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## The indigenous character and the writing of the self.

El personaje indígena y la escritura de sí.


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### Abstract:

This essay deals with the theme of the "indigenous" character represented in Mexican literature and literatures in native languages. The text is divided into three sections: the first one exposes the origin of the meaning given to the concept "Indian" in European and New Spanish narrative; in the second one, it reflects on the character in Mexican literature and, finally, in the third section, it shows how the "Indian" is blurred to present the expression of himself in indigenous literature.

**Key words:** Indigenous literature. Historical novel. Indigenist literature. Literature in native languages.

### Resumen:

Este ensayo trata el tema del personaje "indígena" representado en la literatura mexicana y las literaturas en lenguas originarias. El texto está dividido en tres apartados: el primero expone el origen del sentido que se da en el concepto "indio" en la narrativa europea y novohispana; en el segundo, se reflexiona sobre el personaje en la literatura mexicana y, finalmente, en el tercer apartado, muestra cómo el "indio" se desdibuja para presentar la expresión de sí desde la literatura indígena.

**Palabras clave:** Literatura indígena. Novela histórica. Literatura Indigenista. Literatura en lenguas originarias.

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The construction of a character, based on experience or on the mixture of imaginary elements, responds to a series of connections that is far from being an innocent act, even when it escapes the writer's will, since it is a representation of what we know. This essay intends to analyze: how is the indigenous character expressed according to the literature that enunciates it? with this, we will also be able to investigate: to what imaginaries does the construction of characters allude, to what empirical and theoretical constructions, and why?

None of us escape the conceptions that have been made about us and our culture, therefore, to examine the indigenous character and its expressive form is to question our social constructions. To answer the central question, adjacent questions will also be answered: what are the imaginaries that operate behind a literary character, how does the expression of an indigenous character contrast with that of the character created from a person called "indigenous" that is represented in literature, what could be the implications of an indigenous voice from the outside, and what could be the implications of an indigenous voice from the outside? In this way, we will reflect on the writing of otherness (Mexican literature) and the writing of self (authors of native peoples), to finally focus attention on how a character is configured in a dual dynamic of what is known *about* the indigenous and *from* the community.

The work will be based on a comparison of the expression of the indigenous character in the Mexican narrative and the indigenous narratives, properly speaking, in the novel. However, in the second case, it should be clarified that it will be expressed in Spanish, since the life of this character arises with this language. Allusion will also be made to the category of "Indian" and "indigenous" in a Hispanic sense, since it is the word as such that is pursued, an external identity classification; although it is understood that the continuity from one era to another is offered by the original people of these lands, the meanings have been transforming, so that here a rupture arises. A nominative rupture that has greater effects. These renamed lands and also renamed people (Matías, 2014), entails an act of power (Reding, 2009) and a struggle for life. Christopher Columbus' act of naming was an act of power over lands and people, however, to the extent that these lands had not only one name, but hundreds, according to each cultural and linguistic block, in reality, it was a renaming and homogenization. Renaming affirms the act of power, especially,

when the wars are tilting and the new colonial regime is established. The renamed people themselves become a rupture. They are being called "Indians" under the signs of an imaginary that responds to diverse motives. It will be the centuries that will make the struggle for the change of meaning of this word find new channels.

This essay will be divided into three sections to explain the concerns that are present in this preliminary. In the first, an explanation of the emergence of the concept of the "Indian" as a character in European, New Spanish and novel Mexican literature, in parallelism with those who will be known as "Indians". In the second, an analysis will be made of the expression of the indigenous in Mexican literature, while the third will reflect on the expressive forms of indigenous literature in native languages.

## One

An adventurer sailed the seas, seeking to go beyond the horizon to find riches. In the eventful days when he hoped to reach the eastern lands, he recounted his desires and encounters. Thus he recreated the legendary journey to meet the promised wonders.<sup>1</sup> The people described were "the Indians", later, "Indians", who were born in these pages with a new meaning (Matías, 2019). The "Indian", gentilicio of the Indies, becomes a character, as such, narrative, in which another person will be made to fit.

Sometimes the account of Christopher Columbus' first voyage<sup>2</sup> seems to describe a paradise with naked, "meek", "unarmed and lawless" people (2006, p. 54), whose hospitality is defined as love of neighbor, ideas that will give our imaginary (Christian) goodness and that of the good savage (in union with nature). However, what at first were blessings, gradually turn into shadows. One-eyed people appear, people who ate human flesh and were armed, people with *use of reason*; in the second trip, the perspective changes even more, these beings who disagreed with those, were the source for the image of

<sup>1</sup> Columbus made the voyage of 1492 with the guidance of Marco Polo's *The Book of Wonders* (2002), 1298; likewise, he followed oriental maritime knowledge.

<sup>2</sup> The diary of Columbus was rewritten by Bartolomé de las Casas, after the original text was lost, this annotation is suggestive for the study of narratives, because of the style in which it is written, the ways in which we know it and it became known. It is worth mentioning that the narrative form of the diary changes from the first voyage to the subsequent ones.

the cannibal:<sup>3</sup> anthropophagous, devil worshipers, the insubordinate, the uncivilized Indians. Although the classification was involuntary and no one could foresee what it would unleash, the traces were left for the next travelers.

The archetype of the "savage" and the concept of the "cannibal"<sup>4</sup> were assumed as part of the usual communicative forms. The narrative that is recreating the "Indian" does not respond to the configuration of the Mexica, Zapotec, Mixe people..., these will have their own conceptions (Matías, 2019),<sup>5</sup> however, it is here when this word contracts the conflicts of the contraposition of senses, since it has an operativity in Spanish,<sup>6</sup> thus, it only shows a disfigured face, that of the character.

The Indians, in the Colombian diary, appear as mute witnesses of the ceremonies of possession, stripped of their face and voice, they have a certain utility: to be the informants about the populations with gold, as well as the providers of supplies, the taxonomic evidence, the trophy before society and the Kings, part of the collected collection, the raw material of slavery as of the hosts, to be the objects of Christianization and to fulfill the dream of the *crusader*. The image of the savage and the usefulness of the people are being matched.

The narratives of the first travelers, conquerors, colonizers and evangelizers are inclined to classifications, the magnification of their adventures, offering an account of events that mix their interests, the fantastic, the real, the marvelous and the *never-before-seen*. A dispute for the best story that will have ontological implications. From north to south, from east to west, the sixteenth century is clothed in

<sup>3</sup> Columbus described the *cariba* or *caribales*, which by idiomatic deformation gave origin to the cannibal. In reality, the *Carib* people belonged to different peoples encompassed under this nomination. This can be interpreted from the travels of Fray Ramón Pane, *Relación acerca de las antigüedades de los indios* (1974 [c. 1498]).

