

**THE INDIGENOUS PRESENCE IN RUBÉN DARÍO AND ERNESTO
CARDENAL**

by

John Andrew Morrow

**A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Graduate Department of Spanish and Portuguese
University of Toronto**

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ABSTRACT

The Indigenous Presence in Rubén Darío and Ernesto Cardenal. Morrow, John A., Ph.D. *University of Toronto*, 2000. 346pp. Director: Keith Ellis.

This dissertation examines the indigenous presence in the poetry of Rubén Darío and Ernesto Cardenal. It is divided into two sections, the first dealing with Darío and the second with Cardenal. In both sections the literary analysis is preceded by a critical contextualization. The approach is principally thematic and stylistic.

The Darío section examines the poet's contributions to the debates regarding race and identity, as well as the socio-political future of the Americas; the humanitarian motivation for his interest in the Amerindian world; the poet's double heritage, Hispanic and Amerindian; the presence of indigenous thematic, symbolic, mythological, and stylistic influences in his poetry; and finally his effort to search for and retrieve inspirational aspects of the Amerindian world and, after extensive research, to integrate them into his poetry. It is concluded that Darío was significantly inspired, both aesthetically and philosophically, by the Amerindian world.

The Cardenal section examines the humanitarian roots of the poet's interest in the Amerindian world; the aesthetic, religious, and socio-political influences of indigenous culture on the poet; the integration of the indigenous theme into his poetry and his life as a whole; the research underlying his poetry; and the stylistic influences of Amerindian literature on his poetry. It is concluded that Cardenal's poetry is strongly influenced aesthetically, socio-politically, and religiously by the Amerindian cultures of the Americas.

In the final conclusions the impact of the indigenous influence on the two poets is examined for similarities and differences.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank: Almighty God, to whom all praise is due; my family for their loving support; Professor Keith Ellis for his guidance, insight and attention to detail; Professor Raymond Skyrme for his meticulous criticism; and Professor Rosa Sarabia for her suggestions and contributions.

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The following study deals with the indigenous presence in the poetry of Rubén Darío and Ernesto Cardenal. It is divided into two sections, the first dealing with Darío and the second with Cardenal. Both sections commence with a critical contextualization and then move into literary analysis. In the Darío section, the poems are studied chronologically in order to show the evolution of the indigenous theme in his poetry. In the Cardenal section, the poems are studied thematically since the poet has touched upon many of the same themes in different works. Both the Darío and Cardenal sections have their own conclusions. The study as a whole finishes with a set of general conclusions which establish parallels and differences between the works of both poets.

The Darío section commences with a survey of the indigenous presence in Spanish American poetry. The poets briefly examined include: Alonso de Ercilla y Zúñiga, Juan Espinosa Medrano, Mariano Melgar, José Joaquín de Olmedo, José María Heredia, Manuel González Prada, Rubén Darío, José Santos Chocano, Ramón López Velarde, Pablo Neruda, César Vallejo, Carlos Pellicer, Octavio Paz, and Ernesto Cardenal. This overview demonstrates that the Amerindian world has played a significant role in Spanish American poetry, appearing in the works of Creole, mestizo, and Amerindian poets from all periods of history and belonging to distinct literary movements, be they Baroque, *modernista*, *posmodernista*, or *vanguardista*. The importance of Darío and Cardenal's contributions to the appropriation of the Amerindian world, with focus on their social and aesthetic concerns, is also discussed at the end of the overview.

The study then turns to the indigenous presence in Darío, contextualizing the poet and his poetry and calling into question some of the common views regarding his literary focus, ideology, and the philosophical underpinnings of the *modernista* movement.

The critical contextualization aims at clarifying the confusion existing between *americanismo literario* and *hispanismo literario*, raises some questions about the issue of race in Darío criticism, and points out the poet's humanitarianism and socio-political influences. The contextualization also considers the Martí-Darío relationship and its ideological implications; Darío's view of Martí; the role of Martí in founding *modernismo*, as well as the movement's progressive nature.

After contextualizing the poet and his poetry, the study then proceeds to the core of the Darío section which deals with the indigenous presence in his poetry. The works analyzed include: *Iniciación melódica*, *Epístolas y poemas*, *Selección de textos dispersos* and "Sonetos americanos," *Azul...*, "A Colón," *Prosas profanas*, *Cantos de vida y esperanza*, *El canto errante*, *Poema del otoño*, "A Bolivia," "Apóstrofe a Méjico," *Canto a la Argentina*, "La lora," and "Pax."

An analysis of "Canción mosquita" from *Iniciación melódica* demonstrates that the indigenous theme has been present in Darío's poetry from the beginning of his literary career. The controversy surrounding the source of inspiration of the poem is discussed and evaluated. "El porvenir" from *Epístolas y poemas* is examined, focusing on the poet's socially progressive attitude and his yearning for the return of the gods. The poet's vision of the Aztec and Inca worlds as manifested in "Chinampa" and "El sueño del Inca" from the "Sonetos americanos" is also studied.

Azul... is also given due consideration. "Año lírico" is interpreted as a challenge to the dominant values of the day. The famous poem in praise of Caupolicán is examined, stressing the poet's prodigious ability to condense part of an epic into a sonnet. In addition, Darío is presented as an initiator of the intertextuality of the chronicles. "A Colón" is reviewed at length due to the magnitude of its literary and ideological values. The poet's view of pre-Columbian America, Christopher Columbus, the conquest, the

wars of independence, miscegenation, as well as the state of post-colonial Spanish America are all explored in due course.

The study then continues with *Prosas profanas*. The importance of Darío's "Palabras liminares" as an *arte poética* is noted, as is the poet's desire to present alternatives to the dominant values of the day.

Cantos de vida y esperanza provides an abundance of material for analysis, including: "Salutación del optimista," "Al rey Oscar," "A Roosevelt," "Canto de esperanza," "Helios," "Nocturno (I)," "Divina Psiquis" and "Madrigal exaltado."

The analysis of "Salutación del optimista" stresses its united vision of Spanish America, which includes both its Hispanic and Amerindian legacy. "Al Rey Oscar," a poem which exalts the Hispanic heritage, is viewed, in part, as an invitation to discover indigenous America. With their allusions to Nezahualcóyotl, the Amerindian "Atlantis," Moctezuma, the Inca, and Cuauhtémoc, political poems like "A Roosevelt" also demonstrate Darío's pride in the Amerindian world.

"Canto de esperanza," "Helios," and "Nocturno (I)" are examined from a predominantly stylistic perspective. Similarities to the book of *Chilam Balam*, pre-Hispanic witchcraft, and Náhuatl poetry are pointed out.

In "Divina Psiquis," the struggle between Christianity and paganism, truth and falsehood, good and evil, are examined. This struggle takes place in the soul of the poet, which is torn between Christianity and paganism. The argument is made that the paganism in the poem does not limit itself to the European pagan tradition, but rather extends to all of world mythology, among which the Amerindian myths play a considerable role. "Madrigal exaltado" is an erotic composition which appears to allude to the harems of the Inca.

El canto errante provides several poems for analysis, including, "Momotombo," "Salutación al águila," "Tutecotzimí," "Oda," and "La canción de los pinos." Some of the elements studied in "Momotombo" include Darío's references to Huracán, the Mayan wind-god, as well as the chronicles of Oviedo and Gómara.

"Salutación al águila" is a polemical poem which was calumniated by critics who felt that Darío had betrayed Spanish America. This prevalent view of the poem is examined and discarded. Instead, the work is recognized as a Pan-Americanist poem expressing a yearning for peaceful co-existence between Spanish America and the United States. The study points out that the poet does not yearn for American annexation; rather, he asks for recognition of the Spanish American "Cóndor." He wishes to unite the Americas as a whole under the symbol of the indigenous bird.

"Tutecotzimí," Darío's longest poem dealing with an Amerindian theme and, in this case, the history of the Pipil Indians, is also the subject of analysis. Besides the Amerindian theme, the allusions to indigenous mythology, as well as the numerous *americanismos*, are indicated. The poem "Oda" is significant, as it serves, in part, as a recognition and validation of the Amerindian voice. "La canción de los pinos" contains a few elements alluding to the Amerindian world: a sense of unity with the environment, for example, as well as a particularly revealing conclusion that confesses the importance of the past, including the pre-Columbian, as a source of poetic inspiration.

Poema del otoño provides us with two poems dealing with miscegenation: "Raza" and "Retorno." Although it can be interpreted from a religious perspective, "Raza" can also be interpreted from a racial point of view. In fact, the poet alludes to the painful origin of Spanish Americans, the conquest, and the resultant racial *mélange*. This miscegenation between Spaniards, Africans, and Amerindians is viewed as inevitable and is presented as a positive fact without any indication of negativity. The poet also exhorts

Spanish Americans to follow in the footsteps of Nicarao, the wise Indian chief, who wished to build a bridge of peace and eliminate racial divisions. The analysis of "Retorno" focuses on the poet's criticism of the excesses of the conquest, narrow-minded nationalism, and the necessity of abolishing racial divisions and unifying humanity.

Overlooked by critics for over a century, "A Bolivia" from *Del chorro de la fuente* is a formidable artistic achievement that receives the attention it deserves. In fact, the analysis reveals the poem to be a clear indicator of Darío's double heritage: European and Amerindian. "Apóstrofe a Méjico" is another little-known poem from *Del chorro de la fuente*. Its evident Amerindian, mythological, historical, and revolutionary content, a reminder of Darío's thwarted visit to Mexico in 1910, gives the poem significance.

The importance of the epic *Canto a la Argentina* is also established. Evidence is provided that the work was partly influenced by Balbuena's *La grandeza mexicana*. Among the important aspects of the poem are the poet's desire to enrich, rather than to assimilate; his vision of unity and utopian harmony; his acceptance of all religions; his view of Amerindians as part of the whole; his yearning for the return of Amerindian gods; and his conviction that the retrieval and appropriation of the indigenous past is a poetic possibility.

Like "A Bolivia," "La lora" from *Del chorro de la fuente* is a little-known poem which has been overlooked by critics. Its significance lies in the fact that it reveals the poet's solidarity with oppressed Amerindians.

The final poem analysed in the Darío section is "Pax." The work, written in response to the war raging in Europe, is important: it manifests that Darío's social concerns were consistent and continued until the end of his life. The excerpt from the introductory speech which precedes the poem reveals a poet with a pantheistic vision

which coincides with native American beliefs and is fundamental to Darío and many of the poets he admired.

The conclusions of the Darío section stress the poet's contributions to the debates regarding race and identity, as well as the socio-political future of the Americas; the humanitarian motivation for his interest in the Amerindian world; the poet's double heritage, Hispanic and Amerindian; the presence of indigenous thematic, symbolic, mythological, and stylistic influences in his poetry; and finally his effort to search for and retrieve inspirational aspects of the Amerindian world and, after extensive research, to integrate them into his poetry. On the basis of the above, it is concluded that Darío was significantly inspired, both aesthetically and philosophically, by the Amerindian world.

The Darío section completed, the study then shifts to the indigenous presence in the poetry of Cardenal, commencing with a critical contextualization that establishes: the origins of Cardenal's socio-political commitment; Pound's influence on the poet; the role of liberation theology in his ideas; the ideological influence emanating from Cuba; his brand of humanitarian socialism; his subsequent radicalization; and his relationship with the Catholic Church. The contextualization continues with a discussion of the origins of Cardenal's interest in the indigenous world and also deals with the relationship between Catholicism and nativism.

Cardenal's aesthetic influences and ideas are examined. The fundamental premises of the poet's *exteriorista* school of literary expression are discussed, as are the indigenous stylistic and aesthetic influences in his poetry. Similarities are drawn between the poetry of Cardenal, the Aztecs, and the Incas. Examples of similar techniques are provided and serve as a necessary reference point for the textual analysis which follows.

Once the poet and his poetry are contextualized, the focus shifts to an analysis of the indigenous presence in Cardenal's poetry. It commences with a study of his "Cantares

mexicanos" and then proceeds with a study of his vision of the conquest, as well as the Amerindian-inspired socio-political and religious influences in his poetry. The works analyzed include: *Oración para Marilyn Monroe*, *El estrecho dudoso*, *Los ovnis de oro*, and *Cántico cósmico*.

The approach to the "Cantares" is one of *fuentismo*, the science of searching for sources. Not only are the themes of the poems studied, but their Amerindian sources are also revealed. The result of the research undertaken demonstrates Cardenal's mastery in manipulating his inspirational indigenous sources and his extensive use of collage, a technique which makes the essence of pre-Columbian Náhuatl poetry meaningful to modern readers.

The study then proceeds to analyze Cardenal's vision of the conquest as presented in *El estrecho dudoso*, a work which reveals that the native world played an important role in the poet's literary production from its early stages.

Prior to examining the theme of the conquest in *El estrecho dudoso*, an examination of its noteworthy stylistic characteristics is undertaken. The poet's sources of inspiration are explored as well as the nature of his collagistic technique. While some scholars have claimed that Cardenal merely reproduces fragments of documents without altering them, resulting in the absence of an authorial point of view, this study demonstrates that quite the opposite is true. In fact, the poet's voice is omnipresent in his poetry, the uniqueness of which is the result of the chorus of voices that give it life. Meaning is achieved through the interaction of Cardenal's voice with those of the integrated texts. It becomes clear that Cardenal does not duplicate bits and pieces of his sources; instead, he intertwines them, actualizes them, and makes them relevant to present-day situations.

After discussing Cardenal's use of sources, an analysis of the theme of the conquest in cantos II, IV, VII, X, XIII, XVII, XVIII, XIX, XXI, XXII, and XXIII of *El estrecho dudoso* becomes the focal point. The study examines: the poet's perspective on Columbus; his criticism of the conquistadors and their materialistic ambitions; his inversion of the savage/civilized dichotomy; his admiration of Cuauhtémoc; his concern with presenting the facts in a straightforward manner; his association with Bernal Díaz; his account of the despotic rule of Pedrarias Dávila; the dehumanization of Amerindians; as well as Pedro de Alvarado's conquest of Guatemala; Lempira's insurrection, and the role played by Las Casas in defending Amerindian rights. The poet's use of prefiguration, varied typography, and the integration of historical documents and segments from the *Chilam Balam* are also examined, as is the contemporary relevance of his poetry.

This study of Cardenal's vision of the conquest reveals a poet with a humanitarian vision, critical of the conquest, yet opposed to the overgeneralizations of the *leyenda negra*. While pointing out the excesses and abuses of Alvarado and Pedrarias, Cardenal praises Las Casas's energetic efforts in defense of Amerindians.

Following the analysis of Cardenal's vision of the conquest, the study explores the poet's socio-political inspiration in the Amerindian world. A selection of representative poems from *Oración para Marilyn Monroe*, *Los ovnis de oro* and *Cántico cósmico* is examined. These are categorized as North American, Mexican/Aztec, Central American, and South American poems. The socio-political theme in cantigas 18, 23, 24, 26, 32, 35, 38, from *Cántico cósmico* is also explored.

The North American poems include: "Kentucky" from *Oración*; "Kayanerenkhowa," "Marchas pawnees," "Tahirassawichi en Washington," "La danza del espíritu," and "Grabaciones de la pipa sagrada." The themes examined in these poems include: Cardenal's identification with the Amerindian world; his environmentalist

attitude; the natives' loss of land; the egalitarian nature of native society; his mockery of modernity; the possibility of peaceful co-existence between Amerindians and settlers; the decline of the bison; the apocalyptic Ghost Dance movement; and his association between Amerindians, hippies, and the civil rights movement of the 1960s and 1970s.

The Mexican/Aztec section deals exclusively with Cardenal's poem in praise of Nezahualcóyotl. The main themes in "Nezahualcóyotl" include Cardenal's admiration of and identification with the Chichimecan sovereign and his utopian rule.

The Central American poems, further divided into Cuna and Mayan poems, include: "Ovnis de oro," Nele Kantule," "8 Ahau," "Ardilla de los tunes de un katún," "Oráculos de Tikal," "Katún 11 Ahau," and "Mayapán."

The themes examined in the "Cuna poems" include Cardenal's admiration of Nele Kantule and his achievements; the socialist nature of Cuna society; the rise of materialism to the detriment of spiritualism; and the necessity for revolution.

The themes examined in the "Mayan Poems" include: the poet's veiled attack on the Central American dictatorships through a depiction of pre-Columbian despotism in Mayan lands; the problem of foreign economic domination; the issue of human rights violations; the rise of materialism to the detriment of spiritualism; and the necessity for revolution.

The South American poems, further subdivided into Inca poems and poems dealing with minor tribes, include: "La tierra que Dios nos entregó," "Los yaruros," "La Arcadia perdida," "Los hijos del bosque," "El secreto de Machu Picchu," and "Economía de Tahuantinsuyu" from *Los ovnis de oro*. The themes examined in the "South American Poems" include the plight of Amerindian tribes on the verge of extinction; the importance of preserving cultures in peril; and the usurpation of native land. Other themes include the accomplishments of the Jesuit missions in Paraguay; the persecution of Amerindians;

the messianic hopes of the Quechua-Aymara Indians, and the socio-economic accomplishments of the Incas. The main themes examined in cantigas 18, 23, 24, 26, 32, 35 and 38 from *Cántico cósmico* include the Sandinista revolution; pollution; exploitation of natural resources; and economic injustice.

Whether Cardenal's themes reflect North, Central, or South America, or the Mexican/Aztec influence, his socio-political poems inspired in the Amerindian world reveal a poet in search of political parallels between past and present; and in search of solutions for the problems facing Amerindians, as well as humanity in general.

In its final section, this study examines "Cardenal's Religious Inspiration in the Amerindian World," an element too important to be overlooked. It analyzes a selection of representative poems from *Los ovnis de oro* and *Cántico cósmico*, all of which manifest the poet's belief in the oneness of God, humanity, and nature. These include: "Entrevista con el cacique Yabilinguiña," "Sierra Nevada," "Los tlamatinimes," "Las ciudades perdidas," "Quetzalcóatl" from *Los ovnis de oro*; as well as cantigas 8, 15, 20, 27, 32, 37, and 43 from *Cántico cósmico*. The poet focuses on the religious ideas of Cacique Yabilinguiña; the Kogui Indians; the Aztec "tlamatinimes;" the ancient Mayas; and Quetzalcóatl, the religious leader. Cardenal's search for similarities between Amerindian and Christian beliefs is explored. Also discussed is the poet's evolution from drawing such direct parallels towards general philosophical reflections. The poet's extensive use of collage and jump-cuts is also examined.

The conclusions to the Cardenal section stress the humanitarian roots of the poet's interest in the Amerindian world; the aesthetic, religious, and socio-political influence of indigenous culture on the poet; the integration of the indigenous theme into his poetry and his life as a whole; the research underlying his poetry; and the stylistic influences of Amerindian literature on his poetry. It is concluded that Cardenal's poetry is influenced

aesthetically, socio-politically, and religiously by the Amerindian cultures of the Americas to varying degrees. The socio-political influence is the greatest, followed to a lesser degree by the religious and aesthetic influences.

THE INDIGENOUS PRESENCE IN SPANISH AMERICAN POETRY:

AN OVERVIEW

The indigenous element in Spanish American poetry has been present since its inception. As Luis Alberto Sánchez expresses in *Proceso y contenido de la novela hispanoamericana*: "[e]l indio actúa en nuestra literatura desde el instante mismo en que existió América poblada y hablante ... [e]s la mayor preocupación de los europeos apenas sientan la planta en nuestro territorio" (495). Since the time of the conquest, throughout the colonial period, and well into modern times, the indigenous element has appeared and played a notable role in the works of many of Spanish America's most distinguished poets.

The indigenous presence in Spanish American poetry can be sensed in the works of Creoles, mestizos, and Amerindians from all periods of history and belonging to distinct literary movements, be they Baroque, *modernista*, *posmodernista*, or *vanguardista*. They include Alonso de Ercilla y Zúñiga (Spain, 1533-99), Juan Espinosa Medrano (Peru, 1632-88), Mariano Melgar (Peru, 1790-1815), José Joaquín de Olmedo (Ecuador, 1780-1847) José María Heredia (Cuba, 1803-39), Manuel González Prada (Peru, 1848-1918), Rubén Darío (Nicaragua, 1867-1916), José Santos Chocano (Peru, 1875-1934), Ramón López Velarde (Mexico, 1889-1921), Pablo Neruda (Chile, 1904-1973), César Vallejo (Peru, 1892-1938), Carlos Pellicer (Mexico, 1899-1977), Octavio Paz (Mexico, 1914-98), and Ernesto Cardenal (Nicaragua, 1925-), among others.

The Conquest

Alonso de Ercilla y Zúñiga

While the conquest was still in full force, the Spanish poet Alonso de Ercilla y Zúñiga composed the well-known epic poem, *La araucana* (1569-89), dealing with the Araucanian Indians, or Mapuches, as they call themselves, partly based on his

experiences as a footsoldier in Chile. Whether Ercilla actually identified and sympathized with the Mapuche Indians is questionable. The work is nonetheless important because of the influence it had on Rubén Darío, José Santos Chocano, and others.

The Colonial Period

Juan Espinosa Medrano

After Ercilla, the next major poet to initiate an appropriation of the indigenous world is the "Indian Demosthenes" Juan Espinosa Medrano, also known as "El Lunarejo." Espinosa Medrano's importance is more linguistic than thematic or stylistic. Not only did the poet compose in Spanish and Latin; he also composed in Quechua, which helped increase its recognition as a literary language among Hispanic Peruvians. Significantly, Espinosa Medrano is also considered a possible author of *Ollantay* (qtd. in Yépez Miranda 27). José Gabriel Cosío, however, holds that the drama was merely adjusted to the staging of the epoch by Espinosa Medrano (qtd. in Yépez Miranda 27-28). Yépez Miranda accepts the plausibility of this position. As he points out: "[e]s muy probable que así sea, ya que fue un apasionado del arte, profundo conocedor de la literatura europea de esos tiempos y tenía además una asombrosa facilidad para versificar" (27-28). If Espinosa Medrano were in fact the author, or even the editor, of *Ollantay*, given the subversive nature of the drama, critics would have to reconsider labeling him as an apolitical aesthete.

The Struggle for Independence

Mariano Melgar

The struggle for Spanish American independence fomented an interest in the indigenous world in many poets, particularly Mariano Melgar. As one of the enlightened Creoles of his time, Melgar refused to accept the exclusion of his class from government participation. He equally opposed what he viewed as the European exploitation of the

New World. Melgar also stands out as being the first prominent Spanish American poet to openly and explicitly defend the rights of the oppressed indigenous masses. José Carlos Mariátegui considered the patriot to be the first Peruvian poet to convey the indigenous sentiment (242). The critic held that "Melgar se muestra muy indio en su imaginismo primitivo y campesino" (243). Melgar's concern for the original inhabitants of the Americas is the result of his social commitment. The poet's convictions lead him to fight and die for the freedom of his country.

Mariano Melgar's social commitment manifests itself directly in his poetry and allegorically in his fables. Although the indigenous element is not a salient feature in the content of Melgar's poetry, it does appear in its form. As his *Poesías completas* bear witness, the poet was rather fond of the yaraví, publishing over 70 compositions using that particular Indian form. As Alberto Tauro explains, Melgar "desdeña el rigor de los preceptos clásicos, al adoptar el verso libre; y define los caracteres del *yaraví*, composición elegíaca en la cual se asocian los ritmos del *haravi* incaico y de la poesía española" (90-91).

Mariano Melgar is an important poet for he was the first to introduce and legitimize the use of the Andean yaraví. The introduction of the yaraví into the canon of Spanish American poetry is akin to the introduction of the Italian sonnet into Spanish poetry by Juan Gracián (ca. 1490-1542), the innovations to the form of the Spanish sonnet made by Rubén Darío, and the integration of the Cuban *son* into poetry by Nicolás Guillén (1902-1989). Mariano Melgar is also the first in a line of Spanish American poets to associate social commitment with the defense of indigenous culture.

José Joaquín de Olmedo

Another renowned defender of Spanish American independence is José Joaquín de Olmedo whose importance lies in his composition of "La victoria de Junín: Canto a

Bolívar," which includes favorable portrayals of indigenous leaders such as Huayna-Capac, Atahualpa, Moctezuma, and Cuauhtémoc, as well as elements of indigenous mythology. The poet also expresses his admiration for Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas, the famous defender of aboriginal rights.

José María Heredia

José María Heredia is another great poet and revolutionary to have been influenced by the Amerindian world. A believer in equality, Heredia refused to use the "de" sign of nobility before his name. In Mexico he conspired for the independence of Cuba, was sentenced to death and to the appropriation of his possessions. When he returned to Cuba, early in 1820, he expressed his adherence to Bolívar's liberation movement.

In his "Poesías filosóficas y morales" one finds numerous compositions dealing with the indigenous world, both past and present. Although often critical, censuring pre-Columbian tyrants of indigenous America, there are several cases in which the poet speaks in favorable terms of the Amerindian world. It should be borne in mind, though, that many of the poet's attacks on despotic leaders of indigenous America appear to be thinly veiled attacks against the oppressors of his own epoch.

Among Heredia's poems dealing with the Amerindian world one finds "Al Sol," a poem inspired by his trip to Mexico. After extensively praising the sun, he finishes the poem by condemning the pagan practice of sun worship with its sinister sacrifices of human beings (255-56: lines 134-42). Another poem dealing with pre-Columbian Mexico is "Oda: a los habitantes de Anahuac" which, among other things, presents a dialogue between Moctezuma, Atahualpa, Manco-Capac, Tupac-Amaru, Guaycaypuro and Taramayna. In the poem "A Bolívar" the poet condemns the oppression by Spaniards during the colonial period (319: lines 11-14) and calls for the freedom of the Incas (322:

lines 101-109). Undoubtedly, his best-known composition dealing with the Amerindian world is "En el teocalli de Cholula," in which he condemns the Aztec practice of human sacrifice.

The *modernistas*

As a literary movement, *modernismo* was concerned with aesthetic renovation and, in part, with the originality of America and the idea of progress. Hence, several *modernista* writers dedicated poems to the aboriginal world, including Rubén Darío, the most important and one of the principal subject of this study, as well as Manuel González Prada and José Santos Chocano.

Manuel González Prada

Manuel González Prada is often defined as the precursor of Spanish American socialism, a view supported by the fact that he was a socially conscious writer throughout his life and actively struggled for socio-political reforms. González Prada is known primarily for his essays, the most famous collections of which are *Páginas libres* (1894) and *Horas de lucha* (1908). The writer's prose is combative and didactic, testifying to his inveterate activism in favor of civil rights. "La educación del indio" is perhaps the author's most renowned essay. Regarding his poetic production, one must point out *Minúsculas* (1901) and *Exóticas* (1911).

Among González Prada's most interesting poems dealing with the indigenous world, one finds "La india" and "El mitayo." "La india" deals with a materialistic Spaniard who prefers gold to the love of an Inca woman, infuriating her to the point that she murders him, stabbing him in the chest. "El mitayo," on the other hand, is a composition condemning the exploitation of Inca workers in the mines of Peru. The poem is a dialogue between an Indian father and his son. The father must explain to his son that he is leaving to work in the mines of the whites. He explains to his son that: "[l]a injusta

ley de los Blancos / me arrebatata del hogar: / voy al trabajo y al hambre, / voy a la mina fatal" (458: lines 9-12). The son asks the father when he will return (458: lines 13-14). The father responds that he will return when the hearts of the whites are moved by mercy (458: lines 27-28). His son asks him when the hearts of the whites will be pious and tender, to which the father replies: "[h]ijo, el pecho de los Blancos / no se conmueve jamás" (459: lines 31-32). As can be appreciated, González Prada's humanitarian concerns are just as ardently expressed in his poetry as they are in his prose.

José Santos Chocano

José Santos Chocano is a *modernista* poet who dealt quite extensively, although perhaps somewhat superficially, with the Amerindian world. The indigenous element in Chocano's poetry is present throughout his works, the most famous of which is *Alma América: poemas indo-españoles* (1906). Although praised during his lifetime, Chocano became the object of scrutiny after his death. His romanticized vision of the Indian as well as his support for "responsible" dictatorship alienated many. In a country where *indigenismo*, the preoccupation with assimilating indigenous peoples into the mainstream of Hispanic culture, would come to flourish, Chocano's *indianismo*, the tendency to idealize native Americans which results in the loss of their true identity, soon became unpalatable for the younger generation of writers and intellectuals. Although he dedicated a substantial portion of his work to the theme of indigenous America, Chocano's poetry is somewhat out of touch with the reality of indigenous peoples. Phyllis Rodríguez-Peralta has forcefully argued that Chocano was an arrogant aristocrat who exploited the Indians, in the same way as the conquerors, in order to elaborate his own empire of colorful compositions (*José Santos* 71). Although her views are at times uncompromising, she is accurate in asserting that "Chocano belonged innately to the Spanish realm" (71).

The *posmodernistas*

Ramón López Velarde

Among the *posmodernistas* one also finds poets who engaged the Amerindian theme. Foremost among them is Ramón López Velarde. A slight indigenous presence can be found in his works. Cuauhtémoc appears in the "Intermedio" of "Suave patria" from *El son del corazón* (1932). The poet directs himself to the last Aztec Emperor in the following terms: "[j]oven abuelo: escúchame loarte, / único héroe a la altura del arte" (267: lines 1-2) and thereafter laments the sovereign's suffering (268: lines 10, 13-20). The poet also points out that Cuauhtémoc has found his place on Mexican coins; however, he stresses that his importance is spiritual: "[m]oneda espiritual" (268: line 13).

The *vanguardistas*

The *vanguardistas* produced many socially conscious poets concerned with the plight of the original inhabitants of the Americas. These writers include César Vallejo, Pablo Neruda, Carlos Pellicer, and, to a minor extent, Octavio Paz.

César Vallejo

The indigenous element in César Vallejo's poetry has long been debated by critics. Many critics stress the nativism in the works of the great Peruvian poet, while others attempt to downplay or even deny this aspect. Divergent opinions are also found regarding Vallejo's cultural identity, some holding that the poet was indigenous, mestizo or Hispanic. In our study "Indígena universal: la cosmovisión autóctona en la poesía de César Vallejo" we have argued that although he was genetically a mestizo, the poet identified culturally with the indigenous world and embraced the Amerindian worldview.¹

The indigenous influence in Vallejo's poetry is manifest from the beginning of his poetic production and continues until his final compositions in the themes and the

sentiments they express. Some of these themes have their origins in native legends and beliefs, while others that are not exclusively indigenous, are revitalized via the infusion of Vallejo's native soul. Furthermore, many of Vallejo's poems manifest formal and structural correlations with ancestral artistic procedures from the Chavin and Moche peoples. The indigenous element in Vallejo's poetry is the result of a desire to exalt the native nation and retrieve its roots. Although the poet's works contain *indianista*, *indigenista*, humanitarian, and Marxist elements, Vallejo surpassed all "isms" with the universal appeal of his poetry. His work contains *indianista* elements in the sense that it idealized Amerindians. His work was *indigenista* in the sense that it defended Amerindians and was written from the perspective of an Amerindian. Vallejo was a universal Indian who universalized the suffering of his people. He departed from the indigenous *ayllu*² and extended himself to the world and the universe. The indigenous worldview is the nucleus of Vallejo's poetry and works, and the source of the original nature of his thoughts and modes of expression.

In *Poemas juveniles* (1911-18) one finds the poem "Estival" dealing with the transformation of the Indian into an indigent. "A mi hermano muerto..." can be interpreted allegorically as a poem dealing with the death of indigenous civilization. "Armada juvenil," on the other hand, is a nostalgic poem, filled with Inca hatred against the invaders, demonstrating an elevated level of bitterness and a yearning for revenge.

Los heraldos negros (1918) is a work that eloquently expresses the sentiments and concerns of the native soul. The work is described by Pablo Antonio Cuadra as "[l]a primera verdadera alianza [poética] de la lengua española con los labios del indígena" (qtd. in Lellis 47). José Carlos Mariátegui and Víctor Fuentes have noted that even in "Los heraldos negros" one finds the expression of the Indian's desperation and pessimism in the vital anguish of Vallejo's "[y]o no sé!" (lines 4, 17) (qtd. in Fuentes 21-22).

Another poem inspired in the Amerindian world is "La araña," based on the messianic myth of Incarrí. In "Nostalgias imperiales" Vallejo poeticizes the daily life of his people with numerous references to native mythology. In "Hojas de ébano" the poet expresses his nostalgia for the ancient empire of the Incas. In "Noche en el campo" the poet refers to the Incas as "una raza divina, / trágicamente triste y legendaria" (129: lines 38-39). The "Terceto autóctono" brings together three sonnets with native themes, dealing with issues of religious and cultural syncretism. "Oración del camino" is a prayer directed to the sun, the Inca deity *par excellence*, lamenting the confusion of identity of his conquered people. In "Huaco" the poet expresses his sense of oneness with Mother Nature in accordance with the indigenous worldview. The poem "Mayo" is an idealized vision of Inca times. "Aldeana" deals in part with the sunset, a metaphor for the ruin of the Inca people. The poem "Idilio muerto" reveals his nostalgia for his indigenous roots.

Vallejo's indigenous sensitivity is also found in poems like "El pan nuestro," "La cena miserable," and "Los desgraciados," in which he expresses his compassion for his unfortunate and oppressed people. The native sentiments of anguish, loneliness, abandonment, alienation, and fatalism can all be found in "El palco estrecho," "Nostalgias imperiales," "Heces," "Hojas de ébano," "Mayo," "Agape," and "Espergesia." In "Heces" and "Lluvia" one encounters references to Viracocha, the universal father of the Incas. "Los arrieros" is a portrait of Indian workers for whom the sun-god expresses empathy.

The indigenous influence is also present in *Trilce* (1922) in the references to the sun, significant within the Inca worldview, in poems like "LXXV" ("Estáis muertos"), as well as in the symbolic style reminiscent of that found on Moche ceramics.

"Telúrica y magnética" from *Poemas humanos* (1939) is one of Vallejo's most important poem of indigenous inspiration. According to Carlos Villanes Cairo, the work,

written in Europe, manifests Vallejo's longing for the *pachamama*, the Mother Earth of the Andean Indians. In this work, the poet establishes links between the socio-economic system of the Incas and the Soviet model. The poet essentially presents a utopian vision of Inca society. Significantly enough, the poet rejects Chocano's picturesque *indianismo*, rudely proclaiming: "[m]e friegan los cóndores!" (545: line 36). The key line in all of Vallejo may be his autodefinition: "indio después del hombre y antes de él" (546: line 60), a temporal antithesis that projects the native as a prototype of superior humanity. The lines "¡[l]o entiendo todo en dos flautas / y me doy a entender en una quena!" (546: lines 61-62) may signify that Vallejo is indigenous in his thought, understanding, and expression.

In the poem "Gleba" one finds an allusion to Manco Capac (552: line 13). In "Traspie entre dos estrellas" the poet laments the suffering of all the wretched of the earth. He alludes to assimilated Indians, describing them in the following terms: "[v]anse de su piel, rascándose el sarcófago en que nacen / y suben por su muerte de hora en hora / y caen, a lo largo de su alfabeto gélido, hasta el suelo" (629: lines 8-10).

Many of the *Poemas humanos* contain fundamentally Amerindian stylistic procedures originating in the cultures of the Chavin and Moche Indians. The poems "Intensidad y alturas" and "Yuntas" resemble Chavin art in their symmetry and repetition. Vallejo's conscious utilization of Amerindian forms of stylistic and structural expression has been acknowledged by the poet's wife, Georgette de Vallejo, who holds that "toda la obra de Vallejo desde 1929 hasta su muerte posee el rigor del equilibrio y disciplina del ancestral chavín" (qtd. in Paz Varias 11).

Although Vallejo's poetry deals with many universal themes, it remains rooted in the Amerindian worldview, which is the source of its originality. As Mariátegui has noted, "[e]n Vallejo se encuentra, por primera vez en nuestra literatura, sentimiento

indígena virginalmente expresado" (284). He also rightfully stressed that "lo fundamental, lo característico en su arte es la nota india. Hay en Vallejo un americanismo genuino y esencial" (285).

Pablo Neruda

Pablo Neruda's contribution to the appropriation of the indigenous world is most prevalent in his *Canto general* (1950), especially in "La lámpara en la tierra," "Alturas de Macchu Picchu," "Los libertadores," and "América, no invoco tu nombre en vano." In "La lámpara en la tierra" one finds allusions to the Carib, Chibcha, and Inca Indians (207-08). In Canto VI, the poet deals with Aztec and Mayan Indians, censuring their ritualistic human sacrifices (219-23). He also deals with the Araucanian Indians towards the end of the canto. "Alturas de Macchu Picchu" is arguably Neruda's most famous composition dealing with the Amerindian world; in this case, the grandeur of Inca civilization (224-35). Much impressed by the achievements of the Incas, the poet is nonetheless critical of their alleged use of slave labour to construct the city of Machu Picchu (see Canto X: 232-33). In the poem "Los libertadores" Neruda dedicates a canto to Cuauhtémoc, the symbol of Aztec resistance to the Spanish invaders (Canto I: 236-37). He also dedicates a poem to Fray Bartolomé de las Casas (Canto II: 238-40). Cantos III to XI deal principally with the struggle of the Araucanian Indians, under the leadership of Caupolicán and Lautaro, against the Spaniards (241-49).

In "América, no invoco tu nombre en vano," Neruda refers to the oppression of Indians in Central America (see Canto X: 260-61). He also considers whites, blacks, and Indians as collective victims of generalized oppression in the region: "[d]e noche y día veo los martirios, / de día y noche veo al encadenado, / al rubio, al negro, al indio" (261: lines 8-10). The poet also extends his coverage of indigenous peoples to include the

inhabitants of Easter Island (Rapa Nui), praising those responsible for constructing the island's famous enigmatic statues (see Canto VI, VII: 316-319).

Like many Spanish American poets who wrote about indigenous America, Neruda was partially motivated to do so for socio-political reasons. Despite his assertions about the importance of the Amerindian element in Spanish American culture, his appreciation for the indigenous world was not ingrained; rather, it was acquired during the time he spent in Mexico. Although he dealt with Amerindian issues, Neruda's shortcoming is that he approached them from a Hispanic perspective, never seeming to fully grasp the spirit of the First Nations. In other words, he writes from the outside, not from the inside. As a result, the poet misinterprets the role of José Gaspar Rodríguez de Francia (c.1766-1840) in Paraguay, viewing him in a negative light. Unlike Dr. Francia, who embraced the Amerindian worldview much in the way that Grey Owl (born Archibald Stansfield Belaney 1888-1938) did, Neruda was not quite at ease when it came to native issues. Consequently, his depictions of Amerindians are not as natural as someone like Cardenal who has enthusiastically embraced aspects of the Amerindian worldview.

Carlos Pellicer

The Mexican Carlos Pellicer produced numerous poems inspired in the Amerindian world. His noteworthy poems include "Tríptico Azteca" from *Primeros poemas* (1913-21), which deals with three indigenous leaders "Tzilacaltzin," "Netzahualcoyotl" and "Cuauhtemoc," the section titled "Recuerdo de los Andes" from *Colores en el mar* (1915-20), which features "Apuntes coloridos," "Navidad," "Recuerdos de Iza," and "Cuatro estrofas." Other important poems are "A Juárez," "Noticias sobre Netzahualcoyotl y algunos sentimientos," "13 de agosto, ruina de

Tenochtitlán," "Breve informe sobre Machu-Picchu," and "Teotihuacán," from *Cuerdas, percusión y alientos* (1976).

Octavio Paz

The poetical contributions made by Octavio Paz (Mex. 1914-1998) to the appropriation of the indigenous world essentially limits itself to *Piedra de sol* (1957), the poet's premier long poem. The work is written as a single cyclical sentence taking as its structural basis the circular Aztec calendar, which measured the synodic period of the planet Venus (587 days--the number of lines of *Piedra de sol*).

Contemporary Poets

With regard to contemporary Spanish American poets who have dealt with the Amerindian world, all pale in comparison with the voluminous poetic production of Ernesto Cardenal, the other principal subject of this study. His extensive coverage of the Amerindian world in his poetry is unsurpassed.

The Importance of Darío and Cardenal

Although many of the aforementioned writers made significant contributions to the appropriation of the Amerindian world, all of which are worthy of detailed studies, the foremost among them are the Nicaraguan poets, Rubén Darío and Ernesto Cardenal. Unlike some Spanish American writers who merely utilized the native world as a form of exotic artistic escape, Darío and Cardenal appear to have approached Amerindian issues with a greater deal of concern, tending to view the artistic appropriation of the indigenous world as an expression of attachment to America and a commitment to social and economic justice for all of its inhabitants.

The Amerindian influenced poetry of Darío and Cardenal stands apart from the compositions of other Spanish American poets who explored the theme for several reasons, the most important of which are depth and impact. Their works are not shallow,

superficial, plastic, and artificial explorations of Amerindian themes. Darío and Cardenal, like Vallejo, have had a notable influence on other writers.

Indianismo/Indigenismo

Although there is a degree of nostalgia in the works of Darío and Cardenal, they rarely succumb to the shortcomings of *indianismo* or *indigenismo*. The shortcoming of *indianismo* is its detachment from Amerindian reality and its European perspective. In *indianista* works, Amerindians are idealized in the fashion of European Romantic heroes and consequently lose their true identity. Although Darío may at times idealize Amerindians, he also showed considerable interest in their social well-being. He was not detached from Amerindian reality nor did he view Amerindians from a strictly European perspective. In contrast to the idealization of the New World which is typical of *indianismo*, the distinguishing feature of *indigenismo* is its realistic depiction of Amerindians and its strong social component. The shortcoming of *indigenismo* is to be found in its proposed solution to the Amerindian problem: assimilating native peoples into the dominant Hispanic culture. Darío did not advocate the assimilation of Amerindians. We therefore prefer to discuss the *indianista* or *indigenista* elements in his works, as opposed to labelling Darío as *indianista* or *indigenista* for we feel that he cannot be confined to any of these categories. In fact, his works contain some elements of both *indianismo* and *indigenismo*. To a certain extent, he can be viewed in this respect as a poet in the period of transition from *indianismo* to a progressive *indigenismo*. Cardenal, on the other hand, is clearly more *indigenista* than he is *indianista*: *indigenista* in the sense that he defends Amerindians, not in the sense that he wishes them to assimilate into Hispanic society.

Social and Aesthetic Concerns

The indigenous presence in the poetry of Rubén Darío and Ernesto Cardenal is motivated, to varying degrees, by both socio-political and aesthetic concerns. Socially speaking, it is the result of their attachment to Nicaragua, their Central as well as Spanish Americanism, and their adherence to progressive political ideals, progressive democracy in the case of Darío, and humanitarian socialism and liberation theology in the case of Cardenal. Aesthetically speaking, the indigenous presence in their poetry is in line with the innovative ambitions of their respective literary movements, *modernismo* in the case of Darío, and concrete or *exteriorista* poetry in the case of Cardenal.

Social Concerns

The works of both Rubén Darío and Ernesto Cardenal manifest a profound attachment to the Americas. The vision of both poets expanded over time, from the national to the universal. Their initial commitment was to their homeland, the Central American nation of Nicaragua. Eventually, though, they came to support the cause of Central American unity and eventually defend Spanish American interests as a whole.

As inhabitants of a country with a decimated Amerindian population, Darío and Cardenal may have longed for something they felt they had lost: their Amerindian heritage. They may have attempted to resurrect aspects of Nicaragua's ancestral culture in response to a sense of cultural destitution. The Amerindian presence in Darío's and Cardenal's poetry may be the result of their search for their roots. The inclusion of the aboriginal aspect in their poetry is also an act of rebellion against the dominant mestizo culture which has traditionally marginalized Spanish America's First Nations.

The Central American consciousness of the Nicaraguan people also partly explains Darío's and Cardenal's interest in the Amerindian world. Both Darío and Cardenal have defended the cause of Central American unity. Although Amerindians are

minorities in Nicaragua, Honduras, and El Salvador, they are arguably the majority in Guatemala (see note 7). If one were to add up all of the Amerindian inhabitants of Central America, they would form a considerable group (see note 7).

Darío's commitment to progressive democracy and Cardenal's commitment to humanitarian socialism and liberation theology have also influenced their views regarding the rights as well as the role of indigenous peoples. As we will see in the course of this study, both Darío and Cardenal have expressed their belief that part of Spanish America's originality lies in its Amerindian roots. Hence, when opposing the influence of the United States, both poets invoked their pride in their continent's aboriginal roots. Darío and Cardenal are both inspired in the past of indigenous America and, at times, present socio-political aspects of Amerindian civilization as possible prototypes for a new Spanish America. Although Darío deals with pre-Columbian civilizations with a degree of nostalgia, the poet may also have looked to the past, much like Cardenal does, in search of socio-economic models which could be applied in modern times. Darío's interest in the indigenous world is a manifestation of his humanitarian concerns, a reflection of José Martí's influence on the poet. Unlike Darío, who is attracted to the pomp, splendour and extravagance of Aztec and Inca civilizations, Cardenal is more concerned with the egalitarian economic systems of peoples like the Incas and the Cunas, which, in his eyes, are akin to the socialist model conceived and formulated by Karl Marx. Cardenal's aspiration is the creation of an ideal native Hispanic American culture, the fusion of three traditions, the European, the African, and the native. Cardenal is an evident admirer of the rule of Nezahualcóyotl, the Chichimecan sovereign, as well as the socialist nature of the Cuna culture of Panama.

Unlike Darío, who did not publicly profess any creed and was religiously eclectic, Cardenal's poetry has been openly Christian in scope, yet revolutionary in nature.

Cardenal was therefore impressed by what he viewed among the Mayas as an example of the benevolent rule of religious leaders, a view that would come to be discredited by advances in anthropological scholarship. The poet also admires the monotheism of Nezahualcōyotl and his followers as well as the mystical worldview of the Colombian Kogui Indians from the Sierra Nevada. He is equally impressed by the communist nature of the Guaraní communities of Paraguay which were administered by Jesuit priests.

Aesthetic Considerations

As the most vocal exponents of *modernismo* and *exteriorismo*, respectively, both Darío and Cardenal were interested in poetic renovation, and both viewed the indigenous past as a source of aesthetic inspiration. Darío ushered in the twentieth century with a new poetry inspired in part by the Amerindian world. The twenty-first century is being heralded by the resonant voice of Ernesto Cardenal, who has taken the appropriation of the Amerindian world to further heights. While Darío synthesized European poetry, Cardenal synthesized the voices of the Americas as a whole and focused the eyes and ears of the literary world on the small isthmian nation of Nicaragua. Cardenal's poetic influences originate not from Europe, but rather from the Americas, from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego. Darío was inspired by the indigenous world to an extent not yet fully appreciated. He possessed a rather broad knowledge of Amerindian history and mythology that he acquired predominantly from his reading of the chronicles of the Spanish explorers and conquerors. Considering the limited resources available to the poet at the time, Darío made a noteworthy effort to search for and retrieve aspects of the Amerindian world. By delving into the indigenous world and integrating its influences into his poetry, perhaps even into its form, Darío assisted in legitimizing America as a source of literary inspiration.

Cardenal embraced Darío's indigenous inspiration and taken *americanismo* to new heights. The indigenous presence in Cardenal's poetry is at the forefront of his work. It has played an important role in his poetical production since its inception. Cardenal's image of the indigenous world may be idealized at times, but, overall, it is based on thorough research, even when his interpretations may be questionable. Having access to much more information on the Amerindian world than Darío had, Cardenal's approach is decidedly more scholarly than Darío's. Cardenal relies not only on the chronicles, but also on numerous books of history as well as personal information acquired during his various visits to First Nations peoples in North, Central, and South America.

Impressively, Cardenal, as we will see, is not only inspired thematically by the Americas; stylistically speaking, he is almost *exclusively* inspired by the Americas. Although lacking in the refined elegance and sophistication of Darío's poetry, Cardenal's is nonetheless rich in its own right. The poet has developed a style that, although influenced by Pound, has many affinities with Amerindian literature. At times his works are reminiscent of Aztec poetry, while at others he skilfully duplicates the style and language of the Mayan priests. Like Quechua poetry, Cardenal places a great deal of stress on clarity of expression. He also utilizes expressions and metaphors that coincide with indigenous usage. Like Amerindian poetry in general, Cardenal's works are written in free verse with an avoidance of rhyme for rhyme's sake. Cardenal's poems also tend to be rather long with the regular use of repetition and anaphora. Topics are introduced and discussed in part but are not fully developed at once. Instead of dealing with one theme and then moving on to another, Cardenal uses the technique of collage, dealing with various issues at the same time, cross-cutting from one to another.

The aforementioned aspects resemble oral poetry in general, and Amerindian oral poetry in particular, as well as contemporary film technique prevalent throughout the

world. The Amerindian stylistic influences in Cardenal appear to be conscious and deliberate, for, by and large, they do not form part of the Spanish American literary tradition. The poet made an impressive effort to revitalize the indigenous literary heritage by integrating it into the mainstream of Spanish American poetry. One of Cardenal's aims is to breathe new life into Amerindian literature, as well as Spanish American literature. Cardenal's appropriation of indigenous stylistic influences is so masterful that his works often appear to be translations of Amerindian poetry or prose. This is quite an achievement. His poetry is fresh and invigorating and always bears an authentic Cardenalian stamp.

Although both Darío and Cardenal were culturally Hispanic, they both found aesthetic and, to varying degrees, socio-political inspiration in the pre-Columbian past. In the following pages we propose to analyze the indigenous presence in their representative works, demonstrating through textual analysis the Amerindian influence in their poetry in its thematic, stylistic, symbolic, mythological, and ideological manifestations.

THE INDIGENOUS PRESENCE IN DARÍO

"¡Yo soy el amante de ensueños y formas / que viene de lejos y va al porvenir!" R.D.

The indigenous elements in Rubén Darío's poetry have received little scholarly attention.³ The few critics who have discussed this aspect of his work have done so within the confines of broader studies dealing with the poet's *americanismo* a term whose definition is not necessarily agreed upon. For many critics, *americanismo* signifies allegiance to Spanish America, while for a few it refers to a special sense of attachment to indigenous America. Besides the confusion inherent in the term *americanismo*, the studies that have dealt with the topic tend to be general in scope and so remain rather superficial. They also tend to be written from Peninsular perspectives. To our knowledge, Darío's literary production has never truly been studied on the basis of an indigenous worldview. There is therefore a need for a new approach to the study of his poetry, a non Eurocentric approach which focuses on his work in light of the Amerindian worldview and attempts to clarify the poet's *americanismo*. In the following pages we propose to examine the thematic, symbolic, and mythological manifestations of the indigenous world in Darío's poetry, discussing their importance, significance and ideological implications.⁴ On the basis of an analysis of his literary production we will see that Darío inspired himself in the pre-Columbian world for aesthetic and, perhaps, socio-political reasons, turning to the past in order to project himself toward the future, creating in the process works in which indigenous influences and references appear.

CRITICAL CONTEXTUALIZATION

Before focusing on the indigenous elements in Darío's poetry, it is necessary to contextualize them, thereby establishing their ideological basis. Since poetry may be viewed as the manifestation and the projection of the poet, it is beneficial to study the poet and his circumstances. Not only is it important to contextualize the poet, it is also

important to contextualize the poem. The word should be understood within the context of the line. The line should be interpreted within the context of the stanza. The stanza should be interpreted within the context of the poem. The poem should be viewed within the context of the writer's works. Literary creation is the reflection of the soul, the thoughts and the concerns of the poet. Darío summed this up in the "Palabras liminares" of *Prosas profanas* when he stated that: "[m]i literatura es *mía* en mí" (*Poesías*, 1961: 611).⁵

Despite the structuralist belief that discourse is divorced from intention,⁶ literary creation does not necessarily have an independent life, nor does anything come out of a vacuum. This is not to say that an author intends every possible interpretation nor that the text is limited to one exegesis in particular, but rather that without an author, there can be no works. If one does not take into consideration the context of creation, the doors are then opened for all kinds of misleading interpretations that represent and reflect the thoughts of the scholar instead of the creator in question.

Consequently, we shall commence our study by contextualizing the poet and his poetry, calling into question some of the common views regarding Darío's literary focus, identity, ideology, and the philosophical underpinnings of the *modernista* movement. Darío's work has long been held to be an example of *hispanismo literario* with influences almost exclusively limited to Europe. It has also been argued that the poet was apolitical, concerned more with mythology than with the plight of his people. From this viewpoint, any reference to the indigenous world can be dismissed as a mere exercise in exoticism. So, since we argue that the native elements in Darío's poetry have not yet been fully appreciated, it would be worthwhile to challenge these views by arguing that quite the opposite was true. In order to demonstrate this, we commence our study by examining and criticizing the diverging views regarding Darío's literary focus. We find that Darío's

American themes are plentiful, and that he was particularly proud of his native as well as African ancestry. We question the racial tone which permeates the debate between the poet's *hispanismo literario* and *americanismo literario* and argue that Darío's poetry is an example of *americanismo literario*, but an *americanismo* which includes the native world instead of ignoring it.

After presenting the relative weight of the *indohispanoamericanismo* of Darío's poetry, we proceed to examine his much disputed political philosophy or lack thereof. We take into consideration the impact of the socio-political influences Darío received as a child as well as the ideological implications of his association with José Martí, the great Cuban poet, ideologue, and revolutionary. It is essential to establish Darío's humanitarianism, for it is linked to his concern with the indigenous world. A clarification of the origins of *modernismo* is also in order, as it places Darío's work in a broader context. Opposing the commonly held view that *modernismo* was only an elitist, apolitical movement, we point out that it was also a progressive, socially conscious movement initiated by José Martí. Such an understanding of *modernismo* allows us to see Darío's work in a new light and to more fully appreciate the roots and relative importance of his interest in the native world.

Americanismo literario versus hispanismo literario

Darío's commentators have been polarized for decades. While some scholars defend the theory of his *hispanismo literario* (ie. his identification with Spain), others support the theory of his *americanismo literario* (ie. his identification with the Americas). Among the more moderate defenders of Darío's *hispanismo*, one finds Pedro Salinas and Edenia Guillermo. Salinas holds that "[l]o español lo sintió profundamente ... en el pasado, en la vertiente social histórica" (227). Guillermo expresses essentially the same view when she states that Darío "[s]intió lo español intensamente, como un llamado del

fondo ancestral de la lengua y de la raza" (169). As is well known, Darío was a Nicaraguan of partly Spanish ancestry. It is but logical that he would feel a certain kind of connection with his ancestral homeland. The comments made by Salinas and Guillermo are temperate and accurate. On the other hand, Alberto M. Forcadas' view that "Darío es siempre hispánico" is an overstatement (230). The critic refers to Darío's literary production, which he holds is always European as opposed to Spanish American. The most extreme view seems to be that of Juan Antonio Cabezas, who claims that: "[t]odo es español en la América Central: la sangre y la fe" (40), as if there were no indigenous peoples in the region. Based on the most conservative statistics from 1994,⁷ Amerindians represented 53% of the population of Guatemala, 30% of the population of Mexico, 7% of the population of Honduras, and 5% of the population of El Salvador and Nicaragua (see Colombo). The mestizos, namely those who are a mixture of indigenous and European ancestry, make up the rest of the population of these nations. Native Central Americans, that is, the descendants of the original pre-Columbian inhabitants of the Americas, therefore represented no fewer than 32,257,000 inhabitants in 1994, most of whom have partly preserved their ancestral belief systems, delicately interwoven into the Catholic faith, and continue to worship their ancient gods much as their ancestors did before the conquest.⁸ Cabezas is therefore mistaken to claim that all of Central America is Spanish by blood and by faith. Statistics demonstrate that there is a substantial Amerindian presence in Central America. Textual evidence demonstrates a substantial Amerindian presence in Darío's poetry.

It is disconcerting that Darío's *americanismo literario* could have been downplayed for so long, considering the textual evidence supporting its existence. Francisco Contreras provides some of the reasons for the rejection of the poet's *americanismo* when he states that "[l]os críticos que han negado el americanismo tan

evidente de Rubén Darío, lo han hecho porque no han considerado más que los aspectos refinados de su vasta labor, o porque, cegados por el esplendor de esos aspectos, no han podido ver lo demás" (338). Contreras is correct in his views that many critics have denied the evident *americanismo* in Darío's works as a result of being blinded by other aspects, but he errs by considering only the Hispanic aspects as "refined." It is possible that, at least in some cases, Eurocentrism has played a role in preventing commentators from perceiving Darío's enthusiasm for the Amerindian world. Some literary critics may also be less sensitive to Amerindian issues since they cannot identify with them. In any case, it is important to recognize that claiming that Darío identified solely with Spain unjustly diminishes the breadth of his work. As Keith Ellis has put it: "ni Martí ni Darío se sintieron 'europeos desterrados'" ("Martí, Darío" 211).

