

The Naked and the Differently Clothed: Spanish Encounters with Native Americans in 18th Century Explorations of the Pacific Northwest and Southwest

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ABSTRACT

My analysis focuses on the journals of Alejandro Malaspina titled, *Alejandro Malaspina: En busca del paso del Pacífico* (1990 edition), written during his expeditions to the Pacific Coast of California and the Northwest (Alaska) in 1791, and the diary of Fray Pedro Font edited and translated by Herbert Eugene Bolton as *Font's Complete Diary of the Second Anza Expedition*. The edited and translated volume was first published in 1930 and reissued in 1966. The Font diaries record the day to day events transpiring during Captain Juan Bautista de Anza's expedition in Arizona and California (1775-76). The study has two sections: Section I focuses on Malaspinas' journals while Section II is devoted to some aspects of Font's *Diary* related to the clothing or lack of clothing worn by the Indigenous peoples. The essay deals specifically with issues of Spanish responses to indigenous lack of clothing (nakedness) or their distinctly different way of dressing (the berdaches). I highlight how the Spanish/Indigenous encounters veer from the comical to the tragic and posit that the encounters are characterized by the dialectic of "naked" and "clothed." Furthermore, I demonstrate how European clothes become a metaphor for European knowledge, culture, technology, and power, i.e. "civilization" while

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Native nakedness and/or difference in clothing is used as a justification on the part of Europeans to appropriate Native Americans' raw materials and the surrounding land. Thus the incessant almost obsessive trading between the crew members of the two ships, the *Descubierta* and the *Atrevida*, and the Alaskan Mulgrave native inhabitants represent the unquenchable desire of both groups of people for the "goods" of the other while the nakedness of the Indians in the Southwest and/or their clothing that is "different", i.e. males dressed as females, become a rationalization on the part of Europeans for viewing them as "savage" and therefore without property rights to the land they inhabit and the goods they own.

Keywords: Spanish colonization, America, Alejandro Malaspina, Fray Pedro Font, expeditions, journals, indigenous groups, clothing.

RESUMEN

Mi análisis trata sobre los testimonios de Alejandro Malaspina recogidos en su diario *Alejandro Malaspina: En busca del paso del Pacífico* (edición de 1990) escrito durante sus expediciones en la Costa Noroeste del Pacífico (Alaska) y en la Costa de California en 1791 y sobre los diarios de Fray Pedro Font editados y traducidos por Herbert Eugene Bolton como *Font's Complete Diary of the Second Anza Expedition*. Esta edición fue publicada en 1930 y después en 1966. Los diarios de Fray Font testimonian los sucesos cotidianos de la expedición del Capitán Juan Bautista de Anza en Arizona y California (1775-76). En resumen, mi análisis tiene dos partes: la primera parte trata sobre los diarios de Malaspina mientras que la segunda parte, trata sobre algunos aspectos relacionados con la vestimenta o la desnudez de los indígenas americanos recogidos en el diario de Fray Font. El ensayo enfoca propiamente la actitud de los españoles hacia la desnudez de los indígenas o su forma diferente de vestir (berdaches). Se hace hincapié en el cambio de giro de lo cómico a lo trágico en los encuentros entre españoles e indígenas analizando la dialéctica de la "desnudez" y la "vestimenta". Además, se demuestra cómo la vestimenta de los europeos se convierte en una metáfora del conocimiento, los avances tecnológicos, la cultura y el poder, es decir la "civilización," mientras que la desnudez de los indígenas americanos o su forma diferente de vestir se utiliza como justificación para apropiarse de sus tierras y materias primas. Por tanto, el incesante y casi perturbador comercio entre los miembros de tripulación de las dos naves *Descubierta* y *Atrevida* y los habitantes indígenas de Mulgrave, Alaska, representa el insaciable deseo de ambos grupos por alcanzar los bienes del otro, mientras que la desnudez de los indígenas en el suroeste y/o su vestimenta diferente, por ejemplo

hombres vestidos como mujeres, llega a ser la validación de parte de los europeos de su visión de los indígenas como “salvajes” y por tanto sin derecho a la propiedad de la tierra que anidan y de los bienes que poseen.

Palabras clave: Colonización española, América, Alejandro Malaspina, Fray Pedro Font, expediciones, diarios, grupos indígenas, vestimenta.

