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Amerindian and European Narratives in Interaction

Introduction

Ever since the arrival of Christopher Columbus in the New World in 1492 there have been increasing economic and cultural contacts, at first between Europeans and Amerindians and later between the West and Latin America. The contacts, often the consequence of conflict, have given rise to two significant outcomes in Latin American history: the establishment of the Spanish empire on the American subcontinent (1492–1825), and the subsequent independence of colonial America from Spain. This in turn led to the creation of a Western-model neocolonial (political, economic and cultural) system of development in Latin America, from which emerged more than twenty newborn republics between 1825 and the present. Such economic relations, developed over more than five centuries, have established real and ideological conditions of supremacy/subordination between the West and Latin America. Indeed, it is a paradox that, at the economic and political level,


2 “Ideology. A coherent set of socially produced ideas that lend or create a group or consciousness. Ideology is time and place-specific […] ideology must
these “compulsory” or “consented” relations of subordination have resulted in underdevelopment in Latin America, while, at the cultural level, the similar relations have created the conditions for the cultivation of a third literary discourse—hybrid in themes, techniques and styles—in which new narrative models emerge in an attempt either to assimilate or to oppose Western political and cultural paradigms.

Bearing in mind these historical and cultural conditions that have favored the formation of a hybrid discourse in colonial and postcolonial Spanish America, my main investigative goal in this study is to examine the literary responses to the “compulsory” or “consented” relations towards cultural hegemony as elaborated by colonial and postcolonial writers in their texts. I will examine two kinds of encounters between Europeans (Spaniards) and Amerindians (Mayans and Incas). On the one hand, the reciprocal impressions of cultural differences as depicted in the Amerindian books *Popul Vuh* (fifteenth century), *Chilam Balam* (eighteenth century), *The Huarochiri Manuscript* (1608) and the quintessential Spanish imperial text, *The Journals of Columbus* (first voyage 1492–93). On the other hand, the textual encounter in twentieth-century novels between ancient Amerindian themes and oral devices and modernist European literary techniques as they appear in the novels *El zorro de arriba y el zorro de abajo* (*The Fox from Up Above and Down Below*) (1971) by the Peruvian J.M. Arguedas, *Hombres de Maíz* (*Men of Maize*) (1949) by the Guatemalan M. A. Asturias, and *El otoño del patriarca* (*The Autumn of the Patriarch*) (1975) by the Colombian G. García Márquez.  

saturate society and be transmitted by various social and institutional mechanisms like the media, Church, education and the law. In the view of certain commentators, ideology is to be found in all social artifacts like narrative structures, including written history, codes of behavior, and patterns of beliefs”. Munslow, A. *Deconstructing History* (New York and London: Routledge, 1997): 184.

These texts will not necessarily be studied in chronological order, but will instead be examined according to the sequences created by the connection of themes and arguments put forward in this investigation. Specifically, these texts will be analyzed as narrative forms in order to explore two main hypotheses related to certain transculturation processes embedded in narrative transferences from Spanish America’s colonial times to the present.

Firstly, I would like to demonstrate how the examination of ancient Mayan and Incan codices and manuscripts reveals that the main structural characteristics of these texts appear to be their implicit magical tone as well as the presence of cultural and linguistic hybridity, represented in theme (monotheism versus polytheism), technique (the narration of the myth of nahualismo as an oral and written tale of magic) and style (the combined use of indigenous and European languages and dialects). I propose to disclose the extent to which realismo mágico, as


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The term hybridity derived from the Spanish terms “Hibridación/hibridez” / “procesos de hibridación” that were coined and conceptualized by Spanish American and Portuguese men of letters, historians, anthropologists, and economists centuries before postcolonial critics adopted them in nineteen seventies to analyse Asian and African societies, Procesos de hibridación are manifested in many forms, racial-ethnic (criollo, mestizo, mestizaje), cultural (aculturación, transculturación), religious (sincretismo) linguistic (creolización), literary (real maravilloso, realismo mágico), etc. Ribeiro, Darcy Las Américas y la civilización. Vol 1: La civilización occidental y nosotros. Los pueblos testimonio (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1969); Arrom, J. J. Criollo: definición y matices de un concepto. Certidumbre de América (Madrid: Gredos, 1971); Henríquez Ureña, P. Literary Currents in Hispanic America (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard U.P., 1945); 9–34; Zea, L. Filosofía de la historia americana (México, D.F.: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1978): 103–162; Ortiz, F. Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar (Caracas: Biblioteca Aya-
theorized and practised by the Guatemalan writer Asturias, stems from nahualismo, the immemorial narrative technique used by ancient and present-day Maya Indians for (re)telling, both orally and in codex form (Popol Vuh), their own myths of creation, religious rituals and social rites.

Secondly, I would like to analyze diverse episodes depicting religious and textual encounters between Europeans and Spanish Americans, explored at the intratextual level (inside each text) and the intertextual level (between old and new texts), to determine if colonial and twentieth-century Spanish American authors have often represented their cultural identity and difference from Europe and the United States by employing what we today could call “narrative discourses of resistance”. If this is so, then it is important to determine if these “resistance discourses” have been articulated in themes (as opposition to colonial and neo-colonial forms of Christian evangelization) as well as in technique (as in nahualismo, to recount, with equanimity, the metamorphosis of people into animals) and also through several variants of realismo mágico (as in Asturias’s renewed form of nahualismo and in García Márquez’s narrative modes of “othering”).

In an attempt to answer these questions, I propose to analyze the seven texts that compose the corpus of this investigation using the following concepts and methodologies elaborated by Latin American and Western critics: Transculturación narrativa by A. Rama; Procesos de hibridación by N. García Canclini and M. Bakhtin; Intertextuality by J. Culler; Modes de Transtextualité by G. Genette; Resistance Discourse by R. Terdiam; and Resistance Literature by B. Harlow and M. Zimmerman.


5 See note 9.

Writing the Foundational Text of the Incas The Huarochirí Manuscript

Originally composed partly in Quechua and partly in Spanish, probably in 1608, The Huarochirí Manuscript is a compilation of pre-Colombian and colonial oral accounts of Andean gods participating in myths of creation and human heroes engaged in wars and contests during harvesting ceremonies performed by the pre-Incan community of Waru Cheri who existed from 600 to 1250 AD. Such oral recollections had been passed down through generations of pre-Columbian Indians until the conquest of America in the fifteenth century, at which point they were compiled by a copyist working for a commission headed by the Catholic priest Francisco de Ávila (1573–1647). Ávila had been designated in 1609 by the Spanish Catholic kings as the first “Visitor of Idols” in America authorised to “extirpate idolatries” in the Viceroyalty of Peru. Both the copyist and the priest enthusiastically engaged in compiling, writing, editing, and translating the narration from oral Quechua into written Spanish, achieving in this way one of the most complex textual transcriptions ever done in colonial times.

In The Huarochirí Manuscript’s preface, the copyist and the editor Ávila are described in the act of collecting and editing information for composing the text:

(1) If the ancestors of the people pacha called Indians had known writing in the earlier times, then the lives they lived would not fade from until now. As the mighty past of the Spanish Vira Cochas is visible until now, I set forth the lives of the ancestors of Huaro Cheri people, which all descend from one forefather. What faith they held, how they lived up until now, those things and more; Village by village it will be written down: how they lived from their dawning age onward.7


The writer of this Preface is a bilingual person, and in all probability a person of mixed indigenous and Spanish origins (a *mestizo*) for he makes an adroit comparison between the oral Quechuan culture and the written Spanish culture. The bicultural person of this foreword—who acts as the subject of enunciation—appears to be very aware of two facts: that he is giving textual testimony to Amerindian myths and legends through his telling, and that he is writing history for posterity employing a quintessential element of the Renaissance book: a preface.

Indeed, this pre-Columbian narrative of the Waru Cheri people was transcribed from oral into written Quechua with Spanish titles resorting both to the introduction of the Latin alphabet and the adoption of a Renaissance book structure as it is evidenced in the organization of the narrative matter in the form of a preface, chapters headed by titles, and the use of sections/paragraphs that follow a chronological and thematic sequence. Some of the section headings were written in Spanish as, for instance, the first heading that states: *Como fue anteguam[en]te los ydolos y como guerreo entre ellos y como auia en aquel tiempo los naturales* (What the Idols Were Like, and How They Warred Among Themselves, and How the Natives Existed at That Time).

An examination of the form, content, and linguistic style of the preface, the Spanish headings and the first chapter of *The Huarochirí Manuscript* leads to the following presumptions. Firstly, that the allusion to “ydolos” (idols) in the inserted heading may point to the editorial addition of the Spanish heading after the chapter was written. Secondly, that the writer of the heading is actually a bilingual person whose mother tongue is not Spanish, given the heading’s mistaken Spanish syntactical structures (a non-concordance between the verb and the noun—*fue*? *ydolos*) which are improbable in the speech of even non-educated monolingual Spanish speakers. Thirdly, given that the structure of the manuscript’s initial chapters resembles replies to a series of questions, it can also be suggested that the copyist, acting as compiler and transcriber, may have recast the stories (responses) of the Indian informants in the format of the questionnaire, specifically, the kind of forms issued and distributed among the Crown’s official chroniclers and historians in early colonial times by the imperial agencies, *la Casa de Contratación de Sevilla* and *El Concejo de Indias*. Such questionnaire forms provided explorers, chroniclers and historians with proper writing models both to
catalog and register the ethnicity, the flora and the fauna of the newly colonized American continent. In this light, the Spanish heading would appear to be an answer to the royal enquiries about how the Incas existed at that time and what the idols were like. Consequently, one might gather that the Spanish heading could have been added in 1609, when the Catholic priest Ávila was officially commissioned to denounce, persecute, and prosecute any religious practice other than the one authorized by Spanish Catholicism.

The Spaniards who came to America were in fact depicted in Columbus’s *Journals* as conquistadors, Catholic priests and state officials commissioned by imperial Spain to win over territories and impose Christianity on Amerindians by way of military force and Catholic evangelization. Conversely, the Amerindians represented in *The Huaro-chirí Manuscript* were depicted in the political act of disobeying imperial orders to compel them to convert to Christianity and to abandon their long-standing religious ceremonies and sensual, ritualistic festivities:

(2) On that occasion, they say people celebrated a major festival [Chaupiñamca], dancing and drinking all night long [...] during Corpus Christi and the other major Christian holidays [...]

