

Atlantic Crossings and Valuation in Early New World Historiography

ELVIRA VILCHES

North Carolina State University

For early modern Hispanic culture the common routes of transatlantic trade and the gridded representations of the Atlantic in maps and globes coexisted with an understanding of the ocean as an abstract place without shape or points of reference only tangible as a mesh of reoccurring obstacles, boundaries, and rewards. The understanding of the Atlantic space in the early historiography of the New World is what occupies me in this piece on the Hispanic cultural discourse of the Atlantic in the sixteenth century. The writings on exploration by Christopher Columbus, Las Casas, Ferdinand Columbus, and Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo grasp the extension and materiality of the remoter Atlantic by stressing the role of the Azores as a point of reference that rather than confirming the separation between the Portuguese and Castilian zones of control, convey the notion that the western Atlantic was a domain of contingencies lacking any inherent solidity. These narratives conceived of Atlantic crossings as an itinerary whereby 100 leagues west of the Azores marked a threshold of reversal where the measurements of distance and direction became fluid values. The variation of what Spaniards considered the accurate values of things at sea unveiled in land different organizations of value whereby the evaluation and valorization of money, price, and treasure, and even gender seem to not exist. This realm of non-value conjoined ocean and islands into one entity that not only questioned the western mode of symbolizing value through gold, but also defined the Atlantic as an interstice beyond the proper indices of estimation and judgment.

In the second part of *Don Quixote* chapter 29 tells the story of the enchanted vessel. Traveling to Zaragoza Don Quixote and Sancho get to the banks of the Ebro River in northeastern Spain. As they approach to the river an unattended boat catches the attention and the imagination of the errant knight, who immediately believes that a favorable magician has sent an enchanted vessel to carry him far to his new adventure. The knight dismounts in a haste and gets in the boat ordering Sancho to follow him. The

boat moves down the river pushed by the current. Soon Don Quixote thinks that they have sailed all the way from the mouth of the river to the Mediterranean. Leaving behind the Pillars of Hercules, he feels that the boat has entered the Atlantic. To be certain he asks Sancho to search his body for dead lice explaining that it is a matter of experience and common knowledge that when Spaniards cross the equinoctial line as they sail West to the Indies their bodies become clean of lice.¹

Don Quixote's comments show the currency of old perceptions still prevalent in the seventeenth century when the organization of the Hispanic Atlantic system was well established and the traffic between the Indies and Spain was an ordinary matter regarding the networks of trading ports and the course of the Carrera de Indias.² The common routes of trade and the objective representations of the Atlantic in maps and globes coexisted with a cultural discourse that understood the ocean as a mesh of reoccurring obstacles, boundaries, and rewards. In the middle ages the Atlantic was considered as a strange and treacherous place that sailors and merchants tried to comprehend by imposing upon the ocean a Mediterranean model of maritime space. By the fourteenth century this model was displaced by a new notion of maritime space in which the dimension of horizontality described this space through latitudes. The advances of astronomical navigation and cartography of the next century constituted a notion of the Atlantic as a grid delineated in terms of quantifiable coordinates that carried the sense of a politicized space.³ With the advances of Iberian colonial expansion this ocean became a territory of imperial building, interstate conflict and trade measured and divided by Papal Bulls and international treaties of demarcation.⁴

The understanding of the Atlantic space in the early historiography of the New World is what occupies me in this piece on the Hispanic cultural discourse of the Atlantic in the sixteenth century. I suggest that the writings on exploration by Christopher Columbus, Las Casas, Ferdinand Columbus, and Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo grasp the extension and materiality of the remoter Atlantic by stressing the role of the Azores as a point of reference that rather than confirming the separation between the Portuguese and Castilian zones of control, convey the notion that the outlying Atlantic was a domain of contingencies lacking any inherent solidity that contoured a space of breakage where the comforts of home no longer existed. My argument in what follows is that these narratives of travel bear the tour of a liminal space marked by the threshold located 100 leagues west of the Azores. Beyond this point the experience of the voyage reveals that in the vastness of the ocean, latitude, longitude, distance and even the compass can be quite fluid values.

1. Miguel de Cervantes, *El ingenioso hidalgo don Quijote de la Mancha*. Edited by Andrés Amorós (Madrid: SM, 1999), 591.

2. See Pablo Pérez-Mallaína, *Spain's Men of the Sea*. Translated by Carla Rahn Phillips (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 8-15.

3. Adão da Fonseca, Luís. "The Discovery of the Atlantic Space," in *Portugal, the Pathfinder. Journeys from the Medieval toward the Modern World, 1300-ca.1600*, ed. George D. Winus (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995), 7-16.

4. See Elizabeth Mancke's "Early Modern Expansion and the Politicization of Oceanic Space," *Geographical Review* 89 (1999): 2.

In these texts the archipelago emerge as a threshold of reversal that is subsumed by a reiterative series of dangerous edges that function as a counter-site where the universality of western notions and values are contested. In the following pages I explore such a series as a continuous flow of proliferating thresholds that shape the Atlantic as an outlandish dimension that hold myths and mirages rather than a real space.

In the *Historia de las Indias* by Las Casas this flow is exposed through a genealogy of authorities that rather than providing the origins of the Atlantic suggest that the ocean is contoured by multiplying obstacles and rewards that surface time and again following the steps of colonial expansion. In the context of Columbus's voyages the Azores are portrayed as a threatening edge that, in turn, becomes a useful middle way between farther unknown waters and the void of the ocean. The archipelago also functions as the portal leading to a frontier of prosperity and wealth. Columbus's observations regarding navigation establishes the Atlantic as a perceived space of rupture where climatic and ocean conditions make the compass oscillates. Oviedo reiterates the same notion in order to stress the unfeasibility of the values pertinent to navigation. This lack of precision folds the gap between practice and established nautical and geographical knowledge together with the perception of the Atlantic as a realm of breakage. The experience of disruption that the Atlantic frontier brings about is conveyed by a chain of interconnections converging in value as a multiple category that links the variables and incidents of navigation to the irregular economic and cultural axiologies that explorers observe in the Amerindian societies. The variation of what Spaniards consider the accurate values of things unveils different organizations of value whereby the evaluation and valorization of money, price, and treasure, and even gender do not exist. This realm of non-value not only questions the western mode of symbolizing value through gold, but also defines the Atlantic as an interstice beyond the proper indices of estimation and judgment.