Among the defenders of Darío's *americanismo literario* one encounters Pedro Salinas, Francisco Contreras, Charles Lancha, Guillermo de Torre, and Elsie Alvarado de Ricord. In defense of the poet's *americanismo*, Salinas states that "Rubén Darío, el americano, es un continental completo" (36). He rightly affirms that "Rubén Darío fue un poeta americano durante toda su vida literaria" (335). Lancha holds that Darío's reactions to North American imperialism attest to his authentic Latin Americanism (266), while Contreras gives the Nicaraguan his due by justly considering him to be "el más genuino de los poetas americanos" (339). Firm in her convictions, Alvarado de Ricord holds that Darío's *americanismo* is unquestionable and that the majority of his themes are American (104). The commentator also holds that Darío's American themes are just as abundant as the Spanish themes and those of other origin (39). Later, though, she affirms that "apenas le importó a Darío ... la raíz india" (44), contradicting the poet himself. As Charles D. Watland states, "Darío ... in common with most of the population of Nicaragua, was partly Indian, as he himself was fond of pointing out" (25). Unamuno's statement that one

could see the Indian feathers under Darío's hat elicited a dignified response from the poet.⁹ In a letter written in Paris on September 5, 1907, Darío wrote: "[e]s una pluma que me quito debajo del sombrero con que le escribo" (*El archivo* 67). As we trust will become evident during the course of this study, the poet was proud of his indigenous ancestry and felt that America's originality lay exactly in its native heritage. Alvarado de Ricord's comment concerning Darío's lack of interest in the indigenous world does not give a fair and comprehensive assessment of his literary production, nor does Ellen L. Banberger's claim that "[e]l indígena en el mejor de los casos proveía materia folklórica" (67). As we will see, indigenous mythological elements are found in many of Darío's works. Such aspects are not mere adornments. Some scholars have failed to see the indigenous aspects of Darío's writings due to their limited knowledge of Amerindian literatures, cultures, civilizations and history. For some commentators, *americanismo* inevitably excludes *indigenismo*. In the eyes of Martí and González Prada, though, the bedrock of *americanismo* is *indoamericanismo*.¹⁰ It is quite obvious that many critics who refer to Darío's *americanismo* are essentially talking about his *hispanoamericanismo*, which is but one aspect. But in fact, what one encounters in Darío is an all-embracing *americanismo* which included the Spanish, African, and Amerindian elements of Spanish American society.

The Issue of Race in Darío Criticism

While one examines the bulk of Darío criticism, it is inevitable to notice the racial tone that sometimes permeates the debate about the poet's *hispanismo* and *americanismo*. Two of the critics who stand out for placing undue emphasis on racial matters are Francisco Contreras and Arturo Torres-Río seco. Contreras considers Darío to be "el representante de la raza hispanoamericana" (338). Similarly, Torres-Río seco talks about the "sentido racial" in the poet's works (128-29). The critic makes pejorative statements

about the First Nations as being culturally primitive, claiming that "la cultura indígena es rudimentaria comparada con la que nos legaron los conquistadores, pese a los que ven toda grandeza en las sociedades precortesianas" (128-29). Edenia Guillermo, on the other hand, recognizes the indigenous aspects in Darío's poetry but fails to give them the importance they seem to merit. She feels that the writer sought a romantic refuge "en el sueño de la sociedad idílica precolombiana [sic], en la América del *bon sauvage* ... edad de oro de *unos salvajes* imaginarios" [final emphasis ours] (230).¹¹ A similar view of Darío comes from what Cecil Maurice Bowra called the "right perspective." This critic held that when studying Darío "we must remember that he was a stranger from an undeveloped land, that he had Indian blood in his veins and lacked the complexity and the sophistication which would belong to a European of his gifts and tastes" (51). Baltasar Isaza Calderón, on the other hand, mentions that Darío "heredó de una formidable conjunción de ingredientes étnicos que recuerdan, por cierto, la tesis de la *raza cósmica* sostenida por el pensador mexicano José Vasconcelos" (127). Notions of cosmic or supreme races are understandably a cause for concern. In *Mexican Muralists* Desmond Rochfort reminds us that the concept of a "cosmic race" originates from the book *La raza cósmica* by José Vasconcelos, whose racial theory stemmed partly from *Los grandes problemas nacionales*, the celebrated book published in 1909 by Andrés Molina Enríquez. Rochfort explains that according to Vasconcelos,

the essence of Mexican nationality could never be identified with the Creoles, because European ancestry would by sentiment, culture and custom bind them primarily to their European origins. As for the Indians, [Molina] Enríquez considered that due to the multiplicity of their languages and tribes it would be impossible for them to identify with anything beyond their village or pueblo. He

thus proposed *mestizaje* as the basis on which the struggle for a Mexican national and cultural consciousness would develop. (223, n.1)

The consequences of this influential racial theory have been prejudicial for the native peoples of Mexico and other Spanish American countries since its goal was to assimilate these people into the national mestizo culture, which is unilingual, Hispanic, Catholic, and Western.¹²

The only logical way to settle the debate about Darío's *hispanismo* and *americanismo literario* is to recognize that the poet was both Hispanic and American: he was *Hispanic American*. Jaime Delgado was perhaps the first critic to clarify exactly what was meant by *americanismo* by specifying that "Rubén Darío es un poeta esencialmente hispanoamericano" (316). As Martín Alberto Noel explains, "[e]n Darío lo hispánico se presenta como parte integrante e inseparable de una americanidad primordial" (81). For Darío, the American side came first. He described himself as "un hijo de América y un nieto de España" [emphasis ours] (qtd. in Buitrago 50). Noel's affirmation that Darío was un "indiano [sic] mentalmente europeizado" deserves clarification (18). Although Darío considered himself to be of indigenous ancestry, he was not an Indian culturally or linguistically. Darío was a *hispanoamericano* who tried to rediscover his Amerindian roots in order to integrate them into the present, a manifestation of a desire to give more prominence to his native ancestry.

Darío's Humanitarianism

Besides challenging Darío's *indoamericanismo*, many commentators have minimized and even denied Darío's humanitarian concerns, thus reducing the range and importance of his poetic production. Yet the poet's social consciousness is linked to his interest in native peoples. As shall be seen from the specific comments below, the critics who deny Darío's social concerns include Publio González-Rodas, Rufino Blanco-

Fombona, José María Pemán, and Pablo Antonio Cuadra. González-Rodas holds that "[a] Darío no le interesaban los problemas del pueblo" (185) and that there is not a single socially conscious composition in *Prosas profanas* (186). Blanco-Fombona's views are even harsher. He described Darío in the following manner: "[e]n política, no sólo fue conservador, aun fuera de cualquier partido, sino servil. Fue un cantor y servidor de tiranos.... Jamás amó la libertad ni, en el fondo, a nuestra América" (152). Blanco-Fombona also stated that Darío was "inescrupuloso en cosas de política y tan dispuesto a oscuros dictadores.... En la política, en la libertad, no creyó nunca" (165). According to Banberger, Pemán and Cuadra based themselves on the negative image of the author supposedly presented by Blanco-Fombona and Rodó, and "se apresuraron en 1940 y 1941, respectivamente, a asegurar que el poeta hubiera engrosado las filas anti-republicanas" (14-15). Pemán and Cuadra's affirmation that Darío would have been a Falangist fighter in the Spanish Civil War is a groundless speculation. Both Pemán and Cuadra seem to have merely projected their political beliefs onto the poet. What merits further clarification, though, is Banberger's claim that Pemán and Cuadra's vision of a fascist Darío was based on a negative image of the poet presented by Rodó. Such a claim must be defended by documented proof. However, such evidence is notably lacking in Banberger's essay. Rodó may have failed to fully appreciate the socially conscious aspect of Darío's poetic production. However, his view of Darío was by no means "negative." There is a substantial leap from being apolitical to being fascist. It becomes increasingly obvious from the above that Darío's tarnished image has been steadily deteriorating over the years. From an apolitical poet who did not love his people, Darío has been eventually transformed by some into a tool of tyrants and a Franco militant.

Although the criticism of Darío on the part of some scholars is rather harsh, and should certainly be challenged, a portion of their views actually has some basis in fact.

Accordingly, the facts are not being questioned here, but rather their interpretation. Admittedly, Darío dealt to some extent with sinister political figures. However, this was more out of necessity than anything else. As is commonly known, the poet earned his living as a journalist and a diplomat. As a diplomat, he had to interact with politicians. Unfortunately, due to the state of Spanish American political evolution, many were dictatorial. One must understand, though, that these were "political" or "diplomatic friendships." One must also take into consideration that some of the dictators Darío dealt with were accomplishing positive feats for their respective nations. When one faces two unpleasant alternatives, one must choose the better of the two options. Let us take the case of José Santos Zelaya, for example. This leader played an important role in Nicaragua while President between 1893-1909.¹³ Even Blanco-Fombona ended up revising what he had said about Darío's relations with dictators and acknowledged that Zelaya "[h]izo frente a los yanquis como diplomático, como gobernante, como patriota y como soldado" and that "hoy merece bien a América" (180-81).

Darío can also be reproached for his relations with the Guatemalan dictator Estrada Cabrera (1898-1920). Nevertheless, one must understand Darío's motives before formulating condemnatory conclusions. In a letter to Francisca Sánchez, the poet explained the economic purpose of his stay in Guatemala in the following terms: "[e]s posible que tenga que ir a Guatemala, porque es preciso buscar dinero para que podamos vivir" (qtd. in Banberger 65). He needed to earn a living. As Banberger says, "allí el dictador le pagaba el alojamiento y mandaba médicos a cuidarle; lo único que Darío tenía que dar a cambio era los poemas requeridos" (65). It seems that it is for this reason that Eduardo Buitrago accuses the poet of selling his talent to the highest bidder (125). But this is an unjustified denunciation. According to Edelberto Torres, Darío wished to get out of this humiliating relationship; however, he did not have the means to do so (65). It

is ignominious that a prominent poet like Darío should end his life in such miserable and degrading conditions. The poet could have easily avoided such humiliation had he but known how to properly manage his monetary affairs.

To place things in a broader context, it was not the first time that Darío allowed himself to be exploited. The same thing had occurred before in Paris when, in desperate financial straits, he accepted an offer to edit a monthly magazine called *Mundial* for a meagre salary (Ellis, *Critical* 15). Although Darío's behaviour is regrettable, it is somewhat crude to imply that the poet was guilty of "literary prostitution," as Buitrago does, without understanding his view of the artist's role in society. The poet believed that the role of the writer was the highest and noblest in society, and that he had the right to earn his living by means of his talent. Darío was an artist, and art always came first for him. As Darío himself stated in "Los colores del estandarte:" "[e]n verdad, vivo de poesía.... No soy más que un hombre de arte. No sirvo para otra cosa" (*OC* 4: 874). His works manifest humanitarian concerns but never at the expense of aesthetic excellence. As Ellis states, "[e]ven in the early stages of his career he asserted his right to live as a writer, to make a living from and win social recognition and prestige through his writing. It hardly seemed to occur to him that this expectation was unusual in Spanish America; and so, apparently unabashed, he addressed his requests to the most illustrious citizens of the countries in which he lived" (*Critical* 17). Darío was pressed into difficult choices.

As Banberger admits, "[s]i se va a valer de los escritos de una figura contradictoria como fue Darío, hay que estudiar a esas contradicciones y entenderlas dentro de su propio contexto histórico" (86). Many commentators have criticized Darío for a few lines taken out of context. When his works are reviewed holistically, it becomes clear that such judgements are unsubstantiated. Although Guillermo reserves him a spot among the great liberators of the New World, oddly enough she refuses to recognize

Darío as a socially conscious writer (166-67). She claims that the Nicaraguan never demonstrated a keen interest in political activities, "tan ajenas a su vocación más honda" (167). Darío has been viewed by some critics as being an apolitical, even retrograde conservative; at the same time, other critics have considered him to be a liberal capitalist. Françoise Perus condemns Darío, accusing him of being a lackey of the liberals (qtd. in Banberger 81). Banberger, by contrast, is somewhat more compassionate with the poet. Although she rejects the notion of a "revolutionary" Darío in the Marxist sense of the word, she does recognize the social concerns expressed in his works. What is unconvincing, though, is her claim that Darío "apoyó y propagandizó el proyecto liberal, particular a su país y región natal que tenía como objetivo establecer a la burguesía agro-exportadora en el poder" (82). Darío was liberal, but liberal in the sense that he was open-minded and progressive, not in the capitalistic sense of the word. To hold that the poet was somehow involved in aiding the agrobourgeoisie attain political power is rather far-fetched. When Banberger refuses to consider Darío a revolutionary, she does so because the poet's beliefs do not conform to socialist norms. But since one can be a revolutionary without being a socialist, her argument lacks substance. Banberger is even more erroneous when she states that "Darío, como los escritores costumbristas, ignoraba la miseria de los campesinos de su país" (68). If her statement is a psychoanalytical postulation, in the sense that she is trying to read the poet's mind, it is speculative at best. If it is based on Darío's writings, it is frankly fallacious, for they manifest otherwise. Darío's poetry and journalism demonstrate a concern for the downcast, a concern rooted in the poet's humble provincial origins, as well as the progressive ideology to which he adhered.

Like Banberger, González-Rodas is unconvinced of the "presumed" social vein in the Nicaraguan's poetry and holds that the socio-political aspects in Darío's poetry do not

reflect a sincere attitude on the part of the poet (185, 187). One must insist on the importance that the poet gave to sincerity. "Ser sincero es ser potente," declares the poet in "Dilucidaciones," the preface to *El canto errante (Poesías 792)*. He declared in "José Martí, poeta" that he loved "las sonoridades difíciles, y la sinceridad" (*OC* 4: 960). In "Yo soy aquel" from *Cantos de vida y esperanza* (1905), the poet affirms: "si hay un alma sincera, ésa es la mía" (706: line 48). And in the conclusion of *Historia de mis libros*, towards the end of his career, he wrote: "[y] el mérito principal de mi obra, si alguno tiene, es el de una gran sinceridad" (*OC* 1: 223).

The commentators who question Darío's humanitarianism should carefully read the stanza "Lamed" from "El salmo de la pluma" found in *Del chorro de la fuente* (1886-1916) and his short story "¿Por qué?," both of which manifest the poet's concern for socio-economic justice. It is worthwhile to quote them to demonstrate Darío's social consciousness as well as to discuss the indigenous elements which they contain. In "Lamed" we see a fascinating, yet often unknown or downplayed, side of the poet:

Temblad, temblad, tiranos, en vuestras reales sillas.

Ni piedra sobre piedra de todas las Bastillas

mañana quedará.

Tu hoguera en todas partes, ¡oh Democracia!, inflamas;

tus anchos pabellones son nuestras oriflamas,

y al viento flotan ya.

No encorvaráse el siervo, no gemirá el esclavo;

no dictará sus leyes el dueño altivo y bravo,

no habrá látigo el rey.

Verá campos abiertos la multitud obrera,

y, quebrantando el yugo la nuca prisionera,

será búfalo el buey.

Cuando se desentense el arco puesto en comba,
traerá en el pico al mundo la mística colomba

la oliva de la Paz.

Y el hombre, como el cóndor de poderosos vuelos,
navegará en los aires, camino de los cielos,
en su navío audaz.

Vino oloroso y nuevo de viña virgen; vino
que bulles y fermentas en el lagar latino,
danos calor y luz,

al ir al sacrificio llevando en triunfo al toro
que, consagrado al numen, lleve ceñido de oro

y rosas el testuz ... (*Poesías* 1022)

As can be noted, the poem contains anti-establishment and socialist elements with echoes of the French Revolution.¹⁴ It is a work in which the poet yearns for a socio-political upheaval. He foresees a day when the rich and powerful will be overthrown and the servants, slaves and workers assume power.

The poet compares the revolutionaries to condors, the revered bird of the Incas. This significant simile may signify that the struggle Darío is referring to is authentically American, encompassing the aspirations of the natives as well as of the proletariat. As a result of the revolution, the mystical dove with the olive branch in its beak will usher in a new age of peace and prosperity.

Manifesting their gratitude, the victorious Native Hispanic American nations offer a sacrifice, not to the God of the conquerors, but rather to the native "numen." As an opponent of colonialism, the poet may have opposed the imposition of Catholicism on

native Americans. It is difficult to consider Darío an agent of oppressors when faced with writings as powerful as "Lamed." Another striking example of Darío's humanitarian concerns can be found in "¿Por qué?," published in 1892, when the poet was but twenty five years old. Although he does not incite revolution in this short story, he laments the socio-economic problems affecting Spanish American society:

¡Oh, señor! el mundo anda muy mal. La sociedad se desquicia. El siglo que viene verá la peor de las revoluciones que han ensangrentado la tierra. ¿El pez grande se come el chico? Sea; pero pronto tendremos el desquite. El pauperismo reina, y el trabajador lleva sobre sus hombros la montaña de una maldición. Nada vale ya sino el oro miserable. La gente desheredada es el rebaño eterno para el eterno matadero. ¿No ve usted tanto ricachón con la camisa como si fuera de porcelana, y tanta señorita estirada envuelta en seda y encaje? Entre tanto las hijas de los pobres desde los catorce años tienen que ser prostitutas. Son el primero que las compre. Los bandidos se están posesionados de los bancos y de los almacenes. Los talleres son el martirio de la honradez ... Pues maldita sea esa democracia. Eso no es democracia sino baldón y ruina. (*Cuentos completos* 174-75)

Much time has elapsed for the socio-political aspect of Darío's writings to receive the attention it merits. Salinas expressed his dismay at the fact that Darío had not been considered a prominent political poet when one takes into consideration the many socially conscious poems he published: "[n]o llego a explicarme cómo a Rubén se le ha regateado, o negado, la consideración de poeta social importante, cuando se tienen a la vista tantas y tan excelentes poesías tuyas, salidas de ese tema. Es más, no hay ninguno de los modos de sensibilidad social recién apuntados que no tenga representación en la lírica de Darío" (216). In order to substantiate his argument, Salinas has demonstrated that historical, political, national, and humanitarian modes are all present in Darío's works

(215-16). Appreciating the significance of Darío's contributions to the field of protest poetry, Richard L. Jackson confer's on the poet the honorary epithet of "reivindicador de los oprimidos" (417). Similarly, Cathy L. Jade has made a notable contribution to the defense of Darío as a social poet. This commentator asserts that "Darío's concern with social and political conditions in Latin America is present throughout his career" ("Socio-Political" 36). She holds that the struggles faced in the formulation of a new poetic language appear in *Prosas profanas* "despite the most widely held perceptions" and "continue to reflect a serious mix of social, economic, political as well as artistic considerations" (42). A case in point is the poem "Canto de la sangre," a critique of the fratricidal wars affecting Spanish America, which lucidly expresses Darío's social concerns. The social side of Darío typically receives the attention it merits in Ellis' studies on the poet.¹⁵ Darío was not one to lock himself in an ivory tower. He was the people's poet, if reluctantly,¹⁶ both refined and popular at the same time. As Oliver Belmás states: "[e]l poeta social en Darío no se contradice con el aristo" ("Lo social" 58).

The enduring appeal of Darío's poetry is evident in the impact the poem "Sonatina" has had on the Nicaraguan population. Although "Sonatina" is a sophisticated and cultured composition dealing with the themes of love, intimacy, melancholy, and hope,¹⁷ many Nicaraguans gave it a revolutionary sense. The prince who comes to vanquish death with his kiss of love (624: lines 44-48) has been interpreted by Sandinista supporters as the personification of the revolution itself. In the genre of protest music, a reference to this interpretation is found in the famous revolutionary anthem "Comandante Carlos Fonseca" written by Carlos Mejía Godoy and Tomás Borge in memory of the martyred F.S.L.N. (*Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional*) activist.¹⁸ Although it is a politically motivated reading, specific to a particular segment of Nicaraguan society at a particular time, it nevertheless demonstrates the vitality of Darío's poetry. Although not a

revolutionary composition, the argument that the poem is a proposal of alternative values is worth considering. As Jade has noted, there appears to be a social and philosophical awareness behind the frivolity, musicality, and aesthetic play of the poem, in particular, and *Prosas profanas*, in general ("Socio-Political" 46).

Darío's social commitment commenced with Nicaragua, extending itself to the four other countries comprising Spanish-speaking Central America. Thereafter it extended itself to all of Spanish America and even beyond. In Darío's works one observes a progression from nationalism to Central and Spanish Americanism and thereafter to Americanism as a whole, a complete continentalism based on peace and respect, mutual understanding, and technological cooperation so that all nations could reach their full potential. Nicaragua was viewed by Darío as the literary as well as socially progressive catalyst in Central America, in Spanish America, and the Americas as a whole.¹⁹ Darío may well have felt that Nicaragua would be the torchbearer of the Americas, its guiding light, not only in the realm of literature but also in the realm of politics.

Darío's support for the Central American Union is expressed in *El viaje a Nicaragua* where he states that "esas cinco patrias pequeñas que tienen por nombre Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica y Honduras han sido y tienen necesariamente que volver a ser una sola patria grande" (*OC* 3: 1082). His enthusiasm for Central American unity is also manifest in his poems "Máximo Jérez," "Soneto cívico," "El organillo," "El apocalipsis de Jérez," "Himno a Jérez," "Ante la estatua de Morazán," "Unión centroamericana" from *La iniciación melódica*; "Unión centroamericana" from *Del chorro de la fuente*, and his article "La unión." Gastón Baquero informs us that when the poet appeared in public he presented himself as "un fervoroso partidario de la Unión," and that every time he referred to the homeland he referred to the five countries that make up Central America, without any distinction

whatsoever (qtd. in Gómez Espinosa 340, 343). In "El fin de Nicaragua," Darío prefers to think in terms of Central America and corrects himself when he mentions the country of his birth: "Nicaragua ¡qué digo! las cinco repúblicas de la América Central" (*Escritos dispersos* 262).

Darío viewed the political union of Central America as the first step towards the political union of Spanish America. As Francisco Contreras perceived, the poet's patriotism was not narrow but continental (382); it included all of the inhabitants of the Americas, of Spanish, African, and Amerindian ancestry all fused into one entity, politically, socially, and linguistically, although preserving the defining characteristics of each group.

Darío's Socio-Political Influences

As can be imagined, Darío did not acquire his capacity for social commitment suddenly. This inclination developed as a result of influences that the poet absorbed in his familial home (Vilariño 47-48). Recalling his childhood in León, the poet relates in his *Autobiografía* that: "[p]or las noches había tertulia en la puerta de la calle... Llegaban hombres de política y se hablaba de revoluciones. La señora me acariciaba en su regazo" (*OC* 1:22). These early revolutionary influences may have predisposed him to embrace some of José Martí's progressive ideas. At the age of fourteen, Darío was already writing progressive articles for the opposition's daily newspaper (Vilariño 48). The adolescent Darío has been described by Oliver Belmás as a young revolutionary who defended democracy and the Central American Union (*Este otro* 84). One may recall Darío's poem "La primera diana" with the lines: "[b]rindo por el primer clarín / que toque la primera diana / por la Unión Centroamericana" (67: lines 1-3). Ellis recognizes the enduring nature of this attitude. Demonstrating that Darío's convictions remained firm during adulthood, Ellis holds that the poet's support for the Central American Union "no es sólo

una idea del Darío adolescente" ("Martí, Darío" 203). It is thus erroneous to assert, as Alvarado de Ricord does, that Darío "no tuvo una formación política sistemática" (109). Darío received political influences as a child, and he implemented them as a teenager and as an adult, struggling for the causes that he deemed to be just: Nicaraguan sovereignty when faced with North American imperialistic economic ambitions, as well as Central Americanism and even Pan-Americanism. As the poet's social commitment expanded, it never abandoned one of its fundamental elements, the vindication of the Amerindian.

The Martí-Darío Dichotomy and its Ideological Implications

Darío's socio-political and literary commitment broadened extensively due to the influences he received from José Martí. Like Martí, Darío supported the cause of Central American unity, deprecated racism, defended the equal rights of blacks, and expressed concern for the condition of indigenous peoples.²⁰ Among the scholars who recognize and appreciate Darío's socio-political and literary commitment and its relation to Martí one finds Rodríguez Demorizi, who declares that "José Martí ... reconoció en Darío el genio poético, le llamó hijo e influyó en él de modo poderoso" (504). Osvaldo Bazil, on the other hand, points out the similarity and concordance between Martí's and Darío's style (qtd. in Rodríguez Demorizi 518). According to Arturo Marasso, Martí's influence on Darío "estará en su prosa... Este andar tumultuoso del arte de Martí reveló a Darío recursos expresivos y riquezas de sensibilidad" (qtd. in Rodríguez Demorizi 520). Juan Ramón Jiménez affirms that "[t]odo Martí está en la *crónica* de Rubén Darío ... Además de su vivir en sí propio, en sí solo y mirando a su Cuba, Martí vive--prosa y verso--en Darío, que reconoció con nobleza, desde el primer instante, el legado" (qtd. in Rodríguez Demorizi 520). Rodríguez Demorizi even speculates that "[s]in Martí, pues, no hay Darío" (521). Alberto Baeza Flores, on the other hand, states that

Darío comprendió que Martí fuera un escritor "engagé" ... porque, no obstante el fino sentido esteticista de Darío, su amor por el lenguaje, los símbolos sonoros y exquisitos, Darío--en una parte de su obra--fue, también, un poeta comprometido. En "Salutación del optimista" se comprometió con la esperanza. En el ... poema "A Roosevelt" dio una lección de compromiso político y, a la vez, de compromiso poético. Expresó ideas políticas y sociales ... sin convertir el lenguaje poético ni en panfleto, ni en editorial en verso, ni en prosa rimada. Su poema ... continúa siendo uno de los ejemplos mejores de poesía "comprometida," entre los ejemplos de la poesía hispanoamericana de este siglo. Son muy pocos los poemas políticos que pueden colocarse, junto a este poema de Darío, que sean capaces de tanta dignidad lírica, sin disminuir la calidad y alcance del mensaje político. (44-45)

Baeza Flores also affirms that Martí's struggle was in the realm of the political whereas Darío's was in the realm of art. He states that "[a]mbos fueron rebeldes, revolucionarios, combatientes y predicadores, aunque ambas cruzadas no fueron en zonas idénticas" (41). Although Darío's socio-political commitment was principally literary, he was also an occasional militant activist. As Vilariño informs us, "[c]uando un presidente de Guatemala declaró la guerra por la unión de las cinco repúblicas, Darío anduvo 'entre proclamas, discursos y fusilerías'" (49).

Darío was influenced by Martí's progressive views on the Indian problem. Martí understood that the condition of Amerindians had not improved with Spanish American independence because "la colonia continuó viviendo en la república" ("Nuestra América," *OC* 6: 19). As he explained, "[e]l problema de la independencia no era el cambio de formas, sino el cambio de espíritu" (19). Martí comprehended that the welfare of the Americas was inextricably linked to the welfare of its original inhabitants: "o se hace andar al indio, o su peso impedirá la marcha" ("Arte aborigen," *OC* 8: 329). He also

points out that racism is responsible for gnawing at the social and moral foundations of Spanish America: "¿[n]o se ve cómo del mismo golpe que paralizó al indio, se paralizó América? Y hasta que no se haga andar al indio, no comenzará a andar bien la América" (336-37). As far as Martí was concerned, the Indian was his equal. He refused to accept the concept of racial superiority. "Esa de racista," he writes, "está siendo una palabra confusa y hay que ponerla en claro. El hombre no tiene ningún derecho especial porque pertenezca a una raza o a otra: dígame hombre, y ya se dicen todos los derechos" (qtd. in Sacoto 168). Far from holding a romantic notion of the conquest as was common in his times, Martí held that "[c]uando el español vino a América, la vida del indio era un lirio y el conquistador lo ha roto" (169). Darío followed in the socially conscious footsteps of Martí, resurrecting the pre-Columbian past and incorporating Amerindian elements into his poetry. As a result, Martí's influence on Darío is present in the form and in the content of the Nicaraguan's writings; and, as will be shown below, this was recognized by Darío.

Darío's View of Martí

Many commentators recognize Martí's influence on Darío, influences that the poet himself acknowledged. According to Jackson, Darío greatly admired Martí (416). In an article written for *La Nación* Darío said that "fueron mis maestros de prosa dos hombres muy diferentes: Paul Groussac y Santiago Estrada, además de José Martí" (qtd. Rodríguez Demorizi 519). According to Medardo Vitier, the Cuban critic, Darío was the first to grant Martí the name of *Maestro* (qtd. in Rodríguez Demorizi 515). Baeza Flores states that as far as Darío was concerned "sólo dos veces había animado la condición del genio en la obra creadora de las letras iberoamericanas y que uno de esos raros casos era, sin duda, el de la obra de José Martí" (41). Darío described Martí as "el varón apostólico y sincero que *pone el verso al par de la acción, y que sabe que su propia vida es su verso*" ("José Martí, poeta," *OC* 4: 960-61) [emphasis ours]. When

discussing Martí's martyrdom, the poet wrote: "[o]h, Maestro, ¿qué has hecho...?" ("José Martí," *Los raros*, OC 2: 492). Enrique Anderson Imbert claims that these words were expressed "con la voz llena de reproche" (281-82). However, it is more likely that Darío's words were an expression of sadness at the loss of a good friend who happened to be a brilliant thinker and writer. In fact, Darío expressed this when he said: "maestro y autor y amigo, perdona que te guardemos rencor los que te amábamos y admirábamos, por haber ido a exponer y a perder el tesoro de tu talento" ("José Martí," *Los raros*, OC 2: 491-92). Darío was not criticizing Martí's revolutionary activities. He was lamenting the loss of such an immense talent. As documented earlier, Darío considered that Martí's life was a line of verse. In other words, he converted his words into action--living poetry--which is actually praised by Darío.²¹ Perhaps the best words that express Darío's admiration for Martí can be found in "José Martí, poeta" where he states that "yo admiro--recordando al varón puro y al dulce amigo--aquel cerebro cósmico, aquella vasta alma, aquel concentrado y humano universo, que lo tuvo todo; la acción y el ensueño, el ideal y la vida, y una épica muerte, y, en su América, una segura inmortalidad" (*Escritos dispersos* 339).²² In order to articulate such words Darío had to be sensitive to the social activism that he had observed in Martí.

Martí: The Founding Father of *modernismo*

The lack of appreciation for the socio-political aspect of Darío's writings is due to some extent to a lack of comprehension of the origin and characteristics of the *modernista* movement. Darío was not the actual founder of Spanish American *modernismo*, although he was one of its greatest and most eloquent exponents. Martí was not the precursor of *modernismo*, but rather its founder. As Ellis explains, alluding to the works of Ivan Schulman and Manuel Pedro González, "[l]a idea de que José Martí fue el fundador y el instigador de lo que después llegó a conocerse como el Modernismo

representa hace ya mucho tiempo un consenso de la crítica modernista" ("Martí, Darío" 189). The works of Schulman and González demonstrate that "in relation to the Modernist movement in general not only is Martí as important as the Nicaraguan poet as an innovator but Martí's innovations antedate and are the source of many of those attributed to Darío" (*Critical* 51). Accordingly, they convincingly dispute the claim made by Darío himself and by many of his critics that he was the initiator of the *modernista* movement in Spanish America (51).

The Progressive Nature of *modernismo*

For decades a significant segment of scholars have attempted to present *modernismo* only as an elitist and apolitical literary movement. As Rodríguez Fernández states: "[l]a obra de Darío y, por ende, el modernismo, ha sido objeto de una reducción intolerable por parte de la crítica literaria. Se ha presentado al poeta nicaragüense como escapista, evadido, decadente, vuelto de espaldas a los problemas más urgentes de su época" (95). After the Cuban Revolution some commentators started to integrate a historical perspective into their literary criticism. The result was to consider *modernismo* as the literary equivalent of what in politics is called liberalism, an equally flawed view. According to Ellis, "la mejor definición del término Modernismo reconoce la expresión elevada y el contenido que manifiesta una adhesión a la idea del progreso americano y humano" ("Martí, Darío" 208). This scholar holds that the criteria suggested by Martí, "supone la necesidad de escoger acertadamente los modelos y optar por estimular el avance de la comunidad que uno conoce es compatible con una tendencia que ha reinado en Hispanoamérica desde las primeras décadas de la Independencia ... y ésta ha continuado en poderosas corrientes de poesía en nuestros días" (212). He argues that Darío's work "le sitúa firmemente entre los poetas de su tiempo que se entusiasmaron con la idea del desarrollo en un sentido amplio" and that "es esta cualidad que forma la base

de muchas similitudes entre él y José Martí, entendiéndose que en Martí se extendió la creencia en el progreso a acción comprometida en varios campos" (207).

Similarly, for Jrade the goal of the *modernistas*, like Darío and Salvador Díaz Mirón, was to create a powerful new language that would speak for the nations of Spanish America ("Socio-Political" 42). This new language would break the chains of Spanish rule, yet remain up to date with Europe and North America, while simultaneously being faithful to Spanish America's originality and distinct character, that is, faithful to the ancient traditions represented by Caupolicán, the Araucanian Indian leader (42). Jrade thus links *modernismo* to originality and independence: progressive poetry. In the eyes of Jrade, the political impetus of *modernista* literature is evident even in the early *modernista* verse that was defined by *modernismo's* first commentators as escapist and superficial (47). It is thus obvious that *modernista* criticism has taken a sharp turn in the last few decades. Having discussed Darío's *indoamericanismo*, humanitarian concerns, and the *modernista* movement's interest in the idea of progress in a broad sense, an examination of the Amerindian aspect in the poet's works can now be undertaken.

AN ANALYSIS OF DARÍO'S LITERARY PRODUCTION

La iniciación melódica (1880-86)

The indigenous presence in Darío's poetry is present from the beginning of his literary career and is constant throughout it. In 1884, the poet published the "Canción mosquita" in *El Porvenir de Nicaragua*. The poem was later included in the section "Del cercano ajeno" of *La iniciación melódica*. In *Rubén Darío criollo*, Diego Manuel Sequeira helps us contextualize the poem. He explains that the government of President Cárdenas was interested in bettering the ties between the Pacific and Atlantic coast regions of Nicaragua (171). As a means of rapprochement he brought some Miskito

Indians to Managua to have them educated in the *Escuela de Artes y Oficios* which was run by French professors from Paris with whom Darío used to socialize (171):

[a]hí, tuvo además Rubén, [sic] ocasión de conocer a los indios "mosquitos," y se complacía en escuchar el cadencioso y melancólico lenguaje de aquellos aborígenes, que llegó a comprender con suma rapidez por la natural facilidad que tenía para captar la música de cualquier idioma y por las explicaciones gramaticales que sobre el "mosquito" le diera su amigo José Dolores Espinosa, quien acaba de llegar del Cabo de Gracias a Dios, donde desempeñaba el cargo de [S]ecretario de la Intendencia de aquel puerto." (171)

According to Sequeira, "[f]ué tal el conocimiento que Rubén llegó a adquirir de aquel exótico lenguaje que pudo hacer una traducción al español de una 'Canción mosquita' que el doctor Tomás Ayón, [sic] había publicado en el Tomo I de su *Historia de Nicaragua*" (171).

Méndez Plancarte entertains some doubts about the "Canción mosquita" affair, suggesting that "algún malicioso podrá inquirir si no se tratará de una travesura" (1300). Although Watland admits that "[l]a traducción de la 'Canción Mosquita' [sic] por Darío coincide poco con la original canción de los indios 'mosquitos' que aparece en la obra de Sequeira, no obstante ser el tema muy similar" (qtd. in Lévy 446), he nonetheless believes that "Rubén learned enough of the Mosquito language to translate one of their songs into Spanish" (Watland 75).

In his brief article, Isaac Jack Lévy points out the notable similarities between Darío's "Canción mosquita" and a Sephardic poem composed in Ladino. He considers that it would be worthwhile to investigate the possibility that the poem and the song are the products of an old popular Spanish play (447).

The commentator's opinion regarding the impossibility of Darío being familiar with the folklore of the Sephardim is not altogether convincing. It is perfectly possible that he could have learned the poem by way of Nicaraguan Jews who may have retained it by way of oral or even perhaps written tradition. It is equally plausible that the poem is of Hispano-Muslim origin for its style resembles the *jarchas*. It should be borne in mind, however, that the accuracy of these theories is yet to be proved. Darío has clearly indicated the source of the poem in his epigraph: volume one of Ayón's *Historia de Nicaragua*, and even quotes the first line of the composition. The issue at hand is whether one can trust Darío's words, which we are inclined to do. It may be that the poet translated the "Canción mosquita" rather freely. All concede that the Miskito poem and Darío's have the same theme. And furthermore, the similarities to the Sephardim poem mentioned by Lévy are confined to the first and the fourth stanzas.

Regardless of the polemics regarding the source of inspiration of the poem, what is notable is that, even at the age of seventeen, Darío manifested an interest in native literature. The Miskito Indians have been isolated geographically, culturally and linguistically from the dominant Nicaraguan culture. To be impressed by an indigenous poem and to present it to the public is significant.

Epístolas y poemas (1885)

"El porvenir"

In 1885, Darío composed the poem "El porvenir" which was later published in *Epístolas y poemas (1885)*. The poem is, in many ways, a history of humanity, from creation to Darío's day and age, with a particular focus on Spanish America. The content of the poem is notably revolutionary as the following lines bear witness:

Señor, yo soy el pueblo soberano
que derroca al tirano;

soy la Revolución que en sus fulgores

confunde a los esclavos y señores (423: VI: lines 15-18)

He refers to Bolívar in positive terms, calling him "redentor de un mundo" (424: VI: line 47).²³ He also praises the French Revolution: "se oye *La Marsellesa* / después que se derrumba la Bastilla" (424: VI: lines 53-54).

As part of the socially-progressive attitude of the poem, Darío advocates liberty and unity for all of humanity, and focuses on the plight of Indians and Africans. The poet criticizes the oppressive nature of the conquest while expressing his sympathy for the subjugated Amerindians:

Tras el conquistador que al hombre oprime,
 el fraile que el espíritu ataraza;
 tras una edad que gime,
 una dormida raza. (419: IV: lines 112-115)

As members of "una dormida raza," Darío points out that natives have not had the opportunity to reach their full potential. Among other possible indigenous allusions, Darío describes the eagle as "ave de los héroes" (429: VII: line 58). The poet may be alluding to the Aztecs and/or the Incas in general, or their leaders in particular, considering the symbolic importance they attach to the eagle. Darío also expresses his opposition to slavery: "los hombres de piel negra, / hijos de Cam, que por su desgracia ignoran / y a quienes claro día nunca alegre, / porque es raza de esclavos y precita, / raza sin libertad, raza maldita" (431: VII: lines 124-128). The poet's belief in human rights for blacks would also logically apply to Amerindians. Darío also expresses his preference for the American over the European as the following lines demonstrate:

Y América..., ¡oh Dios mío!,
 si el viejo mundo ya maduro y cano

gozará del fulgor de mi cariño,

donde alzaré mi trono soberano

será en el mundo niño. (431-32: VII: lines 143-47)

Further on he expresses his yearning for Spanish American unity:

Y luego la República que inflama

con su magia divina,

levantará su voz y su oriflama

del Chimborazo que altanero brama,

a la pampa argentina,

y al gigantesco y rudo Tequendama,

al sonar la trompeta de la Fama

en loor de la América Latina. (432: VII: lines 164-71)

When referring to indigenous America the author presents the Chimborazo (an extinct volcano of Ecuador, one of the highest peaks in the Andes) as a representative archetypal landmark, equating it with the Himalayas (430: VII: lines 102-04). The poet desires to sow "la semilla santa / de los principios grandes" (432: VII: lines 152-53) and raise his flag "sobre la cima augusta de los Andes" (432: VII: lines 154-55). The sacred seed may represent continental unity while the flag may be the symbol of peace. As a result of the union of the American nation,

Los dioses volverán, y en tu regazo

entonarán sus mágicos cantares;

y con celeste lazo

circundarán tus montes y tus mares. (VII. 156-59)

When the poet mentions that the gods will return he does so within the context of the Americas. He is possibly referring to the return of indigenous deities as part and parcel of

the reconstruction of the Americas. He may also be stating that America will rise to its glory, as Europe had. Darío's vision of the continent is inclusive, not exclusionary. The universal Republic (433: VIII: line 8) that Darío foresees would be an "edén iluminado" (433: VIII: line 16), an example for all, a guiding light for the world, its very future (434: IX: line 17). The poet's "edén iluminado" (433: VII: line 16) may be interpreted as a place where native people are recognized and accepted as full members of the burgeoning new society.

Although the poem is wide in scope, dealing with the social evolution of humanity as a whole, and Spanish America in particular, an understanding of the indigenous allusions in the poem enables us to fully grasp some of the main themes of the poem: namely, liberty and unity. Although the poet travels the world, drawing from Western and Eastern sources, he does not neglect dealing with issues, such as slavery and the state of indigenous peoples, which affect his beloved America.

Selección de textos dispersos (1899-1916) and "Sonetos americanos"

"Nicaragua"

The composition "Nicaragua" (1887), found in *Selección de textos dispersos* (1899-1916), is an expression of the poet's love for the country of his birth. In the first stanza, the poet praises his nation. In the second stanza, Darío proclaims his patriotic poetic mission, whole-heartedly offering himself and his work to the country of his birth:

Yo te ofrezco el acero en que forjé mi empeño,

La caja de armonía que guarda mi tesoro,

La peaña de diamantes del Ídolo que adoro

Y te ofrezco mi esfuerzo, y mi nombre y mi sueño. (lines 5-8)

As can be noted from this composition, Darío dedicated himself to serving his country and, by association, his continent, from the inception of his literary career. Darío's

attachment to Nicaragua can therefore be viewed as the starting point of his attachment to the Americas as a whole. Artistically altruistic, Darío was attached to the Americas and, by association, to the Amerindian world. The key line in the poem is "[l]a peña de diamantes del Ídolo que adoro" (line 6). Since the poem is set in a Nicaraguan context, and the work is apparently devoid of Hellenic allusions, it is possible that the idol referred to is of indigenous origin. If the idol does in fact represent indigenous America, the line in question, and the poem as a whole, would take on a deeper significance. Darío may therefore be offering the riches of indigenous cultures to his readers: "[l]a peña de diamantes del Ídolo que adoro" (line. 7). Darío's adoration of the idol could in fact be a testimony to his love for the Amerindian world.

"Sonetos americanos"

In *Del chorro de la fuente* (1886-1916), one also finds the significant "Sonetos americanos" which include "Chinampa" and "El sueño del Inca," both of which were published in November of 1888. These poems, along with "Caupolicán," were intended to form part of a new book of sonnets tentatively titled *Sonetos americanos* dealing with aspects of American life, particularly the period of the conquest (Mejía Sánchez, ed., *Poesía* lxxv; Méndez Plancarte 1374 n. 8). Unfortunately, the book envisioned by Darío never became reality.

"Chinampa"

In "Chinampa" Darío paints a love scene that takes place in the ancient metropolis of Mexico, Tenochtitlán:

Al entreabrir los ojos, flotando ve la aurora

la mágica chinampa del lago en el cristal.

Rosas, mosquetas, dalias..., ¿es el bajel de Flora?

Emerge de las ondas olor primaveral.

En la chinampa una india gallarda, encantadora,
 suspira. Hay un guerrero magnífico y triunfal
 que la idolatra ciego de amor. Ella le adora.
 ¡Un beso! La luz baña la tierra tropical.

¿Qué alumbra esa apoteosis? La amada y el amado.
 Ella ardorosa y tímida, y él trémulo a su lado.
 Brazos morenos, túnica blanca. Y el vencedor
 con un corazón de oro, su gran manto de pluma,
 el casco en la cabeza--las fauces de una puma--;
 y encima tiembla un grueso penacho de color. (1005-1006)

The poem deals with a gorgeous Aztec girl who sighs in a floating garden for the love of a warrior who idolizes her. They kiss and are illuminated by love. She is burning with passion, yet timid. He is dressed in a white tunic, a possible allusion to his innocence, and trembles at her side. It is not clear whether the warrior trembles because of passionate love or out of fear. The lack of contextual clarity lends itself to two possible interpretations. It may be that the "[b]razos morenos" and the "túnica blanca" (1006: line 11) refer metonymically to the Indian girl. The "vencedor" would in this case be the warrior whose "grueso penacho de color" (1006: line 14) trembles out of passionate love. From another perspective, the arms and the tunic, a huipil, apparently, may belong to the Indian girl. In this scenario the vanquisher would be the Emperor, identified by his golden shield, his opulent feathered cloak, his helmet, and his thick headdress, all of which are symbols of authority and royalty. The Emperor, the possible fiancé, husband, or master of the girl, has witnessed the loving embrace and trembles out of jealousy. The principal theme of the poem is love in its pure, triangular, or impossible manifestations,

all of which are universal. Native peoples, dehumanized by the European invaders, are humanized by Darío through the power of love.

Darío's treatment of beauty is another one of the salient features of the poem. In the second stanza, the poet presents the girl on the floating garden. She is "una india gallarda, encantadora" (1005: line 5), a positive description demonstrating the poet's capacity to find attraction in a group that was largely disparaged in his time. Darío's life and works indicate that he was capable of appreciating beauty in all women, be they of European, Asian, African, or native American origin.

The presentation of the greatness of Aztec civilization in all its glory is accomplished by way of the reference to the "mágica chinampa" (1005: line 2) which alludes to the marvellous floating gardens which surrounded the Aztec city of Tenochtitlán on Lake Texcoco. Only the word "magic" can adequately describe the grandeur and resplendent beauty of the capital of the Nahuas that so intensely impressed the conquistadors as they themselves showed in their chronicles.²⁴

It is interesting to see how Darío reverts to Western mythological allusions in order to paint this pre-Columbian picture. To portray the ascendance of the sun, he refers to the Roman goddess of the dawn: "[a]l entreabrir los ojos, flotando ve la aurora / la mágica chinampa del lago en el cristal" (1005: lines 1-2). Darío alludes to the Roman goddess of flowers and of gardens while describing the "chinampa:" "[r]osas, mosquetas, dalias..., ¿es el bajel de Flora? / Emerge de las ondas olor primaveral" (1005: lines 3-4). The Aztecs were fond admirers of flowers. Many Náhuatl poems deal with this theme. Flora is the Roman equivalent of Xochiquetzal, the Aztec goddess of love and flowers.²⁵ Gardens traditionally represent the Garden of Eden. Hence, a worldly garden is a worldly paradise. For Darío, the civilization of Tenochtitlán is a miraculous human accomplishment. The garden is also an archetype of the human soul, of innocence, of

happiness: it is a place where the spirit can flower. The pre-Columbian wonders seem to symbolize all of this and even more to the poet.

Although one could criticize the practice of describing a culture with the myths of another, it is possible that Darío did so due to the universal nature of those myths. Such a practice would certainly not be unusual; in fact, it has been used by some of the most eminent writers, including Shakespeare. Darío was an eclectic appropriator who never hesitated to take images from various sources such as Greek and Aztec mythologies, the Oriental world in general, as well as the Islamic world,²⁶ to create his opulently adorned literary canvas. According to Alejandro Sux, a personal friend of the poet, Darío once commented that: "[c]onfieso que confundo en mi espíritu todas las mitologías, y que fuera de Dios son para mí igualmente símbolos los divinos personajes que habitan el Olimpo, el Walhalla y el Paraíso" (312).

Another possibility, which can explain the existence of Western mythological allusions in his poems dealing with Amerindian themes, is the pedagogic, academic, and cultural context in which the poet lived. According to Edelberto Torres, indigenous sources of inspiration "eran extrañas a la América intelectual donde el autor se había formado, tan saturada de espíritu europeo" (37). Referring to culture, Arturo Torres-Ríoasco wrote that "los países de nuestro continente son, a pesar de la mezcla de sangre, eminentemente europeos. Muy poco sabemos de las civilizaciones azteca, incaica, quechua" (128). Furthermore, the vast bulk of indigenous literature was not within the poet's reach. Cuadra explains the problem in the following way:

El literato Rubén Darío se enfrenta aquí con una herencia sin letra, sin escritura. Quedan a salvo algunos libros esotéricos como el *Popul-Vuh* o el *Chilam Balam*; como algunos dudosos poemas de Netzahualcóyotl (en tiempos de Darío aún no se habían descubierto y traducido los poemas con que Garibay y Miguel León

Portilla enriquecieron nuestra tradición nahuatl), quedaban tradiciones apasionantes, como la de Quetzalcoatl, y figuras señeras rescatadas por los primeros cronistas e historiadores de Indias. No había una verdadera literatura--como era la española--que conservara sin pérdida de la forma y de las esencias, la psicología y las creaciones de esos pueblos. (*Aventura* 96)

Besides the limitations mentioned, the poet made a noble and notable effort to retrieve and present aspects of the indigenous world in his creations. As Cuadra says, Darío "[s]e aferra a lo poco que la historia de entonces le ofrece y promueve una búsqueda, una peregrinación hacia el misterio indio" (96).

Darío's fascination with the native world originated in his childhood. In the short story "La larva" we read the following lines that seem autobiographical: "[y]o nací en un país donde, como en casi toda la América, se practicaba la hechicería y los brujos se comunicaban con lo invisible. Lo misterioso autóctono no desapareció con la llegada de los conquistadores" (*Cuentos completos* 292). It should be stressed, though, that even with a relative shortage of indigenous sources, Darío still had at his disposition a substantial number of books on Amerindian history, religion and mythology. It is well known that by the time Darío started publishing his poetry, he was a highly cultured person. He had an admirable mastery of the Spanish language and a sound grounding in the Spanish classics. Although he never attended an institution of higher learning, Darío had spent long hours of study in the National Library. In his words: "[a]llí pasé largos meses leyendo todo lo posible, y entre todas las cosas que leí, *¡horrendo referens!*, fueron todas las introducciones de la Biblioteca de Autores Españoles de Rivadeneira, y las principales obras de casi todos los clásicos de nuestra lengua" (*Autobiografía*, OC 1: 40). Watland points out that Darío "no doubt leafed through these impressive tomes, stopping to read, besides all the poetry, most of the classical drama and the writings of the

Historiadores de Indias" (73). Furthermore, some learned and highly cultured friends who were cognizant of his immense talent also assisted him in his quest for knowledge (Isaza Calderón 116).

Darío was an avid reader of the chronicles of the Spanish conquerors and explorers. One can be certain that he read Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo (1478-1557) and Francisco López de Gómara (1511-1559). In *El viaje a Nicaragua* he mentions that "[e]n Oviedo, en Gomara, en los historiadores de Indias, supe de nuestra tierra antigua y de sus encantos originales" (OC 3: 1029). He also obviously read Ercilla, as can be seen in the sonnet "Caupolicán." In "Folklore de la América Central" Darío expresses his interest in Nicaragua's folklore and its indigenous roots. In this article, Darío demonstrates his familiarity with Brasseur's French translation of the *Popul Vuh* (OC 4: 858-59), the sacred book of the Maya-Quiché, Daniel G. Brinton's English translation of the *Güegüence* (859-61), the Nahuatl language play of the Nicarao Indians of Nicaragua, and the *Ollantay*, the famous Inca play written in Quechua (860). Familiar with the works of Brinton, Darío may therefore have read *The Maya Chronicles* (1882), *Ancient Nahuatl Poetry* (1887), *Rig Vedus Americanus: Sacred Songs of the Ancient Mexicans* (1890), and *The Native Calendar of Central America and Mexico* (1893). Darío's knowledge of the Inca world likely derives from Inca Garcilaso de la Vega's (1539-1616) *Comentarios reales de los incas*. The abundance of references and allusions to native mythology in his poetry suggests that he read Bernardino de Sahagún's *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España*, as well as José F. Ramírez's 1867-80 edition of Fray Diego Durán's *Historia de las Indias de Nueva España y Islas de Tierra Firme*, among other treasure troves of indigenous culture and civilization. Critics have now come to realize the importance of studying Darío's Amerindian sources. As Carlos Martín states:

Después de exámenes engañosos con fundamento en las máscaras de Darío, ahora se empieza a manifestar la necesidad de buscar el orbe nuevo, encarnado por la poesía del nicaragüense, en las fuentes indígenas, especialmente relacionadas con su condición de chorotega, como son las expresiones líricas de cantores nahuatl y, luego, de rapsodas mayas. Así se explica que la multitud de divinidades y de dioses que pueblan su universo mestizo, tiene mayor relación con los "cantares mexicanos." (33)

Another explanation of the phenomenon of mythological and ideological mixture can be found in the concept of symbolic duality. Various scholars have pointed out, criticized, or tried to explain the apparent "contradictions" found in Darío's poetry. In reality, one is not faced with contradictions in themselves but rather with a symbolic duality which mirrors the process of miscegenation that has occurred in the continent. By mingling European and native mythology the poet is reflecting the reality of Spanish-speaking indigenous America, with its genetic and cultural double heritage. In Darío's epoch an enormous emphasis was placed on the European roots of Spanish American culture, downplaying, disdaining and even denying the numerous Amerindian contributions and their evident cultural richness. The poet was precocious in his humanitarian and unitarian vision. He desired to reappropriate native traditions and to integrate them within the body of Hispanic American literature, creating thus an authentic, original and all-inclusive literature, emancipated from a monopolistic, antiquated Spanish influence, which could be seen as a source of sterile imitations.

"El sueño del Inca"

The sonnet "El sueño del Inca," included in *Del chorro de la fuente*, deals with the majestic Andean civilization and demonstrates the extensive knowledge that Darío possessed of Inca mythology:

Después del holocausto, el Inca va y reposa.

Sueña. Ve al dios que pasa. Camina junto a él

la luna enamorada, gentil, pálida esposa.

El es ardiente y rubio, es ella triste y fiel.

El soberano lleva manto de fuego y rosa,

y va detrás un paje tan bello como Ariel:

es el lucero amado de la mañana hermosa

y del azul profundo magnífico joyel.

El Inca se estremece cuando el cortejo mira.

Al padre Sol bendice, su majestad admira,

y ve un fugaz relámpago del cielo en el confín.

Un eco ronco rueda por el inmenso espacio:

el padre Sol retorna soberbio a su palacio;

Illapa va adelante, sonando su clarín. (1006)

"Después del holocausto" (1006: line 1), that is, after the burned sacrifice, "el Inca va y reposa" (1006: line 1) and dreams. The Inca sees "al dios que pasa" (1006: line 2) while the moon, his lover, gentle and fair skinned wife walks along with him. The god mentioned here is Inti, the Inca sun-god, state deity and son of the creator-god Viracocha. Inti is typically represented as a golden disk with a human face. The circular form is a universal symbol with multiple meanings. It represents the notions of totality, unity, perfection, infinity and eternity. The sun is the eternal father who represents the traditional forces of law and order. He is the father of time, the heavenly father. The "luna" seems to be Mama Quilla, Inca lunar goddess, daughter of Viracocha and wife of Inti. According to the *Online Symbolism Dictionary*:

The moon is a feminine symbol, universally representing the rhythm of time as it embodies the cycle. The phases of the moon symbolize immortality and eternity... It might reflect inner knowledge, or the phases of man's condition on earth, since it controls the tides, the rains, the waters, and the seasons... It also provides an analogy for the stages of human development: the new moon is infancy, the crescent is youth and adolescence, the full moon is maturity and pregnancy, and the waning moon represents the decline of life, sleep. ("Moon")

The sun, absolute cosmic power, is burning and blond, and the moon is sorrowful and faithful (1006: line 4). The sovereign who wears a "manto de fuego y rosa" (1006: line 5) represents the sun with its gases which in turn refers to Manco Capac, ancestor and solar fire-god of the Incas, as well as Pachacamac's brother. Behind the sun follows a page, "tan bello como Ariel" (1006: line 6) a simile which also appears in Milton's *Paradise Lost* in which Ariel is an angel expelled from heaven (Book vi 371). The "lucero amado de la mañana hermosa" (1006: line 8) is the morning star, the "lucifer" of the *Old Testament* (Isaiah xiv, 12): the planet Venus in all its scintillating glory. Lucifer is also the personification of Venus and the son of Aurora. In the sonnet "Lírica" from *El canto errante* (1907), Darío gives Apollo the title of Lucifer (1006: line 14). For the Romans, Venus was the goddess of love and beauty, but she was originally the goddess of gardens and vineyards. Gardens represent paradise and wine represents divine knowledge. With this mixture and equating of mythologies that has the effect of elevating the lesser known Indian mythologies, Darío exalts the achievements of Inca civilization in the same way that he praises the marvels of the Aztecs.

The poem can therefore be regarded as a manifestation of mythological intertextuality. Due to a lack of sufficient knowledge of any individual indigenous civilization, Darío employed this technique in order to provide the proper profundity of

this composition. Regardless of his motivations, this movement from one tradition to another demonstrates Darío's often observed eclecticism.