<sup>4</sup> It is pertinent to point out that Columbus said that the Cariba - who for him were *Caniba*, people of the Great Khan - were not anthropophagous, in spite of the evidence that the natives showed him, it was on the second voyage that he changed his perspective. For the last voyage, the Indians ceased to be savages, meek people without greed, and became anthropophagous savages who needed to be fought and subdued by force.

<sup>5</sup> It is understandable how confusing it is to name a group that is also reconfirming its identity as "Spaniards", even "Europeans", but insofar as the work is not delving into this genealogy, they will be used interchangeably, as will "Hispanics" and "peninsulars", also used by the writers themselves. As for "Indians", "indios" will also be used as a synonym, although each one has its own history. In both cases, we will ask the reader to follow the senses of social usage they have to refer to people as well as to their societies.

<sup>6</sup> Eventually, in other languages, since it was not limited to Spanish, but the meaning that was being formed crossed other European societies and languages, also with time, will be universalized. For the purposes of this paper, allusion will be made to Spanish, since a comparison will be made between the narratives of writers in native languages and the Mexican one.



explorers, soldiers and ecclesiastics: Ramón Pane (1498), Américo Vespucio (1500), Antonio Pigafetta (1520), Alvar Núñez de Cabeza de Vaca (1527), Ulrico Schmidel (1534), Fray Diego de Landa (1549), Francisco López de Gómara (1552), Sir Walter Raleigh (1595), to mention a few.<sup>7</sup> Narrative taxonomies are recurrent, on people, animals, plants, climate, objects, cultural practices, etcetera.

The travelers' texts would have lacked the impact they had if it had not been for the processes of war, evangelization and colonization. The narrative of the first descriptions that were made about America in relation to what was written during the wars of conquest changed. By then, the papal bull granted the rights to the Spanish Crown to explore and exploit the lands found and conquered. So the intent aspect of the writing also transformed from a report log on the progress in obtaining gold to a chronicle of events on the advance of the armada and political testimonies in the space granted by god.

We follow the transition in the accounts of the captains that give an account of the advance. It is interesting to note that in the letters of Hernán Cortés, 1520-1526 (Gayangos, 1966), written in the heat of the battles, they are closer to what was thought of the people and the villages, a matter that will change for the *Historia verdadera de la Conquista de la Nueva España* (2013) by Bernal Díaz del Castillo written in the last decades of the 16th century. The way in which Cortés approaches the new lands is not defined. Although he finds some customs barbaric and his intention is to obtain victories and gold, the qualifier of savagery lacks a primordial character as it is present in the account of Columbus' wonders. For Cortés, the Indians will be enemies or allies, reckless and daring. In the second letter-relation, 1520, when he prepares to attack Moctezuma, with the favor of the Tlaxcaltecs, he says of them: "they were many and very strong people" (1966, p. 59). A subject that does not change for the following years; for example, his third letter of May of 1522: "I wrote to Your Majesty that while the said brigantines were being made, and I and the Indians, our friends, were preparing to return to the enemies" (1966, p. 162). (1966, p. 162)

What we are witnessing in Cortés' relations is the narrative form centered on the protagonism of a few actors, which will be consolidated for Díaz del Castillo's text. The names of some Indians, those who deserve to be named, are recorded. Of course, the matter follows the European individualistic forms. Tzvetan Todorov (2008) gave an account of the narrative change from the ancient Mexica voice to the

<sup>7</sup> The dates correspond to the letters compiled by Becco, in *Historia Real y Fantástica del Nuevo Mundo* (1992).

colonial indigenous one, where the collective voice gave way to the individual one, but we must also consider that a voice in indigenous Spanish and another mestizo one were being born (Matías, 2019). In this display of relevance of some natives, the names of Moctezuma or Doña Marina will be frozen in time. The rest of the Indians will be a nice background for the chivalric novels of the relationships.

The representation of the European self and the Indian is constructed by victories and defeats. The stories recreate the mythical struggle between good and evil (Matías, 2014), the Indians with their *customs and things of the devil* are the enemies of religion, a matter that will be unquestionable in Bernardino de Sahagún; those people who have the riches, the enemies of the Crown. Thus, soldiers and ecclesiastics join paths. In this version, the Spaniards and Indians, the narrator and the narrated person, become the protagonist and the antagonist. The Indians who support the Spaniards will be seen as the good Christians; those who fight for their freedom, the barbarians. Both, in any case, become narrated subjects; their images depend on the narrator, just as their voices become hostages.

In the 16th century, Bartolomé de las Casas, in his *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias* (1998) represented the Indians as beings worthy of compassion: humble, patient and peaceful, who required a loving tutelage; while Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, in his *Tratado sobre las causas justas de la guerra contra los indios* (1941) exposes the opposite: they are *homunculi* (little men), criminals and imperfect that require, equally, the tutelage of the Spaniards, but by force. Both positions are contrary, but they coincide in the shortness of the indigenous.<sup>8</sup> At this point, we must not forget the effects that the imaginary had for all those involved, in the literary, social or political aspect. An example of the latter, we can see it in Thomas More's *Utopia* (2019), where people are shown to be obedient -by a use of reason-, in an allusion to an unpredictable land, which Friar Las Casas will try to replicate in reality.

Little by little the letters and relationships will become chronicles, with the participation of Indians and noble mestizos. Also, over time, the expression that the indigenous character *should* have, his image and voice will be built (Matías, 2019).

<sup>8</sup> The dispute of Valladolid (1550) between Las Casas and Sepúlveda summarizes well the debate on the nature of the Indian that was taking place at the time, in which it was debated whether the natives had a soul with the intention of establishing what kind of treatment they should receive.

The viceregal codices show a new language, between that which tries to recover ancient knowledge and that which emerges with the new language, where the original languages are present with small annotations and the ancient language leaves its last signs (Romero, 2011). Chronicles, on the other hand, tend more towards this mixed language, leaning towards new forms (Todorov, 2008). This will be a different aspect from its predecessors, we could almost say that it will be the mestizo narrative, which will lead to Mexican narrative.

In Diego Muñoz Camargo's *Historia de Tlaxcala* (2013), in Fernando Alvarado Tezozomoc's *Crónica Mexicáyotl* (1998) and in Fernando de Alva Ixtlixóchitl's *Historia Chichimeca* (1892) there is already a notorious change in the narrative form. The voice is undisputed in a personal capacity, of course, the intention is to gain favor in property disputes, but still part of the ancient word is recovered. The representation of the "Indian" has a practical functionality.

