

Conflicting Discourses in the Conquest of the Americas in Álvaro Núñez Cabeza de Vaca's 1542 *La Relación*

Discursos conflictivos en la conquista de las Américas en La Relación de Álvaro Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, 1542

Discursos conflitivos na conquista das Américas em La Relación de Álvaro Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, 1542

AUTOR

Ramon Sanchez

California State
University, Fresno,
California, United
States

ramons@csufresno.
edu

RECEPCIÓN

16 de diciembre de
2011

APROBACIÓN

31 de mayo 2012

DOI

DOI 10.3232/RHI.2012.
V5.N2.04

This article examines the section in *La Relación* in which Cabeza de Vaca is reunited with Spanish conquistadors and works with Melchior Díaz mayor of Culiacán, in order to pacify the natives that had been abused and displaced by the Spanish. The article is divided into two parts. The first presents the clash of Cabeza de Vaca's discourse with that of the Spanish encomenderos. The second approaches the imperial discourse that opposed indigenous attempts to maintain their independence. This work analyzes Cabeza de Vacas' civilizing rhetoric, which promoted the officialization, regularization, and the centralization of the Spanish empire in the Americas.

Keywords:

Cabeza de Vaca; Conquest; Empire; Indigenous

Este artículo examina la sección de *La Relación* en la cual Cabeza de Vaca se reúne una vez más con conquistadores y trabaja con Melchior Díaz, alcalde mayor de Culiacán, con el fin de pacificar a los nativos agredidos y desplazados por los españoles. El artículo está dividido en dos partes. La primera presenta el discurso de Cabeza de Vaca en choque con el del conquistador español encomendero. La segunda, trata del discurso imperial en lucha con los indígenas que intentan mantener su independencia. El trabajo analiza el lenguaje civilizador de Cabeza de Vaca que promueve la oficialización, la regularización, y la centralización del imperio español en las Américas.

Palabras Clave:

Cabeza de Vaca; Conquista; Imperio; Indígenas

Este artigo examina a seção de *La Relación* na qual Cabeza de Vaca se reúne mais uma vez com conquistadores e trabalha com Melchior Díaz, prefeito maior de Culiacán, com a finalidade de pacificar os nativos agredidos e deslocados pelos espanhóis. O texto está dividido em duas partes. A primeira apresenta o discurso de Cabeza de Vaca em choque com o conquistador espanhol encomendero. A segunda,

trata do discurso imperial na luta com os indígenas que tentam manter sua independência. O trabalho analisa a linguagem civilizadora de Cabeza de Vaca que promove a oficialização, a regularização, e a centralização do império espanhol nas Américas.

Palavras-chave:

Discurso; Império; Cristiano; Indígenas; Encomendero; Naufrago.

Introducción

E después que los huvimos embiado, debaxo de cautela los cristianos nos embiaron con un alcalde que se llamava Zebreros y con él otros tres cristianos, donde parece quanto se engañan los pensamientos de los hombres, que nosotros andábamos a los buscar libertad y quando pensábamos que la teníamos sucedió tan al contrario. Y por apartarnos de conversación de los indios, nos llevaron por los montes despoblados a fin que no viésemos lo que ellos hazían ni sus tratamientos, porque tenían acordados de ir a dar en los indios que embiávamos assegurados y de paz. Y ansí como lo pensaron lo hizieron¹.

Within the context of the conquest of the Americas, Álvaro Núñez Cabeza de Vaca addresses the Spanish Crown in *La Relación que dio Álvaro Núñez Cabeça de Vaca de lo acaescido en las Indias...* (1542). The narrative contains, at least, three different genre elements: the eye-witness testimony, historical report, and an account of merits (*relación de méritos y servicios*) in connection to his participation in the Pámfilo de Narváez Expedition (1527-1536)². As royal treasurer of this endeavor, Cabeza de Vaca's account relates their military thrust into the mainland, which Emperor Charles V authorized: to conquer and govern the land from *Río de las Palmas* to the cape of *la Florida*³. However, the Narváez Expedition fails and Cabeza de Vaca becomes a castaway who after a difficulty journey that takes years reconnects with Spanish forces in 1536.

In the opening citation of this article, Cabeza de Vaca speaks about what occurs after his reunion with fellow *cristianos*, and his concern is not just pointing out a personal betrayal or illustrating that men are morally weak. As a treasurer of the Spanish crown, he is addressing the conflict between a centralizing Spanish crown's ideological perspective, which Cabeza de Vaca represents with the rhetoric of the civilizer, and the decentralizing *encomenderos* and would-be ones, whose language represents a feudal-oriented position⁴. This also involves Cabeza de Vaca maneuvering to guarantee the emperor's control of self-governing indigenous people and resources in newly conquered areas, a difficult task as his civilizer language confronts the natives' assertion of their independence.

The scholar Ralph Bauer points out that Cabeza de Vaca's *La Relación* rhetorically supports and reinforces the Spanish crown's authority and power to control the distant Indies (*las*

indias), manifesting the official narrative interests of the state.⁵ In his narrative, Cabeza de Vaca participates in the wider struggle over the constitution of the Spanish empire, seeking as civilizer to fulfill the obligations required of his Sovereign, e.g., conversion of the indigenous people, while ensuring the crown's governance of the conquered regions⁶. In this empire building process, Cabeza de Vaca's narrative reveals his and the *encomendero's* protracted struggle over who holds authority and control of the conquered resources, specifically indio labor. Thus as civilizer, Cabeza de Vaca questions the *conquistador's encomendero-oriented* claims over economic, political, legal, and military matters and as well as the natives' assertion of independence⁷.

This article examines the section of *La Relación* where Cabeza de Vaca is once more reunited with fellow Spaniards and works with Melchior Díaz, Captain and Civil Official of Culiacán, in order to pacify the Spanish assaulted and displaced natives. I designate this occurrence as the Melchior Díaz episode, in which Cabeza de Vaca's civilizer discourse is in conflict with those of the *encomendero-oriented* Spanish conquerors and the natives. In the Díaz episode, I first address Cabeza de Vaca's discourse clash with the feudal-oriented Spanish conqueror. I then scrutinize his imperial discourse strife with the indigenous people who seek to hold on to their independence. This examination of the Melchior Díaz episode allows one to discern Cabeza de Vaca's civilizer language, which supports the emperor's officializing, regularizing, and centralizing -as well as the re-conceptualization and restructuring- of the Spanish empire building process in the Americas.

Background

Succinctly, Cabeza de Vaca's 1542 narrative, published at Zamora, Spain, is about the failed Pámfilo de Narváez Expedition (1527-1536) -of which he is one of the four survivors- and his travels from Florida to almost the Pacific Ocean. In April 1527, Governor Narváez leads a conquering force that consists of five ships and about 600 armed men to conquer land and people in the Americas. Cabeza de Vaca represents the Spanish crown's interests as treasurer of the Expedition. He is among the 300 armed men who enter inland into Florida in 1528, but who end up unable to reconnect with the ships⁸. Consequently, the stranded men construct barges and launch themselves into the sea and end up shipwrecked somewhere on the coast of the Gulf of Mexico. From there, Cabeza de Vaca, along with three companions, tries to reconnect with *cristianos* and journeys inland westward. The castaways finally reach a Spanish slave raiding party in 1536 near the Sinaloa River close to the Pacific Ocean. Before and after meeting the Spanish military forces, Cabeza de Vaca observes their violent destruction of the native communities in the region.⁹ He then meets and joins Melchior Díaz, Chief Justice of Culiacán, in subduing the natives of this region. He returns to Spain in 1537.

Cabeza de Vaca promotes his imperial corporate perspective through a civilizer discourse against one displayed by an *encomendero*. In the empire building process, both groups use terms like *cruz* (cross) and *iglesia* (church), which manifest Spanish imperial cultural, political, and military concepts working in concert to establish Spanish sovereignty in the Americas. Both the civilizer and *encomendero-oriented* groups speak of the all-important Spanish Providential mandate that

stokes their imperial commitment to convert the conquered to Catholicism, which is understood as crucial in the goal of not just establishing an empire but in the fulfilling of the universal one¹⁰. Consequently, *encomendero*-oriented conquerors also justify their actions as being necessary in order to bring a Christian rule of law to the invaded region¹¹.

Both Cabeza de Vaca and *encomienda*-oriented conquerors use the language of imperial allegiance in their contest over whose discourse gives authoritative and authentic substance to their positions, especially the issue concerning the control of indigenous people. At one level, the clash between these two groups is about whether indigenous people can be legally enslaved by the Spaniards or not, which since 1492 divides the opinions of Spaniards. The issue continues with the promulgation of the New Laws of the Indies of 1542 and again during the famous debates about the humanity of the Indians of the early 1550s. At another level, the conflict is about what institution is to be set in place for running the political, social, and economic aspects of the captured territories, which directly concerns the indigenous population and whether the crown or the conqueror will be in control.

