

**BELONGING BEYOND BORDERS:
Cosmopolitan Affiliations in Contemporary
Spanish American Literature**

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Conclusion

Belonging Beyond Borders underlines as a point of departure the traditionally contentious relationship between Latin America and cosmopolitan thought. In literature, from *Modernismo* through to the Boom, cosmopolitanism was the subject of many debates and tensions. Nationalist circles understood cosmopolitanism as a foreign influence that, through aesthetic means, was diluting the exploration and expression of Latin American culture. For cosmopolitan artists, however, this ethos was a way to break Spanish America's perceived asynchronicity with the rest of the world—be it through Spanish, French, British, American, or other worldly influences. They did not believe that their *deseo de mundo* was incompatible with the creation of a strong national culture. They believed that by integrating the best elements that other literatures had to offer, they could only create a better, stronger national tradition, one that was capable of engaging the world. Beginning in the mid-1960s as the Boom was in full swing, the erosion of nation-states and the rise of neo-liberal globalization have enabled Spanish Americans to reframe their relationship with cosmopolitanism. While these concepts and their effects remain disputed, it is now harder to completely shut off cosmopolitanism and globalization, not to mention the other cultural influences they bring about. Whether nationalists like it or not, the world is now one, and it is impossible to live in it without being exposed to cultural otherness. Interconnectedness is now a *fait accompli*. For Latin Americans more specifically, the fact that current articulations of cosmopolitanism give equal standing to locality and globality in the creation of a cosmopolitan identity has opened up new possibilities. After years of being wrongly perceived as a menace to national cohesion, cosmopolitanism is now a political tool that can be used to reframe the continent's relationship with the world.

The novels I have studied in this book—Elena Poniatowska’s *La “Flor de Lis,”* Mario Vargas Llosa’s *El Paraíso en la otra esquina* and *El sueño del celta*, and Jorge Volpi’s *El fin de la locura* and *No será la Tierra*—closely mirror the opening of Spanish America to political cosmopolitanism in the twentieth century, and they exemplify the conceptual shift that took place in Spanish American literature, from aesthetic cosmopolitanism and the rejection of political cosmopolitanism in favour of other concepts, to its acceptance, affirmation, and promotion in the global era. Previous studies of earlier periods of Spanish American literary production concluded that cosmopolitanism had always been a part of the continent’s artistic production. It was either the object of much critical debate, which always led to its displacement (Rosenberg), or the expression of a *deseo de mundo* (Siskind). Here, I have established the existence of a shift, a transformation in the literary treatment of cosmopolitanism from its displacement to a new articulation; and from the *deseo de mundo*, expressed in aesthetic terms, to engagement with the world through rooted cosmopolitanism.

Examining five narratives published between 1988 and 2010 has enabled me to show that the representation of cosmopolitanism is intimately tied to the intricate and ever-evolving circumstances that bind the nation to the world, and local politics to geopolitics. This has also allowed me to identify a shift in the treatment of cosmopolitanism in Spanish American literature, from the rejection of cosmopolitanism, understood as intertwined with an imperialist world view in Poniatowska, to its acceptance and promotion, understood as a philosophy reconcilable with an individual’s national identity in Vargas Llosa and Volpi. This shift is explicitly political.

I have developed a methodological framework that I call cosmopolitan reading. This approach is predicated on an exploration of the ways these novels plot human experience across cultures, and on an evaluation of the specific Latin American cultural and historical concerns in which these texts are grounded. My cosmopolitan reading is also premised on the universality of narrative. Indeed, the novel appears to be one of the genres most suited to a cosmopolitan reading, since the complex worlds it portrays serve to reveal our common humanity across space and time. As readers, we can associate with characters, develop empathy and solidarity with them, and in so doing can turn narratives into spaces of universality.

I detected the emplotment of cosmopolitanism in the novels studied here; by identifying travel, residence in multiple localities, and the experience of global events, we can point to the articulation of a cosmopolitan proposition at work in these texts. Each plots travel as the impulse that brings the characters to adopt different perspectives, which leads them to commit to their localities and the world, a departure from the previous generations of Latin American literary production, where cosmopolitanism was mostly an aesthetic proposition.

Even if travel allows them to develop a cosmopolitan consciousness, none of the characters studied in *Belonging Beyond Borders* succeed in being rooted cosmopolitans in the strictest sense of the term. This failure on their part further highlights the difficulty of holding this position in the perilous cultural and political circumstances of the modern and post-modern worlds. Mariana develops a transcultural identity, deeply rooted in Mexico, and Casement discovers his Irish roots through his exposure to colonized people. Both characters evolve because they espouse a national identity based on that of their mother. Luz rejects Mexico, which brings Mariana to become Mexican, and Casement's mother, an Irish Catholic forced to pretend to be a British Protestant, brings Casement to live his Irishness out in the open. Flora Tristán, Paul Gauguin, Aníbal Quevedo, Allison Moore, and Arkadi Granin thrive on universalizing projects. This desire to take part in endeavours bigger than themselves drives them to reject the people closest to them, and to abandon or irremediably damage their families. Only Jennifer Moore finds some balance in her commitments, yet she does so with an imperial mindset, which makes her stances flawed.

All of these characters show, at one moment or another, a desire to be world citizens. And yet few succeed. Rooted cosmopolitanism, as embodied by such characters as Flora, Casement, and Jennifer, is a celebration of diversity. By combining universalism and difference, their rooted cosmopolitanism allows for their national culture and the new cultures they encounter to flourish and enrich one another. In spite of their shortcomings, it is precisely because they embrace diversity that Tristán and Casement are redeemed by the narrative voice, that Allison gets closure before her death, and that Jennifer's dream of having a child materializes. They are deeply flawed characters, but through rooted cosmopolitanism are rendered open to the world, and are willing to share in the human

experience. Characters such as Gauguin, Quevedo, and Irina are not offered redemption, since they never demonstrate any openness to diversity, nor do they try to establish a meaningful connection with other human beings. It is the treatment of these characters, their ultimate fates, that, among other elements, clearly points to the ways in which the notion of rooted cosmopolitanism permeates the novels.

In four of the novels studied, childhood has a major impact in the development of the characters' cosmopolitan commitment. Indeed, Flora and Paul are expelled from their childhood paradise; this is portrayed as the basic impetus for their subsequent development. The same can be said of Casement; after his parents die, he dreams only of travelling, which eventually triggers the development of his cosmopolitan conscience, but also his nationalist sentiment. Both are associated with his childhood, through the figures of his British father and his Irish mother. This is also the case for Arkadi and Allison, who develop, respectively, a strong ethical commitment to others and a rejection of one's birth country in their childhoods. While it is a happy childhood that leads Arkadi to want to save the world, it is (what she thinks of as) a sad one that leads Allison to reject the United States to embrace the world. Much like Mariana, who rejects the elitism associated with her mother's cosmopolitanism and Eurocentredness, Allison rejects the vision the United States promotes on the world stage, which she conflates with her father, who, she believes, has not given her enough attention. Childhood, then, appears to be the moment when a global conscience and/or a cosmopolitan commitment to others are born. This is consistent with current theoretical approaches in cosmopolitanism studies. Indeed, scholars such as Martha Nussbaum, in *For Love of Country: Debating the Limits of Patriotism*, posit that childhood is the best moment in an individual's life to breed a cosmopolitan sentiment, to cultivate humanity, and to develop empathy and compassion—both of which are integral to cosmopolitan citizenship.