It would seem that it is the Indian who takes the pen to talk about himself, however, it is more complicated. We enter the quagmire of what is identity? In this case, are any of these chroniclers "Indians"? Is it the indigenous voice that underlies the lines of their paragraphs? These noble Indians separate themselves from the macehuales, they take up the pen because they can. The collectivity is broken. In spite of the mestizaje -except for Tezozómoc-, they avoid assuming themselves as such. Therefore, the narrative change is more than a champion of rights, it evidences epistemic transformations. It is necessary to separate oneself from the common Indians, from the Indians of the people, a process from which other people in a more modest situation than that of the chroniclers will tend, because in a society of hierarchies and unequal treatment, one soon learns to save oneself as best one can from humiliation. The good Indian comes out of the pages and imaginary also to be accepted. And, of course, for the most astute, it becomes a possibility of deception when disguised as the good Indian, therefore, the ladino Indian is looked upon with suspicion. An identity is far from being a closed entity. In our daily life, indigenous people do not manifest themselves as in our imaginary, but they do when we turn them into a character.

When reading these texts, great care must be taken to deliberate these differences, for which it is crucial to resort to the oralities of the peoples. In the post-Cortesian recovered songs we find differences in



the collective voices; for example, those corresponding to the anonymous ones of the Tlatelolcas -which collect their own stories as of the Tenochcas- when contrasting them with the Florentine or Tlatelolco codices we find the intermingled senses (Matías, 2019).

This narrative voice that belongs to the Mexica peoples is about to be disseminated, to be kept by the colonial authorities in written form. The opposite will happen with the Maya, whose books were kept for more centuries, as in the case of the *Chilam Balam of Chumayel* (Anonymous, 1985; Garza & León, 1980). It is necessary to emphasize that the oralities were kept by the people without being transcribed into the new language.

An interesting text is the *Nican Mopohua*, whose original title is *Huei tlamahuiçoltica omonexiti in ilhuicac tlatocaçihuapilli Santa Maria Totlaçonantzin Guadalupe in nican huei altepenahuac Mexico itocayocan Tepeyacac* [Maravillosamente se apareció la señora celeste Santa María, Nuestra amada madre Guadalupe, aquí junto a la gran ciudad de México, donde se dice Tepeyácac], published by Luis Lasso de la Vega, in 1649. León pointed out the stylistic differences in the content, but that, in the case of the main story, it was of Nahuatl origin. The authorship has been in dispute, being attributed to Fernando de Alva by Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora, or Antonio Valeriano. In the latter case, in *Tonantzin Guadalupe*, León (2014) points out that, being a student at the Colegio de Tlatelolco, under the tutelage of Sahagún, he learned the ancient forms and given his training with the ecclesiastic, he must also have been a scholar in the religious subject. The point is that the anonymous author had knowledge of the ancient Nahua world, its language and mastery of what is proper to Hispania.

Now, the character in the story is what concerns us. In the bibliography of Juan Diego "he is remembered as an exemplary man" (León, 2014, p. 21), this can be seen as a Christian, humble and hardworking Indian, points that can be seen in his own description: "In truth I am an unhappy day laborer,/ I am only like the rope of the porters,/ In truth I am angarilla,/ I am only tail, I am wing, I am carried on my back, I am a burden" (León, 2014, p. 113). This in itself shows us a change of paradigm if it has been written by an indigenous person, otherwise, the bet on the representation of a character in a particular way. The choice of a macehual for the story rather than a main Indian "is already an attack on the Nahuatl culture itself, but the birth of a new world" (Matías, 2019, p. 79), the mestizo world.

In the voice of Juan Diego, ancient conceptions and an inclination for Christian goodness are expressed, but the former is not original, it is an apostasy. Leon points out:

All the words with which Juan Diego describes himself as a poor man are found in several of the *huehuehtlahtolli*, testimonies of the ancient word. For example, the father, in admonishing his son, tells him: "thus you have been molded, you are angarilla, cord for the load", *ca ic mamalihuac in cacaxtli, in mecapalli*. He also notes that "you are carried, you are loaded", *ca tiquihua, ca timamalo*". (León, 2014, p. 61)

That is to say, we can know a theme, a culture, a language, but by not understanding it in its depth we fall into empty and unspontaneous discursive formulas. This can be seen in the indigenist literature of the twentieth century. When Juan Diego replies to Guadalupe to choose honorable and revered men in his place, and when she affirms him as her messenger, it is the Catholic discourse that imposes itself.<sup>9</sup> The translation from Spanish to Nahuatl is problematic, because when thinking in a language, its ways of understanding the world are transferred. This issue will be analyzed by contemporary authors of literatures in native languages, inquiring into what language one thinks in when writing in a different language, revealing the distance between systems of thought.

It is in the 17th century when we can properly speak of literature in New Spain. When the novo-Hispanic baroque art flourished, the pen was cleared in beautiful verses and narratives, but despite the fact that great poets have written in the native languages such as Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, Miguel de Guevara or Antonio de Saavedra Guzmán, we cannot point out that they are indigenous literatures. The Indian, the person narrated, appears as a pretext for compassionate purposes or to claim his "scarce" virtues. Thus, the look at a living being with whom a life is shared is missing. Strong will be the contrast of the functionality of the writing in Spanish of the members of the peoples who raise the pen for protest reasons or administrative declarations. (Matías, 2019)

<sup>9</sup> This is similar with regard to the text *Instrucción del Inca Don Diego de Castro Titu Cusi Yupanqui al Licenciado don Lope García de Castro* (1916) in which Fray Marcos García intervenes; the letters of Tenamaztle (or attributed to him) that are presented by Bartolomé de las Casas (León, *Francisco Tenamaztle*, 2005), and perhaps in a recent case the text imputed to Juan Nepomuceno Cruz (Mixe) in the 20th century (Sánchez, 1952), since what is at stake is "the indigenous", that the texts respond to an imaginary, to an identity linked to a person, the image and the voice constructed from the outside. This can be better compared in the last section, with authors of native peoples, because although there are cultural transformations and people adopt other conceptions, collective epistemic forms underlie.

Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora, in 1692, describes the Indians as: "the most ungrateful, unknown, querulous and restless people" (1984, p. 115), thrown to iniquities, unreason and drunkenness. When the Indians of the Santiago neighborhood (Tlatelolco) rebel against the authorities, he unequivocally exclaims that they are still "barbarians". He was not referring to all the Indians, but to the lower class, because with great encouragement he helped Juan Alva Cortés, son of his friend Fernando de Alva Ixtlixóchtli, to preserve his mother's inheritance (Sigüenza y Góngora, 1984, p. XVI). On the other hand, the Spaniard Juan de Palafox y Mendoza, who lived in New Spain in the XVII century, in his book on the *Virtues of the Indian* (1893) reminds us of Las Casas, in his blessed purpose of the protection and dignity that the natives deserve.

