

## INTRODUCTION

*Dwelling in Transitions*

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The year 1492 invokes many instances of transition in ways that intersected, overlapped, and shaped the emergence of Latin America and what would become distinctive features of Latin American literature. From the point of view of European history, 1492 marked the major transition from the Middle Ages to the Modern Era. It was also the year in which transatlantic travel revealed new places and peoples to European knowledge. The geography of the world as known until then began to change while the centers of wealth and opportunity started shifting to include the Americas. Fifteenth-century technological innovations like the printing press and the development of woodcuts and copper plates allowed for the expansion in ways of knowing and the dissemination of ideas about the unknown, the unusual, the rare, the exotic. Through the profitable slave trade, the modern European expansion also brought by violent force African people to the Western Hemisphere.

In the centuries prior to 1492, the territories on the western side of the Atlantic had witnessed the rise and fall, and the renewed development of Native societies from the Tainos in the Caribbean islands to complex civilizations such as the Olmecs, Mayas, and Aztecs in Mesoamerica, and the Muisca, Mapuche, and Incas in South America. Each of these Native societies of the Americas developed their own ways of sustenance, belief systems, government, record-keeping, and history. Peoples from Europe, Africa, and the Americas met in the New World, clashed, and negotiated their roles and positions in the historical transition initiated by the transatlantic, and later transpacific, voyages. In this place, new to Africans and Europeans, and old for Amerindians, each collective participated in the conflicts of colonialism while resisting, assimilating, appropriating, and creating new ways of understanding and documenting their reality. In this context, Native people throughout the Americas used both pre-Hispanic and European media of communication to register their own experiences of this period of transitions in political structures, belief systems, cultural

practices, and conceptions of time and space. Bark and textiles gave way to ink and paper; Mesoamerican codices and Andean *quipu* (colored knotted strings used for record keeping) were eventually displaced by books and illustrations made of watercolors and engravings; glyphs and knots were substituted for Roman letters and Arabic numerals; Mesoamerican *tlacuilos* (glyph makers) and *tlamatinimeh* (wise men), Andean *quipucamayos* (*quipu* makers and readers), and *amautas* (poets and philosophers) became the Indigenous and mestizo chroniclers and intellectuals of colonial Latin America.

The processes and places that we address as transitions in this volume underline key cultural phenomena that appear throughout the Latin American colonial period, which is generally understood as the year of Columbus's arrival in the Bahamas until the beginning of the nineteenth-century wars of independence. For the Native inhabitants of the Americas as well as the people of Europe, Africa, and Asia who crossed the Atlantic and Pacific as part of the early-modern global movement to and from those lands, their lived experiences were defined by physical, intellectual, and spiritual transitions. These transitions have been registered in critical studies of colonial Latin American literature with key and influential concepts that emerge from the region such as “transculturation” (Ortiz) and “heterogeneity” (Cornejo Polar) as well as the productive application of the critical concepts of “contact zone” (Pratt), “hybridity” (Dean and Leibsohn), “syncretism” (Fuentes, Gruzinski), and “in-between” (Yannakakis). “Transition” is also semantically related and conceptually tied to transatlantic, transpacific (Padrón), and trans-hemispheric studies. Though there is no extended and sustained study of colonial Latin American literature that focuses specifically on transitions, this concept is embedded in studies from the field of literature as well as partner fields of history, art history, and anthropology.<sup>1</sup> Recent studies address, for example, the transition of Tenochtitlan into Mexico City as a physical and urban space (Mundy; Nemser), the colonial life of *Qoriqancha* (“Golden Enclosure”), the Temple of the Sun in Cusco, where Inca and Spanish architectural elements met in a visual metaphor of transition, power, and domination (Dean and Leibsohn 15), the art of being in-between and the complicated transitions in social identities that are enacted in colonial societies (Díaz; Rappaport; Yannakakis; van Deusen), the many ways in which colonial subjects witnessed transitions in literacies and media of communication between the sixteenth and the early nineteenth centuries (Brian; Brokaw; Rappaport and Cummins; Quispe-Agnoli, *La fe andina*, *Nobles de papel*; Ramos and Yannakakis), and the

transition of the Spanish imperial project to Asia (Padrón). This volume dialogues with ongoing studies and provides a novel and fertile conceptual framework with which to engage in a critical examination of multiple areas of colonial Latin American cultural production within a single context.

