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Toward a Genealogy of *Mestizaje*: Rethinking Race in Colonial Mexico

By

Daniel Joseph Nemser

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Hispanic Languages and Literatures

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor José Rabasa, Chair

Professor Estelle Tarica

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Toward a Genealogy of *Mestizaje*: Rethinking Race in Colonial Mexico

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Daniel Joseph Nemser

Abstract

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The history of race in Latin America is commonly glossed as *mestizaje*, a phenomenon itself defined as the movement from original purity into increasing racial or cultural mixing. This dissertation tells a different story: it investigates and historicizes particular formations of mixing and purity, the operations through which they are produced and rationalized, and the political logics according to which they are deployed. I examine three historical moments marked by the specter of racial insurgency: “Indian” uprisings (1692), “mestizo” rebellions (1566-1567), and “black” conspiracies (1612). As eruptions of racialized paranoia, these episodes of political crisis in and around what Ángel Rama calls the colonial “lettered city” generate a rich archive of discourse on bodies and boundaries. By analyzing these moments, I argue that racial discourse is always already mediated by and articulated through particular categories of mixing and purity which, like race, are themselves contested and contingent. At times, race is best seen through sideways glances that reveal the mechanisms of its production at the margins. Mixing and purity are two modalities of a single operation, and it is in the play between them that racial formations emerge.

Colonial actors perceived, organized, and intervened in the world around them through a grid of intelligibility structured by categories of mixing and purity. These categories were embedded in, permeated, and tied together the human body and the material world. Divergent formations of mixing and purity filled and in many ways structured debates over the chemical composition of beverages like *pulque*, a traditional indigenous alcohol made from the fermented juice of the maguey plant; the built environment and segregated layout of the cityscape; the Colegio de Niños Mestizos in Mexico City, dedicated to converting mestizo boys into missionary priests fluent in indigenous languages; and the nature of black blood and Nahua conceptualizations of lineage. These debates, intensified by crisis, demonstrate that mixing and purity were far from self-evident but emerged only through conflict, even among “lettered” elites. They also generate particular modes of engaging with the colonial world, from state interventions and regulatory mechanisms to alternative solidarities rooted in different kinds of political projects and imaginaries. Mixing and purity operate as tactics and strategies, and the genealogy of *mestizaje* maps the field of conflict on which they are deployed.

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Introduction

1921 / From the History of Race to a Genealogy of Mestizaje

The war that is going on beneath order and peace, the war that undermines our society and divides it in a binary mode is, basically, a race war. At a very early stage, we find the basic elements that make the war possible, and then ensure its continuation, pursuit, and development: ethnic differences, differences between languages, different degrees of force, vigor, energy, and violence; the differences between savagery and barbarism; the conquest and subjugation of one race by another.

--Michel Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*

Race demands a history, both because it is a subject urgent and vast, and because its own logic is so closely akin to that of the disciplines (etymology, genealogy, history) with which we study the persistence of humanity in time.

--David Nirenberg, "Was There Race Before Modernity?"

How do we tell the history of race in Latin America? This is a broad question that intersects and articulates with global shifts—the history of modernity, capitalism, the state form, and subjectivity, as well as the nature of race beyond the geographic and disciplinary boundaries that we today call Latin America. In the Latin American context in particular, the history of race is commonly glossed as *mestizaje*, a process or phenomenon itself defined as the racial or cultural mixing of entities that had previously been pure. It has a starting point—the colonial “encounter”—and follows a trajectory of growth along which important breaks can be identified—the slave trade, Enlightenment science, or the wars of independence, to name a few examples. The story I want to tell here, however, is somewhat different: it is an investigation into the meaning of particular mixings and purities, the operations through which they are produced and rationalized, and the political logics according to which they are deployed. It is an incomplete and partial account, stitched together from fragments, moments, and episodes in which particular discourses of identity are imagined and adapted, reformulated and imposed, adopted and contested, within specific fields or configurations of power relations. Each chapter for this reason takes as its point of departure a concrete historical moment identified by a conventional shorthand—a year—and marked by the specter of racial insurgency. “Indian” uprisings (1692), “mestizo” rebellions (1566-1567), and “black” conspiracies (1612) mark eruptions of racialized paranoia and thus constitute a detailed though unstable and confused archive of boundaries, contours, essences, meanings—they are discourses, in short, of racialization.

In this introduction, I want to lay out three overlapping moves that shape my approach. First, I offer a critique of the periodization of race, an operation that tends to enable certain kinds of readings while inserting them into political programs with unintended or unforeseen consequences. But if Fredric Jameson's maxim is correct and "we cannot not periodize," then what is at stake is not a disavowal of periodization as such but the recognition, rather, of the possibility for dwelling simultaneously in multiple periodizing worlds or temporalities.¹ Not that, as academics, we are anything like the colonial subaltern, who, as José Rabasa observes, "must know how to dwell in at least two worlds."² But the epistemic violence of periodization—its twinned operations of fragmentation and homogenization—requires us at least to consider the alternative of holding multiple, overlapping temporalities in mind simultaneously, recognizing their necessarily incomplete and partial nature while upholding them for precisely that reason.³

Second, following Foucault, I consider the structural homology between the idea of race and the idea of history to outline a genealogical approach that replaces the search for the totalizing origin with the cultivation and exploration of "every beginning": not only the continuities and developments but also the breaks, reversals, and disjunctures through which both race and history are imagined. I adopt this fragmented perspective on purpose as a way of complicating and frustrating the articulation of the kinds of stories we inevitably find ourselves wanting to tell. Third, I show how the category of race has a logic that tends to overdetermine the kinds of readings we can offer for its history, and propose that it be decentered. Indeed, notions of race are always already articulated with reference to categories of mixing and purity which, like race, are themselves contested and contingent. By focusing on the shifting formations of mixing and purity and being attentive to the relationship between them, we can begin to conceptualize not a history of race as such but a genealogy of *mestizaje*.

Although I am explicitly attempting to challenge what we could call, to borrow a formulation from Hayden White, the content of periodization's form, this project nevertheless

¹ Fredric Jameson, *A Singular Modernity: Essay on the Ontology of the Present* (London: Verso, 2002), 29.

² For Rabasa, this "plurality of worlds comprising modern and nonmodern forms of life" does not refer to a new syncretic form or finished product, but rather the coexistence and interpenetration of spaces that in themselves are always already hybrid. See José Rabasa, *Without History: Subaltern Studies, the Zapatista Insurgency, and the Specter of History* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010), 69, 67. I return to the idea of the production of new purities below in my reading of Vasconcelos.

³ In many ways the simultaneous deployment of multiple temporalities that I am proposing here resonates with the "synoptic approach" to history advanced by William Taylor: "By 'synoptic approach,' I mean keeping in mind and under study as many of the actors, dimensions, and primary sources of an episode or structure as I can manage, without claiming that there will be a sum total, a Braudelian *histoire totale*, or very definite conclusions. I still find great merit in the aim of early *Annales* historians—going back to Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre—to combine material, documentary, and theoretical approaches to the past. By reckoning with many contexts, relationships, and sources, one can hope to recognize which were salient in a particular situation, but context does not have to mean wholeness." See William B. Taylor, "Two Shrines of the Cristo Renovado: Religion and Peasant Politics in Late Colonial Mexico," *The American Historical Review* 110.4 (October 2005): par. 45. Cf. Cooper on historical temporality as "lumpy": "Historical time is lumpy in another sense—across different conceptions of temporality held by different people at the same moment. But if time is plural, it is not divided into self-contained compartments. . . . [I]n order to understand how ideas of history were shaped by colonialism, one has to understand colonization and challenges to it over time. The critical insistence that historians examine their own concepts of time is valuable, but so too is the historian's insistence on attention to process, on how what happens at one moment in time configures possibilities and constraints on what can happen the next." Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 21-22.

constitutes an intervention in the field of colonial (Latin American) studies. What is evidently a tension can also be productive. If every history of race is recognized as necessarily incomplete, provisional, and limited—and as such an ideological intervention—we are forced to think past and present simultaneously, to insert ourselves explicitly into the construction of our arguments and to question the mechanisms by which academic disciplines themselves shape the kinds of stories we can tell. In other words, my interest is not in proving that the colonial period marks the “emergence” of modern race, but in tracing the political implications of making such an argument. To put it another way, the central question is not “what is the colonial history of race?” (although I certainly hope it can provide some insight) but rather “why is the colonial period so important for the historiography of race?” The answer, of course, is that the colonial period serves a foundational role, constituting in one way or another the origin from or against which the narrative trajectory of race takes shape. If the work of genealogy is to disrupt the logic or, as Foucault put it, “to dispel the chimeras of the origin,” then my intention here is precisely to problematize the conceptualization of colonial history as origin.⁴

1. *Periodization*

. . . knowledge is not made for understanding; it is made for cutting.

--Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History”

Parallel to and embedded in other macrohistorical narratives (of modernity, capitalism, the state form, subjectivity, and so on), global histories of race inevitably turn on *periodizing gestures*. These gestures seek to identify points of historical rupture, turning points or “origins” that correspond to a shift in (among other things) the grid of intelligibility through which nature, identity, and difference are seen, organized, and represented. Periodization therefore has little to do with chronology—rather, it is a technology of classification, an operation that creates the conditions of possibility for acts of naming, classifying, defining.⁵ Arguments invested in the periodization of race are always contentious, to say the least. Some scholars locate the origin of race—“modern,” “true,” “scientific” race—in the nineteenth century, with the rise of evolutionary theory and social Darwinism; others point to the eighteenth, with Linnaeus and the taxonomic urge of the Enlightenment; still others insist on the early seventeenth, with the rise of empiricism, or the boom of the Iberian slave trade and the rise of the plantation economy in the Indies; others point to the sixteenth with its contentious debates about the humanity of the Amerindian; many, of course, look specifically to 1492 as the precise point of origin of a modern/colonial world order founded on racial principles of European superiority. And so on—“modernities,” writes Jameson, “fly thick and fast.”⁶ Following Ann Laura Stoler, what interests

⁴ Michel Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. D. F. Bouchard (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), 144.

⁵ In *The Order of Things*, Michel Foucault argues that it is with a notion of “classified time” and a “squared and spatialized development” that the discipline of history emerges in the nineteenth century. See Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* *The Order of Things* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 132.

⁶ Jameson’s description of the corresponding narratives of the rupture that inaugurates “modernity” generally focuses on European philosophy and notions of subjectivity and consciousness. Citing Enrique Dussel, however, he

me here is less the “accuracy” of these individual readings than the simple fact that so many—and such different—responses are possible.⁷

Periodization is never a neutral or innocent gesture—it is always ideological. It operates through fragmentation and homogenization, the production of stable, coherent temporal blocs for which certain analytic or descriptive utterances “make sense” and others do not. It turns, in other words, on anachronism, whose primary “cut,” to use Foucault’s terminology, is that which frees the present from the weighty baggage of the past. Anachronism is integral to what Dipesh Chakrabarty calls the “historicist sensibility” that is simultaneously caught up in a political project based on “our search for social justice.”⁸ Historicism’s blade strips off the grimy residue of the past in an effort to render a streamlined and sanitized now, in the process giving way to teleological narratives of liberation or redemption that declare “look how bad things *used to be*” and conclude, implicitly or otherwise, with a “look how good they are *now*.” In the United States, for example, the recent election of Barack Obama led many in the corporate media to speculate that a new “post-racial” era had arrived—finally the legacy of slavery had been overcome. Alternately, however, introducing the historical break enables another narrative that is perhaps more critical but equally subject to the same historicist logic. In this formulation, “modern” race is the most violent, the most exclusionary, the most effective discourse of power—this is the modernity whose cold, calculating logic enables the genocidal efficiency of the Holocaust.⁹ In this way, historicism paradoxically produces the conditions for both the glorification and the condemnation of the present.¹⁰ In each case, however, the underlying logic of periodization is the same: it is the historicist operation (“that was then; this is now”) that turns on a radical break.

The urge to codify anachronism invades other political projects as well. To identify an origin, as we will see below, is to decipher its essence. By this logic, the periodization of race

acknowledges the conquest of the Americas in this genealogy as containing “a significant new element of modernity.” Jameson, *A Singular Modernity*, 31-32.

⁷ “Focused on the social construction of racial taxonomies and their naturalization, some have sought to identify the convergence of racisms with specific labor regimes: with slavery, with expanding capitalism, or with the bureaucratic normalizing technologies of modern states. Some have identified racism not as an aberrant feature of, and exception to, the establishment of liberalism and democratic rights but as a founding principle of them. Others have argued that 1800 not the 1600s marks racism’s emergence, identifying its critical articulation with nationalism and the ascendancy of bourgeois hegemony in its modern form. My interest is less in the ‘accuracy’ of these different datings than in their plurality and why such a range is possible.” Ann Laura Stoler, “Racial Histories and their Regimes of Truth,” *Political Power and Social Theory* 11 (1997): 185; also see her more expansive review of the literature on the history of race, 187-89. Similarly, Marshall Brown argues that “Too often earlier discussions have concerned the truth or falsity, reality or fictionality, of period names and designations, the correctness or incorrectness of their boundary determinations, the inclusiveness or exclusiveness of their coverage. All such questions presume that periodization concerns knowledge. But it doesn’t; it concerns thought, which is the other of knowledge.” Marshall Brown, “Periods and Resistances,” *MLQ: Modern Language Quarterly* 62.4 (2001): 315.

⁸ Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 248. Cf. Jameson, *A Singular Modernity*, 24-25; Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 10: “the word [modern] is always being thrown into the middle of a fight, a quarrel where there are winners and losers, Ancients and Moderns.”

⁹ Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989).

¹⁰ “Ironically, viewed from the angle of race, progression is obviously a regression—the fact that slavery is part of a modern sensibility makes it difficult to think about the movement of history as ‘progress.’” Loomba, “Periodization, Race, and Global Contact,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 37.3 (Fall 2007): 597.

constitutes part of a line of argumentation that seeks to define the concept of race itself. If race emerges in the sixteenth century with the Spanish conquest of the Americas, then the critical element, the object requiring critique and analysis, is colonialism itself—a decolonial politics of the present is only a short step away. On the other hand, if race emerges in the eighteenth century with the rise of scientific discourses for apprehending the natural world, then the target may be scientific knowledge itself. And if race emerges in the nineteenth century as a function or element of processes of nation building, then it is the nation-state that deserves our attention. Inasmuch as Chakrabarty’s primary interest is history as an academic discipline, furthermore, the politics of anachronism become visible at a more local level. For periodization not only supports projects that are programmatically political but, in the context of the academy, erects and reinforces disciplinary boundaries as well. These are parallel moves. The temporal “cutting” of periodization corresponds to a disciplinary or spatial “cutting” aimed at producing newly authoritative discourses with which to apprehend race. In this sense, to return to Foucault, historical knowledge is intended not to produce new understandings of race but to codify a regulatory apparatus that mediates the possibility of discourse itself—what can and cannot be said, who can and cannot say it.

A brief outline of two variations on the theme of the emergence of race in colonial Latin America will help to clarify this line of argumentation. The first—no doubt one of the most common—invokes the paradigmatic year of 1492 in order to connect the origin of race, along with the starting point of modernity, with the rise of European colonial expansion. For Tzvetan Todorov, no date is “more suitable, in order to mark the beginning of the modern era, than the year 1492, the year Columbus crosses the Atlantic Ocean. We are all the direct descendants of Columbus, it is with him that our genealogy begins, insofar as the word *beginning* has a meaning.”¹¹ It is worth noting that Todorov’s language of genealogical descent too lends itself particularly well to a history of race, even more so in the context of *mestizaje* narratives that often turn on tracing the enduring presence of Spanishness-whiteness across time. In reality, of course, the salience of 1492 extends beyond Columbus and the so-called “discovery” to include the *reconquista* of the Iberian peninsula from the Moors, the expulsion of the Jews, and even the publication of Nebrija’s vernacular grammar with its infamous reference to the intimate relation between language and empire. Through this striking convergence of events, the stage is set for what Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano calls the “twofold historical movement” that produces the modern nation-state: on one hand, the internal colonization of territories inhabited by people identified as different than the colonizers; at the same time, the external colonization of territories considered outside of those belonging to the colonizers.¹²

Along with other scholars working with world-systems theory, Quijano’s point of origin for the global history of race situates the Americas at the very center: “The idea of race, in its

¹¹ Tzvetan Todorov, *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: HarperPerennial, 1992), 5. David Wallace questions Todorov’s periodization, suggesting that Columbus is less beginning than midpoint, “a figure of ‘our’ genealogical middle.” See Wallace, *Premodern Places: Calais to Surinam, Chaucer to Aphra Behn* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing 2004), 221. On the uses of 1492 in the academy, harnessed to shore up disciplinary boundaries, historiography, and literary periodization in Hispanic studies, see Barbara Fuchs, “1492 and the Cleaving of Hispanism,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 37.3 (Fall 2007): 493-510.

¹² Aníbal Quijano, “Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America,” *Nepantla: Views from the South* 1.3 (2000): 558.

modern meaning, does not have a known history before the colonization of America.”¹³ The conquest sets into motion the processes of colonial accumulation that are necessarily tied to the invention of categories of race as a means of justifying their concordant domination and exploitation. Inasmuch as the categories of race invented during the colonial period continue to dominate representations of Latin America today, race constitutes a structural component of what Quijano calls the “coloniality of power.” For these scholars, race involves the production, imposition, and normalization of hierarchical regimes of classification organized in relation to a particular locus of enunciation.¹⁴ What makes these colonial formations of race “modern” is not a connection with genetics or skin color, but precisely the global context in which it is deployed and the economic purposes to which it is put. Race is inseparable from capitalism and colonialism: “Dating from the very beginning of the formation of the Americas and of capitalism (at the turn of the 16th century),” writes Quijano, “in the ensuing centuries [the idea of ‘race’] was imposed on the population of the whole planet as an aspect of European colonial domination.”¹⁵

For Quijano, then, race refers not solely to the privileging of skin color over other categories of social difference but to a technology that simultaneously produces social difference and inserts it into global structures of economic domination. In its earliest formation, the idea of race targeted the indigenous population of the Americas, codifying the term “Indian” as a unifying category of difference. With the earliest sixteenth-century debates about the nature of the Indian, a story in which Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda played the most infamous role, race injects a radical doubt regarding the humanity of the colonized people that would later be enshrined in the Cartesian split between mind and body, subject and object.¹⁶ It is only in the nineteenth century that color and race become universally synonymous, although the connection appears much earlier especially with regard to African slaves.¹⁷

The turn to skin color brings us to the second iteration of the history of race in Latin America. Highlighting the contrast between notions of difference in the early colonial period and in the nineteenth century, other scholars take issue with Quijano’s characterization and locate the emergence of modern race in the latter. Earlier modes of discrimination are thereby excluded.

¹³ Quijano, “Coloniality of Power,” 534.

¹⁴ Quijano, “Coloniality of Power.” Cf. Mignolo, *The Idea of Latin America* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 17: “Racialization does not simply say, ‘you are Black or Indian, therefore you[] are inferior.’ Rather, it says, ‘you are not like me, therefore you are inferior.’”

¹⁵ Quijano, “Questioning ‘Race,’” *Socialism and Democracy* 21.1 (2007): 45.

¹⁶ Quijano, “Questioning ‘Race,’” 51-53. Following Enrique Dussel, Nelson Maldonado-Torres traced the emergence of this radical skepticism prior to Descartes’s seventeenth-century *ego cogito* in the *ego conquirro* of Cortés. “It is clear that the meaning of race has changed throughout the centuries, and that ‘raza’ did not mean in the sixteenth century what it came to mean at the height of the biological revolution in the nineteenth century that produced taxonomies based on a formal biological category of race. Yet, there was a commonality between nineteenth century racism and the attitude of the colonizers in regard to differences in degrees of humanity. In some ways, scientific racism and the very idea of race were the most explicit expressions of a widespread and general attitude regarding the humanity of colonized and enslaved subjects in the Americas and Africa in the sixteenth century. I’d like to suggest that what was born in the sixteenth century was something more pervasive and subtle than what at first transpires in the concept of race: it was an attitude characterized by a permanent suspicion.” See Maldonado-Torres, “Coloniality of Being: Contributions to the Development of a Concept.” *Cultural Studies* 21.2-3 (March/May 2007): 244.

¹⁷ Quijano, “Questioning ‘Race,’” 51.

Ruth Hill, among others, has made this argument quite forcefully in her monograph on Alonso Carrió de Lavandera's *El lazarrillo de ciegos caminantes* (1775) as well as numerous articles. It is anachronistic, Hill argues, to apply modern concepts of race to the American viceroyalties.¹⁸ Hierarchical difference certainly existed and indeed Spanish dominance depended to a large extent on the production and maintenance of such difference, but nevertheless what is at stake is not race but *casta*: “not biology . . . [but] a cluster of somatic, economic, linguistic, geographical, and other circumstances that varied from parish to parish, from town to town, and from person to person. Colonial Latin America thus forms part not of the history but the *pre-history of race*.”¹⁹

Hill's analysis turns on a sharp distinction between the early modern notion of *casta*, embedded in a “traditional society” and therefore “rooted in culture (primarily, religion)” and the contemporary notion of race, characteristic of “modern [society]” and “rooted in biology,” which emerges for the first time in the nineteenth century.²⁰ Modern scholars' tendency to apply the term “race” to colonial Latin America thus represents an anachronistic confusion of categories: they “use the word *race* to mean *culture*” because “[i]n the viceregal period, culture meant culture.”²¹ In this rather schematic formulation, culture stands in for fluidity while biology stands in for fixity. One consequence of this reading is that Hill finds passing—what she reads as “vertical” movement between categories of identity—to be far more common in the “viceregal period” than the “modern” (which, once again, begins in the nineteenth century).²²

But what Hill calls “passing” is in fact a widespread phenomenon, not only in “traditional” societies (in which, for Hill, “race” does not yet exist) but also in those societies structured by the most highly rationalized, racialized, and scientific formulations of race. The problem is that Hill's reading takes the proclamations of “modern” race at face value. It takes scientific discourse, which claims privileged access to truth, at its word—such arguments, as David Nirenberg has suggested, are “bedeviled by the fiction of true race.”²³ By rooting race in nineteenth-century biological discourses of fixity, this view erases the wide array of social and

¹⁸ Hill is equally suspicious of the term “colonial,” which she also regards as specific to the sort of European domination that developed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

¹⁹ Ruth Hill, *Hierarchy, Commerce, and Fraud in Bourbon Spanish America: A Postal Inspector's Exposé* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 2006), 200; cf. Hill, “Critical Race Theory and the Pre-History of Race in Latin America: Some Reflections on Caste and Hegemony in Valle y Caviedes,” *Afro-Hispanic Review* 26.2 (Fall 2007): 77-85.

²⁰ Hill, *Hierarchy, Commerce, and Fraud*, 202.

²¹ Hill, *Hierarchy, Commerce, and Fraud*, 201.

²² “If the ideological foundation of the social hierarchy in Carrió's times had not acknowledged, implicitly and explicitly, that *casta*, *estado*, and *limpieza* were socially constructed; if it had had the scientific pretensions of, say, nineteenth-century biological determinism; if it had acted to exterminate non-Spaniards, rather than attempt to convert them to the great extirpator Dávila's ‘[Spanish] way of life’; then *passing*, or extralegal end arounds, would have been more difficult. As it was, the ideological foundation of the social hierarchy—laws and glosses in particular—facilitated extralegal vertical movements between *castas* and *estados* by showing men and women that the supposedly immutable laws of nature could be overturned.” Hill, *Hierarchy, Commerce, and Fraud*, 230.

²³ David Nirenberg, “Was There Race Before Modernity? The Example of ‘Jewish’ Blood in Late Medieval Spain.” *The Origins of Racism in the West*, eds. Miriam Eliav-Feldon, Benjamin Isaac, and Joseph Ziegler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 242; cf. Nirenberg, “Race and the Middle Ages: The Case of Spain and Its Jews,” in *Rereading the Black Legend: The Discourse of Religious and Racial Difference in the Renaissance Empires*, eds. Margaret R. Greer, Walter Mignolo, and Maureen Quilligan (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 71-87.

cultural factors that play an instrumental role in the elaboration of racial ideologies.²⁴ Additionally, the traditional/culture vs. modern/biology binary breaks down under all but the most simplistic analyses. To relegate the colonial period to an obsolete past feeds into the Black Legend narrative of Iberian backwardness—which emerged, of course, in northern Europe with a clear political agenda—while denying the effectiveness, and even the violence, of early modern regimes of domination.²⁵ What interests me here is the ambiguity between these apparently modern forms of scientific rationality and what I would call the corresponding forms of governance.²⁶ This ambiguity displays itself in methodological terms, since Hill introduces a radical break that attributes an explicitly “pre-modern” character to colonial regimes of difference at the same time as she adopts the analytical tools that critical race theorists have used to study the operations of “modern” forms of racialization on the other. While insisting on the importance of acknowledging the “historical specificity” of racial formations, Hill at the same time adopts the concept of *racial projects*, developed by Michael Omi and Howard Winant to analyze racial ideologies in the twentieth-century United States, for her reading of eighteenth-century caste poetry from Peru. “By substituting ‘caste’ for Omi and Winant’s ‘race’ and ‘racial,’ we may engage systematically with caste formations in the early modern Hispanic world that belong to the pre-history of race.”²⁷ I am not suggesting that the application of critical or postcolonial theory to other contexts is necessarily problematic, for in many cases such theoretical approaches can help us think the colonial. What interests me, rather, is the tension between the utility of critical theory on one hand and the insistence on structural incommensurability on the other.

In each case, periodization cannot be analytically separated from the analysis of race; far from a neutral gesture, it shapes both objects of study and appropriate methods for their apprehension. For Quijano and other world-systems theorists, race is a function of European colonialism, whose origin at the turn of the sixteenth century marks the inauguration of the modern/colonial world. In addition to its political value for those who fight against the neo-colonial expansion of capital today—in their first public statement on January 1, 1994, the Zapatistas declare themselves to be “producto de 500 años de lucha”²⁸—this reading is

²⁴ “[N]ineteenth-century racism was not built on the sure-footed classifications of science but on a potent set of cultural and affective criteria whose malleability was a key to the flexible scale along which economic privileges could be cordoned off and social entitlements reassigned.” Stoler, “Racial Histories and their Regimes of Truth,” 198.

²⁵ For a comparative approach to the politics of race and the Black Legend, see the collection edited by Margaret R. Greer, Walter Mignolo, and Maureen Quilligan, *Rereading the Black Legend: The Discourses of Religious and Racial Difference in the Renaissance Empires* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

²⁶ After all, the first effective global bureaucracy is the transatlantic Spanish Inquisition. See Irene Silverblatt, *Modern Inquisitions: Peru and the Colonial Origins of the Civilized World* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004).

²⁷ Hill, “Between Black and White: A Critical Race Theory Approach to Caste Poetry in the Spanish New World,” *Comparative Literature* 59.4 (Fall 2007): 271. Interestingly enough, Omi and Winant’s argument itself is more flexible than Hill’s reading allows. Although their focus is the United States in the twentieth century, they argue (with Quijano and Todorov) that modern race begins to emerge precisely at the historical “break” constituted by the notorious year 1492 and with it the advent of European colonialism in the Americas: “the ‘conquest of America’ was not simply an epochal historical event,” but along with inaugurating a new mode of production based on colonial appropriation and exploitation, “[i]ts representation, first in religious terms, but soon enough in scientific and political terms, initiated modern racial awareness.” Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 62.

²⁸ Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional, “Primera declaración de la selva lacandona” (1993), available at <<http://palabra.ezln.org.mx/>> (accessed April 2011).

fundamental for scholars working in colonial studies, as it both explains the persistence of colonial structures today and simultaneously positions colonial studies as the privileged or critical site for approaching not only colonial Latin America but modernity in general. Likewise, Hill's reading turns on a concept of race tied less to the emergence of modes of production like slavery and the extraction economy than to the emergence of scientific discourse. Biology, and of course science more generally, play an important role in producing new and authoritative discourses that are mobilized—as Foucault has demonstrated convincingly—as part of certain technologies of control adopted and deployed by the biopolitical state.²⁹ Unlike Quijano, whose goal is to insert race back into the scope of the colonial period, Hill's project displaces race to a temporal and disciplinary elsewhere. Claims of anachronism demarcate a barrier by which to stake out a privileged position for the specialized eighteenth-century Latin Americanist. In each case, however, the end result is the same: the privileging of colonial studies as the unique disciplinary site from which authoritative discourse about colonial difference will emerge.

As with every periodizing gesture, however, these narratives of historical rupture produce collateral damage by rendering earlier forms of discrimination somehow less effective, less coercive, less violent. By situating the break at 1492, Quijano's periodization neutralizes, for example, the waves of anti-Semitic violence against Iberian Jews during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, as well as the institutionalization of blood purity statutes, which officially prohibited *crisianos nuevos*—recently converted Jews and Muslims—from holding public and ecclesiastical positions.³⁰ It distances the long and difficult conquest of the Canary islands from Columbus's landing on Hispaniola—originally called not the New World but the “new Canary islands”; at the same time, it unwittingly erases the complexity and scale of the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century slave trade in Genoa.³¹ It also overlooks, for that matter, a more critical engagement with the notions of ethnicity that structured precolonial regimes of governance like the Nahua *altepetl* as well as the forms of differentiation and discrimination encoded, for example, in Mexica representations of Chichimec “barbarians.”³² For its part, Hill's periodization is undercut by both these early examples as well as the effectiveness of the social hierarchies outlined by Quijano at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Immediate problems become apparent: both examples would necessarily separate religion and culture from biology and science, such that the racialization of religion would be somehow prior to or less than race itself.³³ This position potentially blinds us to the re-racialization of culture and religion—what

²⁹ Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-1976* (New York: Picador, 2003).

³⁰ See Nirenberg, “Was There Race Before Modernity?”; and Albert A. Sicoff, *Los estatutos de limpieza de sangre: Controversias entre los siglos XV y XVII*, trans. Mauro Armiño (Madrid: Taurus, 1985).

³¹ “Many features of Later European colonialism—as the slaving Mediterranean prepares to enter the black Atlantic—are clearly forming throughout this earlier period. To say this is not to suggest seamless continuity with later, full-blown plantation slaving in the Americas; differentiation of human experience will stem, above all, from questions of scale. Nonetheless, certain discursive and material practices of slaving, familiar from more recent times (familiar from the present), are becoming well-established, such as, for example, racial profiling.” David Wallace, *Premodern Places*, 189. On the Iberian slave trade before 1492, see also James H. Sweet, “The Iberian Roots of American Racist Thought,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 54.1 (January 1997): 143-66.

³² Lockhart calls the *altepetl* an “ethnic state” organized around a genealogical narrative that “imagined . . . an ethnic unity going back into unremembered times.” James Lockhart, *The Nahuas After the Conquest: A Social and Cultural History of the Indians of Central Mexico, Sixteenth through Eighteenth Centuries* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 14-16.

³³ This argument is clear in approaches that take Christian universalism—the apparent capacity of all human beings to convert to Christianity—at face value. “Had the Indians been a race apart, natural slaves or the sons of another

Etienne Balibar has called “new” or “neo-racism,” but which is in fact not so new—that we are seeing in the United States today, a retrenchment exacerbated by the political logic of the “clash of civilizations” and the War on Terror.³⁴

This argument should not be glossed as indicating that race and racism are constant and static—we could also say equally “modern”—across time and space. Rather, I am attempting to highlight the importance of remaining attentive to the implications of the critical moves we make today. In many ways, my argument runs parallel to recent shifts in the field of medieval studies, including so-called “postcolonial medieval studies,” that have begun to push back against the epistemic violence of the periodization of modernity and more generally the insistence of temporal and geographic specificity with regard to postcolonial theory. Kathleen Biddick, David Nirenberg, David Wallace, and others have underscored the consequences of schematic narrations of race in terms of the historical rupture of modernity.³⁵ As Nirenberg suggests, every history of race is necessarily incomplete—and as such, I would add, ideological. In response, he proposes not another methodology more capable of accessing the “true” history of race but the recognition of these limitations: the history of the idea of race “is not the history of a train of thought, whose wagons can be ordered by class and whose itinerary may be mapped across time and space, but that of a principle of locomotion so general that any account of its origins, applications, and transmission will always be constrained by our ignorance.” He continues:

We cannot solve this difficulty by cutting (“race did not exist before modernity”), by stitching (“race has always already existed”) or by refusing to talk about what cannot be clearly defined (“races do not exist, and race does not have a history”).³⁶

Nirenberg’s conclusions bring us to the central question that I am trying to address here: what would a history of race that does not fall into any of these traps look like?

2. Genealogy

A genealogy of . . . knowledge will never confuse itself with a quest for [its] “origins,” will never neglect as inaccessible the vicissitudes of history. On the contrary, it will cultivate the details and accidents that accompany every beginning.

Adam, their history would have been very different, and there could have been no justification whatsoever for the European attempt either to Christianize or to civilize them. For this reason, paradoxical though it may seem, ‘race’ plays no part in the early-modern ideologies of empire.” Anthony Pagden. “The Peopling of the New World: Ethnos, Race, and Empire in the Early-Modern World.” *The Origins of Racism in the West*, eds. Miriam Eliav-Feldon, Benjamin Isaac, and Joseph Ziegler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 311-12.

³⁴ Etienne Balibar, “Is There a ‘Neo-Racism’?,” in Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein, eds. *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*, trans. Chris Turner (New York: Verso, 1991), 17-28. For a fascinating examination of the political logic of periodization in the context of the War on Terror, see Bruce Holsinger, *Neomedievalism, Neoconservatism, and the War on Terror* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2007).

³⁵ In addition to Nirenberg, “Was There Race Before Modernity?” and Wallace, *Premodern Places*, see Kathleen Biddick, “The Cut of Genealogy: Pedagogy in the Blood,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 30.3 (Fall 2000): 449-62.

³⁶ Nirenberg, “Was There Race Before Modernity?,” 262.

--Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History"

To the extent that epistemic violence is embedded in the language and concepts—not to mention, as we have seen, in disciplinary structures like periodization—we use to talk about history, it is unavoidable. In the wry double negative of his well-known maxim—"We cannot not periodize"—Fredric Jameson suggests that disavowing periodization necessarily implies a "reversion to the chronicle" (note the periodization implicit in the phrase), to a series of disconnected facts and dates from which no conclusions can be drawn. It comes as no surprise, furthermore, that he associates this proposal with Nietzsche, who serves as the basis for Foucault's thinking on genealogy.³⁷ But there is another possibility. Jameson's maxim is neither an obligation—we *must* periodize—nor a prohibition—we *must not* periodize—but instead an attempt to describe the logic of historical thinking as such. Even the most critical approach necessarily takes some form of periodization as its point of departure—as such, it cannot help but occupy the circumscribed boundaries of periodization. In the words of Marshall Brown, periods are "a challenge and an opportunity, a resource and a corrective."³⁸ The question, then, is not whether we can renounce periodization, but how best to engage it or operate within and around its margins.

In "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," Foucault offers a critique of what he calls "traditional history" and proposes the methodological alternative of genealogy or "effective" history. Traditional history is characterized by certain structural norms, the most important of which for Foucault is the search for the origin. In the context of traditional history, this origin constitutes not only a temporal starting point but more importantly "the essence of things, their purest possibilities." It is this deep inner meaning that smoothes out and flattens the inconsistent texture of what Foucault calls the "vicissitudes of history" and replaces them with continuity. In similar terms, the origin constitutes, in Foucault's reading of Nietzsche, "the site of truth," in the sense that things have there achieved their greatest perfection in such a way as to overcome the problem of representation: "the point where the truth of things corresponded to a truthful discourse." It is the promise of this truth—which as Foucault points out is already constituted by representation—that produces narratives characterized both by stability and by directionality. With regard to this directionality, Nietzsche views it as a downward curve: if the origin constitutes the moment of perfection, everything that follows it must necessarily operate within the bounds of a melancholic narrative of loss. Nevertheless, this is the same structure that produces teleological narratives of development, progress, and growth. In either case, the origin retains the capacity to reveal the truth of things that gives them content and direction.

³⁷ "Now, however, we need to consider the most obvious consequence of some repudiation of periodization, which would take the form of a historiography of the break as such, or in other words that endless series of sheer facts and unrelated events proposed, in their very different ways, by Nietzsche as well as by Henry Ford ('one goddamned thing after another'). It would be too simple to observe that this method of dealing with the past amounts to a reversion to the chronicle as a mode of storing and registering information: insofar as historicity is itself presumably a modern invention, the critique and repudiation of the modern is bound to generate at least the option of a regression to this or that pre-modern operation." Jameson, *A Singular Modernity*, 28.

³⁸ "Periods are entities we love to hate. Yet we cannot do without them." Marshall Brown, "Periods and Resistances," 309.

To the extent that it generates certain temporalities in which diversity has been reduced to “a totality fully closed in upon itself,” the origin is necessarily complicit with periodization. In disciplinary terms, traditional history is a mode of production that manufactures totalizing histories: “Nothing must escape it and, more importantly, nothing must be excluded.”³⁹ We have seen how periodizing gestures produce not only temporal frames in which historical analysis takes place but also the objects, concepts, and categories of that analysis. It is on the basis of periodization, for example, that race as such is defined: if race refers to fixed somatic markings, it is of necessity consolidated in the nineteenth century; if it instantiates a global capitalist division of labor, it of necessity arises three centuries earlier. Thus spoke the truth of the origin.

Genealogy or “effective” history, on the other hand, begins not with a disavowal of the origin but a reappraisal of its singularity—in the sense of both significance and, for lack of a better term, quantity. The origin as “lofty heights” and “site of truth” is revealed as a discursive construct and discarded as such as a means of exploding the assumptions that accompany it. But this is easier said than done; after all, for Foucault genealogy represents “a transformation of history into a totally different form of time.”⁴⁰ What constitutes this “totally different form of time” is the proliferation of fissures, slippages, and divergences, the “details and accidents” that come into view, undermining notions of stable continuities and subjectivities while investing in turn in every site or moment of disjuncture. The paths traced by genealogical history are both multiple and fragmented—the existence of so many possibilities, interrupted directionalities, and reversals implies that any set, no matter how seemingly encompassing, is necessarily partial. Another way to imagine this “totally different form,” then, would replace the singularity of teleology with a proliferation of overlapping temporalities or worlds whose presence, endurance, and shape are continually subject to movement. In other words, the space of genealogy is characterized simultaneously by continuity and disjuncture, by connection and fragmentation. Foucault puts it a different way: instead of completely rejecting or renouncing the beginning as such, genealogy proposes to identify “every beginning.” The key move is one from singular to plural. “The isolation of different points of emergence does not conform to the successive configurations of an identical meaning; rather, they result from substitutions, displacements, disguised conquests, and systematic reversals.”⁴¹

There is another reason why genealogy is especially useful and relevant for thinking about the history of race: it is fundamentally a corporeal discourse. Foucault’s essay is filled with references to bodies and bodily metaphors—genealogy resembles the nervous system, the digestive tract.⁴² To push the resemblance even further, he suggests that the object of genealogy is not history as such but the relationship between history and the body: the way the two mutually produce, shape, disrupt, and destroy each other. “History becomes ‘effective’ to the degree that it introduces discontinuity into our very being—as it divides our emotions, dramatizes our instincts, multiplies our body and sets it against itself.”⁴³ But body and history are

³⁹ Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” 157. In *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault outlines a critique of what he calls “totalitarian periodization” which assumes a violent flattening of difference within temporal blocs. Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 148.

⁴⁰ Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” 160.

⁴¹ Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” 151.

⁴² Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” 155.

⁴³ Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” 154.

joined by more than just language and rhetorical constructions—the body bears history’s imprint, suffers under its weight.⁴⁴ For this reason, Foucault compares the genealogist to a doctor, and “effective” history to medicine: “it should become a differential knowledge of energies and failings, heights and degenerations, poisons and antidotes. Its task is to become a curative science.”⁴⁵ The disease, in this sense, manifests itself in symptoms that go beyond the stifling structures of traditional history—genealogy also offers the possibility of a political project that can move beyond place as its concrete or stable locus of enunciation. To put it another way, this procedure entails a move that is similar to the leap from strategy to tactic, from what de Certeau calls administrative, hierarchical *place* to flexible, opportunistic *space*.⁴⁶ It is for this reason that Foucault calls the plane of history a “non-place.”⁴⁷ Its view is neither optimistic nor cynical but critical and differential. Genealogy thus thinks in shapes and figures that move away from the geometric uniformity of the line, the segment, the vector. Jagged, unpredictable lines of descent offer new spatial modalities that continually remake themselves: they enable a multiplicity of lines of flight and escape, but at the same time of capture and recuperation.

Genealogy maps descent, lineage, blood, heredity; but it also maps accidents, mutations, reversals, and dispersals. It charts conflicts and battles, alliances and communities, the tensions and struggles that compose the field of power relations. In short, genealogy maps war, “the endlessly repeated play of dominations.”⁴⁸ As a social construction that is constituted in and around the interstices of power relations, that is both fixed and fluid, that persists across space and time and is simultaneously rooted in historical and spatial contingency, race and genealogy are structurally analogous. Inasmuch as race always constitutes an authoritative discourse that ties identity to blood, it is structurally homologous to genealogy. If, as Foucault notes in his reading of Nietzsche, the analysis of descent (*Herkunft*) conventionally involves “a consideration of race” that produces unities and continuities, the promise of genealogy is to disrupt race’s uniformity through fragmentation and the introduction of difference into the minutiae of the processes by which the category of race itself is constituted.

3. *Mestizaje*

Es tesis central del presente libro que las distintas razas del mundo tienden a mezclarse cada vez más, hasta formar un nuevo tipo humano, compuesto con la selección de cada uno de los pueblos existentes . . . que, a falta de nombre mejor, titulé: de la Raza Cósmica futura.

--José Vasconcelos, *La raza cósmica* (1925)

⁴⁴ “Genealogy, as an analysis of descent, is thus situated within the articulation of the body and history. Its task is to expose a body totally imprinted by history and the process of history’s destruction of the body.” Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” 148.

⁴⁵ Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” 156.

⁴⁶ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 35-37.

⁴⁷ Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” 150.

⁴⁸ Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” 150. Inverting Clausewitz’s classic formulation on war and politics, Foucault outlines a reading of politics as continuation of war by other means in *Society Must Be Defended*.

This study, then, is not a history of race: neither is it, in the first place, a *history* nor, as I will suggest in this section, is its object precisely the category of *race*. This is not to say that it does not offer historical insight or touch on questions of race, racialization, or the construction of discourses of identity. Rather, I am interested in shifting the terrain of the debate away from the concept, category, or idea of race itself. Earlier, I alluded to the opportunity that the medievalist David Nirenberg has identified in thinking not in terms of race as such but rather emphasizing the analysis and juxtaposition of “strategies of naturalization.”⁴⁹ In a similar vein, Thomas Holt problematizes the search for a definition—or, in the terms of periodization and genealogy we are working with here, a single or totalizing origin—of race:

Recognizing the relative plasticity of race and racism as concepts and their parasitic and chameleonlike qualities as practice, I have also suggested that we might do better *not* to try to define or catalogue their content. Rather, our task might be instead to ask what *work* race does.⁵⁰

“Perhaps part of the problem in contemporary analyses of race,” continues Holt, “is that *they address their subject head-on*.”⁵¹ Assuming Holt is correct in his diagnosis, the study of race must adopt a different approach or, better yet given the spatiality of his language, *perspective*—one that is indirect, oblique, even tangential in a geometric sense. In his monograph on violence, Slavoj Žižek provides a useful point of departure for realizing this move. For Žižek, the obviousness of what he calls “subjective violence”—that violence perpetrated by individual actors or subjects—blinds us to the everyday structural and systemic violence that he calls “objective.”⁵² Inasmuch as subjective violence can only be perceived against a backdrop in which other conflict has been reduced to null, it becomes impossible to measure the violence that pertains to what has been relegated to the status of context. Objective violence is in this way erased, rendered invisible. To address this ideological problem of invisibility, Žižek proposes to cast a series of “sideways glances” that approach the question of violence obliquely as a means of sketching out its blurry and shifting contours. In a similar way, we have seen how the obsession with race as a biological or genetic category marked by such “obvious” or “apparent” signs as skin color can blind scholars to other, less obvious forms of discrimination. Indeed, I want to suggest that periodizing gestures themselves follow a parallel logic—attributions of “modernity” erase “pre-modern” naturalizations. It is only by casting “sideways glances” that we can collapse the “then” and the “now” and make visible the full extent of the epistemological violence of race in all its forms.

⁴⁹ Nirenberg, “Was There Race Before Modernity?,” 263.

⁵⁰ Thomas C. Holt, *The Problem of Race in the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 27. Holt’s own study is structured around a three-tiered periodization: pre-fordist, fordist, and post-fordist. For obvious reasons, the unwieldiness of the first period is of most interest to me here. The focus on ideological “work” comes from Stuart Hall, “Race, Articulation, and Societies Structured in Dominance,” in *Sociological Theories: Race and Colonialism* (Paris: UNESCO, 1980), 305-45. On the difficulties of defining race, see Peter Wade, *Race, Nature, and Culture: An Anthropological Perspective* (London: Pluto Press, 2002), 1-15.

⁵¹ Holt, *The Problem of Race*, 8; my emphasis.

⁵² Slavoj Žižek, *Violence: Six Sideways Reflections* (New York: Picador, 2008), 3-4.

What I am proposing here forms part of a project that displaces race in favor of a set of categories that can be read as constitutive of racialization itself. I am primarily interested in the corresponding categories of *mixing* and *purity*—especially in the case of Latin America, but almost certainly in a more general sense, I argue that racialized categories of identity are always already mediated, shaped, and constituted by particular formations of mixing and purity. If identity is always constituted in relation to the “Other,” then the contours of difference emerge through the play between mixing and purity. As discursive and ideological categories, mixing and purity are not locked into a relationship of inherent opposition and mutual exclusion but, like race, are themselves highly contested and historically contingent. Rather than fixedness or rigidity, then, a certain fluidity characterizes their relationship. This has both spatial and temporal implications: both the contours of mixing and purity, and the directionality of their relationship, are thus called into question. In concrete terms, mixing does not always undermine or disrupt purity—indeed, certain forms of mixing can at times produce new forms of purity.

In the context of Latin America, the convergence of mixing and purity is called *mestizaje*, a narrative concept that has long dominated the history of race in regional discourse. Earlier, I briefly sketched out the conventional version of this story: set in motion by the “colonial encounter,” individual and collective bodies characterized as racially and/or culturally *pure* are inserted into the movement of History and advance into an increasingly *mixed* future. To situate this narrative in the context of the periodizing gestures outlined above, purity and mixing are located on opposite sides of historical rupture: purity is ancient, assumed to be rigidly pre-modern, while mixing denotes and indeed instantiates modernity. Mixing could then be read as describing the modern condition—insular zones, relics of the past, are forcefully opened by the violent insertion of that which was previously contained.⁵³ At times these temporal and spatial assumptions are explicitly stated, as we will see in the paradigmatic case of José Vasconcelos, but more often than not they go unremarked and implicit in the narrative. So, for example, we find histories that describe the conquest as the encounter of essentially distinct cultures, as the origin of mixing; narrative arcs whose logic depends on demographic shifts and the increase in mixed-race peoples; where the passage of time, pegged directly to ever increasing mixture, functions causally. “The modern Mexican population,” writes historian Alan Knight in his well-known study of colonial Mexico, “is . . . a mixture of several groups who displayed contrasting somatic features; in particular, it is the result of Indian and Spanish miscegenation since the sixteenth-century.” Despite the colonial state’s efforts to erect and maintain barriers between these groups, he continues, “[o]ver time . . . such caste or castelike barriers eroded. Miscegenation proceeded apace, bureaucratic impediments notwithstanding. No rigid apartheid could be sustained, and the sheer proliferation of ‘racial’ subtypes attested to the impossibility of thorough categorization.”⁵⁴ The logic of such histories can be summed up in a single word—

⁵³ This temporal tension, as Lund argues, traverses García Canclini’s formulation of hybridity. See Nestor García Canclini, *Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995); and Joshua Lund, *The Impure Imagination: Toward a Critical Hybridity in Latin American Writing* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), chap. 2.

⁵⁴ Alan Knight, “Racism, Revolution, and *Indigenismo*: Mexico, 1910-1940,” in *The Idea of Race in Latin America, 1870-1940* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), 72. Knight’s history is fascinating yet problematic: in a conventional move, for example, he completely writes off the black “contribut[ion] to the mix.” That Knight’s focus is the ideology of the revolutionary Mexican state points to the importance of this teleological narrative for the process of forging national identities—or, as Manuel Gamio famously put it, “forjando patria.” In historiographic terms, this pattern is common. Magnus Mörner, for example, writes that “Los latinoamericanos descenden de tres

increasingly—that serves to generate their causal force. History becomes a function of demographics.⁵⁵

At first glance, Vasconcelos seems to articulate the clearest formulation of this narrative. “La colonización española,” he asserts with a periodizing flourish, “creó mestizaje.” Turning on the juxtaposition of original purities (“las distintas razas”) with the incessant and ever-increasing pull of mixing (“cada vez más”), the story culminates in the emergence of a Cosmic Race—a new formation of purity that constitutes the end, as it were, of racial history.⁵⁶ This play between mixing and purity takes material form in the headquarters of the Secretaría de Educación Pública (SEP) in Mexico City. Beginning in 1921, the same year he was appointed as minister of education and four years before the publication of his famous essay *La raza cósmica*, Vasconcelos oversaw a series of renovations of the building.⁵⁷ In part, his vision entailed the elaboration of four statues, as he later described in *La raza cósmica*, each representing one of the four contemporary races—“la Blanca, la Roja, la Negra, y la Amarilla”—to stand in the corners of the first courtyard of the newly renovated seventeenth-century colonial building. In the middle of the courtyard, initially called the Court of the Races, would stand a monument to—and with these words Vasconcelos concludes the essay—“la creación de una raza hecha con el tesoro de todas las anteriores, la raza final, la raza cósmica.”⁵⁸

While mestizaje would in Vasconcelos’s hands later take on an explicitly fascist dimension, there are ways in which it can also be seen as productive. I am not referring to the long line of critics like Octavio Paz to Gloria Anzaldúa who read his project as part of a long line of anti-racist thinking, but rather to the structural elements of his mestizaje: its component parts, mixing and purity. What is significant about Vasconcelos’s formulation is not that it begins to disrupt the conventional notion of the temporal relationship between mixing and purity. Conventionally, as we have seen, purity is seen as a given that must necessarily precede mixing. In contrast, Bruno Latour argues in *We Have Never Been Modern* that modernity is defined by two sets of practices: “translation,” which continually produces new forms of mixtures and hybrids that combine nature and culture; and “purification,” which continually works to separate the human from the nonhuman. These activities are mutually constituting, they enable each other: without mixing, there is nothing to purify.⁵⁹ What is particularly useful about Latour’s formulation for the study of race in Latin America, as Marisol de la Cadena notes, is that it “disrupts the temporal relation between purity and mixture.” Instead of the conventional assumption that seeks purity as the base or foundation of mixture and thereby considers it necessarily prior, here the two are simultaneous:

grupos raciales: negros, indios y europeos.” Mörner, *La mezcla de razas en la historia de América Latina* (Buenos Aires: Paidós, 1969), 22. For a critique of the search for original purities in the context of these national projects, see Lund, *The Impure Imagination*.

⁵⁵ Hill presents a powerful critique of the scholarly deployment of demographic data from the colonial period in *Hierarchy, Commerce, and Fraud*, 233-38.

⁵⁶ Vasconcelos “conflat[es] Latin America with the end of universal history itself. . . . For Vasconcelos, the end of history will require the end of race.” Lund, *The Impure Imagination*, 110.

⁵⁷ Luis E. Carranza, *Architecture as Revolution: Episodes in the History of Modern Mexico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010), 29-41. My reading of the SEP headquarters is drawn from Carranza.

⁵⁸ José Vasconcelos, *La raza cósmica*, 5a ed. (Mexico City: Editorial Porrúa, 2010), 35.

⁵⁹ Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, 10-11. Translation and purification, Latour notes, enable each other: “Without [translation], the practices of purification would be fruitless or pointless. Without [purification], the work of translation would be slowed down, limited, or even ruled out.”

I see the Latin American racial formation as genealogically underpinned by two purifying movements. One flowed through faith and required the separation of Christians from pagans. The other movement flowed through reason; it required the separation between nature/biology and culture/history. Both ‘purifying movements’ required all sorts of hybrids—including the mixture of purifying forms of knowledge and of the categories they created.⁶⁰

There are three ways in which Vasconcelos’s project is useful here. First, and in spite of his periodizing gestures, he rejects the notion that mixing is a fundamentally new or modern phenomenon. Mixing has occurred during all three of the historical “periods” he outlines—the material or warrior, the intellectual or political, and the spiritual or aesthetic—differing only in terms of the logic by which it takes place. “Las épocas más ilustres de la Humanidad han sido, precisamente, aquellas en que varios pueblos disímiles se ponen en contacto y se mezclan.”⁶¹ Second, and following this line of thinking, mixing does not always produce the same result. Vasconcelos’s four races have been mixing since the beginning of history but have yet to produce a fifth—because reproduction remains a function of necessity instead of spirit, he asserts, there has been no “improvement.”⁶² Third and most importantly, then, Vasconcelos recognizes that the relation between purity and mixing is far more complex than simple opposition. That a new, fifth race could emerge out of the combination of the other four suggests that mixing is capable of producing new formations of purity. Even the mestizo, in his essentialized mixedness, can constitute a new and consequently pure race: it makes us wince, but Vasconcelos can nevertheless discuss the “abundancia de amor que permitió a los españoles crear una raza nueva con el indio y con el negro.”⁶³ In this way, Vasconcelos disrupts the conventional theorization of the relationship between mixing and purity.