Mary Louise Pratt in her luminous study *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (1992) established an excellent point of departure from which European colonial travel literature can be scrutinized. Of particular usefulness is her concept of “contact zone” which she defines as “the space of colonial encounters, i.e. that space where peoples who once were geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict” (6). A second term that is useful for this study is that of “anti-conquest.” This term also appears in *Imperial Eyes* and is defined as “the strategies of representation whereby European bourgeois subjects seek to secure their innocence in the same moment they assert European hegemony” (7). Pratt further suggests that the main protagonist of the anti-conquest is a figure she calls “seeing-man,” i.e. “the European male subject of European landscape discourse—he whose imperial eyes passively look out and possess” (7). I found both of these terms useful for the study of the diaries and other chronicles penned by Alejandro Malaspina who explored the Pacific Northwest, up to and including the Alaskan coast and Fray Pedro Font who was the official recorder for Captain Juan Bautista de Anza’s expedition sent to explore and find a passageway from Arizona to California.

In this study I center my analysis on the journals of Alejandro (also spelled Alessandro) Malaspina which were edited as *Alejandro Malaspina: En busca del paso del Pacífico* (1990) and written during his expeditions to the Pacific Coast of California and the Northwest (the Canadian coast and Alaska) in 1791 as well as the diary of Fray Pedro Font edited and translated by Herbert Eugene Bolton in 1930 as *Font’s Complete Diary of the Second Anza Expedition*. A new edition was published in 1966. Font’s Diary records the day to day events transpiring during Captain Juan Bautista de Anza’s expedition in Arizona and California in the 1775-76 period. I have divided my study into two sections: Section I focuses on Malaspina’s journals while Section II is devoted to some aspects of Font’s *Diary*. In both sections I deal specifically with issues of Spanish

responses to the indigenous lack of clothing (nakedness) or the manner in which they are differently dressed (the berdaches). I am interested in the contact zones of encounters with the native populations as written in Malaspina's and Fray Font's journals which, although they veer from the comical to the tragic, are always imbued with great human interest. I posit that the discourse extant in these texts with regards to the natives in the Port of Mulgrave on the coast of Alaska and those encountered by Font in the Arizona desert are structured within the dialectics of "naked" and "clothed." I argue that this dialectic is articulated through the social and economic relations between Spaniards and Indians and furthermore that European clothes become a metaphor for European knowledge, culture, technology, and power, i.e. "civilization" while native nakedness and difference in clothing is used as a justification for the European's desire for the acquisition of native raw materials and the surrounding land. Thus the incessant almost obsessive trading between the crew members of the two ships, the *Descubierta* and the *Atrevida* and the Alaskan Mulgrave native inhabitants represent the unquenchable desire of both groups of people for the "goods" of the other while the nakedness of the Indians in the Southwest and/or their clothing that is "different", i.e. males dressed as females, become a rationalization for viewing them as "savage" and therefore without property rights to the land they inhabit. There was an accepted legal notion that the European "civilized" man bringing civilization to a "wild" man had the right to appropriate the latter's land.

1. MALASPINA'S JOURNALS

Malaspina's journals were edited by Andrés Galera Gómez and were given the title *Alejandro Malaspina: En busca del paso del Pacífico*. This edited volume is based on Manuscript 425 of the *Malaspina Archive Collection* housed in Madrid's Naval Museum [Museo Naval de Madrid] (Malaspina 47).

Pratt's seminal book *Imperial Eyes* underscores the importance of Carl Linne or Linnaeus' study titled *System of Nature*, published in 1735 as a turning point in the construction of European consciousness. The intellectual discovery regarding the possibility of systematizing nature brought about a new sense of power humans could have over the world, indeed over the universe. The European intelligentsia perceived the introduction of order into what they thought was a chaotic state of nature and concluded there were new possibilities for harnessing it and exploiting it in a more systematic and "rational" manner. Thus, the systematizing of nature, in Pratt's view, brought about a planetary consciousness which entailed "the consolidation of bourgeois forms of subjectivity and power, the inauguration of a new territorial phase of capitalism propelled

by searches for raw materials, the attempt to extend coastal trade inland, and national imperative to seize overseas territory in order to prevent its being seized by rival European powers” (9).

This planetary consciousness gave impetus to two principal projects: (1) circumnavigation—which consisted of sailing around the world and writing about it, and (2) mapping the world’s coastlines (Pratt 2). Knowledge found through the circumnavigation of the globe implied significant possibilities of commerce, trade, expanded sources of raw materials, markets, labor resources and, most importantly, the acquisition of immense tracts of land.

When the Spanish explorers arrived in 1492 they were not content to explore the islands upon which they landed; indeed, the setting foot in the American continent on that fateful day on the 12th of October was but the beginning of an exploratory spirit that took the Spaniards from the Alaskan shores to the tip of Tierra del Fuego near the South Pole. The intrepid Spaniards logged thousands of miles roaming recondite geographic spaces of the earth, first thirsting for a passageway to India and later searching for gold and undertaking the evangelization of the indigenous populations.

