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two parts. The first part studies esthetics and neocolonialism in twentieth-century modernisms, focusing on some writers of the 1920s–40s in Spanish America and Brazil. The second part reflects on mobility in the present phase of neoliberal globalization, whose outlines were only coming into view when the book was first written. I examine new patterns of mobility, such as reverse diasporas from ex-colonies to the metropole, and new recyclings of the archives of travel. At the suggestion of some readers, the introduction to the book has been substantially rewritten to make it more accessible. There are a few new illustrations.

A year at the Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores de Antropología Social in Guadalajara, México (1998–99), was a life-changing opportunity to think about modernity, migration, and many other things. Chapter 10 was drafted during a year at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University, a great gift. Parts of it appear in an earlier guise, in Mabel Moraña, Enrique Dussel and Carlos Jauregui (eds) *Coloniality at Large: Latin America and the Postcolonial Debate* (Durham: Duke UP, in press). It will appear in the new Spanish edition of the book (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, forthcoming). The children referred to in the 1992 preface are now bright young adults who critique my drafts; Renato Rosaldo remains, miraculously, my most precious interlocutor; the friends cited in the first preface are still friends. I'm grateful to all of them in innumerable ways, and to the dense vitality of New York City that now greets me every day.

New York, February 2007

1 Introduction: Criticism in the contact zone

In Listowel, Ontario, the Canadian farm town where I grew up, one corner of the main intersection was occupied by Livingstone's Drugstore, run by Dr. Livingstone. Dr. Livingstone was a physician turned druggist, but for children his store was above all the place where you could buy practical jokes, or have them played on you by Dr. Livingstone, especially if you went in on an afternoon when Mrs. Livingstone wasn't around. It was through Dr. Livingstone, for example, that I was introduced to the miracles of the dribble glass, the squirt ring, the Chinese handcuff, the phony pack of Juicy Fruit Gum that snapped down on your finger, and, around 1955, a horrifying new item Dr. Livingstone secretly sold to my brother and his friend: plastic vomit. I was therefore unsure he really meant it the day he produced a sheet of faded writing in a frame and said it was a letter written by a great uncle of his who had been a famous missionary in Africa. Only after consulting at Sunday school with Miss Roxie Ellis, herself a former missionary, did I take the story for true. "Our" Dr. Livingstone was a grand nephew of the "real" Dr. Livingstone in Africa. English Canada was still colonial in the 1950s: reality and history were somewhere else, embodied in British men.

The name on the faded letter followed me, trailing its colonial plumage. When they installed sewers in Listowel they decided to upgrade all the street names too. Ours was changed from Raglan Street to Livingstone Avenue. The town itself had been named a century before by the postmaster, after his wife's birthplace back in Ireland. My sister met up with that piece of history in the mid-1970s, also in Africa. In the lobby of the Nairobi YWCA she met Dame Judith Listowel, a wiry, penniless, and eccentric adventuress in her seventies. She was disgusted at the cost of hotels and barely interested in the town that bore her name in Canada. A few years after that, doing research in California, I came across a book by Dame Judith. She must just have finished writing it when my sister met her – it was a biography of David Livingstone. I don't know what became of Dame Judith, but my mother grew old in Listowel, in a retirement home named Livingstone Manor. "English-speaking peoples of the world, unite!" All his life my father held passionately to that nostalgic, neo-imperial call. Even after they changed his street name and my