I do not mean to suggest that Vasconcelos imagined a fully fluid or flexible mestizaje—far from it. On the contrary, his cosmic race is the inevitable result of the incessant pull of universal History: in a sense the mestizo is truly the last man for Fukuyama’s dismal end of history.⁶⁴ If we read the text against its plastic manifestation in the concrete form of the renovations of the SEP headquarters, however, its fissures become apparent. Of the original plan, only a small part was completed. This includes the allegories to Spain, Mexico, Greece, and India, which, as Vasconcelos notes, “hice labrar” on the walls of the patio, and one of the four sculptures of the races—not surprisingly, the one dedicated to the white race—which was made and placed in the building.⁶⁵ The rest were never made. Most strikingly, this includes the sculptural manifestation of the historical “ley de los tres estados,” which was supposed to

⁶⁰ Marisol de la Cadena, “Are *Mestizos* Hybrids? The Conceptual Politics of Andean Identities,” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 37 (2005): 268n23.

⁶¹ Vasconcelos, *La raza cósmica*, 28.

⁶² “Si hasta hoy no ha mejorado gran cosa, es porque ha vivido en condiciones de aglomeración y de miseria en las que no ha sido posible que funcione el instinto libre de la belleza; la reproducción se ha hecho a la manera de las bestias, sin límite de cantidad y sin aspiración de mejoramiento. No ha intervenido en ella el espíritu, sino el apetito, que se satisface como puede.” Vasconcelos, *La raza cósmica*, 27.

⁶³ Vasconcelos, *La raza cósmica*, 14.

⁶⁴ Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Avon Books, 1993).

⁶⁵ Even less surprising is the fact that this sculpture “was later mutilated and removed.” Carranza, *Architecture as Revolution*, 38.

symbolize the emergence of the cosmic race in the third, “spiritual” stage of history and occupy the center of the patio. Beyond any logistical or administrative problems external to Vasconcelos’s essay, this material failure is evident in the text itself. There is, in the first place, the question of verb tense, which suggests a desirous, but ultimately impotent will (“debieron levantarse cuatro grandes estatuas . . .”). But it also comes through as well from the architectural foundations of the project. Vasconcelos acknowledges that from the start he was faced with a situation of lack: “Sin elementos bastantes para hacer exactamente lo que deseaba.” Is there a homology between the exacting architectural vision and the spiritual perfection of the cosmic race? If so, then the gap between the mental projection that appears in *La raza cósmica* and the concrete implementation of the project—with which the text itself culminates—marks the collapse of Vasconcelos’s teleological narrative of the crystallization of a new homogeneous race. New purities may emerge through mixing, in other words, but they will never be entirely seamless—rather, I want to suggest, their continual consolidation is always traversed by fissures and bifurcations that generate new lines of flight and horizons of possibility.

In the chapters that follow, I present readings of three episodes or moments of naturalization, produced in the interstices of differential notions of mixing and purity. What ties these episodes together is not a chronological narrative but, in the first place, the structural conditions that create the situation in which particular formations of mixing and purity can emerge and, in the second, the specter of racial insurgency, of political crisis traversed by and articulated in racial terms: each moment—1692, 1566-1567, and 1612—produces a constellation of thickly layered discourses in and around the lettered city by which racial knowledges and formations of identity were imposed, managed, adopted, reformulated, and challenged. By no means should these chapters be read as exhaustive or complete—they do not tell the whole story, for there is no whole story to tell. Instead, they offer a point of entry that lets us reconsider the role that the colonial period has played in narratives of race, modernity, the nation-state, and of course mestizaje in Latin America. I use this periodization advisedly—in this case, “the colonial period” structures both my approach and my objects of study, but it is to be understood as a discursive and disciplinary category to write both with and against. In other words, my argument turns not on staking out a privileged place for colonial studies in telling the history of race, as in the case of the critical approaches I analyzed above, but in posing a set of questions about the way in which the “colonial period” has been and continues to be used in telling these very stories.

The dissertation is divided into two parts, each centered on a particular location of subjectification and naturalization. Part 1, “Definitions,” opens with another oblique move, against expectations, decentering the human body and shifting location of race onto the material world: in chapter 1, the (al)chemical composition of an alcoholic beverage; in chapter 2, the built environment of the cityscape. Both chapters trace the mechanisms by which the scientific and administrative discourses of colonial governance were mapped onto bodies and populations, rendering them legible and in the process inventing them. But these discursive formations inevitably produce remainders or slippages that make visible the gap between what Ángel Rama called the elaborate ideological formulations of the *ciudad letrada* and the everyday experiences of the *ciudad real*. The year 1692 marks the proliferation and intensification of crisis—agricultural, religious, territorial, political—in New Spain culminating on June 8 in a massive popular uprising that left the palace and other city government buildings, the material

manifestation of colonial authority, in smoldering ruins. I am interested in the colonial state's response and the way this response draws on and reformulates notions of mixing and purity in an effort to stake out a newly consolidated political domain, a new formation of sovereignty. Thus, chapter 1 examines the government's attempts to understand and regulate *pulque*, a traditional indigenous alcohol made from the fermented juice of the maguey. While *pulque blanco* was deemed medicinal, *pulque mezclado* was demonized and blamed for the violence of the insurrection. By showing how the scientific discourse of mixed pulque was mapped onto the mixed bodies of the plebeian masses, I trace the grid of intelligibility that governed elite perception and thus colonial governance. In chapter 2, I turn to the colonial state's second policy response: the segregation of the city. If pulque offered a point at which to elaborate a theory of mixing, the surface of the city represented a mixed space in urgent need of purification. But the meaning of purity was rooted in its locus of enunciation. By juxtaposing two segregation proposals written by *letrados* close to the administrative apparatus—Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora and Agustín de Vetancurt, respectively—I show how different formations of purity corresponded to localized political interests.

In part 2, “Interventions,” I turn back to the body or, to be more precise, the technologies through which bodies are imagined and fashioned as racialized-naturalized subjects. Chapter 3 demonstrates that the construction of the mestizo body as mixed was neither immediate to the conquest nor its natural result. Faced with counterhegemonic “mestizo” conspiracies in Peru and, to a lesser extent, New Spain in 1566-1567, the Crown enacted a series of reforms designed to contain the mestizo threat. But these reforms constituted part of another trajectory that had to do with the colonial project of conversion. I chart the rise and fall of the figure of the mestizo missionary, at mid-century widely regarded as the savior of the evangelization project but three decades later deemed a threat to colonial stability. Across this trajectory, I trace the ways in which the ambivalent slippages between mixing and purity simultaneously invigorate and undermine the colonial project. Finally, in chapter 4, I examine the effects of another conspiracy, this time a “black” plot that was brutally suppressed in 1612. While Spanish accounts offer a vivid depiction of highly racialized paranoia that revolves around the penetration of Spanish purity (corporeal, material), I examine a Nahuatl account written by the indigenous historian Domingo de Chimalpahin to show how genealogy becomes a temporal plane or battlefield of counter-hegemonic struggle defined by tactical deployments of mixing and purity. Chimalpahin's intervention reformulates genealogy, transforming it from a matter of retrospective privilege to a prospective politics of everyday life.

If Foucault is right and, to return to the epigraph with which I began, society is structured by race war, then it is less important to define which violences are to be considered part of that war and which are not, than to identify not only the “basic elements that make the war possible” but also the ways in which those elements are taken up, reformulated, and deployed. Though anything but exhaustive, these episodes nevertheless constitute a point of departure for the impossible project of generating a typology of not only the strategies but also the tactics of naturalization that structure the moves on a battlefield of mixing and purity.

Part 1 / Definitions

Chapter 1

1692 / Defining Mixing Pulque, Classification, and the Body*

All drinks are mixed, figuratively speaking. It matters not whether the *pulque* is fresh, white, and bacteria free, or whether the aguardiente has been distilled in hygienic conditions.

--Tim Mitchell, *Intoxicated Identities*

On the afternoon of June 8, 1692, in the context of widespread food shortages, an uprising broke out in the central plaza of Mexico City that would leave the royal palace and other government buildings in smoldering ruins by nightfall.¹ The scale of the destruction at the very center of colonial authority in New Spain took many elites by surprise, as they tended to see the populace as incapable of effective organization and resistance.² According to what would become the “official history” of the uprising, best seen in a descriptive letter written by the well-known intellectual (and close friend to the Viceroy Conde de Galve) Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora, the blame fell squarely on the city’s indigenous population.³ Instead of admitting the government’s failure to provision the city with grains, which would have provided a reasonable cause for the urban poor to rise up, Sigüenza attacked the inebriating and seditious effects of

* This chapter is an expanded version of an article published as “To Avoid This Mixture: Rethinking *Pulque* in Colonial Mexico City,” *Food and Foodways* 19 (2011): 98-121.

¹ Recent scholarship on the events of the uprising includes R. Douglas Cope, *The Limits of Racial Domination: Plebeian Society in Colonial Mexico City, 1660-1720* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994), chap. 6; Natalia Silva Prada, *La política de una rebelión: Los indígenas frente al tumulto de 1692 en la Ciudad de México* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 2007); and Pilar Gonzalbo Aizpuru, “El nacimiento del miedo, 1692: Indios y españoles en la ciudad de México,” *Revista de Indias* 68, no. 244 (2008): 9-34. Beginning in 1691, central Mexico was hit by a “dual agricultural crisis” (a shortage of both wheat and maize) that caused grain prices to spike. While viceregal officials were sent to procure grains from the surrounding areas, high prices and distribution problems impeded a solution. In the end, the city’s granary (*alhóndiga*) was left empty. See Cope, *Limits of Racial Domination*, 128-34; and Gonzalbo Aizpuru, “El nacimiento del miedo,” 14-15.

² Fray Joseph de la Barrera wrote of the Indians’ “tan no esperado atrevimiento en la corte mas principal de este Reyno.” See Joseph de la Barrera to Conde de Galve, Archivo General de Indias (hereafter AGI), Mexico 333, fol. 471v.

³ “Los que más instaban en estas quejas eran los indios, gente la más ingrata, desconocida, quejumbrosa e inquieta que Dios crió.” Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora, “Alboroto y motín de los indios de México,” in *Seis Obras*, ed. William G. Bryant (Caracas: Biblioteca Ayacucho, 1984), 115. Sigüenza served as “a sort of official historian” for the Viceroy Conde de Galve and his description of the uprising constituted “a semi-official report of the affair, possibly made at the behest of the viceroy.” See Leonard, *Don Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora: A Mexican Savant of the Seventeenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1929), 105, 112. For a detailed study of Sigüenza’s relationship with the viceroy, see Iván Escamilla González, “El Siglo de Oro Vindicado: Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora, El Conde de Galve y El Tumulto de 1692,” in *Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora: Homenaje 1700-2000*, ed. Alicia Mayer (Mexico City: UNAM, 2002), II, 179-203. Cope traces the development of this “official” narrative about the uprising, which he calls the “treacherous Indians” explanation, in *Limits of Racial Domination*, 126-27.

indigenous *pulque*. “Desde el instante mismo que se principió el tumulto,” he wrote, “levantaron todos el grito—¡Este es el pulque!”⁴

Sigüenza’s history stands as both the best-known account of the uprising today and the hegemonic explanation of its causes and trajectory for his contemporaries. But his letter, dated August 30, 1692, merely gave the conventional wisdom a more official form, providing an *ex post facto* logic for the Viceroy Conde de Galve’s principal policy response to the uprising: the regulation of pulque. Already on June 9, with the palace still burning in the background, the viceroy announced an edict prohibiting pulque “absolutamente” within Mexico City because of its role in provoking the violence.⁵ Ten days later the prohibition was extended throughout the whole of New Spain.⁶ The government also acted immediately to demonstrate its will to enforce the new law. The very same day it came into effect, according to the contemporary diarist Antonio de Robles, a mulatto was publicly whipped “por un cántaro de pulque.”⁷ But Robles also records an incongruous detail. On July 31, less than two weeks after the consolidation of the ban, the government legalized the sale of “pulque sin raíz, que es medicinal” in the plaza.⁸

Many scholars—often following Sigüenza’s lead—have glossed over this distinction, anachronistically flattening pulque’s multiple forms and reducing to a single voice or overlooking entirely the debates that shaped its prohibition.⁹ By highlighting the density of these deliberations, I am interested in teasing out the authoritative discourses that represented, surrounded, and infused this drink with meaning in the context of the 1692 crisis. For this reason, my sources are primarily a set of 45 *informes* (official reports) written about a month after the

⁴ Sigüenza, “Alboroto y motín,” 134. A decade earlier, Sigüenza had written that “DETESTABLE PULQUE” was “la causa, y el origen de tanto daño” and called its use “de ninguna manera indiferente, sino siempre pecaminoso.” See his *Parayso Occidental, plantado, y cultivado por la liberal benefica mano de los muy Catholicos, y poderosos Reyes de España Nuestros Señores en su magnifico Real Convento de Jesus Maria de Mexico* (1684), fol. IXr, <<http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/servlet/SirveObras/12585075434593728876657/index.htm>> (accessed 20 April 2011).

⁵ Sigüenza, “Alboroto y motín,” 134; also see Antonio de Robles, *Diario de sucesos notables* (Mexico City: Editorial Porrúa, 1946), II, 257.

⁶ Robles, *Diario*, II, 264.

⁷ Robles, *Diario*, II, 264. According to Hernández Palomo, the prohibition (during the five years it was in force) was reasonably though far from entirely successful in Mexico City, and while pulque was still produced and consumed in rural communities it was on a somewhat smaller scale. Hernández Palomo, *La renta del pulque*, 78-80.

⁸ Robles, *Diario*, II, 265.

⁹ By rendering either pulque or its prohibition “absolute.” See, for example, Leonard, *Sigüenza y Góngora*, 133; as well as recent essays like Cope, *Limits of Racial Domination*, 127; Silva Prada, *La política de una rebelión*, 498; and Gonzalbo Aizpuru, “El nacimiento del miedo,” 25-27. Tim Mitchell uses scare-quotes to call into question the legitimacy of the category of white (medicinal) pulque: after the 1692 prohibition, he writes, “legal sales of ‘medicinal’ pulque slaked the thirst of Indians and poor Creoles alike.” Mitchell, *Intoxicated Identities: Alcohol’s Power in Mexican History and Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 24. Notable exceptions are José Jesús Hernández Palomo, *La renta del pulque en la Nueva España, 1663-1610* (Seville: Escuela de Estudios Hispano-Americanos, 1979); and William B. Taylor, *Drinking, Homicide, and Rebellion in Colonial Mexican Villages* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1979), chap. 2. For a critique of scholarly over-reliance on Sigüenza’s text, see Mabel Moraña, “El ‘tumulto de indios’ de 1692 en los pliegues de la fiesta barroca: Historiografía, subversión popular y agencia criolla en el México colonial,” *Agencias criollas: La ambigüedad ‘colonial’ en las letras hispanoamericanas*, ed. José Antonio Mazzotti (Pittsburgh: Biblioteca de América, 2000), 161-75. Running parallel to the pulque debates, seventeenth-century debates about chocolate as medicine or food highlight the shifting and multivalent significance of food and drink in Europe. See Ken Albala, “The Use and Abuse of Chocolate in Seventeenth-Century Medical Theory,” *Food and Foodways* 15 (2007): 53-74.

uprising by individual or institutional members of New Spain's colonial elite, both ecclesiastical and secular. These reports, now housed at the Archivo General de Indias (AGI) in Seville, Spain, were sent to the viceroy in response to his request for advice about whether the pulque prohibition should be lifted or maintained. Across the board, the *informes* offered strong support for extending the blanket prohibition. But many writers went beyond what had been asked of them, drafting analyses of not only what they saw as the problematic effects of pulque consumption but also their impressions of the pulque economy, the procedures involved in its production, the social milieu in which it was consumed, and, of course, its material qualities and composition.

Tim Mitchell's comment in the epigraph that all drinks are mixed is a useful point of departure here.¹⁰ To the extent that all substances—perhaps all commodities—contain, form part of, or come into intimate contact with other substances over the course of their economic and social lives, the epigraph speaks to mixing as a generalized phenomenon, a condition of being in the world. Nevertheless, certain types of pulque—regardless of their bacteria content—were designated “pure” while others became “mixed.” Mixing and purity, in other words, are rooted less in material qualities than in the discursive and conceptual apparatus through which those qualities are seen, analyzed, classified, and valued. Although there is little consensus in the pulque reports with regard to the specificities of classification schemes, what becomes clear is the common grid of intelligibility through which the significance of purity and mixing—beyond the immediate question of pulque itself—is articulated. While the ostensibly pure *pulque blanco* (also called *pulque puro*) was generally taken as medicinal, *pulque mezclado*, which contained certain difficult to pin down additives, was seen as, in the words of the Franciscan friar Juan de Luzuriaga, “la causa universal de los peccados.”¹¹ At the same time, attacks on mixed pulque blurred together with attacks on its consumers, also—and not coincidentally—designated as mixed. When the Royal University urged the viceroy to “evitar esta mezcla” above all other considerations, I argue, the authors were in fact articulating a far more generalized politics in reference not only to pulque as an (al)chemical body but by extension to the racialized individual and collective bodies of pulque consumers, and—as I go on to argue in detail in chapter 2—the urban space in which that consumption took place.¹² Throughout the *informes*, the production of mixed pulque—the transformation or corruption of natural purity through nefarious mixing—is analogous to, and at times appears even to engender, the production of mixed racial subjectivities through social, cultural, and biological mixing. If Foucault's interest in sexuality has made scholars attentive to this “pivot” that connects individual and population bodies and serves as the target of state intervention, my reading decenters the human body by tracing mixing back to the materiality of foodstuffs and foodways.¹³ In this case, pulque, and not sex, was identified as the

¹⁰ Mitchell, *Intoxicated Identities*, 132.

¹¹ Juan de Luzuriaga to Conde de Galve, AGI Mexico 333, fol. 338r.

¹² The University's *informe* was the only one that was printed. See the *Informe que la Real Universidad, y Claustro Pleno de ella de la Ciudad de Mexico de esta Nueva España haze a el Excelentissimo Señor Virrey de ella en conformidad de orden de su Excelencia de 3 de Julio de este año 1692 sobre los inconvenientes de la bebida de el Pulque* (Mexico City, 1692), fol. 1r.

¹³ “[S]ex . . . was at the pivot of the two axes along which developed the entire political technology of life. On the one hand it was tied to the disciplines of the body: the harnessing, intensification, and distribution of forces, the adjustment and economy of energies. On the other hand, it was applied to the regulation of populations, through all the far-reaching effects of its activity.” Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1978), 145. This is not to say that colonial elites were uninterested in

primary force that united bodies on and between multiple levels of scale, drawing them into the city's *pulquerías* (pulque taverns) to drink, dance, sing, make love—and presumably plot against the colonial state.

The *informes* go beyond straightforward associations of mixed pulque's material role in the production of a mixed plebe. The grid of intelligibility that led colonial elites to conceive of the category of mixed pulque at the same time constituted as its mirror image a plebeian mass as a newly defined object of governance and political horizon to be regulated by the colonial state. In spite of the best attempts of Spanish elites to probe, decipher, and document its many unknowns (ingredients, production processes, even etymology), this indigenous foodway remained stubbornly opaque and was therefore lumped together under the umbrella category of “mixed”—likewise, the racially fluid and indefinable plebeian bodies of Mexico City were channeled into a single collective mass whose principal characteristic was mixing. *Pulque mezclado* and the *mixturada plebe*, I argue, are structurally identical.¹⁴

Defining pulque(s)

Pulque, as the *informes* convincingly demonstrate, is far from the self-evident historical constant many scholars assume it to be. During the colonial period, even the etymology of the word “pulque” was obscure, its origin continually displaced. Although pulque was generally understood to have deep roots in local traditions, the word used to designate it did not—the Nahuatl term, *octli*, never entered into Spanish usage. Many colonial commentators attributed foreign origins to the word, but nevertheless they could not agree on the source.¹⁵ Writing in the

regulating sexuality. Seed traces a shift in the institutional site of social control regarding marriage in colonial Mexico from the church in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to the state in the eighteenth. See Patricia Seed, *To Love, Honor, and Obey in Colonial Mexico: Conflicts over Marriage Choice, 1574-1821* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988). On sixteenth-century approaches to “remedying” indigenous and mestizo women (and in some cases men) in *conventos* and *colegios*, see chapter 3 below; Kathryn Burns, *Colonial Habits: Convents and the Spiritual Economy of Cuzco, Peru* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), chap. 1; and Jacqueline Holler, *Escogidas Plantas: Nuns and Beatas in Mexico City, 1531-1601* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005). Stoler's important work on the regulation of the intimate in the Dutch East Indies has resituated Foucault's approach to race within a colonial context. See Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

¹⁴ Ayuntamiento to Conde de Galve, AGI Mexico 333, fol. 322v. If the plebe took on racialized qualities that had previously been attributed to the Indian, as Cope suggests, it was the study of indigenous culture—in this case, pulque—itsself that provided colonial elites with the discursive formation necessary to define, and thereby constitute, this plebeian body as such. Cope, *Limits of Racial Domination*, 22-23.

¹⁵ Modern linguists believe—and the Real Academia appears to agree—that the word pulque derives from the Nahuatl verb *polihui* (to lose, to disappear, etc.). As nouns in can be constructed by conjugating their corresponding verbs in the preterit, they read the Nahuatl *poliuhqui*, which resembles the Spanish “pulque,” as a “decomposed thing.” Still, there is little evidence that the word *poliuhqui* was used in this way during the colonial period by either native Spanish or Nahuatl speakers. Alonso de Molina (1571), Horacio Carochi (1645), and Rémi Siméon (1885) use the term *octli* instead. See Alonso de Molina, *Vocabulario en lengua castellana y mexicana y mexicana y castellana* (Mexico City: Editorial Porrúa, 2004), 83r, 31r; Horacio Carochi, *Grammar of the Mexican Language with an Explanation of Its Adverbs (1645)*, trans. and ed. James Lockhart (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 238-39 and passim; and Rémi Siméon, *Diccionario de la lengua náhuatl o mexicana*, trans. Josefina Oliva de Coll (Mexico City: Siglo XXI, 1977), 354. For one version of the *poliuhqui* interpretation, see Sonia Corcuera de Mancera, *El fraile, el indio y el pulque: Evangelización y embriaguez en la Nueva España, 1523-1548* (Mexico

late eighteenth century, Francisco Javier Clavijero would assert that the word had come from the “lengua Araucana” of Chile, but admitted that “es difícil adivinar como pasó este nombre a Mécico.”¹⁶ Two centuries earlier, Fray Diego Durán proposed an alternative trajectory in his *Historia de las Indias de Nueva España*. “[E]ste bocablo pulque,” he wrote, “no es bocablo mexicano sino de las islas como maiz y naguas y otros bocablos que trajeron de la Española.” For Durán, the transposition in question is linguistic and material. Pulque as such, he argued, arrived with the conquest: “el que llaman pulque que lo hasen los españoles de miel negra y agua con la raiz nunca ellos [los indios] lo tuvieron ni lo sabían hacer hasta que los negros y españoles lo inventaron.”¹⁷ It was not only the “bocablo” that Blacks and Spaniards brought from the Caribbean, but the very thing to which it referred. Words and things are inseparable at their roots.¹⁸

Etymological concerns were less pressing in 1692, but not because a coherent and generally accepted framework for classifying pulque had been established. Before any prohibition could be supported, then, the authors of the *informes* still had to define their terms. The development of a pulque typology through the process of identifying and classifying its stages of its production and the elements into which it could be reduced demanded a properly scientific approach. The Mercedarian friar Joseph de Noriega, for example, was explicit in refraining from such judgments, deeming himself unqualified to make them: “porque no siendo de mi profesion el conocimiento de la qualidad de esta bebida, no puedo hablar en ella con fundamento sin consulta de Doctos y expertos Medicos, que es á quien toca el conocimiento de semejantes qualidades.”¹⁹ It is for this reason that Doctor Francisco Antonio Ximénez, a member of the *protomedicato* (a board of royally appointed medical officers), was perhaps the most likely candidate to articulate this view.²⁰ In his *informe*, Ximénez broke down the juice of the maguey plant into “tres estados . . . el primero de agua miel, el segundo de Pulque Blanco, y el ultimo de pulque con rayz.” The first state, *aguamiel*, is simply the sweet juice produced by the mature maguey cactus. Once collected, this juice lasts from twelve to fourteen hours in dry climates, or seven to eight in wet, at which point it sours, begins to foam, and becomes *pulque blanco*. In this second state, Ximénez noted, the liquid remains for no more than thirty hours “sin mescla o adereso” before spoiling and losing its effects. In order to preserve it, he continued, “le añaden cascarras de naranjas, de melones, pimienta de la tierra, o chile, cal, la raiz del *ocpatli* (que por su vigor llaman Medicina del vino), arbol del Perú, la semilla del *Pipilzizintli*, y cosas que condusgan dandole fuerza para la embriaguez.”²¹ This last state, of course, is the much-maligned *pulque mezclado*. Fray Luzuriaga, whose own taxonomy coincided with the one proposed by Ximénez, laid out in concise terms the implications of these stages: “el Agua miel es medicinal

City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1991), 20, who bases her reading on Cecilio Robelo, *Diccionario de aztequismos* (Cuernavaca, 1904), 639-42.

¹⁶ Francisco Javier Clavijero, *Historia antigua de Méjico*, trans. José Joaquín de Mora (Londres: R Ackermann, 1826), I, 393.

¹⁷ Diego Durán, *Historia de las indias de Nueva España Historia de las indias de Nueva España y islas de Tierra Firme* (Mexico City: Editora Nacional, 1951), II, 240.

¹⁸ Cf. Foucault, *The Order of Things*, chap. 2.

¹⁹ Joseph de Noriega to Conde de Galve, AGI Mexico 333, fol. 351v.

²⁰ On the formation of the *protomedicato* in the Americas, see John Jay Tepaske, “Regulation of Medical Practitioners in the Age of Francisco Hernández,” in *Searching for the Secrets of Nature: The Life and Works of Francisco Hernández*, eds. Simon Varey, Rafael Chabrán, and Dora B. Weiner (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 55-64.

²¹ Francisco Antonio Ximénez to Conde de Galve, AGI Mexico 333, fol. 540v.

para unas dolencias, y el pulque blanco sin raiz para otras: pero este [pulque] con ella, para nada bueno, y para todo es malo.²²

In this way, a typology based on these three states came to represent the official position and was consequently adopted by the Council of the Indies, which would specifically cite the reports written by Ximénez and Luzuriaga in its follow-up communication with the colonial government of New Spain.²³ But this “consensus” did not go unchallenged. Some commentators, like Sigüenza, simply chose not to distinguish between pulque’s various states, and simply condemned “pulque”—presumably in all its forms—as a dangerous liquid.²⁴ The Jesuit Alonso de Quiros took this essentialization to the extreme, calling for the government to eradicate the maguey plant entirely in order to “extirpar del todo la raiz de tantos vicios.”²⁵ Others framed their alternate typologies in more scientific terms. The priest Francisco Martínez Falcón, for example, argued that pulque had not three states but two:

los terminos del pulque . . . [son] de dos maneras: uno blanco puro (que llaman Agua miel) y otro alterado, confecionado, ó medicado . . . el primero es puro y liquido çumo de el Maguey sin mescla, ni alteracion: el segundo . . . lo mesclan, lo confecionan y alteran con agua hervida, cal viva, una Raiz . . . lo cierto es que en virtud de esta composicion y mixtion, se haze la d[ic]ha bebida en excessivo grado caliente.²⁶

Martínez Falcón’s taxonomy is an attempt to replace the “three state” typology with a straightforward pulque binary. “Three states” are inconvenient; they cloud the waters of condemnation by enabling arguments in support of one type of pulque. By reducing the number of “states” to two, this move constructs a unified substance called “pulque” and simultaneously heightens its contrast with *aguamiel*. This is accomplished by blurring *pulque blanco* and *aguamiel* together, ascribing to the latter the medicinal characteristics of the former. Invoking the name of Doctor Francisco Hernández, who had served as the Crown’s chief medical officer in New Spain during the late sixteenth century, he wrote that “El pulque que llaman blanco, ó agua miel es el jugo simple de la Planta, de el qual y de este dize el Autor citado, que es muy

²² Juan de Luzuriaga to Conde de Galve, AGI Mexico 333, fol. 337v. These attitudes are echoed in a later manuscript entitled “Virtudes maravillosas del Pulque, medicamento universal, ó Polychresto,” written by Doctor Cayetano Francisco de Torres in 1748. “[N]o creo hai otro [medicamento] que tenga tantas [virtudes],” he wrote, and proceeded to outline them at length in the scientific language apparently proper to the study of what he referred to as the “systema physico-mechanico.” But even Torres’ glowing endorsement of pulque’s benefits was reserved for the “pure” kind. Like Luzuriaga and others writing in the wake of the uprising a half-century earlier, he had no sympathy for “Pseudo-pulques,” produced by “mesclandole nefariamente varios estiercoles, simientes, raizes, y hierbas para con facilidad tributar culto al fingido Baco.” See Cayetano Francisco de Torres, “Virtudes maravillosas del Pulque, medicamento universal, ó Polychresto” (1748), Biblioteca Nacional de México (BN), MS 23, fol. 4v, 2r.

²³ Consejo de Indias to Conde de Galve, AGI Mexico 333, fols. 590r-592v.

²⁴ Oddly, given his scientific credentials, it appears that Sigüenza was not asked to submit an *informe*. But his account of the uprising other includes some brief reflections on the drink.

²⁵ Alonso de Quiros to Conde de Galve, AGI Mexico 333, fol. 476v.

²⁶ Francisco Martínez Falcón to Conde de Galve, AGI Mexico 333, fols. 406r-v. In similarly straightforward language, the Prebendary of Mexico City’s cathedral, Joseph Ramírez de Arellano asserted that “en el Pulque no ay mas que dos cosas; la primera, la substancia de el Pulque, que es una Agua, ó licor sacado, ó destilado del Maguey; la segunda, la confeccion que se haze de la cal, y raizes malditas y prohibidas.” In contrast to others who understood the law to allow the former, Ramírez went on to declare both types illegal. Joseph Ramírez de Arellano to Conde de Galve, AGI Mexico 333, fol. 516v.

medicinal.”²⁷ Such a clear distinction between (mixed) pulque and *aguamiel*, however, breaks down on closer inspection. Consider the relation “medicado-medicinal” in the passage above. Despite their identical Latin root, Martínez Falcón uses the words in opposite senses. “Medicado,” on one hand, is paired with “alterado” and “confeccionado,” a linguistic set designating material transformation through combination. “Medicinal,” on the other hand, describes the pure, benevolent state of the juice of the maguey—precisely the opposite of the substance that has been “medicado,” and thus rendered un-medicinal.

Other commentators employed similarly broad definitions of pulque, but inserted them differently into the debate. Instead of conflating *aguamiel* and *pulque blanco*, Antonio Guridi, the parish priest of Santiago Tlatelolco, went out of his way to distinguish them. *Pulque blanco* and *aguamiel* differ, he wrote, “segun sus efectos, y sus nombres.” According to their effects, he explained,

porque el agua miel no embriaga, el pulque si; el Agua miel es como agua clara: el Pulque como agua de jabon, por esso le llaman blanco: el agua miel es dulce, y el Pulque agrio: el agua miel es simple, el Pulque compuesto por la inmixtion de la yerba.

According to their names, he continued,

porque una es agua miel y otro pulque, y no es lo mismo pulque, que Agua miel, ni al contrario.²⁸

Like Martínez Falcón, Guridi is invested in consolidating a pulque binary, in this case by shifting a bundle of associations from one referent to another. Medicinal benefits commonly associated with *pulque blanco* are thereby severed and linguistically sutured onto a visibly different etymological root.

As Guridi’s line of argumentation indicates, language plays a central role in these concerns. The two liquids are substantively different, he flatly asserts, because they have different names. Acts of naming, which constitute the material of the taxonomic edifice, occur over and over in these efforts to redefine and thereby stabilize the nature of pulque. Like Martínez Falcón and Guridi, Miguel de Estrada, the rector of the Colegio Real de Cristo in Mexico City, sought to construct a unified form of pulque by challenging its color:

Ó pulque! por mas que te apelliden *Blanco*. . . . Es manifiesto engaño dezir, que ay pulque dulce, distinto del agua miel contrapuesto al amargo, y apellidado *Blanco*; No solo hierra, quien tal dize; sino tambien queda comprendido en la amenaza, que al

²⁷ Francisco Martínez Falcón to Conde de Galve, AGI Mexico 333, fol. 407r. For his part, Hernández never used the term *pulque blanco*, referring simply to “el mismo çumo” of the maguey. See Francisco Hernández, *Quatro libros de la naturaleza, y virtudes de las plantas, y animales que estan recevidos en el uso de Medicina en la Nueva España*, trans. Francisco Ximénez (Mexico City: Diego López Dávalos, 1615), 148r. On the life and writings of Hernández, as well as their diffusion in Europe, see Hernández, *The Mexican Treasury: The Writings of Dr. Francisco Hernández*, ed. Simon Varey and trans. Simon Varey, Rafael Chabrán, and Cynthia L. Chamberlin (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 3-25.

²⁸ Antonio Guridi to Conde de Galve, AGI Mexico 333, fols 496v-497r.

capitulo quinto haze Isaias á los que le dan el nombre de bueno, al pulque malo, apellidando blanco y dulce, al que todo es amargo.²⁹

While Guridi's analysis of the color white represents a direct rereading of its symbolic implications, here color becomes a vector of meaning indirectly, through taste. In an effort to write *pulque blanco* out of his regime of classification, Estrada conflates whiteness with sweetness and, by extension, the good.³⁰ Arranged in binary opposition (“contrapuesto”) is bitterness, linked not to color—after all, what color is bitter?—but simply to the bad, to evil. All of these associations come filtered through Estrada's reading of Isaiah which, in the context of an allegory of the Christian community as a vineyard that produces grapes and wine, proclaims: “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter” (Isaiah 5:20). There is no tension between this religious language and the more scientific language of classification—names must be correct, truly representative, or risk disrupting not only the moral but also the natural foundations of the world. The *informes* drafted by religious authors identify in broad strokes the consequences of this misnaming channeled through the spiraling proliferation of drunkenness and sin.

Even those who agreed with the “three state” typology used interpretations of color to contest the accuracy of the official names given by Doctor Ximénez. Francisco de Aguiar y Seijas, the Archbishop of Mexico City, criticized the “yndustriosa malicia de la codicia en haverle denominado Pulque blanco, *siendo negro pulque*.”³¹ Like Estrada's blurring of whiteness, sweetness, and the good, the archbishop deployed the symbolic association of blackness with evil. Seeking to move beyond the symbolic, however, he continued: “Y hablando a lo litteral, el pulque que se vende en esta ciudad, y en sus Varrios, y cinco leguas en contorno es amarillo, y de color palido, indicativo de muerte, o falta de salud. Busca pues, el engaño un adjetivo blanco y hermoso, porque tuviesse bueno color en el Assiento.”³² Despite his attempt to speak in “litteral” terms, Aguiar y Seijas cannot unravel the bundle of associations that bind (literal) colors to (symbolic) qualities. For the archbishop—and contrary to what we might expect—it is a pallid yellow, and not black, that “indicates” death. To call the drink “blanco” represents a tool of deception or, better yet, a marketing strategy employed by *asentistas* and pulque sellers to render their product commercially desirable and morally uncontroversial.³³

²⁹ Miguel de Estrada to Conde de Galve, AGI Mexico 333, fols. 484r-v. The origin of the emphasis is unclear: it appears to have been added by a later reader.

³⁰ Other *informes* also base their classifications on sweetness without reference to color, substituting *pulque dulce* for *pulque blanco*. See Joseph Ramírez de Arellano to Conde de Galve, AGI Mexico 333, fol. 517r.

³¹ Francisco de Aguiar y Seijas to Conde de Galve, AGI Mexico 333, fol. 268r. Again, the origin of the emphasis is unclear, as the underlining appear to have been added by a later reader.

³² Francisco de Aguiar y Seijas to Conde de Galve, AGI Mexico 333, fol. 268r.

³³ While Aguiar y Seijas's take on these colors is a shift from the conventional associations of Renaissance humoral physiology, his underlying assumption remains the same—that a food's color provides clues as to its inner essence. “The idea of color and visible form as an indication of nutritional value is also probably a remnant of earlier food systems, although quite often it persisted in humoral physiology. In the West this was called the *doctrine of signatures*. An object's visible signs indicate the object's affinity to other substances and offer clues to its ultimate meaning and value. Within the context of Christianity, these signs were left by God as hints to tell us how we should make use of his creation. By this logic, red foods are hot and thus good for the blood; yellow herbs might be good for jaundice; heart-shaped leaves are logically good for the heart.” Ken Albala, *Eating Right in the Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 80.

In such accounts, nature is inscribed with signs that allow it to be read like a text, written in what Foucault calls “the prose of the world”—words occupy the same order as the materiality of things, which is what permits Guridi to deploy the characteristics of pulque next to its names as equally valid forms of evidence. Names must be correct, not in the arbitrary sense of representational transparency but rather in their correspondence or resemblance to the object they are meant to signify.³⁴ Taste, as a marker of inner essence, thus stands as a sign by which to read, organize, and classify the natural and even ethical world.³⁵ At times, the logic of this sensory trace is transposed from the materiality of the substance to the essence of the pulque consumer. An extreme example comes from Fray Antonio de Contreras, who used the bodily experience of taste to decipher the moral qualities that inhere in certain bodies. For the Indians, he wrote, pulque is a “dulce licor,” but for “la Republica toda” it is an “amargo veneno, causa quisá de sus lamentables Ruynas.”³⁶ What is important about Contreras’s Indians is not so much the representation of their sensory pleasure in the downfall of the colonial state but rather the administrative gaze that operationalizes the legibility of their taste—a taste, in other words, that makes them legible as treasonous actors. All those who enjoy pulque, who consume it willingly, are in this way figured necessarily as objects of governance.

As the variety of elaborate taxonomies and policy proposals advanced in the pulque reports suggests, the nature of pulque was in many ways a highly contested terrain. Despite these differences, however, they are united by a common condemnation—if not the composition or definition—of mixing. In the end, knowing the “true” number of types involved in pulque production and the “correct” name for each respective variety is less important than a shared vision of governance, in which mixing is something to be prevented and eliminated while purity something to be promoted and preserved. Divergent taxonomies, in other words, do not to undermine but indeed heighten the contrast between the mixed and the pure.

The making, and mixing, of pulque

Part of the elite obsession with mixing was channeled into an intense level of scrutiny aimed at discovering the ingredients responsible for this transformation. We have already seen references to additives such as herbs, boiling water, and mineral lime, as well as Doctor Ximénez’s extensive list including certain fruits, vegetables, seeds, and roots. Roots, above all,

³⁴ The chronology is different, but this epistemology of representation seems to correspond to Foucault’s characterization of the sixteenth century: words and things have not yet become separated. See Foucault, *The Order of Things*, chap. 2.

³⁵ According to Galenic humoral physiology, taste was perhaps the most important category for classification. “The key to understanding the qualities in the humoral system is flavor. Behind nearly every single qualitative evaluation is ultimately a taste test, and flavor is the most consistent criterion for categorizing foods.” Albala, *Eating Right in the Renaissance*, 82; cf. Foucault, *The Order of Things*, chap. 2. In his *informe*, Doctor Francisco Antonio Ximénez frequently cited Galen on, for example, the use of taste and smell for identifying natural difference. Ximénez to Conde de Galve, AGI Mexico 333, fols. 547v, 548r. Taste was one of the parallel axes of organization in Francisco Hernández’s *Quatro libros de la naturaleza*.

³⁶ Antonio de Contreras to Conde de Galve, AGI Mexico 333, fol. 533r. Sigüenza used similar terms to describe the threat represented by these different perceptions. The Indians’ memory of their pre-Hispanic gods was “ominoso para nosotros y para ellos feliz,” and took the concrete form of little statuettes marked with red paint on their necks “en su retrato a quien aborrecen.” Sigüenza, “Alboroto y motín,” 117.

were the most cited examples, even when their exact nature remained uncertain. In any case, in addition to the suspected additives listed above, the *informes* referenced stranger and at times hyperbolic ingredients including a variety of herbs and meat, “una piedra ardiendo, que llaman *tezontle*,” and even “en un cañuto tapado, un lagarto vivo y negro como un azabache” that an astonished inquisitor claimed to find in a vat of fermenting pulque (“me causó horror, quando lo vi,” he confessed in his *informe*).³⁷

Long, exaggerated, and inconsistent, the laundry list that I have been able to compile from the *informes* suggests a profound interest in mixing in general on the part of elites, but at the same time an imperfect grasp of what exactly was being mixed. The otherwise confident vicar general of the Mercedarian Order, Francisco Martínez Falcón, who advanced a sophisticated argument to distinguish mixed pulque from *aguamiel*, was certain that some root or other was implicated, but added parenthetically that “en todo Mexico no he podido descubrir ni me han sabido dezir, que raiz es.”³⁸ This root may have been *ocpatli*, although it seems unlikely that Martínez Falcón would have been so unaware of something so frequently mentioned in the other *informes*.³⁹ Along with its precise composition, the minutiae of pulque production also remained highly obscure. The Franciscan friar Agustín de Vetancurt argued that pulque was impossible to regulate because it was produced “en los pueblos,” out of the reach of Spanish administrators.⁴⁰ To be inserted into the pulque economy of Mexico City, of course, this pulque had to be brought in, which theoretically opened it up to supervision. But, as the archbishop argued in his *informe*, a great deal of pulque entered the city secretly and thus illegally “en Botijas, y hodres pequeños, en canoas, y en otras cosas entrometido,” so as to avoid paying the fee to the *asentista*. Once in the city, he continued, the “Yndias Pulqueras” could simply add hot water, and presumably other ingredients, to their pulque vats at will.⁴¹ In part, this interest in the details of pulque production is strategically ethnographic, a motivation similar to that of Spanish missionaries like Diego Durán and Bernardino de Sahagún, who dedicated their lives to documenting indigenous culture so as to facilitate evangelization and the Spanish colonial project.⁴² Read against this totalizing desire, apparent gaps in Spanish knowledge of—and control over—pulque production reveal the limits of colonial hegemony. Pulque “ethnographers”

³⁷ Franciso Xavier Palavicino y Villarasa to Conde de Galve, AGI Mexico 333, fol. 528r; Francisco Martínez Falcón to Conde de Galve, AGI Mexico 333, fol. 414v; and Obispo de Valladolid to Conde de Galve, AGI Mexico 333, fol. 283v.

³⁸ Francisco Martínez Falcón to Conde de Galve, AGI Mexico 333, fols. 406r-v.

³⁹ Such as Antonio Guridi to Conde de Galve, AGI Mexico 333, fol. 496v. While Ximénez translated the Nahuatl as “Medicina del vino,” it would be more accurate to call it “pulque medicine,” as it derives specifically from *octli* (pulque) and *patli* (medicine).

⁴⁰ Agustín de Vetancurt to Conde de Galve, AGI Mexico 333, fol. 499r.

⁴¹ This was part of the archbishop’s effort to determine the number of sins caused by pulque in Mexico City. By multiplying the number of mules entering the city by the number of *arrobas* each one could carry, he calculated that some five million *arrobas* of pulque entered the city each year. Next, he figured that each *aroba* would generate two “peccados de embriaguez,” thus reaching the total of ten million sins of drunkenness per year. At this point, however, he was forced to give up, because the quantity of other sins caused by drunkenness was so high that “solo Dios los puede numerar.” Francisco de Aguiar y Seijas to Conde de Galve, AGI Mexico 333, fols. 272v-273r.

⁴² On such early “ethnography” as part of the Spanish colonial project, see J. Jorge Klor de Alva, “Sahagún and the Birth of Modern Ethnography: Representing, Confessing, and Inscribing the Native Other,” in *The Work of Bernardino de Sahagún: Pioneer Ethnographer of Sixteenth-Century Aztec Mexico*, eds. Klor de Alva, H. B. Nicholson and Eloise Quiñones Keber (Albany: SUNY Institute for Mesoamerican Studies, 1988), 31-52; and José Rabasa, *Inventing America: Spanish Historiography and the Formation of Eurocentrism* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993), 125-30, 151-64.

remained insecure, gripped by an incomprehension that was refracted back on indigenous producers themselves in the form of an essentialized cultural, even natural otherness. As the Royal University argued in its *informe*, “Porque o ya a el hazerse, o ya a el traginarse, como passa por manos de los mesmos indios, no es evitable, y mas quando todo su apetito es a su fortaleza.”⁴³ A pathologized Indian nature, an indigenous body thirsty only for drunken excess, smoothes over these epistemological fissures.

It was this unknown and unknowable *pulque mezclado*, and not its “pure” cousin, that Spanish clergy and colonial administrators were referring to when they criticized, as early as the first half of the sixteenth century, what they perceived as the indigenous population’s heavy drinking.⁴⁴ Even after the 1692 uprising, most of the *informes* agreed about the healthful effects of *aguamiel* and *pulque blanco*, thought to cure common ailments as well as more serious epidemics like measles.⁴⁵ As noted above, Francisco Martínez Falcón drew on the authority of Doctor Francisco Hernández to demonstrate pulque’s medical uses: “Este jugo mueve en las hembras sus messes, ablanda el vientre, facilita la orina, limpia los riñones y vegiga, y limpia las cabidades y transito de la orina.”⁴⁶ Evidence came not only from Spanish physicians but also indigenous informants.⁴⁷ Archbishop Aguiar y Seijas, who described pulque in demonic terms, noted that “segun las noticias, que [h]e adquirido assi de Medicos Doctissimos, como de Yndios Viejos, el Agua miel, o el jugo puro y simple del Maguey es bueno y medicinal.”⁴⁸ Sigüenza too noted that in addition to the multiple ecclesiastic and secular sources, the viceroy requested *informes* from “aun de los propios indios los que conservaban algo de nobleza antigua.”⁴⁹ In other words, even many of the authors who supported the blanket pulque prohibition, meant to eliminate both pure and mixed varieties, took for granted the benefits of the former. What they rejected was the possibility that pulque could remain pure in the face of what they saw as the Indians’ natural wickedness and unquenchable thirst for alcohol (in some cases, the greed of Spanish pulque producers was implicated as well). As Diego de la Cadena, a professor of theology at the Royal University, asserted with despair, without an absolute prohibition “son inevitables las mezclas.”⁵⁰

⁴³ *Informe que la Real Universidad*, fol. 1v.

⁴⁴ Taylor argues that these critiques reveal differences between Spanish and Indian drinking cultures or practices rather than in the relative quantity consumed. See Taylor, *Drinking, Homicide, and Rebellion*, 41. *Pulque blanco* was the only kind legally permitted during the colonial period. Hernández Palomo, *La renta del pulque*, 31-33.

⁴⁵ Hernández Palomo, *La renta del pulque*, 10-13.

⁴⁶ Martínez Falcón to Conde de Galve, AGI Mexico 333, fol. 407r.

⁴⁷ In fact, much like religious “ethnographers” like Bernardino de Sahagún, Spanish doctors like Francisco Hernández drew heavily on indigenous knowledge to produce their findings. Philip II instructed Hernández to “consult, wheresoever you go, all the doctors, medicine men, herbalists, Indians, and other persons with knowledge in such matters [i.e. medicinal uses of native plants and animals].” See “The Instructions of Philip II to Dr. Francisco Hernández,” in *The Mexican Treasury*, 46.

⁴⁸ Aguiar y Seijas to Conde de Galve, AGI Mexico 333, fol. 269r.

⁴⁹ Sigüenza, “Alboroto y motín,” 134.

⁵⁰ “[E]s moralmente ymposible, que pueda haver tal vigilancia en los Ministros, que estorbe las mezclas; porque aunque se reconosca sin ellas, quando entra, hazen las confecciones en las mesmas Pulquerias; y . . . porq[ue] quando fuera possible esta vigilancia, y se consiguiera el estorvarlas, *ipso facto* se conseguia, que no huviera Pulque, porque los Yndios no lo gustan, ni lo apetezen ni lo beben en siendo solo el jugo sin mezcla agua miel, ó, Pulque blanco, que llaman; luego aun supuesta la Vigilancia de los Ministros, no pueden estorvarse todas, ó las mas de las mezclas, es cierto, como emos visto, que es expressa voluntad del Rey n[uest]ro señor, que no ayga Pulque mezclado; luego no pudiendo ser de otra manera, es expressa voluntad de su Magestad, que no lo ayga. A que se llega en confirmacion de lo mismo, que asta oy han velado los Ministros de su Magestad en orden á estorvar las

For many pulque critics, additives did not simply turn the drink into a stronger and more concentrated version of the same substance. Rather, mixing was thought to fundamentally alter its nature, transforming—even *transubstantiating*, in the words of the theologian Francisco Xavier Palavicino y Villarasa—it into something new and essentially different.⁵¹ The mixture of two elements thus produced not a compound but an entirely new third element. As the Royal University wrote, “Las mixturas en la pocion, no conservan la simple; la alteran, y mixturada haze tercera especie de bebida de contraria, o diversa naturaleza.”⁵² Similarly, Vetancurt opened his report with a description of “la condicion de que sea liquido, y no confeccion[a]do el Pulque.” He went on: “desde luego les mesclan las raizes, y los yngredientes noscivos, para que sea brebaje, lo que es [naturalmente] agua destilada de los Magueyes.”⁵³ Though not a scientist like Doctor Ximénez, Vetancurt mobilized an authoritative discourse of classification in order to mark, and by doing so produce, categorical difference. The transformation of “liquido” into “confeccionado” and “agua” into “brebaje” represents the corruption of that which is by nature good or indifferent. These changes were thought to overdetermine the uses to which the new substance could be put. A neutral substance can theoretically be used for many purposes, good or bad, but if a “brew” or “confection” is bad in essence, as Vetancurt suggested, then it can never be used for good—and must therefore be prohibited.⁵⁴

In addition to recruiting indigenous informants for information about pulque production, the *informes* frequently drew on contemporary histories of precolonial customs regarding pulque as a means of justifying the prohibition. Among the Mexica, observed Vetancurt, the punishment for drunkenness ranged from demolishing the guilty party’s house to public execution; women were to be stoned to death “como adúlteras.” After describing this harsh treatment, he posed the rhetorical question: “Si esto hazian los Gentiles por el daño politico, que deben hazer los [cris]tianos por el politico y espiritual juntamente en servicio de Dios y de su Rey?”⁵⁵ Regardless of the severity of the penalties for public intoxication before the arrival of the Spaniards, however, later indigenous commentators may not have shared this obsession with mixing. Where the *informes* go out of their way to identify the more or less bizarre elements that, when added to the drink, rendered it officially “mixed,” the diary of Domingo de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin paints a somewhat different picture. Writing at the end of the

mixturas, y infusiones, que le hechan á esta Bebida, sabemos que siempre y asta el dia de oy ha embriagado á todos los que la beben . . . *porque son inevitables las mezclas.*” Diego de la Cadena to Conde de Galve, AGI Mexico 333, fols. 401v-402r; my emphasis.

⁵¹ Mixed pulque has been “sacado de su ser nativo, ó por mexor dezir, transsubstanciado de agua miel, en Pulque: Porque lo primero dize la entidad *secundum se*; y lo segundo, la misma, no solo alterada; sino transformada, con nueva forma: ó reducida á nueva substancia” Francisco Xavier Palavicino to Conde de Galve, AGI Mexico 333, fol. 525r.

⁵² *Informe que la Real Universidad*, fol. 4v. Also see Aguiar y Seijas to Conde de Galve, AGI Mexico 333, fol. 267r.

⁵³ Agustín de Vetancurt to Conde de Galve, AGI Mexico 333, fol. 499r.

⁵⁴ For example, Antonio Girón, minister of Santa Cruz parish, argued that pulque should not be considered indifferent “because all things that uniformly induce physical or moral necessity towards an action, cannot be called indifferent [with regard to] the good or the bad.” Girón to Conde de Galve, AGI Mexico 333, fol. 520r.

⁵⁵ Agustín de Vetancurt to Conde de Galve, AGI Mexico 333, fols. 501v-502r. Such claims are problematic, as they rely on the recollections of elite indigenous informants at least a half century after the fact. Lockhart suggests that historians have “too readily accepted idealized and self-serving posterior statements that hardly anyone drank pulque before the conquest.” See Lockhart, *The Nahuas After the Conquest*, 112. Also see Taylor, *Drinking, Homicide, and Rebellion*, chap. 2.

sixteenth century, Chimalpahin, as he is more commonly known, recorded in Nahuatl what he saw as the most important events taking place in Mexico City and the nearby Chalco region, his birthplace. Pulque makes an appearance as early as 1594, in an entry referencing “the people of Tacubaya, who make their living with white pulque (*yztac octli*).”⁵⁶ In the entry for the following year, Chimalpahin wrote:

Auh ypan in deziembre de 1595. a[ñ]os. yn momanaco Cocoliztli çahuatl Salanbio ynic micohuac huel totocac yn cocoliztli ynic nepallehuiloc yztac octli heheloquiltic tletlematzin miya yn ipa[n] yztac octli. yc patihuaya auh huel cenca micohuac yn cecemilhuitl huel miec in motocaya.

[It was in December of the year 1595 that an epidemic of measles broke out, from which people died; the epidemic really raged. People were helped with white pulque; *eloquiltic tletlematzin* was drunk in white pulque, with which it was cured. There were a very great many deaths; every day very many were buried.]⁵⁷

Here, as in many of the *informes*, white pulque is described as medicinal. (Although the “very great many deaths” imply that its effects may have been somewhat overestimated.) But I am most interested in what, for Chimalpahin, does and does not constitute mixing. The operative phrase is “*eloquiltic tletlematzin* was drunk in white pulque.” The translators suggest that the words *eloquiltic tletlematzin* “refer to specific herbs used for a variety of purposes.”⁵⁸ Despite the fact that “herbs” appear frequently in the lists of “pernicious” ingredients, the mixture of these particular herbs with *pulque blanco* does not seem to alter the substance of the drink or transform it into the dreaded *pulque mezclado*. Chimalpahin preferred to call the drink *white pulque with herbs*, instead of “mixed pulque” or even just “pulque with herbs.” That he never mentioned any other type of pulque or appears interested in developing his own list of mixture-producing ingredients suggests that Chimalpahin’s primary interest lay in the drink’s healing properties. But it also points to a subtle difference in the place that the category of the “mixed” occupied in his approach to the natural world. And the meaning of mixing, as we will see, extended far beyond the rim of the pulque mug.