Darío was in no sense a purist. He was inspired by many sources, directly and indirectly, and interwove them as he pleased. This has not been fully appreciated by Arturo Marasso who tends to interpret Darío's poetry based on rigidly classical mythological sources, overlooking the fact that the poet used mythology randomly to express his own thoughts and ideas. His works are not necessarily faithful to Greek and Roman mythology.

Understanding the poet's eclecticism, one can comprehend how in Mexican mythology, Inti corresponds to Huitzilopochtli, god of war, son of Coatlicue, whose page would be Paynal, messenger of the sun. The Inca trembles before such beauty (1006: line 9) and blesses the father-Sun (line 10). He then sees "un fugaz relámpago del cielo en el confin" (1006: line 11) and "[u]n eco ronco rueda por el inmenso espacio" (1006: line 12): a manifestation of the power of Illapa, also known as Katoylla (1006: line 14), Inca god of lightning, thunder, and rainstorms. In Quechua, or Runasimi as the language is truly called, *illapa* literally means "lightning bolt."

The allusions to the "lucero amado de la mañana hermosa" (1006: line 8) and the "fugaz relámpago" (1006: line 11) of Illapa (1006: line 14) can also be interpreted within the context of Mexican mythology. It is possible that these lines of verse are references to Xólotl, god of lightning bolts in Toltec mythology, who guides the dead to Mictlan. Among the Aztecs, Xólotl was known as Tlaloc. He was the god of rain and lightning bolts as well as the twin brother of Quetzalcóatl, the Lord of the Nightly Star, that is, the planet Venus. In "Versión de los anales de Cuauhtitlán" we read that Quetzalcóatl "se convirtió en estrella, / en la estrella que brilla en el alba" (León-Portilla, *Literatura* 45). As Cardenal explains, "[e]l Dios Quetzalcóatl estaba simbolizado por Venus, el lucero de

la mañana" ("Quetzalcóatl," 1966: 4). The conclusion of Darío's poem is suggestive. From an allegorical point of view the blowing of Illapa's bugle (1006: line 14) may be seen as a prophecy of the European invasion and its dreadful consequences. This exegesis is substantiated even more so by the possibility that Darío identifies Venus and Illapa with the Toltec-Aztec Xólotl who brings the dead to the Abyss. With its Western, Eastern and indigenous allusions, the poem is truly a treasure trove of mythological intertextuality.

Azul... (1888)

"Estival"

Darío's fascination with the indigenous world further manifests itself in the poem "Estival" incorporated into the "Año lírico" of *Azul...* (1888). According to Rubén Benítez, this youthful composition of 1887 was the one preferred by the first readers of the book of poems (237). The poetic voice of the poem identifies itself with the animals, as is typical among Amerindian poets. According to the metaphoric and symbolic interpretation of Benítez, "[l]a selva indiana y la selva indígena de América representan el espíritu pleno, la incontrolada emoción, la riqueza instintiva y vital" (248). Although the interpretation of the significance of the jungle is reasonable, the critic's claim that Darío is referring to "[la] selva indígena de América" is unsubstantiated in this context. The poet's references to the "tigre de Bengala" (578: line 1), the "selva indiana" (579: line 22), the "elefante" (581: line 78) the "hipopótamo" (581: line 88) indicate a generic jungle, principle of sensual force. Benítez is convincing, though, when he argues that the poem incites the reader to adopt a positive judgement about aspects of the world and humanity that were rejected as barbaric by the bourgeoisie (249). Darío challenges the dominant values of the day by poeticizing the jungle. Although it cannot be claimed that the poet is presenting a Spanish American jungle, the generic nature of the jungle and

what it represents can, by association, be linked to the Americas. In other words, by poeticizing an East Indian or merely generic jungle, the poet is also, in the process, beautifying the natural wonders of his own continent. In this broad sense, the poem can be viewed as a combination of indigenous appropriation and social commentary, in which Darío legitimizes the native world as a source of sophisticated poetic inspiration.

"Caupolicán"

"Caupolicán" is probably Darío's most famous poem dealing with the Amerindian world. The sonnet was added to the 1890 edition of *Azul...* It was published previously in *La Época* the 11th of January, 1888 along with "Chinampa" and "El sueño del Inca." According to the newspaper that initially published the poems, Darío had the intention of including them in a book of sonnets which were to deal with the pre-Columbian world and the colonial period (Mejía Sánchez, ed., *Poesía* lix). According to Contreras, it is in *Azul...* "donde se ensancha la temática americana" in the poet's works (40). In *Historia de mis libros* Darío stated that "Caupolicán" "inició la entrada del soneto alejandrino a la francesa en nuestra lengua" (*OC* 1: 203). Darío makes several references to Western and Eastern mythological characters with the effect of demonstrating the strength of the protagonist, capable of overpowering Hercules' arm or even Samson's:

Es algo formidable que vió la vieja raza;
robusto tronco de árbol al hombro de un campeón
salvaje y aguerrido, cuya fornida maza
blandiera el brazo de Hércules, o el brazo de Sansón.

Por casco sus cabellos, su pecho por coraza,
pudiera tal guerrero, de Arauco en la región,
lancero de los bosques, Nemrod que todo caza,
desjarretar un toro, o estrangular un león.

Anduvo, anduvo, anduvo. Le vió la luz del día,
 le vió la tarde pálida, le vió la noche fría.
 y siempre el tronco de árbol a cuestras del titán.

"¡El Toqui, el Toqui!," clama la conmovida casta.

Anduvo, anduvo, anduvo. La Aurora dijo: "Basta,"
 e irguióse la alta frente del gran Caupolicán. (599)

Caupolicán is a lancer of the woods, a "Nemrod que todo caza" (599: line 7), and a true Titan (599: line 11). What is prominent here is the equation of Caupolicán with the heroes of the Old World. When Ercilla described the bravery of the Araucanian Indians, he apparently did so in order to exalt even more the vanquishers. The greater the enemy, the greater the victory. Darío's vision is different. By placing the "Toqui" on the same level as Western and Eastern heroes, Darío wished to insist upon the grandeur of America's indigenous past. Darío utilizes the Araucanian Indian word for chief, *toqui*, in the place of *jefe* or *líder*, in a possible attempt to stress his allegiance to America.

"Caupolicán" is a remarkable achievement of semantic compression and conciseness which demonstrates Darío's impressive ability to synthesize. The writer was able to condense in one sonnet the events that Alonso de Ercilla y Zúñiga described in *La araucana* in fifteen stanzas which together contain more than one hundred and twenty lines. Darío, "valiéndose de sugerencias y breves descripciones, logra un efecto integral en que los rápidos o lentos movimientos de la prueba y los colores y matices del cuadro, completan una escena más densa, sugerente y viva que la lograda por Ercilla" (Martín 78). Darío may be the first Spanish American writer to draw from the rich traditions, customs, scenarios, characters and themes of *La araucana* for poetic purposes. He may also have been the only one capable of condensing a significant part of an epic into a sonnet, while not only maintaining the literary value of the original but even improving it

greatly. Few have attempted such a difficult task. José Santos Chocano made a noteworthy subsequent attempt to do so. However, his sonnet lacks the strength, delicacy and subtlety that characterizes Darío's. Pablo Neruda also dedicated a poem to Caupolicán in *Canto general* (IV "Los libertadores"), but the powerful conciseness of Darío's effort eludes him.

"A Colón"

Darío's poem "A Colón" merits a rather lengthy and detailed commentary due to the magnitude of its literary and ideological value, particularly in the realm of indigenous issues. It is a work that synthesizes the humanitarian concerns of a gifted poet, and a progressive intellectual notably concerned with aboriginal issues.

"A Colón" was published without a title in *El heraldo* of Bogotá on the 26th of November of 1892 (Mejía Sánchez, ed., *Poesía lxxv*). It was published, under the title "Homenaje a Colón," in the *Guía Colombina* of Madrid on the 29th of August, 1892 and then, with the title "A Colón" in *El Siglo XX* of Managua (lxxv). The decision to include the poem in *El canto errante* of 1907 demonstrates that Darío considered its content to be universal and that it was not a mere occasional poem.

"A Colón" is a composition dealing with Christopher Columbus, the conquest, the shortcomings of the Wars of Independence and the state of post-colonial America.²⁷ It is also an exaltation of the American and of the indigenous. Darío looks back and finds the roots of today's problems in the errors of the past. There is a noticeable oscillation between the present and the past in the poem with the poet noting pessimistically, and even tragically, that the socio-political problems of Spanish America have not improved and in many cases have actually become worse. The pessimistic and tragic tone can be noted from the vocabulary with its preponderance of negative words. In his article "Lo étnico y lo telúrico" Julio Ycaza Tigerino declares that the pessimistic baroque tone of

this poem overpowers Darío (273). Actually, such a tone is the reflection of Darío's anti-imperialism. This perspective demonstrates just how ideologically advanced the poet was for his epoch. In our time, a large section of progressive intellectuals expressed negative sentiments about the celebrations of the five hundredth anniversary of the "discovery" of America (see Aznárez). One can comprehend such sensibility in our time: the result of a population more conscious of social injustices. What is impressive is that towards the end of the nineteenth century, Darío could call into question the "Discovery" of America. He even had the audacity to do so during the celebrations of the four hundredth anniversary. As Salinas affirms in *La poesía de Rubén Darío*: "[n]ingún escritor español del 98 en la cresta de la ola de su sentir pesimista llegó a la crueldad en el análisis, a la dureza en la invectiva, que pone Darío en su visión del desolado panorama americano" (229). Instead of a makeshift poem celebrating the mariner with the familiar epithets, Darío's poem is full of bitter pessimism and sombre despair (229). There are, however, some positive elements interspersed that provide rays of hope. To some extent, "A Colón" can be considered a synthesis of Darío's prominent *americanista* poems (such as "Caupolicán," "Chinampa," "El sueño del Inca," "A Roosevelt," "Salutación del optimista," "Momotombo," "Tutecotzimí," "Raza," and "Retorno"), since one finds in it many of the themes which appear in those poems. These themes shall now be examined as we analyze the poem:

¡Desgraciado Almirante! Tu pobre América,
 tu india virgen y hermosa de sangre cálida,
 la perla de tus sueños, es una histérica
 de convulsivos nervios y frente pálida.

Un desastroso espíritu posee tu tierra:
 donde la tribu unida blandió sus mazas,

hoy se enciende entre hermanos perpetua guerra,
se hieren y destrozan las mismas razas.

Al ídolo de piedra reemplaza ahora
el ídolo de carne que se entroniza,
y cada día alumbra la blanca aurora
en los campos fraternos sangre y ceniza.

Desdeñando a los reyes, nos dimos leyes
al son de los cañones y los clarines,
y hoy al favor siniestro de negros beyes
fraternizan los Judas con los Caínes.

Bebiendo la esparcida savia francesa
con nuestra boca indígena semi-española,
día a día cantamos la *Marsellesa*
para acabar danzando la *Carmañola*.

Las ambiciones pérfidas no tienen diques,
soñadas libertades yacen deshechas.
¡Eso no hicieron nunca nuestros Caciques,
a quienes las montañas daban las flechas!

Ellos eran soberbios, leales y francos,
ceñidas las cabezas de raras plumas;
¡ojalá hubieran sido los hombres blancos
como los Atahualpas y Moctezumas!

Cuando en vientres de América cayó semilla
de la raza de hierro que fué de España,
mezcló su fuerza heroica la gran Castilla

con la fuerza del indio de la montaña.

¡Pluguera a Dios las aguas antes intactas
no reflejaran nunca las blancas velas;
ni vieran las estrellas estupefactas
arribar a la orilla tus carabelas!

Libres como las águilas, vieran los montes
pasar los aborígenes por los boscajes,
persiguiendo los pumas y los bisontes
con el dardo certero de sus carcajes.

Que más valiera el jefe rudo y bizarro
que el soldado que en fango sus glorias finca,
que ha hecho gemir al Zipa bajo su carro
o temblar las heladas momias del Inca.

La cruz que nos llevaste padece mengua;
y tras encanalladas revoluciones,
la canalla escritora mancha la lengua
que escribieron Cervantes y Calderones.

Cristo va por las calles flaco y enclenque,
Barrabás tiene esclavos y charreteras,
y las tierras de Chibcha, Cuzco y Palenque
han visto engalonadas a las panteras.

Duelos, espantos, guerras, fiebre constante
en nuestra senda ha puesto la suerte triste:
¡Cristóforo Colombo, pobre Almirante,
ruega a Dios por el mundo que descubriste! (799-801)

As has been explained, "A Colón" was without a title until it was published in *El Siglo XX*. When faced with a poem without title, those in charge of the Spanish magazine *Guía Colombina* appropriately decided to publish it under the title of "Homenaje a Colón" (Mejía Sánchez, ed., *Poesía lxxv*). Although Darío is critical of the conquest, he treats Columbus and Spain sympathetically. He feels that the Admiral played an unfortunate role in history. Hence, he refers to him as the "¡[d]esgraciado Almirante!" (799: line 1) as well as "pobre Almirante" (801: line 55). Guillermo de Torre, like the editor of *Guía Colombina*, is therefore correct to describe the poem as a dramatic eulogy (40).

The poet uses the word "pobre" to describe America, something which denotes his sympathy for America.²⁸ In the second line, Darío uses the name "india" to refer to America. It may be that the first use of "América" refers to the continent whereas "india" reflects the delusions Columbus had concerning his discovery. This idea is reinforced in the third line, which says that America was the pearl of Columbus' dreams. This might be a reference to his irrational desires. The second, third, and fourth lines are particularly thought-provoking. At first glance they can be seen as references to the primordial purity of America and its pristine beauty. The "sangre cálida" (799: line 2) may be an allusion to the climate of the tropics but may also refer to its inhabitants, that is, to their hospitality and friendliness, underlining that they are humans and not animals as some conquistadors thought. It is possible we are dealing with a case of personification since the words used to describe America can be applied perfectly well to an Indian woman.²⁹ The "América" or "india" in the poem may be an Amerindian girl, a victim of the sexual assaults of the conquistadors, of which many disturbing descriptions exist.³⁰ Darío seems concerned with the human rights of Amerindians.

Darío explores a sometimes idealized pre-Columbian past: the world of the noble native. "Tribu" (799: line 6) is utilized as a synecdoche and represents all indigenous peoples. According to Darío, the tribe was united before the conquest. The poet attempts to contrast the lack of unity in Spanish America with the supposed unity of the First Nations. In other words, where there once was peace, there is only war today: "hoy se enciende ... perpetua guerra" (799: line 7).³¹

The first two lines in the third stanza may be taken as the introduction of the cyclical element of Aztec mythology into poetry that has been traditionally, but perhaps mistakenly, attributed to Octavio Paz's *Piedra de sol*. The stone idol has been replaced by an idol of flesh--"Al ídolo de piedra reemplaza ahora / el ídolo de carne que se entroniza" (799: lines 9-10)--thus conveying the Aztec belief in cyclicity.

In the fifth stanza, Darío speaks about "nuestra boca indígena semi-española" (800: line 18) referring to the genetic and cultural duality of Spanish Americans. It may be that the poet wants to make this duality, these contradictory aspects, stand out. According to Ycaza Tigerino: "[e]sta dualidad, que Darío vivió intensamente en su espíritu, en su carne y en su poesía, se plantea fundamentalmente por la supervivencia ... en el hombre americano, del primitivismo indígena frente al intelectualismo de herencia europea" (258). The dual heritage of Spanish Americans is a historical reality. However, associating indigenous cultures with "primitivism" is a stereotype. Ycaza Tigerino gives the following explanation for this duality:

El choque de sangres distintas en las venas del mestizo y el choque vital y cultural en la convivencia social con los elementos étnicos puros concurrentes en el mestizaje--españoles puros y masas indígenas--con sus respectivas expresiones culturales, produjeron en él un dualismo biológico y psicológico que no puede ser

superado mientras no se complete en nuestras naciones el proceso de mestización y de homogeinización de sus pueblos. (258)

As can be seen from his analysis of the problem, the critic advocates the miscegenation of the population of the Americas. From our standpoint, race is of little significance. What is far more significant is one's culture. Complete miscegenation is irrelevant when the vast majority of the population shares the same culture, whether they have European, African, or Amerindian ancestry. To a certain extent, this is the case in Nicaragua. Darcy Ribeiro has also dealt with the topic of miscegenation in Spanish America in a more convincing manner. The scholar explains that:

Todos los latinoamericanos tienen en el aborígen una de sus matrices genéticas y culturales, pero su contribución fue de tal forma absorbida que, cualquiera sea el destino de las poblaciones indígenas sobrevivientes, no afectará de modo considerable el destino nacional ni alterará mucho su constitución étnica. En otras palabras: la miscegenación, absorción y europeización de las poblaciones indígenas se cumplió o está en marcha y tiende a homogeinizar--aunque no a fundir--todas las matrices étnicas convirtiéndolas en modos diferenciados de participación en una misma etnia nacional. (103)

Ribeiro's analysis of the issue is more extensive than Ycaza Tigerino's. He does not seem to promote the on-going process of miscegenation, he merely describes it.

This discussion now brings us to the issue of "racial theories of literary creation" as advanced by Ycaza Tigerino, Cabezas, Bowra, and Torres-Río seco.³² As has been seen, Ycaza Tigerino holds that Darío had a "primitive" instinct that led him to reject rationalist modernity and to seek, in the original sources of all peoples and cultures, the point of intersection and fusion of his indigenous American primitivism with his vital European culture. Ycaza Tigerino's views deserve to be challenged. As an exponent of

modernismo, a movement partially interested in the idea of progress, it is improbable that Darío would have rejected the positive aspects of rationalist modernity. The opinions of Paz, Jrade, Arrom, and Ellis are more convincing. Paz considers the most "escapist" *modernista* literature to be one of exploration and quest (qtd. in Jrade, "Socio-Political" 36). Jrade adds that "Modernist writers turned their attention from the most up-to-date European trends towards home and resurrected, through flights of fancy as much as through historical fact, a Spanish American past that included ancient civilizations, indigenous peoples, and a Spanish American consciousness" (36-37). Ellis shares Arrom's opinion, which considers that the riches of Spanish American culture is responsible for fomenting a fascination with other cultures in certain individuals (23).

According to Arrom:

esa cultura del Nuevo Mundo, que nos caracteriza, conforma y motiva, no es exclusivamente europea, ni exclusivamente africana, ni exclusivamente indígena: la nuestra es una cultura de síntesis en que participan, en mayor o menor grado, según la región, las culturas que en ellas se suman. De ahí que todo americano de espíritu alerta le sea fácil adentrarse, por sendas que son íntimamente familiares, en la cultura de otros pueblos. Y eso es, en realidad, lo que hizo Darío: captó, sin que en el proceso de captación intervinieran para nada el ángulo racial o el color de la piel, las mejores esencias de España, y de Francia, y del resto de Europa, para unir las, con sabia alquimia personal, a las arcanas esencias que había acumulado en los años formativos de su niñez centroamericana. (qtd. in Ellis, *Critical* 23)

Turning back to the poem, in the sixth stanza one learns that the treacherous ambitions "no tienen diques" (800: line 21); they do not have any sea walls. The "soñadas

libertades yacen deshechas" (800: line 22). The liberties, for which so many gave their lives, have not converted themselves into reality.

The next stanza marks a structural division in the poem that signals a change of perspective from the post-colonial to the pre-colonial. The bond that the Indians had with the Earth is expressed by way of the assertion that the mountains would give their arrows, obviously made of obsidian, to the chiefs. The use of the word "cacique" in line 23 is particularly interesting. This Haitian word, which means "chief," "governor," "lord with vassals," applies only to Indian leaders. In fact, Darío appears to be referring to the fact that the Spanish "caudillo" or tyrant has replaced the Indian "cacique."

In the seventh stanza Darío continues his somewhat idealistic description of the Indian leaders. He affirms that they were "soberbios, leales y francos" (800: line 25). The word "soberbio" should not be understood in the sense of "arrogant" but rather in the sense of "splendid" or "magnificent." The writer describes the Indian leaders. Their heads were crowned with rare and precious feathers.

Thereafter the poet expresses his wish that the "hombres blancos" (800: line 27) could have been like the "Atahualpas y Moctezumas" (800: line 28). Since we are dealing with a metonymy, the sense is not restricted and can easily be applied to other noble chieftains like Caupolicán, or the poet-warrior Tekij. As Darío affirms in the prologue to *Prosas profanas*: "[s]i hay poesía en nuestra América, ella está en las cosas viejas: en Palenke y Uatlán, en el indio legendario y en el inca sensual y fino, y en el gran Moctezuma de la silla de oro" (*Poesías* 612-13). Positive references to characters like Atahualpa, Moctezuma and Netzahualcóyotl, the Chichimecan king and poet, are found in some of Darío's poems (such as "Momotombo" in *El canto errante*; "Apóstrofe a Méjico" from *Del chorro de la fuente*). Huitzilopochtli, on the contrary, is used almost exclusively in a negative manner in Darío's poetry ("Oda a Francia" in *Del chorro de la*

fuelle and "France-América" in *Canto a la Argentina*), although not necessarily so in the short story "Huitzilopochtli."³³ It is somewhat ironic that Darío idealizes Atahualpa and Moctezuma due to the fact that they were ultimately failures as leaders. They had their weaknesses which were exploited by Francisco Pizarro (c. 1475-1541) and Hernán Cortés (1485-1547), respectively. It is important to emphasize that with regard to pre-Columbian civilizations, Darío's approach is selective. The poet typically seizes upon one aspect of the Amerindian world and elaborates on it. If he is looking for a positive aspect, he will utilize it to its fullest extent. Consequently, he will ignore some of the implications of a particular element.

The eighth stanza deals with miscegenation while recognizing its painful origin. The metaphor "vientres de América" (800: line 29) refers to the wombs of indigenous women. "[S]emilla" (800: line 29) is a metaphor for "sperm" and "raza de hierro" (800: line 30) is a metaphor for the physical strength of the Spanish conquistadors. It appears that, for Darío, the fecundating of aboriginal women by the invaders was genetically positive: an intermingling of the heroic strength of Castile and the strength of the mountain Indian.³⁴

The ninth stanza is a prayer, a rhetorical supplication by which the author laments the conquest. The poet demonstrates a desire to reverse what is impossible: the past. The "aguas antes intactas" (800: line 33) refers to the innocence of the continent before the arrival of the Europeans, perhaps implying a subsequent contamination. America was contaminated by the conquest and by the colonial period. Contagious diseases wreaked havoc among the Amerindians. In 60 years of the conquest the native population of Mexico went from 22 million to 1 million (Gerhard: figure 1). In 70 years of the conquest the Inca population of 10 million was reduced to 2 million (*Cimarrones*). The "blancas velas" (800: line 34) in the ninth stanza obviously refer to those of the Niña, the Pinta,

and the Santa María: the first three Spanish boats to have reached the Americas in 1492. In the eyes of Darío, this was the beginning of the trials and tribulations of the Americas, the time the original way of life of the indigenous peoples was disrupted.

In the tenth stanza Darío describes his somewhat romantic and idealized vision of pre-Columbian America. It is a recreation of an unconquered America. The stanza commences with the simile in which the poet compares Indians to eagles. The poet feels that the natives were free like eagles: "[I]bres como las águilas" (800: line 37). In North American Indian cultures, the eagle is considered to be the messenger of the Great Spirit. The relationship between birds and liberty is obvious since these feathered creatures can go where they wish, as they please, and do not have to submit themselves to artificial borders. This simile can represent Darío's Pan-American commitment. It is noteworthy how the poet personifies the hills attributing to them the power of sight. Darío's poetry contains many animistic notions.³⁵ This inspiration has its source in Pythagorean concepts. According to Jade, the belief that God is the one that is everything is the foundation of esoteric Pythagoreanism and the key to Darío's vision of unity (*Rubén Darío* 26). She holds that "Darío learned from esoteric Pythagoreanism that because the universe is the visible unfolding of God in space and time, there is life everywhere, even in what is generally regarded as dead and inert matter" (50). Darío's belief that God is in all things may also partly derive from the Amerindian worldview.

The eleventh stanza is a comparison and a contrast between aboriginal leaders and Spanish soldiers. The poet affirms that a rough and brave leader is better than an egotistic and covetous soldier. The word "rudo" (800: line 41) is used in the positive sense of "simple" and "tough." The word "bizarro" (800: line 41), on the other hand, has the sense of "brave" and "generous." Hence, the attributes of the Indian leader are positive while the attributes of the soldier are negative. The soldier exploits the poor natives --"ha hecho

gemir al Zipa bajo su carro" (800: line 43)-- and commits atrocities that even make the frozen mummies tremble (800: line 44).³⁶

In the twelfth stanza, Darío criticizes the lack of Christian values in Spanish America. He holds that the cross which Columbus brought to América "padece mengua" (800: line 45). This can be read as a lament for the decline of Christian ideals in post-colonial America. The poet does not attack religious values in and of themselves, but rather the lack of faith, of true spirituality among Spanish Americans. In fact, an authentic expression of love would extend itself to the indigenous inhabitants of the Americas and manifest itself in respect for their human rights.

The religious elements in the twelfth stanza continue on in the thirteenth stanza. "Cristo va por las calles flaco y enclenque" (801: line 49); weak, sickly and malnourished. Christ, in this line, is a metaphor for all the downtrodden and the wretched. He represents the nobility of the human spirit. Darío finds God among the poor, among the simple folk. It is in this sense that Darío can be considered a precursor of liberation theology. Barrabás, the thief who was freed in place of Jesus (Matthew 27: 15-26), has slaves and carriages.

The following line is an extended synecdoche with the lands of the Chibcha representing Colombia; the lands of Cuzco representing the Andes, and the lands of Palenque representing Mexico. These three regions represent the three most advanced civilizations of pre-Columbian America: the Chibcha civilization, the Quechua-Aymara civilization, and the Mesoamerican civilization. All of these lands have seen "engalonadas a las panteras" (801: line 52). "Engalonar" is a verb apparently created from the word "galón" which means "stripes" in the military sense. Hence, "engalonar" means to "give stripes to someone" as a reward for his actions. It seems to us that, at least in this

case, the word panther is used in a negative sense. If this view is correct, the line may be questioning the merit of some of the national heroes of those regions.

The final stanza of the poem sums up what Darío sees when he observes Spanish America: "[d]uelos, espantos, guerras, fiebre constante" (801: line 53), references to civil wars, dictatorships, imperialistic wars and disease of all kinds, psychological, physical and spiritual. Spanish America's destiny is "triste" (801: line 54). Darío does not deceive himself. He realizes that Spanish America's problems will not resolve themselves overnight. The poem ends with a plea directed to Columbus: "¡Cristóforo Colombo, pobre Almirante, / ruega a Dios por el mundo que descubriste!" (801: lines 55-56). The poet asks Columbus to pray for America since she finds herself in desperate straits.

The fine literary and ideological value of "A Colón" is evident. It is a powerful poem, rich in images and in rhetorical figures, and possessing an emotional rhythm and an analytical perspective in which Columbus, the conquest, the shortcomings of the Wars of Independence, and the state of post-colonial Spanish America are discussed. The poem exalts and idealizes the American, the indigenous, and the native, from a point of view that finds the problems of the present in the errors of the past.

Prosas profanas (1896)

"Palabras liminares"

The Amerindian element in *Prosas profanas* (Buenos Aires, 1896) manifests itself in the "Palabras liminares" as well as symbolically and stylistically in the poems themselves. The "Palabras liminares" are of particular interest because they appear to function as Darío's *arte poética*. The poet places a great deal of emphasis on originality in literary creation, rejecting consequently the imposition of a model or a code (*Poesías* 611-12). Quoting Richard Wagner (1813-83), he states that "[l]o primero, no imitar a nadie, y sobre todo, a mí" (612).

Darío's genetic and cultural mix manifests itself clearly in these "Palabras liminares," where he asks himself: "¿[h]ay en mi sangre alguna gota de sangre de África, o de indio chorotega o nagrandano? Pudiera ser, a despecho de mis manos de marqués" (612). One finds in this sentence the symbolic duality referred to previously. Darío recognizes the multiple cultural contributions: indigenous, African and European. Emphasis is often placed on the "manos de marqués" when interpreting this statement, as if Darío was merely contrasting the indigenous with the European. What the poet is actually doing is underlining the fact that the Amerindian element forms an integral part of the Spanish American reality. The poet may also be trying to justify his artistic "miscegenation" on the basis of his genetic miscegenation as has been claimed by Isaza Calderón (128).

The poet also states in this book of poems that the reader will find in his lines princesses, kings, imperial things, visions of faraway or impossible lands, because he hates the life and times in which he was born: "yo destesto la vida y el tiempo en que me tocó nacer" (*Poesías* 612). Despising the times in which he lived, Darío set his poems in other contexts, removed from the Spanish America of his times. Darío is thus presenting alternatives to the dominant values of the day, expressing his dissatisfaction with the *status quo*. The settings of his poems are selectively drawn from what he views as the cultural equivalents of the pre-Columbian state of splendour. Darío also criticizes the "absoluta falta de elevación mental de la mayoría pensante" of the Spanish-speaking continent (611). Faced with the lack of creativity and originality of the poets of his time, the poet looks towards the past and declares that if there is poetry in the Americas, it is to be found in pre-Columbian indigenous cultures (180). In *Historia de mis libros*, Darío further recognizes the poetic value of the Amerindian world: "[n]o negaba yo que hubiese

un gran tesoro de poesía en nuestra épica prehistórica, en la conquista y aun en la colonia" (*OC* 1: 206).

Another aspect that is worthy of remark is the duality that exists between the fourth and fifth paragraphs of "Palabras liminares." In the third paragraph, the poet praises the pre-Columbian past while in the fourth he exalts principally the greatness of the Spanish literary tradition, and thereafter the greatness of the English, Italian, and French traditions. While saying farewell to the white bearded Spanish grandfather Darío states that "[m]i esposa es de mi tierra; mi querida, de París" (180). Isaza Calderón has argued that these words are a "credo extranjerizante" (128). Although the poet was influenced by French poetry, he did not reject his American roots. The term "esposa" implies more permanence than the term "querida." It is also associated with traditional values of family and religion which were so important in Darío's days. Commenting on the quote in question, Darío explained in *Historia de mis libros* that

En el fondo de mi espíritu, a pesar de mis vistas cosmopolitas, *existe el inarrancable filón de la raza*; mi pensar en mi sentir continúan un proceso histórico y tradicional; mas de la capital del arte y de la gracia, de la elegancia, de la claridad y del buen gusto, habría de tomar lo que atribuyese a embellecer y decorar *mis eclosiones autóctonas*. Tal di a entender. Con el agregado de que no sólo de las rosas de París extraería esencias, sino de todos los jardines del mundo. (*OC* 1: 206-07) [emphasis ours]

The "raza" Darío refers to may be the Hispanic or Amerindian race or perhaps a fusion of the two. Although "mis eclosiones autóctonas" may signify "my personal blooming," the words can also be translated as my "indigenous blooming." What is clear, though, is that Darío draws poetic inspiration from all cultures: "de todos los jardines del mundo," which would evidently include the Amerindian world. When Darío states that his wife is from

his land and his lover is from Paris, he reaffirms the validity of inspiring himself in all possible sources, on the condition that they are appropriated. It is based on this understanding that one should interpret Darío's juvenile goal of imitating others in order to be original. Darío was not an imitator, as his denigrators accuse. Everything he took up he made his own. As the poet himself explains in "Los colores del estandarte," "[q]ui pourrais-je imiter pour être original? me decía yo. Pues a todos. A cada cual le aprendía lo que me agradaba, lo que cuadraba a mi sed de novedad y a mi delirio de arte; los elementos que constituirían después un medio de manifestación individual. Y el caso es que resulté original" (OC 4: 876). The originality Darío speaks of is the result of his renovation of the poetic language as well as his Indo-American influences.

In his "Prólogo" to *Azul...*, Juan Valera testifies to the poet's originality. Directing himself to Darío, he states: "[u]sted es usted: con gran fondo de originalidad, y de originalidad muy extraña ... no aparece sino que usted quiere ser o es de todos los países, castas y tribus" (40). Further ahead, Valera expresses that "usted no imita a ninguno: ni es usted romántico, ni naturalista, ni neurótico, ni decadente, ni simbólico, ni parnasiano. Usted lo ha resuelto todo; lo ha puesto a cocer en el alambique de su cerebro, y ha sacado de ello una rara quintaesencia" (44).

Cantos de vida y esperanza, Los cisnes and Otros poemas (1905)

Cantos de vida y esperanza (Madrid, 1905) contains various compositions in which references and allusions to the indigenous world can be found. In fact, while discussing the nature of the work in *Historia de mis libros*, Darío has mentioned the influence of "el poder dominante e invencible de los sentidos en una idiosincrasia calentada a sol de trópico en sangre mezclada de español y chorotega o nagrandano" (OC 1: 215). The poems that appear to manifest this indigenous influence include: "Salutación

del optimista" (1905), "Al rey Oscar" (1899), "A Roosevelt" (1904), "Canto de esperanza" (1904), "Helios," "Nocturno (I)," "Divina Psiquis" and "Madrigal exaltado."

"Salutación del optimista"

In "Salutación del optimista" Darío "se comprometió con la esperanza" (Baeza Flores 44). The title of the poem "es revelador en cuanto a la fe y a la aptitud que el poeta tiene depositadas en las fuertes virtudes de la raza" (Isaza Calderón 140). It is a work in which the poet "concretó su fe en la España perdurable, fecunda en el Viejo Mundo y en el Nuevo" (Ghiano 7). According to Martín Alberto Noel, "es el ayer de la España áurea lo que deslumbra al vate y lo induce a arengar líricamente a las incipientes repúblicas del nuevo Continente [sic]" (70). As "[e]spañol de América y americano de España" Darío expressed his faith in the rebirth of the old Hispania (*Historia, OC* 1: 216). The main theme in the poem is the greatness of Hispanic civilization: "[i]nclitas razas ubérrimas, sangre de Hispania fecunda" (709: lines 1, 59). The poet expresses his desire to see the resurrection of the past greatness of "dos continentes, abonados de huesos gloriosos" (709: line 15). He longs to see "[u]n continente y otro renovando las viejas prosapias, / en espíritu unidos, en espíritu y ansias y lengua" (711: lines 50-51). Darío praises the characteristics and positive qualities that manifested themselves in the past and wants to see them revitalized. He does not glorify the excesses of Spanish imperialism nor does he manifest sentiments of racial superiority. When Darío talks about the Hispanic *race*, he refers to the Hispanic *people*, Hispanic *culture*, to all that is positive. Being part European, part native, and part African, it would be problematic for him to associate himself with supremacist ideas. It is also important to elucidate exactly what Darío means by renewing ties between Spanish America and Spain. Such clarification can be accomplished by contextualizing the above-mentioned lines (711: 50-51).

Regarding the ties between Spain and Spanish America, Darío stated that: "[l]os glóbulos de sangre que llevamos, la lengua, los vínculos que nos unen a los españoles no pueden realizar la fusión. Somos otros. Aun en lo intelectual, aun en la especialidad de la literatura, el sablazo de San Martín desencuadernó un poco el diccionario, rompió un poco la gramática" ("La novela americana en España," *OC* 2: 1138). Although Spanish Americans and Spaniards do not form an entity, he adds that "[e]sto no quita que tendamos a la unidad en el espíritu de la raza" (1138). In other words, although Spain and the Spanish American nations have evolved linguistically, culturally and intellectually in different directions, there is still a bond that unites them. This bond with Spain is expressed in "Salutación del optimista" where the poet speaks of "espíritus fraternos" (709: line 2) and orders the Hispanic nations to unite "[ú]nanse ... / formen todos un solo haz de energía ecuménica" (710: lines 38-39). Not surprisingly, Darío's views coincide with those expressed by Bolívar. In his "Discurso ante el Congreso de Angostura, 15 de febrero, 1819" the liberator stated that "[n]osotros ni aún conservamos los vestigios de lo que fue en otro tiempo: no somos Europeos, no somos Indios, sino una especie media entre los Aborígenes y los Españoles [sic]" (676-77).³⁷

Faced with the menacing growth of the United States' power and influence, Darío reasonably advocated that Spanish-speaking nations put up a united front. When faced with the colonialism of the Spanish authorities in Cuba, Darío sided with the patriots who fought them. But when the North Americans crushed the Spaniards, his sympathy was with Spain. As a result of the United States' intervention in Panama and the appropriation of the Canal Zone, Darío expressed his concerns for the future of Spanish American culture in "Los cisnes," where he wonders whether millions of Spanish Americans will end up as anglophones: "¿[t]antos millones de hombres hablaremos inglés?" (732: line 31). The poet's concern for Spanish-speakers includes the indigenous peoples of Spanish

America. Although they are distinct, Amerindians form part of the Spanish American body. In "A Roosevelt," Darío suggested that the originality of Spanish America lay in its Spanish language, Catholic roots, and its indigenous ancestry. He describes Spanish America as "la América ingenua que tiene sangre indígena, / que aún reza a Jesucristo y aún habla en español" (720: lines 7-8).

Although the core of "Salutación del optimista" is the greatness of Hispanic civilization, the poem contains some significant references to the indigenous world as an intrinsic and inseparable part of the Spanish American reality. Particularly illuminating is the line that states: "abominad las manos que apedrean las ruinas ilustres" (710: line 21) in which the lack of interest, admiration, and inspiration in native America by the writers of his times is criticized.³⁸ Darío accentuates, once again, in a poem in which the Hispanic theme is stressed, the importance of looking toward the past, in general, and the Hispanic in particular, in search of the poetic. Further ahead, he describes Spanish America as a "nación generosa, coronada de orgullo inmarchito ... en que yace sepultada Atlántida" (710: lines 34-36). Far from being disparaging to a defunct Amerindian culture, the poem is a glorification of the past and an expression of a desire to see it resurrected.

"Al rey Oscar"

In the poem "Al rey Oscar" Darío exalts his Hispanic heritage. At first glance, the work seems devoid of any native themes. However, the conclusion indicates otherwise:

¡Mientras el mundo aliente, mientras la esfera gire,
 mientras la onda cordial alimente un ensueño,
 mientras haya una viva pasión, un noble empeño,
 un buscado imposible, una imposible hazaña,
 una América oculta que hallar, vivirá España! (713: lines 36-40)

The "América oculta" (713: line 40) which awaits discovery is indigenous America. Although the Spaniards physically discovered the Americas, it now rests on their descendants, the Spanish Americans, to discover the treasures of its indigenous cultures.

"A Roosevelt"

Darío's "A Roosevelt" is a powerful ode directed against United States imperialism. The poem was composed "en un momento de indignación por la violencia que los Estados Unidos ejercieron cuando se produjo la separación de Panamá de Columbia en 1903" (Isaza Calderón 151). It was in 1903, as well, that the United States took possession of Guantánamo, in Cuba, affirming thus its imperialistic character.

Darío's method in "A Roosevelt" is to set American and Spanish American attributes against each other with the purpose of demonstrating the legitimacy of the latter's existence with the hope of receiving well-deserved respect. Darío invokes his Christian faith, his Amerindian ancestry and the courage and pride of the lion, symbol of peninsular bravery on different historical occasions. He compares Hispanic attributes to North American violence, intent on extermination, and not to noble expansions which dignify life (151-52). After presenting a balanced picture of the United States, Darío points out Spanish America's distinctive traits. The first attribute he presents is that our America "tenía poetas / desde los viejos tiempos de Netzahualcoyotl" (721: lines 31- 32). For Darío, the history of Spanish America commences with the pre-Columbian civilizations directly opposing the Eurocentric vision that continues to dominate, in some circles, even in the twentieth century.

According to Ellis, the reference to the Chichimecan poet-king illustrates Darío's interest in social idealism that is maintained in his allusion to Atlantis (721: line 34), that is, Plato's supreme commonwealth ("Un análisis" 525). It is possible that Darío saw the poet-king as a native counterpart of the philosopher-king that one finds in Plato's

Republic. Instead of being mere Spanish American attributes, the references to Nezahualcōyotl, Moctezuma, and the Inca (721: line 38) form part of a political proclamation. San Martín, the liberator, wanted to implement the Inca system of government in the free continent. Darío looked towards the past for political as well as poetic inspiration, seeking out socio-political models which could be beneficial if applied in modern times. Buitrago is correct when he states that Darío: "[n]o vuelve sus ojos hacia atrás para llorar ruinas ni para lamentar tiempos que ya no volverán. Todo lo contrario. Rubén mira al pasado con la más absoluta seguridad de encontrar en él una fuerza capaz de producir un futuro de gloria para nuestros pueblos" (40). For Darío, the past is not something dead. It is something living which forms part of the present and which can enrich our lives. The poet's view of history would thus resemble the mission of Mexico's *Museo Nacional de Antropología* which holds that the past is part of the present.

Another explanation that has been given for the presence of the indigenous aspect in this poem is Darío's desire to elevate poetic expression. According to Ellis, "consecuente con su estrategia de elevar la expresión" Darío "recurre a la nobleza pre-Colombina--al Inca, a Moctezuma y a Guatemoc--y acertadamente emplea la dualidad simbólica clave al referirse al rey-poeta Netzahualcoyotl" ("Martí, Darío" 199).

The poet also refers to the famous martyr of indigenous America, the noble and heroic Cuauhtémoc who died tortured at the hands of the conquistadors (721: lines 40-41). According to Ellis, the assertion of the last Aztec Emperor should be interpreted in accordance with the idealist Spanish American spirit:

Moctezuma, el Inca, los elementos español y católico de América, Cristóbal Colón y Guatemoc representan aquí la búsqueda de un ideal heroico; y las palabras "Yo no estoy en un lecho de rosas" no aluden a la identidad de los

torturadores, sino más bien y únicamente al heroísmo de Guatemoc. Por tanto, a pesar de que los versos carecen de fuerza lógica al considerar la relación política entre los invasores españoles y Guatemoc, sirven de forma efectiva para dar un significado consistente con el resto de la tercera parte del poema. ("Un análisis" 525-26)

Although references to both Cuauhtémoc and the Spanish Lion may appear illogical or paradoxical, they are not necessarily contradictory. They can be explained by way of the concept of symbolic duality. According to Ellis, the idealistic procedure of symbolic duality enables the poet to

aislar ciertos aspectos de sus temas y por consiguiente explica la ausencia de cualquier contradicción en su haber escrito tanto "A Roosevelt" como "Salutación al águila." El mismo proceso selectivo funciona en su uso de imágenes aristocráticas sean éstas pre-Colombinas, europeas, u orientales. Se usan de manera que no sean incompatibles con los deseados mejoramientos en las condiciones sociales de Hispanoamérica. ("Martí, Darío" 199-200)

The apparent "contradictions" in this and other poems of Darío can be explained by way of the concept of "contradictory unity," a kind of literary yin and yang in which two united oppositions co-exist. This "contradictory unity" mirrors the history and the problems of Spanish America: the indigenous and the Hispanic, the Christian and the pagan, diametrically opposed yet united as the result of a historical disaster. These opposites form a union, a union within tensions, but a union that must be maintained when facing the power of the common enemy: the Nemrod (720: line 4), the Alexander-Nabucodonosor (720: line 12), the "Riflero terrible y el fuerte Cazador" (721: line 49), the United States--"el futuro invasor / de la América ingenua" (720: lines 6-7).

The assessment of the indigenous aspect in Darío's poetry and its repercussions done by Ellis is of value. According to this scholar,

No nos debe sorprender, pues, que cuando Darío inició la caracterización de Hispanoamérica como un ideal, las imágenes del mundo indígena predominasen. Es tal vez por estilizar de esta manera a Hispanoamérica, que con toda seguridad se le puede llamar "el poeta de América." Desde los tiempos de Darío, los poetas hispanoamericanos han prestado más atención a los temas indígenas y están demostrando de forma distinta a la de Darío y a veces tan convincente que en ellos "hay poesía." (527)

Martín also recognizes the significance of Darío's literary production and its widespread influence in the realm of socially conscious poetry. Regarding the composition he states that:

Este poema es antecedente directo e iniciador de una corriente de preocupación social, unificadora, por los destinos de los pueblos hispanoamericanos. Típica culminación americana de la expresión poemática de identificación con el fenómeno político, trascendental, del continente, a que llegó Darío y que, a la vez, abre la ancha ruta por donde habrían de transitar luego las voces propias de nuestro continente y nuestro tiempo, como las de César Vallejo, Pablo Neruda o Nicolás Guillén. Voces universalmente solidarias y humanamente justicieras y combatientes. (165)

"Canto de esperanza"

"Canto de esperanza" is an apocalyptic composition in which the poet urges God to hasten the return of Jesus-Christ to rid the world of oppression and tyranny. Although the poem is Christian in scope,³⁹ Martín has pointed out some interesting similarities between the dark prophecies found in it and some segments taken from the Mayan books

of *Chilam Balam* (126-27).⁴⁰ The following lines of Darío are reminiscent of the sombre prophecies of the Mayas:

Un gran vuelo de cuervos mancha el azul celeste.

Un soplo milenario trae amagos de peste.

Se asesinan los hombres en el extremo Este. (722: lines 1-3)

Note the sinister birds mentioned in the book of Chilam Balam:

Se regocijará Ah Ektnel, El-de-la-flauta-negra, frente a los grandes montones de calaveras, y vendrá el zopilote ávido y voraz a sacar los ojos de sus Señores en medio de violentas muertes. (155-158)

Martín also notes the presence of magical formulas in Darío's poetry, giving six excellent examples. He explains that the abundance of such elements is derived from the convergence of three different magical traditions: pre-Hispanic indigenous witchcraft; Spanish superstitions and sorcery with its amalgam of Arabic, Jewish, and Gypsy elements; and voodooism, which originates in Africa (128-29). Although many of the elements presented by Martín are formulaic in nature and are often similar from culture to culture and from language to language, they are nonetheless suggestive. Darío may have been influenced by his readings of apocalyptic writings of the Mayan oracles.

"Helios" and "Nocturno (I)"

"Helios" and "Nocturno (I)" are particularly significant poems in which Darío enumerates and superimposes images demonstrating possible Amerindian stylistic influences. The following lines from "Helios" are worthy of notice:

Gloria hacia ti del corazón de las manzanas,

de los cálices blancos de los lirios,

y del amor que manas

hecho de dulces fuegos y divinos martirios,

y del volcán inmenso,
 y del hueso minúsculo,
 y del ritmo que pienso,
 y del ritmo que vibra en el corpúsculo,
 y del Oriente intenso
 y de la melodía del crepúsculo. (725-26: lines 58-67)

The technique of accumulation is also manifest in the following lines from "Nocturno (I)":

Y el viaje a un vago Oriente por entrevistados barcos,
 y el grano de oraciones que floreció en blasfemias,
 y los azoramientos del cisne entre los charcos,
 y el falso azul nocturno de inquerida bohemia. (742: lines 4-8)

According to Cuadra, Darío's "técnica de acumulación es la misma que nos señala Garibay como característica de la lengua nahuatl" (*Aventura* 92). Although accumulation and anaphora are rhetorical features common in European languages, it is nonetheless possible, as difficult as it is to prove, that Darío was somehow inspired by the style of the Aztec poems he read. Cuadra also claims that the new atmosphere that Valverde observes in this "Nocturno (I)" "es el nahuatl oculto en la lengua de Rubén, que le permite producir una fecunda innovación en la poesía en lengua castellana" (92). As far-fetched as Valverde's view may seem to some, it is supported by Carl Jung's concept of "racial memories," a theory which, philosophically-speaking, is plausible.⁴¹ Although the influence of primordial racial memories is presently impossible to prove, the argument that Darío made at least a conscious effort to imitate the style of the Aztec poems he most likely read in Spanish and English translations is feasible, though at odds, in the lines printed, with the content: an allusion to Baudelaire's "Le cygne," among others.

"Divina Psiquis"

The poem "Divina Psiquis" deals with the struggles between the spirit and the flesh. The poet explains how his soul flies between the cathedral and the pagan ruins: "[e]ntre la catedral y las ruinas paganas / vuelas, ¡oh Psiquis, oh alma mía!" (753: lines 21-22). And further along, "entre la catedral / y las paganas ruinas / repartes tus dos alas de cristal, / tus dos alas divinas" (753: lines 27-30). The pagan ruins represent carnal desires while the cathedral represent mystical matters.⁴² The theme of lust is extensively developed in the poem. The poet confesses that his "sentidos en guerra" enslave his soul (line 7). He explains in erotically-charged language that his salacious soul is "[s]abia de la Lujuria que sabe antiguas ciencias, / te sacudes a veces entre imposibles muros, / y más allá de todas las vulgares conciencias / exploras los recodos más terribles y oscuros" (752: lines 9-12). In Ancient Greece, the rose and the nightingale are symbolically associated with sexual awakening and sexual union. The preponderance of sexual images in the poem indicates the poet's inclination towards the pleasures of the flesh. The "antiguas ciencias" allude to the oldest profession on Earth: prostitution. The poet may therefore be confessing that his human weaknesses lead him to frequent houses of ill-repute. From an Aztec perspective, Darío's struggles with his sexuality can be traced to the influence that Tlazolteotl, the Aztec god of lust, has on the writer.⁴³ The poet may fear that he is heading towards the *mictlan* of the Aztecs or the *mitnal* of the Mayas, that is, the tortures of hell. The pagan-Christian dichotomy in many of Darío's works may represent a conscious or subconscious manifestation of Ometecuhtli, the Aztec god of duality.

The poem can also be interpreted as a manifestation of Darío's conflicting identities: attracted at the same time to the pagan and the Christian. In *Historia de mis libros*, the poet mentions his "tempestuoso instinto pagano" (OC 1: 215). Although Darío

refers to the nightingale who sings in Greek (743: line 32-33) we should not limit ourselves to believing that his interest in paganism limits itself to the European pagan tradition. On the contrary, Darío's fascination with the heathen world extends to all mythologies, among which the indigenous ones seem to play a considerable role.

Darío describes his soul as a "dulce mariposa invisible" (752: line 1) who wants to perch itself on one of the nails of the Cross (753: lines 34-35). The butterfly is a symbol of metamorphosis and hope in many cultures. It is a symbol of rebirth and resurrection, a symbol of the triumph of the spirit over the physical prison of the material world. As Skyrme has explained, "the image of the chrysalis and butterfly occurs repeatedly in Darío as expressions of his cyclic view of life, and to describe the soul in its attempt to escape from the prison of the flesh" (*Rubén Darío* 19). According to Acereda "[e]l último vuelo de la mariposa hacia un clavo de Jesucristo puede indicar ese deseo del poeta a ser inmortal" (93). In *Historia de mis libros*, Darío holds that "en 'Divina Psiquis' se tiende, en el torbellino lírico, al último consuelo, al consuelo cristiano" (*OC* 1: 221).

The butterfly is also a universal Native American symbol. In the Apache Bear Dance, the butterflies induce the girls of the underworld to evil. They are sources of temptation. The Zuni Paiyatemu create butterflies when they play flutes. Butterflies are equally associated with many Thunder Bird narratives. The American Eagle, known as the Thunder Bird among Native Americans, "is considered the greatest of birds, and, in various guises, represents the Thunder Bird, the Great Spirit. Its feathers carry the prayers of the people to the Father Sun. The shaman believes it embodies the power of the Great Spirit" (*Book of Gods*, "Animal Symbolism:" "Eagle").

Traditionally viewed as a poem dealing with the struggles between the spirit and the flesh, "Divina Psiquis" can also be interpreted as a work expressing Darío's fascination for both Christian and pagan mythology. Considering the poet's eclectic

nature, the pagan mythology in question would logically be an all-inclusive one, in which the Amerindian world's contributions are taken into consideration. As we have seen, the poem can also be interpreted on the basis of indigenous mythology. One notices that, when applied to the poem, native symbolism does not detract from the traditional exegeses of the poem, but rather enriches and re-enforces them.

"Madrigal exaltado"

The poem "Madrigal exaltado" was written in Paris for Adela Villagrán, a woman Darío was quite attracted to. The first five stanzas of the erotically charged and rhythmic composition exalt the sexual appeal of the young lady, focusing on her eyes, her mouth, her hands, her chest, and her feet. Darío concludes the poem stating that:

y el Sol, sultán de orgullosas
rosas, dice a sus hermosas
cuando en primavera están:
¡Rosas, rosas, dadme rosas
para Adela Villagrán! (758: lines 16-20)

By capitalizing the word "Sol" Darío converts it from a noun to a proper name. Since the sun is one of the main deities of indigenous America, the poet's tendency to capitalize the word reflects his Amerindian consciousness and sensibility.⁴⁴ The "Sol" in question may be Manco Capac, the son of the Sun and the manifestation of the solar deity. He is described as the "sultán de orgullosas / rosas" (758: lines 16-17). The title "sultán" may be used in lieu of "Inca" or "Prince." The "orgullosas / rosas" may be a metaphor for "las hijas del Sol," the most gorgeous young girls gathered from throughout the Inca empire and placed in a royal harem for the sexual satisfaction of the Inca. For evident reasons, roses are often metaphors for vulvas. Darío may be affirming that Adela is so irresistible that even Manco Capac, surrounded by the most precious pearls of his empire, would

disdain all others and focus only on her, requesting his concubines to gather flowers in an attempt to win her heart, or rather, her flower. Although the poem may deal with Manco Capac, it is more in praise of Adela Villagrán than the Inca himself.

El canto errante (1907)

Following in the footsteps of *Cantos de vida y esperanza* (1905), *El canto errante* (Madrid, 1907) contains many compositions inspired by and dealing with the Amerindian world. Among those, we find "A Colón," which we have already studied, as well as "Momotombo," "Salutación al águila" (1906), "Tutecotzimi" (1890-91), "Oda" (1906), and "La canción de los pinos" (1907).

"Momotombo"

"Momotombo" is a beautiful ode dedicated to the majestic Nicaraguan volcano which bears the same name. Darío's vision of the volcano and the role that the native elements play within the composition are of central interest. The poet mentions that when he first saw the volcano at the age of fifteen (802: line 17) he was "nutrido de Oviedo y de Gomara" and his flowering soul

... soñaba historia rara,
 fábula, cuento, romance, amor
 de conquistas, victorias de caballeros bravos,
 incas y sacerdotes, prisioneros y esclavos,
 plumas y oro, audacia, esplendor. (802: lines 20-24)

The Romantic tone of these lines may lead one to believe that Darío held a romanticized vision of the conquest, a view that must be weighed against the content of "A Colón." Placing the two poems next to each other in *El canto errante* is significant. What results is the establishment of an equilibrium between both perspectives regarding the conquest. A similar equilibrium is established when Darío juxtaposes poems of Greco-Roman

inspiration with poems of Amerindian inspiration, such as "Revelación" which is then followed by "Tutecotzimi." Even when a poem reflects traditional Western mythology, it is not unusual to find a following poem that deals specifically with the indigenous world.

One of the interesting aspects of the poem is how Darío directs himself personally to Mount Momotombo, addressing it as the "Señor de las alturas, emperador del agua" (802: line 28) and "Padre de fuego y piedra" (802: line 37). The poet also refers to the divinity of Lake Managua, just as an animist Indian would. In order to express the greatness of the volcano, Darío recurs primarily to European and Middle Eastern mythological allusions: "aurora" (803: line 47), "Osas y Peliones" (802: line 40), "babilonias" (803: line 51), "Pan" (803: line 58, 69), "Aquilón" (803: line 60, 62) with a notable exception, the reference to "Huracán" the Mayan wind-god:

¡Con un alma volcánica entre la dura vida,
Aquilón y Huracán sufrió mi corazón,
y de mi mente mueven la cimera encendida
Huracán y Aquilón! (803: lines 59-62)

Darío subtly juxtaposes the European with the indigenous and the indigenous with the European, by way of the allusions to the wind-gods of both cultural traditions and through the use of chiasmus. "Aquilón" literally means the cold and violent northern wind, whereas "Huracán" signifies a terrible tropical storm accompanied by extremely violent wind.

The allusion to Columbus in the thirteenth stanza and its association with Hugo may surprise us. But, as Janik affirms, one must take into consideration the fact that: "le poème qui précède 'Momotombo' dans de recueil *Canto Errante* [sic] est précisément adressé à Colon, et qu'il parle du succès équivoque de sa vaste entreprise" (134). Concerning Columbus and Hugo, Darío affirms that "[l]os dos / fueron, como tú,

enormes, Momotombo" (803: lines 64-65). In this context Columbus represents greatness.