Thresholds and Islands

When Don Quixote asks Sancho to check if he is clean of lice he is asking for a sign announcing the entrance into a portal to the open waters of the western Atlantic that will also prove his books. In the times of Cervantes the remoter Atlantic still constituted a dimension breakage found beyond the line of demarcation traced 100 leagues west of the Azores. According to the remarks of Las Casas lice and fleas on ships were an unbearable plague. "But for the Indies we have a singular thing to remark: that up to the Canaries and 100 leagues beyond, or in the region of the Azores, many are the lice that breed; but from there on the all commence to die, so that upon raising the first islands of the Indies, there be no man that breedeth or seeth one. On the homeward passage to Castile, every ship and person proceedeth clean of these creatures, until they attain the aforesaid region of the ocean, whence forward, as if they waited upon us, they presently return in great and disturbing numbers."⁵ Given the realities of the life at sea regarding confinement and hygiene, the disappearance of lice indicated an extraordinary anomaly that at once brought relief and conveyed an attempt to apprehend the incommensurability of the ocean through a bodily dimension of space that, in turn, referred to myths of

5. Samuel Morison, *Admiral of the Ocean Sea*, (Boston: Little, Brown and Co, 1942), 372.

breakage and renewal that would transform those crossing it. Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo wrote about the same anomaly and location. In his perception this phenomenon was the collateral effect of a strong force that made the needle of the compass oscillate between the northeast and northwest and pilots lost their north and their readings of longitude.⁶ In Cervantes's novel this line is implicitly intersected with the tropics as the knight is looking for a tangible border marking the division between the domestic and the outlying Atlantic, between the cold weather and boisterous winds and gentle trades blowing over a sea so calm as the river of Seville, between a harsh and poor land and lands tapped with gold. I suggest that the contours of this imaginary edge stem from the fluid proliferation of threatening boundaries that travelers described as their personal experience delineates the tour of a personalized maritime space through narratives constantly produced by the incidents of exploration and navigation.⁷

From the classical antiquity to the Iberian explorations the Atlantic encompassed a vast textual body of unsettling disorienting portals that conjoined myths, mirages, and commodities with edges separating the limits of the known world from the fringes of the unknown and marking the interface between them as a third space, a place of reversal that offered at once unsurpassable dangers and a frontier of opportunity.

For Paul Batel the Atlantic constitutes a “formidable obstacle” inextricable tied with stories of space made of myths and the rhythm of trade and colonial expansion.⁸ Before the Iberian galleons crossed the ocean first with African gold and slaves and later with gold and silver from the New World, the seafaring peoples of the classical antiquity ventured to cross the Pillars of Hercules in search for new and profitable markets. Phoenicians, Greeks, Carthaginians and later Romans reached the west coasts of Iberia and Africa to trade salt, ceramics, and fabrics for tin, copper, gold, purple dye and slaves. With the barriers they surpassed and the wealth they generated with these voyages they proliferated legends about the dangers to be fought and the riches to be gained once passed Gibraltar. Greek mythology held the outer ocean as the preserve for the Gods. The Pillars of Hercules designated the entrance into the Atlantic, where the hero pursued the completion of his last two labors in two islands, Erythia and the Hesperides—where Atlas held the sky and the heavens on his shoulders—located far west under the rays of the setting sun. Hesiod in his *Theogony* and *Works and Days* located the Gorgons in the same area along with islands of the blessed, an image that was to remain in the middle ages.

From Homer to Herodotus, From Pliny to Strabon and Seneca, the Atlantic held many islands described as hedonist paradise where nature provided abundant sustenance and wealth. Even Plato's description of the lost Atlantis rendered an earthly paradise found at

6. Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés, *Sumario de la historia natural de las Indias*. Edited by José Miranda (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1950), 242.

7. Michel de Certeau distinguishes between “place” (lieu), which is definable, limited, enclosed and “space” (espace), which is that which constantly being produced by the practices of living. One's own spacing may transgress the boundaries of maps and cities that define places. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Translator Steve Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

8. Paul Butel, *The Atlantic* (London: Routledge, 1999), 1-5.

high sea and situated in the west. An island of temperate climate, great beauty and fertile soil, irrigated by navigable rivers, and adorned with all kinds of trees and orchards. These images of bliss coexisted with tales that painted the open Atlantic as an empty, dangerous place where ships might be becalmed in waters teeming with multitude of tunnies of incredible size and obesity—an image that would reappear in Columbus's *Journal of the First Voyage*. The fear of the abyss pervaded through the middle ages. Isidoro's *Ethimologies* envisioned a continental edge fringed with fragments of lands beyond which the ocean stretched limitless, and was described as a place of darkness from which the apocalyptic beast would emerge.⁹

By the late middle ages there emerged an awareness of an Atlantic space determined and configured first by Mediterranean trade with the Maghribi states and later by Portuguese exploration of the western African coast in search for gold.¹⁰ By then the Pillars of Hercules were displaced by new edges of the world. By 1407 the Portuguese located in the western coast of Africa the Cape of Not (Cabo de Nam), beyond which no land could be found, and later displaced the ends of the earth Cape Bojador in 1443, where there was no race of men nor place of inhabitants and the sea was so shallow and the currents so strong that those ships passing the cape could never return.¹¹ Beyond the threat of the threshold, there were many islands lying at large in the fringes of the Ocean. Tales of the Hesperides, the Fortunate Islands, were added to Christian mythical islands where those who traveled in the urge either to spread Christianity (the island of St Brendan and Hy-Brazil) or to escape Muslim rule (Antilia, the Island of the Seven Cities,) sought refuge.¹²

The opening chapters of *Historia de las Indias* by Las Casas bridges this circuit of thresholds and desired destinations establishing a relation of continuity between classical and medieval myths in order to demonstrate the knowledge and stature of Columbus as a learned man of the ocean. But the importance of this Atlantic circuit reaches further. Besides establishing the perfect stage for praising Columbus's character and endeavors, I would argue that the *Historia* provides an understanding of the Atlantic that defies unity and origins by deploying intermittent boundaries and recurring islands. In chapters 8 through 21 of the first book, Las Casas elucidates a lineage of knowledge from Plato and Aristotle to Pliny and Strabo, and their legacy through the church fathers and Peter d'Ally to Columbus. Through these pages citations and commentaries the reader finds repetitive instances of the here and beyond where islands of paradise emerge just to reappear again either in the West Africa coast or in the Indies.

