HISPANIC STUDIES
review

Textual Confrontation in Cajamarca in Pablo Neruda's *Canto general* and Jorge Enrique Adoum's *Los cuadernos de la tierra*

Jason Pettigrew
Middle Tennessee State University

Abstract

This study examines how the Chilean poet Pablo Neruda, in his *Canto general* (1950), and the Ecuadorean Jorge Enrique Adoum, in *Los cuadernos de la tierra* (1963), recreate the famous cultural encounter in Cajamarca, Peru in 1532. Drawing on Gérard Genette's theories on hypertextuality in *Palimpsests* and on Hayden White's ideas about how historiography mirrors the writing of fiction, I explore how these two poets incorporate, adapt, and alter historical discourse in their poetic reimagining of the confrontation. I analyze the authors' selection and interpretation of events and their characterization of historical figures, such as Francisco Pizarro and Atahualpa, demonstrating that both attempt to raise the historical consciousness of their readers by presenting a counter-hegemonic vision that emphasizes the disastrous consequences of the conquest for native groups.

Antonio Cornejo Polar has described the famous confrontation of cultures in Cajamarca, Peru in 1532 as a "catástrofe . . . [que] marcó para siempre la memoria del pueblo indio y quedó emblematizada en la muerte de Atahuallpa: hecho y símbolo de la destrucción no sólo de un imperio sino del orden de un mundo, aunque estos significados no fueran comprendidos socialmente más que con el correr de los años" (50). Despite such historical importance, many of the specific details of what happened at Cajamarca are disputable, considering that the chronicles and subsequent historiography present us with contradictions. We do know that in November of 1532, Atahualpa and a group of soldiers met with Pizarro and his men in Cajamarca Plaza. Friar Vicente de Valverde read the Requirement,[1] asking Atahualpa to yield, with the help of an indigenous translator, Felipe. Valverde spoke to Atahualpa about Christianity, showing him a breviary, which was somehow dropped or thrown to the ground. The Spanish troops attacked and captured Atahualpa, later executing him in 1533. During the second half of the twentieth century, the Chilean Pablo Neruda (1904-1973) and the Ecuadorean Jorge Enrique Adoum (1926-2009) published their own poeticized versions of this encounter in Cajamarca. The third section of Neruda's *Canto general* (1950), "Los conquistadores," chronicles the Spanish conquest of the entire continent, while the third part of Adoum's *Los cuadernos de la tierra* (1963), originally published separately as *Dios trajo la sombra* (1960), focuses exclusively on the conquest of the Andean region. This study explores how the two poets incorporate, adapt, and alter historical discourse in their poetic reimagining of events, focusing on the specific poems that recount the events at Cajamarca Plaza and the aftermath. Both authors attempt to raise the historical consciousness

1 The Spanish Requirement of 1513, or the *requerimiento*, was a text that the Spanish explorers read before native groups in order to take possession of their territory and require, with a threat of violence, their subjugation to the Catholic Church, the Pope, and the King of Spain and his representatives. See Lienhard (1990) for an analysis of the political, legal, and religious functions of the document and of the almost magical power that the conquistadors attributed to the written word, an attitude which he refers to as "el fetichismo de la escritura" (28) in a "sociedad grafocéntrica" (29), contrasted to the predominately oral tradition of the continent's indigenous societies.

of their readers by offering a counter-hegemonic vision of the conquest of the Andean region. Incorporating the theories of Gérard Genette and Hayden White on hypertextuality and historiography, respectively, this paper analyzes the authors' selection and interpretation of events and their characterization of historical figures, demonstrating that both present a Manichean vision that emphasizes the disastrous consequences of the Spanish conquest for native groups.

1. Neo-epic Poetry, Hypertextuality, and Historiography

It is worth noting that Neruda's *Canto general* (1950) represented a new direction in Hispanic American poetry, which Alberto Julián Pérez has described as "poesía neo-épica post-vanguardista" (197). According to Pérez,

> [l]a irrupción de la historia en el discurso poético dejó abierto el camino de la poesía hispanoamericana para concretar un proyecto historicista de inspiración épica, o neo-épica, postergado desde la época en que el Parnaso y el Simbolismo hispanoamericano (nuestro Modernismo) interrumpieran el desarrollo de la poesía romántica de tendencia historicista. . . . ("La visión" 198)

Breaking away from the ahistorical focus, overly hermetic discourse, and experimentation with language that characterized much of Hispanic America's earlier avant-garde poetry, authors such as Pablo Neruda, Jorge Enrique Adoum, and Ernesto Cardenal turned their focus towards the continent's history and its contemporary sociopolitical problems. Influenced by socialist realism, this neo-epic modality pursued the decolonization of historical knowledge through the propagation of new perspectives and interpretations while also placing at the forefront "el *deber moral* de dar cuenta de esa realidad social injusta, opresiva y genocida" (Pérez, "Notas" 53, emphasis in original).

