Making Religion of Wonder: The Divine Attribution in Renaissance Ethnography and Romance

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Summary: *Drawing on the concept of “autoethnography” as defined by Mary Louise Pratt, this paper argues that representations of cross-cultural encounter in Renaissance travel narratives often bear striking resemblances to moments of encounter and reunion in Spenserean and Shakespearean romance. Focusing on the trope of linguistic apotheosis which I call the “divine attribution,” the paper discusses various New World ethnographies with respect to specific encountering moments in *The Faerie Queene* and *The Tempest*; analysis of these texts suggests that their authors shared habits of ideation conditioned both by literary tradition and by contemporary ethnographic awareness.*

I take my title from a passage in Book Four of *The Faerie Queene*. Artegall, disguised as a “saluage wight” and wearing a shield inscribed with the motto “Saluagesse sans finesse,” stands in mute astonishment upon discovering that the knight he has been fighting is in fact a woman, Britomart, with beautiful golden hair:

And he himself long gazing thereupon,
At last fell humbly downe vpon his knee,
And of his wonder made religion,
Weening some heauenly goddesse he did see, . . .¹

Spenser, of course, is speaking ironically here; we know that Britomart is far from being a goddess and that Artegall’s exaggerated reaction is thus a form of idolatry.² We know in addition that similar reactions, literal and figurative, constitute a staple feature of the encountering moments in Renaissance

romance: in *Cymbeline*, for instance, Belarius says of the disguised Imogen, “Behold divineness,” and in *The Winter’s Tale*, Perdita is described by Leontes as a “fair princess — goddess!” In *The Tempest*, Ferdinand greets Miranda as “the goddess / On whom these airs attend”; Miranda, in turn, calls Ferdinand “A thing divine”; and Caliban, upon meeting Stephano, asks “Hast thou not dropped from heaven?” and subsequently addresses him as a “wondrous man” and “a brave god.”³ Finally, in an earlier episode from *The Faerie Queene*, a “troupe of Faunes and Satyres” providentially rescues Una from the would-be rapist Sansloy (1.6.7); standing “astonied at her beautie bright” (1.6.9), they prostrate themselves and spontaneously begin to “worship her” as “Goddesse of the wood” (1.6.13,16). Like Artegall, and perhaps like Caliban, these satyrs make religion of their wonder. And, on a different plane, so do Belarius, Leontes, Ferdinand, Miranda, and various other characters in Shakespearean romance.⁴

What I will call the “divine attribution,” then, is in one of its manifestations merely a form of conventional hyperbole, a metonymic construct in which a particular instantiation of an abstract concept represents the concept itself — in this case, divinity or godhead representing intrinsic superiority.⁵ Hamlet’s comparison of his father to Claudius — “Hyperion to a satyr” — perfectly exemplifies the trope, and shows in addition its extension beyond the genre of romance (1.2.140). That such a verbal construct has attained conventional status is hardly surprising in an intensely hierarchical world such as that of early modern Europe; perceived differences in class, rank, virtue, and innate worth may be quickly and dramatically signalled by resort to this metaphor. Artegall’s reaction may be construed as Spenser’s way of telling us not only that Britomart possesses a superior form of human nature — *melior natura* — but also that Artegall, despite his self-presentation as a savage, is fully capable of recognizing this nature, and thus shares an existential and qualitative continuum with Britomart, though he may lack her particular refinements.⁶ As for the fauns and satyrs, though they certainly do *not* share the same sort of continuum with Una, their idolatry unquestionably signals her superiority, and it points in addition to their essentially benign nature — as opposed to that, for example, of Sansloy. And Caliban? He is drunk, of course, and later castigates himself for his status confusion; but Shakespeare may be suggesting, through this parody of the divine attribution, not that Caliban is innately slavish but that, despite appearances, he is possessed of a common human nature with his European visitors.

