

The face of the other: the particular *versus* the individual A face do outro: o particular *versus* o individual

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Abstract: Five interrelated case studies from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries develop the dynamic contrast between portraiture and pictorial genres newly invented in and about Latin America that do not represent their subjects as individuals despite the descriptive focus on the particular. From Jean de Léry's genre-defining proto-ethnographic text (1578) about the Tupinamba of Brazil to the treatment of the Creole upper class in New Spain as persons whose individuality deserves to be memorialized in contrast to the *Mestizaje*, African, and Indian underclass objectified as types deserving of scientific study, hierarchical distinctions between portraiture and ethnographic images can be framed in historical terms around the Aristotelian categories of the universal, the individual, and the particular. There are also some intriguing examples that destabilize these inherited distinctions, such as Puerto Rican artist José Campeche's disturbing and poignant image of a deformed child, Juan Pantaléon Aviles, 1808; and an imaginary portrait of Moctezuma II, c. 1697, based on an ethnographic image, attributed to the leading Mexican painter Antonio Rodríguez. These anomalies serve to focus the study on the hegemonic position accorded to the viewing subject as actually precarious and unstable, always ripe for reinterpretation at the receiving end of European culture.

Keywords: Ethnography. Portraiture. *Mestizaje*. Tupinamba. José Campeche. Jean de Léry.

Resumo: Cinco estudos de caso interligados, abrangendo o período entre os séculos XVI e século XX, desenvolvem o contraste dinâmico entre retrato e novos gêneros pictóricos inventados na e sobre a América Latina, que não representam seus sujeitos como indivíduos, apesar da ênfase descritiva no elemento particular. Do texto proto-etnográfico e inaugurador de gênero, Jean de Léry (1578) sobre os Tupinambá do Brasil, ao tratamento dado à classe dominante *Criole* na Nova Espanha, como pessoas que merecem ser lembradas, em oposição à *Mestizaje*, aos africanos e aos indígenas das classes subalternas, objetificados como tipos merecedores de estudos científicos, distinções hierárquicas entre o retrato e imagens etnográficas podem ser enquadradas em termos históricos, sob as categorias aristotélicas do universal e do particular. Alguns exemplos intrigantes também existem, que desestabilizam essas distinções herdadas, tais como a imagem perturbadora e pungente da criança deformada, Juan Pantaléon Aviles, pintada pelo artista porto-riquenho José Campeche em 1808; e um retrato imaginário de Montezuma II, de c. 1697, baseado em uma imagem etnográfica atribuída ao reputado pintor mexicano Antonio Rodríguez. Essas anomalias servem para focar o estudo na posição hegemônica atribuída ao observador, denunciando-a como de fato precária e instável, sempre pronta para reinterpretação junto ao polo receptor da cultura europeia.

Palavras Chave: Etnografia. Retratos. Mestiçagem. Tupinambá. José Campeche. Jean de Léry.

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This essay has been organized to discuss the role of 'archaeological illustration' in the material legacy of the Americas. My interest in this subject arises from studying illustrated cultural geographies at the John Carter Brown Library in 1991, when I was beginning to rethink my own field of Italian Renaissance art in terms of cultural exchange. My initial contribution centered on a very famous set of illustrations of Brazilian indigenous peoples, the wood engravings that the French Protestant missionary Jean de Léry included in his "Histoire d'un voyage fait en la terre du Brésil", first published in Geneva in 1578.¹ Since the early 1990s, a significant amount of attention has been devoted by art historians to Early Modern depictions of the ethnographic subject which was hardly considered a subject for art historical study previously; indeed even now the manner in which word and image are combined in framing ethnographic subjects is understudied and undertheorized.²

At its most basic level, the present study is intended to contribute to what is an interdisciplinary field of investigation through a diachronically organized comparison of selected ethnographic and proto-ethnographic images spanning from the sixteenth through the late twentieth century. In no way can my short contribution on the present occasion provide an overview of this considerable body of material evidence – far from it – my aim is different. My intention is to identify and discuss some enduring patterns in the images themselves as they are contextualized in various different ways and studied from different, plural perspectives. My understanding is that the disciplines interested in so-called scientific illustrations that depict material cultural artifacts and the people who made and used them – disciplines including history, art history, anthropology, archaeology,

history of science, history of religion, and others – "keep themselves pure," as Edward Said reproached the academic establishment in 1978 for their Eurocentrism, by not engaging with the messier political and ethical issues of identity, gendering, and power that arise from studying the source material. My study, by contrast, is based on the understanding that everyone and everything are inextricably entangled in a web of agents and actants (to use a term coined by (Latour, 1996)) that spreads out in all directions - like the rhizomatic structure hypothesized by Deleuze and Guattari (1987) - even and especially through time (Bennett, 2010).³ There are no innocent bystanders, historians themselves are active agents - or rather belong to complexes of agencies including both 'things' and institutions that Foucault aptly named an 'apparatus' (*dispositif*) (Agamben, 2009).

Foucault concerned himself with a regional network, France and Great Britain provided most of his data; and the Mediterranean was his philosophical domain. Nowadays we cannot afford to be so provincial in our theorizing – what I do in my work affects others living thousands of miles away – the honor of being included in this volume is proof of that. So what are the most pressing issues to consider in the context of our ethical responsibility as scholars, in the realm of the ethnographic subject? I would say the top priority remains now, as was the case in the early 1990s, to understand whose identity counts, whose does not, how and why. Ann Stoler, writing in 1995, took Foucault to task for treating the history of racism in adequately. Foucault pointed to a fundamental paradox of racial discourse in that it recasts prior representations in new forms. This is an important historical process to keep in mind when studying ethnographic images, but Stoler (1995) faults his account

¹ Subsequent editions were published in 1580, 1585, 1594, 1599-1600, and 1611, and excerpts were incorporated in other works. For modern critical editions with further information on the publication history of the book, see Léry (1980, 1990). Subsequent references will be to the Whatley edition. For my own publications, see n. 11.

² However, several important recent publications are changing the field: Gaudio (2008); Schmidt (2015) and Young (2015).

³ An actant is "something that acts or to which activity is granted by others," neither an object nor a subject but an "intervener," akin to the Deleuzian "quasi-causal operator." Latour (1996) discussed by Bennett (2010). On the rhizome metaphor, see Deleuze and Guattari (1987).

for failing to consider that the discourse surrounding the fear of 'internal enemies' within Europe also played out in extra-European settings – those who were 'white but not quite,' for example, became various targets for 'internal purification' in a variety of colonial settings beginning in the sixteenth century.⁴

Foucault offered a genealogy of racism that located 'Europe' as an unproblematic entity, whereas Europe forged its "changing and porous parameters around the biopolitics of race" in a global arena over several centuries (Stoler, 1995, p. 207-208). To turn to de Léry in this context, his unprecedented claims for the truthfulness of his work constitute a rhetorical strategy that impressed many later writers. De Certeau (1988a) has called "Histoire d'un voyage" the equivalent of a primal scene in the construction of ethnographic discourse. De Léry's account is one of the earliest modern attempts to classify people according to their visual appearance. The subsequent history of the genre implicates many of the academic disciplines and social sciences professionalized in the nineteenth century and, more importantly, extends to fundamental questions about the organization of society and the value accorded to human life today. As I have discussed elsewhere, our nineteenth-century predecessors frequently articulated their ideas about collective identity in terms such as "Germanic", "Mediterranean", "classical", "Late antique", and "Romantic", which were said to define the "essential" content of specific works of art (Wölfflin, 1929, p. 2).⁵ The visual characteristics of works of art were thought to manifest collective psychology. As these muddled distinctions taken from the writings of Heinrich Wölfflin (1864–1945) suggest, 'race,' epoch, and national identity were often interchanged and conflated in the European practice of art history during the discipline's formative period of institutionalization. The

terms derived from notions of a nation or 'race' of people in play at least since the sixteenth century, as well as from the scientific concept of race that emerged in the 1790s to signify permanent hereditary differences that determine cultural characteristics.⁶ By the same logic, some forms of cultural production were excluded from the category 'art' altogether, and these 'lesser' kinds of 'artifacts' ('lesser' in the eyes of European writers that is) became the object domain of anthropology. Archaeology straddled both spheres but subsumed neither. Even though it is (I hope) universally recognized today among academics, as it is among scientists, that the racial underpinnings of our inherited domains of investigation are untenable, the lingering effects of this evolutionary/teleological logic are still perniciously operating in our textbooks, our archives, and even in the way we frame our current research projects.