Thus, in the works of Neruda and Adoum pertinent to this study, and in works such as *El estrecho dudoso* (1966) and *Homenaje a los indios americanos* (1969) by Ernesto Cardenal, the poetic voice takes on the added role of historian, creating a constant tension between the supposed objectivity of history and the subjectivity of poetry. As Tamara Williams asserts about *El estrecho dudoso*, "[t]he poet's use of history is not gratuitous; it serves the purpose of constructing a discourse which appeals to the reader as 'authoritative' and evokes the illusion of truthfulness, objectivity, and adherence to fact rather than fancy and invention" (111). It is through such discourse that Neruda and Adoum attempt to raise the historical and social consciousness of their readers, using their poetry to inspire a first step towards bringing about revolutionary change and, ultimately, a more just social order.

This study examines the contact between historical discourse and poetry and attempts what Gérard Genette has referred to as a "relational" or "palimpsestuous" reading, alluding to

> the old analogy of the *palimpsest*: on the same parchment, one text can become superimposed upon another, which it does not quite conceal but allows to show through. . . . The hypertext invites us to engage in a relational reading . . . a *palimpsestuous* reading. . . . That relational reading (reading two or more texts *in relation* to each other) may be an opportunity to engage in what I shall term, with an outmoded phrase, an *open structuralism*. (398-99, emphasis in original)

Genette refers to the type of intertextuality that interests us here as hypertextuality, recog-

nizing the interplay between the hypotext and the hypertext: "[b]y hypertextuality I mean any relationship uniting a text B (which I shall call the *hypertext*) to an earlier text A (I shall, of course, call it the *hypotext*), upon which it is grafted in a manner that is not that of commentary" (5). This hypertextuality can be as simple as one text speaking about a previous text, or "of another kind such as text B not speaking of text A at all but being unable to exist, as such, without A, from which it originates through a process I shall provisionally call *transformation*, and which it consequently evokes more or less perceptibly without necessarily speaking of it or citing it" (5, emphasis in original). This perspective is also comparable to that of Julia Kristeva, who, as Julie Sanders explains in *Adaptation and Appropriation*, "invoking examples from literature, art, and music, made the case in essays such as 'The Bounded Text' (1980) and 'Word, Dialogue, Novel' (1986) that all texts invoke and rework other texts in a rich and ever-evolving cultural mosaic" (Sanders 17).

Taking into account Genette's theories about hypertextuality, these sections of *Canto general* and *Los cuadernos de la tierra* reveal a hypertextual approximation[2] in which the authors carry out a transvaluation of the historical figures and the events at Cajamarca in 1532. Through this transvaluation and the substitution of values, the hypertext often "takes the opposite side of its hypotext, giving value to what was devalued and vice versa" (Genette 367). In other words, the authors modify the system of values of their hypotexts, altering the valuation of the historical actors and events and placing a higher value on the marginalized, indigenous perspective of those events.

Apart from Genette's ideas on hypertextuality, this study also draws from from the perspective of Hayden White,[3] who argued in such works as *Metahistory* and "The Historical Text as Literary Artifact" that historiography, like fiction, is a rhetorical construction influenced by the motives, ideology, and point of view of the writer. White asserts that historians "emplot" historical events in the archetypal story forms of romance, tragedy, comedy, and satire, and that "most historical sequences can be emplotted in a number of different ways, so as to provide different interpretations of those events and to endow them with different meanings" ("The Historical Text" 84-85). Moreover, White points out that historical events are "value-neutral," but that

> [t]he events are *made* into a story by the suppression or subordination of certain of them and the highlighting of others, by characterization, motific repetition, variation of tone and point of view, alternative descriptive strategies, and the like—in short, all of the techniques that we would normally expect to find in the emplotment of a novel or a play. (84, emphasis in original)

Just as White would argue about the historians who composed the hypotexts upon which they draw, Neruda and Adoum "emplot" the historical events of the encounter at Cajamarca according to the type of story they want to tell the reader.

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2 As Gerald Prince explains in his preface to *Palimpsests*,

> the object of poetics is not the (literary) text but its textual transcendence, its textual links with other texts. One basic aspect of that transcendence pertains to the palimpsestuous nature of texts. . . . Any text is a hypertext, grafting itself onto a hypotext, an earlier text that it imitates or transforms; any writing is rewriting; and literature is always in the second degree. Now though all literary texts are hypertextual, some are more hypertextual than others, more massively and explicitly palimpsestuous. It is that massive and explicit hypertextuality that Genette . . . explores in *Palimpsests*. (ix)

3 See Jaeger for a study that draws on the work of Hayden White to analyze Ernesto Cardenal's *El estrecho dudoso.*

2. Rereading and Responding to the Chronicles and Nineteenth-Century Historiography

Much of the historical writing about the Spanish conquest throughout the nineteenth century, which Neruda and Adoum undoubtedly surveyed, reveals a tendency to emplot events in the romantic mode. According to White, "[t]he Romance is fundamentally a drama of self-identification symbolized by the hero's transcendence of the world of experience, his victory over it, and his final liberation from it. . . . It is a drama of the triumph of good over evil, of virtue over vice, of light over darkness. . . ." (*Metahistory* 9). According to this plot structure, the Spanish conquistadors were often portrayed as heroic adventurers who overcame extreme adversity and helped to bring the light of European civilization to Native Americans.