But is this the only way the reactions of Artegall, Caliban, and the satyrs

may be construed? I think there may be another way, a more complex way, and notwithstanding the logic of Ockham's razor, I want to present an alternative. It requires, however, that we take a detour through what might be described as another and quite distinct realm of textual romance: Renaissance ethnography. The motif of Europeans perceived as gods — a common feature of Renaissance discovery narratives — appears to work differently in different kinds of ethnographic documents, and I believe that close scrutiny of this difference suggests the existence of interconceptual connections to the employment of divine attributions in Renaissance romance. In particular, I think the ironic, distanced, and spectacularly audience-oriented use of the divine attribution in texts possessing what Mary Louise Pratt has called "autoethnographic" features contrasts markedly with its comparatively solipsistic deployment in more conventional ethnographies; and I suspect that the complimentary presence of the divine attribution in Renaissance romance both contributes to and profits from the frequently skeptical and interrogative nature of its utilization in the best of the early modern attempts at cultural description of non-European peoples.⁷

To speak of Renaissance ethnography is to risk the charge of anachronism. Adequately defending the idea that ethnographic practice and discourse did indeed exist during the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries would require more space than I have here at my disposal, so I will not make the attempt — other than to say that we possess a number of exemplary texts, such as Bartolomé de las Casas's *Apologética historia sumaria* (c. 1556-59) and Jean de Léry's *Histoire d'un voyage fait en la terre du Bresil* (1578), which read in many places like compilations of careful anthropological fieldwork and which are still consulted today by ethnohistorians.⁸ I suggest, as an assumption of my discussion, that the Renaissance possessed a form of ethnography — perhaps we may call it a "naive" or "inchoate" ethnography. And I posit as well a subcategory of this textual realm, a subcategory that Mary Louise Pratt has termed "autoethnography." Autoethnographic texts, according to Pratt, are texts "in which people undertake to describe themselves in ways that engage with representations others have made of them."⁹ Such texts are composed by writers who are essentially bicultural, usually bilingual, and often consciously engaged in imagining a double audience: the native population, and the non-native colonists. Pratt cites the 1613 *Nueva Corónica* of Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala as a representative example of Renaissance autoethnography; Guaman Poma was an indigenous Peruvian — and converted Christian — who wrote both in Quechua and Spanish, and whose book offers a revisionist, parodic, and

unabashedly critical history of the Spanish conquest.¹⁰ Two other Renaissance treatises which, if not precisely autoethnographies, nonetheless employ many autoethnographic strategies, are the extraordinary sixteenth-century accounts of Mexican life and culture by Bernardino de Sahagún and Diego Durán.¹¹ Neither of these accounts was composed by a native American, but both are strongly autoethnographic inasmuch as both possess a double consciousness, an insider's point of view in two cultures joined by asymmetrical power relations: they are conversant with the dominant culture's strategies of representing the subjected culture and, at the same time, capable of speaking almost indigenously about this subjected culture, though often by means of indirect or ironic expression.

While ethnographic and autoethnographic texts from the Renaissance are often appended to or embedded within other forms of discourse, this is especially true with regard to the former: bits of Renaissance ethnography are frequently buried within narratives of exploration and conquest, clerical documents, and governmental reports. Columbus's *Diario* and his various letters, for example, contain fragments of ethnographic description, as do the histories of Las Casas and Bernal Díaz del Castillo, the colonial promotionals of Thomas Harriot, Sir Walter Raleigh, and John Smith, and the travel accounts of Amerigo Vespucci, Antonio Pigafetta, Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, Arthur Barlowe, Francis Drake, and many others.¹² And it is in the narration of moments of cross-cultural encounter — particularly *initial* encounter — that one of the primary motifs of ethnographic description shows most prominently: the European characterization of the non-European interpretation of the foreigners' status.¹³ Much in the same way that Artegall is said to transform his wonder into religion, non-Europeans are frequently characterized by European voyagers as viewing their strange visitors as divinities.

Columbus, for instance, constantly repeats his claim that the "Indians" of the Caribbean regarded him and his crewmembers as "men who came from the heavens."¹⁴ Pigafetta tells us that a Patagonian native captured by Magellan's crew was "greatly amased" at the sight of the Europeans and "made signes holdynge uppe his hande to heauen, signifyinge therby that owre men came from thense."¹⁵ Bernal Díaz, a conquistador who accompanied Cortés, writes that the coastal natives near Veracruz regarded the Spaniards as "*Teules*, which means gods or demons."¹⁶ Drake reports that the inhabitants of northern California, after being given clothing to cover their nakedness, "supposed us to be gods, and would not be perswaded to the contrary."¹⁷ And Harriot, an employee of Sir Walter Raleigh at the English colony on Roanoke Island,