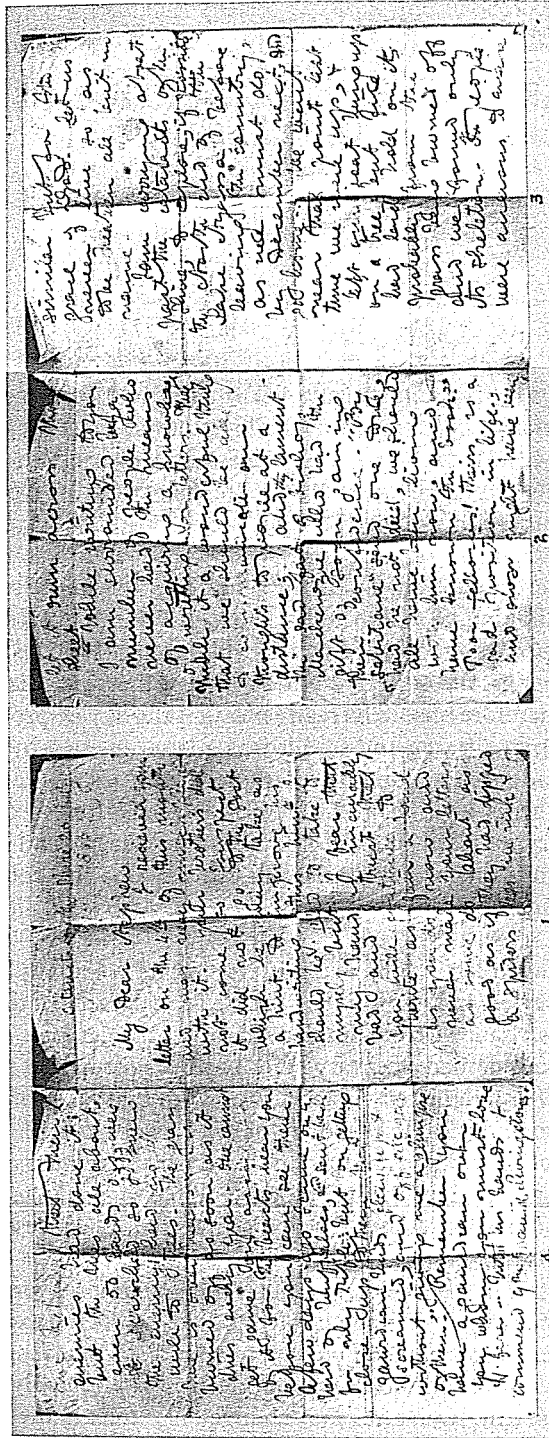


Plate 1 David Livingstone's letter to his twelve-year-old nephew, John Livingstone, July 20, 1863. The letter begins: "My dear nephew: I received your letter on the 4th of this month and was very much pleased with it. Your brother's did not come so I suspect it did not go to the post, which he may take as a hint to improve his handwriting." Livingstone comments on the "sad position" of those who have no access to letters, then speaks of his plans to visit the cataracts of the Shire, and of grassfires that make hunting difficult. Courtesy of John Livingstone's grandson, David Livingstone.

sister came back from Nairobi, he never conceded that they already were united, or at least stuck together, across the globe, with words. Livingstone, Listowel, Livingstone. The syllables wound through our lives, threading together by force of repetition things that were distant, discontinuous and unreal. Living stone. This is how empire makes the world meaningful to its subjects, how it weaves itself into the everyday. In the Listowel where I lived, empire made us part of a history that was somewhere else made by people who were not us. At the same time, when it came to Africa, we knew who we were. Sunday school missionary stories built the color line into our imaginations. That was part of their job, to create us as subjects of empire, give us our place in the order.

This story has a sequel. In the summer of 2006 while considering whether to proceed with a new edition of *Imperial Eyes*, I spent some time at our family cottage on Lake Huron. The neighbor came by to say he'd had a phone call. "Somebody wants to meet you," he told me, "he says you wrote a book." Next day a tall, elegant, white-haired man strolled into the yard, held out his hand and said "Hello, I'm David Livingstone." It was the doctor-druggist's son. Someone had shown him this book, and he wanted to meet the author who'd written about his father, the drugstore, and his famous namesake. He had two things to tell me: first, in the future I should make my writings less difficult to understand, and second, his father had left him the framed letter. Would I like a copy? Indeed I would! And, with its owner's permission, here it is (plate 1). Livingstone, Listowel, Livingstone.

In the last decades of the twentieth century, processes of decolonization opened the meaning-making powers of empire to scrutiny, as part of a large-scale effort to decolonize knowledge, history, and human relations. This book is part of that effort. Its main, but not its only, subject is European travel and exploration writing, analysed in connection with European economic and political expansion since around 1750. The book aims to be both a study in genre and a critique of ideology. Its predominant theme is how travel books written by Europeans about non-European parts of the world created the imperial order for Europeans "at home" and gave them their place in it. I ask how travel writing made imperial expansion meaningful and desirable to the citizenries of the imperial countries, even though the material benefits of empire accrued mainly to the few. Travel books, I argue, gave European reading publics a sense of ownership, entitlement and familiarity with respect to the distant parts of the world that were being explored, invaded, invested in, and colonized. Travel books were very popular. They created a sense of curiosity, excitement, adventure, and even moral fervor about European expansionism. They were, I argue, one of the key instruments that made people "at home" in Europe feel part of a planetary project; a key instrument, in other words, in creating the "domestic subject"¹ of empire.