The importance and significance of the poem goes far beyond the text itself and can be encountered in the psychological state in which Darío found himself when he wrote it. Janik explains the socio-political reasons and their implications, which motivated the poet to address the imposing Mount Momotombo:

Au moment d'écrire les poèmes de *Canto Errante* [sic], Darío était saisi d'un profond pessimisme quant à la direction de l'histoire des peuples américains. L'essor des Etats Unis l'éblouit par sa puissance, mais en même temps Darío était profondément affligé par la transformation des valeurs propres à l'Amérique Latine et par ses dissensions internes. Dans de tels moments, il dirige ses yeux vers le passé préhispanique où il cherche des signes durables de la force de l'Amérique. Le volcan Momotombo lui apparaît dans ces moments comme un être qui a appris le secret de rester au-dessus de l'histoire. (134)

Concerned with both the internal divisions afflicting Spanish-speaking Latin America and the growing power of the United States, Darío directed himself to the pre-Columbian past, to the symbol of greatness, the august Momotombo, in search of a sign that would reflect, eloquently and visually, the permanent values of the continent.

"Salutación al águila"

"Salutación al águila" is a polemical poem which upset many and was calumniated due to its panamericanist content. This poem, along with the prologue to *El canto errante*, "Dilucidaciones," "fueron considerados como una deserción o una traición a la causa continental o hispánica. Menudearon las críticas y los ultrajes" (Martín 165). Edenia Guillermo recalls that: "[e]l poema provocó un verdadero escándalo en los círculos intelectuales y diplomáticos" (171). In a letter dated August 3rd, 1907, Blanco-

Fombona went as far as to write the following to Darío: "[c]ómo no lo han lapidado a usted, querido Rubén! Juro que lo merece. ¿Cómo? ¿Usted, nuestra gloria, la más alta voz de la raza hispana de América, clamando por la conquista?" (Darío, *El archivo* 193).

As can be expected, "Salutación al águila" has been interpreted differently by many critics. According to Contreras, the poet contradicted his true convictions in the poem by giving in to suggestions that proved fatal (337). Martín, on the other hand, affirms that at that moment Darío distanced himself from the pressing problem of the Americas, "quizás estimulado por meditaciones surgidas de la Conferencia" (166). For Torre, it is merely a spur of the moment poem that "[v]iene a ser el contracanto de la salutación 'A Roosevelt' y traduce, antes que ningún punto de vista firme sobre la hermandad tanto como la desinteligencia de las Américas, una peculiar impresionabilidad del autor" (41-42). For Vilarriño, it is basically a mediocre poem (55), unworthy of comment. Among the least convincing exegeses rejected by Oliver Belmás were those that insinuated that "Salutación al águila" was in line with the Monroe doctrine (*Este otro* 83). This perspective demonstrates a lack of comprehension of the poem as well as the Monroe doctrine, "the Americas for the Americans," that is, for the citizens of the United States. As Oliver Belmás states, "[c]uando esa política asombra, el cóndor que Darío llevaba dentro de sí revolvía en el azul con garras y alas andinas en fiera protesta" (83). Lancha claims that "Darío se fait l'avocat de la politique extérieure des Etats-Unis et développe les idées-force de leur propagande" (263). He also contends that Darío's sentiments towards the United States were always contradictory (264).

The fundamental fact is that Darío was not one to promote American imperialism. Darío's attitude toward the United States--its expansionism and foreign policy--was quite consistent. In "El triunfo de Calibán" Darío affirms that: "[n]o, no puedo estar de parte de ellos, no puedo estar por el triunfo de Calibán" (*OC* 4: 570). In the same work, Darío

declared that: "[n]o, no puedo, no quiero estar de parte de esos búfalos de dientes de plata. Son enemigos míos, son los aborrecedores de la sangre latina, son los Bárbaros" (*OC* 4: 569). By calling the *yanquis* "los Bárbaros" Darío inverts the savage/civilized dichotomy. He also dismisses Domingo Faustino Sarmiento's (1811-1888) traditional classification of Caucasians and Amerindians in the dichotomy of *civilización y barbarie*. Much anti-imperialist rhetoric can be found in Darío's journalism, particularly in the articles "El fin de Nicaragua" and "La invasión anglosajona: Centro América yanqui," which are all found in the second volume of *Escritos dispersos*. In a letter directed to Julio Piquet, Rubén made a somewhat humorous allusion to the U.S. presence and actions in the region when he wrote: "Nicaragua (U.S.A.)" (qtd. in Oliver Belmás, *Este otro* 70).

Oliver Belmás can be credited with presenting the most moderate and temperate view of the poem. He holds that it is a diplomatic poem, written in Río de Janeiro, in an atmosphere of courtesy and panamericanism (77). The poem itself is explicit. Darío speaks of hope in the poem (line 5). He wants to see the eagle with "la oliva de una vasta y fecunda paz" (804: line 6) in his beak. The poet praises the United States of the poets. According to Oliver Belmás, Darío "siempre se entendió bien con los hombres de buena voluntad de Norteamérica, siempre admiró y cantó a Whitman, a Poe, a Emerson, a Longfellow, como José Martí, siempre amó al hombre sencillo y demócrata de Norteamérica, a sus ingenieros y a sus científicos" (83). Darío seeks the positive American values: a strong work ethic (806: line 30), constancy, vigour and character (806: line 33), and desires that Spanish Americans learn them for the betterment of their nations. He wants the Illustrious Eagle to teach his people the way of making "Romas y Grecias" (806: line 35). He desires to take the positive from the United States: science, progress, and development. Darío does not manifest an inferiority complex when it

comes to the northern superpower nor does he long for annexation. He considers the United States and Spanish America as two equal entities that should co-exist in peace:⁴⁵

Águila, existe el Cóndor. Es tu hermano en las grandes alturas.

Los Andes le conocen y saben que, cual tú, mira al Sol.

May this grand Union have no end!, dice el poeta.

Puedan ambos juntarse en plenitud, concordia y esfuerzo. (806: lines 39-42)

The word "Cóndor" signifies indigenous America, *par excellence*. In "Marcha triunfal" the writer asserts that "[l]os cóndores llegan. Llegó la victoria" (728: line 33). The word "cóndores" in this composition "es sinónimo de triunfo, simbolismo de victoria americana, de independencia, de heroicos combatientes" (Oliver Belmás, "Los americanismos" 193). In a letter to Blanco-Fombona, dated August 18th, 1907, Darío clarified his position regarding the United States by affirming that: "lo cortés no quita lo cóndor" (Darío, *El archivo* 195). Darío's phrase comes from the colloquial expression: "lo cortés no quita lo valiente." The poet therefore associates valor and bravery with the condor. As Martín states, "[e]l símbolo antagónico, propio, es el cóndor" (162). In "Canto trunco a Bolívar" from *Del chorro de la fuente*, Darío exalts Bolívar calling him "proto-cóndor" (line 3), that is, the first and greatest of the condors. The word "cóndor" comes from the Quechua word *cuntur*. In Darío, the condor represents a Spanish America that is also rooted in indigenous America. The poet's vision of the mighty northern neighbour deserves to be stressed. Darío saw possible inspiration for a Spanish American renaissance in the positive influence of the United States: "[q]ue la Latina América reciba tu mágica influencia / y que renazca un nuevo Olimpo, lleno de dioses y de héroes!" (807: lines 57-58). Note that Darío speaks of a new Olympus, not a Greek one but rather a Hispanic or Amerindian one. Although Darío was slandered for composing

"Salutación al águila," he was, in actual fact, a progressive patriot who never turned his back on his people, yearning to unite them under an indigenous symbol, the condor.

In the sixth stanza, the poet says that "Palenque y la Atlántida no son más que momentos soberbios / con que puntúa Dios los versos de su augusto Poema" (805: lines 24-25). The "Poem" in this context is the creation, God being the greatest artist and art being the reflection of His beauty. "Palenque" refers to the sophisticated Amerindian civilizations while "Atlántida" is used to link the pre-Columbian world to the Classical world. By placing Atlantis on the same level as the great pre-Columbian civilizations, Darío elevates the Indians so that they can receive the level of appreciation and recognition that they justly deserve. After all, they excelled in mathematics, astronomy, architecture, engineering, agriculture, botany, herbalism, medicine, art, literature, sculpture, and philosophy. They deserve respect and Darío felt bound to give it to them. As we have seen, Darío believed that one had to take the best from the past in order to create the future. But he also felt that one must take the best from the present. That is why he seeks progressive values from the United States, desiring to see them implemented in Spanish America. One must remember that Darío's indigenismo forms part of his *hispanismo*, *americanismo* and *panamericanismo*. The poet was proud of his Amerindian background. He did not deny his roots nor did he look down upon them as it is all too common in many Spanish Americans.

"Tutecotzimí"

A truly indigenous theme is developed in "Tutecotzimí" which was written in 1890. Notwithstanding the plethora of indigenous elements and the colourful content of this poem, some critics have found apparent defects in the work. According to Salinas, the poem contains: "vagas tradiciones, fantasías evocativas, con muy escasa concreción en el tiempo para nutrir en ella ese vasto deseo de hallar un pasado común con otros

hombres, de convivir con unos antepasados afines que hayan dejado en los siglos improntas claras y universalmente insignes. Eso lo halló Darío en España" (221). The argument that Darío could not identify himself with the pre-Columbian past due to its distance is feeble. As Isaza Calderón has said, the precious and picturesque "Tutecotzimí" "demuestra suficientemente que Rubén Darío sentía con profundidad el hechizo de su América aborigen" (150). It illustrates his admiration for the Amerindian past, a source of not only poetical but also political inspiration pregnant with lessons for the present time.

It has been argued by Iñigo Madrigal that when Darío "canta a esa América precolombina, cuando canta al gigantesco Momotombo, volcán de su propia tierra, lo hace, no bajo la advocación de su ancestro, sino de Víctor Hugo" (123). In the nineteenth century it was a common practice for many poets to "see" their landscapes through European "eyes." In her book *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, Mary Louise Pratt discusses the issue of "autoethnographic expression" which refers to instances in which colonized subjects undertake to represent themselves in ways that *engage with* the colonizer's own terms (7). Autoethnographic texts are those constructed in response to or in dialogue with those metropolitan representations (7). The critic explains that "autoethnographic texts are not ... what are usually thought of as 'authentic' or autochthonous forms of self-representation.... Rather autoethnography involves partial collaboration with and appropriation of the idioms of the conqueror" (7). Darío does not follow this tendency. He does not view the Americas through foreign eyes. He views the Americas through Spanish American eyes. It seems more plausible that he only invokes Hugo for poetic authority.

Although the French influence in Darío's writing is a given, one should not be blind to the abundance of indigenous elements in his works. Iñigo Madrigal's declaration concerning the lack of *americanismos* in Darío's works is evidently unjustified (123).

According to this critic, Darío "apenas da categoría literaria a algún americanismo. Cuando los usa, frecuentemente lo hace atraído por su exotismo" (123). Oliver Belmás' study convincingly demonstrates the opposite. He points out some two hundred and thirty words of purely American origin in his poetry ("Los americanismos" 192). Recognizing the multiple influences in Darío, the commentator asserts that "no obstante su 'galicismo mental,' no obstante su exotismo, a pesar de su hispanismo acendrado, el gran poeta nicaragüense no renunció a su ser *nativo americano*" [emphasis ours] (mcmxlvii 191). In *Cuadrivio*, Octavio Paz reminds us that "se olvida con frecuencia que en los poemas modernistas aparece un gran número de americanismos e indigenismos. Su cosmopolitismo no excluía ni las conquistas de la novela naturalista francesa ni las formas lingüísticas americanas" (25). Although words of native origin have contributed to the vocabulary of Spanish and other Western languages, Darío did not attempt to be a purist and shy away from their use. Rather, he consciously integrated *americanismos* and *indigenismos* into his work for the same reason he integrated words of French origin: renovation of the poetic vocabulary.

Before integrating "Tutecotzimí" into the book of poetry, the composition was published in two magazines in 1892 and 1896 with the subtitle de *El Libro de los Ídolos-- Los Caciques* (Greiff 13; Méndez Plancarte 1347 n. 10). According to Greiff, the poem was going to form a part of a book on pre-Columbian legends which Darío had planned to complete (131). Méndez Plancarte also mentions that the poet yearned to or was attempting to write a poem titled "Palenke" as well as "Al Chimborazo" (1374 n. 10). We also have word that the poet had conceived of a work tentatively titled *Palenke*, although "no sabemos si podrá haber sido una nueva variante del viejo proyecto de *El libro de los ídolos* o de *El libro del Trópico*" 1375 n. 16).

According to Greif, "Tutecotzimí:" "[e]s casi un poema didáctico, una narración, adobada con curiosos y efectivos detalles, más que un resonante canto épico" (131). As regards the metrical art, the poem "[e]s una epopeya de tono menor, casi epopeya lírica" with a "moderada variedad rítmica ... que da al poema un gusto de crónica lentamente saboreada" (131). According to Contreras, the poem is an archaeological evocation with a native theme, Aztec in this case, demonstrating that Darío did not avoid this motif (42). Salinas informs us that the poem relates the foundation of the Pipil kingdom and its agricultural and peaceful origin (220). For Oliver Belmás, the theme deals with the peaceful foundation of Guatemala by Ahuitzol, the eighth king of the Mexicans ("Los americanismos" 195).

In the exordium of the lengthy poem one notes that a language of enunciation is used, that is, the lyrical first person limits himself to relate to us an external reality, foreign to his interiority, an attitude similar to that of the epic poet (Rodríguez Fernández 96). The poet commences by comparing the labour of the poet with the work of the archaeologist (96). Darío states that "[m]i piqueta / trabaja en el terreno de la América ignota" (812: lines 5-6). That is, Darío makes an effort to retrieve the cultural riches from the past for the benefit of the present. In line seven, he hopes that his poetical pickaxe will make a harmonious sound, that is, be in harmony with the Indo-American past. During his inspirational excavation the poet wishes to discover abundant riches (812: lines 8-9) and hopes that the Muse can solve the mysteries of the hieroglyphics (812: lines 10-11). According to Skyrme, Darío "saw the whole universe as a vast riddle or labyrinth of hieroglyphs" (*Rubén Darío* 29). The clues provided from these signs, along with Darío's efforts to retrieve the past, help to elucidate the "leyenda confusa" (812: lines 12-13) as the mountain reveals its secrets (812: lines 14-15). Darío paints us a picture of the past, with references to Toltec women (812: line 20), Moctezuma, the

proud prince (812: line 21), the gods (812: line 24), and Netzahualcóyotl, the poet who sighs (812: line 28).

Instead of a primitive environment, Darío presents us a purely natural American scenery made dynamic by the spirit of pre-Columbian civilizations (Rodríguez Fernández 96-97). As such, "la *América ignota*, la fabulosa América precolombina, pervive, aunque encubierta, en la realidad coetánea" (97). The description of nature Darío paints for us is particularly appealing. According to Isaza Calderón,

el poema 'Tutecotzimi' le arranca acentos de honda sinceridad, en los que su paleta de pintor se recrea, ya para sorprender el hechizo de la naturaleza abrupta, ya para exaltar los restos de las culturas indígenas convertidos en ruinas; ya para contar las andanzas de los caciques que todavía reinan en la antigua floresta; ya para medir los pasos del reino que se mueve en la selva o hacer sentir la música y el color de las aves que pueblan el paraíso tropical. (148)

According to Torres-Río seco, Darío "nunca abandonó su culto a la naturaleza" (212). In "Dilucidaciones," the prologue to *El canto errante*, Darío confesses to his attempt to penetrate the mystery of the universe: "[h]e querido ... hundirme en la vasta alma universal.... He cantado ... el espectáculo multiforme de la Naturaleza y su inmenso misterio" (*Poesías* 792). Mother Nature, plays a central role in indigenous belief systems. She represents life, fertility, rebirth, protection, shelter, affection, and sustenance. As the *Online Symbolism Dictionary* states: "she is a figure perpetually embedded deep within the individual, collective, and universal psyches" ("Mother"). Although Darío's attachment to nature is influenced by esoteric Pythagoreanism, it also has many affinities with the Amerindian worldview.

According to Salinas' interpretation of the poem, "Darío tiene que ir más hacia atrás, en requerimiento del venero más viejo y más puro de lo americano, en busca de esa

distante y vasta patria común, anterior a Colón y a Pizarro" (220). The critic's view appears to be justified; however, it is Rodríguez Fernández who explains the reasons for this return to the past:

La América enterrada se muestra capaz de *decir algo* al poeta: mostrarle un modo de vida que, aunque en forma ilusoria, puede ser rescatado de la bruma del tiempo porque es bello, fuerte y puede aún iluminar el presente... Es de evidencia suma que Tutecotzimí es presentado como una figura del pasado capaz de venir a reafirmar los ideales del presente. Específicamente el anhelo de paz que siempre poseyó Darío. (97)

After the introduction, which lasts 28 lines, Darío reaches the purpose of the poem: to relate to us the story of the establishment of the Pipil kingdom. The story starts with Cuaucmichín, the noble and priestly chief (812: line 29) who returns from the hunt (812: line 30). The noble leader arrives at the royal palace (814: line 71) to discover that the Pipil people are in a state of insurrection (814: lines 74-76). The sons of Ahuitzol arrive at the palace like a human torrent that growls and overflows (814: lines 77-82). Among them are the high priests, the rich dignitaries, the warriors, the soldiers of Sakulen and Nebaj, as well as the Ixiles from the Sierra with bows and arrows (814: lines 80-88). At the head of the noble contingent walks the brave poet Tekij (814: lines 95-96). Around his neck hangs a golden quetzalcóatl (815: line 98), representing wisdom, and he holds his head up high like a young lion (815: line 100). The proud Cuaucmichín gives a look "como la curva del arco de Hurakán" (815: lines 107-09) to the thousands of people in the agitated crowd. This simile expresses the rage of the sovereign. Hurakán, as mentioned earlier, is the Mayan god of tropical storms. Tekij talks to the prince who listens to him expressionless (815: line 110), "y lleva el aire tórrido la palabra terrible, / como el divino trueno de la ira de un Titán" (815: lines 111-12). This is the second of

only two Western mythological allusions in a poem saturated with indigenous mythology and *americanismos*. Tekij condemns Cuaucmichín for having shed the blood of the Pipiles (815: lines 117-18), accusing him of being a cowardly beast who reins over helpless livestock (815: line 116).

Cuaucmichín, the eighth king of the Mexicans, was great (815: lines 119-20). He consulted with the aged Ahuitzol whom he held in high esteem (815: lines 123-24). The Quelenes, Zapotecas, Tendales, Katchikeles, Mames, and Kiches, all feared the sudden impetuous attacks of the Mexican strong man (815-16: lines 125-28). What follows is a flashback in which the author provides us with the necessary background information explaining how an Aztec came to be King of Mayan lands. Darío explains to us that Cuaucmichín

quiso ser pacífico y engrandecer un día
 su reino. Eso era justo. Y en Guatemala había
 tierra fecunda y virgen, montañas que poblar.
 Mandó Ahuitzol cinco hombres a conquistar la tierra
 sin lanzas, sin escudos y sin carcaj de guerra,
 sin fuerzas poderosas ni pompa militar. (816: lines 131-136)

Darío does not seem to defend imperialistic actions, he merely describes them, giving the reasoning of the colonizers.

Darío explains that these five "pioneers" were the fathers of the Pipiles, that they were peaceful farmers (816: lines 137-39). Tekij explains to the sovereign that the term *pipil* means "child" in Náhuatl (816: lines 143-48). He explains that when the King died (816: line 149) the first Pipiles formed their own laws (816: line 150), which included the prohibition of drinking the blood of human sacrifice (816: lines 152-55). This practice was started by Votán (816: line 152-57) and ever since the Pipiles have offered the

banana as an offering to their holy and faithful god (816-17: line 155-57). Then, Tekij criticizes the King for having shed the blood of Pipiles in a cruel holocaust (817: lines 158-60).

Offended by the audacity of Tekij, Cuaucmichín states that he is: "el sacerdote cacique y combatiente" (817: line 161), justifying his cruelty and brutality and issuing a threat to the Pipiles. Tekij shouts to his people that "[p]uesto que el tigre muestra las garras, sea, pues!" (817: line 163). Tekij opposes slaying the despot with arrows, directing the mob to stone the sovereign (817: lines 167-75). The poem ends with the death of the tyrant and the election of a leader for the Pipiles:

Cuando el grito feroz

de los castigadores calló y el jefe odiado

en sanguinoso fango quedó despedazado,

vióse pasar un hombre cantando en alta voz

un canto mexicano. Cantaba cielo y tierra,

alababa a los dioses, maldecía la guerra.

Llamáronle: --"¿Tú cantas paz y trabajo?"--"Sí."

--"Toma el palacio, el campo, carcajes y huepiles;

celebra a nuestros dioses, dirige a los pipiles."

Y así empezó el reinado de Tutecotzimí. (817: lines 176-185)

"Oda"

The poem "Oda" is an eulogy of Bartolomé Mitre (1821-1906). Although the poet refers to "la América nuestra de la sangre latina" (826: III: 14) and to the "alma latina" (830: IX: 2), Darío does not forget to include the Amerindian element in this composition. Directing himself to the Andean natives, he states:

¡Cóndor, tú reconoces esos sagrados restos!

¡Oh tempestad andina, tú sabes quién es él!

Doncellas de las pampas, rellena vuestros cestos

de las más frescas flores y de hojas de laurel. (827: V: 1-4)

He maintains that even the natives admit to Mitre's greatness and appreciate what he has done. What is noteworthy here is not the eulogy to Mitre, but rather the role given to the Indians, recognizing not only their existence, but also the validity of their voices. Further ahead one finds a reference to one of the great liberators of Spanish America, the Argentine San Martín (830: IX: 1) who salutes Mitre. Again, it is difficult to refer to San Martín without taking into consideration the appreciation, respect, and admiration he had for indigenous civilization in general and Inca civilization in particular.

"La canción de los pinos"

"La canción de los pinos" is a poem dedicated to the glories of the pine tree, in which one finds a few elements that allude to the Amerindian world. Let us take, for example, the perspective towards nature: "¡[o]h pinos, oh hermanos en tierra y ambiente / yo os amo!" (836: lines 1-2). The love for and the unity with the environment are distinctive Indian sentiments, although they are manifested universally in the beliefs of mystics of other traditions. The conclusion of the poem is particularly revealing. In the words of Darío:

... Pretéritas normas

confirman mi anhelo, mi ser, mi existir.

¡Yo soy el amante de ensueños y formas

que viene de lejos y va al porvenir!" (837: lines 41-44).

Darío confesses to the importance of the past, including the pre-Columbian, as a source of poetic inspiration. "¡Yo soy el amante de ensueños y formas / que viene de lejos y va

al porvenir!" (837: lines 43-44) appear to be Darío's key lines, serving, in essence, as the poet's auto-definition, perhaps as important as Vallejo's "indio después del hombre y antes de él" ("Telúrica y magnética," *Poemas humanos*, line 60). Darío acknowledges his love for the marvellous, the fantastic, the exotic and the mythological. The "ensueños y formas" are of multiple sources, Western, Eastern and, of course, indigenous. The poet "viene de lejos y va al porvenir" (837: line 44). He returns to the past in order to project himself towards the future, bringing with him the valuable native contributions for the enriching benefit of humanity.

Poema del otoño and Otros poemas (1910)

"Raza"

"Raza" (1907) from *Poema del otoño* is a poem of rich literary value, because of its historical, theoretical, and philosophical condensation. It can be viewed from a religious as well as social perspective. The poem commences:

Hisopos y espadas
han sido precisos,
unos regando el agua
y otras vertiendo el vino
de la sangre. Nutrieron
de tal modo a la raza los siglos. (884: lines 1-6)

"Hisopo" refers to the aspergillum used in religious contexts. One possible reading of the first line would be the "word" and the "sword," perhaps the joint forces of the red and the black, God and the Army. The "agua" refers to "agua bendita" and the "vino de la sangre" represents the blood of Christ, thus furthering the religious interpretation of the poem. In other words, the poet is stressing the role of Catholicism played in forming the Spanish American culture and identity over the centuries.

The poem, however, can also be seen as a history of Spanish American miscegenation. According to this particular perspective, the word "hisopo" would mean "sprinkler" and would refer graphically to the male sexual member in full ejaculatory action. "Agua" (884: line 3) would be a metaphor for sperm while the "vino de la sangre" would possibly refer to the sexual assaults that occurred as a consequence of the tragic sword, that is, the conquest. The word "preciso" in this context means "necessary." In other words, Spanish America would not exist today were it not for its painful beginnings-*-el doloroso encuentro*. The poem continues:

Juntos alientan vástagos
 de beatos e hijos
 de encomenderos con
 los que tienen el signo
 de descender de esclavos africanos,
 o de soberbios indios,
 como el gran Nicarao, que un puente de canoas
 brindó al cacique amigo
 para pasar el lago
 de Managua. Esto es épico y es lírico. (884: lines 8-17)

According to the religious interpretation, "[j]untos alientan vástagos" (884: line 8) refers to the proliferation of men of the cloth as well as military commanders, once again conveying the notion of the word and the sword. From the social perspective, "[j]untos alientan vástagos" (884: line 8) refers to the two realities of fornication and violation that produced descendants of clergymen (884: line 9) and military commanders (884: line 10). This critical perspective is reinforced by Darío's vision of the conquest. In *El viaje a Nicaragua*, Darío explained that "[n]o iban a América los conquistadores a civilizar, sino

a ganar tierras y oro; y a la América Central le tocó la peor parte, entre aventureros de espada y frailes terribles" (*OC* 3: 1047). Further ahead he states that "[l]os religiosos no se preocupaban gran cosa ni de enseñar lo fundamental que se encuentra en el catecismo. Gobernadores, encomenderos, capitanes, no tenían más objeto que su deseo de riqueza" (1047).

In his poem, Darío refers to the distinctive traits that still manifest themselves in many Spanish Americans demonstrating their African and indigenous ancestry. Darío's words noticeably resemble those found in *El viaje a Nicaragua* where he gives an ethnological breakdown of Nicaragua:

Entre los nacionales se encuentra una interesante variedad etnográfica. Existen los tipos completamente europeos, descendientes directos de españoles o de inmigrantes europeos, sin mezcla alguna; los que tienen algo de mezcla india, o ladinos; los que tienen algo de sangre negra, los que tienen de indio y de negro, los indios puros y los negros. De éstos hay muy pocos." (*OC* 3: 1040-41)

In both Darío's poetry and prose, the Amerindian and African heritage is presented as a positive fact without any indication of negativity, a view point that stands apart from the intolerance of Darío's time (and even of the present). The poet implies that the African and indigenous heritage is an important part of Spanish American identity and that it would be wise to follow in the footsteps of Nicarao, the wise Indian chief, and extend a bridge of peace to eliminate racial divisions. In *El viaje a Nicaragua*, Darío also praises the wise leader (*OC* 3: 1041-1043). Whether one views the poem from a religious or social perspective, the notable part of the poem is that Darío does not appear to present the Hispanic, the Indian, and the African on different planes. In fact, he considers them as equal participants in the epic of American miscegenation, something he is stressing

through the force of the words: "[e]sto es épico y es lírico" (884: line 17). Both the "épico" and the "lírico" represent a historical narrator with a "yo" that is deeply engaged.

"Retorno"

In "Retorno" (1907) from *Poema del otoño*, the pilgrim poet expresses "sus impresiones y asociaciones de sentimientos al volver a su tierra, con acento ya vacilante, poco idóneo, ya vigoroso, conducente" (Contreras 268). The pinnacle of Darío's thoughts regarding America's native heritage may be found in this composition. After exalting the sacred temples of Copán, and describing the cults that were celebrated, Darío affirms that "hay en nosotros mismos / de la magnificencia de nuestra Primavera" (888: lines 49-50). The "Primavera" refers to the pre-Columbian epoch, America's golden age. He declares that the "Atlántidas," that is the Amerindians, "fueron huéspedes nuestros" (888: line 51). It is true that, had it not been for the assistance of the aboriginal inhabitants of the Americas, few if any of the first settlers would have survived. Consequently, one should express gratitude to one's hosts. The poet also refers to the revelation that Moctezuma received, and to the inspiration that Hugo found in Mount Momotombo. Criticizing the excesses of the conquest, Darío stresses the necessity of abolishing racial divisions and uniting humanity:

A través de las páginas fatales de la Historia,
 nuestra tierra está hecha de vigor y de gloria,
 nuestra tierra está hecha para la Humanidad. (888: lines 54-56)

Although it can be read the opposite way, we believe that Darío criticizes the narrow-mindedness of nationalism when he states that:

Si pequeña es la Patria, uno grande la sueña.
 Mis ilusiones, y mis deseos, y mis
 esperanzas, me dicen que no hay patria pequeña. (888: 67-69)

This particular view point is in line with Darío's belief in unity and his overall humanism. According to Salinas, Darío considers the fatherland great, "nunca por el engrandecimiento conquistador, sino por el aumento imponderable que los sueños de sus hijos, y las obras que de ellos se alcen ... puedan traer, en riqueza espiritual, a su reducido espacio terreno" (226). The critic explains that Darío held a liberal, anti-materialistic conception of the fatherland that is exemplified by these lines (226). Darío was capable of seeing beyond nationalism, Central Americanism, Spanish Americanism and even Pan-Americanism. He longed for human unity. Although he was profoundly exhausted and approaching the end of his literary career Darío wanted to say "¡hasta luego!" (889: line 73) to his readers, not daring to say "¡adiós!" (889: line 74), recognizing the necessity of continuing to promote his works in their entirety, which of course include his visionary socially conscious and Amerindian influenced poetry.

"A Bolivia"

In the section "Entre el Río de la Plata y la Isla de Oro (1898-1907)" of *Del chorro de la fuente* (1886-1916) we find "A Bolivia," a significant allegorical sonnet dealing with the Amerindian world and expressive of Darío's poetic impulse and the duality of his inspiration:

En los días de azul de mi dorada infancia,
yo solía pensar en Grecia y en Bolivia:
en Grecia hallaba el néctar que la nostalgia alivia,
y en Bolivia encontraba una arcaica fragancia.

La fragancia sutil que da la coca rancia,
o el alma de la quena que solloza en la tibia;
la suave voz indígena que la fiereza entibia,
o el dios Manchaypüito, en su sombría estancia.

El tirso griego rige la primitiva danza,
 y sobre la sublime pradera de esperanza
 nuestro Pegaso joven, mordiendo el freno, brinca.

Y bajo de la timba del misterioso cielo,
 si Sol y Luna han sido los divos del abuelo,
 con Sol y Luna triunfan los vástagos del Inca. (1120)

The importance of the first quartet cannot be underestimated. The poet makes it explicitly clear that he has been inspired by both classical and Amerindian mythologies from the commencement of his literary career. The poem is even structured in a way to express these dual influences: the first quatrain deals with both Greece and Bolivia; the second quatrain deals with Bolivia; the first triplet deals with Greece, and the final triplet deals with Bolivia. The classical and Amerindian worlds are equally represented and both sources energize the poetic impulse.

In the second quatrain, the poet mentions some of the aspects of Bolivian life he used to ponder upon. He mentions the use of coca, the leaf of life of Andean natives. The leaves play an important role in religious rituals. They are also used to fight *soroche*, or altitude sickness. The poet has carefully selected the intransitive verb *sollozar*, to sob, to describe the sound of the quena which was traditionally fashioned out of human tibias. Perhaps this is the only verb that can come close to conveying the sounds of the quena, a pan flute so capable of expressing the anguish of the human soul. The poet also points out that the smoothness of the indigenous voice has a remarkable calming capacity. Darío alludes to Orpheus, the Thracian hero and musician who was able to charm trees and wild beasts with the music of his lyre. The quena, a pan flute, can also be linked to Pan. What we appear to have is a mixture of ancient Greek symbolism in a context of New World

themes. Besides coca and Andean music, the poet also expresses interest in Manchaypūito, the Inca god of the underworld.

In the first triplet, Darío mentions the primitive dance, and points to Pegasus in the meadow of hope, who holds back and jumps. Perhaps Pegasus, the winged horse, represents the long-awaited freedom of the Andean natives. This would prepare us for the final triplet in which Darío explains that the Sun and the Moon were the gods of the grandfather, and it is with them that the descendants of the Incas will triumph. Pegasus also represents the repressed poetic power of the Andean Indians.

In some ways, "A Bolivia" is the Andean equivalent of "Dafne" from *Prosas profanas*. In "Dafne," the poet yearns to make a flute out of a reed: "[b]uscar quiero la leve / caña que corresponda a tus labios esquivos; / haré de ella mi flauta e inventaré motivos / que extasiarán de amor a los cisnes de nieve (696: lines 1-4). He holds that "como Pan en el campo haré danzar los chivos; / como Orfeo tendré los leones cautivos" (696: lines. 6-7). In both "A Bolivia" and "Dafne," Orpheus is subdued through the music of the pan pipe. In both poems, the flute is associated with the poetic impulse. In "Dafne" we read: "por la virtud secreta / que en la fibra sutil de la caña coloca / con la pasión del dios el sueño del poeta; / porque si de la flauta, la boca mía toca, / el sonoro carrizo, su misterio interpreta, / y la armonía nace del beso de tu boca" (696-97: lines: 9-14).

As can be appreciated, "A Bolivia" is a remarkable sonnet in which the poet reaffirms the dual nature of his mythological inspiration, and sympathizes with the aspirations of the Andean natives. The poem deals with both ancient Greece and ancient Bolivia, expanding its scope from the paganism of the Old World to the paganism of the New World, a philosophical doubling expressing Darío's interest in cosmic correspondences and universal analogies. Although not as well-known as "Caupolicán,"

for example, "A Bolivia" is nonetheless an impressive artistic achievement worthy of greater scholarly attention.

"Apóstrofe a Méjico" (1910)

In 1910, Darío arrived in Mexico for the one hundredth anniversary of the country's independence from Spain. On arrival in Veracruz, the poet was informed that he could no longer proceed to the celebrations in the capital, where a ceremony in his honour was being prepared (Leal 118; Valle 31). Fearing that Darío's presence would trigger an uprising, the authorities requested him to delay his trip or to return to Cuba (*Autobiografía*, OC 1: 175). The poet chose to do the latter (175). After visiting the city of Xalapa, he embarked on the same ship he had arrived on (175). As a result of this event, he composed his "Apóstrofe a Méjico" (Valle 33). The poem was later included in *Del chorro de la fuente*, with its strong Amerindian, mythological, historical and revolutionary content, as a reminder of his thwarted visit.

In "Apóstrofe a Méjico" Darío writes about the glories of Mexico (1170: line 1) and its achievements (1170: line 2), alluding to the Aztec civilization and its architectonic marvels. He refers to the "suelo imperial, fecundado / por sangre de Moctezuma" (1170: lines 3-4) expressing his sympathy for the penultimate emperor of the Nahuas. He describes Mexico as the:

Patria de héroes y de vates,
 cenáculo de áureas liras;
 bravo y terrible en tus iras,
 victorioso en tus combates:
 si contraria frente abates,
 coronas gloriosa frente;
 y te levantas potente

y orlado, a la luz del día,

¡como tu Águila bravía

devorando a la Serpiente! (1170: lines 11-20).

These lines appear to allude to the brave combatants who fought against the conquistadors, as well as for independence. The lines may also allude to Benito Pablo Juárez's (1806-72) resistance to the imperialistic designs of Napoleon III (1808-73) and his puppet Maximilian (1832-67). Leander explains that in Aztec poetry "[c]uando se habla de 'águilas,' se suele referir a los guerreros o al Sol" (53). Among the Aztecs, the *cuauhtli* or eagle was one of the symbols of the sun-god. The image of the eagle and the snake derives directly from the Mexican flag and allude to the foundation of Tenochtitlán. The "Serpiente" may also be the incarnation of the United States that is criticized for annexing Texas in 1845, as well as California and New Mexico in 1848.⁴⁶ Written shortly before the Mexican Revolution, the poem may also be a harbinger of the events to come. Darío was conscious that the country was ripe for revolution. Darío explained that:

en la capital, al saber que no se me dejaba llegar a la gran ciudad, los estudiantes en masa, e hirviente suma de pueblo, recorrían las calles en manifestación imponente contra los Estados Unidos. Por la primera vez, después de treinta y tres años de dominio absoluto, se apedreó la casa del viejo Cesáreo que había imperado. Y allí se vio, se puede decir, el primer relámpago de la revolución que trajera el destronamiento." (*Autobiografía, OC* 1:175-76).

According to Alfonso Reyes, "[e]l poeta creyó ser causa de sucesos que venían germinando ya de tiempo atrás y que obedecieron a causas más complejas y más vitales" (15). Darío considered himself to be, in a sense, a symbolic catalyst that set off the Mexican revolution.

Canto a la Argentina y otros poemas (1914)

The interpretations of *Canto a la Argentina* (1914) have been, until now, rather limited. According to Torres-Ríoaseco, "*El Canto a la Argentina* [sic] es la verdadera epopeya de la tierra gauchesca" (194), a correct yet limited point of view. According to Zulema Jorge, Darío projects "la existencia de una Argentina como un vasto crisol donde se funden todas las razas, todos los credos, todos los destinos, suma de Latinidad, síntesis de América, unida bajo los colores argentinos: esperanza, promesa cierta, visión de porvenir" (297), a perspective that strays from the poet's goal. Salinas, in an effort to appropriate Darío for the Argentines, contends that: "[d]e toda América, la Argentina es lo más suyo" (35) contradicting himself immediately by quoting Darío who stated that Argentina was his "segunda patria de encanto" (35). Even these words should not be taken literally, for he said the same thing about Chile in the epigraph to *Canto épico a las glorias de Chile* (1887). Forcadas, on the other hand, has demonstrated that "*La Grandeza mexicana* [sic] de Balbuena juega un papel muy importante en la 'improba documentación' de Darío para su famoso *Canto a la Argentina*" (247).⁴⁷ The critic has made a valuable conclusion, since it establishes Darío as a master of the intertextuality, a tactic that would be used extensively and with skilful sophistication and success by another Nicaraguan poet, Ernesto Cardenal.

Darío's strategy in "Canto" is to take Argentina as a starting point to explore the theme of America in general. Darío seeks the positive traits of all peoples, be they Jewish (906-908: stanzas 5-8), Italians (908: stanza 9), Spaniards (909: stanza 10), Swiss (909-10: stanza 11), French (910: stanza 12), descendants of Huns and Goths (910-11: stanza 13), to form a synthesis united on the basis of indigenous and Hispanic roots. The poet refers to the "Atlántida resucitada" (907: line 59). As usual, Darío uses Atlantis as a metonymy for pre-Columbian America. In this line the writer yearns for the resurrection

of ancient glory. The "cóndor" (910: line 160), that is, Latin America, is pleased to receive the beneficial contributions of the Italians and the French. Darío does not seem to desire to destroy the native base, but rather to build upon it with the participation of the First Nations. He wants to create a continent where all are equal and work together. The author talks about the "fraternidad de los brazos" (916: line 361) and the "transmisión de los idiomas" (916: line 362). Darío does not desire to assimilate but rather to enrich. He wishes to see

... **construídos los**
muros de las iglesias todas,
todas igualmente benditas,
las sinagogas, las mezquitas,
las capillas y las pagodas. (916: lines 356-60)

According to Acereda, "[I]ate claro en estos versos la idea de que, en el fondo, todas las religiones son válidas y todas tienen una misma raíz, la de ese Dios desconocido e innominado" (86-87). Further ahead, Darío mentions "la confraternidad de los destinos, / la confraternidad de oraciones, / la confraternidad de canciones" (933: lines 915-17) and the "[c]oncentración ... / de vedas, biblias y coranes" (934: lines 958-59). It is a vision of unity and utopian harmony. Darío salutes the "sombras épicas / de los hispanos capitanes, / de los orgullosos virreyes" (918-19: lines 432-34). The poet, as usual, is talking about values, characteristics. As Darío stated: "la España que yo defiendo se llama Hidalguía, Ideal, Nobleza; se llama Cervantes, Quevedo, Góngora, Gracián, Velázquez; se llama el Cid, Loyola, Isabela; se llama la Hija de Roma, la Hermana de Francia, la Madre de América" ("El triunfo," *OC*: 4 575).

What is notable about this poem is the role of aboriginal peoples as a part of the whole. Darío takes the sun as a universal symbol to unite the distinct peoples:

¡Oh Sol! ¡Oh padre teogónico!

¡Sol simbólico que irradias
 en el pabellón! ¡Salomónico
 y helénico, lumbre de Arcadias,
 mítico, incásico, mágico! (920: lines 481-85)

As Skyrme has noted, "[i]t is consistent with Darío's religiosity that he should accept and invoke symbolically the deities of all religions" (*Rubén Darío* 38). He has also pointed out that "[t]he universality of the solar emblem, its transcendence of cult and culture (Ra, Helios, Inti, Rama) clearly appealed to Darío's syncretism" ("Darío's Alter Ego," 413, no. 19). Further ahead, the poet refers to the "lluvia sagrada" (920: line 494), possibly alluding to the tears of Viracocha, supreme deity of the Incas, a synthesis of the sun-god and the god of storms, who cries for the suffering of his children.

According to Darío, America is capable of transforming its customs and to develop new values, to evolve (928-29: stanza 39). The poet wishes to see a renaissance of native beliefs and cultures which he would associate with Greek and Roman cultures:

A las evocaciones clásicas

despiertan los dioses autóctonos,
 los de los altares pretéritos
 de Copán, Palenque, Tihuanaco,
 por donde quizá pasaran
 en lo lejano de tiempos
 y epopeyas Pan y Baco. (930: lines 801-807)

Once again, Darío links the Greek ("Pan") and the Roman ("Baco") civilizations with the pre-Columbian world. The use of *esdrújula* throughout the above segment is significant as it adds an archaic tone. In Spanish, the accent usually falls on the antepenult syllable.

Spanish words that have a dactylic stress are usually preserving the original Latin accentuation. In the above quote, both the sound and the sense of the words reinforce the image of ancient times. The greatness of the ancient Greco-Roman world was present, not only in Argentina, but in the Americas as a whole. Argentina is thus the starting point of the poem, not its final goal. He commences with Argentina and expands to the Americas. What he mentions about Argentina is often applicable, and can be extended to the Americas in its entirety. Thereafter, the poet explains that the retrieval and appropriation of the indigenous past is a poetic possibility:

Y en lo primordial poético
 todo lo posible épico,
 todo lo mítico posible
 de mahabaratás y génesis,
 lo fabuloso y lo terrible
 que está en lo ilimitado y quieto
 del impenetrable secreto. (930: lines 808-814)

Darío's mission, it would seem, is to retrieve, preserve, and propagate. The poet ends his epic shouting: "¡[L]ibertad! ¡Libertad! ¡Libertad!" (936: line 1001). Kelin is quite justified when he states that "[l]a poesía de Darío, en cualquier etapa de su vida, fue un ardiente y sincero canto a la libertad" (39). In any event, Darío desires emancipation for all, including the most dispossessed, the original inhabitants of our continent.

"La lora"⁴⁸

The poem "La lora" from the section "Las horas fugitivas" of *Del chorro de la fuente* is also particularly interesting for the sentiments of solidarity the poet expresses for Amerindians. The composition commences with "[u]n indio que pasaba, débil, triste y enclenque, / cerca de donde existen las ruinas de Palenque" (1240: lines 1-2). Darío thus

conveys the sentiments of sadness, despair, anguish, and nostalgia, which are characteristic of conquered Amerindians. We read that the Indian "se detuvo un instante a beber agua, cuando / apareció en un árbol una lora parlando" (1240: lines 3-4). It is significant that the revelation the Indian is about to receive takes place close to the ancient ruins and near a source of water, symbol of life. She identifies herself: "[i]ndio triste: soy el águila amable" (1241: line 6). The eagle, as is well known, is the messenger of the Great Spirit for North American Indians and the symbol of divine guidance for the Aztecs. Further ahead, the parrot describes herself as "mensajera sacra y ave providencial" (line 25). A manifestation of the divine force, the parrot is omnipresent and eternal: "[s]oy todo lo que canta, soy todo lo que gime; / como el quetzal, mi hermano, pájaro eterno soy: / soy el águila verde, pacífica y sublime, / que trae de lo antiguo las verdades de hoy" (1241: lines 14-17). Confessing that the truths of today are fruits of the past demonstrates an appreciation for past cultures. The parrot also refers to Demeter, the Greek goddess of grain and agriculture, as well as Pan, the Greek god of flocks and herds (1241: lines 19, 21). This, once again, demonstrates that, as far as Darío was concerned, all mythologies were one and all gods formed part of the same universal pantheon. The parrot, full of kind understanding, consoles the Indian: "[i]ndio triste: ... / yo sé cuál es tu condición de miserable" (1241: lines 6-7). Darío, via the voice of the parrot, recognizes the state of oppression in which Amerindians find themselves and expresses empathy for their plight. The parrot explains that, although she could be violent, produce bitterness, and act like a bird of prey, the onus of emancipation is on the Amerindians for the soul of Bolívar, the feat of Martín and the work of Mitre lies within them. In other words, indigenous peoples have the potential of greatness.

"Pax" (1914-15)

The poem "Pax" (1914-15) from *Del chorro de la fuente* is of interest because of its socially conscious content. Written as a response to the war raging in Europe, the poem was intended to be read during a U.S. peace tour that failed. Before reciting the poem for the Hispanic Society at Columbia University, Darío said in his introductory speech that he believed "en el dios que anima a las naciones trabajadoras, y no en el que invocan los conquistadores de pueblos y destructores de vidas, *Atila, Dios & Comp. Limited*" (*Poesía* 473). This view of God siding with the poor and oppressed is the basis of Christ's message. Ernesto Cardenal would take this belief to its logical consequence-- physical struggle against the oppressors. Quoting Poe, the writer states that: "Dios no es sino una gran Voluntad que penetra todas las cosas por la naturaleza de su intensidad. Yo creo en ese Dios" (473). This pantheistic vision coincides with Amerindian beliefs and is fundamental to Darío and many of the poets he admired.

The author yearns for unity, hope, progress, and peace: "¡[o]h pueblos nuestros! ¡Oh pueblos nuestros! ¡Juntaos / en la esperanza y en el trabajo y la paz" (1259: lines 181-82). He mentions the ancient grandfathers who fought for Motherland and Liberty: Washington and Bolívar, Hidalgo, and San Martín (1259: lines 185-88) and finishes the poem desiring peace for America (1259: line 194), the axis of a new libertarian culture (1269: line 195), based on the positive principles of the United States (1269: lines 197-98). Darío did not end his life as a *gringófilo*, although he did admire the American Revolution and the principles of the Founding Fathers. This admiration did not affect his view of U.S. foreign policy in the region. As John E. Englerkirk stated: "Darío was no compromiser with United States imperialism in Latin America" (426, n. 61). The peace that Darío lobbied for was based on respect, and respect for Spanish America includes

recognition of its distinct culture and character, part of which lies in its Amerindian heritage.

CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions can be drawn from this study of the indigenous elements in Darío's poetry:

1) Darío's poetry is a reflection of the many threads that make up the fabric of Spanish America and its people. Through his poetry one gains an understanding of the complexity of the continent and the main issues it continues to face. Darío has made notable contributions to the debates regarding race and identity, as well as the socio-political future of the Americas.

2) More than an exotic tendency, Darío's interest in the indigenous world is a manifestation of his humanitarian concerns, a result of his upbringing, and a reflection of Martí's influence on the poet, as well as a manifestation of the *modernista* movement's interest in the originality of America and the idea of progress. Darío's social concerns commenced with Nicaragua, extended to Central America, South America, and the world as a whole. His humanism is expressed in the works such as the stanza "Lamed" from "El salmo de la pluma," a poem found in *Del chorro de la fuente*; "¿Por qué?" from *Cuentos completos*; "El porvenir" from *Epístolas y poemas* (1885); "Sonatina" and "Canto a la sangre" from *Prosas profanas* (1901); "Salutación del optimista," "A Roosevelt," from *Cantos de vida y esperanza* (1905); "A Colón," "Salutación al Águila," "Tutecotzimí" from *El canto errante* (1907); "Canto de la Argentina" and "France-Amérique" from *Canto a la Argentina* (1914) as well as some of his journalism. Although it is only one aspect of his vast work, Darío's commitment to his native America is a manifestation of his universal humanism.

3) The contradictions in the works of the poet can be best described as a contradictory unity, a kind of poetic yin and yang, a manifestation of Ometecuhtli, the Aztec god of duality. Darío does not deny his Hispanic heritage, but neither does he deny his native heritage. They both co-exist side by side and complement each other, enriching the poet and his works.

4) Several of Darío's poems manifest indigenous thematic, symbolic, mythological, and, at times, stylistic influences. At times, the indigenous influence appears at the forefront of his poetry. This is the case with poems such as "Canción mosquita," "Chinampa," "El sueño del Inca," "A Bolivia," "Apóstrofe a Méjico" and "La lora" from *Del chorro de la fuente* (1886-1916); "Caupolicán" from *Azul...* (1888); "A Roosevelt" from *Cantos de vida y esperanza* (1905); "A Colón," "Momotombo," "Tutecotzimi" and "Oda" from *El canto errante* (1907); "Raza" from *Poema del otoño* (1910) and *Canto a la Argentina* (1914). At other times, the indigenous influence in Darío's poetry is subtly interwoven into its background, often coexisting, side by side, with influences from other cultures. The poet often interlaced Amerindian mythology with other world mythologies as he himself admitted: "[c]onfieso que confundo en mi espíritu todas las mitologías" (qtd. in Sux 312). These subtle manifestations of the indigenous influence appear in poems such as "Nicaragua" from *Selección de textos dispersos* (1899-1916); "Estival" from *Azul...* (1888); "Salutación del optimista," "Al rey Oscar," "Helios," "Canto de esperanza," "Nocturno (I)," "Divina Psiquis" and "Madrigal exaltado" from *Cantos de vida y esperanza* (1905); "Oda," and "La canción de los pinos" from *El canto errante* (1907); as well as the poem "Pax" (1914-15). A great assimilator and synthesizer of culture on a world scale, Darío integrated influences from various traditions into his poetry: Greco-Roman, as well as Amerindian, as he pointed out in "A Bolivia" from *Del chorro de la fuente*: "yo solía pensar en Grecia y en Bolivia: / en

Grecia hallaba el néctar que la nostalgia alivia, / y en Bolivia encontraba una arcaica fragancia" (1120: lines 2-4). Taking into consideration the limited indigenous literature available to the poet in his times, Darío made an admirable effort to search for and retrieve aspects of the Amerindian world (through his readings of the chronicles and the works of Brinton), inspire himself in them, and integrate them into his poetry. In the process, he helped legitimize both America and the Amerindian world as a source of poetic inspiration.

5) Based on all of the above, it can be concluded that although he was culturally Hispanic, Darío found inspiration in his pre-Columbian roots and this had an impact on his aesthetic and, to a certain degree, socio-political views. He returned to the past to project himself into the future: "[p]retéritas normas / confirman mi anhelo, mi ser, mi existir. / Yo soy el amante de ensueños y formas / que viene de lejos y va al porvenir" (837: lines 43-44).

THE INDIGENOUS PRESENCE IN CARDENAL

The indigenous presence in Ernesto Cardenal's poetry merits more scholarly attention than it has received to date. Until recently, critics have focused mainly on the religious and political aspects of his works, which are understandably important. As significant as these aspects may be, one cannot fully appreciate the scope of Cardenal's ideology without considering his interest in the Amerindian world, for the poet's nativism--his commitment to the Amerindian world--is linked to his socialism and his Catholicism. In the following pages we will examine the distinct thematic, symbolic, and mythological, manifestations of the indigenous influence in Cardenal's poetry; we will discuss its importance, significance and ideological implications. On the basis of an analysis of his literary production, we will see the extent to which Ernesto Cardenal is inspired religiously, socio-politically, and artistically in the indigenous cultures of the Americas. In order to commence our analysis of the indigenous presence in Cardenal's poetry, it is first necessary to critically contextualize both the poet and his poetic production.

CRITICAL CONTEXTUALIZATION

Rubén Darío ended the nineteenth century with a new poetry; the end of the twentieth century is being heralded by the resonant voice of Ernesto Cardenal. Darío's *modernismo* was a visionary attempt to create an authentic, original Spanish American literature; *exteriorismo*--concrete poetry--is one of its culminating points. Cardenal embraced Darío's indigenous inspiration and took *americanismo* to new heights.⁴⁹ While Darío synthesized European poetry, Cardenal synthesized the American voice and focused the eyes and ears of Western civilization on the small isthmian country of Nicaragua. The influences of Cardenal's poetry come not from Europe, but from the north

and south of the Western hemisphere. Cardenal is inspired thematically and stylistically in the Americas.

Keeping in mind that nativism, socialism, and Catholicism are the key figures in Cardenal's ideological trinity, we shall first examine the poet's socio-political commitment and establish its roots; next, his interest in the indigenous world; and, finally, the aesthetics and ideas that influenced his work.

Cardenal's Socio-Political Commitment

Given the revolutionary nature of Cardenal's life and works, the sincerity of his socio-political commitment and humanitarian solidarity with oppressed people is not surprising.⁵⁰ Many of Cardenal's commentators, some considering him the greatest Spanish American poet of the twentieth century, a source of inspiration to younger writers, and the most socially committed Latin American poet since Neruda, seem to sympathize with his revolutionary activities and the struggle of the Nicaraguan people.

The poet's socio-political concerns are expressed in much of his work.⁵¹ Indeed, apart from the Indian poems we will study, Cardenal's social consciousness has been a unifying current throughout his poetry. In 1952, the National Guard imprisoned him because of one of his epigrams, which were later compiled and published in 1961. In 1956 he published *Hora cero*, an extensive political poem. Even *Gethsemani, KY* (1960), a book of contemplative meditations, lends itself to classification as a work of social protest. With Ernesto Mejía Sánchez, Cardenal compiled an anthology of Nicaraguan political poetry that was anonymously published under the title *Poesía revolucionaria nicaragüense*. The social commitment of the writer is also manifest in his satire-ridden *Salmos* (1964), as well as *Oración para Marilyn Monroe* (1972), the theme of which is love as solidarity. Next Cardenal published *Canto nacional* (1973) and *Oráculo sobre Managua* (1973), both of which urge social change. One must include the revolutionary

commentary of the scriptures made by him and the peasants of Solentiname which are to be found in *El evangelio en Solentiname* (1975), as well as in *La santidad y la revolución* (1976). Nor can we forget the socially conscious sense of *En Cuba* (1972) and his edition of *Poesía cubana de la revolución* (1976).

Having established the poet's social commitment, we must now examine its causes. What are the social, religious, and political roots of his revolutionary activism, all of which are reflected in his poetry and seem to form the basis of his fascination for the indigenous world?

The Origins of Cardenal's Socio-Political Commitment

Cardenal's social commitment and revolutionary activism appear to be the result of the Nicaraguan socio-economic and political situation. The poet grew up in an underdeveloped and undereducated nation. Cardenal was politicized as a child: his parents stressed that the source of the people's suffering was the dictatorial rule of the Somoza family. Although he was from a wealthy upper-class family from the conservative city of Granada and apparently never felt the pangs of hunger, Cardenal refused to ignore the anguish of his people. God-fearing and spiritually sensitive, he sought a religious and political solution for their plight; and he seemed to sense that its essence would be love.⁵² The writer's vision expanded over time, from the national to the universal. Particularly influencing his growth in this direction was the work of Ezra Pound.

Pound's Political Influence on Cardenal

While studying American and British literature at Columbia University (1947-49), Cardenal discovered Ezra Pound's poetry. Pound's *Cantos* influenced Cardenal ideologically as well as stylistically. He was also fascinated by Pound's anti-capitalistic economic theory. Pound's economic influence on Cardenal was more profound than even

that of Marx. By following Pound's example, Cardenal was able to simplify complex economic ideas in a masterly, forceful way and convert them into poetry.

Cardenal's goal, however, was not to convert poetry into prose but rather to expand the boundaries of poetic content and language by reviving a purportedly exhausted genre, the epic. The young poet was particularly attracted to the flexibility, historical inclusiveness, juxtaposition of sources, and innovative rhyme patterns that this poetic form permitted.

An eclectic appropriator, Cardenal drew from other North American poets as well and integrated some of their ideas into his poems dealing with the indigenous world. For example, Walt Whitman's ideological vision of a universal republic founded on brotherhood was a view the Nicaraguan poet came to share; and he was soon to add to this vision the political activism advocated by Thomas Merton. Religion, contemplation, and revolution would comprise for Cardenal the linked concepts of what came to be known as "liberation theology."

Religion and Revolution: Liberation Theology

While Cardenal and Merton were both in the Trappist Monastery at Gethsemani, Kentucky (1957-59), Thomas Merton had expressed to Cardenal the need for those engaged in the contemplative life to take a political stance. At this time, Merton was also propounding his own blend of traditional Indian religion and Christianity. In fact, the major themes Cardenal would express in post-Trappist poetry, including history and prophecy, the ethics of Christian and indigenous traditions, and even liberation theology in its embryonic form can be traced to Merton's influence.⁵³ Merton's fascination with indigenous America was conspicuously contagious. A flame in the poet's fertile young brain seems to have been ignited, one of political activism and concern for indigenous

people, when Merton posted on the noviciate billboard an article on the Mayan ruins of Tikal.

