RESILIENT MEMORIES
Amerindian Cognitive Schemas in Latin American Art
ARIJ OWENEEL
# CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List of Illustrations</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Pongo’s Spirit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 1</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deep—The Dynamic Unconscious</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 2</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing—The Mediation of Memory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 3</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire—The Theater of the Mind</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 4</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discord—The Intervening Agent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 5</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Division—A Colonial Hangover</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 6</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disclosure—Elmo’s Child</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filmography</td>
<td>271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index</td>
<td>301</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ILLUSTRATIONS

1.1 Example: Schema of the concept “Egg” 8
1.2 *El Supercholo, edición 55 aniversario*, Carlos Castellanos Casanova, 2012, pen on ink, unpublished 17
1.1 *Colonialidad*, Jorge Miyagui, 2014, oil on canvas, 1.50 × 1.20 m 28
2.1 *El Señor de Burgos*. Postcard sold at Almoloya del Río in 1992 62
2.2 Piter. Still from *Angeles caídos*, short by JADAT, Peru, 2005 65
2.3 Two models of urban development in Latin America after Borsdorf et al., 2002 67
3.1 Santiago Román. Still from *Días de Santiago*, feature by Josué Méndez, Peru, 2004 98
4.1 *Patrona de América 1*, Jorge Miyagui, 2010, oil on canvas, 1.2 × 1 m 128
4.2 *Nuestra Señora de la Rebeldía 2*, Jorge Miyagui, 2013, oil on canvas, 1.4 × 1.1 m 132
4.3 Patricia and Karen. Still from *Karen llora en un bus*, feature by Gabriel Rojas Vera, Colombia, 2011 171
5.1 *Plebeya 3*, Claudia Coca, 2007, oil on canvas, 1.7 × 1.4 m 178
5.2 *Mejorando a Sarita*, Claudia Coca, 2002–13, infographics on paper, 4 times 0.29 × 0.42 m 205
ILLUSTRATIONS

5.3  *De castas y mala raza*, Claudia Coca, 2009, oil on canvas, 145 × 180 cm  218

5.4  *Entre lo dominante y lo vestigial*, Claudia Coca, 2009, oil on canvas, 1.45 × 1.45 m  219

6.1  *Buscando al hijo de Elmo*, Jorge Miyagui, 2009, oil on canvas, 1.5 × 1.2 m  224

6.2  *Mariátegui/Waiting*, Jorge Miyagui, 2008, oil on canvas, 1.5 × 1.2 m  231

6.3  Wendy Sulca. Still from *Coach*, feature by Leonardo Medel, Chile, 2016  250

6.4  *Retrato de mi hermano*, Rosmery Mamani Ventura, 2011, oil on wood, 100 × 80 cm  252
This book is a history of the present. It develops a hypothesis about the mediation of collective memory by works of art. In general, historians work with public sources. Because of its research question, this book uses as its principal sources images. The still images are painted by Peruvian artists Jorge Miyagui and Claudia Coca and by an anonymous Mexican artist in the Spanish era. Also, some stills from fiction films are discussed, as well as a well-known Peruvian comic. The moving images are fiction films made in Peru, Mexico, Chile, and Colombia. To interpret the results, historians originally had to work with auxiliary sciences. As auxiliary for historical research, scholarly disciplines like archeology, chorography, cliometrics, epigraphy, philology, or toponymy help evaluate and use historical sources. Later, other sciences were included, depending on the research topic. For example, an economic historian uses economics; a social historian might prefer sociology. This book explores a cognitive approach to memory studies and uses works from cognitive sciences to look at the workings of the mediation of collective memory.

Memory, of course, “has become one of the buzzwords in today’s humanities and social sciences.” In fact, the 2000s have witnessed a true memory boom, which created, in the words of historian Jay Winter, a generation of

In the introduction to *The Collective Memory Reader*, the editors Jeffrey Olick, Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Daniel Levy offer this explanation: "Following the decline of postwar modernist narratives of progressive improvement through an ever-expanding welfare state, nation-states turned to the past as a basis for shoring up their legitimacy. The decline of utopian visions supposedly redirected our gaze to collective pasts, which served as a repository of inspiration for repressed identities and unfulfilled claims. Without unifying collective aspirations, identity politics proliferated. And most often, these identities nursed a wound and harbored a grudge." The contemporary interest in memory, they believe, "is no mere fad," although: "In the commercial sphere, these transformations in political legitimation were supposedly matched by a commodification of nostalgia, a popularization of history, and an interest in ‘memory,’ both individual and collective. Both of the latter—individual memory and collective memory—are seen to be at risk, the former by neurological decay and sensory overload, the latter by dying generations and official denial." Nevertheless, as they conclude, memory studies have developed into "an increasingly important paradigm that unifies diverse interests across numerous disciplines, and consolidates long-standing perspectives within them, in perspicuous ways."

In exploring a cognitive approach to collective memory studies, this book focuses on the mediation of memory. Most studies agree that, in the words of literary scholar Ann Rigney, memories must swim: "As the performative aspect of the term ‘remembrance’ suggests, collective memory is constantly ‘in the works’ and, like a swimmer, has to keep moving even just to stay afloat. To bring remembrance to a conclusion is de facto already to forget." In one way or another, memories must serve the present or will be forgotten. Memory needs mediation. Explaining how this works, philosophers Andy Clark and David Chalmers also use the swimmer’s metaphor: "The extraordinary efficiency of the fish as a swimming device is partly due, it now seems, to an evolved capacity to couple its swimming behaviors to the pools of external kinetic energy found as swirls, eddies and vortices in its watery environment. These vortices include both naturally occurring ones (e.g. where water hits a rock) and self-induced ones (created by well-timed tail flaps). The fish swims by building these externally occurring processes into the very heart of

---

2. Winter, “Generation.”
4. Ibid., 5.
5. Ibid., 4.
6. Ibid., 5.
its locomotion routines.” As humans, we live in a sea of signs, they continue, created by us of course but individually experienced as an environment that envelops them from birth. The human brain—our “inside”—treats semiotic structures as reliable resources to be factored into the shaping of on-board cognitive routines. Where the fish flaps its tail to set up eddies and vortices it subsequently exploits, humans intervene in multiple semiotic systems, creating ecological enclosed structures and disturbances whose reliable presence drives their ongoing internal processes. Artifacts, words, and other semiotic devices are thus paramount among the cognitive vortices that help constitute human thought. It is not sufficient to understand communication between human agents about their beliefs and discourses; we must also understand the communication between the signs “out there” and these agents, and the role these particular signs play in constituting and recreating these beliefs and discourses themselves. One important task for these signs “out there” is to articulate between “out there” and what is “inside” in their task to mediate memory.