Both Neruda and Adoum researched nineteenth-century historians whose works exemplify the romantic emplotment of the Spanish conquest. Neruda confirmed that his primary historical sources during the writing of *Canto general* were the influential works of the Chilean historian Diego Barros Arana (1830-1908), specifically *Compendio de historia de América*,[4] published in 1865, and possibly *Historia General de Chile*, published between 1884 and 1902 (Santí 68).[5] The romantic emplotment of Barros Arana's version of events is exemplified by the way he describes the Eucharist ceremony that ratified the alliance between Francisco Pizarro, Diego de Almagro, and the priest Hernando de Luque for the conquest of Peru: "Luque administró el sacramento de la eucaristía . . . mientras que *los espectadores se enternecían al ver la solemne ceremonia* con que *se consagraban* estos hombres voluntariamente a un *sacrificio* que parecía poco menos que locura" (159, my emphasis). Barros Arana presents the scene as a moving ceremony among quixotic heroes who are prepared to sacrifice themselves on their quest to vanquish an unknown enemy. As for Neruda's perspective in his poem "Cita de cuervos," María Rosa Olivera-Williams highlights the "estampa demoniaca a propósito de la entrevista de Almagro, Pizarro y el clérigo Luque de Panamá. Los tres son representados como entes satánicos. . . . La entrevista del trío se torna en misa negra y la comunión cristiana en un ritual del infierno" (138-39). The Chilean poet clearly rejects the romantic emplotment of events that he found in such hypotexts, although he does not quote from or refer to these texts specifically.

In the case of Adoum, he specifically quotes from and then points out many bibliographical sources at the end of "Dios trajo la sombra," including a reference to *Historia de la conquista del Perú* (1847) by North American historian William H. Prescott, another text that exemplifies the romantic emplotment of the Spanish conquest.[6] Although Prescott acknowledges the treachery of the Spanish attack at Cajamarca (101), passages such as the following one about the assassination of Atahualpa's half-brother Huáscar, with whom he had been waging a civil war, reflect the romantic emplotment of the conquest of the region as a victory over tyranny, implying the imposition of a more just colonial regime: "Este *crimen*, que el parentesco inmediato entre su actor y la víctima pinta á *nuestros* ojos con *mas negros colores, no era tan enorme entre los Incas,* en cuyas múltiples familias los lazos de la fraternidad debían ser muy débiles para contener el brazo de

4 For the purpose of this study, I have consulted Diego Barros Arana's *Historia de América*, the 1962 republication of *Compendio de Historia de América* (1865).

5 See Gazmuri R., chapter 6, for a discussion of Barros Arana's importance in Chilean historiography.

6 See Mayer (1997) for a discussion of Prescott's historical writing about the Spanish conquest. Mayer points out the influence of Romanticism in his work, specifically the works of Walter Scott, François-René de Chateaubriand, and Benjamin Constant (448).

un déspota deseoso de remover toda clase de obstáculos" (108, my emphasis). As Alicia Mayer affirms about Prescott's work,

> como toda obra histórica, refleja juicios personales que son producto de una particular visión del mundo que, a su vez, se origina en una época determinada, y que ahora pueden resultarnos anacrónicos o falsos. Por ejemplo, encontramos que el bostoniano maneja una visión de superioridad hispánica y trata las pugnas personales y nacionales desde un punto de vista maniqueo, propio de la escuela romántica. . . . Asimismo observamos una incapacidad de su parte para valorar el mundo indígena a la par del europeo. (449)

In her book *Pablo Neruda: La invención poética de la Historia*, Eugenia Neves outlines this discriminatory, one-sided perspective of the conquest, a dichotomized view that originated in many Spanish chronicles and was propagated in subsequent historiography: "La lucha entre españoles e indígenas aparece como la oposición entre 'civilizadores y salvajes' en la que los civilizadores emprenden la heroica empresa de integrar a los salvajes del continente recién descubierto a la civilización" (64-65). With some exceptions, such as the works of Bartolomé de las Casas, this perspective favored European culture and glorified Spanish explorers as heroic icons while often demeaning indigenous peoples, characterizing their leaders as cruel tyrants, their civilizations as abhorrent and barbaric, and their religions as demonic heresy. Both Neruda and Adoum invert this dichotomy in order to present a more favorable vision of indigenous society and culture.

As we will see, both poets reject the romantic emplotment of the Spanish conquest and reveal an alternative vision emplotted in the tragic mode. For Hayden White, when events are emplotted in the tragic mode,

> there are no festive occasions, except false or illusory ones; rather, there are intimations of states of division among men. . . . [T]he fall of the protagonist and the shaking of the world he inhabits which occur at the end of the Tragic play are not regarded as totally threatening to those who survive the agonic test. There has been a gain in consciousness for the spectators of the contest. And this gain is thought to consist in the epiphany of the law governing human existence which the protagonist's exertions against the world have brought to pass. (*Metahistory* 9)

In these particular sections of their works, both poets represent the "shaking" of Atahualpa and his people's world through the violence and repression associated with the conquest. Later sections of *Canto general* explore the continuation of this violence and repression throughout the continent's history, a continual "agonic test" that he believes the people can overcome through revolutionary change. It is not by mistake that the following section of Neruda's *Canto general* is titled "Los libertadores."