From this perspective, quite a lot is at stake in studying the formative period of visual ethnography. I use the term 'ethnography' cautiously, since it was coined only in the eighteenth century to mean the graphic or written representation of the culture of a group; therefore, the term itself is a product of the same history and cannot be used to underpin it (Vermeulen, 2008, 1994). Why de Léry's original readers believed him is a matter of great historical significance because this publication (two centuries before the term 'ethnography' even existed) set a precedent – or to be more precise, it developed an existing precedent to an unprecedented degree in a text that was widely read and cited for centuries on account of its objectiveness, based on its supposedly unembellished, empirically-oriented presentation of research.⁷

Why do we still tend to view de Léry's images and others like it as 'scientific'? The terms in which the conference and this volume are framed elicit the

⁴ On the Spanish Colonial foundations of racism, see Mignolo (2005).

⁵ See Farago (1995b). Surprisingly, the most recent English translation of Wölfflin's text dismisses the racializing and teleological elements of his ideas: see Wölfflin (2015).

⁶ See Stepan (1982), for an excellent introduction to the primary sources.

⁷ On the history of the idea of objectivity, see Daston and Galison (2007).



question, what is meant by 'scientific'? To address this question, the present chapter offers five, chronologically diverse case studies beginning with de Léry's "Histoire d'un voyage".⁸ There is also a second reason for framing the subject of my study as I have. The category 'scientific or archaeological illustration' implies a second-order representation of a pre-existing material record. But does this record as record pre-exist the written or visual account of it? Is not the material record equally framed and shaped by the encounter with the technology of representational practices? And equally significantly, the encounter with epistemological structures and cognitive practices. To the question, who was represented as an individual and who was not in the historical record?, the answer necessarily involves looking beyond illustrated cultural geographies to those forms of representation, primarily portraiture, which show that Europeans who saw themselves as distinct individuals with personal histories routinely (though not exclusively) represented 'Others' in collective terms, as undifferentiated members of a group, or types of a larger category such as the *popolo grasso* of the inner cities or the Tupinamba in de Léry's case.⁹

PAINTED PORTRAITS

When Leon Battista Alberti, writing on painting in 1435, states that painting has the capacity to make the absent seem present, he expresses himself in humanist terms that, some 430 years later, Jacob Burckhardt identified as the signature trait of the modern era, its individualism.¹⁰

Although many have since nuanced, questioned, or even refuted Burckhardt's claims both about modernity and about individualism, it is undeniable that portraits of individuals began to be produced in significant quantities in the latter part of the fifteenth-century in Europe and the genre was soon exported wherever Europeans established colonies. Alberti (1991) recommended the representational technology that portraiture exemplifies because, as he put it, painters are concerned solely with the visible.¹¹ The transparency of portraiture refers to its ability to evoke a person or thing as if it were directly present to the sense of sight. The technology of representation is nothing but a highly successful rhetorical strategy. The truth of representation is paradoxically dependent on its ability to deceive the beholder that the semblance of something *is* the thing itself. We routinely refer to persuasiveness of an artistic representation as naturalistic, though it is all artifice like every other work of art, and viewing artifice otherwise necessarily involves a willing suspension of disbelief on the part of the beholder.¹²

The social reality is that very few people came to be remembered as an individual before the era of photography and, even then, our modern and contemporary ideas of individuality have proved to be anachronistic.¹³ Since 1980, when Stephen Greenblatt published his famous essay on self-fashioning, arguing that literary portraits are an artful, performative genre, the rhetorical strategies of portraiture, literary and visual, have attracted a great deal of attention far beyond studies in English literature. We should, by now, have a fairly sophisticated idea about what portraiture is.

⁸ The discussion of de Léry that follows here is adapted from a short section of Farago (2002). The research on which that study was based was originally presented as a conference paper published as Farago (1995a). The scholarship on de Léry is extensive, but recently see Yandell (2015) and Magnone (2014).

⁹ The latest research publications focus on the black body within continental Europe: Lugo-Ortiz; Rosenthal, 2013 and Spicer, 2013. On the *popolo grasso* in seventeenth-century Naples, see Jones (2016).

¹⁰ Alberti (1991, p. 60) "Painting possesses a truly divine power in that not only does it make the absent present (as they say of friendship), but it also represents the dead to the living many centuries later, so that they are recognized by spectators with pleasure and deep admiration for the artist". The reference is to Cicero, "De Amicitia", c. 44 bce. (Burckhardt, 1930 [1860]).

¹¹ For an introduction to period sources on portraiture, see Woods-Marsden (1998).

¹² Eco (1986) has written on the suspension of disbelief, a phrase originally coined by Coleridge (1817).

¹³ On photography and individual identity, see Sontag (2003).



Yet I will argue otherwise by asking some fundamental questions about personal identity, beginning with one about individuation: when does a picture present its subject as an individual, and when does it do something else, despite the focus on the particular? Our present-day understanding of individuality is too easily projected on the past, whereas past understandings of the subject should be the object of investigation, not an assumption. Who is remembered as an individual and who is not is a highly fraught issue with enormous implications for the ways in which social relations are constructed and made to seem natural today. The same is true for who gets to do the looking: who sees, and with what authority?

What is visible in a face and to whom when it is represented by art? The conventions of the representational technology we refer to as 'naturalism' were exported beyond the land mass of Europe beginning in the early sixteenth century. To cite the conventional scholarly consensus, the canons accepted for official and courtly portraits were introduced to the Viceroyalties of Spain and Peru without any significant modifications of their Iberian precedents: the pose is almost always the same standing three-quarter view, the sitter gazing directly at the viewer to establish contact with an opaque expression, with the same elements of setting constantly repeated: drapery, table with objects underlining the uniqueness of the sitter, an identifying, status-conferring coat of arms, an inscription describing the person depicted by place of origin, dates of birth and death, lineage, marriage in the case of women. An inkwell with pens describes the sitter as an official or a distinguished writer, a stack of books signifies erudition, a watch or a flower refers to the nature

of worldly vanities and the unstoppable passage of time arrested in the portrait (Ruiz Gomar, 1999a, 1999b). In the largely masculine world of colonial portraiture before the late eighteenth century, the painting of Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz by Juan de Miranda (1713, Patrimonio Universitario, UNAM) is a conventionally male portrait formula used to depict an exceptional woman, following the same general formula as, for example, the Portrait of José Pérez de Lanciego y Eguilaz, Archbishop of Mexico, by Juan Rodríguez Juárez (1713-1714, Collection of Frederick and Jan Mayer, Denver Art Museum).¹⁴

Most portraits executed in the viceroyalties of New Spain and Peru fall into two categories (Brown, M., 2009)¹⁵: corporate portraits including state and church officials such as viceroys, prelates, and rectors; and civic portraits, family portraits, including a subgenre referred to as crowned nuns that developed in the eighteenth century exclusively in New Spain to mark the entry of women into a convent, as well as their exit upon death, often dressed in rich clothing and always wearing floral crowns to symbolize their virtuous souls.¹⁶ The inscription identifying Sister Elvira de San José (Figure 1) tells us she was mother superior of the Convent of Santa Inés [established for poor young girls and orphans] who died on May 6, 1711 at the age of 74 (Rishel; Stratton-Pruitt, 2006).¹⁷ Rotating the conventional horizontal depiction of a body after death to a vertical position gives her face a powerful lifelike presence even in death (Benson et al., 2004). There is no doubt that this painting documents a particular, historical individual, and this document commemorates a significant rite of passage from one station of life to another.

¹⁴ Both reproduced in Ruiz Gomar (1999a, 1999b).

¹⁵ I thank the author (Brown, 2009) for making his essay available to me in typescript and for his generous bibliographical guidance in territory unfamiliar to me. Brown emphasizes that obstacles to the tidy categorization of Spanish colonial portraiture abound in the existence of 'imagined' portraits of legendary personalities such as long-dead historical figures, saints, and indigenous rulers.

¹⁶ See Córdova (2014), arguing that the *monjas coronadas* portraits were both civic and corporate in nature. My thanks to the author for discussing the portraits with me.

¹⁷ Around 1740, the painters' guild established itself in the convent church, and both José de Ibarra and Miguel Cabrera were buried there, among other artists.



