



Decolonising Futures: Afrofuturism and Indigenous Futurisms in Contemporary Latin American and Caribbean Literature

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Abstract— Latin American and Caribbean literatures have increasingly turned to speculative genres to confront crises of ecology, race, and identity. Moving beyond the hegemony of magical realism, writers across the region employ Afrofuturism and Indigenous Futurisms to reimagine futures historically denied to marginalized communities. This article situates these currents within the broader speculative turn in the Americas, tracing how Afro-Caribbean and Indigenous epistemologies reshape science fiction, fantasy, and dystopian forms. Through close readings of works such as Rita Indiana's *La mucama de Omicunlé* and Edmundo Paz Soldán's *Iris*, alongside anthologies like *Prietopunk*, the study demonstrates how Afro-diasporic spirituality and Indigenous cosmovisions function as speculative technologies, disrupting colonial temporalities and projecting decolonial imaginaries. Afrofuturist texts foreground diasporic hybridity, queerness, and oceanic memory, while Indigenous Futurisms emphasize cyclical time, ecological survival, and sovereignty. Their convergence signals a hemispheric movement where speculative fiction operates as resistance literature, rehearsing cultural survival against extractivism and ecological collapse. By reading these strands together, the article argues that speculative fiction in the Americas is a central site of decolonial thought and world-making.

Keywords— *Afrofuturism, Indigenous Futurisms, Latin American speculative fiction, Decolonial imaginaries, Hybrid temporalities, Caribbean literature*



I. INTRODUCTION

Latin American and Caribbean literatures have long been laboratories for imagining alternative realities, where myth, politics, and cultural memory intersect in complex ways. For much of the twentieth century, the region's most visible literary export was magical realism, epitomized by Gabriel García Márquez's *Cien años de soledad* (*One Hundred Years of Solitude*, 1967). That style, with its layering of everyday life and the fantastic, helped articulate histories of colonial trauma and social upheaval to international

audiences. Yet in recent decades, writers from across the Americas have turned from the backward glance of myth-infused realism toward the forward-looking experimentation of speculative fiction. Science fiction, fantasy, and other “futurist” modes are increasingly used to probe ecological disaster, authoritarian legacies, and the persistence of racial and gender inequities. As Pilar Marrero (2023) notes, “writers who once turned to magical realism to understand their societies are increasingly turning to science fiction and fantasy” (para. 5). This “speculative

turn" signals not a rejection of regional traditions but their reinvention to confront the uncertainties of the present and the looming crises of the future.

Scholars of Latin American cultural studies have begun to chart this transformation. Rachel Haywood Ferreira (2007) demonstrated that science fiction has roots in the region extending back to the nineteenth century, even if it was long overlooked by critics. More recently, Tobin (2018) has argued that Latin American science fiction studies have entered "a new era," with growing recognition of the genre's capacity to reframe debates about modernization, identity, and global interdependence. Within this landscape, two particularly vital and underexplored currents have emerged: Afrofuturism and Indigenous Futurisms. These bodies of work adapt speculative tropes—time travel, cybernetic bodies, ecological apocalypse, interplanetary migration—to the histories and epistemologies of African-descendant and Indigenous communities in the Americas. In so doing, they contest the colonial logics that once cast Black and Indigenous peoples as "without future," positioning them instead as protagonists of tomorrow.

Afrofuturism, long studied in U.S. and African diasporic contexts, has recently been recognized in Caribbean and Latin American literatures as a distinct cultural current. Maguire (2024) argues for a "specifically Caribbean Afrofuturism" that reworks diasporic memory and syncretic religious traditions into speculative forms. Rita Indiana's novel *La mucama de Omicunlé* (Tentacle, 2015), for example, deploys Santería rituals, queer temporalities, and ecological catastrophe to dramatize the entanglements of Afro-Caribbean spirituality, gender, and environmental crisis (Deckard & Oloff, 2020; Perkins, 2021). Meanwhile, anthologies such as *Prietopunk* (2022) testify to the consolidation of Afrofuturism as a genre in the Spanish-speaking Caribbean (González Fernández, 2023). These works mobilize speculative aesthetics to reclaim technology, futurity, and narrative agency for Afro-descendant communities historically excluded from dominant models of progress.

In parallel, Indigenous Futurisms have taken root across Latin America, particularly in Andean and Amazonian contexts. Prado (2023) identifies a burgeoning "neoindigenist" science fiction that draws upon ancestral myths and spiritual cosmologies while engaging with contemporary issues such as extractivism, urban migration, and climate change. Liliana Colanzi (2023) highlights the figure of the *aparapita* in Bolivian cyberpunk, a symbol of indigenous labor reimagined through biomechanical enhancements, embodying the hybridity of tradition and high technology. Cortés Correa (2023) further theorizes how indigenous speculative stories collapse temporal

boundaries, producing "tiempos mixtos" (mixed times) that disrupt linear colonial narratives. Collectively, these texts enact what López-Pellisa (2023) describes as a posthumanist indigenismo, one that projects Indigenous presence and knowledge into the future as acts of survival and resistance.

The significance of these Afrofuturist and Indigenous futurist literatures lies not only in their aesthetic innovation but also in their political charge. They challenge the coloniality of power (Quijano, 2000) by refusing futures defined solely by Western modernity, instead imagining pluriversal horizons shaped by Afro-diasporic spirituality, Indigenous ecological wisdom, and hybrid cultural practices. As Josephs (2013) demonstrated in her reading of Erna Brodber's *The Rainmaker's Mistake*, such speculative forms can destabilize historical fixities and reconfigure Caribbean memory. In both Afro and Indigenous strands, speculative fiction functions as a decolonial imaginary—what Merla-Watson (2017) calls *altermundos*, "alternative worlds" crafted from the margins to unsettle and rework dominant narratives of time, identity, and technology.