In sum, this study will show how Neruda and Adoum, upon incorporating, adapting, and altering historical discourse in their poetic reimagining of the events at Cajamarca, carry out political acts and explore the identity of the continent as a product of its early history. According to Julie Sanders, this type of rewriting of history many times implies political motives, since the very process offers the possibility to advance historically marginalized perspectives:

> the recognized ability of adaptation to respond or write back to an

> informing original from a new or revised political and cultural position, and by the capacity of appropriations to highlight troubling gaps, absences, and silences within the canonical texts to which they refer. Many appropriations have a joint political and literary investment in giving voice to those characters or subject-positions they perceive to have been oppressed or repressed in the original. (98)

Thus, as Guillermo Araya underlines regarding *Canto general*, the author's political ideology takes center stage in Hispanic American neo-epic poetry (140). Similarly, Richard Curry notes about Cardenal's poetry of the *Sandinista* Revolution, that these texts also "responden a una concepción estética para la cual la poesía ya no puede concebirse como precioso objeto artístico, objeto de consumo burgués, sino más bien como un instrumento para cambiar el mundo" (12).

3. Discourse and Style: Neruda's Broad Brushstrokes and Adoum's Hypertextual Testimony

We can glean much about the two authors' approach to rewriting historical events by comparing their discourse, writing style, and particular techniques. Neruda employs a much more controlled, third-person perspective that approximates the voice of a historian/poet. The compositions of this section are relatively short and schematic; for example, poem fourteen of the section, "Las agonías," which relates the meeting at Cajamarca, consists of only thirty-eight lines. This condensed style allows the poet to paint historical events in broad brushstrokes, lending itself well to his black-and-white, Manichean portrayal that is also akin to the Black Legend of the Spanish conquest. Neruda does not incorporate direct quotations from other texts, although he does draw on aspects of the subjective character of the Chronicles of the Indies,[7] as Enrico Mario Santí affirms:

> La crónica . . . es todo aquel material heterogéneo anterior a esa elaboración [la de la historia]; su perspectiva es circunstancial, inmediata y subjetiva; su carácter, marginal; su forma, abierta. Por eso la crónica es la fuente, muchas veces no-reconocida, de la historia; a partir de ella está hecho el *Canto general*. Como las Crónicas de Indias a las que tanto recuerda—sólo que escrita desde el punto de vista opuesta: el de los vencidos—*Canto general* es una historia marginal de América. (15)

As Francisco Carrillo explains about Pedro Pizarro's *Relación del descubrimiento y conquista de los reinos del Perú* (1571), this particular chronicler, like many others, writes with a clear thesis and ideology in mind (29), often employing exaggeration, careful selection of facts (34), and even invented details (32), portraying the conquest as the result of divine providence (35). Just like the chroniclers, Neruda selects what to include, omit, or emphasize, occasionally inserts or invents short lines of dialogue, and at times distorts historical details according to his own perspective and convictions.

In "Dios trajo la sombra," the third section of *Los cuadernos de la tierra*, Adoum recreates events with a markedly intertextual discourse, describing this style in his preface to the 1988 edition in this way: "cita y reproducción textual de documentos de una época pese a todo muy

7 Two examples of the Spanish chronicles about the conquest of Peru are Pedro Pizarro's *Relación del descubrimiento y conquista de los reinos del Perú* (1571) and Pedro Cieza de León's *Crónica del Perú* (1553).

apegada al testimonio del escribano" (83). The poet introduces selections from many different texts, including the novels *Pizarro, el Conquistador* by Russian author Estanislao Volski and *Atahuallpa* by Benjamín Carrión, translated selections of Quechua poetry, the Requirement, as well as selections from the historical works of Juan de Santa Cruz Pachacuti, Agustín de Zárate, Bernardino de Sahagún, El Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, and nineteenth-century American historian William H. Prescott, among others. Poem eight of "Dios trajo la sombra," "Tambor tambor el suelo," which relates the events in Cajamarca, contains almost three hundred lines, often mixing poetic verse and prose,[8] and stretches out over thirteen pages in one edition. Including so much more detail allows Adoum to diverge from Neruda's schematic style, while also expressing a similar perspective on the conquest. In his preface, Adoum describes this perspective, which could also apply to Neruda's text:

> yo no soy un historiador sino un hombre que trabaja las ideas y las palabras . . . . Si en ese texto me proponía plantear el encuentro de dos culturas—lo cual es un decir, irresponsable e inexacto, puesto que una de ellos vino expresamente acá, desembarcó, agredió, violó, saqueó, ofendió, humilló, asesinó, y lo sigue haciendo, en cierto modo . . . no me interesaba hacer un balance «objetivo» de la sociedad incásica. (*Obras (in)completas* I: 86)

