Extravagant Passing: Spanish Masquerade in the American Literary Imagination

By

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Abstract

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The dissertation discusses the figure and narrative of Spanish masquerade in the history of passing in American literature and culture, beginning with Spanish *historias* and English *histories* in the 16th and 17th centuries that provide a frame for the study of 19th century Chicana/o and African American literature. In the works by Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, Gaspar Pérez de Villagrá, John Smith, Herman Melville, Ellen Craft and William Craft, and María Amparo Ruiz de Burton, the manuscript provides literary readings, cultural history, and archival research, also making use of queer theory, post-colonial theory, and theories of *mestiza* consciousness in order to connect these particular case studies to a broader field of inquiry concerning boundary crossing and its representational practices. Whereas most critical readings on the history of passing concentrate on black-to-white performances of mobility, this dissertation introduces a new kind of passing that changes how we think about the traditional genre in order to explore how the variable of disability and illness cross-racially intervenes into the figure of the Spanish decadent colonial. Through readings of social moblity in these authors' works, I generate a theory of *extravagance*, or surplus signification, in the performance of passing. A specific integer of extravagance's operation and which the dissertation is interested is "Spanishness" as an added problem to extravagant passing. I thus situate the content of this study in the context of the traditional genre and recent theoretical discussions. The dissertation ultimately argues that by studying this confounding borderland figure what emerges is the missing *historia* in the history of passing, a ghosting of Spanishness in the American literary imagination, and a plural mode of subjectivity deployed by racial subjects, including *la mestiza*, where the dissertation uncovers a poetics of extravagance in *la conciencia de la mestiza*.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments		ii
Introduction	The Figure and Narrative of Spanish Masquerade	1
Chapter 1	"*estávamos hechos propria figura de la muerte*" [we made our own figure of death]: The (Un)Becoming of the Spanish Conquistador in Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca's *La Relación* (1542 & 1555)	16
Chapter 2	Masquerading "Europeanness": Spanish Distraction in Gaspar Pérez de Villagrá's *Historia* (1610) and John Smith's *Historie* (1624)	61
Chapter 3	"there seemed something so incongruous in the Spaniard's apparel": Spanish Masquerade in Herman Melville's *Benito Cereno* (1855)	103
Chapter 4	"he was either a '*woman* or a *genius*'": Unmasking Ellen Craft's Spanish Masquerade in *Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom* (1860)	149
Chapter 5	From 'Indian' to 'little black girl' to 'blue-eyed Mexican' to 'pure Spanish blood': The Racial Plight of Lola Medina in María Amparo Ruiz de Burton's *Who Would Have Thought It?* (1872)	184
Epilogue	The Missing *Historia* in the History of Passing; or, Moving Towards a Poetics of Extravagance in *La Conciencia de la Mestiza*	223
Bibliography		238

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Introduction

The Figure and Narrative of Spanish Masquerade

The second bell rang, and as I yawningly returned my watch to my pocket, my attention was attracted by the appearance of a young man who entered the cabin, supported by his servant, a strapping negro.

The man was bundled up in a capacious overcoat; his face was bandaged with a white handkerchief, and its expression entirely hid by a pair of enormous green spectacles. …

From the better opportunity afforded by daylight, I found that he was slight built, apparently handsome young man, with black hair and eyes, and of a darkness of complexion that betokened Spanish extraction. …

We arrived at Charleston, and I there lost sight of Mr. Johnson, an acquaintance at my elbow remarking that he was either a "*woman* or a *genius*."

This morning I cut from the New York *Herald* the accompanying extract, and there is no doubt in my mind that William and Ellen Craft are no other than my traveling companions, Mr. Johnson and servant.[1]

– Anonymous, "An Incident at the South" (1849)

1. Extravagantly Passing

With the passage above, I invite my reader into the moment of the dissertation's very inception. How it was that I arrived at a new kind of "passing" that changes how we think about the traditional genre in American literature and culture. The story of the figure and narrative of Spanish masquerade—at least for this project—begins with this newspaper clipping, with a masked-writer (as I call him), who captured on the page what has been called the most notorious and ingenious escape from American slavery: a passing in disguise performed by a young "married" couple, Ellen and William Craft. Extravagantly dressed and bandaged to an extreme, yet fashionable even if in the uncanniest sense, Ellen Craft's (dis)guise provokes the American passenger to (mis)read race as cross-racially intervening into the figure of the Spanish decadent colonial. Enhancing the performance is William Craft's passing as a loyal black slave and his incessant attending to his master's Americanitis. The *genius*—to borrow the term applied to Ellen Craft by the acquaintance (not masked but made even more obscure)—is *her* "invention" of a costume that confounded notions of identity and generated a racial self that transcended the binary terms of the antebellum color line. Here, in the 560 words of "An Incident at the South," as the bonded-duo travel by steamer from the port of Savannah to Charleston, is the portrait of a major character in the history of passing: the figure of the *extravagant Spaniard*, on a boat, and traveling with his slave. This project begins with this newspaper clipping, and Ellen Craft's *extravagant passing*—a surplus signification in the very performance of passing that we have missed—and on the basis of this single thread, I unspool the story of the figure and narrative of Spanish masquerade in the American literary imagination.

[1] "An Incident at the South" is on microfilm at The Newark Public Library. It first appeared in the Wednesday edition of the *Daily Mercury*, dated January 17, 1849. See "An Incident at the South," *Daily Mercury*. 17 January 1849: 1.

There are layers of thinking to Ellen Craft's passing, yet the specific layer of powerful historical texture, and that which Genaro Padilla encouraged me to pursue—the ink of his pen having circled "Spanish extraction" on the first draft of my chapter on the Crafts—is the transnational layer in her performance, where *Spanish extraction* is an added problem to extravagant passing. Ellen Craft has not only unveiled for me the conceptual category of Spanishness—how *she* created it and how it is mobilized as masquerade—but she has also redefined for me the history of (racial) passing, and challenged notions of transnational Americanity.[2] In thinking about Ellen Craft's passing and passage out of slavery, I have found myself re-reading traditional texts, grappling with a major character in several corners of American literature, and creating a different literary historiography. The dissertation examines and explores how her "invention" of this costume actually has a life within and beyond mid-nineteenth century America. This confounding figure has a much longer critical genealogy based in colonialism, and Ellen Craft has forced me to re-read Spanish *historias* alongside English *histories*, prodded me to reimagine the southern borderlands, in addition to the circum-Caribbean, the Gulf of Mexico, and the much deeper south of the Latin-Pacific, all to reconsider the racial taxonomies during U.S. expansionism and abolitionism in order to sharpen my focus on how the American cultural imagination *imagined*. She has forced me to examine the other narrative thread in which nationalism is no longer a fixed paradigm. The dissertation thus leads the reader to a submerged history of knowledge about the hemisphere that was used to powerful narrative effects that could in fact change historical outcomes.[3] This study uncovers the missing *historia* in the history of passing that we did not know we knew.

To begin with this rare sighting of Ellen Craft helps us see the performance of extravagant passing and the (mis)reading of Spanish masquerade, not just as a cultural fantasy but as a formula of reading the confounding borderland figure who resurfaces across several traditions of American literature. She helps us see that her actual passing is everything but normal; instead, she achieves passage by signifying in multiple categories all at once: racial passing, gender crossing, sexual ambiguity, class passing, feigning disability and illness, and confounding transnational borders. This is why I call her figuration process *extravagant passing*, which denotes an oxymoronic potentiality: *extravagant* is defined as wandering beyond the limits, the excessive, and the absurd, whereas *passing* is about fitting in and remaining undetected.[4] In theorizing *extravagant*, it occurred to me that a variety of reactions are happening. Take for instance her feigning of the condition of rheumatism (or "neurasthenia") which cross-racially intervenes into the historical figure of the Spanish decadent colonial.[5] In other words, the *female* slave invents a strategic costume of convenience that arouses cultural ideologies that stem from *la leyenda negra* [the black legend]—a racialized typology, or

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[2] Kathleen Donegan has, through the years, helped shape the terms of the dissertation, specifically this reading of Ellen Craft as "creating the conceptual category of Spanishness," a strategy of reading that I deploy in my analysis of this figure in other chapters.

[3] Conversations with Anna Brickhouse on an earlier draft of the "Introduction" have led me to an analysis of how the dissertation is, in her words, "uncovering… a submerged history of knowledge about the hemisphere."

[4] My arriving at the term "extravagant" stems from conversations with Darieck Scott, especially my reading of his study on "extravagant abjection"; of course, my own title is a slight nod to his influence: *Extravagant Abjection: Blackness, Power, and Sexuality in the African American Literary Imagination* (2010). The word "extravagant" is also often used in reference to the character Don Quixote, perhaps the more famous extravagant Spaniard.

[5] Correspondence with Berkeley faculty (Mel Chen, Julia Bryan-Wilson, and Michael Lucey, as well as several graduate students from across campus) after a dissertation workshop retreat at Westerbeke Ranch, through CSSC/CRG, assisted in my more closely examining the integers of extravagant passing (Lucey), for specific kinds of qualities that converge or mingle, as in Ellen Craft's feigning of disability in terms of the "neurasthenia" condition (Chen), which was viewed as a "property of classed whiteness around that time, one that became increasingly medicalized."

darkening and blackening of the Spaniard, which was also attached to all things "Spain." Here is Spain's long shadow, now cast upon Ellen Craft's masquerade, as if still haunting the American imaginary, but centuries later and long after Spain's first "discoverer" arrived to *las Américas*. Specific kinds of qualities in Ellen Craft's (dis)guise and performance are converging or mingling, however intermittently and unorganized. She conjures Spain's *historia* within antebellum slave society, revealing an Anglo-American preoccupation or distraction with "Spanishness" at the southern fringes of a United States in the months following the U.S.-Mexico War of 1846-48. The masked-writer of "An Incident at the South" merely reminds the modern reader that the figure of the extravagant Spaniard was not a figure that the Anglo-American could not read or did not know but a figure made integral to story of European colonialism and American slavery.

Even literary imaginations of the mid nineteenth century period took their cue from the masked-writer of this newspaper clipping, with passing-plots, cross-dressing heroines, and skin-darkening heroes, perfectly modeled after Ellen and William Craft—as in the book of the century, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1851-52), the first African American novel, *Clotel; or, The President's Daughter* (1853), and the historical novella *Benito Cereno* (1855). Other writers of the day, such as Washington Irving, George Ticknor, William H. Prescott, and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, contributed to the birth of Hispanism in the United States, in many ways further romancing in their writings that long shadow that Spain draped across the Americas. What we witness in this newspaper clipping is the assertion of cultural knowledge or, what Giles Gunn calls, "territories of knowledge [that] can no longer be considered as geographically discrete."[6] In place of traditional readings of Ellen Craft's black-to-white passing then, is the proposal of her Spanish masquerade, because what we stand to learn by examining this unique performative figure of the borderlands is its historical and literary force, for here is the unexamined *historia* in passing's histories.

Locating Spanish masquerade in a new collection of passing narratives, in addition to uncovering what I call the *ghosting of Spanishness* or Spanish *historias* haunting America's literary history, under examination is trope of the extravagant Spaniard and the trope of the bonded-duo of Spanish masquerade. There are associations to be drawn with the help of this newspaper clipping, in particular between European colonialism, American slavery, and frontier conflict at the newly marked U.S.-Mexico border. For in it are striking portraits of two very different male bodies as read through the period's discrete racial and gendered categories: the *dark* body of a borderland figure of "Spanish extraction," and the *black* body of a loyal servant of African extraction. During the mid-nineteenth century period of political and cultural conflict between the U.S. and Mexico, the newspaper clipping reveals the presence of Spanish descendants traveling with slaves, including *Mestizos*, *Tejanos*, *Californios*, *Españoles*, and/or Mexican and Mexican-American travelers, in both the cultural imaginary and as real historical figures achieving passage across dangerous "white" spaces of a racialized slave economy. It also reveals how the American literary imagination looks different when we take stock of the figure and narrative of Spanish masquerade, as a cultural preoccupation or distraction with all things "Spain," especially as a national threat still looming at the southern fringes of a continent in the process of becoming "American."

This story is told in five chapters, and while the fulcrum at the center of the story (and where I begin) is with Ellen Craft, the story for the dissertation begins in 1528 with Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca's *La Relación* (1542), a chronicle of shipwreck by "one of the most romantic of conquistadores" who arrives at Galveston Island—undressed, ravaged, skeletal—and imaginatively

[6] Giles Gunn, "Introduction: Globalizing Literary Studies," PMLA 116, no. 1 (2001): 16-31. Also see Gretchen Murphy, *Hemispheric Imaginings: The Monroe Doctrine and Narratives of U.S. Empire* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 1.

passes into the world of Natives as the *figura de la muerte* [figure of death].[7] The story then transitions to the start of the seventeenth century with a comparative reading between Gaspar Pérez de Villagrá's *Historia* (1610)—a Spanish *capitán* in *la nueva Mexico*—and John Smith's *Historie* (1624)—an English *captayne* in Virginia—as the pair masquerade "Europeanness" to manipulate passage during encounters with Natives, both of which are distracted by Spanishness and bound to a lineage of previous Spanish explorers. These three texts provide a narrative backbone for examining three nineteenth century works: the first text is historically set in the year 1799 at the southern extremity of Chili with a Spanish captain-made-captive by his loyal slave in Herman Melville's *Benito Cereno* (1855); the second text (re)turns to the 1848 escape of Ellen and William Craft, from Macon, Georgia to Philadelphia, with the bonded-duo passing as an invalid gentleman and loyal slave in the Crafts' *Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom* (1860); and, the third text is set in the 1840s to 1860s with a "black" heroine (who is Spanish and) who is rescued from Indian captivity in the Southwest and taken to Massachusetts, where she traverses racial taxonomies while her wealth is stolen by a New England "Yankee" housewife, thus forming a female-bonded duo in María Amparo Ruiz de Burton's *Who Would Have Thought It?* (1872). By beginning with Ellen Craft's Spanish masquerade, my reader is thus introduced to the conceptual category of the extravagant Spaniard, helping us read this critical genealogy, especially across specific transformative historical periods when the contours of the United States had not been clearly outlined.

* * * * *

This dissertation thus strives toward a historical, cartographic, literary, and theoretical study. Each chapter thus follows that same serious play of transformation, indeterminacy, and transcendence through the extravagant-bodies and masquerading-texts that enact those daring metamorphoses.[8] To be clear, the dissertation does a few things: one, it proposes a theory of *extravagance* in terms of the act of passing and the writing of passing; two, it examines the ghosting of Spanishness in terms of *la leyenda negra*; and three, it tracks Spanish masquerade on early maps. There is need to discuss these things in the remaining pages of this section.

In my contrasting the *act* of passing with the *writing* of passing, I construct a separate vocabulary to interpret narrative performance or what I call *writerly masquerade* as the literary (dis)play of extravagant bodies on the page. Like extravagant passing, writing is also about crossing boundaries and challenging normalcy, with its representational forms always playing with both masking and unmasking the performer and performance, and inviting the reader into the space between the mask and the real.[9] Through the term *writerly masquerade* I thus extend a theory of extravagance to an analysis of the narrative performances through which the ways that protagonists achieve mobility as extravagant bodies are translated into texts. I add the term *masquerade* not necessarily as an alternative for *passing* but as a method for articulating narrative performativity that represent acts of passing and that play with the boundary crossing experience through shifting rhetorics of concealment and exposure. While *passing* requires a strict observance of norms in order to succeed in its performance, *masquerade* gleefully demonstrates how malleable and indeterminate

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[7] Jose Rabasa, *Writing Violence on the Northern Frontier: The Historiography of Sixteenth-Century New Mexico and Florida and the Legacy of Conquest* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), 83.

[8] Throughout the writing of the dissertation, Kathleen Donegan has assisted in defining the terms of the project, especially in these lines.

[9] Roland Barthes, *S/Z: An Essay*, trans. Richard Miller (New York: Hill and Wang, 1974), 5. Defined by Barthes, a *writerly* text allows for multiple possibilities of meaning, in that it is infinitely plural, or as he states, a "galaxy of signifiers, and not a structure of signifieds." Whereas a *readerly* text does not allow the reader to actively produce any activity from the text. Thus, *writerly masquerade* is interested in the "infinitely plural" but in terms of an intended narrative play around producing that meaning.

those norms become when transgressed and transformed by the passing figure. Although *extravagant passing* also requires a strict observance of norms, the extravagant passing figure is not confined to general rules or kept within ordinary limits of truth or probability; instead, these bodies meddle with the excess and in doing so rupture and threaten the strict observance of norms. Because extravagance manipulates forms to refuse binaries, it can be said to queer passing, and thus queer the writing of passing's histories. Its *genius* then—to return to the term applied to Ellen Craft—is to further transform the already transformative act of "passing as" into a series of "passages through" language, time, cultures, and identities. I thus attend to both the high-stakes performance of normativity in the historical experience of passing, and also to the representational play of forms through which these performances are revived and redeployed for a knowing audience of readers.

The new terminology proposed is distinctly operationalized and deployed in each of the dissertation's chapters, where terms will be expanded upon and where others will be added so as to extend a theory of extravagance while further complicating the representation of Spanish masquerade in several sociocultural contexts or focal points in American literary history. To be sure, the dissertation is about extravagant passing, for its layers of signification, but examined more fully is *Spanishness*, not just as masquerade or (dis)guise or charade, but as a single and most critical integer in the performance of extravagant passing. Essentially, what I am asking is what happens when we concentrate on one category for how other conditions intervene, connect, conflict and confound. What must be weighed and juxtaposed are: *histories* with *historias*; location(s) with metaphors of race; geographic (mis)understanding with (re)imaginings of identities; literary discussions of nationalism and regional divide with real maps; (masked-)writers and rhetorical patterns with (unmasked-)writers and historical influence. What we have on (dis)play are complicated performances specific to the southern borderlands, but performances that overlap yet reflect distinct *historias* and histories of mullato/slavery and *mestizo*/conquest. This is about the *masquerade* of Spanishness and how it has a legacy based in colonialism, specifically with a figure that continued to trespass across different sociocultural contexts. The American *experience*, read here as a process of transformation, embodiment, and mobility, builds upon unfolding the emergence of a ghosting of Spanishness. Spain left a long, ominous shadow across the centuries, cultures, and textual landscapes of the Americas, and there was an implicit awareness about that shadow. Always attached to this figure is the notion of *la leyenda negra*, yet always in the form of rhetorical play or confusion with various historical conditions that harken back to the figure of the Spanish decadent colonial.[10]

The four scholars who have provided the necessary historical, cultural, and literary foundation for a dissertation like mine to assume importance (chronologically speaking, for interconnection and stability), include Stanley T. Williams and his massive two-volume study, entitled *The Spanish Background of American Literature* (1955), María DeGuzmán's extensive investigation in *Spain's Long Shadow: The Black Legend, Off-Whiteness, and Anglo-American Empire* (2005), Julia Stern's close reading in the article "Spanish Masquerade and the Drama of Racial Identity in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*" in *Passing and the Fictions of Identity* (1996), and Keiko Arai's extension of Stern's findings in the essay "A 'Stranger' as a Mask: The Spanish Masquerade in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, *Clotel*, and 'Benito Cereno'" (2006). Each of these projects differs considerably: Williams focuses on the *influence* of Spain on American letters and reads Spain as a *background* to a developing nation, whereas DeGuzmán concentrates on the *use* of representations of Spain in the creation of Anglo-American

[10] Julián Juderías coined the term *leyenda negra* in 1914, providing the etymological significance with early beginnings of the legend in Europe. Romulo D. Carbia, however, examines the term specifically concentrating in *las América*. See Philip Wayne Powell, *Tree of Hate: Propaganda and Prejudices Affecting United States Relations with the Hispanic World* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2008). [Original work published in 1971]. Also see Bartolomé de Las Casas, *Brevísmia relación de la destrucción de las Indias* (London: Penguin, 1999). [Original work published in 1552].

identity, also envisioning Spain "*more psychoanalytically*… as a projected historical and contemporaneous object within and of Anglo-American culture," as she writes; in other words, her "emphasis is on the representations of one culture by another, not the influence of one on another," as Williams' work pursues.[11] In the articles by Stern and Arai, both read the narrative representation of the light-skinned slave in Spanish disguise—Stern suggests how Spanishness enables slaves to transcend the antebellum color line while Arai considers how Spanishness (as a protean mask of the 'stranger') causes the binary of the color line. The essays by Stern and Arai are concentrated within the nineteenth century, whereas Williams and DeGuzmán (together) handle the topic of Spain and Spanishness in American culture beginning with the Puritans to the late nineteenth century (Williams) and the late eighteenth century to the end of the late twentieth century (DeGuzmán).

My dissertation understands these contributions but constitutes a different trajectory that extends their discussions, in particular how the concept of *la leyenda negra* (as defined by Williams and DeGuzmán), is associated with narrative representations of Spanish masquerade in texts of the nineteenth century (as analyzed by Stern and Arai). According to Williams and DeGuzmán, *la leyenda negra* was a prejudice that formed during the early colonial period towards all things "Spain"—what Williams describes as "la crueldad y el fanatismo espanol,"[12] and what DeGuzmán phrases as the "darkening of the Spaniard," that is, a "presumed blackguardism of the Spaniards [that] was simultaneously externalized and internalized as an innate and thus indelible mark of 'the Spaniard'"[13]—here was a rhetoric of racialization that persisted well into the nineteenth century. DeGuzmán explains,

> In this legend, "the Spaniard" became a typological emblem of religious and political intolerance, tyranny, misrule, conspiracy, cruelty, barbarity, bloodthirstiness, backwardness, slothfulness, and degeneracy. However fragmented, this "historical" story—the Black Legend with its culturally and racially stigmatizing implications—gives a determining shape to the power of blackness haunting… "American" fictions.[14]

Attached to this characterization, Williams reminds us, is a threatening Spanish presence at the South that persisted through the centuries: "We did *not* possess all America; this fact, in one mood or another, was in many minds, particularly those of our leaders. Although we might keep aloof or simulate superiority or indifference, still, there it was to the south, that mighty and alien

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[11] María DeGuzmán, *Spain's Long Shadow: The Black Legend, Off -White- ness, and Anglo-American Empire* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 2005), xiv.

[12] Stanley T. Williams, *The Spanish Background of American Literature*, 2 vols. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), 5.

[13] DeGuzmán, *Spain's Long Shadow*, 5. Of the term's invention and usage in the early colonial period, she explains: "Promulgated by Spain's religious and economic rivals in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries—primarily England and the Netherlands, but also France, Italy, Portugal, and Germany—the Black Legend or *la leyenda negra* elaborated a story of legend about the essential character of Spain around the historical facts of Spain's imperial sway, Inquisition, and treatment of indigenous peoples of the Americas."

[14] Ibid., 4-5. Of conceptualizing 'the Spaniard' through the Black Legend, DeGuzmán writes, "I claim that this third position or figure plays a primal role in the construction of Anglo-American identity as "American" and in the reinforcement of that identity, which needs the shadow of the Black Legend against Spain for definition." Rendering its historical appropriations, she writes, "Although since the sixteenth century the Black Legend has tended to fix characteristics that constitute an ethnic as well as a national myth of essential temperament, the shadowy vestige of the Black legend from the late eighteenth century to the mid-nineteenth century becomes increasingly imbricated with discourses of racialization."

civilization."[15] In my collection of passing narratives—texts from across centuries, cultures, and genres—I venture into this terrain with an entirely different vocabulary, so as to create difference by revising the story of North America's beginning with questions around the trope of the extravagant Spaniard and a rhetoric of the ghosting of Spanishness, both of which emerged from *la leyenda negra*, also as a romanticized rhetoric appropriated by major American authors. As if a ghosting of Spanishness had always distracted the American imagination, and here on the pages of a new collection of passing narratives is the romancing of that shadow. Still haunting the pages of American literary history is the "inaugural ghost story of America," as Adam Lifshey describes, which commenced with Cristóbal Colón's *diario* and his "first transatlantic voyage" to the Americas.[16]

Instead, the dissertation offers a formula of (mis)reading Spanishness, to interpret the historically specific interaction of categories that render confounding performances of a borderland figure passing as an extravagant Spaniard. Ultimately, what does the extravagant Spaniard conjure for Anglo-Americans across the centuries? That is, as a figure of dominance and weakness, of slave owning, of cruelty, of vast mineral wealth, of hidden riches, of leisure and luxury, of fears and fantasies. The extravagant Spaniard thus provokes conflicting or contradictory responses and sensibilities from its readers: captivation but also repugnance, empathy but also revulsion, kindness but also extreme confusion. As an exotic other, the extravagant Spaniard triggers a romance of misery. But, perhaps what this Spanish figure most powerfully rouses in the American literary imagination is a resemblance to the most famous Spaniard of all time: the knight-errant from Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quixote* (1605 & 1615).[17] This Spanish character gained tremendous popularity by the nineteenth century, thus the romancing of Spain's long shadow had intertwined itself with the ingenious Spanish gentleman *de la Mancha*, who was also extravagantly passing *and* always bound to his loyal servant. This *historia* has yet to be included in a discussion of Spanish masquerade yet it is central to the history of passing in American literature.

Cartographically speaking, I also show how extravagant passing (as linked to Spanishness) acts as an analogy for reimagining experience across America's literary Souths. My concern is to map how race and subjectivity are constructed around the *movements* of these bodies, specifically for how these figures cross and intersect at the borders of a forming nation. To problematize the sight of race-crossing, my dissertation takes a cartographic "turn," considering early maps in each chapter as a way of charting (mis)readings of masquerade across forming and dividing lines. Early maps have a lot to tell us about how southern states understood their relationship to Spanishness and southernness. Reimagining *movement* across this cartographic space—a region that extends from the more familiar American South to the borderlands to the Southwest to *California*, mapping and unmapping *la frontera* and the frontier, while also locating masquerades into a much deeper South—allows opportunities for rethinking experience in terms of particularly racialized identities: a mapping of journeys that other geographical spaces on the continent do not allow.

Extravagant Passing does not intend to fully trace the history of passing in American literature. Neither does it set out to declare that here, in these five chapters, is a fixed order of reading Spanish

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[15] Williams, *The Spanish Background of American Literature*, 12.

[16] Adam Lifshey, *Specters of Conquest: Indigenous Absence in Transatlantic Literatures* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010), 10.

[17] Anthony Cascardi's graduate course on Cervantes' *Don Quixote* proved immensely helpful for the dissertation, in particular my final project, which examined performativity (Judith Butler) and mimicry (Homi Bhabha), but also, Spanish masquerade (influenced by David Quint, who I presented alongside of for the graduate seminar). Furthermore, I noticed early on Cervantes' use of the word "extravagant" in portrayals of Don Quixote, however, its initial attention was more concentrated with Darieck Scott, as noted earlier.

masquerade. The texts selected (which are read as "test cases" or "case studies") do not attempt to propose an entirely new genre or subgenre. Neither is it my aim to lay forth for my reader a comprehensive (and perfect chronological) literary history of the extravagant Spaniard. And, this is not about my bringing forward a display of figurations and discussing identification either, in an effort to establish a standard or define a fixed anatomy of a trope that can *only* be found in American literature. Much more can be said in these other projects with objectives that exceed my own. Rather, the dissertation is far more modest in scope. I am most interested in pursuing a specific experience (*extravagant passing*) of a character (*the extravagant Spaniard*) within a larger subject matter (the history of passing in American literature). These are specifically *Spanish* masquerades that remind us of a history at the southern borderlands that includes Spain yet is marked by a transformative period of frontier conflict between Mexico and Anglo-American westward expansion. In acknowledging these crossings, I explore a different literary historiography, unmask a unique portrait of the American character, extend our logic of (racial) performativity, and make permeable national borders to re-conceptualize a Hemispheric Souths.

2. A Hemispheric "Turn" & A Critique of the History of Passing

From a historical and literary perspective, the study of extravagant passing and Spanish masquerade in the history of passing in American literature is at the present rather timely, perhaps even more so in terms of how the dissertation experiments with the current academic interest of comparative, hemispheric analysis in traditional English departments. My aim here is to recover the significance of an understudied figure as intervening into the traditional genre of racial passing, in which passing arose as a literary device in slave narratives of African American literature. The figure at the center of my dissertation is inextricably bound to broader fields of inquiry, and in extending our logic of racial performativity, we also make permeable national *and* literary borders, thus allowing us to define more broadly how the American literary imagination *imagined* this transnational figure within and beyond African American literature.

How might one map the *literary* and *cultural* terrain indicated and/or trespassed by the extravagant passing figure (including its author's own trespassing), and what are the contours of the racial, gendered, and sexual "problems" that this line imagines, defines, and upholds at precise moments in time and in different social contexts? How do we read the literary-theorizing of the racially ambiguous body? Not only as text-as-body but also body-as-text. At the moment these authors are writing, what is history doing? What are the ways in which this figure forces us to re-conceptualize not just the American literary South, but also, the "Hemispheric Souths"? The associations created between the texts analyzed in my dissertation introduce different stakes in the field(s), while also engaging a different methodology to traverse new ground, a different critical imaginative to explore beyond what it is we already think we know, and a different mode for historically based literary analysis to invite possibility and potentiality.

Before discussing each of the chapters of the dissertation in detail (which awaits in the final section of this "Introduction"), I want to examine an aspect of hemispheric critical practice that I implement and what this practice means in how I (and we) pursue comparative, cultural analysis—because, at its core, a hemispheric approach encourages rediscovery (of the Americas) from a cross-cultural perspective. In many ways, this practice is a reading strategy that destabilizes and defamiliarizes nation, along with concerning itself with interpretations that have everything to do with resistance and transgression. I like it because just as it insists on the familiar/nation, at the same time it looks way beyond the familiar/nation to expose the unfamiliar. It is an "awkward reading strategy that calls all order into question," as Cecil S. Giscombe once phrased, though it is the strategy that defies or disempowers closure and grace, and the strategy that at least suggests or

acknowledges the incomplete.[18] What abounds is a practice that goes beyond borders (national, cultural, textual) with a deep concern for re-vision and imaginative potentiality. Can we not call this practice an aesthetic of extravagance? This wandering beyond the limits or rather, as Paul Giles defines the act of transgression, "breaking through the boundaries of conventional knowledge so as to explore what might lie on the other side."[19] What then lies on the *other side* for us as modern readers? And what does our process of getting "there" mean? How are we crossing borders in search of other vision(s) for an (un)common ground of comparability?[20] This intellectual work of U.S. comparative studies, how we analyze overlapping and intersecting *histories* and *historia*…etc.,—our process—is about unmasking. These texts then, once destabilized, cannot be stopped. What we engage and create are fictionalizations of concepts like "America" and "U.S. nation" in American Studies, what Edmundo O'Gorman calls the "invention of America."[21] As I see it, a hemispheric approach is a continual process of America's (un)becoming—a term I play with throughout the dissertation—and the extravagant Spaniard exposes this continual process, especially in its occupying and traversing over real geographical and textual terrain.

In the collection of passing narratives I have compiled here, I create community between texts that are (in)comparable and (un)common. It is this interplay between texts—across genres, traditions, centuries, cultures, and languages—that prompts me to draw a link between a hemispheric approach and my term *extravagant passing*. Both terms are about tracing migrations of racialized bodies, across nations, cultures, and texts. Susan Gillman's definition of hemispheric studies is especially fitting, particularly her idea of "disjunctive comparability" and how this method creates interaction and overlap between texts, authors, and characters. She writes:

> It is not just that the term, when used to bring into focus so many different phenomena (not only geographic locations but also cultural routes, genealogies, imaginaries, cities, and, finally, the conception of spheres themselves), produces a salutary set of anomalous, non-parallel elements that aggressively resist conventional comparative models. More than that, different kinds of space-time frameworks emerge from the materials themselves, so that both geographic space and temporality can be put into play … .[22]

I link *extravagant passing* (a survival strategy) with hemispheric approaches (a reading strategy engaging spatial/temporal categories, what Gillman calls "multidimensional, multidirectional comparability").

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[18] Conversations with Cecil S. Giscombe on racial passing had shaped the project immensely in its earliest stages, including my conceiving of an "awkward reading strategy" within the tradition of black-to-white mobility that I relate here to a hemispheric approach.

[19] Paul Giles, *The Global Remapping of American Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 35. I pair the term "extravagant passing" with his reading of an "epistemological extravagance," which he defines as an "aesthetic of transgression." He also states, "Geographical exploration thus becomes corollary here to epistemological extravagance, in that word's strict etymological sense of moving beyond conventional bounds: Latin *extra*, outside, and *vagary*, to wander."

[20] The hemispheric "turn" into the history of passing was inspired by a seminar at the C19 conference, entitled "Hemispheric Souths," led by Kirsten Silva-Gruesz and Anna Brickhouse, both of which provided feedback to the project and position paper.

[21] Edmundo O'Gorman, *The Invention of America: An Inquiry into the Historical Nature of the New World and the Meaning of Its History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1961), 9-13. O'Gorman's 1961 book title is of specific interest, as an excellent entry for examining the philosophy of "invention" in discovery as an hemispheric approach. What is the act of "invention," that is, for all its violence as well as its (re)vision(s)?

[22] Susan Gilman, "Afterword: The Times of Hemispheric Studies," in *Hemispheric American Studies*, eds. Caroline F. Levander and Robert S. Levine (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2008), 330.

Both invoke plurality and playfulness while producing acts of transgression for transformation and transcendence. But what exactly is enacted in crossing borders and sustaining contradictions? What is that "transnational *turn*" that seems more often to refer to (or maintain) the U.S. as "center," whereas "hemispheric" sounds more attentive to issues of the (global) Souths? What is going beyond for re-vision, or re-drawing the map of "America" to de-center "U.S. nation"? What is the rhetorical power of intervention—that *turn*—which exponentially opens up the "Americas," and necessarily, sets it on its ear, with some sort of destabilizing *enactment* of unmasking? A hemispheric focus then, where we create our own passage for new perspective, involves an *extravagant* enactment, it involves its own passing and even Spanish masquerade.

Extravagant Passing may be described as "experimentally deploying" this enactment, for how I examine the transnational dimension of U.S. slavery in the American literary imagination: a study that is not transatlantic (as many transnational studies on U.S. slave trade have been) but transnational in another way. I track a performative figure that resurfaces in several corners of American literature, not just in texts that I am calling passing narratives. I read chronicles, epic poems, sentimental romances, captivity narratives, historical novellas, and I also turn to real maps, real newspaper clippings, real frontispieces, real letters—all to go beyond borders in an effort to grasp a cross-cultural fascination with the extravagant Spaniard and the bonded-duo of Spanish masquerade. I lay bare how race is (mis)read but turn to geography for how race was seen across regions with forming dividing lines. I am interested in "Spanishness" as a function and a significant racial signifier that invites new conversation about ideological constructions of racial knowledge and representation in relation to space, mobility, and the illusion of it, created by racially mixed persons who traversed emerging national geographies.

Early maps force us to re-think territory, nation-building, and homeland, as well as question themes of power and political control to conceive of a repressed narrative of U.S. invasion into Mexico, the destruction and re-mapping of borders, and historical displacement.[23] Mapping these journeys on real maps is about unsettling the American imaginary, disturbing what has been decreed as the "official history" at the northeastern corner of the United States versus its other beginning at the Southwest. How were borders forming, how were they guarded, and how is U.S.-nation defined by finally defining the other? Placing these early maps alongside my texts show how nations fought for "America," at the same time that a ghosting of Spanishness persisted at the Souths. Maps are integral to studying how imperial territories foreshadowed the nation-states of Mexico and the United States.[24] This dissertation seeks to reflect an American history of cartography, in terms of extravagant passing and Spanish masquerade, where physical, cultural and imaginative geographies are contested. What are the repercussions of territorial formation and displacement? In what ways are territory and nation being challenged and identified with Spanish-language usage, and how is a U.S. national vision present but manipulated to construct a vision of national power and agenda?

A cartographic "turn" helps us *see* more clearly how an Anglo-American imagination *imagined*, that is, how it was that a nation became so distracted by a Spanish presence at the South, and what exactly Spain's long shadow looked like across *las Américas*. We *see* more clearly on these maps a narrative forming, with a nation separating itself from the deeper South, just as we see Spanishness and nation-building in the texts of major writers (think Washington Irving, William H. Prescott, George Ticknor, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Edgar Allan Poe, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Herman Melville). By examining Spanish masquerade as the missing *historia* in the history of passing we come to learn how this foil character became the inheritor-*trickster* of "America's" histories, that is,

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[23] Giles, *The Global Remapping of American Literature*, 5-9.

[24] Martin Brückner, "Introduction: The Plurality of Early American Cartography," in *Early American Cartographies*, ed. Martin Brückner (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 1-34.

through the racially indeterminate bodies of mulatto/slavery and *mestizo*/conquest. These bodies manipulate and play with a system of racial demarcation—the confusion of the black-white at the North-South and a dark-light at the South—exposing conceptions of nationalism with *movement* across geographical-racial divisions. The Spanish figure complicates notions of mobility, space, and time, just as it deconstructs "whiteness" in its signifying in multiple categories all at once. What this figure gestures us towards is a conversation of transnationalism and trespassing, a figure that can be most fully glimpsed and finally approached beyond African American literature through a hemispheric analysis.

3. The Narrative of Spanish Masquerade (chapter summaries)

Extravagant Passing includes an introduction, five chapters, and an epilogue. In the introduction, I began with the inception of the dissertation to outline my methodology while also balancing my theoretical approach with the main concepts and vocabulary at the center of the project. Each chapter will work towards revising and extending a theory of *extravagance*, borrowing from race, gender, and performance studies scholars to critically examine how it was that the American imagination *imagined* this critical figure. In the pages above, I thus attempted to lay forth a rationale for the passing narratives I have selected, also situating the dissertation within fields of relevance and among current debates, including the history of passing, and comparative, hemispheric studies, and also, U.S. Ethnic literature, more explicitly African American literary studies as coinciding with Chicana/o studies. In addition to literary readings, cultural history, and archival research, the dissertation makes use of queer theory, post-colonial theory, and theories of *mestiza* consciousness in order to connect these particular case studies of passing to a broader field of inquiry concerning boundary crossing and its representational practices.

The dissertation contains five chapters that have been arranged conceptually in two parts: the first part includes two chapters, while the second part includes three chapters. In the first part, I analyze the writings of three explorers: (chapter 1) Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, and (chapter 2) Gaspar Pérez de Villagrá and John Smith, all of which have been described as founding figures who produced texts at the very start of North America's beginning. Each writer captures a unique perspective of Spanish *entradas* [entering] and English arrival to the southern and eastern shores of North America, specifically the mid-sixteenth-century (Cabeza de Vaca in 1528) and the early-seventeenth-century (Villagrá in 1596, and Smith in 1607), whose works introduce the figure of masquerade and how Spain's conquistador became an extravagant passing figure at the Souths. These early colonial texts render a frame for further conceptualizing the extravagant Spaniard and also introduce the trope of the bonded-duo of Spanish masquerade. In the second part of the dissertation, I analyze three nineteenth-century texts: (chapter 3) Herman Melville's historical novella *Benito Cereno*, (chapter 4) Ellen and William Craft's slave narrative *Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom*, and (chapter 5) María Amparo Ruiz de Burton's sentimental romance *Who Would Have Thought It?*. Reading chronologically, each chapter leads into the next in an unfolding narrative about the obsession with this Spanish figure *and* the bonded-duo of Spanish masquerade. Each chapter is divided into five sections—1. Introductory Reading. 2. Author Background and Textual Production. 3. Historical Significance. 4. Close Readings. 5. Winding Up—and in those sections I unveil complete portraits of the protagonist and its author both of which call into question the performance of racial mobility in light of the cultural fascination and romanticization of the extravagant Spaniard traveling with a loyal servant. Through a series of portraits and transformations then, each chapter speaks to the one before it, producing lines of association and a trajectory of reading—that overlap historically, intersect regionally, and connect literarily—to explore, examine, and discuss narrative (dis)plays of extravagant passing and Spanish masquerade, and how it was that

the American imagination imbricated a ghosting of Spanishness in its cultural memory. The dissertation is as much about the act of extravagant passing and Spanish masquerade as it is about the *writerly masquerade* of these extravagant passages on the page.

In chapter 1, I begin at the beginning: Cabeza de Vaca's famous 1528-1536 journey of shipwreck and the loss of the costume of imperialism in *La Relación* (1542). Critics have read *La Relación* in terms of the "naked" conquistador achieving social and spiritual mobility across Native space (as shaman and female gatherer and barterer), yet (dis)miss the chronicler's self-proclaimed portrait as the *figura de la muerte* [figure of death]. I argue that his survival had everything to do with his extravagant body, disability, and Spanish masquerade. Examining Cabeza de Vaca's process of (un)becoming—from excessively costumed to a figure of famine to *la figura de la muerte* to Spanish-*Indio* to *mestizo*—I make visible the "extravagant Spaniard" as a figure emerging from the southern borderlands and wed to North America's colonial legacy: a landscape marked by the desires of a colonizing culture and an eventual borderspace that belongs to a history of unresolved racial strife. As a unique performative figure trespassing on the future landscape of the United States, Cabeza de Vaca only partially relinquishes his coloniality of power, while exposing the making of race relations in America that will haunt this southern landscape, leaving on it a traceable trail. Cabeza de Vaca's Spanish masquerade casts a long shadow across the centuries, across cultures, and across textual landscapes. With *La Relación*, I evolve a series of interpretive frames to contrast over and against the contexts of succeeding chapters: including the *writerly masquerade* of the soldier-turned-chronicler reinventing the colonial self through rhetorics of imperialism and native beliefs, and his introducing the portrait of the bonded-duo of Spanish masquerade in the ending scene where four Spanish slave-catchers misrecognize the Spaniard-*Indio* (Cabeza de Vaca) traveling with "his" loyal African slave (Estevanico). I bring this image to bear on the nineteenth-century texts of the second part of the dissertation.

My chapter 2 acts as a bridging apparatus between part one and part two of the dissertation, as an effort to historically, and more so chronologically, fill an inscrutable gap in my telling of the story of the figure and narrative Spanish masquerade. Between Cabeza de Vaca's shipwreck and transformation into the *figura de la muerte* and Melville's 1799 knotting of Spanish colonialism on the transnational stage of slavery with the Spanish slave master's skeletal body replacing the ship's proper figurehead, "Christopher Colón," is a comparative reading with Villagrá's *Historia de la Nueva Mexico* (1610) and Smith's *Generall Historie of Virginia* (1624). Reading these founding texts of North America as complementary (paring America's first epic poem with the famous origin text of North America), I provide an interesting intervention in an area of European colonialism that most English departments tend to ignore. The gap these texts fulfill concerns Spanish presence at the South and Spanish distraction in (dis)plays of imperialistic performances or what I call their masquerading "Europeanness" to achieve passage across Native terrain. I discuss how Spanish models of colonization became foundational in the experience of early discovery, specifically in the rhetorics utilized to narrate colonial encounter. Juxtaposing Villagrá's verse to Smith's prose, of primary concern is how both texts reflect the shadow of *la leyenda negra*: Smith's first words and "lie" to Powhatan, when he effectively makes use of Spain's presence at the Souths to declare the Spaniard as violent and threatening in order to assert English arrival and presence on eastern shores, while Villagrá confirms Spanish cruelty at the South during the three-day battle and massacre at Ácoma but also condemns it from the position of the common soldier. In my pairing of these histories, I also analyze a range of imperial performances during encounters with Natives, specifically narrative (dis)plays of war in terms of masquerade, where both captains conflate European and Native performative threats of military prowess. I propose formal similarities between Villagrá and Smith, arguing how this intervention shows us exactly what Spanish masquerade looked like within Spanish *and* English contexts.

Chapter 3 is a transitional chapter that gets us to the nineteenth century with a historical novella that brings together European colonialism and American slavery: Melville's 1799 setting in the Latin-Pacific with *Benito Cereno* (1855). As other critics often note, *Benito Cereno* is problematic for its extreme (dis)play of allegorical histories and race relations; however, to depart from those studies, I analyze how Spanishness (not blackness) comes into view for the duped American passenger in a much deeper south, concentrating on Melville's rhetorical use of *la leyenda negra* to portray a declining Spanish empire with the skeletonized Spanish slave-ship and its canvas covered figure-head (once Colón but now the real Spanish captain and slave trader). Unlike other studies, I introduce a *Spanish* Melville. Like the writers of his day, Melville, too, wondered what exactly Spain and its Spaniard had to do with it all. Rather than pursue an old quest that has privileged Amasa Delano's *Narrative* (1817) as the most significant historical influence that inspired *Benito Cereno*, I discover the height of Melville's originality as inkling from two other "sources": (1) passing stories of the 1840s, namely the 1848 escape of Ellen and William Craft (also my chapter 4) but also the Confidence Man, and (2) Melville's reading of Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quixote* (1605 & 1615) well before and also during the composition of *Benito Cereno*. What happens if we read *Benito Cereno* with the chance that Melville returned to Delano's *Narrative* because of the mid-century cultural excitement over the famous 1848 escape of Ellen Craft? As I argue, Ellen Craft's escape moved Melville to unspool a much longer narrative of Spanish masquerade in *Benito Cereno* that coincided with his reading of *Don Quixote* (but also coincided with a cultural obsession with the extravagant Spaniard). Melville's marginalia reveals an author captivated by the original bonded-duo of Spanish masquerade (Don Quixote and Sancho Panza), and in my close examination of it, I offer modern readers entrance into his creative process as he reinvented the bonded-duo in his version of Don Benito and Babo.

In chapter 4 (and briefly discussed since this chapter has been referenced here in the "Introduction"), I take my cue from the masked-writer of the newspaper clipping that (mis)read Ellen Craft's racial impersonation as that of "Spanish extraction." Deriving from the newspaper clipping the portrait of the bonded-duo of Spanish masquerade ("Mr. Johnson and servant), I discuss the significance of this pair in the history of passing. I focus on the production history of the 1848 escape, where I extrapolate how their passing-plot initiated the literary trope of slaves passing as Spanish gentlemen in anti-slavery discourse—as it was told in newspapers, anti-slavery platforms, various genres of fiction, represented in engravings, and also in their narrative. I argue an intricate textual and visual craftsmanship to *Running*, a narrative masquerade propelled by the multiple and conflicting ways of reading the subject of its frontispiece. The text never "outs" Ellen Craft's racial impersonation as "white," forcing the reader into a blind spot in which we continue to define her (extravagant) passing as white-to-black. This study also situates the adventure of "Mr. Johnson and servant" within the male-questing tradition of bonded-duos; here is a the bonded-duo with a female lead.

In chapter 5, I take my cue from a masked-bachelor of a newspaper clipping that "outs" María Amparo Ruiz de Burton as the "authoress" of *Who Would Have Thought It?* (1872). From beneath the mask of anonymity then, the first Mexican American novelist to write a novel in English and publish it in the United States was a woman, who also imaginatively remapped the nation's "official history" as beginning in the Southwest. Critics of the novel, however, tend to (dis)miss its anonymous publication, that from beneath the mask Ruiz de Burton borrowed a lens—genderless and ethnically unmarked—through which to imagine a Southwest beginning and the *female* immigrant experience of social (im)mobility and her extravagant passing across a rapidly transforming and racist landscape in the aftermath of the U.S.-Mexico War (1846-1848) and a burgeoning Civil War (1861-1865). Tracking the journey of a Spanish heroine (whose dyed skin fades, allowing her to traverse the racial categories of 'Indian' to 'little black girl' to 'blue-eyed Mexican' to 'pure Spanish blood'), I examine Ruiz de Burton's cartographic play with the heroine's

Spanish masquerade across emerging national geographies. From the far West of California to the far East of Massachusetts to the far South of Mexico, Ruiz de Burton maps on the body of her heroine the dividing racial lines and borders that newly defined and separated bodies in terms of citizen/non-citizen, black/white (North-South), and dark/light (Souths). I engage Ruiz de Burton's decentering of U.S. nation through her version of the bonded-duo of *female* Spanish masquerade yet as *Mexicana/Californiana* and Anglo-American; in this case, the class passing of the "Yankee" housewife at the expense of the "Spanish" heroine. This chapter is a winding up of the dissertation that allows for connections to be drawn from Ruiz de Burton's historical romance to the masquerades of earlier chapters, including Indian captivity (Cabeza de Vaca), Spanish and English colonization (Villagrá and Smith), and racial conflict at the southern borderlands with the U.S.-Mexico War coinciding with slavery in America with the Civil War (Melville, the Crafts, and Ruiz de Burton). Ruiz de Burton unsettles the "official story" on the literary page and reimagines what Julie Ruiz calls the "disappearing of a frontier." I argue that perhaps not Ruiz de Burton but her invented narrator remaps the official *historia* of *la Californiana*, who might very well be that of an Anglo-American male (un)mapping *la Frontera* or, even a Cervantine influence that shaped her literary career.

In the epilogue that closes the dissertation, I do four things, first I begin by flashing forward to the twentieth-century to glimpse Spanish distraction in the backgrounds of two female protagonists: Irene Redfield from the classic passing narrative of the traditional genre, *Passing* (1929), by Nella Larsen, and La Loca Santa in the notable Chicana/o novel, *So Far From God* (1993), by Ana Castillo. This glimpse into the texts of Larsen and Castillo allow me to turn inward into the premise of the dissertation. Now we know *their* story with my unspooling of the narrative of Spanish masquerade. Second, I situate my study of the extravagant Spaniard within the history of passing, predominantly within the African American literary genre of black-to-white and white-to-black passing. Then, in the third section, I shift to discussing how my key theoretical concepts challenge other terms in the genre, namely "imitation," "mimicry," and "queer" so as to change our thinking of traditional assumptions of passing's black-white history. In my sifting through theorists—from Judith Butler to José Esteban Muñoz to Homi Bhabha to Sigmund Freud to Mikhail Bakhtin to Gloria Anzaldúa—I arrive at the importance of concentrating on the single integer of *Spanishness* in *extravagant passing*, in order to approach an extravagant critique of the fantasy and formula of (mis)reading this figure of the borderlands. The final section ends with a poetics of extravagance (at least for this critique of the extravagant Spaniard) as rooted in the emerging consciousness of *la mestiza*. Because the final two chapters of the dissertation are Spanish masquerades enacted by two female figures, Ellen Craft and Lola Medina (and we can certainly add Ruiz de Burton here as well), here we have mixed-race heroines at the southern borders of the United States, and suddenly traversing across the future borderlands—*la frontera*. As hybrid geopolitical subjects of multiple contradictions, subaltern subjectivity must contend with all her ambiguities: "In the Borderlands / you are the battleground."[25] Ultimately, I argue, in that by being attentive to a Spanish past it is for the purposes of critiquing an American present and to thus move beyond it. In declaring a poetics of extravagance in *la conciencia de la mestiza*, the intention is to embrace all divisions of subjectivity, as Anzaldúa calls for, not just those based on racial, ethnic, and national difference, but as a proposal for a new trajectory of thought, at least in terms of a better sociality, as Muñoz advises. I thus seek a new equation in the philosophies of Anzaldúa and Muñoz: (Spanish or *mestiza*) extravagance > queer. That, through *hope* and *potentiality*, we can arrive at something that tells us something different of our past, of our future, and of ourselves.

[25] Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 2007), 3.

This mode of extravagant passing for which this dissertation calls attention to asks one to also enact an extravagant reading experience, in their own extravagant passing through the centuries and genres of American literary history so as to distill from these texts a historical texture of such transformative geographical moments that permitted such extravagant passages of Spanish masquerade. If, as is indicated in the newspaper clipping that begins this introduction, specifically the remark from the acquaintance that appears in the epigraph—"he was either a '*woman* or a *genius*"'—then this woman/genius split, as tied to the fantasy and formula of (mis)reading Spanish masquerade, offers a real historical stance on the interesting forms that this first recording of extravagant passing takes. A major implication of this insight is that contemporary critics who project onto the text, like readers-in-the-past, a simple passing binary of black-white, accidentally occlude the blind spot and opportunity afforded by expansionist-racist-sexist ideology and that which Ellen Craft seized, in a sense recreating that opportunity and allowing *her* Spanish masquerade to slip past them—to slip past us—and extravagantly so.[26]

There is a missing *historia* in the history of passing, thus the dissertation represents an effort to contribute to passing's histories that, through the story of Ellen Craft, I have brought to the surface to specifically offer a convergence (in methodology and critical theory) of Chicana/o literature and African American literature; a dissertation that might be read as a precursor to these traditions.[27] In the place of what might perhaps be exhausted stances of reading a simple binary of black-white, *Extravagant Passing* asks readers to return to those black-white passages to instead reconsider how passing figures embodied and exploited a shifting cartographic-racial formation; in other words, a formation that discursively relies upon gendered geo-political imaginings that, for instance, Ellen Craft's "invention" of an ailing Spanish gentleman is uniquely poised to embody and exploit. She has challenged me and she has challenged us to see the extravagance, maybe even feel it, which is to say she has challenged us to rethink all of passing's critiques—and even queer critiques of passing—to approach the potentiality of what an extravagant critique might push us towards. That is, a methodology of reading from a renewed sense that as modern readers, we too must engage in our own extravagant passage, for the possibility that abounds when we prod at the limits of our field(s). I thus cast the readerly experience onto a new path and towards renewed understanding of passing's histories with *historias*, to glimpse a confounding figure emerging from the southern borderlands *and* on the writerly space of improvisation, parody, and serious play, but always in the space of (un)becoming, that space between the mask and the *real*.

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[26] I am grateful to the two editors from *MELUS* who saw earlier drafts of chapter 4 and offered suggestions for revision, one editor concentrated on role of "the acquaintance" while the other emphasized the role of "readers-in-the-past."

[27] In her recent publication on racial passing in recent American history, Allyson Hobbs writes, "Racial passing in the American context must be acknowledged as a subset of a much larger phenomenon that encompasses multiple disguises and forms of dissemblance." See Hobbs, *A Chosen Exile: A History of Racial Passing in American Life* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014), 19.

Chapter 1

"*estávamos hechos propria figura de la muerte*" [we made our own figure of death]: The (Un)Becoming of the Spanish Conquistador in Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca's *La Relación* (1542 & 1555)

Los que quedamos escapados, desnudos como naçimos y perdido todo lo que traíamos. Y aunque todo valía poco, para entonces valía mucho. E como entonçes era por noviembre y el frío muy grande y nosotros tales que con poca dificultad nos podían contar los huessos, estávamos hechos propria figura de la muerte.

[Those of us who escaped, naked as we were born, and lost everything we brought with us. And although all of it was of little value, at that time it was worth a great deal. And since it was November and the cold very great and we so thin that with little difficulty you could count our bones, we made our own figure of death.][1]

– Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, *La Relación* (1542)

1. The Undressed Conquistador

Staring back at us from the page is a striking self-portrait of the undressed conquistador, in which the myth of Spanish conquest is literally stripped of its image of masculine violence. Here, on the pages of *La Relación* (1542)—known as the famous personal account of the disastrous Pánfilo de Narváez expedition that set sail in June 1527 to claim *La Florida* for the Crown of Castile—the first conquistadors to set foot on North American shores are not armed medieval-looking knights, riding on horseback, ready and willing to threaten Native cultures with the swing of a sword. Instead, its chronicler, Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca (one of only four survivors from the original 600 soldiers and colonists), renders a confounding image of Spanish arrival to the New World. On that cold November day in 1528, what emerged from the waters of the Gulf of Mexico was a band of forty naked soldiers, their bodies ravaged and gaunt from the severe conditions of shipwreck *and also* months of straggling through rough country that literally tore at their clothing and brutally beat against their steel suits, further wounding the frail bodies they encased. Beneath the costume of imperialism, it turns out, there lies a different performative figure: *la figura de la muerte* [the figure of death]. A figure that, in Spanish, is feminine in noun. Half drown and crawling on the sandy beaches of *la isla de Malhado* [the Island of Misfortune], and fittingly dubbed by its survivors, these transformed Spaniards made a haunting scene of failed conquest: "we made our own figure of death."[2] The Spaniards had "lost everything" in their failed attempt to leave the island unnoticed, since they feared being attacked by costal Natives, as the chronicler confesses, *que agora ellos fuessen grandes o no, nuestro miedo los hazía paresçer gigantes*. [whether or not they were of great stature, our fear

[1] Rolena Adorno and Patrick Charles Pautz, *Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca: His Account, His Life, and the Expedition of Pánfilo de Narváez*, 3 vols. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 98. (All citations are from volume 1, unless otherwise noted). English translation emended. The word *propria* [our own] is missing in the translation, which retains a feminine emphasis that resonates with *la* of *la muerte*. The figure of death is a feminine personification.

[2] The *Isla de Mal Hado* is generally thought to be Galveston Island, a long barrier island located off the coast of Texas. See Alex D. Krieger, *We Came Naked and Barefoot: The Journey of Cabeza de Vaca Across North America*, ed. Margery H. Krieger (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002), 28-30.

made them seem like giants.][3] Shipwreck and loss thus forces the chronicler to reinvent the self within the classic plot of colonial encounter, but as he enunciates the sight of nakedness through a discourse of sacrifice and suffering in service to the Crown, the act of self-titling as *la figura de la muerte* cannot be divorced from an Indigenous perspective.

Cabeza de Vaca's survival in the New World had everything to do with a skeletal appearance that proved frightening and strange to *los indios* (as Cabeza de Vaca calls the Natives) who, at the fragile moment of *re*-encounter, failed to recognize the Spaniards in their new (dis)guise. The Natives saw and feared something else, in the chronicler's words, *Mas quando ellos nos vieron ansí en tan diferente hábito del primero y en manera tan estraña, espantáronse tanto que se bolvieron atrás*. [But when they saw us in such different habit from before and of a manner so strange, they were so frightened that they turned to leave.][4] If we read this scene from the distant perspective of *los indios* (in this case, the Karankawas of Galveston Island), a different (mis)reading of the Spaniard (as skeletal, as figure of death, as *mala cosa* [evil thing]) surfaces even if somewhat buried beneath the narrative patterns of colonial discourse. What *los indios* saw and heard versus what the chronicler believed they saw and heard are two very different cultural illusions of fear that masquerade in the text. *La Relación* thus offers a unique spectacle of encounter between Old and New World cultures and at its center is a provocative portrait of the undressed conquistador as extravagant.

Shipwreck and the loss of the costume of imperialism at *Malhado* is a decisive moment in the conquistador's journey. As I read it, Cabeza de Vaca is about to descend into the world of *los indios*. This dramatic reversal has taken exactly one year, beginning with the disastrous nautical venture at the port of Trinidad in November 1527, followed by a dangerous march into the interior of western Florida in April 1528, and then a desperate mission of escape in crude rafts in the Gulf Coast that result in shipwreck at *Malhado* in November 1528. The depth of the real protagonist as chronicler emerges more clearly when tracing the yearlong journey to *Malhado* for the series of calamities that explain how the Spaniard became so thin, naked, and skeletal. Certainly, we cannot appreciate the depth and originality of Cabeza de Vaca's experience in *La Relación* without first understanding a complete account of its chronicler and the period in which he lived, wrote, and published his narrative(s). The real protagonist is a complex figure that goes through multiple metamorphoses in the course of 131-pages, which translates to the span of nearly a decade that Cabeza de Vaca spent in the New World. Who was Cabeza de Vaca? The Spaniard with such a peculiar and illustrious birth name, that is: the forty-year-old veteran of war who sailed to *las Américas* with Narváez; the royally appointed official who rivaled the command of the expedition's leader; the shipwrecked conquistador who imagined himself as *la figura de la muerte;* the survivor who lived as a slave and was made a shaman by the Karankawas; the slave who escaped Indian captivity and as traveling-healer found passage through the American Southwest and Mexico; the healer donning Indian dress who encountered and startled four Spanish slave catchers on horseback in Nueva Galicia; and the Spaniard-*Indio* who "returned" to New Spain and then Spain to write and publish his tragic North American tale.[5]

Unlike other expeditionary writings that trumpeted Spanish arrival to New World shores and portrayed violent images of defeat and the enslavement of Natives (such as Cristóbal Colón's

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[3] Adorno and Pautz, *Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca*, 94.

[4] Ibid., 98. The Natives inhabiting the coastal region of *Malhado* were known as the Karankawas, either the Capoques or the Hans, both of which lived on the island.

[5] Adorno and Pautz argue that Cabeza de Vaca began writing "soon after he arrived in Spain in August 1537"; however, the authors dismiss the possibility of an earlier writerly process. See Adorno and Pautz, *Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca*, 295. Cabeza de Vaca began documenting the expedition as early as 1528, when writing a letter to the King from Trinidad, and then again when writing the *Joint Report* when in New Spain in 1534.

recounting in his *diarios* after his voyages to the Indies in the 1490s, or Hernán Cortés recalling in his *letras* after the Conquest of Mexico in 1519-1521), Cabeza de Vaca's *relación* reveals the other colonial experience, that of suffering and crisis from the perspective of the soldiers and colonists who unwittingly followed their leader. What unfolds in *La Relación* is a different project of empire; instead, the chronicler is intent on demystifying the imperial mission to *conquistar y governar* [conquer and govern], and eager to expose Narváez's bad leadership. When telling this other story, however, the chronicler's eye repeatedly colonizes the Spanish body, stripping it of the costume of imperialism to engage a writerly expedition into the body-interior that shows another kind of suffering, violence, and devastation. Something happens to Spanish colonial identity at the moment of shipwreck and the loss of all worldly possessions. Reflected on the page is a physical and psychological misery, where the chronicler struggles to describe and understand his experience and render some sense of identification. However, he is also interested in rendering his revitalization and reformation, and does so by re-imagining the naked and unarmed self from a space between the material world and metaphorical imaginary.

Despite the chronicler's detailed narrative portrayal, however, critical readings of this often-quoted scene of shipwreck and loss at *Malhado* continue to perpetuate a partial-portrait of the transformed conquistador. Readers tend to stall at the line *desnudos como nacimos* [naked as we were born], yet the more confounding state arrives at the end of the paragraph when the chronicler writes, *E como entonçes era por noviembre y el frío muy grande y nosotros tales que con poca dificultad nos podían contar los huessos, estávamos hechos propria figura de la muerte.* [And since it was November and the cold very great, and we so thin that with little difficulty you could count our bones, we made our own figure of death]. Far more emblematic than nudity is the disturbing portrayal of the imperial body turned inside out: "you could count our bones." Here, the chronicler forces his mid-sixteenth century reader into an encounter with a graphic image of the living body's skeletal frame—its 206 bones—protruding through the flesh as the figure of death itself *or* as the figure of death within the self. A unique performative figure is glimpsed, but how are we, as modern readers, to understand this portrait within colonial discourse?

To read this famous scene and merely marvel at *desnudez* [nakedness], then, is to neglect the cunning implications at play in the prose; after all, the chronicler marvels at his skeletal interiority, *not* at his nakedness.[6] Following the epigraphic quotation (and just before *los indios* reenter the narrative to discover the Spaniards in new (dis)guise), the chronicler digresses from the suspenseful and shocking shipwreck scene to further sketch for the reader *his* confounding state. In one long breath, he explains how his body had been starved down to its skeletal frame, ending with a brief disclaimer for having drifted from the storyline:

> *De mí sé dezir que desde el mes de mayo passado yo no avía comido otra cosa sino maíz tostado, y algunas vezes me vi en necessidad de comerlo crudo, porque aunque se mataron los caballos … yo nunca pude comer dellos, y no fueron diez veces las que comí pescado. Esto digo por excusar razón, porque pueda cada uno ver qué tales estaríamos.*
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> [For myself I can say that since the month of May I had not eaten any other thing but toasted maize, and sometimes I found myself having to eat it raw, because although the horses were killed … I never could eat them, and there were not more

[6] This formula of seeing borrowed from José Rabasa is a reading from the final scene of *La Relación*: "When Cabeza de Vaca first runs into the Spaniards, they marvel at his strange dress and *not* at his nakedness." See José Rabasa, *Writing Violence on the Northern Frontier: The Historiography of Sixteenth-Century New Mexico and Florida and the Legacy of Conquest* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), 66.

than ten occasions on which I ate fish. I say this by way of explanation so that each one might see the condition we were in.][7]

The digression illustrates *his* physical sacrifice so that "each one might see" the desecrated state of *their* bodies. But for the past six months (from May until November), the chronicler had only eaten corn and some fish, and deliberately adds that he never consumed the killed horses because, as he writes, *yo nunca pude comer dellos* [I never could eat them]. He clearly distances himself from the other soldiers who, in their desperation, were reduced to eating the colony's animals. Although eating horsemeat meant succumbing to a basic human instinct, it also acted as a prelude to that grim descent of eating human flesh, and throughout the early colonial period, cannibalism was a powerful trope in narratives of conquest, *La Relación* included. Thus, in declaring his abstinence from all meats, the chronicler maintains his civility while presenting himself as ascetic.[8] Certainly, the chronicler enhances a view of his character for the reader, very much constructing a martyred view of his suffering, not just as a most gaunt figure of famine but a very Christian one. The writer's display of sacrifice would have reminded readers of that other sacrificial figure who abstained from meats but ate fish, Jesus Christ. Of course, with the chronicler-as-author of his own life, his only control over failed conquest lies in reimagining it and rewriting his role in it, and although his modeling of Christian principles occurs throughout the narrative (and quite deliberately)—even the line "you could count our bones" summons Christ's crucifixion in Psalms 22:18: *Han taladrado mis manos y pies, y han contado todos mís huesos*. [They have pierced my hands and feet, and they have counted all my bones.]—should it suffice to say that his narrative voice, even if presenting a different reality of military conquest, is solely concerned with characterization in the larger project of imperial expansion? Is his account merely "another facet of the imperial mask"?[9] Something happened to that *mask of imperialism* while Cabeza de Vaca became *la muerte viva* [death alive] and was forced to go native, and it revolves around the question of his "return." What we find in *La Relación* is a testimony of abject misery and a *writerly masquerade* between rhetorics that conceal and reveal in their attempt to understand an internal and exterior experience of contradiction, and all a transformation occurring at the southern fringes of North America.

Certainly, my intention is not to ignore the destructive (and/or seductive) power of Spanish colonialism in *La Relación*, nor to dismiss the contributions made by critical readings on the subject of its violence. Without a doubt, *La Relación* contains tensions related to an imperial and colonial agenda. After all, Cabeza de Vaca wrote the 1542 account for Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor from 1519-1555, and as we learn in the *Proemio* [Preface], the chronicler was eager to gain a second royal appointment to the New World. As I read *La Relación*, a different narrative of intent is

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[7] Adorno and Pautz, *Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca*, 98. English translation emended.

[8] Rabasa argues, Cabeza de Vaca's writing is "ultimately self-serving: he does not eat horse meat, much less human flesh." See Rabasa, *Writing Violence on the Northern Frontier*, 78.

[9] Agreeing with Beatrice Pastor, the narrative voice in *La Relación* "demystifies, without question, many of the previous representations of the reality of America and it harshly criticizes the process of military conquest," in such a way that "the representation and knowledge of the new reality again appear instrumentalized insofar as they respond to the needs of the narrator's characterization and to the need to legitimize his trajectory and to demonstrate all the merits that make him worthy of coveted appointment." (It is unclear whether Pastor refers to the 1542 or 1555 edition). She concludes: "The authority of the traveling ethnographer that shapes the text of *Naufragios* does not reveal itself in this multiple context as the authority of a knowledge sought in real dialogue with the Other's 'difference' and with its history, but rather as another facet of the imperial mask." Cabeza de Vaca is not necessarily a "traveling ethnographer"; for 6.5 years he was held captive. See Pastor, "Silence and Writing: The History of the Conquest," in *1492-1992: Re/Discovering Colonial Writing*, eds. Renee Jara and Nicholas Spadaccini (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 145-147.

masquerading alongside an imperial agenda, and it reveals (and conceals) itself when we examine the patterns of argument that the chronicler carefully creates and manipulates. Besides a discourse of sacrifice and suffering to prove service to the Crown, the are several confounding portraits of the conquistador that are sensationally emblematic, calling attention to a different emblem of identification that disrupts the logic of encounter between colonizer/colonized: this was an imaginative yet real threat against Spanish empire. I examine the chronicler's destructive eye towards the Spanish body for the ways in which dueling imaginations, varied discourses, and conflicting perspectives, are brought together and negotiated on the page.

Like other early explorers, Cabeza de Vaca appropriates rising discourses of mid-sixteenth century Europe to characterize an *experience* of abject misery in North America that no other European had yet to experience, let alone document. The chronicler narrates a journey with an inventive literary force, participating in a narrative syncretism of European and Indigenous cultural beliefs; in other words, an unusual layering of cross-cultural signification, but also where we read New World experience of misery through, what Kathleen Donegan suggests, "traditional vocabularies persisting, even if they are transformed."[10] This layering that begins at the shipwreck scene at *Malhado*, when the chronicler calls himself *la figura de la muerte*.[11] This self-portrait not only coincides with the popularity of the skeletal figure of Death found in early European devotional texts (with origins that stem from *Ars moriendi*, the Latin expression for 'the art of dying well' that made exemplary the story of Christ on the Cross), but it also coincides with a mysterious skeletal and hermaphroditic figure of *las Américas*. Much later in *La Relación*, after Cabeza de Vaca escapes captivity and describes his role as traveling healer, he recounts how a harrowing figure appeared to the Avavares, sometime between 1519-20, and terrorized them by severing the limbs of its victims only to surgically or magically heal them. Cabeza de Vaca names the figure *mala cosa* [evil thing] (a Spanish phrase associated with the devil). Here, Native perspective functions as a cultural distraction that meddles with the retrospective act of history writing. We must ask whether the chronicler re-imagined the self through the eyes of the Other, at *Malhado* and then later when traveling through Southwest Texas. At narrative sites where the conquistador is *conquistador*, the chronicler must reinvent the self into a figure of absolute dissent in order to interpret his passage. If his is a unique aesthetic, where dueling imaginations coexist on the page, history writing is both a site of cultural negotiation *and* the visual problematization of a spectrum of notions (that of naming, identity and performance, authenticity and deceit, and the definitions of the "real" and the methods or system by which identity is invented and performed). Is this the force of the narrator's own *mestizaje*,

[10] Kathleen Donegan examines the literature of crisis produced by English writers: "What does this excess of misery tell us about the colonial condition apart from the unforgiving New World environment? It is an indication that misery was not only a material condition but also a language through which new settlers revealed how the social links that tied them to England, and to their own sense of Englishness, were breaking down." Long before "generic precursors" of the traditional genre, Cabeza de Vaca writes of misery. North America, too, tested his sense of Spanishness. As Donegan writes, "Colonial writers drew on prior modes of expression to capture their experiences of catastrophe. Their texts are literary creations as much as they are historical artifacts, and in them we can find traditional vocabularies persisting, even if they are transformed." The same we can apply to our reading of *La Relación* and the figuation of *la figura de la muerte*. See Donegan, *Seasons of Misery: Catastrophe and Colonial Settlement in Early America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 4-6.

[11] José Rabasa's final graduate course at UC Berkeley, entitled "Spanish Colonial America, allowed me to examine Cabeza de Vaca's transformation and social mobility in terms of "passing." Rabasa led me to the work of Michael Taussig and Clifford Geertz, the latter of which appears in his tudy on *La Relación* in *Writing Violence on the Northern Frontier*.

protruding through colonial discourse, haunting the author's page, tearing off the mask of imperialism, and thus queering his tale?[12]

I read *La Relación* as a real body in constant motion: twisting, turning, avoiding, and "passing" between imaginations; creating different and conflicting directions; teasing the reader along in a push-and-pull effect; and, at times, desiring to reveal less and conceal more, and at other times, desiring to conceal less and reveal more. This is how *writerly masquerade* works in *La Relación*, when the author fluctuates between the Old and the New, and where the author mediates and meditates as he recoils at what he wants to say against that which cannot be said.[13] Still, he says too much. Therein lies a troubled consciousness on the page—the narrator's own *mestizaje*, perhaps. What we find in *La Relación* is the shedding of Spanish colonial identity and a profound conversion experience. As Robert Russell suggests:

> He really undergoes a pretty-dramatic conversion experience. Basically, going from being a Spanish soldier, mercenary, to becoming something other, something different, in a way, kind of the first 'American'. He begins to see himself as something other than a Spaniard and … definitely something other than the Natives. He really is, in a lot of ways, the first 'American' because of what he experiences.[14]

When Cabeza de Vaca began writing *La Relación*, not long after his rescue, he was "something other than a Spaniard and … definitely something other than the Natives," as Russell explains. From the space of the hyphen—between Spaniard-*Indio*—the chronicler thinks, writes, and reconciles the breaking down of a Spanish self through Native perspective(s), experience, and knowledge. The (un)becoming and transformation of the Spaniard is perceived in relation to Russell's trope of "the first 'American'." I thus set forth to investigate his Spanish masquerade across the southern fringes of what would become the southwest borderlands, for how the Spanish body became broken-down during a yearlong culmination of incidents (as a result of the poor decisions of the expedition's leader), and to understand how exactly the "undressed conquistador" turned into *la figura de la muerte*.

Cabeza de Vaca's passage through Native terrain is often called the "first 'American'" experience of survival *and* of "passing" and becoming Other—the 'extravagant Spaniard'—to the Other. I begin at *Mal Hado* because the scene of shipwreck and loss acts as a hinge between the dramatic portraits that begin and end *La Relacioón*: the excessively costumed Spaniard versus the transformed Spaniard-*Indio* traveling with 'his' slave, Estevanico, and a band of Natives. In addition to discussing the portraits of the Spaniard, I end with and introduce the rise of the trope of 'the bonded-duo of Spanish masquerade' (an image of the "passing" Spaniard traveling alongside 'his' black slave, Estevanico, the "black Arab from Azamor" and first African in North America). The

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[12] Reading for *mestizaje* is not about detecting narrative moments of cultural syncretism or finding representations of the intercultural body (although it should be said that part of the significance of a cultural mixing process is that it had already begun in a different part of the Americas and was now happening in North America); rather, there is a far greater narrative complexity around reading an aesthetic of *mestizaje*, in terms of a split imagination interested in negotiating the mixing worlds in order to achieve passage as a hybrid body, as Spaniard-*Indio*.

[13] Defined by Roland Barthes, a *writerly* text allows for multiple possibilities of meaning, in that it is infinitely plural, or as he states, a "galaxy of signifiers, and not a structure of signifieds." Whereas a *readerly* text does not allow the reader to actively produce any activity from the text. Thus, *writerly masquerade* is interested in the "infinitely plural" but in terms of an intended narrative play around producing that meaning. See Barthes, *S/Z: An Essay*, trans. Richard Miller (New York: Hill & Wang, 1974), 12.

[14] Robert Russell, "The Explorers, Pt. 1. (Cabeza de Vaca)," online lecture. *YouTube*. 12 Jan. 2011. Web. 4 Nov. 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R4JQKKz11Uk>.

aim, overall, is to trace the masquerade of the 'extravagant Spaniard' (and 'his' African slave), a figure (and bonded-duo) made integral in the story of European colonialism and American slavery.

Again and again, Cabeza de Vaca and *La Relacion* have undergone transformations at the hands of critics and from across disciplines, each respectively going through their own mutability, however, even exhibiting their own "passing" of sorts. Not by accident have critics rendered these reconstructions, calling Cabeza de Vaca the "first Chicano" and "founder" of Chicano literature (Juan Bruce-Novoa), even *el primer mestizo cultural* (Alberto Prieto Calixto), while other critics argue over his having gone (completely) native or even the book introducing a new identity: "When Cabeza de Vaca returned to Spain, he was no longer Spanish but Indian" (Luis Leal), or that the book "foreshadows the emergence of an overseas Spanish identity—the *criollos*" (Yolanda Martinez-San Miguel).[15] Cabeza de Vaca has also been named "the first surgeon of Texas" (Ilan Stavans), with his journey described as a "spiritual and epistemological awakening" (Ralph Bauer), where he transforms from *conquistador* to *pilgrim* (Enrique Pupo-Walker), which the text further reveals with its "critique of empire and advocacy for "peaceful conquest" (Jose Rabasa).[16] Other readings examine how the chronicler displays a self-serving rhetoric that is as much about the deeper recesses of anthropological or geographical contribution—"writing-as-service" to the Crown (Lisa Voigt)—as it is about saving-face with its "edifying and entertaining the prince and the elite reading public" (Adorno and Pautz).[17] While to one critic the text transforms the epic genre (David Quint), to another it "betrays a consciousness of the traditional connection between *armas* and *letras* and of the 'dual journey'—fictional and meta-fictional—that has been an integral part of the epic genre from Homer's *Odyssey* to Derek Walcott's *Omeros*" (Bauer).[18] In so many ways, author and text have been re-imagined in academic discourse, with generations of critics eager to revise the history of conquest as a means of uncovering and discovering a different tale of New World exploration and encounter in this origin text of North America.

Cabeza de Vaca is a central figure in the story of North America's beginning. He is remembered as "one of the most romantic of conquistadores" (Rabasa), "the undressed explorer" (Stavans), "the Spaniard-*Indio*" and essence of "*Chicanismo*" (Leal), but also the *conquistador conquistado*.[19] As for what happened after his voyage to North America, Cabeza de Vaca gained an

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[15] See Alberto Prieto Calixto, "Aculturación en las fronteras de América. Cabeza de Vaca: El Primer Mestizo Cultural," *Estudios Fronterizos* 8.16 (2007): 123-143; Juan Bruce-Novoa, "Naufragios en los mares de la significación: De *La Relación* de Cabeza de Vaca a la literature chicana," [Shipwrecked in the Seas of Signification: Cabeza de Vaca's *Relación* and Chicano Literature," in *Reconstructuring a Chicano/a Literary Heritage: Hispanic Colonial Literature of the Southwest*, ed. María Herrera-Sobek (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1993), 3-23; Luis Leal, "Pre-Chicano Literature: Process and Meaning (1539-1959)," in *Handbook of Hispanic Cultures in the United States. Literature and Art*, ed. Francisco Lomelí, gen. eds. Nicolás Kanellos and Claudio Esteva-Fabregat (Houston: Arte Público Press; Madrid; Instituto de Cooperación Iberoamericana, 1993), 64; Yolanda Martinez-San Miguel, *From Lack to Excess: "Minor" Readings of Latin American Colonial Discourse* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2008), 99.

[16] Also see Ilan Stavans, "Introduction," *Álvar Nuñez Cabeza De Vaca: Chronicle of the Narváez Expedition*, trans. Fanny Bandelier, revised and annotated by Harold Augenbraum (New York: Penguin, 2002), x; Ralph Bauer, *The Cultural Geography of Colonial American Literatures: Empire, Travel, Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 63; Enrique Pupo-Walker, *Castaways: The Narrative of Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 26-27; Jose Rabasa, *Writing Violence on the Northern Frontier*, 83.

[17] See Lisa Beth Voigt, *Writing Captivity in the Early Modern Atlantic: Circulations of Knowledge and Authority in Iberian and English Imperial Worlds* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 61; Adorno and Pautz, *Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca*, 4.

[18] For reference see David Quint, *Epic and Empire: Politics and Generic Form from Virgil to Milton* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993). Also see Bauer, *The Cultural Geogrpahy of Colonial American Literatures*, 70.

[19] See Rabasa, *Writing Violence on the Northern Frontier*, 33; Stavans, "Introduction," ix; Luis Leal, "Pre-Chicano Literature," 64.

appointment as *gobernador/adelantado* of *Río de la Plata*, where he introduced laws to help protect Indians, however, angry colonists shipped him back to Spain in chains, where he spent years facing criminal charges, imprisoned and sentenced to serve time in North Africa. Upon his return to Spain, nearly forgotten, he had been shunned by contemporaries, and died in 1557. Amid these characterizations, Cabeza de Vaca has yet to be described as *la figura de la muerte*, a personification the chronicler gives himself and at the most decisive moment in his journey. This is the 'real' portrait of the transformed conquistador, and a self-portrait left untouched by the much older author of *Naufragios*. Still, "His nakedness—*su desnudez*—," a case made compelling by Stavans, has continued to captivate imaginations and has become "an excuse for generations of readers to dress him up according to the needs of the time."[20] Until now, however, we have not acknowledged how the undressed conquistador imagined himself. Casting himself as *la figura de la muerte*, Cabeza de Vaca's journey is read as a story of *extravagant passing*, and within the language of the text is a *writerly masquerade* that presents a sequence of calamities that play out a survival of the conquistador in the imaginative death-space of self-invention *and* Spanish masquerade.

2. Cabeza de Vaca & His Long Journey to *Malhado*

Before the mid-sixteenth century reader of *La Relación* opened the text, the peculiarity of its author's last name on the cover—*Cabeça de Vaca* (meaning "Head of Cow")—would have met the reader's eye. It evoked legend in sixteenth-century Spain and contemporaries would have known the origin story, which is also about a skeletal figure, in this case, a cow's skull. As the story goes, in the year 1212 (and in what has been described as the most decisive battle of the *Reconquista*), a shepherd named Martín Alhaja, who was familiar with the mountain region of Sierra Morena (a region north of Seville), offered his expertise to the King, whose army was about to withdrawal from battle since the region was under Moorish control. However, the shepherd used a cow's skull to mark an unguarded and secret path for the soldiers to pass safely through the mountains and defeat the Moors in the battle called *Las Navas de Tolosa*.[21] To honor the shepherd, King Alfonso VIII of Castile (1194-1234) gave him the title *Cabeça de Vaca* and awarded him a coat of arms with cow skulls ornamenting its design. That title and coat of arms branded its heirs, and as the first son to his parents, the chronicler inherited the illustrious name from his mother. Born in Jerez de la Frontera, sometime between 1485-1492, a young Álvar came of age during the early Spanish exploration period, and because he was born into a prestigious line of *caballeros* (from both sides of the family, the houses of Vera and Cabeza de Vaca), the mere thought of emanating from the shadow of his forebears must have felt a bit like destiny.[22] By 1527, the year the Narváez expedition set sail, a nearly forty-year-old Cabeza de Vaca embarked on his first voyage to the *Américas*. The massive fleet departing from Spain's most bustling port, known during the discovery period as *El Puerto de América* [The Gateway to the New World] and where major explorers commenced their voyages, such as Cristobal Colón, Hernan Cortés, Hernando de Soto, and much later Juan de Oñate, Cabeza de Vaca

[20] Stavans, "Introduction," xxxi.

[21] Martin A. Favata and José B. Fernandez, "Introduction," *The Account: Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca's Relación* (Houston: Arte Público Press/University of Houston Press, 1993), 12-13; Aleck Loker, *La Florida: Spanish Exploration & Settlement of North America, 1500-1600* (Williamsburg: Solitude Press, 2010), 40-41; Adorno and Pautz, *Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca*, 303.

[22] Cabeza de Vaca's exact birth date is the subject of much debate and speculation. Adorno and Pautz provide possible birth years from 1485 to 1492. Still, his birth coincides with the year Cristóbal Colón embarked on his first voyage to the Americas. By 1527, Cabeza de Vaca was between 35 to 42 years old. And possibly between 45 to 52 when he returned to Spain in 1537. He may have been nearly forty. Adorno and Pautz, *Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca*, 343-350.

left the port of *Sanct Lúcar de Barrameda* carrying more weight on his shoulders than that steel suit he would loose at *Malhado*. His family name was legendary.

Cabeza de Vaca was already a veteran to the career of arms when sailing to the New World. Having battled in Spain and Andalusia as a young man, and having seen action as a teenager in the Battle of Ravenna in 1512, then soon after in the service of Duke of Medina Sidonia in the Comuneros Civil War, and by 1520 also battling against the French at Navarre. By 1527, the race across the Atlantic Ocean was merely commencing and the far reaches of North America had yet to be explored and remained unmapped. Like soldiers of his day, Cabeza de Vaca would have been enticed by the fantasy of *Plus Ultra*, his mind fully consumed by reveries about *La Florida*, for its wonder, foreign lands, strange peoples, and fabled riches. In the opening lines of his account though, there is but a small trace of the dreamy flare:

> *A diez y siete días del mes de junio de mil y quinientos y veinte y siete partió del puerto de Sanct Lúcar de Barrameda el gobernador Pámphilo de Narváez con poder y mandado de Vuestra Magestad para conquistar y governar las provincias que están desde el Río de las Palmas hasta el cabo de la Florida, las cuales son en tierra firme. E la armada que llevava eran cinco navíos, en los quales, poco más o menos, irían seiscientos hombres.*
>
> [On the seventeenth day of the month of June 1527, Governor Pánfilo de Narváez, departed from the port of San Lúcar de Barrameda, with power and mandate from Your Majesty to conquer and govern the provinces that extended from the Río de las Palmas to the cape of *Florida*, which are on the mainland. And the fleet that he led was composed of five ships, in which there went about six hundred men, more or less.][23]

In the diary-like style of Cristóbal Colón and the letter-form of Hernán Cortés, Cabeza de Vaca is also writing to Emperor Charles V, his first reader; however, there is a critical difference between the opening lines of Cabeza de Vaca's *relacion* versus that of Colón's *diario* and Cortés' *letras*.[24] In *La Relación*, the individual reporting to the Emperor is *not* the expedition's leader. Someone else is telling Narváez's story, and not just any soldier who survived to tell it. The story that unfolds is that of a soldier eager to talk about how the leader misled common soldiers and brought about the expedition's misery and doom. With every turn of the page, the soldier is relentless, as he "demystifies" the project of empire and conquest, shattering idealizations and fantasies that have been presented (or invented) by earlier explorers, all to expose imperial failures.[25] Although the opening paragraphs of the account present a brief history of the period, which deserve attention, of interest is the shift in the narrative telling, when the chronicler takes a plunge into episodes of crisis that happened on the shores of the Caribbean and during the *entrada* into *La Florida*, all to tell the

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[23] Ibid., 22. English translation emended.

[24] *La Relación* does not contain the traditional prefatory materials found in later conquest narratives, such as songs, reviews by the court, or even a note from the King. It should be noted here that the *Proemio* presents another portrait of the chronicler that must be read as part of the narrative experience, since this introductory plea functions as the author's justification for writing a personal account. There are two editions of Cabeza de Vaca's account: the 1542 publication in Zamora entitled *La Relación*, and the 1555 publication in Valladolid, known as *La Relación y Comentarios* though commonly referred to as *Naufragios* [Calamities or Shipwrecks].

[25] See Beatriz Pastor Bodomer, *The Armature of Conquest: Spanish Accounts of the Discovery of America, 1492-1589* (Sanford: Stanford University Press 1992), 129-152.

reader a harrowing story of arrival to the New World, that of the escalation of catastrophe and abject misery.

Before turning attention to how the soldier-as-chronicler introduces himself in the text and then his immediate shift to discussing the series of calamities that overtook the expedition during the grim descent to *Malhado*, it is worth considering what *las Américas* looked like at the time of the discovery period. Early maps tell us a great deal about cartographic imperial knowledge, including the Spanish wonder of New World exploration. The unfinished *Salviati Planisphere*, produced in Sevilla, Spain, sometime between 1525-26, provides a unique perspective of the eastern coast of *las Américas*, as if the continent we know now was once a long island between two great oceans (see figure 1).[26]

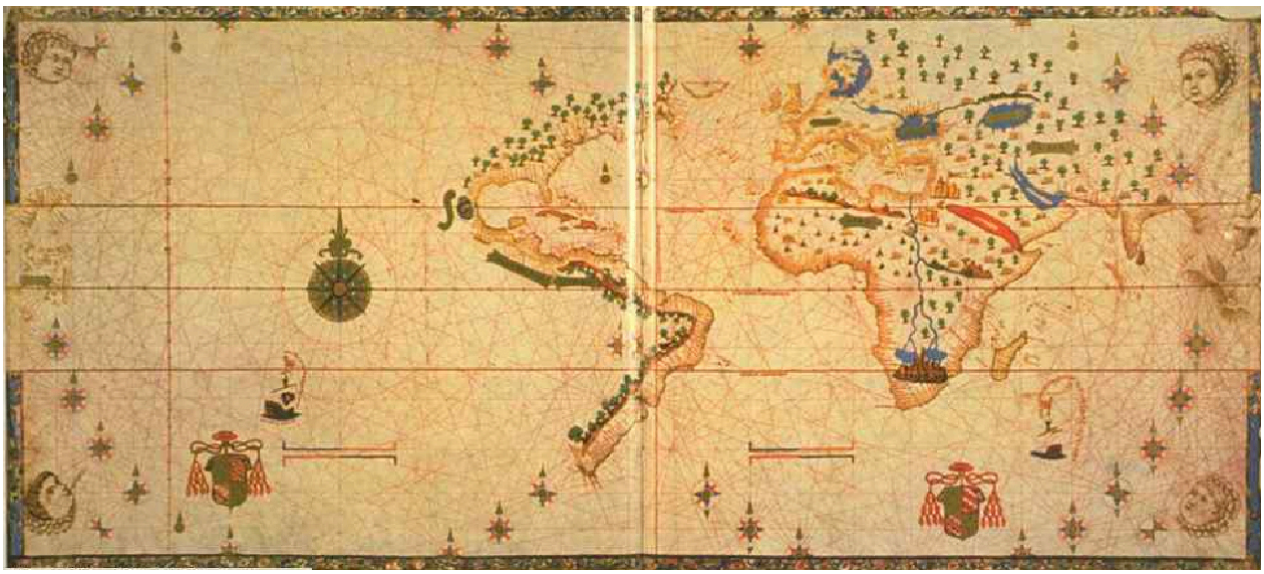


Figure 1. *Salviati Planisphere* (1525-1526)[27]

The orientation of the map places *las Américas* at center stage of Spanish expansionism. The "unknown distance," specifically the invisible western region of North America was the very terrain granted to Narváez, as Peter O. Koch describes:

> Florida was no longer thought of as an island but recognized as the peninsula of a much larger land mass that extended northward and westward for an unknown distance. With the combined rights to the land grants of both Francisco de Garay and Juan Ponce de León and all the lands that lay in between, Narváez held claim to a region of extraordinary breadth and untold possibilities.[28]

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[26] Harry Kelsey, *The Mapping of the Entradas Into the Greater Southwest* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998), 56-62.

[27] Although the map is often attributed to Nuno García de Toreno, it received the name after Charles V gave the nautical chart to Cardinal Ciovanni Salviati. See *America: Early Maps of the New World*, ed. Hans Wolff and trans. by Hugh Beyer and et. al. (Munich: Prestel, 1992) 48-49. For digital copy, see Michael Mell, "Calamities: The Narvarez Expedition's Tale of Discovery and Tragedy," *Guided History: History Research Guides by Boston University Students*. Web. 13 November 2014.

[28] Peter O. Koch, *Imaginary Cities of Gold: The Spanish Quest for Treasure in North America* (Jefferson: McFarland, 2009), 24.

North America belonged to Narváez, and the scattered trees that intend to mark a border, must have engulfed the eye for its imaginary possibilities of exploration, certainly with a ring of the Crown's very motto: *Plus Ultra* [further beyond]. The map allows us, as modern readers, a perspective into how the Spanish imagined *las Américas*, in particular North America (it even includes the 1525 exploration of Estavão Gomes along Chesapeake Bay), at least at the time of the Narváez expedition. In opening lines of *La Relación*, there is a tone of indifference towards the appointed leader and his expedition. Narváez is not writing his story, and the chronicler refuses to display any sentiment of heroism towards him, even refusing to present the grandeur of Spanish imperial power on such a venture.

In these opening paragraphs, too, the chronicler is already challenging the authority of the expedition leader, and at the very moment he introduces his own character. In the third person, he writes:

> *Los oficiales que llevava, porque de ellos se ha de hazer mençion, eran éstos que aquí se nombran: Cabeça de Vaca, por thesorero y por algualcil mayor; Alonso Enrríquez [por] contador; Alonso de Solís por fator de Vuestra Magestad y por veedor. Iva un fraile de la Orden de Señor Sanct Francisco por comissario que se llamava frai Juan Suárez con otros quarto frailes de la misma orden.*
>
> [Because it is necessary to make mention of them, the officers he took were the ones who are named here: Cabeza de Vaca as treasurer and chief legal officer; Alonso Enríquez [as] comptroller; Alonso de Solís as factor of Your Majesty and inspector of mines. A friar of the Order of Saint Francis named Fray Juan Suárez went as commissary, and four other friars of the same order went with him.][29]

His list of the highest-ranking officials includes himself and also those "rivaling even Narváez." As critics have argued, the title of "chief legal officer" is an exaggeration: there is no evidence that the court granted Cabeza de Vaca this position, though there is evidence that the appointment belonged to Narváez. Again, the chronicler is intent on telling *his* story and *his* role in it. As one of four survivors, he may very well had occupied a superior position, especially when presenting his character as always in opposition to Narváez's decisions, all of which result in positioning the army in dangerous circumstances that lead to shocking experiences of shipwreck, disastrous *entradas*, and devastating encounters with *los indios*. Skipping the long voyage across the Atlantic Ocean, Cabeza de Vaca is most concerned with telling the king what happened during the nautical passage through the Caribbean Islands, and the first portraits rendered are of shipwreck at Trinidad and a startling image of the Spanish body turned inside out. From this first crisis, *La Relación* thus unfolds a series of incidents. Within the span of one year, the reader learns exactly how the chronicler suffers his own extreme transformation: his experiencing hurricanes at sea, suffering the harsh conditions of the land and encounters with natives during *entradas* into Florida, surviving shipwreck at *Malhado*, stripped of the costume of imperialism and turning into *la figura de la muerte,* and going native and becoming Spaniard-*Indio*. The chronicler will explain how, because of Narváez's bad leadership and

[29] Adorno and Pautz, *Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca*, 22. Andrês Reséndez states, "The highest-ranking members of the Florida expedition, rivaling even Narváez, were a handful of royal appointees destined to become the new aristocracy of Florida." See Andrés Reséndez, *A Land So Strange: The Epic Journey of Cabeza de Vaca: the Extraordinary Tale of a Shipwrecked Spaniard Who Walked Across America in the Sixteenth Century* (New York: Basic Books, 2007), 48.

poor judgment, common soldiers entered the New World—facing its climate and inhabitants, unprepared and even naked—misguided and then abandoned by the mother country.[30]

Interpreting the condition of suffering in Spanish *historias* can be read as Kathleen Donegan reads the English body of catastrophe. English bodies, too, she describes, went through an escalation of crisis. Spanish bodies also deteriorated and became skeletal in the process of "becoming colonial." The colonist experience at Jamestown can set alongside the experience of Spaniards.

> As colonists were stripped of collective signifiers and social forms that had defined them, the body became the primary site of disarticulation. Mortality crises provoked desperation and then abjection because as half the settlers turned into corpses, there was no recourse to stabilizing cultural institutions and collectives. The starving, moaning body was an abject thing.[31]

The transformation of Englishness—in terms of crisis, catastrophe, abjection and misery—is a process of (un)becoming that, as Donegan continues, "happened more abruptly, through a convulsive series of 'nows'": "It was an unmaking, it was nonadaptive, and it emerged precipitously as a profound reaction to life in extremis. When natives withdrew food, when sickness spread, when settlers died in droves, and when 'home' was an ocean away, Englishmen became something they were not before: colonial."[32] Spaniards, too, became something they were not before: colonial. I, too, concentrate on the moment of abject misery yet read into the "nows" an extravagance in the narrative self-representation. Of that moment—what Donegan calls the "astounded pause"—the English watched themselves become colonial, that is, looked at the exterior self suddenly "stripped of collective signifiers and social forms that had defined them," and in the moment of survival and self-preservation on the page, the "fall into terror" made them stand still, staring at their bodies, devastated and "half-amazed, but only half."[33] "The other half," Donegan suggests, "must move out of the pause, mindful of its costs, and reckon with the colonial past without losing or getting lost in catastrophe."[34] For Cabeza de Vaca, the "not getting lost in catastrophe" has to do with re-imaging his experience within various discourses. The self-portrait of *la figura de la muerte*, at the very scene that he must go native, is his only way to move out of the pause and grope in the dark for the old world.

Cabeza de Vaca, like English writers at the start of the seventeenth century, writes of the misery and crises at the very start of Spain's colonial history in North America. Line-by-line or rather from island-to-island, the chronicler pieces together a textual map for the reader, explaining how the armada acquired provisions from various ports—Santo Domingo, Santiago, Cabo de Santa Cruz, and Trinidad—in its preparation for the overland expedition into *la Florida*. Almost abruptly, Cabeza de Vaca ceases mapping the nautical course because, in his words, *lo que allí nos succedió fue cosa muy señalada*. [what happened to us there was such a notable thing].[35] The scene recounted is often referred to as the first European documentation of a hurricane in North America, and alongside it is the first graphic image of Spanish bodies turned inside out. In these early pages of *La Relación*, the

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[30] Rebecca Earle discusses the bodily experience of eating in the New World, specifically the transformation of the Spanish body. See Earle, *The Body of the Conquistador: Food, Race and the Colonial Experience in Spanish America, 1492-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

[31] Donegan, *Seasons of Misery*, 86.

[32] Ibid., 9.

[33] Ibid., 86.

[34] Ibid., 212.

[35] Adorno and Pautz, *Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca*, 24.

reader is introduced to the violence of the New World climate, the terror of shipwrecks, and the fear of loss and death, which occurred because Narváez sent two boats to retrieve supplies in the storm.[36] Here, with the first shipwreck at Trinidad, the chronicler describes the first of several crises—what Donegan might call a "series of shocks"—all of which intensify as the account unfolds.