Plato's Atlantis surfaces as two possible locations either Fortunate Islands or Anegada (Virgin Islands).¹³ Aristotle's comments about a 'sargasso sea' encountered by

9. Barry Cunliffe, *Facing the Ocean* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000), 2-4, 11-13.

10. Felipe Fernández-Armesto, *Before Columbus* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1987).

11. Bartolomé de Las Casas, *Historia de las Indias 2 vols.* Edited by Juan Pérez de Tuleda Bueso. BAE. (Madrid: Atlas, 1957), vol 1, 84-85.

12. Butel, *The Atlantic*, 20, Cunliffe, *Facing the Ocean*, 12-13.

13. Las Casas, *Historia de las Indias*, 37.

Carthaginians pilots are relocated in Cape of Saint Augustin and Brazil.¹⁴ The Gorgones become the Hesperides, which in turn become the Cape Verdes.¹⁵ The alleged Toscanilli letter consulted by Columbus included in chapter 12 assimilates Antilia to the Seven Cities and situates the later 2500 miles from Zipango.¹⁶ The Portuguese expedition seeking the Seven Cities encountered Flores, the most western island of the Azores. While these mythical islands remind at large, the Cape Verdes and the Azores emerge again as the site where floating islands like that of Saint Bredam pass by.¹⁷ From one island to the next the reader encounters amidst the perils of the boundaries mentioned above few variations of the imagery of hedonist places with temperate climate, great beauty and fertile soil, and great wealth. These chapters *Historia* elucidates an endless place of proliferating thresholds and repeating islands that generate a continuous rhizomorphic movement that shapes the Atlantic as a domain that does not hold as real space, but rather a realm of myths, mirages, and hidden dimensions.¹⁸ In the theoretical framework of Deleuze and Guattari the rhizome dismantles hierarchical centers and structures by fragmenting and displacing their locations and meanings with boundless lines of flight and its capacity of constituting endless series of bridges forming infinite connections and set of repetitions.¹⁹ For Benito Pérez Rojo the rhizome expresses the discourse of the Caribbean through the flow and proliferation of gold mining, sugar plantations, and slave trade. This flow, I would add, also integrates the repeating series of edges from which the Azores emerge as a double boundary of danger and reference.²⁰

West of the Azores and Beyond

The *Historia de las Indias* by Las Casas, as Margarita Zamora argues, was decisive in the transmission of the Columbian corpus. The version of the *diarios* of the first and third voyages would have been lost were it not for Las Casas's edition of the former and the paraphrasing of the latter in the biography of the Admiral contained in the first book of the *Historia de las Indias*. A work that Zamora describes as a "collection of citations and paraphrases tied together by Las Casas's running commentary" amplified by abundant annotations about his reactions to Columbus's words.²¹ Compared to the works of Ferdinand Columbus and Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés, the other biographers

14. Ibid., 40.

15. Ibid., 61.

16. Ibid., 46.

17. Ibid., 48.

18. For the notion of the Atlantic as a rhizomorphic and fractal structure see Paul Gilroy, *Black Atlantic*, (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1993), 4. Francisco-J. Hernández Adrián considers the Atlantic as another space "On Imperial Archives and the Insular Vanishing Point. The Canary Islands in Viera y Clavijo's *Noticias*" forthcoming.

19. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, "A Thousand Plateaus" in *Literary Theory: An Anthology*. ed. Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998) 514-23.

20. Antonio Benítez Rojo, *The Repeating Island: The Caribbean and the Postmodern Perspective*. Translator James Maraniss (Durham, Duke University Press, 1996).

21. Margarita Zamora, *Reading Columbus* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1993), 63.

and historians of the Discovery, the *Historia* is heavily text-dependent. Anthony Pagden has noted that Las Casas fills its pages with an overwhelming number of citations in order to display his erudition and buttress the authority of his own eyewitness testimony about his life in the Indies.²² In the chapters mentioned above, this strategy accounts for an informed history of both cosmography, the conquest of the Canary Islands, the Atlantic rivalry between Castile and Portugal, and the latter's expansion in West Africa. All these elements aim at presenting an idealized characterization of Columbus as a learned cosmographer a knowledgeable mariner. The sections on the first and third voyage complement this characterization with that of the resilient mariner lost in boundless ocean looking for the reassurance of the Azores.

In the *Journal of the First Voyage*, the brief entry of September 13, 1492 Columbus noticed that the needle deviated from the Polar star and at once saw a marvelous flame falling from the sky five miles from the caravels.²³ Both the *Journal* and the *Historia del Almirante* by Columbus's son Ferdinand are quite concise explaining these phenomena to justify the Admiral's strategy to record shorter distances to comfort the crew. Las Casas's *Historia*, on the other hand, renders graphic accounts of the conditions and reactions of the members of the expedition. The oscillation of the compass and the strange flame in the sea were taken as bad omens that "unsettled and worried" the men, whereas Columbus felt reaffirmed by what he took as clear manifestations of the western hemisphere. The sense of doom increased by soft winds and a sea so filled with sea-grass and so calm that seemed to belong to another world, because they feared that would not allow the caravels to move. A series of unfulfilled indications promising land that occurred through the 23rd and 24th of the same month increased Columbus's fear of mutiny. According to Las Casas's the crew complained that it was a great madness and self-inflicted manslaughter to risk their lives to follow the mad schemes of a foreigner who will risk everything in the hope of making himself a great Lord.²⁴ The return voyage delimited the Azores as a space in between the calm and warm conditions encountered sailing west and the cold strong winds that lied in the opposite direction. The *Journal's* entries of February 1493 explained that the caravels were lost out of course for two days in such powerful storms that they feared for their lives.²⁵

The spatial representations of despair, confusion, and disorientation that the interstice delimited by the Azores infuse, were not mentioned in the Papal bull *Inter Caetera* issued in May 1493. Inserted in the long Atlantic rivalry between Castile and Portugal, the document drew a demarcation line of topographical characteristics described as drawn from the north to the south poles "one hundred miles west of the Azores and Cape Verdes." Considering the importance that his location has in Columbus's first and third voyages, Samuel Morison points out that Columbus himself suggested the location of the

22. Anthony Padgen, "Ius et Factum: Text and Experience in the Writings of Bartolomé de Las Casas," *Representations* 33 (1991): 147-62.

