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Journeys to Others and Lessons of Self: Carlos Castaneda in *Camposcape*

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In 1960, Carlos Castaneda found himself eye to eye with Juan Matus, a "Yaqui shaman," in the bus station of the border town of Nogales, Arizona. Castaneda, then a UCLA anthropology student, met "Don Juan" because he sought an informant on the indigenous use of psychotropic plants, but he got far more than he had bargained. During the next ten years, Don Juan trained him in ancient Meso-American doctrines of magic to become "a man of knowledge." Beyond spiritual enrichment, the association with Don Juan produced twelve books that established Castaneda as a celebrity and facilitated his lucrative transformation from anthropologist to New Age guru.

Probing what Castaneda described as the secret indigenous world of "separate realities," the books became instant bestsellers. His first publications were read as a trilogy—*The Teachings of Don Juan: A Yaqui Way of Knowledge* (1968), *A Separate Reality: Further Conversations with Don Juan* (1971), and *Journey to Ixtlan: The Lessons of Don Juan* (1972)—and they propelled Castaneda to world fame. Particularly admiring were members of transnational middle-class youth movements, some who picked up and traveled to Mexico in search of alternative lifestyles, magical experiences, mind-altering substances, and often Don Juan himself. Castaneda's books represented indigenous Mexico as powerful and alluring, attracting counterculture tourists eager to explore and enact new, alternative subjectivities far from the narrow confines of the bourgeois lifestyles and values of their home countries.

Don Juan's lessons appealed far beyond these counterculture travelers. He spoke to subjects engaged in other intersecting revolutionary movements of the sixties and seventies: civil rights, guerrilla struggles, the sexual revolution, and the search for gender equality. Such readers were eager to accompany Castaneda, not

necessarily to travel to actual places in Mexico, but to journey alongside him to *camposcape*, an anachronistic and idealized countryside imagined as the site of so-called authentic Mexico, where they would receive lessons in alterity. As travel to radically alternate spaces, Castaneda's journeys to others' "separate realities" constituted a search for heterotopia.

While Castaneda's spaces of difference can be productively examined through the lens of Foucault's concept, they also push us to consider the potential racial and gendered dimensions of heterotopia that Foucault never addressed. In his search for alternate realities, Castaneda offered up an ethnographic adventure that actively challenged, but also re-invoked and reaffirmed, already existing gendered and racialized constructions of Mexican space and people. Part of Castaneda's brilliance involved an inscription of masculinity onto what frequently had been imagined as feminine space. His magical Mexico re-inscribed earlier gendered notions of place, but also re-imagined indigenous identity and knowledge as a way to perfect masculinity. Drawing on a complicated web of gendered landscapes, constructions of the indigenous past, and ideas about Mexican national essence, Castaneda's "man of knowledge" subverted and re-oriented class and race hierarchies associated with indigeneity, yet his "way of the warrior" also affirmed the heroic masculinity of the "New Man." In journeying to spaces of otherness to become better selves, readers of Castaneda's work encountered lessons about gender norms that were far from revolutionary.

Journeys to Others

Castaneda's first books—a series of adventures into physical and spiritual worlds unknown—read much like an older genre of anthropology, the travelogue. Instead of straightforward ethnography, in which anthropologists immerse themselves in indigenous communities, these books lead the reader to follow Castaneda on multiple travels from the U.S. to Mexico, fantastic forays into spaces of cultural and spiritual otherness. In many ways, Castaneda's account of his shamanic experiences fit the nineteenth-century travel narratives that, as scholar Caroline Brettell notes, "do not document what is specifically Indian, but an intercultural frontier."[1] For Castaneda, crossing this intercultural frontier is made possible through lessons on gender norms: indigenous knowledge is presented as a way to enhance masculinity.

Castaneda relates in *Teachings* that after the fateful encounter in the bus station he continued meeting with the shaman. A full year passed before Don Juan, who now turned out to be a Mexican citizen living in the border state of Sonora, revealed his true interest in his pupil: Carlos was to become a shamanic apprentice. In this first book, we see Carlos, our protagonist, partake in hallucinogens such as peyote and datura (jimson weed) in order to transform both mind and body into different life forms and reach higher spiritual realms.[2] In the second book, *A Separate Reality*, Castaneda continues with accounts of his own apprenticeship that describe

journeys into magical landscapes of "separate realities," where he learns to fly, hold his own against prehistoric animals, deal with terrifying entities known as "allies," and generally "see" the world from a "non-ordinary" perspective.

The third installment in the series, while continuing Carlos's shamanic journeys, breaks with the focus on mind-altering substances as a prerequisite to becoming a "man of knowledge."[3] Warning against the idea of Don Juan as an ordinary *curandero* dabbling in psychotropic substances, *Journey to Ixtlan* introduces the far more complex realm of the *nagual*, where magic opens an alternate route to multiple layers of consciousness. Instead of drugs, Castaneda outlines an ascetic path of masculine power: the way of the warrior. New characters appear to help plot that path, such as Don Juan's friend and fellow warrior Don Genaro, along with a host of new concepts: "stopping the world," "erasing one's personal history," "not-doing," "being inaccessible," and "becoming a hunter."