The exploration of a cognitive approach to collective memory studies brings us also to analyze mnemonic communities. Mnemonic communities share common memories, a common past, a common heritage. They are classified as “mnemonic” because the identities are triggered by encounters with mnemonic aids in the world, like specific artifacts, types of behavior, cultural expressions, and the recognition of being with other members of a mnemonic community. Therefore, mnemonic communities are held together by both narratives (“discourses”) and specific practices based on structured and even ritualized interactions (“doings”). No person, no group, no organization, no nation, no people can constitute an identity without memory. Memory “stands not only for the mental act of remembering,” as Amos Funkenstein famously said,9 “but also for the objective continuity of one’s name—the name of a person, a family, a tribe or a nation.” Because the present does not exist without a vision of the past, this vision or “memory”—real or imagined; or a combination of both—forms crucial ingredients of the mnemonic communities’ identities—individual or collective.10 They are the ones who swim in a sea of signs to keep the memories afloat. The sociologist Jeffrey Olick signals: “Collective memory has been used to refer to aggregated individual recollections, to official commemorations, to collective representations, and to disembodied constitutive features of shared identities; it is said to be located in

10. See, for instance, the chapters in Mediation, Remediation, and the Dynamics of Cultural Memory, edited by Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning.
dreamy reminiscence, personal testimony, oral history, tradition, myth, style, language, art, popular culture, and the built world.”

Probably, every single reference has been with good reason. But it is useful to make the concept more concrete. Changing “collective memory” to “mnemonic communities” transfers it from the “inside” of “memory” to the “out there” of the “mnemonic,” because the latter swirls and swerves by artifacts, including texts, films, and art, both triggering individuals’ memories of a certain past experience or a present-day identity and the actions that come with it. This is in line with one of the classical universals of psychologist William James, one of the leading psychologists of the late nineteenth century, published in his *Principles of Psychology* (1890): “My thinking is first and last and always for the sake of my doing.” The concept of mnemonic communities brings together the individual and the collective, the cognitive and the group. This study focuses on the interplay between them.

Mnemonic communities decide consciously or unconsciously which part of their past experiences should be remembered by individual “members” and what should be forgotten. As humans we have multiple identities, and therefore we most commonly operate in many different mnemonic communities. Some mnemonic communities are small, formed by particular events. Others are quite large and span a nation (an “imagined community”) or a people. An example of a large transnational mnemonic community is the women’s rights movement. Sometimes we have to deal with multiple memories in a conflictive way, for example when we experience a situation with participation of members of different mnemonic communities. Because of the close articulation of memory and identity, both are of course social in origin and influenced by the experiences of the mnemonic communities. Changes in one usually change the other. Due to the mnemonic communities’ specific traditions, a particular cognitive bias marks their identities. Often this bias expresses essentialized truths and representations about them and equips them with emotionally laden cognitive scripts about their “doings” in the world. Therefore, cultural memories and their subsequent cultural identities are different from the sum total of individuals’ recollections of the past or their expressions of contemporary identities. “In other words, it involves the integration of various different personal pasts into a single common past that all members of a community come to remember collectively.” Mnemonic communities bias common denominators.

Cognition, says film scholar Carl Plantinga, “simply put, is the mental activities of gaining knowledge and understanding through thought, experience, and the senses, plus the results of such activities—comprehension, intuition, insight, perception, and so on. Cognition is neither singular nor linear, with multiple cognitive processes occurring simultaneously and connected in complex ways. Neither is cognition necessarily either conscious or rational.” Occurring “beneath consciousness,” cognition is “affected by emotions and moods” and “has a firm grounding in bodily experience.” In short, making “sense of the world around us, we employ body metaphors, we gauge physiological feedback, and we are influenced by emotion,” and the audience’s “understanding of characters, narrative events and progression, and narrativeal point of view is fundamentally cognitive in nature.” A full account of cognition, Plantinga concludes, encompasses affect, the Cognitive Unconscious, and bodily and automatic processes: “We experience movies with our bodies.”

A look at the mediation of memory for mnemonic communities may demonstrate that the mediated artifacts, including texts, pictures, and moving images, are only meaningful for a limited number of people. More than often, one directive pillar of memory studies, the one on “identity politics,” is focused on minority groups, mainly seen as ethnicities. In Latin America, identity politics is concerned with the indigenous past. The indigenous in the region are known as the (formerly) colonized people of the Americas. They stand at one side of the Colonial Divide created between colonizers and colonized. Instead of ethnicities I like to use the concept of ethnotypes. Ethnotypes are based on stereotyping of “ethnically” labeled categories of Self and other in communication. Under Habsburg and Bourbon rule, the colonized were legally classified as indios—the indigenous inhabitants of Las Indias, as the Americas were known at the time. To organize their legal position properly, all over the Americas the indios were grouped together in a larger administrative and official legal community called the república de indios. I believe that their descendants today form a transnational mnemonic community that can be addressed as Amerindian.

15. Ibid.; all preceding quotes from this source, paragraphs 6, 7, and 8.
16. Ibid., paragraph 9.
17. Leerssen, “Imagology.”
The Amerindian mnemonic community includes today’s ethnotypes of indígenas, chulos, and mestizos because they share a joint history of colonization and internal colonization—and because I treat these groups as ethnotypes I write their names in italics. In their turn, indígenas constitute a transnational mnemonic community in their own right as country dwellers, protectors of forests and nature, or as victims of military powers—the latter in Peru with the chulos. Therefore, the members of the Amerindian transnational mnemonic community—or from now on simply Amerindians for short—include more than only indígenas. In fact, based on its wider transnational genealogy, I believe the chulos and mestizos are in the majority; although in many cases some anthropologists may speak of indígenas where others ethnotype them as mestizos or chulos, or even as indigenous mestizos.

This book discusses local cases that can be articulated to the transnational context to demonstrate that for indígenas, originarios, mestizos, and chulos the word Amerindian represents this type of transnational cultural memory best. The cases also highlight a series of key features that constitute the Amerindian as a mnemonic community. In short, Amerindian serves as the name for the transnational mnemonic community that shares the colonial history under Spanish rule as members of the república de indios—which are discussed later on in this book—and the history of internal colonialism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

In exploring a cognitive approach to collective memory studies, this book argues that the mediation of amerindianness or indigeneity builds on cognitive schemas, using schema theory. The Japanese psychologist Hiroko Nishida defines schemas as “generalized collections of knowledge of past experiences which are organized into related knowledge groups and are used to guide our behaviors in familiar situations.” In different scholarly fields these cognitive mental representations are also known as mental models, cultural scripts, or frames. Cognitive schemas are the building blocks of memory, using real or imagined knowledge of a class of people, objects, events, situations, and behavioral codes. They are used to act and behave. Schema theory suggests that memory consists of shared cognitive representations, including status, socialization, and relationship in the minds of individuals. The theory pro-

19. See D’Andrade, Development, 122–49. The word “Theory” here might be, as D’Andrade notes, “a little grandiose” (126n5). Reading Jean Mandler’s Stories, 1, he also prefers to be modest, and might speak of a Schema Framework. Nevertheless, a similar position can be taken toward the Evolution Theory: a coherent all-inclusive theory has not yet been developed, but step-by-step results suggest that we may be able to do so in the near future, and the term “theory” has been privileged for some time.
poses further that there is some truth in William Shakespeare’s monologue of Act II Scene VII in *As You Like It*: “All the world’s a stage / And all the men and women merely players.”