4. Rejecting the Conquistador as a Heroic Icon

Regarding their characterization of historical figures, the main concern for both authors is clearly not objectivity. According to Matthew Restall in *Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest*, official history elevated the figure of the conquistador (e.g. Hernán Cortés or Francisco Pizarro) to the status of a celebrated icon (11), or a romantic hero, to use White's terminology. Both poets clearly reject this perspective, employing what Genette refers to as a "devaluation" of these historical figures, a process that often attempts to "degrade them systematically" (358), unmasking the supposed heroes as villains and their actions as butchery. When we examine the representation of Francisco Pizarro and the other participants in the Spanish camp, it is clear that Neruda takes every opportunity to highlight their cruelty and barbarity, avoiding a deeper exploration of their motivations. In "Las agonías" and the other poems of the section, Neruda characterizes the Spanish camp as a pack of greedy, barbaric animals. In the poet's version of events, Pizarro is a "cerdo cruel" (line 35) and Friar Valverde is a "chacal podrido" (16) with a "corazón traidor" (17). Juan Villegas indicates that the book's antiheroes form a type of "bestiario" (157), also affirming that Neruda's portrayal often "se inicia en la realidad histórica, en un personaje del todo identificable, aun mencionado por su propio nombre y que a través de su asociación con ciertos animales experimenta progresivamente una deformación que concluye con su clara ubicación en la galería de los monstruos" (163). In Neruda's poem, the conquistadors are described as visitors from another planet, "de aquel planeta / de donde vienen los caballos" (20-21). However, the arrival of these *celestial* visitors, often described in animalistic terms, also brings an infernal chaos associated with the symbolic "agonies" of the title, which the poet states began at Cajamarca (1).

In contrast to Neruda, Adoum dedicates a prologue poem, titled "Estirpe de conquistador," to exploring Pizarro's background, psyche, and motives, something that the Chilean poet avoids. While Neruda's first depiction of Pizarro is "el mayoral porcino" ("Cita de cuervos" 6), also re-

8 Since Adoum mixes poetic verse and prose, I cite passages from *Los cuadernos de la tierra* by page number instead of by line number.

ferring to him as a demon, a raven, a hunting ferret, and a thief (1-2, 17), Adoum's first sketch attempts to understand the frame of mind of this historical figure, rather than painting a black-and-white portrait in broad, schematic strokes. Genette defines the "transvaluation" of a character as "any operation of an axiological nature bearing on the value that is implicitly or explicitly assigned to an action or group of actions: namely, the sequence of actions, attitudes, and feelings that constitutes a 'character'" (343). Thus, the poet employs a transvaluation of Francisco Pizarro, devaluing his so-called heroic deeds and iconic facade and reevaluating the conquistador and his actions as a product of his era, his upbringing, his attitudes, and his feelings. Unlike Neruda, who maintains a distanced, third-person perspective, Adoum allows Pizarro and other historical figures to speak in first-person discourse. The poet emphasizes the influence of Pizarro's early life, specifically growing up as the illegitimate and abandoned son of a famous military man, Gonzalo Pizarro. Recalling the contemptuous treatment he received as a child while working as a swineherd, he describes the painful questions that still haunted him as an adult:

. . . . . quién eres, dónde
andabas, en dónde está la bestia
que extraviaste, por qué
te llamas así. (64)

The psychological effect of his early life becomes clear as Pizarro explains how it shaped his motivations and actions. Thus, the Black Legend's motives of a lust for blood, gold, land, and power, as well as the romantic reading, are somewhat refined, via a process that Genette refers to as "transmotivation," which "requires that the original motivation be displaced" by a new one (330), in this case, to live up to his father's name and prove his worth:

. . . . . Las preguntas
hicieron mi destino, las preguntas
siempre cambian y entorpecen el destino?
¿Debo señalar con un dedo de rencor antiguo
las regiones, y explicar: El Golfo
fue conquistado sólo porque el padre
no me nombró en su testamento . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . Todo
debido a las interrogaciones sobre el nombre (64-65)

Recalling his conquests, the bastard son highlights his desire to recreate himself, to be reborn in the image of his father: "Yo buscaba nacer sin errar el aposento, / sin equivocar otra vez mi estirpe" (64). On the other hand, a clear example of devaluation appears in the third poem of the section, "Yo no soy un visitante," in which Adoum reverses a common criticism of indigenous peoples in the chronicles: cannibalism. Using the novel *Atahuallpa* by Benjamín Carrión as his hypotext (Adoum specifically acknowledges the texts he quotes from or adapts at the end of "Dios trajo la sombra"), the poet applies this critique instead to the Spanish camp: "Una noche, Ojeda, él mismo, ha sorprendido a unos cuantos hombres blancos y cristianos venidos de España, en torno de una hoguera, cocinando a un indio del Caribe" (84). In sum, Adoum places more emphasis on the psychological motivations of the conquistadors, although like Neruda, his view of these romantic heroes and supposed icons of history is clearly critical. Both poets, for example, emphasize throughout their works the insatiable greed and ruthless cruelty of the Spanish camp.

5. The Revaluation of Atahualpa

Contrary to his scathing characterization of the Europeans, Neruda sketches Atahualpa in a wholly positive light: an inversion of many of the judgments found in the Spanish chronicles and even in the works of Barros Arana, which the poet was reading as his primary source. For example, Barros Arana and other historians highlight Atahualpa's hubris, and many suggest that he was planning to attract the visitors to Cajamarca to possibly order their death, a potential motivation that Neruda disregards. According to Barros Arana, "Atahualpa concibió el pensamiento de atraerles al interior para conocer a esos hombres misteriosos, bien seguro de que bastaba una señal suya para que fueran destrozados por los millares de soldados que tenía bajo su mando" (Barros Arana 164). In fact, Neruda eliminates from his version any negative suggestion about the Inca, while replacing that perspective with a wholly positive one. Neruda chooses to depict the Inca with numerous descriptions that emphasize his royalty, peacefulness, and innocence. Thus, in Genette's terms, the author carries out a "revaluation" of Atahualpa, which "consists in investing him or her—by way of pragmatic or psychological transformation—with a more significant and/or 'attractive' role in the value system of the hypertext than was the case in the hypotext . . . improving his axiological status through a nobler behavior, nobler motives, or nobler symbolic connotations" (343-44). If we consider a tragic emplotment of the events in this section of *Canto general*, Atahualpa can be seen as a tragic figure whose flaw seems to be that he is naive and overly trusting: he simply does not detect the evil, villainous intentions of his visitors.

