

## Prologue to the second Spanish edition

This book was written out of the absolutist idea that the critical imagination is purely verbal. Therefore it is deployed in a series of words that are set in motion through contact with another, sonorous, verbal universe, that of the gaucho genre, whose substance is the relation between heard voices and written words. The writers of the genre used the positions and tones of the gaucho's voice in order to write the genre, and in that same moment gave the gaucho his voice. "Use" and "gift"—the words that organize *The Gaucho Genre*.

In this book written in two voices, words turn into concepts, make contact with each other, refer to each other, split each other, and trace chains, bands, rings, montages, goings, and returnings. The net of words in motion constitutes something like a verbal apparatus for reading what wants to be read in the gaucho genre: the forms taken by the relations between the oral and the written, and the space of the alliance or the ring, the place where they unite. "Use" and "gift" therefore appear as notions with two sides or two meanings and are subject to a perpetual splitting. The two sides of the use of the gaucho: the literary use of the voice and the economic or military use of bodies. And the two sides of the gift or master: the writer who gives the gaucho his voice and the boss or superior.<sup>1</sup> The dual logic of language (which dominates the verbal matter of this book and which functions on two levels of "reality": the literary reality of the genre and "the other reality") seeks to represent the relation between popular and learned culture in the gaucho genre.

In a certain sense, in the perpetual splitting of this book, another genre, or gender, may also be read: the feminine. One of the formulas of the genre's verbal world is: "in the voice of the gaucho the word 'gaucho' is defined."

In New Haven, years after the publication of *The Gaucho Genre*, wanting to insert myself somehow in a Latin American critical tradition, I imagined that the verbal apparatus for reading the gaucho genre could also function in other regions where texts had been written that placed

1. [*Don* in Spanish can mean either gift or master; see chap. 1, n. 58. *Trans.*]

oral and written culture in relation to each other and used the voice of the Other: the indigenist literature of the Andean region in Perú and Ecuador and the antislavery literature of the Caribbean. I would write a book in three parts: the first would consist of an abstract fiction about the verbal (and political, economic, military, didactic, literary, sexual) devices with which *The Gaucho Genre* was read and written. The second part would be an analysis of the indigenist literature of the Andean region and the Caribbean antislavery literature using this reading apparatus based on the notion of the use of bodies in correlation with the use of voices. And the third part would be a theory about these three Latin American literatures, which would allow the voice of a body used by war, economy, and sex to be heard. The future book would also seek to be a history of the problems of modern, progressive subjects, who wrote these fictions within the frame of the nation-state. (It would analyze the writer's dramas of representation: generating subalterities or subalternities, speaking for or through the Other, speaking of the Other, speaking the Other: using his voice, giving him his voice.)

These three literatures were written or culminated in moments in which regional economies entered the world market and thus in the moment in which gauchos, Indians, and blacks were the producers of national wealth (the future book would have to contain precise economic data for the three regions). It would therefore place these genres of distribution and administration of voices within specific territories: the ranch, the hacienda, the mine, the sugar plantation. These would be the book's scenarios; one chapter would follow the trajectories of foreigners and runaway slaves—two subjects who persist in all three genres—through these territories.

I imagined the title of this book (“Gauchos, Indians, and Blacks: An Alliance of Voices in Latin American Cultures”) in order to be able to verbally consider the three regions that made these literatures (these “genres” of two cultures) a central element of their cultural and national identity. Gaucho genre, indigenist genre, antislavery genre accompanied the history of the idea of the “national-popular” (there would be a chapter on the history of this state idea). These genres also accompanied the history of the constitution of Latin American identities in the relation between region and nation (another chapter would be dedicated to this relation).

And since there is no postulation of identity without work with the tones of the voice, without affect-music in the voice, it would pay attention in the literature of José María Arguedas to what the characters say in Quechua and what they say in Spanish, in order to examine the exact relations between the two languages-cultures: the relations of translation, transcription, publication. The key would be the positions and tones of the voices of Indians and blacks in conjunction with writing; the key would be, again, what kind of alliance was constructed. The book would also be a history of alliances—dreamed, desired, postulated—among these modern, progressive (in relation to the state and the law) writers, Others, and their cultures (with their voices and languages) against the political or economic enemy. A chapter dedicated to Arguedas's *Diamantes y pedernales* [Diamonds and flints] (1954) would show the possible limits of the alliance.

These specifically Latin American textualities suggest that literature, when it works with two voices and their respective cultures, is immediately politicized by them. It fuses the political and the cultural because it fuses languages with social relations of power. And because there is no relation between cultures without politics because between cultures there is only war or alliance, I wanted, again in an absolutist way, the imagined book to be purely politicocultural. I wanted it to be a reflection on certain Latin American literature founded in the differential uses of the voices and words of gauchos, Indians, and blacks, which define the meanings of the uses of bodies. I imagined that in the tortured, marked, abject bodies of these literatures I would find the secret of the perpetual splitting of language. I thought that in Clorinda Matto de Turner's *Aves sin nido* (1889) and Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda's *Saab* (1841) the feminine gender/genre could also be read, which, like the gaucho genre, forms an allegory with indigenism and abolitionism and also with the genre of testimony.

Throughout these years in New Haven this book was always the future book because there is no relation between cultures without the dimension of the future: the gaucho, indigenist, and antislavery genres would form series with various lines of descent and would open onto other literary genres such as the Bildungsroman, autobiography, and testimony.

