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Speculative Coalitions: Indigenous and Chican@ Futurisms, Narrative Form, and Decolonial Approaches to International Law

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Speculative Coalitions:

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and Decolonial Approaches to International Law

by

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Dedication

To my parents, Ann and Mick Uzendoski,

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Speculative Coalitions: Indigenous and Chican@ Futurisms, Narrative Form, and Decolonial Approaches to International Law

Andrew Gregg Uzendoski, Ph. D.
The University of Texas at Austin, 2015

Supervisors: James Cox and Domino Perez

This dissertation analyzes an unprecedented era of Indigenous and Chican@ speculative fiction that advocated for the mobilization of international coalitions. During the first half of the 1990s, a critical mass of Indigenous and Chican@ authors wrote speculative texts that imagined how international coalitions of non-state actors can enact legal reform across North America. Attending to this boom of speculative fiction production, I will examine legal arguments made by Indigenous and Chican@ authors between 1990 and 1995. I address texts that identify specific targets for legal reform: international human rights law, international legal norms, citizenship criteria, electoral systems and collective land ownership. By studying this literary phenomena across both Indigenous and Chican@ literatures, this project offers a robust measurement of how non-state actors at the end of the twentieth century conceptualized legal reform on a continental scale. While the authors of the texts discussed in this dissertation were motivated by different political and cultural interests, they all, through Indigenous and Chican@ speculative fiction, identify international coalitions as essential to achieving

their distinct goals; together, they express the belief that legal reform can be attained by mobilizing international alliances across diverse national and ethnic identities.

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Introduction

This dissertation analyzes an unprecedented era of Indigenous and Chican@ speculative fiction that advocated for the mobilization of international coalitions. During the first half of the 1990s, a critical mass of Indigenous and Chican@ authors wrote speculative texts that imagined how international coalitions of non-state actors can advocate for legal reform across North America. Attending to this boom of speculative fiction production, I will examine legal arguments made by Indigenous and Chican@ authors between 1990 and 1995. I address texts that identify specific targets for legal reform: international human rights law, international legal norms, citizenship criteria, electoral systems and collective land ownership. By studying this literary phenomena across both Indigenous and Chican@ literatures, this project offers a robust measurement of how non-state actors at the end of the twentieth century conceptualized legal reform on a continental scale. While the authors of the texts discussed in this dissertation were motivated by different political and cultural interests, they all, through Indigenous and Chican@ speculative fiction, identify international coalitions as essential to achieving their distinct goals; together, they express the belief that legal reform can be attained by mobilizing international alliances across diverse national and ethnic identities.

SPECULATIVE FICTION

Speculative fiction emerged as a genre category in the 1960s and reflected developments in conventional science fiction [sf] style and content. Commenting on the

origins of the genre, Sherryl Vint writes that "the experimental prose style of some contemporary sf writers, combined with [a] turn to technoscientific themes in writers outside the genre, blurred what had been considered distinct lines between sf and other literature, and the new label 'speculative fiction' attempted to encompass a variety of reality-dislocating modes" (83). Authors reimagined science fiction by applying postmodern formal elements and foregrounding epistemological and social transformations in their speculative narratives. In his 1962 article "Which Way to Inner Space?," author J.G. Ballard anticipated the advent of speculative fiction when he called for the reconceptualization of sf during the era of the Russian-American space race. He demanded new narratives that were set on Earth and broke away from the conventions of "space fiction"—extraterrestrial beings, galactic warfare, and interstellar travel, or what Ballard characterizes as "the standard paraphernalia of robot brains and hyper-drives" (199). Asserting that it is "*inner* space, not outer, that needs to be explored," Ballard posited a new model for the genre: "I'd like to see more psycho-literary ideas, more meta-biological and meta-chemical concepts, private time-systems, synthetic psychologies and space-times, more of the somber half-worlds one glimpses in the paintings of schizophrenics, all in all a complete speculative poetry and fantasy of science" (199-200, emphasis in original). As Vint observes, speculative fiction, in response to Ballard's prognostication, "emphasizes social and cultural change as much as—if not more than—technological change" (90). It is a genre that not only prompts social and political critique, it conceptualizes transformative processes and mechanisms.

Thus speculative fiction bridges the gap between an imagined future and the ever conditional here and now.

If speculative fiction marks existing hegemonic systems as historical and ultimately amendable, it simultaneously propagates alternative models for legal, political, and social systems. In his essay "Critical Methods/ Speculative Fiction," Samuel Delany stresses the ability of the genre to represent multiple epistemologies within a single text. "If s-f is affirmative," he argues, "it is not through any obligatory happy ending, but rather through the breadth of vision it affords, through the complex interweave of these multiple visions of man's origins and his destinations" (146). Speculative fiction is an "affirmative" genre when it prompts the reader to conceptualize the reformation of existing social and political systems from a variety of distinct yet interrelated perspectives. Therefore, the global hegemony of a single political or social system is rejected by speculative fiction. Delany elaborates on this aspect of the genre:

> Now the writers began to explore these infinitely multiplicated worlds, filled with wondrous things, where the roads and the paintings moved, where religion took the place of government, and advertising took the place of religion, where travel could be instantaneous between anywhere and anywhere else, where the sky was metal, and women wore live goldfish in the transparent heels of their shoes. Within these worlds, the impossible relieves the probable, and the possible illuminates the improbable. And the author's aim is neither to condemn nor to condone, but to explore both the worlds and their behaviors for the sake of the

> exploration…an aim far closer to poetry than to any sociological brand of fiction. (145)

Speculative narratives do not privilege a single epistemology—no monolithic world system is presumed as natural or inevitable. In the process of imagining other worlds, speculative texts produce literary spaces where multiple epistemologies coexist.

The juxtaposition of multiple worldviews spurs the reader to interrogate the dominance of existing social and political systems. "Like the postmodern culture with which it emerged," Vint Writes, "speculative fiction critiques and rethinks the discourses by which we understand commonplace reality. It is thus not merely a fiction about the difference between the fictional world and our own, but one in which the ontology of 'reality' itself is unstable" (90). Similar to Vint's explanation, R.B. Gill identifies speculative fiction as works that present "modes of being that contrast with their audiences' understanding of ordinary reality." The genre questions contemporary conditions by asking "what would happen had the actual chain of causes or the matrix of reality-conditions been replaced with other conditions… speculative fiction envisions a systemically different world in which not only events are different, but causes operate by logics other than normal ones" (73). Therefore, to read an Indigenous or Chican@ novel as a speculative text, we have to recognize how the novel challenges and alters Eurocentric conceptions of colonial history and settler colonial logic. We must also recognize the material ramifications of epistemological transformations.

Central to understanding how speculative genres advocate for social transformation is Darko Suvin's theory of cognitive estrangement. In his *Metamorphoses*

of Science Fiction (1979)—one of the first volumes that posited a literary theory of sf—Suvin explains cognitive estrangement. He asserts that through the process of estrangement, speculative genres reimagine common concepts and objects as uncommon, making the known seem alien. Elaborating on how Suvin conceptualizes this process, Isiah Lavender III explains that in science fiction, "the ordinary world is defamiliarized; it is presented in a way that is exceedingly, and perhaps eerily, different from our own experience" (28). In part, Suvin grounds his understanding of estrangement on the work of Bertolt Brecht, who wrote that "a representation which estranges is one which allows us to recognize its subject, but at the same time makes it seem unfamiliar" (6). This move cites the performative aspects of Brecht's theatric work while grounding Suvin's own work in existing literary theory.

But estrangement is only half of the equation. Suvin also stresses the participatory role that the audience plays when reading science fiction. Cognition—which Edward James defines as "the process of acquiring knowledge and of reason" in his measurement of Suvin's theory—is what distinguishes how authors employ estrangement in speculative genres like sf (James 107-108). The concept of cognition "implies not only a reflecting of but also on reality. It implies a creative approach tending toward a dynamic transformation rather than toward a static mirroring of the author's environment" (Suvin 10). Cognitive estrangement both historicizes a given moment's normative social structures—opening up space for the articulation and critique of underlying ideologies—and exploits the contingencies of economic and legal systems. That speculative fiction "sees the norms of any age, including emphatically its own, as unique, changeable,

therefore subject to a cognitive view," is a result of a dynamic interaction between estrangement and cognition, formally expressed by "an imaginative framework alternative to the author's empirical environment" (7-8).

Suvin's theory of cognitive estrangement has informed much of the discourse on speculative genres since the publication of *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction*.[1] His model of cognitive estrangement can help us better understand how and why Indigenous and Chican@ writers have increasingly employed speculative genres over the last two decades. As Grace Dillon writes, sf, when produced by Indigenous authors, "fuses Indigenous sciences with the latest scientific theories available in public discourses, and sometimes undercuts the western limitations of science altogether. In this process of estrangement they raise the question, what exactly *is* science fiction? Does sf have the capacity to envision Native Futures, Indigenous hopes, and dreams recovered by rethinking the past in a new framework?" (2). At stake in these questions is the value of speculative fiction as a political tool for Indigenous authors. This dissertation hopes to address these questions by expanding our understanding of how the conventions of speculative fiction have been employed and subverted by Indigenous and Chican@ writers since 1990.

CHICAN@ AND INDIGENOUS FUTURISMS

To create a robust framework for reading Chican@ and Indigenous speculative fiction, this dissertation recognizes how genealogies of speculative genres have been

[1] As James writes in *Science Fiction in the 20th Century* (1994), "cognition is, in fact, frequently the main subject of sf: the investigation, for instance, of possible social systems of new forms of science" (108).

shaped by many different voices. However, decolonization is at the horizon of all of these texts: to respect the specific contexts of production for each text and to effectively identify how genre serves the authors, this project will privilege the voices of Indigenous and Chican@ theorists and artists. Such sources have long been marginalized by publishers and scholars alike. As science fiction and speculative fiction have become established as acceptable genres for academic scholarship, the vast majority of academic work has primarily focused on European and Euro-American authors. While existing scholarship on science fiction has grown considerably since the 1970s, Isiah Lavender III asserts that "historical overviews of the genre are still divided by racial assumptions, and sf [science fiction] story collections and histories by white writers and critics barely mention race as a category of interrogation or speculation" (157). Lavender's recently published book, *Race in American Science Fiction* (2011), is one of the few scholarly surveys that addresses this neglect.[2] His analysis focuses on the black-white race binary in science fiction, and while no Indigenous or Chican@ artists are engaged at length in his volume, Lavender makes a crucial point applicable to any study of speculative genres: "This is absolutely one of the joys of sf and other speculative writings. Science fiction actually *does* think about the fact that things could be different and to not utilize that potential in it, I think, is limiting, if not downright disturbing" (8). That things could be different drives my interest in this project. As Margaret Atwood succinctly writes,

[2] Lavender provides a history of how speculative genres have both served white supremacy and allowed African American authors a stage to critique the racist values that have shaped American institutions.

speculative fiction imagines "things that really could happen but just hadn't completely happened when the authors wrote the books" (6).

Nevertheless, literary genealogies of science and speculative fiction cannot be decontextualized from histories of European colonization of the Americas. As author Nalo Hopkinson reminds us, the genre has historically been produced from the perspective of the colonizer: "Arguably one of the most familiar memes of science fiction is that of going to foreign countries and colonizing the natives, and as I've said elsewhere, for many of us, that's not a thrilling adventure story: it's non-fiction, and we are on the wrong side of the strange-looking ship that appears out of nowhere" (Hopkinson 7). Commenting on the agents that first developed the genre, John Rieder stresses that "evolutionary theory and anthropology, both profoundly intertwined with colonial ideology and history, are especially important to early science fiction from the mid-nineteenth century on."[3] Many scholars such as Rieder and Adam Roberts, in *The History of Science Fiction* (2005), insist that to properly historicize the rise of science fiction production and readership in the late 19th century, we must read the genre alongside corresponding histories of imperialist expansion and colonial crises. Darko Suvin's *Victorian Science Fiction in the UK* (1983) and Thomas Clareson's *Some Kind of Paradise* (1985) are especially important texts in developing this line of inquiry, with the

[3] As Rieder writes, public discourse that attempted to justify colonial projects would provide science fiction with much of its early narrative content: "The complex mixture of ideas about competition, adaptation, race, and destiny that was in part generated by evolutionary theory, and was in part an attempt to come to grips with—or to negate—its implications, forms a major part of the thematic material of early science fiction."

former analyzing British contributions to the genre and the latter identifying how artists in the United States shaped and employed the genre between 1870 and 1930.

However, Samuel Delany argues that speculative fiction rejects the Victorian concepts of behavior and progress that have historically grounded science fictional texts. This insight is crucial to understanding differences between traditional science fiction and speculative fiction. Commenting on the conceptual experiments in science fiction writing that would become hallmarks of speculative fiction, Delaney writes that speculative fiction, by the end of the 1960s, was "able to reflect, focus, and diffract the relations between man and his universe, as it included other men, as it included all that man could create, all he could conceive" (143). Therefore, according to Delany, speculative fiction critiques and debunks "the Victorian supposition of the linear moral logic of human progress and the inflexible catholicity of human nature" (141). That speculative fiction allows for the articulation of an exponential number of epistemologies lends the genre to decolonial narratives and breaks away from the colonial roots of science fiction. This project promotes Chican@ and Indigenous speculative fiction as paradigmatic decolonial texts that challenge colonial epistemologies and offer alternative models of social and political systems.[4] Nevertheless, little critical attention has been applied to this genre of writing within both Indigenous and Chica@ studies.

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[4] Two noteworthy creative anthologies have been published in the last decade that address the relationship between speculative genres and decolonial and/or postcolonial narratives. In 2004, editors Nalo Hopkinson, Uppinder Mehan and Samuel Delany assembled the collection *So Long Been Dreaming: Postcolonial Science Fiction & Fantasy*. The first anthology of its kind, *So Long Been Dreaming* includes stories by African, Asian, south Asian and aboriginal authors. Similarly, *The Postnational Fantasy* (2011), edited by Masood A. Raja, Jason Ellies, and Swaralipi Nandi, assembles authors across the globe to assess how the genre has been employed to critique nationalist movements and to recover the utopian potential of

In his essay "Aztlán @ Fifty: Chican@ Literary Studies for the Next Decade," published in 2010, John González calls for more critical attention to how and when Chicano@ authors employ genre fiction. He singles out Chican@ speculative fiction as especially ripe for such extended analysis, citing how authors such as Laurence Gonzales, Ernest Hogan, Rosaura Sanchez, and Ulises Silva "have used the genre to outline the increasingly complicated relationship of Chican@s with digital technologies, corporate globalization, and the future of cyborg labor" (176). An example of the work predicted by John González is Lysa Rivera's 2012 essay "Future Histories and Cyborg Labor: Reading Borderlands Science Fiction after NAFTA." Rivera builds off of the work of Chela Sandoval to analyze how borderlands speculative texts—Mexican writer Guillermo Lavín's short-story "Reaching the Shore" (1994), the science fiction films of US filmmaker Alex Rivera, and Rosaura Sanchez and Beatrice Pita's Chicanafuturistic novel *Lunar Braceros* (2009)—mark and critique "neoliberal economic hegemony" as the dominant form of settler-colonialism in the Americas in the twenty-first century. Like González, she envisions more production and appreciation of Chican@ science fiction in the coming years. "Writing about the future from the bottom up or from the margin to the center, is itself an act of agency and will, I believe, become increasingly more appealing to and visible within the broader Chicano/a literary community of the twenty-first century" (433).

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postcolonial moments. In addition, Jessica Langer's *Postcolonialism and Science Fiction* (2012) grapples with literary manifestations of the genre in the wake of colonialism. Exploring how authors use sf to appraise and critique postcolonial states, Langer recognizes postcolonial sf as a global phenomenon by analyzing texts produced in states such as Japan, Canada and India.

Another recent essay that analyzes Chican@ science fiction is Catherine Ramírez's "Afrofuturism/Chicanafuturism: Fictive Kin." To develop her conception of Chicana Futurism, Ramírez draws inspiration from Afrofuturism.[5] Ramírez references Alondra Nelson's definition of Afrofuturism, which places emphasis on the appropriation of technology and commodities by marginalized communities. Theorists like Nelson are especially helpful for theorizing Chicanafuturism because, as Ramírez writes, they "stress a broad definition of technology, one that includes technological waste. Rather than limiting their focus to computer hardware and software, they strive to examine the myriad ways people of color produce, transform, appropriate, and consume technologies in their everyday lives" (77). Afrofuturism allows Ramírez to better understand how texts by Chican@ artists—artists such as Marion C. Martinez, Guillermo Gómez-Peña and Roberto Sifuentes—produce objects and performances out of leftover commodities. By grounding her definition of Chicanafuturism in the appropriation of technology, we can also draw from existing scholarship on how Chican@ artists appropriate limited materials and landscapes to fortify cultural identities as well as local economies. We can then identify Chican@ sensibilities such as *rasquachismo* as operative in Chican@ speculative fiction.[6] However, despite Rivera and González's optimism for the future of the field,

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[5] Mark Dery coined the term Afrofuturism in his 1993 essay "Black to the Future." In defiance of a history of systematic erasure, Afrofuturist texts fortify culture by imagining a future: "The notion of Afrofuturism gives rise to a troubling antinomy: Can a community whose past has been deliberately rubbed out, and whose energies have subsequently been consumed by the search for legible traces of its history, imagine possible futures?" (736). As such, Afrofuturism has served as a model for many sf texts produced as counterpoints or critiques of Euro-American histories of conquest.

[6] That Chela Sandoval recognizes how the "rasquache" can articulate and mobilize a "cyborgian consciousness" is telling of how we may read *rasquachismo* in Chican@ sf—and perhaps more crucially, how Chican@ sf can be constructed by everyday goods. A rasquache sensibility may even thrive in

Ramírez's "Afrofuturism/Chicanafuturism: Fictive Kin" stands as one of the few recently published essays to pay critical attention to Chican@ speculative fiction.

In comparison to Chicanafuturism, Indigenous Futurism—as defined by Grace L. Dillon, Michael Levy, and John Rieder—"designates a growing movement of writing, both fictional and critical, that envisions the future from the point of view of Indigenous histories, traditions, and knowledges—and in so doing situates the present and the past in ways that challenge (neo/post)colonial ideologies of progress." Dillon edited the first and only anthology of Indigenous speculative fiction, *Walking the Clouds* (2012). This unprecedented survey on Indigenous Futurism is an invaluable text for anyone interested in how Indigenous authors have engaged speculative genres. For Dillon, the anthology helps elucidate how Indigenous authors "reenlist the science of indigeneity in a discourse that invites discerning readers to realize that Indigenous science is not just complementary to a perceived western enlightenment but is indeed integral to a refined twenty-first-century sensibility" (3). In *Walking the Clouds*, Dillon also turns to Afrofuturism to theorize how marginalized and/or colonized populations have historically manipulated and employed speculative genres. Specifically, she points the reader toward literary analyses on relationships between Indigenous American and African American literatures by Mark Bould (2007), Jonathan Brennan (2003), Jack Forbes (1993) and Joanna Brooks (2007). These texts suggest that for scholars aiming to better understand how Indigenous authors use speculative genres in the settler-colonial

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cyberspace, a space defined by Sandoval as presenting "boundless possibilities where meanings are only cursorily attached and thus capable of reattaching to others depending upon the situation to be confronted" (259).

context of the United States, we should look to how Indigenous Futurism draws from multiple genealogies of speculative fiction. This dissertation produces such a scholarly inquiry by addressing the coterminous ways that Indigenous and Chican@ speculative fiction advocated for legal reform in the 1990s via the formation and protection of international coalitions across the Americas.

IMAGINING THE INDIGENOUS LABOR DIASPORA: SPECULATIVE FICTION AT THE INTERSECTION OF CHICAN@ AND INDIGENOUS STUDIES

My comparative analysis of Chican@ and Indigenous speculative fiction addresses a contentious debate between Chican@ and Indigenous studies: the problematic appropriation of Indigenous identities by Chican@ artists and activists. Grounded in a romantic and generalized conception of indigeneity, the political goals of Chicano nationalism historically compromised the cultural and territorial sovereignty of existing Indigenous nations across the American Southwest, especially when manifested by the speculative state of Aztlán. Indeed, my examination of Chican@ speculative fiction recognizes that Chicano nationalism is built upon the ultimate speculative text—Aztlán.[7] Acknowledging the many ways that Chicano nationalist projects continue to elide and conflate the identities of numerous Indigenous nations, this dissertation posits a methodology of reading Chican@ literature that respects the cultural and political interests of Indigenous peoples. To anchor this project, I recover a cohort of Chican@

[7] Elaborating on the importance of Azltan during the Chicano movement, Cherrie Moraga writes: "A term Náhuatl in root, Aztlán was that historical/mythical land where one set of Indigenous forebears, the Aztecs, was said to have resided 1,000 years ago. Located in the U.S. southwest, Aztlán fueled a nationalist struggle twenty years ago, which encompassed much of the pueblo Chicano from Chicano to the borders of Chihuahua" (151).

speculative fiction that collectively challenges readers and writers of Chican@ fiction to honor the tribal sovereignty of Indigenous nations. By highlighting Chican@ speculative fiction that explicitly critiques Chicano nationalist appropriations of Indigenous cultures and histories, I aim to foster dialogue between Indigenous and Chican@ studies.

This comparative project models how the field of Indigenous studies can inform literary analyses of Chican@ literature. In the first half of my dissertation, I will identify how various Indigenous authors supported tribal sovereignty by writing speculative fiction in the early 1990s. In the second half, I will differentiate the legal and political goals of contemporaneous Chican@ and Indigenous speculative fiction. Reading Chican@ and Indigenous literature alongside each other will also enable me to examine how emergent international coalitions, mobilized at the turn of the twenty-first century to exert influence on international and domestic law, necessitated an increased scrutiny of how Indigenous identities were manipulated and appropriated by nationalist movements throughout the twentieth century.

Many of the authors addressed in this study specifically critique the nationalist rhetoric of *indigenismo*—rhetoric that romanticizes and generalizes Indigenous histories and cultures in order to project a singular nationalist identity.[8] To address ethnocentric models of Chicano nationalism grounded in romantic appropriations of indigeneity, Domino Perez has proposed an alternative framework that respects shared histories between Chican@ and Indigenous peoples, while also recognizing the distinct cultural

[8] Estelle Tarica writes that the rhetoric of indigenismo historically represented and consolidated the ideology of mestizo nationalism. Comparing it to Orientalism, Tarica writes that "indigenismo is an exoticist and racist discourse that furthers colonial aims of exploiting, subordinating, and silencing Indians" (1).

and political interests of the latter. "Rather than maintain an imagined mythology that participates in the entrenching of an Aztec hegemony, nay Aztext, and the perseverance of a narrative of empire," Perez argues that "Chicana/os can make claim to Native experience through their participation in a centuries-old and still enduring Indigenous labor diaspora that is not confined to any one geographic place, region, people, or particular nation" (500). Her conception of an "Indigenous labor diaspora" can help scholars better understand how shared histories of colonization between Indigenous and Chican@ peoples—resulting in similar experiences of forced migration, loss of territory and labor exploitation—have fostered the formation of political coalitions in the twentieth and twenty-first century without collapsing Chican@ and Indigenous identities into a singular identity category. Therefore, Perez's concept can help bridge divisions between Indigenous and Chican@ studies. If further developed by scholars in both fields, the Indigenous labor diaspora can serve as a critical interdisciplinary framework that recognizes the coterminous interests of both Chican@ and Indigenous peoples without replicating the essentialist logic of *indigenismo*.

Chican@ Literary Context:

In her essay "Queer Aztlán: The Re-Formation of Chicano Tribe," published in 1993, Cherrie Moraga celebrates the successful mobilization of international political alliances between Indigenous peoples during the Columbian quincentennial. However, Moraga problematically identifies Chican@s as Indigenous peoples. As her essay develops, the political interests of various Indigenous peoples are subsumed, rather than

differentiated, by the speculative Chican@ state of Aztlán—thus reinscribing divisions between Indigenous and Chican@ studies.

Nevertheless, Moraga identifies the scope of emerging Indigenous coalitions and networks as global. Contextualizing recent Indigenous movements alongside several political touchstones of the early 1990s—the disbanding of the Soviet Union, the signing of NAFTA, the staging of the Gulf War, the Bosnian War and the quincentennial—Moraga asserts that "the entire world is reconstructing itself" (168). Moraga employs rhetoric that advocates for international alliances and appeals to a global audience. Commenting on the passing of the quincentennial, she writes that "as these 500 years come to a close, I look forward to a new America, where the only 'discovery' to be made is the rediscovery of ourselves as members of the global community" (174).[9] In the final sentence of the essay, Moraga anticipates that Indigenous peoples will help reshape society on a global scale: "We must submit to a higher 'natural' authority, as we invent new ways of making culture, making tribe, to survive and flourish as members of the world community in the next millennium" (174). Moraga's concluding words promote a political program that targets international stages. And strikingly, while she never explicitly cites human rights law, her words evoke the foundational concept of humanity that grounds universal human rights ideals: Moraga views humanity as a singular "world

[9] Like so many contemporaneous Chican@ and Indigenous writers, Moraga identified 1992 as a crucial year for the advancement of international advocacy networks dedicated to the political and cultural rights of Indigenous peoples: "No longer frozen into the Soviet/Yanqui paradigm of a 'cold' and invented 'war,'" Moraga asserts, "Indigenous peoples are responding en masse to the threat of a global capitalist 'mono-culture' defended by the 'hired guns' of the U.S. military. Five hundred years after Columbus' arrival, they are spearheading an international movement with the goal of sovereignty for all Indigenous nations" (168).

community" comprised of individual "members" that "submit to a higher 'natural' authority."

While Moraga imagines and advocates for the fostering of international political alliances, referring at various points to the "world community" and the "global community," she privileges the nation as the primary political actor to defend the politics and cultural interests of Chican@ peoples. Moraga explains her insistence on employing nationalist political rhetoric: "I cling to the word 'nation' because without the specific naming of the nation, the nation will be lost…let us retain our radical naming but expand it to meet a broader and wiser revolution" (150). To be sure, Moraga cites potential risks associated with nationalism: "I recognize the dangers of nationalism as a strategy for political change. Its tendency toward separatism can run dangerously close to biological determinism" (149). Yet, when Moraga reflects back on the Chicano movement, she does not criticize the movement for ethnocentrism. She claims that "what was wrong about Chicano Nationalism was its institutionalized heterosexism, its inbred machismo, and its lack of a cohesive national political strategy" (148-149). Moraga associates the dangers of ethnonationalism not with Chicano nationalism but instead with "ethnic cleansing" in Bosnia and "the nazism espoused by Pat Buchanan" during the 1992 presidential election.

Thus, in this single essay, Moraga both recognizes emerging international Indigenous movements and defends an ethnonationalist political paradigm. In other words, she simultaneously speculates about the potential for Indigenous coalitions to transcend nationalist categories and justifies nationalist rhetoric. Therefore, Moraga's

conceptualization of a Chicano nationalism grounded in a transnationalist Indigenous identity reflects both excesses of nationalism and transnationalism—she privileges race as a cornerstone of nationalism and erases political and cultural differences that exist between Indigenous peoples. An Indigenous American labor diaspora that stretches across (and beyond) the continent is claimed by a singular nationalist identity via the symbology of Aztlán. Later in the essay, Moraga ties the ascendancy of Chicano nationalism to a racial identity that encompasses Indigenous identities across the Southwest: "there was no room for Chicano ambivalence about being Indians, for it was our Indian blood and history of resistance against both Spanish and Anglo invaders that made us rightful inheritors of Aztlán" (154). Thus, Moraga is able to posit the concept of a "Chicano Indigenous movement" as a nationalist movement, rather than an internationalist one that recognizes the political and cultural sovereignty of Indigenous peoples.

The contradictions of Moraga's conception of Aztlán—a nationalist confluence of Chican@ and Indigenous identities—emerge most forcefully in a particularly telling passage: "Few Chicanos really believe we can wrest Aztlán away from Anglo America. And yet, residing in those southwestern territories, especially those areas not completely appropriated by gringolandia, *we instinctively remember it as a Mexican Indian land and can still imagine it as a distinct nation*" (169, italics mine). To imagine the southwestern territories as a distinct nation would mean not to recognize Indigenous nations, which exist in the same colonized territory, as separate nations. Such a political goal would

challenge the territorial sovereignty of the Apache, Navajo, or Yaqui peoples—to name but a few of the many Indigenous peoples that live in the southwestern territories.

And yet, in a subsequent statement, Moraga asserts that "the spirit of the plan [of Aztlán] is very much in accord with Chicano nationalists' most revolutionary dreams of reclaiming a homeland, side by side with other Indian Nations" (170). Thus, in Moraga's essay, the symbol of Aztlán simultaneously projects the American Southwest as a single Chican@ (Indigenous) nation and yet also represents Chican@ aspirations to build alliances with and recognize differences between Indigenous peoples. Aztlán, as a speculative text in 1992, is both a nationalist and internationalist symbol. These contradictions within this image of Aztlán are a marker of conflicting political paradigms representative of the era. In Moraga's essay, nationalist and internationalist frameworks jockey to defend the political and cultural interests of Chican@s. By representing the entrenchment of ethnonationalist rhetoric while referencing burgeoning international networks, Moraga's text stands as a dynamic historical document of shifting approaches for how non-state actors can defend their political and cultural interests.

As such a historical document, the essay invites readers to further investigate, beyond Moraga's text, how Chican@ writers conceptualized and mobilized international coalitions in the early 1990s. By surveying the landscape of Chican@ literature published during this era, we can see that numerous Chican@ authors indeed advocated for the strengthening of international alliances and networks between Indigenous peoples and ethnic minority populations. Moraga's text also demands that scholars of Chican@ studies take stock of how literary uses of the symbol of Aztlán have changed since

Chicano nationalism in the 1970s. However, this literary phenomenon was not widespread across all literary genres. Rather, Chican@ authors expressed their support for the increased mobilization of international coalitions through the engagement of speculative genres.

The dissertation will address this literary phenomenon: how Chican@ authors between 1990 and 1995 wrote speculative fiction to advocate for international coalitions and critique ethnonationlist rhetoric. In their critique of ethnonationalism, these speculative texts anticipated subsequent scholarship in the field of Chican@ studies. Since the 1990s, scholars such as Angie Chabram-Dernersesian, Sandra Soto, María Josefina Saldaña-Portillo, and Nicole Guidotti-Hernández have interrogated the exclusionary politics and/or cultural appropriation of Indigenous identities empowered by Chicano ethnonationalism. Crucially, these scholars critique the (re)production of (neo)indigenismo within Chican@ literature and scholarship from positions within the field of Chican@ studies. However, if this genealogy offers a valuable model for how scholars can foster a productive discourse between Indigenous and Chican@ studies—producing a critical dialogue on the role of ethnocentrism within Chicano nationalist projects—it also marks the discourse as consistently inchoate. Therefore this genealogy serves as a mandate for more interdisciplinary projects like this dissertation.

Commenting on the state of the field of Chican@ studies at the end of the 1990s, Chabram-Dernersesian urged scholars to examine the ethnocentric legacies of Chicano Nationalism at the turn of the twenty-first century:

> It is ironic that, although we live in a period that prizes the multiplicity of identities and charts border crossings with borderless critics, there should be such a marked silence around the kinds of divergent ethnic pluralities that cross gender and classed subjects within the semantic orbit of Chicana/o. So powerful is the hegemonic reach of dominant culture that fixed categories of race and ethnicity continue to shape the production of social identities within the alternative sector. Few are those who have cut through the nationalist or pluralist registers that promote an all-or-nothing approach to writing the intersections between underrepresented transnational ethnic groups and their heterogeneous social movements toward one another. (269)

Chabram-Dernersesian frames the ethnocentrism of Chicano nationalism as replicating the racial logic that justifies white supremacy. Chabram-Dernersesian also emphasizes the scarcity of critical inquiry into how coalitions are mobilized across ethnic and national categories. Attending to this void within Chican@ studies, she identifies a distance between scholars and the communities they serve. In the most speculative passage in the essay, Chabram-Dernersesian writes that "even though an academic Chicano discourse may lag far behind the continual refurbishing of global transnational identities, social reality has not. It is speeding ahead as the geopolitical boundaries of this territory extend north and south in an unrelenting march toward the twenty-first century" (269). A stagnant Chican@ studies has neglected to account for the social realities of Chican@ communities, and scholarly discourse must respond to and serve emerging

social transformations. Targeting what she identifies as "the ethnic absolutism of the Mexican American binary," Chabram-Dernersesian asserts that "we/they must break out of the prison house of nationalism if we/they are to engage our/their social intersected ethnicities 'on the inside.'" Thus Chabram-Dernersesian calls for a "new dialogue" about ethnicity that challenges essentialist frameworks that project "an imaginary notion of the nation as a unified cultural community, by marginalizing, dispossessing, displacing, and forgetting other ethnicities" (270).

Such a dialogue within the field of Chican@ studies on the role of ethnicity in nationalist movements, as called for by Chabram-Dernersesian, has yet to fully materialize. In *Reading Chican@ like a Queer* (2010), Sandra Soto attempts to advance such a discourse. In particular, she laments missed opportunities throughout Cherrie Moraga's work at addressing the negative consequences of ethnocentrism in Chican@ literature and activism. "Moraga is surprisingly uninterested in critiquing models of authenticity, even in her later works," Soto writes, "where we could easily imagine her critically reflecting on the ways in which her felt outsiderness and the attendant shame were symptomatic of the exclusionary practices of ethnonationalism" (21). Soto finishes her book by questioning the ethnocentric legacies of the Chicano movement that to this day influence scholars of Chican@ studies and underwrite subsequent political movements: "What responsibilities does the younger Chican@ scholar have to the ethnonationalist ethos of Chican@ Studies as elaborated in 'El Plan de Santa Bárbara' and to the feminist platforms launched in response to those foundations?" (126). In other words, are Chican@ scholars expected to replicate exclusionary practices modeled after

the ethnocentrism of Chicano nationalism? That Soto's question is the final statement in her volume reflects the relevancy of this issue in 2010. But that Soto does not answer her own question marks the difficulty of challenging the ethnocentric legacies of Chicano nationalism. Almost a half century removed from the beginning of the Chicano movement, scholars of Chican@ studies have yet to fully contend with the ethnocentrist bedrock of El Movimiento.

As Soto's question reveals, Chabram-Dernersesian's call for a new discourse on ethnicity has not been adequately answered. Scholars of Chican@ studies have yet to develop a comprehensive dialogue on how ethnonationalism still informs scholarly inquiries. In *Unspeakable Violence* (2011), Nicole Guidotti-Hernández addresses how scholars continue to employ simplified racial identifies to construct celebratory narratives of Chicano nationalism. Building off previous work by María Josefina Saldaña-Portillo, she critiques scholarship that sanctions romantic conceptions of *mestizaje* and hybridity to engender resistance narratives.[10] Significantly, both Saldaña-Portillo and Guidotti-Hernández incorporate scholarship from Chican@ and Indigenous studies; their work is paradigmatic of how critiques of Chican@ nationalism must draw from both fields.[11] Identifying the importance of indigeneity to contemporary manifestations of Chicano

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[10] According to Guidotti-Hernández, "Saldaña-Portillo suggests that uncritical Chicano nationalism produces romanticized images of a single Indian tribe that later became Chicanos, a system of representation that erases historically accurate Indigenous subjectivities. Such nationalist narratives, grounded in biologically based terms of mestizaje and a national romance of a unified Indigenous past, do not recognize Indians other than Aztecs as inhabitants of this continent, so that in such narratives, mestizo and therefore Chicano means Indian" (16).

[11] In the introduction to *Unspeakable Violence*, Guidotti-Hernández cites the work of many scholars of Indigenous studies including Ned Blackhawk, Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, Evelyn Hu-DeHart, Laura Donaldson, and Cynthia Radding.

nationalism, Guidotti-Hernández writes: "In the 1970s and 1980s it was gender that was rationalized away by cultural nationalism. Today, gender, for the most part, is included in the analytical framework, but what gets rationalized away now is any sort of critique of indigenismo that does not fit the cultural nationalist script of vindication of 'the' Indian subject who is Chicana/o" (19). Thus, while the rhetoric and practice of cultural nationalism had changed significantly since the 1970s, at the end of the twentieth century indigenismo remained a powerful—and at times the primary—unifying force for Chicano ethnonationalism.

In her 2014 essay "New Tribalism and Chicana/o Indigeneity in the Work of Gloria Anzaldúa," Domino Perez expands on the work of these aforementioned scholars by locating cultural and political relationships between Chican@ and Indigenous peoples within a continental Indigenous labor diaspora violently shaped by 500 years of settler-colonialism. Perez asserts that scholars and writers of Chican@ literature must resist the temptation to romanticize and generalize an Indigenous past while they advocate for political reform in the present. Instead, as previously cited, Perez argues that "Chicana/os can make claims to Native experience through their participation in a centuries-old and still enduring Indigenous labor diaspora" (500). To ground such a diasporic framework, Perez writes that scholars must incorporate a broad conception of historical archives:

> Mexican, Central, and South American Indians and mestizos moved, historically and presently, North and South along the Mesoamerican migrant corridor, stretching from Central America through Mexico and into the United States and Canada, to settle or search for work or an

> improved quality of life but not always with documentation. Records for these individuals exist, if at all, in oral rather than in written records. Similarly, family altars, prayer cards, rosaries, recipes, blankets, and other handcrafts or material objects can embody a history that is not immediately identifiable as recorded or even translatable. These and other means provide potential avenues for familial or individual documentation of Indigenous ancestry for Chicana/os. By placing ephemera alongside accounts and documents that convey how the state sees Mexicans and Indians…Chicana/os can move away from romantic fictions to historical and present accountings that bridge indigenous with Indigenous on both sides of the border. (501)

I argue that the era of Chican@ speculative fiction discussed in this dissertation offers compelling examples of how to produce such restorative projects as described by Perez: to recover and recontextualize political and cultural records in order to better respect and foster political alliances between Chican@ and Indigenous peoples. Perez's assertion—that "Chicana/os can move away from romantic fictions to historical and present accountings that bridge indigenous with Indigenous on both sides of the border"—is essential for the effective building of international movements that situate Chican@ and Indigenous peoples in similar economic and social systems of colonial exploitation but also respect distinct political and cultural interests of contemporary Indigenous peoples.

However, similar to Chabram-Dernersesian's new dialogue, Perez's conception of a "still enduring Indigenous labor diaspora" remains undertheorized. Perez effectively

delimits and critiques the cultural and political benefits of Chicano ethnonationalism without providing a detailed example or extended close reading of how her alternative model can be employed to interpret a particular archive, historical event, or literary text. While Perez's model provides a framework for Chabram-Dernersesian's "new dialogue," this framework has yet to be adequately *applied*. Rather than lose more time waiting for another new dialogue to challenge entrenched ethnonationalist frameworks for studying Chican@ literature and history, we must test the alternative models already proposed. In this dissertation, I posit such an examination. To put pressure on Perez's term—to test if an Indigenous labor diaspora can serve as an effective framework for understanding and mobilizing political coalitions—I analyze a cohort of texts that simultaneously critique ethnonationalist appropriations of indigeneity and advocate for the formation of international coalitions between Indigenous and Chican@ peoples.

That the political and cultural goals of Indigenous peoples do not always coincide with the interests of Chican@s challenges conceptions of Chicano nationalism that rely on the appropriation of indigeneity. To imagine effective coalitions between Indigenous and Chican@ peoples, writers of Chican@ speculative fiction in the 1990s interrogated ethnocentric models of nationalism. Therefore, this dissertation identifies a cohort of Chican@ authors that attempted to account for a contentious issue that still divides Chican@ and Indigenous scholars today—the acceptance and reproduction of indigenismo within Chicano nationalist paradigms. In other words, I recover a collection of speculative texts from the late twentieth century that anticipates and models new

scholarly discourses for the twenty-first century. These texts mandate a change in how scholars within Chican@ studies lay claim to and/or romanticize indigenous identities.

Indigenous Literary Context

By contextualizing Chican@ texts alongside Indigenous texts, I will identify how populations of an Indigenous labor diaspora were contending with 500 years of colonization via distinct but similar legal interventions—an international phenomenon that unites colonial experiences and decolonial strategies. However, to employ the Indigenous labor diaspora as an interdisciplinary framework that bridges divisions and fosters discourse between Chican@ and Indigenous studies, I must also acknowledge political and cultural differences between Chican@ and Indigenous peoples. Therefore, I have structured this dissertation to distinguish Indigenous literatures from Chican@ literature.

The first two chapters of this dissertation analyze legal strategies employed by Indigenous authors in speculative fiction published in the early 1990s. This section highlights a literary moment when Indigenous authors endorsed the reformation of international human rights law and/or legal norms in order to support the external self-determination of Indigenous peoples. Each chapter analyzes how, in the early 1990s, both the legal debates that steered the Working Group on Indigenous Populations at the United Nations and the legal debates represented by Indigenous authors through their speculative fiction were substantively interrelated. Such debates, developed across literary and legal forums, engaged international institutions and mobilized international coalitions of non-

state actors to defend the political and cultural sovereignty of Indigenous peoples. By reading Indigenous speculative fiction published in the early 1990s alongside a history of contemporaneous Indigenous legal advocacy, I recover a cohort of texts that have frequently been marginalized within contemporary Indigenous literary studies for seemingly not defending tribal nationalism or for being too fluent in the conventions of speculative genres.

When, in 1999, Craig Womack speculated about new directions in the field of American Indian literary studies for scholars to take at the turn of the century, he suggested that "one of the obvious areas of inquiry in Native studies in the future will have to be the effect of pan-tribalism on Native cultures, from boarding school to the urban demography of Native populations, to the powwow circuit, to beginning global alliances and awareness among Indigenous populations worldwide" (18-19). Over a decade and a half later much of this work still needs to be undertaken. Responding to Womack's prognostication, this project attends to international literary networks that circulated legal theories and strategies. By reimagining international law and legal norms through their speculative texts, Indigenous American authors in the early 1990s advocated for the mobilization of international coalitions. And even if legal strategies have changed over the last few decades, many of the international networks and alliances that were created in the 1980s and 1990s continue to defend Indigenous rights today.

Crucially, applying critical attention to how Indigenous authors narrate the mobilization of international coalitions is not inherently at odds with the practice of tribal specific literary criticism, especially the method of literary criticism promoted by

American Indian Literary Nationalism—a dominant school of Indigenous literary theory since the 1990s. American Indian Literary Nationalism simultaneously recognizes a multiplicity of Indigenous nations and endorses nationalist readings of Indigenous literature that privilege tribal specific sources and histories. As Jace Weaver writes, "American Indian Literary Nationalism is separatist, but is a pluralist separatism. We are splitting the earth, not dividing up turf" (74). Such a literary approach challenges scholars to understand Indigenous fiction not as a singular literature but as a categorical grouping of numerous national literatures. In other words, Indigenous literature is an international collection of Indigenous literatures.

Daniel Justice elaborates on Weaver's definition. He explains that tribally specific criticism is not exclusionary, nor does it reject outside perspectives or technologies; rather, it "affirms Indigenous perspectives, methodologies, and subjectivities as significant contributors to nuanced understanding of Indigenous literatures" (338). Affirmation, not exclusion, is a central tenet of tribal specific literary criticism. Thus, while Weaver asserts that American Indian Literary Nationalism identifies "Native American literary output as separate and distinct from other national literatures," Weaver also recognizes and engages international relationships that form between distinct national literatures and cultures (15). Tribally specific criticism promotes national interests of particular Indigenous peoples, but it also recognizes that distinct Indigenous literature is not produced in a national vacuum. "Contrary to what some critics, whether Native or non-Native, may believe," Weaver writes, "nationalist or separatism and the use of Western forms or theories (depending, of course, on which ones) are not

antithetical or contradictory" (35). Just as distinct cultures are seldom developed in isolation from other cultures, tribally specific readings accommodate international exchanges of forms and theories. In this dissertation, I recognize how such exchanges can apply to legal as well as literary forms and theories. By elucidating international networks that service the flow of ideas via literature, American Indian Literary Nationalism helps my project identify how legal theories circulate between Indigenous and non-Indigenous literatures.

In the article "Currents of Trans/national criticism in Indigenous Literary Studies," published in *American Indian Quarterly* in 2011, Justice encourages scholars of Indigenous literatures to recognize and foster international alliances across the globe. Commenting on the state of Indigenous literary studies, Justice suggests that a critical understanding of international networks can serve—rather than oppose—literary nationalist projects. Justice writes:

> Whether in Turtle Island, Kanata/Canda, Samiland, Aotearoa/New Zealand, Australia, the United States, or other homelands, territories, and nation-states, scholars of Indigenous literatures are reaching out, learning about themselves and one another, looking for points of connection that reflect and respect both specificity and shared concern, localized contexts and broader concerns, rooted perspectives and global viewpoints. Negotiating between the national and the international is nothing new; these relationships, their pressures, and their possibilities are as old as this land and its many human and other-than-human peoples. (344)

Literary criticism of Indigenous texts can effectively attend to both nationalist and internationalist scopes. Tellingly, Justice describes scholarship produced by Weaver and Womack, two key figures in the foundation of American Indian Literary Nationalism, as "the inclusive critical work of separatist nationalist critics." Justice's words are not intended to be contradictory; he challenges his readers to recognize that Weaver and Womack offer tribal specific readings that are separatist and yet inclusive—national and yet international. Thus, Justice asserts that literary nationalism acknowledges rather than rejects international networks and alliances: "[Weaver and Womack] center their respective work in Native perspectives, but they don't imagine that the center is in isolation; a center, by definition, requires connection. To emphasize the importance of context and location is to *necessarily* acknowledge the importance of their multiplicities and relationships."

A key component of Justice's 2011 survey of the field is his reconciliation of two historically divergent strands of Indigenous literary studies: the "nationalist" and "cosmopolitanist" approaches to reading Indigenous literatures. If Womack, Weaver, Robert Warrior, and Elizabeth Cook-Lynn have consistently championed nationalist approaches since the 1990s—often in explicit opposition to cosmopolitanism—scholars such as Arnold Krupat and Elvira Pulitano have frequently defended cosmopolitanism as a valuable lens for reading Indigenous literature. However, Justice claims that these two schools of theory have increasingly become "complementary approaches" in the twenty-first century (338). This project recovers a collection of texts that suggest this convergence is long overdue, a convergence that Krupat anticipated in 2002 when he

speculated that "in the Native American struggle for sovereignty…cosmopolitans and nationalists will have to make common cause" (19). Reading these texts as representing values of both nationalist and cosmopolitan perspectives, I argue that both frameworks are needed to identify the political strategies that underwrite Indigenous speculative fiction.

Cosmopolitanism, writes Joshua Nelson, privileges "postcolonial concepts like hybridity and mimicry to examine American Indian literature" and attends to "cultural contact zones where anomalies like mixed-bloodedness challenge essentialist notions of racial determinism." Cosmopolitanist approaches assume that identities are "always in flux, never pure, and often of spurious origins" (639). Texts by Gerald Vizenor, Louis Owens, and Louise Erdrich have often been cited as examples of cosmopolitism; in their novels, identity is never fixed. Moreover, Cosmpolitanist approaches contextualize Indigenous literary texts as inherently produced and distributed within a global world system. To be cosmopolitan, writes Krupat, is to be a citizen of the world (14). Therefore, cosmopolitanism acknowledges political and social intersections between Indigenous literatures and minority and/or non-Indigenous literatures. As Krupat explains, "cosmopolitan perspective on Native American literatures read them in relation to other minority or subaltern literatures elsewhere in the late-colonial or postcolonial worlds; cosmopolitan criticism must always in some degree be comparative" (19). This insight identifies cosmopolitan criticism as an important framework for conducting comparative projects, like this dissertation, that include Indigenous authors.

When Cook-Lynn offered her own state of the field of Indigenous literary studies

in 1993, she specifically criticized cosmopolitanism. Cook-Lynn lamented that at the end of the 20th century "it is quite possible American Indian writers will accept the notion that they can and, perhaps, should, with impunity become 'cosmopolitans'…or that they can and should legitimize 'hybridity,' or that they can and should transcend national affiliations, or that they can and should simply serve as exotica" (29). In a passage that describes a cosmopolitan literary landscape that is seemingly dominated by "the idea that Indians lacked political skills," Cook-Lynn identifies several novels by Indigenous authors that, from her point of view, lack a clear political message in favor of tribal nationalism:

> The Christian-oriented apocalyptic vision of Erdrich's rich prose, the anguished dismissal of Blackfeet nationhood by James Welch, the ambiguity concerning the Indian rights struggle of politics and land in my own novel, the mythic self-absorption of Scott Momaday, perhaps even the 'whoever wants to be tribal can join the tribe' of Gerald Vizenor (and we could, perhaps name a dozen more) collectively seem to leave American Indian tribal peoples in this country stateless, politically inept, utterly without nationalistic alternatives. (30)

If to become cosmopolitan was to become apolitical, cosmopolitanism was antithetical to tribal nationalism. However, now that such critical assumptions have recently been challenged, how do literary scholars return to novels that were published in the 1990s, during the ascendency of American Indian literary nationalism, and thus were all-too-frequently critiqued according to a strict nationalist/cosmopolitan binary? In other words,

how does Justice's insight into changing trends in the field of Indigenous literary studies prompt a critical reassessment of novels published at the end of the twentieth century? In the first two chapters of this dissertation, I will address how cosmopolitan narratives can indeed advance national political agendas.

To better understand how and where the interests of these two schools of theory meet, Justice employs a "trans/national" method of analysis: "a dual perspective of movement from center outward and back again. The center remains, and it remains *in relationship*" (339). In other words, the convergence of nationalist and cosmopolitan interests prompts the employment of a synthetic focus of analysis, which Justice refers to as "trans/national criticism." Justice's proposal of a trans/national criticism requires more critical engagement in the field of Indigenous literary studies. What I find especially interesting about this proposed mode of analysis is how Justice modifies the phrase "transnational." The slash that splits Justice's term prevents "nationalism" from being completely subsumed by transnationalism; yet the term also recognizes the interconnectivity of national populations—whether such nations are state or non-state actors. Thus, a trans/national criticism offers scholars a literary approach that respects both international networks and national units. It is a method of criticism that delimits the use of "transnational" as an all-encompassing lens while retaining the transnational imperative to look for political and social networks that transcend national categories.

This dissertation offers an example of what happens when the "nationalist" and "cosmopolitanist" schools, as Justice proposed, become "complementary approaches." This project benefits from both theoretical approaches and identifies narratives that

reform international law as trans/national literary texts where the political interests of both theoretical approaches converge. It also practices and contributes to the theorization of a trans/national criticism of Indigenous literary studies, while at the same time advances a literary recovery project that enriches our understanding of how and why Indigenous authors frequently turned to speculative genres in the 1990s to advocate for the political and legal interests of Indigenous peoples across North America—and, indeed, the globe.[12]

A trans/national framework supplements our understanding of the Indigenous labor diaspora as an international model that aligns distinct Indigenous and Chican@ peoples via shared histories of exploitation and forced migration by settler-colonial states. International movements do not inherently produce transnational and/or monolithic identity categories—even when the "nations" are not formally recognized as "nation-states." Both frameworks can help scholars of Chican@ studies critique and dismantle ethnonationalist programs grounded in the appropriation of indigeneity, thus allowing scholars of Chican@ and Indigenous studies to conceptualize new ways of fostering alliances and projecting solidarity.

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[12] Daniel Justice's conception of a trans/national criticism offers my dissertation a more precise critical approach than transnationalism (without the slash) to understanding the dynamics of how Indigenous and Chican@ speculative literature advocates for the building of international coalitions among non-state actors. An international coalition, as imagined by the speculative texts in this dissertation, is not an amalgamation of diverse populations. Therefore, this project recognizes international coalitions as consisting of constellations of distinct peoples and communities—it will respect the particular political and cultural interests of Indigenous and Chican@ literatures. However, a trans/national criticism also applies pressure to nationalist rhetoric and must challenge exclusionary policies sanctioned in the name of nationalism. To better understand how this era of Indigenous and Chican@ speculative literatures advocated for the creation of international coalitions, this dissertation will examine how these literatures critiqued the excesses of both transnationalist and nationalist rhetoric.

THEORIZING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SPECULATIVE LITERATURE AND INTERNATIONAL LAW

At the center of this project are speculative texts that imagine social transformation via legal reform. Elucidating the legal contours of an era of speculative writing at the end of the twentieth century, this dissertation will explore how a cohort of Indigenous and Chican@ authors responded to a series of historical events that occurred within the span of only a few years: the Gulf War (1990-1991), the fall of the Soviet Union (1991), the Columbian quincentennial (1992), the passage of NAFTA (1994), and the Bosnian War (1992-1995). During this period, extraordinary political, legal and economic alliances transformed and transcended the borders of nation-states across the globe. Amidst widespread experimentation on international stages, Indigenous and Chican@ authors also theorized, via speculative fiction, how international coalitions could serve the interests of Indigenous and Chican@ peoples in North America.

By contextualizing these speculative texts alongside contemporaneous developments in international law, this dissertation identifies how this era of speculative fiction reflects universal human rights ideals and expresses optimism that international political coalitions can successfully intervene to protect minority populations and Indigenous peoples from human rights abuses perpetrated by nation-states.[13] Central to this optimism is the belief that international law can be structurally reformed by non-Eurocentric (i.e. Indigenous and Chican@) epistemologies.

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[13] Legal historians Kassi Tallent and Karen Engle define human rights as "inalienable entitlements that all individuals hold by virtue of the fact that they are human beings."

To transform international legal norms, B.S. Chimni, a leading advocate of Third World Approaches to International Law (TWAIL), argues that literature and visual art must lead the way in conceptualizing the reform of international law and popularizing legal strategies. "From the standpoint of TWAIL," writes Chimni, "it is necessary first, to make the story of resistance an integral part of the narration of international law. There is perhaps a need to experiment with literary and art forms (plays, exhibitions, novels, films) to capture the imagination of those who have just entered the world of international law" (22). Responding to Chimni's prognostication, I look at Indigenous and Chican@ speculative fiction for just such literary interventions—interventions that aim not only "to capture the imagination of those who have just entered the world of international law," but to also encourage other readers to consider international and human rights law as worth engaging, and indeed, reforming. Therefore, these speculative texts frame narratives of resistance to Eurocentric legal practices as central to the development and decolonization of international law.