This article argues that reading Afrofuturism and Indigenous Futurisms together, as comparative decolonial projects, enriches our understanding of contemporary Latin American and Caribbean literature. While Afrofuturist works tend to foreground diasporic movement, syncretism, and oceanic memory, Indigenous Futurisms emphasize rootedness, ecological continuity, and cyclical temporality. Yet both converge in their insistence on marginalized communities as central actors in the future of the Americas. By placing these literatures in dialogue, this study seeks to illuminate how speculative genres not only reflect the crises of the present but also imagine the conditions of survival, justice, and renewal.

Finally, this focus aligns directly with the mission of *Review: Literature and Arts of the Americas*, which has consistently foregrounded emergent cultural currents—whether magical realism in the 1970s, pan-Caribbean arts in the 2000s, or eco-literature in recent years. By analyzing Afro and Indigenous futurisms together, this article extends that tradition, spotlighting the region's writers as they seize the tools of science fiction and fantasy to articulate decolonial futures. In so doing, it demonstrates how Latin American and Caribbean literature continues to serve as a crucible of imaginative resistance and cultural innovation.

From Magical Realism to Speculative Modernities

Latin American and Caribbean literatures have long been marked by formal experimentation and hybrid narrative modes that resist the neat classifications of Euro-American literary traditions. The global success of magical realism in the mid-twentieth century crystallized this reputation.

Writers such as Gabriel García Márquez, Alejo Carpentier, and Isabel Allende crafted works that blended myth, history, and the everyday, making visible the supernatural as part of ordinary life. For decades, magical realism dominated how global audiences understood the region's cultural production. Yet as critics such as Rachel Haywood Ferreira (2007) remind us, other speculative forms—particularly science fiction—were already present in Latin America from the nineteenth century, though they remained marginalized within national canons. Ferreira's genealogy of early Latin American science fiction shows that long before the “boom” of magical realism, writers were using futuristic and scientific motifs to grapple with modernization, nation-building, and imperial contact. This overlooked history underscores that the speculative has always been integral to the region's literature, even if critics often relegated it to the periphery.

By the end of the twentieth century, however, the dominance of magical realism began to wane, and writers turned increasingly toward dystopian and science-fictional registers to confront new social realities. Ursula Heise, in an interview with Marrero (2023), emphasizes that Latin American speculative fiction differs from its Anglo-American counterparts by prioritizing social context over technological innovation. In this tradition, futuristic São Paulo in Ignácio de Loyola Brandão's *Não verás país nenhum* (*And Still the Earth*, 1981) serves not as a playground for gadgets but as an allegory of ecological collapse under dictatorship. Similarly, Edmundo Paz Soldán's *Iris* (2014) depicts a dystopian mining colony, reflecting the entanglement of neoliberal extractivism with indigenous dispossession. These texts highlight how the speculative genre in Latin America is not escapist but diagnostic: it holds up a mirror to the structural inequalities and environmental crises that shape everyday life. As Marrero (2023) observes, contemporary authors are “turning to science fiction and fantasy to explain the world around them” (para. 5), suggesting a shift from mythic pasts to speculative futures as the preferred idiom of social critique.

The emergence of critical discourse around Latin American science fiction reflects this transformation. Tobin (2018) argues that the field of Latin American science fiction studies is entering “a new era,” characterized by sustained scholarly attention, anthologies, and conferences dedicated to the genre. Collections such as *Cosmos Latinos* (2003) and *Altermundos* (Merla-Watson & Olguín, 2017) have provided platforms for voices historically absent from dominant literary narratives, particularly Afro-descendant, Indigenous, and Latinx writers. This scholarly infrastructure has created the conditions for recognizing Afrofuturism and Indigenous Futurisms not as peripheral

curiosities but as central currents within Latin American speculative production. The consolidation of these fields suggests that Latin American literature is no longer tethered to magical realism as its global signature, but instead participates in a dynamic and diverse speculative tradition.

A critical feature of this shift is the way speculative fiction engages with the material crises of the region. Climate change, urban inequality, migration, and authoritarian resurgence provide the raw material for dystopian imaginaries. Deckard and Oloff (2020) argue that Rita Indiana's *La mucama de Omicunlé* should be read as part of the “New Oceanic Weird,” a mode of speculative fiction that links ecological devastation of the sea to histories of slavery and colonial violence. In this sense, Indiana's work exemplifies how speculative fiction has absorbed the region's ecological and racial crises into its narrative fabric. Similarly, Josephs (2013) reads Erna Brodber's *The Rainmaker's Mistake* as a Caribbean Afrofuturist text that destabilizes the linearity of colonial time, showing how the speculative allows for new imaginings of post-emancipation futures. Both cases illustrate how the speculative turn functions as a means of confronting the unfinished business of colonialism through futuristic idioms.

Another reason for the prominence of speculative forms lies in the broader cultural climate of the twenty-first century. As Jorge Carrión, cited in Marrero (2023), observes, “the region is finding in its literature the futures that politicians are incapable of imagining” (para. 10). This statement captures the stakes of the speculative turn: literature is not merely reflecting reality but actively compensating for political paralysis and institutional failures. In societies where environmental degradation, corruption, and inequality appear entrenched, speculative fiction becomes a space to imagine alternatives—often dystopian, but sometimes utopian in their decolonial orientation. Such imaginaries reassert literature's role as a laboratory of possibility when political systems fail to deliver.