In this third book, moreover, Don Juan loses his specificity as a Yaqui, someone of a particular cultural and ethnic background, and becomes a more homogenous and less easily traceable indigenous sorcerer whose knowledge does not appear to have a precise point of reference and whose particular ethnic identity can no longer be placed.[4] Instead, the reader learns that Don Juan's knowledge stretches back to an "untainted" and undifferentiated indigenous past before the Spanish conquest. Castaneda shifts narrative gears and increases suspense, as if Don Juan's incomplete masks are part of a much larger master plan, both for the unsuspecting student (himself), and equally for the reader. Many consider *Ixtlan*, which earned him an honorary Ph.D. from UCLA, to be Castaneda's most poetic, philosophical, and "beautiful" book. It also made him a millionaire.[5]

Even if the three books deviate in their depiction of the warrior and the ways to become one, they share similar basic narrative strategies and become increasingly vague in renditions of time and place. Reminiscent of many other classic master-apprentice texts, *Teachings*, *Separate Reality*, and *Ixtlan* are structured around Socratic dialogues between Don Juan and Carlos, portrayed as stock characters in a didactic play, followed by descriptive narrative that delves into action occurring in other worlds. Like a suspense novel, short chapters always end with cliffhangers, while the next chapter never completes the action of the one preceding it. Instead it starts anew, with Carlos appearing at Don Juan's house yet again, or meeting him in unspecified places in Mexico on altogether different occasions. Apprentice Carlos always arrives in nameless Mexican places described only in terms of landscape, but author Castaneda never describes him leaving. Compressions of time and place not only structure Carlos's shamanic journeys, but also structure the narrative itself, where Mexico as an actual place in our physical reality (and the political reality of nation-states) becomes just as indeterminable, vague and surreal as Carlos's imagined spaces "between the worlds." Throughout the books, these two renditions of Mexico increasingly map onto each other.

As places of difference where time and space take on different properties and come to constitute "a kind of effectively enacted utopia," Castaneda's "separate realities" speak to Michel Foucault's notion of heterotopia. In "Les espaces autres," ("Of Other Spaces," 1967), a speech to architectural students in which he introduced the concept of heterotopia, Foucault explained that every culture and civilization harbors places that are like "counter-sites," through which real spaces "are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted."[6] While Foucault did not subject heterotopia to a gender analysis, the concept begs for one, as a space that can index utopia and difference with a potential to foster resistance to dominant norms.

In Castaneda's work we see heterotopia's gendered dimensions. Foucault argued that heterotopias require a particular form of knowledge, permission, or license to enter. Castaneda guides readers beyond the deserts of Sonora, the jungles of Oaxaca, and the Sierra Madre to magical spaces of otherness. The strategies outlined in the books for successfully navigating these realms, however, hinge on gendered understandings of space. Don Juan's lessons in becoming a man (of knowledge) function as the permission to enter the exotic and timeless world of the indigenous other. Hence, a re-articulation of masculinity appears as a means to offset the tension that results from Castaneda's subversion of class and race hierarchies.

Castaneda's Don Juan offered disaffected youth, no matter how fleetingly, a chance to engage politically in the creation of a new social reality, especially with regards to race politics, and provided the budding Chicano movement in the U.S. with an ideological map to plot diasporic ties to Aztlan and La Raza.[7] In Castaneda's books, Indians have access to a realm of higher truths beyond ordinary reality that Carlos (and, by extension, the reader) does not grasp. As Castaneda divulged during a rare interview with Pacifica Radio, indigenous shamans understand that "knowledge is power." Don Juan, whom Castaneda describes during the interview as a poor, marginalized Indian, is also a "superbly sophisticated thinker": in short, a true organic philosopher. Several times in the interview, Castaneda, a Latino immigrant, identifies himself as "a European man" who fails where Indians succeed.[8] By inverting normative class and race dynamics, Castaneda opens a space where a temporal and spatial reversal in social power and indigenous resistance is possible.

Castaneda's journeys thus function as lessons in power and resistance framed by irony. Castaneda effectively engages in parody, irony, and inversion—actions akin to what Bakhtin describes as the carnivalesque—to underscore where true power resides. For instance, in *Teachings*, when Carlos meets the peyote spirit "Mescalito" in the form of a dog during his first journey into "seeing," his indigenous companions merely laugh at his antics, the first of many similar instances throughout Carlos's apprenticeship. Don Juan constantly engages in subversive laughter at his student's "stupidity," especially when Carlos attempts to hold on to his treasured identity as accomplished U.S.-educated Latino immigrant. In keeping with his ethnocentric, self-ascribed "Western" feelings of self-importance, Carlos often feels ill at ease with Don

Juan's laughter, or—worse—this laughter provokes a state of anger and doubt in which Carlos questions the project in its entirety.[9] Don Juan has access to epistemological realms of power that Carlos can't enter alone.

It is at this point, however, that we detect the limits of Castaneda's spaces of difference. Despite the echoes of 1960s political radicalism that propel Castaneda to question "Western" preconceptions of power and truth and to subvert class and race hierarchies, he predicates these on traditional gender norms.[10] In *Journey to Ixtlan*, Don Juan asks Carlos whether they are equals, to which Carlos—reluctantly, as he considers himself the Indian's social superior—responds affirmatively. Don Juan states solemnly: "We are not equals. I am a hunter and a warrior, you are a pimp."[11] Irony gives way to tragedy: Carlos, who measures himself by so-called Western standards of success, status, and self-importance, possesses neither the knowledge nor the power to survive in Don Juan's world. Instead of a shaman and warrior, he is reduced to the lowest of men. Carlos's tragedy—his lack of knowledge, power, and discipline—results from his misunderstanding the implications of his manhood.

The gestures that Carlos has to make in order to shed his identity as a worthless "pimp," to become "a man of knowledge" and survive in magical spaces, require him to unlearn the weaknesses of "Western" masculinity, abandon Latino machismo, and adopt Don Juan's ideas of stoic manhood. As "a man of knowledge," Don Juan possesses the power required to face the unknown, even death, to do battle with unseen forces, and to overcome human weaknesses, because he has honed desirable aspects of his masculinity. Don Juan instructs Carlos: "To seek perfection of the warrior's spirit is the only task worthy of our manhood."[12] Despite the outlandish forays into unknown worlds, wildly unpredictable actions, and extremely vague renditions of space and time, Castaneda ensures his audience that becoming a shaman requires stamina, strict discipline, and "manhood." In order to become a "man of knowledge," one has to follow the ways of a warrior, which include "erasing one's personal history," "stopping the world," "acting impeccably," and learning to store power by leading "the strong and clean life of a hunter."[13] It also entails practicing sobriety and celibacy: this masculinity is not tied to stereotypical understandings of the macho. Castaneda makes it clear that no room exists for children, spouses, or romantic and especially sexual liaisons of any kind. Relationships between men and women are seldom discussed, but Don Juan does provide Carlos with specific instructions on dealing with women. Commenting on a failed relationship, Don Juan remarks that Carlos had made himself "too available." He adds: "The art of the hunter is to become inaccessible."[14]

Carlos's success in entering into other worlds thus depends on heroic feats tied to a reinterpretation of masculinity. As Don Juan's pupil, he requires rigorous preparations that entail a reconfiguration of his personality and de-conditioning of his "Western" complacency. Due to this particular engagement with imagined, indeterminable spaces, Castaneda's lessons in alternate spirituality require journeys

to Mexico as a space of difference, which engage with several earlier constructions of place.

