

One World is not Enough: The Colonial Amazon and the Shaping of the New World

by

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Dedication

To Lucía and the women who have shaped my world.

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Abstract

This dissertation revisits the term ‘world’ to examine its function in the construct ‘New World’, focusing on seventeenth-century imaginings of the Amazon River at a time when geopolitical affairs were challenging what appeared to be a categorical concept. Analyzing a series of mid-century expeditions from opposing parties and geographical extremes of the river, Jesuit annual reports in which subsequent settlement designs are laid out, official documents with similar aspirations, chronicles describing life in the tropical rainforest, and visual sources including a still life painting where this material is rendered, the colonial Amazon is read through these texts in a way that seeks to understand the system they collectively shape—the ‘world’ that, in other words, they form. The crux of the analysis then becomes an engagement with the question of what it means to *be* in this world shaped predominantly by water, and in particular what it means for those who exist within it in a mode that does not agree with its design.

That ‘world’ is understood as an entity which is ‘whole’ is a premise that sets the context of the first chapter which explores renditions of an *incomplete* New World in ontological terms. Elaborating on this direction, the second chapter uses a mid-century expedition, recorded by the Jesuit Cristóbal de Acuña, to explore the mechanics of world shaping wherein the Amazon’s topography is conceptually rearranged to align with geopolitical interests. The handling of nature is further examined in the third chapter through a Dutch still life painting of colonial Brazil and a Portuguese letter advocating the transplantation of crops to the colony. Here ‘tropical nature’ is treated as a concept that is fashioned in response to erstwhile renditions of these worlds, turning the shaping process into a revisionist undertaking.

Using Amazonian archaeology in conjunction with annual reports of Jesuit *aldeas*, the final chapter examines the project's central question through Amerindian responses to the world order established in these occidental texts. Tensions generated by conflicting spatial configurations are read as instances of indigenous agency coming into view and demonstrating the possibilities for defining the New World otherwise.

Chapter 1:

Designed by Committee

It was only near the conclusion of my studies that I began to ponder Brazil's relationship to the rest of Latin America. The realization was that, until that point, my exposure to Brazil as a subject of study had been isolated from my work on Latin American texts written in Spanish on the basis of differing languages and histories. That I had not been aware of this sooner also contributed to my intrigue and further exploration into the reason such divisions were so firmly in place. Often appearing to have a negligible, if any, literary connections with the rest Latin America and even fewer with those of its own South American continent, Brazil often figures in the academic sphere as an entity detached in almost every significant way from its counterparts. "Brazilian narrative tradition", as the critic Earl Fitz defines it, "tends to be characterized by its metafictional dimensions, and especially by its tendency to interrogate identity and being in terms of language", a tendency that he claims appeared only later in other Latin American texts since "Spanish America held on to realism longer than it should have" (64-5). According to the argument, the delayed experimentation with language that has separated Hispanic from Lusophone America in terms of formal innovation also makes it difficult for their cultures, advancing along different timelines, to ever share anything more than a common landmass.¹ It was, in short, a matter of uneven developments.

¹ Fitz's is an extension of a similar classification of literatures advocated by the critic Emir Monegal in *The Borzoi Anthology of Latin American Literature* (1977). Citing Monegal's premise that political tendencies in Brazil have followed a pattern of maturation too distinct to that of the rest of Latin America to be able to find a likeness between its literatures, Fitz argues the disparity between texts on the basis of dissimilar social histories. His arguments expand on the literary trajectories that Monegal has charted in from a comparative perspective, a rubric where the

Not entirely content with this developmental model that relies heavily on periodizations, I was resolved to investigate why Brazil was incompatible with a collective entity consisting of groups that were linguistically and historically no less varied.² Only I did not grasp until various essays and hypotheses later that understanding Brazil's relationship to the rest of Latin America was not a matter of devising a satisfying answer but rather exploring the underlying rationale of the ones that were already in circulation. If I was to study the subject in these relational terms, focusing on a single discipline and definition would only get me so far in my research as it would undermine the aim to broaden the ways that Brazil has been and could be imagined within a finite social structure. It was not long before I learned that the recurring image of a fragmented development rupturing Latin America was only one of many possible configurations in which Brazil had been conceptualized, as I became aware of another continental design that had been gaining traction in South America.

It was a plan where the epistemological divide had spread into the realm of geography and one that had been advancing for several years prior to my encounter with it through the

adjectives 'similar' and 'different' are select terms for discussing the "course of development" of movements such as Brazilian and Spanish American Modernism (Monegal 498). Worth noting in this case is that the format through which this position is voiced is the anthology. The comparative spirit of an anthology makes it the optimal and often the only platform in which to address Brazilian literature within a larger, Latin American context since each tradition can be presented in a compendious fashion that does not require that they share anything more than a vague theme amongst them. In this capacity, the rhetorical model used to reconcile Brazil within Latin America operates on a sense of comparisons as epistemological instruments used to ratify rather than investigate an established stance on its subjects.

² Through sociolinguistic fieldwork in the Amazon, Christopher Ball suggests that the diversity of language communities is something that is perpetually constructed. The tendency has been to organize linguistic communities into groups sharing a common language and prescriptive grammar (247). Yet, Ball places the defining force of these groups in another mode of organization known as speech communities which "share an orientation to interactional norms of communication" (247). This grouping of individuals according to the way they *use* language allows for communities in multilingual sites throughout the Amazon, like the Vaupés and Upper Xingu of Ball's study, to interact across linguistic variances. How utterances are performed and what they can convey about the identity of the individual and their position in society makes it possible for this information to be communicable both within and beyond a single linguistic register. The "interlocal, interethnic, and international" versatility of language as it is used by communities like the Wauja of the Upper Xingu highlight language's ability to be adjusted to meaning as defined by a specific group, yet understood across different peoples (266). Thus adhering to generalized divisions of groups on the basis of language obscures other simultaneous forms of identification and organization that are possible when the demarcations are made less rigid.

media outlet *El Comercio* in 2008. The article that headlined the issue on the 20th of October with the statement “La vía Manta-Manaos es estratégica” detailed the latest steps taken towards the completion of a transcontinental highway and waterway that would traverse the Amazon, connecting the ports of Manta in Ecuador with those of Manaus in Brazil and essentially opening access to their opposing oceans. Being an Ecuadorian publication, the article reported on the trip to Singapore that was made by the Republic’s president, Rafael Correa, in search of international financiers for the project. Both the article and the head of the Republic presented the implementation of the multimodal route to have far-reaching benefits, among which new founts of revenue as well as the reinforcement of existing port commerce:

...el calado de 12 metros permitirá el ingreso de buques de carga que tienen una capacidad de trasladar hasta 1 200 contenedores in un solo viaje.

Otro de los beneficios es que se puede descargar con mayor rapidez pues [Manta] es un puerto a mar abierto. Los últimos datos de Autoridad Portuaria de Manta (APM) indican que anualmente se registra un promedio de 165 buques de contenedores, 50 turísticos y 300 cargan atún.

Asimismo, en Manaus, hay 360 empresas dedicadas a la maquila donde se ensamblan televisores, computadoras y productos de línea blanca. [Carlos] Lara agrega que Brasil también está interesado importar 40 productos ecuatorianos. Entre ellos están hortalizas, pulpa de frutas y, sobre todo, atún. (“Vía” pars. 4-5)

The possibility of fomenting a national economy through transcontinental trade is presented as an attractive feature of this corridor for those with invested interests in the plan such as members of the coastal tuna industry. But the likelihood of the enterprise rests on several variables. To establish access to the goods the manager of the port project, Carlos Lara, suggests are items in demand by the Lusophone market, topographical changes like the broadening of land routes and deepening of fluvial passageways would have to be made effective before any flow of goods could occur. These physical alterations, however, are posited merely as slight inconveniences that can be swiftly handled with the involvement of third-party investments. Even the potentially harming event mentioned at the outset of the article involving the expulsion of a Brazilian

construction firm from Ecuadorian soil for irregular business practices is addressed as irrelevant to the bilateral relations between the two South American countries as interests in the corridor have, as Lara is cited as saying, remained unchanged.

The challenge to conventional understandings of Brazil's exterior relations is expressed in the presentation of the Manta-Manaus axis as a project that takes a regional approach to a global market concern while producing a model for integration that works at both levels. Both in terms of trade and geopolitics, talks of the planned corridor have illustrated a continuous effort to integrate Brazil within and a critical relation to a larger organizational structure. As I read through the article, the area north of the South American pole of inaccessibility was becoming less remote than what its usual depictions would have it seem. The interior of the continent was not only being connected to but also connecting its opposing coasts and the markets on their horizons. And yet the very element that this integration relies upon has also been standing in the way of its full implementation. I am referring to the Amazon and its rivers, which while presenting both obvious and long-term logistic difficulties, also supply the necessary avenues of accessibility for the entire undertaking.

I. A Whole, Wide World

The multifaceted project described in the article charts a general interest in catalyzing stronger connections within the two extremes of the continent that have surrounded discussions of the Amazon. In essence, this transformation of the Amazon from an inland river to a continental highway relies on a reading of the landscape that values connections others may not have previously seen. World orders like this one already exist, goes the rationale, but it is only a matter of making the necessary connections so that they become evident. Since the arrangement championed by the project involves an Atlantic-Pacific corridor that, by virtue of the contiguous

arrangement of the countries involved, already appears within South America's present geography, it is not enough for this link to merely be proposed in official plans but it must also be completed. Its existence, in these terms, is partial. In order for the Amazon River to initiate the kind of unification of worlds by water that the project's administrators argue to have always been possible, some additional modifications to its original design are deemed necessary. Because the Amazon River extends through three quarters of the proposed route as it is, the majority of the organizers' involvement is focused on the remaining stretch towards the Pacific. The organization's principal charge is to find and finish what nature had begun. Its efforts, likewise, are limited to clearing land for a better circulation of a connection already found in nature. More a restoration than a demanding creation of a corridor, this type of involvement is what also makes it enticing for the organization to advocate the project's viability. The organization acts in large part as a catalyst that stimulates nature, so to speak, to fulfill a configuration that it has always been capable of achieving, using machinery to finish the erosion of the river's 'proper course'. The task is not so much the creation of a route, but the completion of one that has been neglected, turning the matter into a question of perception.

Another perhaps more fitting way of phrasing it is that the project initiates an effort to salvage a dormant, underlying world formed around the Amazon River by cleaning up and effectively completing its contours. Projects like these ultimately reassess the concept we may have of the world as a singular and unwavering reality by demonstrating nature's shape to be improvable in more than one way. More importantly, though often overlooked, the concept of nature as interpretable and in turn capable of reinterpretation is a notion with an almost 400 year-old precedent and some extant blueprints.

II. The Watercourse of New World History

Apart from thematically orienting my own study, I open my work with this twenty first-century account because behind the geopolitics of the situation, the ideas driving the Manta-Manaus project tell a familiar story about the Amazon and its place not only in the world but also *as a world*. This story goes back several hundred years to a moment in which the river was at the center of the colonial imagination. It had become a character of many chronicles by the seventeenth century, appearing in texts as an impenetrable tract of land visited almost exclusively through armchair travel. The appeal of this space rested upon the kind of events that could take place there, occurrences carefully gathered in an assortment of styles each altering the quality and dimensions of the Amazon. From accounts of mutiny in the Peruvian jungle to tales of possible riches buried within its foliage, the sixteenth century broke ground on the western front with literature furling in speculation and nourished by the reality that a great deal of the Amazon remained largely unknown. The texts produced by the Jesuit order in the seventeenth century expanded on this *aporia* by capitalizing on the opportunities this vast and undefined space presented for an institution specialized in advancing the territorial reach of their cause in correlation to the number of souls reached. Missionaries, trade companies, and even independent agents established in the Spanish and Portuguese colonies of South America were engaging with the dilemmas and demands of working within a new continental geography or, put simply, a New World.

In effect, the Amazon was not only shrouded in mystery but possibility. In seventeenth-century manifestations of the term ‘world’ we encounter a twofold application both as something that is and something that *can be*. We, just as those presenting its worlds, remain aware that the Amazon *is* a river, but *can be* the source of a fluvial network along with many other possibilities.

How many of these projects attained fruition was a matter tended to by the narratives in which they were written down. The corresponding way these are represented in this study is therefore also two-pronged. It consists of the 'ethnographic' notes on littoral cultures as they appear in the chronicles of travelers as well as the narratives that can be extracted, with the aid of archeological findings, from these same chronicles. With what is given and what can be hermeneutically procured, with what is said and left unsaid, realized and projected, the resulting shapes of the seventeenth-century Amazon will enable us to begin studying the activity of its worlds.

The elements I will turn my attention to as I address these and other ways in which the Amazon was moulded are land and water, elements that open up configurations of the New World which straddle these categories and complicate distinctions between worlds as tangible entities and unrealized potential. These ingredients were used and frequently combined in different ways into the conceptualizations of the worlds actually and potentially contained within the Amazon. On the side of water, as seventeenth-century chronicles illustrate and the Manta-Manaus plan replicates, the extension of the Amazon's river across the equator was promoted for its horizontality in large part due to the places it connected. This was also tied to the issue of land which was used in conjunction with water to call into question the official repartitions of colonial territories on the grounds of their vulnerability to invasions by way of this accessible layout of the Amazon River. The passageway revealed through three expeditions between the Spanish colony of Quito in present-day Ecuador and the Portuguese colony of Belém do Pará in eastern Brazil was one of these instances where the above elements were integrated into the design of the Amazon as a transcontinental corridor joining two hemispheres of a continent once represented as divided.

It is also from its shores that I approach the seventeenth-century Amazon, from this space where land suddenly drops below water leaving behind a marker of *terra firma*'s end. As corridors to fluvial passageways that traverses colonial territories and as a locally inhabited domain, the shores of the Amazon River and its tributaries provide a place from which to study the distinct uses, perspectives, and experiences of this environment that are unique to this mixture of solid and liquid surfaces. The present undertaking turns to archaeological research on the uses of *terra preta* in Amazonia to illustrate the variety of elements that were employed in the process of shaping its inland worlds. With soil treated to emulate the dark earth found in shores, agriculture in the interior lands of the Amazon became part of a widespread technique that recreates shoreline environments elsewhere, resulting in cartographic and epistemological difficulties for foreigners attempting to identify any one culture with this feature. Altering not only landscapes but also concepts of social structures for those who observed them, the dynamic engagement with space exhibited by these cultures offers a renewed understanding of what it means to be in and shape the New World.

Redefining one's sense of world through the physical world becomes the mechanism behind this study that permits it to focus on concurrent formulations of the Amazon. Apart from the relocation of littoral practices inland, the act of transplanting cultures and environmental contents between worlds is also examined from the context of colonial writing. In this way, looking at each narrative strand separately, I am able to concentrate my analysis on the overlaps between distinctly-conceptualized worlds without attempting to reconcile these in a sweeping dialectic but rather to determine the logic behind the way they use the idea of a New World. The tacit worlds and shaping processes that surface from this reconstruction then permit us to regard the confluence of cultures in the Amazon as an ontological matter as much as it is geopolitical, a

stance that will be made clear in the closing discussion of the project's methodology. What can be seen from a vessel or a sojourn is no less valuable than what archeology evinces in this project as both give way to images of the New World and in some way manifest a rationale behind the way they position the people, objects, and places within it. It is here that the question of how to then understand the New World can be addressed through the way a world is organized and with the information drawn from its shape. It is here, too, that our study begins.

III. Oddly Shaped

The Amazon's form provides insights into configurations of the New World as an entity that embodies the essence of the 'incomplete'. We begin with this representative image as it is one of the many connotations that 'New World' and all of its Latinate derivations evoke in their depictions of the lands and peoples it defines. In the Manta-Manaus project one finds a contemporary illustration of the geopolitical uses for this image of an 'incomplete' New World. It is expressed in the discussion of Brazil's natural isolation from the emerging commercial opportunities that are to be found in transcontinental collaborations. Since the Amazon's present topography does not offer an existing passageway for the proposed corridor, it becomes a matter of altering the rainforest's landscape in order to accommodate one. With the majority of the fluvial paths already in place along the Amazon River's course, accomplishing the connection between seaboards becomes a question of finishing what nature could not. Through this depiction of the Amazon as incomplete intermediary entity but one that is compatible with the proposed design of the Manta-Manaus endeavour, the plan for transcontinental integration is an enterprise that functions on the successful conclusion of natural designs.

To close the continental gap between Brazil and its compeers by extending the existing corridors of Amazonia, the Manta-Manaus project frames the relationship amongst these

otherwise separate worlds as one of latent integration. Guided by the idea that South American connections have always existed but never been activated, the transcontinental program initiates a process of recovering what this cohesive world design would look like as it restructures the contours previously imposed on Brazil by natural and cultural barriers. The multinational scope involved in the process is expressed as a logical corollary of the project's depiction as a task of extending and improving upon natural access points that allow for the inherent interactions between them to be actuated unencumbered. Beneath it all lays an understanding of the New World that is not limited to its present configuration but is also capable of being conceptualized in terms of its potential organization. It is a reorganization of individual worlds into a subjacent arrangement of the traditional geopolitical distributions which feature Brazil as separate from the rest of the continent, resulting in divergent orders of the New World.

This practice of modifying systems that are argued to already be in place is the focus of the world shaping referred to in this study. The dynamic involves building worlds upon each other through various materials and techniques available to do so in a 'natural' way. It is something that did not only have theoretical applications, but whose mechanics were part of the establishment of seventeenth-century colonial orders. These can be found in the elicited vagueness of images depicting a sparsely-populated and unclassified Amazon by the chroniclers of the period. For them, as their written records show, this incompleteness was rife with possibilities for here they were presented with a land that could be recast in ways that did not seem to be feasible in thoroughly-documented lands. This incomplete part of the globe, this space challenging the breadth of seventeenth-century knowledge, was a land of opportunity in more ways than one.

IV. Faulty by Design

For something evoking an abandoned undertaking, ‘incompletion’ appears in literary studies as an exacting achievement. José Antonio Maravall speaks of the baroque application of ‘incompleteness’ for its ability to productively motivate “suspension” (220). His focus is on the seventeenth-century culture of the baroque as a period in which incompleteness was featured as a framing device and reasonable pretext to re-imagine one’s ‘world’ according to its shortcomings. This attitude involved using the unfinished text, object, or image to tease the reader or viewer into developing its final form through the faculty of the imagination. Of course, the ‘unfinished text’ comes with its own set of suggestions regarding how it should be concluded. Stimulating intrigue through suspension, Maravall argues that a work is able to launch the passive mind into an active state as it is led by the imagination “in such a way that they follo[w] along a channel that guide[s] them” (220). Open-ended only to a degree, closure in these texts is at the mercy of one’s whim, but only insofar as the participant generated her or his response within the limits set out by everything preceding the moment of ‘suspension’. Maravall indicates that the author of everything leading up to this point still partakes in the possible outcomes of the portion that is left ‘incomplete’ by establishing a hermeneutic path beforehand. Because keeping a controlled ambiguity allows one to direct the public “toward certain desired objectives”, Maravall finds a connection between this trope and the mechanisms of European rule during the seventeenth century (218). It mirrors the tactic of governing with minimal public information which, carefully selected, helps create a sense of agency that does not make evident the conducting force behind it. In other words, it is a tactic that does not reveal the degree to which the individual’s participation is guided.

As the foundational texts of oratory emphasize and Maravall evinces, there is a juncture between politics and hermeneutics that allows one to oversee the use or appropriation of meaning even when it is presumed to be unregulated. It is achieved through the act of reading that Mary Carruthers refers to as an art. Taking Quintilian as her prime example, she demonstrates that direction can be streamed through a series of predetermined channels known as the *ductus* so as to render the result incidental to the actual process of getting there,

Ductus is the way(s) that a composition, realizing the plan(s) set within its arrangements, guides a person to its various goals, both in its parts and overall. This meaning is apparent in a use which Quintilian makes of the general concept. In the preface to his third book on *The Orator's Education*, he speaks of other writers on the same subject of rhetoric, all of whom shared the same goal (of making the subject clear) but each of whom constructed different routes to that goal, and drew their disciples along those various ways: 'for so many writers, though all moving towards the same goal, have constructed different roads to it, and have made their disciples follow their special route'...Through its formal disposition *the work* in and of itself 'directs' movement. This is a crucial point for any audience or other kind of performer to understand. The work does not transparently 'express the author's intentions'. Its formal arrangements themselves are agents, which cause movements, mental and sensory and – as in the case of architecture – physical. (200-1)

The routes taken, in this case by the various writers of rhetoric and their disciples, follow channels particular to the individual who selected them from the range of possible avenues. These 'special routes' are the product of prompts interspersed within the text instead of an overt and prescriptive intervention on behalf of the author, which in turn presents the individual with a dynamic text, navigable in an uninterrupted and individual manner. Thus in place of the author, the work assumes the foreground as the force responsible for ensuring specific modes of engagement with it. In the realm of political administration, leading towards a desired conclusion while accommodating a variety of means of getting there creates the impression that a large amount of a state's organization is left to the discretion of individuals that constitute it. Each person is effectively responsible for choosing between the varieties of ways that are arranged

beforehand in order to arrive at an intended point. Taken in aggregation, by moving through a *ductus* a person is venturing through anticipated avenues designed by someone else. At the same time, however, the resulting pattern is one that maps an itinerary unique to each person. The simultaneous restraint and mobility make way for various agents to turn incompleteness into an art of possibility, into an opportunity to exercise the ordering and imposition of a form over those things undefined.³

At its core, we find in Carruthers' study of the rhetorical *ductus*, just as we do in Maravall's 'suspension', an examination of spatial engineering. Although it draws from medieval treatises on memory, Carruthers' findings demonstrate that the anticipation of an outcome lies in subtle design. In great part, this non-invasive guidance involves the use of an inconspicuous proxy for the author, a role that can even be taken by the 'incomplete' text. If "*the work in and of itself*" is responsible for guiding the individual through its content via a suggestive arrangement of possible options, the task at hand becomes the organization of the text in such a way that stimulates the individual towards a preferred direction. Leaving this directing endeavour to the text is a technique that makes use of the inanimate attributes of a work as the author sees fit. If it is successfully implemented into the work, the author steps away from the centre of the text without abdicating, but merely relocating, her or his function. It is a postulation that simultaneously appears to save the charge of bestowing an intelligible form upon the text for

³ Maravall stresses that this does not entail a unilateral dominance over the individual, but rather shared attainments of the author or governor's and the reader or participant's respective goals:

The receivers of the baroque work, being surprised at finding it incomplete or so irregularly constructed, remained a few instants in suspense; then, feeling compelled to thrust themselves forward and take part in it, they ended up finding themselves more strongly affected by the work, held by it. In this way they experienced a comparably more dynamic influence of the work being presented, with a much greater intensity than when other tasks were taken. It is not a matter of ultimately obtaining the public's intellectual adherence so much as moving it... (220)

Although the term influence seems to betray the bilateral dynamic advocated by Maravall, one can deduce that the historian is underlining the limited yet infused, as opposed to absolute, power that each party has over the outcome of the incomplete.

the shaping hands of the individual. What requires slightly more work, however, is identifying the fingerprints already set into the mould one is left to work with.

The incomplete work also carries a tacit implication further incentivizing the reader's involvement with the material. It functions on the pretence that a text's inconclusive state speaks to the author's inability to see to its conclusion, leaving the task up to those who can. Continuing with his discussion of 'suspension' in baroque literature and using what he understands as the gradual decline of Shakespeare's work to illustrate his argument, Maravall makes note of the stigma of neglect inherent in this type of view when he explains,

After having already written a dozen works, among which were his most grandiose tragedies, the works that Shakespeare produced later seem more carelessly done, as if they were not polished or gone over for the last time. Some critics have tried to see esoteric reasons for this difference, reasons of occult symbolism. Others have chosen to assume that the author had become fatigued and that his weariness had led him to become careless in his work. (218)

As an arcane composition or the deterioration of a once-promising literary mind, the two extremes traced in Maravall's argument display a regard for the incomplete as either a possession or loss of control over one's work. On the one hand is an understanding of the author as a figure at the height of her or his abilities, skilled in compacting phrases and images to a state so laconic it appears unfinished. On the other, there are those described by Maravall who claim that the endeavour has become insurmountable for the author. A "fatigued" writer or a person consumed by her or his profession suggests someone who has had to surrender to the creative difficulties of the work itself. In this position of defeat attributed to an incomplete work, the author is portrayed as someone no longer in the capacity of assigning a form to the work. What we are left with are our own conclusions about a work in the guise of assumptions about the author's intentions and how she or he would have finished it given the adequate skills and circumstances that we as readers possess.

But Maravall is quick to finish his thoughts with the question, “Doesn’t it seem more appropriate and congruent with the circumstance of the case to relate this fact with the baroque sensibility and with its taste for the incomplete?” (218). From this point on in his text the Spanish historian overrules authorial carelessness in light of his argument related to the deliberate ‘suspension’ that he holds to be in line with the baroque spirit of the time. ‘The taste for the incomplete’ rings for him of the tactics of a Tartuffe more than it does the lapse of a literatus. It is the *gusto* of provoking a response from individuals through the decision to leave matters open-ended, of placing them in a situation requiring an exceptional degree of action on the public’s behalf, that contextualizes the author’s self-effacing ‘carelessness’ as a consciously executed and highly refined stylistic choice. It must not go unsaid, however, that this concession appears in Maravall’s text exclusively for those who today benefit from an established reputation in the humanities. Shakespeare and Velázquez, among others, have the advantage of a critically lauded body of work that pardons, as it were, the anomalies in their corpus.⁴ For given the calibre of their career these incomplete works are not taken to be more than that, an irregularity that occurs by choice and out of a delight for engaging with the public in novel ways. It is when the absence of a prestigious body of work cannot rule out calculated ‘carelessness’ as the reason an incomplete text is left in this manner that the issue begins to seep into more troublesome waters.

No longer a blemish in a reputable career, the ‘unfinished’ work of someone in this situation is

⁴ The volume on Shakespeare’s poetry from the Oxford series of handbooks, for example, introduces the reader not only to the poet’s celebrated contributions to the craft but also to those aspects that have garnered less praise. Commonly perceived to be errata or at best an ostentatious exercises in style, Shakespeare’s wordplay has a deictic function in Margaret Ferguson’s entry that she argues has been lost through misguided interpretations based on a series of factors: “In zones between times, languages, cultures, and differently educated people, wordplays may easily be mistaken for something foreign and without value; they may also be simply missed, as no doubt continues to happen for Shakespeare’s auditors and readers—including editors—today. The history of wordplay is tied up with the history of censorship: editors may deal with perceived ‘mistakes’ by cutting or emending them” (81). Like incompleteness, wordplay, seeming to be of no substance, is deemed incongruous with the rest of the poem, breaking up the consistency associated with a writer like Shakespeare and therefore leading to its emendation. Like they do orally and aurally as well as in writing, the significance of Shakespeare’s ‘easily mistaken’ words slip in and out of any fixed meaning, and in doing so bestow yet another dimension upon the cleverness of the poet’s craftsmanship in redefining the function of language.

consigned to an imperfection and the state of the text is no longer viewed as intentional but rather interminable.

When addressing the assumptions surrounding colonial literature from Brazil, Afrânio Coutinho states that the relegation of this literature to a second class is symptomatic of its difference. For Coutinho, the bastardized status of this baroque literature is a product of an appropriation that is rendered unrecognizable:

No que concerne à literature na América Latina, a sua dinâmica se originou da absorção e integração da herança européia, através de um processo de descolonização e aculturação, em tudo semelhante ao realizado pelas literaturas européias em relação às literaturas greco-latinas...O grande processo de diferenciação, produto da descolonização, não foi possível senão como resultado das intensas miscigenação e aculturação aqui executadas espontaneamente, como produto da convivência e fusão dos três componentes étnicos e culturais a que fomos submetidos nos quatro séculos de existência...Essa “diferença” é que os nossos críticos de artes e letras, em grande maioria, subestimam. Amiúde nem lhes dão atenção, preocupados em mostrar que os nossos artistas e escritores souberam muito bem imitar os modelos europeus. E por isso, ao analisar e interpretar os nossos produtos, só enxeram neles o lado revelador da imitação ou importação. (305)

Coutinho interprets the very aspect that was eschewed by literary critics as something that should be brandished as a distinguishing character of the New World baroque. As a source of identity, the critique becomes a quality that plots another trajectory for the works of the seventeenth-century New World as these ‘inferior’ attempts to mimic other works of repute also belong to a category of their own. In this decolonizing reading, the deviations of colonial narratives mark the points up to which the literary production of the New World can be recognized by occidental standards, whereupon it is simply deemed to be lacking. While failing to meet said criteria, this writing can be interpreted to be operating under another, simultaneous course of development, one in which ‘incomplete’ no longer qualifies the measure of a work, but rather the rubric used to understand it.

Looking towards indigenous Brazil for a conceptual model of its lands is something Maria Cândida Ferreira de Almeida finds in seventeenth century writers such as Gregorio de Matos. The satirist of colonial life in Bahia is another writer made famous by his wordplay, but the alterations he makes to the significance of words stem from a change in linguistic register:

Contudo, os experimentos da linguagem empreendidos por Gregório de Matos demonstram sua percepção para a diversidade cultural; pode-se contrastá-lo com Bento Teixeira que, diante da diferença imposta pela diversidade cultural do Novo Mundo, animaliza o outro e ignora completamente sua língua e civilização...Gregório de Matos, por sua vez, encadeia uma série de palavras de origem indígena e africana (moqueca e caruru) que dão uma sonoridade específica ao soneto. A apropriação da linguagem do outro, fundindo-a no rigor da forma tradicional do soneto, serve de paradigma para pensar a relação antropofágica, pois nessa “mistura” literária encontram-se aspectos que participam da edificação da identidade brasileira. (103)

According to Ferreira de Almeida the intercalated words of non-European origin are likened to the anthropophagous condition associated with the communities of Brazil, only here the act of consuming is conceptually inverted. Her interpretation focuses on these atypical experiments with language as indications of the writer’s idiosyncratic worldview, one in which the variety of colonial life is thought to be representable in the language of poetry. Relevant still is the way this multiplicity is aesthetically conveyed. From a formal standpoint, the “apropriação da linguagem do outro” alters the sonority of the satirist’s overall work as the oscillation between languages weaves distinct sounds together into a sonnet. Introducing this combination of elements while adhering to the metre that defines the poetic form in which they are presented, the Bahian writer furthermore demonstrates a mode in which differences can exist and function within an established structure. In this use of linguistic variance an effort is made on behalf of the writer to include expressions of the New World that would otherwise be overlooked. Ferreira de Almeida describes the process of integrating other conceptualizations of the New World as an “antithesis” to the way Brazilian literature had been unfolding at the time:

Gregório de Matos e Guerra tem um olhar português, absolutista, hierárquico, e é assim que ele vê os locais. No poema “A cosme de Moura insigne mordaz”...percebe-se na literatura brasileira a sedimentação da associação dos locais ao canibalismo, o que os tornaria, na visão eurocêntrica e hierarquicamente determinada do barroco, incapazes de uma vicilidade ou mesmo de uma humanidade plena, para a qual a antropofagia sempre aparece como antítese. (104)

The ‘anthropophagous’ approach taken by the Bahian satirist is presented as a response to an “incapacity” he detects in colonial society, namely the inability to redefine the trope of a ‘cannibalistic’ Brazil. Described as a “sedimentation”, the idea is conveyed that period depictions of the Brazilian New World had not been able to move beyond these western images and establish interpretations of their own. Through this criticism he offers as well as linguistically demonstrates, despite his “Portuguese” stance, what the alternative might look like as he transposes the act of consumption into a practice capable of conveying different worlds simultaneously.

Its context in the writing of colonial Brazil extends the understanding of ‘incomplete’ from a term evaluating the content produced *by* the New World to one equally applicable to the *depictions of life* on these lands. Using the corpus of same author but dealing exclusively with a theorization of the New World baroque that can be extracted from these pages, Haroldo de Campos posits the redefinition of ‘incomplete’ to begin when it is understood as a beginning. Rather than seeking to validate the status of Gregório de Matos’ writing, Campos’ interpretation of it and of colonial Brazilian literature at large re-examines the ‘lesser’ status of this oeuvre as an indication of a concurrent development taking place within the New World baroque. The incomplete or not-yet-fully-realized characteristic of this literature is taken by Campos to be a point of departure for a unique trajectory within the literary and cultural developments of the seventeenth century. It is a point of origin insofar as the status of being incomplete indicates a shift in direction that occurs simultaneously with the canon but which cannot be entirely

subsumed into this model due to the antithetical “*visão ‘desconstrutora’*” giving impetus to the New World baroque:

Nesse modelo, à evidência, não cabe o Barroco, em cuja estética são enfatizadas a função poética e a função metalingüística, a auto-reflexividade do texto e a autotematização inter-e-intratextual do código (meta-sonetos que desarmam e desnudam a estrutura do soneto, por exemplo; citação, paráfrase e tradução como dispositivos plagiotrópicos de dialogismo literário e desfrute retórico de estilemas codificados). Não cabe o Barroco, estética da “superabundância e do desperdício”, como o definiu Severo Sarduy... (33)

The baroque as it is manifested in the colonial writing of Brazil is an awkward fit for theories such as those laid out by Maravall. It exists alongside the canon, continuing to exist as a comparably deficient art form, but this incomplete condition that characterizes the writing of the New World cannot be accounted for solely on the basis of this system. Its shortcomings are instead indicative of trajectory that is developing otherwise, of another type of experience that is nestled within these ‘imperfections’. To examine these in a significant manner requires that they be studied alongside one another. The simultaneity of these experiences that the New World rendering of the baroque brings forth enables one to reassess the significance of the aforementioned term. Incomplete for Campos suggests that something is out of place, but in the context of colonial Brazil and particularly its Amazonian rainforest where interactions extended beyond a single culture this classification is ambiguous. The confluence of peoples, modes of perception, and forms of expressing these discernments collectively define the New World in varying degrees. As Campos notes with the writing of Gregório de Matos, some experiences, when placed in direct interaction with one another, seem to elide the other. Yet when these apparent tensions are scrutinized, the outcome of this negation serves to indicate a site where multiple interpretations of the New World are at play. We therefore go into the study of the colonial Amazon heeding to these discrepancies with the intention of understanding the drift

between different developmental patterns as signs of a process wherein simultaneity shapes the concept of ‘world’ in an intercolonial, albeit primarily irregular, way.

V. Natural Resources

The possibility for improvement suggested through the notion of the ‘incomplete’ materialized in the seventeenth-century New World through images of a ‘naturally’ inchoate environment. Places along the Amazon River were undocumented and its peoples encountered as the immediacy of these experiences crafting a sense of its worlds as realms free of any design. What the qualifier ‘natural’ of natural history and its appearance in chronicles can often elide from this world vision is that the incomplete image of the Amazon was itself an image expertly crafted by able, but more importantly human, hands. Rhetorically, this was aided by accounts narrated from the point of view of an author stumbling across ‘novel’ spaces and cultures of the New World which give the impression of the experience unfolding in real time. Without a buffer, the first person account generates an immediate experience with the reader and story moving in synchrony. At the same time, this perspective guides or points out what is being stumbled across in a particular order. The trajectories followed by the chroniclers of the Amazon transformed itineraries into seamless narrative conducts that allowed for newfound worlds to be connected in a specific manner and the reader to be navigated through these channels.

Having the Amazon remain as an ‘incomplete’ part of the world was an enterprise in every sense of the word. It had promises of material gain, consisted of expeditions that were made to scout the area, and was sustained over a period of nearly two centuries. But above all, it involved planning. The Amazon, as we will see throughout these chapters, presented conflicting realities with the images produced by these accounts. The unfinished state of the Amazon therefore had to be skilfully arranged as well as maintained this way.

Shaping the Amazon as incomplete allocates significance to the mode in which its worlds are presented. Neither stable nor definitive but rather variable and thus capable of being ‘perfected’, what conveyed this image of a ‘world’ was the voice of experience. Taking his examples from enlightenment encounters in the New World, Neil Safier’s sustains that the legitimacy presence lends to the words of those writing *in situ* was how itinerant institutions maintained their relevance as the focus of imperial expansion underwent social changes. He claims that during the first part of the eighteenth-century interests in the Amazon involved making emendations to the information that was gathered by preceding expeditions to the rainforest. In effect, ensuing voyages with this mission statement kept the first-person approach to recording observations but did so, as in the case of the French polymath Charles Marie de la Condamine (1701-1774) and the Geodesic Mission of 1735, under the claim that their empirical training made them better candidates for the task than their missionary peers:

In a broader context, La Condamine’s appeal to firsthand testimony conformed to the development of a specific kind of experimental practice and a particular language of experience prevalent in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century academic culture. Within the discourse of the Academy, the personal testimony of a member held special weight, corresponding to a “predominance of the completely personalized scientific proof (*récit d’épreuve*).” These norms had been carried over from earlier traditions in the latter third of the seventeenth century, and the privileging of an experiment that emphasized visual testimony as an acceptable, justifiable, and accurate mode of scientific observation was one valid current of empirical practice. Specifically, as the citation above demonstrates, La Condamine relied on his “own eyes” to question and dispute geographic information given by previous explorers and older cartographic representations of the Amazon. Firsthand, visual testimony, coupled with a narrative structure that emphasized repeated observation of experimental phenomena, were accepted modes of justifying empirical results in eighteenth-century academic culture. (79)

Since the tradition of substantiating claims through experience also enabled individuals to reduce all other experiences to conjectures, *being there* had to account for others that were also there before. To travel to locations like Amazonia was, in this manner, considered to be crucial to the advancement of knowledge because it allowed individuals to revisit places that had already been

documented and use what had been said about them to emphasize and contrast the epistemological gap separating these views from theirs. As Mary Louise Pratt notes, the ventures of eighteenth-century travellers to the New World drew from and sought to reconsider preceding work done in these parts. La Condamine's expedition distinguished itself on this basis of reappraising what had been said about the interior lands of the continent with the aid of the instruments and discourse afforded by Enlightenment practices:

The expedition itself is of interest here as an early, and notoriously unsuccessful, instance of what was shortly to become one of Europe's proudest and most conspicuous instruments of expansion, the international scientific expedition... It is an early instance of a new orientation toward exploring and documenting continental interiors, in contrast with the maritime paradigm that had held center stage for three hundred years. By the last years of the eighteenth, interior exploration had become the major object of expansionist energies and imaginings. This shift had significant consequences for travel writing, demanding and giving rise to new forms of European knowledge and self-knowledge, new models for European contact beyond its borders, new ways of encoding Europe's imperial ambitions. (Pratt 23-4)

New methods were proposed for amassing information about inland travels that took into consideration the inadequacies of prior missions. What was being refined was, as Pratt herself puts it, the mode in which scientific ventures to the New World provided "ideological apparatuses through which European citizenries related themselves to other parts of the world" (23). These global connections extended to the realm of documentation as travellers also began to draw connections between their work and the literature on which they had based their findings. Thus, correcting prior observations by observing in greater detail defines a practice of eighteenth-century revisionism that is founded primarily on completing what others have crudely begun. Here the dynamic between differing visions of the Amazon involves discrediting those findings that are anterior to the empirical investigations of Enlightenment science as underdeveloped formulations. Working from the sections of missionary chronicles where uninformed conjectures would go undetected by those who have not visited the narrated lands,

the first-person accounts of travelers like La Condamine cement their views on the subject of the Amazon as the authoritative verdict on the basis of also offering experiential information, albeit one that is filtered through the veracity of Enlightenment science.

In the procedure involving the reading, citing, and critiquing information about Amazonia and its depicted worlds, the act of resorting to the perceived incontestability of science to claim the final word equates revising with completing a world image. Placing less importance on the act of generating new information than on the deed of updating it is an exercise in establishing a standard, unified vision of the Amazon. Turning to La Condamine's expedition through the rainforest as a paradigmatic example, Safier describes the method employed by the eighteenth-century explorer as a "verifiable process that was reliant on instruments for its accuracy and human effort for its thoroughness", stating that, "La Condamine's rhythmic repetition of geometric and astronomical measurements became his mantra in Amazonia" (78-9). Consisting of the need to retrace the steps of older chroniclers with more scientifically sound objectives and instruments, the single view of the Amazon supported by revisionist projects is not achieved by merely compiling and mediating the multiple, divergent depictions of it but by measuring each in terms of their scientific validity. Having empirical science function as a touchstone allowed for individuals to ascertain what the *real* or *complete* versions of the New World were and eradicate discrepancies in the process. The fact that the corrected datum of revisionist works were gathered through first-person accounts did not have the same depreciative effect as it did for those who were being edited since the enlightened observers strove towards a single truth about the Amazon rather than versions of their predecessors. As Safier puts it at the end of his chapter on La Condamine's reassessment of the seventeenth-century Amazon of the Jesuits: "Responding to the immense variability of experimental data they were recording with

instruments, eighteenth-century natural scientists sought to create empirical ‘order’ and ‘uniformity’ as part of a larger system of ‘geographic expansion and a material and intellectual appropriation of the world’” (90). The writings of missionaries who conveyed their experiences in the Amazon and with its peoples during the seventeenth century would therefore be edited into the eighteenth century with the accuracy the originals lacked in order to make them complete.

Yet, in spite of their facade, *in situ* accounts of the Amazon prior to the Enlightenment were not as unfledged and arbitrary as they are portrayed to have been by posterity. Within the Jesuit order, writers would work within the margins of their colleagues’ words to advance their own depictions of the New World. The internal consistency between the accounts of Enrique Richter and Samuel Fritz is stated outright by the latter as something that helps him advance his particular rendition of his travels through the tropical *aldeas*: “No repetiré lo que mi compañero, el Padre Enrique Richter ya ha escrito sobre las abundantes penas y peligros, que con la ayuda de Dios hemos resistido sanos y salvos” (66). Completion in this context refers to an act of corroboration rather than the correction of a world image, opting to expand upon the one that is already in place. The New World, as it is laid out in Richter’s official correspondence, is appended with Fritz’ 1685 letter to his superiors as he elaborates on the perils that faced the Jesuits in their missionary expeditions. Moreover, his version provides insights into events that were deemed too tangential for his predecessor and thus escaped Richter’s scope. His interests lie in reaffirming the fulfilment of his obligations as a Jesuit missionary with the communities of the *aldeas* as well as confirming the success of these efforts, providing a balance to the harsh conditions of the expedition to the Order’s colonial headquarters that Richter notes (67). Together, they fill in the parts of the narrated New World that are missing from each other’s accounts. Diverging in some points while overlapping in the rest, consistencies within a narrative

lend credence to the world that is being depicted, which, in the New World, is one where work remains to be done. Out of the experience of travelling through these tropical areas and documenting a variety of observations, chroniclers turned the image of an incomplete world into an impetus and reason for establishing an official, coherent narrative.

The capacity to alter a world thus began with recognizing its structure. This is where the writers of colonial accounts found in the authority of their words a privileged position that allowed them to make readers privy to their version of a world that they claimed was already there. Many grounded their observations in a particular series of visuals that illustrated the basic components of ‘the world’, indicating through commentaries aspects that others may have been overlooking. As was mentioned above, those that penned seventeenth-century chronicles did so claiming that they had the advantage of being able to see these superstructures in nature and communicate them in their manner. That manner, once again, was as an incomplete entity. In its support, maps have labelled these oversights under the general heading of *terra incognita*, locating therein a variety of conjectural entities from savages to lost civilizations.⁵ These places that have failed to be completely and systematically addressed, created by what Ricardo Padron identifies as “an ideologically determined gesture of erasure” (167), also present a continent-shaped window of opportunity for those interested in these unknown regions. To point out these auspicious structural gaps, the instrument of choice was the narrated world.

For seventeenth-century writers, the look of a world was a matter of perspective. Particularly in what is now identified as ‘scientific literature’, understanding how one could imagine a world was directly tied to the political order to which the individual was directly

⁵ Alessandro Scafi’s seventh chapter of *Mapping Paradise* (2006) locates the voids in information as the primary sites of earthly paradise. From T and O maps to the torrid zones, a series of cartographic attempts have been made to reconcile the lost world of Eden within the perimeters of the information available in contemporary visualizations of the planet (176). In this it is representative of a continual effort to find what has yet to be known within the known world.

subject to (Bezolla 127). From what vantage point one could ‘behold’ a world and what bearing this would have on its mode of operation were central concerns in the genre of lunar narratives, which, by the century in question, had accrued a fair amount of writing and attention across the disciplines. It is a strand of literature that goes back to the philosophical flight found in the *Dream of Scipio* from Cicero’s sixth book of the *De Republica* and one which Frédérique Aït-Touati describes as a tradition extending to Kepler and Wilkins and Huygens, repeatedly involving “a strategy for employing a new imagined vantage-point for making optical observations that would become a significant trait of the cosmological discourse of the century” (45). In *Fictions of the Cosmos* (2011), this perspective is conceived through the literature of imagined trips to the moon which describe how the world looked from there, inciting “a particular poetics in which the lunar voyage is the condition for a redescription of the world” (45). The shift in vantage point was as much a reallocation of meaning as it was of position, for where a world was viewed from opened it up to different considerations. The re-examination of the world was therefore mediated through a point of view that, prior to actual trips to the moon, only narrative could afford. This privileged perspective that was presented to readers encompassed an image of the world from the outside so as to turn it into a workable specimen of scientific scrutiny. It is present in Kepler’s *Somnium* (1634) which is written as an ethnographic description of the species and locations envisioned to exist on the moon and as such “serves to dramatize, to visualize, an experiment that cannot be performed on Earth, by imagining the physical consequences of the displacement of a body in space” (Aït-Touati 27). Because the moon serves as a proxy for the earth and can undergo changes without directly affecting the world it is standing in for, the movement of the earth could be expressed as a sublunary body in motion around the sun. The advantage of viewing the earth from and through the moon is that the

world image appears as a whole, observable unit alongside other celestial bodies and, therefore, in its total cosmographic context. That is to say, through this mode of imagination, a world comes to be defined in relation to others of its kind.

The exclusivity of this sort of vantage point is not based on an access to arcane knowledge but on the unique opportunities such outlook presents for the ‘redescription of the world’. Baruch Spinoza was someone who, invested in studying what ‘the world’ meant and was made of, articulated what was involved in this process of making the obviated world obvious. In his well-known *Ethics* (1677) Spinoza distinguishes the ways one can understand the world by discussing the differences between the act of knowing a *substance* and grasping its *attribute* (Ip10). Attributes, as engagements with one’s surroundings based on the senses, are considered only “partial” or individual understandings of the world as through them one perceives traits instead of things themselves. That is to say, through the senses one understands a world by way of its qualities, but not its complete *essence*. Furthermore, these “modes” or engagements allow for partial understandings to render various representations of the world without altering its intrinsic *essence*. In Spinoza’s text, nearly everything about a world can be modified except for said core. He attributes these possible alterations to the presence of an agglutinating force that holds things together despite the myriad of ways they are assembled. He models this idea on the atom as the smallest body found in nature and the modicum of being. Everything in existence, he holds, is made of some sort of assemblage of these bodies while they themselves remain unchanged (Iip13). The image resulting from this is one of a world undergoing continuous change at one level while it is presented at another to be doing the opposite. Thus Spinoza’s investigation into ‘the world’ as it was known is rooted in an inquiry into its architecture by way of its malleability, illustrating along the way the connections between the way a world is

perceived and ‘world’ as perception, something that chroniclers explored in their documentation of the ‘incomplete’ New World.

VI. Shapes and Sizes

Discussions of the possibilities that are available when a world is configured to appear ‘incomplete’ veers into a ramification regarding the kind of life one expects to find within it. Studying the seventeenth century New World, one works with protean primary sources and materials, beginning with the concept of ‘world’ itself. To acquire a sense of what this world looked like, the most common of places to begin is by observing its traces. However, the objects and notions that made up the seventeenth-century New World are not available today in the same state as they once were.

Because of these spatial and ideological permutations, my work uses shapes as its primary source, not in an attempt to salvage the worlds that have been ‘lost’, but to study the extent these manipulations confer another function and dimension of meaning to the worlds of Amazonia.⁶ What we have come to know as the principle fonts of information (chronicles, paintings, samples and other artefacts) are featured within this study as tangible building blocks that contributed to the process of world shaping. They are corollary to the ideologically-infused geometry that I classify as ‘shapes’. Put differently, conventional primary sources are the material but not the sole element in the present analysis of world designs. The shapes explored in this study are not of the classical sort insofar as they do not abide by the mathematical proportions of the customary and well-defined figures evoked by the term ‘geometry’. Somewhat

⁶Shawn Miller incorporates the relevance of shapes throughout his discussion of eighteenth-century deforestation practices, arguing that several aspects of colonial society could be read in the physical form of Brazil’s forest landscape. In one such instance, Miller refers to the clearing areas of forests as indicators of the indigenous labour conditions where the lack of communication between these groups and the administrators resulted in injuries that affected the concentration of the manual workforce in these places, therefore also affecting the level of productivity (111-2). The result is a study that makes use of form in a tangible manner to discuss elements of colonial societies that may be overlooked.

closer to what is meant by shape and geometry in the present context is ‘form’, used here as an arranged structure that is embodied as a shape. Focusing on these structures allows for the changing form of the world at the hands of different agents to be taken into account while equally accommodating within the project’s scope those shapes that are considered to be malformations.

While ‘globe’ and ‘sphere’ may appear to be adequate working terms for the purposes of discussing said primary sources, ‘world’ is the word of choice for this project because it was used to evoke everything from a form to the people and cultural expressions of a particular cosmography, whereas ‘sphere’ and ‘globe’ presuppose an unwavering roundness and finitude as the leading characteristics of its structure. Although this distinction will be addressed in further detail in the forthcoming chapter, suffice it to say that the lacking definition of a world’s shape and the ability to speak of it as a plural construct make for a dynamic primary source that contains in its openness the possibility of examining an array of processes that gave each world its meaning. At the same time, it can also lead many studies astray as one may feel inclined to go about evaluating these worlds by comparing them at face value.

VII. In Development

Holding worlds in contrast to each other points out, among many things, their comparative deficiencies. The idea of an ‘incomplete’ world effectively suggests an order that is lacking, but it is when this world is spoken of in the context of another that one realizes exactly what is missing. In the colonial New World, the dichotomy was established in relation to its European counterpart, with the defining characteristic in this set up being the term ‘New’ and all

that it implies.⁷ This allowed for places like the Amazon to be rendered on a developmental scale according to which this area of the New World, in its precarious state, was situated at the lower end.

Furthermore, depictions of this sort have not been limited to a particular century as they have become a standard practice in cognizing New World spaces. The wanting state of the New World has been discussed within the theoretical framework of Dependency Theory and the affiliated World-systems Theory which address the irrevocable condition in which the colonies have been and continue to be made to rely on developmentally-accelerated imperial powers. Within variations of this theory, dependency is spoken of in relation to an economic scheme and where each concerned party falls within it. Theotonio dos Santos, one of Dependency Theory's founding theorists, locates Latin America at the fringes of this framework due to "los obstáculos que las estructuras arcaicas imponían al desarrollo como de los medios para realizar las metas de éste" (*Imperialismo* 282). The claim is that, within the narrative of progress, the colonial structures present to this day in Latin America have obstructed its socioeconomic conditions to the point of rendering it underdeveloped. The issue, then, is not presented as a deliberate repudiation of progress but rather as a question of circumscribing the New World to the aforementioned position on the basis of inevitability.

⁷ The idea of 'new' in a cosmographic context was a pivotal concept in the eighteenth-century works of writers like Guillaume Raynal and Buffon. Evaluating the way this notion was extended to the understanding of the New World and its peoples, Antonello Gerbi describes the ideas of both figures as concepts that operated on a model that was particularly gendered. As Gerbi recapitulates the words of Raynal and, through his those of Buffon, "América es impúber. No es joven, es niña. La naturaleza se ha olvidado de hacerla crecer" (39). Given feminine qualities, the 'new' that Gerbi identifies in Raynal's texts one of an abandoned world that gains its novelty from being rediscovered. The reason this is possible is because of the various 'natural' factors, such as racial inferiority and climate conditions, that writers of the enlightenment identified as impeding its inhabitants from taking part in the complete human governance and advancement of these lands. Although this reasoning was often at odds with the enlightenment's own logic, something that Gerbi notes when Raynal alludes to the degeneration of the New World despite the fact that "la humedad era prueba de un mundo joven, mas no decrepito", efforts were made to formulate worlds according to the category of 'new' and to use the continent's relative immaturity to launch civilizing projects bringing them into the age of reason (39).

Inherent disadvantages in the structure of these societies in contrast to the Old World are then used by the latter to lock underdeveloped worlds into a position of dependence, remaining there not out of aspirations to progress, but to merely survive. Because the status of the dependant benefits the dependee, the cyclical character of this relationship, explains dos Santos, becomes an extension of the semi-feudal system that already existed in Latin America:

La supervivencia de una economía agraria feudal y latifundista provocaba una situación de desequilibrio social y económico, de miseria y de malas condiciones alimenticias y de salud, etcétera, situación que se reflejaba particularmente en el desequilibrio de la distribución del ingreso.

Por otro lado, el desarrollo hacia afuera habría mantenido a nuestros países en una condición de retraso industrial, tecnológico e institucional que sometía sus economías a la dependencia del comercio externo, situación que se habría hecho muy seria después de la guerra de Corea debido a la baja de los precios de los productos primarios en el mercado internacional.

En la medida en que los precios de los productos primarios tendía a bajar, el de los productos manufacturados tendía a aumentar, lo que generaba términos de intercambio cada vez más desfavorables para los países subdesarrollados. (*Imperialismo* 288)

When he speaks of the semi-feudal order that carried over to “el desarrollo hacia afuera”, dos Santos readjusts the scale of the longstanding inequality or “desequilibrio” towards a global perspective. On a macroeconomic level, the only commodities the underdeveloped societies of Latin America could historically offer were crude materials for their counterparts to process, perpetuating the system of imbalance in the form of wealth redirected away from the producers of these goods. Ruy Mauro Marini further explains Latin America’s “insertion” into a global market and the complementary transformation of its resources into revenue undertaken by industrialized nations as a process in which the crudest of New World commodities is labour:

Lo que aparece claramente, pues, es que las naciones desfavorecidas por el intercambio desigual no buscan tanto corregir el desequilibrio entre los precios y el valor de sus mercancías exportadas (lo que implicaría un esfuerzo redoblado para aumentar la capacidad productiva del trabajo), sino más bien compensar la pérdida de ingresos generados por el comercio internacional, a través del recurso a una mayor explotación del trabajador. Llegamos así a un punto en que ya no nos basta con seguir manejando simplemente la noción de intercambio entre naciones, sino que debemos encarar el hecho

de que, en el marco de este intercambio, la apropiación del valor realizado encubre la apropiación de una plusvalía que se genera mediante la explotación del trabajo en el interior de cada nación. (113)

What Marini depicts here is a system of compensations wherein those who are not able to reciprocate the trade value of goods resort to the surplus value of internal labour to restore the commercial equilibrium of the international market. Moreover, he specifies that those at a disadvantage in this exchange cannot even be considered to be involved in any commercial transaction, but simply attempting to avert further constraints from the global market. With this strong reliance on foreign support, the essence of dependency rests on the placement of colonies within a particular, namely subservient, position within a global scheme.