The eighteenth century, however, witnessed a different kind of thirst since by the time of the Age of Enlightenment some of the explorations commissioned by the Spanish Crown were directed toward the acquisition of information through detailed accounts of the lands explored. Spain became fearful of the continued expansionist policies of other European nations who were competing for the raw materials the American continent had to offer. England, France, and Spain struggled to retain their power and to keep their hold, however tenuous, on the recently discovered lands. The mercantile spirit together with the lucrative trade of cacao, tobacco, dyes, coffee, sugar, leather goods, lumber, gold, and silver kept the new lands highly attractive for the nations in the old continent.

By the second half of the eighteenth century the Age of Enlightenment was having its impact on the policies of the Spanish Crown. Commerce, politics and science were the three dominant factors influencing Spanish policy. These three vectors were intimately connected since the political supremacy of one nation could conceivably lead to the downfall of another. Science, on the other hand, provided the means through which nature and its products could be conquered, dominated, and exploited to the outmost advantage.

The Alejandro Malaspina expedition was conceived under the new intellectual and political impetus cited above. More specifically the fear of Russian incursions in the Pacific Northwest lands mobilized Spain to subsidize six expeditions directed to explore

the Pacific coast. In addition, there was a need to find a passage to the orient and Europe through what is now known as the Bering Strait. The English had sponsored an expedition along similar routes in the Pacific Northwest headed by Captain Cook in 1768-1780 and the French had similarly sponsored the Count of La Perouse expedition in 1785-1788 for the same purpose. Previous to the Malaspina expedition the Spanish Crown had commissioned six expeditions between 1773 and 1788 as a result of the information received by the Marquis of Grimaldi who was then Secretary of State. Grimaldi reported to the Spanish Crown the lucrative activities in the Pacific Northwest the Russians were undertaking in the 1760s. As a consequence of this alarming news, the Viceroy of New Spain, Antonio Bucareli, was ordered to commission exploratory expeditions whose purpose was to safeguard and secure Spanish northern lands. Thus Juan Pérez undertook the first expedition. Bruno Heceta, together with Francisco Bodega y Quadra, and Francisco Mourelle, headed the second expedition. This latter expedition was to explore the San Francisco Bay area. In 1779 a third expedition set sail in the frigate *Favorita* under the command of Ignacio Arteaga and Fernando Quirós. The seasoned Pacific Northwest explorers, Francisco Bodega y Quadra, and Francisco Mourelle, also accompanied this third expedition. Other expeditions followed as a direct response to the disturbing news for the Spanish Crown and offered by La Perouse in 1787 regarding the existence of four Russian settlements in Nutka (Malaspina 30).

Malaspina's expedition began after his proposal to undertake one and which he titled "Plan de un viaje científico y político alrededor del mundo" had been accepted by the Crown on October 10, 1788. The expedition set sail from Cádiz on July 30, 1789 toward Montevideo, Uruguay and then on to Acapulco, Mexico with the corvettes *Descubierta* and *Atrevida*.

Malaspina's expedition was imbued with the scientific spirit of the Age of Enlightenment which privileged reason as a means of understanding and dominating the world. If man was to apprehend reality, to know nature, it had to be through the senses, through minute observation and empirical experiments. The Malaspina project modeled itself on the first international expedition that went around the world, the internationally famous La Condamine expedition subsidized by France, England, and Spain in 1735. Thus the Malaspina expedition carried with it scientific instruments of various kinds and scientists, naturalists, geographers, and artists. Some of these men included José Espinosa, Don Tomás Suria, and Don Felipe Bauzá.

The corvettes *Atrevida* and *Descubierta* departed from Acapulco to the Pacific Northwest on 1 May 1791 with specific plans to meet at the Port of Mulgrave, presently the small bay on the island of Khantaak on the Alaskan coast. On their return trip, they

were to stop at Cape of Mendocino, in Monterrey Bay, and at Cabo San Lucas and finally they were to return to the initial point of departure—Acapulco.

Malaspina's diary can be divided into four categories: (1) detailed geographic and climate descriptions and measurements of land and sea, (2) descriptions of flora and fauna, (3) ethnographic descriptions, and (4) encounters between the Spanish crew members and the natives of Mulgrave.