23. Consuelo Varela, *Cristóbal Colón: textos y documentos completos* (Madrid: Alianza Universidad, 1995), 101.

24. Las Casas, *Historia de las Indias*, 129-32.

25. Varela, *Cristóbal Colón*, 204-11; *Fernando Colón, Historia del Almirante* (Madrid: Dastin, 2000), 138-43.

line.²⁶ The meridian west of the Azores traced not only the line of demarcation established by the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494, but also, and more importantly, the line served as the division between European and American conditions described by the contrast between the cold weather and heavy storms and perpetual springtime, the disappearance of lice, and the dislocation of the compass. This set of disquieting conditions constituted the discourse of the Atlantic that pervaded in later expeditions.

In the account of the homeward voyage of the second expedition that Ferdinand Columbus elucidates in his *Historia del Almirante* that the region of the Azores functioned as a useful point of reference, a middle way between farther unknown waters and the void of the ocean. Few days after leaving the island of Guadalupe on 20th April, 1496 the expedition sailed into sluggish weather conditions that spread over a month. During that time the ships were trapped into a nautical chasm where it was impossible to know and set the course. As food and water were running out the pilots observed that they could not use the compass because there was no agreement between his Genoese needles and the Flemish ones. The former took a new course suddenly that formed an angle of 1/4 towards the west. The Admiral, on the other hand, took this disrupting manifestation of magnetic deviation as the clear indicator that they were one hundred leagues west of the Azores. By May 22nd Columbus was able to verify their position in the charts. The crossing of this point, nonetheless, did not entail a definitive orientation but rather an array of possible directions through which Ferdinand exposed the ignorance of the pilots: “The pilots were lost like blind men they laughed at the Admiral efforts to back down the sails in order to enter in the Cape of Saint Vicent, because some were certain that they were at the English channel, others in England, and others in the coast of Galicia.”²⁷

The rescuing presence of this line is the refrain recurring in Columbus’s *Relación del tercer viaje* as both a sheltered border and the doorway to the outskirts of paradise. The goal of the expedition was to improve the chances of finding precious commodities by exploring an unknown area of the Atlantic lying more southerly than the Antilles. Going deeper into the equinoctial region was suggested in part by a letter that Jaime Ferrer de Blanes, a lapidary and cosmography aficionado, wrote to Columbus by petition of the queen; in part by the golden lands that the Portuguese found in Guinea, as well as by the rumors, attributed to king João II, about an unknown continent located in the middle latitudes of the Atlantic.²⁸ The expedition left San Lúcar on May 30, 1498. After stops in the Canaries and Cape Verdes, Columbus sailed 480 miles southeast to find the most unbearable conditions. The heat was so excruciating that “[he] thought that the ships and crew will be set in fire.”²⁹ This climatic change was taken as a new edge whose extreme heat was in sharp contrast with the temperate climate west of the Azores.

Felipe Fernández-Armesto, following Samuel Morison, suggests that the Admiral “sailed into the doldrums—the windless, marine no man’s land between the zones of the

26. Morison, *Admiral of the Ocean Sea*, 371.

27. Fernando Colón, *Historia del Almirante*, 225.

28. Morison, *Admiral of the Ocean Sea*, 515-16.

29. Colón: textos y documentos, 101-2.

north-east and south-east trades—to find himself becalmed, in mid-July under savage sun.”³⁰ Las Casas account of Columbus’s third voyage described the nautical gap between the trade winds as a threshold leading to treasures. South of the island of Santiago in the Cape Verde archipelago, and below the equator in the cape of Saint Ana in Guinea, the richest parallel of the world was found. The proximity of gold and precious commodities, nonetheless, was illustrated as the edges of a no-place, where the thickest fog hid the sun and the stars, and the weather was so hot that in the ship the wine turned into vinegar, the wheat into ashes, and roasted the bacon. All at once fell into disorder for no one could dare to go below deck to mend the casks or see to the stores.³¹

Being in the doldrums, the Admiral decided to sail west in search for the meridian of la Hispaniola instead of continuing south. “I remembered,” he wrote in his *Relación*, “that sailing to the Indies every time I passed 100 leagues of the Azores going west, I found a change of weather spreading from the north to the south.” He prayed for favorable winds that would allow him to take a western course so that he could reach this line—“salvo de navegar al poniente atanto que yo llegase a estar con esta raya”—hoping that he could find a more temperate climate to resume sailing south.³² The direction of that course led to yet another threshold leading to the highest point of a breast shaped earth and from there to paradise. Following his western course Columbus reached the channel between Trinidad and where the Orinoco debouches into the sea. This location inspired thoughts about finding a southern continent located at the end of the Orient near Asia.³³ The desired location, the “lands of a new world” in the words of the Admiral, was juxtaposed to new conditions in the sea beyond the mentioned line 100 leagues west of the Azores. His finding that the angle of elevation diminished progressively, irrespective of latitude made Columbus conclude that he was sailing uphill. The entrance in the sought threshold west of the Azores with its temperate climate, calm winds, and soft seas filled with sea grass, was perceived as the effect of the ships beginning gradually to ascend towards the heavens. In this calm sea no more islands were found and Columbus thought he had reached the end of Orient where Paradise, according to biblical tradition is located.³⁴ The upward movement traced the shaped of a very “round ball” that at one point its surface protrudes forming a woman’s nipple, whose breast-like part would be the most prominent and nearest to the sky. Beyond this elevated part greater temperance in climate and variation of the stars were to be found and with these changes the ultimate entrance to Paradise where Columbus believed was not possible to navigate “where the world reaches its highest point, nor for any man to approach, for I believe that there the earthly Paradise is located, where no man may go, save by grace of God.”³⁵

30. Varela, *Cristóbal Colón*, 124.

31. *Ibid.*, 388.

32. *Ibid.*, 370.

33. Felipe Fernández-Armesto, *Columbus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 126-27.

34. Varela, *Cristóbal Colón*, 382.

35. *Ibid.*, 380, as translated by Fernández-Armesto, *Columbus*, 131.