On their own, Latin American countries have not been able to utilize their resources outside of this global framework. In *Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America* (1969) Andre Gunder Frank positions the structure of underdevelopment to be inescapable. There is no outside or inside, no imposition of an “external condition” that paralyzes Latin America nor internal or “national” remedy to stave its spread. Indeed, the concept of underdevelopment put forth by Frank depicts a system so prevalent that it engulfs every aspect and outside of which operation is inconceivable. This system is for Frank the capitalist system, which in its colonial and imperial forms throughout Latin American history has always been global. It has relied on a periphery and a centre, a source of surplus and a space where it is consumed respectively. They may be distinguished in terms of their function, but in this process these sectors remain intimately connected and it is the promotion of this reliance that coalesces into a systematic order based on the “needs and contradictions of capitalism” (*Capitalism* 282-3). Of importance is the emphasis Frank place on the replication of this dynamic at every level as an act that is carried out rather than being intrinsic or a Latin American condition. Between these positions, there is

something to be gained, there are entities who, as he uses Latin America's colonial legacy to formulate, "benefit from this arrangement":

That is, the voyages of discovery and Spanish investment in Latin America, much of it with Dutch and Italian merchant capital, were part of the mercantile capitalist expansion and an attempt to trap colonial satellite natural and human resources—mostly precious metals and labor—so as to plow the proceeds into metropolitan development and consumption... The Portuguese in Brazil and later the Dutch, English, and French in the Caribbean did not find a happy combination of silver, labor, and civilization; and therefore they had to create a colonial economy through foreign finance. Indirectly it was the previous Spanish-American bonanza that made this finance possible, if not necessary, by concentrating income and raising the prices of sugar and other products in Europe. The metropolitan countries erected plantation economies in these tropical lands, putting African Negroes to work producing Latin American sugar for European tables. (*Capitalism* 282)

Investments are made in the mercantilist system on which underdevelopment thrives. The benefits of prolonging the relationship through continued financial support of the integrative system.⁸ Therefore, as a system that is maintained, underdevelopment is something that is ceaselessly re-created. In the process of sustaining the exportation of raw materials from the New World and through this the development of urban centres, localities in colonial Brazil, such as its northeastern region, operated on a subsistence economy that perpetuated the dependence further as only what was needed was produced for local consumption. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Frank explains,

The sugar economy—the satellite which is at the same time a national metropolis—generated a satellite economy of its own: livestock raising. Livestock was used for meat, for hides, for draft animals to run the sugar mills, for fat to grease their works, for beasts of burden to carry the huge quantities of firewood used in the boilers. The livestock economy was much less profitable than sugar growing and export. The stockmen were exploited by the sugar mills whose satellite they were... The satellite livestock economy formed a metropolis in turn with respect to the Indian zones into which its expansion forced the Indians to withdraw and/or to serve as a source of exploited labor power. The

⁸ Finding regional consumer goods to place import substitutions into effect, as Frank demonstrates in his section on twentieth-century Brazil, may seem as though it could reduce the degree of dependence for those entities seeking such alternatives, yet "though the output of these may rise, the more equipment and raw materials to produce them are needed and must be imported" (*Capitalism* 206). In truth this strategy simply readjusts the centre-periphery model as the sustainability of solutions from below seem futile as long as this infrastructure is supported.

European metropolis thus affected the life of the interior through a long chain of metropolises and satellites. (*Capitalism* 154)

The concatenated system is one of construction through perpetuation, an arrangement of underdevelopment permeating several levels of that chain in order to assure its durability. It is a system that transfers this dynamic to an intercolonial scale and makes satellites into centres of other peripheries. In Frank's account of the interactions between Brazilian colonies one could discern engagements between subsystems which individual serve have different functions but together build upon and in effect reinforces a predominant system.

The overarching, adaptive structure described here echoes the basic principle Niklas Luhmann puts forth when he examines the mechanics of societies as global systems. The "world society" is a phenomenon wherein

The inclusion of all communicative behavior into one societal system is the unavoidable consequence of functional differentiation. Using this form of differentiation, society becomes a global system. For structural reasons there is no other choice. Taking the concept of the world in its phenomenological sense, all societies have been world societies. All societies necessarily communicate within the horizon of everything about which they can communicate. The total of all the implied meanings constitutes their world. Under modern conditions, however, and as a consequence of functional differentiation, only one societal system can exist. Its communicative network spreads over the globe. It includes all human (i.e., meaningful) communication. Modern society is, therefore, a world society in a double sense. It provides one world for one system; and it integrates all world horizons as horizons of one communicative system. The phenomenological and the structural meanings converge. A plurality of possible worlds has become inconceivable. The worldwide communicative system constitutes one world that includes all possibilities. (178)

Posing the study of societies as a matter that goes beyond the information that can be drawn from observing a single case study, Luhmann defines 'world society' as a series of smaller systems or subsystems operating under a larger structure yet each developing at different a rate.⁹ In the

⁹ Noting the developmental discrepancies in Latin America, Fernando Henrique Cardoso suggests that approaches to Dependency Theory should be conscious of the 'fragmented' state of this entity. With territories throughout the continent where different modes of production have had varying rates of success, it is difficult, he declares, to continue thinking of Latin America through adopted views:

described schematic, the stress is placed upon these developmental differences which are not only compatible with the overall “world society”, but are integral to its operation. Yet some theories identify this inclusion “of all possibilities” under a single structure as an ideal opportunity to reorient the way worlds are understood to be designed within a global context.

While “a plurality of possible worlds” that operate *outside* of a single world structure is deemed inconceivable, efforts to find alternatives within these parameters are no less drastic. dos Santos illustrates this point by commenting on import substitutions which he believes to be an ephemeral answer to the situation and one which does not completely eliminate the dependency between constituents within a world system as the centre-satellite model simply takes on a local form, stating: “La interdependencia entre las economías nacionales assume la forma de una dependencia en el caso de los países subdesarrollados. Ocurre así [porque] se trata de una relación de subordinación a aquellos que controlan el Mercado mundial, las técnicas y los medios de producción más desarrollados” (*Dependencia* 24). Apart from relying on imported goods, the techniques used to process local raw material is also something that underdeveloped entities have come to rely upon. Both dos Santos and Frank define dependence in terms of limits that a deeply-penetrated system proliferates. These limits are present not only in the operation of a centre and periphery infrastructure, but also in the way it is imagined. “Hay que comprender esta situación condicionante como límite”, dos Santos affirms, “o mejor, como configuradora de ciertas realidades más complejas con las cuales forman la realidad total que son las estructuras

Lo que quiero decir es que nosotros hacemos frente a transformaciones profundas en la estructura social de nuestros países, pero quizás todavía no tenemos el valor de encarar esas estructuras con otros conceptos a los que fueran valederos en cierta época, y que ya perdieron su capacidad explicativa en los días actuales. De ser así, habría que hacer un esfuerzo por pensar otra vez cuáles son las formas dinámicas de estructuración de la sociedad latinoamericana, diferenciándolas en términos de las formas según las cuales se da el enganche de las economías nacionales en el sistema internacional de producción. (143-4)

In this manner, he presents the asymmetry found in Latin America as one that urges new theorizations of this process of development. Treating it as unique allows for a new definition of ‘development’ to therefore figure within the construct of Development Theory.

nacionales” (*Dependencia* 41). The inescapable conditions of underdevelopment as it is generated by development and the ensuing manner in which this relation multiplies has dos Santos positing the solution to be an alteration of the paradigm itself. Rather than building upon an extant system, as dos Santos asserts the ‘liberation’ movements of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries did, proposals should seek to “cambiar estas estructuras internas” (*Dependencia* 37, 45).

Revisions to the world model of Dependency Theory have therefore been proposed from within. The underlying thesis, conveyed by dos Santos, holds that “el cambio desde un desarrollo ‘hacia afuera’ hacia un desarrollo ‘hacia adentro’ sacaría a los países subdesarrollados de la dependencia del comercio exterior y generaría una economía controlada desde dentro de sus fronteras” (*Imperialismo* 289). This self-sufficient model frames the recovery of ‘underdeveloped’ countries in terms of dependence amongst entities in the same situation.¹⁰ Developed and underdeveloped would in effect cease to be binding terms as economic planning and progress would be measured on an alternative scale fitted to the situation of marginal worlds. With access to the variety of raw products and labour that has traditionally been utilized by foreign nations, the members of these emergent orders have the necessary resources for a different sort of development at their disposal. Yet the prospects for this reoriented economic

¹⁰ Developmentalism, as it is known in the field of economics, fosters this idea as a solution to the financial and subsequent cultural turmoil that least developed countries (LDC) have encountered since the colonial systems of commerce were first introduced. Economists posit that in order to break away from these systems trade is critical. Addressing trade through equal income distribution as a suitable aim for LDCs, Alice Amsden follows the lead of Dependency Theorists and situates the disadvantages of these countries in terms of the inability to successfully implement import-substitution industrialization in their policies. The reason for this, she argues, is because the economic framework in place after the Second World War was neither built nor willing to accommodate this kind of isolated development (13). Furthermore, instead of aiding research and development in these countries, ‘developed’ nations such as the US provided LDCs with economic relief in the form of American-produced exports. This maintained LDC industries in their ‘infancy’ as other nations with research facilities were able to move on from raw materials in favour of cost-efficient substitutes (12-13). For a thorough exemplification of methods towards a reorientation of this economic structure, see the collection of essays in Yong-Shik Lee’s *A New System of International Trade with Volunteerism towards Poverty Elimination* (2013) as well as Neil Burron’s *The New Democracy Wars* (2012).

model are contingent on a noticeable separation from the global order that holds the New World in place.

The solution seems radical because the infrastructure that Dependency Theory is modelled upon, and the one that said detachment is aimed towards, is capitalism. Franks later work offers an idea of how deep-rooted capitalism has become not only in western societies, but also in the very idea of a 'world':

Of late (that is, since Marx), the 'fascination,' as Braudel called it, with 1500 as the date of a new departure that makes a supposed break with the past is mostly a function of the allegation that it ushered in a new, previously unknown or at least never before dominant, 'capitalist mode of production.' ... [M]arxists, Weberians, Polanyists, world-systematizers, not to mention most 'economic' and other historians, balk at pursuing the evidence and argument to examine the sacred cow of capitalism and its alleged peculiarly exceptional or exceptionally peculiar 'mode of production.' Therefore, the mere suggestion that perhaps this conviction might or even should be open to question is already rejected as unacceptable heresy... (*ReOrient* 330)

Unfathomable despite its likelihood, the existence of systems that are not 'capitalist' but operate concurrently with said order have remained largely unexamined. The reason for this is that there is a tendency in scholarship that more often than not groups these non-capitalist systems as delayed orders in the process of *becoming* capitalist. In response, Frank contends that "not only was there no unilinear 'progression' from one 'mode' of production to another; but all manner of relations of production were and remain widely intermingled even within any one 'society', not to mention world society as a whole" (*ReOrient* 331). The reduction of a 'society' to a single type of economy, a single developmental trajectory, and above all a single system, obstructs the coeval modes of operation that give these worlds their form. As Frank elucidates, "The incessant discussions about non-, pre-, proto-, blooming-, full blown-, declining-, post-, or any other 'stage' and quantity or quality of capitalism or the lack thereof have led us down the garden path and diverted us from analyzing the real world" (*ReOrient* 331). This 'real world' that he

mentions is not Frank's way of advocating a centre-periphery model where ulterior worlds are outside the capitalist system as this would only further the centrality of 'capitalism' as the sole organizing principle of the world. Instead, a call is made for a reconsideration of more ways to speak and think of multi-faceted worlds that exist alongside the way 'underdeveloped' worlds imagine themselves. It bears a contrast with the contention made by Dependency Theorists that a complete break from a dominant and dominating structure such as the capitalist organization of the world is Latin America's only egress from its present economic vice, a premise that spawned from the idea that there is a single, targetable world order that every entity responds to in some way. In the 'real world' of Frank, the capitalist world that 'broke from the past' does not require that it, too, be broken from as other worlds can coexist with it and assert themselves within it.

VIII. Organizing the Colonies

Such restructuring begins with the most internal of ambits when one addresses the renegotiation of the relations that exist between entities with distinct developmental patterns as an ontological question. Like the inadequacy mentioned by Frank of associating capitalism with the quintessential world everyone and thing is held to, work in colonial studies has been cautious with adopting comparative models to explain plural world systems. Instead of seeking to complement worlds with each other, in his monograph on the *Telleriano Remensis*, José Rabasa spearheads his discussion on the plurality of worlds in New Spain in terms of the impasses between them. *Tell Me the Story of How I Conquered You* (2011) uses an illustrated page of the codex in which the subject stands amid stock characters of New Spain's colonial society to explore how the gaze of the *tlacuilo* or scribe depicting these images disorients the tropes of colonialism both for the western reader at the time of its publication and researchers today. The portrayal of the *tlacuilo*'s eyes staring outwards beyond the page, Rabasa argues, moves into the

space of the reader and situates her or him in the colonial world as it is represented by the artist. He explains that the images in the *Telleriano Remensis* belong to a world order that is not diametrically opposed to those of the West, but one which is simply *otherwise*. It is contemporaneous with those portrayed by colonists, yet access to it is culturally guarded through what he calls ‘*elsewheres*’ (*Tell* 12-3). These are worlds within colonial social structures that operate under the precepts of these societies but live by their own. Rabasa explains the dynamic of *elsewheres* in terms of a solution to the classical models used to conceptualize heterogeneous subjects and colonies:

The concept of *elsewheres*, as I conceive it in this book, has enabled me to retain the possibility that the modern and nonmodern coexist in a given culture and subject without incurring contradiction. In fact, the concept of *elsewheres* enables me to step out of the negative *non-* in *non-modern* that binds this concept to a denial or a reversal of the modern. It is in the essence of the modern to underscore the incompatibility of the modern and the nonmodern, indeed, to impose the iron-fisted historical logic that promotes the internalization of values aimed at the disappearance of nonmodern. If the power of modernity reduces all exterior forms to its categories, we must also recognize — to cognize again, that is, intuit a different habitus, as in the *tlacuilo*’s picturing of the colonial order — the countering effects of the nonmodern as an *elsewhere* from which the modern (and its ability to generate binaries) is observed. (*Tell* 16)

For Rabasa, *elsewheres* are not ‘somewheres’, abstract realms existing vaguely and undetected, but rather concrete, locatable, and, albeit not openly accessible, inhabited spaces. They are worlds that complicate efforts aimed at compiling different orders into a bilateral system of congruities and differences because the nature of *elsewheres* lies in what is perpetually beyond one’s grasp or, as its name reveals, slightly outside the perimeters of traditional systems of organization.

The question now consists of proposing other ways of addressing the multivalent composition of the New World. Rabasa’s engagement with this matter entails redirecting our attention to worlds as they are viewed by those who are often spoken of but rarely allowed to

speak. In this spirit, Rabasa's discussion of the range of lifeways present in sixteenth-century New Spain avoids the comparative method altogether in favour of a depiction of isolated worlds where points of convergence arise strictly from within these inconsistencies. He takes up a similar thesis in his article "La simultaneidad en la historia global". In the essay, he refers to worlds that coexist simultaneously (those of the modern and non-modern) but which escape some as being present but not always accessible, viewable but not entirely comprehensible. Proposed as a way to "pensar lo global fuera de la globalización totalizante", Rabasa comments on the simultaneity of worlds as an arrangement that does not establish hybridity as its default framework because "la simultaneidad de diferentes tipos de mapas en las comunidades mesoamericanas, por ejemplo el [Mapa de Cuauhtinchan núm. 2] para el consumo interno y otros mapas diseñados para presentar argumentos en las cortes, implica un saber muy claro sobre la necesidad de las diferentes formas de presentar los linderos y el pasado de la comunidad" ("Simultaneidad" III). The map he mentions, illustrating a vision of the colonies in New Spain for an indigenous audience, communicates a stance that turns the wayside position of Mesoamerican communities within the imperial order into a space for resuming their own world systems. This is because the same world can be depicted in two separate ways depending on the viewer the *tlacuilo* has in mind. In short, these worlds cannot be compared or conciliated because they do not even figure within the same orders.

Taking her inspiration from the dynamics she perceives in the environments of the New World, Candace Slater offers a model for understanding the confluence of worlds as it applies specifically to the Amazon. *Entangled Edens* (2002) is dedicated to exploring the application of the comparative approach in the highly diverse environments of Amazonia and the adjustments that must be made for any explanation of this sort to be considered apropos. Spanning from

indigenous and colonial accounts to twentieth-century cinematic examples, Slater's literary study emphasizes the myriad of juxtapositions that result from compiling under the general category 'Amazonian' the perspectives belonging to "inhabitants of different worlds" (7). To illustrate this dynamic coexistence with an analogy, Slater emphasizes a characteristic feature along the Amazon's waters where a similar convergence takes place. The model used to discuss the Amazon in *Entangled Edens*, she reveals, is inspired by the river Solimões where two types of waters meet to form the official Amazon River while still preserving their respective attributes throughout this confluence:

Geographers regularly divide Amazonian rivers into "black," "white," and "clear" waters. The white waters are rich in sediments that give them a pale appearance; the clear waters are largely devoid of organic matter; the black waters are warmer than both and carry less soil and more tannin than either. A "meeting of the waters" occurs when one black and one white river (or one clear and another darker or more murky river) pour into each other. The two rivers may then flow side by side for miles before the boundary between them fades. The most famous meeting of the waters takes place at Manaus, where the inky waters of the Rio Negro spill into the paler, muddy waters of the Solimões to form the enormous river known from this point as the Amazon. From there, the two-toned boundary extends for well over fifty miles. Similar junctures of different-colored tributaries take place at several points within the river basin. Sometimes, as at Santarém, there are actually three rivers that come together in a swirling braid...Unlike the braided river, which eventually shades into a single color, the intertwinings between insiders and outsiders remain perpetually distinct. (20-1)

Through this framing device of motley waters, Slater is working from an understanding of worldviews as distinctly classifiable. She emphasizes the dichotomy between representations of Amazonia and places them next to each other in a simulation of the way that the described waters with different levels of opacity flow through a single course so as to illustrate the type of shared existence discussed in *Entangled Edens*. Moments of contact do not represent compromises to the original worldview of a culture and least of all coercions, but rather instances of proximity where transformations can occur while keeping each world "perpetually distinct". It

is not only the entwining of waters and cultures that this natural analogy helps her depict, but also the traceability of each amidst this mixture.

The American, European, local, and global visions of the Amazon appear in Slater's study as metonymic worldviews aligned with a fixed and traceable cultural environment. As she claims immediately after the explanation of the work's title, the initial set up of contrasting viewpoints is essential to the task Slater has proposed of untangling the snarl of representations associated with the Amazon into distinguishable units:

The title *Entangled Edens* refers to the varied images of a terrestrial paradise—and of an accompanying earthly hell—that the Amazon has long evoked in both insiders and outsiders. In conjuring up the original garden of delights, it confirms the central role of nature in a wide variety of portrayals of the Amazon, including a number by Amazonians. The “tangle” refers to the dense labyrinth of rain forest vegetation and to the jumbled histories and geographies—north and south; European and American; local, national, and global—that lie behind competing notions such as the Green Cathedral and Green Hell. [...] In thinking about how portrayals of the Amazon from outside the region have become enmeshed with others from within it, I have found it useful to think in terms of “giants” and “shape-shifters.” I associate the “giants” primarily with (some) outsiders and the “shape-shifters” primarily with (some) Amazonians. However, what looks at the outset like a contrast quickly turns out to be a fluid nexus of interlacing strands. Although giants and shape-shifters have no life of their own, the varied roles and meanings that different people give them over time illuminate much larger struggles—political, economic, environmental, and symbolic. (8-9)

The autochthonous division of worldviews, distinguishing those originating from observers with those from inhabitants of the Amazon, those choosing to understand its physical dimensions as an intimidating immensity from those who consider it to be a “shifting” environment, organizes these representations into a manageable framework that one could use to navigate and not get lost in the overall “fluid nexus of interlacing strands” that is Amazonia. Slater insists that these entwining renditions of the Amazon constitute a prevalent mode of envisioning the Amazon as a composite of world images, compacting dissimilar representations and interests but jeopardizing none:

In no way rigid, the divisions between inside and outside, giant and shape-shifter reveal numerous crossovers and contradictions. Assurances by early European explorers that the land would soon be conquered alternated with their astonished descriptions of its unfamiliar immensity. The Amazonian storytellers who recount the exploits of shape-shifting dolphins may turn out to be every bit as interested in controlling nature as were the early explorers, although often in different ways. And the same people who acknowledge nature's resistance to domination may openly express their longing to transform it. (19-20)

To work within this formulation of the Amazon, Slater posits a cultural uniqueness to each world view, something that distinguishes each current in her metaphorical body of water. In effect, the development of each world can be followed as something internal and equally external to the interaction with other worlds. By tracing the limits of each world, she argues for the existence of a space that falls outside of each order. According to Slater, arriving at the image of the Amazon that best suits individual interests consists of an overlapping process in which opposing viewpoints are often adapted within another set of goals that in turn redefines their original significance. From the European rhetoric of conquest rendered helpless before the vicissitudes of the unpredictable New World to the Amazonian natives whose tendency to preserve local narratives does not restrict them from actively seeking to alter their surroundings, Slater reads these contradictions as indications of a dynamic in plural world systems in which the individual's world does not have to be negotiated in social encounters.

The way a world is visualized in these theories underscores the relevance of its materialization as a site that conveys a great amount about the reasoning behind its shape. Efforts made to decentre preponderant world systems begin with observing the state in which these are presented. What we see in Slater's mode of inquiry into the multiple worlds of the Amazon and Rabasa's discussion of *elsewheres* is a movement towards breaking from the models that have dominated their fields of study. In the ongoing quest for an adequate model to explain the dynamics of difference, the image of an incomplete and therefore dependent world has been cast

aside as something worthy only as a cautionary tale. Nevertheless, observing how these dominant systems work and even form networks amidst the challenges present in the New World is a strand of research that has yet to be fully examined and it is one which the present project aims to address by observing different responses to these systems from *within* them. For it is in the way that hierarchical connections between worlds were able to subsist and become preponderant that we find a particular mode of world shaping that, like any other, is worthy of analysis along with those that it has eclipsed to understand why it has been able to do this.

The way this project addresses the ontological ramifications of this approach is by working with discarded concepts. Tossed aside because they are outmoded or appear to make no significant contribution to current studies except as a point of comparison to demonstrate how far the field has progressed, a return to something as fundamental as notion of ‘world’ allows one to engage with assertions of being as they are expressed through this very construct.

In ontological terms, the pursuit of this study is to examine how worlds world. The odd phrasing of this statement alludes to Heidegger’s lectures on ‘the thing’ and how it can come to be understood through the titular question, *What is a Thing?* (1967). Both the way the question is posed and its very nature aim to grasp the basic essence of something basic by understanding what it is. How a thing exists, Heidegger explains, is very much a question of what it *does* that defines its existence: “A thing is the existing (*vorhanden*) bearer of many existing (*vorhanden*) yet changeable properties” (*What* 34). The action of the verb ‘to be’ is where the definition of a thing is found. His argument is that everything exists because in existing, a thing is doing something. A thing has properties that are *actively existing*, which according to Heidegger can change depending on the use they are given. Defined by what it is doing, ‘thing’ and ‘world’ have this in common. The way ‘world’ is discussed in this project is by way of its application,

and in the context of the seventeenth-century Amazon, these are many. What ‘world’ signifies, enacts, or means is understood in close relation to the narrative within which it appears and the agent that put it there. Thus the notion of ‘world’ as it appears in documents outlining the shape of the New World bears an imprint, so to speak, of the entity responsible for arranging and defining it in this manner while at the same time it leaves a mark on the thing that is being understood according to these terms. And so it is by observing what ‘world’ does, how it ‘worlds’, that its function within a system can be examined for the ways it imparts meaning on other elements of the colonial enterprise.

The other part of Heidegger’s argument deals with the perception of things. A thing is defined by the way it exists, but Heidegger also makes it just as essential an issue to understand how things exist *for us*. In his study, this is a matter of becoming aware of a thing through its manifestation in space and time or rather within the limits of its uses within a given context. How one uses a chalk, an example he repeatedly draws upon throughout his lecture, can be different for an individual if it is employed as an instrument for writing or if it is pulverized to understand its chemical constitution (*What* 19-20). In any case, the surface changes and its uses are also altered, but the chalk’s essence is not compromised, simply re-contextualized. These shifting definitions of things come from the way one encounters them. However, encounters as they pertain to the colonial New World are often missed. How things are in the New World is equated with how things simply *are*. The discussion of colonial worlds is deeply embedded in the concept of nature that ontology, too, is seen to originate from the same source within the New World. The existence of colonial worlds is presented in terms of a natural state even though this depiction is itself constructed to appear this way. However, to iterate the argument illustrated through Heidegger’s chalk, these appearances point towards the way being is understood through

encounters. Ontology by way of New World shapes returns to those encounters that were designed to be missed amongst nature's tropical foliage. Pointing out world shapes alone will not be as effective an approach as engaging with their process of shaping meaning, or to put it as Joshua Lund does about tropes in contemporary approaches to colonial questions, "simply because we can unmask genre and expose it as a fiction (a made object) does not mean that we disable its authoritative effects; one does not so easily disarm the force of law" (130). That nature throughout the seventeenth-century New World is taken as a starting point for discussing being makes areas like the Amazon, in which it is fundamental, the optimal place with which to begin engaging with the process of world shaping. The depiction of Amazonia during this period is therefore not something that this project aims to correct, but instead examine. In studying the way worlds acquired their 'authoritative effects', one does not denounce but begins to analyze these models in a context that also brings other formulations of 'world' into the discussion because, as products of design, they can impart information about the process of their shaping.

Taking Heidegger's investigation into 'being-in-the-world' further, Enrique Dussel inquires about the nature of the action effected on the sense one has on this place as it applies to Latin America. "Que el hombre obra es un hecho", he begins, "pero, ¿qué es la acción? ¿Por qué obra?" (*Para* 91). These fundamental ambiguities lead him to address existence as an active process, as a constant manifestation of action or "*prâxis*". One makes visible one's existence through actualization that asserts a "miidad" or 'me'-ness indicating one's presence in the world: "estar-siendo-en-el-fin es estar lanzado en un proceso, en un continuo pasaje a la trascendencia. La *prâxis* como actualidad en el mundo es la movilidad misma del ser humano, es su ser en acto, es simplemente *estar-siendo hombre*" (*Para* 93). With the affirmation of one's existence operating under the general guideline that it be directed towards an end, what Dussel refers to as

a *destinación* rather than an obligation in order to maintain a sense of disposition and individual agency, the way one chooses to pursue this orientation is left to personal discretion (*Para* 86).

The effect on others that comes from establishing one's presence in the world becomes for Dussel a question of ethics given that the individual choices involved in this type of ontology transcend their point of origin. Moreover, as others are simultaneously engaged in 'being-in-the-world' he therefore claims that the act of *being* cannot be realized in isolation or without some degree of impact. Using the dynamic of fluvial bodies to illustrate his argument, he explains this system as one that is comparably unconfined:

La prâxis es trascendencia. Su origen es el hombre mismo, y en él los existenciaros hasta ahora descriptos: la com-prensión del ser, la comprensión-interpretadora de las posibilidades, la libre y determinativa pre-ocupación, etc. Todos esos momentos "desembocan" en la *prâxis* que es como el cauce final del gran río, río que ha ido creciendo por la afluencia de los riachos y arroyos, para desembocar pujante en el mar; dicho mar es el mundo. La *prâxis*, por ello, no es *un* modo de ser en el mundo sino *el* modo conjugado de todo el hombre comprometido en las mediaciones hacia su poder-ser siempre mundano. La *prâxis* es *el* modo intramundano que aúna todo el ser del hombre. (*Para* 91)

Congregating, just as waters do, the different parts that flow into one another towards a common direction, *prâxis* is explained as the unmitigated dimension of existence in which other manifestations of being assemble to form and inform the essence of a world. Being thus becomes being amongst others as well as *with* others, all within a concatenated existence wherein these connections shape worlds beyond those of the individual.

Dussel's ontology is one which questions the place of action and, effectively, self-assertion in the context of 'world'. Within this meta-structure made up of uniquely-oriented manifestation of *being*, he emphasizes the relevance of analyzing the position Latin America occupies within it. Understanding Latin American existence by understanding Latin American worlds in relation to 'the world' is a matter of comprehending a broader ontological framework.

It is what leads Dussel to engage with dependency theory and attempt to rephrase its tenets in terms of time by asking through the title of his essay whether el “¿El ser de Latinoamérica tiene pasado y futuro?” (1964). Attempts to place the worlds of the New World within a historical timeline and therefore study it within a global context is expressed by Dussel to be in many ways a search for the fulfilment of a prophecy. He examines this in a follow-up to his own essay written in the same year, in which António Vieira’s sermons are read for the messianic framework in which the existence of ‘ahistorical’ places such as the Maranhão is explained: “Toda su obra posee dos postulados: el Antiguo Testamento anticipa al Nuevo, que realiza las profecias del Antiguo; en la Biblia se contienen las profecías desde la creación hasta la consumación total. Es decir, se incluye igualmente América” (“Escatología” 52). Under the typological rubric that Vieira is read to be using, the existence that the New World is understood to be reaffirming is that which is outlined in a biblical timeline. Brazil, or fifth empire as Vieira refers to it, begins to make sense no longer as an anomaly, but rather as an integral part of a cohesive system that is merely expressed differently. In the search for an explanation, a ‘land without history’ is given meaning and direction under the unifying system that is Christianity. Placed within this broader context, the New World at large is understood to be the fulfillment of an anticipated domain. But the connection had to be deeper. This transference of a context had to *define* life in the New World, not just explain it:

De este modo, la *Cristiandad iberoamericana colonial*, incluyendo a España y Portugal, e igualmente el Brasil, era co-esencial con el *mesianismo* que el español o el portugués llevaba como elemento constitutivo de su conciencia. Ese mesianismo chocó contra la estructura estática y primitiva de las civilizaciones antihistóricas, como la maya, azteca o inca, que no habían pasado la época calcolítica. Dicho mesianismo se infundió en las masas, se impregnó con los nuevos elementos y se transformó profundamente –sin llegar nunca, al menos en la totalidad de la conciencia colectiva a significar un cristianismo adulto, histórico, liberador. (“Escatología” 53)

A messianic past that assures the prospects of the New World's future culminates in the question of the meaning attached to the life of those who originate from these parts. Positing such direction generates a 'towards' with which existence in the New World is aligned. In other words, the use of a timeline establishes a mode of interpretation regarding the manner in which life in the New World is shown to develop.

The question is very much built upon definitions of what the New World *has been, is,* and *can be*. In the way Dussel addresses the latter it is possible to see the ontological facet of understanding *el ser latinoamericano* as an incomplete mode of being:

No es solamente un no-ser-todavía, sino un no-ser-todavía, sino un no-ser-todavía-que puede-efectivamente-llegar-a-ser: una "potencia" *real* y presente. La presencia del futuro (no en tanto futuro, sino en tanto contenido-futuro-posible), se ahinca en el presente: primeramente, como realización plenaria y real de un pasado-realizado en un presente, es decir, el fin, que guía, atrayendo, la utilización de los medios para irrumpir efectivamente en ese presente-que-no-es-todavía (el contenido). ("El ser" 34)

Because the future is a projection of what the New World could be, a messianic possibility, Dussel refers to the type of being associated with it as a "no-ser-todavía-que-puede-efectivamente-llegar-a-ser". Phrasing existence as a reality that has not yet come to be, he views this incomplete state as a characteristic that, just as it can relegate life in the New World to a second-class mode of being, can leave this act open to a myriad of definitions. The same incomplete condition creates at once "una tensión interna segura sobre *lo determinado* de lo que vendrá necesariamente e *indeterminado* sobre el contenido de lo que será en el futuro" ("El ser" 33). This reading of potential within a framework that initially appears to offer little of the sort is an interpretation that comes out of an inversion of what it means to be devoid of a recognized past.

Becoming aware of the comparably inexistent history of the New World is, however, necessary in order for the future to remain undetermined in the ways Dussel argues are

advantageous to practices of self-definition. To move away from an attributed 'towards' and engage instead with the possibilities that the 'uncertainties' of Latin America could offer involves contextualizing what others have made of the New World or "saber negar concientemente la negación" ("El ser" 31). In essence, it involves a re-reading of the way others have read the New World's past. If a messianic timeline has been given to places like Brazil, it is the understanding that this is simply one way of speaking of the open structure of the colonial New World and that other equally valid interpretations of the same feature also exist. If the creation of underdevelopment has helped advance the development of other nations, this truncated trajectory can, as it does in Raúl Prebisch's work, redefine the relevance of dependency under as a model that gives way to collaboration. Prebisch offers a proposal that modifies the responsibility of changing this system as one that is shared. Maintaining that changes must be directed at the internal workings of the world system, the modification of its structure of dependence is collaborative according to Prebisch:

La respuesta no solo depende del arte político del desarrollo, de esa aptitud para encarar los problemas de fondo y combinar lo inmediato con soluciones de largo alcance. Depende también de la cooperación internacional. En una estrategia de aceleración del desarrollo hay una fase inicial difícil pero decisiva: preparar la economía para que ese proceso de acumulación de capital se pueda cumplir sin excesivas tensiones. Se necesita una aportación masiva de recursos financieros del exterior a fin de impulsar una rápida expansión de la economía, mediante el aprovechamiento de recursos ociosos o mal empleados y otras medidas convergentes del orden interno. De más está decirlo: cuando la economía se expande así, es menos difícil la acumulación de capital sin sacrificar el consumo más allá de ciertos límites. Tal es el papel dinámico inicial de la cooperación financiera internacional: impulsar la acumulación de capital interno. Para ello, sus condiciones tendrían que ser muy diferentes a las del pasado. (17-8)

The alternative Prebisch presents in his report to the Inter-American Development Bank is essentially *not* an alternative as it is a plan to work *within* the structure of dependency but towards contrary ends. Proposing it instead as a system of support, the opportunists ends to which the dependency model has been used in the past are transformed along with the sense of

what it means to *be* in Latin America. In effect, a position of vulnerability is rephrased as a conscious effort to work within the boundaries of dependency to find another way of existing and partaking in this world design.

Under the monolithic structure of a world system, agency continues to exist in the form of awareness. In Dussel's response to the titular question of his essay one finds an elaboration of what has been discussed regarding baroque concepts of the incomplete, namely that the same limitations of a system can be altered from within once these are recognized as such: "Acaece así entre los pueblos: los pueblos que esperan expectantes lo Advenidero se transforman necesariamente en súbditos de aquellos que tienen autoconciencia de la evolución universal. En ese sentido, no somos libres ante un futuro impuesto o recibido, ni tampoco es un futuro humano, sino más bien un futuro que otros nos atribuyen" ("El ser" 34). Reinterpreting the difference between the undefined New World and those entities that understand their historical place within a world system, Dussel reveals the standards according to which development is assessed to be "horizons", in Luhmann's teleological terms, that are not inherent but rather established by those with said "autoconciencia". Uneven development originates consequently from the understanding of an entity's function within the world system but this function is in turn dependent on the terms defined for others. Nonetheless, the possibility exists for the same terms to be defined *by* others, by those in a relegated position within such framework, through a cognizance of these workings, with change coming about from *within* this system.

How things exist in a world is a matter of how they exist in an order and acquire meaning through it. World, in short, is a system of simultaneous experiences and understandings of a place that in turn dynamically alter its represented form or shape. These experiences are connected but remain nonetheless different from one another, forming worlds out of this

disjuncture rather than resolving it. To circumvent disparity in theorizations of ‘world’, Heidegger argues, is to ignore a vital component of its operation:

In dealing with the world taken care of, what is unhandy can be encountered not only in the sense of something unusable or completely missing, but as something unhandy which is *not* missing at all and *not* usable, but “gets in the way” of taking care of things. That to which taking care cannot turn, for which it has “no time,” is something *unhandy* in the way of not belonging there, of not being complete. Unhandy things are disturbing and make evident the *obstinacy* of what is initially to be taken care of before anything else. With this obstinacy the presence of what is at hand makes itself known in a new way as the being of what is still present and calls for completion. The modes of conspicuousness, obtrusiveness, and obstinacy have the function of bringing to the fore the character of objective presence in what is at hand... In its conspicuousness, obtrusiveness, and obstinacy, what is at hand loses its character of handiness in a certain sense. But this handiness is itself understood, although not thematically, in dealing with what is at hand. It does not just disappear but bids farewell, so to speak in the conspicuousness of what is unusable. (*Being* I.iii.74)

Those aspects that are classified as incomplete within the chain of being that forms Heidegger’s sense of world are as relevant as the components that function harmoniously within this system. The reason that he cites for this is that, in conspicuously seeming to be out of place, incongruous or ‘unhandy’ elements disrupt the overall sense one has of the congruous components insofar as their handiness is brought into question. ‘Incompleteness’ urges one to reappraise something as fundamental as ‘world’ as those elements that do not work in a world system lead us to reflect on the way a world system in effect works.

The colonial Amazon provides a functional model of this ontological arrangement. What connects the components of the worlds associated with the Amazon is water. It is the conduit that is used to define what it means to be in the New World. Water is used to organize, express, alter, and challenge the very idea of what existing in these worlds means. To address the prevalence of nature as the determinant of New World ontology in the Amazon, we turn to the topographical feature that did in fact serve this purpose, but not in the ways one might have anticipated. By focusing on this inconspicuous element, “conspicuous” only when we understand it according to

Heidegger's terms, in water one can find, as this project intends to do, the agglutinating substance of worlds as they appear in concepts of empire and within radical, often contradictory, New World expressions of the very same Amazonia.

IX. An Itinerary

Despite the advances and burgeoning alternative methods available for discussing the New World in a revisionist manner, the comparative method can still contribute to this current of reconsiderations. I propose to turn towards it not in the interest of forging connections, but in studying those that were forged. As one would imagine, colonial worlds operated by their own internal logic which was often at odds with the infrastructures in which they were embedded. Narratives about these arrangements frequently emphasize internal conflicts, misunderstandings, convolutions, and consequences that occur as worlds come into view of one another under these conditions. I engage with the differences put forth by these texts as they encapsulate a specific partition of world orders wherein, "Relation is intimately bound up with the relativization inherent in the conditions of possibility for narration the story of the world from any place in the world" (Melas 654). Keeping in mind how discrepant formulations of 'world' were conceptualized by those attempting to preserve their own definitions of it assists us in revisiting these conflicting narratives with an awareness of what they can communicate about the process of world shaping.

And so we return to the Amazon and its design. To express the kind of information that can be extracted from the way the Amazon was assembled, longstanding modes of imagining and communicating worlds are incorporated in this project along with non-European practices. Every text, written and non-written works alike, appears in this undertaking as a composition communicating a world design. Using a method similar to close reading, the locations, people,

and topography that appear in chronicles, material remains, landscape layouts, and illustrations of the Amazon are studied as a collection of points outlining what each proposes as its shape.

As a passageway, as an incomplete and unknown terrain, as the ideal setting for narratives about curiosities and the gathering point of different communities, the forms the Amazon assumes at the hands of various agents warrants a return to a basic question that has been treated for some time as an accepted premise. That question investigates what kind of ‘world’ is being alluded to in the phrase ‘New World’ and what are its concrete manifestations. This ontological issue frames every chapter of the present study as each one examines the states these worlds take on in their design process, beginning, as we have, with the ‘incomplete’ and eventually exploring the malleability of some worlds, incompletion of others, and the dynamics surrounding the contours between worlds. Analyzing with each how water, the Amazon’s defining characteristic and substance, is used to organize the tropical rainforest in this myriad of ways allows us to study how these worlds are ‘recorded’ or made patent.

The recorded descriptions also attribute other shapes to the New World that further attempt to situate it within a broader context of ‘world’. Having noted that the ‘incomplete’ is one among these, we will address three other conceptualizations of the Amazon not so much as case studies of the first, but rather as individual, yet not completely dissociated, propositions on the process of world shaping. To the extent that definitions of this process are gradually proposed across the entirety of the project instead of allocating a definitive explanation at its opening, this structure is fashioned in a manner that can be receptive to the plethora of New World formulations as they arose, were negotiated, and reconsidered during the seventeenth century.

For this reason, the second chapter focuses on the cosmography of worlds that forged within larger world structures. In it, questions of the relations between worlds are illustrated

through the seventeenth-century chronicle of a voyage through the Amazon during a time where the contentions about its shape were acquiring a geopolitical dimension amidst territorial claims made by different imperial forces. In Cristóbal de Acuña's 1640 documentation of the Amazon River for the Spanish Crown and his Jesuit order, planned as the final word and culmination of a pair of prior voyages undertaken by rival armies and ecclesiastical orders, the matter of land distributions is approached from an intercolonial perspective. That is, Amazonian worlds are presented not only in relation to the New World orders commissioning the reconnaissance voyage, but also in terms of the possible connections that exist within tropical rainforest and which ultimately alter the way this space is imagined and administered.

With the third chapter, the attention turns to the narratives dedicated to shaping the worlds shaped by others. These consist of no longer merely displaying individual world designs but rather of establishing these through commentaries on the work undertaken by others. By observing the arrangement of Amazonian foodstuffs in Albert Eckhout's *Still Life with Manioc* (ca.1640), the otherwise crude state of the natural world yields a discernable order in the painting's composition that signals the presence of an organizing hand responsible for finding and manifesting cohesion amongst the represented Brazilian spices. This painting, part of a series of still lifes that "played an important part in projecting an idealized view of the Count [Johan Maurits'] power and control over the local population in Brazil", features spices and victuals procured from the Amazon but depicted outside of their original environment and in this sense presented in staged arrangement (Brienen 37). From the manner in which they are sliced in half to their placement in their respective food groups, the way the items are organized in the painting is on display as much as the 'novel' provisions themselves. Manageable and managed, the ordering of the specimens of Eckhout's painting is the organization of the world writ large.

Through the grouping of the material world of the Amazon, a visual claim is made that this systematic bounty is possible under the tutelage of the ‘correct’ governing power. It is thus through pictorial composition that we will begin to address the ways world arrangements were presented as a visual exercise in control over the crude material of the Amazon as it was rustically managed by opposing colonial factions. In addition to this, a treatise from one of these opposing factions will be examined for the way it proposes to respond to their designs of the New World through the transplantation of foreign crops to Brazil. This will be discussed as a practice that politically, geographically, and physically reorders the concept of ‘world’ to such a degree that it turns colonial Brazil into a microcosm or world onto itself. In both examples, it is not a matter of exercising dominance over nature in and of itself as much as it is about doing so over *someone else’s* organization of it.

‘World’ in the fourth chapter addresses the dimensions of and responses to indigenous designs. Narratives recounting failed expeditions into the Amazon are examined for the way encounters between different shaping practices are represented, with the disastrous outcomes that took place in this enigmatic setting representing these interruptions to colonial endeavours. Hostile locals, unpredictable conditions, and tortuous waterways are some of the characters in these narratives of misfortune. Using a selection of annual reports written by missionaries regarding the management of their *aldeas* in the Amazon and related settlement attempts, the chagrin expressed throughout allows us to trace these misfortunes to the unanticipated outcomes of expansionist projects. When these endeavours for consolidation of the fragmented state of the New World are met with local complications, the ensuing abrasion, as it were, produces an opportune ingress to study the world formations that are causing this halt. Alongside chronicles recounting its curiosities, the Amazonian *várzeas* or floodplains are discussed for their capacity

to alter more forms than just landscapes. The mutability of constructs such as nature are witnessed to be at play in the way the dark earth of these areas was interpreted to be used by local peoples. The difficulties of defining the Amazon when much of its physical space was regularly being readjusted and its inhabitants were constantly reorganizing themselves according to fluctuating attitudes towards a foreign presence made the potential of any project in these lands seem uncertain. Therefore, such differences in renditions of the same world will allow us to examine narrative dissonances as a shaping method at the heart of Amazonian vitality.

To recapitulate, the difficulties, and in certain cases impossibility, of knowing, accounting for, and recounting the Amazon as a whole spawned a series of views, both in print and outside it, that ultimately gave way to the notion of the ‘incomplete’. By arranging a model of the New World that is functional for the individual, ‘world’ figures as a tool as much as an ontological expression. We can begin to see this upon abandoning the criterion that values worlds only in terms of being complete entities and successively treating each rendition or shape as an autonomous manifestation.

From my early encounter with the Manta-Manaus project, I became aware of what, after further research, I have come to know as the operation of world shaping. Despite its topical subject, the article would go on to alter the question I originally sought to answer and serve as a guide for my work on the colonial worlds of the Amazon. The Amazon featured in the plans for the continental corridor is one that has alerted me to the type of reconfigurations the New World can undergo based on the type of world it is presented to be or could become. Consequently, my inquest into the reasons why Brazil and the rest of Latin America had been represented in a disjointed manner now includes the question of *how* these were disconnected; for ‘disjointed’, I increasingly began to see, is as much of a design choice as any other.

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Chapter 2:

The Fluid Amazon

The question of where in the Amazon does one begin to look for its colonial worlds is at once an investigation into what kind of worlds we are expecting to find there. Customarily, excavating for pieces of someplace discarded by someone has yielded pertinent information about the cultures that inhabited these rainforest grounds, allowing researchers to draw from its records to produce a synoptic image of these worlds based on the sites from where they have been gathered. Tradition dictates that the majority of these recoveries take place on land-based repositories which in turn makes the correlation between sites and the procedure of reconstructing worlds all the more critical. What it is that is being reconstructed is the history of a surface from the surface. Though it may not always be presented this way, the worlds conveyed with these findings are derived from a specific element, as it were. Yet in Amazonian studies, there is another site that is accounted given that significant portions of rainforest's surface are covered in seasonal and singular waters. Even in works that do not address it as plainly, the presence of rivers has been an ongoing concern for those involved with studies of Amazonia. Often it is an element that is indirectly incorporated into studies of the Amazon as a natural force that, with its waters, has caused numerous pieces of earthenware to be loosened from their original locations and set adrift in the direction of the current until they have become indistinguishable from the murky substance that carries them. For investigators attempting to rebuild the Amazon as a site of the past, this presents a challenge as it is difficult to study

material once found on solid earth and which has been displaced to the realm of water.

Nevertheless, studying water as an integral element in the process of world shaping can lead to appreciation of the other facets that are being left out when research is conducted through an exclusive focus on earthbound findings. The tendency to isolate these spaces can obstruct the view of what was and continues to be a process involving both solid and liquid surfaces.¹¹ For it is precisely where land and river meld that we find the archives of Amazonia.

Leaving areas and communities materially and culturally ‘destitute’, the intersection of fluvial paths with human activity crossed over into the literary concerns of the time. The devastation caused by water as an environmental force inflicting losses of all kinds epitomizes the sixteenth and seventeenth-century genre of shipwreck narratives and its stories of doomed colonial projects. It is a literature written from an awareness of water’s role in simultaneously building and damaging the enterprises, allowing and complicating expansionist efforts. Josiah Blackmore has studied this literature in its many manifestations throughout the literature of the Portuguese Renaissance and makes note of how the aforementioned properties of water were incorporated into the narrative in a way that enacted the disconcerting effect of these maritime tragedies, even by writers, like the playwright and historian Francisco Manuel de Melo (1608-66), who were distanced from any first-hand experience by the demands of their desks:

¹¹ Carla Stang’s *A Walk to the River in Amazonia* (2009) presents the interactions between rivers and land in contemporary Mehinaku culture in terms of phenomenological encounters. Using the experience of a woman’s walk to fetch water from the river, Stang examines how collective and individual definitions of Mehinaku worlds do not allocate any part of the environment to a fixed point. Rather,

the interaction between these discrete forms or bodies is also understood substantially, involving the movement of visible and invisible substances each with their own independent causal efficacy. These interactions as movements of substances, do not only occur between human bodies, but between all entities in the world, so rain is water substance physically thrown down by star-entities onto the land below and sunlight is a material literally squeezed out by a mechanical process from the body of a great Vulture that then passes down onto the skin of human beings. (41)

The dynamism in this concept of world operates on the mutability undergone by material when moving from one place to another just as individuals on the walk to the river transition between spaces. Here water comes to be the conduit moving bodies and substances between places, thereby proving to be a critical in maintaining the activity of the Mehinaku worlds.

The principles of order, harmony, and rationality Melo argues for in the prefatory remarks serve to emphasize how the presence of shipwreck in his book works against these very principles. Melo feels the need to justify his choice of material because the inclusion of an account of shipwreck ostensibly disrupts the precepts he has just identified—Melo, in short, knows that he must defend his decision to give a prominent historiographic place to shipwreck[...] [He] is concerned because it is not just the presence of a tragic story he needs to defend, but the potential break the shipwreck story might cause in the overall flow of his collective narrative of five different books. The *Epanáforas* (1660) give us an instance of the incorporation of a shipwreck story within the flow of a larger historical text and the possible breach or disruption such a story threatens to realize. Melo's own historical circumstances are a reflection of his worry about disruptive chapters in a larger history, for he wrote in the years immediately following the Spanish occupation of the Portuguese crown (1580-1640). (53-4)

One gathers that the salient attribute of water in this account is the disruption it causes diegetically and at the metafictional level. With the act of reading having been cut off from a discernible resolution or devoid of the lifeline usually offered by a narrative thread, the sense of loss that defines this literature operates at the level of the work's framing. Blackmore proposes that the consequent disorientation results from the way the act of reading these accounts, much like the oceanic voyages of which they speak, does not offer any easy form of navigating through the text. The narrative device of the shipwreck, "the fissure in systems of order and the attendant disaster or crumbling of signification as enacted on, through, and because of the body of a ship", places the frailty of symbolic and concrete enterprises at the foreground, offering a dramatization of all-consuming presence of water that gets in the way of a unity amongst an empire's realms and a template for the kind of stories that have been told about areas where these fluvial bodies figure prominently (Blackmore 54).¹²

As mentioned, a very common way of viewing the function of water by those involved in efforts to unearth the colonial Amazon has been to include it in these studies as an antithetical

¹² The quintessential text on the subject of perdition is Luis Vaz de Camões' *Os Lusíadas* (1572). In it the creature of Adamastor that emerges from the waters to interrupt Vasco da Gama's voyage to the east appears at the geographical and narrative turning point of the expedition, reverberating the torment brought on by the storm that forms as he delivers his tortured speech.

force. The archaeologist Miguel Angel Cabodevilla, for instance, manifests the disadvantages of working in the Amazon when he refers to the Napo River as “el gran huaqueador” or the great raider of artefacts (“Tropiezan”). According to Cabodevilla, most attempts to preserve sites and objects in the tropical rainforest are thwarted by the ruinous presence of rivers which ‘loot’ and relocate the archaeological content of these areas. As precipitation levels rise and water begins to run through lowland regions, it unfastens and weathers everything along its course.

Cabodevilla’s familiarity with these natural disruptions comes from the experiences he and other archaeologists of the upper Amazon have had during their research and excavation of Mayo-Chinchipe sites wherein most of the items of their study were only found because the passing river had eventually surrendered them: “es de lamentar que ninguna de las piezas principales haya sido objeto de una recuperación adecuada, con contexto debidamente estudiado. Fueron ofrecidas por el azar (el río desmonta sin cesar las orillas y, con suerte, ofrece a veces una pieza valiosa antes de devorarla) o por el pillaje interesado, tan habitual en nuestro país” (“La vida” 293). Epitomizing the damage that is perpetrated by plunderers of all kinds as it gradually reduces these areas to a barren state, the devouring force of the river becomes an impediment for archaeologists when the aim is to protect sites like those of the Mayo-Chinchipe as cultural heritage.

Cabodevilla’s response is to foment a “local archaeology” by introducing the inhabitants of these affected areas to various preservation methods that they can perform on their own. In doing so, this work is shared amongst a greater number of people who can equitably look over the sites of the Napo’s previous cultures long after archaeologists leave. He suggests that local support towards this effort to offset the effects of rivers is particularly strong in areas along the Tipotín River where the population is primarily non-Napo Runa or ‘non-mestizo’, indicating a

stronger affinity with the past cultures due to the intransient nature of theirs (“Tropiezan”). Yet this strive towards legibility of cultural symbols brings into focus what exactly it is that archaeologists hope to recover.

The ability to read cultural symbols found in archaeological sites of communities that shared some likeness to those of present-day ‘non-Napo Runa’ peoples turns into the defining feature of the latter’s involvement in the project. The assumption is that ‘non-Napo Runa’ individuals are not only capable but ideal candidates for ensuring the longevity of these sites and their content. It begins with the notion that the lamentable loss of one valuable cultural asset can only be mitigated by the protection of another whereby humans, the humans in the Amazon in particular, acquire a newfound importance in these matters as surviving ‘links’ to the worlds perceived to be lost. Cabodevilla’s preservation effort is accordingly redirected to focus on conserving the cultural legibility that the ‘non-Napo Runas’ possess and which, as an intangible artefact that exists well beyond the river’s destructive course, offers an effective way of safeguarding Amazonian sites and their significance in an effective manner. Once left out of excavations and other activities meant to restore the colonial past, these communities are now integral members of such endeavours and furthermore responsible for keeping the sites and their meaning. At the same time, the employment of these intermediary figures as willing deterrents against the aforementioned damages of water recasts the matter of preservation into a question of prescription.

Turning the woe reserved for ‘underdeveloped’ cultures into a misplaced appreciation of what is in fact a saving grace, his project focuses on Amazonian individuals almost entirely for their unadulterated ways of life and how unspoiled genealogy can rectify the ‘loss’ of a past that the Amazon is believed to have endured. Amidst the efforts made to recover and protect the

details of previous cultures, Cabodevilla has one world defer to another and subsist only on these functional terms. Those considered to be living ‘remnants’ of the past end up existing in the service of the peoples with whom they presumably share common symbols. In this type of configuration, the ‘non-’ that precedes ‘Napo Runa’ becomes a defining factor for establishing claims of an unchanged lineage linking contemporary indigenous groups to remote lifeways.¹³ In doing so, the non-Napo Runas are depicted by Cabodevilla as a people rallied against a common threat as it poses a risk to a common history. Water is not only capable of expunging the archaeological artefacts, but the archaeological artefacts *of the non-Napo Runa*. Using water as an antagonistic force, Cabodevilla is able to therefore posit the longstanding interest in curtailing these effects of the Amazon’s rivers as a non-Napo Runa endeavour. It is from this use of water in the depiction of the Amazon that Cabodevilla’s project of restoration is orchestrated.

Cabodevilla’s proposed solution is an example of a recurring practice where water is added to designs of the Amazon in order to put forth a specific vision for its worlds. Underscoring the challenges presented by the fluid, he creates a case for the importance of local involvement in the effort to save the historical Amazon from itself, in turn generating an image of its spaces as the sites of an ongoing process of cultural extinction. But his, it must be clear, is only one of an array of modes illustrating the use of water as the core instrument in the fashioning of the Amazon.

When we take the river’s waters and examine them through associations such as those presented by Cabodevilla, they become research sites in their own right. Turning to rivers as the

¹³ Advocating a return to local sources of knowledge with his defence of indigenous involvement in the recovery of Amazonian cultural heritage, Cabodevilla adheres to the principles of post-processual archaeology and the practices of community archaeology which allow those who are making ancestral land claims to study and present their own evidence. The transfer of authority to native communities that oversee digs and their findings is something post-processual archaeology encourages as a method for ascertaining the impact of various ‘artefacts’ on those who view and engage with them (Hodder 225-6).

sites and subjects of the Amazon's colonial past, this second chapter looks into the shape of *the* world as it pertains to its terraqueous configuration. That is to say, it examines the implications surrounding the use of water and other aspects of nature to convey a cohesive representation of the New World. Through the pages of Cristóbal de Acuña's 1640 chronicle of a voyage through the Amazon, these New World designs will be explored in relation to the science dedicated to understanding worlds in terms of their mode of organization. Cosmography's attention to structural patterns will be assessed in a New World context in order to discuss the alterations that fluvial systems brought to the stability of these arrangements.

A world instead of *the* world is therefore the preferred nomenclature and ideological framework of this study as we come across individual accounts of this term. What 'world' could mean on the basis of how its parts were arranged and presented makes it difficult to refer to the term outside of this plural context given the variety of possible arrangements that could be and were made. Despite this, the model that has been preferred above all others in colonial studies has been that of the single world. World-systems theory, as it has come to be understood through the ideas of Immanuel Wallerstein, operates on this framework of a single world in relation to which communities and social interactions are understood. In synthesis, it is an arrangement where *the* world is submitted as the organizing structure of several micro and macro interconnections around an established core (Wallerstein xxii). This unifying centre is the capitalist system which in Wallerstein's opinion differentiates the levels of development around *the* world, organizing it into those who are at the centre of the arrangement and those who exist at its periphery. And it is here, scattered somewhere along the edges of these extreme coordinates, that the different entities of the New World are often imagined.

