

ARTICLE

## Maize Landscapes in Indigenous Literatures: Toward Alternative Cartographic Imaginaries

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### Abstract

The twentieth and twenty-first centuries have witnessed a literary revival in the Indigenous languages of the region known canonically as “Latin America.” Across this varied corpus, a major theme is the cultural significance of maize. This article compares the depiction of maize in four bilingual poems, each written in a different Indigenous language alongside Spanish: Nahuatl (Ethel Xochitiotzin Pérez), Yucatec Maya (María Dolores Dzul Barboza), Central Quechua (César Vargas Arce), and Southern Quechua (Emilio Corrales). Through close textual analysis and by recourse to theoretical perspectives such as “literary cartography,” the “textual continuum,” “deep mapping,” and “trans-indigeneity,” the article argues that each poem communicates culturally specific ways of understanding geography that, when set in dialogue, challenge hegemonic definitions of the Western Hemisphere such as North, South, or Latin “America.” Rather, the poems in combination weave an interconnected yet multiperspectival cartographic tapestry with maize as the common thread.

**Keywords:** maize; Indigenous literatures; Quechua; Maya; Nahuatl; literary cartography

### Resumen

Los siglos XX y XXI han atestiguado un resurgimiento literario en las lenguas originarias de la región conocida canónicamente como Latinoamérica. Un tema central en este corpus variado es la importancia cultural del maíz. Este artículo compara la representación del maíz en cuatro poemas bilingües, cada uno escrito en una lengua originaria diferente, junto con el español: náhuatl (Ethel Xochitiotzin Pérez), maya yucateco (María Dolores Dzul Barboza), quechua central (César Vargas Arce) y quechua sureño (Emilio Corrales). Mediante un análisis textual cuidadoso, y apoyándose en perspectivas teóricas como la “cartografía literaria”, el “continuum textual”, el “mapeo profundo” y la “trans-indigeneidad”, el artículo propone que cada poema comunica modos culturalmente específicos de conceptualizar la geografía, los cuales, al entrar en diálogo, desafían definiciones hegemónicas del Hemisferio Occidental como Norte, Sud o Latino “América.” Al contrario, los poemas en combinación tejen un tapiz cartográfico de múltiples perspectivas, con el maíz como hilo común.

**Palabras clave:** maíz; literaturas originarias; quechua; maya; náhuatl; cartografía literaria

The twentieth and twenty-first centuries have witnessed a resurgence of literature in the Indigenous languages of the region known as “Latin America.” A widespread theme in this Indigenous literary renaissance is the cultural significance of maize. This article compares

the depiction of maize in four bilingual poems, each written in a different Indigenous language alongside Spanish: Nahuatl (Ethel Xochitiotzin Pérez), Yucatec Maya (María Dolores Dzul Barboza), Central Quechua (César Vargas Arce), and Southern Quechua (Emilio Corrales). Through close textual analysis, I argue that the poems hold the potential to unearth alternative cartographic representations that, in combination, contest efforts to classify the “American” continent under a single definition.

My point of departure is Walter Mignolo’s (2005, 2) insight that “‘America’ . . . was never a continent waiting to be discovered” but “an *invention* forged in the process of European colonial history and the consolidation and expansion of the Western world view and institutions.” According to the K’iche’ Maya scholar Emil’ Keme (2018, 35), “Los pueblos indígenas sólo podemos ser parte de (Latino) América si renunciamos a nuestros territorios, idiomas, y especificidades culturales y religiosas.” He exhorts Indigenous people to use the Guna term *Abiyala* as an alternative designation for the Western Hemisphere: “representa nuestro propio proyecto y lugar de enunciación” (Keme 2018, 35). Mignolo and Keme remind us that the ways we define geography are not ideologically neutral. Indeed, the Dule (Guna) scholar Sue Patricia Haglund (2023) has criticized the new usage of *Abiyala* as another form of imposition and calls for Indigenous communities to use their specific terms of reference instead.

Each of the four poems represents distinct cultural and linguistic constellations: Nahuatl and Yucatec Maya in Mexico, and Central and Southern Quechua in Peru and Bolivia. I have selected these languages because they are the ones I am familiar with, following fieldwork on Quechua folksongs in Ancash, Peru (2010–2011), a year learning Yucatec in Mérida, Mexico (2013–2014), and three years working in Puebla, Mexico (2018–2021), during which I took Nahuatl classes. I have chosen the specific poems because of their culturally distinctive perspectives on maize. The crop’s geographical expansion but rootedness in particular cultural cosmologies makes it a connecting thread that allows the poems, in combination, to speak at both local and hemispheric scales.

It is not my intention to generalize about an entire landmass based on a fraction of its cultural and linguistic diversity. That would contradict my purpose of deconstructing hegemonic definitions of place. Therefore, this article is not so much “about” the area that is designated alternatively as “America,” “Abiyala,” “Turtle Island,” or simply “the Western Hemisphere,” as a journey “toward” a more pluralistic cartography that is opened up when different traditions meet in a horizontal intercultural dialogue (see Sánchez-Antonio 2021, 697). I follow in the footsteps of the literary scholar Adam Lifshey (2010, 5), who, himself drawing on the work of Diana Taylor, explains how the “remapping of America, tantamount to the rereading of America, gains from the aggregate diversity of approaches and interpretations.” As such, my theoretical framework includes scholars of diverse Indigenous and non-Indigenous ancestries as part of a continued effort to develop a “hemispheric approach” (Castellanos, Gutiérrez Nájera, and Aldama 2012) while respecting the specificity of the local.

### Indigenous literary cartographies

I situate this article broadly within the field of literary cartography, which, as Rick Van Noy (2003, 3) explains, studies how maps “can tell a story” and “how literature can be used for cartographic means.” This deconstruction of the literature/map distinction is amply supported by Indigenous epistemologies. Elizabeth Hill Boone (1998, 113) describes how for “the Aztecs and their neighbors prior to the Spanish conquest there was no such distinction between map presentations and ‘written’ presentations”; both were encompassed by the Nahuatl verb *ihcuiloa*, “paint, draw, write” (Launey 2011, 32). Moreover, in the form of the “cartographic history” (Mundy 1996, 106), Central Mexican maps narrated “origins, migrations, and the founding of their cities and communities” (Cintli Rodríguez 2014, 101). In this way, “Indigenous maps told stories, not simply providing a geographical snapshot of the landscape” (Cintli Rodríguez 2014, 101).

In the Mayan languages, cognates of the Yucatec verb *ts'íib* entail a “multimodal Indigenous understanding of text” (Worley and Palacios 2019, 3) that includes writing and the creation of “figures, designs, and diagrams in general, whether they be drawn, painted, engraved, embroidered, or woven” (Tedlock and Tedlock 1985, 124). Agriculture, too, can be described as a form of *ts'íib*, or patterning, onto the landscape (Worley and Palacios 2019, 5–6). According to Matthew Restall (1997, 200), “the way in which the Maya described land in writing in the colonial period is effectively cartographic in its heavy use of visual landmarks and the techniques of narrative journey,” and “may indicate that the Maya before the conquest did their mapping in words.”