Camposcape

Together with Carlos, the reader travels to a distinctly non-urban world that harbors places previously defined as outside of time—places that break with, yet speak to the contemporaneous reality of the 1960s. In seeking out the "separate realities" in rural Mexico, Castaneda enters camposcape, a constellation of spatial imaginaries imbued with pastoral qualities. Because of perceived ties to a sense of eternal and unchanging nature, these are often rendered as timeless entities, static in geographic, physical, and human features.[15] As a place outside of time, camposcape represents a glorified but unspecified past, what Guillermo Bonfil-Batalla calls "deep Mexico," a timeless, Edenic site of *mexicanidad*.[16]

Camposcape, dominated by nostalgia for a perceived purity of pre-modern life—often juxtaposed against the perils of modernity, industrialization, and urbanization—invokes the uncomplicated pastoral pleasures of the idealized garden, which, as Foucault proposed, is a quintessential heterotopia.[17] Reminiscent of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Orientalist pleasure gardens, camposcape places racial others in an exotic countryside and in a highly gendered configuration.[18] The heterotopic garden that reverberates in Castaneda's descriptions of rural and indigenous Mexico calls up a series of overlapping and, at times, contested messages. Imbued with several historical trajectories outlined below, the garden-like qualities of camposcape accrue multiple meanings, many of them wedded to *indigenismo* as both aesthetic and scientific project.

Castaneda's journeys to others, which prompted the alternative-minded to discover Mexico's camposcape, had larger historical precedents. Counterculture tourism of the 1960s had its origins in bohemian travel in the wake of the Mexican Revolution. As is well documented, the cultural phase of the revolution produced a renaissance in the arts: most of this artistic production looked to revolutionary indigenismo that valorized Mexico's indigenous past and elevated indigenous cultures as national patrimony. In the didactic art of Mexican Muralism in particular, archetypal *indígenas* represented Mexico's enduring links to its past as well as its outlying rural regions. Diego Rivera frequently portrayed indigenous areas in the tropics as a return to paradise; exotic locales filled with innocent native women free from bourgeois social (or sexual) constraint. In the bohemian circles of Mexico City, the indigenous south, such as Oaxaca, enjoyed a reputation as a place of matriarchal societies that celebrated free love, and where one could imagine oneself leading an unconventional lifestyle.[19] Depicted as both a place of stasis outside of time and a space of female origins, camposcape was linked to exotic locales of "timeless women," from which indigenous men were conspicuously absent.

This indigenist art of the post-revolutionary years coalesced into a highly nationalist camposcape that could be performed across race and class, yet it was largely women who engaged in its performance. The female indígena—regardless of ethnicity—presented culture brokers with an unstable signifier in a large chain of mimetic capital, from high art (paintings, murals, and photos) to popular culture (film, radio, advertisements, and theater).[20] Mexicanidad came to reflect a camposcape populated with female archetypes where, as Julia Tuñon notes, "the nation acquire[d] a gendered character: essential Mexico is indigenous, ergo it is feminine . . ."[21] The lure of this camposcape was that of the idyllic national garden, a place of unbridled fantasy and desire symbolized by exotic indigenous women, which served a patriotic role in the construction of a revolutionary nationalism that sought to bring together the "many Mexicos."

This camposcape competed with, and increasingly gave way to, a masculine reinterpretation of the *campo* by mid-century, as the realm of the *tehuana* gradually transformed into the land of the *charros*. Nationalist representations of the countryside that originated in the wake of the armed phase of the revolution depicted the campo ruled by the mythical macho, a place where revolutionary heroes were born and the (new, improved) country was forged. This rural Mexico was the land of Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata, who embodied the *campesino*, *tierra y libertad*, and social justice struggles that undergirded the consolidation of memory production of the cultural project of new revolutionary elites. The *ranchero* genre that came to dominate Mexico's cinematic Golden Age taught city audiences to embrace an idealized countryside where dashing cowboys dominated the landscape as well as the silver screen.[22] Yet this hyper-masculine campo, home to Mexico's most illustrious heroes, was construed as the land of the *mestizo*, white (or whitened) patriarch who—with the exception of Benito Juarez and Emiliano Zapata—had little to no indigenous counterpoint.

Hence, Castaneda's rendition of "magical Mexico" engaged deeply-layered patterns of camposcape. Like other "Western" men before him, Castaneda invoked gender-essentialized landscapes when he described Carlos's journeys through the portals in the Sonora desert or Oaxacan jungle to reach "México profundo." Castaneda, however, took the prospect further than most. Don Juan endowed Mexico's countryside with masculine power and altered representations of an indigenous social geography that historically had been rendered in feminine overtones. His camposcape was not a female realm in which to plot a masculine subject position, but a realm in which to triumph over female power.