Mixed pulque and the (re)production of sin

⁵⁶ Don Domingo de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin. *Annals of His Time*, eds. and trans. James Lockhart, Susan Schroeder, and Doris Namala (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 51. It is notable that the translators do not know what to do with “*iztac octli*.” In a footnote, they write, “It is not clear to us if this means simply pulque in general, or if white pulque is a special kind. Molina gives white wine for *iztac octli*.” But Molina also gives “vino” (wine) for “*octli*” (pulque); as we saw above, in Doctor Ximénez’s reference to “Wine medicine,” it was common practice to refer to *pulque* in Spanish as “vino.” It is therefore highly unlikely that Chimalpahin was writing about Spanish wine, white or otherwise.

⁵⁷ Chimalpahin, *Annals of His Time*, 55.

⁵⁸ “*Eloquiltic* seems to be an adjectival form based on *elotl* (*elote* in Spanish), a green ear of corn on the plant, and *quilitl*, any of a variety of green plants of the type used for salads. *Tlemaitl* is a sort of ladle to carry fire in and probably could refer to a ladle or spoon more generally.” The translators go on to question, once again, “whether *iztac octli* could be white wine.” See Chimalpahin, *Annals of His Time*, 54-55n3. Rémi Siméon defines “*eloquiltic*” as a medicinal plant used to treat pleurisy. Siméon, *Diccionario de la lengua náhuatl o mexicana*, 147.

The *informes* described mixed pulque as both a spiritual and temporal threat. The theologian Diego de la Cadena opened his report by declaring that the prohibition “sera el mayor servicio de ambas Magestades; de Dios N[uest]ro señor, por los gravissimos inconvenientes, que se siguen en lo Moral; y de la catholica Magestad de n[uest]ro Rey y Señor (que Dios guarde) por los excessivos, é ynevitables daños, que de ella se ocasionan en lo Politico.”⁵⁹ Most of the *informes*—all but three—were written by members of New Spain’s clergy and therefore concern themselves primarily with the former. They constitute a laundry list of the Indians’ greater and lesser sins, seemingly drawn less from personal experience or empirical evidence than from biblical references and other religious commentary—Saints Ambrose and Augustine figure prominently. Claims of renewed indigenous idolatry and sacrifice demonstrated, in the words of the Dominican Fray Juan del Castillo, that alcohol “los extrahe de la rusticidad, y simple trato, que tenian recien conquistados y convertidos.”⁶⁰ Assertions of religious backsliding were articulated alongside other, somewhat contradictory claims that the indigenous population had in fact never abandoned its ancient religion. In his account of the uprising, for example, Sigüenza declared that “no [se les han] olvidado aún en estos tiempos sus supersticiones antiguas,” while adding parenthetically that “su mayor dios” continued to be “el de las guerras.”⁶¹

In either form, imperfect conversion served as a powerful rhetorical device with which to attack pulque, while at the same time privileging the administrative perspective of the clergy responsible for these reports. Perhaps the most powerful argument *against* the pulque prohibition—and, as we will see, the reason for its eventual collapse—was the revenue that the sale of the pulque *asiento* (contract) provided the government. Many ecclesiastical authors sought to preempt this monetary drawback by flatly asserting that saving even a single soul was worth more than the hundreds of thousands of pesos gained by selling pulque permits. A wide variety of historical examples were mobilized to demonstrate the Spanish crown’s historical interest in evangelization over economics, including Philip II’s costly invasion of Flanders and Philip IV’s failed attempt to hold onto Portugal in 1640.⁶²

But the reports did not limit their focus to the spiritual alone. Indeed, despite de la Cadena’s attempt to maintain an analytical separation between them, the temporal and spiritual worlds in many ways overlap—homicide can simultaneously constitute a mortal sin and a threat to political stability. This concern manifested itself in two primary ways. First, pulque seemed to disrupt the everyday operations of the colonial market economy, in terms of both production and consumption. After spending all of Sunday at the pulquerías, for example, workers were liable to skip work on Monday. “[T]odos en general,” wrote Miguel de Estrada, “se escusan los lunes al trabajo; porque el pulque de los Domingos llega á ympossibilitarlos.”⁶³ High levels of absenteeism had led, according to the Dominican Francisco Sánchez, to the normalization of the “vulgar y comun” expression “San Lunes,” an early appearance of a phenomenon that would continue to inspire state efforts to suppress drinking in the interest of economic “modernization”

⁵⁹ Diego de la Cadena to Conde de Galve, AGI Mexico 333, fol. 399r.

⁶⁰ Juan del Castillo to Conde de Galve, AGI Mexico 333, fol. 386v.

⁶¹ Sigüenza, “Alboroto y motín,” 117.

⁶² Miguel de Estrada to Conde de Galve, AGI Mexico 333, fols. 493r-v.

⁶³ Miguel de Estrada to Conde de Galve, AGI Mexico 333, fol. 484r.

well into the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁶⁴ Priests were clearly concerned with not only the difficulties of corralling Indians into church, but also pulque's broader implications for society's material wellbeing. Various *informes*, for example, declared pulque not only directly responsible for the uprising but also indirectly implicated in producing the food crisis that preceded it. The Indians, the archbishop wrote, were using their best and most fertile land for the cultivation of maguey, rather than the corn on which they and their families relied. Out of these skewed priorities, he claimed, the Indians had put their own lives in danger: "sin Mayz no pueden vivir, y sin los magueyes no pueden beber, y estiman mas el beber, *que el vivir*."⁶⁵

Second, and even more important, were the "intimate" sins thought to take place in Mexico City's numerous pulquerías. Critics frequently referred to the pulquería as a point of encounter where the city's many races were brought together by the pernicious drink. According to the minister of San Pablo parish, Bernabé Paez Núñez, "por esta Bevida contraxeron amistad yndios con negros, y mulatos, que siempre fueron opuestos; y unos y otros forma una muy perversa Plebe."⁶⁶ The composition of this *plebe* involved a dual positive and negative movement: on one hand, the consolidation of a unified underclass; on the other, the disruption of the boundaries of identity, boundaries that elites clearly hoped to maintain and keep visible. For the Dean and Cabildo of Mexico City's cathedral, "otro no menor daño que este linage de vicio tiene ya tan infestada la plebe, que apenas se hallará Pulquería, que no esté llena de Negros, Mulatos, y aun otro genero de Gentes, que es indigno el dezirlo." And those brought together by drink, they continued, "no los distinguen las costumbres."⁶⁷ What most worried these authors, for whom lineage fundamentally shaped moral behavior, was that identities would evade orderly classification: the transformation of what was shameful to mention (*indigno el dezirlo*) into what was impossible to know.

Pulquerías were seen as dark, ambiguous spaces, where—not coincidentally—dark, ambiguous races met secretly to plot against their Spanish rulers. Archbishop Aguiar y Seijas described the seditious mix of blacks, mulattoes, mestizos, and Indians that "se juntan de dia, y especialmente de noche, en salas, aposentillos, y escondrijos" belonging to the pulquerías in order to "cometer sus maldades nefandas."⁶⁸ Among these "maldades" the uprising would no doubt figure, but the archbishop had more immediate concerns. "[N]o solo se embriagan los Yndios," he wrote, "*sino tambien algunas Mugerres*, y igual numero, computando esclavos, Negros, Mestizos, Mulatos, y muchissimos Españoles de ínfima esfera, aunque no todos, ni tantos como los Yndios."⁶⁹ Women are doubly implicated by the mechanics of this list: transformed into a racialized category, an additional ingredient thrown into the already dangerous social mixture of the pulquería, while simultaneously intersected by a far more insidious, even biological form of mixing. Acknowledged as central actors in the production of

⁶⁴ Francisco Sánchez to Conde de Galve, AGI Mexico 333, fol. 448r. On "San Lunes" in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, see John Lear, *Workers, Neighbors, and Citizens: The Revolution in Mexico City* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 95.

⁶⁵ Aguiar y Seijas to Conde de Galve, AGI Mexico 333, fol. 270v; emphasis in original, although it is unclear whether the author or a later reader underlined it.

⁶⁶ Bernabé Núñez Paez to Conde de Galve, AGI Mexico 333, fol. 463r.

⁶⁷ Dean y Cavildo to Conde de Galve, AGI Mexico 333, fol. 315v.

⁶⁸ Aguiar y Seijas to Conde de Galve, AGI Mexico 333, fol. 271v.

⁶⁹ Aguiar y Seijas to Conde de Galve, AGI Mexico 333, fol. 273r; my emphasis.

race, women simultaneously come to serve as a marker of, even to embody race itself.⁷⁰ For Aguiar y Seijas, a reputed misogynist, singling out women for blame may have been inevitable.⁷¹ But many of the *informes* joined in lamenting what the bishop-elect of Durango, don García de Legaspi Velasco, called “los delitos de abominacion en sensualidad adultera, sodomitica, y inestuosas.”⁷² Agustín de Vetancurt, for his part, asserted that pulque drinkers commonly “combida[n] á otros con sus mugeres á la luxuria, porque á ellos les combiden con el Pulque.”⁷³ Legitimate reproduction consecrated by marriage gave way to illegitimate, and likely cross-race, fornication.⁷⁴

Within the shadowy pulquerías, out of the reach of the secular and ecclesiastical authorities, this convergence of men and women thus actualized yet another form of mixing. The friendly contact between Indians, blacks, mulattoes, and mestizos opened the door not only to cross-cultural conversation and conspiracy, but indeed, through the active participation of women, to “sensual” contact as well, facilitating the (re)production of ever increasing numbers of fractioned racial categories. In the minds of its critics, mixed pulque made these couplings, and the racial mixtures they produced, possible. At the same time, the (al)chemical processes that transformed *pulque blanco* into an entirely new substance echoed the unchecked sexuality of the pulquerías, which projected the possibility of new peoples and new kinds of people onto the future.⁷⁵ It was not just the salvation of the Indians’ souls that mattered to these ecclesiastical

⁷⁰ Cf. Kathleen Ross, *The Baroque Narrative of Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora: A New World Paradise* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 11: “How women behave sexually will define the order of colonial society and maintain the separation of the Spanish, Indian, and African races. Mixed-race people—*castas*—upset this neat order. Women, then, are much more than incidental to the baroque era in Spanish America and its literary expression; they are central actors as the encounter of Old and New Worlds moves into its second century.”

⁷¹ “A twisted Catholic puritan, he had a pathological aversion for women, to whom he imputed all the evils against which the Church inveighed. According to his biographer, he regarded his myopic vision as a special boon since it prevented him from seeing members of the less homely sex. If, through some mischance, a woman crossed his threshold, he promptly ordered the bricks torn up and replaced upon which sacrilegious feet had trod.” Irving Leonard, *Baroque Times in Old Mexico: Seventeenth-Century Persons, Places, and Practices* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1959), 160. We should take Leonard’s words with more than a grain of salt, as he seems not to entertain the possibility of other, more nuanced readings of these colonial documents.

⁷² García de Legaspi Velasco to Conde de Galve, AGI Mexico 333, fol. 308r.

⁷³ Agustín de Vetancurt to Conde de Galve, AGI Mexico 333, fol. 499v. In his *Teatro Mexicano*, Vetancurt would deploy similar language once again a year after the prohibition was lifted in 1697. Pulque, he wrote, makes drinkers commit “innumerables ofensas contra Dios” including “incestos hasta con sus mismas Madres . . . unos a otros se truecan las mugeres, y porque uno le combide a la borrachera le embida con su muger para la luxuria; de aqui los robos, de aqui los homicidios, los bayles, y supersticiones, idolatrias, llamandole agua de Dios al pulque, como si fuera bendita.” Agustín de Vetancurt, *Teatro Mexicano: Descripción breve de los sucesos ejemplares de la Nueva España en el Nuevo Mundo Occidental de las Indias* (Madrid: Porrúa Turanzas, 1960), I, 442-43.

⁷⁴ Cf. Asunción Lavrin, “Sexuality in Colonial Mexico: A Church Dilemma,” in *Sexuality and Marriage in Colonial Latin America*, ed. Asunción Lavrin (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), 47-92, esp. 57: “Confronting the church at the beginning of the seventeenth century was a situation of lax personal relationships and sexual interethnic encounters among the so-called lesser social elements.”

⁷⁵ Cf. Stuart B. Schwartz and Frank Salomon, “New Peoples and New Kinds of People: Adaptation, Readjustment, and Ethnogenesis in South American Indigenous Societies (Colonial Era),” *The Cambridge History of the Native Peoples of the Americas, Vol. III, Part 2*, eds. Frank Salomon and Stuart B. Schwartz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 443-501; and Cope, *Limits of Racial Domination*, 4. These new racial categories would soon after be depicted visually in the eighteenth-century genre of *casta* paintings. These paintings depict cross-race couples and their offspring, mapping the genealogical progression of *mestizaje* or racial mixing. “It is no coincidence that *casta* paintings were created only a few years after the famous riot of 1692 in Mexico City.” See

authors—it was their belief that the dangers of mixing could not be contained within *pulque mezclado* but, through a sort of infusion if not consumption, would eventually penetrate the blood of the individual and the physiology of the social body, turning the city into a “Reyno de mestizos, que tienen su [i.e. mixed] sangre.”⁷⁶

Mixed pulque, mixed plebe

Of all the *informes* presented to the viceroy, the one written by the full cloister of the Royal University of Mexico City deserves special attention. This is not only because of the prestige of its authors but also because it was the only one to be printed, which suggests that it may have been intended for wider distribution.⁷⁷ Packed with citations of classical and New World sources, from Herodotus and Aristotle to Solórzano and Torquemada, the University’s report focused in particular on the question of governance. In the opening paragraph, as noted above, the authors established a causal link between mixing and social stability by citing a law from 1671 urging rulers to “evitar esta mezcla.”⁷⁸ As in the other *informes*, the University’s language of mixing applies equally to the composition of *pulque mezclado* and to the bodies of those thought to consume it. Deploying an optical neologism, they declared it “ocularissimo” that the origin of the uprising could be found in the Indians’ “mezclas con los demás miembros de [la República], negros, mulatos, y hasta Españoles,” and further asserted that the ongoing trials against the alleged participants in the riot would prove it.⁷⁹

If other *informes* only gestured at the spatiality of mixing, drawing in particular on the logic of the pulquería, the University built on this conceptualization of the Republic to read mixing as a concrete threat to the city. Like mixed pulque and its “mixed” consumers, Mexico City thus constituted an urban body suffering from a dangerous state of mixing that the University held responsible for the June 8 uprising. Foregrounding the corporeal horizon of their argument, the authors employed a reproductive metaphor to argue that from “las concurrencias de unos con otros en las pulquerías . . . nace lo referido, muertes, y demás desordenes”:

Las congregaciones, y cuerpos no autorizados, y confirmados, prohíben todos derechos: esta [ciudad] de bebedores, si porque no es de toda la Ciudad, no es monopolio, siendo de toda la plebe, será *poliplebio*. Que conferencias no se harán en estas concurrencias? Que robos no se concertarán? Y que que? No es para dicho: diganlo las causas, y procesos del alboroto.⁸⁰

Ilona Katzew, *Casta Painting: Images of Race in Eighteenth-Century Mexico* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 202.

⁷⁶ Ayuntamiento to Conde de Galve, AGI Mexico 333, fol. 322r.

⁷⁷ There are at least two copies of the University’s printed report. One is located in Seville, Spain at the AGI Mexico 333, fols. 566r-584v. The other is in the Fondo Reservado of the BN in Mexico City. The opinion of at least one of the twenty-six signatories was so respected that he was also asked to produce his own separate *informe*. See Joseph Vidal de Figueroa to Conde de Galve, AGI Mexico 333, fols. 376r-383r.

⁷⁸ *Informe que la Real Universidad*, fol. 1r.

⁷⁹ *Informe que la Real Universidad*, fol. 10r.

⁸⁰ *Informe que la Real Universidad*, fol. 10r.

This dense passage traces the convergence of mixed racial bodies within the spatial dimensions of a given political unit. “[E]sta primera,” the University asserted, “la causa de la Ciudad, y Republica.”⁸¹ But exactly what these politics may have to confront is not entirely clear. The University’s rhetorical questions do not limit the possibilities to plotting (presumably on topics such as the injustice of the colonial regime) and robbery (presumably of government or Spanish property), but leave the door open with the open-ended “Y que que?”: anything, however unimaginable, could happen. Perhaps the shock of insurrectionary violence was responsible for this formulation, which constitutes both a rhetorical narrowing and imaginative broadening of the authors’ collective political horizon. Simultaneously addressing past and future, the logic of their argument has no need for the precise link chains of cause and effect. Paradoxically, it was precisely the ambiguity of these unseen plots and unheard whispers that provided the best proof of their existence.⁸²

Conspiracy, furthermore, emerges within a concrete spatial domain. As a counterpoint to the *monopolio* of the unitary city, the University coined and deployed a second neologism: the term *poliplebio*. Anna More has pointed to “a slippage between several meanings of the root ‘poli’” in the interaction between these two words. On one hand, there is the “poli” of “poliplebio,” which refers to the heterogeneous multitudes of the pulquerías. At the same time, there is the dual “poli” present in “monopolio.” “Although the root of ‘monopolio’ is ‘polein’ or ‘to sell,’ the proximity of the question of the ‘city’ in this statement brings to mind the root ‘polis.’ Rather than a united city, a ‘monopolio,’ then, ‘poliplebio’ would indicate a plebeian city whose spread also effects a quasi-monopolization.”⁸³ Within what the authors seem to imagine as a dense network of pulquerías, pulque drinkers constituted a plebeian underworld. This counterhegemonic “ciudad de bebedores” functions conceptually via the metonym of the pulquería, whose transgressive space threatens to spread to the City/Republic. Much like the archbishop’s concern with the obscurity of the pulquerías, the University’s “poliplebio” remains similarly obscure and separate, but at the same time effects a centrifugal movement, bleeding into and thereby contaminating the state’s idealized *monopolio*. Indeed, its influence reaches beyond the walls of the pulquerías and into public spaces. “En las Pulquerías, en las Plazas, en los caminos, en los campos,” asserted Fray Luzuriaga, one could barely avoid stumbling over monstrous bodies of the intoxicated citizens of this counter-city.⁸⁴ Furthermore, according to bishop-elect García de Legaspi, pulque stands permeated the city, “no solo en sus Barrios, sino aun en partes muy cercanas á su corazon.”⁸⁵ In this view, urban space too constitutes an organic body, like those chemical and biological bodies defined by mixing, at risk of contamination.

In the face of this threatening underworld, the University forcefully laid out the colonial state’s claim to political rule:

⁸¹ *Informe que la Real Universidad*, fol. 15v.

⁸² Cf. Guha’s discussion of rumor and insurgency: “Ambiguity . . . is indeed what makes rumour a mobile and explosive agent of insurgency, and it is a function precisely of those distinctive features which constitute its originality—namely, its anonymity and transitivity.” Ranajit Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 260.

⁸³ Anna More, “Colonial Baroque: Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora and the Post-Colonization of New Spain” (Ph.D. diss.: University of California, Berkeley, 2003), 215.

⁸⁴ Juan de Luzuriaga to Conde de Galve, AGI Mexico 333, fol. 338r.

⁸⁵ García de Legaspi Velasco to Conde de Galve, AGI Mexico 333, fol. 309r.

No tiene culpa el enfermo contagioso en su mal, y sin embargo por el contagio de el, y daño de los otros, se aparta, y extermina.⁸⁶

They continue:

Por la salud publica se puede exponer a la muerte, aun a el vasallo inocente; y aun a todos los vasallos, a que peligren en la guerra.⁸⁷

The contagious man is a powerful metaphor. He represents at once victim and victimizer of mixing; his state is unintentional, but is nevertheless treated as if it were not. Like the mixed-blooded offspring of “sensual” contact in the pulquerías, mixture transforms him into a new—and thus contaminating—agent. Death and war thus become the legitimate side effects of the state’s imposition of order through purity, where the good of the *monopolio*, which stands in for the City/Republic, comes before that of its individual members. It is with the question of governance, of what is to be done with the contagious man, that the slippage of categories between biological and social mixings is clarified: “se aparta y extermina.” In the context of the University’s justification of state violence against even an innocent vassal, the threat of extermination speaks for itself. More interesting, however, is the strategy of separation. The *Diccionario de Autoridades* (1726) defines the verb “apartar” as follows:

Separar, dividir una cosa de otra: como el ganado que se separa uno de otro, y assi otros géneros que se dividen. Lat. *Separare, Dividere, Segregare*.⁸⁸

Separation, division, segregation. In the case of the cattle, members of the same type are kept apart from each other. But the expression *unos y otros* is used frequently in the pulque *informes* to refer to the convergence of different types, *racialized* types. For the Royal University, the city, greater than the sum of its inhabitants and the materials they consume, must be kept from mixing—it must be purified. The colonial state, then, must not only prohibit mixed pulque and by extension wipe the pulquerías off the map, but simultaneously redraw the lines of the city to redistribute its individual bodies into rigidly defined and bounded spaces and, as a consequence, legible identities.

Extreme mixing

Pulque did not disappear from the minds of Mexico City elites after the 1692 prohibition. Indeed, five years later the government once again legalized the drink, reinitiated the pulque *asiento*, and (to a lesser extent) decriminalized the pulquerías. Evidently, the religious arguments privileging the evangelizing mission over tax revenues could not, in the end, convince the cash-hungry state.⁸⁹ Nor did it help, as William Taylor notes, that “[s]ome of the wealthiest and most

⁸⁶ *Informe que la Real Universidad*, fol. 14r.

⁸⁷ *Informe que la Real Universidad*, fol. 15v.

⁸⁸ *Diccionario de Autoridades* (Madrid: Real Academia Española, 1726), 327, available at <<http://buscon.rae.es/ntlle/SrvltGUILoginNtllle>> (accessed 20 April 2011).

⁸⁹ The “tan importante fin . . . de la manutencion de la Armada de Barlovento” was apparently a central reason for reversing the prohibition. See Consejo de Indias to Conde de Galve, AGI Mexico 333, fol. 590r. Also see Hernández

influential families in the city” were involved in the pulque business.⁹⁰ But the obsession with regulating the complex pulque economy remained. While historians have included pulque in their readings of the 1692 uprising, the tendency has been to treat it as a static condition throughout the colonial period if not beyond. In many ways, this approach to pulque echoes the conventional understanding of the category of mixing that sees it as obvious and stable on one hand and contextual on the other. Against these assumptions, I have attempted to highlight the density of the high-level debates within the *ciudad letrada* that turned on deciphering, classifying, and regulating both the chemical substance of pulque and bodies of its consumers. The study of pulque provided colonial elites with a language that would make legible the bodies they presumed to govern. But mixing is a slippery, even *baroque* category—it changes shapes, evades definitions, exceeds boundaries, permeates and transforms conceptual spaces and material bodies. What is especially interesting about the pulque documents is that they demonstrate the difficulties of defining not only the proliferation of new objects generated through various forms of mixing, but more importantly the nature of the process or mechanism of mixing itself. As such, pulque drinkers, what the Royal University called the *poliplebio*, also seemed to defy definition.

By way of conclusion, I want to juxtapose two brief passages that speak to the nature of these consuming bodies, individual and collective. Both passages attempt to describe the population of pulque consumers. The first comes from the *Recopilación de leyes de los reinos de las Indias* (1680), an authoritative compilation of laws regarding Spanish America that I return to in the following chapter. Synthesizing royal edicts on pulque from 1529, 1545, and 1607, the official position on pulque is given in Ley 37, Tit. 1, Lib. 6 (“Sobre la bebida de el pulque, usada por los Indios de la Nueva España”). Much like the pulque *informes*, it prohibits the addition of any ingredient into the “jugo simple, y nativo del maguey” because of the multiple spiritual and temporal dangers such mixing engenders. In fact, the language of this law is strikingly similar to the language of the *informes* in many ways, from the enumeration of its harmful and sinful effects (idolatry, incest, death, etc.) down to word-for-word repetition of certain clauses (such as the need to “extirpar tantos vicios”). What interests me most, however, is how the law articulates its object:

Y Nos, en atencion á extirpar tantos vicios, y quitar la ocasion de cometerlos, por lo que deseamos el bien espiritual, y temporal de los Indios, y aun de los Españoles, que tambien la usan.⁹¹

Palomo, *La renta del pulque*, 80-84. In addition, Taylor notes that “the pulque tax had become the main source of revenue for public works and other municipal projects.” See Taylor, *Drinking, Homicide, and Rebellion*, 54.

⁹⁰ Taylor, *Drinking, Homicide, and Rebellion*, 68. Even some of the *informes* condemned the greed of the Spanish owners of the maguey plantations. Archbishop Aguiar y Seijas, for example, wrote harshly of the Spanish “Haziendas enteras de ocho, diez, y doze mill pies” dedicated entirely to maguey.” Aguiar y Seijas to Conde de Galve, AGI Mexico 333, fol. 270r.

⁹¹ The law summarizes royal edicts from 1529, 1545, 1607, and 1672. The reference to the last, however, appears in a separate, self-contained section. “Ley xxxvii. Sobre la bebida de el pulque, usada por los Indios de la Nueva España. Usan los Indios de la Nueva España de una bebida, llamada pulque, que destilan los magueyes, plantas de mucho beneficio para diferentes efectos, y aunque bebida con templança se podria tolerar, porque ya estan acosumbrados á ella, se han experimentado notables daños, y perjuizios de la forma con que la confeccionan, introduciendole algunos ingredientes nocivos á la salud espiritual, y temporal, pues con pretexto de conservarla, y que no se corrompa, la mezclan con ciertas raizes, agua hirviendo, y cal, con que toma tanta fuerça, que les obliga á perder el sentido, abrasa los miembros principales del cuerpo, y los enferma, entorpece, y mata con grandissima

The second passage comes from Sigüenza's account of the 1692 uprising. The plot, he notes, was hatched in the pulquerías, and asserts that "[a]cudían a ellas como siempre no sólo los indios sino la más despreciable de nuestra infame plebe." In a frequently cited passage, the *letrado* goes on to define the elements of this "loathsome" plebeian mass as it responds to the prospect of food shortages and political crisis:

Preguntaráme vuestra merced cómo se portó la plebe en este tiempo y respondo brevemente que bien y mal; bien, porque siendo plebe tan en extremo plebe, que sólo ella lo puede ser de la que se reputare la más infame, y lo es de todas las plebes por componerse de indios, de negros, criollos y bozales de diferentes naciones, de chinos, de mulatos, de moriscos, de mestizos, de zambaigos, de lobos y también de españoles que, en declarándose zaramullos (que es lo mismo que pícaros, chulos y arrebatacapas) y degenerando de sus obligaciones, son los peores entre tan ruin canalla.⁹²

The contrast is striking, to say the least. The passage from the *Recopilación*, which reflects the sixteenth-century view on pulque, offers a neat organizational schema—pulque drinkers are Indians, *and even Spaniards*. It is worth noting that this particular passage diverges from both the title and opening sentence of the law, where pulque is specifically defined as a drink that pertains to the Indians. The brief pause in the formulation "Indians, *and even Spaniards*" reveals the imperfect "fit" of the relation Indian-pulque, which is otherwise assumed to be natural. An after-effect, for the long description of the "notables daños, y perjuizios" caused by the mixing of pulque acts on an implied Indian object—thus the profound concern with the return to idolatry, sacrifices, and ceremonies "de la Gentilidad." It is clearly the return to pre-Hispanic customs and rituals that occupies the minds of not only the "Prelados Eclesiasticos" but also the jurists responsible for the law. The clause "and even Spaniards" is supplementary in that it attempts to fill a perceived gap or stitch together a split seam.

Attempts—and fails. If the relation Indian-pulque is no longer sufficient to understand the pulque economy, then the passage from Sigüenza's *Alboroto y motín* constitutes another approach. The explosion of racial signifiers—note that this list too begins with the Indian—is the culmination of the supplement's failure to obtain—every addition implies, indeed necessitates another. That racial categories must be further enhanced, in the manner of translation, with what

facilidad, y lo que mas es, estando enagenados cometen idolatrias, hazen ceremonias, y sacrificios de la Gentilidad, y furiosos traban pendencies, y se quitan la vida, cometiendo muchos vicios carnales, nefandos, é incestuosos, con que han obligado á que los Prelados Eclesiasticos fulminen censuras: y por autos, y acuerdos del Virrey, y Real Audiencia, se prohiba. Y Nos, en atencion á extirpar tantos vicios, y quitar la ocasion de cometerlos, por lo que deseamos el bien espiritual, y temporal de los Indios, y aun de los Españoles, que tambien la usan. Ordenamos y mandamos, que en el jugo simple, y nativo del maguey no se pueda echar ningun genero de raiz, ni otro ningun ingrediente, que le haga mas fuerte, calido, y picante, assi por inmixtion, destilacion, ó infusion, como por otra qualquiera forma, que cause estos, ó semejantes efectos, aunque sea á título de preservarla de destempla[n]ça, ó corrupcion. Y ordenamos á los Virreyes, y Audiencia de Mexico, que velen con particular cuidado sobre el cumplimiento de esta nuestra ley, y no permitan mas pulquerías, sitios, ni partes donde se venda, que las del numero, y hagan guardar las ordenanças, que para este fin huvieren hecho, por via de bueno gobierno, imponiendo las penas convenientes, con que no sean pecuniarias." A facsimile edition of the *Recopilación* in its entirety is available through the Archivo Digital de la Legislación en el Perú (ADLP) at <<http://www.congreso.gob.pe/ntley/LeyIndiaP.htm>> (accessed 20 April 2011).

⁹² Sigüenza, "Alboroto y motín," 116, 113.

are effectively insults (“pícaros, chulos y arrebatapas”), suggests that even Sigüenza recognizes the need for something beyond everyday categories of classification. Not another name appended to the end of the already extensive list, but a different object of governance to replace it. It is this shift that generates the urge to consolidate the “infame plebe.” It is the plebe, not the Indian, that occupies the pulquería and, metonymically, populates the “ciudad de bebedores” that makes up the urban underworld of Mexico City. The chaos of names that composes this most “infame plebe” recalls the laundry list of supposed ingredients thought to provoke the essential transformation or transubstantiation of *pulque blanco* into *pulque mezclado*. (Likewise, a sense of disdain, disgust, and even hatred permeates both passages.) In this way, the idea of the pulque drinker becomes at least as unstable as the idea of pulque itself. There is no missing category that would make these lists complete. Read as attempts at totalizing codification, both lists reveal the fissures in the grid of intelligibility through which colonial governance is articulated.

If we read Sigüenza’s formulation differently, however, we see that something else is at stake. The chaos of names functions not as an all-inclusive list but as a sign of something else, a more abstract and generalized quality: mixing. In the first place, Sigüenza’s description seems to point to a plebe that is defined, to borrow Douglas Cope’s description, by “its racially mixed nature.”⁹³ No doubt the plebe was composed of various racial groups, but this analysis captures only a small part of the multiple and interconnected mixings that permeated the natural, social, and administrative imaginaries of colonial elites, transgressing even such apparently solid categories as the human body. As the pulque *informes* suggest, the plebe’s characteristic mixedness arose from not only its group heterogeneity, as Sigüenza and Cope suggest, but also its particular positioning within the cityscape, as a group can be constituted only through spatial relations; the biologically “mixed” race of the individual bodies that composed that group, conceived through “sensual” contact in the pulquerías (“... castizos, mestizos, mulattoes . . .”); and, finally, the incorporation of certain foods seen to define those who consume them (as in the figure of the drunken Indian or the University’s formulation of a “ciudad de bebedores”). The plebe, in other words, was the most extreme manifestation of the far more generalized phenomenon of mixing. Extreme, remember, is Sigüenza’s word: he writes that Mexico City’s plebe is paradigmatic, a “plebe tan en extremo plebe.” In the end, it is not a list of ingredients or participants but the plebe’s mixedness itself that comes to define it.

The investigation and critique of pulque advanced in the *informes* points to a common grid of intelligibility that provided colonial elites a framework for understanding, organizing, and intervening in the world. By “common,” of course, I do not mean uncontested. As we have seen, the *letrados* to whom the viceroy appealed for advice proved incapable of reaching an agreement about not only the ingredients and processes that made pulque “mixed” but even the number of possible types or “states” of pulque. What united their vision, however, was the centrality of the category of mixing—it permeated every facet of colonial life. This, in the end, is the key difference between the pulque *informes* and the sixteenth-century laws reprinted in the *Recopilación*. In the latter, there are no “pernicious” mixed-race bodies or even pulquerías to (further) fragment and destabilize the racial order of the *sociedad de castas*. Instead, mixing

⁹³ “[T]he hallmark of the Mexican plebe,” writes Cope, “was its racially mixed nature.” For Cope, this mixedness was expressed in the heterogeneity of a group that “included Indians, castizos, mestizos, mulattoes, blacks, and even poor Spaniards.” Cope, *Limits of Racial Domination*, 22.

constitutes a danger only inasmuch as its location is the fermentation vat or the mug. There is no spillover, no slippage, no potential that threatens at every moment to escape its immediate material or categorical limits. The impossibility of deciphering their constitutive elements transformed both pulque and plebe into bodies defined by indefinable mixing. The conceptual apparatus, then, exists—what remains are the structural interventions through which this collective body is constructed.

Chapter 2

1692 / Defining Purity History and the Segregation of Mexico City

Dentro de ese cauce del saber, gracias a él, surgirán esas ciudades ideales de la inmensa extensión americana. Las regirá una razón ordenadora que se revela en un orden social jerárquico transpuesto a un orden distributivo geométrico. No es la sociedad, sino su forma organizada, la que es transpuesta; y no a la ciudad, sino a su forma distributiva.

--Ángel Rama, *La ciudad letrada*

In the aftermath of the 1692 uprising, Mexico City's elites affirmed the categories of mixing and purity as central to the language of colonial governance. As I show in chapter 1, pulque became a site for contested articulations of mixing which, more than merely a metaphor, linked the (al)chemical mixing of the drink to the biological mixing of its consumers. But the consumption of mixed pulque, as Sigüenza and his contemporaries well knew, did not take place in a vacuum. For this reason, the social space of the pulquería, "mixed" like the drink that was served there, was identified as threatening. But the general state of mixing went beyond the relatively marginalized pulquerías to permeate and "contaminate" urban space at large. After the prohibition of *pulque mezclado*, then, the next item on the colonial state's agenda was the segregation—we could also call it the purification—of the city. In this chapter, I analyze two *informes* that shaped this segregation project: one written by Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora, the viceroy's "official historian" and professor at the Royal University of Mexico; the other by Agustín de Vetancurt, the Franciscan minister of the indigenous parish of San Juan.¹ Both Sigüenza and Vetancurt—friends, well-known *letrados*, and authors in their own right—strongly supported the segregation proposal and used their reports to articulate that support to the viceroy. Likewise, both framed their arguments in the language of early colonial rule, not only adopting the language of *reducción* and *congregación* but also, and more substantively, drawing on the precedent of the "principle of separation" codified in the system of "two republics," a foundational policy of the Spanish crown that had established administrative, juridical, and spatial distinctions between what was known as the *república de los españoles* and the *república de los indios*.²

¹ The archival records of these documents are located in AGN *Historia* 413; Sigüenza's *informe* is on fols. 4r-5r; and Vetancurt's is on fols. 16r-16v. Many (though not all) of the *informes* have also been published as "Sobre los inconvenientes de vivir los indios en el centro de la ciudad," *Boletín del Archivo General de la Nación* 9.1 (January-March 1938): 1-33. In the interest of simplicity, I will refer wherever possible to the published version using parenthetical citations.

² The term "principle of separation" comes from Edmundo O'Gorman, "Reflexiones sobre la distribución urbana colonial de la ciudad de México," in *Seis estudios históricos de tema mexicano* (Xalapa, Mexico: Universidad Veracruzana, 1960), 11-40. Others use the stronger term "segregation" instead. See Magnus Mörner, "La política de segregación en la Audiencia de Guatemala," *Revista de Indias* 24.95-96 (1964): 137-51 and Mörner and Charles Gibson, "Diego Muñoz Camargo and the Segregation Policy of the Spanish Crown," *Hispanic American Historical*

Beginning in the early sixteenth century, the Crown issued a series of ordinances establishing a structural division that would guide Spanish colonialism over the course of the next two centuries. Although regional variations existed, this doctrine, eventually systematized, printed, and widely distributed as part of the *Recopilación de las leyes de los reinos de las Indias* (1680), was intended to serve as a general rule. Some historians have read the policy as a humanitarian effort on the part of the Crown that sought to prevent the exploitation of Indian communities at the hands of “pernicious” racial groups, including blacks, mulattoes, mestizos, and even poor Spaniards.³ Merchants and those considered “vagrants” or “vagabonds” received special attention. What was considered especially dangerous was less the fact of somatic difference than the circulation and convergence of diverse bodies. It was not nomadic movement per se that was criminalized; their presence was thought to constitute a particularly grave danger when living arrangements became more permanent.⁴ Racialized as “different” from both Indian and Spanish norms, these excess bodies were nevertheless supposed to be incorporated into the Spanish republic, preserving what was seen as the purity of Indian communities in order to facilitate the process of evangelization.⁵

Taking this foundational logic of separation as their point of departure, the *informes* written by Sigüenza and Vetancurt constitute historical interventions. Although they employ different forms of authoritative discourse—historiography and law—both nevertheless look to the past as a repository of data (scenarios, precedents) that can be extracted and narratively reconstituted in order to guide state action in the present.⁶ In this case, however, the raw historical material in question is far from incidental. The mythical origin of the two republics is the paradigmatic moment in which Cortés gives the order for Mexico City to be laid out on the ruins of Tenochtitlan—the deterritorialized Mexica *altepetl* is reterritorialized as the capital of

Review 42.4 (November 1962): 558-68. For a useful review of the literature on *castas* and the “two republics,” see Alejandro Cañeque, *The King’s Living Image: The Culture and Politics of Viceregal Power in Colonial Mexico* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 213-36. I analyze relevant portions of the *Recopilación* below.

³ Mörner and Gibson, “Diego Muñoz Camargo,” 558.

⁴ See the *Recopilación*, lib. 6, tit. 3, ley 23: “Que ningun español estè en Pueblo de indio mas del dia, que llegare, y otro”; and ley 24: “Que ningun mercader estè mas de tres dias en Pueblo de Indios.”

⁵ In its most extreme formulation, “Mexico offered the promise of a new Christendom from which many missionaries might have wanted to exclude the colonizers.” Serge Gruzinski, *Images at War: Mexico from Columbus to Blade Runner (1492-2019)*, trans. Heather MacLean (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 95. Of course, separation did not mean non-intervention. In addition to evangelization and economic exploitation in the form of the *encomienda* and *repartimiento*, there was also an attempt to consolidate indigenous communities in easily accessible, central locations. For a discussion of the policy of *congregación* and *reducción*, see Charles Gibson, *The Aztecs Under Spanish Rule: A History of the Indians of the Valley of Mexico, 1519-1810* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964), 282-89; and the *Recopilación de las leyes de los reinos de las Indias*, lib. 6, tit. 3, ley 1: “resolvieron, que los Indios fuessen reducidos á Pueblos, y no viviessen divididos, y separados por las Sierras, y montes, privandose de todo beneficio espiritual, y temporal, sin socorro de nuestros Ministros, y del que obligan las necesidades humanas, que deven dar unos hombres á otros.”

⁶ According to de Certeau, history in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was often produced by jurists, structurally tied to the state, and as such served two purposes: the legitimization of power, and the analysis of the past as a model for present action. “The prince receives a ‘lesson’ provided by a technician of political management.” Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History*, trans. Tom Conley (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 6-7. Also see Roberto González Echevarría, *Myth and Archive: A Theory of Latin American Narrative* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 55: “Law and history are the two predominant modes of discourse in the colonial period.”

the new Spanish colony.⁷ It comes as no surprise, then, that Ángel Rama's *La ciudad letrada* opens precisely with "la remodelación de Tenochtitlan, luego de su destrucción por Hernán Cortés en 1521." "A cordel y regla," said the conquistadores, the new city was carefully measured and plotted among ashes and corpses.⁸ Along with this spatial order, Rama argues, came a social order as well—social hierarchy was not only reflected in but also produced by this geometric distribution. What Foucault describes in the abstract as epistemic "grids of intelligibility" that make the world legible take on literal, material dimensions in the rigidly ordered space of the city.⁹

But the urge to return to this originary moment in the wake of the 1692 crisis is a complex one. It becomes central precisely because the logic of foundational violence—what Alberto Moreiras has called primitive imperial accumulation—is critical to the consolidation of colonial hegemony:

From the necessary but impossible thought of primitive accumulation as the ground of ground, the history of colonial conflict cannot be understood as the history of a hegemony formation; rather, the history of every process of hegemony is always already the history of a forgetting: hegemony is always the forgetting of primitive accumulation, the original sin of political economy.¹⁰

If the insurrection of June 8, 1692 constitutes a tear in the fabric of colonial hegemony, a counter-forgetting (a remembering?) of the hegemony formation on which colonial governance rests, then imperial reason generates an urgent desire to return to the moment of Mexico City's founding—itself already the forgetting of the violence that preceded it—to once again instantiate and simultaneously forget the violence that constitutes the condition of possibility of colonial rule. I want to suggest that the production of purity is analogous to and indeed a necessary

⁷ A little-known conquistador named Alonso García Bravo was delegated the task of laying out the city, "por ser gran xiométrico." See Manuel Toussaint, *Información de méritos y servicios de Alonso García Bravo, alarife que trazó la ciudad de México* (Mexico City: Imprenta Universitaria, 1956), 29.

⁸ Ángel Rama, *La ciudad letrada* (Hanover, NH: Ediciones del Norte, 1984), 1, 7.

⁹ There is a direct relationship between what the geographer Henri Lefebvre has called "the 'micro' (architectural) plane and the 'macro' (spatial-strategic) one." The layout of the city thus extends into the abstract gridded space of the territory at large as part of an economy of colonial extraction: "Geometrical urban space in Latin America was intimately bound up with a process of extortion and plunder serving the accumulation of wealth in Western Europe." If the city serves as a metonym for the territory at large within the Spanish colonial horizon, then the segregated city constituted a model for racializing the colonial project as a whole. Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 1991), 151-52.

¹⁰ Alberto Moreiras, "Ten Notes on Primitive Imperial Accumulation: Ginés de Sepúlveda, Las Casas, Fernández de Oviedo," *interventions* 2.3 (2000): 353. Colonial commentators such as the renowned Jesuit José de Acosta recognized the need to consciously forget the foundational violence of the conquest: "Y no es que yo me ponga ahora a defender las guerras y títulos de guerras pasadas y los resultados de ellas, ni a justificar las destrucciones, represalias, matanzas y demás disturbios de anteriores años en el Perú. Pero sí advierto, por razones de conciencia y de interés, que no conviene seguir disputando más en este asunto, sin oque, como de cosa que ya ha prescrito, el siervo de Cristo debe proceder con la mejor buena fe. Y no hay que empeñarse en sutilizar más y buscar justificaciones profundas, porque aun concediendo que se hubiese errado gravemente en la usurpación del dominio de las Indias, sin embargo ni se puede ya restituir—pues no hay a quién hacer la restitución ni modo de efectuarla—y sobre todo porque, aunque se pudiese, de ninguna manera lo sufriría ni la evidente injuria que se haría a la fe cristiana una vez aceptada ni el peligro a que se expondría la fe." José de Acosta, *De procuranda indorum salute*, ed. and trans. Luciano Pereña (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1984-1987), I, 333.

component of formations of colonial hegemony. Epistemic violence traverses every attribution of purity, which operates by neutralizing, eliding, and erasing—that is to say, forgetting—the complex heterogeneities that inevitably exceed the reach of even the subtlest classifying logic or apparatus of capture. Like the processes of hegemony described by Moreiras, every formation of purity is thus always already a forgetting. But it is an uneasy forgetting that haunts the present of its erasure, for a remainder seems inevitably to manifest itself, bursting violently to the surface in the form of unrecognizable, even “monstrous” bodies and indescribable violence. The question of colonial governance—certainly the underlying question that Sigüenza and Vetancurt aim to address—is how best to deal with such eruptions.

The specter of foundational violence, both militaristic and epistemic, thus haunts these proposals to re-structure and re-segregate the city. But despite their many similarities, the spatial reorganization and the consequent formations of purity Sigüenza and Vetancurt envision are strikingly different. While the former traces a precise narrative of the history of Mexico City in order to mobilize a unified Spanish-white front that blurs the lines between Iberian-born *peninsulares* and American-born *criollos*, the latter turns to the legal precedents of the recently systematized *Recopilación* to call for the purification of the Indian population as the object of a reinvigorated spiritual economy. Respective formations of purity therefore take the form of collective bodies embedded not only in the orderly lines of the cityscape but also in particular temporalities. Sigüenza’s prospective gaze, which generates new and strategic purities, contrasts with Vetancurt’s retrospective thinking, the urge to recover a past meant to be preserved. It is the temporal distance imposed by colonial segregation in particular that structures these formations of purity.¹¹

Counterinsurgent historiography

On July 1, 1692, about three weeks after the uprising, the viceroy asked Sigüenza to put together and submit a proposal for dividing the city into separate Spanish and Indian sectors. In some ways, it is tempting to think that the viceroy’s request transformed Sigüenza from “official historian” into official city planner.¹² But the segregation proposal, far from constituting an essentially different and more “political” form of knowledge production, is framed within a history of Mexico City.¹³ Sigüenza thus opens his *informe* by conjuring up the heroic Cortés at

¹¹ Compare this to Fabian’s formulation of time and the space of colonialism, which is perhaps less about segregation than displacement: “When in the course of colonial expansion a Western body politic came to occupy, literally, the space of an autochthonous body, several alternatives were conceived to deal with that violation of the rule. The simplest one . . . was of course to move or remove the other body. Another one is to pretend that space is being divided and allocated to separate bodies. . . . Most often the preferred strategy has been simply to manipulate the other variable—Time. With the help of various devices of sequencing and distancing one assigns to the conquered populations a *different* Time.” Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 29-30.

¹² On Sigüenza’s official status, see chap. 1; Leonard, *Don Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora*, 105, 112; and Escamilla González, “El Siglo de Oro Vindicado.”

¹³ Sigüenza’s interest in the history of Mexico City is well documented. According to his nephew, at the time of his death he had been working on a manuscript entitled *La historia de México* using information “que había sacado de papeles antiguos muy auténticos, y de los libros que sacó la noche del tumulto, ocho de Junio, de las Casas de Cabildo, donde ninguno quiso llegar, y solo él con su esfuerzo, y á peligro de su vida, y de otros que con él iban . . .

the city's foundational moment: "Tengo por acertado se observe ahora y se reduzca a práctica lo que ejecutó el Marqués del Valle cuando después de su debelación y conquista reedificó esta ciudad" (6). For Sigüenza, city planning is eminently historical work. History, in this sense, is embodied in the "primeros libros capitulares" that Sigüenza rescued from the city's flaming archive on June 8 and the *crónicas de la conquista* that narrated the exploits of heroic conquistadors like Hernán Cortés; and even the materiality of the cityscape, which explains Sigüenza's need to walk the city's "barrios y contornos" several times in order to lay out the line of the original *traza* correctly.¹⁴ It is a history, furthermore, that writes the past in order to constitute an ideological, political, and material present.

With the return to Cortés, Sigüenza effects a temporal sleight of hand that apparently seeks to re-write the city's vast heterogeneous population into the stable, coherent, and readily legible blocs on which the two republics were originally based: "Ejecuto aquí," he states at the beginning of his report, "lo que . . . me encarga V. E., acerca de que informe de los términos que se pueden asignar entre la población de españoles, de que esta ciudad se compone, y la de los indios, de que se formen sus barrios" (6). The point is not to denounce Sigüenza for "ignoring" the insistent, material reality of the city's heterogeneity, but rather to analyze his historical strategies—in particular, the careful neutralization of these "other" bodies—for their political effects. In other words, Sigüenza's elision of the so-called "mixed" population—which otherwise received so much and such obsessive attention from colonial elites, as we saw in chapter 1—cannot be reduced to yet another example of the impossibility of representation. As I demonstrate here, Sigüenza's intervention constitutes more than a recuperation of past populations—rather, its power is located in the way it mobilizes the past precisely to generate new spatial alliances and allegiances. Furthermore, his proposal was meant to operate within an explicitly political field governed by a logic of effectiveness. The segregation plan, after all, was at least intended to *work*, not merely describe or represent. A concrete political intervention such as this owes much to, but at the same time necessarily exceeds, the writing of history as such.

Locating a segregational urge in the city's foundational moment, Sigüenza cites a series of Spanish chroniclers, including Antonio de Herrera, Juan de Torquemada, Francisco López de Gómara, and Bernal Díaz del Castillo, who document the precedent that is to be recovered here: namely, that when Cortés decided to "rebuild" (as he put it) the new Spanish capital over the ruins of Tenochtitlan, he called for a division between Spanish *traza* and Indian *barrios*. Sigüenza quotes Gómara, according to whom Cortés "mandó que el barrio de españoles fuese

subieron . . . a sacar dichos libros, librándolos de el incendio: los cuales llevamos á su casa yo, y los demás hermanos de mi tío, de los cuales papeles para la Historia tenía sacados de dichos libros algunos tengo en mi poder." See the "Carta de Gabriel López de Sigüenza a don Antonio de Aunzibay y Anaya," in Mayer, *Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora*, II, 309.

¹⁴ Sigüenza was fascinated with what we would today call archaeology (that is, the production and interpretation of the persistence of the past in the materiality of the present). In his history of the 1692 uprising, for example, he describes and interprets a number of clay statuettes and mugs that had apparently been found in a canal. These "trastes," he wrote, constituted a "prueba real" of the Indians' hatred for their Spanish rulers. Sigüenza, "Alboroto y motín," 116-17. On Sigüenza the archaeologist, see Ignacio Bernal, *A History of Mexican Archaeology: The Vanished Civilizations of Middle America* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1980), 51-54; and José Alcina Franch, "Guillermo Dupax y los orígenes de la arqueología en México," *Estudios de Historia Novohispana* 10 (1991): 325-27.

apartado del barrio de los indios, y así los ataja el agua”; he further transcribes Torquemada’s assertion that

esta ciudad está ahora fundada y constituída en el riñón y medio de lo que antes era población de los indios de este primer barrio, llamado Tenochtitlán; no se mezcla esta ciudad con los indios, pero cercanla por sus cuatro partes, haciendo barrios por sí, que son los arrabales de dicha ciudad. (6)

Although these passages coincide in their vision of a divided urban space, the rigidity of this separation varied from author to author.¹⁵ Whereas Gómara depicts the components of the city as separate “barrios,” Torquemada lays claim to the terminology of the city itself. For the latter, the Spanish capital and center of authority becomes the *ciudad*, while the Mexica city of Tenochtitlan—the remains left to the indigenous population—is relegated to the status of *barrio*. Torquemada’s language thus fits nicely with that employed by Sigüenza himself in the opening sentence of his report, where he distinguishes between the Spanish *ciudad* and its Indian *barrios*. Beyond a question of language, there is a certain resonance between this regime of classification and the contemporary understanding of the city as the principal unit of civilization—indeed, in the context of the colonization of the Americas, cities served to stake claims of possession over ever increasing swaths of territory. At the same time, the notion of urban civilization underlies a corresponding understanding of the spaces of law: this is obviously a question of jurisdiction, but at the same time of modes or regimes of law based on differential assumptions about the bodies over which that regime claims jurisdiction. For Torquemada and Sigüenza, then, the “other” space occupied by the Indians corresponds at the same time to an “other” juridical regime, which was precisely the case of the Indian courts that emerged as a result of the administrative distinction between the two republics.¹⁶

Sigüenza locates support for segregation in not only sixteenth-century chronicles penned by Spanish historiographers but also a variety of sources written by a veritable parade of illustrious officials and colonial magistrates. He cites the city’s first *libros capitulares*, which, he proudly reminds the viceroy, “saquélos yo de entre las llamas la fatalísima noche del ocho de junio” (6). These books, he continues, contain the laws passed by New Spain’s first viceroys, Antonio de Mendoza and Luis de Velasco, regarding the governance of the city’s indigenous population. Along with these viceroys, Sigüenza invokes not only the Crown’s governing institution, the Council of the Indies, but also the figure of Charles V himself, who ordered that “se amurallase y fortaleciese esta ciudad de México, no por otro motivo sino el de asegurarse de los indios” (7). Within the project of segregation, the city is to be defended by the erection of not only cultural and juridical boundaries but concrete, material boundaries as well. The dual imperatives of military force and constant vigilance are embedded in the spatial logic of the city.

¹⁵ It is perhaps because their accounts of the separation are not sufficiently forceful that Sigüenza names, but does not textually cite, Bernal Díaz, who has Cortés point out “en qué parte habían de poblar [los indios] y la parte que habían de dejar desembarazada para que poblásemos nosotros.” See Bernal Díaz del Castillo, *Historia verdadera de la conquista de Nueva España* (Mexico City: Editorial Porrúa, 1974), chap. CLVII, 374. Neither does Sigüenza quote Cortés’s own letters, where the description of the layout also may have lacked the rigidity he sought.

¹⁶ The regime of Indian law was based on general assumptions about the condition of the Indian, codified when “[t]he Indians were to be assimilated en masse to the juridical condition of *miserables*.” Woodrow Borah, *Justice by Insurance: The General Indian Court of Colonial Mexico and the Legal Aides of the Half-Real* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 80.

