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Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca as Prophet and Mediator in the *Naufragios* (1542, 1555)

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Alvar Núñez's appeal for humane treatment of the Native America[n] populations in the final third of his epic narrative, the *Naufragios*, reflect[s] an acute awareness of the harsh plight of the indigenous groups of north[-] west Mexico (Nueva Galicia) in the wake of the slave raids of Nuño d[e] Guzmán and Diego de Alcaraz. Núñez has often been compared with hi[s] contemporary, Bartolomé de Las Casas with respect to his poignant de[-] fense of the native populations of Sonora and Sinaloa in Chapters XXXI[I-] XXXVII of the *Naufragios.*[1] His advocacy foreshadows the debates betwee[n] Sepúlveda and Las Casas and the subsequent controversies over th[e] plight of Native Americans throughout the sixteenth and subsequent cen[-] turies. Rolena Adorno points out that Núñez's plea for human right[s] makes him "a Lascasian by experience rather than reading" (186). His ap[-] peal to Vuestra Majestad in the latter chapters of his narrative emphasize[s] that peaceful conversion is the only means of gaining the loyalty of thes[e] new subjects and anticipates Las Casas's denunciatory speech found i[n] the *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias.*[2]

> Véase aquí en qué estiman los españoles a los indios, y si cumplen el precepto divino del amor del prójimo, donde pende la Ley y los Profetas. (Saint-Lú 44)

During the latter third of his journey, Núñez is constantly accompani[ed] by 600 to 3,000 Amerindians. He becomes the focal point of reconciliati[on] between the Hispanic and indigenous peoples in Sonora and Sinaloa an[d] the resettlement of the latter into their homelands.[3] In Chapter XXXII [of] the *Naufragios*, the text begins to take on the tone of a prophetic treatis[e,] much as the Lascasian texts of 1539 and 1552, against injustices commi[t-] ted against the Native Americans as Núñez states to His Majesty, Charles V:

> Mas como Dios nuestro Señor fue servido de traernos hasta ellos, comenzáronnos a temer y acatar como los pasados y aun

> algo más, de que no quedamos poco maravillados; por donde claramente se ve que estas gentes todas, para ser atraídas a ser cristianos y a obediencia de la imperial majestad, han de ser llevados con buen tratamiento, y que este es camino muy cierto y otro no. (294)

Abraham Heschel's description of the prophet states that he "longs not for mystical experience but for historical justice" (173). An examination of the themes of Chapters XXXII-XXXVI of the *Naufragios* reveals specific denunciatory language similar in tone to a prophetic appeal for justice. Núñez defends the Native Americans by describing the illicit behavior of Alcaraz's troops and, as we will presently see, by negotiating various dialogues with the native peoples. Maintaining a clear distinction between himself and the *christianos*, he aligns himself morally with the indigenous peoples and places himself within the action of the story, as if he were speaking from a Native American perspective. Núñez is not a distant witness, but becomes an actual victim of Alcaraz's treachery in his attempts to negotiate peace between the native populations of the area and the Spaniards. He describes in Chapter XXXII his interactions with a group of Native Americans who met with the ones with whom he was traveling at the time,

> Truxéronnos mantas de las que avían escondido por los christianos, y diéronnoslas, y aun contáronnos cómo otras vezes havían entrado los christianos por la tierra e avían destruydo y quemado los pueblos y llevado la mitad de los hombres y todas las mugeres y muchachos, y que los que de sus manos se avían podido escapar andavan huyendo. (294)

Here *nosotros*, which includes Núñez and his accompanying group, and *los christianos*, associated with destruction and death are depicted as opposing forces.[4] Another example of Núñez's insider's perspective and active role in the negotiating of peace occurs in Chapter XXXIV when the Native Americans express to Núñez and his companions that they do not believe that they are of the same race as the *christianos* because of the opposite characteristics of Núñez and the Spaniards of Diego de Alcaraz's militia. Núñez reports:

