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Recommended Citation
Peter Schmidt. (2005). "Colonial Romance: Williams's Dark "Supplying Female"". *William Carlos Williams Review*. Volume 25, Issue 1. 79-92.
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Colonial Romance: Williams's Dark "Supplying Female"

Peter Schmidt
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—IN HONOR OF GLORIA ANZALDÚA'S LIFE AND WRITINGS

Williams's understanding of cultural criticism cannot be separated from his understanding of what happens when two or more cultures meet. But the primal scene for such interaction in Williams's imagination, as it has been for many other European and European American writers, is a meeting between a white male and a darker-skinned woman who represents another, an Other, culture. For Williams, the central drama of this scene turns on whether or not the man is courageous enough to welcome contact with a new world that the woman represents, or whether with fear and hate he will turn away from it (or attack it; both produce disastrous results). Williams usually casts this drama as a kind of morality play, tracing the destructive consequences if the man refuses contact and the regenerative powers that are released if contact is achieved. Further, he implies that only when the "beauty" of the New World is appreciated can a lust for material gain and violence not overtake the man's New World enterprise. Representative heroes in Williams's work are thus figures like the Columbus stunned by the "orchidean beauty" of the New World (AG 27), or Aaron Burr awe-struck before an Indian huntress named Jacataqua, both featured prominently in *In the American Grain* (1925), Williams's book-length analysis of the meaning of the history of the Americas. It is impossible not to be disturbed by the sometimes uncritical fascination Williams brings to such a scene, however. It makes sense to call such a scenario a "colonial romance" because Williams is often, though not always, seduced by the possibilities the romance narrative gives him for having his male heroes exercise sexual as well as colonial power.

Such a narrative encounter may be called the "Pocahontas" motif in Williams's writing. Admittedly, Williams was not directly drawn to the famous story of Cap-

tain John Smith and Pocahontas, for an examination of this tale and the colonizing enterprise in Virginia is pointedly omitted from *In the American Grain*. Yet, as Marianne Moore said in a very different context, omissions are not accidents; the issues of colonial and sexual politics raised by the Pocahontas story are everywhere present in Williams's poetic and prose allegories of cultural history.[1]

Williams presciently intended all of his work to be a rejection of Eurocentrism in the name of a New World poetics. This is one of many reasons why he was been such a strong influence on contemporary writers. But by grounding so much of his cultural criticism and his artistic goals in colonial romance, Williams inevitably reinscribed one of the oldest clichés of European thought, that the New World exists to allow the Old to regenerate itself, to make itself new. Williams does try to engage this narrative critically, especially during certain moments that are buried within the texts most seduced by the Pocahontas motif, but overall he is as enchained as his hero Columbus was by the contradictions of colonial romance.

To test some of the above generalizations, I would like first to examine some representative scenes from Williams's version of this romance plot. My central texts will be drawn from Williams's most important writings from the 1920s, *Spring and All* (1923) and *In the American Grain*, and two important works from the 1940s, *Paterson, Book One* (1946) and a letter to an Australian editor about his goals that Williams wrote in that same year. I will end by arguing that colonialist assumption embedded in Williams's supposedly "modernist" romance celebrating the new is endemic to both U.S. and American modernism. I suggest that different approaches to New World cultural history by some Latino/a, African American, Asian American, and Latin American writers provide alternative ways of conceptualizing both the history of colonialism and the history of the New World. My conclusion is not meant to be a rebuke of the limits of Williams's imagination, but an indication of how subsequent writers' innovations in cultural studies can be well defined by a comparative study of their work and Williams's.