Castaneda placed Don Juan within camposcape in a way that not only enhanced Indian masculinity, but also normalized gender difference and rendered femininity a dangerous and treacherous force of nature that Carlos—as a shaman in training—has to overcome. In *Teachings*, Carlos accomplishes two great feats, both of which involve combating the feminine aspects of camposcape. First, he succeeds in "taming" the spirit of "devil's weed" (datura). In a most literal instance of

naturalizing gender difference, Don Juan explains to his pupil that "power plants" contain either a male or female essence. He describes datura as a passionate, wily, and ultimately dangerous woman: "the devil's weed is like a woman, and like a woman, she flatters men. She set traps for them at every turn."[23] He warns that datura "sneaks up on you like a woman [. . .] all you care about is that she makes you feel good and powerful."[24] Even in the "structural analysis" that concludes *Teachings*, Castaneda reiterates that "the ally contained in datura [. . .] was woman-like, and the giver of superfluous power," qualities that Don Juan thought "thoroughly undesirable." Due to its female character, explains Castaneda, datura was "possessive, violent, unpredictable," and capable of enslaving men.[25]

In contrast, Castaneda identifies "Mescalito" (peyote) and "the little smoke" (*psilocybe mexicana*) as masculine, but also as benign, even tender. Peyote, Castaneda explains, "was a male, not only because of the grammatical rule that gives the word a masculine gender, but also because of his constant qualities of being a protector and a teacher." Don Juan agrees that unlike the "devil's weed," peyote is "gentle." Likewise, "the smoke reinforces the heart. He is not like the devil's weed, full of passions, jealousies and violence."[26] Moreover, Castaneda characterizes psilocybin as containing "the most adequate and most valuable characteristics," because it is "male-like and a giver of ecstasy," "dispassionate," and "predictable." More astounding, psilocybin's ability to produce a state of "bodilessness," erasing one's physical form, adds to these desirable male characteristics.[27]

Don Juan's garden-like separate realities are highly gender-stratified, not only in terms of the flora but also in its gendered understandings of power places. Carlos's second and most important trial in *Teachings* consists of a spiritual battle with a treacherous but powerful witch, La Catalina, who tries to deceive him by taking Don Juan's place and "his soul," producing a state of terror from which Carlos barely recovers.[28] Some of his feelings of fear, a recurrent theme that functions as an "enemy" to be conquered in Nietzschean fashion, are due to the sorceress's attempt to occupy Don Juan's body and reverse the carefully plotted gender essentialism structuring Carlos's alternate states of consciousness: "I experienced a profound despair; the thought that Don Juan was going all the way out to frighten me made me feel like weeping. I was incapable of finding a reason for the histrionics; his movements were so artful that I became confused. It was not as if he was trying to move like a woman; it was if a woman was trying to move like Don Juan."[29] Not only does Castaneda privilege a man in the role of teacher and sage, he also demotes female indigenous teachers and shamans by rendering them usurpers of male power.

The need to vanquish the witch Catalina is even more telling when placed in the context of anthropological studies of shamanism. Apart from the camposcapes furnished by aesthetic indigenismo and revolutionary nationalism, Castaneda's re-positioning of the male indígena (Don Juan) from a powerless victim of history to a "man of knowledge" owes much to anthropological imaginings of camposcape. First, Castaneda presented U.S. anthropologists, who saw in shamanism a means to locate

"authentic, pre-modern" cultures, with a viable topic of study. Second, Don Juan spoke to older, revolutionary ideals forwarded by prominent Mexican social scientists who had sought to assimilate the Indian as part of national development.

Castaneda had the good luck to enter the scene at a time when the field of anthropology was experiencing great changes. Facing the legacy of the discipline as a tool of colonialism, many anthropologists embraced the so-called reflexive turn and moved increasingly away from "salvage anthropology" towards more politically activist projects.[30] The centrality of shamans in indigenous communities as spiritual guides, healers, and—by extension—in positions of power, warranted a burgeoning of anthropological studies of shamanism by the 1960s. Interestingly, much of this work tended to misrepresent the gender balance among shamans.[31] Castaneda's Don Juan contributed to this imbalance, and greatly enhanced the popular appeal of anthropological studies of the shaman.

Shamanism, read as the practice most indicative of pre-modern indigenous authenticity, exercised a great attraction for non-Mexican anthropologists during the 1950s and 1960s. Equally, reports about indigenous use of hallucinogenic plants and mushrooms spurred European and U.S. bohemians to travel to far-away places deep in the Mexican campo in search of indigenous shamans.[32] Of these, the first and arguably most widely read was Gordon Wasson's article in *Time*, "Seeking the Magic Mushroom" (1957). Wasson described his experience with the mind-altering *teonanacatl* (God's flesh) as an intense ritual meticulously led by an indigenous healer, María Sabina Magdalena Garcia, and her daughter, who lived in the small town of Huautla de Jiménez in the Oaxacan sierra. Referring to the Mazatec shaman as "a *curandera de primera categoría*" who possessed great knowledge, high spiritual "presence" and oracular powers, Wasson's account left no doubt that women played a primary role as shamans in indigenous Mexico.[33]

Castaneda's ethnography, in contrast, was representative of a new wave of anthropological studies of the 1960s and early 1970s that represented shamanism—in their depictions of the shaman as well as the anthropologist's association with him—as a largely, if not purely masculine endeavor. Reminiscent of Carlos's aim in overcoming the power of the witch Catalina in *Teachings*, Castaneda positions Don Juan as a singular sorcerer who appropriates and then undoes the power of the female curandera. Despite his ex-wife's claim that Castaneda modeled Don Juan after María Sabina and a collection of other women healers he encountered in Oaxaca,[34] Castaneda outlines Don Juan's masculinity as an essential part of his identity as a shaman as well as a path to elevating his social stature. Unlike Wasson's curandera, who is revered in her community but is simply known by her first name, Castaneda's Juan Matus is quickly elevated to Don Juan. Elites and urban ladinos in 1960s Mexico did not address Indians with a title of such gravitas, one reserved for the *paterfamilias*. Castaneda addresses Don Juan as he would an elder, with the utmost respect and distance.