> unos con otros entre si platicavan, diziendo que los christianos mentían, porque nosotros veníamos de donde salía el sol y ellos donde se pone; y que nosotros sanávamos los enfermos y ellos matavan los que estavan sanos, y que nosotros veníamos desnudos y descalços y ellos vestidos y en cavallos y con lanças, y que nosotros no teníamos cobdicia de ninguna cosa, antes todo quanto nos davan tornávamos luego a dar y con nada nos quedávamos, y los otros no tenían otro fin sino robar todo cuanto hallavan y nunca davan nada a nadie; y desta manera relatavan todas nuestras cosas y las encarescían; por el contrario, de los otros. (299)

The Native Americans, through indirect discourse express their grievances. It is here that Núñez most energetically differentiates between the indigenous voice (and his own) and the motives of the Spaniards.[5] He advocates non-destructive behavior by reporting the indigenous reaction to the actions of the Spaniards. The contrast between *tornávamos a dar* [nosotros] and *robar* [ellos], emphasizes the moral differences between himself and the troops of Diego de Alcaraz. The voice of the Native American, until now of limited force, is foregrounded and is appropriated by Núñez's.

Núñez in his role as shaman, profoundly affects the groups he encounters. He is able to perceive and allay the fears of the indigenous peoples in their time of crisis. In the first of the foregoing passages we see how Núñez's fear is internalized, and he worries over possibly having to suffer the consequences of the violent behavior of Diego de Alcaraz's troops. Núñez states in Chapter XXXII:

> Como los víamos tan atemorizados, sin osar parar en ninguna parte, y que ni querían ni podían sembrar, ni labrar la tierra, antes estavan determinados de dexarse morir y que ésto tenían por mejor que esperar ser tratados con tanta crueldad como hasta allí; y mostravan grandíssimo plazer con nosotros, aunque temimos que llegados a los que tenían la frontera con los christianos y guerra con ellos, nos avían de maltratar y hazer que pagássemos lo que los christianos contra ellos hazían. (294)

The natives' fear of violence is shared by Núñez here when he anticipates retaliatory action against himself and his companions by the slave raiders. Although he expects to have to "pay for the sins" of Alcaraz and his troops, Núñez uses his authoritative presence to intervene on behalf of his native companions,

> y vieron como llevavan muchos indios en cadenas, y desto se alteraron los que con nosotros venían y algunos dellos se bolvieron para dar aviso por la tierra como venían christianos, y

> muchos más hizieran esto si nosotros no les dixéramos que no lo hiziessen ni tuviessen temor, y con ésto se asseguraron y holgaron mucho. (295)

Later, in Chapter XXXIV, after Núñez's group has made contact with other Spaniards, his presence again allays the fears of the natives.

> Ellos no querían sino yr con nosotros hasta dexarnos, como acostumbravan, con otros indios, porque si se bolviessen sin hazer esto temían que se morirían, que para yr con nosotros no temían a los christianos ni a sus lanças. (299)

Núñez's fears of the violent acts of the troops are justified when he becomes a victim of the treachery of Alcaraz's deputy, Zebreros, while attempting to move further south to Culiacán. Zerebros intentionally leads Núñez and his accompanying party of natives through a desolate, waterless route, attempting to prevent him from communicating with his indigenous companions. Zerebros' intentions are to capture and enslave the Native Americans who had accompanied Núñez at the time of their contact. Núñez states:

> los christianos nos enviaron, debajo de cautela, a un Cebreros, alcalde, y con otros dos, los cuales nos llevaron por los montes y despoblados, por apartarnos de la conversación de los indios y por que no viéssemos ni entendiéssemos lo que de hicieron; donde paresce cuánto se engañan los pensamientos de los hombres, que nosotros andábamos a les buscar libertad, y cuando pensávamos que la teníamos, sucedió tan al contrario, porque tenían acordado de ir a dar en los indios que enviávamos asegurados y de paz; . . . lleváronnos por aquellos montes dos días, sin agua, perdidos y sin camino, y todos pensamos perescer de sed, y de ella se nos ahogaron siete hombres. (300)