Humans are actors and any role on a stage is scripted—such scripts form parts of cognitive schemas, a script is a schema for an event. We recognize the “actors” around us, both as real-life people but also in pictures, images (moving or still), and written or published texts.

The Amerindian transnational mnemonic community may “act” like this, triggered by the cognitive schemas they share. Historically, *indígenas, cholos, mestizos*, and the like share a genetic and cultural genealogy with the descendants of former colonized *indios*. Their *amerindianess* will be articulated closely to specific cognitive schemas—a very small minority of all possible cognitive schemas—and because cognitive schemas are about behavior, the word will refer to their doing. The Amerindian will not be treated as an integrated personality, as a *being*. Personality theories tend to create discursive constructs about what people *are*. It is, however, extremely difficult to establish for academics to be sure who is in person *indígena, mestizo, or cholo*. To develop beyond set ethnotypes toward new interpretations of diversity, it might be useful to bring back into mind that before the “ethnic turn” of the late twentieth century—which entered the academic world shortly after the “linguistic turn” did—people labeled today as *indígenas* were generally called *peasants*. This classification was about what the people in question were doing. As in several countries, also in Peru their position led to legislation. What many now see as “indigenous communities” were codified as *comunidades campesinas* (peasant communities) and their inhabitants as *comuneros* (community members). Here, a specific cultural and historical memory was articulated with class relations.

Among others, Frederick C. Bartlett was among the first to take up this question of culture and memory. In his book *Remembering* (1932), Bartlett assumed that cultures are organized collectivities with shared customs, institutions, and values, of which members form “strong sentiments” around valued, institutionalized activities. These values and their expression through culture shape psychological tendencies to select certain kinds of information for remembering. Over time, cultures have assimilated knowledge. Next they constituted cognitive schemas to be able to work with reconstructive remembering. Over the past eight decades, many scholars from psychology,

linguistics, philosophy, anthropology, and sociology have adapted, improved, and developed these thoughts into a proper theory.\textsuperscript{25} “The idea is,” says the anthropologist Victor de Munck, “that the deeper a schema is internalized, the greater one self-identifies with it, and the greater the motivational force of the schema.”\textsuperscript{26} Eventually, things learned in the past by groups or cultures of people over time become part of the “natural way” of doing things. Unconsciously motivated this way, people seek to act according to the cognitive schemas in their mind. This motivation, firmly embedded in cognitive schemas, is social.\textsuperscript{27}

Although cognitive cultural schemas are actively constructed neuronal networks, the word “schema” is of course only a metaphor. Anticipating chap-


\textsuperscript{26} de Munck, \textit{Culture}, 80.

\textsuperscript{27} Literary scholar Astrid Erll makes a distinction between the cognitive as individual and the social and medial or collective levels of cultural memory; see her \textit{Memory}. In contrast, as I will try to show, I believe that the cognitive is social and the social, cognitive.
ters 3 and 4, it could be useful to discuss briefly how a schema works. My students browsing the Internet tend to come up with the Egg Schema drawn by Patricia Davis some thirty years ago (see figure I.1).\textsuperscript{28} The Egg Schema helps them imagine why this type of thought is called a schema in the first place—it is diagrammatically simplified.\textsuperscript{29} Each schema has a main category, the “slot.” When a slot is triggered, it quickly connects to a wide network. A schema is not typically activated by words, but we may draw one on a semantic base with slots for all the components, or features, included in it. Imagine that one or a combination of our senses triggers the Egg Schema: seeing one in real or an image, smelling one, hearing someone talking about eggs, feeling one. It must be stressed that each schema is unique to the person’s personal experience. What is triggered at first is the feeling or sight of its form, including the white shell, the touch, taste, or smell of its yoke, and perhaps its temperature. This is connected to several lines and slots in the schema which run from the center outwards like a drawing of a star (see figure I.1): Egg $\rightarrow$ Bird $\rightarrow$ Feathered $\rightarrow$ Winged $\rightarrow$ Warm Blooded $\rightarrow$ Aves $\rightarrow$ Vertebrate. Another line, with slots from this center outward, is Egg $\rightarrow$ Hen Cackling $\rightarrow$ Baby Chicks. This last slot is connected to other slots separately like Egg $\rightarrow$ Delicate Shell $\rightarrow$ Hatching Eggs and $\rightarrow$ Clucky Hens. Each of these slots stands at the end of another line. There is a line Egg $\rightarrow$ Supermarket: Find in Cooler $\rightarrow$ Economy, but also connected to $\rightarrow$ Price Rising; or to $\rightarrow$ Brown Eggs. The line Egg $\rightarrow$ Good to Eat is connected to $\rightarrow$ Scrambled, $\rightarrow$ Boiled and $\rightarrow$ Fried; the latter also to $\rightarrow$ Nutritious and through this one to $\rightarrow$ Contains Cholesterol and $\rightarrow$ Source of Calcium—which in turn is connected to $\rightarrow$ Hatching Eggs and $\rightarrow$ Delicate Shell. The line Egg $\rightarrow$ Easter Eggs is connected with $\rightarrow$ Warm Feelings, $\rightarrow$ Family Fun and $\rightarrow$ Colorings Eggs. Each of these slots may serve as a trigger of the entire schema as well—or each slot may trigger a new schema of its own. Triggering occurs automatically and fast, usually bringing all this to mind in an instant, but soon concentrating on the line that is most relevant.

Schematic encoding or re-encoding usually follows after experiences in or with the world around us. The Egg Schema, for instance, is triggered by what we see, smell, hear, taste, and feel. Clark and Chalmers assert that the human thinking evokes an active externalism, “based on the active role of the environment in driving cognitive processes.”\textsuperscript{30} They add: “By embracing an active externalism, we allow a much more natural explanation of all sorts of actions. It is natural to explain my choice of words on the Scrabble board, for example, as the outcome of an extended cognitive process that centrally

\textsuperscript{28} P. Davis, \textit{Cognition}, 21.
\textsuperscript{29} Bordwell, \textit{Making}, 136.
\textsuperscript{30} Clark and Chalmers, “Extended.”
involves the rearrangement of tiles on my tray. Of course, one could always try to explain my action in terms of internal processes and a long series of ‘inputs’ and ‘actions’ characterizing the interaction with an external object, but this explanation would be needlessly complex. If an isomorphic process were going on in the head, we would feel no urge to characterize it in this cumbersome way. In a very real sense, the re-arrangement of tiles on the tray is not part of action; it is part of thought.”