Even before the Malaspina expedition set sail, encounters with scantily clad native populations and the fascination and attraction they had for cloth and clothing had been extensively reported by other travel writings. Fray Junípero Serra's diaries published as *Writings of Junípero Serra* (1955) extensively depict his travels along the coast of Southern California in his quest for establishing missions and repeatedly reports about unusual encounters with naked indigenous populations. On the May 21, 1769 entry, Fray Serra writes in his diary about finding an old Indian near the present day Mexican-California border:

In the place where we stopped, we found an old Indian man, and just as naked as all the rest. We treated him kindly and gave him to eat. He told us that nearby lived many of his relatives, and that when some time ago, another Father passed there with many companions - it must have been a Jesuit according to his description - all the others fled as they did now, but that he stood his ground. It was evident that he cared not a whit about anybody or anything. In fact while he was in conversation with us, right in the middle of the crowd he squatted down and not having any clothes to bother about, right then and there attended to nature while still continuing to speak with us; and he remained just as calm as he was so relieved. The interpreter asked him if he wanted to become a Christian. He said he did. (67)

According to the diary's entry most or all of the male Indians around the coast of Southern California went about completely nude. The Catholic Father was pleasantly surprised to find that the women did wear clothes. The love of clothing is noted by Father Serra in his entry for June 26, 1769 (near Rosarito in Baja California close to Tijuana, Mexico):

One thing about these poor Indians that causes misgivings, and that a person has to be on the lookout for when he goes among them, is their intense desire or mania for clothes or trinkets, which in their opinion help to improve their looks. Food hardly appeals to them, as they are sturdy and robust. Most of them would make fine Grenadier Guards for the Governor—they are so tall. But to get hold of gaudily colored cloth or any kind of rags, they will jump out of their skins—as the saying goes or take any risk. When I offer them anything to eat, they usually want me to understand, by clear gestures, that they cannot accept that, but want my habit which they tug at by the sleeve. If

I had given the habit to all who wanted it, there would be by this time a pretty large community of gentile friars. (113)

These same Indians become fascinated with the Spaniards so much so that the Spaniards begin to get annoyed at the Native Americans and their constant desire for European clothes and objects. Father Serra explains:

Before long there came to us more and more gentiles—men, women and children—in such numbers I could scarcely count them. Their friendliness degenerated into familiarity, so that if, as a sign of our esteem we put our hand on head or shoulder, they did the same to us. If they saw us sitting, they sat near us; and always with the hope that we would give them anything they wanted, not being content with trifles. From me they wanted my habit; from the Governor his leather jacket, his waistcoat, breeches: in short everything he wore. It was the same with everybody else. They even pestered me quite a bit in an effort to obtain my spectacles. One of them gave me to understand that he only wanted to borrow them in order to see what sort of things they were. So I gave them to him. But God alone knows what it cost me to recover them once more, because he ran away with them. At last, after no end of trouble, I got them back after they had gone through the hands of the women and of everyone who wanted them. (115)

The Native Americans were so intensely interested in European clothing that they would offer their women in exchange for clothing. Near the San Diego area Father Serra reports this incident:

We were very tired and inclined to stop there. But we were told by the Sergeant that they were an insolent tribe. In fact, with the one idea of obtaining their clothes, they had tempted him and his companion Cota with women, insisting that they should sleep there. And because they resisted, they put themselves into the greatest danger. Finally they were forced to give them whatever articles they had with them such as napkins, handkerchiefs, etc. (119)

Except for this mania for clothes the Native Americans were extremely generous constantly giving food and other articles to the Spaniards:

We met with no hostile demonstrations, in fact just the reverse. On many occasions we were regaled by the gentiles—reversing the proverb, “The stingy man gives more than the naked man,” because there naked Indians gave us more than many stingy men would have given us. Naked indeed are all the males among the gentiles, be they children or adults, throughout all this country, without any exception. They go just as their mothers brought them into the world. And they have given us, on many occasions food (135)

However the frequent incursions of soldiers and traders into California soon brought sexual, physical and economic abuse to many of the gentle Indian populations.

European clothing and technological advances likewise will become the desired objects in the Mulgrave contact zone for the Tlingit group of Native Americans and the crew of the various ships that anchored there, including Malaspina's *Descubierta* and the *Atrevida* corvettes. Malaspina's scientific exploratory mission was different from Fray Junípero Serra's expedition and some of the earlier expeditions carried out in the sixteenth and seventeenth century. Under the spirit of the Enlightenment, Malaspina operated under a different set of assumptions which in turn conditioned his attitude and comportment toward the native populations encountered. Around the eighth of June the ship's crew became aware of the local inhabitants. The Tlingit tribe of Native Americans appears in two canoes singing what was perceived to be a song denoting peaceful bearings. This song of peace was accompanied by another sign of peace—opened arms. Thus begins the social and commercial interaction between Europeans and Indians. The Spaniards, via gestures, welcome the small group of native people and invite them to board the ship offering them cookies, bacon, and lard. However, the Tlingit are cautious and request an equal number of Spaniards come down from the ships and board their canoes. Malaspina reports that the friendliness which prevailed among all soon made the Tlingit natives forget their fear and the use of hostages was discarded. Harmonious relations ensued with this group of people as well as with others that soon came to trade. The trade consisted for the most part of salmon and wood utensils and much less otter skins which were highly valued by the Tlingit.