Castaneda's positioning of Don Juan as an authority figure, a patriarch even, makes sense when we place this move within the historic trajectories of the masculinist camposcape as well as that of official indigenismo. While the campo often had been understood in the Mexican national psyche as masculine, it was the imagined land of the charros and not the *indios*, who generally were portrayed as passive and lacking ambition when depicted as an undifferentiated group. Individualist exceptionalism of modernist discourse, however, rendered some indigenous men as great heroes based on their accomplishments as statesmen and warriors. Benito Juárez, Porfirio Díaz, and Emilano Zapata, even if not fully indigenous culturally, were able to escape the negative traits associated with so-called degenerate and passive indígenas because of their ability to retain indigenous characteristics while performing as rational, deliberate, and modern men. Castaneda's Don Juan, an "impeccable warrior," bears traces of these men, and—in keeping with revolutionary indigenismo—invests the indígena with "modern sensibilities."[35]

Indigenismo, especially in its social science incarnation, also embraced modernization as a means to enhance the status of indigenous men. The *indigenista* campo was a place where Indians lived in a glorified past even as they stood in dire need of modernization, which subsumed them in "a kind of eternalized present."[36] The methods of applied anthropology (especially those of Manuel Gamio) resulted in an "essential image of the Indian so that the latter could be manipulated in both space and time."[37] Don Juan, every bit as wise as Socrates, decisive as any statesman, and unrelenting as a drill-sergeant, functions to remasculinize indígena identity, and—inadvertently—to redeem, yet redirect, the struggles of Zapata. In embodying the modernized male Indian envisioned by anthropological indigenismo, one who "was circumspect, a hard worker, temperate in his drinking, and eating . . . , persevering, stoic, and an enemy of liars and thieves," Don Juan anthropomorphizes and masculinizes indigenous space.[38] His lessons operationalize gender categories as essence, masculinizing camposcape to escape its feminine connotations. Consequently, Don Juan exemplifies the Indian as a revolutionary subject, an "actor in [his] own redemption."[39]

Lessons of Self

The timing of Don Juan's positioning as potential revolutionary Indian in camposcape could not have been more fortuitous. The publication of Castaneda's first books coincided with, and spoke to, momentous developments in the transnational arena of the Americas. Apart from cultural politics that saw the rise of the counterculture, social justice movements, and the sexual revolution, Castaneda's series coincided with larger geopolitical developments and revolutions. *Teachings* appeared in 1968, a watershed year that saw worldwide student protests, worker strikes, civil rights battles, political assassinations, massacres, and riots. The Americas witnessed an

intensification of the Cold War and a concomitant increase in Latin American guerrilla activities. In Mexico, the state instigated intense reforms in the wake of the Tlatelolco Massacre, when governmental forces cracked down on a peaceful student demonstration on the eve of the Olympic Games, killing over 300 innocent people and jailing many more. Placed in these moments of social and political revolution, Castaneda's camposcape of warriors accrued additional meaning as a place of social and cultural heterodoxy as well as one of gendered limits.

In the context of the psychedelic sixties, it was no surprise that Castaneda's books found fertile ground in a global middle-class youth culture dissatisfied with material excess and technological progress that, many felt, meant little in terms of spirituality.[40] As a self-professed study on the nature of reality, Castaneda's work was much in keeping with the countercultural infatuation with Eastern philosophies. While he resembled a Bodhisattva calling for a new way of "seeing" truth, hidden beyond the Maya of everyday existence, Don Juan did not need to be from the global "East" to help Castaneda question "Western" concepts of reality.[41] His "Yaqui way of knowledge" followed perfectly on the heels of LSD-guru Timothy Leary's message to "drop out, tune in and turn on," Jim Morrison's call to "break on through to the other side," Aldous Huxley's invitation to "cleanse the doors of perception," and other famous summons to escape the stilted, suburban bourgeois world of the 1960s. Journeying to "other places" in the underdeveloped world as another way to reach "the other side" held great promise.

Even though it is fairly apparent that Castaneda's aim in writing the Don Juan chronicles had not been overtly political, and the *jipitecas* did not demonstrate great commitment to leaving their vision quests for sustained social revolution, Mexican authorities certainly ascribed that power to them and worried about their influence on young Mexicans. Government officials fretted about the relentless growth of counterculture tourism to and within Mexico during the late 1960s, when "scores of youth from Mexico's middle classes"—the vast majority men—left their homes to explore unknown Mexico by hitchhiking, "discovering music, people, and other distinctive worlds."[42] After the fateful events at Tlatelolco, federal and local police raided Huautla de Jímenez, arresting and deporting 22 foreigners, whom they blamed for the student strikes in Mexico City. Sixty-two Mexicans from a nearby commune were also arrested. The Huautla hippies took note of the politically-excluded and economically-marginalized indígenas, a vision that became part of La Onda, the Mexican counterculture movement.[43]

Faced with the Tlatelolco legacy, Mexico went through a period of intense efforts at political and social rehabilitation. President Luis Echeverría launched a comprehensive set of national reforms, which included an effort to revive indigenismo in order to reach out to the impoverished indigenous campesinos of the South. Similar to Castaneda's construction of the Mexican countryside as indigenous, "participatory indigenismo" reclaimed the campo for the Indians at the expense of campesinos.[44] Governmental funding attracted the attention of non-indigenous

peasants, causing them to either align themselves with indigenous organizations or adopt an indigenous identity.[45] In what Armando Bartra has characterized as the "disappearance of the peasant," rural peoples now came to be seen, or self-identified, as indígenas.[46] In short, due to populist indigenismo of the 1970s, the campesino campo now became Indian camposcape.