To better understand the dynamic relationship between the production of popular literature and the formation of legal norms, I turn to the work of literary scholar Joseph Slaughter. In his analysis of the *bildungsroman* in *Human Rights, Inc.: The World Novel, Narrative Form, and International Law* (2007), Slaughter asserts that literary genres not only often reflect the values of legal institutions, but that popular trends in narrative form can exert influence on the development of legal norms. To theorize a relationship between the popularization of literary genres and the normalization of legal systems, Slaughter writes that "genres emerge and become conventional (both publicly common

and formally regular) to the extent that they make collectively legible—if sometimes distorted—both actual and possible (desirable and undesirable) social formations and relations" (10). Literature, like law, shapes our social world. Moreover, Slaughter recognizes that "the social work of literature and the cultural work of law" often promote shared political interests. That both are agents of social regulation grounds two central claims that Slaughter makes about the "interdependent and interrelated" relationship between literature and law: "law favors and enables some narrative plots and literary genres over others" and "literature has historically favored and enabled some formulations of the law" (11). This approach to law and literature underwrites Slaughter's critical investigation into the "ways contemporary human rights law and the *bildungsroman* make human rights legible" (11). The stakes of such a project are immense. *Human Rights, Inc.* marks the legal ramifications on a global scale of the production, distribution and consumption of a literary genre.[14]

Human Rights Inc. offers a compelling case for understanding the limitations of human rights law by analyzing how a popular literary genre has legitimated a theory of universal human rights that privileges the sovereignty of the nation-state in existing

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[14] In *Human Rights, Inc.*, Slaughter argues that popular developments in narrative form during the twentieth century have ultimately constrained the imaginative horizons of international human rights law in our contemporary moment. At the end of his landmark investigation into the coterminous ways that literature and law have shaped human rights discourse, Slaughter holds the popular narrative form of the *bildungsroman* accountable for conditioning generations of readers to privilege the nation-state as the fundamental guarantor of human rights. According to Slaughter's evaluation, "the effective limitations of human rights are related not merely to the institutional frailty to the international legal regime but to the historically nationalist limitations of our literary imaginations" (324). In other words, our nationalist literary imaginations—both how we write and how we read novels—have ensured the failure of human rights law

international legal norms.[15] My dissertation does not contest this argument. But where Slaughter offers an account of how the globalization of a European literary genre has severely constrained the legal possibilities of universal human rights law, I recognize an underappreciated history of contemporary speculative literature that imagines the realization of international law and human rights ideals beyond contemporary legal limitations: in speculative fiction over the last quarter of a century, Indigenous and Chican@ authors have consistently employed non-Eurocentric epistemologies to reshape international legal norms in order to support claims for self-determination and/or secure universal human rights. If Slaughter analyzes how literary movements have informed international legal norms over the *previous* two centuries, I recognize an emerging literary movement that aims to effect the change of international legal norms in *this* century.

That speculative fiction by Indigenous and Chican@ authors has increasingly reflected human rights ideals over the last twenty-five years reflects the utopian qualities of human rights. Samuel Moyn argues that defending human rights is inherently a speculative project: "There is no way to reckon with the recent emergence and contemporary power of human rights without focusing on their utopian dimension: the image of another, better world of dignity and respect that underlies their appeal, even when human rights seem to be about slow and piecemeal reform" (4). Moyn's measurement of human rights is both speculative and practical, but in framing human

[15] Slaughter writes, "the nation-state persists as the organizing principle not only in the novels (and human rights law) but in the critical and reading practices that we perform on these novels" (323-324).

rights as a utopian program, Moyn distinguishes human rights ideals from the practice of human rights law. I read this important distinction—a legal ideal versus a formalized law—as a fundamental component of Moyn's thesis in *The Last Utopia* (2010), his recent history of human rights. In this book, Moyn challenges "classic" accounts of human rights history that present the formalization of human rights law as a two-thousand-year narrative that incorporates cultural traditions and historical events such as the development of Greek and Roman philosophy, the practice of Medieval natural law, and the adoption of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen in France in 1789.[16] Instead, Moyn controversially argues that it was not until "the middle of the 1970s that human rights came to define people's hopes for the future as the foundation of an international movement and a utopian of international law" (7). This argument relies on two central claims: Moyn asserts that in the 1970s, human rights emerged as the "last" universal ideal with significant international popular support; and that it has only been since this decade that international law, in service of human rights, has begun to formally experiment with how legal institutions can empower non-state actors to challenge the

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[16]In his book *International Human Rights Law: Cases, Materials,* Commentary, Olivier De Schutter presents a "classic" account of human rights: By the time human rights emerged as a part of international law in 1945, they already had a long history. As legal entitlements, they had originated in the liberal constitutions of the late eighteenth, and especially nineteenth centuries. International law did not follow suit immediately. And it did so, initially, only piece by piece, and hesitatingly. Karen Engle and Kassi Tallent offer another such variation of human rights history in their 2006 book *A Brief History of International Human Rights Law and Practice*: "the idea that some rights are bestowed upon individuals by nature and cannot be extinguished by State authority is sometimes traced to the provisions of the English Magna Carta. This notion later became more prominent in the writings of Enlightenment philosophers, principally John Locke, and was eventually enshrined in both the United States Constitution and the French Declaration of the Rights of Man. These documents and the principles they embody—particularly that individual liberty must be protected against the inevitable abuse of political power—are in turn often cited as sources of the development of modern human rights law." See also the introduction of *Inventing Human Rights* (2007) by Lynn Hunt.

hegemony of existing nation-states. This latter claim is supported by Indigenous and Chican@ speculative fiction. These novels offer alternative legal models at a time when international law was fundamentally a Eurocentric system. Building from Moyn's utopian appreciation of human rights ideals and Slaughter's scholarship on the mutually constitutive relationship between literature and law, this project analyzes the role played by Indigenous and Chican@ speculative fiction in advocating for the reformation of international law.

Despite the historical marginalization of speculative genres within literary fields, scholars have recently begun to consider speculative fiction as a viable expression of political agency that can help guide the transformation of Eurocentric and/or settler-colonial institutions.[17] Most notably, Ramón Saldívar theorized "a new stage in the history of the novel by twenty-first-century US ethnic authors," which he terms "postrace" American fiction. Speculative fiction plays an important role in his conceptualization of the new postrace novel. In his 2012 article "Imagining Cultures: The Transnational Imaginary in Postrace America," Saldívar suggests that two new hybrid formations of speculative genres—which he terms historical fantasy and speculative realism—characterize this era of ethnic (postrace) literature. Saldívar asserts that in the postrace novel, "fantasy compels our attention to the gap or deficit between the ideals of redemptive liberal democratic national histories concerning inclusiveness, equality, justice, universal rights, freedom guaranteed by rule of law, and the deeds that have

[17] A line of literary inquiry that can be seen in the work of Mark Bould, Grace Dillon, China Miéville, John Rieder, and Catherine Ramírez.

constituted nations and their histories as public collective fantasies" (594). Like his previous theory of Chicano narrative (which he developed in the 1980s), Saldívar's conception of the "postrace" novel contends with the ways that novels reveal underlying ideologies that inform contemporaneous social and economic systems. In theorizing Chicano narrative, via the concept of the dialects of difference, Saldívar identifies how certain Chicano novels, while never quite representing the reality they strive to document, expose exploitive social relationships and the ways that literary genres are complicit in racial and economic stratification.[18] Reflecting back on this era, Saldívar writes, "this kind of ideological unmasking was heroically the utopian goal of earlier ethnic fiction" (595). In comparison, he posits that postrace novels in the twenty-first century, such as Salvador Plascencia's *People of Paper* (2005) and Junot Diaz' *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2007), "articulate a fantasy to the second and third degrees that paradoxically might serve as the real basis for understanding the conditions under which a postrace world might be conceivable as a real possibility within the imaginary of fiction" (595). If Saldívar's theory of a dialectics of difference attends to historical and formal ideological commitments that restrict Chicano expression, then his new theory of

[18] As conceptualized by Saldívar, the dialectics of difference describes a "narrative strategy for demystifying the relations between minority cultures and the dominant culture" (5). This analytic employs a historical materialist approach to read chican@ novels, providing us with an indispensible tool for understanding how authors engage literary genres grounded in Euro-American traditions and all-too-often invested in market interests. Saldívar argues that Chicano narrative is a genre in itself that employs a dialectical structure as an "authentic way of grappling with a reality into which the subject of the narrative's action seeks to enter, all the while learning the lesson of its own ideological closure, and of history's resistance to the symbolic structures in which subjectivity itself is formed" (5).

the postrace novel attends to ways fantasy genres conceptualize the conditions necessary for social and political change.[19]

However, if a "transnational turn in American ethnic fiction" has recently occurred, such a literary trend began to emerge not in this century, as Saldívar argues, but at the end of the previous century. To appreciate this literary trend, which critiques nationalist politics while embracing international political movements and systems, we must contextualize it alongside developments in international political and legal movements. That this literary trend occurred alongside the emergence of human rights law as the dominant legal paradigm in international law to protect the interests of immigrants, ethnic minorities and Indigenous peoples cannot be ignored. Indeed, I argue that this trend is best framed as *inter*national rather than *trans*national—or even, via Daniel Justice's synthetic critical approach, as trans/national. The emergence of international coalitions, rather than transnational identities, must be identified and analyzed. Furthermore, Saldívar does not consider Indigenous speculative fiction in his conceptualization of the "postrace" novel. Omitting the distinct political and cultural goals of Indigenous authors, along with problematically aligning a diverse collection of Latino speculative texts, Saldívar projects a singular political identity shared by a collection of "US ethnic authors" that neglects political and cultural differences that distinguish Indigenous and Latin@ peoples within and without the borders of the US. Informed by the fields of Chican@ and Indigenous studies, as well as Latin@ studies,

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[19] Saldívar is careful to note that the "representation of social justice is not and should not be taken to be the same thing as its felicitous performance" (593).

this project recognizes how the legal strategies narrated in each speculative text reflect the needs of particular communities and peoples.

This contextual approach also recognizes how numerous speculative novels produced during this era were committed to not only staking out the necessary conditions for future political and social change, but they were also actively calling for legal action to instigate such change in the present. This perspective does not assume that all utopian visions are politically naïve or impractical. My critical approach shares José Muñoz's belief that the impulse toward futurity recovers past desires for and visions of change as vital material for amending the present. In *Cruising Utopia* (2009), Muñoz analyzes how Bloch's conception of a utopian hermeneutics—which recovers the "no-longer-conscious" to imagine the social and political contours of the "not yet here"—instigates transformation in the here and now. Muñoz writes:

> [Bloch's] temporal calculus preformed and utilized the past and the future as armaments to combat the devastating logic of the world of the here and now, a notion of nothing existing outside the sphere of the current moment, a version of reality that naturalizes cultural logics such as capitalism and heteronormativity. Concomitantly, Bloch also sharpens our critical imagination with his emphasis on hope. An antiutopian might understand himself as being critical in rejecting hope, but in the rush to enounce it, he would be missing the point that hope is spawned of a critical investment in utopia, which is nothing like naive but, instead,

> profoundly resistant to the stultifying temporal logic of a broken-down present. (12).

Muñoz's appreciation of Bloch's utopian hermeneutics complicates Saldívar's assertion that recent speculative fiction by ethnic American authors "attempts to claim sincerely the utopian vision of achieved freedom and justice all the while not believing in their attainability." It is precisely the *hope* for the utopian vision that spurs change.[20] Drawing on previous work by scholars associated with the Frankfurt School (Bloch, Theodor Adorno, Walter Benjamin, and Herbert Marcuse), as well as pioneers of German idealist thought (Immanuel Kant and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel), Muñoz argues that utopian texts offer "a critique of the present order, and of the overarching dictate of how things are and will always be in an unyielding status quo." Thus, the utopian desire or vision is "a great refusal of an overarching here and now" (133). Where Saldívar emphasizes the unattainability of utopian social and political formations, Muñoz recognizes how present social and political systems are marked impermanent (and therefore amendable) via the articulation of utopian narratives and desires. By understanding how Muñoz valued utopian desires and texts, we can better appreciate how utopian texts are politically productive because they do believe in social change in the here and now.

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[20] Muñoz elaborates on the importance of hope: "Bloch offers us hope as a hermeneutic, and from the point of view of political struggles today, such a critical optic is nothing short of necessary in order to combat the force of political pessimism. It is certainly difficult to argue for hope or critical utopianism at a moment when cultural analysis is dominated by antiutopianism often functioning as a poor substitute for actual critical intervention" (4).

In addition, we must employ a more informed and nuanced approach to the conventions of speculative genres and the long and varied histories of such genres, drawing from foundational literary criticism (such as works by Darko Suvin and Samuel Delany) as well as recent scholarship on speculative genres (by scholars such as John Rieder, Grace Dillon, Sherryl Vint, Isiah Lavender III, Michael Levy and China Miéville). For example, Saldívar's analysis is grounded in a limited appreciation of the fantasy genre. By claiming that postrace novels employ "new forms of fantasy to *reverse* the usual course of fantasy, turning it away from latent forms of daydream, delusion, and denial, toward the manifold surface features of history," he characterizes the genre prior to this recent literary trend (which emerged only in the 21st century) in terms of absentmindedness, delusion, denial and, perhaps most concerning, anti-historical.

Marcial González also reveals a similar generalizing approach to the fantasy genre. Employing Saldívar's theory of a dialects of difference, González critiques Chican@ novels that represent what he identifies as "cultural Schizophrenia"—a literary phenomenon he grounds as inherently postmodern (and therefore at odds with historical materialism). Gonzales identifies manifestations of cultural Schizophrenia—a postmodern condition that "conjures up the image of an individual with a split personality that is unable to deal with difficult situations and must therefore create a fantasy self"—in two Chicana texts, "Literary Wetback" (1993) by Alicia Gaspar de Alba and *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987) by Gloria Anzaldúa. "Unable to cope with feelings of alienation produced by the fragmenting tendency of capitalist society," González argues that these Chicana authors create "a fantasy culture to avoid dealing

with reality" (174). By bringing the expectation that Chicano narrative must engender the dialectics of difference—above all, that they elucidate the political and social structures that ultimately limit the expression of Chican@ voices—González measures these texts as hamstrung by postmodernity and incomplete in both their assessment of and reaction to alienation. Moreover, González uses the word fantasy as a dead end; a fantasy self or a fantasy culture has no place in his reading of historical materialism. Ultimately, both González and Saldívar employ a much too narrow understanding of speculative fiction.

Gloria Anzaldúa's valuation of speculative fiction provides a strong rebuttal to González's critique of *Borderlands/La Frontera.* In "Lesbian Visions, Fantasy, Science Fiction," an essay written for *Sister Wisdom*, Anzaldúa defends her interest in speculative fiction:

> We need to understand all the different forms of fantasy as a ways to heighten both our sense of urgency and our belief in our ability to remake the world. We need to find ways to be patient with this urgency, to startle our creative selves into action…We have to hope that by encouraging imagination, pushing and prodding, inventing outrageous galaxies and the perfect amazon village, we push our minds towards their own evolution. We cannot quite reach the womyn we hope to become, the world in which we want to work and love. But we can infuse our present with all manner of fabulous images, challenge our habits of thought.

Like Muñoz, Anzaldúa recognizes how utopian desires can guide material change in the present.[21] By imagining alternative realities, speculative fiction provides vital literary forums for the expression of marginalized and emerging epistemologies. Her appreciation of the genre also recalls Samuel Delany, who, as previously cited, distinguished speculative fiction for its "ability to reflect, focus, and diffract the relations between man and his universe, as it included other men, as it included all that man could create, all he could conceive" (143). Thus, a text that Marcial González critiques for representing "cultural Schizophrenia" should instead be celebrated for, in the words of Delany, "the breadth of vision it affords" and its ability to interweave "multiple visions of man's origins and his destinations" (146).

Indeed, throughout her life, Anzaldúa was drawn to theories and genres that allowed for a multiplicity of epistemologies and acknowledged diverse life experiences. Asserting that "effective bridging comes from knowing when to close ranks to those outside our home, group, community, nation and when to keep the gates open," Anzaldúa stressed the importance for inclusivity in her concept of new tribalism, a speculative framework for building cultural and political alliances:

> Gathering people from many geographies in a multicultural approach is a mark of inclusivity, increased consciousness, and dialogue. This inclusivity reflects the hybrid quality of our lives and identities—todas

[21] For Anzaldúa, speculative writing, whether fiction or non-fiction, can indeed be revolutionary: "Empowerment comes from ideas—our revolution is fought with concepts, not with guns, and it is fueled by vision. By focusing on what we want to happen we change the present. The healing images and narratives we imagine will eventually materialize" (247).

> somos nos/otras. Living in multicultural communities and the complexities of our age demand we develop a perspective that takes into account the whole planet.
>
> Our goal is not to use differences to separate us from others, but neither is it to gloss over them. Many of us identify with groups and social positions not limited to our ethnic, racial, religious, class, gender, or national classifications. Though most people self-define by what they exclude, we define who we are by what we include—what I call the new tribalism. (245)

In the passage, Anzaldúa posits her concept of "new tribalism" as a "multicultural approach" that simultaneously recognizes differences and fosters connectivity. Anzaldúa conceptualizes transformation on a global stage; yet, via her phrase "todas somos nos/otras"—a concept similar to Daniel Justice's "trans/national" framework—Anzaldúa crafts a term that allows for differences between politically aligned peoples. If new tribalism was, at least in part, conceptualized by Anzaldúa to recognize and foster new models of coalition building, then new tribalism references emerging and speculative political strategies from the 1990s as much as it projects how such strategies can be emboldened in the 2000s. This insight underscores a central claim of this dissertation: that literary scholarship has consistently lagged behind literary production in recognizing

the importance of international coalitions to defend the political and legal rights of non-state collective actors.[22]

This dissertation identifies speculative texts that address this component of new tribalism—the need for new frameworks to understand emerging political alliances—with more legal and political precision than offered by Anzaldúa. Indeed, by presenting narratives that contribute to the reconceptualization of international law, human rights law, citizenship criteria, electoral systems and land ownership at the end of the twentieth century, these texts provide legal content for speculative theories like Anzaldúa's new tribalism, Perez's Indigenous labor diaspora and Daniel Justice's trans/national approach. This dissertation tests and critiques such theories by analyzing speculative fiction from the early 1990s—the first wave of literature to measure how political alliances between Indigenous and Chican@ peoples transformed amidst the political and legal upheaval produced after the fall of the Soviet Union.

CHAPTER DESCRIPTIONS:

In the first two chapters of this dissertation, I examine Indigenous speculative fiction that conceptualizes how Indigenous peoples use international law to defend tribal sovereignty. In chapter one, "Speculative States: Citizenship Criteria, Human Rights and Revising Legal Norms in Gerald Vizenor's *The Heirs of Columbus*," I consider how Gerald Vizenor tests multiple legal strategies on international stages in his novel *The*

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[22] We can even see this lag—between criticism and literature—within Anzaldúa's own body of work: her unpublished speculative fiction from the early 1990s offers an early articulation of her theory of new tribalism, a relationship I will return to later in this dissertation.

Heirs of Columbus (1991). This reading positions *The Heirs of Columbus* as a text that is quintessentially representative of how Vizenor speculatively constructs legal and political systems informed by international coalitions throughout many of his speculative texts, including *Bearheart: The Heirship Chronicles* (1978)*, Griever: An American Monkey King in China* (1987)*,* and *Hiroshima Bugi: Atomu 57* (2004).

In the second chapter, "Quincentennial Secessions: The New Indigenous States of *The Crown of Columbus* and *The Wild Blue and The Gray*," I analyze a pair of Indigenous speculative novels that have yet to be appreciated by literary scholars as explicit political texts that make appeals to reform international legal norms. Marginalized by genre biases for far too long, *The Crown of Columbus* (1991), coauthored by Louise Erdrich and Michael Dorris, and *The Wild Blue and the Grey* (1991), authored by William Sanders, offer historical insights into how legal strategies were conceptualized and circulated in the early 1990s. By using speculative genres, these authors imagine the success of legal strategies that had been developed by international Indigenous rights movements throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Considering these speculative novels within the advocacy histories of three prominent non-government organizations—The World Council of Indigenous Peoples, the Indian Law Research Center, and the International Indian Treaty Council—I will identify how Indigenous speculative fiction published in the 1990s centered international legal institutions as primary sites for Indigenous peoples to successfully defend tribal sovereignty.

In my next chapter, I shift to Chican@ speculative fiction that decenters the nation-state as the primary actor in international law while reforming human rights ideals

so as to reflect Chican@ values and experiences. Throughout my third chapter, "Imagining a Chican@ Human Rights Law: Chican@ Dystopian Fiction from 1990 to 1995," I will note the hallmarks of the dystopian ethnonationalist states imagined by Chican@ authors during this era. To advance my argument that these depictions of dystopian states reflect contemporaneous human rights discourse in international law, I focus on two novels: *Sapogonia* (1990) by Ana Castillo and *The Rag Doll Plagues* (1992) by Alejandro Morales. Positioning my readings of these two novels at the intersection of literature and law, I employ the work of both literary and legal scholars to develop a critical framework within which to explore how each novel supports human rights ideals. I will identify how these speculative novels reflect two particular ideals: my analysis of *Sapogonia* addresses the human rights of immigrants and my analysis of *The Rag Doll Plagues* addresses the human right to health. To augment my examinations of these novels, I will contextualize *Sapogonia* and *The Rag Doll Plagues* alongside other dystopian texts by Ernest Hogan, Guillermo Gómez-Peña and Cherríe Moraga.

In my fourth chapter, "Aztech Neo-Nationalism: Speculative *Indigenismo* and the Politics of Appropriation in Ernest Hogan's *High Aztech* and Gary D. Keller's *Zapata Rose in 1992,*" I examine Chican@ speculative texts that critique the nationalist rhetoric and symbology of *indigenismo*—as employed by both Mexican and Chicano nationalist movements in the 20th century. To address how Chican@ speculative fiction critiqued politically-motivated appropriations of indigeneity during this era, I analyze passages from *High Aztech* (1992) by Ernest Hogan and *Zapata Rose in 1992* (1992) by Gary Keller. I identify how Hogan and Keller cast national political parties, both of which

appropriate Aztec history in order to manufacture a nationalist identity, as the antagonists of their speculative texts. I also explore how each author recovers histories of violence perpetrated by multiple imperial and national powers—Spanish, Mexican and/or Aztec—and thus complicates literary generalizations of European and Indigenous political and cultural histories. That this chapter addresses genealogies of appropriation demands that I employ a critical approach that attends to the problematic ways Chican@ writers have historically claimed or romanticized indigeneity in their literary texts. To anchor such an approach, I turn to recent work by Sandra Soto, Domino Perez, Angie Chabram-Dernersesian, Rafael Perez-Torres, María Josefina Saldaña-Portillo, and Nicole Guidotti-Herenandez to guide my readings of how these texts critique (yet also at times reproduce) practices of exploiting Indigenous heritage for political or legal gain.

In my fifth chapter, "Speculative Coalitions within the Indigenous Labor Diaspora: Building a New International Society in Chican@ Utopian Fiction," I examine Chican@ utopian texts that conceptualize political reform, which targets land ownership and electoral systems, at the end of the twentieth century via the mobilization of international coalitions. Crucially, the authors of these texts conceptualize alliances that are grounded in shared experiences of exploitation and forced migration due to colonization rather than organized around an ethno-nationalist identity. Thus, the authors of these texts anticipate and model Perez's mandate that Chican@ writers and scholars "move away from romantic fictions to historical and present accountings" and construct international political coalitions across "a centuries-old and still enduring Indigenous labor diaspora." In this chapter, I return to *Zapata Rose in 1992* in order to attend to how

Keller advocates for land reform across North America at the Columbian quincentennial by drawing from documents produced during the Mexican Revolution (El Plan de Ayala from 1911; Manifesto to the Mexican People from 1918) and the Chicano Movement (El Plan de Delano from 1966). In Keller's novella, historical documents signed by Emiliano Zapata and César Chávez, respectively, serve as models for aligning the cultural and political interests of *mestizo* and Indigenous peoples. And in my analysis of "The Great Pyramid of Aztlán," I will argue that Treviño historizes Aztlán as a political symbol produced by and for the political interests of the Chicano Movement (rather than romanticizing Aztlán as a symbolic marker of Indigenous heritage). Trevino identifies the foundation of "Aztlán" not as Aztec cultural and religious systems, but as the Viva Kennedy Political clubs of 1960. Undercutting claims to Aztec epistemologies and symbols by framing Aztlán as a symbolic referent to the 1960s, Trevino recovers strategies for conceptualizing electoral reform developed during the early stages of the Chicano Movement.

Chapter One:

Speculative States: Citizenship Criteria, Human Rights and Decolonial Legal Norms in Gerald Vizenor's *The Heirs of Columbus*

This chapter analyzes the legal arguments made by Gerald Vizenor in his 1991 utopian novel *The Heirs of Columbus*. I will contextualize this Indigenous speculative text in terms of the development of international human rights law at the end of the twentieth century. Specifically, I analyze *The Heirs of Columbus* in relationship to the Columbian quincentennial, paying close attention to how Vizenor critiques contemporaneous international legal norms in response to global celebrations of the 500th anniversary of Christopher Columbus' first voyage to the Americas. Throughout this chapter, I identify passages from *The Heirs of Columbus* that demonstrate how Vizenor uses the speculative genre to encourage and demonstrate the reformation of international law and the construction of international political coalitions.[23]

My reading of *The Heirs of Columbus* is inspired by James Cox's literary analysis of the same novel. In *Muting White Noise* (2006), Cox explores how Vizenor "revises Eurowestern storytelling traditions that are hostile to Native people" in *Heirs of Columbus*. In comparison to such Eurowestern literary texts, "Vizenor's sources of worldviews, identities, and representations are more nourishing and more specifically Native: oral traditions, individual and communal memories, dreams, and laser holograms

[23] Representative of Vizenor's interest in the relationship between law and literature, Vizenor initiated and co-lectured a graduate seminar titled "Comparative Law and Literature" at the University of California in 1994 ("Course Syllabus").

projected into the sky" (102). Building from Cox's study of the novel, which unpacks "Vizenor's strategy of revising non-Native textual traditions," I focus my analysis on how Vizenor specifically revises Eurocentric legal norms (which simultaneously privilege and constitute non-native textual traditions). I am particularly interested in how Vizenor reconceptualizes citizenship criteria and human rights law from an Anishinaabe perspective. By narrating the creation of a new Indigenous state named Point Assinika—situated at the border between Canada and the US—Vizenor reforms tribal citizenship criteria as an act of external self-determination that privileges Indigenous forms of governance and law. And in terms of human rights law, Vizenor centers the human right to health as a universal right held by each citizen in the new Indigenous state. Point Assinika's commitment to recognizing the right to health also exposes human rights abuses in neighboring settler-colonial states: in comparison to how Point Assinika safeguards the right to health, Canada and the US have failed to secure appropriate healthcare for their citizens.

Thus Point Assinika emerges as an Indigenous space that upholds human rights ideals. Rather than rely on the settler-colonial state to respect human rights law, Vizenor makes the argument that securing external self-determination for Indigenous peoples is the best way to protect the human rights of Indigenous peoples. Furthermore, Vizenor suggests that human rights ideals will only be fully realized around the globe when international legal norms reflect the values of Indigenous epistemologies and mandate the direct participation of Indigenous peoples. In other words, the future success of human rights law at large is contingent on the implementation of Indigenous traditions and

knowledges to reshape international legal norms. By narrating the decolonization of legal norms, *The Heirs of Columbus* offers a powerful example of how Indigenous futurisms contend with various legal legacies of colonialism by privileging Indigenous legal traditions and reforming international law from Indigenous perspectives.

INDIGENOUS SPECULATIVE FICTION AT THE COLUMBIAN QUINCENTENNIAL

In 1992, nation-states on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean marked the 500th anniversary of Christopher Columbus' first voyage to the Americas with elaborate and costly celebrations. The most expensive celebration by far was the Universal Exposition in Seville.[24] With a price tag of over 9.3 billion euros, the Expo drew over 42 million visitors. Lasting six months, from April 20 to October 12, the Expo coincided with the Barcelona Summer Olympics and boasted the motto of "The Age of Discovery." Over one hundred countries funded national exhibits in individual pavilions at what was at the time the most expensive Expo ever undertaken (Riding; Swick).

Tellingly of the Expo's politics, one of the most popular exhibits was a screening of a fifteen-minute film named "World Song" produced by the US to show at its pavilion. After its premier at the Expo, "World Song" was screened at film festivals around the world, winning numerous awards.[25] The short film celebrates Columbus by celebrating globalization. It opens with a montage of babies being born around the world, starting with the birth of an Indigenous boy and then preceding to show numerous *other* babies—

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[24] The Expo is also known as the World's Fair.

[25] The short film received awards at festivals such as the Houston International Film Festival, the Chicago International Film Festival, and at the appropriately titled Columbus International Film and Video Festival.

Asian, African, European—accompanied by their parents. This multicultural potpourri of children begins a narrative that represents different stages of human life, including falling in love, growing up and mourning death. The film universalizes life experience around the globe; when contextualized by the quincentennial celebrations, the film frames the so-called discovery of the new world as a unifying event. In short, Christopher Columbus brought harmony to the world. As Pyramid Media, the distributer of the film, writes, "'World Song' elevates our shared experience beyond the political, cultural, and geographical boundaries that divide us." However, a quarter-century later, the film is a testament to the failure of quincentennial celebrations, in tone and content, at addressing the actual violent history of European colonialism across the Americas.

The 1992 Expo was certainly not the only expensive celebration produced for the quincentennial. On the other side of the Atlantic, on the island where Spain built its first New World colony, the government of the Dominican Republic spent over 80 million dollars to build a lighthouse, named El Faro a Colón, in the navigator's honor. Incorporating 149 beacons that project an image of a cross into the sky—the cross is so bright that it can be seen from 150 miles away in neighboring Puerto Rico—the lighthouse is also a mausoleum for Columbus, as the supposed remains of the navigator were moved into the monument after its construction. Tragically, the government evicted over 8,000 families to build the lighthouse and the park that surrounds it, and two protesters were shot dead in the weeks leading up to the inauguration (Tarr). In response to numerous protests against the price tag of the lighthouse, constructed while the majority of residents in Santo Domingo lived in poverty, the president Joaquin Balaguer

said, “the people need shoes, but they also need a tie to wear” (Vizenor 212). Despite the controversy, Pope John Paul II attended the pubic opening of El Faro on October 11, where he led mass for thousands of attendees.[26]

A World’s Fair in Spain, a series of international exhibitions of a World Song produced by the US, and the dedication of the world’s most powerfully lit lighthouse in Santo Domingo: these cultural events celebrate the quincentennial by representing unity across national borders. The plot of the previous five hundred years of colonization climaxes in symbols of praxis that signify the hegemony of western values and the coming together of disparate peoples. In anticipation of such celebrations, many Indigenous and Latin@ authors wrote texts that critiqued commemorations of the quincentennial and offered alternative appraisals of colonial history. But the authors of many of these texts write more than just historical revisions. They present political arguments that demand change to settler-colonial systems and institutions. As Chican@ poet Ray Gonzalez, editor of *Without Discovery: A Native Response to Columbus* (1992), explains, “blasting Columbus’s past legacy as a ‘discoverer’ is not enough. Asking countries like Spain and the United States to acknowledge the native point of view will not turn things around. It is too late for that” (ix). Gonzalez identifies the moment as “a time of opportunity” for writers to leverage the Columbian quincentennial as a stage for political activism and literary agency—to not only debate but to shape the future of the

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[26] Juxtaposing the lighthouse to the poverty that many Dominicans contended with everyday, B. Martinez Portorreal, president of the Dominican Committee for Human Rights, said a month ahead of the inauguration, "there is 37 percent unemployment here, each week 300 people try to reach Puerto Rico by dangerous boats, our hospitals are not functioning, and yet the President is thinking about the glories of Spain" (French).

Americas. "The writers will be heard," writes Gonzalez in his collection's preface, identifying the decolonial stakes of writing at the quincentennial moment, "because a look at the past five hundred years means more Americans will have a say on the next five hundred" (x). For the authors in the collection, how we write about the past is how we write about the future.[27]

While Spain, the U.S. and the Dominican Republic were celebrating the quincentennial with symbols of global unification, Indigenous American authors were writing novels that deconstructed and reshaped existing borders of settler-colonial states. Speculative novels published in 1991 by Vizenor, Louise Erdrich, Leslie Marmon Silko and William Sanders reimagine territorial borders across North America. Indeed, all four of their quincentennial era novels seize the anniversary to make political claims in defense of Indigenous sovereignty through the writing of speculative texts. By contextualizing Vizenor's *Heirs of Columbus* alongside *The Crown of Columbus* by Erdrich and Michael Dorris, *The Wild Blue and the Gray* by Sanders, and *Almanac of the Dead* by Silko, we can better recognize how Vizenor's speculative novel reflects contemporaneous Indigenous Futurism.[28]

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[27] With a collection of writers that includes Linda Hogan, Diane Glancy, Robert Warrior, Alicia Gaspar de Alba, Alberto Ríos, Rudolfo Anaya, and Gerald Vizenor, *Without Discovery* is a significant literary archive of the era. (It also includes an excerpt from *The Heirs of Columbus*.) It is a touchstone that references many of the literary discussions and genre explorations that would come to dominate this era of writing. We can see how both Latin@ and Indigenous American authors, side by side, seize the quincentennial as an opportunity, both to assert marginalized histories as well as conceptualize political reform and revolution at the end of the millennium through their diverse literary interventions. Citing networks of influence and collaboration, the collection stands as a testament to how Indigenous American and Latin@ authors engage each other by exploring literary genealogies and affinities across national, ethnic and tribal traditions.

[28] Other speculative texts from this era include "Aunt Parnetta's Electric Blisters" (1990) by Diane Glancy; *Red Spider, White Web* (1990) by Misha; *Princess Pocahontas and the Blues* Spots (1990) by Monique Mojica; *A Coyote Columbus Story* (1992) written by Thomas King; *Dead Voices* (1992) by

All four of these novels advance political arguments for the external self-determination of Indigenous peoples—that Indigenous governance can and should be practiced outside of the national jurisdictions of existing settler colonial governments. However, the political and/or legal arguments that underwrite these speculative states are not identical. Indigenous peoples achieve self-determination through different means in each of these novels: Sliko imagines armed revolution on a hemispheric scale; Sanders imagines what would happen if treaties that were negotiated between Indigenous peoples and Euro-American people**s** were honored by settler-colonial states (as international law demands but does not adequately enforce); Erdrich and Dorris imagine the materialization of decolonized states by applying existing international law to a previously unknown diary written by Columbus; and Vizenor transforms western legal systems and institutions by privileging Anishinaabe traditions and epistemologies. Therefore, while Silko's novel threatens to discard the international legal system altogether through hemispheric revolution organized through international and intertribal networks, the three other speculative novels—*Heirs of Columbus, Crown of Columbus*, and *The Wild Blue and the Gray*—Imagine Indigenous states that come into being via direct engagement with international law. These narratives by Vizenor, Erdrich and Sanders suggest that existing legal systems can be engaged by Indigenous peoples to defend their particular political and cultural interests. Significantly, of these three texts, *Heirs of Columbus* posits the most radical model of employing and ultimately reshaping

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Gerald Vizenor; *A Contemporary Gothic Indian Vampire Story* (1992) by Drew Hayden Taylor; *Green Grass, Running Water* (1993) by Thomas King; "Distances" (1993) by Sherman Alexie; and *The Black Ship* (1994) by Gerry William.

international law to secure the rights of Indigenous peoples. While Vizenor advocates for Indigenous statehood, he does so by directly challenging legal norms practiced by institutions such as the US Federal Court system, the United Nations, and the International Criminal Court. His secession narrative reforms non-Indigenous legal systems to advance a decolonial program.

By recognizing how Indigenous writers "invariably change the perimeters of sf," Grace Dillon argues that Indigenous futurisms empower indigenous writers to "to reenlist the science of indigeneity in a discourse that invites discerning readers to realize that Indigenous science is not just complementary to a perceived western enlightenment but is indeed integral to a refined twenty-first-century sensibility" (3). Dillon's insight is crucial for our understanding of how Vizenor advocates for the reformation of legal systems and technologies not only to support the political goals of indigenous nations, but to defend the human rights of every person across the globe. In other words, by reimagining legal conceptions of citizenship criteria and human rights from an Anishinaabe perspective, Vizenor tests the potential for Indigenous political actors to change legal norms to benefit peoples within every nation-state.

Vizenor—along with a cohort of writers that includes Erdrich, Dorris, Silko and Sanders—seized the quincentennial as an opportunity to advocate for the external self-determination of Indigenous peoples through his writing of *The Heirs of Columbus*. This novel posits a radical narrative: secession empowered by the transformation of western legal norms. It is a landmark of Indigenous futurism, demonstrating how speculative literature can promote legal arguments for external self-determination. Referring to the

relationship between decolonization and self-determination, and the role that self-determination has assumed in contemporary international law, Karen Engle writes that "today it is common to distinguish between internal and external forms of self-determination. While the latter suggests the right to statehood or secession, the former provides for various autonomy regimes that fall short of that paradigm" (38). At a historical moment when internal self-determination was beginning to emerge as the dominant model for Indigenous communities to secure rights to land and culture through international law, especially for Indigenous communities in South and Central America, *The Heirs of Columbus*—like *The Crown of Columbus* or *The Wild Blue and the Gray*—represents an explicit argument for external self-determination. To enrich my inquiry on how Vizenor tests ways to transform western legal norms, the following section contextualizes my reading of *The Heirs of Columbus* alongside contemporaneous political debates held by UN institutions over how to protect Indigenous rights in international law.

WORKING ON THE WORKING GROUP: INDIGENOUS RIGHTS AT THE UNITED NATIONS

In 1982, the United Nations General Assembly in New York debated a proposal sponsored by Spain to officially designate 1992 as the "year of official commemoration of the arrival of Cristobal Colon." Emphasizing the merits of such a commemoration, Jaime de Pinies, the Spanish delegate who put forward the proposal, argued to the General Assembly that "Spain did not come [to America] to establish any colonies. It came here to merge its race with the Indigenous peoples of this continent" ("New General

Assembly President").[29] De Pinies' proposal was met with opposition, but not from any states in the western hemisphere. Instead, Ireland and several Scandinavian countries first protested the commemoration. Their objection was not against celebrating the European discovery of America, but rather they contested *who* discovered America. Ireland claimed St. Brendan was the first European to set foot on the Americas, while the Scandinavian countries asserted that Lief Eriksson lead the first transatlantic voyage.[30] Thus, according to these objections, Spain's proposal was factually incorrect (but not tone-deaf). Soon after, several African states also refused to celebrate the quincentennial, as they objected to any celebration of colonization. Nevertheless, *all* of the American states were on board with Spain's proposal. As *The New York Times* noted, "the resolution produced a brief and startling alliance that brought together the United States, Canada and El Salvador with ideological rivals such as Cuba, Nicaragua and Grenada."[31] Ultimately, after a series of debates, the proposal was not adopted by the General Assembly. Columbus (nor Brendan or Eriksson) would not get an official UN commemoration. Regardless of the outcome, the debate was striking for the absence of one particular stakeholder involved in the question of whether the UN should sanction such a commemoration: Indigenous peoples of the Americas. The authors of *Indigenous Peoples: A Global Quest for Justice*, a Report for the UN's Independent Commission on International Humanitarian Issues,

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[29] Jaime de Pinies was a Spanish UN delegate for four decades and in 1985 was elected to be the UN General Assembly presidency.

[30] *The New York Times* reported that Hordur Helgason, Iceland's official UN delegate, argued that "the historical fact of Leif Ericcson's discovery is so totally ignored in the absolute wording of the draft resolution that we cannot give it our vote" ("For Columbus in the UN, A Stormy Passage").

[31] From an article titled "For Columbus in the U.N., A Stormy Passage."

commented on this omission of Indigenous perspectives during the General Assembly's debate over the proposed commemoration of Columbus: "the whole question had a sinister but largely unnoticed side to it: there was hardly any mention of the large-scale genocide perpetuated in the Americas" (xvi). The absence of Indigenous voices was standard practice at the UN.

However, while the General Assembly was debating if and how to celebrate the European "discovery" of the Americas, the UN was beginning to recognize Indigenous rights in another forum. In 1982, the UN Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities first assembled the Working Group on Indigenous Populations (Working Group).[32] The Working Group was an attempt by the UN to address not only Indigenous rights, but also the lack of participation by Indigenous peoples in employing and shaping international and human rights law. Remarking on this groundbreaking forum, Karen Engle writes that "the Working Group was, at least in principle, institutionally innovative for its inclusion and even encouragement of Indigenous participation" (68). Before 1982, there was not one single legal instrument within the UN that explicitly dealt with Indigenous rights. Certainly no legal instrument had ever been drafted with participation of Indigenous peoples. As the Report for the UN's Independent Commission on International Humanitarian Issues outlines, prior to

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[32] The Working Group was primarily the product of two earlier attempts sponsored by the UN to address the absence of any reference to Indigenous rights within UN instruments: The Cabo Report, a UN sponsored report on Indigenous peoples named after the author Martínez Cabo; and the 1977 NGO conference, where representatives of Indigenous groups pressed for stronger representation in the UN (Anaya 63). While the Cabo report documented the lack of participation by Indigenous peoples on shaping laws and policies that codified interactions between Indigenous peoples and settler-colonial states, the 1977 NGO conference attempted to address such lack of participation by creating international stages for the collaboration and networking of Indigenous nations and NGOs.

the working group, Indigenous peoples had to employ instruments that did not explicitly recognize Indigenous rights. Rather, these documents were tailored to protect minority groups within state populations and addressed rights abuses such as racial, gender or religious discrimination (116).[33] The last political action allowed by any of these instruments was secession from UN member states. Minority groups can only use human rights law to punish and/or reform states—not to contest their territorial integrity.

Arguing that the Working Group has been "the single most significant forum in which Indigenous issues are considered by the United Nations," Hurst Hannum identifies its creation as a landmark for the recognition of Indigenous rights by international Institutions. At the annual sessions for the Working Group, which typically lasted for two weeks, Indigenous peoples and their representatives debated with NGOS and state representatives over how to codify Indigenous rights in UN instruments. These sessions, Hannum writes, were "usually attended by five hundred to one thousand Indigenous people, which in turn have created an effective lobbying force for Indigenous issues" (82). The encouragement of participation by Indigenous peoples was central to the structure of the sessions. J.K Das notes, "at its first session, the Working Group took the unprecedented step of allowing oral and written interventions from all Indigenous organizations which wished to participate in its work, not limiting such participation to

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[33] The report for the UN's Independent Commission on International Humanitarian Issues cites nine such instruments that, while never referring specifically to the rights of Indigenous peoples, did provide avenues for Indigenous peoples to report rights abuses: the UN Charter; the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; The Covenant on Economic, Social and cultural rights; The Covenant on Civil and Polticl Rights; The Optional Protocol to the Covenant on Civil and Polticl Rights; the 1966 Internataionl Convetion on the Elimiation of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; the 1948 Convetion on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide; the 1960 Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples; and the Internatiaonl Convetion on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid.

those with formal consultative status" (54). Writing in the 1990s, Hannun marks the importance of the forum at that historical moment: "The Working Group has become the primary focus of international activities by both governments and nongovernmental organizations concerned with Indigenous peoples." He is especially eager to comment that the sessions "are now held in the same large room at the Palais des Nations in Geneva in which the Commission on Human Rights meets" (84). Nearly a decade after the farcical debate conducted in the UN General Assembly over which European explorer to celebrate at the Quincentary, Hunnun's enthusiastic reference to the prestigious location of the annual sessions should not be read as a frivolous act. Indeed, the Working Group has been critical to raising public awareness of Indigenous rights, and symbolic acts cannot easily be underestimated. Ronald Niezen writes, "one of the appeals of working group meetings, especially to delegates experienced in lobbying, is the international attention given to news that emerges from the U.N. headquarters" (183).[34] As will be seen in the following section, Gerald Vizenor recognizes the value of international media attention in *The Heirs of Columbus*.

The original mandate of the Working Group, as explained by S. James Anaya, "was to review developments concerning Indigenous peoples and to work toward the development of corresponding international standards" (63).[35] To achieve this latter goal

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[34] Niezen continues: "information, views, pamphlets, petitions, and copies of submissions presented to the Secretariat are circulated by Indigenous organizations to the others in the room, and occasionaly to the press. Tables at the back of the meeting room contain pamphlets for distribution to delegates. By the end of the first of two weeks, newspaper articles begin to appear, based on interventions made earlier. Press releases and telephone interviews have by this time already begun to work their magic" (183).

[35] In March 2008, Anaya was appointed by the United Nations as its Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of Indigenous Peoples.

of standard-setting, the Working Group would dedicate over a decade of discussion and revision to draft the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Eleven years after the first meeting of the Working Group, a final draft of the Declaration was submitted to the UN commission on Human Rights in 1993. It was ratified by the General Assembly in 2007. The 1993 draft of the Declaration, which was written primarily by Indigenous authors, includes strong language that supports claims for external self-determination. The most controversial aspect of this language is the insistence to use the term "peoples." Joanne Barker explains that "within the political forums and policy agreements of the UN, Indigenous peoples insisted on being identified as *peoples* (political collectivities) and not as *people* (minorities)" because the "s" would entitle Indigenous peoples to the same rights to external self-determination as UN member states (19). Niezen, who refers to the controversy over the word as "the battle of the 'S'," contextualizes how the term has historically been understood by the UN:

> On the surface, the controversy surrounding the "S" appears to be a mere product of the pedantry of jurists; but hanging upon the "S" is the question of whether Indigenous peoples are the same "peoples"—with an "s"—so prominent in the Charter of the United Nations (the preamble of which is formulated in the name of "the Peoples of the United Nations"), and who therefore must be recognized as possessing all the rights that flow from that status, including the right to self-determination. So the "S" in "peoples" represents something quite important: the unfettered right to self-determination, as given pride of place in Article 1 of the Covenants

> and Article 3 of the Draft United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. (161)

In other words, *peoples* can make legitimate claims via UN instruments for external self-determination. *People*, on the other hand, are minorities, and cannot make legitimate claims for secession. Article 3, in both the 1993 draft and the 2007 draft, states that "Indigenous peoples have the right of self-determination." That the phrase includes an "s" marks that the authors of the Declaration were deliberately retaining the option for Indigenous peoples to claim external self-determination.

The "s" is included prominently throughout both the 1993 draft issued by the Working Group and the 2007 draft ratified by the general assembly. However, the "battle of the 's'" continued through the signatory process—when member states of the UN were able to amend the document—and the 2007 draft was ultimately defanged of the threat to empower Indigenous peoples to secede from settler-colonial states, regardless of the presence of the "s." Article 46.1, the final article of the ratified Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, reads: "Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, people, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act contrary to the Charter of the United Nations or construed as authorizing or encouraging any action which would dismember or impair, totally or in part, the territorial integrity or political unity of sovereign and independent States." The Declaration essentially (and abruptly) ends with a legal asterisk that clarifies that the use of "peoples" in the document does not entitle Indigenous peoples the right to external self-determination. This amendment cynically goes against how the word *peoples* has

historically been read in UN instruments up to this point. The acceptance of the language of Article 46 by Indigenous communities effectively tabled claims for external self-determination through instruments of the UN, a move that formally signaled the ascendancy of the human rights paradigm for defending *internal* self-determination in international law.[36]

Article 46 of the Declaration marked a serious blow to proponents of external self-determination, but many Indigenous participants felt the concession was necessary for the ratification of the document. Nevertheless, external self-determination firmly remained an option in the drafting of the Declaration throughout the 1980s and 1990s.[37] And it is this history that I want to return to and place alongside my reading of *The Heirs of Columbus*. Part of my goal is to reassemble a literary moment when Indigenous authors like Vizenor imagined how international legal norms could be changed to support Indigenous claims for external self-determination. Moreover, I want to remind us that such claims, in both literary texts and legal forums, were quite common during this time period. In the early 1990s, the legal debates that shaped the Working Group on Indigenous Populations at the UN and the legal debates represented by Indigenous authors through their speculative fiction were substantively interrelated. When read alongside this history of Indigenous advocacy, *The Heirs of Columbus* illuminates a

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[36] As human rights law is currently practiced, claims for internal self-determination in international legal forums are much more prevalent than they were during the initial drafting of the Declaration.

[37] For example, the first article of the 1993 draft definitively retains the right for Indigenous peoples to claim external self-determination: "Indigenous peoples have the right to the full and effective enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms recognized in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international human rights law."

critical moment when Indigenous peoples conceptualized using international law and human rights ideals to justify state secession, and not just to strengthen forms of internal self-determination (which leaves the territorial integrity of settler-colonial states intact).

THE SPECULATIVE STATES OF *THE HEIRS OF COLUMBUS*

The title of Gerald Vizenor's *The Heirs of Columbus* refers to the name of a (fictional) Anishinaabe group of storytellers that claims Christopher Columbus as their genetic ancestor. Therefore, these characters refer to themselves as the "heirs of Columbus." They explain that when Columbus first arrived in the Caribbean, he had an affair with a Mayan woman named Samana. The two met on Columbus' caravel *The Santa Maria* on October 12, 1492, the day the explorer first set foot on what he called San Salvador. The heirs are the descendants of their union. Furthermore, the heirs also argue that Columbus was "a mixedblood"—that the explorer himself was a descendant of both European and Mayan ancestors. Five hundred years later, the heirs recast Columbus in their stories as an Indigenous protagonist who had lost touch with his Mayan cultural inheritance while living in the Old World of Europe. Through a series of events, the novel follows the heirs as they defend tribal sovereignty through various acts of self-determination: the founding of a tribal casino (that doubles as a floating Indigenous state) on a ship named *The Santa Maria*; the recovery of the stolen remains of Indigenous people from a club of Euro-American explorers; the legal defense of tribal objects in a US federal court in St. Paul, Minnesota; and the creation of Point Assinika, a new Indigenous state on a small peninsula in the Pacific northwest.

In the novel, the heirs create not just one, but two new Indigenous states: the first on a ship anchored within international waters in the Lake of the Woods and the second a result of their annexation of a small peninsula that juts from the Canadian mainland into the Straight of Georgia, twenty miles southwest of Vancouver. Both Indigenous states are situated at the border of the same two settler-colonial states, Canada and the US. In addition, the first state floats on water, a feature that serves as a powerful metaphor for Vizenor's interrogation of the international norms of the definition of a state—derived from the 1933 Montevideo convention—that privileges secure borders and fixed territory.[38] To create both of these Indigenous states, the heirs use international law to defend their acts of secession. But they also amend western legal principles to reflect and propagate Indigenous conceptions of law and governance. The heirs secure Indigenous statehood by aggressively (re)shaping western legal norms: they target legal norms that dictate how citizenship criteria is conceptualized, how human rights are defined and protected, and how state sovereignty is measured. Therefore, Vizenor narrates how Indigenous epistemologies can structurally change western legal institutions. Realized as a ship or a peninsula, the new Indigenous states of *The Heirs of Columbus* are agents for legal reform. Vizenor applies Indigenous epistemologies to imagine a reformed set of international legal norms, and then he speculatively employs these new norms to imagine successful Indigenous claims for external self-determination. Where most scholarship on the novel has focused on how Vizenor unsettles concepts that ground western institutions

[38] The Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States in 1934 defines the state as such: "(a) a permanent population; (b) a defined territory; (c) government; and (d) capacity to enter into relations with the other states."

and systems—often by employing postmodern literary moves and/or by celebrating trickster identities—this analysis offers an example of how Vizenor engages and appropriates such western institutions and systems to defend tribal sovereignty.[39] In particular, I identify how Vizenor actively participates in the reshaping of international legal norms.

To better understand the possibilities of Indigenous participation within western legal institutions, I first turn to Dale Turner's thesis of his 2006 text *This is Not a Peace Pipe: Towards a Critical Indigenous Philosophy*: "our survival as Indigenous peoples demands that in order to assert and protect the rights we believe we possess, we must engage the discourses of the state more effectively" (7-8). To strengthen tribal sovereignty, Turner suggests, Indigenous peoples must confront the settler-colonial state within existing western legal institutions. However, for such a strategy to work, Indigenous political agents must have literacy in both Indigenous epistemologies and settler-colonial legal systems. Turner identifies such agents as "word warriors," agents that not only protect Indigenous nations but also exert influence on shaping settler-colonial systems and policy, with a focus on the legal and political transformation of

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[39] Barry E. Laga argues that "the most unrelenting and serious aspect of Vizenor's work" is his "widely varied means of (de)constructing identity and the conceptual systems that govern these identities" (72); In reference to how Vizenor troubles western legal concepts and systems, Stephen D. Osborne writes that "Law's purpose is to *settle* things, to codify and arbitrate (but within a framework of accepted premises and acceptable outcomes), while the trickster's is to *unsettle* things, to highlight their arbitrary and contingent nature" (122); Rebecca Lush draws from previous scholarship on "the novel's postmodern intertextual play with literary genres and forms" to analyze the relationship between language and sexuality in the novel (2). She concludes her study with the observation that "in the curious language game of the trickster, representations can construct realities but can also be exposed as illusions and artifice" (14). Katalin Bíróné Nagy attempts to define a trickster strategy that, "due to its ever-changing oral nature, defies fixation which Native Americans consider deadly" (247). Ultimately, she concludes that "the free trade of ideas allows for both the role-shifter trickster—either as character or as narrator—and the reader to use the Columbus story as they wish" (260).

settler-colonial institutions.[40] "Word warriors do the intellectual work of protecting Indigenous ways of knowing; at the same time, they empower these understandings within the legal and political practices of the state. Word warriors listen to their 'Indigenous philosopher' while engaging the intellectual and political practices of the dominant culture" (8). Word warriors must acquire a diverse skill set to effectively pivot between both Indigenous and settler-colonial legal settings and epistemologies.

Significantly, Turner grounds his definition of a "word warrior" by referencing Vizenor's own use of the phrase in his 1988 novel *The Trickster of Liberty*.[41] Explaining the role of the "woodland trickster" to a fictional audience at a US university, the protagonist of Vizenor's novel proclaims, "we are tricksters in the blood, natural mixedblood tricksters, word warriors in that silence between bodies, and we bear our best medicines in our voices, in our stories" (18). He then concludes his definition for a woodland trickster (or a word warrior) with a prophecy: "The trickster heals with humor and wonder, we wear the agnostic moment, not the burdens of the past, but beware…in our second stories we turn the mood, liberate chickens, autistic colonists, and overthrow the world that you remember" (19). Thus, the word warrior in Vizenor's novel(s) defends not only Indigenous traditions and epistemologies, she also challenges colonial and/or global political and social systems.[42] By recognizing Vizenor's protagonists in *The Heirs*

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40 Turner writes "He also stress that "Indigenous knowledge offers legitimate ways of understanding the worlds—ways that have never been respected within the legal and poltical practices of the dominant culture."

41 Turner uses an excerpt from *The Trickster of Liberty* as an epigraph for his chapter titled "Word Warriors" in *This is Not a Peace Pipe.*

42 For more information on Gerald Vizenor's conception of "Word Warrior," see "Woodland Word Warrior: An Introduction to the Works of Gerald Vizenor" (1986) by A. LaVonne Brown Ruoff.

of Columbus as word warriors—in both Vizenor's and Turner's sense—we can better understand how the heirs transform legal norms to secure political self-determination with implications for international law at large.[43] Vizenor demands more than just political recognition. To defend tribal sovereignty, Vizenor appeals to a global audience through a literary text that imagines the contours of legal transformation at the intersection of Indigenous and western conceptions of governance.