The next day, early in the morning, the native people came aboard the corvettes to trade anew and here Malaspina is aware of the preference for clothing and iron on the part of the Tlingit. Nevertheless, the sailors are quite eager to trade:

Procuraron estrechar su familiaridad con las tripulaciones, y como en el carácter del navegante el capricho, o el antojo, sustituyen a la necesidad con un exceso difícil de comprenderse, desde luego en los primeros cambios conocieron que esta especie de mercado les sería sumamente ventajosa; y si juzgásemos por el ansia de los contratantes, más bien debíamos inferir que nuestros marineros no pudieran vivir sin la adquisición de todo lo que veían, que los naturales sin la ropa y el hieiro que con tanta razón anhelaban.

(Malaspina 88)

Malaspina is clearly impressed with the trading strategies of the Tlingit. Evidently they were quite skillful at maintaining a poker face not divulging on whether they seriously desired the merchandise or not. When they arrived to trade they assumed a demeanor

of complete indifference. After an hour or so of feigned lack of interest for what was being displayed or offered to them they quickly brought out a piece of fur or any other object they wished to trade. In exchange for the piece of fur they wanted everything they saw on the table. The natives were also very clever in enticing the sailors to trade by teasing them with a game of hide and seek. They would hide the object then would bring it out again, and hide it again and so forth. Furthermore, Malaspina admires the lack of competition among themselves:

No se advierte en ellos la menor competencia, o para adquisición, o para la alienación; antes bien, reunidos con admirable unanimidad todos los intereses o consultan entre sí para la verificación del cambio, o bien si llegasen a verificarlo lo aplauden con una, dos, o tres aclamaciones unánimes según imaginan que el contrato les ha sido más o menos ventajoso. (Malaspina 88)

Amidst the harmony and admiration for the local population a jarring note is introduced when the natives' offer women to the visiting Spaniards as a sign of hospitality. One of Malaspina's officers, who constantly was pestered with the offer of women, decides to investigate to see whether the women are their wives and daughters and soon discovers that they are actually prostitutes. He notices that there were four or five women standing by a tree near the huts. The women were lightly covered with parts of seal skin and seemed to be obeying the will of the tribe. Since the women were covered with grease, they appeared unattractive to the Europeans. In addition, the grease that the women rubbed on their bodies gave off a fetid smell that increased their unattractiveness for the Spaniards. Again as in the case of Serra, the Spaniards considered the natives consummate thieves: "La inclinación al robo, que ya los naturales habían manifestado desde el principio, se explayó aún más luego que a la sombra de la variedad de los cambios, o de su mismo número, creyeron poderlo verificar impunemente" (91).

The Spaniards, however, are themselves openly stealing from the natives although through the legality of a "contract." The Europeans are conscious that the terms of the trade agreed upon are advantages to them:

Fue también una nueva esencial ventaja de este primer contrato, el establecer un precio fijo por el salmón fresco que deseábamos dar diariamente a las tripulaciones. Quedó éste fijado en un clavo de tres a tres y media pulgadas por cada salmón cuyo peso medio podía considerarse próximamente de siete a ocho y media libras y lograr después la felicidad de conservarla invariable hasta el último día, aunque a veces, por una u otra parte, el natural desnivel de su número convidase a trastornarle. (Serra 92-3)

Furthermore, the Spaniards were getting wood and water from the surrounding area free of charge. Trading, nevertheless, continued to the point that Malaspina writes quite bemused:

Era, sin embargo, un espectáculo bien singular y curioso el ver a la sazón una buena mitad de la tribu antigua, y algunos de la nueva, vestidos tan extrañamente con uniformes viejos de soldado, chaquetas de la marinería, gorros, pañuelos, camisas, calzones indistintamente de invierno y de verano, que sin duda, hubieran causado la mayor novedad a una embarcación a cuyo bordo fuesen, y probablemente héchole sospechar que un buque español hubiese sido asesinado en aquellas inmediaciones. (100)

Malaspina's encounters with the native Alaskans provides a window through which we can see the interactions between the two diametrically different peoples. The ships' crew in general tried to treat the natives with respect given that they were forbidden by the Crown to mistreat the peoples encountered in any manner whatsoever. Nevertheless, the Spanish expedition was exploring the area with the goal of ensuring Spanish hegemony over the American continent territories. The jockeying for power between Spain, England, France, Russia and Holland was not to ensure the indigenous populations their rights but to ensure that one of the European nations became the ruling power in those areas being explored in the eighteenth century. Eventually Spain was in fact unable to hold on to its Pacific Northwest territories and both England and Russia were the beneficiaries of Spain's loss of military and political power.