The present undertaking does not resolve to discard the body of work a twenty-first century researcher of the colonial period inevitably inherits in which ‘world’ indicates little more than a reference to an established order. Instead, this unquestioned formulation is treated as a narrative that holds insights into a unique process of world shaping. Under these terms, to ‘oppose’, ‘separate from’, or propose ‘alternatives’ to this longstanding narrative would run counter to the outlined objective that intends to identify what is being manifested in different New World designs. The containment process of world shaping, or how worlds are held together as a single unit, will be examined in this chapter as it is embodied in seventeenth-century cosmographies of the Amazon and ascribed to its natural order. The discussion will take us through the unravelling of this single-world model amid the events that transpired on the waters of the seventeenth-century Amazon, addressing the process of world shaping from *within* this concept in order to also observe the worlds that have been enclosed in its umbra.

I. The Nature of the Problem

Now, when we introduce an element such as water into the list of factors affecting the world shaping process as it took place the seventeenth-century Amazon, there is a level of awareness that must go along with it. By claiming that water played an important role in defining the worlds of the Amazon the risk is to use ‘shaped *by*’ and ‘shaped *with*’ interchangeably, the first being a deterministic view while the second presenting the role of factors as ancillary. It is the latter that I propose as a way of reading the historical use of the former. I mention this because there is a long tradition involving the enumeration of countless elements such as the weather, natural proclivities, location, humours, and states of the anima amongst others, as factors which the minerals, vegetables, and humans of Amazonia were ‘shaped *by*’. However,

there is just as marked a presence of writings reproving this view and redressing its perceived wrongs raised against human agency.

Hugh Raffles begins his work *In Amazonia* (2002) with the story of how the ideology known as ‘determinism’ came to be the representative school of thought on issues pertaining to scholarship on the Amazon. It is a short story that can in fact be told through an equally pithy plot summary which involves the positing of nature as the explanation for the way things have always been and will remain in Amazonia, finding in the environment the key to understanding its peoples:

This narrow preoccupation with the constraints of given biophysical conditions provoked some exasperatingly protracted debates in the North American Amazonianist literature — most famously that concerned with the limitation on ‘social development’ enforced by a supposed lack of protein available to native populations. It also led directly to the work of Betty Meggers, a research associate in South American archaeology at the Smithsonian, who elegantly glossed the adaptationist position that was to drive her own investigations for almost half a century: “The level to which a culture can develop,” she declared, “is dependent upon the agricultural potentiality of the environment it occupies.” Invoking [Julian] Steward — but more suggestive of the later cultural materialism of Marvin Harris — Meggers allocated the tropical forest environment to the “Type 2 culture area [...] (a region) of limited agricultural potential,” suitable only for swidden agriculture, and, accordingly, restricting society to the “tribal level of organization.” Agricultural potential was reducible to soil fertility, itself understood as a fixed set of conditions. Not only was the environment dominant and determining, but its cultural effects were predictable. (36)

Betty Megger’s presentation of inland cultures as underdeveloped and therefore predictable has made it difficult for archaeologists to reconcile Meggers’ views with their own work. In searching for points of deviation from this fatalist rubric where change could be attributed to individuals and behavioural motives escaped mere mechanical responses to one’s surroundings, investigators began to notice that the environment was a feature that was accommodated to everyday life more often than the contrary was witnessed. Many efforts have been made from

these respective camps to distance themselves in an attempt to correct the wrongs of the other through printed retorts and streams of updated data, but little has been done in the way of advancing the conversation towards a question of the Amazon's plural existence. Seeming less of a truism than it was originally held to be, determinism in its many Amazonian contexts continues to be a divisive issue that has swayed the tone of the dialogue between researchers within and outside of this strand of thinking towards more accusatory debates. According to Raffles, the problem is rooted in the practice of omitting information that does not corroborate the claims of an Amazonian existence conditioned by the Amazon:

Long before these [revisionist] studies, cultural ecologists, including Meggers and Evans, had encountered similar manipulations. Even in the [*Handbook of South American Indians* (1946-50)], Alfred Métraux had documented interfluvial anthropogenic channels connecting Mojo villages in the Bolivian Amazon. Yet, these scholars provided little interpretative space for the analysis of their finds. Such phenomena were either downplayed, ignored, or, where too significant to disregard, attributed to Andean or Mesoamerican diffusion. The explicit emphasis in the work [...] on the dynamic co-production of people and landscape thus represents a significant shift away from the hegemony of determinism and offers the basis for an overdue rethinking of the orthodoxy of adaptation. It presumes a strong notion of human agency, yet continues to emphasize the materiality of the biophysical, the agency of the non-human. (38)

Amidst what seems like a denunciation of the unsound scholarship supporting determinist claims, complete with the names of perpetrators and their textbooks, Raffles signals the problem being an issue of methodology. That “scholars provided little interpretative space for the analysis of their finds” essentially turns determinism's shortcomings into acts of deliberate neglect on the part of its advocates and consequently begin to discredit its academic integrity.

Yet the criticisms have not come only from one direction as Meggers herself has made an effort to discredit the efforts of her detractors. In her essay “Environment and Culture in the Amazon Basin”, she situates her views in relation to the claims that individuals partake in daily acts that continually shape their environment:

The strong emphasis currently placed on man's influence on his environment has tended to obscure those situations where man conforms rather than dominates. Changes wrought by hunters, gatherers and primitive slash-and-burn agriculturalists are comparable to those effected by birds, animals and other natural forces: all scatter seeds, selectively kill other creatures and make similar minor alterations in their habitat. Such modifications are inevitable by-products of remaining alive. However, man alone has evolved the capacity to alter his environment purposefully, on a large scale and in a permanent way, and the development of this capacity is a crucial factor in cultural evolution. To say that all human beings modify their environment is to lose sight of the fundamental difference between transporting a seed and flattening a mountain or extinguishing a forest. All cultures have not been equally successful in achieving this mastery, which is another way of saying that all environments are not equally malleable; modifications that some environments reward, others resist. Those that resist may not necessarily be less plastic, but only have their plasticity in directions that cross-cut rather than parallel human needs. In view of the diversity of climate and topography, it would be remarkable if man found all parts of the world equally congenial, equally easy to master, equally unresistant. In the Amazon basin he has conspicuously failed to make more than a fleeting mark, and denial of the environmental obstacles does not make this failure less real. Recognition of the deterministic quality of environment, on the other hand, provides one more tool for the solution of our ultimate problem – the understanding of how and why culture develops when, where and as it does. (124)

Apart from galvanizing readers into a furry of retorts, what Meggers achieves with her statements is a communication of a specific definition of the Amazon Basin. As a world, it is defined as 'resistant' and an 'obstacle' to human alterations. In these closing lines of the paragraph, the rationale behind her focus on the environment is thrown into relief as her depiction of the Amazon's recalcitrant nature is but a manifestation of a worldview devised around the 'ultimate problem' of underdevelopment. In effect, determinism becomes a device that enables a correspondence between a world view and the shape of this world to exist in Megger's work. What we are observing through the arguments of Meggers just as we are through her critics is a practice where Amazonian nature becomes a platform for the expression of world constructs.

It is present as well in the work of colonial chroniclers and travelers. Those who ventured to the New World with the firm purpose of ascertaining information about these areas integrated its landscapes into their enterprise as opportune tools for research because of what they were thought to intrinsically disclose about the places that were being studied. In the eighteenth century when scientific expeditions flourished, trigonometric surveys embodied this approach to the New World's spaces. Geodesic missions entrusted with the task of returning to Europe from their foreign expeditions with valuable measurements pertaining to the geometric features of the planet were expected to gather these findings at points along the Earth where its curve was most apparent. One of the places where the earth was thought to bend in a particularly useful way was along the South American equator, but the members of the mission shortly found out that the places they were triangulating and the results they were obtaining presented many irregularities. The frustration that crackles beneath the anecdotes and investigative notes produced by the members of the 1735 French Geodesic Mission to Quito alert readers to the obfuscation felt towards the New World. In the process of procuring the numerical values of the planet's arc, Charles Marie de la Condamine's equatorial team was faced with hostilities from every direction. The altitude and inclement weather of the *páramo* was not conducive to the precision they sought, meanwhile support from local academic circles and observers was scarce.¹⁴ Yet the complications give us additional insight into a recurrent conflict of expectations. As a mission launched to collect information, the undertaking is cloaked in the undemanding façade of an expedition consisting of nothing more than that. In order to obtain the necessary measurements

¹⁴ When addressing a European confidant about his trials in one of the cities where geodesic measurements were to be taken, La Condamine's writing becomes unusually vitriolic as he describes an embroiled private affair between lovers that resulted in the unexpected death of one of the team's members at the hands of the locals who were misinformed of Dr. Jean Siniergues' role in the matter. The ensuing *Lettre à Madame*** sur l'émeute populaire* (1746) contains a voice of the French Geodesic Mission at its most expressive and condemning of the difficulties that local customs and attitudes presented for the success of the enterprise.

the team had to use geological formations as reference points and trace the relations between these sites. Inasmuch as these points were gathered and not created, there was a tacit suggestion that all of the required information was already present in the New World's landscapes. It was a matter of integrating the data contained in the topography of places like the Andean Cordillera within the objectives of the geodesic studies.

So if the writings from this mission and others predating it read like failed projects, it is because their lack of success was measured on a scale of expectations. It becomes a drama of worlds colliding with each other involving the New World that was thought to be predictable and the one that was encountered. As a premise, the claim that the New World is conceivable under a preconfigured view of its nature became questionable when attempts were made to carry out work within these templates. Accordingly, the struggles were as much with the ideals themselves as they were with those who opposed them. But before entertaining a sustained discussion of 'what went wrong' in each 'failed' colonial enterprise, it is imperative to linger on the 'what' that went wrong. That is, examining the New World as it was proposed in chronicles begins with a look at the way the 'natural' world was integrated into New World designs and, eventually, gave them their shape.

II. A Cosmetic World

The set of events that unravelled in the seventeenth-century Amazon can be addressed precisely through this avenue and through the discipline of cosmography that served as its mouthpiece. The practice of using external surroundings to read one's world was at the foreground of Renaissance cosmographies dedicated to the subject of the New World. María Portuondo tells us in her introduction to the topic that efforts to make sense of these newly

colonized places drew from canonical conjectures describing what might *potentially* be found there given the geographical location of its lands:

The discipline of Renaissance cosmographers drew from what we might recognize from our modern perspective as geography, cartography, ethnography, natural history, and certain elements of astronomy. For them, this new sky and new land had to be reconciled with an image of the world imprinted on European minds by biblical and classical narratives. Thus, cosmographers first sought structure and guidance from the classical texts that for centuries had defined the contours of the known world. (1)

With the support of a body of writing that prefaced initial, sanctioned expeditions to the New World, the information that came about from these early voyages could be defined as partaking in a process of narrative refinement more than one of trailblazing. There was a tradition already in place that early cosmographers of *las Indias* only had to answer to. Nevertheless, Portuondo argues that a change in primary sources took place for cosmographers as colonial enterprises expanded and “the edifice constructed by the classics and nurtured by humanists soon proved to be resting on shaky foundation. It did not take long for sixteenth-century cosmographers to privilege eyewitness reports over classical accounts and to embark on their own empirical investigations” (1). First-hand accounts, as Portuondo’s use of the phrase ‘shaky foundation’ reveals, seemed to promise a more reliable, updated, and pliant perspective that could adapt to the incongruous facets that were becoming more apparent between what the New World was thought to be and what it appeared to be for those that journeyed there. This inherent advantage of *in situ* accounts, it seemed, would more directly reflect the ‘realities’ of these lands.¹⁵

Consequently, this kind of cosmography eventually became the official discourse of colonial empires as cosmographers would no longer carry out freelance missions to ascertain the

¹⁵ The transition is addressed in Walter Mignolo’s research as one of testimony becoming the mode of expressing the New World in after the intertextual insertions of classical sources had been exhausted. According to Mignolo, the lived New World became the basis for the discursive separation of rhetoric and historiography by writers of the “edad moderna” (365). For a detailed analysis of this trajectory, see subsection III.4 of “El metatexto historiográfico y la historiografía indiana” (1981).

nature of the New World but rather do so with institutional means and goals, generating a “coordinated scientific practice” (Portuondo 2). However, in the process the canon was not being thrown out but rather filled in. Older cosmographies lent a degree of authority as well as an example on which these sponsored examinations of the New World could be modeled. Where accounts of New World were filled with revised figures and names drawn from transatlantic voyages, texts such as Jacopo d’Angelo’s 1406 Latin translation of Ptolemy’s second-century *Geography* provided chroniclers with the necessary resources for their tasks. While to some Ptolemy’s work was a catalogue of information with relevance merely as a historical curiosity, for those who approached it with the New World on their mind it proved to be an invaluable primer that illustrated the ways one can not only communicate but also arrange it as a world. Down to its structure, Portuondo argues, “The reason for the text’s organization becomes apparent when the *Geography* is read as a map-making guide. The tables listing geographic coordinates were intended to serve as the raw data for the set of instructions on how to draw maps using various cartographic projections discussed in the book’s second section” (22-3). In essence, Ptolemaic notions of the world gave writers a skeletal structure onto which details about the New World could be grafted.

Yet it is also useful to note that the part with which the *Geography* was most helpful was with “dra[wing] a map of the *oikoumenē* or ‘known part of the world’” (Portuondo 22). ‘World’ in Ptolemy’s text is a question of position. Where one stands in relation to the universe guides the discussion of longitude and latitude in the text:

Celestially referenced latitude and longitude established a definitive correspondence between earthly and universal coordinates. Projected onto the earth’s surface, the celestial equator became the equinoctial line, the celestial poles our Arctic and Antarctic poles, and the same for the tropics. The Ptolemaic system located the earth unambiguously, and to complete the earth’s inclusion in the cosmos, Ptolemy explained how to locate the accidents of the earth within this universal grid. (Portuondo 23)

The position that was therefore designated by these lines was one commensurate to the layout of the heavens. Orientating oneself within this scheme also involved figuring the individual as part of this planetary perspective wherein one's movement through terrestrial spaces was charted on the earth's surface but understood by way of celestial bodies. The association was critical not only for practices such as navigation, but also for understanding what was meant by world in this cosmographical view.¹⁶ According to the Ptolemaic system, a world had to be understood through something other than itself. It reflected a view in which 'world' did not consist of the contents of the earth alone and instead moved more towards the idea of a composite system.

Wrought in a manner that included the firmament as well as the seas, 'world' was a network. This was particularly true in the case of the lines that placed the earth within the larger grid of a cosmos. One of the aspects that made latitude useful to seaborne pilots was precisely that one could draw correlations between its celestial points and the direction of one's route due to the presumed fixity of the sky's coordinates. As Portuondo explains, longitude, on the other hand, was lacking in this area since its point of reference rested on the variable of time: "For whereas the latitudinal grid is located on earth relative to 'fixed' points in the sky—the celestial poles—and its intervals are determined by the position of the sun at noon, the longitudinal grid is solely a function of the earth's diurnal motion and therefore of time. Without the ability to calculate the passage of time accurately, earth-bound methods of calculating longitude are futile" (24). What latitude offered that longitude could not was a constant on which to base spatial

¹⁶ E.M.W Tillyard argues that in Elizabethan society, itself inspired by platonic thought, the correspondences to a larger order were made through connections between the body and the state which was governed by said macrocosms. This "chain of being" between heavenly and human bodies at their respective ends of this arrangement was communicated most vividly and developed conceptually in poetry where "metaphor [was] strengthened by literal belief" (91, 93). At each level throughout this order that permeated every aspect of an individual's existence 'world' obtained a different meaning and composition, but remained interlaced with each rendering of this term in a system or cosmos that informed one's place within it.

understandings of the earth.¹⁷ As empires embarked on voyages across the unending horizons of the ocean, having a dependable surface in the heavens proved useful for navigators who saw the importance of including the firmament in Renaissance conceptualizations of the world. In Portuondo's discussion of these lines, she evokes the preference for stability or constancy that defined renaissance uses of Ptolemaic cosmography. Part of the reason, she argues, that Ptolemy was adamant on presenting the heavens as an optimum reference point for orientation was that, unlike its terrestrial counterparts, these were not relative or perishable but sempiternal points:

To a reader in the Renaissance familiar with the shortcomings of locating a ship's position at sea using dead reckoning, Ptolemy offered a promising solution. The best way to improve location data, he said, was through mathematics and developing a good understanding of geographical coordinates. If the geographer's goal was to maintain the proportions of a map of the *oikoumenē* as close as possible to those of the real world, the only suitable frame of reference for Ptolemy was the immutable heaven. By using astronomical observations fixed to geographical locations on earth, Ptolemy placed geography on a mathematical and—as he saw it—more accurate and objective foundation. (24)

This cosmic plane contextualized 'world' within a larger, multifaceted framework. As the point of reference for terrestrial science, the heavens offered a way of reading the world through elements that may seem external to it at the outset. Those who therefore followed the Ptolomeic design in their treatment of the New World did so by introducing additional elements that were considered equally germane to the process of world shaping.

According to the Ptolemeic system, 'the world' was to be understood in its entirety. Separately, the components discussed above would merely be categories or features of a world, lacking any relevance to each other. The image of a single world only comes into effect when these parts operate as a cohesive unit and the distinction between them is erased. Put to work in

¹⁷ Due to this asymmetrical development of latitude, determining longitude became a cartographical and ontological dilemma that loomed over efforts in global positioning for some time. See Dava Sobel's *Longitude* (1995) for a detailed history of the advancements made towards ascertaining longitudinal data.

tandem with each other, terrestrial, celestial, and hydrographic planes were all used by cosmographers in the process of establishing the *oikoumenē* as a working system. If this evokes the kinetics of a machine, it is hardly accidental. The Portuguese cosmographer João de Castro used the idea of various parts working in conjunction with each other as a single unit in his *Tratado da sphaera* (c.1538) to convey the concept of the “Machina do mundo” or machine of the world (2).¹⁸ In the two books presenting Castro’s cosmography through an inquisitive dialogue between a teacher and a student, he argues that every conceptualization of a world is made of diverse parts, from antipodes to other “muytas cousas espantosas”, that require some assemblage in order for the machine of the world to work. When successful, the resulting cosmography should be a “representaçam de todo mundo, que he não tão somente do globo do mar, e da terra, senão de todos os globos, e de toda a Esphera Vniversal” (100). There is a shape that Castro has in mind when he writes this which can illustrate the reasoning behind his proposal. The universal sphere is the shape of a world in its complete form which he finds manifested in the way the elements of the physical world are arranged. Using the terraqueous globe as his prime example he has the teacher of the narrative explain that water and earth “não fazem cada hũ seu corpo spherico mas que ambos juntos fazem hũa soo sphere cuio entro he o centro do mundo” (32). In this design, the different surfaces of the earth are interlocked under a single sphere with a discernible centre which holds them together. Writing at a time when

¹⁸ His use of the term ‘machine’ carries the same etymological connotations found in other cosmographical writings of the sixteenth and seventeenth century, whereby,

The Latin word *machine* renders the Greek word μηχανή (or μηχανά) which originally meant artifice or craft, but then came to mean also the skilful use of tools and, eventually, tool itself. Unlike δργανου, which means “atomic” tool, μηχανή, as a rule, is used to refer to *compound* tools [...] The expression *machine mundi* thus emphasises the “technological” or, again, the poetical character of the notion of nature, without attributing to it the idea of a spiritless (or dead) mechanism. (Mittelstrass 26)

To think of a world machine independently from the hand that works it obviates its function as a cosmographic tool. It helps order the interactions between the different parts of a world, but it does not do so on its own. In Renaissance cosmography, the ‘machine’ appears when the parts chosen by the cosmographer are brought together to operate in unison and in accordance to an established design.

expansionist ventures were prevalent, accommodating the surfacing notion of a world made of a plurality of spaces had to be reconciled particularly within a field dedicated to discussing the cosmography in its accustomed totality. Castro's spherical model of a world is one of these instances where an attempt was made to account for the influx of information collected from Portuguese travelers who "navegarão toda a redondeza do mundo, e descurirão tâtas, E tão varias terras nunca dedo principio do mundo descubertas", concluding that "quasi por toda a redondeza do mar se achão nouas Ilhas E terras firme em contrario sitio das antigas" (30). Seaborne encounters with the New World made plain that additional surface areas were being added to the conceptual dimensions of 'world', in turn requiring that modifications to cosmographical models be made. It is here that Castro's spherical design acquires its Ptolemaic context as a complete order able to assimilate otherwise incongruous and disruptive spaces into its coherent design. As Castro iterates using the example of the *mappae mundi*, the visual paradigm of a comprehensive world, "en hu Mappa mundo não se pretende dar perfeito conhecimento de cada Provincia por sy, mas o fim delle he hũa total representaçam de todo o mundo, por que de hũa vista se veja a orde, grandeza, figura, E proporção que todo este globo tem com suas partes, E as partes com todo, E cada prouincia que postura tem em todo este Vniuerso" (97). Triumphant over all disparity is the ultimate, cohesive shape given to a world.

But while cosmography of this nature accommodates mounting information about parts of the world that are known, to witness the necessity for coherence in the world shaping process we must turn to those moments where information is deemed to be missing. As it turns out, much of the New World remained a mystery well into the seventeenth century. One way the enduring lacuna associated with the Amazon was being surmounted was through a series of parallels to other equally-unknown places within the New World. The rationale behind choosing one enigma

to approach another is to be found in the correlation these seemed to share. To the extent that these were both largely unknown worlds even a century after colonial settlements had made incursions throughout the Indies, these lands were characterized by their unrelenting elusiveness. The many regions that remained unmapped were nevertheless circumvented by colonists who decided to use what was available to them. The dimension of the project was tampered as the Amazon would not be understood on a global scale, but in relation to the world it was considered to belong to. The New World was the measure of this readjusted scale. Denis Cosgrove finds an illustrative model for this breakdown of the globe in accounts of the period where the New World is spoken of as an island:

Acknowledgement of a fourth continental landmass was slow and contested. Columbus himself touched the mainland of Central America only in 1498, and he died insisting on its Asian identity. Writing in 1507, Martin Waldseemüller, while indicating a western landmass separating Europe from Asia with an unbroken American coastline, seems ambiguous about its status: “The earth is now known to be divided into four parts. The first three parts are continents, while the fourth part is an island, inasmuch as it is found to be surrounded on all sides by the ocean.” Before Magellan’s 1520-22 circumnavigation, a world map such as Francesco Roselli’s 1506 conical projection could exploit the convenient fact of having to cut global space along a meridian to leave ambiguous the question of America’s continental identity. The De Bure globe of about 1528 makes the Americas a peninsula of China, while the Englishman Edward Wright’s 1599 global maritime chart still implies a single ecumene. America’s physical separation from Eurasia was not fully confirmed to Europe until Vitus Bering’s second expedition, in 1741. The extended process of Europe’s mental embrace of a fourth continent allowed the idea and image of the oceanic island to play a powerful role in its global imaginings. (83)

What Cosgrove stresses here and throughout his discussion of the ‘synoptic’ or all-encompassing globe and its imaginings in western history is that definitions of ‘world’ according to *oikoumenē* meant that those parts considered to be ‘unknown’ were lumped as one, indistinguishable mass. Furthermore, Cosgrove’s words highlight that within views depicting these territories as unknown, affinities were posited between the New World and Asia. Their geographical

separation from continental Europe, where these cosmographies were circulating, was made to coincide with the tradition of written world histories and international treatises representing them as such. These ‘islands’ did not follow the cosmographic models that were applicable to the rest of the ‘known world’ but that did not mean that they would remain this way. They simply required a different approach. Rather than segregate these areas, here the approach is integrative as these ‘unknown’ worlds remained part of occidental conceptions of the world, but were framed in relation to other exceptional places.

The idea was that while these lands were disproportionate to the rest of the world and therefore to its corresponding celestial order, pairing them with each other would restore a semblance of regularity, albeit one only found amongst lands at the ‘edge of the world’. This way of framing of the New World can be seen in the Castilian translation of Petrus Apianus’ *Cosmographicus Liber* (1575). In agreement with the practice of the time, the chapter on the New World offers to clarify what is meant by this term in the service of advancing the central argument: “Llamanla algunos India Mayor, para la distinguir de la India Provincia de la Asia, que se llama otramente India Oriental. Auiendo pues de hablar agora desta India Mayor, la partire primeraméte en dos partes principales: la vna llamaré Nueva España, y la otra el Peru” (f.14 Viii). The distinction between ‘India Mayor’ and ‘India Oriental’ comes as a rectification one would commonly find in footnotes within academic writing, lingering within the text as a preface to the thesis a writer is about to unfold. But in Apianus’ text, these categories go on to spawn a New World cosmography. In these two telling lines, with this revised vocabulary delivered in an inconspicuous aside, Apianus reacquaints readers with the long-held similarity between these ‘Indias’ that had come to define new worlds during the time by inserting it in the *Cosmographicus Liber* as the ideology that he will neither dismantle nor uphold but whose limits

he will simply explore. ‘Mayor’ or ‘Oriental’, they are Indies yet not all the same. His attention to Renaissance toponyms sees Apianus conceptualize each of these in light of one another. His is a project detailing the intricacies of these worlds not in respect to any other point of comparison other than in accordance to the similarities and difference between these ‘Indias’ and one which does away with the classical pivot that is Europe in the process.¹⁹

Speaking of each ‘India’ in terms of realms affords more than a neat system of classification or a succinct cartography of Renaissance colonies. In its segmentation, Apianus declares these colonies or satellite worlds as entities that merit examination, at which point he proceeds to further divide the ‘India’ he is writing about into ‘dos partes principales’ when he separates New Spain from Peru. The partition occurs within the very system of comparability linking these new worlds, using this outline as a heuristic model to explore other ways such worlds can be further detailed. Through internal divisions, each ‘India’ broadens from a category into a series of domains; each domain into kingdoms, and each kingdom into worlds. The interplay between colonies is abated momentarily as Apianus’ consideration lies in the specifics of each of these places. Setting up the contours of his argument within these northern and southern colonies of the New World, New Spain and Peru mark the extension and nature of his cosmography. Compartmentalizing ‘world’ in this way, Apianus declares his interests to be one that he builds and suggests can only be built from within the New World and not in contrast to it.

¹⁹ This world model leaving out Europe from its configuration was not simply a cosmographic novelty, but one that was set in action by the very subjects that were excluded from it. In the commercial context of the sixteenth and seventeenth century, trade between colonies placed them within proximity of each other in a way that elided conventional cartographic representations of the global layout, allowing for alternate systems to come about on water that were not seen on land. Along with these connections between new worlds one could find a plexus formed out of ties within each of these worlds. A.J.R. Russell-Wood remarks that these internal systems, like the highly profitable intra-Asian routes which carried solely merchandise as opposed to accommodating human cargo, became a prominent feature of new worlds that allowed them to exist alongside European routes (32). Russell-Wood’s understanding of the sea as a “nexus for this far-flung world” can be thought of as a nautical manifestation of Apianus’ thesis where official and alternative world pictures exist simultaneously and often in negotiation with each other (Russell-Wood 27).

At this level, the contours of New Spain and Peru engender an internal cosmos within the New World that brings to focus the cosmography within an intercolonial context. The result is the permeation of the *terra incognita* as the bonding agent of worlds throughout many conceptual levels, from the transcontinental to the transcolonial. In order to better understand Amazonia and life therein, this framework offered the much sought-after parity missing from preceding attempts. If we consider that cosmography, the art of world arrangements, rested on parallels between the heavens and earth and that the placement of individuals informed their relation to these orders, we begin to see that colonial world structures were formulated with this concern for cogency in mind.

Moreover, these orders rested upon an act of identification whereupon nature, in the state it was 'found', would be worked into these arrangements. In many ways New World cosmographies of the seventeenth century echo this arrangement of worlds according to an internal logic derived from a shared concept of colonial nature. In the case of geopolitical projects, chronicles were generated to expound on what other writers had previously written. Along the way, narratives were created and in some form had to be acknowledged amongst the contributors in the field, leading towards a unified vision of a New World arrangement. The intertextuality of colonial writing amounts to more than a series of mutual nods confirming the credibility of each chronicler's work when one takes into account the prevailing narratives that resulted from it. Varying configurations of the world in some way fell in line with the images that were being expressed about the New World. Even in the chronicles of writers associated with rivalling empires or projects, general tropes about the worlds of the New World were gathered under a coherent presentation. It is in this way that colonial Brazil is conveyed

according to a singular environmental feature within early colonial accounts or what Sérgio Buarque de Holanda calls a unified ‘vision of paradise’:

Se a mitologia aparece, pode-se dizer que vem já desbastada dos elementos mais fabulosos e reduzida a proporções relativamente plausíveis. Não vale isto pretender que em alguns pontos, mormente no tocante ao clima e temperamento destas terras, se achassem os portugueses imunizados de todo contra a tendência freqüente naqueles cronistas para dar aos mundos recém-descobertos um colorido irreal e fantástico. ... E quando, nos seus escritos, se torna inevitável alguma alusão aos grandes calores que prevalecem durante a maior parte do ano ao longo da costa, fazem-na seguir constantemente de uma referência à sua exemplar salubridade. ... Nota-se mesmo uma tendência curiosa entre cronistas, e não apenas portugueses, para dar maior relêvo à temperança ou até à frialdade dos ares do Brasil. Todos parecem seguir nisto aquêlê passo do escrivão Caminha onde, depois de afirmar que não havia notícia ou sinal da existência de ouro ou prata ou outros metais na terra, e como para amnizar um pouco o mau efeito de semelhante declaração, ajunta que ela é “em si de muitos bons ares, assim frios e temperados, como os de Entre Dioro e Minho, porque neste tempo de agora os achávamos com os de lá”. (332)

Buarque de Holanda offers a synthesis of the paradox that one finds in colonial efforts to establish coherence to the New World. In the middle of the at times eclectic, at other times sober, accounts of the New World, he identifies that in many there are regularities distributed throughout writings and across languages. As one might imagine, while the subjects amongst these texts were shared, opinions of them often were not. Discrepancies such as describing the temperate climate found of areas of Brazil to be at once beneficial and damaging strings together opposing perceptions drawn from existing opinions on the topic into an image of the New World that is capable of sustaining both views and of allowing writers with incongruous ideals and loyalties to nevertheless contribute to the definition of its collective shape. ‘Tendência’ communicates this overlap between New World images concisely for Buarque de Holanda as he holds the discussion about climate to be a topic of interest for many writers. Comments made about the weather tempered the discrepancies regarding what was written about the New World

in a way where writers interested in the more chimerical aspects of these lands as well as those who were ‘immune’ to it could all engage on equal measure. In this way, the idiosyncrasies of chronicles and chroniclers were maintained while there remained central narrative onto which their disparate views could be latched in a cohesive fashion.²⁰²¹

The events that took place in the Amazon during the seventeenth century will now allow us to observe the dynamics of this world shaping practice and its effects on the colonial enterprises along the famed river’s course.

III. By the Waters of the Amazon

On a summer day of 1638 in the Royal *audiencia* of Quito, then belonging to the Viceroyalty of Peru, the Spanish were met with a startling surprise when the unexpected sight of

²⁰ Though removed from the time but not the subject Buarque de Holanda is concerned with, the organization of the 2013 Encuentro Internacional de Arqueología Amazónica (EIAA) reinforced the idea of a total view of the Amazon in the organization of its panels. With the upper, lower, middle, Moxos, and Guianese areas of the Amazon given their separate forums, the geographically-inspired arrangement covered the focal areas of expertise of the researchers in attendance. As the conference progressed throughout its week-long duration, some later presentations began with informal comments alluding to the way further revisions to these papers were necessary in light of new insights that previous talks provided as well as remarks, often citations, addressing the parallel between the work of a researchers in one area with those with findings extracted from distant sites. The exchange of information that took place during the conference illustrates that beyond a frequent occurrence of academic conventions, specialists were assembling an overarching narrative for the entirety of the Amazon’s extension out of isolated investigations in order to make sense of it all.

²¹ Another way that narrative coherence was implemented amongst chronicles was through the quest for ‘truth’ as an ideal associated with the process of writing about nature. More precisely, it was the internal logic associated with ‘truth’ that chroniclers used to discuss nature in the New World in a cohesive manner. When Rolena Adorno discusses Guaman Poma’s writing as a body of work that at once followed and questioned genre conventions, she cites the presence of an internal logic as the decisive element of any contemporary treatment portraying colonial worlds:

Both history and fiction are subject of the truth of coherence as well as to that of correspondence; that is, both must be coherent, possessing a logical and orderly relationship among the various parts, a kind of inner logic. In this regard, the discourse of the historian and the imaginative writer often overlap. At the same time, both must subscribe to the truth of correspondence: fiction as well as history must be ‘adequate’ to an image of something beyond itself if it is to lay claim to presenting an insight into human experience. Considering Guaman Poma’s polemical posture, it is not surprising that the truth of coherence, the weaving of an internal logic, takes precedence over the truth of correspondence. In any event, the overlapping boundaries of history and fiction make it a challenge to locate Guaman Poma’s work on the field of discourse. (36)

The way terms such as ‘truth’ and ‘fiction’ appear and are handled in Guaman Poma’s corpus makes sense only within the worlds found in his works but not necessarily beyond them.

a Portuguese armada approaching from the east revealed an entrance into the city of which they had no knowledge. The lusophone navigator Pedro Teixeira (1570-1641) had led a fleet of 47 canoes, 70 soldiers, and 1200 inhabitants of the Amazon River upstream from the Atlantic shores of Brazil and in through the ‘backdoor’ of the Spanish Empire (Edmundson 59). Yet, the story of this voyage begins two years earlier when the Franciscans Fr. Domingo de Brieva and Fr. Andrés de Toledo accompanied by six soldiers decided to abandon their vanquished mission in the upper-west region of the Amazon and head east after encountering hostility from the local indigenous population.²² Reaching the eastern colony of Pará in February of 1637, they, too, alarmed the Portuguese authorities at this outpost. The Portuguese realized that if the Franciscans could venture this far from the Andes, there must be a path and possible trade route amongst other resources worth exploring. So enrolling the help of the now-experienced Brieva and their own pilot, Bento de Acosta, Teixeira’s journey, sanctioned for October of the same year, set out into the tropical rainforest of the Amazon. Only it would be the Spanish in Quito that soon made the *real* discovery when on that summer day they learned exactly how vulnerable they were to foreign intrusion.

Unlike the time these roles were reversed, the intruders found themselves in a privileged position as they held enough information to expose the limits of the *audiencia*’s defense system. Their voyage had provided the intrepid travelers with geographic points of entry to what was previously thought to be a hermetic colony. In effect, Spanish officials soon realized that the once impenetrable barriers they assumed nature had provided now served as a trail into the city.

²² The most salient of speculations regarding the motivation behind this voyage is the view that this was a pursuit of lucrative ends based on the myth of El Dorado situated the famed city and man of gold deep within the Amazon jungle. With the catastrophic precedents set by the expeditions of Francisco de Orellana in 1541 and Pedro de Ursúa in 1560 who encountered a string of disasters in their pursuit of the same objective, the Franciscan journey would have seemed all the more surprising to those who witnessed these travelers exit the jungle alive. For a collection of the diverse conjectures regarding the motives of the Franciscan voyagers, see the second chapter of Hugo Burgos Guevara’s *La crónica prohibida* (2005) in which he considers the myth of fortune along with others as integral catalysts for travel in Amazonia.

Following the example of the Portuguese, the authorities in Quito decided to respond by escorting Teixeira and his bevy back to Pará in 1639, but this time the voyage would not be made without the accompaniment of an individual partial to the interests of the Spanish crown. At least that is where the *audiencia* tacitly understood loyalties to lie when a Jesuit was asked to lead the mission. Cristóbal de Acuña (1597-1675) was the priest delegated to make the most out of this final trip down the Amazon and to chronicle anything that may be of particular interest to the court in Spain. And he succeeded in doing so; only along with the welfare of the crown he also sought some gain for his religious order. Moreover, to achieve the latter he presented the dangerous flaw in Quito's eastern security as a chance to increase the number of Jesuit Missions present in the Amazon interior, making them seem to be the only worthwhile solution to the crown's territorial problems.

Never stating it as bluntly, Acuña's method for shaping the Amazon involves restructuring it. In his 1640 chronicle titled *Relación del descubrimiento del rio de las Amazonas*, arrangement becomes an geopolitical undertaking that structures a world picture by way of structuring the New World's space and where alliances to the Spanish crown lie within it. His being an expedition where, unlike the two voyages before it, a written account was requested, the opportunity to fashion the Amazon as Acuña does by reordering the world and its geopolitics according to transatlantic notions of friends, enemies, and allies was not only available but also authorized.

Until these three voyages to and from the Amazon, Jesuit establishments remained close to Quito, venturing no further than Mainas in the northern embankment of the river for fear of straying onto the territory of warring communities. Linda Newson explains that the sixteenth-century expeditions made by the Jesuits to the Amazon region unrelentingly concentrated all

efforts on evangelization in order to “pacify the Indians by peaceful means” (208). Once the danger of an attack was mollified through preaching and official permission was conceded, the process of settlement could begin. However, rather than establish various small settlements in the tropics, centralized, albeit fewer, villages began to flourish. The reasoning behind this, Newson remarks, was to build permanent colonies into which satellite tribes of natives could be baptized, opting for an outward expansion that remained as close to the security of the Andean *audiencia* as possible, which also meant “prior to 1615 it would appear that expeditions had not penetrated far to the east” (210). So when in 1639 the Governor of Quito, Juan Vázquez de Acuña, approached his brother Cristóbal de Acuña, then rector of a Jesuit college in the southern part of the *real audiencia*, with the opportunity to access the heartland of the Amazon and report his findings to the King of Spain, it made for a particularly appealing offer (Velasco 467-8). Especially since the endeavour would belong exclusively to a member of the Society of Jesus. André Ferrand de Almeida is quick to clarify that simply because the Jesuits had not been for the most part successful in moving into the Amazon basin, it did not mean that all missionary orders had suffered the same fate: “On the side of the Portuguese, the effort to introduce religious orders into the Amazonian region is a hoary enterprise, practically contemporary with the conquest of Pará. The first Franciscans arrived after 1617, followed by the Carmelites in 1624” (35). On the eastern seaboard of northern Brazil, religious orders were diligently progressing towards the west from the beginning of the early seventeenth century, headed for regions where souls remained to be catechized. Yet none had made the attempt to survey and analyze the land as Acuña was now given the opportunity to accomplish.²³ In light of Domingo de Brevia’s journey upstream, the challenge was to therefore convince Felipe IV that it would be necessary

²³ The first extant document on a complete voyage from one side of the Amazon to another asserting the Franciscan priority to the land was written by Fr. José Maldonado and would be published two years after Acuña’s original chronicle of 1640.

to choose the Jesuits over all other missions and before any other order could establish a permanent presence deep within the ‘unexplored’ and undocumented jungle.²⁴

The shape the Amazon took on after the arrival of the two missionaries at the Lusophone port entailed a union of worlds separated by a longstanding policy and belief that such a link was unfeasible. The vertical line drawn arbitrarily through South America by the 1494 Treaty of Tordesillas signified the beginning of a nearly 200 year-old division that demarcated where one world ended and the other began in *juridical* terms. But beyond legal concerns, the line created a continental divide that ran contrary to its topography and which is palatable in the way colonies were depicted and their respective spaces understood. This is what Carl Schmitt refers to as “global linear thinking” or the “content of the politically presupposed spatial concepts, the intellectual structure of linear concepts, [and] their inherent spatial order” (90). For Schmitt, the existence of the line or *raya* in international law required the acknowledgement of its existence by two or more parties due to differing notions of what a line was. Specifically, an agreement of terms would entail that the question of land repartition be expressed under a universal code that in the fifteenth and early sixteenth century was tied to the edicts of the Catholic Church. Like other rulings concerning the New World, it was an issue fought on the rarified plane of symmetry and undercut by its implementation in the colonies. Acuña’s text exists in this juncture where the rule of the line was no longer adequate for addressing the challenges brought about by the shapes that were resulting from the fluvial course of the Amazon River after 1638.

With the Amazonian voyages of the seventeenth century, lines like the one put in place by the Treaty of Tordesillas were crossed and washed over with the waters that carried the

²⁴ At the expense of the Franciscans, Jesuits occasionally reminded the crown of the violent methods of evangelization that their counterparts were known to practice. An example of this comes from Almeida’s work in which he argues that the Portuguese Jesuits used Luís Figueira’s 1636 chronicle (*Memorial sobre as terras e gentes do Maranhão, Grão Pará e Rio das Amazonas*) on the mistreatment of the indigenous population by the Franciscans in order for a law of 1638 to grant the Society of Jesus sole charge of the evangelization in Pará (35).

Franciscan vessel to Belem do Pará. The ensuing voyages would each increment and detract the dimensions of the Amazon that belonged to each responsible for their financing. Even before the 1638 voyage, the line appeared to be moveable, frequently shifting as those who were interested in claiming the Amazon moved further into the continent. Susanna Hecht's recent study of the nineteenth-century interests that surrounded and gave meaning to the Amazon refers to the politically-motivated expedition the Portuguese carried out during the seventeenth-century as an example of the way politics and the Amazon have been heavily shaped by each other:

Brazil was too big and Amazonia too different to manage under the existing ruling structure. In response to what seemed an emerging territorial catastrophe, in 1621 Philip IV decreed that Portuguese Amazonia should be administered as distinct captaincies—Maranhão, Grão Pará, and Ceará—and as a separate colony, since winds and currents drove toward the Northern Hemisphere and made it easier to reach the Amazon from Lisbon than from Salvador. The initial strategy of Pedro Teixeira, the first commander of the Amazonian captaincies of Grão Pará and Maranhão, was aggressive military action to eradicate foreign forts and colonies on the Amazon channel. While Teixeira's modern fame accrues to his remarkable voyage up the Amazon to Quito and back with 47 canoes, 1,200 black and Indian militia, and 120 armed military men who pounded in markers, claiming the lands they passed through in the name of the Portuguese empire, his renown at the time followed from his obliteration of Dutch and English settlements along the main channel. (109)

Together with the two additional voyages that took place before and after it, the famed expedition and protagonist Hecht refers to are all part of an episode in colonial history where something as pedestrian as chronicling the peoples and things that 'could be seen' when moving through the Amazon's waters became as effective a tool for shaping these selvatic spaces as any project of domestication. Making their way up a river that cut across several areas where the law of *uti possidetis* was aggressively enforced by local powers, Teixeira's crew were venturing into an entanglement of territorial lines.²⁵ The voyage of Teixeira and the text written by the Jesuit

²⁵ In terms of authorized voyages, Teixeira's is regarded as a major advancement in the expansionist project carried out by Portuguese authorities in Brazil: "In the course of one generation [the Portuguese] pushed northwest along the

Cristóbal de Acuña about one of these trips shared the responsibility of demarcating the Amazon in a way that would rectify these jumbled lines of ownership according to the interests of the empires they served. Only the resulting lines and interests these chronicles were aligned to were never as clear as they originally set out to be because, as their readers learned soon after, thrown into the geopolitical ‘scramble for the Amazon’ were the interests of those doing the recording.

The chain of seventeenth-century voyages through the Amazon form part of an enterprise that operated under a general interest in the place for its space. Amplitude was a commodity that facilitated the obtainment of other material goods during the second half of the seventeenth century as well as being a characteristic very much present in the era’s accounts of Amazonia. The test of power was the ability to claim and hold the greatest portion of the Amazon, which, being defined as immense by those who wrote about and traveled through its waters, often put into question the authority of each colonial power that professed to have achieved this. If the Amazon was and could be spoken of as a *terra nullius* it is because of the extension of its area. This was present in military, economic, governmental, and numerous other considerations relevant to the administration of Amazonian colonies as decisions at each level were taken according to an understanding of the place these were operating within:

European patent letters still abounded, because the Caribbean trade had become prosperous and the economic potentialities of the region had mythic allure. Brazil, a colony itself, was seen as having limited local powers over the continental immensity, especially the mangrove coast of the Guianas. The French king, Louis XIV, indifferent to

coast for about 3,000 miles. The decisive result of this remarkable advance was that the mouth of the Amazon became Portuguese by virtue of prior colonization... The expedition of Pedro Teixeira (1637-39) was a momentous move in which Portugal staked out a claim to the vast hinterland of the Amazon River valley, a region which belonged to Castile according to the treaty of Tordesillas. This was the first expedition from the mouth of the Amazon to Quito since Orellana a century before had journeyed in the opposite direction” (Phelan 31-2). While Phelan presents Teixeira’s expedition as a virtually climactic point in the progress of expansionists efforts coming from Portuguese colonists, treating it as a singular event can cast a shadow over the collective effort came out of the trilogy of journeys across the Amazon to which Teixeira’s voyage belongs. That is to say, the push inland was not only an undertaking by those from a single camp and under a single directive, but jointly executed when these individual efforts are observed along with those of different groups with their own ambitions as all having an overall effect on the spatial redefinition of the Amazon.

Portuguese concerns, granted rights to the charter Compagnie Equinoctial to lands extending from the Amazon to the Orinoco and, on the west, to the confluence of the Rio Branco with the Rio Negro. In 1676, after a triumph over the Dutch in the Guianas, lands were assigned by royal decree from the Amazon to the Island of Trinidad to the new charter company, Compagnie Cap de Nord. France's northern colonial boundaries were often contested, but by 1690 the French were definitively installed in Cayenne, while Belém and the lower Amazon was clearly under the aegis of the Portuguese crown. Between them lay the lands of the Cabo Norte, the Contesté/Contestado with no other European enterprise in between, a seething *terra nullius* with multiple overlapping territorial assertions. (Hecht 110)

The way political efforts strove to encase the Amazon in a manner best suited to their aims yet constantly found that sections of it were out of reach speaks to the chasm facing Brazil's "limited local powers over the continental immensity". Vastness as an adjective evoking the simultaneous challenge and opportunity encountered by administrative projects in Brazil gives us an operative term and image to engage with seventeenth-century perceptions of the Amazon and what could be achieved in and through it. As such, we encounter it as the element offering the most leverage and greatest risk in the process of world shaping as it is used by Acuña.

Furthering the political backdrop and transatlantic framework for the trilogy of Amazonian voyages were the international tensions involving the opponent of the Hapsburgs.²⁶ Previously during the seventeenth century, under the reign of Phillip III, discord arose in the field of international politics when the Dutch partook in the Bohemian rebellion of 1618 to takeover the House of Austria and attempted to sever "the corridors and life-lines linking Spain's

²⁶ Amongst the disgruntled figured Spain's peninsular neighbours. Under the Iberian Union founded in 1580, the Portuguese were annexed to the monarchy of the Spanish following the death of Cardinal Henrique of Lisbon (r.1578-1580) and the end of the Aviz succession (Gallagher 8). While the Spanish rulers Felipe II (r.1554-1598) and Felipe III (r.1598-1621) upheld the conditions of this union with the Portuguese, which guaranteed respect for their language, possessions, and governmental positions, C. R. Boxer notes that this treaty was recanted by others shortly after: "In the reign of Felipe IV, Portuguese privileges began to be whittled away, undermined, or simply overridden, as a result of the centralizing policy initiated by his chief minister, the Count-Duke of Olivares" (47). Since the division of bureaucratic power amongst the two Iberian factions was rejected by Felipe IV and his minister, the Portuguese were merely a spectral presence in the court of the Spanish king. This hostility ensuing from this disregard eventually erupted in the form of the Portuguese Restoration that took place during December of 1640 when the lusophone subjects of Felipe IV regained their absolute autonomy and the right to their own monarchy.

military base in Milan to Vienna and Brussels” (Elliott 56). Phillip III argued that the protection of Austria from the Calvinists, the Venetians, and the Dutch was imperative for the reputation and legacy of his father’s empire (Phillip II) to be maintained, even if this required using funds they did not have. To execute this, he had used a specific method of persuasion on the Duke of Lerma, his President of the Council of Finance. As J.H Elliott explains, “The domino theory had established itself during the reign of Phillip II as a standard argument in favour of military action to preserve Spain’s far-flung interests” (57). Central to this argument was the notion that Spain was not only affected by the events within its immediate kingdom, but the risk that could come to its satellite territories outside of Iberia was just as critical. As an extensive empire, the type of protection that was proposed by this theory posed the concatenated structure of Spanish sovereignty as a disadvantage rather than an asset. Nevertheless, it illustrates a strategy that posited another manner of conceptualizing the extent of an empire.²⁷ It goes without saying that the subsequent dismissal of the Duke of Lerma reflected a courtly consent that the decision did more to harm the reputation of the crown, by revealing its discrepant foreign policy, than vindicate it. Furthermore, it illustrates that the rest of the court did not look favourably upon the use of such rhetoric when the crown’s reputation was in jeopardy. Despite this presence and seeing only the opportunity behind the recrudescence of old wounds by the Dutch presence in the Amazon, this rhetoric playing off fear to secure self interest was taken up once again by Acuña.

²⁷ The twentieth-century roots of domino theory are based on the same eradication of contingencies when it came to the spread of communism. Geography, too, was paramount in the formation of such policies as the proximity of Latin America to the United States could be used to advance the perceived threat to western modes of government (Williams 158). As their neighbours, it became a paternal imperative to be vigilant and guard against the encroachment of communism upon those in the extended Americas that were believed to lack as strong a constitution or interest to do so. It is in this context that Jean Franco speaks of the divisions that arose from an attempt to orient an entire hemisphere towards a single, “universal” attitude towards communism through the circulation of printed ideas and ideologically-aligned presidencies (36). Moreover, it is helpful to consider, as Franco does, the “incorporat[ion] [of Latin America] into the “West” for the type of global rhetoric concerning the ‘self’ that resulted from this defence policy when examining the writing that was produced under this socio-political framework (39).

These political rivalries and resentments set the tone of urgency for the talk of ‘protection’ to demand significant attention by all those affected. As long as he could subtly mask his interests behind a resolution guaranteeing the security of the Hapsburg Empire, the Spanish Jesuit would simultaneously attain his goal of permanently settling his mission in the Amazon.

Attached to Acuña’s *Relación del descubrimiento del río de las Amazonas* is a map that visually establishes the basis for the argument in the accompanying chronicle. Although there are vicissitudes regarding the identification of the map’s creator, with some positing that it was drawn by the pilot Benito de Acosta during the 1639 voyage but painted by others, it is known that Acuña was not responsible for its creation (Burgos 116-9). As an appended text, the map creates a distinct version of the 1639 Amazon voyage to the one fashioned by Acuña. The former begins by reorienting the direction of the Amazon so that the river runs from north to south instead of west to east (figure 1). North, on this vertical map, is Quito, indicating not only the importance of the city, but also the direction in which everything seems to be facing. The map also carries the emblem of the city consisting of a motte and bailey. Like the fortress in its emblem, Quito occupies an elevated position in the drawing, high above several mountains belonging to the Andean cordillera. Nestled amongst these colossal barriers, it overlooks the origin of the Amazon River from this height. It would be capable, the cartographic layout suggests, of anticipating any foreign attack disembarking at the foot of the Amazon’s mountainous shores. As John Leddy Phelan has noted about the effect of mountainous enclosure for access even to areas opposite to the Amazon, “the Andes created a formidable barrier isolating the sierra from the coast and the world beyond” (5). However, upon close inspection of the map, the written fragment on this foothill where the Amazon begins (or ends, depending on the direction of the voyage) clearly expresses that this was the point at which the Portuguese

embarked when they were escorted home (figure 1). It reminds its viewer of the accessibility to Quito that Teixeira's voyage established, demonstrating that once this point on the river is reached, many can follow the latter's example and make their way 'north' over the natural and harmless barrier. The map therefore visually establishes that although the Andean environment offers some advantage, it is still exposed to an attack.

But, it is precisely where the map fails to show anything at all that Acuña's text offers strategic possibility. His 1640 chronicle operates according to the logic that the vulnerable openings of the Amazon can be potentially fortified and that "a fortress can be erected in this spot, impeding the passage of enemy armadas, and regardless of whether they traverse this stretch of 300 leagues, those at the mouth of the amazon can warn (if a fortress is ever built), by way of canoes or small crafts, of any enemy arrivals in ten or twelve days" (Acuña 134). Found within the opening pages of his narrative, this textual reconnaissance of the Amazon posits that there are various points on the river's shores that can serve to prevent an attack on Quito. Moreover, not all of these have to be *architectural* defences. Taking advantage of a polemical circumstance of seventeenth-century European affairs and the spaces left blank on the map, his *Relación del descubrimiento del río de las Amazonas* proceeds to bring out the potential 'garrisons' that can counteract the indicated enclaves of 'weakness'. These strongholds are, in short, the 'friendly' natives. The map's legend contains an unconcealed statement declaring, "from the shores of the ocean to the highlands of Quito in each and every direction there are innumerable provinces that, being many and without names, not all are included here" (figure 1). Furthermore, the few barracks and establishments that are featured on the map appear to be clustered on its northern and southern parts where one finds Quito and the Portuguese settlements respectively, leaving a domineering expanse of nameless green in the middle. While

they are omitted from the map, the aforementioned provinces hold a predominant place in Acuña's chronicle. Along the stretches of 'empty land' on the central region of the map he argues that one can find indigenous communities such as the Omaguas and other tribes. He goes on to describe their skills as warriors at length:

They use arrows, blowpipes and other such weapons. The Omagua are skilled at blowpipes because they are familiar with these types of arms; the Trapajosos use poison arrows with tips so sharp and efficient that most [enemy] nations do not have antidotes against them, while others are Caribs, aficionados of human flesh, who eat their captives during war. And this is the principle cause of their wars and they also fight to conquer each other's lands. (154)

Accomplished combatants armed with fatal weapons, the Amazonian inhabitants are presented as communities with sufficient bellicose resources to protect the territory. Filling the void on the map with a passage such as this rapidly calls for a reassessment of the innumerable, yet previously invisible, provinces of the Amazon. What this stresses is that just as they are able to protect their livelihood, they would also guard other things they believe to belong to them. Thus, they would also protect the Spanish territory along the Amazon from invasion if they believed the threat to be against them. Which is why Acuña shifts his emphasis to evangelization.

Once baptized, it is Acuña's contention that the indigenous population becomes amicable. He refers to them as 'friends' as he writes about their desire to participate in the sacrament of communion, portraying them as willing converts that outnumber the missionaries available to convert them: "The Indians that live on the Portuguese reductions and those that are friends and can, as such, be recipients of the Catholic Faith are more than one million and they speak different languages, but they all understand a common [language] that runs throughout the entire coast of Brazil, and this language is also understood by many nations of Indians 400 leagues up the Amazon River" (Acuña 146). The idea of having a potential army of converts, in

the hyperbolic millions, feared for their industrious tactics in war was a prospect worth pursuing for both the interests of the crown and ‘The Company’. On the one hand, it specified an available resource for the protection of the Amazon gateway, while on the other hand it meant that the Jesuits would be required to ‘tap’ into this intact source. Additionally, the attention to a ‘common language’ amongst all natives suggests that in spite of their respective enmities they could also be joined under a common credo that would wipe out all incommensurability. Hence the importance of non-coercive evangelization.²⁸ His use of the term ‘friend’ suggests that the religious order related to the indigenous population by relying more on obtaining their sympathy than their fear, recognizing at the same time that there was a need and not a right to indigenous loyalty. It is worth noting that this was out of necessity rather than charity, for as Phelan specifies, “without substantial Spanish colonization and some military force lurking in the background, it was almost impossible to keep the natives under missionary control, since most of them clung tenaciously to their old ways of life. A few dozen Jesuits, dedicated and skillful though they might have been, lacked effective coercive means to stifle revolts” (36). But Phelan’s natives differ greatly from those in Acuña’s chronicle. In it, the Amazonians are only hostile towards each other but they can be united against the rivals of the Spanish crown if they become friends of the latter. Depicting aggression towards the Spanish would make the natives appear to be the problem rather than the solution that Acuña is setting them up to be. Therefore, his chronicle attributes admirable qualities instead of vices to the Amazonians by stating that

²⁸ Gauvin Bailey’s book on the production of colonial Jesuit art as collaborative endeavour stipulates that native populations did not simply accede but rather negotiated decisions and new systems of order coming from the missionaries: “The non-European ‘converts’ actively created their own Church. Embracing Christianity was not, after all, necessarily an acknowledgement of European superiority. We may see the encounter, somewhat romantically, as a meeting of two worlds – as if two worlds in their entirety could ever meet...Once Christianity was indigenized by non-Europeans, it could no longer be considered an aspect of European culture” (20). Although this may be read as Bailey’s interpretation of syncretism, it proposes that the indigenous individuals were considered to hold the same level of deliberation as the Europeans. While most colonial chronicles depicted them in a passive or aggressive light, these depictions can be read as examples of artistic license that exclude the evident negotiating power possessed by the indigenous population.