[T]hey dance right along until they get drunk. *And as for the Catholic priest, they fool him* saying, “Padre I’m back from cleaning the canal, so I’m going to dance. I’m going to drink.”

As far as that goes, *all the people do the same thing.*

*True, some don’t do it any more, because they have a good padre* [Francisco de Ávila].

*But others go on living like this in secret up to the present.*

[...] During the paschal festival, the Huacsas would dance for five days carrying coca bags [...]

They say that when they danced the Casa Yaco, Chaupi Namcare rejoiced immensely, because in their dancing, *they performed naked,* some wearing only their jewelry, hiding their private parts with just a cotton breechcloth.

*Chaupi Namca enjoys it to no end when she sees our <crossed out> [cocks] private parts!"* They say as they danced naked.

After they danced this dance, a very fertile season will follow.8

(ITALICS mine.)

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8 Ibid.: 65, 78.
In the fragment cited the Waru Cheri informants or myth tellers recount orally to the bilingual compiler–transcriber religious, secular, popular, public and secret stories in distinct but not autonomous narrative voices (see especially the italicized phrases). Actually, there are subsumed in the text’s diverse ideological voices:

a) Father Ávila’s hegemonic editorial voice (echoed by the myth tellers with subordinate respect) whose authority stems from being the official, designated religious censor of imperial Spain, with power to erase from the manuscript the Indian myth-tellers’ plain voices conveyed in the text’s descriptions of ritual songs and dances for fertilizing the earth (see the crossed out and bracketed word for the body’s intimate parts).

b) The mestizo’s subordinated narrative voice asserting that the Huaro-chirí Indians who do not have a “good padre” (i.e., father Avila) do “go on living like this (in sin) in secret up to the present” which illustrates the textual representation of a subordinate, colonized subject, inferior in rank to the colonizer Ávila, the imperial priest.

c) The copyist—the compiler and transcriber—of the manuscript, as indicated by textual evidence, is a bilingual person and a mestizo who, in spite of being a subaltern subject without a voice of his own, manages to give an historical testimony of the people of Waru Cheri (see the Preface, the first heading and the quoted excerpts).

d) The diverse voices of the manuscript are articulated in Spanish and Quechua and, therefore, they become linguistic indicators of the imperial authority as well as of the ethno-social affiliations of the colonized copyist who compiled, transcribed and helped to edit the indigenous text.

e) The oral traces—left by the overall use of colloquial speech that are expressed in the form of anacolutha, repetitions, parallel sentences and “reported speech”—remain very visible in the written transcription of the oral reports and even in the more “book-like” style of the preface, revealing a palimpsest of pre-Columbian, colonial and imperial voices that coexist and oppose one another in the manuscript.

All such stylistic indicators point to the fact that the subordinate colonial writer of the manuscript did manage to oppose, despite strict religious
Amerindian and European narratives in interaction

censorship, Spanish imperial Catholicism. He did this by creating a new
space of testimonial enunciation in which his bicultural (mestizo) identi-
ty emerged by resorting to the textual articulation of a variety of voices
and discourses that resist and challenge the dominant imperial Spanish
policies aimed at depriving the Incas of their ancient religious beliefs by
forcing them to convert to Christianity. This, the mode of hegemonic
control represented textually in The Huarochirí Manuscript has been
described by Antonio Gramsci as “domination by force” not by consent.
In short, orality, testimony, and “resistance discourses”, were important
structural components subsumed and subordinated in The Huarochirí
Manuscript.9

Given such textual evidence it can be suggested, in the terms of
Michael Bakhtin, that The Huarochirí Manuscript encapsulates a poly-
phony of voices or a linguistic hybridity manifested in the text by a
multivocal language situation (the telling of ancient oral myths and sto-
ries by Inca and mestizo informants) which generates multivocal narra-
tives and narrators (the written transcription and “edition” of Inca oral
stories and myths told by diverse informants, compilers, copyists, tran-
scribers, narrators and editors of The Huarochirí Manuscript).10 Such
conflicting textual relations—Spanish imperialism versus Amerindian-
dependent, cultural expressions—reveal, ultimately, the diverse ten-
sions and worldviews subsumed in early indigenous colonial writing
such as Popol Vuh, Chilam Balam in Mesoamerica and The Huarochirí
Manuscript in the Andes.

In conclusion, the examination of The Huarochirí Manuscript pre-
sented here, although limited in scope, may hopefully cast light on the

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9 Resistance discourse or “Counter Discourse. A term coined by Richard Ter-
diman to characterize the theory and practice of symbolic [literary] resistance.
[…] [H]is term has been adopted by postcolonial critics to describe the complex
ways in which challenges to a dominant or established discourse, specifically
those of the imperial center, may be mounted by the periphery […] Thus, such
challenges are not simply mounted against the texts as such but address the
whole of that discursive colonialist field within which imperial texts—whether
anthropological, historical, literary, and legal—function in colonized contexts.”
Ashcroft, B., Griffits, G. and Tiffin, H. Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies

10 Cf. Hybridity in Indian English Literature. (See M. Petersson’s article in this
volume).
implied textual relationships of hegemony and subordination between imperial Spaniards and colonial Inca Indians. Since Father Ávila, while “editing” the Manuscript (1608), was appointed (1609) by the Spanish Crown as the first extirpator of ídolos (the Spanish word for designating the Andean deities) of the Viceroyalty of Peru, one may certainly acknowledge, on the basis of the above-mentioned textual evidence, that the authorial intentions articulated in composing, or contributing to, the composition of The Huarochirí Manuscript were those of an official priest whose main role was “editing-censoring” books and cultural artifacts under the imperial commission of the Holy Spanish Inquisition. Conversely, since the mestizo appears to have been working as a compiler, copyist, transcriber, narrator and editor for Father Ávila, who was the one who really controlled the editing of the manuscript, one may also expect that the mestizo, as a subordinate editor, was not free to select, translate, compose and edit the book as he might have wished. It seems that with the transcription/editing of The Huarochirí Manuscript, Father Ávila—convinced either by authentic confessional beliefs or by his strong desire to become a bishop—was eager to make visible, in a testimonial narrative form, the Andean rituals and “false idols” in order to show the imperial authorities that he was effectively counter-attacking “heresy”.11 Therefore, against all expectations, he did allow, and perhaps even encourage, his junior editor to procure vivid descriptions of the secular religious celebrations or sacred rituals that were performed clandestinely (in reality and in the text) by the colonized Huarochirí people under a steady imperial gaze. Consequently, The Huarochirí Manuscript, which was initially intended to be, in Father Ávila’s inquisitorial eyes, an exposition of ritual objects (i.e., ancestral totems, mumified body parts, divinatory llamas, birds, stones and plants) as well as a written evangelical manifest of “satanic” rites to be used as evidence in the colonial idolatry trials of the early seventeenth century, ended up paradoxically as both an authentic testament of ancient Andean gods and a colonial cultural memory of the pre-Incan people of Waru Cheri.

Rewriting the Colonial Memory of the Waru Cheri People in the Peruvian Novel *El zorro de arriba y el zorro de abajo* by J. M. Arguedas

The colonial themes and devices that we have seen articulated in *The Huarochirí Manuscript* appear “re-presented”—brought to the present as intertext—in Arguedas’ novel *El zorro de arriba y el zorro de abajo*. As intertextuality is one of the main literary strategies employed by twentieth-century Spanish American writers to re-present colonial topics through the lens of parody, it is necessary to clarify the meaning of this term. Within the framework of this study, “intertextuality” refers to the diverse modes by which the modern text (quoting text) interrelates, interacts, or establishes a dialogue with other prior, literary or non-literary texts (quoted texts) through the use of parody, thematic allusion, stylistic imitation, or other structural or generic modes (quotations); these devices bring to the forefront the cultural contexts in which the intertextual references are constructed, not only by authors but also by readers who are informed enough to supply the missing links between prior and present texts and contexts.\(^\text{12}\) Thus, through the technique of intertextuality, colonial narratives from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and the historical spaces metaphorized in them are appropriated and incorporated as intertexts into twentieth century Spanish American novels.

In the case of *El zorro de arriba y el zorro de abajo* intertextuality and parody are used to recreate the conflict between the conversion of Indians to Christianity and the adherence to ancient Incan myths recorded originally in *The Huarochirí Manuscript*. In order to illustrate the way in which intertextuality is constructed in literary terms in Arguedas’s novel to articulate pre-Columbian Inca myths and colonial themes, I will examine, on the one hand, how dialogues function inside *The Huarochirí Manuscript* (at the intratextual level) and, on the other, how dialogues (at the intertextual level) are connected to each other in texts whose dates of composition and publication are separated by more than four centuries in time.

Here is an intratexual dialogue that occurs in the source text, *The Huarochirí Manuscript*:

\(^\text{12}\) Genette 1982: 8; Culler, 1981: 103.
A fox who’d come from down below and one who had come up above met face to face there. One fox asked the other, “Brother, how are things in upper Villca?”

“What is good is good. But a lord in Anchi Cocha, a Villca as a matter of fact, one who claims to know a whole lot, to be good himself, is terribly ill. […]

Then he asked, “And how are people doing in Lower Villca, brother?”

The other fox answered similarly, saying, “There is a woman, the offspring of a great lord and a Villca who almost died because […]

The ellipsis points inserted at the end of this fragment indicate not only that the telling of an Incan Myth (an adulteress who was turned to stone) will follow, but most importantly, it shows that the dialogue—between the foxes from above and below—function structurally in The Huarochirí Manuscript as a narrative framework to introduce the antagonistic but parallel stories about the myths and legends of pre-Colombian and colonial Peruvians, namely serranos or highlanders represented as foxes from up above and costeños or coastal dwellers represented as foxes from down below.

In order to show how the ancient foundational book of the Waru Cheri people of the Andes enters into an intertextual dialogue with Arguedas’s modernist novel, I will quote a passage from chapter five of The Huarochirí Manuscript that narrates both the myth of the adulteress turned to stone and the story of Huatya Curi, a poor man who challenges a rich man to a series of tests:

One day the challenger said, “Let’s have a drinking and dancing contest.” […]

The rich man was the first to dance in the contest. His wives, who numbered almost two hundred, dance along with him, and after they were done the poor man […] danced to the skunk’s drum he’d brought along, the earth of the region quaked.