“Las ciudades . . . no pudieron ser otra cosa que fuertes, más defensivos que ofensivos, recintos amurallados dentro de los caules se destilaba el espíritu de la polis y se ideologizaba sin tasa el superior destino civilizador que le había sido asignado.”¹⁷

But these defensive walls were never built, and their absence presented a constant source of concern for colonial elites throughout the sixteenth century. In 1554, for example, Francisco Cervantes de Salazar published a series of Latin dialogues in which two locals, Zamora and Zuazo, lead a Spaniard, Alfaro, on a tour of the city’s most impressive sights. On the way to the central plaza, Zamora asks Alfaro what he thinks of the houses the line the street, “built so regularly and evenly that none varies a finger’s breadth from another.” The visitor responds:

Al[faro]. They are all magnificent and elaborate, and appropriate to the wealthiest and noblest citizens. Each is so well constructed that one would call it a fortress, not a house. Zuazo. Because of the large, hostile population, they had to be built like this at first, since it was impossible to surround the city by walls and defend it by towers.¹⁸

Alfaro’s comments transform the city’s palaces into the walls that had never materialized. At the same time, the “regular” construction of the houses recalls the Spanish obsession with “order” in the context of laying out the new cities of the Americas in particular, where the cities tended to lack more conventional defensive structures like city walls.¹⁹ Three decades after the foundation of Mexico City, the “large, hostile” and evidently native population represented a clear and present danger against which the houses, palaces, and buildings of the *traza* were metaphorically converted into precisely the defensive bulwark called for by Charles V.

Especially after the violence of June 8, which was coded primarily as an “Indian” revolt, colonial elites viewed the indigenous population as a threat to the Spanish government. After establishing the historical precedents for urban segregation, Sigüenza moves on to historicize the threat itself. Whereas in the first part he cites and quotes from the work of Spanish historians, the second takes a more narrative form recounting an abridged history of the city in the form of a laundry list of moments of crisis instigated by Indians. The history of Mexico City, in this rendering, is transformed into a genealogy of subaltern uprisings that took place in 1537, 1549, 1624, and of course 1692, “el estrago que tenemos hoy a la vista, para llorarlo siempre” (7). Much like Sigüenza’s reading of the 1692 uprising, which rendered the vast and cross-race insurrectionary convergence “Indian” by strategically eliding its black, white, and *casta* participants, this micro-history of the city’s political trajectory consistently erases non-Indian eruptions. After blaming Indians for the “sedición” of 1624, he goes on to assert that the “estrago” of 1692 was executed by “*los mismos indios* vecinados casi en todas las más casas de los españoles . . . y en las pulquerías donde se contaban por centenares, los que de día y de noche

¹⁷ Rama, *La ciudad letrada*, 27.

¹⁸ Francisco Cervantes de Salazar, *Life in the Imperial and Loyal City of Mexico in New Spain: and the Royal and Pontifical University of Mexico*, trans. Minnie Lee Barrett Shepard and ed. Carlos Eduardo Castañeda (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1954), 39.

¹⁹ Kagan reads the lack of city walls as a feature of the central role of the city in the evangelizing and civilizing project. In this reading, walls effect a simultaneous double movement—they keep threats out, but at the same time keep spirituality in. See Richard Kagan, “A World Without Walls: City and Town in Colonial Spanish America,” in *City Walls: The Urban Enceinte in Global Perspective*, ed. James Tracy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 117-54.

las frecuentaban” (7; my emphasis). Here, the indigenous insurgents whose uprising forced the Viceroy Gelves out of office in 1624 become *the very same Indians* who burned the palace of the Viceroy Conde de Galve in 1692—note especially the reference to the fear-producing pulquerías.²⁰ A genealogy of insurrection indeed, as the indigenous presence in the city is constructed as not only an enduring but indeed a naturalized continuity: the ungrateful Indians, Sigüenza continues, bear an “innata malicia con que aborreciendo a los españoles (aun cuando más los benefician) proceden siempre” (7). Causally, the actions of the Spanish government matter little. Along with this essentialized character, historical continuity generates a temporal momentum that is projected into the future and as a consequence future disruptions become inevitable.

But continuity extends into the past as well, suturing it together with present and future to fabricate one uniform whole: the homogeneous, empty time of empire. Pre-Columbian pasts are not only distantly connected to but furthermore seem to penetrate the Indian present.²¹ This operation positions Sigüenza as a key intermediary in the administration and thus the elaboration of the colonial present. Widely recognized as an antiquarian, historian, and archaeologist who was deeply invested in the study of indigenous antiquities, the *criollo*'s authority over the indigenous past is already apparent. But the notion of continuity paradoxically produces an effect like that which Johannes Fabian has called a “denial of coevalness” with regard to the indigenous present: Sigüenza's Indian contemporaries are rendered not only extensions of a long but stable lineage that reaches back to Indian antiquity but indeed as antiquities themselves.²² At the same time, this continuity functions as a condition of possibility for the narrative reconfiguration of the Spanish city's spatial-racial “Others.” It is as if the easy temporal movement facilitated by this historical continuity had enabled Indian ghosts to repopulate the empty gaps left by *castas* torn historiographically from the fabric of the contemporary city.

The elision of these other “Others” is necessarily imperfect. Consider, for example, Sigüenza's account of the 1537 uprising, the only specific reference to a non-Indian subaltern group. According to his micro-history, the Indians had begun to undermine the foundational segregation of the city early on by “entrometiendo[se] . . . en la población de los españoles” and eventually attempted to, “*auxiliándose de negros, sublevarse con la ciudad el año de 1537, y lo hubieran conseguido (por la multitud que había de ellos en aquel tiempo) si casi milagrosamente no se descubre*” (7; my emphasis). Here Indians remain the central actors, employing blacks as little more than their own surrogates, while the slippage between verb tenses (“había,” “se descubre”) again suggests the historical continuity of the threatening Indian. Compare Sigüenza's brief account with that of sixteenth-century historian Diego Muñoz Camargo in his *Historia de Tlaxcala*, of which Sigüenza was almost certainly aware:

Durante su felice gobierno del virrey don Antonio de Mendoza, se descubrió una rebelión que intentaron hacer los negros esclavos de los españoles, y *para ello habían convocado*

²⁰ According to Israel, the multitudes of 1624—much like those of 1692—were composed of not only Indians but a cross-section of Mexico City's races. Israel's account, that the violence reflected primarily an elite dispute between the secular and religious authorities (Viceroy Gelves and Archbishop Pérez de la Serna), would imply that (*pace* Sigüenza) Spanish elites were the ones making use of subaltern actors. Jonathan I. Israel, *Race, Class, and Politics in Colonial Mexico, 1610-1670* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), 151-60.

²¹ José Rabasa, “Pre-Columbian Pasts and Indian Presents in Mexican History,” *Dispositio/n* 46 (1994): 245-70.

²² Fabian, *Time and the Other*, 31

[a] los indios [de] Santiago Tlatelolco y México, la cual rebelión descubrió otro negro. Y habiéndose averiguado jurídicamente, se procedió contra los culpados y se hizo justicia de ellos, con que quedó la tierra apaciguada y sosegada por muchos años.²³

History is readily apparent here as contested terrain. While both accounts concur as to the basic trajectory of the 1537 uprising, including the last minute discovery of the plot, the principal actors have been inverted. For Muñoz Camargo, this is an unmistakably black plot. That these slaves had “convoked” the Indians for their rebellion does not in any way mitigate his certainty about which group took the initiative. Nor, moreover, did the colonial government mistake this for an Indian plot, as only blacks faced reprisal, in the form of capital punishment, at the hands of the state. On the other hand, for Sigüenza it is the Indians who try to “use” the blacks in their own plans. His reference to “la multitud que había *de ellos* en aquel tiempo” clearly refers to the indigenous population, for the black population in Mexico City remained relatively small until the concession of *asientos* at the end of the sixteenth century.²⁴ Faced with this alternate narrative, Sigüenza cannot simply erase the city’s non-indigenous others. Instead, he becomes a revisionist historian: by reversing the roles of blacks and Indians, he does not have to deny the existence or even the participation of the blacks to erase their historical agency and redirect the attention of the sovereign onto the indigenous once again.

In addition to this historical revisionism, Sigüenza entirely ignores other examples of violence that were generally understood by colonial elites to be insurrections and conspiracies instigated and led by blacks.²⁵ Best known are the events of 1612, when colonial authorities seized and brutally executed 35 blacks and mulattoes for allegedly plotting to overthrow the Spanish government and impose their own black regime.²⁶ Both the similarity between the 1537 and 1612 scenarios, and the strong probability that Sigüenza had a copy of Chimalpahin’s diary,

²³ Diego Muñoz Camargo, *Historia de Tlaxcala*, ed. Luis Reyes García (Mexico City: CIESAS, 1998), 256; my emphasis. Although the *Historia de Tlaxcala* remained unpublished during Sigüenza’s life, it was cited in published histories that the *letrado* had certainly read (such as Torquemada’s *Monarquía indiana* [1615]). More recent historians agree with Muñoz Camargo’s account. See Edgar F. Love, “Negro Resistance to Spanish Rule in Colonial Mexico,” *Journal of Negro History* 52.2 (April 1967): 96-97: who writes that “[t]he ambitious plans of the Negroes included provisions for *using the Indians of Tenochtitlán and Tlatelulco in their uprising*”; and David M. Davidson, “Negro Slave Control and Resistance in Colonial Mexico, 1519-1650,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 46.3 (August 1966): 243. Mejía has observed the striking similarities between the 1537 and 1612 uprisings. While he does not go so far as to claim that they are in fact the same disturbance, he does suggest that they must be read together. I explore this connection further in chapter 4. See Edgar Mejía, “La ciudad amenazada: Rebeliones de negros y fantasías criollas en una crónica de la ciudad de México del siglo XVII,” *Colorado Review of Hispanic Studies* 2 (2004): 15.

²⁴ According to Cope, about 36,500 slaves arrived in Mexico between 1521 and 1594, and most were sent to work on the plantations of the coastal region. “In the overall Mexican economy, however, their impact was less significant.” See Cope, *Limits of Racial Domination*, 13-14. In reality, the slave population of New Spain only began to increase significantly during the last quarter of the century. “The seventeenth century, in effect, was that of the greatest Negro immigration [sic] during the whole time of the viceroyalty.” Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán, “The Slave Trade in Mexico,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 24.3 (August 1944): 415.

²⁵ According to Love, there were black rebellions in 1537, 1546, 1579, 1608, 1609, 1611, 1612, and 1670. Edgar F. Love, “Legal Restrictions on Afro-Indian Relations in Colonial Mexico,” *The Journal of Negro History* 55.2 (April 1970): 131. Also see Love, “Negro Resistance to Spanish Rule”; and Davidson, “Negro Slave Control and Resistance.”

²⁶ I analyze this moment further in chapter 4. For an excellent account by a contemporary historian, see María Elena Martínez, “The Black Blood of New Spain: *Limpieza de Sangre*, Racial Violence, and Gendered Power in Early Colonial Mexico,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 61.3 (July 2004): 479-520.

one of the key primary sources on 1612, make the exclusion of the latter even more striking.²⁷ By writing the history of Mexico City as a continuous conflict between Spanish and Indian actors, Sigüenza's story converts the blacks into mere pawns who become dangerous only when harnessed by Indian conspirators.

In addition to the sole mention of the city's blacks, one reference towards the end of the *informe* provides a clue regarding the otherwise unmentioned "Others" of the urban population. The "línea de separación," Sigüenza concludes, was designed to separate "lo principal de la ciudad, en que sólo han de vivir españoles, y los barrios de su circunferencia que quedan por todas partes para vivienda de indios y de otros que allí tienen labradas casas" (8; my emphasis). This unexpected addition contrasts sharply with the earlier emphasis on the recuperation of Cortés's original *traza*, which, as we have seen, imagined a city divided neatly in two, between Spaniards and Indians. These other "Others" constitute a fissure in the racial binary and the excess of the segregational apparatus of capture. After all, they display a certain autonomy from the Indians that the blacks of the 1537 uprising, for example, do not. What is particularly interesting is that they carry no explicit racial classification—their only identifying mark is the material contingency of the location of their houses. This flexibility allows Sigüenza, despite the incorporation of these "Others" into his narrative, to continue to talk in concrete terms about a Spanish-Indian divide. The absence of an embodied identity implies, in practical terms, a site for state intervention—move or knock down their houses, this line of thinking goes, and these "Others" too will cease to exist. In conceptual terms, however, the implications of Sigüenza's conclusion are clear: *castas* are to remain with the Indians, leaving the Spanish *traza* free from "contamination." While employing a discourse of purity drawn from the "principle of separation" and the two republics, Sigüenza inverts the subject of that purity: Spanish space is to be made pure and homogeneous, while its Indian counterpart is to absorb the remainder of the city's immeasurable heterogeneity.

Christianization and law

Among those asked to submit an *informe* along with Sigüenza was the Franciscan friar Agustín de Vetancurt, the parish priest of San Juan and San Francisco best known today for his monumental *Teatro mexicano* (1698). Whereas Sigüenza establishes his claim to authority through historical knowledge and narrative, Vetancurt adopts a discourse of law. Both, of course, are technologies for managing continuity and rupture, memory and forgetting—as we have seen, the consolidation of hegemonic law necessarily means the forgetting of foundational violence. The publication of the *Recopilación* in 1680 constituted a break or beginning, as its codification was intended to obviate all earlier legislation that contradicted its decrees—a juridical *tabula rasa*, as it were. In this sense, there are parallels between the religious orders' turn to the *Recopilación* that we will see here and the deployment of "official history" by Sigüenza.²⁸ At first glance the Franciscans' use of legal argumentation may seem odd, since many historians have viewed them as having a profound distrust of the law. In his classic study, for example,

²⁷ See the "Introduction" in Chimalpahin, *Annals of His Time*, 11-12.

²⁸ With the publication of the *Recopilación* in 1680, Charles II decreed that "earlier, contradictory laws no longer held authority." Matthew C. Mirow, *Latin American Law: A History of Private Law and Institutions in Spanish America* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004), 47.

John Leddy Phelan draws a sharp distinction between the “political-ecclesiastical theory” of Dominicans like Vitoria and Las Casas on one hand, and Franciscans like Gerónimo de Mendieta on the other. The former drew heavily on Aristotelian logic and Roman and canon law—Phelan likens Las Casas to a “canon lawyer”—whose systems of thought, he asserts, are incompatible with the messianic mysticism of the latter—“Mendieta’s world was not the law-bound universe of the canon lawyers.”²⁹

Mendieta’s personal belief in the corrupting influence of secular law on the indigenous population, however, does not translate to an outright rejection of juridical knowledge on the part of the Franciscan order at large. In fact, the Franciscans were quite sophisticated in using and maneuvering within and between the overlapping jurisdictions of secular and religious law.³⁰ Although the Crown sought to maintain a strict separation between the two, for example, mendicant friars were tasked in the mid-sixteenth century with translating and interpreting the law for the indigenous population.³¹ Likewise, the segregation *informes* as a whole demonstrate that the religious orders were adept at not only deciphering legal doctrine but also deploying legal discourse. Like the other religious authors who responded to the viceroy’s call for recommendations, Vetancurt refers specifically to the *Recopilación* to justify his agreement with the segregation proposal. But Vetancurt goes far beyond his fellow priests. While each of the reports names Lib. 6, Tít. 1, Ley 19, which elaborates the temporal and spiritual benefits of *congregación* by mandating that the indigenous population live “juntos y concertadamente,”³² Vetancurt cites an additional two laws, including Lib. 7, Tít. 4, Ley 1, which circumscribes the presence of “vagabundos” in indigenous communities, as well as what is ostensibly the full text of Lib. 6, Tít. 3, Ley 21, an early articulation of the system of two republics:

prohibimos y defendemos que en las reducciones y pueblos de los indios, vivan negros, mulatos y mestizos, porque se ha experimentado son hombres inquietos, de mal vivir, ladrones, jugadores, viciosos y gente perdida, y por huír los indios de ser agraviados, dejan sus pueblos y provincias, y los negros, mestizos y mulatos, demás de tratarlos mal, se sirven de ellos, enseñan sus malas costumbres y ociosidad, y también algunos errores y vicios, que podrán estragar y pervertir el fruto que deseamos en orden a su salvación, aumento y quietud. (22)

²⁹ John Leddy Phelan, *The Millennial Kingdom of the Franciscans in the New World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 5-6, 53. Also see Osvaldo F. Pardo, *The Origins of Mexican Catholicism: Nahua Rituals and Christian Sacraments in Sixteenth-Century Mexico* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004), 94-95.

³⁰ Lauren Benton, “Making Order Out of Trouble: Jurisdictional Politics in the Spanish Colonial Borderlands,” *Law and Social Inquiry* 26 (2001): 389.

³¹ Osvaldo F. Pardo, “How to Punish Indians: Law and Cultural Change in Early Colonial Mexico,” *Comparative Studies in History and Society* 48 (2006): 80-81. On Spanish law as a mechanism of cultural hegemony in colonial Mexico, see Susan Kellogg, *Law and the Transformation of Aztec Culture, 1500-1700* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995); and Mirow, *Latin American Law*. For a detailed study of law in the colonial *república de los indios*, see Borah, *Justice by Insurance*.

³² The full text of this law, included in Vetancurt’s *informe*, reads as follows: “para que los indios aprovechen más en cristiandad y policía, se debe ordenar que vivan juntos y concertadamente, pues de esta forma los conocerán sus preladados y entenderán mejor a su bien y doctrina; y porque así conviene, mandamos que los virreyes y gobernadores lo procuren por todos los medios posibles, sin hacerles opresión, y dándoles a entender cuán útil y provechoso será para su aumento y buen gobierno, como está ordenado” (3).

I will return to this passage in more detail below, but first it is important to contextualize Vetancurt's deployment of the dual tropes of pernicious castas and naive, easily influenced Indians, which, as we have seen, served as common sites for debate. The "humanitarian" assumptions of the original segregation, for which the figure of the Indian is necessarily wretched, innocent, and victimized, fit comfortably with the widespread claims in the aftermath of the June 8 uprising that the Indians could not possibly have organized such a devastating attack on Spanish authority on their own—they must have had a mestizo leader to organize them.³³ This is precisely why, as I show in the previous chapter, the authorities saw the pulquería as especially dangerous—the convergence of different groups (mixing) was thought to facilitate relations in which a dominant group would "trick" another, weaker group into rebelling. No matter that attributions of dominance and weakness oscillated as much as assertions about the nature of the mestizo. In any case, it is precisely the threat represented by this convergence that allows Vetancurt to conclude his *informe* with the suggestion that it would be "conveniente" that

los dichos *negros y mulatos* salgan de los barrios y ocupen el lugar que en la ciudad ocupan los indios, y los indios ocupen el que dejan los *negros, mulatos y mestizos* en los barrios. (22; my emphasis)

Duplicating the logic of the original segregation, the indigenous barrios are to be left uncontaminated while dangerous "others" are assimilated into the Spanish center. Whereas Sigüenza inverts the conventional discourse on segregation, transforming the indigenous population from victim to victimizer, Vetancurt's report can be read as a reaffirmation of the original formulation. Still, there is an important distinction here: namely, the ambivalent and indeterminate presence of the mestizo, who slides smoothly in and out of the text. We cannot attribute this to accident or error: Vetancurt's mistake is especially striking given that the unholy trinity of "negros, mulatos, y mestizos" constituted a "stock formula" of racial categorization in New Spain.³⁴ What is fascinating about this slippage is the way that it manifests textually the fluidity of racial classification that characterized the *sistema de castas* as a whole.

At the same time, the complexity of colonial attitudes towards mestizos makes this erasure particularly significant. Underlying these racial imaginaries is an assumption about the nature of black as distinct from Indian blood. While the latter was thought capable of being whitened over time via certain genealogical practices, a single drop of the former often constituted an absolute contaminant, just as the discourse of *limpieza de sangre* had considered any trace of Jewish and Muslim ancestry enough to disqualify someone from claiming Old Christian status.³⁵ Indeed, the association of blackness with slavery was impossible to separate from assumptions about religion, since the "prevailing notion that co-religionists should not be enslaved" tautologically implied a connection between slavery and heresy.³⁶ As Vetancurt's text attests, it is far more difficult for blacks and mulattoes to disappear, even from a textual standpoint, than it is, conversely, for mestizos. Furthermore, that they vanish precisely in the context of their respatialization into the Spanish-white *traza* structurally reproduces the

³³ Cope, *Limits of Racial Domination*, 138, 160.

³⁴ As well as a "much bandied phrase." Israel, *Race, Class, and Politics*, 60, 64.

³⁵ María Elena Martínez, *Genealogical Fictions: Limpieza De Sangre, Religion, and Gender in Colonial Mexico* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 158-59.

³⁶ Martínez, *Genealogical Fictions*, 155.

colonizing logic of acculturation—or, in this case, of whitening—otherwise hampered by residence in the indigenous barrios.

Indeed, Vetancurt's language is infused with this logic of whitening. Let us return to Vetancurt's deployment of the Ley 21 and compare the language of his citation with the text of the original law, originally issued in 1563. I have italicized the portions of the original that Vetancurt leaves out:

Prohibimos y defendemos, que en las Reducciones, y Pueblos de Indios *puedan vivir, ó vivan Espanoles, Negros, Mulatos, o Mestizos, porque se ha experimentado, que algunos Espanoles, que tratan, tragan, viven, y andan entre los Indios, son hombres inquietos, de mal vivir, ladrones, jugadores, viciosos, y gente perdida, y por huir los Indios de ser agraviados, dexan sus Pueblos, y Provincias, y los Negros, Mestizos, y Mulatos, demás de tratarlos mal, se sirven dellos, enseñan sus malas costumbres, y ociosidad, y tãbien algunos errores, y vicios, que podrán estragar, y pervertir el fruto, que deseamos, en orden á su salvacion, aumento, y quietud. Y mandamos, que sean castigados cõ graves penas, y no consentidos en los Pueblos, y los Virreyes, Presidentes, Governadores, y Iusticias tengan mucho cuidado de hazerlos executar, donde por sus personas pudieren, ó valiendose de Ministros de toda integredad: y en quanto á los Mestizos, y Zambaigos, que son hijos de Indias, nacidos entre ellos, y han de heredar sus casas, y haziendas, porque parece cosa dura separarlos de sus padres, se podrá dispensar.*³⁷

Once again, the differences are far too significant—and strategic—to be the product of a copying error. Two stand out in particular. First and most striking is the erasure of Spanish actors as objects of prohibition and, of course, criticism. Indeed, Vetancurt's careful elision is almost given away by the uncomfortable syntax it yields in the odd repetition of the construction *negro-mulato-mestizo*. In the original text of the law, this trinity forms a single unit with a particular set of negative characteristics that are doubly differentiated from those of the Spaniards. Whereas the Spaniards are cast as a type, associated with a series of ontological qualities (they simply *are* “hombres inquietos, de mal vivir, ladrones, jugadores, viciosos, y gente perdida”), the *negro-mulato-mestizo* is associated with practices that imply or project a series of subject-effects (“demás de tratarlos mal, se sirven dellos, enseñan sus malas costumbres . . .”). In Vetancurt's *informe*, on the other hand, these signs are purposefully conflated and attached solely to this plural *casta* body. The erasure of the Spanish body from this juridical space produces a smoothing effect with regard to the stability of identity discourse—it displaces not only the naturalized qualities, but also the notion of naturalization itself, onto a differentiated “Other.” Of little import is the fact that many witnesses, including Sigüenza himself, attested to the participation of poor whites during the June 8 uprising.³⁸ Vetancurt's rhetorical division between whites and *castas*, however, must be read in the context of a reterritorialization that inserts both types of bodies into the same urban bloc. Leveraging segregation and hierarchy simultaneously, Vetancurt calls for the incorporation of a *negro-mulato-mestizo* matrix into a newly defined and

³⁷ See the *Recopilación*, lib. 6, tít. 3, ley 21.

³⁸ Sigüenza not only included *zaramullos* in the plebe he so despised but singled them out for reproach, calling them “españoles que, en declarándose zaramullos (que es lo mismo que pícaros, chulos y arrebatcapas) y degenerando de sus obligaciones, son los peores entre tan ruin canalla.” See Sigüenza, “Alboroto y motín,” 113.

demarcated Spanish space whose condition of possibility is the materialization of clear structures of racial hierarchy.

Vetancurt erases not only the presence of Spaniards but, additionally, the conclusion of the original law, which had affirmed the legitimacy of mestizos and zambaigos (generally understood as the offspring of an Indian woman and a Spanish or black man, respectively) while offering them a “dispensation” that would allow them to remain in indigenous communities with their mothers. The elision of this “mestizo exception” purports to do the work of a subtle legalistic amendment—subtle because it leaves almost no trace—and consequently project an alternate juridical world onto the surface of the city. Blurred together with blacks and *castas* as part of the *negro-mulato-mestizo* matrix, mestizos must now be inserted into the Spanish *traza*. Most important for Vetancurt, however, is for mestizos to be extracted from the Indian *barrios*. What is at stake here is a question of not only jurisdiction over the indigenous but also the nature of Indian purity. A royal *cédula* issued by Charles II in 1697 outlined the Crown’s official position on the relationship between indigenous blood and purity. It declared Indians eligible for secular and ecclesiastical posts, even positions requiring proof of *limpieza de sangre*. While these prerogatives would apply primarily to Indian nobles, of course, they would also apply to “los indios menos principales, y descendientes de ellos y en quienes concurre la puridad de sangre como descendientes de la gentilidad, sin mezcla de infección u otra secta reprobada.” Indians with strictly indigenous ancestors, then, would reasonably count as pure. But the decree goes further, declaring that these rights and privileges can be afforded to what he calls “indios mestizos” as well. According to this logic, mestizos raised in indigenous communities were capable of “becoming” pure Indians regardless of the conditions of their birth. Mixedness, in other words, is not inherently opposed to purity.³⁹

In part, Vetancurt’s *informe* serves as a response to precisely this formulation—his objective, in the broadest terms, is to *purify purity itself*, shoring up its boundaries and identifying, cataloguing, and isolating potential sites of tension and contamination. I read this erasure as an attempt to reconcile the at times ambiguous relation between mixing and purity. In contrast to the logic of the 1697 *cédula*, here Indian space, and by extension the bodies that inhabit it, can be purified only through negation: in concrete terms, the extraction of the *negro-mulato-mestizo*. This purity, of course, is important in the context of continued evangelization, but it also holds the key to the political stability of the colonial regime. After all, Vetancurt suggests, the June 8 uprising was sparked by the volatile convergence of *castas* with Indians rooted, he would later assert, in the seditious effects of mixed pulque: “los Indios que eran de los Negros enemigos se han hecho con la bebida camaradas.”⁴⁰

³⁹ See the “Real *cédula* que se considere a los descendientes de caciques como nobles en su raza,” in Richard Konetzke, *Colección de documentos para la historia de la formación social de Hispanoamérica, 1493-1810* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1962), III:1, 66-69; and Martínez, *Genealogical Fictions*, 118. The process of official Indianization codified in this *cédula* at the end of the seventeenth century reflects longstanding genealogical and political practice. Whereas the historian Diego Muñoz Camargo was himself ineligible for a post in the Indian government of Tlaxcala because he was considered mestizo, for example, his son became the “Indian governor” of Tlaxcala after marrying a high-ranking indigenous woman. Martínez, *Genealogical Fictions*, 145-46.

⁴⁰ Vetancurt, *Teatro mexicano*, I, 441.

Writing about five years after the uprising in his *Teatro Mexicano*, Vetancurt looks back on the violence of 1692 and the response of the colonial authorities:

En su tiempo [del Virrey Conde de Galve] por la falta de mayz à 8. de Iunio del año de 92. cerca de las oraciones sucedio la sublevacion . . .; robaron la ropa de los cajones, y los quemaron; ajusticiaronse ocho condenados à muerte, y se azotaron muchos, quitose el Pulque, y se pregonò se quitassen los Indios los capotes, y melenas, usando del traje de su nacion como es ordenanza, mandò se fueran à vivir à sus barrios, y executose por provision Real cometida al Ministro de la Iglesia Parroquial de S. Ioseph, y este ha sido el mas acertado acuerdo, assi para saber si son Christianos, y se confiessen, como para que paguen a su Magestad [sic] el tributo, porque estando en los corrales de las casas de la Ciudad escondidos, sin que justicia Secular, ni Eclesiastica los conoscan, amparados de los dueños de las casas, que no consienten que se entren por ningun modo en los corrales, viven como moros sin Señor, y esto se experimentò, porque se hallò que mas de setecientos en seis años, y mas; ni havian cumplido con la Iglesia, ni pagado tributo.⁴¹

What is most striking about these reflections is that the visceral shock of the uprising has been almost entirely displaced. Its only traces are a few subject-less verbs paired with even fewer objects—“sucedio la sublevacion,” “robaron la ropa de los cajones, y los quemaron.” The Franciscan shows little interest, in the first place, in recalling the extent of the violence—he makes no mention even of the burning of the viceroy’s palace, which, if Cristóbal de Villalpando’s 1697 view of the main plaza is to be believed, was still in ruins five years later. Nor does he seem particularly interested here in attributing responsibility: the uprising simply happened, and even the supposed leaders who were executed or otherwise punished remain unnamed and unidentified. Beyond the temporal distance, Vetancurt’s description feels spatially removed—its location is not the chaotic streets and bustling plazas but instead the halls of government.

For Vetancurt, of course, government is not a secular institution—the temporal and the spiritual were deeply entangled. Consider the place of the Indian. As the object, in the first place, of sumptuary regulation—as I show in chapter 1, contemporary notions of “passing” turned in large part on the use of clothing and hairstyles—and, in the second, of segregation, the Indian represents a critical site of governance. But governance here constitutes a precise circuit of administrative operations, delegated authorities, and jurisdictional claims. As Vetancurt tells it, while the segregation is “executed” by royal decree its implementation is necessarily channeled through or “committed to” those actors tied to the religious orders and rooted simultaneously in the spiritual terrain of the city. This, more than anything, declares Vetancurt, has been “el mas acertado acuerdo.” But its effectiveness no longer had to do with neutralizing popular violence, at least directly. Rather, what was at stake was a set of monitoring technologies aimed at measuring and assessing the effectiveness of Christianization, on one hand, and the recovery of tribute, on the other. Not the repressive but the administrative apparatus of the colonial state, whose eyes penetrate the walls of the homes of even the most uncooperative Spanish families residing in the *traza* to quantify—and extract—the spiritual and temporal resources they contain.

⁴¹ Vetancurt, *Teatro mexicano*, II, 225-26.

At stake here is the relationship between what Foucault has called “pastoral power” in early Christianity and the governmentality of the early modern state.⁴² The shepherd exercises power not over territory but over his flock, a power that simultaneously individualizes its members and totalizes them as a single corporate body. For Foucault, pastoral power is rationalized in the elaboration of certain forms of knowledge (e.g. statistics) that constitute new objects of government (e.g. “population”). Already in 1690-1691, the religious orders in Mexico City had begun to generate official lists (*padrones*) of their parishioners.⁴³ In the wake of the uprising, the project received renewed attention, and a number of these *padrones* were eventually bundled together with the segregation proposals. Composed of what we might call early census data, these documents, such as the “Memoria de los naturales que viven en la ciudad,” collected and organized the names of the families and individuals from the parish of San Joseph—precisely the one named by Vetancurt—who had moved into the Spanish *traza*.⁴⁴ Because lines of demarcation had the potential to alter the size and composition of Indian parishes, this demographic information became an ongoing site of contestation between various secular and religious authorities. In addition to staking out a specific claim to jurisdiction, the Franciscan appeals more generally to the key mediating function played by the religious orders in facilitating not only the evangelizing project but also, as he asserted at the time, “la administración y recaudación de los Reales Tributos” (22).

If the urban Indians have lived like “*moros sin señor*,” Vetancurt’s proposal of “*reducción*” (21) is intended to return them to the care of their temporal “*señor*” (the king via the viceroy) but only by way of a more immediate “*senor*” (the parish priest). Indian purity, in other words, is realizable only under careful Christian instruction, surveillance, and, if necessary, enforcement. Like Sigüenza, who imagines a segregation strategy in terms that privilege his intervention, Vetancurt locates himself at the heart of these complex debates. In the context of the newly purified *república de los indios*, Indians are subjected to the benign authority of the friars, while racial hierarchy will presumably keep the “*pernicious*” *castas* in line within the restructured *república de los españoles*.

Formations of purity

At stake in the segregation debate was not only effective policy but also a series of notions about the composition and consolidation of purity. Sigüenza’s “*línea de separación*” that was to divide Spaniards from Indians likewise functioned as an effort to map boundaries of identity over the terrain of not only the cityscape but the body as well. Even among the elites of the *ciudad letrada*, however, these ideas were far from monolithic. In addition to privileging their respective positions within administrative bureaucracy of the colonial state, Sigüenza and Vetancurt coincide on a number of key issues, most importantly regarding the responsibility of

⁴² Michel Foucault, “*Omnes et Singulatim: Towards a Criticism of ‘Political Reason,’*” in *The Tanner Lectures on Human Values*, ed. Sterling McMurrin (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1981), 252.

⁴³ O’Gorman, “*Reflexiones sobre la distribución urbana colonial*,” 28.

⁴⁴ In total there are seven of these “*memorias*,” including information from San José (AGN *Historia* 413, fols. 32r-40v), San Pablo (fols. 41r-42r), Santa Cruz (fols. 43r-43v), San Sebastián (fols. 44r-51r), Santa María la Redonda (fols. 52r-55r), and Santiago Tlatelolco (fols. 56r-56v; 57r-60v). Their dates indicate that at least some of the documents represent the original *padrones* from 1691. Although they form part of the same *expediente*, these documents are not included in the published version of the segregation proposal.

the Indians for the violence of the uprising and the political value of segregation based on the historical precedent of the “principle of separation.” I am most interested in this last point: as Fabian seems to suggest, segregation—and as such purity—are always temporal operations, and as such what differentiates the *informes* are their respective temporalities, the historical operations they deploy. Particular uses of the past correspond to particular formations of purity. The insurrection marks a momentary “forgetting” of colonial hegemony and the simultaneous “remembering” of the foundational violence of the conquest. If the founding of Mexico City itself instantiates the “convenient” forgetting of the violence of the siege and conquest of Tenochtitlan, then the return to Cortés’s original layout functions necessarily as a simultaneous remembering and forgetting of the violence of the uprising. Purity, in other words, is the materialization of (foundational) violence put to specific use.

Vetancurt’s segregation proposal, rooted in the unique legal authority of the *Recopilación*, is based on a form of strategic nostalgia. The original doctrine of separation, as we have seen, called for prohibitions to preserve Indian towns against the penetration of “pernicious” castas, blacks, and Spaniards—except, of course, from their parish priest. Calling for the forced expulsion of blacks, mulattoes, and (sometimes) mestizos from indigenous *barrios*, to be replaced by the Indians who had moved into the Spanish *traza*, Vetancurt sees salvation in a return to the foundational order of Spanish colonialism. In part, his interest is based on nostalgia for the lost millenarian enthusiasm of the Franciscan-led evangelization campaigns of the sixteenth century—as we have seen, his proposal naturally privileges the authority of the parish priest in mediating between the city’s indigenous poor and the governing institutions. But Vetancurt’s proposal also reflects an epistemic failure to assimilate the dense and heterogeneous complexity of the urban population. There is little conceivable place for *castas* in his vision of the segregated city—they are not only forgotten but indeed literally erased, edited out of the text of the relevant laws. His nostalgia is for a simplified past when Spaniards and Indians constituted separate and recognizable groups—a past that manifests physically in Cortés’s original layout of Mexico City on the ruins of Tenochtitlan and juridically in the “principle of separation” codified in Ley 19 of the *Recopilación*. For Vetancurt, then, purity is a quality that must be preserved, or in this case resurrected. Purity is located in the distant past—the task of segregation is its recovery.

For Sigüenza the contours of purity are somewhat more complex. Despite his clear allusion to the history of the two republics, Sigüenza’s goal is to remove Indians from the *traza*, but not—like Vetancurt—to replace them with other members of what he disdainfully referred to in his account of the uprising as the “plebe tan en extremo plebe.”⁴⁵ Rather, Sigüenza’s vision of purity is rooted in the nominally Spanish *traza*, whereas the city’s ambiguous “Others” are to be inserted into the Indian *barrios*. While Vetancurt erases these bodies completely, excising them from the juridical history of New Spain, Sigüenza incorporates them in strategically minimized ways. Their presence is either subordinated to other, relatively powerful actors—as in the case of the blacks—or simply left unnamed, identified only by their houses.

In the context of the elite paranoia about “mixing” that I examine in chapter 1, this proposal to lump all the “dangerous classes” together seems counterintuitive. After all, Sigüenza himself would fiercely attack the city’s indigenous residents—especially Indian women—for

⁴⁵ Sigüenza, “Alboroto y motín,” 113.

instigating the “alboroto y motín” through slanderous and seditious speech and the strategic distribution of mixed pulque. Is he not then asking for trouble by localizing and consolidating—indeed, reducing and congregating—this “mixtura”? But such a conclusion represents a misreading of the way Sigüenza frames the indigenous threat. It is not the occurrence of mixing per se that matters, but rather *where* that mixing takes place. The roots of the problem, as he later wrote, lie precisely in the “culpabilísimo descuido con que vivimos entre tanta plebe, al mismo tiempo que presumimos de formidables.”⁴⁶ Sigüenza’s “nosotros” makes it as much “our” fault as that of the *plebe*, because “we” have let them—all of them—into a space that should rightfully belong to “us” alone. What matters, in other words, is the location of this collective “we.”

This argument has two implications. First, it serves to construct a unified “nosotros” defined principally by Spanish-white identity. For a *criollo* intellectual like Sigüenza, an important figure of New Spain’s letrado elite, this move serves to eat away at the social distinctions between people like himself, on the one hand, and the city’s Peninsular elite, on the other. This is particularly true in the wake of a powerful shock to the colonial system such as the violence of June 8, when the “laberinto de rivalidades ideológicas” that made up the *ciudad letrada* came together “como si tuviera un solo programa de acción.”⁴⁷ By shifting the focus to the *república de los españoles*, Sigüenza’s builds on this strategic, counterinsurgent alliance by reformulating the two republics in order to consolidate a unified Spanish-white elite. While colonial discourses of white superiority are not particularly surprising in and of themselves, it is important to recognize not only the shifting boundaries of what it meant to be pure but also where the responsibility of that purity lay.

Second, this newly unified “Spanish” elite is constructed in opposition to a “body” (like the “gigante cuerpo” [7] that had threatened Sigüenza’s historicized city from its foundation) that the segregation proposal would produce and make visible: the *plebe*.⁴⁸ This body represents an enemy that cannot simply be exterminated or eliminated; what is to be eliminated instead is the “presumption of strength” referenced above. As long as we stop overestimating our own strength and start truly seeing our enemy, Sigüenza seems to suggest, we will be able to better defend ourselves. The recuperation of Cortés’s original Spanish-Indian binary fits into the constitution of a new colonial counterpart, a new domestic enemy, imagined in relation to a white elite that encompassed all “Spaniards” (including, that is, *criollo* elites). He thus echoes the formulation employed by the colonial officials who first outlined the segregation project on June 26, 1692, attacking those responsible for the uprising: “los indios, unidos a la ínfima plebe, *su semejante*” (3; my emphasis). The convergence of characteristics apparent in this equivalence represents not only—or not exactly—the “generalization” of racial qualities onto increasingly class-based groups, as some scholars have suggested.⁴⁹ Instead, it suggests that Sigüenza evokes the foundational Spanish-Indian binary not as a hopelessly obsolete rhetorical strategy to situate his work within a genealogy of Spanish colonialism, but rather precisely in order to displace it.

⁴⁶ Sigüenza, “Alboroto y motín,” 119-20.

⁴⁷ Rolena Adorno, “La *ciudad letrada* y los discursos coloniales,” *Hispanamérica* 16.48 (December 1987): 4, 5.

⁴⁸ The spatialization of the *plebe* in Sigüenza’s proposal corresponds to the Royal University’s articulation of the *poliplebio* in opposition to the dominant *monopolio* of the “Spanish” center. See chapter 1.

⁴⁹ E.g. Cope, *Limits of Racial Domination*, 23: “As the concept of the *plebe* evolved, qualities originally ascribed to certain racial groups became generalized to the commoners as a whole.”

Where the Indian had previously represented the subaltern counterpart to the Spanish elite, Sigüenza's proposal generates a plebeian counterpart to a Spanish-white elite.

Part 2 / Interventions

Chapter 3

1566-1567 / The Language of Mestizo Conversion Mimicry, Evangelization, and Blood

. . . colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite. Which is to say, that the discourse of mimicry is constructed around an *ambivalence*; in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference.

--Homi Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man"

During the mid 1560s, the Viceroyalties of Peru and New Spain were rocked by high-level conspiracies to overthrow the colonial state. In Peru, after decades of tumultuous conflicts between rival warring factions, a plot that Governor Lope García de Castro would later call "el motín de los mestizos" began to coalesce in 1566, but the conspirators were denounced and arrested the following year before they could carry out the alleged plan. In New Spain, another conspiracy involving a number of prominent *criollos* including Alonso de Ávila and Martín Cortés, son of the conquistador and Marqués del Valle, was likewise put down in 1566.¹ Far from a temporal coincidence, the concurrence of these plots can be read as a result of the ongoing political disputes between the Crown and the emerging American aristocracy regarding the perpetuity and inheritance of the *encomienda*, which intensified after the passage of the New Laws in 1542.² But the connection goes beyond macropolitical affairs, turning as well on the circulation of certain (kinds of) bodies across the American territories. Colonial authorities in Mexico City were thus deeply concerned about the presence of soldiers who had participated in the earlier wars in Peru, and apparently blamed these individuals—some undoubtedly mestizos—for fomenting the so-called Ávila-Cortés conspiracy.³

¹ Lope García de Castro's writings are published in Roberto Levillier, *Gobernantes del Perú, cartas y papeles, siglo XVI* (Madrid: Sucesores de Rivadeneyra, 1921-26), III; the reference to "el motín de los mestizos" is on III, 237. More recent historical analysis comes from Héctor López Martínez, "Un motín de mestizos en el Perú (1567)," *Revista de Indias*, 24 (1964): 367-81; Burns, *Colonial Habits*, 35-36. For a brief overview of the period of intense conflict and civil wars that followed the conquest of Peru, see James Lockhart, *Spanish Peru, 1532-1560: A Social History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994), 3-6. On the Ávila-Cortés conspiracy, see Manuel Orozco y Berra, *Noticia histórica de la conjuración del Marqués del Valle* (Mexico City: Tipografía de R. Rafael, 1853). Also involved, though in a less direct way, was the *other* Martín Cortés, namely the son of Hernán Cortés and his indigenous translator, doña Marina (Malintzin).

² For a detailed historical analysis of the institution of the *encomienda* and these disputes during the sixteenth century, see Gibson, *The Aztecs Under Spanish Rule*, 58-81.

³ "Este raciocinio no era nuevo: las guerras civiles del Perú, encendidas y atizadas por los Conteras y por Hernandez Giron, se hicieron bajo los mismos pretestos y reconocieron causas semejantes por origen: muchos de los soldados escapados de aquellas revueltas estaban en México sin ocupacion, sin saber mas oficio que el de las armas, y querian medrar; ellos eran un enseñamiento vivo y sus consejos debieron tener gran influjo para comenzarse á tramarse una conjuracion." Orozco y Berra, *Noticia histórica de la conjuración*, xxxvi. Similarly, mestizos exiled from Peru for their participation in earlier conspiracies were blamed for an attempt to rise up in Panama when García de Castro arrived in 1564. Levillier, *Gobernantes del Perú*, III, 12.

Although these conspiracies are usually associated with the emerging *criollo* aristocracy, the figure of the mestizo occupies a critical, though apparently marginal and certainly overlooked place in the commentary of colonial elites. That these conspiracies involved more than just “mestizos” goes without saying—the more interesting question is why the mestizo body in particular generated so much and such profound concern. Especially in Peru but in New Spain as well, the male mestizo was seen as a grave threat to the stability of the colonial regime. In a letter to the king dated February 1567, García de Castro wrote,

ay tantos mestizos en estos rreynos y nacen cada ora que es menester que vuestra magestad mande ymbiar cedula que ningun mestizo ni mulato pueda traer arma alguna ni tener arcabuz en su poer so pena de muerte porque esta es una gente que andando el tiempo a de ser muy peligrosa y muy pernicioso en esta tierra que asta ahora como no auian crecido no se hacia cuenta de ellos y aora estan ya hechos onbres y banse haciendo cada ora.⁴

Several months later, he wrote another letter to the king, urging him once again to prohibit mestizos from carrying weapons. After repeating his earlier assertion that the mestizos “son ya tantos y crecen mas cada dia” he continued: “como son hijos de yndias en cometiendo el delito luego se visten como yndios y se meten entre los parientes de sus madres y no se pueden hallar y ay muchos dellos que son mejores arcabuceros que los españoles.”⁵ In direct response to these letters and borrowing heavily from their language, a royal decree ordering the enforcement of this prohibition was issued the following year.⁶

These passages turn on the demographic logic of historical causality that often accompanies modern formulations of *mestizaje*, where, as I explained in the introduction, the colonial “encounter” constitutes an origin point in which distinct bodies identified as pure come into contact and begin a historical process of ever increasing mixing whose explanatory power is profound. As García de Castro’s letter suggests, the reason that the mestizo threat had not been perceived earlier was that there were simply not enough of them to matter (at least in the sense of subjects capable of action). Demographic change becomes the motor of history. But this argument makes a number of problematic assumptions—it is as if the body labeled “mestizo” could signify outside of the conceptual structures that render him legible, as if “mestizo” somehow always meant the same thing, as if it were only a simple matter of *seeing* the “mestizo.” It is the illegibility of his identity and the ability to move between worlds that made the mestizo particularly dangerous. But it could also make him valuable.

Using the specter of these “mestizo” conspiracies as an analytical pivot or fulcrum, this chapter charts the rise and fall of what I call the project of mestizo conversion. By this I mean an educational and disciplinary project aligned along two interwoven lines of force: conversion of the soul and the body, of religion and race, to use two admittedly imperfect terms. The former

⁴ Levillier, *Gobernantes del Perú*, III, 235.

⁵ Levillier, *Gobernantes del Perú*, III, 267

⁶ The full text of the decree is reproduced in Konetzke, *Colección de documentos*, I, 436-37. In reality, of course, this order, like so much royal legislation, simply reiterated earlier decrees that had gone, and would continue to go, unheeded.

follows the logic of one of the central discourses of Spanish colonialism, what Robert Ricard famously called the “spiritual conquest” of the New World. The latter belongs to a different kind of project—a racializing project—aimed at identifying, classifying, and transforming the character of its inhabitants. Two analogous projects of conversion: of the *Indian soul* on one hand, and the *mestizo body* on the other. The evangelization of the indigenous population of the New World, as a critical site for understanding the dynamics of the colonial contact zone, modes of transculturation, anticolonial resistance, subaltern studies, formations of universalism, the dark side of modernity, has received an enormous amount of scholarly attention. What these studies often overlook, however, is the figure of the mestizo, a central character, as I argue here, in the discourse of evangelization during the sixteenth century, as both object and subject—the *ideal* subject, even—of conversion. If the mestizo is the human embodiment of mixing—“tomaron el nombre de *Mestizos*, por la mixtura de sangre, y Naciones que se juntó á engendrarlos, por donde los Latinos los llamaron *Varios, é Híbridas*”⁷—the mestizo missionary, whose ambiguous identity, oscillating between the poles of Spanish and Indian, offered a unique potentiality: reliable Christian beliefs and Spanish customs, along with an intimate knowledge of indigenous culture and, most importantly, language. In 1550, the mestizo missionary was being cultivated and praised as the savior of Spanish evangelization and, by extension, the colonial project; just three decades later, he aroused such profound—and at times violent—skepticism and suspicion that the project was more or less abandoned.⁸

Because the discourse of colonial mimicry is built on ambivalence, as Homi Bhabha suggests, these two moments should not be read as absolute or uncontested but contingent and hegemonic.⁹ Mimicry offers a disruptive potential, undermining the authority of colonial discourse while opening up spaces for subaltern agency.¹⁰ At the same time, its “civilizing mission” acts as the ultimate logic of imperial reason: if mimicry must always produce “its slippage, its excess, its difference,” then the task of the colonizer is never complete and must continually project itself into a homogeneous imperial future. I am interested in the uses of excess, according to the shifting and multiple valences of conversion or modes of civilization (and of civilizing) that correspond to particular formations of identity. Paradoxically, the evangelizing project of Spanish colonialism, its lust for the totalizing and permanent spiritual

⁷ Juan de Solórzano y Pereyra, *Política Indiana*, ed. Miguel Ángel Ochoa Brun (Madrid: Compañía Ibero-Americana de Publicaciones, 1972), I, 445.

⁸ There is some tension between this schema and the three-stage model proposed by historians like Juan Olavechea and Stafford Poole. According to this model, the first stage, from about 1524-1555, was characterized by a vibrant optimism found institutionalized form in the Colegio de Santa Cruz; during the second stage, from about 1555-1585, “non-Europeans” faced absolute exclusion mandated by royal and ecclesiastical legislation (the First Mexican Provincial Council prohibited the ordination of Indians and mestizos in 1555); and in the third stage, beginning “toward the end of the sixteenth or beginning of the seventeenth century,” these prohibitions were relaxed and “in some way or another Indians and persons of mixed ancestry began to enter the ranks of the clergy.” See Stafford Poole, “Church Law on the Ordination of Indians and *Castas* in New Spain,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 61.4 (1981): 637; cf. Juan Olavechea, “Cómo abordaron la cuestión del clero indígena los primeros misioneros en México,” *Missionalia Hispánica* 25 (January-April 1968): 95-124. Sabine Hyland offers a slightly different timeline for mestizos in Mexico, with the colegio being abandoned in the 1540s. See her “Illegitimacy and Racial Hierarchy in the Peruvian Priesthood: A Seventeenth-Century Dispute,” *The Catholic Historical Review* 84.3 (July 1998): 435.

⁹ Homi Bhabha, “Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse,” in *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 122.

¹⁰ On the counterhegemonic potential of mimicry, see Michael Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses* (New York: Routledge, 1993); and Barbara Fuchs, *Mimesis and Empire: The New World, Islam, and European Identities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

conversion of the Indian, produces the mestizo as a stubbornly inconvertible subject. That the Indian might become Spanish never really occurred to anyone; Christian perhaps, but Spanish never. On the other hand, it is the mestizo's proximity to the Spaniard—almost Spanish-Christian, *but not quite*—that dooms the possibility of his conversion.

The failure of mestizo conversion—that is, of both his conversion to Christian-Spanish subjectivity as well as his subsequent ability to convert the indigenous population to Christianity—signals the moment at which *the mestizo emerges as a biological entity*.¹¹ This is not to say that the idea of the mestizo did not exist prior to the 1580s, but rather that at this moment the natural identity of the mestizo—and even the Indian, for that matter—begins to detach from the disciplinarity of culture and custom. The missionary priest, furthermore, offers a useful test case for reading this as a shift in the form of racial discourse: perhaps more than any other character on the colonial stage, he projects social conceptions of identity through a prism of the sacred that multiplies exponentially the implications of even minimal flaws. Occupying an extraordinarily sensitive position as intermediary between a highly regulated institutional orthodoxy and a flock of recent converts predisposed to heresy and idolatry, the missionary priest faced intense scrutiny from every direction: “cualquier buen ejemplo edifica mucho,” wrote Fray Rodrigo de Loaysa, to whom we will return below, “y cualquier malo escandaliza más.”¹² In this case, my interest is the encroachment of the biological in the form of bodily fluids—blood and breast milk, in particular—into terrain of identity through an increasing clarification of the conventional sense of “inheritance” at the time that tended to conflate nature and nurture.¹³

My argument is organized around two moments. The first zooms in on the institutional form taken by mestizo conversion, beginning in 1548, when the Colegio de Niños Mestizos was inaugurated and the Colegio de Niñas Mestizas founded, and continuing through the mid-1550s. Through close readings of a memorial written by an agent of the colegio and sent to the Council of the Indies and then onto the king in 1552, as well as Francisco Cervantes de Salazar's Latin dialogues titled *Civitas Mexicus* (1554), I examine the colegio as a specialized disciplinary apparatus targeting the mestizo as both object and subject of conversion, fixing his otherwise oscillating identity as Christian-Spanish and deploying him into the missionary field to facilitate the reproduction of colonial power relations. The second moment comes three decades later, in 1578, with the passage of royal legislation prohibiting the ordination of mestizos. Here I focus primarily on José de Acosta's monumental treatise on evangelization, *De procuranda indorum*

¹¹ I want to make clear that I do not use the term “biology” as a substitute for “race,” nor do I mean to oppose “race” to “culture” or “religion.” “Culture,” too, is easily racialized. Racial discourse has what Ann Laura Stoler has called a “polyvalent mobility” capable of embracing both fixity and fluidity—the power of race is located its ability to feed strategically off both kinds of tropes, often simultaneously. Methodologically, then, this chapter does not deal in *racial origins*; to do so would merely invite the kind of periodizing games that result only in adjusting chronological boundaries without questioning the assumptions on which these boundaries are based. Rather, my intention is for this chapter to form part of a genealogy of colonial mixings, charting the “ruptures” and “reinscriptions” that can never completely strip off the sedimented accumulation that constitute the material of the mestizo's “many beginnings.” In these comments, as in the introduction, I am following conceptual and methodological guidelines laid out by Ann Laura Stoler and Marisol de la Cadena. See Stoler, “Racial Histories and their Regimes of Truth”; and de la Cadena, “Are *Mestizos* Hybrids?,” 269n26, 263.

¹² Rodrigo de Loaysa, “Memorial de las cosas del Pirú tocantes á los indios,” *Colección de documentos inéditos para la historia de España*, vol. 94 (Madrid: M. Ginesta Hermanos, 1889), 556.