Castaneda spoke to this renewed visibility of the Indian as an agent of knowledge and power within a highly-politicized indigenous campo. Even if Don Juan's warrior is not an armed combatant, but rather a "hunter of power" that allows men a more humanist and "softer" masculinity, his appeal draws on traditional masculinist images of strength, power, discipline, and endurance. Don Juan advocates sobriety of mind and body and emphasizes responsibility and humility as the main traits the warrior needs in order to embark on a revolutionary path to increased awareness: "To achieve the mood of a warrior is not a simple matter. It is a revolution." While this revolution is couched within a larger discourse of humanity, it is evident that it hinges on lessons on gender that resonated with young counterculture men in the U.S. and Europe; Mexican jipitecas; and guerrilla fighters in Latin America. Embodied in the Indio, whom mainstream society viewed as a racial and social inferior, Don Juan lends the Mexican campo a masculine power in ways that mirrored contemporary representations of a new political social geography: "the guerrilla mountain."

Castaneda's camposcape of magical realms in which warrior Indians taught counterculture men to become real men, and where knowledge constituted true power, owed and spoke to larger gendered political shifts and movements in the transnational Americas, especially the importance of revolutionary brotherhoods and homosocial spaces within the rise of Leftist revolution. Due to the political repression following Tlatelolco, Mexican student activism bestowed on young male middle-class leaders a political allure that Lessie Jo Frazier and Deborah Cohen aptly refer to as a "heroic masculinity."[47] This type of masculinity closely resembled Don Juan's "man of knowledge" as well as Ernesto "Che" Guevara's "New Man."

Similar to Don Juan and his lessons, Guevara promoted a "new individual consciousness" that would enable the ideal revolutionary subject to overcome the weaknesses associated with bourgeois values. By exhibiting a "highly moral character," working hard, and contentedly sacrificing for the common good, the New Man rejected individualist greed, and instead looked to the fine example set by revolutionaries such as Che. In speaking of sacrifices, Guevara invoked visions of a life both glorious and excruciating, something that echoes in Carlos's trials as he prepares to become a *brujo*: "the task of the vanguard revolutionary is both magnificent and agonizing."[48] Castaneda similarly notes that: "only as a warrior can one withstand the path of knowledge. A warrior cannot complain or regret anything. His life is an endless challenge."[49]

As an alternative masculine subject, however, the New Man was wrought with contradictions, and encouraged the political marginalization of women. Like Don

Juan, Che's revolutionary was moved by a great love for humanity, yet its expression was to remain distant, undefined, and above all, unentangled in romantic relationships. In *Socialism and Man in Cuba*, Che warns that even if "the true revolutionary is guided by great feelings of love," he "cannot descend, with small doses of daily affection, to the level where ordinary people put their love into practice."[50] Similarly, Don Juan teaches that warriors cannot spare the time or energy to engage in loving relationships: "the average man is hooked to his fellow man, while the warrior is hooked only to infinity."

Thus, becoming an ideal revolutionary subject, like a "man of knowledge," requires the cultivation of sacrifice that hinges on austerity, asceticism, displaced affection, and a love for humanity that is undifferentiated and homogenous yet predicated on the revolutionary himself: the male bourgeois hero.[51] Ileana Rodríguez finds that this homosociality, where men reserve affinity for other men instead of women, leads to a displacement of revolutionary principles and goals for equality—gender equality in particular. [52] Like Don Juan's band of warriors, whose unstable New Age gender identities meet and give way to rigid gender essentialism, Che's New Man is not the gender-neutral revolutionary subject. Instead, the New Man represents first and foremost a search for alternative maleness that is the direct result of bonds forged in the homosocial space of the guerilla mountain.

Like Che's guerrilla mountain, Castaneda's camposcape naturalizes gender inequality, having Don Juan function as the visionary leader of a pantheon of warriors. Further in the series, we learn that both Don Juan and Carlos are "naguals," supreme leaders of an extensive, militaristically organized "party of warriors," who have the arduous task of leading their charges into the world of infinity. While this group is made up of as many women as men, women's prescribed placement is alongside their male counterparts. Every party contains "pairs" of male and female warriors who are mapped onto virtual space along north-south and east-west axes, indexed and separated by gender difference. The configuration of one's energy determines one's place on this grid as a "dreamer" or a "hunter" and one's identity to engage (and survive) in the realms of non-ordinary reality. While both men and women can become dreamers and hunters, hunters (such as Carlos and Don Juan) are associated with male attributes. Some of the female warriors appear as "stalkers" (hunters of power), yet the majority presented to the reader are dreamers, whose powers to travel into the realms of separate reality largely depend on their female biology.

The formulation of gender-essentialized space is crucial to the construction of this heroic masculinity. Just as Che's New Man was born from the struggles of the political geography of the guerrilla mountain, Don Juan's warrior is forged in the separate spaces of alternate realities that are mapped onto both physical and imaginary places. Castaneda's camposcape is both a place of freedom, where young men could escape social restrictions, create new brotherhoods based on higher spiritual truths, find their "true nature," and prepare to fight for a new (better)

reality, as well as a space of confinement, an earthly womb, a safe garden, where the warrior hones his skills, the apprentice is schooled, and the "man of knowledge" gestates. Don Juan's path in becoming a warrior and "a man of knowledge" thus mirrored guerrilla experiences. Outside of the confines and demands of ordinary reality, Che's mountain and Castaneda's camposcape have a pace and time of their own. What connected Che's New Man, the counterculture hippie, and Castaneda's Don Juan was the cultivation of a heroic masculinity that was both revolutionary in terms of Leftist politics and an utterly hopeless throwback to bourgeois respectability from a feminist standpoint.

Conclusion

Castaneda's gendered inscription of "separate realities" echoes earlier discourses that identified rural places in Mexico as those of the indígena other: timeless, exotic, and different. Yet these qualities equally tied this spatial imaginary to understandings of authenticity, the nation, and revolution. Castaneda infuses indigenous identity with a sense of power, allure, and visibility. His Indian camposcape—stoic, austere, persevering, and disciplined—maps onto the heroic masculinity of Che's guerrilla mountain as well as earlier indigenista designs for the modernized, yet "authentic," Indian, who understood his indigenous heritage yet was fully prepared (and able) to embrace "Western" rationality, accountability, and individual success. Invested with these qualities, Castaneda's work informed ideas of what kind of Mexico counterculture travelers should expect to find: an indigenous place outside of time that somehow—perhaps magically—functioned as a platform in fomenting transnational spaces of social change.