Consider first a document that is less well known than it should be, a letter Williams wrote in 1946 that was republished many years ago in the *William Carlos Williams Review*.[2] This letter-essay is arguably Williams's most succinct definition of his modernist poetics. Culture, he says, is essentially a site of contention between those who would repeat the past by making it appear new and those who would undo our inherited understanding of what is new and what is the past. Even more provocatively, Williams casts this conflict in a highly gendered way, as a contrast between a sense of tradition as an all-male pantheon of geniuses and a tradition that must venture outside of itself to renew itself. In Williams's view, the

all-male pantheon reproduces by a kind of literary parthenogenesis in which Difference and Newness are created by recombining the Same. As an alternative, Williams advocates what he clearly imagines as a kind of sexual intercourse in cultural history, the renewal of what he concedes is an essentially male tradition by turning to what he calls the "supplying female," the turbulent present, the world of all that has not yet been represented by inherited cultural forms (12). In his words, "there may be another literary source continuing the greatness of the past which does not develop androgynetically from the past itself mind to mind but from the present, from the hurley-burley of political encounters which determine or may determine it, direct" (10). Rather than reproducing the power relations of the past, Williams claims, this second tradition actually produces a power reversal, so that the artist becomes feminized and "fertilized" by the present and significantly new cultural forms are created. Such a tradition may include women as well as male writers, as proven by Williams's tributes to the work of Stein, Moore, Dickinson, and others elsewhere in his writings. Nevertheless Williams's alternative tradition remains profoundly androcentric, and we must not shy from the many implications of a term like the "supplying female" for the source of renewal necessary to Williams's poetics.

For readers of Williams's earlier *Spring and All*, for example, such an *ars poetica* allows us suddenly to see in new ways the narrative structure of Williams's most important volume of poetry mixed with prose manifesto. It moves from his opening attack on the "traditionalists of plagiarism" (CP1 185) who shield themselves from contact with the new, to various breakthrough moments of contact with a "savage" creative source embodied in figures such as the "Arab / Indian / dark woman" central to the last poem in the collection (CP1 236). Most often in *Spring and All* the new is not personified by such a woman but is created through an encounter with her by a male creative principle. This male force achieves new technological and modernist power once it comes into contact with a ground that is outside of history and is coded as either natural or female or both. (Consider the poem "the rose is obsolete" (CP1 195), where a natural or female rose may be outdated but the masculine, high-tech one constructed in its place—synecdoche for Williams's entire project in *Spring and All*—is absolute, not obsolete.) One of the parallels for such a power imbalance is colonial: what is defined as "female" supplies raw materials to the male artist, as colonized countries supply materials for transformation in colonial centers. What makes the ending of *Spring and All* so revealing is that it codes the ground upon which masculine renewal takes place in racial terms, thus fusing its sexual politics with the politics of colonial relations with its subjects, its "dark woman."

In the American Grain works similarly, definitively demonstrating that the role of the "supplying female" for Williams can be fully understood only within the context of colonialism. As Bryce Conrad has argued in his book on *In the American Grain*, the sexual politics of two chapters at the heart of the book, "Jacataqua" and "The Virtue of History," are key. "Jacataqua" is a long analysis of the role of repression in the building of New World civilizations influenced by Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (and, I would argue, Brooks Adams's *The Decline of Civilization*, a book Williams knew from his student days). Williams uses Freud to argue that in general a death instinct drove European cultures in the Americas to try to reproduce themselves intact in the New World without any real contact with it, for it terrified them. To do this, they had to demonize and then destroy the Native cultures they encountered, except for a few heroic individuals driven by a cultural version of the pleasure principle rather than the death instinct. These heroic exceptions in Williams's view strove to achieve contact with the new rather than destroy it.

The cultural hero with whom Williams has the most investment in his *American Grain* narrative is probably Aaron Burr. Cast as a rebel against Washington, Hamilton, Franklin, and all sorts of other personalities representing Williams's version of the death instinct—centralized government, monopoly capitalism, cultural repression, sexual hypocrisy, and threats to democracy in culture and politics—Burr exemplifies the forces for cultural renewal in history, what Williams's chapter on Burr calls the "virtue of history." Burr's character is introduced to us at the end of the "Jacataqua" chapter, where Williams stages Burr's encounter with the New World as a sexual encounter with a Native American woman, Jacataqua, whom Williams apparently invented inspired by stories of Burr's many romantic conquests. Jacataqua's noble savagery and witty challenge to Burr— "these [men] want meat. You hunt with me? I win" (AG 187)—leaves Burr speechless and aroused. But far from representing an encounter with Native culture, such a scene merely casts Native strength as a supplying female to European colonialism; Jacataqua in this scene defines her prowess, after all, in terms of a competition to see who can capture the most provisions for the conquering army of which Burr is a member.