I take up such questions by reading particular clusters of travel accounts connected with important historical transitions in the imperial enterprise. One chapter discusses eighteenth-century European writings on southern

Africa in the context of inland expansion and the rise of natural history (chapter 3); others consider the rise of sentimental travel writing through materials from the Caribbean and the early British exploration of West Africa (chapters 4 and 5); others examine how travel writers reinvented South America during the period of Spanish American independence (chapters 6 and 7); another traces the mutations of the imperial imagination from the Victorians in Central Africa (1860–1900) to Third World travelers of the 1960s and 1980s (chapter 9); and a new chapter written for this second edition looks at how travel tales are being recycled to represent the new wave of globalization since 1980.

These case studies are shaped by a number of shared questions. With what codes has travel and exploration writing produced “the rest of the world” for European readerships at particular points in Europe’s expansionist process? How has it produced Europe’s evolving conceptions of itself in relation to something it became possible to call “the rest of the world”? How do the signifying practices of travel writing encode and legitimate the aspirations of economic expansion and empire? At what points do they undermine those aspirations? What did writers on the receiving end of European intervention do with those European codifications of their reality? How did they claim, revise, reject and transcend them? How have Europe’s subordinated others shaped Europeans’ constructions of them and the places they inhabit? Or Europe’s understanding of itself? While the imperial metropole tends to imagine itself as determining the periphery (in the emanating glow of the civilizing mission or the cash flow of development, for example), it habitually blinds itself to the reverse dynamic, the powers colonies have over their “mother” countries. For instance, empires create in the imperial center of power an obsessive need to present and re-present its peripheries and its others continually to itself. It becomes dependent on its others to know itself. Travel writing, among other institutions, is heavily organized in the service of that need.

In these case studies I make a strong methodological assumption: that important historical transitions alter the way people write, because they alter people’s experiences and the way people imagine, feel and think about the world they live in. The shifts in writing, then, will tell you something about the nature of the changes. Such shifts in writing, if they are historically profound, affect more than one genre. That fact made it important to ask how the shifts that took place in travel writing intersected with other forms of knowledge and expression. The book begins, for example, by considering how European travel writing interacted with enlightenment natural history to produce a Eurocentered form of global or “planetary” consciousness. I consider the classificatory schemes of natural history in relation to the vernacular peasant knowledges they sought to displace. Later, scientific and sentimental travel writing are discussed as paired, bourgeois forms of authority that supersede older traditions of survival literature. Within the sentimental mode, relations are drawn between travel narrative and slave

autobiography, which appear at about the same time and act upon each other. I examine the impact of early nineteenth-century feminism on travel writing, focusing on a rather unpredictable division of labor between female and male writers. Travel writing of the 1960s is juxtaposed with tourist propaganda on the one hand and *testimonio* and oral history on the other.

But the more I studied the huge corpus of travel literature written by Europeans over two hundred and fifty years, the more aware I became of the participants whose voices I wasn’t hearing. There was a huge gap in the archive. What had the people who received these visitors thought of them and the imperial designs they brought with them? How and in what forms of expression had they interpreted the historical process they were living? From time to time as I read, I glimpsed the ongoing ways empire was coded by those in whose lives it intervened – coded in ceremony, sculpture and painting, in dance, parody, philosophy and history; in expressions unwitnessed, suppressed, lost, or simply overlaid with repetition and unreality. It calls for the story of another letter.