“the majority are not bellicose; some have courage, but none of them is ferocious” (151). Including their affability and their ability to bear arms, the text suggests that just as the indigenous population inhabiting the ‘unmapped’ region of the Amazon can shield their land, they would not oppose those who are not against them. Meaning, they would let strangers cross the river just as long as they did not pose a threat. So when Acuña talks about the potential ‘friends’ he finds in the natives, he is speaking of friends against a common threat. And since evangelization integrates natives under a common ideology that they would take up as their own, the natives would also fight against anything that threatens it. As converted Christians, these threats would namely be the enemies of the Catholic crown of Spain.

Planting this radical friendship as a solution to the territorial weakness revealed by Teixeira’s arrival in Quito, Acuña goes on to pose it as the only solution for the desperate Spanish court. When he points out the potential ‘friends’ that could eventually safeguard Quito, he reserves no such term for the Portuguese. He refers to them merely as “soldiers”, a classification which coincides with his overall perception of their contribution and aid to the Spanish crown (141). While Acuña’s voyage was carried out in 1639, he wrote his manuscript in 1640, after the Portuguese were no longer part of the defunct Iberian Union.²⁹ To him, just as to the Portuguese following this separation, belonging to the Iberian Peninsula no longer meant that the two countries had the same interests in mind. As it has been noted above, the Portuguese settlements are depicted on the chronicle’s map as a cluster at the Amazon’s delta. Within these

²⁹ Dauril Alden mentions Acuña’s voyage as an enterprise that, apart from the two ventures before it, was part of another set of politically-motivated trips through the river, one of which was to be led by the like-minded Luis Figueira. The Portuguese Jesuit had penned a collection of “reflections on the Amazon’s material and spiritual potential” where, “like Acuña, Fr. Figueira was impressed by the Amazon’s economic and evangelical opportunities”, stressing “the loyalty of the Brasis during Dutch attack but [also noting] that there were too few clergy to attend to them or to the several hundred Portuguese residents” (222). The information was received by the Council of State and shortly after its author was granted permission to establish missions in the Amazon. During the six years it took for Figueira’s expedition to be set in motion in 1643 due to the Portuguese Restoration War, Acuña launched his voyage, illustrating how the international turmoil was not only felt by administrators of Imperial affairs stationed in Europe, but also between members of the same religious Society working in the colonies (223).

clusters, the *Relación del descubrimiento del río de las Amazonas* claims that the forts are actually short of artillery after being previously despoiled by the Dutch (145). As guardsmen at privileged points at the Amazon's mouth yet lacking weaponry, the Portuguese become unreliable sources of protection for Acuña. They would not be able to inform the Spanish of an attack, nor would they feel the obligation to do so. Under the rule of Felipe IV, Portuguese loyalties to the Spanish were tenuous, their presence on the 1639 Amazon voyage suspect, and their interests specious.³⁰ At best, they could simply be soldiers in Acuña's eyes since their settlements around Pará stood between him and the regions in which he proposed to preach. Therefore, the Portuguese become inept sentinels in the text and only ratify Acuña's proposal to befriend Amazonians. It seems that the Portuguese are only 'allies' insofar as they are protecting their own settlements that happen to be fodder for a common enemy—the Dutch.

Having mapped the presence of friends and 'allies', Acuña finally locates the enemy to introduce a sense of urgency into his argument. The Dutch, against whom both members of the Iberian Peninsula have fought to maintain their territory in the Americas, appears in the *Relación del descubrimiento del río de las Amazonas* as a diabolical figure. On the map, the enemy is a foreign ship disproportionately larger than the Portuguese fortresses, which, having made it beyond the stock sea serpent frequently featured in renaissance maps, heads straight towards the Amazon in a visual foreshortening. It marks a present danger as the Dutch threaten to overtake the Luso-Hispanic territories in the same way that they have done with the trans-atlantic trade routes (figure 1). In Acuña's text, however, they become a lurking threat tantamount to another

³⁰ “According to the treaty of Tordesillas signed on June 6, 1494,” Phelan notes “the whole Amazon valley belonged to the crown of Castile. The Orellana expedition had solidified this claim. During the decades from 1580 to 1640, when the kingdoms of Castile and Portugal shared the same monarch, with Portugal retaining its separate government, the distinctions of the treaty of Tordesillas became blurred but not erased” (31). This was also another factor that, although somewhat quelled during the Iberian Union, made tensions rise amongst Spain and Portugal when the dual monarchy split.

danger facing these lands. They become Satan himself.³¹ This association comes about from the similar description given to the Dutch as well as the imp, but their malice derives from their relationship to the Amazonians. Being a culture of non-Christians, the natives are susceptible to the grip of Lucifer who seeks to conquer the souls of these ‘misguided sheep’: “Without a Shepherd, this copious flock is prone to vice and a held to the Devil who daily condemns an infinite number of souls because heralds of the gospel are scarce, leaving an open space to Lucifer so that he may reign in such vast provinces y reap adoration from these miserable souls” (Acuña 151). Satan in this instance is an invader, but his reach extends beyond moral terrain. He could potentially exercise tangible control over these ‘vast provinces’.

Using the language found in the legend of the supplementary map and recalling that within the ‘voids’ of its cartography lie the ‘untapped’ force of the friendly natives, Acuña draws a parallel between the interest of Lucifer and those of the Dutch. Akin to Satan, they, too, can conquer and reign over these lands by trading with their inhabitants and progressively moving in to their territory. As Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra recounts from his research on other colonial texts featuring the same diabolical character, “God and Satan were engaged in a great geopolitical struggle, a give-and-take of territories” (100). And taking the side of God in this case are the Jesuits.

Echoes of this disdain are found against the common enemy that the Jesuit founder wrote about in his *Ejercicios espirituales* (c.1522). The enemy in Ignacio de Loyola’s spiritual manual is the epithet given vices and temptations facing those individuals attempting to lead a life of

³¹ Newson introduces another angle into the discourse of demonization in the Americas, this time with the accusers as the accused: “In the early 1590s some Cofán had been baptized, presumably by Pedro Ordoñez de Cevallos, but subsequently ill treatment caused them to rebel and oppose and *entrada* [Spanish settlement]. They had developed such a hatred for the Spanish that they called them ‘tensi’, meaning the devil” (209). The problematic presence of the military alongside the Jesuits provoked a resistance from the natives that is suspiciously absent from Acuña’s account.

moral rectitude as prescribed by the Church. But as the text advances in its meditations, this enemy progressively acquires the qualities of a specific kind of enemy. It is not only given physical dimensions by Loyola but also becomes the emblem of a looter or someone who constantly threatens the unaware individual with the loss of virtue as is seen in items 333 and 334 of the *Ejercicios*:

debemos mucho advertir el discurso de los pensamientos; y si el principio, medio y fin es todo bueno, inclinado a todo bien, señal es de buen ángel; mas si en el discurso de los pensamientos que trae, acaba en alguna cosa mala o distrativa, o menos buena que la que el ánima antes tenía propuesta de hacer, o la enflaquece o inquieta o conturba a la ánima, quitándola su paz, tranquilidad y quietud que antes tenía, clara señal es proceder de mal espíritu, enemigo de nuestro provecho y salud eterna.

Quando el enemigo de natura humana fuere sentido y conocido de su cola serpentina y mal fin a que induce, aprovecha a la persona que fue dél tentada, mirar luego en el discurso de los buenos pensamientos que le truxo, y el principio dellos, y cómo poco a poco procuró hacerla descender de la suavidad y gozo espiritual en que estaba, hasta traerla a su intención depravada; para que con la tal experiencia conocida y notada, se guarde para delante de sus acostumbrados engaños. (157-8)

In the cunning enemy that is attempting to infiltrate and trick individuals out of spiritual quietude we find a disruptive force defying the aims of the work as a whole. It is in many ways an enemy, both for those in the process of following the exercises and for he who writes them. Directing one's attention to this enemy whose physical traits bring to mind the evocative, serpent-like characteristics of the figure in the map of the Amazon, Loyola opts to oppose it, to "guard[ar] para delante de sus acostumbrados engaños", by acknowledging instead of ignoring it. To this degree, a similar tactic of approach translates into the defensive strategy upheld in Acuña's text where the enemy similarly aims to depose the stability of certain colonial institutions.

Acuña stipulates that the threat of the demonic Dutch would be eradicated with the implementation of a 'Shepherd' who can watch over the land and the souls of the Amazonians that otherwise never notice the malign presence of this enemy. It is thus the responsibility of a spiritual guide to 'watch over' these provinces. Yet as he repeatedly expresses, here and in other

parts of the chronicle, that there are a vast number of ‘souls’, Acuña proposes this as an endeavour requiring more missionaries. It is an argument that, as he states in the conclusion of his text, urges the crown to act swiftly and promptly send over these reinforcements, these “angels...to edify a new church and free these people from the infidelity under which they live” (166). As the baroque conclusion points out, to impede ‘the devil’ is to interrupt Dutch expansion into the land Acuña is attempting to wittily claim.

By reinforcing the weaknesses depicted by the map, using international turmoil to delineate where loyalties stand in the Indies, and offering an alternative, Acuña ultimately uses the access and vulnerability represented by water to rearrange the geopolitical landscape so as to make the settlement of Jesuits in the Amazon seem like the only logical protection available to the crown in this transatlantic conundrum. What he presents is an Erasmian concept of property where “friends” such as the natives “hold *all* things in common”; only the property that Acuña claims to share is the animosity towards the protestant Dutch that baptism imparts on the baptized Spanish and Amazonians (Eden 114). The sense of propriety that, according to Acuña’s outline, the Amazonians would acquire upon conversion is a ubiquitous trope in colonial documents. Gauvin Bailey finds it in the rhetoric of collaborative development of colonial culture:

Contemporary sources, all written by Europeans, of course, leave no doubt that many communities took to these projects with enthusiasm. But even keeping in mind the bias of the writers, there appears to be some truth to these statements. Recent scholarship on New Spain, in particular, is showing that communal Christian buildings and the new religion itself became the focus for local pride and identity, with the friars and Indians acting as ‘partners in the creation of their own society, different from European society and from that of the colonies and mestizos around them’. (21)

Local communities in these chronicles would recognize that any cultural artifact produced from this cooperation would carry their idiosyncratic imprint and essentially be theirs. After their

conversion, as Baily remarks, the natives would continue to practice their customs independently from ‘the colonies and mestizos around them’. However, in the *Relación del descubrimiento del río de las Amazonas* Acuña extends ‘what is native’ to mean ‘what is Spanish’. He allows it to seem as though what the Amazonians protect after their conversion would be the colonial interest of the Spanish, even though in reality their sense of property has remained unchanged. The Amazonians continue to feel ownership over what was always theirs, the only difference being that they would be identified as Christians. But Acuña does not present it this way. Instead, he portrays evangelization as the necessary link to a predisposed population of natives that excitedly seek to be converted because it works with his and the overall Spanish interest in the Amazon region. Thus, he *orders the world* in this double register, using the social circumstances of the period to abscond his more personal ambitions.³²

Distinction on the basis of this opportunism cannot be attributed to Acuña. Rather, the essence of his political maneuver lies in the way opportunity was incorporated into his world design and made to fit with the way he has broken down loyalties to the Hapsburgs. The matter of *when* he chose to present his argument provides us with further insight into the effectiveness of his project before the eyes of his readers. To his surprise, Acuña managed to alter the Indies with such nuance that his argument was lost on the court of Felipe IV, whose members ordered the text to be changed. They were not amused when Acuña appeared in court to offer the king a

³² Where discussions of friendship are concerned, it is not uncommon to find Jacques Derrida’s *Politics of Friendship* (1994) prominently quoted. Insofar as his critique of Carl Schmitt’s concepts of the political address the latter’s vital distinctions between ‘friend’ and ‘enemy’ as categories that are not realized but rather eventual terms, there is a possible connection that can be made with the geopolitical design of the Amazon as it, too, functions according to potential relations such as these. Derrida maintains that the enemy is established not only on the basis of existing relations, but also on the dynamics that could be, as in the case of the internal tumult of civil wars where a single unit or state could become its own adversary (121). Nevertheless, the discussion on the vicissitudes of these two classes remains on these binary terms, leaving a third category, that of the ally, beyond the scope of analysis. Taking into account the additional dimension that the latter adds in Acuña’s design of the Amazon, the way the natives *could* become friends or enemies of foreign interest groups but only if those who would usually occupy these roles are placed under another category, the ally becomes a key in the study of world shaping practices during the politically-diverse seventeenth century.

chronicle “with its geographical, and simultaneously strategic, annotations regarding his voyage that [Acuña] had understood to be exactly what he was asked to do when he was ordered to produce an investigative report” (Burgos 89). Due to this, the Council of the Indies prevented the text from being published until these sections were removed. In the process of ‘discovering’ the Amazon, of portraying it in a different light, Acuña had made certain things visible that the court did not appreciate. The ‘backdoor’ to Quito that Acuña wrote into the chronicle and around its map served as a step within his broader argument, but it required Acuña’s reader’s at the Spanish court to perceive it as such. Nevertheless, just as the Portuguese navigators were on the same fleet but did not share the goals of their Jesuit counterpart, the aims of the court were not those of its foreign subject. For Acuña, the vulnerable Amazon and its potentially friendly inhabitants could help him make a cogent argument for the population of the river with Jesuit establishments overlooking the evangelization of the Amazonians. For the court, it could be a gateway facilitating the Dutch occupation of an important access point to the Spanish empire. In the process of reordering the Americas, furthermore, Acuña got in the way of *priorities* that proved to be stronger concerns for the Spanish court of 1641 than any underlying, personal rationale. Suddenly, there were other factors that took precedence over the rhetorical ingenuity of Acuña’s account, matters concerning the menacing presence of enemies prowling around an entrance to the Spanish empire that dwarfed and ultimately obscured anything outside this context.

In the end, Acuña’s project organizes water and other topographical features according to a set of mechanics in such a manner that every aspect of the world is brought into correspondence with each other and contained within a guiding motive. Essentially, Acuña has assembled a version of the world where the natives are an integral part of the defence strategy for the Spanish crown. Along the way, he ‘concealed the design’ of his aspiration to settle his order

in this region behind the pretext of building allegiances with the indigenous communities to support Spanish interests. However, no amount of rhetoric would have made this resolution pleasing to the Spanish. By rejecting this proposition and requesting that all geographic details and ethnographic notes be removed, the crown implied that Acuña's proposal, depending heavily on the assistance of the Amazonians, only deterred their image and not their enemies. For a proposal in which the future of the Spanish relied on their colonial subjects was no proposal at all but a dangerous document mapping the helplessness of the Hapsburgs.³³ By disavowing his proposed solution, all the court really saw in Acuña's fluvial design was a blueprint of weak alliances, fortresses, and geographical points along the Amazon trail to Quito. One which, to avoid making this vulnerability evident to a wider (and harmful) readership, was expunged and later published as the polished second edition of 1641.³⁴

Nonetheless, Acuña's work marks an attempt to bridge the world of the court with its blind spots in colonial Latin America, using the same river that puts the Crown at risk to mediate and solve colonial conflicts. More importantly, where the court of Felipe IV draws a line at the possibility that assistance can come from the outside, the Jesuits are willing to recognize an autochthonous presence in international struggles. It signals a moment where natives that are typically concealed from the purview of the court come to foreground of imperial discourse, if only to serve ulterior ambitions, as a solution. What, then, seems to divide the worlds on both sides of the Atlantic is not the distance in between but the opposing views that separately determine what orders one world and disorders another.

³³ In Jaime Regan's introduction to Acuña's second version of the account, he states that some of the readers of the period did not see eye to eye with regards to the claim that the Amazon was 'discovered' by the Jesuits (13). Again, the conflict rises from the distinct application of the term used in the text to mean reordering.

³⁴ This is the version that was included and widely disseminated in Laureano de la Cruz's "Nuevo descubrimiento del Rio de Marañon" of 1651. One of the changes worth mentioning that in this new version of Acuña's account, published after the Iberian dual monarchy is dissolved in December of 1640, the Portuguese join the Dutch as enemies of the Spanish in the New World (see especially chapter 75). It is a resolute category that will be central in fueling religious disputes over the territory of the Amazon well into the mid-eighteenth century.

IV. A New World Order

Near the middle of the seventeenth century, when the unsettling claim was made that a connection existed between the Andes and the Atlantic as the Spanish Franciscans from Quito unexpectedly arrived at Belem do Pará, the traversal of the Amazon seemed a staggering feat for more reasons than the intrepidity of those on board the makeshift vessel. The political implications of this surprise visit were considered to be particularly damaging for both factions of the disputing Iberian Peninsula if preventive measures were not taken to turn this news of an intercolonial channel in their favour. What Acuña therefore proposed was a connection that was already present in nature but lay dormant due to territorial allocations that did not take these inherent designs into account.

Returning to Cabodevilla's proposal in light of these findings, the search for underlying connections to the past amongst the peoples inhabiting ancestral lands can, in some ways, be interpreted as having a comparable view regarding the role space plays in world arrangements. Cabodevilla, like Acuña, also underscores the utility of intact native when it comes to finding a solution to the factors challenging one's interest in the Amazon. In its essence, the suggestion is that the non-Napo Runa of inland Amazonia are inherently suited to examine, understand, explain, and protect the cultural and material remains of the peoples who lived in the same place but during another era. This is, of course, a dilution of Cabodevilla's argument to its most basic form. Restoring the additional layers of the proposal as he communicates it in his delivery, the argument turns into a spatial model of deep, underlying kinships. What is telling of a plan for the preservation of a culture's lifeways that makes sentinels out of temporally displaced inhabitants of an ancestral land is the way geography becomes the ultimate factor of its success. The potential 'friendships' that Acuña insists can benefit geopolitical interests is asserted through the

promise that evangelization of the inland can convert the land and its denizens under a common interest and, more importantly, impart a shared world order. Cabodevilla may call it ‘cultural heritage’, but what he posits as the binding force between people and their land is still rooted in an understanding of space as the basis for a coherent world design. The placement of individuals within these spaces remains important to the process of world shaping as it secures the connections to and sustainability of world they are gathered within. To expound on Cabodevilla’s brand of ‘community archaeology’ and its use of spatial affinities to establish an idea of an integrated world, we turn to the discussion of ‘deep history’.

The bonds across a people, place, and time have received particular attention in the essay featured in a recent anthology regarding the subject. The anthropologists Thomas Trautmann, Gillian Feeley-Harnik and John Mitani examine this matter in “Deep Kinship” (2011) by using primatology to move into considerations that go beyond merely human interactions with space. Environments and non-humans correspond with human subjects in their study as a common space establishes a kinship amongst them, understood by the primatologists as the materialization of a legacy that is both cultural and biological. Citing the ranging patterns of Tanzanian chimpanzees who delimit space according to the location of food and through scattered seeds as manifestation of these spatial nexuses, they introduce extra-linguistic behavioural patterns to analyze how the same space is used by several species:

If we consider nonhuman primates’ territories as “houses,”[...] we might be able to integrate the analysis of settlement and ranging patterns across hominid and other primate groups in deep time.

Evidence of “locales” in the form of scatters—for example, the cluster of wood and flint chips, seeds, and nuts at Gesher Benot Ya’aqov in what is now Israel—dates back to some 780,000 years ago; evidence of multiple hearths to 400,000 ya; burials in caves to 35,000 ya; hearths in caves to 160,000 ya; and cooking hearths to 80,000 ya. [...] Yet the patterns of materials associated with hearths during and after [790,000 to 690,000 years ago] elsewhere, perhaps for lack of evidence, still seem so idiosyncratic and unfamiliar

that they are rarely identifiable either as apes' nests or as shelters. [...] Expanding our understanding of dwelling in terms of what [Tim] Ingold calls "way-finding" (perhaps comparable to range finding among other primates or the social carnivores with whom hominins were closely involved) may help to explain how these paths and places of accumulation developed into the shelterlike containers that began to appear some 20,000 ya. Structures that we would recognize as houses began to appear only in the last 11,000 years, in agricultural settlements associated with the intensification of containment and accumulations of all kinds. (181-2)

The behaviour of primates may seem far removed from the question of Amazonian world shaping practices, but the greater argument would escape us in believing so.³⁵ Understanding how the authors arrive at this correlation between seemingly distant histories of life forms lies in grasping that these associations exist within the context of deep time, where overlaps across these lived spaces occur throughout a broader timescale. In doing so, patterns begin to arise out of the scattered remains left behind by the different hominids occupying these spaces that bring them into a spatial relation with each other, altering the significance of notions like 'home' and 'kinship' on the basis of a social dynamic existing between across species.

Yet, different to the way Trautmann *et alia* propose to look at it, Cabodevilla's notion of shared space remains exclusive to those who partake in an unadulterated lineage and would therefore be more inclined to 'save' the legacy of *their* culture. By attaching spatial affinities to racial purity, what affixes both the people and the land to a single ancestral culture, one that current inhabitants are supposed to consider worth preserving, is not a choice but an inherited obligation. Furthermore, the waters that are so adamantly posed as a risk are only so to those who wish to preserve cultures, both living and dead, in a congealed state along with the rest of the vestiges. Taking the latter stance, Cabodevilla therefore argues that worlds are built upon

³⁵ For an extensive analysis of the way humans and non-human subjects in the Amazon form "part of the general landscape" and interact accordingly (xxiv), consult Loretta Cormier's *Kinship with Monkeys: The Guajá Foragers of Eastern Amazonia* (2003).

associations, in this case oriented in terms of spaces, which allow for a common history and culture to arise from an ensemble of connected histories. Regardless of the final form of the worlds shaped in this manner, there remains above all else, as it did in the seventeenth century, a necessity for a bonding agent to hold these worlds in place. It was on this quest for cohesion that the Jesuit embarked when he left Quito for Pará in 1639.

Acuña's efforts manifest that locating the Amazon's worlds comprises of geopolitical, geometrical, and geographical dimensions that make it a multifaceted venture. In the political domain of the mid-seventeenth century, these elements were integrated under the deceptively straightforward practice of describing the New World's spaces. Defining the Amazonian portion of these spaces are rivers. In Acuña's era, they provided avenues on which to carry out cosmographical surveys and reduced the time it took to move between Amazonian locations. Furthermore, travel through the Amazon's waters, as it is replicated in the structure of Acuña's chronicle, allowed for the formation of a system connecting the different worlds encountered along its path to be charted as contours established by each narrative's scope. Like the network of streams upon which the voyages of the 1630's were realized, the peoples of the Amazon in these accounts are tethered to each other through a rationale that accommodates them into an intelligible whole that is itself shaped by water.

Acuña's cosmography of the Amazon fundamentally operates on a geopolitical armature that arranges the peoples along its rivers according to where their loyalties lie on a transatlantic scale as well as in relation to each other. It is a text in which macrocosms and microcosms alike are organized into a 'natural' structure proposed by Acuña's accentuation of the Amazonian river system and the vulnerabilities it exposes. The way the Amazon is featured in these plans, in short as a world within another larger one, affects the reading of Amazonia both as part of a single,

occidental world order and as a locally shaped entity. And though this layered model for the integration and rationalization of worlds in this is not unique to Acuña's writing, it is noteworthy for coming into effect during a juncture in which these configurations of nature were being met with hostilities that put the stability of the colonial enterprises in the Amazon into question.

Where these ideas resonated with the highest fidelity was at the other side of the Amazon. The notion of regulating what makes its way in and out of the Amazon concerned the Jesuit Antonio Vieira during and after his time working with indigenous peoples in the Brazilian *aldeas*. In his 1646 letter addressed to the Conde da Vidigueira, the Portuguese ambassador in Paris, he argues for an alliance between Portugal and France against the Spanish that would assure the wellbeing of both parties and their colonies. The thesis is followed by an admonition that urges for immediate action to be taken if the encroachment of Spain and Holland in Brazil is to be stopped. Produced a few years after the publication of Acuña's edited chronicle in 1641, Vieira's letter elaborates on the New World model that latter Jesuit was originally proposing. Hence, Vieira discusses the disruption of Castilian expansion into Brazil in terms of a "desunião de Castela" (464r). The planned dissolution was a way of addressing the presence of the Spanish in the Portuguese colonies of Brazil, but it also illuminates Vieira's discontent with the permanence of these posts. Akin to Acuña, the Portuguese Jesuit bases his proposal on a world model where the colonies are connected and simultaneously exposed by fluvial routes. Vieira handles the solution as a matter requiring that the network generating these entry points be disbanded through a reconfiguration of political alliances. By establishing ties with French forces, a step would be taken towards modifying the geopolitical composition that has been granting intruders access to Portuguese colonies. It is his contention that this new configuration would truncate the efforts of adversaries by way of severing the flow of commerce and

establishment of captaincies. In Vieira's letter we therefore have the outline of a project reworking the colonial world systems that were understood to be already in place into a modified version of the New World that would suit individual needs. Furthermore, just as the incompatibility with established New World models becomes a catalyst for remodeling of Brazil's delineations, the Jesuit enterprise on behalf of which Vieira writes is also met with challenges by other individuals carrying out the same process. While these tensions will be covered in chapter four, for the moment it will suffice to indicate that the struggles with the implementation of these world designs in Brazil were just as pressing a subject in Vieira's diplomatic correspondence as his geopolitics.³⁶

What these narratives of frustration with Amazonian nature ultimately end up revealing is a conflict as much about the unmaking of worlds as it is about their making.

³⁶ See Vieira's 1661 letter to Rei D. Afonso VI, written at the end of his time as Superior of Jesuit operations in the Amazon, for an instance where both issues are address in equal measure when discussing the future of the Portuguese colonies along the famed river (Alden 113).



Figure 1

Map featured in Saavedra y Guzmán, Martín de. *Descubrimiento del río de las Amazonas y sus dilatadas provincias*. 1639. MS 5859. Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid. Fol.31.

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Chapter 3:

World Relief

Observing life along its fluvial channels was but one mode of obtaining access to the worlds of the Amazon. Whereas the endeavour to understand Amazonia through its river and shores sought ways to incorporate it into an existing world order, another approach focused on its management, on the task of ordering the way Amazonia was presented. It entailed working with the material content and knowledge of these worlds that had been procured through expansionist voyages inland. This information regarding nature in these parts would then be reorganized in a manner that was made to coincide with the particular image those who reorganized it had for the Amazon. If efficiently implemented, it could lead to the realization of this vision of the Amazon as a self-sustaining microcosm, a notion that was founded on the volume and variety of resources that travellers to these parts frequently reported. However, it was the resources that the Amazon *could* have that interested many seventeenth-century administrators as they began to redefine this space in ways which made available commodities from other parts of the globe in one, centralized place. It was here that the Amazon's global dimensions served as the framework for discussions of its worlds.

In the ensuing era of voyages brought about by Pedro Álvares Cabral's 1500 arrival on its shores, "Brazil was at this stage regarded as little more than a supply stop on the road to India" as "the real prize in everyone's mind was control of the fabulous, far eastern Indies" (Turner 26). The ancillary status mentioned here conveys the overall perceived worth that Brazilian colonies

and the New World represented for the imperial spice trade in which cloves, mace, and nutmeg were historically the most lucrative of its commodities (Howard 124). As these were most commonly obtained from and therefore associated with India, the western lands of the New World, devoid of these and other spices, were considered of little value in such markets.

Yet, two centuries later things appear to have changed. “The very definition of ‘America’ in Diderot and d’Alembert’s *Encyclopédie*”, Londa Schiebinger observes, “emphasized trade in sugar, tobacco, indigo, ginger, cassia, gums and aloes, sassafras, brazil wood (a dyestuff), guaiacum (a cure for syphilis), cinnamon, balsams of Tolu and Peru (against coughs), cochineal (a rich red dye), ipecacuanha, nutmeg, pineapple, and jalap along with the ‘water of Barbados’” (8). The stopover on the route to fortunes in spices has become synonymous with these and other raw materials to the point where they essentially define these lands.

What happened during the interim that led to this shift in perspective is precisely the subject of this chapter. By examining the way world designs were graphed through the allocation of natural resources we can begin to assess how sites of production like Amazonia were featured within these models during a century in which individuals were continually proposing ways of circumventing the limitations presented by these worlds towards certain mercantilist ends. For a landmass that initially failed to register any significance within the spice trade, the New World was at the centre of a series of proposals that would change rather than merely satisfy market demands.

The key was in identifying what could be made out of the lands of the New World within the system of seventeenth-century commerce that was already in place. There were Amazonian initiatives which, as Stephen Bunker notes, were put in place to maximize the profitability of the

products that were native to the tropical rainforest environment yet which eventually proved to be unsustainable:

Amazonian sugar could not compete with the sugar plantations on the Atlantic coast in either quality or cost of production. Depletion of the native spices near colonial settlements mean that collecting expeditions had to go farther inland, expanding their need for Indian labor even as European prices fell and local costs rose. The slaving expeditions became more and more wasteful of Indian life as the drastic reduction of Indian populations along the rivers increased the time, distance, and expense of slaving expeditions. As early as 1693 there were complaints from slavers that it was necessary to go upriver as far as the present boundaries of Peru to find slaves (62).

Relying upon one type of indigenous “resource” to extract another did not yield the results that were anticipated, especially when at the end of the seventeenth century, after more than a hundred years of intensified settlement activity in the Amazon, little of each remained. The pronounced lengths to which those involved in this area of commerce would have to go in order to participate in the spice trade made the endeavour seem ill-fitted to the environment of the Amazon. In the end, the accumulated losses incurred during this century by this competition between products already established elsewhere and the Amazonian versions of these items once again have little in common with the depiction one finds in texts concordant with the *Encyclopédie*.

The Amazon, in spite of contradictory evidence, remained closely associated with spices. It is a connection that, although it may prove to represent a disparity with the state of economic affairs in the Amazon at the time, nevertheless illustrates a process of imagining and in turn shaping its worlds. By focusing on the area of the spice trade from the purview of the Amazon, we are able to study the composition of its worlds in light of an established world order. By the second half of the seventeenth century, this meant reformulating and in most cases ‘improving’ upon the way Amazonia had been organized under the administration of other colonial powers.

I. The World in a Nutshell

Products were the primary source of knowledge about foreign worlds. The tendency went as far as making goods and their environments interchangeable items. In the commentary by Eve Duffy and Alida Metcalf on the exploits of Hans Staden as a figure at the nexus between different worlds, the authors make note of the way German merchants and consumers came to experience a place like India through the import of goods:

From the sixteenth century onward, the markets of the Hessian towns would have had spices from the East Indies available for sale all year long. Perhaps it was through spices that Staden was first exposed to the idea of India. Prized by the affluent, spices were luxury goods with medicinal, culinary, cosmetic, and ritual uses. Dried spices (in contrast to herbs, which were used fresh and had little value) came to Germany by land and sea routes from India and remote islands in south Asia. They were expensive, ostentatious, and fashionable displays of wealth. Nutmegs, cloves, cinnamon, black pepper, ginger, and saffron flavoured the cooked dishes of the elite, not to cover up the taste or smell of rotting meat (other processes such as salting and pickling were much more effective ways), but rather to proclaim the status of the family who used and consumed them. Spices were certainly part of the lure of India: expensive mysterious, precious, and increasingly available, they were markers of wealth in the towns in which Staden lived. (17)

For the colonial explorer, Staden, it is claimed, would have known of the existence of foreign worlds and experienced them through the only means available to him in the shape of the goods imported from those areas, adumbrating his later expeditions to distant worlds and similar encounter with the representative 'elements' of these lands in the form of their inhabitants. The availability of products from places such as India, albeit mainly for a particular clientele, displaced their corresponding worlds to a mercantile setting in a consumable form. The listed spices defined not only the concept of the places from which they originated, but as the adjectives affixed to them evince they also affirmed the status of individuals who consumed them. In other words, spices both informed individuals about unfamiliar worlds as well as manifesting the place of the consumer within their own surroundings.

Amazonia's raw material continued to be associated with a pervading smell of spices well into the seventeenth century that was used to define spatial awareness in additional ways. This aroma jutted from the Amazon's soil in the shape of autochthonous trees and for those who knew how to market its fruit, it was a fragrance that blended indiscriminately with the smell of success. It was not uncommon, Daviken Studnicki-Gizbert tells us using the Portuguese as an example, to find merchants offering raw material from this part of the New World next to a variety of products from other regions in a manner that reduced distances between colonies into an accessible point of sale: "Stationed in Lima, on the westernmost edge of the Atlantic economy, Manuel Bautista Perez offered his customers not only African slaves but also Asian silks and spices, European cloth, New Spain cacao, Polish amber, Chilean cedar, Venezuelan pearls, and more" (101). It was likely that those welcomed into his home were also offered an equally extensive assortment of goods: "It is more difficult to establish what Bautista's guests ate on such occasions. But the nature of the house's business makes it reasonable to assume that the guests were piled with wines from Andalusia, Portugal, and Madeira, cacao from Venezuela, and cakes sweetened with Brazilian sugar" (63). Spirits from Iberia, chocolate from tropical forests, and sugar from the *engenhos*, these were all products whose provenance was not only known but also marketed to consumers. Through a widespread commercial network, merchants like the Portuguese working in the New World thrived on their access to products that were unique to or at least emblematic of their respective places of origin. There was therefore a currency of place that made New World commerce as enticing as the consumption of the commodity itself.

In the product was the place. This became a truism in the imagery of the seventeenth-century Amazon was handled. To engage with a place like the Amazon was to find oneself in a world whose unfamiliar sights, smells, tastes, and sounds offered a graspable rendition of this

new space. Palatable, palpable, and thus profitable, the New World could be understood through the metonymy of *materia prima*. Such items gave the Amazon meaning, encapsulating it in textures and graspable objects whose areas of production were locatable within colonial geographies. The association between world and object was conceptualized forthright in the case of Brazil as it shares its name with the wood produced on its soil. This part of the New World, as Roland Greene notes, existed in the Early Modern imagination through its raw material:

Over time, this object-oriented emphasis proves to be ubiquitous and perhaps decisive in Brazilian culture, colonial and modern. In the colonial period, it means that the place of Brazil itself, rather than its European conquerors or settlers, serves as protagonist of its history, although if terms such as ‘conquest’ and ‘protagonist’ are themselves part of what an object-oriented imperialism undoes with its relentlessly anti-individualist drift, one might hold out for the observation that Brazil is always and finally an object as well as a place of objects—this is its distinction and its doom. Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Brazilian episode offers a crucial alternative and supplement to the Spanish American discourse of conquest: if an object of imperial exertions were to receive as much cultural and emotional investment as goes into Columbus as subject, it would be Brazil. (*Unrequited* 81)

The alternative mentioned by Greene is to understand the “objectification” of the New World as a material process.³⁷ Taking the place embodied in the material as the subject, a colonial process and conceptualization of ‘world’ becomes traceable. In areas where there was nothing but nature, it followed that nothing more was required to understand them than nature alone. The raw in this circumstance connotes a product that, being unrefined, has not lost the traces of its environment. Even in the case of sugar, to cite Stuart Schwartz’s study of colonial *engenhios* in Brazil, in which modifications were made to the initial product of the cane through treatments as well as in

³⁷ The role of materials in the understanding of worlds is a subject treated extensively in theories of Object-oriented ontology. In *Tool Being: Heidegger and the Metaphysics of Objects* (2002), Graham Harman theorizes the place of objects in everyday life to be one that transcends their functions as tools. Objectification, he proposes as he glosses Heidegger’s ontological work, refers to the essence of a ‘thing’ which exists in tandem with but is not solely based upon human understanding of the object: “the fact that we *know* these objects only through their appearances precisely *does not* mean that they only *are* through their appearances” (224). Although one becomes aware of the function of objects when they are viewed within systems which they enable to operate, such as the examined raw material that serves to convey a sense of the colonial New World, this brand of ontology approaches objects in and of themselves and studies them outside any network of meaning.

the form of labour and, in effect, a history of slavery, a recognizable lack of refinement remained attached to the product and the world from which it originated. As Schwartz indicates, the absence of refineries in Brazil was evident in the class of sugar that was produced there,

A peculiar aspect of the Brazilian sugar trade was the total lack of refineries, not only in the colony itself but in the metropolis as well. Brazil became famous for its “clayed” sugar, which resulted in high-quality whites and lower-grade, brown-to-yellow muscavado. Both these types were suitable for immediate consumption. Very coarse sugar still full of molasses, what Brazilians called *panelas*, was not exported in large amounts. This variety, however, was shipped in large quantities from the Caribbean islands after the mid-seventeenth century under the name *mascavado*. It became the raw material for the refining industries of northern Europe...The absence of a home refining industry partially explains why the Brazilians concentrated on producing clayed sugars, although in the sixteenth century the ability to produce clayed sugar probably explains the lack of refineries. (162)

In the “clay” variant, by virtue of its unique properties, it is possible to perceive “the absence of a home refining industry”. In a literal way, ‘raw’ evokes a world of corresponding quality by revealing its infrastructure, or in this case lack thereof, in the unrefined product. To therefore identify places through their raw material, as in the example of Bahia’s sugar operation, is to locate these spaces according to the way the dissemination of resources has come to *define* them.

This capacity to condense entire worlds within a single object proved to be instrumental in colonial designs that set out to reconfigure the canonized shapes of the New World. An essay like Jacques Lezra’s “Geography and Marlowe” illustrates through examples in literature the way worlds could be compacted within a finite spatial representation. For Lezra, the worlds portrayed on stage by the Elizabethan dramatist are gathered under what he calls a “theatre-geography” that provides viewers with a sense of space based on the orientation established within the work:

Geography in Marlowe’s period...takes shape where ‘the world’ abuts upon ‘any particular place *without relation to the whole*’ ...Settling geography *between* ‘the world’ and ‘any particular place *without relation to the whole*’ means at least that geography no longer serves as a scalar step between a ‘particular’ and the whole to which it belongs, as

though one were moving up or down a gradient according to ‘commensurable’ units. Geography marks a boundary between *incommensurables*; it is where we ‘discourse’, as Richard Willes puts it [sic], about ‘the whole worlde, and eche province thereof particularly’, while acknowledging that some or all of these particular provinces have ‘no relation’ to the ‘whole’ of which they are ‘parts’, including the relation of part to whole. The ‘discourse’ of geography results in impossible topologies and in strange, heterogeneous works like Willes’ *History of Travayle*, which feed the ‘late’ fashion for discoursing on ‘the whole world’ with composite collections of travelogues and ‘merchants’ adventures’ to the particular provinces of the known world. (130)

Worlds are suggested to be made up of many, superimposed manifestations that do not necessarily have any relation to each other. They draw and are derived from diverse sources yet can be gathered within a designated arrangement. Applying this finding to the oeuvre of the titular playwright in his study, Lezra concludes by mentioning that the compression of spaces and worlds into a single area prompts viewers to examine the worlds they know in relation to both the unfolding narrative events as well as to themselves:

The *audience* at Marlowe’s plays finds itself at every moment, wrenchingly, in two different spaces: it is called upon to assess what it is watching and to establish *from where* it is watching, according to incommensurable criteria; and it is called upon to trace these incompatible spatialities and systems of valuation within the span of one confuted subjectivity – a paradoxically *divided* atom. (135).

In the cited separation of the self-contained atom, it is possible to identify the conflicting dynamic of a viewer attempting to comprehend familiar worlds through a series of alternating relations with the represented world. The world of the “theatre-geography” is one which exists on its own but is shaped by the way the audience positions itself before it. It is a world with traits of one’s world distilled into the space of the stage. On the basis of associations, in this case between the viewer and theatre, a microcosm encapsulating these relations materializes in a graspable form. Here it is in the viewable stage and the narrative that unfolds on it, but other modes existed which placed compressed worlds within grasp.

The visual medium of the still life genre seemed adequate for this as it had an established inventory of subjects and techniques dedicated to the representation of encountered worlds. As a product of a culture with colonies in the eastern and western hemispheres, Dutch painting in particular had developed a predilection for portraying the spoils of their empire through this medium. Artists joined natural historians in making the claim that the land could be identified with the unique properties of its goods. Fruits, spices, and plants from places such as India were displayed in a domestic setting familiar to European viewers. These sumptuous articles and their arrangement on canvases throughout the century are not stale mementos but active agents in the definition of these places. Much has already been said about practices and notions of consumption that lie at the heart of Dutch still life paintings, with scholars concentrating their studies on the way foreign goods were integrated into the domestic setting of home and homeland alike.³⁸ The congregational capacity of still life paintings has brought about this attention to the display of the reaches of empire on a single surface. Yet, this visual inventory communicates not only the contents of an empire, but as the trajectory of still life in colonial Brazil demonstrates, it is capable of demonstrating *how* these worlds were contained within the imperial system. The way that multiple worlds are handled in still life paintings allows one to observe the entanglement of the genre with procedures of governance over the disparate colonies and spaces of Brazil. In this regard, a reading of the still life depicting Dutch Brazil's commodities allows one to examine how the represented colony was managed amidst a plurality of worlds.³⁹

³⁸ A comprehensive chapter on still life and its conventions is included in Svetlana Alpers' *The Art of Describing* (1983). For studies focused on the Netherlandish genre and the consumption of distant cultures, see Julie Hoochstrasser's "The Conquest of Spice" (2005).

³⁹ In literary studies, colonial cartography and geography have been embraced as ways of engaging with concepts of empire, jurisdiction, and baroque ontology through representations of space. Ricardo Padron's *Spacious Word* (2004), for example, uses the aforementioned disciplinary strands to discuss settings in colonial narratives as the device that generates an ontological context for understanding the subjects of the New World and which is

II. How Tasteful was my Dutchman

During the Early Modern period, foreign places growing spices were valued as much as precious metals and other materials equally arduous to extract. These places and their material resources, as they are enumerated by Benjamin Schmidt, became much-desired, lucrative points along the map and trade itineraries of Dutch and other merchants: “Trade with the New World promised a rich assortment of natural products for exports: vast quantities of gold and silver, precious stones and pearls, costly spices such as pepper and ginger..., exotic brazilwoods and hides, tobacco and cotton, sugar and salt” (180). The problem was that although they knew what these products were worth, they were unaware of how to reach them. While several logistic considerations were involved in the transportation of spices, a different kind of expertise was required when dealing with them in their raw form, for it is one thing to desire these objects and another to obtain them from their natural environment.⁴⁰ In several attempts to accomplish the latter, the logistics proved to be alien for those who were unfamiliar with spice’s material properties.

The most famous of these was Gonzalo Pizarro’s 1539 expedition to the Amazon in search of cinnamon. While prized for its attractive odour, *canela* can be worthless as a food alternative.⁴¹ This was something that the early European voyagers to the Amazon interior

especially effective due to the way this practice is dissimulated behind the specious appearance of a description. Adding to these findings, the arrangement of objects in the still life paintings of Dutch Brazil illuminate metafictional practices for shaping colonial spaces that, when analyzed jointly with the approaches found in literary studies, allow one to observe the way individuals orient themselves amongst the worlds of others.

⁴⁰ Dauril Alden offers an illustration of the *modus operandi* typical of historical shipping practices for spices when he mentions that, during the eighteenth century, cacao was placed next to the *drogas do sertão* in cargoes for reasons of efficiency (“Significance” 132-3). These spatial considerations explicate how the unobtrusive size of cacao and Brazilian spices also made them desirable because greater volumes of these costly items could yield more revenue with a lesser load.

⁴¹ In fact, the first species of cinnamon encountered by Columbus in the Indies, avers Andrew Dalby, was exploitable primarily as a fragrance: “Cinnamon was among the most costly of spices in medieval Europe, and although it was known to come from somewhere far to the east, no one knew exactly where. No wonder the explorers had been anxious to find the supply source. What they had actually found was *Canella Winterana*, the tree

discovered at the worst possible moment in their voyage. Under the aegis of Gonzalo Pizarro, brother of the famed Francisco Pizarro who overturned the Inca Empire in Peru, a reconnaissance mission lasting between 1539 and 1542 was launched. As Charles Mann comments, the entire mission resulted in unanticipated complications:

Gonzalo's quest descended rapidly from the quixotic to the calamitous. He blundered randomly for months about the eastern foothills of the Andes, then as now a country of deep forest. Because the mountains catch all the moisture from the Amazon winds, the terrain is as wet as it is steep. It is also pullulantly alive: howling with insects, hot and humid as demon's breath, perpetually shaded by mats of lianas and branches. Within weeks most of the horses died, their hooves rotting in the mire. So did most of the Indian laborers, felled by being worked to exhaustion in a hot, humid land twelve thousand feet below their cool mountain home. Having lost their beasts of burden, animal and human, the conquistadors painfully cobbled together a crude boat and floated their guns and heavy equipment down the Napo River, an upper tributary of the Amazon. Meanwhile, the soldiers slogged along the banks, a parallel but more laborious course. (281)

The narrative ends with Francisco Orellana deserting Pizarro, his superior, and embarking on one of the 'crude boats' downstream, only to later be considered the first person to navigate down the Amazon. What was later referred to as 'La expedición de canela' served as both precedent and blueprint for voyages to the Amazon, alerting travellers to the type of environment they would have to traverse and the things they would find in it.

Of those items, the few that those who ventured into the tropical rainforest *hoped* to encounter were the spices. Known as *drogas do sertão* in Brazil, the spices extracted from the Amazon interior, a region in and of itself attractive to curious explorers who assumed its vast, uncharted regions promised many untapped goods, were becoming especially coveted (Novión 55). By the time of Pizarro's expedition, the Portuguese had come to be known as the leading merchants of spices like cinnamon which they systematically harvested in other colonies:

that is known in Jamaica now as 'wild cinnamon' or 'white cinnamon'. The aromatic part – just as with cinnamon – is the bark, which has been called 'whitewood bark' or 'Winter's bark'; it is used in perfume sachets and in potpourris" (152).

Early in the sixteenth century the Portuguese took control of the export of cinnamon from Sri Lanka, and foreign observers for the first time were able to remark the organization of the cinnamon harvest. The harvesters, according to Gaspar Correia, worked for an agent who was compelled to supply a fixed number of bundles of cinnamon sticks to the king each year. Royal clerks kept account of deliveries and paid a specified sum per hundred bundles. Another Portuguese author, Duarte Barbosa, adds detail. 'The King requires the cinnamon to be cut in small stick, and the harvest to be gathered only at certain months of each year. The king himself sells it to the merchants who go to Sri Lanka for it, because no one else is authorized to deal in it.' The king kept a warehouse in Colombo entirely for the trade in cinnamon. (Dalby 40)

While the Portuguese had developed a process for the trade for cinnamon, its extraction was still left to the harvester's expertise. The recognition that gathering of the spice was best left to those who specialized in this procedure suggests that access to commodities was mediated rather than immediate. It was common to arrive at this conclusion given the position of indispensable working hands that Amerindians of the Amazon held in colonial society during the seventeenth century. Paula Pinto e Silva explains this specifically in relation to the *drogas do sertão*:

[In the northern part of the Amazon], there were complex hydrographic networks...that only allowed extractive activity based on indigenous labour...It is clear that, in order to withstand long distances and navigate the canoes through this complicated fluvial network, as well as to pick, hunt, fish and cook, only the natives could be approached with the task...Prior to knowing what the region had to offer, it was necessary to walk through it and live in it. This is why the fluvial routes belonged to the native, along with the access to the region's flora and other products. (63)

From the sense of chorography the Amerindians obtained by frequently travelling through the Amazon to living in constant contact with its objects, expertise derived from the experience of an entire life spent in this region. This enabled the use of a spice like cinnamon to be familiar within these cultures, cultures whose level of knowledge Europeans did not possess. Yet in the context of seventeenth-century Dutch Brazil, the lack of expertise to directly access the natural resources of the Amazon provides a welcome opportunity to re-imagine the New World through its objects.

From its inception, the depiction of the material world in Albert Eckhout's *Still Life with Palm Inflorescence and Basket of Spices* (figure 2) was shaped by the confluence of perspectives. Painted around 1640, it is part of Eckhout's series of still lifes commissioned around the same time by count Johan Maurits van Nassau-Sigen, the governor of colonial Dutch Brazil between 1637 and 1644, as part of an effort to systematically document the 'natural' environment of the colony in visual and written terms. The scope of the project was as vast as its object of study. Thus, there to record the multifaceted 'natural world' of Brazil in its distinct manifestations was a team of natural historians, a physician, and the artists Frans Post (1612-1680) and Albert Eckhout. The fruits of each member's work were likewise varied, but they never failed to be interdisciplinary. Natural historian Georg Marcgraf (1610-ca.1644) and Willem Piso (1611-1678), the project's physician, produced a series of botanical observations that would later be compiled and published, posthumously in Marcgraf's case, as the *Historia Naturalis Brasiliae* (1648). Within this text, evidence is found of a sustained relationship between the 'scientists' and the artistic collaborators from the very first illustrated page. Referring to the engraved frontispiece of the *Historia Naturalis Brasiliae* (fig. 1), Rebecca Brienen notes that it "borrows heavily from Eckhout's paintings and drawings, [displaying] a friendly, even amorous, Indian couple posed against an orderly but lush tropical landscape" (17). Apart from establishing the tone for the book, these Eckhoutian tropes also made their way into the text to help ratify the claims made by Marcgraf and Piso, demonstrating, in Brienen's words, "how difficult it is to separate the practice of art from science in Dutch Brazil [where] both were part of the same colonial project" (19). Indeed, the belief that disciplines were most effective in their respective fields when they were open to ideas from other specialties gave this full-scaled venture its idiosyncrasy. Being 'part of the same colonial project' meant that Marcgraf's

illustrations would also serve Eckhout in the latter's contribution to Maurits' endeavour:

“Regardless of whether he accompanied them into the field, Eckhout was clearly aware of the work done by the scientists in Brazil. Eckhout and/or his assistants made copies in oils of a number of Marcgraf's tiny watercolours... we also have pictorial evidence that Marcgraf and Eckhout worked side by side, making images of the same specimens” (33-4). What Brienan alludes to, when she cites the existence of pictorial evidence, are the oil paintings on paper that individually study the flora and fauna of Brazil. Furthermore, these subjects, useful to both ‘scientists’ and artists, collectively convey a statement about the particular type of nature that is being represented. Brienan argues that the flora and fauna in Eckhout's drawings featured local specimens in order to evoke “Johan Maurits' sphere of influence in South America and Africa” (56-9). By way of jurisdiction over the natural world, Johan Maurits' control, in this view, is communicated through the oil studies. In Eckhout's paintings on canvas, however, the reach of empire gives away to the reach of the imagination.

Upon close inspection, one notices that what is lacking in *Still Life with Palm Inflorescence and Basket of Spices* (figure 2) is a landscape background. On the matter, Brienan remarks that this and Eckhout's other still lifes “could have been displayed as a group somewhere in Boa Vista, the second of the Count's Brazilian palaces, where he had his ‘museum’ and ethnographic collection...[Furthermore,] a number of visual clues in Eckhout's paintings demonstrate that they were intended to have been viewed from below” (177, 183). The backdrop of clouds in the absence of fields or cityscapes (which are prominent in Eckhout's ethnographic paintings [figures 3-4]) may reflect the altitude from which the painting was hung but they also leave the variegated basket of spices in the foreground. Additionally, the inclining palm inflorescence in the painting also serves as a second frame that highlights the bowl

containing the spices. Thus, with nothing else to go by but the sky and the featured table as indicators of a non-descript location, Eckhout's painting highlights the presence of its objects for the viewer. This is reinforced through the painting's material objects and the textures they elicit.

Through Eckhout's organization of the 'natural world', it is the organization of its content that enables the viewer's imagination to become integral in the process of defining the material world. The 'natural world' is arranged on the canvas of *Still Life with Palm Inflorescence and Basket of Spices* in a manner that evokes a selective hand. Be it that of Eckhout or of his assistant(s), a choice was made as to the objects that would be included in the painting.⁴² As for these objects, Brienan reveals their provenance stating: "Eckhout did not need to participate in dangerous expeditions into the interior to study Brazilian flora and fauna - indigenous animals and plants could instead be viewed within the boundaries of the new capital city Mauritsstad. In particular, they were present at Boa Vista and Vrijburg Palace: in the governor's menagerie, cabinet of curiosities, and elaborate gardens" (54). The spices featured in *Still Life with Palm Inflorescence and Basket of Spices*, readily available through count Maurits' botanical collection or cabinet of curiosities, still involved a selection process as they would have been picked over other possible spices. These function as suggestive and not prescriptive choices from the artist's end. As Celeste Brusati has noted about the still life genre, "what realist interpretations of still life generally fail to acknowledge is that, contrary to the fictions the paintings purvey, still lifes do not record as much as they *remake* the material world for particular kinds of visual consumption" (145). This act of refashioning that Brusati mentions is visible in the array of spices that Eckhout paints, which reflect not Brazil's, or, for that matter, the count's products as

⁴² According to Brienan, the still life paintings mark a period in his career in which he painted independently, with little to no help from his assistants (176).

they were, but rather as an arranged variety. Once this selection is made and the spices are put together, the artist's 'remaking' of the material world cedes to the viewer's interpretation.

Whereas the artist's role, as mentioned above, involves bringing objects together in a novel manner, Eckhout places foreign materials alongside those that are known in order to engage the viewer with the ongoing process of defining the New World. Since some can be identified while others cannot (a problem that continues well into the twentieth century for scholars of the painting), the focus does not remain on the particular spices in *Still Life with Palm Inflorescence and Basket of Spices* as much as it does on their overall texture.⁴³ Gathering the informed opinions of botanists and art historians, P.J.P Whitehead creates an inventory of the food elements included in the work: "The shallow basket, which has a black and red rim, contains at top five brilliant red pitangas and below them a number of dark green goiabas. Below these are round brown pitombas and below these again are peanuts. On the right of the basket are various kinds of bright red peppers (*Capsicum frutescens*, perhaps also *C. chinense*). The other identifications are uncertain" (81). Listed among the enumerated spices is *Capsicum chinense* or hot pepper, a foodstuff that circulated in seventeenth-century Dutch trade. Peppers, as Julie Hochstrasser outlines in "The Conquest of Spice", were prized by consumers for their distinct ability to alter foods:

In the era before refrigeration, demand was understandable for a product that could smother the flavor of bad meat; its use was widespread enough that *peper* was also the name for a typical winter sauce for meat dishes. Pepper was prized as well for meat dishes. Pepper was prized as well for inherent properties that complemented the qualities

⁴³ The foreign, it must be said, was paradoxically common for those involved with the Dutch overseas empires, for as Jonathan Israel comments, "it was a society in which no one could live without continually sensing the interaction of land and sea, town and country, one town with the next, soldiers and seamen with burghers, the exotic with the mundane and the foreign with the local" (563). Depending on how exposed the individual was to 'exotic' products or regions, the quotidian could take on an inverse meaning. Conversely, with "WIC officials and servants, the occasional visiting Portuguese dignitary from Olinda, and ambassadors from abroad" being among the possible foreign viewers of the painting, the texture of the unknown spices would have also sparked some curiosity (Brienen 199).

of other foods in accordance with the medieval theory of the four humors, which still governed dietary theory during this period. (171)

Used partly as a preservative but also as a tangy additive, the qualities of peppers were known and accordingly used to enhance the properties of the other foods. Particularly its fiery texture gave it a place in humoral medicine and an emblematic effect on the gustatorial senses. Within *Still Life with Palm Inflorescence and Basket of Spices*, the hot pepper is grouped next to autochthonous items, which infuses Eckhout's arrangement of spices with an identifiable texture that would carry some resonance for viewers of the time since the term "pepper of the Indies," as Andrew Dalby clarifies, "was used equally for all *Capsicum* species" (141). Whether through their nominally recognizable genus or a previous recollection of the spice, the piquancy of hot pepper is nonetheless evoked.