In the Quechua languages, the verb *qillqay* has denoted concepts as diverse as “pintar, dibujar, labrar, esculpir, registrar estadísticamente, escribir, dictar, bordar, escarabajar, rasguear” (Quispe-Agnoli 2005, 271). Consequently, the combination of text and illustrations that characterizes the work of the Indigenous, colonial-era chronicler Guaman Poma may not have been conceptualized as two distinct elements in Andean worldviews (Cummins 1998, 182, cited in Quispe-Agnoli 2005, 273). Margot Beyersdorff (2007, 147, 130) suggests that, in Guaman Poma’s written petition to claim ancestral territories, his visual ordering of toponyms mimics “the circularity of the *muyuriy*,” namely, the Andean “walkabout,” which reaffirms people’s relationship with landscape and territory.

My purpose is not to suggest false equivalences between *ihcuiloa*, *ts'íib*, and *qillqay*, which come from unrelated languages and distinct traditions, but to show how, in their different ways, each deconstructs the (Western) distinction between mapping and writing, and thereby reveals literary cartography (Van Noy 2003) as intrinsic to Indigenous creative practices. The Cherokee scholar Christopher Teuton (2010, xvi–xviii) adds further support to this interpretation. According to his theory of the “textual continuum,” Indigenous literature of the Western Hemisphere emerges from the interaction between two creative impulses—oral and graphic—which are mediated and balanced by a “critical impulse.” The “graphic” impulse includes forms such as writing and drawing, which derive their semiotic vitality from dialogue with oral modes of communication; likewise, oral traditions remain “grounded” thanks to their exchange with graphic expressions.

In the case of the poems by Xochitiotzin Pérez, Dzul Barboza, Vargas Arce, and Corrales, it is through drawing on oral traditions that they are able to convey, in writing, culturally specific interpretations of geography that have the potential to become “critical impulses” and challenge overarching representations. The creative interplay between oral and graphic expressions is also highlighted in Bjørn Sletto and colleagues’ (2020) edited volume *Radical Cartographies*, which combines perspectives from south of the Río Bravo/Grande. For example, Kiado Cruz (2020, 22) describes how, in the Indigenous Zapotec region of Mexico, the subversive capacity of oral literatures can “contribute to new cartographic narratives.” In another chapter on the Gran Cumbal region of Colombia, Álvaro César Velasco Álvarez (2020, 39) discusses communal mapmaking, or “social polygraphy,” as a way to “reclaim the meaning of Indigenous languages.”

Combining Teuton’s hemispheric theory of the textual continuum with the culturally particular concepts of *ihcuiloa*, *ts'íib*, and *qillqay* forms a powerful yet nuanced framework that responds to the Chickasaw scholar Chadwick Allen’s (2012) calls for a “trans-Indigenous” literary criticism. Namely, by setting Indigenous texts from widely differing languages and traditions in dialogue, I aim to respect “the specificity of the Indigenous local” (Allen 2012, xix) while creating “juxtapositions [that] can provoke more complex analyses of specific texts” (Allen 2012, 181). In the present article, such analyses involve elucidating the poems’ capacity to propose alternative cartographic representations rooted in local cosmologies, which, when combined, stretch to breaking point arch-signifiers such as “(Latin) America.”

Although none of the poems foregrounds mapping as a central theme, this is rather the point: their cartographic significance rests in implicit potential when read a particular

way, not in any explicit proposal to replace one form of representation with another, which could risk constructing new forms of hegemony. Through detailed textual analysis, I work to bring to the surface what the travel writer William Least Heat-Moon (1991), who traces his ancestry to the Indigenous Osage people, calls a “deep map.” In Susan Maher’s (2014) interpretation, deep map writing seeks to capture “a plethora of interconnected stories from a particular location” (10–11) and to frame “the landscape within this indeterminate complexity” (11), recognizing that “the place itself remains elusive” (11).

Maher’s account of deep map writing closely resembles Sletto’s (2020, 8) description of mapmaking as “rhizomatic formations that emerge through embodied and contingent forms of storytelling.” In Deleuze and Guattari’s (1980) original formulation, “rhizomatic” processes spread laterally in multiple, largely unconstrained forms of evolution, none of which occupies any privileged point in relation to any other. This contrasts with “arboreal” structures, which grow vertically from a centralized location and are associated with hegemony and hierarchy (Deleuze and Guattari 1980, 9–37). While antagonistic, the two modes often coexist, with rhizomatic networks producing arboreal structures, and vice versa (Deleuze and Guattari 1980, 23–24).

In addition to the inherent appropriateness of using a vegetal metaphor to examine literary representations of maize, Deleuze and Guattari’s distinction dialogues well with the “rhizomatic” diversification of maize throughout the hemisphere and its more “arboreal” role in the development of specific cultural institutions in particular locations. In the sections that follow, I seek to show how each poem reflects “arboreal,” or culturally particular, conceptions of landscape that have the potential to enact a “rhizomatic” plurality of geographical perspectives when combined. Such a combination brings out a multifaceted, evolving “deep map” of the hemisphere that is both trans-Indigenous (Allen 2012) and “translocal” (Burdette 2019, xii). I set my analysis within an Indigenous formulation of literary cartography (Van Noy 2003), as expressed by the Nahuatl, Maya, and Quechua concepts of *ihcuiloa*, *ts’ib*, and *qillqay*, together with Teuton’s (2010) theory of the textual continuum.

### Nahuatl: “Tlaoltzintli”

We begin with “Tlaoltzintli/Maíz,” written by the Nahuatl educator, translator, and author Ethel Xochitiotzin Pérez, who hails from Santa María Tlacatecpac in Tlaxcala state, central Mexico. The poem, published in *Revista Raíces* (2021), visually recalls a maize stalk, consisting of a single long stanza that I present in full. For the purpose of analysis, I have divided it into sections, the first of which is as follows:

Iztac xayac,	Rostro blanco,
coztic,	amarillo,
yahuiltic,	azul,
chichiltic.	y rojo,
Achtli tonaltzin,	semilla de sol.
ipan monacayo quiza in nemiliz,	De tu templo mana vida,
monacayo yez in tlatatl,	de tu cuerpo es el hombre,
tlamantli miltzintli;	planta sabia de Dios.