The speculative turn is also deeply tied to questions of identity and belonging in the Americas. As Maguire (2024) argues, Caribbean Afrofuturism incorporates diasporic memory and religious traditions to imagine futures rooted in Black Atlantic experience. For Indigenous writers, speculative fiction provides a vehicle for asserting continuity of culture and knowledge in the face of narratives that consign Indigenous peoples to the past (Prado, 2023). These literary strategies reflect what López-Pellisa (2023) terms “posthumanist indigenismo,” where Indigenous and Afro-descendant epistemologies enter into dialogue with speculative tropes to produce alternative visions of modernity. In both Afro and Indigenous strands, speculative

fiction offers not only critique but also affirmation: it insists that marginalized communities will shape the future, rather than be erased by it.

This background demonstrates that the speculative turn in Latin American and Caribbean literature is not a rupture but a reorientation. It builds upon long histories of speculative writing in the region, from nineteenth-century scientific romances to twentieth-century dystopias, while adapting to contemporary crises of ecology, governance, and identity. In this context, Afrofuturism and Indigenous Futurisms stand out as distinct but interrelated expressions of the decolonial imagination. They mobilize speculative genres not only to expose the violence of the present but also to envision survivance and transformation. Understanding their emergence requires situating them within this broader trajectory: a literary field moving beyond the hegemony of magical realism toward speculative modernities that reimagine the Americas' past, present, and future.

II. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The emergence of Afrofuturism and Indigenous Futurisms in Latin American and Caribbean literatures can be fully understood only by situating these practices within broader theoretical currents of speculative cultural production. Afrofuturism, first theorized in African American contexts, describes the use of science fiction, fantasy, and other speculative forms to reimagine Black identity, history, and future possibilities. While Mark Dery coined the term in the 1990s, subsequent critics and practitioners have expanded its scope. Reynaldo Anderson (2016) situates Afrofuturism 2.0 as part of a Black speculative arts movement that integrates digital culture, performance, and literature into a global project of cultural redefinition. Afrofuturism thus becomes less a bounded genre than a methodology of reclaiming futurity for African-descendant communities historically excluded from dominant narratives of modernity. In the Caribbean, as Maguire (2024) argues, Afrofuturism takes on specific resonances: histories of slavery, syncretic religious practices, and the oceanic imaginary infuse speculative works with distinct textures. What emerges is a "Caribbean Afrofuturism" that reconfigures diasporic memory and spiritual epistemologies into visions of tomorrow.

Latin American contexts complicate the picture further through the articulation of Latinofuturism, or Latinx Futurism, which intersects with but is not reducible to Afrofuturism. Millán (2019) defines Latinofuturism as a speculative current that draws on Chicanafuturism and other Latinx aesthetic practices to project alternative futures. This builds upon Catherine Ramírez's (2004) theorization of Chicanafuturism, in which artists retool science-fiction

tropes to interrogate borderlands identities, technological exclusion, and cultural hybridity. Merla-Watson (2017) extends these insights by describing Latin@futurism as a stitching together of heterogeneous materials—ancestral myth, digital media, and popular culture—to create *altermundos*, alternative worlds that resist dominant narratives of linear progress. Within the Latin American context, these approaches underscore the flexibility of speculative genres: they are not merely about imagining space travel or futuristic technologies, but about reconfiguring cultural belonging, racial hierarchies, and histories of displacement.

Indigenous Futurisms add yet another dimension, one that emphasizes continuity and survivance rather than rupture. Grace Dillon's (2012) *Walking the Clouds* established the term to describe speculative works by Indigenous authors in North America, highlighting how they project traditional knowledges and cosmologies into the future. In Latin America, critics such as Prado (2023) have adapted the concept to describe *ciencia ficción neoindigenista*, a new form of indigenist science fiction that blends ancestral mythologies with speculative narratives. Prado notes that this subgenre reclaims narrative space for Indigenous characters and epistemologies, offering counterpoints to narratives that cast Indigenous peoples as relics of the past. Alemany (2023) suggests that these works move beyond neoindigenismo toward a postindigenismo, marked by hybrid forms and posthumanist engagements that complicate essentialist notions of indigeneity. Bianchi (2023) expands this framework by examining how indigenous speculative fiction engages with posthumanism, presenting Indigenous bodies as sites of technological and cultural fusion rather than as untouched by modernity.

Temporal frameworks are central to these imaginaries. Cortés Correa (2023) highlights how indigenous speculative stories frequently collapse linear time through what she terms *tiempos mixtos*, mixed times that juxtapose ancestral and futuristic horizons. This temporal hybridity is not merely stylistic; it destabilizes the colonial imposition of linear progress, asserting instead cyclical and relational models of temporality grounded in Indigenous cosmovisions. In a similar vein, Afrofuturist texts often reconfigure temporality by drawing on African diasporic spiritual practices, where ancestral presence disrupts Western chronologies. Caruso (2023), in her reading of Rita Indiana's *Tentacle*, demonstrates how Santería rituals enable characters to traverse time, inserting Afro-Caribbean spirituality directly into speculative futures. Such temporal disruptions reflect what López-Pellisa (2023) calls posthumanist indigenismo, in which non-Western epistemologies reshape not only narrative content but also the very structure of speculative imagination.

The convergence of Afrofuturism, Latinofuturism, and Indigenous Futurisms in Latin America and the Caribbean foregrounds hybridity as a method. As Merla-Watson (2017) suggests, Latin@futurism thrives on assemblage, bringing together disparate materials and genres to unsettle narratives of mastery. This hybridity is evident in Caribbean Afrofuturist works that merge cyberpunk aesthetics with orisha cosmologies (Maguire, 2024; González Fernández, 2023), and in Andean cyberpunk narratives where indigenous bodies are reimagined through biomechanical prosthetics (Colanzi, 2023). Rather than treating tradition and technology as oppositional, these literatures insist on their co-presence, dramatizing how marginalized communities negotiate modernity on their own terms. Such hybrid forms challenge the binaries of primitive versus advanced or past versus future, binaries that underpinned colonial discourses of progress.