In spite of this, it still leaves room for the viewer to construct variable properties of this texture, such as the degree of intensity belonging to the peppers in Eckhout's painting, and therefore assign an individual perception of the objects. To elaborate on this idea, it is necessary to turn to Bruce Smith's work on the material properties of sound during the Early Modern period.

In many ways, Smith's work has become the basis for other studies that address the materiality of aural culture such as Gina Bloom's *Voice in Motion* (2007) and Carla Mazzio's *The Inarticulate Renaissance* (2009). His concepts, in relation to which Bloom sets out the framework for her own book, has incited investigations that "[target] specifically the material conditions involved in the communication of voice in an effort to theorize the relation between voice and agency" (5). In *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England* (1999), Smith begins by establishing that within the acoustic world, notions of interiority and exteriority are not separate but rather overlap:

Heard sounds penetrate the body of the listener. They are out there and in here at the same time. This experience suggests that, from the listener's standpoint, there are two quite distinct ways of attending to sound: one that focuses on the *thereness* of the sound, on the sound-producer; and one that focuses on the *hereness* of the sound, on the physiological and psychological effects of sound on the listener. Both dimensions are present all the time, and we can readily shift focus from one to the other. (7)

Since spatial distinctions collapse in Smith's formulation, the ontological marker for individuals becomes sound. Sound gives the person hearing it and the object/person producing it a presence in the world. Yet, Smith, using the example of process involved in sounding [o:], is quick to add that this sonic interaction does not occur in purely philosophical terms given that it has a veritable material effect on the world:

Sound is a periodic displacement of molecules in the air. Now closer together, now farther apart, the molecules set up a sound wave that takes a certain number of microseconds to complete a cycle. The number of times per second a vibration pattern repeats itself constitutes its frequency. That much is a matter of time. But the wave also takes place in space: the vibration exerts pressure on the air molecules, and the greater that pressure happens to be, the greater the displacement of air molecules. The degree of the molecules' displacement constitutes that sound wave's amplitude...What you are listening to in [o:] is time (frequencies) and space (amplitude). (7-8)

Listening, here, allows these changes, occurring in time and space at the invisible level of frequencies and amplitudes, to become perceptible. Consequently, to listen is to become aware of one's surroundings or, to use the term Smith provides, with the pervading 'ecology of speech'.

Using Barry Truax's theory of soundscapes and anthropologist Steven Feld's idea that individual places are created when they are sensed, Smith claims that sound, which may or may not include speech, can create an environment for its listener (48).⁴⁴ Smith elaborates on his

⁴⁴ Smith explains the work of his predecessors as follows: "Anthropologist Steven Feld Argues for the existential force of hearing in the shaping of cultures...[He proposes that] people dwelling in a particular soundscape know the world in fundamentally different ways from people dwelling in another soundscape. For this state of affairs...Feld has proposed the term 'acoustemology'...By combining Hymes' idea of speech communities with Truax's idea of acoustic communities, and framing them with Feld's idea of acoustemology, we arrive at something like an ecology of speech" (47-8).

proposed ‘ecologies of speech’ using the example of the boisterous, regal fanfare that would have been played during the first performances of the Elizabethan play *Antony and Cleopatra*:

In trumpets, hautboys, and drums the audience gathered in the Globe would have hear, first of all, certain *physical* phenomena: a range of distinct frequencies and intensities, particular patterns of attack and decay. At the same time, they would have heard certain *perceptual* phenomena that are not so easy to calibrate: ‘brightness’ in the trumpet, ‘pointedness’ in the hautboys, ‘dryness’ in the drums. The Messenger’s speech invites the audience, finally, to hear certain *imaginative* phenomena, to hear the sounds *as objects*... What the audience hears...is not just physical properties of sound, nor even psychological effects, but the acoustic equivalent of a visual scene—an ‘aura,’ perhaps. (243).

What Smith suggests is that the act of listening captures the sounds of objects and translates them into images within the listeners mind. In this process, the texture of the sound, fluctuating from “bright” to “pointed” to “dry”, is the nexus that allows the object to form in the audience’s mind. However, the object imagined and the object producing the sound appear to have a one-to-one correspondence with each other so that a trumpet sound can only be perceived to come from a trumpet and no other instrument.

The problem is that texture and its immaterial properties are not always commensurate. Sound can be partially heard and incite an inferred resonance that is not necessarily produced but is still imagined. For example, someone in a room across a hall could be singing but only some of the notes may be intermittently audible to the listener in the opposite room. As the melody travels across the hall and the pair of closed doors, the individual may perceive only a few muffled notes that in fact sound less like singing and more like the hum of ambient noise. What effectively occurs is that a perceived and an inferred sound intersect to produce an ‘object’ in the mind of the listener different to the one making the sound. It demonstrates that the perception of something immaterial is not only a receptive process, but also one that is creative and can account for divergences from the traditional textures assigned to objects. In the case of *Still Life*

with Palm Inflorescence and Basket of Spices, the textures formed by the individual based upon recognizable spices and the way they are imagined to be included in the work could suggest possible qualities for the lesser known objects of the painting.

Another way in which the collection of spices in Eckhout's still life teases the imagination and the senses is through association. The peanuts depicted in the painting (figure 2), as products of the New World which have been familiar to western diet since the first Columbian exchange, are example of this kind of engagement. In his book-length study of the legume and its eventual use as the staple food of slaves, Andrew Smith traces the history of peanuts to their first appearance in South America:

That it was a South American species was concluded when archaeological remains of peanuts turned up in pre-Columbian tombs in Peru...Although no archaeological evidence of peanuts has been uncovered in this area due to its tropical climate, it is in the Guarani region of Paraguay, eastern Bolivia, and central Brazil that the greatest diversity exists within wild varieties of the *Arachis* species. (3-4)

Shelled, opened, or halved, the peanuts featured in *Still Life with Palm Inflorescence and Basket of Spices* evoke the diversity of the nut in the multiple ways it is displayed. But it is through its culinary applications that the legume in Eckhout's painting obtains a further layer of texture:

Portuguese settlers in Brazil readily adopted the peanut. The naturalist Gabriel Soares de Souza, who arrived in Brazil in 1570, was the first to describe in depth the peanut plant, its cultivation, and the Indian custom of using smoke to cure it. He also reported extensively on the peanut's culinary uses. According to Soares, raw peanuts 'have the same taste as raw chick-peas, but they are usually eaten roasted and cooked in the shell, like chestnuts and are very tasty, and toasted outside of the shell they are better'. He also noted that Portuguese women living in Brazil prepared peanuts in a manner similar to that of traditional almond confectionery. Hence, peanuts were 'cut and covered with a sugar mixture as confections' and were candied and hereafter as a replacement for the almond in traditional European recipes. (A. Smith 4)

Depending on whether the viewer considers it to be a food, Eckhout's decision to include the peanut in the painting could incite an association with the possible ways it could be prepared. In which case the sweetness and viscosity of the honey, which would coat the peanut in its

elaborated form, add yet another set of textures to the viewer's interpretation of the painting. But the fact that Eckhout does not depict the peanuts covered in honey leaves it up to the viewer to make any connection with the sweet substance.

Yet, as the cited example of the peanut standing in for the almond has shown, spices can be substituted by one another given their interchangeable textures. This, in essence, can be attributed not only to 'spice' doubling as a perceived quality (hot, sweet) and a physical object, but also to the common traits foodstuffs categorized under this term share with each other regardless of their origin. Typically, Dutch still life paintings feature items such as tableware, fruits, animals, metals, and cloths from disparate locations within a single painted scene, with some objects depicted in a manner that obscures their place of origin.⁴⁵ By including spices such as peppers and hot peppers that were customary of Peru and Mexico respectively while depicting Brazilian crops all in the same spice basket, Eckhout adheres to the genre's tenets of heterogeneity. But in arranging them close to each other within said framing device, he underscores a relationship among them (Dalby 141,148). Alas, the connection amongst species from different regions was strong enough that in the absence of one, another could take its place. In *Sacred Gifts, Profane Pleasures* (2008), Marcy Norton discusses how it was precisely through substitution that the chocolate of New Spain came to be used in the Old World:

Change in the composition of chocolate did take place; there was no radical rupture but, rather, evolutionary and gradual tinkering and modifications. The most famous modification was the addition of sugar. Contrary to the popular view that the Spanish invented the idea of sweetening cacao, native Mexicans and Mayans already sweetened many of their cacao beverages with honey. Sugar can be seen as a substitute for honey, in which the intention is to approximate the taste of the original, not to radically change it...Another arena for Spanish 'invention' was spices. Spanish colonists modified

⁴⁵ For a sustained analysis on the manner in which an object such as Chinese porcelain came to be known as Dutch delftware through "the process of dissemination and adaptation" (48), see Hochstrasser's "*Remapping Dutch Art in Global Perspective*" (2010).

traditional Mesoamerican chocolate by adding or substituting spices esteemed in the Old World—cinnamon, black pepper, anise, rose, and sesame, among others—in place of the native flower spice complex, achiote, and chilli peppers. (168)

Cinnamon, be it from Ceylon, Jamaica, or the Amazon, was used in the Old World whenever the Amerindian recipe called for *mecaxóchitl* or *orajuela*, suggesting that *canela* properties provided an adequate substitution in the chocolate drink. And while it makes chocolate accessible to some foreigners through spices available to them at European markets, both the replacement and the spice it replaces do not cease to be exotic additives from foreign lands. Returning thus to the tacit almonds in Eckhout's still life, interpretations of the painting could recall other objects that, though not featured, share a similar texture with those that are.

Finally, just as Eckhout shapes and textures the New World through the organization of the painting's objects, the same can be said about the viewer's rearrangement of the same materials. When she discusses *Still life with Palm Inflorescence*, Brienen contends that it should be interpreted in conjunction with the rest of Eckhout's still lifes as well as his ethnographic paintings (figures 2-4). For her, there are visible links in the form of leitmotifs that connect these paintings to one another in a "single decorative style":

Despite the four-year period of their creation, the subject matter and formal elements of Eckhout's ethnographic portraits and still lifes demonstrate a connection between these two groups of images. For example, all of these paintings feature a cloudy tropical sky in the background, and repeated pictorial motifs create additional connections. African and Tupi baskets similar to those depicted in the paintings *African Woman and Child* and *Tupinamba Brazilian and Child* are represented in *Still Life with Palm Inflorescence and Basket of Spices*, *Still Life with Watermelons, Pineapple and Other Fruit*, and *Still Life with Calabash, Fruits and Cactus*. These last two paintings include citrus fruits, which are also represented in the basket held by the African woman. A citrus fruit plantation, like what was then on the grounds of Vrijburg, is depicted in the background behind the *Brazilian* woman, and she also stands next to a banana tree. Bananas are the primary subject of *Still Life with Bananas and Guavas*. Similarly, the *Brazilian* man stands in front of a manioc field, with several freshly harvested roots on the ground at his feet. *Still Life with Manioc* isolates these roots and makes them the subject of a painting. A papaya tree grows to the right of the mulatto man as well as in the background behind the African woman, linking these images to the fruits in *Still Life with Pineapple and*

Papaya. Finally, the ripe cashew fruits hanging on the tree behind the mameluca, as well as the passionflower draped over the edge of her basket, are both represented in *Still Life with Watermelons, Pineapple, and Other Fruit*. (176)

These formal groupings begin to reveal an order to the still life series and a meta-narrative for their material objects, which recur in different ways within the ethnographic works. To further buttress her argument, Brienens posits that Eckhout incorporated lighting techniques that speak to a prior knowledge of where and how there were to have been displayed. While some paintings feature “light falling from the right”, as it does in *Still Life with Pineapples and Papayas*, and for others the light source, including *Still Life with Palm Inflorescence and Basket of Spices*, originates from the left, it is Brienens’s contention that these correspond with the lighting of sky in the ethnographic paintings and would have accordingly hung above these (187). Although reading the still lifes in this way creates coherence between the works, between New World objects and subjects, it does not account for any other agency beyond that of the painter. Eckhout may have included an innate blueprint for the order of his works, but the task is left up to others to arrange them and thereby interpret their order. His division of the still lifes into vegetables, fruit, and other food clusters also makes them stand-alone works. Since they are not consigned to a single banquet-scene painting, spread out instead in divisions more akin to the ones found in the taxonomy of natural history, each of the still lifes can thus be moved around: in one arrangement, the spices can be placed next to the watermelons, since the palm inflorescence is included in both, while in another presentation the basket may be next to the monkepot fruit, given their spherical resemblance.

Conversely, some paintings could be acquired separate from the rest. That the owner of a painting can reorganize the way it is displayed hardly seems like a point worth making. But considering that the still lifes were gifts from Maurits to dignitaries such as kings (Brienens 199),

ulterior interpretations and orders that recontextualize the paintings were inevitable once the passed on to other hands. Maurits' own collection of curiosities followed a similar process as he chose the order in which he would display objects that were bequeathed to him by acquaintances. Mariana Françaço demonstrates that the rationale behind Maurits' collection evinces some cardinal points about the practice of assembling nonpareil items:

As soon as he came to Recife, he began laying out the foundations of his new town, Mauritsstad. At the same time, he gathered items collected by the naturalists who accompanied him to the New World, as well as gifts he received from local people. According to Father Manuel Calado, a Portuguese clergyman who had access to Johan Maurits and his entourage, "the Prince liked everyone to come and see his rarities, and he himself delighted in showing and explaining them." Since the Luso-Brazilian inhabitants of Recife and its surroundings knew about the count's taste for things exotic, "each one brought him whatever rare birds or beasts he could find in the back-lands." As a result, "there was not a curious thing in Brazil which he did not have, for the *moradores* sent him these with a good will, since they saw that he was kindly and well-disposed towards them." (107)

Behind the testament of character provided by the cleric, there is a correlation that Françaço underscores between settlement and assemblage. The simultaneous foundation of Mauritsstad and collection of Brazilian curiosities strike a parallel whereupon the space of Recife is moulded into a 'new town' as 'Brazil' and its meaning are also shaped through the items in Maurits' possession. Moreover, hinting at Marcel Mauss' thesis regarding gifts and the establishment of social systems, Françaço cites the extent of Maurits' involvement with the local communities of Recife whose members, noticing his traits as an individual, assisted him in building his collection with contributions of their own. According to the reading offered by Mauss in *The Gift* (1925), an exchange of objects tacitly requires that this gesture be reciprocated in order to complete the interaction. What Mauss considers as a "legal tie" manifests itself to be an engagement that in seventeenth-century Recife appears to be less contractual than the French sociologist claims (12). Instead of maintaining an equilibrium between social groups by using gifts to ingratiate

themselves with their host, Maurits' guests provide the material and in this sense contribute to the order that the Dutch governor assigns to these image of Brazil portrayed in his collection. Françaço suggests through this dynamic that social relationships were amongst the elements that were being simultaneously shaped as Maurits' assembled his collection. In a similar fashion, how the painter therefore arranges diegetic content and the viewer rearranges it allows one to see yet another level in which the same materials can be used in different ways. Just as likely, the viewer can choose not to identify any order at all. At the diegetic level, the materials included in *Still Life with Palm Inflorescence and Basket of Spices* (figure 2) work in some of these ways. Peanuts, like the hot peppers, occupy the bottom of the spice basket in a horizontal arrangement that supports the small, spherical spices above them from falling given their elongated shape. Apart from containing the other spices, the two are organized in a manner that is reminiscent of the closed palm inflorescence below while the open one is reflected in the similarly canted rows of spices in the top portion of the basket. And yet, from afar, they seem to assume an arbitrary combination, with the white and tainted yellow spice halves spread widely among the darker-coloured spices. As a result, the painting can be viewed as an organized array of spices, a cluster, or a combination of both when the relationship among them is considered. Whether featured or evoked through the imagination, the spices of Eckhout's still life nonetheless invite one to draw connections that in turn shape the *idea* of New World spices as well as the material objects themselves.

In light of this, Brienen's theory of a 'single decorative cycle' that binds the order of the paintings stems from the notion that the encounter with the Indies was an event taking place at a specific place and time. Accordingly, she argues that by the time Eckhout was commissioned by Maurits, colonialism was an endeavour left already in the past:

Although one scholar has recently argued that Eckhout's still lifes 'incite us to colonize' Brazil, the promised colonization had already take place. Unlike the first representations of Brazil by Europeans, these were not hastily made drawings; these paintings are correctly called colonial works of art. Their existence and content as created in the 1640s bears witness to over 130 years of contact between Brazil and the West. (195-6)

This opinion of colonialism is limited to treating said phenomenon merely as the moment of 'first contact' and not as a continuous process.⁴⁶ Having taken this stance in her work, it is possible to see why Brienen concludes that Eckhout's works "demonstrate the count's domination (either politically or scientifically) over Brazilian nature" (204). Since the moment of colonization has passed, these paintings, according to her, are merely visual paeans of Maurits' triumph as the governor of colonial Dutch Brazil. To only see them in this manner is to ignore the role of the viewer and painter in the ongoing colonial project or reordering the New World.

To iterate Brusati's argument, dealing with the representation of the 'natural' world does not deter creative engagements with the materials of that realm. Despite its halved spices allegedly opening up the New World down to its minutiae for all to understand, Eckhout's painting leaves most of nature's definition to the viewer who participates in the delineation of its foreign textures (Brienen 193). The artist's arrangement and the viewer's imagination are integral, in this way, to the formation of the New World as such. With *Still Life with Palm Inflorescence and Basket of Spices*, the lack of direct access to the material object provides adequate conditions for this type of engagement to take place. At the same time, the various ways one could approach the arrangement of spices is echoed in the painter's acknowledgement that there were just as many other ways in which the same items were arranged. Even when the material New World is reduced down to its most intimate, dissected form, down to the threshold of what is visible, there remain things left unstated. As a metonymic composition of worlds

⁴⁶ It is a view carrying remnants of Mary Louise Pratt's concept of 'contact zones' in *Imperial Eyes* (1992) that presents a contained model of cultural exchange based mostly on the first moment different peoples encounter each other.

which cannot be completely grasped by western understanding, the painting enacts the limits of both direct and mediated access to the colonies. Yet, as we shall continue to see, this curtailing of efforts to render the New World in its totality once again did not deter projects but instead encouraged colonial enterprises to design worlds that, presented unambiguously as constructions, *could* in fact be managed by their architects as intelligible *versions* of this enigmatic part of the globe.

III. The Taming of the New

The mid seventeenth-century image of a bountiful Brazil as it is detailed on a canvas featuring an array of victuals and garnishes lay in stark contrast with Portugal's unstable empire and economy, yet the fruits of a prosperous epoch that Albert Eckhout depicts in *Still Life with Palm Inflorescence* belong to a particular kind of Brazil. It was not the Brazil of the Lusophone empire for at the time the dissatisfaction harboured by Portuguese subjects towards Spanish rule, which was central in the dissolution of the Iberian Union, had altered the economic landscape of the colonies in Brazil and, as Francisco Consentino notes, forced those involved in these areas to rethink and reorganize their governing systems accordingly:

Para a parte americana da monarquia pluricontinental portuguesa, a Restauração originou attitudes diversas e, algumas vezes dúbias. Para o Rio de Janeiro e São Paulo a separação era desfavorável aos circuitos mercantis desenvoltos com a área espanhola da América...Por outro lado, a crise de Madri e Lisboa podía ser aproveitada “para establecer una relación atlántica más respetuosa con los intereses americanos, algo a lo que por fuerza los gobiernos centrales tuvieron que plegarse”. Iniciou-se com a Restauração de 1640 um período tenso e delicado, no qual a negociação, a torelância e a concessão de mercês pela monarquia bragantina foram a estratégia política geral adotada, visando a e conseguindo manter a conquista americana agregada à monarquia portuguesa. (147)

Although not entirely defined by European affairs, the geopolitics of Brazilian trade responded to the manifestation of these matters in the New World.⁴⁷ The negotiations that ensued between parties in the colonies served to consolidate a system that placed the economic conditions of Brazil at its centre. Dauril Alden's *The Making of an Enterprise* (1996) addresses the crucial role played by Brazil after the events of 1640:

The economy of Portugal remained precarious throughout the 1670s and the 1680s, limiting the fiscal options the crown could exercise to restore either the domestic or imperial economy. There were several efforts to organize commercial companies to revive the eastern empire, but none proved successful. The future of the kingdom was, as John IV had said, dependent upon the economic development of Brazil and its satellite, Angola. But down to the early 1690s, both shared the general depression that afflicted the Atlantic world, reflected in falling values for Brazilian sugars and tobacco, the decline of slave trade, and, in large measure, the cessation of the once-lucrative illicit silver trade between Brazil and the Spanish empire. (120)

Amidst the description of Brazil's commodities as a final resort in the list of attempts to recover economic stability in Portugal, Alden touches upon the potential that merchants in the colonies saw in ulterior avenues of commerce. In the note that Alden makes about the decline even within contraband markets of bullion, the existence of trade between Spanish and Lusophone entities, although one that was also part of the decline mentioned by the historian, suggests the alternatives that were found around the affairs of Iberia and the way these were modified to the specific situations of the colonies in the New World. These reorientations manifest themselves as strategies in world shaping that respond to the opportunities created by turmoil. The practice, however, was not restricted to Iberian representatives in the New World, for as Portuguese

⁴⁷ To understand one area where colonies proceeded in ways that diverged from their European counterparts, see Kathryn Burns' study of legal systems in sixteenth-century Peru titled *Into the Archive* (2010) in which she argues that the enforcement of edicts in places like Cuzco rested on the authority of each mandate, which in turn came in the form of the written word emitted by notaries as figures of "local power" (46). Burns' focus on the adaptive characteristics of seemingly immutable structures like the law illustrates the extent to which a local lens determined the relevance of foreign matters in the New World.

colonies renegotiated the commercial ties in light of those that the events of 1640 had complicated, economic stability seemed to favour another group of settlers.

In contrast to their Iberian counterparts, the Dutch began a successful decade in Brazil under the leadership of John Maurice van Nassau-Siegen. Taking over the role of governor for the Dutch West India Company in 1637, he oversaw the capture of Sergipe del Rei, Ceará and Maranhão within a span of four years from his arrival in Pernambuco. As the number of colonies falling under this fate increased for the Dutch empire, so did their access to regional goods such as the salt of Ceará, with some of these products reaching new commercial milestones:

O negócio do açúcar chegou ao apogeu no chamado período nasoviano, impulsionado pela adoção do “livre comércio”, em 1638, que franqueou a todos os comerciantes holandeses, e não somente aos licenciados da WIC, o direito de negociar com os “portos do norte brasileiro”. O comércio de açúcar branco, por exemplo, atingiu o auge em 1641, quando foram exportadas 14.542 caixas. O tráfico de escravos africanos, por outro lado caminhava para o pico, sobretudo após a conquista holandesa de São Jorge da Mina, em 1637, e de Luanda, em Angola, em 1641. (Vainfas 246)

Leading both land and seaborne trade in the northern part of Brazil, the majority of the human and natural resources circulating in the market of the period were managed by a Dutch system of operation which was extensive both in economic power and the reach of its implementation. Of the available methods through which to convey this Dutch vision for the South American colonies, Eckhout's painting of Brazilian nature serves as a pictorial rendition of colonial authority while providing an examination of the source of this power. Both the basis of Dutch colonization and the effectiveness of the painting in conveying it is located in the way Brazil is arranged and managed. For it is through the organization of the painted New World items that Eckhout argues in favour of the efficiency and improvement of Dutch governance in contrast to the irregular way the Portuguese ruled this land.

Positioning Eckhout's composition amongst concurrent activities in the definition of Brazil's colonial worlds allows for his still life to be read not as an isolated endeavour, but as a commentary on the shaping practices of others. With his work on Brazil, Eckhout submits a painted treatise to be considered along with the proposals of his contemporaries regarding the way a series of worlds could be conceptualized. *Five Words: Critical Semantics in the Age of Shakespeare and Cervantes* (2013) contains a chapter dedicated to "world", the last of these words, in which Roland Greene posits that the significance and frequency of this term throughout Early Modern thinking is connected with attempts to engage rather than struggle with the difficulty of speaking about this concept in the singular tense. The baroque, he details, is where these reassessments are placed at the aesthetic foreground:

The Baroque is artifice's revenge against the humanist habits of mind that domesticated incongruity, disproportion, and anachronism, and its specimens tend to enable readers and viewers to step out of their historical circumstances and participate in "a marvellous theatre of sensations." The oversize utterances, curved forms, and unsubordinated detail of the Baroque represent a liberation of the senses that imagines alternative pasts, presents, and even futures in answer to the gathering regimentation of the real present... In artistic terms, the Baroque wields incommensurability as an aesthetic principle. Against a social background of increasingly ordered knowledge, articulated state power, and stratified class relations, the sensation of the incommensurable is that the elements in a structure might escape from their structuring, might resist resolution into a logic, might prove impossible to measure one against another by a single scale. (*Five* 161)

Situating his claim within the artistic movements of the seventeenth century, Greene discusses the spirit of the times as one of experimentation with unorthodox presentations of the world, the most representative of these being the image of a shared world model. The adjustments made to traditional formulas of the New World in Eckhout's still life work are similarly identifiable in what Greene refers to as the Baroque's "imaginative working out of the problems attending the realization of multiple worlds" (*Five* 163). This realization was merely one part, namely the impetus, of the experiments that took place during the seventeenth century wherein the question

of what was to be or could be done with the knowledge of these worlds resulted in theorizations of divergent forms and models. As Greene goes on to note:

In general, as we know, Baroque artists propose to reorient that realization by capturing infinity within a circumscription, depicting limitless spaces within a frame, movement finally controlled by stasis, or plural worlds within the world. In the literary Baroque, the term *world* is an engine that not only raises provocative questions but mobilizes many representative works of the period” (*Five* 163).

For Greene, the critical application of semantics saw Baroque artists use the concepts associated with a word like “world” and expand upon them. Since these were not neologisms but familiar words, slight adjustments to their conferred meaning altered the images connected to them. In the process, the singular form of a term would turn into a plural, its definition into a revision. What a medium such as literature contributed to this procedure was a dimension in which this experimentation could be enacted and these images represented. Moreover, the “limitless spaces within a frame” transcend a literal understanding of the medium of painting to underscore an allure within the seventeenth century towards platforms which allowed experimentation to be coupled with the demonstration of concepts. The painted image adds to this an element of immediacy through composition, allowing the viewer to behold in the artist’s arrangement of painted items a particular meaning of ‘world’.

Eckhout’s is a work that places the multiplicity of worlds in plain view and the artist’s hand in perspective. The creative assembly of spices within the image display a meticulous approach to the presentation of the items wherein the objects are gathered in accordance to an order established by the painter. Beneath the veneer of verisimilitude, the control exerted upon the subject of the painting by Eckhout is where the craft of a world-shaper emerges alongside that of a painter. One finds in his work what A.J.R. Russell-Wood describes as the perspective that goes unexamined in colonial studies, namely “the global scope and interconnectedness of the

imperial undertaking” (xix). Russell-Wood’s own research on the period of colonial history before the Enlightenment approaches the study of an empire such as that of the Portuguese through a “maritime dimension” in order to avoid any anachronistic “fragmentation” (xix-xx). The idea is that the dimensions of a colonial enterprise extended across several locations and cultures under a single infrastructure instead of being limited to one territory, suggesting that studies of these entities be carried out according to the same rationale. In Eckhout’s painting, the variety of items from across the New World present this coverage in a salient fashion, but the work also brings the mutability of these worlds into focus.

Taken as a whole, the entities classified under the category of New World are a formless mass in the colonial imaginary. What imparts an intelligible structure to them is their arrangement and presentation. In a visual medium like painting, composition is this process. Used on its own, it is capable of directly translating the technique of spatial distribution into order. However, Eckhout utilizes composition in combination with other painterly features. The manner in which the items are arranged in a nondescript setting, for instance, relocates geographical information about them from background cues to the foreground subject (figure 2). These are not products of one particular region, but goods from across the colonies gathered to form a New World as it is imagined under colonial rule. As place recedes into the background, the viewer is left with the bare mechanics of *place making* occupying full stage. The muted plane of the horizon funnels the attention of its viewers to the unimpeded exhibition of the colonial objects, simultaneously transferring the definition of location to an unconventional source. Gathered in Eckhout’s still life painting is a selection of items in an adjacent position to one another despite their provenance. Exotic and artfully arranged, these crops are not ascribed to a single place in the colonies, but to the New World at large. Given that these images are devoid of

any identifiable indoor setting or familiar colonial landscape, the subject at the foreground of Eckhout's painting is nature denuded to its very core. Nature is what organizes the painted objects in coherent fashion as the category of New World 'spices' lends a structure to the collection that viewers behold. It assigns a connection amongst the products that are gathered on the canvas on the basis of their qualities as naturally piquant foodstuffs. While in his portraits of indigenous peoples goods like these are depicted as elements that adorn the background and are interspersed amongst fruits and other victuals, Eckhout's treatment of spices picked and on display as isolated subjects within his still life points to a process of selection and placement of items based on their properties and the form they can lend to the composition, concerns which are shown, through the absence of features that would indicate otherwise, to supersede any considerations of geography beyond a general attribution of these goods to the New World. This reading of the painting steers us away from the image of an artist simply extolling the merits of his patron and patria through a visual encomium and brings us closer to the attention he gives to the mechanics of assembling worlds in light of their plurality.

Within this same light, absences reveal an additional facet about the way worlds are composed. Julie Hochstrasser adds that, of the content represented in still life paintings, not all of the gathered worlds are featured in the same way. Hochstrasser engages with an understanding of painted subjects in an array of seventeenth-century Dutch still life works through an examination of the worlds that are both 'seen and unseen' within them. There are the spoils of the Dutch enterprise that are immediately legible upon a first impression of these paintings, but Hochstrasser also mentions other less-conspicuous worlds that are simultaneously present in the same imagery: "the social costs of exploitation both at home and abroad were conveniently overlooked by society just as they were in elegant compositions of the laid table. Eventually,

though, they took their toll. In one respect the Dutch did indeed recognize the economic and social realities of the costs of pepper: that is why it was so costly” (“Conquest” 185). In the celebratory images of Dutch prosperity Hochstrasser discerns the aspects of the enterprise that have been left out in the form of the subjugated worlds from which these materials have been extracted but which, albeit present in the form of spices from foreign locales, do not feature as prominently in still life representations of luxury. While Hochstrasser’s recognition of these hidden worlds is apportioned to a reading of the genre that approaches “still life painters’ mute assemblages of ready comestibles” in general terms, her interpretation of its iconography allows the art historian to examine the modes with which worlds were contained in manageable units that were actuated at the discretion of the individual in charge of their representation (170). What can therefore be accomplished in the practice of world shaping through composition is not limited to a discussion of paintings nor the painted alone.

The creation, association, substitution, and mixture of textures are some of the ways in which the organization of the New World’s untenable products are rendered accessible in new ways. The plethora of possible textures a viewer can assign to the spices in Eckhout’s still life depend on what the interpreter brings to the painting as well as what she or he chooses to see. It can, in effect, include textures that are inferred or created both by acknowledging what is contained in the painted basket of spices as well as what is associated, but not featured, with these objects. The nature of these Early Modern engagements with the New World’s environment proves to be less about viewing its objects as inaccessible because they are ‘foreign’ and rather as open for definition precisely due to this characteristic.

The other component of this analysis manifests itself in a reading of the painting within stricter boundaries. Just as the painting’s New World objects opens Eckhout’s work up to an

array of interpretations, it also responds to contemporary formulations of the same worlds. Reading the work as part of a dialogue between different proposals for the organization of the New World recasts the items on display. Originating from different colonies, the spices are gathered in a specific order on this single surface that is itself part of a larger series of still life paintings, but it is also part of a larger context in another respect. What is collected through this image is not a variety of natural products but rather the products of variations on nature. Emblemized in the basket overflowing with spices is the yield of distinct colonization efforts across the continent assembled according to an external design. As the product of expansionist labours is reduced to raw materials, the formless heap of New World goods undergoes a process of refinement as the painter manages to salvage a unifying composition between the subjects of the painting and thereby restore a semblance of coherence. The immediate suggestion of this reading is that the rendering of the New World that Eckhout places in contrast to his was one best described as formless. Interpreting the work in this way brings one closer to the dialogue at hand as the still life is understood not to manage and arrange natural products as such, but organize the worlds they epitomize or rather to tame the worlds shaped by others. Consequently, world shaping through this approach involves an engagement with the New World by way of the forms others have assigned to it. This method marks another phase in the practice of world shaping in which geographical contiguity is but one of the sites where this engagement takes place as efforts are redirected towards engaging with collective, and thus broader, representations of worlds across the colonies. Put simply, it marks a shift from engaging with world shaping from a common place, as has been discussed through examples pertaining to the seventeenth-century Amazon, towards interactions that forgo this prerequisite and focus instead on the shaping *of* a common place. The position of the still life painter, therefore, is to take the worlds

conveyed in the depicted goods and impart order amongst these formless items, impart, in other words, an intelligible design to the New World.

IV. Outgrown Models

While the visual taming of nature lays claims about the Dutch making the most out of north-eastern Brazil's material and cultural potential, this prospect was also of interest to Lusophone administrators. A plan was drawn up by a member of the Portuguese enterprise detailing the possibility of relocating worlds to Brazil in a manner that reconstitutes and reduces the idea of 'world' to its essence, to its seeds. Transplantation by means of dissemination would allow spices from the East to be cultivated in Brazil and, in the case of some plants, to be tactically placed in environments conducive to their enhancement. As it was discussed in the context of Eckhout's work, the painting is not about things as they are but rather as they are arranged. The added value of the depicted raw material is their artful placement within the proximity and context of other spices. But where proximity in the painting informs the meaning of the New World as it is conveyed through composition, in the transplantation endeavours of the seventeenth century placing spices closer to each other took on a physical dimension. By relocating non-endemic spices to Brazil, new contiguities were being forged between worlds that would otherwise be separated by geography. It was the conversion of Brazilian soil into a matrix of worlds that gave those who proposed it a means to revisit and reconfigure prevailing notions of 'world'.

Systematic efforts were made during the latter part of the seventeenth century to implement transplantation in Brazil. Mostly undertaken by the Society of Jesus, the attempts had yielded significant results in Maranhão, the northernmost of the two states that constituted Brazil during the aforementioned century, as the initiative had the support of one particularly vocal

member of the Company in the figure of Antonio Vieira who, according to Russell-Wood, coordinated a widespread adoption of the practice:

Banned since the time of Dom Manuel, the initiative for the re-introduction of pepper and cinnamon plants from India into Brazil was taken by the Jesuits. António Vieira, S.J., wrote a memorandum to the king advocating such cultivation. In 1682, cultivation of cinnamon was started in the Quinta do Tanque, the country estate officially known as the Casa suburban de São Cristóvão belonging to the Jesuit College in Bahia, with a cutting and five trees. Success was apparently attributable to elimination by the Jesuits of the scourge of all planters in Brazil, namely ants. The following year ten to twelve pepper plants were also thriving in the Quinta do Tanque garden. In 1688, the king gave a cinnamon tree to the Jesuit father Bettendorff who was returning to the Maranhão. By 1689 the Jesuits in Portuguese America were cultivating numerous cinnamon trees and somewhat fewer pepper shrubs. Cinnamon plants were being transplanted from the Jesuit College in Bahia to the Maranhão in addition to cuttings sent directly from India and Ceylon. (155-6)

The Jesuits had managed to successfully relocate cinnamon from other parts of the globe as well as from other Brazilian colonies. In such case, the specific conditions required for a crop to take were not confined to agronomic considerations but to administrative logistics. Colleges made for ideal locations as it was possible to closely supervise the development of a product like cinnamon within a garden setting. Russell-Wood comments on the counterintuitive decision to carry out the project in this manner by stating, “despite conditions which would have favoured their cultivation in the Recônavo of Bahia, this did not occur, and the only cultivation in Bahia of such plants from India was in the Jesuit Quinta do Tanque” (156). Motivated by practical considerations, the Jesuits worked with agricultural layouts that were already in place within their institution but which were not always conducive to the transplantation of all crops. At times this approach did not produce the results that were anticipated as “the Jesuits were successful in cultivating cinnamon commercially on plantations but were less successful with pepper”, a reality that had those interested in the viability of commercially adopting this model to reconsider their options. To retain the potential investors, official incentives were attached to the

project as “Dom João V tried to encourage the cultivation of such plants in Bahia, the *sertão*, Pernambuco, and in the Maranhão, but apparently apart from the Jesuits there were few takers” (Russell-Wood 156). Despite this royal intercession, transplanting Indian crops in northern Brazil was a difficult enterprise for those who did not have the presence in these parts and the network that missionaries relied upon to participate in such venture. The Society of Jesus could assume the task of cultivating these goods because the aforementioned locations were also the sites of their dioceses, in which case implementing the production of Indian crops in parts of northern Brazil became a natural extension of their other administrative duties.

In terms that were even more tangible, the Amazon itself was discussed as a natural extension writ large. The proximity of its basin to other colonies informed the way extraction of its inland crops was understood to be akin to the harvest of cultivated products. In this sense, Eugenio Piñero indicates that Amazonian cacao had a particular development process accommodated to the intensity of the market within which these products were designated to circulate:

Cacao production in Brazil was different from other regions. There, cacao estates were the exception, as feral (wild) cacao collection was the dominant method. There were attempts at cacao domestication in the Amazon in the 1670s, but these were never on a grand scale. Cultivated cacao gave two harvests per year, while wild cacao yielded only one and it was smaller (29).

Weighing the costs involved in cacao domestication, the tendency was to opt for the method that, while limited to an annual instead of biannual return, resulted in greater profits by removing any labour usually required in the production stages of the crop. Efforts were instead shifted to acquiring and selling what the rainforest would yield. Harvesting the wild cacao that grew in this manner and environment thus became akin to the process of setting out on a reconnaissance

expedition into the Amazon as it required a comparable gathering of people and equipment.

Piñero details the undertaking as follows:

Organization of cacao collection had peculiar characteristics. There were collecting parties (*Tropas*), a pilot (*cabo*), canoes and a warehouse. The collecting parties were composed of between 12 to 24 Amerindians in a canoe under a pilot. The canoes were constructed at an approximate cost of 300,000 reis. This expense absorbed 33 percent of the canoe cacao load value in Belem. There was usually more than one canoe in a *tropa*, with the capacity of 300 to 500 arrobas (of 32 pounds each). The collecting expedition started in December or January, and ended in June or July at the city of Belem, where the cacao was sold. *Tropas* left their bases of operation (a mission station, a river port, or the city of Belem) in a particular season. The party constructed a warehouse midway between their home base and location of the cacao trees. Upon arrival at the site, the *tropa* spent six to eight days harvesting cacao, and then storing it in a warehouse. Upon attainment of their load capacity, they returned to Belem, where the party was paid and dismissed after sale of the load. (29)

The task of prospecting for cacao entailed a preparation of warehouses, equipment, and personnel to venture deeper into the Amazon. Since cultivation did not represent as substantial an expenditure of funds and labour as it did in cases where cacao plantations were administered from their incipient stages, the focus was instead on the acquisition of the commercial product. Upon locating the sites where cacao grew, these points were plotted in relation to a base of operations and satellite warehouses. They were conceptualized, in other words, as an extension of the colony for although cacao was not grown in a controlled setting, it was managed as though it had been. The location of these 'wild' crops would fall within the domain of Belem's boundaries as these were established by the *tropas* who, in the to and fro of their collection stops, would begin and end their journey in the same place. They worked within an area demarcated by the pattern of their movement which connected a colony to its remote 'garden'. By expanding the territory of the colonies into the jungle landscape, this practice highlights the process of merging natural resources into both the commercial and spatial models of the colonies, of building a world design upon what is already 'naturally' there.

On an even grander scale, during the second half of the seventeenth century transplantation was theorized as an opportunity to forgo travel to distant production sites and instead bring these worlds to Brazil. Under the horticultural practices of the Jesuits, transplantation became a method to move worlds by relocating their products to environments under Portuguese jurisdiction. By replicating the production of the East Indies on Brazilian soil, the need to submit to the conditions and perils of importing these goods was no longer an issue for Lusophone authorities. India and Ceylon were the primary locations of interest to undergo this move given their wealth in spices. What heightened the appeal of these worlds over others were the beneficiaries that would be deprived of their accustomed riches once the production of said goods was transplanted to Brazil. The status of Indian spices in colonial trade as staples of Dutch commerce added another level of interest for the Portuguese who sought to stimulate the production of these items within their New World colonies. As Russell-Wood comments about the transplantation of cinnamon to Brazil under Jesuit supervision, “the Society of Jesus was encouraged by the king, who saw in the cultivation of cinnamon in Brazil a means to undercut the revenues which the Dutch derived from their sales of cinnamon from Ceylon” (156). The efforts could be interpreted in this way as an endeavour to move over entire worlds, distinguished for their lucrative resources, onto Portuguese soil where, in contrast to the restrictions they faced otherwise, they could have free access to these products. Making East Indian goods available in Brazil therefore involved a reorientation of geography in which worlds were not fixed to soil, but to products.

V. Closer to Home

Before its testing site was moved to Brazil, transplantation was already envisioned by the Portuguese as a project whose outcome relied significantly on the location of a colony. It was a premise that Russell-Wood claims was tactically explored in West Africa:

There are grounds for believing that – although the sixteenth century was characterized by trading rather than cultivating of spices by the Portuguese – at an early date the Portuguese did conduct experiments into the adaptation of plants to different zones and climates. One such field station could well have been the Cape Verdes, despite their aridity and unstable seasons. Uninhabited prior to settlement by the Portuguese in the 1460s, initially on the largest island of Santiago and then on Fogo, the geographical position of this island group favoured contacts with the Gulf of Guinea, Angola, Brazil, and provisioning of vessels outward and homeward-bound on the India run. (150)

Chosen for its points of access to trade routes and other settlements, the geographical situation of the West African archipelago may not have been favoured for its climate, but this did little to deter interests when it proved favourable to trade. The emphasis falls on the flow of goods and the position of the Cape Verdes along the Indian run that facilitated this process. Strategy, in this way, was as much a defining factor in the selection of a site for transplantation as were other considerations.

Much deliberation goes into the issue of location in Duarte Ribeiro de Macedo's 1676 letter supporting the systematic transplantation of spices to Brazil. The goods in question are principally peppers, cloves, and the aromatic cinnamon grown in Ceylon and the method of importation is simulation. With the aim of finding environments similar to the ones in South Asia in which to cultivate these products, Brazil is featured as Macedo's location of choice as, instead of merely being a conglomerate of colonies, he argues that it has the potential to be a self-sufficient microcosm. Brazil's ability to assume the characteristics of other worlds and accommodate these amongst the ones already found within its extension of landmass becomes a recurring trope in the letter that Macedo writes to the king of Portugal. An ambassador to the

crown in Paris and friend of the like-minded António Vieira, Macedo composes his argument for the adoption of transplantation in Brazil as a worldly account in subject and execution.

Structured as a dialogic text, it features conversations with key political figures, consultation of relevant sources, anecdotal evidence, all forming an assenting polyphony in support of Macedo's arguments. Nevertheless, the last portion of the text is dedicated to addressing readers he expects will be less inclined to embrace the ideas in the letter without first examining their validity. What he anticipates will be of great concern for this audience is the notion of 'world' that he proposes.

As he defines it throughout the essay, the world that Macedo envisions is that of a single colony as the epicentre of production and trade. Yet, in order to turn Brazil into this place, the Portuguese colony would paradoxically have to be viewed as something more than just that. Transplantation, as Russell-Wood observes in his reading of Macedo's letter, would be the catalyst that could transform Brazil from a colony into the centre of operations for the Portuguese and revitalize the empire's relevance in areas such as the spice trade:

There was also the hope that small-holders in Brazil, who had hitherto been satisfied merely with subsistence agriculture (tobacco and manioc), would diversify and expand into the cultivation of oriental plants. If such a policy succeeded, no longer would the Portuguese be but one of several groups (European and oriental) competing in the spice trade as had hitherto been the case. Given the virtually unlimited lands available for cultivation on a plantation scale in Brazil, cheap labour, and a considerably shorter transit time to European markets, such cultivation in Brazil was highly attractive. Finally, such cultivation could make Portugal less dependant on foreign capital and contribute substantially to improving her balance of payments situation vis-à-vis England especially and other countries of northern Europe. (153)

Promoting the diversification of crops, Macedo presents the role of Brazilian landowners as one that entails more than the local supply of provisions. Efforts are made in the text to foment interest in the production of additional products by situating the issue within the context of global trade and presenting its outcome as one that contributes to the termination of the crown's dependence on foreign income. Yet, in rescaling this local matter into a question of sustaining

the colonial system, the question of access returns to the forefront. The prospect of a solution to the empire's state of affairs comes at the expense of importing the seeds necessary to make the project viable. To this extent, Macedo's plan, complete with indications on how to proceed and buttressed with suggestions made by representatives of other empires, dangerously oscillates between a sustainable plan and a costly venture.

Responding to this concern, Macedo demonstrates that not all of the spices had to be brought over. Similar products already growing in Brazil could be sold as an affordable alternative to the market prices set for their South Asian namesakes. This suggestion appears in the dialogue that Macedo describes as taking place at one point with Grotius. In it he narrates the remarks made by the celebrated Dutch jurist advising the author on the potential economic advantage that the colonies of Brazil represented for the Portuguese:

Falamos hum dia nas Colonias do Brazil e depois de confexar o valor com que habiam lançado os Olandezes do Estado apontou deferentes cauzas que nos ajudaram a dar ditozo fim aquela grande obra, huma das quaez fora solicitar a Companhia Ocidental alias a companhia da India, e ocultamente a ruina da companhia ocidental até ultimamente comprar as açoes que pertendião ter contra nôs e ajustar com nos e o a paz. (117)

Targeting the Dutch West India Company according to the plan offered in this dialogue with Grotius is presented as a strategy based on control over the Atlantic market. The way the author considers this to be a feasible operation is if the resources required to dominate the spice market already exist, albeit latently, in the colonies, in which case all that is left in order to trade them is a slight name change.

Macedo thus begins to consider other forms of transplantation where, in addition to an agricultural practice, it becomes a matter of geopolitics. Since the conversation appears as an interpolated sequence in the text, this conclusion that the answer lies in the untapped commodities of Brazil comes about when Macedo returns to the narrated discussion that was

being held with the British ambassador and his nephew wherein coinciding suggestions are made regarding the Portuguese colonies:

Esta porpozição de Grocios despertou em mim o dezejo de saber a razão em que defundava a propozição de El Rey de Inglaterra paresendom que devião ter ambos o mesmo fundamento e que pella mesma razão que Sua Alteza por ser Senhor do Brazil podia destruir os Olandezes, na opinão de El Rey de Inglaterra poderia a companhia occidental destruir a da India por ser Senhora do Brazil e devia ser a cauza oculta porque esta procurava a ruina daquella segundo diria Grocios. (117-v.)

With the aim of removing the Dutch from their position of power in the spice trade, an appeal is made to the crown indicating that the king, as the sovereign of the entire Portuguese empire, has command over the Brazilian resources that would make this possible. Macedo underlines that the value of the crown's involvement towards this objective is also acknowledged by the English whose East India Company, he explains, also struggles against Dutch rule over the seas.

Manifesting the reasoning behind the interest in bringing about the "ruin" of the Dutch, Macedo goes on to consider the advice of his acquaintances by recognizing that the feature on which they all base their counsel is namely Brazil's ability to produce variants of established spices:

Foime facil perguntar a Mixor a razão que sem reparo algum me dixo o mezmo que eu cuidava mas com hum forciximo argumento.
O pau cravo dix e tim forma de canella e cheiro de cravo o que mostra que a terra que o produz poderã facilmente produzir a canella e cravo que dam as melhozes drogas de que os Olandezes tir ão fazenda immensa, se as produzir o Maranhão poderão os Portuguezes com facil cuzto de navegação vendellas em Europa a tal preço que os Olandezes os não posam navegar da India, e percam por consequencia o grande interece que della tiram. (117 v)

Finding support for his own theories in the words of the English ambassador, Macedo refers specifically to the *pau cravo* grown in the Amazon and its close resemblance to the established *cravo* as an indication of the advantageous soil that favours spice production in Brazil. These *drogas do sertão*, approximate in form and texture to the widely traded cloves of South Asia, generate an opportunity to circulate and utilize the resources that are already at the disposal of

the Portuguese as if they were the goods that have proven too costly for the same merchants to acquire. Under this plan, oceanic access would no longer involve perilous journeys to Ceylon but would instead make use of the Atlantic route between Portugal and its colony that, being significantly shorter, represented savings that could undercut the price at which the Dutch were selling their spices in Europe. ‘Transplantation’ in this instance thus takes the form of a plan to relocate the site of production of the spice to Brazil *in concept* as it would be a similar commodity and not the actual clove that, being already ubiquitous in the Amazon, would be passed off as the spice that the Dutch were known to trade. The association was established on the productive capabilities of the Brazilian Amazon in which the prominence of a similar spice demonstrated that the New World could support the production of homologous crops to those of South Asia. It is a case in which what these Amazonian lands promised was held in higher regard than what it presently offered.

The advocacy for transplantation in Brazil that Macedo voices through the personalities in his letter comes at a moment when, historically, attitudes were only beginning to reconsider the merits of this project that fluctuated between public acceptance and prohibition. Beginning in the sixteenth century, royal terms were issued against the importation of Indian spices with the intention of cultivating their seeds in Brazil, an infraction that was seen as detrimental to the development of the Portuguese empire in said eastern hemisphere. The decree is cited by Macedo as proof of an antecedent where royal sanctions interfered with a development that was in full operation across Brazil:

Ha muitos annos que sei se dâ no Brazil pimenta e todas as mais drogas da India como se experimentou no principio do descubrimento e El Rey Dom Manuel por conservar a conquista do Oriente mandou arancar todas as plantas Indiaticas com ley capital que ninquem os continuafe, e a fim se executou ficando somente o finfibre que como he raiz dizem no Brazil se metera pela terra dentro, mas ainda se conserva a prohibiçãõ e se tãmam por perdidas. (122 v)

Leaving only ginger unscathed in the eradication of all transplanted products due to its growth below the earth's surface and out of human sight, those carrying out the law of Dom Manuel undid what had been accomplished on Brazilian soil. The truncated duration of the project is attributed to the disparity between the general recognition of Brazil as an ideal site for transplantation and the opinions of the crown on this matter. Russell-Wood attributes this desperate initiative to an effort focused on maintaining administrative stability throughout its colonies in which, "Considerations which included maintenance of the royal monopoly, apprehension of the challenge presented by a Brazil enriched by cultivating such spices, and of a politico-economic and even religious nature, led to preservation of the *status quo* in crown policy" (152). Having colonies in both eastern and western hemispheres, the gain of one was considered to come at the detriment of the other if orders such as the one issued by Dom Manuel were not issued to preserve the necessary balance between them. Nevertheless, Macedo narrates the precursor to the transplantation he envisions in a manner that grants his project the status of a restoration project. Working with the knowledge of this precedent more than a century later, he has the advantage that the position of the crown towards this enterprise has changed in his favour. What was threatening at one point to the Portuguese empire became a powerful tool at another, for the damage that transplantation would bring about to trade along the Indian run was no longer a concern for Lusophone merchants but it remained so for their rivals. When in the seventeenth century the Portuguese had their claim to the colonies of the east challenged by the Dutch and English, the focus was no longer to build the infrastructure of this region but rather to compete against it. In the wake of the 1656 relinquishment of their colonies to rival forces, at which point the Portuguese were not only excluded from "access to spices, especially cinnamon from Ceylon, but placed these resources in Dutch hands", apprehensions against transplantation

were muted (Russell-Wood 152). The Lusophone world did not include South Asia in the same way it once did and therefore required that discussions regarding the future of its empire reflect this change.

VI. Shape Shifting

The sort of world model described in Macedo's letter is one made up of moveable parts. Macedo, who along with António Vieira is cited by Russell-Wood as a pivotal agent in Portugal's newfound attitude towards transplantation, presents a world shaped in accordance to the empire's objective of "making Portugal independent of Asian sources of spices" by changing Asia from a place to a product (152-3). Not a geographical entity, but merely a denomination for a type of spice, the 'Ceylon' and 'Cochin' that he alludes to are transplantable because they exist apart from the territories that carry their name. They are a texture, a taste, a crop that can be replicated in similar environments. Therefore, when access to the colonies of South Asia is mentioned by Macedo, he applies the concept solely to the obtainment of the material content of these regions. He does not propose that Portugal reclaim South Asia, but simply extract its goods as the purpose of transplantation is precisely aimed at ceasing further voyages to these colonies. Access, then, appears less environmentally determined than it does site-specific. When he provides details regarding how to proceed with surreptitiously acquiring seeds from South Asia for their dissemination in Brazil, Macedo suggests that the cinnamon need not be gleaned from one location: "quando a dificuldade da canella de Ceilam seja invencivel, se pode trazer a das terras vizinhas do Cochim que poderã melhorar e ser tam boa como a de Ceilão nas terras do Maranhão como mais vizinha da linha que Cochim" (122). In the case of Cochin, relocating its cinnamon to Brazil is a matter of moving the site of production west along the equatorial axis. This line, which it shares with the Amazon, assures that the transplantation of Cochin's spices

does not cause it to undergo a brusque change to its accustomed climate. Simultaneously, Macedo underscores the ultimate irrelevance that provenance plays in the issue of transplantation as a product like cinnamon does not have to originate from Ceylon to possess the quality of the latter's spice, but can be conditioned to simulate and even surpass these attributes under the right setting.

Key to Macedo's position is the view that the Amazon's proximity to the equator would make a product like the cinnamon of Cochin, grown in lands further north of this line, superior to those found in Ceylon which is closer to this axis than the former, but not as contiguous to it as the lands of the New World. According to him, the situation of northern Brazil makes it an exceptional site for the replication and improvement of *materia prima* like South Asian spices as well as an invaluable example of the areas in cosmographical thought that remain unexplored. Envisioning a world model not too far from the one purported by early cosmographers, the climate zones reappear in Macedo's text with a variation to their customary function. Instead of demarcating the *oikoumenē* and pre-rendering the sustainability of life in areas across the earth's surface, climatic zones appear as patterns in Macedo's interpretation. His system of measurement, like that of his predecessors, is the equator, with the difference being that the quality of life for a product is understood to improve rather than degenerate the closer it is found to this line. Cumulatively, the areas depicted according to this organization differ on a vertical scale but display commonalities when they are read horizontally or along this central contour. Citing natural history's claim that "todo o que a natureza produz nas terras que corem da linha Equinocial ao Tropico de Cancer produzirão nas terras que correm da linha ao Tropico de Capricornio" as a relevant axiom for his New World project, he illustrates the compatibility

between the spaces along this band through the products that are proliferated within it, but not beyond it:

Confirmo a prova da primeira propozição com hum exemplo que me pareceu indisputavil, a Arvore do Coco he a planta em que a natureza se quiz mostrar mais fecund o que em todas as mais plantas conhecidas, e de que os homens tirão tantis e tam di[v]erszos uzos, se dá, e se cultiva no Oriente em todas as terras que correm da linha ao Tropico de Cancer, mais não se dá, nem se cultiva em nenhuma parta fora do Tropico de Cancer da mesma sorte com as mesmas virtudes, e efeitos se dá e cultiva no Brazil nas terras que correm da linha ao Tropico de Capricornio do Norte que produz a terra no Rio de Janeyro que está vinte e tres graos da parte do Sul, e não se dá nem se cultiva em São Paulo questâ hum grao fora do Tropico de Capricornio. (118v-9)

Such is the exclusivity of the crops that can be grown within this general strip that even within the same Brazilian landmass, a separation of a single degree between Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo makes the latter inhospitable to the coco plant grown the zone of the former. The proposal that “ha outras plantas que se cultivão, e nascem com perfeição entre os Tropicós, e que ainda que nadem fora dos Tropicós degenerão”, suggests the organization of worlds to operate under an order that exceeds geopolitical demarcations alone (119). In the view suggested by Macedo, the implementation of goods in Brazilian environments requires that these lands not be treated as if they were all the same on the sole assumption that they are ruled by one entity, but rather that the climate zone to which each colony belongs be taken into account. On this basis, it is possible for Ceylon and Amazonia to be compatible environments and enable the transplantation of the crops that flourish in one colony to be cultivated in the other while another Portuguese colony like São Paulo to only yield ‘degenerated’ forms of the same goods. It is in this turn towards another mode of organizing worlds that Macedo submits his own revisions to prevailing world models.