The Nahuatl title, “Tlaoltzintli,” contains the honorific suffix *-tzin*, which, added to the root *tlaol-* (maize kernel), positions maize as a sacred interlocutor rather than an objective resource. This idea is further developed through the word *xayac* (*rostro*; face), an allusion to the sun, which is mentioned shortly thereafter, and through the four colors that indicate the cyclical emergence of space-time: white (west), yellow (east), blue (south), and red (north) (Aveni 2016, 110). As well as evoking the rhizomatic diversity of maize (Deleuze and

Guattari), the spatiotemporal symbolism of the colors enacts a vision of the land as dynamic and regenerative, in contrast to monolithic labels such as “(Latin) America” or the nation-state. Miguel León-Portilla ([1956] 1993, 111) explains how, in pre-Hispanic Nahuatl cosmology, “se descubre a través de los varios ciclos o edades un principio latente de evolución, que culmina, en el caso particular de las plantas alimenticias, con la aparición del maíz.” Similarly, in “Tlaoltzintli,” the phrase “Achtli tonaltzin” can be read as both “seed of the sun” and “seed of destiny” (Portugal Carbó 2015, s.v. *tonalli*), potentially suggesting a new phase in the land’s evolution.

The Nahuatl root *nacayo*, mentioned twice, refers to both animal and plant “flesh” and, in this context, foregrounds the shared substance between maize and humanity (López Austin [1980] 1989, 172–173), while the two Spanish counterparts, *templo* and *cuerpo*, together indicate the sacrality of life: *nemiliztli* (*vida*; life). Adam Coon (2014, 218) explains how maize “serves as the underlying metaphor” of Nahuatl epistemologies, which recognize “the earth as the living source of one’s sustenance” (217–218). The crop is associated with “sacred landscapes, reciprocity, respect for ancestors, a dynamic cyclical perception of time, and affective intelligence” (217). This sense of the land’s constant regeneration is conveyed by the Nahuatl verb *quiza* (to emerge) and the Spanish *manar*, which in combination suggest vertical and lateral growth. A renewed engagement with the landscape leads in turn to new forms of humanity, as expressed in the Nahuatl version by *yez*, the future tense of the verb “to be,” in relation to *tlacatl* (human being).

The following lines further develop the connection between poetry and agriculture:

tehuatzin,	Tú
titlamatiliztli,	eres mito,
teotlahtoltzin,	oración,
titetlapohualiz,	leyenda,
tixochitlahtoltzin.	eres poesía.
Cuicatl tlen pehua in xopaniztl,	Canto que inicia en primavera,
ihuan tlamiz in tlahaquiztl,	y termina en otoño.
ticquixtiliz hueliqueh ahuiyaliz.	Desprendes sutiles aromas,
Tinechpahtia nonacayo	curas mi cuerpo,
ica motocatzin, nitlahcuiloa in cahuitl,	con tu nombre escribo el tiempo.
monahuactzin tinechcahua	Me dejas sembrar flores y fiesta,
nicchihuaz in xochitzintli huan ilhuitzintli.	

Similar to the farmer’s cultivation of maize, the poet likewise cultivates new ways of interpreting the landscape. The conceptual association between these two occupations is evident in one of the terms for poetry, *xochitlahtolli*, which comprises the roots *xochi*- (flower) and *tlahtol*- (language). In this light, the allusion to sowing “flowers” (*xochitzintli*) and “festivals” (*ilhuitzintli*) may indicate the role of literature in foregrounding those forms of existence (human and nonhuman) that have been marginalized by dominant narratives. The word *monahuactzin* (with your venerable self) conveys the agency of maize as part of a collaborative, interspecies dialogue.

The lines also emphasize the crop’s participation in both the oral and graphic “impulses,” according to Teuton’s (2010) semiotic typology: by invoking the mythological associations of maize, as passed down through the oral tradition, the poet gains the ability to “write time” (“nitlahcuiloa in cahuitl”). This can be interpreted as the “critical impulse” that fosters what Hannah Burdette (2019, 154), commenting on Wayuu cultural practices, calls an “epistemology of transmotion,” namely, “an alternative conception of space and place predicated on constant movement” rather than static categories. The polysemy of the Nahuatl term *ihcuiloa* (drawing as well as writing) strengthens the cartographic significance of the phrase.

Just as the maize plant germinates in the soil, grows upward and outward, and finally blossoms, so Xochitiotzin Pérez enables a new deep map (Heat-Moon 1991, Maher 2014) to emerge from buried semiotic networks that resurface through her poetry, which transforms the drought (*tlahuaquiztl*) of cultural, linguistic, and environmental degradation into new, fertile terrain (*xopaniztl*). While the Spanish verbs are in the present tense, the Nahuatl version deploys the future in *tlamiz* (will end) and *ticquixtiliz* (you will emit), perhaps suggesting that genuine renewal can emerge only from the inclusion of Indigenous languages as part of a pluralistic cultural geography. Such a vision is strikingly laid out in the poem's final lines:

Itech monelhuayo tlacati in tlahtoltzitzin tlen quilia:	de tus raíces nacen voces que dicen:
tlaolli	Maíz en mexicano,
núni	maíz en mixteco,
nue	maíz en chocholteco,
n'ñu nijme	maíz en mazateco,
cuxi'	maíz en totonaco,
xuba'	maíz en zapoteco,
ixim	maíz en maya,
dethä.	maíz en otomí.

Here, “roots” (*nelhuayo-*) have both arboreal and rhizomatic properties (Deleuze and Guattari 1980). Reaching deep into the ground, they can be interpreted in terms of cultural continuity and the “rootedness” of people and place through time. Spreading out in multiple directions, however, the roots link each cultural and linguistic element within a wider network, paralleling the poem's opening lines where the diverse colors of maize indicate the four sides of the cosmos. The poem's middle part invokes poetry as a form of cultivation that can reconfigure people's understanding and appreciation of the surrounding landscape.

Both Spanish and Nahuatl, moreover, deconstruct their linguistic authority in the final lines. The Nahuatl word *tlaolli* (maize) initiates the reader on multiple pathways between a bewildering array of linguistic nodes while ultimately disappearing in an increasingly complex cartographic tapestry. By naming each language, the Spanish version reveals the impossibility of fully understanding a geographical region through only one of its languages. In this way, Spanish transforms from an arboreal agent of domination to a rhizomatic “lengua-puente,” as the Nahuatl author Martín Tonalmeyotl (2017, 7) has argued.

Through reference to distinctive Nahuatl concepts (e.g., *ihcuiloa*), grammatical constructions (e.g., future tense), and cultural references (e.g., color symbolism), Xochitiotzin Pérez inscribes a deep map (Heat-Moon 1991; Maher 2014) that is rooted in local epistemologies while weaving trans-Indigenous (Allen 2012) connections. Even though (perhaps because) cartography is not the explicit focus of the poem, the references to space and time enact an alternative geographical perspective that contrasts markedly with dominant categories such as “(Latin) America” or the nation-state and thereby deconstruct their hegemony. Accompanying maize on its rhizomatic journey, we now travel to another of the semiotic nodes invoked in Xochitiotzin Pérez's poem, as maize transforms from *tlaoltzintli* to *ixi'im*.

