and how the guard of the cave fell asleep, failing to mark the dawn, and the sun took him away, and how others who left the cave to fish would be turned into trees, and the treeless place they called *sabána*, acquired trees, *jobos*, the fruit of the Island still, the ambarella in English. And there was a god, an immortal, invisible, whose name is Yúcahu Vagua Maorocotí. He was of no beginning and no end but who had a mother, Atabey. And Man is the first human creation; and some of the men tied Inriri to their bodies, birds that bore holes in tree trunks, so that their “branch” might be whittled and thereby become women. And since man and woman were fundamentally the same, both ruled, so that there was patriarchy and matriarchy, depending on who rose to *cacique* from the *nitáino*, leader from those of the ruling class, a ruler of the group, some groups amounting to approximately 3,000 people on Boriquén. And heredity was marked by the line of women—sometimes matriarchal; always matrilineal. Men and women kept their hair long in back with bangs in front, and the men would wear a short skirt, as would the women after they married, and they’d decorate themselves with *cibas*, beads made of stone, tied to their arms and necks, and wear *guanines*, a golden crest worn by the *cacique* or smaller golden ornaments hanging from earlobes, the ears pierced when young.

The Taíno lived on fish and fruit and tubers and birds and lizards. And they grew squash and pineapple and peppers and cashews and especially, after yucca, *batata*, sweet potatoes. They would cook such things over a fire they called *barbacoa*. And on religious occasions, they would inhale *tabaco*, also called *cogioba*, and worship the god Yúcahu and Atabey, the god of the cassava and his mother.

They lived in organized communities called *yucayeques*. Round houses that would accommodate from fifteen to thirty of the common folk. The insides were decorated and contained alters to the gods, and their beds, made of cotton and hemp and palm, strung between poles. The beds were called *hamaca*. The *cacique* and his or her family were distinguished in having a rectangular home that opened into the town plaza—an open field, most often round, used for religious ceremonies, cultural events, and especially the game they called *batey*, played with a stick and a rubber ball. And when there would come the Center of Wind, the *huraca’n*, people would seek the caves, then return to rebuild and to continue.

And there were occasional wars, mainly against the Island Caribs, who would raid the Taíno, mainly to take their women, so that the