Taken together, these conceptual frameworks demonstrate that speculative fiction in the Americas is not a peripheral experiment but a central decolonial strategy. Afrofuturism reclaims technological and temporal agency for Afro-descendant communities, Latinofuturism situates diasporic and borderlands experiences within futuristic imaginaries, and Indigenous Futurisms insist on the persistence of Indigenous knowledge in shaping humanity's future. Each of these strands responds to specific historical traumas—slavery, displacement, colonization—but their convergence signals a broader cultural project: to imagine futures in which the peoples most excluded by colonial modernity are not only present but central. This comparative framework will guide the analyses that follow, illuminating how Latin American and Caribbean speculative literatures mobilize futurity as a tool of resistance, survivance, and cultural renewal.

Analysis I – Afro diasporic Futures

Afrofuturism in Latin American and Caribbean contexts emerges as both a continuation of global Black speculative traditions and a distinct articulation shaped by the histories of slavery, colonialism, and diaspora in the Americas. While the concept developed largely in North American cultural criticism, its resonance in the Caribbean and Latin America demonstrates the adaptability of Afrofuturist aesthetics to diverse sociopolitical environments. Caribbean Afrofuturism, as Emily Maguire (2024) emphasizes, is not simply an extension of U.S. Afrofuturism but a unique current where Afro-Caribbean spiritual practices, diasporic memory, and the legacy of the Middle Passage configure speculative futures. This literature insists that Afro-descendant communities, often marginalized in national narratives, are central actors in imagining the future. By foregrounding Afro-Caribbean epistemologies in

speculative contexts, these works dismantle colonial binaries that associated technology and progress with whiteness while relegating Blackness to the past.

Rita Indiana's novel *La mucama de Omicunlé* (*Tentacle*, 2015) exemplifies this tendency. Set in a near-future Dominican Republic devastated by ecological collapse, the novel follows a transgender protagonist navigating time travel enabled through Santería rituals. As María Cristina Caruso (2023) argues, Indiana's integration of Afro-Caribbean religion into a speculative framework constitutes a "futurismo caribeño" that challenges Eurocentric visions of science fiction. The orishas, divine figures from Yoruba religion carried into the Caribbean through the slave trade, function in the novel as technologies of temporal and ecological repair. This use of ritual as speculative machinery unsettles the Western assumption that futurity is a secular, technological domain. Instead, Afro-diasporic spirituality becomes the very medium of accessing and reshaping time. In this sense, *Tentacle* not only critiques environmental degradation but also asserts Afro-Caribbean culture as indispensable to imagining survival in a collapsing world.

Critics have illuminated how Indiana's novel refigures ecological crisis through the lens of race, gender, and history. Sharae Deckard and Kerstin Oloff (2020) describe the work as part of the "New Oceanic Weird," in which marine ecosystems devastated by pollution and overfishing become sites for confronting the legacies of slavery and extractive capitalism. They argue that Indiana's novel links contemporary ecological devastation with the historical violence of the transatlantic slave trade, drawing connections between the exploitation of the sea and the commodification of Black bodies. This reading positions *Tentacle* as both a climate novel and a post-slavery narrative, demonstrating how Afro-Caribbean Afrofuturism fuses ecological and racial critique. The novel also destabilizes heteronormative frameworks by centering a transgender protagonist, whose gender transitions parallel temporal transitions, a point developed further by Perkins (2021), who interprets the text through a lens of queer materiality. The speculative technologies of the novel, then, are not neutral; they embody intersections of race, sexuality, and ecology, all framed through Afro-diasporic cultural resources.

The queer dimensions of Indiana's Afrofuturism deepen its decolonial charge. Humphrey (2022) argues that Indiana's narrative produces "fluid temporalities" that queer linear histories of nationhood and progress. By reimagining bodies, time, and place through Afro-Caribbean rituals and queer subjectivities, *Tentacle* subverts the logics of colonial temporality that equated modernity with heteropatriarchal

and racial hierarchies. Acevedo-Reyes (2025) similarly interprets the novel through a “cuir ecological” framework, highlighting how its portrayal of toxic ecologies and non-normative genders exposes Dominican cultural constructs of race, sexuality, and environment. Taken together, these readings demonstrate how Afro-Caribbean Afrofuturism in *Tentacle* envisions liberation as multidimensional: ecological, racial, and sexual. This aligns with Maguire’s (2024) claim that Caribbean Afrofuturism is distinguished by its ability to integrate multiple axes of marginalization into its speculative imaginaries.

If *Tentacle* represents an individual novel’s radical intervention, the anthology *Prietopunk: Antología de afrofuturismo caribeño* (2022) signals the consolidation of Caribbean Afrofuturism as a recognized literary current. González Fernández (2023) analyzes two of its stories to demonstrate how Afro-Caribbean authors deploy speculative tropes to center Black identities in futuristic contexts. In these works, orishas are not merely cultural remnants but active participants in cybernetic and post-apocalyptic futures. Maguire (2024) notes that the anthology reveals a specifically Caribbean mode of Afrofuturism that insists on the persistence of African diasporic cultures in technologically saturated environments. The title itself—*Prietopunk*—signals a blending of Afro-Caribbean identity (*prieto*, colloquial Spanish for Blackness) with cyberpunk’s high-tech, low-life aesthetic. These stories refuse the erasure of Afro-Caribbean presence in futuristic imaginaries, ensuring that the “weight of Afro-diasporic histories” remains central to how the Caribbean envisions tomorrow.