The process involving the conquest of the Americas contains the built-in conflict between the Spanish crown's control and the conqueror's expectation of recognition and reward of his work in empire building¹². Patricia Seed comments that the Spanish crown attempts to limit the control of the apportionment of native labor, but it has to accommodate the settlers' desires for permanent trusteeships of indigenous labor¹³. John Elliott observes that the Spanish monarchy seeks to prevent the rise of a European-style aristocracy, in part, by striving to prevent the automatic perpetuation of *encomiendas* through family inheritance¹⁴. The Spanish conquerors' demands are based on the defense of the common well-being of the community along with recognition and reward for their services in building the empire¹⁵. The focal points of their conflict are indigenous labor and tribute, and the crown takes the conqueror's threat to its centralizing control and authority seriously. The challenge to the crown, for example, is revealed in the *Comuneros* revolt (1520-1521), the threaten *encomendero* revolt to the crown's attempt to end the *encomienda* which forces the viceroy of New Spain to not comply with the New Laws of the Indies 1542, and the violent *encomendero* revolt in Peru (1544-1548)¹⁶. However, the loyalty to the emperor is always claimed by both crown and conquerors even as they clash over the economic, political, legal, and military matters.

This vision of a stronger and more centralized imperial state needs a discourse to assist in creating and maintaining it¹⁷. Cabeza de Vaca's civilizer discourse works to establish the monarch as the harbinger of the millennial reign of peace and victory over "seigniorial discord, tyranny, and confusion"¹⁸. As Bauer observes, there is a "transformation of imperial policy" and "retroting of Spanish imperial identity" with the discourse shift from "conquest" to "pacification"¹⁹. Cabeza de Vaca helps erect this ideological environment, which promotes the emperor's officializing, regularizing, and centralizing agenda about the construction of empire that is in conflict with both the feudal-oriented Spanish conquerors and with self-governing indigenous people. As treasurer, Cabeza de Vaca represents the crown's interests and employs the imperial corporate discourse, which articulates a centralization of political power in the monarch and the victory over the feudal-oriented Spanish conqueror and native agency. His civilizer discourse intertwines secular and

religious authority -concisely expressed as *cruz* and *iglesia*- and voices intellectual and ethical supporting language that supposedly raises the imperial corporate perspective to an unassailable high position.

When Cabeza de Vaca reunites with Spanish forces, he assists the efforts of the Chief Justice Melchior Díaz to pacify the assaulted and displaced natives. For most of his narrative, Cabeza de Vaca's imposition of his imperial corporate discourse is not an actual fact on the ground. The Melchior Díaz episode, though, is presented by Cabeza de Vaca as a concrete example of an appropriate and justifiable conversion approach, in which he embodies the civilizer who upholds the emperor's values, rights, and centralizing powers in the conquest process²⁰. In this episode, Cabeza de Vaca's discourse struggles with both the feudal-oriented Spanish conqueror's and the indigenous peoples' discourses. In the following section, I will first address Cabeza de Vaca's civilizer discourse clash with the *encomendero*-oriented one.

Part I

In 1536, in the process of trying to catch up with fellow *cristianos* and end what he calls his captivity (*aquella catividad*), the castaway Cabeza de Vaca crosses a devastated region and observes the results of the destructive Spanish military attacks on the basis of the empire: the people and its lands²¹. In addition, because those armed Spaniards are terrorizing the indigenous communities (*atemorizados*), Cabeza de Vaca fears that the abused *indios* further along the path will make him and his fellow castaways pay for what those raiding Spaniards have done to the natives (*maltratar y hazer que pagássemos lo que los christianos contra ellos hazzían*)²². The distinction between two different *cristianos* emerges.

Governor Nuño de Guzmán is responsible for the actions of the assaulting Spanish soldiers²³. Guzmán is known for seeking power and wealth, being arbitrary and unreasonable in his dealings with his fellow Spaniards, as well as cruel and brutal in dealing with indigenous people, and mistreating his Indian allies²⁴. Cabeza de Vaca does not directly take on Guzmán. Indirectly, though, his civilizer discourse categorizes Guzmán's approach as inappropriate and incompetent by describing the disastrous results to the region. Governor Nuño de Guzmán drives into the region without enacting the obligatory *requerimiento* and the forces responsible to him disrupt and devastate rich native farming communities²⁵. He loses control of his Indian auxiliaries, issues slaving licenses, and even ends up enslaving his Mexica and Tlaxcalan military allies²⁶.

The dispute between Cabeza de Vaca's vision and the regime imposed by Nuño de Guzmán and his subordinates concerns how the Spanish conquest of northwest New Spain should proceed. Consequently, Cabeza de Vaca needs to distinguish himself from the conqueror who wishes to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the expanding empire for his own sake while using the rhetoric of loyalty to the emperor. He must show that conquerors like Guzmán embody the callous cruelties and betrayal done in the name of *cruz* and *iglesia*, which means they never commit themselves in any substantial manner to the conversion duty, instead paying merely lip service to it²⁷.

Cabeza de Vaca's and the *encomendero's* language, as represented by cruz and iglesia, presupposes mutually agreed ready-made choices and interpretations about empire building, which define social relationships, convey legitimacy, and thus channel responsive reactions and rejoinders of speakers²⁸. One observes that Cabeza de Vaca's and the autonomous-oriented conqueror's discourses appear on the surface to utilize similar meanings for their imperial language, suggesting that the two factions have unified perceptions, memories, and ideas that transform and integrate the conqueror and conquered²⁹. Both discourses, for instance, concur that the crusade continues, that their goal is to accomplish the ideal Christian empire, and that the on-going conquest of the Americas is bringing into being the universal domain as it thoroughly breaks with the recent past³⁰. Both discourse factions accept the right to conquest and, most importantly, both uphold the Providential mandate, derived from a millennialist context³¹. In addition, they reinforce their divine right to empire building with Papal officializing language (e.g., the bulls issued in 1493 by Pope Alexander VI, such as the *Inter caetera and Dudum Siquidem*) which sanctions Spanish rights to conquer and subjugate, as well as Roman law arguments used to deny rights to the natives³².

However, the *cristiano*/Hispanic empire building process is forcing a reconceptualization of everything, leading to the argument about which Spanish discourse is truly *cristiano* and which is not³³. Within a developing imperialistic and evolving complex society, both Cabeza de Vaca's civilizer and the *encomendero*-oriented discourses are in a long-drawn-out struggle over who grasps authority and controls the acquired wealth of the land, particularly indio labor. In the language of the feudal-oriented Spanish conqueror and in that of the civilizer, one can discern that each party recognizes the importance of the utterances cruz and iglesia but understands them differently³⁴. Here both factions use the language of an imperial policy in their struggle over whose discourse gives authoritative and authentic substance to cruz and iglesia.

Once Cabeza de Vaca is with Melchior Díaz, he is able to draw once again on Spanish military backing. As civilizer, though, Cabeza de Vaca's use of cruz and iglesia guides his loyal service (*servicio*) to his His Majesty, who is the center of authority, emphasizing voluntary conversion of the natives (*con entera voluntad*), because it is pivotal to fulfilling the enterprise of the universal empire under the emperor³⁵. For Cabeza de Vaca, in *La Relación*, the above terms impose, interject, connote, expand, as well as highlight assigned meaning and values, and most importantly justify the Spaniards' obligation to convert the conquered as part of their empire building. Cabeza de Vaca's utterances mirror the imperial dictates as he seeks to naturalize the imperial social relationships to all in the emperor's domain³⁶.

In the Melchior Díaz episode, the two Spanish discourse factions cannot draw together and become a united, stable, and coherent voice. The civilizer and feudal discourses, in fact, do disagree on issues such as how best to serve the imperial interests, raising questions about who can wrest and command the resources gained through the conquest and who and what will guarantee the stability of the Spanish imperial domain³⁷. This leads to the feudalistic discourse attacks on the legitimacy of Cabeza de Vaca, which are not unexpected. Since near the beginning of *La Relación*, the assaults commence, for instance, when Pámfilo de Narváez, head of the expedition and speaking as an *encomendero*-oriented conqueror, questions Cabeza de Vaca's

honor, accusing him of being afraid and hence of being an obstacle to the inland military endeavor (*tanto estorvava y temía*). Thus he discredits the representative of the crown's interests, portraying him as unfit to advance the universal empire and seeking to sideline him so he cannot witness Narváez reaping the rewards of the campaign³⁸. Later, after years of being a castaway, Cabeza de Vaca reconnects with fellow Spaniards who categorize him as being of little worth. Captain Diego de Alcaraz and his men tells the natives they have to obey and serve (*obedeçer y servir*) them as lords of the land (*señores de la tierra*) and not Cabeza de Vaca and his companions who are of no importance (*gente de poca suerte y valor*)³⁹. In the feudalistic Spanish conqueror's discourse, Cabeza de Vaca does not fulfill his duty to His majesty, having no honor or earned worth. The language points out he does not embody *crux* and *iglesia*, and it rejects his approach to empire building as ineffective.