At this point Columbus's *Relación* becomes extremely rich with citations from Ptolomey, Peter d'Ally, the bible, an array of church fathers demonstrating both the pear-like shape of the earth and the location of paradise in the oriental end of the earth. Las Casas's *Historia* deploys a parallel effort in chapters 140 through 146 by exemplifying the right assertions of the Admiral with a further array of authorities that offers a "convoluted erudite disquisition on the topic, which Las Casas transcribed verbatim or closely paraphrased." He glosses Columbus carefully in the sections describing the nature and location of Paradise supporting the Admiral's interpretation of Paradise's the Indies over other competing sites:³⁶ "he experienced such fresh lands, and such green and delightful groves, so much clemency and amenity in the subtle breezes, so much and such rapturous grandeur and [rapturous] lake and capacious and so large a union of such slender and sweet waters; and moreover, the goodness, generosity, and gentleness of the people. What else could he judge or conclude but that there, or around there, or even close to that place, the Divine Providence had constituted the Terrestrial Paradise, and that that freshwater lake was where the river and the fountain of Paradise emptied and where the four rivers Euphrates, Ganges, Tigris and Nile originated?"³⁷ The Edenic features of the Indies seem so obvious to Las Casas that the passage closes the passage with the affirmation "whoever experienced this splendor and did not arrive at the same conclusions as Columbus would deserve to be judged for an idiot".³⁸

Despite the legion of authorities probing Columbus's location of Paradise in the Indies, this heavenly image resonates as yet another recurrence of the many islands of bliss and wealth pullulating in the fringes of the Atlantic. For Las Casas the innocent, harmless, and carefree Indians still leaving in a Golden Age substantiated his vision of Paradise. For the explorers who followed in tow Paradise conveyed the secular rendition of the Garden of Delights promising treasures, bodies for the taking, and the certainty that gold would change their humble origins and means by raising them to lofty positions. These were the realms of reversal that the Atlantic encompassed. These are the expectations pushing Don Quixote's enchanted vessel into the Atlantic. Waiting for the disappearance of lice functions as a powerful metaphor for the changes taking place west of the Azores foreshadowing the transformation of Don Quixote from a poor knight into a lord so powerful that he would grant his squire the island he has promised to reward his services.

Articulated Categories

In the narratives of exploration and discovery the Atlantic space conflated an objectified perception of a stable space delineated by meridians and parallels, with a narrative dimension about threatening interstices and paradisaical islands, and the advances of trade and colonial expansion. This endless propagation of edges and thresholds concurred with the influx of gold, slaves, and plantations. Obstacles and commodities functioned as

36. Zamora, *Reading Columbus*, 81.

37. Las Casas, *Historia de las Indias*, 390, as translated by Margarita Zamora, *ibid.*, 82.

38. Zamora, *Reading Columbus*, 82.

articulated categories that emerge in and through relations to each other.³⁹ Columbus's *Relación del tercer viaje* illustrates the concatenation of these categories by fashioning the alleged location of Paradise as a twofold compensation for the poor returns of the previous expeditions and the failure to find the unknown continent lying west. Between 12 October 1492 when he reached the first island to the moment he began the return voyage in 17 January 1493, gold is mentioned at least 65 times along with other profitable commodities such as aloes, gum, and cotton in the *Journal*. Despite long passages about gold-bearing sands and exchanges of gold for trinkets that made a second voyage look very profitable, the returns were quite meager. Once in La Hispaniola, members of the expedition like Pedro Chanca, the royal physician, report that gold is everywhere and that the monarchs are the richest princes in the world. A fellow traveler, Guillermo Coma, writes that gold can be easily removed from rocks, mines, and rivers.⁴⁰ After the return of some of the settlers, Martyr describes in *Decades* his fascination with a big nugget of gold weighting 20 ounces that he handles and admires in the royal court.⁴¹

The excellent prospects for establishing a chain of trading posts along the islands are soon overshadowed by reports of Bernardo Boyl and Pedro Margarite, who, on their return with Torres's relief fleet (February 2, 1494), informed the king and queen that the whole enterprise was a joke, that there was no gold on La Hispaniola, and that the expenditures of the crown would never be recovered.⁴² Fernández-Armesto pinpoints an anonymous memorandum of 1496 by someone who evidently knew Hispaniola who complained about the little gold there was in relation to Columbus's promises, the incapability of the Indians of supplying the quantities demanded from them, the worthless spices of Hispaniola, and about the preeminence of cotton as the most promising commodity.⁴³ On 29 of October of that year Pero Alonso Niño, one of Columbus pilots, arrived with slaves and very little gold. According to Las Casas, Alonso Niño announced everywhere that he was bringing gold only because he presented the income from selling the slaves as gold ore. The monarchs were very disappointed because of their urgent need of gold to pay for the military expenses of the war with France and the lack of money that at that time was in Castile.⁴⁴ Their rage seemed to be calmed after the interview that Columbus had with the queen in the spring. Las Casas writes that the Admiral presented her with gold ore and masks and other crafts of gold as certain proof of the gold of the Indies and as the guarantee for profitable third voyage.⁴⁵

39. Anne McClintock uses this concept to study gender, race, and class in *Imperial Leather* (London: Routledge, 1995), 4.

40. *Cartas de particulares a Colón y relaciones coetáneas*, eds. Juan Gil and Consuelo Varela (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1984), 177-203.

41. Peter Martyr, *De Orbe Novo*, trans. Francis Augustus Macnutt, vol. 1 (New York: Burt Franklin, 1912), 109.

42. William D. Phillips and Carla Rahn Phillips, *The Worlds of Christopher Columbus* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992), 208.

43. Fernández Armesto, *Columbus*, 111.

44. Las Casas, *Historia*, 328.

45. *Ibid*, 305.

In the third voyage the quest for gold became of central importance and determined the goal to sail into the equator in search for the latitudes opposite to the region of Guinea. In this context, the finding of Paradise comes as a compensating effort to locate a mirror reflection of richest Portuguese territories. The presence of Terrestrial Paradise in Columbus's texts is mingled with optimistic material expectations: "here and [all the nearby islands] valuable commodities grow because of the great temperatures that come from their closeness to the sky, because they are located in towards the highest place of the world"⁴⁶. This comment returns to the original goal of the expedition, that is sailing south to equator in search for riches that Aristotle's doctrine of similar products in the same latitude seemed to assure in comparable proportions to that of the Portuguese endeavors in western African coast.⁴⁷ Mentioning this copious source of gold functions as a double reminder about the expected results from the Indies. Writing about the finding of pearls and gold in the Gulf of Paria in vicinity of the mouth of the Orinoco river, on the one hand, is an attempt to cancel out the meager returns of previous expeditions, on the other, offers a disclaimer of the accusations blaming him for the economic failure of the enterprise, only to return to the Portuguese example and the financial efforts made by the crown to foster the exploration of Guinea until rich benefits were attained as the exploration model to be followed.⁴⁸

