



# POSDATA

## POSTSCRIPT

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As I face the task of writing the closing section to this collection of creative and critical pieces, I consider the available genre. I have decided to title my piece “postscript,” *posdata*, rather than “postface” or “afterword.” Whereas the latter genres bear an explicit connection to the main text, postscripts address what has been left out. The wide variety of genre, the objectives, the theoretical positions, and aesthetic sensibilities make the volume extremely rich and complex but for that reason extremely difficult to grasp as a totality. Postscripts merely add a remainder. To invoke the Derrida of *Archival Fever*, what remains binds us to what has been suppressed, when not repressed in the archive. What remains pertains to the category of the *unforgettable*, a memory without certain inscription. As a postscript, this brief text seeks to address the anonymity of all those voices and imaginations that make a difference in their interaction with the structures of power. I am simply adding a word to Mónica González’s invocation of the millenarian Ñanderuvusú in the epigraph to her introduction to this volume.

Along with the nameless creators, speakers, all those that the powerful draw from but also all those who speak and tell stories, the nameless include the readers without whom the authored texts would remain dead. To the nameless belong all those cultural artifacts that genealogy and remembrance cannot appropriate. By remembering the ancients and all those who have been ignored (not known rather than willfully negated), genealogies also constitute forms of erasure. Reminders partake of what erasures suggest in their silencing. However necessary and universal, genealogies select and parcel the whole in their memorialization and monumentalization of the past. And this is common both to hegemonic and counter-hegemonic practices of memory. The silenced will inevitably haunt those privileged with the authority to name. Whether in the mode of creative geniuses or of political protagonists (all types first conceived with the invention of the Renaissance), anonymous voices remain *without* (outside and lack) hegemonic historical genealogies; their counter-hegemonic counterparts inevitably reproduce the structures of exclusion.

However necessary the periodic reshuffling of names and dates might be, the nameless form a category of their own that cannot be merely incorporated into the genealogical programs in one more appropriative gesture. Regardless of the best of intentions to establish ties of solidarity, their inclusion in history entails an institutionalizing framework.

I will call forth the anonymity of the *tlacuilos* and artist who painted and sculpted pictorial codices and sculptures, but also the insurgents who resisted oppressive institutions, and invented spaces of freedom before and after the European invasion of the Americas. Among the nameless insurgents we may single out the Zapatista *comandantes* of the late twentieth-century insurrection in Chiapas—the children, men, and women, the creators of beauty in resisting communities, in their *caracoles*. In their everyday practices Communities redefine territories and the exercise of political power. It is perhaps unfair to categorize the *caracoles* or *Juntas de Buen Gobierno* as communities-in-resistance given that these communities and political structures do not react to power. They exemplify new forms of conducting politics and revolutionary struggles while remapping social and territorial spaces. The *caracoles* constitute communes—not unlike the Paris Commune of 1871 which constituted autonomy from the State (so memorably chronicled by Marx in the *Civil War in France*), though with their own *imaginary* grounded in millenarian Mesoamerican political and cultural—that administer territories with forms of social organization designed to avoid the corruption that accompanies State formations and their institutional histories. The political maxims of *mandar obedeciendo* and *para todos todo, para nosotros nada* capture the communist ethos that defines the indigenous spirit of their struggles. These maxims best exemplify the anonymity of nameless. In Zapatista murals we find the images of Quetzalcoatl, Emiliano Zapata, and Ricardo Flores Magón coexisting within one single creative flow. If these are names of spiritual, agrarian and anarcho-communist leaders, their position in the community murals is one that coexists and overlooks the everyday life practices of play, work, political meetings, schooling and armed insurgency that define the communalism of the *caracoles*. These figures capture what is meant by *Votán-Zapata*, the combination of the most ancient with the most modern, *el guardián y corazón del pueblo*, which resides

in the heart of every member of the community.

In the effort to convert and rule indigenous peoples in the Americas, missionaries and bureaucrats asked native informants to produce visual artifacts that recorded religious, topographic, botanical, historical, and cultural information. In fact, in some instances the project sought a visual record of the totality of *las cosas de la Nueva España* (as in the title of Bernardino de Sahagún's ethnographic masterpiece). I remain cautious of speaking of *representation* and even of *description* since the pictorial practices of the indigenous painters/scribes (in some instances the question remains whether we should speak of *pinturas* or *escrituras*) should not be understood in categories that first emerged in Europe in the early modern period. Depiction seems the least problematic, even within Europe, since it falls within a transitional moment in the conceptualization and practice of representation. We face the task of addressing these terms with a special emphasis on how the request to make "indigenous culture" visible in verbal and pictorial texts involved the assumption that the indigenous informant shared a visual *habitus* still in a formative phase in Europe. To what extent we can speak of the native painter as making visible the emerging European system of representation? This involved conceptualizing the European *habitus* from within a Mesoamerican *habitus*. In responding to the request to produce images of self and culture, the native painter incorporated European forms within a practice of quotation that we should not assume implied an internalization of the pictorial values of the early modern period. This entails capturing the imaging of the European imagination from afar. From this perspective we can paraphrase the Andean Wuaman Puma, and say "y no hubo colonización," and there was no colonization. In quoting European perspective, but also genre, which should not be confused with mimicry, there was no internalization of the epistemic and ontological values. In these native texts we witness a return of the gaze that makes the European regime of truth visible. As such, we face visual instances that at once belonged to the Early-Modern-Eyes cultural formation (because of the time frame), but cannot be merely reduced to a variety of European forms (alternative or not).

The *tlacuilo* remains anonymous even in that exceptional folio 30r of Codex Telleriano-Remensis in which a woman *tlacuilo*, which a Dominican friar

labeled “La pintora,” and who modern glossators have identified as one of Huitzilihuitl’s concubines. If the *tlacuilos* remain anonymous, One of their principal functions was producing genealogies and dynastic accounts. These memorials to the rulers blind us to the everyday life of Mesoamerica. But it is precisely those people who, after the invasion, continued the old while reinventing their “traditions” under the time of Christianity and Spanish dominion. Their incorporation of European culture, of material and religious life forms into the Mesoamerican *habitus*, suggests that it does not make sense to speak of colonization, even if it does make sense to speak of colonial order and rule, and certainly of oppressive regimes. There was a violent imposition of political and cultural institutions, but indigenous uses and abuses of European forms need not imply a colonized mind, language, or culture. With this I want to suggest that the artifacts available to colonial and modern Indians include Christianity, alphabetical writing, horses, machetes, rifles, cars, motorcycles, Marx, Derrida, Bordieu, Mariátegui, Quijano, Anzaldúa, Moraga, Morrison, Spivak, Negri, Las Casas, the wonderful pieces in this collection, computers, guitars, marimbas, Silvestre Revueltas, Coca-Cola, unions, MSN Messenger, etc. etc. etc. (so much is erased yet suggested under the etceteras) as items in the repertoire of readily available cultural formations and material goods that they may choose to use, discard, play with, imagine with, and laugh with. From its inception, the “universal subject” of cartography carried a blind spot that gave place to perceptions and imaginings that made sense of the whole and its parts—never immediately available—in ways that could never be anticipated by those who assumed the universal was European.

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