By discerning the way in which cosmopolitanism is plotted in the novels, and by analyzing the new narrative recourses at work, as well as the novels' inscription in literary and intellectual history, I underscored the political aspects in the representation of cosmopolitanism. Poniatowska's *La "Flor de Lis"* takes place in the 1950s, when nationalist discourses were at their height in Mexico, and at a moment when the Latin

American-coined concept of transculturation gained increased discursive currency. Mariana's mother Luz embodies cosmopolitanism and its imperial connotations. The novel conceives cosmopolitanism as a tool of cultural imperialism that has the power to undermine the articulation of a liberating cultural identity. In a way, cosmopolitanism is perceived as a step backward. Indeed, after having fought for the country's emancipation from European and American investors, and their cultural hegemony, Mexicans cannot conceive of turning back to Europe yet again. In *La "Flor de Lis,"* the controversy surrounding cosmopolitanism in Spanish America is represented as a rejection of the complex hybrid culture that emerged out of conquest and colonization. Although cosmopolitans such as Luz have an extensive cultural repertoire, unlike rooted cosmopolitans, they lack the perceptiveness and commitment to frame it in harmony with the repertoire of their national setting.

Whereas my allegorical reading of Elena Poniatowska's novel shows how cosmopolitanism was displaced in favour of transculturation, and in this view, is very much aligned with the political discourse of mid-century Mexico, Mario Vargas Llosa's and Jorge Volpi's works plot political cosmopolitanism, advocate for rooted cosmopolitanism, and imagine characters who take an active role in tackling the world's problems. The novels engage in discussions about conceptions of cosmopolitanism and its articulation, as well as the articulation of a global consciousness. Vargas Llosa's and Volpi's novels embrace the contemporary view that aims to deconstruct the dichotomy that pits cosmopolitanism against nationalism. However, while Vargas Llosa is obsessed with plotting cosmopolitanism in stark opposition to nationalism—which highlights the dichotomous relationship his generation has had with the latter—Volpi, who belongs to a generation that has experienced the increasing porosity of the nation-state and the emergence and consolidation of globalization, has transcended it. Indeed, his employment of cosmopolitanism goes beyond the traditional binary opposition, and his fictions, especially *No será la Tierra*, construct narrative worlds where characters are deeply immersed, as global citizens, in the world.

In Vargas Llosa's *El Paraíso en la otra esquina* and *El sueño del celta*, political cosmopolitanism is plotted as a means to abolish inequality—namely, through the representation of Flora Tristán's and Roger Casement's

trajectories. The novels place cosmopolitanism at the intersection of rooted cosmopolitanism and liberalism. As cosmopolitans, the two activists have a cultural repertoire that allows them to connect to others across cultures. They see a glimpse of success when they find balance in their commitments both to their national setting and to the world, but fail when they choose one extreme—humanity for her, the Irish people for him. The character of Paul Gauguin is also applicable to an examination of Vargas Llosa's take on cosmopolitanism, for he embodies the binary opposition at its fullest, and never finds a middle ground like Tristán or Casement do. He is the counterpoint to rooted cosmopolitanism. It is because he never develops a balanced approach that Gauguin is not redeemed in the end.

Cosmopolitanism is represented as the best way to fight for the improvement of the oppressed, and by setting these novels in the distant past, Vargas Llosa participates in a discussion about nationalism and cosmopolitanism in the contemporary world. In this manner, a cosmopolitan reading reveals the novel as a space of universality that also transcends the past and informs the present. Not only does the novel highlight the failure of various ideologies in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but my analysis has shown that Vargas Llosa is also commenting on today's society. In numerous instances, the narrative voice comments on the downfalls of nineteenth-century globalization, interventions that echo similar indictments of globalization today.

Volpi's *El fin de la locura* and *No será la Tierra* plot political cosmopolitanism as a means to address conflicted identities, and to attempt to overcome the deterritorialization brought about by neo-liberalism in the twentieth century. Through the representation of characters such as Quevedo, the Moore sisters, and the Granin family, the two novels articulate cosmopolitanism on both a local and a global scale. In Volpi's works, the cosmopolitan is someone who concretely tackles the world's problems, even if in most instances these efforts are flawed from the outset. All the characters fail in their endeavours because they cannot embody the precepts of cosmopolitanism. Quevedo is always turning toward Europe, even when he is back in Mexico; Arkadi and Allison thrive on universal projects that leave little space for their local settings—and consequently alienate their family—and Irina and Jennifer are too anchored in their local settings to give enough credit to how the rest of the world could help

them shape their outlook on life. No one embodies rooted cosmopolitanism; they all occupy a different place on the spectrum from nationalism to cosmopolitanism, some being too nationalist, and others too universalist or disengaged. I have argued that the novels thus reveal a conception of cosmopolitanism as a means to have a concrete impact on other people's lives, in the truest sense of world citizenship.

I have also pointed out that these novels are a new step in the development of a Spanish American literary tradition. They reflect the contemporary ethos, our relationship with increasing globalization. The new politics of cosmopolitanism showcased in the novels thus inform aesthetic transformations. The novels are, on the one hand, framed within the Spanish American literary tradition, for they are part of a popular subgenre, while on the other, they propose a rearticulation of that tradition. Poniatowska uses the traditional genre of first-person narrative to consider the experience of a female immigrant—a departure from that very genre. By reworking the codes of the historical novel, and through his use of documents produced by real-life Flora Tristan and Roger Casement, Vargas Llosa produces novels that are pedagogical in nature. They highlight the difficult position in which the characters find themselves, but they also advocate for the acceptance of this very position. For Vargas Llosa, literature is a means to fight against *las insuficiencias de la vida*; I conclude that his historical novels constitute a concrete stand in this direction. Though the novels do not propose a solution to overcome the possible failures, they are an attempt to explore the complexities and contradictions of characters with a global consciousness. Historical novels have traditionally served to discuss national identity and fill the void in official histories; Vargas Llosa's rearticulation of the canonical genre, by contrast, expands on the notion of cultural identity and its inscription in institutional discourses of the nation-state, for his novels frame it in global terms.

For his part, Volpi embeds his narratives with extensive research, turning them into *novelas ensayos*, hybrids between the historical novel, historiographical metafiction, and intellectual research. Moreover, while the new Latin American historical novel generally focuses on the history of individual Latin American countries, Volpi deliberately moves away from this tradition and incorporates international settings in his

narratives. Volpi's rearticulation of historiographical metafiction—which generally serves to reassess national history using irony and parody—on a global scale expands on the possibility of re-evaluating Latin American history in global terms. The fact that most of his characters are removed from Mexico or Latin America allows for the plotting of global events and issues in which Mexico and Latin America took part, but in which they did not occupy centre stage. Volpi's global novels rearticulate Latin America's relationship with the world: his country, his continent, and the world are transformed into chambers of resonance for the issues discussed in the novels.

Rooted cosmopolitanism is clearly at work in the novels of Vargas Llosa and Volpi, and such a position is not surprising given the long history of Latin American cosmopolitan authors—from Reyes and Borges to Paz and Fuentes, among many others—who have always deconstructed the faulty perception of cosmopolitanism as dangerously alienating and foreign. Moreover, ideas about the decolonization of cosmopolitanism are precisely what explain its displacement in Poniatowska; at a time when the concept still carried an imperial connotation, transculturation was the only concept capable of reconciling the local and global aspects of an identity.