The prospects of finding reliable sources of gold improved with the last expedition, by late October 1502 he found the province of Veragua—between of present Costa Rica and Panama—a gold bearing country. Pierre Chaunu summarizes the prospects of gold in the Caribbean from 1494 to 1525 as a "cycle of gold" that move from one island to the next time and again yielding brief and quite modest returns and wiping out the Amerindian population.⁴⁹ The exploitation of gold in Hispaniola fell from 1511 after a brief peak in the previous year, and remerged in Puerto Rico to end in 1515, to reappear briefly in Cuba where the settlers were leaving by 1516 in search for the precious metal for Tierra Firme and Yucatán. The evidence presented by Frank Moya Pons shows that during those years both the crown and settlers were never satisfy with their gains. He suggests that during those years Indians were held as the standard of wealth since it was more profitable to sell Indians as slaves than to mine gold. As gold production declined the Indians became bargaining chips to attract new settlers along with attractive benefit packages that included tax exemptions.⁵⁰

This fourfold movement of conquest, force labor, slave hunting, and mining organized a smaller dimension of the Atlantic within the Caribbean as a space determined by what Antonio Benitez Rojo denominates a repeating island. The Caribbean archipelago presents "the features of an island that "repeats" itself, unfurling and bifurcating until it reaches all the seas and the lands of the earth" flowing outward past

46. Valera, *Cristóbal Colón*, 381.

47. Morison, *Admiral of Ocean Sea*, 515.

48. Valera, *Cristóbal Colón*, 383.

49. Pierre Chaunu, *Seville et L'Atlantique*, vol.8 (Paris 1959), 104.

50. Frank Moya Pons, *Después de Colón: trabajo, sociedad y política en la economía del oro* (Madrid:Alianza Universidad, 1986).

the limits of the its own sea.⁵¹ The cycle of gold and abuse is just one of its repeating features flowing away to the outer Atlantic, to the western African coast, to the 'Rio de Ouro' and the lands of Mansa Musa, the black king sitting in a throne of solid gold, just to flow in the opposite direction back to the Indies reaching Tierra firme mapping infelicitous quests and unreachable geographies that link Atlantic thresholds, phantom islands, promises of Paradise, and the establishment of a Caribbean economy of exploitation and destruction of the native population.⁵²

Contingencies of Value

Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés was immersed in these multidirectional bridges linking the Caribbean and the Spanish Main with the propagating thresholds of the open Atlantic. Oviedo arrived at the Indies with the most ambitious expedition organized by King Ferdinand to mine the richest gold resources of Darien. Oviedo first began his career in the New World in 1514, when he was appointed General Scribe and Overseer of Gold and in Castilla del Oro, and remained in America for the rest of his life, with the exception of a few trips to Spain. In one stay in Toledo, to satisfy Charles V's curiosity about his western territories, Oviedo wrote *Sumario de la historia general y natural de las Indias* (1526) from memory using notes he had already taken for his monumental *Historia general y natural de las Indias* (1535-49). *Sumario* is simultaneously a book of prodigies, a bestiary, and a tenacious attempt to describe the exquisiteness of American flora and fauna. A text made to fit his royal addressee, *Sumario* remains as a miscellanea or even a cabinet of curiosities of odd facts about the nature and the peoples of the Indies.⁵³

Through *Sumario*'s fabric of peoples, animals, plants, and minerals of the New World, Oviedo weaves the bountiful wealth of a golden land. His entries about these topics flow in and out the Atlantic as a third space of dislocation that represents the distortion of a European perception of a natural order of things. The first chapter describes the voyage from Spain to the Indies as an almost safe route that goes from San Lúcar de Barrameda to Gran Canaria o Gomera and from there to the boundless western Atlantic to Santo Domingo. As soon as the itinerary is described through the incipient risk that pilots would go astray and arrive at unexpected destinations. This instance opens a series of implied comparisons between what should be regarded as the norm and the deviations that the ocean and constellations of the western hemisphere inflict. The changes in weather, the compass, and in the body hygiene of the crew occurring in this threshold brought about a discourse of breakage that combined the description in climatic and nautical terms of the boundaries found at sea with the world of reversal found at land. This domain encompassed the reiterative themes of temperate climate and perpetual spring describing the ocean with images of fertile soil and bountiful nature, minute

51. Benítez Rojo, *The Repeating Island*, 50.

52. For the African gold markets and the colonization of the Gold Coast see Pierre Vilar, *A History of Gold and Money* (London: NLB, 1976), 46-61 and Fernández Armesto, *Before Columbus*, 140-50.

53. Stephanie Merrim, 170.

listings of precious commodities, and detailed descriptions about naked lustful Indians, with neither taboos nor knowledge of money and private property. Oviedo addressed these issues throughout *Sumario*. The chapter titled “De las diferentes propiedades de las cosas” –of the different properties of things—functions as the bridge that extend the domain of breakage found in the West of the Azores into the the Antilles and the Spanish Main.⁵⁴ In this instance, the Atlantic emerges as a place of rupture that dislocates what Oviedo perceives as the universal order of things.

In the “De las diferentes propiedades de las cosas” Oviedo writes that according to his experience in sailing from Spain to the Indies, lice die as soon as the ship passes the most western island of the Azores and continues sailing west. This meridian delineates a grey area, almost a twilight zone where the manifestation of a strong force, not only kills lice in a mysterious way, but also makes the needle of the compass oscillate between the northeast and the northwest and pilots get disoriented and lose their north. Magnetic variation, a variable that depends upon where one is on the face of the earth and also changes with the passage of time, had been noted earlier in the Mediterranean and northern shipping lanes, yet the reversal in direction only took place on the way across the Atlantic beyond the Azores, where the needle was said to point true north. This phenomenon of deviation posed questions regarding why, exactly where did the reversal take place, how large was the deviation at different points, how could it be allowed for in the making of the compass and charts.⁵⁵

In Oviedo’s chapter this phenomenon is taken as an indication of different realm of experience that emerges in the Atlantic and travels in land where the influence of constellations and climate changes the properties of the flora, the fauna, and men, leaving the mineral world untouched. In this chapter the meridian of Azores emerges as the threshold to a liminal zone between the Indies and Spain where travelers realize that both the inconvenience and comforts of home no longer exist. It is a place of its own where the social and cultural displacements overlap and articulate difference by opposing the spheres of experience. Oviedo’s report mediates between what he calls the two halves of the world by substantiating difference through metamorphosis of value. The royal chronicler, writing in Toledo about the Indies, offers an opposite mirror of values where the American bountiful nature does not agree with the western conception of the desirable, that is to say not only what people actually want, but also the values and ideas of what people ought to want.