2. FRAY PEDRO FONT'S DIARY

In this section, I examine colonial narratives found in Font's diary; the edited and translated volume by Bolton bears the title *Font's Complete Diary of the Second Anza Expedition* and appears in his book *Anza's California Expedition, Vol. IV: Font's Complete Diary of the Second Anza Expedition*. (See 1996 edition). The *Diary* contains detailed accounts of numerous encounters with Native American tribes living in southwestern Arizona. As in the previous section, I am interested in issues of the naked and the differently dressed since both Malaspina and Font stress Native American nakedness or difference in dressing behavior. In particular, I am interested in the descriptions given by Font's narratives regarding the cross-dressing practiced by some of the indigenous males (the berdaches) in the various tribes encountered by the Spaniards while exploring the southern Arizona desert near the Colorado River. The narratives depict transgender practices of dressing and I argue that there are strong ideological and political issues pertaining to the politics of colonization and subjugation

implicit in the structuring of these texts. Font's *Diary* examined in this study, records the events related to Captain Juan Bautista de Anza's second expedition from the state of Sonora, Mexico, through southern Arizona around the Yuma and Colorado River area, up the California coast passing through San Diego and ending in San Francisco. As written in Font's *Diary*, the Spanish explorers of the Southwest were mystified at encountering men dressed as women and functioning as women in their daily lives. Anthropologists have named these men *berdaches*, a term derived from the Middle East. The term "berdache" is accepted by most anthropologists but contested by Native American and First Nation groups. *Webster's Dictionary* defines berdache as a "homosexual male—an American Indian transvestite assuming more or less permanently the dress, social status and role of a woman." Gary Bowen, also known as Bean Lame Eagle and Coordinator-in-chief, The American Boyz and Chair of the *Two Spirit Conference 98* has a short piece in the internet detailing the problems related to the use of the word "berdache." In Bowen's essay titled "What's the Problem with 'Berdache?'" he opines:

While 'berdache' is in common use among white gays, Native Americans find the term offensive as it comes ultimately from the Arabic where it means roughly, 'male prostitute'. We do not appreciate having our sacred people referred to in this way. The consensus of opinion is that 'berdache' should not be used and the tribal name should be used when known. There is no consensus of opinion on a generic term, it is safest to refer to lesbian, gay bisexual and transgendered Native Americans. However, some use the term GAI (Gay American Indian) or Two Spirit (people).

Bowen further adds that the term Two Spirit is also "a contested term with no universal agreement or meaning" (ibid.) and delineates the multiple meanings of the term Two Spirit.

In a short web article titled "Who and What Are Two-Spirits/Berdaches?" Will Roscoe, author of the book *Changing Ones: Third and Fourth Genders in Native North America* (1998), defends the use of the term berdache stating the multiplicity of misconceptions surrounding the term due to the lack of knowledge regarding its history and etymology. In the article he provides a convincing argument for his position by articulating a historical analysis of the term and its etymology.

Co-authors of the article "—And We Are Still Here': From Berdache to Two-Spirit People" Wesley Thomas and Sue-Ellen Jacobs, report that the participants of two invitational conferences held on the topic of "Revisiting the North American Berdache: Empirically and Theoretically" in 1998 agreed to "reintegrate the word berdache into

our respective writings, but using it clearly and precisely in its original meaning: ‘kept boy’ or ‘male prostitute’ and expressed a preference for the term Two-Spirit”. In deference to the general consensus for the term Two-Spirit by the participants of the above conferences, I will be using the designation Two-Spirit in this essay, denoting the co-existence of a male spirit and female spirit existing in the same body.