Beyond the Dominican Republic and Spanish Caribbean, Afrofuturism has resonated in broader Latin American and Caribbean contexts. Brazilian cultural production has developed its own Afrofuturist idioms. Parisi (2023), in her analysis of *Negrum3* by Diego Paulino, highlights how Black queer embodiment and cosmic imagery reconfigure spatial politics in Brazilian Afrofuturism. Here, Afrofuturism intersects with queer futurity to imagine new forms of belonging beyond racialized and heteronormative boundaries. While Paulino’s work is audiovisual rather than literary, its critical reception underscores how Afrofuturist aesthetics in Latin America often cut across media, blending literature, film, and performance in a shared speculative vocabulary. These examples also demonstrate how Afrofuturism is not monolithic but adapts to local histories of race and colonialism, from the Caribbean’s plantation past to Brazil’s legacies of slavery and racial democracy.

In the Anglophone Caribbean, Erna Brodber’s *The Rainmaker’s Mistake* (2007) has been read by Josephs (2013) as an Afrofuturist narrative that destabilizes the

linearity of post-emancipation history. Brodber reimagines slavery’s aftermath through speculative devices, offering new modes of historical memory. Josephs argues that Caribbean Afrofuturism here performs a radical temporal revision, creating futures in which enslaved peoples’ descendants assert narrative control. This aligns with the broader Afrofuturist project of rewriting the past to reclaim the future. Brodber’s work underscores how Afrofuturist strategies resonate across linguistic traditions in the Caribbean, confirming that the speculative has become a transnational Afro-diasporic mode of critique and survival.

Taken together, these examples demonstrate that Afrofuturism in the Latin American and Caribbean context is not derivative of North American traditions but a distinct set of practices that reconfigure futurity through Afro-diasporic epistemologies. Whether through Indiana’s fusion of Santería with climate fiction, the *Prietopunk* anthology’s assertion of Afro-Caribbean presence in cybernetic worlds, Paulino’s audiovisual explorations of queer Black futurities in Brazil, or Brodber’s speculative revision of Caribbean history, these works collectively insist on Afro-descendant centrality in the Americas’ futures. Critics such as Maguire (2024) and González Fernández (2023) emphasize that this Caribbean Afrofuturism is distinguished by its insistence on hybridity—melding spirituality with technology, ancestral memory with speculative imagination. This hybridity itself is a decolonial strategy, refusing the colonial dichotomy of tradition and modernity, and asserting instead that Afro-diasporic knowledge systems are indispensable to the future.

Afrofuturism in the region also consistently links futurity to survival in the face of ecological, racial, and sexual precarity. As Deckard and Oloff (2020) note, the ecological devastation in *Tentacle* mirrors historical and ongoing racial exploitation. As Humphrey (2022) and Acevedo-Reyes (2025) show, queer ecologies in Indiana’s work destabilize both gender and environmental binaries. And as Josephs (2013) illustrates, Caribbean Afrofuturism reimagines historical trauma as a foundation for speculative liberation. These analyses converge on the argument that Afro-Caribbean futurisms are not escapist fantasies but deeply engaged cultural critiques, mobilizing speculative aesthetics to reconfigure narratives of power, survival, and identity.

In sum, Afrofuturism in Latin American and Caribbean literatures constitutes a powerful decolonial imaginary. By blending spirituality, technology, and memory, it reclaims futurity for Afro-descendant peoples. It contests the colonial logics that confined Blackness to the past and excluded it from visions of progress. Instead, it imagines futures where Afro-Caribbean and Afro-Latin cultures are not only present

but central, shaping the survival of societies facing ecological and political collapse. This current, distinct yet in dialogue with global Afrofuturism, prepares the ground for comparative analysis with Indigenous Futurisms, where similar strategies of hybridity and resistance emerge from different historical experiences. Both converge in their insistence that the peoples most marginalized by colonial modernity are precisely those who must shape the futures of the Americas.

Analysis II – Indigenous Futurisms

If Afrofuturism reconfigures Caribbean and Latin American futures through diasporic memory and Afro-spiritual epistemologies, Indigenous Futurisms confront colonial modernity by projecting Indigenous knowledge, cosmologies, and subjectivities into speculative worlds. Across the Andes, the Amazon, and Mesoamerica, writers are reimagining indigeneity not as a vestige of the past but as a dynamic presence shaping possible futures. This move constitutes a direct challenge to the colonial narrative of disappearance that has long consigned Indigenous peoples to historical prologues of the nation-state. Instead, speculative fiction insists on Indigenous continuity and sovereignty in the face of extractivism, ecological crisis, and cultural erasure. As Prado (2023) emphasizes, the emergence of *ciencia ficción neoindigenista* marks a turning point: science fiction is no longer peripheral but is becoming a mode through which Indigenous and mestizo authors reclaim narrative agency, expand genre boundaries, and articulate resistance to new forms of colonialism.

The Andean region has become a particularly fertile ground for Indigenous Futurisms. Edmundo Paz Soldán's *Iris* (2014) is emblematic of this trend, weaving together dystopian mining landscapes, authoritarian control, and fragments of Andean mythology. Martínez-Arias (2023) argues that such works transform Western science-fiction tropes by embedding them within local cultural contexts. The novel's depiction of extractive economies resonates with the lived realities of Andean communities, where mining corporations displace Indigenous populations and devastate ecosystems. The speculative setting is not an escapist fantasy but an allegory of contemporary socio-environmental violence. Montoya Juárez (2023) similarly highlights how Paz Soldán hybridizes indigenismo with science fiction, crafting narratives that critique the enduring coloniality of resource exploitation. In these dystopias, Indigenous bodies and lands remain central to global capitalism, yet speculative tropes allow writers to invert the narrative, imagining scenarios where Indigenous epistemologies resist or outlast extractivist violence.