claims that “some people could not tel whether to thinke us gods or men.”¹⁸ Five examples, then, of Europeans alleging a transformation of wonder into something resembling religious perception on the part of native Americans — and I could provide many more.¹⁹ But let these suffice to suggest that the early voyagers and colonists were, in a sense, *inhabiting* Renaissance romance; their accounts and their ethnographic endeavors employ rhetorical conventions familiar to us from the Spanish chivalric romances, *The Faerie Queene*, the late plays of Shakespeare, and other contemporary texts.²⁰ Indeed, Bernal Díaz makes this association explicit when he describes the Spaniards’ reactions upon first entering Tenochtitlán:

And when we saw all those cities and villages built in the water, and other great towns on dry land, and that straight and level causeway leading to Mexico, we were astounded. These great towns and *cues* and buildings rising from the water, all made of stone, seemed like an enchanted vision from the tale of Amadis. Indeed, some of our soldiers asked whether it was not all a dream.²¹

Mexico is wondrous, astounding, dreamlike; it suggests a vision from *Amadis of Gaul*, and thus we see romance directly conditioning history in Díaz’s text.²²

If Renaissance ethnography, then, employs on occasion the rhetorical conventions of romance and, in particular, the divine attribution as a trope in which the superiority of Europeans is indirectly but unequivocally affirmed, Renaissance autoethnography also relies upon these conventions, but makes use of them in a more self-conscious and potentially subversive manner. The implicit axis of attribution along which claims of ontological status are made consists, in many ethnographic documents, of a static hierarchy, a great chain of being marked with such familiar categories as the divine, the angelic, the royal, the gentle, the common, the subhuman, the bestial, the monstrous, and the demonic. Thus, when Pigafetta implies that his Patagonian native is virtually indistinguishable from a “beaste,” we should hardly be surprised that he alleges this creature to regard him as a heavenly being.²³ But in autoethnographic texts, precisely because writers operate from a double consciousness and are alert to the mutual acts of mental assimilation involved in articulating an other’s status, this hierarchy loses its absolute character and the axis of attribution becomes relative, fluid, subject to interpretation. Let me illustrate.

Both Sahagún and Durán were born in Spain and both were Roman Catholic mendicants, Sahagún a Franciscan, Durán a Dominican. But both spent the majority of their lives in Mexico and both were fluent in Nahuatl.²⁴

Indeed, Sahagún's book, commonly known as the *Florentine Codex*, is essentially a synthesized transcription — in Nahuatl — of the oral testimony of numerous native Mexican informants, accompanied by a Spanish translation and copious illustrations. And Durán's three major works, while composed solely in Spanish, nonetheless rely heavily on pre-conquest codices, native paintings, and a lost Aztec history known as the *Crónica X*.²⁵ Together, the accounts of Durán and Sahagún provide an encyclopedic treasury of information about the religion, history, and lifestyle of the pre-Columbian natives of central Mexico. I will focus here on the two writers' respective narratives of the Spanish conquest.

Durán tells us in his *Historia de las Indias de Nueva España* that upon hearing of the arrival of strangers in his land, Moctezuma sent out emissaries to learn if the strangers' leader was in fact the culture-hero Quetzalcoatl, or one of his descendants (264). Cortés's translator and mistress, La Malinche (Doña Marina), quickly sensed Moctezuma's apparent uncertainty regarding Cortés's status, and deftly exploited it, telling the emissaries that this was indeed an epiphany, that Cortés and his men were gods (266). From then on, according to Durán, Moctezuma acted publicly as though Cortés was in fact divine, a son of Quetzalcoatl; he constantly sent him food, ordered lodgings prepared for him in all towns he passed through, and even honored him by proposing to sacrifice ten slaves and present him with their hearts (272-5). At the same time, however, Moctezuma plotted against Cortés, commanding sorcerers to enchant him and wizards to plague him with snakes, scorpions, and spiders (276-9). In short, Durán presents Moctezuma as divided between seeing Cortés as divine and invulnerable, on the one hand, and on the other, mortal and therefore resistable.²⁶ And there is little suggestion that the contradiction embedded in this dual perception has gone unrecognized. On the contrary, it seems likely that Durán means to portray Moctezuma not as terminally uncertain but as consciously duplicitous: publicly speaking of Cortés as godlike, privately seeking his destruction. This may or may not be the truth about Moctezuma's behavior; what is important for us is that this is the way Durán chooses to represent it. He engages with standard ethnographic discursive practice by adopting the axis of attribution and employing some of its conventional terms, but he simultaneously offers an ironic commentary on what seems to have been a frequent and largely unconscious European anxiety about the status of native Americans.