The chronicler is not telling a story that trumpets empire and colonization. Cabeza de Vaca's experience of the storm from ashore guides the reader through the destructive power of tempests and how they demolished Spanish settlement and efforts of evangelization.[37] The image is an inversion of sorts: the very instruments Spaniards used to celebrate empire and convert *los indios* are turned into instruments of terror, all through the night was heard *grande ruido de boces* [great clamor of voices] and *gran sonido de cascaveles y de flautas y tamborinos y otros instrumentos* [loud sounds of small bells, flutes, tambourines, and other instruments].[38] Then, with the graphic details of the shipwreck ashore, Cabeza de Vaca presents the text as conflating the potential of his own violent death by shipwreck while also exposing the shocking reality of his own mortality. When the hurricane at Trinidad ceased the next day, the reader is drawn into a search for survivors, with the chronicler pulling the reader through a rhetoric of discovery and possession, where suddenly language and tone are transformed and confounded with the word *hallamos* [we found]. Here, to return to Donegan, is an instance of "traditional vocabularies persisting, even if they are transformed." The chronicler writes,

> *El lunes por la mañana baxamos al puerto y* ***no hallamos*** *los navíos. Vimos las boyas dellos en el agua, adonde conosçimos ser perdidos, y anduvimos por la costa por ver* ***si hallaríamos*** *alguna cosa dellos. Y como* ***ninguno hallássemos****, metímonos por los montes, y andando por ellos un quarto de legua de agua,* ***hallamos*** *la barquilla de un navío puesta sobre unos árboles, y diez leguas de allí por la costa* ***se hallaron*** *dos personas de mi navío y ciertas tapas de caxas y las personas tan desfiguradas de los golpes de las peñas que no se podían conocer.* ***Halláronse*** *también una capa y una colcha hecha pedaços, y ninguna otra cosa paresçió.*
>
> [Monday morning we went down to the port and **we did not find** the ships. There we saw their buoys in the water where we knew they had been lost, and we went along the coast to see if **we could find** any remains of them. And since **we found none**, we went into the woods, and walking through them a quarter of a league from the water, **we found** the rowboat of one of the ships on top of some trees, and ten leagues from there along the coast two men from my ship **were found** and certain lids of crates, and the bodies were so disfigured from the blows of the rocks that

[36] Colón introduced tropical storms to a late fifteenth century audience. Cabeza de Vaca provides a momentary glimpse into the destructive power of tempests, but does not name the storm as Colón had when borrowing Native terms (what the Taino and Maya called *Juracan* or *Yuracan* [hurricane]). The dramatic dialogue captures an urgency of testimony: "It was only with the European conquest of North America that documentation of hurricane events became a part of recorded history." See Phillip D. Hearn, *Hurricane Camille: Monster Storm of the Gulf Coast* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2004), 59.

[37] Even in the early months of the expedition the chronicler's letter to the Emperor focuses on the nautical experience of hurricanes. This letter is Cabeza de Vaca's first known written account. The original letter has yet to be found, though the fact that one existed is "verified by a letter from the emperor to Cabeza de Vaca dated 27 March 1528," what Adorno and Pautz also describe as a "brief missive" which is available on microfilm at The Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley. Adorno and Pautz provide details of Cabeza de Vaca's letters to the emperor, two of which he sent. See Adorno and Pautz, *Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca*, 8-11.

[38] Ibid., 28.

> they could not be recognized. **Also found** were a cape and a quilt shredded to ribbons, and not another thing appeared.][39]

A different kind of discovery is happening in these lines; certainly, the difference lies between "active" acts of finding versus "passive" acts of finding. The narrative movements are numerous and quick, with the reader's attention very carefully directed to what was and was not found: *no hallamos* [we did not find], *si hallaríamos* [we found], *ninguno hallássemos* [we found none], *hallmos* [we found], *se hallaron* [we found], and *Halláronse* [Also found]. The Spaniards discover fragments of a shattered fantasy: a broken rowboat, lids from missing crates, a tattered royal cape, and a ruined quilt. Yet the most striking discovery is the sight of two disfigured bodies: *y las personas tan desfiguradas de los golpes de las peñas que no se podían conocer*. The violent image of the Spanish body turned inside out forces the protagonist into a shocking encounter with the violence of the expedition: Spanish bodies among the lids of their own broken caskets, stripped of the royal cape that once defined them, and uncovered by a quilt that once protected them. The chronicler must leave the bodies unidentified; to lie on the page as a spectacle, forever mutilated, bloody, naked, skeletal, and turned inside out.

As *La Relación* and the journey to Florida continues, the chronicler places before the reader more "series of shocks." Spending nearly four months at Trinidad, from November of 1527 until February of 1528, in fear of violent storms, the expedition would not reach the western coast of Florida until April of 1528. Arriving at *Bahía de la Cruz*, (present-day Tampa Bay), the chronicler reveals how some soldiers were forced to remain on the boat and could not participate on the *entrada*, having turned into figures of famine. Even before the overland journey could begin, soldiers were left on the ship as if worthless cargo: *Y estos pocos que quedaron estavan tan flacos y fatigados, que por el presente poco provecho podimos tener de ellos*. [And these few that remained were so thin and worn out that for the present we could make little use of them.][40] Then, during the trek inland, which included the governor, the commissary (Fray Juan Suárez, the friar named in the opening lines of the narrative), the inspector (Alonso de Solís, also named in the opening lines), Cabeza de Vaca, and forty soldiers, instead of celebrating Narváez's possession of the land, the chronicler turns attention to a second image of shipwreck and the discovery of corpses in Castilian-made crates with the help of nearby Indians (most likely the Tocobago).

> *Allí* ***hallamos*** *muchas caxas de mercaderes de Castilla, y en cada una dellas estava un cuerpo de hombre muerto, y los cuerpos cubiertos con unos cueros de venados pintados. Al comissario le paresció que esto era especie de idolatría, y quemó las caxas con los cuerpos.*
>
> [There **we found** many crates belonging to Castilian merchants, and in each one of them was a body of a dead man, and the bodies were covered with painted deer hides. To the commissary it looked to him to be a type of idolatry, and he burned the crates with the bodies in them.][41]

Again, the language of the text presents the scene through the rhetoric of discovery and possession. Upon removing the lids of the crates (now coffins), the group perhaps hoped to find provisions. Instead they found rotting corpses under Indian "painted deer hides." *We* are left to wonder which race the mid-sixteenth century reader imagined or rather which race the chronicler hoped they imagined. Although the chronicler refuses to "out" the race of the corpses here, later in the narrative

[39] Ibid., 28. (*Bold mine*.)
[40] Ibid., 34.
[41] Ibid., 36. (*Bold mine*).

he reveals that the corpses were of Christians: *adonde hallamos las xaxas de Castilla, que atrás se a dicho, adó estavan los cuerpos de los hombres muertos, los cuales eran cristianos*. [where we found the crates from Castile, that have previously been mentioned, in which were the bodies of the dead men, who were Christians].[42] The Spaniards discovered a cemetery, where Castilian-made crates became native coffins and Christian bodies became converted with the sight of them donning native burial garb. Here is a religious conversion in the reverse: the Indigenized-Spanish body as opposed to the Christianized-Indian body. The commissary's decision to burn the crates and bodies in them is to annihilate the sight of converted Christians, to destroy race-crossing, and to secure the divide between colonizer and colonized. The painted deer hides, which the commissary suspects as *especie de idolatría* [a type of idolatry], might have been read as a garment that tampered with the Christian soul's journey back to God, not from Madrid to purgatory but from the New World to purgatory. In this moment of race-religious-crossing, native burial dress replace the "linen shroud, a habit from a religious order, or a confraternity tunic."[43] The commissary's act is a rejection of Christians buried by non-Christian Indians, who deliberately prepared animal-skin coverings that might be understood as an acknowledgement of the death and the afterlife of the Other.[44] Still, the reader is left to wonder whether the crates were found waiting to be buried, not burned.

The horrific sight and smell of putrefaction would have stamped upon the Spanish mind a traumatizing physical experience with death.[45] Perhaps, in the retrospective act of writing, the chronicler saw his own body incinerated: the Spanish-*Indio* found wandering in México also donning painted deer hides or Indian garments. To reveal the race of the bodies then would have incriminated the chronicler's character, exposing him as a participant, a witness, and an official recorder of Spanish savagery and violence; indeed, a scandal that would have been condemned by the Crown.[46] I read the refusal to "out" the race of the bodies, and the decision to leave them

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[42] Ibid., 276.

[43] For burial and funereal practices in sixteenth-century Madrid, see Carlos Eire, *From Madrid to Purgatory: The Art and Craft of Dying in Sixteenth-Century Spain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 105-107.

[44] For further discussion of Indian burial practices, particularly the juxtaposition between encounters at the North (versus my discussion of the South), see Erik R. Seeman, *Death in the New World: Cross-Cultural Encounters (1942-1800)* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 175.

[45] Turning to Tzvetan Todorov complicates the cultural divergence between Europeans and Mesoamerican practices, specirically *writing* versus *pictorial histories* (what the Spaniards actually saw versus what Cabeza de Vaca asked his audience to imagine): "The absence of writing is an important element of the situation, perhaps even *the* most important. Stylized drawings, the pictograms used among the Aztecs, are not a lesser degree of writing: they not the experience, not the language." Stephen Greenblatt's response to Todorov: "The absence of writing determined the predominance of ritual over improvisation and cyclical time over linear time, characteristics that in turn led to disastrous misperceptions and miscalculations in the face of the *conquistadores*. The unlettered peoples of the New World could not bring the strangers into focus; conceptual inadequacy severely impeded, indeed virtually precluded, an accurate perception of the other. The culture that possessed writing could accurately represent to itself (and hence strategically manipulate) the culture without writing, but the reverse was not true." Following Todorov's lead, "The unfamiliarity to the Indians of European writing creates reactions the literary tradition will exploit," but in *La Relación* Spaniards experience unfamiliarity in 'reading' the painted deer hides, and in this scenario the chronicler exploits the Spaniards. See Todorov, *Conquest of America: The Question of the Other* trans. Richard Howard (New York: Harper, 1992), 80. [Original work published in 1982.] Also see Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 11.

[46] See Astrid M. Fellner, "Performing Cultural Memory: Scenarios of Colonial Encounter in the Writings of John Smith, Cabeza de Vaca, and Jacques Cartier," in *Transnational American Memories* ed. Udo J. Hebel (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009), 33-58. For a discussion on this scene in Cabeza de Vaca as a "scandal," see Fellner quoting Bruce-Novoa, 51: "In the peculiar political/religious milieu of Spanish colonial legalities, which intricatedly delimited a conquistador's range of action while exploring foreign territories, the burning of countless bodies could well have struck the inevitable court reviewers as an atrocity worthy of investigation."

masked (even if temporality), as a carefully plotted narrative move, because in the moment of his "going native," the chronicler introduces native funereal practices and the argues the difference between natives burial practices versus the highly symbolic act of memorialization when burning the bodies of their *físicos* [physicians].

> *Tienen por costumbre de enterrar los muertos, si no son los que entre ellos son físicos, que éstos quémanlos. Y mientras el fuego arde, todos están bailando y haziendo muy gran fiesta. Y hazen polvos los huessos. Passado un año, quando se hazen sus honrras, todos se jasan en ellas, y a los parientes dan aquellos polvos a bever de los huessos en agua.*
>
> [Their custom is to bury their dead, except those among them who are physicians, whose remains they burn. And while the fire burns, they all dance and make a great celebration. And afterward they pulverize the bones. And a year later, upon paying homage to them, they all lacerate themselves, and to the relatives they give the powdered bones so that they may drink them in water.][47]

Cabeza de Vaca can write about natives burning the bodies of *físicos*, but he cannot bring himself to write about Spaniards burning Christian bodies. I must add that the narrative is unclear as to the extent of Narváez's participation in the burning of the Christians; however, in the *Joint Report*, Narváez is described as ordering the burning of the crates, acting as a symbolic figurehead of Spain's domineering imperial force. In fact, the Indians also told the Spaniards that the corpses in the crates were of Christians. The final remark, because the corpses were of Christians they should not have been burned. Cabeza de Vaca steers clear from telling this story of Spanish savagery. With a period, the chronicler puts out the fire, so to speak, then quickly turns the reader's attention away from the ignorance of Spaniards inflicting its own cultural taboo (burning Christian bodies instead of performing a proper burial). The language of the text carries an eagerness to push the expedition forward—*Plus Ultra*—as a way of forgetting about the incineration of (Spanish) bodies and the possibility of race-crossing. His return to the rhetoric of empire allows the chronicler to escape dangerous narrative terrain that was punishable by the Crown: ***Hallamos*** *también pedaços de lienço de paño y penachos que parescían ser de la Nueva España.* ***Hallamos*** *también muestras de oro.* [**We also found** pieces of linen cloth and plumes that seemed to be from New Spain. **We also found** traces of gold.][48] Cabeza de Vaca knows he must adhere to the rules of empire and heed the King's own motto—pushing forward. The narrative turns full attention to the pursuit of bounty in Apalachen, perhaps another *El Dorado*. The chronicler now shifts focus to the Narváez's fixation with "traces of gold," and how this endless search brought about the destruction of Spanish *entrada* and the expedition's very doom.

La Relación reads like a testimony of suffering endured by soldiers, yet as the chronicler tells it, he articulates their being misled by a leader and his monomaniacal pursuit of gold. Narváez's immense desire to restore his name also became the guiding force of the expedition. Following the leader to Apalachen, then Aute, and finally to the Bay of Horses, Cabeza de Vaca tells a different version of the imperial drama, that is, he critiques Spanish *entradas* by presenting its figurehead as an anti-hero. Although Narváez was once a celebrated conquistador, with a "string of victories" achieved during the conquest of Cuba in 1521, all this changed after several quarrels with Hernán Cortés. My reading of *La Relación* images Narváez as Peter O. Koch describes him:

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[47] Adorno and Pautz, *Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca*, 108.
[48] Ibid., 38.

> It was an arrogance that frequently led him to underestimate his enemy and ultimately resulted in his humiliating defeat at the hands of Hernán Cortés, a soldier who once served under him. A humbled Narváez lost not only his command and an eye during a brief battle with a smaller army under the command of Cortés, but also the favorable reputation he had worked so hard to establish. Adding insult to injury, Pánfilo was forced to watch as his triumphant foe was accorded titles and accolades for a conquest that, by his reckoning, rightfully belonged to him.[49]

The "humbled" conquistador returned to Spain in early 1525, "wearing a silk patch to conceal his barren eye socket," and, as Koch continues, by "December 11, 1526, Emperor Charles granted him a patent to explore, conquer, and settle Florida 'from one sea to the other'," and it "provided the one-eyed Narváez with a chance to restore his good name and return to the good grace of the emperor."[50] Instead, Cabeza de Vaca writes of his failure and fixation with bounty in Apalachen, which natives lied about: *Señaláronnos que muy lexos de allí avía una provincial que se dezía Apalachen, en la qual avía mucho oro, y hazían seña de aver muy gran cantidad de todo lo que nosotros estimamos en algo.* [They indicated to us by gestures that very far away from there was a province called Apalachen, in which there was much gold, and they made signs to indicate that there were very great quantities of everything we held in esteem].[51] Narváez is portrayed as arrogant and aggressive, with hubris that defied common sense; however, he is also a victim of the Spanish empire, and, like the other soldiers, felt pressed under the weight of the Crown's looming authority. The chronicler reminds the Emperor that Narvárez carries the fatal flaw that stems from the project of empire's dangerous motto. Still, and greedy for riches, Narváez abandons the ships, which is strongly opposed by Cabeza de Vaca (a long debate reiterated for the reader, including the clouded judgment of the governor and the imperial politics that coerced soldiers), Narváez leads an army of about 120 men into the dangerous interior of western Florida, where common soldiers marched in heavy suits of armor and faced unexpected skirmishes with *los indios* who "go about naked" but dominate the land.

Immediately, the Spanish *entrada* is made a spectacle of suffering, with Narváez leading the army through rough country, *tan despoblada y tan pobre quanto nunca en aquellas partes se avía hallado.* [the most desolate and poorest ever found in those parts], without proper military attire and without sufficient provisions.[52] From April 1528 until September 1528, the *entrada* is overwhelmed by the harsh conditions of the land itself and the military tactics of *los indios*, and also, the heavy steel suit of armor that Spaniards carried: *muchos avía entre nosotros que, allende del mucho cansançio y hambre, llevavan hechas llagas en las espaldas de llevar las armas a cuestas sin otras cosas que se offreşçian.* [there were many among us who, apart from the great fatigue and hunger they suffered and, since there was no other recourse, had wounds on their backs from carrying their weapons on their shoulders.][53] Beneath the armor are skeleton bodies, bruised and beaten by the weight of steel suits. The chronicler's language is also at work in laying out a justification for the failed quest. Also confessed to the reader is a striking parallel between the physiques of the conquistador as paling in comparison to that of *los indios*. The argument that surfaces concerns the physical limitations of the excessively costumed Spaniards versus the quick and mobile yet naked Natives. A touch of admiration is even expressed towards their physiques and brilliant military tactics: *Quantos indios vimos desde la Florida aquí todos son flecheros, y como son crescidos de cuerpo y andan desnudos, desde lexos pareşçen gigantes. Es gente a maravilla bien*

[49] Koch, *Imaginary Cities of Gold*, 22.
[50] Ibid., 23.
[51] Adorno and Pautz, *Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca*, 38.
[52] Ibid., 40. English translation emended.
[53] Ibid., 54.

dispuesta, muy enxutos y de muy grandes fuerças y ligereza. [All the Indians we had seen from *Florida* to here are archers, and as they are of large build and go about naked, from a distance they appear to be giants. They are a people wonderfully well built, very lean and of great strength and agility.][54] The chronicler exposes the vulnerability of the excessively costumed Spaniard, where nakedness is suddenly deemed superior. Is the chronicler preparing the reader for the moment he will be stripped of the costume of imperialism and forced to "go about naked" and go native? Here is writerly masquerade.

The chronicler presents a critical consensus regarding the conquistador's costume. It allowed subject identification for the colonizer and also allowed him to establish differentiation from the very people the Spaniards set out to conquer. One needs also to acknowledge that the soldier's costume and armor covered and hid the skeletal body of the conquistador—it hid a bruised and frail frame, it hid a figure of famine—especially from view of overpowering natives. It also kept a skeletonized frame hidden from other Spaniards (as well as the self), so that the conquistador could be seen as existing in the social world of colonizer/colonized, and not on the side of colonized. Furthermore, as Elizabeth Wilson persuasively explains, the conquistador's costume "not only links the body to the social world, but also more clearly separates the two."[55] Thus, the conquistador's costume acted as a border, separating him from the naked body of the native: "Dress is the frontier between the self and the not-self."[56] Difference was established visually, yet attached to the act of self-representation and the act of seeing the other was a rhetorical play of "passing," though natives were not always duped. A European perspective and understanding is often discussed over that of a native perspective. Still, and in agreement with Mariselle Meléndez,

> Early narratives of encounter showed how nakedness became an immediate tool to articulate difference. Natives as well as Spaniards recognized visually what set them apart: the lack of or presence of clothing. Early illustrations of the encounter published between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries reiterated that fact very

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[54] Ibid., 62.

[55] An understanding of the term "clothing" and/or "dress" in their earliest conception is useful to expand upon, especially as as it informs an understanding of the binary of self/not-self. Wilson describes: "The earliest forms of 'clothing' have been adornments such as body painting, ornaments, scarifications (scarring), tattooing, masks and often contricing neck and waist bands." She also states that "dress" covered and contained the body from visual threat: "If the body with its open orifices is itself dangerously ambiguous, then dress, which is an extension of the body yet not quite part of it, not only links the body to the social world, but also more clearly separates the two. Dress is the frontier between the self and the not-self." See Wilson, *Adorned Dreams: Fashion and Modernity* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 3-4. [Original work published in 1985.]

[56] Also useful is considering dress as separate from the body according to Dani Cavallaro and Alexandra Warwick: "Dress *represents* the body as a fundamentally liminal phenomenon by stressing its precarious location on the threshold between the physical and the abstract, the literal and the metaphorical." Useful to my discussion is their theorizing of "dress" as a boundary or margin, yet still a process "from the material to the metaphorical: "What is more, the transition from the material to the metaphorical, and vice versa, is not a smooth passage of either transcendence (in the direction from carnality to disembodiment) or empirical grounding (in the direction from abstraction to incarnation). In fact, no transition is ever conclusive, in so far as the framing strategies enacted by dress invariably involve open-ended processes of disjunction and displacement (temporal, spatial, physical) that may provisionally represent experience but never totalize it." That is, without dress separating or masking the self from the not-self, here is a transformed figure into the metaphorical. See Cavallaro and Warwick, *Fashioning the Frame: Boundaries, Dress and the Body* (New York: Berg Publishers, 1998), 7.

> clearly. For Europeans, this lack became a social parameter that justified the power to change the other.[57]

The chronicler forces the reader to reckon with a different logic of encounter that explores a visual and discursive difference, detailing the consequences of Spaniards donning an extravagant costume of armor in their declining state versus going about naked like natives. "Nakedness as a trope of barbarism suffered a twist in 1542 when Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca in his book *Naufragios* presented the Spaniard in a state of nakedness," Meléndez describes; however, and often unrealized is that the Spaniard is not naked *like* natives.[58] Rather, the naked Spaniard is skeletal. He becomes something other than native.

Fearing the dangerous interior—because of the physical threat of natives and the harsh landscape—the Spaniards seek refuge along Apalachee Bay, where they make crude rafts, spending September through October sailing along the northern shore of the Gulf of Mexico. More suffering and misery continue at sea and in the face of storms that separate the rafts, which includes the disappearance of Narváez and his crew from the expedition and the text. During these months, desperation fills the page, with the last of the colony's horses having been eaten and soldiers unable to raid villages. The chronicler describes their declining state: all *tan cerca de la muerte* [so close to death], *no avía cinco hombres en pie* (90). [there were not five men left standing]. Then, he writes, *la gente començó mucho a desmayar de tal manera que quando el sol se puso todos los que en mi barca venían estavan caídos en ella unos sobre otros tan cerca de la muerte que pocos avía que tuviesen sentido.* [the people began to faint in such a manner that when the sun set all those who came in my raft were fallen on top of one another in it, so close to death that few we conscious.][59] In this devastated state, the first of two shipwrecks occurs at *Malhado*. He writes,

> *Y çerca de la tierra nos tomó una ola que echó la barca fuera del agua un juego de herrandura, y con el gran golpe que dio, quasi toda la gente que en ella estava como muerta tornó en sí. E como se vieron çerca de la tierra, se començaron a descolgar, y con manos y pies andando.*
>
> [And near land a wave took us that hurled the raft out of the water the distance of a horseshoe's throw, and with such a great blow that its fall occasioned, almost all the people who were nearly dead upon it regained consciousness. And since they saw themselves near land, they began to leave the raft, and on hands and feet crawled out.][60]

The image we see: clothed Spaniards, nearly dead, emerging from the cold waters of the bay, and then crawling ashore on all fours. The Spaniards must seek aid from local natives; however, the chronicler expresses a serious concern with the dangers of arriving to remote islands, frail, near death, and defenseless. As *los indios* enter the narrative—*cien indios flecheros* [a hundred Indian archers], also stating, [whether or not they were of great stature, our fear made them seem like giants]—the chronicler confesses the reality of Spanish presence against a massive native military force: *Entre nosotros, escusado era pensar que avría quien se defendiesse porque diffiçilmente se hallaron seis que del suelo se*

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[57] Mariselle Meléndez, "Visualizing Difference: The Rhetoric of Clothing in Colonial Spanish America," in *The Latin American Fashion Reader* (New York: Berg Publishers, 2005), 19-20.
[58] Ibid., 20.
[59] Adorno and Pautz, *Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca*, 90.
[60] Ibid., 92.

pudiessen levanter. [It was out of the question for us to think that anyone could defend himself, since it was difficult to find even six who could raise themselves from the ground.][61]

Although *los indios* provide the Spaniards food for several days, even promising future provisions, the Spaniards fear being attacked (perhaps eaten) and decide to escape the island unnoticed. Instead, what results is a second shipwreck. The chronicler writes into history a different story of transformation at the moment of imminent colonial encounter.[62] Before examining the scene and how the conquistador became *la figura de la muerte*, I want to summon a chapter-title from the 1555 *Naufragios*, where this shipwreck and transformation occur, because it provides a lens through which to interpret the narrative play also at work in the 1542 *La Relación*. Remember, the 1542 edition of *La Relación* did not contain descriptive chapter-titles like the 1555 edition, instead its 131-pages read as an undivided text. In *Naufragios*, the title of *Capítulo XII, Como los indios nos trajeron de comer* [How the natives brought us food], an accidental slip of the tongue with the Spanish word *trajeron* easily turns the word into *trataron*, making Spanish arrival to the remote island a frightful one: *Como los indios nos trataron de comer* [How the natives tried to eat us.][63] A slippery tongue enters the page and just as the Spaniards enter a man-eating or human-sacrificing world undressed and unarmed. Without knowing the 1555 chapter-title and its tongue play on the reader, what happens at *Malhado* retains a discourse of terror, and a narrative telling significantly preoccupied with Eurocentric fantasies of natives as anthropophagus. Let us return to *La Relación* to examine the transformation and moment of re-encounter.

Before launching the raft, the chronicler explains that the Spaniards took off their clothes because of their frail bodies and weakened physical state: *Y fue menester que nos desudássemos todos y passásemos gran trabajo para echarla al agua, porque nosotros estávamos tales que otras cosas muy más livianas bastavan para ponernos en él.* [And it was necessary for us to undress and endure great labor in order to launch it, because we were in such a condition that other much less strenuous tasks would have sufficed to place us in difficulty.][64] Here is the image of the undressed conquistador, as he launches the crude raft and begins to paddle into the Bay. Then, a "huge wave" hits the raft, with a second wave following, causing a second shipwreck at *Malhado*, which ends the colonial narrative and a story of going native will begin: *Y assí embarcados a dos tiros de ballesta dentro en la mar, nos dio tal golpe de agua que nos mojó a todos, y como ívamos desnudos y el friío que hazía era muy grande, soltamos los remos de las manos. Y a otro golpe que la mar nos dio, trastornó la barca.* [And thus embarked, at a distance of two crossbow shots out to sea, we were hit by such a huge wave that we were all soaked, and since we went naked and the cold was very great, we dropped the oars from our hands. And with a successive wave the sea overturned our raft.][65] As if babes thrown from the oceanic-womb, and now completely abandoned by the mother country, the band of Spaniards must face the New World without the costume of imperialism and without the border that separated dressed/civilized Spaniards from undressed/uncivilized *indios*. Stripped of all that defines them, the chronicler founders in inventive discourse to reinstate the naked and unarmed self for the imminent moment of re-encounter with *los indios flecheros*. How the chronicler discerns the naked-self from the naked-other reveals a unique cultural imaginary, with Cabeza de Vaca pairing rising discourses around *la figura de la muerte* in Spain

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[61] Ibid., 94.

[62] Critics (including Stavans, Rabasa, and Maura) describe this part of the text as the start of a "Dantenian journey." It marks a symbolic moment in the text, what Lisa Rabin interpretes as "John Freccero's theory on conversion in Dante" in which "a conversion marks a point in the text where a new story is to be told." See Rabin, "Figures of Conversion and Subjectivity in Colonial Narrative," in *Hispania* 82, no. 1 (1999): 40-45.

[63] Two chapters later Cabeza de Vaca writes of discovering the remains of eaten bodies though the man-eaters are not natives but Spaniards.

[64] Adorno and Pautz, *Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca*, 96.

[65] Ibid., 96.

and native oral stories of *mala cosa* that Cabeza de Vaca learned while traveling through the Southwest. My question is this: What is *la figura de la muerte* doing *here*, in terms of a *writerly masquerade* and the chronicler's effort to reinstate the transformed self at the moment of encounter, that is, and as Donegan might argue, "to write from within the breach of a ruptured" Spanishness, and also, *there* in that unknown space at the edge of a world, where we find this unique performative figure, not just beneath the costume of imperialism, but suddenly resurrected as a haunting self-portrait on the page and on North American shores?[66]

3. Cabeza de Vaca's (Un)Becoming and *La figura de la muerte*

Immediately following the chronicler's explanation as to how his body became starved down to its gaunt state, he returns the reader to the shores of *la isla de Malhado*, where the naked and half drown Spaniards are wet, cold, hungry, and struggling to fight off an unrelenting north wind and its November chill. When *los indios* return to their shoreline to bring the Spaniards the promised provisions, *los indios* encountered something else: *E a hora de puesto el sol, los indios, creyendo que no nos avíamos ido, nos bolvieron a buscar y a traernos de comer. Mas quando ellos nos vieron ansí en tan diferente hábito del primero y en manera tan estraña, espantáronse tanto que se bolvieron atrás*. [And at the hour of sunset, the Indians, believing that we had not gone away, came back to look for us and bring us food. But when they saw us in such different habit from before and of a manner so strange, they were so frightened that they turned to leave.][67] What did *los indios* see? What did they fear? Or, what did *los indios* think they saw? If we read the scene from the distant perspective of *los indios*, an (in)sight emerges, even if deeply buried beneath the narrative patterns of colonial discourse. What the chronicler narrates is a scene of naked and ravaged Spaniards in the middle of a dramatic and elaborate ritual of mourning over dead bodies. How did *los indios* initially interpret the scene of re-encounter? To complicate matters further, did the Karankawas know of the figure of *mala cosa*? A figure that resembled the naked and ravaged Spaniards, and an oral story shared among tribes throughout Southwest Texas. Still, whatever *los indios* at *Malhado* encountered, "it" proved confounding and threatening in appearance—*tan diferente hábito del primero*—as well as in performance—*en manera tan estraña*.

Examining the transformation of the undressed conquistador into *la figura de la muerte* is an unspooling derived from a single thread: *con poca dificultad nos podían contar los huessos, estávamos hechos propria figura de la muerte*. Still, this is the complete portrait of the most famous of conquistadors, and a portrait that introduces a figuration process attached to the character of the Spaniard that resurfaces in various genres of American literature. In this origin text of North America, however, it is the Spaniard himself who borrows the rising discourses of the day to express his experience and to write about his journey into abject misery. Here, on the sandy beaches of *la isla de Malhado*, the naked and ravaged Spaniard is lost, dying, and desperate, hinging in a dangerous space at the edge of the world, indeed, an island that figured as nowhere on the mid-sixteenth century map yet where a morbid reality transpired—all beyond the watchful eye of the Crown and on an island that sits between worlds, that of North America and that of Central and South America. As the Spaniards prepare to enter the world of *los indios*—a place named and infused with Eurocentric fantasies of nakedness, savagery, and cannibalism—the chronicler invites the reader to witness his crossing of

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[66] See Donegan, *Seasons of Misery*, 212. The full passage quoted from is: "Representing the initiation of colonial life as a new world of misery allowed settlers to write from within the breach of a ruptured Englishness, to witness the wages of becoming colonial, to express their bewilderment, to justify their violence, and to claim the singularity of their experience all at once."

[67] Adorno and Pautz, *Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca*, 98. English translation emended.

border (Spanish/*Indio*, costumed/naked, *figura de la muerte/mala cosa*) and his residing at a threshold before entering a world of misery: "Both as an event and as a discourse, catastrophe marked a threshold between an old European identity and a new colonial identity, a state of experiential and narrative instability wherein only fragments of Englishness [or Spanishness] were retained amid the upheavals of New World experience."[68] The reader must also cross into this real yet imaginative space, though not a liminal space, but a space of (un)becoming that enabled the chronicler to imagine this other world of misery and his place in it.

The chronicler imaginatively passes through 'death space', a concept I borrow from Michael Taussig, which he interprets as "a threshold that allows for illumination as well as extinction," but also, a space "important in the creation of meaning and consciousness."[69] Cabeza de Vaca enters 'death space' in seeing his skeletal interiority; a moment when the *subject* becomes an *unstable object* and a sort of narcissistic crisis occurs in the very sense that Julia Kristeva describes 'abjection'. In seizing a glimpse into the experience of his mortality, Cabeza de Vaca also asks:

> How can I be without border? That elsewhere that I imagine beyond the present, or that I hallucinate so that I might, in a present time, speak to you, conceive of you—it is now here, jetted, abjected, into "my" world. Deprived of world, therefore I fall in a faint. In that compelling, raw, insolent thing in the morgue's full sunlight, in that thing that no longer matches and therefore no longer signifies anything. I behold the breaking down of a world that has erased its borders: fainting away. *The corpse, seen without God and outside science, is the utmost of abjection.* It is death infecting life. Abject. It is something rejected from which one does not part, from which one does not protect oneself as from an object. *Imaginary uncanniness* and *real threat*, it beckons to us and ends up engulfing us.[70]

Cabeza de Vaca "fall[s] in a faint" with the loss of his world—deprived of its materiality—and now stuck in a place that has erased his borders. The Spanish body is divorced from binary logic and cast in a state of perpetual wandering. In the writer's imagination, it imaginatively passes from that space where the self is defined and upheld by materiality through a space where the loss of materiality is thus the loss of self. To borrow the words of Beatrice Pastor-Bodmer, "nakedness now signifies their absolute dispossession of the cultural and ideological context that had given the image of the conquistador and his enterprise its identity."[71] Upon seeing the corpse within, yet "without God and outside science," Cabeza de Vaca is "jetted" or rather, 'thrown out of himself': he is ab-jected. In the moment of "death infecting life," he cannot part nor protect himself from becoming an object: "you could count our bones." Within the space of not-self, colonized, abstract and metaphorical—where the abject dwells—the chronicler ventures in the space between the (imperial) mask and the 'real'. As he beckons us to see beneath the costume of imperialism and beneath his very flesh, the chronicler engages a discourse of *real threat* and *imaginary uncanniness*, even his words follow this

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[68] Donegan, *Seasons of Misery*, 79-81.

[69] Michael Taussig, *Shamanism, Colonialism, and the Wild Man: A Study in Terror and Healing* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 5.

[70] See Julia Kristeva, *The Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* trans. Leon Samuel Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 4. (*Italics mine*). [Original work published in 1980.]

[71] Besides reading this scene as a twofold significance—(1) failure and death as the loss of the original culture, and (2) nakedness and death as rebirth (although this analysis is dead-on, and I agree that it "marks the beginning of a new consciousness"), but what happens if we read the narrative thread as follows: nakedness, death and *la figura de la muerte*? See Pastor-Bodmer, *The Armature of Conquest*, 137.

pattern: "with little difficulty you could count our bones, we thus made the proper figure of death." The grotesque reality of his physical body ("you could count our bones") moves into the space of the imaginative and thus metaphoric personification ("we thus made the proper figure of death").

With the loss of the costume of imperialism came the loss of the physical border that allowed subject identification and differentiation. Without the costume and armor as barrier, and as phrased by Rabasa, there occurred "a transition to chaos and social anomie but also a transition to a world where Western reason faces its limits and founders."[72] However, the Spaniards do not immediately transition to the world of *los indios* (which Rabasa refers to), at least not yet. Something else happens with the turning of the body inside out and exposing its skeletal interiority. Cabeza de Vaca beckons the reader to follow him, as he wanders into an imaginative space of *his* own colonial reality to write of colonial identity. All that is enshrined in the masculine image of valor and violence is, at the moment of shipwreck and the loss of all worldly possessions, suddenly demystified, stripped of all essence and power, and, as a new performative figure emerges to introduce a very different scene of colonial encounter and a very different colonial metamorphosis. Working through the language of empire and appropriating the traditional plot of colonial encounter, in particular tropes that portrayed natives as engaging in idolatrous practices and cannibalism, Cabeza de Vaca presents naked and ravaged Spaniards in a frightening position and image that the natives fear. Even if ventriloquized through the imagination of the Spaniard-*Indio*, the Karankawas (either the Capoques or the Hans) are interpreted as fearing this image of naked and mourning Spaniards:

> *Y sobre todo lo dicho avía sobrevenido viento norte, de suerte que más estávamos çerca de la muerte que de la vida. Plugo a nuestro Señor que buscando tizones del fuego que allí avíamos fecho, hallamos lumbre con que hezimos grandes fuegos. Y ansí estuvimos pidiendo a nuestro Señor misericordia y perdón de nuestros peccados, derramando muchas lágrimas, aviendo cada uno lástima no sólo de sí más de todos los otros que en el mismo estado vían.*
>
> [And beyond all this, a north wind came up, bringing us closer to death than to life. God granted that while looking for firebrands from the fire that we had built there, we discovered a flame with which we made great bonfires. And thus we were beseeching our Lord for mercy and the pardon of our sins, shedding many tears, each one having pity not only for himself but for all the others whom they saw in the same state.][73]

What did readers of the early colonial period make of this image of a band of forty skeletons, moaning and chanting in unison, huddled around large fires, and fearing what the night might bring? Christian prayers and the fear of dying overwhelm the text, and here, too, we find the castaways in the middle of an intimate conversation with God. In addition to calling attention to the suffering and sacrifice of the soldier, the chronicler invites the reader to enter the moment of culminating death, when one comes so close to dying that their standing at its border, repenting and pleading for mercy. What does the act of self-titling as *la figura de la muerte* signify in this scene? Especially at a critical moment that the chronicler depicts himself as defenseless but requesting that *los indios* rescue them.

The naked and unarmed conquistador takes it upon himself to stop the *gigantes* [giants] and great *flacheros* [archers]. As *los indios* retreat, the chronicler tells us, *Yo salí a ellos y llamelos, y vinieron muy espantados. Hízelos entender por señas como se nos aví hundido una barca y se avian ahogado tres de nosotros.* [I

[72] Rabasa, *Writing Violence on the Northern Frontier*, 54.
[73] Adorno and Pautz, *Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca*, 98.

went after them and called them, and they came back very frightened. I made them understand through signs how a raft had sunk on us and three members of our company had drowned.][74] And with signs, the chronicler conveys the drama of shipwreck. In a moment of grave danger—for both the Spaniards arriving "naked as we were born," and the natives who "came back very frightened"—the chronicler presents *his* character as performing a heroic act. The portrait of the undressed conquistadors, however—*estávamos hechos propria figura de la muerte*—is that same "dark and metamorphic discourse" that, as Donegan states, "emerged in colonial writing"; in other words, a discourse in *La Relación* that "marked the threshold between an old identity and a new one as a site of abjection, at which what collectively disturbed 'identity, system, [and] order' came to express the inescapable condition of becoming colonial." Of transforming, of becoming something else or something misplaced here at the edge of a new world.[75] Here, too was the Spanish body made extravagant, as a body (dis)playing a surplus signification, and read through various discourses in which the chronicler must cobble together in an effort to define colonial identity at the moment that Spanishness is broken down and made something else.

Looking down at his transformed body and calling himself *la figura de la muerte*, the chronicler turns his body into a site of abjection but also a site where language signals the rising discourses of the day. As if language, too, had reached a limit in which this confounding figure of the borderlands must, in desperation to tell the king what happened, seek a language of the familiar but also of the grotesque: again, this report is his only service to the crown. The chronicler thus operates within and outside the discourses of the discovery period to articulate an (un)becoming of Spanishness. In a sense, the narrative page is turned into a table for anatomical discovery even, and as he ventures into the body-interior to explore the death and near-death experience of the conquistador, he spectacularizes mortality, and here at *Malhado*, the chronicler summons the real allegoric curiosity that captivated all of Spain: the emergence of the figure of Death. It is worth turning to that history, even if briefly, for its significance in Cabeza de Vaca's personification, but also, to the dissertation as a whole and its investigation of the trope of the extravagant Spaniard, not just as attached to *la leyenda negra* (which was on the rise as Cabeza de Vaca arrived to North America), but also how other discourses of the colonial period might have cross-racially intervened into the figure of the Spanish decadent colonial. *La figura de la muerte* was a known phrase and thus a known figure with a long history, and because of its skeletal body and deadly and haunting presence as now figuring into the portrait of the undressed conquistador, this is a past that must be reckoned with, even if only slightly examined here for its significance in *La Relación*.

By examining the figure of Death as it arose in mid-sixteenth century Spain, the argument posed is certainly not about finding an urtext to link Cabeza de Vaca's *figura de la muerte* to a particular history that was circulating in Spain around such a figure. That project exceeds the scope of my interests here. Instead, let us look at the imaginative force during this period, because there are converging discourses in and around Spain, specifically literature and art on the figure of Death alongside the cultural excitement over anatomical discoveries of the body-interior. What we stand to learn is how the chronicler's self-portrait fits accordingly to the times, but this racial reconfiguration is also a personification specific to the New World, because he is also about to go native and spend six years in captivity and two escaping the Southwest. It is difficult to know whether Cabeza de Vaca saw or studied textual and/or artistic representations of Death. Even the massive volumes about the chronicler's life, written by Adorno and Pautz, shed no light on Cabeza de Vaca's education or reading habits as a young man or even what he might have read much later upon his return to Spain in 1537 and while writing *La Relación*. Still, a conversation about the figure of Death and the body

[74] Ibid., 98.
[75] Donegan, *Seasons of Misery*, 89.

turned inside out, were all being had in Spain and at the indicative moment that Cabeza de Vaca returned home in August 1537 and continued drafting his *relación*, finishing it in late 1540. This is all to say that while Cabeza de Vaca wrote *La Relación*, the very discourses he borrows from and transforms to 'fit' his New World *experience*, coincided with appropriations of the skeletal figure of Death that circulated in Spain in the late 1530s. The chronicler conceives his own portrait of the figure of Death in the textual form of colonial writing, and knowingly drew upon this figure. Readers of *La Relación* would have recognized the phrase *la figura de la muerte*, most likely drawing the connection between Cabeza de Vaca's emaciated body with the full-bodied skeletal figure of Death found in *libros del buen morir*. During this period, however, Spain did not have its own representation of Death but before the 1530s, there existed a cultural understanding of the allegory in Spain's literature, though perhaps a visual image of Death was borrowed from neighboring countries.

The *figura de la muerte* arose out of *libros de buen morir* [books on dying well], which stem from the *Ars moriendi* tradition (the Latin expression for "the art of dying well"), which were devotional books (or guidebooks for religious people experiencing macabre horrors) that began in Western Europe during the late Middle Ages. Entitled *Tractatus* (or *Speculum*) *artis bene moriendi* (1415), and written by an anonymous Dominican friar per the request of the Council of Constance (1414-1418), these books included illustrated woodcuts of the dying man on his deathbed, where the reader is positioned in the frame to witness his suffering and consider the physical presence of a full-bodied skeleton that represented Death (think of the scare of the Black Death of 1347-1352). The books served as a "virtual priest" for the Roman Catholic Church, disseminating devout ways of coping with the culminating moment of death, the idea being that "one should die in a state of preparedness, that he should be 'shriven' (absolved) of his sins," and that one should model the exemplary story of Christ on the Cross.[76] The relevance of these types of texts in discussing *La Relación* is the fear the dying felt when "losing one's worldly possessions" that, and to return to Donegan's theorizing of misery, of the abject figure "not getting lost in catastrophe": "These texts, intended for priests and for the faithful, suggested how to face fears of going to hell, losing one's worldly possessions, having insufficient faith, and being unable to bear pain and suffering."[77] It was during the early colonial period that devotional literature began to transform, however. Suddenly, allegorizations of Death, its textual and artistic representations, took on a "grotesque spirit of dancing skeletons and rotting corpses," a history discussed fully in the context of Spain by scholar Carlos Erie: "By the late sixteenth century, Counter-Reformation writers were producing a type of *Ars moriendi* that combined the Renaissance focus on the *Ars Vivendi* ['an art of living'] with the Tridentine reinterpretation of the traditional motifs of the art of dying."[78] As modern readers, we must ask: What then was happening in sixteenth-century Spain with *la figura de la muerte*? Erie argues this was a cultural intrigue on the rise: "Although books on the art of dying had never been as popular in Spain throughout the fifteenth and early sixteenth century as they had been elsewhere in Western Europe," Eire explains, "Spanish interest in this type of literature slowly began to increase in the late 1530s and built up considerable momentum after midcentury."[79] Florence Whyte,

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[76] Paul Binski, *Medieval Death: Ritual and Representation* (London: British Museum Press, 2012), 40.

[77] Enrico de Pascale, *Death and Resurrection in Art* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum Press, 2009), 82.

[78] See Erie, *From Madrid to Purgatory*, 24.

[79] Ibid., 26. Devotional texts were translated into most Western European languages, including Spanish. Although Europeans of the Middle Ages and Renaissance had long been obsessed with death as a didactic tactic for religious and personal reasons, in my research I have come across arguments stating that during the colonial period neither textual nor artistic representations of skeletons and/or skulls appear as a theme in Spain's cultural iconography, an argument discussed by José Moreno Villa. For further discussion on Villa and as quoted in, see Stanley Brandes, *Skulls to the Living, Bread to the Dead: The Day of the Dead in Mexico and Beyond* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 55, who references Villa's article, "The Death Theme in Spanish and Mexican Arts" (1986).

however, argues that the idea of the personification of Death is found in Spain's *literature*: "The soil of Spain was congenial to the theme; its profound appeal is witnessed by the long and varied history of the allegory. The dramatic nature of the survivals confirms the conclusion that *living representation* was the characteristic of the Spanish Dance of Death."[80]

Literature of this type was produced by major historical figures, including Alejo de Venegas, a "follower" of the much-acclaimed Erasmus whose work appeared in 1535 in the form of two Castilian translations of *De pareparatione ad morten*. However, it was Venegas, who "for several decades fairly dominated the Spanish market" with his book *The Agony of Crossing Over at Death* (1537).[81] Another important figure during this period was Hans Holbein the Younger. His literary-alphabetic book, entitled *Dance of Death* (1538), included 41 plates by engraver, Hans Lützelburger.[82] Each plate portrayed humans alongside full-bodied skeletons, with its alphabetic association of a specific descending order, commenting on the various divisions of society in descending order. During the early colonial period, Holbien and Lützelburer provided these allegorical presentations of Death, and Europe witnessed the publication of 16 editions, from 1538-1562 (nine in Latin, five in French, one in Italian, and, one in Spanish). In 1540, Spain finally received its translated edition. It was not until 1547 that Holbein and Lützelburer added "The Knight" to the descending order (see figure 2).



Figure 2. The Knight by engraver Hans Lützelburger[83]

[80] See Florence Whyte, *The Dance of Death in Spain and Catalonia* (Baltimore: Waverly Press, 1931), 147. (*Italics mine*).
[81] For a detailed discussion of the influences Erasmus and Venegas had in Spain see Eire, *From Madrid to Purgatory*, 25-27.
[82] Holbein (the Younger) knew Desiderius Erasmus after arriving in England in 1526-1528. During that time he was commissioned to produce portraits, including Erasmus', which made Holbein famous. During his second visit to England in 1530-1542, Holbien would become the King's Painter by 1536, Henry VIII.
[83] See Hans Holbein, *The Dance of Death*, intro. Austin Dobson (London and New York: Scott-Thaw Company, 1903), plate XXXI. *Project Gutenberg*. Web. 23 August 2014.

Thus, we can argue, the figure of the excessively armored conquistador is, as Reséndez argues, "steeped in the medieval tradition of heroic romances and chivalric accounts"; in other words, the conquistador—as similarly encased in a steel suit of armor like the knight—hinges between that medieval world and the era of conquest that marked the new.[84] But, the difference is that *La Relación* "breaks new ground by placing the action in the Americas."[85] In *La Relación*, the Spanish conquistador stared down at his naked body and found Death haunting him from within, as if Death had always been hidden beneath the costume of imperialism. Mocking his victim or perhaps even reflecting his moralistic nature, the figure of Death in the soldier-knight plate is shown with only the top half of the soldier's costume, his legs left exposed and skeletal. Is the soldier-knight looking into a mirror?

During the early colonial period, representations of *la figura de la muerte* also coincided with the discourses generated around the discovery of the body-interior and the discovery of *las Américas*, both of which are discourses significantly influenced by Spain. Knowing this background, and with Spain at its center, provides an understanding as to why Cabeza de Vaca may have turned to these discourses. Cabeza de Vaca's narrative telling occurred at the historical moment that scientists began charting the human body, a transition in history from *Ars moriendi* to the discovery of the body-interior. In fact, Jonathan Sawday compares the role of the scientist to the role of the journeyer of the New World. Of course, the reference to Spain's "discoverer" marks the conquistador as the primary figure initiating that very role of scientist-explorer. Sawday writes:

> Like the Columbian explorers, these early discoverers dotted their names, like place-names on a map, over the terrain which they encountered. In their voyages, they expressed the intersection of the body and the world at every point, claiming for the body an affinity with the complex design of the universe. And in the production of a new map of the body, a new figure was also to be glimpsed – the scientist as heroic voyager and intrepid discoverer. The body was a remote and strange terrain into which the discoverer voyaged.[86]

Situating Spain at the center of the collusion or convergence of New World exploration and anatomical discovery, what Sawday is also interested in articulating is how vocabularies of exploration overlapped on the bodies of the unknown and new. Again, transformation through the misplacement of occurred, as perhaps the only way to express discovery. Elsewhere Sawday once again draws an association of these discourses with Spain, pairing the motto of *Plus Ultra* as declared by Charles V to the experience of explorer's traveling into the interior of *las Américas*. He writes,

> The microcosmic explorer of the body labored on a project the dimensions of which were held to be every bit as dark as the interior of the continent of the newly 'found' [sic] americas. But the body's darkness, its strangeness, its alieneity did not preclude knowledge. The scientist who searched the cavities and recesses, the interior secrets, of the body was not faced with the 'ne plus ultra' confronting earlier, theologically-bound, patterns of knowledge. Instead 'Plus Ultra' – 'yet further', the motto of Emperor Charles V – became the watchword of the natural philosophers. Though,

[84] Reséndez, *A Land So Strange*, 250.
[85] Ibid., 250.
[86] See Johnathan Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned: Dissection and the Human Body in Renaissance Culture* (London: Routledge, 1995), 23-24.

> on occasion, warning voices might be heard, this project was conducted with boundless optimism. No limit was to be placed on the possibility of gaining understanding. The task of the scientist was to voyage within the body in order to force it to reveal its secrets.[87]

In *La Relación*, the chronicler pursues a similar quest into the body-landscape, and in his articulation of the physical and psychic limitations suffered, Cabeza de Vaca wanders into new narrative-landscape to explore the "body's darkness, its strangeness, its alieneity," which was "every bit as dark as the interior of the continent of the newly 'found' americas."[88]

Scientific practices of opening up the human body and wandering into its unseen territories, however, encouraged real fears related to cultural practices in the New World of natives as cannibalistic. Here is another link between explorers and scientists: "It was into this cannibalistic universe that the scientist journeyed when the body was opened … . [It] announced an alien world of values in which the body existed. It was neither subject to laws of community, nor was it an emblem of civilization. Instead, it lived by its own animalistic desires."[89] Oddly enough, the anatomist at the center of the history of the body-interior is Andreas Vesalius, the imperial physician for Emperor Charles V who, like Cabeza de Vaca, dedicated his book to the King. Entitled *De Humani Corporis Fabrica* (1543) [On the Fabric of the Human Body], the book contained illustrations permitting readers an interior view of the human body. On the title page is a frontispiece of the skeletal figure of Death (see figure 3), taking center stage or, as Sawday writes, where Death "stands in the world's anatomy theatre … quietly surveying the human attempt to unravel his mystery."[90]

[87] Ibid., 23-25.
[88] Ibid., 25.
[89] Ibid., 24.
[90] Ibid., 71.



Figure 3. Frontispiece to the 1543 *De humani corporis fabrica libri septem* by Andreas Vesalius[91]

Published a year before Vesalius' book, *La Relación* contains its own images of an anatomy theater yet on the New World stage. Cabeza de Vaca, so to speak, places the body of the conquistador on a narrative-table, where he strips the Spaniard of the costume of imperialism and dissects it in every which way, "so that colonialism and the discovery of the body appeared to complement one another."[92]

As Cabeza de Vaca thus enters the world of *los indios* at *Malhado*, he enters a European imagined world, where discourses of the figure of Death, anatomical studies and cannibalism all coincide and flail about, but not uncontrollably, perhaps more so extravagantly to capture and identify the spectacularity of the experience.

As it turns out, Cabeza de Vaca was onto something in conjuring the image of *la figura de la muerte*. Yes, there were also very early discussions of the Spanish body's interior, in particular its skeletal frame:

> *Fue España la primera nacion en la que se hicieron practicas sobre difuntos. La Iglesia Catolica apoyo estos estudios, y en la Escuela de Medicina del Monasterio de Guadalupe, fundada en el ano de gracia de 1322, se abrian cadavers humanos para el major conocimiento de la anatomia. El Arte espanol aprovecho esta feliz oportunidad.*

[91] Translation of Latin, "On the fabric of the human body in seven books." Full title: *Bruxellensis, scholae medicorum Patauinae professoris, de Humani corporis fabrica Libri septem* [Andreas Vesalius of Brussels, professor at the school of medicine at Padua, on the fabric of the Human body in seven Books]. See Andreas Vesalius, *De humani corporis fabrica libri septem*. 1543. Frontispiece. *Books, Health, and History: The New York Academy of Medicine*. The New York Academy of Medicine, New York. 23 August 2014.< http://nyamcenterforhistory.org/tag/vesalius-500/>.
[92] Ibid., 26.

> [Spain was the first nation that practiced on the dead. The Catholic Church supported these studies, and the School of Medicine of Guadalupe Monastery, founded in the year of 1322, opened human cadavers to evolve knowledge of the anatomy. Spanish Art approached this happy opportunity.] [93]

Although it is difficult to pinpoint a direct influence in the two centuries preceding Spanish conquest of the Americas, there happened in Europe a proliferation of discourses attempting to conceive the body as skeletal—its unknown depth—to the figure of death. Cabeza de Vaca's "turn" to the science of the human body, to a religious rhetoric as self-serving, to *libros de buen morir*, all act as an effective strategy to enhance his character in its death or near-death experience of becoming colonial. However, one thing is missing here within European discourses, because the figure of Death that Cabeza de Vaca transformed into is of the southern borderlands: there is a link to be made between how *los indios* perceived the naked and skeletal Spaniard at the fragile moment of re-encounter *with* the rising discourses of the colonial period—the discovery of the New World, the scientific discovery of the body-interior, and appropriations of the figure of Death—especially as rhetorics from across the Atlantic Ocean that were brought over and appropriated in the experience and new region of North America.[94] Missing from this discussion is an analysis of how *los indios* (mis)read the Spaniard in new (dis)guise. How did an Indigenous discourse work against a Spanish perspective of reading the self as *la figura de la muerte*?

The narrative telling gradually unfolds a complexity that links Cabeza de Vaca's calling himself *la figura de la muerte* and his becoming shaman to an extravagant passing figure resembling a native figure of terror, called *Mala Cosa* [evil thing]. Cabeza de Vaca learns about this figure while traveling through the American Southwest, but before informing the reader of this native oral history, the chronicler carefully prepares the text. There is a narrative play or *writerly masquerade* at work with how each self-portrait speaks to the other, informing each other. The intent concerns a possible relation to be drawn between *la figura de la muerte* that allows him to be selected by natives to become shaman, which later is a transformation into healer that is presented as *only* resembling *Mala Cosa*. There is a desire for self-invention at the moment of (un)becoming. How is the author organizing discourses on the page? How is he moving between self-portraits and what is happening in each narrative space—with language, with patterns, with arguments, with pause—for how the chronicler merges a correlation to enhance his character of *Spanish masquerade*?

How might we consider *La Relación* as a work of its own accord? As Cabeza de Vaca goes native, the writerly representation of self fully entertains a masquerade around encounter, especially during discussions of racial passing and becoming Other. Read as a sort of *writerly mobility* in the creation of identity on the page, I want to consider the thinking of Clifford Geertz, specifically his posing two questions that are also relevant to the discussion of "author-function" in *La Relación*:

> If, then, we admit that ethnographies tend to look at least as much like romances as

[93] Unfortunately, I cannot find the author of this citation; the book is in "Stacks" at UC Berkeley. The text was of the early twentiety century and only in Spanish. Translation mine.

[94] In their discussion of Erie's historical study, Martina Will de Champarro and Miruna Chim comment on how his findings that are made specific to Europe still offer opportunity for commencing studies on the subject of death in the Americas: "Though Erie offered no overt links to the New World, his work on Counter-Reformation Spain remains a foundational text for those exploring both ordinary and exemplary death in the Americas." See Champarro and Chim, "Introduction," in *Death and Dying in Colonial Spanish America* ed. Champarro and Chim (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2011), 4.

> they do like lab reports […], two questions, or perhaps the same one doubly asked, immediately pose themselves: (1) How is the "author-function" (or shall we, so long as we are going to be literary about the matter, just say "the author"?) made manifest in the text? (2) Just what is it—beyond the obvious tautology, "a work"—that the author authors? The first question, call it that of *signature, is a* matter of the construction of a *writerly identity*. The second, call it that of *discourse*, is a matter of developing a way of putting things—a vocabulary, a rhetoric, a pattern of argument—that is connected to that identity in such a way that it seems to come from it as a remark from a mind.[95]

Throughout *La Relación* there are deliberate writerly acts that exceed the confines of the rhetoric of empire. The other imagination at work, or as Geertz calls it, is the "remark from a mind," that of the Spaniard-*Indio* in the retrospective act of writing, thinking, and imagining; of course, from a more distant retrospect. As Geertz continues,

> The question of *signature*, the establishment of an authorial presence within a text, has haunted ethnography from very early on, though for the most part it has done so in a disguised form. Disguised, because it has been generally cast not as narratological issue, a matter of how best to get an honest story honestly told, but as an epistemological one, a matter of how to prevent subjective views from coloring objective facts. The clash between the expository conventions of author-saturated texts and those of author-evacuated ones that grows out of the particular nature of the ethnographic enterprise is imagined to be a clash between *seeing things as one would have them* and *seeing them as they really are*.[96]

What is the narratological issue disguised in *La Relación*, especially as the author invites the reader to witness his entrance into the world of *los indios*? What narrative structures are being drawn from traditional narratives of conquest and thus manipulated and woven into this narrative of rescue and survival by going native? Cabeza de Vaca's version includes Eurocentric fantasies of nakedness, savagery and fears of entering a man-eating world, however, the chronicler also constructs a personal narrative of what occurred during the long journey to *Malhado* and then what happened with *los indios*. One can read Cabeza de Vaca's narrative telling of going native as yoked between two modes of thinking: *seeing things as one would have them* versus *seeing them as they really are*. A *writerly masquerade* is rendered at the fragile moment of encounter and the decision to go native. How Cabeza de Vaca presents his transformation or transition in native culture is effectively plotted in the retrospective act of history writing. The "remark from a mind" is that of the Spaniard-*Indio* writing years later, a mind some might call that of *mestizaje*.

4. Going Native, Becoming Shaman, and *Mala Cosa*

Cabeza de Vaca's survival in the New World had everything to do with his skeletal appearance that proved frightening and strange to the coastal Indians at *Malhado*. On the shores of the island, Cabeza de Vaca's pleading proves so effective that the Karankawas relent. Here begins Cabeza de Vaca's process of crossing over into native culture, yet read in terms of extravagant

[95] Clifford Geertz, *Works and Lives: The Anthropologist as Author* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), 8-9. (*Italics mine*).
[96] Ibid., 8-9. (*Italics mine*).

passing and as a Spanish masquerade to understand what that passage (or cultural integration) into native society looked like in terms of "passing" versus "going native," so as to draw attention to the performative aspects that allowed him social mobility and survival. Although by the end of the narrative Cabeza de Vaca has fully transformed from conquistador to Spaniard-*Indio*, a close reading of the text reveals a transforming figure that never lost sight of the possibility of escaping Indian captivity and a dangerous Southwest terrain. His passing is tied to a *writerly masquerade*, so that he can later 'return' to civilization. *La Relación* (dis)plays an experience through canonical tropes of the genre of travel writing, in order to avoid cultural slippage and represent the self as having gone too far native. From the very beginning, the chronicler establishes a narrative balance between Spanish culture and native cultural practices, always steering clear from blurring the boundaries of racial difference. What emerges from *La Relación*, however, is not just a story of his going native—where he spins the reader into and through tropes of the genre—but also a racial consciousness of this southern terrain of cross-cultural contact. As Cabeza de Vaca narrates his dramatic entrance into native culture, he also reveals what the entrance meant through the deliberate play of conflicting discourses. Here is the story of how Cabeza de Vaca became a confounding borderland figure suddenly becoming conscious of the potentiality of *mestizaje*.

The chronicler entertains the fear of Spaniards entering a man-eating world, while also challenging this European fixation by manipulating the traditional colonial-plot to tell how *los indios* actually saved the Spaniards versus *Como los indios nos trataron de comer*. The scene of re-encounter is actually described as a moment of "shared weeping," as Bodmer describes, between clothed-natives sitting among naked-Spaniards. The chronicler-as-protagonist is convinced of native humanity, leading him to suggest to the Spaniards that they ask *los indios* to rescue them, which all will oppose.

> *Los indios, de ver el desastre que nos avía venido y el desastre en que estávamos con tanta desventura y miseria, se sentaron entre nosotros. … Sosegado ya algo este llanto, yo pregunté a los christianos y dixe, que si ellos paresçia, rogaría a aquellos indios que nos llevanssen a sus casas. Y algunos dellos que avían estado en la Nueva España respondieron que no se devía hablar en ello, porque si a sus casas nos llevavan nos sacrificarían a sus ídolos.*
>
> [The Indians, on seeing the disaster that had befallen us and the disaster that was upon us with so much misfortune and misery, sat down among us. … When this weeping was somewhat calmed, I asked the Christians and said that, if it seemed acceptable to them, I would ask those Indians to take us to their houses. And some of them who had been in New Spain replied that we should not even speak of it, because if they took us to their houses, they would sacrifice us to their idols.][97]

Little did the protagonist know of native mourning practices among coastal tribes of the region, yet at the time of writing the chronicler conceals this knowledge from the reader in keeping with the narrative masquerade. By characterizing the natives with extreme emotional output, especially in contrast to European ideology, the chronicler upholds but also undermines racist tropes. Having never journeyed to the New World, the chronicler presents his character as ignorant of the dangers of encounters with Mesoamericans and the knowledge of their sacrificial (and also cannibalistic) practices. And as he gives voice to the fears of Spaniards who had traveled to New Spain, whether alongside Hernán Cortés during the conquest of Mexico (1519-1521) or with Narváez to oppose

[97] Adorno and Pautz, *Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca*, 98.

Cortés (1520), also working in the text is the portrayal of his character.[98] Although brief, the chronicler acknowledges the sheer vulnerability of entering a native controlled world, indeed, as a critique of the European fantasy since the castaways are not actually entering a man-sacrificing society. Once again, the chronicler distinguishes and distances his character from the other Spaniards, in the end ignoring their horror stories and racial constructs. In refusing to recite the debate, he forces the reader to ignore their stories as well: *Mas visto que otro remedio no avía y que por qualquier otro camino estaba más çerca y más çierta la muerte, no curé de lo que dezían, antes rogué a los indios que nos llevassen a sus casas.* [But realizing that there was no other solution, and that by any other course death was closer and more certain, I did not heed their words, but rather beseeched the Indians to take us to their houses.][99] The chronicler echoes Narváez's final order when Cabeza de Vaca was "unable to follow him" since the men in his boat were of the weaker crew: "[I]t was no longer time for one to rule another, that each one should do whatever seemed best to him in order to save his own life."

The chronicler tells a story of *los indios* rescuing the Spaniards; here is an alternative perspective of colonial contact in North America versus horror stories experienced in New Spain and Mexico, even if still represented through a discourse of fear—*que nos tomaron, y llevándonos asidos y con mucha priessa, fruimos a sus casas.* [… when they took us, and by their carrying us by clutching us tightly and making great haste, we went to their houses.] and also, *Y desde a una ora que avíamos llegado, començaron a bailar y hazer grande fiesta que duró toda la noche, aunque para nosotros no aviendo fiesta ni sueño, esperando quándo nos avian de sacrificar.* [And an hour after we arrived, they began to dance and make a great celebration that lasted all night long, although for us there was neither rejoicing nor sleep, as we were awaiting the moment when they would sacrifice us.]—but all the (dis)play of uncertainty is countered and without harming the chronicler's character: *Y a la mañana nos tornaron a dar pescado y raízes, y a hazer tan buen tratamiento que nos asseguramos algo, y perdimos algo el miedo del sacrificio.* [And in the morning they again gave us fish and roots and treated us so well that we were somewhat reassured, and we lost some of our fear of being sacrificed.][100] Cabeza de Vaca distinguishes regions, carefully structuring the real experience in the narrative telling. He is also distinguishing Spaniards from natives, in which natives construct ideologies around Spanish cannibalism.

From the perspective of *los indios*, the Spaniard confesses that it was *los indios* who found Spaniards partaking in the act of cannibalism—*Y cinco cristianos que estavan en Xamho [el rancho] en la costa llegaron a tal extremo que se comieron los unos a los otros hasta que quedó uno, que por ser solo, no huvo quien lo comiesse.* [And five men who were in Xamho on the coast came to such dire need that they ate one another until only one remained, who because he was alone, had no one to eat him.]—and at the scene of its occurrence (not elsewhere in the text) the chronicler reveals the names of the five Spaniards to the King: *Los nombres de ellos son éstos: Sierra, Diego López, Corral, Palacios, Gonzalo Ruiz.* [The names of these men were: Sierra, Diego López, Corral, Palacios, Gonzalo Ruiz.][101] Cabeza de Vaca identifies the Christian bodies, with their mutilated bodies on the page—dead, eaten, rotting—almost asking the King to guess which one had no one to eat him. This incident, which was followed by the death of more Spaniards, alarmed *los indios*. Of the eighty Spaniards that originally crashed on the island (forty from Cabeza de Vaca's crew and forty from the Dorantes-Castillo boat, which shipwrecked on the other side of the island), *quedaron bivos solos quinze.* [only fifteen remained

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98 See Reséndez, *A Land So Strange*, 136. In his words, "expeditioners [...] opposed the plan," because they had "been to Mexico and had seen or heard about Aztec practices of human sacrifice and ritual cannibalism."

99 Adorno and Pautz, *Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca*, 100.

100 Ibid., 102.

101 Ibid., 104.

alive].[102] As a result of Spanish canibalism, the chronicler writes, *Deste caso se alteraron tanto los indios y huvo entre ellos tan gran escándalo que sin duda que si al principio ellos lo vieran los mataran, y todos nos viéramos en grande trabajo.* [The Indians became very upset because of this and it produced such a great scandal among them that without a doubt, if at the start they had seen it, they would have killed them, and all of us would have been in grave danger.][103] In agreement with Mariah Wade, this incident "may have altered permanently their perception [*los indios*] of the strangers at their shores."[104] Because of the incident of cannibalism, the natives planned to kill the remaining fifteen "strangers" or rather cabalists, also believing the Spaniards also caused the stomach ailment (European virus/bacteria) that killed half the tribe. What follows though is not a scene of natives executing Spaniards but the introduction of a nameless Indian who intercedes on their behalf, thus saving the Spaniards.

Whether a real historical figure or a fictional character created for plot structure, the nameless Indian plays a significant role in *La Relación*. In a mere glimpse, here is the trope of the Indian as savior to the white colonizer, perhaps an earlier version of the Pocahontas-Smith legend. Cabeza de Vaca writes:

> *Y creyeron que nosotros eramos los que los matauamos, y teniendolo por muy cierto, concentaron entre si de matar a los que auiamos quedado. Ya que lo venían a poner en efeto, un indio que a mí me tenía les dixo que no creqyessen que nosotros éramos los que los matávos, porque si nosotros tal poder tuviéramos, escusamos que no murieran tantos de nosotros como ellos veían que avian muerto sin que les pudiéramos poner remedio, y que ya no quedávamos sino muy pocos, y que ninguno hazía más daño ni perjuizio, que lo major era que nos dexassen.*
>
> [And they thought that we were the ones who had killed them. And taking this to be very true, they planned among themselves to kill those of us who remained. When they came to put it into effect, an Indian in whose possession I had been placed told them that they should not believe that we were the ones who killed them, because if we had such power, we would not have allowed so many of our own to die, as they saw, without our being able to prevent it, and that since no more than a few of us now remained, and since none of us did any harm or ill, the best thing to do would be to leave us alone.][105]

The Indian (as *master*) saves Cabeza de Vaca (the *slave*), including the remaining Spaniards. Might we assert that emerging from the text is a representation of bravery, even if in a condensed form versus extensive native speeches found in later histories of Indians saving the colonizer, including the histories by John Smith and Gaspar Pérez de Villagrá. What is the nameless Indian doing here as a critical figure in Spanish colonial history? As readers responsible to history, we should approach the scene with caution and ask if the chronicler reimagined a real historical figure into a character for narrative structure and argument. We do not really know, since this is all Cabeza de Vaca's version of things. We can assert that *La Relación* raises issues about memory, responsibility, and loyalty. Did Cabeza de Vaca correctly interpret and understand the dispute between the nameless Indian and the tribe? It is difficult to accept Cabeza de Vaca's interpretation as entirely loyal to the actual dialogue; certainly, there is narrative intent to evoke tension and fear that existed between Spaniards and

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[102] Ibid., 106.
[103] Ibid., 106.
[104] Mariah Wade, "Go-between: The Roles of Native American Women and Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca in Southern Texas in the 16th Century," in *The Journal of American Folklore.* 112 (1999): 335.
[105] Adorno and Pautz, *Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca*, 106.

natives. We can state the same of other histories purporting to narrate these types of Indian saving colonizer plots. The chronicler allows extensive narrative space to the unnamed Indian, as well as a powerful role and at a critical moment in the journey. The nameless Indian will teach Cabeza de Vaca the practices of shamanism, but actually he will teach Cabeza de Vaca how to "pass" as shaman and learn to navigate the native social system of power. Here, Cabeza de Vaca commences his six years of Indian captivity.

Conceding to the nameless Indian, yet fearing another incident of cannibalism among the Spaniards, *los indios* divide the remaining Spaniards between two different native groups inhabiting the region (the Hans and Capoques). Cabeza de Vaca and two other Spaniards (Hierónimo de Alaniz and Lope de Oviedo) join the Hans. Before describing how he is coerced into adopting the role of shaman, the chronicler breaks from the narrative course to explain native culture—what natives looked like, their seasonal migration and unique customs, emphasizing funereal practices and honoring shaman. If cannibalism and/or human-sacrifice existed among *los indios*, the chronicler seems to argue, it assumes a ceremonial significance that contradicts notions of savagery. The ritual of honoring native healers not only arrives in the same area of the text that Cabeza de Vaca tells of the four Spaniards who partook in cannibalism, but it also arrives just before he is propositioned to learn the role of *físico* [physician]. The chronicler constructs a narrative pattern of argument that critiques a European fascination with and fear of the conquistador entering the world of *los indios*, also concentrating on how to present an argument around cannibalism and going native. Cabeza de Vaca purposely presents the Spaniards as savage in juxtaposition to Natives as non-savage because, with the turn of the page, Cabeza de Vaca learns the curing practices of Native healers and is persuaded into realizing that going native is about economic survival, not a full conversion experience.

The Spaniards have been useless and entirely dependent on *los indios*, and having no knowledge of survival (or how to prompt social mobility and access in native culture), the Spaniards feel limited by their emaciated state, the natives think otherwise:

> *En aquella isla que he contado nos quisieron hacer físicos sin esaminarnos ni pedirnos títulos, porque ellos curan las enfermedades soplando al enfermo y con aquel soplo y las manos echan dêl la enfermedad. Y mandáronnos que hiziéssemos lo mismo y sirviéssemos en algo. Nosotros nos reíamos dello, diziendo que era burla y que no sabíamos curar. Y por esto nos quitavan la comida hasta que hiziéssemos lo que nos dezían.*
>
> [On that island about which I have spoken, they tried to make us physicians without examining us or asking us for our titles, because they cure illnesses by blowing on the sick person, and with that breath of air and their hands they expel the disease from him. And they demanded that we do the same and make ourselves useful. We laughed about this, saying that it was a mockery and that we did not know how to cure. And seeing of this, they took away our food until we did as they told us.][106]

The protagonist contemplates the prospect of crossing over as merely a "mockery," and although laughter also implies superiority, the presumption of Spanish imperialistic power is immediately contained: "they took away our food until we did as they told us." The chronicler explains that one cannot so easily become a healer and unbecome being Spanish. Here, in these lines, the chronicler addresses the process of "going native," expressing the difficulty of crossing the color line and unbecoming Spanish. He preserves the Spanish self, to a degree; making clear that through

[106] Ibid., 112.

performance the Spaniard is not native, arguing that the act of imitation is an absurdity in the representation of the real, thus questioning the act of repetition and resemblance.[107] Scholars often ask why then did *los indios* grant the Spaniards such an esteemed role of healer. Too often we are preoccupied with "exams and titles," as Cabeza de Vaca is: "they tried to make us physicians without examining us or asking us for our titles." We must ask about the relationship between the Spaniard as a frightening skeletal figure—yet as a privileged identity—with the native role of shaman, for how the sight of this stranger suddenly convinced *los indios* to allow the Spaniards to occupy such an esteemed role and become medicine healers. Wade provides possible answers:

> Quite likely his hosts tried to incorporate him into their social group by finding him a role compatible with his persona, and fasting was a necessary step to the induction into such a role. Cabeza de Vaca is Other but not enemy; he is disassociated; he is useless as a warrior; and he is not female. He has an unintelligible language: he speaks Latin to his God. He has also managed to survive. Can he therefore access the powers of healing?[108]

Wade reads Cabeza de Vaca's emaciated state solely in terms of fasting (in terms of religions, both Catholic and native belief systems), and as an "induction" to becoming a healer. The chronicler also tells the reader something else, however. Cabeza de Vaca learns to "pass" as shaman, and is offered a social power and authority because of the contradiction, confusion, and very ambivalence created in *his* performance as shaman.[109] At stake in re-articulating Cabeza de Vaca's becoming shaman, as a reading of racial performance in terms of resemblance, repetition, and ambivalence, is a revision of Wade's question: How does the chronicler access the powers of healing as a form of illusion? What is missing from observations of this scene is the role of the nameless Indian who teaches Cabeza de Vaca to pass as medicine healer by learning to manipulate the illusionary possibilities of cultural syncretism. This very manipulation, to add Gloria Anzaldúa to the conversation, is a multiplicity of subjectivity that allows the extravagant passing figure a plurality as the only mode of survival.[110]

The chronicler explains to the reader exactly how he learned to imitate Native healing practices.

> *Y viendo nuestra porfía, un indio me dixo a mí que yo no sabía lo que dezía en dezir que no aprovecharía nada aquello que él sabía, ca alas piedras y otras cosas que se crían por los campos tienen virtud, y que él con una piedra caliente trayéndoa por el estómago sanava y quitava el dolor, y que nosotros que éramos hombres[,] çierto era que teníamos mayor virtud y poder. En fin nos vimos en tanta neçessidad que lo huvimos de hazer sin temer que nadie nos llevasse por ello la pena.*
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> [And seeing our resistance, an Indian told me that I didn't know what I was saying when I said that what he knew how to do would do no good, because the stones and

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[107] See Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 128.

[108] Wade, "Go-between," 336.

[109] Bhabha's definition of "ambivalence" is appropriate here: "The ambivalence of colonial authority repeatedly turns from mimicry - a difference that is almost nothing but not quite - to menace - a difference that is almost total but not quite. And in that other scene of colonial power, where history turns to farce and presence to 'a part' can be seen the twin figures of narcissism and paranoia that repeat furiously, uncontrollably." See Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 131.
"From such a colonial encounter between the white presence and its black semblance, there emerges the question of the ambivalence of mimicry as a problematic of colonial subjection."

[110] Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 2007), 79.

> other things that the fields produce have powers, and that he, by placing a hot stone on the abdomen, restored health and removed pain, and that it was certain that we, because we were men, it was true that we had greater virtue and capacity. In the end, we found ourselves in such need that we had to do it, without fearing that anyone would bring us to grief for it.][111]

The nameless Indian alerts Cabeza de Vaca to the social opportunity allowed to *male* healers, prompting Cabeza de Vaca to reconceptualize his gender alongside his skeletal *and* desperate state, for the potentiality of integrating his unique racial identity within the Native social system, which is based on an economic structure of social networking and trading patterns, as opposed to understanding the transformed (and powerless) European self through the perspective of a system of "exams and titles." This is about a different type of knowledge. The nameless Indian teaches Cabeza de Vaca to think and navigate a network on new economic principles: "the fields produce have powers." He offers knowledge but with it an understanding of the plurality of self (survival through social mobility), demonstrating the tools that will permit social access and power. Cabeza de Vaca, the nameless Indian seems to say, cannot be entirely Spanish here. The nameless Indian—as a voice, still ventriloquized through the colonizer, and a character invented on the page—turns chaos into order. He conceptualizes the ritual of healing in intelligible terms and presents it for its performative significance and an acceptance of cultural divergence. Thus, the nameless Indian plays a critical role in Cabeza de Vaca's process of becoming shaman and going native. However, what does the nameless Indian suggest when telling Cabeza de Vaca, "it was certain that we, because we were men, had greater virtue and capacity"? Is the nameless Indian commenting on gender, race, or both? Or, is he reading the Spanish body for its ghastly sight and the possibility of its transformative powers of hybridization? Although this is Cabeza de Vaca's version of things, is the nameless Indian thus defining the relationship between healer (Spaniard) and patient (*los indios*), insisting on the physical appearance of the Spaniard as a privileged (racial) identity negotiable within the social system of Native culture? Is it his (Spanish or European) "whiteness"? Or is it that skeletal body now exposed from beneath a costume of steel?

The act of passing as shaman is framed as a joke, at least from the perspective of the Spaniards. Quickly, however, Cabeza de Vaca turns the moment into that of cultural syncretism, where the Spaniard must negotiate the European self within native cultural practices, all for the sake of survival. It can be said that the nameless Indian offers a new logic to the Spaniard in his difficulty of crossing over: transculturation requires an uprooting for transformation and it requires the embodiment of the other. Learning the role of shaman is about performing the rituals familiar to natives, but also, as Michael Taussig argues, "the power of shamanism lies not with the shaman but with the differences created by the coming together of shaman and patient, differences constituting imagery essential to the articulation of what [Taussig] calls implicit social knowledge."[112] Taussig is interested in the power dynamic between healer and patient, in other words, the patient already believes, but the healer needs only to speak the same language: "here it is the patient and not the shaman who sounds the chords of poetic wisdom."[113] The nameless Indian seems to say that Cabeza de Vaca need only to accept that "the stones and other things that the fields produce have powers," and that the mere use of these familiar tools by "men" adhered to native cultural and theological hermeneutics, that the act of assimilation was vital to social acceptance and the believability for the skeletal Spaniard as shaman. Becoming shaman is about *performing* (or imitating) the role of healer. It

[111] Adorno and Pautz, *Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca*, 112.
[112] Taussig, *Shamanism, Colonialism, and the Wild Man*, 460.
[113] Ibid., 461.

is about tolerance, to return to Anzaldùa: a figure that can develop "a tolerance for contradictions, a tolerance for ambiguity," and learns to juggle cultures" to exist as a "plural personality."[114] Although the consciousness that Anzaldúa describes is that of *la mestiza*, here we see Cabeza de Vaca learning that same mutability and we can more closely associate his gender to *la mestiza* when he begins passing as female gatherer and barter across warring territory.

Still, the once stable categories of race (and religion and cultural practice) are intersecting with the native system that Cabeza de Vaca must now take part in for his very survival. The chronicler is careful to discuss his performance as shaman, treating the page as a space for sorting out an anxiety around racial performance or passing, as if he is working through cross-cultural panic for the reader, by placing belief systems side-by-side. The chronicler effectively distinguishes cultural healing practices: (1) *La manera que ellos tienen en curarse* [The manner in which they perform cures] and (2) *La manera con que nosotros curamos* [The manner in which we performed cures].[115] Here is the hyphen between worlds, between imaginations, between practices, religions, and beliefs. Embedded in colonial discourse is a deep anxiety about the ambivalence and the cultural slippage. Of native curing methods, he writes,

> *Lo que el médico haze es dalle unas sajas adonde tiene el dolor y chúpanles al derredor dellas. Dan cauterios de fuego que es cosa entre ellos tenida y por muy provechosa, y yo lo he esperimentado y me sucedió bien dello. Y después de esto soplan aquel lugar que les duele, y con esto creen ellos que se les quita el mal.*
>
> [What the physician does is to make some incisions where the sick person has pain, and then sucks all around them. They perform cauterizations with fire, which is a thing among them considered to be very effective, and I have experimented with it and it turned out well for me. And after this, they blow upon the area that hurts, and with this they believe that they have removed the malady.][116]

Although the narrative language sets the protagonist apart from Native practice, he admits, "I have experimented with it and it turned out well for me." Cabeza de Vaca imitates Native curing practices, and to a degree, accepts and assimilates their cultural practice, values and beliefs. Yet a reconfiguration of native practice is produced for the reader, with the chronicler introducing how he then integrated Spanish curing methods, explaining that this act of integration or cultural syncretism is improvisational—here is the first moment of ontological *mestizaje*, where the chronicler presents his character as negotiating conflicting cultural practices to render a new conception of religious belief systems. In the lines below is a narrative balancing of two opposing discourses (Spanish prayer noted in bold), brought together and retained on the page as incompatible yet merging as something else. He writes,

> *La manera con que nosotros curamos era s**antiguándolos** y soplarlos, **y rezar un Pater Noster y un Ave María**, y rogar lo mejor que podíamos **a Dios nuestro Señor que les diesse salud y espirasse en ellos que nos hiziessen algún buen tratamiento**. Quiso Dios nuestro Señor y su misericordia que todos aquellos por quien suplicamos **luego que los santiguamos** dezían a los otros que estaban sanos y buenos, y por este respect nos hazían buen tratamiento, y dexavan ellos de comer por dárnoslo a nosotros, y nos divan cueros y otras cosillas.*

[114] Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera*, 79.
[115] Adorno and Pautz, *Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca*, Vol. 1, 112.
[116] Ibid., 114.

> [The manner in which we performed cures was by **making the sign of the cross over them** and blowing on them, **praying a Pater Noster and an Ave Maria**, and as best we could, **beseeching our Lord God that he grant them health and move them to treat us well**. Our Lord God in his mercy willed that all those on whose behalf we made supplication, **after we had made the sign of the cross over them**, said to the others that they were restored and healthy, and on account of this they treated us well, and refrained from eating in order to give their food to us, and they gave us skins and other things.][117]

Both practices depend on a higher or spiritual power, with Native healing practices depending on the performance of surgical operations, and Spanish healing practices engaging prayer. If we can agree with Taussig, when he states, "the healer gives the vision," then the vision that Cabeza de Vaca gives might be understood in terms of "passing," that what is practiced is a performance and illusion of healing powers.[118] But Cabeza de Vaca cures the sick, exhibiting neutrality between incompatible belief systems, and thus introducing the contact between cultural practices as rendering the potentiality of what might arise from cross-cultural intercourse. Here, on the page, the chronicler presents symbiosis where the Spaniard has not lost his identity but empowered it through acknowledgement of the other.

Cabeza de Vaca "passes" into native culture and capitalizes on the role as healer. His act of passing might also be understood as an "improvisational"' act, a term Stephen Greenblatt has defined in relation to self-fashioning, and which is also fitting here, since Cabeza de Vaca learns from the nameless Indian "the ability both to capitalize on the unforeseen and to transform given materials into one's own scenario."[119] In his ability to adapt and assimilate, the metamorphosis that transpires is the skill of a passing figure, Greenblatt states, "who passes from one representation form to another, who mediates between systems, who inhabits the in-between."[120] Cabeza de Vaca enters the space of the hyphen—where as a slave—the transformed Spaniard experiments with cultural *mestizaje*, embodying a role that depends on transculturation for survival, and ventures into a space where colonial identity prods at another level of consciousness, not Spaniard-*Indio*, but Spanish American.

The role of shaman allows Cabeza de Vaca social mobility and access: "they treated us well, and refrained from eating in order to give their food to us, and they gave us skins and other things." The union of native healing practices with Spanish healing prayers is a manipulated social power, especially later in the journey when Cabeza de Vaca becomes a traveling-healer and achieves passage through the American Southwest and then along the western coast of New Spain where he eventually encounters four Spanish slave catchers on horseback. By understanding and manipulating the social and economic relations within and between various tribes, Cabeza de Vaca learns to navigate the land by understanding and integrating native customs and rules. He masters native passageways and trading routes, navigating the land, however, is presented in the text as a mobility granted only to females. Interestingly, and during his six years of captivity with the Hans, Cabeza de Vaca learns to shifts between native roles, including the female roles of gatherer and barterer: *porque las mujeres pueden contratar aunque haya guerra.* [because the women can travel wherever they please.][121]

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[117] Ibid., 114. (*Bold mine.*)
[118] Taussig, *Shamanism, Colonialism, and the Wild Man*, 448.
[119] Greenblatt, *Marvolous Possessions,* 227.
[120] Ibid., 139.
[121] Adorno and Pautz, *Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca*, 187.

In agreement with Wade, Cabeza de Vaca's gender-crossing aids in his survival and eventual escape: "The trading business allows him to master the land, reconnoiter the landscape, learn the roads to Pánuco, know the harvesting and hunting grounds, their timing, their meeting places; make friends; trade information; and become embedded in the chiaroscuro of the hybrid who stands out just enough to be viable and not enough to be threatening."[122] He thus achieves passage by performing and switching between the roles of healer, gatherer, and merchant. Whether as practicing healer, performing women's labor, or traveling as a barterer, during each of these occupations Cabeza de Vaca is searching for a way out. Is he not a figure of Spanish masquerade, achieving passage by performing these various roles to his social advantage? Wade describes his mobility as one might talk about extravagant passing, she writes:

> He has observed what the Americans need, and he uses his Otherness to seduce his native hosts. His strange appearance, his beard and hair, and his inchoate language add interest to trading. He parodies the image of Otherness to perfect his hybridness, playing Otherness against acceptance, juggling vulnerability and ambiguity.[123]

This is how extravagant passing figures think, navigate and plot their escape. His learning how to travel the trading passageways, utilizing the tools of knowledge from various tribes to his advantage, and transforming into a figure of two (if not more) cultures, all to achieve passage. His ability to traverse boundaries of identification, including gender, is why I posited earlier that he gestures toward a *mestiza* consciousness. In his cross-dressing, we might very well think of him through the words of Anzaldúa:

> The new *mestiza* copes by developing a tolerance for contradictions, a tolerance for ambiguity. She learns to be an Indian in Mexican culture, to be Mexican from an Anglo point of view. She learns to juggle cultures. She has a plural personality, she operates in a pluralistic mode—nothing is thrust out, the good the bad and the ugly, nothing rejected, nothing abandoned. Not only does she sustain contradictions, she turns the ambivalence into something else.[124]

My interest in this parallel is to merely draw upon Anzaldúa's theorizing of the notion of *movement*, as an ability of the hybrid figure to move within and through yet away from binarism. This is the space of the otherwise, as I call it, where the subaltern can access the potentialities of multiplicity—not just of twoness—but where the sustaining of cultures and knowing them well is an ability of the always-transformative self, *la mestiza*. Here is an early instance of what the space of the borderlands comes to signify with hybrid bodies that emerged from cross-racial conflict: In the Borderlands / you are the battleground."[125]

As he becomes more confident with his transformation(s), Cabeza de Vaca plots his escape with the other three survivors, finally escaping *Malhado* in late 1534 but immediately encountering the Avavares, a migratory tribe located north of the Rio Grande (known as the prickly pear region), and is forced to remain with them through the winter, from October 1534 until August 1535. Then, before his second escape from this tribe, Cabeza de Vaca suggests a resemblance between this role

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[122] Wade, "Go-between," 336.
[123] Ibid., 336.
[124] Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera*, 79.
[125] Ibid., 3.

as traveling-healer and a mysterious figure called *mala cosa* that terrorized *los indios* by performing miraculous surgical practices on their bodies.

Arriving to the Avavares as a trained healer, the protagonist aligns an image of himself as a naked traveling-healer against that of a mysterious traveling figure of the Southwest who performed surgical practices on fearful natives. The descriptions are placed side-by-side, as if the chronicler is prompting the reader to draw a comparison between the naked Spaniard with *mala cosa*. As he writes, *siempre con mi lumber y carga de leña … porque para el frió yo no tenía otro remedio por andar desnudo como nasçí*. [always with my lighted torch and load of wood … because against the cold I had no other recourse since I went naked as I was born.][126] The Spaniard achieves passage through native terrain as a frightful figure, but not as a skeletal figure, for the Spaniard has fully transformed by this point in the journey. He was not emaciated at this stage of the narrative. He has recovered and become re-figured into something else, at least on the outside. On the narrative page, he draws a parallel between his transformed self to another figure or stranger, who was wandering native lands, achieving passage, and which the Avavares reveal to Cabeza de Vaca as a frightful and powerful figure:

> *Éstos y los demás atrás nos contaron una cosa muy estraña, y por la cuenta que nos figuraron pareçia que avía quinze o diez y seis años que avía aconteçido; que dezían que por aquella tierra anduvo un hombre que ellos llaman mala cosa, y que era pequeño de cuerpo, y que tenia barvas aunque nunca claramente le pudieran ver el rostro, y que quando venía a la casa donde estavan, se les levantavan los cabellos y temblavan, y luego pareçia a la puerta de la casa un tizón ardiendo.*
>
> [These and the rest whom we had left behind told us something very strange, and by the explanation they put together for us, it seemed that it had occurred some fifteen or sixteen years earlier; that they said that through that land went a man they call an evil being, and that he was small in body and that he had a beard, although they were never able to see his face clearly, and that when he came to the house where they were, their hair stood on end and they trembled, and afterward he appeared at the door of the house with a flaming firebrand.][127]

Cabeza de Vaca also arrived with "a flaming firebrand," and stood at the door of the natives. The chronicler attempts to present a difference between the haunting figure of "evil thing," who went about the land seeking victims to perform surgical operations, versus the transformed Spaniard-*Indio*, who arrived only to heal the already sick. This other figure, the chronicler writes,

> *Y luego aquel hombre entrava y tomava al que quería dellos, y dávales tres cuchilladas grandes por las hijadas con su pedernal muy aguado, tan ancho como una mano y dos palmos en luengo. … y poniale las manos sobre las heridas, y deciannos que luego quedaban sanos, y que muchas veces cuando bailban aparecia entre ellos, en habito de mujer unas veces, y otras como hombre.*
>
> And later that man came in and took whichever one of them he wanted, and he gave them three large incisions in the sides with a very sharp flint, a hand wide and two spans long. … Finally he would place his hands on the wounds which they said

[126] Adorno and Pautz, *Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca*, 156.
[127] Ibid., 164.

> suddenly healed. They told us that he often appeared among them when they were dancing, sometimes dressed as a woman and other times as a man.[128]

Small-bodied and with a face nearly masked, this bearded and cross-dressing figure—a *en habito de mujer unas veces, y otras como hombre*—must have reminded the natives of the Spaniard who stood before them: also a small-bodied stranger, bearded, and navigating the passageways only granted to female natives. Indeed, Adorno and Pautz assert, "The natives made an association between the Spaniards and *Mala Cosa*."[129] After spending nearly six years of captivity and then wandering across the Southwest for two years, the figure of evil being may have stemmed from the costumed conquistador who had arrived in those lands and became transformed by it and forced to go native. Here is a figure of masquerade—*Spanish* masquerade—traversing the boundaries of the Souths as a figure of racial passing, cross-dressing, sexual ambiguity, of disability and illness, and traversing transnational borders. Here is the portrait of the extravagant Spaniard-*Indio*, achieving passage across native terrain.

5. The Bonded-Duo of Spanish Masquerade

In the final pages of *La Relación*, set sometime in March of 1536 and after Cabeza de Vaca spent two years traveling by foot through Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona, we find Cabeza de Vaca journeying south into New Spain (along the Gulf of California) just before reaching Petachán (known today as Río Sinaloa), where he encounters four Spanish slave catchers on horseback. The nearly fifty-year-old chronicler had discovered traces of Christians traveling through those parts. Failing to entreat Andrés Dorantes and Alonso del Maldonado to pursue the Christians, Cabeza de Vaca decides to pursue them himself, bringing along with him Estevanico (Dorantes' African slave) and eleven natives. A unique spectacle of encounter ensues—of seeing and of being seen—that has long captivated the attention of readers. The scene captures the chronicler at his farthest transformative state—in *Naufragios* his farthest removal arrives in chapter thirty-four—since the loss of the costume of imperialism at *Malhado*.[130] Cabeza de Vaca writes,

> … *otro día por la mañana tome conmigo al negro y onze indios, y por el rastro que hallava siguiendo a los christianos, passé port res lugare donde avian dormido. Y este día anduve diez leguas. Y otro día de mañana alcançé quatro cristianos de cavallo, que reçibieron gran alteración de verme tan extrañamente vestido y en compañía de los indios. Estuviéronme mirando mucho espcaio de tiempo, tan atónitos que ni me hablavan ni açertavan a preguntarme nada.*
>
> [… the next day in the morning I took with me the black man and eleven Indians, and following the trail of the Christians that I found, I passed through three places where they had slept. And this day I went ten leagues. And the next morning I

[128] Ibid., 159-160.

[129] Rolena Adorno, "The Negotiation of Fear in Cabeza de Vaca's *Naufragios*," in *New World Encounters*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 59.

[130] The term "removal" is borrowed from Mary Rowlandson's narrative of captivity, published in 1682 and long after Cabeza de Vaca's chronicle. The two captives belong to the same tradition, however. She also narrates an experience with the "mirror trope," common in 'going native' texts of the New World. Of her "farthest removal," Ralph Bauer states, "Rowlandson's look in the mirror occurs one stage before her final and, according to the structure of her narrative, farthest removal from the Christian community, the city, and human civilization itself, from which she will ultimately be removed twenty times before her eventual return." See Bauer, *The Cultural Geography of Colonial American Literatures*, 148.

> reached four Christians on horseback who experienced great shock upon seeing me so strangely dressed and in the company of Indians. They remained looking at me a long time, so astonished that they neither spoke to me nor managed to ask me anything.][131]

Here, through the eyes of Spanish slave catchers, is a (mis)reading of the transformed conquistador. As seen through the imperialist eyes of four Christians, who thought the stranger "so strangely dressed," and extravagantly so. Cabeza de Vaca had reached his "farthest removal from Christian community, the city, and human civilization itself"—thirty-four removes before his eventual return to Christian life. The four Spaniards on horseback, José Rabasa explains, "marvel at his strange dress and *not* at his nakedness."[132] They marvel at his *tan extranamente vestido* [dressed in such strange/extreme clothing], but also, at his being in the "company of Indians," and as they "remained looking" must have also marveled at the metamorphosis of the Spanish body—their Spanish body—(no longer emaciated): his long and dark hair, his overgrown beard, his darkened skin from years of exposure, and perhaps even his tattoos and/or pierced body. "There was something very queer about the whole thing," yet there was also something hugely extravagant about his masquerade.[133] The figure of the transformed conquistador as Spaniard-*Indio* was only like *los indios*, however.[134] Suddenly, the horrors of enslavement were reflected on the "passing" body of the Spaniard that looked *Indio* but was not, at least not entirely. The four Spaniards stare into a self-reflecting mirror of sorts, engulfed by their own possible enslavement. If only accidentally they must have felt compelled to enslave the transformed Spaniard, which translated to an enslavement of self, the mere thought left them confounded. Here, as Cabeza de Vaca "passes" *en compania de los indios*, the "observer becomes the observed," and in this moment of marveling at the Spanish body unbound the "colonized returns the colonizer's gaze."[135]

In the same moment that the Christians saw themselves transformed in seeing Cabeza de Vaca, the chronicler also experiences looking into a mirror but at an earlier self, now as slave catcher, not conquistador. Here the protagonist sees the old self in the Spaniards on horseback, costumed, and eager to enslave. What had this moment of encounter meant to Cabeza the Vaca? To once again see his body costumed, and reminded of that Old World and everything that was upheld by materiality. He, too, looked into a mirror, yet at a "self" recovered. The reader must reconcile the binary that the chronicler has set forth, between clothing-as-civilized and nakedness-as-barbaric, yet with Cabeza De Vaca distancing the self from both categories. Euro-centrism penetrates the page, with the chronicler's narrative efforts to remain indistinguishable, but is he? We are read and marvel at the protagonist not as *la figura de la muerte* but a unique performative figure in native dress. Staring

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131 Adorno and Pautz, *Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca*, 244.

132 Rabasa argues that critics like Margo Glantz have taken Cabeza de Vaca's description, *en cueros* [in skins], as a term to suggest "nudity that slides into forms of Indian culture characterized as barbarian"; however, Rabasa argues otherwise, stating that Cabeza de Vaca emphasizes the donning of Indian dress: "Underneath this semantic play lies the fact that the Spaniards end up really *naked* and depend on *real* Indian dress to survive." See Rabasa, *Writing Violence on the Northern Frontier*, 66. My reading argues that this is not the argument the chronicler poses. Cabeza de Vaca is not "really *naked*": something else is happening to the body-exterior.