Figure 1. Anonymous, 'Sister Ellvira de San José'. Eighteenth century, oil on canvas. Source: Tepotzotlan, Museo Nacional del Virreinato.

JEAN DE LÉRY'S RHETORICAL STRATEGIES

With these conventional characteristics of Spanish and Viceregal portraiture in mind, let us turn now to de Léry's "Histoire d'un voyage". As I have written elsewhere, the illustrations that played an important role in the development of visual ethnography are quite unlike the settings that characterize individual portraits of the same period (Farago, 1995a). A brief summary of my earlier arguments will orient the reader to the distinctions between portraiture and visual ethnography in my present argument. The author informs us that he is personally responsible for the illustrations, and perhaps this unusual circumstance

has exacerbated the problem of historical interpretation. Perhaps because de Léry was not a trained artist – he has no oeuvre, no place at all in the historical roster of artists – we are not sure who is responsible for the remarkable woodcuts in the first edition. As a way of introducing the issues raised by the interaction between word and image in his text, let me clarify which illustrations I am talking about. I am not going to discuss the three narrative scenes which were added to subsequent editions, such as one depicting combat between Tupis and the Margaias in the foreground and a cannibalistic barbecue prepared by the victors in the background. No doubt these tried-and-true formulas borrowed from earlier travel accounts like that published in 1557 by de Léry's arch rival André Thevet were intended to meet public demand, that is, to increase sales (Thevet, 1558).¹⁸

There are altogether five images of full-length figures engaged in typical daily activities. I would like to discuss Figure 2 that illustrates the chapters on war and cannibalism.¹⁹ Two extraordinarily muscular warriors are depicted with their weapons – we see not portraits of individuals, but two views of a single type, Tupi mannequins who display how their instruments of war function – how the bow is drawn, how well the combatants' physiques are developed to make it work. No violence. The reference to cannibalism is suppressed, but not excluded altogether, since the head on the ground, conveniently cut off at the neck by the frame, refers discreetly to the dismemberment described elsewhere in the text, in the following unillustrated chapter on ceremonies of war, which precedes the chapter on religious rites.

The pictorial conventions – iconic, sculpturally-conceived figures, modeled in light and shadow, with only a bare indication of setting – are presented along with clear, conceptual contrasts. By this, I mean the deliberate

¹⁸ Also see: Lestringant (1991); Schlesinger and Stabler (1986). On the impact of printing technology, see Febvre and Martin (1976).

¹⁹ This illustration occurs twice: it accompanies Chapter XIV, entitled 'Of the War, Combats, Boldness, and Arms of the Savages of America', and Chapter XV, entitled 'How the Americans Treat Their Prisoners of War and the Ceremonies They Observe Both in Killing and in Eating Them' (translation cited from "History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil, Otherwise called America").

juxtaposition of subordinate features such as one head in frontal view next to the side view; or the juxtaposition of a pineapple in the foreground with a hammock in the background. Without other distracting elements (and in the case of the pineapple, with sufficient knowledge of Aristotle to recognize the comparison between the products of nature and man), the visual juxtapositions can be 'read out' of the image as a conceptual contrast.²⁰ De Léry's organization of what might be described as the syntax of the picture is striking. His visual comparisons and contrasts allow the image to function in close correlation with the literary text. Clear visual juxtapositions direct the viewer to draw specific comparisons.

The visual antitheses in de Léry's illustrations mirror more complicated contrasts described in the text. A dialectic between image and text reinforces certain habits of conceptualization. For example, when de Léry describes the Tupinamba warrior feature by feature, he treats his human subject as if it were a plant or animal to be dissected – something you might study in real life or in a zoological or botanical text, but not the portrait of an individual, someone to engage in conversation, as Alberti (1991) described portraiture in making an absent friend seem present. De Léry explains, moreover, that he has constructed this visual reference with specific contrasting elements for the reader's benefit, so that one can connect the appearance of the Tupi warrior (and I might add, trigger one's memory) with the author's discussion of a nonvisual topic, namely the ritual context in which cannibalism is practiced among the Tupi people. The visual substitution of body decor for war activities makes the subject more attractive and less threatening – as de Certeau (1988b) says, it turns the Tupis into the object of the viewer's pleasure²¹ – while the emotionally charged topic of Tupi



Figure 2. Tupi Warriors. Illustration for Chapters 14 and 15 of Léry (1578). Providence, Rhode Island, John Carter Brown Library. Source: Photo courtesy of the Library.

anthropophagy is cut up and dispersed throughout the body of de Léry's work. We might say that the author's textual practice reproduces the ritual dissection and re-assimilation of the fragmented subject into a new body, namely the

²⁰ A rich and varied commentary tradition is based on Aristotle, "Physics", Book II (192b8-200b10). I have discussed the Renaissance artistic heritage of these neo-Aristotelian ideas in Farago (1992).

²¹ De Certeau (1988b) argued that de Léry both preserves and masters alterity, turning revelation into a scientific concern for upholding the truth of things. Through his act of writing about the Tupinamba, de Léry made them appear fascinating to a European audience, while suppressing the natives' uncanniness.

(proto)ethnographic text. In the chapter under discussion, the subject of cannibalism is occluded under the neutral category of 'life and manners', subcategory 'dress', that de Léry inherited ultimately from Herodotus. De Léry (1990, p. 128) avoids a sensationalist presentation and writes about the behavior of 'savages' with scientific detachment:

As for those who have committed these murders, they think that it is to their great glory and honor; the same day that they have dealt the death blow, they withdraw and have incisions made, to the point of drawing blood, on their chests, thighs, the thick part of their legs, and other parts of the body. And so that it may be visible all their lives, they rub these slits with certain mixtures and with a black powder that cannot ever be effaced. The more slashes they carry the more renowned they will be for having killed many prisoners, and they are consequently esteemed the more valiant by others. (So that you can understand this more clearly, I have repeated the illustration of the savage covered with slashes, next to whom there is another one drawing a bow.)²²

Sixteenth-century European audiences learned about voyages of discovery and conquest through the publication of sumptuous illustrated atlases organized by 'nation' or 'people.' These 'cosmographies,' as they were often called, filtered information through long-established categories in the tradition of Herodotus, Pliny, Solinus, Isidore of Seville, Bartolomaeus Anglicus, and their Early Modern printed counterparts (Hodgen, 1964).²³ One reason for the continued popularity and credibility of this textual tradition must have been its flexibility – that is,

due to the nature of the genre, pictorial encyclopedias were continually assimilating new information. Printing technology encouraged the constant development of novel visual models to attract a broad readership.

Although the scale of de Léry's 'Voyage' is modest judged against the most elaborate illustrated cultural geographies, such as those published by Theodor de Bry, his innovations were part of this new market in illustrated cultural geographies intended for armchair travel. De Léry's presentation of the Tupinamba culture was indebted and to some extent perhaps even directed to ongoing debates about scientific method.²⁴ Aristotle and the second-century medical authority Galen were the most important textual authorities in these widespread discussions, which often took the form of polemical arguments published in commentaries or prefaces to other works. The greatest development of method took place within the medical tradition, which was the focus of considerable controversy.

De Léry's presentation, consistent with his theological views, is in the spirit of Galen's method to combine theoretical knowledge with direct experience. His precedents included Protestant reformers like the Lutheran Philip Melanchthon who advocated a linear method of mathematical proof and specifically recommended the 'anatomical method' of considering each subject according to the ten Aristotelian categories, proceeding by the analysis of phenomena into their parts and the examination of their interrelated function.²⁵

Andreas Vesalius's revolutionary anatomy text, entitled "De humani corporis fabrica" and its companion volume,

²² The immediately preceding paragraphs, not illustrated, describe (in terms that de Léry states are partly drawn from (López de Gómara, 1552)), how the Tupinamba practice cannibalism.

²³ A valuable recent study of some of the earliest European prints is Leitch (2010), which examines sixteenth-century German prints of newly discovered people of Africa, South Asia, and the Americas, woodcuts by Hans Burgkmair, one of the earliest to incorporate accurate ethnographic information about details of dress and human physiognomy. Little has been published to date on the history of (proto)ethnographic prints in the Americas, but see Cummins (2012).