Feasibly this means that our thinking includes a kind of extended phenotype. In biology, phenotypes are the outward, physical manifestation of an organism; anything “in the world” that is part of the observable structure, function, or behavior of a living organism. That extended phenotype is essential for the evolution of the organism and must therefore be part of the organism itself. For humans, the creation and reading of signs might fit into this modeling, language in particular. Signs are embedded in cognitive schemas and probably co-evaluated. This means that although they are learned from others, the cognitive schemas people live with may have very ancient origins indeed. Once it is recognized that the environment plays such a crucial role in constraining the “phenotypic” character that a cognitive system evolves and develops, it should be agreed that extended cognition is no simple add-on extra but the core cognitive process itself. Because we could regard all remembrance as a social activity, recollection from memory improves when several persons participate. A single person usually retrieves less information from personal memory than two or more people do.

Perceiving and thinking in terms of cognitive schemas enables people as individuals and as groups to process large amounts of information swiftly and economically. Instead of having to perceive and remember all the details of each new person, object, or situation someone encounters, they are recognized as an already encoded cognitive schema, so that combining the encoding of this likeliness with their most distinctive features is sufficient. Cognitive schemas are set, stored, reset, and maintained by encoding and decoding. This occurs rapidly, automatically, and unconsciously. It works within an experienced world of real or assumed agreement about the meanings of words, gestures, and other signifiers, or signs in general. Although the number of

31. Ibid.
32. See Dawkins, Extended.
33. Deacon, Symbolic.
35. The price to be paid of course is distortion, if the schema used to encode it does not fit well. Research over the past decades has confirmed Bartlett’s suggestion. In her college note, “Schema,” Widmayer mentions interesting examples and some links that can be followed easily.
schemas is infinite, some may be easily foregrounded. Written down or discussed, cultural meaning or the implication of a hidden or special significance in behavior, works of art, texts, semiotic signs, and the like, is usually indeed metaphorical. Metaphors are cognitive functions that serve to create and extend structure in experience and understanding, which are culturally embedded, humanly embodied, and imaginatively structured. And so is meaning: “A theory of meaning,” says philosopher Mark Johnson, “is a theory of how we understand things.” And: “We cannot understand the nature of meaning, therefore, without a theory of understanding that explains how we can experience a shared, public world.” The event schema or script contains encoded sequences of events in particular situations, places, or between groups of people—believed likely to occur and used to guide our behavior in familiar situations. That is the reason we may recognize complexes of local schemas as the culture people inherit and may describe these as “living” at a certain spot in space and time.

3

In view of the broad scope of this book, it seems best to restrict our scope from the Amerindian mnemonic community in general to only a few cognitive schemas that “swim in their sea of signs.” I suggest beginning with two short examples from the Latin American corpus of cultural texts. Therefore, first, recall the well-known short story by Peruvian writer José María Arguedas about an Andean pongo. Arguedas had introduced the story in 1965 as a tale told to him in Lima by an Andean comunero “from Qatqa or Qashqa” in the Quispicanchis District of Cusco, who had learned it from an old comunero from Umutu (Junín). Retelling the tale, Arguedas pictured a humble man, one of the serfs of a hacienda in the Paucartambo area in Cusco, who offered himself to his master. The humble man had to perform the obligation of pongo

36. Fiske, “Thinking”; Hogg and Vaughan, Social, 49; Atkinson et al., Hilgard’s, 598–600; Hilton and von Hippel, “Stereotypes,” 240, 248–51; Kunda and Thagard, “Forming”; Spears et al., eds., Social; Nishida, “Cognitive.” 37. M. Johnson, Body, 176. 38. Ibid., 175–76. 39. Even the experience of illness may be conceptualized as schematic. Hawai’ian psychologists Jeanne Edman and Velma Kameoka have showed how event schemas exist that provide information pertaining to illness events. Illness schemas, they write, “can be viewed as mental representations of the illness concept.” Illness is the interpretation of disease, and a person’s illness schema is the “conceptualized link” between disease and illness. And so is cure. See Edman and Kameoka, “Cultural,” 252.
or household service. It was a man of small, frail stature. In front of all other
hacienda workers, the hacendado received him, laughing: “What are you? A
person or something else?” The hacendado checked his hands and ordered
him to clean the place of garbage. That was his task anyway, and he did it well.
However, the pongo always had frozen eyes, a slight look of horror on his face.
Others thought his heart must have been full of sadness. Furthermore, quiet
and obedient, the pongo rarely spoke to anyone. Now and then, he only said:
“Yes, papacito, yes, mamacita.” Probably because of this humble attitude, the
hacendado began humiliating him in front of all the other workers, especially
at dusk around the daily religious service in the hacienda house—the casco or
casa-hacienda. He forced the pongo to bark, or to walk around on his knees.
Apparently the pongo had learned to run like the small dogs of the puna. The
others would look and say their Ave Marías quietly, with a cold wind in their
hearts. In the end, the pongo was hardly ever among them, there in the casco;
he would never say his own Hail Marys in the hacienda chapel.

However, one afternoon the pongo suddenly asked permission to speak. The
hacendado could not believe his ears. The little man told him that he had
dreamed that the two of them had died. They had been standing naked before
Saint Francis, next to each other. The saint had observed them closely and
intensively. The pongo had felt that the saint had recognized the hacendado
as a rich and powerful man. “And you?” the hacendado asked. The pongo
answered that he did not know, because he could not judge his own worth.
The saint had asked some angels to come forth, the pongo continued. The
audience of indígenas listened, worried, with increased terror. What would
be the end of this tale? The pongo told that one angel returned with a golden
cup filled with the most delicate and translucent honey. Another angel cov-
ered the hacendado with it. “In the splendor of the heavens,” the pongo told
the hacendado, “your body shone as if made of transparent gold.” “That is
the way it must be,” the hacendado replied. But what happened to the pongo
in that dream? The most ordinary angel brought a gasoline can filled with
human excrement. A very humble, old angel covered the pongo with it. “In
the midst of the heavenly light,” the pongo continued, “I stank and was filled
with shame.” “Just as it should be!” crowed the master. Was that the end? No.