Highlighting Atahualpa's youth, Neruda describes him as an "estambre azul, / árbol insigne," emphasizing his strength, vigor, and prestige (2-3). In addition, concise regal descriptions accentuate his majesty and dignity, as in these lines: "El Inca salió de la música / rodeado por los señores" (11-12). According to the poet, upon arriving in Cajamarca, it seemed that the Spaniards "iban a hacer la *reverencia*" before the Inca (15, my emphasis). After the battle begins, Neruda states that princes surround him like a religious choir, as if they were protecting a divine figure (30-31). Finally, at the end of the poem, Pizarro, "el cerdo cruel de Extremadura / hace amarrar los *delicados* brazos / del Inca," a description that highlights his youth while also suggesting frailty (35-37, my emphasis). Thus, in an inversion of the portrayals in the Spanish chronicles and much of the subsequent historical writing, Neruda debases the conquistadors and elevates the Inca to an iconic, legendary status.

Rather than stressing youth, majesty, peacefulness, and innocence, in "Tambor, tambor el suelo," Adoum characterizes Atahualpa as overconfident, naive, prideful, and aggressive, although his first description of the Inca is "el joven dios" atop a gilded litter (111). While the Inca never speaks in Neruda's poem, Adoum silences Pizarro and explores Atahualpa's thoughts, allowing him to chastise the visitors in extended sections of first-person discourse. Atahualpa's first words in the poem express his disregard and disdain for the visitors:

> Me dais lástima, vagabundos
> sagrados, débiles
> miedolentos, recaderos
> de un dios. (111)

Like Neruda, Adoum never mentions the presence of the indigenous translators Felipe and Martín during the encounter, but rejects the idea of the misinterpretation or misunderstanding

of the Requirement. Atahualpa suddenly understands the language of his visitors and chastises the insolence of the Spanish camp and the absurdity of the Requirement:

> Comprendo ya el idioma. Bastardos,
> eso sois, y no los dulces nómadas,
> no los enviados del pacífico.
> ¿Qué Dios borracho puede regalaros
> lo que sólo a mí me pertenece? (117)

While Neruda admonishes the visitors' words and deeds, Adoum allows Atahualpa to reprimand them directly and boast Incan superiority:

> Yo no sé si al salir por tu boca
> se ensucia Dios; no sé si es Dios
> quien te mancha la boca: porque dices
> amor y salpicas crueldad hasta
> tus manos, y se te ve la pupila
> del odio guiñando entre los ojos.
> Descubridores, eso fuimos nosotros
> antes que vuestros descoloridos
> sorprendidos; conquistadores, eso
> nosotros, charlatán. (118)

Although Neruda downplays the fact that the Incan Empire had also conquered and subjugated the region,[9] Adoum addresses the fact directly in these lines, also dedicating the entire second section of *Los cuadernos de la tierra* to that time period.

6. Atahualpa's Confrontation with the Written Word

The supposed dialogue between Atahualpa and Friar Valverde brings us to the famous encounter between what Martin Lienhard refers to as a "sociedad grafocéntrica" (29) and a society with a primarily oral tradition, notwithstanding Incan quipus. Without a doubt, both poets had studied and reflected on several different historical texts on the matter of the breviary or missal that was thrown or dropped by Atahualpa. Matthew Restall's summary of how the scene played out in different historical texts helps us to understand the different versions of events that the poets had to choose from. According to Restall, the chronicler and conquistador Francisco de Jerez claims that Atahualpa "deliberately threw the Bible to the ground out of pride because he was unable to read its writing," which provoked the attack (92). The 1570 version of Titu Cusi Yupanqui, Atahualpa's nephew, asserts that the Spaniards poured out a drink offered to them in a golden cup and thus provoked a similar response from the Inca (93). Garcilaso de la Vega blames the poor translations of the interpreter Felipe and maintains that the book fell to the ground involuntarily (93). Lastly, according to Pedro Cieza de León, Atahualpa threw the book without ever understanding what it was, and Valverde then incited Pizarro to attack (93). In

9 In his poem "Economía del Tahuantinsuyu," Ernesto Cardenal also displays a more critical view of the Inca's totalitarian power:

> El Inca era dios
> era Stalin
> (Ninguna oposición tolerada)
> Los cantores sólo cantaron la historia oficial (157-60)

While he certainly contrasts an overall positive view of society during the Tahuantinsuyu with the socioeconomic problems of the Colonial period and the present, Cardenal also emphasizes that "no todo fue perfecto en el 'Paraíso Incaico'" (150).