In 1908 a Peruvianist named Richard Pietschmann was scavenging in the Danish Royal Archives in Copenhagen when he came across a manuscript he had never seen before. It was dated in Cuzco in the year 1615, some four decades after the final fall of the Inca Empire to the Spanish, and signed with an unmistakably Amerindian, Andean name: Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala. (*Guaman* in Quechua means “eagle” or “falcon” and *poma* means “puma.”) Written in a mixture of Quechua and rough, ungrammatical Spanish, the manuscript was a letter addressed by this unknown Andean to King Philip III of Spain. Pietschmann was stunned to find that the letter was twelve hundred pages long. There were nearly eight hundred pages of written text and four hundred elaborate line drawings with explanatory captions. Titled the *New Chronicle and Good Government and Justice* (“*Nueva Cronica y buen gobierno i justicia*”), the manuscript proposed nothing less than a new view of the world. It began by rewriting the history of Christendom to include the indigenous peoples of America, then went on to describe in great detail the history and lifeways of the Andean peoples and their leaders. This was followed by a revisionist, critical account of the Spanish conquest, and hundreds of pages documenting and denouncing Spanish exploitation and abuse. The four hundred illustrations followed the European genre of the captioned line drawing but, as subsequent research revealed, they deployed specifically Andean structures of spatial symbolism (see plates 2 and 3). Guaman Poma’s letter ends with a mock interview in which he advises the Spanish King as to his responsibilities, and proposes a new form of government through collaboration of Andean and Spanish elites.

No one knew (or knows) how this extraordinary work got to the library in Copenhagen, or how long it had been there. No one, it appeared, had ever bothered to read it, or even figured out how to read it. Quechua was not considered a written language in 1908, nor Andean culture a literate culture.



Plate 2 Guaman Poma de Ayala's drawing of biblical creation.² The caption reads "El primer mundo/Adan, Eva," "The first world/Adam, Eve." The drawing is organized according to Andean symbolic space, with Adam and the rooster on the "male" side of the picture under the male symbol of the sun and Eve, the chickens and children on the "female" side, marked by the moon. The two spheres are divided by a diagonal, here marked by Adam's digging stick, a basic tool of Andean agriculture. The Inca Empire was likewise laid out in four kingdoms divided by two diagonals intersecting at the city of Cuzco.

Pietschmann prepared a paper on his find which he presented in London in 1912. Its reception, by an international congress of Americanists, was confused. It took another twenty-five years for a facsimile edition of Guaman Poma's work to appear in Paris; the few scholars who worked on it did so in isolation. European scholars in the early twentieth century lacked tools for grasping Guaman Poma's text. With the reading habits of the time, they judged it in simple terms of truth and falsehood, accuracy and inaccuracy, and found it wanting. Through the lens of Eurocentric elitism, the masterpiece looked semiliterate and ill-formed. In the 1970s, scholars developed more sophisticated ways of interpreting textual representations, both fictional and non-fictional. Points of view anchored in the colonies and ex-colonies entered the dialogue, challenging Eurocentric values and bringing into view the force of colonialism and empire in creating the modern world. At long last, Guaman Poma's text began to be read as the extraordinary intercultural *tour de force* that it was.³

To be read, and to be readable. The readability of Guaman Poma's letter today is another sign of the changing intellectual dynamics through which imperial meaning-making has become a subject of critical investigation. His elaborate intercultural text and its tragic history exemplify the possibilities and perils of writing in what this book calls "contact zones", that is, social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination – such as colonialism and slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out across the globe today. This key term is discussed more fully below.

It takes at least these two letters – the seemingly inevitable monolingual page from an Englishman in Africa to his nephew, fading on the wall of a rural drugstore in Canada, and the seemingly incredible twelve hundred bilingual pages from an unknown Andean, lost in an archive in Copenhagen – to even begin to suggest the vast, dense, and discontinuous history of imperial meaning-making that is the subject of this book. If one studies only what the Europeans saw and said, one reproduces the monopoly on knowledge and interpretation that the imperial enterprise sought. This is a huge distortion, because of course that monopoly did not exist. People on the receiving end of European imperialism did their own knowing and interpreting, sometimes, like Guaman Poma, using the Europeans' own tools. This is why the term transculturation appears in my title. Ethnographers have used this term to describe how subordinated or marginal groups select and invent from materials transmitted to them by a dominant or metropolitan culture.⁴ While subjugated peoples cannot readily control what the dominant culture visits upon them, they do determine to varying extents what they absorb into their own, how they use it, and what they make it mean. Transculturation is a phenomenon of the contact zone. In the context of this book, the concept of transculturation serves to raise several sets of questions. What do people on the receiving end of empire do with metropolitan modes of representation? How do they appropriate them? How do they talk back? What materials can