133 John Upton Terrell, *Journey into Darkness: Cabeza de Vaca's Expedition Across North America, 1528-36* (New York: Morrow, 1962), 251.

134 My thinking of "only like *los indios*" is influenced by Donegan's analysis of English soldiers "compelled to attack their non-English selves" during an incident at Virginia in August 1611, as narrated by Alexander Whitaker to William Crashsaw: "The figure running outside was only 'like an indian', but the settlers chant of '*Oho Oho*' and their 'breakeinge one anothers heades' were real." See Donegan, *Seasons of Misery*, 2.

135 Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 45.

back at us, also, are the founding figures of the Souths: the transformed Spaniard, 'his' slave, and the Native. Here is a portrait of three very racially diverse bodies whose histories are interconnected and whose interconnection will haunt future annals as much as it has haunted this contested region of racial difference. What also emerges from the text is the portrait of the 'extravagant Spaniard' traveling with 'his' African slave: here is the bonded duo of *Spanish* masquerade, among a band of loyal natives. The horrors of enslavement are reflected on the transformed Spanish body, as if the slave catchers were staring into a mirror and seeing themselves made *Indio*, made *slaves*, made extravagant.

Little is known of Estevanico, yet he is often described as the first African to cross into North America and travel the borderlands. He was born in North Africa and sold to a Spaniard, and his significance as a character in *La Relación* and American literary history is, as Rodela tells us, centered on what hi epitomizes as a transnational figure: "The Cabeza de Vaca account brings us the Atlantic world not only along its Spain-North America axis but also along that of Portugal in relation to Africa and India. The Portugal-West Africa nexus is epitomized in the figure of Estevanico, the black Arabic-speaking African slave from Portuguese-held Azemmour in coastal northwestern Africa" Extending his significance further, however, Estevanico is also a Spanish speaking African 'slave' traveling across the Souths of a continent in the process of becoming "American," and he is also a figure who learned to communicate with many native tribes, achieving passage through their lands, even continuing this passage long after Cabea de Vaca, when he led other expedition leaders as a translator and guide, for he too offered a cartographic/ethnographic knowledge in the continuing conquest of North America.

The bonded-duo, at least in *La Relación*, and upon the request of Cabeza de Vaca, are taken to the *gobernador* of San Miguel, Nuño de Guzman, sometime in April 1536. Of meeting the *gobernador* and really, of his "return" and transition back to Christian community and life, the chronicler writes, *Y llegamos en Compostela, el gobernador nos resçibió muy bien y de lo que tenía nos dio de vestir, lo qual yo por muchos días no pude traer, ni podíamos dormir sino en el suelo.* [And having arrived in Compostela, the governor received us very well and from the provisions he had gave us some clothes, which I was unable to wear for many days, nor were we able to sleep but on the ground].[136] Caught in-between two worlds—two very different realities—the chronicler walks into Compostela (present day Jalisco), still in the dress of natives. As he admits, *por muchos dias*, he could not wear European clothing, nor could he sleep in a bed *sino en el suelo*. Suspended at the hyphen between Spaniard-*Indio*, or perhaps *Indio*-Spaniard (more *Indio* than Spaniard), the chronicler confesses the struggle to reverse the transformation, that is, a difficulty of transforming the exterior self that had fully assimilated. Passing back into the world he once knew took time, and it wasn't too long after returning to Spanish provinces that the Spaniard-*Indio* took to the pen and began conceiving his journey in a new cultural geography of New Spain.

Somewhat soon after the encounter, Cabeza de Vaca began writing the 1542 *La Relación*, offering cartographic/ethnographic knowledge to the continuing conquest. After all, as he confesses to the King in the *Proemio* [Prologue]: *pues este todo es el que un hombre que salio desnudo pudo sacar consigo*. [because this alone is what a man who came away naked could carry out with him].[137] Finishing the manuscript as early as 1540, he gave a copy to Charles V, won his admiration, and gained another royal appointment, this time for an expedition in South America as *gobernador/adelantado* of *Río de la Plata*. Although at the height of his military career, this expedition would also turn disastrous. The rules of conquest had changed, and almost immediately after Cabeza de Vaca arrived in *Río de la Plata*, where Spanish colonists accused him of corruption, he was imprisoned and by 1545 shipped

136 Adorno and Pautz, *Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca*, 264.
137 Ibid., 20.

to Spain in chains. Cabeza de Vaca was convicted, stripped of his titles, exiled to Africa, and forced to make the kingdom his jail, spending the rest of his life battling the courts in an effort to be pardoned of charges and attempting to restore his reputation and family name. After being pardoned in the early 1550s, Cabeza de Vaca spent the remaining years of his life battling the course, let alone working for them, while also, emending his 1542 *La Relación* into his now famous 1555 *Naufragios*.

Even with the emendations in *Naufragios*, Cabeza de Vaca still (dis)plays graphic portraits of his (un)becoming and grim descent into the world of natives: from his donning of the excessive costume of imperialism as he traverses dangers native terrain, to the stripping of that masculine costume of violence and transformation into *la figura de la muerte*, to becoming a traveling-healer among various tribes in addition to gaining access to female-warring spaces as barterer and gatherer, to his reconfigurement into Spaniard-*Indio* while masquerading as a bonded-duo with 'his' loyal African-*Indio* (and Spanish speaking) slave. Cabeza de Vaca's story of journeying across the southern borderlands of a future United States introduces the Spaniard as an extravagant "passing" figure at the fringes of a continent in the process of becoming "American." In the final pages of *La Relación*, Cabeza de Vaca also introduces the bonded-duo of Spanish masquerade.

As students of American literature, we must acknowledge this figure of the transformed Conquistador as integral to the story of European colonialism and American slavery. Here is a figure transformed by New World *experience* that continues to resurface in several corners of American literature. Before we can turn to the nineteenth-century period—and the heart of the dissertation project—let us first examine two founding texts at the center of the story of North America's European beginning, where we find how the figure and narrative of Spanish masquerade took further root in the southern borderlands. That story continues in America's first epic poem, entitled *Historia de la Nueva Mexico* (1610), by a Spanish Captain, Gaspar Pérez de Villagrá, and the foundational text of North American writings, entitled "A True Relation" (1608) that eventually became six books entitled *The Generall Historie of Virginia, New England, and the Summer Isles* (1624), by an English Captain, John Smith. On the pages of his *historia* and his *historie* is the story of Europeans "becoming colonial" at the southern fringes of a continent in the process of becoming "American." Reading these texts side-by-side we find submerged a history of European soldiers masquerading "Europeanness" across Native lands. Central to the process of becoming colonial, and surfacing on these texts of early America, is *Spanish distraction*, that is, the shadow of *la leyenda negra* on the pages of American (literary) history.

Chapter 2

Masquerading "Europeanness": Spanish Distraction in Gaspar Pérez de Villagrá's *Historia* (1610) and John Smith's *Historie* (1624)

Las armas y el varón heroico canto,
El ser, valor, prudencia y alto esfuerzo
De aquel cuya paciencia no rendida,
Por un mar de disgustos arrojada,
A pesar de la envidia ponzoñosa
Los hechos y prohezas va encumbrando
De aquellos españoles valerosos
Que en la Occidental India remontados,
Descubriendo del mundo lo que esconde,
'Plus ultra' con braveza van diziendo
A fuerza de valor y brazos fuertes,
En armas y quebrantos tan sufridos
Quanto de tosca pluma celebrados. (1.1-13)[138]

I sing of arms and the heroic man,
The being, courage, care, and high emprise
Of him whose unconquered patience,
Though cast upon a sea of cares,
In spite of envy slanderous,
Is raising to new heights the feats,
The deeds, of those brave Spaniards who,
In the far India of the West,
Discovering in the world that which was hid,
'Plus ultra' go bravely saying
By force of valor and strong arms,
In war and suffering as experienced
As celebrated now by pen unskilled.

– Capitán Gaspar Pérez de Villagrá's *Historia de la Nueva México* (1610)

Hee asked mee the cause of our coming; I tolde him, being in fight with the Spaniards our enemie, beeing over powred, neare put to retreat, and by extreame weather put to this shore, where landing at Chesipiake, the people shot us, … (1.53)[139]

– Captayne John Smith's *A True Relation* (1608)

1. The Spanish Distraction

At the center of the story of North America's European beginning is the shadow of *la leyenda negra* [the black legend], an elaborate *historia* about Spain's imperial influence and dominance in *las Américas*. Tucked into the texts of early America is, what I call "Spanish distraction," an anxiety or hate against all things "Spain." To great narrative effects, explorers of this period appropriated a rhetoric of racialization that conjured images of "the Conquistador" as a violent and haunting

[138] Gaspar Pérez de Villagrá, *Historia de la Nueva México*, ed. Miguel Encinias, Alfred Rodríguez, and Joseph P. Sánchez (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992), 3. [Original work published in Alcalá de Hernares by Luis Martínez Grande in 1610]. An original 1610 edition of the *Historia* is in the "vault" at The Bancroft Library at the University of California at Berkeley. I retain the Spanish alongside its English translated counterpart. For the remainder of the chapter, I will quote from the 1992 Encinias, Rodríguez, and Sánchez edition, which depended on a 1920s English translation of the poem by Yale graduate student, Fayette S. Curtis Jr. I shall refer to the text as *Historia*.

[139] John Smith, *A True Relation of such occurrences and accidents of noate as hath hapned in Virginia since the first planting of that Colony* . . . in *The Complete Works of Captain John Smith (1580-1631)* ed. Philip Barbour, 3 vols. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 53. [Original work published in London by John Tappe in 1608.] All citations are from volume 1, unless otherwise noted. I shall refer to the text as *Historie*.

presence of blackness and/or darkness. Emerging from these pages was the figure of the Spanish decadent colonial and thus a central character attached to New World journeying and defining the European *experience* of becoming colonial.

To begin with the opening lines of America's first epic poem, entitled *Historia de la Nueva México* (1610), is to begin with, as Genaro Padilla phrases, "One of the soldiers who explored and helped colonize the first Spanish settlement in the far northern reaches of empire," and also, as Manuel M. Martín-Rodríguez claims, to begin with "arguably the first literary text of the United States."[140] Its Spanish poet, Gaspar Pérez de Villagrá (1555-1620), yet criollo born in Puebla de los Ángeles, Mexico, is writing a New World epic of thirty-four cantos about his journeying from 1595 to 1599, revealing his sacrifices as a captain in an expedition or *entrada* across present-day New Mexico, led by Juan de Oñate (1550-1626), who became the governor of the Santa Fe de Nuevo México province. Instead of celebrating Spanish imperial power and trumpeting Oñate's heroism, the poet's invocation sings of the shadow of *la leyenda negra*, and what unfolds in his verse is a soldier's shame in taking part of an expedition gone wrong, including a battle and massacre of hundreds of Pueblo Indians at Ácoma in 1599 that ends the epic poem.

Following the *Historia* is an epigraphic quotation of the more familiar English *historie* that began as a letter, entitled *A True Relation* (1608), which later became *The Generall Historie of Virginia, New England, and the Summer Isles* (1624), and a foundational text considered "the point of origin for a specifically American history," according to Mary C. Fuller.[141] Its English writer, John Smith (1580-1631), is writing this letter to a friend in London, describing English arrival on northeastern shores in April 1607, encounters with Powhatans, and his journeying across Virginia through October 1609. Smith's *Historie* begins with a rhetoric that is also inextricably preoccupied with the shadow of *la leyenda negra*, in his case Spain's violent presence at the south. This Spanish *historia* and this English *historie*, when read together, offer an intervention in the field of early American literature. We may thus rewrite the story of journeying in America, as an "experience" defined by the racialized typology attached to the figure and narrative of the Conquistador. Seeping into the American imagination was a ghosting of Spanishness that would haunt the southern landscape of a continent in the process of becoming "American."

Challenging the notion of a "single experiential starting point," thus proposes a sense of diversity to colonial becoming, that is, as a cross-cultural American *experience* that we can read as a literary politics when allowing a Spanish *historia* to complicate and inform traditional readings of an English *historie*.[142] A comparative reading—through both Spanish *and* English colonialist's eyes—renders a glimpse into a collective narrative of the first European settlements to arrive in the far northern territories of the Americas. The story narrated there is of the figure of Spain's *Conquistador* and its symbolic content, as a figure abjectly configured, even contrived imaginatively, into a foil

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[140] See Genaro M. Padilla, *The Daring Flight of My Pen: Cultural Politics and Gaspar Pérez de Villagrá's* Historia de la Nueva Mexico, 1610 (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2010), 1. Manuel M. Martín-Rodríguez, "400 Years of Literature and History in the United States: Gaspar de Villagrá's *Historia de la nveva Mexico* (1610)," in *Camino Real: Estudios de las Hispanidades Norteamericanas* 4: 6 (2012): 13.

[141] Mary C. Fuller, *Voyages in Print: English Travel to America, 1576-1624* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 105.

[142] For a discussion of reading in terms of a diversity of histories, see Jim Egan, *Authorizing Experience: Refigurations of the Body Politic in Seventeenth-Century New England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 4. His argument is framed by the work of Paul Lauter. The full quotation reads: "Rather than propose a single experiential starting point for American culture, advocates of a multicultural approach to American literary studies such as Paul Lauter suggest we think of America beginning with the 'particular experiences' of the many different groups of 'people' representing various ethnic, gender, and class categories that ultimately produced the patchwork quilt that now constitutes American life."

character in the greater narrative of European colonization in North America.[143] Under particular investigation is a reading of the European *experience* of journeying as an imperialistic performance modeled after Spain's influence.[144] Fundamentally dependent on strategies of masquerade, this performance, as linked to the racialization of Spanishness, was sifted through *la leyenda negra*. Spain's early arrival to the Americas sent a threatening message to all of Europe, profoundly influencing (or distracting) rivaling powers to join the race across the Atlantic Ocean, and to follow (while also attempting to resist) Spain's model of early colonization. Like other European powers, the English imagination had become distracted with Spain's massive presence in the Americas, and the figure of the Conquistador certainly influenced European trials and travails across Native American ground. Especially, the translation of experience and passage as it was imagined and interpreted on the page.

Reimagining experience through the discourse of "passing" and performativity aims to redefine European "social authority" by complicating a modern understanding of the process of becoming colonial, where passage across Native lands is understood here as Spanish and English bodies masquerading "Europeanness" during contact with Natives. Central to the narrative presentation of European journeying and the moment of encounter in both Villagrá's *Historia* and Smith's *Historie* is a narrative performance or *writerly masquerade* that could not escape the shadow cast by Spain and its earliest Spaniards. Nearly a decade separates the narrative in Villagrá's poem from Smith's own narrative in his prose. Until now, these captains have not been carefully read as complementary. Embedded in the verse and prose of their texts is a submerged history of knowledge about early arrival to the hemisphere, specifically Spain's looming imperial presence that spread across the Americas and was used to powerful narrative effects. Both articulate how the act of journeying and its narrative representation requires a process of transformation, embodiment, and mobility. In the story of European colonization, although the term *experience* is enshrined in the works of Americanists and over any other term—certainly over *masquerade* and even *Spanishness*—and almost always cast as the distinctive existential force that broke down "Europeanness" in entirely new ways, here there is an insistence on a different logic of this historical experience.[145] Reading for passing—in other words, for how the Spaniard and English (dis)played on the page acts of subterfuge in relations with Natives—extends our understanding of the transformation from Europeanness into a New World subject. Surfacing in these early American texts is the missing *historia* in the process of becoming colonial, through a unique performative figure that deployed strategies of masquerade, all the while distracted by a model of early colonization set by Spain's first "discoverer," of course Cristóbal Colón.

Creating a new genealogical narrative, I trace how the process of being *experienced* is also concerned with the narrative of contest, specifically how, in the moment of encounter, Spanish explorers imagined the *self* in excessive costume in relation to how they were imagined by the rivaling *other*. Villagrá and Smith narrate European arrival and survival as always defined in relation to Spain's image of masculine violence and cruelty. At the onset, Villagrá acknowledges a tainted image of Spanish rule through its leader, Oñate, as he writes, "In spite of envious slander, / Is raising to new heights the feats, / The deeds, of those brave Spaniards," whereas Smith invents a "lie" using the threatening figure of the Conquistador to create alliance in his first conversation with Powhatan who was knowledgeable of Spanish incursions, "I told hime, being in fight with the

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[143] The critical scholarship on the figure of "the Spaniard" in the American historical and literary imaginary is limited; however, my reading of "the Spaniard" as a foil character and antagonist is an argument proposed by María DeGuzmán. See DeGuzmán, *Spain's Long Shadow: The Black Legend, Off-Whiteness, and Anglo-American Empire* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005).

[144] The term "experience" aligns with Egan's explanation in the "Introduction" of *Authorizing Experience*, 3-13.

[145] See Egan, *Authorizing Experience*, 4-8.

Spaniards our enemie, beeing over powred, neare put to retreat."[146] The Spanish *Capitán* and English *Captayne* introduce an *experience* of journeying across a land that although "still being discovered, explored, and mapped at its furthest reaches," was a land first tres-*passed* by Spaniards. Passage through Native terrain thus resided in the dark shadow of Spain's earliest presence. Seeping into American letters from the very beginning is a *ghosting of Spanishness* that became a narrative tool in the writing and imagining of Euro-American/English/white history.

What might reading these early histories for how Spanishness is wed to the process of becoming colonial, tell us about becoming "American"? Reading Villagrá's poetic journeying across *la nueva México* alongside Smith's fashioned journeying across Virginia demands a widened perspective into the diversity of colonial identities to render a narrative that concerned a multicultural beginning. A *Spanish* masquerade thus shaped American identity and the cultural imaginary.

Villagrá and Smith also fill a gap in the longer narrative of Spanish masquerade: a story that begins with Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca's "going native" as *la figura de la muerte* [figure of death] in *La Relación* (1542), and continues in early Spanish *and* English histories. Villagrá and Smith introduce the effects of *Spanish distraction* upon culture and textual production, all the while (dis)playing in their literature an attempt to master geography, its resources, and inhabitants through their own writerly authority or masquerade. The story that the captains tell (or reimagine) for a knowing audience of readers is an *extravagant passing* both on and off the page, in which masquerade is a multicultural experience that produces culture and thus shaped colonial discourse.

Long before a twenty-eight-year-old Smith paddled through the fissures of Chesapeake Bay, searched for riches and a Pacific route, learned of Roanoke, and laid claim to Jamestown (1607-1609), a forty-five-year-old Villagrá had already crossed the Rio Grande, searched the plains for riches and a Pacific route, learned of missing friars from an earlier expedition, and helped establish the colony of New Mexico (1598-1601). To read chronologically, thus appropriately situates the modern reader at an earlier point of origin in *la nueva México*. Spain's southern presence existed well before a Virginian project launched at the North. Returning to Villagrá's *Historia*, the soldier-poet introduces Spanish *entrada* as the imperial performative into *la nueva México* with a dark shadow associated with the expedition and the epic's hero, Oñate. In the same moment the poet evokes Virgil and Homer—when he writes *Las armas y el varón heroico canto*, borrowing from the epic tradition to celebrate a new hero of the Americas—also entering the poem is a slight interruption around the characterization of *el varón heroico* of the first line. The poet presents to the reader (or King Philip III to whom the poem is dedicated), an image of the unnamed hero and symbolic figurehead of the expedition, Don Juan de Oñate (who remains unnamed for several cantos, as if intentionally masked by the poet). Commenting on the rumors circulating about the epic's hero—"In spite of envy slanderous"—the language of the text hints at the real accusations held against Oñate for Spanish military conduct in *la nueva México*, which included the execution of two Spanish soldiers and the massacre at Ácoma in January 1599. In this first stanza, as Padilla explains, the telling "shifts decisively from its focus on a single hero—Oñate—to 'aquellos españoles valerosos,' those valiant soldiers who, by 'force of valor and strong arms,' have expanded the empire's reach into the 'plus ultra,' that hidden terrain that lies beyond the map."[147] Instead, the thirty-four cantos—totaling 11,891 lines—actually describe a long journey that, Padilla continues, "celebrates not Oñate's

[146] My research on Villagrá stems from my research alongside Genaro Padilla, beginning in 2006 during a summer internship at UC Berkeley, and the comparative analysis with John Smith was influenced by a graduate course with Kathleen Donegan. She has been especially influential in my critique of Smith's "lie" to Powhatan, a scene that she drew my attention to in order to address Smith's strategy of Spanish masquerade.
[147] Padilla, *The Daring Flight of My Pen*, 25.

heroism but that of the common soldiers and settlers who felt a foolhardy leader had exploited and duped them."[148] Tucked in the poem then, is the conflicted consciousness of a transformed soldier, struggling to find a balance between his service to the Crown and the reality of a colonial fantasy gone wrong. Villagrá's *Historia* thus preserves realism in its cantos, placing before the King what Spanish journeying looked like for the sacrifices and risks. The poet's narration as rhetorical play, through which destruction and shame are uniquely represented and dramatized in epic form, is a writerly performance produced by a soldier rethinking his role in the historical experience of Spanish imperialism.

Placed alongside Villagrá's poetic lines, so as to generate dialogue between Spanish and English histories, are the very first words exchanged between John Smith and Chief Powhatan. In fact, this brief conversation only appears in Smith's 1608 letter since it is conveniently omitted from the 1624 *Historie*, where Smith replaces it with the story of Pocahontas. This narrative decision of inserting the standard trope of the Native woman rescuing the European colonizer might be read as two fold. First, as Ann Laura Stoler explains, the native woman's body symbolizes "American land," thus Pocahontas' act of "offering her body to the foreigner" is offering Smith mobility in "indigenous terrain."[149] Second, and with the standard trope enhancing Smith's character, he is able to downplay the influence of Spanish distraction in *the* writing of English history of New World experience. Considering the intent of Smith's "lie" to Powhatan alongside Villagrá's eagerness to lay bare the truth of "Spanish viciousness" is also a study examining "the experience of becoming American in the seventeenth century," to return to Padilla, an experience shaped by an English preoccupation with Spain's nautical power and presence: *Los hechos y prohezas va encumbrando / De aquellos españoles valerosos.*[150] Smith's passage suggests Powhatan's knowledge of Spanish journeying, as perhaps a mutual concern between Natives and rivaling European powers alarmed by Spain's movements and intentions of permanent settlement. Yet Powhatan is vigilant of English movements, as Smith describes: "He demaunded why we went further with out Boate."[151] Smith responds with a second "lie," as he writes, "in that I would have occasion to talke of the backe Sea."[152] Central to this first conversation is a threatening Spanish presence; indeed, long before King James I of England issued a royal charter to the Virginian Company, which brought Smith to the northeastern shore of North America in April 1607, there was already a Spanish presence in North America that England (as well as other European powers) were forced to navigate around to avoid conflict and also to lay claim to their own territories. The compiled reports by Richard Hakluyt (the Younger and Older), such as "Discourse of Western Planting" (1584), urged England to rival Spain in its planting of English colonies yet to pursue a different trajectory in which its political and economic arguments were set in direct opposition to a Spanish model of colonization.[153] In *A True*

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[148] Ibid., 12.

[149] See Tiya Miles, "'His Kingdom for a Kiss': Indians and Intimacy in the Narrative of John Marrant," in *Haunted by Empire: Geographies of Intimacy in North American History*, ed. Ann Laura Stoler (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 179-180.

[150] Ibid., 19. Padilla's entire sentence: "Villagrá writes too much, describes what he ought not, and in so doing exposes Spanish viciousness, but the truth must out." Also see Andrew Delbanco, *The Puritan Ordeal* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 1.

[151] Smith, *A True Relation*, 55.

[152] Ibid., 55.

[153] See Richard Hakluyt, "Discourse of Western Planting," in *The Original Writings & Correspondence of the Two Richard Hakluyts* ed. E.G.R Taylor. 2 Vols. (London: Hakluyt Society, 1935). [Original work published in 1584). Some examples of encouraging a new trajectory as anti-Spanish include: "That all other englishe Trades are growen beggarly or daungerous, especially in all the kinge of Spayne his Domynions, where our men are driven to flinge their Bibles and prayer Bokes into the sea, and to forsweare and renownce their religion and conscience and

Relation then, the Conquistador figured as a central character—the antagonist—upon English arrival to North America. Smith's first "lie" to Powhatan effectively makes use of Spain's nautical presence, only to assert a different trajectory: "Hee asked mee the cause of our coming; I tolde him, being in fight with the Spaniards our enemie." Although Smith "invented" the sea-fight, there is truth in its telling.

Spain had a strong naval presence across the Atlantic Ocean and their mobility at sea made Spanish arrival and colonization in the Americas not just possible but remarkable and unstoppable, at least well into the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, before Spain lost its foothold on North American territories. Powhatan understands the use of the Conquistador in the European plot of territorialization, with Spanish arrival to Chesapeake Bay in 1526 with Lucas Vázquez de Ayllón, and then again the Bay's rediscovery in 1561 with Antonio Velázquez, plus years of conflict with Spaniards arriving in the 1580s.[154] Therefore, Spanish attempts at colonization in Virginia set the tone for future encounters between the English and Natives. Smith's "lie," however, pursues an English-Indian pact or alliance against the "*our* enemie," the Spaniards. Smith's passage is his deploying of a strategy of knowing the New World, and thus inventing a "competing epistemology" which is interpreted here as *writerly masquerade* or the performative act in re-telling English journeying and encounter.[155] Although Powhatan detects Smith's charade, further questioning Smith's exploration of the Bay—"He demaunded why we went further with our Boate"—tucked into Smith's reply is a whisper to the reader of his intentions and also a second distraction: "I tolde him, *in that I would have occasion to talke of the backe Sea*, that on the other side the maine, where was salt water, my father had a childe slaine, whiche wee supposed Monocan *his enemie* had done whose death we intended to revenge."[156] Smith turns new attention to declaring a second rival enemy with Monocan Indians, that is, enemies of Powhatan—"his enemie"—who had slain his leader's child.

Seeping into the narrative telling of Smith's *Historie* and Villagrá's *Historia* are portraits of the Conquistador, as a New World trope of journeying informed by Spanish colonialism. In the narrative of Spanish *and* English arrival, in addition to a European contest, colonizers articulated a ruse around Spanishness to justify European mobility (or immobility) as a central means of achieving passage across dangerous and non-white space belonging to and controlled by Natives. Journeying across North America depended on an ability and skill of navigating a new environment,

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consequently theyr obedience to her Majestie," and "This enterprise may staye the spanishe kinge from flowinge over all the face of that waste firme of America, yf wee seate and plante there in time … ."

[154] Of a Spanish Chesapeake, Anna Brickhouse explains a history prior to the arrival of Englishmen: "It is no coincidence, after all, that the story of English Jamestown, and of Pocahontas in particular, became prominent in the nineteenth-century Anglo-American public sphere at the very height of its promotion of the Black Legend and its polemical insistence upon the legacies of Spanish incompetence and cruelty in the years leading up to the U.S.-Mexican War. Nor is it a coincidence, I would argue, that the story of the sixteenth-century Spanish exploration of the Chesapeake, long hidden successfully from the English by the Spanish, first entered—precisely to be dismissed from—the Anglophone scholarly record when discovered by an influential linguist and historian working for the U.S. State Department during the U.S.-Mexican War: Robert Greenhow." See Brickhouse, "Hemispheric Jamestown," in *Hemispheric American Studies*, ed. Caroline Levander and Robert Levine (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2008), 31. Also see J. H. Elliot, "The Iberian Atlantic and Virginia," in *The Atlantic World and Virginia, 1550-1624*, ed. Peter C. Mancall (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 541-557.

[155] Egan reads colonial writing from the perspective of how Europeans exactly achieved "political authority": "To approach colonial writings from this vantage point is to understand experience as a way of knowing the world that did not support but competed with and ultimately undermined the tropes of political authority that dominated seventeenth-century Europe. Indeed, I will go so far as to argue that this competing epistemology was forged in the colonies to authorize colonial subjects over and against their European counterparts." See Egan, *Authorizing Experience*, 33.

[156] Smith, *A True Relation*, 55. (*Italics mine.*)

plus learning to interact with its non-white inhabitants. Reading these histories together is about the study of European encounter for the process of transformation, especially as it defined New World subject formation in terms of (Spanish) masquerade. New World *experience*, to summon Kathleen Donegan's work on how catastrophe shaped English histories, forced Europeans to become something else at the moment of encounter and in colonial writing. However, Europeans were displaced and they became *extravagant* in their attempts to be mobile. Passage in the New World thus depended on masquerading "Europeanness," and often to an extreme. If, as Donegan explains, "catastrophe marked a threshold between an old European identity and a new colonial identity, a state of experiential and narrative instability wherein only fragments of Englishness were retained amid the upheavals of New World experience"—in which the exterior and interior trials that explorers faced "broke down" Englishness (and Spanishness) and made them into new subjects, colonists—how then might we describe the figuration process in the transformation from "being European" to "becoming colonial"?[157] Donegan asks: "What does this *excess of misery* tell us about the colonial condition apart from the unforgiving New World environment?"[158] That "excess of misery" as a pre-colonial condition is also about *extravagant passing*. Explorers were miserable but within that misery they became *extravagant* in the need to transform, but they also became performative figures significantly attached to a Spanish model that influenced their passing or distracted it. Just as Donegan tracks a "formulation of coloniality that," as she argues, "emerged during its acute states of misery and violence, and not after the colony was stabilized," this study tracks its own formulation of coloniality that emerged out of Spanish distraction and extravagant acts of passage, or what I interpret as a figuration process through the excess of misery—through the "state of emergency," as Donegan calls it—and into masquerading "Europeanness," to be mobile and to survive, all in order to eventually arrive at coloniality.[159] The reading of *extravagant passing* of explorers in Native lands on these pages, concentrates on the trespassing and traversing of cultural boundaries and borders, where mobility as Spanish masquerade is a pre-colonial condition in becoming colonial.

Considering *extravagant passing* in relation to Stephen Greenblatt's definition of "improvisation" is helpful, which he defines as a "European talent" that offered explorers their own scenario for existing in and navigating an unknown world. The mode of "improvisation," as Greenblatt defines it, is an ability to navigate in, around, and through (Native) social systems, as a skill of manipulation where one achieves advantage and power. This mode helps us understand the (dis)guise of masquerading "Europeanness":

> I shall call that mode *improvisation*, by which I mean the ability both to capitalize on the unforeseen and to transform given materials into one's own scenario. The spur-of-the-moment quality of improvisation is not as critical here as the opportunistic grasp of that which seems fixed and established. … the impromptu character of an improvisation is itself often a *calculated mask*, the product of careful preparation. What is essential is the Europeans' ability again and again to insinuate themselves into the preexisting political, religious, even psychic structures of the natives and to turn those structures to their advantage.[160]

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[157] Donegan, *Seasons of Misery: Catastrophe and Colonial Settlement in Early America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 3.
[158] Ibid., 4. (*Italics mine.*)
[159] Ibid., 72.
[160] See Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2012), 227. (*Italics mine.*) [Original work published in 1980.]

Greenblatt's term, in my own reading, emphasizes the potentialities in the spontaneity of the performative, and always a "calculated mask," with the figure beneath it accessing authority as always deployed with "careful preparation." Like "improvisation," the act of passing requires spontaneity and demands the understanding of normative categories—that "careful preparation" as a realization of the knowledge of differences—in order to exercise a believable masquerade. In response to Greenblatt's definition, Mary C. Fuller also understands "improvisation" as a mode utilized by John Smith: "This passage identifies an adaptive mode of power which insinuates itself and turns difference into advantage; and it describes this ability as 'European'."[161] According to Fuller, this "mode of behavior" was not necessarily a "European" ability, in the general sense. I agree: Smith exhibited the ability as a unique quality, whereas the colonists of Jamestown, as Fuller explains, "did not characteristically exhibit an ability to adapt to and enter into alien 'political, religious . . . psychic structures'."[162] In addition to a divergence existing between Smith and the colonists of Jamestown, Fuller also acknowledges how Natives exercised this ability and successfully seduced Europeans: "[T]his ability to enter and act upon the other's domain was by no means limited to the English settlers; quite the contrary, … Indians have succeeded in killing Englishmen only by luring them; at least into their houses: 'by . . . subtilty in them, & weakenes in ours'."[163] Powhatan also seduced Englishmen, and the Pueblo Indians of Ácoma also seduced Spaniards. The ability of "improvisation" concerns passing, but it does not concern extravagance. The act of *extravagant passing* acknowledges the surplus signification—the excess—in the performative acts of masquerading "Europeanness." This is not just an *experience* specific to English texts, as I have urged, but a reading of performance also found in Spanish *historias*; that is, as a skill exercised by Spanish conquistadores over *los indios* but also a skill performed by *los indos* over Spaniards.

Emerging from Villagrá's epic poem and Smith's revised letter that became six books are a series of portraits of the European colonizer and Native other, that is, as elaborate characterizations of major figures in the narrative of context, including imaginative dialogues between colonizer and colonized, carefully crafted portrayals of costumed and non-costumed Europeans encountering masked and unmasked Indians, and also narrative (dis)plays of dramatic masquerades of war. On the New World stage of "calculated masks," we thus find performances of *extravagant passing* yet as a quality significantly attached to becoming colonial, and also as a quality attached to the conceptual category of Spanishness.

By unmasking the captains first, what we stand to learn about their transformation from soldier-to-writer is how each is uniquely tied to Spain's lineage of explorers: Villagrá, having been born in Puebla de los Ángeles, Mexico—that space between New Spain and *la frontera*—is actually, as Padilla argues, "born not only *in* but *into* the new world."[164] This *español criollo* lived at the fringes of a borderspace, where he was exposed to indigenous life, even if in his youth he studied in Spain. Still, as a figure of the borderlands, to return to Padilla, Villagrá thus "speaks a syncretic discourse that partially blurs the lines between imaginations of the old and new worlds," in other words, he can imagine *experience* and perceive Native people not as a Spaniard of the old world, but "rather the multifaceted articulation of a New World subject born to cultural difference and indigenous complexity."[165] Smith, on the other hand, having been born in Lincolnshire, England, is not born *in* the New World like Villagrá, but he is born *into* cultural difference and indigenous complexity like

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[161] Fuller, *Voyages in Print*, 95. She quotes John Smith.
[162] Ibid., 95.
[163] Ibid., 96.
[164] See Padilla, *The Daring Flight of My Pen*, 35. (*Italics mine.*) Also, *español criollo* is defined as a person of Spanish ancestry but in being born in the Americas, these figures of "Spanish extraction" are now ranked below Iberians.
[165] Ibid., 35.

Villagrá. As an Old World subject who internalizes Spanish distraction before arriving to North America (who had also studies Spanish classics, as Villagrá had), Smith experiences cultural difference and indigenous complexity but at a northern borderspace, and the scenes that capture this exposure are conversations with Powhatan but also the mock-execution scene, where Smith is saved by Pocahontas, Powhatan's daughter, and then made captive. If the moment that Smith is to be executed is a mock-execution that strips Smith of Englishness and acts as his rebirth and initiation into Native culture, then might we imagine Smith as also a New World subject not only born *in* but *into* the new world of cultural difference and indigenous complexity? This valuation extends a realization that European explorers were not just bound to a Spanish lineage but forced to gain knowledge of indigenous life and culture. In this regard, and venturing to argue, subjectivity around journeying arose out of a multicultural experience of a very different kind. Or, to borrow the thinking of Egan, a kind of experience that "qualifies as 'genuinely American' experience," that is to say, an experience of becoming that relates to Padilla's argument of the New World subject, this notion of being born *in* and *into* the new world.[166]

Journeying and trespassing at the borders of a continent in the process of becoming "American"—a space in-between, the hyphen, and the moment of exposure—neither Smith nor Villagrá can protect their writings from a Spanish influence, and also struggle to declare on the page an authority over cultural difference and indigenous complexity. The captains tether between the rhetorics of an old world and that of the new. "America begins," Egan writes, "or so one line of thinking goes, when its first European colonists were unable to successfully map their 'Old World' ideologies onto the experiences of a New World, Virgin Land, Unknown Coast, or Frontier."[167] These two captains, however, mapped *their* version of a New World, and succeeded by disrupting pre-Columbian ideologies, an essential component in the "invention" of the Americas. On (dis)play in these Spanish *historias* and English histories is not an awkward fluctuation between forms and rhetorics to create meaning and significance.[168] What surfaces on the page is a mind recasting experience while accessing from this borderspace an "aesthetic mestizaje" and "embryonic mestizo subjectivity."[169] That here, on their pages, is an attempt to negotiate the threat of Spanishness alongside the complexity of Native cultures, and at the center is a deliberate masquerade to explicate the (un)becoming of European identity through *mestizo* subjectivity, perhaps a *conciencia* specific to this borderspace. In piecing together the story of the Conquistador in North America's European beginning then, what emerges in the narrative (dis)play of early journeying is a ghosting of Spanishness, the ability of colonizers masquerading "Europeanness," and the enacting of extravagant passing (both on and off the page) that hints at an aesthetic of *mestizaje*.

2. *El Capitán* and the *Captayne*: His Verse & His Prose

Placing the lives that these captains led side-by-side—from their upbringing to their military careers to their arrival in North America to the moment of encounter with Natives to their return to Europe—offers a way of re-reading these two figures that stare at the modern reader from the frontispieces of their histories. Acting as prefaces, in these frontispieces and beneath the costume of imperialism and the mask of Europeanness, is a transformed soldier. Analyzing the frontispieces, specifically against the lives that they led versus who they had become, is the power of experience in

166 Egan, *Authorizing Experience*, 4.
167 Ibid., 3.
168 See Padilla, *The Daring Flight of My Pen*, 35. He also argues that the writing in *Historia* is a "deliberate *mestizaje* rather than a careless jumbling together of diverse source materials."
169 Ibid., 35.

developing the consciousness of a soldier who traveled to North America at the start of its diverse cultural history. Searching in the archives for hints of how a Spanish *historia* shaped the lives of Villagrá and Smith, it is evident that both were inspired to follow in the footsteps of famous Spaniards who traveled to *las Américas* before them, having read and heard about their feats and deeds at sea or across new lands. Although, in their autobiographical writings, Villagrá and Smith articulate in their own ways a resistance to Spanishness, the frontispieces retain the figure of the returned and experienced soldier as still trapped and influenced not just by medieval tradition of knighthood, heroic romances and chivalric stories. The figure of the Spanish *capitán* is excessively costumed and armed, yet so is the English *captayne*, to a slightly lesser degree, with both bodies forever covered by the extravagant costume of a very different past (see figure 4).[170]



Figure 4. Etching of Gaspar Pérez de Villagrá (1555-1620) and Etching of John Smith (1580-1631)[171]

Trapped in these frames is a historical figure posing for the annals of time, while both captains appear journeyed, with the much older Villagrá as broken-down as the younger Smith, the former stares into the distance while the latter stares at the reader. As modern readers, our vision is somewhat obscured when looking at the bodies in these frontispieces. These captains, in extravagant costume, attempt a pose as if passing as a soldier unaffected by the years of journeying in the New World: four years of journeying for Villagrá versus the two years of journeying for Smith. Upon closer inspection, something unexpected comes in and out of focus: the desire to preserve the *capitán* and *captayne* of the past *against* the transformed New World subject of the present, suddenly (dis)guised by the costume of imperialism. What the frontispieces hide that the texts reveal is the

[170] See Philip Alexander Bruce and William Glover Stanard, *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* Vol. 89 (1981): 38. Footnote reads, "I am indebted to Mr. William M. E. Rachal for drawing to my attention the contemporary portrait of Smith in armor; this visual evidence reinforces the chivalric effect of the captain's autobiographical writings," in regards to "The Captain's Self-Portrait."

[171] For Villagrá's frontispiece or etching see Villagrá, *Historia de la Nueva México*. 1610. Frontispiece. The Bancroft Library, Berkeley, California. *Bancroft Library*. 8 July 2006. For Smith's etching, see *The general historie of Virginia, New-England, and the Summer Isles* … 1624. Also see STC 22790, The Houghton Library, Harvard University.

transformed *capitán* and *captayne* in the process of becoming colonial. Yet, what comes to the fore in the frontispieces as well as the narrative page is how the pair deployed a *Spanish* masquerade as a means of achieving social mobility across dangerous Native terrain. The captains arrived in the New World inspired by their predecessors, Spanish explorers. Little did they know (or did they?) that their imaginative retellings would fail at silencing the profound effects of Spanish distraction that would in turn shape the histories they foretold.

The frontispieces capture a moment in historical space and time, not of transformation or colonial becoming, but the recovery of an old self as unscathed by New World *experience*. For a moment we can read these portraits as the captains passing back into the Old World. Indeed, a portrait that dupes the unsuspecting (modern) reader. In their autobiographical writings, however, we find the very (un)becoming of the soldier. As two of the very first soldiers who helped colonize the first settlements in North America, both knew they were crafting histories to set their names in the annals of time. Writing them, too, was essential to their "return" to the motherland, as soldiers unaffected by war and eager to receive recompense for their service to the Crown in addition to gaining another royal appointment to *las Américas*. But, the figures in these oval frames are still masquerading "Europeanness," with their names and titles encircling them and reinstating their military status: *El Capitán ~ Gaspar de Villagrá. De Edad 55 años* and "The portraictuer of Captayne John Smith / Admiral of New England." Both appear as if being strangled by such flamboyant collars, while Villagrá's body is lost to the heavily decorated plates adorning his shoulders (his head sitting on a wide flair of accordion-like folds), Smith's body is tightly encased (or entombed) in the breastplate (his head also sitting on a flared yet stiff collar). The reader need not look too hard to realize that Villagrá is the much older captain. Surprisingly, although beards were characteristic of the Spaniard, it is Smith's beard that looks more Spanish than Villagrá's thick mustache and goatee. Smith's beard, as one scholar declares, is "not in the common aristocratic Vandyke system" (think of Walter Raleigh's beard).[172] Is Smith's beard then in the likeness of Spaniards? Similar to complexion, beards shaped ideas of race between "bearded Spaniards" and "non-bearded Natives," and as the historian Elizabeth Earle tells us, "Beards were considered a signal mark of manhood by sixteenth-century Spaniards," and they certainly feared they might lose their beards by living in the new-world climate.[173] Smith, with his beard, thus stands unaffected by the new-world climate, yet can we argue the same for Villagrá? Also, adorning both frames, so as to not let the reader forget, is the familiar image of the armored knight on horseback. As if the captains had imitated such a gallant style of the medieval tradition, of triumph and romance as they journeyed the New World. To a degree, we are to relate the two, however, especially with Villagrá's excessively decorated shoulder plates, and Smith's matching cuffs and sword in hand. Still, what lies beneath the costume of imperialism is the old and haggard body of the *español criollo* of *la frontera* and the young but paralyzed Englishman (injured between the legs while in Virginia) as Hispanicized.

After journeying *la nueva México* and Virginia, Villagrá and Smith returned to Europe: Villagrá returning to Spain at fifty-five-years of age, around 1606-1609, and Smith returning to England at thirty-years of age, in late 1609. Side-by-side, the *capitán* and the *captayne* render more similarities than not. As for the writing of their histories, the two participate in travel writing, a genre of storytelling that, as M. G. Aune describes, was "just coming into its own in the sixteenth and seventeenth

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[172] See J. A. Leo Lemay, *The American Dream of Captain John Smith* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1991), 111. Lemay provides a brief but useful discussion of what beards meant to Indians, including references to Indians offering to trade for beards. A question he suggests is if Indians related Smith to Spaniards, even though Smith's narrative strategy is to distinguish the self from Spaniards.

[173] See Rebecca Earle *The Body of the Conquistador: Food, Race and the Colonial Experience in Spanish America, 1492–1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 24.

centuries."[174] It was an "admixture defying easy classification: part autobiography, personal letter, geography, natural history, ethnography, and more."[175] Woven into travel writing, which was based "sometimes on first-hand information, sometimes on prior writings, or sometimes on rumor," are similar patterns of argument, recycled tropes of the tradition, elaborate character portrayals, and epic speeches.[176] Like other sixteenth- and seventeenth-century explorers, Villagrá and Smith studied the texts of earlier Spanish explorers and alongside writings of their contemporaries, some of which included Cristóbal Colón, Hernán Cortés, Francisco Pizarro, Hernando de Soto, and Cabeza de Vaca.[177] Both belonged to the tradition of history writing that characterized and criticized the image of the Spaniard in *las Américas*, specifically for his brutality, indeed, a history that began with "the expulsion of the Moors and Jews; from the Iberian Peninsula" and continued with "the so-called discovery of America and the domination and exploitation of Indians and African Slaves."[178] Thus, the two participated in a style of writing that perpetuated an anti-Spanish sentiment with *la leyenda negra* (a phrase coined by Julián Juderías in 1914). We find this rhetoric in the histories by Villagrá and Smith, both of which however uniquely conceptualize Spain's colonial brutality at the fringes of the continent: one in verse, and the other in prose. To appreciate the histories that they wrote, let us turn to a brief biography of who they were and who they had become.

Born in Puebla de los Ángeles, México, in 1555, Villagrá lived most of his life in the geographical space between New Spain and the region of *la frontera*, often depicted as a border region and space of cultural diversity. In the early 1570s, and as a young man, Villagrá actually studied in Spain, where he attended the Universidad de Salamanca and received a degree in law with special interest in Spanish, Greek and Roman classics. However, he was raised and became a soldier in, as Manuel Martín-Rodríguez writes, "*una zona de contacto e interacción lingüística, política y cultural entre pueblos diversos*." [a contact zone of interaction with linguistic, political and cultural differences between different peoples].[179] Living in this region and at an extraordinary moment, cross-cultural contact certainly influenced Villagrá, and in ways that speak to a unique and developing consciousness as emerging from the borderlands. This identity, or what historian Octavio Paz describes as *criollo* identity, is worth defining. Paz writes,

> In the seventeenth century criollo identity—to avoid the equivocal word "nationalism"—was expressed in artistic creation and philosophical and religious speculations in which the image of New Spain appears, more or less veiled, as the Other Spain. With some confusion, the criollo felt he was heir to two empires, Spanish and Indian. With the same contradictory fervor with which he exalted the

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174 M. G. Aune, "Early Modern European Travel Writing After Orientalism," in *Journal of Early Modern Cultural Studies*. 5.2 (2005): 120.

175 Ibid., 120

176 Ibid., 120.

177 Of Smith's Spanish influence, Mary Fuller argues, "If an Americanist sees proleptically *American* Smith's vision of America as a place where a man's hands could be his lands, Smith was inspired by heroic models from the recent past – Columbus, Pizarro, Cortés" – who 'advanced themselves from poor Soldiers to great captains, their posterity to great lords, their King to be one of the greatest Potentates on earth'." See Fuller, *Voyages in Print*, 136. She quotes from Smith's *Historie*, Volume 1, 327.

178 See Margaret R. Greer, Walter D. Mignolo, and Maureen Quilligan, "Introduction," *Rereading the Black Legend: The Discourses of Religious and Racial Difference in the Renaissance Empires* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 2.

179 Manuel Martín-Rodríguez, *Gaspar de Villagrá: legista, soldado y poeta* (León: Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de León, 2009), xx.

> Hispanic Empire and detested the Spanish, he glorified the Indian past and distained the Indians.[180]

Still, and to align my thinking with Padilla, "Make no mistake: Villagrá is a Spaniard."[181] So, too, does Miguel Encinias (and Alfred Rodríguez and Joseph P. Sánchez) assert that Villagrá is a descendant of Spaniard heritage: "His generation of Spaniards born in the New World does not appear to have felt any less Spanish."[182] Nonetheless, Padilla redirects our attention to the need to make a clear difference between Villagrá the soldier *and* Villagrá the poet, stating: "Villagrá the solider never denies that he participated in military campaigns against native people. Yet a decade after his *entrada* into la nueva México, Villagrá the poet discloses a more complex understanding of native life and culture than he is usually credited."[183] The imaginative edge of the poet thus produces a different "Spaniard," this New World subject born *in* and *into la frontera*. Padilla states, "The violence that burdens memory, though—his own experience in war conflated with the archetypal landscapes of Homer and Virgil—produces an estranging juxtaposition between Villagrá the solider and Villagrá the poet."[184] There is method in separating the experience of war from the archetypal landscapes of the poet's imagination, in terms of rhetoric, in terms of literary passage. Still, violence cannot be detached from the body or bodies of the soldier-as-poet, as if the battleground is suddenly separate from the borderlands: "In the Borderlands / you are the battleground."[185] Perhaps the multiplicity of subjectivity is a singular consciousness of *la frontera* and of *this* transformed soldier-poet.

Villagrá is very much a figure (soldier and poet) *de tres mundos* [of three worlds], as Martín-Rodríguez conceptualizes:

> *Villagrá vivió a caballo entre tres mundos: Nueva España, donde nació y residió la mayor parte de sus sesenta y cinco años de vida, España, donde se formó como lesgista y donde publicó su poema, y Nuevo México, que marcó su Carrera tanto en lo literario como en lo militar y hasta cierto punto, también en lo juríco.*
>
> [Villagrá lived between three worlds: New Spain, where he was born and lived most of his sixty-five years of life, Spain, where he trained as lesgista and where he published his poem, and *Nuevo México*, which marked his career in literature as in the military and to some extent also in juríco.][186]

Yet Villagrá crossed *la frontera* and traversed into a region where he became something else: the *español criollo* also spoke *náhuatl*.[187] The soldier-poet is a figure of *la frontera* then, who traveled into deep regions of the New World, where he and the other trespassers performed Spanishness during (dis)plays or masquerades of war, where he experienced real war and violence, and where in the moments of cross-cultural contact and communication with Natives—his passing and passage into Native world—the soldier-poet become *other* to the *other*.

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[180] Octavio Paz, *Sor Juana, Or, The Traps of Faith*, trans. Margaret Sayers Peden (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 36.
[181] Padilla, *The Daring Flight of My Pen*, 29.
[182] Miguel Encinias, Alfred Rodríguez, and Joseph p. Sánchez, "Introduction," in *Historia de la Nueva México, 1610* trans. and ed. Encinias, Rodríguez and Sánchez (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992), xvii.
[183] Padilla, *The Daring Flight of My Pen*, 29.
[184] Ibid., 101.
[185] Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 2007), 3.
[186] Martín-Rodríguez, *Gaspar de Villagrá*, 25.
[187] Ibid., 25-28.

Smith, on the other hand, born in Willoughby, England, in 1580, had a coming-of-age that included a limited formal education, yet he read classics and tales of Armada heroes and wars abroad like Villagrá, but unlike Villagrá turned early to a military career: he served as a mercenary in the French army of Henry IV against the Spanish army of King Phillip II, was a soldier against the Turks in central Europe, and even made captive in Constantinople, where he eventually killed his master, escaped, and returned to England.[188] Reading Smith's experiences as transformation, J. A. Leo Lemay states,

> Smith's battle experiences in Europe and especially his escape from slavery in the Middle East had created a typology of transformation that served as a paradigm for his vision of American metamorphosis. When he reached the Russian outpost in 1602, had his slave's irons removed, and found himself "kindly used," "he thought himselfe new risen from death" (3:201). Applying his experiences in Europe and America to the colonist, Smith generalized that "those can the best distinguish content, that have escaped most honourable dangers, as if out of every extremity he found himselfe new borne to a new life" (3:299).[189]

Make no mistake: Smith is English. However, in his writing, and what Lemay draws our attention to when referring to Smith's creation of a "typology of transformation" is Smith's vision for "American metamorphosis," as a unique ability of mobility of the journeyer who has faced and escaped extreme conditions. Moments of "extremity" are about discovering a plural self. Here is the transformed identity of the soldier, who crossed cultural borders, traversed into foreign lands, and was forced to masquerade "Europeanness," indeed, he was forced to become something else. Smith, like Villagrá, is a figure (soldier and writer) of three worlds, yet there is an additional integer we must first add to the analysis in order to conceptualize Smith's crossing.

Smith lived during a time when all of Europe had its eye on Spain, watching its every move, especially as it laid claim to territories in the distant lands. There was thrill in Spain's feats and deeds, and, like other explorers of his day, Smith read Spanish exploits, even mentioning them in the *Historie*: "the wonderful endevours of Ferdinando de Soto" in *La Florida*, describing him as "a valiant Spaniard' … whose writings in this age is the best guide knowne to search those parts" (1.325). Having read the extraordinary feats of Spaniards, "Smith hoped to achieve for England," as Lemay argues, "what Cortés, Pizarro, Soto, Magellan, and others had achieved for Spain."[190] He borrowed a Spanish heroic model as a young soldier: "Smith was inspired by heroic models from the recent past – Columbus, Pizarro, Cortés – who," as Smith reveals in *Description of New England* (and as quoted by Fuller), "'advanced themselves from poor Soldiers to great captains, their posterity to great lords, their King to be one of the greatest Potentates on earth'."[191] In that "advancement"—or transformation—here was an Englishman distracted by Spanish conquistadors, wanting to be like them but also struggling not to fall victim to the shadow that stained the rival's character for all of time. There was also distain: Spain was the "enemie," as Smith told Powhatan. And Smith was careful with his image against new opponents, that is, "Smith is always political, acutely aware of the operations of power and the engaged subjectivity of his opponents," as Donegan describes.[192] When

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[188] For a detailed background on Smith see Philip Barbour, *The Complete Works of Captain John Smith (1580-1631).* Also of relevance see Lemay, *The American Dream of Captain John Smith.*

[189] Lemay, *The American Dream of Captain John Smith*, 217.

[190] Lemay, *The American Dream of Captain John Smith*, 35.

[191] Fuller, *Voyages in Print*, 136.

[192] Donegan, *Seasons of Misery*, 73.

Smith arrived to Jamestown, his experience was a reformulation of a Spanish model at a very different part of the continent where he learned Algonquin. Although Smith and the English were vehemently anti-Spanish, Smith is a figure with a multifaceted subjectivity. Like Villagrá, Smith is a figure of three worlds: *England*, where he was born, raised and where he died; *Europe*, where he served as a soldier, was made captive and escaped; and *Virginia*, where he traveled into deep regions of the New World, and also performed Englishness during (dis)plays or masquerades of war, where he experienced war and Indian captivity. His was a cross-cultural experience that marked his career in the military as much as it had his career in literature. Smith, the Englishman—in his passing and passage—had also become *other* to the *other*.

Villagrá's *Historia* and Smith's *Historie* are shaped and marked by the political contexts and historical backgrounds from which both captains produced their autobiographical writings. As a frame for reading and appreciating the complexity in the production of these histories, perhaps modern approaches should contemplate the unreliability of the soldier-turned-historian as storyteller of a past that was re-imagined in response to imperial pressures of duty and loyalty as subjects of empire. Indeed, as imperial agents, Villagrá and Smith felt the constraints of empire.

For Villagrá, the horrors enacted by the Spanish Inquisition loomed over him as he crafted the epic. Whether he began early drafts of a manuscript as early as 1601 while still in New Spain, drafted and/or revised the manuscript while in México, continued the work while crossing the Atlantic, or commenced the project when in Spain around 1605 or 1606, the soldier-poet understood this other trudging, this time through a cloud of policies and allegations.[193] Some scholars believe Villagrá began writing either the same year the viceroy of New Spain began investigating and formulating accusations against Oñate and his soldiers for their military conduct at Ácoma, an investigation that opened in 1601 and ended in 1609. The conditions surrounding the production and eventual publication of the *Historia* merely begin here. Villagrá may have been writing in response to murder allegations, preparing a justification piece for the unannounced trial. Although the manuscript or fragments of one have not been discovered, by early April of 1609 and only a few months after the court completed its investigation and presented the allegations, Villagrá submitted the original manuscript of the *Historia* for review of publication to King Felipe III and the censorship committee of his Holy Court. The poet knew very well the publication policies set by the Catholic Monarchs; after all, in earlier years at the University of Salamanca, Villagrá studied the very laws that King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella implemented in 1502 and especially those preserved by King Felipe II in 1558. The publishing process in the early seventeenth century, at least in Spain, required a strenuous censorship procedure, where manuscripts were meticulously scrutinized for any dissemination of heretical and corrupt philosophies. Those writings that disclosed any material found to be threatening were burned or submitted to the Indexes of prohibited works. As for their creators, they, unfortunately, were prosecuted. As a standard, this interrogation was also the case for Villagrá's manuscript and it lasted four months. Obviously, as well as fortunately, the King approved its publication and North America's first epic poem was spared from the fires, and the poet from auto de fé. During Villagrá's eventual prosecution in 1614, he used the approved and published epic in court since he was accused of executing two Spanish soldiers without appropriate judicial jurisdiction.

The *Historia* was approved on March 7, 1610. There is no evidence suggesting that the King, his committee, or the poet, revised the manuscript, and this is the only edition published during the author's lifetime: a small volume, including 24 preliminaries (censorships from the committee and King), 10 laudatory poems (dedications from contemporary writers), the author's prologue, and the

[193] For further background on these events in Villagrá's life, see Padilla, *The Daring Flight of My Pen*, and George Hammond, *Don Juan De Oñate and the Founding of New Mexico, 1595-1620* (Santa Fe: El Palacio Press, 1927).

epic's thirty-four cantos. With the trial pending, the *Historia* was forwarded to the presses of Luys Martínez Grande and the merchant of books, Baptista López, who produced the first Spanish edition on April 27, 1610 in Alcalá de Hernares, Spain: located about 20 miles west of Madrid, the so-called "Mecca for writers" of the Golden Age and the "smallest cultural capital in Europe."[194] Villagrá's timely publication suggests *here* was a defense used for a trial, *not* a book to entice reader-inquisitiveness. The fact that Alcalá de Henares is only a short distance from Madrid, the epic might have been written with an audience in mind and it could very well have received moderate attention for marketability and popularity.[195] Because Villagrá used the poem in the 1614 trial to defend Spanish military conduct, however, many historians and literary critics claim that Villagrá wrote the poem as a justification piece. True, the trial compels us to interpret the poem as a justification piece, but there is evidence that argues otherwise. Did the investigation itself prompt the accused soldier to craft the *Historia* as solely a defense for Spanish conduct in the New World? Michael Murrin explains, "Villagrá published his epic the year after the viceregal court in Mexico had completed its investigation of Spanish conduct in New Mexico and formulated charges."[196] The poet would have already known about the accusations, thus the oddity in the matter is that he waited an entire year after the charges were finalized to publish the poem. An entire year is plenty of time for revisions because, after reading its 11,891 lines, the *Historia* does not read as a justification piece; in fact, Villagrá produced a pamphlet as a justification piece in 1612, entitled *El Capitán Gaspar Pérez de Villagrá, para justificcación de las muertes, justicias, y castigas que el Adelantado don Iuan de Onate dizen que hizo en la Nueva México* [Captain Gaspar de Villagrá for the justification of the deaths, justices, and punishments that *el Adelantado* Don Juan de Oñate is said to have committed in *la Nueva Mexico*] and published it in Madrid.[197] Instead, as Padilla argues, the poem reads as a critique of empire, with the soldier-poet voicing animosity towards the viceroy, monarch, and the expedition's leader, all through a literary masquerade around a complex history of allegations.[198] Villagrá never returned to the Americas, dying while crossing the Atlantic while en route to the New World: "Like countless mariners before him, he was buried at sea."[199] Villagrá, perhaps, as Padilla also claims, carried with him to the bottom of the sea a manuscript of the promised second poem that he mentions in the ending lines of the *Historia*: "It was as though he spiraled downward into the sea with the poem tucked under his coverlet, the world of print itself a sea that covered over his book as it has so many others."[200]

The *Historia* is, Padilla writes, "a poem, an epic in which history is made subordinate to its literary imagining."[201] What we find in the *Historia*, Martín-Rodríguez explains, is "the combination

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[194] See William Cruickshank, "'Literature" and the Book Trade in Golden-Age Spain," in *Modern Language Review* 73 (1978): 799– 824.

[195] Manuel Martín-Rodríguez, "The History of New Mexico by Gaspar Pérez de Villagrá: Its critical reception with new biographical data on its author," in *Spanish humanism, its projection in America and the Canary Islands in the era of humanism*, ed. Antonio María Martín Rodríguez and Germán Santana Henríquez (Las Palmas: Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, 2006).

[196] Michael Murrin, *History and Warfare in Renaissance Epic* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 221.

[197] The 1612 *Justification* is available on microfilm at the The Huntington Library. The original is in Seville. It is not in hendecasyllabic verse as the *Historia*, but reads in a similar narrative-poetic style. This piece heavily references religious passages, as well as discusses a history of judicial acts of enslavement, tortures and mutilations. It also provides a significant number of literary connections. The significance lies in the explicit intention of such a *Justification* piece.

[198] See Padilla, *The Daring Flight of My Pen*, 22.

[199] Ibid., 10.

[200] Ibid., 10.

[201] Ibid., 3.

of his literary and legal interests with his military experience [that] resulted in a rather novel approach to writing. Villagrá's poem, unlike those by Alonso de Ercilla's most direct imitators, sets itself apart from many of the conventions of epic poetry, while maximizing discursive and generic hybridity."[202] Adopting a "rhymeless free verse (hendecasyllabic in this case)," Villagrá also infuses his version of the epic with legal documents and letters, and here we have a poem, as Martín-Rodríguez declares, of "distinct hybrid nature," and what Padilla calls "a conscious, deliberate *mestizaje* rather than a careless jumbling together of diverse source materials."[203] The convergence created on the page is a *writerly masquerade*, where the author traverses into literary space in search of a poet-language to articulate or approach the cultural experience of crossing borders: "His poetry may well have suffered from the chronicle imperative he chose for much of the *Historia*, but when all is said and done, it remains an epic that by its nature required a distinct kind of imagination to write—and to read."[204] The terrain of the epic, offered the poet the room to play with the experience of crossing over, of being Spanish and what that meant when entering *la nueva México* and reporting about the land, geography, populations, and confrontations with the Ácoma. This is a new kind of writing history. Here is the transformation of the soldier-to-poet, his Spanish masquerade, yet a narrative performance as extravagant as the very history he experienced.

For Smith, the earliest draft to the Six Books that became his *Historie* may be said to have began with the 1607 letter he wrote to a London friend and unknown correspondent, *A True Relation*. Along with the letter, Smith included a map of the Chesapeake Bay, also adding a dotted line that tracked his captivity trail.[205] The letter (without the map) was published the following year, in 1608. The unknown editor, however, is said to have omitted "perhaps 80 pages," shortening the document to a "forty-page quarto," *and*, the editor also omitted or confused Smith's name, instead attaching to the publication the name of "Thomas Watson."[206] Also missing from the letter, if not "cut" from it, as Fuller hypothesizes, were several key experiences that arrive much later in the *Historie*: the story of Smith's execution (or mock-execution), the legend of Pocahontas as rescuer, and many other experiences he would remember or invent.[207] Upon his return to England in October of 1609, and after having spent "twenty-nine months" in Jamestown, Smith returned twice to the coasts of Maine in 1614 and 1615, thereafter retiring the sword (perhaps because of an injury he suffered while in the New World) to pick up the pen and participate in the production of travel writing, offering an autobiographical account of his colonizing experiences (although he utilizes a third-person voice) while also "borrowing" stories from the works of other explorers to enhance his own account. A few years after his return, Smith wrote a pamphlet, entitled *A Map of Virginia* (1612), a fifty-page quarto to accompany the map he drew of the entire Chesapeake Bay area. Following this volume was another work, entitled *Proceedings of the English Colony* (1612), and then, from 1612 through 1624, Smith published several works on and about New England, including *The Description of New England* (1616), *Letter to Sir Francis Bacon* (1618), a shorter and longer version of *New England's Trials* (1620, 1622), and finally, *The Generall Historie of Virginia, New-England, and the Summer Isles* (1624). The *Historie*, a full folio, with 254 pages, is a compilation of Smith's earlier writings, which he revises and expands upon, narrating other unmentioned experiences as well as borrowing stories from the works of other explorers. His text was published, Fuller notes, "as the Virginia Company

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202 Martín-Rodríguez, "400 Years of Literature and History in the United States," 14.
203 Ibild, 14. See Padilla, *The Daring Flight of My Pen*, 35.
204 Ibid., 6.
205 For more background on the letter in relation to the *Historie*, see Philip Barbour, *The Complete Works of Captain John Smith (1580-1631)*, 5-9; Fuller, *Voyages in Print*, 106-108; Lemay, *The American Dream of Captain John Smith*, 40-42.
206 See Fuller, *Voyages in Print*, 107. Also see Lemay, *The American Dream of Captain John Smith*, 40.
207 Fuller, *Voyages in Print*, 107.

was dissolving."[208] Before its publication, however, Smith was already revising the telling of his experience at Jamestown, through a distant perspective *and* third person narrative voice that could expound upon the colony's pending failure and allow the reinvention of his role on the page. Often dismissed in Smith's writing, however, is Spanish distraction as influencing his writings in specific relation to his interest in transforming the Spanish colonial model into an English one. Lemay writes, "Throughout his writings, Smith referred to the Spanish historians of empire," and just as "[t]hey provided inspiration, on the one hand, and examples of miserable difficulties and failures," on the other, Smith aimed to traverse boundaries in re-writing a *historie* and discourse for New England explorers.[209]

There is a personal objective in the *Historie*, especially after Smith failed to obtain another appointment following the 1622 massacre at Jamestown. Smith published the *Historie* two years after this massacre; indeed, the opportune time allowed an eager Smith to restore his reputation by chiding these colonists who did not follow his earlier lead and English model. Having this knowledge of a failing and suffering Virginia colony influenced Smith's narrative and political strategies in the *Historie*. Definitely, Smith's focus shifted with historical time, in which the transformations of the historical allowed him to recast the biographical and rewrite his actions and role, transforming them as well. Smith's time in Jamestown occurred prior to the "Starving Time" that killed nearly all of the five hundred colonists that remained in Virginia upon Smith's departure to the motherland. In its own way, the *Historie* reads as a critique of the colonist against his role as explorer, with the soldier-turned-historian voicing the type of colonist who would have survived settlement, declaring a new English model, all through a *writerly masquerade* around the task of reinstating the self as well as declaring a mastery and superiority, what Fuller calls in her chapter-title on the Jamestown colonists versus John Smith, "Mastering words."[210] Like Villagrá, Smith never returned to the Americas, having remained in England, where he died in June 1631 at the age of 52, also with an unfinished manuscript under his coverlet, what he described as "my history of the Sea."

In the *Historie*, as Donegan writes, "Smith writes history as autobiography."[211] However, what we find in his personal experience of history, as Fuller explains, is a "copious textual production, which replaces soldiering and colonizing as his principal activity," that is, a *copia*, Fuller further examines in parenthesis, that is "especially characterized by revision and repetition of the same material."[212] Adopting the roles of biographer (Donegan) and the "roles of editor *and* writer" (Fuller), Smith "assembles the relations of others, substitutes others' stories for his own and also silently absorbs others' work."[213] Smith unsettles history in prose like Villagrá unsettles history in verse, piecing together documents and stories to articulate experience. Yet Smith's is not a cobbling of histories. In asserting an "overwhelmingly autobiographical focus," as Fuller phrases it, it is Smith's "almost exclusive use of the third-person voice" that distinguishes him from Villagrá's first person narration.[214] The time between being *there* and his return to Europe allowed Smith to *turn distance from the experience* into *distance from the self within the experience*. Smith is much more eager to place a discourse of his experience within the genre, not necessarily offer a mere autobiographical account. In agreeing with Fuller, what emerges in the *Historie* in terms of a mastery over words and maps and region, but not to be separated from his mastery over Colonists and Natives, is a writer fashioning

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[208] Ibid., 110.
[209] Lemay, *The American Dream of Captain John Smith*, 190.
[210] Fuller, *Voyages in Print*, 85.
[211] Donegan, *Seasons of Misery*, 80.
[212] Fuller, *Voyages in Print*, 106-107.
[213] Ibid., 107.
[214] Ibid., 107.

the self on the page, and turning that past-self into a model concerned with evolving the portrait of a "heroizing Smith" into a figure of mastery, of knowledge, of cultural advantage, that is, a figure of mobility.[215]

Smith is concerned with establishing an English model, not in imitating a failed English one or following in the footsteps of a Spanish violent one. Smith's writing transforms: "When the audacious and unrestrained Smith pushes out of Jamestown, his writing expands. Reports of the land, geography, populations, and especially of his confrontations and negotiations with the Powhatan and other native groups energetically comprise a new kind of writing."[216] On (dis)play in his *Historie* is a resourceful Smith, as he insinuates his own authority over peoples and lands, carefully laying forth a knowledgeable of experience for a knowing audience.[217] That knowledge is defined here as a skill of masquerade between rhetorics, social systems and networking, as well as (un)familiar characters. In extending his role in the New World and attributing it to the pursuit of tolerance and mastery for the knowledge required for colonial expansion, Smith set out to "surpass a written tradition" set by Spaniards and English explorers, thus defending *his* 'Jamestown colony by comparing it with that traditions."[218] In agreement, "the tradition Smith inherited was both English *and* Spanish," however, Fuller continues, "Smith's heroic models are principally Spaniards"[219] His experience and reliance on this model also involves Spanish masquerade as an issue in Smith's text. In so far as much that Smith was interested in declaring an English presence, wedging its potentiality into the northeastern corner of the continent, and asserting that the English could render a better model than the rivaling power, that is, *his* model.[220]

Smith is distracted by his Spanish predecessors, making reference to the "Spanish Decades" and concluding with a remark as to what this *historia* should mean in relation to a New England *historie*. Smith, in a way, aims to declare an English legend by asserting that in the "three first yeares [that] began this Plantation"—the years he was at Jamestown—all crisis and chaos was "gently corrected, and well prevented":

> I onely saw this, for those that the three first yeares began this Plantation; notwithstanding all their factions, mutinies, and miseries, so gently corrected, and well prevented: peruse the Spanish Decades; the Relations of Master Hackluit, and tell me how many ever with such small meanes as a Barge of 2 tuns, sometimes with seaven, eight, or nine, or but at most, twelve or sixteen men, did ever discover so many fayre and navigable Rivers, subject so many severall Kings, people, and Nations, to obedience, and contribution, with so little bloodshed. (2.207)

Smith distinguishes himself—"the three first yeares" at Jamestown—from "the Spanish Decades." He points to a Spanish model that proved disastrous, for all of its violence and cruelty. Smith's final passage in the *Historie* is a final call that defines, once again, a different (or *his* different) English project, in which discovery might happen "with so little bloodshed." If the reader were to "peruse

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[215] Ibid., 118. Fuller describes the versions of the *Historie* under revision and the divergences between them, stating that the second version is interested in "heroizing Smith and revealing the inadequacies of other colonists," while the third version "follows the pattern of the first version—Smith as a masterful speaker."

[216] Donegan, *Seasons of Misery*, 80.

[217] See Egan, *Authorizing Experience*, 39-42.

[218] Fuller, *Voyages in Print*, 135. Fuller's complete sentence reads, "Smith defends the Jamestown colony by comparing it with that tradition."

[219] Ibid., 135-36.

[220] According to Fuller, for her is a different argument, "Spain is hardly an issue in Smith's text; the real nexus of rivalry and conflict is closer to home," namely Walter Ralegh and his 'lost colony'." See Fuller, *Voyages in Print*, 136.

the Spanish Decades," Smith argues—and we can include Villagrá's epic—what did that model, that *historia*, that project, look like compared to his *historie*?

What then is the story of North America that Smith and Villagrá tell together? This is about introducing a different vision of the Americas, or consciousness, as cultural knowledge and imperial desire, and as a way of looking at North America from the angle of its southern fringes. Cartographically speaking, this story of colonial trespassing across Native lands is always in relation to Spain's looming southern presence—as a major figure in the story, as a threatening imperial presence, and as a ghosting of Spanishness haunting the page. Let us examine Villagrá's *Historia* and Smith's *Historie* for Spanish distraction, as it is (un)mapped in their narrative telling against real historical maps of the early sixteenth-century discovery period.

3. (Un)Mapping Spanish Distraction

Spain's first "discoverer" set the tone and trajectory for European explorers who dared follow his lead, setting for all of Europe a "Spanish" model that, through the decades and centuries, was borrowed yet also refined by other powers in the race for colonies and expansion. All of Europe had its eye on Colón, whose name became forever wed to the "Spain" of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella. However, Villagrá's *Historia* and Smith's *Historie* challenge Colón's influence, refusing to celebrate him as *the* "first" discoverer or "sole" discoverer of North America. Instead, the captains recast this early history to the far reaches of the North. They do not begin with Colón, instead rewriting *historia* and *historie* by writing over it with other origin stories that direct attention to a more specific Spanish and English presence at the southern borderlands (Villagrá) or northeastern shores (Smith).

If to recall and write the origin story of North America was essentially to reimagine and revise that origin story, Villagrá and Smith asserted that responsibility. When Villagrá mentions Colón it is in passing and much later in the third canto: *Qual famoso Colón, que Nuevo Mundo / Dio a vuestra Real corona de Castilla,* (3.119-120). [Like famed Columbus, he who gave a world / All new unto your royal Kingdom of Castile,]. Before this first reference to Colón—and much earlier in the third Canto—the poet begins the story of discovery with the African slave, Esteban, and his long journey alongside the Spanish explorer, Cabeza de Vaca, from 1528-34. Similarly, Smith argues that it was not Colón but Cabot who "saw the Continent" first: "For though Cullumbus had found certaine Iles, it was 1498. ere he saw the Continent, which was a yeare after Cabot." This dismissal of Colón by Smith and Villagrá—as a more compelling portrait of early discovery versus elevating the most famous explorer—might be read as a new world project at the start of the seventeenth century, of revising and of manipulating the writing of national narrative and what was purported to be an official story. The captains assert a new perception in their re-reading of a Columbian influence—redefining distraction, and redefining anxiety. In their writing of this past, the pair introduce how it was that North America was discovered from the southern terrain of New Mexico and the northeastern terrain of Virginia. Both are part of the "national narrative," where Villagrá now adds a great deal of narrative in-between. Looking at how the captains represent Colón, suddenly the two dislocate him, textually and geographically, and what they push forward is an alternative origin story of North America.

Beginning with the *Historia*, after narrating Aztec origins in the first two Cantos, in the third canto Villagrá turns full attention to the history of Spanish presence in the specific space between New Spain and *la frontera*. In Canto III, "How, by themselves, the Spaniards began the discovery of New Mexico, and how they entered, and who were those who first began and undertook the journey," Villagrá appropriately begins with the other famous Spanish expedition, which

shipwrecked in Florida, then again at Galveston Island, with its four survivors then traveling across *la frontera* or the southern borderlands of present-day United States:

> *Después que en la Florida se perdieron*
> *Por aquel largo tiempo prolongado,*
> *El grande negro Esteban valeroso*
> *Y Cabeza de Vaca memorable,*
> *Castillo, Maldonado, sin Segundo,*
> *Y Andrés Dorantes, más aventajado,*
> *Todos singularísmos varones.* (3.27-33)
>
> [After in Florida they were lost
> For that prolonged time,
> The great and valorous negro Esteban
> And memorable Cabeza de Vaca,
> Castillo, Maldonado, without peer,
> And Andrés Dorantes, most remarkable,
> All being men most singular.]

The poet does not begin with Álvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca (1527-1536), the Spaniard who penned the history of the disastrous 1527 Narvárez expedition; rather, Villagrá begins his chronology with, as he states, "The great and valorous negro Esteban" (1500-1539), the Moroccan-Berber, who was sold to Andrés Dorantes, a Spaniard, and then with his Spanish master embarked on the Narvárez expedition. Esteban is often called the "first black explorer of America," having been born in Africa and the first African to have arrived and traveled across North America. By 1539, Esteban had also accompanied Friar Marcos de Niza, acting the important role of guide who led the Spanish further into *la nueva México*. For Villagrá, the story does not begin with Europeans but with the African slave.

Smith's also dismisses Colón in his chronology of early voyages, refusing to grant Spain the honor of being the 'first' nation to discover the Americas. Instead, Smith asserts an English arrival as separate from a Spanish origin and influence. That honor of 'first' discoverer belongs to, according to Smith, John Cabot and his son Sebastian. In "The First Book," Smith writes:

> The Spanyards say Hanno a Prince of Carthage was the first: and the next Chrisotpher Collumbus, a Genoesian, whom they sent to discover those unknowne parts, 1492.
>
> But we finde by Records, Cullumbus offered his service in the yeare 1488. to King Henry the seaventh; and by accident undertooke it for the Spanyards. In the Interim King Henry gave a Commission to John Cabot, and his three sonnes, Sebastian, Lewis, and Santius. John and Sebastian well provided, setting sayle, ranged a great part of this unknowne world, in the yeare 1497. For though Cullumbus had found certaine Iles, it was 1498. ere he saw the Continent, which was a yeare after Cabot. (2.10)

Here is a self-portrait of Smith as erudite, his having ferretted through the archives to set the record straight: "But we finde by Records," is Smith's oppositional declaration. Suspicious of what the "Spanyards say," Smith investigates this history for himself, listing for his reader a few corrections he has uncovered: Collumbus' real national identity is "Genoesian," the imperial power Colón

serviced was that of "King Henry the seaventh," and it was by "accident" that he "undertook it for the Spanyards." Smith, in his mastery of words, is eager to explain the power struggle between English/Spanish: Colón was not the first to see the continent. Rather, Smith argues, Colón saw "the Continent … a yeare after Cabot," because Colón had only seen the islands. Naming Cabot as the discoverer of the continent—of *las Américas*—Smith rewrites the origin story for England through English colonist's eyes. Smith disagreed with the chronology set by Hakluyt in *Principal Navigations*: "the Spanyards affirme themselves to be the first finders since Hannos time"; rather, the first glimpse of *las Américas* belonged to and was seen through the eyes of an English explorer, as commissioned by an English King. Rewriting the chronology, Smith reveals his preoccupation with Spain's dominant presence in North America that continued to distract and thus define English presence and its narrative of exploration.

At the time of their journeying, and long after Colón and Cabot, *las Américas* had yet to be mapped. A cartographical turn, however, introduces an early imagining of North American territory. As a strategy of reading, by looking at early maps the modern reader can outline the history of European expansion and explore how imperial powers imagined a sense of nationalism during the act of territorialization and occupation of native space. As a form of visual documentation, early maps tell the story of contest, for here is a medium that speaks to the visual force behind European expansion, that is, how North America came to be imagined and how it came to be constructed regionally: Spanish *entrada* and *plus ultra* versus an English "wedging" of nationalism. Comparing Villagrá's *la nueva México* to Smith's Virginia, these "American maps" were from the start, as G. N. G. Clarke maintained, "used by the competing European colonial powers as a text of ownership and control, as sources of information and accurate (often inaccurate) knowledge about the continent."[221] Considering the historical role that cartography played as yet another European textual-tool in colonization, early maps defined possession versus dispossession, while also declaring boundaries that had as much to do with the land as it did nationalism, colonial identity, and authorial power.

Early maps, by extension, valorize imperial presence, also displaying extraordinary journeys as a representation of success, authority, and contest. Maps provide the origin points at the southern and eastern fringes of North America: below are the maps of Villagrá's *la nueva México* and Smith's Virginia (see figure 5).

[221] G. N. G. Clarke, "Taking Possession: The Cartouche as Cultural Text in Eighteenth- Century American Maps," in *Word and Image* IV (1988): 458.

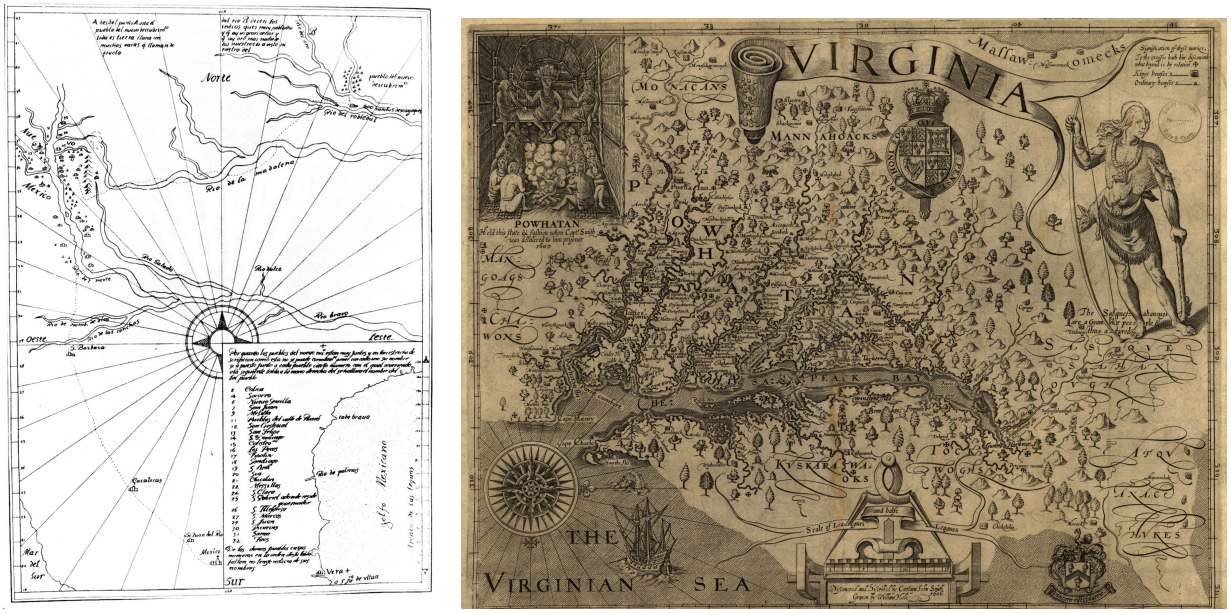


Figure 5. Enrico Martinez's Map of New Mexico and the Great Plains (1601) and William Hole's Map of Virginia (1612) based on sketches by Smith[222]

The maps do not delineate vast terrain, especially when compared to other maps of the period. Rather, both concentrate on smaller regions—the fissures of the *rio grande* and the *chesapekeke*—perhaps to control water passages and claim the rich territory immediately surrounding them. The maps are most concerned with telling the story of Spanish and English possession of land, its future potential, and their encounter with Natives. Declaring an English presence across Native territory meant strengthening forces in Europe, and for England in particular it meant the opportunity to beat Spain: "an English presence in America was an absolute necessity," as Karen Kupperman argues.[223] All other nations fell in the shadow of Spain, the reason being, according to Edward Hale, "Spain had as yet had no sharer of this northern new world."[224] The competition for empire was, cartographically speaking, plotted around the southern coordinates that Spain outlined. In fact, "The Spanish had long believed that the North American coastline, at least from Chesapeake Bay south, was part of their natural sphere of influence," to return to Kupperman.[225] If the English desired a future of greatness, they needed to establish a firm claim on North American territories, and it needed to happen around the interests of the Spanish who were at the Souths and the French who were at St. Lawrence. Put simply, and as the historian Woodbury Lowery argues, "like an iron wedge, the English colonists penetrated the domain of their rivals, thrust them apart on either side, and with ever increasing dimensions pressed farther and farther across the continent, until they had

[222] For Martinez's map see Villagrá, *Historia*, ed. Encinias, Rodríguez, and Sánchez, ix. Original map available at the Archivo General de Indias, Sevilla. For the Smith/Hole map see, *Virginia*. Map. London: 1624. *Library of Congress*. Web. 28 November 2014. < https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3880.ct000377/>

[223] See Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *Roanoke: The Abandoned Colony* (Totowa: Rowman & Allanheld, 1984), 2.

[224] Edward Everett Hale, "Chapter II: Hawkins and Drake," in *Narrative and Critical History of America: English Explorations and Settlements in North America* (1497-1689). 12 Vols. ed. Justin Winsor (Boston: Houghton Mifflin and Co., 1884), vol 3., 69.

[225] Kupperman, *Roanoke*, 13.

occupied almost the entire territory, which had previously belonged to France and Spain."[226] The English found a geographical pocket in the corner of North America and between rivaling powers, that is, "close enough to the trade routes to give access and yet hidden away from the Spanish in Florida."[227] Anthony Aveni reminds us of the dominant Spanish presence in the Americas, as he explains in the article "Why Virginia Was Not Spanish" (2005),

> A look at a late sixteenth-century map of Spanish-controlled territory suggests every part of he Americans would end up Hispanic. Then the most powerful empire in the world, Spain claimed lands in the Americas from Argentina north through Central America and Mexico, the Caribbean islands, and all the territory up to 200 miles in and along today's United States coast from the Texas-Mexico border to the New Jersey coast. Her inland North American claims encompassed all the Florida peninsula, huge chunks of Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, and the Tidewater coast, including the Delmarva Peninsula.[228]

Still, Spain's long shadow loomed over this tiny "wedge," haunting the English who arrived much later, which is why Smith is eager to chart an English presence in obsessive detail.

Taken together, then, these early maps offer a different perception (and even perspective mechanism) into the experience of Spanish *and* English journeying and colonization. These maps must be read from the distinct orientation or angle from which they were drawn. Expansionism is played out through a vision that, for the Spanish, moves upward and outwards, positioning the reader with an aerial view of the *rio grande*, with a specific origination of a South-to-North axis—not *Plus ultra* [further beyond] but the word *norte* appears at the top of the map. Whereas on Smith's map, that vision moves inward into North America and westward towards the Pacific, positioning the reader with an aerial view of a remarkably detailed Chesapeake Bay (for all its fissures), with a specific orientation of an East-to-West axis—also in the fashion of *Plus ultra*. Together, what these maps show are movement northward (Villagrá) and westward (Smith), how imperial power imagined their own movement in the shaping of a North American region within the hemisphere and on the global map. Both maps also tell the story of European-Native encounter and contact, especially with the overwhelming placement of tribes: on the English map, the rivers and streams cannot be imagined without the tribes that surround them, while on the Spanish map a legend with a list of tribes interrupts Spanish mapping. Only does the English map provide elaborate drawings of Natives, including Chief Powhatan and the famous ceremony or Smith's mock-execution, also including a title "when Capt. Smith was delivered to him prisoner" and the quote, "To the crosses hath bin discouerd / what beyond is by relation" (1.142). On both maps, and alongside a European-Native story of contact is the charting of major and minor waterways that offer the visual reality of survivability in these foreign lands essential to mobility.

By pairing the Spanish map of *la nueva México* with the English map of Virginia, another narrative is resurrected around origin or focal points of early North American history. "Against the broad theme of the Age of Discovery," as Encinias, Rodríguez, and Sánchez write, "New Mexico became the focal point of Spanish exploration in North America," in other words, the founding of

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[226] Woodbury Lowery, *The Spanish Settlements within the Present Limits of the United States, 1513–61* (New York: G. Putnam's Son, 1911).

[227] Kupperman, *Roanoke*, 15.

[228] See Anthony Aveni, "Why Virginia Was Not Spanish," in *Colonial Williamsburg Journal* 35.2 (2013): 2.

New Mexico in 1598 was certainly "an event tantamount to the founding of Jamestown, Virginia, in 1607."[229] To borrow the words of Martín-Rodríguez,

> Al mismo tiempo, en el contexto de la literature estadounidense, la temprana fecha de publicación de su poema épico-histórico, catorce años antes que la *Generall Historie of Virginia, New England, and the Summer Isles* de John Smith y cuarenta antes de la impression de los versos de Anne Brandstreet, lo convierte en un pionero indiscutible de la historiografía y la poesía de ese país.
>
> [At the same time, in the context of American literature, early publications of his historical-epic poem, fourteen years before the *Generall Historie of Virginia, New England and the Summer Isles* by John Smith, and forty before the impression of the verses by Anne Bradstreet, makes it an undisputed pioneer of historiography and poetry of that country.][230]

With the founding of New Mexico by the Spanish, well before the English founded Virginia, the stage was set and here furthered the conceptualization of Spanishness at the southern borderlands. Spain was always at the Souths. Villagrá, too, is among the soldier-writers of a literature specific to this geographic region. Understanding a Spanish presence at the Souths and an English presence "wedged" at the Norths must be further complicated by relations with Natives, certainly, so as to address the significance of the overwhelming names of tribes on the maps in relation to the many encounters described in the texts. Europeans faced conceptual dilemmas that of self-representation and national image, both of which were on the line during encounters with Natives. There was a complex set of relations between Europeans and Natives, and, the ways in which comparative racialization happened rendered colonial subjectivities in very different spaces of contact and journeying. If we can call them instances of masquerade versus ethnography, the desire is to recover an *experience* in the moment of encounter at these specific regions of the borders, so as to redefine "authority" as an enacting of *extravagant passing* and performances of masquerading "Europeanness" in order for the colonizer to achieve passage across dangerous Native lands.

4. Masquerading "Europeanness": Reading Villagrá's *Historia* and Smith's *Historie*

A different portrait of the Spaniard and English captain is unmasked when considering how the masquerade of "Europeanness" is integral to the very experience of war. Engaging a discourse of masquerade, which is defined here as a re-defining of the performance of soldier identity in the New World, offers a reading strategy for unmasking elements of masquerade at the moment of encounter between Europeans and Natives. This lens recognizes the masks donned by both sides of war: not just how early explorers imagined themselves but also how the rivaling other imagined them. At play in the histories by Villagrá and Smith is a structuring of perception of the costumed other, where the costume of war is a social mask, evoking threat, intimidation, and confusion. Here, at the moment of encounter is the masquerade of war, and Villagrá and Smith introduce the soldier as a figure masquerading "Europeanness" because Spanishness and Englishness cannot function normally in America.[231] The captains cannot be too identified with Europeanness, nor can they be too identified

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[229] Encinias, Rodríguez, and Sánchez, "Introduction," xxv.

[230] Martín-Rodríguez, *Gaspar de Villagrá*, 22.

[231] This phrasing and analysis of "remobilizing Spanishness and Englishness," actually stems from conversations with Donegan, as well as reading the work of Egan on "authorizing experience."

with *Spanishness* and Spain's model of colonization. This is about the act of improvisation, or how to "pass" and create for the journeying-self a mode of remobilizing Spanishness and Englishness. What evolves during moments of encounter is a transformative-self in the process of becoming colonial. Villagrá and Smith thus reveal in their histories a range of masquerades, and at the center of each are extravagant portraits of threat that are foundational to their narrative telling.

Reading war in terms of masquerading "Europeanness" is reading the performance of the soldier as trespassing across Native terrain. Encounter had everything to do with how force was represented and performed—in costume (as seen), in speech (as heard)—where imperialistic performance is (mis)read because of the extravagant costume donned by Europeans and the specific role enacted in that costume to assert European authority and power. There is a theatrical display of military force in Villagrá's *Historia* and Smith's *Historie*, such as the mock-battle of *Moros y Cristianos* (Muslims and Christians) for Ácomas to witness Spanish military prowess in Villagrá's *Historia*, or when Englishmen enter Powhatan territory and "weare our armes as our apparel" in Smith's *Historie*. Both captains explore the performance of war as masquerade, in terms of effective costuming, deceptive masks, and elements of social authority as mobilizing. Certainly, these "texts" of early encounter, as is often asserted of colonial writing, include carefully constructed plots in which the characterizations of the Native as Other is made to 'fit' into a letter, a report, and an epic poem.[232] "They"—the Ácomas and the Powhatans, as David Quint reminds us—"have a voice and role only within the history made by their Spanish [and English] masters."[233] *They* become reimagined. *They* are invented and thus enshrined into a history made by and for a European imagination. *They* are also forever immortalized, even idolized—even if trapped—in the colonizer's imagination, where fact and fiction become endlessly woven. In these "texts" is the falsification of the real or what was portended to be "real." Thus, masquerading "Europeanness" happened both on and off the page.

Villagrá casts an image of Spaniards masquerading "Europeanness" with the staged performance of the battle of *Moros y Cristianos*, a historical battle reenacted on the New World stage to intimidate Indigenous peoples and also a scene often discussed by scholars of the epic, including Padilla, Martín-Rodríguez, Ramón A. Gutiérrez, and Enrique R. Lamadrid. In agreement with Padilla, this was "a drama central to the idea of Spain as a nation," but also central to the idea of "Spanishness" in *la nueva México*, where Spanish in this context is about becoming colonial.[234] This is a new stage, *el llano*, and an entirely new audience that included Spanish women and children, but also, criollos, mestizos, and Indigenous peoples. This is not a stage or audience of Old World Spain, or even New Spain. This is a stage and audience of the uniquely diverse region of *la frontera*, here in the far reaches of North America and beyond the borders of New Spain in *el norte*. Read as Spanish masquerade on *la frontera*, this scene arrives in the most pivotal canto of the *Historia*: Canto XVI, entitled "How the Governor made a dwelling place in a town of barbarians to which was given the name of San Juan de los Caballeros" (and two cantos before the battle at Ácoma). What is the "jolly drama, well-composed" (16.104) that Villagrá recounts for the reader?

> *Regozijos de moros y Christianos,*
> *Con mucha artillería, cuio estruendo*

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[232] Bruce R. Smith, "Mouthpieces: Native American Voices in Thomas Harriot's *True and Brief Report of . . . Virginia,* Gaspar Pérez de Villagrá's *Historia de la Nuevo México,* and John Smith's *General History of Virginia*," in *New Literary History* 32 (2001): 515. As Smith argues, "The result of transforming the heard into the seen is an illusion of knowledge, in more ways than one."

[233] David Quint, *Epic and Empire: Poetics and Generic Form from Virgil to Milton* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 105.

[234] Padilla, *The Daring Flight of My Pen*, 66.

Causó notable espanto y maravilla
A muchos bravos bárvaros que abían
Venido por espías a espiarnos.
Y a ver las fuerzas y armas que alcazaban
Allí los Españoles, cuio brio
De ninguna nación fue más notado,
Como después veremos adelante,
Que de la fuerza de Acoma, que tuvo
Entre nosotros vna grande espía
Que muy larga razón llevó de todo. (16.105-116)

[Playing at Moors and Christians,
With much artillery, whose roar
Did cause notable fear and marveling
To many bold barbarians who had
Come there as spies to spy on us,
To see the strength and arms possessed
By the Spaniards, whose manliness
Was by no nation noted more,
As we shall see here further on,
Than by the folk of Ácoma, who had
There in our midst a mighty spy
Who took a long report of all he saw.]

To contextualize the historical (or old world) significance of the mock-battle, at least according to the scholars mentioned above, the reenactment, also known as the *Reconquista de España* [Reconquest of Spain], is "an *auto de entrada*," as Lamadrid explains, which was both celebratory of imperial power while also posing a real threat. And while scholars often refer to the mock-battle as participating in "Spanish narratives of conquest" (Ramón A. Gutiérrez), or define it as a "nationalistic drama" (Padilla), or even borrow the poet's words to describe it as "*'regozijos' de moros y christianos"* ['plays' of *moros and cristianos*] (Martín-Rodríguez), it is described here as Spanish masquerade.[235]

This Spanish masquerade of war operated as an imaginative tool that produced an aspect of colonial violence, where Spaniards performed an old battle for Ácoma warriors to "*see* the strength and arms possessed / By the Spaniards" who are now on Native terrain. What the Ácoma saw (and what the reader sees), however, is a very different kind of war that complicates history making in colonial writing. This mock-battle is misplaced on *el llano*, with the Spaniard donning a different costume in the play of *Moros y Cristianos*, while some Spaniards dressed in the full-body armor of the conquistador, other Spaniards dressed in ancient Arab robes. Excessively dressed and an extravagant sight—from head to foot, soldiers pretend combat with steel plates covering their bodies, faces fully masked, and some riding on horseback and firing harquebuses and canons, while other Spaniards carried scimitars or swords and donned turbans. This is a masquerade of some other war that aimed to demonstrate the consequence of resisting Spanish rule, even as it simulated the battle to medieval music, fireworks, and gunpowder.[236] The figure of the Conquistador thus signifies across historical

[235] See Ramón A. Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away: Marriage, Sexuality, and Power in New Mexico, 1500-1846* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991); Padilla, *Daring Flight of My Pen*; and Martín-Rodríguez, "400 Years of Literature and History in the United States."
[236] Padilla, "Hispanic Literary Traditions in New Mexico," *Platica* (Albuquerque, New Mexico, 2006).

time and place, in his pretending to be at and old war between *Moros y Cristianos* and a new war between *Ácomas y Cristianos*. The defeated are to be read as Ácoma warriors, with an "invented" Ácoma character of the "mighty spy" acting as messenger who will confirm the (performative) Spanish/Christian threat to the tribe of Ácoma.