¹³ Martínez, *Genealogical Fictions*, 48.

salute, written in 1577 but published about ten years later. Acosta's "enormously influential" text circulated widely and was frequently cited, shaping both missionary practices and royal legislation, perhaps even the 1578 decrees.¹⁴ Although he is best known for his *Historia natural y moral de las Indias* (1590), originally intended as an introduction to *De procuranda*, Acosta's approach in the latter work too turns on the tensions and linkages between the *natural* and the *moral*—that is, between the worlds of the physical-biological and the human-cultural.¹⁵

It is interesting to note that Acosta is often read as a character pertaining to the history of science, a natural historian or ethnologist who contributed to the development of a new discourse of the material world. Certainly, the *Historia* elaborates a scientific discourse of empiricism and criticizes the argument from classical authority. But this frame, of course, privileges certain types of discourse while blinding us to others.¹⁶ For this reason, I am particularly interested here in Acosta the missionary priest, Acosta the ecclesiastic, Acosta the theologian. My intention is not to reject or ignore any discourse that could be characterized as "scientific"—quite the opposite—but trace the way that a racializing discourse of biology emerges precisely within the theological field. This is particularly important given that critics interested in the history of race have long focused their attention on the development of scientific discourse and practice, whether in the form of Enlightenment taxonomies or the doctrine of Hippocratic-Galenic physiology. For example, Jorge Cañizares Esguerra has argued convincingly that it was only in the seventeenth century that the Indian *body* became an object of knowledge—and criticism—for colonial elites. Following Anthony Pagden, he argues that despite a common language of blood and lineage it was not "nature" but "culture" and "nurture" that constituted the operative force of identity before that point. Cañizares locates this shift in seventeenth-century *criollo* patriotism and the corresponding desire to "invent" two kinds of bodies, one for the Indians and another, distinct

¹⁴ "Acosta's interpretation of Amerindian culture was enormously influential. *De procuranda* became the standard work on its subject and Acosta's approach something of an orthodoxy. It was not only used as a textbook by his own order in places as far from the Americas as Calabria and Asturias, North Africa and the Philippines; it was also employed as a model by members of other orders, such as the Carmelite Tomás de Jesús, whose *De procuranda salute omnium gentium* (1613) owes far more than its title to Acosta." Anthony Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man: The American Indian and the Origins of Comparative Ethnology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 197-98.

¹⁵ Edmundo O'Gorman, "Prólogo," in Joseph de Acosta, *Historia natural y moral de las Indias* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2006), xxxv. The structure of Acosta's *Historia* establishes a formal division between what he calls "obras de naturaleza," meaning the natural world (books I-IV), and "obras del libre albedrío," or the world of human history and culture (books V-VII). But as O'Gorman suggests, this dichotomy is not absolute, "puesto que ambas provincias lo son de una y la misma realidad." In part, what I do here is identify what could be seen as a bridge between these two "provincias." See O'Gorman, "Prólogo," xl.

¹⁶ This does not necessarily mean that Acosta's only goal was "to convert the Indians to Christianity" as Mignolo suggests, but that his text, which circulated throughout Europe in multiple translations, was deployed for diverse purposes. See Walter Mignolo, "Introduction to José de Acosta's *Historia Natural y Moral de las Indias*," in Acosta, *Natural and Moral History of the Indies*, ed. Jane E. Mangan, trans. Frances López-Morillas (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), xxi. For a recent version of the "scientific" reading of Acosta, see Antonio Barrera-Osorio, *Experiencing Nature: The Spanish American Empire and the Early Scientific Revolution* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006), 113-20, esp. 120: "Acosta's theory provided the Jesuits with the elements needed to confront the scientific empirical production of other European groups at this time of rapid intellectual change. Acosta . . . created an intellectual tradition that constituted yet another version of modern science, as it was defined at the end of the sixteenth century." On Acosta's "scientific" worldview, see Thayne R. Ford, "Stranger in a Foreign Land: José de Acosta's Scientific Realizations in Sixteenth-Century Peru," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 29.1 (Spring 1998): 19-33; and Jorge Cañizares Esguerra, "Iberian Science in the Renaissance: Ignored How Much Longer?," *Perspectives on Science* 12.1 (2004): 96-98.

and superior, for white elites.¹⁷ Not only were the nature-nurture debates more contested, and from an earlier point, than this chronology suggests, however, but the racial discourse produced under the aegis of Spanish colonialism cannot be severed from Iberian conceptualizations of identity based on religion. Not only the obsession with *limpieza de sangre* but even the specter of Jews and Muslims continued to haunt colonial elites through the end of the colonial period. For this reason, I am interested in the way that corporeal-biological forms of racism emerge from the evangelizing project of Christianity and the invention of the mestizo body goes hand in hand with the privileging of the Indian soul. The ability of racial discourse to speak in religious terms is a phenomenon that we would do well to reflect on today.

In addition to engaging a different terrain, this chapter diverges from most scholarship on Christianization and education in the Americas in two significant ways. First, many critics either focus exclusively on the indigenous population or blur Indian and mestizo together under the umbrella category of “non-Europeans.”¹⁸ The Colegio de Santa Cruz of Santiago Tlatelolco, for example, has received much, and much deserved, attention. Although their trajectories overlap in certain key respects, however, the corresponding figures of the mestizo missionary and his indigenous counterpart diverge in terms of both their chronologies and broader social implications, particularly with regard to the shifting composition of racial discourse. Second, because I am interested in the discourse of the colonial evangelization, my focus is the male mestizo. Recently, scholars have begun to examine the strategies deployed in sixteenth-century Peru and New Spain to “remedy” female mestizas. Rich with implications for the study of race, the gendered politics of mestizaje highlights the imbrication of mechanisms for the production of Christianized and Hispanized female subjectivities and the consequent *re-production* of Spanish colonialism.¹⁹ Mestizas were targeted, enclosed, and trained before being married off to Spanish men in order to ensure the continuation of the Spanish population and colonial relations of power. Clearly, the importance of sexuality in the construction of racial formations cannot be overlooked. But the male mestizo was in no way separate or excluded from the logic of this machine of racialization.²⁰ There is an extent to which the emphasis on female particularity in the re-production of race can blind us to the ways that gender and race simultaneously infuse *all* social relations.

¹⁷ Jorge Cañizares Esguerra, “New World, New Stars: Patriotic Astrology and the Invention of Indian and Creole Bodies in Colonial Spanish America, 1600-1650,” *The American Historical Review* 104.1 (February 1999): 64-65.

¹⁸ Poole, “Church Law on the Ordination of Indians and *Castas*”; Guillermo Figuera, *La formación del clero indígena en la historia eclesiástica de América, 1500-1810* (Caracas: AGN, 1963).

¹⁹ See Burns, *Colonial Habits*, chap. 1; and Holler, *Escogidas Plantas*.

²⁰ Burns suggests that the institutional attempts to remedy the mestizo population in Peru focused almost exclusively on women, whose gendered social position exercised a stronger and more constant regulatory pressure on their behavior. Male mestizos, on the other hand, were seen as politically dangerous: “While they too might be raised culturally Spanish, they stood to gain a potentially destabilizing role as male adults.” Burns, *Colonial Habits*, 37-38. In New Spain, however, mestizo boys were given a domestic training very similar to that of the mestiza girls described by Burns. They were taught, for example, the role of good Spanish fathers, and specifically instructed “en como se casen y tengan casa y ganen de comer para sí y para su familia, como no tornen a ser perdidos y vagamundos como de antes.” See “La orden que se tiene en el Colegio de los Niños de México,” published in France V. Scholes, “The Colegio de San Juan de Letrán in 1552,” *The Americas* 2.1 (July 1945): 105; and Paulino Castañeda Delgado, “El Colegio de San Juan de Letrán de México: Apuntes para su historia,” *Anuario de estudios americanos* 37 (1980): 118-126.

It is impossible to talk about the mestizo without mentioning Indian and Spaniard, but the inverse is equally true. If the ambiguous contours of mestizo identity make it difficult to pin down the precise nature of the body they delimit, it is also true that these contours simultaneously illuminate the elements of those other bodies that compose both the mestizo himself and the foundational binary of Spanish colonialism. Identity, in this sense, is a spatial relation: it is proximity to or coextension with other bodies that gives meaning to that of the mestizo. The Indian, then, is always in the background, either a parallel model of Christianization and education, as in the Colegio de Santa Cruz or as the perennial object of conversion, a sort of permanent spiritual revolution that justified and gave meaning to both the original conquest and the extension of Spanish colonialism into the homogeneous time of an imperial future.

The mestizo colegio as apparatus of capture

If a “mestizo problem” had surfaced in Mexico City by the 1530s, 1548 marked a significant development in the institutionalization of a colonial apparatus designed to address it.²¹ In that year the Colegio de Niñas Mestizas was founded, and the corresponding Colegio de Niños Mestizos (also known as the Colegio de San Juan de Letrán), which had been founded the previous year, was inaugurated.²² As Antonio de Mendoza, the first viceroy of New Spain, wrote to his successor two years later:

Su majestad y la Emperatriz, Nuestra Señora, que está en la gloria, me mandaron por muchas veces que yo diese orden como los hijos mestizos de los españoles se recogiesen, porque andaban muchos de ellos perdidos entre los indios. Para remedio de esto y en cumplimiento de lo que Sus Majestades me mandaron, se ha instituido un colegio de niños donde se recogen no sólo los perdidos más otros muchos que tienen padres los ponen a deprender la doctrina cristiana, y a leer y escribir, y a tomar buenas costumbres. Y así mismo hay una casa donde las mozas de esta ciudad que andan perdidas se recogen y de allí se procura sacarlas casadas.²³

The colegio represents an new and eminently colonial operation: homes for converting non-Christians and for taking care of orphans existed previously and indeed served as a precedent for the colegios in Mexico City, but never before had the orphan been overlaid with a racialized character in desperate need of remedy.²⁴ Mestizo conversion is, in this sense, an apparatus of capture and colonial reproduction: it seeks to collect (*recoger*) “lost” mestizo children and channel them into centralized locations; to produce newly Christianized, Hispanized subjectivities through the implementation of a detailed set of micro-technologies of the self (“buenas costumbres”); and to introduce these newly formed colonial subjects into the field of power relations under a spiraling logic of expansion. The project is thus deployed along three

²¹ Holler, *Escogidas Plantas*, chap. 4, par. 3.

²² Holler, *Escogidas Plantas*, chap. 4; Castañeda Delgado, “El Colegio de San Juan de Letrán,” 69-70.

²³ Quoted in Tomás Zepeda Rincón, *La educación pública en la Nueva España* (Mexico City: Editorial Progreso, 1999), 104-5.

²⁴ “In 1557, for example, the founders of the School for Mixed-Race Girls (Colegio de Niñas Mestizas) asked that the King seek from the pope ‘the privileges, exemptions and graces and indulgences granted to the house of orphan girls of Rome, which is similar to this one.’” Holler, *Escogidas Plantas*, chap. 3, par. 24.

lines of force: *recoger*, *deprender*, and *tomar*. These verbs function in different ways, or, to be more precise, have different subjects. In the first case, the subject is the institution; in the second, it is the mestizo child, but only through the mediation of the institution; and in the third, the subject is the mestizo child alone—the object, in other words, of mestizo conversion. It is this move from object to subject—the formation of new subjects—that I examine in this section.

The viceroy's use of the verb *recoger* suggests an active collection, the identification and rounding up of a set of dispersed or “lost” (*perdidos*) bodies. According to Bishop Zumárraga, before the founding of the colegio these mestizo boys existed in what was essentially a barbaric state of nature: “andaban perdidos por los campos, sin ley ni fe, comiendo carne cruda.”²⁵ For Mendoza, on the other hand, mestizo boys were not literally but *transitively* “lost” because of their presence among the indigenous population. Not lost but *lost-to*. In this sense, mestizaje represents an explicitly gendered phenomenon: the father is always Spanish, the mother Indian. As a result, mestizo identity is overdetermined and mestizo children coded as illegitimate orphans regardless of the particularities of their birth.²⁶ As the jurist Juan de Solórzano y Pereira put it, “lo más ordinario es, que nacen [los mestizos] de adulterio, ó de otros ilícitos, y punibles ayuntamientos, porque pocos Españoles de honra hay, que casen con Indias, ó Negras.”²⁷ These are the foundations of the trope of the “lost” mestizo child—abandoned by his father, left to his indigenous mother—then “collected” (*recogido*) by and inducted into the colegio. It is precisely the possibility of *recovering*—not necessarily in the sense of physical capture but cultural formation—the mestizo that seems to differentiate him from other “vagrants” (such as blacks, mulattoes, even Spaniards) who were thought to wander the countryside.

But *recoger* had other meanings as well. The Colegio de Niñas Mestizas, for example, was officially described as a *recogimiento*, a protected and enclosed space, much like a cloistered convent. Accordingly, one of the requests made in the memorial of the boys' colegio is for the construction of “altas paredes porque no se huyan los niños que están recogidos allí.”²⁸ As an adjective, *recogido* could also identify a person of great virtue and morality.²⁹ The polysemous character of the root thus suggests that the project of *recogimiento* represented the institutionalization of intense scrutiny and the disciplinary gaze, on one hand, and separation combined with moral education, dedicated, primarily, to neutralizing the cultural influence of the children's indigenous mothers, on the other. In this sense, the *recogimiento* resembles a panoptic apparatus that “reverses the principle of the dungeon; or rather of its three functions—to enclose, to deprive of light and to hide—it preserves only the first and eliminates the other two.”³⁰

²⁵ Quoted in Holler, *Escogidas Plantas*, chap. 4, par. 5. To *recoger* these children, then, meant, quite literally, to make them human, to teach them, as the description of the colegio stated, to “ser hombre.”

²⁶ As Cervantes de Salazar puts it in *Life in the Imperial and Loyal City of Mexico*, 55:

Al[faro]. Whom do you call mixed?

Zuazo. The Spanish-Indians.

Al[faro]. Explain more clearly.

Zuazo. Orphans, born of Spanish men and Indian women.

²⁷ Solórzano, *Política Indiana*, I, 445.

²⁸ Scholes, “The Colegio de San Juan de Letrán,” 106.

²⁹ Nancy E. Van Deusen, *Between the Sacred and the Worldly: The Institutional and Cultural Practice of Recogimiento in Colonial Lima* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001).

³⁰ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage, 1995), 200.

At times, *recogimiento* literally shines a light on and through the mestizo in an effort to make him effectively transparent; its mechanisms are designed to open up and reveal his innermost thoughts. The rules at the boys' colegio, for example, stipulate the proper steps for ending the day and going to bed:

Y luego entran los mayores y medianos en un lugar que para ello tienen diputado con el dicho preceptor y se hincan de rodillas un paso apartado uno de otro y una candela puesta delante en una linterna metida, y el preceptor o preceptores detrás, que los puedan ver, medio a obscuras, para se recoger un cuarto de hora en silencio, apartados del ruido que han traído y traen todo el día, a pensar en sus pecados y en la misericordia de Dios. Y acabado, hace señal el principal preceptor, y sacan la lumbre y levántanse, y allí tórnales a decir alguna cosa para les aparejar a contrición y a confesión y a los demás sacramentos para dignamente los recibir y para enmendar la vida.³¹

The emphasis on the play of light and the preceptor's line of sight is particularly interesting given that the object of knowledge is not the child's body, backlit by the light of the lantern, but his feelings and desires—his very soul. The preceptor's gaze, of course, does not penetrate the child's shadowy surface. Rather, its pressure provokes inner reflection, the production of a truth of the self as a contained body—it comes as no surprise that this process is also designated by the verb *recoger*.³² A double enclosure: within the walled off architectonic space of the colegio, the mestizo child is obliged to withdraw into the intimate boundaries of his body. Like the child's physical enclosure, which comes to an end when he has been effectively transformed and is then ejected into the space beyond its walls, so too this mental enclosure is necessarily temporary: through confession, the procedure externalizes the internal.

The logic of the homonym *se recogen* (they are collected, enclosed)-*se recogen* (they collect, enclose themselves) traverses the mestizo's passage from object to subject, at which point the verbs *deprender* and *tomar* become operative. *Deprender* means to learn (reading, writing, *doctrina cristiana*), while *tomar* means to take on or become: they refer to the formation of civilized subjectivities. With regard to the former, the mestizo continues to operate as an object of conversion in the sense that he is instructed by a teacher. Nevertheless, in grammatical terms he becomes the subject of the verb. The latter thus completes this transition, constituting the mestizo as agent by eliding the presence of the teacher. Education carries him to the point at which a new subject—a new man—emerges, bridging the gap between *tomar buenas costumbres* and *ser hombre*.³³

This transformation is captured in Francisco Cervantes de Salazar's *Civitas Mexicus*. The dialogue constructs an itinerary map of Mexico City couched in the form of a tour given to a visiting Spaniard, Alfaro, by two locals, Zamora and Zuazo. The group visits “the college for girls of mixed blood,” where interned mestizas “are carefully watched over, and are taught the womanly arts of sewing and embroidery. They are trained, also, in those virtues which pertain to

³¹ Scholes, “The Colegio de San Juan de Letrán,” 103.

³² According to Van Deusen, *recogimiento* too could be understood at the level of the individual body: the isolation from sensory perception. See *Between the Sacred and the Worldly*, chap. 1.

³³ Scholes, “The Colegio de San Juan de Letrán,” 105.

Christian observance; and when they have reached a marriageable age, they are wed.”³⁴ As in Viceroy Mendoza’s letter to the king, the colegio is imagined as a point of entry into the economy of colonial reproduction, whereby girls are “trained” solely in order to “sacarlas casadas,” to marry them off.³⁵

The locals also take their Spanish interlocutor to “the college for boys of mixed blood,” where, as Zamora explains, the boys are instructed according to a somewhat different curriculum:

They read, write, and, better still, they are trained in those matters that pertain to the worship of God. Clad in ankle-length garments, they walk about by twos, but generally by fours, being small boys.³⁶

Language and literacy constituted a central component of this gendered program of instruction. Reading and writing, plus Latin taught (presumably in Nahuatl) by “un preceptor indio” who was to be paid yearly “cien pesos porque enseñe gramática.”³⁷ Certainly, Latin was on the mind of Cervantes de Salazar, who, as professor of rhetoric at the Royal University, taught and of course composed his dialogues in Latin. Regardless of the language of its instruction, learning Latin meant more than merely learning a language—it also required “learning a whole body of knowledge and system of thought.”³⁸ At the Colegio de Niños Mestizos, as at the Colegio de Santa Cruz, Latin literacy formed the foundation of a program of Westernization.

Critics have been careful to distinguish between two pedagogical programs targeting the indigenous population—Christianization and Hispanization—which, in turn, reveal the divergent sets of interests that inspired their supporters.³⁹ The Spanish crown, on one hand, pushed a program of “Castilianization” in the New World through royal legislation that, even before 1535, required the indigenous to learn “Christianity, decent morals, good government, and the Castilian language.” On the other hand, the Mendicant friars who taught at and ran the colegios resisted this tendency. More invested in Christianization than Hispanization, at least at the Colegio de Santa Cruz, they privileged the study of Latin and Nahuatl while purposefully marginalizing Castilian.⁴⁰

³⁴ Cervantes de Salazar, *Life in the Imperial and Loyal City of Mexico*, 56.

³⁵ This differentiates the colegio in Mexico City from the otherwise similar Convento de Santa Clara in Cuzco, where mestizas had the option of marrying or taking vows and becoming nuns. See Burns, *Colonial Habits*, chap. 1. For a brief history and analysis of the Colegio de Niñas Mestizas, see Holler, *Escogidas Plantas*, chap. 4, pars. 1-16.

³⁶ Cervantes de Salazar, *Life in the Imperial and Loyal City of Mexico*, 55.

³⁷ Scholes, “The Colegio de San Juan de Letrán,” 105; also see Castañeda Delgado, “El Colegio de San Juan de Letrán,” 72. According to Motolinía, the Colegio de Santa Cruz had an “Indian *bachiller*, who taught grammar,” while Charles V wrote in 1533 that he had asked the Franciscans “to teach grammar to the natives in the common language of Mexico.” Robert Ricard, *The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico: An Essay on the Apostolate and the Evangelizing Methods of the Mendicant Orders of New Spain 1523-1572*, trans. Lesley Byrd Simpson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), 220-22.

³⁸ Walter Mignolo, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance: Literacy, Territoriality, and Colonization* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), 55-56.

³⁹ Mignolo, *Darker Side of the Renaissance*, 97; Ricard, *The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico*, 52; Phelan, *The Millennial Kingdom*, 86-91.

⁴⁰ Mignolo, *Darker Side of the Renaissance*, 52-53.

What is interesting about the curriculum at the Colegio de Niños Mestizos is that Latin was not the only language that was explicitly incorporated. Consider the following description of the morning prayers from the memorial:

Estáles mandado que en despartando y vistiendo se signen y santigüen y recen las oraciones del Paternóster, Avemaría, Credo, Salve, *en romance*, y acabado de vestir hincanse de rodillas delante de una imagen allí en el dormitorio diciendo la Confesión y el himno de Los Tres Niños, *Benedicite* todas las obras al Señor, etc., y la oración de prima con las demás oraciones acostumbradas en que ruega por sí y por todos los vivos y difuntos y bien y malhechores, *todo en romance*.⁴¹

The repeated requirement of Spanish language, along with the accentuated second appearance, is striking, and suggests that language instruction at the colegio was not only more complex but also more intentional than Mignolo's binary schema allows. If the mestizo serves not only as a metonym for the process of mestizaje as it is conventionally imagined but also the embodied personification of the contact zone, then the project of mestizo conversion too constitutes an apparently unlikely mixture of Christianization and Hispanization. In any case, it makes sense that the pedagogical approach of Franciscan teachers would distinguish between indigenous nobles on one hand and mestizo "orphans" on the other, especially given that it was precisely a language-culture matrix, as we will see, that constituted mestizo difference—itsself an ambivalent constellation of values and dangers.

But mestizo conversion involved more than language instruction. Learning was carefully calibrated, measured, as Cervantes de Salazar puts it, "in twos and fours." The process meant the imposition of a set of daily practices or detailed routines that would over time become habits embedded on the mestizo body. Cervantes de Salazar's "better still" above suggests that the true nature of "training" goes far beyond language. The last sentence seems to refer to the kind of routines found in the memorial of the colegio. While the generic form of the dialogue-itinerary, which resists immobility and compels its characters to circulate through the city, is not conducive to a complete and detailed listing of the institution's rules, this strikingly solitary and arbitrary example functions as a sort of place holder, metonymically standing in for just such a list. Recall the above example of the children's waking and bedtime rituals; here is another passage, similar in its disciplinary detail:

Anda uno de los preceptores con los servidores que están señalados, poniendo a todos sus raciones. Comen pan y carnero y caldo. El carnero es continuo porque no enfermen, y esto les dan que les baste dos veces al día. A las diez horas y media acaban y dan gracias. Y van concertados a la capilla diciendo el Miserere, y acabado, rezan nona y luego una quincuagena del rosario.⁴²

These regulations cover everything from the appropriate positioning of the body, the correct language to be employed, the type of food to be consumed, and hour at which this consumption should take place. Once again, the deployment of preceptores channels a disciplinary gaze. But this gaze is multiplied: a mestizo child, without visible prodding, steps up

⁴¹ Scholes, "The Colegio de San Juan de Letrán," 102; my emphasis.

⁴² Scholes, "The Colegio de San Juan de Letrán," 102.

to take roll of and account for his peers. “Acabado, se levanta uno en pie y toma una tabla en que están los nombres de todos escritos y llama a todos para ver si falta alguno.”⁴³ On one hand, then, the gaze is personified, made concrete and visible. Even the characters of the dialogue constitute surfaces onto which this desire is projected. “[W]e’ll go [to Chapultepec] after lunch,” suggests Zuazo halfway through the tour of the city proper, “to look at the environs of the City of Mexico from a mountain ridge near by, *lest no view escape us*.”⁴⁴ At the same time, however, the locus of observation is blurred, abstracted by its “scopic and gnostic drive . . . this lust to be a viewpoint and nothing more.”⁴⁵ Passive verb conjugations reinforce this impression by eliding individualized actors responsible for raising the mestizo children: “the girls,” for example, “are carefully watched over,” but the watcher remains unseen and unnamed.⁴⁶ Beyond the watchful but hopelessly limited vision of any individual preceptor, the panoptic gaze belongs to a unified ideological apparatus of colegio-state.⁴⁷ After all, Cervantes de Salazar explicitly frames the institution in terms of the state as both spatial and temporal domain: “Never is the interest of the state [*rei publicae*],” Alfaro asserts, “so well served as when boys are so trained that, having imbibed virtue, so to speak, and grown strong afterwards, they can never depart from it.” The mestizo children, Zuazo adds, “increase in virtue with age, so that when they have become men they cannot be led into evil, except unwillingly.”⁴⁸

“Except unwillingly.” While Cervantes de Salazar’s pedagogical model is constructed around a triumphant humanism, it is nevertheless marked by the ambivalence of colonial discourse. Here, a moment of doubt or hesitation reveals fissures that open onto a multiplicity of potential insurgencies and countermovements against the disciplinary imperatives of mestizo conversion. Further underscoring these fissures is the divergence of Cervantes de Salazar’s formulation from its likely biblical referent, Proverbs 22:6, which includes no such caveat: “Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”⁴⁹ If the institutionalization of pedagogy grew out of the Aristotelian thesis of the power of moral education to produce a “second nature” and thereby shape emerging subjectivities, the clause implies the possibility of “regression” to a “first” nature that is somehow more original or essential. My point is not that this eruption of fixity undermines the pedagogical program advanced in Cervantes de Salazar’s dialogues, but rather that racial discourse survives and persists by drawing on tropes of fluidity and fixity with equal relish. The egalitarian promise of universalism, built on the premise that education contains the teleological possibility of civilization for all, simply constitutes a new foundation on which new racial projects will emerge.

⁴³ Scholes, “The Colegio de San Juan de Letrán,” 102.

⁴⁴ Cervantes de Salazar, *Life in the Imperial and Loyal City of Mexico*, 52; my emphasis.

⁴⁵ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 92.

⁴⁶ Cervantes de Salazar, *Life in the Imperial and Loyal City of Mexico*, 56.

⁴⁷ In fact, in terms of both institutional supporters and members, the colegios could be difficult to separate from the city government. Often the colegios were founded by *cofradías* like the *Cofradía del Santísimo Sacramento y Caridad*, established in 1538. Although any Christian could join, “many of the founding members of Caridad were officeholders in urban government.” Holler, *Escogidas Plantas*, chap. 4, par. 3.

⁴⁸ Cervantes de Salazar, *Life in the Imperial and Loyal City of Mexico*, 56.

⁴⁹ Acosta too cites this passage in his discussion of the power of education to shape identity in *De procuranda*, I, 151. Unless otherwise noted, I use the Luciano Pereña edition of Acosta’s treatise, published as *De procuranda indorum salute* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1984-1987), which includes the Latin source text. At times, however, I draw on the Francisco Mateos edition, *De procuranda indorum salute (Predicación del evangelio en las Indias)* (Madrid, 1952).

Language, affect, and the mestizo missionary

For the humanist Cervantes de Salazar, the mestizos of the colegio are produced as not only Christianized-Hispanized subjects but also economic actors, inserted into appropriate positions in the colonial economy. “Those endowed with talent apply themselves to the liberal arts; others, not equally endowed, to handicrafts and jobs about the market-place.”⁵⁰ Either as bureaucratic nodes in the developing *ciudad letrada* or as buyers and sellers in the colonial marketplace, they constitute efficient and effectively placed workers whose labor serves to strengthen the colonial state. But the colegio also inspired visions of other kinds of labor—spiritual labor. If Spanish colonialism constitutes an evangelizing enterprise, then it is here that the mestizo missionary is inserted into the spiritual economy of the colonial project.

The memorial of the Colegio de Niños Mestizos, in contrast to Cervantes de Salazar’s dialogues, minimizes mechanical labor: for its author, the colegio opens primarily onto a lettered stage demarcated by what Ángel Rama regarded as the twin exigencies of the colonial project and its *ciudad letrada*—administration and evangelization⁵¹:

Tienen deseo de hacer de manera que haya estudio para que los que se inclinaren a letras y a ser eclesiásticos o religiosos lo sean, porque de allí salgan personas que aprovechen *en los naturales*, porque sabrán las lenguas de ellos y ayudarán mucho más que los que de acá van, uno más que diez, por ser naturales y tener la lengua y conocer y saber las flaquezas y condiciones de ellos para convertir y atraer, enseñar y conservar en la fe y doctrina; y serán para más trabajo y suplirán la falta que hay de religiosos y de sacerdotes allá en muchas maneras, y no desearán venirse acá por ser allá su patria; y porque se compadecerán más de las necesidades de los indios y les dolerán más sus trabajos *por ser naturales*, y entenderlos han mejor que de los que de acá van, que de ciento se vuelven los noventa acá; y más si se hace universidad que esté junto a la casa y colegio de niños recogidos de México y aun ordenándolo de manera que se enseñen todas las lenguas en dicha casa para que de allí salgan algunos predicadores para enseñar tanta diversidad de lenguas de gentes como hay en aquellas provincias. Y los frailes pueden dar el tiempo andando esta orden.⁵²

That the memorial privileges the formation of “eclesiásticos y religiosos” over the more general study of “letras” led the historian Castañeda Delgado to liken the colegio to a “seminario

⁵⁰ Cervantes de Salazar, *Life in the Imperial and Loyal City of Mexico*, 55-56.

⁵¹ Rama, *La ciudad letrada*, 27: “Varias causas contribuyeron a la fortaleza de la *ciudad letrada*. Las dos principales fueron: las exigencias de una vasta administración colonial que con puntillísimo llevó a cabo la Monarquía, duplicando controles y salvaguardias para restringir, en vano, el constante fraude con las que se la burlaba, y las exigencias de la evangelización (transculturación) de una población indígena que contaba por millones, a la que se logró encuadrar en la aceptación de los valores europeos, aunque en ellos no creyeran o no los comprendieran. Esas dos inmensas tareas reclamaban un elevadísimo número de letrados, los que se asentaron preferentemente en los reductos urbanos.”

⁵² Castañeda Delgado, “El Colegio de San Juan de Letrán,” 122-23; my emphasis. This version fills in several gaps marked as illegible in Scholes, “The Colegio de San Juan de Letrán,” 104.

conciliar.”⁵³ Even where the document calls for the establishment of a university, the goal is to fashion an institutional body in order to pack the missionary ranks with priests capable of speaking “tanta diversidad de lenguas de gentes como hay en aquellas provincias.” It should come as no surprise, then, that the memorial imagines the ideal university as *literally* connected to the colegio in spatial terms. In both cases, the logic is one of coordinated expansion—in terms of the direct extension of Christianity to the indigenous population as well as the reproduction of evangelizing labor power. The motor of this expansion, of course, is language.

Furthermore, there is a slippage in the passage between two uses of the word *naturales* (natives): in the first instance it refers to the indigenous population that would make up the parishioners of the newly ordained mestizo priest, while in the second the referent is the mestizo priest. A different kind of *criollo* imaginary than the one described by Cañizares—because it arises from *peninsular* needs—strategically foregrounds the mestizo’s indigeneity as excess. In large part, the argument proceeds on the basis of a logic of *patria*: by means of comparison, mestizo missionaries would be far better than their Spanish counterparts, 90 percent of whom (or so the memorial asserts) abandon their posts to return home to the Iberian peninsula. A second comparison offers another calculus: one mestizo priest will be more effective than ten Spanish ones. What is interesting here is not the mathematical inconsistency but the dual rationales for this geographic judgment: the *patria* generates knowledge of indigenous language on one hand and indigenous culture on the other. These “natural” skills make the mestizo not only an *object* but also the ideal *subject* of conversion and “spiritual conquest.”

“La lengua [de los indios],” wrote Motolinía, “es menester para hablar, predicar, conversar, enseñar, y para administrar los sacramentos; y no menos el conocimiento de la gente, que naturalmente es temerosa y muy encogida.”⁵⁴ Language subtly penetrates epistemological barricades, extracting raw cultural materials for processing and strategic redeployment. But the memorial goes beyond instrumentalism. What comes across is a profound sense of empathy, of affective relations, that binds mestizo to Indian—even pain is experienced mutually. It is this empathy, which was thought to arise from common language and common culture, that makes a given missionary effective. Such a position follows the Catholic tradition of St. Augustine, for whom a common language was the foundation of solidarity between men: “a man would more readily hold intercourse with his dog than with a foreigner.” Similarly, the question of cultural fluency is not only one of ethnographic imperialism, as the search for and exploitation of the “weaknesses” (*flaquezas*) of the Indians might suggest. In other words, this is not, or not only, a cynical gesture. Pastoral power, as Foucault has suggested, is manifested in the deployment of particular forms of kindness.⁵⁵ Accordingly, the focus is not the sympathy felt by the Indians for the priest who speaks their language, but exactly the opposite: the operative compassion is that felt *by* the priest *for* the indigenous.⁵⁶

⁵³ Castañeda Delgado, “El Colegio de San Juan de Letrán,” 72.

⁵⁴ Toribio de Benavente (Motolinía), *Historia de los indios de la Nueva España* (Mexico City: Librería de J. M. Andrade, 1858), 113.

⁵⁵ Foucault, “Omnes et Singulatim,” 229.

⁵⁶ Acosta, on the other hand, wrote excitedly of the Indians’ feelings of empathy for the priest that speaks their language. I address this below. See *De procuranda*, II, 51.

What is interesting about this explanation is that, if it were not already clear that the object of the colegio in question was the mestizo, it would resemble an argument for training and ordaining *Indian* priests. This, of course, was the purpose of the Colegio de la Santa Cruz de Santiago Tlatelolco, run, like the Colegio de San Juan de Letrán, by Franciscans. According to Ricard, the Colegio de Santa Cruz was designed not merely to Christianize—though as mentioned above not necessarily Hispanize—the children of the indigenous nobility, but to produce indigenous subjects capable of being ordained as priests in order to accelerate and deepen the evangelization project and “spiritual conquest” of New Spain. The “dazzling success” of indigenous language training, writes Ricard, “was only partial, for its brilliance concealed a failure; that is, the College of Santiago Tlatelolco gave the Mexicans not a single priest of their own race—this in spite of the fact that the college had been founded not merely to train translators, copyists, and Latinists, but above all to train priests. It was to have been the first native seminary of the New World.”⁵⁷ Opposition came from both the secular clergy and other religious orders, such as the Dominicans. In 1544, for example, Domingo de la Cruz and Domingo de Betanzos wrote to Charles V to persuade him against the education and ordination of the indigenous: they argued, for example, “that the Christian doctrine had not yet sufficiently penetrated their spirit, and it was to be feared that they would spread heresies.”⁵⁸

What is it about the mestizo missionary that changes the terms of this debate? Not much, according to some scholars. Stafford Poole, one of the few historians to have studied the question of mestizo ordination, discusses Indians and mestizos in more or less the same terms, grouping them together as “non-Europeans.”⁵⁹ Even the memorial, in striking fashion, uses the word “mestizo” only once. But this single appearance serves to highlight potential sites of differentiation, which allow us to read the mestizo as *remainder*, that which is left over after the subtraction of indigeneity. We have seen, for example, how the mestizo is coded as “lost,” and is therefore “collected” and “enclosed” and instructed in moral values (*recogido*); and, furthermore, how conversion is necessarily a temporal project projected into a homogeneous, imperial future. This is why, contrary to the scenario in Cuzco described by Kathryn Burns, even the male mestizo children—“especialmente a los mestizos”—in Mexico City were instructed in and channeled into domesticity: so that as adults “no tornen a ser perdidos y vagamundos como antes.” The memorial continues:

Y de esta manera se acortarán los grandes males que éstos hacen y hacían en los indios, y los robos y muertes y fuerzas, tomándoles las mujeres e hijas a los indios y haciendo otros agravios y enormes pecados, y sin saber ni tener cuenta con misa ni doctrina ni confesarse ni aun saber qué cosa es ser cristianos, blasfemando con sus malas obras y ejemplos el nombre de Nuestro Señor, y aun siendo causa que muchos o todos los naturales indios que los ven y con quien conversan y tratan lo blasfemen y huyan de él por su causa, y animando a otros que hagan lo que ellos ya sean como ellos y peores.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Ricard, *The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico*, 224–25.

⁵⁸ Ricard, *The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico*, 226.

⁵⁹ Poole, “Church Law and the Ordination of Indians and *Castas*.” Walter Mignolo is so invested in the education of indigenous elites that he assumes that its pedagogical developments are generalizable to other sectors. He therefore suggests that it was only “[w]hen the Jesuits arrived in Mexico, in 1572 [that] the teaching of Latin and the humanities changed direction and was targeted toward the Spanish and Spanish-descendant population, rather than to the children of the Amerindian nobility.” Mignolo, *Darker Side of the Renaissance*, 56–57.

⁶⁰ Scholes, “The Colegio de San Juan de Letrán,” 105.

Instead of affective bonds of solidarity, in this passage the mestizo-Indian relation is governed by colonial violence, rape, and exploitation. The description recalls the language of royal legislation that was at about the same time articulating the “principle of separation,” segregating the indigenous from other social groups as a means of fostering their evangelization (see chapter 2). Dating from 1563 and reprinted in the seventeenth-century *Recopilación de las leyes de los reinos de las Indias*, the law prohibited “Españoles, Negros, Mulatos, ó Mestizos” from living in indigenous communities. In particular, the law went on, “los Negros, Mestizos, y Mulatos, demás de tratarlos mal, se sirven dellos, enseñan sus malas costumbres, y ociosidad, tãbien algunos errores, y vicios, que podrán estragar, y pervertir el fruto, que deseamos, en orden á su salvacion, aumento, y quietud” (Lib. 6, Tít. 3, Ley 21). That these laws apparently regarded “vagrants” as particularly pernicious connects the prevalent trope of the *mestizo perdido* with the discourse of segregation.⁶¹ It makes sense, then, that these discourses would crystallize at about the same time and at the hands of the same groups—namely, the clergy in general and in particular the Mendicant orders.

On the surface, then, the memorial seems to attribute to mestizos a natural enmity for the Indians. Certainly this passage breaks with the ambiguity of the passage cited earlier, which could be applied equally to mestizos and indigenous. Upon closer inspection, however, even in the face of such apparently terrible violence, the underlying structure on which the earlier idolization of the mestizo missionary depends remains the same. That structure is mimetic: the mestizo constitutes a sort of mirror in which the Indians quite explicitly see themselves (“todos los naturales indios que los ven y con quienes conversan y tratan . . . ya [son] como ellos y peores”) and toward which they are drawn, as if magnetized. In the 1563 law, this mimesis takes on a more familiar form: pedagogy. The mechanism through which the indigenous are infected is teaching: the mestizos “enseñan sus malas costumbres.” What is particularly valuable about the mestizo, then, is precisely what makes him dangerous. Mestizo conversion thus represents a triple intervention: first, it removes from circulation certain particularly contagious bodies; second, it refashions them in its own image; and third, it deploys them—still contagious—into the missionary field.

According to the memorial, this pedagogical practice is clustered around four tasks, divided into two paired sets: “convertir y atraer, enseñar y conservar en la fe y doctrina.” Neither set can be completely disentangled. We saw in the previous section the connection between disciplinary procedures of instruction (*enseñanza*) and the extension of the temporal horizon of conversion (*conservación en la fe y doctrina*). Now consider the relationship between the two procedures of the first set: attraction (*atraer*) and conversion (*convertir*). Attraction, defined in spatial and physical terms, is clearly at work in the rationale for the mestizo missionary’s effectiveness. The mestizo, according to the Spanish clergy, magnetizes his parishioners—indigenous eyes follow his every move, while indigenous ears are alert to his subtlest whisper. There is a sexual dimension to this attraction as well. In this respect, the language used by Acosta to describe the reactions of Indian parishioners to Quechua-speaking priests is illuminating:

⁶¹ Mörner and Gibson, “Diego Muñoz Camargo,” 558-60.

Vemos que los indios, cuando oyen a un predicador que sabe su propia lengua, le siguen con toda atención y disfrutan sobre manera de su elocuencia, están embobados con el entusiasmo del que habla y boquiabiertos y extasiados, con los ojos clavados, están pendientes de sus palabras. Lo cual observándolo yo en los sermones de mis compañeros, tanto me cautivaba la desusada atención y satisfacción de los indios, que casi daba saltos de placer concibiendo grandes esperanzas de la salvación de esos indios.⁶²

Although Acosta is not talking specifically about mestizos here—and, as we will see, deemed mestizo ordination too dangerous to permit—his words are revealing in their expansion of the magnetic field of linguistic abilities. Acosta’s own orgiastic enjoyment of this scene, his “saltos de placer,” suggests that the deployment of indigenous languages enthralled not only indigenous parishioners but indeed the highest levels of the colonial church were enthralled. Accordingly, the mestizo missionary—the embodiment of Acosta’s “grandes esperanzas”—came to constitute the ideal agent of evangelization.

Of hearts and mouths, souls and bodies

By the mid 1570s, the grand project of mestizo conversion had collapsed. On one hand, the Colegio de Niños Mestizos had become embroiled in a jurisdictional debate between Franciscans and Jesuits, supported by their respective administrative allies. At the same time, another problem was becoming apparent. In 1575, the Viceroy Martín Enríquez reflected on the “poco fruto que se saca” from the colegio. Most of the children, he observed, were either being removed from the colegio by their parents or abandoning it on their own. The colegio had been repurposed: it was to be less a “centro de orientación y estudio” than a “reformatorio.”⁶³ Mestizos were not being ordained, and as a consequence little opportunity for advancement remained.⁶⁴

Around the same time, in 1578, Fray Rodrigo de Loaysa, an Augustinian missionary with years of experience in Peru, returned to Spain to present a series of legislative requests directly to Philip II. Language was one of his priorities.⁶⁵ The Indians are not being educated in Christian *doctrina*, he asserted, because the priests who are supposed to instruct them do not speak their

⁶² Acosta, *De Procuranda*, II, 51.

⁶³ Quoted in Castañeda Delgado, “El Colegio de San Juan de Letrán,” 85. As for the Colegio de Niñas Mestizas, the girls had simply been replaced by elite Spanish women, a process that Burns refers to in the case of Cuzco as the “creolization” of the convent. As the Viceroy Conde de Monterrey wrote to the king in 1597, “El collegio que v. md. llama de las doncellas mestiças ha venido a ser con el tiempo de españolas y gente honrada y de calidad que son huerfanos o hijas de padres pobres que las depositan allí.” Holler, *Escogidas Plantas*, chap. 6, par. 9; cf. Burns, *Colonial Habits*, 39-40.

⁶⁴ In fact, mestizo ordination had been prohibited in the First Mexican Provincial Council of 1555. Poole notes a 1575 survey of the Archdiocese of Mexico that found only a single mestizo priest. Poole, “Church Law on the Ordination of Indians and *Castas*,” 641.

⁶⁵ The priesthood’s lack of indigenous language abilities continued to be named as a serious problem well into the seventeenth century. John Charles, “‘More *Ladino* than Necessary’: Indigenous Litigants and the Language Policy Debate in Mid-Colonial Peru,” *Colonial Latin American Review* 16.1 (2007): 23-47.

language. There is not even a school where these languages are taught.⁶⁶ Spanish priests arrive, learn “una docena de vocablos” from a *confesionario*, and are sent into the field. (In a later text, Loaysa would compare this practice to granting someone a “título de doctor, no sabiendo latín, por decir que es hábil y lo aprenderá.”) “[L]os que no saben la lengua,” he concluded, “son predicadores mudos” and therefore cannot “descargar la conciencia de Vuestra Magestad.”⁶⁷

But Loaysa pressed the king further. In stark contrast to the supporters of the project of mestizo conversion in Mexico City thirty years before, he demanded a prohibition on the ordaining of mestizos, regardless of any new legislation requiring knowledge of indigenous languages:

es gran inconveniente ordenar mestizos y ponerlos en doctrina siendo tan mal doctrinados. Debía de mandar Vuestra Magestad los obispos tuviesen gran moderación en ordenarlos, y si alguno se ordenase, no se pusiese en doctrina hasta ser muy aprobado y conocido por muy virtuoso, porque tenemos experiencia que han hecho mucho daño.⁶⁸

Philip II was thoroughly convinced. On December 2, 1578, soon after Loaysa’s visit, *cédulas* were issued and sent throughout the Indies, not only to Peru but to New Spain as well.⁶⁹ One required that all priests sent to indigenous parishes speak the local language. A second generalized and extended to the rest of the Indies a decree from the previous year that the king had issued to the bishop of Cuzco prohibiting the ordination of mestizos. “[O]s ruego y encargo,” the new version declared, “que miréis mucho en ello y tengáis en el dar las dichas órdenes el cuidado que de vuestro buen celo y cristiandad se confía dándolas sólo a personas en quien concurren las partes y calidades necesarias, y por ahora no las daréis a los dichos mestizos de ninguna manera.”⁷⁰ In this way, language requirement and mestizo prohibition were made official colonial policy throughout the Americas.

It has been suggested that Loaysa, in his presentation to the king, explicitly invoked the substantial authority of José de Acosta on the subject of the mestizos.⁷¹ In *De procuranda*, Acosta’s treatise on the Spanish evangelization project composed the year before Loaysa’s trip to Spain, the importance of indigenous languages had if anything increased, but optimism about the mestizo missionary, as well as the project of mestizo conversion, had largely disappeared. In other words, the important role of indigenous languages in evangelization had not been rejected but intersected by two parallel questions of purity. On one hand, the purity of indigenous language itself had to be considered. In Peru, much of the clergy believed that heretical thought

⁶⁶ In fact, by 1578 several programs existed for the study of “lengua índica,” including the Jesuit Colegio de San Pablo in Lima, founded in 1574. Magnus Mörner, “La afortunada gestión de un misionero del Perú en Madrid en 1578,” *Anuario de estudios americanos* 19 (1962): 269n11.

⁶⁷ Fray Loaysa’s *relación* is transcribed in Mörner, “La afortunada gestión,” 270.

⁶⁸ Mörner, “La afortunada gestión,” 270.

⁶⁹ According to Guillermo Figueroa, the king had received similar requests from New Spain and New Granada, suggesting that the concern, like his response, was generalized. See *La formación del clero indígena*, 331.

⁷⁰ Real Cédula of December 2, 1578 in Konetzke, *Colección de documentos*, I, 514.

⁷¹ According to Juan R. Lodaes, Loaysa “cit[ed] the authority of Father José de Acosta and his work *De Procuranda Indorum Salute*,” although I have not been able to locate this reference. See Lodaes, “Languages, Catholicism, and Power in the Hispanic Empire (1500-1770),” in *Spanish and Empire*, eds. Nelsy Echávez-Solano and Kenya C. Dworkin y Méndez (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 2007), 20.

was embedded in indigenous languages, at least in their common usage. In 1583, therefore, the Third Lima Provincial Council “moved to cleanse the maternal languages of their alleged impurities in order to separate native Andeans from the harmful traditions of an autochthonous past” by developing standardized, approved versions of Quechua and Aymara and mandating their use.⁷² I will return to the question of linguistic purification in the conclusion, but for now I want to focus on a second concern that addressed the nature of its speakers. Acosta’s ambivalence regarding the mestizo, I argue, signals a shift in the discourse of identity: the crystallization of a biological basis for identity, which collapsed from within the triumphant discourse of moral education that circulated around the project of mestizo conversion at mid-century.

Language looms large in *De procuranda*. Acosta recounts a story of how, traveling in the province of Callao, he had spoken with a fellow priest who complained bitterly that his years spent preaching had been for naught—the Indians learned nothing of Christianity and continued to follow their barbarous customs. Overwhelmed by the Indians’ “contumacia y malicia,” the priest declared their conversion an impossible task. Acosta, however, reversed the charges: “Yo, por el contrario, sostenía que esta situación había que atribuirla no a culpa de los indios, sino del párroco mismo.” Indignant, the priest demanded an explanation. Acosta responded with a series of questions: “¿Cuántos sermones has tenido en la lengua de los indios? ¿Ha sido esmerada tu exposición? ¿Con qué fervor de espíritu has anunciado el camino de la salvación?” Against this line of questioning, the stubborn priest was forced to acknowledge his inability to speak the indigenous language. Indeed, he admitted, he had not delivered a single sermon, but instead simply repeated the prayers of the catechism—and even this in Castilian. For Acosta this was insufficient: “hacer pronunciar las palabras como papagayo sin tocar ni siquiera remotamente los contenidos mismos, le dije, no es instruir, puesto que la fe, que es el comienzo de la salvación, está en el corazón, no en la boca.”⁷³

Faith is located in the heart, not the mouth. But the mouth is far from irrelevant. For Saint Paul, *fides ex auditu*—faith cometh by hearing (Romans 10:17)—and Acosta, referencing Romans, asserted that the salvation of the peoples of the world depended

de la palabra de Dios, que ciertamente no puede llegar a los oídos humanos, si no se anuncia con palabras humanas; quien no las percibe, nunca experimentará la eficacia de la palabra de Dios.

For this reason, Acosta believed that one of the biggest obstacles to the *verdadera y sincera conversión* of the indigenous population continued to be the linguistic incapacity of the missionary ranks: “Hay muchísimos de esta calaña hoy en las Indias,” he wrote echoing Fray Loaysa, “mudos y sin lengua.”⁷⁴ Acosta does not go as far as Alonso de la Peña Montenegro, Bishop of Quito, who would argue in his *Itinerario para párrocos de Indios* (1668) that a priest who addresses his indigenous congregation in Spanish commits a mortal sin,⁷⁵ but he

⁷² Charles, “More *Ladino* than Necessary,” 26-28.

⁷³ Acosta, *De procuranda*, I, 181-83.

⁷⁴ Acosta, *De procuranda*, II, 53.

⁷⁵ Alonso de la Peña Montenegro, *Itinerario para párrocos de Indios, en que se tratan las materias mas particulares tocantes á ellos para su buena Administracion* (Madrid: Pedro Marin, 1771), 114-15: “cumplirá su obligacion el

nevertheless stakes out a highly critical position at multiple levels of scale, both macro—e.g. the evangelization project in general—and micro—e.g. the salvation of the individual priest. These priests “a sí mismos se perjudican poniéndose en no pequeño riesgo de condenación, por tomar sobre sí carga que no pueden llevar, y su arrogancia y avaricia es tan grande que intentan hacer más de lo que pueden.”⁷⁶ Thus, the missionary’s first and most important task should consist of rectifying these gaps. “Pues estoy completamente persuadido,” he wrote, “que de esa manera en breve penetraría el Evangelio de Cristo en el alma de los indios y desplegaría su propia virtualidad, ya que hasta el día de hoy parece que las más de las veces solamente ha sonado en los oídos de los indios sin tocar el fondo del corazón.”⁷⁷

Predication as penetration: the ears constitute a portal to the soul, and language the vehicle that transmits the message of God. In a parallel way, spoken language serves as the manifestation of a person’s interior—and as a consequence true—beliefs. Just as the missionary’s words reveal his deep love of Christ, so too do the words of his parishioners reflect the nature of their conversion: true believers are “los que conciben la fe en el corazón” and then “la confiesan con la boca.”⁷⁸ Linguistic knowledge is therefore important not only for transmitting Christian faith to the indigenous population but also for monitoring the results of evangelizing labor.⁷⁹ Accordingly, the only possibility of overcoming the baroque division of interior truth from exterior appearance, of *ser* from *parecer*, is the act of speech. Otherwise, Acosta observes, nothing can prevent the Indians from erecting an impenetrable and mystifying facade—a consistent paranoia of Spanish colonizers. These Indians, he writes, are “cristianos de apariencia y de nombre, pero de corazón y en realidad infieles obstinados.”⁸⁰

The pastor, then, must know enough not only to speak the indigenous language but also to understand it—evangelization requires a dialogic relation between him and his flock. After all, he must administer the sacraments, take confession, recommend appropriate penance. How can a priest who does not understand the language, Acosta asks, confess an indigenous parishioner? Understanding a little, catching a word here and there, is clearly insufficient: “siendo de derecho divino la integridad de la confesión, no es ministro apto para la confesión aquel a quien por ignorancia del idioma necesariamente le queda oculta la mitad o más de ella, porque eso es exactamente igual que si no oyera nada.”⁸¹ If confession is a truth practice, in which the Indian constitutes himself as a Christian subject through a reflexive attention to inner desire, it must have a totalizing character to be effective.

In light of the weighty implications of these linguistic subtleties, Acosta continues, the use of interpreters is inadequate. “Llámenme rívido y pesado,” he declares. “No me importa.”⁸² First, the insertion of a third party or intermediary threatens the integrity of confession by

Doctrinero, que enseña las Oraciones y Misterios de la Fé, que se contienen en el Credo, en Romance? Respondo, que está en pecado mortal, y tiene obligacion á restituir parte del estipendio.”

⁷⁶ Acosta, *De procuranda*, II, 53.

⁷⁷ Acosta, *De procuranda*, II, 47-49.

⁷⁸ Acosta, *De procuranda*, I, 199.

⁷⁹ Acosta, *De procuranda*, II, 49: “¿cómo un pueblo de idioma desconocido y lenguaje misterioso a ti . . . en su corazón te va a responder *amén*, esto es, cómo te va a prestar su interior asentimiento?”

⁸⁰ Acosta, *De procuranda*, I, 199.

⁸¹ Acosta, *De procuranda*, II, 57.