However, Merton's idea of political activism coincided with Gandhi's concept of non-violence. Even though Cardenal had participated in the disastrous 1954 "April Conspiracy" in which Somoza García was attacked in the Presidential Palace, he now embraced Merton's Zen-like pacifism. On August 15th, 1965, Cardenal was ordained as a priest in Managua at the age of forty.

In 1966, the poet, along with William Agudelo and Carlos Alberto, established Our Lady of Solentiname, a contemplative Catholic community on the remote Mancarrón Island in the south-eastern extreme of Lake Nicaragua. There, inspired by the spirit of Thomas Merton, the poet surrounded himself with pictures of famous leaders. Cardenal also set about preaching "liberation theology," a socially conscious version of Catholicism. The authorities attempted to have the poet charged with subversion, and he had to testify before the courts. When Cardenal was asked whether he personally supported any subversive movement in Nicaragua he replied that he sympathized with movements that helped the impoverished. His sentiments logically extend to the struggles of the impoverished aboriginal inhabitants of the Americas.

During his years at Solentiname, the writer continued to preach Mertonian non-violence and published several books that expressed his commitment to the ideals of liberation theology. They include: *El estrecho dudoso* (1966), *Salmos* (1967), *Homenaje a los indios americanos* (1969), *En Cuba* and *Canto nacional* (1972), *Oráculo sobre Managua* (1973), *El evangelio en Solentiname* (1975), and *La santidad y la revolución* (1976).

The political and the religious in Cardenal's post-Gethsemani works increasingly converged, particularly in *Salmos* and *El evangelio en Solentiname*. Believing that

politics and revolution were indistinguishable from the kingdom of God, Cardenal thought of his poetry, didactic by nature, not only as prophetic guidance, but also as an effective and profound mass media tool.⁵⁴ Cardenal's dedication to poetry, then, is the result of moral, social, humanitarian, and religious motivation.

As for Solentiname, Cardenal's community, it was politicized from its inception. Involved with the Nicaraguan people (as a whole, including Indians and Blacks) and with their liberation, it seemed bound to come into contact with the Sandinista Front and eventually take up arms in the struggle for national liberation.⁵⁵ In this light, one can comprehend the poet's concern for indigenous America, which deepened after his visit to Cuba.

The Cuban Experience

In 1970 Cardenal was invited to Cuba to be a judge in the Casa de las Américas literary contest. He stayed for three months in Cuba, which resulted in his conversion to Marxism. Much inspired by the socialist state, Cardenal believed that the Vallejo era of America had commenced (Cohen, 1984: 15). Markedly influenced by indigenous culture, César Vallejo, the Peruvian poet, adhered to the Amerindian worldview. In Cardenal's view, the continent was finally coming to grips with its own identity, accepting the Amerindian and African contributions to Spanish American culture.

What especially captured his imagination was Cuba's moral and ethical New Society in which Che Guevara's concept of the New Man ("hombre nuevo") as the brother of man, was taking hold; and an egalitarian work ethic was replacing the capitalistic Western society Cardenal considered decadent. Cuba demonstrated to the poet that it was in fact possible to have a non-exploitative society in which everyone's basic needs were met (Valverde 11). He considered it to be a truly Christian society in spirit and action.

Cardenal came to believe that one did not have to flee the world in order to live as an observant Christian. It was in fact feasible to create a nation-wide commune similar to the one he had established in Solentiname. The poet's goal from now on was to export the socialist lifestyle of his commune to the rest of Nicaragua. His conception of Cuba found its way into his poetry. Cardenal's socialism would henceforth go hand in hand with his nativism. The poet would go to great lengths to emphasize the similarities between Marxism and aspects of the socio-economic systems of certain Amerindian peoples, like the Cunas and the Incas.

Cardenal's Humanitarian Socialism

It was only after his trip to Cuba that Cardenal started to study socialism seriously. For revolutionaries like Cardenal, there was no conflict between political activism and religious faith. As Cardenal himself has stated: "[y]o he llegado a la revolución por el Evangelio. No fue por la lectura de Marx, sino por Cristo. Se puede decir que el Evangelio me hizo marxista" (*El Evangelio* 20). While Cardenal's brand of socialism was humanitarian, however, it also assumed a radical nature.

Cardenal's Radicalization

In 1976, when the Russell Tribunal II was convened in Rome to consider violations of human rights in Latin America, Cardenal represented the F.S.L.N. (Salmon xx). It was during this period that he engaged himself in on-going discussions with Tomás Borge and Carlos Fonseca regarding the method of struggle that was called for in Nicaragua. Cardenal espoused non-violence and even lent a copy of the Louis Fischer biography on Gandhi to Fonseca in a vain attempt to convince him of the virtues of pacifism. Although Fonseca came to admire Gandhi, he became even more convinced that armed struggle was the only option for a country like Nicaragua. Disenchanted by

the continuing misery of people in India and inspired by the struggle for freedom in China, Cardenal gradually returned to his previous militancy.⁵⁶

Cardenal justified his solidarity with the armed insurrection in Nicaragua, not on the basis of Thomas Aquinas' just war doctrine (as did Nicaragua's Catholic bishops) but on certain biblical precedents such as David's slaying of Goliath, and Judith's decapitation of Holofernes. Although as late as 1978, the poet still preferred non-violence as a means of struggle whenever and wherever possible, by July of 1979, he began to advocate violence in terms of a Holy War (Walsh xiii). It was at this time that Cardenal had an audience in Tehran with the leader of the recently triumphant Islamic Revolution of Iran, Ayatollah Khomeini. After his interview, Cardenal expressed his support and admiration for the Imam and his concept of a Holy War against oppressors.⁵⁷ Although varying in its approach, Cardenal's social activism remained steady over the years, as has his difficult relationship with the Catholic Church.

Cardenal and the Catholic Church

Just as Cardenal's views on non-violence came full circle, so did his perception of the Roman Catholic Church. It would appear that Cardenal was initially an enthusiastic and relatively submissive priest. He was even willing to abandon his career as a writer to enter the monastery in Gethsemani (Salmon xix; González-Balado 95). One must wonder whether it was only for health reasons that Cardenal left the Trappist Order. Perhaps he also left because he found the environment stifling, both artistically and politically. In any case, the poet set off in a different direction when he founded his own community at Solentiname, where he wrote prolifically and engaged himself in revolutionary political activism. He became increasingly acrimonious and resentful towards the Catholic Church, describing the Vatican as having sold itself to the rich and powerful (González-Balado 22, 23).

Cardenal's alienation from the Church reached its pinnacle during the Pope's visit to Nicaragua in the 1983. In front of millions of spectators and viewers John Paul II angrily and publicly scolded Cardenal for his participation in the Sandinista revolution. Cardenal's openly expressed disenchantment with the Catholic Church's hierarchy and its official views finally resulted in his excommunication. Cardenal was thus obliged to abandon the office of priest. Since mid-1989, he has been the director of the House of the Three Worlds, a foundation, where he continues to work for the recognition and respect of the three cultures which have contributed to the formation of Spanish American culture: the European, the Amerindian and the African, all of which ideally should form a harmonious whole.

Those who consider Cardenal a "devil in priestly disguise" are probably content that he was excommunicated from the Catholic Church. Although neither saint nor prophet, the poet has been a staunch defender of moral values in Spanish America.⁵⁸ Cardenal's confrontations with Church leadership and dogmas do not diminish the sincerity of the poet's Christian commitment.⁵⁹

We have seen how, in Cardenal's mind, Christianity could be linked with Marxism as well as nativism. In order to better understand the development of Cardenal's poetry, let us then examine the roots of his interest in the native world, as well as the Christian element that he associates with it.

The Origins of Cardenal's Interest in the Indigenous World

Although Cardenal is not of indigenous ancestry, he deserves more than anyone of European descent the title of "Honorary Native American." The poet has demonstrated an interest in the indigenous world from the commencement of his literary career.⁶⁰

This interest in the pre-Columbian world, originally fostered at Gethsemani, has been the driving force of Cardenal's poetry and politics. After departing from Gethsemani

in 1959, Cardenal spent several years researching pre-Hispanic texts and the history of Indian tribes while at the Benedictine priory in Cuernavaca, Mexico.

In 1963, Cardenal and José Coronel Urtecho published their 400 page *Antología de la poesía norteamericana*, the fruit of 20 years of labour, which begins with the North American Indians and concludes with the Beat poets. Later, Cardenal expanded the native section to include more indigenous material from the American continent as well as "primitive" poems from around the world in a second anthology, *Antología de poesía primitiva* (1979).

After his ordination as a priest in 1965, Cardenal briefly went back to Gethsemani, and on his return journey he visited the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico, which was his first visit to any indigenous North American people. He also made two visits to the Cuna Indians from the Archipelago of Peace in Panama and traveled up the Upper Amazon basin. The poet also attempted to visit the mystical Koguis who inhabit Colombia's Sierra Nevada but never succeeded in reaching them. He did, though, engage in research in the anthropological collections of Medellín and Bogotá. The poet was also inspired by what he heard in person from Gerardo Reichel-Dolmatoff, an anthropologist who had lived among the Koguis, and whom Cardenal met in Bogotá.

As Minister of Culture in the Sandinista government (1979-1988), Cardenal initiated a series of poetry workshops and fairs (Schaefer-Rodríguez 9). He also proposed to establish an indigenous university for the Miskito Indians, which would reaffirm the cultural identity of the forgotten people in their music, arts, songs, dances, and language (9). In "Towards a New Democracy of Culture," a statement to UNESCO in Paris, April 23, 1982, Cardenal expressed his desire "to oppose cultural ethnocide" in Nicaragua (347). However, due to the severe economic impact of Contra terrorism and the North American embargo, the dream of establishing an indigenous university failed to

materialize. In 1988, the Sandinista government was even obliged to downgrade the Ministry of Culture to an institute as a cost-saving measure that resulted in Cardenal retiring from political office. For Cardenal, however, the indigenous world remains a source of cultural identity as well as a means of attaining social and moral redemption for the contemporary world.

Catholicism and Nativism

The association Cardenal makes between Christianity and nativism is an important part of his poetry and his worldview. His studies of pre-Columbian cultures reinforced his respect for peaceful, spiritual, and classless Amerindian values, which he found largely coincided with those of the early church, and he attempted to recreate them in his own commune.

Opposed to the materialism and spiritual emptiness of contemporary society, Cardenal presents the communitarian economics of past indigenous cultures as a viable alternative. He would later attempt to implement those pre-Hispanic values, mixed with Christianity and Marxism, on a national scale. Somoza's defeat and the establishment of the socialist Sandinista régime provided an opportunity to construct a new society, and consequently, the New Man of the Latin American revolutions. Cardenal's cultural contribution now found a receptive context.

The social order he proposed would consider the mystical, political and artistic needs of the human being. The new Nicaragua he advocated, rather than being only a Christian/Marxist community as Schaefer-Rodríguez describes it (9), could be defined more accurately as a Christian/indigenous/Marxist society.

These Christian, indigenous, and Marxist factors have played a decisive role in the formation of Cardenal's socio-political convictions, and his poetry should be understood in the light of the socio-political context in which they were conceived.

Cardenal intertwines aspects from Christianity, the indigenous way of life, and Marxism to create an ideology that is truly his. He is not purely Christian, native, or Marxist, he is Cardenal, an open-minded, eclectic, and progressive poet.

The "visions" of the Indian prophets presented by the poet as chronicler of history, soothsayer, and divine interpreter, constantly take the reader from the personal search for well being to the quest for peace and social order.

Cardenal's Aesthetic Influences and Ideas

Cardenal grew up listening to Rubén Darío's poetry that was read to him by his father, a businessman (Randall 92). The first poem Cardenal remembers writing is an ode to Darío when he was but seven years old (Cohen, 1984: 4). He simply states that he discovered in Darío the magic of words (Randall 93).

When he was 18, he received the beneficial influence of Pablo Neruda, but the influence of César Vallejo was much more profound, not so much in style as in spirit (González-Balado 52). The influence of Darío and Neruda is evident in the poems Cardenal wrote in high school and during his student years in Mexico (1943-47), poetry that he has since discarded (Pring-Mill, *Apocalypse* xi). Cardenal claims not to have had any further Spanish American influences (52).

Ideologically and poetically, he was in tune with formative influences originating from the United States. Among the many distinctive features which he borrowed from Pound's poetry, for example, are the use of satire, the highly selective utilization of documentary sources, collage, and an air of extreme (yet only apparent) objectivity, as well as the elimination of overtly subjective elements (Pring-Mill, "Cardenal's Treatment" 54).⁶¹ The poet also makes effective use of ideograms, which superimpose images, juxtapose past and present, and create a powerful third image.

Underlying the techniques he used was a deep concern that his poetry should reach the common people as well as the *literati*. In fact, Cardenal has explained that he is more concerned with communicating with the layperson than with the erudite (White, *Culture* 62-63). Perhaps this is the result of the high level of illiteracy in Nicaragua. His widespread appeal to a culturally and linguistically diverse readership partly owes itself to intertextuality, a process by which a particular text establishes its (co) existence as a rewritten version of other texts (158). This feature has been utilized by Cardenal with manifest mastery.

The poet has contested the disputable claim that his style is deliberately prosaic; rather, his *exteriorista* poetry is "'impure' poetry, poetry that is, for some, closer to prose than to poetry, and they have mistakenly called it 'prosaic,' due to the fact that its subject matter is as ample as that of prose (and due also to the fact that, because of the decadence of poetry in the last centuries, the epic has been written in prose and not in verse" (Williams:xv).

By proposing that *exteriorismo* is the poetry of primordial peoples, Cardenal links his literary theory to the poetry of indigenous peoples, which he describes as "primitive" but not in a negative sense. By "primitive" poetry the poet means "concrete" poetry. For Cardenal, "primitive" poetry has much in common with what he himself has attempted to define as *exteriorismo*:

La poesía primitiva, por lo general, no tiene rima consonante ni asonante.... Pero con mucha frecuencia hay una "rima" a base de paralelismo o repeticiones. En muchos casos el ritmo es muy acentuado, y entre los indios norteamericanos el ritmo del verso es el del tambor.... Y una característica de la poesía primitiva de todos los tiempos es que no está hecha con ideas abstractas sino con imágenes concretas (*Antología de poesía primitiva* 15)

Although Cardenal abandons the end rhyme in his poems, this does not affect their musicality which is maintained through the medium of frequent alliterations and occasional cases of internal rhyme. The musicality of his poetry is also enhanced by the use of highly effective onomatopoeia.

ii) Indigenous Stylistic and Aesthetic Influences in Cardenal's Poetry

Although an English-language source has been traditionally found for Cardenal's poetic techniques, his revolutionary approach also has an Amerindian origin. Some of his poetry remarkably resembles Aztec as well as Mayan literature, in its form as well as in its content: no rhyme schemes, free verse, clarity, use of first names, emphasis on sense perceptions, length, parallelism, manner of presentation, and theory of literary creation.

According to Cardenal's "Rules for Writing Poetry," "[l]os versos no deben ser rimados" ("Unas reglas" 121). This precept coincides with Aztec poetry which does not submit to fixed rhyme schemes. Giving preference to free verse with long and short lines of verse as the poet desires, Cardenal opposes a regular rhythm or metre (121). Aztec poetry tends to be written in free verse. He also gives preference to the concrete (121), although Aztec poetry does not necessarily do so. It is essentially a metaphorical language. *In xochitl in cuicatl*, "flower and song," was the expression utilized by the ancient Náhuatl-speaking Mexicans to designate poetry (Leander 3).⁶²

Although the language of Náhuatl poetry was not direct, the language utilized in Quechua poetry was. Among the Quechua-Aymara Indians, emphasis was placed on clarity of expression. There is a resemblance between the poetry of the Quechua-Aymara Indians and that written by Cardenal. The poet has stated that "[n]o me gusta la poesía del disparate ni los hermetismos, surrealismos y dadaísmos. Mi poesía es una poesía clara y que se entiende" (Borgeson, *Hacia* 91). At first glance, Cardenal's straightforward style may appear simplistic, which is far from the case. In fact, as Borgeson has noted, "[l]a

sencillez aparential del verso de Cardenal, comúnmente observada, se debe sobre todo a la elección que hace de sus palabras" (90). The critic stresses that

la sencillez, en el sentido de una insuficiencia técnica, no es característica del verso de Ernesto Cardenal. Más bien, el poeta busca hacer entrar en el poema la cantidad mínima de elementos, aprovechando ricamente cada uno, volviendo activas todas las partes del poema. Con todo, Cardenal ha hecho una contribución innegable a la poesía en lengua española--que ya ha empezado a crear escuela (101).

Cardenal also advocates the use of first names in poetry ("Unas reglas" 121). Likewise, one finds many first names in Aztec poetry. He believes that poetry should be based on sense perceptions (121-22). Similarly, images based on the five senses are quite often found in Náhuatl poetry. Cardenal also felt that one should write as one speaks and opposed using formal written language (122). To a certain extent, this was the case among the ancient Mexicans; however, with one major difference. The common language of the Aztecs was itself highly metaphorical and poetic.⁶³ Hence, there was no major difference between their spoken language and their poetry. Cardenal opposes the use of ordinary or hackneyed expressions and promoted conciseness of language ("Unas reglas" 122). To a certain degree, these last two principles are universally accepted; namely, to express the most, using least number of words.

Cardenal gives preference to long poems. The same can be said of Aztec poetry. He also includes dialogue within his poetry, a trait that can also be found in the poetry of the ancient Mexicans. Like Náhuatl poetry, Cardenal's compositions make extensive use of polysyndeton and anaphora, as can be seen in poems from *With Walker in Nicaragua* (1949-1954).

Among the main stylistic characteristics of Náhuatl poetry we find parallelism, the arrangement of two equally important ideas in similar grammatical constructions in order to stress, expand upon, or clarify an idea. In Náhuatl poetry, the most common form of parallelism is the synonymic sort, where the same idea is expressed with different words. We also find the use of *disfrasism*, the combination of two complementary concepts or metaphors to express the same idea; interjective particles, small unintelligible phonetic units intercalated into the text to produce a rhythm; the repeated use of refrain, and the emphasis on key words. All of these characteristics are found in Cardenal's compositions as will be noted in our literary analysis of his poetry.

Aztec poetry is also characterized by what are called units of expression, lines of verse that are not constructed on the basis of a linear structure that advances from verse to verse. Lines of verse are thus independent and can be interchanged and reorganized without disrupting the sense or style of the composition in question.

The manner in which Cardenal presents his arguments, therefore, appears to be native American in origin. Topics are introduced and discussed in part but are not fully developed. Instead of dealing with one theme, then moving on to another, Cardenal examines various issues at a time, cutting from one to another. This technique remarkably resembles oral poetry in general and native American poetry in particular. The Aztec poets would use convergent rather than linear methods in order to present the central theme of the composition, approaching it from different angles. This is precisely the process at work in Cardenal.

Cardenal also finds great appeal in the Aztec theory of literary creation. Among the Aztecs, artistic inspiration was believed to be of divine origin. As the poet explains in his article "In xóchitl in cuícatl" "[l]a poesía para los nahuas era divina, venía de arriba, de Dios, como ellos decían: 'del interior del cielo'" (667). Poems were actually believed

to be the flowers of the Giver of Life, the Supreme Deity. In the epithet of the poem "In xóchitl in cuícatl," Cardenal explains that for the Aztecs "la poesía era la manifestación de Dios en la tierra, y un medio para llegar a él, la Metáfora Suprema, la Suprema Poesía" (*Los ovnis* 254). This is further elaborated upon in his article of the same name in which he explains that "[l]a poesía para los nahuas era el medio para conocer a Dios" ("In xóchitl" 666). As John F. Garganino explains, "[m]ediante la poesía, los nahuas intentaban establecer una comunicación de orden divino" (4).

Aesthetic Amerindian influences, then, are significant contributors to an understanding of Cardenal's work. As can be seen, Cardenal's poetry resembles Aztec and Quechua-Aymara Indian poetry to a notable degree. Unlike other Spanish American writers who have traditionally focused on Europe, Cardenal's source of thematic inspiration lies in great part in the Americas. Stylistically, although the influence of Pound and other North Americans is unmistakable, he is also partially influenced by Amerindian modes of expression.

In this critical contextualization, we have pointed out the role that Ezra Pound played in forming Cardenal's political and economic philosophy, and the effect of the Cuban revolution on the poet, as well as his adherence to humanitarian socialism. We have also examined Cardenal's brand of revolutionary Catholicism, and the difficulties he faced within the constraints of the Catholic Church. In addition, we have identified the roots of his interest in the indigenous world, and the associations he makes between Catholicism and nativism. We have explored Cardenal's aesthetic influences and ideas, focusing especially on the indigenous stylistic influences in his poetry. Last but not least, we have discussed Cardenal's creative process. This contextualization provides us with the vital background information on the roots of Cardenal's interest in the Amerindian world essential for a fuller comprehension of his poetry. With this contextual background

in mind, we can now explore the particularly evident influence of indigenous poetry on Cardenal in the "Cantares mexicanos."

AN ANALYSIS OF CARDENAL'S LITERARY PRODUCTION

The following analysis of Cardenal's works focuses initially on the "Cantares mexicanos," which incorporate pre-Columbian poetry into his own masterful blend of past and present. Each of the "Cantares," however, has its particular subject matter and stands on its own. The main aim of this exploration is to demonstrate the Aztec aesthetic influence on the "Cantares." Next, this analysis delves into Cardenal's vision of the conquest of the Americas by considering the cantos of *El estrecho dudoso*, which predated some of the "Cantares." Finally, it examines both the socio-political and religious themes of his poetry.

The "Cantares mexicanos:" Indigenous and Modern

Although his "Cantares mexicanos" are based on Aztec poetry, they are revitalized and modernized, making them more appealing and accessible to readers. As Pring-Mill has pointed out, the poet is not just seeking out their "modern" relevance through the discovery of parallels, but he is also finding the originals themselves enriched because these parallels enabled him--and other modern readers--to empathize with their creators ("Cardenal's Treatment" 67). The writer consciously reproduces the style and the substance of the ancient Náhuatl songs but recreates them in Spanish so as to make them available to his audience.

"Cantares mexicanos II"

This essentially self-descriptive poem commences with Nezahualcóyotl expressing his love for peace: "[n]o he venido a hacer guerras en la tierra / sino a cortar flores / yo soy el rey cantor buscador de flores / yo, Nezahualcóyotl" (192). These lines are similar to those found in several indigenous poems. One possible source is

Nezahualcōyotl's poem "He llegado" in which he states that "[h]e llegado aquí, / soy Yoyontzin. / Sólo busco las flores, / sobre la tierra he venido a cortarlas. / Aquí corto ya las flores preciosas... / yo soy Nezahualcōyotl, el señor de Yoyontzin" (León-Portilla, ed., *Cantos*: 177). Also, in "Monólogo de Nezahualcōyotl" we find the line "[y]o soy cantor: flores para esparcir las," which is similar to the ones used by Cardenal (Martínez 224). Again, according to Leander, "[l]as flores, a las que se alude con tanta frecuencia, evocan en general la idea de algo delicado y pasajero. Pueden referirse a la vida humana con su inevitable brevedad: pueden simbolizar el mundo espiritual, el arte, la poesía" (53). According to Cardenal, "[l]a flor era para los nahuas un emblema del alma" ("In xóchitl in cuícatl" 690).

The poet is not only impressed by Nezahualcōyotl's poetic prowess, but by his peacefulness. Cardenal describes him as a "[c]ortador de las flores de cacao... / No Cacaos (las MONEDAS / para comprar y vender en los mercados...) / Atesoren los millonarios sus Cacaos, los dictadores, / sus xiquipiles de Cacaos" (*Los ovnis* 192). Cardenal yearns for a world in which money is not the main motivation for work. According to the poetic voice of Cardenal's Nezahualcōyotl, "[l]a flor de cacao es más valiosa que el cacao" (192). His Nezahualcōyotl is not concerned with wealth, but with beauty. Further ahead, the King states that "[l]es riego poemas, no tributos" (194).

Cardenal, via the voice of Nezahualcōyotl, praises the brotherhood of Náhuatl poets: "[s]ólo en las flores hay Hermandad" (194); "[l]a confederación de amigos poetas son esas flores. La reunión / de amigos. / Este poema es una flor. / Yo voy cantando esa hermandad" (194). Cardenal was inspired by poems like "Con flores escribes" by Nezahualcōyotl in the original source. In this source poem, the Chichimecan sovereign laments that the Giver of Life will eventually erase the existence of the Náhuatl poets: "[c]on tinta negra borrarás / lo que fue la hermandad, / la comunidad, la nobleza. / Tú

sombreas a los que han de vivir en la tierra" (León-Portilla, ed., *Cantos*: 172). In "He llegado aquí," Nezahualcóyotl proclaims that "[m]ucho quiero y deseo / la hermandad, la nobleza" (Martínez 187).

The conclusion of Cardenal's poem is also quite similar to one of the versions of "He llegado aquí." Cardenal's poem concludes in the following fashion:

¿Quién baila con los tambores? Soy yo, "Yoyontzin"

--señores Ministros, Presidentes--

el Rey que baila con los tambores.

No cante yo en vano. (*Los ovis* 196)

The conclusion of Nezahualcóyotl's poem is as follows:

¿Quién es el que baila aquí,

en el lugar de la música,

en la casa de la primavera?

Soy yo, Yoyontzin,

¡ojalá la disfrute mi corazón! (León-Portilla, *Cantos* 178)

Both conclusions commence with a question, include references to music, and finish expressing a desire for artistic appreciation.

"Cantares mexicanos IV"

Similarly, "Cantares mexicanos IV" is a poem dealing with existential anguish, influenced by the pre-Columbian Náhuatl poem "¿He de irme?" In Cardenal's poem we read:

¿Me iré como la flor del zacuanxóchitl?

¿No dejaré nada yo poeta

sino un nombre náhuatl difícil de pronunciar?

¿O ni siquiera quedará mi nombre náhuatl?

Está cayendo la flor del zacuanxóchitl.

Al menos Flor-Canto (*In xóchitl in cuícatl*).

La flor de zacuanxóchitl ha brotado en vano:

el suelo blanquea con las flores ...

¿Venimos a brotar en vano sobre la tierra?

¿A esparcir nuestros huesos blancos

como la flor color de leche del zacuanxóchitl? (*Los ovnis* 200)

In the Aztec poem we read:

¿He de irme como las flores que perecieron?

¿Nada quedará de mi nombre?

¿Nada de mi fama aquí en la tierra?

¡Al menos mis flores, al menos mis cantos!

Aquí en la tierra es la región del momento fugaz.

¿También es así en el lugar

donde de algún modo se vive?

¿Hay allá alegría, hay amistad?

¡O sólo aquí en la tierra

Hemos venido a conocer nuestros rostros! (León-Portilla, *Cantos* 140)

The thematic, stylistic, and structural similarities between both works are striking.

Cardenal's work is loyal to the *icnocuícatl* genre, namely, to poems of reflection.

"Cantares mexicanos V"

"Cantares mexicanos V" is another work inspired by Náhuatl poetry. In this case, Cardenal's poem draws from a mixture of the anonymous Aztec poem, "Incertidumbre del fin," and Nezahualcóyotl's "¡Ay de mí!" Although Cardenal's poem is brief, it embraces elements from both compositions. Cardenal's poem is as follows:

Sólo soledad

he venido a conocer

en anáhuac [la tierra].

Tengamos amistad

antes de morir

en anáhuac. (*Los ovnis* 202)

In "Incertidumbre del fin," we find several segments similar in content: "¿[a] dónde iré, ay? / ¿A dónde iré? / ... / Totalmente nos vamos, totalmente nos vamos. / ¡Nadie perdura en la tierra! / ¿Quién hay que diga: Dónde están nuestros amigos? / ¡Alegraos!" (León-Portilla, *Cantos* 147: lines 1-2, 10-13). Nezahualcóyotl's composition is presented below:

¡Ay de mí:

sea así!

No tengo dicha en la tierra

aquí.

¡Ah, de igual modo nací,

de igual modo fui hecho hombre!

¡Ah, sólo el desamparo

he venido a conocer

aquí en el mundo habitado!

¡Que haya aún trato mutuo

aquí, oh amigos míos:

solamente aquí en la tierra!

Mañana o pasado,

como lo quiera el corazón

de aquel por quien todo vive,

nos hemos de ir a su casa,

¡oh amigos, démonos gusto! (Martínez 199)

Cardenal's poem is a work of masterful condensation. In very few words, the poet has expressed the same helplessness and despair as the Aztec poets. He concludes that one should enjoy life while one still can: a pre-Columbian *carpe diem*.

"Cantares mexicanos VI"

"Cantares mexicanos VI" deals with the fleeting nature of life. Cardenal attributes the quote "¡que no perezca yo!" (*Los ovis* 204) to Nezahualpilli. Although this may be accurate, the quote also resembles the words "que viviera siempre, que nunca se muriera" from the Aztec poem, "Canto de angustia, Segunda Parte" (León-Portilla, *Cantos* 143). Cardenal's quote also resembles the anaphora "[s]i yo nunca muriera, / si yo nunca desapareciera" from Nezahualcóyotl's poem "Estoy embriagado" (171). We find a similar line in the anonymous Aztec poem "Si en un día." "[o]jalá siempre se viviera, ojalá no hubiera uno de morir" (146).

In his poem, Cardenal uses the metaphor "tu atabal riega flores" (*Los ovis* 204). Similar metaphors are found in Náhuatl poetry. In "Xochicuicatli: Cantos floridos y de amistad" we read "[t]añe tu tambor florido" (León-Portilla, *Cantos* 123). In Nezahualcóyotl's "He llegado aquí: Yo soy Yoyontzin" we find "[t]añe bellamente / tu tambor florido tú, cantor; / espárganse flores perfumadas y blancas / y flores preciosas se derramen, / caigan en lluvia aquí junto a los atabales" (Martínez 187-86).

Further ahead, in Cardenal's poem, we read: "[l]loro yo Nezahualpilli . / ... / Estoy triste, / ... / ¡Si hubiera un lugar donde no se muriera!" (*Los ovis* 206). In Nezahualcóyotl's poem "Estoy embriagado, lloro, me aflijo" we read "[e]stoy embriagado, lloro, me aflijo, / ... / si yo nunca muriera, / si nunca desapareciera"

(Martínez 207). In "Canto de Nezahualpilli, we read "[m]i corazón está triste, / soy el joven Nezahualpilli" (León-Portilla, *Literatura* 207).

In short, Cardenal's "Cantares mexicanos" are examples of his appropriation of Amerindian poetic practice and demonstrate the poet's extensive use of collage, a technique which makes the essence of pre-Columbian Náhuatl poetry meaningful to readers in the modern world. His rediscovery of indigenous America is also evident in the cantos of *El estrecho dudoso* (1966), in which Cardenal manifests his vision of the conquest of the Americas.

Cardenal's Vision of the Conquest: *El estrecho dudoso*

The theme of Indo-European cultural conflict is extensively developed in many cantos (II, IV, VIII, X, XIII, XVII, XVIII, XIX, XXI, XXII, XXIII) of *El estrecho dudoso*, a work which is a re-reading and re-writing of the first one hundred years of post-Columbian Central American history. The work is particularly relevant to our study since it reveals that the native world has played an important role in the poet's literary production since its early stages.

Stylistic Characteristics of *El estrecho dudoso*

Before analyzing the theme of the conquest in *El estrecho dudoso*, it would be worthwhile to examine the noteworthy stylistic characteristics of the work. Although it has not enjoyed the popularity of some of his other works, Williams has heralded *El estrecho dudoso* as one of Cardenal's most significant poetic achievements (xii-xiii). Borgeson has described it as "[a] truly magnificent poem. The best history of Central America and Nicaragua ever written" (Lyons, back cover).

The poem deals with the conquest and politics of Central America, and most importantly, the destiny of the indigenous population. The poet, of course, "[e]stá escribiendo, reescribiendo la historia desde una posición ideológica determinada, distinta

de la historia oficial" (Porrúa 83). He interprets history to clarify the present. As Williams states, "the past is not walled off, sacred, and valorized. Rather, it is rendered familiar, relative, and connected to the present: Cardenal's contemporary viewpoint breaks through the spatio-temporal boundaries, connecting the historical past with contemporary reality" (xxiv).

Pring-Mill confirms that *El estrecho dudoso* provided the model for Cardenal's treatment of pre-Columbian cultures by handling an explicit "chronicle" of past injustice in such a way that it would read as an implicit commentary on the modern world ("Cardenal's Treatment" 56). Williams explains further that the poem redefines Central America's symbolic heritage and national mythology, providing a sense of historical coherence and direction to the revolutionary struggle that coincided with the text's production (xxvii). In accomplishing this purpose, Cardenal extensively utilizes canonical sources in *El estrecho dudoso*, a poem that earned him credit as a veritable master of metalepsis.⁶⁴

Cardenal also draws extensively from lesser known works, such as letters, royal decrees, and legal proceedings.⁶⁵ The poet also utilizes the *Chilam Balam*, the Mayan book of prophecies (xiii).⁶⁶ In fact, the presence of documents and histories dating from the colonial era is evident in *El estrecho dudoso*. The poet presents the reader with a mosaic of quotations. The work is thus an absorption and transformation of other texts. Although Cardenal uses historical documents, he does not necessarily present their version of history. He presents his own. The poet uses the testimonies from his sources to highlight the points he wants to make about the chaos of the conquest, about the greed that motivated the conquerors, and about the corruption of government officials.

Williams errs in stating that the most remarkable feature of *El estrecho dudoso* "is that it is constructed almost entirely from unaltered fragments of documents and histories

dating from the colonial era" (xiii). While the use of fragments of documents is notable, they do not constitute the bulk of the work, nor are they unaltered. The originality of Cardenal lies in the constant presence of his poetic voice. Even when the poet quotes a document, he does so to advance an argument. His train of thought is evident. Cardenal is a master puppeteer. He manipulates past voices from a present perspective. The poet passes the past through his ideological filter and refreshes it. Cardenal demystifies the conquest, challenging the romantic notions of the ill-informed. He attempts to present what he views as the "true" version of the conquest and the colonial period, aiming to "purify" traditional history.

Salmon claims that Cardenal "does not rewrite history: he searches out the poetry of history" (xxviii-xxix). This, however, does not seem to be the case. Cardenal is not necessarily faithful to his sources. He manipulates them, as he deems fitting, to project his particular ideological agenda. He stresses analogies between indigenous and Christian beliefs while downplaying aspects of native American society that he dislikes, polytheism, for example. As Pring-Mill has stated, "one should never consult his pre-Columbian poems in search of 'accurate' history or archaeology" ("Cardenal's Treatment" 71).

Although the poet's extensive manipulation of his sources is manifest, Williams believes that "Cardenal does not rework his sources. He borrows 'whole slabs' of the historical records and transcribes them as would an archivist or compiler" (xiv). "What results is the absence of *an* authorial point of view," she claims, "with the text replaced instead by diverse perspectives, each registered in a distinct voice and style. These perspectives converge, intersect, and oppose one another, producing a text with a distinctive polyphonic quality that is less pronounced in Neruda" (xiv).

The uniqueness of Cardenal's poetry is the result of the chorus of voices that give it life. Meaning is achieved through the interaction of Cardenal's voice with the voices of his sources. Gordon Brotherston speaks of the resonance between Cardenal's voice and that of the ransomed text (11-12). In the Mayan poems Cardenal often assumes the voice of the chilam, the ancient prophet-priest who denounces and announces (Salmon xxviii). As Porrúa explains, "[l]a voz del Chilam Balam (funcionando como máscara) sirve para legitimar, dar autoridad al decir del sujeto autor" (88).

Cardenal does not duplicate bits and pieces of his sources; instead, he intertwines them and actualizes them in such a way that he makes them relevant. They become comments on present-day problems. As Ana María Porrúa explains, in Cardenal "[e]l pasado encubre al presente y es por esto que podemos hablar ... de un lector diferente: el nicaragüense leyendo su historia pasada y en medio de ella, entre líneas, la interpretación del presente" (87). As she states, "[e]l sujeto no sólo 'presenta' la historia ... sino que la escribe" (84). She speaks of the poet's process of re-creation and re-writing of texts, a technique Cardenal adopted from Pound (84).

Elías describes *El estrecho dudoso*, for example, as "un rico mosaico de documentos históricos tomados de fuentes variadas, y hábilmente trabajados, intercalados y *modificados* por el hablante de la epopeya" (923, emphasis ours). Minard has pointed out how "ces citations s'intègrent parfaitement dans le modèle général du poème--rythme, grande sobriété, regard extérieur, position minimaliste, tant à l'égard des faits, que de l'écriture" (112). Minard also notes that "[i]l ne s'agit pas seulement de citations, bien entendu, mais de *réécriture totale ou partielle* (101, emphasis ours).

The poet takes his sources and gives them a new breath of life. His sense of humor gives a fresh taste to what could otherwise fall into mere "protest poetry." Cohen accurately describes Cardenal as a master of understatement whose sense of humour

often saves his poetry from falling into rhetorical bombast (1984: 12). Furthermore, the poet practices the art of ellipsis as often as he adds or condenses. At times, he also re-establishes the chronology. It is therefore evident that Cardenal does in fact manipulate his sources.

Cuadra believes that in many of Cardenal's poems "el futuro es lo importante del pasado" (*Antología* 19). Ana María Porrúa has argued, more convincingly, that Cardenal actually contrasts the pre-Columbian past and the present so that the first can impose itself as a model (85). The poet also wishes to legitimize the veracity of the voices of the Mayan priests, as well as Nezahualcóyotl, and Bartolomé de Las Casas (Porrúa 85). He also longs to have the masterpieces of pre-Columbian literature included in the canon of Spanish American literature. González-Balado holds that "mientras narra el pasado [Cardenal] ya anticipa el futuro en una transposición lúcidamente profética" (171). Cardenal desires to establish a national history that includes the indigenous past (85). An essential part of that history is reflected in Canto II of *El estrecho dudoso*.

Literary Analysis of *El estrecho dudoso*

"Canto II"

Canto II is loosely based on Columbus' *Diario*, particularly the events that took place during the first voyage from 1492-93. We read that the Indians "[n]o tienen jefes ni capitanes de guerra" and "[n]o riñen entre sí" (6). In addition, the Indians "desprecian el oro y las piedras preciosas" (6). According to Elías, Cardenal "ejerce su selectividad poética al escoger detalles descriptivos de la organización socio-política de los pueblos indígenas de la región en contraste con la imposición militarista ejercida por el conquistador europeo" (926). Although Elías believes that Cardenal is praising aspects of Amerindian society which appeal to him, which may certainly be the case, one should

also consider the possibility that the poet is merely presenting Columbus' perspective of the natives.

Cardenal does not necessarily have to share this view. The poet may actually be trying to penetrate Columbus' mindset, attempting to extrapolate his particular agenda. One must recall that Columbus was directing himself to the Spanish crown. He wished to legitimize the conquest of the New World and ensure funding for his endeavors. By presenting the natives as peaceful, he thereby highlights how easy they would be to conquer. By claiming that they do not value precious metals, he stresses the economic benefits of the conquest and points out how easy it would be to exploit the mineral riches of the Americas. In any case, the natives appear as potential victims of imperialistic economic ambitions.

"Canto IV"

In Canto IV Cardenal criticizes the materialism of the Spanish conquistadors who are obsessed with finding gold. The poem commences with the oration and actions of Panquiaco, the eldest son of the Cacique, Comagre, which, as Williams has pointed out, are reminiscent of Christ overturning the tables of the moneylenders (xxii). After hitting the scale with his fist and scattering the gold, Panquiaco goes on to explain the values and vices of gold (*Estrecho* 16). He states that had he known that the Spaniards would have squabbled over his gold, he would never have given them any: "[s]i hubiera sabido que por mi oro reñiríais / no os lo hubiera dado!" (16). He expresses his amazement at how the Spaniards break up finely wrought jewels to make a few bars (16). He explains that among his people, gold has no intrinsic value (16). What they do value, though, is the finished craftsmanship (16). The Cacique criticizes the Spaniards for shedding blood over gold and declares that they would have been better off in their ancestral land: "[m]ás os

valiera estar en vuestra tierra / que tan lejos de aquí está" (16). He also implies that the Indians were better off before the arrival of the Europeans and lived in contentment (16).

"Canto VIII"

Canto VIII deals with Cortés's disastrous expedition to Hibueras accompanied, among others, by Emperor Cuauhtémoc (¿1495?-1524), Coanococh, Lord of Texcoco, Tetzpanquétzal of Tlacopán and Oquici of Azcapotzalco. The poet expresses the despair and anguish of the conquerors who end up wandering aimlessly in the harshest of conditions. With nothing to consume but grasses, desperation grew:

Se comían los caballos

y los indios ya iban comiendo muertos

. . . y no sólo los indios (un Medrano contó después
que se había comido los sesos de un Montesinos).

No lo cuenta Cortés en las Cartas de Relación.

Nubes de zopilotes seguían al ejército. (40)

As the members of the expedition walked, they passed burned houses and cornfields, reflecting the scorched earth policy of the Indians who preferred to destroy their livelihood than to have it usurped by the invaders. After traversing seemingly endless swamps, they arrived at a town. To their despair, it was deserted. And beyond the town there was more swampland. By now "[s]e habían comido a los guías" (42).

In the meantime, "Cuauhtémoc iba detrás, despacio, / con los pies quemados / ("El Águila que Cae") / sin quejarse, sin decir una palabra" (42). Cuauhtémoc maintained his serenity when facing the worst of calamities. Even in trials and tribulations, the native leaders fatalistically joked among themselves (42). The contrast Cardenal makes between the desperate Cortés and the dignified Cuauhtémoc is effective. By doing so, the poet demystifies the image of the noble conqueror and the savage Indian. By repeating that

Cuauhtémoc suffered with dignity "sin quejarse, sin decir una palabra" he stresses the nobility of the character (42).

Coming to grips with their impending doom, the sovereigns started to sing "romances, tristes romances / que profetizaban todas las cosas que ahora veían / y padecían, compuestos por los filósofos antiguos" (44). Through the use of internal prefiguration, Cardenal prepares the reader for the unjust hanging of the Aztec rulers. Cuauhtémoc's name was itself prophetic; in Náhuatl it literally signifies "descending eagle," a metaphor for the sunset. As can be appreciated, the name can also symbolically represent downfall, the end of an age, the termination of the rule of the Aztecs whose emblem was an eagle devouring a snake.

Much like the words of Christ in the Gospels, Cuauhtémoc delivers a sermon to the Lords of Acalán full of love, mercy and compassion, expressing more concern for his people than for his own fate (44-46). Meanwhile, Mexicatl, the Tenocha dwarf, has informed Malinche, Cortés' lover and interpreter, that Cuauhtémoc is plotting a conspiracy against him (46). As a result of this false accusation, the Kings are put to death on the next day.

Before being hanged by order of Cortés in 1534, Cuauhtémoc informs Malinche that he knew from the beginning that she would play a part in his death and reproaches her for the injustice she has perpetrated (48). Like Jesus who knew that Peter would deny knowing him three times before the rooster crows (Matthew 26: 69-75), Cuauhtémoc was also aware of the role Malintzin would play in his demise. The Lord of Tlacopán "dijo que moría contento / porque moría junto al Rey Cuauhtémoc, su señor" (48). In many ways, this scene is reminiscent of the crucifixion of Christ, along with the two thieves. The mindset of the Lord of Tlacopán resembles the attitude of the repentant thief who was crucified along with Jesus (Luke 23: 40-43).

Before the Amerindian sovereigns died, the Franciscans heard their confessions and, as an insulting gesture, Doña Marina, the traitor, acted as interpreter (48). Cardenal reveals his source by disclosing that "Bernal Díaz iba triste, porque era amigo de Cuauhtémoc" (48). The sadness of Bernal Díaz del Castillo also represent the sadness of Cardenal who feels a certain attachment to the valiant Cuauhtémoc. In addition, the character of Bernal Díaz masks the poet's opinion of the people and events described by becoming his spokesman or his sympathetic ally: a case of character linkage.

In contrast with the chaos of the conquest and the political intrigues of the colonial period presented earlier, Cardenal presents an orderly vision of pre-Columbian civilization. He mentions the democratic political system of the natives which appeal to him:

(No se gobernaban por caciques ni por señor ni jefe
 sino por un consejo de ancianos elegidos por votos
 y éstos elegían un capitán general para la guerra
 y cuando moría o lo mataban en la guerra elegían otro
 --y a veces ellos mismos lo mataban
 si era perjudicial para la república--
 y se reunían en la plaza a la sombra de una ceiba:
 aquel consejo de ancianos elegidos por votos.) (54)

Curiously enough, and not coincidentally, the poet uses the term "república" to refer to what he perceives as the "democratic" political system of the Nicaraguan Indians.

"Canto X"

In Canto X, Cardenal deals with the dehumanizing treatment the Indian and African people, as well as their leaders, received at the hands of the conquerors.

Enslaved, the Indians and Africans were reduced to the level of beasts of burden. The

poet explains that:

El Muy Magnífico Señor Pedrarias Dávila

Furor Domini!!!

Fue el primer "promotor del progreso" en Nicaragua

y el primer Dictador

introdujo los chanchos en Nicaragua, sí es cierto

"cauallos e yeguas vacas e ovejas

e puercos e otros ganados..."

(pero ganado de él)

y el primer "promotor del comercio" en Nicaragua

(de indios y negros)

a Panamá y al Perú

(en los barcos de él)

"indios y negros y otros ganados"

"para que los pobladores destas partes se rremedien

y la dicha Panamá asimismo"

dice la propaganda de Pedrarias (56)

In this fragment, "el narrador va y viene entre sus propios comentarios y los trozos de textos históricos, cuya colaboración brinda al poema un paso narrativo muy particular, y una unidad derivada por igual de la ética implícitamente comunicada" (Borgeson, *Hacia* 56). The change in typography also indicates a switch from the narrative voice to quotations from colonial documents. By altering typography, the poet makes his borrowing evident to the reader.

Cardenal grants the title of *Furor Domini* to Pedrarias Dávila to stress his evil attributes. The poet may have used the title *furor* as a result of its association with the German *führer*, thus labelling Pedrarias as Hitlerian. By doing so, Cardenal would be condensing an entire moral description into one word. *Furor Domini* would thus be a mixture of German and Latin meaning "Leader and Ruler."

The poet then quotes a list of livestock. Cardenal sarcastically states that Pedrarias was responsible for introducing pigs into Nicaragua. Among the mares on the list of livestock, one finds the names of slaves, black and Indian, old and young, male and female, with their distinctive prices. One learns that slaves could even be bought on mortgage.

The utilization of personal names helps to humanize these shackled and fettered individuals. As Cardenal states: "¡[d]ulces nombres en los áridos documentos comerciales / de la COLECCIÓN SOMOZA! / Dulces nombres / que Pedrarias jugaba al ajedrez" (58).

Although Cardenal may only have capitalized "COLECCIÓN SOMOZA" to indicate his source, Alstrum rightly believes that the poet has also done so to "emphasize further the affinity between Pedrarias and Somoza and to assure that this similarity is not overlooked by the reader" (Alstrum 15). The use of capitalization also enhances the visual impact of the page.

One cannot help but note the economic factor present in this critical poem. Cardenal condemns not only the slave-dealer, but also the economic system that actually flourishes through the perpetration of such injustices. Not only is Cardenal condemning the exploitation that occurred in Nicaragua during the period of colonization, he is also actively opposing the exploitation that continues to occur in the present. By describing a slave-monger as a "promotor del progreso," Cardenal equates capitalist progress with

slavery. The poem is thus a parable for persecution and a vindication of the oppressed, both Africans and Indians.

As the poem progresses, Cardenal continues to attack Pedrarias' cruelty towards the natives. Pedrarias' brutality can be judged on the basis of the resistance it caused among the indigenous population. Cardenal informs us that: "[l]os indios mataban a sus hijos para que no fueran esclavos / o las mujeres malparian para no parirlos o no cohabitaban / para no concebirlos" (58).

The Indians were also starved into submission for not having planted corn, an action Cardenal terms a "Huelga General" (58); he thereby applies a modern-day term to the colonial epoch, a practice facilitated by the distance between the poet and his sources, which ultimately permits him a broader vision. The motive of the natives for not planting their crops appears to be that they wanted to starve the conquerors. In the meanwhile, the Indians would live off their reserves (58). However, their plan backfired when they were dispossessed of their stockpiles of food (58).

Cardenal also refers to the forced labour in the notoriously unsafe mines. He relates that if one did not know the way to the mines, one merely had to follow the skeletons of dead Indians (58). As Alstrum explains, the muted voices of slain Indians at the sides of roads leading to the mines bear witness to the truth and belie the official reports left by Pedrarias about his administration (16). Cardenal mentions the natives' lack of hope, their desperation (58).

The poet describes the Spaniards' lack of respect for human life; in order to remove a chain off an Indian's neck, they would prefer to decapitate the Indian instead of cutting the chain: "(por no abrir la cadena / cortarle / la cabeza / para sacarle la cadena)" (58). The poet also describes how the Spanish taught puppies how to hunt Amerindians, and how they let loose their greyhounds and mastiffs to tear the natives apart (58).

Left to starve and at the end of their hopes, the natives turned to witchcraft. They even invoked the Devil in several of his possible manifestations to ask how they could be rid of the Spaniards (60). The Devil replied that their wish would only come to pass by causing the oceans to unite: "haciendo que los dos mares se juntaran / (¿el Canal de Nicaragua?) / pero entonces perecerían los españoles / (¿el canal Norteamericano en Nicaragua?) / juntamente con los indios" (60). As can be seen from his parenthetical comments, Cardenal seeks a modern explanation for this demonic prophecy. For the poet, the Spanish oppressor has been replaced with new oppressors, namely the ruling class and United States foreign policy.

Although the Indians have struggled against the dominant Hispanic culture, Cardenal implies that the time has come for both parties to join hands in opposing their common enemies: the North American superpower whose neo-colonialism and cultural imperialism threaten the liberty, livelihood, and culture of both Indians and Hispanics.

It is also possible that the poet felt that Nicaraguans suffering under the Somoza dictatorship were really *modern-day* Indians. Hence, "Indian" would be a metonym for all those who are exploited and oppressed, regardless of their ethno-cultural or linguistic identification. In the chronicles of the Spanish conquistadors, the Indian is the "other." In the literature of the Romantic writers, the Indian is often idealized; yet, he still remains the "other." In Darío we encounter a *toma de conciencia mestiza*. Darío realized that the Indian was part of himself and part of his past and attempted to retrieve aspects of his Amerindian past. In Darío, the Indian is still the "other," and admired "other," but an "other" nonetheless. In Cardenal, however, the Indian has become fully humanized. He is no longer subaltern. The Indian is a man like any other man, the symbol of man, and the symbol of the oppressed. This is clearly expressed in Cardenal's words: "el pueblo, sus mártires, sus indios" (qtd. in González-Balado 169).

The relationship between the First World and the Third World is cleverly highlighted by the poet. He initially mentions the "Canal de Nicaragua," and then corrects himself by adding "el Canal Norteamericano en Nicaragua" to stress that this was a foreign venture which was intended to benefit foreign interests.

"Canto XIII"

Canto XIII deals with brutality again, in this case the conquest of Pedro de Alvarado in Guatemala. Cardenal explains how

Corrió Pedro de Alvarado por la tierra como un rayo ...

En Soconusco se rindieron.

Pasó a Zapotitlán

y los venció, y le pidieron la paz.

Marchó hacia Quetzaltenango

y en la cumbre de un puerto halló una hechicera gorda

y un perro sacrificado (que significa guerra).

Peleó en las barrancas

y los venció. Peleó en un llano

y los venció. Pelearon junto a una fuente

y volvió a vencerlos. (*Estrecho 75*)

Besides the initial simile about tearing through the land like a lightning bolt, Cardenal makes use of both anaphora and polysyndeton to achieve his goal of describing Alvarado's military might. We read how Alvarado "marchó," "peleó" and how he "los venció" again and again. The consequences of Alvarado's onslaught is captured by way of the simile describing how "[l]a sangre de los indios corrió como un arroyo / por la falda del monte, / y bajó hasta el río Olin-tepec / y lo tiñó de rojo / y desde entonces se llamó Xequiquel ("río de sangre")" (74).

The poet then goes on to describe how Tecún-Umán, a leader of the Quiché, arrived with his army (74). Alvarado deployed his army in two flanks and Tecún-Umán did the same, positioning himself at the center, on the plain of Quetzaltenango as a quetzal soared overhead:

Alvarado en su corcel se encontró con Tecún-Umán
que iba en sus andas,
y Tecún-Umán se bajó de sus andas y se fue contra Alvarado
tratando de derribarlo del caballo

(mientras el quetzal daba gritos en el aire)

y le mató el caballo, y Alvarado
atravesó el pecho del rey del quiché con su lanza.

Estuvo mirando largo rato su cadáver.

Y el quetzal fue hallado muerto cuando murió el indio

(atravesado por una lanza)

y lo acometieron perros.

Dijo Alvarado: "Nunca vi en México más extraño *quetzal*." (*Estrecho* 74)

Alvarado's statement is a veritable late twentieth century "sound byte:" clear, concise, and to the point. Like a good reporter, Cardenal captures the essence of a story.

The symbolism of the quetzal is significant. The quetzal is a beautiful large Central American bird with a crest and brilliant plumage. According to Darío, "[e]l Quetzal es pájaro de belleza y de libertad, raro y simbólico, que muere si se le aprisiona o si la gloria de su cola se marchita o daña. El se ostenta en el blasón de esta Guatemala ardiente, pintoresca, brava y generosa" (*OC* 1: 885). In "Palas athenea" from *Del chorro de la fuente*, Darío explains that the quetzal "[s]imboliza en Guatemala / Paz, Idea y Libertad" (*Poesías* 1267: IV, lines3-4). The death of the quetzal in the canto may

represent the end of freedom and liberty and the commencement of an age of oppression for the aboriginal population of Guatemala. Although the Mayan Indians of Guatemala are the majority of the population, they have been repressed since the time of Alvarado to the present. Like Cuauhtémoc in Mexico, Tecún-Umán is considered a national hero in Guatemala. The quetzal that appears in the poem may also represent Tecún-Umán's *nahual*; that is, his guardian spirit.

As a result of Tecún-Umán's murder, Oxib-Queb and prince Beleheb-Tzy sued for peace with all the noblemen and princes of the royal family (76). They invited Alvarado to the court of Uatlán while warriors lay hidden in the ravines (76). The astute Alvarado recognized the threat of ambush (76). He noted that the town was deserted, surrounded by ravines, that there was no sign of women and children, and that the Caciques were agitated in their parleying (76). Alvarado prudently decided to leave the town, to the chagrin of the Indians (76). When Oxib-Queb and Beleheb-Tzy arrived at his camp he put them in chains, had them court-martialed, and sentenced to be burned alive, which was done in the presence of all the princes of the royal family, who were in tears (76).

Alvarado went on to burn the court of the Quiché Indians and to conquer Atitlán, Itzucintlán, Nancintlán, Paxaco, Acajutla, and Cuzcatlán (74). In Atitlán in Guatemala, he defeated the Zutuhils, led by Tepepul, in 1524. In Acajutla, a coastal town in present-day south-western El Salvador, he defeated the Pipils in 1524. He subdued Cuzcatlán, the capital of the Cuzcatec Indians (near present-day San Salvador) by July 1524.

Cognizant of the continued war against the Indians being waged by the Guatemalan government, in which hundreds of villages have been destroyed, Cardenal establishes parallels between the ruthless methods of the past and the equally repressive measures of the present. Alvarado's oppression prefigures present-day oppression in the region.

"Canto XVII"

Canto XVII deals with the insurrection of Lempira, "Señor de las Sierras," who "reunió los indios de 200 pueblos, / y más de 2.000 señores y caballeros conocidos" and brought them together in the "Sierra de las Neblinas" where he explained to them "era vergonzoso / que tantos hombres estuvieran en servidumbre / de tan pocos extranjeros, en su propia tierra" (102). Lempira's war cry spread through the land, from valley to valley, from sierra to sierra. Eventually 30, 000 men joined his ranks and together they ascended the highest crag, as sheer as a lance, without any path (102). There, the Spaniards surrounded him and the siege lasted six months (102). Some suggested to Lempira that he make peace because in the end he was bound to lose, "pero él rechazaba las ofertas de paz / y desde su peñol retaba a los españoles" (102).