In this literary lineage we cannot overlook an image that in later centuries will be important for Latin America: Shakespeare's Caliban, in *The Tempest* (2015), an enslaved savage who is the obvious reference to the *cannibal*, where the author shows a dangerous being, as Columbus saw him when he understood that the *Caribs* were not docile beings of easy subjugation: "Shakespeare in turn was most probably inspired by the English translation of Montaigne's famous essay, "Des Cannibales" [ca. 1580]" (Weinberg de Magis, 1994, p. 25). 1580]" (Weinberg de Magis, 1994, p. 25). In the play, Caliban lashes out at Prospero and civilization: "This island's mine by Sycorax, my mother" (Shakespeare, 2015, p. 36), but he also understands that it was a mistake to have been generous: "Cursed be I that did so!" (p. 37). Words that will have repercussions in the early twentieth century.

By the eighteenth century, naturalistic approaches will involve the colonies. The duality will focus on the degrees of civilization, strengthening the idea of savagery,<sup>10</sup> the lack of control or domination over nature. In the civilizing form, work and education will have a greater contrast for the indigenous people who will be seen as ignorant, drunkards and lazy. Francisco Javier Clavijero in *Historia antigua de México* (1945, Vol. IV), a work of 1780, will try to defend the indigenous position a little, but will fall into the prejudices that preceded him, something that will be more open in other writers such as Servando Teresa de Mier.

<sup>10</sup> Progress will be the point of enclave in which "the figure of the Good Savage emerges, with all its dose of exoticism, which excites the imaginary of the Age of Enlightenment" (Díaz de la Serna, 2009, p. 170). The idea of progress is joined by the philosophical approaches of a national history.

The invention of a character whose characteristics will later be transferred to people avoids looking and listening to the beings called "Indians", however, they will assume the word and endow it with new meanings. The novo-Hispanic narrative is the antecedent of Mexican literature, but it is also the sample of how imaginaries are constructed. This writing *about* the indigenous is a writing from otherness.

## Two

Romanticism enters the scene to reinforce the idea of the Indian in communion with nature, a life diametrically different from that of the civilized, who wishes to "recover" what has been lost. A clear example is Count de Chateaubriand's *Atala*, published in 1801, which is based on the slaughter of the Natchez in Louisiana in 1727 by the French. In it, the widely disseminated images of the Indians come to the fore. The missionary tells Atala: "My daughter, all your evils come from your ignorance; it is your savage education and lack of instruction that have lost you" (Chateaubriand, 1983, p. 59). Such could be the words of Friar Las Casas, Sahagún or Clavijero.

Romanticism had great influence in America: "This is the model of the novel and Indianist poetry ... which serves perfectly the project of a national culture" (Wey, 1984, p. 156). In the nineteenth century, the literary plane is closely linked to that of politics; the literati are the politicians and ideologists of the nation. The utopian ideas that emerged from the sixteenth century that led to dream about the American lands to found a perfect government and the Indians, as perfectible individuals, were moving to literary texts.

Consequently, the unity of the Indian with nature will be more than *a* way of life of the Indians, it will be their foundation; it is not only a literary model, as if the structure were insufficient to understand that the rooted content is what is also transferred. Leticia Algaba (2005) points out the unusual, at the time, use of the prologue that was imported, and also reveals that *Atala's* preface was translated by Teresa de Mier:

The preface to *Atala* is a text that defines the poetics of the novel. Chateaubriand exposes the guiding idea of the composition: "the epic of the man of nature", from the painting of the customs of the savages "relating them to some known event" (Algaba, 2005, p. 290).



That is, what will become the historical novel.

*Atala* is a sample of how history and literature will begin to mix. An issue that will be replicated in Mexico. In *El filibustero*, 1866, by Eligio Ancona (2010), in which his time is represented and has as a background the Caste War: "The clear awareness of writing historical novels is perceptible because in 1864 he had also published in Mérida *La cruz y la espada*, where he deals with the conquest of Yucatán" (Algaba, 2005, p. 291). This practice of the conscience of the historical novel has the Indians as secondary characters: an impertinent sacristan or a servant, or the "Indians" as a static entity mentioned as the unhappy ones tied to the encomiendas. No shadow of a Jacinto Pat or Cecilio Chi, whose letters of those times distilled protagonism, even more so without the Mayan and Afro-descendant peoples who fought side by side for their freedom.

True, as Celia Rosado Avilés indicates in a prologue to the updated edition of the book: "El filibustero by Eligio Ancona is a romantic historical novel that uses the recreation of some scenarios of colonial Yucatán to convey to the reader the political and social proposal of liberalism" (Ancona, 2010, p. 10). The writers and politicians constructed the myth of the nation, of a Mexico whose ancient greatness, of magnificent indigenous empires, was interrupted by the unscrupulous, cruel and bloodthirsty Spaniards.

In the heartfelt introduction of the *Filibustero*, we read a kind of dedication: "To the fierce aborigine who fights incessantly to preserve his independence, who resists with courage the superiority of his enemies" (2010, p. 17), but this admiration is broken before the reality of the Mayan people, in whose cases they were hunted or their rights were taken away and, properly, of the Caste War fought by the people to avoid being Mexican or Yucatecan. Thus, a partial view is discovered in order to condemn them:

The pupil Indian, hypocritical and dissimulated, who suffers his yoke with apparent conformity, who allows himself to be slapped by the encomendero and the friar and who does not resist the innumerable agiotists who swarm the country and snatch the bread from his mouth, has taken over. (Ancona, 2010, pp. 17-18).

Algaba, in this sense, shows that there is a great distance between the conquest and the new struggles: "hence the scene will be "different", although the scenario is the same" (2005, p. 291). The Maya



will be seen through an old model, but with the light of historical romanticism. In this period "the indigenous person appeared in stories, novels, tales and chronicles of the time, although framed within conceptions of western influence that tended to paint him in a distorted and almost caricatured way, in the ideological framework of his supposed inferiority". (Waldman, 2003, pp. 64-65)

Ignacio Manuel Altamirano, a writer of Chontal and Nahuatl origin, follows this trend (2007). Nicolás, a character in *El Zarco*, a nineteenth-century novel, can only be rescued through work and education, something that happened to him as a native of a village. In this novel, the Indian is described by Doña Antonia, Manuela's mother and Pilar's godmother, as a brave and hardworking man, among other adjectives. For her part, Manuela expresses her repudiation of Nicolás when her mother tells her that the best thing to do is to marry him in view of the imminent danger of the bandits: "I will never marry that horrible Indian whom I cannot see..." (2007, p. 244), and who preferred to go with a silver one: El Zarco. This is a type of sentence that Altamirano was familiar with, as he had often been humiliated by his contemporaries. Doña Antonia replies to her daughter to make her agree to marry, adding that Nicolás is: "a boy who is a golden grain of honesty" (p. 224), she had previously mentioned that in addition to his virtues: "Nicolás has earned a lot of money with his work, he has his savings" (p. 223). But nothing convinces the young woman to be the wife of an Indian. It is pertinent to point out that the man who once served as head of the Ministry of Development and was a champion of liberalism, ends up with a moral teaching in favor of the working Indian, since Manuela ends up badly for choosing the bandit, while Nicolás marries Pilar. A subject for an analysis similar to the one made at the time by Frantz Fanon.