Think, for instance, of Pigafetta. He suggests that the Patagonian "giaunte" is more bestial than human, but kidnaps another, baptizes him, and names him

“Paule.”²⁷ Or Díaz: he claims that the Mexicans’ astonishment at Cortés’s incitement to rebellion left them with no alternative but to attribute supernatural status to the Spaniards; but he later implies that the Spaniards sufficiently respected the Mexicans’ deductive capacities that they went to extraordinary lengths to circumvent their employment on the question of Spanish mortality.²⁸ Or Arthur Barlowe, one of two English captains who made the first reconnaissance voyage to Roanoke: he describes the islanders as paradisaic innocents — “most gentle, loving, and faithfull, void of all guile, and treason, and such as lived after the manner of the golden age” — but nonetheless refuses their offer to house his men on shore for a night, clearly suspecting treachery.²⁹ Standard ethnographic practice, in short, often presents a dominant text of certainty and confident appropriation combined with an unconscious subtext of doubt or fear; and this subtext is problematic inasmuch as it works against the grain of the colonial project. Autoethnographic texts, on the other hand, often succeed through their double consciousness in adopting the discursive strategy of representing ambiguity while at the same time consciously exploiting the ironic and revisionist potential contained therein.

The case of Sahagún is different, but equally revealing. Like Durán, Sahagún narrates the conquest primarily from the Mexicans’ perspective; indeed, his narrative is a collaborative redaction whose authority lies in part with Sahagún’s trilingual Nahuatl assistants. The narrative achieves its unique perspective with vivid clarity in such descriptions as those of the Spaniards’ horses and the Spanish desire for gold: “their deer, which bore them upon their backs, were as high as roof-tops”; “in truth they thirsted mightily for gold; they stuffed themselves with it, and starved and lusted for it like pigs” (12:19, 31). Sahagún also represents Moctezuma as taking Cortés for a god, the returned Quetzalcoatl (12:5, 9, 15, 21, 41-2). As in Durán’s account, however, there is a fascinating disjunct here, for even as Moctezuma addresses Cortés as “our lord the god,” he simultaneously attempts to bewitch him (12:13, 21-2). But what seems most intriguing about Sahagún’s narration is the habit of abruptly shifting the point of view. Consider the following passage:

[The Spaniards] had been our friends for one hundred and ninety-five days. And they were our foes for forty days. And when the Spaniards had thus gone, it was therefore thought that in truth they had departed forever, that indeed once and for all they had left — [that] nevermore would they come back, never would they once again make their return. Then once more were adorned and arrayed the devils’ houses; all were swept, rubbish was picked up, and the dirt removed (12:76-7).³⁰

This narration begins by referring to the Spaniards in the third person and by identifying the speaker with the natives; but when the Aztec temples are called “devils’ houses” Sahagún moves suddenly from the inside to the outside, so to speak, and adopts the standard Euro-Christian perspective. Other accounts of the Mexican conquest — those, for example, of Díaz, Cortés, and López de Gómara³¹ — create a consistent illusion and maintain a constant point of view, but Sahagún’s employs a distancing technique, a kind of Brechtian alienation, which jars the reader into reflecting on the multiple perspectives attendant upon cross-cultural encounters. I do not propose that this technique of estrangement is deliberate on Sahagún’s part — on the contrary, I think it is quite possibly unconscious — but I suspect that, as a rhetorical strategy, it is nonetheless conditioned by the very nature of Sahagún’s enterprise. That is, an autoethnographic account, due to its intimacy both with the conventional forms of European representation and with non-European habits of epistemological assimilation, almost inevitably presents a text that contains its own interrogation, its own internal code of skepticism, and readers from both dominant and subjected cultures are likely to sense this — and perhaps learn from it.