### Volume Organization and Chapter Summaries

Though “transición” is not registered in contemporary Spanish dictionaries until 1739, when it appears in the *Diccionario de Autoridades*, the concept is omnipresent in colonial Latin America. In this volume, we address transition in its associations with change, transformation, movement, transfer, journeys, displacement, and migration but also as imposition of new ways of writing and communicating, believing in the natural and the supernatural, one’s relation with the body, (self) identification, and social institutions. One important distinction in the study of transitions in colonial Latin America is the notion of “literature” that goes beyond the traditional European understanding of the lettered canon. In 1989, Rolena Adorno and Walter Mignolo led the scholarly debate that ushered in the theoretical transition from “colonial literature” to “colonial discourse” as the main object of study within the field of colonial Latin America letters. This transition validated the study of texts produced in a variety of media and the inclusion of writers that were excluded from the official history of colonial Latin American literary studies. This way of understanding literary artifacts and discourses calls for interdisciplinary approaches in our field and necessitates the broadening of materials to be studied. In this volume, contributors examine a range of texts including books published in Europe and the New World and manuscripts stored in repositories around the globe that represent poetry, prose, judicial proceedings, sermons, letters, and grammars.

We have identified six thematic areas for the study of where transitions in colonial Latin American texts are made manifest: space, body, belief systems, languages, literacies, and identity. The chapters address the wide expanse of the Spanish and Lusophone Americas, including the Caribbean, North and South America, and Asia. The volume opens with Part I, “Space, Land, and Territory.” The four chapters in this section address the representation of a range of geographies at various moments during the colonial period. Pablo García Loaeza’s “Migrations and Foundations in the Literature of New Spain” works with the concept of *translatio (imperii, studii)* as it relates to the displacement of people, the political and spiritual changes wrought by such movements, and the renderings of these events in

various media. In New Spain, such transitions were represented, in both visual and alphabetic texts, by migrations (the wandering Aztecs, the seafaring missionaries, the forlorn creoles) and urban foundations (the legendary Tollan, the otherworldly Puebla, the all-encompassing Mexico-Tenochtitlan) in which past, present, and future, as well as myth, history, and literature, overlap. Sarissa Carneiro's "Defining Portuguese America: The First Depictions of Brazil Within the Context of Overseas Expansion" addresses the Portuguese colonization of Brazil as part of a prolonged history of exploration, trade, and settlement in Africa and India. Taking as a point of departure Pero Vaz de Caminha's 1500 letter documenting the initial Portuguese forays into Brazil, Carneiro notes that the descriptive tropes employed by early Portuguese settlers, drawn in part from previous incursions elsewhere, emphasized voids in the people and lands of the new territories. These people were seen to be lacking faith, civilized society, and means to properly cultivate the fertile earth. The next two chapters look closely at a selection of texts that struggled to represent spaces that were both less familiar to European readers and yet significant sites of imperial and colonial control. Yamile Silva's "The Conquest of Space in the *Relación del Descubrimiento del Rio Marañón* by Gerónimo de Ypori (c. 1630)" examines an account of the controversial expedition by Pedro de Ursúa into the Amazon Basin (1560–1561), which led to the rise of the infamous Lope de Aguirre. By discursively rationalizing the space through its description, Ypori carries out an epistemological exercise to exert sovereignty over a *topos* that is amorphous in the eyes of his European readers. Next, Kathryn Joy McKnight's "Disturbing Place: Afro-Iberian Herbalists Interrupt Imperial Cartagena de Indias" addresses the ways in which the place of Cartagena de Indias is represented in city plans, the epic poetry of Juan de Castellanos, and Inquisition testimony regarding Afro-Iberian healers, particularly Paula de Eguluz. Few European doctors served the newly cosmopolitan areas of empire that fostered alarming new experiences of climate, disease, and injury. Surgeons and herbalists of African descent competed for Iberian clients and played significant roles in defining the spaces of a port city vulnerable to all manner of invasion. McKnight's chapter leads to the theme of this volume's second part: the body.