A notorious case will be Emilio Rabasa's form of representation in his novel *La bola* (1888), where the war scenario gives us an Indian observed among equals although his home and his means are those of an impoverished being: "his poor conditions" (p. 171). Pedro Martín is an Indian, friend and compadre of Don Mateo. He has a fundamental role in the plot. He is one of those in charge of the attacks, thus we read his adventures in the uprising of San Martín de la Piedra: "Pedro Martín surrounded the ravine to seize the espinal ... While the Indian Pedro took it from the rear, Don Mateo organized his troop as much as possible, encouraged by the sudden change of positions, and launched it again" (p. 145). Even when luck and the tactics of war have abandoned him: "Pedro Martín, who by his daring and his clumsiness had lost many

people, entered the plaza at once; and when attacked by his force and mine, Coderas' force dispersed, running in all directions" (p. 204). (p. 204)

In this type of themes is where the Indian re-emerges as a being of actions, even if in an adjacent way, as it was in the case of Cortés' relations or in Díaz del Castillo's *Historia Verdadera*, allies who give their support for the cause, and that we can see later on, in Mariano Azuela's *Los de abajo* (1999) and in novels of the Mexican Revolution. In Rabasa's text another even more disdained figure appears, that of the "Indian", as in the case of the man with a more realistic appearance:

Minga, who went out for half an hour, returned to the house full of news from the square, which would alarm anyone but the haughty wife of Pedro Martin, who had the profound conviction that where her husband was was the whole world, and that the man capable of touching a hair on his head had not yet been born. (1888, p. 180).

This haughty woman, admirer of her husband, who is far from the fearful image that provokes the sighs of dramatic stories: "The Indian, with the disdainful smile on her thick lips, imposed everything on me" (p. 180), the protagonist will end up pointing out. But, all in all, without surpassing the character of Doña Marina de Díaz del Castillo, who called her "most excellent lady" and who played a fundamental role in the wars of conquest. Of course, they are two different positions, with the distinction in the number of pages and importance for national history. Nevertheless, they share a solid character.

In the costumbrista novels, says Mario Calderón, the:

describe the struggle for socioeconomic advancement of men with an existence outside the law, revolutionaries, traffickers or thieves (*Astucia, Los bandidos de Río Frío, Los plateados de Tierra Caliente, El Zarco, La Bola, Ensalada de pollos and Antón Pérez*) (2005, p. 316). (2005, p. 316).

In literature, the impoverished face of the indigenous seems to be something new and at the same time a custom. The political texts with a positioning from this "Indian being" are far from the ones that have been acclaimed by literature, for example Ignacio Ramírez, the Necromancer, or the letters produced by the indigenous leaders in the midst of battles.

At the end of the century, the Indian becomes a social and cultural value to establish a national history. The museum Indian is the new image. The indigenous image of folklore is born to be the beautiful archaeological theme and tourist ornament. During this century the "indigenous chronicles" of nobles, produced during the viceroyalty, are recovered, this interest on the "Indian voices", legitimized a process with a glorious past.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Shakespeare's Caliban took off in Latin America in José Enrique Rodó's *Ariel* (1984) and spread to Mexico, thus taking up the texts of the first travelers (Weinberg de Magis, 1994). Shakespeare raging in the passions of man, looks at the indigenous without poetics despite his verses: "*You taught me language, and my profit on 't / Is I know how to curse*" (2015, p. 39). The savage has learned the language, masters the foreign culture and curses with it, yet the savage is still subject to nature, to the element that the civilized has overcome. Caliban crosses the frontiers against slavery, but not even by passing to the American lands has a better fortune, because his image has a precise historical background, it is formed on the basis of stereotypes and concrete prejudices. The two long-standing opposing images of the Indian: the savage and the cannibal, from Columbus' diaries, are updated.

After the Mexican Revolution, the current of indigenism will take the Indian as the protagonist of its stories: "trying to unravel the uniqueness of their customs and worldviews" (Waldman, 2003, p. 65). Some writers "such as Mauricio Magdaleno, Carlos Antonio Castro and Rosario Castellanos, among others, believed that teaching, good treatment and well-paid work were the remedies required to bring the Indian out of his indolence" (Romero, 2010, p. 4). The salvation of the Indian lies in education, nothing new; it is a matter of civilizing him.

The image and voice of the Indian will be the main theme, however, there is still a distance, no matter how much closeness is intended. In *El indio* de 1935, by Gregorio López y Fuentes: "the narrator protests violently about the abuses, but in reality he does not know how this population lives and speaks. The novel divides the characters into good and bad" (González, 2011, p. 77). Descriptions of the indigenous world abound, the author's position is clear:

Sad nightfalls of indigenous ranchería; gray lumps, squatting at the door of the houses. Women already returning from the well, with the jar on their heads. Dull clapping of those who make tortillas. The child, drowsy, who cries tirelessly because his mother does not help him (López and Fuentes, 2008, p. 7).

The *Indian* is a man without a face or a name, but he alludes to all Indians or to anyone. The white men, those who have *the use of reason*, are the ones who torture him, who strip him of his gold, who deceive him. The insinuations of romanticism-nationalism have changed the character and the antagonist of New Spain. Now it is the indigenous the good guy and the whites, the evil ones. But both historical stages are far away. The discourse comes from other battles, the struggle for the lands of the peasantry, a peasantry that is in the process of recognizing itself as mestizo, if it has not already done so. Is this discursive object different from its predecessor eras? The paladins of the Revolution also echoed the poor in their harangues. The Mayas, Nahuas, Totonacas, Tsotsiles, Tseltales, for their part, fought, once again, against their enemies, those who declared war on them since the 16th century and whose descendants took the baton to continue the process of domination. Nevertheless, the Manichean is incapable of returning the reflection of the Indians who support this or that side for their own interests, but rather, if they support the whites, it is because they are deceived. In the narrative, the Indians who participated in the wars for their own benefit are far away, although reality affirms it.

There will be moving stories for their strength and rawness, such as *El callado dolor de los tzotziles* (1990) by Ramón Rubín or *Los hombres verdaderos* by Carlo Antonio Castro, but it will be the construction of a world interpreted from the outside, even when the authors have spent time in the indigenous regions, even though they use words in native languages. Indigenist literature should not necessarily adhere to reality, given that among the interpretations that exist about indigenous peoples, it would seem to be the least harmful, except because it reveals the epistemic conditions of the society to whose authors they belong.