With this he beat them all.

Next, they began drinking […]

And all of those people who were sitting there served him drink after drink without giving him a break.

Even though he drank every bit of it he sat there with no problem.

HM: 42–43, 45.
Then it was his turn. [...] 
But when he began to serve, starting from the head of the gathering, they dropped down drunk in no time, one after another.

After winning all these contests [...] 
Huatya Curi said, “Now, with blue tunics! And let our breechcloths be of white cotton! That’s how we’ll dance!”

“Very well then,” the rich man agreed. [...] 
As he was dancing, Huatya Curi charged down on him from outside screaming. That man panicked, turned into a brocket deer and ran away.
And his wife followed him [...] 
Chasing them, he caught the wife on the road to Anchi Cocha [...] 
And right then and there she turned into a stone instantly.14

(Italics mine.)

This ancient myth of Huatya Curi narrated in a dialogue form in The Huarochirí Manuscript (quoted text) has been (re)produced in Arguedas’ novel El zorro de arriba y el zorro de abajo (quoting text), perhaps to represent literally an unfinished dialogue that started centuries ago between a highlander (a fox from up above) and a coastal dweller (a fox from down below):

(5) The fox from down below: [...] This is our second encounter. Two thousands five hundred years ago we met in Lautasco Mountain in Huarocheri; we spoke to each other by the sleeping body of Huatyacuri, the son who was born before his father, craftsman son of the god Paracaca. There you revealed the secrets that let Huatyacury win the contest he had been challenged to by the son-in-law of Tamtañamca, a vain, ill and faltering god. First the son-in-law challenged him to sing, do ritual dancing, and drink; and he sang and danced two hundred different dances with two hundred women [...] The son of Pariacaca passed all of the tests; he presented himself wearing a garment made of snow [...] he made a blue puma roar; he himself roared even more ferociously while dancing dressed in white and black; he frightened his rival and changed him into a deer, and his rival’s woman he changed into a miraculous stone harlot. [...] 

The fox from up above: Now you’re speaking from Chimbote; you’re telling the stories of Chimbote. Two thousand five hundred year ago Tutaykire (Great Chief or Wound of the Night), the warrior from up above, son of Pariacaca, was detained in Urin

14 Ibid.: 58, 59.
Allauka, a yunga valley of the world of down below, he was detained by a harlot virgin […]

The individual who tried to take his own life and is writing this book was from up above; he still has ima sapra swaying in his bosom. Where is he from, what is he made of now? (Italics mine.)

Two literary propositions become evident in fragments 3 and 5 quoted above: the first is that the transcribed verbal dialogue represented in The Huarochirí Manuscript serves as the textual and contextual structural framework for Arguedas’s novel El zorro de arriba y el zorro de abajo; and the second is that each narrative in both texts is structured in parallel syntactical constructions that symmetrically correspond to or oppose each other, the presentation in direct dialogue form (questions and answers between the foxes) being the main structural device employed in the two texts.

Indeed, the title of Arguedas’s novel (El zorro de arriba y el zorro de abajo) not only alludes to themes or “conversations” articulated in the two texts but also anticipates the binary structure that characterizes the entire work: “the fox from up above” is a rich man and “the fox from down below” is a poor man. The two fictional characters engage in antagonistic dialogues and duels and, in so doing, introduce readers either to Incan myths or legends (The Huarochirí Manuscript) or to the parodied retelling of them (El zorro de arriba y el zorro de abajo). Arguedas’s novel presents a dual structure in which terms interrelate with or complement each other: it has two parts (I, II); two paratexts: The Prologue and the Epilogue; two main discursive modes: the diaries and the storytelling form of the chapters; two predominant narrative forms: dialogues and monologues; two main sets of characters: the protagonists (the foxes from above) and the antagonists (the foxes from below); and finally, it conveys metaphorically two chronological times and geographical spaces (or to put it in Bakhtin’s technical terminology, two main narrative chronothopo): the colonial Incan realm of the Quechua Indians of Waru Cheri and the urban setting of present day Peruvian Indians. Therefore, one may say that, taken in the context of the entire novel, this unfinished dialogue symbolizes the incomplete dialogue Arguedas—through his

15 FAFB: 53, 54.
narrator and readers—has established between colonial and modernist
texts and their relative, cultural contexts.

By reading these myths in both texts and comparing them, the readers
of *The Huarochirí Manuscript* (composed 1608) and *El zorro de arriba
y el zorro de abajo* (written in 1971) participate actively in the process
of intertextuality by supplying the missing links between the cultural
contexts of the Incas’ colonial past and the neocolonial present of Peru,
which includes the author’s extraliterary reality. Accordingly, in the
last part of the fragment cited the author Arguedas, by way of his narra-
tor, presents himself in its narrative as “one of the above,” a serrano, a
highlander Quechua Indian who writes in Quechua, even if he may sub-
sequently admit in the novel’s last page his bi-cultural background,
when he declares that: “I have been happy in my inadequacies because I
was perceiving Peru in Quechua and in Spanish”. An additional narrative theme in Arguedas’s novel transcribed from
*The Huarochirí Manuscript* is the Westerners’ colonial and contempo-
rary will to convert Inca Indians to Christianity. As indicated in the pre-
vious section, the Catholic priest Francisco de Ávila, the main editor of
*The Huarochirí Manuscript*—as the first priest authorized by the Span-
ish empire as “extirpator of idolatries” in the Viceroyalty of Peru—pos-

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16 Additional “intertextual dialogues” occurring between these two narratives are: the intentional use of Quechua, the language of ancient and present day Incas, side-by-side with Spanish, the language of colonial Spaniards and modern creoles and mestizos. There is another kind of hybridization that occurs at the level of syntax. Thus, the constructions of “unfamiliar” Spanish syntactical structures that distort and fragment the Spanish language by intentionally imitating Quechuan linguistic structures: for instance, the use of repeated double verbs with gerund value, a common linguistic feature in Quechua, but completely strange to Spanish. (*FAFB* 154: “Dijo, diciendo” (He says to me sayin’); 154: “baila bailando” (dance, dancin’); 156: “gira girando” (roll, rollin’).

17 FAFB: 259. As autobiographical information confirms, José María Arguedas (1911–1969) was a highlander, a bilingual Quechua-Spanish speaker and a Peruvian novelist who foretold in this novel and other documents his own suici-
essed the official religious authority to decide the conversion of the Inca to Christianity. By narrative contrast, the three main priest-figures who appear in *El zorro de arriba y el zorro de abajo* (the American priest associated with the Peace Corps, the Monseñor, and the preacher Moncada) appear to have lost all official and confessional authority to evangelize the present-day urban Indians of Peru portrayed in the novel.

Actually, the great official and confessional authority traditionally attributed in Catholicism to high-ranked church figures like the Monseñor, as well as the high appreciation of well-articulated sermons expected from priests in general, are completely undermined in the novel:

(6) Out of the small group of men near the archway came a priest dressed in lay garb, with a hard white collar. He raised a battery-powered bullhorn, like the richest peddlars carried.

“Brothers, Brothers, compañeros….,” he broadcast. “Not being disposition that you carry crosses nor corpses to this cemetery to other cemetery. Only new dead bodies buried in other cemetery, other side San Pedro. You people to decide, most illustrious Bishop, Monsignor, to respect. I to give name illustrious Bishop, blessing. […]"

From the cemetery the American priest went to the bishop’s office. He was speaking in English with the American bishop of Chimbote. Monsignor they [the Indians] are both tame and wild. One never knows…18

Likewise, the character Moncada is presented as a mentally ill preacher who in his fits of madness imitates Christ’s Gospel, preaching in incongruent street harangues directed to by-passers or to the open-mouthed citizens standing in the city’s open markets:

(7) On the first corner of El Modelo Marketplace, the main one in the city, near the stall with clothing, vegetables and a thousand odds and ends spread over more than half the street, Moncada set down the cross he has been carrying on his shoulders. […] [He] began to preach. […] “I am God’s toreador. I am a beggar for his affection, not for the false affection of the authorities, of humanity too. Look here!”

He shouted loudly and began bullfighting near the cross. […]

“Ah, ah! Life, death, the stink of fish meal, of genteel American monk, a gentleman that does not pronounce Castilian as it ought to be pronounced. The Yankee priest clergy hear this, hear

18 FAFB: 68, 70.
this is never going to talk Castilian—the kind of Spanish we speak—as it should be spoken. That doesn’t matter. They don’t come here to impose their will on us. They preach here, they put themselves in danger, gentlemen, amidst the pestilences, amidst the foul odors, like Moncada does, imitating Moncada, who would also preach with good deeds if he had the monis.\(^{19}\) (Italics mine.)

Arguedas’s narrative presentation of the “sermons” given by the evangelical priest and Moncada in the city streets greatly diminishes the authority of both priests by resorting skillfully to four stylistic and technical devices commonly associated with surréalisme: firstly, the use of syntactically fragmented structures like the transcription of a broken gringo-Spanish, which in Arguedas’s novel helps to convey the speech of the American priest; secondly, the creation of “odd” characters whose erratic actions usually cause chaos, as is the case of Moncada, a self-appointed Christ-like outlandish character whose actions parody the sacred figure of Christ as traditionally presented by institutional Spanish Catholicism; thirdly, the use of the technique of écriture automatique (as in surréalisme) to convey speeches with no apparent semantic directions, a feature commonly present in surrealist novels, and also illustrated in Arguedas’s novel by Moncada’s flashy speeches; finally, the introduction and/or intermingling of the city voices of street-wise characters with the voices of blue- and white-collar workers who (mis)communicate in urban slang or in distorted words from different languages and dialects (that is, monis) or in coastal Peruvian Spanish slang.\(^{20}\) All these modernist linguistic and literary techniques commonly associated with surréalisme are aimed at the literary elaboration of an urban multilingual milieu in which the voices of the main narrator, the Indian workers, the citizens and the foreigners are disarticulated in a linguistic chaos that conveys the predictable miscommunication of characters portrayed as displaced newcomers in urban milieux.