Alongside Spanish masquerade is the poetic portrayal of Native masquerade, and just before the war at Ácoma. The poet tucks into this canto an incident in which an Indian trickster-figure, or a mysterious figure by the river who is not yet perceived to be Indian, who dons his own costume, frightens a group of Spaniards with his own theatrical (dis)play. Almost immediately after the staging of *Moros y Cristianos* and the narration of the escape of four Spanish soldiers (that included the execution of two for which Villagrá is later accused of), the poet describes the following:

> *En menos de tres horas los soldados.*
> *Pues yendo assí marchando, acaso vn día*
> *Abiendo hecho alto por las faldas*
> *De vna pequeña loma junto a vn Río*
> *Por vn repecho vieron que assomaba*
> *Vna figura humana con orejas*
> *De casi media vara y vn hozico*
> *Horrible por extreme y vna cola*
> *Que casi por el suelo le arrastraba,*
> *Bestido con vn justo muy manchado,*
> *De roja sangre todo bien teñico,*
> *Con vn arco y carcax, amenazando*
> *A toda vuestra gente con meneos,*
> *Saltos y con amagos nunca vistos.* (16.186-198)
>
> [Now, marching thus, by chance one day,
> A halt being made upon the skirts
> Of a small upland hard by the river,
> A human figure having ears
> Almost half a yard long and with a snout
> Extremely horrible, and with a tail
> That almost dragged upon the ground,
> Dressed in a tight garment, much stained,
> And all well-stained with red blood,
> With bow and quiver, threatening
> All of your folk with gestures,
> With leaps and such capers as ne'er were seen.]

The poet sustains the inability of the Spaniards to unmask the Indian in disguise. Rendered as a "humorous description," as interpreted by Encinias, the language of the text also presents a malicious figure that is dangerous, frightening, and evil. In this scene, the Ácoma warrior is "passing" as a mysterious figure that challenges the theatrical (dis)play of Spanish masculinity and violence, for all its arrogance and "strength and arms possessed." "Extremely horrible," the poet describes, standing before the soldiers was a "human figure" but not Indian. What the Spaniards saw at first was not *la bárbara burla de aquel bruto* (16.209) [the barbarian humor of that brute], or so the poet admits upon the unmasking of the Pueblo Indian. What the Spaniards saw was some other "human figure" who was "Dressed in a tight garment, much stained, / And all well-stained with red

blood," who carried a "bow and quiver" as its weapon and seeking its next victims. Such stories of mysterious and dangerous figures, and evil ones, were told across the Southwest and during earlier expeditions; in fact, the story of *mala cosa* [evil thing] in Cabeza de Vaca's *La Relación* (1542), also a mysterious figure yet who dismembered its victims only to reattach their limbs with surgical procedures, is reminiscent of the Pueblo Indian in disguise. Mercedes Junquera Gòmez argues that perhaps in these lines is the first documentation by a European of the sacred clown figure of Pueblo religious dances.[237] Yet what had this mysterious figure meant in the European colonial imagination? After all, as the poet confesses, this figure exercised a degree of authority over Spaniards, as terrorist, as torturer, and perhaps even as parodist to the (dis)plays of Spanish masquerade.

What follows, the poet writes, upon the ordering of the Sergeant, is the realization of a performance by an Pueblo Indian in disguise, with the Spaniards entertaining the act:

> *Por cuia causa juntos se mostraron*
> *Alebrestados, tímidos, cobardes,*
> *Fingiendo se escondían temerosos*
> *Entre la misma ropa que llevaban.* (16.210-213)
>
> [Wherefore, huddled together, they did act
> Extremely fearful, all timid, cowardly,
> Pretending they hid themselves in fear
> Among the very clothing that they wore.]

Only after the Spaniards realize what *it* was, do they engage in a trick themselves by participating and acting as if still afraid and duped. The Spaniards then, *le cogieron / Y la mascara luego le quitaron* (16. 216-217) [seized him / And then they took his mask away], a scene that Padilla reads as the Indian being "stripped and shamed," for here he states is colonial humiliation, but perhaps more so in the form of retaliation after thus having been duped.[238] The poet preserves this moment of masquerade on the Spaniards as an act of social authority enacted by the Pueblo Indian in disguise, for he had duped the Spaniards, as the poet writes, "With leaps and such capers as ne'er were seen." In this instance, the Spaniards (mis)read the extravagant performance of a Pueblo Indian who passes and plays with Spanish vulnerability. Here, the Pueblo Indian is masquerading "Indianness," as an extreme response to the play of Spaniards masquerading "Europeanness."

As in the *Historia*, Smith's *Historie* also presents a discussion around the (dis)play of war in terms of masquerade, and from both a European and (imagined) Native perspective. Immediately, though, and during his first encounter with Powhatan, Smith introduces the figure of the Native in disguise. After having been captured by Powhatans, taken prisoner, and then almost executed, Powhatan is introduced in *A True Relation* as follows, "their Emperour proudly lying upon a Bedstead a foote high upon tenne or twelve Mattes, richly hung with manie Chaynes of great Pearles about his necke, and covered with a great Covering of *Rahaughcums*" (1.53). Then, "Two dayes after" Pocahontas saved Smith, Powhatan reenters the text in extravagant disguise:

> Powhatan having disguised himselfe in the most fearefullest manner he could, caused Captaine Smith to be brought forth to a great house in the woods, and there upon a

[237] Mercedes Junquera Gómez, "Introducción," in *Historia de la Nueva México, 1610*, ed. Mercedes Junquera Gómez (Madrid: Historia 16, 1989), 51.
[238] Ibid., 153. Also see Padilla, *The Daring Flight of My Pen*, 74-75.

> mat by the fire to be left alone. Not long after from behinde a mat that divided the house, was made the most dolefullest noyse he ever heard; then Powhatan more like a devil then a man with some two hundred more as blacke as himselfe, came unto him and told him now they were friends, and presently he should goe to James towne, to send him two great gunnes, and a gryndstone, for which he would give him the Country of Capahowosick, and for ever esteeme him as his sonne Nantaquoud. (1.151)

The entire scene above, in addition to the details of Pocahontas saving Smith, is not narrated in *A True Relation*, all of which replace the conversation between Powhatan and Smith about, as he writes, "the cause of our comming," to which Smith argues was a result of "being in fight with the Spaniards our enemie, beeing over powred, near put to retreat." The letter and the *Historie*, read together, however, provide a specific knowledge around the Native world that Smith imagines through a lens that perceives experience as an opportunity to enhance his character: this is about personal ego, not a national one. Still, both texts tell a story of encounter, with the *letter* concentrating on the (national) contest with Spaniards, and the *Historie* concentrating on a (personal) contest with Natives. Read together, then, the letter and the *Historie* provide Smith's shift in personality from 1608 to 1624, indeed, a protagonist in both stories always at work in masquerading "Europeanness" across Native terrain, yet at stake in the latter is his reputation for the annals of time. The scene added to the *Historie* exaggerates the figure of Powhatan, borrowing the trope of the Indian in extravagant disguise in order to re-introduce the leader as a malicious and evil figure of his own masquerade. Here, the survival of the protagonist is made extraordinary, as he stands before the "subtill Savage," as *his* captive—even though saved by his "dearest daughter" (1.194). The portrait of Powhatan allows Smith to structure an argument that enhances his character's performance and ability to negotiate with not just any Native, but a leader of a nation and a figure in extravagant disguise who was "more like a devil than a man" and who sat among a military force of "some two hundred more as blacke as himselfe." Smith's new story includes a racial demarcation, in which Powhatan is "blacke" but also not too "blacke" for the white European to connect with, allows Smith to present his character with a unique skill of "passing"—not too English, not too Native—in order to establish relations with a leader also (dis)playing his own arrogance in an effort to cheat the English of their "gunnes and swords."

The *Historie* unfolds a series of conversations between Smith and Powhatan, with a dialogue that stresses what Fuller calls "the English problem"; in other words, the continued disagreement over Powhatan's eagerness to gain control over English dependence on technologies of power (firepower, swords, harquebuses) by enticing Smith with the difference between Corne and Copper.[239] Attached to this disagreement, as ventriloquized through Powhatan, is "the *native* problem" that is, the probability of the Virginian Company establishing a permanent settlement *and* the problematic (dis)play of Europeans armed for war. The long speeches and dramatic constructs that overwhelm the *Historie* are epic speeches that we also find in Villagrá's *Historia*. Smith, too, utilizes Native voice as a narrative device to address and articulate the challenges of establishing peaceful relations. At the center of European and Native relations, is the (dis)play of arms in terms of masquerade. Considering the gap between the time Villagrá and Smith were soldiers and when they began to (as Bruce Smith states) "quote what purport to be direct first-person speeches," for us, as readers responsible to history, we should approach Native speech with caution since the captains-as-historians re-created historical figures into carefully constructed characters to "fit"

[239] Fuller, *Voyages in Print,* 115-117.

narrative structure and argument.[240] Alongside ideological figurations of European and Native power is a critique of extravagant (dis)plays of military power in the European-Native plot of peace and war.[241] *It*—might we call *it* "masquerading war"—exemplifies failure. Let us remain with Smith and Powhatan before turning to Villagrá and the epic speeches invented for the Ácoma leader, Zutacapan.

During a later encounter with Powhatan, with Smith this time calling him a "subtill Savage," Smith reveals the leader's concern with English settlement while also commenting on his own ability to detect Powhatan's lies: "he began to aske us when we would be gone: fayning he sent not for us, neither had he any corne; and his people much lesse: yet for fortie swords he would procure us fortie Baskets" (1.194). In response, Smith states, "how it chanced he became so forgetfull," pointing to Powhatan's manipulative efforts to acquire "gunnes and swords" in his taunting the visibly hungry English with baskets of corn (1.194). Before Smith provides a rebuttal, he comments on Powhatan's rhetorical play around bartering: "the King concluded the matter with a merry laughter, asking for our Commodities, but none he liked without gunnes and swords, valuing a Basket of Corne more precious then a Basket of Copper" (1.194). Powhatan articulates a ruse around English survival, "saying he could eate his Corne, but not the Copper" (1.194). Smith reminds Powhatan of other offerings the English have provided the Natives, shifting to a discourse initiated by Powhatan, that of *friendship* and *love*. Smith states, "'As for swords and gunnes, I told you long agoe I had none to spare; and you must know those I have can keepe me from want: yet steale or wrong you I will not, nor dissolve that friendship we have mutually promised, except you constraine me by our bad usage'" (1.195). Smith assures Powhatan that his refusal to trade "swords and gunnes" should not affect their "friendship"; however, the line, "except you constraine me by our bad usage," speaks to Smith's realization and confrontation of Powhatan's cunningness to manipulate "trade for trifles." In reply, Powhatan informs Smith of "the *native* problem" with an English (dis)play of arms: it signals *war*, not *friendship* and/or *love*. "'Yet Captaine Smith,'" Powhatan begins,

> "… some doubt I have of your comming hither, that makes me not so kindly seeke to relieve you as I would: for many doe informe me, your comming hither is not for trade, but to invade my people, and possesse my Country, who dare not come to bring you corne, seeing you thus armed with your men. To free us of this feare, leave aboord your weapons, for here they are needlesse, we being all friends, and for ever Powhatans." (1.195)

Powhatan agrees with Smith's assertion regarding "friendship" as "mutually promised," but contests or tests Smith on his own rhetorical usage of the agreement: the (dis)play of weapons equals "feare" not "friendship." There is a link Powhatan creates between the words *friends* and *Powhatans*: here, friendship is not associated with Englishness but with compliance to Indianness. Powhatan tells Smith, "'Captaine Smith, you may understand that I having seene the death of all my people thrice, and not any one living of those three generations but my selfe; I know the difference of Peace and Warre better than any in my Country. … What can you get by warre, when we can hide our provisions and fly to the woods?'" (1.196). Powhatan's speech or "expostulation," offers a

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[240] See Smith, "Mouthpieces," 507.

[241] Padilla, *The Daring Flight of My Pen*, 73. Full passage reads: "Villagrá's poem locates itself in a world misapprehended and ravaged by his countrymen, but against this imperial stupidity he describes native people in verse that bespeaks admiration. Such a vision is only partial, unsustainable in the Spanish imagination quite simply because empire will not allow it. Villagrá's poem both portrays and exemplifies this failure."

"difference between Peace and Warre," he further argues: "Let us therefore assure you of our loves, and every yeare our friendly trade shall furnish you with Corne; and now also, if you would come in friendly manner to see us, and not thus with your guns and swords as to invade your foes" (1.196). Smith's response is a strategic shift that complicates Powhatan's rhetorical masquerade:

> "…that had we intended you any hurt, long ere this we could have effected it. Your people coming to James Towne are entertained with their Bows and Arrows without any exceptions; we esteeming it with you as it is with us, to weare our armes as our apparel. As for the danger of our enemies, in such warrse consist our chiefest pleasure: for your riches we have no use: as for the hiding your provision, or by your flying to the woods, we shall not so unadvisedly starve as you conclude, your friend care in that behalf in needlesse, for we have a rule to finde beyond your knowledge." (1.196)

Of course, Powhatan's foresight turns out to be true: starvation almost ruined Jamestown, still the story of the "Starving Time" feel upon the English soon after Smith returned to England. Through the ventriloquized voice of Powhatan, Smith responds to a history fourteen years after the fact, and also poses another inquiry: English relations with Natives failed because of an English dependency on Natives, and its very refusal to follow a Smith model, as now laid forth on the page.

Native speeches in early histories cannot be easily accepted as entirely loyal to the actual historical dialogue that took place. Certainly, there is a narrative intent in creating suspense, tension, and fear. There is also the desire for a justification of a successful conquest or even its failure. What are we to make of the narrative space that Smith allows Powhatan to occupy in the *Historie* and in the English imagination? Smith succeeded in his relations with Natives, but his *writerly masquerade* follows a tradition of turning real historical figures into extreme characterizations with such vivid detail that speak to narrative plot more than ethnographic documentation. Specifically, Native speeches act as dramatic literary constructs; they are not only invented, they are *epic* speeches. Villagrá, too, renders such elaborate characterizations in the *Historia*; however, his dramatic constructs arrive much earlier than Smith, with Villagrá thus initiating and asserting that tradition on American soil and in American writing. Here, too, is Spanish influence in the performative assertion of colonial writing.

Spanish imagination introduces "the Native problem" of Europeans entering Native terrain fully costumed and armed, (dis)playing signs of war. Through the (invented) voice of one of Acoma's tribal chiefs, Zutacapan, and the (invented) voice the twenty-two year old Zutancalpo, the poet overwhelms the page with Native dialogue during a tribal council in response to Spanish military threat, suggesting a perspective of Native over-reading of the costumed Spaniard and as signifying violence *versus* the un-costumed Native as signifying non-violence. The dialogue articulates a fundamental logic of war and peace, knowledge in terms of contest and conquest that is also emphasized in Smith's *Historie*. Villagrá's poetic imagining of Native speech illustrates opposing perspectives within the tribal council, what Murrin describes as a "generational division at Ácoma" on the topic of war and peace, but, I would like to add, a specific conversation around the costumed Spaniard.[242] The difference between Villagrá and Smith is that the former illustrates a dispute between father and son, while the latter presents a dispute between European-Captain and Native-Chief. In *Historia*, the son accuses the father of over-reading Spanish threat from atop of the Ácoma

[242] Murrin, *History and Warfare in Renaissance Epic*, 220. Murrin explains the "generational division" as: "The *old* favor war; the *young*, who must fight it, oppose," and what follows Zutacapan's declaration for war is an "opposition within a fictional Indian family."

mesa. Similar to Smith's characterization of Powhatan, Villagrá characterizes Zutacapan as "treacherous" and the main instigator of war. Through the perspective of Zutacapan, however, the poet offers the reader a perspective of Spanish *entrada* and threat from a tribal leader. Still, the poet imposes *his* Native vision of Spanish military presence of excessively costumed soldiers:

> *"¿No sentís los clarines y las cajas*
> *De la soberbia gente Castellana*
> *Que a toda priessa viene ya marchando?*
> *Quál es aquél que piensa de vosotros*
> *Quedar con libertad si aquéstos llegan,*
> *¿Estando como estamos descuidados?*
> *Tomad, tomad, las armas y esperemos*
> *La intención, mala o Buena, con que vienen …"* (18.43-50)
>
> ["Do you not hear the trumpets and the drums
> Of those haughty Castilian folk
> Who now come marching in all haste?
> What one of you is there who thinks
> To keep his liberty if they arrive,
> Being, as we are, all unprepared?
> Take, take your arms and let us wait
> The intention, good or bad, with which they come…"]

Native speech is imagined, contrived even, not just to "fit" an epic trajectory, but to justify war at Ácoma, and tangled in the narration is a conflicting and powerful image of the extravagantly costumed Spaniard ready for war. There emerges on the page a (mis)reading of the non-threatening Spaniard entering Native terrain while donning the costume of war. This is not a reenactment, nor is it a masquerade, but what is played out for the reader is the visual cause and effect of war, not peace. This is about a father's precaution, not necessarily Native compliance to Spanish threat: the extravagantly costumed Spaniard in military attire suggests threat, violence, and war. These are soldiers dressed in colonial Spanish armor, that is, in full regalia, that should not to be confused as Spanish masquerade. This was not a staged performance of *Moros y Critianos*, the Spaniards were marching towards Ácoma.

The emphasis on the image of the Spaniard dressed for war is a major theme in Native speech. On the one hand, the argument presented from the perspective of the elder, allows the poet to avoid implicating himself and the other Spaniards as initiating the war, yet this "imperial vision" in a moment of self-reflection is carefully juxtaposed with the son's logic; of course, the poet imposes *his* rationale for the youth's antiwar politic. The son tells the council:

> *Bien os consta que entraron los Castillas,*
> *Según grandes guerreros, en la tierra*
> *Bien preevnidos todos, con cuidado,*
> *La noche toda en peso, con sus velas,*
> *Sabemos duermen juntos bien armados,*
> *Y en pueblos que han entrado conozemos*
> *Que en paz gustosa a todos los dexaron.*
> *Pues si ellos alcanzasen que nosotros*
> *Las sossegadas armas lebantamos,* (18.115-123)

["'Tis evident enough to you that the Spaniards
Entered into the land like great warriors,
All well on guard, very careful,
All the entire night with their guards out,
And in the towns that they have entered we know
That they have left all men in pleasant peace.
But if they come to know that we
Are taking up our arms, that were at peace,
Coming, as they will come, forewarned,
Who doubts war will be certain in our home?"]

The son argues that for the pueblo to reflect a similar image of Natives dressed for war could only lead to war. The critique proposed in the text reads as the poet's imperial vision, a discourse and rhetoric imposed upon a muted story—a Native perspective we do not know—in the form of an imagined dialogue between father and son in regards to Spanish colonial troops in full regalia. The poet is identifying a common knowledge here, which is worth considering, not as a possible Native perspective, but rather as a colonial mirror that reflects the *extravagant Spaniard* dressed for war. The imagined Native dialogue, we can argue, is evidence of Villagrá creating or acceding to *la leyenda negra*; that is, a narrative (dis)play of Spanish trespassing and instigating notions of war. What the poet places before the reader a conception of violence attached to the extravagant costume that is (mis)read by the Native father and his son. What their dialogue as a colonial mirror of opposition to Spanish imperialism reflects is the fundamental nature of Spanish barbarity. That here, on *el llano*, the band of Spaniards marching towards and impregnable mass and fortress of Ácoma, was the image of impending "Spanish assault," yet as represented on the page, as Padilla explains, as a "structured debate following the classical model so as to present alternate ideologies, competing social philosophies, and, though it may appear self-serving, to give voice to indigenous responses to the Spanish military threat."[243] An indigenous response that, is not rendered by a complicit and loyal *poet* to the Crown, but a *poet* conflicted with the ideologies of empire and the definitions and boundaries in a culture of violence that Spaniards initiated in the New World with threatening theatrics, fearful costumes of armor, and artillery that could only indicate the universal message of war.

In terms of performance and passing and extravagant (dis)plays in the masquerade of war, in each of these texts, whether Spanish or English, Native speech overwhelms the narrative telling, certainly acting as a historical and/or literary strategy for representing how war happened or happens and who is at fault. The imaginative characterizations of Native figures and Native voice, call attention to the Europeanization of the Native other, specifically for the various ways that the play of rhetorics and tactics through ventriloquization allow the captains to denounce the violence of colonial wars and justify imperial expansion, even if those eloquent speeches are beyond the ability of European interpretation.[244] The captains thus turn history into an illusion of cultural knowledge, offering extensive narrative space to elaborate Native characterizations and epic speeches. On the one hand, tucked into these histories is the strategic appropriation of the opponent

[243] Padilla, *The Daring Flight of My Pen*, 99.

[244] Even with translators, Villagrá and Smith could not have accurately interpreted Keres or eastern-Algonquian. Although Smith and Villagrá knew some vocabulary, Smith more than Villagrá, since he was held captive in the Powhatan village for about four weeks, the narrative perspective they purport as Native speech reads as a discourse of imperial bias specific to the European colonial plot of conquest.

of war in a frame that justifies a larger political and personal agenda, in which the captains depend on the Native other for definition. On the other hand, tucked into theses histories is a ghosting of Spanishness, as a trope of Spanish colonial viciousness and a threatening and powerful image of the Spaniard as extravagantly costumed and masquerading across vast terrain in the Americas. The Spanish figure masquerading war is used to dramatic narrative effects, by Villagrá, specifically in epic speeches as ventriloquized through central Native characters, and by Smith, since he later appropriates Villagrá's epic speeches in the characterization of his central Native characters. What if we read Smith's *Historie* as following in the tradition set much earlier by Villagrá? The degree to which the extravagantly armored Spaniard is presented on these early histories, to thrill but also to terrify—whether in real acts of war or theatrical (dis)plays of war in order to establish superiority and thus mobility against Native courage and hostility—is the measure of a burgeoning Spanish presence at the Souths, but also, the continued racial blackening of the Spaniard, and a ghosting of Spanishness in colonial writing that would persist as a central theme in the literature of America.

5. A Ghosting of Spanishness in Villagrá's *Historia* and Smith's *Historie*

Bringing together the histories of these captains is about piecing together a missing *historia* in the longer narrative of North America's very beginning. Trapped in the imagination of our European explorers is Spanish distraction, as a ghosting of Spanishness on the page that was made central in the drama of New World discovery. Therein lies a cultural knowledge around Spanishness, that is, as a problematic presence across North America that cannot be so easily dismissed. Even on the final pages of Villagrá's *Historia* and Smith's *Historie* lies a conversation about Spanishness, with each captain, in their own writerly way, constructing an argument in response to the role of Spanish figureheads in the colonial imagination, and questioning the looming influence of Spain in the New World, for its magnitude, its destruction, its presence, its ghosting. The captains thus cast in their final narrative thought a final attentiveness around Spanishness, as a haunting reality that persisted and marked the pages of history they wrote. Is there a degree of retraction in the final lines of their histories—for the poet is it shame, for the prose writer is it authority? When Villagrá left the New World—with Ácoma burned to the ground, and the two warriors all cursing Spanish descendants—*la nueva México* seemed cursed. And, it turns out, when Smith left the New World—having suffered "grievous" wounds perhaps "accidentallie" castrated, and with the "Starving Time" awaiting Virginia—"Virginia seemed cursed."[245]

There is a real preoccupation with genealogy in the final pages, in addition to a desire to project a future that propels a different historical paradigm. As for Villagrá, his final lines challenge and erase Spanish dominance in his refusal to end the poem with a heroic image of the expedition's figurehead, Oñate; instead, he cripples Spanish power and presence at Ácoma through the words of two warriors who curse Spanish descendants. In Smith's case, his final lines challenge and (as best as he can) erase Spanish influence in his effort to rewrite English thought as distinct and not forever wed to a Columbian legacy; instead, he introduces an image of English power and presence in North America. In the final lines of their histories, Villagrá and Smith refuse to celebrate Spanish colonialism, offering the reader a message of resistance against all things Spain: the mere reference to things Spanish is the ghosting. Thus, the captains cannot escape a Columbian and Spanish legacy in the Americas; they cannot create a different inheritance, nor provide the reader a different cultural logic outside of Spain's long shadow. Despite their writerly pleas in the final lines, the dark drama that unfolds at Ácoma *and* much later in Jamestown are colonial historiographies marked with curses and death.

[245] Lemay, *The American Dream of Captain John Smith*, 80.

Villagrá closes the poem with the suicide of two Ácoma warriors, leaving the reader to ponder the words of Tempal and Cotumbo as the two form a haunting image that ends the epic. He does not end with the words of the figurehead of the expedition, since Oñate's presence fades much earlier in the epic, with his authority becoming more like a shadow or ghosting presence upon soldiers who, as Padilla writes, "felt a foolhardy leader had exploited and duped them."[246] Villagrá refuses to end with the epic's supposed hero of the invocation, even though earlier in the poem, Villagrá provides the details of Oñate's "New World mestizo genealogy," as Padilla phrases, from which the figurehead descends: Don Cristobal de Oñate, Don Juan's father *que fue casado / Con viznieta del Rey, hija que he dicho / Del buen Marques, de cuio tronco nace* (6.61-63). ["who was wed / To the King's great-granddaughter, the cited daughter / Of the good Marquis, from whose stock was born."][247] Like his father then, Oñate is a *decendiente, / De todos estos Reyes, y no Reyes* (6. 64-65). ["descendant / Of all these Kings and non-Kings."] Although Oñate marches into *la nueva México* as *mestizo*—a figurehead linking Aztec, Spanish, and Mexican origins, but also, a character passing as purely Spanish while embodying the diversity of cultural otherness—Villagrá's real preoccupation with lineage in the poem emphasizes how Oñate chooses to act the role/blood of masculine privilege versus an Indigenous maternal heritage. In agreement with Luis Leal, "Villagrá presents Oñate, as the son of kings, a descendent of Cortés and Moctezuma, representatives of the two cultures that, upon uniting, gave form and spirit to the resultant Mexican nationality," yet the poet also presents how Spanishness erases Oñate's indigeneity.[248] He is the next Spaniard in line, even if a descendant of Cortés *and* Moctezuma, It is Oñate's Spanish lineage, his role as "only the symbolic figurehead of a greater force in the poem," and his descendants that, through a polyvocal voice from Ácoma's greatest warriors, Tempal and Cotumbo, that Villagrá ends with the cursing of the next Spaniards in line to follow their leader.[249]

In Villagrá's closing lines, he brings something to an end, as does Smith in his closing lines. Perhaps both propose a new beginning, as defiance towards Spanish imperialism. Smith ends his *Historie* with an attempt to diminish and propose a non-Columbian trajectory for future explorers. In "The Sixth Book," the closing paragraph presents a portrait of Smith, with a message that has been referred to as "not a real ending" to the "unpartiall Reader." He reflects doubt on the "present estate of New-Plimoth," stating a final plea to the reader or "practitioner in those affaires," who will take up his volume and follow *his* lead. In mid-breath of the long paragraph, Smith re-examines Colón's project—this time forgetting Cabot—to question the certainty of his design, promising "no Mines of gold" but promising "more certainty and facility" with fish:

> …that thus freely have throwne myself with my mite into the Treasury of my Countries good, not doubting but God will stirre up some noble spirits to consider and examine if worthy Columbus could give the Spaniards any such certainties for his designe, when Queene Isabel of Spaine set him forth with 15. saile, and though I promise no Mines of gold, yet the warlike Hollanders let us imitate but not hate, whose wealth and strength are good testimonies of their treasury gotten by fishing;

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246 Padilla, *The Daring Flight of My Pen*, 12.

247 Ibid,, 40.

248 Luis Leal and Ilan Stavans, *A Luis Leal Reader, Latino Voices* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2007), 101.

249 Phil Jaramillo, "The Heroic Image in Gaspar de Villagrá's *Historia de la N[u]eva Méxcio*," in *Bilingual Review/La Revista Bilingüe* 19.1 (1994): 39-47. The full quotation reads: "Oñate is only the symbolic figurehead of a greater force in the poem: the Zaldivars, the Augilars, the Romeros, and even our poet-soldier, Villagrá."

> and New-England hath yielded already by general computation one hundred thousand pounds at the least. Therefore honourable and worth Country men, let not the meannesse of the word fish distaste you, for it will afford as good gold as the Mines of Guiana of Potassie, with lesse hazard and charge, and more certainty and facility. (3.474)

Smith's reference to Colón marks the end of something: the end of Spain's false testimonies of *El Dorado*, and of Sir Walter Ralegh's own *El Dorado*, 'the Mines of Guiana or Potassie'. Smith is training the reader to become investors, and to rethink a strategy of certainty by altering the search: fish versus gold. In these lines, Smith is as preoccupied with Colón as he is Walter Ralegh, to challenge Fuller's argument, even as I agree with her: "Spain is hardly an issue in Smith's text; the real nexus of rivalry and conflict is closer to home. … Walter Ralegh and the colony at Roanoke."[250] In these final lines of *Historie*, however, Smith makes reference to both Spanish and English predecessors, attempting to cast his name in the genealogy of early American explorers, while also recasting an English "designe" to resist any and all earlier models of Spanish *and* English influence and its obsessive search for gold. Here, in these final lines, is the shadow of the imperial power that initiated it all, still shaping the cultural imaginary and functioning as "a kind of psychologic preoccupation."[251] Even if Smith's "designe" for England (fish versus gold) arrives nearly a decade after the extreme chaos that ensured during "Starving Time" at Jamestown, not long after his departure, from the beginning his central concern was what to do with starved men. "John Smith left Virginia," as Donegan describes, "just as the conflict germinated."[252]

> Earlier in Jamestown's history, John Smith had tried to make Englishmen speak an incomprehensible language by teaching them the words "Mowchick woyawgh tawgh noeragh kaquere mecher," which meant, "I am very hungry. What shall I eate?" (302). No matter how foreign those Algonquian words may have sounded in settlers' mouths, they could not have been as alien as this cry in their native English: "We are starved! We are starved!" issued from the mouths of skeletons and released into the foul air.[253]

"Virginia seemed cursed," with the bodies of Englishmen turning into skeletons—the walking dead—thoroughly emaciated and made figures of famine: "the living become almost ghostly," as Donegan phrases.[254] Rightfully so, then, "Virginia was death."[255] But so, too, was Ácoma, after Spaniards invaded the *mesa* to avenge the death of Oñate's nephew, murdering hundreds and burning the town to the ground: a "surreal deathscape they have made," as Padilla describes.[256] Hundreds of Ácoma lay dead on the mesa floor, what had been called by Zaldivar, a the *sepulcro más pomposo* (33.404) ["pompous sepulcher"] and those who survived the battle—men, women, and children—were taken prisoner, tried for murder, found guilty, and sentenced to twenty years of servitude. For men over the age of twenty-five, Oñate ordered the amputation of one foot. The

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[250] Fuller, *Voyages in Print*, 136.
[251] DeGuzmán, *Spain's Long Shadow*, xxxiii.
[252] Donegan, *Seasons of Misery*, 91.
[253] Ibid., 104.
[254] See Lemay, *The American Dream of Captain John Smith*, 81. See Donegan, *Seasons of Misery*, 104.
[255] Lemay, *The American Dream of Captain John Smith*, 81.
[256] Padilla, *The Daring Flight of My Pen*, 118.

town was then burned: "sad homes ablaze, smoke rising into the sky." Ácoma, like Virginia, was death.

But, in the remaining pages of the poem, the Spaniards are cursed by two of the "most valiant" Ácoma warriors: Tempal and Cotumbo. In the final canto—(its title worth quoting in full, since it narrates a series of events before the climactic ending of the poem), Canto XXXIV, "How the fortress of Acoma continued to burn and how Zutacapan was found dead from a great wound, and of other events which happened until the news of the victory was carried to the Governor, and of the deaths of Tempal and Cotumbo"—the bonded pair are introduced in their failure to pass as Indians from another pueblo, with the Spaniards then capturing them and imprisoning them upon their being "outed" by "friendly barbarians" from a neighboring tribe: *Con mascara de paz, los dos fingieron, / Como hastutos cosarios, que ellos eran / De allá la tierra adentro* (34.245-247). ["The two did feign, behind a mask of peace, / Like astute pirates, that they were natives / From far within the land…".] The Spaniards learn that these two passing Indians of another tribe are Ácoma's best warriors:

> *Eran de los más bravos y valientes*
> *Que Acoma mostraron y pusieron*
> *La cólera en sup unto y lebantaron*
> *El sossegado fuerte ya perdido.* (34.264-267)
>
> [Were of the bravest and most valiant
> That Acoma could show and they had raised
> The outbreak to its highest point and roused
> The peaceful fortress that was now destroyed.]

After barricading themselves in a kiva for three days, the pair finally surrender, requesting *"Sendos cuchillos botos, que nosotros / Aquí vuestras gargantas hartaremos / Privándonos de vida"* (34. 283-85). ["'two blunt knifes, one for each, that we / May here appease our throats for you, Taking our lives ourselves.'"] Rather than to be killed *En manos tan infames y tan viles* (34. 288-290). ["'In hands so infamous and vile / As are your hands, which we despise'."] The Spaniards provide nooses, and before the warriors leap to their death, they state the following message in unison to surrounding Spanish still costumed for war:

> *"Soldados, adverted que aquí colgados*
> *Destos rollizos troncos os dexamos*
> *Los miserable cuerpos por despojos*
> *De la victoria illustre que alcanzastes*
> *De aquellos desdichados que podridos*
> *Están sobre su sangre rebolcados,*
> *Sepúlcro que tomaron porque quiso*
> *Assí fortuna infame perseguirnos*
> *Con mano ponderosa y acabarnos.*
> *Gustosos quedaréis que ya cerramos*
> *Las puertas al vivir y nos partimos*
> *Y libres nuestras tierras os dexamos.*
> *Dormid a sueño suelto, pues ninguno*
> *Bolvío jamás con nueva del camino*
> *Incierto y trabajoso que llevamos.*

Mas de vna cosa ciertos os hazemos,
Que si bolver podemos a vengarnos
Que no parieron madres Castellans,
Ni bárvaras tampoco, en todo el mundo
Más desdichados hijos que a vosotros." (34.345-364)

"Soldiers, take note that hanging here
From these strong tree trunks we leave you
Our miserable bodies as spoils
Of the illustrious victory you won
Over those wretched ones who are
Rotting amid their weltering blood,
The sepulcher they chose since infamous
Fortune chose so to pursue us
With powerful hand and end our days.
You will remain joyful for we now close
The doors of life and take our leave,
And freely leave to you our lands.
Sleep sure and safe because no one
Ever returned with news about the road,
Uncertain and laborious, we now take,
But yet of one thing we do assure you:
That if we can return for our vengeance,
Castilian mothers shall not bear,
Barbarian either, throughout all the world,
Sons more unfortunate than all of you."

How are we to read the voice of warriors, where erasure and silence of the other is reconstructed, only to be made indispensible within poetic structures and colonial language? Here is a "staged suicide" that we also find in Spanish classics that Villagrá modeled, in particular, as Quint has argued, Alonso de Ercilla's *Araucana* (1569, 1578, 1589): a Chilean war story, in which Villagrá is a distant relative (descendant) of Don Francisco de Villagrá, a hero-conquistador of Chile in Ercilla's poem.[257] Indeed, Villagrá knew he was next in line, drawing parallels between Ercilla's epic and his own.

What had this curse and subsequent narration of a staged suicide meant to Villagrá, for both the hanging bodies of Natives and the nautical imagery of their souls passing into the world beyond, not just as epic trope, but as epic *historia*? In the creation of "formal closure," what is intended in the representation of native *defiance* and as a threat to Spanish control and imaginative power, where self-execution shames the act of Spanish colonial violence on and off the page?[258] Tempal and Cotumbo dupe the Spaniards in their "passing" as other Pueblo Indians, then stage a hunger protest, resist murder at the hands of Spaniards, and refuse to leave the epic until cursing the Spaniards and their descendants. Locked into the Spanish colonial imagination is a haunting portrait of hanging bodies: a message visible to the Spanish, and now the reader. The poet not only compares the warriors to "the strong brothers of Carthage," but their message echoes the words that Jesus Christ told the Women of Jerusalem: "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and for

[257] Padilla, *The Daring Flight of My Pen*, 120. See Quint, *Epic and Empire*, 101-102.
[258] Quint, *Epic and Empire*, 104.

your children. For the time will come when you will say, 'Blessed are the barren women, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!'" (Luke 23: 28-31). In this biblical reference through the voices of Tempal and Cotumbo, the poet returns to a preoccupation with lineage, for here in this biblical image the curse of barren women is the consequence of sin. The effort here is to re-think the trope as instead rendering the ideology of the common Spanish soldier. It is not Jesus or an angry God cursing the Spaniards, but two common soldiers. A curse of barrenness that conjures the image of the Spanish figure as decadent colonial, and a soldier that failed to conquer the mesa even till this day.

What remains on the page is a conflicted imagination: that of the soldier against that of the poet, as represented in the portrayals of the two hanging bodies. The first is of the soldier:

> *Y assí, rabiosos, bravos, desembueltos,*
> *Saltando en vago, juntos se arrojaron,*
> *Y en blanco ya los ojos, trastornados,*
> *Sueltas las coiunturas y remisos*
> *Los poderosos nierbios y costados,*
> *Vertiendo espumarajos, descubrieron*
> *Las escondidas lenguas regordidas*
> *Y entre sus mismos dientes apretadas.* (34.365-372)
>
> Thus raving, angry, all heedless,
> Together they both leapt out into space,
> And now their eyes, turned back, displayed the whites,
> Their joints were all loosened and slack,
> As were their mightly thews and sides.
> Spurting out foam they discovered
> Their hidden tongues, now all swollen
> And tightly clenched between their teeth.

The second is the portrayal render through the poet, with the bodies performing what the poet describes as "a harsh and severe pass" from this life into the next: perhaps the echo of this pass reflects that of the soldier-to-poet, the crossing over into *la frontera*, of being *de aquí y de allá*. The nautical language and imagery that the poet crafts a powerful image of Indian souls departing from the colonial world:

> *Y assí, qual suelen dos bajeles sueltos*
> *Rendir la ancha borda, afrenillando*
> *La gruessa palamenta y en vn punto,*
> *Las espumosas proas apagadas,*
> *En jolito se quedan, assí, juntos,*
> *Sesgos y sin moverse se rindieron*
> *Y el aliento de vida allí apagaron.* (34.373-379)
>
> And, as may two separate and free vessels,
> Lower their broad main sails and bridle up
> The mighty banks of oars and all at once
> The foaming prows do come to rest
> And all is calm, so, together,

Calm, without motion, they remain
And there give up the breath of life.

The contrasting memory of the bodies, hanging from the tree versus two free vessels, presents a divergence between what the soldier saw versus what the poet now sees. Is this the transformed soldier-as-poet in the final lines of the *Historia*, in which the second image (what the poet now sees) creates another passage? In this world the two men are still hanging, their lifeless bodies acting as a message, not to other natives, but to the Spanish soldiers still dressed for war, and to the reader still reading Spanish masquerade.

* * * * *

The long shadow of *la leyenda negra* haunts the pages of Villagrá's *Historia* as much as it haunts the pages of Smith's *Historie*; a necessary comparative reading between Spanish and English texts that not only fulfills a historical (and literary) gap but unmasks the degree to which Spanish masquerade shaped North America's very beginning. The figure of the Spanish decadent colonial was a real historical character, not only trespassing across the borderlands but also the deep Souths, with its many contradictions and transformations that shaped the cultural imaginary in the decades and centuries to follow. The story told between Villagrá's *Historia* and Smith's *Historie* is that of a Spanish past that marked the borderspaces of *la nueva México* and Virginia. Understanding how his *historia* converges with his *historie* allows us, as modern readers, a realization of the ghosting of Spanishness that emerged in the earliest texts of America's past, and how this unique performative figure of the Souths came to function in the cultural imaginary as an othered but somehow indeterminate category in a forming "American" schematic that insisted on (a fiction of) racial bifurcation. Through the eyes of Spanish *and* English explorers, the passing and passage of the *extravagant Spaniard* is made visible, as both a real and fictionalized character in the narrative of contest, as a figure masquerading across the southern fringes of North America and already shaping a future U.S. racial-geographical-political-gendered imaginary.

Here, on the pages of these histories, is a developing American imagination becoming fixated and distracted with all things Spain—his past, his lineage, his contradictions, his masquerade, and his extravagance. The story by Villagrá and Smith "fits" between the 1542 story of shipwreck at Galveston Island that begins this dissertation—the undressed and skeletonized conquistador imaginatively passing as *la figura de la muerte* [the figure of death] and then Spaniard-*Indio* (Cabeza de Vaca) across Native terrain *and* with his loyal African slave (Estevanico)—and the 1799 story of slave revolt on a Spanish slave ship in the Latin-Pacific—the dying Spanish figure of imperial power (Benito Cereno) made captive by his "loyal" West African slave (Babo). Tucked in-between these Spanish masquerades is the 1610 *Historia* by Villagrá and the 1608/1624 *Historie* by Smith. In their story the Spanish *capitán conquistado* and the English *captayne* Hispanicized—and their descendants (now cursed by the Native-other), will meet on the decks of Herman Melville's Spanish slave ship, the *San Dominick*. Suddenly misplaced in the nautical space of the Latin-Pacific, near the uninhabited island of St. Maria, the next descendants in line are a Spanish captain-made-captive and an American captain donning a *mask of innocence*.[259] At the end of the eighteenth century—the year is 1799—what is made visible is Spain's long shadow upon the American imaginary. Melville turns a new leaf in fully taking on the symbolic figurehead of a greater Spanish past; that is, reminding the mid-nineteenth century armchair-traveler of a European colonial history distracted by *la leyenda negra* and its haunting shadow upon the formation of U.S.-nation. Indeed, this is the story we glimpse in the verse and prose of Villagrá and Smith. Cunningly, however, Melville introduces his own symbolic

[259] I explain this term in the next chapter. Kathleen Donegan, during our discussions of Delano's troubled perceptions, led us to this phrasing as one's own masking.

figurehead. Not "the image of Christopher Colón, the discoverer of the New World," who the American captain imagines as adorning the prow of the ghost-ship, but instead, the hanging skeleton of the real Spanish master, Don Alexandro Aranda, an inheritor of a cursed legacy.[260] Extravagantly passing as Chilean and "master," Don Benito is the next in line to follow his leader, not Colón or Aranda but Babo, the West African slave-turned-*master*. In this historical novella that brings together *historia* and *historie*, the duped American Captain cannot see through the shadows and shadows of Spain's colonial past to realize that beyond the extravagant performances of Spanish masquerade is a different power of blackness deployed by a new master, for the scope of slavery is now trespassing across the hemisphere and crippling Spain's hold on *las Américas*.

[260] See Herman Melville, *Benito Cereno*, ed. Wyn Kelley (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2008), 97.

Chapter 3

"there seemed something so incongruous in the Spaniard's apparel": Spanish Masquerade in Herman Melville's *Benito Cereno* (1855)

But the principal relic of the faded grandeur was the ample oval of the shield-like stern-piece, intricately carved with arms of Castile and León, medallioned about by groups of mythological or symbolic devices; uppermost and central of which was a dark satyr in a mask, holding his foot on the prostrate neck of a writhing figure, likewise masked.

Whether the ship had a figure-head, or only a plain beak, was not quite certain, owing to canvas wrapped about that part, either to protect it while undergoing a re-furbishing, or else decently to hide its decay. Rudely painted or chalked, as in a sailor freak, along the forward side of a sort of pedestal below the canvas, was the sentence, "*Seguid vuestro jefe*," (follow your leader); while upon the tarnished head-boards, near by, appeared, in stately capitals, once gilt, the ships name, "SAN DOMINICK," each letter streakingly corroded with tricklings of copper-spike rust; while, like mourning weeds, dark festoons of sea-grass slimily swept to and fro over the name, with every hearse-like roll of the hull.[1]

– Anonymous, *Benito Cereno* (1855)

1. The *San Dominick*'s Figurehead of Death

On the other side of the *Américas*, in the nautical space of the Latin-Pacific, and at the end of a long century—"In the year 1799" and at "the southern extremity of the long coast of Chili"[2] (to be exact)—the masked-writer of the passage above (who is also telling someone else's story), places before the reader an image of Spanish decadence in the form of a ghost-ship that represents or resurrects Spain's haunting colonial legacy: "Her keel seemed laid, her ribs put together, and she launched, from Ezekiel's Valley of Dry Bones."[3] With the vessel's floor exposing its ribs, the ship thus floats on its back—like a rotted corpse—and, as the ship launches from the Valley of Death, in its incarnation the ship is feminized and renewed as "a Spanish merchantman of the first class; carrying negro slaves, amongst other valuable freight, from one colonial port to another," while also (mis)read as a ship "passing" in the likeness of "Acapulco treasure-ships, or retired frigates of the Spanish king's navy."[4] The portrait of the skeletonized ship evokes a sweeping reading of the "inaugural ghost story of America,"[5] to return to the words of Adam Lifshey, as it all began with the supposed figure-head beneath the canvas: "Christopher Colón, the discoverer of the New World," as the narrator reveals near the end of the story.[6] I begin at the very moment the protagonist, an

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[1] See Herman Melville, *Benito Cereno* ed. Wyn Kelley (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2008), 38. [Original work published anonymously in *Putnam's Monthly* in 1855, appearing in three installments: October, November, and December. The story was also revised and republished for Melville's *The Piazza Tales* in 1856, a collection of short stories.]

[2] Ibid., 35

[3] Ibid., 38.

[4] Ibid., 37.

[5] See Adam Lifshey, *Specters of Conquest: Indigenous Absence in Transatlantic Literatures* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010), 10.

[6] Melville, *Benito Cereno*, 97.

American Captain named Amasa Delano, boards the *San Dominick*, for here, as he passes all that is emblematic of Old World Spain, the reader enters the American imaginary and experiences the New Englander's nostalgic fascination with the "faded grandeur" of Spain's ghostly presence at the Souths. Greeting the American passenger is a "shield-like stern-piece," familiar indeed, reminding us of the Spanish conquistadors who carried the weight of *Plus Ultra*, shields carved with the "arms of Castile and León" and elaborately decorated with warring masquerades, such as this dance of death between a "dark satyr" and a "writhing figure." Not until the end of the tale does the masked-writer unmask the real figure beneath the canvas. In the incriminating moment of "performative surprise," the American Captain learns (as does the reader) that the figure-head is not Colón but the full-bodied skeleton of the ship's real Spanish Captain, Alexandro Aranda, "which had been substituted for the ship's proper figure-head."[7] Here, and once again, is the figure of the Spanish decadent colonial—but in the role of slave-trader—but still, as *la figura de la muerte* [the figure of death]. Like the writers of his day, the anonymous author—of course, Herman Melville—wondered what exactly Spain and "the extravagant Spaniard" had to do with it all.

The nautical yarn that Melville unspools in *Benito Cereno* (1855) is said to read a lot like the real historical account from which his tale had drawn its passing-plot. Indeed, those thirty-five pages of Chapter XVIII, entitled "Particulars of the Capture of the Spanish Ship Tryal, at the island of St. Maria; with the Documents relating to that affair," in *A Narrative of Voyages and Travels in the Southern and Northern Hemispheres* (Boston, 1817), written by a New Englander, Captain Amasa Delano himself.[8] Still, Melville casts his own *writerly masquerade* over those pages, reimagining Delano's 14,000 words into 34,000 words, thus cunningly revising the original by crafting a dark and haunting shadow over every aspect of the real.[9] In the original account, Delano set sail in the year 1805 (Melville begins in 1799), and while seal hunting off the coast of Chili [sic] in the ship *Perseverance* (renamed *The Bachelor's Delight*)—near the harbor of St. Maria—Delano caught sight of a "strange ship" in distress, called *Tryal* (renamed *San Dominick*). After boarding it, Delano met a bonded-duo, the ailing Spanish Captain, Bonito Sereno, and his loyal Senegalese slave, Mure (which Melville renames Benito Cereno and Babo).[10] Unbeknownst to the American Captain was the slave rebellion

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[7] See Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge Press, 1999), 15. Full sentence reads, "Those who are deemed 'unreal' nevertheless lay hold of the real, a laying hold that happens in concert, and a vital instability is produced by that performative surprise."

[8] In 1928, Harold H. Scudder discovered Melville's use of Delano's *Narrative* for *Benito Cereno*: "[I]n Chapter XVIII of Captain Delano's book Melville found his story ready made." See Schudder, "Melville's Benito Cereno and Captain Delano's Voyages," in *PMLA* 43 (1928): 502-32. According to Hershel Parker, the "*New York Evening Post* identified Melville's source," thus *they* "gave away the plot, with two installments of a masterpiece of suspense still unpublished." See Parker, *Melville Biography: An Inside Narrative* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2012), 257.

[9] For a detailed discussion on the differences between Melville's *Benito Cereno* and Delano's *Narrative*, in addition to the particular "symbols" resonating among them, see Max Putzel, "The Source and the Symbols of Melville's 'Benito Cereno'," in *American Literature* 34.2 (1962): 191-206.

[10] The Spanish Captain's name is repeatedly (mis)spelled throughout Delano's Chapter XVIII, for instance "Bonito" or "Sereno" and even "Cerreño." In the official documents of the "deposition," however, the name is spelled as "Benito Cereno." See Delano, *Narrative*, 329 and 332. For more background on the two texts see *The Writings of Herman Melville*, eds., Harrison Hayford, Hershel Parker, and G. Thomas Tanselle, 15 vols (Evanston and Chicago: Northwestern University Press and the Newberry Library, 1968), the "historical note" on *Benito Cereno*, 580-597. Melville utilizes two spellings—Bonito and Benito Cereno—as Wyn Kelley explained during a conversation, "for unique effect, particularly when the American Captain expresses frustration and anger towards Don Bonito." In English, "bonito" means "a small relative of the tunas, with dark oblique stripes on the back and important as a food and game fish," also "shipjack," whereas in Spanish the word means *belleza o atractivo*, also a masculine adjective versus *bonita*.

well underway yet masked by an elaborate performance of passing enacted by the Spaniards and West Africans. What transpires is a nine-hour duping of the American passenger, and all a masquerade orchestrated by Muri himself (or Babo in *Benito Cereno*).[11] Unlike the original account, Melville conceals the slave revolt from the reader and from the very beginning, in which he unfoldS a thread of peculiar incidents between the captains and the slaves, that is, to dupe *his* American passenger: the armchair traveler and subscriber of *Putnam's Monthly* (1853-1857). Here was a magazine that was known then as America's "most politically progressive" monthly, and where *Benito Cereno* was first serialized in three installments, from October to December. What continues to haunt readers of *Benito Cereno* is the incriminating moment of "performative surprise," when Melville rips off the mask so that Delano can finally see/read the extravagant performance of Spanish masquerade which coincides with the revealing of "the figure-head, in a human skeleton," the real Spanish master having been murdered: "Captain Delano, now with the scales dropped from his eyes, saw the negroes, not in misrule, not in tumult, not as if frantically concerned for Don Benito, but with mask torn away, flourishing hatches and knifes, in ferocious piratical revolt."[12] Melville, too, tugs at the sleeve of his reader, asking: "Would you have been fooled?"

At stake for the modern reader is that same refusal to see/read the extravagance—to see/read the *Spanish* masquerade as orchestrated by the slave-made-master—because, and like Delano, the reader also chooses the *mask of innocence* instead.[13] How are we, as modern readers, to appreciate Melville's literary play and elaborate representations with and against the real, yet as a radical critique about the artifice and theatricality of race? What has become of the performative figures aboard the *San Dominick*—the duped American passenger, the ailing Spaniard, and ever-credulous loyal African servant—now that the historical tale is in Melville's hands? How are we to examine Melville's *writerly masquerade*, that is, his literary play around, with and through the historical and literary "sources" that he borrowed from to manipulate and interrogate a fiction inherent in the central figures of a Spanish-American past? Rather than pursue an old quest that has privileged Delano's *Narrative* as the most significant "source" influencing and inspiring Melville's dramatic portrayals and passing-plot, let us instead discover the height of his originality as inkling from elsewhere, and perhaps a corner in American letters that was all too familiar to the subscriber of *Putnam's Monthly*. When we look closely at Melville's reading and marginalia, what we discover is a unique portrait of the author that we did not know we knew: Melville, "so Spanishly poetic," at least more so than we'd ever thought.[14]

Melville's trick or his very betrayal to the reader arrives in the final pages of *Benito Cereno*, as a narrative (dis)play of his creative imagining or what Hershel Parker calls Melville's "great contributions" to the original account: "the image of Christopher Colon (Columbus) he added,

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[11] In Delano's account, Babo is the father of Muri (or Mori). Greg Grandin provides a remarkable study and history of the slaves aboard the *Tryal*, which Melville may not have known but was well traveled throughout the South Seas to have had some knowledge of slavery at the Souths: "Babo, Mori, and possibly others on board the *Tryal* were lettered men, probably educated in qur'anic schools. They knew how to read the sky, at least enough to keep the calendar, and how to write in their own language. Legal contracts like the kind they had made Cerreño sign in exchange for his life were well established in Islam by 1805, as they were in Christianity. Mori knew enough Spanish to communicate with Cerreño. And Babo was held in high respect by the other West Africans, suggesting that he could have been a marabout (a cleric) or a *faqih* (a scholar) in his former life." See Grandin, *The Empire of Necessity: Slavery, Freedom, and Deception in the New World* (New York: Metropolitan Books/Henry Holt & Company, 2014), 214.

[12] Melville, *Benito Cereno*, 88.

[13] Kathleen Donegan, during our discussions of Delano's troubled perceptions, led us to this phrasing as Delano's own masking. My use of it here follows her lead.

[14] Melville, *Moby-Dick; Or, The Whale* (Random House: New York, 1930), 619.

cannibalism he added, the skeleton figurehead he added."[15] In the climactic scene of the text, Melville's composition makes central the unmasking of the real figure-head, which is actually the human skeleton of the real Spanish captain, Aranda, who did not die of a fever but at the hands of rebellious slaves.

> Meantime Captain Delano hailed his own vessel, ordering the ports up, and the guns run out. But by this time the cable of the *San Dominick* had been cut; and the fag-end, in lashing out, whipped away the canvas shroud about the beak, suddenly revealing, as the bleached hull swung round towards the open ocean, death for the figure-head, in a human skeleton; chalky comment on the chalked words below, "*Follow your leader*." At the sight, Don Benito, covering his face, wailed out: ""Tis he, Aranda! my murdered, unburied friend!"[16]

Melville creates a colonial mirror in the skeleton of Aranda for Don Benito to glimpse his own mortality, yet Don Benito refuses to see the Spanish-self turned inside out, instead covering his face from viewing the real master's skeletal body. For this very scene, students of *Benito Cereno* must also read the original account to distinguish Delano's "reality" from Melville's "touch of genius," as Parker differentiates the two; however, Melville's creative re-imagining of the real is also "slightly adapted" from other "sources," which is to say Melville's "great contributions" are not his own invention, at least not entirely.[17] Take for instance the often-quoted scene above, of the Spanish captain made a figure of bones by his African slaves, and whose violent death loomed over the masquerade of that "dark satyr in a mask," Babo, who had "his foot on the prostrate neck of a writhing figure, likewise masked," Don Benito. The imagined figure-head of authority—"Christopher Colon"—is thrown overboard upon the order of Babo, indeed, his hand playing a role in Columbus now appropriately floating towards the West Indies. The narrative knot of creativity is Melville's prodding at a Spanish colonial past *but* as sifted through Delano's "reality" with Melville's "touch of genius" turning to an unexpected "source": Miguel de Cervantes' *El ingenioso hidalgo don Quijote de la Mancha* (1605 & 1615) [*The Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote of La Mancha*]. This is Melville's other critical "source" in writing *Benito Cereno*, not only *the* extravagant adventures of the most famous bonded-duo of Spanish masquerade but where Melville also read about a real historical slave-revolt that Cervantes made literary and alongside it Melville saw an elaborate etching of the historical event as conceived by the illustrator, Tony Johannot (see figure 6):

[15] Hershel Parker, *Herman Melville: A Biography, 1819-1851*, 2 vols (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 240.
[16] Melville, *Benito Cereno*, 88.
[17] Parker, *Herman Melville: A Biography*, 240 (volume 2).



Figure 6. From the Jarvis-Johannot edition of *Don Quixote*[18]

The iconography in Melville's personal copy of an 1853 Jarvis-Johannot edition of *Don Quixote* provided the author with "dazzling evocative material," to borrow the words Parker suggests of Delano's *Narrative*.[19] Among other key "sources" that I discuss much later in the chapter, Melville turned to *Don Quixote*, such as Cervantes' scene of a conspiring group of slaves that attacked and murdered their captain. In Chapter XII of the first book, titled "Wherein the captive relates his life and adventures," Don Quixote tells the story of the taking of the galley called the *Prize*:

> "The son of Barbarossa was so cruel, and treated his captives so ill, that, as soon as they who were at the oar saw that *the She-Wolf* was ready to board and take them, they all at once let fall their oars and seized their captain, who stood near the poop, ordering them to row hard; then passing him along, from bank to bank, and from the poop to the prow, they gave him such blows that before he was so far forward as the mast, his soul had passed into hell, such was the cruelty wherewith he treated them, and the hatred they bore to him."[20]

The year is 1572, and attached to Don Quixote's summary is the editor's nineteenth-century footnote that provides details of the actual historical event. Charles Jarvis notes, "Maco Antonio Arroyo says that this captain, called Hamet-Bey, grand-son and not son of Barbarossa, 'was slain by

[18] Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, trans. Charles Jarvis with illustrations by Tony Johannot (London: J. Dubochet, 1837), 1.90-91. See AC85.M4977.Zz853c. Houghton Library, Harvard University.
[19] Ibid., 240.
[20] Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, trans. Charles Jarvis with illustrations by Tony Johannot (London: J. Dubochet, 1837), 1.90-91.

one of the Christian slaves, and that the others tore him to pieces with their teeth.'"[21] Melville seems to have borrowed from Cervantes this scene which (dis)plays the master's cruelty alongside the act of "vengeful cannibalism" enacted by rebelling slaves, as phrased by Geoffrey Sanborn.[22] Yet Melville only gestures at such an act with the skeleton of Aranda, in which cannibalism, to align my thinking with Sanborn, "is not a sign of a miserable reduction to the condition of beasts but the sign of an absolute triumph over all insults to the honor of the immaculate self."[23] In *Benito Cereno*, Melville devises a system of writerly masquerade through multiple "sources" of historical and literary telling, thus narrating a more complicated, deliberate, and evocative composition, especially at the most critical moment when the narrator reveals the potentiality of slave revolts concealed by Spanish masquerade.

Launched from Ezekiel's Valley of Death then, what emerges from the hull of the *San Dominick* is an illusion of Spanish power through which the system of slavery in the hands of slaves speaks to the Spaniard as in the shadow of *el negro* [the black/the slave]. Reality aboard the *San Dominick* is a reversal of hierarchies, where slaves are *made* masters and the masters *made* slaves—that here on the deck of the *San Dominick* is an inversion of power that extends Delano's *Narrative* and Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, engaging a different formulation of the master-slave relationship that forces the reader to glimpse the confounding nature of "reality" against that of a "touch of genius." In other words, the notion of becoming civilized and uncivilized is performative. Greg Grandin reads this importance in terms of "blindness" and the experience of becoming "becharmed anew":

> There were no free people on board. Obviously not Cerreño, held hostage by the West Africans. Not Babo and the rest of the rebels, forced to mimic their own enslavement and humiliation. And not Amasa Delano, locked in the soft cell of his own blindness. Trying to "break one charm," Melville wrote of his fictional New Englander, Delano was "becharmed anew."[24]

Melville thus tells a story of "no free people," that is, masters and slaves extravagantly passing. But, if we can allow ourselves to be becharmed anew by Melville, why is the American captain blinded by Spanishness, especially here at the corner of *las Américas*? Indeed, Melville's re-imaginative play with the Spanish *capitán*, as emerging in the likeness of *la figura de la muerte* [figure of death], also signals us to grapple with (mis)readings of American slavery and the slave's blackness within the narrative of a much deeper Souths, that of the extravagant passing-plot of Spanish masquerade.

Rendered through the interpretive guidance of the narrator is a grim portrait of Spanish decadence, yet as read through American spectacles that cannot grasp the scope of slavery across the hemisphere. For here, intervening cross-racially is Spain's long shadow through *la leyenda negra* [the black legend], a rhetoric that blinds the American captain from seeing/reading the extravagance. Melville presents a different wonder aboard the Spanish slave-ship. In his teasing of the "faded grandeur" of Spanish maritime travel, Melville critiques national decadence to an extreme, exposing

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[21] The note further states, "Geronimo Torres de Aguilera, who was like Cervantes and Arroyo, at the battle of Lepanto, says that: 'the galley of Hamet-Bey was taken to Naples; and in commemoration of this event, was christened *the Captured*.' (*Cronica de varios Sucesos*). P. Haedo adds that the unmerciful Moor flogged the Christian captives, who composed part of his galley's crew, with an arm that he had severed from the body of one of them. (*Historia de Argel*, fol. *123).*" See Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quixote de la Mancha*, trans. and ed. Charles Jarvis and illustrated by Tony Johannot, 3 vols (London: Dubochet & Co., 1837-1839), volume 1, 91.

[22] Geoffrey Sanborn, *The Sign of the Cannibal: Melville and the Making of a Postcolonial Reader* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1988), 91.

[23] Ibid., 50.

[24] Grandin, *Empire of Necessity*, 271.

the decline and decay of an imperial power and its pathetic persistence now on the transnational stage of slavery. What Melville brings to the surface is not imperial glorification but the decadence of Spain and in a much deeper South, here, at the edge of the world, where Colón intended to find a passageway to the West Indies but instead discovered *las Américas*.

* * * * *

The literature Melville read, especially in the years leading up to the publication of *Benito Cereno*, is not all that surprising, given the historical and literary contexts surrounding him and his contemporaries. Where Melville found his "sources" and what he did with them though, continues to captivate and baffle his best critics, and while the most obvious "source" has taken precedence, in this case Delano's *Narrative*, perhaps the less obvious "sources" are the real seeds to Melville's most imaginative creations. Of this single "source," however, as Parker explains in correspondence with Henry Hughes, "All we know about Melville's reading of Delano is that he had it at hand when he was writing *Benito Cereno*!"[25] There is no disputing this: Melville read Delano's *Narrative* and copied it, word for word, but he also crafted his own historical novella. Melville's father-in-law, Chief Justice Lemuel-Shaw, may very well have introduced a young Melville to Delano's *Narrative* as early as 1841, though when Melville began writing *Benito Cereno* his was a *return* to the *Narrative* instead of a first encounter. Could it have also been some other "source" that *moved* Melville to return to the passing-plot of Spanish masquerade in Delano's *Narrative*?[26] I would like to think so, and I would dare to say that these other "sources" are as important in Melville's crafting of *Benito Cereno* as Delano's *Narrative*. Like his contemporaries, Melville shared a thrill for Spain's most prized literary classic, and throughout his literary career, he read and re-read *Don Quixote*—while writing *Mardi* (1849), then while writing *Moby-Dick* (1851), and then again and again while writing *Benito Cereno* (1855). He also read it while writing *The Confidence Man: His Masquerade* (1857), and perhaps on other occasions throughout his career, even returning to its central characters when writing the poem, "The Rusty Old Man" (1872). When placed alongside the extravagant knightly adventures of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, Don Benito and Babo seem all too strangely familiar.[27] However, what if we read *Benito Cereno* with the chance that Melville's return to Delano's *Narrative* aligned with America's cultural excitement over performances of passing, including the figure of the "Confidence Man" but mainly the 1848 escape from slavery by Ellen and William Craft? When placed alongside the newspaper clipping of an American passenger (mis)reading Ellen Craft's (dis)guise as that of a Spanish gentleman traveling with a loyal servant, Don Benito and Babo seem all too strangely familiar.

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[25] See Henry Hughes, "Seeing Unseeing: The Historical Amasa Delano and his Voyages," (Drew Archival Library of Massachusetts, 2010), 26, footnote 4. Correspondence dated 23 Dec. 2005.

[26] Chief Justice Lemuel Shaw (serving from 1830 to 1860), Melville's father-in-law, may have introduced Melville to Delano's *Narrative*, since Shaw presided as lawyer who prepared the contract for the *Narrative*'s second edition in 1818. According to Robert K. Wallace, however, Melville may have heard about the book from Shaw as early as 1841, nearly eight years before Melville married his daughter, Elizabeth Shaw, and almost fifteen before writing *Benito Cereno*. In the Lemuel Shaw Collection at Boston's Social Law Library is located the contract for a new edition of Delano's *Narrative*, which is dated March 30 of 1818, with the note that this edition would be "'distributed to the Southern states." See Wallace, "Fugitive Justice: Douglass, Shaw, Melville," in *Frederick Douglass & Herman Melville: Essays in Relation*, eds. Robert S. Levine and Samuel Otter (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 43, 61-62.

[27] I adopt the same comparative approach, and revise the sentence that begins Justin D. Edward's chapter, entitled "Gothic Travels in Melville's *Benito Cereno,*" he writes: "When placed alongside Poe's *Pym*, Melville's *Benito Cereno* (1855) is strangely familiar." Edwards draws a link between *Benito Cereno* and Edgar Allan Poe's *Pym* (1838). See Edwards, *Gothic Passages: Racial Ambiguity and the American Gothic* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2003), 18.

Linking Melville to Cervantes, the Confidence Man, and the Crafts, invites the modern reader into the distracted imagination of the period and its turn to all things Spain. Could it have been Ellen Craft who *moved* Melville to unspool a much longer narrative to *her* Spanish masquerade, and could it have also been Cervantes who *moved* Melville to re-imagine this *historia* of the extravagant Spaniard and servant as a powerful motif for an American audience? This reading of *Benito Cereno* examines how Melville transformed the motif of the bonded-duo of Spanish masquerade, but also, how he perceived the ghosting of Spain's colonial legacy upon the American imaginary. What had a Spanish distraction meant to Melville as he wrote *Benito Cereno*, in which he viewed the problem of slavery as in the shadow of *la leyenda negra*? Throughout his career, I would like to think, Melville returned to Delano's Chapter XVIII, because he glimpsed an intimacy between the master and his slave that both thrilled and terrified him.[28] Could it have been that through the years Melville returned to the relationship between Don Benito and Babo, as if he were saving the pair for the right historical (and literary) moment, maybe enshrining them—the duped American passenger, the ailing Spaniard, the ever-credulous loyal servant—in hopes of reconceptualizing the encounter so as to arrive at a deeper understanding of these complex figures on the transnational stage of slavery. What has become of this *historia* and the bonded-duo of Spanish masquerade in Melville's hands?

Melville and his contemporaries were writing during at a transformative historical period, when a southern border divided the U.S. and Mexico. As Melville examined the history of Spain in the Americas, he did so alongside reading Spanish literary classics, which coincided with the mid-century cultural excitement over the phenomena of light-skinned slaves passing out of slavery as Spaniards. I thus set out to introduce a *Spanish* Melville, and his Spanish reading, because by tracing this influence, here was an author also distracted by all things Spain, an author who appropriated a Cervanteian and Craftean bonded-duo, mesmerized by the figure of the "Confidence Man," all the while exploring a "different playing in the dark" (to borrow Toni Morrison's phrasing) and thus expose a different "darkening of the past," that is, a darkening in which Melville's presents his own "resurrecting of blackness" (to engage Christopher Freeburg), yet as a (mis)reading of blackness because of a ghosting of Spanishness still lingering in the American imagination.[29]

2. Melville's Spanish Reading: Crafting *Benito Cereno* for *Putnam's Monthly*

Imagining a *Spanish* Melville helps us read *Benito Cereno*, and to introduce this portrait of the author we have come to know through *Moby-Dick*, I must turn to an incident of "passing" as captured by Melville's good friend and contemporary sensation, Nathaniel Hawthorne. In his journal, dated August 1 of 1851, Hawthorne recalls a "cavalier" approaching on horseback who greeted him and his son Julian in Spanish.

> While thus engaged, a cavalier on horseback came along the road, and saluted me in Spanish; to which I replied by touching my hat, and went on with the newspaper.

[28] Readings of the master-slave relationship and Spanish masquerade, specifically in terms of "terror," stem from conversations with Genaro Padilla. Samuel Otter also suggested I return to what Melville calls the "Siamese connexion" in *Moby-Dick*, in addition to re-reading the metaphor of the monkey-rope, where the "monkey and his holder were ever tied together," as Melville continues, "in order to afford to the imperiled harpooner the strongest possible guarantee for the faithfulness and vigilance of his monkey-rope holder"—this union, this marriage of life-death, this love-bond, appears often in Melville's writings.

[29] See Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), and Christopher Freeburg, *Melville and the Idea of Blackness: Race and Imperialism in Nineteenth-Century America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012).

> But the cavalier renewing his salutation, I regarded him more attentively, and saw that it was Herman Melville!"[30]

Melville's own Spanish masquerade had duped one of America's most attentive readers, and here we have a unique portrait of a Spanish-speaking Melville, riding on horseback. Knowing Melville, he would have offered a whimsical line, after seeing Hawthorne distracted with the newspaper: *Desocupado lector*, Melville must have said, recalling the first words of *Don Quixote*, and the book he read more than any other. Duping Hawthorne must have amused Melville, for the mere thought of being racially misread and passing, would have reminded him of the very character he was studying, that his little Spanish masquerade through the Berkshires was a performance now tested on his favorite New Englander. This was a period distracted by Spanishness, especially by the extravagant Spaniard, even as an ethereal presence of the *caballero de la triste figura* [knight of the sorrowful figure], now so iconographical of *Don Quixote*, especially so for a nineteenth century audience, Hawthorne included.[31] For Melville, his Spanish passing and duping of Hawthorne, entertains a sincere interest in the phenomena of "border crossing," as Christopher Castiglia calls it, yet often dismissed is Melville's enthusiasm for the extravagant knight in Cervantes' epic: "Who has not read it? who does not know it by heart? who has not thought with Sir Walter Scott, the greatest admirer, as he is the noblest rival of Cervantes, that it is one of the master-pieces of human genius."[32] As Harry Levin writes, "The light in which Melville must have reread Cervantes is caught in the introductory sketch of *The Piazza Tales*, where the enchantments of the Berkshire landscape remind him of 'Don Quixote, the sagest sage that ever lived.'" [33] And in Hawthorne's journal is captured that enchantment and Melville's very own hand at Don Quixote's extravagant passing.

Cervantes' *Don Quixote* was on Melville's mind well before he began writing *Benito Cereno* for *Putnam's Monthly*. In the most formative years of his literary career, and in addition to *Don Quixote*, Melville turned the pages of Spain's most celebrated literary classics, yet this interest was, as Stanley T. Williams describes, "the maturing of his interest in Spanish literature."[34] Tracking a Spanish interest through Melville's career provides an interesting apparatus for understanding the "Spanish background" that shaped his writings. After writing *Typee* (1846) and its sequel *Omoo* (1847)—often referred to as the "Siamese twins," and the books that commenced his career—and also publishing the South Sea fantasy narrative *Mardi* (1849), Melville read *Guzman de Alfarache* (1599), having purchased it in 1849. Then, while writing two sea novels, *Redburn* (1849) and *White-Jacket* (1850), or what he called "two *jobs*," Melville read *Lazarillo de Tormes* (1554) and *Don Quixote*, having borrowed them in 1850. While writing his whaling book, *Moby-Dick* (1850-51) and then when writing the "unpopular romance" *Pierre* (1852), he read *Don Quixote* twice. By the "winter of 1854-55," when Melville is said to have composed *Benito Cereno*—also a time of his transition to magazine fiction (1853-1856)—he was once again reading *Don Quixote*, having borrowed it from the Boston

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[30] Nathaniel Hawthorne, *Twenty Days with Julian and Little Bunny: A Diary* (London: Forgotten Books, 2013), 25. [Original work published in 1851.]

[31] In *Don Quixote*, the famous knight tells a traveler, "'I am Don Quixote de la Mancha, otherwise called *the Knight of the Sorrowful Figure*.'" See Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, volume 2, 450.

[32] See "Memoir of Cervantes, with a notice of his works: translated from the French of Louis Viardot" in *Don Quixote*, trans. Jarvis with illustrations by Johannot, volume 1, xlvi.

[33] See Christopher Castiglia, "Alienated Affections: Hawthorne and Melville's Trans-Intimate Relationship," in *Hawthorne and Melville: Writing a Relationship* ed. Jana L. Argersinger and Leland S. Person (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008), 333. Also see, Harry Levin, *Contexts of Criticism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957), 103.

[34] See Stanley T. Williams, *The Spanish Background of American Literature*, 3 vols (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), 224.

Athenaeum from July 8 to July 21, of course charging it to his father-in-law's account: this copy is the 1837 edition translated by Jarvis and illustrated by Johannot, in three volumes.[35] He also read *Don Quixote* the month prior to *Benito Cereno*'s first serialization in October of 1855, finally purchasing the Spanish classic and dating it its opening page with "September 17 of 1855": his personal copy, which is at The Houghton Library, is an 1853 edition, also a Jarvis/Johannot edition, but in two volumes. This was a text that Melville returned to through the years, especially when writing his final novel, *The Confidence-Man: His Masquerade* (1857), completing it in 1856, which is often described as the work that most reflects a Cervantean influence.[36] He also returns to *Don Quixote* during his years as a poet, having composed a poem between 1872-76, entitled "The Rusty Man," once again thinking of Cervantes' knight-errant and his loyal squire. Although we might call this list a mere glimpse into Melville's "Spanish background"—certainly a distraction—it must be noted that Melville's Spanish reading and its influence on his writings had not gone unnoticed by his contemporaries, as it has our modern approaches to his works.

In the New York *Home Journal*, dated October 13 of 1849, the poet-journalist Nathaniel Parker Willis speaks to what might be thought of as Melville's Spanish masquerade, even in his earliest publications. Of Melville's first two books, Willis states, "Herman Melville, with his cigar and his Spanish eyes, *talks* Typee and Omoo, just as you find the flow of his delightful mind on paper. Those who have only read his books know the man—those who have only seen the man have a fair idea of his books."[37] While in 1849 we have a Melville with Spanish eyes, in 1851 we have a Spanish-speaking Melville, and if we continue tracking a Spanish masquerade in Melville's literary career, what we stand to learn is that here is a major American author who had always been distracted by Spanish themes, for his was a serious study that emerged on the heels of Boston's intellectuals. For some time, all things Spain had been penetrating the American imagination, an influence that began with Washington Irving: a major voice in the 1830s and 1840s that encouraged a literary "turn" and excitement with a Spanish past. Boston was the hub for this rising interest with Spain—and where Melville often visited his father-in-law—as was Cambridge, often referred to as the birthplace of Hispanism in the United States, led by Obadiah Rich, in addition to George Ticknor, William H.

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[35] Herman Melville, *The Piazza Tales and Other Prose Pieces 1839-1860* ed. Harrison Hayford, Alma A. MacDougall, and G. Thomas Tanselle (Evanston and Chicago: Northwestern University Press and the Newberry Library, 1987), 581. As is stated in the notes on *Benito Cereno*: "'Benito Cereno' was probably composed during the winter of 1854-55; the first reference we have to it is an April 17 letter to Joshua A. Dix (of Dix & Edwards, publishers of *Putnam's*) from George William Curtis, his editorial advisor: 'I am anxious to see Melville's story, which is in his best style of subject.' The 'story' was evidently 'Benito Cereno,' which Dix then forwarded to Curtis after first showing it to another associate, Frederic Law Olmsted." Thanks to Samuel Otter who assisted in sketching with me a detailed outline of Melville's writing of *Benito Cereno*.

[36] See Merton M. Sealts, Jr., *Melville's Reading: A Check-List of Books Owned and Borrowed* (Madison: Univiversity of Wisconsin Press, 1966). Sealts' guidebook for the Melville scholar has been immensely helpful in my pursuit of the editions of *Don Quixote* that Melville read or may have read and their locations. Of the editions Melville had access to, Sealts writes: "Charged to Lemuel Shaw by the Boston Athenæum from 8 July to 21 July, 1854, as revealed by the entry 'Don Quixote 1. 2. 3' in the Athenæum's ledgers for that year. Melville was in Boston, and presumably a guest in the Shaw home, sometime in July 1854 (see Sealts No. 411). The Boston Athenaeum housed translations by Smollett (4 v., Dublin, 1796) and Motteux (5 v., Edinburgh, 1822) as well as editions in the original Spanish." The second reference that Sealts lists is an 1853 edition of 'Don Quixote de la Mancha.' Translated from the Spanish of Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, by Charles Jarvis, Esq. Carefully Revised and Corrected. With Numerous Illustrations by Tony Johannot." Melville's personal edition of *Don Quixote* is currently housed at The Houghton Library and in those two volumes we find marginalia that will I discuss in depth in a later section of this chapter. It should be noted that the two editions (the three volume 1837 Jarvis/Johannot et. al. illustrated edition *and* the two volume 1853 Jarvis/Johannot illustrated edition are particularly different in terms of illustrations).

[37] Parker, *Melville Biography*, 145.

Prescott, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and of course Irving himself. However, it was Irving who, in 1846 and while writing his great study on Spanish literature and culture, "had become the godfather to the American edition of *Typee* by recommending that George Putnam accept it," as Parker describes.[38] Knowing that Irving encouraged Putnam to publish Melville's first book and who had a hand on the start of his career, perhaps he too encouraged Melville's interest in Spanish literature. Needless to say, as Williams asserts of Melville's Spanish reading, "Aside from the question of his exact knowledge of the language and literature, it is plain that Melville was a victim, like so many of his contemporaries, of the provocative mystery of the Spanish world."[39]

Contrary to these thinkers, however, Williams explains that Melville approached Spanish themes with a singularity of his own: "Through books and through his experience on the sea, Spain and the 'Spaniard' had come to be identified by Melville with something singular. As in so many situations and qualities in life, Melville read into Spain his own private meanings."[40] These "private meanings" around Spanish themes, a Spanish colonial heritage, and the "Spaniard," I would like to emphasize, were shaped by the cultural and literary curiosity around performances of passing on the rise in the late 1840s and 1850s—including the light-skinned slave passing out of slavery as a Spanish gentlemen, as well as the figure of the Confidence Man—yet as tied to the romanticized portrait of Cervantes' knight-errant and his loyal squire from *Don Quixote* but also another Spanish figure of masquerade that mid-nineteenth century America found as perplexing: Spain's "discoverer" of the New World, Christopher Columbus. With the help of Irving, who published a fictionalized biography called *Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus* (1828), a book lauded by William H. Shurr as a "publishing phenomenon," a mid-nineteenth century America imagined Columbus as a popular figure, even claiming him as their very own.[41] Irving's book was translated in a dozen languages and reached 175 editions in both America and Europe, a book that had, as Williams states, "created in its own time a new image of the heroic navigator. … Irving made him for the first time a human being, a personage in American literature."[42] Melville was given *The Works of Washington Irving* sometime in June of 1853, a time when Columbus was embraced as a "paradigm of romantic irony," an idolizing of Spain's "discoverer" that Melville found problematic, especially when *Putnam's Monthly* chose Columbus as its figure-head for its first editorial and note to its subscribers.[43]

Often overlooked are the editorial policies for the very magazine that *Benito Cereno* was published in, specifically in relation to the audience for which it was written. Subtitled *A Magazine of*

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[38] Ibid., 135.

[39] Williams, *The Spanish Background of American Literature*, 224.

[40] Ibid., 226. At the early part of the nineteenth century, major voices in the genre of travel writing set the tone for the public imagination, also inspiring writers of the day, both of which had suddenly been overtaken with an intrigue of Spanish culture, its themes, and its romance. Even if initially fueled by a hatred for the "neighbor" or Spanish presence still lingering at the Souths, Spanish subjects permeated American thought. Beginning with the writings of three eminent scholars at Harvard: George Ticknor (*History of Spanish Literature*), Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (essays on Cervantes), and James Russell Lowell (-----), who set a historical stage for literary novelists and poets, from Washington Irving (*The Alhambra*, *Voyages of Christopher Columbus*, *Conquest of Grananda*), and W. H. Prescott (*History of the Conquest of Mexico*), in addition to the literary imaginations, such as James Fenimore Cooper, Mark Twain, Walt Whitman, and Herman Melville.

[41] William H. Shurr, "Irving and Whitman: Re-Historicizing the Figure of Columbus in Nineteenth-Century America," in *American Transcendental Quarterly* 6.4 (1992): 237-250.

[42] See Williams, *The Spanish Background of American Literature*, 41. As Williams put it, "It was amazing luck. No one, save the great scholar himself, could possibly have unbarred the doors to these archives." Also see Williams, 13.

[43] The Houghton Library holds Melville's copy of Irving's *The Works of Washington Irving*. The front inscription reads: "Herman Melville Esq from his friend Richard Lathers Winyah June 7th 1853" (v. 1), and "To Herman Melville Esq from his friend Richard Lathers Winyah June 7 1853" (v. 2). Editions do not include book about Columbus. References are made throughout.

Literature, Science, and Art, the editors of *Putnam's Monthly* set out to engage the American reader in a different type of literary pursuit. This is made clear in the "Introductory" note to the magazine's first editorial, which appeared in January 1853. The editors pose this question to their readership: "In what paper or periodical do you now look to find the criticism of American thought upon the times?"[44] Subscribers would thus embark on a "twelve-month voyage in pea-green covers," led by masked-writers who took them on a journey beyond U.S. borders in order to see "the countless phenomena of the times" and all through "'American spectacles'": "Within he will find poets, wits, philosophers, critics, artists, travellers, men of erudition and science, all strictly masked, as becomes worshippers of that invisible Truth which all our efforts and aims will seek to serve." Readers thus plunged into a poem, a critical essay, or short story, without knowing which celebrity-author was about to dazzle them. From behind the veil of anonymity, the editors and its contributors critically reflected on the nation in the heat of its international affairs. This highly political yet imaginative travel magazine, if we can call it that, took the reader "by the eye" and, unlike any other magazine of the time, openly discussed the pretenses embedded in an American perspective. Intriguingly symbolic—and romantically ironic—was that the magazine borrowed its vision from Spain's misrouted "discoverer." The editors appropriate Columbus' vision as their own:

> Why do we propose another twelve-month voyage in pea-green covers, toward obscurity and the chaos of failures?
>
> These are fair and friendly questions, while we stand chatting at the portal. With the obstinacy of Columbus,—if you please—we incredulously hear you, and *still believe* in the West. No alchemist, after long centuries of labor, ever discovered the philosopher's stone, nor found that any thing but genius and thrift would turn plaster and paper into gold. But, if even he had withstood his consuming desire, he would have perished at first of despair, at last, of disappointment.
>
> So our Magazine is a foregone conclusion. Columbus believed in his Cathay of the West—and discovered it.

In his crafting of *Benito Cereno*, Melville thus set out to criticize the editors of *Putnam's Monthly* for embracing Columbus' "strategy of obstinacy," and their eagerness to declare Spain's legacy as truly American. *Benito Cereno* reads as a provocative response to the magazine's definition of American "progress," in which Melville opposes old European structures and figures, arguing that American identity and definition of nationalism finally shake itself loose, once and for all, from Spain's "discoverer." For here was some other nation's leader whose geographical discoveries proved to be erroneous, yet a vision that functioned not as an influence but a distraction to national becoming.

The national turn to Columbus was about forming a national autobiography, and *Putnam's Monthly*, in 1853, continued to follow Irving's appropriation of this historical figure. Claiming an inheritance with the "obstinacy of Columbus" was a very real narrative for defining "American" and declaring national standing in the hemisphere. Irving framed ideas of progress through a problematic paradigm, a sort of idealism shuffling between romanticism and irony. Irving, among others, created a scholarship of "literary nationalism," as Paul Giles calls it.[45] Yet by the 1830s, Transcendentalists introduced a different vision for defining American exceptionalism. In "The American Scholar" (1837), for instance, Ralph Waldo Emerson offered an abstracted perception of self: "The world is

[44] All quotations from the "Introductory" note to *Putnam's Monthly* are from Cornell University Library's online source of the magazine, see 1853, Volume 1-2.

[45] Paul Giles, *Antipodean America: Australasia and the Constitution of U.S. Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 117.

nothing, the man is all; in yourself is the law of all nature, and you know not yet how a globule of sap ascends; in yourself slumbers the whole of Reason; it is for you to know all; it is for you to dare all."[46] To Melville, as Shannon L. Mariotti argues, there was "an element of absurdity in the abstracted."[47] Emersonian pragmatism declared a form of self-governance but did away with materiality and the world, and instead argued for a turn inward. Here was a blindness that Melville opposed, critiquing a nationalistic movement that, on the one hand, embraced a transcendental spirit of self-reliance, while on the other hand, followed the erroneous strategy of an old-world leader. Although *Putnam's Monthly* was a radical magazine, here it was celebrating and adopting Columbus' "obstinacy" as a vision for transnational relations and at a time when Transcendentalism was at its height and attempting to rewrite American exceptionalism.

Placing Spain's explorer in a secure and superior position, particularly when the country was beginning to (re)invent itself was, for Melville, a model of progress that represented non-Americanness in preference for Europeanness, as if old-world notions were superior. Here, again, was America's unrelenting fixation with old Europe, and Melville may have associated the nation's poetic preference for Shakespeare, what he described as an "absolute and unconditional adoration of Shakespeare" ingrained in "Anglo Saxon superstitions," with America's other national fixation with Columbus, that is as America's discoverer.[48] Melville witnessed an "absolute and unconditional adoration" with all things Spain, especially Columbus, which had for years dazzled America's most talented writers, many of which drifted back to Europe, including Irving, Ticknor, Prescott, Bryant, and Longfellow. There was for Melville a more complicated understanding of this identification with Columbus. As Hester Blum makes clear, "what he [Melville] criticizes is not so much the person of Columbus himself but, rather, how that figure is appropriated without the kind of rigorous intellectual apparatus that would allow for his transformation into a model of visionary instruction."[49] Underway in *Benito Cereno* then is an appropriation of the figure of Columbus (or "Christopher Colón," as Melville refers to him) with an *extreme* kind of rigorous intellectual apparatus, where his transformation into the skeletonized slave-trader (or next Spaniard in line) intends to "trick" the reader byway of Melville's own "conspicuous southing" and Spanish masquerade.[50] Melville's renaming of Columbus in *Benito Cereno*—"Christopher Colon," as a hybrid name, and now a hybrid figure—questions Anglo-American conceptions of Spain's "discoverer," and the prominent role this Spaniard has played in the longer narrative of American history.

What exactly does Melville prod the reader to realize in the climactic moment of the story when the *San Dominick*'s figure-head is finally unmasked, not as "the proper figure-head" that is

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[46] See Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The American Scholar," in *Ralph Waldo Emerson and Margaret Fuller: Selected Works: Essays, Poems and Dispatches with Introduction*, ed. John Carlos Rowe (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2003), 73.

[47] Shannon L. Mariotti, "Melville and the Cadaverous Triumphs of Transcendentalism," in *A Political Companion to Herman Melville*, ed. Jason Frank (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2013), 172.

[48] Melville detested in his famous review of Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Mosses*: "The great mistake seems to be, that even with those Americans who look forward to the coming of a great literary genius among us, they somehow fancy he will come in the costume of Queen Elizabeth's day,—be a writer of dramas founded upon old English history, or the tales of Boccaccio."

[49] Hester Blum, *The View from the Masthead: Maritime Imagination and Antebellum American Sea* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 138.

[50] I turn to Gómez's massive historiographic assessment of the voyages of Colón in *Tropics of Empire: Why Columbus Sailed South to the Indies*, because he recasts Colón's story of discovery for the modern reader, challenging the standard narrative that, I think, Melville is also challenging in *Benito Cereno*. Gómez argues, "Almost nobody seems to notice that Columbus also intended to sail south to a tropical part of the globe that he and his contemporaries had some reason to identify initially as legendary India." See Nicolás Wey Gómez, *Tropics of Empire: Why Columbus Sailed South to the Indies* (Cambridge: Massachusetts University Press, 2008), 130.

Christopher Colón but a full-bodied skeleton of the murdered Spanish captain, indeed, Colón is made into *la figura de la muerte*. The importance of the missing Colón in *Benito Cereno* intends to undermine the importance of Columbus's discovery for *Putnam's*. Though Blum observes a significant function to Columbus' discovery, that I am inclined to define as a Spanish masquerade of sorts. She writes:

> The importance of Columbus's discovery for *Putnam's*, despite his geographic and ethnographic error, lies not in the intrinsic truth of its physical existence (that is, that the continent he visited was not Asia but a different landmass) but in his power to impose his own meaning on a geographical truth. His ability to do so forms the model for the monthly's attempt to adapt geographical perspective to an empirical understanding of the world.[51]

If *Putnam's Monthly* asserts a Columbian authority that, as Blum explains, concerns a power or willfulness to impose not just "geographic and ethnographic error" but cultural ideology and thus "geographical truth," then his is a commanding ability or model that is about turning an error into something else. Might this ability be read as Columbus' ruse, that here is, as Nicolás Wey Gómez phrases, Columbus' "trick" or his rhetorical play around latitudes and longitudes, as tied to what Columbus *believed* he discovered against what he actually discovered.[52] In agreement with Blum, Melville criticizes the magazine for theorizing a Columbian vision as an American vision. This American-Colombian vision is represented in *Benito Cereno* through Delano's misreading of Spanish masquerade, a vision through which Melville can (dis)play the "failure of American vision," but much more must be said of the "*grotesque misperception* of the situation aboard the Spanish slave ship," as Blum describes it—even as I agree with her whisper in parenthesis that Delano "(who in his wrongheadedness is a kind of Columbus figure in the story)."[53] Melville's interest in the notion of wrongheadedness relates to how Spanishness pervades American vision. Whereas Blum describes American vision in *Benito Cereno* as "grotesque misperception," I define it as a systematized (mis)reading distracted by Spanishness, where "grotesque misperception" is a vision clouded by *la leyenda negra*.

Putnam's Monthly thus presents a call for an American-Columbian vision that Melville carefully examines in *Benito Cereno*, not just through Delano's "grotesque misperception," but that of the reader's as well. Melville's narrative "trick" with the missing "Christopher Colon" is, as Blum correctly suggests, "meant to display the dangers of a too-quick or undertheorized transformation of the representative figure of the explorer."[54] That (dis)play on Delano (and on the reader) teases at the consequences of obstinacy and misreading, that in misperceiving the figure-head beneath the canvas as "Christopher Colon," Delano is the next in line—now Hispanicized—to follow Spain's *next* leader, not an Anglicized Colón, but a refigured explorer made grotesque, in that the duped Delano (and the duped reader) are thus forced to glimpse the interior-skeletonized self in the hanging body of the Spanish slave trader, now *la figura de la muerte*.

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[51] Ibid., 136-137.

[52] Gómez states, "Columbus could no longer credibly claim that his India was the India just reached by da Gama and Cabral, so he resorted to a trick that was perfectly consistent with a geographical model that had broadly defined India as extending indefinitely to the east and to the south." See Gómez, *Tropics of Empire*, 138.

[53] See Blum, *The View from the Masthead*, 138. (*Italics mine*).

[54] Ibid., 138.

The magazine's turn to the figure of Columbus, Blum argues, is focused on "a method of creatively altering fact, [yet] without providing actual methodology for the transformation."[55] Although the magazine dismisses the details of this methodology, perhaps contemporary readers understood what that transformation looked like; after all, "Christopher Colon" had become an iconic figure during this mid-nineteenth century period. Perhaps the methodology concerns establishing a divergence between, as Gómez explains, what Colón *believed* he discovered versus what Colón then *imagined* of his discovery, which the magazine attempts to capture in this line: "Columbus *believed* in his Cathay of the West—and discovered *it*." If discovery is read as a process of appropriation, then the act of *believing* in *his* Cathay of the West—*his* discovery and *his* having discovered *it*—is all about truth making of *it* and through a "model of creatively altering fact." That was Colón's trick. (This is also Melville's trick). In my pairing of the work of Blum and Gómez, and believing these two scholars can easily be paired, the latter offers an answer to the former's questioning of the magazine's failure to articulate an "actual methodology for the transformation." Gómez argues that Colón's methodology or "trick" was articulated and perceived as a navigational truth, which presented readers with his "conspicuous southing," but is Colón's methodology then a "model of visionary instruction"?[56] Might we read this as his Spanish masquerade? What Columbus discovered, the magazine reveals, is that which *he* believed in his appropriating the legendary India onto a different landmass. Indeed, this other landmass was *his* Cathay of the West, for he believed in it—and thus discovered it. Because *it* (or India or *las Américas* was then renamed the *Yndias oçidentales a todo el mundo ignotas* [West Indies unbeknownst to all the world]. Columbus had a plan, Gómez argues, "Whichever the India Columbus was looking to find, it was not just *anywhere* to the west across the Atlantic."[57] Gómez has found affirmation of that plan in one of the most significant pieces of writing about the Americas, "that there was method in his southing," and it was Bartolomé de Las Casas who "mindfully phrases" his southing plan in *Historia de las Indias* (first published in 1552).[58]

Putnam's Monthly also makes explicit its plan to extend American thought into the southern Americas, arguing for a collective interest in examining nationalism in greater geographical terrain, however, the celebrity-writers representing this transnational viewpoint through American spectacles would all do so from beneath the mask of anonymity: "Let it content you, ardent reader, to know that behind these masks are those whom you much delight to honor—those whose names, like the fame of Isis, have gone into other lands." Readers expected to be dazzled, they expected a rhetorical ruse, and they expected to go "southing." *Putnam's Monthly* borrows the notion of "obstinacy"—as Blum reminds us, as a "positive attribute" for an editorial mission that upheld its own "Columbian quality."[59] In *Benito Cereno*, Melville then takes that "Columbian quality" to extrapolate the dangers of Spanish distraction upon American becoming and sense of progress, carefully constructing a view through Delano's Duxbury eye, through which the reader can also enter the darkness of *la leyenda negra* to snatch a glimpse of the power of Spain's long shadow when Spanish masquerade is carried out by revolting slaves. Certainly, Melville knew he was writing for a magazine that, as Sheila Post-Lauria describes, was not only "one of the most intellectual and politically progressive magazines of mid-nineteenth-century America," but "whose contributors were closely aligned to the antislavery

[55] Ibid., 138.
[56] Gómez, *Tropics of Empire*, 130.
[57] Ibid., 175. (*Italics his.*)
[58] Ibid., 338.
[59] Blum, *The View from the Masthead*, 138-139.

movement."[60] As his only work that most fully takes up the problem of slavery, Melville continues shaping a critique we find in his other works, an examination of America for its transnational affairs, which constitutes a deliberate de-centering of American thought. Perhaps more so in *Benito Cereno* than in any of this other works, Melville's turning of a new leaf is actually his turn to Spanish masquerade, for he, like his contemporaries, also wondered and questioned this enchantment with the figure of the extravagant Spaniard who tottered about and so easily achieved passage alongside his loyal slave. For here was a thrilling and most terrifying story of the bonded-duo of Spanish masquerade that had, in years and centuries past, left an indelibly impression upon the American imagination.

3. Reading *Benito Cereno*: Spanish Distraction & the Bonded-Duo of Spanish Masquerade

Benito Cereno begins at the end of a long century with an unidentifiable narrator-as-editor who recounts a story from the distant past and from a very different corner of the world. Not his story (or her story) but someone else's story.

> In the year 1799, Captain Amasa Delano, of Duxbury, in Massachusetts, commanding a large sealer and general trader, lay at anchor, with a valuable cargo, in the harbor of St. Maria – a small, desert, uninhabited island towards the southern extremity of the long coast of Chili. There he had touched for water.[61]

With these words, the narrator draws a map for the reader of *Putnam's Magazine*, yet the geographical play begins with the title-character's "sounding name" that would have confounded New England readers: Benito Cereno, Don Benito Cereno.[62] However, a name, the narrator later informs the reader, "not unknown," at least not "to super-cargoes and sea captains trading along the Spanish main," and even a name "as belonging to one of the most enterprising and extensive mercantile families in all those provinces; several members of it having titles; a sort of Castilian Rothschild, with a noble brother, or cousin, in every great trading town of South America."[63] With the title-character's name suspended above the story, the reader enters the world of the text, with Melville (as author) remapping the contours of the story that engages an etymological concern (or play) with the names of characters and locations that work to introduce a transnational turn: from Benito Cereno (South American, Spanish) to Amasa Delano (Hebrew, French), then Duxbury (English) in Massachusetts (North America) to St. Maria (Spanish) along the cost of Chili (Incas). On the other side of the Americas, the reader finds an American Captain in a much deeper South, now anchored

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[60] Sheila Post-Lauria explains, "*Putnam's Monthly* started in 1853 as a critical commentary on the times and as a direct contrast to the political conservatism and sentimentalism of *Harper's Magazine*," and it quickly became "one of the most intellectual and politically progressive magazines of mid-nineteenth-century America." See Post-Lauria, *Correspondent Colorings: Melville in the Marketplace* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996), 201-209. She provides a valuable discussion of Melville in the marketplace, specifically the editorial policies of the magazine and how it contrasted with (or complimented) the conservative magazine that Melville also wrote for, *Harper's Monthly*.

[61] Melville, *Benito Cereno*, 35.

[62] Ibid., 54.