Perhaps, where we find a less homogenizing intention of the indigenous character is when his intention is, precisely, to leave them as secondary without the pretension of knowing what they think. There is an inclination in *Callado dolor de los tzotziles* when José Damián López Cushün crosses borders, so

that Rubín places him in an urban context, although he still pretends to be the indigenous voice and recreates a worn-out image. Literary criticism would be merciless with authors who do the same with a Japanese or German character, if they fall into stereotypes, unless it is justified. The typical explanatory character of indigenist literature shows the target audience, aimed at those who wish to "understand" the life of peoples and their people.

Therefore, perhaps, authors like Rosario Castellanos find a better position to portray both societies from their experience, avoiding falling into the explanatory, romantic or frivolous story, because she will avoid being the indigenous voice, she will be a narrator from the otherness. In the dialogues with her nanny, in her inquiring look of what that woman does and in the look she gives back to her, there is a mutual diatribe. In the memories of the girl in *Balún Canán*, a 1957 work, the nanny remarks: "Did she talk to you? Did she talk to the grains of aniseed?" (2013, p. 9), while the girl, for her part, replies to the prejudices of her society without ambiguity or moralizing:

Does my nana know that I hate it when she combs my hair? She doesn't know. She doesn't know anything. She is Indian, she is barefoot and wears no clothes under the blue tzec cloth. She is not ashamed. She says that the earth has no eyes (Castellanos, 2013, p. 9).

The positions of both are different, in terms of age, socioeconomic and cultural hierarchy, and at the same time, they share silences as women. We could find something similar in Juan Rulfo, who does not have to give further explanations about his peasant characters, only to describe them together with the catrines.

The beauty of the indigenist works is something that is far from being questioned, an unparalleled poetic prose that contains echoes of indigenous voices, of what we know *about* the indigenous through translations (Matías, 2019), as is the case of *Benzulul* (2009) by Eraclio Zepeda or *Canek* by Ermilo Abreu (2013), that although, in an unequal world, the authors also found the discomfort of being a discriminated person, as Zepeda shows, when he indicates that it is useless to be Benzulul, therefore, he changes his name to be Encarnación Salvatierra, a name of power, of a man without fear. A longing that we can intuit



in those people who fled from themselves to become mestizos, and we cannot reproach them at all. In the game of identities, the risks of migration and the change of customs, lies the struggle for survival.

What indigenist literature shows us is that, no matter how many interpretations and good intentions, in the case of indigenous peoples, we are veiled until in our realities we are able to look at ourselves as equals, with all its implications and without moralistic safeguards. To what extent can we judge a creative voice and an imitating voice? Even in later works that are no longer indigenist, that have the character in a secondary role, such as *Los errores* (2014) by José Revueltas or main, such as *Malinche* (2009) by Laura Esquivel, we will continue to be witnesses of the imaginaries that have permeated for centuries.

In contemporary literature, both in novels and short stories, indigenous people appear as thieves, opportunists, employees, drunks, superstitious, however, even when some put them as managers or students, as a novel act -and it is not because an indigenous person does not occupy these spaces-, what is still manifested is the lack of a look towards an equal. A small space among the new generations is breaking with this by describing a character without the nickname of "Indian", since by showing his characteristics it is inferred that he belongs to some native culture, this however arises from the friction with indigenous literature. The real person is still under the stigma of a narrative character created from imaginary mimics. A voice imposed by societies still does not listen to them. If perhaps the economic, social and political conditions would change, we could be in a position to create a literary character and not just a representation of our prejudices.

Narratives about the ancient indigenous world abound, with recognized and independent writers, with the intention of vainglorizing the romanticized past, some with the impetus to recognize their roots, but it is not so different from what has been pointed out.

The intentionality of literatures is a central point in the discussion of character configuration. The literatures we have from the western tradition<sup>11</sup> have different motivations from those of the native

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<sup>11</sup> I use this term to encompass a group of nations, with their own histories, cultures and languages, in contrast to another homogenization, the original peoples.

peoples and it is here where we can notice that the narrative forms and the construction of characters change substantially.

### Three

Indigenous literature is the counterpoint to indigenist literature. This is the voice of those who have been called "Indian/indigenous". Centuries had to pass for writing to be public, free and under one's own canons. This is the writing of oneself, the writing of a person who takes up the pen to speak for himself. The "Indian/indigenous" had repercussions that people tried to change for centuries, literature was an activity that adhered to this struggle, for this reason, Natalio Hernández expressed: "We began to say with pride: we are Indians" (1998, p. 44). This process tried to make Spanish-speaking words stop being loaded with stereotypes, but what changes in concept does not necessarily change in meaning.

In the distance were the natives who were the informants of the captains and ecclesiastics, who had to watch their words, or who in reckless acts wrote on the margins of the colonialist codices. Also left in the parallel path were the intellectuals who defended the indigenous writers who, in addition, pointed out that literature existed before the New Spain.<sup>12</sup>

At the beginning, the narrative of indigenous literature<sup>13</sup> was composed of the recovery of orality. The teachers had realized that, as time passed, ancient knowledge was being lost. Thus, they transcribed prayers, stories, histories and teachings that were important to their culture. It is here that we see that a character such as the "indigenous" disappears, there is no such. The people of the original peoples are responding to literature with their own objectives and characteristics.

The masters of indigenous literature were few, a handful of writers of the Nahuatl, Maya, Tsotsil and Zapotec languages, but now each one has his school, his students, and more and more authors of

<sup>12</sup> For scholars such as Montemayor (2012; 2001) or León (1978; 2006), "the literary" in the ancient world is found in a set of activities such as: myths, chants, hymns, prayers, codices....

<sup>13</sup> The beginning of indigenous literature is established in the 90's decade of the XX century, however, its antecedents go back to the 50's with Andrés Henestrosa (even before), 60's and 70's with Gabriel López Chiñas and Pancho Nácar. From the 70's to the 90's authors such as Víctor de la Cruz and Macario Matus already had some productions. The name comes in the last decade of the last century to name the group of authors who write in their mother tongues.

different languages are expanding what is now called "literatures in native languages". One of the characteristics of indigenous literature was to write in a native language, both out of conviction and to emphasize communal identity. Much of the initial work concentrated on the formalization of the alphabet and the teaching of reading and writing (this task continues today), so that it would eventually become a standardized activity. Thus, writing in some language is a fundamental part of literatures. The new generations have opted for the latter name by pointing out the cultural and historical prejudices in the category of "Indian/indigenous".