The notion directly associated with the diplomat’s proposal is the theory of climate zones that was instrumental to early arguments surrounding the nature of the New World. Using

Albertus Magnus' *De nature loci* (c.1251), which was also used as a starting point for Bartolomé de las Casas' own writings on the New World, Nicolás Wey Gómez finds that the favourable conditions of the equator are expressed in terms of the solar dynamics in these areas. According to Albertus, Gómez writes, crops in the equator undergo decay, but they do so in constant intervals as "the sun passes directly overhead twice a year, once every six months" (274). The symmetrical lapse of time between harvests allows plants to reach complete cycles of production biannually, making the equator an optimal zone of production. Additionally, the periodic intervals of direct sunlight have an effect on the stability of the climate in these areas. As Gómez investigates further into Albertus' views on the matter, he finds that the latter considers the issue of global position to be the cause of the equator's temperate environments:

Albertus reasons that the temperature of any given place is mainly a function of the sun's approach and retreat along the slanted ecliptic to and from the zenith in the sky relative to that place. The sun generates heat as it approaches that zenith and leaves behind cold as it recedes away from it. Since the intermediate point between heat and cold is the temperate, tropical places can also be regarded as (relatively) temperate: the heat cause by the sun's approach to any given zenith within the belt of the tropics is always tempered by the sun's retreat away from that zenith. (275)

Neither cold nor inordinately hot but consistently temperate, the equator's notable feature becomes the predictability of its climate. It is the embodiment of the golden mean in a planetary line. The closer a site is to the centre of this zone, the less it is subject to the unforeseen changes in climate.

With the equator's temperature being regulated by its position in relation to the sun, climate is removed as a detrimental variable in crop production and instead functions as an innocuous setting. In support of his discussion about the ways latitude informed colonial associations that were made regarding the New World, Gómez follows Albertus to his Aristotelian conclusion about life at zero degrees latitude:

According to Albertus, life on the Tropic of Cancer is “laborious and unpleasant,” whereas life on the equator is “continuous and delightful.” He explains that while the sun passes overhead twice a year on the equator, its “ray” does not linger there. The sun also does not return to the equator until it has passed “at least four signs of the zodiac,” meaning at least four months. For these two reasons, the heat caused by the sun’s approach to the equator does not set fire to anything or tend to accumulate over time. In other words, because the ecliptic is slanted and the sun presumably travels at a constant speed around it, the rate at which the sun’s declination changes relative to the equator around the times of the equinoxes is significantly faster than the rate at which the sun approaches either tropic near the times of the solstices. The sun’s rays do not have enough time to scorch the equator, though they do have time to scorch the tropics. In astronomical terms, in the torrid zone the number of days during which a gnomon has no or little shadow at noon is greater for latitudes near the tropics around the times of the solstices than for latitudes near the equator around the times of equinoxes. (277)

Founded on cosmic reasoning, the advantages of the equator were in every sense those of a *locus amoenus* or pleasant place. It was imagined as a place where elements that were normally deterrents existed only in such moderation that the opportunity for these factors to become pernicious did not arise. Sunlight, for example, is not excessive enough to sear the environments of the equator but rather nourishes the crops that grow there. To an extent, it is the temperance of climate, a by-product of the global position of the equator, which creates the ideal conditions for life to flourish rather than fade under the sun.

In accordance with the favourable conditions of the Brazilian equator, Macedo submits his proposal to centralize the production of transplanted and native crops at a site where the climate is controlled but human enterprise is not. His use of the cosmographical partition of zones to discuss the viability of a project does not consign transplantation as it is presented in the missive to exclusively follow this model. Instead, this Renaissance understanding of geography that by the seventeenth-century had accumulated a considerable paratext in the numerous expeditions made to the equator, torrid zones, and different tropics, appears in Macedo’s letter as

a suggested layout of the planet.⁴⁸ In place of a prescriptive approach to climate zones, places were identified for their potential. If geography was mapped according to deficiencies save for one equatorial strip, according to Macedo's interpretation it followed that items such as spices could be improved upon by cultivating them at zero degrees latitude. This outlook, of course, is associated with transplantation's movement of crops which sought better locations for these products in light of the limitations of their native environments. A crop was not circumscribed to its site of origin, but rather existed within a trajectory toward perfection. What enabled South Asian spices to reach this teleological state was their relocation from the Tropic of Cancer to the equator. Coinciding with the understanding of spice cultivation as process that facilitates the natural progression of a crop's development through transplantation is the fact that the best possible location for this undertaking is a Portuguese colony. Items under the control of the Dutch appear now not only within reach for the Portuguese, but available in their most refined form. The idea of a location under colonial jurisdiction that is posited as the centre of production for that commodity is a reorientation that furthermore turns this into the point of access to other worlds.

This concept of a microcosmic Brazil would only work if key portions of the world model it was revising were removed and its scale accordingly adjusted. The idea is expressed in Macedo's work when he describes the transplantation of the spice trade to Brazil as a decision that would eliminate the need to use a route to South Asia. As the tactical transplantation of one production site to another is met with attempts to adequate these in their New World setting, oceanic connections between colonies are rerouted. It is not a matter of cutting out the ocean, as it were, but rather of superimposing the Amazon River as an extension of the maritime corridor.

⁴⁸ Gerard Genette's term is used here in reference to the narrative enterprise that accrued as voyages to new worlds continued, forming a textual component to these travels through this relation and thereby contributing to their legitimacy.

Stretched across the equator, the river courses through the tropical rainforest covering tracts of its inland regions where Macedo proposes to implement the production of South Asian spices. Native crops as well as those produced in the northern coast of Brazil are also placed within reach by this fluvial pathway that serves as a passageway between the commodities of different worlds gathered along this part of the equator. Moving amid the colonies of Brazil to access goods that would usually grow at the other end of the planet is a venture of a different scale. Reaching these transplanted worlds still requires travel along water, but it does not come at the same cost as it does when these waters are under foreign control. Having worlds relocated to a domain where spice production can be better controlled recasts the notion of ‘world’ in a way that demonstrates the possibility of reworking significant aspects of it into an accessible microcosm that gathers variety within a single site.

By re-contextualizing this notion of a world order defined by variations, Duarte Ribeiro de Macedo answers those who, on the very basis of the inherent differences in climate conditions between a spice’s place of origin and those of the target location, may refute his proposal. Macedo notes that, to some, he may appear to be proposing a model in conflict with the common idea of ‘world’, claiming:

[Q]ue Deus deu qualidades a huma terra, e a hum clima diferente do outro para incitar e facilitar o comercio, e a comunicação das Naçoens, e que parece quimera, e vizão querer que todas as terras sejam capazes de todas as produções donde se fegue que as dysperzas, e trabalhos que ham de ceftar estas experiencias serão inuteis. (123)

He begins to clarify the terms of his proposal with the notion of variation which Macedo indicates might appear to have been disregarded in support of transplantation. That crops can be deracinated from their ‘natural’ setting and subsist in another is accredited to a view that, contrary to theological tenets, finds parallels between worlds in distant areas of the globe. The diversity that puts these areas in communication with each other is established on the idea that

one seeks to commercially, diplomatically, or through duress obtain from other regions what it lacks in its own. While Macedo recognizes how transplantation obviates this dynamic, his reply comes less as a defence of his position than it does as an advancement of the worldview he may seem to be ignoring:

A primeira razam respondo que por via de regra a fim he que a Providencia Divina deverificou pelas Nasçoens as produçoens da natureza para que a necessidade que huns tem de outros unisse pello comercio as distancias, e fizerão suciaveis os homens, mas tambem lhe deu industria para suprir em muita parte os defeitos da natureza. (123-v)

Working within the model of a “deficient” and therefore diverse world, Macedo posits transplantation as an endeavour that compensates for what is inherently lacking in the present world order by repositioning crops in different locations according to these shortcomings. Left dormant by allowing nature to be the sole determinant in these matters, Macedo works within the configuration he might be seen to disavow and proposes that another unexamined option exists for this established model to be improved. Through human involvement these latent orders move to the forefront and become fully-realized versions of what a ‘diverse’ world could be.

From the very method of transportation of the seeds, human intervention is presented in Macedo’s letter as a valuable component in the process of transplantation and its reformulation of world orders. In his project, climate differences, while indicating the particularities of an area, also signal that these variations are manifested in degrees. The human agent takes this into account at the level of design. Theirs is the task of devising a suitable trajectory for the transportation and dissemination of crops that adheres to the dynamics of these climate zones. It is in this capacity that Macedo positions his own role as the author of a letter detailing the mode and merits of transplanting spices to Brazil. In the charge of designer, the human element is referred to as the ‘efficient cause’. The Aristotelian term appears in Macedo’s text as he explains the extent to which the climate zones orient the course that must be taken to transport goods

between colonies and the necessity of someone who, heeding to these circumstances, integrates this information into the way the transplantation process is overseen throughout its many stages. Furthermore, the Aristotelian facet of Macedo's writing coincides with the details he provides to his royal confidant regarding the ingenious shipping of oranges in other empires that illustrate the 'efficient cause' in action:

Em França as plantão em caixoes para as retirar da inlemencia do Inverno, ha cazas que tem bem sercadas, e forradas de esteiras com vidrasas para o parte do meyo dia, porque nos dias que ha de sol se lhe comunique por ellas, e eu vi laranjas destas lorangeiras tam perfeitas como as nofas em França. Em Estocolmo Corte de Suecia obra a industria dos homens estas maravilhas.

A onde mas experimentei aquella orden da Providencia he na diferença dos climas, e não nos mesmos climas he na distancia que ha de Norte a Sul, e nam nas distancias que ha del Oriente a Ocidente a onde as cauzas eficientes da produção das plantas tem as mesmas influencias, e a mesma formalidade como fica provado. (123 v.)

The attention he gives to the labours of the French consists of accentuating the options available to make goods virtually resilient to the inclement conditions of these voyages. Within the boxes insulated with cloth and sealed with glass tops to allow for the midday light to reach the oranges, the crops arrive at their destination in a 'perfect' state. The word is used here to describe the state of a commodity that is conserved through this handling practice. Left unguarded, Macedo suggests, the oranges would otherwise perish. To this extent, the storage device secures the movement of goods against deterioration on the way to their new location, yielding products that arrive at their destination untarnished by the voyage, in other words still acclimatized to their source environment, yet are improved variations of the unregulated oranges that would traditionally be delivered at the ports of Europe. Insofar as the efficient cause bridges the movement between the states of matter, Macedo situates the role of an advocate for transplantation in line with the writings of Aristotle. Moreover, the second component of the passage which overtly mentions the concept does so in the context of explaining the lateral

movement the shipment of products from South Asia must follow. Here he plans the direction of the product in an immediate sense, supporting the novel mode of transportation with the best possible route for the relocation. As such, transplantation achieves a definition in Macedo's project that combines both the efficient causes of climate with those of human engineering with the aim of rendering an improved product in an environment other than the one in which it began.

Charting the course of action during the transportation of seeds is one of the many ways humans are proposed to function as conduits facilitating the transplanted product's final cause. That these products are given the opportunity to thrive in their destined environments, the diplomat illustrates, is not left to the auspice of soil and climate alone. As Macedo demonstrates at a meta-fictional level, persuasion is also part of the transplantation process. Guiding his reader to the conclusion that Brazil is peerless as a colony for nurturing South Asian spices is a task requiring just as much deliberation as the strategy involved in shipping the commodities to this site. Thus, when he concludes his example about French practices for importing oranges, Macedo cautions that the goods are robbed of their true potential by virtue of being relocated to the incongruous climates of Europe:

Se Dom Francisco Mascarenhas mandara vir de Goa a Inglaterra a lorangeira que trouxe a Lisboa no mesmo anno se perdera porque passava de trinta e cinco graos a cincoenta, mas trouxe a de trinta e cinco graos a trinta e oito, ainda que era trazida do Oriente a Ocidente, produzio com tanta abundancia nesta parte como naquella. (123 v.)

With the objective of perfecting spice commodities at the foreground of his proposal, Macedo describes the error that would be committed in thinking that 'perfect' in this context is a corollary brought about through the mere act of relocating a product. He states this as a matter of confusion that could arise when considering any point of destination of a crop to be adequate. As he explains in continuation of the instance provided earlier in the text, oranges from Goa

transplanted to England would undergo a significant shift in coordinates from 35 degrees to 50, whereas relocating the same article of trade to Lisbon, situated at 38 degrees, would yield a better crop due to the slight change in global position. And while, in this comparison, bringing the South Asian oranges to Lisbon “produzio com tanta abundancia nesta parte como naquella”, the volume of production does not reflect the quality of the product. For the latter to be achieved, there is a more appropriate environment to be found for Macedo in the northern part of Brazil. In his capacity as the designer of this proposal, Macedo emphasizes the characteristics of the Portuguese colony above all others as the site where transplantation would yield the greatest results. Persuading his audience to adopt the same view involves dissuading the Crown from choosing any target location other than northern Brazil as well as any source other than South Asia from which to procure the spices. In this sense, he contributes to the process of perfecting the transplanted crops by assuring that the climatic relation between these two areas, which makes said process viable, is observed. Human involvement thus extends to the application of intangible areas such as rhetoric to the modification of New World models in tangible ways.

VII. Spatial Oddities

While the human element receives attention from Macedo as an integral part of transplantation’s operation, additional subjects emerge as equally relevant agents upon examining the effects of this process. With the wave of changes that foreign cultigens incurred in the New World, colonialism takes on a new biological front and transplantation a new social dimension. The presence of imported crops in colonies like Brazil has been studied by Alfred Crosby for the parallels it shares with other forms of cultural impositions. Crosby’s approach to the interaction between non-native and autochthonous cultures in *The Columbian Exchange* (1972) addresses to the matter as one of biocolonialism. Crops, livestock, and products that were

introduced into places such as the Spanish and Portuguese colonies from the last decade of the fifteenth century onwards remained as the quintessential example of a malignant interaction between disparate environs. Yet, egregious differences in climates created adverse conditions for the implementation of these foreign products. Regarding this process of acclimatization that was launched in response to this discrepancy, Crosby notes:

Not only did Iberia develop men fit for life on the American steppes, but also animals for these new grasslands...Spanish cattle were even more adaptable. Fast, lean, and armed with long horns, the Spanish cow makes a poor showing at the stockyards today, but in her heyday she made an excellent showing in a variety of climates and against a variety of carnivores from the cougars of upper Missouri River to the anacondas of the Paraguay River. (86-7)

For Crosby, the presence of non-autochthonous life forms in New World environments did not go unchallenged. Far from being a haphazard placement of products and livestock, the enterprise required that the climactic and geographical tolerance of the relocated subjects be observed when considering what to introduce into these terrains. Such considerations resulted in a project that did not relocate cattle, but instead raised them within these environments so as to best prepare them for its trials. As Crosby notes using the example of sixteenth-century New Spain,

Cattle were first brought to Mexico for breeding purposes in 1521. So few were they at first that their slaughter was forbidden, but within a decade there were scores of cattle ranches...As the European population of Mexico built up and began to spread north, ranching went along with it. The penetration of Spanish cattle into the rich grass country of northern Mexico in the sixteenth century set off one of the most biologically extravagant events of that biologically amazing century. In 1579 it was stated that some ranches in the north had 150,000 head of cattle and that 20,000 was considered a small herd...At the end of that century Samuel de Champlain, on a tour of Mexico for the French king, wrote with awe of the 'great, level plains, stretching endlessly and everywhere covered with an infinite number of cattle'...Wild cattle roamed freely in inestimable quantities far beyond the colonist's horizons. When the Spanish began a serious attempt to settle in southern Texas in the early eighteenth century, they discovered the wild cattle were there before them. (87-8)

Crosby demonstrates here that changes were hardly one-sided. As cattle were habituated to New Spain's surroundings, they were not only free to reproduce but also to wander. The noticeable

scale in which they populated the colony's northern lands attests to the way livestock thrived in both settled and uninhabited areas. Modifying the species so that it may succeed in New Spain effectively expanded their roaming grounds, which meant lands further off were now within reach and subject to the changes the presence of livestock often brought.

One of these changes, noted above by Crosby, is that areas of the New World were not only occupied by human populations but also by animals and other species of plants. Though rarely spoken of in this way, these, too, were colonial inhabitants. The tendency is to focus almost exclusively on foreign presence as being human, but Crosby explains that other organisms were very much a part of the world shaping process. Through the example of New Spain's sixteenth-century breed of cattle that took hold of areas unbeknownst to settlers he illustrates how biomes were altered by these wild livestock as well as the presence of colonists. Because these were a species bred in one area of the colony but proliferated throughout its lands, the interaction can be seen as intercolonial to the extent that the crossing of worlds ensued with the movement of life from one area of a colony to another. It calls to mind Macedo's proposal to perfect items from South Asia by placing them in a new setting and trade these offshoots as a superior version of the spice. One of the differences between these two instances is that in the diplomat's letter the environment of northern Brazil is not mentioned as a place to inure imported seeds to the challenges of its landscape, but rather as a location to relocate the spices like cinnamon to what a favourable climate suggests is the place where they belong. Completing the course of nature in this manner effectively transforms colonies from isolated territories into sites of transition on the path to improving a product. In this way, transplantation was put forward as a mode of resurfacing these tacit connections between colonial worlds and their content. The emphasis on geographical and climatic similitude maintained that there were

commonalities between these spaces already in place and that the only effort remaining would be to configure the globe in a way that these worlds could come into closer proximity of each other and thus culminate an integrated natural system of production.

VIII. A World Amongst Worlds

Proposals in favour of transplantation were recognized for the opportunity that they presented to defy the hold that the Dutch had over colonial trade by doing away with their system of operation and opting to recast the official world model differently. If it was necessary to confront or go through the Dutch to access the spices of Ceylon, bringing its cinnamon to Brazil made such voyage and ordeal redundant. In part a response to the infringements of rivals in commercial and geographic territories as well as a solution to the logistic inconveniences of moving commodities across a sizeable empire, creative efforts were made to circumvent established models of colonial worlds. The rhetoric surrounding transplantation was that, if executed properly, these products could be improved versions over those circulating through Dutch commerce. Rearranging the material order of the New World, Eckhout's still life painting of colonial Brazil used a visual medium to explore the possibilities available for imagining these worlds in other ways. Amidst these alterations, improvement was understood in terms of the changes that could be made to nature as it had been traditionally handled and defined. When applied to colonial Brazil, improvement became a value judgement that equated the engineered transplantation efforts of the Portuguese and the arrangement of the New World portrayed on canvas by the Dutch with a refinement over the efforts of their counterparts working in or on these same worlds; shaping, in effect, the way others shaped nature.

Transplantation, in the way it was presented during the seventeenth century, and Dutch still life painting, in the way it represented the content of Brazil, are projects that extended world

shaping to a reactive process. Aware of the ongoing formulations surrounding the definition of the Amazon, each proposition advocating a particular form by which to understand the potential of its lands advanced the supporter's argument by commenting on the way others were undertaking the same task. Between administrative tensions and the effort to improve upon the chasms they identified in the work of their contemporaries, worlds were being shaped in anything but isolation. In the final chapter of this investigation, it will become as important to understand which *others* these other worlds belonged to in order to comprehend the type of reactions this reactive process of world shaping provoked.



Figure 2

Albert Eckhout. *Still Life with Palm Inflorescence and Basket of Spices*, c.1640, oil on canvas. Nationalmuseet, Copenhagen.



Figure 3

Albert Eckhout. *Tupinamba / Brazilian Woman and Child*, 1641, oil on canvas. Nationalmuseet, Copenhagen.



Figure 4

Albert Eckhout. *African Woman and Child*, 1641, oil on canvas. Nationalmuseet, Copenhagen.

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Chapter 4: An Awkward Fit

Let us begin by considering for a moment a rendition of the Amazon as a “water world”:

O Rio-Mar, the River Sea, was one of the early Portuguese names for the Amazon, greatest of all rivers on the surface of the globe, with a length, including windings, of nearly four thousand miles. The mouth of this delta measures nearly two hundred miles from shore to shore, and the river is navigable for large liners as far as the confluence of the Marañon and the Ucayale. Nearly all the Amazon's tributaries are navigable to a great distance from the main stream, and the region affords an extent of water communication unequalled in any other part of the world. From July to December, wind and current are usually opposed to each other, so that in days of sail a vessel could make her way up or down the river by utilizing either the one element of the other. The influence of the tides is felt four hundred miles above the mouth of the Amazon, and the river current is distinctly perceptible for more than two hundred miles out at sea. For most of its length the river and its affluents are bordered by tropical rain forests for a depth of many miles, but clearings of low grassy plains and of mud banks are not infrequent...

There are no violent oscillations of temperature in the Amazon region such as occur frequently in other parts of Brazil, in Minas Gerais and São Paulo for example. Almost the only difference of temperature is that between day and night, the latter being always agreeable. The so-called summer is the season when the flood waters recede, the winter being when they drown the surrounding countryside to an extent which gives the river-sea the appearance of an ocean. In such a watery environment fish formed the basic diet of Amerindians, missionaries, and colonists. The river is singularly rich in edible fish, some of the larger varieties of which are comparable in weight with a pig. This fish diet was supplemented to a greater or lesser extent with manioc flour, and with the products of the chase and the fruits of the forest. A man-made product which soon became indispensable to masters and slaves alike was the regional *cauim*, or sugar-cane brandy, which even the missionaries soon came to regard as a necessity rather than a luxury.

Roads there were none in this water world, and canoes were the universal means of transportation. (271-2)

Its geographical contours were defined by it. Its settlement patterns as well as the mode of travel and native diet were not exempt from it either. In this description, water permeated every

dimension of life in the colonial Amazon. I have ceded my opening statements, aware of any inherent anachronisms, to Charles Boxer's account in *The Golden Age of Brazil* (1969) for the depiction of seventeenth-century Amazonia wherein the elemental pivot of this stretch of rainforest is its water. *Rio-Mar*, to be precise, is the image that embodies these turns and contortions of the Amazon River and its tributaries into any shape desired by its handlers as it conveys the manner in which these waters double as both river and ocean. Their expanse is a considerable feature of both fluvial and maritime systems, with the first being of a significant length and the latter noted for its spacious width, both lending a sense of great mobility to the *rio-mar* construct. The conceit, although phrased in Boxer's customarily laconic prose, is hardly of his own invention as his words serve more to identify and elaborate on a trope that has been continuously invoked in colonial texts to give the Amazon a characteristic nuance amongst other bodies of water. This quality which the *rio-mar* image conjures is the pliant spatial design of the Amazon's colonial worlds. We have seen aspects of this in Cristóbal de Acuña's writing and we shall continue to examine it in this chapter with the work of those who experienced its inland manifestations.

But where the dynamics of world shaping through water will be immediately patent is in the complications a system using such a volatile substance so intricately can present for expansionists plans or strategies designed for progressive, long-term developments of stationary settlements. This chapter will study those writings that not only attempt to address the ways water manifests itself in the variety of life found within the Amazon but which also make efforts to incorporate these elements into colonial designs of the tropical rainforest. The difficulties faced when adjusting to the complexities of the Amazon's riverine spaces, as expressed in accounts related to establishment and management of missionary *aldeas* inland, will allow us to

follow the drastic reformulations that had to be made to worldviews in the course of these developments.⁴⁹ Worrisome still for writers are the opportunities that water affords to those intent on bringing this disruption about deliberately. For it is here, in this capacity to unmake worlds, that we, along with chroniclers of the time, begin to observe colonial engagements involving another process and indeed other participants in the shaping of worlds.

I. There Must be Something in the Water

In the spirit of water's ebb and flow, we will now progress in our study by going back. We return to the contours of the Amazon within the representative plans of the second chapter, but attentive to the competing renditions of the New World examined in the third, to ask about the Amerindians. Where are they? More importantly, what did they have to say about all of this? In the Spanish Jesuit's chronicle they are a rhetorical solution, figuring in his geopolitical design only to give Amazonia what he envisions to be the figure most in line with his private cause. They are there, but we encounter them as part of the topographical contours of the tropical rainforest. They are heard, but mainly through the words of the chronicler who interprets their political vocation for readers. Blended into the landscape is the human form of the Amerindians that collectively give the worlds of the Amazon their shape. However, there is yet another way in which they partake in this very process. To see it, we, too, will use the same contour of

⁴⁹ Perhaps contrary to what a focus on narratives dedicated to impediments may initially suggest, the plot that this chapter follows is one of resilience rather than decline. Both foreigners and natives to the Amazon are presented to be actively engaging with its vicissitudes and finding ways of integrating challenges into their manner of engaging with its spaces. As David Cahill conveys using the example of colonial Incan society, and other writers express throughout the book *Questioning Collapse* (2010), societies continued to function even under and many times through the duress of colonial conditions. This is held to be true of the Spanish who made use of the Incan network of communication, which pre-dated the Incas and was used by pre-Columbian societies such as the Moche and Chimu, to connect the different regions of the Andean empire for the purposes of conquest in spite of linguistic and cultural discrepancies (Cahill 217). The circumvention of impediments depicts an encounter with the New World that adjusts to toils rather than succumbing to them. This, as mentioned above and as we shall see, was a practice that was not limited merely to newcomers but extended to a mode of life in Amazonia.

indigenous bodies along the shores of the Amazon River, only we will be reassessing these subjects impressed into the background to inquire about the kinds of impressions they made.

Continuing with the same spirit mentioned above, we turn to a second written experience of the now-familiar set of seventeenth-century Amazonian voyages in order to study other forms in which the rainforest's shape was rendered. This time, our view into the life of this tropical area comes from a Portuguese source. Until now, we have followed the story from the purview of the Spanish, engaging primarily with the way their Jesuit delegate saw this world. Yet, stored in Lisbon's Biblioteca da Ajuda, there is a document by the navigator Pedro Teixeira, written in Castilian, which recounts the expedition that took the Spanish authorities of Quito by surprise and launched Acuña's escort mission. Like Acuña, the navigator was tasked with exploring the way Franciscan missionaries had made their way across the Amazon from one end of the continent to the other. Like Acuña as well, he produced a document consisting of notes on the features of the Amazon that were of interest to the authorities involved in expansionist projects in Brazil. Yet, Teixeira's eight-page text succinctly examines an element that is not stressed as intensely in the account of his Jesuit counterpart despite the latter's geopolitical focus. While Teixeira's 1639 letter is defined by its attention to details concerning the military potential of Amazonia, a focus shared with Acuña's account, it presents these options through a discussion of the land in reference to rather than separate from the water.⁵⁰ River banks become "lindas playas para fortalezas y defensa de el rrio" while surrounding rocks and minerals serve as the construction material for these fluvial projects (6). The enclosed environment that makes parts of

⁵⁰ Teixeira's experience has received an extensive study in the form of the Foucauldian analysis of power that informs Sarasvati de Araujo Bacellar's thesis "Surrounding Amazonia: The 1637-39 Teixeira Expedition, Knowledge and Representation" (2012). In it Sarasvati demonstrates the way sanctioned voyages into the South American lowlands were instrumental to the propagation and expansion of colonial projects as the communities that were encountered en route, by virtue of being inscribed in written accounts, fell under and were mapped within this epistemological grid. Travel, Sarasvati argues, was an extension of the colonial arm and the navigator's document of the continental inland functions to demonstrate how long and tenacious was its reach.

the Amazon viable as formidable strongholds connotes a system in which these advantages are outcomes of a natural order. The idea suggested is that with water having carved opportune forms in the land and materials being readily available at these sites, the ‘defensa de el rrio’ is a feat that is realizable through the opportunities and tools that the river itself provides. In this environment, therefore, water is not only a creative force but one which also facilitates human involvement in the definition of its surrounding topography. As he makes his way through the Amazon, Teixeira observes its water to consist of a series of ordered worlds. Whereas Acuña referred to the Amazon River in his chronicles as a setting in which one could find valuable allies, Teixeira is not prepared to overlook the presence of the river as easily. The impression the latter gives is that what he was stumbling upon en route to Quito were worlds where water was integrated in the way local communities carried out their lives. Mention of human activity follows the comments on the strategic value of the river, whereupon Teixeira makes note of the site, with its “lindos puestos pegadito a tierra”, in relation to the location of community settlements, stating “aunque esto es despoblado sobre el agua de una parte, e otra, luego zercano, es el gentio, tanto como en las de mas partes” (6). Humans are not far from the locations that Teixeira records in his letter, a proximity conveyed in this case by the way the writer’s attention moves from the solitude of the featured shore to the water and eventually to the extensive population on the other bank which, he notes, follows the pattern of large settlement sizes encountered elsewhere along the river. Water, land formation, and people are indeed part of the same order in the navigator’s account and, as the final part of the citation expresses, in this way the connections provide a key to understanding Amazonia as a whole.

On his voyage from Belém to the Spanish colony on the west, Teixeira’s objective was to execute the orders of Jacome Raimundo de Noronha, then governor of Pará, and extend the

Portuguese presence in Amazonia further inland than it had previously been established. While not unlike the instructions that would later be given to Acuña by Spanish authorities, a critical distinction between the two voyages is the timeliness of each departure. Launched before the dissolution of the Iberian union, Teixeira's enterprise has been viewed as part of a wider strategy to restore Portuguese autonomy from Spain. The activities in Amazonia took place within the context of a broader stimulus for change that was circulating throughout the colonies with news from Iberian manifestations of a separatist attitude. Recognizing the role of the New World in questions of empire to be of great import, Portuguese incursions into the Amazon were launched as key advancements towards this cause on a separate, but no less significant, front. It was an initiative rather than the defence strategy that Acuña's voyage became. In contrast to maintaining imperial stability, the Portuguese voyage upstream was an expedition that set out to claim advantageous land. Yet, Teixeira, who was assigned to lead this venture, addresses his letter to Alonso Peres de Salazar, the president of the *Audiencia de Quito* at the time. In a move that seems to go against the surreptitious advancement of the Portuguese to annex the western areas of the Amazon, the letter explains, albeit in redacted form, the exploits of the journey. Julio Cezar de Faria states that it was precisely because the Portuguese had not yet separated from the Spanish crown that the latter did not dwell on the efforts made by the lusophone colonists of eastern Brazil as detrimental but rather propitious to the Iberian empire as "qualquer acréscimo ao domínio territorial português somente podia ser proveitoso à soberania espanhola" (15).⁵¹ The type of communication between Teixeira and his Spanish addressee presents an oscillation

⁵¹ Faria later adds that this interaction between Teixeira and the Spanish figure led not only to the support of the expedition from the viceroy of Peru, but also to the inclusion of the navigator on Acuña's voyage: "é mister não esquecer que, recebendo Pedro Teixeira do vice-Rei do Perú os auxílios de que carecia por prosseguir na expedição, dito vice-Rei não só lhe determinou o regresso imediato para Belem, como recomendou se incorporassem à expedição duas pessoas ilustradas com a incumbência de levarem a el-Rei de Espanha todas as informações conexas com o descobrimento" (15). To the extent that a liaison existed between Teixeira and Quito, the representative of the Spanish Crown was able to launch Acuña's expedition under the pretense of a benefactor.

between what is divulged and what is held back in the way the Amazon is featured in the letter.⁵² It is in this capacity to reveal only what is necessary about Amazonia that Teixeira is thought to have excelled.

The way water is used in Teixeira's particular account of the voyage to describe the worlds that formed around a riverine system opens the narration of the seventeenth-century Amazon to an engagement between inhabitants and their surroundings. It begins with noticing that much of the information about local non-European communities is intertwined in his letter with observations about the land on which they reside and how it is integrated into daily practices. Of course, Teixeira quickly notices that what he hopes to learn about the landscape does not coincide with the knowledge and uses that local inhabitants have found in it. He narrates this realization stating that, in the inland of Curupá,

haze desaguadero, el gran rrio de Parnayva, que corre al surtendra de ancho tres quartos de legua, Lindas águas, y mejores tierras, de una parte y de otra mui lleno de Indios corpulentos, las caras riscadas y tan menudo que le queda la cara toda tan denegrada que tiene por nombre seruna que quiere dizer voca negra, as gente tan valerosa que quando salen en sus canoas, a guerra traen las mujeres consigo, y tan confiadas en ellas que pelean los maridos, y ellas ilan sus algodones conversando unas con otras no ai ninguno que de relazi3n de el nazimiento deste rrio, sino que viene de mucha tierra âdentro. (5v)

That the source of the river is to be found in the inland is the only information that the people of Curupá are able to communicate with confidence. Their concern for the hydrography of the Amazon does not appear in Teixeira's letter to extend beyond the areas of the Parnaíba that they encounter in their daily life. Rather than chorographical limits, the immediacy of this knowledge

⁵² Those elements that are withheld are explained diplomatically to be irrelevant to the letter. Especially where measurements are involved, the pretext for their omission from the text is claimed to be in the service of removing digressions in the account given to the President of the *Audiencia*: "La cantidad de Leguas, no declare, ni las combenienzas de las Maquinas de los rrios que entran en el gran Marañ3n por quanto tengo dho no tome en Memoria sus Rumbos ni alturas, porquanto el piloto maior lo hizo y de éso darâ relazion él suso dho" (7v). Bento da Costa, the *pilôto-mor* whose *roteiro* –found in Candido Melo-Leitão's edition of Alonso de Rojas' account– is a supplementary document to Teixeira's letter, is designated as the functionary of the voyage responsible for providing such numerical data in a separate account. In the interest of a coherent narrative, or rather under this pretext, Teixeira establishes a limit to the information that his letter reveals and, as the primary observer, positions himself as the arbiter of the details that suffice for the story to maintain its credibility as a complete account.

indicates a spatial boundary to the world of the Curupá which is constructed around this land of “Lindas águas, y mejores tierras”. It is a domain revolving around the blend of water and land that the river brings together. Among the quasi-ethnographic notes Teixeira has gathered, his attention is primarily to the gendered distribution of tasks that life within this world involves wherein men embark on canoes towards war while women remain adrift spinning cotton into yarn. While the author of the letter uses this observation to exemplify the conviction the women have in the victory of the men, it also underscores the way travel on water serves as a social common ground for the people of Curupá. Women converse with each other as they wait, weaving a social community while heeding to the exigencies of their craft. At the same time, men disembark from the canoes and together venture inland as a martial unit. The river’s adhesion of a community across and within genders in effect situate it at the centre of Curupá life as it is portrayed in Teixeira’s letter. The tasks of each group, though divided, involve the body of water in some way, either as a conduit or a destination for encounters.

However, the shape water confers upon the Amazon in Teixeira’s text relies on another substance. The mixture of soil and water is a combination that the author finds in the Amazon as the source of life. Sites consisting of both components stand out in the letter as locations in which productivity is considerably greater than the activity in other regions. The contrast is accentuated in the narrative after Teixeira leaves the company of the Omagua, “gente mui carnizera” and “tan grandes comedores” whose land is established solely as a feeding ground of unbridled consumption, and journeys towards the Napo River where a starker change of scenery could not exist (7). Here he is surrounded by a topology of water and land that is, amongst many things, fertile:

Dejando estos pueblos, hasta el rrio napo én los quijos, es todo él rio despoblado a vera mar, mas tierra adentro, no ây tierra despoblada ni en todo rrio, ây âtrebome, âfirmar, no

tiene quanta la gente que âi. La fertilidad de este rrio es Increhible porque tiene muchos pescados de diferentes suertes, muchas carnes del Monte muchísima yuca y mas muchísimas frutas de castas diferentes, gran numero de tortugas, Maderas én gran numero de diversas suertes ây muchísimos rrios, que bajan al gran rrio, assi de una parte, como da otra en ellos entra el gran rrio de Tunguragua, y otro curaray de los quales aquí ây noticia én todo el rrio, gran numero de casos de dos o tres castas, âi también mucha cantidad de algodónes que hacen los Moradores sus camisetas y mantas de que se sirven. Todo este gran rrio es navegable y pueden llegar emvarcaciones grandes hasta el rrio del oro, partinedose del Curupa, con las mensiones, que empiezan por el S^an Juan y con ellas se pueden rromper las corrientes, y de âi para aca no se puede Navegar, si no a rremo, por falta de los Vientos, que empiezan âlli a ser contrarios, que es fondo, hasta Napo ây mucho. Ay dentro deste rrio mas de treinta mil Islas, y muchas dellas, pobladas, y mui grandes, âi tanto numero de Leguas, por las muchas bueltas, que haze, y tan grande que por vezes, llegamos â sinco y seis grados âl sul y muchos deseamos a la yquinocial. (7-v)

From a passage observing the ways the rainforest is stripped of life and its people consumed to one where communities flourish, Teixeira's transition is charted in terms of the sustainability of life.⁵³ Critical to this distinction is the blend of *terra firma* and waterways that Teixeira does not find in the Omagua settlements whose location he describes as "estando en el medio, un gran rrio que llaman de las Barreras" (7). Surrounded by water and presented through a rhetoric of danger, the truculent Omagua embody the characteristics of their sectioned backdrop in a recognizable contrast with the environments found near the Napo River. 'Beira mar' or near to the water the density of life is low in Teixeira's description of said river, yet as one travels inland, distancing oneself from the landscape that defines the Omagua surroundings, a bountiful realm is revealed. The 'incredible' fertility of this region consists of game and other edible provisions, consumable

⁵³ As with most tropes regarding Amazonia, the topic of a fertile stretch covering the South American continent would reappear centuries later as a limitation in the development of its cultures as these would essentially be seen to simply be living in rather than shaping these lush environments. Hugh Raffles and Antoinette WinklerPrins explain in "Further Reflections on Amazonian Environmental History" (2003) that this concept of overabundance is often coupled with that of dearth as if to indicate the ways in which both environmental situations render the individual to be at the mercy of their natural surroundings, for the image of a fertile earth corresponds "to the cultural ecological narratives of the twentieth century that describe the apparently identical social effects of a rather different environment, one now seen as a harsh setting of nutrient-poor soils and inadequate protein. This is a long and stubborn genealogy in which influential scientific and popular narratives construct native Amazonians as both close to and subordinate to nature, and explicitly represent the region as a space of nature, rather than of society" (168). Of note is the attribution of this elision of human activity to scientific and popular narratives as this chapter sustains a different approach to these fecund environments and the ways their appearance in these narratives can serve to read indigenous agency.

vegetation, fruits and plenty of rivers. Teixeira depicts an environment that is not only adequate for the subsistence of a variety of life but also one that is also functionally diverse. Consumable goods are not limited to a single source of nourishment as the local land and waters of the area contain different plants and edible species of aquatic life. The agriculture of manioc, a dietary staple throughout many areas and eras of the Amazon, is shown to also be suited to the Napo River's ecosystem and offer another source of food for its inhabitants. Yet, Teixeira's description does not linger merely on the benefits of the land as a consumable source but also as a site of productivity. The most advantageous of aspects offered by the Napo River is the mixture of land and water. Concluding Teixeira's list of items in support of the inland's fecundity, mention is made of the many rivers that traverse through the Amazonian interior and which have sculpted islands along their course. These archipelagos of the tropical rainforest embody a place where neither water nor firm ground is exclusively in excess, but rather both are equally prevalent components of the environment. In this land of plenitude, where the volume of products requires a classificatory caste system, the embarrassment of goods is suggested to have its origins in the different surfaces that give the region its form and function.⁵⁴ The high-yielding mixture of soil and water that define this system also render products that accentuate the singular nature of the

⁵⁴ John Hemming's discussion of the Teixeira's return to the lower Amazon along with Acuña also emphasizes the organization of local life around interactions with land and water:

Not only was the Amazon full of fish, but the forests on its shores also contained all the usual game: tapirs, deer, peccaries, monkeys, coatis, armadillos and every sort of game bird. Whenever Teixeira's expedition camped for the night, its weary Indian rowers cleared the undergrowth and made fires...

Every Omagua kept at least a couple of canoes for his family, and he did not even have to enter the forest to cut trees to make them. He would wait for a suitable tree, preferably a cedar, to come drifting down from the forests of Peru, lassoed it as it passed, and towed it ashore. When the river fell and the log lay stranded, he would slowly carve his dugout with stone and turtle shell tools. The river Indians moved everywhere by water, 'like Venetians or Mexicans'. Other tribes used light Bark Canoes so that they could escape enemies by paddling into the shallows and carrying their canoes into tributary lakes. (233)

The appellation "river Indians" is used by Hemming to describe a people who not only reside near a fluvial channel, but who also have intimate knowledge of it. This is demonstrated to consist of an ability to find ways of using rivers in both dry and wet seasons, such as the Omagua are shown to do through their logging practices as well as other groups who build canoes that use shallow waters as a strategic advantage for warfare. Mobility across land and water in Amazonian communities is therefore shown to be a feature that displays a skilled understanding of the rainforest's landscape in all of its variations.

Napo River even further as the large quantity of cotton is turned into garments by the local inhabitants. 'Clothed Amazonians' appear in Teixeira's text as people robed by the inland's bounty of crops and are in this way far removed from the Omagua who have not demonstrated comparable interests. With the peoples of the Napo River, the letter generates a model of a community that has been successful in gaining the most from the variety that the inland environment offers. Clothing stands in this case as a materialization of this intersection between human and environmental productivity and as a token of a non-European culture that, amongst the peoples of the Amazon, is effectively of another ilk.

The variety that defines life in the inland also extends beyond the observable activities of its inhabitants to include the events that once transpired on these grounds. Multiple histories, as it were, are recorded on the terraqueous surfaces of the Amazon's interior and are discernable to those who consider the inland beyond the time frame of the present. In the letter, Teixeira gathers these narratives in one place and in the process offers a context for the interpretation of those communities that, like the Omagua, narrowly engage with their environment in merely one way. Teixeira records the 'consumptive' tendencies of the Tapajos that inhabit the vicinity of the Curupá who, separated to the east by a considerable distance from the Napo River of the Upper Amazon, exclusively direct their efforts to the hunt of man. In the nearby inland region, he notes the technology these inhabitants have developed in order to procure their target and later goes on to mention the most noteworthy, or more appropriately relevant, of their prizes. The narrative leading up to this revelation, and which follows the passage on the Parnaíba, progressively weaves topographical and ethnographic notes into a history of the inland more than it does a cautionary tale of European encounters in the Amazon:

Atravesando este rio vienesse corriendo tierra, hasta los tapajos que distan ochenta leguas del curupa, y todo este camino, es despoblado sobre el Rio, mas a dos o tres leguas tierra

adentro, no tiene quento los Indios que aí, usan ya, todos los desta quadrillera de flecha heruada tan ponsoñosa, que en quitando qualquiera sangre no âi remedio ninguno ni los que la usan, lo saben. son todos carnizeros a marabilla comiendose unos a ôtros como hacen todos los del rrio, los tapazos, estan situados en la voca de un gran rrio algunos naturales, tendrá este pueblo, de quinze mil vesinos para arriba el rrio muchísimos âqui, trataron mal a los religiosos de S^an Franc^o que vajaron desta ciudad de Quito quitándole el Abito âl padre Fr. Andres de Toledo, dándole âlgunos rempujones, y el le puso el nombre de barviarrojas, por las tener tintas y arriscadas como los xeruunas, en este mismo Pueblo mataron un poco de gente de Franc^o. de Õrellana, que aun oy estan Arvoles de las estacas de su serca én el mismo lugar, hazemos las nuestras, quando allí venimos. (5v-6)

Although it can be read as a warning to future travellers, an interpretation that is not completely unrelated in this circumstance considering the interest the letter's addressee may have in Teixeira's survey, reference here to the Amazonian inhabitant as a cannibalistic being differs from other sections in the text where this theme recurs. What separates this passage is the way violent encounters record rather than erase the legacy of previous European voyages as part of the local history. Through the act of immolation attributed to the 'Barviarrojas', the travels of Francisco de Orellana (c.1511-1546) and, to a lesser degree, the initial seventeenth-century expedition led by the Franciscan Andres de Toledo are consecrated to the landscape in a veritable way as signposts mark the site of confrontation between inhabitants and travellers. In the case of Orellana's arrival, the death of some of the men under his charge at the hands of the 'cannibal' inhabitants is indicated by the wood that was used to denote where the former had fallen. What began as a small placeholder, however, is illustrated to have become part of the environment as these have flourished into monuments where "aun oy estan Arvoles de las estacas de su serca én el mismo lugar". Whether embellished by poetic liberties or guided by a sense of maintaining the succinctness of the narrative, the passage of time expressed in this image of the emergent tree adopts a tone which teeters between the bucolic and melancholic to communicate the way the perished bodies are integrated into the surrounding rainforest. Trees no

longer simply adorn the landscape but now designate the location of a conflict and the terminus of some journeys, mapping these events onto the layout of the land. At the same time, histories fold into one another at this site as Orellana's expedition is recalled by Teixeira just as Toledo's journey is also remembered, both accounts spatially overlapping each other in the land of the 'Barviarrojas'. The physical affronts undergone by Toledo's men in the narrative are contextualized by the words 'en este mismo Pueblo' as an indication of a history of hostility engrained in this location. Although Teixeira suggests the harm that the Franciscans endured to be relatively mild in light of the anthropophagous inclinations that characterize the local communities, it details a certain type of conflict that repeatedly took place at this location and one which the writer notes to have also commemorated with the placement of new wooden markers as he passed through this site. Cumulatively, the responses to the local conditions which travellers encountered and the events that transpired across generations of expeditions to this region become part of the factors that, along with indigenous actions, infuse meaning in the landscape. As all three expeditions converge in a single space within the text, the result is an integration of a foreign presence as part the vitality that defines the 'Barviarrojas' environment. Arriving by its water and succumbing to struggles on its land, travellers and the strain that their presence brought upon these parts are repeatedly shown to have contributed to the history of the inland and, some in a more literal way than others, to its flourishing environment. Along with measurements and cultural observations, the story of the Amazon in this form turns to the broader sense of vitality, taken here to mean the many activities that took place in and through these environments and from which death is not excluded, to understand the way locals, travellers, and their various engagements with each other and their surroundings shaped these worlds.

Also of relevance to the understanding of the type of Amazonia featured in Teixeira's letter is the provenance of the information that he shares. As Jaime Cortesão notes:

Pedro Teixeira foi, sim, um excelente executor das ordens recebidas. A relação da sua viagem...revela um dirigente experimentado e dotado duma segura visão das possibilidades econômicas e humanas do Amazonas, ainda que através do entusiasmo e otimismo cândido do homem que, após a longa residência e trabalhos da conquista, se afeiçoara à terra. Como prova do seu grande descortino, entre outros fatos, citemos o seguinte: êle previu, por assim dizer, levado pelo estudo do terreno, a fundação de Manaus. (183-4)

Distinguished for his ability to evaluate the advantages of the Amazonian landscape, the type of measured account Teixeira could render aligned well with the objectives of those who authorized the expedition. A precise account of the journey through the Amazon could be given because Teixeira, having participated in “a longa residência e trabalhos da conquista”, was versed in basing his comments on an expansionist reading of the earth. The land of the shore was therefore interpreted to be a choice space for the foundation of settlements that could be used in conjunction with the “possibilidades econômicas e humanas do Amazonas” to allow for these areas to flourish into Portuguese colonies. Yet, the manner in which the soil's function is appraised in the letter, despite the admiration Teixeira's role as a perceptive executor has garnered from commentators, manifests itself to be knowledge founded on indigenous precepts. In one particular encounter with the Tupinamba, Teixeira mentions the reconnaissance information that he was able to gather from his interlocutors regarding the history of the land adjacent to the river, stating:

Havia de este sitio, hasta los tupinambas ziento y veinte leguas, esta nazon de gente es muy feroz, carnicera, y no han nunca querido conocer sugezion y por éso vinieron huidos de el Brasil, rrompiendo por tierra, y conquistando muchisimos numerous de gentios, hasta llegar al gran rrio y sitio donde ó viven éstos nos dieron nuevas de las Almasonas mui verificadas. (6)

At this point along the Rio Negro, Teixeira's letter takes an informative pause. During this intermission, before proceeding with his customary measurements of the river's fluctuating size, the author presents the information about the tropical rainforest in a manner that is intertwined with the story of the Tupinamba migration towards the interior of the Amazon, becoming a historical account of the people who are in turn authorities on the history of the place. The anecdotal mention of Tupinamba diet and obstinacy leads into a discussion of the trail of conquests they have left in their migratory path in search of an environment suited to the needs of the community. In the process they have become the authorities on the place that has allowed them to continue with their social practices. The depiction of the Tupinamba suggests that they, too, are travellers through the Amazon, albeit ones with a longer duration in and therefore greater understanding of the region than the members of Teixeira's expedition. This Tupinamba knowledge of the Amazon, moreover, has been acquired. Teixeira's manner of indicating this seems to be by removing their indigeneity insofar as he suggests that the people he encounters are not native to the region. The epistemological implication of the parallel between these two groups of 'travellers', therefore, is that the Amazon is graspable through experience. The rainforest in this way is not exclusive to those who were engendered on its grounds, but it can also be known by those who traverse it. As conquerors of a different ilk but similar trajectory, the Tupinamba provide "nuevas" that can be ratified by the equally non-indigenous Teixeira. Elsewhere in the text he refers to acquired knowledge simply as "Informaciones", using the ambiguity of this category to cite news from local communities that contributes to the way his bevy of travelers continue on their course as well as other written histories of the Amazon. When he declares shortly after that "deesta para el rrio, que nase de el cusco, segun las Informaciones âbra quarenta leguas", an uncertainty as to the source of the provided information thus blurs the

distinction between local knowledge of the distance to the river and that which comes from chronicles that Teixeira could be citing (6). The commensurability between the two types of knowledge lead to a matter underlying the discussion of the Amazon in seventeenth-century texts which is the question of authority and who wields enough of it to provide the definitive account of the New World. In Teixeira's letter, the question specifically involves speaking of *the land* with authority, which he demonstrates even travellers to be capable of doing.

With his depicted connections between the earth and human life predicated on experience, Teixeira's letter returns to the spatial dimension of term 'indigenous'. The placement of people in relation to the earth is a conceit that Stuart Elden identifies as the basis of political theories on 'territory'. Tracing the development of the term across a chronological spectrum that begins with mythology as it has been worked through Greek tragedy and becomes rarefied in Leibniz's writings on sovereignty and space, it is in the former, classical literature that Elden finds a patent treatment of territory as belonging to those who are born out of the earth. There is no association more direct to a land nor is there a right more inherent to ruling it in these tragedies than the one that those who are brought forth from the earth possess, a position that Elden examines in his reading of Arlene Saxonhouse's essay on the formation of cities within the genre:

Saxonhouse has noted that the theme of autochthony is useful in a number of ways. First...it provides a unity to the *polis*. Second, the boundaries of the *polis* are set by nature rather than human agreements. The *polis* is natural, rather than set in opposition to nature. Third, the land is seen to belong to the people by right, by birth. There was no need for conquest and forced movement of previous inhabitants. Playing a role similar to that social contract theory would many centuries later, the origins of a *polis* could be assumed to be peaceful. The consequence of this is the existing regime is the original and only one. In other words, it is not a regime that had to overthrow a previous one, but the only possible regime, thereby enhancing its legitimacy and security. However, the myth of autochthonous birth had some less desirable consequences too. One of these negatives was the obvious xenophobia towards those who were not descended in the same way and, as a partner to this, a tendency toward an aristocracy. Another is the attitude to women.

The public *polis* is the realm of male warriors sprung from the earth. By excluding women from the birth origins of the city, their position generally tends towards marginalization. (25-6)

In addition to noting the presence of this origin myth in Greek tragedy, the meaning it lends to the process of social organization is a focal point for Elden. The use of soil as a determinant for the social integration of a community situates the autochthonous and its claim to territory as a birth right. The direct connection of the people to the land that they legislate in these texts marks a clearly demarcated space from which individuals are excluded or to which they belong. It is a conceit that he continues to examine in later chapters related to seventeenth-century political iterations of this early concept by figures like Leibniz and Spinoza wherein the body is spoken of as an extension of territory (297). Elden's comments on the process behind the organization of the Greek *polis* demonstrate how the soil, in its life-bearing role, defines the way communities are organized and often contested, as in the case of the disputed burial rights in *Antigone*, throughout these texts. Although Elden draws from distant examples both in terms of time and geography, beneath it all he engages with the space of the ground and the discussion of a particular kind of life that surrounds it. In studies of the Amazon, this discussion is moved to the foreground.

What soil can tell us about life along the shores of the Amazon and how it communicates this information is a topic that archaeologists have addressed primarily through studies of pre-Columbian interactions with the Amazon's environment. The claim is that in the earth one can trace various elements about the activities that took place on it. While archaeology has used soil in different areas to deduce similar information about the mobility of communities and social formations around dietary practices, with middens being the most common form of deposits from which to draw this material, Amazonian dark earth and *várzea* also gather information about the

ways the environments of inland or seasonally-flooded areas have been altered by the lifeways of its inhabitants despite their ‘natural’ appearance.

In tandem with archaeology, which provides the necessary tools to study human and environmental interactions, what can essentially be extrapolated from soil as it is featured in chronicles is human agency. Seventeenth-century Amerindian uses of water appear in a two-fold manner within the documented material of the period. Even in records that seem to avoid discussion of the indigenous population, silences, as it were, can be helpful in understanding the interactions that took place in the colonial Amazon between subjects and spaces.⁵⁵ Within these projects of integration, the absent ‘natives’ offer a view into those elements that did not entirely fit within a proposed design for the Amazon. For this reason we will continue to draw information from chronicles and archaeology but with a distinct focus on indigenous agency by reading those moments when the latter was at odds with the worlds that others set out to make of the Amazon. We have seen where written documents of the period have located indigenous subjects within their world schemes and the significance that this geopolitical move has had in defining them. Now, in the second part of this analysis of seventeenth-century accounts, we will observe where and how these same subjects *manifest themselves* to exist within the Amazon. The

⁵⁵ Since “no text, regardless of the extent to which it emphasizes the values imposed by its ideological framework, will fail to allude (even in its silences) to other events or realities that challenge that ideological framework”, Gustavo Verdesio elaborates that it is in the act of reading that the colonial subject is defined (10). He suggests that approaches to the study these texts as “objects of consumption” will seek no further than to identify those parts that are usable, namely what is expressly recorded in writing. Because the heterogeneous composition of a text is located in its silences or absences, these are overlooked in the process of interpreting solely what is explicit. To perceive the internal challenges of a colonial work in all of its complexity, Verdesio therefore mentions that reading practices must first be altered. He calls for a “change in the mode of knowledge production” consisting of a “reconstruction of the colonial corpus as a polyphonic totality” and one in which hermeneutic practices are not limited to reading what is made available by the writers of these texts, but rather what is salvageable (10-11). Within Verdesio’s proposal, the incomplete nature of the colonial corpus, a construct the present investigation has attempted to address in the first chapter, is theorized as a state that helps readers view those ‘voices’ that are left out by contextualizing them as elements which are actively placed in this position. In turn, an active reconstruction of this process begins with an equally dynamic engagement on behalf of the readers of these texts.

várzea and *terra preta*, therefore, are once again the site of our study, serving as the setting of these chronicles and the subject of their interpretation.