[63] Ibid., 54. It must be noted that Melville "fixed" the real Spanish Captain's name, from the supposedly incorrect spelling rendered by Delano. While Delano spelled it "Bonito Cerreño." To expand, in Spanish "Benito" also means *benedictino* or *fraile*, derivative of *sanbenito*, a penitential garment (a fatal yellow garb) that heretics wore at an auto de fé, also a "religious catholic who is part of an order," while "Cereno" sounds like *sereno* meaning *que es o está tranquilo y apacible, sin agitación* but perhaps Melville's use aligns with morning-dew.

in the nautical space of the Latin-Pacific, "towards the southern extremity," and at the southern fringes of the continent. Far from U.S. territories, the American Captain is displaced near this "uninhabited island" of St. Maria; coincidentally, the name of the Spanish ship that carried Colón to Hispaniola (or St. Domingo), which became the nexus of *las Américas*, where world powers fought over slavery and leadership, and where, in 1799, warfare between French and creole masters and African slaves was led by Toussaint L'Ouverture (1743-1803), the so-called "Black Napoleon" of the Haitian Revolution and even the "Haitian Washington." Here, "at the ends of the earth," Melville's "southern extremity" introduces the reader to a much deeper South, where the American Captain leaves the safety of his New England ship, the *Bachelor's Delight*, to board the mysterious Spanish slave ship, the *San Dominick*, and is duped by an extravagant performance of passing enacted by the Spanish Captain-*made*-captive (Benito Cereno) and his loyal slave-*turned*-master (Babo).

The narrator exposes an American-Columbian vision, or rather a New England-Protestant mind distracted by Spanishness, not blackness. Emerging from the page then is a narrative mocking of the Duxbury eye, what can be described as Delano's anti-Spanish and anti-Catholic provincial view, but also present is Melville's writerly masquerade on the antebellum reader. Following Delano, the reader also enters a "non-American world," as phrased by Ann Douglass in her imagining of the *San Dominick* as a "floating microcosm" of perhaps a transforming Spanish world at conflict with slavery. A cartographic "turn" to early maps to examine Melville's "southern extremity" as a "non-American world" assists the modern reader with an unfamiliar perspective of forming territories across the Americas, and these early maps also suggest a typology of a specific view and unique kind of historical cartographic knowledge. What do the Americas look like in 1799 or as Melville re-imagines it in his 1855 literary mapping of *Benito Cereno*? (See figure 7). A glance at a 1799 map by English cartographer John Cary, entitled "The Western Hemisphere," offers a view of the Souths within the larger hemispheric context and the vast distance that Melville creates between Delano's Duxbury (where in the 1780s slavery had been abolished in Massachusetts and slave trade made illegal), the *San Dominick*'s St. Domingo or St. Domingue (where a contemporaneous uprising was happening at Haiti, and where L'Ouverture who, in just over a decade, defeated three imperial powers—Spain, France, and Great Britain), and the narrator's much deeper southern imagining of St. Maria (where we find pirates, seal hunters, slave traders, and revolting slaves).



Figure 7. *The Western Hemisphere* (1799) by John Cary[64]

Cartographically speaking, Cary's map allows us to measure how far down the South American coast Delano traveled from his Northern New England haven. Cary's map—a composite of pervious maps and from as early as the 1740s—tells a story of national relations, maritime powers, imperial presence on land and at sea, and (if we look more closely) racial conflict and domination across the hemisphere. Here on this map and in *Benito Cereno* is the missing *historia* to a New England *historie*.

This unfamiliar perspective is about challenging and expanding a domestic American context, in an effort to de-center U.S. nationalism because, in 1799, a U.S. presence was hardly visible in relation to Spain's massive presence which extends in North America from West Florida to the territory beyond the Mississippi River, and then in Central and South America from the western region known as *Nuevo México* to *Terra Firma* to Patagonia, with a tight hold on the southern Americas versus territories controlled by rivaling nations. The territories claimed by the U.S. were east of the Mississippi, with the territory of Louisiana still in possession of Spain, at least until 1800, when Napoleon Bonaparte gained ownership of this vast terrain for the French. Far from his coastal town of Duxbury, Massachusetts (which, by the 1790s, was "the largest producer of sailing vessels on the South Shore"), the American Captain is at the corner of the Americas, having navigated

[64] For Cary's map see, *The Western Hemisphere*, London: Published by J. Cary, Engraver and Map-Seller, no. 181, Strand, 1799. *David Rumsey Map Collection*. Web. 12 December 2014. < http://www.davidrumsey.com/luna/servlet/detail/RUMSEY~8~1~21495~630109:The-Western-Hemisphere---London--Pu>.

south along its eastern fringes—as if tracing the faint passages on the map by Cook, Vancouver, and Perouse—as if the *Bachelor's Delight* were descending from the context of New England's antebellum Duxbury to the context of Spain's fearful Catholic institution now in the western world even the "southern extremity" of St. Maria.[65]

Melville's 1799 literary context, versus the real historical setting in 1805, imagines Delano's maritime travels in the final years of the wars at Haiti, and also, in the same year that the U.S. signed a trading treaty with L'Ouverture, often described as a friendly American policy since the black leader promised not to invade the American South, with the U.S. supplying firepower for L'Ouverture to conquer the Spanish part of the island.[66] Melville's literary map helps orient the 1855 reader unfamiliar with a deeper south, all while de-centering U.S. nationalism within the hemisphere.[67] Cary's map, and to reference Will Slocombe's suggestion, also shows that Melville's St. Maria is not exactly at the "southern extremity of the long coast of Chili" (not *Chile*, at least not until 1900), as Slocombe writes, "In essence, Melville translocates the island… moving it from off the coast of central Chile [sic] to its southern tip," thus we might argue the narrative tactic aims "to disorient the reader of *Benito Cereno.*"[68] Melville's (un)mapping renders a geographical slip-up, creating an unreliable narrator who, as we now know, is telling someone else's story, that is, the American Captain's story. The narrator thus presents a view through which the reader is to witness (and experience) Delano's "grotesque misperceptions," yet a structured way of seeing through a thickly veiled lens that renders a social criticism of Spain's long shadow that continued to distract this American Captain at the moment of (re)encounter with a "strange sail," a very different Spaniard of New Spain, and all in the context of slavery in the Latin-Pacific.

Benito Cereno essentially begins with a dramatization of how Spanishness comes into view for the American Captain, engaging what Jenny Franchot calls a "tourist rhetoric" as a troubled perception brought by a history of European conflict with Spaniards, yet presented in the narrative opening as a perception obscured by the weather conditions of that morning which, we can surmise, implies Spain's shadowy remnants at this corner of the world: "Everything was mute and calm; everything gray. … The sky seemed a gray surtout."[69] Even that "gray surtout" prods us to imagine a dark and capacious cloak.[70] Because of the shadows upon shadows, Delano (dis)misses the threat of slavery, and here begins his American vision as distracted by Spanishness. The ship, he realizes,

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[65] See Ann Douglass, *The Feminization of American Culture* (New York: Avon, 1977), 293. She notes, "The non-American world Melville shows us is the arena for American acquisitiveness: the seas are the locale where Americans conduct their fishing industries and their wars, the South Sea Islands are the places to which they send their missionaries and their sailors. The non-American world of Melville's narratives is one by definition mutilated by America."

[66] See Madison Bell Smartt, *Toussaint Louverture: A Biography* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2007), 30-31.

[67] See Paul E. Cohen, *Mapping the West: America's Westward Movement 1524-1890* (New York: Rizzoli, 2002), 141-145. What we see are Spanish territories shadowing the Pacific, with the United States bordered by yellow, including the territory of *la Florida* which was still in Spain's possession until 1819. When the United States claimed this southern region from Spain a major concern on the minds of slaveholders were its rebellious slaves.

[68] Will Slocombe, "Did Melville Misplace Santa Maria in *Benito Cereno*?" in *MHRA Working Papers in Humanities* 4 (2009): 25–33.

[69] Melville*, Benito Cereno*, 35-36. Also see, Jenny Franchot, *Roads to Rome: The Antebellum Protestant Encounter with Catholicism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 174-175.

[70] Melville, *Benito Cereno*, 36. Melville uses the word "surtout" in *White Jacket* (1849), its description is of the white jacket which, he writes, "was not a *very* white jacket": "When our frigate lay in Callao, on the coast of Peru—her last harbor in the Pacific—I found myself without a *grego*, or a sailor's surtout; and as, toward the end of a three years' cruise, no pea-jackets could be had from the purser's steward: and being bound for Cape Horn, some sort of a substitute was indispensable; I employed myself, for several days, in manufacturing an outlandish garment of my own devising, to shelter me from the boisterous weather we were so soon to encounter."

"showed no colors," yet to him it "appeared *like* a white-washed monastery after a thunder-storm," with "dark moving figures" that he perceives as "Black Friars pacing the cloisters."[71] Delano (mis)reads the skin of African bodies as the habit of *Black* Friars. Here, as Franchot describes, is a "peculiar kind of Catholic interior," as glimpsed by Delano, "for the malevolent fatherly power of Jesuit, of pope, and of the Dominican inquisitor in particular has been usurped—not conquered by Protestants but subversively appropriated by Africans."[72] West Africans restage a *historia* in their "passing" as *Black* Friars, yet an appropriation that recalls the *historia* written by Bartolomé de Las Casas, not just his arrival to Santo Domingo (the play on *San Dominick*), but how his writings argued for the enslavement of Africans versus the enslavement of New World Indians. In agreement with Franchot, "Melville's Catholic imagery invokes the Roman church's role in spurring the development of African slavery—a role that began, ironically, with the efforts of Las Casas to protect New World Indians from enslavement by suggesting the greater suitability of Africans."[73] Thus, Melville's (dis)play of West Africans "passing" as *Black* Friars—their enacting a Spanish masquerade—exposes Delano's suspicion and fear of a Spanish presence in this Deeper South.

Delano's American-Columbian perception also recalls a narrative of contest between the English and Spaniards, in this case Protestantism versus Catholicism, with the Anglo-American desiring the imperial degeneration of Spanish imperial power, fantasizing of African slaves as *Black* Friars "pacing the cloisters" of a rotting Spanish ship. Distracted by Spanishness, it is this vision that the narrator then critiques or mocks, also warning the antebellum reader against following this Protestant American too closely, since he cannot differentiate between racial-religious difference. Delano's "Romanizing gaze" is pit against the knowledge of a narrator who repeatedly steps into the text to prod at the space between the mask (Delano's Duxbury eye) and the real (the all-knowing knowledge of the text), guiding the reader through levels of consciousness that may be understood as a "hierarchy of knowingness," as Peter Coviello calls it, to speak directly to Delano's limited vision and hint at the inaccuracy of intellectual perception.[74] As if passing through Delano's consciousness, the narrator states:

> Considering the lawlessness and loneliness of the spot, and the sort of stories, at that day, associated with those seas, Captain Delano's surprise might have deepened into some uneasiness had he not been a person of a singularly undistrustful good nature, not liable, except on extraordinary and repeated incentives, and hardly then, to indulge in personal alarms, any way involving the imputation of malign evil in man. Whether, in view of what humanity is capable, such a trait implies, along with a benevolent heart, more than ordinary quickness and accuracy of intellectual perception, may be left to the wise to determine.[75]

If through ignorance a power is represented through Delano's vision—a characterization of the American traverler described as a democratic captain (Juan López Gavilán), an American "victim"

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[71] Melville, *Benito Cereno*, 37.
[72] Franchot, *Roads to Rome*, 174.
[73] Ibid., 175.
[74] The narrator (and the text) create a consciousness that may be understood as a "hierarchy of knowingness." See Peter Coviello, "The American in Charity: 'Benito Cereno' and Gothic Anti-Sentimentality," in *Studies in Fiction* 30 (2002): 166. Attached to this hierarchy, Coviello explains, is "an economy of readerly positions," where there is a difference between *knowing* and *not knowing*, and reading *well* and reading *wrongly*. See Franchot, *Roads to Rome*, 180. She states, "[T]he narrator supplants Delano and appropriates his mystified Romanizing gaze, enticed and thwarted by a foreign Catholic interiority."
[75] Ibid., 36.

(William V. Spanos), the "founding father" and "innocent" New Englander (Eric Sundquist), the "archetypal American" (Harold Kaplan), and "Jack of the Beach" (Melville)—then what cultural knowledge is Delano allowed and what does this knowledge represent within and beyond the text?[76] The narrator draws attention to the act of (mis)reading, in which blindness is willfulness, but not that which Delano cannot see/read but that which Delano refuses to see/read. Asserting Delano's "benevolent heart" in relation to the nobility of the mind, the narrator contemplates the protean force of prejudicial facticities, specifically the role of inclination in terms of racial illiteracy but also viewing racism as a seductive force.[77] The narrator thus advises the reader to question Delano's benevolence as a preference for the *mask of innocence* that refuses to read the extravagance, instead favoring a deadly Spanish narrative that allows him to fantasize about American nationalism.[78] Distracted by Spanishness, Delano (mis)reads the ship's appearance: this is not Catholic Spain and its friars arriving to Santo Domingo, this is Catholic New Spain and slaveholders failing to uphold the mission of bringing African slave labor to other parts of South America.

Melville's year of 1799 renders a Spanish incident at the Souths suddenly haunted by slave rebellion.[79] When the ship's "appearance was modified and the true character of the vessel was plain," the narrator deliberately muddles the American Captain's anxieties, insecurities, fears, and fantasies: "Thus the Catholic imagery through which Delano haltingly approaches his enlightenment operates both sardonically and prophetically, simultaneously illuminating the limitations of his Massachusetts sensibility and pointing toward the presence of a novel malevolent power in the New World that jointly inhabits the story's exterior deceptions and its interior truth."[80] Here on (dis)play is Spain's hold on the Anglo-American imagination: "Shadows present … and the deeper shadows to come."[81] Spanishness overshadows the threat of slave rebellion, disguising it, masking it, with Delano denouncing Spain through an old world lens of *la leyenda negra*, insisting on the "fatal trope" of the Spaniard to interpret a different drama of slavery, which is, as DeGuzmán states, a "drama on the *San Dominick* [that] telescopes centuries of Spanish history," or rather racial-generational

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[76] Juan López Gavilán, " The Shadow of the Wound-Mark': Poetic Witnessing in Darkness," in *Nor Shall Diamond Die: American Studies in Honor of Javier Coy*, eds. Carme Manuel and Paul Scott Derrick (Universitat de València, 2003), 294; William V. Spanos, *Herman Melville and the American Calling: The Fiction after Moby-Dick, 1851-1857* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008), 11; Eric Sundquist, *To Wake the Nations: Race in the Making of American Literature* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 154; Harold Kaplan, *Democratic Humanism and American Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), 15; Melville, *Benito Cereno*, 66.

[77] See Post-Lauria, *Correspondent Colorings*, 207. She writes, "The tale's narrator emphasizes the process of perception. The contrast of different legal, imperialist, and sentimental perspectives that together perpetuate the inequality and oppression in the tale—and by extension in society—serve as the foundation for the author's theme. Melville suggests through this emphasis upon process that a careful sorting of the possibilities is necessary to understand and overcome the ironic reversals that are intrinsic to institutional practices such as slavery and expansionism. And it is precisely this analytical probing of surfaces that the magazine—and Melville's tale—urge."

[78] My thinking here follows the work of Lauren Berlant and Barbara Johnson: the former is thinking through the later when she writes, "But the condition of projected possibility, of a hearing that cannot take place in the terms of its enunciation ('you' are not here, 'you' are eternally belated to the conversation with you that I am imagining) creates a fake present moment of intersubjectivity in which, nonetheless, a performance of address can take place. The present moment is made possible by the fantasy of you, laden with the x qualities I can project onto you, given your convenient absence." See Berlant, *Cruel Optimism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 25.

[79] Melville, *Benito Cereno*, 38.

[80] Franchot, *Roads to Rome*, 178.

[81] Melville, *Benito Cereno*, 36.

diversity.[82] This is about Delano's racial-religious illiteracy: he cannot distinguish an antiquated Spanish imperial past from New Spain's present role on the transnational stage of slavery. As Delano boards the *San Dominick* and passes all that is emblematic of Spain's arrival to the New World, indeed, here is a (mis)reading of Spain's looming *historia*, as fragmented yet a haunting nautical presence and dominance in the Latin-Pacific, with Melville exposing a different blackness darkening American consciousness: the "shield-like stern piece" with the arms of Castile and León; the presumed figure-head of "Columbus, who initiated New World colonization and slavery, is the Ur-figure of Atlantic trade"; the Spanish inscription of *Sequid vuestro jefe* recalling the motto of *Plus ultra*; and, the ship's Spanish-sounding name alluding to Columbus' arrival at Hispaniola which he named St. Domingo.[83]

Melville casts a wide net of slavery's impact: from Massachusetts (the first colony to legalize slavery and the first to abolish it) to St. Domingo (the first successful slave insurrection in the Western Hemisphere) to St. Maria (an island that recalls Colón's ship and the island looking towards the West Indies yet as untouched by slavery). In this corner of the world, the American Captain cannot see nor understand the geographical scope of slavery, which has suddenly crossed from the specter of the French colony of Saint-Domingue to the "southern extremity" of the Americas. What moves through the pages of *Benito Cereno* is the "silent" power of slave insurrection, where West Africans appropriate Spain's long shadow, rendering a European narrative of contest with an extravagant performance of Spanish masquerade so familiar to the New Englander.[84] The extravagant passing staged on the *San Dominick* seduces the American Captain, who is far too suspicious of the ailing Spaniard and his loyal black slave, a bonded-duo that signify in all the categories through which Delano identifies discourses of racialization.

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The first encounter between Delano and Don Benito and Babo arrives in the space of several pages, with the narrator unfolding a point of perspective as a formula of (mis)reading Spanishness. Delano is highly suspicious of Don Benito, and for all the wrong reasons is distracted by the illusion of Spanish power and presence in the nautical space of the Latin-Pacific.[85] The Spanish narrative of contest that Delano (mis)reads is: "I, little Jack of the Beach, that used to go berrying with cousin Nat and the rest; I to be murdered here at the ends of the earth, on board a haunted pirate-ship by a horrible Spaniard?"[86] The figure of the "horrible Spaniard" appears to "the visitor" through a constructed vision of racialization that projects Anglo-American fears, hatred and

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[82] See DeGuzmán, *Spain's Long Shadow*, 47-63. Marvin Fisher, "Narrative Shock in 'Bartleby, the Scrivener,' 'The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Mains, and 'Benito Cereno,'" in *A Companion to Herman Melville*, ed. Wyn Kelley (Malden: Blackwell, 2006), 447.

[83] See Blum, "Atlantic Trade," in *A Companion to Melville*, ed. Wyn Kelley (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 120.

[84] The idea of "silence" follows the work of Sibylle Fischer, particularly the outline of her project: "Much of this book is thus devoted to drawing a landscape around the silences and gaps that punctuate the historical and cultural records. It works from significant examples and symptomatic fragments, keeping track of what is said, and especially what is not said. It is an attempt to think about literature, culture, and politics transnationally, as forms of expression that mirrored the hemispheric scope of the slave trade; to think about might have been lost when culture and emancipatory politics were finally forced into the mold of the nation-state; and to think what might have happened if the struggle against racial subordination had carried the same prestige and received the same attention from posterity as did the struggle against colonialism and other forms of political subordination." See Fischer, *Modernity Disavowed: Haiti and the Cultures of Slavery in the Age of Revolution* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 2-3.

[85] The theorization of the failure of whiteness stems from conversations with Ianna Hawkins Owen, who read an earlier draft of my chapter 4 during a faculty and graduate student dissertation workshop retreat. She defines "whiteness" through the work of Charles Mills.

[86] Melville, *Benito Cereno*, 66.

fantasies towards Old World Spanish conspiracies: "But as a nation – continued his reveries – these Spaniards are all an odd set; the very word Spaniard has a curious, conspirator, Guy-Fawkish twang to it."[87] From the onset, however, the narrator mocks Delano's (mis)reading of the "horrible Spaniard," allowing the reader to follow his movement of sight for how he imaginatively projects onto the body of the Spaniard and his slave the *histories* and *historias* of Spanish cruelty, where the "neurasthenia" condition intervenes into the figure of the Spanish decadent colonial, not only as attached to the rhetoric of *la leyenda negra* but how disability and illness manipulate the very structures and patterns of Anglo-American thought through which Delano understands the rivaling Spaniard. Of the initial moment of encounter between the captains, the narrator writes, "the visitor," Delano, "turned in quest of whomsoever it might be that commanded the ship":

> **But as if not unwilling to let nature make known her own case among his suffering charge, or else in despair of restraining it for the time, the Spanish captain, a gentlemanly, reserved-looking, and rather young man to a stranger's eye, dressed with singular richness, but bearing plain traces of recent sleepless cares and disquietudes, stood passively by, leaning against the main-mast, at one moment casting a dreary, spiritless look upon his excited people, at the next an unhappy glance toward his visitor.** By his side stood a black of small stature, in whose rude face, as occasionally, like a shepherd's dog, he mutely turned it up into the Spaniard's, sorrow and affection were equally blended.[88]

The movement of sight between the body of the Spaniard and the body of the slave (as signaled above between bold and non-bold text) is a formula of seeing that continues throughout the text. Staring back at Delano is a confounding presence of the ailing Spanish captain-made-captive as upheld by the loyal black slave. Still, the conflicting variables on the Spaniard's off-white body are never independent but always interacting with and connecting to the physical presence of the slave's black body. This is the portrait of the bonded-duo of Spanish masquerade that the American Captain cannot unmask, where a different sort of blackness is at play between the Spanish master and loyal slave: it is Babo's passing that makes extravagant the "deadly trope" of the Spaniard.

Immediately, the American Captain is drawn to Don Benito's "suffering charge," making central the variable of the "neurasthenia" condition in the rubric of (mis)reading Spanish masquerade. Something is happening to race, masculinity, and nationalism because of disability and illness. Although Delano recognizes a shared "whiteness" in terms of gender, refinement and class ("a gentlemanly, reserved-looking, and rather young man, dressed in singular richness"), his attention returns to the Spaniard's mental state and physical decline, with the word "but" marking a shift from reading commonality to detecting difference ("*but* bearing plain traces of recent sleepless cares and disquietudes, stood passively by"). For Delano, Spanishness is linked to physical and mental sickness, with the narrator repeatedly presenting Delano's fixation with Don Benito as neurasthenic: "But the debility, constitutional or induced by the hardships, bodily and mental, of the Spanish captain, was too obvious to be overlooked."[89] The figure of the dying Spaniard, however, is emphasized by the role-play or overplaying of Babo as the nursing slave to the sick master. Babo's extravagant passing brings order to the disorder but also controls the performance so that it does not fall out of normative categories. The binaric model played out through this master-slave

[87] Ibid., 68.
[88] Ibid., 40. (*Bold mine*.)
[89] Ibid., 41.

relationship is that of sickness/wellness, with the ailing Spaniard complimented by the healthy slave who, "like a shepherd's dog," acts as a shadow or a mirror to the master's every move.

Don Benito and Babo thus adhere to a script in the performance of ailing master and nursing slave, but the narrative presents a deconstruction of the performance of Spanishness alongside blackness. Although, we might assert, that Spanish masquerade is orchestrated entirely by Babo, with the healthy slave and "devoted companion" upholding the performance and fulfilling a fantasy for Delano.[90] There is also a formula at play between the bonded-duo, and this formula is presented to the reader as the narrative continues (dis)playing a toggling between the *discord* as represented with Don Benito (as deranged and incompetent) and *order* with an attentive Babo (loyal and devoted companion). In the passage below, for instance, Don Benito's "suffering charge" continues to take center stage as Delano continues his diagnosis of the Spaniard:

> **His mind appeared unstrung, if not still more seriously affected. Shut up in these oaken walls, chained to one dull round of command, whose unconditionality cloyed him, like some hypochondriac abbot he moved slowly about, at times suddenly pausing, starting, or staring, biting his lip, biting his finger-nail, flushing, paling, twitching his beard, with other symptoms of an absent of moody mind. This distempered spirit was lodged, as before hinted, in as distempered a frame. He was rather tall, but seemed never to have been robust, and now with nervous suffering was almost worn to a skeleton. A tendency to some pulmonary complaint appeared to have been lately confirmed. His voice was like that of one with lungs half gone, hoarsely suppressed, a husky whisper.** No wonder that, as in this state he tottered about, his private servant apprehensively followed him. Sometimes the negro gave his master his arm, or took his handkerchief out of his pocket for him; performing those and similar offices with that affectionate zeal which transmutes into something filial or fraternal acts in themselves but menial; and which has gained for the negro the repute of making the most pleasing body servant in the world; one, too, whom a master need be on no stiffly superior terms with, but may treat with familiar trust; less a servant than a devoted companion.[91]

With the variable of sickness, even calling Don Benito "some hypochondriac," at least to the degree that Don Benito "plays" his part well, the narrator plays out Delano's hypochondriac-izing gaze to an (illogical) extreme, prodding at his captivation (indeed, he too is made captive to the Spanish masquerade) as fantasy inducing and redefining of the master-slave relationship. Confused by this relation between master-slave (even reprimanding the Spaniard for allowing the slave some authority), Delano reads into the complexities of "intimacy," in terms of superiority and "something filial or fraternal," even marital. Delano imagines faithfulness in the racial hierarchy of master and

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[90] The binary sick/well extends from the work of Cristobal Silva. I find use in the geneaology he presents of "the rhetoric of infection" – the "miraculous plague" that killed indigenous population, how defining health in America in relation to citizenship, binary of sick/well represents in conceptualizing American culture – in relation to Maria DeGuzmán's argument of this being a rhetoric utilized against Spain and its Spaniard, as a racist discourse, and as a cultural ideology, "and around whose abjected body the Anglo-American empire might be erected." Both scholars pursue very different projects. My intention is to reconsider relationship between their colonial projects and how the narrative of sickness might be mapped cross-culturally in metaphors that defined nationalism in terms of a north/well, south/sick. See DeGuzmán, *Spain's Long Shadow*, xxv. See Cristobal Silva, *Miraculous Plagues: An Epidemiology Early New England Narrative* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 11.

[91] Melville, *Benito Cereno*, 41. (*Bold mine.*)

slave, and also imagines deception or threat or the potentiality of the reversal of that racial hierarchy: "As *master* and *man* stood before him, the black upholding the white, Captain Delano could not but bethink him of the beauty of that relationship which could present such a spectacle of *fidelity* on the one hand and *confidence* on the other."[92] The relationship proposed is that of "master and *man*" yet as redefined by the spectacle of a new binary: fidelity-confidence. That Delano imagines the bonded-duo as fidelity/*master* and confidence/*man*, prods at a Melvillian twist. Here, in *Benito Cereno*, Babo is the *confidence man*.[93] Melville's binaric play reminds us of the title and idea for his final novel, having not yet been written of course, *The Confidence Man: His Masquerade* (1857).

As the scene continues, the narrator proceeds in the deconstruction of the performance of Spanishness alongside blackness, with attention to Delano's reading of race is "heightened," as the narrator tells us, "by the contrast in dress, denoting their relative positions":

> **The Spaniard wore a loose Chili jacket of dark velvet; white small clothes and stockings, with silver buckles at the knee and instep; a high-crowned sombrero, of fine grass; a slender sword, silver mounted, hung from a knot in his sash; the last being an almost invariable adjunct, more for utility than ornament, of a South American gentleman's dress to this hour. Excepting when his occasional nervous contortions brought about disarray, there was certain precision in his attire, curiously at variance with the unsightly disorder around; especially in the belittered Ghetto, forward of the main-mast, wholly occupied by the blacks.** And the same occurs with the depiction of the servant. The servant wore nothing but wide trowsers [sic], apparently, from their coarseness and patches, made out of some old topsail; they were clean, and confined at the waist by a bit of unstranded rope, which, with his composed, deprecatory air at times, made him look something like a begging friar of St. Francis.[94]

There are multiple layers of signification to the Spaniard's costume, an excessiveness or extravagance of display that Delano cannot appropriately identify and distinguish from "centuries of Spanish history" between the Old and New World. Immediately, Delano deploys a stereotyped idea of a "South American gentleman's dress," with the "loose *Chili* jacket of *dark* velvet" being contrasted against the "*white* small clothes" beneath it. In the paragraph below, taken from Joseph M. Bennett's *The Illustrated Toilet of Fashion, Or, Annals of Costume, from the Earliest Period to the Present Time* (1850), we find an almost perfect explanation for Delano's reading of the Spaniard's costume:

> The most important part of the Spaniard's costume is the *capa*, or cloak. The lower orders wear it of a dark chocolate, faced with crimson plush or cotton velvet; while that worn by the higher classes is of blue or black cloth, faced with rich black silk velvet, and frequently lined throughout with taffety. The cloak is not a winter garment alone; in the hottest days of summer it is often worn. The rest of the costume consists of a short round jacket, with an upright collar, trimmed with braid

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92 Ibid., 46. (*Italics mine*.)

93 Sam Otter notes, "The burdens of performance and the costs of failure are shared by the Africans, whom the narrator often describes as 'blacks,' and the Spaniards, whom he often refers to as 'whites.' Melville heightens the ascriptions when revising his periodical story for *The Piazza Tales*, twice exchanging national terms ('Spaniards,' 'Spanish') for racial ones ('whites,' 'white')." See Otter, *Philadelphia Stories: America's Literature of Race and Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 268.

94 Melville, *Benito Cereno*, 46-47. (*Bold mine*.)

> and velvet and lined with silk. The generally prevailing fashion for the hat is a high sugar-loaf with a broad rim, and among the peasantry, a bright silk handkerchief is folded over the beard diagonally, and tied with a knot behind, and over this they wear the hat. They wear tight breeches of various colors; their boots and shoes are also made of colored leather. A large clasp-knife is considered a part of a Spaniard's costume. The costume of Portugal, Mexico, and their descendants in South America, and the yarious [sic] Spanish possessions, differs but little from that of Spain.[95]

Similar to Bennett's description is Delano's own description of Don Benito's costume but disrupting the extravagant "precision in his attire" is the variable of sickness ("his occasional nervous contortions") that Delano so deliberately turns to in his darkening of the Spaniard. Delano's juxtaposition of dark/white is also a subtle application of a formula of racial distinction: dark/Spaniard and white/Anglo-American. All the while the depiction of the servant "like a begging friar of St. Francis" is Delano's dismissal of slavery in preference of seeing West African bodies guised in dress that further enhances the narrative of Old World Spain's imperial degeneration in the New World.[96] Delano instead imagines the bonded-duo as a sickly descendant of this Spanish past, Don Benito the Chilian, alongside a West African passing slave as a "deprecatory" *Black* Friar. Here is the racial-religious conversion of the West African, but not to Catholicism, or even Las Casas' preaching; rather, the conversion the page (through Delano's racial and religious (mis)readings) permits Babo's extravagant passing between stereotypes, from being "like a shepherd's dog" to being like a *confidence man* to being "like a begging friar of St. Francis." To agree with Leonard Cassuto, Babo thus "swing[s] back and forth between human and thing in Delano's mind," yet he also extravagantly passes back and forth in such a way that signifies what Delano imagines against what Babo prods him to reimagine.[97] Of course, it is Babo who has dressed his master as *master* (perhaps in the likeness of Alexandro Aranda, the real and murdered Spanish captain), just as he has dressed himself as *begging friar of St. Francis*, all to dupe and seduce Delano into (mis)reading *his* Spanish masquerade.

There is a darkening of the Spaniard also happening at the hands of Babo, specifically his creation of extravagance in the passing-plot to further confound the American Captain. Carefully orchestrated by Babo, Don Benito also swings back and forth between stereotyped ideas in Delano's mind, from an extravagantly dressed Chilian to a "hypochondriac abbot" to an "invalid courtier tottering about London streets in the time of the plague":

> Though on the present voyage sailing from Buenos Ayres, he had avowed himself a native and resident of Chili, whose inhabitants had not so generally adopted the plain coat and once plebeian pantaloons; but, with a becoming modification, adhered to their provincial costume, picturesque as any in the world. Still, *relatively to the play history of the voyage*, and his own pale face, there seemed something so incongruous in the Spaniard's apparel, as almost to suggest the image of an invalid courtier tottering about London streets in the time of the plague.[98]

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[95] Joseph M. Bennett, *The Illustrated Toilet of Fashion, Or, Annals of Costume, from the Earliest Period to the Present Time* (New York: Booth & Foster, 1850), 27-28.
[96] DeGuzmán, *Spain's Long Shadow*, xxviii.
[97] Leonard Cassuto, *The Inhuman Race: The Racial Grotesque in American Literature and Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 205.
[98] Melville, *Benito Cereno*, 47.

The figuring or dis-figuring of the extravagant Spaniard in Delano's mind is shaped by the Black Legend, with the American Captain reinforcing this vision in his darkening of the Spanish body, not through his hypochondriac-izing gaze but also borrowing other European rhetorics to *blacken* the Spaniard, as with the Black Plague. Here is the Spaniard who "will not pass away," as DeGuzmán argues in her summoning of Roland Barthes' understanding of stereotype in *The Pleasure of the Text* (*Le plaisir du texte*, 1973) and argument of Edgar Allan Poe's story of M. Valdemar: "…what remains, what will not pass away, is, as Barthes points out, the stereotype that refuses to die," and to DeGuzmán this also applies to "the Spaniard according to the Black Legend and the legendary (as in long-lived) blackening of the Spaniard."[99] That "something so incongruous in the Spaniard's apparel" may very well have been Babo's dressing up of the Spaniard, further darkening him, even blackening him, all towards provoking the New Englander to (mis)read the power of blackness on the Spaniard rather than on the bodies of rebellious slaves.

Delano's experience of encounter with the bonded-duo along the deck of the *San Dominick* is (dis)played by Melville with attention to a specific historical (mis)perception in which the New Englander is highly suspicious of the *black* Spaniard not the loyal "*black* of small stature." The way in which the American Captain (mis)perceives the layer of illness and disability on the extravagantly costumed body of the Spaniard is a vision enhanced and dependent on the role or performance of the black slave. Yet the concern here and what might be described as the main narrative, at least to Delano, is how a ghosting of Spanishness infiltrates every fissure of popular U.S. consciousness, where the configuration of the extravagant Spaniard as a familiar figure, indeed, and like Columbus, according to DeGuzmán, is "a figure of identification for Anglo-Americans" in the pursuit of national and imperial destiny.[100] Although a second narrative functions throughout the text, what might be described as the dismissal of slavery, the main narrative maintains a deep structure of imagining the Spaniard as "an imposter," or so Delano thought: "Some low-born adventurer, masquerading as an oceanic grandee; yet so ignorant of the first requisites of mere gentlemanhood as to be betrayed into the present remarkable indecorum."[101] Suspicious of the Spaniard's every move, Delano watches closely the "the stranger's conduct," questioning if it was "something in the light of an intentional affront, of course the idea of lunacy was virtually vacated," to which he then wonders, "But if not a lunatic, what then?"[102] Here, in the American's musing, is the Spaniard's masquerade, as a performance that Delano carefully conceptualizes for the reader:

> The alleged Don Benito was in early manhood, about twenty-nine or thirty. To assume a sort of roving cadetship in the maritime affairs of such a house, what more likely scheme for a young knave of talent and spirit? But the Spaniard was a pale invalid. Never mind. For even to the degree of simulating mortal disease, the craft of some tricksters had been known to attain. To think that, under the aspect of infantile weakness, the most savage energies might be couched – those velvets of the Spaniard but the silky paw to his fangs. [103]

Delano's imagining of the Spaniard's masquerade and his piratical nature quickly vanishes in the closing line of the passage above, yet what he glimpses is the possibility of the Spaniard's "passing," described as his "simulating mortal disease" and even referred to "*the* craft of some tricksters," as if

[99] DeGuzmán, *Spain's Long Shadow*, 47.
[100] Ibid., 75-90.
[101] Melville, *Benito Cereno*, 54.
[102] Ibid., 54.
[103] Ibid., 54.

common knowledge. Yet the act of feigning a "mortal disease" follows his (double) reading of race: "The *Spaniard* was a *pale* invalid," in which race (Spanishness, paleness, perhaps ghostliness) is then linked to "the aspect of infantile weakness"—as the key layer also signifying against "those velvets" (not just his excessive dress, that "jacket of dark velvet," but the literal definition meaning "skins" that we might attach to "silky paw"/hand and "fangs"/dagger or even as a term meaning "coverings" or "passings"), which ultimately confounds Delano, this shifting between stereotypes that escalate but that he pulls back from the more he darkens Don Benito's character, as if he has gone too far.[104]

Delano cannot unmask Don Benito's Spanish masquerade, because of "those velvets of the Spaniard," also a word that appears four times in the story, like "Follow your leader." As a variable of race, here "those velvets" speak to the multiplicity in the performance of extravagant passing, and while we can read the Spaniard in terms of paleness or off-whiteness—as a dying and ghostly figure, even *la figura de la muerte*—also at play in the racial reading is extravagance as closely associated with Spanishness as *darkness*, a rhetoric prodding at *la leyenda negra*: "the *dark* Spaniard himself, the central hobgoblin of all," "the idea of Don Benito's *darkly* pre-ordaining Captain Delano's fate," "observing so singular a haggardness combined with a dark eye," "if the whites had dark secrets concerning Don Benito," "but ten minutes ago, dark-lantern in had, was dodging round some old grind-stone in the hold, sharpening a hatchet for me, I thought," "his dark spleen," and "the dark Spaniard himself, the central hobgoblin of all." Delano darkens and disables the Spaniard, and between these rhetorics of race and disease, makes an implicit association and formulation of a foredoomed Spain: "his national formality dusked by the saturnine mood of ill health."[105] Still, we must add that Delano also ponders the possibility of a shared "whiteness" with Don Benito, positing an alliance between Spaniards and Anglo-Americans in regards to slavery, but this desire, too, occurs in a mere glimpse, since Delano also questions the Spaniard's loyalty to "whites" because of the social relation he allows with the black slave: "Besides, who ever heard of a white so far a renegade as to apostatize from his very species almost, by leaguing in against it with Negroes?"[106]

The master-slave bond is a familiar relationship, in particular the image of an extravagant passing Spanish master and his loyal West African slave. Embedded in the American cultural consciousness is this confounding yet romanticized—indeed, Romanticized—bond which Delano questions in terms of race and alliance but that which he cannot unmask. On (dis)play throughout *Benito Cereno* is are various portraits of the ailing Spaniard and his loyal servant, yet as a pair bound to a transnational rubric that includes the duped American Captain. Through American spectacles, Melville theorizes the extravagant passing of Don Benito and Babo, and what we stand to learn by his formulaic dissection of the effects of Delano's (mis)reading is the degree to which the figure of the Spaniard *alongside* the slave become symbolic in terms of identification. This is not about a simple binaristic model of black-white; rather, this is about a discursive system as represented through Delano's (mis)perceiving of racial threat because of the implications of the variable of disability and illness that produces an odd relation between Spanish master and West African slave. This bond and the presentation of interdependency, which is deeply complicated by significant factors we'd ordinarily think of as the very opposite of "intimacy," thrilled Melville just as it terrified him. After all, this bonded-duo of master-slave was not a pair that the American imagination did not know or could not read. Melville also encountered the pair across American letters, including Spanish literary classics and contemporary popular print culture, especially newspaper clippings detailing rare sightings of passing figures and the mid-century serialized novels that borrowed passing-plots.

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[104] Ibid., 57.
[105] Ibid., 40.
[106] Ibid., 54.

Besides Delano's *Narrative*, Melville discovered traces of this symbolic pair in historical and literary "sources," such as the famous escape from American slavery by Ellen and William Craft in 1848, the figure of The Confidence Man in the 1840s, and the knight-errant and squire from Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quixote* (1605 & 1615) that became an emblem of culture through derivative representations that excited a nineteenth century America obsessed with Spanish themes. Melville, too, wondered what this pair had to do with it all. Performing his own sort of extravagant passing through these tales of passing, Melville finds new "sources" to invent his version of the bonded-duo of Spanish masquerade.

4. Melville's Other "Sources": The Crafts, The Confidence Man, and *Don Quixote*

Considering the passing stories that were or may have been on Melville's desk during the composition of *Benito Cereno*, we find an intertexual dialogue that resonates too perfectly to easily dismiss. As in his other works, Melville "borrowed" from various and numerous "sources" to enhance different areas of his fiction, always rearranging those "sources" and sculpting them in ways that enriched and exaggerated his figurations but rendered remarkable and such vivid characters in much more complicated narrative plots. Melville did the same with Delano's *Narrative*, including referencing other slave revolts, such as the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804) and uprisings on the American brig, *Creole* (1841), and the Spanish schooner, *Amistad* (1839), but he also turned to referencing historical and literary passing figures in order to re-invent the bonded-duo of Spanish masquerade. There are other primary "sources" that Melville studied while composing *Benito Cereno*, and it is no coincidence that circulating in the very newspapers that Melville subscribed to and read were figures of passing in 1849 that gained significant public attention: Ellen and William Craft's Spanish masquerade out of American slavery and the rise of a new passing figure called the "Confidence Man." Alongside this organizing concept around slaves passing as Spanish gentlemen and the figure of the *con-man* or *con-artist* as another type of passing figure, Melville was reading about the extravagant adventures of passing enacted by the most famous bonded-duo of Spanish masquerade, of course Don Quixote and Sancho Panza in Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quixote* (1605 & 1615). By linking Melville's interest in (Spanish) masquerade to the Crafts, the "Confidence Man," and *Don Quixote*, here we find Melville's *other* significant "sources" that are seminal to his invention of Don Benito and Babo.

While somewhat cogent, this reading of the historical escape of the Crafts as prompting the literary trope of the bonded-duo of Spanish masquerade, yet as further complicated alongside the rise of the "Confidence Man" as a "new species" of passing that further stirred a cultural excitement with figures of passing, *and* also in light of Melville's sincere interest with the bond between Cervantes' knight-errant and squire, intends to present Melville in a deep study that allowed him to create in *Benito Cereno* a multi-layered textual and visual *writerly masquerade* that renders a new portrait of the bonded-duo of Spanish masquerade. What has become of the bonded-duo in his hands, and what had become of the pair in his imagination? While the Crafts' passing-plot was appropriated by the literary imaginations of the day, with Ellen Craft enacting *Spanishness* in masquerade and the bonded-duo extravagant passing across a different topography, the figure of the "Confidence Man" introduced another performance of masquerade alongside the role of the duped American, but it was the famous bonded-duo, Don Quixote and Sancho, that remained deeply embedded in an American imagination. It is through these other "sources" that Melville fully conceived *his* Don Benito and Babo, (re)turning truly "original" characters into historical fiction and within a hemispheric context. Let us begin with the Crafts.

In the guidebook (or key) to reading Melville's "sources" by Merton M. Sealts, there is a footnote listing the newspapers Melville subscribed to that offers a possible link between Melville

and the 1848 escape of Ellen and William Craft. Following the sentence, "Throughout the Berkshire period, reading of all kinds, including newspapers and magazines, provided Melville with recreation as well as source-material," Sealts notes that Melville subscribed to the New York *Herald* (among other newspapers and periodicals). Taking Sealts' footnote and pairing it with Tony Tanner's linking of Melville to his reading of an article entitled "Arrest of the Confidence Man," which was published in July 1849 in the New York *Herald*, where he is said to have found the title and idea for his final novel—*The Confidence-Man: His Masquerade* (1857)—then, Melville might have also come across the first printing to describe the Crafts' escape, which was originally printed in the *Liberator* and then reprinted in the New York *Herald* in early January 1849, titled "Singular Escape: Here is a wonderful case—read it!" by William Wells Brown. In the weeks, months, and even the years thereafter, hers was the performance of Spanish masquerade told and re-told in newspapers and on both sides of the Mason-Dixon line. Joining Brown on a four-month lecture tour throughout Massachusetts, in addition to several neighboring states, the Crafts were central to William Lloyd Garrison's anti-slavery crusade: the pair also met Frederic Douglass.

It is difficult to imagine that Melville, being the voracious reader that he was, as never coming across any material or hearing about the most famous and ingenious escape from American slavery. Although the early months of 1849 Melville was still in New York, and although he moved to Pittsfield in the summer of 1850, any and all news related to abolitionism took the northern region by storm; in fact, the popularity of the Crafts' passing-plot initiated a literary trope in anti-slavery discourse of the early 1850s period, that of light-skinned slaves passing out of slavery dressed as Spanish gentlemen, for instance Harriet Beecher Stowe borrowed their passing-plot for *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1851-52), as did William Wells Brown in *Clotel* (1853). Stowe's book that, to borrow Barbara McCaskill's words, "reminded audiences of the Crafts' tenacious escape—and probably left them wondering where the firsthand version was."[107] There is a possible connection between Stowe and Melville that might also link him to the Craft's. Julia Stern address this possibility: "Whether or not Stowe's novel had a direct influence on the creation of 'Benito Cereno,' it is nevertheless significant that these two important narratives of slavery written in America in the 1850s interrogate the institution of slavery in its international form."[108] If Stowe and Brown took their cue from *the* newspaper clipping detailing the Craft's escape as a Spanish masquerade—called "An Incident at the South" (January 1849)—might Melville have as well? Could the extravagant passing of the Craft's have nudged Melville to return to Delano's *Narrative*? As R. J. M Blackett put it, "no other escape, with the exception of Frederick Douglass' and Josiah Henson's, created such a stir in antebellum America as did the Crafts."[109] Put another way, Melville could not have escaped their popularity; he could not have missed *her* Spanish masquerade, and the very passing-plot appropriated in the book of the century.

In that newspaper clipping, the reader follows an American passenger who, like Melville's Delano, is a "believer in physiognomy." Traveling by boat, from Savannah to Charleston, the

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[107] Barbara McCaskill, "Introduction" in *Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom: The Escape of William and Ellen Craft from Slavery* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1999), xvi. For more on the light-skinned slave passing as a Spanish gentleman in the fictions of the 1850s, see Julia Stern, "Spanish Masquerade and the Drama of Racial Identity in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*," in *Passing and the Fictions of Identity*, ed. Elaine E. Ginsberg (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), 103-130; Monica Miller, *Slaves to Fashion: Black Dandyism and the Styling of Black Diasporic Identity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009), 108-122; and, Keiko Arai, "A 'Stranger' as a Mask: The Spanish Masquerade in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, *Clotel*, and 'Benito Cereno,'" in *Japanese Institutional Repositories* (2006): 1-19.

[108] See Stern, "Spanish Masquerade and the Drama of Racial Identity in *Uncle Tom's Cabin,*" 126, footnote 17.

[109] R. J. M Blackett, *Beating Against the Barriers: Biographical Essays on Nineteenth-Century Afro-American History* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1986), 87-137.

passenger's attention—in this case, his Newark eye—is alerted to a stranger entering the cabin supported by "his servant, a strapping negro":

> The man was bundled up in a capacious overcoat; his face was bandaged with a white handkerchief, and its expression entirely hid by a pair of enormous green spectacles.
>
> There was something so mysterious and unusual about the young man, as he sat restlessly in the corner, that curiosity led me to observe him more closely.
>
> ….
>
> From the better opportunity afforded by daylight, I found that he was slight built, apparently handsome young man, with black hair and eyes, and of a darkness of complexion that betokened Spanish extraction. Any notice from others seemed painful to him, so to satisfy my curiosity I questioned his servant who was standing near, and gained the following information.
>
> His master was an invalid—he had suffered a long time with a complication of diseases that had baffled the skill of the best physicians in Georgia—he was now suffering principally with the "rheumatism," and was scarcely able to walk or help himself in any way. He came from Atlanta, Georgia, and was now on his way to Philadelphia, at which place resided an uncle, a celebrated physician, through whose means he hoped to be restored to perfect health.

Can you see the extravagant Spaniard? Can you see bonded-duo of Spanish masquerade? Can you see the trio at the center of *Benito Cereno*? And perhaps most importantly, can you see the extravagance in *her* performance of Spanishness in masquerade? As if the trio were a formula in this passing-plot, here, too, are the three central characters in Melville's historical novella: the duped American passenger, the ailing Spaniard, and the loyal black servant. Ellen Craft's extravagant passing, as rendered by this duped American passenger, helps us see what Delano is seeing and what he fails to see. Ellen Craft now forces us to really see the extravagance in the very performance of passing that we have missed in our reading of *Benito Cereno*. This is about the extravagance in her passage *but* as linked to Spanishness through the variable of disability and illness. When we ask how is Spanish masquerade created in *Benito Cereno*, we should also ask how did Ellen Craft create it, not just for Melville, but for his contemporaries as well.

The light-skinned slave passing as Spanish was not the only figure of passing on the rise in 1849, however. Coinciding with stories of fugitive slaves passing across the color line were stories referencing the passing enacted by the "Confidence Man," which, as Tony Tanner perfectly phrases, "is a figure of quite special – and central – importance in American culture."[110] The portrait of the "confidence man," as this figure was first described in a July 1849 article titled "Arrest of the Confidence Man," and printed in the *New York Herald*, introduces another passing figure of this critical period who was also duping Americans:

> For the last few months a man has been traveling about the city, known as the 'Confidence Man;' that is, he would go up to a perfect stranger in the street, and being a man of genteel appearance, would easily command an interview. Upon this interview he would say, after some little conversation, 'have you confidence in me to trust me with your watch until to-morrow;' the stranger, at this novel request,

[110] Tony Tanner, *The American Mystery: American Literature from Emerson to DeLillo* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 84.

> supposing him to be some old acquaintance, not at the moment recollected, allows him to take the watch, thus placing 'confidence' in the honesty of the stranger, who walks off laughing, and the other, supposing it to be a joke, allows him so to do. In this way many have been duped …

This figure of confidence and passing certainly coincided with stories of fugitive slaves passing out of slavery. In this article, the notion of "placing 'confidence' in the honesty of the stranger" offers a point of perspective into cultural benevolence, while also addressing a key element in the performance of passing in order for the pass to succeed. Yet what the writer of the article seems to gather from such a figure is how masquerade questions and places on (dis)play American morals and ethnics when confronted by the supposed "honesty of the stranger." Responding to this very article was Melville's friend, Evert Duyckinck, who write in the *Literary World* that the "Confidence Man" was a "new species of the Jeremy Diddler," which Tanner explains is the title-character from Edgar Allan Poe's essay, entitled "Diddling Considered as One of the Exact Sciences" (1843), with Poe borrowing the name from James Kenney's English play. Duyckinck introduces a parallel between the "Confidence Man" and Jeremy Diddler, explaining to his readers how the figure of "swindling" exposes the good of benevolence versus a "hardening of civilization." He writes,

> The Confidence Man, the new species of the Jeremy Diddler recently a subject of police fingering, and still later impressed into the service of Burton's comicalities in Chambers Street, is excellently handled by a clever pen in the *Merchants' Ledger*, which we are glad to see has a column for the credit as well as for the debit side of humanity. It is not the worst thing that can be said for a country that it gives birth to a confidence man:—' … It is a good thing, and speaks well for human nature, that, at this late day, in spite of all that hardening of civilization and all the warning of newspapers, men *can be swindled*. The man who is *always* on his guard, *always* proof against appeal, who cannot be beguiled into the weakness of pity by *any* story—is far gone, in our opinion, towards being a hardened villain. He may steer clear of petty larceny and open swindling—but mark that man well in his intercourse with his fellows—they have no confidence in him, and he has none in them. He lives coldly among his people, he walks an iceberg in the marts of trade and social life—and when he dies, may Heaven have that confidence in him which he had not in his fellow mortals!'[111]

Here is the figure of the naïve American alongside the figure of the "Confidence Man," the latter of which Duyckinck chastises through the voice in the quoted text. Of concern is surely the role of "confidence" in the act of passing, but for what it says of honesty and trust between the passer and the duped. This is about the fictions and (dis)play of personhood, especially how the "Confidence Man" renders a social masquerade that indulges the cultural hope of trust in others, a theme that Melville explores in his final novel, of course, *The Confidence-Man: His Masquerade* (1857).

Even while writing *Israel Potter* in 1854, however, Melville comments on the figure of passing or the confidence man, in this case naming him the "Jack of all trades": "Printer, postmaster, almanac maker, essayist, chemist, orator, tinker, statesman, humorist, philosopher, parlor man, political economist, professor of housewifery, ambassador, projector, maxim-monger, herb-doctor,

[111] Ibid., 85. (*Italics his*).

wit:—-Jack of all trades, master of each and mastered by none—-the type and genius of his land."[112] Even William V. Spanos interrupts the lines above to prod at Melville's conjuring of the figure of the "Confidence Man": "herb-doctor [one of the avatars of the confidence-man], wit"—indeed, here is a figure that is presented as a *con-man* or *con-artist*.[113] At the heart of Melville's *Benito Cereno* is this "Confidence Man" yet as manipulated by Babo, with the American Captain as victim to *his* Spanish masquerade with Don Benito.

Melville's exposure to the theme of passing merely begins with the Crafts and the "Confidence Man." During this period, Melville continued pursuing a long interest in the extravagant passing adventures of the errant-knight and squire from Cervantes' masterpiece, *Don Quixote* (1605 & 1615). Turning to the margins of Melville's surviving copy of a translated and illustrated edition, the modern reader gains access to a mind in the process of inventing Don Benito and Babo. Following his marginalia—a check here and another there; single and double lines beneath a word; underlining a sentence or entire passage; one asterisk marking the text while a second asterisk lingers in the margin with a conversation attached to it; checks alongside chapter-titles on the table of contents; a list of page numbers at the end of a volume; pages flagged with small and large "dog-ears"; and, a large check next to an etching/sketch/illustration—Melville makes available to the reader a passage through his handling of a "source," how deeply absorbed he had become with a trope, and the careful development of a quasi-philosophical conversation about the influence of this classic pair. But, Melville is particular with his marginalia, and this cannot be emphasized enough. Melville identifies a focus on the bond between Don Quixote and Sancho, and with the pen and folding of pages, he repeatedly interrupts the narrative telling by Cid Hamet who, it turns out, is also a narrator-as-editor telling someone else's story, to examine several portraits of the pair and the intensity of their attachment. What we discover in his array of annotations is a mind in the middle of a serious study on Cervantes' bonded-duo. This is not a mind in a random engagement with a Spanish classic, but an author crafting his own hidalgo as bound to a loyal servant.

Following Melville's marginalia in his personal copy of *Don Quixote* (housed at The Houghton Library at Harvard) directs the modern reader to a singularity in Melville's approach at rewriting the characterization of Don Benito and Babo in the shadow of the most famous bonded-duo of Spanish masquerade: Don Quixote and Sancho. From the onset and by following his pen, it is apparent that Melville set out to advance a trope by borrowing the real characters and passing-plot from Delano but facilitating that historical account through Cervantes' work and influence of his novel (let us not forget that this facilitating also coincides with the discourse of passing in slavery and antislavery literature), especially the very story itself but also its accompanying materials, such as critical essays that prefaced his personal edition and the textual iconography that enhanced his readerly experience. For Melville, those engravings, etchings, and drawings were part of his crafting of Don Benito and Babo, yet a process of converting the visual experience into the writerly that, as an interpretative tradition, allowed him to design a textual and visual component in *Benito Cereno* that we might glimpse by following his marginalia. This investigation begins with Melville's reading of the "Introductory" note by Louis Viardot, entitled "Memoir of Cervantes, with a notice of his works" (and translated from French), which appears in the opening pages of his personal copy of *Don Quixote*. Melville would have come across this critical essay during his most earliest encounters with the text, including his July 1854 reading of *Don Quixote* while visiting his father-in-law in Boston.

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[112] Melville, *Israel Potter: His Fifty Years of Exile*, eds. Harrison Hayford, Hershel Parker, and G. Thomas Tanselle (Evanston: Northwestern University Press and Newberry Library, 1982), 48.

[113] See Spanos, *Herman Melville and the American Calling*, 78-79.

Immediately into the "Introductory" note, a single black line, drawn with a pen, stands perpendicular alongside this following sentence: "Don Quixote is but the case of a man of diseased brain; his monomania is that of a good man who revolts at injustice, and who would exalt virtue."[114] In this first marking of the essay, we find Melville's attention drawn to Viardot's characterizing of Don Quixote "a man of diseased brain," of course "his monomania." If we look more closely at the bottom half of the page, however, and just below the sentence above, over the text is a long crease where Melville folded the page. The long "dog-ear" stretches across an intricate analysis that captures the uniqueness of the relationship between Don Quixote and Sancho. The crease (as recreated with the line across the paragraph below) begins with the first word of the following passage and extends through the entire paragraph:

> … Sancho assumes a new shape; he is sly though coarse, subtle though blunt. As Don Quixote has but one grain of madness, his square has but one of credulity, which, however, is justified by the superior intelligence of his master, and accounts for the attachment to him which he feels.
>
> They furnish an admirable spectacle. We see these two men, become inseparable, like the soul and body, sustaining and completing each other; united for an object, at once noble and ridiculous; performing foolish deeds, but making wise speeches; exposed to the mirth, if not to the brutality of spectators, and bringing to light the vices and the follies of those by whom they are mocked, or more seriously maltreated; exciting at first the contempt of the reader, afterwards his pity, and finally his most lively sympathies. They affect almost as much as they amuse; they give at the same moment a mirthful entertainment and a moral lesson; forming, in short, by the perpetual contrast of one with the other, and of both with all the rest of the world, the unfailing materials for a drama, immense in its design, and always new.
>
> It is more especially in the second part of Don Quixote that we discover the new plan of the author, ripened by age and greater experience of the world. There is no question of knight-errantry, more than is necessary to continue the original idea, that the same general plan may embrace the two parts. It is no longer a playful parody on chivalric romance; it is a book of practical philosophy, a collection of maxims, or rather parables—a mild and judicious critique on human nature generally.[115]

This passage affords the modern reader a hint as to Melville's original intentions. Clues that complicate traditional readings of *Benito Cereno*: this is not simply about Melville's 34,00 words versus Delano's 14,000 words but rather Melville's specific treatment and engagement with a "source" through other "sources" for how he imposed a different theory. When we reflect on his other novels and the bonded-duos therein, we can read the passage above with confidence that Melville sought material on male pairings with a particular interest in the deeply complex factors pertaining to master-slave relations among interracial couples. For him, there was something peculiar with the bonded-duo in *Don Quixote*, however, as "an admirable spectacle" and the bond that made them "inseparable"—wed, tied—"like the soul and body, sustaining and completing each other." Especially for how Viardot describes the pair as "united for an object," in which he articulates a relation that reads similarly to the bond between Don Benito and Babo: "at once noble and ridiculous; performing foolish deeds, but making wise speeches." Melville, having read Viardot's

[114] Louis Viardot, "Memoir of Cervantes, with a notice of his works," in *Don Quixote de la Mancha*, trans. Jarvis and illus. Johannot, 3 vols (London: J. J. Dubochet, 1837-1839), lii.
[115] Ibid., lii-liii.

note in July 1854 and again in September 1855 (the latter is when he left this "dog ear" on the page), would have seen in Don Quixote and Sancho *his* Don Benito and Babo. Linking the pairs through the materials of others (Cervantes and Delano), offered him a newly imagined "mirthful entertainment and a moral lesson." Yet Melville, like Cervantes in the second part of *Don Quixote*, seeks a "new plan" in *Benito Cereno*. Melville engages "a playful parody" on the antebellum reader—this "play of the barber"—to expose the *mask of innocence* donned by the reader, in an effort to craft a "practical philosophy" as a radical (dis)play of "outing" his readership by the author's own trick or Spanish masquerade.

Melville's reading of *Don Quixote* thus helps us interpret the layered complexity in his invention of Don Benito and Babo. Turning our attention to Melville's markings in the "Introductory" note of *Don Quixote* offers a reading strategy for examining how it was that Melville conceived his bonded-duo. What happens to the most memorable scene in *Benito Cereno*—the "barber's chair" or what Melville calls "the play of the barber"—if we allow Melville's marginalia in his personal copy of *Don Quixote* to elucidate for us the force of realism in the writerly (dis)play of master and slave?[116] Reading *Benito Cereno* alongside *Don Quixote*, the final section examines the transformation of the bonded-duo in Melville's hands. Thus following Captain Delano's cue, "He was a true off-shoot of a true hidalgo Cereno," let us examine Melville's interplay (or a conjunction) with the words and illustrations from *Don Quixote* that led Melville to a cross-discursive model with which to reimagine Delano's real bonded-duo.[117]

5. Melville's Spanish Masquerade: *Benito Cereno* & *Don Quixote*

In the fictions throughout Melville's career, the relation between master and slave became a serious study, especially during the composition of *Benito Cereno* and his reading of *Don Quixote*. The two go hand-in-hand. When we place Melville's marginalia from his personal copy of *Don Quixote* alongside the portraits of Don Benito and Babo, there is a sure Cervantian influence that is difficult to dismiss. This was a bond that the American author was eager to transform. In perhaps the most cited line of his 1853 Jarvis/Johannot edition of *Don Quixote*—which he purchased and dated as "Sep 18. '55"—or, as Harry Levin calls it, "Melville's most revealing note," here is Melville at work with rethinking the bonded-duo. The scene in *Don Quixote* provokes Melville to mark the margin in pencil with an "X," when Don Quixote says "… that a knight-errant without a mistress is like a tree without leaves, a building without cement, a shadow without a body that causes it," and also offer commentary to the scene. (See figure 8).

[116] Samuel Otter, *Philadelphia Stories*, 272. Although the "sources" discussed here do not "postdate Melville's story," of interest in following Otter's lead is the very acknowledgement of the practice of turning to Melville's "sources" for how they might "help us construe the shaving scene episode in *Benito Cereno*," as Otter states.
[117] Melville, *Benito Cereno*, 54.

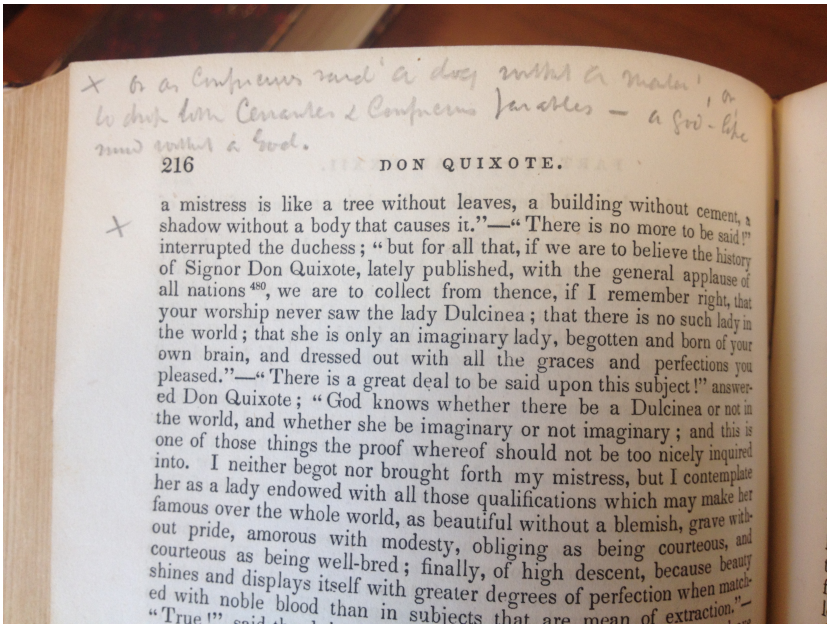


Figure 8. Melville's Personal Copy of the Jarvis-Johannot edition of *Don Quixote*[118]

Marking the top of the page with an "X," Melville responds to the knight-errant's bond with the mistress, Dulcinea: "Or as Confucius said, 'a dog without a master', or to drop both Cervantes and Confucius parables – a god-like mind without a god." This line might also remind us of Captain Ahab, who is described in the opening pages of *Moby-Dick* as "a grand, ungodly, godlike man," but these words also provide insight to Melville's project at hand in *Benito Cereno*. Scholars have yet to draw a link between Melville's marginalia and Cervantes' words *and* even Johannot's illustrations, all of which intersect in Melville's writing of *Benito Cereno*.

Melville's own parable, "a master without a dog," recalls Delano's first encounter with Don Benito and Babo: "By his side stood a black of small stature, in whose rude face, as occasionally, like a shepherd's dog, he mutely turned it up into the Spaniard's, sorrow and affection were equally blended." If we shift to Cervantes, in particular this remark, "a shadow without a body that causes it," yet in direct parallel to Delano's telling Don Benito, "'You are saved,' cried Captain Delano, more and more astonished and pained: 'you are saved; what has cast such a shadow upon you?' 'The negro,'" there is an overlap and interplay (or overplay) between *Don Quixote* and *Benito Cereno*.[119] Critics have pursued the relevance of Melville's parable, for instance as Levin explains, "Thus the significance of Cervantes' absent heroine is momentarily transposed into Melville's key; she is the symbol of an elusive faith. And if she incarnates – or rather etherealizes – womanhood for Don Quixote, his relationship with his fellow men is symbolized in the person of Sancho Panza."[120] Besides "womanhood," however, *her* absence is also about "faith" and, to return to Melville, *fidelity* and *confidence*: "the beauty of that relationship which could present such a spectacle of *fidelity* on the one hand and *confidence* on the other."[121] Moving beyond the binary of manhood/womanhood, this is about fidelity/*master* and confidence/*man*, with Babo as the *confidence man* and Don Benito as loyal master. Also at play between Cervantes' words and Melville's appropriation of them are Johannot's

[118] Melville's marginalia appears in the first volume (of two volumes) in Part II, Chapter XXXII, 216. See AC85.M4977.Zz853c. Houghton Library, Harvard University.
[119] Melville, *Benito Cereno*, 107.
[120] Levin, *Contexts of Criticism*, 102.
[121] Melville, *Benito Cereno*, 46.

accompanying illustrations and their critical role in providing audiences with a visual narrative over the written word, all are intersecting, as if locking into each other and signifying a cross-discursive model in the composition of *Benito Cereno*. Take for instance the significance of the iconic image of Don Quixote and his dog, which appears on the title page of Melville's 1853 edition of *Don Quixote*. (See figure 9).

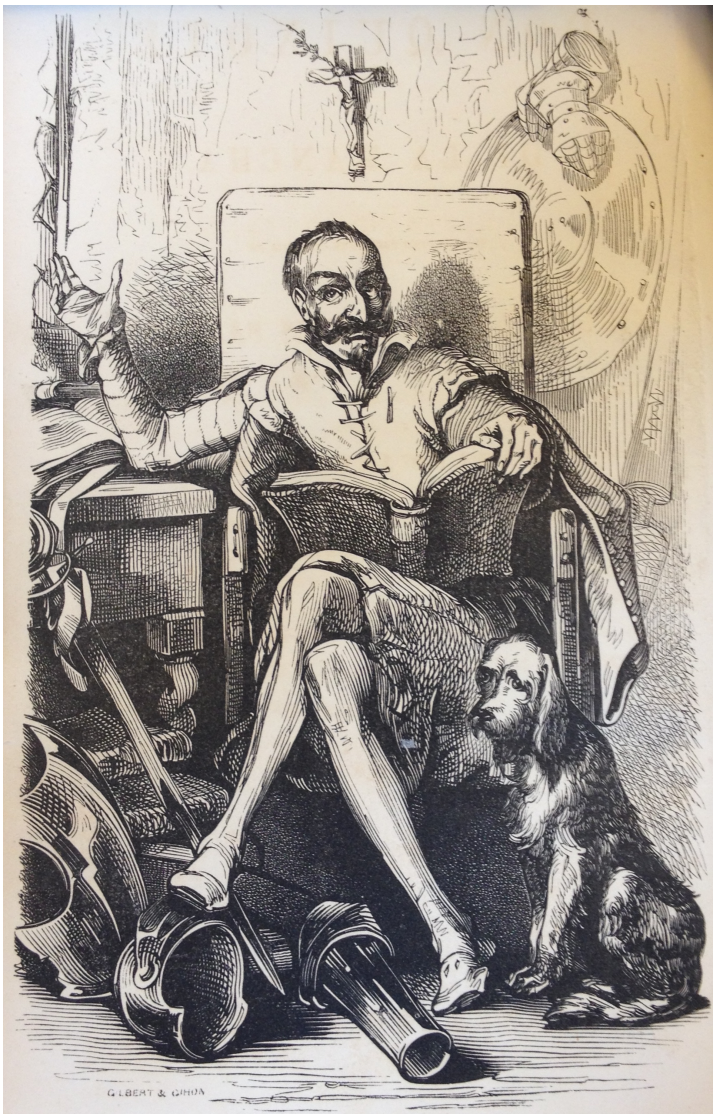


Figure 9. Melville's Personal Copy of the Jarvis-Johannot edition of *Don Quixote* [122]

Although Melville did not add a check alongside this etching, as he had with others, he understood the influence of the visual, elsewhere borrowing etchings as "sources" to further enhance his descriptions of Don Benito and Babo. *Benito Cereno*, in effect, implicates our spectatorial complicity as viewer-readers, raising questions about the act of looking and the role of reading. Attention to the Cervantian influence in *Benito Cereno*—for his words and Johannot's illustrations—challenge us to re-think Melville's writerly masquerade. Let us turn to the scene in *Benito Cereno* often described as the

[122] See AC85.M4977.Zz853c. Houghton Library, Harvard University.

most memorable in American literature, for in it is Melville's interplay of "sources" in his recreation of the wretched bond between Don Benito and Babo.

Moments before Don Benito sits in the barber's chair for his afternoon shave, the reader is shown how Babo upholds the Spanish masquerade, always manipulating the relation between the Spanish and American captains through his dramatic performance as servant. During instances when the passing-plot or revolt might be slipping from Babo's control, the narrator closely follows Babo, allowing the reader to witness how the slave-turned-master regains control of the masquerade. In these instances, too, Melville is hard at work in presenting Delano's (mis)reading of the performances. The "play of the barber" begins when Babo detects that the captains have wandered too far in their conversation, overhearing a discussion on navigational matters. Noticing that the Spaniard has fallen out of the perimeters of the passing-plot, Babo interrupts the pause, as the narrator explains, Don Benito "pausing an instant, as one about to make a plunging exchange of elements, as from air to water," indeed, this plunge foreshadows Don Benito's actual plunge into Delano's boat at the end of *Benito Cereno*.[123] In a moment of panic, the Spaniard, who "cringed" because his master had seen and heard him slip from the passing-plot, now awaits his punishment. What Delano later describes as the "servant's anxious fidelity," Babo actually reinstates his role as master when repeatedly addressing the Spaniard as "master," the narrator writes:

> "**Master**," said the servant, discontinuing his work on the coat sleeve, and addressing the rapt Spaniard with a sort of timid apprehensiveness, as one charged with a duty, the discharge of which, it was foreseen, would prove irksome to the very person who had imposed it, and for whose benefit it was intended, "**master** told me never mind where he was, or how engaged, always to remind him, to a minute, when shaving-time comes. Miguel has gone to strike the half-hour afternoon. It is *now*, **master**. Will **master** go into the cuddy?"[124]

Babo's excessive use of the title "master" is merely to reprimand the master-turned-slave *and* to remind the Spaniard that Babo is *now* master. Delano dismisses the remarks of the incessant slave, but questions "his host's capriciousness, this being shaved with such uncommon punctuality in the middle of the day."[125] Babo's repeats the word "master" four times, also recalling the four instances that "follow your leader" appears in the tale. Here, Don Benito must follow his leader, Babo.

The threesome enter the cuddy, described as "a sort of attic to the large cabin below," or as Samuel Otter describes it, "Babo's parlor, in which the African leader manipulates the heads of his captain and audience and Melville reflects on constraint within and beyond the story."[126] What ensues is a sort of decapitation of the Spaniard, while Delano fails to see the "extremity of the cuddy" or how Spain's long shadow decorates the interior of the room and haunts it. Delano enters the parlor, once again passing all that is symbolic of an Old World Spain. The morbid colonial and Catholic room that, Delano says, is "'a sort of dormitory, sitting-room, sail-loft, chapel, armory, and private closet all together,'" is a cuddy that contains its own extremity:

> The floor of the cuddy was matted. Overhead, four or five old muskets were stuck into horizontal holes along the beams. On one side was a claw-footed old table lashed to the deck; a thumbed missal on it, and over it a small, meager crucifix

[123] Ibid., 71.
[124] Ibid., 71. (*Bold mine.*)
[125] Ibid., 71.
[126] Ibid., 71. Also see Otter, *Philadelphia Stories*, 271.

> attached to the bulk-head. Under the table lay a dented cutlass or two, with a hacked harpoon, among some were melancholy old rigging, like a heap of poor friar's girdles. There were also to long, sharp-ribbed settees of Malacca cane, black with age, and uncomfortable to look at as inquisitors' racks, with a large, misshapen arm-chair, which, furnished with a rude barber's crutch at the back, working with a screw, seemed some grotesque, middle-age engine of torment.[127]

This is "Babo's parlor"—with hanging muskets, armor, a small crucifix, the friar's girdles, and an "execution chair" of religious excess and of "inquisitorial violence." This "cuddy" resembles Don Quixote's study. Through the perspective of the American Captain (refereed to as "the benevolent one"), the narrator presents a striking image of the bonded-duo, with Babo acting the role of "natural valet" ("as though God had set the whole negro to some pleasant tune") about to shave the ailing Spaniard who is compared to other hypochondriacs ("Johnson and Byron") with loyal valets ("Barber and Fletcher").[128]

Babo's "play of the barber" is the master reprimanding his slave, with Delano almost glimpsing the extravagance:

> Setting down his basin, the negro searched among the razors, as for the sharpest, and having found it, gave it an additional edge by expertly strapping it on the firm, smooth, oily skin of his open palm; he then made a gesture as if to begin, but midway stood suspended for an instant, one hand elevating the razor, the other professionally dabbling among the bubbling suds on the Spaniard's lank neck. Not unaffected by the close sight of the gleaming steel Don Benito nervously shuddered; his usual ghastliness was heighted by the lather, which lather, again, was intensified in its hue by the contrasting sootiness of the negro's body. Altogether the scene was somewhat peculiar, at least to Captain Delano, nor, as he saw the two thus postured, could he resist the vagary, that in the black he saw a headsman, and in the white, a man at the block. But this was one of those antic conceits, appearing and vanishing in a breath, from which, perhaps, the best regulated mind is not always free.[129]

For a moment, Delano imagines Babo as tyrant and as a headsman about to murder the Spaniard at the block, thus giving shape to the potentiality of the American Captain perceiving the threat of the slave and slavery, but treated as a mere passing thought. The revolutionary trope of the slave as rebel is "appearing and vanishing" in the American imaginary, but that is all. Instead, the flag of Spain, which Babo drapes across the Spaniard's chest and used as the barber's towel, distracts the American Captain.

> "The castle and the lion," exclaimed Captain Delano – "why, Don Benito, this is the flag of Spain you use here. It's well it's only I, and not the King, that sees this," he added with a smile, "but" – turning towards the black, – "it's all one, I suppose, so the colors be gay"; which playful remark did not fail somewhat to tickle the negro.[130]

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[127] Melville, *Benito Cereno*, 72.

[128] Ibid., 73. Some critics look at Samuel Johnson's black servant, Francis *Barber*, while others at Byron's longtime valet, whom was white, not black, William *Fletcher*.

[129] Ibid., 74.

[130] Ibid., 74.

Spain's flag, not Babo's razor, concerns Delano. Here is the play of the barber as Babo's deliberate play with the flag of Spain. His laughter is in response to what Delano sees and what he fails to see. Instead, the American Captain regresses to the fantasy of the Spaniard's death, now at the knife-edge handled by the barber, which Babo further entertains in his assentation of *his* role as slave-turned-master: "'Now, **master**,' he said, readjusting the flag, and pressing the head gently further back into the crotch of the chair; 'now **master**,' and the steel glanced nigh the throat. Again Don Benito faintly shuddered."[131] Recalling his earlier threat—"'It is *now,* **master**'"—Babo threatens the master with the very tools of the master's house: his words, his title. Each mention of "master" intends to remind Don Benito of the death of the real "master," Aranda:

> "You must not shake so, **master**. – See, Don Amasa, **master** always shakes when I shave him. And yet **master** knows I never yet have drawn blood, though it's true, if **master** will shake so, I may some of these times. Now **master**," he continued. "And now, Don Amasa, please go on with your talk about the gale, and all that, **master** can hear, and between times **master** can answer."[132]

Babo has set the stage, as the play of the barber as executioner, who has carefully positioned the American Captain to reveal any and all cartographic knowledge of their location, that is, for "**master** can hear"—for Babo can hear—their exact location and whether or not the Spaniard has been rendering his own masquerade.

The Spaniard fears that the duped American Captain will reveal their exact location. Does the Spaniard shudder beneath the razor because Delano might expose Don Benito's own trick on Babo, that the ship has been traveling up and down the shore versus returning the slaves to Senegal? The narrator allows this reading, that perhaps the Spaniard overplays illness to halt all conversation of navigational coordinates and end the shaving scene:

> Here an involuntary expression came over the Spaniard, similar to that just before on the deck, and whether it was the start he gave, or a sudden gawky roll of the hull in the calm, or a momentary unsteadiness of the servant's hand; however it was, just then the razor drew blood, spots of which stained the creamy lather under the throat; immediately the black barber drew back his steel, and remaining in his professional attitude, back to Captain Delano, and face to Don Benito, held up the trickling razor, saying, with a sort of half humorous sorrow, 'See, **master**, – you shook so – here's Babo's first blood.[133]

Who or what is at fault for causing the razor to pierce the Spaniard's neck is unknown. The narrator refuses to tell the reader. That trick-ling razor having cut the Spaniard, whether "the hull in the calm," "a momentary unsteadiness of the servant's hand," or if "Don Benito nervously shuddered"—"however it was" that it happened, and as only slightly decapitated—the reader, too, is left wondering of that "juggling play before him."[134] With a "sort of half humorous sorrow," Babo attempts to regain control: "'See, **master**, – you shook so – here's Babo's first blood.'" Speaking in the third person, Babo distances the self-as-master from the role of self-as-other, thus accusing the Spaniard. The narrator refuses to contest Babo's assertion, as Otter suggests, "Babo wields the

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[131] Ibid., 75.
[132] Ibid., 74.
[133] Ibid., 75. (*Bold mine.*)
[134] Ibid., 76.

emblem of mortality as satire and ultimatum," especially in that "*sort of* half humorous sorrow."[135] Yet Babo's ruse continues. Soon after Delano exits the cuddy, Babo joins him on deck. Delano then hears "the negro's wailing soliloquy" that exposes his master's "'sour heart'" and "'sour sickness,'" especially how it was that the Spaniard reprimanded him: "'cutting Babo with the razor, because, only by accident, Babo had given master one little scratch.'"[136] Babo's words convince Delano of Don Benito's cruel nature, and although he will dismiss any and all suspicion, once again he glimpses the performance, "that possibly master and man, for some unknown purpose, were acting out, both in word and deed," and that the cutting incidents were merely "a sort of love-quarrel" between the pair.[137]

Delano continues questioning the scene: "'But then, what could be the object of enacting this play of the barber before him?'" even postulating that there was a "theatrical aspect of Don Benito in his harlequin ensign."[138] Delano imagines the Spaniard as a half-masked harlequin, often described as in colorful and extravagant disguise, acting as a trickster figure, and a central character in Spanish *comedias*. (Dis)played before the American Captain is a physical comedy, with a very different kind of mastery and theatrical aspect attached to the figure of the Spaniard. Might we read the "play of the barber" as a tragicomedy? Although somewhat cogent, a turn to *Don Quixote* as a possible "source" helps us interpret Melville's famous "love-quarrel."[139] Cervantes' bonded-duo may have unraveled a knot for Melville, allowing him to see/read extravagance in the repetition and relation of the bond between master and slave. Melville read into the master-slave relationship the tragedy, yet he also read into the bond the comedy of that bond. A point of view is offered by turning to a similar scene in *Don Quixote*, as a way of examining what Otter calls an "ambivalent intimacy"—or rather, the complexities of "intimacy" that the fictional pairing might be said to try to represent, which is at the very least ironic and the very opposite of "intimacy."[140] Melville's is what we might pursue as a Hegelian obsession to get at the complexities of "intimacy": there can be no master without the slave and vice versa, and that this complexity between the master and the slave entailed an extremity of love's quarrel.

The scene in *Don Quixote* that recalls Melville's "play of the barber" is Don Quixote's quarrel with sheep and then his quarrel with Sancho. The following passage, which is accompanied by an etching by Johannot of a beardless Don Quixote reclining on the leg of his squire, the reader sees Sancho embracing his master and examining his mouth. Moments before, Don Quixote persuaded Sancho that the sheep who had attacked and injured him are real men that will transform if he

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135 Otter, *Philadelphia Stories*, 274.

136 Melville, *Benito Cereno*, 77.

137 Ibid., 76-77.

138 Ibid., 76.

139 Sterling Stuckey provides another "source" for the barber scene, from Delano's *Narrative*, a must-read in relation to the shaving scene in *Don Quixote*, which adds another layer of complexity to the characterizations. The scene is between the real Delano and his friend, George Howe of Connecticut, a Spaniard, who he is visiting in Valparaiso:

He was lying on a miserable bed, or couch, in a very languishing state; his flesh was wasted, till he was almost a skeleton; and no one near to afford him assistance, or friend to offer him a word of comfort … I endeavored to raise his spirits, and told him that I would take him aboard my ship, and bring him home. I procured a barber and had him shaved, his clothes shifted, and dressed him in a decent manner, putting on his handsome Spanish cloak, and led him into the parlor, with an intention of giving an airing; but the poor man so reduced, that he fainted and was obliged to be placed on a sofa, and soon carried back to his room, from which he never again was removed till a corpse.

See Stuckey, *African Culture and Melville's Art: The Creative Process in Benito Cereno and Moby-Dick* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 113.

140 Otter, *Philadelphia Stories*, 271,

follows them, but he begs Sancho not to follow them, "'But do not go now,'" Don Quixote cries out,

> "… for I want your help and assistance; come hither to me, and see how many teeth I want, for it seems to me that I have not one left in my head." Sancho came so close to him, that he almost thrust his eyes in his mouth; and it being precisely at the time the balsam began to work in Don Quixote's stomach, at the instant Sancho was looking into his mouth, he discharged the contents with as much violence as if it had been shot out of a demi-culverin, directly in the face and beard of the compassionate squire. "Blessed Virgin!" quoth Sancho, "what is this has befallen me? without doubt this poor sinner is mortally wounded, since he vomits blood at the mouth." But reflecting a little, he found by the colour, savour and smell, that it was not blood, but the balsam of the cruise he saw him drink; and so great was the loathing he felt thereat, that his stomach turned, and he made an effort similar to that of the knight, so that both remained in the same pickle.[141]

Having mistaken *fake* blood for *real* blood, a distraught and duped Sancho contemplates leaving his master. The scene is serious and comical, while also revealing the dysfunctionality of the master-slave relationship, for its cruelty in a loyalty that works in both directions. (See figure 10).



Figure 10. Melville's Personal Copy of the Jarvis-Johannot edition of *Don Quixote*[142]

[141] Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, 178.
[142] See AC85.M4977.Zz853c. Houghton Library, Harvard University.

Like Babo, here is Sancho's first blood, and what Melville may have read into this scene and etching is the real threat of the bond as a quixotic trick on the master and the slave. To borrow the thinking of Viardot,

> Sancho lives himself into Don Quijote, whose madness and wisdom become productive in him. Although he has far too little critical reasoning power to form and express a synthetic judgment upon him, it still is he, in all his reactions, through whom we best understand Don Quijote. And this in turn binds Don Quijote to him.[143]

Unlike Sancho, Babo is portrayed as having as much critical reasoning power as Don Benito, it is through all Babo's (re)actions that the reader understands Don Benito. This in turn binds Don Benito to Babo, as Don Quixote is to Sancho.

The fundamental claim in considering Cervantes' bonded-duo as now in Melville's hands is the very reconfiguration of the pair for the layers that Melville infuses into his narrative play, that is, with "sources" that overwhelm the original account. Melville does to Delano's *Narrative* exactly that which Alonzo Fernandez de Avellaneda did to Cervantes's *Don Quixote*. Melville hijacks Delano's story or, to quote Wyn Kelley, "Melville takes up another kind of leaf, that is, someone else's narrative, and rewrites it in his own idiom."[144] The difference between Melville and Avellaneda is that Melville-as-hijacker proved the superior plagiarist. Like the second part of *Don Quixote*, Melville was not writing a playful parody but articulating a moral philosophy on the master-slave relation, and the profound effects of slavery at the hemispheric level. In the remaining pages of the tale, and in the likeness of Cervantes, Melville carries the Spaniard to his deathbed, but what Melville does differently from Cervantes and Delano, is present to the reader the Spaniard's dramatic decline as following of his leader, Babo. Melville thus kills his bonded-duo of Spanish masquerade. Why.

Melville places before the reader the Spaniard's failure to reverse his having been made a slave by the slave himself, in a way complicating the linear plot of transformation set by male fugitive slaves, in particular Frederick Douglass who set the trajectory for Northern white audiences when he said: "You have seen how a man was made a slave; you shall see how a slave was made a man." The trajectory Melville introduces is the inability of the master to reverse his bondage because of the interdependency of such a cruel bond. Delano cannot understand the undoing of the Spanish master: that the traversing of white-to-black is an easy return to black-to-white, and as unscathed by the violence of having lived in the world of the master's imaginative construction.

En route to Lima, and on the final page of the narrative, Captain Delano attempts to lift the shadow that has fallen upon Don Benito: "'You are saved,' cried Captain Delano, more and more astonished and pained: 'you are saved; what has cast such a shadow upon you?'"[145] Benito responds, "'The negro.'"[146] The conversation between Delano and Benito is silenced as the narrator settles into the melancholia that overwhelms the Spaniard: "the moody man sat, slowly and unconsciously gathering his mantle about him, as if it were a pall."[147] On (dis)play for the reader is the Spaniard's undoing because, as the narrator tells the reader, "how hard it had been to enact the part forced on the Spaniard by Babo."[148] The reader also witnesses the Spaniard's dramatic unbecoming or undressing: "The dress so precise and costly, worn by him on the day whose events have been

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[143] Ibid., 57.
[144] Wyn Kelley, *Herman Melville: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 101.
[145] Melville, *Benito Cereno*, 107.
[146] Ibid., 107.
[147] Ibid., 107.
[148] Ibid., 105.

narrated, had not willingly been put on. And that silver-mounted sword, apparent symbol of despotic command, was not, indeed, a sword, but the ghost of one."[149] The Spaniard, looking down at his body and at his dress, suddenly experiences the loss of self as a result of the loss of the slave that upheld, clothed and defined him. Here the Spaniard is *conquistado*. This being made a *slave* to his slave-as-*master*, for he had successfully incorporated the slave-as-master into his psychic reality, is also Don Benito's fear of the imbalance of the binary of master-slave: how *he* dressed him, how *he* positioned his sword, *his* ways of thinking for him, *his* modes of speech to him, *his* very existence that gave him life. Don Benito's mourning is his "yielding" to the psychic power of the slave.[150] For him it is an "unwanted transformation," and what remains is that Don Benito cannot free himself from the bond. Don Benito, in a way, collapses into abjection, showing the reader how the slave-as-master possessed him.

In one long and last breath of the text, the narrator describes Babo's execution, placing before the reader the punishment of terrorism and for murdering Spaniards, yet like the opening pages of *Benito Cereno*, the tale ends with another literary map of sorts, in this case, the burial site: Babo's severed head is "fixed on a pole in the Plaza"; Aranda's "recovered bones" lay in a vault; and Benito Cereno's body remains on Mount Agonia.

> Some months after, dragged to the gibbet at the tail of a mule, the black met his voiceless end. The body was burned to ashes; but for many days, the head, that hive of subtlety, fixed on a pole in the Plaza, met, unabashed, the gaze of the whites; and across the Plaza looked towards St. Bartholomew's church, in whose vaults slept then, as now, the recovered bones of Aranda; and across the Rimac bridge looked towards the monastery, on Mount Agonia without; where, three months after being dismissed by the court, Benito Cereno, borne on the bier, did, indeed, follow his leader.[151]

The reader, too, is left on "Mount Agonia," and in his usual cunning linguistic mode, Melville emphasizes a mounting agony with the penultimate move of killing the Spanish Captain while harking back to Babo's only writing in the text, "*Seguid vuestro jefe*." Don Benito "did, indeed, follow his leader," not Aranda, but Babo. From the Plaza to the church of St. Bartholomew to the Rimac bridge to the monastery on Mount Agonia, Melville maps for the reader the "City of Kings," that rear gate of *las Américas* that opened to the other side of the world, also harkening back to the opening lines when Delano catches sight of the strange ship "which, wimpled by the same low, creeping clouds, showed not unlike a Lima intriguante's one sinister eye peering across the Plaza from the Indian loop-hole of her dusk *saya-y-manta*."[152] Melville thus leaves the reader at Lima and on "Mount Agonia." He leaves us with the death of the Spaniard.

The Melvillian twist with Don Benito and Babo is that of poetic and philosophic quality so familiar to the writer we have come to know in earlier writings. What had the bonded-duo meant to

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[149] Ibid., 107.

[150] See, Judith Butler, "Speaking of Rage and Grief" (PEN, April/May 2014).

[151] Melville, *Benito Cereno*, 107.

[152] Melville, *Moby-Dick*, 239. Melville visited old Callao in 1844, and its grandeur would haunt the poet-philosopher, for he would return to visions of Lima in *Moby-Dick* and now in the ending lines of *Benito Cereno*: "Nine miles inland and overlooking the Pacific at fifteen hundred feet above the sea, Lima, the City of Kings, that seat of the Inquisition and home of the royal mint, was the grand throne of Spanish Catholicism in South America." This was, Melville knew, and Grandin describes, "the world's busiest global harbor, linking Spanish America to the Philippines, China, Japan, Indonesia, India, and Russia, with a deep anchorage and calm water that gave safe berths to hundreds of ships at a time." See Grandin, *The Empire of Necessity*, 239.

Melville, who had been a loyal follower of Cervantes? As a trope reinvented from the ink of his pen, where exactly does his tale of Spanish masquerade sit within the history of passing, now that the pair has passed on? We can deduce a lot from Melville's passing judgment on Delano's original *Narrative*, and also from the Cervantean influence that enchanted him. What Melville's literary project does differently is consider the extravagance in the performance and relation of the master-slave bond. Melville prods at something of who we are through the implications of this relationship: the ties we have to others, the bonds we create with them that define and sustain us, and the psychic reality that we cannot escape if a separation were to surprise us. Melville, through this relation, is also commenting on Spain's long shadow upon the American imagination, not just that of *la leyenda negra* but another shadow. Turning to the irony in Delano's line to Don Benito, "'what has cast such a shadow upon you?'" is the doubling of the shadow, that which blinds the American Captain and that which kills the Spanish Captain. Here is the shadow of "The negro"—or *el negro* in *las Américas*.

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Long after having written *Benito Cereno*—then, living in New York, having made another shift in his literary career, this time to poetry—Melville wrote a poem in the voice of "a timid one." In it, his creative hand was still processing Cervantes' famous pair; in fact, it is a poem Melville revised on several occasions.

The Rusty Man
(By a timid one)

In La Mancha he mopeth
With beard thin and dusty;
He doeth and mopeth
In library fusty—
'Mong his old folios gropeth:
Cites obsolete saws
Of chivalry's laws—
Be the wronged one's/beggar's knight:
Die, but do right.
So he rusts and musts,
While each grocer/philistine green
Thriveth apace with fulsome face
Of a fool serene.[153]

Who is describing this image of the Spaniard, now a rusty man yet still in his "fusty" library, perusing "old folios" and citing outdated idioms—called "the wronged one"—who "rusts and musts" while "each grocer" thrives with a "fulsome face" of "a fool serene"? This figure, too, is also Cervantes, who saw himself a timid writer, fearful of publishing and being rejected by the *desocupado lector*, and he who so eagerly desired to please with his imaginative creations. Is the "rusty man" also our novelist-magazinest-poet—"with his cigar and his Spanish eyes," now sitting in his "fusty" library in New York, turning over "old folios," now far from the height of his career that nearly transpired when he moved to Pittsfield? "So he rusts and musts," though who is watching the rusty man and who is writing his poem? In the final lines we find the "face / Of a fool serene"—that publishing "grocer" perhaps, which printed to the tastes of a mid-nineteenth century readership.

[153] Melville's poem is housed at the Houghton Library at Harvard University. Also see Levin, *Contexts of Criticism*, 108-109.

The play on "a fool serene" might remind us of Don Benito Cereno, but his name never meant "serene" in the sense that Melville uses it here. Cereno, all along must have meant, "Everything was mute and calm; everything gray"—that "grey surtout."

We have forgotten about the *Spanish* Melville who sailed the global south, disembarked at various Spanish ports in the Latin-Pacific, and read Spain's most celebrated literary classics. Like his contemporaries, the bonded-duo of Spanish masquerade fascinated him, and the extravagant Spaniard alone was a figure he too would make central and integral to his story of European colonialism and American slavery. As María DeGuzmán argues:

> It is no accident that Benito Cereno and his boat are connected with Chile, with Buenos Aires, and with Lima. Nor is it any accident that the everywhere-ness of 'Spain' and the everyone-ness of "the Spaniard" should have become a growing obsession within Anglo-American culture at the time (late 1840s-early 1850s) that the tide of Anglo expansion began to rise and shadow, with its own breaking wave, the borderlands—Texas, California, and so on—once claimed for the king of Spain.[154]

It is no accident that Melville's literary career, with passages from his novels, short stories, and poetry having had intently (if not subtly) mined within them a sort of honey-comb around the precariousness of a nation all too fascinated with Spanish themes and Spain's long shadow across *las Américas*. On Melville's pages of *Benito Cereno* is the extravagant Spaniard on a boat, traveling with his loyal slave, as a bonded-duo still haunting America's very aspirations of expansionism. A figure that, during the cultural and literary rise of light-skinned slaves passing out of American slavery, had actually been inspired by a *female* slave who "invented" a costume that provoked a duped American passenger aboard a steamer to (mis)read her as that of "Spanish extraction." On the other side of *las Américas*—off the eastern coast of the United States and near St. Helena—was the extravagant passing of Ellen Craft in December 1848. She is the extravagant Spaniard of my next chapter, and she is the female slave who initiated the literary trope of this figure long before Melville began composing *Benito Cereno*.

[154] DeGuzmán, *Spain's Long Shadow*, 64-65.

Chapter 4

"he was either a '*woman* or a *genius*'": Unmasking Ellen Craft's Spanish Masquerade in *Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom* (1860)

We arrived at Charleston, and I there lost sight of Mr. Johnson, an acquaintance at my elbow remarking that he was either a '*woman* or a *genius*'.[155]

– Anonymous, "An Incident at the South" (1849)

1. The Spanish Gentleman from Atlanta, Georgia

The passage above captures an extraordinary moment in what has been called the most notorious and ingenious escape from American slavery: a "passing" in (dis)guise performed by a young "married" couple, Ellen and William Craft. However, the fugitive slave beneath the costume of "Mr. Johnson" is Ellen Craft herself. Entitled "An Incident at the South"—and anonymously published in the Newark *Daily Mercury* on January 17, 1849—here is a rare sighting of the fugitive pair acting as *master* and *slave*. While the fair-skinned Ellen dressed the part of a Southern planter's ailing son, the dark-skinned William played the part of the ever-credulous loyal servant. The plan: to travel by rail, steamship, and carriage in search of a cure for Mr. Johnson's "complication of diseases." As the column suggests, an American passenger spotted the bonded-duo on December 23, 1848 while aboard a steamer, traveling from the port of Savannah and bound for Charleston. Sightings of runaway slaves were common in newspapers, whether to advertise the whereabouts of a runaway or to report peculiar encounters, however, this escape, which began in Macon, Georgia and ended in free Philadelphia on Christmas day, gained unique transatlantic popularity as a *female* version of transformation and a harrowing yet romantic leap for liberty. Even the literary minds of the day appropriated the Crafts' passing-plot, modeling their cross-dressing heroines (and heroes) after Ellen Craft, as in the book of the century *Uncle Tom's Cabin; or, Life Among the Lowly* (1851), the first African American novel *Clotel; or, The President's Daughter* (1853), and the historical novella *Benito Cereno* (1855). Years before the publication of these fictions, however, the masked-writer of "An Incident at the South"—as I call the anonymous author—captured the genius beneath the mask, prodded at that space between the mask and the "real," and substantiated what precisely Ellen Craft's passing achieved in specific ethno-racial terms. Her passing signifies in multiple categories all at once: racial passing, cross-dressing, sexual ambiguity, class passing, feigning disability and illness, and traversing transnational borders. The *genius*—to borrow the term applied to Ellen Craft by the acquaintance (not masked but made even more obscure)—is her "invention" of a costume that confounded notions of identity and generated a racial self that transcended the binary terms of the antebellum color line. The extravagance that provokes a transnational layer where, in the eyes of the masked-writer, Spanishness is the added problem to Ellen Crafts' *extravagant passing*: "he was slight built, apparently handsome young man, with black hair and eyes, and of a darkness of complexion that betokened Spanish extraction."

Intriguingly symbolic is the (mis)reading of her racial impersonation by the American passenger, who provides a critical lens for interpreting how Ellen Craft's (dis)guise allowed her to

[155] "An Incident at the South" is on microfilm at The Newark Public Library. See "An Incident at the South," *Daily Mercury*. 17 January 1849: 1.

achieve passage across a racist and rapidly transforming U.S. landscape that, her actual slave narrative, *Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom; or, the Escape from Slavery by William and Ellen Craft* (1860), refuses to unmask. Here, in this newspaper clipping, emerges the confounding borderland figure and her enacting of *Spanish* masquerade is triggered by the layer of disability and illness, which signifies a powerful historical texture that intervenes cross-racially with the figure of the Spanish decadent colonial. This is *her* "invention" of the Spanish master with Americanitis. In the (mis)reading of the fugitive pair, Ellen Craft provokes two tropes that entered the discourse of anti-slavery literature: the trope of the "extravagant Spaniard" as the other "white" master and the bonded-duo of Spanish masquerade. I begin with "An Incident at the South" because it acts as a mirror into American consciousness, revealing an imagination forever wed to legacies of empire and nationalism, while also engaging its own *writerly masquerade* that will help us read the Crafts' slave narrative, *Running*.