At this point, the antipathy between Núñez and the *christianos* becomes very pronounced. As an advocate of *libertad* and *paz*, Núñez falls victim to the corrupt practices of Zerebros' troops. The terms liberty and peace clash sharply with the deceiving "thoughts of men". He once again "pays for the sins" of Zerebros's group by losing his own men. Zerebros's ploy is to disrupt communications, and subsequently, to enslave the Native Americans. Without the mediating efforts of Núñez, any hope for peaceful settlement and dialogue is destroyed. As a result of this attempt

to isolate him, seven of his group die. Núñez's protest now reaches its epitome and becomes the only vehicle by which his concerns over the devastation of the indigenous groups are expressed.[6]

The result of Núñez's defense of the native groups is immediate and is realized within the events of the account. We have seen that one of the results is the allaying of fears. Another significant result is the establishment of a direct dialogue between Melchior Díaz and the native groups of Río de Petatlán. Utilizing the gourd as an emblem of authority, Núñez and his companions convince three chieftains to come down from their mountain refuges in order to communicate with Díaz. The passage follows:

> les dimos un calabazo de los que nosotros traíamos en las manos (que era nuestra principal insignia y muestra de gran estado), y con este ellos fueron y anduvieron por allí siete días, y al fin de ellos vinieron, y trujeron consigo tres señores de los que estaban alzados por las sierras, que traían quince hombres, y nos trujeron cuentas y turquesas y plumas. (303)

In the subsequent dialogue, Díaz promises the native groups protection from harm provided that they serve God. Díaz then acts as a mediator of peace, just as Núñez had during the latter phase of his journey. Núñez paraphrases Melchior Díaz's evangelizing speech in which he explains the concepts of heaven and hell to the native groups. Díaz then concludes with the promise of good treatment provided that these conditions are met and bad treatment otherwise:

> nosotros les mandaríamos que no les hiciesen ningún enojo ni los sacasen de sus tierras, sino que fuesen grandes amigos suyos; mas si eso no quisiesen hacer los cristianos los tratarían muy mal, y se los llevarían por esclavos a otras tierras. (303-304)

Granted, there is nothing unusual about this type of statement akin to the "requirimiento", until we consider the Native Americans' response to Díaz's statement. It is only through their response that the encounter between the two groups can even remotely be considered a dialogue. The reading of the "requirimiento" was usually a monologue in which only the Spaniards understood what was being said. In this rare moment, however, through Núñez and his companions' interpretation, both parties were able to communicate, and thus establish the conditions for a true dialogue.

The Native Americans respond to Diaz's speech by stating that they to worship the same God, whom they called *Aguar*.

> A eso respondieron a la lengua que ellos serían muy buenos cristianos, y servirían a Dios; y preguntados en qué adoravan y sacrificavan, y a quién pedían el agua para sus maizales y la salud para ellos, respondieron que a un hombre que estava en el cielo. Preguntámosles cómo se llamava y dixeron que Aguar, e que creyan que él avía criado todo el mundo y las cosas del. Tornámosles a preguntar cómo sabían esto. Y respondieron que sus padres y abuelos se lo avían dicho, que de muchos tiempos tenían noticia desto y sabían que el agua y todas las buenas cosas las embiava aquél. Nosotros les diximos que aquél que ellos dezían nosotros lo llamávamos Dios, y que ansí lo llamassen ellos y lo sirviessen y adorassen como mandávamos y ellos se hallarían muy bien dello. (304)

This remarkable exchange between the indigenous groups and Díaz breaks with the didactic, sermonizing monologue often found in chronicles and *relaciones* of the period. The voice of the Native American is heard; they inform Díaz of the God known to them, who is then understood by the Spaniards as being the same as the God of the Judaeo-Christian heritage. Common ground is established. Furthermore, when asked how they knew about the Judaeo-Christian God, the Native Americans express that they had known for generations. Núñez presents here the revolutionary idea that the Spaniards were not the first to bring the knowledge of God as Creator to the native peoples. This then raises the question of why arms were needed in order to coerce the native populations into worshipping the Judeo-Christian God. After this turning point in the text (Chapter XXXV), the remaining descriptions of the Native Americans depict the remarkable pacification of the region without the use of arms. Núñez states in Chapter XXXVI, the denoument of his pacification efforts, that the indigenous peoples, from this point on, slowly begin to descend from the mountains, build churches, and form communities. Thus, the result of this negotiation and true dialogue is pacification and resettlement of desolate lands.