Despite the current stances on cosmopolitanism, there are still many readers, scholars, and politicians who criticize Spanish American cosmopolitan authors who choose to set their novels abroad or discuss issues that are deemed not Spanish American enough and who, in short, do not abide by the dogma that dictates what and how a Spanish American author ought to write. The argument is invariably the same—these critics associate cosmopolitanism with a lack of commitment to the nation. Although current articulations of cosmopolitanism, and the novels that inscribe themselves within this new thinking, try to undo the dichotomy that pits cosmopolitanism against nationalism, people believe that this binary opposition still exists. The *Modernistas*, the *Vanguardistas*, and the authors of the Boom were all called cosmopolitans in a reductive and derogatory manner, as are two of the novelists studied in *Belonging Beyond Borders*. Vargas Llosa and Volpi have each been called out and criticized for their supposed lack of allegiance to the nation; Vargas Llosa is despised due to his engagement as a public intellectual defending cosmopolitan ideals and

globalization, while Volpi has been criticized because his novels are deterritorialized. Both authors have also been condemned by the Peruvian and Mexican nationalist intelligentsias because they are often highly critical of their native countries.

Beyond these perennial debates, I would counter this criticism with the argument that these Spanish American authors are now engaging, as never before, in the global cosmopolitan conversation, and thus expanding the traditional loci of enunciation of the concept, an exercise that, in light of Walter Mignolo's proposal to deconstruct Western cosmopolitanism, can be construed as taking part in a decolonial project. Spanish American authors are now proposing their own conceptualizations of rooted cosmopolitanism, and discussing its implications, which is a concrete way to tackle the world's problems.

In this context, a promising line of inquiry is to expand on the study of cosmopolitanism in Latin American literature by investigating not only other contemporary authors, but also by exploring specific cosmopolitan positions in Spanish American intellectual and literary history more broadly, both critical tasks that, given the scant traditional interest in this increasingly important area of inquiry, are still pending. I have explored my conception of cosmopolitanism, but it is a multi-faceted concept, and there are other perspectives beyond those of the authors studied here. To this end, a project I would like to develop is the study of the articulation of rooted cosmopolitanism in the literary output of *McOndo* and *the Crack*, to which I alluded in the introduction. I believe it would be of particular interest to study the evolution of the ideas on cosmopolitanism put forward by the writers of both movements, how these ideas intersect with discourses of globalization and the rise of new nationalisms in the current world order, and their responses to the current situation in the United States.

Notes

INTRODUCTION

- 1 Unless otherwise noted, translations from the original Spanish (and in some cases French) are my own. Where I have quoted from a published English translation, I have used an endnote to indicate the source on first occurrence.
- 2 I use *mestizaje* and miscegenation interchangeably.
- 3 This translation comes from p. 219 of the 1970 edition of Borge's *Labyrinths*, translated by James Irby and published by Penguin.
- 4 From p. 23 of Lysander Kemp and Margaret Sayers Peden's translation of *The Siren and the Seashell*, U of Texas P, 1976.
- 5 In Argentina, Roberto Arlt is a prominent example of this literary experimentation. Another key figure is the young Jorge Luis Borges, who spent his early adulthood in Spain, where he was exposed to the Spanish Ultraist movement, which he later brought back to Buenos Aires in his twenties. In Mexico, the poet Manuel Maples Arce was the *figure de proue* of the *Estridentistas*, a movement that was both artistic and political, its proponents having experienced the Mexican Revolution (1911). José Carlos Mariátegui imported the *Vanguardistas* to Peru, and in 1926, created the journal *Amauta*, to which César Vallejo was a major contributor. For a thorough review of national Avant-Garde movements, see Ramírez and Olea.
- 6 While it is true that Latin American authors aspired to be published in Spain, they mostly longed for Paris. In fact, the most important literary review promoting the Boom, Rodríguez Monegal's *Mundo Nuevo*, was published in the French capital. Vargas Llosa describes it at length in *La tía Julia y el escribidor*, to which I refer in chapter 2. In fact, the protagonist, Varguitas, discusses how Peru lacked any sort of literary system, and Peruvian authors and journalists, intellectual autonomy. His integration into the already well-established European literary market—be it in Spain or France, where all Boom authors spent time—meant the affirmation of the very possibility of his role as a *creador* who was no longer expected to mimic the production of other European or Latin American countries.
- 7 The publication and subsequent popularity of Boom authors in the metropole raises paradoxes, which can be explained by the very question of modernity to which I referred earlier. In the late 1950s and early '60s, Spanish cultural elites were eager to

enter their own modern framework. After twenty years of dictatorship under Franco, who condemned everything foreign for fear it would dilute the Spanish national essence, there was a frantic search for foreign cultural products. Contact with the Boom writers was an injection of both modernity and cosmopolitanism for the Spaniards. The Boom was as useful for Latin Americans as it was for Spaniards: emerging writers from the periphery received international attention, and readers from the metropole were finally allowed to access reading materials from outside their national area. For Spain, Latin America represented modernity versus its own cultural and intellectual backwardness; for Latin America, Spain represented the undoing of coloniality, and reaching contemporaneity with the rest of the world—ironically so, since Spain was itself at the periphery of Europe’s intellectual scene.

- 8 Most of the authors published in *McOndo* received a cosmopolitan education since they were raised or lived abroad during their youth. The paradigm through which to study this movement should be globalization rather than cosmopolitanism, which is why I have not included *McOndo* in *Belonging Beyond Borders*. *McOndo* novels portray characters in a global world, but do not concern themselves with the ethics of living in one. In the “Presentación del País *McOndo*,” the preface to *McOndo*, Fuguet and Gómez hint at the fact that Latin America has now moved past Rama’s *arritmia temporal*, even if being synched with the rest of the world now means having access to things such as MTV Latina, CNN in Spanish, NAFTA, and Mercosur (9).
- 9 Appiah is but one of many scholars to advocate in favour of rooted cosmopolitanism. Some authors refer to the same idea using a slightly different terminology: Dallmayr’s “anchored cosmopolitanism” (2003), Baynes’s “situated cosmopolitanism” (2007), Erskine’s “embedded cosmopolitanism” (2008), and Werbner’s “vernacular cosmopolitanism” (2006) all express similar ideas.
- 10 Mignolo advocates in favour of decoloniality, which he describes as a movement that confronts “the colonial matrix of power” (*The Darker Side of Western Modernity* xxvii). The main objective of decoloniality is to erase all aspects of coloniality and rearticulate history as stemming from multiples locations, not only Europe. As much as rooted cosmopolitanism is “an actually existing” type of cosmopolitanism (Calhoun 1), decoloniality is a concrete practice that aims at undoing the—according to decolonial scholars such as Mignolo—ever-growing effects of colonialism and its recent incarnation, globalization. Decoloniality is particularly used in relation to Latin America, where decolonial theorists argue that post-coloniality is mostly an intellectual movement, while decoloniality is an actual praxis.
- 11 In Appiah’s conceptualization, “what makes the cosmopolitan experience possible—in reading as elsewhere—is not that we share beliefs and values because of our common capacity for reason: in the novel, at least, it is not ‘reason’ but a different human capacity that grounds our sharing: namely, the grasp of a narrative logic that allows us to construct the world to which our imaginations respond” (“Cosmopolitan Reading” 223).