Miguel Esquirol's *El cementerio de elefantes* (2008), analyzed by Colanzi (2023), further illustrates this

hybridity. The novella reimagines the *aparapita*—a marginalized Indigenous porter figure in La Paz markets—as a biomechanically enhanced worker in a near-future cyberpunk economy. Colanzi interprets this as an example of “Andean cyberpunk,” where the Indigenous body becomes a site of negotiation between tradition and high technology. Far from erasing indigeneity, the speculative lens highlights how Indigenous figures adapt to, resist, and haunt national narratives of modernization. The *aparapita* embodies what Colanzi calls overlapping temporalities: past, present, and future intersect in the figure’s hybrid existence. This undermines colonial binaries that cast indigeneity as incompatible with technological modernity. Instead, Indigenous Futurisms insist that technology and ancestral knowledge can coexist, generating forms of resilience rooted in cultural continuity.

Temporal disruption is a defining feature of Indigenous Futurisms. Cortés Correa (2023) introduces the concept of *tiempos mixtos* to describe how Indigenous speculative narratives collapse linear time, intertwining ancestral pasts with futuristic horizons. Stories by Giovanna Rivero and Alicia Fenieux exemplify this approach, producing what Cortés calls “migrant subjectivities” that traverse both spatial and temporal boundaries. This manipulation of time aligns with Indigenous cosmovisions in which cyclical and relational temporalities contrast with the linear progress of colonial modernity. By bending time, Indigenous Futurisms unsettle the narrative of inevitable assimilation or disappearance, offering instead visions where Indigenous presence shapes the longue durée of the Americas’ futures. These temporal experiments resonate with Afrofuturism’s reconfiguration of diasporic time but remain grounded in Indigenous philosophies of renewal and return.

The ecological dimension of Indigenous Futurisms is equally central. Works like Alison Spedding’s *De cuando en cuando Saturnina* (2017) imagine Indigenous women protagonists who time-travel to address ecological collapse, dramatizing the role of ancestral cosmologies in environmental resilience (Prado, 2023). In such narratives, Pachamama, Andean deities, or Amazonian spirits are not relics but active agents in shaping futures. Palacios (2023) underscores how Andean speculative stories addressing Peru’s internal armed conflict mobilize apocalyptic motifs to reframe trauma and resilience. These texts situate ecological and political violence within longer Indigenous frameworks of survival, suggesting that futures depend on revaluing traditional ecological knowledge. In this sense, Indigenous Futurisms converge with global climate fiction, yet they reorient the genre by grounding environmental crisis in colonial histories of dispossession and by foregrounding Indigenous stewardship as central to planetary survival.

The evolution of Indigenous Futurisms can also be traced through conceptual debates over neoindigenismo and postindigenismo. Alemany (2023) observes that Indigenous-centered science fiction today departs from earlier indigenista literature, which often depicted Indigenous peoples through paternalistic or nationalist frameworks. Instead, neoindigenist and postindigenist works foreground Indigenous voices, often authored by Indigenous or mestizo writers themselves, and embrace hybrid or posthumanist aesthetics. Bianchi (2023) elaborates this shift by showing how speculative narratives stage Indigenous bodies as sites of technological and cultural fusion. Such posthumanist indigenismo challenges both primitivist stereotypes and assimilationist ideologies, articulating futures where Indigenous subjectivities thrive through hybridity. These critical perspectives confirm that Indigenous Futurisms are not nostalgic or essentialist but forward-looking, open-ended, and experimental.

While much of the scholarship centers on the Andes, Indigenous Futurisms extend across the hemisphere. Gama and Garcia (2020) discuss "Amazofuturism" in Brazilian science fiction, where Indigenous cosmologies of the Amazon intersect with speculative tropes to resist narratives of deforestation and cultural erasure. These stories imagine futures in which Indigenous communities deploy advanced technologies alongside ancestral practices to defend their lands from extractive forces. In Mesoamerica, speculative works like Franz Galich's *Tikal Futura* draw on Mayan imagery to critique urban modernity and neoliberal corruption. Though less systematically studied, these texts demonstrate the breadth of Indigenous Futurisms across linguistic and cultural borders, reinforcing that this is a hemispheric phenomenon with local inflections.

The political stakes of Indigenous Futurisms lie in their ability to transform imaginaries of sovereignty and survival. By depicting Indigenous characters as scientists, hackers, or time travelers, these works claim space for Indigenous agency in realms often monopolized by Western narratives of progress. As López-Pellisa (2023) argues, this constitutes a form of posthumanist indigenismo, where Indigenous cosmologies reshape not only cultural representation but also the ontological terms of futurity. By refusing linear progress, Indigenous Futurisms articulate a pluriversal future in which multiple epistemologies coexist. They insist that Indigenous knowledge is not antiquated but urgently relevant to confronting planetary crises. This decolonial orientation converges with Afrofuturism's insistence on Black futurity, even as it emerges from different historical experiences. Both currents deploy speculative genres to overturn colonial erasures and to imagine worlds in which the peoples most marginalized by modernity determine the shape of the future.

In sum, Indigenous Futurisms in Latin American literature mark a critical intervention in speculative genres. Through allegories of extractivism, temporal disruptions, ecological imagination, and posthumanist hybridity, they project Indigenous presence into futures from which colonial narratives sought to exclude them. By situating ancestral cosmologies within futuristic settings, they challenge the temporal and ontological hierarchies of colonial modernity. Like their Afrofuturist counterparts, they are decolonial imaginaries that insist on survival, transformation, and agency. In their convergence with Afrofuturism, Indigenous Futurisms broaden the horizons of speculative literature in the Americas, ensuring that the future is not the property of the colonizer but a terrain of creative and political reclamation.