²⁴ For an introduction to this history and the extensive scholarship, see the still fundamental studies by Temkin (1973); Gilbert (1960) and Ong (1958). A considerable part of these debates were addressed to the applied or productive sciences – a category in which painting was often included – that occupied a (disputed) place between routine skills and demonstrated knowledge.

²⁵ See Gilbert (1960, p. 39); on Aristotle, *Topics*, p. 100-18; and Gilbert (1960, p. 100-125), on methodological controversies from Padua and Bologna to Melanchthon's *Loci communes theologici*, which includes remarks on method in the preface by the Lutheran theologian Victorinus Strigelius (d. 1569).

the “De humanis corporis fabrica librorum. Epitome”, both published in Basel in 1543, arguably contain the most famous anatomical illustrations in all of medical history.²⁶ Vesalius provided de Léry with a compelling scientific model of illustration in the analytical mode. The rhetorical effectiveness of the ‘Fabrica’ rests on the same equation as de Léry’s between the author’s direct experience and its artificial analogue in the visual presentation.²⁷ Vesalius, also like de Léry, claimed that he drew his own images directly from nature but actually employed professional artists working in a classicizing Renaissance style who were trained in anatomy and optics, and were familiar with ancient theories of human proportion.

It is important to recognize the rhetorical strategy of de Léry’s framing of the subject. De Léry’s criticism of his opponent André Thevet diverts attention away from the persuasive power of his own images. He masks their rhetorical force by describing the illustrations as if they were a transparent record of what he witnessed firsthand – it is a brilliant strategy intended to make us forget that our sole visual access to the Tupinamba is through artistic renderings of them. There are further ironies and ambiguities circulating within the text. De Léry was a Calvinist minister at the time his “Histoire d’un voyage” was published. He had two years earlier published an account of the devastating 1572 siege of Sancerre during which he had witnessed acts of cannibalism (Nakam, 1975).²⁸ His brief descriptions of the Tupinamba in this earlier publication suggest that de Léry again intended to provide his European readers with a comparison between good Brazilian savages who practice cannibalism only for

ritual purposes and the bestial behavior of the European civilians. While the implicit comparison ennobles the New World native, it nonetheless assigns the Tupi to an inferior position in the broader social and intellectual hierarchy – for the equation between Indians and Europeans inverts a widely held European idea of savagery without changing the lowly position of either savages or rebellious peasants and artisans.

ABY WARBURG’S ETHNOGRAPHIC PHOTOGRAPHS

Some of the same rhetorical strategies continue to be effective when contemporary historians take at face value the transparency claimed for the type of ethnographic image that de Léry’s text helped to establish as ‘scientific,’ that is, objective and accurate. A recent example is the re-publication of art historian Aby Warburg’s late nineteenth-century photographs of esoteric Native American ceremonial dances (Warburg, 1938-1939; Guidi; Mann, 1998).²⁹ On the jacket cover (Figure 3) is a photo of the young German art historian Warburg dressed as a cowboy, posing with a Hopi dancer whose ceremonial dress and body paint, although authentic in themselves, fictionalize his identity for most viewers as simply that of an Indian ‘warrior.’ The objectifying ethnographic frame of reference in the original photograph is conveyed visually through conventions of pose, framing, and costume very similar to those established in de Léry’s wood engravings and even earlier. The ‘intended’ irony of the jacket cover, conveyed in the superimposed title ‘Photographs on the Frontier’, is that Warburg’s ‘progressive’ ideas defined the

²⁶ Vesalius (1934, 1543a, 1543b) the latter, printed from the original woodblocks used in the 1555 edition. The plates and generally reliable publication history of Vesalius’s writings are conveniently available in Saunders and O’Malley (1950).

²⁷ Vesalius’s debt to ancient sculpture has been treated most cogently by Harcourt (1987) who argues that the illustrations are the visual equivalent of Vesalius’s rhetorical attempt to establish the united science of medicine combining both theory and practice.

²⁸ For the complicated publication history of “History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil, Otherwise called America”, see Whatley, Introduction to de Léry (1990). De Léry himself notes that the Tupinambas’ programmed, ritual practice of war and cannibalism is a striking contrast to arbitrary acts of savage cannibalism and mob violence associated with the ongoing European religious conflicts (Nakam, 1975).

²⁹ Warburg’s essay on the Hopi ‘serpent ritual’ was first published posthumously in 1939 on the basis of his lecture notes of 1923 about events that took place three decades earlier. His study of the Hopi has recently become something of an art historical cult piece. See further, Farago (2006), a synopsis of which is published in Farago (2002).

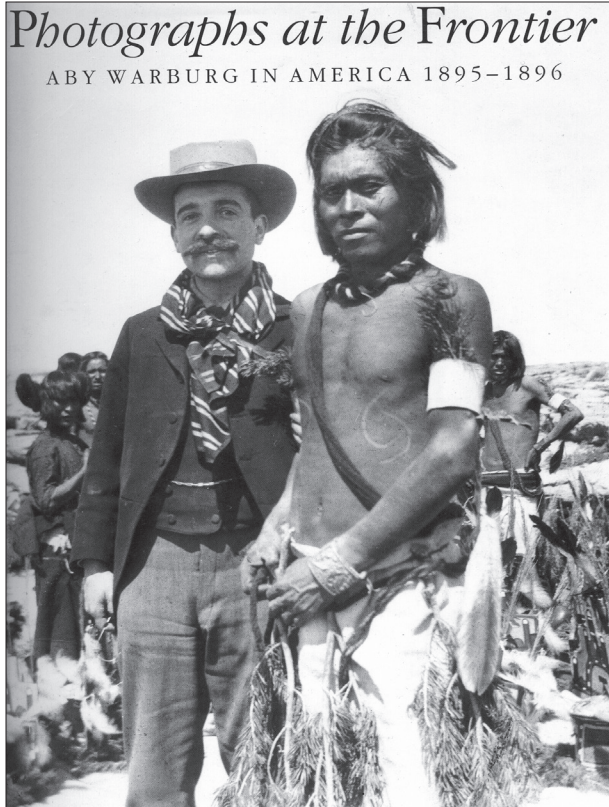


Figure 3. Book jacket. Cestelli Guidi and Mann (1998). Source: Photo courtesy The Warburg Institute.

frontier of a new field of study that includes ethnographic investigations of extra-European people.

An additional, presumably unintended, meta-critical effect of the words-with-photographic image reiterates (and wordlessly condones) the former colonial frame of reference. The current, politically sensitive status of any esoteric, private *Pueblo* image – such as one that shows a katsina dancer without his mask – is denied any acknowledgment and the dancer's only status is that of a generalized 'Other'. For there is only space on the cover for Warburg and his unnamed companion, portrait and ethnograph, to celebrate the Euro-American Wild West fantasy while referring to Warburg's actual trip. For contemporary viewers, these half-truths raise the question of what a non-fictional identity would look like. Warburg is often rightly praised for his unconventional thinking, but he

remained within the dichotomous framework of primitive/civilized even when he sought to undercut the valence attached to each term of this problematic dichotomy.

JOSÉ CAMPECHE'S GENRE-BREAKING IMAGE OF PANTALEÓN AVILES

What can the contemporary reframing of Warburg's original image say about how power works materially and visually to help us think through our own blind spots today? What I have been anachronistically calling ethnographic illustrations are images that do not represent their subjects as 'individuals' despite the descriptive focus on the 'particular'. To explain the difference between the individual and the particular, let us return briefly to de Léry, specifically to his image of a male, female, and presumably, their offspring (Figure 4). Where we would tend to see a family portrait of mother, father, and child, the internal evidence of de Léry's text suggests these are modern projections. The image likewise registers information primarily about 'typical' forms of the Tupinamba people. A key to understanding his image is the Aristotelian concept of the 'particular' as the concrete instance of a universal. 'Family' was considered a universal category in the sources that served as de Léry's models, most immediately sixteenth-century cosmographers like Johann Boehm and Jean Bodin who regarded 'family' as the cornerstone of society (Boemus, 1520; Braun et al., 1572-1618). When de Léry, to his great credit, confronted the problem of cultural difference, his perceptions were filtered through inherited categories like 'family,' 'religious rites,' 'marriage customs,' 'food habits,' and 'burial practices' that originate in the ancient Greek and Roman texts of Herodotus, Pliny, and Solinus, and their medieval commentators such as Isidore of Seville and Bartolomaeus Anglicus (Hodgen, 1964; Campbell, 1988). In this context, the image of a Tupinamba man, woman, and child is a particular instance of the universal category 'family.'