⁸² Acosta, *De procuranda*, II, 55.

making the confessee feel embarrassed, reluctant to divulge a complete and detailed list of sins in front of a peer.⁸³ Second, the transposition of words, their passage from one mouth and language to another, even the distance traveled, not only garbles their original meaning like an extended game of “Telephone” but also diminishes their power: there is a “dificultad y frialdad con que llega el sentimiento transmitido por boca ajena, y que en su tortuoso recorrido las más de las veces llega debilitado perdiendo toda su fuerza, que es como el alma del lenguaje.”⁸⁴ The use of the word *alma* here as the force of language is particularly significant because, as we have seen, this same word refers at the same time to the meaning of evangelizing language—the pastor’s faith, rooted in his soul, is what his words transmit to the flock. Again, confession presents a particular problem for the interpreter. Any error of translation risks compounding the sins of those who confess—especially during Last Rites, when even a minimal mistake could result in eternal damnation. Who is to blame, Acosta concludes, but the priest himself.⁸⁵

Third and most revealing, continues Acosta, the use of interpreters is problematic because of not only the mechanics of translation but also the interpreters themselves:

Pero es que los intérpretes que usan son ordinariamente infieles o ignorantes, que apenas ellos mismos entienden lo que les dicen, y cuando lo entienden apenas saben explicarlo, indios al fin como son también ellos o descendientes de indios, que con frecuencia no conocen suficientemente nuestras cosas ni nuestro idioma.⁸⁶

Most interpreters, in the first place, are simply too stupid to understand what is being said, let alone formulate an accurate translation. But beneath this concern over competency lies a second set of assumptions that turn on questions of identity and difference. On one hand, as *infidel*, the interpreter occupies a curious position: privileged over the rest of the community by his hierarchical and even spatial proximity to the priest, while simultaneously relegated to the same place as the rest of the unconverted flock. Nearing the locus of sacred enunciation and channeling the Word of God through his own mouth, the interpreter becomes an increasingly dangerous figure. Inquisitorial logic, furthermore, converts heterodox religious practices into hereditary impurities associated with blood.⁸⁷ Indians, however, are not Acosta’s only target: he condemns not just “indios” but “descendientes de indios” as well. Contrasted with “indios,” these “descendientes de indios” can refer only to mestizos. It is an interesting formulation, because as we have seen the conventional classification, for example in the context of the colegio, is “hijos de españoles.” In any case, the implications are clear: there, the project is to emphasize the mestizo’s Spanish nature in order to expand the horizon of possibility to true mestizo conversion; here, it is precisely the opposite, to emphasize the mestizo’s indigenous roots in order to disqualify him from church office. The meaning of the mestizo once again

⁸³ Acosta, *De procuranda*, II, 431-33.

⁸⁴ Acosta, *De procuranda*, II, 55. Cf. the “Prologo al lector” in Molina, *Vocabulario en lengua castellana y mexicana*, n/p: “Y no es pequeño inconveniente, que los que los han de gobernar y regir, y poner en toda buena policia, y hazerles justicia, remediando y soldando los agravios que resciben, no se entiendan con ellos, sino que se libre la razon y justicia que tienen, en la intencion buena o mala del Nauatlato o interprete. . . . Porque muchas vezes, aunque el agua sea limpia y clara, los arcadzes por donde passa la haze turbia.”

⁸⁵ Acosta, *De procuranda*, II, 55: “cuando piden de veras confesión, van a correr el riesgo de condenarse por la ignorancia del sacerdote.”

⁸⁶ Acosta, *De procuranda*, II, 55.

⁸⁷ Silverblatt, *Modern Inquisitions*, 121-25 and passim.

fluctuates according to political exigency. But Acosta's treatment of the mestizo deserves a closer look.

Blood beyond metaphor

If the project of mestizo conversion—the disciplinary formation of the mestizo as Christian-Spanish-white subject deployed on the front lines of the “spiritual conquest” of the indigenous population—constitutes the institutionalization of colonial mimesis, then Acosta's own approach to the mestizo exemplifies its ambivalence. Before writing *De procuranda*, Acosta welcomed the mestizo into the evangelizing project, but in 1577 he asserted that the mestizo, like the Indian, is marked by an “oscuro origen” that is nearly impossible to erase. Trustworthy mestizos may exist, he continued, but they are few and far between and must therefore be treated with utmost skepticism.⁸⁸ By late 1582, he would vote with other members of the Third Provincial Congregation in Lima to completely “cerrar la puerta a mestizos,” preventing them from entering the Society of Jesus “porque la experiencia ha mostrado a la larga no probar bien este género de gente.”⁸⁹ This ruling would remain in effect until the Jesuits were expelled from the Americas in 1767.⁹⁰ The very next year, however, we find Acosta testifying in favor of the mestizo Jesuit Blas Valera and more generally declaring before the Lima Council that it would be “muy conviniente y conforme a razón que no se cierre la puerta tan absolutamente a los que con estudio y virtud pueden merecer el sacerdocio, e con él, mediante la habilidad y lengua que tienen, harán mucho fruto en los indios.”⁹¹ These two doors, one shut tightly and the other slightly ajar, highlight the tensions within Acosta's thought on the mestizo.

One way to read these contradictions would be as signs of a change of heart, perhaps because new experiences had altered Acosta's previously held opinion. From this perspective, Acosta comes to represent an egalitarian turn in the politics of the church in Peru.⁹² These readings, however, assume a linear history in which the more recent position smoothly supercedes its predecessor, despite the fact that Acosta's perspectives do not follow a simplistic model of ever increasing tolerance. (Neither, for that matter, did colonial legislation.⁹³) Rather

⁸⁸ Acosta, *De Procuranda*, II, 457-59.

⁸⁹ Antonio de Egaña, *Monumenta Peruana* (Rome: Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu, 1954), III, 205-6.

⁹⁰ Sabine Hyland, “Illegitimacy and Racial Hierarchy in the Peruvian Priesthood: A Seventeenth-Century Dispute,” *The Catholic Historical Review* 84.3 (July 1998): 436.

⁹¹ Egaña, *Monumenta Peruana*, III, 274. On the relationship between Blas Valera and Acosta, see Sabine Hyland, *The Jesuit and the Incas: The Extraordinary Life of Padre Blas Valera, S.J.* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003).

⁹² For example, Sabine MacCormack, “Grammar and Virtue: The Formulation of a Cultural and Missionary Program by the Jesuits in Early Colonial Peru,” in *The Jesuits II: Cultures, Societies, and the Arts, 1540-1773*, eds. John W. O'Malley, Gauvin Alexander Bailey, Steven J. Harris, and T. Frank Kennedy (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 589-90: “several Jesuits in Peru, especially José de Acosta, thought that mestizos, sons of Spaniards or creole fathers and Andean women, should be full partners, in the work of evangelization, of Jesuits from Europe or Peruvian Jesuits of European descent.” See also Juan B. Olaechea Labayén, “Un recurso al rey de la primera generación mestiza del Perú,” *Anuario de estudios americanos* 32 (1975): 155-86. Although Poole's reading focuses on Mexico, it largely corresponds with this chronology. Poole, “Church Law on the Ordination of Indians and *Castas*.”

⁹³ For example, the Jesuit order's adoption of a statute of *limpieza de sangre* in 1592 that excluded all “gente que tenga raça”; and the substitution of a language of (il)legitimacy for a language of blood in Bishop Francisco de Verdugo's attempt in the 1620s to not only exclude mestizos from ordination but even remove those already

than attributing a unifying causal explanation to Acosta's reevaluation, the range of positions he adopts in such a short time can be read as a manifestation of tensions internal to both the Jesuit order, as Hyland suggests, and more generally to the discourse of colonial mimicry.⁹⁴ It is the counterpressure to resolve these tensions that authorizes and indeed demands a rearticulation of identity and its formation.

According to Anthony Pagden, Acosta was heavily influenced by the "new Thomism" of Francisco de Vitoria and the School of Salamanca. In response to the invocation of Aristotle's theory of "natural slavery" to justify Spanish rule over the indigenous population, neo-Thomists like Vitoria had executed a sort of balancing act. On one hand, while the indigenous populations of the Caribbean islands or the Chichimeca of the northern New Spain were readily recognizable as barbarians, the Mexica and Inca societies had clearly been built by rational beings. On the other hand, these very same cultures had somehow failed to decipher God's natural law, the violation of which constituted a basic structure of governance and social meaning. Vitoria's solution was to argue that if the Indian's rational capacity seemed incomplete, it was not because he was incapable of becoming fully rational but because his reason existed *in potentia*. Education and custom, which produce a sort of "second nature" in the individual, are the means by which this capacity develops: "the patterns of social expectation [are] impressed by the community upon the growing child." According to Pagden, Acosta thus believed that "like all reasonable beings" the Indians could "be made to perceive the truth of the Christian 'law.' In the end they would come to laugh at the now self-evident folly of their ancient ways."⁹⁵

But Acosta's teleological confidence in this horizon of human possibility is at times more ambivalent than Pagden allows. I would like to propose an alternative reading. Most scholarship on Acosta's view of human nature has focused, for obvious reasons, on his writings regarding the Indian. The figure of the Indian, however, exceeds the Indian body. For this reason, it is equally important to examine Acosta's complex and innovative view of the mestizo, whose composition introduces a limit into the Indian imaginary. As the human representation of colonial mixing, the mestizo is engendered at the shifting intersection of two discursive axes: one running horizontally between the *natural* and the *moral*, to borrow the terminology of Acosta's *Historia natural y moral de las Indias*; and other running vertically between Indian (female) and Spanish (male). Mestizo conversion breaks down precisely at the point at which these ambivalent discourses collide.

In part, as Pagden recognizes, the ambiguities of *De procuranda* are merely rhetorical, due more to the scholastic structure of the text than epistemological uncertainties about the

ordained from the clergy. But racial projects could also run in the opposite direction. In Peru, for example, it eventually became common mestizos as priests *ad titulum indorum*, in other words, authorized to serve only in indigenous parishes, "the poorest, most isolated, and least influential" locations available. On the contrary, in New Spain, mestizo ordination was extremely rare. According to Hyland, this difference is due to the lack of both the mestizo-supporting Mercedarian order in Mexico and, ironically, of a "powerful spokesman like Acosta." Alexander Coello de la Rosa, "De mestizos y criollos en la Compañía de Jesús (Perú, siglos XVI-XVII)," *Revista de Indias* 68.243 (2008): 37-66; Hyland, "Illegitimacy and Racial Hierarchy"; and Hyland, *The Jesuit and the Incas*, 181.

⁹⁴ Hyland, *The Jesuit and the Incas*, 182. I find this explanation far more useful than Hyland's other hypothesis that Acosta's inconsistency was somehow pathological: "Acosta was a complex and difficult thinker, subject to bouts of depression and anger."

⁹⁵ For Pagden's reading of Acosta, see *The Fall of Natural Man*, 146-200; quotes on 146-47, 160-61.

formation of human subjectivities.⁹⁶ In an early chapter revealingly entitled “La rudeza de los bárbaros nace no tanto de la naturaleza cuanto de la educación y costumbres,” Acosta first enumerates the conventional arguments connecting the indigenous population’s reluctance to convert to certain innate characteristics, then proceeds to reject them: “la incapacidad de ingenio y fiereza de costumbres de los indios,” he asserts, “no proviene tanto del influjo del nacimiento o la estirpe, o del aire nativo, cuanto de la prolongada educación y del género de vida no muy desemejante al de las bestias.”⁹⁷ Even this apparently straightforward formulation, however, leaves room for ambiguity. Nature, in the form of birth or lineage, *does* play a role, as the “tanto-cuanto” construction suggests; the question is not whether but how much and in what capacity. This ambiguity, furthermore, is found in not only grammatical but also representational form, as in the figure of the *negro etíope* which serves as a sort of limiting test case for the power of education to reshape identity. In the course of arguing that no nation—“por bárbara y estúpida que sea”—is excluded from the possibility of civilization, Acosta self-consciously stakes out what he clearly sees as an extreme position: “los hijos de los negros etíopes, educados, ¡oh caso extraño!, en palacio, salen de ingenio tan pronto y tan dispuestos para todo que, quitado aparte el color (*ut si colorem detrahas*), se les tomaría por uno de los nuestros.”⁹⁸ *If you could remove the color of his skin*—as if it could somehow be consciously stripped off, intentionally overlooked. Interpellated by the second person subjunctive (*detrahas*), the reader is forced to imagine the impossible feat of erasing that which, in itself, serves to identify the object of imagination. Color and “apariencia” must vanish, skin must become transparent, in order to reveal the refashioned reality inside. But the palace-educated black can never be taken—only mis-taken—for “uno de los nuestros.” Almost white but not quite, he exemplifies the ambivalence of a colonial mimicry that turns on paranoia and menace even outside the scholastic logic of Acosta’s argumentation.⁹⁹

But the “strange case” of the *etíope* is perhaps more common than Acosta makes it appear. Outside the formal logic of the structure of scholastic argumentation (primarily localized in chapters 2-4 of the first book), Acosta frequently evokes images of stubbornly resistant indigenous peoples and cultures throughout *De procuranda*. Even in the Indian, then, this resistance to Spanish culture and Christian religion contains a clear corporeal component, as in book V, where Acosta describes it as follows:

se trata de una enfermedad hereditaria de la impiedad que, contraída en el mismo seno de la madre y criada al mamar su misma leche, robustecida con el ejemplo paterno y familiar y fortalecida por larga y duradera costumbre y por la autoridad de las leyes públicas, tiene tal vigor que no la podrá sanar sino el riego muy abundante de la divina gracia y el trabajo asiduo e infatigable del doctor evangélico.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man*, 158-59.

⁹⁷ Here I prefer the Mateos edition of Acosta, *De procuranda*, 91; cf. the Pereña edition, I, 149.

⁹⁸ Again, Mateos more effectively captures the original’s self-conscious sense of the extreme. Acosta, *De procuranda*, 92; compare to Pereña, *De procuranda*, I, 151: “No parece haber cosa más negada que los hijos de los etíopes; pues aun éstos, si se les educa en palacio, se hacen tan despiertos de ingenio y tan dispuestos para cualquier tarea, que de no ser por el color, pasarían por ser de los nuestros.” Even Mateos, however, fails to capture adequately the second person directness of the clause included above in the original Latin.

⁹⁹ Pagden, of course, offers a different reading of this passage. See *The Fall of Natural Man*, 160-62.

¹⁰⁰ Acosta, *De Procuranda*, II, 255; translation altered. Significantly, this passage is located outside the scholastic frame, though it resembles an earlier statement from within: “Hay, por consiguiente, sujetos que están afectados de

Indian reproduction, and the consequent reproduction of “Indianness,” is operationalized in a set of gendered procedures that isolate and engage a series of sites pertaining to nature or culture. The mother’s formative power over the infant is localized in the breast and actualized in her milk. Drawing heavily on classical authors like Galen, early modern medical theory saw breast milk as a “twice cooked” or “whitened” form of the mother’s blood, converted in the mammary glands and returned to its original state after being consumed. Writing around the same time in his *Diálogos familiares de agricultura cristiana* (1578-80), Juan de Pineda asserted that

Naturaleza lleva su tenor continuado de que como en el vientre nos compuso de sangre y nos mantuvo de sangre, así después de nascidos nos mantuvo con leche, que es sangre blanqueada, bien tal como substancia seminal es lo mesmo.¹⁰¹

Critics like María Elena Martínez have argued that blood-breast milk functioned not as a marker or element of biology but primarily as a *metaphor* for the combined forces that acted upon and shaped the child’s formation—because “nature” and “nurture” were not clearly delineated, they were often conflated.¹⁰² It is telling that language, at the intersection of the body (tongue-*lengua*) and culture, is one of the primary tropes on which these metaphors turned, as the expression “maternal language” (*lengua materna*) suggests. The Spanish humanist Juan Luis Vives observed in the early sixteenth century that it was difficult for contemporary students to acquire fluency in languages like Latin and Greek since, unlike writers like Cicero and Demosthenes, they had not “sucked in the language with their mother’s milk.”¹⁰³ The Franciscan friar Alonso de Molina wrote in the prologue to his *Vocabulario en lengua castellana y mexicana* (1571) of the myriad difficulties he had faced in learning Nahuatl. “Lo primero y principal,” he asserted, “por no aver mamado esta lengua con la leche, ni ser me natural.”¹⁰⁴ In this rather vague capacity, milk also served as a vehicle for transmitting the physiological and behavioral characteristics of the mother (and wet nurse) to the baby.¹⁰⁵ “Thus it happens, I know not how,” wrote Vives, “that we imbibe with our mother’s milk not only our mother’s love but also a disposition toward certain behavior.” Transmission is so likely, Vives continued, that

una malicia congénita y hereditaria, por así decir; su modo de pensar está tan pertinaz y perversamente arraigado, que casi es imposible extirparlo.” Acosta, *De Procuranda*, I, 89.

¹⁰¹ Juan de Pineda, *Diálogos familiares de agricultura cristiana*, ed. Juan Meseguer Fernández (Madrid: Ediciones Atlas, 1963), I, 321. Also see Ken Albala, *Eating Right in the Renaissance*, 75, 124; Martínez, *Genealogical Fictions*, 47-48; Emilie Bergmann, “Language and ‘Mothers’ Milk’: Maternal Roles and the Nurturing Body in Early Modern Spanish Texts,” in *Maternal Measures: Figuring Caregiving in the Early Modern Period*, eds. Naomi J. Miller and Naomi Yavneh (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 105-20.

¹⁰² Martínez, *Genealogical Fictions*, 47. This confusion, I think, has led historians like Schwartz and Salomon, following Saignes and Bouysse-Cassagne, to differentiate “blood” from “milk,” with the former referring to “inheritance or inborn quality” and the latter to what “would today be called nurture or socialization.” As breast milk constituted a form of blood, however, such an absolute distinction is untenable. See Schwartz and Salomon, “New Peoples and New Kinds of People,” 478; and Thierry Saignes and Therese Bouysse-Cassagne, “Dos confundidas identidades: mestizos y criollos en el siglo XVII,” *Senri Ethnological Studies* 33 (1992): 18: “el status de la sangre, por oposición a la leche, no se sitúa del lado de la naturaleza: está regido por un cuerpo de leyes que trasmite el status social: ‘la ley con sangre entra.’”

¹⁰³ Juan Luis Vives, *On Education*, trans. Foster Watson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1913), 295

¹⁰⁴ Molina, “Prologo al lector,” *Vocabulario en lengua castellana y mexicana*, n/p. For further examples, see Bergmann, “Language and ‘Mothers’ Milk,” 105-12.

¹⁰⁵ Valerie Fildes, *Wet Nursing: A History from Antiquity to the Present* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1988), 73 and passim.

according to a well known—and apparently reasonable enough to be believed—fable, animal-like characteristics could pass to infants through animal milk, such that “he who was nurtured with the milk of a sow has rolled in the mire.”¹⁰⁶ In similar terms, the Dominican friar Reginaldo de Lizárraga wrote that “el que mama leche mentirosa, mentiroso; el que borracha, borracho; el que ladrona, ladrón.”¹⁰⁷

In Acosta, however, breast milk’s biological function has been clarified, disentangled from its metaphorical scaffolding with the help of a gendered division of reproductive labor. If breast milk functions as the corporeal base on which custom is naturalized and rendered hereditary, then the mother’s role can be read as one of providing foundational biological structures. This predisposition, on the other hand, is “robustecida con el *ejemplo* paterno”: the father’s role is quite clearly pedagogical, to teach by example. Public space and law, elements of the *res publica*, represent an outward extension of the patriarchal dominion of the father over his family. Biology belongs to or comes from the mother, culture the father. Nature and nurture thus come to constitute differentiated categories, and it is this differentiation that makes possible an approach to the corporeal-biological basis of an identity painted in blood.

Into this imaginary of identity formation, Acosta introduces the mestizo. For the Jesuit, as we have seen, one of the biggest obstacles to effective evangelization is knowledge of indigenous language, and *De procuranda* examines three proposed solutions. The first, following the political line of the Crown mentioned above, would force the indigenous population to learn Castilian. Acosta recognized that such a policy would be difficult if not impossible to enforce—knowing that repeated *cédulas* had failed to achieve their desired effect, he characterized these laws as “palabras vacías . . . que al aplicirlas quedan en pura fábula.” Who would denounce those Indians that chose to speak Quechua in their own homes?¹⁰⁸ The second proposal would promote, again by decree, the use of “lenguas generales,” languages like Quechua, in order to break down the barriers of communication created by the “espesa selva” characterizing the linguistic territory of the Americas. Again, Acosta concluded that this outcome, though certainly desirable, would prove difficult to mandate and would furthermore take a great deal of time to achieve. In the meantime, he argued, we must continue to work at learning indigenous languages ourselves and at teaching our own language to the Indians.¹⁰⁹

The third and most reasonable proposal would harness the “natural” skills of those born “de padre español y madre india.” As native speakers, these mestizos (*mixto genere*) could make excellent teachers for Spanish priests and possibly even excellent priests themselves. In such a context, the reliability of their Christian beliefs is sure to emerge as a question but, so the argument goes, can be largely dismissed because, much like their “natural” language, they will have learned Christian doctrine “desde la cuna.” In the capacity of language instructors in particular, mestizos would preside over a sort of immersion program for Spanish missionaries, transmitting both language and cultural knowledge so these fortunate Spaniards could learn to

¹⁰⁶ Vives, *The Education of a Christian Woman: A Sixteenth-Century Manual*, ed. and trans. Charles Fantazzi (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 54.

¹⁰⁷ Quoted in Saignes and Bouysse-Cassagne, “Dos confundidas identidades,” 17.

¹⁰⁸ Acosta, *De procuranda*, II, 63.

¹⁰⁹ Acosta, *De procuranda*, II, 65-67, quote on 65; cf. I, 93: “Se dice que en tiempos pasados setenta y dos lenguas pusieron en confusión al género humano. Pero estos bárbaros se diferencian entre sí por sus setecientas y más lenguas: apenas hay valle de una cierta extensión que no tenga su propia lengua materna.”

know and love “las demás cosas de los indios”—the same sort of ethnographic imperialism that to which the memorial from the Colegio de Niños Mestizos appealed.¹¹⁰

Acosta notes that at one point he had supported this proposal, but had since then changed his mind: “sin embargo, la experiencia, maestra muy segura, demuestra de sobra que no podemos nosotros ni debemos descargar toda nuestra solicitud y cuidado en la ayuda de estos criollos mestizos.”¹¹¹ In labeling the mestizo question an “asunto tan grave y peligroso,” Acosta may have been thinking of the political threat constituted by the so-called “motín de los mestizos” described above, which had been discovered and foiled just a few years before he arrived in Peru. Indeed, critics have argued that it was precisely these mestizo rebellions that provoked the anti-mestizo turn of the late sixteenth century.¹¹² What interests me here, however, is the discourse of identity that actively sustains the institutionalization of these racialized policies:

son expertos en el idioma (*sermoni*), pero [sus] costumbres no son tan a propósito. Porque de ordinario mantienen los resabios de la condición (*ingenia*) y costumbres de los indios, con cuya leche y trato se han criado.¹¹³

Against their language abilities—and note the suggestive directionality of the Latin *sermoni*—Acosta emphasizes the overwhelming danger of the mestizos’ corrupt, contagious character: they represent “más . . . un obstáculo con sus costumbres corrompidas que sirvan de provecho con su buena palabra.”¹¹⁴ Here, as in the case of indigenous children, the mestizo child’s education is comprised of two parts: the innate or natural, on one hand, and the cultural or customary, on the other. The parallel structure of Acosta’s description, which generates the twinned pairings “condición-leche” and “costumbres-trato,” supports my earlier contention regarding the respectively biological and social mechanisms of formation exercised on the body of the infant. While parallel, however, these pairings are not necessarily equivalent. That the traces of vice that remain in the adult mestizo are described as *resabios*—a bad aftertaste—suggests that milk performs the central work of these operations.

Still more important in Acosta’s elaboration of the mestizo’s development, however, is the disappearance of the father and his “ejemplo paterno.” Cultural concerns remain present, if somewhat muted, but in any case they are enacted under the aegis of female authority. In part, of course, the trope of the absent father draws on the materiality of conquest, where rape played an integral role and produced generations of what Octavio Paz famously called “los hijos de la chingada.” Furthermore, social conceptions of legitimacy made it difficult for colonial elites to imagine cross-race families. Solórzano, as we have seen, asserted that mestizos are generally

¹¹⁰ Acosta, *De procuranda*, II, 67.

¹¹¹ Translation altered to combine the Pereña edition, *De procuranda*, II, 69; and Mateos, *De procuranda*, 359-60. The operative word is *indigenarum* (native or indigenous), which had been used above specifically in reference to American born mestizo children. Pereña gives “indígenas (criollos y mestizos).”

¹¹² Acosta, *De procuranda*, II, 71; Burns, *Colonial Habits*, 35-36; López Martínez, “Un motín de mestizos.” Kathryn Burns argues that the shift in opinion regarding the mestizo arose precisely from these political intrigues in her “Unfixing Race,” in *Rereading the Black Legend: The Discourses of Religious and Racial Difference in the Renaissance Empires*, eds. Margaret R. Greer, Walter Mignolo, and Maureen Quilligan (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 371.

¹¹³ Acosta, *De procuranda*, II, 69.

¹¹⁴ Acosta, *De procuranda*, II, 71.

illegitimate because few decent Spaniards would ever choose to marry an indigenous or black woman.¹¹⁵ In empirical terms, if mestizo children are not recognized by their fathers, then the lack of paternal influence is understandable.

But the issue has less to do with precisely how a child is raised than with the question of how identity is constituted. In the case of indigenous children, as we saw above, the long-term disciplinarity of “costumbres-trato” backed by the full juridical and social force of the state falls under the patriarchal jurisdiction of the father-governor; the mestizos, on the other hand, are left with only a vague sense of cultural background noise and no clear vehicle for delivery. Only one actor remains: the indigenous mother, figured metonymically by the unique product of her breast.¹¹⁶ Nature is privileged to the point that the efficacy of culture is naturalized—any cultural pedagogy in which the mother may participate is blurred with or subsumed by the moment of birth, from which it is increasingly difficult to separate her. Although breast milk retains a metaphorical function in this passage, it seems to be doing something else as well, taking on a more literal, biological meaning that has been disentangled from the conflated complex of nature-nurture that had dominated its literary use. I am not suggesting that after Acosta no writer ever used breast milk as a metaphor for education, but that this precise usage corresponds to the urgent need for a vocabulary of the innate character of identity, one that draws on a language of corporeality, including blood and perhaps even skin color, to resituate the discourse of subjectivity in the face of the difficulties facing the Spanish colonial project towards the end of the sixteenth century.

We can trace Acosta’s move into the seventeenth century. In his monumental legal treatise *Política Indiana* (1648), Juan de Solórzano y Pereira specifically and repeatedly cites Acosta’s concerns regarding the mestizo, tied to the consumption of indigenous breast milk. He connects this consumption to interior essence, the mestizo’s “tan malas castas, razas, y condiciones,” and concludes by externalizing it, inscribing it on the surface of the body: “sobre él cae la mancha del color vario, y otros vicios, que suelen ser como naturales, y mamados en la leche.”¹¹⁷ Disciplinarity, what Acosta had described as the father’s pedagogical role in raising indigenous children, is entirely absent. The mestizo’s “vicios” become “como naturales” because they are carried in and transmitted through breast milk-blood. Furthermore, the mestizo body is now physically marked by a “stain” on its surface, made visible in the form of skin color. *Color vario*—the Latin referent that Solórzano used to define the essence of the mestizo becomes an exterior identifier. This color is not “bad” per se, but indeterminate. Oscillating between Spanish and Indian poles, the mestizo had long been characterized by indeterminacy: not a new kind of person, but a wrench in the gears of typology; “not so much a new category as a challenge to

¹¹⁵ Solórzano, *Política Indiana*, I, 445.

¹¹⁶ The significance of the absent father is compounded by common gendered assumptions about inheritability and the relative strength of male over female inputs. Most early modern commentators believed that semen was the “key agent” in reproduction. Because of the loss of blood during menstruation, the female body was deemed too weak and too cool to generate reproductive fluids as potent as those of the male. As a result, inheritance, even in the most straightforward physical terms, was generally thought to come primarily from the father. By first dedicating the realm of the pedagogical to the father and second eliminating him entirely, Acosta thus offers a significant reformulation of the gendered relations of reproduction. See Martínez, *Genealogical Fictions*, 48-49; who bases her argument on Pineda, *Diálogos familiares de agricultura cristiana*, I, 321-22.

¹¹⁷ Solórzano, *Política Indiana*, I, 447, 445.

categorization itself.”¹¹⁸ For Solórzano, however, this indeterminacy has become concrete, natural, *epidermal*.

And when Alonso de la Peña Montenegro writes in his *Itinerario para párrocos de indios* (1668) that the idolatry of the Indian population is so deeply rooted that it has become part of their “carne y sangre” and furthermore that “aunque nacieron con libertad en el alvedrio, con todo eso el vicio que viene con la sangre, y se mamó en la leche, trahe consigo un imperio interior,” he is building on the foundations staked out in the writings of Acosta and his sympathizers a century before.¹¹⁹ If Solórzano drew the biological essence of the mestizo out and onto the surface of his body, Peña Montenegro mapped its dominion over the interior, giving what María Elena Martínez calls the metaphorical language of blood a scientific formation based on an analysis of bodily fluids and humors.

Conclusion

To conclude this chapter, I would like to return to the question of mimicry raised in the introduction. Bhabha writes that “in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference.” In the case of the mestizo missionary, “effective” mimicry is visible in the delicate balance of a disciplinary institution that seeks, on one hand, to *recoger* (collect-enclose-reform) the archetypical “lost” mestizo in order to render him Christian-Spanish and consequently worthy of a sacramental trust; and, on the other, to produce and exploit an excess (Indianness) in the form of language abilities that together facilitate Christianity’s “penetration” of the (Indian) soul-heart beyond the exterior limits of the body-mouth. On a macro-strategic level, excess is multiplied by the interwoven problems of maintaining the faith and a “permanent suspicion” that severs exterior appearance from interior essence.¹²⁰ Excess thus energizes the colonial project at large: there is always a remainder that must be brought into the fold.

I have argued here that a crucial component of this excess—key to both the success and the failure of mestizo conversion—was indigenous language. The failure of the pedagogical project indicates that the valence of excess had shifted. When the memorial of the Colegio de Niños Mestizos praised the unmatched potential of the mestizo missionary in 1552, it emphasized the multiplicity of indigenous languages in which evangelization would have to be carried out: “tanta diversidad de lenguas de gentes como hay en aquellas provincias.” The mestizo’s “natural” fluency would both facilitate the study of this “diverse” set of indigenous languages by Spanish priests while at the same time reducing—perhaps even obviating, if we believe the memorial’s optimistic estimates of comparative efficacy—the need for this kind of

¹¹⁸ Schwartz and Salomon, “New Peoples and New Kinds of People,” 444.

¹¹⁹ Peña Montenegro, *Itinerario de párrocos de indios*, 171. The passage comes from the second book of the work, titled “De la naturaleza y costumbres de los indios,” which begins with a summary of Acosta’s typology of the “tres clases de Indios” from *De procuranda*. See *Itinerario de párrocos de indios*, 137. Cañizares argues that the heavy presence of bodily fluids in this passage in fact privileges the formative power of custom. I would argue, however, that it is precisely Peña Montenegro’s focus on the Indian that makes Cañizares’s reading possible, because of the disappearance of the gendered division of reproductive labor that organizes the accounts of Acosta and Solórzano. See Cañizares, “New World, New Stars,” 67.

¹²⁰ Cf. Maldonado-Torres, “On the Coloniality of Being,” 243-49.

study. Along with the nature of the mestizo, however, indigenous language itself began to be regarded as stained and impure, embedded with heretical and idolatrous concepts, terms, and expressions. Parallel technologies were deployed to confront this problem: first, the purification or “cleansing” of indigenous language through normalization and standardization, as suggested by the numerous grammars produced in the second half of the sixteenth century; and second, the promotion of “lenguas generales” that could facilitate dialogue across what Acosta called a “espesa selva” of linguistic difference.¹²¹ We have already seen that Acosta was generally supportive of the latter policy. With regard to the former, he praised the “estructuración gramatical” carried out most likely by the Dominican Fray Domingo de Santo Tomás, whose *Grámatica o arte de la lengua general de los Indios de los Reynos del Perú* (1560) “ha reducido” (*redacta*) the language—much like the Indians themselves—“a reglas y no muchas ni difíciles.”¹²² As indigenous languages were ordered, structured, and purified, and as professors of these languages were installed at local universities,¹²³ it became easier to imagine even new arrivals from Spain overcoming linguistic difficulties and learning the languages themselves:

Vemos a hombres nacidos y formados en España . . . que, venidos a estas tierras por obediencia y movidos por la caridad que induce a esfuerzos heroicos, se entregaron con tanta diligencia a aprender la lengua de los indios, que predicaban con no menor fluidez y facilidad en el idioma de los incas a como podían hacerlo en el suyo de Castilla. . . . Y no falta alguno que, no contento con una lengua, aprende varias. Conocí a uno que al cabo de tres o cuatro meses, sin maestro alguno, le oíamos predicar con tal pericia en la lengua aymará, que después de la del Cuzco ocupa el segundo lugar, que hasta los mismos collas se llenaban de admiración.¹²⁴

What is interesting about these words of encouragement—in particular, the possibility of learning *without* a teacher—is that they respond directly to the (rejected) proposal of employing mestizos in this task. Even aside from the question of ordination, the mestizo has been sidelined; or, to be more precise, *the biologization of identity has produced the mestizo himself as excess*. This is colonial mimicry’s mirror image.

Solórzano’s epidermal logic of identity and Peña Montenegro’s reformulation of sanguinity are epistemic extensions of the fact that, in *De procuranda*, the project of mestizo conversion is no longer operative. What stands out in contrast with earlier documents like the memorial from the Colegio de Niños Mestizos in Mexico City is the fact that, in a work with such an expansive administrative and ecclesiastical scope, Acosta does not elaborate any

¹²¹ Alan Durston, *Pastoral Quechua: The History of Christian Translation in Colonial Peru, 1550-1650* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007); and Charles, “More *Ladino* than Necessary,” 26-28. While Quecha and Aymara were constituted as “lenguas generales” in Peru, the diversity of indigenous languages in New Spain made such an effort impossible for Nahuatl. There, as Louise Burkhart notes in her exemplary study, linguistic purity was primarily a problem of translation. “Even in direct translation, the Nahuatl words used had various denotative and connotative meanings alien to those of the terms they translated. Thus it was impossible to avoid the problem with which Zumárraga and Sahagún were concerned [i.e. that idolatrous ideas might lurk behind poetic metaphors].” Louise M. Burkhart, *The Slippery Earth: Nahuatl-Christian Moral Dialogue in Sixteenth-Century Mexico* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1989), 27-28.

¹²² Acosta, *De procuranda*, I, 161; II, 75.

¹²³ “Por lo cual son muy útiles las cátedras de lengua india creadas, y de ninguna manera hay que menospreciarlas.” Acosta, *De procuranda*, II, 75.

¹²⁴ Acosta, *De procuranda*, II, 73.

mechanism for “remedying” the mestizos who would, if not for their “oscuro origen,” occupy a privileged place in the colonial project in question. What is at stake, in other words, is not the reinsertion of the mestizo into the categories of Spanish or Indian. As nature and nurture begin to be disentangled from a conflated language of reproduction, the mestizo body, little by little, is subsumed by the biological. There is a certain resignation in Acosta’s repeated advice about subjecting the mestizo to a prolonged and careful period of inspection. There is no pedagogical project, no intent to transform mestizo subjectivities; what is being proposed is less an apparatus of capture than an apparatus of *apprehension*—epistemic rather than economic capture—that will be further developed in Acosta’s *Historia natural y moral de las Indias*.

In the end, the significance of Acosta’s articulation of mestizo identity lies not in his exclusion per se but rather in the manner of his *differential inclusion*, the calculation of degrees of deviance from the standard of Christian-Spanish normativity.¹²⁵ It is in this sense that the ambivalence of Acosta’s own position regarding the mestizo perfectly encapsulates the ambivalence of colonial mimicry. What is important is not the “endpoint,” the Jesuit’s “last” opinion—or perhaps simply the last one recorded—but rather the full spectrum of positionings that he is able to adopt. Instead of treating Acosta’s endorsement of Valera as the sign of transition or a historical break, then, I read it as a node in the shifting constellation of racial signs with which the terrain of colonial discourse is arranged. Acosta’s last known move represents, in any case, not the emancipation of the mestizo from the structures of the racial project that organized and sustained the *sistema de castas*—which would entail the delinking of race from social and economic possibility—but simply a new point of reinsertion. In Mexico City, the figure of the mestizo missionary faced intense suspicion from church officials and as a consequence never really materialized, whatever “the letter of the law” permitted; while in Peru, the relaxation of racially formulated exclusions led to a rearticulation of the language of restriction from blood to (il)legitimacy—there was little confusion as to the object of prohibition.¹²⁶ Subject to extreme scrutiny due to his proximity to the sacred and his explicitly mimetic function, the mestizo missionary signals the decoupling of blood from culture and the rise of the biological.

¹²⁵ “From the viewpoint of racism, there is no exterior, there are no people on the outside. There are only people who should be like us and whose crime it is not to be.” Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 178.

¹²⁶ Poole, “Church Law on the Ordination of Indians and *Castas*,” 650; Hyland, “Illegitimacy and Racial Hierarchy,” 439-40.

Chapter 4

1612 / Plotting Race (War) The Space-Time of Genealogy in the *Annals* of Chimalpahin

. . . what is often called the black soul is a white man's artifact.
--Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*

On May 2, 1612, thirty-five blacks and mulattoes (twenty eight men and seven women) were paraded through the center of Mexico City and hung in a public spectacle on gallows specially built for the occasion. Twenty nine of the bodies were decapitated and the heads left to rot on top of the gallows, while the other six were quartered, the pieces of their bodies placed strategically on pikes marking roads that entered into the city. The heads remained there for a week, until the stench became so bad that the city's physicians demanded they be removed to prevent the outbreak of disease. This gruesome display of the raw violence of the colonial state came in response to what the authorities called a seditious conspiracy by which these blacks had plotted to overthrow the Spanish government and install not only their own black king and but an entirely black ruling elite as well. The Audiencia had carried out an investigation, apparently judged the rumors to be reasonable, and moved before the alleged insurrection could take place.¹

Today, most scholars believe the plot was a figment of the imagination of Spanish elites.² Along with the obvious point that no uprising actually occurred, the few primary sources follow strikingly predictable scripts, which suggests that they are subject more to a series of tropes and paranoid fantasies than to any well-documented empirical data or reliable observation. In 1537, 1546, 1609, and 1612, if the official stories are to be believed, a series of disconcertingly similar plots came together and were "miraculously" averted by the last minute confessions of supposed participants.³ As is the case with Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora's account of the 1692 uprising,

¹ The best recent analysis of the uprising as a location of racial discourse is Martínez, "The Black Blood of New Spain," 479-520. Many of the historical details in Martínez's account come from Chimalpahin, *Annals of His Time*, 218-29. Torquemada notes that "como eran tantas [las cabezas], comenzaron a causar mal olor y temiendo alguna corrupción de el aire y que de ella resultaría alguna pestilencia se mandaron quitar de aquel lugar." Juan de Torquemada, *Monarquía Indiana de los veinte y un libros rituales y monarquía indiana, con el origen y guerras de los indios occidentales, de sus poblaciones, descubrimiento, conquista, conversión y otras cosas maravillosas de la mesma tierra*, ed. Miguel León-Portilla (Mexico City UNAM, 1975-1979), lib. V, cap. lxxiv, 576.

² See, for example, Leonard, *Baroque Times in Old Mexico*, 19-20.

³ On the similarities between 1537 and 1612, see Mejía, "La ciudad amenazada," 15. Chimalpahin briefly mentions a plot in 1609 whose trajectory sounds suspiciously like 1612: "the blacks were going to rebel and make war here in Mexico; they were going to make it on their lords the Spaniards, they were going to kill them, but our lord God did not want it so, he did not permit the Spaniards to be killed, for it became known right away, and the blacks were immediately arrested. . . . They had already established a black as their ruler; the ruler and king who had been created was named don _____. And also a black woman had been chosen woman ruler and queen, named _____. And they had distributed all the various altepetl here to other blacks who would rule there; some had been made dukes, some marquesses, some counts. They thought they would make us local people, us commoners, their vassals; we were going to serve them." Chimalpahin, *Annals of His Time*, 155.

what the more or less official accounts tell us about these plots has far more to do with elite imaginary than with the events that took place (see chapter 1).

This chapter takes what is as far as I can tell the complete set of primary accounts regarding the alleged plot as a point of departure for analyzing the spatiality of race war. There are three accounts: two written in Spanish by members of the colonial elite, and a third written in Nahuatl by the indigenous historian Don Domingo de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin. The first section of the chapter focuses on the Spanish accounts, the first from an annals history written by the Spanish poet Mateo Rosas de Oquendo and published in 1917 by Alfonso Reyes, the other an anonymous report in narrative form, possibly written by Luis López de Azoca, a criminal judge (*alcalde del crimen*) in the Audiencia of Mexico City.⁴ It is not particularly surprising that these sources should offer us a vivid depiction of white, highly racialized paranoia. I draw on Anne McClintock's formulation of paranoia in the wake of 9/11 as the contradiction internal to the exercise of imperial power, a "doubleness" that "oscillate[s] between delusions of inherent superiority and omnipotence, and phantasms of threat and engulfment."⁵ What is at stake here is less to examine what was in fact proposed in the plot, for this we can only imagine, but rather to make sense of the decapitated bodies, tortured confessions, and confiscated goods that remain. In particular, I am interested in the *fear of penetration* that underlies the Spanish narratives. According to a classic trope of colonialist paranoia, black desire posed an immediate and urgent threat, primarily to the integrity of the white female body. But this perception was in many ways ungrounded, permeating both the social world and the built environment. The city operates as a white social body rendered coherent by its constitutive boundaries, lines of friction that divide inside from outside. As I argued in chapter 2, the production of purity—pure white bodies—is thus a project of social engineering based on both the generation of an external threat—colored agents of contamination—and, subsequently, a violent and continuing process of neutralization, dispossession, and extermination.

The second and third sections of the chapter focus on the Nahuatl account written by Chimalpahin, an Indian who had moved from Chalco to Mexico City in 1593 and worked as a

⁴ Mateo Rosas de Oquendo, *Memoria de las cosas notables y de memoria que an susedido en esta ciudad de México de la Nueva España, desde el año de 1611 asta oy, sinco del mes de mayo de 1612*, in Alfonso Reyes, "Sobre Mateo Rosas de Oquendo: Poeta del siglo XVI," *Revista de filología española* 4.4 (October-December 1917): 365-69; and the anonymous "Relación del alcamiento que negros y mulatos libres y cautivos de la ciudad de Mexico de la nueva Hespaña pretendieron hazer contra los Españoles por cuaresm[a] del Año de 1612 y del castigo que se hizo delos cauecas y culpados," in Luis Querol y Roso, "Negros y mulatos de Nueva España: Historia de su alzamiento en Méjico en 1612," *Anales de la Universidad de Valencia* 12.90 (1931-1932): 141-63. The hypothesis of López de Azoca's authorship comes from Martínez, "The Black Blood of New Spain," 512. I thank María Elena Martínez for generously providing me with a copy of the Querol y Roso article.

⁵ Anne McClintock, "Paranoid Empire: Specters from Guantánamo and Abu Ghraib," *Small Axe* 13.1 (March 2009): 53. McClintock's focus, of course, is the so-called "War on Terror," but I find her argument useful for conceptualizing the tensions between assertions of racial superiority and abject terror felt by the Spanish residents of Mexico City even after the alleged black plot was put down and its conspirators punished. The conclusion of the anonymous report admits as much: "todavía ay poco que fiar para lo de adelante desta gente que es mal inclinada mucha y irritada pues si bolviesen a tratar de la mesma platica seria con mas recato y preuencion para executarla a mayor daño, como se deue temer sino se remedia con tiempo y mas de proposito." See "Relación del alcamiento," 153.

fiscal at the church of San Antonio Abad in the relatively peripheral neighborhood of Xoloco.⁶ Writing in Nahautl, Chimalpahin kept a “diary” or what has been called an annals history of the events of note occurring in both cities, running from 1579 to 1615. Through this genre of historical writing, known in Nahuatl as the *xiuhpohualli* (“count of the years”), Chimalpahin brought an explicitly indigenous perspective to bear in his observations, consistently using the term *timacehualtin* (“we indigenous commoners”) as the subject position from which he wrote.⁷ This is not to say that Chimalpahin’s text somehow gives us to access the indigenous “mind,” but that it emerges from a particular position within the social and political field of the colonial “lettered city.” In this case, Chimalpahin offers us neither an unmediated account of black subaltern agency nor a reiteration of elite interests as represented in the Spanish accounts. The text’s multiple lines of sight—by which the Indian observes blacks and Spaniards but also Spaniards observing blacks—complicate simplistic models of colonial representation and transculturation. While a great deal of scholarship has been dedicated to the textual back and forth between Spaniards and Indians, and even, though to a far lesser extent, between Spaniards and blacks, the vectors that join Indians and blacks have often been overlooked. Chimalpahin’s account thus forms part of another genealogy that would run back at least to the mid-sixteenth century *Codex Telleriano-Remensis*, where the execution of an alleged black conspirator in the 1537 plot mentioned above resonates strongly with the 1612 hangings.⁸ In other words, the black soul may have been a white man’s artifact under twentieth-century French colonialism, as Fanon so eloquently wrote in *Black Skin, White Masks*, but in colonial New Spain it was an Indian project as well.⁹

Some scholars have argued that, in the end, Chimalpahin basically followed the line advanced by his Spanish colleagues and friends. According to Doris Namala, Chimalpahin’s writing on Mexico City’s black population is defined by a “Spanish lens”: he “relied primarily on his Spanish colleagues when it came to gathering information about the blacks.”¹⁰ Namala argues that by adopting Spanish vocabulary and concepts, such as the assumed relationship between blackness and slavery, the Nahua annalist reproduces many of the racialized stereotypes generated under Spanish colonialism. Indeed, as I argue in the second section, modern translations of the Nahuatl source text have in many ways reproduced the colonial logic of black

⁶ Susan Schroeder, *Chimalpahin and the Kingdoms of Chalco* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1991), chap. 1.

⁷ James Lockhart calls Chimalpahin “the prince of the Nahua annalists.” On the genre of Nahua annals, see Lockhart, *The Nahuas after the Conquest*, 376-92. Rabasa is cautious about applying Western categories of annals history to forms of Nahuatl textuality, which can erase their specificity. Instead, he uses *xiuhpohualli* or *xiuhamatl* (“book of the years”) to refer to Chimalpahin’s writing. See Rabasa, *Without History*, 313n1.

⁸ For a facsimile image, see Eloise Quiñones Kebler, *Codex Telleriano-Remensis: Ritual, Divination, and History in a Pictorial Aztec Manuscript* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995), 93.

⁹ Fanon declares the black man to be, in ontological terms, a white construct. This is the fact of blackness: “The black man has no ontological resistance in the eyes of the white man.” Most visceral for Fanon were the effects of colonialism and race on the colonized psyche, the white gaze’s interpellation that produces the black man as subject. But there is a second layer to this, one that resonates with the encyclopedic project of Spanish colonialism: the classification—indeed, the invention—of the New World. Grids of intelligibility were applied to make sense of not only the natural world but also of its human inhabitants, beginning with (but of course not limited to) the Indian. See Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann (London: Pluto Press, 2008), 6, 82-108. On the invention of the category of Indian, see Schwartz and Salomon, “New Peoples and New Kinds of People,” 452-53.

¹⁰ Doris Namala, “Chimalpahin in His Time: An Analysis of the Writings of a Nahua Annalist of Seventeenth-Century Mexico Concerning His Own Lifetime” (Ph.D. diss.: UCLA, 2002), 79-81.

desire that marks the Spanish accounts of the uprising. But this text is in fact far more complex. I argue here that Chimalpahin's account of the black conspiracy outlines what we could call a "genealogical strategy" that maps out a field of conflict as well as a series of interventions corresponding to a logic of race war. Genealogy is usually imagined as a temporal operation, but what Chimalpahin outlines is a *plot* in both senses of the word—it is both *conspiratorial* and *cartographic*. I argue that Chimalpahin draws on the generic conventions of Nahua (pictorial) genealogy, which not only traces blood relations over time but also *maps these relations geographically*, and can therefore be read as what the art historian Delia Cosentino has aptly described as "landscapes of lineage." But instead of merely reproducing the genre, Chimalpahin reformulates it to chart the fault lines of colonial Mexico. Not a landscape but a *battlescape* mapping out a temporal plane of struggle. By transposing the structures of colonial racial ideology according to a spatial logic that is incompatible with the grid of Euclidean geometry, Chimalpahin's account of the black insurrection not only renders intelligible to a Nahua (or Nahuatl-literate) public the fissures, slippages, and ambiguities of race but furthermore *constitutes a platform for conceptualizing and imagining future worlds from within the colonial present*. Rather than casting nostalgic looks backward, rooting claims to authority in a distant past, Chimalpahin's genealogical strategy looks resolutely forward, scanning the horizon for sites of opportunity. Instead of a unidirectional movement from purity into mixing, here purity and mixing are simultaneous, flexible, and capable of being deployed tactically. For Chimalpahin, in other words, tactical mixings can generate new formations of purity or purities-in-becoming in a movement that continually refashions the genealogical field.

Paranoia and penetration in Spanish accounts of race war

Tenían nonbrada a una mulata de Luis Maldonado, herrada, por Rreyna, y nonbraron por Rrey a un negro del Fiscal de la Ynquisición, que abía sido de un Capitán de Flandes, donde estuvo el negro muchos años, y sabía mui bien formar un canpo.

--Mateo Rosas de Oquendo, *Memoria de las cosas notables y de memoria que an sucedido en esta ciudad de México de la Nueva España, desde el año 1611 asta oy, sinco del mes de mayo de 1612*

The body is a model which can stand for any bounded system. Its boundaries can represent any boundaries which are threatened or precarious.

--Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger*

At the outset, it is important to acknowledge that Spanish accounts of the black plot of 1612 represent neither a systematic relation of the "facts" of the case nor a coherent or unified ideology of Spanish colonial dominance. Nevertheless, what I would like to do here is briefly

identify several points of convergence between the two principal sources written by Spanish (or possibly *criollo*) authors. In general terms, both texts display a profound concern with and investment in the production, reaffirmation, and enforcement of boundaries (biological, social, moral, racial). Circumscribed by and cutting across these boundaries, race war is imagined in fundamentally spatial terms—as we will see, the threat presented by the black strategist with substantial experience in the Spanish wars in Flanders and the professionalized ability to “formar un canpo” or deploy troops on the battlefield is precisely the possibility of the emergence of an insurgent counterspace that could undermine the spatial hegemony of the Spanish colony. If paranoia is defined by a doubleness internal to the exercise of power, as McClintock suggests, then it is along these boundaries, lines of friction characterized simultaneously by resistance and vulnerability to transgression, that its violence will be played out. In Spanish accounts of the 1612 plot, the boundaries in question are often (though not always) corporeal: either way we can speak of this generalized paranoia in terms of a *fear of penetration*.

Notions of corporeal integrity, as Mary Douglas suggests, are tangled up with social integrity—the city, after all, constitutes a social body that is spatialized in both the built environment and the practices of everyday life that inhabit it. Furthermore, the cityscape is overlaid with a grid of intelligibility that invests it with particular meaning and renders that meaning visible. One example is the jurisdictional split between *ciudad* and *barrio*. The violence of Mexico City’s foundational moment upon the ruins of Tenochtitlan traced a line intended to separate the city center (*traza*), from the indigenous neighborhoods that surrounded it. Spanish within, Indian without: a *ciudad española*, with *barrios indios*. More than a terminological distinction, this division had implications for institutional structures of government, questions of legal and ecclesiastical jurisdiction, the authority of the religious orders, and so on. In this way, the Spanish *ciudad* was rendered analogous to the Spanish body—the penetration of that body by foreign elements was regarded in biological or sexual terms.¹¹ The anonymous report opens with a vivid description of the large number of blacks and mulattoes in the city “traídos de fuera y nacidos dentro con vida licenciosa mezcladas [sic] con los Españoles y sus familias.”¹² Sexuality, as we will examine in more detail below, is central to this formulation. Denunciations of black licentiousness—itsself intimately intertwined with the figure of the black rapist—merge with a language of childbirth to conjure the image of a city defined by sexual mixing. Highlighting the circulation of black bodies as slaves, servants, and laborers through Spanish homes, the report identifies the Spanish family as a key point of insertion—penetration occurs in the silences between “traídos de fuera” and “nacidos dentro.”

“[T]an mala semilla . . . de que jamas se cojera buen fruto.”¹³ Black bodies, then, have already penetrated—and contaminated—Spanish homes and by extension the Spanish city. But the black threat was simultaneously figured as a foreign, external body as well. Early in the report, an appearance is made by “negros alçados y cimarrones” who inhabit the easily

¹¹ Compare with Solórzano’s view of the Republic as a mystical body in *Política Indiana*, I, 171: “Porque según la doctrina de Platón, Aristóteles, Plutarco, y los que le siguen, de todos estos oficios hace la República un cuerpo, compuesto de muchos hombres, como de muchos miebros, que se ayudan, y sobrellevan unos á otros; entre los quales, á los pastores, labradores, y otros oficiales mecánicos, unos los llaman pies, y otros brazos, otros dedos de la misma República, siendo tódos en ella forzosos, y necesarios, cada uno en su ministerio, como grave, y santamente nos lo dá á entender el Apóstol San Pablo.”

¹² “Relación del alcamiento,” 141-42.