III. DISCUSSION – HYBRIDITY, RESISTANCE, AND DECOLONIAL IMAGINARIES

The analyses of Afrofuturist and Indigenous futurist literatures reveal distinct genealogies but also striking convergences. Both traditions emerge from the Americas' histories of colonialism, racial violence, and cultural marginalization, and both use speculative genres as vehicles for imagining alternatives to those histories. Their common ground lies in their insistence on reconfiguring futurity, a domain historically monopolized by colonial modernity, through epistemologies and practices that colonial discourse dismissed as primitive, folkloric, or vanishing. In bringing these strands together, it becomes clear that hybridity, resistance, and the construction of decolonial imaginaries are the threads that tie them into a broader hemispheric movement of speculative innovation.

Hybridity stands as the defining aesthetic and political mode of both Afrofuturist and Indigenous futurist works. In Afro-Caribbean contexts, hybridity manifests through the blending of African diasporic spirituality with speculative technologies. Rita Indiana's *La mucama de Omicunlé*, with its reliance on Santería rituals as a form of time travel, exemplifies how spiritual practices are reframed as speculative technologies (Caruso, 2023). Similarly, the *Prietopunk* anthology merges cyberpunk's aesthetics of high-tech urban decay with orisha cosmologies, producing stories where Afro-Caribbean deities shape digital and futuristic landscapes (González Fernández, 2023; Maguire, 2024). In Indigenous Futurisms, hybridity often involves the insertion of Indigenous figures into technologically saturated settings. Colanzi (2023) shows how the *aparapita* in Miguel Esquirol's novella becomes a biomechanical subject, at once indigenous and cybernetic. Such representations resist the binary of tradition versus modernity, demonstrating that Indigenous and Afro-

descendant knowledge systems can coexist with and even transform technological futures. Merla-Watson (2017) has described Latin@futurism as a practice of assemblage, stitching together seemingly incompatible elements to create *altermundos*, or alternative worlds. This principle is visible across Afro and Indigenous works, where hybridity becomes not only a narrative device but a political stance against colonial mastery.

The logic of resistance is equally central. Both Afrofuturism and Indigenous Futurisms deploy speculative fiction as protest literature, rehearsing survival strategies and subverting dominant narratives. Deckard and Oloff (2020) interpret Indiana's *Tentacle* as a response to ecological devastation that links marine crisis with the violence of slavery, reframing environmental catastrophe as inseparable from racial exploitation. Similarly, Josephs (2013) shows how Erna Brodber's *The Rainmaker's Mistake* rewrites the historical trauma of slavery through speculative means, offering descendants new agency over their past and future. On the Indigenous side, works such as Paz Soldán's *Iris* and Spedding's *De cuando en cuando Saturnina* dramatize extractivism as dystopian futures, critiquing the neo-colonial exploitation of land and labor (Martínez-Arias, 2023; Prado, 2023). In both cases, speculative narratives serve as symbolic acts of resistance, rewriting colonial encounters as science-fictional battles over resources, bodies, and memory. They reveal how marginalized communities use literature to stage insurgencies that might not be possible in political or material domains.

At the heart of these resistant imaginaries is a reconfiguration of time. Cortés Correa (2023) emphasizes how Indigenous Futurisms create *tiempos mixtos*, collapsing ancestral and futuristic horizons into narratives that refuse linear colonial temporality. This temporal hybridity aligns with Afrofuturist strategies where the past—the Middle Passage, slavery, ancestral presence—erupts into speculative futures. Humphrey (2022) notes how Indiana's fluid temporalities queer not only bodies but also histories, disrupting the heteronormative and racialized linearity of progress. Both traditions thereby destabilize colonial time, which positioned Afro-descendant and Indigenous peoples as “behind” modernity. Instead, they insist that marginalized communities generate alternative chronologies in which past traumas and ancestral wisdom are not erased but actively shape the future.

These literatures also share an ecological orientation, though expressed differently. Afrofuturist works like *Tentacle* dramatize climate catastrophe through oceanic imaginaries, linking environmental degradation with histories of slavery and queer ecologies (Deckard & Oloff, 2020; Acevedo-Reyes, 2025). Indigenous Futurisms

foreground land as both character and cosmology, situating ecological collapse within the logic of extractivism and colonial dispossession (Montoya, 2023; Palacios, 2023). In both cases, the environment is not a neutral backdrop but a contested site of survival and resistance. By projecting ecological crises into speculative futures, these works insist that Afro-descendant and Indigenous epistemologies—whether Afro-Caribbean rituals or Andean cosmovisions—offer models of resilience absent from technocratic discourses of climate adaptation. These narratives thus expand speculative fiction beyond Western techno-utopias to include ecological justice and cultural survival as conditions of futurity.

Despite these convergences, the traditions maintain distinct emphases. Afrofuturism is often diasporic, oceanic, and creolized. It dramatizes fragmentation and recombination, reflecting histories of forced migration and cultural syncretism. Stories like those in *Prietopunk* or Indiana's novel emphasize mobility, hybridity, and the haunting weight of diasporic histories (Maguire, 2024). Indigenous Futurisms, by contrast, frequently emphasize rootedness, continuity, and sovereignty. The Andean cyberpunk of Esquirol or the temporal disruptions of Rivero and Fenieux emphasize persistence in place and the cyclical endurance of Indigenous cosmologies (Colanzi, 2023; Cortés Correa, 2023). Yet these differences do not preclude dialogue. Instead, they reveal the richness of decolonial imaginaries across the Americas, showing how different historical experiences—diaspora versus dispossession, oceanic rupture versus land-based continuity—produce complementary visions of liberation.

The construction of decolonial imaginaries is the ultimate point of convergence. López-Pellisa (2023) frames Indigenous Futurisms as posthumanist indigenismo, where speculative aesthetics destabilize human/nonhuman binaries and reinsert Indigenous knowledge into the core of futurity. Maguire (2024) similarly frames Caribbean Afrofuturism as a project that insists on the centrality of Afro-descendant epistemologies in rethinking modernity. Together, these critical perspectives highlight that Afro and Indigenous speculative literatures are not marginal subgenres but central to the hemispheric project of decolonization. They imagine futures where technologies are not stripped of cultural context but embedded in ritual, myth, and memory. They refuse the colonial exclusion of Afro and Indigenous peoples from narratives of progress, positioning them instead as architects of the Americas' futures.