Vizenor's First Speculative State: The Santa Maria Casino

The first act of independence by the heirs of Columbus is the creation of a new Indigenous state on a caravel, the type of ship that carried Columbus across the Atlantic in the 15th century, on international waters. The sovereign caravel also doubles as a tribal casino. Named the *Santa Maria Casino*, it is "anchored on the international border near Big Island in Lake of the Woods" (6). The geographic location of the casino/state is crucial to its survival. Floating along the borders of the US state of Minnesota and Canadian province of Ontario, the reservation is not fixed to land, nor is it solely beholden to US state laws. Nevertheless, after the establishment of the casino, the state of Minnesota arrests Stone Columbus, the leader of the heirs, for violations of state tax and gambling laws. On the morning following the state court order, a US federal judge reviews the ruling. During the review process, the floating Indigenous state is the object

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[43] Kathryn Hume, in her article "Gerald Vizenor's Metaphysics," recognizes Vizenor as the type of Word Warrior that Turner defines—which she identifies as "intellectuals trained in the western traditions who can speak for Native Americans"—but she focuses on Vizenor's representation of human consciousness (590). Stephen D. Osborne, writing before Turner defined his use of the term, identifies Vizenor as a "word warrior employing every discursive weapon he can to undermine and overturn the assumptions that he feels are used to colonize and delimit the possibilities of tribal identity in the contemporary world" (115).

of intense surveillance by both bordering settler-colonial states. As Vizenor writes, Canada and the US are envious of the casino's accumulation of (western) capital but these states are also confident that the US federal judge will ultimately rule against tribal sovereignty: "border patrols from both countries circled the 'dirty mary,' copied boat and airplane numbers, estimated the tax free cash flow, and anticipated the court decision that would sink the savage *Santa Maria Casino*" (7). However, the two settler-colonial states would be greatly disappointed in the judge's decision. Beatrice Lord rules in favor of the *Santa Maria Casino*. The US federal judge recognizes the caravel as a new Indigenous state.

Citing the international location of the casino, Lord explains her decision: "The *Santa María* and the other caravels are limited sovereign states at sea, the first maritime reservations in international waters…the defendant was wise to drop his anchors on the border, knowing, as he must, that future appeals and other remedies could reach the International Court of Justice at The Hague" (8). Lord recognizes international jurisprudence and the threat of international legal sanction as the grounds for her ruling. The judge's justification for her decision reflects Vizenor's overall political investment in reshaping international legal norms. In a treatment for a proposed film adaptation of the *The Heirs of Columbus*, written in 1992, Vizenor underscores Stone Columbus' literacy of law and the protagonist's transformational employment of Indigenous epistemology in the courtroom: "Stone is challenged by the local power elite and hauled into a US court for violating tax and gambling laws. But with a performance that is equal parts shrewd arguments from historical treaties and sheer bravado in its appeals to 'trickster law,'

Stone wins a favorable ruling" ("Project Description"). Thus, via the ruling, Vizenor marks how international law could protect tribal sovereignty if the US was actually held accountable to international law and if legal norms were amended by Indigenous epistemologies.

Crucial to our understanding of Vizenor's political program is how Vizenor consistently casts popular opinion as a social agent capable of changing legal norms throughout the novel. Popular opinion can shape how law is practiced—whether through national reform or by holding federal law to international legal standards. Indeed, throughout much of his literary work, Vizenor consistently identifies public opinion as a crucial force that is needed to hold settler-colonial states accountable to international law. When the judge announces her decision, she does so in a highly public performance. Standing on "the wild sterncastle of the *Santa Maria Casino* on Columbus Day," Beatrice Lord delivers her ruling over a loudspeaker to "thousands of people in canoes, pontoon boats, and launches." The ruling becomes a sensation on network television and Stone becomes a star on national radio. "Heard by millions of people late at night on talk radio that wild summer," Vizenor explains in the novel, "The talks from the casino two or three times a week attracted new listeners and eager advertisers. Carp Radio had discovered a new world on the *Santa Maria Casino*" (9). This new world was created by an act of tribal sovereignty posited on new international legal norms. And strikingly, this act was *supported* by non-Indigenous people on both sides of the border between Canada and the US—but only due to the heirs' use of public media.

In this audacious scene, Vizenor secures autonomy for the floating Indigenous state by using Indigenous *and* non-Indigenous resources: a US federal judge rules for tribal sovereignty by privileging an Indigenous definition of sovereignty and citing international law. Representing the successful epistemological intervention of Indigenous sources in a western legal forum, it is a US federal judge that cites an Anishinaabe definition of sovereignty in this scene. In promotional materials advertising the publication of the novel, Beatrice Lord is described as "a Judge versed in trickster law" ("University Press of New England"). During her public performance, Lord explains to the crowd that "the notion of tribal sovereignty is imaginative, an original tribal trope, communal and spiritual, an idea that is more than metes and bounds in treaties." The scene imagines a legal ruling by a US institution, delivered by a non-Indigenous agent of the settler-colonial state, based on an Indigenous conception of sovereignty. Vizenor's trickster play does more than trouble western notions of law. He offers a formula for how to transform legal norms.

To theorize how Indigenous agency can be realized by engaging western technologies and institutions, Scott Richard Lyons turns to the historical use of "X-marks" in the signing of treaties by Indigenous political representatives with the United States. An x-mark was a signature. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Lyons explains, "many an Indian's signature was recorded by the phrase 'his x-mark,' and what the x-mark meant was consent." As such, in addition to consent, the x-mark also signified coercion. For Lyons, the x-mark was therefore a complicated act of agency, one that signified a choice made from limited options dictated by a settler-colonial context.

However, in *X-marks: Native Signatures of Assent*, Lyons recovers the historic use of the "x-mark" as a potent metaphor for Indigenous agency in the 21st century. With each X-mark, Lyons writes, "there is always the prospect of slippage, interdependency, unforeseen consequences, or unintended results; it is always possible, that is, that an x-mark could result in something good. Why else, we must ask, would someone bother to make it?" (2-3). If we read the work of Gerald Vizenor looking for what Lyon defines as x-marks—or, moving from one metaphor to another, read his novel as a map of Indigenous agency expressed through western technologies—we would find countless instances of such signatures of assent. In the aforementioned section from *The Heirs of Columbus*, which narrates the creation of a tribal casino on international waters between the United States and Canada, there are numerous examples: in addition to engaging state, federal and international law, the heirs of Columbus also embrace national radio and television, employ western forms of gambling, appropriate western symbols of imperialism (naming the casino the *Santa Maria*; claiming to be the heirs of Columbus) and even recontextualize music from the European classical canon (the *New World Symphony* by Antonín Dvorák is played over the loud speakers after the announcement of Beatrice Lord's decision). Each act can be seen as an X-mark.[44] And with Lord's federal recognition of tribal sovereignty, the sum of these acts realizes the *speculative* hope

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[44] Stuart Christie worries that "the virtuosity of the heirs in pursuing their tribal objectives often risks conjoining Vizenor's narrative with those structural factors within capitalism he is trying to deconstruct: including free enterprise, self-interest, and free access to such things as gambling and technology" (367). I would argue that Lyon's conception of X-marks, coupled with Cox's analysis of how textual revision works within the novel, helps us better understand how Vizenor's narrative resists the adoption of capitalist ideals (i.e. free enterprise and self-interest). Furthermore, Christie's concern does not take into consideration how the heirs' reformation of international legal norms does not benefit capitalist ideals.

inherent in x-marks—"the prospect of slippage, interdependency, unforeseen consequences, or unintended results"—in the formation of a sovereign state at sea. What I find most striking about this defense of the *Santa Maria Casino* as a sovereign state is how the heirs use a series of X-marks to change legal norms. Therefore, X-marks not only signal Native assent, but they also can provide Indigenous peoples the legal footholds necessary for the structural change of settler-colonial institutions.

Initially, the *Santa Maria Casino* is a huge success for the heirs of Columbus. Not only do the heirs establish a new Indigenous state, they also make a lot of money. It is not a coincidence that the heirs use a tribal casino to fund their new Indigenous state. In an interview with A. Robert Lee, Vizenor identifies the potential for tribal casinos to constructively use casino money to defend tribal sovereignty:

> Natives, at last, could change the world with casino money, but these are my stories. Natives could heal with casino money, they could even establish embassies, the natural pose of sovereignty, and negotiate with other governments to liberate stateless families. Natives could be mighty philanthropists. Casinos are a chance, a tricky chance of moral courage, but the right to heal may have been squandered once more by greedy leaders. Casinos are the end of a native romance and the last earnest tease of sovereignty. (130)

Tellingly, all of the examples that Vizenor gives for the use of casino money involve establishing international relationships with other sovereign states. By identifying embassies as "the natural pose of sovereignty," Vizenor argues that tribal sovereignty

relies on international representation. That the quote casts tribal governments as international actors does not mean that such governments will always act in the interest of tribal citizens. Vizenor is all too aware that this newfound agency is ultimately the result of western forms of capital. Complicated moral questions and conflicting motives can hamstring the few tribal governments that are lucky enough to own successful casinos. Vizenor marks casinos as a rare yet potentially vital opportunity for these tribal governments.[45] Speculative literature like *The Heirs of Columbus* argues for a political program that seizes this opportunity to fund Indigenous states that can adequately participate in international legal forums.

In addition, as James Cox explains, the name of the casino helps Vizenor trouble the mythology of Columbus' (and Europe's) fated voyage to the Americas: "That the *Santa Maria* is a casino suggests chance, not prophecy, led Columbus to the Caribbean and helps illustrate that the prophetic rhetoric informing Columbus's voyage was a narrative framework that, for example, masked the violent search for riches and promoted personal and cultural self-aggrandizement" (131). If, as an x-mark, the *Santa Maria Casino* represents the heirs' engagement with capitalism, and their acceptance of money from US and Canadian tourists, it also recodes the *Santa Maria* as a symbol of chance, not manifest destiny. Vizenor also replicates the conclusion of the *Santa Maria*'s transatlantic journey, following this motif of chance to a violent extreme: while the *Santa Maria Casino* withstands a legal challenge by the state of Minnesota, it eventually sinks

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[45] In his reading the *Santa Maria* Casino, Benjamin Burgess writes, "I believe Vizenor is sending a clear message about casino wealth: When it is not coupled with healing, it will fail the people" (32).

to the bottom of the Lake of Woods after a torrential storm submerges the caravel underwater. In the wake of the shipwreck—the second time a *Santa Maria* captained by a man with the surname Columbus has been sunk in the western Hemisphere—the heirs shift their attention to the repatriation of both tribal cultural objects and the remains of Indigenous people. However, the money earned by the *Santa Maria Casino* will be crucial for the heirs' second attempt at creating a new Indigenous state and changing legal norms. With the creation of Point Assinika, they realize Vizenor's speculations that Indigenous nations can "change the world with casino money."

Vizenor's Second Speculative State: Point Assinika

The heirs of Columbus mark the quincentennial with the creation of another new tribal nation. On October 12, 1992, they seize Point Roberts, Washington—a tiny American exclave on a peninsula that extends three miles south of the Canadian border into the Straight of Georgia. Only twenty-two miles southwest of Vancouver, Point Roberts is a geopolitical anomaly manufactured by a treaty between Canada and the United States. At the territorial margins of two competing settler-colonial states, Point Roberts proves to be an ideal location for Vizenor to ground a new tribal nation on Indigenous science and a radical model of citizenship. After the seizure of Point Roberts, the peninsula is renamed Point Assinika, after the Anishinaabe word for stone. On the same weekend that John Paul II visited the Faro a Colón in Santo Domingo and the Seville EXPO ended its six month run with a climactic fireworks display, the heirs of Columbus sailed across the Straight of Georgia, travelling north from Seattle on the *Santa*

Maria Ferry, and "took back the new world" (123). While television stations across the nation mistook the seizure as merely a protest against the celebration of the quincentennial, the heirs of Columbus framed the event as a radical testing of tribal sovereignty: "The point was claimed by the heirs as a free state with no prisons, no passports, no public schools, no missionaries, no television, and no public taxation; genetic therapies, natural medicine, bingo cards, and entertainment were free to those who came to be healed and those who lived on the point" (124). As such, the new nation specifically targets the politics of healthcare. Vizenor writes in the aforementioned film treatment for the novel, Point Assinika is "a combination Mayo Clinic and Political Sanctuary" ("Project Description"). A potent combination of Indigenous science, state-of-the-art technology, Indigenous forms of governance and a bankroll funded by tribal casinos allows the heirs to conceptualize the practice of sovereignty that not only defies settler-colonial political paradigms, but also threatens to reform legal norms across the globe.

The heirs of Columbus define Point Assinika as "the first crossblood nation dedicated to healing the wounded with genetic therapies." The new nation aggressively promotes research on treating various illnesses. Funded by casino money, the research draws on both Indigenous and non-Indigenous sources of knowledge. Ultimately the research produces extremely effective genetic therapies. The healing therapies rely on two separate stages. First the patient receives a genetic implant. The implant has been manufactured from an Indigenous genetic code extracted from the remains of Columbus.

This genetic code has the ability to heal many diseases and injuries.[46] In the second stage of the therapy, tribal healers are called upon to activate the genetic codes. As Vizenor explains, "only shamans and tricksters were able to stimulate the trickster opposition in the genes, the ecstatic instructions, and humor in the blood. The scientists delivered the genetic signatures, the tribal healers touched the wounded and heard their creation stories" (144). Thus, Indigenous epistemologies and traditions are necessary to successfully employ the new scientific treatments developed at Point Assinika.

However, the most revolutionary aspect of this medical advancement is not the science itself, but the distribution of the science: the healing therapies that are created at Point Assinika are available to anyone, regardless of tribal affiliation, ethnicity or nationality. This liberal distribution of Point Assinka's new healing therapies distinguishes Vizenor's speculative text from conventional sf narratives—narratives that have historically been shaped by colonial ideologies. Commenting on the introduction and development of new technology in conventional sf, John Rieder writes that "the key element linking colonial ideology to science fiction's fascination with new technology is the new technology's scarcity" (32). As Rieder explains, sf reflects colonial ideologies via the limited distribution of new technologies: "The thrill of the technological breakthrough is not that it benefits everyone but that it produces a singular, drastic difference between those who possess the new invention or power source and those who do not…the relevance of colonialism to stories about technology shows up in the social

[46] The protagonists are able to isolate the signature after they gain access to DNA from Columbus' remains (which also definitively proves that Columbus was a descendant of Mayan ancestors). This genetic implant essentially gives the patient the same healing genes that were passed from Mayan hand talkers to Columbus and eventually to the protagonists of the novel and the citizens of Point Assinika.

relations that form around the technology's uneven distribution" (32). By making Point Assinika's new healing therapies widely available in his novel, Vizenor not only breaks genre convention—a convention especially prevalent in early sf texts—he imagines a distribution model that allows for new social relations that are not informed by colonial ideologies.

To publicize these healing therapies—and the radical approach to the distribution of new technologies—the new state broadcasts news about this Indigenous scientific breakthrough on public radio: "Point Assinika announced that the lonesome and wounded would be healed with dreams, blue memories, and the signature of survivance; those who heard the stories on late night talk radio sailed, drove, and hitchhiked by the hundreds to be humored in the blood at the pavilions" (143). Not only do the national broadcasts attract people to the peninsula, they also protect the tribal sovereignty of Point Assinika. Once again, public support is crucial for the defense of an Indigenous state in the novel: "State and federal officials were cautious and did not move against the insurrection because of public sympathies raised by the radio talk shows. Several national polls indicated that the public was in favor of the new tribal state" (124). As can be seen in the defense of both speculative states in the novel, popular opinion of a nation's citizenry can influence government policies and actions.

Against a backdrop of broad national support from "lonesome and wounded" American citizens, Point Assinika appears as a utopian state where the ideals of universal human rights are fully realized. Porous borders and citizenship criteria inclusive of ethnic or national identity create the conditions for Point Assinika to secure human rights for

anyone that travels to the peninsula. Furthermore, the genetic therapies prove to be a potent symbol for the universal scope of human rights ideals. Central to my understanding of Point Assinika as a utopian space where human rights are universally secured is how the genetic experiments have eradicated identity based on racial difference. The scientific research conducted at Point Assinika has created a genetic implant that can change "national and racial identities." The scientists have also "established the genetic signatures of most of the tribes in the country, so that anyone could, with an injection of suitable genetic material, prove beyond a doubt a genetic tribal identity" (162). The genetic implant is not a symbolic flattening of cultural identity. Rather, the genetic implant provides Vizenor with a potent symbol of how human rights apply universally to each person irrespective of genetic difference. By identifying Point Assinika as a speculative Indigenous state that is invested in securing universal human rights for each individual that crosses its borders, we can then read the open access to this genetic implant as a human rights argument to recognize each individual's right to health.

Crucially, Point Assinika does not simply replicate existing human rights law. The Indigenous state challenges the norms of human rights law to broaden what is recognized as a right. That the advertisements appeal to a broad audience across thousands of miles of radio waves is representative of Point Assinika's policy on access to their new genetic therapies: anyone is welcome to receive treatment at the new Indigenous state.[47] I read this policy as an argument to recognize the right to health as a

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[47] Yvette Keopke and Christopher Nelson argue that Point Assinika "advances a three-part position that responds to prominent debates in health ethics" that incorporates free access to healthcare, the

human right that belongs to any individual. To emphasize the stakes of such an argument, Alicia Ely Yamin offers two examples of how "framing health as a right…links health with social justice." First, she argues that the right to health is necessary to construct a functional democracy.[48] Second, if the right to health was codified in human rights law, such a right would legally recognize "the accountability of the state and, to a certain extent, other actors, under national and international law. Thus, a human rights framework simultaneously acknowledges health as inherently political—intimately bound up with social context, ideologies, and power structures—and removes health policy decisions from being matters of pure political discretion by placing them squarely into the domain of law" (1157). The recognition of the right to health would transform international legal norms, and would expand the ways that settler-colonial states can and should be held accountable for human rights abuses.

Represented by their defense of the right to health, the heirs privilege not only civil and political rights—such as the right to freedom of speech and the right to participate in governance—but they also promote social and economic rights. In addition to offering equal access to genetic therapies to each individual, the heirs also make a strong argument to transform human rights law by honoring each of their citizen's right

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encouragement of collaborative investment across tribal and national borders, and the embrace of the free market (23). Crucially, they also recognize healing as "the mode of Vizenorian survivance."(21). While these two scholars read how the novel addresses debates surrounding biomedical ethics, I apply a human rights framework to understand how Point Assinika attempts to transform international legal norms.

[48] Yamin writes: "Framing health as a right adds to the growing literature in social epidemiology that links health with social justice; it does this by first making explicit the link between health and the construction of a functional democracy. That is, health- related resource distribution, evidence of discrimination and disparities, and the like are analyzed not just in terms of their impact on health status but also their relation to laws, policies, and practices that limit popular participation in decisionmaking and, in turn, the establishment of a genuinely democratic society" (1157).

to a job, shelter and food. The argument also strongly exposes and contests the human rights limitations of the US-backed International Covenant on Political and Civil rights. What is even more surprising is how early in the evolution of human rights law Vizenor makes this argument. Writing in 1999, Paul Farmer characterized the field of health and human rights as "in its infancy" (1488). Looking towards the coming decades, Farmer identifies that "public health and access to medical care are social and economic rights; they are every bit as critical as civil rights" and therefore he asserts that "promoting social and economic rights is the key goal for health and human rights in the 21st century" (1487). A decade after Farmer's call to action, the World Health Organization submitted a 52 page document in favor of recognizing the right to health in human rights law to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The document identified the right to health as an inclusive right that recognized entitlements held by each individual in regards to personal health. Many of the listed entitlements mirror the commitment to health practiced by Point Assinika in Vizenor's speculative novel: "The right to a system of health protection providing equality of opportunity for everyone to enjoy the highest attainable level of health"; "The right to prevention, treatment and control of diseases; Access to essential medicines"; and "Participation of the population in health-related decision-making at the national and community levels" (3-4). Farmer's article was published in 1999 and the World Health Organization submitted their document in 2008. *The Heirs of Columbus* was published in 1991. Vizenor was certainly ahead of the field of health and human rights when he centered the right to health as the primary human right defended by Point Assinika. Fulfilling the human right to health also

seems to be a principle factor of what constitutes sovereignty for Vizenor in this novel. I point this out to suggest that Indigenous futurisms can serve as important archives of how Indigenous perspectives on international legal norms anticipated and even laid important groundwork for the reform of human rights law (and other international instruments).

By not recognizing the human right to health, the settler-colonial state has produced the refugees that arrive sick to Point Assinika. By recognizing the right these refugees have to healthcare, Point Assinika fulfills human rights where the settler-colonial state cannot. The identification of these sick immigrants as refugees cites the failure of each neighboring settler-colonial state to secure the human rights of its citizens. In his essay "Genocide Tribunals," Vizenor asserts that "America has been a recalcitrant nation in the advancement of human rights." He also suggests that only by honoring human rights can a constitutional democracy function: "The United States has constructed by situational ethics, godly sentiments, resistance, idealism, contrary practices, and by force one of the most provocative histories of civil and human rights. The political turns of observance, frenzy, and denial of human rights in a constitutional democracy have rightly worried citizen of the nation and the world" (137). In *Heirs of Columbus*, Vizenor offers a literary representation of this "provocative" history and "denial of human rights" by marking the inability of the US to meet the health needs of its citizens.

This leads to a crucial point of my reading about how the novel engages western legal conceptions: Vizenor supports human rights ideals, but the novel implies that Indigenous forms of governance are better equipped to model and secure certain human

rights (such as the right to health). Therefore, to defend the right for Indigenous peoples to secure external self-determination is to defend, and even advance, human rights law. Point Assinika, founded by a group of Anishinaabe storytellers, represents the development of universal human rights. Vizenor frames the repercussions of the new Indigenous state as potentially global in scope: "[the heirs'] point is to make the world tribal, a universal identity, and return to other values as measures of human worth, such as the dedication to heal rather than steal tribal cultures" (162). Again, the right to health is central to the heirs' political agenda. And this right to health appears to be an avenue to significantly transform international legal norms.

To read Point Assinika as an Indigenous space where human rights are secured does not mean Point Assinika is uncritically modeled after western states. In his analysis of the novel, James Cox offers crucial insight into how citizenship is redefined in Point Assinika—and how this revision differs from US models of citizenship. To be a citizen of Point Assinika, Cox writes, one must demonstrate "a commitment to healing the people damaged by colonial and settler-colonial practice" (176). Furthermore, Cox cites Lyon's own understanding of Indigenous revisions of citizenship criteria as x-marks. This reference deserves more critical attention as it reveals how western qualities of statehood—in this case, citizenship criteria—can be revised by Indigenous peoples. Vizenor's political argument aligns with Dale Turner's investment in engaging western legal institutions. That Indigenous peoples can use western legal instruments to secure statehood implies that Indigenous peoples can also transform legal norms.

I want to linger on the importance of citizenship criteria in Vizenor's work to underscore how this legal intervention is an investment in an Indigenous futurity. In *The Heirs of Columbus*, Point Assinika's revision of citizenship criteria is a speculative act of external self-determination. It extrapolates a new Indigenous state from a particular definition of the citizen. In a relevant section of *X-marks*, Scott Richard Lyons argues that citizenship criteria not only defines the sovereign nation, but it projects the sovereign nation. Therefore, a tribal nation's citizenry reflects the measurement of decolonization. If, as Lyons contends, "nations are produced by nationalists, but they are *re*produced by citizens who articulate the meanings of their nation in locales like constitutions," then the baseline for citizenship is prospective. Lyons challenges Indigenous nations: "require what you want to produce" (188). In *The Heirs of Columbus*, Vizenor interrogates the terms of sovereignty for his recently constituted nation by testing the limits *and* possibilities of citizenship. Point Assinika rejects the logic of blood quantum; national membership derives from community responsibilities and tribal kinship practices, not from blood purity. After all, through genetic implants, anyone can now have the same blood. The citizen as the nation: inasmuch as we can define the values of a state by examining the role of the citizen, we can advance decolonization through the projection of citizenship as a political and cultural guideline.

Due to both the genetic healing therapies and citizenship reform developed at Point Assinika, tribal authorities from the White Earth Reservation, where many of the heirs of Columbus were born, are suspicious of the new state. Lappet Tulip Brown, a private investigator hired by the White Earth tribal government, warns the heirs of

Columbus that tribal authorities are "convinced that the heirs [are] selling tribal enrollment documents to refugees who could then enter the country and claim services as a tribal person; this would reduce services on reservations" (155). While the claim is specious—the heirs do not sell tribal enrollment documents—the accusation does spur further reform by the new nation. Lappet explains that "the heirs considered the idea a proper response to the corruption in tribal leadership on reservations, and would soon provide artists and the wounded refugees of the world with tribal identities at Point Assinika" (156). Membership is not for purchase, but rather is available for people who meet certain citizenship criteria—criteria *not* modeled after settler-colonial nation states. The tribal government of the novel's fictional White Earth reservation cannot make the same claim about how it defines citizenship criteria. Therefore, it is the citizen's responsibility to recover and defend tribal epistemology as a vital resource to ground Indigenous government. As Cox notes, "rather than invalidating White Earth sovereignty, however, the novel depicts the heirs of Columbus acting as citizens of White Earth, either on the Santa Maria Casino, in federal court, or at Point Assinika, to develop a model of sovereignty distinct from the practices of the tribal government" (176). Cox identifies these three locations—a casino, a court, and a state—as spaces where political intervention is realized by the citizenry of the White Earth Reservation. They also represent the diversity of western institutions that Vizenor marks as sites for the strategic production of an innumerable amount of x-marks.

If Point Assinika is a speculative space that allows Vizenor to reimagine citizenship criteria and human rights ideals on Indigenous terms, it also allows him to

hold the US responsible to existing international law. After the annexation of Point Assinika by the heirs of Columbus, and the opening of the Indigenous state's borders to any individual seeking to be healed by the genetic therapies, the heirs file a formal complaint against the US at the International Court of Justice. Stone Columbus explains that as descendants of Christopher Columbus they are due a tithe:

> My lawyers have advised me that according to precedent in international courts we are due, as documented heirs, the tithe of our namesake, for the past five centuries.
>
> King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella signed seven documents and granted to 'Don Cristóbal de Colón in some satisfaction for what he hath discovered in the ocean sea,' a tenth of the gold, and other precious metals, spices, pearls, gems, and other merchandise obtained in commerce and free of all taxes.
>
> These rights and capitulations have never been abrogated by treaties, conquest, or purchase; therefore, since we are the legal heirs of the unpaid tithe on this continent, be so advised, that unless your government pays the inheritance due, we shall annex, as satisfaction of the tithe, the United States of America. (160)

The use of international law by the heirs serves multiple purposes. Explicitly it claims the tithe owed to Columbus' lineage. However, as Lappet Brown notes, ten percent of all of the wealth accumulated by western exploitation is not necessarily the endgame. The heirs "were determined to negotiate a cash settlement or some other agreement to resolve the

tithe due for the past five centuries." But the goal of this direct engagement with international law by the heirs is about engaging international institutions to secure their standing as a state. Vizenor writes that the heirs "would stimulate popular support with their appeal to the International Court of Justice at the Hague" (163). Yet again, Vizenor reveals a political agenda that targets the popular support of non-Indigenous people. Even if the tithe is never honored, the use of the International Court of Justice will help the state secure independence. Moreover, it is the second time that Vizenor mentions the International Court of Justice in the novel. Beatrice Lord cited that if she did not strike down the ruling by the State of Minnesota against the *Santa Maria Casino*, the case could go to the International Court of Justice, where, she speculates, the legal outcome would likely not favor the position of the US. Throughout the novel, the heirs exploit international legal systems to augment their argument for external self-determination. If the setter-colonial state were beholden to international law, and if Indigenous groups were able to successfully change international legal norms, Indigenous peoples would have a significantly greater ability to seek legal recourse for colonial exploitation and to assert tribal sovereignty in the form of Indigenous statehood.

CONCLUSION

As cited in the introduction of this dissertation, B.S. Chimni asserts that literary and visual art must lead the way in conceptualizing the reform of international law and popularizing non-Eurocentric legal strategies: "it is necessary first to make the story of resistance an integral part of the narration of international law" Chimni writes, "to

capture the imagination of those who have just entered the world of international law" (22). Gerald Vizenor's *The Heirs of Columbus* is an exemplary "story of resistance" that marks international law as amendable. In this speculative novel, international legal norms are not presumed but contested; international law is not a fixed concept, but rather a contested and dynamic legal science. Vizenor's novel narrates how Indigenous peoples can use international law to successfully pioneer legal practices and theories in order to advocate for their political and cultural interests. Therefore, Indigenous epistemologies and traditions instigate significant legal changes on an international stage—defending the rights of Indigenous peoples while underwriting the wholesale reform of how international law is conceptualized and practiced across the globe.

By creating Point Assinika, the heirs of Columbus both defend tribal sovereignty and recognize healthcare as a universal right regardless of national borders. In an unpublished revised draft of *The Heirs of Columbus*, written in 1992, Vizenor elaborates on the success of the new nation's radical approach to citizenship and health. In this draft, Vizenor narrates the creation of Point Assinika from the perspective of Chaine Riel Doumet, an Indigenous detective from the White Earth Reservation who has been hired by various US government agencies to investigate the new Indigenous nation. After completing his investigation, Chaine reports to the US agencies:

> My recommendation is that the new nation be rewarded for their dedication to heal the mutants of civilization and those who have been abandoned by health insurance companies and our own government … Stone Columbus is a muskie shaman with the vision of a bingo mutant. He

> is a genetic tribalist, to be sure, but he is not a fascist. The heirs of Columbus, the scientists, the warriors and the manicurists, should be honored for their humanitarian service to the world. Not to do so would bring harm to our own economy, and shame to our own government. ("Stone Columbus")

Chaine celebrates Point Assinika for its open borders and thus inclusive distribution of healthcare. In contrast, Chaine casts health insurance companies and the US as antagonists to people(s), who due to illness or injury, have become refugees.

The territory of Point Assinika is less than five square miles, but the implications of the nation's successful establishment are global. Throughout *The Heirs of Columbus*, Vizenor defends the sovereignty of an Anishinnabe cohort of storytellers and activists by fostering international and intertribal coalitions. Perhaps most telling of Vizenor's commitment to strengthening international alliances is the title he first gave to Point Assininka prior to publishing the novel. In the first draft of the novel—dated July 20, 1990—Vizenor names the new Indigenous nation on point Roberts "the tribal republic of Ghost Dance" ("Ghost Dance Genes"). Furthermore, he refers to the regenerative genetic signature inherited from Mayan ancestors via Christopher Columbus as the "Ghost Dance genes." That the original name of both the Indigenous nation and the transformational genetic signature cite a pantribal anti-colonial movement from the late 19th century marks Point Assinika as a symbol and indeed product of intertribal coalitions.

In his essay "Native American Indian Literature: Critical metaphors of the Ghost Dance," published in 1992 in *World Literature Today*, Vizenor evokes the Ghost Dance

to identify the revitalizing characteristics of contemporary Indigenous literature. As Vizenor explains, the English language can serve as both a colonial and a decolonial tool. Once a vital instrument in the dissemination of the Ghost Dance between Indigenous peoples across North America at the end of the nineteenth century, the English language can mobilize Indigenous peoples at the turn of the twenty-first century. Vizenor writes:

> English has been the language of colonial discoveries, racial cruelties, invented names, and the written domination of tribal cultures; at the same time, this mother tongue of neocolonialism has been a language of liberation for some people. English, learned under duress by tribal people at mission and federal schools, was once of the languages that carried the Ghost Dance, the religion of renewal from tribe to tribe on the plains at the end of the nineteenth century. 'The great underlying principle of the Ghost Dance doctrine is that the time will come when the whole Indian race, living and dead, will be reunited upon a regenerated earth, to live a life of aboriginal happiness, forever free from death disease and misery,' wrote James Mooney in *The Ghost-Dance Religion*. Captain Dick, a Paiute, said that 'Indians who don't dance, who don't believe in this word, will grow little, just about a foot high, and stay that way. Some of them will be turned into wood and be burned in the fire.' (227).

In this passage, Vizenor addresses the unexpected utility of a colonizing instrument for the liberation of colonized peoples. And yet English is but a single instrument, one of many that can be employed to foster coalitions and empower Indigenous peoples on

international stages—instruments that include international law and human rights law. Thus, the above passage is less about English and more about the power of X-marks to appropriate and transform settler-colonial technologies and institutions. Like Justice's conception of trans/nationalism (detailed in the introduction of this dissertation), Vizenor's speculative recovery of the Ghost Dance—via a new Indigenous nation, trickster legal interventions, and genetic engineering—frames tribal nationalism as immeasurably strengthened by intertribal (and international) alliances. As Vizenor's cosmopolitan fiction and non-fiction asserts, vibrant indigenous nations are inherently networked nations.

Chapter Two:

Quincentennial Secessions: The New Indigenous States of *The Crown of Columbus* and *The Wild Blue and The Gray*

In this chapter, I continue my analysis of how Indigenous speculative fiction published at the Columbian quincentennial imagines the successful use of international law by Indigenous peoples to secure external self-determination. To further illuminate the interrelationship between Indigenous speculative fiction and international legal debates, I attend to the legal arguments posited by two novels that have yet to be adequately recognized in the field of Indigenous studies for containing explicit political content: *The Crown of Columbus* (1991) by Louise Erdrich (Anishinaabe) and Michael Dorris[49], and *The Wild Blue and the Gray* (1991) by William Sanders (Cherokee). In both novels, state secession is empowered by the transformation of Eurocentric legal norms.

Seizing the quincentenary anniversary to make legal claims for Indigenous statehood, the speculative novels discussed in the first two chapters of this dissertation are landmarks of Indigenous futurism. In the previous chapter I explored how Gerald Vizenor advocated for the reformation of international law and legal norms. I paid particular attention to how he reconceptualized citizenship criteria and human rights law from an Anishinaabe perspective. Thus, in my first chapter, I identify how Vizenor imagines the transformation of law (human rights law; citizenship criteria) and

[49] While his tribal identity has been a topic of debate in the field of Indigenous studies, Dorris identified his tribal affiliation as Modoc. In an interview with *Artful Dodge*, Dorris says: "I of course do have a specific tribal affiliation. I'm Modoc. I grew up on the Fort Belknap reservation for part of my life and went to school there, so this matter of an affiliation just isn't an issue for me" (Bourne).

international legal norms (how law is conventionally practiced and recognized by the international community) via his protagonist's trickster legal intervention. Similar to *The Heirs of Columbus*, the two novels discussed in this chapter frame international legal norms as distinctly Eurocentric and yet also fundamentally amendable. By elucidating contemporary international legal norms, *The Crown of Columbus* and *The Wild Blue and the Gray* mark the inconsistencies between law and legal practice. Both novels narrate how the increased participation of Indigenous peoples in international legal systems and institutions promises to expose contradictions between existing international legal treaties and international legal norms, thereby mandating the reformation of legal norms in order to require nation-states to meet responsibilities that they have already agreed to in law (but not in practice). To hold settler-colonial states accountable, the authors cite how international legal norms have failed to respect the sovereignty of Indigenous peoples.

In their speculative novel, Erdrich and Dorris recover a text from a colonial past (Columbus' Diary) to transform legal norms in the present. Thus, *The Crown of Columbus* imagines the conditions necessary for Indigenous states to legally secede from settler-colonial states across the globe when evidence is found that throws into question the (legal) history of the first encounter between European explorers and Indigenous peoples. Their novel is especially valuable when read as a literary text that represents contemporaneous debates over the strategies Indigenous peoples should adopt to change legal norms and hold settler-colonial states accountable to existing international law. Likewise, in *The Wild Blue and the Gray*, Sanders imagines what would happen if treaties signed between Indigenous peoples and settler-colonial states were honored (as

international law requires but does not enforce). In my analysis of Sanders' speculative novel, I will employ Samuel Delaney's theorization of subjunctivity to demonstrate how speculative fiction is particularly equipped to recover legal histories of anti-colonial resistance and to revitalize previous legal strategies from the nineteenth century to defend the external self-determination of Indigenous peoples at the turn of the twenty-first century.

To be sure, the novels discussed at length in the first two chapters of this dissertation were not the only speculative texts produced by Indigenous authors during this era. Other speculative texts from this era include "Aunt Parnetta's Electric Blisters" (1990) by Diane Glancy, *Red Spider, White Web* (1990) by Misha, *Princess Pocahontas and the Blues* Spots (1990) by Monique Mojica, *Almanac of the Dead* (1991) by Leslie Marmon Silko, *A Coyote Columbus Story* (1992) written by Thomas King, *Dead Voices* (1992) by Gerald Vizenor, *A Contemporary Gothic Indian Vampire Story* (1992) by Drew Hayden Taylor, *Green Grass, Running Water* (1993) by Thomas King, "Distances" (1993) by Sherman Alexie, and *The Black Ship* (1994) by Gerry William. However, these texts make different political arguments than the three novels discussed at length in the first two chapters of this dissertation. None of these texts use western legal systems to promote the decolonization of Indigenous lands and peoples. They do not directly attempt to transform international legal norms. As referenced in the previous chapter, *Almanac of the Dead*—perhaps the most famous of these speculative texts, at least among readers in the US—Silko rejects Eurocentric legal systems altogether. That Silko's novel

completely discards Eurocentric legal systems through hemispheric revolution posits a very different political argument than the three novels at the heart of this chapter.

To better understand and distinguish the legal arguments that underwrite each of these novels, I will contextualize my readings of the novels alongside the political advocacy histories of three contemporaneous Indigenous non-governmental organizations (NGOS): The World Council of Indigenous Peoples, the Indian Law Research Center, and the International Indian Treaty Council. All three of these NGOs played significant roles in conceptualizing strategies to shape international legal norms. These were the primary Indigenous NGOs involved in forming the agenda of the Working Group, and they would play a significant role in shaping the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.[50] Each organization was originally founded in the 1970s and each contributed to the Working Group in its very first meeting in August of 1982.[51] By focusing on their political goals, as well as their strategic use (and distribution) of legal rhetoric, I want to bring attention to how Indigenous activists were using international and human rights law to support claims for external self-determination in the 1980s and early 1990s.

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[50] As Hannum writes: "Due to the unprecedented level of influence and participation by Indigenous peoples themselves, the Working Group's text largely reflects positions taken by Indigenous organization (89).

INDIGENOUS RIGHTS AND THE REFORMATION OF INTERNATIONAL LAW

The following section tracks how preceding legal debates on the external self-determination of Indigenous peoples informed Indigenous American literature produced in the early 1990s. I will examine how three NGOS—The World Council of Indigenous Peoples, the Indian Law Research Center, and the International Indian Treaty Council—advocated for the increased participation of Indigenous peoples in the practice and theorization of international law. I will then demonstrate how the legacies of these NGOS are reflected in Indigenous speculative fiction from the 1990s in my readings of *The Crown of Columbus* and *The Wild Blue and the Gray*. That these three NGOs argued for strong definitions of self-determination and saw international law as a forum to secure external autonomy reflects an acute optimism that Indigenous peoples could transform legal norms. This optimism would then be reflected in the speculative fiction of Vizenor, Erdrich, Dorris and Sanders—and retained in subsequent generations of Indigenous authors of speculative fiction.

The International Indian Treaty Council

The International Indian Treaty Council (IITC) was formed between June 8 and June 16th, 1974, at the First International Indian Treaty Conference. The conference, which represented ninety-seven Indigenous nations and was co-organized by the American Indian Movement (AIM), was held on the land of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe (Ortiz 269). At the conference, the IITC issued the Declaration of Continuing Independence. The Declaration shifts dynamically between recognizing the legal

obligations of the United States and appealing to international institutions and networks to hold the United States accountable to these obligations, and would serve as a model political agenda for many Indigenous activists and artists to follow.

The Declaration first targets the history of US settler colonialism. The IITC recognizes broken treaties and promises to use "every available legal and political resource" to hold the US to the treaties the state signed with Indigenous peoples across the continent—a strategy employed Vizenor, Erdrich, Dorris and Sanders in their speculative texts. That the IITC directly cites the US constitution is telling of how the organization exploits western legal documents and systems.[52] Representative of the council's broader commitments, the Declaration then pivots from securing tribal rights through US law to employing international forums to fight for Indigenous self-determination. Writing from the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation, the Council promises to "establish offices in Washington, D.C. and New York City to approach the international forces necessary to obtain the recognition of our treaties. These offices will establish an initial system of communications among Native nations to disseminate information, getting a general consensus of concerning issues, developments and any legislative attempt affecting Native Nations by the United States of America." The Declaration ends with a global view that encourages international networks of Indigenous peoples to target the legal recognition of sovereignty by international law: "The International Indian Treaty Council established by this conference is directed to make the

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52 "The United State Government in its Constitution, Article VI, recognizes treaties as part of the Supreme Law of the United States. We will peacefully pursue all legal and political avenues to demand United States recognition of its own Constitution in this regard, and thus to honor its own treaties with Native Nations."

application to the United Nations for recognition and membership of the sovereign Native Nations. We pledge our support to any similar application by any aboriginal people." The Declaration stands as a landmark document that represents a political strategy of transforming legal norms to defend Indigenous sovereignty. The IITC directly addresses broken treaties by the United States, but also targets international law, specifically the UN, as a forum not only to specifically address treaties signed by the US, but to secure external self-determination for Indigenous peoples across the globe. Employing legal strategies analogous to various approaches endorsed by the IITC, protagonists in *The Heirs of Columbus* and *The Crown of Columbus* prove their own literacy and mastery of colonial legal histories and practices while validating the transformative legal interventions developed by the IITC.

The IITC was instrumental in bringing global attention to the rights of Indigenous peoples. Three years after the First International Indian Treaty Conference, the IITC gained consultative status as an NGO in the Economic and Social Council of the UN. In 1977, the IITC also began publishing a newsletter called the *Treaty Council News.* This is only one example of how the NGOs discussed in this chapter published literature in order to raise public awareness among both Indigenous and non-Indigenous readers about Indigenous rights. Explaining the importance of this text, Bruce Elliott Johansen identifies that the two key functions served by the publication were "bringing international Indigenous news to an audience of Native people and supporters in the United States and describing issues within the area to an international audience" (155). That same year, the IITC played a leading role in conceptualizing and organizing the

International Non-Governmental Organization's Conference on Indigenous Peoples of the Americas (Niezen 45; Prucha 418; Ortiz 270).[53] Held at the United Nations offices in Geneva, Switzerland, this conference was a watershed moment for the development of global Indigenous networks and movements. Writing that the convention "marked the beginning of Indian direct activity in the international context," Roxanne Dunbar Ortiz recognizes that the IITC was the initiating force behind the conference (270).

At the end of the conference, participants drafted a Declarations of Principles for the Defense of the Indigenous Nations and Peoples of the western Hemisphere. The draft is noteworthy for its explicit support of external self-determination. The 1977 Declaration uses almost identical language to the 1933 Montevideo Convention's definition of the state—the standard measurement of the state used by the UN—to defend the right for external self-determination: "Indigenous Peoples shall be accorded recognition as nations, and proper subjects of international law, provided the people concerned desire to be recognized as a nation and meet the fundamental requirements of nationhood, namely: (a) Having a permanent population; (b) Having a defined territory; (C) Having a government; (d) Having the ability to enter into relations with other states."[54] This move positions Indigenous nations as having equal international standing as states already recognized by the UN. The Declaration than makes perhaps an even more radical move in recognizing non-state actors as units for international law: "Indigenous groups not

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[53] Recognizing the scope of the conference, Francis Paul Prucha writes that "some 250 delegates attended, including representatives of more than fifty international nongovernmental organization and Indian delegates or observers from Canada, the United States, and Central and South American (418).

[54] The Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States in 1934 defines the state as such: "(a) a permanent population; (b) a defined territory; (c) government; and (d) capacity to enter into relations with the other states."

meeting the requirements for nationhood are hereby declared to be subjects of international law and are entitled to the protection of this Declaration, provided they are identifiable groups having bonds of language, heritage, tradition, or other common identity." This statement argues for the transformation of international legal norms in order to recognize non-state political collectives. This transformation would decenter the UN member state as the fundamental unit of international law. While such a proposition remained largely on the fringes of international debate throughout the 1980s and 1990s, since the turn of the century many Indigenous American authors of speculative fiction—such as Stephen Graham Jones, Zainab Amadahy, Nalo Hopkinson, and Daniel Justice—have begun to explore what such a transformation would look like.

After the NGO conference in Geneva, Indigenous participants submitted documents to the UN that recommended the creation of the UN Working Group of Indigenous Populations.[55] Once the Working Group was initiated, the IITC would play a significant role in its development. Often, its contributions would recognize specific cases of human rights abuses. During the very first meeting of the Working Group, the IITC submitted a resolution aimed at recognizing the ongoing genocide of Indigenous people in Guatemala.[56] In 1995, reflecting on its role in the development of the Declaration of Indigenous Rights by the Working Group, the IITC wrote: "The IITC has

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[55] The history of the UN Working Group of Indigenous Populations is further explored in the first chapter of this dissertation.

[56] The resolution condemned "the reported massacres of thousands of Indians by Guatemalan military forces since March 1982, and the expulsion of more than one million Indians from their Indigenous communities, and hundreds of thousands from the country itself" and requests that the UN documents the violence perpetuated by the state military and that all the "all Governments and International Organs" recognize the human rights of Indigenous peoples.

participated at every stage of the progress of the draft Declaration with great interest. We have great hopes for its adoption, as the draft Declaration is the only human rights instrument to have been written with the participation of those most concerned, Indigenous peoples themselves." Over a decade after the Working Group was first formed, the IITC remained at the center of debate for Indigenous rights in international law.

The World Council of Indigenous Peoples

A year after the First International Indian Treaty Conference was held at the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation, the World Council of Indigenous Peoples (WCIP) had their first meeting in British Columbia, Canada during October in 1975.[57] The first president of the WCIP was George Manuel, a chief of the Shuswap tribe, who published *The Fourth World: An Indian Reality* in 1974. In this groundbreaking text, the "fourth world" is defined as the "aboriginal World" and is distinguished from the political goals of third world countries. Identifying a "world pool of technology" where distinctive epistemologies employ the same technologies for different political and cultural goals, Manuel promotes "the utilization of technology and its life-enhancing potential within the framework of the values of the peoples of the Aboriginal World." Encouraging Indigenous peoples to engage and/or appropriate various technologies and institutions, Manuel's speculative text offers theoretical precursors to Gerald Vizenor's (and Dale Turner's) conceptualization of "Word Warriors" as well as Scott Richard Lyon's

[57] In 1974, the organization held a planning committee in Guyana.

productive appreciation of "X-marks." In addition, Manuel's embrace of emerging technologies aligns his text with optimistic appraisals of technological advancements expressed by contemporaneous science fiction theorists such as Samuel Delaney, Darko Suvin and J.G. Ballard. The text is also noteworthy for its broad scope of decolonization; as Manuel writes, continental transformation is the goal of decolonization.[58] Thus, epistemological intervention grounded in Indigenous values can spur technological and scientific transformation on continental and even global scales.

Crucially, for Manuel and the WCIP, the "world pool of technology" included international law. In 1977, Douglas E. Sanders, Professor of Law at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, explained why the WCIP focused on international alliances. "Colonialism was international for Indigenous peoples in two ways," Sanders writes, "not only did it involve contact with European nationals, but it grouped various Indigenous nations within new political boundaries (5). Therefore, anticolonial resistance has to be international in scope: "[Indigenous Peoples] learned that to act solely on the basis of tribal groups was ineffective…to effect change in this new situation, alliances of Indigenous Peoples within the new national boundaries promised to be more effective" (5). After asserting the need for international alliances between Indigenous peoples, Sanders then targets international legal norms, arguing that "the contradictions between theory and practice in western European colonialism suggested to Indigenous populations

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[58] Manuel writes that "the Fourth World is a vision of the future history of North America and of the Indian Peoples. The two histories are inseparable. It has been the insistence on the separation of the people from the land that has characterized much of recent history. It is this same insistence that has prevented European North Americans from developing their own identity in terms of the land so that they can be happy and secure in the knowledge of that identity" (12).

that they could influence the European powers by political and legal agitation" (6).[59] Like the IITC, the WCIP would demand that the UN "recognize the treaties that Indigenous Nations around the world have signed as binding under International Law"—a demand that is also made by the protagonist of *The Crown of Columbus*. With respect to Indigenous epistemologies, the WCIP requested in 1981 that the UN recognize "Indigenous interpretations of what 'land rights, international agreements and treaties, land reform and systems of tenure' means to us."[60] This approach echoes Manuel's utilization of technology from an "aboriginal" framework, an approach that can also be seen at work throughout *The Heirs of Columbus*.

In 1984, the WCIP drafted a Declaration of Principles that placed secession from the settler-colonial state as a clear option for Indigenous peoples: "All Indigenous nations have the right of self-determination. By virtue of this right they may freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social, religious and cultural development." They submitted the draft to the Working Group. As the Report for the Independent Commission explains, this 1984 Declaration appealed directly to both the international Covenants on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and Economic, Social and Cultural rights (ICESCR) to claim the same rights as existing nation-states to secure

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[59] Sanders elaborates on this legal approach, conceding that it is, "at best, an uncertain alternative to other forms of resistance. This type of Indigenous political activity began within particular colonial systems. It expanded to the sphere of international organizations when the League of Nations and the United Nations were formed. In the last decade it has led to the formation of an international organization, the World Council of Indigenous peoples, which has established a formal relationship to the United Nations and is seeking to have concepts of aboriginal rights accepted international as basic economic and political rights of Indigenous peoples" (6).

[60] The previous two quotes directed to the UN are from a document presented by the WCIP to the International NGO Conference on Indigenous Peoples and the Land held in Geneva in September 1981. The title of the document is "Land Rights of the Indigenous Peoples, International Agreements and Treaties, Land Reform and System of Tenure."

political and territorial autonomy. In other words, it demands the right for Indigenous peoples to assert independence from settler-colonial states.[61] As J.K Das writes, the WCIP asserts "that Indigenous populations are 'peoples'"—the same "peoples" referred to in article one of both the ICCPR and the ICESCR—"and they aspire to full independence and statehood in the internationally recognized sense of the term 'self-determination'" (97). This is another example of the importance of the "s" in *peoples*, detailed in the previous chapter. The 1987 Report for the Independent Commission on International Humanitarian Issues recognizes that the WCIP's Declaration, if acknowledged by the UN, would enable secession: "It is, of course, a controversial claim because it challenges the absolute sovereignty of nation states." However, to downplay the risk, the report is quick to point out in the following sentence that "in fact, few Indigenous people's organizations seek full political independence" (54). Nevertheless, external self-determination is clearly on the table—and poses a territorial threat to many UN member states.[62]

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[61] Article 1.1 of both the ICCPR and the ICESCR states: "All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development." Article 1.2 of both the ICCPR and the ICESCR state: "All peoples may, for their own ends, freely dispose of their natural wealth and resources without prejudice to any obligations arising out of international economic co-operation, based upon the principle of mutual benefit, and international law. In no case may a people be deprived of its own means of subsistence." Article 47 of the ICCPR and Article 25 of the ICESCR state "Nothing in the present Covenant shall be interpreted as impairing the inherent right of all peoples to enjoy and utilize fully and freely their natural wealth and resources."

[62] Within three years, I argue that the rhetoric of WCIP would begin to somewhat concede on the issue of external self-determination. Notice the shift from the first principle from the 1982 deliberations and the first principle from the 1985 deliberations: "All Indigenous peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of this right they may freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social, religious and cultural development." The word "independence" is nowhere in the 1985 document. In addition, the document offers no definition of the term "self-determination."

The Indian Law Research Center

The Indian Law Research Center focuses on empowering Indigenous peoples to navigate international institutions such as the UN and the Organization of American States (OAG). As demonstrated later in this chapter, it is easy to imagine the protagonist of *The Crown of Columbus*, Vivian Two-Star—a word warrior with legal and literary literacy in both Indigenous and non-Indigenous discourses—working for this organization. The Indian Law Research Center was established in 1978. In 1980 it filed the first human rights complaint in defense of Indigenous rights against the United States to the UN Commission on Human Rights. Like the IITC and WCIP, the Indian Law Research Center significantly contributed to debates that informed the Working Group's drafting of the Declaration. Furthermore, the Research Center was also instrumental in informing the general public about Indigenous rights in international law. Its most significant contribution aimed at educating Indigenous people and advocates of Indigenous rights was their 1984 text *Indian Rights, Human Rights: Handbook for Indians on International Human Rights Complaint Procedures*.[63] The title itself asserts the center's activist spirit: it aims not only to explain the international legal system at large, it also explains at length how Indigenous people can file a formal complaint to the UN. Published in both English and Spanish, the Handbook was produced as an accessible tool for a broad audience. "Prepared in response to request from Indians of North, Central

[63] The Handbook begins: "This handbook is designed primarily for the Indian leaders, Individual Indians and non-Indian supporters of Indian rights who want to know more about international procedures for protecting human rights. It has been prepared in response to requests from Indians of North, Central and South America for more information about international human rights law and the most important human rights complaint procedures" (preface).

and South America for more information about international protection of Indian's basic rights," the preface states, "the handbook is designed to help Indians make informed decisions about human rights procedures." As S. James Anaya attests, the Handbook was a success in spurring Indigenous readers to engage international law. Looking back on the legacy of the text, Anaya writes that "the use of international human rights procedures by Indigenous peoples was encouraged by the publication [of the Handbook], a small book written with the nonlawyer in mind" (79). The Handbook is especially useful as an index of Human Rights Law as codified in both global institutions (the UN) and hemispheric institutions (the Organization of American States). The Appendix includes copies of the UDHR, ICESCR, ICCPR, the Optional protocol to the ICCPR, the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man, and the American Convention on Human Rights.

Especially noteworthy for this study, the Handbook ends with a document that the Research Center submitted to the Working Group. Titled "Principles for Guiding the Deliberations of The Working Group on Indigenous Populations," the document contains eight articles intended to set the political agenda of the Working Group. These principles would eventually be transmitted by the Working Group to the U.N. Human Rights Sub-Commission.[64] The first article is especially direct in supporting external self-determination: "Indigenous peoples and groups shall be entitled freely and independently to practice, develop, and perpetuate their own religions, languages, cultures, traditions, social systems, and ways of life" (124). In addition, the Declaration also uses strong language to support whatever type of self-determination Indigenous peoples claim.

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[64] UN Document E/CN4/Sub.2/AC4/1982/R1

Article five states that "Indigenous peoples are, in some circumstances, under a domination which is both alien and colonial in nature…Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination, that is, to posses whatever degree of self-government in their territories the Indigenous peoples may choose" (124). Again, this Declaration was included in the Handbook. The author's of what was likely the most widely read document on Indigenous rights published in the 1980s include language in favor of external self-determination on the Handbook's last two pages.