### Yucatec Maya: “Ixi'im”

In María Dolores Dzúl Barboza's Yucatec Maya poem, “Ixi'im/Maíz” (Chavarrea Chim 2017, 66–67), it is maize who addresses humanity, the inverse of “Tlaoltzintli.” The Maya poem, moreover, foregrounds the preoccupation of biocultural loss that hastens the message of



renewal in Xochitiotzin Pérez’s work. Dzul Barboza hails from Peto, in the Mexican state of Yucatán, and was in the first cohort of creative writing students at the Centro Estatal de Bellas Artes (State Center of Fine Arts) between 2009 and 2011. Her poem has two stanzas in the Spanish version, but the Maya version separates the first half into two separate stanzas, the second constituting just two lines:

<p>Teen u bak’el yáax yuumo’ob,  a wíinklile’, ixí’im xan,  teen u ki’iki’ o’och  u paalal yóok’ol kaab.</p> <p>Kin k’i’itpajal tu kanti’itsil lu’um  in tséent tuláakal máak.</p>	<p>Soy la carne de los primeros padres  tu cuerpo, también es maíz.  Soy el sabroso alimento  de los hijos de la tierra,  me esparzo  por los cuatro puntos del universo,  soy sustento de toda persona.</p>
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As in “Tlaoltzintli,” maize is presented as a meaningful interlocutor. Its description as the *bak’el* (*carne*; flesh) of the *yáax yuumo’ob* (*primeros padres*) recalls the *Popol Wuj*, in which the gods create the first humans from white and yellow maize (Christenson 2007, 195), and similar descriptions of a shared substance in the Nahuatl poem. The phrase “a wíinklile’” (*tu cuerpo*; your body), interacts with “u bak’el” (their flesh) to form the traditional parallel structure that is widespread in Mesoamerican literature (see Montemayor 1999, 44–53). In “Ixi’im,” this structure effectively foregrounds the co-constitutive relationship between maize and humanity. The result is a crosshatch pattern whereby the beginning of the first line and the end of the second refer to maize (*teen* [I]; *ixí’im* [maize]), while the end of the first line and the beginning of the second refer to humanity (*yáax yuumo’ob* [first fathers]; *a wíinklile’* [your body]).

This pattern recalls the close association between textiles and writing in Maya thought, with both practices falling in the semantic orbit of *ts’íib*, the Maya expression of the “graphic impulse” (Teuton 2010), as discussed earlier. The Yucatec Maya writer Pedro Uc Be (2016, 11) describes how agriculture is likewise “un ejemplo de escritura; se limpia el espacio, luego se pone la semilla para que nazca la vida, la palabra, la historia, el alimento del alma.” In these ways, the structure of the opening lines recalls the multimodality of *ts’íib*, anticipating the poem’s potential to enact a counterhegemonic literary cartography as it progresses.

The interweaving of maize and humanity continues through the third and fifth lines of the Maya version (which refer to maize) and the fourth and sixth (which refer to humanity). Out of this lateral, dialogic relationship emerges the projection of time and space: from the “first fathers” in the opening line, the stanza progresses to “los hijos de la tierra” (*u paalal yóok’ol kaab*; the children of the earth), whereas the geographical expansion across the “cuatro puntos del universo” (*kanti’itsil lu’um*; the four corners of the universe) includes “toda persona” (*tuláakal máak*; every person). The Maya version separates the latter two phrases in a two-line stanza, which emphasizes this sense of extension over vast distances. The allusion to the cardinal directions evokes the four main colors of maize and their cartographic significance, recalling a similar depiction in “Tlaoltzintli.” Maya color symbolism is nonetheless different from that of the Nahua world: red (east), white (north), black (west), and yellow (south), as well as green (the young maize shoot that represents the growing, central axis of the world).

In these ways, Dzul Barboza, like Xochitiotzin Pérez, enacts a “social polygraphy” (Velasco Álvarez 2020) that combines the culturally specific with the universal. Through the central trope of maize, both writers reaffirm a distinctively Maya and Nahua interpretation of the landscape which extends beyond national or ethnic territories to encompass the world at large. When set in dialogue, the two “arboreal” cultural nodes gain more rhizomatic properties as they complement each other’s cartographic perspective and bring forth a deep map that resists any definitive representation.

The word *lu'um* (in “*kanti'itsil lu'um*”) refers to “earth” as substance, which imparts “*itz*, ‘sap’ or ‘the holy substance of life’ to growing plants and other things” (Dunning and Beach 2004, 10); this forms “part of a cyclical system in which *yiitz ka'an*, ‘the holy substance of the sky,’ is believed to bring fertility to the earth in the form of rainfall” (10). Reenacted as *lu'um*, the land regains its regenerative capacity; this is also suggested by the “scattering” (*k'i'itpajal*) of maize seeds that extends rhizomatically in all directions and whose new shoots will nurture (*tséent*) “*tuláakal máak*” (*toda persona*; every person), as well as by the suffix *-pajal*, which indicates habitual action (Martínez Huchim 2014, 211). The rendering of *lu'um* as “universe” in the Spanish version again suggests how the revival of linguistic, cultural, and agricultural diversity at the local level opens up new ways of understanding geography at a larger scale. Like the allusion to healing in the Nahuatl poem, the phrase “*ki'iki' o'och*” (*sabroso alimento*; delicious sustenance) can be interpreted in terms of existential, not only physical, nourishment.

The second half of the poem, however, reveals that the nourishing properties of maize are in danger of vanishing forever:

<p>Ba'ale', ok'om óolalen, ts'o'ok a tu'ubsken, ma' ta pak'ik a kool, ma' ta k'áatik in kuxtal yéetel sujuy tiich'il. Wa ma' ta kanáantik le k-lu'umila', ba'ax yéetel ken a tséent a paalal, táan a xu'ulsik in kuxtal, táan a xu'ulsik xan a ch'i'ibal.</p>	<p>Pero, la tristeza me envuelve, Te has olvidado de mí, ya no pones semillas en la milpa, ya no pides con primicias por mi vida. Si ya no cuidas nuestra tierra, ¿con qué sustentarás a tus hijos? Estás acabando con mi vida, estás acabando también con tu linaje.</p>
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The phrase *ok'om óolalen* translates roughly as “I am of heavy heart,” with *ok'om* denoting acute suffering, and *óolalen* comprising the noun *óol*, the adjectival suffix *-al*, and the first-person suffix *-en*. As the anthropologist Gabriel Bourdin (2007, 5, 12) explains, the *óol* is a key concept in Maya philosophy that is related to the European notions of soul, spirit, mind, and feelings; it constitutes a “núcleo a partir del cual se irradia un cierto crecimiento o movimiento vital de orientación centrífuga y ascendente.”