Perhaps trying to answer Henry Adams' charge that American culture's idealized and sterile images of women represent its death instincts and its fear of contact with the new, Williams in *In the American Grain* turned to Henry's brother Brooks Adams and adopted his theory that civilizations will become inbred and die unless they perfect the means to induce continual infusions of new blood into themselves. Normally this occurs via intermarriage between male cultural elites

and women of another class or race. For this reason Williams stresses that Jacataqua showed "the best traits of her mixed French and Indian blood" (AG 186) and that Burr demonstrates his democratic virtues by accepting her challenge. But Williams has been clearly seduced here by colonial romance, for Burr's contact with Jacataqua (like John Smith's with Pocahontas) hardly represents contact with the new so much as it does an affirmation of colonial power: the new is defined as a provider for that power, a site of raw materials.

Williams's cultural politics of the supplying female extends, as Bryce Conrad has pointed out (131–32), to his methods of research. His wife Flossie did all of the research on Burr and then presented her findings to Williams. Inspired by their conversation, Williams cast his chapter on Burr, "The Virtue of History," into an argument between two people, one of whom has researched Burr's life and defends him as a champion of democracy and women while the other remains skeptical. Like Burr, Williams appropriates the findings of his "supplying female" to his own uses, which include giving voice to his wife's interpretations, countering them, then making both sides of the argument ultimately his own.

Elsewhere in "Jacataqua" and other moments throughout *In the American Grain*, however, Williams presents another narrative of the encounter between two cultures that goes somewhat against the grain of colonial romance. I am thinking in particular of two scenes, though others could be chosen. One is Williams's analysis in the "Jacataqua" chapter of the uses of violence against scapegoats, especially Indians, blacks, and Jews, as a way of giving a group a sense of identity and coherence in the midst of rapid social change and uncertainty. Influenced by D. H. Lawrence's *Studies in Classic American Literature* (1923) and anticipating Richard Slotkin's analysis of American culture in *Regeneration Through Violence* (1973), among other works, Williams stresses that such spectacles of violence are essentially expressions of economic fears coded as an abhorrence of race-mixing: "Do not serve another for you might have to TOUCH him and he might be a JEW or a NIGGER" (AG 177). Williams goes on to chronicle the story of a white man who saw the twins his wife gave birth to and immediately accused her of sleeping with a black man, only to find later that he had a black person in his family six generations before (AG 177). While such moments in *In the American Grain* testify powerfully to Williams's interest in decoding the roles played by race prejudice, violence, and power in the history of the New World, Williams's fascination with colonial romance is hardly undone in this scene. It is no accident that the story about contact between a *man* of color and a *woman* who is white is narrated in roughly ironic language mocking the racial

fears of whites, while the Pocahontas motif in Burr's story is narrated with all the epic grandeur and sexual innuendo Williams can invent. Such a conjunction may complicate the colonial romance at the heart of *In the American Grain*, but it hardly undoes it.

Another scene in *In the American Grain* may provide a stronger counter-narrative: I'm thinking of the moment when an enslaved old Indian woman gets revenge upon her enslaver, Ponce de Leon, by prophesying that he will find gold and eternal youth in the New World; driven by her vision, he explores ceaselessly and eventually meets his death (AG 42–43). (The chapter on de Soto engages in a further elaboration of this motif.)