This convergence has implications beyond literature. By dramatizing resistance through speculative forms, these works intersect with broader cultural and political

movements: environmental justice campaigns, Afro-descendant rights activism, Indigenous sovereignty struggles. As Carrión, cited in Marrero (2023), notes, Latin American literature is imagining futures that politicians cannot. These speculative imaginaries thus fill a political void, offering visions of justice, survival, and renewal where institutions fail. They remind readers that the future is not neutral but contested terrain, and that Afro-descendant and Indigenous epistemologies are indispensable to its construction.

In bringing Afrofuturism and Indigenous Futurisms into dialogue, it becomes clear that speculative fiction in the Americas is not simply entertainment or genre experiment. It is a decolonial practice, one that asserts cultural survival, critiques colonial structures, and envisions alternatives to systemic violence. Hybridity, resistance, and decolonial imaginaries are not abstract themes but lived strategies encoded in narrative form. Together, these literatures announce that the future of the Americas will be plural, ecological, and deeply marked by the knowledge and resilience of those communities long excluded from dominant visions of progress.

IV. CONCLUSION

The exploration of Afrofuturism and Indigenous Futurisms in contemporary Latin American and Caribbean literatures demonstrates that speculative fiction has become one of the region's most vital decolonial practices. What began as a shift away from magical realism toward speculative genres has evolved into a powerful mode of cultural resistance and renewal. Writers across the Caribbean, the Andes, Brazil, and Mesoamerica have harnessed science fiction, fantasy, and futuristic motifs not as escapist entertainment but as instruments for rewriting history, critiquing extractivism, and imagining plural futures. By positioning Afro-descendant and Indigenous communities as central actors in speculative worlds, these literatures reclaim futurity from the colonial imagination and reassert it as a terrain of survival, justice, and creativity.

Afrofuturist works in the Caribbean and Latin America foreground hybridity, spirituality, and diaspora as resources for imagining tomorrow. Novels like Rita Indiana's *La mucama de Omicunlé* exemplify how Afro-Caribbean religious practices can be reframed as speculative technologies, challenging Eurocentric associations of futurity with secular technoscience. Anthologies such as *Prietopunk* consolidate these innovations, embedding Afro-Caribbean presence in cybernetic landscapes and refusing erasure from narratives of progress. These texts insist that the histories of slavery, displacement, and racialization do not relegate Afro-descendant peoples to the past; instead,

they become the foundation upon which alternative futures are built. In parallel, Indigenous Futurisms reposition Indigenous epistemologies as indispensable to the future of the Americas. Andean and Amazonian speculative works confront extractivism, collapse linear time, and dramatize Indigenous survivance through characters who embody both ancestral wisdom and technological adaptation. Concepts such as *neoindigenismo* and *postindigenismo* illuminate how Indigenous futurist texts move beyond earlier literary paternalism, presenting Indigenous voices as architects of futures where sovereignty and ecological stewardship are paramount.

The comparative discussion of these strands highlights their shared commitment to hybridity, resistance, and decolonial imaginaries. Both Afrofuturist and Indigenous futurist works destabilize colonial temporalities, whether through Afro-diasporic disruptions of linear history or Indigenous *tiempos mixtos* that collapse ancestral and futuristic horizons. Both critique ecological devastation as inseparable from colonial and capitalist violence, proposing instead ecological futures rooted in Afro-diasporic ritual or Indigenous cosmovision. And both articulate resistance not only through allegory but also through the act of narrative itself, creating imaginative rehearsals of liberation. Their differences—diaspora versus rootedness, oceanic fluidity versus land-based continuity—are not contradictions but complementary perspectives that together expand the horizons of decolonial thought in the Americas.

By situating these literatures within the mission of *Review: Literature and Arts of the Americas*, this study underscores their relevance to the journal's history of foregrounding emergent cultural currents. Just as earlier issues brought magical realism, pan-Caribbean arts, and eco-literature to critical attention, the present moment demands engagement with Afrofuturism and Indigenous Futurisms as defining currents of twenty-first-century Latin American and Caribbean letters. These works exemplify how literature in the Americas continues to act as a laboratory of imagination, producing futures that politicians and institutions have failed to envision. They demonstrate that speculative fiction is not peripheral but central to ongoing struggles for cultural survival and decolonial transformation.

The objectives of this study have been to chart the emergence of Afro and Indigenous futurisms in Latin American and Caribbean literature, to analyze their narrative strategies, and to bring them into comparative dialogue. In doing so, it has argued that speculative fiction is not merely reflective but actively world-making: it constructs alternative temporalities, identities, and ecologies that resist colonial logics. The conclusion is clear:

the future of the Americas, as imagined through these literatures, is not singular but pluriversal, shaped by the creativity and resilience of the very communities once denied a future. This recognition not only enriches literary scholarship but also affirms the power of cultural production to envision justice and renewal in a fractured world.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT ON THE USE OF GENERATIVE AI TOOLS

In the preparation of this manuscript, I have used OpenAI's **GPT-5** (version GPT-5.0) as a language model to assist with language refinement, grammatical accuracy, and stylistic consistency. The AI tool was not used for idea generation, content creation, or analysis but solely for enhancing the clarity and readability of the text. All intellectual contributions, critical insights, arguments, and research findings presented in this manuscript are entirely my own. The use of GPT-5.0 has been carefully reviewed to ensure academic integrity and adherence to scholarly standards.

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