The metaphorizing of the chaotic transculturation that contemporary Peruvian Indians have undergone and of the contemporary attempt to

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\(^{19}\) Ibid.: 56, 62.

\(^{20}\) Peruvian Spanish slang as well as Quechua words and sentences and also English misspelled words occur throughout the entire novel (FAFB Glossary, 271–280; and pages 62, 99, 132).
convert Indians to Christianity is a central topic that Arguedas’s narrator has taken up from an old (con)text—The Huarochirí Manuscript—and skillfully transformed into a new (con)text—El zorro de arriba y el zorro de abajo. Resorting to modernist narrative techniques, Arguedas not only succeeds in achieving this kind of “transculturación narrativa”21 but also articulates in his novel a discourse of resistance that, on the one hand, questions in a literary mode the hegemonic role that Spain and the United States have played in the evangelization of ancient and present-day Incas and, on the other hand, depicts the contradictions between neocolonialism and the ongoing, imperfect modernization in Peruvian and Latin American societies metaphorically described in the novel.22 Indeed, the social contradictions caused by the interconnection in third world societies of economic neocolonialism, incongruous modernity and the vestiges of peripheral globalization—in the form of dependent, transnational capitalism—are the very topics represented in Arguedas’s novel.23 Thus, the reader confronts the depiction of the labor exploitation and ethnic degradation suffered by present-day Incas when they migrate from rural, highland villages to the urban, coastal cities and become workers of multinational corporations and marginalized consumers who intermingle in brothels with prostitutes and foreigners.24

In fact, to express in novel form the contradictions between the innovative, modernist narrative (surréalisme and plurilingualism as a literary practice) and inadequate modernity (as it appears in Peruvian society), Arguedas has masterfully reconstructed in El zorro de arriba y el zorro de abajo a shattered mirror that reflects surrealistically the vestiges of Spanish imperial colonialism, overlaid by fragmented images of a Peruvian modernity. This modernity represents the unfinished process

23 Hybridity in the context of “The new phase of Global Capitalism and its contradictions”, is further discussed in M. Petersson’s article “Hybridity in Indian English Literature”, included in this volume.
24 FBFB ch. I and III; see especially page 114; “the face of Peru” with its features: “Pope John XXIII, USA., Peruvian Industry, Communism, Peruvian Government, Peruvian people”. In sum, intertextuality, parody, and the religious and social conflicts as literary techniques and themes occur throughout the novel, see specially, 85, 90, 94, 100, 102, 114.
of economic, cultural, ethnic, and linguistic hybridizations that have not found their own system of social and cultural articulation, and, therefore, accounts for relationships of domination/dependency characteristic of the neocolonial, capitalistic order metaphorically described in the novel.

At the textual level, it is also interesting to note that scriptural and cultural intertextuality help bring to the forefront the ideology imbedded in the making and the reading of both the ancient manuscript and the modernist novel. Namely, “the question of what or whose ideology is in play” in texts can be detected clearly in both narratives if the observant reader correlates the roles of editor and narrator played respectively by Father Ávila and Arguedas in *The Huarochirí Manuscript* and *El zorro de arriba y el zorro de abajo*. Father Ávila, as an imperial editor, conveys his official ideology by censoring and revising a local (pre-Incan) text written in Quechua, allowing—in the name of judicial “authenticity”—the introduction of syntactical errors in the Spanish sentences used by the mestizo in the colonial text. By contrast, Arguedas, as a Peruvian author, conveys his ideological resistance to neocolonialism by also allowing the introduction of morphological and syntactical errors in the Spanish words and sentences used by the American and Peruvian preachers in the modernist novel. It becomes evident that the reading response or hermeneutical activity set off by reading Arguedas’s novel affects diverse levels of reception for instance, the uninterested response that Moncada’s religious harangues awaken in the characters stands in contrast not only to the probable, hilarious response of observant readers who can detect parody in the narrative setting, but also to the “competent” response of the readers whose historical horizons includes acquaintance with Arguedas’s Spanish version of the manuscript: *Dioses y hombres de Huarochirí* (1975).

Ultimately, then, analysis of the colonial manuscript and the modernist novel, as narratives and cultural texts, shows clearly that dialogue is used intratextually and intertextually to convey the cultural perspective of Indians both at the conversational level of the story and at the written level of the discourse. Dialogue functions in the manuscript mostly as an intratextual narrative framework that subordinates the transcribed
conversations of the Inca informants to the imperative, editorial voice of the priest Ávila. Therefore, one may say, in Bakhtin’s terms, that the manuscript is a monological narrative. By contrast, Arguedas’s modernist novel is a dialogical one because the dialogues represented in it are not governed by a predominant authorial voice but are independent voices engaged in intratextual and intertextual conversations with fictional characters and texts from different historical times.26

Writing the Foundational Texts of the Mayas: *Popol Vuh* and *Chilam Balam*

At the time Columbus and the Spanish conquistadors arrived in the Western hemisphere, Maya-Quiche Indians from the Mesoamerican region were in the process of compiling, in their indigenous languages, their two major foundational narrations, later called *Popol Vuh* and *Chilam Balam*. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the Quiche, a Mayan ethnic group, compiled their ancient oral myths on the creation of humans by carving them on tree bark in a codex form named *Popol Vuh*. Today three manuscripts, which were composed originally in glyphs and later in alphabetic forms, have been preserved: *Dresdensis–Dresden, Peresianus–Paris, Tro-Cortesianus–Madrid*. The *Popol Vuh* was composed of glyphs (carved figures and symbols) that mingled writing (phonetic signs) and painting (depictional drawings); these may be deciphered by using an interpretative system in which words and pictures are displayed together to convey meaning.

*Popol Vuh* was considered to be a sacred Council Book and was supposed to represent everything existing on the sky-earth (*kajulew*). The enlightened diviners, day keepers and priests, supposedly endowed with a cosmic vision, were meant to be able to see (read) in the Council Book the past, present and future events which affected the creation and destruction of gods and humans. The events narrated in the *Popol Vuh*

26 The terms “dialogue” and “dialogical” are refer here to Bakhtin’s clear-cut distinction between dialogue as real and fictional speech acts broken down into replies, and dialogue as an intertextual conversation that interconnects (parts of) texts from different periods. Bakhtin 1997: 316–317.
were structured a posteriori in five parts, according to Tedlock’s translation. The first part describes how the Mayan gods (“Bearer, Begetter, and Sovereign Plumed Serpent”) created the world: “for the forming of the earth they say, ‘Earth’. It arose suddenly, just like a cloud, like a mist, now forming, unfolding”. Having created earth, the Mayan gods appeared in Popol Vuh—parts one and four—undertaking the creation of the aboriginal Mayan and Quiche man. At first, the gods failed in their attempts to make (mold) man from mud and wood, but afterwards the gods succeeded in molding adequate human beings out of a perfect substance, maize:

(8) [T]he Bearer, Begetter, the Makers […] sought and discovered what was needed for human flesh. It was only a short while before the sun, moon, and stars were to appear above the Makers and Modelers. Split Place, Bitter Water Place is the name: the yellow corn, white corn came from there […] And then the yellow corn and white corn were ground, and Xmucane did the grinding nine times. Food was used, along with the water she rinsed her hands with, for the creation of grease; it became human fat when it was worked by the Bearer, Begetter, Sovereign Plumed Serpent, as they are called.

After that they put it into words:

- The making, the modeling of our first mother–father,
- With yellow corn, white corn alone for the flesh,
- Food alone for the human legs and arms
- For our first fathers, the four human works.
- It was staples alone that made up their flesh.

Maize being an omnipresent product for Mesoamerican Indians, it may seem appropriate that the Mayan gods created the aboriginal man out of it, the cereal that ancient Olmecs started to cultivate around 1400 BC, and which is still today the staple food for indigenous Mexicans and Central Americans.

The second and third parts of the Popol Vuh recount the mythological and vivid adventures of the young heroes Hunahpu and Xbalanque and their parents who, after many wanderings, endeavors and vicissitudes, were sacrificed by the Evil Spirits in the dark kingdom of Xibalbay. The fourth part of Popol Vuh deals not only with “the beginning of the con-
ception of humans” but also with the naming of “the first people who were made and modeled” and presided over the origin of the Maya-Quiche people and their realm. The fifth and last part of the Council Book is a compilation of foundational accounts of the origin of the Mayan peoples: their wars, migrations and geographical distribution in Mesoamerica as well as the historical accounts from the ancient divine Quiche ancestors to the sixteenth century Lord Quiche families and their lineage gods, that is, from around the year 3372 BC (the first year recorded in the Mayan calendars, according to their own vision of their history) until the Spanish Conquest of Mayan territories at the beginning of the sixteenth century. In one of the Popol Vuh’s last paragraphs entitled, “and here shall appear the faces, one by one, of each of the Quiche Lords,” there appears a name-listing of fourteen Quiche generations of Lords. Representatives of the last three generations of Lords, who were in power during and after the Spanish conquistador Pedro de Alvarado invaded the Quiche kingdom in 1524, are mentioned in this way:

(9) Three Deer and Nine Dogs, in the twelfth generation of lords. And they were ruling when Tonatiuh arrived. They were tortured by the Castilian people. Black Butterfly and Tepepul were tributary to the Castilian people. They had already been begotten as the thirteenth generation of lords. Don Juan de Rojas and Don Juan Cortés in the fourteenth generation of lords. They are the sons of black Butterfly and Tepepul.

My underlined words call attention to two historical and cultural facts: firstly, that Tonatiuh, which means “Sun” in Nahuatl, was the name that the Mexicans gave to the Spanish conquistador Pedro de Alvarado (1486–1541), who in 1524 invaded the Quiche kingdom; and secondly, that by recording in the original Quiche text the Spanish and Mayan names to pinpoint the patri-sanguineal family filiations (“Juan de Rojas and Don Juan Cortés are the sons of Black Butterfly and Tepepul”), the narrator not only reveals the mestizo affiliations of the recorded persons who are from indigenous and Spanish origins, but also makes the Popol

29 Ibid.: 145.
Vuh’s reader an actual eyewitness to a process of ethnic mestization and cultural hybridization which is still going on today in the American continent.