¹³ “Relación del alcamiento,” 142-43.

defensible “tierra larga y en muchas provincias aspera i destemplada.” For years, the report continues, the Spanish government has attempted to conquer these groups, “esta gente tan bárbara e inclinada a libertad atrocidades y delictos,” but without success. In one sense, these *cimarrón* communities constitute fissures in the projection of a homogeneous space of colonial dominance, gaps that undermine the integrity the kingdom at large. But they also present a more concrete threat. What worried the author of the anonymous report was the possibility that lines of race solidarity could extend between the spatially dispersed black population: “que unos y otros se juntarian y ayudarian por gozar de libertad y de las haziendas que robasen con conocimiento de que los españoles son inferiores en numero menos usados en el trabajo desarmados y poco exercitados en la milicia en este rreyno lejos despaña de do podrian ser socorridos.”¹⁴ Indeed, according to the report, the insurgent plan was based on the irruption of lines of flight from the capital toward the very same “negros alçados y cimarrones” who had proven so successful at defeating the Spaniards militarily: “trataron y platicaron sobre el Alçamiento y . . . que diesen notiçia desta determinaçion a los demas negros y mulatos y a los de la comarca fuera de la Çiudad para que concurriesen.”¹⁵ Two overlapping concerns emerge: first, and perhaps most importantly, that a boundary would be established so as to prevent foreign and external elements from entering; and second, that this same boundary would prevent internal—but equally foreign—elements from exiting without leave. In other words, what was at stake was the violent demarcation of a dichotomy between inside and outside. Policing boundaries, preventing circulation, stabilizing bodies, fixing order: “Y cada día entra de guardía una [compañía] en Palasio, y hasen sus guardias en todas las calçadas y su rronda con muncha orden, para que no entre ni salga negro.”¹⁶

This was not idle talk, but a fear that materialized in concrete form when rumors began to circulate that an army of a thousand blacks had amassed on the Calzada de la Piedad, one of the five causeways that connected the island city to the mainland:

Miércoles de Tinieblas, a las ocho de la noche, ubo un rrebato, que fueron 18 de abril, que se desía que estaban por la calçada de la Piedad mill negros. Salió todo México a pie y a caballo con grandísimo ánimo, como leales basallos del Rrey Don Felipe Tersero, nuestro señor. Ubo muchas luses por calles y bentanas, porque hasía muy escuro y estaba llobiendo, que era lástima de ber los pobres españoles por el lodo, y las muxeres y niños llorando a las puertas y bentanas, que daba gran dolor. Fué Dios serbido que no ubo negro ninguno, aunque salió toda la jente asta la Piedad.¹⁷

Later, we will see that Chimalpahin depicts a similar panic on the part of the city’s Spanish population, although the sentiment with which he presents it is entirely the opposite—where Rosas de Oquendo sees “lástima,” Chimalpahin sees the absurd. For now, what is important to recognize is the shape of Spanish fear. Again, I understand paranoia here not as a phenomenon of the individual psyche but as the materiality of violence, manifested in the projection of

¹⁴ “Relación del alcamiento,” 143-44.

¹⁵ “Relación del alcamiento,” 147.

¹⁶ Rosas de Oquendo, *Memoria de las cosas notables*, 367. Apparently this fear was fairly consistent. In 1609, a military expedition left Mexico City to put down a black uprising in Orizaba, but only after promulgating an edict that no black could leave the city so as to avoid any contact between the groups. Querol y Roso, “Negros y mulatos de Nueva España” 126.

¹⁷ Rosas de Oquendo, *Memoria de las cosas notables*, 367.

militaristic power, the tears of the children, and the muddy stains on the armor of the Spanish militias.¹⁸ The findings of the anonymous report are therefore highly revealing:

determinaron [los negros] en diversas Juntas, y platicas alçarse con ella [la Republica], matando y rrobando los españoles hallandolos descuidados en sus casas y cometer otras atrocidades de lastima y sentimiento *que solo pasarles por imaginacion no puede causarle pequeño.*¹⁹

Imagination's effects, in other words, are very real. Even the Spanish commentators seem to acknowledge the material force of a paranoia that conjures not only illusions and despair but also late-night calls to arms—not to mention mass public executions.

If the fear of sexual penetration, as we will see below, constituted the conventional narrative in Spanish accounts of black insurrection, other forms of corporeal penetration—transgressions against the integrity of the body—were equally represented. One form taken is that of the black as a foreign and contaminating element in relation to the social body of the city; another is poison. Both of the Spanish accounts are profoundly concerned with the possibility that insurgent blacks might poison the city's water supply. According to Rosas de Oquendo,

Echaron una yerba que era beneno en las aguas, de que murió muncha xente. Y se tiene por muy sierto que dieron beneno al Arsobispo, de que murió, y al Dotor Asoca, y a Don Juan Altamirano, y al Alguzil Maior de Corte y al Deán don Luis de Rrobles, y al Ynquisidor Bohorques. Y este beneno daba un mulato que era del Dotor Asoca, que se lo pagavan muy bien; que era su yntento yr matando a los gordos y poderosos para hazer mexor su hecho. Confesó uno que traían este mismo beneno en los barriles de agua los negros aguadores, y se hallaron en dos barriles la dicha hierba. ¡Bentido sea nuestro señor que nos a librado por su misiricordia! . . . Ase pregonado que quien prendiere o matare a este dicho mulato de Asoca, que daba el beneno, que le darán quinientos pesos. No a parecido asta agora. Hallóse en México quando se hisieron las onrras de la Rreyna y desde entonses se a desaparecido. ¡El señor lo descubra para que sea castigado tan gran delito! . . . En una casa de México conpraron una carga de agua a un negro aguador, y luego hisieron con ella un poco de afrecho para unas gallinas, y en el punto que lo comieron cayeron todas muertas. Fué misiricordia de nuestro señor no beber alguna xente de la casa della, porque le susediera lo mismo.²⁰

And the anonymous report asserts:

Vna negra vieja ladina esclaua de vn Juan de Auila embio con vn español vn papel al alcalde con larga Relaçion de que sabia de un negro biejo llamado Sebastian esclauo de vn diego Ramires que era brujo y hechizero y que curadola de una enfermedad la auia

¹⁸ Cf. McClintock, "Paranoid Empire," 53: "I conceive of paranoia as *an inherent contradiction with respect to power*: a double-sided phantasm that oscillates precariously between deliriums of grandeur and nightmares of perpetual threat, a deep and dangerous doubleness with respect to power that is held in unstable tension, but which, if suddenly destabilized (as after 9/11), can produce pyrotechnic displays of violence. The pertinence of understanding paranoia, I argue, lies in its peculiarly intimate and peculiarly dangerous relation to violence."

¹⁹ "Relación del alcamiento," 142.

²⁰ Rosas de Oquendo, *Memoria de las cosas notables*, 368.

vntado y dado a entender vsaba de malas artes y tenia muchos dicipulos y consortes que las vsaban y que estos hasian amenazas a los españoles que los auian de matar con hechizos, y con veneno en los mantenimientos y aguas.²¹

On my reading, these passages raise several interrelated questions. First, in Rosas de Oquendo's *memoria*, poison serves an important historiographical function, perfectly formulated for a "great men" model of history—the targets, after all, are none other than "los gordos y poderosos." The figure of most significance, as we might expect, is listed first: the archbishop. At the time, however, fray García Guerra was in fact not only archbishop but viceroy of New Spain as well—that is, head of both temporal and spiritual authorities—and as such has until recently played a prominent if indirect role in histories of the 1612 conspiracy. According to this line of thinking, it was the death of the archbishop-viceoy himself, and the subsequent vacuum of institutional authority, that provoked and generalized a sense of panic, and the imaginary black plot, on the part of the Spanish.²² Rosas de Oquendo's narrative uses the same set of data points but plots an alternate path and causal directionality. Where the conventional history suggests that the death of the archbishop-viceoy was the trigger for the Spaniards' "general hysteria," the *memoria* adds an additional—and most importantly *anterior*—data point that operates as an explanatory, rationalizing intervention. Mulatto poison normalizes pathological "hysteria," converting it into a far more reasonable form of prudence.²³

That the criminal mastermind is a mulatto in Rosas de Oquendo is significant—it diverges, furthermore, from the anonymous report, in which he is an old black slave.²⁴ Even more than its mulatto counterpart, "black poison" in particular functions by analogy as the material counterpart to the insertion of black bodies into the white cityscape. In the anonymous report, according to a heavily mediated statement of a black informant, the poison originates in the "malas artes" of a "brujo y hechizero." Descended, presumably, from the black magic of African traditions, the spells cast by this unnamed slave run parallel to the poison with which the blacks were supposed to contaminate the water: "matar con hechizos, y con veneno."²⁵ Food and water act thus as the vehicles through which the poison is introduced into the body and, according to Galenic theories of physiology, literally *incorporated*, both transmuting and being

²¹ "Relación del alcamiento," 150.

²² A half century ago, the historian Irving Leonard read these events as an indication that the Spanish suffered from a sort of "community neurosis." The death of fray García Guerra caused an eruption of "general hysteria" and a "violent wave of unreasoning fright and terror" that reached its climax in the "barbarous" executions of the blacks. Leonard, *Baroque Times in Old Mexico*, 19-20.

²³ It is interesting that the mulatto in question apparently belonged to one "Dotor Asoca," perhaps the same "Doctor Luis Lopez de Açoca alcalde del crimen" who makes a prominent appearance in, and has consequently been suspected of authoring, the anonymous report. Perhaps his account was motivated at least in part by the desire to clear his indirect responsibility. See the "Relación del alcamiento," 145.

²⁴ Inconsistencies like this one demonstrate the instability of racial identity in colonial Mexico. See Patricia Seed, "Social Dimensions of Race: Mexico City, 1753," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 62.4 (November 1982): 569-606; Martínez, *Genealogical Fictions*; and Ann Twinam, *Public Lives, Private Secrets: Gender, Honor, Sexuality, and Illegitimacy in Colonial Spanish America* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999).

²⁵ The anonymous report is clear about the continued use of African ritual, describing the funeral of a black leader as follows: "se juntaron muchos negros con ceremonias y rritos barbaros usados en su nacion de alaridos cantos y danças lacearon y regaron el cuerpo con vino y aseite, lo mismo la sepultura, metiose uno viuo en ella y auiendole echado tierra y vino se leuanto furioso con una arma en la mano amenasando y esgrimiendo con ella que esto hasen quando an de emprender alguna guerra o alcamiento." See the "Relación del alcamiento," 146.

transmuted into the body.²⁶ Substances labeled “poison,” and the practices associated with their production and use, are not necessarily distinct from others called “medicine.” This overlap becomes clear in the anecdote above: the old slave’s “malas artes” include both curing and causing sickness, and indeed it is in the very act of healing the informant that the unguent’s malicious counterpart is revealed. By consuming the products of what is most likely these inextricably African—not to mention heretical—cultural practices, the Spanish body is not only penetrated but remade as well.²⁷

In the Spanish accounts, then, blackness and poison are inextricably linked by corruption. Spanish bodies—individual, collective, and metaphorical—are figured as otherwise pure, separate, whole. The introduction of foreign black elements constitutes both a penetration of the boundaries of the body and at the same time a reformulation of the nature of that body. While these forms of penetration may be metonymic, they also help to explain the appearance of other, perhaps more literal modalities. Building on the allusions to black sexuality that we saw above, the clearest example is found in the anonymous report’s articulation of the threat that black male desire posed to white women:

como eran tantos y barbaros y lo sabian los negros a qualquiera enojo que tenian rebosaban con palabras sospechosas y preñadas contra los españoles dando a entender que breuemente los auian de matar los varones todos y dejar viuas las mugeres religiosas y seglares para que los siruiesen y aprouecharse dellas.²⁸

The figure of the black rapist is a classic trope of colonial discourse.²⁹ Slavery constituted the foundation of white paranoia: it articulated a discourse of absolute racial superiority, backed up by a regime of terror, but simultaneously generated a consistent and profound fear of race war that erupted in racialized fantasies like these accounts of the 1612 plot.³⁰ Such fantasies, as María Elena Martínez has observed, are less a question of individual psychology than the result of a “social order that enslaved and sometimes castrated black men, denied them patriarchal rights over their women, and essentially prevented them from reproducing themselves.”³¹

²⁶ Albala, *Eating Right in the Renaissance*, 65-66.

²⁷ It is not surprising that both the “mulato que era del Dotor Asoca” and the “negro biejo” are slaves. For Aguirre Beltrán, black medicine in New Spain is inseparable from the experience of slavery. See Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán, “La medicina negra en la situación colonial,” in *El negro esclavo en Nueva España: La formación colonial, la medicina popular y otros ensayos* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1994), 93-121, esp. 114-19 on “magia destructiva.”

²⁸ “Relación del alcamiento,” 148.

²⁹ Angela Davis, “Rape, Racism, and the Myth of the Black Rapist,” in *Women, Race, and Class* (New York: Vintage, 1983), 173-269. An alternative version of this colonial discourse is Spivak’s formulation “White men are saving brown women from brown men.” Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?,” in *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory*, eds. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 92. I should note that the black rapist does not figure in Rosas de Oquendo’s account, which asserts that the plan was simply to slaughter everyone: “matándolos a todos [los españoles], sin perdonar criatura de tres meses para [a]riba.” Rosas de Oquendo, *Memoria de las cosas notables*, 367.

³⁰ Martínez, “The Black Blood of New Spain,” 495-97. Also see Robin Blackburn, *The Making of New World Slavery: From the Baroque to the Modern, 1492-1800* (New York: Verso, 1997), 12-13.

³¹ Martínez, “The Black Blood of New Spain,” 496.

The black male rapist emerges from a series of assumptions about the nature of the black body, which of course are easily recognizable as part of a colonial discourse of racial superiority and domination. It is, furthermore, a very familiar discourse, based on a set of binary oppositions that were often applied to the indigenous population as well: civilization vs. barbarism, reason vs. irrationality, Christianity vs. superstition, male vs. female, and so on. We have already seen how, in the context of their medical-magical practices, blacks were associated with barbarism and heresy. But in the case of black desire I would like to focus on a second form of this racialized discourse, one that—somewhat ironically, given the context of slavery—turns on the word *libertad*. Consider the following passages from the opening paragraphs of the anonymous report:

El numero grande de negros y mulatos, *cabtivos y libres* que ay en este Reyno en Poblazones, labores, baquerias, y estancias y particularmente en esta Çiudad de Mexico que se multiplica asi con los que naçen en la tierra como los que se traen de guinea en navios de Aimasones, por trato y grangeria todos los años y *la libertad y licencia conque esta gente a proçedido* . . .

Si esta gente no fuera *tan bárbara e inclinada a libertad atrocidades y delictos* pudierase entender que este intento no era tan de temer . . .

los negros alçados y cimarrones . . . se juntarian y ayudarian *por gozar de libertad* . . .

En diuersos tiempos los S[eñores] Virreyes se an preuenido en esta mate[ri]a viendo el conocido daño y riesgo della disponiendo lo conueniente para moderar y refrenar su proceder *libertades Juntas y trages desta gente* que aunque en esta parte se a hecho lo que se a podido no a sido todo lo necessario a lo menos no se a executado con la precesion y rigor que la causa pedia pues en diuersas ocasiones an auido auissos señales e indicios de que *tratauan de su libertad* que asta ver mas parecio conueniente disimularlo y no darse por entendidos.³²

Liberty, in other words, is a highly ambivalent concept.³³ On one hand, its association with freedom—in opposition, that is, to slavery and captivity—is clearly present in the first passage, where in the opening words of the *relación* the slave trade sets the stage for the anticolonial insurrection that is to come. Of course, this is the common usage of the word today. More frequently, however, the concept of *libertad* appears in a negative sense, paired here with words like *licencia, bárbara, atrocidades, and delictos*. In this sense it represents a disavowal of civilized norms, of institutional authority, of proper restraint. Published at about the same time, Sebastián de Cobarruvias's *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española* (1611) captures this polysemy nicely:

LIBRE. Tiene por opuesto siervo. Y dizese *liber* qualquiera que es *sui iuris*. Llamamos libre al soltero que no es casado. Libre, el que está sin culpa. Y libre, aquel a quien el

³² “Relación del alcamiento,” 143-44; my emphasis.

³³ My discussion of early modern understandings of *libertad* has benefited significantly from David A. Boruchoff's “Free Will, the Picaresque, and the Exemplarity of Cervantes's *Novelas ejemplares*,” *MLN* 124.2 (March 2009): 372-403.

juez ha dado por tal. Libre, el que es suelto de lengua, diciendo todo lo que le parece, sin respetar ni perdonar a nadie. Dixose libre del nombre latino *liber*.

LIBERTAD. Opónese a la servidumbre o cautividad, *latine libertas, quae sic dfinitur a Florentino, l. libertas, ff. de statu hominum: Libertas est naturalis facultas eius, quod cuique facere libet, nisi quod vi, aut iure prohibetur*. Tiene libertad, dize San Ambrosio, lib. de Josepho, el que no ama, quien no teme, el que a ninguno haze daño, quien con segura esperanza de lo presente no teme lo venidero. Y no la tiene, dize Erasmo en sus Apothemas, el que a los vicios se rinde, sino sugestión desdichada y miserable esclavitud. *Nemo liber qui servit cupiditatibus*. Geroglífico de la libertad lo eran dos manos sueltas al ayra y ésta: *Quo velint*; como presas o con esposas y ligaduras representan el cautiverio y servidumbre; libres dizen la libertad sin alguna sugestión. La libertad que buscan los hereges de nuestros tiempos y llaman libertad de conciencia, es servidumbre de alma y licencia que, como dize Lactancio, *parit audatiam, quae ad omne flagitium, et facinus evadit*.³⁴

Liberty, therefore, is simultaneously directly opposed to, and aligned with, slavery. We are faced, in the first place, with the image, or more properly the *hieroglyph*, of shackles—an image that goes against the very nature of human beings, for liberty is a natural faculty of humankind (*libertas est naturalis facultas eius*)—and equally the promise of their removal. At the same time, traversed by the theology of the Counter Reformation, liberty becomes rooted in heretical Protestant thought and, paradoxically, slips into a more profound spiritual form of slavery. Filtered through the work of the Roman rhetorician Lactantius, liberty here gives rise to presumption and insolence (*parit audatiam*) and ends in every shameful act and deed committed in passion (*omne flagitium, et facinus evadit*). Liberty and desire: no one who is a slave to his desires can be truly free (*Nemo liber qui servit cupiditatibus*).³⁵

In spite of his enslavement, then, the black is dangerously free. It is this ambivalent freedom, in the sense of both lacking respect for authority and surrendering one's being to desire, which is at the root of the figure of the black male rapist. He is, in this sense, *insufficiently enslaved*—slavery thus constitutes one arm of a Spanish colonial machine that legitimated itself by reference to the civilizing and evangelizing missions. If the doubly-enslaved black population is to rise up against its masters, then the form of its insurrection will necessarily be circumscribed by an irrational drive, a desire—in this case a sexual desire for white women—that cannot be sated. *Libertad y licencia*, liberty and licentiousness, is how the black population has apparently lived.

Yet once again, Spanish accounts are fundamentally ambivalent as to the nature and ability of the black insurgents. The insurrection seems to envision an orderly model of society mirroring and quite literally replacing that of the Spanish authorities: king for king, queen for

³⁴ Sebastián de Covarrubias, *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española* (Madrid: Ediciones Turner, 1977), 764-65.

³⁵ It comes as no surprise, then, that these ambivalent understandings of *libertad*, rooted in the experience of colonial slavery, not only engender the notion of the libertine but also shape the libertine novels of the nineteenth century. This is the foundation of Doris Garraway's insightful study of the relationship between liberty-libertinage and black slavery in the French Caribbean during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. See Garraway, *The Libertine Colony: Creolization in the Early French Caribbean* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 24-34.

queen, just as the Spanish had replaced the indigenous structures of rule that were in place before the conquest.³⁶ After all, one of the insurgent leaders was to be “un negro del Fiscal de la Ynquisición, que abía sido de un Capitán de Flandes, donde estubo el negro muchos años, y sabía mui bien *formar un canpo*.”³⁷ A high level of professionalism would be the natural result of having personally experienced in the notoriously bloody Spanish campaigns in Flanders.³⁸ With substantial experience in the bloody Spanish campaigns in Flanders and the professionalized ability to “formar un canpo”—to deploy military formations, maneuver troops on the battlefield, maintain supply lines, and so on—the black military strategist represents the possibility of the emergence of a counterhegemonic formation that mimics the spatiality of Spanish colonial dominance. There is a tension or ambivalence between the strategic legibility of this counterspace and the dispersed agents of contamination that threaten to penetrate lines of structure. As Homi Bhabha argues, these forms of ambivalence, which cut across the black body as well, are the nature of racial stereotype: “a form of knowledge and identification that vacillates between what is always ‘in place,’ already known, and something that must be anxiously repeated . . . as if the essential duplicity of the Asiatic or the bestial sexual licence of the African that needs no proof, can never really, in discourse, be proved.”³⁹ Ambivalence also characterizes Spanish paranoia, based simultaneously on the certainty of racial superiority and the absolute terror of imminent collapse. The Janus-faced black insurgent, split between the desiring rapist and the military strategist, is the manifestation of that paranoia.

Translation and the colonial logic of black desire

Every translation is already an interpretation.
--Martin Heidegger, *What Is Called Thinking?*

In a recent article, the historian John F. Schwaller revisits what he calls “the most famous line in Nahuatl”: “Broken spears lie in the roads / We have torn our hair in our grief / The houses are roofless now, and their walls / Are red with blood.”⁴⁰ The line was popularized by Miguel

³⁶ The Spanish accounts are clear about the blacks naming a king and queen. Chimalpahin goes further, detailing a full array of black nobility to replace its white counterpart: “And reportedly all the different altepetl everywhere in New Spain had been distributed to the blacks, and there they would rule, so that some had reportedly been made dukes, some marquesses, some counts, so that we local people, we commoners, would have become their vassals, we would have paid them tribute and served them, and they would have branded our mouths so it would be seen that they were our masters.” Chimalpahin, *Annals of His Time*, 219-21.

³⁷ Rosas de Oquendo, *Memoria de las cosas notables*, 367; my emphasis.

³⁸ Cf. Ben Vinson III, *Bearing Arms for His Majesty: The Free-Colored Militia in Colonial Mexico* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 10. According to Vinson, blacks began to serve in colonial militias around the mid sixteenth century. These militias, called *compañías de pardos y morenos libres*, were often independent and more importantly organized around racialized identities that became professional subjectivities.

³⁹ Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 94-95.

⁴⁰ John F. Schwaller, “Broken Spears or Broken Bones: Evolution of the Most Famous Line in Nahuatl,” *The Americas* 66.2 (October 2009): 241-252. Miguel León-Portilla, *The Broken Spears: The Aztec Account of the Conquest of Mexico*, trans. Lysander Kemp (Boston: Beacon Press, 1962); the Spanish original is *La visión de los vencidos* (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1959).

León-Portilla's famous book, *The Broken Spears* (1962)—itself an English translation of his *La visión de los vencidos* (1959)—but, as Schwaller observes, in fact constitutes the codification of an earlier translation error. León-Portilla had transcribed the line from the version published—notably, without a transcription of the original—by Ángel María Garibay, who mistook the Nahuatl word *omitl* (bones) for *mitl* (arrows). What is interesting about all of this is the fact that, although scholars of colonial Mexico have known about this error for decades at least, the phrase “broken spears” continues to exercise a powerful imaginative force on scholarship today. Schwaller suggests that its “tremendous staying power” may have to do with an interest on the part of contemporary scholars to evoke the heroism of Mexica warriors even in the face of their tragic military defeat. He concludes:

From all of this one can draw a few conclusions. Most importantly is the admonition not to translate material that has already been translated. Go back to the original source material. Do not necessarily rely on the transcriptions of another; attempt to go to the original source. Similarly, when presenting translated material, provide the original transcription so that the reader may make an independent translation. The great irony, of course, is that what has become a truly iconic passage in the popular imagination, and certainly among undergraduate students in the United States, never existed. It is a sublime mistake that has now replaced reality.⁴¹

To my mind, there is a danger in overemphasizing the legibility of a “reality” that has supposedly been “replaced” by faulty translation or transcription. Every translation, however skillful, will of necessity alter the source text, whether by collapsing the ambiguities of textual meaning or by inserting the accumulated associations of the target language. Nevertheless, as Schwaller's interpretation of the allure of the phrase “broken spears” suggests, translation is always a political act, as much for sixteenth-century missionaries moved by apostolic fervor as for modern historians inspired by a nationalistic vision rooted in a heroic indigenous past. As such, we should consider the political dimensions of every act of translation.

Before comparing these Spanish texts discussed above with the Nahuatl account written by Domingo de Chimalpahin, then, I would like to turn briefly to the politics of translation. I presume that the disciplinary structures of academia today—not to mention those of the world as we experience it—are shaped by colonial pasts, in terms of the circulation and accumulation of not only capital but also narrative. Part of what I am trying to show with this project is that categories of identity that were invented and applied during the colonial period continue to structure the way we think about race in Latin America, and more generally in Latin American studies, today. As I argue in the introduction, even the categories that constitute the conceptual bedrock, as it were, of the epistemic architecture we use to understand colonial pasts and postcolonial presents, such as “Indian” and “black,” are colonial inventions whose fields of meaning are shaped and in many ways circumscribed by the context in which they were created. This is not to say that such signs were imposed without contest or that they cannot be, and have not been, redefined, appropriated, subverted, turned against their proverbial progenitors. What I hope to show, rather, is the importance of remaining attentive to the ways that these categories continue to shape the readings we advance today about the colonial past.

⁴¹ Schwaller, “Broken Spears or Broken Bones,” 252.

Translation is one site at which these subtle acts of reproduction occur. In its double movement based on the simultaneous centripetal incorporation of non-European elements and the centrifugal insertion of European knowledge, translation can be thought of as a basic modality of colonialism. Spanish colonialism advanced in time to not only the thundering of horses' hooves and the booming of the conquistadores' cannons but also the dull scratching of a thousand missionary pens. Over the course of the sixteenth century, Franciscan and Dominican friars worked tirelessly to develop dictionaries and grammars of indigenous languages in order to both decipher in ethnographic terms cultural meanings and subsequently to facilitate the colonial project of conversion.⁴² As I argue in chapter 3, colonial administration, both temporal and spiritual, was guided by a politics of language.

In this section, following Schwaller's recommendations to take original source materials as the point of departure, I problematize existing translations (into English and Spanish) of a key passage in Chimalpahin's *Annals* and propose an alternative reading, one that lays the groundwork for my analysis of Chimalpahin's account of the 1612 black conspiracy. My argument is not that these translations are wrong per se—certainly not in the same way as in Schwaller's example in which spears are substituted for bones.⁴³ Rather, I want to suggest that by foregrounding a set of semantic valences while eliding others, these translations duplicate the colonial logic of black desire that I analyzed in the first section.⁴⁴ The ambivalent figure of the black rapist, enslaved by and subject to his irrational desire, continues to operate as a powerful trope today—indeed, its power is revealed in the striking familiarity of certain readings that seem to present themselves, the hegemony of “common sense.” Ideology takes the form here not of a carefully crafted argument but the subtle encroachment of the stereotype—split, as Bhabha usefully observes, between the supposed obviousness of the other's difference and the simultaneous and repeated urgency of naming it. Translation occurs precisely at the intersection of these two axes: the *obvious* materializes in the interpretive decisions made by the translators.

Consider the following passage. In his discussion of the details of the black plot, Chimalpahin outlines what I call a concrete and carefully crafted “genealogical strategy,” that is,

⁴² See Durston's fascinating work on missionary translation in Peru, *Pastoral Quechua*, 1: “Missionary translation in this broader sense was a key instrument of colonialism—interethnic relations were established and mediated by conversion, which in turn worked through, and was epitomized by, translation.” On the production of missionary Maya or “Maya reducido,” see William Hanks, *Converting Words: Maya in the Age of the Cross* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010).

⁴³ The translators of the English edition lay out their translation philosophy quite clearly: “In choosing between an idiomatic English version that corresponds closely to the sense of the original and a more literal rendering which is less idiomatic and does not give the sense, we prefer the first alternative.” Translation, they recognize, inevitably presents problems and uncertainties, especially given the current state of the field of Nahuatl studies: “the field has not yet reached the stage of definitive editions, in which every single passage of dubious or contested meaning would be discussed in detail, all alternatives presented, and the thinking behind them elucidated.” I situate my intervention in this context, as a response to the translators' call for “more commentary.” See the “Introduction,” in *Annals of His Time*, 16, 22.

⁴⁴ Similarly, Rabasa identifies a slippage between the English and Spanish translations of Chimalpahin's history in the entry about an eclipse that took place on June 10, 1611. One metaphor employed by Chimalpahin to describe the eclipse is an analogy, borrowed from Juan Bautista, of a shelter that blocks the sun only for those beneath it. The word Chimalpahin uses to describe Bautista's analogy is *tlahtolmachiyotl*, translated by Molina as “parabola, semejanza, o figura.” Rabasa continues: “Rafael Tena's translation renders *tlahtolmachiyotl* as ‘comparación,’ which does capture Molina's preference for a trope, but the English translators preferred ‘statement,’ which lends it a scientific weight that the Nahuatl term does not carry.” See Rabasa, *Without History*, 225.

a calculated political intervention in the temporal plane of genealogy. The blacks, he writes, planned to slaughter all the Spanish men (except for those belonging to certain mendicant orders—they would merely be castrated), and many—though not all—of the presumably Spanish women (as the fact that he employs the Spanish loan word *señorati*, or “the *señoras*,” implies). The remaining women would be taken as wives, used to re-produce repeated generations of increasingly black offspring. I will examine these plans in greater detail in the following section, but for now I would like to focus on the description of the women who are to be saved—the objects of this strategy of anti-colonial race war. What follows is the Nahuatl source text along with the English translation by Lockhart, Schroeder, and Namala and the Spanish translation by Rafael Tena:

yhuan quil no quinmictizquia yn señorati in ye yllamatitzin yn aocle ynnecoca yhuan in manel quin iyolloco cihua yhuan quil yn manel noço Oquichpopochtin *yntlacamo huel chipahuaque quil yntlacamo huel cualxayaqueque* mochintin quinmictizquia. yntla huelitini çan quintlapepenizquia. auh quil ça yehuantin quincahuazquia *yn huel chipahuaque señorati yn huel cualxayaqueque . . .* ypampa quil quinmocihuauhtizquia in tilitique.

and reportedly they were also going to kill some of the Spanish women, the old women who were no longer of any use, and even though women were still in the prime of life and reportedly even though they were still young, *if they weren't really good looking and with comely faces*, they were going to kill them all if they had been able; they were going to choose among them. Reportedly they were going to spare only the *very good looking Spanish women with very comely faces . . .* because reportedly the blacks were going to take them as wives.⁴⁵

y dizque habrían de matar también a las señoras, a las viejas inútiles y aun a las mujeres maduras y a las jóvenes, *a menos que fueran agraciadas, pues a menos que fueran hermosas de rostro* a todas les darían muerte, y de poder hacerlo, escogerían entre ellas. Solamente habrían de perdonar a *las señoras agraciadas y de hermoso rostro . . .* [y] a *las niñas bonitas . . .* [y] las guardarían para hacerlas sus mujeres.⁴⁶

What comes through in these translations is an implicit politics of blackness. The primary characteristic that identifies the “chosen” women is their beauty: they are “really good looking” with “comely faces,” they are “agraciadas” and “hermosas de rostro.” There is a certain consonance between this emphasis on beauty and the stereotype of the black rapist that we saw above, in which the insurrection constitutes the violent result of the excess of *libertad* and the eruption of highly sexualized black desire. Of course, this same desire is projected metonymically onto every surface of colonial order. Still, there is a tension between the highly rationalized, totalizing character of the plot, as we will see in more detail below, and the lust-driven imagery of rape. This is precisely the ambivalent logic of race war that appears in the

⁴⁵ Chimalpahin, *Annals of His Time*, 220-21. I use this edition, translated by James Lockhart, Susan Schroeder, and Doris Namala, for the Nahuatl source text.

⁴⁶ Diego de Chimalpahin, *Diario*, ed. and trans. Rafael Tena (Mexico City: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 2001), 289-91.

Spanish accounts of the conspiracy—the tension between the instinctual responses of desiring beasts and the rationalized calculations of battle-hardened war strategists.

The operative words that describe these women in Nahuatl are *chipahuaque* and *cualxayaqueque*. Structurally, these words are parallel and analogous: “yntlacamo huel chipahuaque . . . yntlacamo huel cualxayaqueque.” This doubling, the metaphorical proliferation of overlapping yet slightly divergent images, is a common feature of Nahuatl textuality.⁴⁷ In the translations, the word *chipahuaque* is alternately given as “really good looking” in English and “agraciadas” in Spanish, while *cualxayaqueque* is similarly given as “with comely faces” and “hermosas de rostro.” Again, these are certainly *accurate* translations, in the sense that they isolate one particular strand from a polysemous fabric of possibilities. In fact, however, the Nahuatl terms are far more complex.

To begin with, then, what is the logic of *chipahuaque*? This is, in the first place, a philological question.⁴⁸ As employed by Chimalpahin, the word functions like a past participle derived from the verb *chipahua*. In Nahuatl, adjectival nouns can be derived from verbs by conjugating them in the preterit tense—if one *did* something, then one is a *doer* of that thing.⁴⁹ Fray Alonso de Molina thus defined the transitive verb *chipaua* in his *Vocabulario* (1571) as “alimpiarse o purificarse” and, by extension, the adjectival noun *chipauac* (that is, the singular form; *chipahuaque* is the plural) as “cosa limpia, hermosa, o clara.”⁵⁰ Already, in the movement away from verbal root, the connotation of beauty is added. This definition also suggests a certain lightness (as in the word “clara”) that can apply to skin color. Indeed, Chimalpahin uses the word *chipahuaque* earlier in the text to describe the visit of a Japanese delegation to Mexico City in 1610, where he writes that the delegates “ynic chipahuaque” [are whitish and light].⁵¹ Finally, and most importantly, *chipahua* is marked by liquidity—it not only refers to or takes liquids as its object but is conceptually structured by the formal properties of liquid. This is more than a metaphor. One of Molina’s definitions for the verb *chipaua* is: “pararse clara el agua turbia.” It is a liquid purity, that of a stream in motion, that of a smooth and constant flow: “Aclararse, purificarse, volverse claro, límpido, limpio, *hablando de un líquido*.”⁵² It is no surprise that Spanish clergy used the word in discussing not only chastity in general but also the cleansing action of baptism.⁵³ It is in this context that *chipahua* functions both transitively and reflexively, lending itself to agglutinative forms like *chipauacanemi*, “biuir casta, y limpiame[n]te,” and *chipauacanemiliztli*, “continencia, castidad, o vida limpia.”⁵⁴ *Nemi* means “to live,” but in a metonymic sense: literally, it suggests a sort of movement, to walk or wander around.⁵⁵ In other words, *chipahuacanemi* refers to a pure living or becoming-pure that parallels in structural terms

⁴⁷ Rabasa, *Inventing America*, 111.

⁴⁸ Philological analysis is one of the methodologies adopted by López Austin in his groundbreaking study, *The Human Body and Ideology: Concepts of the Ancient Nahuas*, trans. Thelma Ortiz de Montellano and Bernard Ortiz de Montellano (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1988), I, 21-22.

⁴⁹ I thank John Sullivan for this formulation.

⁵⁰ Molina, *Vocabulario en lengua castellana y mexicana*, 21r.

⁵¹ Chimalpahin, *Annals of His Time*, 172-73.

⁵² Siméon, *Diccionario de la lengua Náhuatl o mexicana*, 103-4; my emphasis. Similarly, Spanish clergy used the word to describe the cleansing action of baptism. See Burkhart, *The Slippery Earth*, 115-16.

⁵³ Burkhart, *The Slippery Earth*, 115-16.

⁵⁴ These words are formed by the addition of the verb *nemi*, which means to wander about and, by metaphorical extension, to live. Siméon, *Diccionario de la lengua náhuatl o mexicana*, 322-23.

⁵⁵ Thus its reduplicated form, *nehnemi*, means “to walk.”

the emphasis on abstinence, discipline, and the policing of the self found in both Christian and Nahua moral doctrine.⁵⁶ The chaste, clean life, then, is not an endpoint but a constant struggle, a process—a *flow*.

Together, this constellation of associations suggests that a particular kind of purity is at stake in Chimalaphin's description of the women targeted in the plot. The logic of *chipahua* runs parallel to Spanish notions of *limpieza*—not just cleanliness but a purity that is tangled up in notions of chastity, lines of descent, and race. First codified in the form of legal statutes in fifteenth-century Iberia, *limpieza de sangre* was used to naturalize the distribution of wealth and privilege along lines of genealogical identity, dividing Old Christians from New (that is, recent converts from Judaism). In the Americas, of course, notions of *limpieza de sangre* contributed to the formation of regimes of racial classification and the *casta* system.⁵⁷ In this light, it is fitting that, according to Sahagún, Nahua discourse of the human body likened blood vessels to both “rivers” and “reeds, moving the blood through the flesh as water moves through the earth.”⁵⁸ What I want to suggest is that this river of blood constitutes the “agua turbia” to be cleansed—or rather, the clean water to be muddied. By reading *chipahuaque* as a description of blood, we make visible the connections between the associations of sexual chastity and skin color, on one hand, and a constitutive and essential liquidity, on the other: the women in question are not (or not only) beautiful but *pure*. Any attribution of beauty emerges from and is dependent on this purity.

If *chiapahuaque* invokes a beauty based on a set of liquid qualities that inhere in the blood, *cualxayaqueque*, the other adjectival noun used to describe the women in question, seems comparatively legible at first glance. Indeed, I would guess that the translators worked in reverse order, allowing their interpretation of the polysemous *chipahuaque* to be constrained and shaped by the apparently more clear-cut *cualxayaqueque*. The word, again in the plural form, is derived from *cualli*, or “cosa buena,” and *xayacatl*, which Molina defines as “cara o rostro, caratula o maxcara.”⁵⁹ A good face, then, would clearly be one logical reading. But what exactly does this mean? Does “good” in this context necessarily imply “comely” or “hermosa,” as the translations above suggest? To begin with, it is interesting to note the double meaning of *xayacatl*. Face and mask both cover, overlay; they serve as signs of internal essence that are projected outward, surfaces that transmit or transpose meaning. The face/mask is surface and sign. In the context of the Spanish baroque, the matrix of surface-face-façade is the critical category for mediating and maneuvering social relations, and indeed holds the key to social advancement. In Gracián, for example, the relation between interior and exterior is clear: “Las cosas no pasan por lo que son, sino por lo que parecen. Valer y saberlo mostrar es valer dos veces: lo que no se ve es como si no fuese. No tiene su veneración la razón misma donde no tiene cara de tal. . . . La buena exterioridad es la mejor recomendación de la perfección interior.”⁶⁰ Surface is continually and repeatedly constructed, both project and strategy. The Spanish courtesan navigates a world of

⁵⁶ Burkhart, *The Slippery Earth*, chap. 5.

⁵⁷ On the blood purity statutes in Spain, see Sicroff, *Los estatutos de limpieza de sangre*. The best study of the relationship between notions of *limpieza de sangre* in the Iberian peninsula and the *sistema de castas* in the Americas is Martínez, *Genealogical Fictions*.

⁵⁸ López Austin, *Human Body and Ideology*, I, 167; Inga Clendinnen, *Aztecs: An Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 182-3.

⁵⁹ Molina, *Vocabulario de la lengua castellana y mexicana*, fols. 84v, 158r.

⁶⁰ Baltasar Gracián, *Oráculo manual y arte de prudencia* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1996), 240.

hostile forces competing for power, succeeding only by means of a *subjective* awareness split between the self, which composes the surface, and the world, to which it directs its signs—and its piercing gaze.⁶¹

If for Gracián, the face is always a mask, Chimalpahin may very well have understood it differently. Nahua conceptualizations of the human body—what López Austin calls an “ideological system”—did not presume an inherent division between exterior and interior.⁶² At the most basic level, the face displays signs of emotion that reflect the state of the body at a given moment. But the relationship goes deeper, as Bernardino de Sahagún’s informants suggested:

the face is the place from which the vital force of breath issues to the outside, breath which, as stated, is charged with feeling and moral values. This makes the face a mirror of individual qualities, a characteristic alluded to in the phrases the informants used when referring to it as “good, upstanding,” “sorrowful countenance,” “afflicted, sorrowful, elegant, good, beautiful, shining, . . . it is dignified, . . . it is infamous, it is placated.” These and other terms come under the headings of three words used to designate the face: *ixtli*, *xayacatl* and *ihiyotl*.⁶³

Here the “good face” becomes significantly more complex. Sahagún’s informants incorporate beauty but again only insofar as it responds and refers to something else—not signified, but signifier. By reversing the directionality of our reading of the passage in Chimalpahin—by reading, that is, in the order in which the words appear and passing from *chiapahuaque* to *cualxayaqueque*—I want to suggest that the internal qualities to which a “good face” points are inseparable from the complex of sexual chastity and racial purity outlined above. *Cualxayaqueque*, then, may indeed imply a beautiful countenance, as suggested in both English and Spanish translations. But this interpretation is at best partial, and at worst a reactivation of colonial ideologies of blackness.

Returning now to the phrase in question—*yntlacamo huel chipahuaque quil yntlacamo huel cualxayaqueque mochintin quinmictizquia*—we can now offer an alternate interpretation: “unless the women were very pure [i.e. pure of blood], and reportedly unless this purity was

⁶¹ Cf. William Egginton, “Gracián and the Emergence of the Modern Subject,” in *Rhetoric and Politics: Baltasar Gracián and the New World Order*, eds. Nicholas Spadaccini and Jenaro Talens (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 151-69.

⁶² Similarly, Nahua thought has no body-soul dichotomy. López Austin, *Human Body and Ideology*, I, 8-18, 2-3; and Burkhart, *The Slippery Earth*, 98-110.

⁶³ López Austin, *Human Body and Ideology*, I, 171-72. Elsewhere, López Austin examines a phrase used by Andrés de Olmos in his *Arte de la lengua mexicana*: “ahniquitlaznequi in ixtli, yollotli; yn xayacatl, yn izcalli.” There is a parallel between the pairings *ixtli-yollotli*, on one hand, and *xayacatl-izcalli*, on the other. He concludes that the expression refers, in the first part, to “la personalidad humana en su aspecto interno,” and, in the second, to “la personalidad humana en su aspecto externo.” In other words, while both *ixtli* and *xayacatl* both refer to the face, the former suggests an internal focus, connected to perception and feeling, while the latter points to an external form, based on a representation of status. See his “Cuerpos y rostros,” *Anales de antropología* 28 (1991): 331-34. It should be noted that this essay appears at the end of a long and contentious debate between López Austin and Miguel León-Portilla. As such, while the interpretation presented here is to my mind more convincing, it is by no means universally held. On the relationship between skin, face, and symbolic power in the context of Mexica ritual, see Clendinnen, *Aztecs: An Interpretation*, 228-29.

readily visible in their faces, they were going to kill them all if they had been able.” Anti-colonial race war, in this reading, is not a proverbial explosion of black male desire, but a calculated attack on the racial foundations of Spanish colonialism.

Battlescapes of lineage

The Nahuas, therefore, believed that movement and life resulted from the harmony achieved by the spatial orientation of the years and the days, in other words, by the spatialization of time.

--Miguel León-Portilla, *Aztec Thought and Culture*

Spanish accounts of the black conspiracy, as we have seen, articulate race war in spatialized terms that are deeply invested in the establishment and preservation of *boundaries*. In this section, I propose a reading of Chimalpahin’s account of the same incident as a formulation of race war informed by the spatiality of Nahua genealogies. Drawing on Nahua pictorial texts that conceptualize history, lineage, and cartography in a single register, I argue that Chimalpahin imagines genealogy as a temporal plane joining time and space as one in an intimate embrace. The art historian Delia Cosentino has aptly described Nahua genealogies as “landscapes of lineage” that plot the spatial relationship between physical environments and communities of people.⁶⁴ Building on Cosentino’s analysis of these pictorial genealogies, I read the lineages articulated by Chimalpahin instead as *battlescapes*, fields of conflict onto which (anti)colonial struggle is projected. Addressed to an indigenous or at least Nahuatl-literate public, Chimalpahin’s text makes “indigenous” sense of the insurrectionary logic of black race war.

According to Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl, before the arrival of Europeans the Mexica had *tlacuiloque* (painters) dedicated to every historical genre: “tenían para cada género sus escritores.” Among these figured not only the painters of annals histories, the *xiuhpohualli* (“count of the years”), but also those who “tenían a su cargo las genealogías y descendencias de los Reyes y Señores y personas de linaje.”⁶⁵ Pictorial genealogies thus constituted one form of historical *tlacuilolli* (painting), though these genres are difficult to separate analytically. It is telling that the genealogical lines in the fragmented *Genealogía de Cotitzin y Zozahuic* (figure 1)

⁶⁴ “Building on the basic model of the house and the lineage that descends from it, . . . the more complicated [genealogies] generally replicate that formula, combining several separate, usually related genealogies. Those pictorials have been embellished with a greater number of elements, such as groupings of houses, plots of land, trees, paths, and roads. These added features help to suggest, in an explicit manner, the physical environment in which the genealogies have been made. The visual message is one of larger communities of people who are pictured not only in spatial relationship to each other, but in relation to the territory they inhabited. These and other genealogies of Tlaxcala and the greater Central Mexican region convey the strong sense that here the *tlacomecayotl* must be understood as having been inscribed on a physical landscape, and that the lineages have been conceptually ‘mapped.’” Delia Cosentino, “Landscapes of Lineage: Nahua Pictorial Genealogies of Early Colonial Tlaxcala, Mexico” (UCLA: Ph.D. diss, 2002), 136-37.

⁶⁵ Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl, *Obras históricas de don Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl*, ed. Alfredo Chavero (Mexico City: Oficina Tip. de la Secretaría de Fomento, 1892), II, 17.

are alternately black and red: these colors, *in tllili, in tlapalli* (“the black [ink], the red [ink]”), refer metaphorically to writings, books, as well as knowledge and wisdom.⁶⁶ Charting and organizing the past in order to intervene in the politics of the present, genealogy’s ideological function is to establish authoritative—authorizing—histories and thus reproduce the privileges of descent.⁶⁷

But these interventions exceed a purely temporal frame—they distribute bodies in spatial relations as well. If Miguel León-Portilla is correct in suggesting that the Nahua worldview was based on the inseparability of time and space—“the spatialization of time,” to use his terminology—then we should consider the spatiality of Nahua genealogies as well.⁶⁸ This spatiality takes two primary forms. First, bodies are arranged and distributed in social-spatial relation to each other. Bodies mean differently according to their position on the visual field of the page—a particular logic of genealogical descent, for example, places children to the left of (figure 2) or below (figure 3) their parents. Together these images produce clusters of knowledge representative of the kinship relations encoded in the Nahuatl word *tlacamecayotl*. Derived from *tlacatl* (human, person) and *mecatl* (rope), the word suggests a sort of rope of people or, as Jerome Offner has suggested, a “human cordage” that binds individuals together.⁶⁹ This “rope”—which at times even appears in the form of an umbilical cord (figure 2)—links bodies in particular arrangements and constellations. Sahagún thus describes the work of the Nahua genealogist as *teço, teuipana* (“he links people well, he places them in order”)—the first word refers literally to the act of stringing things together.⁷⁰

Second, genealogical space is not only social but geographical as well. In part, this has to do with the Nahua conceptualization of the family as a spatial unit. As James Lockhart has observed, no term exactly equivalent to “family” exists in Nahuatl. For “familia,” Molina’s dictionary gives *cenyeliztli*, “being one” or “being together” (Molina also glosses the term as “gente que biue en vna casa juntamente”); *cencalli*, “one house”; *cencaltin*, “those in one house”; *cemithualtin*, “those in one patio”; and *techan tlaca*, “people in someone’s house.”⁷¹ All but one of these words incorporate the root *cen*, or “one,” while the same number are imagined in the spatial terms of the home. Rather than “family,” then, Lockhart uses “household” in his discussion of the Nahua family unit rooted in and connected to a particular place. Genealogy and cartography are imbricated etymologically, then, but they are mutually constitutive in visual

⁶⁶ Elizabeth Boone, *Stories in Red and Black: Pictorial Histories of the Aztecs and Mixtecs* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000), 21; Cosentino, “Landscapes of Lineage,” 156n3.

⁶⁷ Eduardo de J. Douglas, *In the Palace of Nezahualcoyotl: Painting Manuscripts, Writing the Pre-Hispanic Past in Early Colonial Period Tetzaco, Mexico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010), 95-98. As Cosentino and others have observed, *tlacamecayotl* suggests less the static, lineal relationships that are described by the English term “lineage” than a set of dynamic kinship relations that are “ongoing, sacred and ancient.” See Cosentino, “Landscapes of Lineage,” 127.

⁶⁸ Miguel León-Portilla, *Aztec Thought and Culture: A Study of the Ancient Nahuatl Mind*, trans. Jack Emory Davis (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990), 56. Jacques Soustelle makes a similar point: “Mexico thought did not recognise an abstract space and time, separate and homogeneous dimensions, but rather concrete complexes of space and time, heterogeneous and singular sites and events . . . ‘place-moments.’” Quoted in Doreen Massey, *For Space* (London: Sage, 2005), 7.

⁶⁹ Quoted in Cosentino, “Landscapes of Lineage,” 127.

⁷⁰ Molina gives “ensartar cuentas, axi, flores, o cosas semejantes” for *çoço*. Molina, *Vocabulario en lengua castellana y mexicana*, 24v-25r.

⁷¹ Lockhart, *The Nahuas after the Conquest*, 59; Molina, *Vocabulario en lengua castellana y mexicana*, 62.

terms as well. An image from a mid-seventeenth century inheritance case, for example, shows a house (*calli*) made up of various rooms and patios, bounded on two sides by roads represented by the conventional trope of footprints (figure 3). Inside the compound, two groups of people, depicted by human faces, are distributed among the patios and linked both to each other and to particular houses. Each group is composed of a mother and father, with three children arranged below. Black lines tie individuals together in kinship clusters, while at the same time representing economic relationships in the form of what appears to be some sort of payment, gift, or inheritance—under the main line connecting the two familial groupings are thirty-four tiny disks arranged in orderly rows to represent pesos. This is the visual manifestation of Lockhart’s “household”: the family unit and the web of relations on which it is based is explicitly embedded in the *calli*.

This “household” constitutes not only a spatialized social relationship but also one that is often literally mapped onto and inscribed in geographical space. The house is one particularly significant form: the house glyph is used in many of these pictorial texts as a symbol of genealogical origins. At times, however, the house glyph also forms part of a physical landscape. In the *Lienzo Vischer II* (figure 4), houses map out not only genealogical or abstract temporal relationships—at least three generations are depicted—but also spatial and geographical relations as well. The image, painted on a large piece of cloth, contains nineteen houses, whose diverse orientations allude to a multiplicity of lines of sight and perspectives. All but one of the houses are inhabited by a single male figure, while the last house, in the center of the image, contains both a man and a woman, is most likely the focal point. As the house is labeled *ycha quauhtlixtac*, or the house of White Eagle, the image appears to map White Eagle’s genealogy. Two paths or roads marked by footprints also cut through the landscape. Across one road from the main house is a building with three arches, which probably represents a church. The roads thus serve as boundaries or limits while at the same time investing the relationships represented here with a possibility of motion, circulation, and transformation.⁷² Nahua genealogy thus distributes social relations across a plane whose organizing logic is simultaneously temporal and spatial.

While Chimalpahin’s history belongs to what Ixtlilxochitl characterized as the annals genre, it is difficult to separate this history from the specifically genealogical histories depicted in the pictorials described above.⁷³ This is especially true when his interest is genealogical, as is the case with the description of the black conspiracy. To begin with, Chimalpahin rejects in fairly explicit terms the Spanish formulation of race war that turns on the generalized instantiation of rape sparked by black male desire and lust. In his entry for the day on which Rosas de Oquendo recorded with “lástima” the Spaniards’ heroic sally to defend the city from its black ghosts, Chimalpahin notes that the Spaniards were so terrified that they threw themselves against the doors of their homes to keep out the blacks. He goes on to detail what the Spaniards thought was going to happen to them should they falter: “auh in señorati mochintin mochoquiliaya in ye quincahuazque ynnamichuan ypampa yuh mihtohuaya çan yehuantin yn oquichti españoles mictilozque auh in señorati çan cahualozque quinmocihuahuatizque yn

⁷² “The pictorial’s multiple households, perspectives, the church and the roads, all pictured as part of a backdrop to the central and secondary genealogies, make it clear that these lineages are indeed mapped against a physical landscape.” Cosentino, “Landscapes of Lineage,” 140.

⁷³ Chimalpahin used pictorial sources frequently in his historical writings. See Rabasa, *Without History*, 220.