one study to answer those questions? In this book, I only begin to address this last question. Indigenous texts and drawings (like Guaman Poma's letter) provide some examples. Another key source is literary texts by writers from colonized places. Writers in Europe's colonies, ex-colonies, and neo-colonies find they must grapple with European travel literature as they develop ways of representing themselves. Often the European archive provides valuable raw material on which to exercise a decolonizing creativity. One chapter of this book is dedicated to examining how Spanish American writers in the early nineteenth century selected and adapted European discourses on America to their own task of creating autonomous decolonized cultures while retaining European values and white supremacy (chapter 8). It is a study in the dynamics of creole self-fashioning. The new chapter added here extends this approach to Latin American writers of the 1930s and 40s, and the creative potential they found in the exasperating intersections of neo-colonialism and modernity.

In the attempt to develop a dialectic and historicized approach to the writing of empire, I have crafted some terms and concepts along the way. One coinage that recurs throughout the book is the term "contact zone," which I use to refer to the space of imperial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict. I borrow the term "contact" here from linguistics, where the term contact language refers to an improvised language that develops among speakers of different tongues who need to communicate with each other consistently, usually in the context of trade. Such languages begin as pidgins, and are called creoles when they come to have native speakers of their own. Like the societies of the contact zone, such languages are commonly regarded as chaotic, barbarous and lacking in structure. (Ron Carter has suggested the term "contact literatures" to refer to literatures written in European languages from outside Europe.⁵) "Contact zone" in my discussion is often synonymous with "colonial frontier." But while the latter term is grounded within a European expansionist perspective (the frontier is a frontier only with respect to Europe), "contact zone" shifts the center of gravity and the point of view. It invokes the space and time where subjects previously separated by geography and history are co-present, the point at which their trajectories now intersect. The term "contact" foregrounds the interactive, improvisational dimensions of imperial encounters so easily ignored or suppressed by accounts of conquest and domination told from the invader's perspective. A "contact" perspective emphasizes how subjects get constituted in and by their relations to each other. It treats the relations among colonizers and colonized, or travelers and "travelees," not in terms of separateness, but in terms of co-presence, interaction, interlocking understandings and practices, and often within radically asymmetrical relations of power.⁶

A second term I use often in what follows is "anti-conquest." I use this

term to refer to the strategies of representation whereby European bourgeois subjects seek to secure their innocence in the same moment as they assert European hegemony. The term "anti-conquest" was chosen because, as I argue, in modern travel and exploration writing these strategies of innocence were constructed in relation to older imperial rhetorics of conquest associated with the absolutist era. The main protagonist of the anti-conquest is a figure I sometimes call the "seeing-man," an admittedly unfriendly label for the white male subject of European landscape discourse – he whose imperial eyes passively look out and possess.

A third and final unconventional term I use is "autoethnography" or "autoethnographic expression." This term in either form refers to instances in which colonized subjects undertake to represent themselves in ways that *engage with* the colonizer's terms. If ethnographic texts are a means by which Europeans represent to themselves their (usually subjugated) others, autoethnographic texts are texts the others construct in response to or in dialogue with those metropolitan representations. Guaman Poma reviews Inca history and customs in his *New Chronicle*, and appropriates the Spanish chronicle form to do so. This is a canonical instance of autoethnographic representation, as are the visual works of Andean artists in plates 2, 3, 4, and 26. Autoethnographic texts differ from what are thought of as "authentic" or autochthonous forms of self-representation. In the Andes, for example, there were no writing systems when contact with the Spaniards took place. Elaborately coded knotted cords called *quipus* were used to store information, including information Guaman Poma later wrote down. The *quipus* are an autochthonous or "purely" Andean form (though it may well have come from somewhere else). Today nobody knows how to decipher them. Autoethnography, in contrast, involves partly collaborating with and appropriating the idioms of the conqueror – e.g. alphabetic writing, Spanish language, the chronicle form, the line drawing, all of which Guaman Poma took over and transculturated. Often, as in Guaman Poma's case, autoethnography appropriates the idioms of travel and exploration writing, merging or infiltrating them to varying degrees with indigenous modes. Often, like Guaman Poma's letter, it is bilingual and dialogic. Autoethnographic texts are typically heterogeneous on the reception end as well. That is, they are usually addressed both to metropolitan readers and to literate sectors of the speaker's own social group. They are bound to be received very differently by these different readerships. Often such texts constitute a group's point of entry into metropolitan lettered culture.⁷

Though I have been unable to pursue the matter in this book, I believe autoethnographic expression is a widespread phenomenon of the contact zone, and will become important in unraveling the histories of imperial subjugation and resistance as seen from the site of their occurrence.