Cardenal explains that Lempira gathered his men in the year *Ix* that was predicted by the oracle of Chilam Balam to be of much misery:

Un año "de gran falta de agua y de muchos soles
 los cuales habrán de secar los maizales,
 y tendrían muchas discordias y guerras entre sí
 Y CON OTROS PUEBLOS,
 y habrán mudanzas en el mundo de los Señores
 y de los sacerdotes,
 por razón de esas guerras

Y LOS QUE QUIERAN SER SEÑORES NO PREVALECERÁN" (102)

Again, Cardenal stresses what he considers to be the most important elements of the quote by capitalizing them so as to make them stand out. He is impressed by the prophecy that the Mayas would fight "OTROS PUEBLOS" and that they would lose in the end: "LOS QUE QUIERAN SER SEÑORES NO PREVALECERÁN" (102).

Cardenal explains that year *Ix* (1535-36), the year of many miseries, was the year of Montejo's arrival in Honduras and the arrival of Pedro de Alvarado (102). And the end of "Katún 13 Ahau" was approaching; that is, the Mayas were approaching the end of an age.⁶⁷ With this in mind, Cardenal states that "Lempira defendía un baktún condenado a perecer" (104) and failed to heed the prophecy of Chilam Balam, Maní, the singer of Cabal-chen (105).

Then Cardenal proceeds to quote one of the final prophecies from the *Chilam Balam* with the effect of demonstrating to the Indians that it was the will of Camaxtli, the Mayan god of fate, that they be conquered and converted to Christianity and that fighting their fate was in vain:

Recebid a vuestros huéspedes, los hombres barbados, los del Este,
los portadores del signo divino, oh Nobles de Itzá.

Buena es la palabra de la divinidad que viene hacia vosotros
para que se cumpla la renovación de la vida.

Nada tenéis que temer, oh Nobles, del que está arriba de la tierra;
es el único Dios que os ha creado,

y esto por sí solo os prueba que su Palabra es propicia ...

Grande es la anarquía que comienza.

Restaurado es el Árbol de la Vida del mundo.

Que se le dé conocimiento a todas las gentes
de la insignia de Hunab-ku erguida.

Adoradla, oh Itzalanos. Debéis adorar esta insignia enhiesta
y creer en la palabra del verdadero Dios
que viene del cielo a hablaros.

Multiplicad vuestra buena voluntad oh Itzalanos,

ahora que está el nuevo amanecer por iluminar el universo

y la vida está por entrar en una Edad nueva.

Tened fe en mi mensaje, yo soy Chilam Balam

y he interpretado la palabra del verdadero Dios." (1995: 106)

The first two lines in question are taken from the "Capítulo del Año Katún" while these following are from "La interpretación histórica de Yucatán" under the subtitle "Profecía de Chilam Balam." Interestingly enough, the new Christian god is associated with the one God, Hunab Ku. Miguel Rivera explains that, according to the *Diccionario de Motul*, the Mayas adored one divinity above all others (161, note 38). According to this colonial source, Hunab Ku was intangible and could not be represented.⁶⁸

The poem thus ends with the supposed fulfilment of the prophecies of Chilam Balam which stated that the natives would fight among themselves, that there would be a change of religion, and the guerrillas would not succeed in their endeavors. And, as can be expected, this is exactly what occurred. Lempira was murdered, not by his own people, but through the deceit of the Spaniards during supposed "peace negotiations." Cáceres sent Lempira an envoy urging him to accept peace and obey the King of Castille (106). In return, the Spaniards promised to treat him well (106). Unflinching in his stance, Lempira sent a strong message to the Spanish soldiers by murdering the messengers: "[d]ecía: que no quería conocer otro señor ni saber otra ley / ni tener otras costumbres de las que ya tenía" (*Estrecho* 106).

The Spaniards decided to resort to extreme measures to put an end to the siege that had already lasted six months. Cáceres sent Lempira another envoy while a soldier within crossbow range would fire at him. When offered peace for the final time Lempira said from the high crag that "[l]a guerra / no habrá de cansar a los soldados ni espantarlos / y aquel que más pueda vencerá" (106). Cardenal claims that the Mayas had not slept for

two months, neither by night or day, since they shot arrows constantly (106). Regardless of this clear case of hyperbole the resilience of the Mayas was impressive. As Lempira's final words echoed through the valley in defiance of prophetic wisdom, a soldier aimed at him, and fired as he was speaking. The arrow pierced his forehead and killed him. The arrow piercing the forehead symbolizes the end of Mayan leadership. In fact, the Mayas have never since succeeded in successfully uniting themselves behind an Amerindian leader.

The poem informs us that Lempira passed away in the *bisextil* year (1536-37), a bad year of fateful days according to the Mayan high priests. It was the year ruled by "Hozanek" the black "Bocab" of the West, the subterranean and evil being (108). Demonstrating the authenticity of the prophecies of the Mayan priests, Lempira's soldiers were happy to surrender and did so with "caracoles y atambores y atabales" (108).

"Canto XVIII"

In Canto XVIII Cardenal attempts to exonerate a segment of the Catholic clergy from responsibility for, or at least complicity in, the atrocities committed in the Americas against the native population, and to condemn those who defended them. The poem deals with an audience the Bishop of Darién and Bartolomé de Las Casas had with the King of Spain regarding the plight of the aboriginal inhabitants of the Americas. Cardenal manifests his support for Las Casas by presenting his arguments at length and by shortening those of the Bishop of Darién.

The Bishop of Darién explains that many of the first settlers starved to death and those who remained were obliged to rob and murder in order to survive (110). He admits that "[e]l primer gobernador fue malo / y el segundo muy peor" but he maintains that the Indians "son siervos *a natura*. / Son los siervos *a natura* de que habla Aristóteles" (110).

After this defense of servitude and slavery, Las Casas rebukes the Bishop for his beliefs. Las Casas attempts to establish some credibility by explaining that he was one of the first who went across to the Indies (112). He actually went to Hispaniola with his father in 1502. He explains that during his many years in the Americas, he has witnessed "tantas crueldades / cometidas en aquellos mansos y pacíficos corderos" (112). The "Apostle of the Indies" argues that the Indians are not slaves, "son libres *a natura!*" (112). Repudiating the stereotypical image of Indians as primitive savages, he explains that they had their own natural kings and lords, that they were peace-loving and that their republics were well-ordered (112).

He also challenges the dominant European notions of physical beauty, affirming that the Indians are "proporcionados y delicados y de rostros de buen parecer / que pareciera que todos ellos fueran hijos de señores" (112). Aiming to indicate the absurdity of assailing the Indians with brute force he explains that "[f]ueron creados simples por Dios, sin maldades ni dobleces / obedientes, humildes, pacientes, pacíficos y quietos" (112). Hence, heavy-handed approaches at forcing them into submission and the ironhanded rule of the conquered tribes are unjustified. He describes the simplicity and frugality of the natives, who are neither proud, nor ambitious, nor covetous (112).

The friar's comments implicitly condemn the absence of such values among the Spanish conquerors. When Las Casas states that the Indians "[s]on limpios y vivos de entendimiento y dóciles," he wishes to criticize his people's lack of hygiene and their hard-headed belligerence (112). According to Williams, the savage/civilized inversion functions on one level as a reminder of the indigenous people's deserved membership in the community of Christ and humankind (xxii). The critic also feels that Cardenal presents the Amerindians as "virtuous, civilized, and Christian victims of the lawless and godless tyrants" (xxi). In the context of *El estrecho dudoso* as a whole, however, this

does not appear to be the case. Take the following segment, for example, where the poet mentions the rare, but nevertheless repulsive practice of anthropophagy among Amerindians. In Canto XXI, we read that:

De quinientos cincuenta que pasaron con Cortés
 no quedan vivos más que cinco en toda la Nueva España.
 ¿Y sus sepulcros? Son los vientres de los indios
 que comieron sus piernas y sus muslos y sus brazos,
 y lo demás fue echado a los tigres y a las sierpes
 yalcones que tenían enjaulados (Bernal Díaz) (134)

It is also misleading to claim that Cardenal views the Indians at the time of the conquest as "Christian victims," as there is no textual basis for such a claim. Rather, Cardenal sees the Indians from the early colonial epoch as human beings, first and foremost, and perhaps thereafter as *potential* Christians.

In the poem, Las Casas states that the natives had been so mistreated that he wishes that they had been treated like beasts instead of like dung on the streets (112). He recalls seeing Indian lords burned alive on slow fires by the Spaniards: how the Spaniards hunted Indians with vicious dogs; how new-borns died due to the lack of milk in their mothers' breasts; and how their existence had become so miserable that mothers would consume abort-efficient herbs to ensure that their children would not be born into such a living hell (112-14). He goes on to describe how the Spaniards would carry the Indians off to ships to be sold in slavery, branding them like animals, and how they came upon Indians, tearing them apart with their swords (114). Men in armor mounted on horses perpetrated all of this against defenseless and naked men, women, and children (114).

Las Casas explains that the Indians are not suited to work, to forced labour obviously, because they are frail by nature (114). He finishes his plea affirming that "no

hay gentes más mansas ni de menos resistencia / ni más hábiles ni aparejados para el yugo de Cristo" (114). In other words, the Indians will come into the fold of Christianity by their own free will. When the Bishop finally finished his appeal in defense of the natives, there was a long silence, and "[d]espués se levantó el Rey y entró en su cámara" (114). No answer is in itself an answer: the *status quo* persists to the detriment of human dignity and justice.

According to Lewis Hanke's thesis, *The Spanish Struggle for Justice in the Conquest of America*, the Spanish conquest of the New World was accompanied by an intense national debate, led by Dominican friars including Las Casas, who questioned the morality of the treatment received by the Indians at the hands of the Spanish conquistadors. As we have seen, this debate has been well presented by Cardenal in the poem in question.

"Canto XIX"

Canto XIX deals with the missionary activities of Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas to the Rabbinical Indian people, a tribe from the Tuzulutlán area in what is now Chiapas, Mexico. Cardenal relates how the conquistadors in Santiago de Guatemala and San Salvador laughed at Las Casas' book, *De unico vocationis modo*, and challenged him to bring the Indians into the society of the Church peacefully, "con palabras y con persuaciones" (116). The author advocated full human and legal rights for the Indians and argued for peaceful means of conversion. The treatise attacked the feudal *encomienda* system, wherein the owner of the land owns all the inhabitants as well. The conquistadors affirmed that if Las Casas achieved his goal of peaceful conversion, they would set aside their weapons, adjudging themselves unworthy soldiers and captains (116).

Las Casas accepted their challenge and set off to the only unconquered province called Tuzulutlán, "Land of War," where nature was as indomitable as were the ferocious

and "barbaric" Indians who inhabited it (116). Las Casas set off to the "Land of War" asking for no salary, traveling expenses, food or drink, or for the bishopric of the land (116). His sole condition on accepting this mission was that the Indians should not be tied to anyone's *encomienda* and that they should be free vassals of His Majesty (116). His altruism is evident.

In the poem, the friars composed couplets, ballads in Quiché in order to appeal to the Indians. They used their native rhymes and cadences to recount some fundamental Christian beliefs (116). The clergymen sent these songs to four Indian merchants in Guatemala who set them to the sound of Mayan music. Las Casas gave the Indians scissors, knives, lenses and other things from Castille and sent them off to the Chieftain's house where they performed their songs (118). The musical compositions kindled the Cacique's interest so much that he invited the performers to return and eventually embraced Christianity (118). The message in the poem is clear: gentle persuasion is more effective than brute force.

"Canto XXI"

In Canto XXI Cardenal attempts to justify his rewriting of colonial history by placing himself in the shoes of the elderly Bernal Díaz del Castillo who wishes to preserve the legacy of the one hundred and fifty men who crossed over with Cortés. As the poem says: "[y] ninguno de sus nombres los escribió Gomara / ni el doctor Illescas, ni los otros cronistas. / Sólo del Marqués Cortés hablan esos libros. / Él fue el único que descubrió y conquistó todo, / y todos los demás capitanes no cuentan para nada" (134).

Bernal Díaz, as chronicler, sees the necessity of presenting the foot soldier's version of the conquest. He feels anxious when he compares his crude style with the elegant writings of Gómara, Illescas, and Jovio. After all "[é]l es sólo un soldado" (134).

Cardenal himself may have felt some apprehension regarding his straightforward and seemingly simple style at the early stage of his career when comparing his poetry to the elegance and sophistication of Darío and the richness of emotional expression of Vallejo. However, like the chronicler, Cardenal overcomes these feelings, impelled by the importance of the content he wishes to convey.

The chronicler, like Cardenal, embarks on a journey to "tell the truth" dedicating himself to rewriting the "official" version of history since "las cosas no fueron como las cuenta Gomara" (136). For example, Cortés did not secretly sink the boats; it was done at the soldiers' unified request.

The chronicler recalls with meticulous details his impression of Tenochtitlán and its inhabitants and remembers the events surrounding the famous "noche triste" (138-40). One reads how "los españoles caían al agua, abrazados al oro" (140), giving an accurate impression of the greed that motivated the conquistadors. As Williams states, Cardenal "debunks the traditional view of the glory of Spain's past actions by collecting fragments that show how greed informed the premises of the conquest and the motivations and deeds of its actors" (xxiv). The chronicler rereads the chronicles and notes the falsehood they contain:

ve que no cuentan nada de lo que pasó en Nueva España.

Están llenas de mentiras. Ensalzan a unos capitanes

y rebaja a otros. Dicen que estuvieron en las conquistas

los que no estuvieron en ellas. (140)

The chronicler then picks up the pen, determined more than ever to write in a straightforward style, "sin elegancia, / sin policia, sin razones hermoeadas ni retórica," the "true" version of what occurred during the conquest of Mexico (140). These verses sum up Cardenal's aesthetic ideas.

"Canto XXII"

In Canto XXII Cardenal contrasts pre-Columbian administration in Yucatán with the rule imposed by the Spaniards. After the initial encomiastic verses exalting the natural beauty of the land with its abundance of fertile fields filled with fruits, the poet explains that "[s]e gobernaba / con el mejor sistema político de las Indias / y no tenía vicios ni pecados / y se pudieran hacer grandes ciudades de españoles / y vivir allí como en un paraíso terrenal" (144). Challenging the view that violence was inevitable, Cardenal argues that peaceful co-existence between Indians and Europeans was always a possibility in the Americas. However, this earthly paradise was not destined to last, for in 1545 the Europeans arrived, accompanied by a governor who

... mató a los que estaban en sus casas sin ofender a nadie.

Y como no tenían oro, sacó el oro de sus cuerpos.

Y regresaban cargados de gente vendida,

comprada con vino y aceite y vinagre,

cambiados por tocinos, cambiados por caballos.

La doncella más bella, una arroba de vino.

Un tocino. El hijo de un príncipe

(o que parecía un hijo de un príncipe)

comprado por un queso. Cien personas por un caballo. (144)

The reader is stricken by this scene of dehumanization and the disrespect for human life. Human life, or at least the lives of Amerindians, had little worth in the eyes of the slave-mongering Europeans.

"Canto XXIII"

Canto XXIII is composed of various fragments of letters drawn from the Somoza collection, a multi-volume compilation of archival documents on the history of Nicaragua

from the arrival of the Spaniards, edited by Andrés Vega-Bolaños in the 1950s. The letters in question criticize the oppressive rule of Pedrarias Dávila for, among other things, enslaving the Indians: "hechando en cadenas e otras prisiones / yndios e yndias naturales desta tierra / teniendo respeto solo a su ynterese particular" (148). Cardenal opposes the overgeneralizations of the *leyenda negra*,⁶⁹ wanting to vindicate the good souls who embarked on the journey to the Americas and who were actually appalled at the injustices that were perpetrated there.

The poem ends with a petition presented to prince Don Felipe on behalf of Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas and his friend Fray Antonio de Valdivieso. The petition calls for freeing the native Indians from the tyrants who oppress them and placing them under the protection of the Royal Crown. The Bishops of Guatemala, Chiapas, and Nicaragua tell the Council of the Indies that they can bring justice to the miserable, oppressed, and injured Indians. They argue that the native Indians "sean las mas myserables y mas opresas y agraviadas afligidas / y desamparadas personas que mas ynjusticias padezcan y mas carezcan / y mayor neçesidad tengan de amparo defension y proteccion / de todas las que oy ay en el mundo" (156-58). They explain that:

ningunas otras naçiones jamas se vieron que tan entronado
y arraygado y casi ya natural tengan el miedo
por las nunca otras tales vistas ni oidas ni pensadas
violencias fuerças opresiones tiranyas
robos crueldades ynjustos captiverios guerras iniquas
estragos matanças despoblaciones de dos mil leguas de tierra
... de lo cual se sigue manifiestamente ser estas myseras naçiones
las mas myserables y mas abatidas y peor agraviadas y mas ympotentes
y desamparadas y neçesitadas que ay en el universo orbe ... (158)

The clerics argue that it is the obligation of the ecclesiastical establishment to bring the Indians the full execution of justice and to defend their lives and liberty from the rage and blindness of those who afflict, oppress, and destroy them, and to free them from their abominable living conditions (158). After this lengthy, emotionally-laden, and meticulously detailed plea for justice and human dignity for the native inhabitants of Central America, the decision of the Royal Tribunal is cold, dry, and unyielding:

(Respondieron los señores presidente

y oidor de la dicha real audiencia:

que no hay lugar) (158)

The petition is denied. The mallet of justice has chosen to perpetrate injustice. These final three lines of verse dismiss all of the evidence which precedes them and help to convey the frustration of those who defended the human rights of Amerindians.

As we have seen, the theme of the conquest plays an important role in Cardenal's poetry, particularly in many of the cantos of *El estrecho dudoso*. The poet focuses on issues from a humanitarian perspective. He debunks the image of a noble and heroic conquest by propounding the view that it was motivated by greed and by exposing the extent of suffering for which it was responsible. Critical yet controlled, Cardenal does not succumb to the overgeneralizations of the *leyenda negra*. He points out the wrong-doings of Spanish conquerors like Alvarado and despots like Pedrarias while at the same time praising Las Casas's energetic campaign in defense of the Amerindians.

Cardenal's Socio-Political Inspiration in the Amerindian World

Cardenal's socio-political inspiration in the Amerindian world runs deep and surfaces in North American poems, such as: "Kentucky" from *Oración para Marilyn Monroe* (1972); "Kayanerenhkowa," "Marchas pawnees," "Tahirasswichi en Washington," "La danza del espíritu," and "Grabaciones de la pipa sagrada;" in the

Mexican/Aztec poem, "Nezahualcóyotl;" in Central American poems (further subdivided into Cuna and Mayan poems), such as "Ovnis de oro," "Nele Kantule;" "8 Ahau," "Ardilla de los tunes de un katún," "Oráculos de Tikal," "Katún 11 Ahau," and "Mayapán;" and in South American poems (further subdivided into Inca poems and those dealing with minor tribes), such as: "La tierra que Dios nos entregó," "Los yaruros," "La Arcadia perdida," "Los hijos del bosque," "El secreto de Machu-Picchu," and "Economía de Tahuantinsuyu" from *Los ovnis de oro* (1992). His Amerindian socio-political inspiration is also found in the cantigas 18, 23, 24, 26, 32, 35, 38 from *Cántico cósmico* (1989). Each of these sections and sub-sections is a distinct unit.

North American Poems

"Kentucky"

"Kentucky" from *Oración para Marilyn Monroe* demonstrates Cardenal's socio-political inspiration in the Amerindian world, personified by Daniel Boone. White convincingly argues that the poem is a contrast of ethics between the edenic world that Daniel Boone inhabits, with a lifestyle resembling that of his Amerindian neighbours, and the materialistic, suburban life of modern, polluted Kentucky (179). Henry Cohen rightly believes that Boone represents a paradigm for all that contemporary society has lost and destroyed:

Cardenal's Daniel Boone is *le bon sauvage*, living in balance with nature, more Indian than European. Conserving natural resources, religiously respectful of his surroundings and in tune with their rhythm, Boone is naïve, good, untainted by the preoccupation with property, and ruggedly self-sufficient, in short, a foil for everything that the poet finds distasteful in modern U.S. society. (23)

Cardenal is possessed by a sense of belonging to this continent, with roots established in the Americas as opposed to Europe. His poem also manifests a sense of belonging to his

natural environment and sympathy with the lifestyle of the continent's original inhabitants. Cardenal presents Boone as a positive role model, as an example of the humble settler, who, rather than attempting to impose his imported way of life in his new homeland, adopts the American way of life, that is, the *native* American way of life. By embracing the ways of the Indians, the Europeans end up leading more spiritually enriched lives in harmony with their neighbours and with the natural order of things. Cardenal wishes that the early European settlers had followed this primitivist model.

As if sighing sadly that the ways of Boone and the Indians were not emulated, Cardenal paints us a grim picture of ecologically-tainted modern day reality: "[y] ahora en el Ohio desembocan todas las cloacas, / desperdicios industriales, sustancias químicas. / Los detergentes de las casas han matado a los peces, / y el Ohio huele a fenol" (108: lines 27-30). The dominance of the Western values over traditional Amerindian ones has led to widespread ecotoxicity.

"Kayanerenhkowa"

In "Kayanerenhkowa," Cardenal penetrates the domain of the North American native. The work is an epic poem in which Cardenal reflects on the present through the use of collage and cinematic jump cuts. The word "Kayanerenhkowa" means "The Great Peace" inspired by Tarachiwagon, the Great Spirit (*Los ovnis* 118).⁷⁰ To emphasize the peacefulness of the Iroquois, Cardenal informs us that "[t]enían / la misma palabra para 'Paz' y para 'Ley'" (118). These small details are often highly informative and permit an insight into the culture in question. As in other poems dealing with indigenous civilizations he uses etymology to open doors of understanding.

Cardenal presents Degandawida as a prototype of good leadership. The poet relates how the Huron Degandawida ("the Master of Things") traveled the land as a peace broker. Degandawida was one of two chiefs who united the Iroquois tribes by bringing

them into the Iroquois League. According to Eduardo Urdanivia Bertarelli, "[p]ara Cardenal esta Liga de Naciones es comparable a lo que es hoy la Organización de las Naciones Unidas, con la diferencia de que aquélla funcionó efectivamente" (128).

In "Kayanerenhkowa," Cardenal explains that, unlike the Americans, the Indians never broke their treaties, "aunque tratado tras tratado perdieron todas sus tierras" (128). As Angélica Morrow points out, instead of protecting native interests, the treaties were merely utilized to appropriate more land from the indigenous peoples, a situation that contributed to their decline (42). Cardenal presents us with a glimpse of disappearing Amerindian life:

Todos comeremos de un mismo plato

un mismo castor.

De pronto en el bosque una hoguera, bultos girando

entre el fuego y la sombra, y sus sombras girando

tan-tán tan-tán tan-tán, tatuajes rojos

más rojos que sube la llama, ah uuuuum

también niños y perros saltando

muchachas con conchas, con

wampum. Ah uuuuum. La fogata se apaga.

Se fueron. Y no se les vio más en la historia.

Pero después del tráfico y anuncios de neón de Siracusa

y pasando las carreteras de las afueras, moteles

gasolineras, y más neón, HAM & EGGS en la noche

detrás de las grandes fábricas, llegás a la reservación

un vallecito, donde dijo el iroqués aquel

junto al viejo Ford que no camina

"nosotros nos levantaremos otra vez

y el mundo nos escuchará a nosotros" (128)

In contrast to the symbols of "progress" that Cardenal mocks later in the poem, he depicts the egalitarian nature of Amerindian culture. Everyone will eat the same food from the same dish: "de un mismo plato / un mismo castor" (128). The placement of these verses, directly above one another, expresses unison. The repetition of the word "mismo" also stresses the concept of equality. The repetition of the verb "girando," the pulsating drum beat expressed through the effective use of the onomatopoeia "tan-tán," and the chant of "ah uuuuum" assist the reader in formulating the mental image of a North American pow-wow.

The sterility of modern day life, however, is conveyed by words such as "tráfico," "anuncios de neón," "carreteras," "moteles," "gasolineras, y más neón," "HAM & EGGS," and "grandes fábricas." The poet's description of stifling industrial society expresses the extent of encroachment on Amerindian land. The tribe in question has been left with nothing but a tiny valley behind large factories.

The words of the defiant Indian quoted above refers to the progressive radicalization of the native movement since the 1960s, and the increased pressure being placed on North American governments to compensate for past injustices, settle land claims, and address the issue of Indian sovereignty. Cardenal, an effective teacher, establishes links between the past and present to facilitate the learning process.

Cardenal concludes the poem with the rhetorical question, "¿[y] hacia dónde van los jets? / ¿Van / hacia Vietnam?" (130). The word "van," repeated twice, conveys onomatopoeically the sound of airplanes flying over head. The letter "V" in "Van" and "Vietnam" also recalls the shape of a military flight formation, itself inspired by flocks of migrating birds. Pring-Mill has stated that "[h]owever profoundly Cardenal is moved by

the symbolic aspect of Indian life and beliefs ... his crosscutting between the past and the present is nonetheless directed at the contemporary world" ("Cardenal's Treatment" 62). Cardenal was certainly distressed by the war in Vietnam; however, it does not seem to be the focus of the poem.

As Salmon describes the procedure that Cardenal is utilizing, "the poet constantly shocks us with the reality of chaos and war in our own times ... making us realize that 'their' world and 'ours' are not different realities--they are one and the same" (xxxiii). It becomes evident, then, that Cardenal's aim is to associate past injustices with present evils, and that he is as concerned with the oppressed of the past as he is with those of the present.⁷¹

"Marchas pawnees"

In "Marchas pawnees," Cardenal condemns the ecological destruction that comes as a result of economic growth and questions whether the short-term monetary benefits are worth it in the long run. This poem is inspired by the collection of songs and stories of the North American Indians recorded and compiled by Alice Cunningham Fletcher (1845-1923). Here Cardenal portrays Tahirassawichi, the Pawnee chief who took his tribe as far north as Nebraska in the nineteenth century. Tahirassawichi's march was actually a procession of peace. His goal was "sobre todo para establecer una unión / entre dos grupos, una especie de comunión / 'y para que haya paz entre las tribus'" (*Los ovis* 144).

In "Marchas pawnees," Cardenal presents us with one of Tahirassawichi's parables for peaceful coexistence between aboriginal peoples and settlers of European ancestry:

Un sacerdote oyó cantar un pájaro una mañana
 con notas más alegres y agudas que los otros
 lo buscó y era el gorrión, el más débil

se dijo: ésta es una lección para mi pueblo

todos pueden ser felices y tener una canción. (146)

The sparrow mentioned above is a metaphor for Amerindians. Admittedly, they are vulnerable. However, their song is beautiful. In other words, they have a rich culture. The message is that human beings can and should co-exist in peace.

"Tahirassawichi en Washington"

"Tahirassawichi en Washington" continues Cardenal's portrayal of the Indian chief Tahirassawichi. Here the chief mentions that the Indians sing to the buffalo in the hut, for there are no buffalo left. The near-extinction of the buffalo was devastating for the Plains Indians whose culture revolved around the bison.⁷²

Cardenal comprehends the importance of the buffalo to the Indians when he says that: "[e]l búfalo era el Universo / la totalidad de las formas manifestadas / y comida vestido vivienda artefactos etc. todo era de búfalo" (156). Each and every part of the bison had a purpose, and unused portions were rare. The buffalo provided meat, clothing, tools, and weapons for the Indians of the Great Plains. Once numbering 60 million, by 1889 predatory killing had reduced the number of bison to about 600. The decline of the bison coincides with the decline of the culture of the Plains Indians. As the bison disappeared, so did the Indian lifestyle and the traditions that went along with it.

Cardenal relates that, in the fall of 1965, he went to Taos to meet Merton and the Indians (164-66). In the poem, a tourist from New England asks an elderly Chief if he had known the buffalo (166). The Chief replies that he had known them as a child but sadly adds, "[n]o más búfalos ... I wonder where they have GONE" (166). The capitalization of the word "GONE" reveals an accusatory tone directed to the tourist. Cardenal intervenes, responding sarcastically that the buffalo have gone "to heaven" (167). The tourist laughs as if at a joke, and the old Chief smiles sadly, "y me entendió"

says Cardenal (166). The words "me entendió" appear to indicate some sort of bond between the old Chief and the poet.

"La danza del espíritu"

The disappearance of the buffalo and the loss of tribal territory are major themes in "La danza del espíritu." Here Cardenal captures the complex reality of the North American western plains, evoking the great prophets of the nineteenth century: from Tecumseh, to Wowoka (Jack Wilson), and ultimately to Sitting Bull (Salmon xxviii). In the poem, Cardenal cross-cuts from one leader to another, reflecting the state of chaos for the Indians as the various leaders assume direction.

Prior to the arrival of Europeans in the Americas, buffalo were abundant: "[r]ebaños de veinte de doscientos de diez mil de / diez millones de búfalos ... la tierra toda retemblando con los búfalos" (150). The buffalo herds that once extended from the northeast to the south to the western mountains were so plentiful that the early settlers described them as "brown seas stretching to the horizon" (*Encyclopedia Mythica*: "buffalo").

The chaotic enumeration of the buffalo in Cardenal's poem is also found in the book of *Chilam Balam de Chumayel*, where we read that "[t]rece veces cuatrocientas veces cuatrocientos millares y quince veces cuatrocientas veces cuatrocientos centenares más, su éxodo, los ancianos jefes de los herejes Itzaes" (71). Although Cardenal is delving into the realm of the North American Indian, he may have been inspired by the confused arithmetic of the *Chilam Balam*.

The poet mentions how the Plains Indians followed the migration of the buffalo (152). Due to the systematic decimation of the buffalo by the whites, the vast herds continued to shrink: "eran menos cada año / eran menos cada año los rebaños" (152). The

words "eran menos" are repeated as an anaphora to stress their constant reduction in numbers. Gradually, the buffalo all but disappeared:

En 1810 ya no hay búfalos en Kentucky

Al día siguiente (1 de enero)

ya no hubo búfalos en Pennsylvania

Xmas de 1802 el

último búfalo de Ohio fue matado. (156-58)

The last buffalo in Ohio was killed on "Xmas de 1802." The poet may prefer to refer to the holiday as "Xmas" as opposed to Christmas, since the action that occurred on that day was not ethical from a Christian perspective. The "X" from "Xmas" may also serve as a visual metaphor for the cross.

Gradually, the Indians lost the freedom of their prairies, and each time they were moved on to more distant reservations: "ellos perdían la libertad de las praderas / llevados cada vez más lejos, a / más lejanas reducciones" (158). The verbs "perder" and "llevar," and the adverbs "lejos" and "lejanas," preceded by the adjective "más," repeated twice, assist in conveying the image of loss and displacement. As Cardenal explains, the Indians "desaparecían como los búfalos de las praderas / y se fueron sus tradiciones y sus cantos / con los búfalos" (158). The simile "desaparecían como los búfalos" is particularly fitting in the context of the poem.

As a result of the loss of the buffalo and the Indian's ancestral land, a state of social and spiritual crisis ensued, paving the way for the apocalyptic Native American movement commenced in 1888 by Wowoka, a Paiute Indian from Nevada, whose English name was Jack Wilson. The son of a mystic, Wowoka was "greatly affected by his father's teachings and experienced a vision during an eclipse of the sun" (Salmon 432).

For a time, Wowoka's Ghost Dance movement filled the spiritual vacuum. He claimed that the world was coming to an end, and a New Age was going to start. The Indians, including the dead of past ages, "would inherit the new earth, which would be filled with lush prairie grasses and huge herds of buffalo" (415).

As Cardenal states in his poem, "[m]uy pronto, en la próxima primavera / vendrá el Gran Espíritu / con todos los animales de caza otra vez / y todos los indios muertos otra vez" (*Los ovnis* 154). The path to this new life was inter-tribal harmony and strictly avoiding the ways of the whites (Salmon 415).

The Ghost Dance rituals included meditation, prayers, chanting, and especially dancing (415). Dance was the medium for catching a foresight of the promised world-to-come (415). The Ghost Dance Religion spread like wild fire and found adherents among many Indians of the Plains, southwest, and far west (415). Wowoka's Ghost Dance movement promoted brotherhood: "hermanos, todos serán hermanos / indios y blancos formando un solo pueblo" (154). His movement was non-violent: "NO DEBÉIS LUCHAR fue la enseñanza de Wowoka" (152).

Further along in the poem, Cardenal presents the contemporary equivalent of the pacific doctrine: "MAKE LOVE NOT WAR / Estar en paz con los blancos" (160). Not limited by geography or culture, such images cross over boundaries of time and space. Like Wowoka's "no debéis luchar," the hippie slogan "make love not war" is capitalized to stress its importance. One of the purposes of presenting this English language slogan is to demonstrate the cultural interdependence of the American nations. It also places the struggles of students in the 60s and 70s in a much broader temporal and cross-cultural context. By stressing the pacifist nature of the movement, the poet prefigures its violent destruction. As Cardenal states, they were Indians

Sin armas en las manos

sino manos en las manos

danzando en rueda (160)

The holding of hands, of course, is a symbol of brotherhood. The words "manos" in the first and second lines line up, perhaps visually representing the holding of hands: one on top of the other.

Cardenal thus links them to the peace movement of the 1960s and 70s and the Gandhian approach to civil rights represented by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929-68). The poet also states that "Sitting Bull profetizó que / las plumas sagradas / defenderían a los indios del fuego nuclear" (164). Once again, Cardenal associates the Indians' struggle for survival with the anti-nuclear movement that struggles for the survival of humankind as a whole.⁷³

Although the Ghost Dance movement was non-violent, the U.S. government was determined to crush its followers. Sitting Bull, the Hunkpapa Sioux chief, was killed by the U.S. Army General, Nelson Miles, for leading a prohibited gathering in "dance" in the northwest corner of the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota (Salmon 415). In 1890, the atrocity at Wounded Knee Creek took place and marked the end of the Ghost Dance. The U.S. 7th Cavalry led an attack against 350 men, women, and children of the Minneconjon Sioux, massacring more than half of them. This event marked the end of the Indians' hope. In that same year, writes Cardenal, the U.S. Census Bureau announced that there was no longer a line of frontier on the census map (415). Hence, Indian lands no longer officially belonged to the Indians (415).

The poet also alludes to Tecumseh's Rebellion of 1809-1811. Tecumseh, a Shawnee orator and visionary, is considered by many historians "as the greatest man of his age because of his wisdom, compassion, military genius, his belief in fair treatment

for all prisoners, the knowledge he acquired about White history and literature, and his strong sense of being an Indian first and a Shawnee second" (Salmon 427).⁷⁴

The rights of the natives to the land are repeatedly mentioned. Another leader, Shooting Star, declares that "[e]l Gran Espíritu dio esta gran isla a sus hijos pieles rojas" (148). He also states that "[e]l Gran Espíritu nos dio esta tierra / para que aquí encendamos nuestros fuegos. / Aquí / nos quedaremos. Y en cuanto a fronteras / el Gran Espíritu no reconoce fronteras / y sus hijos los pieles rojas no las reconocerán tampoco" (150). In the text, the word "aquí" is isolated to the far right of the verse allowing for a pause before continuing with "nos quedaremos." The emphasis on the word "aquí" conveys to the reader that the Amerindians will no longer be moved from the territories in which they reside.

"Grabaciones de la pipa sagrada"

"Grabaciones de la pipa sagrada" is, perhaps, one of Cardenal's most nostalgic North American poems. The title itself refers to Alice C. Fletcher's wax-disk recordings (mentioned earlier, they began in the 1890s) of the ceremonies, songs, and stories of the Pawnees. According to Pring-Mill, the poem is inspired by John G. Neihardt's *Black Elk Speaks*, which turned into a youth classic during the 1960s ("Cardenal's Treatment" 70). Prior to the composition of "Grabaciones," the book exploded into popularity once more when Neihardt was interviewed on television in 1970 (70).

In "Grabaciones de la pipa sagrada," Cardenal dedicates himself to relating the struggle of Black Elk against United States expansionism and presents a critique of colonial culture. The information is conveyed either by Cardenal as a third person narrator or in the guise of Black Elk as a first person narrator. This narrative cross-cutting allows the poet flexibility and objectivity, although the narrative voice of the Indian chief mirrors Cardenal's voice.

The poem commences by recounting how the Great Father in Washington, an epithet for the President of the United States, wanted the Black Hills, where the Indians had lived happily. As Salmon explains, this move was motivated by the discovery of gold in the Black Hills of Wyoming and South Dakota in 1874 (408). As a result, the United States government attempted to pacify and dislocate the regional Indians so as to secure the area for prospectors and settlers (409). The Indians refused to move from their traditional lands. This led to the conflict known as the War for the Black Hills (1876-1877) (409). As a child, Black Elk had foreseen that his people would be placed in islands to live like *wasichos*, that is, like the whites (*Los ovnis* 176). It was a vivid vision of the reservations in which they would be obliged to live, and where attempts would be made to assimilate them into mainstream colonial culture. It disrupted and destroyed their traditional way of life.

The comments made by Black Elk concerning the way of life of the whites are interesting. He explains that his mother used to say: "si te portas mal te llevan los wasichus" (172). The term "wasichu" is actually a corruption of the word *wasi'cun*, which is used disparagingly to refer to the white man (*Dictionary of the Teton Dakota Sioux Language*: "wasi'cun"). Since the term "white" rarely, if at all, is used negatively, Cardenal has opted to use a corruption of the indigenous noun *wasi'cun* to convey a condemnatory tone.

We learn from the poem that at the age of twenty, Black Elk joined Buffalo Bill's circus "para conocer los secretos de los wasichus" (*Los ovnis* 180). However, he was not impressed by what he witnessed. As Black Elk says: "[n]o vi nada que ayudara a mi pueblo / se quitaban cosas unos a otros los wasichus / no sabían que la tierra era su madre" (180). Instead of being awed by the whites' technology, Black Elk is dismayed by

their worldview. Materialism did not impress him. He was concerned with spiritual issues.

Mexican/Aztec Poems

"Nezahualcōyotl"

"Nezahualcōyotl" is a panegyric poem inspired by Texcocan court poetry. Unlike the "Cantares," where Cardenal is inspired by Nezahualcōyotl's poetry, the poet limits his content to relating the life of Nezahualcōyotl, and its socio-political dimensions, instead of attempting to assume his voice. The work, in fact, is a poetical biography of Nezahualcōyotl, "the Famished Coyote" (1402-1472) who ruled Texcoco beginning in 1431.

Cardenal establishes links of similarity between Nezahualcōyotl and himself: both were guerrilla fighters, poets, and politicians. Cardenal describes Nezahualcōyotl as "[e]l Rey-Poeta, Rey-Filósofo (antes, Rey-Guerrillero)" (214). The term "guerrillero," so typically pertaining to the twentieth century, contemporizes the struggle of the poet-king and adds historical legitimacy to the present-day struggle against oppression.

Cardenal explains how Nezahuacōyotl had changed his name from "León-Fuerte" to "Coyote-Hambriento" and wonders whether it was because of the years he spent as a guerrilla in the mountains (214). Although Cardenal's view is plausible, the argument that the mystic took on the name "Famished Coyote" because of his fondness of fasting is more convincing. The name also expressed the Chichimecan leader's longing for the divine, as can be grasped from Nezahualcōyotl's compositions.

Cardenal is impressed, above all, by Nezahualcōyotl's equilibrium between the arts and the sciences, between the sublime and the concrete, between the spiritual and the worldly:

fue Místico, Legislador, Astrólogo, Ingeniero

hizo versos, y también hizo diques

platicando de puentes y de poesía nueva

cuestiones de carreteras y cuestiones de melodía

"estas carreteras se necesitan"

"este dique aquí"

"y aquí en Chapultepec, haremos parque"

"¿Y cuáles son las corrientes?"

Digo, nuevas corrientes literarias" (*Los ovnis* 214-216)

The equilibrium Cardenal praises in "Nezahualcóyotl" is manifest in the Nicaraguan poet's verses, which abound in alliterative exposition of laborious tasks. The harmonious integration of quotes into poetry, only successfully achieved by accomplished poets such as Nicolás Guillén, demonstrates Cardenal mastery of this difficult technique.

In "Nezahualcóyotl," Cardenal finds a precursor for his own artistic as well as political endeavors. Like Nezahualcóyotl, Cardenal has been concerned with constructing not only poetry, but also a new society. Among the most interesting aspects of this poem, then, one must include Cardenal's association and identification with Nezahualcóyotl and his labelling of the Aztecs as "Nazis." In this composition, written during the Somoza dictatorship, the parallels between Nezahualcóyotl and Cardenal are striking. Cardenal's vision, which at the time seemed romantic, was prophetic in its accuracy. The balance between poetry and politics came to pass. The poet mentions how Nezahualcóyotl "[d]errocó tiranos y juntas militares" (216). Although Cardenal speaks about pre-Columbian politics, he uses the contemporary term "juntas militares" (216).

As a child, Nezahualcóyotl witnessed the assassination of his father, the King of Texcoco, from the top of a tree where he was hiding. As a result of the coup, and drawn by his instinct of self-preservation, Nezahualcóyotl fled to the mountains where he

organized a guerrilla force that eventually overthrew the usurpers of his throne. "¡Tal vez ya no dure mucho tiempo el imperio de Azcapotzalco!" the people would say (232). This yearning also echoes the yearning of the Nicaraguan people for the downfall of the Somoza dictatorship. Cardenal explains that the dictatorial rule of Azcapoltzalco finally came to an end when Nezahualcóyotl personally executed the murderer of his father King Ixtlixochitl (232).

Cardenal's focus is on the present struggles of Nicaragua when he relates these events. He stresses the democratic nature of Nezahualcóyotl's rule (216). For Cardenal, Nezahualcóyotl's rule was democratic because he ruled with the interests of the people in mind.

Nezahualcóyotl's personality is endearing to Cardenal for several reasons. Not only was he a revolutionary, he was also monotheistic, as were other Aztec philosophers. Cardenal points out that Nezahualcóyotl did not approve of human sacrifice, holding that songs (in other words, thought) not war, make people great (216). Nezahualcóyotl was surrounded by wise men, philosophers or *tlamatinimes* in Náhuatl, and as Cardenal accurately puts it, "el Emperador fue el mayor de los tlamatinimes" (216).

Considering the epidemic of illiteracy that plagued Nicaragua prior to the Sandinista Revolution, Cardenal is impressed that academic learning for the Aztecs comprised both knowledge and ethics. According to the Aztecs, education meant building character. Cardenal explains that the literal meaning of education in Náhuatl is to engrave faces: "labrar rostros" (216) and that "[t]o give them faces" means to give them "moral features" (230).

At the same time, Nezahualcóyotl boldly opposed Aztec religious influence. He was an astute man, a characteristic admired by Cardenal. Nezahualcóyotl was cognizant that his people could not resist the imperialistic onslaught of the Aztecs. Hence, he

established an alliance with Tenochtitlán, as did the Indians from Tocuca. Nezahualcóyotl's philosophy was clear: peaceful alliance, yet political and philosophical opposition on questions of principle. The result was the Triple Alliance.

Cardenal explains that Nezahualcóyotl and his fellow philosophers believed in Tloque Nahuaque, the Master of Presence and Inwardness.⁷⁵ Tloque Nahuaque is described as being "Invisible como la noche e Impalpable como el viento" (218), two similes conveying the deity's omnipresence in understandable terms.

Like Darío, Cardenal censures the Aztecs for their human sacrifices. The poet complains about the noise emanating from the temple of Tláloc, where the *teponaztli* plays all night: "[e]l teponaztli en el templo de Tláloc toca toda la noche" (218). The extensive use of alliteration of words commencing with the consonant /t/ conveys onomatopoeically the sound of the beating drum. While the teponaztli plays, the mutilated corpses of the sacrificed victims tumble down the stairs (218). Cardenal insults the Aztec ritual executioners by describing them as "hijos-de-la-chingada," followed by the innovative addition of the neologism "huitzilopochtlistas." The Aztecs thus become "[l]os hijos-de-la-chingada huitzilopochtlistas" (218).

Cardenal "quotes" Nezahualcóyotl who states that "[l]as flores de las cosas / ¡yo las deseaba ansioso!" (218). This quotation is a paraphrase of the following lines from Nezahualcóyotl's poem "Solamente él:" "[o]lorosas flores, flores preciosas, / con ansia yo las deseaba" (lines 10-11) (León-Portilla, *Literatura* 168).

Cardenal mentions the smoke of human sacrifices originating from Tenochtitlán (224). He mocks the Aztec belief that the sun-god requires blood: "[e]l Sol tiene sed' / se quejaban los sacerdotes. / Cliché / eslogan de Tlacaélel / de los nazi-aztecas" (236). Huitzilopochtli, the Aztec sun and war-god, who had an almost insatiable thirst for human sacrifice. For the Aztecs, the heart was the symbol of the soul. Hence, it was the

most highly prized offering that could be made to the gods. In normal times, hundreds of victims from within the Aztec community were sacrificed to the sun to ensure that the sun survived its trip through the darkness of night. In times of trials and tribulations many more perished, especially in the period that preceded the arrival of Cortés, during which special wars [the "guerra florida"] were waged to get greatly increased numbers of victims for the sacrifice. According to the *Larousse World Mythology*, "[t]he statement that 'Mexico bathed in a river of blood' is justified. There are countless examples. At the festivals held to commemorate the foundation of the great Teocalli in Mexico the canals in the city flowed swift with blood" (Grimal 467). By saying that "[e]l Sol tiene sed" is a cliché imposed by the Aztecs, Cardenal poet conveys the perverse absurdity of such a belief. The sun existed prior to the existence of the Aztec tribe. Hence, how could their religious leaders claim that the world would end without their blood sacrifice?

Cardenal links the oppressive Aztec rulers with twentieth century Central American dictators. The despots of the past prefigure the despots of the present. Like Cardenal, who faced censure under Somoza, Nezahualcóyotl's contemporaries also faced difficulties. Cardenal presents the quote "[l]os militares destruyen nuestros libros" (220). This quote is actually a contemporary rendering of "destruyen nuestros libros los jefes guerreros," a complaint made by an anonymous Aztec poet in "Canto a Nezahualcóyotl" (Martínez 224); and which was quoted in a slightly different translation by Cardenal in his article "In xóchitl in cuícatl" (686). The destruction of books by the military is a recurring theme in the poem (*Los ovnis* 220, 222, 230).

The poet blames the destruction of books on Itzcóatl, King of Tenochtitlán from 1428-1440, whom he accuses of being "el títere de Tlacaélel" (230). Again, the poet contemporizes pre-Columbian politics by labelling Tlacaélel a "puppet."⁷⁶ Itzcóatl, under the apparent influence of Tlacaélel, went to great lengths to destroy all documents

previous to his reign so that history would commence with him (417). Cardenal was also a victim of censure. In fact, he published *Poesía revolucionaria nicaragüense* and his epigrams clandestinely to avoid persecution. In the poem, one also find references to colonels and uniforms, which allude to modern military rule in Central America. Political executions by government-controlled death squads are for Cardenal the modern day equivalent of human sacrifice.

As Pring-Mill has pointed out, the poem marks a shift from drawing simple direct parallels or contrasts between the past and the present to exploring a major pre-Columbian confrontation between good and evil in ways which either imply or underline its presumed present-day significance ("Cardenal's Treatment" 66). Cardenal achieves this with great economy simply by using terminological crosscuttings between the two periods (66).

The comparisons Cardenal makes between the Aztec rulers and Spanish American dictators are interesting. He could be wrongly criticized for his "Manichaeian" polarization between good and evil, as well as his seemingly harsh assessment of Aztec civilization. However, when one comes across terms such as "fascistas" or "nazis" in Cardenal's poetry, one should remember that the poet uses them in a general sense. To label pre-Columbians as Nazis in a specifically modern sense would demonstrate a violation of chronology. This is not the case in Cardenal's poetry; rather, the poet is asserting that the actions and ideas of certain tribes resemble some aspects of fascism: hatred of other tribes, for example. The brutal violence of Aztec human sacrifice invokes images of the Jewish holocaust in Nazi Germany. Cardenal thus establishes a thought-link, a technique often used by the poet, between past and present atrocities.

In contrast to the violent atmosphere of the temples of the Aztecs, Nezahualcōyotl's place of worship was serene: "sin / imagen dentro ni piedra de

sacrificio" (218). The absence of images and sacrificial stones, so prevalent in Aztec society, stresses the monotheistic nature of the temple. Cardenal is impressed by Nezahualcóyotl's fight for monotheism in an ocean of polytheism. He repeatedly mentions the Poet-King's belief in the "verdadero dios," "Aquel que se inventa," the "único dios," the "Dador de la Vida" (220, 224, 226). Cardenal contrasts good and evil, faith and disbelief, right and wrong, as well as truth and falsehood.

Among other similarities Cardenal is apt to point out are the parallels between Nezahualcóyotl's combatants and modern day Latin American guerrillas. He states that Nezahualcóyotl's guerrillas sang *corridos*, ballads, in Colhuacan (220). Cardenal dresses Nezahualcóyotl in the unofficial uniform of Central American guerrillas, jeans: " [y] el Rey va de sala en sala vestido de blue-jean" (222).

Besides expanding the poetic vocabulary, the use of the Anglicism "blue-jeans," rather than the Spanish "tejanos" or "vaqueros" is an attempt to invoke modern popular culture. As Pring-Mill points out, echoing Lyons and Borgeson, "the act of describing Nezahualcóyotl as wearing blue-jeans--Cardenal's normal dress--contributes to the identification of the Philosopher-King with the modern poet" ("Cardenal's Treatment" 66). "Describir a un rey indígena de 'blue-jeans' es," Borgeson explains, "una forma de significar sus contactos con el pueblo común. Pero también es una manera de ligarlo simbólicamente, y desde su remota realidad temporal, a actividades y situaciones que hoy son tan vigentes como entonces" (*Hacia* 174). It is also an attempt to rekindle interest in Nezahualcóyotl by making him more fashionably contemporary. Not only does Nezahualcóyotl wear jeans, he also eats tacos like modern day Central Americans (*Los ovnis* 222, 216).

As well, he is attracted to the pretty Azcalxochitzin "[c]on la pintura facial estilo azteca y la mini-falda de plumas / parecía un pajarito de las tierras dei hule. / Miserere

mei" (228). The alliterations in "plumas / parecía un pajarito" and "[m]iserere mei" contribute to the musicality of the verses in question. The modern and humorous tone of this passage is appealing to contemporary readers, particularly the Latin prayer at the end, where the poet asks God to take pity of him.

Cardenal explains to the reader that Nezahualcóyotl's fighters were righteous and did not dabble in intoxicants: "[n]o bebían pulque ni comían hongos. No eran bohemios. / Pasan la pipa religiosa / y se inspiran con las jícaras de cacao" (226). As a Guerrilla-King, Nezahualcóyotl also established a series of 80 laws, each of which was "meditada con oración y ayuno" (234). It should be made explicit that Cardenal takes poetic license when it comes to Nezahualcóyotl's laws. Much of the legislation attributed by Cardenal to Nezahualcóyotl is fictitious and nowhere to be found in the King's "Ordenanzas" or "Ochenta leyes" reproduced by Martínez (248-54). According to Cardenal, Nezahualcóyotl's laws were all-inclusive, applicable to all, including royalty: "si el yerno del rey comete adulterio / debe morir" (234). Taking bribes was also forbidden: "[l]a mordida / prohibida bajo pena de muerte" (236). The term used by Cardenal is *mordida*, literally "bite," rampant today in Mexico, Central America, and Spain. Cardenal traces back this practice to pre-Columbian times. Perhaps the practice is so difficult to uproot since it is so rooted in history.

Nezahualcóyotl's ecological inclination in his approach to the law is not to be overlooked. He was an environmentalist concerned with the future of the natural resources of his kingdom, but also conscious of the needs of his people:

Dictó una estricta ley forestal
 para la conservación de bosques
 pero vio a un niño pepenando leñita sin entrar al bosque
 y suavizó la ley. (234)

Evidently, the King was flexible. Laws were not written in stone and could be amended. His benevolence also manifested itself when he forgave a criminal because of some verses he wrote (234). Although he does not cite his source, the event to which Cardenal refers is related in Fray Juan de Torquemada's *Monarquía indiana y los veintiún libros rituales* (165), but it is unlikely that the poet had direct access to the work.⁷⁷

Not only does Cardenal present Nezahuacóyotl as a merciful sovereign, but he also stresses that he was an accessible, socially conscious leader who was concerned about his people, particularly the downcast. He forbade the oppression of the poor by the wealthy (236). He assured that widows and his people in general were well cared for and well fed (234, 238). He provided his people with running water, brought from the mountains via aqueducts (238). Showing consideration for wayfarers, the King ordered that crops be planted alongside the roads for their consumption (234). The doors of his palace were open to the people (234).

His Majesty also believed in the quick implementation of justice. He decreed that "[n]ingún juicio pase de 80 días / con todas sus instancias y apelaciones" (234). In order to create a stable economy, avoid excessive spending by the government and fight inflation, Nezahualcóyotl forbade the increase of taxes, as well as any change in the size of tamales: "[q]ue se mantenga el tamaño de los tamales," adds Cardenal for comic relief (236).

The Philosopher-King was also concerned with pedagogical matters. Universal education was made compulsory (236). He divided university education into two fields: "Ixlamachiliztli" ("to give wisdom to the faces") and "Yolmelahualiztli" ("to straighten the hearts") (236). Historians who falsified the facts in their paintings were to be put to death (236). Judges were to work morning and afternoon (except on holidays) (236). The Ministry of Poetry was to be opened all day long, and the Ministry of War was almost

always closed (236). Cardenal quotes the King as saying "[m]i ideología es la No-Violencia" (238). When he finally passed away "no hubo luto. / Hubo fiesta en Texcoco. / Música en el palacio, bailes folklóricos en las calles / por orden suya" (240).

Satirizing political corruption, Cardenal claims that Nezhualcóyotl decreed that "[i]nteligentes y honrados, así han de ser los burócratas / si no no sirven las leyes" (236). Poets and artists were exempt from taxes since "la belleza es su impuesto," while composers of bad music were fined (236), another example of Cardenal's sense of humor. In assessing Nezhualcóyotl's political system, Cardenal's mindset is planted in the twentieth century: "[n]i dictadura personal, ni partido único" (236). Hence, the society envisaged and later implemented by Nezhualcóyotl was everything of which Cardenal could dream, but the direct opposite of the reality in which many Central Americans lived. The rule of Nezhualcóyotl is Cardenal's utopia.

Central American: Cuna Poems

"Los ovnis de oro"

Cardenal's socio-political inspiration in the Amerindian world is evident in *Los ovnis de oro* (1992). In "Ovnis de oro," Cardenal relates his first visit to the Tule Indians of Panama who are popularly known as the Cuna or Kuna. In the poem, Cardenal explains that he decided to visit the Cuna Indians on the suggestion of Turpana in Panama (22). This Sorbonne-educated Cuna informed him that among the Cunas of the San Blas Islands (off the coast of Panama) he would find what he likes: "una sociedad socialista" (22).

On arrival, the poet is greeted by the Cacique who welcomes him to the island of Malatupo, informing him that "[e]n la isla / 'Todo es gratis'(4). "Tendría hamaca y comida" explains Cardenal (4). He admits that "[y]o sabía del sistema comunista / de esta

desconocida nación centroamericana" and confesses that "[m]e sentía como visitante en la URSS" (4).

Cardenal points out how modernity and tradition coexist side by side among the Cunas. The typical drink of *chocula*, made with chocolate and plantains, co-exists with Coca-Cola (4). The sign on the native restaurant or club is in Spanish, although the young Cunas do not speak the language (4). They wear necklaces of monkey, caiman, and wild boar teeth, yet they have gas refrigerators and stoves (6). The bar is made of bamboo yet the shelves are filled with canned goods (6). The Cunas have thus established an equilibrium between tradition and modernity that appeals to the poet. The treatment of contrasts in this poem advances the argument that modernity and tradition can be made to be compatible.

To add to the benefits of the Cuna socialist society, Cardenal learns that "[n]o permitían desembarcar a los comerciantes" (10). As is explained further ahead, "[l]os comerciantes traen el desorden" and "crean la desigualdad" (12). Hence, they can only anchor their boats off shore and the Cunas can go there to see the merchandise (12). With the defeat of capitalism, greed is potentially abolished. Hence, crime would be difficult to conceive of in this environment, as Cardenal explains concisely in three lines of verse, each placed slightly more to the right than the one it precedes, a technique known in Spanish as *acoplamiento múltiple*: "[v]i cárceles. / Eran 3. / Vacías" (10).

The Cunas explained to Cardenal that they once founded a sovereign Cuna Republic, the Republic of Tule in 1925 (12). The Cuna nation was established after Indian leader Nele Kantule demanded increased services and more independence from the Panamanian government. The United States, fearful of disputes within the proximity of the Panama Canal, obliged both sides to capitulate and come to terms. The Cunas affirm that:

Han sido socialistas por 2 000 años.

Entre todos construyen las casas de todos.

Las tierras, de toda la tribu.

El venado, el pescado grande, repartido entre todos.