40. Based on Arguedas, Sueño del pongo, and “Pongoq mosqoynin.” “The indio failed to
keep his promise to visit me again,” Arguedas explained, “but it remained almost engraved in
my memory.” (I left the word indio untranslated: “El indio no cumplió su promesa de volver,
pero ella quedó casi copiada en mi memoria.”) After the first publication in 1965, the story
was reprinted in Chile in 1969; and in Arguedas’s Obras Completas in 1983. Several editions
followed, including the well-known translated version published in The Peru Reader by Orin
Starn, Carlos Iván Degregori, and Robin Kirk in 1995 and 2005; English quotes are from the
For a very long time, Saint Francis looked at the two men before him: the hacendado covered with golden honey, the pongo with human excrement. Finally the saint said, “Now, lick each other’s bodies slowly, for all eternity.” And an angel was entrusted to make sure that the saint’s will was carried out, forever and ever.

What does the “Pongo’s Dream” tell us? The story is about a rigid order victimized by the internal colonialism that still prevailed in many parts of Peru around the 1960s. “But the denouement,” the editors conclude, “where the world turns upside down [. . .], suggests the existence of a spirit of independence and opposition [. . .].””41 Elaborating on the author’s words, the editors of the Peru Reader introduce Arguedas as a “modern Quechua man,” who was interested not just in Andean traditions but above all in questions of migration, modernity, and cultural pluralism. In his own introduction to the story, Arguedas claimed that despite some “home-grown” elements (of his “propia cosecha” or his “own harvest”),42 the “Pongo’s Dream” was a widely known Andean Quechua folktale. Nevertheless, after talking to the anthropologist Oscar Núñez del Prado in Cusco and the painter Emilio Rodríguez Larrain in Rome (Italy), he had realized that there were different versions. Therefore, he was not certain that the story was an original Quechua tale. Expressing the necessity of creating a literature in Quechua, Arguedas wanted it published in that language for its literary, social, and linguistic value.43 Arguedas suggests with his texts that if we look for a schema in art, articulated to the Amerindian transnational mnemonic community, we will find it as a “spirit of independence and opposition.”

That a Quechua literature hardly existed at the time was unfortunate in the light of its extensive oral tradition. The written version of the “Pongo’s Dream” should reflect the spoken one, which meant the inclusion of loan words from Spanish and some linguistic hybrids. Contrary to a purist’s approach, Arguedas believed that the adoption of Spanish ways of expression was “not negative,”44 because this reflected the language as a modern and living instrument. The written form of Quechua presents its particular style, demonstrating that it still maintains and “defends triumphantly” all its “mysterious characteristics of being alive.”45 Arguedas saw the dissemination and partly creation of Quechua literature as an important task for himself. Accepting the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega Award in October 1968, he told his audience that the wall between the

41. Arguedas, “Pongo’s,” 258 or 273; italics added.
42. Arguedas, “Pongoq,” 125.
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid., 126.
45. Ibid.
urban *white* culture of cities like Lima, Arequipa, and Cusco and the Andean world should be demolished. Apparently, he saw the two worlds being able to coexist next to each other and himself as an example of this: talking and writing happily in both Spanish and Quechua. The virtual wall between the two worlds of the Colonial Divide “should have been destroyed,” Arguedas continues, “because the copious streams [of wisdom and art] from the two nations could have and should have been united.”

He also saw no reason why “the conquered nation should renounce its soul (even if only formally appearing to do so) and take on the soul of the conquerors, that is to say, that it should become acculturated.” Next, Arguedas famously expressed: “Yo no soy un aculturado,” “I am not acculturated.”

Interestingly, the pongo’s “spirit of independence and opposition” is not simply found in the denouement where the world turns upside down. This would mean a “colonization of the imaginary,” especially by the missionaries of the Roman Catholic Church. We realize that the pongo plays a role, “formally appearing” to believe in the teachings of the Church. His tale is an act of resistance in words the hacendado understands only too well. And if we realize that Arguedas was convinced that the “conquered nation” had not renounced its soul—only playing a role that it did: “even if only formally appearing to do so”—Arguedas denied also the acculturation of the Quechua-speaking nation he knew so well. They would even reach out to the other side of the Colonial Divide: “Being here [in Peru] and imitating others would turn out to be rather shameful. In technology [the *whites*] will surpass us and dominate us, for how long we do not know, but in art we can already oblige them to learn from us and we can do it without even budging from right here.”

The second text is a popular comic from mid-twentieth-century Peru. A little earlier than the pongo had appeared on the stage, another character had arrived in the *limeña* mind. The inhabitants of Peru’s capital city could read every Sunday in the supplement of the major daily published in their city about Supercholo. Originally created on November 3, 1957, by Austrian immigrant Victor Honigman as illustrator and Francisco Miro Quesada Cantuarias a.k.a. Diodoros Kronos, Supercholo was an *indio*, an impoverished and simple

---

47. Ibid.; italics added.
rural dweller, speaking a poor and childish Spanish, and traveling with his llama Chaccha. The first Supercholo looked a lot like the pongo. His adventures were published as “El Supercholo: una historieta peruana para todos los peruanos” (“The Supercholo: A Peruvian Comic for All Peruvians”) in *El Dominical* until 1966. The tone was comical but the idea was rooted in an indigenist and nationalist background. A second series was published between 1985 and 1989, illustrated by Antonio Negreiros in an even more childish style. The last version of the Supercholo comic—see figure I.2—was to be published first as “El reencuentro con el Supercholo” or “A Reunion with Supercholo,” also entitled “El Regreso del Supercholo” or “The Return of Supercholo” in a sequence of one page a week in the Sunday supplement *El Dominical* of the daily Lima newspaper *El Comercio*. Supercholo was now portrayed by illustrator Carlos Castellanos Casanova. The illustrator had received some broad ideas about the story he needed to develop, and on the basis of this he wrote a script. Castellanos was free to modulate the characters in his own way. Because there are relatively few Peruvian comics, he chose to imagine his characters as Peruvians: he designed them as urban *indígenas*, transforming Supercholo from the *indio* to the *cholo* because Castellanos refused to make a caricature of an Andean boy.

The meaning of terms like *indios*, *indígenas*, *mestizos*, or *cholos* depends on the context in which they are used—by whom and to whom. In Peru, the *cho-*

---


51. The term *cholo* is also known in the United States and Mexico, where it has connotation with being a gang member or being “filth.” In Mexico, a *xolo* is a dog; “xoloi tzcuintli” is a dog with no hair. Also: Nugent, *Laberinto*, 34.
los are indígenas who are not seen as straightforwardly “indigenous” anymore: they are, for instance, modern, new, progressive, urbanized, and globalized but still connected to their roots. In contemporary anthropological language we may understand them as mestizo indígenas. The cholos are the children of a New Peru, almost in the sense Arguedas would have liked. Indeed, the migrants of Andean origins who arrived in Lima since the 1970s usually self-identified increasingly as cholos. At the time, the “cholo” as a political and ethnic issue lay on the table when Supercholo returned in the press. It is interesting to realize that the 1995–98 years fell in the period of the authoritarian presidency of Alberto Fujimori (1990–2000). Fujimori, who had recently won re-election in 1995 with almost two-thirds of the votes, had sought the “cholo vote,” whatever he meant by that. Soon after the inauguration, however, things turned bad for the president because of allegations of corruption and abuses of violence: Peruvians demanded more freedom of speech. Fujimori was succeeded by Alejandro Toledo (in office: 2001–06), who had actively campaigned as El Cholo, both during the 1994 campaign, which he lost, and the one in 2000. Generally, Toledo is seen as a person of Andean descent, born into an impoverished family of Quechua-speaking peasants. In this atmosphere of incipient cholo empowerment at the end of a time of war and authoritarian politics, Castellanos’s Supercholo shared this national Andean heritage. He had his family and a few friends in the Andes, most of his readers in the city.