But how does all this relate to Artegall and Britomart, to Una and the satyrs, to Caliban and the various Europeans in *The Tempest*? Clearly, it is *not* a matter of simple textual influence. Spenser and Shakespeare may well have been familiar with the voyaging anthologies of Eden and Hakluyt, and Shakespeare, in addition, certainly knew Florio’s Montaigne and the Bermuda pamphlets, but the accounts of Durán and Sahagún were not available to either writer, nor were any other texts I can confidently describe as autoethnographic.³² Rather than primarily intertextual, the relation, I suspect, is interconceptual; even as the ethnographers drew on the conventions of romance and the romancers on the details of ethnography, some readers and some writers saw that this very cross-pollination suggested intrinsic limitations both to the supposedly objective depiction of non-Europeans and to the imaginative possibilities of romance. Autoethnographic texts, with their double consciousness, implicitly acknowledge these limitations, and so do certain of the encountering moments in Renaissance romance; the principal sign of this acknowledgment is the employment of self-conscious irony and ambiguity rather than straightforward earnestness. Thus, while the divine attributions of Artegall, Caliban, and the satyrs certainly draw on the romance convention of hyperbole as signifying *melior natura*, they also open to question the validity of European constructions of hierarchy and the axis of attribution upon which they partly depend. In the passages I have touched upon by Spenser and

Shakespeare, narrative and dramatic enactments of moments in which humans are accorded divine status allow us to see an imaginative and ironic exploration of claims along this axis of attribution, an attempt to view these claims from within in a way that strongly resembles bicultural understanding and the strategies of autoethnographic depiction, and an incisive probing of the discursive representation in which religion is made of wonder.

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Notes

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1. Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. Thomas P. Roche, Jr. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 4.4.39, 4.6.22. Hereafter I will use in-text citations to this edition.
2. For New Testament representations of similar confusions between shadow and substance, see 1 Corinthians 1:11-15 and Acts 14:11-18. See also Virgil's *Aeneid*, 1.314ff.
3. Quotations from Shakespeare's plays are drawn from *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G. B. Evans, et al. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974): *Cymbeline*, 3.6.43; *The Winter's Tale*, 5.1.131; *The Tempest*, 1.2.422-3, 1.2.419, 2.2.142, 2.2.172, 2.2.122. Hereafter I will use in-text citations to this edition.
4. For further examples, see *Pericles*, 5.Pro.3-4, and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, 2.1.192-4. See also Chaucer's philosophical romance "The Knight's Tale," lines 1101-7; Boccaccio's *Il Teseida* (trans. Bernadette Marie McCoy [Sea Cliff: Teesdale Publishing, 1974] esp. 77-85); and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 3.2.224-7.
5. The "divine attribution," understood as conventional hyperbole, is a common trope in Petrarchan rhetoric as well as in the rhetoric of romance; see, for instance, Petrarch's *Canzoniere* 30.27 and Spenser's *Amoretti*, Sonnet 61. See also Dante's *Purgatorio* 31-32 and Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, 4.31-32, 35.75.
6. On the concept of *melior natura* in Renaissance literature, see Frank Kermode's introduction to the Arden *Tempest* (London: Methuen, 1954), pp. xliii-xlvii. For a succinct expression of the idea, see *Cymbeline*, 4.2.27. For an example of the related motif of civility taming savagery, see *Mucedorus*, scene xi; and, for discussions of this motif, see Roy Harvey Pearce, "Primitivistic Ideas in *The Faerie Queene*," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 44 (1945), pp. 139-51; Richard Bernheimer, *Wild Men in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952), 136-55; and Paul Brown, "'This thing of darkness I acknowledge mine': *The Tempest* and the discourse of colonialism," in *Political Shakespeare*, ed. Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), p. 54.
7. On "autoethnography" see Mary Louise Pratt, "Arts of the Contact Zone," *Profession*, 91 (1991), 33-40.