Perfecta armonía interinsular. (12)

The word "todo" is repeated to stress the brotherly nature of Cuna society. The Cunas have police, Cardenal learns, not so much for themselves but for the "civilizados" (12). The Indians use the term "civilized" ironically, in the sense of "primitive," and perhaps even "barbaric." In *El estrecho dudoso*, the poet inverted the savage/civilized dichotomy. In the case of the Cunas, there is no need to do so as the Cunas themselves have inverted the traditional dichotomy. Theft does not prevail among the Cunas for they believe in divine reciprocity: "[s]i uno roba una canoa Dios le cobraría dos canoas" (12). The houses of lumber and zinc are considered "casas del diablo" for they destroy equality (14). Equality is taken seriously among the Cunas:

Todos deben ser iguales

En 1907 se opusieron a que hubiera tiendas
porque acabarían la igualdad.

Ahora hay Tiendas del Pueblo. Como comisariatos.

Mangos, guineos, yuca,

todo lo que cogen lo reparten entre amigos. (14)

Cardenal is impressed by the democratic nature of Cuna society: "[m]uy frecuentes sus congresos, / de sólo hombres, de mujeres, / de niños, de niñas, / de niños y niñas juntos, / o asambleas generales" (14). A religious people, they commence their sessions remembering God and repeating their traditions (14). Then, they deal with the miscellaneous issues of the day (14). For the Cunas, "lo tradicional era revolucionario. /

El progreso capitalista, retroceso" (28). These two sentences could actually function as political slogans. Cardenal found an indigenous ideological home among the Cunas.

Pring-Mill has stated that "[t]he visit to the Cuna showed Cardenal that perfect communities did exist in the 'real world' and might even provide him with a viable model: his own foundation, on an island in the Solentiname Archipelago, may have owed almost as much to the example of the Cuna islanders as it did to Christian monastic tradition" ("Cardenal's Treatment" 61). Pring-Mill is correct that Cardenal was inspired by the Cunas; however, there is no textual basis for claiming that he believed their community was perfect. On the contrary, the poet points out some of the shortcomings of Cuna society, particularly, pollution.

In "Los ovis de oro" Cardenal disrupts his picturesque painting of Cuna society, only to bring in a floating piece of feces: "[u]no caga como en una pecera. / Bajo la letrina de palma / el agua de cristal, casi invisible. / La mierda flotando" (20). Cardenal concludes the poem with the same sort of image: "[l]as orillas de las islas son un cristal puro, / y uno ve el lecho del mar. / Allí llantas, plásticos, vacinillas ... / Y sobre las basuras los peces de colores" (30). The poet may either be criticizing the problems the Cunas face with waste disposal or their lack of power to protect themselves and their environment from the contaminating influence of Panamanian society. In any event, the poet is praising important aspects of a society, not portraying a "perfect" one as Pring-Mill claims.

"Nele Kantule"

"Nele Kantule" is a panegyric poem in honor of an Amerindian leader who is a model for how communities should be administered. Moderate yet pragmatic, Nele Kantule was a brilliant man grounded in both traditional and modern knowledge who "[c]uraba con cantos y con medicinas mágicas / pero también con penicilina de la Zona

del Canal" (44).⁷⁸ In altruistic fashion, he did not desire worldly power: "[n]o pretendió poder político / sino servir a su pueblo" (34). Even as the Head Cacique, "[t]rabajaba en el gallinero de la comunidad / cuando le llegaba su turno" (44).

Cardenal commences the poem affirming, through the use of parallelism, that Nele Kantule was a "modelo de estadistas presidentes / Sí, modelo de los Presidentes de América" (32). He describes Nele Kantule as the "[h]éroe de la revolución indígena de 1925 / contra los *waga* (extranjeros)" (32). The achievements of the insurrection were beneficial for the Cuna people.

He was neither a conservative nor a liberal leader, but rather a progressive and even visionary Indian one. When he brought civilization he began by teaching himself first. Among his last words to his people were "[h]agan respetar la Ley 59 de la Reserva Indígena / Y todos los demás caciques de San Blas deben unirse / como un solo hombre deben unirse / para defender los derechos del coco y su precio" (44). He understood that the price of produce would affect the lifestyle of his people, particularly if they were dependent on one main crop. Cardenal's poem is thus inspired by a socially, as well as economically conscious individual.

Mayan poems

"8 Ahau"

"8 Ahau" is a revolutionary composition, written in the style of the ancient Mayan oracles but directed in part at the Somoza dictatorship. The poet paints a dismal picture, with numerous metaphors inspired in Amerindian usage, of the oppressive and murderous clutch the Somoza regime held on the Nicaraguan population:

Palabras falsas han llovido sobre nosotros

Sí, hemos tenido un ataque de palabras

El pan de la vida

nos ha sido reducido a la mitad

Los discursos del demonio llamado *Ah Uuuc*, El-siete-muerte

Ahora nos gobiernan los coyotes

ahora los lagartos están mandando

Coge tierras Hapai-Can, Serpiente tragadora (358)

One reads about vultures that fly overhead, evil tongues, despotism, and bloodsuckers, biting vixens that collect taxes, the usurpers of power--the sons of bitches (358-40). The poet is referring to the crimes of the Somozas who plundered Nicaragua and became millionaires (*Third World Traveler*: "Anastasio Somoza, Sr. and Jr.").⁷⁹

As can be sensed, one is faced with an intense poem, filled with the poet's anger, but also with faith in the triumph of the revolution.⁸⁰ Approximately half of the poem is concerned with condemning the forces of repression, while the final half is dedicated to painting a peaceful picture of revolutionary triumph. Cardenal describes this future epoch as "el katún del Árbol de la Vida" (360), which will supersede and supplant the katún of underdevelopment.

The writer exalts the status of the poet to that of the chilam, the medicine man, and the shaman of the Amerindians. He describes poets in the following lines abundant in alliteration: "[l]os poetas, los / que protegemos al pueblo con palabras" and warns that prophecies will deceive those who have contempt for them (360). Cardenal thus places poets in the position of guardian-priests over the people.

God's decree will come to pass. Cardenal, the poet-prophet, foresees generals being arrested and imprisoned: "[v]eo ya a los generales detenidos / llevados presos" (360). He speaks of "[u]n Katún No-Violencia" with "[c]ielos tranquilos sobre las milpas del pueblo / ... en el tiempo de la cosecha de la miel" (360). The metaphor "cielos tranquilos" refers to a time of tranquility, while the biblical "cosecha de la miel" refers to

an epoch of abundance. Although rooted in the Amerindian world, the references to "generales" and to the philosophy of non-violence always link us to the present.

"Mirad la luna," he counsels his people, "los árboles de la selva / para saber cuándo habrá un cambio de poder" (360). In other words, prepare for the final assault and triumph of the revolution. He ends the poem by stating that "[m]i deber es ser intérprete / vuestro deber (y el mío) / es nacer de nuevo" (360). For Cardenal, revolution is a duty, a natural law within the order of the universe. Revolution is progress. Revolution is evolution. The inclusion of "y el mío" in brackets indicates that the poet views himself as part of the process, and not above it.

"Ardilla de los tunes de un katún"

"Ardilla de los tunes de un katún" follows in the emotive line established in "8 Ahau." In this poem, though, the focus shifts from Nicaragua to Guatemala where Cardenal sees the seeds of a new revolutionary order. Cardenal, convinced of the eminent triumph of the Sandinistas, wishes to assist the revolutionary process in Guatemala. He complains that "los niños no pueden leer las escrituras" (362). He is lamenting the loss of understanding of the ancient writing of the Mayas and/or the high level of illiteracy in the country. He understands that educating people about their rights is one of the first steps needed to launch a revolution. By "niños" he may be referring to the Pipiles, the native Náhuatl-speaking Indians of Nicaragua, or the oppressed people in general. The complaint that the eyes of the children cannot read the scriptures may also allude to censorship.

In the night, the cry of Cuy, Horned Owl, Icim, Screech Owl, can be heard in the ruins (362). "Y cuando lloran" explains Cardenal "el indio muere" (362). "Los hombres que cantan," namely the poets and priests, are being scattered (362). Knowledge has been lost and all the while "[l]os Jaguares son condecorados" (362). The writer alludes to the

Guatemalan Army's counter-insurgency brigade, responsible for the bloodshed. When Cardenal mentions the "[j]untas Militares sobre montones de calaveras / y zopilotes comiendo ojos" (362) he captures the essence of Guatemalan atrocities. Within the last decades, 440 Indian villages have been destroyed, and more than 200,000 Guatemalans have been killed, leaving 75,000 widows and 250,000 orphans (Tooley 3). One million people have been internally displaced and more than 200,000 Guatemalan refugees have fled to other countries (3).

Cardenal describes "[e]l dictador sacrificador-que-saca-corazones-humanos" in much the same way an Indian would (*Los ovnis* 362). In fact, the poet is using the technique of condensation to convey the image of the dictator. The poet also mentions the murder of Miss Guatemala at the hands of the Mano Blanca death squads. The MANO (Movimiento Anticomunista Nacionalista Organizado) has operated in Guatemala since 1966. When Cardenal condemns human rights abuses in Guatemala, Spanish America, and the world as a whole, he is also condemning U.S. foreign policy.⁸¹

The poet's invective is also directed to the American-owned United Fruit Co., the symbol of foreign economic domination.⁸² Cardenal states that "la United Fruit Co., vino a flechar / al moto, a la viuda, al miserable" (*Los ovnis* 362). "Moto" is Central American Spanish for "orphan." The writer uses the United Fruit Co. as a synecdoche for the evils he wishes to condemn. He may be alluding to the exploitation of Guatemalan workers, who not only are underpaid but also obliged to live in deplorable and unsanitary conditions.

Cardenal may be expressing concern for the grave health problems they suffer due to their unnecessary exposure to toxic substances sprayed on the crops while the workers are in the fields.⁸³ The poet also criticizes the United Fruit Co.'s vast land holdings in Guatemala. The American Co. has also been a major opponent of much needed land

reform.⁸⁴ Cardenal is cognizant of the fact that land reform would be a major step in helping the impoverished Mayan Indians achieve a degree of subsistence.

Land reform in Guatemala is long overdue. The nation has the most unequal land tenure in Latin America, with less than two percent of the landowners controlling 65% of the farmland (EPOCA 5).⁸⁵ For Cardenal, the United Fruit Co. is the epitome of opposition to land reform, which is, in a sense, an opposition to liberty. Hence, the poet puts forward the accusation that "[h]an comido Quetzal lo han comido frito" (*Los ovis* 362), repeating twice that it has been eaten. Not only has the quetzal, the symbol of freedom, been consumed, but it has also been prepared in the typical U.S. fast food fashion: "Kentucky" Fried Quetzal.⁸⁶

Cardenal prophesies that the days of foreign domination, poverty, and oppression are coming to an end: "[c]hilán Poeta Intérprete Sacerdote hacé saber / que ya llegó la primera luna llena del katún / luna encinta / El tiempo en que el Presidente vomite lo que tragó / y la reina de belleza resucite en la Estación de Policía" (362-64). The image of the "luna encinta" is rich in symbolism. The moon represents change and new life. The new katún will be an age of abundance for the people and not affliction. Mayapán "será el lugar donde se cambie el katún" (364).

The poet explains that the Mayan word *cuceb* signifies revolution. The word literally means "squirrel," that which spins (364). *Cuceb* is also the title given to the predictions for the twenty years of the Katún 5 Ahau in the *Chilam Balam of Mani* (Salmon 414). Cardenal is certain that the dawn of the *cuceb*, that is the revolution, is near and it will be the end of cupidity and greed. The true significance of the title only manifests itself at the end of the work.

"Oráculos de Tikal"

"Oráculos de Tikal" is the culmination of the two previous poems. "8 Ahau" dealt with the plight of the Nicaraguan people, while "Ardilla de los tunes de un katún" dealt with the plight of the Guatemalan people. "Oráculos de Tikal," on the other hand, encompasses the struggles of the people of Nicaragua, Guatemala, and Honduras.

The poet initiates the work explaining, in alliterative fashion, how the prophecies of the sages predicted "el fin de la codicia y el robo / el katún en que coman en común" (Cardenal, 1992: 366). The rhythm of "el katún en que coman en común" may be an attempt to imitate the the intonation of the Mayan language.

The Ah Kins are the Priests-of-the-Solar-Cult (366).⁸⁷ Although not stated in the poem, they are likely followers of Ab Kin Zoc (sometimes called Ppiz Hiu Tec), the Mayan god of poetry (*Encyclopedia Mythica*: sv. "Ab Kin Zoc"). The priests of the sun-god are clergymen, poets, musicians, and revolutionaries. They are also wise, for they worship a god with jaguar-like features that represent sagacity.⁸⁸ The priests of the sun-god incarnate what Cardenal views as exemplary and ideal leadership qualities: spirituality, creativity, revolutionary fervor, and wisdom. They are adorers of the sun, for they aim to bring spiritual light into the world and defend the people.

The priests of Ah Kin predict that when the establishment changes, the powerful "perderán el Poder y la Banca / ... los Batabes (Oligarquía) Los-del-hacha / advenedizos" will be crushed (366). The use of words such as establishment, Power, and Bank in a supposed ancient time seem to be subliminal inferences of today (Salmon xxx). The poet states that Ku, the deity, is now weeping, for the people have drunk terror as if it were *pozole* (366), a maize porridge of Amerindian origin. The simile is effective, particularly in the context of Central America, for *pozole* is often consumed in the region.

Cardenal also refers to the sadness in the eyes of the Indians "sin electricidad en su noche /--Electricidad en los güevos / tirados como venados" (366-68). The poet says "sin electricidad en su noche," not "en la noche." Hence, he alludes to the oppressive state in which they live. The verb *tirar* in this case is used in the sense of to fire a bullet. Cardenal's vocabulary aims to shock, surprise, and humor his readers. He speaks to the people, like a man of the people, using their slang and their obscenities as he deems fitting. He even uses the conversational "güevos" as opposed to the written *huevos*.

The poet presents us with the tragic reality of the Mayan Indians of Guatemala. The government fails to provide its citizens with electricity, yet the Armed Forces go out of their way to utilize electricity to torture their detainees. Cardenal captures the extent of military activity in the Guatemalan highlands by mentioning that "larga es la sombra de los cuarteles de Mayapán" (368). Directing himself to the colonels and generals, the poet declares that the people are fed up with their lewd semen; they have had enough of the hooded torturers and rapists (368). Instead of presenting us with statistics concerning rape victims, the poet personalizes the crime of sexual assault by mentioning the name of one victim: Doris (368).

Cardenal alludes to the United States when he says that "despótico es su imperio" (368). He also denounces North American involvement in regional affairs as the intervention of the Generation of Apes (368). The Mayas have traditionally depicted the god of the North as having the head of a monkey (*Animals* s.v. "monkey"). The North, in this case, represents North America--the United States. As can be appreciated, "[g]eneración de Monos" is a clever metaphor for the United States. In any event, one must be familiar with the Mayan Pantheon in order to decipher it.

Cardenal proceeds to lament the castration of the sun (368). In other words, the brutality of the Guatemalan regime, coupled with the blindness of United States foreign

policy, has left the Guatemalan people in obscurity and oblivion. It has contributed to the castration of life.

Cardenal pictures the president of Guatemala with a sacrificial flint, putting to death the Mayan Indians whom he describes as "[v]íctimas-Venados" (368). The deer represents docility and can be considered the indigenous symbolic equivalent of the lamb in the Christian tradition. Cardenal longs to see the day when "ya no nos llamarán los extranjeros 'La Tierra del Venado' / Tierra-de-muy-buenos-venados / pobre venadito huérfano que lame toda mano!" (370). No longer does he want his people to accept servitude and exploitation. The childish mode of expression and the use of the diminutive "venadito" expresses the poet's affection for the deer-victims. The docility of the deer is also conveyed by the fact that they are prone to licking each and every hand that is stretched out to them. The mode of expression in question also reflect the attitude of contempt the forces of repression express towards the Mayan people. In fact, the diminutive in Spanish is also used with an element of sarcasm to talk down to people.

Cardenal wonders how much has to be given to Ubico, Carias, and the Somozas to sate them (368). He singles out some of the most notorious Central American dictators. He condemns the forced labor imposed by Jorge Ubico (1878-1946), Guatemalan general, president, and ruthless dictator from 1931-44.⁸⁹ The poet also singles out Tiburcio Carias Andino (1876-?) the Honduran general and dictator (1932-48), as well as the Somoza family in its entirety. Nicaraguans suffered under Anastasio Somoza (1896-1956) from 1937-47, and again from 1950-56. Thereafter, they were victimized under Luis Anastasio Somoza Debayle (1922-67), son of Anastasio Somoza, who ruled from 1956-63 after the assassination of his father. The nepotism continued with Anastasio Somoza Debayle (1925-80) Nicaraguan soldier and politician, son of Anastasio Somoza,

who served as president from 1967-74, and again from early 1979 until his overthrow by the Sandinistas in July of the same year.

All of the above public figures were notorious for their abuses of human rights. Cardenal advises the Spanish American people to stand strong and have faith, for the rule of the "mamadores / los animales-gente" and "el general gran mamador adúltero" will not continue forever (368). The pejorative "mamadores" is inspired by Mayan usage. In the *Chilam Balam de Chumayel*, the Mayan oracle states that "[n]os cristianizaron, pero nos hacen pasar de unos a otros como animales. Y Dios está ofendido de los Chupadores" (107). Evidently, *chupador* and *mamador* are synonymous and can be interchanged. The poet may therefore have been influenced by a translation which used the word *mamador*. The poem continues with Chilam Balam, the interpreter of Ku, who says, weeping, that "[s]us parrandas y desorden serán manifiestos" (368).

Soon, the revolution will shed light on the lives of the people, and misery will be relieved. As the Mayan oracle predicts, "[e]l pueblo tomará posesión del Gobierno, del Banco," and the people will no longer have to turn their maidens over to the Casino (370). Furthermore, "la tierra ya no le abrirá sus piernas a los gángsters / a los invasores" (370). In other words, the land, its resources, and its people will cease prostituting themselves to foreign interests. "Esto será el mero final de los mamadores," says the poet-priest in words echoing the colloquial speech of Central American Natives, "en la costa del mar nos mofaremos / del maligno Xooc, Tiburón" (370). Besides being alliterative, the use of the phoneme /m/ imitates the sound of sucking. Here again Cardenal makes effective use of alliteration.

The triumph of the revolution signifies the triumph of indigenous America. The face of Ku, the Deity, will be manifest, and the Priest-of-the-Solar-Cult and the Chilanes will be heard, "[e]l Quetzal abrirá sus alas en el cielo de Guatemala" and "volverá la

música / sonarán las sonajas en el cielo del Petén" (372). The alliteration in that last line helps to conjure up images of music. The repetition of the phoneme /s/ also onomatopoeically conveys the sound of the rattle or maracas. This statement is qualified, though. As the poet says, "puede que suceda, puede que no suceda" (372). Evidently, the onus for change is on the people. Without oppressed people, there cannot be oppressors. Hence, in the eyes of Cardenal, the burden is on the oppressed to oust the oppressors and assume popular power.

The writer then concludes the work in the same fashion as the Mayan oracles, reaffirming that this is a reading of a sacred esoteric text that will only be grasped when there lives a pure and saintly priest: "[e]sto se entenderá si hubiere un Ah Kin con alma íntegra y santa" (372). Cardenal's conclusion is an echo of the final words of the book of *Chilam Balam de Chumayel*: "¿[q]ué Profeta, qué sacerdote, será el que rectamente interprete las palabras de estas Escrituras?" (164). Although Cardenal based himself on an earlier translation, the similarities are noteworthy and manifest the intertextuality of Amerindian sources.

"Katún 11 Ahau"

"Katún 11 Ahau" is a composition in which Cardenal, inspired by the mode of expression of the Mayan sages, points out the parallels between ancient and modern Central America, both of which were faced with recurring disasters and revolution. Cardenal's extensive use of collage is manifest in the poem. In fact, he paraphrases sections of *El libro de los libros de Chilam Balam* that deal with the repetition of the year 11 Ahau.

The poet speaks to us about the "[k]atún de muchas flechas y deshonrosos gobernantes, / de tristeza en las chozas, / cuchicheos, / vigilancia en la noche" (352). The "muchas flechas" refers to generalized violence, the "deshonrosos gobernantes" refers to

those who violate human rights, while the "tristeza en las chozas" refers to the anguish of the impoverished families of the murdered or disappeared. The "cuchicheos" refer to the whispers of political dissidents who fear to express themselves openly. The "cuchicheos" also refer to the whispers of the *soplones*, members or agents of the secret police. The death squads typically act upon the accusations made by the *soplones* or prompters. The "vigilancia en la noche" refers to the fear of the death squads, who typically operate at night.

Cardenal describes a katún in which people weep for the burned books and for the exiles from the kingdom (352). It is a time of "[a]varicia y pestilencia y rocas y calaveras" (352). The use of polysyndeton in this verse is an effective means of presenting an accumulation of negative images. It also coincides with the manner of speaking of an uneducated Mayan Indian. Cardenal's "exilados del reino" (352) find their equivalent in the *Chilam Balam de Chumayel* which laments the disappearance of the priests of the Mayan religion: "[l]os sacerdotes se acabaron, pero no se acabó su nombre, antiguo como ellos" (68).

The images of greed in Cardenal's poem are also found in the *Chilam Balam de Chumayel* where one reads about the "chupador del pobre indio" and the "principio de la esclavitud por las deudas, el principio de las deudas pegadas a las espaldas" (68). Cardenal associates rocks with greed in the same way as the priest of Chilam Balam, who states that: "[s]e comerán piedras, se perderá todo sustento dentro del *Once Ahau Katún*" (67). The oracle also conveys images of violence and death: "¡[q]ue eran niños pequeños los muchachos de los pueblos, y mientras, se les martirizaba!" (68).

In the poem, the rulers of the age are Chief Wild Cat and Chief Honey Bear, whom Cardenal describes as "[e]l jaguar del pueblo" (352). These names are possibly derived from chapter two of the *Chilam Balam de Chumayel*, which mentions "el

Anticristo sobre la tierra, puma de los pueblos, gato montés de los pueblos" (68).

Although the names of the oppressive rulers are in Spanish in Cardenal's text, their English rendering sounds noticeably North American in nature. It is possible that this echo of U.S. popular culture may have been meant to brand the tyrants as *gringófilos*--Yankee-lovers.

An Amerindian interpretation of these names is also possible. Images of jaguars, for example, are prevalent in Olmec art. Numerous figures, sometimes referred to as "were-jaguars" (as in werewolves), are part human, part jaguar (*Mesoamerican Encyclopedia*: "Altar 4, La Venta"). This, however, should not be taken literally, for one should be conscious of the fact that indigenous peoples tend to describe others on the basis of character. Hence, if individuals were particularly cruel, they would be depicted as fierce animals. Amerindians typically condense moral or physical descriptions into images in order to implicitly characterize individuals. The symbolic value of the jaguar passed on to the Mayan culture. Among the ancient Mayan Indians, rites and sacrifices were made to the jaguar god (*Animals*: "jaguar").

As one can imagine, Cardenal is much repulsed by human sacrifice and would thus be an opponent of the jaguar-god. The Aztec warrior-god Tezcatlipoca is also depicted as a jaguar. Tezcatlipoca was a spreader of discord who would promote disorder amongst nations in order to keep the flame of war burning (Villanes and Córdova 39). Cardenal's dislike for the religious practice of human sacrifice, as well as the imperialism of the Aztecs, whom he likens to Nazis, is evident. It is safe to say, then, that in this case the term "jaguar" is utilized negatively and is a synonym for "dictators," although it is often used by Mayan Indians in a positive sense, referring to wisdom.

In the poem, Cardenal also speaks of "[e]l katún de la colecta de tributos" as well as the "robo del tesoro enterrado en la milpa" (352). The katún of assessment of the

tributes alludes to indentured labor, while the theft of the treasure hidden in the cornfield alludes to the meager price developing countries are paid for their crops. In fact, in many Spanish American countries, dependence upon a single crop is dangerous as their economies are at the mercy of fluctuating prices. The verse can be viewed as a critique of both feudalism and capitalism. In the *Chilam Balam de Chumayel* katún 11 Ahau is described as "el principio de los depojos de todo ... el principio de la continua reyerta, el principio del padecimiento ... el principio de los ... fiscales" (68).

"Katun 11 Ahau" also depicts the age of invaders, of "enemigos de la tierra" (352), an allusion to foreign intervention in national affairs. In this particular case, it alludes to the U.S. government's support for the Somoza regime. The original katún 11 Ahau from the *Chilam Balam de Chumayel* also deals with foreign invaders: "[e]n el Once Ahau se comienza la cuenta, porque en este Katún se estaba cuando llegaron los Dzules, los que venían del Oriente" (67). Katún 11 Ahau is also described as "el principio de las peleas con armas de fuego, el principio de los atropellos" (68).

As dismal as this picture appears, the poet predicts a time when the katún of the Cruel Men will end, when the katún Tree of Life will be established under a charitable ruler. It will be the katún "Unión-con-una-Causa" (354). The *Chilam Balam de Chumayel* also speaks of unity: "[n]o para vender traiciones gustaban de unirse unos con otros" (68). In his contemporary Chilam, Cardenal alludes to the struggle headed by the Sandinistas. The poet explains that a cause must have unity if it is to triumph. The establishment of the new regime will result in good living conditions, and beauty and happiness will return to the land. The oppressor of the masses will be brought to justice: "[e]s arponeado el maligno Xoc, Tiburón" (356).

Once again, Cardenal presents the careful reader with a challenging metaphor for an evil doer. The "xoc" is a salt-water fish identified as a bull or cub.⁹⁰ The presence of

this fish from across the ocean symbolizes a foreigner in some Mayan glyphs. Cardenal may be stating that the evil Xoc is a foreigner, or at least, an agent of foreign powers, in this case, the United States. Now that the Shark has been condemned to death, and the people are under the guidance of legitimate lords, "[e]s el tiempo de construir sobre la vieja pirámide / una nueva pirámide" (356). The poet promotes progress, not a return to the past or a scorched earth policy. He implies that one must construct on the basis of what one inherits.

"Mayapán"

In the poem "Mayapán," Cardenal explains that, in the Classical Period, Mayan cities "no tenían defensas" (338). Mayapán, though, was different, for it was a walled city. The writer describes the condition of Mayapán. He mentions the totalitarianism, centralism, and the cultural poverty of the Cocom family's military régime.

Cardenal recounts that after the dynasty of the Hunaac Ceel, King of Mayapán, the Cocom dynasty remained in power for 250 years (340). As Salmon has documented, the Cocoms ruled authoritatively and despotically over the Mayans and the Izamal in the Yucatan Peninsula until defeated in 1441 by Ah Xupan (413). Cardenal explains that "Cocom, que quiere decir en maya: 'Enredaderas de flores amarillas, familia Somoza, Mata Palo'" (342).

Cardenal links the Cocom family to the Somoza family. He explains that the Cocoms had Aztec bodyguards, and sold Mayas to foreigners. The poet criticizes the Somoza family's links to the U.S. military and accuses them of selling out the Nicaraguan people to U.S. interests.⁹¹

Cardenal explains that Mayapán was bound to fall, and it did, thanks to the Ah Xupan rebellion that occurred in the year 1441 (342). According to White, "the poet also projects the successful rebellion of Ah Xupán into a revolutionary future: in 1979, a

decade after Cardenal wrote his poem, the Sandinistas were victorious in Nicaragua" (185). Unfortunately, as the poet points out, the nobles of the area continued to fight one another for power until the arrival of the Spaniards.

A similar parallel can be drawn with the Nicaraguan situation. Although the revolution triumphed in 1979, the Nicaraguan people could never fully reap the harvest of liberation due to the distress and destruction caused by the U.S.-funded Contra rebels. In the poem we read that the revolution was bloody, and "[t]odos los Cocom asesinados / no, menos uno, el chavalo que estaba en Honduras o no sé dónde" (342). This scenario resembles the flight of Somoza III to Paraguay, where he was later assassinated in 1980.

The poet complains that although the revolution triumphed, civil war ensued (342). Pyramids were no longer built, palm huts replaced temples, and the roads were not repaired (342). The following verses appear to prefigure the Sandinista triumph and the Contra rebellion that impeded the reconstruction of the nation. Understandably, the prophets predicted bad katúns, evil fortune:

13 Ahau: "ningún día de buena suerte para nosotros"

11 Ahau: "avaro es el katún; escasas las lluvias ... miseria"

7 Ahau: "pecado carnal, gángsters en el gobierno"

5 Ahau: "malo su rostro, malas noticias"

10 Ahau: "sequía es el peso de este katún" (342)

The presentation of the prophetic voice is in line with the stylistic and rhetorical norms of the *Chilam Balam de Chumayel*, particularly chapters 12-14 including "La rueda de los Katunes," "Vaticinios de los Trece Katunes," and "Las últimas profecías." Although the prophecies in Cardenal are gloomy, the colloquial style of the language gives them a somewhat humorous tone. The use of the Anglicism "gángsters" instead of *pandilleros* adds to the popular tone of the verse, but also alludes to the nefarious influence of U.S.

foreign policy in the region. As Borgeson has pointed out, "[e]l uso del lenguaje cotidiano, lejos de traicionar una escasez de recursos expresivos, más bien exige extraordinaria destreza y sensibilidad para dar una poesía rica, sin incurrir en los evidentes peligros" (*Hacia* 90).

Pring-Mill argues that in "Mayapán" Cardenal speaks not only as a chilam but also like an Old Testament prophet in his combination of "denunciation" and "enunciation" ("Cardenal's Treatment" 64). Salmon holds that the prophetic voice projected by Cardenal in the Indian poems is consistent with both the biblical as well as the indigenous tradition of America, whether it be that of the shaman, the chilam, or the North American Indian medicine man (xxvi). Pring-Mill points out that these are the very words used by Cardenal to describe his *Salmos* (64). The critic describes the poem as "a tablet, predicting a (political) eclipse that presages the downfall of Somoza" (65). This image can be grasped from the following lines from the poem:

El final de la estación de las lluvias.
 Defiende de las plagas y el hambre.
 Distribuye la comida en los días de hambre.
 Supervigila la labrada de las estelas,
 diseña los nuevos templos,
 entrega las tabletas con los eclipses. (356)

The prominent role of the chilam in society comes as no surprise. As Pring-Mill explains, "[t]his is the role which Cardenal has set aside for the modern poet-priest as the initiator of social change" (65). The critic also expresses that many of these values were put into practice at the micro level in Solentiname.

The writer describes the pottery of Mayapán as monochrome and monotonous, similar to "gasolineras en una carretera de Texas" (340). The modern sense of this simile

assists in refreshing poetic expression. For the purpose of artistic authenticity, the poet prefers the name Texas to its Spanish version. Perhaps this is a way of alluding to the fact that Texas was a Mexican territory that was annexed by the United States.

Cardenal mentions the "[e]jecuciones en masa para el Más Allá" and explains that atheism originated in Mayapán (340). Note the use of the terms "en masa" with its industrialist connotation. Previously unknown to the Mayas, bows and arrows were imported by the ruling class (340). One also notes a reversal in the architectural emphasis. The best masonry was now "en la casa de los nobles no en los templos" (340), demonstrating that materialism and class privilege had supplanted spirituality and religion. Good sculptures were to be found in the houses of the rich, while mediocre sculptures were found in the temples. They were molded in bad, porous clay. It was a case of "dioses en serie, mass production, assembly line, Henry Ford" (340).⁹² The symbolic value of these English words is evident for, as Borgeson has pointed out, they evoke the sterility of modern life (*Hacia* 95). The critic rightly observes that the criticism is not limited to the socio-economic system of the United States, but extends to Western society in general (95).

Cardenal explains that "los / mayas actuales / no recuerdan a Quetzalcóatl" (344). What the writer means is that contemporary Mayas do not remember *the ways* of Kulkán- Quetzalcóatl or his doctrine. They have been reduced to an impoverished cultural level. Unlike the architecture of the past, in Mayapán "[l]as columnas [son] una mierda," states the poet quite crudely (338).⁹³ All that remains of Mayan art is arts and crafts (344).

Cardenal lays the bulk of the blame on the military: "la culpa fue de los militares / Mayapán no maya" (344). In other words, the military corrupted the essence of Mayan society. He spends a few pages exalting the accomplishments of Mayan civilization.

Thereafter, he presents a collage of truncated texts from the *Chilam Balam*, after which he prophesies: "[y] yo digo pues que caerá Mayapán / En este katún siempre cae Mayapán la amurallada" (350). Pring-Mill points out that one of the intended resonances is the biblical echo of Jericho ("Cardenal's Treatment" 64). In any event, the poet is utilizing the technique of foreshadowing to predict an eventual revolution in the region.

The poet then returns to the present-day plight of the Mayan Indians, reproaching once again the military dictatorships. The Mayan people have been reduced to cheap labor for developed countries: "[e]l hule maya para la Goodyear / el chicle maya para Chiclets Adams / La culpa fue de los militares, y ahora / en la pared de palma el calendario de CARLOS OCHOMOGO & HNOS / pin-up-puta peinándose" (350).

The repeated use of English names such as "Goodyear," "Adams," and "pin-up" expresses the poet's opprobrious attitude towards the encroaching socio-economic influence of the United States in Spanish America. The poet wishes to blame multinationals for their role in exploiting natural as well as human resources: the Mayan Indians, for example. The company "CARLOS OCHOMOGO & HNOS" is capitalized to indicate that it is the name of a company or to give the impression that it is a sign or a billboard. The alliterative words, "pin-up-puta peinándose," may be crude, but they indicate that the poet condemns not only economic exploitation, but "sexploitation" as well.

It is not the poet, however, who degrades the female model by labeling her a whore. Cardenal is merely conveying how she is viewed by segments of society.⁹⁴ Perhaps this is why we find the preponderance of the occlusive phoneme /p/ which assists in creating the image of spitting.

Cardenal quotes the British anthropologist John Eric S. Thompson (1898-1975), one of the leading authorities on Mayan civilization, who said that "el dinero juega un

papel muy insignificante / en la economía maya" (350). Thompson also explains that "[n]inguno aspira a recibir más de lo justo ... porque sabe que sería a costa de otro" (350). The poet stresses this detail as it conveys the communitarian ethics of the present-day Mayan people: all must be equal. In fact, the Mayan Indians of Chiapas, Mexico, will kill any member of their community who attains a higher level of living than the others. Any excess wealth must be distributed among the community.

South American Poems: Minor Tribes

"La tierra que Dios nos entregó"

"La tierra que Dios nos entregó" describes an impoverished and diminishing South American Indian tribe. The poem relates Cardenal's visit to another remote tribe of Indians that could only be reached after much peril and hardship: "[p]rimero a caballo bordeando el mar. / Cuando no había camino metiendo los caballos en el mar. / Haciendo nadar los caballos en el mar entre las grandes olas / en las bocanas llenas de tiburones. / Los caballos relinchando entre las olas. / Con peligro de caernos del caballo / entre los pez-espadas y tiburones" (54-56). The truncated nature of these verses resembles the words of a man out of breath, relating an adventure as briefly as possible. They also seem to imitate the ebb and flow of the waves. No adornments are added to embellish or dramatize the story, for the event being related is, in itself, adventurous enough in its facts and details. In fact, its direct style is reminiscent of travel literature. It is sufficient for the poet to repeat that he was mounted on a horse, that the horses were struggling to swim in the ocean among the menacing waves, while stressing the danger of falling into the surf infested with sharks and swordfishes.

The writer finally arrives at the Indian village and meets with the leader of the decimated tribe that now consists of only 250 individuals (56). Cardenal is aware that most of them were infected, "yo sabía que la mayor parte tuberculosos" (58); however

this does not impede his effort to reach this remote tribe in order to gather data for his poetic works. The fact that he risked his health and perhaps his life to contact Amerindian tribes demonstrates Cardenal's commitment to the native cause.

The poet also explains his motivation in contacting remote tribes: his desire to document their culture, much like an anthropologist. It is therefore evident that Cardenal is moved by more than a desire to find socio-political and religious similarities between his beliefs and those of Amerindian tribes. He expresses a genuine desire to contribute to the documentation of cultures in peril.

Cardenal finds it sad that the tribe's Cacique only considers settlers and non-Indians "libres" (56). Although the poet sympathizes with the plight of the natives, he also understands the poverty and misery of the local settlers. Cardenal does not seem to share the Cacique's view that the poor Colombians are even remotely "free."

The Cacique complains at length that the "free men" are stealing their land "[c]omo si las tierras se las hubiera dado el gobierno" (56). The Cacique explains that land does not belong to the government: "Dios nos dejó tierra buena para el cultivo. / Para ser permanente" (56). The Cacique also complains that the settlers are hunting and at the same time frightening away the wildlife that his tribe depends upon for food and that it is becoming increasingly difficult to feed the children (60). He sees no need for the settlers to hunt wild animals when they raise cattle for food (60).

As the Cacique reaffirms his people's ancestral rights to the land, the manner of speech of the Amerindian leader is faithfully conveyed to maintain a degree of local color: "[n]osotros no vamos a cambiar la tierra de nosotros. / Nosotros no vamos a abandonar esta tierra donde fue derramada / la sangre de nosotros cuando los españoles, / y desde entonces estamos aquí, / y desde nuestros abuelos y nuestros antes-abuelos /

estamos viviendo aquí tranquilidad. / Y ahora últimamente no puedo estar tranquilamente" (58).

The issue of land claims is a political one, and the Cacique must communicate with Bogotá on a regular basis, with governors and ministers (58). Indeed, the issue of native sovereignty and land ownership is one of the most difficult issues that American nations have to contend with. He explains that the Governor of Antioquia promised he would help the tribe but the Cacique does not seem to have high hopes (58). Like many North American natives, the Colombian Amerindians find themselves trapped in a seemingly endless series of expensive, time-consuming negotiations concerning their rights to their ancestral territories. Cardenal understands that judicial solutions are unlikely to resolve the issue of land claims, for there is little political will to do so. Hence, negotiations continue for generations without any foreseeable solutions.

The Cacique then poses Cardenal some questions about the Indians of the United States and Nicaragua (58). He also wants to know how many Indians there are in the Americas, to which Cardenal answered that there are 30 million (58). The poet is silent at this point, for, in the back of his mind, he may recall that in 1492 before the arrival of the Europeans, there were no less than 80 million inhabitants in the Americas.⁹⁵ As Cardenal responds, he is also thinking "cuánto canto, mito, misticismo, sabiduría misteriosa, poesía / había para América / en esos 30 millones. / Y por eso estábamos con ellos en esa selva" (60). The poet can certainly appreciate the cultural richness of present-day indigenous culture, but he also regrets that so much of it has fallen into oblivion as a result of the disappearance of hundreds of tribes and languages.

Cardenal's mission is clear. His goal is to attempt to recover what he can of the cultural richness of indigenous America and to disseminate it via his poetry. As Pring-Mill has pointed out, *Los ovnis* is a work in which Cardenal, not only extends his

Amerindian coverage but also moves away from his former preoccupation with the discovery of "messages" in the past. Instead, he gives at least equal attention to the anthropological description of today's endangered peoples, conducted in a substantially more "documentary" mode ("Cardenal's Treatment" 71). The poet wishes to broaden people's horizons and foment a fascination with the native world. By drawing attention to the plight of the aboriginal population of the Americas, the writer hopes to sensitize people to the native cause.⁹⁶

"Los yaruros"

"Los yaruros" describes a tribe that is nearly extinct. This poem is based on Cardenal's article "Los yaruros: el pueblo escogido," and, in part, on his 1977 visit to meet the remnants of the Yaruros. In many instances, the poet has rendered the prose of the article into verse, quoting his original article word for word and retaining its repetitive nature. At times, the poet changes the order of the words and resorts to the use of ellipsis.

Among the overwhelming similarities between the article and the poem, we find: "[d]espués de esa comida, que era la única del día, ya no hacían nada" ("Los yaruros" 274): "[d]espués de esa comida, la única del día, / [y]a no hacían nada" (*Los ovnis* 78); "[a]sí se estaban contemplando las estrellas en la noche callada, y el paso de los meteoros que según ellos son los mensajeros de Kuma que atraviesan la noche" (274): "[s]e estaban contemplando las estrellas en la noche callada / y el paso de los meteoros, / mensajeros de Kuma que atraviesan la noche" (78). These are but some of the similarities. There are many more.⁹⁷ The technique of personal intertextuality is efficient, permitting the poet to publish the same research in two formats--prose and verse--and to reach different audiences.

The poem in question portrays the plight of an indigenous tribe on the edge of extinction. The Yaruros, who prefer to call themselves the Pumeh, that is, "the (Chosen)

People," are a tribe of an independent language family living in the south central area of the state of Apure in Western Venezuela. The Yaruros call the whites "rationales" (80). The rationals, they hold, "los habían explotado siempre y les quitaban sus mujeres" (80). In his article, Cardenal explains that "[s]i se negaban a dar las mujeres los mataban a machetazos" (276). They told Petrullo, the North American anthropologist who conducted the first ethnographic study on the Pumeh, that "[u]n tiempo ellos eran muchos" but that now few were left (80-82).

Cardenal commences the work by painting a picture of the simple, nomadic lifestyle of these Indians. They are a people who live for the moment, hunting and gathering the bare necessities for their one daily meal while "pensando / en la vida bienaventurada que les esperaba, / después de ésta, / en la dichosa Tierra de Kuma" (*Los ovnis* 78). Kuma is the goddess of the Yaruros. The simplicity of the Pumeh way of life, and its spiritual richness, appeals to the poet. Paraphrasing Petrullo, Cardenal explains in his article that "[h]ay un gran contraste ... entre la pobreza material de los yaruros y la riqueza y la intensidad poética de su mundo espiritual" ("Los yaruros" 276).

The poet explains that the plains of Venezuela were once the home of numerous native tribes of which little is known and which have vanished from the face of the Earth (*Los ovnis* 80). They include the Tamanachi, the Guamos, the Achaguas, and the Otomacos (80). Cardenal explains how the encroachment of civilization contributed to the destruction of entire peoples: "[l]os llanos convertidos en fincas. / En el río Capanaparo sólo quedaban 150 yaruros / y otro más en el Cinaruco. Eso era en 1934 / cuando los visitó Petrullo. Y estaban a punto de extinguirse. / Un pueblo perseguido, sabiendo que su extinción era inminente" (80). Although not mentioned in the poem, Cardenal explains in his article that the Yaruros believed that their extermination would mark the end of the world ("Los yaruros" 285).

They consoled themselves in the belief that Kuma, their Goddess who lives in the west, "esperaba que murieran todos para recibirlos en su Tierra. / Pidieron al antropólogo una foto de Kuma o la Tierra de Kuma" (*Los ovnis* 82). As Cardenal explains in his article, the Yaruros believed that the Land of Kuma had an ideal climate, was devoid of trees and diseases, and was a place where the "civilizados" would no longer bother them ("Los yaruros" 284).

How a group of semi-nude wanderers could live day and night in a world full of mystery impresses the poet (*Los ovnis* 82). Rightly so, for among the Yaruros "no hay barreras que separen el mundo natural del sobrenatural" ("Los yaruros" 285).

The Yaruros, facing almost certain extermination, were obliged to come to grips with their impending doom. They now saw in the skies that "estaban condenados a morir, pero pasarían a un mundo mejor" (84). It was easy to make them talk about Kuma and the world they would go to, but no other topic interested them as much. They were reluctant to talk about their other beliefs "porque la vida para ellos en este mundo había prácticamente cesado./ Como grupo su voluntad de vivir había terminado. Veían inútil / tratar de mantener su cultura en contra de los racionales" (84). As Cardenal explains:

Sabían que estaban condenados a perecer
 y su único consuelo eran Kuma y la Tierra de Kuma.
 Seguían yendo a cazar el cocodrilo y la tortuga, la iguana y el sahino,
 a pescar el tonino y el manatí, y a recoger el changuango,
 y se consolaban con el canto y la danza, el contacto con Kuma,
 pero ya no tenían la voluntad de vivir. (84)

The Yaruros did not fear death for "era la cosa que deseaban" (86). Their ideal of paradise was the way the Americas were before the arrival of the whites, immaculate and unspoiled (86). They had no explanation for the superiority of the whites "a no ser por la

maldad de los blancos" (86). The Yaruros are obsessed with the sky. They believed that they were the first people ever created, and that is why they were given the plains where the sky's expanse is much greater, so that they can have the greatest contact with Kuma (86). Cardenal aptly describes them as "[u]n pueblo de místicos, obsesionados por el cielo" (86). When Petrullo departed, the Pumeh were sad, for "[q]uedaban solos, dijeron / sin nadie con quien hablar de cosas religiosas / más que con ellos mismos" (86).

When Petrullo left, the Indians did not go hunting, because they were sad, and the North American anthropologist was certain that they would soon be extinct (88). Nevertheless, he was wrong; there are still Yaruros, to whom Cardenal personally paid a visit in 1977. The bulk of the poem is based upon Cardenal's 1963 article, which in turn was based on Petrullo's field-work. The remainder is based on the poet's personal visit to the Yaruros fourteen years later, which adds an entirely new dimension to the work.

The Yaruros no longer live along the Capanaparo or by any other river. All of their former hunting grounds have been converted into ranches. Dispossessed of their ancestral territory, the Yaruros now live in a filthy camp: "[s]u campamento polvoriento: con conchas de tortuga, calabazas, / junto a recipientes de plástico, viejos, rotos, / y latas de supermercados, chopeadas, oxidadas / como sacadas de un basurero" (88). The accumulation of words associated with squalor assist the poet in conveying the image of poverty and wretched living conditions. A woman in the camp asked Cardenal's party for "ropa vieja" (88). Having lost their only means of subsistence, the once proudly independent Pumeh people have been reduced to beggary.

Cardenal and his party passed by a large property "robado a los yaruros" (88). The poet does not hide his sympathy for the Yaruros. Along the way they encountered some youngsters who descended from their private plane with cokes and chilled beer (88). The writer does not have to comment on this scene. The reader can easily comprehend that

these are the usurpers of the land of the Yaruros who can afford the luxuries of private planes while the rightful owners of the territory they occupy live in abject poverty and misery. As night falls, Cardenal admires the star-studded sky in its awe-inspiring beauty and prays that Mother Kuma will defend the Yaruros who yearn for the return of their ancestral land: "Madre Kuma defiéndelos" (88).

The poet then presents an apology for Christianity when he states that: "[n]o toda religión es opresión / instrumento de clases dominantes: / cuando la religión no es propiedad privada sino bien común / no es enajenante" (88). Cardenal shows an awareness of the Marxist view that "religion is the opiate of the people" and qualifies it.⁹⁸ Religion can be good, Cardenal believes, when practiced properly and positively.⁹⁹

The poet also views the sky from a political perspective. He explains that the Milky-Way has no central body: "es una especie de república / donde los movimientos de los miembros / están regulados por las fuerzas gravitatorias combinadas / de todos los miembros de la población estelar. / La república de los cielos. (No es monarquía)" (90). The poet may be using the term "monarquía" in lieu of *oligarquía* or *dictadura*, as the term implies a lack of democracy. In fact, monarchy is not a problem in the Americas: military dictatorships and oligarchies are. The poet has thus used an older concept and superimposed it onto present-day problems.

Cardenal expresses his sense of oneness with the universe and his sense of belonging, of not being alone: "[l]a seguridad de no estar solos en el cosmos" (90). Perhaps Cardenal wishes to project what he views as the natural law and order of the republican universe onto human society. Perhaps this is why he mentions that, while listening to Radio Havana, he learned that his friend Carlos Agüero, a guerrilla leader, had been killed with a bullet through his heart, a bullet, "[c]omo maracas de yaruros" (90), a simile that conveys the sound of the fatal shot. The poet may also wish to compare

the pain caused by the death of his companion with the suffering of present-day Pumeh Indians.

The writer may be implying that the only solution for the Yaruro Indians is a complete change in the socio-economic system. Cardenal may have been alleviating his sense of helplessness caused by his inability to concretely help the Pumeh Indians by reminding himself that he was an active member of a revolutionary movement in Nicaragua which aimed to resolve the same kind of socio-economic problems that he was witnessing in Venezuela. After leaving the Yaruro Indians, Cardenal may have been convinced more than ever that the only way he could change the plight of the natives was by changing the socio-economic system: only a revolution could solve such problems. This belief has continued to dominate his poetic perspective.

"La Arcadia perdida"

Cardenal's socio-political inspiration in the Amerindian world is also evident in the poem "Arcadia perdida" but with a new twist. In this case, the benefits of pre-Columbian America are combined with the beneficial contributions of the monastic communitarian lifestyle of the Jesuit priests. In "Arcadia perdida," the poet finds a balance between positive aspects of Amerindian life, Roman Catholic faith, and "socialist" ideals. The Paraguayan missions embody Cardenal's ideological Trinity: nativism, Catholicism, and communism.

"La Arcadia perdida" deals with the Jesuit mission in Paraguay that was obliterated by Spanish forces in 1767. The poet marvels at the outstanding achievements of this mission in the middle of the jungles of Paraguay. The title of the work alludes to the poet's utopian vision of the mission.¹⁰⁰

Viewed as an ideal implementation of socialism, Cardenal confers the name of "Guaraní Republic" on the mission. He praises at length the well-ordered nature of the

community (92-96). Cardenal repeatedly mentions the happiness of the inhabitants of the mission. He mentions the "[j]uventud risueña" and the twelve-year-olds that played melodies on the harp (92). Further ahead, the poet states that the Guaraní Republic had applied Plato's principle of "[l]a felicidad por la justicia" (102). It was an "democracia económica," explains the poet, "[s]in la explotación del hombre por el hombre" (94). The death penalty did not exist, for this was "[u]n régimen de dulzura y de paz" (94).

The Tupí-Guaraní Indians had an army, not for conquest, but for self-defense. For over a century nobody dared to attack them, and they flourished. They had no form of money whatsoever (96). Articles were obtained without money, and gold and silver were only used for altars (96). Prices corresponded to real value, that is to the work employed to produce it, and nobody received surplus value. Private commerce was prohibited, and there were no intermediaries, whom Cardenal labels "parásitos" (96). The entire production was oriented to the satisfaction of everyone's needs, and every kind of profit was forbidden (96). There were no boundaries, no private property, as the land belonged to all. Agriculture was compulsory (96). Cardenal claims that common labour was livelier, happier, and more efficient than private labor (96). The inhabitants of the mission paid no rent on their houses, transportation was free, and foodstuff was fairly distributed, thus eliminating beggary (96).

This was not a socialist state where all were equal in their poverty. On the contrary, there was abundance in the mission. Everyone worked a six-hour day, and there was no division between school and life (96). All went out to harvest with joy, since it was everyone's harvest (98).

At the end of the harvest, a formidable feast was held (98). The community supported the elderly, the sick, and the widowed (98). All worked without wages, and in return they received everything they needed, including free medical care and medicine

(98). The sick were cared for according to their needs and not their work (98). The words "mío" and "tuyo" were unknown in the Guaraní Republic (100).

Since they had no money, Cardenal deduces that they had no inflation. It was "[u]na Utopía en la selva," says the poet, where there was no recession and no unemployment (98). Cardenal states that "[e]l concepto de reducir la pobreza y la riqueza / era el de Platón y el de Perón" (98). It might seem difficult to justify the allusions to Plato and Juan Perón in this context, but one must consider Cardenal's ability to focus on one particular aspect while excluding others. In this case, the poet wishes to stress what he views as Plato's and Perón's goals of establishing greater economic justice. Cardenal is referring to Plato's utopic *Republic* and Perón's *justicialismo*, an ideology that advocated creating a balance between capitalism and communism, impeding exploitation while permitting limited free enterprise and ensuring solid social programs.

Cardenal states that the young people from the mission "se casaban por amor y no por interés," alluding to Marx's belief that marriage among the bourgeoisie was a form of prostitution since they married for economic as well as for class reasons (100).¹⁰¹ This was not the case in the Guaraní Republic. Cardenal claims that no one was idle and no one was burdened with an excessive workload in the mission (100).

Cardenal describes the Jesuit mission as "[e]l único estado del mundo que no tenía clases sociales" (100). Pring-Mill describes their rule as "an example of benevolent priestly paternalism" ("Cardenal's Treatment" 70). Cardenal explains that the missionaries drew inspiration from Sir Thomas More's *Utopia*, Tomaso Campanella's *Civitas Solis*, Plato's *Republica*, Bacon's *New Atlantis*, and perhaps Sidney's *Arcadia*; and, most importantly, from Inca society (100).

In "Arcadia perdida" we learn that, although it enjoyed a century of excellence, the Guaraní Republic was destined to come to an end, not as a result of any inherent

inconsistencies, but rather as a consequence of outside intervention. In July 1767, Governor Francisco Bucarelli decided to "libertarlos" against their will from what he viewed as a "sistema totalitario" (102). Bucarelli issued orders to carry out the mandate of Charles III for the expulsion of the Jesuits from the Paraguayan-Argentine missions (Salmon 409). The swift departure of the Jesuits "brought a near-immediate and wholesale end to the once powerful and extensive mission network of the Jesuits" (409). Cardenal challenges the notion of totalitarianism applied to the mission by stating that consensus does not imply lack of freedom (102).

The poet then presents us with the results of Spanish intervention in the mission: fields without cattle, deserted offices, empty workshops, the Guaraní scattered in groves, and churches and schools crumbling (102). With the arrival of the whites came profit, and as a result the Indians became day laborers for the settlers (102). The settlers built fences, and common property was abolished (102). Even with the introduction of a new economic system, "en el siglo XIX / guaraníes seguían siendo comunistas a escondidas" (102). Once again, the writer establishes links between communism and the egalitarian way of life of the indigenous inhabitants. He explains that:

Ya antes de los jesuitas habían tenido la selva en común

(todo lo que vuela en el aire

lo que nada en el agua

lo que crece libre en los bosques

lo habían tenido todo en común).

Y comunismo volverán a tenerlo los guaraníes. (104)

Interestingly structured, these verses commence with a statement in the pluperfect, contain a clarification presented in rhythmic form as a result of the anaphora "lo que,"

and conclude with another statement, this time in the future. Hence, what once existed will exist again. This circularity is reinforced by the hyperbaton of the last line.

After describing the ruins of the idealized mission, the poet expresses the tragic realities of poverty and child slavery to point out how a once great, peaceful, and prosperous people have been reduced to misery. Cardenal explains that "aquí, en estos lugares, ahora mismo, / un niño tupí-guaraní / es vendido por 80 guaraníes (75 ctvs. de dólar). / Los descendientes de los que vivieron antes en la Utopía de Moro / ahora son pordioseros ante los buses en Puerto Stroessner" (106). These final verses allude to the rule of Alfredo Stroessner who seized power in Paraguay in 1954.¹⁰²

"Los hijos del bosque"

In "Los hijos del bosque," we learn that even in the eyes of the creatures of the jungle, the whites are foreigners and a threat to the natural order, while the natives, living in harmony with nature, are viewed as brothers and sisters of the animals. According to the beliefs of an anonymous Paraguayan tribe, there is a bird that cries, "¡[p]eligro! ¡La gente blanca está cerca!" while another sings, "¡[l]os hermanos vienen!" (114). Unfortunately, like many other tribes, the Paraguayan tribe has been dispossessed of its beloved jungle. As Cardenal explains: "los paraguayos les quitaron todas las selvas" (110). Consequently, they have come to despise whites for multiple reasons: "[n]os quitaron las selvas. / Nos destruyen nuestras pobres trampas" (114).

This tribe of Paraguayan Indians has suffered so extensively at the hands of the whites that they have dehumanized them. The Indians refer to "[l]os ataques de quienes no son Personas" (114). They believe in a heaven called Paragua, the hunting land of their souls, where they will have the opportunity to "cazar a los blancos en sus sueños" (114). Reduced to a state of subjection in this worldly life, they console themselves with

the belief that there will be reciprocity in the hereafter. Although unsettling, their hatred is comprehensible. As a matter of fact, "[e]n el Paraguay matarlos no es delito" (114).

Cardenal informs us that the average life span of a captive Indian child is less than 15 years. The poet relates that in the Leipzig Ethnographic Museum one can even find the skull of an Indian child on display (114). The poet finishes the poem mentioning once again that "[p]ara ellos," that is the Indians, "todo es palabra, / y están cantando su muerte" (114). They are singing the death of life. They are doomed.

South American poems: Inca

"El secreto de Machu-Picchu"

"El secreto de Machu-Picchu" is a fascinating composition grounded in Cardenal's personal knowledge of the Peruvian situation. Dealing with the Lost City of the Incas, the work is an exploration of Andean messianism via the myth of Incarrí that has supplanted that of Huiracocha. Due to its importance, we shall briefly discuss the myth before entering into our analysis of the poem.