Cabeza de Vaca responds to Narváez by informing him his honor will not be questioned (*mi honrra anduviessse en disputa*), and he dutifully goes inland with the expedition representing the emperor. As for the Spaniards who categorize him as being of little worth, Cabeza de Vaca responds is to his reader, saying that the natives do not recognize the assaulting Spaniards and Cabeza de Vaca's party as being of the same group (*nunca se pudo acabar con los indios creer que éramos de los otros cristianos*)⁴⁰. He implies the native witnesses offer a public consensus that verifies the point that Cabeza de Vaca and his companions are the true *cristianos*. Consequently, there arises the phrase "*los otros cristianos*" (the other Christians) that exposes a serious differentiation between the Spanish factions and which identifies Cabeza de Vaca as the true *cristiano*⁴¹.

Indeed, Cabeza de Vaca's narrative grapples with a "discursive transformation" about who the imperial Spanish people are becoming during the problematic establishment of an empire in the Americas⁴². Cabeza de Vaca's language conveys to a *cristiano*/Hispanic audience his civilizer's inherent Providential duty. For instance, Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, royal chronicler, includes an account of the Narváez Expedition experience in the Americas in his *Historia general y natural de las Indias* (first compiled in 1539) and presents Cabeza de Vaca as fulfilling the Spanish sovereign's authority (*Emperador Rey*) over the indios by leading the peaceful and good-willed natives (*gente de paz e de buena voluntad*) into the empire⁴³. Cabeza de Vaca recognizes the emperor's role as leader of Christendom, defender and propagator of the faith, and acknowledges his universal sovereignty, for he is truly the one everybody is willing to serve (*verdadera voluntad, gran diligencia y desseo*) and in whose time and domain Cabeza de Vaca is fortunate to live in (*debaxo de vuestro poder y señorío*)⁴⁴.

The importance of the Melchior Díaz episode is that Cabeza de Vaca portrays it as having the substance of the sanctioned conquest, which is a response to the charge that his approach is ineffective. Cabeza de Vaca constructs imperial ideological and political expectations that orient the Spanish conqueror's word and deed to a messianic mission based on a Providential mandate that is not acquired but is bestowed on a people. His Christianizing elements establish jurisdiction over non-Christians and puts forth that there is no one more suitable to liberate the natives than the emperor. Thus, he articulates a God chosen Spanish conqueror who converts the natives, which will bring into actuality the ideal universal *cristiano* empire⁴⁵.

Although the Spanish conquerors claim as their goal the conversion of the natives to Catholicism, Cabeza de Vaca points out he follows the proper imperial civilizing approach that accomplishes the religious duty and demonstrates loyalty to the emperor. For instance, he does this by describing what he, as castaway, sees as he nears his reconnection with Spaniards. He travels through a region that is in a state of administrative disorder, to say the least. The pillaging, plundering, and taking of slaves by Spanish military forces have impacted disastrously on the native communities, making the region ungovernable⁴⁶. He notes that the military actions of the armed Spaniards, who pursue and champion old feudalistic patterns even as they speak of loyalty to *Dios* and Majesty, are only self-seeking and not part of the imperial corporate context⁴⁷.

It is the Spanish conqueror's clash with the indigenous people that allows the Spanish "we" to be sharply contrasted with the indio or "them". However, the conflicting Spanish civilizer and feudal-oriented conqueror discourses split the Spanish "we", reflecting two different hostile factions. One group is exemplified by Cabeza de Vaca as the Spanish crown's treasurer and another by the likes of Narváez, Zebros, and Guzmán who demand their conqueror's feudal privileges. These latter Spanish conquerors proclaim to be bound to the defense and maintenance of the unity of faith, which implies they are also to be entrusted to save the souls of conquered natives. After all, their discourse declares they secure a region, allowing the conversion process to occur, even if it means they impose themselves on the barbarian people in order to rectify their behavior. In such *encomendero*-oriented discourse, a conqueror is *fuerte* and *señor de la tierra*. His narrative depicts his self-confidence, which derives from being part of the chosen people, and presents him subduing the indios and making the newly won territories safe through *honor* and *valor*. Consequently, the Spanish conqueror pursues his special interests, making the point that by doing the fighting he earns his status and his rights⁴⁸. In addition, this situation meshes with the notion of well-being of the community, which is affirmed as the proper relationship between His Majesty and his serving subject. In practical terms, this conqueror's military power gives him command of some elements of might and influence, such as controlling large indigenous groups and material resources. The *encomendero*-oriented conqueror's word and deed, then, threaten to dominate politically and economically the conquered lands and to determine imperial policy while he purports to benefit the emperor.

Cabeza de Vaca's civilizer discourse reveals what the centralizing Spanish crown struggles against: the threat of political dissolution. For Cabeza de Vaca, the Spanish *nosotros* becomes two camps. There is the *nosotros* that connotes civilizer's legitimacy and the *ellos* that categorizes the independent conqueror faction. This *nosotros/ellos* verbal-ideological distinction asserts the stabilizing authority of the emperor, alluding to the Spanish crown as heir of and successor to the Roman Empire and very importantly that it has the mandate to establish a Christian universal empire⁴⁹. In addition, the civilizer language shows Cabeza de Vaca acting in good faith as he formulates and frames the *cristiano* cultural boundaries, which familiarize and naturalize His Majesty's positions. This makes the crown's policies compatible with the supposed willing conversion of the natives, who are placed in another category of *ellos*.

The incongruities -that lie in the evolving Spanish imperial endeavor- reflect the conflict

between the contesting Spanish factions, each trying to impose the context that defines word and deed. In the Melchior Díaz episode of *La Relación*, Cabeza de Vaca responds to the events by presenting his and Díaz's discourse and actions not as ad hoc remedial words and deeds initiated under the pressures of the destabilized situation but as exercising a sanctioned and sound approach based on the conversion of the indigenous people. In the narrative, although both the feudal-oriented Spaniards and Cabeza de Vaca label themselves *crístianos*, the independent-oriented Spaniards are described as not acting as such. For instance, Cabeza de Vaca points out the feudal-oriented conqueror merits no praise because his treacherous actions actually harm innocents. When the Spaniards, who receive Cabeza de Vaca and his companions back to the Christian fold, want to enslave 600 innocent natives who come with the castaways, Cabeza de Vaca angrily opposes such an act. He states that the good-willed indios will serve the *crístianos*, and he guarantees their liberty. However, the Spaniard Zebreros misleads (*engaña*) Cabeza de Vaca, isolating him from those natives who are then enslaved by Spaniards working with Zebreros. These Spaniards, as well, continue the attacks on the native communities (*despoblados y quemados*)⁵⁰. This undermines the feudal-directed rhetoric about defending the well-being of the community and the issue of honor and valor.

In the Melchior Díaz episode, Cabeza de Vaca illustrates the failed results of conquerors, such as Alcaraz, Zebreros, and Guzmán, who take advantage of sustained incessant military activity to act as if independent of His Majesty's interests in the imperial enterprise, e.g., Nuño de Guzmán's approved actions in the Culiacán region against the indios⁵¹. Cabeza de Vaca points out that the Spanish raids, such as those by Alcaraz and his men, are destroying and depopulating the indigenous sedentary communities, and creating native resistance⁵². Consequently, in the occupied territories these Spaniards fail to put in place subservient local native administrators, whom they need in order to maintain control and facilitate the extraction of logistical support for their expedition and allow it to be profitable. In addition, the conquerors cannot proceed with the amalgamation of the conquered people into the empire.

The opposing Spanish factions struggle over whose rhetorical frame controls the meaning of the conquest, and this does not allow for a mutual discourse of unity and action, making their conflicts of interest irreconcilable⁵³. Cabeza de Vaca's language highlights the disloyal atomized Spanish conquerors' undermining acts that fail to deal appropriately with the indigenous people as well as negating *crístiano* opportunities to peacefully extend the cross and church, as directed by the emperor⁵⁴. Therefore, Cabeza de Vaca's civilizer discourse identifies the feudal-oriented Spanish faction as a disorderly element, which has no place in the crown's expanding domain. At the same time, his language presents Cabeza de Vaca as the royal agent who validates the incorporation of conquered land and people into the Spanish empire⁵⁵.

Part II

In this next section I examine, in the Melchior Díaz episode, Cabeza de Vaca's civilizer discourse strife with the indigenous one, which is highlighted by the cruz and iglesia utterances⁵⁶.