The *várzea* and the communities assembled around it appear within seventeenth-century texts as part of a general understanding of the tropical rainforest's vitality. Phrased both in terms of human activities and in relation to the physical properties of its mineral-rich earth, references to Amazonian soil allude to the life that can be drawn from it. Nevertheless, while autochthony qua source of land rights does not figure in this precise manner within these references as extant records are primarily non-indigenous and principally reserved for this group's concerns, the hermeneutic framework used by Elden remains relevant.⁵⁶ Locating a connection between humans and the ground as the basis for the way societies could be imagined is a general premise that can also serve to examine how these worlds were described to form around such association. We have already seen this very argument at the core of Miguel Ángel Cabodevilla's approach to 'local archaeology' as discussed in chapter two, in which he posits the candidacy of indigenous communities around historic sites as the best resource for the preservation of said cultural heritage given their link to these ancestral grounds. His, however, is an archaeology of continuity where subjects of both past and present are treated as the very same people with common interests. While this chapter may seem to return to this approach, it departs from it by analyzing how these connections were used by individuals to impart a form on the worlds of the Amazon in

⁵⁶ Land rights are instead discussed in Elizabeth Maria Beserra Coelho's *Territórios em confronto* (2002) in terms of the recognition and simultaneous denial ("*reconhecimento/desconhecimento*") of indigenous presence within colonial institutions. This oscillation between two views of the relation Amazonian polities share with their land are attributed to what Beserra Coelho describes as a "grande distância entre o que estava posto nos textos legais e o que era executado", whereby laws like the Royal Letter of the tenth of September, 1611 that recognized indigenous right to their *fazendas* were challenged rather than put into effect by colonial projects like the missionary-controlled *aldeamentos* (5-6). The vacillation that Beserra Coelho examines advances the discussion of autochthony as an ideological framework to one that also extends to the realm of implementation, framing her investigation to likewise focus on both elements as she narrates the activities of the Guajajara and the efforts towards the recovery of their territory from the state over the second half of the twentieth century. For examples on the narrative of conflict as a research tool in studies of contemporary Amazonia, see David Treece's *Exiles, Allies, Rebels* (2000), Dora Shellard Corrêa's *Paisagens sobrepostas* (2013), Seth Garfield's *Indigenous Struggle at the Heart of Brazil* (2001), as well as Bruce Albert and Alcida Rita Ramos' collection of essays titled *Pacificando o Branco* (2002).

addition to the way individuals were used to make these connections. To extract the information contained in the dark earth of the Amazon as Elden does from the political grounds of Greek tragedy, we therefore turn to the question of the way life is presented on this soil.

In many ways the question that is essentially being answered when we engage with colonial records, be they soil or chronicles, is that which has almost assumed the status of an adage in this and the post-colonial field since Gayatri Spivak first proposed it. “Can the subaltern speak?” is an inquiry that I approach by modifying that critical, final verb to one with greater relevance to the circumstances found colonial Amazonia, alternatively asking “can the subaltern shape?” (Spivak 283). In altering it so, a crucial adjustment is made to the question’s frame of reference, namely the notion that agency entails locution is amended to reduce the emphasis on speech in order to focus on silent action. Spivak’s theorization on the limits of what the subaltern can *say* draws a correlation with the extent to which a subject can be acknowledged:

When we come to the concomitant question of the consciousness of the subaltern, the notion of what the work *cannot* say becomes important. In the semioses of the social text, elaborations of insurgency stand in the place of “the utterance.” The sender—“the peasant”—is marked only as a pointer to an irretrievable consciousness. As for the receiver, we must ask who is the “real receiver” of an “insurgency?” The historian, transforming “insurgency” into “text for knowledge,” is only one “receiver” of any collectively intended social act. With no possibility of nostalgia for that lost origin, the historian must suspend (as far as possible) the clamor of his or her own consciousness (or consciousness-effect, as operated by disciplinary training), so that the elaboration of the insurgency, packaged with an insurgent-consciousness, does not freeze into an “object of investigation,” or, worse yet, a model for imitation. “The subject” implied by the texts of insurgency can only serve as a counterpossibility for the narrative sanctions granted to the colonial subject in the dominant groups. The postcolonial intellectuals learn that their privilege is their loss. In this they are a paradigm of the intellectuals. (287)

Her point of reference is concerned with the transparency that scholarship on the subaltern claims to practice when attempting to ‘hear’ the subaltern. The assumption Spivak identifies to be implicit in this approach is that there is such thing as *a* subaltern ‘subject’ that is knowable upon being located within the annals of history. To dispel the premise of such claims, she

remarks that such search fails to understand the heterogeneity of the subaltern and as a result a normative subject, *the* “Subject”, becomes the focal point of these investigations. Such studies fail to accomplish what they set out to do as they do not consider the silences or the dimensions of subaltern communities that are also part of such lifeway. With the revised question put in place to guide the discussion regarding colonial Amazonia, the diverse manifestations of non-European peoples are not assumed to be beacons in the service of a comprehensive understanding of these communities nor are they presumed to be able to grant such access, but rather they are incorporated to illustrate the capabilities epistemological impasses offered to the process of shaping the various worlds of the New World.⁵⁷

To observe the dynamics of interruptions in the shaping of the New World, speech itself is examined as an action with its own set of limitations. Mabel Moraña studies the extent of subaltern speech in the appropriation of the religious *villancicos* that occurred in colonial Mexico, wherein the language in which the songs were written and sung was based on local vernacular that altered the original Castilian. With Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz’s *Villancicos a la*

⁵⁷ Doris Sommer’s *Proceed with Caution, when Engaged by Minority Writing in the Americas* (1999) outlines the way frustrations also modify the act of reading New World texts. Sommer’s study walks readers through the ‘difficulties’ that make the interpretation of this kind of writing a delicate venture as it involves a readjustment of one’s sensibilities to foreign worldviews. When it comes to impasses, however, she does not express these as obstacles that must be removed but as pauses that enhance the way one approaches ‘minority writing’:

There is a danger, of course, of demurring entirely. Cultural relativists claim a freedom from desire that amounts to irresponsibility, and colonizers decline to know the Other for fear that knowledge would compromise their control. Yet literary studies proceed as if control were not a political concern but an illusion that serious literature challenges by frustrating readers’ expectations and explanations. The challenge, I am saying, has been more hermeneutical than ethical, more a goad than a reason to worry about heady approaches to texts and the world. (xi)

Sommer declares forthright that common issues in scholarship on Latin America, such as the thwarting of control, must not remain relegated to politics but rather also be interpreted in light of literary practices wherein dominion involves the benefit of an immediate and sweeping comprehension of different modes of being. Acknowledging that colonial texts, most evidently those in which the writer is already vocal about the difficulties of narrating the New World, do not lend themselves to a casual perusal of its content urges readers to engage with its material through other, less-conventional approaches of viewing not only each work but also the worlds conveyed within them.

Asunción (1685), Moraña highlights the elements of combined linguistic registers that demonstrate the ways in which the subaltern ‘speaks’ but does not ‘say’:

La “media-lengua” del subalterno al igual que la “lengua cortada” del dialecto español simbolizan, en su actualización parcial de los códigos dominantes del castellano, una estratificación que abarca pero también supera a la condición colonial, y que tiene que ver con el tema más amplio de la hegemonía cultural y política dentro de las amplias fronteras del imperio. La heterogeneidad no es así característica exclusiva de la Colonia americana, sino, de manera más amplia, marca de alteridad, ajenidad, distancia, haciendo de la lengua el principal –si no el único- instrumento de construcción y apropiación del Otro.

Podría decirse que a través del villancico (y, por extensión, de los géneros en los que se representa al dominado en contextos coloniales) el subalterno puede “hablar” por la boca del Otro pero no “decir”, utilizar la lengua impura que simboliza su enajenación, en función eminentemente expresiva, exponer su “estar-ahí” sin develar su ser. (120)

The mixture of modes of linguistic expression, each associated with a specific social class within the colonial system of New Spain, make the *villancico* in essence a site where the distinction between ways of speaking is staunchly marked in order to underscore communication as a privilege. The singing subject, intoning verses in a ‘derivative’ tongue, manifests the *villancicos* to be compatible with egregiously different, non-European elements of New Spain’s vernacular culture. It is in this sense a form of communication in which the subaltern can partake in ‘speaking’, helping to establish, as Moraña puts it, “su ‘estar-ahí’”. The *villancico*, therefore, is above all else a platform, one in which speaking becomes an action that reveals, through prescriptive uses of language, the shape of a colonial society and the place non-Europeans are represented to occupy within it. As the *villancico* in New Spain illustrates, wherein the mode in which a world is portrayed can be as revealing as what is said about it, ‘speaking’ writ large can be done through the words of others yet demonstrated alternatively.

In the case of colonial Amazonia, particularly when focusing on its seventeenth-century history, the manifestation of Amerindian agency is a silent feat. The way the worlds of the Amazon are shaped is rarely a sonorous process, although accounts of non-European uprisings

would seem to prove otherwise, as attempts to reclaim its space are often kept out of the documents recorded by contemporaneous observers.⁵⁸ Yet it is in this very *gesture* of historical redaction motivated by those aspects of the Amazon which do not comply with an established colonial vision that subjacent interactions with indigenous worlds are demonstrated to repeatedly take place. In those moments within texts where the stability of a colonial enterprise is perceived to be at risk or rather in which proposals and justifications are made to uphold the presence of such institutions in the New World, one encounters responses to Amerindian activity that in their tacit manner acknowledge the presence of these worlds. If the initial discussion of vitality in Amazonia serves as an indication, these responses occur more often than they do not.

Given the prevalence of such communities throughout the tropical rainforest, the shaping of Amazonia's worlds almost urges an engagement in some form with its vitality, making it difficult to negate the presence of peoples and factors that may conflict with imperial and other aims. When engaged by writing in the seventeenth century, the frustrations expressed in colonial tomes are not only by-products of writers recalibrating their preconceived understanding of the New World in light of *in situ* experiences, but also the signposts of ensuing engagements between western epistemologies and non-western worlds. Beyond an epistemological revision, therefore, the impasses in chronicles alert the readers of underlying tensions between worlds.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ The impact of *motines* or revolts on commerce, property, and religion coalesces in the writings of missionary orders as a strand of colonial literature that seeks to explain these upheavals as a question of a natural disposition of indigenous souls. Depending on the order, the actions taken to remediate the situation can range from rigorous duress to a call for further assistance either in the form of monetary aid or the support of more personnel, yet in each case a proposal is made claiming that the nature of these Amerindian souls is alterable. Linda Newson's essay "Between Orellana and Acuña" (1996) offers a synthesis of the development and trajectory of this genre of colonial writing specifically related to the Amazon, in which integrating insurgent communities within spaces designed and supervised by missionary orders was thought to be the most effective way of circumventing Amerindian revolts and became the rationale behind colonial *entradas* to the Napo region.

⁵⁹ What Spivak refers to as 'epistemic violence' is in this sense understood as a discernable interaction between world definitions, namely that which takes place between first and third worlds (289). The evocation of violence to describe these encounters is not uncommon in the research conducted by Amazonianist scholars, the most notable example being Pierre Clastres' collection of essays in *Archeology of Violence* (2010) which hold indigenous resistance to be defensive and directed only incidentally towards people and more directly towards the formation of

The ensuing responses initiate an engagement with those ‘mute’ subjects which now partake in the definition of the Amazon as the entities around which the latter is shaped. Circumvention of these ‘difficulties’ becomes the rationale that structures colonial writing on the Amazon during the seventeenth century as chronicles situate their narratives amidst corollary tensions. In these conflicts one finds moments of impasses that are often left unresolved within documentary texts, but in which writers also communicate that this is not due to a lack of effort. In such instances, a warning, tantamount to the cartographic admonishment *hic sunt leones* visually present in the map appended to Acuña’s chronicle, informs posterity of a location in which peril awaits. From the identification of anthropophagous feeding grounds to geographical faults, areas are verbally sectioned off as spaces of high risk. These are the limits of an empire’s domain, zones of interference that are too volatile for expansionist efforts to adequately attempt to subsume. For Lauren Benton, the uneven reach of empire is embodied in these unstable domains of the New World that are described to be indomitable. She refers to these as enclaves, irregular spaces that proved to be difficult to reach not only for travellers but also for their western mores. Developing the notion of ‘partial sovereignty’, citing Giorgio Agamben’s definition of the latter term, Benton uses the impact the geography of scarcely-frequented parts of the New World, such as Amazonia, had on law and the way it dealt with these parts to discuss the manner in which non-Western communities and their unconventional landscapes challenged and reconfigured monolithic approaches to empire, revealing the adaptations that were required in order for expansionist projects to make their way towards the innermost regions of the Americas (xiii). Inland empires in effect are the materialized form of atypical worlds structured, both topographically and socially, in ways that assert their incontrovertible presence within western

a ‘state’ or unified body. Though analyzing the matter from different viewpoints, those enacting and those undergoing violence, Spivak and Clastres both speak of a collision that arises at the crossroads of worlds and one which frames the way this interaction is understood.

designs. This manifestation of enclaves is established in Moraña's research as a feature that had to be addressed when attempting to contextualize New Spain according to "la modernidad eurocentrista":

En efecto, si la ciudad virreinal opera como enclave y frontera, definiendo material y simbólicamente los parámetros desde los que se gestionaría la entrada de América en la modernidad eurocentrista, en su interior se dirimen también no solo luchas por el poder político y cultural sino también por el predominio interpretativo y representacional. Las batallas discursivas, el entrelazamiento de visiones y versiones que registran la actuación y proyectos de diversos sectores de la sociedad de la época, así como las estrategias a través de las cuales los actores del periodo colonial definen e implementan sus agendas en el contexto de la dominación imperial revelan tanto la fuerza del aparato hegemónico sobre las formaciones sociales americanas como la tremenda dinámica que éstas despliegan para consolidar su identidad e ir definiendo un sujeto social multifacético y progresivamente diferenciado de los modelos metropolitanos. (13-4)

With this passage directed towards defining "la cultura barroca", Moraña makes note of the pockets existing within imperial models of the New Spain which, being many and varied, continually renegotiate the extent to which these visions for New World can be implemented. She locates the source of this challenge to come from within the colonial system and therefore turns to lettered *criollos* like Sor Juana as examples of those figures sufficiently acquainted with colonial systems that can use this access to recast their New World identities. From within or by way of other oversights, limits to the reach of imperial designs for the New World cede to an underlying force embodied in exceptional spaces that manifest a presence that in some form must be acknowledged. In effect, these are the spaces where imperial influence must undergo changes in light of the unique conditions of life in the New World if it is to maintain its meaning.

Undeniably present, the mode in which the non-European worlds of the Amazon are integrated into western documents forms the second part of the question regarding an individual's agency to shape these worlds.⁶⁰ As a place where danger is immanent in every one

⁶⁰ With the provenance of the texts reviewed in this chapter being primarily works deriving from experiences of travel through the Amazon and therefore part of the production of New World literature, the term "western" or

of its features, the Amazon basin and its terraqueous interior are featured in seventeenth-century texts as worlds that require stabilization. Embodied in the precarious geography of the tropical rainforest are worlds where humans and minerals are shown to be growing equally wild and in which integrating, mapping, and properly using these spaces within expansionist projects becomes an endeavour that must address this challenge. Here we find the writing of missionaries that combine observations about recalcitrant Amazonian communities and their surroundings as elements that would benefit from domestication. Discussions of an Amazonia that is fecund as it is indomitable, moreover, are accompanied by the suggestion that at the hands of others these spaces have been or could be tamed. The latter situation applies to those communications expressing the lucrative, military potential of the Amazon and entails obtaining adequate access to its resources by removing impediments. In the former scenario, however, the impediments are shown to be an inconvenience only to foreigners as the adroit locals have experience in cultivating these landscapes and display skill where writers only express what they hope to be able to do. In this case, in those moments where local expertise is highlighted, Amazonian communities and their experience with the tropical rainforest's surroundings join the other 'natural' impediments in colonial records as obstacles to be overcome. The advantageous knowledge of the environment associated with local communities complicates expansionist efforts to shape these worlds in a particular way and removes any confidence that these spaces

"European" is used to signal a mentality. Prompted by the lack of non-European thinkers amongst the western "Escuela de Sabiduría", Rodolfo Kusch addresses the modes that exist for understanding a world, the manner in which one conceptualizes one's place within it based on a particular understanding of the elements that define it. He contextualizes this discrepancy by asking "¿Qué hacer entonces en América?" using the question to probe in what ways New World thought is a "radical contrast" (256). For Kusch, the difference that characterizes an indigenous approach to the world is rooted on principles that do not follow western reasoning, attitudes that are not only adhered to as mores but which are also interiorized through an indigenous identity. Expressed in this contrast is a distinction that includes but goes beyond indigenous individuals and their counterparts to convey a form of thinking, a "sentido" to quote Kusch, that is derived from specific engagements with and one's presence in a world (271).

will not be shaped otherwise. Of all the environmental obstructions, this human element is therefore expressed to be the most difficult to deracinate.

The heterogeneous formation of the indigenous population in seventeenth-century Amazonia reveals a division where there was once a plan for colonial unity. For those, like the subjects of the previous chapter, who sought to convey a limpid geometry to the New World, the indigenous Amazon was a shapeless thing and would hopelessly remain this way based on accounts of the difficulties faced by those who attempted to change it. If one were to speculate what follows in the story of missionary presence in Amerindian lands, it would appear that the story veers into the territory of tragedy, with numerous missives carrying news of members recently lost in the process of establishing a religious presence in areas of the Amazon, many written with an air of doleful resignation to the fickle nature of the New World. The conflicts arising from this discrepancy materialize in the genre of the annual religious report or *cartas annuas* where the efficacy of missionary plans is measured against their implementation. Comprising of a semi-confessional tone in which writers disclose what the order has done and what it has failed to do, the Jesuit letters addressed to the Company's office in Rome are the textual site of reflection on these issues and the platform through which their form of representation is decided. Selecting the most opportune way to present findings through tactics of persuasion becomes a feature that, as we have seen in the previous chapters, defines the geopolitical accounts of the Amazon. Yet added to this objective is the way life and its challenges in the New World are addressed in the *cartas annuas* in the context of the devastation they brought about to colonial projects. Upon closer inspection, these lamented shortcomings belie a concealed order that is achieved through and, to this degree, requires the hostilities presented by the New World. The enterprise alluded to here is the pacification of the Amazon's

multifaceted vitality within a system flexible enough to contain and in effect convert turmoil into a productive force.

To make the most out of the Amazon's vitality, *aldeas* were instituted. The Spanish *cartas annuas* of the mid-seventeenth century focus in great part on the occurrences and activities that took place at these locations situated on the upper regions of the tropical rainforest. These were New World institutions found in the inlands of the Amazon, nestled far beyond the headquarters of Lima, Quito, and Belém, yet connected to them as domains where the peoples and properties of Amazonia could be organized in a manner that would be of service to these governing entities.⁶¹ Discussed in the *cartas annuas* as formative areas where the herculean endeavour to implement new modes of perceiving one's world must be catered to a population that is not homogeneous, the *aldeas* are sites where the spectrum of Amazonian life is very much a part of the design and function of colonial spaces. In the annual letters describing such dynamic realms of the tropical rainforest we find writers grappling with questions of Amazonian vitality as its manifestations, its overwhelming presence in various facets of the chronicled experience, cannot be ignored by projects of this spatial scope. The vast Amazon, with its countless alcoves, languages, peoples and products, is incorporated into the intelligible, and above all manageable,

⁶¹ The Spanish crown saw the importance of these institutions and encouraged the religious orders such as the Jesuits to continue these types of incursions inland. To use the now-familiar case of the king's response to Acuña's expedition, while the regal office expressed trepidations about the content of the Jesuit's original account, these sentiments did not extend to the mode of operation that had been undertaken by the chronicler's order as a letter from Madrid contains the following royal encouragement:

agan entradas en aquella tierra por las partes que se tubiere por mas combeniente asistiendo, de buestra parte con todo cuidado y desvelo, a la mayor disposicion y direccion de lo referido, de forma que se consiga el efecto que se desea, y a las personas con quien se capturase les dareis todo calor, favor y asistencia para que se animen, a hacer con mas esfuerzo esta faccion pues como teneis entendido es la mas importante que se puede ofrecer en el distrito de esta Audiencia y del mayor servir mio y siempre iréis con atención y advertencia que la otra pacificación y reducción se a de hacer sin gravar mi real hacienda en cosa alguna y para que en esta materia se proceda con mayor acierto. (1v)

The instructions from the crown, albeit given and to be executed discreetly, communicate the establishment of *aldeas* to be not only an effect but also a humane solution to the hostilities found in the Amazon. At the same time, the verb *animar* accentuates the importance given to the act of convincing local peoples to support imperial projects, suggesting a type of captivity that does not ensnare so much as it entices individuals towards a common cause.

design of the *aldeas* by way of a relinquishment of control. Abandoning any pretence of actually managing or rendering the rainforest intelligible, the establishment of *aldeas*, as they are described in the *cartas annuas*, is expressed as a simple demarcation of spaces within which missionary work is to be carried out. Naturally, Amerindian populations are utilized to indicate its perimeters as signposts of a general area containing souls that require attention. What helps to frame the missionary project this loosely are precisely those reports lamenting the little progress that has been achieved in the *aldeas*. The narratives detailing the resistance amongst Amerindian communities towards these establishments, a group to which one could add those displeased settlers pining for indigenous labour that was kept at a distance and protected by *aldeia* administrators, contains an underlying attitude towards disorder that is rather more welcoming than any professed mission statement might initially convey (Hawthorne 33). The letters to superiors adopt this subjacent stance as the narration of life on the *aldeas* are replete with accounts of activities that go beyond evangelization to include information about agriculture in settlement areas, news of other settlers, and events classified under the ambiguous label of ‘curiosities’. In this way, through the wandering eyes of chroniclers, the meandering narration of the *cartas annuas* seems not only best suited but also indicative of the irreducible state of life in the tropical rainforest. The result is a colonial approach that finds it much more advantageous to conserve the state of disarray found in Amazonia’s baroque rainforest and administer it as a multipurpose space and in this way, albeit loosely, begin to understand its nature.

In discussing this dynamic, it would be difficult, if not ill-informed, to presume that a single directive or plan was set for the inland areas and peoples of the Amazon. This is why, before we can turn to the *cartas annuas*, defining further what is meant by ‘Amazonian vitality’ can assist us to better identify the manner in which this served as the avenue for Amerindian

practices of world shaping to exist not only in spite of but also with and through efforts of domestication of tropical nature.

II. Impressions of the Past

Perhaps it is helpful to contextualize the objective of this approach, which sets out to locate indigenous agency in colonial texts, in relation to other methodologies.⁶² Investigations into questions of world shaping are addressed in Amazonian ethnography by assessing the process as one that is led by investigators. In the presence of a human observer, the act of documenting appears less passive as deliberations regarding the inclusion of indigenous subjects in these studies extend to the mode in which narrators position themselves in relation to what they are recording. João Pacheco de Oliveira classifies this asymmetrical relationship as a “interação dirigida”, describing the actions of ethnographers as part of a larger narrative:

Não basta explicar a atuação de um ator pelas suas motivações e pelos seus papéis originários, nem é suficiente compreendê-lo como um dos elementos de um par de papéis em interação. É preciso reconstituir uma rede social mais abrangente, recuperar a multiplicidade de contextos subjacentes e, sobretudo, enquadrar cada ação em uma dimensão linear, como resultado de jogadas sucessivas em que os atores acumulam um conhecimento mútuo e, em virtude de experiências de conflito e ajustamento, estabelecem entre si padrões de relacionamento e articulação. (*Ensaio* 67-8)

⁶² Reflexive approaches to Spivak’s question can be found in the type of multivocal archaeology that Ian Hodder proposes. It entails including a variety of voices in the process of understanding the past, but it also “involves more than providing a stage on which they can speak” (196). Multivocality, in essence, allows for distinct forms of knowledge or worldviews to simultaneously exist and be acknowledged, creating the opportunities for interactions amongst them. By “tak[ing] into account the social positions of stakeholder groups”, this “collaboration” is what Hodder recommends in order for archaeological methodologies to see indigenous worldviews working even within predominantly Western depictions of the past:

These groups are often divided into local and global categories. Use of the term multivocality often assumes an opposition between on the one hand, a global archaeological discourse of theoreticians, heritage managers, methods, laws, and codes of ethics, and on the other hand the local voice...In practice, however, it often seems that this opposition is too simplistically drawn. In practice we often see complex alliances between local, regional, national, and international agencies and groups. (198)

Aware that imperialist strategies could also coopt multivocality if it were simply a question of including numerous voices and opinions, the archaeologist complicates matters by emphasizing the presence of dissenting points of view. Rather than pitting one voice against another, Hodder finds that looking at one in the other to be of greater use not only to researchers, but also to the subject of research which now sheds its passive role. This integrative sense of multivocality remains germane to the study at hand which looks at the actions of local Amazonian communities within those documents from which they are presumed to be absent in order to find their presence in tacit but tangible ways.

The ethnographer to which Pacheco de Oliveira alludes as he makes this argument is Curt Nimuendaju and the latter's work with Ticuna communities during the first part of the twentieth century. The broader series of interactions are those instances wherein Nimuendaju partook, or more aptly intervened, in denouncing the activity of landowners on behalf of the Ticuna (*Ensaio* 74). Pacheco de Oliveira uses this involvement as the culmination of a series of "linear" developments in Nimuendaju's ethnographic work that lead to this degree of integration. As living amongst the Ticuna gave way to "relational patterns" between the ethnographer and his subjects, the way the latter were written also began to reveal this mutual understanding. For Pacheco de Oliveira, time in the form of repeated interactions reduces the distance that separates the observer and the observed, ultimately joining them as actors within a single narrative.

Under the effects of time, narratives also begin to change. As Pacheco de Oliveira indicates, the information that Nimuendaju recorded began to develop over his corpus not only due to its 'maturation', but because his sojourns quickly became lengthier stays. What he could observe during his initial visit of two weeks resulted in a "limited" view of the community for whom he would eventually develop an affinity. As Pacheco de Oliveira narrates,

A primeira visita de Nimuendaju aos ticuna foi marcada por sua brevidade e limitação — esteve na região por 15 dias, conhecendo apenas grupos locais que habitavam nas proximidades da sede dos seringais Belém e Vendaval. Isso se refletiu em seus registros sobre o relacionamento entre os ticuna "caboclistizados" e os seus "patrões". Ao falar do seringal São Jerônimo, descreve um quadro que qualifica como "atraente", no qual verifica com satisfação "a cordialidade existente entre a família do 'patrão' e a dos índios". Em Belém do Solimões, suas observações afastam qualquer idéia de pobreza ou exploração dos índios por seus "patrões", sublinhando que todos dispõem de roupas, ferramentas e outras mercadorias mais necessárias, indicando que o arrendatário proíbe que seu capataz ou outros trabalhadores brancos submetam os índios a maus-tratos ou desrespeitem suas famílias. A descrição (idealizada) inverte até a lógica do barracão, afirmando que os índios não devem ao barracão e que recebem sempre um salário em dinheiro. (*Ensaio* 68-9)

In the example offered by Pacheco de Oliveira, the limited duration of the voyage is connected to Niemendaju's ability to only read the outward state of the indigenous community. Clothed and salaried, Nimuendaju understood the relationship between the "patrões" and the Ticuna "caboclistados" to be one of largesse as these external signals appeared to hint at a concern for the wellbeing of the indigenous peoples. His depiction of their lifestyle, therefore, carried these overtones of placidity and mutual regard as the Ticuna never wanted for any material necessities. Amongst the principal oversights that his this brief venture failed to document, Pacheco de Oliveira cites the interethnic tensions, as the "patrões" interfered in Ticuna customs, to be salient, proposing that it is not until a second, longer visit that Nimuendaju is able to encounter "outros fatos e opiniões, inclusive mais característicos da operação de um seringal" (*Ensaio* 71). In Pacheco de Oliveira's chapter, a prolonged encounter awakens Nimuendaju to other aspects of Ticuna lifeways that a brief stay had previously clouded and guides the composition of a monograph wherein the cultural negotiations between these groups supplant the harmony that was assumed to exist. As the gaps in information close and Nimuendaju's visits are extended, Pacheco de Oliveira interprets this to be an indication of the ethnographer's increasing visibility in his research. The nuanced portrayal of the Ticuna functions as a veritable sign of the investigator's time spent observing and interacting with the subjects of the study, attributing a less-superficial view of the community to a greater involvement with it and vice versa. Intimate knowledge therefore serves as Pacheco de Oliveira's mode of reading the presence of the ethnographer by way of the manner in which the lifeways of the cultures under investigation are rendered.

According to this linear time scale, the form in which indigenous subjects are included within a series of written texts simultaneously graphs the writer's method of observation on the

same pages. According to this linear time scale, moreover, the relatively short voyages through the seventeenth-century Amazon would seem to complicate and in essence remove the ability to examine this authorial presence. Conversely, it may appear as though in the absence of an extended stay amongst the people that chroniclers include in their works, the reduction of these indigenous communities to a succinct passage or mention makes plain the limited involvement of the observer. In these views and within the model presented by Oliveira, the central relationship between the writer and her or his work is understood in terms of the depiction of the indigenous component in their writing. When one thinks of the colonial act of recording indigenous communities as a larger enterprise, it becomes feasible to transition from understanding brief encounters as only providing imbalanced depictions of native peoples to situating these instances within the context of a literary choice. Taking a literary approach to the subjects expressed in the title of his essay “Cartas, crónicas y relaciones del descubrimiento y la conquista”, Walter Mignolo clarifies the manner in which colonial writing operates within these multiple registers:

nos queda por agregar que el corpus textual en consideración constituye una *unidad* en la medida en que todos los textos tienen en común tanto el referente como ciertas fronteras cronológicas ideológicas. Pero por otro lado, por pertenecer a tipos y a formaciones distintas, tal *unidad* puede mejor designarse como una *familia textual* en la que encontraremos, como en toda familia, diversidad de formas y funciones. (58)

The grouping of texts according to a common narrated event and to a way of referring to the New World in ideological terms over a specific span of time form an overarching unity that functions in conjunction with the individual instances to which each work is responding.

Keeping in mind the immediate and larger contexts of each text, to only focus on one of these aspects disconnects the work from the broader narration of the New World. Contextualizing the writing on indigenous subjects therefore begins with locating the writer within a structuring colonial narrative.

The basis for understanding such narrative is experience. Like Oliveira, Mignolo studies different examples of writing and, through their relation to each other, or more aptly through their kinship as a “familia textual”, derives the process of their production. He compartmentalizes this writing in the form of *cartas relatorias*, whose primary concern was to initiate a project of colonization and in which case writing was corollary, *relaciones*, a “discursive type” associated with transmitting organized information that has been collected about the New World, and *crónicas*, the literary refinement of chronological events through rhetorical devices (60, 75, 76). Although they function in accordance with distinct objectives, Mignolo emphasizes that these texts are products of an experience of the New World that the writer seeks to communicate. To encapsulate this correspondence, he includes texts written in other languages about encounters in the New World to be part of a single venture when he states “Estos textos forman parte de la cultura hispana no por la lengua en la que están escritos sino por referirse a un hecho crucial en la historia de esa cultura (por ejemplo el descubrimiento); y por estar los escritos relacionados, de algún modo, con la estructura de poder de esa cultura en el momento de escribir” (58). The act of relating a New World experience is the unifying principle amongst these forms of colonial writing regardless of particularities like language. Furthermore, variations of this shared experience, as Mignolo adds, greatly owe to the changes in the social imaginary and the writer’s relation to it, a facet of this enterprise that is best appreciated retrospectively. Indeed, these categories are chiefly posterior and assigned when they are grouped as a subject of study:

Si las cartas y las relaciones forman parte de la <<historia literaria>> o de la <<historia de la historiografía>>, no la forman por la *intención de escritura* (*i. e.* ni Colón ni Cortés se proponían <<hacer literatura o historia>>), sino por un cambio epistemológico en el cual se consolidan la historia literaria y la historia de la historiografía y se recuperan del pasado, aquellos textos que <<muestran>>, desde la perspectiva de la *recepción*, ciertas

propiedades o historiográficas o literarias, aunque estas propiedades no sean características en la *producción* de tales discursos. (59)

Approaching colonial texts as a body of writing, scholarship organizes recorded experiences in a manner which makes it possible to identify a coherent narrative amongst selections of these writings. Within the long trajectory of colonial documentation, which colonialists and colonizers participate in defining, the worlds rendered by these ‘experiences’ across historical periods allow one to contextualize narrative shifts between them as reflections of epistemological changes.

Reading documented experiences through an overarching narrative composed of smaller alterations, it remains possible not only to locate the writer as actor in the shaping of contemporaneous models of the New World but also to identify the specific worlds that are being shaped. Mignolo offers a literal example of this continuous narrative when he examines a project that set out to compile colonial histories and present them in a new rhetorical style. In Juan Bautista Muñoz’s compendium, the author retells Antonio de Solís y Rivadeneyra’s seventeenth-century chronicle *Historia de la Conquista de México* (1648) in a manner that Mignolo claims makes no outwards addition to the writing in terms of its content. Yet, again, one must turn to the production of this writing to observe the vision of the New World that it proposes, exploring other areas where this experience could be recorded: “Al leer la *Historia* de Muñoz tenemos una sensación semejante a la que nos produce la lectura de Solís: el cúmulo de información *se procesa* de una manera en la que el resultado se asemeja más a un resumen depurado de los datos existentes, vertidos en una prosa que mantiene, por ella misma, la atracción y el interés de la lectura” (96). The adjustments to the prose made by Muñoz begin to distinguish the copy from its source text and in effect generate a separate approach to the narration of the New World despite sharing the same source of information as Solís. Muñoz’s work is at once a continuation

of the experience that the former originally documented as much as it is also a new rendering of the same subject. It carries on the world shaping project but does so through a particular vision of the New World. In this manner, 'world' reflects considerations that are simultaneously specific to the period and consistent with the depictions that have preceded it. Even when identical methods are used to depict these worlds from one epoch to another, as Mignolo observes Muñoz's work to be doing, idiosyncratic visions of the New World linger and are therefore legible in each rendition of it:

La preocupación por el <<efecto>> narrativo de Muñoz, que nos recuerda, además de a Solís, a otros relatos que empleaban los datos historiográficos para articular una narración despojada de los ripios que exige una fidelidad a ellos, no debe llevarnos a equívocos, haciéndonos ver en la *Historia* de Muñoz sólo un relato que, uno o dos siglos después, repite la concepción historiográfica de sus antecesores. Esta afirmación no debe tampoco llevar a poner énfasis en la <<originalidad>> de Muñoz, aunque la tenga, sino más bien a destacar el cambio de orientación que se está produciendo en la época en la cual escribe. Los indicios que en Muñoz nos llevan a relacionarlo con un cambio de época en la concepción historiográfica son varios. En primer lugar, las notas documentales que, además de las pocas que incluye, promete ampliar. Esto, junto al criterio que le lleva a pensar en la edición de documentos inéditos, su esmerado trabajo en la recopilación de fuentes, nos ponen frente a una concepción historiográfica que se distingue tanto del resumen y la repetición que practicaban los autores de los siglos XVI y XVII (y que muchas veces llevó a los especialistas a acusarlo de <<plagio>> o de <<deshonestidad>> al emplear, sin hacer referencias, el material de otros escritores) como de la falta de mención explícita de las fuentes en Solís. (97)

Originality is not the measure of a writer's contribution to narratives of colonization when the objective is to understand the relationship between accounts of one period and those of another in order to plot their changes. In its place, Mignolo suggests that narrations or iterations of a colonial event be analyzed in reference to the 'reorientations' that a text displays, which he posits are indicated by attitudes towards the colonial enterprise and its worlds. To a certain extent, the omission of information in Muñoz's project is interpreted as an emulation of the tropes of his predecessors, yet the fact that he does so more than a century removed from the those who established this convention in the writing of the New World adds an inflection, as it were, to the

repetition. The subject of the initial account is now filtered through the lens of another ‘concepción historiográfica’ that not only engages with this primary event, the conquest of Mexico in the case of Solís, but also with the writing of it. Locating the narrators place within the development of a single, repeated narrative is therefore accomplished by contextualizing the moment in which the New World is being written or, effectively, rewritten.

By observing a continuous narrative over time *and* across different hands, the literary approach to colonial texts appends the ethnographic focus on the development of a sole actor in the writing of the New World to include a series of worlds and worldviews. The linear model of time by which an ethnographer’s work is measured tacitly suggests that experience directly translates into greater understanding of the written subject. By widening the time scale, one moves beyond the individual’s experience or, rather, contextualizes it further in order to observe a project in which worlds are shaped with each chronicle, letter, and report. A variety of experiences are amassed and patterns amongst them read under this comparative framework in order to understand the colonizing project to which they belong and contribute. Shifting the focus of study from writer to writers modifies Oliveira’s ethnographic model but retains the emphasis on ‘experience’. What is written about the New World continues to be the conduit to the world shaping process even within this collective setting. The writings of missionaries, for instance, can tell us of the governing objectives of their missions, the way these informed individual visions of the New World, as well as provide a reference by which to interpret the development of an order’s outlook on these worlds throughout its presence in these lands. Experience is thus directed towards an accumulation of information that defines the project of a colonial institution. Phrased alternatively, the development of a written corpus on the New World over time does not necessarily entail a better understanding of the cultures that are

observed but rather it is the objectives of a colonizing presence that become apparent. The interpretation in ensemble of texts allows the various designs for the New World recorded by equally varied experiences to be legible within the context of a colonial enterprise to which they all contribute.

Where this approach requires further adjustments in order to continue to be legible is in situations that escape the comparative framework because they do not fit into available correspondences. When there are deviations from this model which relies on similarities, efforts are made to understand how these can be reconciled with the rest of its parts. In the field of ethnography, Michael Heckenberger suggests that explanations of socially complex communities use a sliding scale capable of acknowledging and adapting to the different points of comparison these present. To contextualize the deep history of Southern Amazonia in relation to a broader understanding of the New World's past, Heckenberger similarly uses a cumulative reading but does so focusing on the atypical rather than simply the normative manifestations of this history:

As an experiment in historical ethnography (which I take to mean the study of an "*ethnos*" through time, through whatever means possible), issues of scale and perspective are central. Particularly important are problems of scale-shifting and self-similarity across scales, what Wagener has aptly called the fractal person. The enterprise is, by necessity, interpretive and contextual. The task then is not to select the appropriate terms, questions, methods, or even instruments of measurement beforehand, but instead to find correspondences between things that can be visualized at different scales within the same sociohistorical context. In other words, to measure patterned relations we must freeze wither time or space, but to get the picture moving again requires not measurement but translation and interpretation. (6)

Heckenberger's focus is on 'pertinent' instead of preconfigured correspondences as the former allow for anomalies to be understood alongside other comparable cases. In his own study, this involves research on the Xinguano peoples who demonstrate marked differences in many regards from their ecology which, being a mixture of várzea and terra firme, "cannot be reduced to any general Amazonian pattern", to their intense 'domestication' of this landscape ensconced in

forest (22-23). With differences that are notable even within Amazonia, a regional history of the Xinguano challenges sweeping readings of the past by limiting comparisons and adopting a prolonged look at a single region. In this way variations are interpreted over time and on diverse scales, such as the process of establishing autonomy through landscape management, in order to collectively arrive at a sense of a ‘fractal person’. Heckenberger’s approach indicates the possibility for one set of correlations to exist within another. Tantamount to the overarching narratives mentioned above, the adjustment of the scale on which one searches for patterns can allow for worlds that escape some trends to still be understood through others. In this mode, Eduardo Góes Neves finds an opportunity to discuss the pre-colonial history of the Amazon in terms of the incongruence between archaeological records and patterns of language distribution. Elaborating on the premise that the central Amazon presents a unique variability of archaeological records belonging to the aforementioned timeframe and that “we do not find in tropical lowland South America a prevalence of a single language expansion over wide expanses”, Neves sets out to analyze this disparity by seeking “other dimensions of variability beyond the study of pottery alone” (36-8). Namely, this methodology consists of exploring the lack of a single, dominant language to which all others in Amazonia could be attributed in terms of the various, contemporaneous linguistic families that arose on different scales and produced diverse material records.⁶³ The absence of Polychrome in some sites and prevalence of Incised-punctated ceramics in others, despite the latter being a later development, suggest that Polychrome’s predominance as a material tradition was not univocal. Working on the smaller

⁶³ For several examples of anthropological studies that use a comparative approach to understand activities in Amazonia within a global context, see the collection of essays in *Beyond the Visible and the Material* (2001), especially the introductory chapter in which the editors Laura Rival and Neil Whitehead explain that this method requires that one first recognize “the fundamental difference that exists between [two] ethnographic universes, in particular the gulf separating their distinctive symbolic-religious classifications” before concentrating on similarities (12).

scale that takes into consideration “site layout[s], length of occupation, and structures such as cemeteries and artificial mounds” to alternatively piece together a set of correlations where there were thought to be none, the exceptionality of Amazonia in terms of language dispersal is interpreted by the archaeologist through the exception that is the central Amazon (47). In this way, studying deviations from a body of information can also contribute to its overall understanding.

Aware of the larger scheme to which writers belong, the question remains of where within this design can one locate indigenous subjects and their worlds. When Mignolo analyzes the work of individual chroniclers, he lingers on the details of who was writing and for whom insofar as they reveal information about the allocation of power in colonial societies. His inquest is into the social positions from which the New World is observed, reconstructing this through various documents as one would a fragmented text. In truth, his readings of colonial texts are directed towards reading the colonial systems in which they were produced more so than solely concentrating on the writers that produced them. Yet, the colonial world of writers is not the only kind that can be reconstructed through these texts as those worlds portrayed *by* them are also accessible through chronicles. The written worlds of colonial texts begin to peer through into the writer’s world and create noticeable interferences in it that can serve as a latent point of entry into both of these ambits. From the way that indigenous projects can disrupt colonial endeavours one could derive an understanding of the fluctuating scale on which this dynamic takes place. At the level of individual chronicles, an emphasis is placed on the challenges of establishing a form upon an intractable land and people. When these texts are taken in aggregation, a narrative of accomplishments and solutions in these lands generate an image of the New World as a tumultuous place that can ultimately be domesticated. Once again, experiences inform these

areas of colonial writing but they do so in the form of encounters with projects that do not fit into these designs. To quell the tensions between worlds created by this incommensurability, readjustments are made to the manner in which these are approached. Projects attempting to reconcile these incongruous worlds are recorded in the earth on which they took place, which archaeologists then use to measure the extent to which they were effective in achieving their goal. One example of this is featured in Stephen Rostain's *Islands in the Rainforest* (2013) in which he gives an account of the instruments that were used to physically merge the environments and communities of the Amazon into a colonial design:

Slash-and-burn agriculture has become associated with European contact because it became the predominant technique among the indigenous groups after their numbers decreased drastically due to demographic collapse and the dissolution of populations provoked by the arrival of Europeans. The introduction of the metal axe, one of the principal bartered objects since the beginning of the colonial period, was the main factor that allowed increased forest clearance. Furthermore, iron axes played an essential role in the Jesuits' evangelization of indigenous groups. Moreover, Father Chantre y Herrera wrote in the seventeenth century "it is rare that it be Divine Reasons—that the Indians little heed—that attract them to our mission. They settle there for very practical reasons.... We could not accomplish anything without the axes we distribute". (46)

The impenetrable hearts and forests of the Amazon obligate those attempting to expand into these lands to find other means. As Chantre y Herrera demonstrates to be the case with a colonial project heavily reliant on axes, the indispensability of tools assigns certain characteristics to the worlds within which these instruments are considered to be effective. These were worlds that one had to find ways of approaching, where adjustments had to be made in order to overcome the demanding nature of their environments. In the objects and strategies introduced to facilitate goals such as the conversion of indigenous communities, images of an exigent Amazonia become legible and proceed to set the background on which these projects are staged.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ The same can be said of situations in which tools like axes doubled as gifts. In Teixeira's letter, the navigator recounts the way in which the presentation of objects to indigenous communities enabled his expedition to continue on their journey towards Quito: "Todos los moradores del rrio de Sta. Luzia deje contentos é satisfhos con dadibas

Furthermore, through the technique of slash-and-burn used by both indigenous and European peoples one is able to read the different ways this practice was used to shape overlapping worlds. A cleared forest presents an apt situation for agriculture just as it does an opportunity to acquire access to previously secluded areas. These applications are not mutually exclusive and are suggested by Chantre y Herrera's mention of settlement patterns to be influential in "attracting" subjects to inhabit their *reducciones* when both slash-and-burn strategies are used together. Throughout written and material records, one finds attempts to manage the environment that interferes with the visions for the New World. However, these efforts are not limited to the actions of foreigners to these parts but also include the projects of non-Europeans with plans of their own for the shaping of these worlds.

To answer the question framing this chapter and section, how one perceives the subaltern's ability to shape the New World is based on the way absences are interpreted. Indigenous practices of world shaping are ostensibly thought to be omitted from the collective narrative of the colonial New World given the primarily European and to a lesser degree *mestizo* records that are found in the archives. Yet what escapes this premise is the indirect reading of indigenous world shaping practices that can take place using these very records but redefining the role of absences, no longer treating these documents as exclusive representations of those cultures responsible for writing them. Although he focuses on a single writer, Pacheco de Oliveira's understanding of the ethnographic record illustrates this point as it involves reading both what is and is not included within an ethnographer's body of writing on indigenous cultures

de Achas, cosillas, Anzuelos y valorios, y peines; y otras cosas, por me parecer ânsi conveniente âl servicio de S.M., por lo mucho que quellas partes prometen, y saliendo de allí torne a buscar el camino del rrio Maranon y metido en el camine siete días despoblado" (6v). Relating the satisfaction that their recipients felt with the tools given to them by the travellers and later reporting on the way they carried on with their mission, Teixeira's narrative itself pauses in a digression before it can continue with its usual descriptions of the landscape. In this manner, the inhabitants of Sta. Lucia are acknowledged as barriers that, through the act of receiving the listed articles, are overcome, allowing the travel narrative to progress. It is another, albeit symbolic, dimension of the axe's facilitation of expansion into the Amazon.

to be equally informative. It communicates an image of indigenous worlds as something that is constructed through observations. If there are gaps in the information that is relayed, it is less about worlds that are lacking than it is about writers omitting vital details.

In search of a recognizably indigenous presence, when Amazonian archaeologists seek to recover and examine the remnants of a material culture, their search is dedicated to understanding precisely its vitality. To identify the activity of the Amazon, many have turned to the *várzea* and its wetland soils which are considered to be “among the most fertile of the Amazon” as well as the similarly-classified *terra preta* (Rostain 47). These soils along the edges of the Amazon River and its tributaries are analyzed for the kind of life they supported. From agricultural to social practices, information about the worlds that existed in relation to this type of earth emphasizes the continuous activity that took place on these grounds. Likewise, archaeological research on the *várzea* and *terra preta* refers to these sites in terms of their fecundity. The alluvial mixture of water and soil in the *várzea* and its annual renewal during flood seasons are conveyed as characteristics of a world where rivers are an essential shaping device. The areas they flood are discussed in terms of what the soil gains from this fluvial interaction rather than what is lost. As Mark Harris puts it, it is helpful to “understand the floodplain not just as a place that limits human life, but one that enables it, offering potential and opportunity” (38). The earth treated by this cycle of floods is connected with life, both that of the crops that it is suited to yield and to the human activity that it attracts to its surface. Moreover, what archaeologists like Manuel Arroyo-Kalin find in the enriched soils of central Amazonia are patterns of this human activity that took place during the regions formative period that have been recorded on its stratified ground. The presence of distinct minerals and materials in these layers are used to indicate patterns of human modification of the earth in these areas by pre-colonial

communities and have served researchers as evidence for understanding the kind of vitality that the rainforest landscape has sustained:

Estes solos enriquecidos são provavelmente formas embrionárias dos solos antropogênicos posteriores, o que hoje reconhecemos como *terras pretas de índio*. Pelo menos em Araracuara, antrosolos acompanham a presença de micro-fósseis de cultivos extra-amazônicos, que precisam de um pH menos ácido e de teores mais altos de nutrientes. É pouco provável que essa ocorrência seja aleatória, é muito mais provável que o cultivo dessas espécies tenha sido possibilitado pelo enriquecimento do solo decorrente de dinâmicas de concentração e domesticação de árvores frutíferas, além da deposição de sementes, ossos, carvão e cinza em lixeiras associadas a ocupações recorrentes do mesmo local. (Arroyo-Kalin 892)

The traces of microscopic remains in the soil that are not indigenous to the area indicate human involvement as one of the primary agents responsible for this relocation and the effect is has had on the crops that could be cultivated there. Pre-colonial cases such as this expand the meaning of vitality to include anthropogenic activity wherein the earth is conditioned and not simply found to be fertile. With the cultivation of fruit trees in soil treated with sedimentary deposits, bones, ashes, and other elements conducive to the growth of crops, the environment ceases to be the only force that impacts the landscape. The diffusion of these organic components by way of human occupation suggests that the earth was modified to be productive and that, by extension, life in the Amazon involved design. ‘Antrosolos’, the soil that Arroyo-Kalin labels as the precursor to the *terras pretas de índio*, convey a human conditioning of nature in a similar fashion to the way nature is thought to condition life. Interpreting the information of earth samples from archaeological excavations, low acidity levels and a higher concentration of nutrients are findings that simultaneously narrate the story of human occupation and their contribution to the composition of the Amazon.

Furthermore, the content of tiered soil also opens vitality to temporal considerations. Arroyo-Kalin argues this point when he stresses that variations between layers suggest that the

same sites could have been used and altered by different peoples in distinct eras and successive products grown there would indicate the kind of activity the soil has undergone. He states this when he compares pre- and post-ceramic strata in the soil and the kinds of manioc that were cultivated in each period, with ceramic technology allowing for the production of a variety of the crop that is high in starch yet bitter in taste. In order to achieve this feature in cassava production, the soil had to contain elevated levels of acidity, levels in which the sweet variety of the tuber, known as *mandioca doce* or *macaxeira* could not flourish. Selective horticulture was therefore centred on the modification of the soil so that in turn the properties of the crop, too, would be altered. Using “a evolução da complexa tecnologia de ralar, espremer e ferver”, those elements that kept acidity levels low in *terra preta* soil were removed in order to produce manioc of the bitter variety:

Pois, sem esse conjunto de práticas culturais, as opções de reduzir a toxicidade dos tubérculos deve-se basear em processos análogos aos utilizados na fabricação da farinha d’água, o que levaria – sem o uso de vasilhas cerâmicas – a uma menor produção de amido. Pode-se sugerir, então, que a mandioca doce pode ter sido usada originalmente por grupos pré-ceramistas e que a mandioca brava pode ter sido resultado da evolução agrícola decorrente da utilização de tipitis e vasilhas ceramic, e da adoção de práticas de abrir roçados em áreas de floresta. (Arroyo-Kalin 896)

Ceramic technology enabled the *terra preta* Anthrosol to be further modified in order to change the type of crop it can yield. This reconfiguration, described by Arroyo-Kalin as the product of an “evolution” in agricultural practices, contextualizes human engagement with the soil to be diverse. The most prominent distinguishing factor is periodization wherein the use of tools like vessels that communities during the ceramic era utilized to alter the acidity in the soil is interpreted as having allowed them to therefore harvest a product that was distinct from the one that previous cultures reaped. From those who opted to keep the inherent properties of the dark earth to those later inhabitants of the central Amazonia that preferred an acidic crop for its starch

content, the repurposing of soil to obtain the most out of it indicates a process of repeatedly shaping the environment into the form that one sees fit. These world designs that one finds materialized in the soil ultimately assist archaeologists studying pre-Columbian Amazonia in plotting a narrative about the kind of vitality that formed on the surface of dark earths. Although it is referred to as an indigenous process, there is no single culture that definitively altered the *terras pretas* but instead it is the repeated preparation of the earth over time that makes its shaping a cumulative procedure. In effect, the alteration of Amazonian dark earth is understood within the timeframe of a prolonged history of occupations. As Arroyo-Kalin concludes from his findings:

A mandioca brava ocorre justamente na area onde é registrada uma explosão repentina de ocupações ceramistas que formam as *terras pretas* no começo do primeiro milênio da era Cristã. A mandioca doce ocorre numa extensa área na qual as pesquisas arqueológicas até agora, não acharam grandes extensões de *terras pretas* de *antiguidade similar*; onde existe múltiplas famílias linguísticas e línguas isoladas; e – onde, ainda que ocorram cerâmica modelada, muito antigas, não foi possível identificar com segurança a presença de cerâmica modelada, o que Lathrap chamou do Barrancoide na Amzônia. A única exceção para esse quadro é a região do Alto Madeira, onde foram datadas as *terras pretas* mais antigas da Amazônia, onde a mandioca foi domesticada, e onde atualmente se consome principalmente a macaxeira. (896)

The differences in ceramic technology are cited as having an immediate connection with the extension of dark earth found at excavation sites and have allowed archaeologists to deduce, in conjunction with data on the linguistic and material dispersal of communities throughout the Amazon, the cultures to which they correspond. Yet in the case of Alto Madeira, there is an exception to this pattern as the treatment of the soil parallels that used to cultivate *mandioca brava* but where sweet cassava was sown instead. Reading cultures and cultural practices in the soil, the plural uses assigned to it reveal a design that is aided but, as the aforementioned exception shows, not restricted by the tools of the time. Other factors, such as linguistic

influence, settlement patterns, and human deliberation are necessary to understand the anthropogenic changes to the worlds of the Amazon.

Locating an abundance and variety of life in the New World leads us to analyze how this life is featured. Given the limited attention to non-European engagements with the Amazon in seventeenth-century chronicles, the rainforest's liveliness suggested by material records seems to contradict the former image. However, the mode in which this vitality is interpreted can also serve a contrary purpose to the one it is expected to prove. Readings of vitality in the Amazon, Rostain warns, are prone to be understood to be equally present throughout all of its regions, a standpoint that apportioned the understanding of the life these areas support to be just as consistent. To illustrate this, he draws on his comparative research on the Amazonian regions of the Guianas:

The principal fault of some authors may be to assume that demographic growth in Amazon resembled a regularly rising curve, without considering the heterogeneity of the landscape and its variability through time. Humans did not equally exploit all of the tropical biotopes; they found the open areas of the savannas and the *várzea* much more appealing. The agricultural and diverse resources also vary to great extent between the different natural habitats. Although large and dense societies may have developed on the alluvial plains, the interior savannas of Guiana do not seem to have experienced comparable demographic growth. Whether considering Formative period fisher-gatherers or more recent farmers, areas of *várzea* were clearly more favorable for sedentism than other regions of the Amazon (133)

The diversity of agricultural practices that Rostain refers to is the disproportionate alteration of the Amazon Rainforest by communities that preferred one type of area over the other. According to him, a discrepancy arises between this heterogeneous landscape and the uniform explanation of human activity in Amazonia as the latter's design does not include intensified engagements with the environment that in turn separated these from other biotopes. The irregularity of a heterogeneous Amazonia, moreover, is recovered by a reading that deems the image of a monolithic rainforest to be suspect. In the absence of enclaves of indigenous communities from

conceptualizations of the Amazon, design choices behind the definition of this landmass that *are* provided are read precisely as selective renderings.

Just as those details that are included in a chronicle follow a tacit rationale, if anything is left out it is also for a reason. By identifying this reason one engages with a design established for depicted worlds to follow. For instance, if one interprets the previous example provided by Rostain, describing the tools involved in slash-and-burn agriculture, to suggest a struggle with the environment, investigating what aspect of the Amazon Chantre y Herrera found difficult to overcome simultaneously reveals the plan this was impeding from coming into fruition. In essence, the rainforest and its inhabitants, by respectively being extensive and many, stood in the way of efficiently instituting *aldeias*, which, in effect, would allow for the heterogeneous Amazon to be reduced to a manageable unit. In place of lamenting the difficulties of making incursion towards the inland regions of the continent, Chantre y Herrera highlights how indispensable axes have proven to be for overcoming obstructions. The elimination of those features of the Amazon that appeared to be insurmountable redirect one's attention away from the resulting homogeneous environment that the same tools facilitated. Challenges in and of themselves are not the focus in narratives like these, but rather it is the triumphs over them and what could be realized in spite of them that are the subject of attention. In these accounts of ingenuity in the face of adversity, of consolidation where disparity was believed to reign, what is left unaccounted for is the nature of the disruptive forces that antagonize these ends. They are simply presented as a collective risk to the implementation of an external design, such as that of the *aldeias*, but this inclusion is nevertheless useful to those attempting to identify non-European agency in the shaping of the New World. In these chronicles, the Amazonian vitality is acknowledged, and although it is relegated to an adversarial position, it is nonetheless present

and sufficiently disruptive to projects that they become embedded in the latter. It is this view that Rostain conveys when he attributes the “social homogenization” of indigenous communities to “the impact of the European conquest”, interpreting colonial enterprises such as that of Chantre y Herrera to be constructed upon the administration of life in the heterogeneous Amazon (134). The mode in which vitality is integrated into colonial designs is a question that turns associated records into sites that, by virtue of responding and proposing solutions to the activities encountered on inland voyages, record Amazonian ways of life. As they are so tautly intertwined, to dispel colonial records for their partialities would be to dismiss as well the contributions of non-Europeans to the shaping of the New World that are also included in the same texts, only in the form of anomalies.