As the “punto central a partir del cual se irradia la vida y se organizan el espacio y el tiempo” (Bourdin 2007, 12), the *óol* recalls the vertical and lateral growth of plants, while linking “el ‘núcleo’ de la persona con el centro del mundo” (5). This concept therefore combines the arboreal and rhizomatic qualities that allow a person to locate themselves in relation to the landscape around them. The *óol* is arboreal in growing upward from a specific position, yet it is also rhizomatic in its outward dialogical projection and combination of temporal and spatial aspects, which eschews any notion of an absolute standpoint. Moreover, because everyone has an *óol*, the geographical “center” is a matter of perspective and shifts from one person (or plant) to another. In these ways, the Maya concept of *óol* opens the path to a pluralistic cartographic vision as “social polygraphy” (Velasco Álvarez 2020) that is “radical” in both senses of the adjective (vegetal and transformative), embracing the “indeterminate complexity” (Maher 2014, 11) that characterizes any place.

In the *Popol Wuj*, it is only when humans are re-created from maize that they acquire the dialogic capacity that gives them full understanding of their place in the world (Christenson 2007, 197). While constituting a general term for anguish, the phrase *ok'om óolal*, in the context of the poem, also evokes the role of maize as the key element in human consciousness. The mutual dependence of maize and humanity is emphasized by the parallel use of the first-person suffix *-en* in the first and second lines of the Maya version. In the first line, maize is the subject of *ok'om óolal* (anguish); in the second, it is the grammatical object that has been forgotten (*tu'ubs-*) by humanity.



The Spanish version, in contrast, conveys the vegetal nature of maize through the verb *envolver*, which suggests leaves and recalls another animating entity, the *pixa'an*. The term designates a “cobertura o envoltura de la persona” (Bourdin 2007, 15), which, following the European invasion, became equated with the Christian soul and, unlike the *óol*, is believed to survive physical death (16). The body, *pixa'an*, and *óol* comprise the three main dimensions of the human being, which emerges as a totality by reading across the poem’s two languages. That it is, moreover, the voice of maize that causes humanity to appear reaffirms the plant’s key role in human evolution according to Maya tradition. The sadness of the *óol* of maize reflects the loss of bearing in the *óol* of humanity, which has gone astray by forgetting traditional ways of relating to the land.

Such traditions constitute the cycle of agricultural rituals that Dzul Barboza alludes to in the stanza. As the literary scholar Carlos Montemayor (1999, 54) explains, through ritual prayers “se conserva la forma correcta de salutación a la divinidad, a los santos y a las presencias sagradas de los campos, montañas, cuevas, ríos y bosques”; maize is the chief offering in such ceremonies because humans were created from it (103). The ontological entanglement of maize and humanity is further illustrated by the possessive suffixes: “a kool” (your field) and “in kuxtal” (my life). The line, “ma’ ta k’áatik in kuxtal” can be interpreted either as “you do not enquire after my life” or as “you do not ask permission for my life,” suggesting a loss of care or curiosity.

Similarly, the phrase “yéetel sujuy tiich’il” contains the conjunction *yéetel* (with), the adjective *sujuy* (chaste, virginal), and the noun *tiich’il* (stretching out, in the sense of an offering); the latter is derived from the verb, *tich’*, which refers to the act of extending one’s arm in a gesture of engagement or assistance. In the context of agricultural rituals, Dzul Barboza’s use of this verb can be interpreted as indicating the dialogic projection of the individual toward the surrounding landscape. In this way, the poet signals the lateral expansion of the *óol* and opens the possibility of new “cartographic narratives” (Cruz 2020, 22) that emerge through and with the landscape rather than being imposed from above. The line “wa ma’ ta kanáantik le k-lu’umila” (*Si ya no cuidas nuestra tierra*; If you no longer care for our land) emphasizes this sense that the land (*lu’um*) is shared, particularly through the first-person plural possessive marker *k-* (*nuestro*) in combination with the suffix *-il* on *lu’umila’* which, in this context, denotes inalienable belonging to a particular place. The deictic suffix *-a’* indicates immediacy, so that the whole word translates roughly as “this land of ours right here,” serving to remind the reader of what is directly before them yet rendered invisible through loss of compass.

As with Xochitiotzin Pérez’s evocation of “roots,” Dzul Barboza’s allusion to “ch’i’ibal” (*linaje*; lineage) has both arboreal and rhizomatic qualities. On the one hand, it suggests the relative immobility of ethnic affiliation and family “trees,” yet in the *Popol Wuj*, the first nations diversify rhizomatically as they migrate through the land (Christenson 2007, 213). Indeed, the “lineage” is left unspecified, suggesting an ever-widening sense of allegiance that can encompass the whole of humanity.

While “Ixí’im” focuses on the loss of biocultural diversity, Dzul Barboza, like Xochitiotzin Pérez, proposes an alternative representation of the land founded on traditional principles of dialogue. Some examples discussed were the allusion to the cardinal directions, the Maya concept of *lu’um* (earth), and the rituals that sustain the relationship between people and landscape. Read through the lens of *ts’úib*, which encompasses writing, farming, and mapping, the poem can be interpreted as cultivating a renewed vision of the land as reciprocal and agential, rebelling against efforts to objectify and define it. This “critical impulse,” borne of the interplay between oral and graphic traditions (Teuton 2010), enables specific cultural concepts to reconfigure cartographic imaginaries at a hemispheric, trans-Indigenous (Allen 2012) scale.

### Central Peruvian Quechua: “Willka Hara”

Tracing the rhizomatic expansion of maize southward, we leave Mesoamerica for the Andes to engage with César Vargas Arce’s poem, “Willka Hara/Maíz sagrado” (Vargas Arce and Sigüeñas Vivar 2008, 44–45), written in Central Peruvian Quechua. Vargas Arce hails from Pichiw San Pedro in Huari province, part of the Conchucos valley. He is a specialist in intercultural bilingual education as well as a poet and singer-songwriter. The term *willka* means both “sacred” and “grandchild” (Carranza Romero 2003, 280), indicating here how the religious role of maize in the Andes is inseparable from its function in sustaining life.

Maize, while a crucial food source in its solid state, is generally consumed in central Andean ritual contexts in the form of the fermented beverage known as *chicha* in Spanish, *aswa* in Central Quechua, and *aqha* in Southern Quechua. The drink “was highly important in the economic, ritual, political, military, and social functioning of both the elite, and common people of the Inka Empire” (Duke 2011, 265) and “remains the central alcoholic beverage in indigenous ritual life” (2011, 267). Bill Sillar (2009, 373) notes how “*chicha*-drinking is a communal activity” and “a form of communication with the ancestors and animate world.” The capitalization of *hara* (maize) in the title and identical first line of the poem can therefore be interpreted as an indication of the crop’s cultural significance and, similarly to the Mesoamerican poems, of its relatability, even personhood.