But the strongest deconstruction of the colonial romance that exists in Williams's work may very well be the prose about the "Jackson's Whites" near the beginning of *Paterson* I. It is arguably the moment in Williams's work in which the issues of colonialism, race-mixing, and cultural criticism come together most powerfully and unpredictably. Because of the detective work of Christopher MacGowan, we now know that most of this passage is probably Williams's own prose, inspired by reading various sources in 17th- and 18th-century New Jersey and English history. "Jackson's Whites"[3] were actually a *mestizo* or mixed-blood population of fugitives living in the Ramapo Mountains of northeastern New Jersey, made up of Indians, Hessian deserters, escaped Negro slaves, women who had been brought by a contractor named Jackson to New York to be "comfort women" for British mercenaries, and descendents of Irish and Africans who were mated by British colonials in the Barbadoes to breed slaves and later had somehow escaped to the U.S. and found this band of fugitives in New Jersey. I quote from *Paterson*:

> The mixture ran in the woods and took the general name, Jackson's Whites. (There had been some blacks also, mixed in, some West Indian negresses, a ship-load, to replace the whites lost when their ship . . . foundered in a storm at sea. . . .)
>
> New Barbadoes Neck, the [New Jersey] region was called.
>
> Cromwell, in the middle of the seventeenth century, shipped some thousands of Irish women and children to the Barbadoes to be sold as slaves. Forced by their owners to mate with the others these unfortunates were succeeded by a few generations of Irish-speaking negroes and mulattoes. And it is commonly asserted to this day the natives of Barbadoes speak with an Irish brogue. (P 12–13)[4]

Here colonial romance is seen through the eyes of its victims rather than its

"heroic" exemplars. Race-mixing is understood not as democratic regeneration but as a by-product of economic coercion. Further, in foregrounding the brutal history of colonialism in this way Williams does not do what he often does, suggesting that an appreciation of what *In the American Grain* called the "orchidean beauty" of the New World would somehow have made New World history less racist and violent. It is true that the piece's outrage seems driven by the fact that the victims of this colonial breeding policy were predominantly European. There is no comparable analysis in *In the American Grain* or *Paterson* of the effect the slave trade had on Africans, for example. (For two brilliant poems on the slave trade and Africans remaking New World cultural history, influenced by Williams's *Paterson* and Eliot's *The Waste Land*, see Robert Hayden's "Middle Passage" and "Runagate Runagate.")

Williams's "Jackson's Whites" vignette stresses how class and racial divisions have been exploited in the history of the Americas to provide cheap labor for capital. Such a thematic motif links well with the later role in *Paterson* played by Williams's Burr-inspired critique of Hamilton. In *Paterson* II Williams reveals Hamilton to be one of the villains of his epic. To put it bluntly, Williams sees Hamilton as a traitor. Hamilton urged that the newly freed U.S. colonies achieve economic independence, but in Williams's eyes the labor policies and work rules of the new mass-production U.S. industries based in Paterson and other sites in New England that Hamilton promoted gave them such power that they essentially functioned like industrial forms of plantation labor (P 69, 73–74). Moreover, they destroyed an indigenous and decentralized network of cottage industries creating "homespun" that was prepared to provide local sources for clothing and thus independence.[5]

In short, Williams is most critical of Hamilton because under the guise of creating a powerful independent state he set up a government state whose treasury was controlled by the major business powers and whose new economic structures (especially in the new mass-production industries) were essentially neocolonial in Williams's view. Williams leaves his readers to make a connection between his depiction of class and race as they functioned in the Caribbean and as they functioned in New Jersey, for the "Jackson's Whites" passage comes early in *Paterson* I while the crucial documents Williams will use to indict Hamilton appear in *Paterson* II. But once that connection is made, key elements are in place for a New World narrative that is antithetical to colonial romance and links the history of Latin American and the Caribbean with that of North America.[6]

Williams's entrapment within colonial discourse even as he tries to construct a critique of New World history is symptomatic of a dilemma shared by all New