Portraiture does depend on conventions very similar to those encountered in ethnographic illustrations of the

kind that de Léry's text established, but the secondary elements function differently when they portray a specific individual. What can be said about José Campeche's 1808 painting of Pantaleón Aviles: is this a portrait (Figure 5)? The conventional inscription identifying the sitter appears as a



Figure 4. Tupi Family. Illustration for Chapter 8 of Léry (1578). Providence, Rhode Island, John Carter Brown Library. Source: Photo courtesy of the Library.

horizontal band along the lower border of the painting. Since the sixteenth century, numerous engravings of monstrous human beings, especially of children born with congenital malformations, were in circulation in Europe, often identified as divine portents of impending events (Daston; Park, 1998). However, a different, medical context of viewing has been established for this painting, commissioned from Puerto Rico's leading portraitist by Bishop Arizmendi to send as documentation to the Royal College of Surgeons of San Carlos in Madrid.³⁰



Figure 5. José Campeche, 'Pantaleón Aviles', 1808. Oil on canvas, 27x19. San Juan, Puerto Rico. Source: Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña.

³⁰ The visual documentation ordered by Dr. Rigau Pérez was probably encouraged by the military surgeon Dr. Francisco Oller and the garrison doctor Tomás Prieto; a similar wax model of a child born with genital abnormalities was sent to the Bishop's predecessor Don Francisco de la Cuerda then living in Madrid, for this purpose. See Rishel and Stratton-Pruitt (2006) and Taylor (1988). For discussing the scholarship with me, my thanks to Emily Thames, PhD student at Florida State University, Tallahassee, currently competing a monographic study of José Campeche.

The existing scholarship focuses on the careful visual documentation of an identifiable clinical condition and on the supporting archival evidence of scientific interest, in keeping with current Enlightenment sensibilities. The boy's melancholy expression, exceptionally expressive in comparison with Campeche's other portraits, such as his 1797 depiction of the daughters of Governor Don Ramón de Castro, has also been the subject of recent comment.³¹

What the archive cannot answer is why a bishop would have become so interested in the scientific cause of certain birth defects. Was it solely that his interest in science was fostered by his colleagues, or was it also to deflect superstitious beliefs that might have been projected onto the boy by an uneducated population, including perhaps the boy's parents, who were farmers from a neighboring village? Or might his particular malformation have elicited comparison with long established artistic conventions for representing angelic creatures, such as those supporting the feigned architecture in an anonymous retablo painted in Cuzco, of la Virgen del Carmen, 1776, now in the Lima Museo (Figure 6). Not that there is any actual historical connection between this particular altarpiece and Campeche's painting, only that this naturalistic rendering of angelic creatures suggests that the resemblance between the actual Pantaléon and artistic representations of seraphim and cherubim might have been noticed at the time. Although the poignant expression that Campeche has given his sitter is suggestive – is it angelic? Is it expressive of a soul tragically trapped – there appears to be no way to resolve such historical questions about the effect of the painting on its original audiences into a single unambiguous reading.

Is it possible that Campeche's representation elicited contemplative questions about the immanence of the divine in nature, even (perhaps especially) from scientifically-minded viewers not given to believing in



Figure 6. Anonymous, 'La Virgen del Carmen', formerly Cuzco Cathedral, 1776. Lima. Source: Museo de Osma.

superstitious omens? In trying to understand not only the scientific purpose of the painting, but what the documented scientific purpose of the image signifies – not what scientific information the painting conveys, but what the purpose of conveying the scientific information was – we become more aware of the limitations of our archives. 'How' we remember becomes 'what' we remember: the secret at the heart of the archive is its incompleteness, the fact of erasure.³² In developing a provisional understanding of Campeche's painting, the innovations of which exceed the genre practices to which we try to assimilate it, it also helps to bear in mind its resemblance to other representational practices,

³¹ On the portraits of the young girls, 1797 (Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico, San Juan, 44x31"), see Vidal (2000).

³² As famously argued by Derrida (1996).

such as engravings of monstrous births, the wonders of *kunstkammers*, and ex-votos, as the painting's small size and placement of an inscription suggest.³³

Such speculation about the ways in which the past is imbricated in the present is intended to begin a conversation about the importance of distinguishing 'our' understanding of 'individuation' from what we find in the historical record. Campeche's painting haunts us in part because it puts into question our modern assumptions about individuality. It is both more and less than a portrait of an individual. The painting documents an individual - it even records the individual's name - but at the same time, it documents a specific type of congenital malformation for a scientific audience that had no interest in Pantaléon Aviles other than his congenital condition. Yet considering the painting as a painting, it also functions as a tender, evocative record of a specific person rendered by a leading portraitist. This unusual work outplays the conventions of both the category of scientific illustration and the category of portraiture. For us, the 'unresolvability' of the painting is its most significant feature. It hovers between categories: not purely ethnographic illustration or scientific subject, nor monstrous portent, nor portrait, nor religious subject, this painting tells us about the scope and dynamism of historical genres by refusing to be wholly contained within any one of them.

AN ANONYMOUS PORTRAIT OF MOCTEZUMA II

At this juncture, it should be emphasized that naming genre conventions and the distinction between the particular and the individual that seems to divide portraiture from ethnographic illustration, are modern ways of talking

about the historical record - instruments of analysis to understand a messier situation 'on the ground' in which anomalies like the image of Pantaléon Aviles offer valuable clues to historical ideas of individuation. As entertainment and as educational information, popular with various European audiences over a several-hundred year period, images depicting ethnographic subjects appeared in a wide variety of forms, including a 1799 canvas mural measuring over three meters long, with a map of the viceroyalty of Peru in the center, surrounded by drawings of 148 flowers, 200 species of animals, and 32 portraits of 'naciones civilizadas y salvajes'. Partly executed by Peruvian artists, the mural is one product of an expedition directed by Luis Thiebaut which resulted in a vast archive of drawings comprising nine volumes.³⁴ From its origins in sixteenth-century European cultural geographies, the ethnographic-costume book formula also passed into Mexican painted manuscripts that record indigenous cultural information supplied by native informants (as de Léry claimed for his own project), including native pictorial conventions (which de Léry did not claim). The most extensive and one of the earliest of these was the "Historia general de las cosas de nueva España" created under Bernardino de Sahagún's (1982) direction, sent to Europe around 1580, today in the Biblioteca Laurenziana in Florence.³⁵

The late sixteenth-century Codex Ixlixlxochitl, ultimately derived from Sahagun's model, is more Europeanized: the figure is shaded, with contour lines denoting its turning in optical space, resembling costume book illustrations, lacking narrative elements. The Codex Ixlixlxochitl was one of the sources for the painted portrait of Moctezuma II sent as a gift to Cosimo III de' Medici around 1697, as Escalante Gonzalbo (2004) has

³³ My thanks to Adam Sellen for the last suggestion, worth pursuing in an expanded study.

³⁴ The painting, 'Quadro de historia y geografica del reino del Peru', Lima, 1799, is now in the Museo Nacional de Ciencias Naturales, Madrid. Thiebaut was also responsible for extensive texts and images of natural history and archeological material painted by anonymous Peruvian craftsmen, compiled into nine volumes under the generic title of "Trujillo del Peru" and sent abroad in 1789. See Peralta Ruiz; Walker (2006). See further in Schiebinger; Swan (2005) and Bleichmar (2012, 2009).