8. On Léry, see *History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil*, trans. Janet Whatley (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990); on Las Casas, see the excerpts from the *Apologética historia* in *Bartolomé de Las Casas: A Selection*, trans. George Sanderlin (New York: Knopf, 1971). On Renaissance ethnography more generally, see Margaret T. Hodgen, *Early Anthropology in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1964); two articles by John Howland Rowe: "Ethnography and Ethnology in the Sixteenth Century" (*Kroeber Anthropological Society Papers*, 30 [1964], 1-19) and "The Renaissance Foundations of Anthropology" (*American Anthropologist*, 67 [February 1965], 1-20); Michael T. Ryan, "Assimilating New Worlds in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 23.4 (October 1981), 519-38; Anthony Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man*, rev. ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Mary Louise Pratt, "Fieldwork in Common Places," *Writing Culture*, ed. James Clifford and George E. Marcus (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), pp. 27-50; Caroline B. Brettell's introduction to *Ethnohistory*, 33.2 (1986), 127-38; and Mary B. Campbell, "The Illustrated Travel Book and the Birth of Ethnography," in *The Work of Dissimilitude*, ed. David G. Allen and Robert A. White (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1992), pp. 177-95.
9. Pratt, 35. Clifford speaks of the "indigenous ethnographer" in *Writing Culture*, p. 9, but Pratt's "autoethnographer" is distinct in that he or she habitually writes for a double audience.
10. Pratt, 33-37. Guaman Poma's *Corónica* was not discovered until 1908, in Copenhagen, and only published (in facsimile) in 1936. See Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala, *El primer nueva corónica y buen gobierno*, ed. John Murra and Rolena Adorno (Mexico: Siglo XXI, 1980).
11. Sahagún's *Historia general de las Cosas de Nueva España* (c. 1558-85) was first published in 1829, roughly 250 years after its completion; I rely here on the English translation by Arthur J. O. Anderson and Charles E. Dibble: *The Florentine Codex: General History of the Things of New Spain*, 13 vols. (Santa Fe: School of American Research and the University of Utah, 1955). Durán's *Historia de las Indias de Nueva España* (c. 1576-81) took almost 300 years to find its way into print; the first edition was published in 1867. My translation is that of Doris Heyden and Fernando Horcasitas: *The Aztecs: The History of the Indies of New Spain* (New York: Orion, 1964). I will hereafter use in-text citations to these editions of Sahagún and Durán; for a comparison to Spanish versions, see Sahagún, *Historia General de las Cosas de Nueva España*, 3 vols. (Mexico City: Editorial Nueva España, 1946) and Durán, *Historia de las Indias de Nueva España*, ed. Angel M. Garibay, 2 vols. (Mexico City: Editorial Porrúa, 1967). An excellent introduction to the work of the two writers in the context of early relations between Europeans and native Americans may be found in Tzvetan Todorov's *The Conquest of America*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Harper and Row, 1984), 185-241. See also the articles in *The Work of Bernardino de Sahagún*, ed. J. Jorge Klor de Alva et al. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1988).
12. Columbus, *The Diario of Christopher Columbus's First Voyage to America*, abstracted by Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, transcribed and translated by Oliver Dunn and James E. Kelley, Jr. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989); Columbus, "Letter of Columbus, describing the results of his first voyage," in *The Journal of Christopher Columbus*, trans. Cecil Jane (New York: Bonanza, 1989), pp. 191-202; Antonio Pigafetta, "A briefe

declaration of the vyage or nauigation made abowte the worlde,” in Richard Eden, *The Decades of the Newe Worlde or West India* (London, 1555; facsimile rpt. Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1966), 216v-232v; Bernal Díaz del Castillo, *The Conquest of New Spain* (1632), trans. J. M. Cohen (Hammondsworth: Penguin, 1963); Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, *Relation of Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca* (New York, 1871), trans. Buckingham Smith (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1966); Richard Hakluyt, “The famous voyage of Sir Francis Drake into the South sea, and therehence about the whole Globe of the earth, begun in the yeere of our Lord, 1577,” in Hakluyt, ed., *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation* (London, 1598-1600; rpt. New York: AMS, 1965), 2:101-33; Thomas Harriot, “A briefe and true report of the new found land of Virginia” (London, 1588) in David B. Quinn and Alison M. Quinn, eds., *Virginia Voyages From Hakluyt* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), pp. 46-76.