Castellanos’s version of Supercholo appeared between October 1995 and November 1998 in 51 pages. His protagonist now spoke an excellent Spanish and was very intelligent. In the comic, Supercholo was known as a true superhero with incredible powers by all kinds of people whom we may classify as aliens. They needed him and his friend Juanito Pumasoncco, also known as Capitán Intrépido or Captain Fearless, to help them out. Juanito is a young Andean shepherd and a master in the lethal arts. Reading the comic today, we learn from the story that the “Super” and his dog Aljo have been in outer space for a few years, accompanying Juanito. The readers of Castellanos’s comic are informed that the cholos are in power. Invited by the people of the planet Geos, Supercholo had traveled to its capital city, Cosmopolis. But he has unexpectedly returned to Earth on a very secret mission. Wandering the puna highlands near Huancayo looking for him, Juanito’s parents soon meet him. Playing the quena (an Andean flute), Supercholo has been traveling with llamas, vicuñas, a puma, and a condor through the highlands. He tells

---

52. Reminiscent of de la Cadena’s Indigenous Mestizos, but closer to the indígena than the mestizo—however we may measure this.
Juanito’s parents that he has returned from a mission to pass through a black hole with Juanito. The two heroes were fighting an appalling dictator called Deinos, the ruler of the planet Megas. In Cosmopolis, a multicultural and well-developed Western type of city, Supercholo is given a hero’s reception and a few white girls wonder whether Supercholo has a girlfriend; see figure I.3. Of course, Supercholo and Captain Fearless triumph in the end. Geos and the entire universe are saved. The story ends with major festivities. Captain Fearless and Supercholo, the two Andean astronauts, were the great heroes of this adventure. The fate of the multicultural planet of Geos, and our own planet Earth of course, had been in their capable and valiant hands. Courage, cleverness, and wisdom had been their major assets. The Peruvian readers could be proud of them, and their “race.” Castellanos’s Supercholo takes down the Colonial Divide, as if Arguedas’s wall between the urban white culture and the Andean world was effectively demolished in a true “spirit of independence.” The world of Supercholo is a multicultural Peru, with a prominent role for the Andean hero.

The Pongo and Supercholo stand at the extremes of a dichotomy. This suggests that their spirit of independence and opposition may indeed be mapped
between attitudes of shy-but-smart (Pongo) and self-confident (Supercholo). Also significant is that these two examples are taken from different historical periods. The Pongo’s spirit was independent and oppositional in a time of deep discrimination against the Andean population. The Andeans in Peru were set aside as secondary citizens; at the time scholars, journalists, and politicians argued that they had to be “civilized.” Although the Pongo’s situation is still recognizable for many Andeans today, the Supercholo operates in a time when the social, economic, and cultural gaps with the white upper classes—Euro-Peruvian—are nevertheless slowly shrinking, as if we witness a development from neocolonial Pongo to the Supercholo hero of our times. What the two stories immanently share is the feeling that the attitude of independence of opposition is deeply rooted in the Andean mind, and not simply as an isolated cognitive schema but articulated to the complex of cognitive schemas that motivate Andean Amerindian action and behavior. Cognitive schemas are encoded in the neuronal network of the brain, from working memory (including short-term memory) to long-term memory (deep memory). Because they work unconsciously (out of consciousness), we look at a series or complexes of cognitive schemas as forming the building stones of something we may metaphorically label the Cognitive Unconscious. If we can identify a series of Amerindian cognitive schemas, shared memories, operating within specific mnemonic communities, there is a ground to tentatively speak of an Amerindian Cognitive Unconscious. I believe that the Pongo and Supercholo were informed by this Amerindian Cognitive Unconscious. Among other things, in this book I further discuss the gridiron pattern of urban planning, the intervening agent operating in cyclical time-frames, the idea of nondefeat, and a kind of disregard as resistance to ethnotyping.

We all know what I mean with the notion “Unconscious”: many of us, perhaps even all of us, have experiences about actions that seem to have been guided out of conscious will, being guided by unconscious forces. Some believe that these could have been guided by a kind of homunculus, an entity that knows how to hide from Consciousness but guides our behavior. In his overview of the free will and the science of the brain, Who’s in Charge (2011), cognitive neuroscientist Michael Gazzaniga affirms that many of us think we indeed believe this: “Do you remember the telling scene in the movie Men in Black, when a corpse is undergoing an autopsy?” he asks us.53 Followed by: “The face popped open only to reveal the underlying brain machinery, and right there was an extraterrestrial-looking homunculus pulling levers to make it all work. It was the ‘I,’ the ‘Self,’ the phenomenal center and take-charge we

53. Gazzaniga, Who’s, 43.
all think we have. Hollywood captured it perfectly, and we all believe in it even though we may understand that that is not at all how it works. Men in Black was a 1997 film; in 2015 Hollywood Pixar Animation Studios produced Inside Out, a computer-animated comedy drama, basically set in the mind of a young girl. The unconscious agents here guiding the girl’s behavior and actions are five personified emotions: Anger, Disgust, Fear, Joy, and Sadness.

The coming chapters offer an investigation into a series of cognitive schemes as mediators of the Amerindian Cognitive Unconscious. However, a first disclaimer is in order, even one that warrants an entire chapter. The idea of the Unconscious is still very much associated with psychoanalysis and the notions of Sigmund Freud. A few years ago, writing a critical evaluation of psychoanalysis in film criticism—Freudian Fadeout (2012)—I came to agree with the general tone of Freud history that the theories of the doctor from Vienna do not work and do not explain, perhaps as a consequence of not being stooled on proper academic work. The problem is that psychoanalysts in general tend to believe the Freudian legend, fabricated by Freud himself around 1914 and confirmed and disseminated by biographers like Ernest Jones, Peter Gay, and Élisabeth Roudinesco to justify his writings and the organizational politics within the Freudian movement. For that matter, Freud’s self-analysis especially served institutional politics: “The self-analysis, always described by Freud’s biographers as heroic, unprecedented and superhuman, is at the core of the Freudian legend.”