The four chapters in Part II explore representations of the body in colonial letters, including themes related to health, disease, discipline, sexuality, and social constructions of the body. These chapters highlight the extraordinary insights that can be gleaned by reading less-common genres, including medical treatises, sermons, and legal records. Opening

this section, Yari Pérez Marín’s “The Health of the Soul: Religious Guidance and Medical Practice in Early Colonial Mexico” looks at the published decrees from the first Provincial Council of New Spain, the *Constituciones del arzobispado y prouincia dela muy ynsigne y muy leal ciudad de Tenuxtitlan Mexico* (1556), which set aside specific instructions for medical practitioners, and vernacular medical texts published in Mexico City during the sixteenth century. Though seemingly from different textual traditions, the religious dictates and vernacular medical texts followed a prescriptive approach, capturing in detail the very behaviors they purportedly sought to curtail. Pérez-Marín illuminates varying perspectives on the evolving roles of physicians and surgeons in managing the spiritual and corporeal health of patients. Another way to look at the close relationship between soul and body is at the center of Judith Farré Vidal’s “Viceroy Valero’s Heart: A Traveling Relic and an Embodied Metaphor in Transit to the Indies.” This chapter draws our attention to the symbolic significance ascribed to the heart of the Marquis of Valero, Viceroy of New Spain (1716–1722), who bequeathed his own heart to the Convent of Corpus Christi, which he had helped found in Mexico City in 1719 for Indian *cacicas* (Indian noble women). Once he returned to Spain, he arranged that, after his death, his heart would be embalmed and buried in the high altar of the Franciscan Convent as a means of both promoting the religious community he had aided to establish and securing continued prayers for his eternal salvation by the members of that community. The next chapter brings us to the early modern theories about body’s humors. Germán Morong Reyes’s “Humoralism and Colonial Subjugation: Indians and Medical Knowledge in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries” ties the formation of the category “Indian” to practices of medicine and specifically the tradition of understanding humans by way of humors. Through a study of Andean administrative and historical treatises from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, he shows how this framework facilitated the justifications for the subjugation of the Native populations. Mariselle Meléndez’s “Assaulted Bodies: The Case of Two Enslaved Black Women in the Port City of Santa María de los Ángeles de Buenos Aires, 1772–1778” closes Part II with a discussion of late eighteenth-century legal proceedings that involved two enslaved Black women who were physically assaulted causing injury to one and death to the other. This chapter traces the ways in which the victims registered their physical injuries through judicial processes and the ways in which their narratives were contested in those same processes. Drawing on 2007 studies of the body by Fraser and Greco, Meléndez argues that the body is a vehicle through which “social

relations of power” are exerted and fought over and in this way, as bodies transition through domestic, public, and legal spaces, they provide a window onto the shifting status of Black women in the late colonial period.

Part III addresses the broad theme of transitions in belief systems. The five chapters in this section look at a range of transformations in belief systems, from questions of religion and the body to ritual practices and beliefs among Native communities to public religious displays, and ways in which expressions of Catholicism were impacted by creole and Native social practices. Soledad González Díaz’s “The Flood Story in the *Huarochiri Manuscript* and Other Early Colonial Andean Texts” explores the interpretation of the Biblical narrative of the Flood in the colonial Andean context, especially in the Quechua-language, sixteenth-century text known as the *Huarochiri Manuscript*. Through careful readings of the Flood in Spanish Catholic texts, including Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa’s sixteenth-century *History of the Incas* and sermons from the *Tercero Cathecismo* (1585), she establishes the necessary context to take note of the Indigenous innovations in the Flood narrative. Next, Esperanza López Parada’s “Idol or Martyr: Sacredness and Symbol in the Religiosity of the Indies” explores transformations in the embodiment of the sacred and the profane through the study of a series of objects that emerged from cultures of Native peoples, such as *cemis*, or Europeans, such as chalices, and which were then resignified in the course of colonial encounters. López Parada surveys a wide range of contexts in which these exchanges took place, including the early stages of European colonization of the islands of the Caribbean and later attempts at colonization of what is now the US Southwest. The next three chapters in this section address religion in the Viceroyalty of New Spain and Asia. Stephanie Kirk’s “Creole Religiosity in Colonial Mexico: Devotional Cultures in Transition” examines the textual representation of creole religiosity as it developed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries during its transition from being a transplanted, transatlantic belief system into a hybrid American faith. Surveying a range of textual examples, Kirk demonstrates how creoles rejected (as was the case with Hernando Ruiz de Alarcón) and appropriated (as was the case with Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora) elements of Indigenous devotional practices as they shaped their religious identity in colonial Mexico. Eva Maria Mehl’s “The Empire Beyond Spanish America: Spanish Augustinians in the Pacific World” addresses Spanish imperialism beyond the Americas, in the Pacific. Focusing on missionary efforts by the Augustinians, Mehl draws our attention to the Spanish