CHAPTER 1

- 1 The English comes from p. 72 of Katherine Silver's translation of *Tinísima*. U of Mexico P, 1995.
- 2 According to Teresa M. Hurley, in "Mother/Country and Identity in Elena Poniatowska's *La 'Flor de lis,'*" the novel is a "female novel of awakening" (152) rather than a *Bildungsroman*, since Mariana is a woman: "The novel of awakening is similar to the apprenticeship novel in some ways: it also recounts the attempts of a sensitive protagonist to learn the nature of the world, discover its meaning and pattern, and acquire a philosophy of life, but she must learn these lessons as a woman. The protagonist's growth results typically not with an 'art of living,' as for her male counterpart, but instead with a realisation that for a woman such an art of living is difficult or impossible: it is an awakening to limitations" (Rosowski in Hurley 152). I disagree with this position. As we shall see, while Mariana does discover some limitations caused by her being born abroad, once she overcomes them and becomes a transcultural Mexican, she is sure of where she belongs and does not experience limitations due to her gender.
- 3 *Massacre in Mexico*, about the events at Tlatelolco, was published in English in 1975, and *Nothing, Nobody: The Voices of the Earthquake*, about the aftermath of the 1985 earthquake, in 1995. *La noche de Tlatelolco* recounts the events that marked Mexico shortly before the opening of the 1968 Olympic Games. On 2 October 1968, between 30 and 300 students were killed by the police and the military in the Plaza de las Tres Culturas, in downtown Mexico City. They were protesting numerous decisions taken by the government of Gustavo Díaz Ordaz. After the massacre, Poniatowska gave voice to the people who lived through the events and compiled a series of testimonials from Mexicans who were in favour of, as well as some who opposed, the student movement. The chronicle was published in 1971. Many historians consider the Tlatelolco massacre the first in a lengthy series of events that led to the defeat of the PRI in 2000. *Nada, nadie—Las voces del temblor* focuses on the impact of the 1985 earthquake that cost the lives of about 26,000 people. For weeks, the government denied the extent of the disaster and it was Mexicans themselves who saved their countrymen buried in collapsed buildings. In this chronicle, Poniatowska weaves her earthquake experience into the testimonies of people who were present to show the consequences of this drama on a human scale. Poniatowska has often spoken about her commitment to the subaltern and how her work as a *cronista* ("chronicler") became intertwined with her career as a journalist: "lo que sucedió con el periodismo es que fui comprometiéndome cada vez más, no sólo con el periódico, sino también con las personas a quienes entrevistaba" ("what happened with journalism is that I became more and more committed, not only to the newspaper, but also to the people I was interviewing"; *Nada, nadie* 26).
- 4 From p. 98 of Harriet de Onís's translation of *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar*, Duke UP, 1995.
- 5 From pp. 86–7 of Lysander Kemp's translation of *The Labyrinth of Solitude*, Grove Press, 1961.
- 6 From p. 88 of the Kemp translation.

- 7 Despite the fact that her Mexican grandmother is of primary importance in Mariana's development, she never mentions her first name. At the beginning of the novel, Mariana makes a distinction between her European grandmother and her Mexican grandmother, referring to the latter as *la nueva abuela*, the new *abuela*. As she grows accustomed to her new setting, the protagonist only uses the term *la abuela*.
- 8 In *Me lo dijo Elena Poniatowska*, Poniatowska addresses this very event and acknowledges that her grandmother was not as prejudiced as she is portrayed as being in the novel:

mi abuela paterna, se llamaba Elizabeth Sperry Crocker, era norteamericana y hablaba mal el francés—lo conjugaba mal—, nos quería mucho a Kitzia y a mí. Ella fue la que más se opuso a que viniéramos a México. Por las noches nos enseñaba una revista, la *National Geographic Magazine*, donde aparecían hombres y mujeres con huesos atravesados arriba de la cabeza, las tetas caídas, los labios deformados con platos. Mientras las hojeábamos nos decía: “Miren niñas, esto es México.” Nos contaba que llegando allá nos iban a sacar la sangre y nos iban a comer crudas. Por eso cuando llegué a México yo tenía mucho miedo por todo lo que mi abuela nos había dicho, pero obviamente la abuela lo decía porque no quería que la dejáramos (14).

My paternal grandmother, her name was Elizabeth Sperry Crocker, was an American and spoke French poorly—she conjugated it poorly—she loved Kitzia and me very much. She was the one most opposed to our coming to Mexico. At night she would show us a magazine, the *National Geographic*, where men and women appeared with bones pierced above the head, sagging tits, lips deformed with plates. As we leafed through them, she would tell us: “Look at it girls, this is Mexico.” She told us that when we got there they would drink our blood and eat us alive. That’s why when I arrived in Mexico I was very afraid, because of everything my grandmother had told us, but obviously Grandma said it because she didn’t want us to leave her.

- 9 Glantz compares Magda to La Malinche, and claims that “con ella entran a la casa las leyendas, los servicios, la segunda lengua: como Malinche, es la que interpreta la realidad, la transforma, le da sentido, la organiza” (“with her legends, services, the second language enters the house: like Malinche, she is the one who interprets reality, transforms it, gives sense to it, organizes it”; “Las hijas de la Malinche” 87). La Malinche, Doña Marina, or *la lengua*—the tongue—was the young Indigenous woman gifted to Hernán Cortés in 1519. Her mastery of Indigenous languages and Spanish enabled her to act as a mediator and translator, a role resembling Magda’s in Mariana’s life. The formative process fostered by the Indigenous *nana* is a recurring trope in Mexican post-revolutionary literature. For instance, in Rosario Castellanos’s 1957 novel *Balún Canán*, the privileged daughter of a landowner gets acquainted with Indigenous and lower-class Mexicans through her Indigenous nanny. Unlike in *La “Flor de Lis,”* both the child narrator and the *nana* are nameless, thus highlighting their relative lack of importance in the family.
- 10 In the essay “A Question Mark Engraved on My Eyelids,” Poniatowska claims that she “absorbed Mexico through the maids. . . . I discovered Mexico through them, and not even Bernal Díaz del Castillo had better guides. Surrounded by Malinches . . . I was able

to enter an unknown world, that of poverty and its palliatives. . . . Without realizing it the maids provided me with a version of Benito Juárez; they were all like Benito Juárez. Like him they vindicated themselves: 'Dirty foreigners.' Like him they defended Mexico, as stubborn as mules" (99–100).

- 11 By her own admission, this is something that Poniatowska took to heart: "desde joven, por mi propia formación pensaba: 'Bueno, yo le tengo que ser útil a mi país.' Pero, ¿cómo le puedo ser útil? Denunciando lo que vea, observando, escribiendo acerca de los problemas de cada día y dándoles voz a gente que simplemente me la pide" ("from when I was young, all by myself, I thought: 'Well, I have to be useful to my country. But how can I be useful? By denouncing what I see, by observing, by writing about everyday problems, and by giving a voice to people who simply ask me for it"; *Me lo dijo Elena Poniatowska* 27). This resonates with her body of work, whether we think of *La noche de Tlatelolco* or *Hasta no verte Jesús mío* (*Here's to You, Jesusa!*).