³⁵ The history of ethnographic illustration in the Americas has yet to be written, but see the magnificent volume edited by Pillsbury (2012) which reproduces a number of ethnographic illustrations in passing worthy of further study.

established³⁶ (Figure 7). The image of Moctezuma II looks like in an individuated portrait, though it is an imaginary reconstruction.³⁷ The identification of its source in the Codex Ixliuochitl is possible due largely to the figure's costume and pose. While these details now function as personal attributes that identify the individual portrayed, what this remarkable image demonstrates is the slippage between ethnographic illustration and portraiture. In this case the particular costume, details of one Nahuatl ruler (Nezahualpilli) are used to provide (the not entirely accurate) attributes of a different historical individual. Rodriguez's portrait nonetheless retains many features of the ethnographic illustration such as the static frontal pose, emphasis on details of costume, simplified setting.³⁸

Yet the image of Moctezuma II presents a 'portrait' of an individual. Escalante Gonzalbo (2004) also argues, convincingly, that the polymath Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora, custodian of the Codex Ixliuochitl, and a book collector with a magnificent library, was responsible for commissioning the portrait of Moctezuma II and had it sent from Mexico to the Grand Duke of Tuscany, custodian of one of the greatest collections of American artifacts begun by the

de' Medici family in the early sixteenth century.³⁹ In Mexico, Sigüenza y Góngora was also responsible for designing a triumphal arch for the reception of the Viceroy, the Count of Paredes and Marquiz of Laguna, in 1680 decorated with portraits of past native rulers of Mexico in imitation of galleries of European kings and portraits of famous men. Sigüenza y Góngora described his design strategy in a treatise entitled 'Teatro de virtudes politicas', also published in 1680. In this text, Sigüenza y Góngora conferred the founding of the kingdom of New Spain on native 'kings' rather than 'foreign heroes'. In other words, he used the purported ethnographic authenticity of his sources to fabricate a new, *criollo* history, establishing a line a descent independent of European authority, based on the nobility of individuated native rulers. He might have derived the idea from Duran, who in describing the creation of Moctezuma I's portrait in stone as resembling the "king" himself, structured his history of indigenous rulers as a chronological sequence of kings (Hajofsky, 2012, p. 174–176). Although it was not made directly for the triumphal arch, the portrait of Moctezuma II is the sole surviving visual artifact of that project (which is also known in an engraving by Antonio de Solis, 1699).⁴⁰

³⁶ Escalante Gonzalbo (2004) argues that the portrait depends on the image of Nezahualpilli, Codex Ixliuochitl, c. 1582, and an image of Moctezuma in the Manuscrito Tovar (1582-87). The same Mexican manuscripts informed the European cultural geography published by Gemelli Careri as "Giro del Mondo", Naples, 1699-1700 (with a copy of the Nezahualpilli in Codex Ixliuochitl labeled 'Tizoc' serving as the basis for an engraving of 'King Tizoc'). According to Escalante Gonzalbo (2004), when the Italian traveler Careri visited Sigüenza in 1697, Sigüenza gave him copies of his manuscripts. Careri visited Cosimo III in 1703, which Escalante Gonzalbo (2004) argues is too late to deliver the painted portrait, and he hypothesizes another route of transmission. Other European-style portraits of indigenous rulers survive in the Manuscrito Tovar (1583-87), Diego Durán's "Historia de las Indias de la Nueva España" (composed between 1570 and 1581), and the Codex Ixliuochitl. Representations of Moctezuma II survive in Diego Muñoz Camargo, "Descripción de la ciudad y provincia de Tlaxcala" (c. 1580), and other sources such as a set of late seventeenth-century *enconchados* (Miguel and Juan Gonzales, "The Visit of Cortés to Moctezuma"). See further in Cuadriello (2009), Terraciano (2012); and the following note.

³⁷ Hajofsky (2012) discusses the precedents, beginning with a pre-conquest "portrait" of Moctezuma II carved in stone at Chapeltepec, arguing that the image of the ruler belonged to a very different system of representation not based on an implied optical resemblance between sign and signified. He cites Diego Durán's "Historia de las Indias de Nueva España y islas de tierra firme", 1582 ("The Creation of Moctezuma I's Portrait at Chapultepec", Chapter XXXI, Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional), as an interpretation of that sculpted image that was highly assimilated to European concepts of both portraiture and rulership.

³⁸ Other contemporaneous large-scale painted examples exist of the same type of ethnographic image, including portrayals of African people by the Dutch artist Albert Eckhout working in Brazil: Albert Eckhout, Dutch, African Man and African Woman and Child, 1641, oil on canvas, 111x74, National Museum of Denmark, Copenhagen. On Eckhout, see Hochstrasser (2010).

³⁹ The fundamental study of the collection remains Heikamp; Anders (1972). On the complex and extensive interconnections between Mexican artifacts and the Medici collections (which included the Florentine Codex by c. 1580), see most recently, Russo et al. (2015).

⁴⁰ Escalante Gonzalbo (2004, p. 171-174) considers his imaginary 'portrait' related to a design developed by Sigüenza y Góngora as an image for a triumphal arch that located the founding of New Spain in a lineage of Nahuatl kings. The engraving after the painted portrait was published in the first Italian edition of Antonio de Solis's "Historia della conquista del Messico", 1699, and reproduced in the third Spanish edition of Solis's "Historia de la conquista de México", 1704; see Terraciano, (2012, p. 173).





Figure 7. Attributed to Antonio Rodríguez, 'Moctezuma II', 1680-97. Oil on canvas. Florence. Source: Museo degli Argenti.

Thanks to this evidence, we can understand how Sigüenza y Góngora put his ethnographic sources in service of a rhetorical project to magnify the viceroy and simultaneously promote his own nationalistic agenda. If we ask, 'what makes

Sigüenza's representations of indigenous Mexican rulers believable?', it is the specificity of objects, costumes, and pose ultimately derived from the Florentine Codex (and filtered through a series of intermediate sources with progressively less reliable ethnographic information. Although the indigenous content never completely disappears, it is increasingly compromised by its European reframing.⁴¹

Once the image of Moctezuma II became an object in Cosimo III's collection, it would have inevitably been understood in a very different context, as a specimen in a storehouse of Americana, no longer a portrait in a gallery of kings. Even Escalante Gonzalbo (2004), on whose research my brief discussion here largely depends, did not question the current classification of the image of Moctezuma II as a portrait and he applied the criteria of accuracy to his sources without considering 'accuracy' as a historical criterion worth studying in itself.⁴² I wonder if Sigüenza y Góngora anticipated that his attempt to place American and European nobility on a par would be quickly re-inscribed in a discourse that objectifies extra-European people and material culture. The paper museums of cultural geographies, or in this case its deluxe, painted transformation into the more elevated genre of portraiture in a princely collection of Americana, constitute elements of a museographic practice that limits the signification of a given object based on its value at the receiving end. Even and perhaps especially if the ethnographic authenticity of the material collected matters, a much broader field of possible semiotic associations is curtailed. The object is made legible by being contained, re-presented as part of a new system of commensurable objects described according to a fixed set of categories such as those which de Léry considered universal.⁴³ Within the museological space, these filiations come to seem

⁴¹ The progressive copying of images from the Florentine Codex to the Codex Ixilxochitl to the eighteenth-century Codex Veytia is discussed in these terms in Farago and Parenteau (2009). Another case study of colonial portraiture that situates indigenous subjects based on European formulas in-between and as part of both European and Andean worlds is Dean (2005).

⁴² Escalante Gonzalbo (2004, p. 171-174) writes that Sigüenza manipulated illustrations in various codices to create "[...] imaginary portraits [...]" and this later experiment "[...] privileges ethnographic authenticity [...]".

⁴³ See Hodgen (1964) one of the first studies to call attention to this fundamental problem of crosscultural studies based on their presumed commensurability.

reasonable, inevitable, demonstrable, natural. Paradoxically, to recall Alberti's praise of painting, the 'copy' still makes the absent seem present. In this case, the copy secures an 'original' that does not exist as such in the historical record.