"Failing to Marvel: Atahualpa's Encounter with the Word," Patricia Seed concludes that

> [w]hether Atahualpa's gesture with the book was a deliberate "throwing" or "flinging" or an accidental "falling" depends on the kind of story the narrator wished to tell. If the story was to be one of unbridled Inca arrogance or revenge for a similar offense, the book was "thrown." If the story was one of native dismissal, the book was "flung." But if the story was one of simple miscommunication, the book accidentally "fell". . . . [I]t was the kind of story about the other that the narrator wished to tell that determined how the book left the friar's hands and landed on the ground of Cajamarca Plaza. (30)

Seed's comment about the type of story the narrator wants to tell reflects the ideas of Hayden White about how historians emplot events according to their own ideology and perspective. Upon analysis of these two poeticized versions of the events at Cajamarca, we can affirm that the same is certainly true for Neruda and Adoum. Neruda's depiction of this scene differs from the version of Barros Arana, his primary source, which asserts that Valverde explained the Christian faith and the Requirement to Atahualpa. According to the Chilean historian, this speech "debía ser incomprensible para Atahualpa, [porque] fue torpemente explicado por un indio intérprete llamado Felipillo" (165). Barros Arana claims that Atahualpa was insulted by the Requirement, claiming that he was more powerful that all the princes of the world, and then threw the book to the ground (165). In departing from the hypotext, the poet employs a "pragmatic transformation," which consists of "a change in the very course of the action and in its material support," many times in order to transform the original message of the hypotext (Genette 311-12). Instead of reiterating the hypotext's description, Neruda emphasizes Atahualpa's complete innocence and avoids any mention of pride or anger:

> El capellán
> Valverde, corazón traidor, chacal podrido,
> adelanta *un extraño objeto, un trozo*
> *de cesto, un fruto*
> *tal vez* de aquel planeta
> de donde vienen los caballos.
> Atahualpa lo toma. *No conoce*
> *de qué se trata: no brilla, no suena,*
> *y lo deja caer sonriendo*. (16-24, my emphasis)

The Inca simply does not understand the concept of the breviary as a sacred object for his visitors and seems to drop it accidentally while smiling amiably, which for Neruda, highlights all the more the cruel injustice of the following attack. Antonio Cornejo Polar underscores the importance of the written word for European culture at that time, explaining that the breviary was not simply a book but rather a sacred object and that when the Inca disrespected it, vengeance was required:

> La nuez del asunto reside entonces en el conflicto entre una cultura oral y otra escrita, pero que ha sesgado la letra hacia lo sagrado y la ha sobrecargado de dimensiones harto más esotéricas que simbólicas . . . . En ese orden de cosas, lo acontecido en Cajamarca es sobre todo un ritual del poder, mediado y de alguna manera constituido por el libro, y su condición de «diálogo» sólo hubiera

> funcionado en términos de orden y sumisión. En noviembre de 1532 ese «diálogo» no se produjo y su ruptura, por la «desobediencia» del Inca, adquirió dimensiones trágicas: quien se niega a responder con el único parlamento al que tiene derecho (el perverso derecho a decir solamente «sí») debe y tiene que morir. Y en efecto, poco después es asesinado. (47-48)

Also rejecting the idea of any real "dialogue," Neruda asserts absolute miscommunication; in fact, he never mentions the presence of any interpreter.

Finally, Neruda disregards historical descriptions of the indigenous people fleeing in fear during the attack, choosing to omit this information found in his hypotexts. According to Barros Arana, the artillery fire, the arquebuses, the trumpets, the smoke, the smell of gunpowder, and the horses terrified the indigenous people, and "[n]adie tuvo el valor para pensar en resistir: los peruanos trataban sólo de huir de aquella matanza" (165-66). According to Neruda, the nobles "rodean como un coro / al Inca" (30-31) in order to protect him, eliminating Barros Arana's insistence that these men "estaban también aterrorizados" (166). Thus, the poet highlights the native peoples' courageous protection of their Inca, who remains a completely silent victim throughout the encounter.

In comparison, Adoum also chooses not to mention the presence of an interpreter, but he allows Atahualpa to speak in first-person discourse, which reminds us of the quechua play *Tragedia del fin de Atahualpa*. As Miguel de León Portilla points out in *El reverso de la conquista*, in this play, Atahualpa, Sairi Túpac, and Felipe dominate the discourse, while the conquistador only moves his lips and sometimes shouts and makes furious gestures (174-75). In Adoum's version of events, there is very little detail about the book. After stating, miraculously, that he can understand Spanish, Atahualpa only mentions the book one time, and then the attack begins after he insults the visitors' god:

> . . . . . Heroísmo testarudo
> es esta tierra. Y tú quieres robarla
> con tu cruz de malagüero y el botín
> ruidoso de tus frases y el impúdico
> regalo de abalorios y dioses
> múltiples mortales vulnerables
> que mezclan su pobreza y sus historias
> en tu libro vacío que no suena. (119)

Emphasizing that Atahualpa does not understand the concept of the "word" contained in the book because he cannot hear it, the poet never mentions it hitting the ground at all.