However: “The heroic self-analysis never took place—or at least, it never took place in the manner in which it has been recounted. What transpired was a retrospective construction, aimed at immunising psychoanalysis from conflicts within it. It was a legend, but one with a very precise function: to silence opponents, to end the mutual diagnoses and to reestablish the asymmetry of interpretations in Freud’s favour. To anyone who objected to the arbitrariness of his interpretations, he could now oppose his privileged, solitary and incomparable experience of the unconscious.”

And: “the myth of the immaculate self-analysis had already taken root and become embedded and enshrined in the literature of psychoanalysis and spread to other disciplines, including in figures as sophisticated as [Jacques] Derrida and [Paul] Ricoeur.”

54. Ibid.
56. Ibid., 20, reference to the work of Henri Ellenberger; italics in original.
57. Ibid., 54.
58. Ibid., 256.
As these quotes attest, anyone interested in the Freudian edifice should at least consult the particularly well-researched and well-argued history of psychoanalysis by Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen and Sonu Shamdasani, *The Freud Files* (2012). Throughout their book, Borch-Jacobsen and Shamdasani discuss three key elements of the legend: “the peremptory declaration of the revolutionary and epochal character of psychoanalysis [completely new ideas and concepts], the description of the ferocious hostility and irrational ‘resistances’ which it gave rise to [everyone in the university and the clinics refused to recognize psychoanalysis], the insistence on the ‘moral courage’ [of Freud during his self-analysis].”\(^{59}\) Moreover, as with most legends, the structure is open, elements of it can change, specific ideas or concepts can be abandoned and be kept under wraps, others can be added, making it difficult to grasp in total. As teasers to read *The Freud Files*, a few key conclusions:

The Freudian legend is not an anecdotal or propagandist supplement to psychoanalytic theory. On the contrary, it is the theory itself. Questioning the Freudian legend leads to questioning the status of psychoanalysis itself.\(^{60}\)

The legend of the immaculate conception of psychoanalysis played the role of epistemological immunization against internal as well as external critiques.\(^{61}\)

The legend maintained the identity of the movement, portraying its mythic independence from and superiority over all other psychological and psychiatric theories.\(^{62}\)

Ultimately, the legend of Freud’s self-analysis was a means to justify the argument from authority.\(^{63}\)

And as we know now: none of it is true.

Nothing new here, of course, were it not for the popularity of Freudian notions among the so-called Decolonialists—the Proyecto Modernidad/Colonialidad or Modernity/Coloniality Project—which began operating during a conference in Caracas, Venezuela, organized by the sociologist Edgardo Lander in 1998. Among the participants were Walter Mignolo, Aníbal Quijano, Enrique Dussel, Arturo Escobar, and Fernando Coronil, who became the

---

59. Ibid., 12–24, quote from 12.
60. Ibid., 23.
61. Ibid., 119.
62. Ibid., 119.
63. Ibid., 54, 119.
core members of the M/C Project. One central idea defended by the project’s major spokesperson, Walter Mignolo, is to bring the “repressed culture” back into the Latin American Consciousness. The “repressed” here is the egalitarian indigenous community, living in harmony with nature. To underscore this, Mignolo frequently refers to the work of Enrique Dussel, whose work is firmly rooted in Freudian psychoanalysis. However, as I argue throughout the book, I confidently believe that this impedes academic and political progress.

Therefore, before answering the question how an Amerindian Cognitive Unconscious may operate, I need the first chapter to move around the Freudian quagmire. Nonetheless, as is well known in Latin America Studies, the foundations of the communauté indigène (“indigenous community”) may indeed be an important feature of the Amerindian Cognitive Unconscious. My attitude here is strongly inspired by what the radical Bolivian sociologist and Aymara activist Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui recently stated in a keynote speech at the Sociology Conference at the University of Buenos Aires (2016), Argentina: “We are all indios as colonized peoples. Decolonizing one’s Self is to stop being indio and to become people [gente]. People is an interesting word because it is said in very different ways in different languages.”

She also spoke against the term originario (native): “It is a word that divides, that isolates the indios, and, above all, negates their condition as the majority so that they recognize themselves through a series of rights that restricts them to being a minority from the state’s point of view.” As I discuss in chapter 5,

---

64. Dussel, Ética and Filosofía. Dussel, born an Argentine but naturalized Mexican, is a philosopher and theologian. Inspired by the theology of liberation—or, indeed, by the “liberation” in the Freudian sense as “liberation” from repressed thoughts—he tries to systemize theoretical tools to substitute Hellenocentrism ontological Eurocentrism for a philosophy inspired by authors from around the globe. As most philosophers do, Dussel builds his system on the shoulders of previous philosophers. These predecessors include almost all well-known European philosophers and some theologians, and Freud—who never saw himself as a philosopher but as a therapist. Reading volume 6/III of the series Filosofía ética latinoamericana, on De la erótica a la pedagógica (1977) I found it difficult to understand why this is Latin American philosophy. Dussel does not question the universality of Freud’s “discoveries.” He mentioned his name in consent 74 times in 168 pages. Also, hardly any historical or anthropological research on Latin American communities is being mentioned and certainly not discussed. Although Dussel questions the universality of these philosophies, he maps his philosophies among his European predecessors. For example: Mignolo, “On Pluriversality,” October 20, 2013, http://waltermignolo.com/on-pluriversality/ (accessed 4/16).

this approach is similar to the work of the British philosopher Kenan Malik. Consequently, I return to the Amerindian community and the decomposition of colonial structures at the end of the book.

As said, today the transnational Amerindian mnemonic community stands at the formerly colonized side of the Colonial Divide. Its memory consists of cognitive schemas—which are unconscious. Studying these schemas opens the doors to the features of Amerindian memory, or, differently voiced, the Amerindian Unconscious. It begins with the draft of a theory of art as a mediator of that memory in the second chapter. The book takes up the challenge of Arguedas’s dictum that Amerindian memory in art “can already oblige” people “to learn” from it by studying cultural products. It locates the “spirit of independence and opposition” in the production of visual art rooted in an Amerindian Cognitive Unconscious. The hypothesis about its workings is the implication of the cognitive approach. However, although chapter 2 builds the foundation for the rest of the book, the theory is further clarified throughout the other chapters of the book with additional discussions as its building stones. Due to a lack of space—only a limited number of cultural products can be discussed of course—the Latin American Amerindian Cognitive Unconscious considered throughout the book is a hypothesis, based on a few specific memory survivals that have been passed on from one generation to the next over many centuries; but not without adopting new elements constantly—referred to as amerindianization—without affecting their core features. In the second chapter the theory is discussed, and illustrated with an analysis of a few short fiction films made by a youth organization based in the outskirts of Lima, the Peruvian collective JADAT. Furthermore, a folk painting is discussed; a popular anonymous Mexican colonial work El Señor de Burgos (“The Christ of Burgos”) presenting the audience with both Christ at the cross and the pre-Hispanic Face of the Earth. Another typical deep memory that was passed down the generations by telling stories and simply following traditional building instructions as cultural customs in common is the gridiron city planning. Chapter 3 offers more building stones of a theory on the Amerindian Cognitive Unconscious, using the metaphor of the theater of the mind. From a single case, one of Peruvian artist Jorge Miyagui’s paintings about the remembrances of the Internal Armed Conflict combined with Josué Méndez’s feature film Días de Santiago (Peru, 2004; Days of Santiago), I discuss how resilient cognitive schemas can be; and also, as in the latter case, how they may cause troubles for the film’s protagonist.