The poem is arranged in three stanzas, the first of which is as follows:

Willka Hara ima shumaqmi pampakunachaw winanki, shikshinki, hirkakunata kushitsinki.	Maíz sagrado qué bonito creces y floreces, en las pampas y valles alegrando a las montañas.
--	--

The stanza describes maize as *shumaq*, which the linguist Francisco Carranza Romero (2003, 223) defines as “bonito, precioso, agradable” and “tranquilo,” while *shumaqlla* means “con cuidado, sigilosamente, con astucia.” Margarita Manosalvas (2014, 114) notes how *sumak* (the Ecuadorian cognate used in the politicized phrase, *sumak kawsay* or “buen vivir”) is frequently described as indicating “un sentido de plenitud, completitud, excelencia.” While the Spanish counterpart *bonito* emphasizes the aesthetic dimension, the Quechua term arguably locates aesthetics within wider ethical and relational parameters.

From this standpoint, it is the relational dimension of *shumaq* that enables the plant to grow (*wina-*) and blossom (*florecer*). As in Xochitiotzin Pérez’s poem, maize is addressed directly (indicated by the second-person verbal suffix *-nki*). In the stanza, this dialogic capacity extends to an engagement with the entire landscape: “pampa-kuna-chaw” (*en las pampas*, or “in the pampas”) and, in the Spanish version, “valles” (valleys) express the crop’s capacity to embed itself in the specific topographical features of the Andes, while the plural markers (*-kuna* in Quechua) and the verb *shikshiy* (to scatter straw; Carranza Romero 2003, 218) suggest the crop’s rhizomatic expansion over a wide expanse of land. The description of maize as “cheering” (*kushitsi-*) the hills (*hirkakuna*) indicates its full participation as a form of *qillqay* (inscription) in the semiotic tapestry of the landscape.

My interpretation of the poem is informed by the Quechua concepts of *pacha* (or *patsa* in Conchucos Quechua) and *ayni*. Josef Estermann (2013) defines *pacha* as “el todo de lo que existe en forma interrelacionada, el universo ordenado mediante una compleja red de relaciones, tanto en perspectiva espacial como temporal.” Understood as one manifestation of *pacha*, “agriculture represents the dialogue which occurs between diverse beings within the natural collectivity” (Gonzales 2000, 203). *Ayni* “is the basic give-and-take that governs the universal circulation of vitality” and constitutes “a kind of dialectical pumping mechanism” (Allen 1997, 76) that enables vital energy to circulate within the totality of *pacha*. By integrating itself into the land’s natural processes, maize enables the landscape

to flourish and plays its part in the continual revitalization of nutrients. In the same way, by interpreting the landscape through a distinctly Andean worldview, Vargas Arce enacts a deep map that presents an alternative literary cartography of the land as *pacha*, namely, evolving and relational, rather than as a fixed territory.

The second stanza develops these themes further:

Willka Hara	Maíz sagrado,
mishkiq tulluykikuna,	tus dulces tallos,
quyu rapraykikuna	tus verdes hojas,
ima munaylla	qué lindo juegan
quya quya	con el viento de la mañana.
wayrawan pukllan.	

The repetition of the crop's name at the start of every stanza suggests a constant process of mutual adaptation, even a ritual formula uttered at key moments during the agricultural year, recalling Dzul Barboza's Maya poem. This theme of continual regeneration is indicated at several points in the above lines. For example, the description of the maize canes (*tulluykikuna*) as *mishkiq* (*dulces*; sweet) indicates their provision of energy, while both the Quechua and Spanish terms suggest an agreeable character, a connotation that is heightened by the literal meaning of *tullu*, "bone," which hints at the ontological entanglement between maize and humanity and the role of the former in human rebirth. Catherine Allen (1982, 187) describes how people in Sonqo, southern Peru, considered dry bones to "exert a fertilizing, seminal influence," just as maize does in Vargas Arce's poem.

The wordplay of *quyu* (*verdes*; green), in reference to the leaves (*rapraykikuna*), and *quya quya* (every morning) can be interpreted as emphasizing the cyclical rejuvenation of the landscape. Given the punning, the allusion to play (*pukllay*) is self-referential. Susan Ross (2020), commenting on a study among the Peruvian Q'ero community, describes how her research participants viewed *pukllay* as a "natural state" (4) that cultivates a "union between self and other through direct reciprocal relationship" (5). As a "biopsychospiritual relational activity," *pukllay* "causes the individual to heal, mature, and learn in order to become a fully developed human" (4) and manifests most frequently through ritual and creative activities (4), within which poetry can certainly be included.

In this way, *pukllay* helps eliminate *hucha*, the negative, heavy energy that only human beings create, restoring the light, life-enhancing energy (*sami*) that circulates naturally in the world (Ross 2020, 5–6); this function bears a close resemblance to Vargas Arce's description of maize "playing with the wind" (*wayrawan pukllan*). In Teuton's (2010) framework, the phrase could suggest the relative spontaneity of oral expressions, which balance the fixity of graphic representations and, in line with the argument of this article, have the potential to replace rigid models of territory with a more "playful" cartographic imaginary. Indeed, *pukllay* also denotes the Andean Carnival festivities that celebrate fertility and renewal.

The term *wayra* (wind) can also refer to the spirit or *animu* that Xavier Lanata (2007) defines as "la fuerza de realización contenida en cada ser" (82), including features of the landscape, and that frequently manifests as air currents during shamanic rituals (162). As a ritual act, Vargas Arce's poetic invocation of maize can be interpreted as a form of reanimating the land by participating in ancestral channels of communication, and thereby reaffirming the land's sociocultural (not only economic) significance (Springerová and Vališková 2021, 780).

The final stanza looks to the future with a vision of hope:

Willka Hara	Maíz sagrado
mishki wiruykiwan,	con tu dulce caña,
mishki muruykiwan	con tu dulce grano
waktsa wamrakunapa	alimentas la sed y el hambre
mallaqayninta, yakunayninta	de los niños huérfanos,
takpatsinki,	ay maicito, maíz querido.
ay, kuyaylla hara.	

Following the repeated ritual invocation of maize in the first line, the parallelism of the second and third lines conveys a continual sense of growth as the stalk emerges from the seed and subsequently satisfies the thirst (*yakunay*) and hunger (*mallaqay*) of humanity, described as “niños huérfanos” in Spanish and “poor” or “abandoned” (*waktsa*) “children” (*wamrakuna*) in Quechua. At one level, the term *waktsa* alludes to the widespread poverty in the Andean hinterland but, as specified by the Spanish *huérfanos* (orphans), the word’s deeper meaning is an absence of social relations. As Estermann (2013) states, “La ‘vida’ se define, en los Andes, prácticamente por la relacionalidad, y la muerte —si existiera en forma absoluta— sería la expresión de la más absoluta falta de articulación y relación, el aislamiento o solipsismo total.” In the present context of mass acculturation, migration to cities, and relentless environmental destruction, orphanage can also be interpreted in terms of the rupture from networks of meaning which, for millennia, have bound people together as communities within a sentient landscape.