The desire to continue and pluralize the *Treatise on the Motherland* only generated a spectral and excessive book, which dissolved into thin air

when I immersed myself in the bibliography of this Latin American critical tradition and realized that what I had imagined was all already said and written, and that I would never write this book.<sup>2</sup> It is to fill this void that

2. The history of the relation between two cultures is identified with the now classic history of a Latin American critical tradition that begins with Fernando Ortiz's concept of transculturation (*Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar*, 1940) and concludes perhaps with the concept of subalternity. The two histories coincide.

For Fernando Ortiz, transculturation is a sociocultural process in which different cultures merge in daily life and culture. This concept was adapted to literature by Angel Rama (*Transculturación narrativa en América Latina* [Mexico: Siglo XXI, 1982]), who also wrote *Los gauchipolíticos rioplatenses: Literatura y sociedad* (Buenos Aires: Calicanto, 1976). For Rama, transculturation is manifested as cultural mixing; it takes place between high and subaltern cultures, it is under the charge of a vanguard of writers and critics, and it is related to national identity and the establishment and consolidation of the state. According to Rama, the literature of José María Arguedas demonstrated that the fusion of cultures was possible, because these operations are situated not only at the level of themes or explanatory programs but function also within the text itself.

Antonio Cornejo Polar situated the problem within the category of heterogeneity. In heterogeneous literatures, he writes, one or more of the constitutive elements correspond to a sociocultural system different from that which presides over the composition of the other elements deployed in a concrete process of literary production. The way the heterogeneity that defines indigenism takes shape in the indigenist novel is a case in point. This novel must be understood not in exclusive relationship with the indigenous world but rather as a cultural exercise that is located in the conflicting intersection of two sociocultural systems, attempting a dialogue that is often polemical and expressing, at the level to which it corresponds, one of the medullary problems of nationality: its dismembered and conflicting constitution (*Literatura y sociedad en el Perú: La novela indigenista* [Lima: Lasontay, 1980], 88).

In *Escribir en el aire: Ensayo sobre la heterogeneidad cultural en las literaturas andinas* (Lima: Horizonte, 1994), Cornejo Polar reelaborated and pluralized the concept of heterogeneity. And in one of his most recent works ("Una heterogeneidad no dialéctica: Sujeto y discurso migrante en el Perú moderno," *Revista Iberoamericana* (1996): 176–77, 837–44), he analyzed the migration from the high Andean plateau to the coastal cities in Perú. Cornejo Polar writes that this "diasporic phenomenon" weakens the essentialist Andean basis of Arguedas's utopian nationalism, which imagined a "new city" that would synthesize the best elements of the creole–half-breed coast and the indigenous Andes. Arguedas produced this "national allegory," but immigration weakened the authority of the indigenist model.

Alejandro Losada (*La literatura en la sociedad de América Latina: Perú y el Río de la Plata, 1837–1880* [Frankfurt: Vervuert, 1983]) also belongs within this critical tradition, as does Martín Lienhard (*La voz y su huella: Escritura y conflicto étnico-social en América*

*The Gaucho Genre* is now reissued. And in order to let the critical imagination manifest its purely verbal substance, I have tried to remove from this edition the numbers, letters, and graphics of which there were so many in the first edition in Spanish.

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*Latina, 1492–1988* [Hanover: Ediciones del Norte, 1991]), as well as Carlos Pacheco, with “Trastierra y oralidad en la ficción de los transculturadores” (*Revista de crítica literaria latinoamericana* 15, no. 29 [1989]: 25–38), and with his book *La comarca oral: La ficcionalización de la oralidad cultural en la narrativa latinoamericana contemporánea* (Caracas: La Casa de Bello, 1992).

The following essay collections are also important: *La voz del otro: Testimonio, subalternidad y verdad narrativa*, edited by John Beverley and Hugo Achugar (Lima: Latinoamericana Editores, 1992); *Asedios a la heterogeneidad cultural: Libro de homenaje a Antonio Cornejo Polar*, coordinated by José Antonio Mazzotti and U. Juan Zevallos Aguilar, and published by the Asociación Internacional de Peruanistas in 1996 (this includes Martín Lienhard’s article “Mestizajes, heterogeneidades, hibridismos y otras quimeras,” in which the relation between the two cultures is conceived of as diglossia).

The history of the relation between two cultures in Latin American criticism could be said to culminate in “Declaración Fundadora del Grupo Latinoamericano de Estudios Subalternos” (“Founding Statement, Latin American Subaltern Studies Group,” published in *The Postmodern Debate in Latin America*, edited by John Beverley, José Oviedo, and Michael Aronna (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1995). This group based itself in part on the historiographic deconstruction performed by Ranajit Guha (founder of subaltern studies) in his essay “La prosa de la contra-insurgencia” (published in *Debates postcoloniales: Una introducción a los estudios de la subalternidad*, ed. Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui and Rossana Barragán [La Paz: Historias/SEPHIS/Aruwiyiri, 1997], 33–72). For Guha, as for the Latin American Subaltern Studies Group, subalternity is a problem of representation. Guha critiques teleological constructions (the explaining of a past event as an antecedent of future events) and “master narratives.”

John Beverley (in “Los límites de la ciudad letrada: Subalternidad, literatura y transculturación,” *Historia y Grafía* [Mexico City: Universidad Iberoamericana], no. 12 [1999]: 149–76) relates Angel Rama’s idea of transculturation to the theory of dependence (the need to produce a national culture and literature), arguing that what is important for subaltern studies today (faced with the changes produced by the mass media who do not consider the idea of a literary culture as a model or practice for citizenship) is to register the moments in which a counterrationality appears in opposition to the rationality of the colonial or bourgeois-national state. Moreover, he argues the need for a multicultural or culturally heterogeneous nationalism that is not based in the logic of transculturation or hybridization.