Though it is difficult to get at the marginalized and fragmented indigenous discourse in the episode, it does exist and can be detected, for instance, through the rejoinders in the text⁵⁷. In *La Relación*, Cabeza de Vaca's rhetorical starting point is a clash of opposites: civilizer vs. barbarian. The natives are neither *crístianos* nor *españoles*. Instead, Cabeza de Vaca labels them barbarian people (*bárbaras naçiones*), whom he intends to subjugate and transform⁵⁸. However, these people from the Americas actually begin as a mystery that initially shakes the conqueror's sense of what the world is, for these lands and people are not known in his narratives. The natives' ambiguity is partially pushed aside by imposing a known narrative on them, which begins with the term *indio*. However, as the interaction with the indigenous people develops, it appears that depending on the political situation the Spanish conqueror identifies the native in varying ways -such as *indio*, *hermano*, *amigo*, *esclavo*, *enemigo*, or *crístiano*- but without really altering his perceived subordinate status⁵⁹. Nevertheless, Cabeza de Vaca cannot ignore the indigenous people's presence and their discourse which he is compelled to take into account and respond to.

The Díaz episode documents the Spanish violence that creates the conquered territory and brings with it the implementation of a coerced conversion of the subdued people whose communities are torn apart and whose members inevitably associate the cross and church with deadly assaults. The violent circumstances contribute to moments of obfuscation or incomplete or limited guidance on how Spaniards and natives can deal with each other. In the midst of the Spanish onslaught on the indigenous people, both groups awkwardly implement dissimilar discourse tools that provide knowledge and understanding (e.g., language, history, and customs) about themselves and others. For his part, Cabeza de Vaca seeks to clarify and stabilize the situation utilizing his civilizer discourse.

Spanish aggression pressures different native groups or remnants of them to join in order to deal with the danger at hand⁶⁰. The escaping indigenous people of the Culiacán region react to Spanish aggression by re-locating, fighting, and/or submitting with guarantees to their rights. This pattern of indigenous re-consolidation due to Spanish displacement is repeated throughout the northern regions. Under the Spanish pressure, natives re-group in order to improve their prospects for survival either in submission or rebellion. The violence, though, profoundly redefines, or re-structures, or recreates ethnic group identities, affecting relationships and -under the Spanish- their official status.

Once Cabeza de Vaca reunites with fellow Spaniards, he agrees to assist Chief Justice Melchior Díaz in helping to pacify the natives, who are fleeing the Spanish military assaults⁶¹. In the service of "*Dios nuestro Señor*" and "*Vuestra Magestad*," Cabeza de Vaca and Díaz seek to resettle (*poblar/asentar*) these people and thus repair the damage done by the feudal-oriented Spanish military forces and consolidate them appropriately as a subordinate community within the universal empire⁶².

In the Díaz episode, Cabeza de Vaca recedes to become the witness and symbol of the crown. His civilizer discourse promotes a persuasive approach that supposedly attracts the indigenous people to His Majesty's lordship, *señorío* (*debaxo de vuestro poder y señorío, estas*

*gentes vengan a ser verdaderamente y con entera voluntad sujetas al verdadero Señor*⁶³. His language affirms the emperor's governing control of a subdued region as he seeks to pacify the natives and construct a dual society, contributing to the invention of a subordinate indio, who at best turns out to be an incomplete *cristiano*⁶⁴. Both the civilizer and *encomendero*-oriented Spanish discourses dovetail in their aim to not complement but oppose and to not supplement but replace the indigenous people's discourse context.

However, to the question about who is qualified and required to defend the emperor's interests, the rhetoric of the *encomendero* brings up the Hispanic tradition of dividing the acquired wealth, which in this case is the indio labor. Cabeza de Vaca, to the contrary, replies that the crown is the only *encomendero*. Consequently, the indios are His Majesty's. The natives, though, do not share the perspective of either Spanish conqueror, for their utterances about their ancestors present an alternative source of authority, which supports their independence⁶⁵. These oppositional views continue to persist during the negotiations Díaz and Cabeza de Vaca conduct with the indigenous people.

In a much disrupted region, Cabeza de Vaca presents his assistance to Melchior Díaz in pacifying natives as a needed decisive action, for he is maneuvering to guarantee the emperor's control (*poder y señorío*) of indigenous people and resources in newly conquered areas and on the fringe of the continuing expanding imperial border. Through his civilizer discourse, Cabeza de Vaca strives to articulate the proper and successful imperial approach that accomplishes the conversion duty and demonstrates loyalty (his *servicio*) to the emperor, professing that his approach can effectively speed up the stabilization and assimilation of a conquered region. Nevertheless, he is faced with the fundamental difficulty of making his alien discourse and rule acceptable to the indigenous people, specifically to the native *principales señores* (indigenous chiefs) among whom loyalty to their cultural/social discourse traditions remains strong, e.g., their oral histories and commemorative rituals.

His civilizer discourse deletes indigenous conceptual narratives that are the basis of native authority, substituting them with *cristiano*/Hispanic ones. It is as if he changes the native people into blank sheets of paper on which he inscribes who they now are, shifting the indio perspective to a new history that re-defines the *cristiano* past as legitimate and that, in turn, ignores the natives' own constructions of their past⁶⁶. For instance, Cabeza de Vaca's and Díaz's fulfillment of the *requerimiento* legal obligation (which Guzmán fails to implement) clearly demands from the natives the forceful break from their cultural discourse memories by commanding their immediate allegiance to the Spanish crown and threatening a wide variety of aggressive actions against them if they do not⁶⁷. In the Melchior Díaz episode, Cabeza de Vaca's civilizer unifying language means to co-opt the subdued natives and replace their authority and independent histories, turning them into useable elements in the formation of the empire⁶⁸. It also attempts to stamp out any infringement by the Spanish conqueror of the centralizing prerogative of the crown.

Cabeza de Vaca in his account also presents himself as law-abiding servant of the Spanish crown, who journeys across the American land speaking about the cruz and iglesia and telling all to believe in and serve (*creyessen, sirviessen*) God, which are terms that mandate,

legitimize, and solidify the Spaniard Providential right to empire⁶⁹. In the Díaz episode, his civilizer's imperial corporate discourse is credited with bringing the fleeing natives to the negotiating table as well as inducing them to accept the Spanish crown⁷⁰. The indios become subordinated *cristianos* with whom treaties are enacted. They are settled and their life is regulated (turning the native voice into a passive whisper). Spanish imperial forces, as well, have a base in the pacified communities from where to continue empire building. Cabeza de Vaca's language asserts that his approach allows the establishment of enforceable Spanish imperial norms, whose results give the crown the most gains and ensure the stability of the throne's domain in an expanding, enduring, and peaceful realm.

John H. Elliott in *Empires of the Atlantic World* observes that the Spanish imperial policy was to "reduc[e] the savage people to Christianity and civility"⁷¹. In the Díaz episode, Cabeza de Vaca's civilizing discourse implements this by narratively defining and exercising authority over *bárbaras naciones*⁷². Through the utterances *cruz* and *iglesia*, he organizes conquered native territories around imperial corporate values, designating communities by means of the iconography of crosses and churches, which are one in the emperor⁷³. Consequently, Cabeza de Vaca thanks merciful God our Lord (*Dios nuestro Señor*) for living in the days when under the dominion of Your Majesty (*Vuestra Magestad*) the indios truly submit voluntarily to the real Lord who created and redeemed them⁷⁴.

However, Cabeza de Vaca, in the Melchior Díaz incident, is confronted by the indigenous community discourse that challenges his civilizer utterances by re-defining what are acceptable meanings and limitations for the natives⁷⁵. It is Cabeza de Vaca's use of the gourd (*calabaçón*) and not the cross (*cruz*) that induces indigenous leaders to accede to a dialogue between the Spaniards and the natives, for the gourd carries a narrative that he may not clearly comprehend but which he knows must be used to communicate a reciprocal discourse frame that allows a dialogue⁷⁶. He is obligated to work within and with the native community in order to have a language that truly validates authority for the indigenous people. The gourd as a sign expresses the sphere of native political power and structure and its interconnected expectations⁷⁷. His use of it demonstrates that he anticipates the native questions about authority and discourse orientation⁷⁸.

Though the natives are forced to deal within a conflict environment with culturally intrusive Spanish forces that lead to immense cultural loss, they resist, evade, adjust, and deflect the aggressors as much as possible. Under the Spanish armed pressure, the natives acknowledge the outward forms of the imposed imperial relationships of the *cruz* and *iglesia* and endeavor to adapt or even redefine the terms into their ideological frame. From a weak political position, the indigenous chiefs negotiate with Díaz and Cabeza de Vaca and try to use the Spanish system as an instrument for accomplishing their governing aims, such as utilizing *cruz* and *iglesia* to deal with and resolve the Spanish violence against their communities. They incorporate those utterances without necessarily being committed to Cabeza de Vaca's Providential mandate or agreeing with his civilizer philosophical underpinnings. For instance, it is not at all clear that the indigenous people accept or understand the *cristiano*/Hispanic significance of Cabeza de Vaca's greatest claim to success: the fulfillment of his order (*mandamos*) to the indios to establish churches with crosses (*hiziessen iglesias y pusiesen cruces*)⁷⁹.