THE INVENTIVENESS OF CASTA PAINTINGS

I would like to begin drawing this essay to a close with one additional case of an ethnographic illustration masquerading as a transparent image in a deluxe artistic form. Sigüenza y Góngora was again involved. A surprising new variant based on print sources appeared in Mexico in 1711, known today as *casta* paintings and studied extensively by Katzew (2004) and others.⁴⁴ These sumptuous reinterpretations of the well-established genre of visual ethnography, so popular with European audiences, were executed by leading Mexican-born artists not by indigenous artists, working for missionaries or scientific expeditions, as is usually the case, but by the leading artists of Mexico City. Antonio Rodriguez to whom Escalante Gonzalbo (2004) attributes the Moctezuma II portrait was part of the same family of artists, one generation older. These once again are not portraits of named individuals, but many of them are of superior quality as paintings.⁴⁵ Katzew (2004) has made the highly plausible suggestion that Viceroy Fernando de Alencastre Noroña y

Silva, Duke of Linares, commissioned the earliest sets of *casta* paintings to send to the Spanish king and his court representing different racial mixtures in the Spanish colony. Katzew (2004) suggests that Linares conceived the idea specifically from a cultural geography by Athanasius Kircher, *China Monumentis*, 1667, which had been bequeathed by Sigüenza y Góngora to the Jesuit College of San Pedro y San Pablo in Mexico City (Katzew, 2004, p. 81).⁴⁶

Casta paintings are so innovative in appearance that their indebtedness to an existing European genre of visual ethnography came as a surprising discovery to modern scholars. Yet most of the sets of *casta* paintings survive in European collections, and the documentation confirms their function as a novel variation of the (proto)ethnographic type, for which there was a large existing market. At the height of their popularity, the sets created by Miguel Cabrera and others are even signed as being made in Mexico, clear indications that they catered to an export market (Figura 9).⁴⁷ *Casta* paintings provided material for curiosity cabinets, and may have elicited further interest in the inhabitants of New Spain, as several historical questionnaires published by Estrada de Gerlero (1994) suggest. She argues that the orderly presentation of colonial subjects of various ethnic mixtures engaged in artisanal skills was consistent with an emerging Enlightenment discourse of a programmatic

⁴⁴ The following was originally prepared for a paper presented at the Renaissance Society of America annual conference in 2009. Subsequently, the argument was developed in a collaborative study published as Córdova and Farago (2012). The notes throughout benefit from the bibliography developed with my collaborator and I thank him for permission to use our jointly authored work in the present context. Notable publications on *casta* paintings include García Sáiz (1990); Estrada de Gerlero (1994, 1995); Carrera (2003); Katzew (2004); Deans-Smith (2009) and Martínez (2008).

⁴⁵ They are unlike the few examples of non-Spanish portraiture, like Indian Noblewoman portrayed when she was sixteen years old, designated by the prestigious title of doña, (Anonymous, 'Sebastiana Ines Josefa de San Agustín', 1757, 22 x 18", Denver Art Museum). The date of this painting commemorates Sebastiana's admission to the convent of Corpus Christi in Mexico City. The sitter wears an indigenous version of a Spanish Creole black velvet choker with charms and other fashionable jewelry that testify to the indigenous nobility's assimilation of a Spanish lifestyle on their own terms (Córdova, 2011, 2014).

⁴⁶ The book figures on the shelves of portraits of Sigüenza's friend Sor Juana. This account is corroborated by the theologian Andres Arze y Miranda, writing in 1746, that Viceroy Linares had conceived the idea of presenting images of different racial mixtures to the King of Spain and his court through a series of paintings, that Arze y Miranda considered as "a vision of what harms us," because they promote an image of an industrious society that would perpetuate Mexico's colonial status. See further discussion of the racial dimension of Arze y Miranda's criticism in Córdova and Farago (2012).

⁴⁷ Deans-Smith (2009) cites Miguel Cabrera's *casta* painting of 1763, 'De español y de India, mestiza', which is signed 'painted by Miguel Cabrera, Mexico' (Collection Elisabeth Waldo-Dentzel, Multicultural Music and Art Foundation, Northridge, California). The images by Cabrera reproduced here (Figure 9) from the same series specifies the names of the exotic fruit pictured, another indication that it was meant as an export item.

and utopian kind.⁴⁸ Indeed Bourbon reforms in Mexico, beginning with Felipe V (1700-46), were created to alleviate and prevent social problems. They coincided with the development of the so-called *castas* genre. These documented circumstances help to explain the historical events that created the genre, and may also further explain the attractiveness of the images for a European audience, for whom the disparity between placid artistic representations and actual lived social realities in New Spain might have been vague. At the least, these paintings make social conditions in the colonies appear non-threatening (Katzew, 2004).⁴⁹

However, the explanations to date do not fully explain why the *casta* paintings were painted by the most highly regarded artists living in Mexico City.⁵⁰ As Katzew (2004) emphasizes, the development of an art academy (eventually established with royal patronage in 1791) is crucial to understanding how the *casta* genre evolved over the course of the eighteenth century.⁵¹ What can the material presence of these paintings tell us now? As my colleague James Córdova and I have recently explored in a jointly authored article, Mexico City's most important artists sought to elevate the status of their craft to the level of an intellectual calling by demonstrating their artistic ability in terms set by their most advanced European counterparts.⁵² The extensive scholarship on *casta* paintings considers them as if they were transparent windows directly reflecting

real or imagined social conditions. Was the relationship between artistic representation and social conditions really so straightforward? The sumptuous brushwork so evident in many *casta* paintings beginning with the earliest sets has not drawn comment from contemporary scholars. It is instructive to compare the newly invented genre with portraiture, because both demanded the skillful rendering of natural appearances (Figures 8 and 9). Unlike the established static quality of most formal portraits, frozen in both the expression of the sitters and in the meticulous rendering of the material surface of things – fabrics, patterns, surroundings of the sitters – the new *castas* genre encouraged painterly handling of the surface and lively interpretation of the figures. Increasing details of costume and setting were added while the bravura brushwork, heightened juxtapositions of light and dark, clear organization of overlapping optical planes, expressiveness of gesture and expression, painterly imitation of textiles, and coloristic visual display in general, served as constant reminders of the artist's presence. As the *castas* genre developed, artists like Juan Rodríguez Juárez (1675-1728) and José de Alcibar (1725/30 – 1803) continued to exploit exotic types and the sensuous qualities of the painted surface. The style of rendering is very different from the objects and details of costume in formal portraits where all signs of brushwork and the artist's presence are effaced.

⁴⁸ As an export item, *casta* paintings were often paired with natural specimens and American exotica intended for curiosity cabinets. For an extensive study of *casta* painting collectors and the reasons for collecting these works see Deans-Smith (2005, p. 181-183).

⁴⁹ Katzew (2004) suggests that *casta* paintings must have eased Spanish anxieties about New Spain's socio-racial complexity by creating the illusion of a harmonious society that was rigidly ordered according to the *sistema de castas*, which placed Europeans at the top of the socio-racial system and everyone else on its lower rungs. As for *casta* paintings that picture discords among their figures, the implication is that some unions are adverse.

⁵⁰ The Rodríguez Juárez brothers, who were responsible for some of the best sets of *casta* paintings, tried to found an academy of art in Mexico City in 1722 or even earlier, that is, within a decade of their first *casta* paintings. The same is true of later artists such as José de Ibarra and Miguel Cabrera: the leading painters of *casta* sets were directly involved in efforts to establish an art academy along European lines. Guillermo Tovar de Teresa has proposed that the Academy of San Carlos in Mexico was created in imitation of the drawing academy, founded by Bartolomé Estéban Murillo and Francisco Herrera the Younger in Seville in 1660. The Seville academy was created in order to elevate the status of painting as one of the liberal arts of the vicerealty, endorsed by the king himself (Tovar de Teresa (1995) discussed by Katzew (2004, p. 16-17)). Both build on the study of Pacheco's Academy by Brown, J. (1978). On the historical and theoretical context for these arguments in Seville, see further Navarro de Zuvillaga (2009).

⁵¹ To explain these connections, Katzew (2004, 1996) and others have argued that *casta* paintings, with their depictions of racial mixing in harmonious family settings, may be a *Creole* expression of pride in the homeland.

⁵² See further in Córdova and Farago (2012) which deals with the academic training of artists and the surrounding literature in New Spain and its counterparts in European Spanish and Italian contexts.



Figure 8. Miguel Cabrera, 'Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz', c. 1750. Oil on canvas, 81 1/2 x 58 1/4." Mexico City. Source: Museo Nacional de Historia.

The continuing contrast between formal portraiture and *casta* paintings is a significant symptom of evolving class-based differences in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century New Spain. The same artists who painted *casta* sets tried to exclude indigenous and racially-mixed (*casta*) artisans from the profession and, far from identifying with the miscegenated underclass they depicted so sympathetically, many locally-born artists who painted *casta* sets claimed pure blood (*limpieza de sangre*) status for themselves (Deans-Smith, 2009).



Figure 9. Miguel Cabrera, 'De Lobo y de India, Albarasado', 1763. Oil on canvas, 53 1/3 x 40 3/4." Madrid. Source: Museo de América.