Atlantic crossings involve different systems of value and therefore sentiments of dislocation that particularly disturb what a given culture may perceive as a natural order of things. Value is neither a fixed attribute nor an inherent quality, or an objective property of things. Value is radically contingent since constitutes a changing function of multiple variables. In the sixteenth century considering that value categories can emerge in different ways and different sites to the point of breaking the polarity between objective and subjective notions of value was not considered at all. In this imperial context any divergence of what was held as the universal norm was deemed a deviation

54. Fernández de Oviedo, *Sumario*, 242-47.

55. Ursula Lamb, “Science by Litigation: A Cosmographic Feud,” in *Terrae Incognita I* (Amsterdam: Nico Israel, 1969), 40-57.

of the accurate value of things. For a society that held God and gold as the measure of subjects and things the New World that Oviedo describes in his chapter on the different properties of things constitutes a world-up-side-down, where insects are a delicacy, sodomy is the accepted custom, are source of labor rather than pleasure, and gold is wasted as it is exchanged for what he sees as worthless things. The chapter moves from the discussion of lice to a section on sexual preference in order to close with trade. This last section describes two networks of trade. In the first one located in Santa Marta, the first one salt is the staple commodity exchanged for blankets, cotton, captives, gold, emeralds, and sapphires. The second one deals with cicadas, locust, and crickets and is located in a province (Cenú) of cannibals. In this region the Indians trade these insects for the same items mentioned above. Through their exchange with people from inland the Indians obtain a cache of precious metals and stones whose worth they ignored. Oviedo's does not understand the Indians inclination to barter and trade as an economic activity since they see exchange as a means to acquire new things with no consideration for quality and value.

In the outset of the intense capital accumulation resulting from the enterprise of the Indies, Oviedo fails to acknowledge a different organization of value whereby trade entails a long-distance circuit of exchange and networks of elite associations whereby goods and crafts greatly desired by the ruling groups circulated. In the Amerindian societies wealth was measured by the production of sustenance, symbolic means of denoting status, collection of tribute, networks of services and dependants, and the ritual destruction of surplus wealth.⁵⁶ With the enterprise of the Indies the Amerindian material world runs into a different paradigm of value, whereby gold subsumes its aesthetic properties to its function as the generalized form of value, the single equivalent that reflects the value of all commodities, and the privileged medium of exchange. As the western mode of symbolizing valuation imposes its role as the only expression of value, other paradigms of valuation are not recognized and become a festive theater that represents an economy of pleasure rather than work.

Colonial discourse describes the economic naiveté of the Indians as a twofold wonder. For imperial eyes, the Indians desire for trinkets and the misuse of gold for personal adornment implies the abundance of free gold and the waste of treasures. For those with noble goals, the absence of private property and the disregard of riches bring back the revival of the mythical Golden Age and natural man. In Columbus's letters to Ferdinand and Isabella the Indians desire to exchange gold for bells promises wealth beyond measure. Peter Martyr in his *Decades of the New World* (1516) writes in admiration about societies that estimate the gifts of nature. Thomas More recreates such utopia (1516) as a world with no money, where only use-value, rather than exchange-value constitutes the foundations of a communist society that escapes the tyranny of the precious metals as the agents of wealth and poverty. The celebration of wealth as a natural pleasure will be reiterated by the Spanish friars in their defense of the rights of the Amerindians against Spain's imperial policies. For those who praise Spain's imperial mission, the omission of the general equivalent is seen as conceptual void that fractures a

56. Mary Helms, "The Indians of the Caribbean and Circum-Caribbean at the End of the Fifteenth Century," in *The Cambridge History of Latin America*, ed. Leslie Bethell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 42.

western order of signs and values organized by a principle of unification and sovereignty that places the great majority of signs under the sacred command of gold and God. In the preface addressed to Charles V of his *Historia general de las Indias* (1553), Francisco López de Gómara, writes that the Indies are called the New World because it is completely different not only because of its plants, fish, and animals, but also, and more importantly because men do not have the things needed for living in society such as religion, letters, money, and beasts of burden.⁵⁷ The absence of gold, god, and writing as the cornerstones of civilization marks a tropic of difference that inverts the notions of utility and price. What seems difficult to accept, anyway, is that when exchange takes place across cultural frontiers there is no felicitous translation of value, since estimation arises from different idiosyncratic associations. Barter, as the cultural anthropologists Nicholas Thomas explains, transcends the domain of monetary transactions.⁵⁸ Even though different indexes of value converge, barter disregards abstract units of value, which instead is determined by the interest each side has in the object of the other. It is a realm where there are objects of desire: things one does not have and for which one is prepared to sacrifice what one has. But such sacrifices in hindsight entail the Western concern that native transactors did not understand the ‘real’ value of the gold they gave away. In his *Historia general y natural de las Indias* Oviedo writes that what the Indians of La Hispaniola value the most when they exchange things is the degree of satisfaction and enjoyment they get, without paying attention to monetary value, and giving what it costs hundreds for what it is worth five.⁵⁹

This lack of understanding designs the Indies as the wish horizon promises an easy and immediate acquisition of wealth. Indians do not recognize either private property or a standard of exchange value. They give gold for bells. Everything imaginable is free even sex. Gold lies wasted along with other bountiful resources waiting to be put to use. These myths of free profits, economic or otherwise result in the juxtaposition of the erotic and the economic. In Oviedo’s chapter the traffic of men dressed as women and the exchange of young women for old wives precedes the exchange of insects for gold and precious stones and leaves the reader to imagine a surplus of young women and treasures. Creating the other as an inverted index of value imposes the authority to speak of a polarity created by subjective and objective notions of value that offers a pathway to a realm of non value where the evaluation and valorization, of preference and price, of use-value and exchange-value, and of taste, truth, and treasure do not exist. The omission of value is seen as excess that is not channeled towards growth and reproduction but to waste.