The Spanish chroniclers of the Southwest in their expansionist excursions repeatedly described the existence of Two-Spirit people. Ramón Gutiérrez rightly cites the writings of Spanish explorers Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca (1542), Pedro de Castañeda, Hernando de Alarcón (1540), Fray Juan Agustín de Morfi (1770), and Don Esteban Clemente (1660) as containing descriptions of Two-Spirit people. Fray Alonso Benavides in his *Memorial of 1630* also discusses the phenomenon of Native American berdaches. As cited earlier, my study focuses strictly on Fray Pedro Font’s *Diary* written during Anza’s second expedition in 1775-76. Font’s *Diary* falls within the ideological concepts discussed by Mary Pratt in *Imperial Eyes* since the Anza expedition was specifically commissioned by the Crown of Spain to explore the northern territories and Pacific Northwest in order to enable Spain to maintain its hegemony in the American continent and dissuade the French, English, Russian, German and Dutch from establishing a foothold in America. The Font *Diary*, therefore, is a document that describes in minute detail the land and all its geographic characteristics including mountains, deserts, rivers, and lakes; it describes the flora and fauna, the economic possibilities for development, and the Native American populations contacted along the way. It is in these descriptions that we encounter the narratives concerning the habits and manner of living of the native populations. Father Font provides us with an in-depth portrayal of the Yuma tribe but insists that what he writes for the Yumas applies to the other Native Americans in the area:

And since the Yuma tribe ends here and the Cajuenche begins I will note down what I have learned of this tribe in the course of passing through, and of the land which they inhabit, remarking that what I say of the Yumas may be applied also most in the same terms to the Cajuenches and the tribes farther down the river, and likewise to the Jalchedunes, and even the Jamajabas or Soyopas upstream; for all these Indians, in customs and in everything, are almost the same. (Bolton 98)

Font continues to elaborate on the area where the Yumas dwell, that is, the land that “lies on the bottom lands of the Colorado River and on both sides of its banks.” (p. 98) Font enumerates the physical characteristics of the Yumas:

These Yumas, and likewise the Cajuenches and the rest, are well formed, tall, robust, not very ugly, and have good bodies. Generally they are nearly eight spans high and even more, and many are nine and some even above nine according to our measurements. The women are not so tall, but they also are quite corpulent and of very good stature. (Bolton 101)

While Mary Louise Pratt's theories on the "imperial eye" zero in on the imperialist gaze that transforms free subjects into imperial subjects, Beatriz Pastor's theories on the discourse analysis of the conquest aptly describe the process through which colonial narratives of exploration structure these transformations. Pastor posits in her elucidating study *The Armature of Conquest: Spanish Accounts of the Discovery of America 1492-1589*, (1992) three fundamental discourses extant in colonial narratives of conquest: (1) the discourse of mythification, (2) the discourse of justification, and (3) the discourse of failure. The discourses of mythification and justification are clearly evident in Font's narrative. Clothed versus naked will be the binary structure through which Native Americans are placed in a subordinate position. The fact that Native Americans do not possess clothing (by European standards) relegating them to the realm of the irrational; they will be likened to the wild beasts of the country and thus not rational—and by extension not human beings. Font describes the issue of nakedness in this manner:

But as a rule they go about totally naked, and they are so shameless that they are always con las manos en las partes vergonzosas, jugándose y alternándose (sic) la naturaleza. And they are so brutal that if they are reprimanded they make it worse and laugh about it, as I experienced. And if les viene gana de orinar, whether standing still or walking about they do so like beasts, and even worse, que estas se paran para mear. Asimismo quando (sic) les vienen sus flatos, los echan delante de todos con mucha frescura, and since they eat so many beans and other seeds they are very offensive with their flatulency. And if they are seated on the ground they do not more than levantar un poco la nalga por un lado, y como echan los cuescos tan largos, redondos, y recios, con el soplo levantan el polvo de la tierra. On one occasion the commander asked an Indian to bring him a brand with which to light his cigarette, and the Indian, very serious, with the lighted stick in his hand, standing in front of him echose un pedo formidable, and although the commander told him that such a thing was improper, the Indian laughed quite undisturbed. (Bolton 103-4) [The original translations of the *Diary* use both Spanish and English as written above.]