The outlines of this study are intentionally broad, but they open out from a point of departure that is quite specific. It is marked in the mid-eighteenth

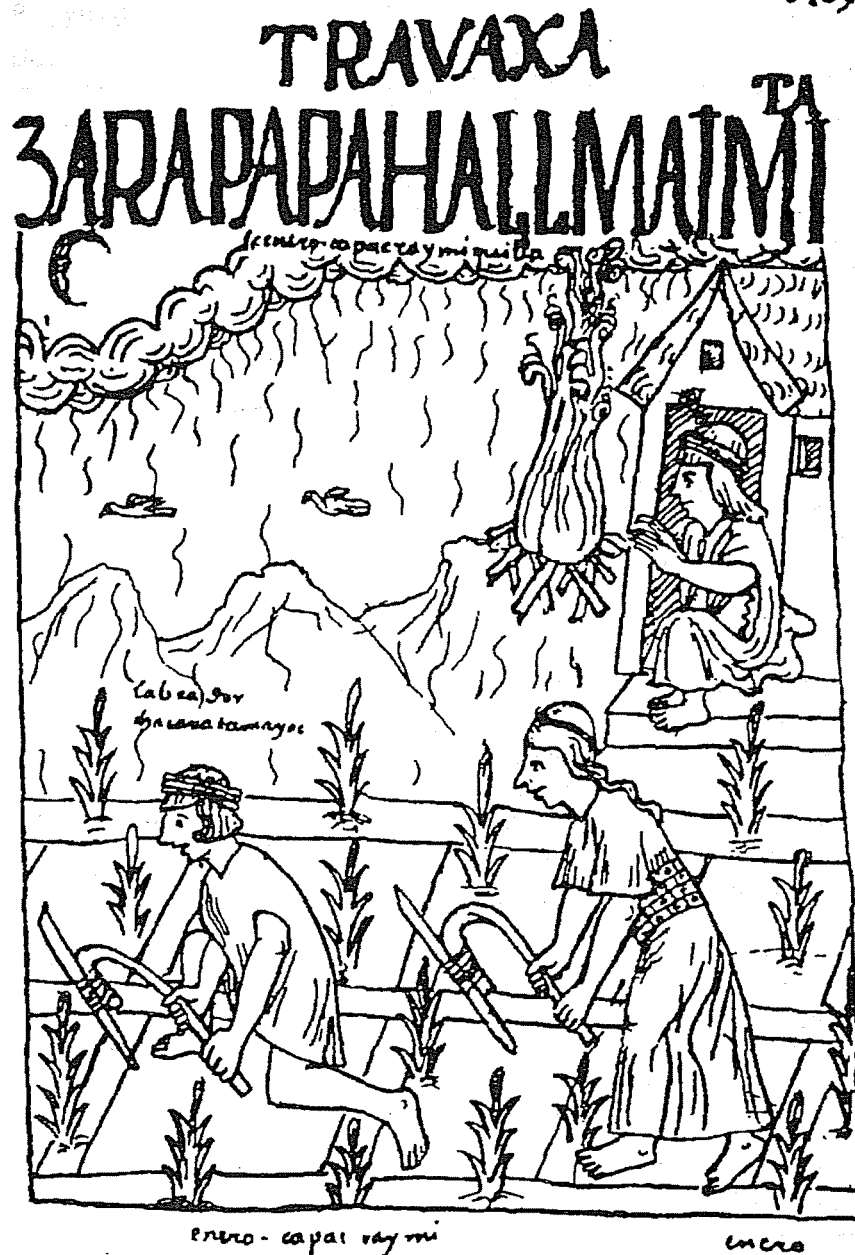


Plate 3 Autoethnographic depiction from Guaman Poma's *Nueva coronica y buen gobierno*, from a series of representations of Andean agriculture. Caption reads "Trabaxa/Zara, papa hallmai mita" meaning "Work [in Spanish]/corn, time of rain and banking up [in Quechua]." The small writing under the caption reads "enero/Capac Raymi Quilla" meaning "January [in Spanish]/month of great feasting [in Quechua]." The man on the left is identified as a "labrador, chacarq camahoc," "laborer [in Spanish], in charge of sowing [in Quechua]".