By recourse to Quechua concepts such as *shumaq* (ethics and aesthetics), *pukllay* (play), and *wayra* (wind, animating spirit), and by evoking the reciprocal relationship between agriculture and the wider topography, Vargas Arce offers hope for the revitalization of these networks. While, like the Nahuatl and Maya poems discussed earlier, “Willka Hara” does not focus explicitly on mapping, all three evoke culturally specific notions of landscape, which, when set in a trans-Indigenous (Allen 2012) dialogue, open the possibility for a hemispheric literary cartography that is flexible enough to include multiple geographical perspectives.

### **Bolivian Quechua: “Yuyasqa sarachay”**

Following the rhizomatic spread of both maize and the Quechua language family, we reach the southernmost node in this article, represented by the Bolivian writer Emilio Corrales’s poem, “Yuyasqa sarachay/Maíz de mi recuerdo.” Corrales studied under Aquilino Alvarado Bonifacio in the Intercultural Bilingual Education program at the Instituto Normal Superior, Caracollo, Oruro department. His poem was originally published alongside the work of Alvarado Bonifacio (2006, 98–99) and his other students, then subsequently in Noriega Bernuy’s (2016, 792–793) anthology. Invoked through the Bolivian variety of Southern Quechua, a distinct language from Central Peruvian Quechua, maize transforms from *hara* to *sara*, while the diminutive suffix *-cha* (used in an affective sense) and the first-person possessive *-y* in the title indicate the species’ integration into human spheres of relationality; the word *sarachay* can be roughly translated as “my dear maize.”

The term *yuyasqa* (remembered) indicates a retrospective focus, recalling Dzul Barboza’s Maya work “Ixi’im.” Rosaleen Howard (2002, 46) notes how the “cultural function of remembering in Andean ways of thinking is a regenerative one, whereby the past provides the symbolic resources for making sense of the present and projecting toward the future, in a way that allows at once for continuity and change.” Storytelling and festivals are crucial for the maintenance of such historical continuity (Howard 2002, 29–30), and like the other poems discussed in this article, “Yuyasqa sarachay” can be read

as a continuation of this originally oral tradition, recalling Teuton's (2010) discussion of the necessary balance between the "oral" and "graphic" impulses to sustain the dynamism of cultural innovation.

In a similar vein to Xochitiotzin Pérez's allusion to the many colors of maize, Corrales highlights the crop's diversity by invoking *chuspillo*, a specific variety:

Ch'uspillu puka simi sarachay	Ch'uspillu maíz de boca roja
Llamp'u yuraq sunquchayuq,	de corazón suave y blanco,
Chukchasapa wawachay	guagüitay de pelos largos
P'achayniykipis watamanta wata	tus ropas de año en año
Pachamamayki mayt'u'ykusunki.	la Pachamama te envuelve.

While the past participle suffix *-sqa* in *yuyasqa* (remembered) hints at the loss of traditional maize varieties and their associated cultural meanings, the very act of remembering offers hope for their resurgence. Indeed, the mention of the colors red and white recalls Oswaldo Torres Rodríguez's (2015, 32) description of healing rituals in the central Peruvian Andes: red (*puka*) indicated love, happiness, strength, and courage, while white (*yuraq*) bestowed health, peace and a change of destiny (29). The term *sunqu*, commonly translated as "corazón" (heart), though incorporating a wider semantic orbit, was traditionally considered a source of consciousness, reason, memory, judgment, willfulness and understanding during the colonial period (González Holguín [1608] 1989, 328). This relates to the description of "long hair" (*chukchasapa*), which Allison Caine (2019, 84) found to be associated with stubbornness in the Cordillera Vilcanota, southern Peru, with the hair-cutting ceremony of *chukcha rutukuy* constituting "a significant milestone in a child's development as a social being" (Caine 2019, 84). In conjunction, these elements all suggest youthfulness yet resilience, the capacity for regeneration.

The expression "watomanta wata" (year on year) conveys the cyclical nature of this process of continual rejuvenation, rooted in the agricultural calendar, as does the wordplay between the near homophones, *p'acha* (clothes) and *pacha* (relationality, spacetime) in *Pachamamayki* (your Pachamama). Given the polysemy of *pacha*, which, as discussed earlier, includes both space and time, it would be misleading to view Pachamama as an Andean equivalent of "Mother Earth." Daniela Di Salvia (2011) describes the concept as "una *esencia anímica* materna" that perpetuates "los ritmos biológicos de nacimiento, crecimiento y regeneración vegetal y agrícola." The Quechua second-person possessive suffix (*-yki*) indicates a personal relationship with the land that varies between individuals ("your Pachamama"), in contrast to the Spanish version, which defines it as objective and singular ("la Pachamama"). The possessive suffix thereby reveals a more perspectival understanding that recalls the multifaceted nature of deep map writing, while the allusions to regeneration hint at the revival of traditional Andean conceptions of landscape.

The second stanza continues these themes:

Ch'uspillu misk'i suru sarachay	Ch'uspillu de saliva dulce
Tukuyapaq munasqa puka simichayuq	boca roja, querido por todos,
Makimanta maki puriykacharinki,	caminas de mano en mano
Munasqaykimanjina wirayachisqayki	a tu gusto te engordaremos
Ch'uspillu misk'i sunqu sarachay.	ch'uspillu maíz de corazón dulce.

The reference to being "querido por todos" (*tukuyapaq munasqa*; loved by everyone) recalls Sarah Kollnig's (2020, 34) discussion of how the Morales government (2006–2019) used "culturally engrained food habits, such as eating *chuspillo* (dried maize), as symbols to evoke national unity"; in this light, the phrase can perhaps be interpreted as a nod to the "plurinational state." This interpretation would illustrate another aspect of the deep map

invoked by Corrales's poem, one that is inscribed within national borders but reconceptualizes the state in terms of a plurality of cultural perspectives, in a similar way to Xochitiotzin Pérez's listing of maize terms in several Indigenous languages of Mexico.

The expression "makimanta maki" (*de mano en mano*; hand in hand) likewise evokes maize as a symbol of unity through diversity. Combined with the phrase "watamanta wata" (*de año en año*; year on year) in the previous stanza, it complements spatial expansion with temporal cyclicity, reflecting the inseparability of space and time in *pacha*. The verb *puriy* (in *puriykacharinki*) is frequently translated as "caminar" (to walk), but as Bruce Mannheim (1998, 256) explains, has "a semantic range from 'to travel' to 'to function,'" denoting "a kinetic form of existence, one that cancels the notion of 'boundedness' and implies either motion or the interaction of parts." Corrales's use of this verb for a plant is highly marked and, in combination with the iterative suffix *-ykacha*, which indicates repeated action such as the swaying of leaves in the breeze, creates the possibility for a new way of conceptualizing the landscape as freed from the confines of static cartographic representations. The sense of movement and expansion resonates with Maher's (2014, 23) description of the deep map as "a rhizomatic genre, extending in infinite ways" that "resists any master paradigm."