CHAPTER 2

- 1 All English renderings of Vargas Llosa's Nobel speech come from Edith Grossman's translation, available at https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/2010/vargas_llosa/25162-mario-vargas-llosa-nobel-lecture-2010/.
- 2 Vargas Llosa has written extensively on the function of literature, and has also stated in various essays that the very act of writing also serves as a way to settle the score with reality and history, reimagining, or rather improving, some of its aspects. In *Cartas a un joven novelista* (*Letters to a Young Novelist*; 1997), for instance, he argues that the very act of writing is an act of rebellion. In "The Power of Lies" (1987), he argues that "the real world, the material world, has never been adequate, and never will be, to fulfil human desires. And without that essential dissatisfaction with life which is both exacerbated and at the same time assuaged by the lies of literature, there can never be any genuine progress" (30).
- 3 In my analysis of *El Paraíso en la otra esquina*, I use the same spelling as Vargas Llosa to refer to the character of Flora Tristán, whereas I use the spelling "Flora Tristan" (absent the tilde) to refer to the historical figure.
- 4 The other Latin American authors who won the Nobel Prize for Literature are Chilean poet Gabriela Mistral in 1945, Guatemalan novelist Miguel Ángel Asturias in 1967, Chilean poet Pablo Neruda in 1971, Colombian novelist Gabriel García Márquez in 1982, and Mexican intellectual Octavio Paz in 1990.
- 5 Indeed, most of his novels, even the deterritorialized ones, revisit Peru, whether we think of *El hablador* (*The Storyteller*; 1987) or *Travesuras de la niña mala* (*The Bad Girl*; 2006). More recently, after a series of novels that took place in a global environment, he has returned to Peruvian settings in such novels as *El héroe discreto* (*Discreet Hero*; 2013), which is set in Lima and Arequipa, and *Cinco esquinas* (*The Neighbourhood*; 2016), which focuses on Lima and is set during the Fujimori regime.
- 6 Page numbers here and below refer to Helen Lane's translation of *Aunt Julia and the Scriptwriter*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1982.

- 7 The publication of *El héroe discreto*, in 2013, and of *Cinco esquinas*, in 2016, seems to shake, at least partially, the foundations of this theorization, since the novels take place in Lima and Arequipa, two Peruvian cities that embody the idea of *peruanidad* in Vargas Llosa's works. *Cinco esquinas* also deals with so-called Peruvian themes, more specifically with the Fujimori regime. *El héroe discreto* does not openly discuss either cosmopolitanism or nationalism, but it does broach universal topics, such as corruption, greed, and family roots. The characters in *El héroe discreto* are not cosmopolitans by value—they show no moral commitment, and I would even argue that both protagonists display behaviour close to Gauguin's much-criticized individualism in *El Paraíso en la otra esquina*. *Cinco esquinas* also deals with such themes, which are, if not cosmopolitan, at least universal.
- 8 While Vargas Llosa's first *maître à penser* was Jean-Paul Sartre, a second reading of Camus's *L'homme révolté* (*The Rebel*; 1951) in 1962, as Vargas Llosa was starting to have doubts about the Cuban Revolution, allowed the Peruvian author to detect similarities between his still developing ideas and those of Camus. In the essay, Camus criticizes revolutions, which, according to him, fail because they end up betraying their precepts. This second reading allowed Vargas Llosa to conclude that the fight against injustice was moral rather than political, and not political rather than moral, as it was conceived by Sartre. This articulation planted the seeds of Vargas Llosa's rejection of Cuba after the Padilla Affair, and later his turn to liberalism.
- 9 The George Lengvari Sr. Lecture was given in English at the Institut économique de Montréal, then translated into French and Spanish. I'm quoting here from the trilingual French-English-Spanish publication entitled *Mon itinéraire intellectuel/My Intellectual Journey/Mi trayectoria intelectual*.
- 10 However, Giudicelli also claims that as a young author, Vargas Llosa had a tendency to write about what he knew: "Avec la prudence qu'impose une oeuvre en devenir, on peut souligner deux aspects qui marquent un cheminement. Par rapport aux premiers romans de l'aire liméenne, en prise directe avec une réalité connue, vécue et subie, et avec tout juste quelques années d'écart seulement, les oeuvres suivantes marquent une approche du fonds historique avec davantage de recul, que ce soit dans l'implication directe, personnelle, ou que ce soit dans le temps historique" ("Notwithstanding the necessary caution when considering a writer's early works, we can distinguish two aspects that mark a progression. When compared to the first novels of the Limean era, which are grounded in a known and lived experience, and with just a few years between them, the works that follow treat their historical source material with greater perspective, whether it be through the lens of personal experience or of a historical setting"; 191).
- 11 In his study, Menton defines historical novels as "novels whose action takes place completely (in some cases, predominantly) in the *past*—arbitrarily defined here as a past not directly experienced by the author" (16). Of course, Menton's definition is highly arbitrary. Following this reasoning, Vargas Llosa's *La fiesta del Chivo* (2000), among others, would not be a historical novel.
- 12 Other than the ones previously mentioned, characteristics of the new historical novels include metafiction, intertextuality, and the "Bakhtinian concepts of the *dialogic*, the

carnavalesque, parody, and *heteroglossia*” (Menton 23–4), all characteristics that apply to the Jorge Volpi novels I study in the next chapter.

- 13 Vargas Llosa first expressed interest in Flora Tristan in his biography, *El pez en el agua*. He later realized that he would need another character to balance the narrative, and the figure of Tristan’s grandson, Paul Gauguin, prevailed, for “they had very similar personalities: stubborn, a propensity towards idealism, utopian constructions, very courageous in trying to materialize their utopias, even though they were very different ones” (qtd. in Rangel 11).
- 14 To this end, Sabine Köllmann has argued that “the frequent shifts from third-person to second-person-singular narrative voice and back do not hide but, on the contrary, underline the strong presence of the omniscient narrator in the background” (247). The use of *tú*, doubled with the fact that the narrator refers to Tristán as *Madame-la-Colère*, could be read as somewhat condescending. The narrator seems to diminish women. Although this is a legitimate reading of the narrative voice, I contend it leaves aside the fact that the novel celebrates Tristán’s obstinacy. Moreover, unlike Gauguin, she is redeemed at the end of the novel. In “Arabesques: Mario Vargas Llosa et Flora Tristán,” Stéphane Michaud puts forth the hypothesis that the Peruvian author took this narrative tool directly from the historical Flora Tristan’s writings, for she used to talk of herself as *Florita* or *l’Andalouse* (the Andalusian), two nicknames the second-person-singular narrator uses when present. Vargas Llosa, for his part, responds to Michaud’s argument by stating that his main objectives were to provide intimacy and to reproduce internal monologues: “Si vous utilisez la deuxième personne grammaticale, vous introduisez un narrateur ambigu. On ne sait pas directement si c’est le narrateur impersonnel qui parle ou si c’est le personnage qui se parle à lui-même, en se dédoublant, comme nous faisons couramment quand nous réfléchissons. . . . Dans ces petites parenthèses, il laissait le personnage se parler à lui-même, en montrant cette intimité qui introduit une perspective pas seulement subjective, mais aussi un peu ironique, établit une espèce de distance entre un personnage et sa propre expérience” (“If you use the second grammatical person, you introduce an ambiguous narrator. It is not immediately evident whether it is the impersonal narrator who is speaking or if the character is in fact talking to himself as though he were someone else, as we commonly do when we are trying to think. . . . In these brief interludes, he would let the character speak to himself, and portray this intimacy to introduce a perspective that is both subjective and ironic, and which sets a character at a distance from his own experience; qtd. in Michaud and Bensoussan 224–5). According to Daniel Lefort in “Mario Vargas Llosa, de la *Fête* au *Paradis*: fictions de l’histoire et pouvoirs de l’écrivain” (Mario Vargas Llosa: From *Feast* to *Paradise*: Fictions of History and the Writer’s Powers), this feature of Vargas Llosa’s writings appeared for the first time in *La fiesta del Chivo*; it is thus a feature of the third cycle in his writing.
- 15 Page numbers refer to Natasha Wimmer’s translation of *The Way to Paradise*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003.
- 16 This affirmation echoes that of Mariana in *La “Flor de Lis,”* who says “Soy de México porque quiero serlo, es mi país” (“I am from Mexico because I want to be, it’s my country”; 74).