CONVENTIONS OF COLUMBUS: SECESSION AND MULTICULTURALISM IN *THE CROWN OF COLUMBUS*

At the time of its publication in 1991, *The Crown of Columbus* had the highest public profile among any contemporaneous Indigenous American novel. To create a literary event to coincide with quincentenary celebrations, the publishing press Harper Collins offered Dorris and Erdrich a 1.5 million dollar advance to co-write a novel about the legacy of Christopher Columbus from a Native American perspective. Erdrich and Dorris, who began writing the novel in 1988, originally conceptualized the story with Christopher Columbus as narrator (Farrell 121). However, as their idea developed, they decided to set their story in 1991, at the eve of the quincentenary, and to narrate their plot from two different perspectives: Vivian Twostar, who self-identifies as "Coeur d'Alene-Navajo-Irish-Hispanic-Sioux by-marriage," and Roger Williams, a white male from Boston. Twostar and Williams are both professors at Dartmouth University and are engaged in a rocky romantic relationship. They begin the novel separated, but after the birth of their child, they tentatively reunite as a couple. Much of the novel's drama is

produced by their ambivalent feelings about their relationship. They have a difficult time imagining a long-term future together, especially as parents of their newborn (and mixed-race) child. Adding further strain to this relationship, they are also both working on projects about Christopher Columbus. Twostar has been commissioned to write a critical article on the quincentenary from a Native American perspective, an assignment she accepted in part to appease her tenure committee. Williams is writing an epic poem, mostly empathetic to and at times celebratory of the European explorer, from the perspective of Columbus himself. (Among many things, this poem argues that Columbus was Jewish and struggled with anti-Semitism his whole life, documents Columbus' many attempts to get funding for his voyage, and narrates Columbus' first impressions of landing in the New World.) While Williams is busy working on his poem, Twostar discovers a lost letter in a literary archive at the university. The letter leads her to contact a man named Cobb who claims to have Columbus' original diary, a text that has never been shared publicly. Taking a chance at finding a literary object that could not only advance her career but significantly alter our perceptions of Columbus' motivations and actions, Twostar books a flight to a Caribbean island to meet the mysterious owner of the diary. After a series of increasingly dire events—including a kidnapping, a shark attack and a last-second excavation of Williams from a cave filled with hundreds of bats and heaps of guano—Twostar leaves the island with the diary intact.

The novel is highly speculative. After all, the plot revolves around the discovery of a previously unknown text—the aforementioned diary written by Columbus. After reading the diary, Twostar realizes the potential for the diary to transform international

legal norms and secure claims for external self-determination by Indigenous peoples. Thus, Twostar realizes significant legal objectives targeted by the aforementioned NGOS in the previous section. The diary legally sanctions Indigenous claims for secession from settler-colonial states. By proving that Columbus recognized the sovereignty of the Indigenous peoples he first encountered upon arriving in the Caribbean—he explicitly says so in his own handwriting—the diary holds revolutionary potential for the defense of tribal sovereignty. Therefore, the text could produce numerous new Indigenous states across the Americas (and even the world). The legal argument for self-determination made by Twostar is similar in many ways to the legal arguments that the heirs of Columbus make to defend their own two Indigenous states. Twostar and the heirs both cite international law as a tool to achieve Indigenous statehood; and the protagonists of both novels search for legal entry points from which to transform international legal norms. With their speculative novels, Erdrich, Dorris and Vizenor imagine what would happen if settler-colonial states were held accountable to international law. In *The Crown of Columbus*, Twostar discovers evidence that meets the preexisting standards of international law to change how the sovereignty of Indigenous peoples is recognized by international law.

But what is especially interesting about this novel, and what has ultimately limited most critical appraisals of the novel, is how the novel simultaneously supports state secession by Indigenous peoples *and* offers a celebratory image of the multicultural state through the reconciliation of Twostar and Williams and their joint parentage of their mixed-race child. Moreover, the novel offers an ambivalent take on Eurocentric

international law by both recommending its reform and centering it by default. Most critics attempt to resolve the novel's contradictions in their readings. We must resist such inclinations to wrap up this novel with a quincentenary bow. The novel's whipsaw position between secession and multiculturalism reflects contemporaneous debates in international legal forums: what are the best strategies for Indigenous peoples to secure political and cultural rights? The contradictions that underscore the political arguments of *The Crown of Columbus* represent the tensions that constrain the agency of Indigenous peoples within international and human rights law—the same tensions that produced an ambivalent multiculturalism at the Columbian quincentenary.

The Speculative States of The Crown of Columbus

The Crown of Columbus reflects a political investment made by multiple Indigenous authors to write speculative fiction at the eve of the quincentenary. Tellingly, Erdrich and Dorris craft their protagonist to share their value of literary genres such as speculative fiction. Vivian Twostar is a champion of popular genres that are all too often ignored by academia. Early in the novel, Williams, Twostar's non-Indigenous boyfriend and colleague, criticizes her taste in literary genres. He is particularly dismissive of the bibliography she has assembled to write an article on the quincentenary. Williams comments: "Vivian had browsed among the sensational titles, the fantastical theories, the improbable *speculators*…She was apparently attracted to the odd, not the reliable, and I could only imagine what silliness she was concocting" (51, italics mine). The quote both reveals Twostar's expansive appreciation of textual resources for history and exposes

traditional academic attitudes that marginalize genre fiction and non-western texts alike. Twostar herself is representative of the quincentenary-era-texts discussed in this chapter: she is both a product and a purveyor of popular culture, a character that critiques and rewrites colonial legacies via popular genre conventions. With Twostar as avatar, Erdrich and Dorris—in concert with Vizenor, Sanders, and Silko, in addition to texts by Thomas King, Misha, Diane Glancy, Drew Hayden Taylor, Sherman Alexie and others—recover and reposition the use of speculative fiction within Indigenous literature at the quincentenary moment.

Dorris and Erdrich confront the legacy of colonization by holding Christopher Columbus accountable as a representative of Spain and an agent of European colonization. After arriving in the Caribbean, Twostar finally reads the original diary of Christopher Columbus. While analyzing the text, she quickly identifies two significant departures from what was previously unknown: first, she learns about a crown that was given by Columbus to an Indigenous community upon arriving in the "New World" (The crown in the title of the novel); second, and more significantly, she finds textual proof that Columbus viewed the Indigenous community as a sovereign nation. In his diary, Columbus writes about a representative of the community, *"He is clearly a King…a Sovereign the equal of Portugal or France, the Lord of all his dominions"* (204). After reading this line from the diary, written by Columbus's own hand, Twostar immediately recognizes the political importance of the document:

> "Bingo! I closed my eyes, blessed Columbus for his big mouth. In one sentence he had by extension recognized every native tribe and nation.

> Wait till I got this baby before the Supreme Court. The first European Chronicler, official representative of the king and queen of Spain, had acknowledged in his own handwriting that native people had the full right to govern their own territory—and that was the missing ingredient in every Indigenous land claims and reparation case from Long Island to Hawaii." (204)

This discovery supports more than just claims in the US Supreme Court. Vivian uses the newly found diary to ground legal cases in international legal institutions for Indigenous people across the world. As Williams writes in the coda of the novel, "Vivian found, within the text, material for a plethora of legal approaches under international law, issues of aboriginal claim and sovereignty, or premeditated fraud. The prospects for victories—here, in Brazil, in New Zealand, in Mexico—appear better than anyone would have expected" (375). That the novel ends with the promise of legal victories for Indigenous communities around the globe is a detail surprisingly ignored or minimized in most readings of the novel. But it is precisely this speculative element of the novel that reveals the politics of *The Crown of Columbus*. The finding of a lost diary recovers an alternative history of the founding of European colonization that proves that Spain recognized the sovereignty of Indigenous peoples.

Reading The Crown of Columbus; or the Irresistible Resolutions of Multiculturalism

The reviews of *The Crown of Columbus* were mixed. Interestingly, most of the reviews focused on Erdrich's and Dorris' expansive use of conventions from popular

literary genre. Many of the positive reviews focused on its success as a romance. Writing in the *L.A. Times,* Don G. Campbell argues that the novel is "a wonderful adventure/mystery story of a mismatched pair of scholars hopelessly out of their depth, dealing firsthand with evil but, in the process, discovering strengths in each other." Similarly, Michael Kerrigan, in *The New York Review of Books,* writes that *The Crown of Columbus* "is a rich and rewarding novel of ideas…but its ultimate conclusion are simple—not to say sentimental. The exploration that really matters, it seems, is the search for trust and stability, for America of the heart." In both reviews, the union between Twostar and Williams—Native American woman and a Euro-American man—is emphasized over everything else. However, many other reviewers criticized Erdrich and Dorris, especially for their use of multiple popular genres. Michiko Kakutani, the *New York Times* reviewer, complains that *The Crown of Columbus* "emerges as a distinctly commercial novel, a fast-paced, fluently written novel that combines the archeological suspense of 'Raiders of the Lost Ark' with the scholarly thrills of A.S. Byatt's 'Possession." Kakutani is also critical of the novel's sense of temporality, remarking that "whereas Ms. Erdrich's and Mr. Dorris's earlier novels cut back and forth among several generations to create a nearly mythic sense of the past, 'The Crown of Columbus' is almost willfully contemporary" (25). When read alongside each other, these two quotes from the same review, against Kakutani's intention, reveal how popular genres, when employed by Native American authors, can disrupt stereotypes that relegate Indigenous people to living in the past tense. After all, Kakutani misses the "nearly mythic sense of the past" at the expense of Indiana Jones thrills. The *People Magazin*e review also elicits

Indiana Jones to criticize the literary merits of the novel; reviewer Joanne Kaufman labels it "something like *Romancing the Stone* meets *Raiders of the Lost Ark*." For this critic, the abundance of genres is not an asset, but is instead a sign of indecision and failure: "Erdrich and Dorris ultimately can't decide what this book should be: an adventure romance, a thriller, a discourse on academic responsibly or revisionist history. As a result, they succeed fully at nothing" (26). In her review, titled "The Art of Pandering," M. Annette Jaimes also cites *Indiana Jones*, seemingly a prerequisite text in Erdrich studies during the early 1990s: "The book's finale, compared to its John Updike run-rabbit-run beginning, reads like an Indian Jones thriller set in the Bahamas." The authors have "opted for the pop reading trends of the general American public to satisfy the contemporary taste for literary kitsch" (58). Seemingly the only conclusion these negative reviews can agree on is that the novel is a multigenre text and that *Indiana Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Ark* is not literature. These reviews reveal how critics and readers struggle with appraising (and enjoying) genre fiction by Indigenous authors.[65]

Like many of the initial reviews of *The Crown of Columbus,* scholarship on the text since the novel's initial publication has also been varied. Tellingly of how racial identity is often the locus of literary analyses of *The Crown of Columbus*, scholars frequently read the novel through the genre lens of the romantic novel. Such an approach interprets the relationship between the Indigenous American Twostar and the Euro-American Williams, and their mixed race baby, as a metonym for American

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[65] Other examples of similar reviews include Robert Houston's "Take It Back for the Indians: *The Crown of Columbus* by Michael Dorris and Louise Erdrich*,"* from the *New York Times Book Review* and "1+1<2: *The Crown of Columbus* by Michael Dorris and Louise Erdrich" by John Elson for *Time*.

reconciliation at the quincentennial. (The fact that Erdrich and Dorris were married at the time when they co-wrote the novel certainly encouraged many of the critics to produce this reading.) However, emphasizing the conventions of the romantic novel threatens to over-determine scholarly readings of the novel while allowing its more explicitly political elements to languish in the background of critical discourse. While focusing on speculative *identities* that dovetail into a celebration of a multicultural society—an ideal not dissimilar from the global society celebrated by El Faro a Colón, the World Song, and the Seville Expo discussed in the introduction of this chapter—this scholarship ignores or downplays the emergence of the speculative Indigenous *states* that Twostar envisions (and legally defends) at the end of the novel.

Celebrating the novel as offering "the idea of racial mix moving toward synthesis," Ann Rayson's 1992 appraisal of *The Crown of Columbus* framed the novel's narrative thrust around the creation of a mixed-race family whose identity avoided easy categorization. For Rayson, the "seeming indecision about intent and direction mirrored in the conglomeration of genres and allusions to other fiction comments on the theme of shifting identity" (35). Thus the novel rejects reductionist measurements of ethnic or gender identity through intermarriage, genre mixing and co-authorship. Similarly, writing on the novel ten years later, Birgit Dawes celebrates *The Crown of Columbus* as a global text that enacts a post-ethnic performance where "an entire family makes itself whole across ethnic lines" (252). And Susan Farrell commends *The Crown of Columbus* for its "blending of cultures," arguing that Erdrich and Dorris have produced "a contemporary American novel in which the effects of colonization are felt by *all* Americans" (133).

Felisa Lopez Liquete also reads mixed-race characters as central to how the novel symbolically resolves contradictions of the quincentennial. Liquete even points to the dedication of the novel—"for our bouquet of violets"—as how the novel values "mixed-blood" children (82). In addition, Jamil Khader uses the novel to define what he terms as a post-colonial Nativeness. For Khader, a postcolonial Native subjectivity "engages in negotiating and investing in several parallel continuities of the local and the global and the anti-colonial and the postcolonial in the context of multiplicity, continuous becoming, and transformation" (86). Not only does Khader's term—"post-colonial Nativeness"—imply that the work of decolonization is done, it attempts to resolve the contradictions of celebrating settler colonialism at the quincentennial through non-tribal-specific readings of mixed-race identities.

How can the novel be all of things identified above—a celebration of multiculturalism and a symbol of synthesis; a post-ethnic and postcolonial text—and yet also be pro-secessionist? While such critics offer compelling close readings of speculative identities in the novel, they do not adequately reconcile their interpretations with how the novel's conclusion overtly supports Indigenous secession from the settler-colonial state. Furthermore, that no prominent scholar of Indigenous literary studies associated with American Indian Literary Nationalism has yet to offer an in-depth reading of the novel reflects how the cosmopolitan novel has been overlooked as a political text that explicitly defends the external self-determination of Indigenous peoples. This is not to say that the novel does not celebrate a mixed-race family and cosmopolitan identities, but to point out that the novel is much more complicated and

cannot be reduced to a narrative that celebrates multiculturalism and an apolitical model of cosmopolitanism (and thus protects the integrity of settler-colonial territory). Moreover, there is an uneasy trend to conflate racial and tribal identity in many of these readings, as if the speculative mixed-race identity of the family posited at the novel's climax trumps and subsequently makes irrelevant tribal identification. If, as these critics claim, the novel alleviates anxieties over the quincentennial anniversary through tropes of racial miscegenation and celebrations of postmodern hybrid identities, then why does Twostar promote the creation of new Indigenous states? As a novel that can be read as both a celebration of multiculturalism and an argument for state secession, *The Crown of Columbus* offers not a resolution to but rather a representation of the tensions inherent in international human rights law. On the one hand, it offers the multicultural family as a microcosm of universal equality across ethnic and national divides. On the other hand, it recognizes the collective right to self-determination for Indigenous peoples across the globe. Thus the novel empowers acts of secession that reject the multicultural state as the only social and legal vehicle for reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

As a speculative text, *The Crown of Columbus* remarkably captures the tensions that drove debates—which were at their most contentious in the late 1980s and early 1990s—over the role of international law and human rights law for the defense of Indigenous self-determination. We can clearly identify an argument for secession in the novel. But we can also read the symbolic work performed by the reconciliation of Twostar and Williams, and the consolidation of their family, as a harbinger of a

quincentenary rapprochement that is enacted within the settler-colonial state. That both of these speculative images of Indigenous survivance are posited at the end of the novel is a reflection of the impasse that was occurring within Indigenous activists networks over how to shape and employ international law. Should Indigenous peoples aggressively fight for external self-determination, meaning their right to represent themselves as a state recognized by and participating within the international community as an equal partner with other existing states? Or should Indigenous peoples fight for internal self-determination by employing and expanding human rights law, thereby reforming rather than seceding from the settler-colonial state? It is especially important for us to group these novels together in order to recognize how Indigenous speculative fiction at the eve of the quincentenary dynamically reflected contemporaneous debates occurring in international legal forums like the UN Working Group on Indigenous Peoples. These speculative novels were not imagining secession and Indigenous statehood in a vacuum. These speculative texts were participating within active debates over the future of Indigenous self-determination, were sharing these debates to a wide audience, and were above all taking these debates seriously. In these novels, a new Indigenous state in 1991 was more than a possibility—it was a choice.

ALTERNATIVE HISTORY X: RECOVERING COLONIAL TREATIES IN WILLIAM SANDERS' *THE WILD BLUE AND THE GRAY*

The Wild Blue and the Gray by William Sanders is a paradigmatic text of how speculative fiction can return to the past to recognize the contingency of history. In Sander's alternative history, the recognition of international treaties (signed by

Indigenous and settler-colonial governments) produces the conditions for a new Indigenous state to be created in the middle of North America in the early twentieth century. However, in this speculative text, it is the Confederate States of America rather than the United States of America that honors its treaties. By positing an alternative history of settler-colonial expansion, where the settler-colonial power is the Confederacy, Sanders exposes how shifting political conditions have always haphazardly shaped US colonial policy. Sanders sets his novel in an alternative world where the Southern Confederacy defeated the Union army in the American Civil War. This allows Sanders to recover historic treaties that were actually signed between Indigenous nations in Indian Territory and the Confederacy during the Civil War. By changing the course of history, Sanders is able to imagine what would have happened if the Confederacy honored these treaties after winning the Civil War. These treaties are literal examples of the types of signatures of assent that Lyon's terms "X-marks." They were signed under threat of military action in a dire situation when the outcome of the Civil War was very much in doubt. But crucially, in this novel, these X-marks retained enough sovereignty for Indigenous nations that when the conditions allowed for it, the nations were able to secure external self-determination in the form of a pan-tribal state.

I read Sanders' version of the Confederate States of America as an alternative version of the US—a settler-colonial state that honors its treaties. The central tenet of Sanders' argument is clear: if the US was held accountable to the treaties it signed with Indigenous nations, Indigenous nations would be in a much stronger position to secure external self-determination as independent states in the twentieth and twenty-first

centuries. Moreover, Sanders' formal choice to write an alternative history of settler colonialism in North America serves the novel's political argument well. By applying Samuel Delany's concept of subjunctivity to the text, I will demonstrate how *The Wild Blue and the Gray* is a paradigmatic speculative text that asks the reader to interrogate existing legal and political systems and to reimagine the world from a different perspective.

Indian Territory and the Civil War

The Civil War dramatically changed life in the Indian Territory, and the political fallout of the war would drastically constrain the sovereignty of numerous Indigenous nations. Identifying the war and its immediate aftermath as a pivotal moment for Indigenous peoples in North America, Kevin Bruyneel writes that the period "witnessed the repositioning of Indigenous people into more of a domestic concern than a foreign one, more inside than outside American political boundaries" (28). Prior to the Civil War, Indian Territory was governed mostly by tribal governments, primarily the Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw, Creek, and Seminole nations. By the terms of the Treaty of New Echota, the Indian Territory was not a US territory. As Bruyneel explains, "it was often referred to as *the* Indian Territory, a signal that it was not legally incorporated into or formally governed by the United States." He stresses that Indian Territory was "a rather remarkable, contingent boundary between the warring states themselves and between these states as a whole and a portion of the western frontier" (29). However, after the appointment of Jefferson Davis as president of the Confederate States of America, the

confederacy quickly annexed Indian Territory. In the months that followed, the Confederacy negotiated with each of the tribal governments to forgo neutrality and officially support the Confederate army. The Cherokee nation would be the last to agree. John Ross, Principal Chief of the Cherokee, signed a treaty with the Confederacy in October of 1861 (Trafzer 204; Sonneborn 1861-1862). In *Behind the Trail of Broken Treaties* (1974), Deloria points out that "the Five Civilized Tribes offered to join the Union side, recognizing that their treaties bound them to the United States as military allies." However, Deloria argues that "the Union forces rejected the overtures of the tribes, stating that the use of Indians against the Southern whites would be barbaric" (131).[66] Tragically, the treaties signed between the tribal governments and the confederacy would have irreversible effects after the Confederacy lost the war. The treaties signed with the Confederate States "justified" the United States federal government to legally annul their own treaties it signed with tribal governments in Indian Territory. During the civil war, Congress passed legislation—the "Reconstruction Program for Indian Territory"—that allowed the country to break previous treaties with tribal governments who has acted "in actual hostility to the United States" by supporting the confederacy (Trafzer 206). After the war, Indian Territory would never be the same. Not only does *The Wild Blue and the Gray* recover this history, it reactivates the political potential of Indian Territory prior to the Civil War. The novel asks the question: What

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[66] Deloria notes an interesting historical fact that distinguishes the language of these treaties: "The Confederate treaty is the only treaty in which the text actually reads 'as long as the rivers flow and the grass grows.' The phrase is frequently found in the proceedings of other treaties but never in the actual text" (132).

would the *state* of tribal sovereignty be in 1916 if the confederacy had won the Civil War and honored its treaties signed with Indigenous nations in Indian Territory?

Historically, the practice of negotiating treaties with tribal nations was initiated by Great Britain and was continued by the United States well after independence. These treaties still exist; and for the authors discussed in this chapter, treaties both reference the bad faith of the United States government and serve as resources for anti-colonial resistance. Summarizing the history of the dissolution of political agreements made between tribes and the United States, Vine Deloria, Jr., writes that "as military strength of the tribes dwindled through the attrition of a hundred nameless skirmishes, the treaties and agreements began to reflect one-sided real-estate transactions rather than further clarification of the political status of the tribes" (134). Nevertheless, while the settler-colonial state has come to view these treaties as merely real-estate contracts, Deloria insists that the broken treaties still represent the vitality of tribal sovereignty: "the idea that Indian problems are some exotic form of domestic disturbance will simply not hold water in view of the persistent attitude of Indians that they have superior rights to national existence which the United State must respect" (20). Deloria identifies the unfinished business of the hundreds of treaties signed by the US and Indigenous nations.

The Speculative State in The Wild Blue and the Gray: The Pan-Tribal State of "Oklah Homah"

The novel begins in 1916 in the middle of World War I. The Confederate States of America has just agreed to join the military efforts in support of their ally Great Britain. (Great Britain was instrumental in helping the Confederacy defeat the Union

army.) The protagonist of the novel is Amos Ninekiller, a Cherokee fighter pilot who flies for the confederate army. That Cherokee pilots are fighting for the Confederate states is a result of the aforementioned treaty signed by the Cherokee nation during the Civil War. Because the Cherokee nation remains an ally of the Confederate States, Ninekiller is flying for the confederate army against the Germans in World War I. The novel follows Ninekiller as he interacts with both British and Confederate soldiers while he fights the German army in France. As the novel progresses, Ninekiller's missions become more and more dangerous. However, the Cherokee Nation did not send Ninekiller to France primarily to fight in the World War. Rather, the Cherokee government wants Ninekiller to research and report on political developments that occur during the war. The tribal governments in Indian Territory are gauging the political scene to determine if the time is right to declare statehood. Since the Confederacy honored their treaties, the settler-colonial state did not absorb Indian Territory under their jurisdiction after the civil war (as the US did in 1865). Nevertheless, neither the Cherokee nation nor any other Indigenous nation in Indian Territory is fully recognized as a political state equal to the US or the Confederate States; Indian Territory remains Indian Territory. Only now the Territory remains perpetually stuck between two settler-colonial states constantly at odds.

Sanders ends his alternate history with a revolutionary outcome. Ninekiller's reports would prove to be valuable—and correct. By the end of the novel, the Indigenous nations that encompass Indian Territory (including the Cherokee nation) leverage their continued status as governments unincorporated within the jurisdiction of a settler-

colonial state to take advantage of two historic developments—the political instability caused by World War I, and the discovery of oil—to create a new Indigenous state. The novel suggests that if Indian Territory had retained its political status into the twentieth century—a result of either the US not breaking its treaties or the CS being in position to honor its treaties—the tribal nations that comprised the territory would have been in a strong position to seize political opportunities to attain external self-determination. As Ninekiller prepares to leave Europe and return to Indian Territory, Sam Harjo, his military superior, informs him of the news:

> There'll be a new nation on the map of North America, a single, united Indian nation—and maybe it's not much, compared to what we used to have, but it'll be ours…There was some talk of naming it after Seqouyah, the great Cherokee. Then there were some other proposals—United Indian Republic, that sort of thing. But…trust the Choctaws to come up with a commonsense idea. Call the place what it is, they said; call it Red People's Land. And since it was the Choctaw's idea, the convention decided to use the words in their language. Oklah Homah. (190 – 191)

Not only does Sanders imagine a new Indigenous state, in this passage he employs tribal-specific details in respect of Cherokee and Choctaw cultural heritage. Sanders uses his alternate history to construct an Indigenous future by reimagining the past where legal documents, signed between settler-colonial states and Indigenous peoples, were actually honored. Such an alternative history posits a world where international legal norms did not result in the US breaking hundreds of treaties signed with Indigenous nations.

***The Subjunctivity of* The Wild Blue and the Gray**

To better understand how speculative fiction can imagine political and social revolution at the horizon of our here and now, we should turn to the work of Samuel R. Delany, one of the first critics to offer a literary theory of science fiction as a speculative genre. Writing most of his criticism of the genre in the late 60s and early 70s, Delany was especially attuned to how the genre employed literary spaces as stages to promote radical social and political change. In 1968, Delany coined the term "subjunctivity" to explain how science fiction's style governed the genre's content. Delany writes that "subjunctivity is the tension on the thread of meaning that runs between (to borrow Saussure's term for 'word') sound-imagine and sound-image"(43). Delany uses this term to explain how a reader understands how a series of words, such as "a winged dog," relates to reality depending on the genre of the literary text. For example, a series of words presented as journalism are read as something that did happen; as fiction, they are read as something that "could have happened"; and in fantasy they are read as "events that could not have happened". Therefore, when a winged dog appears in fiction, Delany writes "it is meaningless"; and when the same dog appears in fantasy, it requires "merely a visual correction." What distinguishes science fiction, and other similar speculative genres, is how the reader processes the series of words through the subjunctivity of "events that have not happened." By applying the subjunctivity of a speculative genre to the aforementioned winged dog, Delany explains that the reader must actively conceptualize how something that has not happened could happen. For the reader, the resulting "visual correction" of the series of words "must include modification of breast-

bone and musculature if the wings are to function, as well as a whole slew of other factors from hollow bones to heart-rate; or if we subsequently learn as the series of words goes on that grafting was the cause, there are all the implications to consider of a technology capable of such operation" (45). Speculative fiction like science fiction catalyzes a complicated critical inquiry. Delany's definition of science fiction as a genre that operates from a unique temporal relationship between the reader's here and now and the novel's presentation of *events that have not happened* is especially useful for understanding how speculative subgenres, like alternative histories, employ different temporal interventions into the reader's location in history:

> *Events that have not happened* include several sub-categories. These sub-categories describe the sub-categories of s-f. *Events that have not happened* include those events that *might happen*: these are your technological and sociological predictive tales. Another category includes *events that will not happen*: these are your science-fantasy stories. They include *events that have not happened yet* (Can you hear the implied tone of warning?): There are your cautionary dystopias, *Brave New World* and *1984*. Were English a language with a more detailed tense system, it would be easier to see that *events that have not happened* include past events as well as future ones. *Events that have not happened in the past* compose that s-f specialty, the parallel-world story, whose outstanding example is Philip K. Dick's *Man in the High Castle*. (44)

Delany's classification of these subgenres is based on how they enact different temporal manipulations. Such a taxonomy allows us to better recognize how certain decolonial moves are materialized in Indigenous speculative fiction. In addition, when Delany writes that if English had "a more detailed tense systems, it would be easier to see that *events that have not happened* include past events as well as future ones," he opens the door for narrative mediation anchored in non-western epistemologies, such as those found in Indigenous and, as I will explore in later chapters, Chican@ literatures.

Consider this sentence: *Amos Ninekiller is an officer of the Cherokee Flying Corps, a division of the Confederate Army in the Civil War.* How would Delany expect us to read such a sentence? If Sanders successfully employs the subgenre conventions of what Delany terms "the parallel-world story," the aforementioned sentence of Ninekiller's military position would demand that the reader ask a series of critical questions. Why is the Confederate Army fighting in the Civil War? Why is a Cherokee officer flying in support of the Confederate Army? What is the Cherokee Flying Corps? Through Sander's temporal manipulation, the reader is asked to reassess the consequences of an historical event seemingly settled in "American" history. The official history of the United States, which frequently paves over historical forks in the road, is denied the final say over how the Civil War effected everyone on the continent. The subjunctivity of *The Wild Blue and the Gray*, activated by the speculative subgenre that imagines *events that have not happened in the past*, requires the reader to reconsider the political possibilities of tribal sovereignty. Specifically, it asks the reader to imagine what would have happened if the US had honored its treaties.

Indeed, each of the three novels analyzed in the first two chapters of this dissertation ask the reader the same question: how could new Indigenous states be created in the twentieth century? I stress Delany's concept of subjunctivity because these novels don't just imagine new Indigenous states—they imagine *how to create* new Indigenous states. As such, these texts are not pure fantasy. They are speculative texts that engage and shape contemporaneous debates about the role that international law can play in producing a decolonial future.

Chapter Three:

Imagining a Chican@ Human Rights Law: Chican@ Dystopian Fiction from 1990 to 1995

This chapter examines the dystopian ethno-nationalist states that populated the literary landscape of Chican@ speculative fiction from 1990 to 1995. These dystopian texts are at the vanguard of theorizing human rights. In the process of representing ethno-nationalist states as dystopias, numerous Chican@ texts supported a political program to strengthen human rights law while decentering the nation-state as the primary actor of international law.[67] Such a speculative human rights law does not privilege the citizenship of any nation-state nor does it mandate citizenship as a requirement to be protected by human rights law. To develop my analysis on how this era of Chican@ dystopian texts reflected contemporaneous human rights discourse in international law, I focus on a pair of speculative novels: *Sapogonia* (1990) by Ana Castillo and *The Rag Doll Plagues* (1992) by Alejandro Morales. My analysis of *Sapogonia* addresses the human rights of refugees; my analysis of *The Rag Doll Plagues* addresses the human right to health.

As defined by Lynn Hunt, human rights are comprised of three qualities: "Human rights must be *natural* (inherent in human beings); *equal* (the same for everyone); and *Universal* (applicable everywhere). For rights to be *human* rights, all humans everywhere

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[67] Lynn Hunt defines human rights as such: "Human rights require three interlocking qualities: rights must be *natural* (inherent in human beings); *equal* (the same for everyone); and *Universal* (applicable everywhere). For rights to be *human* rights, all humans everywhere in the world must possess them equally and only because of their status as human beings" (20).

in the world must possess them equally and only because of their status as human beings" (20). In *Human Rights Inc.,* Joseph Slaughter unpacks the central tension that limits the enforcement of contemporary human rights law—between the universalism of human rights ideals and the primacy of the nation-state in formalized international law—by recognizing how nationalist literary trends over the last two centuries have shaped the legal norms that would ultimately prevent human rights law from protecting every individual person on the globe. By contrast, the novels analyzed in the following three chapters do not share the "*nationalist* limitations of *our* literary imaginations" that Slaughter presumes of each legal actor (collective or individual) on the international legal stage (324, emphasis mine). Instead, these speculative novels reflect the same utopian vision that Samuel Moyn argues defines the contemporary human rights movement: a legal program that can defend the human rights of any individual regardless of citizenship status and in defiance of nation-state sovereignty.

In his introduction to *The Last Utopia*, Moyn defines the relevance of human rights at the turn of the twenty-first century:

> The phrase implies an agenda for improving the world, and bringing about a new one in which the dignity of each individual will enjoy secure international protection. It is a recognizably utopian program: for the political standards it champions and the emotional passion it inspires, this program draws on the image of a place that has not yet been called into being. It promises to penetrate the impregnability of state borders, slowly replacing them with the authority of international law. It prides itself on

> offering victims the world over the possibility of a better life. It pledges to do so by working in alliance with states when possible, but naming and shaming them when they violate the most basic norms. Human rights in this sense have come to define the most elevated aspirations of both social movements and political entities—state and interstate. They evoke hope and provoke action. (1)

Moyn's speculative definition of human rights captures the revolutionary spirit of universal human rights as an ideal. To strive for this ideal, Moyn asserts that human rights advocates must be prepared to work both with and against nation-states. By "naming and shaming" nation-states that violate human rights, legal advocates can appeal to and embolden human rights law—a strategy employed by NGOs such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch. Castillo and Morales also both employ this strategy.

Sapogonia and *The Rag Doll Plagues* both contribute to and raise the profile of contemporaneous legal debates on how to materialize a human rights law that is able to circumvent the sovereignty of the nation-state while also curtailing the expanding economic and political influence of multinational corporations. These speculative novels often employ different legal strategies than those endorsed by the Indigenous speculative novels discussed in the previous two chapters. This is a crucial difference between the Indigenous and Chican@ speculative fiction analyzed throughout this project: while Indigenous speculative novels published in the early 1990s collectively celebrated the proliferation of new Indigenous states across North America, contemporaneous Chican@

speculative fiction expressed apprehension about the fragmentation of nation-states across the continent. Therefore, in contrast to Indigenous authors, Chican@ authors explored speculative legal and political strategies (such as international human rights law) that transcended the sovereignty of nation-states in order to defend the rights of minority populations.

In clarification of the difference between human rights ideals and human rights law, it is important to stress that Joseph Slaughter's critique of human rights law is directed primarily at what he terms "the international human rights regime."[68] He explains that this regime "comes into being either through formal agreements between sovereign states or as a consequence of state practice; that is, as custom" (24). Throughout *Human Rights, Inc.*, Slaughter focuses on how human rights law has been codified through a complex of human rights documents, instruments and institutions. His critique puts pressure on how human rights law has historically been practiced. In comparison, throughout my dissertation I attend to the ways that human rights law, as well as international law in general, *could potentially* be practiced if international legal

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[68] Slaughter writes that the international human rights regime "comes into being either through formal agreements between sovereign states or as a consequence of state practice. Although it claims to speak for humanity in general, human rights law consists of principles about the hum that state delegations—acting as corporate persons, not as humans—agree to abide in principle. Critics—both those seeking to weaken and those seeking to strengthen the human rights regime—charge that contemporary human rights law lacks the executive, judicial, and regulatory apparatuses that traditionally give domestic civil law the force of law…from an institutional standpoint, international human rights law has little formal immediacy, lacking administrative formations, social structures, and enforcement instruments comparable to those of the modern nation-state" (24-25).

norms were shaped by more non-Eurocentric perspectives—such as Chican@ and Indigenous American voices.[69]

In his 1994 article "The Changing World Oder and the International Legal Order: The Structural Evolution of International Law Beyond the State-Centric Model," Georges Abi-Saab identifies the conditions that enabled the global dominance of the traditional international law by the end of the nineteenth century.[70] Stressing that this universal system was once a regional system, Abi-Saab writes:

> It should be recalled that, at its inception, this system was not the only one contending for the status of international legal order. It had to coexist, even in Europe, with the system of Islam as well as with other existing regional systems with similar universalist pretentions. However, with time, it progressively managed to dispose of these contending systems, either by direct control, via its subjects, of large parts of the non-western world through colonialism; or, for those communities that managed to remain formally independent (e.g. because they served as a buffer between two European empires or to avoid upsetting the European balance of

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[69] To be sure, at times diverse perspectives have participated in the shaping of human rights. The original drafting Committee of the UDHR included Hernan Santa Cruz from Chile, Peng-chun Chang from China, and Charles Malik from Lebanon. And in her book *The History of Human Rights: From Ancient Times to the Globalization Era* (2008), Micheline Ishay tracks the origins of human rights ideals beyond European intellectual traditions.

[70] "The origins of the present international legal order go back to the disintegration of what Vinogradoff has called 'the World State of Medieval Christendom', as a result of the Reformation and the Wars of Religion in Europe. Its traits were fixed in the Peace of Westphalia, which definitively broke away from the formally theocratic character and hierarchic structure of the existing system, invalidating once and for all the assumption—already negated in practice—of the double allegiance of princes to Pope and Emperor, and replacing it by a new egalitarian set-up epitomized in the dictum '*cujus regio, ejus religio*' (each region follows its prince's religion)."

> power), through forced assimilation, in order to qualify as 'civilized nations.' (450)

In this passage, Abi-Saab not only provincializes the traditional international legal system, he recognizes the existence of numerous other systems. One primary characteristic shared by each of the speculative novels discussed in this chapter is how they recover and/or recenter "contending systems" to challenge the *status quo* of international law. These novels document the failure of human rights law to defend human rights ideals—that settler-colonial states continually abuse the human rights of Indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities; and that international law has yet been unable to protect such populations from settler-colonial states. But crucially, these novels do not just critique international legal norms, nor do they outright reject human rights ideals. These speculative texts posit a non-Eurocentric model of human rights that incorporates non-western sources of knowledge and is developed through the participation of Indigenous and Chican@ peoples—producing a literary intervention that is engendered by the world-making qualities of speculative fiction. These novels offer alternative models of human rights at a moment when international law is fundamentally a Eurocentric system. Thus, they can be read as examples of the Indigenous labor diaspora collectively reforming human rights law and international legal norms.

CHICAN@ DYSTOPIAN STATES

Informed by contemporaneous historic events—the collapse of the Soviet Union, the implementation of NAFTA in 1992, and transatlantic celebrations of the Columbian

Quincentennary—Chican@ writers working in the first half of the 1990s produced speculative texts that redrew the political borders of nation-states across North America. While numerous states in Eastern Europe were contending with the immediate consequences of balkanization, Chican@ artists were speculating how a similar process might transform North America. In these texts, the breaking-up of settler-colonial states along ethnic lines does not protect minority populations, but instead creates corrupt governments that control citizens through constant surveillance and rigid social hierarchies. Chican@ dystopian fiction produced during this era expresses a palpable sense of anxiety over the potential reorganization of existing political boundaries in North America. *Sapogonia* (1990) by Castillo, *The Rag Doll Plagues* (1992) by Morales, *High Aztech* (1992) by Ernest Hogan, *The New World Border* (1992-1994) by Guillermo Gomez-Peña and *The Hungry Woman* (1995) by Cherríe Moraga all imagine futures where the current political boundaries of North America have been altered.[71] These "new states" are characterized by national polities officially defined by a monolithic ethnic identity. And in each case, the author posits the ethnonationalist state as a political dead end: Castillo, Moraga, Gomez-Peña, Hogan and Morales all begin their speculative texts with an oppressive ethnocentric government in power of a new state in North America.

Not only do many of the following dystopian texts narrate the balkanization of North America, they explicitly employ the term to characterize their imaginary remapping of North America. In *The Hungry Woman*, Moraga sets her play in the wake

[71] In the first text, Castillo creates a new Central American state; in the other four texts, the United States has been reshaped, politically and/or territorially, by revolution.

of "an ethnic civil war [that] has 'balkanized' about half of the United States into several smaller nations of peoples" (6). Moraga imagines this ethnic civil war as a result of perpetual US imperial expansion.[72] The new separatist nations include Africa-America, the Mechicano Nation of Aztlán, the Union of Indian Nations, the Hawai'I Nation, and the confederacy of First Nations Peoples. However, the revolutionary rise of "Pan-indigenismo," along with the subsequent balkanization of the North America, has not resulted in a utopian partitioning of land. The setting of *The Hungry Woman* is a "postrevolutionary dystopia," a tragic conclusion to a once-promising revolution. Moraga writes that "several years after the revolution, a counter-revolution followed in most of the newly-independent nations. Hierarchies were established between male and female, and queer folk were unilaterally sent into exile" (6). The play begins with Moraga's protagonist—who had previously served as a leader in the Chicano revolt—isolated in prison staring at a mirror, separated from her son, lover and nation. Ostracized from Aztlán by a rigid social system grounded in strict definitions of gender, sexuality and race, the protagonist (who is named Medea) faces the prospect of permanent exile.[73]

Similar to Moraga, Guillermo Gómez-Peña also radically redraws the political borders of North America in his *The New World Border* (1992-1994).[74] Gómez-Peña

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[72] Moraga writes: "The revolutionaries that founded these independent nations seceded from the United States in order to put a halt to its relentless political and economic expansion, as well as the Euro-American cultural domination of all societal matters" (6).

[73] The prison is set in Phoenix in the second decade of the twenty-first century. To emphasize the dystopian qualities of this setting, Moraga describes Phoenix as "a city-in-ruin, the dumping site of every kind of poison and person unwanted by its neighbors" and the traffic of the city as "Blade Runner-esque." She even describes the lighting of the set as "urban neon," noting that "most people look lousy in it" (6-7).

[74] The text was performed as both a solo act by Gómez-Peña himself and as a duet with either Coco Fusco or Roberto Sifuentes.

explains the concept of the performance piece: "the process of balkanization that Eastern Europe underwent from 1989 to 1992 is projected onto the United States: dozens of micro-republics pop up everywhere; the U.S.-Mexico border disappears; Spanglish becomes the 'official' language; the hybrid state is now a political reality; and the ethnic/social pyramid has been turned upside down" (21). Sectarianism has created mafias, essentialist policies have limited artistic production, and the "government-sanctioned transnational media culture" has reacted by producing apolitical and homogenous representations of an idealized monolithic identity.[75] The dystopia of *The New World Border* is characterized by the simultaneous ascendancy—and thus convergence of interests—of both transnational corporations and ethno-nationalist movements.

In comparison to the previous two texts, the dystopian ethnonationalist state in Castillo's novel *Sapogonia* is in Central America. Described by Castillo as "a distinct place in the Americas where all mestizos reside," Sapogonia—the name of the novel's speculative state—has a history that can "be traced back further than 7,000" years. Over the millennia, Sapogonia has been defined neither by a fixed territory nor a static ethnic identity. Rather, as Castillo explains in her novel's prologue, Sapogonia has been "besieged by a history of slavery, genocide, immigration, and civil uprising, all of which have left their marks on the genetic make-up of the generation following such periods as well as the border outline of its territory" (1). By the end of the twentieth century, when

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[75] In 1995, Gomez-Pena would return to similar themes in his novella *Friendly Cannibals* (1995), a text that includes visual art created by Enrique Chagoya.

the novel takes place, the state of Sapogonia is decidedly a dystopian state. As Castillo writes, Sapogonia "had turned into a living nightmare of chaos and the macabre" (254) where the citizens of the state are "subjected to the same horrors day after day, all destined for the same maltreatment, the same theft, whether the deprivation was of food or family heirlooms" (255). Systematic abuses have resulted in a quotidian dystopia.

Ernest Hogan imagines another future characterized by a politically fragmented North America in his second novel, *High Aztech*. In the wake of global nuclear war, Mexico City has emerged as the new hegemonic power of the continent. The dominant political party in Mexico City, which is named "High Aztech," is consolidating power by manufacturing a religious national identity defined as "neo-Aztec." High Aztech plans to reestablish the Mexica Empire through the distribution of a virus that makes carriers a believer of the neo-Aztecan religion. However, High Aztech's goal of disseminating one religion across the globe is thwarted when every other world religion is simultaneously spread across the city via hundreds of rival viruses—viruses manufactured by an international group of artists and scientists, who calls themselves the "Surrealist Terrorist Voodoo Network," that opposes the political agenda of High Aztech. Hogan resolves the global conflict produced by religious sectarianism through a speculative narrative that creates a synthesis of religions from distributing artificially manufactured contagions. Amidst a post-Armageddon setting, Hogan's novel expresses an acute anxiety over the exploitation of religious and racial identities in service of mobilizing nationalism. Thus, the novel critiques ethnonationalist appropriations of Aztec religion, symbology and history. By representing a manifestation of *indigenismo* in the future, Hogan condemns

how political movements across the Americas continue to manipulate and appropriate indigenous identities to impose monolithic worldviews on diverse populations.

Like *High Aztech*, genetic engineering also plays a significant role in *The Rag Doll Plagues* by Alejandro Morales. The third act of the novel is set in a future where the political boundaries of North America have (yet again) dissolved. An economic alliance called Lamex now controls the entire continent. In a dystopian vision of the consequences of NAFTA, signed during the same year the novel was published, economic interests have decided the territorial fragmentation of the continent. Moreover, citizenship is distinguished by three different class ranks: Lower Life Existence, Middle Life Existence, and Higher Life Existence. In Morales' depiction of North America in the twenty-first century, endless pollution dumped into the Pacific Ocean has resulted in a catastrophic consequence: the pollution has morphed into a sentient being that inflicts humans with a deadly disease that kills within days. However, after a cure for the ecological plague is discovered in the blood of *mestizo* citizens living in poverty in Mexico City, Lamex institutionalizes a new form of slavery: in order to have access to the restorative blood of impoverished citizens from Mexico City, citizens from Higher Life Existence are legally allowed to own citizens from Lower Life Existence. Throughout the novel, Morales employs metaphors of blood identity and blood transfusion to critique opportunist or oversimplified appropriations of *mestizo* identity and indigeneity. Again, *indigenismo* is a target of a Chicano novel in 1992.

Each of the aforementioned speculative texts imagines a similar dystopian state. To be sure, these different authors promote diverse and often conflicting political agendas

in their artistic works. Moraga, Gómez-Peña, Castillo, Hogan, and Morales are certainly not a homogenous cohort of writers. But all of their works are similar in that these speculative texts critique the limitations of formalizing ethnonationalism through statehood. By mapping these dystopian states alongside each other, we can recognize a literary geography of failed ethnonationalist political movements. And yet, I offer this speculative map not just as a survey of stymied political aspirations, but also to suggest that each state should be read as a dystopian counterpoint produced by Chican@ authors to serve as a foil for international legal and political movements. To strengthen human rights law and to change international legal norms from the perspective of Latin@ participants: these are the utopian desires that mirror the dystopian visions throughout Chicano@ speculative fiction produced during this era.

SHAME AND EMPATHY AT THE BORDER: THE CRIMINALIZATION OF IMMIGRATION IN ANA CASTILLO'S SAPOGONIA

In the following analysis *Sapogonia*, I attend to the ways that Ana Castillo cites the political conditions that lead Latin@ populations to immigrate to the US and the difficulties that refugees face after crossing state borders in North America.[76] *Sapogonia* documents the abuses of Sapogonian citizens outside of their own nation-state's borders is reflective of a common argument made by human rights scholars in defense of immigrant populations. As Mary Crock writes, "to have real meaning, 'human rights'

[76] In the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, a refugee is defined as someone who "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such a fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it" (40). The US is a signatory of this Protocol.

must be read as an indivisible phrase—not as two words that can be separated according to putative membership of a society. The treatment of the alien *outsider* inevitably impacts on the citizen *insider*" (1054). Crock's assessment mirrors Lynn Hunt's definition of human rights, cited earlier in this chapter: "for rights to be *human* rights, all humans everywhere in the world must possess them equally and only because of their status as human beings" (20). Not only should human rights law protect individuals at all times, each nation-state should be held accountable to recognizing the human rights of each individual within its borders, whether they are a citizen of the nation-state or not. Many of the protagonists of *Sapogonia* would benefit from such a model of universal human rights that is not tethered to citizenship. Thus, Castillo demonstrates the need for a human rights law that transcends the sovereignty of nation-states, not only to protect citizens against atrocities committed by their own governments, but also to safeguard the rights of refugees from the governments of neighboring states.[77]

The dystopian ethnonationalist state in Ana Castillo's novel *Sapogonia* is in Central America. With a history over 7,000 years long, Sapogonia is "a distinct place in the Americas where all mestizos reside."[78] Max, the protagonist of the novel, is an itinerant sculptor from Sapogonia who was raised in an upper-class family. However, as the government of Sapogonia becomes more oppressive and the national economy becomes more depressed, Max's family slowly loses political and economic power—and

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[77] Article 23 of the UDHR states that "everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment."

[78] Over the millennia, Sapogonia has been defined neither by a fixed territory nor a static ethnic identity. Rather, as Castillo explains in her novel's prologue, Sapogonia has been "besieged by a history of slavery, genocide, immigration, and civil uprising, all of which have left their marks on the genetic make-up of the generation following such periods as well as the border outline of its territory" (1).

his privileged life becomes less and less privileged. Tellingly, what Max finds particularly tragic about the increasingly dystopian state of Sapogonia is the homogeneity of life: "My country didn't consist of individuals each making their own way through life, seeking their own fortunes or destined to have none at all. My country now consisted of groups, clusters, large numbers of people" (255). In this description, we see that Sapogonia does not allow for individual expression nor does it guarantee the basic civil and political freedoms of its citizens. In other words, the state (Sapogonia) does not respect the individual human rights of its citizenry (Sapogones). Expanding on his critique, Max comments that Sapogones are "subjected to the same horrors day after day, all destined for the same maltreatment, the same theft, whether the deprivation was of food or family heirlooms." Furthermore, freedom of speech has been effectively abolished: "My country now had one national newspaper in synch with radio and television news" (255). Fleeing from what has become a police state, many of the Sapogones in the novel (including Max) attempt to immigrate to the United States—a nation-state that Castillo characterizes in distinct but similarly dystopian ways.

Castillo also critiques the role that empathy can play in mobilizing readers (or witnesses) to advocate for victims of human rights abuses.[79] In the first scene I discuss, empathy explicitly fails to incite political action when Max witnesses a (fellow) refugee being apprehended by US immigration officials and does not assist the stranger. In the second scene, empathetic feelings expressed by a Chicana for the plight of an Indigenous

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[79] Addressing how Chican@ speculative fiction complicates previous studies on the relationship between empathy and human rights, I will engage work by scholars such as Lynn Hunt, Richard Rorty, Kay Schaffer and Sidonie Smith.

refugee fail to instigate a meaningful relationship (political or personal) between the two characters; despite strong feelings of empathy, the Chicana protagonist, who is named Pastora, is powerless in protecting the Indigenous refuge from deportation. Ultimately, it is only by naming and shaming the US via international legal forums that the refugee is able to defend her human rights and, at least temporality, stave off deportation. Thus, it is shame rather than empathy that protects refugees in *Sapogonia*.

Political Context

Sapogonia reflects contemporaneous debates around immigration occurring on national and local stages across the US. In 1990, Pat Buchanan, a longtime adviser to President Ronald Reagan and a presidential candidate himself in 1992 and 1996, infamously asked, "Does this First World nation wish to become a Third World country? Because this is our destiny if we do not build a sea wall against the waves of immigration rolling over our shores" (Lofgren 350). Buchanan's comments exemplify a strand of nativist rhetoric that was increasingly employed in political debates throughout the US during the 1990s. Buttressed by media reports fomenting nativism with dramatic stories of immigration along the border, conservative candidates with anti-immigrant platforms would gain control of Congress in 1994.[80]

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[80] Reflecting back on this era, Zoe Lofgren—a US Representative since 1995 and a current member of the House Judiciary Committee and its subcommittee on Immigration, Border Security and Claims—claims that "well publicized cases of terrorism and illegal immigration—coupled with opportunistic anti-immigrant political campaigns in the early 1990s—created an environment for the conservative right to adopt changes unconnected to the real challenges facing the nation or the immigration system" (377). Amidst a contentious public debate, writes Lofgren, buttressed by media reports fomenting nativism with dramatic stories of immigration along the border, "conservatives with an anti-immigrant agenda rose to power in 1994" in the US congress (378).

While anti-immigrant rhetoric in national campaigns helped republicans reclaim congressional power in Washington DC, California lawmakers attempted to implement such rhetoric into law at the state level. In November 1994, California state voters voted in favor of Proposition 187. The proposition aimed to deny undocumented workers access to education, healthcare and welfare.[81] Not only were there immediate legal repercussions, there was a rhetorical charge to the campaign that aimed to transform conceptions of national identity. Commenting on how proposition 187 enflamed political and social tensions across the state, Kent A. Ono and John M. Sloop write that the campaign in favor of the proposition "helped to construct a crisis surrounding California's economy and its ethnic diversity" and reminded "migrants and 'natives' alike of the privileges of U.S. citizenship and the lack of such privileges for noncitizens" (4). In August 1993, the anti-immigrant governor Paul Wilson advocated for the proposition by casting immigrants as the primary threat to the social welfare of Californian citizens: "we do not exaggerate when we say that illegal immigration is eroding the quality of life for legal residents of California, is threatening the quality of care to our needy and blind, elderly and disabled" (*Times*).

In addition to engaging nativist rhetoric and paranoia at the national level, Castillo's *Sapogonia*—like the aforementioned student movements against Proposition

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[81] Bobby Byrd and Susannah Mississippi Byrd, editors of *The Late Great Mexican Border*, write: "Proposition 187, a California voter initiative approved in 1994, sought to eliminate government services—such as health care and public education—for undocumented immigrants. Several civil rights organizations filed lawsuits against 187 on constitutional grounds" (146). Reflecting on the legacy of proposition 187, Robin Dale Jacobson asserts that "the sections that produced bitter, protracted public debates and made Proposition 187 a landmark in immigration politics and race relations were those that denied illegal immigrants social services, including nonemergency health care and public education, and required official who delivered public social services to report any suspected undocumented person to the INS" (xiii).

187 in 1994—projects national debates as international concerns. On December 18, 1990—during the same year that the first edition of *Sapogonia* was published—the General Assembly of the UN adopted the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. Commenting on how this legal instrument applies to undocumented workers and immigrants, José Luis Morín writes that the International Convention "calls for the protection of the health, safety, and well-being of all migrant workers and their families, including the provision of fair and equal conditions of employment, freedom from slavery or servitude and child labor, and other basic rights and treatment" (139). However, this convention would not receive enough votes from member states to go into legal force until 2003; the debate over this convention spanned the entire decade.

While legal advocates were campaigning for member states to sign the International Convention, NGOs were gathering vital information in order to document human rights abuses on the US/Mexican border. In 1992, the California Committee of Human Rights Watch released a landmark report on human rights abuses of undocumented aliens perpetuated by US border patrol and other agencies associated with the INS. Research for the report began in the fall of 1990 and was limited to documenting abuses in four states: California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas. "Even with this limited focus," the introduction of the report states, "the findings are appalling. Beatings, rough physical treatment, and racially motivated verbal abuse are routine. Even more serious abuses, including unjustified shootings, torture, and sexual abuse, occur" (1). The report does not just condemn the abusive practices of US agents; the report explicitly

aligns the US with other nation-states that have histories of committing human rights abuses: "The human rights abuses reported here are similar in kind and severity to those about which we have reported in many other countries. Moreover, the response of the US government is as defensive and unyielding as the responses of many of the most abusive governments" (1). This rhetorical move to compare the US with other states guilty of human rights abuses undercuts American exceptionalism and exposes the discrepancy between official US immigration policy and actual border patrol actions. As the report notes, "the INS's high tolerance for human rights abuses makes a mockery of the materials that it purports to use to train its agents" (1).[82] The report also documents at length the unresponsive complaint process that consistently fails to hold border patrol agents accountable for their actions.[83] Moreover, the report recognizes that "changes in U.S. law and policy have led to a climate along the border that is even more likely to contribute to serious abuses of human rights" (4). This report is a paradigmatic example of the strategy to shame nation-states guilty of human rights abuses; and such a strategy of shaming nation-states can be seen at work in Castillo's *Sapogonia*.

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[82] The report specifically refers to language used in the Officer Integrity Course for Border Patrol agents: "The business of the United State Border Patrol is "people". These people come to the United States from all over the world. The Border Patrol Agent may very well be an alien's first and only contact with an "authority figure" while in the United States, especially if he/she is apprehended shortly after entry. How these people are treated will leave a lasting impression of, not only the Border Patrol, but the United States in general" (1).