It is with respect to clothing that the issue of the Two-Spirit people arises. Font acknowledges that the women do wear a type of skirt fashioned from the "inner bark of the willow and the cottonwood" (105). He describes the male-wearing-skirts thusly:

Among the women I saw some men dressed like women, with whom they go about regularly, never joining the men. The commander called them *amaricados*, perhaps because the Yumas call effeminate men *maricas*. I asked who these men were, and they replied that they were not men like the rest, and for this reason they went around covered this way. From this I inferred they must be hermaphrodites, but from what I learned later I understood that they were sodomites, dedicated to nefarious practices. From all the foregoing I conclude that in this matter of incontinence there will be much to do when the Holy Faith and the Christian religion are established among them. (Bolton 105)

The liberal and flexible sexual and gender societal structures found within Native American communities were anathema to the Spaniards who equated what they perceived as sexual promiscuity with belonging to the realm of beasts. To the European eye, the sexual structures were incomprehensible and attributed its “design” to the devil. However, for some if not most of the Native American nations, the berdache was highly valued. In the website for berdache a short explanation is provided regarding Native Americans and their view of this gender designation:

In some Native American cultures, male children display feminine characteristics at an early age valued by the tribe as a sacred trust. It is believed the Great Spirit has sent this child to them as a go between for males and females, a bridge between sexes who understand both sides of the human condition. (Berdache 2007a)

Such a child is apprenticed to a shaman, or healer of the tribe. In his training, he learns the traditional work of both sexes, dresses as a woman, and performs the functions of healer and arbiter for people. (Berdache 2007a)

In the web article “Zuni Berdache,” for example, it is pointed out that the Zuni “viewed gender as an acquired rather than an inborn trait. Biological sex did not dictate the roles individuals assumed.” The Zunis’ conceptualization of gender coincides with contemporary queer theory of the social construction of gender since their view does not limit it to only two versions. To them berdaches occupy an ‘alternative’ gender called “lhamana.” (1) This conceptualization of flexible gender structures contrasted sharply with Europeans notions of strictly male/female entities defined by biological givens. Third, fourth, and even fifth genders have been found in Native American societies. For example other “genders” can include hermaphrodites, transgendered persons, a transvestites, and so forth.

In addition to an acceptance of gender diversity, the Native American peoples viewed those that were different not as deviants as Western cultures tended to do, but

were considered by some cultures as sacred, as holy. Two-Spirit people tended to enjoy prestige and power within their communities. They were healers, surgeons, counselors, therapists, high religious priests, shamans, witch doctors, medicine women, weavers, potters and were respected for their great creative and artistic skills. They were viewed as “blessed by the Gods” (Parker)

Ramón Gutiérrez in his book, *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mother Went Away* (1991), attributes the privileged status of Two-Spirit people within Pueblo society as a function of their role as mediators. He states: “The emphasis male ritual placed on village cooperation and social peace also explains in purely functional terms the meaning of the berdache. As sacred half-man/half-woman who conjoined all that was male and female, she was a living symbol of cosmic harmony.” (35)

In Font’s narrative, as well as in those numerous other Spanish chroniclers, the discourse of mythification, i.e. turning the Native American into beasts or monsters, dovetails into the discourse of justification which will be used as a god-given right to rule the Indigenous populations. As Beatriz Pastor rightly points out, the discourse of mythification, i.e. turning Native Americans into beasts and monsters, or for all practical purposes into non-human entities, was used to justify converting the free subjects of the American continent into serfs and virtual slaves; it served as a justification for appropriating their lands, their property, and even their women.

3. CONCLUSION

Both, Malasпина’s and Fray Pedro Font’s writings, fall within the purview of what Pratt calls the anti-conquest. The discourse of anti-conquest presents Europeans engaged in supposedly “innocent” endeavors of scientific explorations but which in fact are geared toward the implementation and imposition of European hegemony over the native populations and their lands. A Lockeanian perspective permeated European epistemological endeavors since knowledge by divine rule had been displaced by faith in empirical data, by experience. The gaze became of paramount importance for “to know” was “to see” and concomitant with this was the fact that knowledge was power. Thus, the race for scientific evidence, for an ordering and systematizing of the world’s resources played a significant role in the subsidizing by the various European imperial powers’ exploratory voyages across the seas.

Pratt subsumes this thirst for knowledge as the result of the emergent planetary consciousness stating that “travel writing and enlightenment natural history catalyzed each other to produce a Euro-centered form of global or planetary consciousness” (5). She further views scientific and sentimental travel writings as “bourgeois forms of

authority that displace older traditions of survival literature (5). This new scientific classificatory schemes of natural history sought to displace vernacular or peasant forms of knowledge” (5). The imperial gaze therefore is transformed into an imperial form of discourse which reconceptualizes the world from a European perspective and through discourse begins the construction of non-Europeans as “Different,” as “Others.” As Others, non-Europeans become fixed objects caught within the iron-grid logic of imperial meaning and the imperial imaginary whose expansionist enterprises sought to extract as much economic profit as possible. The asymmetric relations of power between a European Subject and a non-European Other guaranteed unequal distribution of coveted resources. The Other, that is the naked one, the one that was dressed differently from European conceptualization of what was proper attire for man and women was generally on the losing side.

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