13. Stephen Greenblatt, in *Marvelous Possessions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991) argues that wonder is “the quintessential human response to what Descartes calls a ‘first encounter’” (p. 20); he speaks elsewhere of the “reverse wonderment” (77) that native Americans must have experienced upon encountering Columbus and other European voyagers. I focus here on the divine attribution as a European representation of one of the consequences of that “reverse wonderment,” and I regard what I have called the “axis of attribution” as a European schema which provides one way of accounting for and interpreting both European wonder and perceived non-European wonderment.
14. *Diario*, 75 (entry for October 14, 1492). See also the *Diario* entries for October 22, November 6 and 12, December 3, 13, 16, 18, 21 and 22. See, in addition, the “Letter of Columbus,” p. 196.
15. “A briefe declaration,” 219r.
16. *The Conquest of New Spain*, p. 112; see also pp. 94, 116-7, 138, and 150.
17. The famous voyage,” p. 119.
18. A briefe and true report,” p. 73. See also p. 70.
19. For example, Las Casas writes that “the Indiens throughout all the Indes neuer thought any displeasure unto the Spaniardes: but rather that they reputed them as come from heauen” (*The Spanish Colonie*, trans. by M. M. S. of Las Casas’s *Brevissima relacion de la destruycion de las Indias* [Seville, 1552; London, 1583; facsimile rpt. Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1966], A3r. Jacques Cartier describes the natives of the Canadian village of Hochelaga as regarding the French voyagers as divine healers: “for it seemed unto them that God was descended and come downe from heaven to heale them” (“A shorte and briefe narration,” in Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*, 8:235). Fray Toribio Motolinía corroborates Díaz in claiming that the coastal Mexicans “called the Spaniards *teteuh*, which means ‘gods,’ and the Spaniards, corrupting the word, said *teules*” (*Motolinía’s History of the Indians of New Spain* [c. 1541] trans. Elizabeth Andros Foster [Berkeley: Bancroft Library, 1950], p. 170. And Captain John Smith, in his *Generall Historie of Virginia* (1624), asserts that certain Susquehana Indians “with much adoe restrained from adoring us as Gods” (*The Complete Works of Captain John Smith*, ed. Philip L. Barbour, 3 vols. [Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986], 2, p. 106).

20. Many modern scholars believe that in some early encounters non-Europeans did indeed take Europeans for divine or supernatural beings: see, for example, Nathan Wachtel, *The Vision of the Vanquished*, trans. Ben and Siân Reynolds (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1977), pp. 17, 20-21, 23-4, 38; David Carrasco, *Quetzalcoatl and the Irony of Empire* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 48; Tzvetan Todorov, *Conquest*, pp. 80-1; Mary W. Helms, *Ulysses' Sail* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), pp. 173-8; Urs Bitterli, *Cultures in Conflict* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989), pp. 24-5, 72-3; and Octavio Paz, *The Labyrinth of Solitude* (1961; New York: Grove, 1985), pp. 93-4. Rolena Adorno, however, argues that, at least in the case of the natives encountered by Cabeza de Vaca, the claim that the Spaniards came from heaven originated in a native idiom: "'about all the things that they do not understand or have information regarding their origins, they say that such phenomena come from the sky'" ("The Negotiation of Fear in Cabeza de Vaca's *Naufragios*," *Representations*, 33 [Winter 1991], p. 183).
21. *The Conquest of New Spain*, 214. The association I am suggesting is certainly implied by Charles Frey, who writes, regarding *The Tempest*, that "In melding history and romance, therefore, Shakespeare merely dramatized what his contemporaries enacted" ("*The Tempest* and the New World," *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 30.4 [Winter 1979]), p. 39); and it is discussed at length by Irving A. Leonard — with particular attention to the relation between Spanish conquistadors and Spanish chivalric romances — in *Books of the Brave* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949), chs. 1-6. See also Greenblatt's comments on the Díaz passage in *Marvelous Possessions*, pp. 132-3; Roberto Fernández Retamar's remarks on intertextual connections in early descriptions of the Caribs in *Caliban and Other Essays*, trans. Edward Baker (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), p. 7; and, for a discussion of the probable education of conquistadores like Díaz and Cortés, J. H. Elliott's "The Mental World of Hernán Cortés," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, Fifth Series*, 17 (1967), 41-58, esp. pp. 44, 48, and 51.
22. For other examples, see Columbus's various remarks on mermaids, Amazons, and cannibals in the *Diario* (entries for November 4, 23, and 26, December 5 and 17, January 9, 13, 15 and 16) and Raleigh's comments on people "whose heads appear not above their shoulders" in *The Discovery of the Large, Rich and Beautiful Empire of Guiana* (London, 1596) in *Sir Walter Raleigh: Selected Writings*, ed. Gerald Hammond (Manchester: Carcanet Press, 1984), p. 111. See, in addition, Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions*, pp. 20-3, and Leonard, *Books of the Brave*, pp. 36-53.
23. "A briefe declaration," 219r. Compare this to Francis Bacon's meditation on the saying "man is a god to man" in *The New Organon*, ed. Fulton H. Anderson (London, 1620; Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1960), p. 118.
24. Sahagún (1499-1590) came to Mexico in 1529 and spent the next 61 years there; Durán, who arrived in Mexico as a child in 1542, died 46 years later in 1588. Both men, clearly, were cultural hybrids; see Todorov, *Conquest*, pp. 202-41, and Ignacio Bernal, "Introduction" to Durán's *Aztecs*, pp. xxi-xxxii. Poma de Ayala too was a cultural hybrid: he had adopted Christianity. Indigenous native status is less important here than the double consciousness I have spoken of.
25. Sahagún's manuscript is held by the Laurentian Library in Florence; thus its title. See Bernal, *Aztecs*, xxviii-xxix, and Todorov, *Conquest*, pp. 213-5.