With his ideological ties to the New Man, the Castanedan warrior thus occupied an interesting subject position at the crossroads of counterculture rebellion, guerrilla revolt, and new indigenismo. Castaneda's heterotopia of "separate realities" depended, however, on carefully plotted positions of traditional gender norms, where homosociality provided a social glue in connecting men who did not share national, race, or class bonds. The counterculture youth who took Castaneda's Don Juan seriously learned to see indigenous power as male territory. In exposing them to a magical Mexico, where Don Juan attempted to teach them to become "impeccable warriors," "erase personal history," and "become unavailable," Castaneda offered men like himself portals to realms of alternative masculinity. Ringing in the "New Age," Castaneda's camposcape represented a place that reconfigured masculinity to serve youthful rebellion.

The gendered dimensions underlying Castaneda's camposcape prompt us to consider the gendered nature of heterotopia. Feminist theorists have demonstrated that identity and our understanding of time-space relationships are mutually constitutive.[53] Foucault's spaces of difference, especially because of their potentially transformative power, have to be understood within a gendered context.[54] Clearly,

the lure and validation of searching for Castenedan spaces of alterity indexed changing ideas about race and gender relations in the 1960s and 1970s. Invoking an Edenic garden, Castaneda's camposcape naturalized gender difference and strengthened essentialist notions already present within the transnational counterculture movement. If we keep in mind that the sexual revolution was not necessarily devoid of gender discrimination, and that subverting the patriarchy by "junior men" easily entailed a modernization of machismo, we can understand how revolution in social norms can thrive without drastically altering the gender hierarchy. Envisioning a spatial configuration of romanticized and essentialized gender difference, Castaneda's heterotopia in Mexico neutralized the "gender trouble" within the sexual revolution.

Even though Castaneda's camposcape valorized the idea of the indígena and implicitly connected this to counterculture revolution and Latin American guerrilla struggles, he ultimately subsumed political concerns under personal considerations. Instead of fighting for a new world, Don Juan proposed an alternate goal: spiritual enlightenment. Unlike María Sabina's vision quests intended to heal her community, Don Juan's way of the warrior stressed individual accomplishment in "hunting" for power. His was a new revolution: that of the "new age" of global consciousness. It was the kind of spiritual quest that emphasized, by naturalizing gender difference through camposcape, that men were to be warriors and women dreamers.

Notes

[1] Caroline B. Brettell, "Introduction: Travel Literature, Ethnography, and Ethnohistory," *Ethnohistory* 33, no. 2 (Spring 1986): 127–38.

[2] To avoid confusion, I separate Castaneda as author from Carlos, the books' protagonist and Don Juan's pupil.

[3] Amy Wallace, *Sorcerer's Apprentice: My Life with Carlos Castaneda* (Berkeley: Frogbooks, 2007), asserts that Castaneda both abhorred the drug-happy culture and felt guilty that his first two books had contributed to it.

[4] Much later in the series, Castaneda refers to Don Juan's knowledge as "Toltec" in origin, something not mentioned in the first three books.

[5] Robert Marshall, "The Dark Legacy of Carlos Castaneda," *Salon Magazine*, April 12, 2007, accessed June 10, 2009, http://www.salon.com/books/feature/2007/04/12/castaneda/.

[6] Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," 1967, accessed June 10, 2009, http://foucault.info/documents/heteroTopia/foucault.heteroTopia.en.html.

[7] I am indebted to Luz María Gordillo for this insight. For a preliminary assessment of Castaneda's influence on the Chicano movement, see *Mexican American Religions:*

Spirituality, Activism, and Culture, ed. Gastón Espinosa and Mario T. García (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008), 23.

[8] Theodore Roszak, Interview with Carlos Castaneda, January 30, 1969, radio broadcast on KPFA, mp3 audio file, 36:56, Pacifica Radio Archives, http://www.archive.org/details/DonJuanThe Sorcerer-CarlosCastanedaInterviewedByTheodoreRoszak.

[9] Carlos Castaneda, *Journey to Ixtlan: The Lessons of Don Juan* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1972), 51.

[10] While I acknowledge the problematic nature of the term "Western," I use it not only for dominant cultures in Europe and the U.S. but also for urban, non-indigenous worldviews in Mexico.

[11] Castaneda, *Journey to Ixtlan*, 57.

[12] Ibid., 109.

[13] Ibid., 99.

[14] Ibid., 69.

[15] While camposcape is not directly related to Arjun Appadurai's use of the suffix "scape," it does share his notion of "scapes" as "building blocks" of imagined worlds. See Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), chapter 2.

[16] Guillermo Bonfil Batalla, *Mexico Profundo: Reclaiming a Civilization* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996).

[17] Foucault, "Of Other Spaces."

[18] See Olivier Debroise, *Mexican Suite: A History of Photography in Mexico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001).

[19] Aída Sierra, "The Creation of a Symbol," *Artes de México* 49 (2000): 84–85.

[20] From middle-class women in the city of Oaxaca who frequented photo studios posing as indigenous women to Frida Kahlo's appropriation of the *tehuana* costume, and from Dolores Del Rio's performance in Emilio Fernández's film *María Candelaria* to the mestizas competing in "India Bonita" beauty contests and dancing the zandunga in the national Ballet Folklórico, white and mestiza women often acted out indigenismo on and off the stage. See Debra Poole, "An Image of 'Our Indian': Type Photographs and Racial Sentiments in Oaxaca, 1920–1940," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 84, no. 1 (2004): 37–82; Rick A. López, "The India Bonita Contest of 1921 and the Ethnicization of Mexican National Culture," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 82, no. 2 (2002): 291–328; and Ageeth Sluis, "City of Spectacles: Gender Performance, Revolutionary Reform, and the Creation of Public Space in Mexico City, 1915–1939" (Ph.D. diss., University of Arizona, 2006).