The first writers had to face very harsh criticism from the cultural authorities who pointed out that their texts were not "literature", which demonstrated the distance between societies, the lack of understanding and the prejudices about what the Indian could or could not do. The texts produced by native authors are still seen under the harmonic light of the union with nature, which speaks of flowers, skies, animals... but without understanding the symbolic basis that this means, because a flower will not be the same for the Nahua, Maya or Mixe. Each language has its own set of signs that must be unraveled. Jorge Miguel Cocom Pech (Maya) put it this way: "no, I do not conceive that contemporary indigenous literature ... is only fertilized by the inspiration of the muses and other nonsense that we inherited from the bohemian romanticism" (2010, p. 94). Indigenous writers followed their path demonstrating that there can be a literature with other purposes.

A clarification is pertinent with respect to current literatures, as they are proving to be a literary movement that unveils the social processes with respect to the indigenous category: not all authors write in any language, nor are all writers in native languages from any native group, so it only congregates certain writers. In the viceroyalty, the category "Indian" was something that was being constructed and the first writers were self-ascribed as such due to the claim on their rights of possession, while some others, being poor, preferred to pass for mestizos. The current "indigenous" ascription has different causes, effects and contexts. These classifications have always been problematic.

Literature in native languages is having a *boom*, so there are mestizos who revert to their "roots" and adhere to writing in some language, in this sense, they are endorsed by the authors of the peoples themselves; there are also writers who being indigenous, but without speaking their language are

considered within Mexican literature. There are writers who, knowing their language and the way of writing it, decide to write in Spanish, however, we could not doubt their identity, because they assume Spanish as another part of themselves, Cocom Pech (2010), for example, pointed out that if he thought a poem in Spanish, he would leave it that way.<sup>14</sup> There are people who are part of a community, but do not know the language of their ancestors, however, they are still part of the movement. This shows us how complex it is to catalog texts by their producers or self-ascription. Finally, as happens in reality, recognition is given by the community.

Thus, the current narrative -including the indigenous literature movement- can be divided into transcribed oralities (teachings, history, stories), short stories, novels, essays, articles and scripts. It is opportune to mention that western literary genres have been difficult to frame in the literatures in native languages. Carlos Montemayor (1991) had noted in his work groups that what indigenous writers called "story" lacked the characteristics we know, since they regularly stuck to the story that recovered the history of the people. In other words, poems and narratives cross their themes and the way they are expressed, something similar that we see in post-Cortesian songs and codices (Matías, 2019).

Montemayor has emphasized the historical part of the oralities:

Authors who write about customs, history or traditional uses operate in a very similar way to the writer of stories. Both transmit information of probable facts or related to invisible or prodigious entities that in themselves are "historical" information. (2009, pp. 29-30).

Historical consciousness is reflected in the codices, songs, chronicles and maps elaborated by indigenous people, in addition to ancestral knowledge (which includes religious, astronomical, civil, labor, philosophical, etc.), therefore, literatures in native languages provide much more than entertainment or rhetorical beauty.

Having said that, and recovering the idea that it would be improper to find an "indigenous" character, especially with the characteristics constructed by the national imaginary, we find short and long stories that recover the oral tradition in which the authors transcribe the knowledge of their community.

<sup>14</sup> In personal conversation, regarding the book *Los 43 poetas de Ayotzinapa* (2015), in which the teacher collaborated with a poem written in Spanish, entitled: "No quieren que salgamos a las calles" (They don't want us to take to the streets).

The themes are varied. The people represented are usually real people that the neighbors of the community can recognize or remember. The story belongs to the people, just as it happened in the past, that is, it is a collective voice that sustains the story. Of course, the author is the one who expresses it, therefore, the same story can have its variants, what we call "oralities" (plural). The oralities in the villages are not univocal, which reveals the historiographic complexity. Sometimes, family memory is also used, as in the case of the book *J-nool Gregorioe', juntúul miats'il maya. Grandfather Gregorio* (2012a) by Cocom Pech.

Indigenous stories are often classified as "children's", as in the previous case, but this minimizes the transmission of information. It is true that in the communities, from infancy the stories are heard and throughout life they are attended to with their peculiarities, but it is far from what we understand in the West as children's literature. A few brief lines from Cocom's text remind us of this: "dreams give an account of your personal history that goes back years or forwards, they leave signs in traces, they leave signs, clues and traces" (2012a, pp. 38-39). This, which to pagan eyes may seem beautiful, for it is, carries cultural meanings of dreams, ancestors and spatiotemporal conceptions. The work also shows the struggle of the Mayan people to avoid being devoured by their enemies. Along the same lines is another essential book by the author, *Muk'ult'an in Nool. Secrets of the Grandfather* (Cocom, 2012b), where we find greater emphasis on Maya history.

Books such as *U yixi'im chan x-nuuk. Tsikbal maayáa. El maíz de la viejita* (*El maíz de la viejita* (cuento maya) by Feliciano Sánchez Chan (2007), *Mokpaak. Los granos del maíz* (Mixe tale) by Martín Rodríguez Arellano (2007) or *Lluvia negra. Kaposkiyahwitl* (Nahuatl tale) by Gustavo Zapoteco (2019) are children's editions, beautifully illustrated, however, they communicate to us the cultural symbolisms to understand their own worlds. The first two show the civil, labor and religious relations with corn; while the last one, the way of work and current festivity that is held with the harvest in the Nahua villages.

The differences between these authors' way of narrating with the indigenous literary writers, about the indigenous and even with novo-Hispanic authors who collected the indigenous stories, are very



different. The intentionality is different, and so is the public -although they are read more in Spanish<sup>15</sup>. Although readers from different parts of the world have come to know them, we need a greater effort to understand them.

When can we speak of an indigenous character in native language literatures? One of the aspects in which we can make the contrast, and at a certain point, point out the lines of intersection, is in the fictional narrative, especially in the younger generations who sometimes resort to the Western imaginary under the influence of school, the media or social networks, but even so, the limits are thorny. For the time being, it should be pointed out that the texts have some fictional elements whose invention does not always respond to stereotypes from the outside. Thus, there are texts that mix fiction with orality, that create some characters with certain characteristics, responding to prejudices.

Now, the writers who mix the elements of orality and fiction are several, but it does not mean that everything is a negative influence. In these stories there is also a collective foundation. Javier Castellanos (Zapotec) is one of the authors who has mentioned that his novels contain elements of fiction, that although they are based on oralities, some people or situations were invented.

In *Dxiokze xha... bene walhall. Gente del mismo corazón* (2014), a novel -which we could call historical, although as mentioned history is a substantial part of literatures in native languages- Castellanos portrays the Independence War of the 19th century, here we find Guere Xhilha, the protagonist, who is involved in the struggles of his people. In the Zapotec author's novels we can find winks to link the stories. Amos, for example, is a rebellious and adventurous father, better known as Terán, also present in *Gaa ka Chhaka ka ki. Relation of the exploits of the son Lightning* (2003). Historians might find suggestive how the population participated in the uprising, the change of the nicknames through the characters, the conformation and confrontation between the Zapotec populations (isthmo-serranía) or the millenary enmity and casual support with other communities, such as the Mixes.