66. Malik, Strange.
Chapter 4 focuses on one interesting feature that may have rooted as a cognitive schema in the Latin American transnational mnemonic community: a typical way stories are told following ancient conventions. Many stories told in the Amerindian mnemonic community are built on cyclical schemas, beginning where the protagonist experiences a deterioration of life that seems unstoppable. In this schema, a step-by-step downhill can only be stopped by an intervening agent and turned into something positive. The intervening agent comes with feelings of increased deception, depression, frustration, and anger. It brings hope, perhaps even the confidence in improvement. Every depressed, frustrated, and angry person may also feel hope and expectations at the same time, because there will be an intervening agent; and if it does not show up soon enough, the protagonists may compel it by intervening themselves. This has happened in Chiapas in 1994, where a Maya army of Faceless Warriors acted out an intervention that was to improve the life of their communities. As the Zapatistas show, the intervening agent can also be a group of people and the intervention is to bring the “others,” for example the community, in movement. In short, the cycle commands at least someone to do something. This is also a good reason to include the Mexican films Y tu mamá también (2001) and Temporada de patos (2004), the Chilean feature La nana (2009), and Karen llora en un bus (2011) from Colombia as typical cases here. Also Miyagui’s paintings fit, not only for a discussion of deep memories but also because he unwittingly styled his art as a Japanese butsudán—another intervening agent.

Discussing the work of Miyagui, we may note that he builds on the embodied memory of local activists who brought their communities into movement. His work stimulates the viewer not only to recognize the crucial role of these local heroes but also to consider acting like an intervening agent themselves. Being moved by such agents is a crucial consequent of the art as agent in culture. This theme stands central in chapter 5, dedicated to paintings by Peruvian artist Claudia Coca. She comments on both the colonial legacy of Casta paintings and contemporary race relations. The chapter offers a possibility to work with an important cognitive instrument in human thinking: ethnotyping. The chapter also takes the analysis a step further: in all previous chapters the key feature constituting the Amerindian mnemonic community in Latin America was its colonial and neocolonial (1830–1990) history. In the final chapter, some work of the Peruvian YouTube artist Wendy Sulca is included, as is the work of Bolivian pastellist Rosmery Mamani Ventura. That chapter of course contains a discussion to bring the lines followed in the book together but also to take an extra step. It seems that if the “spirit of independence and opposition” can indeed be articulated to contemporary movements, a wider
view on commoning is inevitable. There and then, at the end of the book, the “politics of memory” arrives on the screen, and a plea to include the relevant cognitive schemas in that discussion because they constitute the drives and motivation of the Amerindian mnemonic community.

In all, after the wider aspects of the theory, these last chapters zoom in on a few specific examples because of the general question about the workings of the Amerindian Unconscious posed by the M/C Project. These cases circle around the agency provided by the paintings by Miyagui, Coca, and Mamani Ventura; by the fiction films of JADAT; and the films from Mexico, Colombia, and Chile just mentioned, as well as the Peruvian Días de Santiago (2004). In the interest of thematic unity, Peruvian art is somewhat privileged. Because the study has a modest and tentative approach, the selection is no doubt one-sided and limited to mainly products of visual culture like paintings and fiction films that demonstrate the workings of these schemas. In every chapter, the cultural production is contextualized within the society in which it is rooted. This brings me, finally, to a few disclaimers. The paintings and fiction films discussed in this book are used as sources for investigating Amerindian cognitive schemas—as their agents. Therefore, and in line with the cognitive approach, the book does not consider cultural products as “cultural texts.”

Neither are the paintings and fiction films treated as symptoms of hidden elements of some Latin American “indigenous” culture in a wider sense. This is not a book about contemporary “indigenous” art or filmmaking. Finally, looking at the context of the encoding process of the cultural products, this book avoids speculations about the role of cultural consumers. In all, the chapters below argue that because older memories are also the realities of every new generation—who let them “swim”—every ancient memory subjectively singled out is also always very modern and belonging to the present.

A spirit of independence and opposition. Colombian Nobel laureate Gabriel García Márquez realized where it came from. His short novel Del amor y otros demonios (1994) is based on the legend his grandmother told him as boy about “a little twelve-year-old marquise with hair that trailed behind her like a bridal train, who had died of rabies caused by a dog bite and was venerated in the

67. Many cultural scholars focus on the production of cultural meaning as metaphorical and textual and are concerned with a semiotic, narrative, and rhetoric look at the world, which allows them to “read” it. For a discussion of Discursive Idealism, see Aldama’s Why. But see also: Korsten, Lessen, 302–5.
towns along the Caribbean coast for the many miracles she had performed.”

In the book the novelist tells about copper-haired Sierva María and the bookish priest Father Cayetano Delaura, who amid the lush, coastal tropics of eighteenth-century Cartagena de Indias were caught in a chaste, ill-fated love affair. The girl, much younger than the priest, was believed to be possessed by Satan and hence, by order of the local bishop, incarcerated in a convent, much to the dislike of the convent’s abbess. One day, the new viceroy paid a short visit to the convent. Witnessing the girl, he could hardly believe the accusations. He went to the bishop to discuss the matter. The bishop is gifted with skeptical wisdom: “By the end of the visit, it became evident that the Viceroy’s greatest interest was the case of Sierva María. For its own sake, he explained, and for the peace of mind of the Abbess, whose suffering had moved him to pity. ‘We still lack definitive proof, but the acta of the convent tell us that the poor creature is possessed by the demon,’ said the Bishop. ‘The Abbess knows this better than we do.’ ‘She thinks you have fallen into a snare of Satan,’ said the Viceroy. ‘Not we alone, but all of Spain,’ said the Bishop. ‘We have crossed the ocean sea to impose the law of Christ, and we have done so with Masses and processions and festivals for patron saints, but not in the souls of men.’”

Not in the souls of men.

---

68. García Márquez, Of Love, 3.

69. Ibid., 102.