The dissimilar or utterly different Spanish and indigenous discourses do produce and

frame two distinct sets of interpretive conventions. As an example, the natives tell Cabeza de Vaca their religious beliefs are based on what their ancestors have passed down from long ago. Their words root them to the land through their ancestors (*sus padres y abuelos*), who were there long before the Spaniards' arrival. The natives communicate that their relationships of legitimacy are apart from the Spanish imperial context. It is their forebears who link them and give value to their discourse⁸⁰. This echoes other indigenous peoples' statements to the Spanish invaders⁸¹. Their ancestors are the basis of their legitimacy.

This notion, nevertheless, does not count within the *cristiano*/Hispanic empire building context because, as Gómara states in his *Historia General de las Indias*, the Spaniards are conquering the Americas in order to convert -and thus reveal the true God and Lord- and to fight the infidels⁸². In addition, Cabeza de Vaca emphasizes service to the sovereign as the basis of his actions in fulfilling the civilizer's tasks, specifically the conversion of the indigenous people. Legitimacy is defined by his civilizer discourse, which supposedly facilitates the subordination and incorporation of the natives' social allegiance and identity to the Spanish universal empire, for they apparently give themselves up to the superior *cristiano*/Hispanic cultural history⁸³.

Because of the depth of the destruction and the rending of the social fabric of the Culiacán area native communities in 1536, the tribal leaders are forced to negotiate with the invading Spaniards⁸⁴. The Spanish *señorio* demands from the natives a new ritual of observance, which aims to change their social boundaries. Cabeza de Vaca's discourse requires that all indios abandon their own culture and adopt the *cristiano*/Hispanic way. The supposed indio acceptance of *iglesia* and *crux* designates a native belief shift into a Hispanic imperial context, which assumes that the natives cannot see any reason to remain apart and, therefore, will wish not do so. Consequently, they agree to Spanish *cristiano* subordination (*obedeçer sus mandamientos*)⁸⁵. However, there is one significant point that cannot be erased but which is ignored in the Díaz episode, and that is that the natives are free until the Spaniards arrive and subjugate them.

In the Melchior Díaz incident, the required conversion of the natives to Catholicism underlies Cabeza de Vaca's and Díaz's peace protocol demands. They pressure the indigenous people to accept the required Spanish governing conventions through threats of violence and enslavement against them. Even though it is under military pressure that the native *principales señores* agree to accept the symbols of *iglesia* and *crux*, the indigenous people do not simply passively accept the Spanish terms for peace⁸⁶. They bargain as they seek to protect their core interests. In exchange for protecting their rights to their lands and their security, the natives agree to the Spanish demands. For their part, Cabeza de Vaca and Díaz guarantee the natives' safety, stating that the Spaniards (*españoles*) will receive them as brothers. However, the term "brothers" (*hermanos*) is quickly replaced by the phrase best of friends (*grandes amigos*). Yet, it becomes clear that even this phrase does not apply to the converted indigenous people, who turn out to be servants, for they are socially below the *español*⁸⁷. For instance, in this conquering context, the converted natives are obligated to obey, feed, and shelter the *cristianos españoles*. The aim of Cabeza de Vaca's civilizing mission is not to incorporate the indios as "*nosotros*" but as

subordinates who are set apart from the Spaniards. He and Díaz dictate this hierarchy; hence, the natives are a type of "ellos".

In addition, once Cabeza de Vaca establishes the social obligations of conversion, it follows that if the Christianized natives violate their presumed solemn vow to Catholicism, then they are heretics and, consequently, when and where necessary the full weight and severity of force must be brought to bear on them for their own good⁸⁸. Cabeza de Vaca's civilizer discourse justifies his and Díaz's threatened aggression against the indios as fulfilling their obligation to direct the natives to the *cristiano*/Hispanic truth. After all, they have accepted Catholicism and if need be the natives must be reminded of that *cristiano* truth. This, of course, makes the civilizer's commitment to win over the natives through persuasion problematic.

Cabeza de Vaca's civilizer statements about the indios being drawn to be Christians and to submit to the Imperial Majesty are contradicted by events, e.g., the coerced baptism of the sons of the *principales señores* (indigenous chiefs) or the readiness to use violence against the natives (*Quien contra ellos huviere de pelear*)⁸⁹. Nevertheless, first of all, Cabeza de Vaca presents the Spanish crown as reasserting its authority over the indigenous people, and he delegitimizes the independent Spanish conqueror who is presented as de-centering the imperial endeavor⁹⁰. Secondly, despite the inconsistency about the place of violence in the conquering enterprise, his language emphasizes not violence against the natives but instead their voluntary acceptance of Catholicism, which incorporates them into the universal. He states that the decisive issue is that indigenous people must be treated well, for there is no other approach (*otro [camino] no*) to empire building than the civilizer one, which addresses the natives' desire to become *cristianos* and to obey the "*Imperial Magestad*"⁹¹. Cabeza de Vaca, in the role of reliable witness, articulates what he designates as the proper path for the development and accomplishment of the Providential mandate through which he serves "*Dios Nuestro Señor y Magestad*"⁹².

His discourse negates native meaning and legitimacy, for he argues their conversion to Catholicism is the process through which they gain substance. For instance, this is exemplified by his attempt to substitute the native god, *Aguar*, with the name of the *cristiano* god, *Dios*, which aims to redirect who the natives will serve and worship⁹³. His and Melchior Díaz's pressure on the natives to convert to Catholicism, though, will lead to a coerced community resettlement, involving their re-organization and re-congregation. This process unintentionally brings together diverse, fragmented, and ravaged natives who re-form their social relationships as well as community identities during the Spanish conquering and governance-development process⁹⁴. Intentionally, Cabeza de Vaca's discourse sets up the beginnings of an indigenous parallel yet subordinate line of authority, the *república de los indios*, which will be contested by the crown and the feudal-oriented *conquistador*⁹⁵.

However, Cabeza de Vaca's attempt to use his unitary language to establish dominance over the natives is inconsistent because of the fact that at different times the speech of the indigenous people appears to retain, adapt, and even reject the Spanish imperial conversion discourse⁹⁶. The indigenous people will not open negotiations without the discourse object-sign of

native culture (e.g., the gourd, calabacón); they adapt to their cultural environment the imposed term *Dios*; and some as *enemigos* continue to completely and violently reject the Spanish⁹⁷. In addition, the indio memories of the past speak, presenting the Spaniards with references to a history that gives the natives and not the Spaniards legitimacy⁹⁸. The limited Spanish forces, as Cabeza de Vaca acknowledges, cannot at this time control the indios. In fact, they need the natives' cooperation very much. Because of this, the indigenous people continue to retain their fundamental religious ideas embodied either by their divinely recognized spiritual intermediaries or priests, and/or their *principales señores*.

He ends the Melchior Díaz episode by stating that the negotiations with the natives are witnessed by a notary (*en presencia del escrivano*), verifying his obedience to the emperor and the legitimacy of the discourse⁹⁹. Nevertheless, the difficulties of Spanish consolidation persist despite Cabeza de Vaca having declared pacification a success. He himself continues to shift the native's identity back and forth between the categories of *ellos* and *nosotros* notwithstanding having announced the transformation of the indigenous people into *cristianos*, which makes things problematic. In addition, the indigenous people appear to utilize *cruz* and *iglesia* as political tools without necessarily granting validity to the Spanish Providential values. In fact, indigenous cultural discourse persists, as it did in many native communities¹⁰⁰. It should not be a surprise that as the indigenous people actively adapt to the dramatically changing circumstances they defend their community's prerogatives, which are rooted in their history and cultural traditions. In the process, they reveal that they are not thoroughly assimilated or absorbed into the Spanish domain.

On 15 May 1536, Cabeza de Vaca leaves the indios of the Culiacán region supposedly subdued and heads for Compostela, where Governor Nuño de Guzmán is awaiting him. However, Cabeza de Vaca needs an escort to make sure he can reach his destination because natives continue to resist the Spaniards violently in what is declared to now be *tierra cristiana*, which turns out to be a Spanish ruined region and enemy dominated land¹⁰¹. This contests his civilizer claim that the *cruz* and *iglesia* have turned the indios into complete loyal servants of the Spanish domain. Nevertheless, Cabeza de Vaca points out that this situation is the fault of the Spanish conqueror who covets feudalistic rights, because his ineffective, insufficient, and hasty measures to secure the regions create very unstable social conditions.

Conclusion

This discourse examination, of the Melchior Díaz episode in Cabeza de Vaca's 1542 *La Relación*, reveals the strife involved in the Spanish imperial enterprise between three contending discourses, each attempting to establish a particular ideological framework with which to define meaning and channel the response of others¹⁰². The Díaz episode describes how in the Culiacán region the three discourses interact and affect one another in a very serious struggle over which group possesses authority and command in the territory. This results in a factional struggle between two Spanish groups and their assault on the cultural core of indigenous people. For his part, Cabeza de Vaca promotes a civilizer imperial discourse that is to be the guiding

influence in the development of empire. As a treasurer of the Spanish crown, Cabeza de Vaca's language upholds the emperor's rule over the *encomendero*-oriented Spanish conqueror, who is challenging the crown, and asserts His Majesty's control over indigenous people and resources in newly conquered areas. His discourse is in conflict with the rhetoric of the *encomenderos* and would-be ones, as well as confronts the natives' assertion of their independence.