7. Conclusions

As we have seen, both poets, like Cornejo Polar, emphasize the symbolic importance of the events in Cajamarca in 1532. Neruda's version is clearly a schematic, black-and-white version of events, but purposefully so, as he deconstructs and inverts the dichotomies of the manipulative, discriminatory rhetoric of previous historiography. In "Dios trajo la sombra," Adoum undertakes a more nuanced exploration of this pivotal encounter, while still presenting an overall Manichean vision that underscores the disastrous consequences for native groups, which he acknowledges in his preface. Neruda emphasizes its historical importance to the origins of all of Latin America with this short line: "Nuestra sangre en su cuna es derramada" (29). He ends

his poem with a description of a symbolic darkness that engulfs Peru after the battle: "La noche ha descendido / sobre el Perú como una brasa negra" (37-38). For the Chilean poet, instead of representing the arrival of the light of European civilization, the conquest brought with it a burning darkness like the Christian Hell. The end of "Dios trajo la sombra" expresses a similar perspective, while emphasizing the chaos during the battle as the attendants of Atahualpa flee in fear. The poet's final lines emphasize the catastrophic results of the encounter at Cajamarca for the indigenous population, lamenting the centuries of suffering, but of survival, yet to come:

> huye a morir despacio, huye a callar
> siempre, arrodillado, pidiendo
> perdóname, no para seguir viviendo
> sino por haber sido . . . . . .
> . . . . . son
> el primer país del Dios que viene
> a amar a puñetazos, el primer
> territorio de una muerte sucesiva,
> tu muerte pequeñita, de tu largo
> vacío. Húyete,
> bórrate,
> destrúyete
> durando. (121)

In his essay, "Ecuador: Señas particulares" (1997), Adoum maintains that these tragic, traumatic consequences of the Spanish conquest continue to affect the peoples of modern Latin America: "[e]n el espíritu del pueblo al que pertenecemos hay algo como una inseguridad ontológica, un resentimiento latente y duradero que viene de la Conquista" (129).

Both Neruda and Adoum bring their readers back to the traumatic origin of this insecurity, cultivating a rejection of the pro-conquistador interpretation of the Spanish chronicles and of the romantic emplotment of the conquest. Furthermore, their tragic emplotment works on the reader's perceptions in an analogous way to how Hayden White compares historiography to psychotherapy:

> This is not unlike what happens, or is supposed to happen, in psychotherapy. The sets of events in the patient's past which are the presumed cause of his distress . . . have assumed a meaning that he can neither accept nor effectively reject. . . . It is not that the patient does not *know* what those events were, does not know the facts . . . . He knows them so well, in fact, that he lives with them constantly and in such a way as to make it impossible for him to see any other facts except through the coloration that the set of events in question gives to his perception of the world. . . . The problem is to get the patient to "reemplot" his whole life history in such a way as to change the *meaning* of those events for him and their *significance* for the economy of the whole set of events that make up his life. ("The Historical Text" 86-87, emphasis in original)

By reemplotting events in this way, both poets guide readers to reject the romantic vision of the conquest, which they may have been exposed to throughout their lives. Neruda and Adoum offer a counter-hegemonic view of the conquest, one that values the marginalized perspective

of indigenous groups, carrying out political acts influenced by their Marxist ideology[10] and their desire to raise the historical consciousness of their readers in order to inspire and bring about revolutionary change. Neruda certainly hinted at the transformative goals of his *Canto general* while speaking of the book and his contemporaries: "Somos los cronistas de un nacimiento retardado. Retardado por el feudalismo, por el atraso, por el hambre. Pero no se trata sólo de preservar nuestra cultura, sino de entregarle todas nuestras fuerzas, de alimentarla y de hacerla florecer" (quoted in Santí 19). Interestingly, Adoum served as Neruda's private secretary in 1947 (Hamilton 221), during the composition of *Canto general*, which might suggest a possible influence on the younger author's work and help to explain the similarities between these two extensive projects that blend poetry, history, and political ideology. In an interview, Adoum described his political views as one of "pesimismo combativo. Yo creo que uno puede llegar a una posición de contestación, de combate, de cambio llevado por el pesimismo. . . . Entonces por ese pesimismo, uno puede llegar a ser revolucionario" (Adoum 1998, 45). Like Neruda's work, *Los cuadernos de la tierra* seems to propel its readers towards this stance of combat and revolutionary change, and both authors attempt to inspire social action in their readers, since "no se trata sólo de contemplar una realidad reflexivamente, sino que, como el hablante, el destinatario del discurso debe comprometerse . . . [y] cambiar la realidad" (Veas Mercado 60).

Canto general and *Los cuadernos de la tierra* share much in common with other works of this neo-epic modality of Hispanic American poetry, which attempted to bring a clear, critical view of the injustices of history before the public's eyes, with the goal of inspiring change towards a more just social order. Just as Hayden White suggests in "The Historical Text as Literary Artifact," "the encodation of events in terms of such plot structures is one of the ways that a culture has of making sense of both personal and public pasts" (85). Ultimately, Neruda, Adoum, and other poets who penned similar projects such as Ernesto Cardenal in his *El estrecho dudoso* (1966), seem to believe in the power of poetry to shape their readers' understanding of historical and contemporary injustice and, thus, kindle a desire for revolutionary change.

10 Neruda's participation in the Communist party in Chile is well known (see Santí 44). Hamilton also points out the influence of Marxist ideology on Adoum (221).

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