In these works by native authors we also find the returned reflection, since now the European and national otherness is represented as characters. In *Gente del mismo corazón*, Donatanasio is a *wandering*

<sup>15</sup> I use the word "Castilian" because, regularly, the people of the villages refer to Spanish in this way.

Jew who finds himself among Zapotecs. Unlike the men of Castile, he is represented as a friend; the Jew tells Guere:

What I wanted you to notice is that we are different, and we are all different ... That is the difference between you and me, I am not too far away from you nor from the other people who live here, but even if I wanted to or you wanted to, it would not be possible for me to become part of those who are from the village. (2014, p. 230)

It seems that Castellanos shares his knowledge with us, that of the community, and to do so, he resorts to a teaching strategy: the stories. Thus, we witness reflections around a historical fact, Guere comments: "then we still have to give for the revolutionaries, before it was for the Spaniards" (p. 311), the battle against domination is part of the concerns of the people. There are few descriptions of the landscape or their customs, contrary to the indigenist literatures. It is unnecessary to explain them. The crumb is placed in the concerns of another space. To be able to elucidate which content is oral and which is fiction, we would have to know the traditions of the people or, at least, their history.

It is noteworthy that in one way or another, in the texts of indigenous authors there are recurring themes: reflection on the indigenous/indigenous (in Spanish), the struggle of their communities, the recovery of oral traditions, their history and language, pride in *their* (non-Mexican) nation, territory, knowledge and practices. It should be noted that identity is linked to the people, not to the language or the cultural sphere, this comes later, the first thing is the relationship with the community to which you belong, therefore, writers revert to the aspects that are known to them, like any person linked to their country, culture and language. What is delicate is when we look at them from the outside and give them classifications such as "Mayan", "Mixe" or "indigenous".

Different will be the works of Marisol Ceh Moo (Maya), in which we can see the imaginary of two worlds opposing, therefore, the characters drawn with both paradigms. In *T'ambilák men tunk'ulilo'ob. El llamado de los Tunk'ules* (2011) describes the Caste War of the nineteenth century and the peoples who fought will be present. In the novel the participation of women, Indians and blacks is rescued, Jacinto Pat and Cecilio Chi are not only part of a side, but main characters, also there is the main look of Imán, a mestizo hero little recognized, but important, for the armed struggle. This fact can be noticed since his first

novel *X-Teya, u puksi'ik'al ko'olel. Teya, un corazón de mujer* (Ceh, 2008), in which we learn the story of Teya Martín and the death of her eldest son, Emeterio Rivera Martín, a lawyer and socialist. The dialogues reveal a mutual incomprehension:

-The indigenous question is somewhat complicated, my dear Mayan representative," said Contreras to Indalecio. The organization is a social enigma. Since we don't know where they are going, how are we going to make their objectives converge towards socialism? (p. 343).

The novelist pointed out in an interview that her intention was never to write from "the Maya", simply to write a story. She, being a bilingual woman, who grew up with both languages (Serrano, 2014), has understood both worlds, settling at the crossroads in a loose way. For this reason, it is worth noting that the narrative form presented by the author is essential that, although for some it is to pigeonhole her as "mestizo", the truth is that literature allows to break the borders that politics and good manners condemn. What stands out is that she is beyond the dilemma of what to write, because she has allowed herself to overcome self-imposed limits and generate new perspectives, where she is no longer only Maya or Castilian, but writing.

Historical stories will also be in the theater and short stories, as is the case of *Bix úuchik u bo'otku si'ipil manilo'ob tu ja'abil 1562 or El Auto de Fe de Maní, Choque de dos culturas* (2009) by Carlos Armando Dzul Ek, which describes the infamous murder by the Church. Maní, a place that will be revisited by several authors. María Luisa Góngora Pacheco, in "U suumil k'i'ik' Mani. La sogá de sangre" (1992), which in turn compiles from Emiliano Tzab de Mani, in 1990, as "El cordón umbilical de los Xiu", refers to the Maya dynasty, in its link with the present day:

It is also said that the rope that was cut into pieces is the road that extends and grows more and more each day, the blood that flowed when it was cut is the same blood that is spilled day by day because of the many accidents that occur on it. (p. 41).

In indigenous literature we find a series of stories, whose characters represent the inhabitants of the communities, as well as their otherness. In some cases we witness the discursive change, as in the case

of Librado Silva Galeana (Nahuatl), in his short novel *Cozacacuauhco. En el lugar de las águilas reales* (1995). There are novels or stories, in which we can clearly see the transmission of customs and knowledge, such as: *Xtille Zikw belé, Ihén bene nhálhje ke Yu'Bza'o. Pancho Culebro y los naguales de Tierra Azul* (2007) by Mario Molina Cruz (Zapotec), *Mosoon Paal. Niño remolino* (2011) by Jorge Echeverría Lope (Mayan), *Slajibal ajawetik. Los últimos dioses* (2010) by Marceal Méndez (Tseltal), *Rarámuri Oseriwara. Escritos en Rarámuri* (2003) by Patricio Parra, *Los dones de Wíexu* (2007) by Gabriel Pacheco (Huichol) or *Xëëw wintsëëkë ajt nmooyën. Las ofrendas al sol* (2021) by Martín Rodríguez Arellano (Mixe).

In this bouquet, we can also be readers of works that refer to the historical as well as to current events, in a past that looks to the future, as is the case of *Un pama, pama nzhogú. El eterno retorno* (2019) by Francisco León Cuervo (Mazahua), *U yóok'otilo'ob áak'ab. Danza de la noche* (2011) by Isaac Carrillo Can (Mayan), *U ka'ajsajil u ts'u' noj k'áax. Recuerdos del corazón de la montaña* (2013) by Patricia Martínez Huchim (Mayan) or *Ch'ayemal nich'nabiletik. Los hijos errantes* (2015) by Mikel Ruiz (Tsotsil).

The imaginary of the Spaniards, Creoles and mestizos has had implications in the life of the original peoples and the so-called "indigenous" people, it is undeniable -just as the peoples have influenced them-, but they have not been able to permeate the totality of the interpretations. The expression between a character produced from otherness and another produced from the writing of self differs due to imaginaries and paradigms. A writing of self expresses the voice of any person under the imaginary of his or her society, as it is in the narratives of authors in native languages. Even when a character responds to the western imaginary, it gives us the guideline to understand the transformations in a society. Reviewing the construction of a character and the imaginaries that operate it, leads us to review literature from aspects that confront us, question us and make us reflect beyond the text.

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