World writers, but a quick comparison of Carlos Williams's approach to those of other cultural critics demonstrates how constricting indeed was the Pocahontas subtext in Williams's work. I've already mentioned Robert Hayden. Other black writers from James Weldon Johnson, Sterling Brown, and Melvin B. Tolson, to James Baldwin, Toni Morrison, and bell hooks, have pondered white America's obsession with the meaning of race-mixing. They have noticed that it is either celebrated by whites as a route for the regeneration of the white race or (more commonly until very recently) damned as causing degeneration of the racial traits of all races involved. Rarely is race-mixing understood as involving rape and disinheritance, the two common motifs stressed when black writers approach the subject, for black writers cannot conceive of race-mixing apart from the history of how it functioned within the context of white supremacy and the slave system in the New World.[7]

Similarly, the Latin American imagination has been fascinated with the Native American woman who became Cortez's translator and lover, La Malinche; she is a figure many U.S. readers would no doubt associate with Pocahontas. But Latinos never consider this figure without alluding to the cultural condition they call *la chingada*, the state of being fucked-up, entrapped within the violence of the power struggle between Native and European cultures. Recently, with Chicano/a culture in the U.S. as one example and the writing of the Cuban Roberto Fernández Retamar as another, this condition of *chingada* has been transformed into a culture of resistance, ironic appropriation, and transformation—the cultures of the borderlands or, in Retamar's formulation, of Caliban.[8] Like black blues culture, such cultures explore the possibilities of all kinds of mixture, including racial mixture, but theirs is the opposite of a colonial romance, and central to their narrative is Caliban's curse, his using of the master's linguistic tools to foretell the dismantling of the master's house. In these writers the curse and its consequences are foregrounded rather than buried, as the Indian woman's curse is in the midst of the romance of Williams's *In the American Grain*. (And yet given what happens to Ponce de Leon, Williams at least subconsciously had to admit that his colonial romance had to be seen as its opposite—a curse, a death wish.)[9]

In 1975 Sacvan Bercovitch suggested a new paradigm for American cultural studies and cultural criticism in his book *The Puritan Origins of the American Self*. In that book he argued that the Puritans bequeathed to U.S. culture a semiotics of representative selfhood that effectively co-opted all forms of cultural criticism into consensus. That is, any protest against dominant American narratives would become merely an antithesis in a Hegelian narrative of synthesis—in this case, reaffirming ideals of assimilationist American selfhood. Bercovitch's analy-

sis was a tour de force of synthesis and detail, but from the present standpoint its limitations as well as its strengths appear, for Bercovitch's equations can compute neither race nor gender as a variable, and it is only with some strain that it can handle class difference. Just as importantly, they cannot acknowledge forms of resistance that are *not* co-opted by a dominant interpretive voice.

I would argue that an equally powerful narrative embedding oppositional voices into consensus in New World history has been what this paper has called the Pocahontas motif, and that it can only be critiqued by a counter-narrative such as that provided by interpreting La Malinche's dilemma, or that of Retamar's Caliban or Williams's unnamed Indian slavewoman. From such a perspective, Williams's importance lies in the fact that of all the European American modernists in the U.S. he explored most thoroughly the colonial romance's seductions and contradictions. One of Williams's central concerns from "The Wanderer" (1914) involved an examination of how conquering the New World also involved containing its speech and imposing European names and concepts onto the new. Given this concern, however, it is extremely odd that the most famous (or notorious) figure who confronted the difficulties of translating and mediating between the New World and the Old, La Malinche, is never mentioned in Williams's chapter criticizing and evoking the power of Cortez's colonialist language. (They are perhaps forms of "representative selfhood" that do not model assimilation but rather difference and resistance.) To devote a chapter to Malinche's dilemma might have forced Williams to face rather than ignore the contradiction between the slavewoman's curse and Jacataqua's come-on in his depiction of women in the New World legends. And yet, in recreating Cortez's narrative in English, Williams places himself in many ways *precisely* in La Malinche's position—recreating in another language Cortez's epic pretensions, yet also trying to find a way of criticizing Cortez from within his own discourse.