[83] The report cites six central problems with complaint procedures at the INS: "The lack of a complaint form; the lack of a comprehensive and systematic procedure for informing the public of its right to complain; a low ratio of investigators to total employees; the failure to notify complainants of the status and disposition of their complaints; the lack of an adequate appeals process; incomplete complaint statistics and the failure to publish statistics on a regular basis" (2)

***Reading Identity in* Sapogonia**

The majority of scholarship on *Sapogonia* has focused on how Castillo interrogates the construction of identity throughout the text, paying close attention to her exploration either of sexuality or hybridity in the novel. An example of the former critical approach, Joy Lynch's study concentrates on the protagonist Max's sexual identity, exploring how sexuality "is historically inflected and…symbolizes the displacement of anxieties rooted in encompassing pressures to assimilate within an American population" (122).[84] For Lynch, the consequences of grounding his new identity in gender stereotypes results in an "identity as war with itself, stagnant and resistant to change" (123). In comparison, Elsa Saeta explores how multivocal formal elements of the text reflect the "mixed blood" identities of the novel's protagonists.[85] Allison Fagan makes a similar connection between Castillo's formal choices and her interrogation of identity formation at borderlands.[86] Through her comparative analysis, Fagan asserts that "literature of the border often advocates sustained attention to the instability of identity and history, asserting *mestizo/a* identity as a valorization of the spaces between traditionally conceived binaries implied by nation, race, ethnicity, gender and sexuality." Therefore,

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[84] Employing this critical approach, Lynch argues that in the process of creating a new identity for himself after immigrating from Sapogonia to the U.S., Max "incorporates identifiable markers of a stereotypic masculine identity from his Sapogonian past which further isolates him from others."

[85] In her study of the multiple narrative voices that Castillo employs in the novel, Saeta posits that Sapogonia "explores one of the primary themes of minority literatures: the question of assimilation and the cost to the individual and society of the loss of one's cultural roots." In particular, she asserts that the novel "examines the personal and social consequences of mixed blood which form the core of the Mestizo's search for self identity" (67).

[86] In her essay, Fagan compares two different versions of the novel: the 1990 edition, published by Bilingual Press/editorial Billingüe, and the revised 1994 edition, published by Anchor books (and distributed by doubleday).

Fagan argues that Castillo invites "readers to reflect on the instability common to literary texts and border identity, and her revisions make that instability material" (169). Representing both critical approaches to interpreting *Sapogonia*, Roland Walter tailors his analysis to focus on how Castillo attends to the ways that "borderland experience" simultaneously shapes the gender and racial identity of Max in the novel.[87] Walter concludes his analysis by defining Max's identity as "the alienated and fragmented psyche of a man who sells his soul to the American Dream, (ab)uses women and denies his indigenous roots" (86).

In contrast, Marissa K. Lopez expands her analysis of the novel from inquiries into identity formation to examine Castillo's challenge to presumptions about the role of the nation-state. Lopez argues that through formal experimentation—which Lopez describes as Castillo's "conflations of time and space"—the novel posits "that modern-nation-states, despite their power and seeming inevitability, are, like Pastora and Max, merely a manifestation of external creative and destructive forces existing in all aspects of nature" (160). Castillo marks the very existence of nation-states as impermanent and conditional. By writing that "nation-states are as transitory as ideologies of gender," Lopez refuses to privilege nationality over other aspects of identity in her reading of *Sapogonia*—unlike California Governor Paul Wilson and his nationalist framing of proposition 187. Such a reading of the novel assists the development of my own project

[87] Walter contends that "by focusing on Max…and his affairs with women, Castillo delves into the male and female psyche in order to reveal and problematize not only the difficulties of survival in their borderlands but also, and most importantly, effects of a borderland existence on individuals."

on imagining international legal and political models that transcend the (always conditional) sovereignty of the nation-state.

However, in her analysis of how the novel interrogates the concept of the nation-state, Lopez consistently understands indigenous definitions of "the nation" in temporal terms, locating indigenous epistemologies as pre-modern or even primitive. For example, she reads the nation-state of *Sapogonia* as "an allegory of *modern* and *primordial* understandings of 'nation,' the former represented by the conflicted histories of many Latin American countries whose civil strife and economic woes are precipitated by U.S. involvement in their affairs, and the latter represented by the indigenous ways of knowing that counter these forces" (italics mine, 149). Lopez later reinforces this temporal understanding of indigenous conceptions of nationhood by identifying how the relationship between "Pastora and Max signify beyond the modernist definition of the nation to the primordial" (150). In addition, she reads the formal elements of the novel as "a reclamation of the genre [of the novel] from modernist definitions of the nation in favor of a more primordial one" (152). Lopez relegates indigenous conceptions of the nation to the past—ever fixed in a pre-conquest and non-tribally specific category. While Lopez helps us recognize how Castillo challenges the authority of the nation-state in international politics and law, her reading of *Sapogonia* restricts the options for political and legal change. Lopez structures her critical approach to the role of the nation-state around a binary logic that contrasts indigenous agency and identity to modernity: "Spanish architecture and bodily scars mark Sapogonia; history and western conceptions of time are forced upon it in ways that do not allow them to disappear. Sapogonia can

only demonstrate before history, not become a part of it" (156).[88] Thus her approach limits how we can conceptualize legal intervention by marginalized, non-western actors. The blind spots of her analysis also illuminate why more dialogue between Indigenous and Chican@ studies is needed in order to produce literary scholarship that respects distinct cultural and political interests of both Chican@ and Indigenous peoples.

Narrating the "Precise Moment" when a Migrant becomes a Criminal

Castillo references human rights abuses of migrant populations across the Americas by dramatizing the legal struggles of refugees in the US.[89] Marking the inability of contemporary human rights law to protect migrant populations, Castillo narrates the process by which refugees become illegal immigrants. Referencing the tragic irony of this process of criminalization, Garcia identifies the limits of contemporary human rights law when applied to a migrant worker: "It is at the precise moment where a person, a migrant, whose 'only' crime is to move to another nation to be able to provide for his family the necessary means to live, is simply stripped of his or her human being entitlements and placed outside of the national law, and, apparently, outside of the protection of the current international human rights framework" (407). When a migrant becomes a criminal: it is this "precise moment" that Castillo narrates numerous times throughout her novel. In two important scenes, Castillo demonstrates how literature can

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88 "To be aware of time is to be aware of one's coloniality, as Max slowly becomes throughout the novel. Max only feel this temporal difference; he cannot come to know it until the end of the novel, and so in many ways *Sapogonia* is the story of Max's growing knowledge about the difference between France and Sapogonia, about the distinction between modern and primordial definitions of the nation. Other characters in *Sapogonia* must learn these things as well." (156-157).

89 Commenting on the consistent presence of immigration narratives throughout the author's body of work, Marissa K. López notes that "a constant topic of Castillo's has been the movement of bodies" (149).

represent the ways refugees are criminalized by US law in defiance of human rights ideals.[90]

In a New York bus station, Max witnesses "the precise moment" when a migrant becomes a criminal. Max is waiting for a bus when he spots two immigration officials checking the station for illegal immigrants. At first he laughs at the men, mocking them as "idiots" for thinking "anyone who was undocumented would dress in a native costume" (76). He soon notices the officials approach a man that Max quickly identifies as an immigrant. Max also notes that this man is unaware of the presence of the immigration officials. Castillo captures Max's reaction to the scene:

> A flash of bravado passed through Max's head. He could hurry and warn the man, pretend to ask the time and in Spanish, in a low voice, warn the stranger, who most likely, from appearances, had just arrived in the city and may have spent what was to him a small fortune to get there.
>
> *For an instant of empathy*, Max imagined himself in the role of the ordinary hero, who on any given day extended himself to his fellow man in need because preservation bound all humanity. (77).

Max does nothing and the immigration officials apprehend the man. Crucially, Castillo juxtaposes Max's inaction alongside "an instant of empathy." He briefly feels compassion for the stranger, who he recognizes as "a fellow man in need." And yet despite empathizing with the stranger, Max allows the immigration officials to arrest him.

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90 "The current international human rights framework in the form of treaties, laws, courts, commissions, etc., is becoming rapidly and dangerously obsolete in regards to how it applies to current human migratory flows in general" (406).

In this scene, Castillo explicitly narrates the failure of empathy to produce political action.

Castillo further interrogates empathy as an emotional mechanism for eliciting action from a reader by portraying Max as both a witness and a reader in the scene. As Max passively observes the apprehension of the stranger, he simultaneously reads "Lament for Ignacio Sanchez Mejias" by the Spanish poet Federico García Lorca. In the poem, Lorca expresses his grief over the death of his friend Iganacio, a bullfighter who died in the ring. In the passage that Max reads during the arrest of the stranger, Lorca juxtaposes his own apprehension to being a witness to a violent act and the immutability of violence:

> I will not see it!
>
> Tell the moon to come
>
> For I do not want to see the blood
>
> Of Ignacio on the sand.
>
> I will not see it!

The perspective of the poem parallels Max's desire to ignore the violent arrest of the stranger. But Max will not find solace in "Lament for Ignacio Sanchez Mejias." Within the passage, Lorca recognizes that denying his grief does not change the materiality of his friend's death. Nevertheless, Max does not act—not when he views the arrest nor when he encounters a literary scene that mirrors his own denial of reality. In Castillo's striking scene, Max fails as a witness (of the criminalization of a refugee) and a reader (of Lorca's reluctant acknowledgement of a violent event) to act in defense of the stranger.

That empathy fails to materialize political action challenges contemporaneous literary theories on the relationship between literature and human rights. During his often quoted 1993 Amnesty Lecture on Human Rights and Sentimentality, Richard Rorty famously argued, "let us concentrate out energies on manipulating sentiments, on sentimental education" (176). In this lecture, he promoted the fostering of empathy through literature. Rorty wanted to manipulate readers to help secure the human rights of strangers by inspiring said readers to empathize with victims of human rights abuses. He conceptualized literature as a human rights tool that should produce affinity—not estrangement—between disparate peoples in order to achieve the goals of human rights law. For Rorty, a sentimental education "gets peoples of different kinds sufficiently well acquainted with one another that they are less tempted to think of those different from themselves as only quasi-human" (176). *Sapogonia* offers a different, more critical measure of the productive value of empathy. Max does not respond to his moment of empathy—at the "precise moment" the stranger was criminalized for being an undocumented immigrant—in accordance to Rorty's expectations.

In their study of the importance of personal storytelling for the documentation and persecution of human rights abuses, Kay Schaffer and Sidonie Smith assert that empathy can "provide healing and solidarity among disaffected groups" (6).[91] This evaluation of empathy as a feeling productive of community and identification reflects Lynn Hunt's central argument of her 2007 volume *Inventing Human Rights*: that by imagining

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91 "Sensations, such as embodied pain, shame, distress, anguish, humiliation, anger, rage, fear, and terror can provide healing and solidarity among disaffected groups and provide avenues for empathy across circuits of difference" (6).

empathy, "novels of psychological identification of the eighteenth century" (39) would serve "as the foundation of human rights" (32).[92] However, Schaffer and Smith, unlike Hunt, recognize the volatility of empathetic emotions. They write that "avenues of empathy across circuits of difference" often result in surprising and even unwanted reactions: sensations generated by narratives "can also produce pleasure out of another's pain, turn subjects into spectacle, reduce difference to sameness, and induce exhaustion. While affect offers a potential for change, for becoming, it is impossible to predict how sensations will be channeled into knowledge or practice" (6-7). Schaffer and Smith's appreciation of the unpredictability of (manipulating) empathy is crucial in recognizing the limits of what Rorty describes as a sentimental education. The aforementioned scene at the bus station is so frustrating because "instant empathy" does not produce the very kind of political action that Max himself speculates his "feeling" mandates—the becoming of "the ordinary hero." Max rejects his initial feeling of "instant empathy" and refuses to help the stranger; and yet his understanding of what he should have done reflects that he is indeed a *product* of a sentimental education—he is just not the *hero* of Rorty's concept of sentimental education. The scene is haunting in how it cites empathy as failing to produce solidarity among disaffected subjects, even when Max knows what his role should be; instead, Max's inaction results in the likely deportation of an undocumented immigrant.

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[92] Hunt writes: "Novels made the point that all people are fundamentally similar because of their inner feelings, and many novels showcased in particular the desire for autonomy. In this way, reading novels created a sense of equality and empathy through passionate involvement in the narrative. Can it be coincidentally that the three greatest novels of psychological identification of the eighteenth century—Richardson's *Pamela* (1740) and *Clarissa* (1747-480 and Rousseau's *Julie* (1761)—were all published in the period that immediately preceded the appearance of the concept of "the rights of man"? (39).

Castillo's Second "Precise Moment" when a Migrant becomes a Criminal

In the novel's second act, we are introduced to the female protagonist, named Pastora Vasquez Ake. Pastora is a naturalized US citizen and the daughter of Mexican parents. Her patrilineal side is Spanish while her grandmother was Yaqui. In the novel's third act, Pastora becomes romantically involved with a leader of an organization that aids refugees traveling from Sapogonia to the U.S. The leader is named Eduardo Madero. When he himself is unavailable to assist providing transportation for refugees, Pastora takes his place as a driver to clandestinely bring refuges from rural Michigan to safe housing in Illinois. For an entire winter, Pastora helps shuttle refugees between states. Eventually, U.S. federal agents suspect her and interrogate her activities. She evades arrest, but the agents warn her that if they ever catch her smuggling refugees, the FBI will aggressively prosecute her. Pastora decides to stop transporting refugees for a few months, but when Eduardo next leaves town, the organization requests her to undertake the risk one last time: she is asked to transport Eduardo's wife (Dora) and his four year old child (Eduardo Jr.) to Chicago.

To date, no scholarship has yet paid critical attention to Pastora's attempt to help Dora.[93] Moreover, no study has recognized how Dora herself actively engages international law to publicize both the violence of the Sapogonia civil war and the unfair treatment of refugees in the US. While she may not be a central protagonist of the novel,

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[93] Lopez is the only critic yet to analyze Dora's part in the novel; and she does so by contrasting Dora's harrowing trip from Sapogonia to the US with Max's much more comfortable immigration narrative.Lopez writes: "Max's and Dora's flights from Sapogonia drive home the importance of class and introduce gender into Castillo's analyses of global migrations. While Max is rich, Dora is poor; Max is unburdened while Dora travels with her young child" (158). This comparison primarily supports Lopez's interpretation of Max rather than illuminates Dora's role in the novel.

Dora shares the novel's commitment to naming and shaming states that violate human rights in powerful ways unique to the character.

When Pastora first meets Dora, she carefully observes her ethnic features. Pastora's characterization marks Dora as racially indigenous: "She tried to determine if the woman's warm-toned complexion was darker than her own. Her hair was thick and its ends curled independently around her shoulders. Her eyes were deep-set, not slanted like Pastora's, which held the traces of ancestors who'd travelled thousands of years before in canoes from the tip of one continent to the next" (206). Pastora also notes that Dora's child is wrapped in a blanket that is decorated in "colors used by the Indigenous people of Sapogonia who made their livelihood for centuries through textiles; a pattern alternated with each color, eagle, tree, fish, eagle, tree, fish, air, earth, water" (205). This scene is crucial in understanding how Castillo interrogates ways that Chican@ artists and activists claim (or empathize with) indigeneity. Throughout the scene, Castillo marks a distance between Pastora's own Chicana identity and Pastora's perception of Dora's indigenous identity. By comparing herself to Dora, Pastora marks herself as *less* Indigenous than Dora. Further distinguishing the two women, throughout this scene Castillo does not give Eduardo's wife a name; it is only later in the novel that we learn her name is Dora. In this scene, Castillo refers to Dora as "a woman," "the woman," "Eduardo's wife," "The other woman," and "her passenger" (205-208). Despite having the feeling that "she enjoyed the company of such a woman," Pastora does not learn what Dora's name is during the scene. While Pastora reveals a desire to connect with Dora—to empathize with this undocumented immigrant and her child—a distance between the two

women remains (not the least because Pastora is sleeping with Dora's husband). Thus, Pastora's Indigenous heritage (her grandmother is Yaqui) does not automatically transcend the ethnic and national differences between the two women's identities. Strikingly, throughout this scene, Pastora's desire to *empathize* with Dora is aligned with Pastora's (relative) position of *privilege*: her interrogation of Dora's indigeneity, her assuming "the role as the ordinary hero" as a citizen transporting a non-citizen, her ignorance of Dora's name, and even her romantic relationship with Dora's husband exposes an unequal power relationship within the car. Throughout the scene, Castillo puts critical pressure on the desires and conditions that allow for and, I would argue, empower empathy. A citizen empathizes with a non-citizen; a Chicana empathizes with someone she characterizes as Indigenous. Thus, this scene marks (Pastora's) desire to empathize as a marker of relative privilege within a particular relationship between two women who are otherwise marginalized by the dominant social, legal and economic systems of the US.

While crossing the border between Indiana and Illinois, Pastora and her two passengers, Dora and Eduardo Jr., are pulled over by the FBI. The FBI ultimaley arrests and charges Pastora. She is sentenced to over a year in prison. After Pastora is arrested, Castillo reveals, in a separate chapter, Dora's motivations for travelling to the U.S. While living in Sapogonia, Dora "had witnessed and experienced the debasement of humanity men were capable of." But there was no institution within the nation-state that would allow Dora to seek justice in response to the atrocities she observed: "If she spoke out, if she behaved in any way that might be proven against the new government, only God

could help her" (210).[94] In addition, Eduardo Jr. was starting to become deaf, and Dora through the US would offer their son the best medical support. But above all, it was the need to bear witness that drove her to leave Sapogonia. As Castillo writes, "she needed to talk. She needed to tell what she knew, what she had seen" (211).[95]

While Dora deliberately frames her status as a political refugee, she rejects the opportunity to gain citizenship via marriage to an American citizen. She is not seeking the civil rights of an American citizen, but the human rights that belong to each and every person:

> She had not seen [Eduardo] since he left California the year before when she had asked a lawyer about requesting political asylum for her in the U.S. He told her citizens of Sapogonia were not granted political asylum. In addition, he advised her in such a way that she should know it was for her own good—although none of that he had discovered could be proven—that Dora Sierra Madero was considered by the U.S. as an undesirable. She was married to an American citizen, but she did not want to apply for citizenship. She wanted her status in the U.S. to remain a symbol of the political status of her country. (209)

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94 "Each morning was a new chance for her to think of something to do to end the atrocities; but while she remained in her hometown in Sapogonia, the most she could manage was safety and well-being for herself, her son, and aging parents."

95 "Dora became afraid of the day the rhythm of the new government of Sapogonia began to synchronize with that of the neighborhood's activities. She no longer expected the soldiers who took permanent post on the corner of her street to go away. If she didn't see them in the morning when she went out for milk, she wondered about them. If someone in the community wasn't picked up for routine questioning on a given night, she felt listless at not having an event to mull over the next day" (211).

Dora's insistence on acting as "a symbol of the political status of her country," asserts a role for literature beyond building empathy in advancing the strength and relevancy of human rights law. In a sense, she chooses to be a melancholic emblem of the failure of (her) citizenship to secure her human rights.[96] As a Sapogone, Dora has suffered human rights abuses like her fellow citizens. Instead of replacing her Sapogonian citizenship with an American citizenship—replacing a citizenship status that fails at securing her human rights with a citizenship status could enable her to secure her human rights—Dora refuses to be naturalized as a US citizen, thus producing a melancholic relationship to her citizenship as a Sapogone. A political symbol, Dora incessantly cites the loss of her human rights that were supposedly guaranteed by citizenship. From the perspective of traditional international human rights law, Dora may as well have no citizenship at all. And yet she insists on remaining a Sapogone and a non-citizen—a paradoxical symbol that cites systematic human rights abuses across multiple nation-state borders. Rather than instigating or maintaining "avenues of empathy" in order to produce solidarity with US citizens like Pastora—a Chican@ activists who feels empathy with Dora—Dora insists on marking the very real political difference between two citizenries; or, perhaps more accurately, between citizenry and non-citizenry. In Castillo's narrative representation of human rights abuses, identifying the differences of legal identities takes

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[96] If mourning, as defined by Freud, is the gradual process of withdrawing the libido from a lost object or ideal, melancholia marks the disruption or rejection of the mourning process of substituting what is lost with a replacement object or ideal. In other words, melancholia is a characterization of perpetual mourning. This unresolved grief stops the melancholic from replacing the lost object or ideal, allowing ambivalence and psychic conflict to manifest themselves throughout the extended mourning process. Sigmund Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia" in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud,* Volume XIV, ed. James Strachey (London: The Hogarth Press, 1957), 243.

precedence over mobilizing solidarity via empathy. Thus, we see in the novel that the politics of shaming and naming does not necessarily rely on securing empathy from the reader and/or the concerned (American) citizen; and that marking legal difference can form the crux of arguments for strengthening human rights law. That estrangement and shame can instigate political action at individual and collective levels is an insight provided by both of these examples from the novel—narrative arcs that capture the precise moment when a migrant or refugee instantly becomes a criminal.

Despite being an illegal immigrant, Dora strives for legal agency. And Dora's choice to adamantly remain a political symbol does have some impact. While Pastora was immediately sent to prison, "Dora was released and allowed to return to her family until her trial." Castillo explains that her release was due to the threat of international censure: "This was unusual treatment for such a case, but the government of Sapogonia was careful in this instance not to cause international criticism and planned on treating the Sierra woman with kid gloves. Eduardo Madero was obviously responsible for bringing Dora's case to U.S. public attention" (222). Similar to Gerald Vizenor's use of public opinion in *The Heirs of Columbus*, Castillo identifies international publicity—shaming and naming—as a tool for human rights advocates to use in order to shape international law. That Dora's shaming is more productive than Pastora's empathizing is telling of Castillo's overall interrogation of the role empathy often plays in narratives that address human rights abuses.

At this point in the novel, Castillo has narrated two instances where migrants become criminals the moment they are identified as foreign (non-citizens of the US).

Strikingly, in both scenes, a moment of empathy felt by a protagonist does not protect the non-citizen. Like the previous scene when Max decides against helping the stranger in the phone booth, the scene between Pastora and Dora delimits to the possibilities and limits for empathy to serve as an emotional catalyst to address injustice. Moreover, in these two scenes, Castillo aligns the feeling of empathy with characters in positions of relative power. To be sure, Pastora and Max are rarely privileged subjects in the US; but, in these two scenes, they are the ones in position to lend assistance. Therefore, the novel identifies the ability to feel "instant empathy" or to desire "avenues of empathy" as indeed a privileged position. That Pastora and Max could be in any position of privilege or power complicates our understanding of coalition building. In addition, Pastora's characterization of Dora as Indigenous—specifically, *more* indigenous than her—references how narratives of identification or empathy between Chican@ and Indigenous subjects are all to often built on unequal power relationships. The novel frames empathy not as a means to *securing* human rights, but as an emotional marker of *secured* human rights. I read these two scenes as demanding the reader to interrogate the dynamics of empathy—not to discredit it as a productive feeling, but to locate it as a feeling or desire that is situational and reflective of unequal power relationships.

A Speculative History of the Right to Health: The Function of Genre in Alejandro Morales' *The Rag Doll Plagues*

In *The Rag Doll Plagues* (1992), Alejandro Morales uses the unpredictable spread of viral pathogens as a narrative device to mark universal characteristics that connect peoples across the globe. National and racial differences do not stop the transmission of

infectious diseases; epidemics caused by aggressive viruses reveal biological vulnerabilities shared by diverse populations. I read Morales' novel—which depicts how three distinct pandemics ravage three North American populations in three different centuries—as an argument to revise international standards in order to legally recognize the right to health as a universal human right. Furthermore, the novel anticipates that corporations will supersede nation-states as the principle agents that determine the policies and structures of healthcare systems around the globe. If Morales asserts that healthcare is a universal human right, he targets for-profit hospitals and transnational pharmaceutical corporations as the primary threats to securing universal access to healthcare. Morales' speculative novel is at the forefront of human rights advocacy in terms of the human rights to health.[97]

Morales organizes *The Rag Doll Plagues* in three acts. In each act, Morales narrates the medical response to three different pandemics (or "plagues"). He sets the first act in 18th century Mexico City. Doctor Gregorio has been sent by royal officials in Madrid—the colonial metropole—to find a cure for a mysterious plague named "La Mona." For months the plague has been killing indiscriminately, whether the victim is Indigenous or European. Ultimately Gregorio fails to find a cure, but the virus eventually disappears after years of decimation. At the end of the section, Gregorio breaks off the engagement with his Spanish fiancé and chooses to remain in Mexico for the rest of his

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[97] *The Rag Doll Plagues* offers arguments in favor of strengthening universal human rights that are similar to those Vizenor makes in *Heirs of Columbus*, including the argument that recognizing the human right to health and incorporating non-western participants is crucial to the shaping of international law. And like Vizenor's text, published only one year prior, *The Rag Doll Plagues* employs the metaphor of genetic engineering to interrogate racial identities.

life. In the second part of the novel, Gregorio's grandson, a young doctor named Gregory, struggles to provide general healthcare for residents in his Los Angeles neighborhood during the 1980s. After his wife contracts the HIV virus, Gregory contends with the structural prejudices of the US healthcare system from the perspective of a patient rather than a doctor. When his wife is unable to receive adequate treatment in California, they travel to Mexico in search of humane treatment. The third act of the novel is set in a dystopian state called Lamex, a "futuristic technocratic confederation" that has imposed new borders across North America according to class. Gregory, the protagonist of this final act, is a descendant of the doctors from the preceding acts. And like his two ancestors, Gregory is tasked with finding the cure for a devastating plague—in this case, a virus caused by manmade pollution.

In addition to advancing innovative content, *The Rag Doll Plagues* is formally noteworthy as a speculative text that theorizes how to read speculative fiction: the novel is self-aware about the role speculative genres can play in fostering political subjectivities. While Morales sets the novel's third and final act in a dystopian future, the novel expresses optimism that dystopian prophecies can assist writers and readers to materialize political and legal reform in the present. Morales explores the productive relationship between writing and reading speculative fiction by generating a posthumous dialogue between a deceased man and his grandson via the discovery of the grandfather's unpublished speculative novel. The grandfather is the protagonist from act two, and the grandson is the protagonist from act three. At the turn of the twenty-first century, the senior Gregory writes a novel predicting the eventual quarantine of HIV patients in the

US: under pressure from both for-profit hospitals and transnational pharmaceutical companies, the US concentrates every HIV patient into a privately owned detention center in California. His grandson, who was educated within a totalitarian state, is unable to discern fact from fiction. He does not know which part of the text is speculative and which is historical. However, after finding the speculative novel in his grandfather's long-forgotten library, the junior Gregory becomes politicized. The senior Gregory, via only his speculative novel, motivates his grandson to enter politics and advocate for the legal rights of the poorest class of citizens in the dystopian state of Lamex. By addressing how Morales produces an intergenerational dialogue between two protagonists—characters temporally and structurally separated by different eras and different acts in the novel—I will examine how the genre of speculative fiction supports Morales's argument for universal access to healthcare.

In Defense of Universal Healthcare

The hero of the novel's second act, Gregory, is a champion of universal access to healthcare. Dedicated to serving poor and marginalized populations, Gregory staffs the Santa Ana Medical Clinic in his Los Angeles barrio called Delhi. The *barrio* is named after the Delhi Sugar factory; it was established by the agricultural laborers who once worked for the factory. Early in the act, Morales contrasts Gregory's values with the economic interests of Tremolino N. Trompito, the director of a nearby for-profit hospital where Gregory works at when not at the clinic. Gregory identifies Trompito as "arch enemy" to the "concept of indigent care in the County." In comparison Gregory's work

ethic and devotion to Delhi, Trompito "practices a convenient, power-hungry politics which in the long-run always supported his fellow cronies and above all made him look good" (86). He is even described as "a little Hitler" (87). This relationship between Gregory and Trompito symbolizes different approaches to healthcare practiced by Gregory's local clinic and Trompito's corporate hospital.

In the novel, Gregory marries a Jewish actress named Sandra. While Gregory recognizes "Hitler" in Trompito, Sandra's figure reminds Gregory of "the victims of the holocaust" (77). However, Sandra has hemophilia. After receiving a blood transfusion, she contracts HIV. Much of the second act of Morales' novel narrates how Sandra struggles to receive adequate treatment in US hospitals while also contending with prejudice from both her colleagues and medical staff. For example, while visiting the Orange County Theater, where she previously starred in a wildly successful Chicano staging of Federico García Lorca's *Blood Wedding*, she is treated as "an unpredictable, contaminated animal" (108). When she asks the director of the theater if she can audition for parts in the upcoming season, the director tells Sandra through a half-closed door, "You just don't know about this sickness. Nobody wants to endanger their lives by working with you" (109). After he speaks these words, he closes the door on Sandra.

Sandra receives even worse treatment at the hospital than at the theater. Gregory details her experiences at a UCLA clinic: "Several doctors and nurses absolutely refused to be in the same room with her…they considered Sandra a human scourge, a Pandora's box filled with diseases capable of destroying humanity" (112). Gregory painfully observes that the doctors value Sandra more as an object to be experimented on rather

than a human to be cured. “Sandra was simply a research case, a human disease puzzle to be solved,” Gregory writes. “The endocrinologist and the hematologist saw her as a job risk. Their complaint was that they did not get combat pay for endangering their lives with scum like her” (112). Not only do the staff at the University clinic dehumanize Sandra, they characterize her as an existential danger to humanity. And again, Morales contrasts Gregory with the actions of other doctors, showing that Gregory’s commitment to his community’s health extends to how humanely he treats his patients. Eventually Dr. Milton Flink, a close friend of Gregory’s and the doctor who runs the Clinic in Delhi, refuses to give Sandra any more treatment. Insisting that he cannot administer experimental medication that is not legal in the US, he tells Sandra, “My hands are tied. You must seek help somewhere else!” He adds that her illness has kept other patients away from the clinic “because they are afraid to run into you” (113). Flink cites both pharmaceutical law and public perception as impassable obstacles keeping Sandra from medical care.

Rejected by both the local clinic in Delhi and the hospital at UCLA, Sandra and Gregory travel to Mexico to seek better medical treatment. In the following scenes set in the Mexican village of Tepotzotlan, Morales casts Indigenous Mexico as a site of healing and positions Indigenous medical practices in opposition to the corporatization and monetization of healthcare in the US. Sandra is warmly welcomes by her Indigenous doctors. She ingests a medication called “Nahaultzin’s nourishment” (120), she participates in “the celebration of the energy of Tepoztecatl” (122) and she partakes in a *nahuatl* healing therapy conducted by a local *curandera* while in Tepotzotlan (122-123).

During the therapy, the *curandera* tells Sandra that she "is a special child, a special source of energy. You have honored and blessed me, and I wish that the world outside the sacred triangle of Tepotzotlan will honor and respect you to the end of your journey" (123). The indigenous medicine has a positive effect on Sandra.

While *The Rag Doll Plagues* celebrates Indigenous medicine, the novel also distinguishes Chican@ and Indigenous epistemologies. In these scenes set in Tepotzotlan, Morales revises conventional Chicano narratives that leverage a biological inheritance from Indigenous peoples to access and claim indigenous systems of knowledge.[98] Upon first arriving to Mexico City, Gregory immediately romanticizes the Mexican landscape and Aztec gods. He describes looking out of the plane's window "into a volcanic cradle crowned by Popocateptly and Ixtacoatepetl, two white magical peaks, the symbols of a legendary love affair and the eternal natural sentinels of Tenochtitlan" (114). However, after travelling to an Indigenous village in Tepotzotlan, Gregory proves to be just as ignorant of Indigenous epistemologies as his Jewish wife Sandra. Indigenous knowledge is not accessible to Gregory (a Chicano doctor). Only Indigenous doctors administer Indigenous healing therapies to Sandra (with her permission). While Sandra receives various medical treatments, she and Gregory are treated as guests and not members of the Indigenous community. Furthermore, a doctor named Jane Krauze, who is identified neither as Indigenous nor as Chicana, serves as their medical guide while in

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[98] We can find such narratives in *Bless Me, Ultima* (1972) by Rudolfo Anaya, *The Road to Tamazunchale* (1978) by Ron Arias, *The People of Paper* (2005) by Salvador Plascencia, *The Hummingbird's Daughter* (2005) by Luis Alberto Urrea and *Lunar Bracers* (2009) by Rosaura Sanchez and Beatrice Pita. Interestingly, all five of these novels can be classified as speculative fiction.

Mexico. She instructs Gregory and Sandra about various forms of indigenous medicine. Since neither Gregory nor Sandra speak *nahuatl*, Dr. Krauze most translate for them as they meet various indigenous healers. They learn about Indigenous medicine from a non-Indigenous doctor. And while numerous Indigenous doctors address Sandra, via Dr. Krauze's translation, none ever talk directly to Gregory. Morales does not narrate a single interpersonal relationship between Gregory and an Indigenous character while he is in Tepotzotlan, and he only learns about Indigenous epistemologies via Sandra and Dr. Krauze. Thus, Morales complicates Gregory's identification with Indigeneity by placing several levels of mediation between Gregory and his access to Indigenous epistemologies.

Morales recognizes Gregory's desire to connect with his indigenous heritage, but he also recognizes Indigenous medicinal treatments as distinctly Indigenous—that they represent separate sources of knowledge and reflect different cultural experiences. After all, Gregory, a doctor trained in Euro-American traditions of medicine, shows no intellectual or instinctive knowledge of Indigenous medicine. A distinguished doctor in Los Angeles, Gregory is but a spectator in Tepotzotlan. However, it must also be noted that Morales' depiction of indigeneity remains problematic. Morales does not recognize the specific tribal identity of the Indigenous peoples who leave in Tepotzotlan. He does not even give a single Indigenous character a name! They are only ever referred to as "Indian men" and "Indian Women." In addition, while Morales includes numerous references to the village's Spanish colonial history—especially as a hemispheric center of Jesuit education—he does not cite any history of the Tenechca Empire. The Tenochca

Empire was the hegemonic power that dominated much of pre-Spanish Mesoamericaa in the 15th and 16th century. This empire, often refereed to as the Aztec empire, forcibly incorporated the territory of Tepotzotlan. By failing to recognize specific tribal affiliations and multiple colonial histories, Morales generalizes the cultures and histories of distinct Indigenous peoples. In this single text, Morales successfully problematizes identificatory narratives that cast Chican@ protagonists as inheritors of Indigenous (i.e. Aztec) epistemologies and yet reproduces romantic characterizations of Indigenous peoples in Mexico. Nevertheless, this speculative novel offers an early, if flawed, attempt at critiquing the ethnonationalist myths grounded in Indigenous Mexico that guides Chicano nationalism.

Unfortunately, while in Mexico, Sandra is diagnosed with Kaposi's Sarcoma, and she must return to the US to acquire necessary medication to treat the illness. In *The Rag Doll Plagues*, Indigenous epistemologies are effective but do not hold global hegemony over medical knowledge.[99] Within weeks, Sandra dies at home in Los Angeles with Gregory and her parents at her side. It is only after Sandra's death that Gregory will begin to write the speculative novel that will influence his grandson a half a century later—a speculative novel that will allow his grandson to build upon his grandfather's experiences and knowledge.

[99] Thus, Morales shares Smaule Delany's interest in representing multiple epistemologies without enforcing hierarchies.

NAFTA, LAMEX and the Ascendency of Multinational Corporations

In the third act of the novel, the perpetrator of human rights abuses is not a single nation-state but a conglomeration of states named Lamex. Within the borders of Lamex, Citizenship is distinguished by three different class ranks: Lower Life Existence, Middle Life Existence, and Higher Life Existence. Each tier of "citizenship" affords access to particular territories across the continent; the most desirable land is home to the class categorized as Higher Life Existence. Each tier also prescribes what type of healthcare a citizen can access; the "higher" the citizenship, the better healthcare the citizen is receives. Lamex was formed by an economic agreement made between Mexico, Canada and the US—an agreement referred to in the novel as the "Triple Alliance." This alliance is allegorical; Morales' novel was published in 1992, the same year that NAFTA was signed by Mexico, Canada and the US. Lamex can be read as a speculative embodiment of NAFTA as a transnational economic organization that has transcended the sovereignty of each nation-state in North America. The novel reminds us that nation-states are not the only antagonists to universal human rights. As Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri write, at the turn of the twenty-first century, "large transnational corporations have effectively surpassed the jurisdiction and authority of nation-states" (306).[100] Thus, transnational corporations pose as much a threat to human rights as nation-states.

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[100] Commenting on this phenomenon of the ascendancy of the transnational corporation in our current economic world system, Hardt and Negri caution that this phenomenon should not be read as an unqualified victory of the state by capitalist corporations: "Although transnational corporations and global networks of production and circulation have undermined the powers of the nation-states, state functions and constitutional elements have effectively been displaced to other levels and domains" (307),

In this dystopian future, manmade pollution dumped into the Pacific Ocean has resulted in a catastrophic consequence: the pollution has produced a virus that kills its host within days. As previously mentioned, the protagonist of the third act is Gregory's grandson; like his grandfather, he is also named Gregory. However, unlike his ancestors (Gregorio from Act I; Gregory from Act II), Gregory discovers a cure for the new plague. By transfusing blood extracted from poor mestizo citizens—who have lived in the polluted environment of Mexico City for their whole lives and are therefore immune to a disease born from excess pollution—into the veins of victims of the plague, Gregory is able to heal his patients. But this form of healing via genetic engineering demands blood from the most impoverished communities on the continent. Soon, every rich family on the west coast literally buys poor mestizo citizens from Lower Life Existence living in Mexico City in order to have ownership of (and thus easy access to) their restorative blood. A cure produced from the blood of citizens of Lower Life Existence only benefits citizens of High Life Existence.

The conclusion to the third act does not see the economic inequalities of Lamex resolved. Instead, the class divisions of the dystopian organization are inadvertently amplified by Gregory's discovery of a cure: the poorest citizens of the state become slaves in the homes of the citizens of Higher Life Existence. Families are broken up when individual citizens of Lower Life Existence from Mexico City are forced to move across the country and breed in accordance to specific genetic models to produce children with the blood type most effective at curing (wealthy) victims of the new plague. Because citizenship is not standardized across the nation-state, citizenship to Lamex does not

recognize universal human rights. Advanced medical procedures and treatments developed in Lamex are only available to Lamex citizens in the upper class. In the future, poor citizens of Lamex receive mediocre healthcare, if any, and are readily expendable when a pandemic breaks out across the continent.

Mirroring the fetishization of mixed-race identities by Vasoncelos' *La Raza Cósmica*, the cure for the virus is in the blood of an urban mestizo population in Mexico City. That the cure results in the enslavement of this mestizo population reflects the dangers of nationalist identities grounded in *mestizaje*. Commenting on the novel's conclusion, Manuel M. Martín-Rodríguez asserts, "it is clear that the *mestizaje* described [in the novel] is not the synthetic fusion of all races that Vasconcelos envisioned, but a more destabilizing and irresoluble one" (92). Likewise, López-Lozano argues that the text critiques practices of indigenismo and exposes "the shortcomings of concepts such as *mestizaje* to resolve social inequalities" (94). Arguing that *The Rag Doll Plagues* "refuses to posit the cosmic race as the answer for societies that continue to be divided along racial and class lines," López-Lozano encourages readers to recognize "broader projects of cultural and political transformation" at work in the novel. Throughout *The Rag Doll Plagues* Morales rejects ethnonationalist political agendas while endorsing intercultural and international coalitions. Ultimately, nationalist celebrations of mestizaje all too often obscure economic divisions while erasing distinct Indigenous and ethnic identities.

Through this narrative of selective breeding in service of the healthcare of citizens of Higher Life Existence, Morales marks the economic interests that drive medical research and treatment in a world system dominated by transnational corporations. As

measured by Hardt and Negri, in such a world system, "government and politics come to be completely integrated into the system of transnational command" (307).[101] In our current moment, such transnational command is represented by trade agreements such as NAFTA and the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS).[102] In the future envisioned by Morales, transnational command is symbolized by Lamex: a transnational economic organization (created by the Triple Alliance of Mexico, the US, and Canada) that has divided the continent into economic zones. For Hardt and Negri, the ascendency of transnational corporations, along with the accompanying system of transnational command, effectively nullifies any oppositional political movements mobilized through national identity and institutions: "The decline of any autonomous political sphere signals the decline, too, of any independent space where revolution could emerge in the national political regime, or where space could be transformed using

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[101] Expanding on this idea of "transnational command," Hardt and Negri write: "Controls are articulated through a series of international bodies and functions. This is equally true for the mechanisms of political mediation, which really function through the categories of bureaucratic mediation and managerial sociology rather than through the traditional political categories of the mediation of conflicts and the reconciliation of class conflict. Politics does not disappear; what disappears is any notion of the autonomy of the political" (307).

[102] We can read the novel as prescient of the international adoption of the Agreement of Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS agreement), an economic pact that imposes a minimum requirement for the protection of intellectual property rights on member states of the World Trade Organization (WTO). First drafted in 1994, the TRIPS agreement was a landmark in international law, and all 158 member-states of the WTO have now signed the agreement. The repercussions of the agreement would significantly favor the rights of multinational corporations over nation-states as well as individual people. Matthew Flynn writes that "the TRIPS agreement undoubtedly increases the structural power of capital by establishing an overarching international legal code and juridical structure that favors the interests of transnational firms with large intellectual property portfolios" (4-5). Explaining how the agreement especially restricts the domestic laws of states with limited economic capital (and international political agency), Carlos María Correa adds that the TRIPS agreement "has generated a massive change in the legislation of developing countries, which now provide patent and data protection for pharmaceutical products (i.e. protection on clinical data against unfair commercial use)" (399). In other words, the TRIPS agreement primarily protects intellectual property rights rather than human rights or state sovereignty. Such a consolidation of legal power by a multinational economic organization is narrated in *The Rag Doll Plagues.*

instruments of the state. The traditional idea of counter-power and the idea of resistance against modern sovereignty in general thus becomes less and less possible" (307-308). Thus, Hardt and Negri claim that "a new type of resistance would have to be found that would be adequate to the new dimensions of sovereignty" (308). The novels discussed throughout this dissertation speculate alongside Hardt and Negri what new types of resistance would best contest such new dimensions of sovereignty.

In an interview conducted with *World Literature Today* in 2006, Ana Castillo shares this investment in looking beyond nationalist politics to address "social issues":

> The thing we see today, which we didn't see thirty years ago, is that capitalism is growing and connecting everything in the world to the point where we are seeing globalization. I don't think we can entertain generalizations about a Chicano movement, even with our greatest generalist view about the best outcome. More than anything, I feel globalization is changing everything; therefore, we cannot think anymore about nationalism, about national pride." (621)

It is a striking comment on how globalization has transformed the scope of the types of political movements needed today. For Castillo, they now must be transnational. And in both *Sapogonia* and *The Rag Doll Plagues*, we can see Chican@ authors identifying and struggling with the main challenges of producing transnational movements and systems capable of protecting the human rights of Latin@ populations across North America.

Intergenerational Dialogues

The Rag Doll Plagues is formally noteworthy as a speculative text that actively theorizes how we read genre fiction: the novel is self-aware about the productive role speculative fiction can play in producing political subjectivities. While the novel concludes with a dystopian vision of the future of North America, the novel also expresses faith in the process of reading and writing science fiction. As María Herrera-Sobek writes, "an underlying theme of the novel is the various protagonist's epstemophilic desire. All three male protagonists explicitly state their love for books, for reading" (107).[103] While Herrera-Sobek and Manuel M. Martín-Rodríguez have stressed the importance that all three protagonists are voracious readers and prolific writers, no study has yet focused on the role played by speculative genres in their writings, especially Morales's celebration of speculative fiction in the final act of the novel.

Morales' attention to the process of reading speculative fiction offers the reader a case study to understand the literary phenomenon that Darko Suvin terms "cognitive estrangement." Previously defined in the introduction of this dissertation, Suvin's model of cognitive estrangement addresses how speculative genres productively juxtapose "an imaginative alternative" to the reader's own "empirical" or "naturalistic" experiences. For Suvin, science fiction achieves the effect of estrangement by denaturalizing normative social and political systems, framing common concepts and institutions as constructed and alien. However, if science fiction estranges the reader from the structures

[103] In her essay on the novel, Herrera-Sobek uses Freud's definition of "epistmophilic" as "the urge to know" (106).

and technologies of quotidian life, it also prompts the reader to imagine and scrutinize alternative structures and technologies. Characterizing this critical process in terms of "cognition," Suvin writes that science fiction produces a "cognitive critique" that results in a "dynamic transformation" rather than "a static mirroring of the author's environment" (10). Cognitive estrangement captures how speculative genres instigate a critical awareness of particular historical conditions, simultaneously alienating the reader from his or her everyday surroundings and habits while challenging the reader to consider new social and political systems. Crucially, while the setting and cast of the speculative novel is "radically or at least significantly different from empirical times, places, and characters," these changes are "perceived as not impossible within the cognitive…norms of the author's epoch" (viii). Thus, pathetic appeals—whether via empathy or estrangement or shame—are not the sole overriding rhetorical modes employed in speculative fiction. By presuming economic and social systems as conditional and therefore changeable, cognitive estrangement, a combination of logos and pathos, encourages readers of speculative fiction to critique systematic prejudices and conceptualize structural change. And Suvin stresses that the participatory role that the audience plays when reading science fiction is grounded in logos. Speculative fiction mandates more than just (Richard Rorty's) sentimental education—it spurs logical processes and transformations.

As he researches the plague, Gregory works in his grandfather's library. While in the library, Gregory begins to read speculative novels written by his grandfather. Commenting on the appeal of these explicitly speculative texts, Gregory reflects that "it

was a greater thrill and challenge to read the literary creations of my grandfather, a writer of novels who posited his vision of the future world" (141). In addition, he notices that while reading his grandfather's novels, "I concentrated on history and fiction and discovered very little difference in this oppositional binary that resisted separation" (141). This is an early sign of his reconceptualization of speculative fiction. He is impacted by one speculative novel in particular. Written by his grandfather, this novel offers numerous critiques of medical practices at the turn of the twenty-first century. This text shares the name of Morales' novel: it is titled *The Rag Doll Plagues*. His grandfather's own *The Rag Doll Plagues* confronts Gregory with the ethics of treating sick populations, especially when the population has been marginalized by racist or homophobic policies. From his own perspective in the middle of the twenty-first century, Gregory grapples with the political arguments that underwrite his grandfather's speculative text.

In one section of the novel, his grandfather describes the testing of an experimental synthetic chemical on 1,000 patients with cancer. The chemical is surprisingly successful, and within hours many of the terminally ill patients feel cured. However, as the news of the cure spreads across the hospital, demand for the chemical becomes overwhelming. "Every severely ill patient, regardless of whether he suffered from terminal cancer or not, wanted the cure," Gregory's grandfather writes, "At nine o'clock, the city police and county sheriffs arrived to face a full-fledged riot" (158). Some patients were able to escape the hospital and share the news about the miracle cure to the public. Cancer patients from all across the United States begin traveling to the hospital where the experiment was conducted. Demand for the drug results in widespread

violence, and numerous doctors lose their lives when they are unable to attain to chemical. Soon counter-reports that the drug does not actually work begin circulating in the news, but such reports do not dissuade public demand. Gregory's grandfather writes:

> The citizenry aggressively accused the government and the multinational drug producers of withholding chemicals in certain parts of the world in order to maintain profit margins and in other areas of the globe to control population. As a whole, the population was convinced that cancer had been cured, but political and economic factors out of their control resulted in the medications not being released to save lives. (159)

The passage is a tragic vision of the economic interests of multinational drug companies trumping the health of a national citizenry.

In response to the passage, Gregory is shocked—and he begins to change his perspective on the ethics of medical experimentation and access to health care. His interaction with the novel begins to change his valuation of speculative fiction. Former conceptions of genre—that fact and fiction are neatly separated by genre categories; that genre fiction is for entertainment—become upended: "I grasped my inability to discern fact from fiction. Grandfather Gregory's novel became a history. I began to read exclusively for the pleasure of information and not for the pleasure of entertainment nor for psychological avoidance" (159). As the "novel" transforms into "history," Gregory questions the medical ethics that he has been taught as a doctor and citizen of High Life Existence. The more he reads from his grandfather's library, the more politically aware he becomes of the class hierarchies that divide the citizenry of Lamex. As the third act

develops, and Gregory reads more of his grandfather's speculative fiction, he becomes more outspoken against the segregation of sick/poor patients. At numerous times in the novel, colleagues caution him that he may lose his position if he continues to critique the economic and social policies of Lamex. At one point, needing his research but fearing his political commentary, administrative agents of Lamex sequester Gregory away from other health workers.

In another passage in his grandfather's speculative novel, which was written in the early 1990s, Gregory reads about an "AIDS camp" constructed in 1999 on University of California property located in Asilomar, California. The camp is established in response to a riot that breaks out in San Francisco when "the citizenry" protested the use of public funds to support AIDS patients. Gregory's grandfather describes the scene: "Without warning, the outside community attacked and brutally dragged out to the street every AIDS victim in the Moribundus Support Houses and systematically massacred them" (160). In the wake of the riot, the California state government mandates that the University of California—"which donated [the land] for the right to conduct experiments on AIDS"—to relocate all the state's AIDS patients to a single location in Asilomar. Soon, "the other states followed suit and arranged to help finance a national AIDS settlement as Asilomar," writes Gregory's grandfather, "In one year, almost all the AIDS patients were housed at Asilomar. Those who went underground were given one month to surrender or face the death penalty. The logic behind this concentration camp alternative was that it was the only way to control the AIDS plague" (160). Gregory's grandfather then concludes this (speculative) history of the AIDS pandemic in the United States with

a striking image: “By the year 2003, Asilomar cremated its last experimental AIDS patient” (160).

Referring to the AIDS settlement as a concentration camp, and describing the systematic cremation of AIDS patients, Morales once again employs symbols of the Holocaust to describe atrocities at the turn of the twenty-first century. With these references to the Holocaust—along with earlier references to Hitler and Jewish victims of the Holocaust—Morales invokes the Human Rights paradigm, as the UDHR is frequently contextualized as a historical response to World War II and the specifically the Holocaust. Three events are therefore framed as systematic human rights abuses in the novel: the medical treatment of AIDS patients in the 1980s, Cancer research and the distribution of medicine in the 1990s, and the quarantining of AIDS patients at the end of the 1990s and beginning of the 2000s.

After reading both narratives in his grandfather’s novel—the former a history of a multinational corporation withholding the cure for cancer for economic and political reasons; the latter a history of a nation-state establishing concentration camps to remove AIDS patients from the general population and to conduct experimental procedures, resulting in the mass death of each and every patient in less than a decade—Gregory struggles to process the information. “I tried to convince myself that I was reading fiction,” he writes. “Nonetheless, according to Grandfather, these were actual interviews preserved in the University of California library” (160). And while we, the readers of Morales’s novel, also do not know the “accuracy” of his grandfather’s speculative novel, we do know the prejudice that he witnessed against his wife Sandra. In addition, we are

well aware of the medical disadvantages that faced the Chican@ community of Delhi. Thus, we know that his grandfather's political and social critiques are grounded in experiences—working for a clinic that served a Chican@ community and caring for a wife who was diagnosed with AIDS. After finishing his grandfather's novel, Gregory first attempts to debunk what he just read: "I reassured myself that cancer and AIDS has been cured and that the drugs to cure these diseases were available at any pharmacy, day or night, for anyone to purchase." Gregory's final comments reflect his ideals of universal access to healthcare; but as both his grandfather's and Morales's speculative novels prove, such a utopia has not been achieved for each class of citizen—nor was universal access to healthcare ever a goal for the transnational organization known as Lamex.

As Gregory returns to his Grandfather's library numerous times in the novel, Morales models how reading speculative fiction can spur political agency and critical awareness. In the final passage of the novel, Gregory laments the state of medicine and science, recognizing (and romanticizing) that "in the time of the Aztecs and in his [grandfather's] time, scientists were heroes. Now, no specific heroes were allowed to exist. We were all caught in the asymptote of knowledge, never quite touching the perfection humanity pursued" (182). But Gregory, surrounded by his grandfather's books, also notices a striking change in his own conception of his family history, temporality and politics: "I am no longer me. I am transfigured into all those that have gone before me: my progenitors, my hopeful ever-surviving race. From the deepest part of my being there rushes to the surface of my almond shaped eyes an ancient tear" (200).

On the one hand, Gregory's transformation is limited to only Gregory: in the future, he is one of the last humans on earth that still reads books. On the other hand, his grandfather's novel has successfully persuaded Gregory to imagine a social system alternative to the hierarchal structure of Lamex. At the end of the novel, Gregory becomes the director of the political and paramilitary sectors of El Mar de Villas, a sector of Lamex dedicated to the reform of the Triple Alliance and the representation of poor Mexican citizens. Thus, Morales' novel promotes speculative fiction itself as a possible decolonial tool. By writing the ending of *The Rag Doll Plagues* as a figurative guide to reading speculative fiction, Morales encourages us to seek out similar speculative texts. In the next two chapters, I will recover contemporaneous Chican@ texts that, at the end of the twentieth century, offer utopian visions of North America as models for political and legal reform.

Chapter Four: Aztech Neo-Nationalism:

Speculative *Indigenismo* and the Politics of Appropriation in Ernest Hogan's *High Aztech* and Gary D. Keller's *Zapata Rose in 1992*

Throughout this era of speculative fiction, Chicano@ artists not only projected international political movements into the future, but they also interrogated the way Chican@ literary and political projects have historically appropriated Aztec cultural symbols and religious systems. In the following two chapters, I will attend to Chican@ authors' increased scrutiny of cultural appropriation by examining how they (re)align their literary texts with the political and cultural interests of Indigenous peoples. During this remarkable boom of speculative fiction production, broad political alliances were imagined across national, ethnic and cultural divisions. Crucially, these alliances were promoted *not* to transcend distinct identities (national, ethnic or cultural) but rather to produce international political and legal models capable of securing the rights of any number of collective and individual subjects.[104]

To address how Chican@ speculative fiction critiques politically motivated appropriations of indigeneity during this era, I analyze passages from *High Aztech* (1992) by Ernest Hogan and *Zapata Rose in 1992* (1992) by Gary Keller. Hogan and Keller cast national political parties, both of which appropriate Aztec history in order to manufacture

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[104] This insight helps us understand a vital contribution to the theorizing of universal human rights by Chican@ speculative fiction over the last quarter of a century: Chican@ authors have increasingly written speculative texts that recognize universal human rights held by every person, but that also honor the distinct political and cultural interests of collective groups such as Indigenous peoples. Thus their texts offer a model of human rights that respects collective rights in addition to individual rights.

a nationalist identity, as the antagonists of their speculative texts. Each author also recovers histories of violence perpetrated by multiple imperial and national powers—Spanish, Mexican and/or Indigenous—and thus complicates literary generalizations of European and Indigenous political and cultural histories. That this chapter addresses genealogies of appropriation demands that I employ a critical approach that attends to the problematic ways Chican@ writers have historically claimed or romanticized indigeneity in their literary texts. To anchor such an approach, I turn to recent work by scholars such as Domino Perez, Rafael Perez-Torres, and Nicole Guidotti-Hernández to guide my readings of how these texts critique (and at times continue) practices of exploiting Indigenous heritage for political or legal gain.