Although the feudal-oriented Spanish conqueror's rhetorical perspective and that of the civilizer Cabeza de Vaca's are struggling over the constitution of the Spanish empire through a common sanctioned vocabulary, the differences between the two discourses are significant. For Cabeza de Vaca, the independent Spanish conqueror's words and deeds signify a trend that endangers the completion of the universal empire and the emperor's sovereignty. His discourse, consequently, supports an *Emperador Rey* authoritative center with which he disputes the Spanish conqueror's contentions to earned *encomendero* rights.

Cabeza de Vaca's civilizer discourse depicts his ordeal in the Melchior Díaz episode as concretely fulfilling beyond a doubt the Providential mandate. His civilizer language challenges the *encomendero*-oriented conqueror's hold on the instrument of warfare and coercion by claiming he is the one who applies the proper pacification approach and royal jurisdiction over the indigenous people. He utilizes the rhetoric of *cruc* and *iglesia* to demonstrate how to mend the dreadful circumstances created by the feudal-oriented Spanish conqueror, whom he accuses of applying disruptive and degenerative approaches along with employing misleading rhetoric. He professes that his persuasive Christianizing approach effectively hastens the stabilization and assimilation of a conquered region and will lead to the establishment of the emperor's political domain. In addition, in the Díaz episode, his claim of successfully pacifying the land not only testifies for the *Emperador Rey's* assertion of authority but contrasts with the *encomendero*-oriented Spanish conqueror's failed policies that damage the process of empire building -creating an unbalanced symbiosis- and, consequently, make him unworthy of the Providential mandate that validates the Spanish empire's exercise of universal and exclusive sovereignty.

In Cabeza de Vaca's narrative, a crucial question is who owns interpretative authority, which is related to issues of control and power. Cabeza de Vaca's civilizer language defends the crown's interests by formulating an end to all the separate rhetorical currents, especially the native one that fights against the dreaded dangers of the tribal community losing its integrity and independence to the Spaniards. Despite the problematic sanction of violence, Cabeza de Vaca claims to save the indios from their unenlightened state by persuading them to voluntarily convert, emphasizing that there can be no other way to empire building that fulfills the natives' desire to become part of the crown's realm. With the morality and ideology of this language underpinning Cabeza de Vaca's actions, he attempts to complete the Spanish divine mission of the universal empire under which indigenous people are subordinated as vassals¹⁰³.

Cabeza de Vaca's discourse supports the sovereignty of the monarch by reinforcing patterns of reference that produce and organize information with which the emperor can subsume all within the developing Christian universal empire. The rhetorical conquering process appropriates and occupies the territories of the Americas, re-creating the cultural space in a

hierarchical and centralizing manner in which the emperor is the authoritative core. In Cabeza de Vaca's civilizer discourse, crucial terms like *cruz* and *iglesia* drive an emperor's officializing, regularizing, and centralizing agenda that re-orders the substance of the Spanish debate about the Providential mandate in the construction of the empire¹⁰⁴. Cabeza de Vaca's utterances resonate with expansionist millennialist attitudes and values as well as put forth a powerful corporate imperial identity with which to re-conceptualize and restructure the ever growing universal empire under the emperor's civilizing and centralized domain.

Sources

- Cabeza de Vaca, Álvar Núñez. *La Relación*. Zamora, Augustin de Paz y Juan Picardo, 1542.
- Díaz del Castillo, Bernal, *Historia Verdadera de la Conquista de la Nueva España*. Madrid, Espasa Calpe, 1992.
- López de Gómara, Francisco, *Historia General de las Indias: Hispania Victrix*. Vol. I. Barcelona, Ediciones Orbis, S.A., 1985.
- Fernández de Oviedo, Gonzalo. *Historia General y Natural de las Indias*. Perez de Tudela Bueso, Juan (ed.). Vol. I y IV. Madrid, Ediciones Atlas, 1992.

Bibliography

- Adorno, Rolena and Pautz, Patrick Charles (eds.) *Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca: His Account, His Life, and the Expedition of Pánfilo de Narváez*. Vol. 1 and 2. Lincoln, University Of Nebraska Press, 1999.
- Alcock, Susan E.; D'Altroy, Terence N.; Morrison, Kathleen D.; and Sinopoli, Carla M. *Empires: Perspectives from Archaeology and History*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail M. *The Dialogic Imagination*. Holquist, Michael (ed.). Translated by Carly Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin, University of Texas Press, 1981.
- . *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*. Emerson, Caryl and Hoquist, Michael (eds.). Translated by Vern W. McGee. Austin, University of Texas Press, 1986.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail M. and Medvedev, Pavel N. *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship*. Translated by Albert J. Wehrle. Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1985.
- Barr, Juliana. "Geographies of Power: Mapping Indian Borders in the 'Borderlands' of the Early Southwest". *The William and Mary Quarterly*. Vol. 68, No 1, Williamsburg, Virginia, January 2011.
- Bauer, Ralph. *The Cultural Geography of Colonial American Literatures: Empire, Travel, Modernity*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Dandeleit, Thomas James. *Spanish Rome, 1500-1700*. New Haven, Yale University Press, 2001.
- Day, David. *Conquest: How Societies Overwhelm Others*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Elliott, John H. *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America 1492-1830*. New Haven, Yale University Press, 2006.
- . *Spain And Its World 1500-1700*. New Haven, Yale University Press, 1989.
- Greenblatt, Stephen. *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World*, Chicago. The University of Chicago Press, 1991.
- Himmerich y Valencia, Robert. *The Encomenderos of New Spain, 1521-1555*. Austin, University of Texas Press, 1991.
- Karttunen, Frances. *Between Worlds: Interpreters, Guides, and Survivors*. New Brunswick, New Jersey, Rutgers University Press, 1994.
- Kubler, George. *Aesthetic Recognition of Ancient Amerindian Art*. New Haven, Yale University Press, 1991.
- Melton-Villanueva, Miriam. "Late Nahuatl Testaments from the Toluca Valley: Indigenous-Language Ethnohistory in the Mexican Independence Period". *Ethnohistory*. Vol. 55, No 3, Durham, Summer 2008.
- Mills, Barbara J. "How the Pueblo Became Global: Colonial Appropriations, Resistance, and Diversity in the North American Southwest". *Archaeologies*. Vol. 4, No 2, New York, August 2008.
- Mundy, Barbara E. *The Mapping of New Spain: Indigenous Cartography and the Maps of the Relaciones Geográficas*. Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 2000.
- Padrón, Ricardo. *The Spacious Word: Cartography, Literature, and Empire in Early Modern Spain*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2004.

- Panich, Lee M. "Missionization and the Persistence of Native Identity on the Colonial Frontier of Baja California". *Ethnohistory*. Vol. 57, No 2, Durham, Spring 2010.
- Rabasa, José. *Writing Violence on the Northern Frontier: The Historiography of Sixteenth-century New Mexico and Florida and the Legacy of Conquest*. Durham, Duke University Press, 2000.
- Reséndez, Andrés. *A Land So Strange: The Epic Journey of Cabeza de Vaca*. New York, Basic Books, 2007.
- Rivera, Luis N. *A Violent Evangelism: The Political and Religious Conquest of the Americas*. Louisville, Kentucky, Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992.
- Salomons, Carolyn. "Hybrid Historiography: Pre- and Post-conquest Latin America and Perceptions of the Past". *Past Imperfect*. Vol. 12, Edmonton, Canada, 2006 <ejournals.library.ualberta.ca/index.php/pi/article/view/1546/1077>.
- Seed, Patricia. *American Pentimento: The Invention of Indians and the Pursuit of Riches*. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2001.
- Serés, Guillermo. "Ariosto, los Reyes Católicos y la *Monarchia Christianorum* carolina". *Revista de Indias*. Vol. LXXI, No 252, Madrid, España, 2011.
- Simpson, Lesley Byrd. *The Encomienda in New Spain*. Berkeley, University of California Press, 1950.
- Terraciano, Kevin. Religion and the Church in Early Latin America". Hsia, Po-chia (ed.). *A Companion to the Reformation World*. Oxford, Blackwell Publishing, 2006, pp. 336-352.
- Tavárez, David E. "Idolatry as an Ontological Question: Native Consciousness and Juridical Proof in Colonial Mexico". *Journal of Early Modern History*. Vol. 6, No 2, Leiden, The Netherlands, 2002.
- Tyler, Stephen. "Memory and Discourse". Fries, Peter H., et. al. (eds.), *Relations and Function Within and Around Language*. New York, Continuum, 2002, pp. 189-224.
- Voloshinov, Valentin N. *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*. Translated by Ladislav Matejka and I. R. Titunik. Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1973.
- Wallerstein, Immanuel. *European Universalism: the Rhetoric of Power*. New York, The New Press, 2006.
- Weber, David J. *Bárbaros: Spaniards and Their Savages in the Age of Enlightenment*. New Haven, Yale University Press, 2005.
- Wright, Ronald. *Stolen Continents: The Americas Through Indian Eyes Since 1492*. New York, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1992.
- Zavala, Silvio. *La encomienda Indiana*. 2nd edition. Mexico City, Editorial Porrúa, 1973.