A prelude to this remarkable dialogue appears in Chapter XXXI, when Núñez expresses his amazement at his and his companions' ability to stimulate peace among the numerous indigenous groups they encounter. He explains that,

> Por todas estas tierras, los que tenían guerras con los otros se hacían luego amigos para venirnos a recebir y traernos todo cuanto tenían, y de esta manera dejamos toda la tierra en paz (291)

He then explains their concept of the existence of God to the Nativ Americans:

> y dijímosles, por las señas por que nos entendían, que en el cielo avía un hombre que llamávamos Dios, el cual avía criado el Cielo y la Tierra, y que hacíamos lo que nos mandaba, y que de su mano venían todas las cosas buenas, y que si ansí ellos lo hiciesen, les iría muy bien de eso. (291)

This passage contains several of the same ideas about God expresse shortly afterwards by Díaz in Chapter XXXV. The response to Núñez's ex planation is positive: "y de ahí en adelante, cuando el Sol salía, con mu gran grita abrían las manos juntas al cielo" (291).

The easy reception of this description of God as expressed in this earlie episode, provides further evidence of the fact that the concept of one om nipotent God was already present in the indigenous religious belief sys tem. Their response to Núñez's announcement is of overwhelming accep tance and enthusiasm.

As we have seen, Núñez successfully utilizes constructive dialogue i his attempts to reconcile differences between indigenous and Europea cultures. By reporting the never before heard responses of the Nativ Americans, he rescues to some extent their voice.

Núñez's skills in negotiating are not limited to dialogue, however, bu they also extend into the realm of physical healing as he lives the role shaman thrust upon him early in the text. In Chapter XV, on the island *Mal Hado* (now Galveston Island) where they were held as slaves, he re ports that,

> En aqulla isla nos quisieron hazer físicos, sin examinarnos ni pedirnos los títulos, porque ellos curan las enfermedades soplando al enfermo y con aquel soplo y las manos echan dél la enfermedad, y mandáronnos que hiziéssemos lo mismo y sirviéssemos en algo; nosotros nos reyamos de ello, diziendo que era burla y que no sabíamos curar, y por esto nos quitavan la comida hasta que hiziéssemos lo que nos dezían. (229)

His awareness of spiritual power being assigned to ritual objects be comes evident when he adds the practice of using the gourd during ritu healing practices to his European healing rite of recitation of the "Av Maria" and the "Pater Noster". This idea of the presence of symbolic pow in objects has its precedents in Biblical as well as folkloric prophetic trad tions, for example, the rod with which Moses struck the rock from whic

came water, the brass rod with the serpent used to heal the snakebites of the Israelites in the desert, the powerful and coveted arc of the covenant, and the mantle of Elijah bestowed upon Elisha to confer to him prophetic power. Marcel Mauss has investigated such power-invested articles in various aboriginal cultures of North America and the world. He describes them as such:

> Together these precious family articles constitute what one might call the magical legacy of the people; they are conceived as such by their owner, by the initiate he gives them to, by the ancestor who endowed the clan with them, and by the founding hero of the clan. (27)

Early in the *Naufragios* (Chapter XV), the Native Americans cope with their fear of Núñez and his companions by attributing to them imaginary powers and giving them gourds and other objects which carried symbolic spiritual power. While they are enslaved on *Mal Hado*, Núñez and Castillo are coerced into being shamans. Their very survival depends on "making themselves useful" and reconciling the conflicts between two radically different cultures. This mediating and healing role of the shaman has been compared by anthropologist Eleanor Wilner with the role of prophet. She uses the terms prophet and shaman synonymously. In her observations of the spiritual and social dynamics of preliterate societies and of the role of the visionary, one can find a rationale for Núñez's transformation into shaman and for the truthfulness of his account. Wilner states concerning the roots of apocalyptic vision in preliterate societies that they are,

> . . . produced out of deep social crises of order; that they are the product of individual imaginations that share in a collective experience of disorder, and are often radically transformative and regenerative both for the individual psyches in which they occur and for the collectivities in which they find a communal resonance and assent; (1)

According to Wilner, these shamans, or "prophets of preliterate societies", possess insight superior to that of ordinary society members. Their visions are regenerative, resolving the fears and enigmas of their respective societies and bridging the gap between the mundane and the spiritual.[7] Maladies in the physical realm are often considered by these societies as originating in spiritual causes. (What was considered spiritual by earlier cultures is more often considered in modern societies as pertaining to psychological or pathological phenomena. Thus, in many respects, the mod-

ern day psychiatrist could also be seen as fulfilling the role of the sha man).