The task at hand, then, is to locate the diverse indigenous communities and the way they modified the Amazon in the ‘difficulties’ they posed to colonial plans. What is being proposed as a response to the ever-present conundrum of locating indigenous agency is being done primarily through non-indigenous texts where this is considered to be absent. This contradictory approach to seventeenth-century Amazonia, however, relies heavily on the interpretation of these texts, on reading what is there in conjunction to what is less apparently recorded. It requires what Neil Whitehead calls “sophisticated interpretive strategies”, which literary hermeneutics is particularly capable of contributing (ix). For what he hopes to accomplish, the proposed strategy to read absences and missing archival information as indications of an indigenous presence in these texts is a useful though problematic initiative. Explicating his proposal for a large-scaled examination of the colonial Amazon based precisely on European texts, he delves into the scepticism this approach faces as a mode of inquiry into an indigenous past. Beginning with the idea that “socially and culturally biased materials” are used to reconstruct histories of non-

Europeans and their counterparts alike, Whitehead asserts that apprehensions with “the attempt to read others through the writings of their conquerors” stems from a view maintaining that although these worlds occupied the same New World space, they existed separately from each other (ix-x). Instead of interpreting the interactions in Amazonia between native groups and travellers to these parts as diametrical, the proposal is to read them as part of a dynamic encounter of worlds and the texts where they are fleetingly featured as the sites where such analysis can be sustained in conjunction with additional information on indigenous communities:

It is not enough to say simply that cultural bias in European writing on non-Europeans needs to be factored out, accounted for, or otherwise made overt – for this leaves us only with hollow texts and empty documents. Therefore, going along with this critical appreciation of the culturally dependent nature of historical and ethnographic representation, we must also consider Native social and cultural practices, particularly as expressed in Native discourse. In doing so we can immediately see that Amazon warriors, ferocious cannibals, and even El Dorado himself appear to be less the pure result of European cultural projection and as much an element in existing Native cosmologies and mythologies. The presence of analogous symbolic and discursive motifs in both Amazonian and non-Amazonian thought makes interpretation more difficult but simultaneously provides the hermeneutic strategy by which such histories may be written – for they are histories of the mutual, mimetic, and entangled relations of Amazonians and non-Amazonians over the last five hundred years. In this way Native cultural practice is itself an equally necessary and viable context for the interpretation and analysis of European texts. (x)

Upon considering the colonial interactions in the Amazon to be part of a web of relations rather than a series of isolated events, a context emerges in which indigenous activity cannot be extricated from the definition of the worlds featured in European texts. What precedes any interpretation of colonial documents, more aptly, is the understanding that these texts are not disconnected from “Native discourse”. What is more, it is precisely because these worlds shape each other in such a dynamic fashion that this context indeed “makes interpretation more difficult”. In large part, the difficulty does not arise from an endeavour to distinguish what is and is not ‘autochthonous’ but rather from finding a suitable method to engage with these texts in a

manner that reflects the kinds of engagements that took place in the Amazon. It is here that challenges to colonial projects or incongruities with these that writers claim the New World to pose acquire further significance as archival texts of this sort in truth indicate the existence of a series of complex relations. Learning to interpret the terse label of impediments in colonial records as signposts for the interactions between Amazonian and non-Amazonian worldviews allows one to reassess the type of information that can be extracted from writing that would seem to be of little importance to investigations attempting to reconstruct indigenous practices.

In order for the approach to be effective, in addition to knowing how to read one must also discern what to read. A more comprehensive study of the Amazon, such as the one Whitehead proposes, can counter the oversimplification of colonial texts and their place in this field. His recommendation is that chronicles be used to initiate investigations but should not be thought to exhaust them:

We must at least address the full range of textual production that took place during European colonial expansion, for without this more tedious and lengthy exercise, it becomes quite impossible to say what the relationship of European description to Native cultural practice may have been. This also means that the study of the kinds of textual production of the 17th and 18th centuries, referred to above, has to be complimented by study of the letters and reports produced by individual missionaries and colonial officials.
(x)

The purpose of drawing from distinct sources of information when reading colonial chronicles is to investigate those elements that writers deemed to be best left out. ‘Gaps’ in documents pertaining to the peoples encountered in travels through the New World, such as those explored in concept of the ‘incomplete’ within the first chapter and through the chronicle featured in the second, provide an indication of how writers proposed to handle the portrayal of this vitality in their works, but it is in conjunction with contemporaneous records that one can come to know what aspects of it warranted this treatment. It is in this sense that Amazonian archaeology and

the Jesuit *cartas annuas* can augment our mode of analysis into the worlds that Acuña and Teixeira attempt to capture through words. Being a form of documentation in which denial of the presence and impact of non-European communities in Amazonia would annul the purpose behind these projects, letters and material findings provide a view into the way institutional attempts to establish one kind of order in these parts on the basis of acknowledging in some form the prior existence of another, conflicting arrangement. In essence, the attention of the *cartas annuas* is placed on the mode in which worlds can be built upon each other, something we began to address in the third chapter but which we now revisit in a noticeably different context as missionaries attempt to reconcile the instability of a process that involves building upon non-European configurations of the Amazon. Prior to pursuing this line of inquiry, however, there is one additional methodological consideration to address.

Not all challenges to colonial projects manifest themselves in the same way. Hal Langfur explains this position by identifying those concepts holding an ‘indigenous’ engagement with the New World to be inherently different as examples of another way these communities are homogenized:

Throughout the colonial period, with few exceptions, the distinct groups comprising the kaleidoscopic population of lowland South America embraced no sense of common identity vis-à-vis the Portuguese, Dutch, French, Spanish, and others who at one point or another had designs on their territory or labor. Native struggles and aspirations centered on the local and regional, not on the wider realm of the colony as a whole. To emphasize ways in which individual kin groups or tribes contributed to or rejected the colonial project is to risk misconstruing the basis of Indian conduct. Their relations with the colonial world drew on a calculus internal to their communities, which can often be discerned only faintly. Native cosmology and prophecy, the ravages of epidemic disease, the claims of competing headmen and clans, revenge, the search for food, the demands of indigenous distribution networks for metal and other manufactured objects, interaction with peoples of African descent, and growing historical experience of both conflict and cooperation with settlers mattered in ways that cannot be reduced to simple dualities. (14)

What Langfur lists are the sites where chronicles can be reread to perceive, albeit “faintly”, the presence of indigenous worlds in a new, regional context. The argument is that these worlds shape the colonial world indirectly; responding to events and situations caused by expansionist efforts as these manifest themselves in quotidian affairs. To speak of an ‘indigenous response’ is to assume, according to Langfur, that a univocal stance exists. As he demonstrates, such reading reduces a diversity of communities to the binary roles of either supporters or adversaries of colonial projects as non-European peoples and their actions are collectively classified as ‘indigenous’. In effect, identifying vitality where others posit an absence of indigenous agency in the shaping of the New World has the same overall effect if the life that is identified is considered to be one and the same. Nevertheless, if one begins with the ‘common identity’ that colonial texts offer, inconsistencies with what is presumed to be typical indigenous behaviour can indicate activity that takes place outside of these definitions. One now returns to the absences of indigenous actors in colonial texts with this concept of vitality in mind, prepared to read the irregularities at the heart of the archival sources on the Amazon as a confluence of worlds.

III. Accommodations

We apply this approach to the writing of missionaries that simultaneously followed an objective as defined by their orders but also wrote about uncharacteristic subjects and in ways that fall outside of these conditions and considerations. The Jesuit Simão de Vasconcelos reflects on the mutability of colonial Brazil in his seventeenth-century text describing the unusual creatures found therein. Deliberating on the origin of the peoples that one ‘discovers’ upon traveling to Brazil, the first book of the *Notícias curiosas e necessárias das cousas do Brasil* (1668), compiled from the larger *Crónica da Companhia de Jesus do estado do Brasil* (1663), emphasizes the abundance of life that the chronicler observes in these parts. When contrasted

with the edenic New World, the eclectic flora, fauna, and peoples of Brazil did not conform to the idea of a halcyon environment that one would associate with a terrestrial paradise. Some of these elements presented a danger for travellers while others were considered to be oddities, therefore simply referring to the spaces of Brazil as ‘edenic’ could not capture those facets of its worlds which were too diverse to be defined as such. Even in the way that the vitality in Brazil was viewed, especially in the inland regions, it was difficult to find a common definition for this place. The question of the ways the Amazon can be perceived is a something that Vasconcelos admits to rarely be the same for two observers:

Estas eternas aparências, viram os exploradores somente, e só com elas ficaram admirados: que fariam, se vissem sues interiores? Se penetraram aqueal matas solitárias, e viram a multidão de feras que por ali se criam, isentas das traições da gente humana? Cansariam de contar suas espécies somente: umas veriam de animais nocivos, tigres, onças, gatos silvestres, serpentes, cobras, crocodilos, raposas. Outras de animais de caça, antas, veados, porcos monteses, a quários, pacas, tatus, tamanduás, lebres coelhos, e estes de 5, ou 6 espécies. Outras de animais de gosto, e recreação, monos, macacos, bugios, saguis, preguiças, cotias, e outras espécies sem conto. Veriam aves as mais formosas, e numerosas, que se vêem em outra alguma parte do mundo. Só seus nomes sem outra descrição lhes gastaria muito papel; admiráveis em variedade, penas, cores, e formosura. (Par. 71)

The species of inland Brazil are many. This is the general impression that Vasconcelos’ description conveys. But the way one perceives this variety is also manifold. The plural visions of ‘paradise’ are present in the adjectives he reserves for what travellers to Brazil “veriam”, from dangerous tigers to the “animais de gosto” such as the apes and the ‘gorgeous’ birds. The range of classifications for these creatures are as numerous, Vasconcelos suggests, as the life they describe which, based on the number of pages he claims that ‘would be wasted’ trying to name them all, is considerable. No single viewpoint conveys the variegated biosphere that is the interior of Brazil because this landscape cannot be experienced in a single viewing. In fact, and not unlike the aforementioned ethnographic model, the Jesuit chronicle maintains that Brazil’s

eclectic environments are best appreciated by those who venture inland. Those who remain on its fringes, enraptured by the sights of coastal Brazil, have only come to know a meagre portion of what can be experienced closer to the heart of the continent. The contrast is set by the musings done in the conditional clause regarding the way those travelers who do not stray far from the shores would react upon encountering the hidden life of Brazil. It is speculation that anticipates these reactions to be unpredictable given the equally irregular life that dwells there.

Present, therefore, in Vasconcelos' Brazilian report is the manifestation of life in the New World as a series of incongruities. In the previous example, incommensurable experiences of Brazil are portrayed through the "variety, colours, and beauty" of the flora and fauna. Yet, added to this is the presence of human amongst these organisms which are also considered to form part of the irregularity of life in colonial Brazil. In the same passage describing the hypothetical sights that one would behold, not long after the mention of 'feral creatures' that roam the interior, humans are introduced as treacherous beings that also inhabit these regions. Humans become another 'curiosity' in the text and are portrayed to be in direct connection with the conditions of life in the Amazon. They are featured in this way through the associations made between their behaviour and that of endemic animals, sharing more with this last group than with the chronicler who observes such conduct. The most evident of effects derived from this grouping is the distance it generates between the feral and the lettered, the observed and the observer, distinctly demarcating one type of existence from the other while underscoring the irregularity of Amazonian life in contrast. But this distance serves a secondary function as it establishes cosmographical affinities amongst those 'like' entities of the rainforest. Between local peoples and their surrounding environment, represented in the text by its fauna, Vasconcelos proposes that human inhabitants share more than behavioural habits and a habitat

with the other creatures given that their similar existence within the common domain of the rainforest serves as a connection allowing them to participate in a local conceptualization of the Amazon in which explorers of these parts cannot freely partake. As outsiders, the distance separating observers from this local mode of perception, generated here on the basis of differences in comport, reveal a disparity and limits to what non-native individuals can comprehend about Amazonia. However, Vasconcelos' text does not seek to reconcile this ontological disjuncture but rather stresses the differences in experience that come from a local vision of the Amazon which is privileged with a greater understanding of its worlds. If such asymmetry separates inhabitants from foreigners to these parts, aligning oneself as much as possible with the mode of discernment of the former becomes a way of surmounting the divide. This reasoning has Vasconcelos opting to include information about Brazil that goes beyond historical written accounts in the form of narratives told from an 'indigenous viewpoint'.⁶⁵

Where Vasconcelos seeks to overcome this irregularity of visions is in the explanations that he provides regarding the origins of the Amazon's curiosities. The marvels that abound in the tropical rainforest are narrated in the chronicle as materializations of an idiosyncratic form of existence. Amazonian life in all of its ubiquitous variety is suggested by Vasconcelos to be decipherable through an understanding of the significance behind and impressed throughout its anomalous environment. Primary among these telling materializations is the Amazon River which he considers to be the embodiment of irregularity through its disproportionate size as a fluvial entity:

⁶⁵ If one recalls Cabodevilla's stance towards local approaches to the past in the previous chapter, Vasconcelos' approach to understanding the Amazon from an indigenous point of view may seem to be an early example of the same reconstructive project. Yet, besides the reality that no direct correlation, apart from a general conceptual similitude, exists between the two, there is a fundamental difference in the appropriation of an indigenous outlook that Vasconcelos practices and Cabodevilla's position that suggests such worldviews to be exclusive to and therefore only recoverable by members of local communities.

Da grandeza disforme deste rio se colhe facilmente o grosso de seu corpo, e o largo de sua boca. O grosso de seu corpo é alimentado de tantos rios, quantos se consideram pagar-lhe o tributo devido de suas águas, por tão grande espaço, como é o de mil e trezentas até mil e oiteocentas léguas, afora a extensão de seus braços: porque entrando estes com mais de mil léguas, e posto seu diâmetro, vem a somar toda a circunferência de seu grande domínio sobre quatro mil léguas, em boa aritmética. (Par.25)

The impression given is that of the river as a gargantuan body that cannot be viewed in its entirety even when travelling through it. Extended across large part of Brazil, the Amazon River is depicted as a recumbent giant of ill proportions that is inextricably connected to the land upon which it rests. Tributaries, true to the dual significance of their name, ‘feed’ every part of its extremities in Vasconcelos’ description which blends topographical language with anatomical overtones. Identifying the Amazon River to consist of a ‘torso’, ‘mouth’, and ‘arms’, the areas surrounding this elongated body become the vessels that maintain it as they allow waters to course into it. What is also implicit is the kind of body that is being sustained through the vascular system of water. Amazonia, it appears, is governed by a monstrosity. Such is the irregular size of the Amazon River that Vasconcelos refers to it on a global scale and places its imposing stature on the top rung of this hierarchy:

O das Almazonas, por outro nome Grão-Pará, sem exageração alguma, é o imperador de todos os rios do mundo; e qualquer dos que celebra a antiguidade, à vista deste fica sendo um pequeno pigmeu em comparação de um grande gigante. Chamam-lhe os naturais Paraguaçu, que quer dizer mar grande: e tem razão, pois para ser um mar, falta-lhe só serem suas águas salgadas. Jacte-se embora o antigo mundo de seus famosos rios: a Índia do seu sagrado Ganges, a Assíria do seu ligeiro Tigris, a Arménia do seu fecundo Eufrates, a África do seu precioso Nilo, que todos estes juntos em um corpo, são pouca água, em comparação de um só Grão-Pará. (Par. 23)

The dimensions of the river in this passage are likened to those of an ocean with the only difference being that in the Amazon River one does not find saline waters. An ocean bound only by the horizons of sight becomes a characteristic of the continental river and serves as a point of comparison to other rivers on a grand scale. Due to its immensity, the relation Vasconcelos finds

between Amazon River and other notable fluvial systems of India, Syria, Armenia, and Africa is one of a body of water that dwarfs the others. Moreover, so vast is its depiction in the chronicle that the New World's river seems to devour those of the Old World. All of these rivers gathered as one 'body', argues Vasconcelos, would still be insufficient to satisfy the size of the Amazon River. Therefore, surpassed by no other in the Jesuit's account of its magnitude yet also connected to the fluvial systems of Brazil, the oceanic river exists at once on a global scale as well as one that is regional. It is in this context that the 'curiosities' of Amazonia are traced to a point of origin wherein anything that comes out of this oddly-proportioned 'body' is seen as merely personifying the irregularity of its governing source of life.

Vasconcelos' work puts the description of the Amazon into perspective as a record of an indigenous cosmography. In addition to stimulating the imagination, the image of an anomalously-proportioned river is suggested to be related to stories of the disproportionately-sized humans that roamed the interior of the rainforest. According to the synopsis Vasconcelos provides, these beings found the shores of the expansive river to be a suitable home for their kind and established their communities there alongside other chimerical beings:

Diziam, que entre as nações sobreditas, moravam algumas monstruosas. Ema é de anãos, de estatura tão pequena, que parecem afronta dos homens, chamados goiaizis. Outra é de casta de gente, que nasce com os pés às avessas: de maneira que quem houver de seguir seu caminho, há de andar ao revés do que vão mostrando as pisadas: chamam-se estes matuiús. Outra nação é de homens gigantes, de 16 palmos de alto, valentíssimos, adornados de pedços de ouro por beijos e narizes, aos quais todos os outros pagam respeito: tem por nome curinqueans. Finalmente que há outra nação de mulheres também monstruosas do modo de viver (são as que hoje chamamos almazonas, semelhantes às da antiguidade, e de que tomou o nome o rio) porque são mulheres guerreiras, que vivem per si sós sem comércio de homens: habitam grandes povoações de uma província inteira, cultivando as terras, sustentando-se de seus próprios trabalhos. (Par. 31)

With the description of the immense river transitioning into an account of giant beings, together these parallel images confer upon the Amazon, through their enormous dimensions, a particular

spatial quality. But there is also variety to be found in this rendition of the Amazon River as diminutive creatures and “mulheres tambem monstruosas” are also said to be dwellers of the rainforest. Connecting this plethora of curiosities is the river itself which, being sufficiently large and equally ‘monstruous’ in constitution, congregates these groups and in doing so provides adequate space for their existence. In size and substance, moreover, the imposing scale of Amazonia works with this diversity to define a model through which the life it sustains can be perceived. The description of the female warriors stands out as the place in which this connection is established. Specifically, in the parenthetical note attributing the name of the river to the presence of the female Amazons one finds a connection in which these iconoclastic women are responsible for giving their surrounding its identity. Living in large populations along its course, they are depicted as the source of the Amazon River’s material shape as well, tending to its lands and cultivate its forests. The intertwined existence and shared characteristics of the anomalous life and setting of the Amazon become the legend that Vasconcelos provides for an approximation to a different understanding of this enigmatic place.

Although he narrates them, Vasconcelos communicates that these stories are not his. He is adamant in pointing out to the readers of his chronicle that the source of these narratives is indigenous in origin and has been passed along not only to him, but to others who have travelled through the Amazon. The Jesuit chronicler declares immediately after glossing the curiosities of the Amazon that “todas estas cousas contavam os índios àqueles primeiros descobridores: e todas elas, e muito maiores descobriu o discurso do tempo” (Par.32). Indicated in this statement is the way the writer interprets the context of local histories as one that exceeds the boundaries of the Amazon through the transmission of information. The presence of indigenous peoples as the narrators of this curious rendition of Amazonia, who repeatedly “contavam” these stories to

explorers, appears as a seal of authenticity, as it were, that lends credibility to those texts providing similar accounts but penned by foreigners. In recounting these oral narratives of exaggerated geographies, beings, and the environments that hold them, Vasconcelos demonstrates that these features exist within a confluence between indigenous and non-indigenous views of the Amazon. “Vejam-se os autores que hoje tratam deste grande rio,” Vasconcelos urges, “tantas vezes depois navegado, e explorado por mandado dos reis”, establishing the legacy of these stories in subsequent voyages which, with added information of discoveries he considers to be “muito maiores”, have gone on to shape the way the Amazon is discussed (Par. 31). ‘Anomalies’ become expressions of an indigenous mode of conceptualizing the surrounding world and even provide the basis for western cosmographies of the Amazon. With the nameless, collective “índios” describing their worlds, it is as if the Amazon’s oddities were being narrated directly by the place that produces these curiosities, as if these worlds were revealing their reason for being. Expressed as recipients of this view, occidental depictions of the tropical rainforest’s worlds, to which we add the *Notícias curiosas*, are shown to be synchronized with local sensibilities and extensions of them. Vasconcelos lists the geography of Abraham Ortelius and Cristóbal de Acuña as examples of the support indigenous sources lends to the corroboration of printed details about life along the equatorial river. While indigenous perceptions inform these details, the confluence of worldviews does not blend them indiscriminately. Even Vasconcelos’ account, never dropping ‘curiosidades’ as a useful adjective for prefacing his descriptions, reinforces the distinction of local narratives from specialized texts on the Amazon. Acknowledging the existence and value of a regional cosmography does not necessarily imply a deferral to it, but rather serves to underscore further means in which such indigenous views could be useful. As a point of departure, a modified view of the Amazon *from*

the Amazon is an approach that is therefore interpolated into to the establishment of colonial order in worlds that would not otherwise be possible to penetrate. It is this strategy that the *Cartas annuas* of the mid-seventeenth century therefore bolster to promote incursions into irregular areas of the Amazon with the aim of establishing and administering *aldeas*, all in a manner that is spatially and culturally attuned to surrounding lifeways.

Few are the instances amongst the *cartas annuas* in which one finds as open an acknowledgement of Amazonian contributions to the understanding of its worlds as one does Vasconcelos' text. At the same time, this does not mean that a local worldview is absent from the annual reports. Instead of an overt attribution, the *cartas annuas* incorporate the tension that rises from the incongruity of modes of perceiving the spaces of the Amazon. In this manner, there is a separation, similar to the one present in the *Notícias curiosas*, between such views. Nevertheless, where Vasconcelos associates the narration of the Amazon's past with an affirmation of an indigenous conceptualization and form of understanding, the *cartas annuas* connote a process in which this view is shaped through negations. Specifically, resistances to western modes of organizing the worlds of the Amazon are where the annual Jesuit reports become useful for tracing the contributions of non-Europeans to colonial designs for these spaces while illuminating the way these tensions are incorporated and materialize into the operation of *aldeas*.

A regard for and use of space is present in the narratives of missionary ventures within the New World that set out to stabilize these worlds. The order evangelization could potentially implement is conveyed in colonial writing in terms of a constancy or regularity that is not only spiritual but also tangible. The changes brought about by conversions were directed towards the reconstitution of souls just as they were towards the surroundings in which these inhabited. The linguistic anthropologist William F. Hanks, for instance, finds the Franciscan *reducciones* during

the early colonization of the Yucatec Maya to consist of spatial inscriptions of “schemas of inspecting, gathering, and entering” that were part of what he defines as the act of reducing: “Like the mental habits discussed by Panofsky and the civilizing process of Elias, the mindset of *reducción* was embodied in a whole constellation of social forms and ways of perceiving. The properties of iteration, self-replication, and dispersion were integral to *reducción*, as well as to its ultimate inability to contain the conversions it set in motion” (xv). As he analyzes the ramifications of this process into *pueblos reducidos*, *indios reducidos*, and *lengua reducida*, Hanks demonstrates that in the nexus of the *reducciones* there is an encroachment of this act in the most salient modes an individual uses to perceive her or his world. At the disposal of missionaries were instruments such as chronicles and catechisms that, by re-inscribing the way indigenous worlds could be conceptualized, ‘enclosed’ or had the subject of conversions ‘enter’ a colonial system by which they were to be contained. Because this reordering permeates various levels of quotidian interactions with one’s surrounding, Hanks illustrates the extent to which in some ways it could appear to be virtually inescapable yet prove otherwise in other cases, citing records from some regions, like the Sahcabchén, as examples of this oscillation: “An individual could be *reducido* at one time, then flee to become a fugitive or an apostate idolater, then subsequently return to the *reducción*. *Reducción* was serial in practice, and the *indio reducido* of today might well be yesterday’s apostate, or tomorrow’s idolater; hence the ‘perpetual *reducción*’” (56). Although a spatial structure was established in the colonies through a Franciscan curriculum, delineating boundaries between the world of the reductions and the New World and more importantly regulating activity between them, there was also the possibility that these demarcations could be transgressed yet, as Hanks shows, this did not mean they were completely erased. The interiorized disposition toward conversion that catechisms and other

auxiliary discourses helped implement meant that once an individual became an *indio reducido*, they had been sufficiently integrated within the *reducción* to recognize how to return to it. In essence, the ‘perpetual *reducción*’ is not a place, but a perception of space. Through Hanks’ analysis of the linguistic ordering of space in catechisms one concludes that the reorganization of the layout of the land pertaining to the way missionaries managed colonial spaces relied in great part on the way these spaces could be perceived, a project deemed to be realized most effectively through the interior reach of evangelization.

This union of worlds, nonetheless, did not consist of a complete suturing of a gap between colonies, as the case of seventeenth-century Amazonia reveals attempts to coalesce non-Western worlds that were based on negotiations between all parties. In between the worlds of the *aldeas* lay ‘countless’ indigenous and foreign communities from which missionaries drew potential members to their sites. What also lay between *aldeas* was distance, spatial and conceptual. The amplitude of the Amazon and the people and things found within it presented an irreducible vastness that exceeded the spatial capacity of the *aldeas* which were aimed at consolidation and regional integration. Conceptually, a distinction arises, at least in theory, out of the boundaries of the *aldeas* that separated these spaces from the rest of the Amazon. This is akin to the dynamic Hanks discusses amongst the Mayan *reducciones* insofar as the arrangement of missionary sites according to a radial design that was devised to contain also served to establish a second space that remained external. We detect in this formula an extension of a Cartesian worldview that finds relations between interior and exterior worlds to be disconnected. One could read many of the initial complications associated with introducing Amazonian peoples to *aldeas* as patent examples of the difficulties that come with bringing in someone from the outside, of the conflict that altering an external mode of perception entails. This understanding is

not only viable in Amazonian studies, but also elaborated upon through the notion of “perspectivism” associated with Eduardo Viveiros de Castro’s work. How one perceives the world can be a point of violent contention as these modes can seem to so separate that they appear to be irreconcilable.⁶⁶ Viveiros de Castro highlights colonial attitudes towards radical differences in perception when he begins *O mármore e a murta: sobre a inconstância da alma selvagem* (1992) by citing Antônio Vieira’s sermon demonstrating the disposition of Indians towards Jesuit doctrines to change depending on the degree to which missionaries nurture docile attitudes in these communities. The comparison made by the seventeenth-century Jesuit which Viveiros de Castro uses to expound his own argument is that which is struck between the soul and sculpture. Incompliance, in this comparison, is like marble which is difficult to mould but which, upon successfully implementing a form upon the original slab, maintains its figure, while the myrtle used in topiary modeling is malleable but requires constant care in order to keep its form. Under these two categories, the 1657 *Sermão do Espírito Santo* describes the essence of the soul. But it is under the same group as the fickle myrtle that the soul of the Brazilian Indian is proposed to be intelligible (Viveiros de Castro 21-2). While resistance is tangible in the case of marble, it is also present in the pliancy of myrtle as a material that is susceptible to losing its imposed form. This inconstancy which colonial texts identify to govern the Indian soul is argued by Viveiros de Castro to pervade in the manner indigenous communities of Brazil were imagined outside of religious discourse: “Esta proverbial inconstância não foi registrada apenas para as coisas da fé; ela passou, na verdade, a ser um traço definidor do caráter ameríndio, consolidandose como um dos estereótipos do imaginário nacional: o índio mal converso que à primeira oportunidade manda Deus, enxada e roupas ao diabo, retornando feliz à selva, presa de

⁶⁶ The eighth chapter of *From the Enemy’s Point of View* (1992) is where Viveiros de Castro develops the concept of perspectivism as an approach to the interpretation of Amerindian hostilities and warfare in the Amazon.

um atavismo incurável” (23). The difficulties of integrating native Brazilians into colonial systems through projects such as the Jesuit missionary effort result in a definition of indigeneity that underscores instability. An irresolute attitude towards permanent commitment to a new or single worldview complicated the efforts of colonists, but it did not deter them. It became a question of adapting to this dynamism that initial accounts associated with Amerindian communities in Brazil. Behind this stance is a solution to what Viveiros de Castro identifies as a “coisa bem real”: “se não um modo de ser, ela era um modo de aparecer da sociedade de tupinambá aos olhos dos missionários” (24). Inconstancy as a manifestation of an opposition to occidental ways of life becomes a divide in colonial writing that frames the way indigenous existence is perceived and, in effect, managed.

The spatial arrangement of *aldeas* took into account not only how one perceives a world, but also how one perceives it to be organized. What this is said to entail in the *Carta annua desde los años 1642 hasta el de 1652 de la provincia del Nuevo Reino y Quito* is the foundation in Amazonian communities, through frequent incursions inland, of a “vista racional” (43v). This rational point of view was not only part of a religious agenda, but it also functioned as a mode of operating within the environment and volatile conditions of the Amazon rainforest. Things had to follow a rational order. However, a governing rationale did not imply one based solely on Jesuit precepts. It was a process that used indigenous resources to implement order in a manner that was identifiable by the targets of these efforts. One way in which the *aldeas* served this end was in the manner it grouped Amerindians of different communities under a single space. João Pacheco de Oliveira tells of the way this gathering would typically come about, using the example of missionary work along river edges during the seventeenth century:

Los primeros contactos con el hombre blanco son de finales del siglo XVII, cuando jesuitas españoles, llegados del Perú y liderados por el cura Samuel Fritz, fundaron

diversas aldeas misioneras en las márgenes del río Solimões. Allí se originaron las futuras poblaciones y ciudades de la región, tales como São Paulo de Olivença (anteriormente llamada de São Paulo dos Cambevas), Amaturá, Fonte Boa y Tefé. Dichas misiones tenían como foco a los omagua, también conocidos como cambeva, que dominaban las márgenes y las islas del Solimões y causaban fuerte impresión a los viajeros y cronistas coloniales (Caravajal, Acuña, Heriarte, João Daniel) debido a su densidad demográfica, su potencia militar y su bienestar económico. Los archivos de la época hacen referencia a otros pueblos (como los miraña y los extintos içá, xumana, passé y juri, entre otros) que, unidos a los omagua, habían sido agrupados también en aldeas. [E]n su mayoría [los Ticuna] fueron considerados extintos en la primera mitad del siglo XIX, según ciertos naturalistas (Spix y Martius; Bates), y dieron origen así a una población mestiza situada en las márgenes del río. (“Acción” 54)

Referring to the history of the Ticuna and their incorporation into Jesuit *aldeas*, Pacheco de Oliveira disentangles the constituent members of the river aldeas that “dieron origen así a una población mestiza situada en las márgenes del río”. ‘Amazonian’ is shown to be only a heuristic term used to discuss a multitude of cultures, yet, through this gathering of multiple cultures, it can also be considered to inform the structure of *aldeas* as a reduced jungle. The variety that characterizes the tropical rainforest is collected in sample form, as it were, within the established contours of Jesuit settlements and built, furthermore, on familiar terrain. The shores of the Solimões, for instance, frequented by the Omagua are also the marginal sites of some aldeas and locations that resulted in “futuras poblaciones y ciudades de la región”. In this replication of the Amazon on a different and consequently more manageable scale, reason is defined in terms of a spatial design that transposes a familiar structure into a new but still intelligible setting.

On the other hand, in condensing the Amazon through an assembly of its peoples, this interethnic composition did not imply that the terms on which one group co-existed with the other within these Jesuit establishments were favourable. One such effect arising from this type of gathering is the compromised well-being of individuals within these closed quarters.

Amazonian *aldeas* underwent a constant cycle wherein their population was decimated by diseases and, as Walter Hawthorne argues, replenished by new members:

Despite the fact that settlers often replenished their slave holdings with Indians taken from the interior, shortages from death were a constant problem...Disease spread quickly in Indian populations in part because many Indian groups were encouraged to, and others forced to, change their settlement patterns. Before the establishment of Maranhão, Portuguese law in Brazil required that Indians who were not slaves live in Jesuit mission villages, or *aldeias*. Under arrangements known as *descimentos*, Jesuits in the mid-seventeenth century ventured up the main tributaries of the lower Amazon and Negro Rivers, returning with some 200,000 Indians whom they located near the coast in fifty-four villages. Indians were lured by the promise of salvation and material prosperity. However, in fixed and densely populated *aldeias*, Indians had prolonged contact with Europeans carrying contagions that had been unknown in the Americas before 1492. *Aldeias* were, then, the perfect breeding grounds for disease. (33)

It would seem that an attempt to address the way the spatial organization of the *aldeas* fostered these adverse conditions was deemed irrelevant as large numbers of Amerindians were brought into these lodging arrangements that had repeatedly proven to be pernicious. However, missionaries, like plantation owners, could continue to search for newcomers to the *aldeas* if vacancies were frequently becoming available and the need kept arising, lending momentum, and even a "model", to the evangelization effort as a perpetual obligation (Metcalf 53). By altering Amerindian settlement patterns in shape and number through their allocation in *aldeas*, administrators display a capacity to adjust the rationale of their projects to the conditions of life in settlements even when these appear to be counterproductive.

Where consideration also seems to be lacking, at least at first sight, is in the social dynamics between Amazonian groups which did not appear to be directly translated into the design of *aldeas*. One feature of Amazonian life that has remained clear to those giving written accounts of expeditions through its regions is the divisions that exist amongst its peoples. Narrating a reality stretching as far as Orellana's journey into the tropical rainforest, Hemming evokes that travellers were not the only ones found to be the targets of hostilities and at times were even favoured over other rivals during local confrontations:

The tribes were also constantly at war with one another, fighting with throwing-sticks, clubs, arrows and the manatee-hide shields that had often saved the lives of Orellana's Spaniards. The Omagua, for instance, were at war not only with the tribes above and below them on the Amazon, but also with the Ticuna to the north and the Mayoruna in the forests to the south. The last village of each tribal territory was a fortified frontier outpost, filled with warlike Indians, and there was often an unoccupied no-man's-land between one tribe and the next. (234)

The strife and boundaries existing between groups make their gathering in the *aldeas* counterintuitive, with settlement plans seeming to be indifferent to the potential turmoil that could come from such configuration. Despite being presumably bellicose, space is reduced between Amerindian communities in *aldeas* where there would otherwise be "an unoccupied no-man's-land". The elimination of distance suggests that a spatial orientation of the Amazon according to factions, where certain lands were associated with specific communities, collapsed into a re-conceptualized layout of the land. Within settlements, other factors become significant in the shaping of new interethnic connections.

In this manner, the *Carta annua desde los años 1642 hasta el de 1652 de la provincia del Nuevo Reino y Quito* provides a different context for the interpretation of the discrepant ordering of Jesuit *aldeas*. Particularly the section covering the accomplishments and concerns regarding the *misiones de Mainas* located in the Upper Amazon, the western part of the Amazon under the jurisdiction of Spanish missionaries, describes the settlements to be institutions edified through collaboration.⁶⁷ In the same part of the text where the dissemination of a "vista racional" is said to be the purpose behind *aldeas*, the *Carta* reveals Amerindian groups to be of great service to this objective, such as the Jerberos and Cocamillas who, upon being *reducidos*, are said to have actively helped with *reducciones* of other communities:

⁶⁷ The final years covered by the *Carta* are written shortly before the significant expansionist undertaking in the Upper Amazon by Martín de la Riva Herrera between 1653 and 1657 in which he would be aided by the administrator of the Mainas missions, Lucas de la Cueva, in his progress. Archive documents detailing the way Jesuit work in the Upper Amazon facilitated future incursions in the process of establishing their own presence inland are collected in *La conquista de los Motilones, Tabalosos, Maynas y Jíbaros* (2003).

La primera de las dos en pueblo[,] también ordenado así en lo cristiano como en lo político[,] que de los que no tenían ni aun conocimiento del verdadero Dios hay muchas almas puras que frecuentan los sacramentos que doctrinan a los otros y celan la honra de su Criador procurando reducir a los gentiles que comunican a que vivan en nuestra santa fe. Ayudan a los padres en las entradas que hacen para conquistar mas almas y fuera de que entre año viven como antiguos cristianos, en las cuaresmas es mayor el esmero de su piedad en oír gustosamente la palabra de Dios, en hacer sus procesiones y asistir con muestras de muy antigua religión a los oficios de Semana Santa y al monumento (que la seguridad de la gente ha permitido se pueda encerrar ya el jueves santo el Santísimo Sacramento) tiene esta población mas de mil almas y se van conduciendo cada día otros entablandose con la experiencia que no son buscados para la molestia que en otras partes padecen los indios sino solo para solicitarles su salvación y vista racional. (43-v)

Having internalized the doctrines and the structure of life pertaining to the *aldeas*, the Jerberos communities advance the Jesuit cause, "procurando reducir a los gentiles que comunican a que vivan en nuestra santa fe". The dimension of the process in which they participate involves communication, both with new members as well as with the missionaries that seek them out and in this capacity their involvement as intermediaries becomes pivotal. Through the reach of missionary efforts that comes from the inclusion of indigenous participants, the "vista racional" is presented as a concept which they help shape. The use of integrated subjects to bring in new constituents therefore places an emphasis on the advantages rather than the disruptions that come from interactions amongst different Amerindian communities surrounding *aldeas*.⁶⁸

Furthermore, the operation of *aldeas* in the *Carta* displays an integrative approach to the refashioning of the Amazon by providing a view into the construction of one of these sites. In one fragment of the work narrating the travels of a Jesuit further inland from an established

⁶⁸ Examining the way indigenous networks functioned in tandem with colonial institutions, Monica Kittiya Lee suggests, can lead to a renewed interpretation of the Amazon's past. In support of this view, she discusses the way the status of Tupi-Guarani as an Amazonian lingua franca and the dispersal of its language groups manifest a collaborative facet to colonial relationships that is not commonly addressed: "The rivalries internal to the language family often did not characterize Tupi-Guarani relations with non-Tupi-Guarani Indians...Neighboring native societies must have understood the benefits to be gained by allying themselves with the expansionistic, warrior peoples" (159). Agency is a critical aspect of this reconsideration as members of Tupi-Guarani language groups are portrayed to have negotiated the terms of their alliances which were considered to be beneficial to interested parties. Thus, as it is for the study of *aldeas*, "the integration of Tupi-Guarani newcomers into regional Amazonian networks calls for revision of the expansion/migration concepts scholars have used to categorize the territorial relations of the language group through time" (Lee 159).

aldea, his search for new souls is demonstrated to have fomented the foundation of a new settlement for the Company. The addition of the *aldea* of Cocamilla to the network of Jesuit missions is described to have been an improvised venture:

La fundación de Cocamilla era la mas reciente (según la relación última que se tuvo de esta misión) pero con prenuncios de que ni será menor que la pasada ni tendrán nuestros ministerios menor empleo porque habiendo bajado uno de los nuestros misioneros el río para reconocer otra nación de Cocamas (de quienes se temió algún alboroto) viendo el padre un sitio a propósito para pueblo, insinuó la conveniencia de que en el se fundasen, señaló lugar para la iglesia, para la casa del padre, para el cacique e indios principales y después de pocos días habían estado tan diligentes que faltando el padre por necesaria ausencia, tenían hecha la iglesia y casa para vivienda estando ya juntas muchas familias en el puesto y tratando de reducirse a esta misma población los cocamas con que vendrá a ser la mayor de todas. (43v)

"Viendo" or suddenly coming across it as he navigated the local waters, the land upon which the protagonist chooses to develop the Cocamilla *aldea* is narrated as happenstance. The unexpected circumstances that gave rise to the settlement are furthermore expressed to be the product of a digression. Originally tasked with a reconnaissance journey to learn more of the Cocamas, the traveller is shown to find greater merit in investigating the potential of this site. Stumbling across or finding such a suitable location rather than having prior knowledge of its existence leaves the nameless missionary of the account without the means to properly see his vision for the place come to fruition. Instead, he only "insinuates" what the best use of this land would entail, 'marking' or 'señalando' the places to erect the necessary buildings to congregate people. Carrying out the construction and completion of these plans are the local people who, upon the missionary's return from a mandatory absence, have already accommodated themselves physically and spiritually within the establishment. What is more, the Cocamas, the same people that the Jesuit had been responsible for seeking out and studying, are described to be "tratando de reducirse a esta misma población". What begins as an unexpected opportunity becomes a self-fulfilling reality where the *aldea* in many ways builds and fills itself. Precisely because of the

improvised quality of the *aldeas*' initial design that the narrative accentuates, Amerindian involvement is depicted as a central and necessary part of the creation of Cocamilla, with the prospects of this dynamic exciting even the narrator of the account who believes it to be promising. In this account of a settlement designed according to a western rationale but constructed by and functioning because of Amazonian collaboration, we have the crux of Amazonian world encounters.

Aldeas based on an integrative design encapsulate in their overlap of spaces and spatial understandings a cross between the variety of worlds of Amazonia. Administrators expressed an interest in mitigating the divide between the worlds inside and outside the settlements by handling the perception of Amazonian environments, integrating features that were recognizably indigenous and, above all, recognizable by Amerindians. Yet, a measured insertion of Amazonian customs into the routine structure of life on the *aldeas* was a customary practice amongst Jesuit administrators and allowed for some regulation to be set around permissible activities: "While Jesuit missionaries were willing to incorporate indigenous music, instruments, and dancing, they insisted that certain other customs be abandoned in Indian villages where they worked. At the top of their list was ritual cannibalism" (Metcalf 36). Exercising caution in determining what is permitted to enter the domain of the *aldeas*, limits existed within the adaptive structure of these settlements. This mode of operation, nevertheless, did not hinder the efforts that were made to freely borrow people, things, and ideas from the worlds outside the confines of the *aldeias*, blending the emulated version with the Amazonia its people have come to know. To this extent there is a similitude with the "domesticated" jungle that Philippe Descola discusses with Pierre Charbonnier in relation to Achuar agricultural practices. Using his fieldwork and observations on the collective habits of the Achuar of the Upper Amazon to

expand on the ontological implications of cultivated landscapes, Descola suggests that external spaces to human-inhabited domains are only so in name:

Après trois ou quatre ans d'utilisation d'un jardin, son rendement faiblit en raison de l'épuisement du sol, et les Achuar l'abandonnent pour en ouvrir un autre plus loin. La forêt recolonise alors rapidement la parcelle, les espèces sylvestres transplantées ou protégées subsistent avec une densité bien supérieure à celle que l'on trouverait <<naturellement>>...[L]a forêt amazonienne est en partie le produit non intentionnel de ces techniques de gestion du végétal. C'est pourquoi il est absurde de voir la forêt comme un univers sauvage, comme le voudrait notre représentation intuitive, c'est au contraire un sorte de macro-jardin. (145)

In practice, the forest contributes, along with human activity, to the shaping of its landscapes in a manner that builds upon the latter's work. Environmental agents "re-colonize" the spaces that had previously been occupied and altered by the Achuar, taking advantage of the modified earth left behind. As cultivated "macro-gardens", these sites blend with other repurposed spaces throughout the Amazon. Descola demonstrates Achuar practices to challenge distinctions between controlled and 'natural' spaces, stating that the same Amazonian site can fluctuate based on perceptions between understanding its rainforest as a "macro-garden" or agricultural sites as "micro-rainforests". The shift is essentially from one sense of space to another, and it is the Amazon rainforest's capacity to accommodate both views that we find the seventeenth-century rationale behind *aldeas* attempting to replicate in its mitigation of internal and external worlds.

Yet these were often frustrated plans as the objectives of those endeavouring to accomplish this were not as malleable as the model they set out to reproduce. At a fundamental level, and even at their inception, *aldeas* were expected to be projects of permanence. In terms of duration, Alida Metcalf manifests that "the new aldeias were envisioned by the Jesuits to be permanent, a place where they could develop a mission that would endure over time", to which extent, "unlike the traditional Indian villages that moved every few years, they sought to maintain the population of their aldeias" (47, 53). As we have seen, in their inclusive mode of

operation and construction they were also built to last. Ideologically, they were designed to curtail the capricious disposition of Amerindian communities by embracing the variety that characterizes the Amazon and using leniency in their missionary approach. Yet, inconstancy, although in certain respects compatible, was not completely reconcilable with the structured perception of the worlds of the Amazon that *aldeas* were designed to promote.

To the question of whether the subaltern can shape, we find an affirmative response in the way the ever-present vitality of the seventeenth-century Amazon prompted reconsiderations and spatial readjustments to western concepts of its worlds. The salient change, and what perhaps defines the shift in tone that one finds in letters of later religious missions as David Treece notes in *Exiles, Allies, Rebels* (2000), is the newfound understanding that approaches to mitigating the movement from one world to another could not be unilateral:

Indeed, if the texts of the colonial period do reveal any development, it is this rapid shift from the euphoric optimism of Discovery, when the hospitable Indian appeared ripe for incorporation into the spiritual and secular kingdoms of Christian Europe, to sceptical disillusionment, as the Jesuits' project of evangelization was met with military and cultural resistance. In a kind of second Fall, the naked, Edenic innocent was transformed into a bestial, satanic monster. (20)

Disillusioned with the incompletion of the souls they set out to convert, Jesuit missionaries altered the way in which they referred to the native population of the New World. They were accordingly reconsidered within colonial plans as unstable entities as frustrations arose regarding the inability to reform Amerindian worldviews. While en masse they could be graphed as a nameless, general populace, individually they could not be morally shaped. The worry for religious orders was less that they could not proselytize a people and more a concern that missionary plans for the New World had been undertaken in an ineffective manner. The call was for change as traditional approaches to colonial projects no longer sufficed. It was no longer possible to proceed in the way that had been customary, designing a settlement with only a

functional regard for the place and people around which these were built. Rather, administrators had to also undergo a change of worldviews. The rationale behind *aldeas* had to be altered to espouse an Amazonian mode of utilizing the surrounding space in order to make the boundaries between these worlds seamless.

The written reports of Jesuits and other travellers provide a place in which to see the tensions that shaped the Amazon and the hands that could not be completely supplanted in the process of the making and unmaking its worlds. The rationale of *aldeas*, the transmission of indigenous worldviews, and the observation of these practices collide within the pages of these texts and become sites where one can trace encounters with different modes of conceptualizing the New World.

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Conclusion

We have finally arrived at the other side and cannot help but notice that the world looks different from here. From the incomplete to the incontinent, we have covered perceptions of the New World that have attributed divergent properties and shapes to constructs of the colonial Amazon. The 'world' with which we began, the single entity that organized all life under a common design, has fragmented into a series of worlds that exist simultaneously and rarely, if ever, congruently.

Looking back, the 'world' of expansionist travellers to colonial Amazonia becomes one amongst the many that were present beforehand. The vantage point from which this can be discerned is afforded by the turn in the fourth chapter. To the explanation of, experimentation with, and improvement upon the world models found respectively in chapters one through three, the last entry recasts the entire concept from another point of view. The 'other modes' of organizing the Amazon and by extension the New World that have been alluded to in the arguments leading up to the final chapter materialize in indigenous action. The affirmation of observable life in these parts that escapes occidental comprehension and explanations in Pedro Teixeira's chronicle signals a process of unmaking the world in the Jesuit *cartas annuas*. As antithetical as it may sound, indigenous worlds, in all of their contrariety, in truth display the possibility that exists for a variety of arrangements of the New World to operate simultaneously. By demonstrating the limits for occidental models of the Amazon by way of instances in which indigenous activity resisted containment within them, those worlds organized otherwise make it

apparent that the term ‘world’, as it has been traditionally theorized, could no longer bear any significant meaning in its present form.

Worlds are defined and, as the fourth chapter illustrates, redefined by their delimitations. By marking the extension of a world one establishes its domain, declaring what is and is not part of it through this distinction. This initiates a process of containment that defines the second portion of the system whereby what remains within these contours is combined in a design that lends an identifiable character to each world, as is the case of the material New World studied in the third chapter. It is here that the form or shape of each world is moulded through an internal organization of its environment in a manner which in turn serves to advance the demarcation of its contours, a practice made manifest in Cristóbal de Acuña’s rendition of the Amazon.

Furthermore, insofar as it is distinguishable, the resulting shape also communicates from what it is being distinguished. In this third facet contiguous worlds are also defined by their reciprocal contours as, taken collectively, these operate within the infrastructure known as *the* ‘World’. Under this vision, all ‘worlds’, whatever be their shape, are gathered and function adjacently in an integrated system that emanates the *impression* of a unified system or the single world order discussed at the outset of the project. These are worlds that exist along limits, wherein what defines one through an affirmation of integration into this model also defines another through a negation of it.

Throughout the dissertation, the element that has embodied this limit is water. It has been present in both the facilitation and interruption of empire. Its function as the defining feature of the colonial Amazon situates it at the core of converging practices in world shaping where it could be used to simultaneously assert one world and disorder another.

In the fourth chapter, different forms of existence within the colonial rainforest have been discussed in terms of the Amazon's vitality derived from water and the uses given to this substance by Amazonian peoples in the process of defining their variegated environment. Whereas the establishment of *aldeas* was an endeavour that struggled to find its footing, as it were, in the unstable topography and social organization of the Amazon rainforest, the same uncertainties were integrated in to the lifeways of local communities. The latter did not attempt to confine nature to a pre-existing design but rather work within the vicissitudes of this fluvial landscape.

As mentioned in the third chapter, the transplantation of goods to Brazil and the visual ordering of its material in Albert Eckhout's still life painting evoke a practice in which distances created by bodies of water were compressed in a redesign of nature. The cultivation of foreign crops in Brazil in order to eliminate the need for maritime travel to eastern colonies in search of these prized items was a plan aimed at circumventing the dominance of rivals over the ocean. By concentrating the production of other colonial crops in Brazil, the world was intended to be reduced to the Portuguese New World and a single ocean. The need for any waters other than those of the Atlantic and the Amazon was considered unnecessary by administrators who sought to realign the conduit between Portugal and its colonies as a direct one. The elimination of distances represented by water into a distilled model of the New World informs the composition of Eckhout's *Still Life with Palm Inflorescence and Basket of Spices* (c.1640). Amalgamating spices from different colonies into a meticulous arrangement of raw materials, the image conveys a concentration of New World textures within a single space. No longer restricted by topographical accuracies, Eckhout is able to establish under the common taxonomy of 'spices' an

encapsulated vision of the New World with which the viewer can engage purely through the realm of the senses.

The abstract engagement with water in these redesigns is preceded by the second chapter and its featured chronicle which relies heavily on the substance. Acuña's record of the Amazon bases the prospects of Jesuit acquisitions of its lands on the vulnerability that the rainforest's river exposes for Spanish Crown. As a transcontinental channel leading into the western colony of Quito, the possibility of intrusion into the Spanish settlement by adversaries turned the Amazon River into a liability. Under Acuña's pen, however, this topographical disadvantage enables the chronicler to imbue a sense of urgency to the geopolitical layout he frames around access to the river. In the shared interest of guarding the fluvial entrance, he proposes the befriending of the 'bellicose' yet 'sympathetic' Amerindians, experts in the traversal of the Amazon, to be the only worthwhile solution for the Spanish Crown, assuring in the process that his religious order be the one tasked with arranging this allegiance.

Within the first chapter, we saw how the variety of people drawn to the Amazon's waters also brought with them distinct perceptions and expectations of this place. What has been highlighted is the manner in which the Amazon as a spatial and conceptual entity was able to accommodate these discrepant views. Through an investigation of the term *incomplete*, those Amazonian worlds classified under this category were shown to exist simultaneously with authoritative accounts of life along the river. Down to its ontological considerations, we can retrospectively appreciate how water has been present as the fundamental material in the process of shaping colonial Amazonia.

Lastly, from this side of things, we can finally return to the representative discourse of integration surrounding the Manta-Manaus mainline having glossed some of the key terms and

ideas with which the project is being advanced. Spearheaded by the Initiative for the Integration of Regional Infrastructure in South America (IIRSA), the Manta-Manaus project featured in the first chapter is considered to be a step taken in the redesign of the New World's geography, bringing together places and bodies of water separated by extensions of land into a single order. Luis Alberto Machado analyzes the endeavour in terms of the newfound continental ties that could develop, stating:

Esa salida hacia el Pacífico podría abrir una serie de oportunidades para los países del bloque, y la más evidente sería la significativa reducción de los costos del transporte para los países de Oriente. Esta es una antigua aspiración de los países del bloque que, de esta forma, estarían concretando el viejo sueño de ver transformado al Mercosur en un bloque bi-oceánico. En el plano institucional, el aspecto positivo de destacarse es el compromiso formalmente asumido por los gobernantes de América del Sur, en el año 2000, con la creación de la IIRSA..., a partir de la cual se ha efectuado un trabajo serio y sistemático de planificación, incluyendo acciones de corto, medio y largo plazos, que es lo que, muchas veces, falta a los países del continente... (70)

It is worth noting that when discussing the correlation between an expansion of the Amazon and the broadening of commercial routes Machado refers to the parties affected by the corridor as members of a 'bi-oceanic' bloc. His choice of words helps illustrate a geopolitics organized according to accessibility to both oceans. For the IIRSA, this configuration of the continent in oceanic terms grants international relations that were merely diplomatic (such as those supported by Mercosur) a concrete link and fitting geography. As a unit bound by a mutual passageway, the bi-oceanic Amazon would connect far-off places through a multilateral arrangement and eventually integrate in its design countries and regions the proposed corridor could potentially reach.

'Potentially' is the operative word here. As Machado goes on to explain, topography dictates that the Amazon River does not easily extend as far as the Manta-Manaus route aims to have it stretch:

A mi juicio existen una serie de factores de orden geopolítico que, por lo menos hasta hoy, han neutralizado esos aspectos positivos. Dos de ellos son obvios y saltan a la vista hasta del observador menos atento. La selva amazónica y la cordillera de los Andes constituyen barreras naturales considerables, en especial para el Brasil, que tiene en el sistema vial una de sus características más destacadas. (70)

Its stream splits up and dwindles in the Andes, remains embanked some places, and does not have access to others. This is inevitable, but more importantly this is ‘nature’. The Amazon River cannot *naturally* make its way through the proposed ‘bi-oceanic’ route because the continent’s topography hinders more than it helps. Thus the totality that defines the project’s aim is frustrated by nature when the fluvial corridor is brought to a halt at the foot of the Andes. The project is also stunted at a diplomatic level, adds Machado, as a shared space does not guarantee unanimity or even an interest in supporting this bond since trade with North America has always been coveted above all other commercial liaisons in the southern continent (71). The human roadblocks are in this case just as overwhelming as those found in nature. Given the distance between the Andes and coastal Brazil and the even greater separation of both from Asia, the Amazon therefore allows for relations to come about that are normally untapped because they involve places considered to have little in common and even fewer means for establishing ties regardless of how desirable these may be. The identified hindrances of an incontinent environment and the independent will of its members form the obstructions of language, culture, and geography that the fluvial corridor is designed to dissolve by way of the transcontinental Amazon River. Nonetheless, it must not be overlooked that these countermeasures respond to factors brought to light by the very same river.

In accordance with the contradictions embodied by the Amazon River’s role in the shaping of worlds, the dissertation has therefore approached texts as artifacts that internalize this dynamic. The conclusion to this work should consequently be read as a legend to the itinerary

laid out in the first chapter, one which is meant to provide readers with a quick reference to the material that has come before it and add meaning to what is now familiar ground. To this end, the plans for the Amazon of then and now are contextualized in these closing pages not to situate one world design as the precursor to another, but to examine how, placed next to one another as we have seen in the seventeenth century, worlds resonate contiguously along that tortuous edge that is the Amazon River.

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