century by two simultaneous and, as I argue, intersecting processes in Northern Europe. One is the emergence of natural history as a structure of knowledge; the other is the turn toward interior, as opposed to maritime, exploration. These two developments, as I suggest in the next chapter, register a shift in what can be called European "planetary consciousness." This shift coincided with many others. Bourgeois forms of subjectivity consolidated themselves, a new territorial phase of capitalism propelled by searches for raw materials began, coastal trade extended inland, and nations began to seize overseas territory in order to prevent its being seized by rival European powers. From this point of departure, the book moves in a roughly chronological order.

The geographical parameters I have chosen are given by history as well. At the end of the eighteenth century, South America and Africa, long linked with Europe and each other by trade, became parallel sites of new European expansionist initiatives. The "opening up" of Africa began haltingly in the 1780s with the founding of the African Association. Simultaneously, in Spanish America, independence movements that would open the South American continent to the same expansionist energies were taking shape, also haltingly (Francisco Miranda first sought revolutionary support from England in the 1780s). Much of the momentum on both continents was British, as are many of the writers I discuss here. In 1806 Britain invaded both the Rio de la Plata in South America and the Cape of Good Hope in



Plate 4 Contemporary autoethnographic depiction in a style developed by painters from the town of Sarhua, State of Ayacucho, Peru. The caption "Tarpuy" means "sowing" in Quechua. These paintings, based on an older non-commercial form of commemorative painting, often include longer captions explaining in Spanish the custom named in Quechua. From the studio of Pompeyo, Carmelón and Marciano Berrocal, Chorrillos, Lima, Peru.

Africa – even using some of the same officers in both places. But the players were by no means entirely British. In 1799, the German Alexander von Humboldt and the Frenchman Aimé Bonpland were preparing to join a trip up the Nile when they were thwarted by Napoleon's invasion of North Africa. They switched their itinerary from Africa to South America and went up the Orinoco instead. In the 1960s and 1970s, decolonization movements in Africa and national liberation movements in the Americas shared ideals, practices, and intellectual leadership. In the same period, not coincidentally, both continents became the object of the grumpy metropolitan discourse I discuss in chapter 9 as the "third-world blues."

Readers of European travel books about Europe have pointed out that many of the conventions and writing strategies I associate here with imperial expansionism occur in travel writing about Europe as well. As I suggest at several points in the discussion, when that is so, related dynamics of power and appropriation are likely to be there as well. The discourses that legitimate bourgeois authority and delegitimize peasant and subsistence lifeways, for example, can be expected to do this ideological work within Europe as well as in South Africa or Argentina. The forms of social critique through which European women claim political voice at home enable them to make similar, though not identical, claims abroad. In the eighteenth century Northern Europe asserted itself as the center of civilization, and claimed the legacy of classical Greece and Rome as its own.⁸ It is not surprising, then, to find German or British accounts of the Mediterranean sounding a lot like German or British accounts of South America.

I described this book earlier as a study in genre as well as a critique of ideology. Scholarship on travel and exploration literature, as it existed when I undertook this project, had not developed along either of these lines. Often it was celebratory, recapitulating the exploits of intrepid eccentrics or dedicated scientists. In other instances scholars drew on travel accounts simply as sources of information about the places, peoples, and times they discussed. Under modernism, an estheticist or literary vein of scholarship developed, which studied travel accounts, usually by famous literary figures, in their artistic and intellectual dimensions and with reference to European existential dilemmas. I am doing none of these things. With respect to genre, I have tried to pay serious attention to the conventions of representation exhibited by European travel writing, identify different strands, and suggest ways of reading and focusing rhetorical analysis. My aim however, is not to define or codify. I try to use the study of tropes as much to disunify as to unify what one might call a rhetoric of travel writing. I have aimed not to circumscribe travel writing as a genre but to suggest its heterogeneity and its interactions with other kinds of expression. The book includes many readings of quoted passages. I hope that some of the readings and ways of reading I offer will be suggestive for people thinking about similar materials from other times and places.

Part I

Science and sentiment, 1750–1800