The *Popol Vuh* is worthy of comparison with the other major text of the Mayan *Chilam Balam*. Firstly, both texts were composed in languages belonging to the Mayan linguistic families, the *Popol Vuh* in Quiche and *Chilam Balam* in Yucatecan. Secondly, both texts are foundational books because they represent their cultures through written signs and, in so doing, offer a mythical and historical explanation of the origin of the peoples of Quiche and Yumayel in Mesoamerica. In addition, both were—and are still today, to a lesser extent—considered by their once-polytheist communities to be sacred and magical books because the Mayan priests who interpreted them to their communities were believed to “see” in these cosmological narrations prophecies of salvation and doom: the coming of new gods and the predestined end of the Maya empire and civilization.

Although there is no doubt that the greater part of the *Chilam Balam* narrations deals with Mayan mythology and polytheist religion, it is also true that, interspersed among the sacred themes, there are also a summary of the most notable events of Mayan history, synthetic chronological accounts in the “Katuns series”, a collection of riddles whose sacred function was to serve as the symbolic formula of religious initiation, and a list of prophecies attributed to the indigenous Priest Chilam Balam, who is the major narrator of this series of texts. The central character in the *Chilam Balam* books is the main God of the Maya-Yucatecan Indians, *Citbil*, the Creator (*ah ch’ab*), the True God (*hahal ku*), who united in his being some of the twenty gods and goddesses present in the Mayans’ myths of creation. The Mayan cosmology and theology are profoundly interwoven with myth, mystique, ritual, a sacred numerology, and a calendaric system dominated by quadripartite sets for counting time.31

In *Chilam Balam*, the spokesman (prophet) of the Jaguar, using Yucatecan-Mayan strophic forms, evokes and invokes both the Mayan ancestors and the disastrous effects Christianity had upon the Mayan (Yucatecan and Quiche) Indians:

31 *ChB*: 1–30.
(10) How much more cannot be told.
   For in fact the knowledge comes
   From the Ancestry of us Maya.
   This stone knows its meaning,
   Which comes from their country,
   is here.
   One looks at the stone
   And divine its meaning. […]
   Only by this was the divination,
   And these were the diviners.
   When misery came,
   When Christianity came
   From these many Christians
   Who arrived
   With the true divinity,
   The True God.
   For this indeed was the beginning of misery
   For us,
   The beginning of tribute,
   The beginning of tithes,
   The beginning of strife over purse snatching,
   The beginning of strife with blowguns,
   The beginning of strife over promotions,
   The beginning of the creation of many factions,
   The beginning of forced seizure for debts,
   The beginning of forced imprisonment for debts,
   The beginning of village strife,
   The beginning of misery and affliction,
   The beginning of forcible separation,
   The beginning of forced labor for the Spaniards.32

In the face of these arguments, it would not be difficult to make broad
generalizations about the evils of the Spanish conquest and coloniza-
tion of America as manifested in the brutal imperial policies of forced
labor and compulsory evangelization imposed on Amerindians by co-
lonial army officers, Catholic priests and royal officials of the Spanish
Crown. Nevertheless, anthropological evidence shows that the Mayan
and Aztec Indians promoted internal wars in which they vandalized
and burnt temples, killed and enslaved Indians from neighboring tribes
and tortured them to death in acts of blood-letting, as human sacrifices

32 Ibid.: 109, 110, 111.
offered to the stars and the sun, which were considered by them great deities.33

Few will dispute the tremendous negative impact that the Spanish conquest and colonization brought to native American Indians and their cultures. However, it should be remembered that the Spaniards’ imposition of Christianity on Amerindians took two main forms: an imperial enterprise that helped legitimize the economic and socio-political power of the Spanish Crown in colonial America, and an evangelical mission carried out mostly by Franciscans, Dominicans and Jesuits whose ambiguous role in the colonization of America may be characterized as an historical paradox. On the one hand, Christian priests like Francisco de Ávila and Pedro de Landa34 aided in the killing, exploitation, and destruction of Amerindian culture by burning manuscripts and tearing down ancient pyramids, religious centers and stone monuments in order to make America’s indigenous peoples reject their long-standing religious beliefs and embrace the Christian faith. On the other hand, other priests and missionaries—like Bartolomé de Las Casas (1470–1566), Bernardino de Sahagún (1500–1590), José de Acosta (1539–1600), and Juan de Torquemada (1560–1624)—undertook the commendable tasks of compiling and transcribing into Spanish or Latin the myths and legends of Amerindians. They also wrote religious summaries, historical chronicles, art books, and dramatic representations. By virtue of this transcultural process, the Spanish missionaries and friars preserved for posterity indigenous cultural artifacts that today may give us an historical glimpse of how ancient peoples from the Old and New World lived and intermingled socially during the conquest and in colonial times.

34 The Spanish priest Diego de Landa first burned books and other cultural objects of the Mayans because he believed they were the work of the devil; afterwards he tried meticulously to reconstruct (Relación de las cosas de Yucatán) the Mayan cultural and religious history content in the codices he had burned. This paradox symbolizes the two sides of the Spanish cultural imperial policies in the Christianization of America.
Rewriting the Colonial Memory of the Maya-Quiche People in the Guatemalan Novel *Hombres de Maíz* by M. A. Asturias

The policies and practices that brought about the Indians’ forced or willing conversions to Christianity, as well as the economic exploitation of indigenous races, provide the central topics for the novel *Hombres de maíz* by the Guatemalan Nobel Prize winning writer Miguel Ángel Asturias. Like Arguedas, Asturias makes use in his novel of intertextuality, parody, and surrealist writing to recontextualize the ancient indigenous mythology and religious/cultural conflicts recorded in the two foundational books of the Mesoamerican Indians *Popol Vuh* and *Chilam Balam*.

Indeed, resorting to both parody and literary discourses of resistance, the narrator of *Hombres de maíz* presents contemporary conflicts between different religions. Cultural encounters of the religious kind are illustrated in the following anecdote, where a Catholic priest tries to forcibly instill the Christian faith into a present-day Mayan Indian who literally resists it to the death:

(11) Well, this Indian was dying, and the Holy Father, after a thousand difficulties, because he lived far away, brought him the viaticum. The road was so bad the priest lost the host, and when he arrived at the rancho, not finding anything else to give the sick man, he picked up a cockroach and pulled off one of his wings. The Indian was very near the end, gasping, and the Holy Father, beside the cot, was saying, ‘Do you believe this is the body of Our Lord Jesus Christ?’ ‘Yes, I do,’ replies the Indian. ‘Do you believe this little wafer is his Holy Body?’ ‘I do,’ repeats the Indian. ‘And do you believe in life eternal?’ ‘Yes, yes, I do.’ ‘Then if you do, open your mouth-’ At that moment, the Indian pushes the priest’s hand away and says, ‘I believe, father, but I ain’t swallowing it’.35

The Indian character portrayed here knows the Catholic protocol of confession and competently answers affirmatively all the priest’s questions until he is asked to swallow the false host; then he chooses to refuse it, and by doing so, he mentally and emotionally rejects confession and the Christian faith altogether.36 This Indian character, as the an-

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35 *MM*: 172.

36 The rejection of Catholicism by the Maya Indian is emphasized linguistically by the use of the idiomatic expression “No me lo trago” (“I ain’t swallowing it”) which in colloquial Spanish means “I certainly do not believe it.”
cient Amerindians portrayed in *Chilam Balam* and *The Huarochirí Manuscript* are reported to have done, followed Christianity in the letter, but not in the spirit. In fact, through the use of parody, Asturias’s narrator tells in a novel form not only how rural Catholic priests have failed in their efforts to completely convert Amerindians to the Christian faith, but, most importantly, he metaphorically emphasizes the Indians’ silent resistance to the imposition of a foreign culture and religion. “The passive resistance of Indians is an important trait that has appeared even in the earliest short stories of the Guatemalan writer,” acknowledges Gerald Martin, a leading critic of Asturias’s work.37

Asturias’ novel *Hombres de maíz* is structured externally in six parts: “Gaspar Ilom”, “Machojón”, “The Deer of the Seventh Fire”, “Colonel Chalo Godoy”, “María Tecún”, “Coyote Postman” and an epilogue. However, any attentive reader can also detect a dual internal structure of the story presented in four main sections. The first section deals with the initial four episodes; the second recounts the story of María Tecún; the third is about Coyote Postman; and the fourth is the epilogue. By referring intertextually in his novel’s title (*Hombres de maíz*) to a central theme of *Popol Vuh*, by giving Mayan Indians central roles as protagonists, and by allowing the indigenous beliefs to occupy most of the narration, the author, through his narrator, imposes in his novel the perspective of the Mayans. These narrative strategies become evident in the novel’s first lines:

(12) ‘Gaspar Ilom is letting them steal the sleep from the eyes of the land of Ilom.’

    Gaspar Ilom is letting them hack away the eyelids of the land of Ilom with axes …’

    Gaspar Ilom is letting them scorch the leafy eyelashes of the land of Ilom with fires that turn the moon the angry brown of an old ant …’ […]

    Bare earth, wakeful earth, sleepy maize-growing earth […]

    We got to clear the land of Ilom of them who knock the trees down with axes, them who scorch their forest with their fires, them who dam the waters of the rivers that sleeps as it flows and opens its eyes at the pools and rots for wanting to sleep…The maizegrowers’.38

37 *MM*: 394; footnote 48; my translation.
38 Ibid.: 1, 2, 4.
In this kind of poetic prose the land is given a face—eyes, eyelids, eyelashes—to see, and a voice to claim and accuse those who devastate and burn the Indian highlands: “the maize growers”. In these first pages land becomes a central narrator who “sees” and also “tells” the story, reflected through the point of view of a person (Gaspar Ilom) who perceives reality as a Mayan Indian. Thus, personification as well as syntactic parallel sentences, rhythmic evocations in triads, unexpected images distorted by dreams and even the use of écriture automatique are the very narrative and poetic, surrealist techniques used by Asturias to reincorporate in his novel the Amerindian cosmogony and the social and religious protest which originally appeared in the ancient Mayan folk-tales reported in Popol Vuh. Actually, Asturias verifies the existence of a “Latin American surréalisme” in these words: “For us, Surrealism meant […] to find in ourselves, not the European style, but lo indigena, lo americano”.39

In this first section the two protagonists (Gaspar Ilom, a descendant of Mayan Indians) and Colonel Gonzalo Godoy (a descendant of Spaniards) oppose each other to protect their own people’s ideological and economical interests. Ilom, the Indian chief, stands up for his land and for the spiritual right of Indians to cultivate maize solely as a food and not as a commodity because, as he argues, maize “sown to be eaten is the sacred sustenance of the men who were made of maize. Sown to make money it means famine for the men who were made of maize”.40 This argument, which refers to the title of Asturias’s novel, is intertextually related to the Mayan myth of creation, in which the ancient Mayan Gods molded man out of maize.41 By contrast, Godoy confronts Ilom militarily to protect the industrial “maizegrowers” of Spanish descent (maiceros ladinos), who have burnt the forests of Ilom to grow maize and to trade it commercially. After Godoy massacres most of the Indians, Ilom kills himself so as not to survive his men. Subsequently, the Indian sorcerers avenge him and his men by cursing and punishing the perpetrators of the massacre with death, a fate that is fulfilled in the three remaining episodes.