Ellen Craft unveils for the modern reader the conceptual category of the extravagant Spaniard—how *she* created it and how Spanishness is mobilized as masquerade, but also how she redefined the history of (racial) passing in American literature and culture, indeed, challenging notions of transnational Americanity. The newspaper clipping is central to the story of the Crafts' escape, because for its first public telling at Faneuil Hall in Boston, Massachusetts, William Wells Brown read this sighting to a hostile "Yankee" crowd and only moments before the Crafts joined him on the so-called "revolutionary stage of America." In previous years, this anti-slavery lecture-platform included famous fugitive slaves such as Frederick Douglass, Henry Bibb, and Brown himself. I bestow upon my reader those 560-words in their entirety, for here begins Ellen Craft's Spanish masquerade.

> One bright starlight night in the month of December last, I found myself in a cabin of a steamer General Clinch, then lying in the port of Savannah, and bound for Charleston. I had gone early on board, in order to select a good berth, and having got tired of reading the papers, amused myself with watching the appearance of the passengers as they dropped in one after another, and I being a believer in physiognomy, forming my own opinions of their characters.
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> The second bell rang, and as I yawningly returned my watch to my pocket, my attention was attracted by the appearance of a young man who entered the cabin, supported by his servant, a strapping negro.
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> The man was bundled up in a capacious overcoat; his face was bandaged with a white handkerchief, and its expression entirely hid by a pair of enormous green spectacles.
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> There was something so mysterious and unusual about the young man, as he sat restlessly in the corner, that curiosity led me to observe him more closely.
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> He appeared anxious to avoid notice, and before the steamer had fairly left the wharf, requested in a low womanly voice to be shown to his berth, as he was an invalid and must retire early—his name he gave as Mr. Johnson. His servant was called and he was put quietly to bed. I paced the deck until Tybee light grew dim in the distance and then went to my berth.
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> I awoke in the morning with the sun shining in my face—we were then just passing St. Helena, and soon were out at sea. It was a mild, beautiful morning and most of the passengers were on deck enjoying the freshness of the air and stimulating their appetites for breakfast. Mr. Johnson soon made his appearance, arrayed the same as on the night before, and took his seat quietly on the guard of the boat.

> From the better opportunity afforded by daylight, I found that he was slight built, apparently handsome young man, with black hair and eyes, and of a darkness of complexion that betokened Spanish extraction. Any notice from others seemed painful to him, so to satisfy my curiosity I questioned his servant who was standing near, and gained the following information.
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> His master was an invalid—he had suffered a long time with a complication of diseases that had baffled the skill of the best physicians in Georgia—he was now suffering principally with the "rheumatism," and was scarcely able to walk or help himself in any way. He came from Atlanta, Georgia, and was now on his way to Philadelphia, at which place resided an uncle, a celebrated physician, through whose means he hoped to be restored to perfect health.
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> The information, communicated in a bold off hand manner, enlisted my sympathies for the sufferer, although it occurred to me that he walked rather too gingerly for a person afflicted with so many ailments.
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> We arrived at Charleston, and I there lost sight of Mr. Johnson, an acquaintance at my elbow remarking that he was either a "*woman* or a *genius*."
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> This morning I cut from the New York *Herald* the accompanying extract, and there is no doubt in my mind that William and Ellen Craft are no other than my traveling companions, Mr. Johnson and servant.[156]

Escorted by Brown and supported by William Lloyd Garrison's Anti-Slavery Society, the Crafts and their riveting tale quickly became the escape heard 'round the world, not only for its extravagant means of crossing the color line, but as a romantic story with a *female* lead. Ellen Craft was the other voice opposed to the linear plot of transformation set by male fugitive slaves, including William Wells Brown, but in particular the voice of Frederick Douglass who set the trajectory for Northern white audiences when he said: "You have seen how a man was made a slave; you shall see how a slave was made a man."[157] Instead, Ellen Craft—the light-skinned female slave of miscegenation—became of significant value as the *female* voice to the anti-slavery crusade, and her metamorphosis from a slave to Mr. Johnson to a *free*woman introduced a new trajectory: You have seen how a woman was made a slave; you shall see how she was made a man and a master; you shall see how *he* was then made a '*woman* or a *genius.'*

Ellen Craft's *experience* moves away from the masculine experience to present how the feminine experience complicates the traditional male-centered paradigm of transformation, especially during a historical period that saw the rise of the light-skinned slave and its potentialities for being re*made*. To borrow the thinking of Simone de Beauvoir, when she wrote, "One is not born a woman, but rather becomes one," which suggests the fictions of socialization, Ellen Craft's *experience* as a process of (un)becoming offers a different kind of critique to being *made*, for she is re*made*, over and over again.[158] In discovering and defining her (un)becoming—especially the (mis)reading of her performance as an extravagant Spaniard and how this figure was appropriated in the historical and cultural production of the escape—I anchor a formula for understanding the

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[156] The "accompanying extract" was written by William Wells Brown. Entitled "Singular Escape," and published in *The Liberator* on January 12, 1849, Brown is the first to announce the Crafts' escape to the public, also revealing the real identities of "Mr. Johnson and servant."

[157] See Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass: An American Slave Written By Himself* (London: H.G. Collins, 1851), 62. [Original work published in 1845.]

[158] Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier (New York: Random House, 2012), 283. [Original work published in 1949.]

masked-writer's term of *genius* in relation to the varying and intersecting variables at play in her performance. This is *genius*: all the variables at play, where categories of identification are never independent though always interacting and connecting to stir new truths and desires and create new meaning. I turn the term *genius* into a metaphor to render a model that speaks of spectacle and re-theorizes passing to conceive of Spanish masquerade and its writerly representation for the extravagance in its (dis)play.

This sighting of "Mr. Johnson and servant"—as the masked-writer dubs the pair by the end of the article—thus serves as a starting point and centerpiece for reading *Running*, since it is through the eyes of the duped American that we first learn how the famous fugitive pair achieved passage out of slavery. Upon first seeing Mr. Johnson enter the cabin, "supported by his servant, a strapping negro," the unnamed passenger found "something so mysterious and unusual about the young man," not only his "low womanly voice," but Mr. Johnson "was bundled up in a capacious overcoat," and "his face was bandaged with a white handkerchief, and its expression entirely hid by a pair of enormous green spectacles." Bandaged to a surprising degree yet fashionable even if in the uncanniest sense, the pose of the invalid (and hypochondriac, "as he sat restlessly in the corner") also manages to effect an interracial mystique that is viewed through a thin veil of sexual (if not gay) desire: "I found that he was slight built, apparently handsome young man, with black hair and eyes, and of a darkness of complexion that betokened Spanish extraction." The masked-writer exposes the ambiguous position of the light-skinned slave of miscegenation, prodding at a fluid indeterminacy between whiteness and blackness, masculinity and femininity, and mastery and slavery, while calling attention to this figure in racial terms that speaks to America's history at the southern borderlands; indeed, a history of slavery that includes Spain yet is marked by the transformative period of frontier conflict between Mexico and Anglo-American westward expansion. During the mid-nineteenth century period of political and cultural conflict between the United States and Mexico, what was the presence of Spanish descendants, including *Mestizos*, *Californios*, *Tejanos*, *Españoles*, and/or Mexican travelers, both in the cultural imaginary and as real historical figures crossing through dangerous "white" spaces of a racialized slave economy?

At the time of the Crafts' escape it was less than a year—eleven months to be exact—after the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. In this New Jersey newspaper clipping, we have a traveler very much aware of a post-1848 southern terrain, as a space of national contact and conflict. Anxiety around Spanishness permeates the page, hinting at a looming and threatening national presence at the periphery of an already conflicted United States. That is, the North-South disagreement about the institution of slavery and at a time when the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act was on the horizon. In the (mis)reading of Ellen Craft's racial impersonation, there is a connection made between Spanishness at the Souths with American slavery *and* its frontier conflict with Mexico. It is done so with the striking display of two very different male bodies as read through the period's discrete racial categories: the *black* body of the "strapping negro" (a six-foot giant with a massively muscled physique) that towers over the *dark* body of the southern master of "Spanish extraction" (a short, ailing, and dying inheritor of American slavery). Staring back at us from the newspaper clipping is a portrait of the bonded-duo of Spanish masquerade that invokes a discussion about reading race across distinct regions of a developing United States, and at a time of rising conflict at both of its borders: the Mason-Dixon line and the newly marked borderspace between Mexico-U.S., that is, through particularly racialized bodies of the Souths that crossed these borders and journeyed across a landscape in the process of becoming "American."

A look at the regional formation of the United States from the opposite side of the continent is worth considering, especially as John Disturnell rendered it in the early months of 1847, entitled *Mapa de los Estados Unidos de Méjico*. His was the map that Nicholas Trist carried into *Mêjico* (not Mexico) during the negotiation of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which resulted in the U.S.

obtaining southern territory that would establish a boundary or border from Texas to California; however, that southern boundary separating the United States from Mexico had been erroneously marked in earlier 1828 plates by White, Gallaher, and White. Although the map was published in New York City, its title is in Spanish, for here is the United States of *Méjico*; indeed, the "j" versus the "x" signals a spelling and pronunciation that is specific to Spain (see figure 11).



Figure 11. *Mapa de los Estados Unidos de Méjico* (1847) by John Disturnell[159]

The placement of the title oddly replaces the Northern states. What we see is Spanish words covering a young United States and a blank space bordered by colored states: Iowa, Missouri, Arkansas, and Louisiana, but also Texas and a frontier region that has yet to be fully outlined. Below the title we find a southern terrain that, although separated from the frontier space in the middle of the continent, is an American South in conflict with the North but not far removed from the southern borderlands; after all, the region of Florida had been Spanish territory, and until 1821 Florida was considered a refuge for escaped slaves.[160] The Crafts' four day journey is added to the map, beginning in Macon, Georgia (and Atlanta for "Mr. Johnson"), where the pair traveled across the state to the port of Savannah, then boarded a steamer to Charleston and another boat to

[159] John Disturnell used plates from the 1828 map by White, Gallaher, and White, with minor additions. Disturnell's map became the "geographic authority" on U.S.-Mexico regions of conflict. See *Mapa de los Estados Unidos de Méjico*. Map. Nueva York: Lo publican J. Disturnell, 1846. *Library of Congress*. Web. 10 May 2012. < https://www.loc.gov/resource/g4410.ct000127/>.

[160] For a brief discussion of the cartographic history of a western United States and in relation to its southern territories, see Paul Cohen, *Mapping the West: America's Westward Movement 1524-1890* (New York: Rizzoli, 2002), 141-145.

Wilmington, North Carolina, and then traveled inland by carriage and train to Maryland, eventually reaching free Philadelphia. This southern region was an intricate web of cross-cultural contact between 1821 and 1854, which contributed to dynamic patterns of social and class relations between races.[161] The map tells a story of racial inclusion and exclusion, and in mapping the journey of the Crafts we can see the narrative of Spanish masquerade. The encounter with Mr. Johnson occurs off the eastern coast, on a steamer and near the island of St. Helena—as if here an association was being made between Spanishness, nautical travel and discovery, even reminding us of Don Benito Cereno and Babo, from Melville's 1855 historical novella, with another duping of an American passenger who boards a Spanish slave ship in the Latin-Pacific, this time near the Spanish discovered island, St. Maria.

This early map helps us understand the (mis)reading of the light-skinned slave of actual "African extraction," which, by December of 1848, had occurred at a transformative moment in which the southern landscape of the U.S. was implementing two very different racial orders: a black/white color line of the North and South, and a dark/light hierarchy of the southern borderlands. In the case of Ellen Craft in disguise, she traverses into the racial hierarchy demarcated to descendants of Spanish/Native ancestry, thus allowing her racial impersonation to be imagined outside the contours of a black/white binary. Our traveler of bi-raciality (or multicultural identity) then, derives roots from the other mother country of colonization. This "Spanish extraction" not only conveniently masks any trace of Ellen Craft's Indigenous blood but it also grants her "certificates of 'whiteness,'" to borrow G. Reginald Daniel's phrasing, hiding or "erasing" any trace of "Native American and/or African origins."[162] Daniel provides a useful lens for interpreting the social mobility of multiracial individuals during this period, namely dark-complexioned Mexicans and *mestizos* who passed as *Españoles* by obtaining "certificates of 'whiteness'" which erased non-European origins. As he further examines, "This certification not only gave them legal status as *Españoles* and greater opportunity for vertical social mobility; it also enhanced the comparatively more fluid racial demarcations between 'pure' Spaniards (or whites), light mestizos, and mulattoes. Consequently the memory of African forbears eventually was lost and forgotten, if not deliberately and successfully concealed, by the many light-skinned, Spanish identified descendants of the Southwest's first families."[163] This certification, however, also calls attention to a different racial order at the Souths: a dark/light hierarchy that was very much shaping the American imagination. Ellen-Craft-as-Mr.-Johnson thus passed up and out of slavery by entering this more fluid racial order of the southern borderlands.

Thinking of race relations in terms of a dark/light racial order, the words "Spanish extraction" suggest that Mr. Johnson descended from the Southwest's first families. This newspaper clipping renders a possible narrative about the Spanish descendants of this group and their mobility throughout the Southwest and Deep South, or at least how Americans imagined it. Is this "darkness of complexion that betokened Spanish extraction" then that of a traveling *mestizo*? Although this race shared African ancestry, all trace of blackness is lost to a "darkness of complexion," that other hierarchy. But here "darkness" is not associated with Native American or African ancestry; rather, Mr. Johnson is read as "pure" Spanish and thus "white" in the Northern European sense, which

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[161] David J. Weber provides a careful discussion of Mexico's frontier provinces to show a more balanced historiography of this western and southern region by decentralizing dominant discussions of American expansion. See Weber, "Mexico's Far Northern Frontier, 1821-1854: Historiography Askew," in *Western Historical Quarterly* (1976): 279-93.

[162] G. Reginald Daniel, *More Than Black? Multiracial Identity and the New Racial Order* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002), 14.

[163] Ibid., 14.

meant citizenship and access to the privileges of Southern Anglo-Americans.[164] Unfortunately, Mr. Johnson is still the inheritor of a negative image, that of the *conquistador* and his violent legacy of conquest—thus forever wed to *la leyenda negra* [the black legend]. Even if during the nineteenth-century, perceptions of the Spaniard-at-war and also appropriations of Spain's 'discoverer' of the New World, whose strategy of obstinacy was borrowed as a model for American 'progress' (think, Washington Irving), indeed, Spain and its Spaniard had put a romantic spell on the American mind.

In "An Incident at the South," the masked-writer provides a peculiar portrait of the dark-skinned descendant with an American pseudonym, certainly still perceiving Spain and its Spaniard through a rhetoric that establishes national superiority, but a rhetoric conflicted by the variable of favored Europeanness that is preserved in the name Mr. Johnson, which speaks to a shared whiteness.[165] In the mid-nineteenth century U.S. political consciousness, Mr. Johnson is thus perceived as stranger yet familiar, as fantasy yet queer. And as he occupies a space of "eccentric positionality" (to align my thinking with David Halperin)—a space of contradiction, possibility, and plurality, where *she* stirs new truths and desires as a queer subject, and a space where "it may become possible to envision a variety of possibilities for reordering the relations among sexual behaviors, erotic identities, constructions of gender, forms of knowledge, regimes of enunciation, logics of representation, modes of self-constitution, and practices of community"—the dark-skinned descendant follows in the footsteps of his paternal heritage.[166] Hailing from Atlanta, Georgia, Mr. Johnson emanates from the shadow of the Johnson patriarchs: an elite family of privileged circles on both sides of the Mason-Dixon line. He is not only the son of a wealthy Southern planter from a city soon to be named the "rail hub" of the entire antebellum South, but also the young nephew of a "celebrated physician" living in Philadelphia. As an inheritor of an American surname of English, Scottish, and Irish roots, Mr. Johnson is given a lineage, a life-narrative, and an origin that legitimizes the self in the white patriarchal ordering of time and space.[167] However, there lies an irony in that narrative that needs explaining, specifically the dissonance between his "darkness of complexion" and the fact that his name is not Spanish, and as both operate simultaneously, there is

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[164] As Daniel explains, "Rather, the prime beneficiaries of that privilege, and those deemed most worthy of integration into the new racial order, were members of the light-skinned *Tejano*, *Hispano*, and *Californio* ranchero (the merchant) elite in Texas, New Mexico (and Arizona), and California, respectively. Those individuals not only boasted of their "pure" Castilian ancestry—and thus identified themselves as *Españoles* (Spaniards)—but also were considered white under the racial policies that had prevailed during Mexican rule. A "white" designation was logical given the limitations of the U.S. racial order, which necessarily made definitions of Native American or African American comparatively less applicable." See Daniel, *More Than Black?*, 14-15.

[165] Several texts have served for examining and defining 'the Spaniard' in mid-nineteenth-century America, including definitions of the *mestizo* and/or Mexican traveler of the Southwest. See David J. Weber, *Foreigners in Their Native Land: Historical Roots of the Mexican Americans* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1973), 59-61. Weber provides firsthand accounts of the Mexican American experience at the southern borderlands, rendering a narrative of nation-building around the negative image of the *conquistador* that was transferred to its decedents by Anglo-Americans. This image of Spain and its Spaniard had become shaped by "self-critical writings of Spaniards themselves, most notably Bartolomé de las Casas, who was widely read in England and its American colonies": thus, "Mexicans inherited the bad reputation of their Spanish forefathers." By later centuries, Weber continues, "Anglo Americans found an additional element to despise in Mexicans: racial mixture." Also adding, "American visitors to the Mexican frontier were nearly unanimous in commenting on the dark skin of Mexican mestizos who, it was generally agreed, had inherited the worst qualities of Spaniards and Indians to produce a 'race' still more despicable than that of either parent."

[166] David Halperin, *Saint Foucault: Towards a Gay Hagiography*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 62.

[167] For a discussion on the absence of a slave's patriarchal genealogy but the inheritance of the slave mother's blood, see Russ Castronovo, *Fathering the Nation: American Genealogies of Slavery and Freedom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 203-207.

an important historical implication about miscegenation that deserves attention. Mr. William Johnson inherits his "foreignness" from his *maternal* side, and although his father's name erases his mother's lineage, the masked-writer's detection of a "darkness of complexion" thus preserves the only trace of a *maternal* inheritance. What was *her* heritage—*Indigena*, *Mestiza*, *Mexicana, Tejana, California*, or *Española*? And we might very well ask the same of George Harris' *maternal* side.[168] More importantly, and in both cases, she was from the Souths.

Long before the Crafts' passing-plot had been appropriated in fictions of the period, the masked-writer had already introduced the light-skinned (female) slave of miscegenation as exoticizing the role of the inheriting-son of American slavery. In her crippling of the body of the rising master, feminizing him, Hispanicizing him, and castrating him, she—as the master's slave-*daughter*—transcends the discrete categories of racial, gendered, and national identification. The *genius* of her Spanish masquerade—to return to the term applied to Ellen Craft's passing—is that hers is a disguise and performance that queers the act of passing. If we take a moment to consider the arbitrary structure introduced in the line, "he was either a *'woman* or a *genius*,'" what we discover is a delineation of Ellen Craft's real gender within an entirely new binary: woman/genius. Its non-linear terms thus break the binary of man/woman to propose a reading of the paradoxical that hinges on the notion of queering. There is an in-between state of being and non-being suggested by the "or" as either/or—even the term genius contains this hinging either/or in its etymology: as *either* a spiritual attendant *or* a transcendent personification. This new binary confounds our understanding of what it means to be woman (physical) in relation to what it means to be genius (spiritual). At play on the body is not crisis but variables at play and creating genius—its "element of eccentricity," its "romantic vision," and its "infirmities of genius" (that of lameness and rheumatic fever, and also the hypochondriacs; think Lord Byron, Samuel Johnson, and Robert Burns).[169] Disability and/or illness are associated with genius, just as Spanishness is always linked to infirmities and *la leyenda negra*. The line "he was either *a 'woman* or a *genius*'" calls attention to the fact that the person beneath the mask is not just any woman or any genius at that. The person beneath the mask is a black female slave dabbling in the art of theatrical alchemy; of course, an art long associated with the transatlantic fantasy and the Romantic period's fixation with William Shakespeare as "the quintessential genius." What is this eagerness for the acquaintance from "An Incident at the South" to discover genius in this confounding figure? It can be said that with Ellen Craft's invention of the invalid Spanish gentleman, she enters that realm of genius, a space and term typically reserved for men and denied to women, yet she does so from the 'real' stage, where she voices an outrageous critique of the master and his rites of passage.

In the *Seventeenth Annual Report, Presented to the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, By its Board of Managers* (January 24, 1849), there are details of the Crafts' debut at Faneuil Hall, such as the reaction of the audience on consecutive evenings of the conference. On the final evening, Wendell Phillips is quoted as stating the following:

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[168] Julia Stern's analysis of Spanish masquerade in Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is informative, particularly her discussion of Mr. Butler's character as a "Spanish gentleman with an American pseudonym." She states, "the name Henry Butler is not Spanish," which "suggests that the stranger's foreignness derives from his *maternal* side and that all traces of the mother's lineage will be erased from the record in keeping with the patriarchal custom that governs the transmission of identity in Anglo-American culture." See Stern "Spanish Masquerade and the Drama of Racial Identity in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*," in *Passing and the Fictions of Identity* edited by Elaine E. Ginsberg. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), 112.

[169] Marjorie Garber, "Our Genius Problem" *The Atlantic Monthly*. (2002): 65-72.

> [W]e should look in vain through the most trying times of our Revolutionary history for an incident of courage and noble daring to equal that of the escape of William and Ellen Craft, and future historians and poets would tell this story as one of the most thrilling in the nation's annals; and millions would read it with admiration of the hero and heroine of the story, and would have wished that they could have lived to take part in the glorious struggle of freedom and justice and humanity, against Slavery, fraud and tyranny.[170]

Much excitement filled that hall. Unfortunately, Ellen Craft would never set into writing her version of the transformation and escape; however, her husband would, though twelve years after the fact. In those twelve years, the couple shaped their story of escape on the anti-slavery lecture-platform, which in turn shaped the literary imaginations of the day. The (mis)reading of the light-skinned slave of actual African extraction shaped a unique metaphor of race for fugitive identities that was appropriated and romanticized in classic narratives of American literature. This newspaper clipping is very much the key to reading *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, *Clotel*, *Benito Cereno*, *The Bondwoman's Narrative*, and *Running*.

2. The Antislavery Platform and the Historical Production of the Crafts' Escape

In the years before *Running* was published, the fugitive pair spent considerable time on the anti-slavery lecture-platform. Immediately after their "debut" at Faneuil Hall, they joined William Wells Brown on a four-month lecture-tour in New England (January-April 1849), and then, while in exile overseas, due to the passing of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act, the trio reunited for a second tour in England (1850-1852).[171] The narrative telling of the escape to a British audience versus an American one would significantly shape the textual anatomy of *Running*. Unlike other fugitive slaves before them, who suppressed details of their escapes, the Crafts concentrated entirely on narrating the escape, the details of their plotting, her transformation, and how exactly they duped passenger after passenger. They wrote what their predecessors refused to write yet that which the fictions of the day dared to write. Their "severe cross" from slavery to the lecture-platform, as Frederick Douglass famously put it, provided the Crafts with the opportunity to experiment with the sequence of the escape and explore the theme of passing as a plot-device before rendering it on the page for publication. In many ways the stage acted as a blank page for rehearsing and revising their story, and it also allowed them a political space to develop its rhetorical possibilities and hone its dominant themes into oral-narrative perfection. In the paragraph below, from "The Performance of Slave Narrative in the 1840s" (1986), William L. Andrews describes the implications of this "severe cross" for fugitive slaves like the Crafts:

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[170] The *Seventeenth Annual Report, Presented to the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, By its Board of Managers, January 24, 1849*, is a rare document mentioned in scholarship related to the Crafts yet has not been thoroughly discussed, in particular how the conference and newspaper clipping shaped the historical production of the famous escape. See The Cornell University Library Digital Collections (Boston: Andrews & Prentiss, 1849), 82-87.

[171] R. J. M Blackett, *Beating Against the Barriers: Biographical Essays on Nineteenth-Century Afro-American History* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1986), 87-137. For discussion on the Crafts' travels with Brown, see William Edward Farrison, *William Wells Brown: Author & Reformer* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 134-137 and 179-188. Barbara McCaskill recently completed a manuscript that investigates the Crafts' 19 years of exile in Britain see, *Love, Liberation, and Escaping Slavery: William and Ellen Craft in Cultural Memory* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2015). The edition of *Running* cited here includes the 1860 first edition and also Barbara McCaskill's edition, *Running* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1999).

> Lionized in one town and reviled in the next, they were well schooled in the ways that their self-presentation, their modes of address, their idiom, and their tones of voice would affect whites. This preparation as oral self-historians on the abolitionist platform instilled in them a rhetorical sophistication and audience-consciousness unprecedented in the history of Afro-American autobiography.[172]

The advantages of lecturing on both sides of the Atlantic allowed the Crafts, and especially William Craft, to study what Andrews calls "audience-consciousness," and thus learn to shift between versions of narrative telling for two very opposing audiences and their cultural and political perspectives on slavery.[173] For an American audience, the narrative tone and perspective worked to recruit and convince a hostile "Yankee" crowd, but, for a British audience, the narrative tone and cross-Atlantic perspective on America's "peculiar institution" allowed William Craft mobility in representation in order to engage and entertain an already convinced audience. This of course was still potentially horrifying but all the while empowering.

The trio followed a simple pattern for their meetings. After Brown lectured for about an hour, "analyzing the development of American Slavery in the South and prejudice in the North, which culminated in the Fugitive Slave Law," as R. J. M. Blackett writes, William then took the stage and narrated the escape.[174] In America, Blackett continues, "Although William was not an experienced public speaker, his narrative was filled with suspense and wit"; however, by the time they arrived in Britain, "William's lectures had become markedly sophisticated."[175] The routine was strategically arranged and in specific preparation for its grand finale, what Blackett describes as the "tear-jerking scene" of the meetings and the moment when Mrs. Craft was finally invited onstage. Described in some mid-nineteenth century newspapers as the "silent argument," other records reveal that she answered questions from the crowd and even added details to William's account of the escape. One newspaper described her as "knowing how to use her tongue with considerable effect" (*Liberator*). Her "coming out" on the lecture-platform played on her passing. Here, the black female subject of miscegenation as the "white" slave, dislocates the context of the "Negro exhibit" in challenging the very act of whites (mis)reading the fugitive slave's body. She is the living proof of miscegenation and the unimagined display of white slavery. The undetectably of the black female body, with the threatening possibilities of her mutability, manages an authority upon its spectators: her image is in the likeness of the father, as well as his wife, sisters, and daughters.

Also available to them were abolitionist expropriations of their escape, both its reduction to the discourse of the antislavery cause, and the fictional possibilities in which major novelists sifted their passing-plot. "This is the stuff of which great adventure novels are made," as R.J.M Blackett writes, and novelists found admiration in its hero and heroine, making substantial use of their romantic story of escape and closely modeling the transformation of their heroines (and heroes) after Ellen Craft. The two works commonly mentioned in connection to the Crafts are Harriet

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[172] See William L. Andrews, *To Tell A Free Story: The First Century of Afro-American Autobiography, 1760-1865* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 100.

[173] John Sekora examines the influence of the fugitive slave's oral-narrative experience on the abolitionist lecture-platform. Of intrigue is his discussion of Douglass' experiences and the slaves that followed in his footsteps during the 1840s and 50s. Sekora writes of their speaking at lecture halls and before live audiences, "Certainly it initiated the process through which many fugitives were transformed into speakers against slavery and then into authors of slave narratives." His list of slave-lecturers that would later produce narratives, includes Ellen Craft and William Craft. See Sekora, "Black Message/White Envelope: Genre, Authenticity, and Authority in the Antebellum Slave Narrative," in *Callalloo* 10 (1987): 497.

[174] Blackett, *Beating Against the Barriers*, 97.

[175] Ibid., 97-98.

Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1851-52, serialized in America) and William Wells Brown's *Clotel* (1853, originally published in Britain). Both fictionalize the Crafts' escape to investigate the light-skinned slave passing out of slavery in the guise of a Spanish (or Italian) gentlemen, who also adopt an American pseudonym and are accompanied by a black slave. The title-character of *Clotel* is modeled after Ellen Craft, with Brown inserting a section from "An Incident at the South," also borrowing the racial (mis)reading of Ellen Craft as a cross-wooing Spanish gentleman, adding the possibility of 'him' being Italian. Clotel-as-Mr. Johnson is also accompanied by a dark-skinned slave named William; however, this William is not her husband. Also, Brown is the first to tell the story of the two Virginian women who fell in love with the "wrong chap," and highlights Mr. Johnson's foreignness and sexual ambiguity. Clotel finds freedom in the American North though suffers the fate of the tragic mulatta: she plunges to her death in the Potomac River. As for Stowe, although *The Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin; Presenting the Original Facts and Documents upon Which the Story is Founded* (1853) never mentions the Crafts as an inspiration for the escapes of Eliza and George Harris, we may still infer that nineteenth century readers, including the Crafts, recognized the transformations of husband and wife as reimaginings of the real-life escape. Eliza, like Ellen Craft, dresses in masculine garb and passes as a "white" gentleman, though she escapes with their infant son Harry who is dressed in girl's clothes and is renamed, Harriet. George darkens his light skin with paint and invents a Spaniard pose, goes by the name Mr. Butler, and escapes with a free-slave named Jim, who acts as loyal servant. Stowe removes disability and illness from both performances, though George's hand is significantly branded with the letter *H*. Another notable writer to render a narrative plot with this bonded-duo is Herman Melville in *Benito Cereno* (1855).[176] In *Benito Cereno*, Melville title-character shares a striking resemblance to the ailing "Mr. Johnson"—Melville's captain is "exotic, elegantly attired but a strangely sickly young Spanish gentleman." With his servant-slave Babo, the bonded-pair dupe a New England captain, Amasa Delano. To borrow the thinking of Julia Stern, "Whether or not Stowe's novel had a direct influence on the creation of 'Benito Cereno,' it is nevertheless significant that these two important narratives of slavery written in America in the 1850s interrogate the institution of slavery in its international form."[177] Indeed, the 1850s period saw the rise of the confounding figure of Spanish masquerade as an ailing Spanish gentleman traveling with his loyal servant, but of these authors it was Stowe's book that, to borrow Barbara McCaskill's words, "reminded audiences of the Crafts' tenacious escape—and probably left them wondering where the firsthand version was."[178]

That "firsthand version" was finally published in 1860, in London, and like *Clotel*, was written for a British audience. *Running* went through "two printings," even reaching American shores.[179] Some scholars credit William Craft as sole author of *Running*, with other scholars arguing for the significance of a co-authorship. Perhaps the criticism to wage against all others is that

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[176] For more on the light-skinned slave passing as a Spanish gentleman in the fictions of the 1850s, see Keiko Arai, "A 'Stranger' as a Mask: The Spanish Masquerade in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, *Clotel*, and 'Benito Cereno,'" in *Japanese Institutional Repositories* (2006): 1-19. His work provides a comprehensive historical analysis, significantly informing my readings of "An Incident at the South" and *Running*; however, nowhere in his work does he create a link between the Spanish masqueade in these novels to the newspaper clipping. He explores the "ambiguous position" of the light-skinned slave, as he writes, "Worn both by the white and by the black, the mask of 'a Spanish gentleman' has an ambiguous position in the black-white dichotomy" and, as he continues, "functions as a highly significant and problematic motif in American literature written in the 1850s, uniquely and effectively working as a protean mask of a 'stranger'."

[177] See Stern, "Spanish Masquerade and the Drama of Racial Identity in *Uncle Tom's Cabin,*" 126, footnote 17.

[178] Barbara McCaskill, "Introduction" in *Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom: The Escape of William and Ellen Craft from Slavery* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1999), xvi.

[179] Blackett, *Beating Against the Barriers*, 105.

presented by Blackett: "Although it is impossible to say, beyond all doubt, that William was the sole author of the narrative, his style, as seen in some of his later letters and reports, suggests that he possessed all the literary tools necessary to write *Running*."[180] In addition to possessing the writerly ability, Blackett offers another perspective: "Chesson, who became a close associate, always referred to William as the author."[181] But the quarrel seems also to turn on what Ellen Craft knew that William Craft did not of the escape's details, during the many instances her accomplice was in "black" only cars. Charles Heglar proclaims a collaborative production stating that the answer is in the book's title: "There is a duality in their subtitle—*The Escape of William and Ellen Craft*."[182] Interestingly, however, the title pages of twentieth-century editions of *Running* vary, with some granting sole authorship to William Craft while others refuse to do so: for instance, a 1969 edition by Mnemosyne Publishing Co., Inc., which is an "exact reprint" of the 1860 edition. Two 1999 editions, however, take opposite stances: the Louisiana State University Press edition and edited by Blackett claims that William Craft is the sole author, but the Georgia University Press edition and edited by Barbara McCaskill upholds that the pair as co authors— "by William Craft and Ellen Craft"—and rightfully so, since Georgia is their home state.

To return to the mid-nineteenth century, when the Crafts set out to claim their story from the very abolitionists and novelists who made them famous, the pair constructed *their* story collaboratively, and in the "real" version of Ellen Craft's transformation, their perspective on the incidents at the South never suggest a racial impersonation, as other narratives had when appropriating the escape.[183] Here is the key to reading *Running*: the narrative plays out her passing through its own racial masquerade by refusing to state that she passes as "white." Ellen Craft is only ever described as "he" and "Mr. Johnson," while critics have freely defined her racial impersonation as merely black-to-white passing. This not knowing her racial impersonation in specific ethno-racial terms strengthens her performance, because it challenges the reader to decipher the racial play at work. She is always shifting and she is always (un)becoming. She passes up, but how far up is all a part of the complex narrative trajectory—or rather, all about the *writerly masquerade* as an illusion that is played out for (and on) the reader. In fact, the power and ability to decode racial politics of image and identity is critically tested before the narrative account begins. On the very first page of the 1860 edition of *Running*, the reader is confronted with a frontispiece of Ellen Craft dressed in masculine garments, thus challenged by the perplexity in the performance of her passing, and provoked by the seduction of being duped.

There is a textual and visual craftsmanship to this little book, and although *Running* reads as a sort of cobbled text (mainly for the ways the writing moves through three distinct narrative sequences), a closer look at its 111-pages reveals a narrative trajectory propelled by the multiple and conflicting ways of seeing and reading the subject of its frontispiece. Upon opening the 1860 edition, staring back at the reader is a portrait of Ellen Craft in the partial-guise of Mr. Johnson. In the frontispiece, she passes as "a most respectable looking gentleman," as William Craft remarks in the

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[180] Ibid., 105.

[181] Ibid., 105.

[182] Also see Heglar, *Rethinking the Slave Narrative: Slave Narrative and the Narratives of Henry Bibb and William and Ellen Craft* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 92.

[183] There are no references to when William Craft began writing *Running*. We do know that the couple began a formal education at an agricultural school in Ockham, Surrey, as early as 1851, and under the tutelage of Lady Byron, John Estlin, and Harriet Martineau. As Blackett states, "At Ockham the Crafts were able to broaden their education." The couple spent three years at the school, and as Blackett continues, "The Crafts' development at Ockham was so impressive, they were offered the positions of superintendent and matron." For this study, I take into account their experiences on the lecture-platform as pre-writing stages for the composition of *Running*, in particular the years between 1849 and 1851. See Blackett, *Beating Against the Barriers*, 103.

often-quoted line of the book. Well, if it were not for the gender and race trouble initiated by the title below the portrait: "ELLEN CRAFT, The Fugitive Slave" (see figure 12).

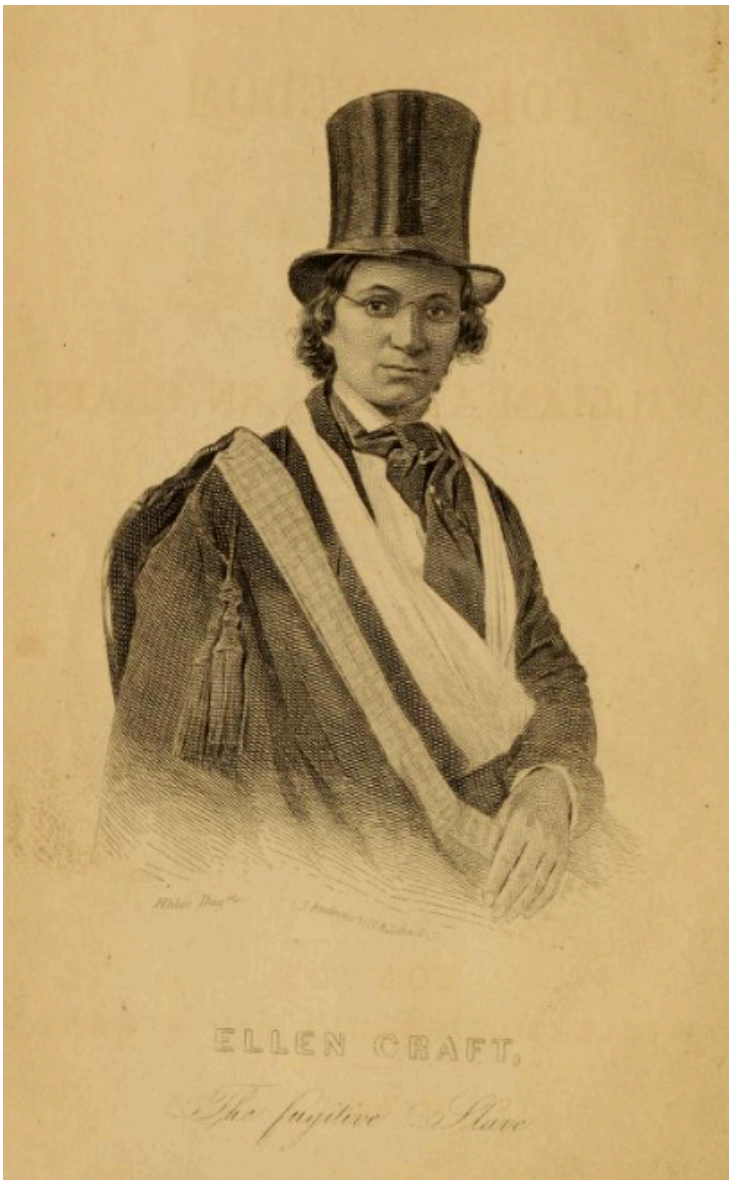


Figure 12. Frontispiece of Ellen Craft, Entitled "Ellen Craft, The Fugitive Slave" (1851, 1860)[184]

The title "outs" her real gender and destabilizes the reading of race on the page. What the reader really sees is a constructed process of her (un)becoming: an unintelligibility or a performative contradiction. And there is nothing accidental about its staging, as can be seen in the absence of her autograph. Although there is no traditional inscription on the frontispiece—that is, there is no autograph in Ellen Craft's hand in the likeness of male fugitive slaves who autographed their

[184] For frontispiece, see *Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom* (London: William Tweedie, 1860). [Digitized by Boston Public Library.] This 1860 edition is inscribed to William Lloyd Garrison by William and Ellen Craft, dated 27 June 1860. Also see BANC MSS 98/121 cz Box 1, *Craft-Trotter Family Papers, 1884-1996*, "Ellen Craft, The Fugitive Slave." 1851, 1860. The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. 14 July 2006.

frontispieces—it must be stated that Ellen Craft began to read and write while touring in New England and she may have been able to sign her name. As early as 1852, and while she and William Craft were in exile in England, a letter of hers was circulated in anti-slavery newspapers in New England, including the *Anti-Slavery Advocate* (December 1852). Her aim was to settle a particular rumor. Her signature appears at the end of the letter, that is, eight years before the publication of *Running* and about three years after the 1848 escape. She writes:

> Dear Sir:
>
> I feel very much obliged to you for informing me of the erroneous report which has been so extensively circulated in the American newspapers: "That I had placed myself in the hands of an American gentleman in London, on condition that he would take me back to the family who held me as a slave in Georgia." So I write these few lines merely to say that the statement is entirely unfounded, for I have never had the slightest inclination whatever of returning to bondage; and God forbid that I should ever be so false to liberty as to prefer slavery in its stead. In fact, since my escape from slavery, I have got on much better in every respect than I could have possibly anticipated. Though, had it been to the contrary, my feelings in regard to this would have been just the same, for I ha much rather starve in England, a free woman, than be a slave for the best man that ever breathed upon the American continent.
>
> Yours very truly,
> Ellen Craft
>
> P.S. Mr. Craft joins in kind regards to yourself and your family.[185]

However, on the engraving, replacing her autograph is the inclusion of the names of two male engravers. After all, as Frederick Douglass once stated in *The North Star* (1849), "Negroes can never have impartial portraits at the hands of white artists."[186] Those white artists were Luther Hallman Hale, who created the 1851 daguerreotype, and Stephen Alonzo Scoff and Joseph Andrews, who both produced the steel engraving.[187] It was a popular image that was circulated in American newspapers throughout the 1850s and on both sides of the Mason-Dixon line, even widely circulated in England. It was also sold at abolitionist meetings and lecture halls, and the money collected helped free William Craft's sister from American slavery.

In this constructed frame, Ellen Craft sits forever in a state of metamorphosis. But agency is not entirely lost at the hands of white artists. The pose is not locked into any one gender or race, nor does she shift between femininity and masculinity or even between blackness and whiteness; rather, she inhabits the contradiction and occupies a space between the mask and the "real." Not only does the reconstruction of her passing challenge the act of reading male fugitive slave portraiture (think of the famous portraits of Douglass, Brown and Bibb), but it also displaces the narcissistic male viewer, who sees his sex and race being played by a female slave. This adds a sort of subtextual homoeroticism, because in seeing himself in the transformed female body, the viewer is pulled into a

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[185] See "Supplementary Readings" in William Craft and Ellen Craft, *Running*, 86-88.

[186] See Frederick Douglass, "A Tribute to the Negro," *The North Star*, 17 April 1849.

[187] Michael Winship, *American Literary Publishing in the Mid-Nineteenth Century: The Business of Ticknor and Fields* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 119. Also see Michael A. Chaney, *Fugitive Vision: Slave Image and Black Identity in Antebellum Narrative* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 80-81.

gaze of desired identification. Here, the slave returns the master's gaze (to borrow Homi Bhabha's formula of colonizer/colonized), but how does Ellen overthrow or intensify the fiction of gendered *and* racial bifurcation? Which gender and race is she playing? How is she troubling the categories through which the viewer identifies himself and "whiteness"? In every which way, this frontispiece muddles her performance of race, gender, class, sexuality, and disability, and in ways that the narrative can only hope to settle.

Hers is an extravagant representation of the southern gentleman: something is happening to his masculinity, his race, his nobility, and his refinement. The critical function of the frontispiece is that it forced readers to realize the transformative power of the light-skinned female slave, but as further confounded by the technology of the daguerreotype; an invention in 1839 that well into the 1850s that still stirred in Americans an anxiety about likeness and doubles, as if the copy rendered a realness or authenticity that threatened to displace the real or even the viewer. Of the daguerreotype, Americans thought: "This is indeed Life itself."[188] In Ellen Craft's case, the very transference of the "real" or in her becoming "an embodied double or ideal other of a human character," to think through Molly McGarry's analysis of the advent of the daguerreotype, would have been troubling and puzzling not only because of gender but also because of the inability to read race on the supposed "Fugitive Slave." She not only looked like a gentleman, but she also looked white. To borrow the words of Marjorie Garber, "If a gentleman can be made as well as born, why not make one from even the most unpromising material: a female Negro slave?"[189] How was this image read by white northerners, in terms of how the southern gentleman was *made* against the reality of the real gender and race beneath the costume? In other words, what is the fiction of gender and race permeating the page? How, as modern readers, shall we read this performance, that signals racial and gendered difference but only in its language?

She dons a capacious black cloak that hides the female body, while a light-colored patterned sash, with elegant black tassels, enhances respectability; resting on her chest is a most lustrous black cravat in a loose taffeta that is perfectly wrapped around a tall-standing white collar that further suggests refinement; hanging around her neck is a mysterious white cloth that is almost lost to the exceptionally tall stovetop hat that dominates the frame; and, below the brim of the hat, the slave's eyes stare back at the viewer through clear spectacles. In every which way this staging, at the hands of white artists, refuses to muffle femininity; in fact, the abolitionists omitted the very articles from the original costume that would have downplayed a feminine impression. Not until the reader is immersed into the narrative—and just before the account of the escape—does William Craft explain these changes to the frontispiece: "The poultice is left off in the engraving, because the likeness could not have been taken well with it on"; in other words, it would have masked "the smoothness of her face" and "the expression of the countenance, as well as the beardless chin" (24). Also missing from the frontispiece are those enormous green spectacles that covered her face and hid her eyes.

As for the racial play at work in the frontispiece, it has gone unexamined in previous analyses; instead, critics have concentrated more closely on the ambiguity of gender and sexuality, the invisibility of illness, and the single trace of physical impairment (that mysterious white cloth around her neck is a sling for her right arm). Critics tend to marvel at the "crucial function of disability for the disguise," this "passing as disabled," as Ellen Samuels untangles in stating that while the frontispiece nearly omits this key element to the disguise—"the sling looks like another sash or

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[188] Tom Gunning, *The Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture Reader*, ed. Vanessa R. Schwartz and Jeannene M. Przyblyski (New York: Routledge, 2004), 108-110. Also see Molly McGarry, *Ghosts of Futures Past: Spiritualism and the Cultural Politics of Nineteenth-Century America* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 111-113.

[189] Marjorie Garber, *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 284.

scarf, its disability-function obscured to the point of invisibility"—its function is "emphasized by its remarkable proliferation throughout the narrative."[190] Certainly, the cloth begs to be read, especially for its racial implications in that it serves to create the illusion of literacy and thus white privilege by covering illiteracy, blackness, and gender. The variable of disability and illness are also 'the' key layers in the performance and (mis)reading of her Spanish masquerade. Always attached to the narrative of Spain and its Spaniard is a rhetoric of decay and decline that was used to powerful narrative effects by rivaling nations, including Anglo-Americans and well into the nineteenth century ("Benito Cereno" is a prime example). The sling, however, I would like to add, also excuses the young gentleman from having to autograph the engraving. And while these conversations of gender and disability and illness are important and relevant to my study, I am more interested in how mid-nineteenth-century readers interpreted the slave's race in the portrait.

What begs to be read in her countenance are the traces of European origins, which construct a masculine impersonation that negates the "real" gender and race suggested in the title. She passes up, but how far up has yet to be explored in specific racial terms. Is hers the pose of a Spanish gentleman? Is there a "darkness of complexion" on the countenance that suggests "Spanish extraction"? Although we now read Ellen Craft's passing up as "white," what was the character of whiteness *they* read? What were the racial categories through which *they* examined the color of her smooth and beardless countenance, her dark eyes, and dark curly hair? What was asserted in *their* reading of her high-bridged nose, her thin lips, and even her protruding chin with a small cleft? Above all, from which direction did *they* read her racial performance—from the direction of whiteness or blackness, or from the direction of lightness or darkness? While critics begin from the direction of whiteness, I find it more revealing that the masked-writer from "An Incident at the South" began from the direction of darkness. If we take our cue from the masked-writer, an intriguing discussion surfaces about the ways that a "darkness of complexion" shares similar privileges with whiteness, even as it introduces a very different racial hierarchy in connection to the other mother country. In the case of Ellen Craft, darkness is read as "other" yet relatable and with origins from Western Europe as opposed to Africa. The crucial factor to note is that darkness is not to be mistakenly categorized with blackness or the ideological notions that define the "black" body of the African-American slave. Darkness is not blackness. Here, darkness suggests difference: it suggests stranger, fantasy, queer.

Before pursuing this reading of Ellen Craft's "darkness of complexion" in the frontispiece, Julia Stern provides a useful explanation for understanding the divergence between "whiteness" and "darkness" in the figure of the light-skinned slave passing as a Spanish gentleman, even if her terms are not explicitly discussed in relation to the racial taxonomies proposed in my study. Stern compares the "white skin" of Castilians to the "brown tint" of George Harris' skin dye: "The brown tint of George's disguise is more closely associated in the white American nineteenth-century, middle-class imagination with the exotic Spaniard: bullfighters, gypsies, and flamenco dancers who are often *darker* in skin tone and who represent a romantic vision of the old world."[191] I am interested in this representation of the "exotic Spaniard," but not in the cross-Atlantic sense that Stern proposes. Instead, let us consider this racial identity (that "brown tint") as hailing from the southern borderlands. By 1848, the American imaginary was intrigued by the "exotic Spaniard" yet from the opposite side of the continent, not solely a figure from across the Atlantic and associated

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[190] See Ellen Samuels, "'A Complication of Complaints': Untangling Disability, Race, and Gender in William and Ellen Craft's *Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom*," in *MELUS* 31 (2006): 17-20. Also for discussion of disability see Lindon Barrett, "Hand-Writing: Legibility and the White Body in *Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom*," in *American Literature* 69 (1997): 315-26.

[191] Stern, "Spanish Masquerade and the Drama of Racial Identity in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*," 110. (*Italics mine*)

with Castile. What of the descendants from the Southwest's first families? Stern's footnote pertaining to a Spanish American past proves even more interesting. In a letter to art historian Elizabeth Boone, Stern states:

> Elizabeth Boone explains that American reactions to the Spanish people during the nineteenth century are ambiguous at best. There are two kinds of representations in art: the Spanish 'conquistador' who is white (Christopher Columbus, pictured with Ferdinand and Isabelle, is a frequent figure in nineteenth-century American paintings of Spain), and which was particularly popular before the Civil War; and the exotic Spaniard (bullfighters, gypsies, flamenco dancers) who is darker in skin tone and was more popular in the later nineteenth century.[192]

Boone's conclusion: "'Simply put, *light* skin suggests power and *dark* skin suggests difference'."[193] In a way, Ellen Craft's racial impersonation of Mr. Johnson hinges between these two historical representations of the "Spanish conquistador" and the "exotic Spaniard." Instead, her performance is that of the *extravagant* Spaniard of the southern borderlands. As Mr. Johnson from Atlanta, Georgia, she presents a borderland figure of *dark* skin that suggests difference but dons a costume that suggests a romanticized Spanish past. The Anglo-American imaginary (with the help of Washington Irving), we can say, was fixated on old-world representations of the Spaniard as conquistador, which had become tangled with a present-day conceptual category of the Spanish-American of the borderlands.

It can be said that Ellen Craft's countenance in the frontispiece is of a darkness of complexion, and it can be said that hers is the appearance of the Spanish type of the period. The costume also encourages this reading. Whether the act was accidentally or purposefully externalized is besides the matter. We might never know her true racial impersonation, but in this portrait she dons the dress of a nineteenth-century Spanish gentleman, which works simultaneously with the dark eyes and curly hair that significantly contrast against an almost pale though smooth-looking countenance. She follows the racial performative traditions of this historical figure, and in the paragraph below, taken from Joseph M. Bennett's *The Illustrated Toilet of Fashion, Or, Annals of Costume, from the Earliest Period to the Present Time* (1850), we find an almost perfect explanation for why the masked-writer (mis)read her performance as that of "Spanish extraction" (see figure 13):

> The most important part of the Spaniard's costume is the *capa*, or cloak. The lower orders wear it of a dark chocolate, faced with crimson plush or cotton velvet; while that worn by the higher classes is of blue or black cloth, faced with rich black silk velvet, and frequently lined throughout with taffety. The cloak is not a winter garment alone; in the hottest days of summer it is often worn. The rest of the costume consists of a short round jacket, with an upright collar, trimmed with braid and velvet and lined with silk. The generally prevailing fashion for the hat is a high sugar-loaf with a broad rim, and among the peasantry, a bright silk handkerchief is folded over the beard diagonally, and tied with a knot behind, and over this they wear the hat. They wear tight breeches of various colors; their boots and shoes are also made of colored leather. A large clasp-knife is considered a part of a Spaniard's

[192] Ibid., 126.
[193] Ibid., 126.

costume. The costume of Portugal, Mexico, and their descendants in South America, and the yarious [sic] Spanish possessions, differs but little from that of Spain.[194]



Figure 13. "The Spanish hat and cloak" from Bennett's *Illustrated*[195]

Bennett provides a fascinating investigation into "the mysteries of dress and fashion," as he calls it, and with a particular focus on how dress has transformed through the ages and between genders, including a love for finery that was shared by women and men (7-8). His study speaks to the diverse practices of dress, beauty, and refinement in other countries to explore its influence on the mid-nineteenth century period in America (there are also significant discussions pertaining to body painting, tattooing, hairstyles, and the beard). I select this text over contemporary discussions of dress because of its historical relevance. If we read Ellen Craft's costume in relation to this summary, we find that her black cloak alone signifies on the gentlemanly costume of the Spanish gentleman, as does the white handkerchief around her chin that is tucked under the stovetop hat. Her costume, though, is the Americanized version that follows the traditions of Southern and Anglo-American culture—the cravat, taffeta, green spectacles, and a top hat, all of which point to refinement, fashion, and privilege. Other than her beardless chin, she looks like the portraits of Spaniard Americans from this period. Her pale skin, hair texture, and dark features share a likeness to the descendants of Spain. The frontispiece confirms the (mis)reading of her racial passing by the masked-writer, as a descendant of the Southwest's first families, and now an eccentrically dressed planter hailing from Atlanta, Georgia.

The frontispiece thus acts as a narrative device that plays on Ellen Craft's passing with its own shifting rhetorics of concealment and exposure. The title and image create a linguistic and visual masquerade that challenge the conventional reading experience of male portraiture and introduce the mutability of the mulatta and her subversion of normative categories of identification. At work is a dynamic play on the reader and at the border where image-as-text and text-as-image

[194] Joseph M. Bennett, *The Illustrated Toilet of Fashion, Or, Annals of Costume, from the Earliest Period to the Present Time* (New York: Booth & Foseter, 1850), 27-28.
[195] Ibid., 28.

meet. Although the frontispiece will interfere with the narrative telling of Ellen Craft's original invention of the costume, one thing is for sure: the frontispiece is meant to visually problematize a spectrum of notions, that of naming, identity and performance, authenticity and deceit, and definitions of the real and the methods or system by which identity is invented. This image is meant to confound its spectators and engage them into a fictional exploration of the black female passing body, as palimpsest and illusion. It may have been a familiar image, especially since in the weeks, months and years to follow the escape, the Craft' story appeared in newspapers and periodicals throughout the North and South, with appropriations of their passing-plot also surfacing in the fictions of famous writers. By 1860, when nineteenth-century readers finally held in their hands the first edition of *Running*, and as they gazed at its staged frontispiece, there was no question whether this *free*woman existed: "It is this image that introduces the text and haunts it."[196] Its illusive quality still prodded some readers to ask, "Is it true?"[197]

As the reader turns the page and enters the written account of the escape, its tone and textual anatomy signal its notably being shaped by the fact that it was published in London, which relieved the Crafts from the pressures of convincing an American readership that the subject in the frontispiece, indeed, existed.[198] The narrative attempts its own trajectory with the frontispiece but then another frame is created by a brief "Preface" and then an immediate yet unexpected plunge into the details of the escape. Unlike other slave narratives, their story is not tucked in-between pages and pages of documentary proof and/or letters written on behalf of the Crafts by abolitionists, editors, and/or publishers. Certainly, readers of slave narratives expected this "careful layering of heterogeneous material into a collective and invulnerable whole," as John Sekora phrases it in "Black Message/White Envelope" (1989): "If the story of a former slave was thus sandwiched between white abolitionist documents, the story did carry the aegis of a movement preaching historical veracity."[199] However, when readers sat down to read *Running*, they did not flip through any proselytizing documents. The reason being: an abolitionist-army had already escorted the Crafts into the popular imagination.

In the "Preface" to *Running*, William announces the trajectory of the book in hand:

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196 Ellen M. Weinauer, "'A Most Respectable Looking Gentleman': Passing, Possession, and Transgression in *Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom*," in *Passing and the Fictions of Identity*, ed. Elaine E. Ginsberg (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), 53.

197 According to Sekora, and quoting from Price's *Slavery in America* (1837), who is speaking of Moses Roper's narrative, in a way says "the first question all readers will ask is, 'Is it true?'" See Sekora, "Black Message/White Envelope."

198 For a discussion on the British perspective in *Running*, see Heglar, *Rethinking the Slave Narrative*. Also, Weinauer attributes the narrative's tone to a temporal significance, though dismisses the implications of a British readership: "From the distanced perspective of the narrative—the couple escaped in 1848, twelve years before *Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom* was published—Craft can present the escape as a sort of great adventure/hoax. Thus, the narrative's tone is often urbane and ironic, its humor fueled by the different ways that Ellen/Mr. Johnson can 'read'." See Weinauer, "'A Most Respectable Looking Gentleman': Passing, Possession, and Transgression in *Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom*," (45). This "distanced perspective" is the result of the Crafts spending eleven of those twelve years exiled in Britain, where they continued touring with Brown and where they received an education under the tutelage of Lady Byron. William utilizes the advantage of a removed perspective as a way of enlisting an outside/British reader to gaze upon Americans and their practices of enslavement, but more, as a way of allowing a readership (that has already abolished slavery) to gaze upon Americans and with humor to witness the many and "different ways" that the female slave navigated white spaces of privilege not meant for her.

199 Sekora, "Black Message/White Envelope: Genre, Authenticity, and Authority in the Antebellum Slave Narrative," 497.

> This book is not intended as a full history of the life of my wife, nor of myself; but merely as an account of our escape; together with other matter which I hope may be the means of creating in some minds a deeper abhorrence of the sinful and abominable practice of enslaving and brutifying our fellow-creatures.[200]

Something of a different narrative architecture is attempted versus the narrative strategies from what Sekora refers to as "master-texts," like Douglass' or Brown's. The account of the Crafts' escape is actually perfectly sandwiched in-between *their* "pages of documentary proof" or neatly crafted arguments that frame the telling of the escape. Although William Craft divides the narrative in two parts, to think of it as three narrative sequences may act as a better guide for reading *Running*. The first sequence is a 30-page introduction that investigates the act of racial passing in the other direction, that is, whites passing into slavery and in connection to Ellen Craft's childhood passing, which critiques a system that enslaves its own white children. (Ellen Craft's first master, James C. Smith, was also her biological father). The second sequence is narrated in 50-pages and recounts how Ellen Craft invented the costume and how her and William Craft escaped slavery by achieving passage from Macon, Georgia to Philadelphia by railway and steamer. (These two sequences comprise "Part I" of *Running*). The remaining 30-pages (all of "Part II") narrate the Crafts' arrival in free-Philadelphia, Ellen Craft's reverse transformation, her passing as a "white" woman, and their second escape from North America to Great Britain, where they find refuge.

That same mutability we see in Ellen Craft's passing is very much a rhetorical tool that radically crafts each of the three narrative sequences. These narrative shifts or what I call *writerly masquerade*, particularly with all the intertextuality of the first and third sequences that open and close the narrative but is nowhere to be found in the second sequence that narrates the account of the escape. As Sterling Bland Jr. explains, "Ellen's passing gives William the opportunity to write a text asserting multiple conflicting interpretations"; thus, the representation of her passing, through writerly masquerade, "reproduces for the reader the sense of instability Ellen Craft's shifting identities suggest."[201] This is essential to interpreting the narrative strategies throughout *Running*. William Craft plays out her passing—its "multiple conflicting interpretations," its "sense of instability," but also, its possibilities—for a knowing British readership, which he deliberately positions as a central character in the narrative, always connecting his reader to the story and in intimate ways (with puns and brief explanations of American ways and perspectives) whereas writing for an American readership would have demanded an entirely different perspective.

As the text inaugurates this "different perspective mechanism" for a British audience, both serious and playful, *Running* goes through its own transformative changes to produce multiple ways of seeing and (mis)reading the runaway slave. *Running* provides a hybrid visual/textual experience for an audience obsessed with classic cross-dressing plots and an unrelenting fondness for puns and wordplay from the Elizabethan stage. This little book thus emerges as its own authority to bare witness to a new kind of passing. It provides a double vision of sorts, that suddenly speaks anew to the abject, queer, and coloured, and that speaks anew to the female slave standing at the crossroads of America's political, gendered, and racist landscape: a figure ready and willing to negotiate the imaginary, literary, and contested racial terrain haunted by its English and Spanish conquerors. The narrative will set forth the multiple ways of seeing and (mis)reading the runaway slave in the

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[200] William Craft and Ellen Craft, *Running*, 1.

[201] Sterling Bland Jr., *Voices of the Fugitives: Runaway Slave Stories and Their Fictions of Self-Creation* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2000), 146. He writes, "Ellen's role is played out both *intratextually* in the ways in which she is able to fool others and *intertextually* in the ways in which the rhetorical method of the narrative seeks to make the implied assurances between the reader and the text less secure" (*Italics mine*).

frontispiece, and reveal the complete costume that she invented, the passing-plot that she asserted, and the transformation and masquerade that she mastered.

3. Reading *Running* and its Critique on Racial Passing

Propelled by the masked-writer's (mis)reading of Mr. Johnson as a descendant of Spanish ancestry, also at the heart of this study is a fascination with how and why the Crafts refuse to settle the debate in their narrative. Instead, *Running* entertains the ambiguity and its ambivalence, and without precedent. While there is mention of Ellen Craft's childhood racial passing, it is never in reference to Mr. Johnson. The opening sequence does, however, attempt some sort of racial insistence as it gradually constructs a critique of the color line and defines racial passing in terms of mistaken identity and as linked to the horrors of whites passing into slavery. In mere glimpses, William Craft reveals Ellen Craft's passing ability and mobility as a light-skinned slave, but the start of the narrative predominantly centers on a general discussion of the arbitrariness of whiteness in mid-nineteenth-century America and the problem with passing in the opposite direction, which introduced a new picture of slavery. This opening critique strategically frames a reading for the second sequence that recounts Ellen Craft's transformation and escape; however, it remains unexamined in relation to the narrative repression of her racial impersonation while in the (dis)guise of Mr. Johnson. The opening sequence creates a narrative play around the phenomena of racial passing, and all before presenting the great escape. It also offers a different perspective for re-reading the famous scene of Ellen Craft inventing the costume, re-examining her transformation for how the performance signifies in multiple categories all at once (as we saw in "An Incident at the South"), and re-considering *movement* in her passage and thus more appropriately interpreting her mastery of masquerade, specifically during the railway scene where two young Virginian women, to borrow William Craft's words, "fell in love with the 'wrong chap.'" There is a narrative play that happens before the escape that helps us read her masquerade and it also helps us answer the questions I have been proposing: Who was Mr. Johnson? What was the character of whiteness that passengers read? Was *hers* the pose of a Spanish gentleman? What was *his* interracial and erotic mystique? What was the illusion that *she* performed? What was its genius? And what does the *writerly masquerade* do to her passing, as a tragic and comedic performance?

The contours of *Running*, especially in its opening pages, echo the rhetorical devices and patterns found in the slave narratives of their predecessors. For instance, the book begins with a description of the separation of slave families and its trauma and the reason why the Crafts plan to escape slavery. As the pages unfold, William Craft revisits the trope's implications with the technique of "imaginative substitution," as William Lloyd Garrison called it, and engages the theme of racial passing in the wrong direction to transform that image of separation and present a new portrait: the trope of white slavery and now its missing white children. Also, and before honing in on the argument of whites passing for slaves, William Craft briefly mentions Ellen Craft's childhood experiences of passing as a *free*child and daughter of her master.

> Notwithstanding my wife being of African extraction on her mother's side, she is almost white—in fact, she is so nearly so that the tyrannical old lady to whom she first belonged became so annoyed, at finding her frequently mistaken for a child of the family that she gave her when eleven years of age to a daughter, as a wedding present.[202]

[202] William Craft and Ellen Craft, *Running*, 3.

The passage emphasizes the ease of light-skinned slaves crossing-over the racial divide and infiltrating domestic spaces of white privilege. To be "frequently mistaken for a child of the family" introduces the slipperiness of reading whiteness and the cultural frustration with the sudden unreadability of "African extraction." Although the black slave mother's lineage goes undetected, the figure to step in and uphold racial order in the master's house is not the master himself but "the tyrannical old lady" as the evil stepmother. Here, racial convergence is demarcated by white antebellum female fears of slaves being mistaken as her offspring. The irony resides the stepmother passing seven-year-old Ellen Craft off as a "wedding present" to her own half-sister, Eliza Smith. (Coincidentally, "Eliza" is Stowe's cross-dressing heroine in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*—Eliza Harris). The stepmother's passing of the mulatta through the female line, significantly recasts the sanctioning of marriage with the covering of the master's infidelity. Ellen Craft's passing up as a child of the master and as the child of the stepmother, and perhaps even her passing as the sister of Eliza, also signals the possibility of white children accidentally passing into the political economy of slavery.[203]

The critique at work destabilizes notions of whiteness and argues an illegibility of race that is characterized by deceit. Slavery in America, William Craft argues,

> […] is not at all confined to persons of any particular complexion; there are a very large number of slaves as white as any one; but as the evidence of a slave is not admitted in court against a free white person, it is almost impossible for a white child, after having been kidnapped and sold into or reduced to slavery, in a part of the country where it is not known (as often is the case), ever to recover its freedom.[204]

The laws of the slave empire are defined and upheld by, as William Craft writes, "he who has the power, and is inhuman enough to trample upon the sacred rights of the weak," for they "care nothing for race or colour."[205] William Craft begins to paint the new picture of slave life in America, this warning of "he who has the power" evokes the final line of the narrative's opening paragraph: "[B]ut above all, the fact that another man had the power to tear from our cradle the new-born babe and sell it in the shambles like a brute, and then scourge us if we dared to lift a finger to save it from such a fate, haunted us for years."[206] A sort of narrative doing and then its undoing occurs, as William Craft works to revise the tragic picture of slave life suffered by slave parents and their

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[203] For further discussion on the relationship between Ellen Craft and Eliza Smith, see McCaskill, *Love, Liberation, and Escaping Slavery*, 23-24. Also of importance is William Craft's racial "origins," which McCaskill proves is "mulatto or mixed-race," see 19-20.

[204] William Craft and Ellen Craft, *Running*, 4.

[205] Ibid., 4. Scholars such as Bland, Edwards, and McCaskill have closely examined the opening pages of *Running* for the theme of white slavery. According to McCaskill, nineteenth-century audiences were "mesmerized by such stories," and "most compelling" "was what the stories said about the fluidity of race." What William shows us, as McCaskill writes, is how "whiteness and blackness could not be so rigidly distinguished." See McCaskill, "Introduction," xx. In Bland's words, "Slavery and, by extension, its dependence on easily identifiable racial identity, argues for a view of race that emphasizes the truly arbitrary nature of racial identification and classification." Furthermore, the "narrative voice subverts the infallibility of the gaze by initially asserting a variousness of blackness that the gaze fails fully to comprehend," and he also states, "If one were mistakenly to pass in the 'other' direction (that is, from white to black), the legal restrictions intended to prevent blacks from infiltrating the ranks of whiteness would also deny whites the possibility of exiting the ranks of blackness." See Bland, *Voices of the Fugitives*, 145. See Justin D. Edwards, *Gothic Passages: Racial Ambiguity and the American Gothic*, (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2003).

[206] William Craft and Ellen Craft, *Running*, 3.

children by creating for the reader a new picture of slave life in America: white slavery. "[H]e who has the power" is now haunting the cradles of his very own white children.

Passing into slavery added a different kind of horror story to the slavery plot, which William Craft is careful to convey in the first sequence of *Running*. Stephen Talty calls this new plot the stories of the "unfortunates," also describing these persons as those "whites who were kidnapped or sold into slavery in the years before the Civil War, actual white slaves," for instance "white children were kidnapped, white immigrants were sold, orphans were shipped south, and adults were caught and even 'dyed' and sent into bondage."[207] *Running* recounts the famous 1838 Supreme Court case of the German immigrant girl, Salomé Müller, who lived twenty-five-years as a slave in New Orleans until a relative recognized her passing as a slave, and the story of a seven-year-old boy kidnapped from his home in Ohio, "tanned and stained in such a way that he could not be distinguished from a person of colour and then sold as a slave in Virginia," as William Craft continues, not until "the age of twenty, he made his escape, by running away, and happily succeeded in rejoining his parents."[208] But, William Craft warns, not all children were so lucky to return home, as was the case for Salomeé's sister, Dorothea, who was also kidnapped though forever lost to slavery. This was a new image of slave life: the horror that your child (or even you) could be *made* a slave and passed into the South. This technique of "imaginative substitution"—which attempts to turn the white reader into a character of the horror story—is a step removed for the British reader. Still, the idea of being *made* a slave by skin-darkening recalls Frederick Douglass' "You have seen how a man was *made* a slave; you shall see how a slave was *made* a man." By 1860, it also recalled other narratives that experimented with this trope, such as George Harris' painting of his skin a shade darker in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* to pass as a Spanish gentleman, and another variation of the trope includes Tommo in *Typee* who fears being tattooed because a mask would permanently disfigure and transform him for another culture. *Running* offers the bi-directional dynamic of being made *and* passing up to introduce its reverse reality, thus painting slavery and the roles of master and slave as performative and as a network of social myths created by and for the master.

"The white slave added another kind of bad dream," as Talty argues.[209] Yet so did the light-skinned slave of miscegenation, and here was the female slave's experience and her invention of a costume that exalted the intellectual power of the slave. She makes herself into "he who has the power" and infiltrated white spaces of masculine privilege by disabling the right hand of the patriarch—the very hand haunting the cradles of all his children. She creates the illusion of literacy to escape from slavery and from the (slave) mother's fate of losing a child to the 'peculiar institution'. In a sound recording from *The Craft-Trotter Family Papers, 1884-1996*, entitled "Escape to Freedom" (1983), Ellen Craft Dammond (a great granddaughter of the Crafts) shares the family's oral-story of the escape and states, "Ellen knew from the time she was a little girl that she would never, never, have a child in slavery. […] Just like she was taken from her mother, her children would be taken from her."[210] Because *Running* focuses on the escape and not their life stories, the text only briefly discusses Ellen Craft's conversion experience. It arrives just before the escape:

> My wife was torn from her mother's embrace in childhood, and taken to a distant part of the country. She had seen so many other children separated from their

[207] Stephan Talty, *Mulatto America: At the Crossroads of Black and White Culture: A Social History* (New York: HarperCollins, 2003), 8.
[208] William Craft and Ellen Craft, *Running*, 6.
[209] Talty, *Mulatto America*, 13.
[210] See BANC MSS 98/121 cz Box 1, "Escape to Freedom." 1983. *Craft-Trotter Family Papers, 1884-1996*, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. 14 July 2006.

> parents in this cruel manner, that the mere thought of her ever becoming the mother of a child, to linger out a miserable existence under the wretched system of American slavery, appeared to fill her very soul with horror; and as she had taken what I felt to be an important view of her condition, I did not, at first, press the marriage, but agreed to assist her in trying to devise some plan by which we might escape from our unhappy condition, and then be married.[211]

The thought of losing a child to slavery is a climactic moment in Ellen Craft's conversion experience as well as in William Craft's own experience. Her realization of the conditions she suffers as a race and as a woman prompts her to convince William Craft to think of an escape.[212] Barbara McCaskill poses the possibility that Ellen Craft may have had a child in slavery that died, a story that, as McCaskill examines, is known to us now through two male voices: the first is Reverend Theodore Parker (1810-1860) and the second is Unitarian pastor James Freeman Clarke (1810-88). McCaskill states, "As concocted or exaggerated as this story of Ellen's baby may be, it is plausible that in their first two years of married life, before they lit out for the North, the Crafts may have lost a son or daughter by their own or other unions to any one of numerous maladies: malnourishment, miscarriage, the auction block, disease."[213] *Running* reveals in its opening the fear of losing a child in and to slavery, and if it were true that the couple lost a child, as McCaskill argues, that story is silenced to keep with "a public script about their relationship in slavery that suggested abstinence or the application of birth control. … the Crafts would be fools to risk a disconnect between the upstanding people they presented themselves as being and the opportunists or slouches that a skeptical white public could easily think they were."[214] Thus, in rejecting motherhood and marriage, and asserting a resistance to the institution of slavery, the female slave is presented as challenging the ideological notions of "True Womanhood" that predominantly emphasized virtue, marriage, motherhood, and the white family structure. Here, the female slave refuses to relegate her children to the "peculiar institution" in which, as is revealed, "the tyrannical old lady" is shown as having an active hand and defining role as the accomplice to the master in concealing and perpetuating his infidelity and "cultural corruption."

These opening pages carefully introduce the reader to the complexity of (mis)reading race and colour in America, and not only on white and black bodies, but also, on the light-skinned bodies of female immigrants. As I read it, these pages discipline the reader to prove Ellen Craft's passing abilities, including her masks, what was at stake, and what exactly she does and will do with that volatility to negotiate a continuously generating self in spaces of privilege not meant for her. Part of the imaginary force that is attached to the costume is the whiteness it suggests. However, there are only a few occasions that William Craft describes Ellen Craft's racial passing in specific racial terms,

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211 William Craft and Ellen Craft, *Running*, 19.

212 In stating the "realization of her condition," it is helpful to differentiate her role as house slave versus field slave. Barbara Christian provides a clear differentiation between the two roles, and speaks directly to the experiences of Ellen Craft and Harriet Tubman: "Whether house or field slave, most slave women did not live in situations that allowed them many chances for escape. It has been estimated by historians that the majority of runaway slaves were young men between the ages of sixteen and thirty. Because slave women tended to have children at an early age, they were less likely to attempt escape. Obviously, it was very difficult to evade the patrols that roamed the countryside if one was traveling with children, and few slave women would leave their children behind. A few did manage to runaway with children in their arms, but the women noted for successful escapes, such as Harriet Tubman or Ellen Craft, did not have children." See Christian, "Introduction," in *Black Foremothers: Three lives* ed. Dorothy Sterling (New York: Feminist Press at City University of New York, 1988), xxv.

213 See McCaskill, *Love, Liberation, and Escaping Slavery*, 27-29.

214 Ibid., 30-31.

and these references appear in the opening sequence and before the escape. In the first he states, "it occurred to me that, as my wife was nearly white, I might get her to disguise herself as an invalid gentleman," and a few pages later he mentions Ellen Craft's "fair complexion" though speaks of it in terms of her passing as a white woman, as he writes, "it would have been a very difficult task for my wife to have come off as a free white lady, with me as her slave."[215] Critics of *Running* have yet to grapple with the fact that nowhere in the narrative is Mr. Johnson's racial pose identified. Unfortunately, critics have settled on an agreement of his whiteness that goes unfounded: Marjorie Garber describes Ellen Craft as "the light-skinned wife disguised as a white man"; Barbara McCaskill insists that Ellen Craft transformed into a "free, privileged, primary, racially pure, genetically superior *white man*"; Sterling Bland Jr. calls Ellen Craft's passing as that of a "white young gentleman"; Charles Heglar, who includes the layer of disability in his description, presents her pose as that of "an invalid 'white' planter"; and Ellen M. Samuels, who also examines the role of disability in the performance, claims that Ellen Craft assumes the disguise of a "'white invalid gentleman.'"[216] Although these critics appropriately frame their arguments with the narrative's strategic critique of white slavery and passing in the wrong direction, their textual and discursive analyses of the costume and discussions of the character of whiteness that Ellen Craft performs do not contextualize the repression of Mr. Johnson's racial identity in terms of the opening narrative argument about the arbitrariness of whiteness. She passes up but how far up?

How much information to divulge in slave narratives was a significant concern to ex-slaves writing their life stories, for fear of endangering other slaves. Think of the vague details in Frederick Douglass' 1845 *Narrative* versus his 1881 autobiography, or even the lack of details in William Wells Brown's 1847 *Narrative*. Yet novelists of the 1850s imagined every minute detail and meditated on some truth about the light-skinned slave, letting their pen have its way with the plan of escape, the costumes, skin dyeing, and the course of passage through the South. *Running* offers the reader access to the untold; after all, the Crafts can recall what actually took place without having to subordinate themselves to the many fictional reproductions of their escape. William Craft also had the heroine as a collaborative source to solidify her transformation, not only her exterior transformation, which William Wells Brown and Harriet Beecher Stowe took a deliberate interest in, but also, and more importantly, the elaborate transformation that the interior must go through in the process of being made. This part of the story had yet to be written. Was William Craft trying to provide a best-seller that brings together the narrative strategies found in slave narratives as well as the popular fictions of the day? Possibly.

4. Becoming Mr. Johnson: The Plot, Extravagantly Passing, and Spanish Masquerade

Throughout the famous scene of how Ellen Craft was made into a gentleman, there is no mention of her racial passing, only a discussion of her gender transformation. Still, the latter deserves careful attention for the tropes that William Craft harnesses yet revises to render the "real"

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[215] William Craft and Ellen Craft, *Running*, 20 and 35.

[216] See Garber, *Vested Interests*, 282; McCaskill, "'Yours Very Truly': Ellen Craft—The Fugitive as Text and Artifact," in *African American Review* 28.4 (1994): 518; Bland, *Voices of the Fugitives*, 150; Heglar, *Rethinking the Slave Narrative*, 94; Ellen M. Samuels, "'A Complication of Complaints': Untangling Disability, Race, and Gender in William and Ellen Craft's *Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom*," 15. The term "gentleman" demands attention. It suggests whiteness, however, it also allows variability within the category of whiteness, particularly for the different ways that William utilizes the term in reference to Mr. Johnson. As Garber explains, "The balance of the narrative demonstrates over and over how artificial a term 'gentleman' can be, not only in terms of manners but in terms of gender."

perspective of a female slave. In the following scene, William Craft describes how the couple obtained the masculine clothing and where they hid them:

> [W]ith little difficulty I went to different parts of the town, at odd times, and purchased things piece by piece, (except the trowsers which she found necessary to make), and took them home to the house where my wife resided. She being a ladies' maid, and a favorite slave in the family, was allowed a little room to herself; and amongst other pieces of furniture which I had made in my overtime, was a chest of drawers; so when I took the articles home, she locked them up carefully in these drawers.[217]

In this little room of her own, sits the mulatta's "chest of drawers" like the nefarious Pandora's box, and the mischief and evil locked inside is the masculine wardrobe of the master. Here, William Craft begins to paint the trope of "the mulatta and the cottage" as a space of solace that is concealed beyond the watch of the master, not as prisoner, but as "a favorite slave in the family." In these pages, as the reader learns how Ellen Craft added the invalid layer or variable to the masculine disguise, the cottage in the woods slowly takes full form as an idyllic haven and tucked far into the wilderness. The cottage is made a place and space of privacy for the mulatta to imagine and dream up a means of repossessing the black female body. Here is where she turns herself into the master, an act of privilege for the "favorite slave" riddled by his history and ancestry.

This scene reinstates Ellen Craft's ingenuity that was lost in the frontispiece and at the hands of white abolitionists. In a moment of brilliant inspiration and inventiveness, Ellen Craft disables the costume in order to mobilize it in public space. This moment of originality arrives as her voice finally enters the narrative. "'I think I have it!'" she tells William Craft, "'I think I can make a poultice and bind up my right hand in a sling, and with propriety ask the officers to register my name for me'."[218] Although her voice is ventriloquized through William Craft, what emerges is the black female voice, whose brain engineered a new body and the visual elements for the scripted plot between ailing-master and servant-slave. She makes visible the function of the white cloth in the frontispiece. Then, as the transformation continues, she also covers the "likeness" on her countenance left exposed in the frontispiece, William Craft writes, "It then occurred to her that the smoothness of her face might betray her; so she decided to make another poultice, and put it in a white handkerchief to be worn under the chin, up the cheeks, and to tie over the head," and even requested "something to go over the eyes"—a "pair of green spectacles," not clear ones as shown in the engraving.[219] After William Craft cut her hair, as he describes, "square at the back of the neck, and got her to dress in the disguise and stand out on the floor," the persona she has invented, that she made, is *not* that of "a most respectable looking gentleman."[220] Rather, his comment is ironic and reads as a playful tug at the sleeve of the reader: "What do you really see?" he seems to ask. Here is where the queering of passing occurs, that is to say, the narrative does *not* render the gentleman from the frontispiece—a figure who fits in and passes (the very definition of passing)—instead, the gentleman is made an *extravagant* visual display of masculinity with disability and disease, and a figure who will attract attention. Actually, Ellen Craft made a most *rheumatic* looking gentleman.[221]

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[217] William Craft and Ellen Craft, *Running*, 21.

[218] Ibid., 23-24.

[219] Ibid., 24.

[220] Ibid., 24.

[221] Ibid., 43. William Craft, too, dresses up though not until later in the narrative does the reader learn of his "very good second-hand white beaver," which is commented upon by passengers as a "slap in the face to the white

Following her physical transformation, William Craft completes the image of the mulatta and the cottage, which I quote below. Furthermore, tucked into the scene is an exploration of what Ellen Craft's femininity and fear is doing beneath the costume and what William Craft, the character (as well as the author), is doing (and must do) with her femininity through the gender transformation. The scene is worth quoting in full:

> After this we rose and stood for a few moments in breathless silence,—we were afraid that someone might have been about the cottage listening and watching our movements. So I took my wife by the hand, stepped softly to the door, and raised the latch, drew it open, and peeped out. Though there were trees all around the house, yet the foliage scarcely moved; in fact, everything appeared to be as still as death. I then whispered to my wife, "Come, my dear, let us make a desperate leap for liberty!" But poor thing, she shrank back, in a state of trepidation. I turned and asked what was the matter; she made no reply, but burst into violent sobs, and threw her head upon my breast.[222]

There is an eerie tone attached to a fear that someone is watching them, yet the only one "watching" is the reader. The mulatta's cottage is painted as an idyllic setting, surrounded by trees, foliage, majestic beauty, and timelessness. William Craft generates a new origin myth with the transformation of the female chattel object into the parody of a human subject.[223] This scene thus speaks to and revises the Eden trope of the American literary tradition. Here, *she* stands as the master with "his" complement, the loyal servant. Hand-in-hand, this new couple flees a paradise that was conceived by Anglo-Americans; instead they commence a search for the "Promised Land" up North. In this moment, as they are about to begin their journey, the reader sees Ellen Craft respond to the sheer enormity and audacity of their plan. Caught on the page, for the reader, is a display of her acting womanly in male clothing. The text suggests that the exterior or clothing can change but the interior, that is, one's character, must go through its own elaborate transformation. In other words, one's exterior cannot easily define their interior. Ellen and William Craft must contend with the interior self, and they do so very differently.

In his role as loyal slave, William Craft repeatedly slips out of character, which the reader sees, first when expressing physical affection ("I took my wife by the hand"), and then again while in dialogue and addressing Ellen Craft as opposed to the disguise (""Come, my dear, let us…""). The "real" slave must also get into character but fumbles over Ellen Craft's transformation. William Craft fails to imagine her crossing over that gender and racial divide. In the moment that he ruins the bonded-pattern, the reader witnesses a dangerous moment of their (un)becoming. Here is gender-slippage on the page. What the reader sees is the slave take the master's hand and call the master "my dear," and then, the reader sees the master "burst into violent sobs" and "throw [his] head upon the breast" of *his* slave. The "real" identities beneath the costumes fail to adhere to their newly prescribed roles. As for Ellen Craft, hers is an extreme display of the feminine interior. What the scene explores is the liminal moment that occurs at the threshold of her (and his) becoming—her very metamorphosis captured in the frontispiece. As the scene continues, William Craft

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man." His hat serves as a status symbol for his master's wealth and status, it plays up Ellen Craft's fashionable and wealthy-looking costume. At the same time, his performance acts as parody of the very role of the "loyal slave," particularly commenting upon his relationship to the master.

[222] Ibid., 27.

[223] See J. Lee Greene, *Blacks in Eden: The African-American Novel's First Century* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1996), 41-44.

describes, "the sobbing was soon over, and after a few moments of silent prayer she recovered her self-possession."[224] What happens to her feminine interior as it enters "self-possession" is that she overcomes the feminine self through a moral and ethical self-possession that moves through a masculine self-possession. The question of intrigue is whether that feminine interior becomes possessed by masculinity or something else. Is this the moment of transcendence, the moment that prods at *genius*?

The bonded-pattern of master and slave commences when Ellen Craft inhabits the construction of a new identity with a new social and cultural power. She must imagine herself as *free* and no longer the captive within a system of slavery or even a female under patriarchal order. She must achieve a status that replicates the master's power, especially in her relationship with William Craft. The performance of gender and thus racial difference finally occurs when Ellen Craft announces the start of the journey: "'Come, William, it is getting late, so now let us venture upon our perilous journey'."[225] As William Craft "locked the door" to the mulatta's cottage and the pair then entered the public domain of the master—the two "tiptoed across the yard into the street, shook hands, said farewell, and started in different directions for the railway station"—the couple leaves the Edenic world of the mulatta's cottage and enters the master's world of racial difference, in a way, a postlapsarian moment of leaving the Garden.[226] Immediately, the text begins to impose the mechanisms of color control by splitting the pair and laying forth the "different directions" of the binary color line and the performances required of each.

The text also goes through its own elaborate transformation to adhere to Ellen Craft's gender transformation. To capture the illusion of "Mr. Johnson and servant," William Craft (as narrator) turns Ellen Craft's feminine pronouns into masculine ones and instead of calling her "my wife," he begins calling her "my master":

> I took the nearest possible way to the train, for fear I should be recognized by some one, and got into the negro car in which I knew I should have to ride; but my *master* (as I will now call my wife) took a longer way round, and only arrived there with the bulk of the passengers. He obtained a ticket for himself and one for his slave to Savannah, the first port, which was about two hundred miles off. My master then had the luggage stowed away, and stepped into one of the best carriages.[227]

Just as the passage describes her movement from feminine to masculine pronouns and titles, it also introduces her movement into white spaces of privilege. Their public performance of racial difference is once again displayed as they enter separate railroad cars. In the moment that the cars then separate the servant from his master, the writing acts out its own separation with a dividing semicolon: I, William Craft writes, "got into the negro car in which I knew I should have to ride; but my *master* (as I will now call my wife) took a longer way round." Here, the semicolon carries a similar effect as it did in Douglass' most famous line: "You have seen how a man was made a slave; you shall see how a slave was made a man." It acts as a hinge at the very moment of her historical experience and textual representation of her transformation. This is the pivotal move in the illusion: her becoming the *master* and his becoming her *slave*. Let's borrow the thinking that Valerie Rohy applied to Douglass' semicolon: "At the fulcrum of the sentence a modest semicolon, the barest trace of an almost effaced present tense, joins and divides past and future, sequencing those times,

[224] William Craft and Ellen Craft, *Running*, 28.
[225] Ibid., 28.
[226] Ibid., 28.
[227] Ibid., 28.

like the two halves of the sentence, through the diachronic order of its syntax."[228] In *Running*, the semicolon serves as a similar divide but encapsulates a new logic in which slavery is deemed a preeminently performative act between master and slave, though with her crossing of the color line as well as the gender line. The formulation of female-slave to master-white supersedes the linearity of slave to man. And, whereas time in Douglass' passage "turns back the clock, reversing time to undo the wrong of making a slave of a man," the sequencing of time in the passage from *Running* forever suspends her transgression without declaring a future or promise, as Douglass does.[229] Rather, she is left to haunt the racialized social structure of the master—that space of the semicolon, and that space in-between the mask and the "real". This is when her racial impersonation begins and the reader witnesses her mastery over masquerade.

Another transgressive effect of the costume is her cross-wooing that permits her sexual authority and social power. As was the case of mistaken attraction with the masked-writer, and in what is perhaps my favorite scene in *Running*, William Craft recounts an incident on a railway passenger car, the so-called "marvel of the new age,"[230] in which two young Virginian women swoon over the "wrong chap." The incident occurs during the second day of the journey and while the fugitive pair is aboard a train bound for Richmond, Virginia. The reader is led through a series of comedic narrative moves in which the narrator maneuvers between what the duped American passengers see and don't see and what the reader knows. The scene—narrated in two pages—follows the classic comic-plot of cross-dressing and mistaken love found in the works of England's famous playwright. William Craft sets the American stage for the British reader:

> I have stated that the American railway carriages (or cars, as they are called), are constructed differently to those in England. At one end of some of them, in the South, there is a little apartment with a couch on both sides for the convenience of families and invalids; and as they thought my master was very poorly, he was allowed to enter one of these apartments at Petersburg, Virginia, where an old gentleman and two handsome ladies, his daughters, also got in, and took seats in the same carriage. But before the train started, the gentleman stepped into my car, and questioned me respecting my master.[231]

William Craft carefully describes the scene for the British reader. Its playfulness, at the hand of the black artist, renders the exact same flavor of the Elizabethan stage. He carefully explains how Mr. Johnson achieved access into white spaces of privilege because of his "very poorly" appearance. The costume of the invalid allows his entrance into a "little apartment" that looked very much like an American living room. The text then demonstrates the bonded-pattern in the performance of "Mr. Johnson and servant." As the ladies engage Mr. Johnson, their father enters the servant's car for an explanation from the slave regarding his master.[232] William Craft's role-playing as 'loyal servant' authenticates Ellen Craft's passing by providing a language for the inquiring passenger to interpret the costume and the ailing body that lies beneath it.[233]

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[228] Ibid., 27.

[229] Ibid., 27.

[230] John H. White Jr., *The American Railroad Passenger Car* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1978), 204.

[231] William Craft and Ellen Craft, *Running*, 38.

[232] By 1850, these travelers were obliged to ride in baggage cars, White explains, "The Petersburg Railroad of Virginia, however, permitted Negroes to travel in the coaches at full fare." See White, *The American Railroad Passenger Car*, 203.

[233] The bonded-patteren in their performance as "Mr. Johnson and servant" emphasizes the repetition necessary in making a successful pass, or in Judith Butler's words, "Performativity has to do with repetition, very often with the

In the moment that the father is recruited into the ruse, William Craft, as narrator, unspools a series of playful puns for the entertainment of the reader, which works to destabilize the role of loyal servant and remind the reader that the loyal servant is now retired and at his desk writing *Running*. When the father agrees with William Craft that his "master could obtain the very best advice in Philadelphia," the narrative voice then shifts from a historical present tense to the present, with the transformed 'loyal servant' now at his desk and poking fun at the irony: "it turned out to be quite correct, though he did not receive it from physicians, but from kind abolitionists who understood *his* case much better."[234] William Craft both masks and unmasks the passing-plot for the reader, all the while freely imposing his own reading of the masquerade, but when addressing the proliferation of layers of the ailing master and the female 'black' body that lies beneath him, the text is careful to remain with the masculine gender so as to keep up with the passing on the page. William Craft is so effective in his role as loyal servant that the father asks, "'I reckon your master's father hasn't any more such faithful and smart boys as you.' 'O, yes, sir, he has,' I replied, 'lots on 'em'."[235] The slip-up in dialect with "lots *on 'em*" acknowledges that the "faithful and smart" slave can't act too smart. And the text works to preserve the performance of the loyal servant even in dialect. The joke is that the gentleman has no idea what he is asking for, but the reader does—a runaway in his own imagined terms, since he perceives Mr. Johnson as traveling with his father's slave. The older gentleman reads Mr. Johnson as following the footsteps of his paternal heritage.

"During the gentleman's absence," as William Craft informs the reader, "the ladies and my master had a little cosy chat."[236] Immediately, however, William (as narrator) abandons the thought of this intimacy, that "little cosy chat" (and whatever the content entailed we might never know) to follow the father back into the car with his further inquiring about Mr. Johnson's "inflammatory rheumatism." The father's desiring and demanding male-heterosexuality permeates the page, as well as the railway car that, literally and symbolically, had become a transported domestic interior, both a space of intimacy and female desire. In a mere glimpse, we learn that the father interrupts a flirtatious interaction between the women and Mr. Johnson; indeed, the father interrupts female sexuality at play with the cross-dresser and traverser of racial lines. Before the father had returned, female desire flirted outside of the realm of white male (and black male) authority and compulsive heterosexuality: the love-play between the women that is left untold is not about 'queer shame', at least not from the perspective that the narrative sustains for a British readership, who was certainly familiar with crossing-dressing plots and the love-trouble stirred.[237] Their love play is only temporarily silenced, however. As the scene continues, the father is so taken and seduced by the performance, especially by the variable of disability and illness, that he immediately recruits his daughters into the fictional script. Ironically, the father orchestrates a more intimate and erotic moment between the women and Mr. Johnson.

> The gentleman thought my master would feel better if he would lie down and rest himself, as he was anxious to avoid conversation, he at once acted upon the

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repetition of oppressive and painful gender norms to force them to resignify. This is not freedom, but a question of how to work the trap that one is inevitably in." See Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion* of *Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 84. The Crafts manipulate their roles and experience a mobility not meant for them.

[234] William Craft and Ellen Craft, *Running*, 38. (*Italics mine*)

[235] Ibid., 38.

[236] Ibid., 38.

[237] Conversations with Joseph Lavery have added a necessary complexity to this scene, mainly a consideration of "the dialectical relationship between queer expressivity and compulsive heterosexuality in William Craft's book"; however, compulsive heterosexuality becomes tangled with the humor of the bed-trick from the Elizabethan stage that was so familiar to a British readership.

> suggestion. The ladies politely rose, took their extra shawls, and made a nice pillow for the invalid's head. My master wore a fashionable cloth cloak, which they took and covered him comfortably on the couch. After he had been lying a little while the ladies, I suppose, thought he was asleep; so one of them gave a long sigh, and said, in a quiet fascinating tone, "Papa, he seems to be a very nice young gentleman." But before papa could speak, the other lady quickly said, "Oh! dear me, I never felt so much for a gentleman in my life!"[238]

William Craft pokes fun at the love-trouble stirred by Ellen Craft's real gender, and in this moment of intersection between female (homo)sexuality with an experience of race, which may be viewed as the projection of mulatta homosexual desire onto white women, the narrator accentuates this moment by the free-indirect adoption of the endearment, "papa," which coincides with his being quieted by female desire. The scene would have reminded British readers of the cross-wooing heroines from the theatre stage and the classic English romantic comedies that had audiences roaring with laughter when the transvestite figure fortuitously duped the unbeknownst and then desperately tried to evade sexual advances. Ellen Craft's performance presents a reflection and knowledge of masculine identity though as effectively complicated by bodily affliction that, in this instance of love-play, signifies more or less on his sexuality. Without hesitation, Mr. Johnson agrees to the suggestion of a nap versus the possibility of another "little cosy chat"; however, his nap proves to be more trouble than he bargained for, which William Craft (as narrator) is all the more willing to entertain.

William Craft captures female-love play across the color line, and the scene is not invented, however, it is Ellen Craft's own masquerade. That "little cosy chat" may very well have been the four-play before the comic bed-scene, which reads as a sort of "bed-trick" on the ladies, their father, and even Mr. Johnson. We can interpret Mr. Johnson's nap as a fear of sensuality but in terms of her protecting the masquerade, specifically the categories of race/whiteness intersecting with gender/masculinity: Ellen Craft is passing but she has to be very good at avoiding so many triggers and falling *out* of normative categories. Here we must see her as transgendered (that is, female-to-male, not lesbian) and in her performance of Mr. Johnson we can tease at the *extravagance* for how she creates a mode of desire that slips in and out of femininity, cross-race relations, class status, and disability and illness. The performance seduces and arouses, certainly, and as flirtation brims, it occurs in operation with disability and illness, perhaps as a sympathy made complex by, in this instance, the racial (mis)reading. In addition, gender is once again, destabilized when the women undress Mr. Johnson and cover his body with the "fashionable cloth cloak" or rather, a *cloak*-turned-blanket: is this not the cloak of the Spaniard? With their shawls under his head, they watch him sleep, gazing, and fetishizing over a supposedly masculine and ailing body now hidden under the cloak. As the scene continues, the daughters break their silence in what may be interpreted as a climactic and orgasmic moment. While one daughter releases a "long sigh" and expresses a joy over meeting the "very nice young gentleman," the other daughter confesses she has "never felt so much for a gentleman in [her] life!" Here we find not antebellum fears towards the light-skinned slave (or even the 'black' female body and her sexuality) but a suppressed obsession, desire, and fantasy of cross-race relations from the perspective of two young Southern belles.[239] In this erotic exchange,

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[238] William Craft and Ellen Craft, *Running*, 39.

[239] Garber explains, "The threat of erotic race-mixing, the besetting fear of miscegenation that dominates so much of the period's rhetoric of race hatred, is here cast in a comic mode, at the cost of repressing any untoward thoughts about same-sex, as opposed to the mixed-race, border-crossing." See Garber, *Vested Interests*, 284. Also

too, if the cloak signals Spanishness, then the experience of white antebellum female desire (and through racist assumptions) may be read as arriving at a (mis)reading of Spanishness as it is wed to disability and illness. Beneath the comedy of the incident then, we find a rare glimpse into a submerged history of knowledge, that is, a vision of the racialized and disabled body that subtly aligns with the portrait of the extravagant Spaniard as historically read through the rhetoric of *la leyenda negra*.