Williams's narratives in *Spring and All* and *In the American Grain* usually downplay or ignore the parallels that suggest themselves between Williams and the female victims of New World history. Williams in the mid-1920s clearly preferred to identify his project with that of heroic male figures such as Daniel Boone or Aaron Burr. But earlier, in *Kora in Hell* (1920; written, 1917–18) Williams constructed an alter ego for himself as an artist of *la chingada*, of Kora in the borderlands. Afterwards—from *The Great American Novel* (1923) through *The Descent of Winter* (1928) and *Paterson* (particularly the "Cress" passages based on Marcia Nardi's letters)—Williams was continually haunted by this restless and turbulent ghost within his modernist machines made out of words. She may indeed have been his most important muse.

Recently Williams critics, including Paul Mariani, Julio Marzán, and Lisa Sánchez González have begun stressing the relevance of Williams's own "mixed" family ancestry. Though Williams's parents revered Anglo, French, and German culture as the height of civilization, both spoke fluent Spanish and had deep family roots in the Caribbean—specifically, St. Thomas and Santo Domingo (now the Dominican Republic) on his father's side and Martinique and Puerto Rico on his mother's. He also had English blood from his father and a mix of Basque and Sephardic Jewish blood via Holland and then Puerto Rico on his mother's. (Further, one side of his mother's family was in Martinique since the early nineteenth-century and very well may have intermarried some with "black" Martiniquans.) Spanish was frequently spoken in Williams's home as he was growing up—it may well have been the first language Williams learned and English the second, since his mother preferred speaking to him in Spanish when he was young. Though Williams could pass for "white" he insistently kept Carlos in his middle name in both his professional and private lives. Today Williams would be called "Latino." Culturally, Williams and Langston Hughes are our crucial Modernist poets of linguistic borderlands and culture clash. And if any figure in colonial history embodies Williams's special position within both mainstream American culture and international Modernism it is not so much Pocahontas or even Jacataqua but that Latina Kora figure, Malinche.

I end with two quotations. The first is the closest Williams may have ever gotten to speaking from La Malinche's position as a betrayed translator, an inhabitant of the border marking the contradictory history of all "our" Americas: "History, history! We fools, what do we know or care? History begins for us with murder and enslavement, not with discovery. No, we are not Indians but we are men of their world. The blood means nothing; the spirit, the ghost of the land moves in the blood, moves the blood. It is we who ran to the shore naked, we who cried, 'Heavenly Man!' These are the inhabitants of our souls, our murdered souls . . . " (AG 39).

The second quotation is from an essay by the filmmaker Trinh T. Minh-ha, one of a host of contemporary cultural critics whose work marks the transition from modernism to the postmodern, from the romance of the new to a discourse of the diaspora, a world of multiple departures, returns, borders, and identities. Trinh engages in this work knowing only too well that colonial romance must be continually deconstructed because it continually reinvents itself and its forms of seduction and of power.

> Re-departure: the pain and the frustration of having to live a difference

> that has no name and too many names already. Marginality: who names? whose fringes? An elsewhere that does not merely lie outside the center but radically striates it. . . . Effacing [identity] used to be the only means of survival for the colonized and the exiled; naming it today often means declaring solidarity among the hyphenated people of the Diaspora. . . . Identity is a way of re-departing. Rather, the return to a denied heritage allows one to start again with different re-departures, different pauses, different arrivals. . . . She dares to mix; she dares to cross the borders to introduce into language . . . everything monologism has repressed. ("Cotton and Iron" [1991]; 14)

When Jacataqua and La Malinche speak in new ways and reconfigure "old" histories, the postcolonial prospects for cultural criticism in the Americas have begun to be heard. This cultural shift is now occurring, and nothing can stop it.