- 17 Vargas Llosa relies heavily on Flora Tristan's writings and books, such as *Pérégrinations d'une paria*, to create her character. In fact, the novel's depiction of her experience in Peru is supported by her travel accounts.
- 18 This technique is common in Vargas Llosa's work. Indeed, as pointed out by Weldt-Basson, the Peruvian author has a "tendency to metaphorize one historical context through another" (231). For instance, *La guerra del fin del mundo* discusses fanaticism in Canudos and obliquely criticizes "Castro's curtailment of freedom of artistic expression in Cuba" (231), while *La fiesta del Chivo* (2000) is both a critique of Trujillo's regime and Alberto Fujimori's regime in the late 1990s.
- 19 Gauguin's quest for perfection, for an *escurridizo lugar*, is a recurring topic throughout the novel. Near death, he remembers having chased it most of his life: "Su música llenaba los vacíos del espíritu, lo sosegaba en las crisis de exasperación o abatimiento, y, cuando estaba enfrascado en un cuadro o una escultura—rara vez, ahora que tenía la vista tan mala—, le daba ánimos, ideas, algo de la antigua voluntad de alcanzar la escurridiza perfección" (Vargas Llosa, *Paraíso* 391) ("Music filled the empty places in his soul, soothing him at moments of frustration or discouragement. When he was immersed in a painting or a sculpture—rarely now, since his sight was so bad—it gave him energy, ideas, something of his old will to achieve elusive perfection" 363).
- 20 I quote in this chapter from Edith Grossman's translation of the *Dream of the Celt*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2012.
- 21 This is not the first time that Vargas Llosa writes about Roger Casement. In the chapter titled "*El corazón de las tinieblas—Las raíces de lo humano*" ("*Heart of Darkness—The Roots of Humankind*") in *La verdad de las mentiras*, he referred to the historical Casement as one of the first people to have denounced King Leopold II's abuses in the Congo. He states that "quienes, a base de una audacia y perseverancia formidables, consiguieron movilizar a la opinión pública internacional contra las carnicerías congoleñas de Leopoldo II fueron un irlandés, Roger Casement, y el belga Morel. . . . Ambos merecerían los honores de una gran novela" (38) (those "who, showing extraordinary bravery and perseverance, were mainly responsible for mobilising international public opinion against Leopold II's butchery in the Congo, were an Irishman, Roger Casement, and a Belgian, Morel. Both deserve the honours of a great novel")—in this way foreshadowing his own work. (The English here is from p. 34 of John King's translation of Vargas Llosa, *Touchstones: Essays on Literature, Art, and Politics*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007.)
- 22 According to Kristal, "The novel might also be loosely inspired by a Jorge Luis Borges story, 'Tema del traidor y del héroe,' 1944, in which an Irishman is remembered as a hero because his people want to remember him as such, even though he was deeply flawed" ("From Utopia to Reconciliation" 141).
- 23 *Heart of Darkness's* narrator, Charles Marlow, recounts a trip up the Congo River in the Congo Free State, and epitomizes the civilization/barbarism dichotomy, implying that the white man is as barbaric as the African native populations (as perceived by Europe at the time). Although very popular and still required reading in high school and college, *Heart of Darkness* has been harshly criticized by eminent scholars in post-colonial studies, who argue against its dehumanization of Africans. Published in 1975, Chinua Achebe's "An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's *Heart*

of *Darkness*” maintains that the novella “projects the image of Africa as ‘the other world,’ the antithesis of Europe and therefore of civilization, a place where man’s vaunted intelligence and refinement are finally mocked by triumphant bestiality” (3), where Africans are depicted as “dumb brutes” and cannibals who grunt (7). Vargas Llosa addresses Achebe’s paper in his essay “*El corazón de las tinieblas—Las raíces de lo humano.*” While he does not dispute Achebe’s claim, he maintains that the novel is “pese a las severísimas condenas que lanzó contra ella el escritor africano Chinua Achebe acusándola de prejuiciada y salvajemente racista (*bloody racist*) contra los negros, una dura crítica a la ineptitud de la civilización occidental para trascender la naturaleza humana, cruel e incivil” (43) (“without doubt, and despite the strong criticism launched at it by the African writer Chinua Achebe who condemned it for being prejudiced and ‘bloody racist,’ a trenchant critique of Western civilisation’s inability to transcend cruel and uncivilised human nature”; 37-38). In the novel, Casement and Conrad meet for the first time in Congo, and later in 1903 after the publication of *Heart of Darkness*. Conrad makes clear that he owes a lot to Casement, and tells him that he should have appeared “como coautor de ese libro . . . Nunca lo hubiera escrito sin su ayuda. Usted me quitó las legañas de los ojos. Sobre el África, sobre el Estado Independiente del Congo. Y sobre la fiera humana” (*Sueño* 74) (“You should have appeared as co-author of that book, Casement. . . . I never would have written it without your help. You removed the scales from my eyes. About Africa, about the Congo Free State. And about the human beast”; 52). Later on, in jail, Casement discusses the novel with the historian Alice Stopford Green, to whom Vargas Llosa gives the part of Achebe: “Esa novela es una parábola según la cual África vuelve bárbaros a los civilizados europeos que van allá. Tu *Informe sobre el Congo* mostró lo contrario, más bien. Que fuimos los europeos que llevamos allá las peores barbaries” (76) (“That novel is a parable according to which Africa turns civilized Europeans who go there into barbarians. Your Congo report showed the opposite. That we Europeans were the ones who brought the worst barbarities there”; 54). Casement, for his part, speaks the words of Vargas Llosa and sees the novel as a metaphor for the original sin (“*El corazón de las tinieblas—Las raíces de lo humano*” 38; *Sueño del celta* 76).

- 24 A quotation like this one reveals the work and preparation Vargas Llosa put into the writing of the novel. The expression “‘incorregible irlandés” is taken from a 1907 letter Casement sent to Alice Stopford Green, one of his closest friends: “I had accepted Imperialism—British rule was to be extended at all costs, because it was the best for everyone under the sun, and those who opposed that extension ought rightly to be ‘smashed’ . . . Well the [Boer] War gave me qualms at the end—the concentration camps bigger ones—and finally when up in those lonely Congo forests where I found Leopold I found also myself—the incorrigible Irishman” (qtd. in Ó Síocháin 1).
- 25 In “*El sueño del celta: Postcolonial Vargas Llosa*,” Helene Carol Weldt-Basson criticizes the fact that “at times the reader has the sense that the novel’s most pressing point is not the denunciation of colonization in Africa and South America, but rather the criticism of Ireland’s colonial status in the early twentieth century. The character Roger Casement, although a clear denouncer of colonialist abuse both in the Congo and in the Putumayo region, interprets these geographical regions from a Eurocentric perspective and seems at times more concerned with European politics and his own nationalist agenda, than with Third-World realities” (234). She maintains that while the novel

“exposes the economic motivation of colonialist ‘civilizing’ discourse, [it also] falls into the colonialist trap of de-emphasizing national peculiarities in favour of a generalizing discourse that runs the risk of being racist and essentialist through eliding ethnic, racial, and social differences between nations and favouring the European ‘First-World’ problematic versus the Third-World reality” (236).