In the final comment that ends the scene, as William Craft tells the reader, "To use an American expression, 'they fell in love with the wrong chap'," he marks something about Ellen Craft's performance and mastery over masquerade.[240] Even William Lloyd Garrison, after reading Mr. Johnson's encounter with the two young women, marked this very line in his personal copy of *Running* with the words "rats" and "Oh fudge." The "wrong chap" suggests a number of things. Is William pointing to the wrong gender, the wrong race? Or both? Is he commenting upon her feigning of disability and illness? Is he commenting upon the fact that this bachelor is not the heir of his father's estate? At best, we can state that Ellen Craft achieves mastery over the master's key instruments of authority and puts into action a pose of a stranger that boasts a dynamic sense of mobility in the very dangerous white terrain of a racialized slave economy. Her passing, precisely for how she trivializes categories of identification while also successfully reproducing them, also presents a portrayal of "nondisabled persons unaccustomed to disabled people" and what that encounter offered in terms of "human connections."[241] Here the young belles are representative of the "benevolent woman," and in Ellen Craft's favor is how the performance of the disabled figure signifies on the (mis)reading of the master's interracial mystique, all the while heightening his sexual power and all that is afforded to the invisible phallus.[242] Hers is a mastery over masquerade: this is the body of a genius.[243]

5. "Mr. Johnson and Servant" as Bonded-Duo of Spanish Masquerade

The success of her passing as an ailing (Spanish) gentleman had much to do with her much-darker accomplice, William Craft, and his elaborate performance as the "loyal slave" or, as the masked-writer describes, "his servant, a strapping negro." The Crafts achieve passage through white spaces of privilege and pass out of slavery because William Craft, in his physical presence as a black

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fitting is her discussion of "an intimate connection between cross-dressing and same-sexuality." See Garber, *Vested Interests*, 48.

240 William Craft and Ellen Craft, *Running*, 39.

241 Rosemarie Garland Thomson, *Extraordinary Bodies: Figuring Physical Disability in American Culture and Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 12-14.

242 My phrasing of "the invisible phallus" in Ellen Craft's transgendered performance aligns with the work of Judith Butler. See Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 60-70.

243 In his novel *Clotel*, Brown renders this very encounter between the two smitten Virginian ladies, their father, and Clotel-as-Mr.-Johnson. Not only does Brown utilize "An Incident at the South" for reading a Spaniard pose as provoked by the costume, but also, he explores the "darkness of complexion" of light-skinned slave passing with an "appearance of an Italian or Spanish gentleman." The difference between Ellen and Clotel is that the latter dons "a splendid pair of dark false whiskers [that] covered the sides of her face, while a curling moustache found its place upon the upper lip." Also, Brown omits the layer of disability or illness. During Brown's rendition of the encounter, the young Virginian women are described as "rather partial to foreigners," and in the closing remarks of the scene, Brown states that "Clotel had the appearance of a fine Italian," and briefly mentions the flirtation between the trio: "[B]ut that sly glance of the eye, which is ever given where the young of both sexes meet, had been freely at work." The unmarried ladies beg their father to invite Mr. Johnson to their family residence, and he does. The same happens in *Running*. See Brown, *Clotel or the President's Daughter*, ed. Robert Levine (New York: Bedford-St. Martin's, 2000), 186. [Original work published in 1853.]

body, with his performance as the nurturing and supportive servant to his ailing master, not only fulfills the binary of master/slave but also complicates the relationship with another binaric model: sickness/wellness. He physically "enhances" Ellen Craft's racial and invalid impersonation, rendering an intimacy between the bonded-duo that paints the portrait of Mr. Johnson's "status as free and master of his affairs."[244] Who is Mr. Johnson without the presence of the black slave? Passage is made possible by their bonded-pattern, its repetition, and the sight of color on the textual landscape of their bodies: the black slave, the dark master. Their mimicry adheres to an Anglo-American fixation with black/white and dark/light binaries. Knowing the difference between these binaries and understanding the cultural obsession affixed to each is key to examining the force of the racial variable to their masquerade that, intersects and complicates other categories of identification, namely that of gender, disability and illness, and thus extending to a transnational performance. The Crafts abide by the rules of reading body politics and participate in the racial drama of master and slave in terms of black/white as well as dark/light. Their performance transcends the Anglo-American racial narrative of the North and South because of the prevailing cultural preoccupation with Spanishness at the Souths. There was a deeply rooted panic around Spain and its Spaniard in mid-nineteenth-century America, and we catch a glimpse of this in "An Incident at the South." The racial anxiety that permeates the page is not about miscegenation, but about the realities of international conflict at the Souths, where conceptions of Spanishness were tied to fantasies of an Old World Spain and its lingering Spaniard as always at the borderlands: a figure that was a key player in the colonization of the Americas and also in the invention of its institution of slavery. The servant-slave alongside the Spanish master then is essential to the narrative, its fantasy, and the very queering of Ellen Craft's passing up and out of American slavery.

We cannot think of Mr. Johnson without his loyal servant, and the text instructs the reader to observe the solidarity of their relationship for the bonded-pattern of their performance as master and slave. Their flight from slavery and quest for freedom echoes the narrative pattern found in classic male adventure narratives of mid-nineteenth-century America, especially those of oddly paired duos in which a lighter-skinned protagonist is paired with a much darker-complexioned figure, or foil-character. Their adventures almost always present the pair as escaping and engaging in a quest across new and strange lands or oceans. Think of the marital-like bond between the whaling-duo Ishmael and Queequeg (and even Ahab and Pip) from Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick* (1851), or bond as masquerade between the Spanish captain-made-captive Don Benito and his "loyal slave" Babo in "Benito Cereno" (1855), the pairing and friendship between Huckleberry Finn and the slave Jim in Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884), and the intimate companionship between Natty Bumppo and his Mohican "brother" Chingachgook from James Fenimore Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales* (1820s & 1840s). "The heroes of the American text are not solitary but bonded. Indeed, their survival in the territory depends on the solidarity of their relationships," as Donald J. Greiner explains.[245] Like their fictional contemporaries, Mr. Johnson and William are bonded-heroes. Just as "[o]ne cannot imagine Natty without Chingachgook, Ishmael without Queequeg, Huck without Jim" (68), and Don Benito without Babo, one cannot imagine Mr. Johnson without William. Their heroism, too, is "joined, not isolated."[246] What happens if we locate *Running* in the tradition of the American literary quest and add the real marital-pair to the lineup of famous male pairings to re-

[244] Monica Miller provides an intriguing discussion on the Spanish masquerade of Don Benito and how his servant Babo "enhances" racial passing. See Miller, *Slaves to Fashion: Black Dandyism and the Styling of Black Diasporic Identity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press), 113-115.
[245] Donald J. Greiner, *Women Without Men: Female Bonding and the American Novel of the 1980s* (South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1993), 68.
[246] Ibid., 68.

examine the tradition of "interracial friendships" and thus complicate the "male questing pattern" with the black female passing slave and her accomplice?[247] Her escape is both romantic and epic; here, is a quest of (fe)male travel and adventure that complicates the masculine tradition while also remapping concerns of nationalism and the global south. Her passing offers a unique representation of a real historical figure of the borderlands, and critiques the masculine and male-only experience across transnational borders. Her story not only gives truth, but her racial performance, as enhanced by William Craft, helps us to see how categories of identification are mobilized as masquerade during a historical period of vast regional formation. In their creation of this bonded-duo, the Crafts force us to really see the *extravagance* in the very performance of passing that we had missed.

If the Crafts influenced Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and Stowe in turn influenced Melville's "Benito Cereno," then Mr. Johnson and servant are very much inextricably entwined in the shaping of a literary and cultural paradigm. *Running* is not necessarily a "man's book" but its writing traverses into this narrative terrain to produce a bonded-*heroine*. *Running* may thus be read as revising the "male questing pattern" by introducing a female's quest.[248] Like her fictional contemporaries, Ellen Craft escapes from the iniquities of the dominant culture in hopes of discovering a liberty elsewhere. In what is the most extensive study on the Crafts and their daring escape, R. J. M. Blackett writes, "This is the stuff of which great adventure novels are made," and as Wendell Phillips put it on that historical moment at Faneuil Hall, "[F]uture historians and poets would tell this story as one of the most thrilling in the nation's annals."[249] While her male contemporaries embark on adventures in either a boundless wilderness, river, or ocean—Huck and Jim travel down the Mississippi River, Ishmael and Queequeg search for Moby-Dick in the Pacific Ocean, Natty and Chingachgook venture through the wilderness of frontier America, and Don Benito and Babo reroute their course from the Latin-Pacific to Africa—Mr. Johnson and William escape slavery by entering and navigating the very system that defines and oppresses them. They escape the American South by finding passage through white spaces of privilege, unlike other runaway slaves who found refuge in the wilderness in their escape attempts. The black female subject of miscegenation traverses the boundaries of the domestic space and escapes the mulatta's fate, her idyllic cottage, and its Eden, to venture into the masculine and public space of the master. What distinguishes her bonded-pattern of escape with William from the heroes of American literature is clear: Mr. Johnson and William are successful in their quest for liberty, not once, but twice. "A standard feature of American texts of male bonding is lack of closure, failure to find the grail," as Greiner argues: "Natty and Chingachgook do not escape the sound of the axes. Ishmael and Queequeg do not kill the white whale. Huck and Jim do not discover freedom."[250] And, Don Benito and Babo do not sail back to Africa: Babo is executed, and Benito follows him in death. The case of the Crafts is different: Mr. Johnson and William *do* discover freedom, that is, in Britain—and with a female lead.

In the first-ever printing of the Crafts' 1848 escape, William Wells Brown states, "Ellen is truly a heroine."[251] In calling her a heroine he moves her into the dominant literary discourse from which female figures have long been denied, and he also casts her passing in such a way that the performance—for its ingenuity and her invention of the invalid gentleman—questions the integrity

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[247] Sandra M. Gustafson uses the term 'interracial friendships' to speak of relationships between classic American literary characters. See Gustafson, "Cooper and the idea of the Indian" in *The Cambridge History of the American Novel* ed. Leonard Cassuto (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 110-111.

[248] Dana A. Heller quoted in Donald J. Greiner, *Women Without Men*, 168.

[249] Blackett, *Beating Against the Barriers*, 106.

[250] Greiner, *Women Without Men*, 69.

[251] Brown's "Singular Escape" appeared in *The Liberator* on January 12, 1849, but was originally a letter written to William Lloyd Garrison. The latter printed the letter and announced the meeting at Faneuil Hall.

of the real white mask worn by those, as Brown puts it, "distinguished advocates of the 'peculiar institution' [who] say that the slaves cannot take care of themselves." Brown denounces pro-slavery's characterizations of African Americans and places before the reader a pair of slaves who can take care of themselves and with a female lead. It is this same article that the masked-writer read and cut from the New York *Herald* before writing "An Incident at the South." As Brown proclaims her role as "truly a heroine," the acquaintance of the masked-writer describes her act as that of "either a '*woman* or a *genius*.'" The mulatta—whose brain and body yielded the superiority of the master and his masculine and sexual privileges—not only traversed the lines of the master's white social spaces of privilege, but also, found access into his masculine and male-only literary spaces. The genius lies in the illusion that she created by crippling the body of the other master. It acts as a powerful critique of the master's will, his power, his mask, his invisible phallus, and his rites of passage. The mulatta's (mis)representation is the ultimate (mis)representation, from black-to-white-to-lightness, from female-to-male-to-exotic, from slave-to-master-to-*genius*.

With these newspaper clippings began a cultural fascination with the light-skinned slave passing out of slavery. As the writers of the day set out to romanticize her passing—rendering the mutability of the mulatta by daring to complicate her racial mobility as venturing outside the black-white binary of the antebellum color line and her passing into the dark-light taxonomy of the southern borderlands and America's literary Souths—the (mis)reading of *her* racial impersonation initiated the trope of the extravagant Spaniard in anti-slavery discourse. Similar to Ellen Craft's Spanish masquerade, the "black" heroine of my final chapter also traverses the racial taxonomies of a mid-nineteenth century United States. In Lola Medina's case, however, the masked-author of the sentimental romance *Who Would Have Thought It?* (1872) imagines a Southwest beginning, where the protagonist is born into Indian captivity and with Native Americans dying her skin "black" to pass as Indian. Yet when she is rescued by a New Englander, *la Californiana* beneath the "Indian paint" arrives to a Massachusetts home where she experiences a "second captivity" as the skin dye fades and she transforms from "Indian" to "little black girl" to "blue-eyed Mexican" to "pure Spanish blood." A different bonded-duo of Spanish masquerade is presented, however, between *la Californiana* and the "Yankee" housewife, Mrs. Jemima Norval, whose false abolitionism permeates the page, as does her Anglo fixation with the heroine's wealth. Here in the penultimate chapter is the *female* version of the bonded-duo of Spanish masquerade.

Chapter 5

From 'Indian' to 'little black girl' to 'blue-eyed Mexican' to 'pure Spanish blood': The Racial Plight of Lola Medina in María Amparo Ruiz de Burton's *Who Would Have Thought It?* (1872)

"I don't mean the boxes in the large wagon. I mean the—the—that—the red shawl," stammered Mrs. Norval. And now the three other ladies noticed for the first time a figure wrapped in a bright plaid shawl, leaning on the doctor's breast, and around which he tenderly encircled his arm.[252]

– Anonymous, *Who Would Have Thought It?* (1872)

Indeed, I have wondered, what might this nation be like today if its 'official history' began in the Southwest—with the likes of the Catholic Cabeza de Vaca and the Zapotec Benito Juárez rather than from the Atlantic side with the *Mayflower* and the Masons?[253]

– Ana Castillo

1. "A Native Californian Authoress"

The masked-*author* who penned the passage above is the first Mexican American to write a novel in English and to publish it in the United States. The author is, as we now know, a woman: María Amparo Ruiz de Burton (1832-1895). Writing from behind a mask, she imaginatively remaps the nation's "official history" as beginning in the Southwest. From *California* to Massachusetts to *México*, the masked-*authoress* maps the journey and racial passing of a ten-year-old Spanish heroine, Lola Medina, who is rescued from Indian captivity by a traveling "healer," Dr. Norval. Arriving to his New England home, with her skin still dyed black with "Indian paint," Lola commences a "second captivity" at the hands of Mrs. Jemima Norval, a "Yankee" housewife who steels the riches and property of *la Californiana* for her own class mobility. As the young Lola transforms from "Indian" to "little black girl" to "blue-eyed Mexican" to "pure Spanish blood," the reader witnesses the (mis)reading of her racial transformations from the perspective of the "Yankee" housewife (a Northern abolitionist as hypocrite) whose racial and class prejudices are deeply rooted in early English *histories* and Spanish *historias*. Alongside the *authoress*' projecting onto the Spanish heroine's body the dividing racial lines and borders that newly defined and separated immigrant bodies in terms of citizen/non-citizen, black/white (North-South), and dark/light (Souths)—those borderlands marked after the U.S.-Mexico War (1846-48) and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848)—is another kind of projection but onto the body of the "Yankee" housewife. The reader witnesses Mrs. Norval's own extravagant physical transformation into an elitist. Just as Mrs. Norval passes up or "whitens up," do too does Lola Medina, but how far up is all a part of the complex narrative trajectory with this *female* version of Spanish masquerade.

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[252] María Amparo Ruiz de Burton, *Who Would Have Thought It?*, ed. Rosaura Sánchez and Beatrice Pita (Houston: Arte Público Press, 1995), 8. [Original work published in 1872 in Philadelphia by J.B. Lippincott.] On the cover of the 1995 edition is the theme for the series: "RECOVERING THE U.S. HISPANIC LITERARY HERITAGE."
[253] See Ana Castillo, "Introduction," in *The Squatter and the Don* (New York: Modern Library, 2004), xvi.

Critics of *Who Would Have Thought It?*, however, (dis)miss its anonymous publication, that from beneath the mask of anonymity Ruiz de Burton borrowed a lens—genderless and ethnically unmarked—through which to imagine a Southwest beginning. Through this lens she imagines the *female* immigrant experience of social (im)mobility, particularly during the rapid transformation of the southern borderlands, when a racist landscape continued to evolve after the U.S.-Mexico War (1846-1848) and burgeoning Civil War (1861-1865). Critics do take careful notice of the pseudonym used when Ruiz de Burton published her second novel, *The Squatter and the Don* (1885): "C. Loyal" which is from the Spanish *Ciudadano Leal* [Loyal Citizen], a letter-valediction, and used by government officials in Mexico during the nineteenth century.[254] Anglicizing the idiom and turning it into an English name, Ruiz de Burton` intentionally creates layers of ambiguity around her real race and gender. Yet we must also ask the implications of anonymity in her first novel. It was at her request that her name be withheld from the binding and title page of *Who Would Have Thought It?*, and her reason surfaces in a newspaper clipping, published in San Francisco's *Daily Alta California* and dated September 15 of 1872, which appeared not long after the novel was published. A "bachelor correspondent" (as the interviewer calls himself by the end of the article) met Ruiz de Burton while aboard the steamer *California* and en route to San Diego. In third-person narration, the interviewer reveals his encounter with the "Native Californian Authoress":

> "Mrs. Burton," said our correspondent, "have you read the new book—'Who would have thought it?'"
>
> "Read it? No! Yes! Why, of course I have!"
>
> The manner of the answer and a little attendant embarrassment caused the bachelor to look at the charming widow with some surprise and awakened a feeling of curiosity.
>
> "Excuse me for repeating your words, Mrs. Burton;" he cautiously ventured to remark; "but 'of course I have' seems to imply that you have some particular interest in the work." He was rather rude in his scrutinizing way of looking and speaking. The ruse, however, succeeded.
>
> "Why! that's my book! No! Well, there now I didn't mean to tell you; but you know it now." Those black and lustrous eyes (but they were fascinating to be sure) evinced a little fire and a little vexation, and at the same time were not without a certain look of pride and satisfaction.[255]

Entitled "'Who Would Have Thought It?' A Native Californian Authoress—A Literary Incognito Lost in an Interview—A New Sensation for the Public" (a title punning off of the book's title and immediately "outing" the author-ess), the correspondent maneuvers his own ruse and succeeds: "Having ascertained the secret," he exclaims. Before "demanding permission to make known the name of the author to the public," the bachelor (and unabashedly) captures a portrait of the authoress, commenting on her ethnicity through a thick veil of sexual desire. As the narrative voice

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[254] The cover of the 1992 edition of *The Squatter and the Don* reads: "the first literary text to be issued by a national project to reconstruct the literary history of Hispanics of the United States." See Marcial González, *Chicano Novels and the Politics of Form: Race, Class, and Reification* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009), 40-41.

[255] See "'Who Would Have Thought It?' A Native Californian Authoress. A Literary Incognito Lost in an Interview. A new Sensation for the Public," in *Daily Alta California*, 15 September 1872. Also see Rosaura Sánchez and Beatrice Pita, "Introduction," in *Who Would Have Thought It?*, ed. by Rosaura Sánchez and Beatrice Pita (Houston: Arte Público Press, 1995), vii-ix.

asserts, the bachelor is "rude in his scrutinizing way of looking," also offering the lens through which he viewed her:

> Mrs. Burton is a native Californian. Her beauty is of the pure Castillian type, graceful, *non-chalant* and easy. Judging from her present appearance, her form and features, and the bright glance of her eyes, so well preserved, what she must have been at sweet sixteen—is a thought too bewildering for a youthful and susceptible bachelor to contemplate.

The masked-writer offers a glimpse into the American imaginary of 1872—middle-class, male—for its romantic gaze (if we can call it that) upon *la Californiana*, calling attention to this female figure in racial terms that speaks to America's history at the southern borderlands. Indeed, a history that includes Spain and is marked by the transformative period of frontier conflict between Mexico and Anglo-American westward expansion. Here, in this article is the eroticization of "the pure Castillian type," with the author-ess staring at the "youthful and susceptible" bachelor with "black and lustrous eyes." During the late nineteenth century, this was a common reading of the presence of Spanish descendants, including *Californios*, *Mestizos*, *Tejanos*, *Españoles*, and/or Mexican travelers, both in the cultural imaginary and as real historical figures accessing "white" spaces of privilege. *La Californiana* was not an alien figure that the Anglo-American could not read or a figure he did not know. She was an integral figure to the story of political and cultural conflict between the United States and *México*.

Critics have yet to question Ruiz de Burton's *writerly masquerade*, even though it is in the likeness of the masked-writer of the article. That the *authoress* is "passing" as someone whose native language is not Spanish but English, because to reveal her name (and an oxymoronic one at that, Spanish/Ruiz de, English/Burton) meant to unveil a racial and gendered identity. Demanding her permission to write this very interview and publicize her name as "authoress," the bachelor actually failed in obtaining her permission:

> "No!" she said, "I don't want anybody to know that I wrote the book."
> "Why not?" asked the impressionable bachelor.
> "Because—why, because everybody would then criticize the work, and they would think that they discovered defects which otherwise they would not notice. Oh, no; don't give my name, for they know that English is not my native language, and they would say that my expressions partake of the Spanish idiom, and that my English is not good—and then, you know, I may do better with my next book. I only wrote this to see how I could write, and of course I couldn't tell how it would read until I saw it in print."

Stunned by her looks, surprised by her mastery of the English language (as the bachelor states, "a feat rarely accomplished by one of Spanish descent"), and astonished by her social mobility and "gaining for herself a large experience among noted men and women," the bachelor offers a unique portrait and perspective of reading *la Californiana* on a boat, as the figure of "the pure Castillian type," just off the western Pacific shore of southern California.

The interviewer writes a positive review of the novel and includes a detailed biographical sketch: "She was born in Loreto, Lower California, an old mission established on the shores of the Gulf of California by Jesuit Padres"; "While only six months old, she was taken by her parents to La Paz, whe[re] she grew up"; "In 1849, she came North and resided with one of her *parientes*, Don Pablo de la Toba, at Monterey"; "Here she first met General H. S. Burton, then a popular, young

and promising officer in the United States Army"; "Her associations were, however, in the best society, and with cultivated and intelligent people"; "General Burton distinguished himself for gallantry in the Union army, but in the service he contracted a disease that proved fatal"; "Her claim to the Jamual Rancho in San Diego County, after long litigation, has been confirmed to her and very recently she has obtained recognition of her rights by the Mexican Government to a large tract of land on Todos Santos Bay, Lower California"; "Last Spring she conceived the idea of writing a book—and 'Who would have thought it?'" "This is," the writer continues, "the first instance we have to note of a native Californian authoress, and as such, together with the peculiar history of the lady, she is worthy of more than a passing notice." Ruiz de Burton's decision to withhold her name (and gender) from the binding and title page of *Who Would Have Thought It?*—her act of "passing notice"—renders an alternative reading experience worthy of unmasking. Here is Ruiz de Burton's Spanish masquerade.

Reading her novel may very well require the knowledge of the real author's life, since the novel briefly wanders into biographical terrain.[256] Yet on (dis)play in its sixty chapters and conclusion is a carefully crafted narrative voice that we have yet to consider, explore, and define as separate from that of the *authoress*. The first Mexican American novelist writes from behind a mask with serious political intent, rendering a cartographic play with her heroine's Spanish masquerade across emerging national geographies. What we witness in *Who Would Have Thought It?*, and in the parodying of the period's domestic novels and their melodramatic plots (think of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* or even Victorian novels like those by Charlotte Brontë), is the assertion of what Giles Gunn calls "territories of knowledge [that] can no longer be considered as geographically discrete."[257] In her parodying of the female tradition and its romance plot, Ruiz de Burton exposes through the two central female characters of the novel—Lola Medina and Mrs. Jemima Norval—this very notion of "territories of knowledge," as suddenly intersecting and conflicting in the most eastern corner of the United States.

This reading of *Who Would Have Thought It?* considers the *authoress*' intended *writerly masquerade* versus privileging the biographical elements within the text as Ruiz de Burton's most significant literary device. On narrative (dis)play is a critique of the female body politic in the aftermath of the Mexican–American War of 1846-48 in relation to the Civil War. My intention is not to dismiss the significance and value of the scholarship and arguments that interrogate the ways in which the *authoress* reinforces a discourse of racism, as repulsion towards non-white or "foreign" female bodies. Critics often refer to this discourse as derivative from *her* personal and real historical position of "white" female privilege (she achieves passage into circles of privilege), and *her* personal and real historical position of racial subjectivity (regarding legal battles over land rights). Of concern is the author's abject-subject position and her own class passing *versus* her ventriloquizing a critique of "white" female (and male) policing of immigrant bodies yet from a genderless and ethnically unmarked narrative telling. Writing in the aftermath of two major wars that had shaped the regional formation of the United States, Ruiz de Burton examines "cultural memory," all the while exploring and expanding the complexity of identities during the emergence of national geographies and a forming epistemology of the borderlands. In her historical romance, Ruiz de Burton offers performative aspects of travel and mapping, especially the female *experience* of journeying alongside

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[256] For a more detailed biographical discussion see the next section of the chapter, and also González, *Chicano Novels and the Politics of Form*, 40-76, and Sánchez and Pita, "Introduction," vii-lxv. For historical context, see Genaro Padilla, *My History, Not Yours: The Formation of Mexican American Autobiography* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), and Rosaura Sánchez, *Telling Identities: The Californio Testimonios* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995).

[257] Giles Gunn, "Introduction: Globalizing Literary Studies," in *PMLA* 116 (2001): 18.

the literary (un)mapping of *la frontera*. Thus, Ruiz de Burton is read here as unsettling the "official story," yet what does that look like on early maps. How does she imagine what Julie Ruiz calls the "disappearing of a frontier," that is, the disappearance of *historias* of a frontier that mark (mis)readings of the passing body of the Spanish heroine?[258] As masked-*author*—not *authoress*—the literary imagination that remaps the official *historia* of *la Californiana* might very well be that of Ruiz de Burton donning the mask of an Anglo-American male who dares (un)map *la frontera*.

* * * * *

Returning to the epigraphic quotation—which is taken from the final lines of Chapter 1 in *Who Would Have Thought It?*, entitled "The Arrival"—the narrator describes the encounter between Mrs. Jemima Norval, the middle-class "Yankee" housewife whose racial and class prejudices are about to be revealed, and María Dolores (Lola) Medina, the mysterious "figure wrapped in a bright plaid shawl," who turns out to be (as the reader learns upon the turn of the page with the misleading chapter title), "The Little Black Girl." Ruiz de Burton revises the masculine colonial experience of encounter by presenting a *female* colonial experience between the New England housewife and the ten-year-old Spanish heroine passing as Indian. The year is 1857, and Mrs. Norval's husband has, after four years of traveling across the Southwest on a geological expedition, returned to their Massachusetts home with a girl he has rescued from Indian captivity. At the moment of encounter, Mrs. Norval is not interested in the boxes full of valuable stones: "'I don't mean the boxes in the large wagon. I mean the—the—that—the red shawl.'"[259] She is most concerned with the stranger. The drama is disrupted with the entrance of the family dog that sniffs out the truth by startling Lola Medina, then, "in her fright[,] she dropped the obnoxious shawl, and all the ladies saw that what Mrs. Norval's eyes had magnified into a very tall woman was a little girl very black indeed."[260] The "tall woman" beneath the red shall (now a curtain to a stage) is (mis)read as an Indian giant and then (mis)read again as a "little black girl."

The narrator of *Who Would Have Thought It?* draws upon racist, gendered and religious voices to expose an economy of looking, where specific variables of identification (skin, eyes, lips, beauty, name, hearing, and disease) present racist ideologies for (mis)reading the "black" body. The youngest daughter, Mattie, is first to comment: "'Goodness! what a specimen! A nigger girl!'"[261] The racist dialogue continues and includes several female characters (Mrs. Norval, her daughters, and maid) and also the male perspective of the Reverend (Mr. Hackwell), all of which (mis)read the Spanish body in disguise. The conversation is worth quoting in full:

> "I have been looking at this one, and I think it is rather pretty, only very black," the Rev. Hackwell observed.
>
> "Of course she is pretty," put in Mattie. "Look what magnificent eyes she has, and what red and prettily-cut lips!"
>
> "How could she have such lips?—negroes' lips are not like those. What is your name?" cried out Miss Lavinia, as if the child were deaf.
>
> The girl did not answer: she only turned her lustrous eyes on her, then again riveted her gaze upon Mrs. Norval, who seemed to fascinate her.
>
> "How black she is!" uttered Mrs. Norval, with a slight shiver of disgust.

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[258] Julie Ruiz, "Captive Identities: The Gendered Conquest of Mexico in *Who Would Have Thought It?*," in *María Amparo Ruiz de Burton: Critical and Pedagogical Perspectives*, ed. Montes and Goldman (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 122.

[259] Ruiz de Burton, *Who Would Have Thought It?*, 8.

[260] Ibid., 8.

[261] Ibid., 8.

> "I don't think she is so black," said Mattie, taking one of the child's hands and turning it to see the palm of it. "See, the palm of her hand is as white as mine,—and a prettier white; for it has such a pretty pink shade to it."
>
> "Drop her hand, Mattie! you don't know what disease she might have," said Mrs. Norval, imperiously.[262]

The narrative deliberation around the (mis)reading of Lola Medina's body is a site of color anxiety for the "white" female characters, that of prejudice, revulsion, and hysteria, but also voiced are the repressed fantasies, desires, and envy towards the "prettier white" of the "black" female subject of miscegenation. There are layers of historical signification in the (mis)reading of Lola Medina's "black" body because her skin has only been dyed "black" with "Indian paint." Born in Indian captivity in 1846—the same year the U.S. national project of westward expansion escalated into a war against Mexico that, two years later, resulted in the annexation of a third of Mexican territory by the United States—Lola Medina then spent ten years passing as Mohave Indian. In the passage above, however, the Spanish heroine also passes as an African American girl, at least to the female characters and the Reverend. The female figure rendered on the page—and on a different sort of stage—is *la Californiana* in (forced) blackface. Lola Medina's passing is extravagant. She feigns deafness, and unintelligibility, and as she appears diseased and mixed-blood, she is also made an object of repulsion *and* desire. Here *la Californiana* passes in the opposite direction, again, yet as African American.

In the constructed conversation between the central female characters of the novel, and from the perspective of the narrator, Ruiz de Burton replicates the performance of racial objectification through which the real *female* author can expose and parody New England *female* racism overseen by the Reverend. From the very beginning, the black-white binary of the antebellum North-South is the point of perspective that is magnified to an extreme in its abjection of the racialized body. The "Yankee" women of the novel thus project the ideologies of a culture and a people of English-speaking, Protestant, and English descent. The colonial-like encounter, however, turns into the auction block, now a stage with *la Californiana* passing as a slave: "'I have been looking at this one, and I think it is rather pretty, only very black.'" Referred to as Lola Medina's "second captivity," she enters the middle-class New England home of the Norvals as an African American girl. Presented to the reader are the complications of (mis)reading the racially indeterminate body. However, Lola is not of the race and historical binary of mulatta-slavery but of the binary of *mestiza*-conquest. Lola herself causes the trouble with reading her race. Her refusal to introduce her Spanish name into the conversation allows Lola to maintain substantial control of her racial identity, since revealing her name would have "outed" her as being of Spanish extraction (in addition to revealing her ability to speak English well). She withholds this information, and the presumption that Lola is deaf adds another layer to her passing. Certainly, Lola's refusal to give her non-Anglo American prods at Ruiz de Burton's own refusal to give her Spanish-English when publishing *Who Would Have Thought It?*.

At the moment of encounter, Ruiz de Burton proposes a metaphor for race in order to begin talking about a different calculus for the Hispanophone, the Spanish criolla, and *la Californiana*. This is about (mis)reading the Spanish body of the Souths through the racial taxonomies of the Norths. Even Dr. Norval refuses to reveal Lola Medina's *Spanish masquerade* by allowing the female characters to continue projecting their racist perceptions. Mrs. Norval calls Lola "'a true emanation of the black art!'" and when Mattie asks, "'Who were her parents, papa? … Indians or negroes, or both, … Any one can *see* that much of her history,'" Dr. Norval states, "'And those who saw that

[262] Ibid., 8-9.

much would be mistaken or fools.'"[263] The narrator finally reveals the truth nearly a dozen pages later: "Lolita's blood is pure Spanish blood, her mother being pure Spanish descent and her father the same, though an Austrian by birth, he having been born in Vienna."[264] As the narrative unfolds, Lola passes in-and-out of various racial taxonomies of the period, as if she were passing through shades of blackness and through shades of whiteness. Attached to her racial passing is a discussion of class mobility, because of the fortune contained in the boxes that is her inheritance. The gold and jewels therein introduce the reader to a nefarious Pandora's box, stirring greed in Mrs. Norval that immediately binds her to the rich Spaniard. A very different bonded-duo of Spanish masquerade is thus presented in *Who Would Have Thought It?*.

The history behind the boxes is attached to Lola Medina's mother, Doña Theresa Medina, who was kidnapped by Apache Indians in Sonora, Mexico, sold to a Mohave chief, and, during her captivity and "marriage," gave birth to Lola, and spent ten years "mining" for riches until Dr. Norval's arrival presented itself as an opportunity for Lola to escape. Here, Ruiz de Burton has altered the female-Puritan version of Indian captivity and "going native" in New England (think of Mary Rowlandson and her biographical account of Indian captivity in 1682, entitled *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God*) into the female-Spanish version of Indian captivity and "going native" in *California*.[265] A few scholars have discussed the significance of Ruiz de Burton's "revision" of early American histories with *historias*—as alluded to in the epigraph by Ana Castillo: "Indeed, I have wondered, what might this nation be like today if its 'official history' began in the Southwest—with the likes of the Catholic Cabeza de Vaca and the Zapotec Benito Juárez rather than from the Atlantic side with the *Mayflower* and the Masons?" Andrea Tinnemeyer explains how the "revision of the captivity narrative" in *Who Would Have Thought It?* marks a Southwest beginning:

> Ultimately, Ruiz de Burton's revision of the captivity narrative operates under a different geographical and racial imaginary than the one commonly animating captivity narratives. It focuses attention on the Southwest territory, on the broken promises of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, on the co-optive actions of people like Hubert Howe Bancroft, on the primacy of the Southwest territory in nation building, on U.S. imperialism, and on the U.S./Mexico border.[266]

Ruiz de Burton unsettles the American geographical and racial imaginary in a literary space where radical thought is transformed by fictional characters and made into what Lázaro Lima calls a "sentimental reverie" that allows her to (dis)play real notions of racism, sexism and nationalism as exceeding the borders of historical and literary space where the crossing of diverse histories can occur, has occurred, and continues to occur. She attempts this by weaving together two captivity narratives, not just Rowlandson's but also the Indian captivity of Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca's 1528-1536 and his traveling across the Southwest as shaman and Spaniard-*Indio*.

Ruiz de Burton produces an elaborate link between Puritan *historie* with Spanish *historia*, in which Dr. Norval, like Cabeza de Vaca, is a healer journeying across the Southwest and curing the wounds of a Mohave chief. The New England doctor is introduced to the chief's Spanish wife,

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[263] Ibid., 9.

[264] Ibid., 28.

[265] See Mary Rowlandson, *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God* (Boston: Bedford, 1997). [Original work published in 1682.]

[266] See Andrea Tinnemeyer, "Rescuing the Past: The Case of Olive Oatman and Lola Medina," in *María Amparo Ruiz de Burton: Critical and Pedagogical Perspectives*, ed. Amelia María de la Luz Montes and Anne Elizabeth Goldman (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 181.

Doña Theresa (renamed *ña-Hala*), and in the likeness of Rowlandson's account of captivity, she recounts her life and captivity to Dr. Norval and asks that he rescue her daughter in exchange for half of the riches she has collected. Doña Theresa's only request, "[S]he must be baptized and brought up a Roman Catholic."'[267] Dr. Norval agrees and rescues Lola, taking her to Massachusetts where she will undergo racial transformations as the skin dye lightens. The novel presents a coming-of-age story of an immigrant traveling East, where she will commence a "second captivity" in a New England home and all at the hands of the middle-class "Yankee" housewife whose husband dies and leaves her desperate for class mobility. Emerging from the text are the transformations of its two central female characters, with Ruiz de Burton placing the stepmother-stepdaughter relationship at center stage, examining Lola Medina's exploitation by Mrs. Norval who, throughout the novel, projects Anglo-American fears and fantasies about the mixed-race and ambiguous female body. Hers is a fear of miscegenation as a social threat to "white" culture and purity.

Amelia María de la Luz Montes best describes the society of New Englanders represented through the character of Mrs. Norval:

> The 'Yankees' (Northerners) in this novel are for the most part political opportunists, hypocrites (racists who call themselves abolitionists), and greedy individuals who commit fraud and bigamy in order to attain the riches that belong to the only Mexican American woman in the novel: Lola Medina.[268]

As if romancing the shadow casted by Spain, Mrs. Norval reinforces a deep complicity in Spanish colonialism in her "blackening of the Spaniard" while voicing physiognomic (mis)readings of the Spanish heroine.[269] Hers is not just repulsion towards Lola's non-white body, however, but an eroticizing of *la Californiana*. Distracted by Lola's blackness, Mrs. Norval also turns attention to Lola's riches. In her projection of racist discourse, the "Yankee" housewife is presented as recalling the narrative of contest between English and Spaniards, yet now with the next Spaniard in line—*La Californiana*—who is on Puritan shores with boxes of gold. The narrator writes,

> Even Mrs. Norval could not deny—to herself—that Lola was growing prettier every day. As this fact became more and more palpable, the hatred of the Christian matron increased in proportion. She had always hated and despised the black creature ever since she had appeared before her eyes encircled so tenderly by her husband's arm. But Lola was rich, and for her money's sake the matron had concealed the throbbings of aversion of her mercenary heart. For money Mrs. Norval would do almost anything… .[270]

Staring at the reader is the transformation of Mrs. Norval into a greedy woman, and alongside her growing obsession with Lola's riches is the presentation of a new bonded-duo. Mrs. Norval thus replaces the patriarch (Dr. Norval) in the bond with Lola, and as the novel continues, an extravagant

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[267] Ruiz de Burton, *Who Would Have Thought It?*, 30.

[268] See Amelia María de la Luz Montes, "Introduction," in *Who Would Have Thought It?*, ed. Amelia María de la Luz Montes (New York: Penguin Books, 2009), xii.

[269] For a thorough discussion of the darkening and blackening of the Spaniard, see Maria DeGuzmán, *Spain's Long Shadow: The Black Legend, Off-Whiteness, and Anglo-American Empire* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), xi-xxvii.

[270] Ruiz de Burton, *Who Would Have Thought It?*, 85.

performance of passing ensues for both female characters, both in their passing up or whitening up *and* Spanish masquerade.

From beneath the mask of anonymity, we can argue that perhaps Ruiz de Burton tries her hand at a *writerly masquerade* that engages fragments of history, the literary, the political, and the biographical: "Perhaps the real passing figure in this text is María Amparo Ruiz de Burton," as Pascha A. Stevenson describes—certainly, "Lola's journey from darkness to whiteness, commands metaphorical significance as Ruiz de Burton's own journey from darkness to whiteness, from Mexican to Caucasian, from subaltern to imperialist."[271] In this reading of *Who Would Have Thought It?*, let us consider the "authoress incognito" (as the masked-writer of the newspaper clipping calls Ruiz de Burton), for her narrative play and for her desire to tease at a discourse that seems more about her interest in exposing cultural ideology versus personal history, the latter of which Stevenson emphasizes as the sole project of the novel: "She seems to be trying, with this text, to forge out of its discourse some sort of reality wherein she too is a white person, able to stand amidst other white people and heave a collective sigh of relief that they are not dark."[272] True, Ruiz de Burton also experienced racial passing, but we must separate the personal from her political musings in literary space, as a transnational perspective that she performs on the page in order to de-center U.S.-nation. The novel is about her donning a different masculine mask to lampoon the complicated patterning of American "progress" through Manifest Destiny and the American woman's role within that pattern. As masked-*authoress*, Ruiz de Burton is passing as "white" *author*, but she is also neither this nor that. The performative play is about her ability to pass on the page, also an attempt to dupe the reader. She intended to pass as masculine and non-Spanish—genderless and ethnically unmarked. She meant for us *not* to identify her as "a subaltern mediator" who is, as José Saldívar continues, "simultaneously an *insurgent critic of monopoly capitalism* and a *radical critic of Anglocentric historiography*," but who we often assume is narrating *Who Would Have Thought It?*.[273] Instead, we should relent and examine the *writerly masquerade* intended, because she is telling her/a story through the eyes of someone else. This is Spanish masquerade.

2. Ruiz de Burton & Writing *Who Would Have Thought It?*

Her biography is a "peculiar history," as the masked-bachelor of the interview noted, and certainly, he continues, "she is worthy of more than a passing notice." There needs to be a distinction made, however, between what José F. Aranda Jr. says is Ruiz de Burton's *biography* versus her *textuality*, a remark that heeds the advice of Jesse Alemán. Aranda states, "Because of Ruiz de Burton's status as a recovered author, no textual analysis can proceed without some attention to biography. While this approach may seem reasonable, even logical, the relationship between textuality and biography must be negotiated cautiously to avoid a reductive privileging of one over the other, as Jesse Alemán has pointed out."[274] To begin with biography then, we may very well begin with her name—"María Amparo Ruiz de Burton"—because looking at it bares the very layers

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[271] Pascha A. Stevenson, "Reader Expectation and Ethnic Rhetorics: The Problem of the Passing Subaltern in *Who Would Have Thought It?*" in *Ethnic Studies Review* 28:2 (2005): 61-74.

[272] Ibid., 74.

[273] The sentence begins, "As a writer who painstakingly traces the juridical, political, and erotic activities of the Californios and Euro-Americans in what Michael Paul Rogin (1983) calls 'The American 1848' and beyond, Ruiz de Burton functions as a subaltern …. ." See José David Saldívar, *Border Matters: Remapping American Cultural Studies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 170. (*Italics mine.*)

[274] See José F. Aranda Jr., "Contradictory Impulses: María Amparo Ruiz de Burton, Resistance Theory, and the Politics of Chicano/a Studies," in *No More Separate Spheres!: A Next Wave American Studies Reader*, ed. Cathy N. Davidson and Jessamyn Hatcher (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 122 and 143, footnote 2.

and complexities in Ruiz de Burton's life *and* writings. The name itself is oxymoronic, at least in the sense of the clash between her family's Mexican heritage and her husband's English surname. As a contradiction of life—of hybridity—here was a duality of self that she transferred onto the pages of her novels, and where she could continue the interior-exterior debate. We might read this as an odd pairing of, on the one hand, her experience of dispossession, and, on the other hand, her experience of passing up, which she could speak to with fairness, though perhaps also with an eagerness to voice the complexities of the national divide on the body and on the mind. "Enemy Lovers" they were—María and Henry—as José Saldívar notes, quoting Winifred Davidson's article of her marriage to Henry S. Burton in the 1932 *Los Angeles Times Sunday Magazine*. Her career as a writer, however, did not begin until after her husband's death. At thirty-seven, she commenced that journey, which is best described in the title of the article that "outs" her writerly identity: "'Who Would Have Thought It?' A Native Californian Authoress—A Literary Incognito Lost in an Interview—A New Sensation for the Public."

María Amparo Ruiz (de Burton) led a life and literary career of passing and passage, masking and unmasking, and we can say that it included a touch of its own Spanish masquerade and dare I say extravagance. As a woman of the borderlands traversing into "white" spaces of privilege not meant for her, she knew very well what was at stake in her own passing and the difference of that performance on and off the page. As she tells a friend in a letter, dated February 15, 1869:

> *Ah! Si yo fuera hombre! . . . Qué miserable cosa es una mujer! Decididamente la providencia debe recompensarme de alguna manera haberme hecho mujer! [sic]. . . . Como si ser mujer no fuera suficiente calamidad sin añadir otras. No, es necesario q[ue] yo no me entuisiasme por el progreso del Continente. Para qué? Ni mi raza ni mi sexo mejorá.*
>
> [Ah! If I were a man! What a miserable thing a woman is! Decidedly providence must compensate me in some way for having been made a woman! As if being a woman was not a sufficient calamity without adding others. No, it was necessary that I do not wax enthusiastic over the progress of the Continent. For what? Neither my race nor my sex will do better.][275]

This is the political voice of Ruiz de Burton—as a powerful assessment of the late nineteenth century—and a female voice that we, as modern critics, so eagerly search for and draw parallels to in the pages of her novels. Perhaps it is worth identifying her roots so that we can understand the kind of *political writer* working in her letters that might speak to the *political writer* of her novels, but these voices must also be separated. In all agreement, though, her letter writing and novel writing share an interplay between ideologies and political interests that speak to her life and the knowledge that surface in her texts.

Born in Loreto, Baja California (Mexico) in 1832, María Amparo Ruiz was the daughter of Mexican parents, Jesús Maitorena and Isabel Ruiz Maitorena, and she also had two siblings. The

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[275] See Amelia María de la Luz Montes, "*Es Necesario Mirar Bien:* Nineteenth-Century letter Making and Novel Writing in the Life of María Amparo Ruiz de Burton," in *Recovering the U.S. Hispanic Literary Heritage,* 3 vols, ed. Ramón A. Gutiérrez, Genaro M. Padilla, Virginia Sánchez Korrol and Maria Herrera-Sobek (Houston: Arte Público Press, 1993), 23. For other letters see María Amparo Ruiz de Burton *Conflicts of Interest: The Letters of María Amparo Ruiz de Burton*, ed. Rosaura Sánchez and Beatrice Pita (Houston: Arte Público Press, 2001), and "Ruiz de Burton's Litigation Correspondence and Letters," in *María Amparo Ruiz de Burton: Critical and Pedagogical Perspectives*, ed. Amelia María de la Luz Montes and Anne Elizabeth Goldman (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 247-252.

Maitorena family is described by Montes as "an aristocratic Mexican military family who owned vast tracts of land" in what today is southern California.[276] She lived a privileged youth, having been educated in three languages: English, French, and Spanish. Not yet a teenager, a young María Amparo Ruiz lived in a territory of northern Mexico that the United States would soon claim as its own. In 1846, with the start of the war, the American officer, Lieutenant Colonel Henry Stanton Burton, arrived with his regiment in Mexico and near the war's end entered La Paz, where he met the Maitorena family and soon courted María. As Montes writes, "Fearing retribution from the government, La Paz citizens, including Ruiz's family, requested asylum in what was now U.S. territory," and one of the officers aiding La Paz families to San Francisco Bay included Burton.[277] Henry and María were married in Monterey, where they resided until Henry's military orders forced the young family to begin moving to various parts of the country: Southern California from 1853 to 1859 (purchasing Rancho Jamul in east San Diego), Washington, D.C. in 1859 to 1869, and then her return to Southern California (after Henry's death) in 1869 to 1895.

Her marriage to Henry and then his military orders to Washington D.C. took *la Californiana* to the East, where she entered its elite political world, which Sánchez and Pita describe as Ruiz de Burton's "front-row seat at the turbulent events of the decade of the 1860s."[278] The Senate chambers had become the other live theater to her liking, where she observed proceedings and integrated herself more fully into the political culture of her day. In her private letters, we learn of her mingling with Mrs. Lincoln, the wives of Senators, and members of the cabinet, even hearing speeches at the Capitol, including those by Mr. Davis, Hughes, Sumner, and Hammond, and also, she attended President Lincoln's inauguration.[279] Alongside Henry, María passed into the other elite circle on the other side of the country. Not long after the Civil War, Henry contracted malaria and when he died four years later, on April 4, 1869, as Montes explains, he left her "with a lifetime of heavy debts and land-claim litigations, with no financial prospects to lift her out from under such burdens."[280] Around the time of Henry's death, perhaps during the four years of his suffering, Ruiz de Burton tested her hand at writing fiction; keen on creating a career from publishing to keep above "debt-ridden waters." During the composition of *Who Would Have Thought It?*, two friends were essential to shaping her literary career: Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo, a prominent *Californio*, active in northern California politics and society, and Samuel Latham Mitchell Barlow, a prominent lawyer in New York, who not only offered her support but was her liaison into the literary world and in finding her a publishing house. After Henry's death, and on the writerly page, Ruiz de Burton questioned what it meant for her to have a foot on each side of the border. This is the split mind—the authoress and her daring prose—that we find in the pages of her novels, *Who Would Have Thought It?* and *The Squatter and the Don*, as well as in her play, *Don Quixote de la Mancha: A Comedy in Five Acts, Taken from Cervantes' Novel of That Name* (1876, published in San Francisco). Alongside a literary career, Ruiz de Burton spent years in courtrooms when her land ownership came into question by the California Land Commission. Even until her death, on August 12, 1895, and while in Chicago, Ruiz de Burton continued fighting for her *rancho*.

Ruiz de Burton arrives to American literature as a "recovered author." Of the rigorous recovery process demanded to uncover the voices of *Californianas*, especially those female names and

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[276] Ibid., xvi.

[277] Montes, "Introduction," xvii.

[278] Sánchez and Pita, "Introduction," viii.

[279] For more biographical information see Montes, "Introduction," xviii-xix. Also see Sánchez and Pita, "Introduction," and Anne Elizabeth Goldman, *Continental Divides: Revisioning American Literature* (New York: Palgrave/St. Martin's Press, 2000).

[280] Montes, "Introduction," xx.

narratives catalogued in Hubert Howe Bancroft's (1832-1918) seven-volume project entitled *History of California* (1884-1890), Genaro Padilla discusses in *My History, Not Yours: The Formation of Mexican American Autobiography* (1990) how prominent Mexican American women are "concealed behind the name of their American husbands," including María Amparo Ruiz (de Burton), who remained in the shadow of her husband because of the "white" patriarchal ordering of his name that erases her ethnic origins.[281] The greater Anglo and masculine authority is, however, the historian, as Padilla argues:

> Recovering women's narratives from the Bancroft collection requires, first of all, restoring their presence on the page, bringing the names and narrative titles up from the footnotes, dislodging these disembodied women's voices from Bancroft's master list of "Authorities Quoted in the *History of California*," culturally reclaiming those whose names were concealed behind the names of their American husbands: Hartnell, Ord, Fitch et al.[282]

Padilla provides a list that includes "twelve women whose lives were collected during the 1870s by Bancroft's field assistants," and in that list he provides a parenthetical play that separates *la Californiana* from her Anglo-American counterpart, allowing the woman in the shadow of her husband to finally step forward. Included in his list are the following Mexican American women: Apolinaria Lorenzana, Catarina Avila (de Ríos), María Innocente Pico (de Avila), Josefa Carillo (de Fitch), Teresa de la Guerra (de Hartnell), María de las Angustias de la Guerra (de Ord), Felipa Osuña, María Amparo Ruiz (de Burton), Rosalía Vallejo (de Leese), Eulalia Pérez, Dorotea Valdez, Juana Machado. Here, is a prominent list of Mexican American women who contributed to the history of California, Padilla adds, "In the main, however, their voices are reduced to whispers in Bancroft's work; most remain silenced in the Bancroft library archives."[283] Bancroft was an American historian with a massive archive, and with the help of assistants, rendered a much needed but slanted series of histories of the western region of North America. Lost in his archive (or *his* story of *California*) is the presence and significance of Mexican American women, not just in his *History of California*, but also, in the history of the United States.

Thanks to the work of Beatrice Pita and Rosaura Sánchez (and of course the numerous scholars who have contributed to recovering the work of Ruiz de Burton), here is the recovery of a seminal female figure in American literary history. Ruiz de Burton is thus canonized as the first nineteenth-century Mexican American woman to publish in North America after the U.S.-Mexico War of 1846-1848, whose life and writings break the silence. Essential to her identity within this history is her writerly performance as a woman's voice of the West, for the political work attached to her imaginative musings. This is not just solely about her "bicultural biography," and how her life alone offers new directions around border studies, gender concerns, and critical regionalism.[284] Goldman has offered a specific literary engagement with her work, in order to move readers beyond her life and into the work itself. There is also a fascinating historical breadth of knowledge attached to the romance narrative at hand, with its sharp political analyses and its multi-layered historical

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[281] Padilla, *My History, Not Yours*, 111.
[282] Ibid., 111.
[283] Ibid., 11. Also see Lázaro Lima's discussion, even though brief: "By including fewer than a [sic] fifteen testimonials, Bancroft also minimized the presence and important of Mexican American women in his *History of California*." See Lima, *The Latino Body: Crisis Identities in American Literary and Cultural Memory* (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 27.
[284] Ibid., 49.

backdrop of geographical interest, not just as a *literary mapping* of contested racial terrain that witnessed new borders and from a West-to-East perspective, but also, a *historical unmapping* of *histories* with *histories*.

Distinguishing the *historical* from the *romance* concerns adopting a literary criticism that defines her *writerly masquerade*, specifically for how she foregrounds the real with acute attention to re-inverting a genre made famous by Anglo American *female* writers, including Helen Hunt Jackson who published *Ramona* in 1884, which is said to have inspired Ruiz de Burton's second novel, *The Squatter and the Don* in 1885.[285] We should also include Harriet Beecher Stowe, Lydia Maria Child, and even Victorian writers like Charlotte Brontë.[286] Long before *Ramona*, however, Ruiz de Burton had accomplished in *Who Would Have Thought It?* that same striking look at American life yet from the perspective of the displaced Mexican American woman *alongside* the class-consciousness of the middle-class New England woman. Ruiz de Burton introduces a unique juxtaposition between "American" women of the mid-nineteenth century, while also creating a bond between the *female* pair still marked by early English *histories* and Spanish *historias*. We must rethink Ruiz de Burton's writerly performance as masquerade and as exceeding beyond the confines of the *historical* and the *romance*, that is, as her writerly play and her expanding the narrative strategies of sentimentalism, romance, and satire. Here we might argue for an aesthetic of *mestizaje*, as part of the process of recovering the *female* voice and restoring *la Californiana* on the page. This is *her* passing into the American literary world, though not in the likeness of her "white" contemporary writers. To understand her writerly masquerade, we must begin with an examination of the structure of the novel, for all of its parts so as to best examine its transformations and literary potentialities.

The three-hundred-and-five-pages of *Who Would Have Thought It?* are organized into sixty chapters (with descriptive titles *yet* chapters that are brief in page count) and a conclusion that reads as a "winding up" of the multiple plots that enter in and out of the novel (all characteristic of the Victorian novel). From the onset, Ruiz de Burton invites the reader to read her novel as if it had been initially published in serial form in a monthly magazine. Indeed, a framing strategy that prods at the discourse of the genre, and responds to a female tradition that even Henry James imitated with *The Portrait of a Lady* (his novel was serialized in 1880-81 in *The Atlantic Monthly* and *Macmillan's Magazine*). She creates a trick on the reader since this book had not been serialized, nor had it been tailored to the tastes of its readership. Instead, Ruiz de Burton renders her own trajectory. Sánchez and Pita provide a helpful outline of the chapter trajectories that is worth quoting.

> The first ten chapters deal with events between 1857 and 1861 (the attack on Fort Sumter), through flashbacks taking us back to 1836 (the marriage of the Norvals) and 1846 (the kidnapping of Doña María Theresa Almenara de Medina, Lola's mother). The next fifty chapters deal with events during the Civil War (1861-1864). The novel's Conclusion, a case of 'writing beyond the romantic ending,' takes up the narrative after a seven-year hiatus, wraps up the romance and situates the reader in 'real time' as it were, in the midst of the political events of 1872.[287]

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[285] Nina Baym's work on women writers of the American West provides a useful context. She writes, "In some ways, also Ruiz de Burton's book accomplishes the *Ramona*-inspired tasking of turning attention from Native Americans toward a particular kind of imaginary Hispanic." See Baym, *Women Writers of the American West, 1833-1927* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2012), 192.

[286] Montes and Goldman also address a divergence to other writers of her day: "Unlike contemporaries Lydia Maria Child and Helen Hunt Jackson, who tend toward the baroque in sentimental writing, her crisp commentary, at its best, recalls the astringent economic pragmatism of Jane Austen and the clear-eyed appraisal of class relations characteristic of Rebecca Harding Davis's prose." See Montes and Goldman, "Introduction," 3.

[287] Sánchez and Pita, "Introduction," xvi.

Woven into the novel's general historical structure then, which extends from 1836 to 1872, are a diverse set of references to a line of male writers that journeys from North America to Britain to Europe: Washington Irving (American), Lord Tennyson (British), John Milton (English), Miguel de Cervantes (Spanish), William Shakespeare (English), Lord Byron (British), Charles Dickens (English), William Makepeace Thackeray (English), and Victor Hugo (French). Through these thinkers (and others, she even ventures into the arts), she creates a satirical portrait of American life, where she—as masked-*author*—can access a rhetoric of authority used by "white" cotemporary writers (borrowing from across traditions established by American, British, and European *male* writers), without the reader contesting *her* writing and *her* story because of *her* gender and race. Here on these pages is, as the bachelor of the newspaper clipping stated, "critical and extensive knowledge of men and manners, diverse notions and popular 'isms'," but all through an invented masculine writerly lens that is demystified even camouflaged, as she—the masked *Californiana*—discovers passage into the privileged literary space of masculine *travel writing* not meant for her.

Who Would Have Thought It? reads like a travel narrative, with a narrator acting as an interpretive guide who maps a unique journey across the political geography of a forming United States, but with a West-East axis versus a North-South axis, as Goldman cleverly argues and introduces to the scholarship on Ruiz de Burton.[288] The novel begins in the Southwest with the story of a Spanish heroine, who is then (mis)placed in New England, the home of the Puritans. This is why I ask the same question of *Who Would Have Thought It?* that Ana Castillo asks of *The Squatter and the Don*: "[W]hat might this nation be like today if its 'official history' began in the Southwest—with the likes of the Catholic Cabeza de Vaca and the Zapotec Benito Juárez rather than from the Atlantic side with the *Mayflower* and the Masons?"[289] This "official story" of the Southwest, which Castillo imagines and that Ruiz de Burton conceives, begins with the most romantic of Spanish conquistadors who arrived at Galveston Island, the Spaniard-*Indio* Cabeza de Vaca, and extends to the Spanish heroine from *California*, the Spaniard-*India* Lola Medina. For the journey of that latter, the reader commences a journey from the far West in *California* to the far East in Massachusetts, but also travels to New York City, Washington D.C. and Mexico. Lola Medina's geographical mobility and passage crosses the emerging western territories of the United States, which was, at the time, the "disappearing of a frontier," to return to Julie Ruiz's phrasing.[290] Of emphasis and intrigue to Ruiz de Burton is the impact of displacement of immigrant bodies in the eastern corner of the United States and what this conjured for the American imagination. Lola Medina's journey is best conceptualized on early maps that illustrate her boundary crossing across the very border established between the United States and Mexico after the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.

Entitled "A Map of the United States of Mexico" (1850), and named one of the most important maps of the nineteenth century, its cartographer, Henry Schenck Tanner, actually reprints a composite of previously released maps (as early as 1825-36), certainly a common practice among cartographers. Made central to his version, however, is the newly established border between the U.S. and Mexico, but a border in red marked too far north (see figure 14).

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288 Goldman, *Continental Divides*, 1-5.

289 Ana Castillo, "Introduction," xviii.

290 Julie Ruiz, "Captive Identities: The Gendered Conquest of Mexico in *Who Would Have Thought It?*," in *María Amparo Ruiz de Burton: Critical and Pedagogical Perspectives*, ed. Montes and Goldman (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 122.

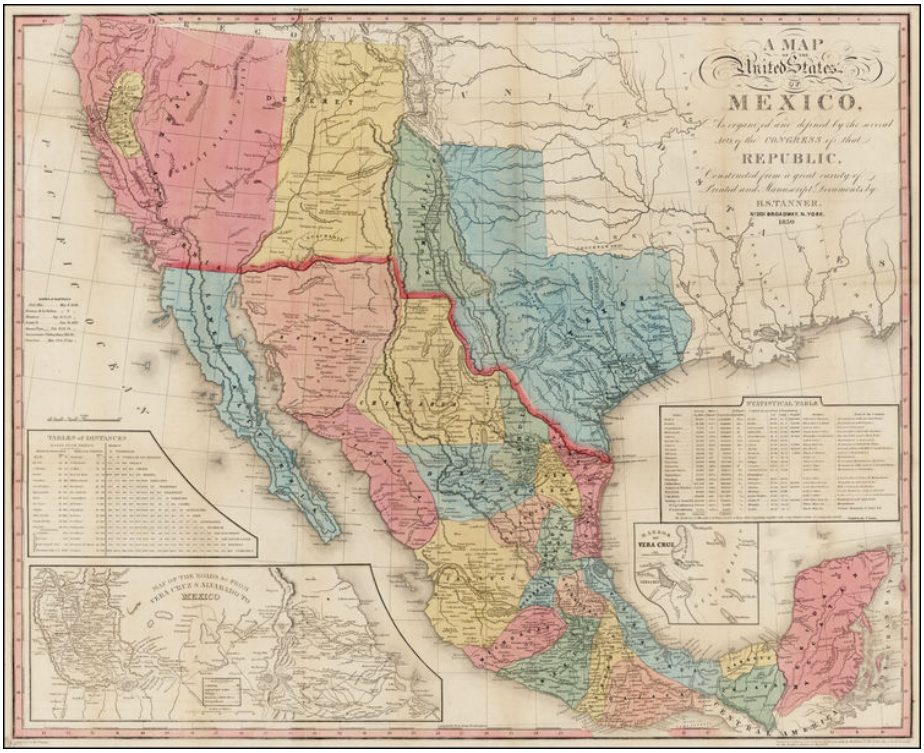


Figure 14. *A Map of the United States of Mexico* (1850) by Henry Schenck Tanner[291]

This is a rare 1850 edition of Tanner's map, which was copied and reproduced in the United States and abroad. It provides a European-American view of territories in Mexico alongside emerging western territories of a developing United States. Here, too, is the Southwest at mid-century. Tanner's map is based on the work of several cartographers: Alexander von Humboldt, William Darby, Bernardo Orta, Zebulon M. Pike, Don Juan Pedro Walker, and J.F. de Lángara y Huarte. In this last variant, however, Tanner significantly revises earlier variants. Take for instance the 1828 map by White, Gallaher, and White, which was the source for John Disturnell's 1846 *Mapa de los Estados Unidos de Mejico*. The latter map also rendered the erroneous (or too far north) boundary between the U.S.-Mexico. Still, Tanner's map was central to declaring the divide between the two countries. Also of historical importance on the map are two major historical events that shaped the West during the mid-nineteenth century period: (1) the 1848 discovery of Gold in California and (2) the 1849 Gold Rush (both marked in yellow, also identified as "Gold Region"). Also visible is a clearer outline of Southern California, which in pervious maps had been crudely outlined. The map also features a list of dates of battles during the U.S.-Mexico War, titled "Dates of Battles" (the text floating in the Pacific on the far left), and a large inset, titled "Map of the Roads &c. from Vera Cruz and Alvarado to Mexico City" (in the left corner), which provided details for passage across territories in Mexico during the 1846-48 war. It is no wonder that this map is *the* map of the century,

[291] For Tanner's map see, *A Map of the United States of Mexico, As organized and defined by the several Acts of the Congress of that Republic, Constructed from a great variety of Printed and Manuscript Documents by H.S. Tanner . . . 1850 [Deseret Edition!]*. Map. New York: Published by H.S. Tanner, 1850. *Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.* Web. 23 July 2015. < http://www.raremaps.com/gallery/enlarge/33349>. For Tanner's 1846 map see, *A map of the United States of Mexico : as organized and defined by the several acts of the Congress of that Republic*. Map. Philadelphia: Published by H.S. Tanner, 1846. *Library of Congress*. Web. 23 July 2015. < http://www.loc.gov/resource/g4410.fi000007/>.

as noted by Michael Buehler, a long-time collector of rare maps (variants of Tanner's map included). He writes,

> It was by far the most important and influential general map depicting the theater of the conflict, which was arguably the most transformative event in 19th Century American History, whereupon the United States went from being a player on the Atlantic sphere to becoming a great World power stretched from sea to sea across North America. As such, the map would have been of great interest to the American public, which generally knew very little about Mexico or the Southwest.[292]

It is also worth glancing at a Civil War map, entitled "Military Map of the United States & Territories" (1861), by Peter S. Duval and Son, mainly to juxtapose newly marked territories of the U.S. at both the start of the Civil War alongside emerging borderlands in Tanner's map at mid century (see figure 15).

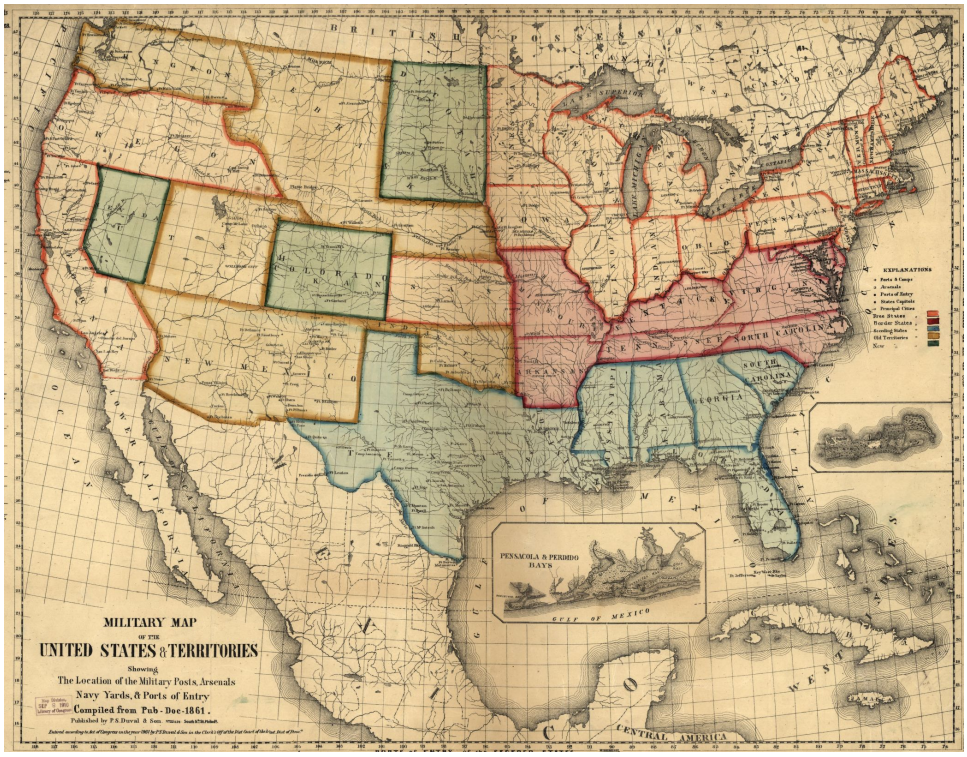


Figure 15. *Military Map of the United States & Territories* (1861) by P.S. Duval and Son[293]

The P.S. Duval and Son map provides, in more detail versus Tanner's map, carefully marked states in the U.S., including military information, as noted in the legend on the right side of the map. Titled "Explanations," the map clearly identifies "Free States" in orange, "Border States" in red, "Seeding States" in blue, "Old Territories" in yellow, and "New [Territories" in green. Also identified with various symbols are "Forts & Camps," "Arsenals," "Ports of Entry," "States Capitols," and "Principal Cities." Here, too, at the southern borderlands, is a newly marked border between the

[292] See Michael Buehler, "Tanner's map of Mexico," *Boston Rare Maps: Specializing in Early American Maps & Prints*, 2002. Web. 23 July 2015. < http://bostonraremaps.com/inventory/tanners-map-of-mexico/>.
[293] See *Military Map of the United States & Territories*. Map. Philadelphia: Published by P.S. Duval & Son, 1861. *Library of Congress*. Web. 23 July 2015. < http://www.loc.gov/resource/g3700.cw0010000/>.

U.S. and Mexico, indeed, more south than on Tanner's map. Together, however, these maps provide a frame for understanding the regional formation of the United States during the mid-nineteenth century. Not just a forming southern border in relation to forming southern and western U.S. territories, but here we can see Ruiz de Burton's precise cartographic imagining of Lola Medina's journeying and masquerade on the literary page: from the "disappearing of a frontier" after the U.S.-Mexico War (as shown on Tanner's map) to emerging U.S. territories at the start of the Civil War (as shown on the Duval and Son map). It is on the literary page that Ruiz de Burton, as masked-*author*, suddenly (un)maps *la frontera*. The maps above provide us a clearer trajectory as readers of Ruiz de Burton's novel. That is, on her literary map we can now *see* the *female* immigrant journeyer in her traversing across a disappearing *frontera*, yet *la Californiana* as foreigner. Lola also travels from one birthplace of the U.S. (the Southwest) to the other (New England). It is the New England son—Julian Norval—who, by the end of the novel, then travels south and into Mexico, after falling in love with the Spanish heroine passing as Indian.

In *Who Would Have Thought It?*, Ruiz de Burton conceives of a *literary* Southwest, a region where *Californios*, *Mestizos*, *Españoles*, *Tejanos*, and *Mexicanos* become non-citizens on newly claimed U.S. lands. She maps and unmaps *la frontera*, exposing a different literary historiography, and showing the reader a major region of cross-cultural contact, conflict, and transformation. Ruiz de Burton also places before the reader the (im)mobility of the Spanish heroine *and* (im)mobility of the "Yankee" housewife, at a time of emerging national geographies and at a time of regional division, while also investigating the ethical implications of cultural identity, especially as new borders defined and separated bodies in terms of citizen/non-citizen, and also, black/white (North-South) and dark/light (Souths).

Is this all rendered through Ruiz de Burton's voice, as most critics argue? Or is another narrative tone at play? Of both her novels, Montes and Goldman describe Ruiz de Burton's ability to move between feminine and masculinist discourses, and their argument helps us understand what I call Ruiz de Burton's *writerly masquerade*.

> With their convoluted sentimental plotting and rapier-sharp satire, their lampooning of feminine vapors and masculinist political institutions, her fictions also establish points of intersection between genres typically framed as distinct: the novel of social protest and the novel of sentiment, muckraking journalism and feminist critique, plantation fiction and historical romance.[294]

The "rapier-sharp satire" in the narrative voice of *Who Would Have Thought It?* deserves more attention, since it is often attached to the author's letter-writing and her other novel, specifically for the anti-American tone or, as Montes and Goldman phrase, her "crisp commentary" (versus the sentimental prose found in the novels of contemporaries), even calling it her "Yankee" prejudice and her use of "parody to turn the Anglo American racial aesthetic on its head."[295] In perhaps the most often-quoted letter, which Ruiz de Burton wrote in the months following her husband's death, she confesses to Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo a radical sentiment towards the U.S. regarding the notion of "Manifest Destiny." Critics often associate this tone to the tone in her novels:

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[294] Montes and Goldman, "Introduction," 2-3.

[295] Goldman, "'Who ever heard of a blue-eyed Mexican?': Satire and Sentimentality in María Amparo Ruiz de Burton's *Who Would Have Thought It?*," in *Recovering the U. S. Hispanic Literary Heritage* 2 vols, ed. Erlinda Gonzales-Berry and Chuck Tatum (Houston: Arte Público Press, 1996), 62.

> *De todas las malvenidas frases inventadas para hacer robos, no hay una más odiosa para mí que ésa, la más ofensiva, la más insultante; se me sube la sangre a la mollera cuando la oigo, y veo como en fotografía en un instante, todo lo que los Yankies nos an hecho sufrir a los mexicanos—el robo de Tejas, la guerra; el robo de California; ¡la muerte de Maximiliano! … Si yo pudiera creer en el "Manifest Destiny" dejaría de creer en la justicia ó la sabiduría divina. No amigo mío, el Manifest Destiny no es otra cosa q(ue) "Manifest Yankee trick" como sus "wooden hams and wooden nutmegs" del Connecticut.* (February 15, 1969)
>
> [Of all the wicked phrases invented by stupid people, there is not one more odious for me than that, the most offensive, the most insulting; it raises the blood in my temples when I hear of it, and I see it instantly in photographs, all that the Yankees have done to make us, the Mexicans, suffer: the robbery of Texas, the war, the robbery of California, the death of Maximilian. If I could believe in Manifest Destiny I would cease believing in justice or divine wisdom. No my friend, Manifest Destiny is nothing but a Manifest Yankee trick like their wooden hams and wooden nutmegs of Connecticut.][296]

Is this the narrative tone in *Who Would Have Thought It?*, or must we acknowledge her mask from which the voice may have been borrowed? For Ruiz de Burton, in agreement with Padilla, "writing nevertheless also operated as a vital form of resistance to Anglo-American ethnocentrism."[297] Certainly, Ruiz de Burton, as Padilla continues, "mimicked an Anglo-American discourse that romanticized the Spanish Southwest," but (and to extend his argument) Ruiz de Burton deepened her text by allowing other and multiple histories, cultures, and genres to intersect, conflict, overlap, and connect, so as to challenge a formula of thought that adhered to the reality and complexity of the real life experience of the "American" woman (Anglo and Spanish) in mid-nineteenth century America. From behind a mask, Ruiz de Burton pursued her own masquerade and achieves a narrative tone that might be read separately from her letter writing.

Who Would Have Thought It? establishes a template, as Marcial González argues, "not because of the author's ethnic background or Spanish surname, but because of its contradictory form."[298] A form thought of here as*writerly masquerade*; that is, a form with consistency in its inconsistency. The *narrator* follows two female characters to tell the story of, if we are to lean on the words of Ruiz de Burton's letters, "the differences of the two races": "There is much to see in the U.S., and much to think about, particularly if one begins to make comparisons. In reality, to truly appreciate one thing it is necessary to look well at the other."[299] *Who Would Have Thought It?* puts this perspective into practice, but the tone of the letter is far from the tone of the novel. Instead, the latter parodies the "Yankee" housewife in her New England life—maybe a narrative voice in the likeness of Mrs.

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[296] For a discussion on the notion of "Manifest destiny" as associated with "The Mexican Question," in particular the start of the conversation as it appeared in the *Democratic Review* (1845) by John O'Sullivan (why and when he invented these terms and how they coincided with the war), see John-Michael Rivera, "Embodying Greater Mexico: María Ruiz de Burton and the Reconstruction of the Mexican Question," in *Look Away!: The U.S. South in New World Studies*, ed. Jon Smith and Deborah Cohn (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 453-454. For the Spanish translation of Ruiz de Burton's letter, see Nicolás Kanellos, *En Otra Voz: Antologia de Literatura Hispana de Los Estados Unidos* (Houston: Arte Público Press, 2002), 82. For the English translation of her letter, see Aranda Jr., "Contradictory Impulses: María Amparo Ruiz de Burton, Resistance Theory, and the Politics of Chicano/a Studies," 124.

[297] Padilla, *My History, Not Yours*, 21.

[298] González, *Chicano Novels and the Politics of Form*, 76.

[299] See Montes, "Appendix," *Who Would Have Thought It?*, ed. Montes (New York: Penguin Books, 2009), 320.

Fanny Trollope's in her book *Domestic Manners of the Americans* (1832), in fact, an anti-slavery novel that inspired Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1850-51).

From behind a mask, here is New England history laid bare, but not as told from the perspective of a New Englander, but maybe that of a European making jest of the ex-colonial cousin. We might now read Goldman's own ponderings of a European link to Ruiz de Burton more closely: "With exuberant Dickensian satire, Ruiz de Burton undermines conceptual equations that link 'America' with the Puritans who controlled its northeastern most territories in order to expose the regional agenda that underlies this national rhetoric."[300] Although there is no direct link between Mrs. Fanny Trollope and Charles Dickens (let alone Ruiz de Burton and Mrs. Fanny Trollope), the scholar Brenda Ayres recalls Trollope's popularity as surpassing that of Dickens: "At one time or another during her life — as Pamela Neville-Sington writes — her popularity matched, and even exceeded, that of Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, and her son Anthony."[301] Is Ruiz de Burton borrowing a European mask for her narrator, in the likeness of Mrs. Fanny Trollope *and* Dickens? Is this distant perspective thus a non-American identity? That is, as a lens bound to a much deeper South, beyond yet also within the borderspace of the U.S. and Mexico. Perhaps the Western Pacific-shore of *California*, and a voice of the Southwest, and from a space of the disappearing *frontera*. It is a plural narrative mode—and to borrow Gloria Anzaldúa's notion of "plural mode"—this distant perspective and narrative tone embodies multiple subjectivity which emerges from *la conciencia mestiza*: "In the Borderlands / you are the battleground."[302]

Let us not dismiss the implications and intentions of the *authoress* in disguise, because we might fail to account for how exactly Ruiz de Burton complicated a simple passing binary (in terms of male-female but also brown-white), so as to occlude the blind-spot and opportunity afforded by expansionist-racist-sexist ideology, which Ruiz de Burton seizes to slip past the readers-in-the-past and also to slip past us-as-modern-readers-of-the-present. As a precursor text to the Chicana/o literary tradition and as a major nineteenth century author writing on the subject of passing in American literature—especially the reimagining of "Spanish" feminine landing and masquerade in New England, and the ways in which the "Yankee" housewife is eager for class mobility by exploiting the racialized other—Ruiz de Burton becomes a passing-*author* in her traversing of geographical and literary borders, all the while embracing the contradictions while creating a surplus signification. Presented in the story of the figure and narrative of *la Californiana's* masquerade is how the mid-nineteenth century "woman" performed extravagant passages—Lola Medina's passing in and out of different categories of racial subjectivity, *and* Mrs. Norval's passing out of domestic womanhood and into elite social circles. Here is the *female* bonded-duo of "Spanish" masquerade.

3. Spanish Distraction: Mrs. Norval and Lola Medina

Central to the novel is the relationship between Mrs. Norval and Lola Medina, in particular the juxtaposition of their transformations and performances of passing. *Who Would Have Thought It?* thus creates a different rubric of Spanish distraction, while also examining the extravagant means that American women deploy in an eagerness to achieve social mobility in dangerous white spaces of not just a slave economy but also—and what Beth Fisher calls—a consumer economy.[303] Alongside

300 Goldman, *Continental Divides*, 69.

301 Brenda A. Ayres, *Frances Trollope and the Novel of Social Change* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2002), 12.

302 Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 2007), 3.

303 See Beth Fisher, "Precarious Performances: Ruiz de Burton's Theatrical Vision of the Gilded Age of Female Consumer," in *María Amparo Ruiz de Burton: Critical and Pedagogical Perspectives*, ed. Montes and Goldman (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 187-205.

a discussion of racial passing, the novel also examines the female *experience* of class passing yet in terms of upward *and* downward mobility: "During this era of intense economic volatility," as Fisher argues, "the rapid expansion of commerce and industry spurred the rise of a newly prosperous middle class and swelled the ranks of the elite, but also made downward mobility an ever-present threat."[304] Mrs. Norval and Lola Medina are thus represented as figures of "trespassing" in both directions, in which the female *experience* of passing happens in public and private domains of privileged "whiteness," where skin, wealth, and performance become defining factors in a culture that is all about seeing and being seen. As Beth Fisher summarizes, "Indeed, just as Lola's disguise wears off to uncover her true whiteness, Jemima's disguise of moral propriety fades, revealing the greed, sexual passion, and ambition that will transform her into a wealthy consumer."[305] Placed side-by-side are the dramatic transformations of the two central female characters, in particular their performances of *tres*passing. *La Californiana* and the New England housewife also become bound to each other in what may be thought of as a "social contract" that, certainly, belongs to the story of the social and political problems that arose from the racial and class conflicts framed by the U.S.-Mexico War and the Civil War, but also, belongs to the story of much earlier American historical relations, specifically the rivalry between English and Spaniards.

Ruiz de Burton's novel thus captures a very different bonded-duo, now a bond between two female characters. Read in terms of "Spanish" masquerade, the passing-plot presented by these *female* figures is also haunted by the narrative of colonial contest in which the contest between stepdaughter-stepmother reflects the context between the rich "Spaniard" and the privateering "English." Fundamental to the passing of either character is the (mis)reading of Lola Medina's racial passing as seen through the eyes of Mrs. Norval, especially at their initial encounter at that start of the narrative. Although Mrs. Norval (mis)reads the Spanish heroine as Indian and also African American, she initially dismisses the boxes that contain Lola's inheritance. When Mrs. Norval is alerted to Lola Medina's real racial identity and the riches inside those boxes, she turns eager to seize Lola's riches in order to traverse class brackets by profiting at the expense of Lola, ultimately achieving the status of elite "Yankee." The masked-*author* (dis)plays a critique of the Anglo-American *female* distracted by Lola's wealth and property, also exposing a type of social character through Mrs. Norval. Lola Medina's passing body becomes the site or object of symbolic racialization, but so too does the body of Mrs. Norval, with all the racial and sexual anxiety revealed through the engendering gaze of Mrs. Norval *and* the invented persona at the hands of the masked-*author*.

The unmasking of Mrs. Norval's character reveals a particular "social type," as phrased by Sánchez and Pita, that is a figure who is "often presented as possessing 'the character traits demanded by a 'modernizing society.'"[306] Dr. Norval comments on this social type at the beginning of the novel, yet he misleads the reader when declaring that his wife is the "strictest" of that social type. Soon after meeting Lola Medina, and after Mrs. Norval tells her husband, "'Doctor, you certainly do not mean that we are to keep this creature always near us,—you can't mean it!'" the narrator provides the dialogue between Dr. Norval and Reverend Hackwell regarding his wife's hostility.[307] While "following his wife and holding the poor little girl by the hand," Dr. Norval says,

> "I beg you to remember, Mr. Hackwell… that my wife is a lady of the strictest Garrisonian school, a devout follower of Wendell Phillip's teachings, and a most

[304] Ibid., 189-190.
[305] Ibid., 191.
[306] Sánchez and Pita, "Introduction," xviii.
[307] Ruiz de Burton, *Who Would Have Thought It?*, 18.

> enthusiastic admirer of Mr. Sumner. Compare these facts with the reception she gives this poor little orphan because her skin is dark, whilst I—a good-for-nothing Democrat, who doesn't believe in Sambo but believe in Christian charity and human mercy—I fell pity for the little thing."[308]

Dr. Norval plays to the "sham," according to Sánchez and Pita, in his denying of abolitionist racism, and it is through the character of Mrs. Norval that the reader witnesses a portrait of the middle-class *female* "Yankee"—as opposed to the middle-class *male* "Yankee" in Melville's *Benito Cereno* (1855)—for all her fears, prejudice, weaknesses, and cultural fantasies of racial purity. Although Dr. Norval expresses his disbelief in Sambo (a derogatory term used in the United States for African-Americans, and derived from the Latin American term *zambo* or a caste category for people of Indian-African extraction), the novel itself sustains an image of Sambo alongside the master, but surely of a different type.[309] Upon Dr. Norval's "death," however, the novel introduces a *female* bonded duo, not necessarily of Spanish masquerade, but a masquerade of *la Californiana* and the New Englander, and thus between the matriarch/Mrs. Norval and Sambo/Lola Medina, with Lola Medina's wealth in the hands of the matriarch versus the patriarch.

Mrs. Norval's vision of American "progress" depends on a narrative of contest that (mis)reads *la Californiana* with suspicion, and as an unpredictable and threatening figure to American *female* identity and her progress. In a conversation with her son, Julian Norval (who has fallen in love with Lola), Mrs. Norval projects her fears and fantasies onto the body of the "good Mexican," conjuring an image of the threatening Spaniard. She says,

> "If that is not a clear case of 'your purse or your life,' there never was one. She is a good Mexican, surely, and knows how to put the dagger to the throat," said Mrs. Norval, with a hoarse laugh, siting down again.
>
> "Pshaw!" ejaculated Julian, taking his cap and walking towards the door. "In this instance the simile is bad, for we have appropriated the purse, not she."
>
> "Anything else you would like to call me, besides a thief?"[310]

Encoded in the dialogue is a generational contrast between Mrs. Norval and her son. Also rendered are the fixed pretenses of the mid-nineteenth-century U.S. popular consciousness that continued (mis)reading foreigners or immigrants of "Spanish extraction." Mrs. Norval projects onto Lola Medina's body an old world suspicion towards the figure of Spanish ancestry: "'She… knows how to put the dagger to the throat," Mrs. Norval asserts, recalling a racial typology that the son is quick to explain to his mother and reprimand her for it. Julian Norval interrogates the stupidity of Mrs. Norval's association of the old narrative of the conquering Spaniard—a figure of violence, treachery, and deceitfulness—onto the body of the Spanish heroine: "'In this instance the simile is bad, for *we* have appropriated the purse, not *she*.'" Julian Norval and Mrs. Norval recall the piracy practiced by English colonizers lusting after Spanish gold. We might think of John White and his 1590 fleet to Roanoke, where he established a colony for privateering in order to seize Spanish ships: "The small fleet that carried White to Roanoke in 1590 was interested in finding an established colony only if it could be used as a base for privateering, a place to spend the winter months while waiting to seize Spanish ships traveling through the West Indies in the spring," as Kathleen Donegan describes of

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[308] Ibid., 18.

[309] See Sánchez and Pita, *Who Would Have Thought It?*, 18, footnote 5.

[310] Ruiz de Burton, *Who Would Have Thought It?*, 178-179.

English and Spanish rivalry in *Seasons of Misery* (2014).[311] Mrs. Norval is thus imagined in *Who Would Have Thought It?* as a contemporary New England "privateer," indeed, now of a different century and still upholding English *histories*.

Mrs. Norval is only strangely distracted by Spanish *historias* in this instance of associating the "good Mexican" with Spanish colonialism. Also, suggested in this phrasing of the "good Mexican," especially by the mid nineteenth century, is the notion that the conquering Spaniard as violent, treacherous, and deceitful is a characterization passed onto and situated in the Indian-Mexican stereotype. Mrs. Norval will continue to call Lola Medina a "savage"/Indian and "nigger"/African. Still, we can argue, Mrs. Norval romances the long shadow of Spain's past, engaging in the darkening and "blackening of the Spaniard" in order to assert her own passing-plot that depends on the Spanish heroine.[312] However, the racist discourse represented through Mrs. Norval's character is the narrative play of a masked-*author* intending to explicitly critique "Yankee" ignorance of racial distinctions through an imagined narrative voice. Although she is repeatedly told Lola Medina is of Spanish heritage and only slightly distracted by Spanish and Mexican *historias*, Mrs. Norval maintains a preoccupation with Lola's "black" body, only able to identify her as Indian or African, and unable to read "black" or "dark" or "light" or "white" complexion in relation to *Californios*, *Tejanos*, *Mestizos*, *Mexicanos*, or *Españoles*.

Lola Medina's body is made a spectacle for Mrs. Norval's prejudice of Indian and African Americans, especially with her incessant inquiring about Lola Medina's "frightful spots." Mrs. Norval tells her son, "'Do you think Lola will never have those spots any darker? Will they remain so?'"[313] Racist dialogue is played out for the reader yet from the domestic space. In this moment that Lola Medina plays Indian, so too does the novel, as John-Michael Rivera argues: "The allusion to Pinto Indians is historically important and reveals how the novel 'plays Indian' in order to expose the racial distinctions between Mexicans and Anglos that develop in the nineteenth century."[314] There arose conflicting discourses on race throughout the nineteenth century, namely scientific studies. According to Rivera, this scene is when "Lola's body begins its last metamorphosis," and what the reader witnesses is not just an Anglo racialization of Indians, but also, as Rivera argues (specifically pointing to the author as maintaining such a discourse), "the racialization of Indians in the book by *both* Anglos and Mexican Americans," which "occurs because of the racial consciousness that was developed among landed Mexican Americans about their own mestizo blood, an embodied ideology called the 'Spanish fantasy heritage,'" a phrase derived from Carey McWilliams.[315] Rivera raises the problem with the *authoress* as *mestiza*, and while there is truth to his comment—Ruiz de Burton as Mexican American author who represents and critiques a social reality—the lens through which she writes and which is racist might not be female and/or Mexican American. There is a need to differentiate between the *author* and the characters of *the* novel. This is about understanding the artistic relationship to culture. To extend this thought further, what is problematic is the very suspicion we hold as modern readers, that in writing this novel Ruiz de Burton dons a "white" (Spanish, Anglo) mask, and the radical voice of the anonymous *author* is *hers* and *hers* alone. This was her warning to the young bachelor of the newspaper clipping, that the reader might fall into this same trap when seeing her name on the binding of the novel and accept

311 See Kathleen Donegan, *Seasons of Misery: Catastrophe and Colonial Settlement in Early America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 22.
312 DeGuzmán, *Spain's Long Shadow*, xxiv-xxviii.
313 Ruiz de Burton, *Who Would Have Thought It?*, 83.
314 Rivera, "Embodying Greater Mexico: María Ruiz de Burton and the Reconstruction of the Mexican Question," 461.
315 Ibid., 461. (*Italics mine.*)

her as author. Instead, we must question the identity of the invented narrator whose vision is clouded by this "Spanish fantasy heritage," not draw a parallel between the *authoress* and *her* characters of *her* novel. The project that Ruiz de Burton places before us is not about drawing a link between Mrs. Norval and Ruiz de Burton, or even Ruiz de Burton and Lola Medina. It also seems dismissive to deem the *authoress* a hybrid figure that is split between the characterizations (and consciousness) of Mrs. Norval and Lola Medina. The voice and tone of the narrator is much more complex than it emanating from Ruiz de Burton herself. What about the potentiality of an invented narrative voice as masculine, genderless even, but certainly foreign? Perhaps that voice is ambiguously *Californio*. Most importantly, here is the "Spanish" masquerade of *la Californiana*, of *la mestiza*, that is, the potentiality of a *mestiza* masquerade.

To return to Lola Medina's playing Indian, the narrative (dis)plays a perception that has a lot to tell us about the reading of discrete racial categories at mid century, especially conflicting perceptions on race. With a slightly humorous tone, the narrator frequently responds to Mrs. Norval's (mis)readings of Lola's racial passing, including her reaction to the "dark spots" on Lola's body: "Oh, Mrs. Norval, if you had known what was to be the consequence of this examination, I am sure you would never have brought it about."[316] The narrator turns attention to a symbolic ordering as a consequence of Mrs. Norval's racism, which leads her son to further inspect the spots on Lola's body, with Mr. Hackwell also joining him in the inspection. Suddenly, "Julian looked at Lola's eyes and lips, and he forgot about the spots," and in this moment of desiring "true whiteness" in Lola's *blue* eyes and *thin* lips, slippage also occurs between race, gender, and sexuality, where race can no longer be contained as a separate category that was once controlled by Mrs. Norval's racism.[317] In his forgetting about the spots, though, he does not forget about race: her eyes are *blue*. The variables of gender and sexuality in relation to race begin to overlap, conflict, and intersect. Race is inflected in her passing as *la Californiana* or Mexican heroine as "Indian" heroine, whose sexuality is at play on the page with the *New* England son: "His gaze became fixed on hers, and a thrill went through his whole frame from the little soft hand he held in his."[318] The drama of love rendered is a familiar plot but with a twist to the John Smith and Pocahontas story. Here is the New Englander falling in love with *la Californiana* or Mexican heroine who is only playing Indian.

In the racialization of sexuality, Julian Norval (as well as Mr. Hackwell) is transfixed by Lola Medina's returned gaze—seduced by her "magnificent" and "lustrous" eyes—with the narrator interrupting the scene to further contextualize the son's admiration: "She was a child, only fifteen years of age. She had no design in her look. But her soul was up in revolt, and was gradually shining in her *glorious eyes*, making eloquent speeches, which Julian and Hackwell alone seemed to hear or understand. But neither found an answer. Their feelings were too deep for words."[319] In this awakening moment of masculine desire for her *glorious eyes*—where white male gazing at her *blue* eyes and passing "Indian" body, race permeates the page, pointing to male-heterosexuality as crossing the color lines—it is Mrs. Norval who interrupts male love play and desire for the "Indian" body: "'Well, what makes you both so silent?'"—then, as if castrating the pair, her repudiation carries another variable of racism and paranoia related to skin disease—"'I guess you see I am right, and that it is a *cutaneous disease* peculiar to the Indians of her tribe.'"[320] In this same scene, however, Mrs.

316 Ruiz de Burton, *Who Would Have Thought It?*, 84.
317 Ibid., 84.
318 Ibid., 84.
319 Ibid., 84. (*Italics mine*.)
320 Ibid., 84. (*Italics mine*.)

Norval also desires the passing Indian, with the narrator providing insight into her *female* gazing: "Even Mrs. Norval could not deny—to herself—that Lola was growing prettier every day."[321]

Attached to Mrs. Norval's gazing and desiring of the "Indian" body is the eroticizing of Lola Medina's racial trespassing; however, Mrs. Norval views Lola's "whitening" as a threat to her own upward mobility.[322] If the ideological constructs of white racism are tampered with, so is the binary of master-slave. Indeed, the very bond and "social contract" that Mrs. Norval and Lola Medina share is threatened in the moment that sexual desire undermines racial typology. Mrs. Norval is still preoccupied with notions of "progress" at the expense of the female *other*. Alongside a discourse concerned with the whitening of the dark-skinned heroine—the moments she is described as more than white or as off-white (as DeGuzmán would argue)—is the discourse concerned with the darkening or blackening of the heroine, both of which are strategies for establishing borders and boundaries around racial identity in order for Anglo-Americans to establish a binary of existence over the *other*. Indeed, the figure of the *other*, in this case *la Californiana* or Mexican heroine, and to return to DeGuzmán, "plays a primal role in the construction of Anglo-American identity as 'American' and in the reinforcement of that identity, which needs the shadow of the black legend against Spain for definition."[323] Thus, and what might remain somewhat invisible in the narrative yet prodded at by the masked-*author*, is Mrs. Norval's own project of colonialism and expansionism in her thirst for Lola's *California* gold. Woven into this scene is the ghosting of Spanish *historias* but also English *histories*, in addition to mid nineteenth century *California historias*. Furthermore, and in the likeness of the American Captain in Melville's *Benito Cereno*, Mrs. Norval represents the ineradicable pervasiveness of white racism, now through the perspective of the *female* "Yankee" of Massachusetts and her encounters with racial taxonomies as challenged by the passing *Californiana*.

"'How I do hate foreigners!'" states Mrs. Norval, never recognizing her role in the *historie* that did not anticipate the effect of expansionism in the aftermath of the U.S.-Mexico War of 1846 and the signing of a treaty in 1848 that defined national belonging and expatriation. Alongside her dismissal of the violent protocols that newly defined "American" citizenship, is a critique of the matron as a marked subject lusting after *California* gold *and* appalled by the mere thought of interracial marriage between her son and Lola.

> But Lola was rich, and for her money's sake the matron had concealed the throbbings of aversion of her mercenary heart. For money Mrs. Norval would do almost anything; but the idea of Julian taking a fancy to Lola, when she wanted him to marry Emma, was now insupportable to her.[324]

The narrator exposes her "throbbings of aversion," which spill out onto the page, thus revealing to the reader her "mercenary heart"—which might easily be juxtaposed to Captain Delano's "benevolent heart" in *Benito Cereno*, who is also distracted by Spanish *historias* and displays reactions to miscegenation as threatening Anglo-Saxon purity. At the moment that Lola Medina's wealth is finally revealed to Mrs. Norval, however, a deep-seated greed for *California* riches emerges and transforms her character. Central to the novel is how the masked-*author* reimagines English and Anglo *histories* into the relationship between Mrs. Norval and Lola Medina, specifically the narrative

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321 Ibid., 85.

322 I relate Judith Butler's reading of desire in "Passing, Queering," specifically how Irene Redfield desires Claire Kendry, with desire as entailing a trespassing of sorts that overlaps with race, gender and class. See Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 275-277.

323 DeGuzmán, *Spain's Long Shadow*, 4.

324 Ruiz de Burton, *Who Would Have Thought It?*, 85.

play around how the *histories* of Europeans lusting after Spanish riches and Anglos desiring Mexican territory now function in a post war period of national divide.

Lola Medina's passing body and her wealth arrive to New England from the West versus from the South and onto the Atlantic shore. Her displacement and wealth share a complicated history as a result of the U.S.-Mexico War of 1846-1848 and the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in early months of 1848. Ruiz de Burton is—in the story of Indian captivity with Lola Medina's mother, Doña Theresa—calling upon the rapid transforming landscape of *la frontera*. The inclusion of Doña Theresa's discovery of gold and jewels while in Indian captivity coincides with this history at the borderlands. By the late 1840s, the Gold Rush was well underway in California and the West, where the "negotiated" lands of the Mexicans had become a goldmine for the United States. Gold was discovered in California not long after Nicolas Trist signed the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. These lands were thought of as the famous *El Dorado* or "the city of gold," which was now in U.S. hands. The narrative voice of *Who Would Have Thought It?* not only prods at these histories but also is suggestive of examining citizenship (if not loyal citizenship). After the Treat of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the U.S. implemented non-citizen and "trespass" orders, which were strict policies that prohibited newly declared non-citizens from mining on U.S. terrain. The fear and reason for the policies, as Hunt Janin and Ursula Carson have noted, "foreigners were now sweeping up all the gold."[325] That is, America's gold. These histories act as the historical backdrop of *Who Would Have Thought It?*, with the character of Doña Theresa proposing her own "treaty" with Dr. Norval. Doña Theresa's treaty includes negotiating Spanish riches for Lola's rescue, and Dr. Norval is true to the agreement.