Notes

¹ "After having sent the indios away, alclade Zebreros and three other Christians took us under their charge who showed us how much men deceive others because we were seeking freedom and, in turn, when we thought we had gained it the opposite occurred. And in order to keep us from communicating with the indios, they led us through the unpopulated hills. They did not want us to be aware of their deceitful actions, for they had agreed to seize the indios whom we had sent away reassured and in peace. And so they accomplished what they planned". The Cabeza de Vaca translations are my own, and for the Spanish quotations, I follow the original orthography. Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, *La Relación*, Zamora, Augustin de Paz y Juan Picardo, 1542, sig. H4v.

² Ralph Bauer, *The Cultural Geography of Colonial American Literatures: Empire, Travel, Modernity*, Cambridge, Cambridge Press, 2003, pp. 35, 36. The relación de méritos y servicios seeks to gain royal favors based on merit of the author's conduct while in service of the crown.

³ Cabeza de Vaca, *op. cit.*, sig. A3r. The referred area indicates a vast unexplored region that began at the Río Soto la Marina (present day Tamaulipas, Mexico) to the tip of the Florida Peninsula. Rolena Adorno and Patrick Charles Pautz, (eds.), *Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca: His Account, His Life, and the Expedition of Pánfilo de Narváez*, Vol. 1, Lincoln, University Of Nebraska Press, 1999, p. 23.

⁴ The *encomienda* is a grant by the Spanish crown of the right of the grantee to receive the labor and tribute of indios within a certain territory. See the following landmark and fundamental works on the *encomienda* Silvio Zavala, *La encomienda Indiana*, 2nd edición, Mexico City, Editorial Porrúa, 1973; Lesley Byrd Simpson, *The Encomienda in New Spain*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1950.

⁵ Bauer, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 42, 44.

⁷ John H. Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America 1492-1830*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2006, p. 130.

⁸ Adorno and Pautz, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 374.

⁹ Cabeza de Vaca, *op. cit.*, sig. H3r.

¹⁰ For instance, Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, who is appointed in 1532 official royal chronicler of the Indies by Charles V, notes that as a faithful scribe he will be rewarded by His Imperial Majesty who is needed by the entire "*universal*

república cristiana," because of his Christian rule as well as being in direct line of Roman emperors, "*Vuestra Cesárea Majestad*". Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, *Historia General y Natural de las Indias*, Vol. I, ed. Juan Perez de Tudela Bueso, Madrid, Ediciones Atlas, 1992, pp. 12, 17-20.

¹¹ David E. Tavárez, "Idolatry as an Ontological Question: Native Consciousness and Juridical Proof in Colonial Mexico," *Journal of Early Modern History*, Vol. 6, No. 2, Leiden, The Netherlands, 2002, pp. 1145-139, (p. 124).

¹² Elliott, *op. cit.*, 2006, p. 121.

¹³ Patricia Seed, *American Pentimento: The Invention of Indians and the Pursuit of Riches*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2001, pp. 63, 64.

¹⁴ Elliott, *op. cit.*, 2006, pp. 40, 132.

¹⁵ The term *servicio* for the conqueror takes on the connotations of expected reciprocity from the Monarch.

¹⁶ Elliott, *op. cit.*, 2006, pp. 131, 132. The *Comuneros* Revolt originally involves some of the eighteen cities in the crown of Castile represented in the Castilian Cortes. Andrés Reséndez notes that Cabeza de Vaca fought the *Comuneros*. Andrés Reséndez, *A Land So Strange: The Epic Journey of Cabeza de Vaca*, New York, Basic Books, 2007, pp. 49, 50.

¹⁷ Guillermo Serés comments on *la tercera redacción* (C 1532) del *Orlando furioso* by Ariosto, pointing out the Providential view of Charles V as the one pastor and the one monarch who will bring peace and justice. Guillermo Serés, "Ariosto, los Reyes Católicos y la *Monarchia Christianorum* carolina," *Revista de Indias*, Vol. LXXI, Núm. 252, Madrid, España, 2011, pp. 331-363, (pp. 331, 332).

¹⁸ John H. Elliott, *Spain And Its World 1500-1700*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1989, pp. 8-10. John H. Elliott has commented that millennialism for the Spanish conqueror involved the notion of being chosen by God to fight the enemies of their faith, a holy war. He executed the divine will, upholding and extending Catholic Christianity.

¹⁹ Bauer, *op. cit.*, pp. 44, 46, 48.

²⁰ Susan E. Alcock, *et. al.*, *Empires: Perspectives from Archaeology and History*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001, p. 185.

²¹ Cabeza de Vaca, *op. cit.*, sigs. H1r, E5v, H7r.

²² *Ibid.*, sigs. H1r, H1v.

²³ Guzmán serves as Governor of the province of Pánuco from 1525–1533, President of the first *Audiencia* from 1528–30, and as Governor of Nueva Galicia from 1529–1534. In March 1531, Guzmán's army reaches the site of present-day Culiacán (now in Sinaloa), where his force proceeds to enslave the inhabitants and devastate the region. Despite the fact that the Spanish Crown at times uses Guzmán as a counter balance to another autonomous-oriented conqueror Cortés, he is a threat to the authority and power of the crown, leading to Guzmán's arrest in 1536 for treason.

²⁴ Nuño de Guzmán establishes *encomiendas* for himself and his Spanish followers and even seizes land previously granted to other Spaniards. In 1536, the Viceroy of New Spain, Antonio de Mendoza arrests Guzmán and imprisons him (1536-1538) and is then returned to Spain where he dies in obscurity. *Encomienda*, in the Spanish colonies, is a grant of authority over natives who provide cheap labor and periodic payments of goods to the *encomendero*, who is obliged to Christianize the indigenous people.

²⁵ *Requerimiento* was a document that was read aloud by the Spanish *conquistadores* of the early sixteenth century to native peoples in the Americas, demanding that they submit themselves to Spanish rule and to Christianity. If they did not, the *conquistadores* were permitted to conduct just war on them leading to their death or enslavement.

²⁶ Rolena Adorno and Patrick Charles Pautz (eds.), *Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca: His Account, His Life, and the Expedition of Pánfilo de Narváez*, Vol. 2, Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1999, pp. 370, 372.

²⁷ The *encomenderos* are also in conflict with religious orders over indigenous labor. But the orders themselves are a possible problem to the crown. The Franciscan Diego de Landa, for instance, in his struggle with the *encomendero* "asserted that his jurisdiction was not only independent of the civil court of appeals, but also of the authority of the archbishop in Mexico City. Landa claimed that he was subject directly to the pope." Frances Karttunen, *Between Worlds: Interpreters, Guides, and Survivors*, New Brunswick, New Jersey, Rutgers University Press, 1994, pp. 96, 97.

²⁸ Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, trans. Vern W. McGee, Austin, University of Texas Press, 1986, pp. 94, 95.

²⁹ Stephen Tyler, "Memory and Discourse," in *Relations and Function Within and Around Language*, Peter H. Fries, et. al. (eds.), New York, Continuum, 2002, pp. 189-224, (p. 211).

³⁰ Luis N. Rivera, *A Violent Evangelism: The Political and Religious Conquest of the Americas*, Louisville, Kentucky, Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992, pp. 50, 51.

³¹ Bakhtin, *op. cit.*, 1986, pp. 87, 88.

³² Rivera, *op. cit.*, p. 57; David Day, *Conquest: How Societies Overwhelm Others*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 75.

³³ Elliott, *op. cit.*, 2006, p. 66.

³⁴ Valentin N. Voloshinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, trans. Ladislav Matejka and I. R. Titunik, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1973, p. 68.

³⁵ Cabeza de Vaca, *op. cit.*, sigs. A8v, C4r, F3v, H1r, H3v, H4r, H5r, H7r; Elliott, *op. cit.*, 2006, pp. 14, 23.

³⁶ Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Carly Emerson and Michael Holquist, Austin, University of Texas Press, 1981, pp. 257, 281.

³⁷ Kevin Terraciano, "Religion and the Church in Early Latin America," in *A Companion to the Reformation World*, ed. Po-

chia Hsia, Oxford, Blackwell Publishing, 2006, pp. 336-352, (pp. 336, 337).

³⁸ Cabeza de Vaca, *op. cit.*, sig. A8r.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, sig. H3v.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, sigs. A8r, H4r.

⁴¹ Cabeza de Vaca, *op. cit.*, sig. H4r.

⁴² Bauer, *op. cit.*, pp. 33, 48, 49.