presence in the Philippines and China in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, noting how intertwined these colonial projects were with those in the viceroyalties, particularly New Spain, which served as a launching site for the missionary journeys across the Pacific. Her study of Augustinians' letters highlights the transition of the Spanish imperial project to Asia and the impact of that development on individual and societal planes. This section concludes with a chapter by Mónica Díaz, "Indigenous Peoples and Catholicism in Eighteenth-Century Mexico City." This chapter shows how defining aspects of the eighteenth century, such as the Bourbon Reforms and the Enlightenment, altered possibilities for Indigenous people in Mexico to practice Catholicism and participate in the institutions of education and worship, both controlled by the Church. Díaz looks at three specific and illustrative examples: festivities around the opening of the Convent of Corpus Christi in 1724; a *vida* (spiritual biography) of an Otomí woman, which was used as an educational resource; and a pamphlet containing the prayer of the rosary that belonged to Jesuits from the Colegio of San Gregorio in Mexico City.

Part IV of the volume, "Literacies," presents four chapters that address transitions in forms of literacy and media of communication. These chapters are meant to highlight the significant ways in which Native and European forms of writing and communication were transformed after European colonization as well as the dynamic shifts that occurred in Native-centered and European-centered understandings of literacy and literature. Galen Brokaw's "Transcultural Intertextuality in Colonial Latin America" opens the section with a study of the interaction between European alphabetic writing and Indigenous media such as Mesoamerican iconography and the Andean *quipu*, where he proposes a theory of transcultural intertextuality as a model for understanding the nature of this interaction. Less a critical tool than an ontological theory of texts, his formulation, as he says, "describes the nature of texts that engage with or derive from the discursive formations of two different cultures and the media associated with them." The next chapter, José Ramón Jouve-Martín's "Becoming a Book: The Reproduction, Falsification, and Digitalization of Colonial Codices," addresses the resignifying of colonial-era alphabetic and pictorial texts from Mexico as they transitioned both in location and meaning, from their place of production to repositories in Europe to digital archives. Jouve-Martín focuses throughout on the case of the Códice Chimalpahin, a set of three bound volumes containing Spanish and Nahuatl manuscripts which were collected by Native scholars in the seventeenth century, then transferred to a creole scholar, who left them to

a religious institution, from where they were taken to Europe, only to be returned to Mexico in 2014, at which point digital versions of the manuscripts were disseminated online through the auspices of a state institution. Looking at this case and others, Jouve-Martín highlights how the transition of scripted sources, such as Native-authored pictorial codices, from local communities to printed volumes to the World Wide Web implied at each stage a reorganizing and subduing of those materials according to criteria that were not operating in the context of their initial production. The final two chapters in this section take up the topic of transitions in literacies and communication through the study of shifts in the reception of an iconic published text from Spain and the recalibration of textual genres as witnessed in the publication of New World bibliographies. Eva Valero Juan's chapter "From Print to Public Performance to *Relaciones de fiestas*: Don Quixote in Viceregal Festivals" takes as its point of departure the most well-known early modern work of fiction and then looks at how the central characters of that novel were received and transformed in the context of the New World in the years and decades after the 1605 publication of *El ingenioso hidalgo don Quijote de La Mancha*. Specifically, Valero Juan looks at ways in which Don Quixote and Sancho Panza make their first American appearances in seventeenth-century accounts of public festivals in the Viceroyalty of Peru and the Viceroyalty of New Spain. These texts, she argues, represent paradigmatic examples of transitions in colonial literature in that they are defined by their generic hybridity and the transplanting of Cervantine characters to the New World. Part IV closes with a coauthored chapter by Clayton McCarl and Lindsay Van Tine, "Colonial Latin American Bibliography and the Indigenous Text," which circles back to questions posed in Brokaw's opening chapter by exploring the continuities and disjunctures in the inclusion, representation, and classification of Native-authored texts. In their analysis of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century bibliographies, McCarl and Van Tine view those texts not only as critical tools but also as instruments for the critique of the collection and circulation of forms of knowledge in the colonial context. They survey significant examples of bibliographers and their works, highlighting the ways in which they each incorporated wide-ranging source materials into single reference texts according to authors' names or subjects such as history, geography, and language. McCarl and Van Tine identify a trend in the evolution of these bibliographies away from the cataloging of works and toward author-centered entries that privileged known figures and ultimately marginalized Indigenous sources that were not attributed to named authors.