However, it is upon Dr. Norval's "death" (or disappearance, and even his own "passing"), that the treaty falls into the greedy hands of Mrs. Norval (and Mr. Hackwell). According to U.S. law, Lola Medina's money is lawfully that of the Norval family. Not only was Doña Theresa a non-citizen or foreigner when she discovered the gold, the law also conveniently included the opportunity for Anglo-American's to rob non-citizens or foreigners of their gold: "[U]nder the protection of the American military establishment, Anglo-American miners could rob and harass 'foreigners' with impunity. Since neither the Americans nor the Mexican government considered *Californios* to be their own citizens, these miners were left without the protection of either nation."[326] Ruiz de Burton's literary play between these histories prompts a clever historical reformulation for the novel. The story thus begins with the Gold Rush in the West and its arrival in Massachusetts along with the rescued Spanish heroine. As Vincent Pérez notes, "As a host of historians have shown, the Gold Rush *was* a period marked by social conflict and disorder and particularly so for the landed Californios whose society was within a span of two years inundated with tens of thousands of landless 'foreigners.'"[327] As the reader follows the racial passing of the protagonist, or Lola's racialization into "foreignness," a critique of her mobility is promulgated on the page from the perspective of the character of Mrs. Norval, through which the narrator critiques racist discourse that recall recent and major histories at the Souths: the U.S.-Mexican War, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, and the upcoming Civil War. Sánchez and Pita also make reference to the significance of "gold in Massachusetts," particularly its impact upon the two central female figures of the novel:

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[325] Hunt Janin and Ursula Carlson, *The California Campaigns of the U.S.-Mexican War, 1846-1848* (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, 2015), 157.

[326] Ibid., 157.

[327] Vincent Pérez, "Remembering the Hacienda: Land and Community in Californio Narratives," in *María Amparo Ruiz de Burton: Critical and Pedagogical Perspectives*, ed. Montes and Goldman (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 49-50.

> The arrival of gold in Massachusetts will strip the veneer of the righteous Puritan and transform Mrs. Norval into a desiring and plotting woman. The chests of gold function, then, as a Pandora's box, unleashing repressed desires of all sorts. The orphan Lola, a mere child of ten, will be defenseless against the greed and voracious appetite of Mrs. Norval for what is not hers—just as the U.S. had long lusted after the Mexican territory and the wealth contained therein.[328]

Here is another nefarious Pandora's box, and the "repressed desires" that are unleashed are those of the New England housewife, whose "greed and voracious appetite" overwhelms the novel, and much of the narrative space is committed to presenting to the reader her dramatic transformations. Mrs. Norval's metamorphosis begins in the opening pages with the initial encounter with Lola and then continues more intensely after Dr. Norval informs her of Lola's wealth. She repeatedly questions the doctor about the riches, "'Where is all that jewelry?'" and his response, "'It is all locked up in an iron safe,'" simply enrages her.[329] Here is the Pandora's box that Sánchez and Pita refer to.

Mrs. Norval is carefully unmasked for the reader, and the transformation she undergoes is from Jemima Sprig, having grown up and worked on a farm in rural Massachusetts, to Mrs. Jemima Norval, having married a college-trained geologist and moved into town to become a housewife and mother. In the earliest portrayals of Mrs. Norval's lusting after Lola's jewelry, the desire for wealth and class mobility coincides with shame. The narrator says,

> Mrs. N. could not do that. She did not want the jewelry for herself, and she could not exactly approve of her daughters wearing such expensive things; but it made her heart ache to think that the black child would have these things. The doctor might speak about the child getting lighter by-and-by: she did not believe that. And would that little nigger be so rich, and her girls so poor? Their new carriages and splendid horses and handsome house, after all, did not make Mrs. N. Happy.[330]

Mrs. Norval is not consumed with the thought of desiring class consolidation for herself, yet in desiring it for her daughters there is an eagerness for her to secure her whiteness.[331] Also, on (dis)play in these lines is the deliberate shortening of her name to "Mrs. N," in which the narrator creates a distance between Mrs. Norval from Dr. Norval. The suggestive play in the shortening of her name coincides with the repetition of the word "nigger." And let us not forget her first name, "Jemima," which recalls the figure of Aunt Jemima who was a prominent character in minstrel shows of the late nineteenth century. These lines, it seems, speak to the role that Mrs. Norval feels compelled to play or perform as a white female attempting to achieve passage in a consumer economy, to return to Fisher. Yet she succumbs to internalized racism in the moment she must consider the socioeconomic future of her "white" children. The threat she realizes is about "class envy," to quote Jesse Alemán, or as he continues, the fact that Lola only "looks black" while "getting lighter by-and-by."[332] To agree with Alemán, the "absence of slavery in the novel more

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328 Sánchez and Pita, "Introduction," xxiii.
329 Ruiz de Burton, *Who Would Have Thought It?*, 76.
330 Ibid., 42.
331 Sánchez and Pita, "Introduction," xxviii and xxix.
332 Jesse Alemán, "'Thank God, Lolita Is Away from Those Horrid Savages': The Politics of Whiteness in *Who Would Have Thought It?*," in *María Amparo Ruiz de Burton: Critical and Pedagogical Perspectives*, ed. Montes and Goldman (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 105.

tellingly reveals the narrative's attempt to valorize the South," yet in Ruiz de Burton's examination of passing or looking black and whitening up, the novel also takes notice of a different issue of slavery, that of the modern "Yankee" passing as an abolitionist while still haunted by the "white" southern voice of slavery's promoters.[333] Just as the name "Mrs. N" thus signifies on the word "nigger" it also signifies on "North." Here is at different performance by a "white" Jemima at the North, with Mrs. Norval passing up from the role of housewife and masquerading in *white*face to gain access into Northern spaces of elitism as ideal white citizenry.

Mrs. Norval undergoes multiple transformations in the course of the novel, what Beth Fisher calls her "precarious performances," or as she describes, "Ruiz de Burton portrays Jemima Norval as a woman engaged in a series of performances, first as a frugal middle-class housewife and then as a wealthy consumer who appropriates Mexican property."[334] In the act of appropriating Lola's wealth, who does the "Yankee" woman become, and what does her (un)becoming entail? At center stage is the mid-nineteenth century woman who is all too eager for social visibility and economic opportunity without the carefulness of authentically performing such a role. Instead, Mrs. Norval enters elite circles looking the part but not knowing how to play the part, and the narrator captures her precarious performance in the New York opera house through a comical lens, (dis)playing for the reader the inability of the "frugal middle-class housewife" to pass up or rather to look white and whiten up. Fisher is correct: "The story of Jemima Norval's transformation from a frugal middle-class housewife into a free-spending woman of the urban elite takes precedence over Lola's experience of social descent and restoration," yet how it takes precedence is often not examined carefully in terms of Mrs. Norval's disenchantment in passing up and failure to do so.[335] Mrs. Norval fails at class mobility and whitening up because she does not understand that the interior self must also transform. Overwhelming the text is her eagerness for the promises of class passing yet her inattentiveness to perform the role of ideal white citizenry as a believable masquerade. As is the case in Chapter 37, entitled "Mrs. Norval's Mental Debut," when the housewife enters high society "for *the first time*" and experiences Italian opera with her daughters, son, and "*new* husband."[336] This scene, as Fisher writes, is "an account of Jemima's 'debut' appearance in New York society," yet it is also an account of Jemima's inability to pass up, that is, her inability to hide parts of her "Yankee" identity in order to enter the elite culture of the New York opera house without detection.[337]

The novel concentrates on Mrs. Norval's physical transformation into a "bourgeois matron," which allows her a youthful appearance and also suddenly sexually desirable: "She had grown younger and improved in appearance rapidly since her arrival in New York."[338] Hers is only a physical transformation, however. "Jemima becomes an extravagant, passionate bourgeois matron," as Fisher argues, yet how exactly Mrs. Norval becomes *extravagant* and *passionate* deserves more attention.[339] These variables—*extravagant*, *passionate*—play different roles in her racial and class passing. Mrs. Norval dresses the part of "bourgeois matron" and well, yet this exterior transformation does not match her interior self. The interior self must also go through a transformation that Mrs. Norval dismisses, especially her passing into the Italian opera house. She does not understand the intellectual engagement necessary to perform this female figure, and as the

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333 Ibid., 105.
334 Ruiz de Burton, *Who Would Have Thought It?*, 189.
335 Ibid., 192.
336 Ibid., 196. (*Italics hers.*)
337 Ibid., 196.
338 Ibid., 171.
339 Ibid., 192.

narrator exposes the slippage between her exterior performance and the interior self, also revealed is an internalized racism that is saddled with shame. Hers is a physical transformation, as the narrator adds in a parenthetical whisper to the reader, "(all bought with Lola's money)," and although Mrs. Norval and her family can look the part, passing up and performing those roles well is a very different story: "Ruth and Emma spread their costly silks (all bought with Lola's money) in magnificent array, flanked by the general and Major Hackwell, who certainly looked very handsome in his uniform, and prepared themselves to stare and be stared at."[340] Dressed by *la Californiana*, Ruth and Emma gain access to this social circle but only "to stare and be stared at"—"Ruth saw the evident admiration of the general, and was pleased thereat, because they were in full view of the Misses McCods, the Misses Pinchinghams, the Misses Squeezphat, and more so of the pretty Mrs. Van Krout, who had the proscenium-box opposite, and could see the general's 'yellow buttons' so well"—indeed, the women profit from westward U.S. expansion, and to revise the words of Sánchez and Pita, achieve class mobility with Lola Medina's California gold that is no longer in Massachusetts but suddenly in New York.[341]

The narrator provides a vision of contempt towards the "Yankee" women, which we might call modern "Yankee" abolitionists, in their eagerness to pass into high culture. From the unique perspective of the masked-*author* is a narrator critiquing "Yankee" manners. According to Fisher, "This satirical scene links Ruiz de Burton to the many foreign visitors to the United States who had, since the late eighteenth century, expressed disdain for the unrefined manners and exaggerated pretension of New York's elite," yet instead of linking Ruiz de Burton to this foreign and non-American perspective, we must link the masked-*author* to the invented narrative voice (masculine and foreign) in *his* assessment of the displaced Northern "Yankee" women.[342] "Although Ruiz de Burton ridicules Ruth's snobbery," Fisher continues, "she confirms this character's assessment of the New York elite by assigning members of the opera audience comic names that undercut their claims to prestige."[343] Alongside Ruth's snobbery is the force of the masked-*author*'s anonymity, as a narrative voice in the likeness of Mrs. Fanny Trollope. Instead of *Domestic Manners of the Americans*, here we have the *Elite Manners of the Yankees*. At center stage, then, is the figure of the female housewife or the "Yankee" women, and their inability to pass into this society, which is an inability not only scrutinized and ridiculed by her daughter, Ruth, yet parodied by the masked-*author* as masculine, even foreign or non-American.

> And Ruth now began to point out to the general the notabilities of fashionable society, the major and Emma occasionally adding their observations, whilst back of them silently sat Julian and Mrs. Norval, who certainly had no wish to be there. Julian was too annoyed and Mrs. Norval too much out of her sphere to enjoy that elegant din. But that force of circumstances which whirls us poor mortals like chips round a whirlpool, had brought them there,—the madam for *the first time*.[344]

Mrs. Norval is unimpressed with Vincenzo Bellini's famous opera, *Norma* (1831, a *tragedia lirica* in two acts), which reached American shores by 1836. The scene and song from the opera that the masked-*author* recalls on the page arrives in act two, reflecting the 1848 liberation of Sicily. During

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340 Ruiz de Burton, *Who Would Have Thought It?*, 165.
341 Ibid., 164-65.
342 Fisher, "Precarious Performances: Ruiz de Burton's Theatrical Vision of the Gilded Age of Female Consumer," 196.
343 Ibid., 196.
344 Ruiz de Burton, *Who Would Have Thought It?*, 165.

this scene, Mrs. Norval dismisses the vocal complexity of the title role of Norma, the soprano lead whose repertoire captivated and amazed audiences on both sides of the Atlantic. Calling the opera a "Chinese din," Ruth attempts to correct her mother's misunderstanding of the "sacred shield" as a Chinese gong—"'She is calling her warriors to drive off the Romans,' said Ruth, in despair"—also attempting to quiet her mother's inability to transcend class systems by failing to act well-educated in European cultural arts yet looking the part.

Mrs. Norval fails to perform her role as opera attendee, not "elegant din" and although she passes into the circle of the New York elite, the figure presented to the reader is that of the displaced "Yankee" housewife. Through her laughter and racism, the masked-*author* portrays Mrs. Norval in the likeness of Contessa Giulia Samoyloff, the mistress of composer Giovanni Pacini who famously criticized the rivaling Bellini's opera in its earliest stages of production. Referred to as "a very rich woman," Samoyloff might very well be the model for Mrs. Norval, though also at play with her adverse reaction is a reference to the famous scene in Cervantes' *Don Quixote*: the story of Maesa Pedro and the performance of puppets when Don Quixote leaps on the stage to defend the hero who is pursued by Moors. In the case of Mrs. Norval, Hackwell remained "amused at her remarks" and "this made her so happy that she almost felt tempted to leap upon the stage and begin to sing her own love, as being exactly similar to that of Norma, only greater, truer, than any ever sung or wept for by any matron before or after Norma."[345] The narrator adds, "It was very fortunate that the 'leg opera' had not yet blossomed on the New York stage, as it lately has, else his ex-reverence might have been tempted to take the madam there."[346] The narrator pokes fun at Mrs. Norval's manners, calling attention to her inability to pass into this elite circle, though pointing to her desire to imitate the title role.

4. Passing Up & Passing Out

In the final chapters of *Who Would Have Thought It?*, the passing-plot between Mrs. Norval and Lola Medina unravels, with the author presenting a unique narrative play in the rupturing of the bonded-duo of Spanish masquerade, all by disrupting the marriage-plot(s) at the center of the novel: Dr. Norval is alive and returns to Mrs. Norval, and Julian Norval marries Lola Medina. Borrowing from sentimentalism and romance, the masked-*author* appropriates the marriage-plot(s), which were at the time a central narrative structure in nineteenth-century novels. These novels, however, did not end happily, typically ending with one of two endings: "marriage-or-death."[347] The narrative voice settles on the former, however, the marriage-plots played out for the reader through Mrs. Norval and Lola Medina is satirical: the Norval male characters transform the passing-plot between Mrs. Norval and Lola Medina, thus shattering the middle-class woman's fantasy of Manifest Destiny that depended on the Mexican heroine's wealth. The winding up of the final chapter and the conclusion of the novel turns particular attention to the political identities of the two female characters, specifically for how the marriage-plots *re*position Mrs. Norval in relation to Lola Medina, that is, geographically and economically speaking. The resolution of *Who Would Have Thought It?* has Lola Medina (and Julian Norval) return to Mexico, while Mrs. Norval (is returned to Dr. Norval) falls into "a violent brain-fever" in her return to middle-class status as "Yankee" housewife.

Ruiz de Burton draws another pronounced juxtaposition between Mrs. Norval and Lola Medina, with the marriage-plot(s) that disrupt the novel's passing-plot. Something has become of the passing-plot in the rupture of the relationship of the bonded-duo, and of particular interest is

345 Ibid., 166.
346 Ibid., 164.
347 Tabitha Sparks, *The Doctor in the Victorian Novel: Family Practices* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 5-6.

female nostalgia towards European colonialism (both Spanish and English). The novel critiques English *histories* and Spanish *historias* from a female perspective, for how an Anglo perception reinforced a ghosting of these *histories* and *historias*. The narrator exposes this past to an extreme and unravels it in the passing-plot. Ruiz de Burton highlights the American body politic and the dependability of Anglos on the dispossessed bodies of Mexicans who became non-citizens and an oppressed minority in Anglo controlled states. In her narrative play, Ruiz de Burton examines this dependability with the "passing up" of Lola Medina and "passing out" of Mrs. Norval. While Mrs. Norval descends into madness upon hearing of Dr. Norval's return—hers is a passing out of the elite circle she struggled to pass into—while Lola Medina ascends (if not transcends) the racial taxonomy of the North—hers is a passing up but also a passing out of New England society with her return to Mexico. Let us begin with Mrs. Norval.

Mrs. Norval's final transformation, or what may be phrased as her reverse passing in having to return back to middle-class status, occurs in Chapter LVII, entitled "Who would have thought it?," when Julian Norval announces that Dr. Norval is alive and in London. This is also the chapter where the novel takes its very title. The narrator writes,

> "My beloved father is in London. I have just received two letters from him. He might be here in a few days,—perhaps this week."
>
> With a piercing cry, Mrs. Norval threw her hands up and fell back in Julian's arms.
>
> "Who would have thought it?" shrieked the wretched woman, as she swooned away.[348]

Mrs. Norval's "piercing cry" symbolizes her fear and rage at being reminded of her marriage and bondage to the patriarch, Dr. Norval. The narrator captures a detailed description of interior suffering that Mrs. Norval experiences in the moment of her unmasking and suddenly stripped of her wealth—her disguise. Mrs. Norval's transformation from elite "Yankee" to "wretched woman" is captured on the page, as a loss of agency, the loss of desire, the loss of the ability of transgression, and the loss of individuality. Mrs. Norval's crossing over into spaces of (other) "white" privilege, prompted an awakening to a (false) liberty that she must now relinquish. The "pure" Puritan who, in the space of the novel, went from a life on a farm in rural Massachusetts to housewife and mother in Boston, to entering an adulterous relationship with John Hackwell and with her "*new* husband" seized Lola Medina's wealth and achieved an urban elite lifestyle in New York, is now found out and forced to return to the woman she once was. Hers is a passing out that might be read as a critical narrative twist, an articulation of Ruiz de Burton's fiction of retaliation and ideological revenge: "'Who would have thought it?' shrieked the wretched woman, as she swooned away."

"Slowly," the next chapter begins, "Mrs. Norval returned to consciousness, to live, to know that she was wretched."[349] The narrator describes Mrs. Norval's return to the role of housewife, after having obtained and experienced (male) economic power and social mobility. Her passing out symbolizes a feminine shock to the fear of class reversal in her marriage to Dr. Norval. The narrator dramatizes her fall from urban elite, with Ruiz de Burton replicating a familiar portrait of the shrieking and devastated heroine from Victorian novels (think of Charlotte Brontë's title-character *Shirley* (1849), among other female novelists) forced to marry and upon the realization of their loss of agency, they too discovered, as Mrs. Norval does, "in all its horror," the "debasement of her

[348] Ruiz de Burton, *Who Would Have Thought It?*, 270.
[349] Ibid., 271.

situation."[350] Attached to the marriage-plot, however, is the loss of Lola Medina *and* her wealth. In this self-reflecting scene—with an image of the "passing" New England housewife that, in its exaggeration, reads as a mockery of *her* upward mobility, specifically for her gracelessness in the act—Mrs. Norval cannot imagine a self outside of marriage, that is, outside of the bond with Lola.

> A shudder, a feeling of horror came over her; she tried to speak, but could not; she raised herself, and with another shriek again fell back. Nature succeed; she was delirious; fever took possession of her brain, and she did not know any longer that she was a miserable woman.[351]

Ruiz de Burton's critique presents interlocking incidents that intensify the grim stages of descent that Mrs. Norval experiences: the coinciding of Dr. Norval's mysterious return with Lola Medina's departure. Here, in this passage, Mrs. Norval's extreme mental and physical display of shock is her fear of powerlessness at the hands of the patriarch, along with the loss of autonomy. The "violent brain-fever" that overcomes and disables Mrs. Norval also acts as a symbolic scheme, with the narrator dramatizing her immobility by figuratively presenting her as passing out of her role as matriarch and back into the submissive role of wife, since Dr. Norval has returned to claim his role as head of household. Tucked into this scene is also her fear in the loss of self (as matriarch, as master) with the loss of Lola Medina that breaks the "marriage" that allowed her access to male controlled spaces of privilege.

The narration of Mrs. Norval's final unmasking is symbolically darkened, as if a dark veil is now draped over her transformation back to middle-class housewife:

> The palatial mansion of the Norvals, lately so gay and brilliantly illuminated, was now a vast mass, darkly, ominously silent. The joyful news brought by Julian had turned music and laughter into maniacal ravings and timid whispering. The gay dancers now walked about in noiseless tread.[352]

The scene suggests that domesticity for Mrs. Norval may very well mean her death. Perhaps in these lines, too, is the "dark, ominously silent" shadow of the Spaniard, of the Mexican, of *la Californiana* as this "vast mass" that haunts her. Represented in this characterization of Mrs. Norval is her near fatalistic acceptance of marriage and downward mobility, and also represented is an instance of how cultural memory cannot forget. "Cultural forgetting," as Lázaro Lima explains, is "rooted in Manifest Destiny politics, [which] attempted to erase the Mexican American presence from geographic and psychic spheres of the nation's consciousness through a racialized discourse of dispossession."[353] Mrs. Norval's lapse into illness is commentary on the inability of Anglos to "erase" from "geographic and psychic spheres" the presence of Spanish descendants. This is another critical narrative articulation of retaliation and ideological revenge. Mrs. Norval is humiliated, instead, in being forced to pass out of the social spaces of class privilege accessed with "the

[350] Ibid., 271.
[351] Ibid., 271.
[352] Ibid., 271.
[353] Lázaro Lima, *The Latino Body*, 24.

dispossessed wealth of the Mexican Southwest."[354] This, too, is exacerbated with her inability to stop the marriage (or mixed-race love affair) between Lola Medina and Julian Norval.[355]

The marriage between Julian Norval and Lola Medina unites the Norval-Medina families, a marriage that now bonds the Mexican and New Englander, replicating the historical pairings of the European with the dark-skinned heroine: Hernán Cortés and Doña Marina (*la Malinche*), and John Smith and Pocahontas. In returning *la California* to Mexico with the New England son, the novel "celebrates Mexican patriotism," as Goldman suggests, while turning its back on "American nationalism."[356] With the heroine's return to Mexico, at stake is national pride and the construction of middle-class American *female* identity that depended on wealthy and propertied Mexicans for social mobility and economic progress. Is this narrative union between "two colonial enterprises"—"here Mexican colonialism and its material wealth is merged with U.S. colonialism and its promises of representative democracy"—that Ruiz de Burton imagines in 1872, a "cautiously optimistic/hopeful" declaration, as Aranda Jr. argues, "about the role that upper-class Hispanics will play in the reformation of the United States"?[357] In other words, is the Norval-Medina marriage Ruiz de Burton's proposal of a "political idealism" that positions *la Californiana* (in the intermediary role like Doña Malinche and Pocahontas) as negotiating a "new nationalism" or allowing for convergence between national, social and racial relationships? The question of national belonging and citizenship is made central in the final pages, a perspective that is filtered through the male characters of the novel.

Who Would Have Thought It? poses a number of theoretical questions around race in relation to gender, class, sexuality, and transnationalism that forces us to rethink the role that female figures played in capitalist expansion and the invention of national identity in the United States. In the aftermath of the U.S.-Mexico War and the political events leading up to the Civil War years, the narrator seems most interested in the (dis)placement of *female* figures during transformative historical periods, when the newly established border defined bodies as non-citizen/citizen. That narrator is an imagined intervention. As Aranda Jr. argues: "I would argue that Ruiz de Burton has a stake in this brand of political idealism. It is precisely because Spanish/Mexican colonialism has failed her that Ruiz de Burton ends her novel by forecasting the future marriage of Lola Medina and Julian Norval."[358] Similarly, Anne E. Goldman states that in the character of Lola Medina, Ruiz de Burton speaks:

> … [T]here is Lola, a Mexican child born in California, and therefore an objective correlative for the remapping of the federal polity following the U.S.-Mexican War. In her person she embodies Ruiz de Burton's complex working out of the relation between region and nation, an argument that affirms the cultural integrity of western 'natives': not just of California, but of Arizona, Utah, Colorado, New Mexico—that entire land mass once the property of Mexico, ceded only 24 years before the publication of her novel—but insists, at the same time, on their political status as U.S. citizens.[359]

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[354] Julie Ruiz, "Captive Identities: The Gendered Conquest of Mexico in *Who Would Have Thought It?*," 128.

[355] See Tabitha Sparks, *The Doctor in the Victorian Novel*, 3-6. Also, Fisher discusses how, through this female character, the "ideological connections between the rhetorics of Manifest Destiny and domestic womanhood" are exposed, speaking directly to Amy Kaplan's notion of "Manifest Domesticity." See Fisher, "Precarious Performances: Ruiz de Burton's Theatrical Vision of the Gilded Age of Female Consumer," 189.

[356] Goldman, *Continental Divides*, 81.

[357] Aranda Jr., "Contradictory Impulses: María Amparo Ruiz de Burton, Resistance Theory, and the Politics of Chicano/a Studies," 69.

[358] Ibid., 69.

[359] Goldman, *Continental Divides*, 83.

The historical background in *Who Would Have Thought It?* is Ruiz de Burton's personal story that we can read into the life of Lola Medina, a theorizing of Ruiz de Burton's very own "Latino subjectivity," which is read as an "internalized racism after the 1848 cultural and political divide" that the author experienced.[360] There are limitations, however, when concentrating solely on Ruiz de Burton's novel as biographical, where the literary and its potentialities of accessing something beyond the historical becomes easily *conquistado* by real life. Instead, let us lean on the anonymous publication of the novel because Ruiz de Burton invented a narrator with a critical eye looking at a mid nineteenth century United States through an objective eye and comical voice from a masked-*author* who deploys a writerly (dis)play of the linguistic and cultural preoccupations that were circulating during this period around race and with eagerness to define Anglo-American identity.

Though the eyes of the narrator, the American body politic is made a spectacle, a (dis)play of various portraits of mid-nineteenth-century American women, in particular the two central female characters of the novel: Lola Medina and Mrs. Norval. The narrator provides the dramatic transformations required of these characters, but also, as reliant characters, that is, as a Mexican-Anglo bond. Their transformations concern racialized associations with "whiteness," in terms of Anglo-Americanness and Mexicanness, where the appeal and desire of social access to spaces of masculine and "white" privilege is about a nation and its recovering from two major wars. The rapid geopolitical changes resulted in a proliferation of conflict between races, genders, and classes, and the critique that ensues from the intrusive narrator is a feminist's deliberation with the public-private binary separating men from women in the economic and social spheres. This is what passing looked like in the history of expansion, and how *la Californiana* of the borderlands, as Goldman argues, "figure[d] in the United States political understanding of the body," as well as the American cultural imaginary.[361]

Rather than read *Who Would Have Thought It?* as a novel written by *la Californiana*, let us see the "white" mask that *la Californiana* donned to sardonically masquerade as a "white" man. *Who Would Have Thought It?* is a passing narrative, and with many complex layers of performativity, of masking and unmasking, that we have yet to understand for its implications through a writerly *and* gendered-crossing, racial masquerade. Its anonymous publication intended to dupe the late-nineteenth century reader or armchair traveler, in this regard, *Who Would Have Thought It?* is a comedy of social manners, teasing its "white" readership, and in its passing-plot, engaging a female reality at a close emotional distance. By unspooling of the narrative of *la Californiana* and her masquerade, the narrator displaces the reader by beginning in the Southwest versus the North East, and by venturing into a literary space and (dis)playing conspicuous performances of female social (im)mobility, the novel becomes a mirror in its reflecting a reality of historical specificities that constructed the "fantasy-heritage model," which Lima describes in terms of "racial accommodation through 'passing' for Spain,'" to return to Carey McWilliams.[362]

5. The Masked-*Author* & Cervantes' *Don Quixote*

Ruiz de Burton plays a trick on the Anglo-American reader of the late-nineteenth century. Her trick includes racial passing, cross-dressing, and the traversing of newly merging southern borders. Hers, we might say, is a writerly performance in "whiteface" or the act of "whiting up,"

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360 Lima, *The Latino Body*, 23.

361 Goldman, *Continental Divides*, xx.

362 Although Lima is specifically referring to the novel *Pocho* by Jose Villareal, the concept of fantasy-heritage model also applies to earlier novels. See Lima, *The Latino Body*, 59.

what Marvin McAllister defines in African American culture as "whiteface minstrelsy," that is, the performance of race "as extra-theatrical, [and a] social performance in which people of African descent appropriate white-identified gestures, vocabulary, dialects, dress, or social entitlements."[363] In the case of Ruiz de Burton, and applying McAllister's definition, *la Californiana* appropriates the role of white (straight) male novelist in her racial passing and cross-dressing. McAllister also calls these cross-racial performances as African Americans "trespassing on whiteness," in other words, "trespassing on white cultural and performative property."[364] This white mask of mobility on the page offered Ruiz de Burton access into the nineteenth-century literary marketplace. A mask was necessary because of the prejudices towards women, and many of her "white" female contemporaries also borrowed masculine pennames to pass into the circle the world of male writing. Ruiz de Burton's writerly masquerade merely begins here, however, for she is also parodying how sentimental novels were serialized with her own long chapter titles. In doing so, was she introducing to a readership a novel masquerading as a national bestseller, all to dupe her reader into reading a story about a "series of remembrances" in the U.S. popular consciousness through the dramatic arrival of *la Californiana* to the home of the Puritans? Possibly. In considering her white performance as a trespassing into a literary space of privilege not meant for her—as a woman, as *Californiana*, as Mexican—our reading of the portraits presented of Anglo-American life as if from an Anglo-American and male perspective, say something different about the role of author-narrator-character and the empowerment in the act of trespassing, in terms of political desire, agency, and citizen-artist.[365] From behind a "white" mask, Ruiz de Burton repositions *los Californios*, creating opportunity in the dominant narrative(s) that omitted *los Californios* in the aftermath of the U.S.-Mexico War.[366]

Who Would Have Thought It? carefully balances competing discourses and, as Marcial González states of the narrator of *The Squatter and the Don* (again, published under the penname C. Loyal), this narrator also engages "political positions… as the ideological contradictions of the author herself, now foregrounded as reified because of the conflict between what the novel can represent of the social totality and the liberal obscurantism of the narrator."[367] The challenge for the modern reader is accepting divergence between what the text is doing against that which the masked-*author* may or may not be doing. Situating Ruiz de Burton historically, González turns to the work of Sánchez and Pita, in particular their analysis of the *Californio testimonios* as a sort of reality check against Ruiz de Burton's narrative voice in *The Squatter and the Don*. Their intention was to present "the ideological contradictions of the Californios themselves," also arguing that "Ruiz de Burton's narrator similarly bemoans—perhaps even more precipitously than the other Californios—the fact that a grave injustice has been committed against the 'native Californians,' and her

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363 Marvin McAllister, *Whiting Up: Whiteface Minstrels and Stage Europeans in African American Performance* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 1. For a discussion of the history of whiteface on the stage in the early nineteenth century, also see 19-23.

364 Ibid., 104.

365 Ibid., 13-14.

366 McAllister and Lima, although working on very different projects, discuss the importance of "artist-citizen" for Black performers and Mexican-American writers. Speaking in particular to Ruiz de Burton's *The Squatter and the Don*, but also women's testimonials more generally, Lima states, "They are part of the limited repository we possess of specifically Mexican American attempts to participate in the discourse of American citizenship after the signing of the treaty. Furthermore, their gendered nature speaks to the limited possibilities for women to insert themselves into the emerging discourse of nationalism, given the constraints of their class, ethnic ancestry, and inchoate cultural identity." He concentrates on the "limited possibilities Mexicans had for broad cultural and political inclusion born out of the crisis of 1848," a concern Ruiz de Burton was well aware of. See Lima, *The Latino Body*, 23-24.

367 González, *Chicano Novels and the Politics of Form*, 54.

complaints are laced with class and personal prejudices that taint the forcefulness of her critique."[368] The study, as I examine it here, is interested in history: that the perspective of the narrator is "authentic," that it reads like *Californio testimonios*. But, González concludes, although "her complaints" are "laced" with the personal, he is not so much concerned with a biographical criticism practiced by most scholars; rather, he engages the "historical-dialectical method" as initiated by Sánchez and Pita, to examine "the conflict between the narrator's reified consciousness and the novel's aspiration toward a critical approximation of the author's 'concreted historic situation'."[369] Understanding the divergence allows us to move elsewhere, that is, to move out of the biographical versus autobiographical, since Ruiz de Burton's novel is not about her life, even as veiled. She is too smart for this. Instead, to move into a different terrain that is about the genealogical but specific to the creation of a *narrator* for American literature. Instead of asking is the author-as-narrator from the community of "native Californians," "Spano-Americans," or that of "the conquered," we can ask a more accurate question like how does the narrator of extreme mobility disrupt the canon of masked-authors in the history of passing.[370]

Much work has been done on situating Ruiz de Burton alongside major authors of the nineteenth-century period, and many essays have already named her a pre-cursor to Chicano/Latino/a literary production of the post 1960s. Just as her novels fit within the literary world of nineteenth-century America, these novels also disrupt the traditional canon. González lists several scholars who have paired Ruiz de Burton with other novelists from across various literary genres: Sánchez and Pita with *The Octopus* (1901); Anne E. Goldman with *The Bostonians* (1886) and *Ramona* (1884); Gertrude Atherton and Julie Ruiz with *The Scarlet Letter* (1851); and, Carrie Tirado Bramen with "Up the Coulee" (1891) and "The Negro in the Black Belt; Some Social Sketches" (1899).[371] González proposes a comparison of historical/political periods, turning to Lukács' interpretation of Balzac's novels to concentrate on "the objective conditions of pre-1848 France and those of pre-1890 California."[372] Following his lead, I propose a comparison of a different kind, considering *Who Would Have Thought It?* within a new collection of passing narratives as adding to the story of Spanish masquerade, and also, as a seminal text in the history of passing that revises the traditional trope of male-only pairings of Spanish masquerade by introducing a female bonded-duo. Part of the task is reading *Who Would Have Thought It?* in a different group of texts, for what new things it might tell us, while also shifting attention to new definitions of class relations through the vocabulary of passing, so as to reconceptualize notions of dispossession and social mobility to reveal a more complex class history and the political and economic developments following the annexation of Mexican territories. The hope is to extend the conversation beyond what González calls "authorial intentionality," to instead consider that "the significance of a text often surpasses the immediate motives of an author."[373] Perhaps not "often" but usually, certainly a common place reading practice.

Ruiz de Burton is writing *about* a historical period when the literary device of passing captivated the literary imagination *and* coincided with the newly established border in the West. However, this *historia* is often neglected as part of, if not central, to the history of passing in

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368 Ibid., 54-55.
369 Ibid., 55 and 58.
370 John Morán González**,** *Border Renaissance: The Texas Centennial and the Emergence of Mexican American Literature* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009), 3-4.
371 See González, *Chicano Novels and the Politics of Form*, 59-60.
372 Ibid., 60.
373 Ibid., 54 and 58-62.

American literature. Passing was a central theme in anti-slavery discourse, but in *Who Would Have Thought It?* Ruiz de Burton transforms the theme in the context of a history at the southern borderlands, specifically the years before and after the U.S.-Mexico War of 1846-1848 and its coinciding with the Civil War of 1861-64. Ruiz de Burton joins the ranks of nineteenth-century American authors appropriating real historical performances of Spanish passing in their literature. Ruiz de Burton's novel, set from 1836-1872, encapsulates entirely the rise and development of the history of passing, strategically expanding the writerly possibilities within the passing narrative tradition, especially during this later part of the nineteenth-century period as other writers (like William Dean Howells, Mark Twain, Kate Chopin, and Charles Chesnutt) contributed to the genre. Ruiz de Burton provides is a unique formulation of the bonded-duo of Spanish masquerade that reminds us of European models of colonization, exposing the bedrock of U.S. strategies of territorialization (piracy, masquerading "Europeanness"), however, she is also writing to a knowing audience of readers: Ruiz de Burton reified the central trope of the (male) extravagant Spaniard and the (male-only) bonded-duo of Spanish masquerade. The contemporary discourse of racial passing that Ruiz de Burton engages centers on the Spanish heroine as seen through the racist perceptions of a New England housewife. The portrait of the bonded female pair—what might be viewed as the Anglo-American master of the northeast in "whiteface" (Mrs. Norval) *alongside* the Spanish stepchild of *la frontera* in "blackface" (Lola Medina)—helps to expand our knowledge of the passing narrative tradition specific to the 1840s and 1850s period, with writers particularly interested in the traditional trope of male-only pairings of Spanish masquerade and black-to-white passing versus passing in the other direction. Ruiz de Burton proposes a female-only pairing, for she too was captivated by figurations of the extravagant Spaniard in the American literary imagination.

To address the task of genealogy—that is, where Ruiz de Burton lands in the genre with her (dis)play of a *female* version of the bonded-duo of Spanish masquerade—we must also mention her study of the knight-errant and his loyal squire. She was familiar with Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quixote de la Mancha* (1605 and 1615). Like her contemporaries, she too wondered what the extravagant Spaniard had to do with it all. In the final lines of *Who Would Have Thought It?* she quotes Sancho Panza, who is resigning from the imagined position of governor of his own island after his one-day tenure:: *"'Cuando te den la vaquilla, Corre con la soguilla.'"* ["When they give you a little cow, / Run with the little rope"].[374] Ruiz de Burton creates a comical jab at the American system. The joke: after only one day Sancho returns to the Duchess requesting to abdicate his rule. Sancho's reason: too much work with the people, having spent the night defending the island, and the entire day handling court cases, which prevented him from eating and sleeping well. Ruiz de Burton ties Sancho's complaint of the *Californios*, a people now under new rule and filing objections through the courts to declare their land rights and citizenship. Ruiz de Burton's reading of *Don Quixote* shaped her writing. The closing of her first novel with Sancho carries into the title of her second novel, *The Squatter and the Don*, even the pseudonym carries a playful Cervantine twist to it: "C. Loyal" or *Ciudadano Leal* [Loyal Citizen], maybe Cervantes Loyal. Often overlooked however is the play she wrote based on *Don Quixote*, which Ruiz de Burton began writing well before she became a novelist, "around 1856," although publishing it between the publication dates of her novels, entitled *Don Quixote de la Mancha: A Comedy in Five Acts: Taken from Cervantes' Novel of That Name* (1876).[375] Here,

[374] See Ruiz de Burton, *Who Would Have Thought It?*, 305. See Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quixote de la Mancha*, Part II, Chapter 40.

[375] See Ruiz de Burton, *Conflicts of Interest*, 554. As noted, "One of the plays performed in the Mission theatre around 1856 was a comedic play that MARB herself had written. The play *Don Quixote de la Mancha: A Comedy, in Five Acts, Taken from Cervantes' Novel of that Name*, by Mrs. H. S. Burton, was not published until 1876, although it was copyrighted in 1875 by the author." Also see de la Luz Montes, "'Mine Is the Mission to Redress': The New

the mid-nineteenth century *author* resurrects the famous Don Quixote and relocates him into a *Californio hidalgo*.

As one late-nineteenth century critic stated: "It is quite possible that the author based her version [the play] on a careful reading of the Spanish original, since many names, quotations, and paraphrasings seem original with Burton and are not necessarily derived from the translation."[376] In the likeness of her contemporaries, Ruiz de Burton marvels at Cervantes' narrator, from whose writerly masquerade materialized the modern novel. Cervantes' author-narrator-character became a central motif in the works of famous writers, an instrument in narrative telling that future writers continued to experiment with even if they remained loyal to the adventures of present-day extravagant Spaniards.[377] Thus, Ruiz de Burton's extravagant Spaniard is a *Californio hidalgo* from Alta California who, alongside the Sancho as *Californio*, has been duped by the "Manifest Yankee" trick and thus *conquistado* by squatters as the enchanters "who pretend aristocratic lineage."[378] The two displaced *Californios* thus ride across stolen lands, aiming to redress the wrongs against their people and thus put an end to the enchantment.[379] The scenes she reimagines include those that other writers of the day also made reference to in their works, "including the battle with the rams and windmills, the Maritornes episode at the inn, the freeing of the galley-slaves, the braying of the judge-asses, the cave of Montesinos, the duke's castle, and many others."[380] As for her appropriation of Cervantes' author-narrator-character, that is a more complex literary play that relates to the mask she dons as a writer.

I measure Ruiz de Burton's irony, not in the writing of the play, but in the inscription written by Ruiz de Burton on a copy of the play that she dedicated and gave to Hubert Howe Bancroft. In that copy is Ruiz de Burton engaging in another *writerly masquerade* on the reader, in this case on Bancroft himself. For here we have the author desiring to be other than herself. It reads:

> Mr. Hubert H. Bancroft. A souvenir from.
>
> DON QUIXOTE
>
> The Author, MARCH 6, 1876.

Although the copyright page reads "by Mrs. H. S. Burton" (printed by John H. Carmany & Co., in San Francisco), the author knew very well that her name, "her presence on the page," remained in

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Order of Knight-Errantry in *Don Quixote de la Mancha: A Comedy in Five Acts*," in *María Amparo Ruiz de Burton*, 208. She states, the play was most likely performed on the San Francisco stage. According to de la Luz Montes, "Even before the 1860s, Cervantes's name was known not only by the Mexican Californios on the land but also by Americans on the waters of the Pacific. In 1836, the *Don Quixote* was an American ship that aided Don Juan Bautista Alvarado in his efforts to depose the Mexican governor, Nicolás Gutierrez, and pronounce California independent from Mexico." An enchantment with Cervantes reached the western waters of the Latin-Pacific, this author, and his knight-errant, were famous figures.

376 See Howard Mancing, *The Cervantes Encyclopedia* 2 vols (Westport: Greenwood, 2004), 89-90.

377 See Roberto González Echevarría, "Introduction," in *The Ingenious Hidalgo Don Quixote de la Mancha*, trans. John Rutherford (New York: Penguin Books, 2001), xxi.

378 Montes, "'Mine Is the Mission to Redress': The New Order of Knight-Errantry in *Don Quixote de la Mancha: A Comedy in Five Acts*," in *María Amparo Ruiz de Burton: Critical and Pedagogical Perspectives*, ed. Montes and Goldman (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 220.

379Ibid., 221.

380 Ruiz de Burton, *Conflicts of Interest*, 554.

the shadow of her deceased American husband: Henry S. Burton.[381] However, in this dedication, the first Mexican American novelist as playwright creates an ironic stance with the self-declared historian of *Californio* history, "Mr. Hubert H. Bancroft," who will reduce her voice to a whisper in his *History of California*. The souvenir in Bancroft's hands was not by and from Ruiz de Burton herself, or even by and from "Mrs. H. S Burton," but from "DON QUIXOTE / The Author"—that is, hers is a "passing as" the now resurrected knight-errant, finally as author of his own story: that the character has become "The Author" of his own play.

Of the dedication to Bancroft, de la Luz Montes emphasizes the tragedy of the play versus its comical possibilities in the hands of the author.

> The Don Quixote in the play may be male, but he is certainly an aspect of Ruiz de Burton's own self—a woman who began her life as an aristocrat but spent most of her adult life defending her aristocratic heritage despite her destitute and second-class citizenry on lands that have become American and appropriated by rogue squatters. The enchantment is that she is no longer an aristocrat but a poor woman who is lowly appropriate personally and publicly. The cruelty of her fate pervades her rendering of the play.[382]

There is much more to be said of her extravagant passing as the most famous Spaniard in all of history: "DON QUIXOTE The Author" now as *el Californio* or *la Californiana*. What should have been a "New Sensation" for Bancroft's *History of California* became a female voice "reduced to whispers" and "silenced in the Bancroft library archives."[383] She had slipped past the historian in her Spanish masquerade on this dedication page, but her name is not "concealed behind" that of her American husband, instead, and in the (dis)guise of "DON QUIXOTE / The Author," she stares back at Bancroft—back at us—slipping by us, as an extravagant *Californiana* masquerading as the most extravagant Spaniard of them all. Who would have thought that the mask that the "Native California Authoress" dons in the writing of *Who Would Have Thought It?* would be that of an author-narrator-character as "Literary Incognito" of many contradictions, of many potentialities, engaging in a cartographic and hemispheric turn on the literary page to decenter U.S. nation and remap an official *historia* as beginning in the Southwest. To borrow the words of Ana Castillo—a comment in reference to Ruiz de Burton's writing of *The Squatter and the Don*—"Call it what you will, but I'd say the woman had *cojones*."[384] So what does one call it?

Ruiz de Burton elevates the whisper to *un grito*, refusing to be masked by the historian, instead always donning her own masks. She can no longer slip past us, now that we can take hold of the extravagance in her performative play with the role of "The Author" in the publication of all of her works. This is her "Manifest Yankee" trick that she played on her mid-nineteenth century reader, including Bancroft. The layers of masking and unmasking in her role as "The Author" might be read as a Spanish masquerade, or better yet as the masquerade of *la Californiana* who takes hold of the multiplicity of her subjectivity as a plurality of self in order to access and traverse spaces of the literary, the historical, the social, and the political. Here she invokes *la conciencia de la mestiza* in her Spanish masquerade.

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[381] Padilla, *My History, Not Yours*, 111.
[382] Montes, "'Mine Is the Mission to Redress': The New Order of Knight-Errantry in *Don Quixote de la Mancha: A Comedy in Five Acts*," 222.
[383] Padilla, *My History, Not Yours*, 111.
[384] Castillo, "Introduction," xvi.

Ruiz de Burton, as "an ancestor to our contemporary Chicana identity," as Montes rightfully calls her, the author's inheritances matter: she descends "from the Spanish father" but only "culturally she comes from an Indígena inheritance," and we must also state that "[h]er inheritances are historical," having lived through the *historias* and *histories* of the U.S.-Mexico War, the French invasion of Mexico, and the Civil War.[385] Our trouble with Ruiz de Burton is, as Montes continues, "No, she is not what we would hope our ancestor to be like: a voice for the indigenous peoples. She cannot speak to us from that vantage point."[386] Our desire for Ruiz de Burton is as ancestor in the recovery project of a Hispanic literary heritage, that she must be Spaniard-*India* and that we are to be so lucky if she were a real *mestiza*. Because she is not what we would hope our ancestor to be like, Montes argues, she can only offer us *hope*, or in her words, the "hope to read a future mestizaje."[387] Our trouble perhaps is not with Ruiz de Burton's inheritances (or lack thereof), but the aesthetic force in her writerly masquerade.

Setting aside the biographical, Ruiz de Burton offers a different vantage point within literary terrain. Ruiz de Burton's authorial masquerade from behind the male mask and her early play with *Don Quixote*, render a multifaceted story of racial passing and racial subjectivity—from *la india* to "little black girl" to "blue-eyed Mexican" to "pure Spaniard blood." In *Who Would Have Thought It?*, English *histories* meet Spanish *historias* through the precarious performances of passing by *la Californiana* and the "Yankee" housewife, where we might envision a different history as beginning in the Southwest as well as envision a different future through *la mestiza*: "The future will belong to the mestiza."[388] Ruiz de Burton gives us a new mythos in her borrowing of the mask of the masters (masculine, Spanish, English, Anglo) to deploy a different type of masquerade, that of *la Californiana*.[389] From behind the mask of the patriarch, and from *his* vantage point, *la Californiana* achieves in her writerly masquerade an (un)mapping of *la frontera*. Through the imaginative passing of her novel's heroine—as told from the perspective of a carefully crafted narrative voice—Ruiz de Burton unmasks the "white" enchanters and their "Yankee" tricks, while exposing illusions and power structures through the (im)mobility of *female* passing figures of mid-nineteenth century America. Ruiz de Burton reveals a blind-spot in the American imaginary so that historical revisionism can happen. For it is here that, as Gloria Anzaldúa tells us, "*la mestiza* creates a new consciousness."[390]

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[385] Montes, "María Amparo Ruiz de Burton Negotiates American Literary Politics and Culture," in *Challenging Boundaries: Gender and Periodization*, ed. Joyce W. Warren and Margaret Dickie (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2000), 223.
[386] Ibid., 223.
[387] Ibid., 223.
[388] Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera*, 80.
[389] Ibid., 80.
[390] Ibid., 80.

Epilogue

The Missing *Historia* in the History of Passing; or, Moving Towards a Poetics of Extravagance in *La Conciencia de la Mestiza*

They always took her for an Italian, a Spaniard, a Mexican, or a gipsy. Never, when she was alone, had they even remotely seemed to suspect that she was a Negro. No, the woman sitting there staring at her couldn't possibly know.[1]

– Nella Larsen, *Passing* (1929)

She became known as simply La Loca. The funny thing was (but perhaps not so funny since it was the way of la gente to call a spade a spade, and she was called "La Loca" straight out), even La Loca's mother and sisters called her that because her behavior was *so* peculiar.[2]

– Ana Castillo, *So Far From God* (1993)

1. The Winding Up

For a dissertation on passing it seems most appropriate to end with the classic passing narrative of the traditional genre; of course, *Passing* (1929), Nella Larsen's famous Harlem Renaissance novella. Now, when we read this single line as alluded to in the first epigraph—of Irene Redfield seeing herself being seen by Claire Kendry *and* imagining herself passing as "a Spaniard" on the rooftop café of the 'Drayton Hotel' in Chicago—we know *her* story with my unspooling of the narrative of Spanish masquerade. It is also tempting to bring the dissertation to a close with a classic Chicana/o novel for comparison, especially *So Far From God* (1993), Ana Castillo's telenovela-like novel set in southern New Mexico about a mother and her four daughters, one of whom has risen from the dead, becomes the town's healer, and is renamed *La Loca Santa*. If we dare to read the passing by Irene and passing by La Loca in terms of Spanish masquerade, the fictions by Larsen and Castillo prod me to extend my analysis of the conceptual category of Spanishness, in addition to further theorizing the complexity of extravagant passing, yet as now evolved by twentieth century African American and Chicana/o literature. What do the extravagant Spaniard and the ghosting of Spanishness now look like on the pages of contemporary fiction? How might the missing *historia* in passing's history now challenge us read the traditional genre and its development?

From that single thread—the masked-writer's (mis)reading of Ellen Craft's racial impersonation as that of "Spanish extraction"—I have unspooled the narrative of Spanish masquerade that emerged from the *historias* and *histories* by Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, Gaspar Pérez de Villagrá and John Smith, and continued to resurface, especially in the nineteenth-century with historical fictions by Herman Melville, William and Ellen Craft, and María Amparo Ruiz de Burton. Following this single thread has led me to the missing *historia* in passing's histories. It is the daring performance by Ellen Craft and her "invention" of the extravagant *Spaniard* that has led us to something of our history—something of a submerged history of knowledge about the hemisphere—

[1] Nella Larsen, *Quicksand and Passing* ed. Deborah E. McDowell (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2009), 150. [Original work published in 1929.]
[2] Ana Castillo, *So Far From God* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1993), 25.

that we did not know we knew. I have imagined what her performance suggests in terms of knowledge, for here is a new kind of passing that not only changes how we think about the traditional genre of black-to-white passing, but also, alters our way of critiquing the history of race in the American imagination. What I have looked at and revealed in my unspooling of the narrative of Spanish masquerade is our present-day racial blind spot of the magnitude of this *historia* in passing's history. If we dare to look back at these *historias* and *histories*, at stake is the potentiality of arriving at something that was always there but that which we couldn't see.

In the preceding five chapters, I tracked the journeys and masquerades of a confounding figure of the borderlands, carefully unmasking *complete* and never before seen portraits of major protagonists, characters, and authors in American literature, while also drawing on the theory of extravagance in the performance of passing that we have missed. I examined and explored one variable—*Spanishness*, for its magnitude—in the act of extravagant passing and its writerly representation as a masquerade. Here, in this tightly unified group of texts is a cultural fascination—as much drama as myth—with a haunting figure deeply rooted in the American imagination, and a real historical figure who trespassed across the southern fringes of a continent in the process of becoming "American."

In *La Relación*, Cabeza de Vaca introduced a series of transformations in the (un)becoming of the Spanish conquistador, specifically his transformation into *la figura de la muerte* and then his masquerade as a Spaniard-*Indio* traveling with 'his' African-*Indio*, that set a trajectory for the dissertation. The passing narratives of my other chapters developed a perspective of this Spanish figure—reading its survival, escape, journeying, and extravagant passing—dramatizing its movement, transgressions, and trespasses across borders. In *Historia* and *Historie*, the New World experiences as narrated by the Spanish *capitan* Villagrá (across *la nueva México*) and the English *captayne* Smith (across Virginia) exposed journeying as an imperial performance of masquerading "Europeanness" during moments of cultural contact yet as always distracted by a Spanish model of colonization: together, Villagrá and Smith criticize Spanish presence at the Souths while also (dis)playing war with the rivaling other(s) in terms of masquerade. In these texts, these founding figures as characters at North America's beginning—the Spaniard, the English, the African—construct a fictional world of Spanish masquerade (or more broadly, ideologies made central to the formation of racial identities and transnationalist discourses) that, upon shifting to the long nineteenth century, we find their descendants and a ghosting of Spanishness lingering on the page: Melville's imagining of a New England captain's encounter with an ailing Spaniard and his loyal slave in the Latin-Pacific; the Crafts' narrative play with their passing out of American slavery as a bonded-duo of masquerade in which "whiteness" is not defined as Anglo or Spanish; and, Ruiz de Burton's imagining of a *Californiana* passing in New England from "Indian" to "little black girl" to "blue-eyed Mexican" to "pure Spanish blood" while the "Yankee" housewife as stepmother steals her wealth. The protagonists, characters, and authors in all these texts (dis)play a distraction with Spanishness, engaging in a performance of masquerade (both on and off the page) that speak to a collective understanding of the interplay between categories of race and nation, all the while romancing Spain's long shadow of *la leyenda negra* with the theme of extravagant passing. The authors of the passing narratives selected all foreground their stories of Spanish trespassing with the political and social problems framed by the disparate and transformative historical moments they are writing in.

What the study of Spanish masquerade in American literary history revealed is a submerged history of knowledge about the hemisphere that was used to powerful narrative effects. The texts by these writers all engaged the theme of passing while making visible *Spanishness* as a distraction in the stories they told of journeying at the Souths. All articulated a fantasy-heritage and a formula of (mis)reading the extravagantly passing body of the racialized other in Spanish (dis)guise. Consequently, these writers have not been read together until now. But, I should be made clear, the

texts analyzed in the dissertation are brought together because of the masked-writer of "An Incident at the South" (1849), who was provoked by Ellen Craft's extravagant passing into (mis)reading her passing out of American slavery as a Spanish masquerade. The dissertation is thus about extravagant passing *and* Spanish masquerade. Ellen Craft then, has led me to a unique cast of historical figures and characters, where I have grouped writers that might not otherwise have been brought together.

Because of Ellen Craft I have turned the pages of chronicles, Spanish *historias*, epic poems, English *histories*, historical novellas, slave narratives, and sentimental romance novels, to track this confounding figure of Spanish masquerade as well as investigate a ghosting of Spanishness in various scenes and settings. In each of these scenes and settings then, I have questioned the appropriation of the rhetoric of *la leyena negra* [the black legend] and its relevance to various portraits of extravagant Spaniard across time; that is, the use of this rhetoric in terms of a *historical confusion* where, like in Ellen Craft's extravagant passing, the physical rheumatic or "neurasthenia" condition of the antebellum era might be cross-racially intervening into the figure of the Spanish decadent colonial.[3] By placing an emphasis on the hypervisibilty of disability and illness in public spaces, as modern readers we can now see the extravagance in Spanish masquerade and complicate our analysis of how exactly the American imagination *imagined* this extravagant passing figure. These writers have forced me to inquire about specific kinds of categories or qualities that converge or mingle—race, gender, class, sexuality, disability, illness, transnationalism…etc.,—however intermittently and unorganized, in the continued resurrection of the extravagant Spaniard.

2. The Missing *Historia* in the History of Passing

To borrow the words of Allyson Hobbs, "Racial passing in the American context must be acknowledged as a subset of a much larger phenomenon that encompasses multiple disguises and forms of dissemblance."[4] As a historical phenomenon and artistic trope, racial passing is predominantly associated with African American literature, as a literary device used in slave narratives of the mid-nineteenth century and a trope that continued into the texts of the early twentieth-century and into the Harlem Renaissance period. As students of American literature, we have yet to scratch the surface of this "larger phenomenon," however. There are more characters of passing, particularly those trespassing beyond American borders and prodding us to examine this history within a hemispheric context. Racial passing is much more than the black-white color line of an antebellum past. Knowing that tradition is vital but lingering within the history of passing and that, which has slipped past us, is the *historia* of Spanish masquerade.

In the traditional genre of black-to-white passing, some scholars begin with Olaudah Equiano's *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* (1789) and his masquerade of becoming a self-made man. Other scholars begin in the mid-nineteenth century with classics like, Harriet Beecher Stowe's ***Uncle Tom's Cabin*** (1851-52) with the escapes of Eliza and George Harris, William Wells Brown's ***Clotel; or, The President's Daughter*** (1853) with the story of the tragic mulatta, William and Ellen Craft's ***Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom*** (1860) with the "married" fugitives escaping in dangerous "white" spaces of privilege, Henry "Box" Brown's *Narrative of the Life of Henry Box Brown, Written by Himself* (1851) who mailed himself to abolitionists in a wooden crate, and Herman Melville's ***Benito Cereno*** (1855) with the bonded-duo of Spanish master and West African slave duping the New England captain. Scholars also include works from a

[3] I am grateful to Mel Chen for her insight and correspondence pertaining to the association between "neurasthenia" condition, disability studies, and the figure of the Spanish decadent colonial.

[4] Allyson Hobbs, *A Chosen Exile: A History of Racial Passing in American Life* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014), 19.

diverse literary population (writers who appropriated the traditional trope in the latter part of the nineteenth-century), including William Dean Howells' *An Imperative Duty* (1892), Mark Twain's ***Those Extraordinary Twins*** and ***Pudd'nhead Wilson*** (1895), Kate Chopin's "Desiree's Baby" (1900), and Charles Chesnutt's *The House Behind the Cedars* (1900). Works specific to the Harlem Renaissance and classics include James Weldon Johnson's ***The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man*** (1912 and 1928), Walter White's *Flight* (1926), Claude McKay's *Home to Harlem* (1928), Jessie Fauset's *Plum Bun* (1929), Nella Larsen's ***Passing*** (1929), George Schulyer's *Black No More* (1931), and of course poetry by Chester Himes, like "Dirty Deceivers" and "The Ghost of Rufus Jones," and Langston Hughes' "Passing," "Who's Passing for Who?" (1952) "Dear Ma," and "**Spanish Blood**" (1923). If we were to re-read the list above, many of these writers take up an interest with the extravagant Spaniard (or Italian), prodding at a history of Spanish masquerade and extravagant passing, as if Spanishness and extravagance had been always been a part of the genre, but that which we've accidentally missed.

The rise of the Civil Rights Movement in the late 1950s became, as Gayle Wald discusses in her extensive study on racial passing in twentieth-century U.S. culture, "an era in which passing was largely perceived to be 'passing' out, to quote a phrase from a July 1952 article in *Jet Magazine*."[5] Although the Civil Rights Movement brought an end to Jim Crow, performances of passing across the color line persisted. As a recent call for papers has argued, "Passing has not passed because we have not yet fully examined its history." Scholars of the latter part of the twentieth century have drawn attention to racial performances intersecting with other categories of identification—cross-dressing, class passing (in terms of education and profession), sexual ambiguity, religious passing, feigning disability and/or illness, and traversing transnational borders (regarding citizenship/non-citizenship). With that said, we have yet to fully examine passing's histories outside of a black-white binary. Contemporary literature on the theme of passing still emphasizes this *one* history, with scholars turning to John Howard Griffin's *Black Like Me* (1960), Norman Mailer's "The White Negro" (1957), Grace Halsell's *Soul Sister* (1969), Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* (1970), Audre Lorde's *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name* (1982), Danzy Senna's *Caucasia* (1998), Philip Roth's *The Human Stain* (2000), Gregory Howard Williams's *Life on the Color Line* (1995), and Bliss Broyard's *One Drop* (2007). Yet passing persists among other cultures and it always has, especially as a performance that has evolved historically at different levels with more complicated racial taxonomies, not just a black-white color line of this *one* history: "A history of passing opens a window onto the complexity of the human experience."[6]

There are other racial contexts, other disputes over race, history, and citizenship, and other metaphors of race in relation to passing that we have yet to explore. Taking my cue from the masked-writer of "An Incident at the South," since the tradition's earliest thinkers also took their cur from this masked-writer, my aim in the dissertation has been to re-examine the history of passing and carefully unmask a central figure resurfacing across genres. What now has happened to the traditional genre in African American literature when we include Chicana/o literature, which finally helps us unspool the narrative of Spanish masquerade that cannot be detached from the rise of black-to-white passing in the discourse of anti-slavery literature? Turning to Chicana/o literature, such as precursors to the genre like Cabeza de Vaca's *La Relación*, Villagrá's *Historia* and Ruiz de Burton's *Who Would Have Thought It?*, and as in relation to canonical texts also discussing Spanishness, such as Smith's *Historie*, Melville's *Benito Cereno*, and the Craft's *Running*, is a necessary method for piecing together why the figure and narrative of Spanish masquerade appears at all in

[5] Gayle Wald, *Crossing the Color Line: Racial Passing in Twentieth-Century U.S. Literature and Culture* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000), 119.
[6] Hobbs, *A Chosen Exile*, 267.

traditional black-to-white passing narratives. The missing histories of passing are *historias*.

Just as Allyson Hobbs argues of mixed-race identities in the twenty-first century, the same is true for those identities in the twentieth and nineteenth:

> The long history of passing reveals that older racial formations never give way entirely. Shards and fragments of past racial regimes remain visible in contemporary ones. Even in historical moments widely heralded as turning points, when the nation seems to pivot and reverse course, the past still can be seen in the present. … The past is stubborn Time never begins again. As our present moment unfolds, we are often left to wonder if we have seen this movie before.[7]

The dissertation has thus pursued a long history of passing, in search of the missing *historias* of Spanish masquerade that we find in the classic passing narrative, such as Larsen's *Passing*, as well as contemporary Chicana/o works like Castillo's *So Far From God*. A Spanish history of the borderlands thus acts as a precursor to the study of traditional passing narratives. What I have realized along the way is the ghosting of Spanishness, as if a shadow extending from earlier histories of passing—the very texts of the dissertation: Cabeza de Vaca, Villagrá, Smith, Melville, the Crafts, and Ruiz de Burton. I agree with Hobbs, as she states in the final paragraph of her study, "Perhaps passing, as traditionally understood, has 'passed out' in the twenty-first century," though I would like add—as a sort of tongue-in-cheek—that passing literally has "passed out," that is, with the extravagant Spaniard as always ailing, fainting, dying, it always has.[8]

Now, what happens when we place Spanish masquerade at the center of the history of passing, uniting Chicana/o literary texts with those of the African American tradition? Taking my cue from the masked-writer of "An Incident at the South" (1849), who captured on the page Ellen Craft's racial impersonation as that of "Spanish extraction," I make central the narrative of Spanish masquerade in the history of passing which moves us in the direction of necessary comparative work between Chicana/o literature and African American literature in American literary history. With that said, what remains to be discussed in the final pages of the dissertation is what I have arrived at with my key concepts, that through the extravagant characters of my study I developed a theory of extravagance as linked to Spanishness, and that through my own extravagant passing—across genres, centuries, traditions—I have arrived at a poetics of extravagance as rooted in Gloria Anzaldúa's *la conciencia de la mestiza*.

3. Pursuing a Theory of Extravagance as Linked to Spanishness

What I have generated in the dissertation is a theory of extravagance; a surplus signification in the very performance of passing that we have missed. My intention is not to dismiss the violence of naturalized knowledge, yet the shift I want to make is towards interpreting extravagant (dis)plays of the absurd, the ridiculous, and nonsensical, as bodies moving into a realm of political potentialities of (un)becoming: the body as always way too dynamic, as always way too extreme, and as always way too terrifying and way too thrilling. Extravagance is a figuration process, as can be seen in the (un)becoming of the extravagant Spaniard in each of my texts. The thought yet to be more closely entertained is how one "becomes" extravagant. What exactly that transformation from

[7] Ibid., 269.
[8] Ibid., 278.

human subject into an extravagant subject means?[9] Certainly, one type of construction occurs in the moment of passing and passage, perhaps not permanently, but its temporality might very well be its essence. As if in only fleeting glimpses we might capture the fiction of it all, where all categories of identification are a kind of impersonation (be it tragic or comedic), all of which elude us during many moments of seeing and (mis)reading. When we refuse to see/experience the extravagance—when we are duped—it is in a preference for the *mask of innocence*, in our seeking familiarity, and desiring security. Performances that confound us do so because of the signifying elements that are too much, too many, and too different. These performances (dis)play a radical critique of categories in crisis, exhibiting what Marjorie Garber calls "a failure of definitional distinction, a borderline that becomes permeable, that permits of border crossings from one (apparently distinct) category to another: black/white, Jew/Christian, noble/bourgeois, master/servant, master/slave."[10] The extravagant passing body is all about "disrupting and calling attention to cultural, social, or aesthetic dissonances," but how is extravagance ontologically understood, imaginatively reconfigured, and ultimately read through the compulsory categories of identification? But how we are to consider extravagance as linked to Spanishness is a more complicated process of identification. Let us further explore the term "extravagance" within relevant fields of performance theory and queer studies—mainly grappling with terms like "passing," "queering," "imitation," "uncanny"—as a way of arriving at Spanishness.

Until these final pages of the dissertation, I have not yet fully developed a general theory of extravagant passing, even as I dip into discussions of passing from across fields and disciplines that offer a range on the subject of performativity, in particular performance studies, visual culture, gender studies, queer theory, cultural studies, and critical theory. Queer theory (let us say, Judith Butler, José Esteban Muñoz, etc.) will help us arrive at somewhat of an understanding of this kind of passing: Butler, for instance, will tell us that the performance of an identity necessarily entails a travesty of some sort, and Muñoz will help us to access the transformative political potentialities of these moments. Turning to post-colonial theory (Homi Bhabha), literary theory (Mikhail Baktin), and psychoanalytic theory (Sigmund Freud) will help us extend a formula of thinking around the enactment of identities within and beyond cultural practices of cross-dressing and drag performances so as to engage the terms specific to the dissertation, namely extravagance in the performance of passing *and* Spanishness in the performance of masquerade: Bhabha, for instance, will tell us that the ambivalence of mimicry produces excess and contradiction on the body, while Bakhtin and Freud will prod us to realize our blindness in the face of the obvious, how the *carnivalesque* and *unheimliche* waver between horror and thrill, nostalgia and romance, the familiar and unfamiliar. But, despite the overlaps that I show between all these thinkers, especially between the terms "passing" and "queering" and "extravagance," I want to arrive at a different formula of thinking: "queer" ≠ "extravagant." I am not avoiding the language of queer studies, only tentative as to how this discourse might boil down the original category of "extravagant" into one that is perhaps tiresomely familiar. Rather, the desire here is to cast "extravagant" elsewhere, in the space of the beyond or otherwise, and that in this pursuit of some other type of social contract that refuses to be cobbled with "queer" and thus be queered, what might be proposed is a different demand for better sociality.

One might assume that "queer" = "extravagant," for the very reason that "passing" is assumed to be = to "queering"; however, what occurs in guaranteeing this discursive formation is the dismissal of the paradoxical singularly constituted by extravagance. To say that representations

[9] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York & London: Routledge, 1990), 143-142.

[10] Marjorie Garber, *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1993), 16.

of "the extravagant" are the same as those of "the queer" is to declare a universal structure or model of what is absurd: the absurd is absurd because it is absurd, not because it is queer. Variability is of the essence. What I can say is that extravagance is ephemeral and fungible, always increasingly labile in its signifying in multiple categories all at once. To appreciate the divergence between "queer" and "extravagance" the terms must be disconnected, separated off, as if they had never been wed, in order to examine them analytically (as well as politically and poetically) for their foundational premises, at least for how the two relate to performance of passing. What we stand to learn is that within the semantics of it all, how these terms have been used historically, it turns out, the notion of "queer" never touched that of "extravagant." Indeed, the idea of "queer" is far from it, never having ever queered it. Yet it has queered "passing."

The term "queer," for its historical interpretation and usage in the history of passing is different than its evolved definition and present-day interpretation. The term "queer"—according to Noah Webster's *American Dictionary of the English Language* (1828)—meant: "cross, oblique, traverse; *querkopf*, a *queer* fellow; *querlen*, to twirl," and its "primary sense is probably to turn," as well as "Odd; singular; hence, whimsical." As for the term "extravagant"—as defined by Webster—meant: "Literally, wandering beyond limits"; "Excessive; exceeding due bounds; unreasonable"; and, "Irregular; wild; not within ordinary limits of truth or probability, or other usual bounds; as *extravagant* flights of fancy." By the early twentieth century, however, the term "queer" gained a new history of meaning in connection to racial passing, as is noted in Nella Laren's *Passing* (1929) and even James Weldon Johnson's *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man* (1912 and 1928). To contemplate and draw comparisons between the traits of these terms, I turn to the writer whose work has most animated my thinking and influenced my theorizing of extravagant passing in the dissertation. In her seminal essay "Passing, Queering: Nella Larsen's Psychoanalytic Challenge" (1993), Judith Butler sets psychoanalytic feminism on its ear by allowing categories of race, sexuality and class to offset and upset the central category of gender. She addresses my inquiry around queering, in particular her conceiving of the divergence between passing and queering. Cuing the reader to a scene in Larsen's *Passing*, when Irene Redfield is passing for "white" alongside her childhood friend Felise who cannot pass for "white," the pair run into Jack Bellew (Claire's "white" husband). Larsen writes: "Felise drawled: 'Aha! Been 'passing' have you? Well, I've queered that!'"[11] The unveiling or outing of "white" passing in this instance, Butler argues, is the *queering*: "queering is what upsets and exposes passing; it is the act by which the racially and sexually repressive surface of conversation is exploded, by rage, by sexuality, by the insistence of color."[12] At least here, queering unmasks the truth beneath the (dis)guise, it is the very moment of the "performative surprise," where queering is about "betraying what ought to remain concealed"; in other words, "*queering* works as the exposure within language—an exposure that disrupts the repressive surface of language—of both sexuality and race."[13] Queer theory provides an apparatus for interpreting unstudied dynamics of passing and it highlights something different in ambiguity than what I propose with the term "extravagant." The reason for extravagant's mobilization is that through its ambiguity we can arrive at a fundamental logic but that which is always transforming into newer fictions, that in its

[11] Larsen, *Quicksand and Passing*, 259.
[12] Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 177. [Original work published in 1993.] Even in the early twentieth century, Butler continues, "it seems *queer* did not yet mean homosexual, but it did encompass an array of meanings associated with the deviation from normalcy that might well include the sexual: of obscure origin, the state of feeling ill or bad, not straight, obscure, perverse, eccentric."
[13] Ibid., 177.

confounding of a supposedly consistent set of characteristics, this performative figure conjures fantasy and something else in the space of the otherwise.[14]

My interest in applying queer theory is as an interpretive practice and methodology for exploring the force of ambiguity in relation to the mobilization of queer in apposition to extravagant: the former's "exposure within language" is about full disclosure and outing, whereas the latter's is about the ability to move outward and inward, always concealing and revealing, but never fully disclosing the realities or fictions of the self or selves. It is necessary to distinguish "extravagant passing," too, from other relevant terms such as "imitation" (Butler) and "mimicry" (Bhabha). Indeed, passing is imitation and/or mimicry but "extravagant passing" is neither. The figure of extravagance passes precisely because it is extravagant. If "imitation," in terms of gender parody, as Butler argues, is a process that "reveals that the original identity after which gender fashions itself is an imitation without an origin," or "a production which, in effect—that is, in its effect—postures as an imitation," or if "mimicry," in terms of a post-colonialist reading, as Bhabha asserts, is "a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite," then we can surmise that extravagant passing, in order to be effective, continually produces not a slippage but slippages, rendering an excessiveness that prods at differences, always suspending contradictions and fictions of identities *visually* on the body—this is about a mode of plurality, this is about surplus.[15] The terms "imitation" and "mimicry" suggest a tension between the original and the copy, as a concern and adoption of norms, rules and boundaries, whereas extravagant passing is about the excess, about a different sophistication that does not care about norms, rules, and boundaries. That does not care about the original or the copy. Extravagant passing forces us to contend with the proliferation and surplus of it all.

How are we to figure Spanishness into extravagance? I read it as one integer that changes our thinking of extravagant passing. Perhaps this is all a question of organization: the basic formulation here is extravagant > queer. Because of the added integer of Spanishness then, the formula that I want to arrive at is: (Spanish) extravagance > queer. This type of extravagance as linked to Spanishness has its own style: it repulses, just as it fascinates, but in its transgression of multiple categories all at once, extravagance passes a point of incomprehension. It arrives at its own style as it prods at the process of (un)becoming, which assumes an unexpected and paradoxical form very different from the logic of passing, of queering. The figuration of the extravagant Spaniard is best understood when we engage the several domains of identification that constitute its specificity: Spanishness is thus a singular notion within the possibilities and potentialities of extravagant embodiment. The extravagant Spaniard as a borderland figure dwells in the domain of the racial grotesque—as ghastly, as grim—but its foreignness in the national scene is always familiar and often romantic. We might very well invite the thinking of Freud's notion of *unheimliche* or uncanny, and alongside and in relation to Bakhtin's discussion of (racial) grotesque, if only to conceive of a "borderlands uncanniness" and "racial grotesque" that helps us think through the various historical performances of the extravagant Spaniard where each is a figuration process is of its own historical accord.

A different kind of access is unfolding in each chapter of the dissertation, that we might say gets at what Freud describes as an "eerie strangeness" out of the cognitive dissonance of the paradoxical nature of being repulsed by and also attracted to that which is both familiar and peculiar. We might also state that this figure gets at what Bakhtin describes as the "racial grotesque" and all

[14] Annamarie Jagose, *Queer Theory: An Introduction* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 96. "Queer's ambiguity is often cited as the reason for its mobilization," to borrow her thinking, and as she continues, "Queer itself can have neither a fundamental logic, nor a consistent set of characteristics."

[15] Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 175-176. See Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 122.

that protrudes from the body, making it hybrid, transgressive, and always in motion.[16] The extravagant Spaniard is all about "eerie strangeness," and it is also all about the racial grotesque, but more similar to the latter, the extravagant Spaniard "can never be locked into any one meaning or form, historical period or even political function," and perhaps more importantly, what this suggests is "that any attempt to locate the grotesque is by definition bound to fail."[17] If we can allow the terms that I have placed before my reader to coalesce so as to render an exemplary force of extravagance, then what we can agree upon is that an extravagant body is always in the act of (un)becoming: "It is never finished, never completed; it is continually built, created, and builds and creates another body."[18] In all its ambivalence, extravagance volleys between fixed ideas and shifting notions, here is the confounding figure of the borderlands—the extravagant Spaniard—"as never locked into any one meaning or form, historical period or even political function": Cabeza de Vaca as *la figura de la muerte*, Villagrá and Smith masquerading "Europeanness," Melville's ailing Spanish captain as a romance of misery, Ellen Craft's "Mr. Johnson" as a most rheumatic and most romantic looking gentleman, and Ruiz de Burton's Lola Medina as diseased yet of an interracial racial mystique that is desirable. These Spanish masquerades are "invented," with the ghosting of Spanishness protruding through their bodies, yet as readers not misreading the performance of the Spanish decadent colonial, we can finally contend with the rhetorics on the page and at strategic play. Whether through religious rhetoric (Cabeza de Vaca), a history of slaves malingering to avoid labor (Ellen Craft), for instance, these extravagant Spaniards in their exaggerations of disability and illness can be located within the discourses of their historical periods that reinforced racist ideologies of a "death trope" as always sin the shadow of the historical ideology of *la leyenda negra*. There is an object of mockery at play in the narrative telling, as these extravagant bodies fetter in the discourse of the racial grotesque to pass out of captivity, slavery, and bondage.

There is a positive and negative pathos to a theory of extravagance. This is not a traditional performance of passing with a figure simply traversing across boundaries and merely queering the color line. To be sure, the historical presence of the extravagant Spaniard is about fantasy and a formula of (mis)reading. By understanding the (dis)play of extravagance we arrive at an understanding of the logic of Spanishness. As I see it, Spanishness is one interger in the formula or performance of extravagant passing—one element, one feature, it is additive. It is a type of performance that is about the intersectionality of several categories of identification. Fantasy, then, is conceived through the (mis)reading of those layers of identification. The fantasy of the extravagant Spaniard (and the trope of the bonded-duo of Spanish masquerade) is heightened by cultural nostalgia for a past, for materiality, where extravagance functions and responds to specific desires and pleasures of time and place. Writing about the extravagant Spaniard thus concerns readerly sensibilities, and the writers selected for the dissertation show us—(dis)play for us—the fantasy and the formula of popular culture, that is, they (dis)play for us how an American past characterized its desire for Spanishness, a desire for its extravagance.

What exactly does the spirit of extravagance in relation to Spanishness thus characterize, however? What does this confounding figure of the borderlands imply for us as modern readers? In

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[16] Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Helene Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 275. [Original work published in 1965.] I relate Bakhtin's term and understanding of "carnivalesque" to the term "masquerade," in which I re-read masquerade as a creative yet political act where social roles are turned-upside-down. Carnivalesque literature allows an imaginative site where the "real" may be tested and the fictions of identity and reality revealed.

[17] See Justin Edwards and Rune Graulund, *The Grotesque*, (New York: Routledge, 2013), 15.

[18] I revise the line: "The grotesque body, as we have often stressed, is a body in the act of becoming." See Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 317

ending the dissertation with two heroines of the borderlands who engage Spanish masquerade—Ellen Craft and Lola Medina—something must be said of a poetics of extravagance as perhaps linked to *la conciencia de la mestiza*. In her excessiveness, her multiplicity, her mutability, the surplus, and political potentiality, these heroines turn ambivalence into something else.

4. A Poetics of Extravagance in *la conciencia de la mestiza*

Following the dissertation's rhythm, it is with female heroines that I end the final chapters of this long genealogical project in search of extravagant representations of Spanish masquerade. If we can call Ellen Craft and Lola Medina "Spanish" heroines, the pair return us to the southern region—the borderlands, *la frontera*—that this figure is most commonly associated with, that racially conflicted space between the U.S. and Mexico, the space of the hyphen or, as Gloria Anzaldúa calls it, "*una herida abierta* [the open wound] where the Third world grates against the First and bleeds."[19] There is much to be said in ending with feminine embodied subjects of the border, figures who are of mixed-identities—*la española de California* and the mulatta from Georgia—who deploy female versions of Spanish masquerade at the very locus of racial division and intensity. I thus conclude the dissertation with hybrid geopolitical subjects of contradictions—figures of betweenness, women *de aquí y de allá*, and ambiguous bodies of possible Spanish extraction and *none at all*. Both are caught between the same two different worlds, forced to navigate through their *historias* and *histories*, and pass out of its geographical *herida abierta* that has shaped their borderland identity. My returning to their journeys of passing and passage out of subaltern subjectivity, the desire in these final pages is to leave my reader with a realistic image of her potentiality, that is, an image of her at the borderspace of the United States. There is a perception of knowledge prodded at by Ellen Craft and Lola Medina, what I imagine as a knowledge rooted in the female hybrid experience from the borderspace at the Souths: "In the Borderlands / you are the battleground."[20] It seems most appropriate to conclude with Gloria Anzaldúa's poetic musing on *la mestiza*, a figure who stands at the crossroads of *la frontera*, with all her contradictions, with all her multiplicity, and with a spirit of extravagance, because she passes, too, as a hybrid figure of potentiality, then and now.

Ellen Craft and Lola Medina embody and exploit a shifting cartographic-racial formation at the southern borderlands; a formation that discursively relies upon gendered geo-political imaginings that Ellen Craft's cross-dressing and feigning disability *and* Lola Medina's fading "black" skin paint are uniquely posed to embody and exploit. A major implication of this insight is that contemporary critics who project onto the text (or readers-in-the-past) a simple passing binary of black-white occlude the blind spot and opportunity afforded by expansionist-racist-sexual ideology which Ellen Craft and Lola Medina both seized, in a sense recreating that opportunity and allowing her life to slip past them—to slip past us—and extravagantly so. Ellen Craft's "invention" provokes the masked-writer to identify her as an ailing gentleman of Spanish extraction or distraction, and Lola Medina's "black" skin color stimulates the New England housewife to identify her as "the little black girl" or diseased "Indian" but also as threatening Spaniard. That Ellen Craft and Lola Medina embody and exploit many of the contradictions shaping the United States racial-geographical-political-gendered imaginary of the mid-nineteenth-century—such as black/white, light/dark, Spanish/Mexican, American/Spanish, American/Mexican, upper-class/middle-class, British/American—here, with these two heroines, the extravagant passing body of the borderlands

[19] Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 2007), 3. (*Italics mine.*) [Original work published in 1987.]
[20] Ibid., 3.

is that of multiple subjectivity that is born out of the borderlands.[21] For her, Anzaldúa states, "Rigidity means death," adding that "[o]nly by remaining flexible is she able to stretch the psyche horizontally and vertically."[22] This is the extravagant passing *de la mestiza*.

As a figure of multiple subjectivity, and described as the abjected of the United States, this is a figure who must live on the margins, the borderlands: "*Los atravesados* live here: the squint-eyed, the perverse, the queer, the troublesome, the mongrel, the mulatto, the half-breed, the half-dead; in short, those who cross over, pass over, or go through the confines of the 'normal'."[23] The figure of the U.S.-Mexico border region (even those states within its proximity so as to include Ellen Craft, but historically, as the masked-writer of "An Incident at the South" tells us, the American South could not distance itself from the Spanish borderlands) inherited the imperial histories that have marked color and nationalism on the female body, radically objectifying her and controlling her *movements* in and out of this borderspace, all the while reflecting a racialized, gendered, and class-based status here and beyond: "Those who are pounced on the most have it the strongest—the females, the homosexuals of all races, the darkskinned, the outcast, the persecuted, the marginalized, the foreign."[24] The racial (mis)readings provoked by the extravagant passing enacted by Ellen Craft and Lola Medina speak to this history of Anzaldúa's borderlands: the space between *here* and *there*—between U.S.-Mexico, between *Tejas*-Texas, and between *Aztatlán*-Southwest (Northern Mexico)—a space imagined as a bridge where building differences must occur, that is, where opposition must signify in terms of apposition. Because of all her contradictions, Anzaldúa's thinking relates to my interest in the transformative state of (un)becoming in which a hybrid identity must seek beyond binarism, as a negation of sorts to thus transcend to the otherwise: "We are a synergy of two cultures with various degrees of Mexicanness or Angloness. I have so internalized the borderland conflict that sometimes I feel like one cancels out the other and we are zero, nothing, no one."[25] Of this "borderland conflict," Anzaldúa approaches a different political strategy, arguing that the shadow of oppression has been inherited by the United States, who has become the new "territorializing machine" that, as Lawrence Grossberg defines it, "distributes subjectivity and subject positions in space," and also "diagrams lines of mobility and placement; it defines or maps the possibilities of where and how people can stop and *place* themselves."[26] America has now casted its own shadow across an Anglo-Americanized Southwest (Northern Mexico): "Admit that Mexico is your double, that she exists in the shadow of this country."[27] The history of this shadowy borderspace is the history of the formation of violence as a result of Spanish arrival and settlement in New Spain and *la nueva México*—here *la frontera* and the frontier meet—yet a racial violence prolonged by the United States with their "expansionary wars, colonization, juridico-immigratory policing, and coyote exploration of émigrés and group-vigilantes," extending "from Brownsville to San Diego, from Tijuana to Matamoros."[28] Here in this borderland region of dangerous cultural contact and centuries of trauma is not just a long history of violence on the land—"This land has survived possession and ill-use by five powers: Spain, México, the Republic of Texas, the United States, the Confederacy, and the U.S. again. It has survived Anglo-Mexican blood feuds, lynching,

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[21] Ibid., 79.
[22] Ibid., 81.
[23] Ibid., 3.
[24] Ibid., 38.
[25] Ibid., 63.
[26] See Lawrence Grossberg, "Cultural Studies and/in New Worlds," in *Race, Identity, and Representation in Education*, eds. Cameron McCarthy and Michael J. Shapiro (London: Routledge, 1993), 100.
[27] Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera*, 86.
[28] Norma Alarcón, "Anzaldúa's Frontera: Inscribing Gynetics," in *Displacement, Diaspora, and Geographies of Identity*, eds. Smadar Lavie and Ted Swedenberg (Duke: Duke University Press, 1996), 41-53.

burnings, rapes, pillage"—but also, a long history of violence on the body of its survivors, their descendants, and its inheritors.[29] Anzaldúa's understanding of this type of subjectivity, and what concerns her most, is the potentiality of the hybrid figure as occupying a space of plurality yet through the opportunity of affirmation of the contradictions followed by self-negation (not abjection) so as to transcend binarism.

Living between cultures, Anzaldùa argues, "*Nosotros los Chicanos* straddle the borderlands. … Neither eagle nor serpent, but both. And like the ocean, neither animal respects borders."[30] This is about twoness (as she prods at W. E. B. Du Bois' theorizing of "double consciousness") yet exceeding the bounds of their limitations. Anzaldúa argues for a borderless sense of identity formation or self-invention, in search of an otherwise in the face of what she calls "the Shadow-Beast." She is worth quoting in full:

> To avoid rejection, some of us conform to the values of the culture, push the unacceptable parts into the shadows. Which leaves only one fear—that we will be found out and that the Shadow-Beast will break out of its cage. Some of us take another route. We try to make ourselves conscious of the Shadow-Beast, stare at the sexual lust and lust for power and destruction we see on its face, discern among its features the undershadow that the reigning order of heterosexual males project on our Beast. Yet still others of us take it another step: we try to waken the Shadow-Beast inside us. Not many jump at the chance to confront the Shadow-Beast in the mirror without flinching at her lidless serpent eyes, her cold clammy moist hand dragging us underground, fangs barred and hissing. How does one put feathers on this particular serpent? But a few of us have been lucky—on the face of the Shadow-Beast we have seen not lust but tenderness; on its face we have uncovered the lie.[31]

It is this move, the awakening of the Shadow-Beast, that I want to engage, for here are the "unacceptable parts" of the self that Anzaldúa challenges us to confront, accept and embrace for new subject formation and separation from an economy of cultural, social and political exclusion: "How does one put feathers on this particular serpent?" That is, how does one take the feathers of the eagle and transform the serpent snake? Anzaldúa's reference to the Shadow-Beast might very well remind us of the work of Carl Jung and Sigmund Freud (and even Du Bois), though the metaphor at play (as it speaks through Spain's long shadow as now inherited by the United States) is an internal force—that "borderland conflict" within the self: this is about Western imperialism, racism, and patriarchy.

Anzaldúa shifts attention to the ambivalence of *la mestiza* in her duality—which is about seeing and being seen—yet moving beyond binarism, and moving beyond what Anzaldúa calls the *Coatlicue State* (the step towards *mestiza* consciousness) or what she defines as a "a third perspective—something more than mere duality or a synthesis of duality. … a symbol of the fusion of opposites." [32] This process of reconfiguration is about recovering the body of the

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[29] Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera*, 90. Also see Alarcón, "Anzaldúa's Frontera," 117. In reference to the border between U.S.-Mexico, she explains: "It is not surprising, then, that Anzaldúa should refer to the current U.S./Mexican borderline as an 'open wound' from Brownsville to San Diego, from Tijuana to Matamoros, where the former are considerably richer than the latter and the geopolitical line itself artificially divides into a two-class/culture system; that is, the configuration of the political economy has the 'third' world rub against the 'first'."

[30] Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera*, 84.

[31] Ibid., 20.

[32] Ibid., 69.

indigenous/colonized from the colonial imagination, indeed, a struggle in accepting the violence on the body but turning it into something else. This is about crossing over and passing out of the binarism, so as to arrive at something new: "At some point, on our way to a new consciousness, we will have to leave the opposite bank, the split between the two mortal combatants somehow healed so that we are on both shores at once."[33] Here, in the space of the hyphen, the figure of the borderlands must face her (un)becoming.

Anzaldúa's rejects the limitations of dualism, arguing for a "third element" in which the figure of the borderlands can be mobilized versus immobilized by the fantasy of normative physical and national unity. In a move towards new consciousness, Anzaldúa proposes a consciousness tolerant of ambiguity and without borders. She writes,

> The new *mestiza* copes by developing a tolerance for contradictions, a tolerance for ambiguity. She learns to be an Indian in Mexican culture, to be Mexican from an Anglo point of view. She learns to juggle cultures. She has a plural personality, she operates in a pluralistic mode—nothing is thrust out, the good the bad and the ugly, nothing rejected, nothing abandoned. Not only does she sustain contradictions, she turns the ambivalence into something else.[34]

Emerging from her text is a theorizing of the notion of *movement* as liberty, or the ability of the hybrid figure to move within and through yet away from binarism. This is the space of the otherwise, as I call it, where the subaltern can access the potentialities of multiplicity, where her sustaining of cultures and knowing them well is an ability of the always-transforming self. The thought that "she turns the ambivalence into something else" may very well prod at the essence of extravagance, that here at the site of subversive multiplicity, there is knowledge to be discovered in the *turn*. That in trusting the ambivalence and imagining a mobile and ever-shifting self and body, she effectively disarms and defuses hegemonic discourse: "It's an interesting path, one that continually slips in and out of the white, the Catholic, the Mexican, the indigenous, the instinct. In and out of my head."[35] Perhaps as culturally assimilationist but not; instead, allowing the self to shift between identities, in such a way that the self turns to categories only to pass out of them, as they intersect, conflict, connect, and evolve. The state of *la mestiza* consciousness is about transformation(s), about operating in multiethnic and multinational modes. It means the self has room for (dis)play in a space "where phenomena tend to collide" and "where the possibility of uniting all that is separate occurs," or that can occur and what will occur.[36] For Anzaldúa, however, "This work takes place underground—subconsciously. It is work that the soul performs. That focal point or fulcrum, that juncture where the *mestiza* stands."[37]

Yet this work can take place on the body—such as in the extravagant passing of Ellen Craft and Lola Medina, "where the possibility of uniting all that is separate occurred": "This assembly is not one where severed or separated pieces merely come together. Nor is it a balancing of opposing powers"; indeed, chaos happens, as does crisis, but so does the invention of something else.[38] Anzaldúa describes, "In attempting to work out a synthesis the self has added a third element which is greater than the sum of its severed parts. That third element is a new consciousness—a *mestiza*

[33] Ibid., 79
[34] Ibid., 79.
[35] Ibid., 19.
[36] Ibid., 79-80.
[37] Ibid., 80.
[38] Ibid., 80.

consciousness—and through it is a source of intense pain," certainly a pain of transformation, of (un)becoming, as Ellen Craft becomes "Mr. Johnson" as Lola Medina's skin fades from black-to-white—"its energy comes from continual creative motion and keeps breaking down the unitary aspect of each new paradigm."[39] What is gained in this process of transformation is an understanding of the performance of extravagance that perhaps the project is just now approaching.

Anzaldúa's injunction is also my injunction: I have sought the minoritized historical figure that unsettles the historiographies we accept as truth, unmasking these performers, but all to call attention a narrative of the past, as José Muñoz describes, "in the service of a futurity that resists the various violent asymmetries that dominate the present."[40] Where might we arrive at through *la conciencia de la mestiza*? Or, as Muñoz poses that I also want to pose: what is the "fantasy of futurity" that I seek to illuminate in proposing an aesthetic or poetics mapped by extravagance and now linked to *la mestiza*?[41] First, extravagant passing is about making visible the crossing of multiple categories of identification, as (dis)playing multiple subject positions and ambiguous identities. The extravagant body contains layers of embodiment and reads as a palimpsest: the body-as-text, or a composition with layers of writing, with multiple texts, many stories. It is able to return to old texts. It can mutate and migrate. It can generate and indicate a space and place in language and culture. It is a type of border crossing, though not as a move out of one category and into the opposite other but as a move that pulls self-identification *through* categories and with no end, creating that multi-layered palimpsest and permitting a layering of identities so as to pile the fictions onto the body, shaping a new consciousness. This transference *through* prompts a collisions or confusion, not necessarily a crisis among categories, challenging the firm lines set around each category, allowing the body to pass out, so to speak. It charms and enchants in its transgression. The thing to remember about extravagant is that there is an insistence on multiplicity, the signification in multiple categories all at once—an additive, the plurality, surplus—as intersecting variables in the category of color, then we come to understand passing quite differently, where now color-race looks different, too.

Extravagance needs more of an emphasis than the category of the "queer," which is why I turn to *la mestiza* as more like a category of social priority and argument. Like *la mestiza*, extravagance is a category that is about the procedure, about a process of transformation(s), teasing at languages of histories and *historias*: indigeneity, *la leyenda negra*, expansionism, slavery… etc. What I can say: the queer content of extravagance leads to a notion that exceeds passing, as surplus bound rather than survivalist: this is what extravagant is all about.[42] Extravagance upsets passing, the very survivability of passing, which is precisely what makes passing about extravagance. To say something about the extravagant idea, as a mood, as an attitude of surviving, as a style even, to pass to surpass, and maybe rooted in a queer concept of passing, but its excessive structure of queerness (a way that queer concept shows up) is a typology you can do something with. Extravagance prods at a different discourse of power, another poetics, where extravagance is surplus bound, as I would like to think, in the terrain of *la mestiza*. A legibility of extravagance is not just about calling it queer. All passing cannot be defined as extravagant; thus, non-extravagant passing = passing. Perhaps this is all a hope of mine to keep open the play of textual possibility versus concrete meaning, that I seek abundance and the infinite, as a way of imagining the future of our very own (un)becoming. In that, to learn

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[39] Ibid., 80

[40] José Esteban Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* (New York: New York University Press, 2009), 84.

[41] Ibid., 1.

[42] I am grateful for my friendship with Seulghee Lee as he offered guidance throughout the dissertation especially in these final pages as I/we theorized "extravagant" in opposition and apposition to "queer."

from Muñoz, "we must never settle for that minimal transport; we must dream and enact new and better pleasures, other ways of being in the world, and ultimately new worlds."[43] For that reason, extravagant cannot be reduced to queer, but is a different kind of queer that has never been queered. With those new worlds comes knowledge, which is perhaps the missing category in my discussion of extravagant passing. To propel us onward, these figures of the dissertation—I would like to think—get us to the *otherwise*, in our seeing the struggle of *here* and *there*, but also in seeing a *then* and *now*.

The collection of passing narratives compiled in the dissertation do not come close in scope to discuss the struggle, nor do I capture a full understanding of Spanish masquerade in the history of passing at whole, or even scrape at the surface of extravagant performances and what they might truly unfold for us within the realm of the aesthetic. Nevertheless, what these figures do in all their extravagance, they do well: what they imagine, what they propel us towards (into the space of the beyond) is how a submerged history of *knowledge* illuminates a very different romance, as if we suddenly escaped the confines of the old and glimpsed the potentiality of the new.

Extravagance is about the illumination of knowledge, of what perhaps we thought we knew yet suddenly it glares back at us—"not lust but tenderness," as Anzaldúa tell us—and there, "on its face we have uncovered the lie." This dissertation about extravagant passing is actually about passing out—Ellen Craft's passing out, Lola Medina's passing out, and Babo's passing out—and extravagantly so. There is an exit (as Hegel might argue): this is not about existential impasse. This is, as Anzaldúa argues, about knowledge:

> Every increment of consciousness, every step forward is a *travesía*, a crossing. I am again an alien in new territory. And again, and again. But if I escape conscious awareness, escape 'knowing,' I won't be moving. Knowledge makes me more aware, it makes me more conscious. 'Knowing' is painful because after 'it' happens I can't stay in the same place and be comfortable. I am no longer the same person I was before.[44]

I must read these lines by Anzaldúa as now illuminated by the story I have been so eager to tell: Ellen Craft's extravagant passing and Spanish masquerade out of slavery. Hers is a performance that we can interpret for what it suggests about knowledge. Her knowledge is the missing category in my theorizing of extravagance. This is about a subalternization and deligimitization of epistemic knowledge, as Anzaldúa asserts. That the return to the old self is impossible, yet the knowledge of that older self is always retained and made essential to moving forward, to passing out, to exceeding the bounds of binarism in the hope of generating something else in the extravagance. What did Ellen Craft know, in her deploying of a history of the borderlands, and to such great effect that she is changing for us historical outcomes? And did she know it?

Ellen Craft has forced me to rethink assumptions within a different group of texts and the imaginative world therein. The genius is *her* deploying of a history of knowledge about the hemisphere by extravagantly passing through passing's histories. Here is the narrative of Spanish masquerade in the story of Ellen Craft, and while we see Ellen Craft as inventing the extravagant Spaniard, this is not an invented figure. This figure has a narrative: it has this whole other life. And it is in the extravagance of her passing—which contains an essence, a mode, a spirit—that we might say pushes us onward so as to glimpse *la mestiza* consciousness, a plurality accessed only by the female figures of the borderlands—in her ability to always (un)mask, always (un)become.

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[43] Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia*, 1.
[44] Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera*, 48.

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