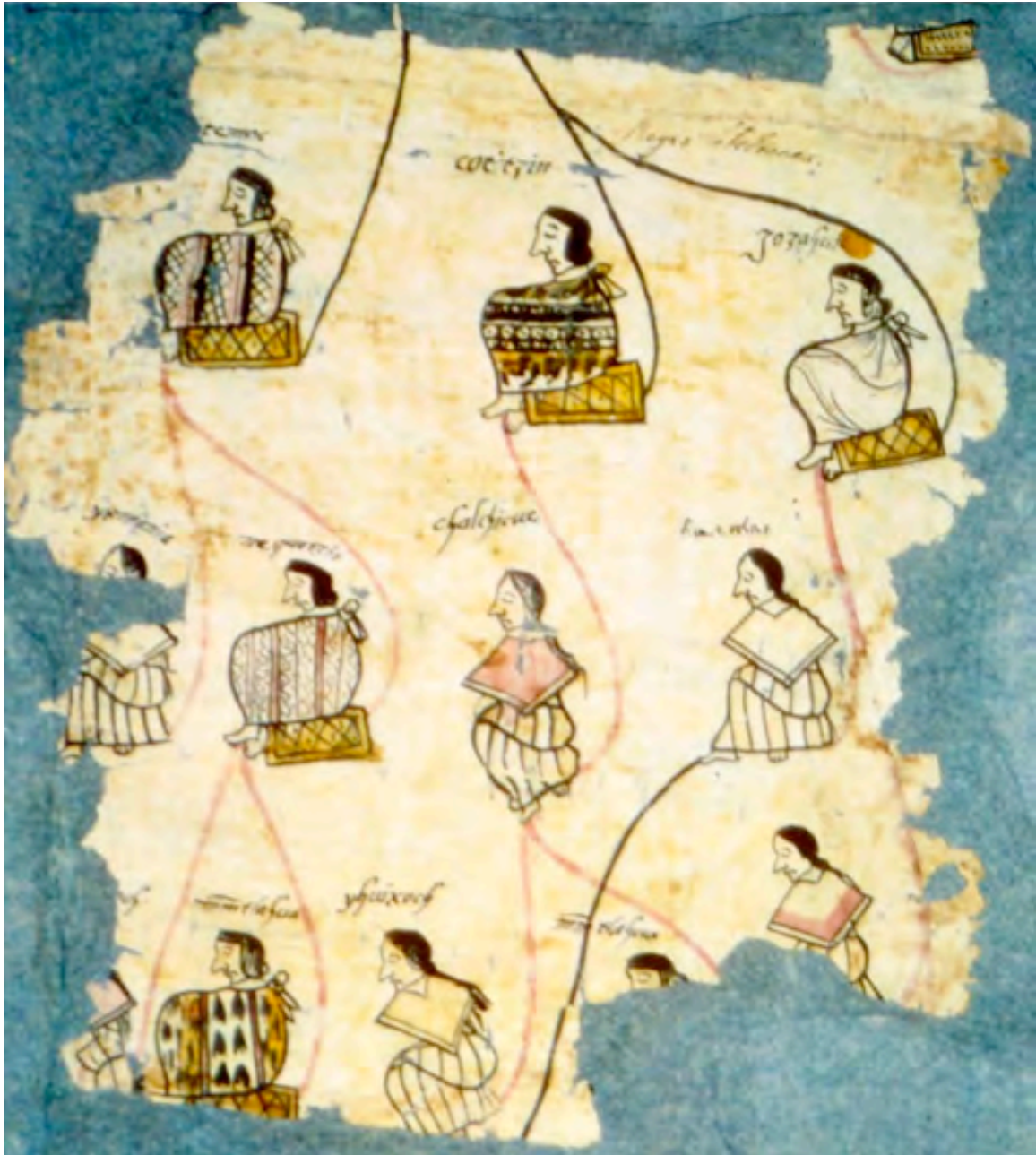


Figure 1. *Genealogía de Cotitzin y Zozahuic*. Museo Nacional de Antropología (Mexico City). Image from Delia Cosentino, “Nahua Pictorial Genealogies,” in *Sources and Methods for the Study of Postconquest Mesoamerican Ethnohistory, Provisional Version*, ed. James Lockhart, Lisa Sousa, and Stephanie Wood (2007), 3.

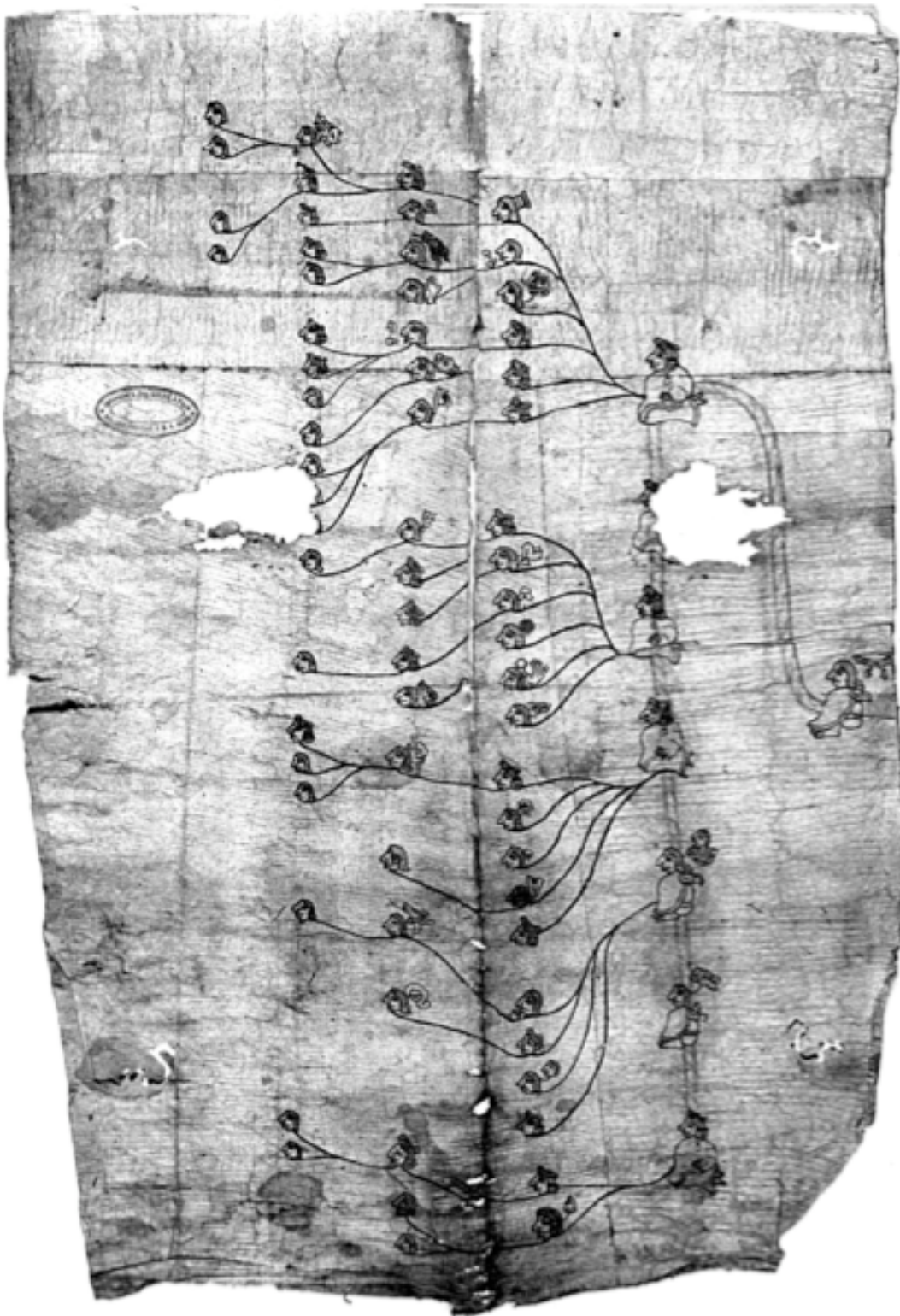


Figure 2. *Proceso de Marta Petronila y Agustín de Luna, Indios, contra Juan Francisco, María y Juana*. Bibliothèque Nationale de France. Image from Justyna Olko, "Genealgías indígenas del centro de México: Raíces prehispánicas de su florecimiento colonial," *Itinerarios: Revista de estudios lingüísticos, literarios, históricos, y antropológicos* 6 (2007): 151.

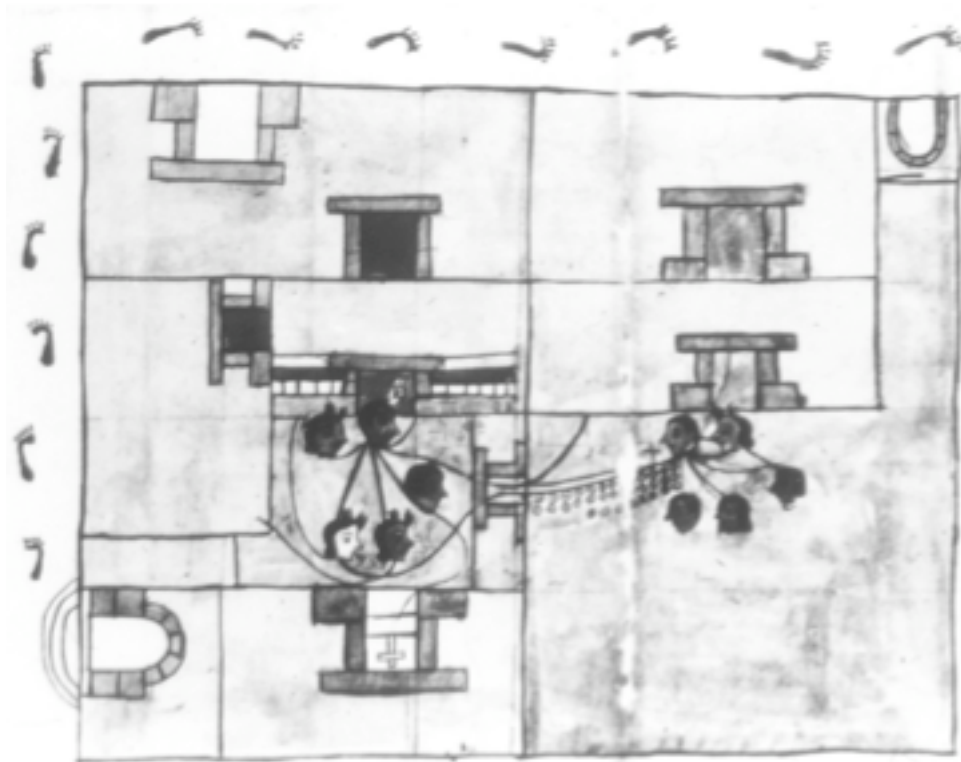


Figure 3. AGN Intestados 301, exp. 2 (1653). Image from Cosentino, "Nahua Pictorial Genealogies," 4.

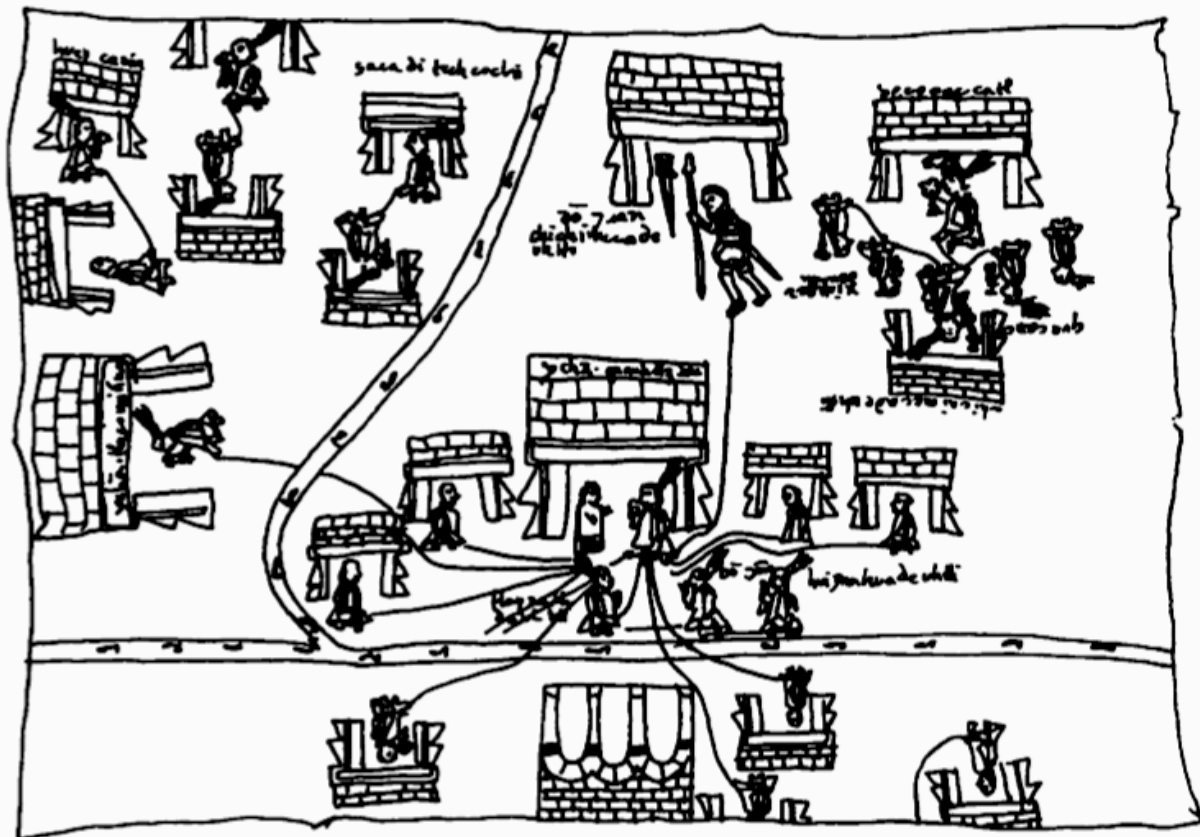


Figure 4. *El Lienzo Vischer II*. Drawing by Delia Cosentino. Image from Cosentino, "Landscapes of Lineage," 289.

tliltique” [all the *señoras* were crying that their husbands would leave them because it was said that only the Spanish men would be killed. The *señoras* alone would be left, and the blacks would take them as wives].⁷⁴ He continues:

auh yn izquitlamantin teopixque Mexico monoltitoque çan mohuetzquitiaya amo Quinmomauhtiliaya yn quimocaquiltiaya yn ipampa yxquich tlamantli mihtohuaya yaotlahtolli yntechpa tliltiq[ue] yn cuix quichihuaznequi. auh yn mexica timacehualtin atle ytlán quinmauhtiaya çan tlatlachia yhuan tlatlacaqui çan quinmahuiçohaya yn españoles. yn iuh mopollohuaya in i[n]nemautiliztica yniqu iuhqui macamo huel yaotiachua[n] ypan nezque.

[And all the different groups of ecclesiastics who live in Mexico were just laughing; they were not frightened by what they were hearing about all the different kinds of news of war concerning the blacks, what they supposedly wanted to do. And we Mexica commoners were not at all frightened by it but were just looking and listening, just marveling at how the Spaniards were being destroyed by their fear and didn't appear as such great warriors.]⁷⁵

Positioning himself strategically alongside the ecclesiastic community, Chimalpahin ridicules Spanish fears. He composes a powerful image: the indigenous historian watching from the sidelines, an emerging form of political subjectivity that turns the tables on the conventional stereotype of the meek and submissive Indian. Notably, this consciousness follows us through the remainder of the account, including the public executions at the end. After hearing Chimalpahin's scornful laughter, we are all the more likely to attend to subtle details, from his frequent use of filtering words like *quil* (“reportedly”) and *mihto* (“it was said”) to his profound and explicit skepticism regarding the claims of authoritative knowledge by the sovereign institutions:

O yxquich tlamantli yn yn italhuililoque yn tenehuililoque yn tliltzitzin yhuan oc cequi miectlama[n]tli yn italhuiloque yn amo huel moch nican motenehuaz tlahtolli ca cenca miec yn intech tlan yn aço nelli quichihuazquia yn anoço amo ca çan iceltzin huel yehuatzin quimomachiltia yn tt.o dios. yntla yuhtica, yehica ypampa ca amo huel mellahuac quimocuititihui yn cequintin yn manel oquitzauhctiaque opiloloque çan oquihtotiaque ma ycatzinco tt.o dios. ticcelican yn miquiztetlatzontequililiztli topan ye mochihua ca amo ticmati yn tleyn in totech tlami ye tictzauhctihui.

[These then are all the things that were said and told about the blacks; many other additional things were said about them, not all of which tales can be told here, for they were accused of very much that maybe they truly were going to do or maybe not, for only our lord God himself knows whether it is so, because some [of the blacks] did not acknowledge the full truth of it; though they were punished and hanged, they said on dying, “Let us in the name of our lord God accept the death sentence that has been passed upon us, for we do not know what we are accused of that we are being punished for.”]⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Chimalpahin, *Annals of His Time*, 218-19; translation altered.

⁷⁵ Chimalpahin, *Annals of His Time*, 218-19.

⁷⁶ Chimalpahin, *Annals of His Time*, 222-23.

Chimalpahin thus challenges the simplistic Spanish accounts of conspiracy whose motor is *libertad* in the sense outlined above, a drive constituted along twin and simultaneous lines of motion: hatred (the murder of Spanish men) and desire (the rape of Spanish women) are two sides of the same coin. At times, he appears to question the fundamental validity of the charges. But Chimalpahin also offers an especially striking account of the black conspiracy that stands out, especially in comparison with the stripped down versions in the Spanish sources, for its intricate details. Skepticism remains—for example, Chimalpahin continues to make abundant use of the terms *quil* and *mihto*—but here the author is not moved to laughter. Furthermore, it is important to remember that we are not seeing the black insurgency itself but a representation. Chimalpahin’s formulation of the black insurrection is important less for what it shows us about black “resistance” (although such readings are possible and indeed valuable) than about subaltern representation and the politics of genealogy.

Race war, for Chimalpahin, is a genealogical strategy, a set of political interventions whose field of engagement is the extended temporal plane composed of generations of rationalized reproductions. Here, the blacks’ plan is neither to murder all the Spaniards nor simply to use white women to satisfy an excess of sexual desire, but something far more intricate and intimate, an intervention on the battlescape of lineage:

yhuan yuh mihto. ca çan niman aocac qui[n]cahuazquia yn oquichtin españoles yn huehuentzitzin yn iyoloco oquichtin yn telpopochtin ça ce ynic ye mochi oquichpipiltzintzinti mochintin quinmictizquia huel quinpopollozquia ynic aocmo yehua[n]tin tlapilhuatizquia aocmo yehuantin tlacaxinachozquia yhuan quil no quinmictizquia yn señorati in ye yllamatzitzin yn aocle ynnecoca yhuan in manel quin iyoloco cihua yhuan quil yn manel noço Oquichpopochtin yntlacamo huel chipahuaque quil yntlacamo huel cualxayaqueque mochintin quinmictizquia. yntla huelitini çan quintlapepenizquia. auh quil ça yehuantin quincahuazquia yn huel chipahuaque señorati yn huel cualxayaqueque in ye yyoloco cihua yhuan yn ichpopochtin ça ce in ye mochintin cihuapipiltotonti yn huel cualxayaqueque çan yehuantin amo quinmictizquia, çan quincahuazquia yehica ypampa quil quinmocihuauhtizquia in tliltique. auh yhuan quil yntla nel quinpilhuatizquia tliltique yn señorati yntla oquichtin yntech quichihuazquia ynpilhuan in ye xeliuhqui ynnacayo yn motenehua mulatos moriscostin tlatatzquia, quil niman quinmictizquia amo huel nemizquia amo huel quinquapahuazquia, auh quil intla ye cihua yntech señorati quinchihuazquia in motenehua ye mulatati muriscastin quil amo quinmictizquia ye nemizquia quinquapahuazquia ypampa yn ihcuac huehueyazquia ca niman quinmocihuauhtizquia yehuantin in tliltique ynic huel hualmotlilticacuepazquia yn innepilhuatiliz yn intlacamecayo yn intlacaxinacho.

[It was also said that they [the blacks] were not going to leave any Spanish men at all, whether old men, men in their maturity, or youths; they would kill every last one of all the male children and destroy them absolutely, so that they would no longer have children and reproduce. And reportedly they were also going to kill some of the Spanish women, the old women who were no longer of any use, and even though women were still in the prime of life and reportedly even though they were still young, unless they

were very pure [i.e. pure of blood], and reportedly unless this purity was readily visible in their faces, they were going to kill them all if they had been able; they were going to choose among them. Reportedly they were going to spare only the very pure Spanish women whose purity was visible in their faces, the mature women and maidens and all the little girls with faces of purity; they were the only ones that they were not going to kill, that they were going to spare, because reportedly the blacks were going to take them as wives. And also, reportedly, even if the Spanish women had the blacks' male children, if they engendered by them children whose blood was divided, and what are called male mulattoes or moriscos would be born, reportedly they would kill them right away, they would not be permitted to live and be brought up. But reportedly if they should engender females by the Spanish women, called female mulattoes and moriscas, reportedly they would not kill them; they would live and they would bring them up, because when they grew up the blacks would take them as wives so that their procreation, their lineage, their generation would turn black.]⁷⁷

Chimalpahin's formulation remains one of totalizing violence—the verb *popoloa* (to conquer, destroy a people) is used to describe what the blacks “reportedly” had in mind for the Spanish men.⁷⁸ But this violence is far from indiscriminate or irrational. Instead, it forms part of a particular strategy of warfare, whose modality is the inversion of colonial structures of violence: “Ça ce yn ixquich tlamantli yn intlaticpantlahuizquiliz españoles. quil moch quincuilizquia ynic no yehuantin tilitique ypan yazquia no yc tlamanitizquia” [All the different things that the Spaniards were responsible for arranging they reportedly were going to take from them so that the blacks also would have access to them, would thereby make the rules of behavior].⁷⁹ In part, of course, this goal is realized by appropriating the institutional structures of power, by coloring them black.⁸⁰ Beyond these institutional manifestations of colonial governance, however, what comes under attack is the very fabric of colonial order. A second line of attack, subtler and in many ways far more powerful, is directed against the structures of racial hierarchy. Carefully selected female bodies, visible manifestations of white purity, serve as the site of this intervention—sexuality, after all, constitutes a point of intersection between individual and population bodies.⁸¹ According to Chimalpahin, the intended goal of this intervention was “ynic huel hualmotlilticacuepazquia yn innepilhuatiliz yn intlacamecayo yn intlacaxinacho” [so that their children, *their lineage, their seed* would turn black]. I read the plot as an alphabetic (rather than pictorial) Nahua genealogy whose deployment is prospective

⁷⁷ Chimalpahin, *Annals of His Time*, 220-21; translation altered.

⁷⁸ Alonso de Molina gives “destruir combatiendo, o conquistado” for *popoloa*. Etymologically, this is the root of the word “barbarian,” which Molina gives as *popoloca*. See Molina, *Vocabulario en lengua castellana y mexicana*, 83r-v; and Simeon, *Diccionario de la lengua náhuatl o mexicana*, 393.

⁷⁹ Chimalpahin, *Annals of His Time*, 222-23.

⁸⁰ “And reportedly all the different altepetl everywhere in New Spain had been distributed to the blacks, and there they would rule, so that some had reportedly been made dukes, some marquises, some counts, so that we local people, we commoners, would have become their vassals.” Chimalpahin, *Annals of His Time*, 219-21. Also see Martínez, “The Black Blood of New Spain,” 481-83.

⁸¹ Foucault, *History of Sexuality, Vol. I*, 145; cf. Ania Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 135: “The fear of cultural and racial pollution prompts the most hysterical dogmas about racial difference and sexual behaviors because it suggests the instability of ‘race’ as a category. Sexuality is thus a means for the maintenance of erosion of racial difference. Women on both sides of the colonial divide demarcate both the innermost sanctums of race, culture and nation, as well as the porous frontiers through which these are penetrated.”

instead of retrospective.⁸² It fashions not only children (*nepilhuatiliztli*), a first generation, but more broadly the *tlacamecayotl* at large, a term we have already discussed extensively: the “human cordage” or bonds of kinship that bind individuals together in clusters and constellations and extends simultaneously into past and future. If the *tlacamecayotl* turns our focus outward, situating the body firmly within a world of social relations, the *tlacaxinachtli* (semen or seed, either male or female) draws us inward, to the most intimate recesses of the body. A form of penetration that goes far beyond the sexual act: it appropriates and transforms the body’s sexual organs and processes. Here blackening—and, as such, race—operates simultaneously in the realm of the social and the biological. It is an appropriation. The verb *hualmotlilticacuepazquia* (“it would have been blackened”) is composed of *tliltia* (“to blacken, darken”) and *cuepa* (“to turn, return”; in the Spanish sense of *volver*, too, it suggests “to become”). The directional prefix *hual*, furthermore, suggests an inward movement, a construction of proximity, a spatiality of the intimate. In this sense, the act of *blackening* unfolds in a double movement: inward, the reappropriation of essence; and outward, along paths to be traced by genealogical descent.

Like the “canpo” or battlefield evoked in Spanish accounts of black insurrection, the temporal plane of race war in Chimalpahin is a field of engagement on which tactical interventions are possible at a multiplicity of points. Again, what is at stake is a plot in both senses of the word. For Chimalpahin, however, these points are not merely spatial markers but more effectively imagined as coordinates that chart paths through space-time. The two-dimensional page is transformed not into a three-dimensional battlefield subject to a “politics of verticality” but, further, a four-dimensional web of what Doreen Massey, following Jacques Soustelle, calls “place-moments.”⁸³ (That such a map might resist being thought in terms of Euclidean geometry makes it that much more effective.) Place-moments represent not only intersectional nodes but opportunities as well, wormholes that open onto broad horizons of possibility. Chimalpahin identifies numerous place-moments: the identification and initial appropriation of particular female bodies, as well as the rape that accompanies it, the strategic typologies that determine whether the offspring of these pairings will be killed or spared, and so on. Each step of the cycle repeats itself. Then, future conditional place-moments are plotted as well, structuring the field of engagement—these future projections are refracted back onto the present, where they shape pre-emptive responses:

auh ne yn ipampa oquichti yn inpilhuan tliltique omoteneuh yn itech quinchihuazquia
 senorati quil yn ipampa amo quincahuaznequia nemizque ynic amo
 quinquapahuaznequia. quil ye yc quimimacacia ypampa yntla huehueyazquia ma
 quenmanian ytlán y[n]pan quichiuhti yn intahuan tliltique in tlamiequiyazquia moriscos.
 tin ma quilnamicti yn cihuatica yn innanhuan ca españolas. yn itech quiça mahuiztic
 xinachtli mahuiztic tlacamecayotl yn amo yuh mahuiztic quipia ytechpa yntahuan
 tliltique. ynic niman aço quinyaotlahtalhuizquia, aço yc niman quinmictizquia yn
 intahuan tliltique. quil yehuatl in yc quinmimacacia.

⁸² Kellogg suggests that, while *tlacamecayotl* mapped descent in reverse through ancestors, the kinship concept of *teixhuihuan* (literally “someone’s grandchildren”) described the projection of descent into the future. Susan Kellogg, “Kinship and Social Organization in Early Colonial Tenochtitlan,” in *Ethnohistory*, ed. Ronald Spores (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986), 110-11.

⁸³ Massey, *For Space*, 7. For a fascinating analysis of colonialism and the politics of verticality, see Eyal Weizman, *Hollow Land: Israel’s Architecture of Occupation* (New York: Verso, 2007).

[But about the blacks' male children, as was said, that they would engender by Spanish women, reportedly the reason they didn't want to let them live and to raise them reportedly was that they feared them because when they grew up they might do something sometime to their fathers the blacks, and when the moriscos increased, [they were afraid] lest they remember that their mothers, on the female side, were Spanish women who came from splendid stock, splendid lineage, more splendid than they had on the side of their fathers the blacks, so that perhaps then they would prepare for war against them, perhaps then they would kill their fathers the blacks. Reportedly that was the reason they were afraid of them].⁸⁴

These conspiratorial and cartographic plots emerge from particular understandings of mixing and purity. As suggested above, the object of this genealogical strategy is the Spanish ideology of race purity, one of the primary structures supporting the racial hierarchies on which colonial rule depended. Several characteristics stand out in this passage. First, race—or, to be more specific here, “lineage” or “descent”—clearly exercises a determining influence over human agency. But this force is contingent on memory: it is, in the first place, the Spanishness of the mother that enables this consciousness to emerge in the son. Even here, however, the mother's “splendid stock, splendid lineage” (*mahuiztic xinachtli, mahuiztic tlacamecayotl*) alone is not sufficient. Rather, it is precisely the *difference* between mother and father, between white and black—the normative effects of colonial racial hierarchy—that generates this Oedipal effect. Difference, in such a context, is conflictive, embattled: Chimalpahin thus describes these mulatto offspring not as “mixed” but *divided* (*in ye xeliuhqui ynnacayo*: “their flesh was divided”).⁸⁵ Not only the division but indeed the *distance* between black and white reveals the tensions, if not the sexual violence, that envelopes these moments of conception.

Second, the transformation of difference into distance turns on a spatial operation: the external division between mother and father and its internal counterpart embedded in the flesh are represented in spatial terms. *Tlacamecayotl*, conceived of as a spatialized web of blood relations, is once again invoked. In abstract, synchronic terms, it serves to crystallize the object toward which the genealogical strategy is directed, while at the same time unfolding a surface on which that strategy will take place. At the same time, Chimalpahin employs relational words to spatialize the blood relations in question—the gendered “sides” of the division etch clear lines of enmity and compose a field of battle. This field, furthermore, is composed of a mix of elements that, much like a Nahuatl genealogy, include both specific individuals nested in their own respective webs of blood relations and geographic landmarks loosely situated within the built environment:

auh quil yn ixquichtin cihuateopixque yn monjastin motzacuiltitocque Monasterios Mexico quil mochintin quinquixtizquia yn ichpopochtin quinmocihuauhtizquia yn tilitocque quil oc cenca yehuantin yntech tlahtohuaya yn omentin ychpochhuan tlahtohuani Don Luis de Velasco Marques de Salinas pressidente del consejo de indias. yn españa auh yn omoteneuhque ychpochtitzinhuani ce yncocihuatl ytoca Doña Maria dircios. ynyn ydynamic catca Don Juan altamirano. auh yn oc omentin cihuateopixque monjastin yn

⁸⁴ Chimalpahin, *Annals of His Time*, 220-21.

⁸⁵ Chimalpahin, *Annals of His Time*, 220-21; translation altered.

oncan moyetztcate monasterio totlaçonantzín Regina ynic ce ytoça Doña Beatriz de la e[n]carnacio[n] Abbadessa yn oncan ynic ome ytoça Doña isabel de Jesus.

[And reportedly, as to all the nuns who were enclosed in nunneries in Mexico, the blacks were going to bring them all out and take the young ones as wives; reportedly they spoke especially about the two daughters of the ruler don Luis de Velasco, Marqués of Salinas, president of the Council of the Indies in Spain; of the said daughters one is a widow named doña María de Ircio, who was the spouse of don Juan Altamirano, and there are another two who are nuns at the nunnery of our precious mother Regina [Coeli], the first of whom is named doña Beatriz de la Encarnación, abbess there, and the second is named doña Isabel de Jesús.]⁸⁶

These monasteries occupy a central location in the narrative, and are themselves occupied by bodies that compose part of the *ilatocatlacamecayotl* (“royal genealogy”) of the transatlantic Spanish elite. Less about the transgression of static boundaries like the monastary walls than about identifying and intervening at particularly strategic points of the genealogical web, this line of attack strikes at the heart of what Chimalpahin calls the *altepetl cemanahuac*, the global *altepetl* or polity of the Spanish empire. Here, it bears mentioning, the women in question are not described as beautiful—it is enough to be Spanish, white, elite, and a nun.⁸⁷

We are faced, then, with two models of genealogy based on different conceptualizations of mixing and purity. The Spanish model, on one hand, is not only essentially paranoid but conservative, obsessed with defending what it imagines as extant structures of purity, conceived as the at the same time heavily fortified and threateningly vulnerable foundations of the colonial order. City limits guarded by armed militias, fortress-like homes sealed by barred doors, and bodily orifices defended to prevent the polluting insertion of black poison and semen. As Mary Douglas observes, the body as a bounded entity can be transposed onto “any bounded system”—especially when the boundaries in question are “threatened or precarious.”⁸⁸ The specter of anti-colonial, anti-Spanish race war, in this sense, serves a stabilizing function inasmuch as it

⁸⁶ Chimalpahin, *Annals of His Time*, 220-21. Schroeder has suggested, based on Chimalpahin’s writings, that *cihuateopixque* were in fact “elite mestizas,” but I see little reason to assume these women in particular—the daughters of the viceroy and generally the upper echelons of society—were seen as anything but “pure” Spanish ladies. Viceroy Luis de Velasco married María de Ircio y Mendoza (not to be confused with their daughter, also named María de Ircio, and mentioned by Chimalpahin above), whose family was related both to Spanish nobility and the New Spanish *encomendero* elite. See Susan Schroeder, “The Noblewomen of Chalco,” *Estudios de Cultura Nahuatl* 22 (1992): 83-84; and John F. Schwaller, “The Early Life of Luis de Velasco, the Younger: The Future Viceroy as a Boy and Young Man,” *Estudios de Historia Novohispana* 29 (July-December 2003): 33-36.

⁸⁷ Burkhart’s examination of Nahuatl conceptions of purity and pollution, and their transposition into Christian instruction, is peppered with religious uses of the word *chipahua*. In Sahagún’s *Psalmody christiana*, God speaks to Moses on Mount Sinai and “declares himself completely pure” (*nicenquizca chipaoac*). Fray Juan de la Anunciación similarly uses the word to describe both temporal and spiritual purity: “yn iquac aca anquitta in cenca *chipauac* in atle ytech neci catzualiztli, ca vel anquimauiçoa vel anquipaccayta yn *ichipaualiz*. çan no yuh mochiua teoyotica, ca in totecuiyo DIOS, yn iquac auimotilia in ca chipauati ca in amanima, in atle ypan ca temictiani tlatlacolli, vel quimopaccaytilia, yuan vel quomotlaçotilia” [When you see someone who is very *pure*, on whom no dirtiness appears, indeed you marvel at, you see with pleasure his or her *purity*. Likewise it happens in a sacred way; indeed our lord God, when he sees that your souls are *pure*, that there is no mortal sin on them, he sees them with great pleasure, and he loves them well]. Burkhart, *The Slippery Earth*, 124-25; my emphasis.

⁸⁸ Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (New York: Praeger, 1966), 115.

attempts to preserve and reinforce the “lines of structure” that delineate the contours of bodily and social meaning. If identity is not a “thing” but a process produced by repeated acts of performance and affirmation, the policing of access points reflects a conceptualization of purity that locates it in a distant, originary past that simultaneously works to conceal its constructed roots. Here, purity is intrinsically opposed to mixing, which for its part is conceived as the transgression of boundaries.

Chimalpahin, on the other hand, posits genealogy as a mode of production. His account of the black insurgents’ genealogical strategy not only contests the Spanish stereotype of the black body, but furthermore it situates purity and mixing within a very different temporal matrix. Here, purity is actively constructed—it is located perhaps in a mythological past but also in a projected future: new purities can emerge through specific modes of engagement with the *tlacamecayotl*. We can think these modes of engagement not as a representation of a specific instance of black insurrection but rather as a more generalized strategy or optics for existing in and among colonial world(s). In this sense, mixing is an act that targets particular points of space-time, access points constituted not by bodily orifices or narrow doorways but by the intersection of genealogical, geographic, and temporal vectors that together configure a multidimensional field of battle. Purity is a product of constant tactical interventions that trace a multiplicity of arcs into a nebulous future marked by instability, as in the irruption of homicidal memories of the children of “divided” blood. Rather than closure or a terminal endpoint, then, Chimalpahin’s genealogy gestures toward a *prospective* (instead of retrospective) purity, a *becoming pure*, which literally *incorporates* acts of mixing as the building blocks of future formations of purity.

Solidarity and subaltern studies

. . . the concept of plural worlds liberates us of the moral that exclusively values cultural artifacts in which one can find acts of resistance. These Indian subjects enable us to break from that deceptive, if not fastidious, variant of the cogito “I resist, therefore I am.” From them we learn that resistance pertains more to the materials, in the fashion of the glass blower.

--José Rabasa, “Historical and Epistemological Limits in Subaltern Studies”

Across Spanish and Nahuatl accounts of an alleged black plot to unleash race war on the colonial order—to blacken Spanish institutions and/or bloodlines—I have traced the lines of friction between spatial vocabularies and rationalities, on one hand, and conceptualizations of mixing and purity, on the other. It is tempting for the postcolonial scholar to insert Chimalpahin’s text into a colonial/anticolonial binary, a model that Rabasa likens to another variant of the cogito: “I resist, therefore I am.” But such a reading is necessarily schematic. To conclude, then, I would like to propose two readings of Chimalpahin’s account that position themselves outside of a binary “resistance” model that celebrates “the ascendancy of the slave to

mastery.”⁸⁹ These readings are not mutually exclusive; the primary difference lies in their relation to the historical object. The first reading takes as its point of departure the event that constitutes, and is constituted by, the 1612 conspiracy—it reads Chimalpahin’s text as both report on and critique of the particular details of the plot allegedly elaborated by the black insurgents, on one hand, and the terrified response on the part of the Spanish government, including the violent repression. The author, as I have argued above, uses a variety of narrative strategies to remove himself from the immediate action. But this should not be glossed as a sort of political neutrality or, worse still, “journalistic objectivity.” Frequent use of caveat words like *quil* (“reportedly”) and *mihto* (“it was said”) establishes a critical distance between subject and object that lends an aura of skepticism to the report. It is this distance, furthermore, which enables Chimalpahin’s dual lines of sight—he positions himself as an observer, watching Spaniards and blacks with equal interest. (It is because of these lines of sight that the text complicates conventional notions of transculturation and cultural change more generally that tend to assume a binary relation.)

Earlier, we saw that Chimalpahin criticizes the colonial state in multiple ways: his scornful laughter at the Spaniards’ profound terror of the blacks, including paranoid fantasies of wild hordes threatening to invade the city; his general skepticism about the allegations against the thirty-five blacks and mulattoes who were executed—“cenca miec yn intech tlan yn aço nelli quichihuazquia yn anoço amo ca çan iceltzin huel yehuatzin quimomachiltia yn tt.o dios” [they were accused of very much that maybe they truly were going to do or maybe not, for only our lord God himself knows whether it is so]⁹⁰—and his veiled attack on the extreme violence of the state’s response—he lists the names of all the officials, “yn izquintin tlahtoque Oydores. yhuan alcaldes de corte ingouierno” [all the lords civil and criminal judges of the Audiencia] who, in the absence of a viceroy, were responsible for the sentencing.⁹¹ All of this has the tone of a denunciation, of an inappropriate overstepping of bounds, an injustice carried out in the absence of the true sovereign.

But these criticisms of the colonial state and the ridiculing Spanish officials cannot be mistaken for support of, let alone solidarity with, the black insurrection—he does not write from the perspective of a politics of alliance. For in the end the insurrection he describes is fundamentally one of continuity—while the (skin) color of sovereignty changes, the institutional structures through which that sovereign guarantees its rule remain the same. Not only would a black king and queen (strikingly named Isabel) be installed, but “quil yn ixquich altepetl ynic nohuiyan ypan nueua españa quil ye moch oquimomamacaca yn tliltique yn oncan otlahtocatizquia ynic cequintin Duques. cequintin Marquestin cequintin Condesme quil omochiuhca” [reportedly all the different altepetl everywhere in New Spain had been distributed to the blacks, and there they would rule, so that some had reportedly been made dukes, some

⁸⁹ “Instead of rushing to celebrate the ascendancy of the slave to mastery, we out to recall that Hegel had already mocked such a dialectical resolution when he conceived it as ‘stubbornness, a type of freedom which does not get beyond the attitude of bondage.’” Rabasa, *Without History*, 72.

⁹⁰ “[S]ome [of the blacks],” he continues, “did not acknowledge the full truth of it; though they were punished and hanged, they said on dying, ‘Let us in the name of our lord God accept the sentence that has been passed upon us, for we do not know what we are accused of that we are being punished for.’” Chimalpahin, *Annals of His Time*, 222-23.

⁹¹ Chimalpahin, *Annals of His Time*, 222-23.

marqueses, some counts].⁹² In addition, just as the administrative bodies of the colonial state would endure, so would the economic structures on which colonial rule depended. Chimalpahin puts it vividly: “tinmacehualhuan otochihuazquia otiquintlacallaquilizquia otiquintlayecoltizquia oc yehuantin y[n] nican titlaca timacehualtin techcamaycuiloizquia ynic necizquia ca totecuiyohuan” [we local people, we commoners, would have become their vassals, we would have paid them tribute and served them, and they would have branded our mouths so it would be seen that they were our masters].⁹³ The Indian under black rule, as formulated by Chimalpahin, would continue to pay the same tribute as that imposed by the Spanish colonial state—subjects to an economic regime based on the extraction of tribute. By branding their mouths, furthermore, the new rulers would be applying a symbol of slavery associated with blackness to transform the Indians into a doubly subalternized population, occupying the position of both Indian vassal and black slave.⁹⁴

Such a reading of Chimalpahin’s account, I think, resonates with the critique of nationalism that has come, for example, from the field of subaltern studies. In his early essay “On Some Aspects of the Historiography of Colonial India,” Ranajit Guha notes that the historiography of Indian nationalism is characterized by elitism—colonialist elitism on one hand, and bourgeois nationalist elitism on the other. “Both originated as the ideological product of British rule in India, but have survived the transfer of power and been assimilated to neo-colonialist and neo-nationalist forms of discourse in Britain and India respectively.” And both, he continues, treat politics purely as the domain of the state, of state institutions, overlooking entirely what Guha calls the *politics of the people*.⁹⁵ This is not only a domain of spontaneous subaltern insurrection but also the of “the conditions of exploitation to which the subaltern classes were subjected.” Decades before, Frantz Fanon had written of the bourgeois nationalist leader who “endeavors to lull [the masses] to sleep” by asking them “to remember the colonial period and to take stock of the immense distance they have covered” since gaining independence. For the masses, however, little has changed: “The peasant who continues to scratch out a living from the soil, the unemployed who never find a job, are never really convinced that their lives have changed, despite the festivities and the flags, however new they might be.”⁹⁶

I do not mean to suggest that Chimalpahin’s text should be read as representative of the same political moment that Guha and Fanon are describing. But there is something about his skepticism regarding the violence that seems to correspond to the colonial state form and its institutions that resonates strongly with more recent critiques of neocolonialism. As such, the first reading that I am outlining here would situate Chimalpahin within not so much a history of

⁹² Chimalpahin, *Annals of His Time*, 218-19.

⁹³ Chimalpahin, *Annals of His Time*, 218-21.

⁹⁴ Or, alternatively, the return to Indian slavery under the *encomienda*. “Cortés branded Indians in Texcoco and then sold them as slaves.” Gibson, *The Aztecs Under Spanish Rule*, 78.

⁹⁵ Ranajit Guha, “On Some Aspects of the Historiography of Colonial India,” in *Subaltern Studies I: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, ed. Ranajit Guha (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1982), 1-7.

⁹⁶ This is in many ways a consequence of the economic continuity between the colonial and postcolonial periods. Bourgeois nationalism “has done nothing else but prolong the heritage of the colonial economy, thinking, and institutions.” Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2004), 114, 120.

anticolonial resistance (where Spanish and colonial become synonymous) but rather a genealogy of critique of the emancipatory potential of the state form.

If the first reading of Chimalpahin's account looks to the black insurrection as the sole object, the second reading I wish to propose here has a somewhat different object and scope. Instead of taking the text strictly as a report about the specific events in question, a recitation of facts associated with a concrete and definable historical moment, what is at stake is something more general. Not only a different site of politics—the space-time of genealogy, as represented in Nahua pictorial texts—but a different mode of doing politics as well. Not a politics focused on capturing state power or even a “politics of the people” in the sense that Guha describes, but rather a politics of everyday life. Or, to put it differently, it is more than a politics—what Chimalpahin begins to articulate is another way of seeing and of engaging with the colonial world. The two-dimensional battlefield—a space dedicated to formal military operations, the site on which the black military strategist would “formar un campo”—is transformed into a temporal plane of struggle, a field that plots space and time together, where *place-moments* that mark and identify strategic locations are not only targeted in tactical interventions but further incorporated into “other” configurations, webs, or constellations of meaning. These points are mapped not only geographically (bodies, buildings) but temporally as well (past, present, future). Rabasa's notion of dwelling in plural worlds is useful here. What is at stake in this politics represents not so much a stitching together of multiple worlds but a recognition of their overlapping positionalities—it seeks the opportunities that open up in the movement between them. It is important to recognize that in Chimalpahin's genealogical strategy neither mixings nor purities necessarily imply the production of new syntheses, syncretic wholes and totalities. There is no *raza cósmica* in this story—instead, there are *formations*. To the extent that mixings trace movements on a different field of struggle and purities constitute platforms from which to launch interventions, this mode of engaging with the colonial world is structurally genealogical, a map composed of mixings and purities. What Chimalpahin highlights are paths by which the movement between worlds is operationalized—tactical interventions occur, for example, precisely at points of temporal and spatial simultaneity. What characterizes Chimalpahin's text, then, is not an anticolonial politics of “resistance” but the attempt to negotiate the divergent times of mestizaje.

Epilogue

Rethinking Race: Mixing, Purity, and Mestizaje

Law is not pacification, for beneath the law, war continues to rage in all the mechanisms of power, even in the most regular. War is the motor behind institutions and order. In the smallest of its cogs, peace is waging a secret war. To put it another way, we have to interpret the war that is going on beneath peace; peace itself is a coded war. We are therefore at war with one another; a battlefield runs through the whole of society, continuously and permanently, and it is this battlefield that puts us all on one side or the other.

--Michel Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*

What the episodes examined in this dissertation share, in part, is the specter of racial insurgency, the expectation and realization of violence, the pivotal character of crisis that simultaneously opens up and closes off possibilities. In 1692, 1566-1567, and 1612, Mexico City elites manifested forms of paranoia that turned on the counterhegemonic potentiality of particular naturalized identities: “Indians,” “mestizos,” and “blacks.” In doing so, these identities were often reconfigured, reimagined, and redeployed within the political field. Foucault suggests in the epigraph above that society is a battlefield founded on and structured by continuous and permanent war—he goes on to describe this struggle as “basically, a race war”—which enables precisely this sort of rupture at every turn.¹ The battlefield that cuts across society, in other words, is constantly being remapped. For this reason what I have presented here is by no means a complete history but a partial and fragmented one, a series of episodes, moments, and flashes along the frontlines that both make sense on their own terms and at the same time make possible the telling of not one but many stories inasmuch as the object has shifted from *the* beginning to *every* beginning, from the singular to the plural. This study, then, represents an attempt to elaborate a historical method that takes as its point of departure the ideological nature of periodization and the overlapping existence of multiple temporal worlds or “synoptic” temporalities.

The notions of race that both signpost and constitute the moves on this battlefield, I argue, are always already mediated by and articulated through particular categories of mixing and purity. In this sense, the common assumption that the history of race in Latin America is equivalent to the history of mestizaje is correct, but for the wrong reason. The point is not that originary purities have become increasingly mixed since the colonial “encounter,” but rather that the categories of mixing and purity themselves are both the object and more importantly the product of the kind of racializing moments analyzed here. For this reason I adopt a position of skepticism with regard to conventional histories of mestizaje that turn on words like *increasingly* and *cada vez más*, that take mixing as a constant which advances according to a sort of internal

¹ “The war that is going on beneath order and peace, the war that undermines our society and divides it in a binary mode is, basically, a race war.” Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, 50-51, 59.

inertia, where demographics serves more often than not as the motor of history and provides its causal force. As I explain in the introduction, I am interested in a different kind of story here: not a history of race but a genealogy of mestizaje, charting another path—or multiple paths, to be more precise—through shifting formations of mixing and purity and the violences—epistemic and material—that emerge through their crystallization. Racialization is the operation through which these categories are produced and mobilized.

These episodes, of course, force us to reconceptualize not only concepts of race but those of mixing and purity as well. Conventionally, mixing is assumed to deal with transgressing boundaries and purity with establishing or enforcing boundaries. As a consequence, mixing and purity are conceived of as not only oppositional but indeed separate analytical categories that operate in independent though often overlapping ways: two modes of engaging boundaries, something like what Sigüenza called “líneas de separación.” My argument, however, treats mixing and purity not as oppositional but dialectical in that they are distinguishable but impossible to separate. As such mixing involves not only the transgression of old boundaries but also the tracing of new ones, while purity as we have seen operationalizes a series of mixings that are rendered invisible and forgotten in the epistemic and material violence that accompanies its imposition. This is how the chapters that make up the first part of this dissertation are intended to be read: although their titles emphasize operations of mixing and purity respectively, as if they were separate operations, my intention is to show how every operation of mixing necessarily implies particular formations of purity and vice versa. Mixing and purity are two modalities of a single operation, and it is in the play *between* them that racial formations emerge.

By accessing racialization via shifting formations of mixing and purity, the genealogy of mestizaje that I outline here avoids the trap posed by “the chimeras of the origin.” This is not to say that the moments examined here cannot be read as ruptures, turning points, even starting points—they are useful moments precisely because they are opportunities, precisely because of the reconfigurations that they enable—nor does it suggest, furthermore, that they cannot be harnessed or mobilized by other narratives that turn precisely on the attribution of origins. My point is not to assert the impossibility of reducing the multiplicity of moments to a single point but rather to attempt to identify the consequences that accompany such a move. Sometimes these consequences are useful. Quijano’s deployment of 1492, for example, enables and legitimates a powerful anticolonial stance, a site of critique against the persistent inequalities that indigenous people in Chiapas, for example, continue to suffer today. It represents a political position in solidarity with Zapatistas’ first public words to the world in the *Primera declaración de la selva lacandona*: “Somos producto de 500 años de luchas.” But we can imagine other stories with other political efficacies. We must remain attentive to our “political investments” in the stories we tell about race and racism today as well as, more importantly, the racial “regimes of truth” that insinuate themselves into and structure these stories.² “[A]ny history of race,” writes Nirenberg, “will be at best limited, strategic, and polemical and at worst a reproduction of racial logic itself.”³

For these reasons I am more interested in mixing and purity as strategies—and I would add tactics to Nirenberg’s formulation—than anthropological or even historical categories,

² Stoler, “Racial Histories and their Regimes of Truth,” 184.

³ Nirenberg, “Race and the Middle Ages,” 86.

though of course there is a great deal of overlap between these modes of reading. Foucault has argued that in the eighteenth century the discourse of history was transformed from the ideological representation of the nobility into a sort of instrument or weapon, a generalized “discursive tactic” available to those beyond the narrow confines of that elite class position: “insofar as it is a tactic, [it] is transferable and eventually becomes the law governing the formation of a knowledge and, at the same time, the general form of the political battle.”⁴ The same could be said for the discourses of mixing and purity I have traced here. Contested, contingent, and generalized, mixing and purity are integral to the grid of intelligibility through which the material world is perceived. Bodies—human and non-human, individual and collective—come to have meaning through concepts of mixing and purity as well as the boundaries between the two. At the same time, these categories mediate not only the perception, classification, and organization of bodies in themselves but the interaction between bodies as well. The moments that interest me the most are those in which bodies of “different” types are brought together—mixed, as it were—not through the phenomenon of mixing itself but rather through the process of *defining mixing*; or, similarly, those in which bodies of the “same” type are differentiated—purified—not through the distilling action of purification but a conceptual apparatus of *defining purity*. Pulque, in particular its treatment in the aftermath of the 1692 insurrection, is of course an exemplary case. Furthermore, definitions or formations of mixing and purity do not emerge through textual production alone—they are also shaped by, and at the same time contribute to shaping, technologies of governance deployed by the colonial state. But it is not only a question of the elites: these categories are theorized and practiced from the margins as well, outside the walls of the stone palaces where colonial officials held court, as Chimalpahin’s text suggests. Even among the elites who composed the *ciudad letrada*, diverging interests are made apparent in the mobilization and deployment of diverging formations of mixing and purity, as the conflicting segregation proposals of Sigüenza and Vetancurt and the rise and fall of the Colegio de Niños Mestizos indicate.

Insofar as these formations speak to a generalized grid of intelligibility through which society is made legible, the question becomes a spatial one. Michel de Certeau argues that strategies and tactics can be distinguished in the first place by their mode of interacting with and intervening in space:

I call a *strategy* the calculation . . . of power relationships that becomes possible as soon as a subject with will and power (a business, an army, a city, a scientific institution) can be isolated. It postulates a *place* that can be delimited as its *own* and serve as the base from which relations with an *exteriority* composed of targets or threats . . . can be managed. As in management, every “strategic” rationalization seeks first of all to distinguish its “own” place, that is, the place of its own power and will, from an “environment.” . . . By contrast with a strategy . . . a *tactic* is a calculated action determined by the absence of a proper locus. No delimitation of an exteriority, then, provides it with the condition necessary for autonomy. The space of a tactic is the space of the other. Thus it must play on and with a terrain imposed on it and organized by the law of a foreign power. . . . It must vigilantly make use of the cracks that particular

⁴ Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, 190.

conjunctions open in the surveillance of the proprietary powers. It poaches in them. It creates surprises in them.⁵

At one level, based on this elaboration, it is tempting to treat mixing and purity as fundamentally different operations. After all, inasmuch as the attempt to purify the city through segregation after the 1692 uprising seems to correspond to the demarcation of a “place of its own” it resembles a strategy. The same is true for the production of pure bodies. On the other hand, the mixing thought to occur in the pulquerías of Mexico City appears tactical, to the extent that its is enabled by “cracks” in the surveillance apparatus of the secular and ecclesiastical authorities. The problem with this approach, however, is that, much like many recent critical approaches to hybridity, it ends up reifying both the emancipatory potential of mixing and the bureaucratic or institutional location of purity.⁶ These episodes point to the importance of reading mixing and purity not as structurally oppositional but rather as part of a single process—I have used *mestizaje* as what I think is an appropriate shorthand—that articulates the field in which objects and subjects, both individual and collective, are organized, rendered intelligible and meaningful, and managed. Both can be mobilized and deployed as tactics and both are capable of identifying and claiming spaces. At the same time, the “discursive tactics” that constitute the debates and discussions that I have analyzed here form part of broader strategic interests that are rooted in the exigencies of economic and spiritual extraction and competing claims to jurisdictional authority, for example. As such, *mestizaje* constitutes not a historical phenomenon but a field of battle on which the war beneath the peace is waged.

⁵ De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 35-36.

⁶ “We are concerned with battles or games between the strong and the weak, and with the ‘actions’ which remain possible for the latter.” De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 34. I cannot do justice here to the vast literature on hybridity, but I consider the paradigmatic texts to be García Canclini, *Hybrid Cultures*; and Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*. For a critique of hybridity as a tool of emancipation, see Lund, *The Impure Imagination*, xii-xiii.

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