AZTEXTS IN THE 20TH CENTURY

There is a long literary history of Chican@ authors positioning Chican@ protagonists as inheritors of Aztec culture and religion. This move grants protagonists access to Indigenous epistemologies and (further) legitimizes claims to territory colonized by European settler-colonial states. Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzales's epic poem *I am Joaquin*, published in 1967, offers an early example of how Chican@ authors aligned contemporaneous Chican@ identity (which privileged male nobility) with an Indigenous empire (more mythic than historically accurate) grounded in Aztec and Mayan cultural symbols and religious icons. As Domino Perez writes, this literary move to ground Chican@ political and social systems in Indigenous epistemologies all too often conflates distinct Indigenous identities across both geographic and temporal distances:

> [*I am Joaquin*] extends Aztec hegemony into that particular moment, while also replacing it with what is best described as an "Aztext," a matrix of Aztec, Mayan, and Mesoamerican iconography, mythohistory, and symbology. The absence of a specific tribal history, oral and/or written, allows for the Aztext to serve as an ever-evolving, romantic, fictional placeholder for an Indigenous past, a palimpsest that writes over and further obscures the individual tribes subsumed by and outside of the Aztec empire. (491)

The "Aztext" erases differences between Indigenous peoples while temporally relegating such peoples to a nostalgic past. Aztexts also tend to conflate political identity with ethnic identity, the most iconic manifestation of this later move being the conceptualization of Aztlán. By using Perez' term "Aztext" to categorize these speculative texts, I am able to locate them within a particular genealogy of Chican@ literature. I employ this term to pay critical attention to the ways that Chican@ speculative fiction from this era simultaneously critiques acts of appropriation and appropriates Indigenous sources. On the road to mobilizing international political movements, how does the author contend with this legacy of Chican@ literary texts and political programs that erase and/or generalize about distinct Indigenous nations and cultural practices? In other words, how do Hogan and Keller—among a cohort that includes Castillo, Morales, Jesus Salvador Treviño, Cherrie Moraga, and Guillermo Gomez-Peña—reproduce and/or critique previous acts of appropriation by Chican@ authors?

For many artists and activists that participated in the Chicano Movement, the symbol of Aztlán serves as a territorial manifestation of cultural and ethnic inheritance to pre-conquest Indigenous peoples. Aztlán became a powerful symbol in the Chicano Movement after the drafting of El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán at the National Chicano Youth Liberation Conference in March of 1969.[105] Held in Denver, Colorado, the Chicano Youth Conference was organized by the Crusade for Justice, a civil rights organization led by Corky Gonzalez (author of *I am Joaquin)*. El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán would be the primary legacy of this conference. Informed by the rhetoric of Alturista, a young Chican@ poet who attended the conference (Navarro 337), the opening passage of El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán states:

> In the spirit of a new people that is conscious not only of its proud historical heritage, but also of brutal "Gringo" invasion of our territories: We, the Chicano inhabitants and civilizers of the northern land of Aztlán, from whence came our forefathers, reclaiming the land of their birth and consecrating the determination of our people of the sun, declare our power, our responsibility, and our inevitable destiny. (El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán)

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[105] Commenting on the legacy of the Chicano Youth Liberation Conference and El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán in 1969, Aramando Navarro writes: "For [Corky] Gonzales, the conference served to further his quest to become the leader of the Movimiento. While El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán was a powerful manifesto on cultural nationalism, it lacked detail or specifics on how to create Aztlán. As a manifesto, it was so nebulous that it raised issues related to gender, class, and the Indigenous people of the Southwest, and was unclear about what geographically constituted Aztlán. Nevertheless, its impact was significant and served to energize various aspects of the Movimiento's politics. As a result, *Chicano* came into vogue and increasingly *Mexican American* was regarded as passé in the lexicon of most activists" (338).

Aztlán, according to Mexica (Aztec) mythology, references the Mexican homeland. Aztlán is the geographic region from which the Mexica peoples left to migrate southward in the 9th century to Tenochtitlan in the central plateau of Mexico (Perez-Torres 57; Lopez 209).[106] This is the Aztlán that El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán claimed.

Since the National Chicano Youth Liberation Conference, Aztlán has come to represent multiple facets of Chican@ identity in a single symbol. As Rafael Perez-Torres asserts, "the ideas embodied in Aztlán draw together geography, culture, history, genetics, migration, tradition, heritage, unity, authenticity. It crystalizes in one term the history of dispossession endured by Mexicans, Mexican-Americas, and Chicanos alike" (57). Therefore, Aztlán has been asked to bear the weight of not only representing a complex heritage of dispossession, but also resolving any number of tensions that result from the multiple social, cultural and political histories that have come to shape Chican@ identities. Simultaneously representing a singular history of dispossession of the Mexica homeland as well as the various histories of settler-colonial territorial conquests across the southwestern United States, Aztlán functions as a rather vague geographic marker.[107] Indeed, as Daniel Cooper Alarcón documents in *The Aztec Palimpsest* (1997), historians have been unable to locate the exact location of Aztlán. Research places the territory in numerous locations all across the continent—such as present day Arizona, Florida, and even Wisconsin.

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[106] Tenochtitlan was located where present-day Mexico City stands.

[107] In an example of how Aztlán represents an array of US territorial conquests, Luis Leal notes that Aztlán has two meanings, one symbolic and the other geographic. For Leal, Aztlán "Represents that geographic region known as the Southwest of the United States, composed of the territory that Mexico ceded in 1848 with the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo" (7). There is no mention of the Mexica in this territorial claim.

Chicano nationalism never produced a consensus vision of Aztlán. As Perez-Torres explains, two different strands of nationalism—cultural and political—contested the meaning of Aztlán: "The tensions between the locally political and the universally cultural form one of the fault lines that runs through the terrain of early Chicana cultural articulations," and Aztlán became "the hotly disputed terrain on which either one or another type of nationalism was ostensibly founded" (63). It should come as no surprise then that most appraisals of Aztlán as a mobilizing force for political and/or cultural self-determination remain undecided on the ultimate success of the move to foreground the reclamation of the Mexica homeland. As Armando Navarro remarks, "if the goal was Aztlán, it was never effectively addressed as how it was going to be achieved; nor did it explain the nature of political, economic, or social systems that would ensue as an alternative to liberal capitalism" (317). The symbol of Aztlán did not elucidate how Chican@s could instigate the structural change of dominant political and economic systems—not only to defend the interests of local communities but also to challenge hegemonic systems across the continent. Similarly, Mario Barrera argues that "While El Plan de Aztlán stated the goal of ethnic nationalism in a forceful manner, the exact form that nationalism should take was nowhere spelled out…a clear statement of the eventual relationship of Chicanos to the political system of the United States never emerged" (4). Ylanda Alaniz and Megan Cornish echo these statements by Navarro and Barrera when they ask a series of questions about the definition of Aztlán: was it "an assertion that a nation truly existed? Was it an emblem spawned by cultural nationalism? Or was it simply a metaphor to stimulate Chicana/o solidarity through pride in the Indian part of

their Mestizo heritage?" Aztlán may have emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s as a potent symbol of Chicano nationalism, but it never stood for a single political platform. When scholars of Chican@ studies look back at the legacy of Aztlán, they acknowledge that it was never clear what the mandate of Aztlán was.[108]

Like fiction authors writing during the Chicano Movement in the 1960s and 1970s, Chican@ authors of speculative fiction in the 1990s incorporate Aztec and Mayan mythohistories in literary texts that make political claims in defense of Chican@ communities. But the Aztexts that these authors produced in the last decade of the 20th century—unlike previous Chican@ texts that leveraged the mythohistory of Aztlán to argue for ethno-nationalist political movements—imagined ethno-nationalist states as dystopias. Chican@ speculative fiction in the 1990s never found solace in Aztlán as an imaginary placeholder for an ethno-nationalist state. This certainly does not mean their texts were not politically charged; nor does it mean that for Chican@ speculative fiction Aztlán had lost political value. Instead, the speculative texts, analyzed in this chapter, represent a significant change in scope for political reform advocated by Chicano authors. The decolonial horizons of these speculative (Az)texts are not national, but international. Such Aztexts repurpose Aztec and Mayan symbology not to create a new nation state but

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[108] Nevertheless, some did indeed read Aztlán as a call for secession. Armando Rendon, in his *Chicano Manifesto* (1971), demands a Chicano nation-state: "The concept of Aztlán is undergirded by a desire for restitution of the land of Aztlán. The Chicano does not wish for have merely an empty dream. Just as for other displaced peoples in the world's history, the cry for the land is keen in our ears; we, too, have had title to the land which was violently taken from us. Geography and culture make the vision of a new state for the Chicano not quite so wild an idea; the direct roots we have sunk into the land can burgeon once more…If we seek an irredentist solution—a Chicano state between the United Sates and Mexico—would that be the best means of liberating ourselves? (309). This passage is clear example of how Aztlán, after El Plan, was viewed as a call for political separatism.

to shape new international legal and political coalitions.[109] In other words, Aztlán is not a symbol of national decolonization, but of continental (or even global) decolonization.

In these Chicano texts, we see how imagining decolonization on an international scale requires a critical assessment of how Chicano ethno-nationalism marginalizes Indigenous peoples. Thus, I identify two defining characteristics of Aztexts from the 1990s: each text defends the distinct political and cultural rights of diverse minority populations and Indigenous peoples; and each text criticizes Chican@ literary texts and political programs that romanticize and generalize the distinct cultures and histories of Indigenous peoples. To be sure, many of the utopian texts that I discuss in the following two chapters offer problematic examples of Chican@ authors appropriating Indigenous sources. These Chican@ speculative texts include progressive and regressive strategies toward building political coalitions with Indigenous peoples. But this era is not the pinnacle of a literary trend. Rather, this era of speculative fiction is a critical turning point: as the scope of decolonization shifted from an ethno-nationalist to an international model, Chican@ authors increasingly scrutinized the production and celebration of Aztexts in order to better respect the cultural and political distinctions of Indigenous peoples. With this shift in political scope, the speculative texts produced during this era interrogate how literary and political texts claim Indigenous epistemologies and iconographies in service of Chican@ communities. The aim of this chapter is to note

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[109] These speculative texts are more invested in establishing universal values than justifying ethnic-separatism; they are more engaged in reforming universal human rights by drawing from non-western sources than accepting human and civil rights preordained by Euro-American institutions.

significant changes that developed in the 1990s in how Chican@ authors draw from and/or align their texts with Indigenous sources.

Many of these authors addressed in this study cite the practice of *indigenismo* by nation-states across the hemisphere as an exploitative and even destructive political campaign. Peter Wade, in *Race and Ethnicity in Latin America,* defines the history of and motivation behind national campaigns of *indigenismo* in the 20th century:

> From the 1920s, the Indian became a prime symbol of national identity in countries such as Mexico and Peru: both countries created government departments for Indigenous affairs, while Peru recognized the "Indigenous community" as a legal entity and Mexico created academic institutions dedicated to the study of Indigenous peoples. In Brazil, an agency was set up in 1910 for the "protection of the Indians." This, in broad terms, was the ideology of *indigenismo*. This term covers a variety of perspectives, but the central notion was that Indians need special recognition and that special values attached to them. Very often, it was a question of exotic and romantic symbolism, based more on the glorification of the pre-Columbian Indian ancestry of the nation than on respect for contemporary Indian populations. Thus, the reality was often one of continued discrimination and exploitation. In addition, the future was generally envisioned as being integrated and mestizo in colour" (32).

That Indigenous peoples exist in the futures imagined by many of these authors—i.e. Moraga, Gómez-Pena, Morales, Hogan, Castillo, and Keller—is in itself a significant

challenge to national campaigns of *indigenismo*. Speculative texts such as Morales' *The Rag Doll Plagues,* Hogan's *High Aztech*, and Keller's *Zapata Lives!* critique how nationalist political parties employ the rhetoric of *indigenismo* to manufacture a national identity. Keller even specifically identifies how the Institutional Revolutionary Party (the Partido Revolucionario Institucional, PRI) historically employed the rhetoric of *indigenismo*—and incorporated the figure of Emiliano Zapata in this perpetual campaign aimed at manufacturing a national identity—ever since the end of the Mexican Revolution. Indeed, the primary antagonists of all three of these novels are governments based in Mexico that exploit the ideology of *indigenismo*.

In addition to explicitly critiquing *indigenismo*, this era of speculative fiction is also noteworthy for how Chican@ authors reference the violent histories of pre-Columbian Indigenous empires. Many of the speculative texts produced between 1990 and 1995 do not gloss over violent histories nor do they presume imperial expansion as solely a European political goal. At the beginning of Hogan's *High Aztech*, the Aztec empire is re-emerging as the dominant hegemonic force in the region and Tenochtitlan is the capital of a repressive and authoritarian government in power during the year of 2045. In her prologue to *Sapogonia*, Castillo offers a brief summary of the 9,000 year history of Sapogonia, a fictional Central American country, where "slavery, genocide, immigration, and civil uprisings, all of which have left their marks on the genetic make-up of the generation following such periods as well as the border outline of its territory" (1). And in *Friendly Cannibals* (1995)—a text not analyzed at length in this dissertation—the violence of the Aztec empire is dramatized in both the prose of the narrative, written by

Gomez-Pena, and the accompanying paratextual pictures, illustrated by Enrique Chagoya. Each of these texts marks pre-Columbian empires as oppressive and violent. In other words, these texts characterize empires as empires. Furthermore, throughout Chican@ speculative texts from this era, ethno-nationalist movements are not immune from reproducing the violent campaigns of European *and* Indigenous empires.

While different, and often competing, political and cultural programs have historically employed the concept of Aztlán, it has always been a speculative text. Any imaginative recovery of Aztlán—in literature, in speech, in history, in visual art—orients the audience towards the future. Again, the opening passage of El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán states: "We, the Chicano inhabitants of the northern land of Aztlán…declare our power, our responsibility, and our inevitable destiny" (El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán). Ignacio M. Garcia's reading of Aztlán is exemplary of the utopian impulse that underwrites many manifestations of Aztlán. For Garcia, Aztlán is "a social, political, economic, and cultural utopia, free of liberal politicians, welfare programs, police brutality, discrimination, poverty, and identity crises" (18). Elyette Andourd-Labarthe's embrace of Aztlán as a potent symbol is no different: "In Aztlán, past and future mingle to give impetus to the present. Aztlán is the spiritual elixir which gives courage and unity to a scattered people spent by their wanderings" (80). However, in this example from 1990, Labarthe shockingly brushes aside hemispheric and global political developments to focus exclusively on racial inheritance when measuring the value of Aztlán at the end of the century:

> Geo-political preoccupations have vanished to give way to a geopoetic that generates ever-renewed talent. The territory is nowhere and everywhere at the same time, its geography is ubiquitous, its actual location doesn't matter much as long as it inhabits the imagination and is there to stay. The myth of Aztlán remains in the mind of each Chicano as an instantaneous reserve of history, a rich potential which can be drawn nearer or held at a distance according to his needs. (83)[110]

In this passage, Labarthe double-downs on Aztlán as a symbol of an internal (i.e. biological or racial) identity. By minimizing the geo-political factors that shaped Aztlán as a political symbol produced *by* activists and artists during the Chicano Movement, Labarthe further romanticizes Aztlán as an ahistorical marker of identity. And if the "actual location" of Aztlán may not be important for Lebarthe, it certainly is for the Indigenous peoples across the Southwest who continue to defend their specific territorial claims. Similar to Labarthe, Luis Leal also looks inward to locate Aztlán. For Leal the geographic location of Aztlán is immaterial: "What interests us is not determining where Aztlán is found, but documenting the rebirth of the myth of Chicano thought" (9). He ends the essay with this claim: "That is the way it must be for all Chicanos: whosoever wants to find Aztlán, let him or her look for it, not on the maps, but in the most intimate part of his being" (13). Commenting on this approach towards locating Aztlán *within* the (Chican@) individual, Perez-Torres critically notes that Leal's "historical perspective

[110] Labarthe also writes: "The stolen word returned is alive and kicking in Chicano literature and art, where it still nourishes the imagination of poets, novelists and painters more than fifteen years later, serving as a priceless symbol of a host of researchers, critics and publishers, long after the weary warriors or the Movimiento abandoned it."

quickly dissolves, however, into a more essentialized and reified notion of Aztlán … Aztlán ceases to exist except as a vague search for spiritual centering" (66). Leal's rhetoric measures cultural and political identity via biology, collapsing the Indigenous labor diaspora across the Southwest into a single racial identity. He seemingly ignores, like Labarthe, the numerous political and cultural systems that have comprised the Indigenous labor diaspora over that last 500 years of colonization.

Like Leal and Labarthe, many of the authors in the next two chapters explore the utopian qualities of Aztlán as a symbol. But unlike Leal and Labarthe, these authors are skeptical of ethnocentric claims to Indigenous sources and epistemologies made by Chican@s—whether manifested externally in a state or internally, as Leal writes, "in the most intimate part of his being." Instead, these authors produce prophetic visions of Aztlán (and other Aztexts) in order to advocate for international political and legal reform that exceeds the interest of a single ethnic identity. And crucially, they mark their Aztexts—and all Aztexts—as always conditional: that they are manufactured by political and cultural needs and desires particular to the historical moment when they are created.

ERNEST HOGAN'S *HIGH AZTECH*: IMAGINING A THIRD WORLD UNITED NATIONS

In his 1992 novel, *High Aztech*, Hogan imagines a future in the middle of the twenty-first century characterized by a politically fragmented North America. In the wake of global nuclear war, which began in the Middle East due to religious sectarianism, Mexico City (now once again named Tenochtitlán) has emerged as the new hegemonic power of the western hemisphere. In Hogan's novel, "High Aztech" is the name of a

Mexican political party (which doubles as a religious organization). At the beginning of the narrative, High Aztech consolidates political power by appealing to a religious identity referred to as "neo-Aztec." The party attempts to manufacture nationalism through the revivalism of Aztec religious practices and symbols. And the agenda of this political party is explicitly colonial; High Aztech wants to reestablish the Mexica Empire. Amidst this post-Armageddon setting, Hogan's novel dramatizes how nationalist movements across the Americas have consistently manipulated and adopted Indigenous religious iconography and ceremonies to impose monolithic worldviews on diverse populations—a manifestation of *indigenismo* in the future. The title *High Aztech* refers to the main antagonist of the narrative and represents the importance Hogan places on critiquing political appropriations of indigeneity that service nationalist agendas.

Hogan published his first short story, "The Rape of Things to Come: The Black Side of Race Relations on the Moon," in the March 1982 edition of *Amazing Stories*. In a short biography that Hogan wrote to accompany the story, the author explains why he is drawn to speculative genres: "Part of the reason why a lot of what I do (off paper as well as on) turns out science fiction is because it's so easy for me to identify with aliens and mutants. I'm racially ambiguous. Being a Chicanoid polluted with Black Irish genes, I'm more mutant Mex than Futuro-Africoid, and look like that brown, mongrelized Third World/United Nations nightmare that ruins the sleep of so many klansmen." Science fiction provides Hogan with a literary forum to understand and articulate his complex

cultural identity.[111] Furthermore, by imagining a "brown, mongrelized Third World/United Nations nightmare," Hogan opposes a white supremacist institution with an international institution. In his short phrase, he both universalizes the Third World and aligns an ethnic identity with the UN; his Third World/UN is as racially inclusive as it is threatening to white supremacy. By confronting the reader with a conception of the United Nations in the image of the Third World, Hogan identifies the Third World as a source for universal values and identity. The juxtaposition—a "third World/United Nations nightmare"—offers us a dynamic image with which we can ground a critical approach to understand much of Hogan's work including *High Aztech*.

If an ethno-nationalist political party is the antagonist of Hogan's *High Aztech*, then an international terrorist organization emerges as the protagonist of the novel. Named the Surrealist Terrorist Voodoo Network, the novel's heroic international organization serves as a "Third World/UN" in defense of minority populations from ethno-nationalist governments. Indeed, *High Aztech* offers a narrative of how non-state actors can advance political goals and defend human rights via global coalitions. At the end of the novel, Hogan's "mongrelized Third World/United Nations nightmare that ruins the sleep of so many Klansmen" will begin to materialize in Tenochtitlán/Mexico City in the middle of the twenty-first century.

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[111] Hogan continues: "This all leaves me with no culture that I can really call me own, so I have no choice but to tear bits and pieces of my environment (Southern California, a large-scale, drive-thru collage) and reassemble them into my own culture. Some of these pieces are science fiction (real sf as well as cheap sci-fi), surrealism (I was a teenaged dadaist), comics (both over and underground), Warner and Fleischer Brothers cartoons, American music (ragtime, blues, rock, Big Band, even New Wave), all kinds of freako movies, Henry Miller, Jerry Cornelius, Hunter S. Thompson, assorted warmedover psychedelia, shopping malls, amusement parks and much, much more!" (40).

Xólotl Zapata is the novel's main character. Hogan identifies Zapata as *mestizo*.[112] Moreover, he shares the surname of Emiliano Zapata—the famous *mestizo* leader who fought for the land rights of poor *mestizo* and Indigenous communities during the Mexican Revolution. By naming his protagonist after Zapata, Hogan explicitly aligns his protagonist's politics with a historical (*mestizo*) revolutionary who is often considered a champion of Indigenous culture and political interests. And yet, while his last name cites the famous Emiliano, Xólotl Zapata's first name references Aztec religion: in the novel, Xólotl is the name of an Aztec god.[113] Hogan explains that Zapata's father ("his papátal") named his son Xólotl as a result of the neo-Aztecan social trend that has increasingly gripped the Mexican nation since the early twenty-first century. Therefore, within the context of the novel's social world, Zapata's first name is less a claim to authentic indigeneity and more a sign of stylish appropriation. Within a single name, Hogan both evokes the history of Emiliano Zapata, a *mestizo* man who fought for land reform in favor of Indigenous peoples, and critiques how a *mestizo* character (and society at large) romanticizes Aztec heritage.

By the novel's conclusion, High Aztech—and the political party's dream of empire—is defeated by the international Surrealist Terrorist Voodoo Network. Zapata is one of the charter members of the Surrealist Terrorist Voodoo Network, and he emerges during the novel as a central figure in advancing the plot against High Aztech's

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112 In the novel, Beatriz "Beat" García Ortiz, an Argentinian pop star who proudly describes her ethnic heritage as "pure Catilian stock," calls Zapata a "filthy, ugly half-breed" on his answering machine when he refuses to call her back (13).

113 As he explains early in the novel, his father "named me after Quetzalcóatl's deformed twin brother, the intelligent monstrosity and patron of the deformed, the crippled and hunchbacked, who were considered blessed with his power, and were sacrifices to him during solar eclipses" (8).

nationalist campaign. Zapata is also a fledging writer and illustrator of speculative fiction. That Zapata, like Hogan, is a writer of genre fiction is another interesting layer of self-awareness embedded into the novel. At the beginning of the novel, Zapata is aiming to achieve greater fame (and financial security) by adapting his recent graphic novel *The Teoguerrillas* into a movie. In the novel's first scene, Zapata receives a death threat from "the Neliyacame," a neo-Aztecan fundamentalist group, due to his recent publication of *Teoguerrillas.* Zapata's juxtaposition of cultures, his dramatizing of human sacrifice, and representation of non-heteronormative sexuality threaten the Neliyacame: the protagonist of Zapata's graphic novel draws his identity from Aztec and Japanese sources, is homosexual, and practices human sacrifice and cannibalism.

Zapata's own relationship with indigeneity is ambivalent. Hogan does not identify him as Indigenous or a member of any Indigenous nation. Yet Zapata liberally mixes Nahuatl words into daily conversations in Spanish and employs Aztec symbols and figures in his literary work. When officials of High Aztech detain Zapata, he rejects joining their political party, claiming that "I've never been much of a fan of you people. Your approach to the Aztecan revival seems rather stilted to me" (80). Zapata's defensive response identifies High Aztech's political appropriation of the Aztec religious system as a constructed framework—unnatural and indeed manufactured. During his interrogation at the headquarters of High Aztech, he carefully explains that his own appropriations of Aztec mythohistoy are active choices, grounded in social and political interests: "religion is a metaphor you use to guide your life, your decisions, your actions. I prefer to make mine Aztecan" (81). Throughout his novel, Hogan consistently situates identification

with Aztec cultural and religious systems as always conditional. Zapata's comments provide a model for skeptical readings of political appropriations of indigeneity—a model that marks such appropriative acts as a choice and not an inheritance or a right. Furthermore, this skepticism should be applied to Zapata as well as any other character or political organization in the novel.

Genetically Engineering an (Inter)National Movement

High Aztech is such an intriguing speculative text—and paradigmatic of contemporaneous speculative texts—precisely because Hogan consistently exposes the scaffolding of political and cultural mediations of indigeneity. Hogan denaturalizes any claim to Indigenous identities and/or epistemologies by either a Mexican nationalist party or a *mestizo* (or Chican@) character in the novel. He marks such claims in *High Aztech* are marked as inherently political choices. Thus, the novel encourages us—in the words of Nicole Guidotti-Hernández—to always be skeptical "when the excessive recursiveness of indigenismo, *mestizaje*, and nationalism crop up in an institutionalized fashion." Speculative fiction like *High Aztech* interrogates appropriative claims to indigeneity by underscoring their "excessive recursiveness" and aligns such acts with the political agendas of national and cultural institutions.

To recreate a Mexica Empire in the twenty-first century, High Aztech turns to science: the political party funds the research, development and distribution of an artificially engineered virus that transforms its carrier into a believer of the neo-Aztecan religion. The virus is spread by touch. As soon as one person is infected, anyone he or she

physically interacts with will become another carrier of the virus. If High Aztech cannot secure ideological hegemony across the hemisphere via the use of nationalist rhetoric grounded in Indigenous religious symbology—like the PRI historically did in Mexico throughout the 20th century—then the political party will convince "its" citizenry to support their political agenda via genetic engineering. In other words, High Aztech is attempting to genetically engineer *indigenismo.* This political scheme threatens to exponentially increase appropriative acts of claiming and romanticizing indigeneity across Greater Mexico—projecting the excessive recursiveness of *indigenismo* beyond national borders.

Early in the novel, Zapata is unknowingly infected with the virus. Soon after receiving the virus, he becomes a believer of the neo-Aztec religion—the religion that has increasingly become synonymous with Mexican nationalism since "Armageddon." Zapata is certainly surprised to find himself inclined to suddenly join High Aztech. As previously mentioned, just that morning his life was threatened by a neo-Aztec fundamentalist group for supposed blasphemy and secularism. However, as the plot develops, Zapata begins to suspect that his spontaneous religious conversion was a consequence of genetic manipulation (rather than a product of internal inspiration). Visiting the headquarters of High Aztech, he discovers that High Aztech nationalists have indeed funded and organized the spread of a religious virus to shore up national unity.

But the nationalist political goals of High Aztech will not be realized by the novel's conclusion. As Zapata proceeds to investigate the plans of High Aztech, he unexpectedly becomes infected with other religious viruses. By the end of the day,

Zapata is a believer in literally hundreds of religions. While acquiring more and more religious beliefs, Zapata uncovers yet another clandestine political plot: the unidentified scientist hired by High Aztech to create the neo-Aztec virus was secretly using the research funds to create a virus capable of spreading not one religion, but *any* kind of religion. Therefore, this virus—called the "Faith Virus"—can "infect" any human mind with any religious belief. It can be programed to genetically alter a person to be Catholic, Jewish, neo-Aztec or any other religion. High Aztech was a costumer (or carrier) of just one of the versions of the Faith Virus. High Aztech thought they were creating a (genetic) colonizing tool that would impose a singular religious identity onto everyone within its empire. Instead, they funded a decolonizing tool that effectively nullifies religion—specifically the political appropriation of Aztec religious symbology and history—as an operative component in their imperial campaign.

At the end of the novel, Zapata learns that the unidentified scientist employed by High Aztech was covertly working for the Surrealist Voodoo Terrorist Network. (While Zapata is a member of this organization, he was unaware of this plot.) Using funds provided by High Aztech, this staunchly anti-nationalist and anti-colonial organization distributed hundreds of other religious viruses across the city via numerous carriers.[114] When Zapata asks Cóatliquita, another member of the Surrealist Voodoo Terrorist Network, why the organization spread the Faith Virus, Cóatliquita responds:

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[114] Itzocótal, the leader of the Surrealist Voodoo Terrorist Network, is reading *Mumbo Jumbo* by Ishmael Reed when he first reveals to Zapata the true intentions of the organization. *Mumbo Jumbo,* an afrofuturist novel, narrates the spread of a virus throughout the United States. In addition,

> Oh, piligüetl Xólotl, this is the way things have been, it's just that the human race was so spread apart that it couldn't see it. Once civilization hit the global scale, we had to see it all as one system in order to survive, but we couldn't—so we had Armageddon and all the other stupid little wars, but now the viruses that I'm helping to bring to Tenochtitlán will make us all see. (212)

Thus the religious viruses reveal to each and every carrier of the viruses that they are part of a single global system—that there are universal qualities that unite every person within that system. The goal of the Surrealist Voodoo Terrorist Network is to mobilize an international political moment grounded in humanist values. This plot point is highly symbolic: Hogan puts an end to a history of *indigenismo* that stretches back to the immediate post-revolutionary period of Mexican history via the emergence of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI)—and he does so by mobilizing international coalitions.

After learning the truth about the origin of the viruses, Zapata embraces this new political strategy employed by the Surrealist Voodoo Terrorist Network. He decides to hold a party in the center of Mexico City to help spread the Faith Viruses. He does not downplay the stakes of embracing the virus: "We need this, all of it, all our heritages, all our gods, all our realities—the only alternative is more Armageddons" (243). His words echo Cóatliquita's own justification for distributing the viruses, signaling his alignment with the Surrealist Voodoo Terrorist Network. Thus the conclusion of *High Aztech* is the beginning of a local block party with global ambitions; and by the end, each partier will

believe in every religion in the world. High Aztech's nationalist goal of disseminating a single religion across the globe is thwarted when every other world religion is spread across Mexico via hundreds of rival viruses.[115] Hogan resolves global conflict, represented by religious sectarianism, through a speculative narrative that spreads every religion across the city (and eventually the world) through artificially created contagions.[116]

Recovering the Histories of Violence of Tenochtitlán

In addition to casting political parties that promote *indigenismo* as antagonists, Chican@ speculative texts interrogate the romanticizing of Aztec cultural and religious systems by recovering histories of violence. The location of Zapata's party is Tlatelolco Plaza, also known as the Plaza of Three Cultures. Zapata's choice to hold "a big, illegal, unauthorized party" at this specific plaza is politically symbolic. He notes that Tlatelolco Plaza is "a place best known for the mass slaughter of student protesters way back in 1968" (236). Ten days before the start of the 1968 summer Olympics in Mexico City, thousands of students gathered at the same plaza to protest the Mexican government. As explained in *Massacre in Mexico*—a widely read account of the tragedy written in 1971 by Mexican journalist Elena Pontiatowska—the events of that night began when "some

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[115]As Itzcótal explains to Zapata: "People come to us—and pay big tomines that we gladly accept—to give them a virus for their religion…They all foolishly think this is a necessary defense for their religion, that it, being the true faith, will wipe out all others. They never seemed to have heard of the concept of synthesis" (235).

[116] This move, which biologically nullifies religious difference, is similar to how Vizenor's protagonists from *The Heirs of Columbus*—a novel published only a year before *High Aztech*—use genetic implants to nullify ethnic difference. In both novels, artificial genetic transformation encourages individuals to recognize universal qualities shared by peoples across the globe.[116]

tens thousand students met in peaceful protest against political repression, illegal arrest, and violations of human rights" (257). This quote is especially noteworthy for its application of human rights language to describe the protests. Tragically, when the students would not stop their protests, the Mexican military opened fire on the crowd. In their 1969 annual report, Amnesty International wrote that between 300 and 500 people were killed, more than 2000 were wounded and as many as 2000 people were arrested that night in the Plaza (12).

The Tlatelolco Plaza can all too easily be described as a palimpsest of violence motivated by the expansion and/or consolidation of empire(s). Thus, the location of Zapata's party cites generations of violence perpetrated by and against numerous peoples. Octavio Paz elaborates on the symbolic importance of the Tlatelolco Plaza in both Indigenous and Mexican national histories:

> The Plaza of Tlatelolco is magnetic with history. Tlatelolco itself, an expression of Mesoamerican dualism, was actually a twin center with Méxcio-Tenochtitlán. Although it never lost its autonomy entirely, it lived in strict dependence on the dominant power after an attempt at rebellion had been harshly put down by the *tlatoani* Axayácatl. It was the seat of the merchant class, and its great plaza contained not only temples but also a celebrated market that Bernal Díaz and Cortés have described with detailed and enchanted exaltation, as if they were recounting a legend. During the siege, Tlatelolco resisted the Spaniards tenaciously and was the last Aztec stronghold to surrender. (105-106)

In this passage, Paz identifies Tlatelolco as resisting two empires—first the Aztec empire ("*tlatoani* Axayácatl") and then the Spanish ("Díaz and Cortés"). Paz seamlessly pivots from one anti-imperialist campaign to another. In 1968, the tragic massacre of students and activists was but the last in a long line of violent events—perpetrated by Indigenous, European and Mexican militaries—that occurred on that very ground.

The 1968 massacre received little international attention in spite of the coming Olympics. Margaret Keck and Kathyrn Sikkink assert that "one key part of the answer" to why there was so little international outcry was that "the international human rights network, and the human rights consciousness and practices that it created, did not exist in 1968. Because there was no credible independent source, the Mexican government was able to control information about the event, and its low casualty figures were almost universally accepted" (IX). The Mexican government failed to respect the human rights of its citizens, and yet the nation-state did not face any significant international criticism or legal repercussions. Thus the Tlatelolco Plaza cites both a tragic event in Mexican history and a historic failure of the international human rights regime.

Referencing the violent history of the plaza, Zapata further explains his choice to hold the party at the Tlatelolco Plaza: "It made a locoa kind of sense: a party in celebration of the virus-generated recombinant religions of the future in a place that celebrated three kinds of architecture—the Aztec, the Spanish, and the Mestizo—where a horrible sacrifice of human life once took place, and that stubbornly keeps its Nahuatl name" (237-238). In a plaza that is multicultural in both architecture and name—its Spanish title is "The Plaza of Three Cultures"—even violence is recognized as a

universal trait (shared by empires). The "horrible sacrifice of human life" is not specified; while it certainty applies to the aforementioned Tlatelolco massacre, it may refer to any number of violent acts that have occurred in Tenochtitlán/Mexico City.

Fortunately, during the party at the end of *High Aztech*, the Tlatelolco massacre is not repeated. The religious viruses ultimately subdue nationalist military retaliation. At first, five assault helicopters are dispatched by the government to stop the party, but only two fire "nerve jelly rounds" into the crowd. Two of the other helicopters quickly change course and leave the plaza, and the crew of the fifth helicopter lands in order to join the party. "There was some panic and fighting," Hogan writes "but the party went on." There is no further military intervention that night. Afterwards, the plaza will be famous for a new landmark in (human rights) history: "the Tlatelolco party." The plan to biologically turn every citizen in Tenochtitlán into a member of the religious organization High Aztech is countered by the Surrealist Voodoo Terrorist Network. High Aztech's dream of a national identity unified by a single religion (neo-Aztech) succumbs to a multireligous identity. And on the final page of the novel, Zapata promises to continue the process he began during the Tlatelolco party: "I've got to get to all the work I have to do. My agent made some great deals at the party, I've got lots of writing to do—and I've got to keep spreading the viruses!" (243). Like the protagonist in the final section of Alejandro Morales' *The Rag Doll Plagues*, Zapata frames speculative fiction as a transformative tool that can politicize both reader and author.

In addition to advancing certain human rights ideals, the Surrealist Voodoo Terrorist Network's celebrations of the Faith Virus also reflects Gloria Anzaldúa's

optimistic conceptualization of "new tribalism." As defined by Anzaldúa, new tribalism is a speculative framework for mobilizing inclusive political and social coalitions. "Many of us identify with groups and social positions not limited to our ethnic, racial, religious, class, gender, or national classifications," Anzaldúa writes, "Though most people self-define by what they exclude, we define who we are by what we include—what I call the new tribalism" (245). In an interview with Irene Lara, Anzaldua elaborates on her concept: "New tribalism is a kind of mestizaje. Instead of somebody making you a hybrid without your control, you can choose. You can choose a little Buddhism, a little assertiveness, individuality, some Mexican views of the spirit world, something from blacks, something form Asians" (42). In a passage evocative of Zapata's justification for the Faith Virus, Anzaldúa claims, "we need a new tribalism. We need a different way of shuffling the categories" (42).

I am not suggesting that Hogan and Anzaldúa were in direct conversation with each other's work. However, by recognizing similarities across diverse Chican@ speculative texts, I want to underscore how many Chican@ writers were at the literary avant-garde in the 1990s in terms of theorizing how non-state actors can defend their rights and interests via international coalitions and institutions. In "(Un)natural Bridges, (Un)safe Spaces," an essay originally published in 2002 as the forward to *this bridge we call home: radical visions for transformation*, Anzaldúa reflects on how strategies for building political alliances had changed since the first publication of *This Bridge Called My Back* in 1980. Arguing that "effective bridging comes from knowing when to close ranks to those outside our home, group, community, nation and when to keep the gates

open," Anzaldúa asserts that inclusivity must characterize political and social movements at the turn of the twenty-first century. However, it is only in speculative fiction that we see a shared commitment with Anzaldúa by contemporaneous Chican@ authors to realize what Ana Louise Keating terms as a "radically inclusionary politics" (55)—whether via human rights law or alternative political and legal systems produced by international coalitions.

The Collective Rights of Ticmotraspasarhuililis

Offering a tableau of hundreds of cultures from around the world, the final scene confronts the reader with a fantastic if absurd representation of multiculturalism. At the Tlatelolco party, Zapata meets gods and goddesses, films stars and scholars, artists and politicians. Each partygoer is an icon of a particular culture. The party is less an assemblage of individuals and more a gathering of collective identities. Thus, if the party is a humanist celebration of universal traits and rights, the party conceptualizes humanity as a collection of diverse cultures rather than discrete individuals. In other words, the Tlatelolco party challenges the reader to recognize both universal and cultural-specific values represented by each partygoer. This scene dramatizes the challenges of defending universal rights and respecting cultural sovereignty—or of mediating individual and collective rights.

Prior to the Tlatelolco party, Hogan reveals that the unidentified scientist who invented the viruses is an African professor named Ingrid Moeketsi. Prior to collaborating with the Surrealist Voodoo Terrorist Network, Hogan notes that Moeketsi

worked for the "Pan-African Institute of Native Medicine" (229). She decided to join the Surrealist Voodoo Terrorist Network in order to effect global change. Moeketsi adopts an "Españahuatl" word to explain her interest in producing the viruses. ("Españahuatl" refers to a Spanish/Nuahuatl creole language in the text.) When Moeketsi meets Zapata, she uses the "Españahuatlized" term "Ticmotraspasarhuililis" to describe her project. When Zapata asks what the word means, she responds that it is "from the sixteenth century, I believe. I found it in a book of Aztecisms. It means, 'you will pass it on to someone" (228). After learning this Españahuatl word from Moeketsi, Zapata directly addresses the Military leaders of the Mexican government, who he discovers have had him under surveillance throughout the entire day. "Soon a faith virus will be working on your basal ganglia," Zapata promises, "sending you on your feverish way to new religions—and new realities." Zapata prophesizes the inevitable proliferation of the viruses; and even enemies of the Surrealist Voodoo Terrorist Network will aid his plan. Zapata then finishes the novel with an Españahuatl closing to his High Aztech audience: "Mayitl. Ticmotraspasarhuililis!" With this phrase—"Goodbye, you will pass it on to someone!"—Zapata rejects the ethno-nationalist agenda of High Aztech and uses Moeketsi's Españahuatl phrase in his prophecy of global change.

Ticmotraspasarhuililis, the triumphant phrase of the Surrealist Voodoo Terrorist Network, is a combination of Spanish and Nahuatal words, and thus cites influence from European and Indigenous linguistic systems. One might be tempted to read this phrase as a celebration of the inevitability of *mestizaje*—with the *mestizo* identity representing a universal identity. Such a reading would suggest that the narrative conclusion of *High*

Aztech neatly dovetails with José Vasconcelos' theory on *mestizaje*. Writing in the prologue of the 1948 edition of *La Raza Cósmica*, Vasconcelos argues that "the different races of the world tend to mix more and more, until they form a new human type, composed from the best of each of the existing peoples" (903). Zapata's block party at Tlatelolco plaza could possibly be interpreted as the realization of Vasconcelos' *La Raza Cósmica* And yet, Hogan does not end his novel with the celebration of a singular identity; his model of universalism explicitly recognizes difference. Moreover, Zapata consistently frames identity as informed by cultural and political forces—not as racially determined. Ticmotraspasarhuililis is not a marker of inevitable mestizaje, but a citation of cultural specificity within an international political movement.

Rather than mandating a singular identity as the subject of universal human rights, Hogan's novel acknowledges and even celebrates cultural difference. *High Aztech* not only recognizes hundreds of religions, the novel incorporates a multitude of religions into its universal model. At the narrative's climax, Zapata stands in the middle of Tlatelolco plaza. As he surveys the scene—appreciating the party that he started—religious figures from countless cultures begin to appear in front of him. Exclaiming that "all the gods of the world swirled around me," Zapata quickly recognizes Jesus, Budha, Xólotl (his namesake), Papa Legba and Marilyn Monroe (the latter "zoomed by like a jet-propelled Earth Mother/Sacred Virgin") (214). Zapata uses an expansive definition of religion that includes figures revered in Christian, Hindu, Aztecan, Haitian and Hollywood religious/cultural systems. Zapata then observes a debate about "modernization and introducing advanced technology to feudal and agrarian societies" held between Mao

Zedong, Karl Marx, Thomas Jefferson and "Frankenstein's monster" (214). He is even a witness to Mohammed asking Salman Rushdie to autograph a copy of the first edition of *The Satanic Verses*, noting that "the prophet told the writer that he got all the jokes" (214). The scene does not offer an amalgamation of each figure. Nor does Hogan employ a strict definition of religion; political and literary icons are also celebrated. While nominally about religion, the scene is committed to representing cultural diversity. Indeed, the Tlatelolco party is where Hogan's narrative of religious proliferation is most symbolic of cultural recognition.

Thus, *High Aztech* can be read as an early literary representation of the tension between collective rights and universal human rights. Rejecting ethno-nationalism in favor of international political coalitions, the speculative novel sets the conditions for Zapata (and the reader) to witness the conflicts, and indeed paradoxes, that are inherent in any proposed model of universal values. As the scene at the Tlatelolco plaza develops, Hogan concludes his novel not with harmony but with friction:

> Contests broke out all over. Vegetation gods, Jesus Christs and other martyrs were committing suicide and coming back to life, trying to see whose sacrifice was the most powerful. War gods fought with everything from their bodies to nuclear weapons, and weren't really trying to prove anything—for them conflict was its own reward. Love goddesses led incredible orgies…then deified movie stars and directors and director/stars appeared, complete with cameras and microphones from all eras of show biz, trying to make a big extravaganza of it all, while gods of twentieth

> century religions like Marxism and Surrealism argued about what it all meant. (215)

I encourage us to read this passage as representative of fundamental contradictions of conceptualizing universal human rights. The novel dramatizes the unresolved tension between collective rights and universal human rights—a tension that would increasingly drive human rights legal discourse at the turn of the twenty-first century, as the collective rights of Indigenous peoples and minority populations would emerge as a viable subject of international law. Rather than solving this tension, this scene identifies the tension as an inherent paradox of any universal model that respects distinct cultural and political rights of individual persons and collective peoples. *High Aztech* is a product of its time; within the novel, we encounter literary interrogations of contemporaneous legal and political debates. That *High Aztech* reflects the values of human rights ideals at all is telling of a broader political experiment—an experiment that is actively testing different models outside of nationalism to secure the rights of non-state actors.

The new nickname that Zapata gives Tlatelolco plaza at the end of the novel is especially evocative of how to read the crowd that assembles at the plaza as creating a Third World United Nations: "The Plaza of the Four-Hundred Cultures" (238). And that the narrative of *High Aztech* takes place on August 6, 2045 should not go unnoticed. As the novel's protagonist Xólotl Zapata notes early in the novel, the date is "the hundredth anniversary of the atom-bombing of Hiroshima" (5). By choosing this specific day to release the viruses, the Surrealist Voodoo Terrorist Network contrast their revolutionary plot to the United State's decision to use the atom bomb against Japan. The Surrealist

Voodoo Terrorist Network's distribution of the Faith Virus both reflects human rights ideals and enacts change through a non-violent strategy. If the Surrealist Voodoo Terrorist Network is successful, there will never be another human rights catastrophe like the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima. This move by Hogan to set the plot exactly a century after the first military use of an atomic bomb mirrors Alejandro Morales's periodic references to the Holocaust in *The Rag Doll Plauges*: each author evokes two main examples of human rights abuses that occurred during World War II that are commonly cited as mandating the creation of the UDHR. As can be seen throughout many of the speculative texts discussed in this dissertation, international human rights ideals were emerging to constitute viable models for Chican@ communities to protect their rights.

NATIONAL ANTAGONISTS: SPECULATIVE *INDIGENISMO* IN GARY D. KELLER'S *ZAPATA ROSE IN 1992*

No Chican@ author addresses the Columbian quincentenary as directly as Gary D. Keller does in his 1992 novella *Zapata Rose in 1992*.[117] The novella explicitly critiques political and cultural appropriations of Indigenous identity. Like Hogan, Keller casts a Mexican political party, which employs *indigenismo* rhetoric to shore up national identity, as the primary antagonist of his novel. In Keller's novella, the political party is the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). However, the novel advances an imperfect critique that at times replicates some of the appropriative acts that Keller critiques. Keller struggles with conceptualizing a productive relationship between Chican@ political

[117] The novella is an expanded adaptation of Keller's 1992 short story "Zapata Rose in 1992."

movements and Indigenous sources that does not ignore or generalize about the political and cultural interests of contemporary Indigenous peoples. On the one hand, the text romanticizes Zapata's Indigenous heritage to access and even claim Indigenous epistemologies to ground an international political movement. On the other hand, the novella critiques the appropriation of indigeneity by the PRI throughout the 20th century to manufacture a sense of national unity across the nation-state. Keller also scrutinizes how non-Indigenous scholars, artists and activists across North America have misunderstood or misappropriated Indigenous epistemologies and sources to serve personal agendas.

As can be seen in the opening passage of the novella, Keller's text at times shares many of the same prejudices and blind spots that characterize Aztexts produced during the Chicano Movement. Keller begins his narrative outside of the tomb of Emiliano Zapata. A lightning bolt suddenly strikes the tomb and the body of Zapata is instantly resurrected. Seventy-three years following his death, Zapata is alive once again. Comparing the "fearsome" bolt to an "electric river that split at the end into a luscious white delta," Keller writes that the "silver frenzy backlit the lover volcanoes, Popo and Ixta, prefiguring dawn on the altiplano" (1). Keller further describes the scene from inside the tomb: "a man who had been betrayed woke from the long sleep. He awoke numb and cold inside a sacred sepulcher carved from the living rock 1000 years ago by Toltecs and kept from the white man in grave confidence for five centuries by generations of indios of the south" (1). Romanticizing the Indigenous heritage of Zapata, Keller simultaneously connects Zapata to the Toltec empire—an early Mesoamerican

society that preceded the Aztec empire—and the Aztec empire (via the myth of Popo and Ixta). In addition, while Keller is specific in his identification of Zapata's Aztec and Toltec ancestors, Keller does not specify any contemporary Indigenous identity. Rather, he condenses the identities of distinctive Indigenous peoples from the last five hundred years into the term "indios of the south." Therefore, at the beginning of the novella, Keller offers a problematic representation of indigeneity—one that both idealizes the past and generalizes the present (and future) of Indigenous peoples in North America.

However, while Keller generalizes Indigenous identity in the opening passage of *Zapata Rose in 1992*, in the foreword to the second edition of the novella (retitled *Zapata Lives!* and published in 1994) Keller recognizes distinct Indigenous peoples in the Mexican state of Morelos (Zapata's home state). He writes: "Oppression against the Indigenous people of this region including the Tzeltales, Tzotziles, Tojolabales, Choles, Zoques, Kanjobales, Mames, and many others has been going on for centuries, in fact since the Spanish conquest of Mexico. Zapata described it well in the portion of [a] 1914 letter to Woodrow Wilson" (xii). This is a welcome move to acknowledge distinct Indigenous peoples—and to recognize that Zapata was careful to acknowledge differences between Indigenous peoples. While Keller's historical assessment of "oppression against the Indigenous people of this region" does not consider violence conducted by pre-Columbian empires (such as the Aztec, Toltec or Mayan empires)—and continues the speculative text's tendency to ignore histories of violence on the continent prior to 1492—it does represent Keller's own accounting for his previous omission of specific Indigenous peoples in the first published version of his novella. Thus, even in the

development of a single text during this era of Chican@ speculative fiction, we can see an evolving awareness of and sensitivity to the different political interests of distinct Indigenous peoples.

Zapata Rose in 1992 represents an era of Chicano literature that can be characterized by the increased interrogation of the ways Chicano authors and activists alike appropriate Indigenous epistemologies and empathize (or identify) with Indigenous peoples. This era of speculative fiction marks a turn toward critical self-reflection by Chican@ authors. By examining how Chican@ political agendas affect—both positively and negatively—different minority and Indigenous peoples across the globe, Chican@ speculative fiction produced between 1990 and 1995 offers a literary space for us to recognize how the growth of political coalitions mandated more accountability of the power dynamics that govern cultural transactions. As Chican@ authors began to replace ethno-nationalist utopias with internationalist utopias, these authors were also exposing their speculative (Az)texts to critiques of cultural appropriation; and more often than not, they were guiding such critiques themselves.

The Revolutionary Melancholia of Emiliano Zapata

When Emiliano Zapata rises from the dead in his hometown of Anenecuilco, Mexico, he is distressed to find that the national government of Mexico (since his death, the PRI) is still determining the futures of Indigenous peoples and their territory. In the opening of his novella, Keller confronts the resurrected Zapata with a disappointing history: his political goals during the Mexican Revolution were not achieved and his

"legend" has been appropriated as a political tool by PRI to justify the *status quo* of national political and legal institutions. Even his progeny have abandoned his revolutionary ideals. After stepping out from his tomb and realizing the failures of the revolution, Zapata spends the rest of the narrative speculating what, if anything, can be done to reignite hope to attain the political goals originally sought by Zapata during the Mexican Revolution.

After emerging from his tomb, Zapata meets the son of Antonio Diaz Soto y Gama (a revolutionary who was a key advisor to Zapata during the civil war). The senior Soto y Gama has been dead since 1967. Notably, Jose Vasoncelos despised both Zapata and Soto y Gama. Luis A. Marentes writes that "obsessed about racializing history and politics," Vasconcelos insisted that "Zapata was a *mestizo* and Soto y Gama…a *criollo*, thus marking both as vicarious leaders of a supposedly Indian centered project" (70). Soto y Gama's son, who simply goes by the name Soto y Gama, is now himself an old man. He is the last in a famous lineage of revolutionary leaders from Morelos dedicated to reforming national law to protect regional territory being seized by the national government.

Upon first seeing him, Soto y Gama assumes Zapata is merely a confused pilgrim from Central America showing his respects to Zapata's grave. Soto y Gama has no idea that he is talking to (the newly resurrected) Zapata himself. During their conversation, Zapata asks Soto y Gama to recall the history of the region since his death in 1919. From the perspective of Soto y Gama in 1992, movements for land reform had reached a nadir in the region: "Communal agrarianism was out of favor. Salinas de Gortary [the President

of Mexico from 1988 to 1994, and a leading figure of the PRI] and his economic wizards were busy privatizing many of the ejidos. Revolutions now had a bad name, particularly those that were said to prefigure the great Bolshevik fiasco." Zapata has returned from the grave only to find the national government exploiting his name. As Soto y Gama explains, it was "not good years for zapatismo, although it still was quite necessary for los politicos—siempre los politicos—to come down from Mexico City to commemorate Miliano's birthday on August 8th" (246). The scene that Zapata wakes up to is framed by revolutionary stagnation and the political exploitation of his own legacy. For the PRI, Zapata is nothing but a symbolic figure invoked to feign national unity and commitment to Indigenous rights. Soto y Gama explains that the national politicians, after giving their annual speech in Anenecuilco, leave "the village hot and melancholy, the quiet punctured only by respectful, well-behaved Indian children playing serpientes y escaleras en la plaza" (246). Finally, Zapata learns from Soto y Gama is that Zapata's own son, Nicholas, had exploited his father's name for nothing but financial gain after the death of Emiliano. Telling of the novel's investment in interrogating relationships of appropriation, Soto y Gama spends as much time criticizing the opportunistic employment of Zapata's legend as he does on detailing the dire conditions of people in the state of Morelos. The national appropriation of Zapata is a fundamental component of the structural exploitation of poor rural populations and Indigenous peoples alike throughout the region.

While this initial conversation with Soto y Gama leaves Zapata disillusioned, Keller's narrative structure requires that Zapata further interrogate not only the legacy of

the Mexican Revolution, but also the histories of colonial violence and illegal land appropriation that initially motivated Zapata. After his resurrection and conversing with Soto y Gama, Zapata is suddenly (and quite unexpectedly) transported from outside his tomb in Anenecuilco to Catholic Purgatory. Stuck literarily in Purgatory—between his tomb and heaven—Zapata discovers that he is joined by two other famous (and long deceased) historical figures: Miguel Cervantes and Saint Teresa. Initially, Zapata is barely able to speak a single word amidst a series of monologues by Cervantes, who is as loquacious as ever, more than 350 years after his death. More confused then reverent, Zapata listens to Cervantes as the Spanish writer explains the temporal characteristics of purgatory: "Hear me, my dear revolutionary Zapata, we are dealing with what in 1992 they call the problem of real time. You come out of your 73-year stupor and a Toltec crypt, and they sock it to you, baby! Life, death, all of time's cycles and action's consequences. Welcome to your little game board, where the past and the future merge into one pastiche. It's a matter of fast forward and reverse." (257). Cervantes defines purgatory primarily by an altered conception of temporality. Time does not stand still in limbo, but rather the opposite—time fluctuates and compresses dramatically.