Judging from his accounts of healer/patient interactions with the Na tive Americans, and his conversion into shaman, Núñez and his compan ions are credited as having special knowledge desired by the larger collec tive society for its value in resolving crises produced by the presence of th unknown. In an episode of Chapter XII, his indigenous companions see the advice of Núñez and of the other three survivors concerning the reso lution of their fears of a malevolent entity translated as "la mala cosa" tha had been destroying their people and homes. We see evidence of the na tives' confidence in Núñez's knowledge in his prelude to the vignette of "l mala cosa", as he writes:

> En todo este tiempo [referring to the eight months spent among the avavares] nos venían de muchas partes a buscar, y decían que verdaderamente nosotros éramos hijos del Sol. . . venimos todos a ser médicos, aunque en atrevimiento y osar acometer cualquier cura era yo más señalado entre ellos, y ninguno jamás curamos que no nos dijese que quedaba sano; y tanta confianza tenían que habían de sanar si nosotros los curásemos, que creían que en tanto que nosotros estuviésemos, ninguno de ellos había de morir. Estos y los de más atrás nos contaron una cosa muy extraña. (256)

This passage and its accompanying story of "la mala cosa" (that on Núñez and his companions could dispel) indicate the restorative effect their knowledge on the Native Americans of the surrounding areas. Núñ reports that people lost much of their fear: "perdieron mucha parte del t mor que tenían" due to his informing them that, "si ellos creyesen en Di nuestro Señor y fuesen cristianos como nosotros, no tenían medio aquel [la mala cosa], ni él osaría venir a hacelles aquellas cosas" (62 Their role as shamans are enhanced by the natives' nomination of them *hijos del sol*, implying a supernatural origin. Núñez's conversion into sh man can thus be explained in light of modern anthropological theory the dynamics of social organization in preliterate societies.

Pupo-Walker's description of the shaman/patient relationship in indi enous societies provides a more complete understanding of the value Núñez's shamanistic activities. He offers these comments:

> En términos muy concretos, el curandero y su enfermo representaban los extremos del pensamiento colectivo; es decir, lo específico de la enfermedad (el paciente), y la abstracción mági-

> ca (el shaman); abstracción que como significante totalizador integraba una latitud muy diversa de significados. (775)

Others have focused on the appropriation of ritual signs as a catalyst for cultural mediation in Núñez's journey. This mediation is brought about, according to Maureen Ahern, by his utilizing two simultaneous referential systems, "the analogous sign system of known value in the Christian register, that of miraculous signs" and that of the shamans who were common at that time in southern Texas (Ahern 7). She observes that,

> The climax of Alvar Núñez's *La relación y comentarios* (1542, 1555). . . turns on the signifying power of the *calabaza*, or ritual gourd, and its use by Núñez and his companions as a symbol of healing prowess and knowledge to effect their safe passage from tribe to tribe through the Great Sonoran Desert. (1)

Ahern describes this phenomenon as one of "old forms taking on new meanings" (2). Of the Christian system of signs, she comments that:

> Now this connotative register can serve as a gloss or trope that points to an analogy between the curing that Núñez and his companions wrought among the Indian groups in the Great Sonoran Desert and the miracles of Christ and the apostles as told in the Gospels. The signs manifested by the subtext offer a discursive solution to counter criticism that shamanistic curing of gentiles by Spanish soldiers and self-attribution of miracles might (and indeed did) generate [criticism] among Spanish readers of the *Relación*, as it triggers associations of healing in the most authoritative tradition of miracles performed by Christ. (8)

Núñez establishes in his text a seemingly harmonious relationship between Native American and Christian healing practices. He skillfully deflects criticism of his shamanistic activities by providing descriptions rich in Christian religious imagery, often evoking the image of Christ's suffering in the desert.[8] This imagery is particularly striking in a passage from Chapter XXII, where Núñez states:

> A las vezes me acontesció hazer leña donde después de averme costado mucha sangre no la podía sacar, ni acuestas, ni arrastrando. No tenía, quando en estos trabajos me vía, otro remedio ni consuelo sino pensar en la passión de nuestro redemptor Jesuchristo y en la sangre que por mí derramó, e considerar quánto más sería el tormento que de las espinas que él padesció, que no aquel que yo entonces sufría. (259)

In his discussion of the anthropological significance of the *Naufragio* Enrique Pupo-Walker notes that the text does not negate the shamanist tradition in the least. It is, rather, supportive of this tradition in its a knowledgement of the shamanistic practices upon which Núñez's curin episodes depended. He observes that,

> lejos de desvirtuar creencias paganas, reconstituía a diario—para las tribus que lo veneraron—un amplio texto y los códigos articulados pneumotécnicamente por aquellas culturas. (774)

In retrospect, Núñez revives in the *Naufragios* prophetic models such a Christ and Moses and shamanistic traditions through healing episode accounts of suffering, and peace negotiations. His text provides a rare se ting in which Christian and indigenous religious code systems exist simu taneously, and in doing so, break with the models of the past. As Pup Walker comments,

> en contraste con las relaciones que produjeron, entre otros a Pedro Mártir, Antonio Pigaffeta, El Paletino y el Inca Garcilaso, los *Naufragios* no recurren con frecuencia a las muletillas tópicas que difundió el pensamiento analógico y que tantas veces desnaturalizaron la configuración 'sui generis' de lo americano. (773)

By assuming roles understood by Native American and Spaniard, an by utilizing both shamanistic and Christian sign systems, Núñez portray a rare moment in the literature of the *relación* in which, through dia logues, a reconstruction of indigenous voices occurs. His experiences a shaman and peace negotiator, although at first his only road to surviva later become the means of survival for others. Núñez's accounts of pr gressive acculturation are among the very first instances in the history the Southwest and of Northern Mexico in which, through his venturin into the world of the other, we are able to perceive what is truly "lo amer cano".

NOTES

1. The first edition of Núñez's text coincides chronologically with Las Casas's experiment in peaceful resettlement in Vera Paz, Guatemala (1537-1550)—itself an attempt initiated to achieve colonization and peaceful coexistence with the indigenous population of that region. The only significant precursor to Las Casas's attempts to establish a humane order among the native inhabitants of America was Fray Antonio de Montesinos's passionate appeal contained in his sermons of 1511. Montesinos's appeals were, for the most part, ignored.

Núñez's description of the destruction of the Indies (in the final chapters of the *Naufragios*) slightly preceeds the Las Casas/Sepulveda debates of the latter 1540's (first edition, 1542) and reappears (in the second edition, 1555) three years after Las Casas' *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias* (1552). Although the *Brevísima* displays the harshest criticism of the Spanish treatment of native peoples, Las Casas's protests date back much earlier to around 1514, while at the age of thirty, and twelve years after his arrival in La Española and Cuba (Saint-Lú 1987:13). All quotes in this article from the *Naufragios* are from Enrique Pupo-Walker's 1992 critical edition of the same title.

2. Recent criticism has pointed out the continued relevance of Las Casas's position as spokesman for the Native Americans. These debates are still relevant and are reflected in the discussion of problems such as modern colonialism and the impoverishment among indigenous peoples of Latin America. Raquel Chang-Rodríguez describes his work as follows: "La obra lascasiana conserva su vigencia por tratar problemas aun no resueltos en Hispanoamérica: el coloniaje, la incorporación del indio al proyecto nacional, la creación de una sociedad verdaderamente pluricultural" (16). She considers Las Casas' work an important antecedent to the indiginest literature of the early twentieth century.

3. This topic of resettlement, as pointed out by Rolena Adorno in her article on the negotiation of fear in *Naufragios*, has been largely ignored in the critical literature.

4. Núñez's denunciation of Alcaraz's treatment of the Native Americans is more subtle than that of Las Casas. Also, as opposed to Las Casas's use of rhetorical arguement and Biblical allegory, Núñez supports his arguement with the more immediate description of destruction, carefully placed in the voice of the indigenous subject.