40 MM: 5–6.
41 Cf. PV, part 3, ch. I.
Two cultures confront each other in this section: the pre-industrial Mayan culture, represented by Ilom and the Indians for whom money (gold) does not have any value; and the industrial Western culture, represented by Godoy and the industrialist “maizegrowers”, for whom money is a capitalist necessity. Given the reality that underlies Asturias’s fiction in that Ilom is the name of both a geographical region in Guatemala and an historical person (Gaspar Hijom, an Indian leader who revolted against the Guatemalan government for authorizing Mexican settlers to appropriate Indian lands), it can be claimed that in Hombres de maíz the author takes a real fact (a social text) from Guatemala’s history and incorporates it into his novel (as a literary intertext). Hence, Hijom’s revolt represents the collision between Indian and Ladino cultures both in reality and in fiction. The author himself confirms this fictional appropriation of reality: “Sometimes I reread to myself entire paragraphs of Men of Maize, and I realize that there is a popular richness, born of the people, not born of me, that I have only transposed it to the pages, namely, characters that speak, that I have heard speaking, and I have carried them to Hombres de maíz”.

The second structural component of the novel deals with the fifth episode, the legend of María Tecún, who abandoned her blind Indian husband Goyo Yic. This single episode narrates the story of Yic who, after regaining his vision through an eye operation, becomes a salesman and follows María Tecún for years throughout the coastal villages and cities until he finally find her and retires to the highlands to live peacefully with her. Readers of this part may infer a binary opposition between city and highlands: Ladinos are portrayed as leading their materialistic life in the coastal cities while Indians live permanently in the highlands or return there to lead a quiet, spiritual life. It is particularly interesting to remember that the binary opposition between city and highlands—connected to theme and narrative space—is also a central literary device in Arguedas’s novel El zorro de arriba y el zorro de abajo. What is different, however, in Asturias’s novel is the presence of

intermediate characters who undergo a transculturation process as the narration progresses: Indians who occasionally adopt the culture of the Ladinos (Goyo Yic) or, conversely, Ladinos who adopt the spiritual attitudes of Indians (the Spanish priest Don Casualidón).

The third section corresponds to the sixth episode, Coyote Postman. It deals with the magical adventures of Nicho Aquino, a postman who carries mailbags by mule from a provincial village to deliver them to the capital city. During one of his journeys, Aquino, while looking for his wife who had disappeared, meets an Indian wizard in the “Painted House” who guides him into “the mouths of the rivers”. There, the postman is transformed into a coyote, and then, as half-animal and half-human, he has to overcome many tests in order to be granted the right to know what has happened to his wife.

The fourth or last section of the novel is the Epílogo. It seems initially to have the traditional narrative function of a last chapter that summarizes and ties up the loose ends of the novel, accounting for all the characters’ final destinies. In fact, the surrealist, shifting images and the use of écriture automatique, as well as the modernist open ending allow the novel to retain the life-like fragmented structure that has prevailed in the entire narration. Like Arguedas, Asturias skillfully uses surrealist techniques in Hombres de maíz to reconstruct the shattered mirror that reflects the interconnected, fragmented images of ancient and contemporary Amerindian cultures and narrative traditions.

Of the various sections of Hombres de maíz, the one that is most representative of Asturias’ narrative mastery is, in my view, the third section, “Coyote Postman” because it shows that the intertextual dialogue established between colonial texts—Popol Vuh and Chilan Balam—and Asturias’s novel occurs not only at the levels of title and theme, but also in relation to structure, style and vocabulary. In order to understand the mechanics of Asturias’s literary creation and the internal and external dynamics of his explicit intervention or authorial involvement in the text, it is relevant to examine the processes by which the Guatemalan author takes up an ancient Mayan narrative device, nahualismo (nagualism), and introduces it in his novel in a refashioned form: realismo mágico.

Nahualismo, as both a theme and a way of presenting ancient Maya myths, implies the narrative transformation of humans into animals or
Amerindian and European narratives in interaction

vice-versa (as in *Popol Vuh* when two young Indian brothers are transformed into monkeys by the mythical heroes Xbalanque and Hunahpu or when a possum takes the form of Hunahpu’s head and body. Nahuatlismo stems from the ancient Maya myths in which “initiated” men, priests, sorcerers, and courageous warriors assumed themselves or instilled in other humans, by virtue of magic, the most representative qualities of animals, for instance, fierceness from tigers, guile from coyotes, and fleetness from deer. The priest Valentín Urdáñez, a character in *Hombres de maíz*, ambiguously attests in the novel to this Mayan belief:

(13) Nagualism. Everyone talks about nagualism and no one knows what it is. He has a nagual, they’ll say of someone, meaning he has an animal to protect him.45

[T]hese ignorant people [Indians] believe to be not only their protectors but their other selves, so much so that it is thought they can change their human form for that of the animals, which is their ‘nagual,’ a tale as old as it is foolish.46

Indeed, nahuatlismo becomes, in *Hombres de maíz*, a topic and a narrative device that Asturias appropriates from the ancient Mayan myths recounted in *Popol Vuh* and transforms into the original literary technique of realismo mágico in order to recount how Nicho and a wizard are converted into a coyote and a deer, respectively:

(14) Señor Nicho pushed the mailbags aside, took off his hat, as if he were in church, and continued to stare stupefied. […]

A man with blue or, rather, black hair, in any case it was shining, and soot-stained hands […] fingernails agleam like fireflies, took him out of his thoughts. […]

‘I am one of the great firefly wizards…’ […]

‘And now that you know who I am, I will tell you where you are. You have journeyed towards the West across lands full of wisdom and maizefields, you have passed beneath the tombs of the Lords of Champ, and now you are on your way to the mouths of the rivers…’

‘I am looking for my woman…’ […]

He [Nicho] casts off his human shell, a rag doll with dripping eyes his tragic human mourning, inseparable from the memory of

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45 *MM*: 176.
46 Ibid.: 173.
his woman changed into a pile of bones, and flesh, and hair, and clothes, and pieces of broken jar, and cold of bracelets and earrings, and a tangled roundlet at the bottom of a well in which she, through going for water, went to meet her darkness. He cast off his human shell and leaped up onto a sandbank warm but rough beneath his four extremities. The firefly wizard who has accompanied him since they met in the Painted House was still at his side, and told him he was the Curer-Deer of the Seventh Fire. And indeed, if one looked at him closely, his body was like a deer’s, his head was a deer’s head, his tail, his rump, the way he moved.

And he [Nicho], without saying it, proclaims himself a coyote, with teeth from a cob of white maize, his far-fetching body like a handsaw sawing, pitched forever forward, four paws of running rain […]

Eyes of forest animals were the eyes of the curer and the postman, deer and coyote.47

Metaphor and metamorphosis converge here to represent magic (nahualismo) as fictional reality, or realismo mágico, to use Asturias’s terms. Certainly it is not only critics who have associated Hombres de maíz with realismo mágico, but also Asturias himself, who acknowledged this literary device as a main characteristic of his novel. He related realismo mágico to the Mayan Indian’s mentality in this way:

(15) You see, an Indian or a mestizo in a small village might describe how he saw an enormous stone turn into a person or a giant or a cloud turn into stone. That is not a tangible reality but one that involves an understanding of supernatural forces. That is why when I have to give it a literary label, I call it “magic realism.” But there are other similar kinds of occurrences. Due to an unfortunate accident a woman falls into a chasm while going for water, or a rider is thrown from his horse. Such affaires diverses as they could be called, can also be transformed into magic events. Suddenly, for the Indian or mestizo, the woman didn’t fall into a chasm, but the chasm grabbed her, simply because it needed a woman for a spring or for some other purpose. And the rider didn’t fall from his horse because he had a few drinks too many but because the stone on which he hit his head or the water in which he drowned called him. In this way stories grow into legends. The old Indian literature, the Indian books that were written before the conquest of America by the Europeans, stories

Amerindian and European narratives in interaction

such as Popol Vuh or Los Anales de los Xáhil gain a kind of intermediary reality this way. Between the “real” and the “magic” there is a third sort of reality. It is the melting of the visible and the tangible, the hallucination and the dream. It is similar to what the surrealists around Breton wanted and it is what we could call “magic realism.” “Magic realism”, of course, has a direct relationship to the original mentality of the Indians. The Indian thinks in pictures; he sees things not so much as the events themselves but translates them into other dimensions where reality disappears and dreams appear; where dreams transform themselves into tangible and visible forms.

The two previous long quotations are necessary to illustrate how Asturias’s poetics of realismo mágico is put into practice in Hombres de maíz. In Asturias’s aesthetic view, realismo mágico, as a literary concept and as a narrative device, is determined by ideological, methodological and narratological criteria. Realismo mágico has an ideological dimension because the Amerindian vision of life makes them think in pictures and see tangible reality as a result of both natural (real, logical) laws and supernatural (magic, simultaneous) forces. It expresses itself as literary creation because, according to Asturias, (Latin) American colonial and modernist narratives are elaborated as literature to meld reality with magic, the visible and tangible with hallucination and dream. Finally, realismo mágico derives from a narratological framework because it stems from an ancient narrative oral tradition (nahualismo), by virtue of which stories grow into legends and real events are perceived as magical ones and, conversely, magic accounts are reported as real.