What are we to make of the apparent contradiction between these artists' depictions of a harmonious social order and their documented efforts to distinguish themselves from the underclass? What the combination of visual and documentary evidence suggests is that *casta* paintings are not just direct reflections of *Creole* patriotism or interest in racial mixing, as the existing literature proposes (Córdova; Farago, 2012). The apparently spontaneous, painterly handling and the inventiveness of the subject matter demonstrate the assured judgment and skill of hand that identify their makers as masters of the liberal arts, as established by European academic standards.⁵³ From the perspective of Mexican-born painters aspiring to the status of liberal artists, then, the *casta*

⁵³ Corroborating evidence for this hypothesis survives in the form of two very personal studies in self-fashioning – self-portraits by Ibarra and Juárez that were not commissioned works, that of Juárez being only recently rediscovered in the Academy of San Carlos archives. Juan Rodríguez Juárez, 'Self-Portrait', Mexico, c. 1719; oil on canvas, 66 x 54 cm, Mexico City, Museo Nacional de Arte; and José de Ibarra, 'Self-Portrait', c. 1730; oil on canvas, 57 x 42 cm., Mexico City, Museo Nacional de Arte.

paintings signified their high artistic achievements, not their social identification with their lowly subject matter. A formal portrait is a matter of copying nature accurately, *ritrarre* in the Italian can refer to any kind of thing copied, while a *casta* painting is a matter of idealized invention, corresponding to the higher artistic calling of *imitare* that depends on the exercise of selective good judgment.

Despite the many references to the higher calling of *imitare* embodied in the materiality of the paintings themselves, from a European vantage point, the *casta* paintings still functioned as deluxe ethnographic subjects - objectifying, exoticizing representations that situated Mexican society and the most talented Mexican artists in a subordinate position compared with their European counterparts. As the records show, ethnographic illustrations, even lusciously painted ones imaginatively composed, were destined for scientific collections and curiosity cabinets, not the grand painting and sculpture galleries of wealthy European patrons of art.⁵⁴

CONCLUDING REMARKS ON THE PORTRAIT VERSUS THE PARTICULAR

As is the case with all the examples I have discussed, the interconnections between discourses taking place on both sides of the Atlantic are crucial for our modern historical understanding of the complex play of rhetorical strategies embodied in images that present themselves as transparent, objective, and accurate description. These connections can be glimpsed only by repeatedly redirecting our gaze between those who look and those who are seen, those for whom the ethnographic images were intended being a very different audience from those who are portrayed. The contrast between portraiture and the representation of ethnic

types runs implicitly throughout this history: while the elite commissioned individuated representations of themselves in the form of portraits, making the absent seem present, the underclasses were represented by others, for others, absenting their actual social presence by fictionalizing them in richly elaborated, beautifully crafted typologies that focused on the particular but not on individual identity. Individuation in the period sense was tied to class/ethnic social position.

I have purposefully avoided restricting the analysis of ethnographic images to examples that are directly linked to one another historically and chronologically in favor of constructing comparisons separated by time and place so that continuities could be glimpsed at a broader scale. Yet at the same time, I am interested in understanding how the significance attributed to this long enduring genre and the rhetorical strategies associated with it varied in specific historical settings. In the case of Sigüenza's involvement with both portraiture and the new genre of *casta* painting, the same underlying source of ethnographic information was capable of producing very different results in the same, or nearly the same, historical setting.

An adequate historical explanation needs to account for both continuities and discontinuities, and it would be shortsighted to imagine the range of meanings associated with ethnographic illustrations, as with other types of images, on any other terms. In making sense of the historical record, it is important to bear in mind that the critical inversion of values associated with a given type of image (or any kind of artifice) does not change its epistemology. For example, when one viewer attributes positive value to a fantastic monstrosity or grotesque, while a contemporary evaluates it in strictly negative terms, the range of possibility constitutes what I am calling the epistemology of the image. This range is the

⁵⁴ As an export item, *casta* paintings were often paired with natural specimens and American exotica intended for curiosity cabinets, including the most prestigious curiosity cabinet of all, the Spanish king's Real Gabinete de Historia Natural in Madrid, which held "all types of Nature's curious productions indigenous to the lands and towns" that were a part of the king's empire. See Katzew (2006, p. 15) and García Sáiz (1990, p. 44). However, lower-ranking elites in New Spain also had access to these works, as is clear by the late eighteenth century, when a range of individuals from high-ranking Spanish bureaucrats and prelates to well-to-do merchants owned *casta* painting sets. Deans-Smith (2005). My thanks to James Córdova for these references.

discursive field that is the historian's challenge to reconstruct, bearing in mind that the reconstruction necessarily remains partial and provisional. Over time, the discursive field inevitably shifts and the epistemological domain transforms as it reproduces itself, as Foucault recognized in his indictment of racial discourse. When a given image from one signifying practice is introduced into an entirely different context, as is the case when an ethnographic image of European origin was introduced into a colonial setting, the significance attributed to that image was established in relationship to other pre-existing images with histories of use within the local interpretive community.

As the five case studies discussed in this essay suggest, certain continuities are enduring, even in heterogeneous colonial communities where the concrete context of use yields unprecedented associations. In the so-called portrait of Moctezuma II, details of costume secured the accuracy and hence the 'authenticity' of a documented historical individual: what we observe from our historical vantage point as slippage between portrait and ethnographic image, two genres with distinct roots, was the effect of an intentional manipulation of genres. Sigüenza y Góngora, the initial patron, and perhaps the artist (Antonio Rodríguez?) who actually painted the image, were engaged in inventing an image that contained information originating on both sides of the main cultural divide. Their mimicry of European portraiture evolved along the lines that Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Homi Bhabha, and other postcolonial literary theorists associate with the transgressive acts of subaltern colonial subjects.

The enduring assumption implicit in all the artistic images studied here is that the artistic image 'represents' something existing in the real world faithfully: the match between image and what it represents is presented as being indexical in the same sense that a footprint is the index of a foot, or smoke is an index of fire. In every case, the relationship between signified and signifier is judged on the basis of its accuracy, while the rhetorical strategies that frame the image in these terms are occluded. Campeche's portrait of Pantaleón Aviles alerts us to ways in which

conventional boundaries between the portrayal of a particular type and portrayal of a specific individual could be destabilized, in the process calling attention to framing conditions – in this case by functioning as both portrait and scientific specimen at the same time. While it appears to be impossible to resolve the ambiguous status of Campeche's painting at this historical distance, the destabilization itself is of historical and theoretical significance. In the final and perhaps most complex case considered here, the *casta* paintings, costume and setting again play a crucial role in establishing an aura of accuracy or 'truthfulness' – to the extent that contemporary historians have been misled into thinking that the paintings are transparent records of actual social realities, despite glaring contradictions in the historical record. The painterly facture of these artistic images determined their local meaning differently from their European reception. These circumstances enable modern historians to better understand how the formal structure of ethnographic images functions.

In the final analysis, it is important to emphasize that I have approached the problematic of interpretation on historical grounds. In this short essay I have tried to understand the structural logic of a certain type of ethnographic image. In all five case studies of the single type discussed in the essay, including the contemporary re-use of a late nineteenth-century photograph of Warburg with a Hopi ceremonial dancer, subordination and objectification of the 'Other' is an enduring function of ethnographic images, accomplished by presenting the signifying elements of a rhetorical structure as if they were value-neutral factual records. In every instance – in every concrete image – the value assigned to these 'facts' of representation is dependent on other 'facts' not present, as the comparisons between the genre of portraiture and the depiction of particular ethnic types demonstrate. It is a modernist myth to think that the format of the ethnographic image I have been discussing all along is innocent. Anthropologist James Clifford does not mince words: ethnography has been a form of representation that establishes the ethnographer in

a transcendent and transcendental position, “over-seeing” and explaining his subject according to his own categories of signification. Writing thus produces culture (Clifford, 1988).

Yet there is a final caveat. Given the extent of recent critical interest in the history of vision in a number of fields, it is surprising that there is still so little critical literature on the subject of visual ethnography in its foundational moments. The subject invites further study. The further conclusion that I would like readers of this essay to draw from case studies spanning four hundred years is that the hegemonic position accorded to the viewing subject – the viewer positioned as the ethnographer – is actually precarious and unstable, difficult to maintain, subject to fluctuating contexts of reception. It would be interesting to frame a more extensive cross-cultural study of ethnographic images with this thesis in mind, to try to recover from the historical record more cases of local intervention and manipulation of the discursive field so that we are not always (pace Clifford) re-writing cultural history from the standpoint of the dominant culture but, instead, creating a more complex and pluralistic history of individuation.

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