By placing Emiliano Zapata in purgatory—a speculative space that does not privilege linear time—Keller mandates that his protagonist contemplate and confront historical trauma produced by the Mexican Revolution. On Columbus day, exactly 500 years after the European explorer first set foot on land in the western hemisphere, Zapata must attend to the legacies of European colonization of the Americas as well as the Mexican Revolution and the subsequent rise of the PRI. That the conditions of purgatory

allow for such a critical reflection is representative of the productive processes of melancholy. Attending to ways that archives ask us to forget traumatic histories, Nicole M. Guidotti-Hernández, in her recent monograph *Unspeakable Violence*, demands that we contend with losses that are all to easily over-looked or re-appropriated by contending nationalisms at the borderlands. Guidotti-Hernández leaves us with the insight that it is the failure to mourn that produces resistance narratives. Therefore, we must return to these shared histories to identify violence, its traces and practice, as the locus of our further investigations into the past. When operating within dominant scholarly models, Guidotti-Hernández argues that "the inability to reckon with our intimately intertwined national histories forecloses the possibility of reconciliation because individuals and nations on one side of the equation are not willing to take responsibility for the violence" (296). By contrast, this project of melancholic mourning, in promoting scholarship that recognizes "violence as both a category of analysis and an intensive declaration of difference," returns to traumatic events in order to identify how intersections of race, sex, gender and class are governed by violent acts (296). An aggressive engagement with these intersections promises to trouble the paradigms of citizenship and territorial sovereignty that have long privileged the primacy of nation-states over the human rights of individual people at the borderlands.

Over the last two chapters, we have seen multiple examples of how Chican@ authors used speculative fiction to mobilize melancholic responses to collective trauma. Indeed, I contend that both dystopian novels analyzed in the previous chapter are invested in the productive process of melancholic mourning. In my previous analysis of Ana

Catillo's *Sapogonia*, I argue that we should read Dora's denial of American citizenship as a melancholic response to the human rights abuses perpetrated by Sapogonia—that her denial should be interpreted as a melancholic retention of her "failed" citizenship to Sapogonia. And before I continue with my reading of Keller's text, I want to take this opportunity to encourage us to read Alejandro Morales' *The Rag Doll Plagues* as paradigmatic of how speculative genres are especially equipped to spur melancholic relationships with collective trauma. In the third section of Morales' novel, as Gregory reads his grandfather's speculative novel about the human rights abuses of people diagnosed with AIDS or Cancer, Gregory is constantly confronted with tragic histories of medical abuse (perpetuated by both nation-states and multinational corporations). By addressing both speculative and historical human rights abuses—and that Gregory is often unsure where his grandfather's speculation begins and his grandfather's historical documentation ends—the novel demonstrates the ways that speculative fiction can cite and recover historical collective trauma to spur political reform. It is only by reading and rereading his Grandfather's accounting of human rights abuses of large populations of people that Gregory becomes politicized and committed to reforming the dystopian "state" of Lamex (The multinational organization that authoritatively governs political, social and economic systems across North America).

In *Zapata Rose in 1992,* Zapata's melancholic interrogation of the legacy of the Mexican Revolution and the rule of the PRI—instigated by his resurrection in Anenecuilco, his initial conversation with the disillusioned Soto y Gama, and subsequent introduction to Purgatory—incites Zapata to (re)mobilize a broad political movement to

defend and recover the rights of Indigenous peoples across the continent. As the novel progresses, Zapata discovers that travel, like temporality, also is not governed by the same rules in purgatory as in life. Seemingly without a choice, Zapata is transported to the Red Square in Moscow, the 1992 Seville Expo in Spain, and a neighborhood in East Los Angeles. Instantaneously Zapata travels from one location to another. (How he travels is never explained in the text—it is simply a phenomena that occurs during one's stay in purgatory.) Throughout his travels, Zapata, who is accompanied by Cervantes and Saint Teresa, encounters more similarities than differences between the people he meets—regardless of temporal or geographic distance. These international experiences lay important groundwork for Zapata—and the reader—to recognize universal values shared by people around the globe.

At this point in the novel, Zapata is exasperated. Turning to Saint Teresa, he asks her why he was brought back to life: "I'm in this here and now of 1992, not 1919! And everything has changed, the sands have shifted, what was a valley is now a peak. What can I do in 1992 when I failed in 1919? Do I need to do anything at all?" (296). Teresa responds to his questions:

> Well, we re-member into the future anyway, whether we wish to or not. If you were living in 1919 the psychological phenomenon would be the same! Memories of crimes past like your betrayal or the suppression of the aboriginal peoples do not hang dead in the air. On the contrary, the dynamics that shaped attitudes and the forces that cause travesties to be committed still function and need to be re-membered. (296)

In her response, Teresa demands that Zapata recognize how colonial systems of violence remain in place at the end of the 20th century. Teresa identifies both Zapata and "aboriginal peoples" as subjected to "crimes past" that were enacted during the Mexican Revolution. And for Teresa, to re-member the past is to recognize the present. By spelling "remember" with a dash—"re-member"—Keller emphasizes the affective and material manifestations of recalling "crimes past." To remember is to enact change, to benefit individuals (Zapata) as well as whole communities or nations ("aboriginal peoples"). Furthermore, I read this conception of "re-membering" as reflective of melancholia—it emphasizes a physical manifestation of a psychological act or response. If settler-colonialism still governs systems of oppression and exploitation in the Americas today, then, as Teresa argues to Zapata, recoveries of histories of colonial violence—instigated by the melancholic temporal and spatial conditions of Purgatory—are relevant and indeed productive.

After his resurrection, a stay in purgatory, and his travels around the world, Zapata returns home to Anenecuilco. After meeting again with Soto y Gama, Zapata decides to continue his struggle for land reform and Indigenous rights. Together, Zapata and Soto y Gama encourage the people of Anenecuilco to consolidate their resources and to march to Mexico City. Recalling his original strategy from the Mexican Revolution, Zapata explains his plan to a gathering crowd in the central plaza of Anenecuilco: "We should go back to Tenochtitlan where all this started and get back on the right road. We need to meet as soon as possible with the federales and start over again on the right footing" (101). With these words, a late 20th century land rights movement is founded on

the hopes of an earlier land rights campaign. At the climax of the narrative, it is Zapata himself who recalls his own political strategies and manifestos. This act of recovery requires the appropriation of strategies—not to mention a historical hero—originally employed in the Mexican Revolution.

Interestingly, Soto y Gama amends Zapata's original strategy by adding an emphasis on capital accumulation. This strategy directly engages Mexico's capitalist economy: "If we move now with determination and dispatch, we can have our people congregated by Monday morning at the original Bacno de Mexico at the corner of the Zocalo and Avenida 16 de Septiembre. We'll open the bank tomorrow morning on a new sun and count and develop our assets!" (101). Like Vizenor's *The Heirs of Columbus*, Keller advances the political strategy of using western institutions to accumulate capital. In his 1994 forward to *Zapata Lives!*, Keller explains his endorsement of this strategy—and yet inadvertently reveals underlying prejudices about Indigenous peoples:

> The message of my novelistic Zapata, informed by liberation theology and by a realization of the economic tempo of the postmodern world, is one of nonviolent militancy. It does not emphasize warfare. Zapata exhorts his Indigenous followers in Nahuatl to take an overt stand against marginalization in order for them to no longer be ignored or neglected. The Emiliano Zapata of the novel exhorts his people to assume economic power, to enter the postmodern era, as it were, the twenty-first century. At the same time there is an emphasis on cultural continuity and the maintenance of Indigenous cultures. It is a message of biculturalism, of

> the need for Indigenous peoples to operate effectively in the postmodern, high-technology world and to maintain their own values and culture. This is the way that the novelistic Emiliano Zapata resolves in the present the issues of the Revolution of 1910 that had eluded him. (xiii-xiv)

The above passage is representative of how Keller's advocacy for the rights of Indigenous peoples re-inscribes generalizations about Indigenous epistemologies and elides historical and cultural differences between Indigenous peoples. Keller argues that his novel privileges the political goals of Indigenous peoples—which it does, inasmuch as it privileges goals as perceived (or mediated) by Keller. There is a certain paternalistic tone in Keller's speaking for Indigenous peoples (or Zapata's "Indigenous followers"). A close reading of the above passage also reveals underlying prejudices toward Indigenous identity. Indigeneity is inherently measured in contrast to (post)modernity and what Keller labels "high-technology." (One certainly would not be able to say the same about Hogan's *High Aztech*.)

This climax to Zapata's resurrection is ultimately frustrating. Reflecting on the potential global appeal of Zapata, Keller writes: "who else representing the worldwide community of Indigenous peoples has accomplished as much militarily as Emiliano Zapata in the twentieth Century?" (x). This comment exposes certain limits of Keller's Aztext. To be sure, to cast a non-Indigenous person as *a* leader of a global Indigenous movement is not necessarily a disrespectful or patronizing literary move. However, Keller's lack of a historical awareness to include influential Indigenous leaders from the twentieth century in such a global movement is indeed problematic. Keller's elevation of

Zapata above any Indigenous leader is also symptomatic of how legacies and/or stories of Indigenous leaders are not well-represented in conventional Euro-American historical and literary archives.

And yet, Zapata would actually become a symbolic avatar of an Indigenous movement in Mexico in 1994. On January 1st of that year, "thousands of armed and masked Mayan Indian took eight municipalities in the State of Chiapas by arms" (Hayden 150). The group responsible for this insurrection named themselves the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN). Echoing Keller's seemingly prophetic casting of Zapata in 1992 as the mobilizing figure of a hemispheric Indigenous movement, the EZLN cited Emiliano Zapata and his goals for land reform as inspiration for their political program. The date of their initial insurrection was also highly symbolic: it was the first day that NAFTA officially went into effect, and the EZLN adamantly opposed the trade agreement. As Tom Hayden writes, the purpose of the "Mayan insurrection" was "to call the world's attention to the plight of Indigenous people and to the corruption and fraud behind the façade of prosperity and democracy in Mexico" (150). Similar to the utopian texts discussed in this dissertation, the EZLN also argues for the reform of existing legal and political institutions—not for state secession. Subcomandante Marcos, the official spokesperson of the EZLN between 1994 and 2014, emphasized the importance of reform in 2004: "We do not want independence from Mexico, we want to be part of Mexico, to be Mexican Indigenous…We want to be first-class citizens and to be part of the country's development, but we want to be so without ceasing to be Indigenous" (522).

Notably, Subcomandante Marcos simultaneously values citizenship to Mexico and yet defends the collective rights of Indigenous peoples.

In spite of Keller's problematic rhetoric, which at times romanticizes and generalizes indigeneity, the above passage from *Zapata Rose in 1992* reflects an optimism that Indigenous peoples can intervene in western economic and political systems—an optimism that would be expressed and tested by the EZLN only two years later. Keller's novella imagines the conditions for an Indigenous future, privileging the political and cultural interests of Indigenous peoples. He argues that his narration of Zapata's (second) march to Mexico City—a march that the EZLN would also replicate—does not serve primarily Chican@ or Mexican or American interests, but rather those of Indigenous peoples. Keller also offers a narrative that encourages international networks of Indigenous peoples to demand reform on an international scale. When a rejuvenated Soto y Gama appeals to the crowd in Anenecuilco to join the resurrected Zapata, he asserts that "with our treasures and all our material and spiritual assets and the new fire in the bellies of our compadritos indios and reborn Zapata at our side guiding us, we shall now rebuild our home Anencuilco y recrear un Nuevo mundo que no nos fallará" (101). By saying "Recrear un Nuevo mundo que no nos fallará"—"to recreate a new world that will not fail us"—Soto y Gama marks the quincentenary as a moment to definitively conclude the previous 500 years of European colonization in order to create a *new* "new world." The phrase implies a global scope for the emerging political movement led by the reincarnated Zapata (i.e. a "reincarnated" Zapatista movement). And by writing this

phrase in Spanish, Keller explicitly decenters English as the dominant language of the emerging Indigenous movement.

However problematic, this is one of the most compelling aspects of the novella: that in spite of an extensive critical framework that acknowledges a century of political acts of appropriation committed by the PRI, the novella reproduces similar acts. To be sure, *Zapata Rose in 1992* is an Aztext. However, that the novel positions itself as participating in such acts of appropriation—and locates itself within larger genealogies of political, academic and literary strategies of appropriation—is paradigmatic of how Chican@ artists during this era were turning to speculative fiction to interrogate their own roles in appropriating indigeneity. Even though Keller fails to hold his own text fully accountable to how it appropriates Indigenous culture and identity to advocate for global reform, the text's self-awareness certainly invites further critique.

Thus, in this single speculative text, we can see progressive and regressive strategies for aligning the political goals of Chican@s with the cultural and political interests of Indigenous peoples. By unpacking this dynamic, we are able to recognize that detonators for breaking free from the romanticizing and marginalization of Indigenous peoples are indeed present in this text, as well as the other speculative texts by Chican@ authors that I discuss in this dissertation. The political program of the EZLN certainly did not emerge within a vacuum. That Zapata reemerged as a symbol in both Mexico and the US to galvanize international and/or multiethnic political coalitions signals a shared commitment by Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples to building stronger networks at the end of the twentieth century. And in the following chapter, I will identify specific

passages from contemporaneous Chican@ speculative fiction that offer new strategies for building such political coalitions between disparate populations within the Indigenous labor diaspora.

Chapter Five:

Speculative Coalitions within the Indigenous Labor Diaspora: Building a New International Society in Chican@ Utopian Fiction

In this chapter, I continue my analysis of utopian fiction by Chican@ authors published between 1990 and 1995 by attending to how Chican@ authors align Chican@ political goals with the interests of other ethnic minority populations and Indigenous peoples. In the works under my consideration, Chican@ authors simultaneously imagine international coalitions while respecting the cultural and political differences of non-Chican@ allies. In the previous chapter, I demonstrated how effectively Chican@ authors critiqued political appropriations of Indigenous identities and cultural systems. In this chapter, I identify how Chican@ authors imagine alternative strategies—alternative to the appropriation, romanticization and generalization of Indigenous cultures—to mobilize international political movements and/or advocate for the reformation of international human rights law.

In her 2014 essay "New Tribalism and Chicana/o Indigeneity in the Work of Gloria Anzaldúa," Domino Perez asserts that scholars and writers of Chican@ literature must resist the temptation to romanticize and generalize an Indigenous past while they advocate for political reform in the present. Instead, Perez argues that Chican@s must employ other strategies to mobilize political and social movements with Indigenous allies. "Rather than maintain an imagined mythology that participates in the entrenching of an Aztec hegemony, nay Aztext, and the perseverance of a narrative of empire," Perez

writes, “Chicana/os can make claims to Native experience through their participation in a centuries-old and still enduring Indigenous labor diaspora” (500). Perez critiques appropriative acts by Chican@ writers that lay claim to Aztec and/or Mayan epistemologies and symbols—acts that often only replace one empire with another, thus maintaining rigid social hierarchies—and adamantly cites alternative strategies to honor existing bonds and to build new political coalitions between Chican@ and Indigenous peoples. However, Perez insists that such nuanced strategies must incorporate a broad conception of historical archives:

> Mexican, Central, and South American Indians and mestizos moved, historically and presently, North and South along the Mesoamerican migrant corridor, stretching from Central America through Mexico and into the United States and Canada, to settle or search for work or an improved quality of life but not always with documentation. Records for these individuals exist, if at all, in oral rather than in written records. Similarly, family altars, prayer cards, rosaries, recipes, blankets, and other handcrafts or material objects can embody a history that is not immediately identifiable as recorded or even translatable. These and other means provide potential avenues for familial or individual documentation of Indigenous ancestry for Chicana/os. By placing ephemera alongside accounts and documents that convey how the state sees Mexicans and Indians…Chicana/os can move away from romantic fictions to historical

> and present accountings that bridge indigenous with Indigenous on both sides of the border. (501)

I argue that this era of Chican@ speculative fiction offers compelling examples of how to produce such restorative projects (as described by Perez): to recover and recontextualize political and cultural records in order to better respect and foster political alliances between Chican@ and Indigenous peoples. Perez's assertion—that "Chicana/os can move away from romantic fictions to historical and present accountings that bridge Indigenous with Indigenous on both sides of the border"—is essential for the effective building of international movements that situate Chican@ and Indigenous peoples in similar economic and social systems of colonial exploitation but also respect distinct political and cultural interests of contemporary Indigenous peoples.

This chapter focuses on how three Chican@ speculative texts attempt to "move away from romantic fictions to historical and present accountings" in order to ground their speculative models for the advancement of international political reform: "A Letter from the U.S./Mexico Border" (1991) by Guillermo Gómez-Peña and Robert Sanchez; *Zapata Rose in 1992* (1992) by Gary D. Keller; and "The Great Pyramid of Aztlán" (1995) by Jesús Salvador Treviño. In my reading of "A Letter from the U.S./Mexico Border," I will mark how performance artists Gómez-Peña and Sanchez situate Chican@ artists in an economic world system that has been created by the continual exploitation of the Indigenous labor diaspora. I will then return to *Zapata Rose in 1992*—a novella that I discussed at length in the previous chapter—in order to attend to how Keller builds political coalitions at the Columbian quincentenary by drawing from documents produced

during the Mexican Revolution (El Plan de Ayala from 1911; Manifesto to the Mexican People from 1918) and the Chicano Movement (El Plan de Delano from 1966). Thus, in Keller's novella, historical documents signed by Emiliano Zapata and César Chávez, respectively, serve as models for aligning the cultural and political interests of *mestizo* and Indigenous peoples. And in my analysis of "The Great Pyramid of Aztlán," I will argue that Treviño historizes Aztlán as a political symbol produced by and for the political interests of the Chicano Movement (rather than romanticizing Aztlán as a symbolic marker of Indigenous heritage). Trevino identifies the foundation of "Aztlán" not as Aztec cultural and religious systems, but as the Viva Kennedy Political clubs of 1960. This move undercuts claims to Aztec epistemologies and symbols by framing Aztlán as a symbolic referent to the 1960s.

THE "NEW INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY" OF CHICAN@ UTOPIAN FICTION

In 1991, Guillermo Gómez-Peña and Robert Sanchez produced a performance piece called "A Letter from the U.S./Mexico Border."[118] This piece contextualizes quincentenary celebrations—such as those discussed in my first chapter—that were conducted by Spain, the US and the Dominican Republic alongside contemporaneous political and economic events happening across the globe. In particular, Gómez-Peña and Sanchez reference both the end of the Cold War and the beginning of the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Their text proclaims that "as Europe prepares for the grand opening of its borders, we are preparing ourselves for another major project: the

[118] Gómez-Peña and Sanchez presented the piece in Barcelona in 1992 under the title "Five Hundred Years of Genocide" at the invitation of the Joan Miró Foundation.

grand redefinition of 1992. We won't be celebrating the 'discovery of America' or the 'encounter of cultures.' We will be attending a funeral for all the victims of five hundred years of genocide of our Indigenous cultures" (172). They ground their critique of current hemispheric and global political developments in the recognition of European colonization of Indigenous peoples and their territories. I find this previous quote especially evocative of Perez's argument that Chican@ artists can make claims to "Native experience through their participation in a centuries-old and still enduring Indigenous labor diaspora" (500). Rather than romanticize Indigenous cultural and religions systems, Gómez-Peña and Sanchez historicize Euro-American political and economic systems—and then locate their position as artists within these systems.

Throughout this performance piece, "we" refers to what Gomez Pena and Sanchez call "border artists." These two artists claim that the quincentenary offers an opportunity for all border artists to reconceptualize how their artistic work responds to political and economic forces: "As border artists, we wonder what our role will be in this whole process. Should we be chroniclers, activists, philosophers, or diplomats? And what kind of art must we make to contribute to a world dialogue?"[119] To address these questions, Gómez-Peña and Sanchez appropriate the Soviet term *glasnost*: "there is a movement toward tolerance and reform that is equivalent to *glasnost* and that is mistakenly called multiculturalism; there are aggressive government sectors devoted to its destruction." Gómez-Peña and Sanchez promote the continuation of what they equate to a North American version of *glasnost*; and they cast border artists as crucial agents in the

[119] This echoes the words of Ray Gonzales, discussed in the first chapter of this dissertation.

fostering of such a continental *glasnost*. This act of appropriation is lateral in temporality—Gómez-Peña and Sanchez employ a term that describes a contemporaneous phenomenon occurring in Eastern Europe—and provides border artists with a political framework within which to conceptualize international reform. Again, Gómez-Peña and Sanchez privilege historical and political similarities rather than biological inheritance.

Thus, these two performance artists use *glasnost*—which marked a new era of political transparency in the Soviet Union ushered in by president Mikhail Gorbachev—as a transformative idea to spur disparate populations to demand "tolerance" and "reform" across the Americas. In this hemispheric context, rather than the national stage of the Soviet Union, the term *glasnost* becomes a powerful symbol of a speculative "international society" that decenters the agency of the nation-state in favor of recognizing the human rights of each individual across the globe. Gómez-Peña and Sanchez assert that while "the centers of power are irreversibly shifting…a new international society is being born" and thus "a new culture will have to emerge from its foundation." This focus on reformation and the emergence of "a *new* international society" and "a *new* culture" imagines a global audience irrespective of state borders. For example, Gómez-Peña and Sanchez appeal to an inclusive audience—made of "citizens" united by a temporal rather than national measurement—in the opening of their letter: "Dear fellow citizen of the end-of-the-century society: We approach the last decade of the twentieth century submerged in total perplexity as we witness, from the U.S./Mexico border region, structural changes in the world topography. We can't help but feel like uninvited actors in a disnarrative science-fiction film" (172).

Crucially, they define neither audience nor artists by ethnicity. Gómez-Peña and Sanchez privilege firsthand experience of "structural changes in the world topography" (172). They then leverage this experience to anchor international political and/or legal reform. What is especially striking about "A Letter from the U.S./Mexico Border"—and what is present in numerous performance and literary texts produced by Gómez-Peña throughout the 1990s—is how Gómez-Peña and Sanchez imagine a new international society and (subsequent) new culture not only from a borderlands perspective, but as an international society being *shaped* by border artists.

If "A Letter from the U.S./Mexico Border" prophesizes the emergence of a new international society and culture directly informed by the contributions of border artists, the performance text identifies nation-states as inherently resistant to such a global movement. Indeed, the letter is anxious about how nation-states, in the Americas and beyond, will act in the coming decade (and wonders what nation-states will even exist). Gómez-Peña and Sanchez write:

> THE COLD WAR ENDS AS THE U.S. DRUG WAR BEGINS. THE SOUTH REPLACES THE EAST AS THE NEW THREATENING OTHERNESS. RUSSIA IMPLEMENTS PERESTROIKA AND GLASNOST. A NEW ERA OF EAST/WEST RELATIONS BEGINS. THE CHINESE STATE CARRIES OUT THE MASSACRE OF TIANANMEN SQUARE. THE BERLIN WALL IS ABOLISHED EXACTLY WHEN THE UNITED STATES BEGINS TO MILITARIZE ITS BORDER WITH MEXICO. HUNGARY, POLAND, BULGARIA,

> AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA EXPERIENCE AN INSTANTANEOUS, RELATIVELY PACIFIC TRANSITION TOWARD "DEMOCRACY." THE SALVADOREAN CIVIL WAR REACHES A STALEMATE. ROMANIAN DICTATOR NICOLAE CEAUSECU FALLS WHILE CHILEAN DICTATOR PINOCHET LOSES THE AWAITED FIRST ELECTION SINCE THE FALL OF PRESIDENT ALLENDE. CENTRAL AMERICA AND MEXICO MOVE TO THE RIGHT. AND TO THE OUTRAGE OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, THE UNITED STATES INVADES PANAMA. (172)

Within this specific passage, Gómez-Peña and Sanchez recognize (and lament) nation-states as the primary actors that have historically shaped global politics and economic systems. Throughout the text, there is a tension between "the citizen of the end-of-the-century society" and various nation-states jockeying for geopolitical power in the wake of the fall of the Soviet Union—a tension that mirrors the inherent constraints of contemporary human rights law, where the human rights of individuals are all to often subordinate to the sovereignty of nation-states. However, the border artist, in imagining and ushering in "a new international society," cannot rely on the goodwill of any nation-state. Therefore, I read this text as a paradigmatic example of Chican@ artists who, working in the first half of the 1990s, imagined political reform not at the national level, but at the international level. It is a call to action for border artists to challenge international legal norms and to (finally) realize a human rights law that privileges the individual over the nation-state.

EMILIANO ZAPATA AT THE COLUMBIAN QUINCENTENARY IN GARY D. KELLER'S *ZAPATA ROSE IN 1992*

Between 1992 and 1995, three Chican@ authors named a protagonist of a utopian text after Emiliano Zapata: Ernest Hogan in *High Aztech,* Gary Keller in *Zapata Rose in 1992* and Jesus Salvador Treviño in "The Great Pyramid of Aztlán." In *High Aztech*, a science fiction novel by Hogan, Xólotl Zapata starts a genetic revolution in Tenochtitlán (in the year 2045) that is intended to transcend religious sectarianism. In Treviño's short story "The Great Pyramid of Azltán," a Chican@ entrepreneur named Manuel Zapata assembles an international coalition of workers to reconstruct an Aztec Pyramid in the Arizona desert. And in his novella *Zapata Rose in 1992*, Keller imagines the resurrection of Emiliano Zapata as the catalyst of a hemispheric revolution at the end of the twentieth century. Each text imagines a "Zapata" leading a massive yet peaceful international movement that undermines the national hegemony of an ethnocentric political party. By contextualizing them together, we can discern in each text an acute optimism for an international human rights legal program that challenges the territorial sovereignty of settler-colonial states in North America. Moreover, by reading these texts alongside each other, we can enrich our understanding of how Emiliano Zapata was appropriated in the 1990s across North America as a symbol of international reform.

In this section, I will address this literary phenomenon, which has yet to receive scholarly attention. However, due to limited space, I will focus my critical energies on Keller's novella. *Zapata Rose in 1992* is representative of how all three speculative texts endorse international political coalitions by recovering Emilano Zapata as a symbolic

figure of political and legal reform. In *Zapata Rose in 1992*—like Hogan and Treviño's own speculative texts—Zapata emerges as a symbolic figure for mobilizing alliances between disparate peoples. Significantly, Keller does not simply "resurrect" the famous revolutionary leader, as discussed at length in the previous chapter. Keller builds political coalitions at the Columbian quincentenary in 1992 by drawing from two specific documents signed by Zapata during the Mexican Revolution: Manifesto to the Mexican People from 1918 and El Plan de Ayala from 1911. Thus, Keller situates *mestizo* peoples within an Indigenous labor diaspora by historicizing political documents rather then romanticizing or generalizing about Indigenous heritage.

Appropriating Zapata: From 1919 to 1992

Over the last century, politicians, scholars and artists alike have continually contested the political and cultural importance of Emiliano Zapata. And such debates over Zapata's role in the Mexican Revolution typically reveal more about the authors of Zapata's many histories than about Zapata himself. Nicole Guidotti-Hernández cautions scholars of Chicano studies that they "need to be cognizant of how they are mediating voices, often actively forgetting the ethnic, racial, sexual, and gender-specific histories of those individuals whom they are uncritically reclaiming as foremothers, pioneers, and perceived Indians." Such a careful and deliberate approach to how we frame historical figures is especially needed when attending to the legacy of Zapata—a historical figure that arguably is as symbolically malleable as any historical figure from the twentieth century. Recognizing that "in recent decades the possible uses of Zapata's image have

become nearly limitless" (249), Samuel Brunk writes that "nobody could possibly chart the innumerable ways in which people have remembered Emiliano Zapata" (1). Indeed, the figure of Zapata has been appropriated by the Institutional Revolutionary Party (Partido Revolutionario Institutional, PRI) to consolidate nationalist identity across Mexico since the end of the Revolution *and* adopted by the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (Ejécito Zapatista de Liberación Nacional, EZLN) to justify the political, cultural and economic self-determination of Indigenous peoples at the dawn of the NAFTA era. Therefore, in addition to attending to Zapata's own history, we must also attend to histories of Zapata's history.

Keller makes his novella an especially intriguing text during this era of speculative fiction by expending significant labor in historicizing *previous recoveries* of Zapata as a symbol and a source for building coalitions between Indigenous peoples and mestizo populations. As analyzed in chapter four, Keller resurrects Zapata in the opening passage of his novella. Thus, his novella narrates the literal recovery of Zapata. Keller imagines what would happen if the actual man—and not just his symbol—led a political movement at the Columbian quincentenary. And yet, Emiliano Zapata's resurrection is not the only plotline of the novella. A second plotline captures the perspective of non-Indigenous characters in Europe on Columbus Day, October 12, 1992. On the same day that Zapata rises from the dead in Anenecuilco, Keller simultaneously narrates the international assembly of scholars, artists and government officials at the American pavilion on the final day of the 1992 World's Fair in Seville, Spain. The gathering—rather ironically—is held in celebration of César Chávez. Each character that Keller

assembles at the American pavilion on this Columbus Day has appropriated Zapata to achieve different political and/or professional goals: Lefty Womack, a Harvard scholar who made a career out of studying Zapata; Miguel León-Portilla, a Mexican scholar who critiqued Womack's scholarship and adamantly recognized Zapata as a hero of Indigenous peoples; Alfonso Caso y Casas, a military official who works for the PRI, the National political party famous for appropriating Zapata's figure; and César Chávez, who, along with Luis Valdez, conceptualized his famous 1966 Plan Del Delano after Zapata's 1911 El Plan De Anaya. If the first half of *Zapata Rose in 1992* is Keller's own recovery of Zapata, the second half is Keller's accounting for other recoveries of Zapata that occurred between his death and his resurrection. Thus, Keller deliberately positions his novella within a larger genealogy of political and literary appropriations of Zapata and places critical pressure on the subjects (politicians and writers) who appropriate historical figures and documents.

Lefty Womack, a professor of Latin American history at Harvard, is the keynote speaker at the quincentenary event in Seville. For his presentation, he delivers his new English translation of the Manifesto to the Mexican People, a landmark manifesto signed by the revolutionary leader in Tlaltizapán, Morelos on April 25, 1918. Thus, Zapata's political agenda is recovered a second time in the novella—once by the resurrected Zapata himself and once by a Harvard professor. Just before Womack's recitation of El Plan, Keller explains Womack's intentions for choosing this document to read at the Seville Expo:

> Zapata and zapatismo, with all their attendant glories and limitations, they were genuinely indio. And they went back. Their logic, which achieved so little reception, went back to the Council of the Indies and the virreinatos and to much before that, to the pre-Columbian division of property and administration of rights. One might argue that, for 20th century Native Americans over the entire continent from Baffin Island to Tierra del Fuego, Emiliano Zapata was the greatest American Indian revolutionary model of them all. There would be few other serious contenders for that distinction. So, to bind this quincentenary business, to go back to 1492 and centuries before that, and to touch upon the 20th century, one not formed primarily by Western philosophies such as Marxism, anarchism, socialism, capitalism, one still discernably Indian at its core, to project into the future, and the surely forthcoming struggles of native peoples to empower themselves, who better than the caudillo of tierra y libertad? (290)

For Womack, Manifesto to the Mexican People offers the best example of a "pre-Columbian division of property and administration of rights." Womack also cites specific Indigenous legal systems by referring to Zapata's document. Thus, Zapata's manifesto serves as a historical document to ground alliances between non-Indigenous and Indigenous peoples that do not rely on generalizations. Recovering the manifesto (and similar documents) is a crucial component "to project into the future" an international political program significantly informed by Indigenous epistemologies. This is an

example of how Chican@ authors of speculative fiction attempted to reconceptualize political coalitions between Chican@ and Indigenous peoples by recovering historical documents that attested to shared experiences of exploitation within the world economic system.

Paradigmatic of both Chican@ and Indigenous speculative fiction from this era, this passage also imagines revolution on a hemispheric scale. "From Baffin Island to Tierra del Fuego"—Zapata's words, as mediated by Womack (and ostensibly Keller), can unite Indigenous peoples across the Americas. At the end of the 20th century, Keller recovers Zapata as a leader of international Indigenous movements and the ideological forefather of an emerging intercontinental revolution. Significantly, Zapata concludes this manifesto with the declaration of four pillar values shared by the "revolutionaries" of his "liberating army": "Reform, Freedom, Justice, and Law" (73). Keller encourages us to conceptualize legal and political *reform* as potentially *revolutionary* by citing how Zapata viewed his struggle for land reform as very much revolutionary.

In the novella, Lefty Womack refers to the actual Harvard professor John "Jack" Womack. Womack is a white scholar. At one point in the text, a Chicano poet refers to Womack as a "Gringo Dude" and pokes fun at his educational pedigree by calling him "Harvard Boy" and a "Cambridge Dude." Womack's most famous publication was *Zapata and the Mexican Revolution* (1968); it was a landmark text for US scholarship on the Mexican Revolution. Throughout this history on Zapata, Womack casts the Mexican leader first and foremost as a champion of "country people." Womack does not align the followers of Zapata with a particular class identity—which is why, Womack explains, he

chooses the term "country people" instead of the term "peasants" (x). For Womack, "country people" refers to people "who did not want to move and therefore got into a revolution…they insisted only on staying in the villages and little towns where they had grown up, where before them their ancestors for hundreds of years had lived and died" (ix). Despite this connection between Zapatistas and the land, Womack seldom recognizes the role that Indigenous peoples played in informing and advancing Zapata's revolutionary agenda. Womack's text characterizes Zapata's army and the people of his region—the state of Morelos, south of Mexico City—not by class or race, but simply as "country people" who did not want to lose their territory. Representative of contemporaneous scholarship on Zapata conducted in the US—almost always conducted by white men—Womack refuses to align Zapata's political agenda with the interests of Indigenous peoples in Mexico.

Since publishing *Zapata and the Mexican Revolution*, Womack has faced significant criticism from Mexican and Chican@ scholars, the most prominent scholar being the Mexican historian and anthropologist Miguel León-Portilla. A contemporary of Womack, León-Portilla explicitly criticized Womack's treatment of Zapata for not recognizing Zapata's lifelong commitment to defending the cultural and political interests of regional Indigenous peoples. Ever aware of the many histories of Zapata, Keller includes León-Portilla as a character in his 1992 novella; he is a fellow guest at the ceremony for César Chávez and in the audience during Womack's speech. As Keller notes in his novella, León-Portilla famously critiqued Womack's text for "its downplaying of Zapata's knowledge of Nahuatl and Womack's claim that the

revolutionary did no show much initiative in bringing indios into the Mexican Revolution" (57-58). León-Portilla's critique applied not only to Womack's work, but much of the scholarship on Zapata produced in the US during the 20th century. In his *The Ideology of a Peasant Revolutionary* (1969), Robert Million also explores the centrality of land to the Zapatista movement during the Mexican Revolution while minimizing any participation by Indigenous peoples in said movement Asserting that "the focal point of the revolution was the desire for land reform and the *zapatists*, the men of the South, were the agrarian reformers of the revolution par excellence" (5), Million claims that "the struggle for land reform was the heart of Zapata's movement" (39). Throughout his text, Million casts Zapata as a hero of land reform and, unlike Womack, the "peasantry" of Mexico. Indeed, Million adamantly dismisses the argument that Indigenous peoples played any significant role in the Zapatista movement, succinctly writing that "the 'Indianist' concept can be disposed of most easily" (83). Later examples of US based scholars reading Zapata primarily through a class lens—at the expense of recognizing particular political interests of Indigenous peoples—include *Zapata: A Biography* (1975) by Roger Parkinson, *The Mexican Revolution* (1983) by Adolfo Gily, *Revolutionary Mexico: The Coming and Process of the Mexican Revolution* (1987) by John Mason Hart, and *Villa and Zapata: A History of the Mexican Revolution* (2000) by Frank McLynn.[120]

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[120] Commenting on Zapata's early class/political allegiances, Roger Parkinson writes that "If leadership of the revolution came to [Zapata], as was highly probable, then he would be fighting to peasants throughout Mexico (119). Representing a Marxist approach, Adolfo Gily argues that "had it not been for the Zapatists, the Mexican Revolution would have passed into history as one of many Latin American revolutions—just a few battles in early 1911, followed by the replacement of one bourgeois fraction by another. We therefore have to account not only for the tenacity of the Zapatist peasents, but for their success in maintaining against all and sundry what Marx called the *permanence* of the Revolution (344). John Mason Hart writes

In each case, Indigenous peoples are subsumed under the class category of "the peasant." These scholars therefore marginalize and/or deem inconsequential any interests particular to Indigenous peoples in South-Central Mexico.

In stark contrast to the aforementioned readings of Zapata—which minimize (or completely ignore) the role played by Indigenous peoples—León-Portilla characterizes Zapata in his own work as "a legendary hero to thousands of *mestizo* peasants and Indians…fighting to get back for them the communal lands that had been usurped by Spaniards, Mexicans, and others of European provenance over the course of centuries" (165). A decade before Womack's *Zapata and the Mexican Revolution* was published, León-Portilla emphatically asserted that Indigenous peoples were influential in supporting and strengthening Zapata's political agenda.[121] León-Portilla writes that while Zapata himself was *mestizo*, his political movement was embraced by Indigenous peoples in Zapata's region. He asserts that such support offered to Zapata by Indigenous peoples

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that "Zapatismo was much more significant than the man and his immediate following in the south-central area of the nation. His revolution reflected a wider grass-roots peasants' war" (253) and that his "new agrarian plan" called for "pueblo control over uncompensated hacienda expropriations and the inalienability of peasant holdings" (277). Frank McLynn argues that "Zapata represented the agrarian peasantry—the villagers, share-croppers and smallholders who suffered from the greed of *hacendado, ranchero* or Cacique and who wanted their stolen lands back" (102). Thus, McLynn writes, "Zapata's achievement was to give a concrete form to peasant aspirations that had remained dormant and even partly unconscious" (102).

[121] In his 1959 text *Visión de los Vencidos* (titled "the Broken Spears: The Aztec Account of the Conquest of Mexico" in the first English-language edition published in 1962) León-Portilla writes:

> Nahuatl-speaking Indians and other natives, among them the Yaqui of Sonora and the Maya of Yucatan, took part in the Mexican Revolution of 1910-19. Emiliano Zapata, a well-known leader of the Revolution and champion of the landless peasants of southern Mexico, was not himself an Indian, but he was a mestizo, born in Anencuilco, a small town in Morelos, who, endowed with a charismatic personality, had managed to attract large numbers of Nahuas and others to join the army he has raised. However, the mere idea of an Indian uprising caused such alarm among the elite that a prominent conservative congressman, José Maria Lozano, warned his fellow partisans of Zapata's successes and threat in these terms: "Zapata has rebelled…he poses as the liberator of the slave; he offers something to all. He is not alone…Countless people follow him…He offers them lands. His preaching beings to bear fruit: the Indians have rebelled!" (165)

posed a significant threat to the national government of Mexico. León-Portilla also stresses that we must not ignore that Zapata wrote many of his manifestos in Nahuatl (166). Reflecting on this choice to write many of his manifestos in Nahuatl in addition to Spanish, Bridget Christine Arce explains that Zapata "spoke Nahuatl, as his community was primarily Indigenous or operated within confines of Indigenous society. For this reason, many of the Zapata's manifestos were bilingual" (98). Zapata was both capable of and committed to addressing regional Indigenous peoples in their own language.[122]

In considering how Keller cites Womack's scholarship from 1968 and incorporates both León-Portilla's critique of the text and a defensive response by Womack—recreating an academic history on the role that Zapata played in the Mexican revolution—I am reminded of Guidotti-Hernandez's imperative that scholars must attend to the ways we mediate historical voices and histories.[123] Keller's novella reminds us that any re-contextualization of a text by Zapata will inherently be mediated. And interestingly, in the aforementioned passage explaining Womack's decision to choose Zapata's 1918 manifesto, we see that Womack has indeed listened to León-Portilla's criticism. In the novella—nearly a quarter of a century after the publication of *Zapata and the Mexican Revolution*—Womack finally recognizes the role that Indigenous peoples played in supporting and advancing Zapata's political reform agenda. Womack has learned from his previous misreading of Zapata and has therefore literarily amended

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[122] Nick Henck also notes the significance of Zapata's fluency of Nahuatl.

[123] Again, she writes that scholars of Chican@ studies "need to be cognizant of how they are mediating voices, often actively forgetting the ethnic, racial, sexual, and gender-specific histories of those individuals whom they are uncritically reclaiming as foremothers, pioneers, and perceived Indians."

his own interpretation of the 1918 manifesto. Interestingly, Keller himself makes a similar move to address a previous failure at recognizing the presence and agency of Indigenous peoples (cited in the previous chapter). In the forward to the second edition of *Zapata Rose in 1992*, Keller specifically recognizes the tribal-specific identities of numerous Indigenous peoples in the state of Morelos—Indigenous peoples that actively supported Zapata and were still fighting for the land rights at the end of the twentieth-century. The names of these specific Indigenous nations were omitted in the first edition of the novella.

Since the early 1990s—and in the wake of events such as Columbian quincentenary celebrations, the founding of the EZLN, and the signing of NAFTA—histories that honor and identify the significant roles played by Indigenous peoples in the Zapatista movement during the Mexican Revolution have become more commonplace in scholarship on Zapata. Commenting on the previous overemphasis of class in historical accounts of Zapata, Tanalis Padilla, in his 2008 text *Rural Resistance in the Land of Zapata*, contends that "the legacy of the Zapatista movement as a campesino struggle, and the state's appropriation of the figure of Zapata as the emblem of Mexico's agrarismo, has obscured the Indigenous component of the Zapatisa forces" (21). All too often, the class dimension of the Zapatista movement had overshadowed the participation of Indigenous peoples. In the same text, Padilla also emphasizes that Zapata openly

criticized racist rhetoric and policies (21).[124] Also writing in 2008, Emron Lee Esplin contends that if we ignore race in our readings of the legacy of Zapata during the Mexican Revolution, we risk misunderstanding both the causes of divisions between military leadership and the stakes for Indigenous soldiers that fought in the civil war.[125] Expanding on his reading of the revolution as "a racial conflict," Esplin writes that "Emiliano Zapata's Indigenous army stands out as a more overt example of the racial undertones of the Mexican Revolution. Unlike Madero and his followers, and later, the Constitutionalists and their armies, Zapata's army fought for a specific racial goal—the restoration of the ejidos or Indigenous communal lands in southern Mexico" (64). Other recent scholars who recognize the significant role played by Indigenous peoples during the Zapatista movement include Mark Kurlansky (2004) and, indeed, Gary D. Keller.[126]

All of these histories of Zapata are not immaterial to how we read Keller's novella. Womack's delivery of Zapatista's manifesto confronts the reader with a complex framing of a revolutionary text originally written during the Mexican Revolution: the Mexican government has invited a white academic from Harvard who was trained at Cambridge to give a lecture on Emiliano Zapata at a celebration for Cezar Chávez at the

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124 Padilla refers to a quote by Pedro Merminio, a Nahuatl-speaking Indigenous man from Xoxocotla, who stated that "All of us Indigenous people were with [Zapata], and he spoke against the discrimination by those who called us 'indios'" (21).

125 "Reading the Mexican Revolution against the grain," Esplin writes, "one could argue that it was actually a racial conflict whose first hero (Madero) used Mestizo and/or Indigenous armies (like Villa's) to overthrow a mestizo president (Diaz)" (64).

126 Mark Kurlansky acknowledges the participation of Indigenous peoples in the Zapatista pursuit of agrarian land reform: Zapata's followers "were agrarian Mexicans, either *mestizo* or from Indigenous non-Spanish-speaking tribes, of which there are still many in Mexico, fighting for land. His goal was to have the arable land of Mexico taken away from wealthy landowners and distributed equally among the peasants" (324).

American Pavillian at the Seville Expo on Columbus Day, 1992. To untangle the power dynamics that allow for Womack's prestigious presentation would require producing the scholarly equivalent of a Matryoshka doll. Like Ernest Hogan, Keller revels in marking the myriad ways that writers and artists appropriate Indigenous histories, figures and symbols.

Chávez and Zapata in 1966

Keller's narration of Womack's keynote presentation references many of the ways that non-Indigenous scholars, artists and political activists alike have appropriated Zapata's legacy for political causes in the second half of the twentieth century. We can recognize how Keller attends to all three such actors: Womack's scholarly casting of Zapata as the heroic avatar of a new generation at the Columbian quincentenary; Keller's own account of the quincentenary celebration in Seville as well as his resurrection of Zapata, two literary moves that recontextualize the leader's political agenda as a viable reformist model at the end of the twentieth century; and the fact that Womack's keynote speech is held in celebration of César Chávez and spoken to Chávez himself. After all, Chávez drew significant inspiration during the Delano Strike (1965-1966) from another political document famously signed by Emiliano Zapata during the Mexican Revolution: Chávez, along with Luis Valdez, modeled their 1966 Plan Del Delano after Zapata's 1911 Plan Del Ayala.

The parallels are striking: Keller's Womack recites a Manifesto written by Zapata in 1918 to incite reform at the end of the twentieth century; Chávez and Valdez redrafted

a political declaration by Zapata signed in 1911 to guide reform in the middle of the twentieth century. The keynote scene mirrors Chávez's own re-contextualizing of Zapata's political strategies. If Keller's novella cites how a historical text that aligned *mestizo* peasantry and Indigenous peoples in Mexico during the 1910s would serve as an effective model for building alliances amongst California farm workers in the 1960s, then Keller's novel also asserts that historical documents from the Mexican Revolution can mobilize similar political coalitions in the 1990s.

In the following section, I will contextualize Chávez's modeling of Plan de Delano after El Plan de Ayala alongside Chávez's overarching political goals. Keller explicitly juxtaposes his own narrative of the resurrection of Zapata alongside Chávez's historical use of Zapata's Plan Del Ayala. In other words, Keller aligns his strategic appropriation of Zapata, as well as his recovery of Zapata's Manifesto to the Mexican People, with Chávez's appropriation of El Plan Del Ayala. Therefore, to better understand Keller's literary employment of Zapata and his Plan de Ayala, we have to return to the historical context of the drafting of El Plan de Delano during the Chicano Movement in 1966. Chávez turned to Zapata's 1911 Plan de Anaya to advance a political agenda in the 1960s that demanded the reform of political and legal institutions in the US and mobilized a political coalition around class interests. Tellingly, while directed at domestic reform, we can also recognize early employments of human rights rhetoric in El Plan de Delano. Keller's speculative movement shares Chávez's investment in political and legal reform of existing institutions as well as mobilizing broad coalitions that share similar histories of labor exploitation. The primary difference is scope: Keller casts

Zapata as an avatar of international reform. Thus, the many histories of Zapata cited throughout *Zapata Rose in 1992* prepare the reader for the climax of the novella: it is only via multiple cultural and political mediations throughout the twentieth century that Zapata emerges as a hero of human rights at the turn of the twenty-first century.

On March 17, 1966, the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA) began a march from Delano, California, to the state capital of Sacramento.[127] This historic march, led by César Chávez, would span 250 miles and last 25 days. Referred to as a *pereginacion* (pilgrimage), the march was an extension of the Delano Grape Strike, which had begun in September of the previous year. The *pereginacion* from Delano to Sacramento employed both nationalist and religious rhetoric.[128] The rallying cry for the farmworkers was "*Justicia para los campesinos y viva la Virgen de Guadalupe!*" ("Justice for the farmworkers and long live the Virgin of Guadalupe") (Rosales 139). Throughout the 250-mile march, thousands of farm workers and students would join the protest in support of the Delano Grape Strike. Commenting on the political agenda of the *pereginacion*, Navarro writes that "the cardinal strategic intent was to garner general public support." Navarro identifies two additional goals of the march: to present the NFWA's complaints to the Governor of California and to encourage farmworkers across the country to join the growing union (327). The NFWA appealed to a nationwide

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[127] The NFWA would later become the United Farm Workers (UFW).

[128] Navarro describes the *pereginacion* as producing "unprecedented mobilization" of campesinos: "On a daily basis, rallies were held in the evenings at various farmworker communities along the way. The Teatro Compesino performed skits and playlets; the Plan de Delano was read; *corridos* (ballads), such as "Nosotros Venceremos" (the Spanish version of "We Shall Overcome"), were sung; and speeches made" (328).

audience. The NFWA was keenly aware of the power of public opinion to shape legal and political reform. As F. Arturo Rosales notes, "Chávez cultivated a Gandhi-like image that fascinated Americans, many of whom viewed with misgiving the rough-and-tough mainstream unions like the Teamsters" (138). By utilizing nonviolent tactics—such as marches like the *pereginacion* of 1966, regional and national consumer boycotts, and community organizing—the NFWA, under the leadership of Chávez, would promote a political agenda that imagined comprehensive reform to aid marginalized communities across the country. While the NFWA was primarily lead by Chican@ activists, it explicitly fought for the rights of workers regardless of their ethnic identity. This is a particular interesting moment during the Chican@ movement for Keller to cite: it provides Keller with a historical example of a Chican@ figure mobilizing a broad political coalition based on class interests.

One of the legacies of the march to Sacramento was the drafting of El Plan de Delano in March of 1966. Again, this plan was directly modeled after Zapata's Plan de Ayala. By recovering this history (of the drafting and inspiration of El Plan De Delano), Keller also recovers a model for building political alliances across different cultural and ethnic identities. This model does not rely on romanticization. While explicitly defending the rights of Chican@ workers, El Plan de Delano is aimed at improving labor conditions for a broad coalition of workers. Endorsed by the NFWA, El Plan was drafted by Luis Valdez and Chávez. As highlighted by the opening statement of the document, El Plan cites class solidarity before national or ethnic allegiance: "Plan for the liberation of the Farm Workers associated with the Delano Grape Strike in the State of California, seeking

social justice in farm labor with those reforms that they believe necessary for their well-being as workers in these United States." Grounded in class, the scope of the plan transcends ethnic identity. "We shall unite. We have learned the meaning of unity. We know why these United States are just that—united. The strength of the poor is also in union." Indeed, the plan aligns Chicano interests with the political interests of farm workers in general. "The majority of the people on our pilgrimage are of Mexican descent, but triumph of our race depends on a national association of farm workers." Therefore, this declaration reflects an investment in defending the civil and human rights of all exploited workers, regardless of race, in order to secure better working conditions specifically for Chican@ workers.

While El Plan may not explicitly cite human rights law, it certainly references human rights ideals. To mobilize a political movement defined primarily by class identity, El Plan employs the rhetoric of human rights: claiming that "We seek our basic God-given rights as human beings," the signatories of the declaration assert that "we are not treated with the respect we deserve as working men, where our rights as free and sovereign men are not recognized." The plan also quotes Benito Juárez—the famous politician who served as the president Mexico and the Governor of Oaxaca in the nineteenth-century—who wrote that "Respect for another's rights is the meaning of Peace." Notably, the rights that the plan are arguing for—first generation rights that are fundamentally political and civil in nature—are the same rights protected by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which was adopted by the UN General Assembly that same year in December of 1966. El Plan reflects

contemporaneous developments in human rights law and aligns itself with a particular set of human rights championed most by the US (i.e. first generation rights and rights acknowledged in the ICCPR). The Declaration explicitly targets the right to vote, fair wages and safe working conditions. The signatories of El Plan clarify the political demands: "We do not want the paternalism of ranchers; we do not want the contractor; we do not want charity at the price of our dignity. We want to be equal with all the working men in the nation; we want a just wage, better working conditions, a decent future for our children." Thus, it is not an argument for the right to work *per se*—a second generation right that is defended in the International Covenant on Social and cultural rights, not the ICCPR—but the right for equality for all farmer workers, whether Chican@ or not, within the US. Writing in an editorial published in *The Voice*, a newspaper produced by the Mexican American Political Association, Richard Forquer celebrates the political developments spurred by the march to Sacramento and the drafting of El Plan: "Never before, in the history of California, has any poverty stricken group dared to unite against an organization as large as that of the growers and even think success…Our history tells us that when a cause is just and human rights are concerned, people respond with yells of justice—and that we expect from this, the greatest strike in our history" (249). In 1966, Forquer identifies Chicano activists as champions of human rights for all workers.

As previously mentioned, El Plan de Delano was modeled after Emiliano Zapata's El Plan de Ayala, which was drafted during the Mexican Revolution. In struggling for social justice, both declarations position their political movements within an economic

world system. Each text mobilizes a broad political coalition that appeals to populations that have suffered from exploitative labor and/or land ownership policies propagated by European colonization of the Americas.

Commenting on the importance of the El Plan de Ayala, Keller describes it as "the chief document that took *zapatismo* from a local movement of protest in the south to a national movement to take over the federal government" (156). In this quote, we see Keller value the document for the ability of its rhetoric to change the scope of a movement for political reform from regional to national. In his appreciation of the document, Keller emphasizes that "among its major provisions were to restore the lands to communities that had lost them" (156). Keller cites three "core" articles—articles 6, 7 and 8—of the Plan de Ayala as representative of how Zapata conceptualized achieving land reform across Mexico. In these articles, Zapata demands that legal institutions respect the right of communal ownership of land—"so that the communities and citizens of Mexico may obtain common lands, colonies, and foundations for their communities"—and reject the forced privatization of territory. Article 6 of El Plan de Ayala is especially demonstrative of how Zapata aimed to use existing land titles to make legal claims in defense of his constituents:

> As an additional part of the Plan that we have established, we note: that the fields, timberlands, and water that the landowners, científicos, or bosses have usurped by means of their tyranny and corrupt laws will now come into the possession of the communities or citizens who have the corresponding titles for these properties from which they have been

> ejected through the bad faith of our oppressors, maintained by dint of firearms; and the usurpers of our lands who think they have a right to them will make their case before special tribunals that will be established upon the triumph of the Revolution.

For both Keller and Chávez, Zapata's documents offer a model for reform that engages existing legal documents and institutions. In addition, documents like the Plan de Ayala represent broad coalitions of people. After all, El Plan de Ayala was originally drafted in both Spanish and Nahuatl.

By comparing the introductory declarations of El Plan de Ayala and El Plan de Delano, we can see crucial similarities that reflect a shared strategy of appealing to a broad audience. Both plans speak directly to a global audience; and they do not call for secession from their nation-state but instead promote the legal and political reformation of existing nation-states. The authors of El Plan de Ayala begin their declaration:

> We who undersign, constituted in a revolutionary junta to sustain and carry out the promises which the revolution of November 20, 1910, just past, made to the country, declare solemnly before the face of the civilized world which judges us and before the nation to which we belong and which we call [sic, love], propositions which we have formulated to end the tyranny which oppresses us and redeem the fatherland from the dictatorships which are imposed on us, which [propositions] are determined in the following plan.

In comparison, El Plan de Delano begins:

> We, the undersigned, gathered in Pilgrimage to the capital of the State of Sacramento, in penance for all the failings of Farm Workers as free and sovereign men, do solemnly declare before the civilized world which judges are actions, and before the nation to which we belong, the propositions we have formulated to end injustice that oppresses us.

Both declarations appeal directly to the judgment of a global community. They seek (legal) legitimacy on an international stage. What is especially striking about this language is that while it calls for revolution, the revolution it imagines does not dismantle the United States. This is *not* a plan for secession. Therefore, when El Plan de Delano declares that "we shall pursue the Revolution we have proposed. We are sons of the Mexican Revolution, a revolution of the poor seeking bread and justice," the signatories are conceptualizing not the fragmentation but the reform of the US—and citing their confidence in receiving approval from the international community as justification for their political actions. In other words, El Plan de Delano, like El Plan de Ayala, does not reject universal values—both plans are models of universal justice and ethics.