The chapters in Part V of the volume explore themes related to the impact of conquest and colonization on language. These four chapters focus on the use of the imperial language and Native languages in a series of scenarios that were overdetermined by unequal power relations. Each chapter teases out ways in which marginalized forms of knowledge survived in the use and documentation of language, throughout the political and social transitions that defined the colonial period. This section opens with Kelly McDonough's "Technologies of Communication in Transition: Indigenous Orality and Writing in Colonial Mexico," which expands on themes addressed in chapters from Part IV, specifically modes and technologies of communication. McDonough focuses on Nahuas in central Mexico and proposes that alphabetic writing introduced by European colonizers did not eclipse Indigenous forms of communication. Furthermore, Nahuas adopted and adapted alphabetic writing for their own communication needs. She surveys significant genres of Nahuatl texts produced with alphabetic writing, to ultimately conclude that "the alphabet was a technology added to and subsumed by Nahuatl culture if and when it was deemed useful in specific contexts." Caroline Egan's chapter complements McDonough's contribution. In "A Baroque *Arte*: Horacio Carochi and the Tradition of Nahuatl Grammars," Egan performs a literary and formal reading of Horacio Carochi's *Arte de la lengua mexicana* (1645). As grammars of Native languages were key for learning the languages of the newly baptized and the evangelical project more broadly, they held a significant role in implanting the Catholic faith in the New World. Having adapted the genre of vernacular grammars from Europe to New Spain, Carochi's Nahuatl grammar is among a series of such texts printed in Mexico City. It exhibits numerous innovations in the content and form of its representation of the language. Egan concludes that Carochi's *Arte*, as it is characterized by a series of oscillations that call to mind a sort of chiaroscuro, could be understood as Baroque in its rhetorical style. Loreley El Jaber's "Acquiring a Voice: The Plebeians Speak in Early Colonial Río de la Plata" looks at a series of legal documents that simultaneously represent a discourse of failure and discouragement around the colonization of Río de la Plata and give voice to the common people, soldiers, and sailors, who, while also connected to these lands and expeditions, were often excluded from the written documentation of those experiences. El Jaber's archival findings demonstrate that voices of subjects like these, pushed to the margins of the empire, can be heard and when studied provide an alternate view of events and histories. The final chapter in this section, Allison Margaret Bigelow's "Knowledge in Transition: Rethinking

the Science of Sameness in Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz's New Spain," examines the intersection between Indigenous knowledges and scientific writing in the *Respuesta a Sor Filotea* (1695) by Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (1648–1695). By juxtaposing Mayan language documents from colonial Yucatan with Sor Juana's masterful defense of knowledge in central New Spain, this chapter analyzes how Indigenous ways of knowing and epistemological categories may have shaped one of the most important treatises on knowledge in colonial Mexico.

Part VI, the final section of the volume, "Identities," focuses on the complicated and yet also foundational theme of the politics of identification. Identities – the act of self-definition and the definition of others around categories of race, ethnicity, religion, social status, economic status, or gender – are simultaneously key to understanding colonial societies and challenging to grasp, in part because they were inherently in flux. Identities were characterized by transitions of many sorts, just as the transitions in colonial societies were tied to shifting politics of identification. The three chapters in this Part work toward revealing the contours of transitions in colonial identities through the study of a range of subjects, regions, and time periods. Valeria Añón's essay "Textual Figures and Modalities of Change: The Soldier, the Translator, the Plebeian, and the Woman Chronicler" opens the section with a broad-ranging study of the four iconic figures mentioned in the title who, through their relation to diverse experiences – conquest, trauma, distance, and silence – provide insight into the configuration of identities. Añón highlights rhetorical structures associated with each of these figures, which become foundational for the Latin American archive. The next chapter, Héctor Costilla Martínez's "Diego Muñoz Camargo and the Destabilization of the *Relación Geográfica*: Adaptation and Variation in the Mestizo Chronicle," explores questions of identification through a focused study of a single author. Muñoz Camargo, a sixteenth-century writer, son of a Spaniard and a Native woman from Tlaxcala, is often viewed as a paradigmatic mestizo in both his mixed racial heritage and social identity as well as his narrative style. Costilla Martínez describes the context for and the purpose of a 1577 *relación geográfica* questionnaire and then analyzes how Muñoz Camargo's three histories interacted with that imperial project. This chapter highlights the ways in which Muñoz Camargo sought to insert the non-European history of the city of Tlaxcala in a colonial Spanish narrative framework, thus revealing the mestizo author's dual identity and fluid engagement with European and Native discourses. This, in turn,