Notes

1. Mary Dearborn has published a study of gender and ethnicity in American culture that uses John Smith's Pocahontas story as a defining paradigm. And Annette Kolodny has eloquently discussed the cultural history of figuring the land in female terms. Both works do not focus on Williams but are indispensable for the kind of analysis undertaken here. A global context to the histories of colonialism and desire is given in works such as Robert Young's *Colonial Desire* and Anne McClintock's *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest.*

2. Originally published in 1946. Republished in the *William Carlos Williams Review* 17.2 (Fall 1991): 8–12.

3. Williams doesn't comment on the assumptions behind the name "Jackson's Whites," or even sketch its history. But it hardly needs to be pointed out that there are strong parallels between naming a people after their contractor and the Southern practice of having slaves (and ex-slaves) receive their last name after their "master" (cf. Gutman, who of course also focuses on the naming practices of blacks that attempted to counteract the effects of the slave system and reaffirm kinship ties and individuality). In the case of "Jackson's Whites," though, the name is clearly anachronistic, for the population living in the Ramapo Mountains was perhaps more akin to the maroons, the escaped slave communities, than to a slave or even an indentured servant community.

4. The final paragraph in the Jackson's Whites passage, as Christopher MacGowan and others have pointed out, comes from Seamus MacCall, *Thomas Moore* (London, 1935). In the one substantive change Williams made to this quotation, he substituted "the others" for "Negro men" (P 257). Why? The change was hardly necessary for clarity's sake; in fact, Williams's change makes what happened to the Irish women less clear until the rest of the

sentence is read. Could Williams have been shying away from referring to interracial sex when it involves a black male and a white woman, since it is the opposite of the relations between a white male and a woman of color that is central to his colonial romance? If so, such an evasive impulse is rather at odds with the reasons why Williams apparently chose to include the passage in his New World epic.

5. It should be noted that in *Paterson* Williams is not critical of mass production or sentimental toward cottage industries so much as he is protesting the way in which mass industrialization occurred abetted by the U.S. government, giving workers minimal rights and power. For more on this issue and Williams's critique of Hamilton, see Schmidt, *Williams* 197–200. My present view is that Williams's critique of Hamilton is much too simplistic, but can provide excellent discussion points for those who would use *Paterson* as a guide to renewing the study of the colonial and early federal periods in U.S. history.

6. The only other passage in *Paterson* I and II that prominently refers to the Caribbean identifies with a colonialist ancestor of Williams's in Santo Domingo (in the present-day Dominican Republic), who fled his home as "Revolutionists" approached (P 26). For more on the Caribbean roots on both sides of Williams's family, see Mariani 2–17, Julio Marzán, and my discussion in the conclusion to this paper.

7. For more on this topic beyond the writers mentioned, see Dearborn 131–58, Berzon, Mencke, Fredrickson, Murray, and Nielsen. Jordan summarizes laws passed regarding miscegenation, 167–78. Scheick focuses on white/Indian intermixing. Murray supplements Brown's critique with the excellent insight that miscegenation also represents the indubitably composite reality of American culture, and that white America's inability to face its own history of race-mixing also was related to its inability to conceive of the truly composite—African-American and Native as well as European-American—nature of New World culture. Nielsen provides an excellent overview and criticism of the representation of racial difference in Williams's poetry and selected prose, among other authors discussed. Morrison appears unaware of Nielsen's book but gives an invaluable revisionist reading of American literary history in *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*. She uses a revealing quotation from Williams's "Adam" as an epigraph for a section of her book (61): "But there was / a special hell besides / where black women lie waiting / for a boy—."

8. For two very different discussions of the significance of La Malinche and *la chingada* in Mexican and Chicano culture, see Paz and Tagg/Sanchez-Tranquilino. Chicanos/as have profound disagreements with Paz and other Mexican intellectuals, beginning with Paz's assessment that Chicano culture is an illegitimate and debased reenactment of the noble and tragic dilemma of La Malinche.

9. This is not to say that elements of the Pocahontas myth in a somewhat different form have been absent from the Latin American imagination; *The Cosmic Race*, published the same year (1925) as *In the American Grain* by the Mexican writer José Vasconcelos, argues that interbreeding in the New World has created a new race, the mestizo, that will eventually transform the New World. But it is the rare Latin American writer who would celebrate

the moment when La Malinche decides to provide Cortez with words with the same gusto as Williams celebrates Jacataqua's invitation to provide meat.

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