Witnessing the Revolution

This second narrative arc in Keller's speculative text concludes by capturing the perspective of non-Indigenous *witnesses* to the emerging revolution that will be led by Emiliano Zapata and Soto y Gama. When the Mexican participants at the Seville assembly return to Mexico, they unexpectedly witness the beginning of a revolutionary movement comprised of numerous Indigenous nations from across the continent. Many

revolutionary acts occur: a small group of Indigenous people peacefully seize the Palenque national park, reclaiming it as Indigenous land; in San Pedro Tlaquipaque and Tonala, Indigenous craftspeople go on strike against low wages and the explotations of their cultural objects; and Indigenous groups have closed down the Cobá and Tulúm tourists sites in the Yucatan Peninsula. The biggest sign of political solidarity among Indigenous nations occurs in the center of Mexico City: Thousands of Indigenous people have assembled in the Zocalo Plaza; and thousands more, from locations further away on the continent, are on their way.

Keller narrates the revolutionary gathering in Zocalo from the perspective of agents of the Mexican government. And throughout the day's events, he consistently characterizes them as witnesses, not agents. One Mexican security official reports on the day's events, which began in Zapata's hometown of Anenecuilo: "First they marched out of the mountains and box canyons or Morelos. Then they massed at the Cuautla-Mexico freeway two kilometers out of Cuautla, cut the road and piled as many people as they could into every vehicle heading north. They're doing nothing violent, but they are requiring the drivers, mostly truckers, to take them [to the Zocalo]" (108). Furthermore, Indigenous nations in the United States are also participating. The official notes that "the entire Taos pueblo left home and is moving down the road to the capitol building" and that "other pueblos—Laguna, Santa Clara, Cochiti, who knows how many others—are on the move too, toward Santa Fe" (114, 115). It is a peaceful movement, inspired by Zapata's return from the grave, gathering support from Indigenous peoples across the continent.

Alfonso Caso y Casas, the head of national security of the Republic of Mexico, is nominally in charge of the PRI's military response. However, as he gathers more information on the day's events, he starts to identify with the peaceful protests. At the novel's climax, Caso y Casas steps into the Zocalo. Keller writes, "Caso y Casa staggered around the Zocalo for a little while longer, confused and disoriented rather like the bull in the corrida that's received the mortal wound but lingers on wobbly legs." At first glance, he has trouble relating to the scene unfolding in front of him, but soon Caso y Casas gains a new perspective on the gathering. In this scene, Caso y Casas is not an agent of change. Rather—not unlike Kevin Costner in *Dances With Wolves* (1990) or *McFarland, USA* (2015)—*he* is changed. "Something clicked with Caso y Casas," and he comes to this conclusion:

> The Amerindians, that is, his own people, his own ancestors, had five directions, did they not? Above the four cardinal points and prime vectors of the Western worlds that had known the fifth vector, the center. It was the direction that was missing in the Western world and to the Amerindians it was sacred. Together with the cardinal points, it completed one great circle: Cem-Anahuac. The Valley of Mexico in the center and the surrounding lands and waters. The Amerindians had returned to the center of the empire, which was at the same time the beating spiritual center of the human self. (118-119)

The desire to ground a universal model in Indigenous epistemology can be recognized in this passage. And yet I must also acknowledge that in this passage, such a desire to find

the universal with Indigenous ways of knowing spurs uncritical romanticizing of the Aztec empire. Thus, the conclusion of Keller's novella is, at best, frustrating. Keller participates in appropriative acts—which romanticize and generalize indigeneity—which are similar to other acts that are committed by the PRI that Keller harshly critiques at different sections in the novella.

Keller's novel, or Aztext, criticizes how nationalist movements appropriate Aztec mythohistories and yet, however aware the novel might be, it nevertheless actively appropriates Aztec imperial history as a sign of an emerging international political movement. Keller critiques the appropriation of indigeneity while appropriating indigeneity. I point this out not to condemn *Zapata Rose in 1992* as a paradoxical political dead-end, but to mark the ambivalence expressed by many Chican@ speculative texts towards Indigenous identities and epistemologies. The turn away from national paradigms in favor of international paradigms by Chican@ writers in the 1990s poses both possibilities and dangers for Indigenous peoples. As discussed in the previous chapter, during Chicano nationalism, indigeneity was often treated by Chicano activists, scholars and artists as only a tool for securing political and cultural self-determination for Chicano communities across the United States. This history demands that we attend to how effectively these Chican@ speculative texts promote international legal and/or political models that provide space for Indigenous peoples to represent and protect their own political and cultural interests. If *Zapata Rose in 1992* represents a turning point for imagining the scope of political reform in Chican@ literature, the novella also marks the entrenchment of an ideology, consolidated throughout the Chicano movement, that

enables the misappropriation of indigeneity. In its closing passage, the novella regresses to generalizing and romanticizing an Indigenous heritage at the expense of recognizing tribal specific histories and cultural systems. The novel must be read with a critical awareness of Keller's tendency to generalize about and romanticize Aztec culture and empire.

That the novel's progressive and regressive traits are so intertwined requires careful close-reading. The novella offers two different strategies towards recognizing and building alliances between mestizo and Indigenous peoples. Therefore, it is able to make important inroads in testing alternative literary strategies to build coalitions between Mexican, Chican@ and Indigenous peoples—and yet still reproduce deeply troubling acts of romanticizing and generalizing Indigenous identities and epistemologies. I challenge us to read the failure of the novella's conclusion not as a judgment against Keller's drawing from historical documents signed by Emiliano Zapata—such as the Mexican Manifesto or the Plan de Ayala—in order to mobilize political reform, but instead as a critical reminder of the temptations to romanticize Aztec imperial history and cultural systems. After all, these are two different strategies. Via Zapata's documents, Keller effectively marks how continental and indeed global economic systems have exploited an Indigenous diaspora over half a millennia. It is only during other passages in the novel, when Keller reverts to romanticizing a racial inheritance to Aztec empire, that his attempt at mobilizing an international political movement looks more like José Vasconcelo's model of *La Raza Cósmica* and less like César Chávez' political coalition during the Delano grape strike.

THE UNITED NATIONS OF ATZLÁN: AN INTERNATIONAL MONUMENT TO CHICAN@ REFORM IN JESÚS SALVADOR TREVIÑO'S "THE GREAT PYRAMID OF ATZLÁN"

In his 1995 short story "The Great Pyramid of Atzlán," Jesús Salvador Treviño realizes a Chican@ United Nations in the Arizona desert via the modern day recreation of a giant Aztec pyramid. Treviño narrates the creation of a pyramid that attracts an international set of people from across the globe. Unlike the dystopian states discussed earlier in this dissertation, the construction of the pyramid materializes a utopian community that provides shelter, work and food for anyone regardless of their ethnicity or nationality. The inclusive membership criteria of the pyramid mirrors the inclusive citizenship criteria practiced at Point Assinika in Gerald Vizneor's *The Heirs of Columbus* (1991). Also, similar to the use of casino money by Point Assinika to fund medical research, Treviño exploits global capitalism to fund the community-building project developed at the pyramid of Atzlan. However, unlike *The Heirs of Columbus*, in "The Great Pyramid of Atzlán" no boundaries are redrawn and no territorial jurisdiction is questioned. The borders of each settler colonial state in North America remain intact. Rather than challenging the borders of the settler-colonial state, the pyramid makes such borders irrelevant through institutional reform.

I end my analysis of Chican@ speculative fiction produced between 1990 and 1995 with Treviño's text in part to offer an example of a literary employment of Aztlán that looks very different than the political and/or cultural employment of Aztlán during the Chicano Movement. Throughout this chapter I explored how Chican@ speculative fiction sought new literary strategies—alternative to romanticizing and generalizing

indigeneity—to build coalitions between Chican@ and Indigenous Peoples. In my reading of "The Great Pyramid of Atzlán," I argue that Treviño historizes the symbol of Aztlán as a symbol manufactured by and representative of the Chicano Movement—and thus the text never claims ownership of or access to Aztec culture or history.[129] Treviño's Aztlán is a utopian space tethered to political goals of the 1960s. As such, Aztlán does not reference the Aztec empire nor does it privilege racial inheritance. Rather, in Treviño's short story, Aztlán recovers the goals and desires that founded the Chicano Movement. Treviño cites the idealism and hope for political reform via electoral participation that lead to the creation of the Viva Kennedy Political clubs of 1960.

This is a provocative claim. The short story certainly does not adequately address the long legacy of Chican@ Aztexts romanticizing Indigenous heritage for the benefit of Chican@ communities in the US. In addition, the argument relies on a subjective reading of how Treviño "fails" to reference any Aztec cultural symbol or historical event. For an Aztext, there is a remarkable absence of Indigenous mythohistory. Treviño makes no claim to Indigenous epistemology, whether justified by race or not. In comparison to my analysis, one could read this text as an extreme example of how Chican@ authors risk erasing Indigenous presence by creating Aztexts. The text invites subjective readings. However, I argue that Treviño uses Aztlán as a symbol to claim lost or stalled ideals from the beginning of the Chicano Movement in the early 1960s, an era that did not employ

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[129] This critical approach suggests that by the 1990s, some Chicano@ authors employed Aztec symbols not to romanticize a pre-Columbian past, but to cite political strategies and values of the Chicano Movement during the 1960s and 1970s. Moreover, this reading suggests that Aztlán had circulated enough in Chican@ political and literary spheres, and that enough time had passed since the Denver conference, that the symbol itself had taken on new symbolic value.

Aztlán as a political symbol. Therefore, the text challenges our perceptions of Aztlán and how we historicize the Chicano Movement. If we put critical pressure on how the text ultimately challenges histories of the Chicano Movement, we can see that Treviño is concerned with how the strategic employment of Aztlán—as a political symbol of Chicano self-determination embraced in the late 1960s and 1970s—obscured or favored certain political strategies. The text marks Aztlán as always already mediated by particular voices from the Chicano Movement, leveraging the fact that there never was a consensus on what Aztlán really symbolized. Treviño's short story attempts to recover strategies for electoral and political reform that were lost or marginalized by a particular model of Aztlán—an ethnocentric projection of Chican@ self-determination. Therefore, I suggest that the Atzlán of "The Great Pyramid of Atzlán" is not the Mexica homeland of the 9th century, but the reformist agenda that sparked the beginning of the Chicano movement in the early 1960s.

I read Treviño's repetitive use of "Aztlán" throughout his short story—without citation of any other Aztec cultural symbol or historical event—as producing a rhetorical effect similar to Gertrude Stein's most famous line "a rose is a rose is a rose is a rose." Reflecting on Stein's poetic phrase, Sharon Kirsch writes that "Stein's repetition offers a pedagogical imperative, inviting readers again and again into a potential process of meaning making" (67). R. Bruce Elder emphasizes the aesthetic effect of repetition in his reading of Stein's poem: "each successive instance of 'rose' is a qualitatively different phrase, and the differences among the instances…throws the word's material properties in relief. This has the effect of pushing its referential or signifying function into the

background" (220). Treviño's repeated reference to "Aztlán" reflects Stein's poetic experimentation with repetition, thus achieving results similar to those described by Kirsch and Elder. To expose our understanding of Aztlán as always conditional to historical context, Treviño undercuts the symbolic significance of the word by repeatedly referring to the pyramid's name as Aztlán without providing any content to the symbol. It simply is the "Pyramid of Aztlán." Again and again. For the majority of the narrative, he makes *the reader* identify Aztlán's value based on assumed knowledge. It is not until the very end of the narrative that Treviño provides us with his own political content to associate with the symbol of Aztlán. And it comes from an unexpected source: the Viva Kennedy Clubs of 1960.

Rebuilding Aztlán

The story begins when Samuel Samuels, the city editor of the *Los Angeles Times*, assigns Frank Del Roble to report on the building a giant pyramid in Arizona. Skeptical that this is just another trivial human-interest story—and hyperaware that he, the one Chicano reporter in the newsroom, is always assigned to report on Chicano culture—Del Roble grudgingly accepts the assignment. After landing in Tucson, he is surprised to discover that the pyramid is larger than he ever imagined. Standing over thirty stories tall, with a base that is a mile long (and it is not even close to being complete), the pyramid is visible from almost an hour away by car. When he finally reaches the pyramid, he meets Manuel Zapata, the architect of the project, who, as Del Roble describes, has "an emphatic…*Zapatista* mustache" (164). During his interview with Del Roble, Zapata

explains that the project started when he received grants from the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations to build "a modest, table-sized model of the foundation of the Teotihuacán pirámide" (166). However, these grants were just the beginning. With greater financial resources, Zapata reconceptualized the size of the pyramid to be much larger. Soon, the project receives federal investment from the Department of Housing and Urban Development to build a motel in the pyramid, which was followed by a million dollar loan from the Small Business Administration. Then the Labor Department offered to subsidize the hiring of full-time construction workers. Zapata accepts proposals from McDonald's, Hilton, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Pizza Hut, and Pollo Loco to be commercial tenants in the pyramid. To further increase their capital, Zapata lobbied for Latino politicians to change protectionist federal policies so that the pyramid could receive foreign investment from Japanese and German companies. The support to change federal law was secured when Latino politicians "argued to their more redneck supporters that the pyramid would displace Puerto Ricans and Mexicans from the big cities to the desert. That alone got us a lot of backing" (170).

In "The Great Pyramid of Atzlán," a modern day Emiliano Zapata gains autonomy for his community through the acceptance of federal and state money, and participation in commercial expansion and capitalist development. However, that people from all over the world start to show up to help build the pyramid—creating a multiethnic, multinational workforce—signals that the pyramid is more than a glorified mall in a southwestern desert. As Zapata notes to Del Roble, "they started to show up in campers, trailers and by the busloads: Hari Krishnas, gurus, pot smokers, pyramid-power

believers, artists, revolutionaries, newagers, and just plain middle-class all-American folks looking for a dream to believe in" (170). Drawing a global audience, the pyramid represents a Chican@ space characterized by inclusion rather than separatism; as Del Roble comments, "it looked like a microcosm of the United Nations" (170). In other words, the pyramid emerges as a *Chican@* United Nations. When asked why he built the pyramid in the first place, Zapata asserts that the pyramid is about "trying to make the best of our opportunities, building our own institutions, helping one another with dignity and *carnalismo*. And if we pull it off, then the world is open to us" (173). The assignment changes Del Roble's life. He quits his job at the *Los Angeles Times* to move to Arizona, where he starts a new paper produced by the pyramid called *The Daily Apex.* Eight years after first meeting Zapata, Del Roble details the enormous success of the pyramid in promoting Chicano culture and political interests: "the *pirámide* has created quite a worldwide stir that has helped us domestically as well. Before the *pirámide*, no one knew who or what Chicanos were. Now, we have twenty reps in Congress and a half-dozen senators. This year, all the newspapers are saying that the Carillo/Kennedy ticket can't lose" (175).

This short story by Jesús Salvador Treviño promotes a Chican@ political program through the reform of Eurocentric economic and political systems. In addition, by reading the pyramid as a metaphorical Chican@ United Nations, we can also identify how such a Chican@ized United Nations promotes a universal measurement of the individual human that does not privilege one's national identity—thus "The Pyramid of Aztlán" does not require national citizenship as a precondition to human rights. Rather, this Chican@

United Nations acknowledges and even defends transience and migration as a commonality across humanity that is inadequately recognized by the contemporary human rights paradigm as it stands. Like Guillermo Gómez-Peña and Robert Sanchez—from "A Letter from the U.S./Mexico Border"—Treviño employs borderland experience to guide political and legal reform via international networks.

Recovering the Reformist Bedrock of Aztlán

While nominally indebted to a symbol of the Aztec empire, "The Great Pyramid of Aztlán" does not draw from Aztec cultural and political systems to project a new international society in the Arizona desert. Instead, Treviño references much more recent sources to guide his characters and readers alike. Treviño recovers the reformist bedrock of his Pyramid Aztlán not from Aztec culture, but from the political organizations that grounded the Chicano Movement. That *High Aztech,* "The Great Pyramid of Aztlán," and *Zapata Rose in 1992* all conclude with direct references to political movements from the 1960s suggests that these authors are themselves not content with romanticizing Mesoamerican mythology to ground contemporary political and legal reform. Indeed, Hogan, Treviño and Keller—by recovering the reformist agendas that led to the 1968 Tlatelolco massacre, the Viva Kennedy Clubs of 1960, and the Plan Del Delano, respectively—successfully mark new sources for political mobilization. And, in the case of Trevino and Keller's texts, those sources include "pre-Aztlán" political organizations and documents from the early and middle 1960s.

Treviño concludes "The Great Pyramid of Aztlán" by predicting the triumph of the speculative "Carillo/Kennedy" presidential campaign. This presidential ticket is highly symbolic of the political agenda that underwrites Treviño's text. After all, the narrative concludes with electoral success on a national scale. This finale marks the text as advancing the reformation of the US via existing political institutions. Furthermore, by imagining a presidential campaign with a "Kennedy" on the ticket, Treviño specifically cites an earlier era of Mexican American political activism that emerged during the early 1960s. Treviño's Carillo/Kennedy ticket harkens back to the beginning of the Chicano Movement. Specifically, it references the emergence of Viva Kennedy Clubs (political organizations) and the "Kennedy Democrat" (a political identity) in Chican@ communities across the US. Thus Treviño recovers this era of increased participation by Chicano activists in national and local electoral campaigns as an inspiration for national (and international) reform at the end of the twentieth century.

During the 1960 presidential campaign, numerous Chicano activists and politicians worked together to help elect John F. Kennedy to the US precedency. As Ignacio García writes, "this mass movement to support the candidate from Massachusetts was spurred on by hundreds of political clubs known as the Viva Kennedy Clubs, which arose in many Mexican American communities nationwide" (5). Participants in the Viva Kennedy Clubs would come to be known throughout the decade in Mexican American communities as "Kennedy Democrats." García emphasizes that such clubs, while nominally affiliated with the Kennedy/Johnson ticket, were largely independent organizations: "They were an official arm of the Kennedy presidential campaign, though

they functioned mostly on their own; Mexican American leaders wanted to prove that the could do it on their own, and they wanted to remain independent of the state Democratic Party committees" (5). The organizers of Viva Kennedy Clubs intended to use the 1960 election as a springboard both to increase voter turnout in Chicano communities and to demand political reform at local and national levels. They did not want the demand for national reform to end with just the election of a (white) liberal Catholic president.

Commenting on the legacy of Kennedy's presidential campaign in 1960, Berrera recognizes that the election gave "rise to a different set of expectations. Many old and new Chicano political activists had participated in the Viva Kennedy Clubs, resulting in a new impetus for organizational activity…Kennedy's youthful liberalism and Catholic affiliation attracted Chicano political enthusiasm as no other recent presidential candidate had." Therefore, the overarching political goal of the Viva Kennedy Clubs, explains Garcia, was to direct this emerging political enthusiasm for Kennedy towards materializing subsequent institutional reform.[130] And while many of their political goals would not be achieved, the Viva Kennedy Clubs did indeed cause "a shift in the emphasis of many Mexican Americans from social reform to political participation" (8). As Carlos Muñoz, Jr. notes, the clubs were quite successful in mobilizing an unprecedented turnout among Mexican American voters for a presidential election. However, Muñoz also recognizes that the high turnout particularly benefited middle-class interests. He contends that "the 'Viva Kennedy' campaign in 1960 had been a watershed in the development of

[130] Garcia writes: "The Kennedy Democrats would politicize the Mexican American reform agenda and shift emphasis from educational and social reform to political and electoral participation. Inherent in this shift was the belief that they could introduce the Mexican American community to the electoral process and integrate their reform agenda into the larger liberal agenda" (6).

middle-class political organizations, since it marked the entry of their leadership into the arena of national politics for the first time" (55). Middle-class interests would dominate much of the political debate in Mexican American communities during the first half of the 1960s. The legacy of the Viva Kennedy Clubs is therefore complicated; the political clubs both mobilized and fractured Mexican American communities. Garcia explains:

> The Kennedy campaign caused a shift in the emphasis of many Mexican Americans from *social reform to political participation*. Voting and holding political office became the new avenue by which to continue reform activity. This participation in the national campaign would also shift—in the minds of Mexican American elites—the center of power from the local and state levels to the national level. More and more Mexican American reformers looked toward the federal government and the national Democratic leadership for the resolution of problems affecting the barrios. This new political perception magnified the detachment of the Mexican American middle class from the working-class community. Political participation, unlike social reform required citizenship, English proficiency (before bilingual ballots), some education, and Anglo American empathy. (Italics mine, 7)

Even after the Viva Kennedy Clubs disbanded, and new political organizations with similar goals[131] were founded, class divisions would persist.

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[131] Such as supporting the aforementioned shift "from social reform to political participation."

The largest of the organizations to form in the wake of the presidential election were the Political Association of Spanish-Speaking Organizations (PASO), based in Texas; the Mexican Americans for Political Action (MAPA), based in California; and the American Coordinating Council on Political Education (ACCPE), based in Arizona. Reflecting on the foundation of PASO, José Angel Gutiérrez writes that the organization was innovative during the early 1960s for numerous reasons. He specifically notes that "the name itself was controversial in that it stated up front that the group was political" (40) and that "the PASO name also created a new ethnic label, that of 'Spanish-Speaking,' and the organization was sometimes referred to as PASSO as a result" (41). However, Gutiérrez also contends that PASO and MAPA would not merge because the two organizations could not agree on a name: "The Texas group wanted to distance themselves from being Mexican. The California group wanted to embrace their Mexicanness" (41). In regards to the creation of the ACCPE, Navarro writes that "bickering and infighting that had occurred at the Phoenix PASO convention [a national convention aimed to coordinate and consolidate Viva Kennedy Clubs across the US] coupled with the tendency toward localism or parochialism, convinced the Viva Kennedy Club leadership and supporters in Arizona to form their own political organization" (280). Despite their differences, all three organizations would have success in mobilizing voters from Mexican American communities. PASO was instrumental in leading the political takeover of the town council of Crystal, Texas.[132] ACCPE achieved a similar

[132] In addition, as Navarro notes, in 1963 PASO leaders also "boasted that they had some twenty thousand dues-paying member and chapters in seventy counties" (280).

takeover by "electing five Mexicanos to the seven-member city council in Miamia, Arizona" (Navarro 291). And MAPA, which still exists today, won numerous electoral positions for their candidates. In 1962, they led successful efforts to elect Edward Roybal to the US Congress as well as John Moreno and Phil Soto to the California State Assembly. As Navaro writes, "these electoral victories were unprecedented, since no Mexicano from California had served in Congress since the 1880s, and none had served in the California state legislature since 1909" (274).

At the end of "The Great Pyramid of Aztlán," Treviño references this history of successful electoral campaigns lead by Mexican American political organizations in the early 1960s. His imagined "Carillo/Kennedy" presidential ticket endorses direct political engagement by running Chican@ candidates and encouraging voter turnout in predominantly Chican@ communities. And yet, this political reform movement is symbolized by Aztlán—a political symbol not conventionally associated with this earlier era, which was defined by increased participation in national and local elections. Rather, Aztlán, as previously discussed, emerged in 1969 as the dominant beacon of the Chicano movement after the drafting of El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán. This new era of political activism, by and large, supported different political and social strategies to defend the interests of Mexican American people than the Viva Kennedy Clubs and the organizations that developed in the immediate wake of the 1960 presidential election. Carlos Muñoz measures the difference between these two eras as the difference between generations. For Muñoz, the Viva Kennedy Clubs represented "the assimilationist and accommodationist perspective" of the Mexican American Generation. In comparison, the

following generation—the Chicano generation—sought "a new and radical departure from the politics of past generations of Mexican American activists" (15). Muñoz argues that the central objective of this generation was to create "new political institutions to make possible Chicano self-determination" (16). Armando Navarro narrates the transition from the Mexican American generation to the Chicano generation in starker terms:

> From 1966 to 1974, Mexicanos in occupied Azltan experienced the most dynamic transformation with the epoch of militant protest politics. The tumultuous and at times turbulent epoch rejected the politics of social action and replaced it with cultural nationalism, which was impelled by militant protest politics. Adaptation and accommodation-oriented politics and the ethos of the Mexican American Generation were discarded…all though initially they embraced some aspects of the Mexican American generation, by late 1968 a dialectical change occurred. Aztlán experienced the rise of a new dynamic political generation—that of the "Chicano Generation"—that was driven by the quasi-ideology of Chicanismo. (303)

In this passage, Navarro explicitly distinguishes the political goals of Mexican American Generation and the Chicano Generation. He also consistently employs the rhetoric of "Occupied Azltan" as the main mobilizing symbol for the latter generation.

However, other historians of Mexican American political activism in the 1960s and 1970s offer different appraisals of the distinctions between these two generations, presenting an alternative approach to understanding the political goals and strategies that were supported by the Chicano generation and the Mexican American generation. Such

appraisals suggest that the conceptual separation of these two generations is more misleading then helpful in understanding the development of Chican@ political activism. In comparison to histories of the era by scholars such as Navarro and Muñoz, Juan Gómez-Quiñones and Irene Vásquez characterize the Chicano movement as encompassing a more diverse set of goals. (They also conceptualize the Movement as occurring between 1966 and 1978, offering a different timespan than Navarro, who characterizes the duration of the movement as occurring from 1966 to 1974.) "In practice," write Gómez-Quiñones and Vásquez, "while some demands highlighted self-determination, some trends spelled out a conditional integration" (1). Arguing that the Chicano Movement "reflected a broad range of struggles demonstrating status quo, reformist, and radical tendencies" (2), Gómez-Quiñones and Vásquez carefully define the Movement as an era of increased political activism where "members of the Mexican American community proactively engaged intuitions of the larger US society" (1). With different Chicano activists and organizations simultaneously calling for a diverse if not contradictory set of demands—which included "immediate civic-self-determination, political integration, and social involvement"—we cannot presume that Chicano activists shared a single political agenda during the Movement.

In addition to challenging the desire to impose a uniform agenda on the diverse set of activists, artists and organizations that comprised the Chicano Movement, historical surveys since the 1990s have increasingly recognized continuities between the seemingly different political strategies adopted by the two generations. In his 1997 volume *Chicano! The History of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement*, F. Arturo Rosales marks a

through-line between the two generations by recognizing a shared, and therefore continual, commitment to institutional reform. Rosales claims that "the Mexican American generation has a far greater influence on the Chicano Movement than ever imagined…it succeeded in instilling a strong reformist agenda" (195). Comparing the Mexican American generation with the Chicano generation, Rosales asserts that "what distinguished the two eras was that the younger group turned to cultural nationalism instead of assimilation to define identity and freely used shock or militant tactics to pursue almost purely reformists objectives" (195). Significantly, in his appraisal of the shift between the Mexican American and Chicano generations, Rosales asserts a difference between endorsing assimilation and supporting a reformist agenda. In other words, one can pursue reform without assimilating.

In his book length analysis of the Viva Kennedy Clubs, Garcia makes a critical argument that while these clubs promoted reform, they were ultimately unsuccessful. "The reality was that the Kennedy Democrats had not engaged in any real reform movement," Garcia writes, "By campaigning among their people, most of whom were democrats, and promoting an agenda that did not fundamentally question American society, they avoided major debates among themselves and with established Democratic Party leaders" (166). Garcia also claims that organizations like PASO would succumb to a similar fate. In the end, "PASO simply became a forum for competing interests and a place to debate ideas on reform" (167). This insight by Garcia is especially informative for how I read Treviño's recovery of this era. Garcia suggests that we can both acknowledge the political shortcomings of the Viva Kennedy Clubs and organizations

like PASO and ACCPE, *and yet also* value the political ideals and attendant, if dormant, potential strategies for reform that such organizations conceptualized during the early and middle 1960s. Thus, "The Great Pyramid of Aztlán" is a recovery project that intends not to replicate an outcome of a political movement but rather to salvage a political idealism for reform.

Therefore, in "The Great Pyramid of Aztlán," Treviño encourages his readers to reconceptualize the symbolic utility of Aztlán: he transforms a towering symbol of Chicano ethnonationalism into a symbol of Chicano universalism (i.e. grounded in Chicano experiences and histories) that transcends ethnic identity and promotes class solidarity across national borders. This text demands that we rethink both the historical goals of Aztlán and its political utility as a symbol today. By recovering the reform spirit of the Viva Kennedy Clubs under the banner of Aztlán, Treviño provocatively connects two generations of political activists while boldly employing Aztlán as a symbol of political reform rather than ethnic inheritance to indigeneity. After all, the community at the Pyramid is as international as the United Nations. While the election is national, the presidential campaign is bankrolled financially and intellectually by an international community mobilized by the building of the Pyramid of Aztlán. This is the main distinction between Treviño's building of Aztlán and the building of Aztlán during the Chicano movement: in his speculative text, Treviño imagines successful political and electoral reform of the US as a direct result of international support, capital and pressure. And like all of the authors of utopian Chican@ fiction highlighted throughout this dissertation, he encourages us to think of reform in radical terms.

CONCLUSION

Looking towards an unknown horizon in "A Letter from the U.S./Mexico Border, Guillermo Gómez-Peña and Robert Sanchez write: "the birth pains of the new millennium are overwhelming. We don't know what will happen next. The amount, complexity, and intensity of the changes surpass our capability to digest them and codify them adequately." The text argues that "a new international society" must be the foundation of any political reform that succeeds at curtailing state-sponsored violence. As seen throughout the last three chapters, "A Letter from the U.S./Mexico Border" is not the only contemporaneous Chican@ speculative text that promotes the reformation of international legal norms to decenter the state as the central actor in international affairs. Challenging the primacy of the nation-state in securing human rights, "A Letter from the U.S./Mexico Border" is paradigmatic of dystopian and utopian speculative texts produced by Chican@ authors between 1990 and 1995. While the performance piece critiques the US as a settler-colonial state grounded on white supremacy, it does not posit an ethno-nationalist state as an effective political response to securing human rights for Chican@s. Rather, Gomez-Pena and Sanchez turn to "an international society" to defend the rights of minority populations throughout the Americas.

Is such a conception of a new "international society," which removes the nation-state as the primary guarantor of human rights, a purely utopian proposition? This chapter, in concert with the previous two chapters, asserts that many Chican@ speculative texts published in the 1990s imagine such a proposition as neither naïve nor unattainable. Instead, I argue that these texts offer conceptual models for legally

recognizing and politically defending human rights of individuals regardless of their citizenship status and irrespective of state sovereignty. Commenting on the state of international human rights law in 1996, Louis Henkin asserts that "the international system, still very much a system of independent states, has moved beyond state values towards human values and towards commitment to human welfare broadly conceived." Thus, Henkin defines emerging international human rights law at the end of the 20th century as "a revolutionary penetration of the once-impermeable state" (46).

Contextualizing these texts alongside the emergence of human rights law in the 1990s as the dominant paradigm for international humanitarian intervention, I assert that each text reflects universal human rights ideals and expresses optimism that international political coalitions can successfully intervene to protect minority populations and Indigenous peoples from human rights abuses perpetrated by nation-states. And by recovering these speculative texts and analyzing their "utopian" political programs, we can also better recognize the political ideals that underwrite the dystopian texts discussed in chapter two. In conversation with the previous section on dystopian states in contemporaneous chican@ speculative fiction, we can see a turn away from ethno-nationalism toward an embrace of international political and legal reform. Writing in 2005, Antonio Augusto Cancado Trindade articulates the legal stakes that I contend anchor Chican@ speculative fiction during this era:

> Traditional International Law as purely inter-State has led to abuse of power by those who held it. Although States keep on playing a predominant role at the international level, contemporary International

> Law has been enriched with the overcoming of the old inter-State dimension and the contributions of other subjects, such as international organizations, individuals and humankind. The end of the monopoly of international personality by States and the expansion of such personality at international level is a guarantee against the abuses of the past, reducing at international level the scope for oppression or tyranny. That abuses and crimes have been (and are) committed in the name of the public power of the State is wholly unjustifiable, as the State was originally conceived — it should not be forgotten — as promoter and guarantor of the common good.

In this passage, we see Trindade rejecting traditional international law (which was formalized in Europe in the 17th century) in favor of what he distinguishes as contemporary international law—an international system that aggressively recognizes human rights. Furthermore, while observing that "the State" was once viewed as "promoter and guarantor of the common good," Trindade decidedly shifts the responsibility to "other subjects" such as "international organizations, individuals and humankind." That Trindade identifies "humankind" as an agent of contemporary international law reflects this legal scholar's unequivocal embrace of universal human rights. This move to position contemporary international law, rather than the nation-state, as "promoter and guarantor of the common good" is reflected in each of the texts discussed in this chapter—especially the belief that international political coalitions can mobilize support for political and legal reform to protect the rights of minority and

Indigenous peoples. I contend that this shift from a national to an international stage is especially apparent in utopian fiction written be Chican@ authors.

Conclusion

Throughout this dissertation, I analyze how Chican@ and Indigenous speculative fiction published in the early 1990s enacted decolonial approaches to law by fostering international coalitions. This study demonstrates that speculative fiction is particularly suited to servicing narratives of legal reform. It also identifies how the increased engagement with international law and the production of speculative fiction in the early 1990s are coterminous phenomena. With an understanding of the legal and generic foundations of contemporary Chican@ and Indigenous speculative fiction, we can better identify similarities and differences among contemporaneous speculative literatures. Ultimately, I hope this dissertation can be a resource for readers exploring the rich speculative potential of contemporary Indigenous and Chican@ speculative fiction.

That increased interest in international law and speculative fiction occurred simultaneously across Indigenous and Chican@ literatures should not be surprising. To write speculative fiction is to presume the coexistence of multiple epistemologies. This trait is what originally distinguished the genre from conventional science fiction narratives in the 1960s. It is also why the genre lends itself so well to mobilizing international coalitions and reconceptualizing international law. Recalling Samuel Delany's theory of speculative fiction, each novel discussed in this dissertation shares a signal trait of the genre: as referenced in the introduction, Delany distinguishes speculative fiction for "the breadth of vision it affords" and "the complex interweave of [the] multiple visions of man's origins and his destinations" (146). Authors of speculative

fiction demonstrate and recover the existence of other ways of being and understanding unknown to the reader. Conceptualized at the intersection of literature and law, this dissertation examines speculative novels that enact legal reform by respecting and employing distinct epistemologies of Indigenous and Chican@ peoples.

Significantly, the consideration of alternative epistemological frameworks is not just a hallmark of speculative fiction from this era. Over the last twenty-five years, Chican@ and Indigenous authors have increasingly employed speculative genres to create literary forums that allow for the recovery and/or articulation of numerous epistemologies alternative to Eurocentric systems of understanding.[133] Rather than replicating conventional science fictional narratives grounded in Victorian-era science and sociology—which, as discussed in the introduction of this dissertation, project linear progressions towards monolithic systems (social, political and legal)—these novels disrupt hegemony by referencing or imagining alternative ways of being. By examining the political motivations and legal aims of Chican@ and Indigenous speculative fiction published in the early 1990s, this dissertation historicizes the origins of a vital contemporary literary movement. Thus, this dissertation both identifies a cohort of likeminded authors that have yet to be grouped together and encourages further

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[133] Recent Indigenous and Chican@ speculative novels include Daniel Wilson's *Robogenesis* (2014), Manuel Gonzales' *The Miniature Wife and Other Stories* (2013), Rudy Ch. García's *The Close of Discarded Dreams* (2012), Blake Hausman's *Riding the Trail of Tears* (2011), Laurence Gonzales' *Lucy* (2011), Rosaura Sánchez and Beatrice Pita's *Lunar Braceros 2125 – 2148* (2009), Sherman Alexie's *Flight* (2007), Drew Hayden Taylor's *The Night Wanderer* (2007), LeAnne Howe's *Miko Kings: An Indian Baseball Story* (2007), Daniel Heath Justice's *The Way of Thorn & Thunder Trilogy* (2005-2007), Sesshu Foster's *Atomik Aztex* (2005), Celu Amberstone's *Refugees* (2004), Stephen Graham Jones's *The Bird is Gone A ~~Monograph~~ Manifesto* (2003), Nalo Hopkinson's *Midnight Robber* (2000), Archie Weller's *Land of the Golden Clouds* (1998), and Zainab Amadahy*'s The Moons of Palamares* (1997).

scholarship on how and why this literary movement has continued well into the twenty-first century.

In contrast to contemporary Indigenous and Chican@ speculative fiction, speculative fiction written by canonical white male authors often presumes the primacy of Euro-American culture—even when critiquing existing social, legal and/or political systems.[134] David Foster Wallace may have set *Infinite Jest* (1996) in a future marked by the territorial transformation of both the US and Canada, yet the social imagination of his novel is very much contained by Eurocentric epistemologies. Depictions of gender, race, disability and consumption are all informed by settler-colonial logic. If Wallace advances many trenchant critiques of Euro-American culture, he does so without identifying alternative sources for reforming or replacing bankrupt social systems and institutions. Thus, Wallace's novel is less speculative—of the past and/or the future—and more representational of the here and now.

Surprisingly, in an epic novel (1,079 pages long) that imagines the political transformation of settler-colonial states across North American, Wallace specifically references Indigenous cultures only two times. Early in the novel, the reader learns that Hal Incandenza, one of the protagonists of the novel, has Indigenous heritage. As Wallace writes, Hal's great-great grandmother had "Pima-tribe Indian S.W. blood" and his father as a young man was "darkly tall" and had "high flat Pima-tribe cheekbones" (101). This is the only reference of Hal being a descendent of the Pima tribe. Four

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[134] To be sure, there are many white male authors of speculative fiction who effectively recognize and support non-Eurocentric epistemologies, including Kim Stanley Robinson, Paolo Bacigalupi, and Neal Stephenson.

hundred and fifteen pages later, Wallace notes that Hal avoided his therapist because she "always wants to probe him on issue of space and self-definition and something she keeps calling the 'Coatlicue Complex'" (516). Hal's therapist insists on applying a psychological framework structured around the Aztec figure of Coatlicue. Curiously, Wallace concludes this sentence with a footnote. If the reader looks up the footnote (number 216), she will only find two words: "No clue" (1036). What is Wallace up to with these two references? In the former reference, he is likely parodying white people who make vague claims to a distant Indigenous heritage. In comparison, the later reference can be read as Wallace parodying the appropriation of Aztec mythohystory by Euro-American doctors to diagnose contemporary psychology disorders. Considering the brevity of "no clue" alongside Foster's other footnotes, many of which stretch beyond ten pages, we can interpret Wallace as succinctly disregarding her use of the "Coatlicue Complex" within footnote 216.

Such critiques are similar to those produced by the speculative fiction of Ernest Hogan and Gary Keller. And yet, as those texts demonstrate, critiquing appropriation does not have to extinguish speculation on how to foster intercultural and international discourse. In contrast, Wallace's critiques conclude with dead-ends: the two-word footnote "no clue" rejects dialogue and Hal's Indigenous heritage is surprisingly never cited again over the following 900 pages. Ultimately, to not have to offer alternative models for intercultural and international discourse is a privilege that Wallace can afford.

We can see a similar favoring of critique over speculation in Philip Roth's *The Plot Against America* (2004). In this novel, Roth posits an alternative history of World

War II to dramatize the dangerous consequences of affording ethno-nationalist movements political power in the US. By narrating the election of Charles Lindbergh as president of the US from the perspective of a Jewish family in New Jersey, the novel produces an effective allegorical critique of the institutionalization of anti-Semitism. However, Roth's alternative history, like Wallace's *Infinite Jest*, offers the reader a vision of what nation-states in North America *should not become* rather than what nation-states *could become*. In other words, the novel forecloses on old worlds rather than exploring new ones. This existential dilemma—knowing what not to do but not knowing what to do—is likewise reflected in speculative fiction by Cormac McCarthy and Don DeLillo. In both *The Road* (2006) and *White Noise* (1985), environmental catastrophes delimit the adaptability and sustainability of Eurocentric epistemologies without referencing other ways of understanding. The failure of Euro-American epistemologies leaves the white male protagonists of these two novels without any functional social or legal systems for understanding the world.

When contextualized alongside the authors and theorists analyzed throughout this dissertation, we are able to recognize how authors like Wallace, Roth, McCarthy, and DeLillo—a veritable Mount Rushmore of contemporary white male literary icons—leave *the speculative* out of speculative fiction. Even while manipulating the borders and histories of settler-colonial states, the narratives of these texts firmly operate within the intellectual parameters settler-colonial logic. To recall Joseph Slaughter's critique of popular human rights narratives, these authors are indeed hamstrung by "the historically nationalist limitations of our literary imaginations" (324). However, as demonstrated

throughout this dissertation, not all literary imaginations are limited by Eurocentric understandings of nationhood and law.

In order to indicate the direction in which I plan to take my book project, I will conclude here with a brief discussion of how Sherman Alexie (Spokane/Coeur d'Alene) imagines decolonial strategies in his speculative fiction to build coalitions between Indigenous and non-Indigenous protagonists. In his short story "South by Southwest" (2000), Alexie takes aim at the limited imaginations of white males in the US—imaginations all-too-frequently shaped by settler-colonial conceptions of race, gender and national identity. The story begins with a crime: a white man named Seymour holds hostage the lunch-hour crowd of an International House of Pancakes in Spokane, Washington. However, Seymour does not consider himself a criminal. He sees himself as a hero. After ordering his hostages to lie on the floor—but instructing "the cooks to keep flipping the pancakes and pressing the waffles, to make sure the bacon and eggs didn't burn"—Seymour introduces himself as the "Gentleman Bandit." Ever aware of his public image, he repeats the name multiple times and even requests that his hostages pass his name along to local television news programs. Further elaborating on his identity, Seymour offers lengthy descriptions of his motivations: he is both the "Man With Scotch Tape Wrapped Around His Broken Heart" and the "Man Who Was Looking For Love."Alexie is careful to note that Seymour's presumed control over the media representation of his crime betrays his position of privilege within settler colonial society: "He was a white man and, therefore, allowed to be romantic." Seymour never doubts that he can be the author of his own heroic narrative—and Alexie makes sure the reader does

not forget this.

After introducing himself as the "Gentleman Bandit," Seymour explains to his hostages that he is about to embark on a "nonviolent killing spree" to Arizona. In response to his proposed journey, the hostages all "ooh" and "ahh." Seymour is not surprised; he expected a positive reaction. As Alexie explains, "[Seymour] knew that everybody loves Arizona because Arizona is potentially dangerous. A man could strap a pistol to his hip and walk unmolested through the streets of Phoenix." After successfully establishing his cowboy ethos, Seymour takes one single dollar from each of his hostages and shares his last demand: he needs a companion to join him on his journey to Arizona. Critically, he stipulates that the companion must agree "to fall in love with him" along the way. He then waits for one of his hostages to volunteer. Finally, one comes forward: "From the floor, a fat Indian man raised his hand. He wore black sweatpants and a white T-shirt embossed with a photograph of Geronimo. 'I'll go with you,' said the Indian man." Thus Alexie reimagines the original meeting of Tonto and Lone Ranger as a romantic coupling at gunpoint.

When the Indigenous man volunteers, Seymour immediately interrogates his new recruit's sexual identity. He asks him, "Are you gay? I'm not gay. Are you gay?" By foregrounding their introduction with Seymour's appeal to heteronormativity, Alexie exposes Seymour's settler-colonial imagination as structured on a homo/heterosexual binary.[135] However, the Indigenous man responds to Seymour's interrogation with a

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[135] In *Epistemology of the Closet* (1990), Eve Sedgwick identifies the Western bedrock of understanding identity since the late 18th century as "the world-mapping by which every given person, just as he or she

measured response: "No, sir, I am not homosexual, but I do believe in love" (59). He neither aligns himself with a non-Native queer identity nor assumes a heterosexual one. His move effectively sidesteps settler colonial categories of sexuality and calls attention to Seymour's assumption that such categories are natural. Via his actions, the Indigenous man marks Seymour's limited imagination while setting the intellectual conditions necessary for a speculative exploration of decolonized sexuality.

After considering the Indigenous man's response, Seymour accepts him as his partner and gives him the new name of "Salmon Boy"—a name that refers to the man's tribe and yet minimizes the character's agency at the same time. Telling of how both race and sexuality inform and fortify projects of settler colonialism, questions of race immediately follow questions of sexuality during Seymour's interrogation. Further exploiting his parallel roles of hostage-taker and Euro-American subject, Seymour asks Salmon Boy, "You're an Indian, ain't you?" Salmon Boy responds to his inquisitor, twice in the affirmative and with an assertive rejoinder: "Yes, I am, yes, I am. Do you have a problem with that?" Seymour answers by insisting that Salmon Boy assume a stereotypical Plains Indian role. "Only if you're one of those buffalo hunters," Seymour says, "I can't have a nomad in my car. You just can't trust a nomad." In his response, Seymour both expresses anxiety about alternative ways of being—via his rejection of nomadism—and mistakenly contrasts buffalo hunting with nomadic cultures. Seymour wants Salmon Boy to match his ignorant conceptions of Indigeneity. Salmon Boy

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[is] necessarily assignable to a male or female gender, [is] considered necessarily assignable as well to a homo- or a hetero-sexuality" (6).

responds to Seymour's apprehension by stating, "I come from a Salmon tribe and therefore I am a dependable man" (59). The interrogation ends here. There is no further inquiry into Salmon Boy's tribal specific self-identification. His claim to being dependable is accepted. Seymour then helps Salmon Boy stand up, an act that Alexie contextualizes, with an expected measure of Alexian cheekiness, as a international act of solidarity: "They stood together in the half-light of the International House of Pancakes" (59).

Seymour may be holding a gun, but he is hardly a paradigm of control. If, as Andrea Smith suggests, "the central anxiety with which the Western subject struggles is that it is, in fact, not self-determining," Alexie's depiction of the robbery exposes Seymour's insecurities as a self-determined, white subject (43). Thus Alexie undercuts the presumption of Western "universality and self-determination," what Denise Ferreira da Silva argues is the central tennet of European subjectivity. Silva argues that to embody and fortify Euro-American ideals in particular Euro-American bodies, racial difference is leveraged as self-defining: "the racial subaltern subject is placed before (in front of) the ethical space inhabited by the proper national subject" (53). That Alexie reverses this formula is telling of the text's political impulse; he presents a Euro-American crisis and consequently desire for self-determination before the Native American body is even introduced into the scene. Seymour is desperate for an identity, and his criminal actions are measured not by violence or greed, but by the desire for control:

> In control, and because he wanted to be charming and memorable, Seymour kicked open the door to the kitchen and told the cooks to keep

> flipping the pancakes and pressing the waffles, to make sure the bacon and eggs didn't burn, and keep the coffee fresh.
>
> This was Spokane, Washington, and he wanted the local newspaper to give him a name. Seymour wanted to be the Gentleman Bandit. He wanted to be the Man With Scotch Tape Wrapped Around His Broken Heart. (57)

With each sentence in the opening scene, Seymour struggles with individual self-determination: he orders people around; he desires control over the restaurant; and he wants to dictate how he is represented by the press and the public.

In the process of unsettling Seymour's identity, Alexie carves out a space for Salmon Boy and Seymour to imagine alternative social systems and processes of identity formation. Together, the two depart the International House of Pancakes on their "nonviolent killing spree" to Arizona. As soon as they get into Seymour's 1965 Chevrolet Malibu to make their getaway, they discuss their first kiss:

> Well, then, said Salmon Boy. Do you think we should kiss now?
>
> It seems like the right time, don't it? Asked Seymour. He licked his lips.
>
> Yes, it does, said Salmon Boy. He wished he had a mint.
>
> They kissed, keeping their tongues far away from each other, and then told each other secrets.
>
> Seymour said, When I was eleven years old, I made a dog lick my balls.

> Did you like it? Asked Salmon Boy.
>
> No, I threw up all over the mutt, said Seymour, and then it ran away.
>
> That's what happens when you get too far into love.
>
> When I was fifteen, said Salmon Boy, I stole eighty dollars from my grandma. My mom and dad never knew. But my grandma must have, she had to have, because she never talked to me again.
>
> And then she died, said Salmon Boy. (60)

This scene is highly speculative. They are not able to clearly define their desires, and yet they are eager to act on them. Moreover, the kiss, more surreal than erotic, instigates the two men's sharing of painful or embarrassing childhood memories. The scene is definitively not from the screenplay from John Wayne's *The Searchers;* and Seymour's Western will not turn out the way he intends. He will not walk down the dangerous streets of Phoenix, a paradigm of cowboy masculinity with a six shooter strapped to his waist. Nor will Arizona be his final destination. The Lone Ranger may have had an Indigenous sidekick, but they certainly never kissed (at least not on screen). By agreeing to fall in love, their partnership not only breaks settler-colonial expectations of sexuality, it instigates a radical change to their worldviews.

Seymour and Salmon Boy's journey towards the American southwest is driven by an overriding utopian impulse. If "South by Southwest" critiques processes of identity formation within social systems of settler colonialism, delimiting the cognitive constraints that restrict the imagination of a romantic relationship between a white man

and a Native American man, the story searches for sexual and familial models outside of the settler colonial state—both literally outside of its borders and figuratively outside of its social systems and cultural institutions. After holding the lunch crowd at another restaurant hostage, they continue their journey beyond the Mexican border. As Alexie writes in the final passage of the story, their new destination is not yet clear:

> They held a McDonalds in Tuscon, Arizona, hostage.
>
> Salmon Boy stared down into his coffee cup and saw a blue man with a gun.
>
> Oh, said Salmon Boy. He said, Oh, as he rose to his feet and stood on the table beside Seymour. They were men in love with the idea of being in love.
>
> Please, he said. He said, please.
>
> Seymour took all the money his victims could spare, and then he took Salmon Boy's hand, and they ran outside into all the south and southwest that remained in the world. (75)

This new abstract destination—"all the south and southwest that remained in the world"—can perhaps best be identified as what Jose Muñoz has described as Queer Futurity (1). Defining queerness as "an insistence on [the] potentiality or concrete possibility for another world", Muñoz stresses the analytic strength of a queer aesthetic to think and imagine outside of our current social and political systems. For Muñoz, queer futurity is "all about desire, desire for both larger semiabstractions such as a better world or freedom but also, more immediately, better relations within the social that include

better sex and more pleasure" (30). Outlaws at the US/Mexican border, Seymour and Salmon Boy share such desires.

As Seymour and Salmon Boy's journey becomes unmoored from Seymour's original desire to become a cowboy in Arizona, it is a direction rather than a location that propels them forward. Therefore, the charting of decolonization, like utopia, is best measured by process rather than destination. In theorizing decolonial resistance as a process, Qwo-Li Driskill writes: "I don't see decolonization as a process that necessarily ends in the clearly defined 'postcolonial' states of South Asia, Africa, and other parts of the world." In comparison to these postcolonial contexts, Driskill characterizes decolonization as the "ongoing, radical resistance against colonialism that includes struggles for land redress, self-determination, healing historical trauma, cultural continuance, and reconciliation" (69). Beginning with a scene set in an International House of Pancakes, "South by Southwest" posits a similarly broad scope for decolonization. The lack of a destination allows Alexie to incorporate all of the south/west covered by Salmon Boy and Seymour while approaching their utopian horizon. In other words, the decolonial destination of their non-violent killing spree is the decolonization of an entire hemisphere.

"South by Southwest" is a text that speculates how to foster decolonial thinking. As such, Alexie's short story can be read as an allegory for the political value of producing speculative fiction. As Seymour and Salmon Boy proceed on their decolonial journey across "all the south and southwest that remained in the world," they are chased by American law enforcement. Alexie frames the speculative relationship between

Seymour and Salmon Boy as dangerous for the US government. Moreover, Alexie structures a temporal relationship between speculative fiction and structural change: throughout the narrative, law enforcement follows behind Seymor and Salmon Boy's speculative acts. Thus, to spur decolonization in what Alexie projects as the global southwest, speculative narratives must set the pace for social and political change across the Americas.

Published at the turn of the twenty-first century, "South by Southwest" represents a continual investment in speculative fiction by Indigenous and Chican@ authors. The speculative fiction boom that began in the early 1990s would not die out. Indeed, over the last two decades, Alexie has consistently published speculative fiction.[136] His novel *Flight* (2007) is particularly representative of recent developments in Indigenous speculative fiction. Michael, the protagonist of the novel, is an orphan who is Indigenous and Irish American. He has spent the majority of his childhood living with various foster families. Early in the novel, after running away from his most recent foster home, Michael plans to commit a massive act of violence in the lobby of a bank in downtown Seattle. However, as soon as he pulls the trigger of his gun in the bank, Michael's consciousness is teleported into the body of white FBI agent investigating the American Indian Movement in the 1970s. Throughout the novel, Michael will teleport into four more bodies: an Indigenous boy at Little Big Horn in 1876; a white "Indian tracker" working for the U.S. in the nineteenth century; a white flight instructor from Chicago

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[136] Alexie's speculative fiction includes the novels *Reservation Blues* (1995) and *Flight* (2007), as well as the short stories "Captivity" (1993), "Distances" (1993), "Sin Eaters" (2000), "Dear John Wayne" (2000), and "Ghost Dance" (2003).

who inadvertently trained a terrorist; and Michael's own father in the present day. By teleporting into these five bodies, Michael learns about significant events in settler-colonial history through first-hand experiences. Moreover, he gains insight into the subjectivities of different people that participated in these events. Assuming different ethnic and national identities throughout the narrative, Michael gains a broad understanding of settler-colonial institutions and policies—an understanding attainable only by incorporating several different perspectives.

Like Indigenous and Chican@ speculative fiction from the early 1990s, *Flight* is committed to fostering international coalitions. Numerous Indigenous nations are referenced as existing alongside settler-colonial states in the novel. However, the coalitions that are formed in *Flight* are largely interpersonal. In each body, Michael confronts characters that claim a different nationality than the national identity of the particular person he momentarily possesses. In addition, Michael's five teleportations represent and amplify Michael's multinational and multicultural identity as an Indigenous and Irish American. While Alexie imagines international coalitions and networks between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in *Flight*, he is less concerned with the transgression of state borders and more interested in crossing distinct identities. Transposing multiple national identities onto a single protagonist, Alexie compresses an international society into the figure of a single character.

If Alexie endows his protagonists in both "South by Southwest" and *Flight* with a certain allegorical charge—citing violent histories and exploratory relationships between distinct nations—he also depicts his protagonists as experiencing unique and personal

narratives. The national and international politics of these two speculative texts are characterized by personal and familial dramas. Alexie's speculative fiction signals a change in speculative fiction by Indigenous and Chican@ authors at large. Over the last two decades, Chican@ and Indigenous authors have increasingly supported and represented international political coalitions and networks by dramatizing the social systems of local communities. As Chican@ and Indigenous speculative fiction continues to develop in this century, we must recognize new strategies employed by authors to posit alternative epistemological frameworks. Genre transformations, such as the shift in scope from hemispheric and continental stages to local stages, demand critical interrogations by scholars of both Chican@ and Indigenous studies. How are multiple epistemologies imagined or recovered? What roles do legal institutions play? How are non-nation-state actors protected—via human rights law or by other means? By tracking these questions throughout the last three decades of Chican@ and Indigenous speculative fiction, we can better recognize and harness emerging manifestations of decolonial thinking.

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