As the closing chapter of a series on the exotic variety of plants and animals, as well as the values and costumes of the indigenous peoples, it is interesting to notice that the mixed bag of economic and erotic valences described does not send the readers to other

57. Francisco López de Gómara, *Historia general de las Indias* (Caracas: Ayacucho, 1991)

58. Nicholas Thomas. “Politicised Values: The Cultural Dynamics of Peripheral Exchange,” in *Barter, Exchange, and Value. An Anthropological Approach*, ed. Caroline Humphrey and Stephen Hugh-Jones (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 169-92.

59. Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, *Historia general y natural de las Indias 5 vols.* Ed. Juan Pérez de Tudela Bueso (Madrid: Atlas, 1992), 1: 123.

territories either in the Caribbean or Tierra Firme where they could be filled in with more instances of the Amerindians as exotic objects of description, but rather to the ocean itself. If in the previous chapters galenic discourse elucidates the effects of constellations and climate as validation of colonial stereotyping, the chapter discussing the different property of things explores otherness as the corollary of a series of conditions and rules of change that the western subject observes as Atlantic side effects. This oceanic projection ignores Amerindian cultures and relegates them to curiosities of an exotic landscape of deviation where the absence of money subsumes homosexual practices. These markers are needed by a colonizer who has to recuperate from an experience of dislocation. It is the discussion of lice and magnetic deviation that takes the readers to the open Atlantic west of the Azores as the local where the European subject encounters experiences of rupture whereby value and values lose their link to western ontological referents.⁶⁰ This is the space that Oviedo describes as a tour of displacement and change in both the chapter discussed above and the chapters IX-XI of the second book of his *Historia general y natural de las Indias*. Interpolated between the account of Columbus's second voyage, these chapters describe the crossing from Spain to the Indies by comparing the Atlantic to the Mediterranean and discussing magnetic declination as a phenomenon of displacement. Oviedo measures a total of 1200 leagues between San Lúcar and Santo Domingo, a distance that is questioned as soon as the chapters describe with ample detail the relative measurements of distance and time and vacillating readings of latitude. This lack of precision lie, on the one hand, on the gap between established knowledge and the practice of sailing, and, on the other, on the effects of the Atlantic as a realm where values become unfixed; where pilots have little control over whether their course would encounter the lesser Antilles, any other of the big islands, or even an unknown coast.

As *Historia* resumes the unfolding of the history of exploration and conquest, these chapters establish a space of fracture that flows from the meridian of the Azores through the Caribbean to the realm of the different properties of things. This discourse of breakage redefines the foucaultian notion of heterotopia by designating a third space that articulates change as a discomfiting experience of disorientation and distortion. This is the experience of displacement where western identities, notions, and values find themselves traversed by forces of difference. Navigation and crossings converge this fragmentation into value as a multiple category that conflates units of time, distance, and space, along with monetary value and what is regarded as proper and desirable. Value is radically contingent since constitutes a changing function of multiple variables that dwell the Atlantic as a practiced space of dislocation that Oviedo expands from the Azores, the point where magnetic deviation takes place, to Caribbean and from there to Main land.

Oviedo's concern with the Atlantic as a frontier of reversal emerges as different semiosis of value are ignored. His understanding imposes the rules of change he perceives upon the territories of the peoples of the Caribbean and Tierra Firme, on the space they live and practice their networks of exchange and knowledge. Thus the

60. D. F. Ruccio; J. Graham; and J. Amariglio, " 'The Good, the Bad, and the Different': Reflections on Economic and Aesthetic Value," in *The Value of Culture: On the Relationship between Economics and Arts*, ed. A. Klamer (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1996) 44-73.

existing Amerindian values are defined as an inverted mirror, as a heterotopia of deviation, where sexual, aesthetic and economic distinctions are placed in relation to the required mean or norm.⁶¹ But the Atlantic as a place of rupture works in both directions. If Oviedo sees this interstice as the realm of non-value where value and values no longer remain fixed, this Atlantic effect is projected in a rhizomatic fashion over the eastern margins presenting a threat to the solid ontological referent that value and values hold in the Old World.

It is the influx of American gold that creates in Castile a high increase of inflation that alters the notion of gold in its money form as fixed standard of value. As the bridge of precious metals attracts immigrants to the Indies the influence of excessive hot and humid climate combined with that of American wealth generates a disruption of the Spanish ideal of ethnicity. Both the criollos and those who have spent time in the Indies are said to be influenced, as Peter Martyr writes, by the perfumes and soft odors of these countries, which incline people to idleness and luxury, contributing more to effeminacy than to the encouragement of virtue. Juan de Cárdenas, the author of *Problemas y secretos maravillosos de las Indias* (1591) attributes these effects to the mild temperatures and the abundance of the gifts of nature.⁶² These inclinations also form the Indiano, the rich returnee, as a marginal subject that escapes all traditional categories and is figured as the embodiment of multiple vices, corrupted speech, lascivious behavior, and racialized physiognomy.⁶³ The concern of effeminacy returns with the corrupting properties that seventeenth century Spanish moral writers attribute to American gold when they evaluate Spain's transatlantic experience.

Among the Atlantic discourse of breakage there are also missing links. This is the case of the Amerindians taken to Spain as either curiosities for the king or as slaves, as well of those slaves taken from Africa to the New World.⁶⁴ How can we recover their experiences of the Atlantic. In the first book of his *Historia* Oviedo writes about the six Indians that Columbus presented to the monarchs in Barcelona in 1493. One of them called Juan de Castilla remained at court as page of Prince John and died within two years, the other five returned to La Española with the second expedition. This is just one instance of the specters that hunt the Atlantic as a space and discourse of disruption. When values are held as substantial, real, and intrinsic parts of an ontological order, their shift is seen as a disruption of the social fabric that goes beyond economics and permeates the networks of exchange between the Indies and Spain, the Spanish imperial imagination, and its models of civility.

61. Michel Foucault "Of Other Spaces" *Diacritics*, 16 (1986): 22-27.

62. Juan de Cárdenas, *Problemas y secretos maravillosos de las Indias* (Madrid, Alianza Editorial, 1988), 175-77.

63. George Mariscal, "The Figure of the Indiano in Early Modern Spanish Culture." *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies* 1 (2000): 55-67.

64. Elvira Vilches, "Columbus's Gift: Representations of Grace and Wealth and the Enterprise of the Indies," *MLN* 119 (2004): 201-25.