While not obvious at first, a similar interpretation can also be argued for the phrase, *wirayachisqayki* (I will fatten you), which contains the root, *wira* (fat), and, in the poem, may also denote pregnancy. Francis Ferrié (2015, 110) describes how, for people in the Apolo region of western Bolivia, to "eat and drink fat substances maintains the vital force and prevents diseases." *Wira*, moreover, circulates "between animal, plant, human, and non-human entities" (113) in such a way that "physiology and cosmology are connected" (105). From this perspective, Corrales's allusion to *wira*, a life-giving substance that integrates the individual with the wider world, suggests the reemergence of a more intimate and evolving relationship with the landscape.

The final stanza returns to the theme of memory:

Sarachay, pitaq qunqasunkiman,	Maíz, quién te puede olvidar,
Munakuyki ñañitay,	te quiero hermanita,
Ama saqwaychu ñañitay	no me dejes hermanita
Jallp'a jallp'aman puñuchikusqayki,	te haré dormir sobre arena
Yaku yakupi tusuchikusqayki.	te haré bailar sobre agua.

The rhetorical question can be read as a jolt to the reader's conscience, recalling Dzul Barboza's Maya poem, which laments the decline of traditional agricultural practices. To quote Rosaleen Howard (2002, 30), in Andean philosophy, forgetting "is the way that neglect of social and ritual obligations is described, and it is punishable in the form of sickness, crop failure, even death." Despite the explicit mention of loss in the third line, grammatical agency rests with maize, perhaps serving as a counterpoint to the widespread presumption of human dominance. The word *ñañitay* (hermanita) is used as a general term of affection in the Andes, but its suggestion of kinship is also significant.

The parallelism of the last two lines enacts a complementary relationship between *jallp'a* (earth) and *yaku* (agua; water), as well as between *puñuy* (dormir; to sleep) and *tusuy* (bailar; to dance). Mary Strong (2012, 166) describes how dance "was one of the highest forms of prayer" in the pre-Columbian Andes; commenting specifically on the "scissor dance," still performed today, Strong explains that the "basic purpose is to ensure a good water supply" (167) for agriculture. Indeed, the lines suggest both sowing and irrigation, while sleeping evokes dreaming, which, in Andean thought, is related to divination and revelation (Cecconi 2011, 404). Literature, another artistic genre that has its roots in ancient rituals, can likewise be considered a form of cultivation, and Corrales's bilingual



poem a kind of irrigation that revives buried memories and, in so doing, opens the path to alternative ways of imagining geography.

Corrales's focus on memory as a means of inspiration for the future recalls the Bolivian sociologist Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui's (2010, 54–55) insight, "El mundo indígena no concibe a la historia linealmente, y el pasado-futuro están contenidos en el presente"; this opens the possibility for an alternative, Indigenous take on modernity as "un continuo retroalimentarse del pasado sobre el futuro" (55). In these ways, Corrales, like Vargas Arce, draws on ancestral Quechua concepts to reawaken more reciprocal modes of understanding and engaging with the landscape. Some examples included color symbolism, *Pachamama*, *puriy*, *wira*, and the regenerative role of memory. While "Yuyasqa sarachay" is not overtly cartographic in nature, the effect is to open the door to alternative geographical imaginaries, out of which "new cartographic narratives" (Cruz 2020, 22) can arise. In combination with the three other poems discussed in this article, Corrales's work forms another thread of a multiperspectival deep map at a hemispheric scale.

## Conclusion

In this article, I have attempted to illustrate how bilingual evocations of maize in contemporary Indigenous literatures afford multiple cartographic perspectives. As noted from the outset, my goal has been to unearth each poem's implicit cartographic potential, not to speculate on authorly intention or to suggest what each poem may ultimately be "about." I have attempted to show how, intentionally or otherwise, the four poems open up alternative ways of understanding geography and how setting them in dialogue relativizes dominant definitions of the hemisphere such as "(Latin) America" while not excluding them altogether. Moreover, in their different ways, Xochitiotzin Pérez, Dzul Barboza, Vargas Arce, and Corrales all evoke landscapes as living, moving and agential, as exceeding any effort to define them.

The theoretical concepts of literary cartography (Van Noy 2003), textual continuum (Teuton 2010), deep map (Heat-Moon 1991; Maher 2014), and rhizome (Deleuze and Guattari 1980) have enabled me to reveal the cartographic implications of Indigenous writing on maize, as have the Indigenous terms *ihcuiloa*, *ts'ib* and *qillqay*, which conceive of no strict distinction between mapping, writing, and other forms of inscription. Like the poems it discusses, the structure of this article recalls that of a textile pattern, with a complementary relationship between the two female Mesoamerican poets and the two male Andean poets. Similarly, the prospective vision of the first Mesoamerican and Andean poems and the retrospective vision of the second poem in each half recall the cyclical aspect of space-time that is rooted in the agricultural calendar and which anticipates the land's renewal each year.

In a project of this nature, there is always the risk of doing precisely the opposite of what it intends, namely, of constructing a false sense of uniformity in the effort to draw connections. I have tried to mitigate this by basing my textual analysis on specific cultural concepts in particular Indigenous languages and by setting my discussion within a "trans-Indigenous" framework (Allen 2012) that takes as its starting point the local and particular, drawing comparisons without effacing differences. The focus on maize, a hemispheric crop that has propagated diverse cultural institutions, has been especially useful in this regard. Maize is a vector of both connection and divergence, in the same way that Spanish serves, in bilingual Indigenous literature, as a point of mediation between multiple languages: in the present case, between Nahuatl, Yucatec Maya, Central Peruvian Quechua and Bolivian Quechua.

Both maize and the Spanish language, however, can also become "monocultural" instruments of hierarchy and homogenization, associated with what Arjun Appadurai (2000, 6–7) calls "trait geographies," namely, efforts to define a particular region in terms of fixed properties. While each of the four poems discussed in this article is grounded in

specific cultural concepts—such as *nemiliztli*, *nacayotl*, *xochitlahtolli*, *óol*, *pixa'an*, *lu'um*, *shumaq*, *wayra*, *pukllay*, *pacha*, *puriy*, *wira*—in combination, they illustrate the shifting complexities of “process geographies” (Appadurai 2000, 7) that belie efforts to define a region according to any master signifier. In these ways, by weaving a dialogue between different cultural, linguistic, and literary traditions, the article seeks to move toward alternative cartographic imaginaries that are not totalizing and absolute but that shift perspective with each node on a moving tapestry. What emerges from this conversation is, I have argued, a multiperspectival literary cartography at a hemispheric scale.

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