Asturias’s narrative skill in describing ancient and present-day Mayan Indians is shown diversely in his fictional writings (novels, short stories, poems), in his academic studies (a doctoral dissertation at the Sorbonne University on Mayan culture and Popol Vuh), in his ethnological essays (such as his Master’s thesis, El problema social de los indios), and in his newspaper articles (on Guatemalan society, politics and


Mayan Indians). In addition to writing extensively on both Mayan culture and *Popol Vuh*, the Guatemalan author was also a trained ethnologist who, as a child, lived with Mayan Indians and therefore was also able to acquire a first-hand knowledge of the Mayan’s magical and real world. Given the bibliographic and literary evidence relating to Asturias’s work, it can be suggested that he was eager to recreate in his novels, particularly in *Hombres de maíz*, the perception of magic articulated in *Popol Vuh* by renewing the ancient Mayan narrative device of *nahualismo* and, as a result of this process of intertextual recreation, it might be claimed that he invented *realismo mágico*, both as a modernist literary technique and as a style of literary resistance to Western cultural hegemony.

Writing the Foundational Text of Spanish Americans: Columbus’s *Journals of Discovery of America*

When Peninsular Europeans arrived in the new-found Western continent, they brought with them a specific European, Renaissance worldview. Conceptually speaking, Renaissance thought was centered on the dichotomy of culture versus nature, in which culture was generally associated with the civilized man (the European), whereas nature was associated with the natural man (the non-European). Such a dichotomy was instrumental in the ideological debate about the non-European peoples and cultures that took place in Europe from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century. Ibero-Europeans, in particular, brought with them not only their medieval–Renaissance mentality (i.e., religious beliefs, theocentric geographical assumptions and ethno–Eurocentric convictions), but also their social conventions (i.e., dress styles and Mediterranean cultural mores). Spaniards, in imperial times, were fanatically monotheist and consequently believed—as did the majority of Europeans—that their Christian mission was to impose their “civilized” cul-

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ture and religion on the “natural man” of the new-found American continent.

One can only imagine the mutual surprise Columbus and Native American Indians felt when gazing at each other on the West Indian island of Guanahani, where Columbus and his crew landed unexpectedly on 12 October 12, 1492:

(16) At two hours after midnight appeared the land, [...] they arrived at an Island of the Bahamas that was called in the Indians’ tongue, Guanahani. Presently, they saw naked people [...] it appeared to me that these people were very poor in everything. They all go quite naked as their mother bore them; and also the women [...] All that I saw were young men [...] very well built, of very handsome bodies and very fine faces [...] (and they are of the color of the Canary Islanders, neither black nor white) [...] They bear no arms, nor know there of; for I showed them swords and they grasped them by the blade and cut themselves through ignorance. They have no iron [...]51

Conversely, this is what the Aztec messengers described in astonishment to Moctezuma II: “When the foreigners arrived: / Fifteen nineteen [...] / Here / in the land / Of the Neck Country, / Yucatan /”:52

(17) All iron was their war array. They clothed themselves in iron. They covered their heads with iron. Iron were their shields. Iron were their lances. And their deer, which bore them upon their backs, were as high as roof-tops. And they covered all parts of their bodies. Alone to be seen were their faces—very white. They had eyes like chalk; they have yellow hair, although the hair of some was black. Long were their beards, and also yellow; they were yellow-bearded. [The hair of the negroes] was kinky and curly.53

It is to be inferred from these intercultural encounters, recorded a posteriori in colonial texts, that not only the Spanish crew were astonished to gaze at the naked native American Indians, painted in black, white and red colors, standing, as Columbus writes, under the shadows of “trees, which were the most beautiful thing to see that ever I had seen”,54 but

51 Columbus, Journals: 64, 65.
52 ChB: 221–222.
54 Columbus, Journals, 73, entry: 17 October, 1492.
also the Amerindians were greatly amazed when they saw bearded Spaniards, dressed to excess, wearing iron arms, and appearing to have arrived in “floating houses”, “from beside the sea”.\(^{55}\) Although Amerindians lacked iron, they were reported to live, despite their rough living conditions, harmoniously in communion with a nature rich in exotic flora, fauna and sites of gold.

It is inferred from Columbus’s letters that his ambition for gold, as well as his aspirations to obtain respect and religious authority from the Spanish Catholic kings, make him go as far as to assume that Amerindians have neither religion nor speech:

\(\text{(18) I believe that they easily be made Christians, because it seemed to me that they belong to no religion. I, please Our Lord, will carry six of them at my departure to Your Highness, that they may learn to speak.}^{56}\)

Assuming a perspective of cultural superiority, Columbus accentuated in his *Journals* the Amerindians’ lack of material objects, which were so essential to Europeans. In his eyes, Amerindians had no clothes, no possessions, no arms, no iron, no religion, not even speech, but they had gold and a “marvelous” flora and fauna. Hence, he recommended to the Spanish Catholic kings, first, to subdue the Amerindians in a military action, to enslave them, and, afterwards, to impose on them the Christian faith and the Castilian tongue. The one recommendation the Catholic kings did not follow was to enslave the Amerindians, and, in fact, the Spanish kings promulgated a law declaring Amerindians not to be slaves because, in the royal understanding, although savages, the Amerindians still were creatures of God.

Within this imperial context, Columbus’s *Journals* emerge as both an act of inventory and an act of invention. They are an act of inventory because the Admiral was the first to classify the New World’s races, fauna and flora and report them both in written narrative and in numerical accounts to the Spanish kings and to European gentlemen. By doing so, he laid the grounds for the birth of American ethnology. Simultaneously, it is an act of invention because the narratives that Columbus’s *Journals* incorporated (i.e., mariners’ verbal accounts of journeys to the Indies,

\(^{55}\) *PV*: 16.

\(^{56}\) Columbus, *Journals* 65, entry: 12 October 1492.
Vespucci’s illustrated accounts of the discovery of the New World, Waldseemüller’s annotated maps), and other tales and chronicles which informed Columbus’s textual discourse of exploration have, undoubt-edly, contributed to the invention of the “colonial Other”, on the basis of hyperbolic accounts that have ambiguously described Amerindians either as innocent, handsome, noble savages, or conversely as naked, lustful, ignoble savages and cannibals.57

These vivid, written images of New World peoples and cultures gave rise to an imperial discourse in which Renaissance Europeans assumed that Amerindians and other non-Western peoples needed to be “civilized”, that is, to be Christianized by them. This superior cultural view has, since Columbus’ times, been articulated in texts, institutions, and historiographic studies, creating a very powerful Eurocentric perspective on extra-European and Latin American peoples and societies.58 Such a discursive construction of a Eurocentric view of Amerindians, which emerged during the Renaissance and still remains embedded in mainstream European popular discourses, has been questioned by twentieth-century Spanish American novelists.

Rewriting Columbus’s Journals of the Discovery of America in the novel El otoño del patriarca by G. García Márquez

In El otoño del patriarca (The Autumn of the Patriarch) (1975), the Colombian author Gabriel García Márquez uses intertextuality, parody and realismo mágico as literary strategies to revise both European (Eurocentric) history and Spanish American (official) history. García Márquez often rewrites national and Latin American official history in his


58 For the definition of ‘Eurocentrism’ and relevant bibliography on that concept, see Ashcroft, 1998: 90–91.
novels by introducing a fictional version as an alternative reading. For instance, the discovery of America, reported originally in Columbus’s *Journals*, is rendered in *The Autumn of the Patriarch* from the perspective of the villagers of a Caribbean town:59

(19) [The dictator] began to look into what had happened to the world while he was sleeping […] and finally he found someone to tell him the truth general sir, that some strangers had arrived who gabbed in funny old talk […] they called macaws poll parrots, canoes rafts, harpoons javelins, and when they saw us going out to greet them […] [they] shouted to each other look there how well-formed, of beauteous body and fine face, and thick-haired […] they are the hue of canary birds, not white not yet black, […] and on the other hand they [the Spaniards] were decked out like the jack of clubs in all the heat […] and they wore their hair like women even though they were all men and they shouted that they didn’t understand us in Christian tongue when they were the ones who couldn’t understand what we were shouting, […] a wild motherfucking trade grew up and after a while everybody was swapping his parrots, his tobacco, his wads of chocolate, […] they even wanted to trade a velvet doublet for one of us to show off in Europeland, just imagine general what a wild affair, but he was so confused […] so he went back to his bedroom, opened the window that looked out onto the sea […] and he saw the usual battleship that the marines had left behind in the dock, and beyond the battleship, anchored in the shadowy sea, he saw the three caravels.60

In this passage the narrator adopts both a local (Latin) American perspective and a narrative form of a report that converts chronological, national and continental official history (that is, Columbus’s reports of his first encounters with Amerindians) into non-chronological popular rumors spread among a coastal village people who observed indifferently the most extraordinary events, such as the arrival of strangers who wear outdated clothes, navigate in ancient caravels, speak the same language as they do, using old dialects, and display objects never seen before.

59 In *El arpa y la sombra* (México: Siglo XXI, [1979] 1989): 87–88, 93, 94, 99, 100, Alejo Carpentier also makes use of intertextuality and parody for elaborating the same historical material (the first encounter between Columbus’s crew and Indigenous Americans) as García Márquez did in *El otoño del patriarca*.

60 Ibid.: 41–42.
Realismo mágico is particularly well adapted for the representation of this anachronistic kind of world because, as a literary technique, it allows the inclusion of a literary “organized chaos” to create narrative verisimilitude, as witnessed in the episode cited above, which includes both historical and linguistic anachronisms to convey simultaneously different historical periods. Accordingly, in the material order, caravels appear side-by-side with steel-clad battleships, and, linguistically, Castilian cultisms and archaisms (la mar, papagayos, almadias, azagaya, fermoso, dellos, la calor, and jubón) co-exist with stylized regional slang (cayucos, encarapitaron, despellejarnos, carajo, and despelote). Thus, the collective narrator inverts the traditional Eurocentric vision of history by marveling that the Spaniards “covered all parts of the bodies”, and it is the Spaniards who are mocked because they are inappropriately dressed to cope with the tropical climate in which the semi-naked natives live.