26. It is a genuine possibility, of course, that Moctezuma saw Cortés as simultaneously divine *and* mortal. The Mayan *Book of Chilam Balam*, for instance, claims that while the ancient gods did indeed exist, they were mortal: "Forsake those things which you have held sacred, oh Itzá; forget your perishable gods, your transitory gods" (trans. R. L. Roys [Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967], p. 167). It is important to remember, however, that the *Chilam Balam* is heavily imbued with Christian influences and comes down to us through many colonial transcripts. See also Wachtel, *Vision*, p. 28.
27. "A briefe declaration," 220v.
28. "Having returned to our camp, well contented and giving thanks to God, we buried the dead in one of the Indians' underground houses, so that they should not see we were mortal but believe that we were indeed *Teules*, as they called us" (*The Conquest of New Spain*, p. 150).
29. "Arthur Barlowe's Narrative" (London, 1589) in *Virginia Voyages*, pp. 8, 9.
30. For similar passages, see 79, 92, 112. S. L. Cline, in "Revisionist Conquest History: Sahagún's Revised Book XII" (in Klor de Alva, *The Work of Bernardino de Sahagún*) claims that Sahagún seldom departs from the Tlatelolcan perspective in the *Florentine Codex*'s narration of the Conquest, particularly in comparison to a later revision of this narration, composed in 1585 (93-106). I agree with Cline's general argument, but I find far more (admittedly subtle) shifts in viewpoint in the *Florentine Codex* than does Cline.
31. Hernán Cortés, *Letters from Mexico*, trans. Anthony Pagden (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986); Francisco López de Gómara, *The Pleasant Historie of the Conquest of the Weast India*, trans. Thomas Nicholas (London, 1578; facsimile rpt. Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1966).
32. Richard Eden's translation of Peter Martyr's *De orbe novo* appeared in 1555; it contained, among other narratives, the account of Magellan's voyage by Antonio Pigafetta, from which Shakespeare took the name "Setebos"; Richard Hakluyt's first edition of *The Principal Navigations* appeared in 1589-90, and the expanded second edition came out in 1598-1600. Shakespeare knew Montaigne's essay "Of the Cannibals" from Florio's 1603 English translation of the *Essais* (Bordeaux, 1580; Paris 1588). The principal Bermuda pamphlets were those of William Strachey (*A true repertory of the wracke, and redemption of Sir Thomas Gates Knight* [c. 1610; London, 1625]), Sylvester Jourdain (*A Discovery of the Barmudas* [London, 1610]), Richard Rich (*Newes from Virginia* [London, 1610]), and the anonymous *A True Declaration of the Estate of the Colonie in Virginia* (London, 1610).