[21] Julia Tuñon, "Femininity, *Indigenismo* and Nation: Film Representation by Emilio 'El Indio' Fernández," in *Sex in Revolution: Gender, Politics, and Power in Modern Mexico*, ed. Mary Kay Vaughan, Jocelyn Olcott, and Gabriela Cano (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007), 95.

[22] Emblematic of this genre was the feature film *Allá en el Rancho Grande*, directed by Fernando de Fuentes (1936).

[23] Castaneda, *Teachings*, 159.

[24] Ibid., 65.

[25] Ibid., 202–3.

[26] Ibid., 204.

[27] Ibid., 205.

[28] Ibid., 180–82.

[29] Ibid., 181.

[30] See work by Nicholas Dirks and Laura Ann Stoler, as well as Benoît de L'Estoile, ed., *Empires, Nations and Natives: Anthropology and State-Making* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005); Roberto J. Gonzalez, "From Indigenismo to Zapatismo: Theory and Practice in Mexican Anthropology," *Human Organization*, Summer 2004; and Claudio Lomnitz, *Deep Mexico, Silent Mexico: An Anthropology of Nationalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001).

[31] For critical studies of anthropology's infatuation with shamanism, see Andrei A. Zamenski, *The Beauty of the Primitive: Shamanism and Western Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). For a telling example in Latin America, see Napoleon Chagnon's work on the Yamomani.

[32] Notable writers of the Beat Generation, such as Alan Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac, detailed their travels to southern, indigenous Mexico as shamanic utopias. See Eric Zolov, "Discovering a Land 'Mysterious and Obvious': The Renarrativizing of Postrevolutionary Mexico," in *Fragments of a Golden Age: The Politics of Culture in Mexico Since 1940*, Gilbert Joseph, Anne Rubenstein, and Eric Zolov (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001).

[33] María Sabina quickly became a national and international celebrity. Sought out by the likes of John Lennon, Bob Dylan, Timothy Leary, Aldous Huxley, Walt Disney, and the Rolling Stones, María Sabina's shamanism—depicted by Wasson as a syncretic blend of pre-Colombian and Catholic religious elements—attracted a large following and gave rise to the first wave of counterculture tourism to Oaxaca.

[34] Margaret Runyan, *A Magical Journey with Carlos Castaneda* (Lincoln, NE: iUniverse, 2001), 44.

[35] Alexander S. Dawson, "From Models for the Nation to Model Citizens: *Indigenismo* and the 'Revindication' of the Mexican Indian, 1920–1940," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 30, no. 2 (1998): 279–80.

[36] As Alan Knight and Claudio Lomnitz have pointed out, indigenismo was a "white/mestizo construct" seeking to integrate Indians into mainstream society as mestizos while glorifying past indigenous culture as the heart of Mexican identity. Alan Knight, "Racism, Revolution and Indigenismo: Mexico, 1910–1940," in *The Idea of Race in Latin America, 1870–1940*, ed. Richard Graham (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), 77, 82; Lomnitz, *Deep Mexico*, 251; Dawson, "From Models for the Nation," 283–84.

[37] Guillermo Zermeño, "Between Anthropology and History: Manuel Gamio and Mexican Anthropological Modernity, 1916–1935," *Nepantla: Views from South* 3, no. 2 (2002): 316, 321.

[38] Dawson, "From Models for the Nation," 294.

[39] Ibid., 297.

[40] Runyan, *A Magical Journey*, 145.

[41] Maya here refers to the Hindi (and at times Buddhist) concept of illusion.

[42] Eric Zolov, *Refried Elvis: The Rise of the Mexican Counterculture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 138.

[43] Ibid.

[44] "Participatory indigenismo" targeted indigenous areas to set up local cooperatives, promote the manufacturing of indigenous arts and crafts for national and international markets, fund projects to study indigenous use of medicinal plants, and provide governmental aid in the organization of indigenous congresses (including the first national one in 1975). See María Olin Muñoz, "Son Tan Mexicanos Como Nosotros: The First National Congress of Indigenous Peoples of Mexico and the Politics of Indigenismo, 1940-1980" (Ph.D. diss., University of Arizona, 2009); and Gabriela Soto Laveaga, *Jungle Laboratories: Mexican Peasants, National Projects, and the Making of the Pill* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009).

[45] Muñoz, "Son Tan Mexicanos," 109.

[46] Armando Bartra, "Sobrevivientes," in Armando Bartra, Elisa Ramírez Castañeda, and Alejandra Moreno Toscano, *De Fotógrafos y de Indios* (México: Ediciones Tecolote, S.A. de C.V., 2000), 92.

[47] Lessie Jo Frazier and Deborah Cohen, "Defining the Space of Mexico '68: Heroic Masculinity in the Prison and 'Women' in the Streets," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 83, no. 4 (November 2003): 625.

[48] Ernesto Guevara, "Socialism and Man in Cuba" (1965), accessed January 1, 2010, http://www.marxists.org/archive/guevara/1965/03/man-socialism.htm.

[49] Castaneda, *Journey to Ixtlan*, 33.

[50] Guevara, *Socialism*.

[51] Ileana Rodríguez, *Women, Guerrillas, and Love: Understanding War in Central America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1996), 31.

[52] Ibid., 33, 34.

[53] Elizabeth Grosz, "City-Bodies," in *Space, Time, Perversions: Essays on Politics of the Body* (London: Routledge, 1995); Doreen Massey, *Place, Space and Gender* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 179.

[54] Recent scholarship has applied the framework of heterotopia to underscore the gendered dimensions in establishing spaces of difference. See for example Cesare Cesarino, *Modernity at Sea: Melville, Marx, Conrad in Crisis* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002).

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