Realismo mágico is utilized, then, in García Márquez’s The Autumn of the Patriarch not only as a narrative technique to depict the Caribbean social, political and cultural environment, with a rich interplay of contrasting images and an exuberant, stylized colloquial language, but also as a literary act of ideological resistance to contest ethnocentrism, the chronological conception of history, and the textual construction of the “Other” and, by extension, the narrative process of “othering”.

In the episode already cited from The Autumn of the Patriarch, realismo mágico is also used to depict an alternative relationship or to neutralize the “exotic” images Europeans may have of non-European peoples and cultures. Thus, by resorting to parodic inversion, the collective narrator imposes the villagers’ provincial perspective, whereby the Spaniards are “reported” as “exotic” strangers, so that the latter become represented not as the subjects and writers of history but as the objects of the narration. This narrative process of “othering” the Spaniards is achieved both through the use of parody (i.e., the diminishing of the im-

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61 Cf. fragment 16.
62 “In general terms, the ‘other’ is one who is separated from one’s self. […] Othering describes the various ways in which colonial discourse produces its subjects. […] The construction of the O/other is fundamental to the construction of the self. The process of Othering can occur in all kinds of colonialist narratives” (Ashcroft 1998: 169, 170, 171, 172).
portance of Europe by the use of humor through the hyperbolic plural *las Europas*, in the English translation, “Europeland” and by the insertion of contrasting comparisons in which Spaniards turn out to be the ones observed, not the observers (i.e., “they were decked out like the jack of clubs”, “they wore their hair like women”). In consequence, Europeans (Spaniards) are frequently represented in García Márquez’s novels not as the ones who, clinging to their own Western perspective, often “understand” or impose their interpretation on the others (the non-Westerners) but as the ones who are misunderstood or even misinterpreted by extra-European peoples.

Employed as a narrative order to neutralize or to oppose oppressive cultural perspectives, *realismo mágico*—in the form used in *The Autumn of the Patriarch*—can be viewed as an inversion of the technique of “defamiliarization”. An explanation is in order: if the concept of *ostranenie* or “defamiliarization”, put forward by the Russian formalist Victor Shklovsky, can be generally defined as “to make the familiar unfamiliar”, then the literary device of *realismo mágico*, or at least the variant of it introduced in the above-cited episode, can conversely be defined as “making the unfamiliar familiar”. It may be argued that the inverse and movable perspectives inherent in García Márquez’s *realismo mágico* might become a hermeneutical problem for foreign readers who cannot distinguish history from invention, and, subsequently, read historical events that have been fictionalized in novel form either as “pure” magical fantasy or, alternatively, as invented stories, or even as “factual” national history. This kind of “misreading” may render twentieth century Latin American novels that incorporate the technique of *realismo mágico* only as the accounts of fabulous and exotic events, even if these novels are based on national or continental history. Of course, one may turn this argument upside down by saying that this very ambiguity may be hermeneutically enriching for the informed reader.

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63 Shklovsky cited in Stacy, R. H. *Defamiliarization in Language and Literature* (Syracuse, USA, UP., 1977); IX, 173.

64 According to García Márquez: “The trouble is that many people believe I’m a writer of fantastic fiction, when actually I’m a very realistic person and write what I believe is the true socialist realism”. Stone, P. H. *The Art of Fiction* LXIX, Gabriel García Márquez. *Paris Review* 23, 1981: 59.
García Márquez, as has been suggested in the episode dealt with above, uses realismo mágico to question both a pervasive Eurocentric perspective of Latin Americans and a Western, Cartesian logic in which history tends traditionally to be considered “chrono-logical,” that is, linear, rational and reasonable. By contrast Asturias, as has already been discussed, employed realismo mágico in Hombres de maíz to encapsulate the ancient and contemporary history of Guatemala by transforming the magic narrative device of nahualismo into a real and fantastic discourse that questions through literary form the Mayans’ incongruous transculturation into the modern Western world. The fact is that Asturias, through his skilful use of the intertextual process, invented realismo mágico long before the Colombian novelist García Márquez used it and made it internationally famous in One Hundred Years of Solitude (1967).

Realismo mágico has become a very elusive and controversial term, not only because of its multifaceted presentation as theme, technique, space, and style in works of fiction, but also because, as a literary style and as an ideological discourse of resistance, it has been used in diverse ways by both Asturias and García Marquez, as well as other prominent Latin American and international writers and critics. Realismo mágico can even be used in different ways by the same author, as is the case with García Márquez in One Hundred Years of Solitude and The Autumn of the Patriarch. Consequently in the present-day global village it is more appropriate not to refer to only one kind of realismo mágico, but to talk about the many and diverse realismos mágicos that now circulate in the literatures of the world.

Conclusion: An Ongoing Hybridization of Spanish Literary Cultures

This study began by tracing the first cultural—ethnic and religious—encounters between Spaniards and Amerindians recorded in The Huaro-chiri Manuscript, Popol Vuh, Chilam Balam, and Columbus’s Journals, and ends with a comparative analysis of themes and techniques that were introduced first in these colonial texts and, afterwards, reincorporated as intertexts in the modernist novels El zorro de arriba y el zorro
de abajo, Hombres de maíz, and El otoño del patriarca by Arguedas, Asturias, and García Márquez, respectively. I hope that the combination of an intratextual, intertextual, and extratextual analysis related to the seven texts studied here has demonstrated, firstly, that there were inherent in colonial narratives both a hegemonic ideology, presented either by imperial editors or Spanish chroniclers, and the emergence of a resistance discourse that contested from within the texts the ideology of dominance; secondly, that the encounters and clashes between European and Amerindian narrative traditions appear in the four colonial texts listed above in the form of motifs (polytheism versus forced Christian conversion); ethnicity and clothing (Westerners’ appearance and excessive dress codes versus Amerindian looks and scarce clothing); language style (plurilingualism); and narrative perspective (nahualismo); finally, that twentieth-century Latin American novelists have in their modernist novels both appropriated and renewed pre-Columbian and colonial Amerindian and European narrative devices (i.e. nahualismo, ancient magical tales, and the narrative device of othering), transforming them into new themes (neocolonialism / incongruous modernity and peripheral globalization) and modernist literary techniques (i.e., surréalisme, realismo mágico).

As has been shown, the artistic blend of ancient Amerindian and twentieth century Spanish American narrative devices (nahualismo and realismo mágico) and of universal and Western literary styles (i.e., intertextuality, parody, surréalisme) was instrumental in the innovations of the twentieth-century Spanish American novel. In fact, from colonial times to the present this process of cultural and narrative hybridity and literary experimentation with foreign and autochthonous techniques has created the intercultural conditions in Latin America for the creation of the so-called “novels of the Boom”, those best-selling narratives written by major Latin American writers such as Asturias and García Márquez whose technical innovation greatly contributed to the internationalization of the Spanish American novel in the sixties.65

65 It must be emphasized that Spanish American literature neither starts nor ends with Asturias’s creation of realismo mágico in the forties or its internationalization by García Márquez in the sixties. In fact, besides the novela del realismo mágico, such trends as the novela feminista (namely, Fanny Buitrago and Diamela Eltit), the nueva novela histórica (namely, Abel Posse, and Sergio
In this respect it is interesting to note that some Western literary critics have claimed that, given the absence of refined literary techniques in non-Western narrative traditions, writers in colonial times (such as Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*), in order “to represent the periphery to a metropolitan audience”, have often been obliged to select “a plot from the periphery—and a style from the core.” However, this study contests those claims by demonstrating that non-Western economically dependant societies like the Mayas and Aztecs have in pre-Colombian and colonial times engendered sophisticated narrative techniques like *nahualismo* as a form of *realismo mágico avant la lettre*. Therefore, the nature of the question has changed, as it was foretold by the well-known Latin American critic Angel Rama in these words: “The only way that the name of Latin America would not be invoked in vain, is when its internal cultural accumulation will be able to provide not only raw materials, but also to project a *cosmovisión*, a language style and a technique in the production of literary works.”

As a concluding remark, one may then suggest that, in the process of converting old Amerindian narrative traditions into modernist forms of writing, as happens in *Hombres de maíz*, Asturias invented *realismo mágico*: a technique stemming from the ancient myths of *nahualismo*, whereby magical transformations of humans into humanized animals acting in an enchanted nature and the narration of supernatural occurrences and fantastic deeds are recounted as if they were pragmatic, everyday events and vice-versa. Likewise García Márquez in *The Autumn of the Patriarch* resorted to the use of parody, invert defamiliarization and diverse linguistic and cultural modes of “othering” to create his particular—and different variants of—*realismo mágico* as a narrative device to question eurocentrism: the hegemonic relations of cultural su-

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piority and neocolonial economic dominance towards Latin America as fostered by Westerners since their arrival in the New World. However, Asturias and García Márquez have effectively questioned such eurocentric discourses through their creation of realismo mágico, both as a renewed narrative technique and as a literary act of resistance towards Western cultural hegemony. This ideological use of realismo mágico has, in the last decades, been either lauded or criticized by World and Spanish American authors. Thus a new generation of Spanish American writers and critics refused to see their continent as “una fantasía exótica”; as they claim it is seen by most world readers of the novels of realismo mágico, maintaining that such an anachronistic “misreading” either denies or delays the entrance of Latin America into contemporary world history. Conversely, most non-Western authors and critics seem to have embraced (mimicked?) realismo mágico, perhaps because the Latin American novels in which it appears often depict recognizable Third World rural social realities and urban, peripheral, globalized milieus as incongruous modernities skillfully mediated by fiction.

Yet, put into a global context, realismo mágico, a narrative technique stemming from Amerindian narrative forms and re-elaborated in (post)colonial Spanish America, has increasingly been used as a literary device to help articulate in fictional texts both cultural interdependency with the West and mutual constructions of Western and non-Western literary subjectivities. Given this cultural circumstance it may also be suggested, as a general conclusion, that, thanks to the creation and dissemination of realismo mágico, for the first time in the history of Spanish American literature an equal exchange of literary experiences and techniques has taken place not only with the West but also with the entire world.

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69 Cf. the international use of Realismo mágico in the modern literatures of India and Oman. See in this volume the articles “Hybridity in Indian English Literature” by M. Petersson, and “Globalization and Cross-cultural Writing in the United Arab Emirates and Oman” by G. Ramsay.