⁴³ Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, *Historia General y Natural de las Indias*, Vol. IV, ed. Juan Perez de Tudela Bueso, Madrid: Ediciones Atlas, 1992, pp. 287, 313. Oviedo read the Joint Report of Cabeza de Vaca and his fellow expeditionary survivors and Cabeza de Vaca gave him access to the manuscript in progress that became *La Relación*.

⁴⁴ Thomas James Dandeleit, *Spanish Rome, 1500-1700*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2001, pp. 31, 32; Cabeza de Vaca, *op. cit.*, sigs. A1v, H7r.

⁴⁵ Elliott, *op. cit.*, 1989, pp. 8, 9, 10.

⁴⁶ Cabeza de Vaca, *op. cit.*, sigs. H1r, H2r.

⁴⁷ Bauer, *op. cit.*, pp. 44, 48.

⁴⁸ Rivera, *op. cit.*, pp. 50, 115, 116.

⁴⁹ Bakhtin, *op. cit.*, 1981, pp. 352, 354.

⁵⁰ Cabeza de Vaca, *op. cit.*, sigs. H3v, H3r, H4v, H1r.

⁵¹ Adorno and Pautz, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, p. 372.

⁵² Reséndez, *op. cit.*, pp. 210, 211.

⁵³ Bakhtin, *op.cit.*, 1981, p. 401.

⁵⁴ Bauer, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

⁵⁵ In the narrative, Cabeza de Vaca presents himself as representative of the true ruler, depicting Your Majesty (*Vuestra Magestad*) as the one who intertwines both crown and church (*Sacra, Cesárea, Católica Magestad*) and is renovating the empire. Cabeza de Vaca, *op. cit.*, sig. A1v; Serés, *op. cit.*, pp. 336, 354.

⁵⁶ His civilizer discourse also confirms the legitimacy of the imperial endeavor through narrative utterances associated with cross and church, such as *santiguamos, después de santiguado, creyessen en Dios nuestro Señor, or santiguar*. Cabeza de Vaca, *op. cit.*, sigs. D2r, E6r, E7v, G2r.

⁵⁷ Bakhtin, *op.cit.*, 1986, pp. 124, 125.

⁵⁸ Cabeza de Vaca, *op. cit.*, sigs. A2r, A2v.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, sigs. H3v, H6r, H7v.

⁶⁰ An example of the native reconfiguration is in Texas involving the remnants of the Coahuilteco-, Comecrudo-, and Cotoname-speaking people. Juliana Barr, "Geographies of Power: Mapping Indian Borders in the 'Borderlands' of the Early Southwest," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 68, No. 1, Williamsburg, Virginia, January 2011, pp. 5-46, (pp. 12, 13). Another example of this involves the remnants of Seris and Pimas in Sonora and Chichimecas in Coahuila. David J. Weber, *Bárbaros: Spaniards and Their Savages in the Age of Enlightenment*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2005, p. 71.

⁶¹ Cabeza de Vaca, *op. cit.*, sig. H5r.

⁶² *Ibid.*, sigs. H4v, H5r.

⁶³ Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1991, p. 82; Cabeza de Vaca, *op. cit.*, sigs. G8r, H7r.

⁶⁴ This process, though, also affects the Spanish *crístianos* in the Americas with the creation of the *indianos*. A term used to call someone returning from the Americas with riches. George Kubler, *Esthetic Recognition of Ancient Ameridian Art*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1991, pp. 14, 15; Seed, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

⁶⁵ Robert Himmerich y Valencia, *The Encomenderos of New Spain, 1521-1555*, Austin, University of Texas Press, 1991, pp. 10, 11.

⁶⁶ Carolyn Salomons, "Hybrid Historiography: Pre- and Post-conquest Latin America and Perceptions of the Past," *Past Imperfect*, Vol. 12, Edmonton, Canada, 2006, pp. 1-33, accessed May 28, 2011, <ejournals.library.ualberta.ca/index.php/pi/article/view/1546/1077>, pp. 3, 4, 5, 15.

⁶⁷ Cabeza de Vaca, *op. cit.*, sig. H6r.

⁶⁸ Bakhtin, *op. cit.*, 1981, p. 271.

⁶⁹ Ricardo Padrón, *The Spacious Word: Cartography, Literature, and Empire in Early Modern Spain*, Chicago, University of Chicano Press, 2004, pp. 78, 79; Cabeza de Vaca, *op. cit.*, sigs. A2r, A3r, H5v.

⁷⁰ Cabeza de Vaca, *op. cit.*, sig. H5v ; José Rabasa, *Writing Violence on the Northern Frontier: The Historiography of Sixteenth-century New Mexico and Florida and the Legacy of Conquest*, Durham, Duke University Press, 2000, p. 80.

⁷¹ Elliott, *op. cit.*, 2006, p. 66.

⁷² Cabeza de Vaca, *op. cit.*, sig. A2r

⁷³ Barbara E. Mundy, *The Mapping of New Spain: Indigenous Cartography and the Maps of the Relaciones Geográficas*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 2000, p. 69.

⁷⁴ *estas gentes vengan a ser verdaderamente y con entera voluntad sujetas al verdadero Señor que las crió y redimió*. Cabeza de Vaca, *op. cit.*, sig. H7r.

⁷⁵ Barr, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

⁷⁶ Cabeza de Vaca, *op. cit.*, sig. H5v.

⁷⁷ Bakhtin, *op. cit.*, 1986, p. 124.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 91, 99.

⁷⁹ *Y nosotros les mandamos que hiziessen iglesias y pusiesen cruces en ellas, porque hasta entonces no las avían hecho.* We commanded them to build churches and place crosses in them. Until then, they had not done such a thing. Cabeza de Vaca, *op. cit.*, sig. H6v.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, sig. H6r.

⁸¹ Bernal Díaz del Castillo, *Historia Verdadera de la Conquista de la Nueva España*, Madrid, Espasa Calpe, 1992, pp. 214, 226; Ronald Wright, *Stolen Continents: The Americas Through Indian Eyes Since 1492*, New York, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1992, pp. 146-148. For instance, the transcript of the 1524 debate between Nahuas and Franciscan missionaries communicates this point.

⁸² Francisco López de Gómara, *Historia General de las Indias: Hispania Victrix*, Vol. I., Barcelona, Ediciones Orbis, S.A., 1985, p. 25.

⁸³ Bakhtin, *op. cit.*, 1981, pp. 276, 277.

⁸⁴ Cabeza de Vaca, *op. cit.*, sigs. H1r, H1v, H2r, H5v, H6r.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, sig. H6r.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, sig. H6v.

⁸⁷ Cabeza de Vaca, *op. cit.*, sig. H6r.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, sigs. F3v, H6r; Immanuel Wallerstein, *European Universalism: the Rhetoric of Power*, New York, The New Press, 2006, p. 7.

⁸⁹ *Atraídos a ser christianos y a obediencia de la imperial magestad.* Cabeza de Vaca, *op. cit.*, sigs. H1v, F3v, H6v.

⁹⁰ Bauer, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

⁹¹ Cabeza de Vaca, *op. cit.*, sig. H1v.

⁹² *Ibid.*, sig. H5r.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, sig. H6r.

⁹⁴ Lee M. Panich, "Missionization and the Persistence of Native Identity on the Colonial Frontier of Baja California," *Ethnohistory*, Vol. 57, No. 2, Durham, Spring 2010, pp. 225-262, (pp. 239, 247, 251, 252).

⁹⁵ Elliott, *op. cit.*, 2006, pp. 169, 170.

⁹⁶ Bakhtin, *op. cit.*, 1981, p. 271.

⁹⁷ Mikhail M. Bakhtin and Pavel N. Medvedev, *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship*, trans. Albert J. Wehrle, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1985, p. 14; Cabeza de Vaca, *op. cit.*, sigs. H5v, H6r, H7v.

⁹⁸ Cabeza de Vaca, *op. cit.*, sigs. H6r, H6v; Tyler, 220.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, sig. H6v.

¹⁰⁰ Barbara J. Mills, "How the Pueblo Became Global: Colonial Appropriations, Resistance, and Diversity in the North American Southwest," *Archaeologies*, Vol. 4, No. 2, New York, August 2008, pp. 218-232, (pp. 224, 225). Mills reports on Zuni resistance to wheat in connection to tribal identity. Miriam Melton-Villanueva, "Late Nahuatl Testaments from the Toluca Valley: Indigenous-Language Ethnohistory in the Mexican Independence Period," *Ethnohistory*, Vol. 55, No. 3, Durham, Summer 2008, pp. 361-383, (pp. 361, 362, 363). Miriam Melton-Villanueva documents an example of this in Nahuas continuing to write wills in their own language until well into the nineteenth century.

¹⁰¹ Cabeza de Vaca, *op. cit.*, sig. H7v.

¹⁰² Bakhtin, *op. cit.*, 1986, pp. 83, 84, 91.

¹⁰³ Day, *op. cit.*, p. 138.

¹⁰⁴ Bauer, *op. cit.*, p. 48.