5. In this passage the juxtaposition of the lascasian concept of wolves among sheep is especially noticeable. *Sanávamos* is contrasted with *matavan*, *desnudos* is contrasted with *vestidos y con cavallos y con lancas*. The concept of *cobdicia* ("no teníamos cobdicia") is also emphasized in Las Casas' Introduction to the *Brevísima* where he states that, "La causa porque han muerto y destruído tantas y tales. . .

ha sido solamente por tener por su fin último el oro y henchirse de riquezas muy breves días" (Saint-Lú 78).

6. While Núñez utilizes the actions and words of the Native Americans as sources of reference, Las Casas reinforces his position with biting words and w more distant Biblical and rhetorical sources of reference. Rather than participat actively in the allaying of fears, Las Casas utilizes didactic exposition to defend indigenous peoples, as in the following passage from his introduction to *Brevísima*:

Dos maneras generales y principales han tenido los que allá han pasado, qu llaman cristianos, en estirpar y raer de la haz de la tierra a aquellas miseran naciones. La una por injustas, crueles, sangrientas y tiránicas guerras. La o después que han muerto todos los que podrían anhelar o sospirar o pensar er bertad, o en salir de los tormentos que padecen, como son todos los señores na rales y los hombres varones (porque comunmente no dejan en las guerras a v sino los mozos y mujeres), oprimiéndolos con la más dura, horrible y áspera se dumbre en que jamás hombres ni bestias pudieron ser puestas (Saint-Lú 78). would be expected, the result of the defenses of these two spokesmen for the tive Americans is as different as the descriptive techniques used. Las Ca achieved far-reaching results in the arguements recorded in the proceedings of debates against Sepúlveda in Spain. The debates would be immortalized by t recording in history and would lead to further reforms in the treatment of ind nous groups such as the New Laws of 1542.

7. Claude Levi-Strauss has also expressed the idea that collective experien of disorder and social crises, when mediated by the shaman or medicine man, come transformative and regenerative experiences for the individual and for the ciety as a whole.

8. Margo Glantz also considers Núñez's self-portrayal as identifiable v Christ: las espinas, las cruces, las llagas, los malos tratos, la sangre, el sufrimie corporal y su paralelismo con los sufrimientos del Redentor: la pasión como ca no de la redención—la imitación de Cristo—las marcas corporales como signos una hagiografía. Ya está listo para ser chamán, la purificación ha terminado. (9

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A Comala of the Mind: José Emilio Pacheco's Early Theory of Influence

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One poem that sneaks its way into most of the criticism written on Jos Emilio Pacheco (Mexico, 1939-) is "Legítima defensa": "La poesía no es d nadie, se hace entre todos" (*Irás y no volverás* 59).[1] In both its content an context, this brief text provides an accurate description of Pacheco's wor since *No me preguntes cómo pasa el tiempo* (1969). "Legítima defensa" i an explicit declaration of the poet's belief that it is natural that all text mix and blend with others. In fact, the poem itself is a un-cited quotatio from Lautrèamont that Pacheco has recycled and published numerou times under the heteronym Julián Hernández. As various critics have not ed, the nature of the literary text is a central concern of Pacheco's poet ics.[2] Even in poems that are not attributed to pseudonyms, such as "D.H Lawrence y los poetas muertos" from 1973's *Irás y no volverás*, poetic in fluence is portrayed as a free and open exchange with other texts and po ets.

> No desconfiemos de los muertos
> que prosiguen viviendo en nuestra sangre
> No somos ni mejores ni distintos
> Tan sólo nombres y escenarios cambian
> Y cada vez que inicias un poema
> convocas a los muertos
>
> Ellos te miran escribir
> te ayudan. (*Irás* 49)

This is the *persona* Pacheco promotes in his work, that of the poet wh has an amicable relationship with tradition, one who agrees whole heart edly with Eliot's famous maxim that "Good poets borrow and great poets steal." For Pacheco, they cannot help but do so because authorship is a illusory construction. And the Mexican poet backs up these words by pub lishing anonymously, under heteronyms, and by including loose transla-