- 26 *Travesuras de la niña mala* (2006) is quite cosmopolitan too, but in a very broad understanding of cosmopolitanism, where it is only associated with travels, and not articulated as a philosophical position.
- 27 According to Vargas Llosa, “The reconstruction of the past through literature is almost always misleading in terms of historical objectivity. Literary truth is one thing, historical truth another. But, although it may be full of fabrication—or for that very reason—literature presents us with a side of history which cannot be found in history books. For literature does not lie gratuitously. Its deceptions, devices, and hyperbole all serve to express those deep-seated and disturbing truths which only come to light in this oblique way” (“Power of Lies” 28).

CHAPTER 3

- 1 Even if he has been criticized for not being Mexican enough, Volpi’s first novels tend to prove this affirmation as false. *A pesar del oscuro silencio* (*In Spite of the Dark Silence*; 1992) concentrates on the life and works of Mexican poet Jorge Cuesta; *Días de ira* (*Days of Wrath*; 1994) is inspired, from a narrative and thematic perspective, by Salvador Elizondo’s *Farabeuf*; and *La paz de los sepulcros* (*Peace in the Graves*; 1995) is perhaps the most Mexican novel of all, since it was written in Mexico, has a Mexican narrator and protagonist, and is about Mexican events.
- 2 Julio Cortázar talks at length of his cosmopolitan vocation in his letter-essay “Situación del intelectual latinoamericano” (1967), directed at the Cuban thinker Roberto Fernández Retamar, who had rather conflicted views when it came to the internationalization of the Latin American author. Cortázar confesses that his years in France made him discover his true Latin American self, which he puts in perspective on a global scale: “¿No te parece en verdad paradójico que un argentino casi enteramente volcado hacia Europa en su juventud, al punto de quemar las naves y venirse a Francia . . . haya descubierto aquí, después de una década, su verdadera condición de latinoamericano? Pero esta paradoja abre una cuestión más honda: la de si no era necesario situarse en la perspectiva más universal del viejo mundo, desde donde todo parece poder abarcarse con una especie de ubicuidad mental, para ir descubriendo poco a poco las verdaderas raíces de lo latinoamericano sin perder por eso la visión global de la historia y del hombre” (“Doesn’t it seem really paradoxical to you that an Argentine almost entirely turned toward Europe in his youth, to the point of burning his bridges and coming to France . . . had discovered here, after a decade, his true condition as a Latin American? But this paradox leads to a deeper question: whether it was unnecessary to place oneself in the most universal perspective of the old world, where it seems that everything can be encompassed by a kind of mental ubiquity, in order to discover little by little the true roots of Latin Americanness, without losing as a result the global vision of history and mankind”; 269–70). In Cortázar’s

understanding, locality and globality go hand in hand, in that they both help a writer become more aware of the tradition to which he belongs, but also drive him to discover more about himself. Cortázar also mentions having received negative comments since “vivir en Europa y escribir ‘argentino’ escandaliza a los que exigen una especie de asistencia obligatoria a clase por parte del escritor” (“living in Europe and writing as an ‘Argentine’ scandalizes those who demand a kind of compulsory classroom attendance by the writer”; 275), but he remains “dispuesto a seguir siendo un escritor latinoamericano en Francia” (“willing to continue being a Latin American writer in France”; 277).

- 3 They claimed that “Ahí hay más bien una mera reacción contra el agotamiento; cansancio de que la gran literatura latinoamericana y el dudoso realismo mágico se hayan convertido, para nuestras letras, en maguismo trágico; cansancio de los discursos patrióticos que por tanto tiempo nos han hecho creer que Rivapalacio escribía mejor que su contemporáneo Poe, como si proximidad y calidad fuesen una y la misma cosa; cansancio de escribir mal para que se lea más, que no mejor; cansancio de lo *engagé*; cansancio de las letras que vuelan en círculos como moscas sobre sus propios cadáveres” (“Manifiesto Crack” 5) (“There is, of course, a reaction against exhaustion; weariness of having the great Latin American literature and the dubious magic realism converted, for our writing, into tragic magicism; weariness of the patriotic speeches which, for a long time, have made us believe that Rivapalacio wrote better than his contemporary Poe, as if proximity and quality were one and the same thing; weariness of writing poorly in order to be read more [but not better]; weariness of the *engagé*; weariness of the letters that circle like flies over corpses). This English rendering comes from Cecilia Bartolin and Scott Miller’s translation of the “Crack Manifesto,” included in Jaimes (2017).
- 4 Page numbers here and below are from Ezra Fritz’s translation of the “Crack Postmanifiesto,” in Jaimes (2017).
- 5 One could argue that Berry’s stand on the integration of a Latin American canon, as well as how to ensure one’s legitimacy and longevity in literature, can be tied to that of Harold Bloom and his seminal *The Anxiety of Influence*. Bloom associates literary tradition with authors who have a certain influence over others, and says that “Every disciple takes away something from his masters” (6), whether consciously or unconsciously. In addition, Bloom proposes a gradation to explain the development of what he calls the “strong poet.” He posits that such poets maintain an ambiguous relationship with their predecessors and with the literary canon, since their influence creates a feeling of anxiety in the new poet. Bloom considers that as long as the works of his precursors inspire the young poet, he is doomed to produce works that are unoriginal and weak. Therefore, the poet must forge a personal poetic vision for himself, in order to ensure his survival in the literary world, and eventually his inclusion in a new canon.
- 6 While Volpi applauds García Márquez’s skills, and does not deny that magical realism had a tremendous impact on Latin American literature, he laments that it has become some sort of brand that is expected from Latin American authors. He also claims that the fact that magical realism is seen as the defining characteristic of a whole continent is inevitably reductive, for it erases large parts of Spanish America’s literary history,

“desde los balbucesos del siglo XIX hasta algunos de los momentos más brillantes de nuestras letras, incluidas las vanguardias de principios del siglo XX, Borges y Onetti, la novela realista o comprometida posterior—en especial la novela de la Revolución mexicana—, las búsquedas formales de los cincuenta y el contagio de la cultura popular de los sesenta. . . . Y, acaso lo más grave, ha exacerbado el nacionalismo frente a la rica tradición universal de la región” (“from the babbling of the nineteenth century to some of the brightest moments in our letters, including the Avant-Garde of the early twentieth century, Borges and Onetti, the later realist or socially engaged novel—especially the novel of the Mexican Revolution—formal searches in the 1950s and the contagion of popular culture in the 1960s. . . . And, perhaps most seriously, it has heightened nationalism despite the region’s rich universal tradition”; *El insomnio de Bolívar* 69–70). He also despises the hypocrisy of some critics, who were fast to attack the Boom for its use of foreign literary devices, but who eventually changed their mind when García Márquez and other Boom writers’ novels became successful: after the publication of *Cien años de soledad* “el realismo mágico[©] fue elevado a paradigma y, de ser tachados de vendepatrias, los miembros del Boom pasaron a encarnar la esencia misma de América Latina” (“magical realism[©] was elevated to a paradigm and, after being tarred as traitors to the nation, members of the Boom came to embody the very essence of Latin America”; 70). Volpi uses the copyright sign—©—to highlight how magical realism has been turned into a brand.

- 7 Volpi explained that he never intended to portray an American physicist, but that the authenticity of the novel depended on it: “A fines de 1998 comprendí que había algo ridículo en que un mexicano, y para colmo físico, se dedicase a cazar nazis en Alemania. Sólo entonces decidí, por una simple cuestión de verosimilitud, cambiar la nacionalidad de mi personaje, que se tornó estadounidense y pasó a llamarse Francis Bacon, como el filósofo isabelino” (“At the end of 1998 I understood that there was something ridiculous about a Mexican, and on top of that a physicist, devoting himself to hunting down Nazis in Germany. Only then did I decide, simply as a matter of plausibility, to change the nationality of my character, who became an American renamed Francis Bacon, like the Elizabethan philosopher”; *Insomnio* 24). Volpi even shared, in an interview with *Areco*, that the first portrayal of Bacon was named Jorge Cantor, a wink to the German mathematician Georg Cantor. For an analysis of Volpi’s supposed lack of national allegiance, see Christopher Domínguez Michael’s various interventions in *Letras Libres*.
- 8 Rodrigo Fresán is an Argentinean author and journalist. He now lives in Spain. He was a close friend of Chilean Roberto Bolaño, with whom he shares a tendency to write hybrid narratives that make use of different media. He is openly influenced by American fiction, which has obviously caused some commotion in Argentina, where his writings are deemed by some insufficiently national.
- 9 Volpi addresses this very criticism in *El insomnio de Bolívar*. He says, in an ironic manner, that “un español me acusó de usar un lenguaje desprovisto de localismos para conquistar el mercado mundial (que un oficial nazi dijese ‘me lleva la chingada’ me parecía una simple falta de sutileza)” (“a Spaniard accused me of using language devoid of local turns of phrase in order to appeal to the world market [that a Nazi officer would say ‘fuck me’ seemed to me a simple lack of subtlety]”; 25).

- 10 *El fin de la locura* has yet to be translated into English.
- 11 Toward the end of the novel, the reader learns that the editor of the novel is none other than Jorge Volpi. In a section entitled “Peor libro del año” (“Worst book of the year”), journalist Juan Pérez Avella provides a devastating critique of “*El fin de la locura*, de Aníbal Quevedo (edición a cargo de Jorge Volpi, Seix Barral, 2003)” (“*The End of Madness*, by Aníbal Quevedo [edited by Jorge Volpi, Seix Barral, 2003]”). The criticism presented in this section is twofold. First, in an ironic manner, Volpi questions journalists and literary critics who are still interested in a literary tradition that would mostly be of a national sort, and who dislike this “intensa—y estéril—globalización” (“intense—and sterile—globalization”) that does not bring about great literature. Second, he mocks openly the supposed identity of the novel at hand, calling it “un libro francés escrito en español” (“a French book written in Spanish”), which, according to literary critics well versed in national tradition, cannot make it Mexican (451).
- 12 The intertextual references to Miguel de Cervantes’s *Don Quijote* are obvious throughout the novel: Josefa Ponce, whose last name sounds like that of Sancho Panza, acts as a helper to Quevedo; the psychoanalyst publishes his work with a publishing house called Rocinante; and he spends the major part of his life trying to seduce Claire, whom he calls his Dulcinea.
- 13 Volpi already alluded to this state of affairs in the “Manifiesto Crack”: “parafraseando a Nietzsche, el fin de los tiempos no ocurre fuera del mundo, sino dentro del corazón. Más que una superstición decimal o una necesidad del mercado, el fin del mundo supone un particular estado del espíritu, lo que menos importa es la destrucción externa, comparada con el derrumbamiento interior, con ese estado de zozobra que precede a nuestro íntimo Juicio Final” (9) (“paraphrasing Nietzsche, the end of time does not happen outside the world, but inside the heart. More than a mere superstition, the end of the world supposes a particular state of the spirit; what matters less is the external destruction when compared to the inner collapse, this state of anguish that precedes our internal Judgment Day”; 188).
- 14 Quevedo’s behaviour is the polar opposite of that of great intellectual figures like Carlos Fuentes, Octavio Paz, and José Revueltas, who openly criticized the government. For instance, Fuentes never stopped denouncing the massacre in various *revistas*, both in Mexico and abroad; Paz renounced diplomatic service in solidarity with the protesters; and Revueltas was jailed after being accused of being the brains behind the protest.
- 15 The English title comes from Alfred MacAdam’s translation of *No será la Tierra*, Open Letter, 2009. All page references in the English quotations in this section come from this edition.
- 16 In an interview entitled “Jorge Volpi: Quiero dedicarme a la música” (“I want to dedicate myself to music”), the author explained that “*No será la tierra . . . empieza como una ópera, tiene una obertura en donde se presentan los temas que se van a desarrollar, y luego son tres actos. Los personajes se desarrollan de una manera operística*” (“*Season of Ash* begins like an opera, it has an overture where the themes to be developed are presented, and then there are three acts. The characters develop in an operatic way”; 34). In the same interview, Volpi also describes the novel as a “novela rusa” (“Russian novel”; 34).

- 17 The novel is unique in terms of characters, who, as in some operas, are classified in very strict categories according to occupations (“Los científicos,” “Los economistas,” “Los ecologistas,” “Los poetas”), countries (“En Hungría,” “En Afganistán”), cities (“Chernóbil,” “San Francisco”), nationalities (“Los soviéticos,” “Los estadounidenses”), and the projects with which they are identified (“Iniciativa de defensa estratégica,” “El genoma”) (*No será la Tierra* 517–23).
- 18 Nationalism is a topic with which the narrator is well acquainted. Before moving to Moscow, he lives in Baku (now the capital of Azerbaijan), where he gets to experience it for himself. In 1988, “el pasado se volvió presente y dio inicio a la guerra” (Volpi, *No será la Tierra* 263) (“the past became present and war broke out”; 199). Consequences of *glasnost* and *perestroika* are “la exacerbación de las disputas y rencillas nacionales, aplacadas por la fuerza durante más de siete décadas” (263) (“the exacerbation of national disputes and quarrels, all of which had been held in check for more than seven decades”; 199). People are killed in various skirmishes, which only exacerbates the tensions. In his diary, he notes that “Los fantasmas pretéritos reaparecen, otra vez se instala aquí la muerte, otra vez entramos en la Historia” (265) “Ghosts of the past are reappearing. Once again we have death, once again we’re entering History”; 200). He speaks of the “virus nacionalista” (266) (“nationalist virus”; 202) that has contaminated his wife and his family.

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Belonging Beyond Borders maps the evolution of cosmopolitanism in Spanish American literature through a generational lens. Drawing on a new theoretical framework that blends intellectual studies and literary history with integrated approaches to Spanish American narrative, this book traces the evolution from aesthetic cosmopolitanism through anti-colonial nationalism to modern political cosmopolitanism.

Cosmopolitanism in Latin America has historically been associated with colonialism. In the mid-twentieth-century, authors who presented cosmopolitan narratives were harshly criticized by their nationalist peers. However, with the intensification of cultural globalization Spanish American authors have redefined cosmopolitanism, rejecting a worldview that relies on the creation of an other for the definition of the self. Instead, this new generation has both embraced and challenged global citizenship, redefining concepts to address human rights, identity, migration, belonging, and more.

Taking the work of Elena Poniatowka, Mario Vargas Llosa, and Jorge Volpi as examples, this book presents innovative scholarship across literary traditions. It shows how Spanish American authors offer nuanced understandings of national and global affiliations and identities, and untangles the strings of cosmopolitan thought and activism from those of nationalist criticism.

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