There are numerous versions of the post-Hispanic myth of Incarrí; however, the gist of them all is the same: the Spanish god decapitates the legendary Incarrí--Inca, King, and son of the Sun--who is left powerless (Paz Varias 18-19). As a result of the Christian god defeating Huiracocha, the dynamic god of fertility, hunger has spread through the land (Salmon xxvii). But there is hope, for since the Inca is eternal like the Sun, from whom he is descended, "the Inca ... is reincorporating himself from the head down" (Salmon 416). In turn, this reincorporation is made possible by the Inca belief in "latent" semi-gods residing in the underworld (Villanes and Córdova 312). Once this metamorphosis is accomplished, "the reintegrated emperor will return order to the Andean world" (Salmon 416).¹⁰³

In his poem, Cardenal explains that the existence of Machu Picchu was the solemn secret of the Quechua-Aymara Indians: "[e]n cuatro siglos ningún indio habló" (*Los ovnis* 400). "Ni el Inca Garcilaso supo de esta ciudad," says Cardenal, "[h]a sido el secreto mejor guardado del mundo" (400). It was still unknown in the twentieth century, "[a]unque en la selva amazónica se sabía de una ciudad de piedra / habitada sólo por mujeres. / --De ahí lo de las Amazonas" (400).

It was only in 1911 that an Indian guide led Hiram Bingham to its site. In order to preserve the secrecy of Machu Picchu, which means the "Old Peak," the Quechua-Aymara Indians never referred to it by name. Instead, they alluded to it. Their password was "[p]usaj ('Bajemos'). / Bajemos a la selva. / Vamos a la noche, a lo oscuro, a la selva" (388). They also expressed it in songs: "[v]ete tras las montañas blancas" (388). They referred to Machu Picchu as the turtledove that appears so often in their love songs (388).

The Spanish authorities forbade the Quechua-Aymara people to refer to their lost nation: "[l]es estaba prohibido pintar todo lo incaico. / Pero se ingeniaban para aludir a su Reino perdido / y esperado de nuevo" (390). One reads how the Quechuas used to paint lovely fields full of flowers or representations of flights into Egypt in the Churches (390). The Spanish towns were grey and sad, with slaves, while Egypt was depicted as fields with flowers and birds (390). The Spanish, of course, did not understand (388). The Spanish towns represented Hispanic domination while Egypt represented the Inca empire.

Cardenal describes the devastating effects of the conquest on the Indian population of Peru: "[l]a llegada de los europeos volvió el mundo al revés. / El mundo ordenado de la superficie / quedó bajo tierra" (390). "Los dioses andinos están ahora en el subsuelo," the poet explains (392), referring to the Quechua-Aymara belief in latent semi-gods. He also alludes to the fact that the Indians had to hide their true beliefs to avoid religious persecution.

When Atahualpa was killed by Pizarro, "reinó el caos sobre la tierra. / El centro carnal del universo fue asesinado. / El Inca era el principio de la vida. / Con su muerte el río se tiñó de sangre. / El tiempo se redujo a un parpadeo. / Las lágrimas fueron torrentes como los afluentes del Amazonas" (392). In this simile, Cardenal expresses the sadness of the Quechua-Aymara Indians.

Although there was once a distinction between the sun-god and the Inca, by the time of the conquest these lines had long been blurred, and the Inca was viewed as the very manifestation of the deity. Hence, the death of the Inca must have been truly traumatic for the Quechua-Aymara people. As Cardenal expresses, the Inca was the principle of life. Water, the symbol of life and purity, became contaminated with blood, perhaps as the result of the bloodshed that accompanied the conquest.

Many Quechua-Aymara Indians despise Caucasian people. The only consolation the Andean natives have is their messianic hope in the return of Incarrí, and their belief that they will rise up and exterminate the whites. Cardenal understands this harsh reality and its roots. He knows that the arrival of the Spaniards initiated an "age of chaos" for the Indians. "Los europeos son la tiniebla, Nónki, la serpiente acuática / que debe ser destruida. Se espera / que el mundo dé otra vuelta," he explains (390). The Europeans are darkness, for they extinguished the light of the Inca Empire.

In Andean culture, the serpent represents *amaru*, a destructive force erupting from beneath the earth in an attempt to re-create balance when relations of equilibrium are not maintained in the social and natural universe (Griffiths 6). The manifestation of *amaru* "testifies not to the defeat of satanic forces but, on the contrary, to the revitalization of the native supernatural world" (6-7).

According to Frank Salomon and George L. Urioste, "*Amaru* is the great mythic water serpent, virtually omnipresent in Andean myths, and usually symbolic of disorder

erupting in the transition to a new world" (93 n. 399). Anne Marie Hocquenghem has likewise noted of the mythical serpent that "[t]he *Amaru* arises at the moment of natural and social catastrophes resulting from a relationship of unequal forces, because of a disequilibrium. The appearance of the *Amaru*, sudden and violent, is a sign of change, of alternation, of *pachacuti*" (212).

Although Cardenal's usage of the serpent as a symbol of evil is more consistent with Christian as opposed to Andean belief, this is not necessarily the case. When the poet says that *Nónki* must be destroyed, he is referring to the present age of oppression of the Andean Indians. As we have seen, the presence of *Nónki* is associated with a change in the social order. Hence, Cardenal speaks of doing away with the present *Nónki*, or social order, and not doing away with the incoming *Nónki*, who will usher in a new age for the Quechua-Aymara Indians.

Cardenal discusses the Peruvian revolution of Túpac Amaru (392) as an attempt to attain a new age. He may be referring to Túpac Amaru, who led a rebellion to establish a neo-Inca state and was killed by the fifth Spanish viceroy, Francisco de Toledo in 1572 in an attempt to quell native resistance. On the other hand, the poet may be referring to Túpac Amaru II who rebelled in 1780 and was killed by colonial authorities. It is also quite plausible that the writer's reference encompasses both revolutionary leaders, thus expressing the continuity of the struggle against colonialism and imperialism.

Although some scholars hold that the play *Ollantay* pre-dates the conquest, Cardenal links the work to Túpac Amaru II's revolution. He alludes to the play with the conviction that it was a subversive work. "Su representación era de una princesa" one reads, "[u]n río rojo. Una flor. / Un español malo y uno bueno. Y la princesa era la que salvaba" (392). "El indio debe haber estado tan dormido," for not having grasped the

subversive message the play advocated (392). However, "[c]uando empezó la Revolución y vieron los afiches de Tupac Amaru / el pueblo casi despertó" (392).

The weight in these verses in on the word "casi" for, as history attests, Túpac Amaru II was not successful. In 1781, the forces under viceroy Agustín de Jauregui y Aldecoa defeated him, and he and his family were tortured and executed. Túpac Amaru's execution also coincided with an eclipse and earthquakes throughout the land.¹⁰⁴ One wonders why the poet did not include such rich apocalyptic imagery in his poem, as it could have been used to great effect.

The plight of the Andean Indian has remained unchanged since the defeat of Túpac Amaru's revolutionary forces. To this day, the natives only seem to revive during their festivals (392). The rest of the time, "están dormidos, explotados" (392). The poet associates sleep (in the sense of lack of social consciousness) with exploitation.

The poet ponders the symbolic value of Machu Picchu, "[e]n el cielo como vuelo de cóndor" (392), a simile that might represent the precarious existence of the secret city or its remote yet elevated station. The poet refers to the national bird of the Quechua-Aymara Indians, the symbol of the freedom they have not attained. Cardenal views Machu Picchu as "la capital de la resistencia cultural" (394). Not only is the Old Peak a symbol of the past, it is also a symbol of the future.

Cardenal quotes the words of an old Quechua man to a researcher which explains the supposed decline in popularity of Runasimi, the Quechua language: "Perú comienza en el lago Titicaca / que es el sexo de nuestra Madre Tierra / y termina en Quito que es su frente. / Lima dicen es su boca y Cuzco su corazón palpitante. / Lima es su boca. Por eso nadie, ningún peruano / quiere hablar nuestra lengua" (394-96).

By the metaphor "sexo de nuestra Madre" the elderly Indian means the birthplace of his nation. Quito is the forehead of the Quechua-Aymara Indians, namely, its

intellectual center, for it was the most northerly city of their empire. Lima is the mouth of the Mother, for as a cosmopolitan center it allegedly reflects the state of the Quechua language. Cuzco represents the heart of the mother, since it was the capital of Tahuantinsuyu.

Cardenal then proceeds to discuss José María Arguedas' discovery of the myth of Incarrí and the faith the Quechua-Aymara Indians have in his return. The Quechua-Aymara Indians, Cardenal explains, have always had a clear vision of the changing world. They hold that "[c]ada mil años el mundo muere y vuelve a nacer" (396). They call the millenium "Pachacuti," which means change. "Pachacuti," the poet explains, was the collective hope of the ancients (398). Walls were knocked down, but the stones later fit back again perfectly (398). The faith of the Quechua-Aymara Indians is firm when it comes to "Pachacuti," the Last Judgement, "[c]uando los indios harán trabajar a los blancos" (398). It is a return to the time of the Inca, but not a return to the past, says Cardenal (398). It is when the Indians, "príncipes en harapos" (388) as Cardenal describes them, recover their elevated position in relation to the Spaniards.

Cardenal proceeds to criticize the so-called reform-minded government of General Juan Velasco Alvarado (1968-1975) for failing to implement land reform and for lacking courage (398-400). "Hubieran dejado Lima / y vuelto a hacer la capital en el Cuzco. / Todos los quechuas lo entenderían: La cabeza se había juntado con el cuerpo" (400). The poet then quotes an old Bolivian man facing Lake Titicaca:

Hace mucho, mucho tiempo, cuando había todavía Tahuantinsuyo,
éramos libres.

Después el pueblo sufrió y lloró mucho.

Un llanto como para llenar otra vez el Titikaka.

Un día el Dios Viracocha se compadeció de su pueblo.

Mandó decirnos por medio de los sabios:

"El pueblo sufrirá por mucho tiempo.

Hasta creerán que no saldrán ya nunca de este estado.

Yo mismo no daré más señales de existencia.

Pero llegará un día, no olviden de trasmitirlo a sus descendientes,

en que encarnaré en un grupo de hombres justos y valientes

que los libertarán a ustedes. Yo se los prometo." (402)

The repetition of "mucho" in "[h]ace mucho, mucho tiempo" stresses the length of time that the Quechua-Aymara Indians have been subjugated, almost 400 years, in fact. The separation and central location of the words "éramos libres" conveys the deep longing felt by the Quechua-Aymara Indians for their lost empire. The quote from Viracocha also indicates the strong messianic currents that still flow in the hearts and minds of the Andean Indians.

Although the Quechua-Aymara Indians were conquered, and Cuzco was no longer the navel of the world, Cardenal believes that Machu Picchu became the new place of the virgins of the Sun (402). Cardenal concludes the poem quoting his companion, who states that "Machu Picchu ahora es turismo. / Los caminos de Machu Picchu son interiores" (404). Hence, having lost the physical symbol of hope, the Quechua-Aymara Indians have now interiorized their hope.

"Economía de Tahuantinsuyu"

"Economía de Tahuantinsuyu" is one of Cardenal's best-known compositions. The work evokes the poet's socialist vision of Quechua-Aymara society. Unable to find religious equivalents of his convictions among the Quechua-Aymara Indians, Cardenal focuses on their economic system. The writer explains that although the Quechua-Aymara Indians had much gold and silver, they had no currency (374). The insistence

that the empire of the Quechua-Aymara Indians did not know of money, "no tuvieron dinero," converts itself into a kind of *estribillo*, stressing the socio-economic consequences of the absence of money.

The poet also claims that there was neither corruption in the administration nor any embezzlement (376). Administrators, he explains, were held accountable for their actions (376). According to Cardenal, there was no commerce or money in Quechua-Aymara society, and therefore there was no slavery: "[n]unca se vendió ningún indio / Y hubo chicha para todos" (376). The poet explains that, without a currency, the Quechua-Aymara Indians "[n]o conocieron el valor inflatorio del dinero" (376). The currency of the Quechua-Aymara Indians was "el Sol que brilla para todos / el Sol que es de todos y a todo hace crecer / el Sol sin inflación ni deflación: Y no / esos sucios 'soles' con que se paga el peón (que por un sol peruano te mostrará sus ruinas)" (376). The word "Sol" is used positively as an anaphora, and is contrasted with the currency, the "sol," which is used negatively.

Cardenal also states that financiers were not the creators of Quechua-Aymara myths (376). By making such a claim, he wishes to criticize the immense influence of the mass media in shaping the consciences and cultures of developing countries. The poet criticizes what he views as the progressive Americanization of the world and denounces the mass media's dissemination of North American popular culture and its materialistic values.

Criticizing modern day materialism, the poet states that, unlike capitalists, the Quechua-Aymara Indians worshipped their gods instead of money (374). Cardenal explains that "porque no hubo dinero / no hubo prostitución ni robo" (374). Hence, "las puertas de las casas las dejaban abiertas" (376). One of the things that shocked the Quechua-Aymara Indians most during the conquest was how the Spanish invaders broke

into their homes. Violating the sanctity of a home was scarcely conceivable considering the rigid moral nature of Quechua culture.

Cardenal relates how the arrival of the Spaniards also coincides with the introduction of money, and, consequently, greed. The Spaniards stole the gold from the temples of the Sun, and soon ingots with Pizarro's initials went into circulation (376). Along with the new economic system came the imposition of taxes that, in turn, brought the first beggars (376). The economic infrastructure of the Quechua-Aymara Indians was obliterated: "[e]l agua ya no canta en los canales de piedra / las carreteras están rotas / las tierras secas como momias" (376). The poet uses the metaphor "cantar en los canales" to convey the sound of the flow of water.

Cardenal points out that the name of the founding father of Quechua-Aymara civilization, Manco Capac, actually means "[r]ico en virtudes y no en dinero" (376). His translation is not literal, however, for Manco Capac is merely a metaphor for "rico en virtudes." The addition "no en dinero" is Cardenal's and heightens the significance and possible implications of the name. This is actually a case of prefiguration, preparing us for his antithesis that "el dictador es rico en dinero y no en virtudes" (384).

Cardenal describes Quechua-Aymara society as "[u]n sistema económico sin MONEDA / la sociedad sin dinero que soñamos" (378). The alliteration of the phoneme /s/ imitates the sound of the snake, or *amaru* in Quechua, which symbolizes revolution and a new order. Cardenal refers to the monastic orders of the early Christians that more closely resemble Quechua-Aymara society. The Quechua-Aymara Indians "[n]o tuvieron dinero," Cardenal continues, "y nadie se moría de hambre en todo el Imperio" (378). "MANTENER LOS INDIOS OCUPADOS / era un slogan inca," Cardenal affirms (378). He also holds that "no había ociosos ni desocupados," although whoever could not work would be fed (378).

Cardenal explains that Quechua-Aymara Indians who worked in the mines were not exploited under Inca rule (380), although under colonial rule, they were. The writer implicitly alludes to the eight million people who died in the mines of Potosí in Bolivia during the colonial period (OXFAM 7). Such exploitation motivated by greed could scarcely be conceived by an Quechua-Aymara mind. Fishing for pearls was also forbidden, and "[y] el ejército no era odiado por el pueblo" (Cardenal, *Los ovis* 380).¹⁰⁵ Hence, the poet criticizes obliquely the Peruvian Armed Forces. "La función del Estado," explains Cardenal, "era dar de comer al pueblo" (380), which has not been achieved in Peru since the rule of the Inca.¹⁰⁶

One learns that, among the Quechua-Aymara Indians, "[l]a tierra del que la trabajaba / y no del latifundista" (380). The echo of Emiliano Zapata's (Mexico, 1883-1919) cry "la tierra a quien la trabaja," itself an echo of Marx, is evident in this line of verse. There was land for all, as well as free water and fertilizer from coastal water birds: "no hubo monopolio de guano," says Cardenal humorously (380).

Animal rights is another of the aspects of Quechua-Aymara society admired by Cardenal: "[h]ubo protección para los animales domésticos / legislación para las llamas y vicuñas / aun los animales de la selva tenían su código / (que ahora no tienen los Hijos del Sol)" (380). In order to stress the dehumanization the Quechua-Aymara Indians have faced, the poet states that animals have more rights than natives in Peru. This is true to a certain degree in present-day Peru, but it was more the case in the 1970s, when the poem was composed. Until the 1970s, land sold in Peru and Bolivia was sold with all the Indians who inhabited it. They were essentially reduced to slaves of the landholder. This feudal system was still in place when Cardenal wrote his poem and was scandalized that forms of slavery still existed in the Americas in the twentieth century.

Another aspect that merits mention is Cardenal's vision of the Quechua-Aymara Inca economic system. According to the writer, the Incas had implemented what he considers to be a form of "comunismo agrario" (382).¹⁰⁷ Cardenal recognizes the validity of Neruda's statement that, although there was social security in the socialist empire of the Incas, there was no freedom. Cardenal admits that

no todo fue perfecto en el "Paraíso Incaico"

Censuraron la historia contada por nudos

Moteles gratis en las carreteras

sin libertad de viajar

¿Y las purgas de Atahualpa?

¿El grito del exilado

en la selva amazónica?

El Inca era dios

Era Stalin

(Ninguna oposición tolerada)

Los cantores sólo cantaron la historia oficial

Amaru Tupac fue borrado de la lista de reyes (382)

It is thus evident that Cardenal does not blindly praise Quechua-Aymara society. There is a critical assessment of their socio-economic system. Although the positive elements are appreciated, he does not forget the relatively repressive basis and the monopoly of power at the root of such abundance. Cardenal grasps that, for the Quechua-Aymara Indians, "[l]a verdad religiosa / y la verdad política / eran para el pueblo una misma verdad / Una economía *con* religión" (382). As Borgeson observes, "Cardenal quiere pintarnos el concepto de un universo unido, que perdió la civilización europea hace siglos ya y que

anhela recuperar ... podemos buscar al hombre nuevo en el mundo nuevo" (*Hacia* 64).

Cardenal states that:

las tierras del Inca eran aradas por último
 primero las del Sol (las del culto)
 después las de viudas y huérfanos
 después las del pueblo

y las tierras del Inca aradas por último (382)

Cardenal then proceeds to compare Inca rule with colonial and post-colonial rule. What was once an empire of *ayllus*, *ayllus* of working families, in which fauna and flora were divided in *ayllus*, and where the entire universe was seen as one great *Ayllu*, has now been replaced by latifundia (384). The land that could not previously be taken, for it belonged to all and was the Mother of all, now belongs to the landowners. Where there were once abundant harvests, there is but poverty. The Quechua-Aymara Indians used to celebrate their harvest with songs and chicha, says Cardenal (384). But under the capitalist world-order "hay pánico en la Bolsa por las buenas cosechas /--el Espectro de la Abundancia" (384). Abundance is viewed negatively.

The poet includes segments from the stock market. In order to highlight this collagistic technique, he presents the business news in capitals: "AZÚCAR MUNDIAL PARA ENTREGAS FUTURAS BAJÓ HOY / ... / LA PRODUCCIÓN MUNDIAL ALCANZARÁ UNA CIFRA SIN PRECEDENTES" (384). As a religious, socially conscious man, Cardenal implicitly denounces the strategy of hoarding foodstocks to create artificial shortages in order to hike prices.

The poet mourns that a once glorious civilization finds itself in utter decay: "el tejido se ha hecho pobre / ha perdido estilo / ... / el dictador es rico en dinero y no en virtudes / y qué melancólica / qué melancólica la música de los yaravíes" (384). The

yaravís are Quechua-Aymara songs of lamentation. The repetition of "qué melancólica" has the effect of stressing just how gloomy the yaravís are. The repetition also allows for an emotional breathing space: a sigh, perhaps between both lines. The poet explains that some Quechua-Aymara Indians can only escape their worldly misery by immersing themselves in drugs and alcohol. The writer implies that the high rate of alcoholism among the Quechua-Aymara Indians is the result of the loss of their empire:

A los reinos irreales de la coca
 o la chicha
 confinado ahora el Imperio Inca
 (sólo entonces son libres y alegres
 y hablan fuerte
 y existen otra vez en el Imperio Inca) (386)

Conquest is traumatic on a people. They remain scarred even centuries after the event. In an attempt to cope with their anguish and oppression, they fall into many vices. The poet refers to the "reinos irreales." Having lost their worldly kingdom, the Quechua-Aymara Indians now search for surreal kingdoms in the sky. Cardenal wonders what destiny holds for the Quechua-Aymara people:

¿Volverá algún día Manco Capac con su arado de oro?
 ¿Y el indio hablará otra vez?
 ¿Se podrá
 reconstruir con estos tiestos
 la luminosa vasija?
 ¿Trabar otra vez
 en un largo muro
 los monolitos

que ni un cuchillo quepa en las junturas?

Que ni un cuchillo quepa en las junturas

¿Restablecer las carreteras rotas

de Sudamérica

hacia los Cuatro Horizontes

con sus antiguos correos?

¿Y el universo del indio volverá a ser un *Ayllu*? (*Los ovis* 386)

The image of Manco Capac with his golden plow recalls Darío's image of Moctezuma with his golden chair found in his "Palabras liminares" (*Poesías* 613), and provides us with an interesting comparison between Darío and Cardenal. While Darío admired the product of labor, Cardenal is more concerned with the process of labor. The luxury, splendor, pomp, and extravagance of indigenous royalty fascinated and inspired Darío. Cardenal, on the other hand, is more impressed by what he perceives to be an egalitarian society with an efficient infrastructure. This point is important as it summarizes some of the differences between the two poets: aesthetic versus social concerns, and literary *indianismo*, with its focus on glorifying the Amerindian past, and literary *indigenismo*, which is more concerned with a realistic depiction of the societies in question.

Cardenal concludes the composition by suggesting that, unlike most tourists, his voyage was not to the Museum, but to the Beyond (386). Just like the mummy who squeezes her pouch of grain in her dry hand with a firm belief in the afterlife, Cardenal wishes to believe that the Quechua-Aymara Indians have a future in which there will be the same sense of community and oneness with the earth of their ancestors, a solidarity much stronger than the one existing among Peruvian Indians in present times.

Cántico cósmico

Cántico cósmico (1989) is Cardenal's most ambitious literary work to date. Written over a period of thirty years, the work is rapidly gaining recognition as Cardenal's greatest poetic achievement and the masterpiece of his literary production to date (Williams xi). Although the lengthy poem deals with the evolution of the universe from a scientific perspective, it also deals with a multitude of socio-political and philosophical questions that continue to interest the poet. As can be expected, the indigenous world plays a significant, although secondary role in *Cántico cósmico*.

In fact, the indigenous element in Cardenal's literary production has reached a stage of integration in *Cántico cósmico*. Instead of being at the forefront of his poetry, the indigenous presence has been smoothly blended into its background. No longer combative, the indigenous element has been subtly synthesized into Cardenal's verse. The poet may feel that the voice of indigenous America has been heard, and that he has succeeded in integrating the Indian voice into the chorus of Spanish American voices and the voices of humanity as a whole.

It is perhaps for this reason that Cardenal informed Borgeson in 1992 that he did not intend to return to the indigenous theme ("Nueva Poesía" 257, n. 7). It is not that the indigenous element will not be present in his poetry, but it will not be in the foreground. Rather than an abandonment of the native theme, in *Cántico cósmico* one finds it in symbiosis with other themes. The indigenous element no longer limits itself to the Americas: it has extended itself to indigenous cultures throughout the world, from the South Pacific to Africa, and from Asia to Australia.

As one has come to expect, the socio-political commentary in *Cántico cósmico* is strident. In "Cantiga 18: Vuelos de victoria," the poet defends the Nicaraguan revolution, insisting that, as a result of the Sandinistas' triumph, Nicaragua was free for the first time

since the time of the Indians (187). In "Cantiga 23: Oficina 56000," the writer quotes some counter-revolutionary newspaper headlines, capitalized to stress their stridently propagandistic nature, in order to justify limiting the "freedom" of the press under the revolutionary regime:

NICARAGUA PAÍS TOTALITARIO
LOS SANDINISTAS PERSIGUEN A LA IGLESIA
MISKITOS MASACRADOS
TERRORISTAS...

Por eso, periodistas yankis, se censura "La Prensa." (265)

In order to further exonerate the Sandinistas from the charge of persecuting indigenous peoples, Cardenal points out the hypocritical stance of a world community that failed to speak out against the atrocities committed against the Miskito Indians by Somoza III. In "Cantiga 26: En la tierra como en el cielo," one learns about a Miskito Indian who had his eyes gouged out, his tongue cut out, and his mouth sewn shut with barbed wire by Somoza's forces of repression (291). As Cardenal points out, this atrocity occurred "[c]uando nadie hablaba de miskitos en el extranjero" (291). The poet also points out how misguided it is for people to believe that the Sandinistas killed three million Miskito Indians when the population of Nicaragua does not even reach three million inhabitants (291).

The violation of the human rights of indigenous peoples is of grave concern to Cardenal and is given substantial treatment in *Cántico cósmico*. Among the abuses of human rights, the poet mentions the sterilization of Amazonian women (267). He points out the level of complete literacy in Paraguaya in 1845, the fruit of Dr. Francia's program of obligatory universal education, with an implied contrast to the high level of illiteracy that persists in Spanish America, and particularly indigenous America, to this day (269).

Cardenal explains how Indians are being given clothing infested with contagious diseases and caramels infected with cholera (270).

He refers to the massacre of Guatemalan Indians with the consent and logistical support of the United States (270). The poet also criticizes attempts made in Guatemala to keep Indians out of tourist areas, since they allegedly present a negative image of the country (272). Indians are often viewed with hostility in their own country. They are called "lastre de la economía nacional" (280).

Against this negative background, the poet recalls that the Guatemalan government continues to bombard el Petén, while the Cardinal of Guatemala continues to injure the oppressed (272). Cardenal discredits the Guatemalan legal system that he views as "criminal" (281). The poet's voice shouts from the pages of the text: "LAS VENAS ABIERTAS DE AMÉRICA LATINA" (270). Besides contributing to the development of the theme, and indicating the poet's use of Eduardo Galeano's book *Las venas abiertas de América Latina* for information on the exploitation of the Americas, the typography stresses that this is a cry of despair and outrage against the exploitation of the Americas.

Cardenal also relates the massacre of Indians in Mato Grosso, Brazil. In "Cantiga 24: Documental latinoamericano" the writer contrasts the innocence of the local Indians who accepted the invitation of a landowner to a banquet, only to be massacred thereafter:

Primero la gran fiesta, y se reían,
 se veían en espejos y reían,
 pintados y emplumados, con collares de dientes y de conchas
 y tras la borrachera con cachaça, la masacre. (270)

The joyful attitude of the Indians is captured through the use of rhyme, rhythm, and repetition. By pointing out how the Indians giggled when looking at themselves in

mirrors, Cardenal stresses their almost edenic innocence, which consequently intensifies the atrocity to follow.

Cardenal points out that the murderers of these Indians were "absueltos por el alegato de la defensa / de que no sabían que matar indios era delito" (271). The poet condemns the complicity of sectors of the Church in defending the *status quo*. He points out that one particular Cardinal had a one-hour interview with the Minister of Justice, and, as His Eminence was leaving, he was asked by journalists if he had discussed the massacre of Mato Grosso. The Cardinal replied that he had wanted to discuss the issue but had forgotten to do so.

Cardenal views the Indians as a conquered people; that is, essentially how they view themselves. The writer explains that the Indians ceased to be slaves without being free (270-71). Their joyful dances have been supplanted by the monotonous Dance of the Conquest, accompanied by melodies of Spanish origin played on defective *chirimías*, peasant-type oboes (271).

Nothing, the poet tells us, has changed for the Indians since the time of the conquest. As Cardenal explains, "[e]n Bolivia / 'todo exactamente igual que en la Colonia / excepto los anuncios de Coca Cola.' / Las venas abiertas. / El niño vende-periodicos, la prostituta, el pordiosero / en la Avenida Revolución" (281). Cardenal condemns the omnipresence of global capitalism. "Las venas abiertas" is repeated, not as an outcry, but as a mere fact. In order to stress the irony of the situation, the poet juxtaposes the child laborer, the prostitute, and the beggar in one verse with the Avenue of the Revolution in the other (281). Through the use of juxtaposition, Cardenal can make a moral judgement without openly intervening in the poem. The message remains clear: revolutions have arisen, but they have resolved little.

Cardenal explains that he was personally informed by Perilla that he had discovered a terrible secret in the plains, organized hunts for Amerindians: "cazadores de tigres que a veces iban en cacería de no animales" (271). In fact, the poet explains that logging companies in Brazil have even hired murderers to exterminate the Indians inhabiting their lands, or lands that they desire to exploit. Goodyear actually waged a war against Amazonian Indians in order to gain a monopoly of the rubber industry, states Cardenal.

Cardenal sums up the situation in "Cantiga 32: En el cielo hay cuevas de ladrones" with the following verses rich in alliteration:

Mr. Charles Goodyear descubrió la vulcanización
y cada árbol de caucho marcado como propiedad privada.

Fueron fusiles contra flechas.

Las márgenes de los afluentes del Amazonas

sin los vistosos plumajes,

los vestidos de tela de aguaje...

O tan sólo algunos pocos, tristes,

pidiendo kerosín a los barcos que pasan (370)

Through the simile "[c]ada árbol de caucho marcado como propiedad privada," the poet aptly conveys the perils of materialistic exploitation of natural resources. The alliterative verse "[f]ueron fusiles contra flechas" captures the vulnerability of the natives when faced with the technological superiority of the whites. The repetition of the phoneme /f/ also conveys the sound of arrows being shot. The poet laments the loss of Amerindian tribes, suggesting that the shores of the Amazon are not the same without their presence: "[l]as márgenes de los afluentes del Amazonas / sin los vistosos plumajes."

Cardenal also deplores the dependencies that natives develop from their contacts with whites. He is cognizant that once they are exposed to pots and pans, knives and axes, guns and bullets, and modern medicines, the natives become dependent on them and lose a degree of independence. Consequently, they cease passing on their traditional knowledge to the following generations.

In "Cantiga 24: Documental latinoamericano" Cardenal informs the reader that within the last few years, Amazonian Indians have been dispossessed of 82 million dollars in land (271). He explains that, at the on-going rate of destruction and deforestation, the Amazonian Indians will disappear, as well as the Amazonian rainforest and its flora and fauna. The destruction of human and wild life reflects the greed for titanium, thorium, uranium, manganese, bauxite, zirconium, talium, and mercury (278). The writer expresses his disapproval of ecologically unsound economic development.

He relates to us the story of Walin Kili who, while tilling the soil in order to plant yuca, came upon a bright yellow rock (278). When the word got out, "gringos" started arriving at Wasakin, and soon thereafter the fish and the shrimp started to die due to the cyanide (271). Walin Kili explains that, prior to the arrival of the white man, the river was crystal clear (271). Cardenal points out that the Miskitos and the Sumos are facing the same plight as the shrimp and the fish (271).

The poet also discusses the plight of the Inuit people, whose staple food has been contaminated. In "Cantiga 32: En el cielo hay cuevas de ladrones," we read that

En Anaktuvuk: su alimentación caribús

que se alimentan de líquenes que

se alimentan de agua de lluvia

que es radioactiva.

Y así los esquimales envenenándose (370)

The repeated use of the word "que" serves well to stress the interconnectedness of nature, the delicate balance of ecosystems, and the resultant microaccumulation of toxins.

Cardenal expresses his concern for the "[d]estrucción a tan gran escala en el planeta como no había / desde la extinción de los dinosaurios en el Cretáceo" (371). He condemns the "pillaje del planeta" (370). The repetition of the plosive phoneme /p/ helps to convey the sense of disgust felt by the poet. He explains that the buccaneers never even dreamed of accumulating the riches that are in the hands of cartels, trusts, consortiums, and corporations (370).

Like a native American, Cardenal views the Earth as the House of God. He partially quotes Jesus: "[h]an convertido mi casa..." (370). Cardenal is alluding to turning the House of God into a place of business, thus integrating an element of biblical intertextuality into the composition.

The poet's ecological concern manifests itself once again when he mentions the demise of the American bison. In "Cantiga 27: La danza de los millones" he points out that "[e]l búfalo sólo quedó en la moneda de níquel y en el zoológico / y el indio en la otra cara del níquel y en la reservación." (323). He also points out how their entire economic system was destroyed with the disappearance of the buffalo. Cardenal explains that Indians still saddle their horses and sadly go out in search of buffalo, as in the old days, in the hopes of finding one (323).

This dismal and dejected portrait closes with the image of acid rain falling upon the prairies: "[e]n vez de fertilizante lluvia / lluvia ácida" (323). Rain is a symbol of life. Acid rain is as bitter as life has become for the Plains Indians. The poet may be alluding to a Native American prophecy. Native elders explain that one of the signs of the End of the Age is that there will be water everywhere, but not a drop to drink.

Confronted with a world drowning in iniquity and injustice, Cardenal continues to believe in the necessity of revolution, of a new communist world order that he considers to be the pinnacle of ideological evolution, a view expressed in "Cantiga 26: En la tierra como en el cielo:" "[y] de pronto dos tortugas, enganchadas, / la una montada sobre la otra / haciendo el amor en el mar / como lo han venido haciendo desde el principio de su especie / para reproducirse y producir más especies y más especies / el mismo acto en el mar por millones de años / por amor / a la especie humana / y a su culminación / el comunismo" (302).

In "Cantiga 38: Asaltos al cielo en la tierra," he points out that the communitarian ethics of the Quechua-Aymara Indians have persisted to this day, although they live under a feudal economic system. The poet explains:

Ha de entenderse.

20 indios de Majipamba

trabajando en la carretera de Cajabamba

cada uno con su maíz y su máchica: ninguno

come lo suyo: junto en un poncho

el almuerzo común.

Los indios de la comuna de Majipamba

alegres alrededor del poncho.

80% latifundio (no

como la economía común de los indios de Majipamba). (*Cántico* 476)

The sight of an Indian woman sleeping on the streets while hugging her little ones infuriates Cardenal. He recalls the *Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel*, in which it is said that "bajará ... / la justicia de Dios de un golpe sobre el mundo" (280).

The quote in question is taken from chapter two of the *Chilam Balam de Chumayel*, which deals with the lamentations of katún 11 Ahau. In the words of the Mayan prophet: "llegará el día en que lleguen hasta Dios las lágrimas de sus ojos y baje la justicia de Dios de un golpe sobre el mundo" (68). However, until then, explains Cardenal, the Indian women are but queens in tattered rags (280). The writer associates capitalism and imperialism in Peru with the wind X-Kamnakul: "[e]s el capitalismo, el imperialismo en el Perú. / Igual el viento X-Kamnakul, cuando viene / los mayas sacan jícaras de ceniza / para hacer cruces en el suelo" (277). He laments the dejected and poor Potosí—the symbol of economic exploitation (277). Cardenal condemns economic inequity: "[l]a mitad del planeta / para 6% de planetarios" ("Cantiga 32: En el cielo hay cuevas de ladrones" 370).

In "Cantiga 35: Como las olas," Cardenal relates numerous flood myths. He presents the versions of the flood related by the Muscoki Indians, the Yaguas, the Tzotziles, the Nicaraos, the Matakos, the Jibaros, the Katos, the Cunas, the Mapuches, the Macusi, the Mayas, and the Nahuas. He finds that the story of the deluge is shared by all cultures, and so is the belief in a final apocalypse. As the Klallman Indians explain: "[e]l diluvio fue un cambio. Hay uno más que va a venir. / El mundo tendrá un cambio más. Cuándo será, no sabemos" (431).

In examining Cardenal's poetry that reveals his interest in the Amerindian world we have so far stressed socio-political matters. We will now emphasize the spiritual aspect of this interest, which is also pronounced.

Cardenal's Religious Inspiration in the Amerindian World

The poet's spiritual inspiration in the indigenous world is manifest in many poems, some of which have already been examined in their socio-political aspect in the previous section. However, in the following pages, we have selected for commentary a

number of poems not yet discussed. These include: "Entrevista con el cacique Yabiliguiña," "Sierra Nevada," "Los tlaminimes," "Las ciudades perdidas," "Quetzalcóatl" from *Los ovnis de oro*; as well as cantigas 8, 15, 20, 27, 32, 37 and 43 from *Cántico cósmico*. What makes these various poems cohesive is the oneness of God, humanity, and nature they express.

"Entrevista con el Cacique Yabiliguiña"

"Entrevista con el Cacique Yabiliguiña" deals with Cardenal's meeting with "one of the most important men" he ever met: Yabiliguiña, a poet, philosopher, statesman, and leader of the Cuna (48). Through his interpreter, the Cacique informs the poet that "Dios dio la tierra al indio para que viviera tranquilo" (48). Cardenal is keen to point out any possible parallels between Cuna and Christian beliefs. For this reason, he quotes Yabiliguiña's affirmation that "Dios sólo hay uno. Dios es único. / Sólo hay un Dios y es un Dios muy bueno" (50).

The Cacique places importance on living in peace, respecting nature, and sharing (50). One is informed that the Cuna keep the word of God in their hearts. In order to promote good and forbid evil, they hold daily congresses, like the Christians mass, to keep the word of God (50).

"Sierra Nevada"

"Sierra Nevada" is another poem dealing with Colombian Indians, this time, with the mystical Koguis, also known as the Kagaba Indians. Cardenal commences the poem with emotion and excitement: "¡Sierra Nevada! / Están en la Sierra Nevada. / Son monoteístas, y Dios es Mujer" (62).

The poet recounts the Koguis' creation myth and their legend concerning the elder and younger brothers. According to the Koguis, all humans once lived together on the same land mass. The ancient continent became separated by the ocean, and, as a result, so

did the brothers. The elder brothers, of course, were those who remained in the Americas, namely the Indians. They were wiser and held on to the ancient traditions and beliefs. The younger brothers, however, did not keep the words of God in their hearts and were led astray. The elder brothers were peaceful and believed in sharing and living in harmony with nature. The younger brothers were warlike, selfish, and declared nature their enemy. The parallel between this story and the biblical account of Cain and Abel is striking (Genesis 4).¹⁰⁸

The Koguis claim that they once had everything the Colombians now have, planes, bridges, highways, cities, but they gave them to their younger brothers: "[e]stas cosas no *lucían* a los indios / y además no las necesitaban" (64). Although the Koguis parted with technology ages ago, they did, however, keep one secret: the secret of fertility. The Koguis hold that they are the guardians of the universe and the protectors of the younger brothers. They claim that "[c]on la oración y el rito mantienen la armonía del universo" (64). They believe that if they fail to dance with the sun mask, the sun will not rise; if you do not pay for the summer, the rain will continue (64). "Si nosotros no cuidamos mundo," they affirm in broken Spanish, "entonces se acaba / y viene enfermedad. Indio siempre cuidando hermanito" (64).

Gerardo Reichel-Dolmatoff, the anthropologist, explained to Cardenal that the Koguis celebrate rites for all the peoples of whom they have heard: dances for the English, others for the French, and for the Colombian blacks so that the caimans will not devour them. The Koguis asked Reichel-Dolmatoff about his country of origin, Austria. They wanted to know all about it, its climate and people, in order to create ceremonies for Austria, to bring it into the liturgy (64).

Cardenal must have been impressed by the Koguis' love for the brother and sisterhood of humankind, finding it Christian in nature. The Koguis take to heart the command of "loving your neighbour."

According to the Koguis, "[l]a vida de los ricos es contraria al saber. / Los ricos son irresponsables, peligrosos y locos (*nugi*)" (64). The Koguis are proud to be poor. Their religion teaches them that "[l]os ricos en esta vida / serán pobres en la otra. / Los sanos en esta vida / enfermos en la otra" (66). However, as Cardenal points out, the Koguis' belief system does not teach them that the ignorant in this life will be wise in the next (66).

The poet is impressed at their almost monastic lifestyle: "[p]obreza voluntaria! Abrazaron la pobreza / como una orden religiosa--todo el pueblo" (66). The Koguis view everyday objects as metaphors for other objects. They view trees as vipers while they see snakes as phallic symbols. In this way, they live in a dream world.

The Koguis live in harmony with nature. They call animals "parientes" (68). Houses are wombs, and hammocks are placentas. They live in peace with one another. As they state, "[h]ay que estar de acuerdo. Entonces todo estará bien" (68). Cardenal compares them to the monastic order he belonged to in Kentucky:

Como los trapenses que no pueden decir *mío* ni *tuyo*
allí no dicen 'mi niño murió'--la Madre Universal
se enojaría--sino 'nuestros niños mueren.'

Nunca piden yuca para uno, piden yuca para todos. (70)

Among the basic laws of the Universal Mother are: take care of the father-in-law, dance for summer to come, fasting is necessary, and do not fight against your brother. They use coca for purposes of spiritual elevation. Coca helps them to fast, to sing many hours, and to talk about the Elders. The Koguis maintain that they already knew what the

missionaries preached, that the Christian religion and theirs *is the same*, but that the Capuchin fathers did not understand it well (72).

The Koguis watch the superjets pass overhead, but they are not impressed for, as Cardenal explains, "[s]e saben superiores" (74). Superjets fly, trains and telecommunications come and go, and the Koguis think about fertility (72). However, they have renounced the entire system of modern technology since the time of their Elders. They do not receive newspapers, and, politically speaking, they belong to the Party of Fertility.

The Koguis believe that "vivir es pensar," and that he or she who does not think is like a dead person (74). They believe that "civilized" people are dead and worthless because they eat and sleep but do not "live" in the spiritual sense (74). The poem ends with Cardenal meditating upon the Koguis' way of life:

¡Sierra Nevada!

Una vez, desde Santa Marta, vi la Sierra Nevada.

Hubiera querido ir allí donde se vive en aluna.

Estaba lejos. Vi y vi esa nieve.

Yo estuve allí en aluna. (76)

The Koguis do not have a word for love in a limited sense: love is *aluna*, which stands for thought, spirit, memory, soul, and life (74). Besides representing "oneness," *aluna* can also be described as an all-encompassing notion of love, which is the leitmotif of the poetic composition.

Cardenal would have liked to visit the Koguis. However, he was unable to do so and had to content himself with discussing the Koguis' belief system with an anthropologist while in Bogotá. Although he could not spend time with them, Cardenal feels as if he has been among the Koguis and has shared in their mystical union. As he

says: "[y]o estuve allí en aluna," which is to say, "I have submitted to the natural order of things;" "I am one with the Universe." As Pring-Mill has pointed out, Cardenal is "fascinated by the continued existence of a way of life which regards the world as a physical-cum-spiritual continuum ruled by an all-pervasive force of love" ("Cardenal's Treatment" 69).

"Los tlamatinimes"

The poem "Los tlamatinimes" is dedicated to the Aztec philosophers, those who possess knowledge: "guardianes de la sabiduría trasmitida" (244). They are the ones who make faces wise, who give men clear features, those who "[a]lumbran las cosas como una tea" (244). Cardenal considers them "[u]no de los cuatro Ministerios en Texcoco, / el Ministerio de Cultura y de Ciencias" (244). Culture and science are not separated.

The tlamatinimes were organizers of literary contests and taught poetry and music in the "cuicacalli" the houses of song (244). The tlamatinimes did not speculate about aesthetics; they read the hieroglyphs in the sky. They were a mirror to the people and reflected God in the mirror of poetry and painting (246).

Cardenal explains to us that the artist was called *yolteotl* in Náhuatl, that is, "corazón con Dios" (246). In other words, with God in their hearts they could "diosear" (246)--they were creators. The tlamatinimes were humble masters who passed on their teachings from generation to generation and taught belief in the Lord of Closeness and Togetherness.

The tlamatinimes followed in the footsteps of the ancient Toltecs, whom they held in high esteem. The word *toltecatl* had become a synonym for artist. The mysterious Toltecs were "[g]randes artistas, grandes sabios, astrónomos, artesanos, / muy virtuosos, buenos cantores, poetas, muy devotos" (248). The accumulation of adjectives such as "grandes," "virtuosos," "buenos," "muy," help to highlight the numerous nouns whose

effect is to convey the elevated level of art, science, and religion among the Toltecs. The poet states that he descends from those wise men: "de allá vengo yo, de Tula" (248). This may be the voice of Cardenal himself, who holds that he forms part of an indigenous poetic tradition.

The tlamatimines opposed the Aztec régime which fomented war and human sacrifice: "Nezahualcóyotl se opuso a la doctrina oficial. / Hizo la pirámide altísima, contra la de Huitzilopochtli / arriba ninguna estatua, el dios no conocido ni visto" (250). Nezahualcóyotl and the tlamatimines renewed the message of the priest Quetzalcóatl who served the single god, the Giver of Life, who could only be reached by poetry, symbols, and art. The tlamatimines opposed the Aztecs with poetry, or what is called in Náhuatl, Flower-Song.

Cardenal's heart pains for Mexico City-Tenochtitlán, for its inhabitants have forgotten the cult of Quetzalcóatl. A burning pain spreads over Tlatelolco: "[e]n la Plaza de las Tres Culturas salpicaduras de sesos" (252). The poet presents us with a cross-section of historical atrocities. He refers not only to the human sacrifices of the Aztecs, but also to the massacre of Tlatelolco perpetrated by the Mexican military forces against student demonstrators in 1968.¹⁰⁹ "Los presidentes," he recalls, "han dejado en herencia una red de agujeros" referring to the bullet holes which bear witness to the butchery (252). One also reads about the "precio del joven, del sacerdote, / del niño y de la doncella" (252), a quote drawn directly from the post-conquest Náhuatl poem "Después de la derrota," found in Leander's *In xóchitl in cuícatl* (lines 29-30) (257).

The rhetorical question he poses towards the end of the poem lingers with the reader: "[e]stá todavía en Texcoco junto al lago / el Ministerio de Cultura y de Ciencias?" (252). In other words, are the modern day Mexican governments following in the footsteps of Quetzalcóatl and Nezahualcóyotl, or have they embraced the cult of violence

of Huitzilopochtli? The answer is obvious. As dismal as the situation appears, Cardenal concludes the poem on a note of hope. Tenochtitlán exists, he affirms, in the spiritual vision of its poets, tlamatinimes, who are still in the 5th epoch, that of Teotihuacán (252).

"Las ciudades perdidas"

The "Las ciudades perdidas" is a Mayan poem written within nine or ten months of Cardenal's arrival in Cuernavaca in August 1959. According to Pring-Mill, the poem was completed before Cardenal tackled any serious historical research and this partly explain why a certain romantic nostalgia took priority over scholarly content ("Cardenal's Treatment" 57, 58).¹¹⁰ The poem was in fact the product of serious research. However, the interpretation of the data in that research has been supplanted as new findings have emerged.

"Ciudades" was inspired by an article about the ruins of Tikal that Merton had pinned up on the noviciate noticeboard (58). As Pring-Mill has observed, Cardenal projected onto Classic Mayan cities the monastic values of shared work and prayer which he had encountered in Gethsemani, and which ruled the Benedictine priory at Cuernavaca where the poem was written (58-59). In the modern Catholic Church the "communism" of the early Christians, which Cardenal admires, survives only in the monastic orders (59).

At the commencement of the poem, Cardenal expresses his desire to return to the past. He wonders "¿... cómo escribir otra vez el jeroglífico, / pintar al jaguar otra vez, derrocar los tiranos? / ¿Reconstruir otra vez nuestras acrópolis tropicales, / nuestras capitales rurales rodeadas de milpas?" (326). The poet then proceeds to present a utopian vision of Mayan civilization. He claims that

No hay nombres de militares en las estelas ...

... no hay nombre de cacique ni caudillo ni emperador

ni sacerdote ni líder ni gobernante ni general ni jefe
 y no consignaban en sus piedras sucesos políticos,
 ni administraciones, ni dinastías,
 ni familias gobernantes, ni partidos políticos. (328)¹¹¹

The poet also explains that:

La religión era el único lazo de unión entre ellos,
 pero era una religión aceptada libremente
 y que no era una opresión ni una carga para ellos.
 Sus sacerdotes no tenían ningún poder temporal (328)

"Ciudades" also includes an example of Cardenal's delight in discovering Amerindian analogies for Christian beliefs or practices. He claims that the Mayas "[c]onocieron a Jesús como el dios del maíz / y le ofrecían sacrificios sencillos / de maíz, y pájaros, y plumas" (328).¹¹² In his article, "In xóchiti in cuícatl," Cardenal explains that "[l]os nahuas vieron en el maíz lo mismo que Cristo nos mostró en el grano de trigo: 'Si el grano de trigo no cae en la tierra y muere, permanece solo; pero si muere producirá mucho fruto'" (689). The poet's attempt to find parallels between Christian and Indian beliefs is similar to efforts made by clergymen during colonial times in Mexico.¹¹³

"Quetzalcóatl"

Among the *Poemas indios*, "Quetzalcóatl" can be ranked as one of Cardenal's major artistic achievements.¹¹⁴ "Quetzalcóatl" is an epic poem that explores the historicity of myth and traces the evolution of Quetzalcóatl from the Toltecs to the Nícaraos. The question of identity--that is, Quetzalcóatl's identity--is the main theme of the work.

Once the introduction, with its rhythmic, spiralling quality characteristic of Native American oral poetry is completed, one is faced with the question of identity: "¿[q]ué /

Quetzalcóatl? / ¿Cuál Quetzalcóatl? / En este enredo / ¿con cuál Quetzalcóatl nos quedamos?" (264). In a few questions Cardenal conveys the confusion surrounding the identity of Quetzalcóatl.

In his article, "La religión de Quetzalcóatl," Cardenal explains that Quetzalcóatl appears as both god (identified with Ometéotl, the supreme deity, god of duality) and as a priest and a culture hero: "[l]o cual ha producido bastante confusión entre los estudiosos de ese México antiguo" (3). The poet explains that some scholars believe that Quetzalcóatl is a god who humanized himself, while others believe that he is a deified hero (3).

Cardenal explains that he believes in Sahagún's interpretation that "existía, el Dios Quetzalcóatl, y el sacerdote de ese Dios, que tenía también el mismo nombre" (3). Cardenal then proceeds to quote Sahagún and even provides us with the chronicler's source, which can be found in el *Códice Matritense* (3). In his poem, Cardenal paraphrases Sahagún's words, using ellipsis, and informing us that "los toltecas tenían un solo Dios que se decía Quetzalcóatl / y al sacerdote de ese Dios le decían Quetzalcóatl / quien les decía que había un solo Dios que se decía Quetzalcóatl / quien no quería más sacrificios que de culebras, mariposas" (264).

In his poem, Cardenal proceeds to explain some of the attributes of Quetzalcóatl as well as part of the mythology and symbolism related to this fascinating figure. Quetzalcóatl, he states, was the same as Ometéotl, the Holy Couple from which children are sprinkled to Earth, the twin god, the true god and his spouse (268). He suggests that this is similar to the concept of God in Catholicism, "Dios Padre y Dios Espírita" (268). As for the son, Cardenal explains that it is Man. The poet has affirmed that, in his eyes, "Jesucristo es el pueblo" (qtd. Borgeson, *Hacia* 123). Cardenal thus believes that in order to serve God, one must serve humanity.

Cardenal also explains that Quetzalcóatl spent "[o]cho días en *Mictlan*, la Región de los Muertos" (*Los ovnis* 266). Cardenal wishes to stress the similarities between Quetzalcóatl and Jesus-Christ who, according to Catholicism, spent time in hell before his resurrection. In the "Apostle's Creed" one reads that Jesus was "crucified, died and was buried; He descended into hell; the third day He rose again" (Nigosian 176). Both Jesus and Quetzalcóatl are viewed as redeemers. Christians believe that Jesus was crucified for the sins of humankind, while the ancient Mexicans believed that Quetzalcóatl shed blood from his penis to redeem humanity.

Although Cardenal wishes to establish links of similarity between the two concepts of God, few Catholic theologians would accept the poet's interpretation of the Trinity, which Cardenal presents as a balance between a male and female creative force. He subsequently presents the prayer "[s]eñora de nuestra carne, / Señor de nuestra carne, / La que de noche tiene una falda de estrellas, / El que de día cubre la tierra de algodones" (*Los ovnis* 274). These lines are actually reversed in the original Amerindian source: "a la de la falda de estrellas, / al que hace lucir las cosas; / Señora de nuestra carne, Señor de nuestra / carne" ("La religión" 4). In this case, besides reorganizing the order of the lines, the poet has amplified the text in question.

By presenting a theological doctrine of the Dual Principle, masculine and feminine, Cardenal may be attempting to draw women back into the fold of the Church. Since the traditionally masculine vision of God, and the patriarchal nature of Christianity have disillusioned many feminists, some have turned to the pagan worship of various goddesses.¹¹⁵ Although Cardenal's attempt is noteworthy, it could perhaps have been more easily achieved by dealing with the issue of Marianism, the adoration of Mary, a practice tolerated, although not condoned, by the Catholic Church.¹¹⁶

Of Quetzalcóatl the person, as opposed to Quetzalcóatl the deity, Cardenal relates that he was born in the year 843 A.D. Many years later he was proclaimed King in Tula. He served as their King and High Priest, and taught the people a new religion that opposed human sacrifices.¹¹⁷

Cardenal depicts Quetzalcóatl as a contemplative religious thinker who was in search of a god. Suggesting that Quetzalcóatl was in fact Saint Thomas the Apostle (272), Cardenal may be attempting to make Catholicism more appealing to native Americans by stressing the faith's Indo-American as opposed to colonial nature (272).¹¹⁸ This view is expressed in "La religión de Quetzalcóatl:" "[d]ice San Agustín que ha habido cristianos desde el principio del mundo aunque hasta después de la venida de Cristo comenzaron a llamarse cristianos. Como uno de esos grandes cristianos antes de Cristo emerge la figura del sacerdote-rey Quetzalcóatl" ("La religión" 6).

In his poem, we learn that Quetzalcóatl was eventually thrown out of the city and that, defeated, he fled with his people. His fall, explains the poet, "fue por oponerse a los sacrificios humanos" (284).

Cardenal is much impressed by Toltec culture and its religious emphasis. He describes the Toltecs as people consecrated to worship and meditation. He praises their knowledge of astronomy, their art, and their architecture. He recalls that the Toltecs were at the height of their civilization while the Aztecs were still nomads in the northern plains. The tribes that followed the Toltecs all held them in high esteem and glorified their technology. Cardenal describes the Quetzalcóatl legacy as "[u]na gran tradición humanista" (276).

As regards the city of Tolan that followed in the footsteps of Teotihuacán, Cardenal describes it as "la ciudad del orden cósmico. / De la armonía celestial" (284). He talks about "[u]na estructura social según los astros" (284). For Cardenal, Tolan was

"[l]a reproducción del cielo aquí en la tierra ... Una copia del cosmos a escala humana" (286). He describes it as "[u]n orden natural y social ideal. / Un reino mítico tropical" (286). Again, Cardenal is defending his vision of a socially conscious theocracy that he yearned to see implemented on a national, continental, and universal scale.

The fall of Tolan represents the end of social harmony and the disappearance of a collective dream. It was the loss of the holy capital, likened to Celestial Jerusalem, the spiritual capital of Mesoamerica. Cardenal views Tolan as the basis for a re-evaluation and re-interpretation of the spirituality of Spanish Americans. He also view Tolan as the basis for a new socio-spiritual order. He stresses the harmony and balance of the society with the universe and holds that Tolan was "un modelo de liberación de las civilizaciones de Mesoamérica" (288).

Besides Teotihuacán, Tolan, and Cholula, there is another Tolan in Nicaragua, which, according to Cardenal, became the center of the world for the followers of Quetzalcóatl. There, the believers arrived "huyendo de la dictadura instaurada en Cholula, / con su fe en Quetzalcóatl ... hacia una tierra profetizada" (300).¹¹⁹ The cult of the Plumed Serpent could also be encountered in Chichen Itzá.

Tenochtitlán, the last great Mesoamerican City, was the last Tolan. The Aztecs arrived at the island of Tenochtitlán in 1325 and settled where they saw the eagle devouring a snake on a cactus. These newcomers to the land "[c]ontrapusieron la serpiente de turquesa (Huitzilopochtli) / a la serpiente de plumas de quetzal (Quetzalcóatl)" (304). The supreme god was now Huitzilopochtli, the Lord of War.

After the defeat of the worshippers of Quetzalcóatl, human sacrifices were established. The Aztec ruler Itzcóatl, whose cruelty we have already noted, ordered that the painted books be burned, for in them the Aztecs were described as "bárbaros en un

pasado sin gloria" (304). The Aztecs implanted a superior social class. The Aztecs claimed that their sovereigns were the legal heirs of the mythological Quetzalcóatl.

Cardenal denounces this claim as "[p]ura propaganda de Estado" (304), a contemporary concept applied to a past régime. Quetzalcóatl had been converted into another god of the ruling class, what Cardenal calls "[u]na manipulación del mito para su imperialismo" (306). It was a spiritual heritage betrayed by despotism: "[u]n plan diabólico de control mitológico. / Huitzilopochtli el más cruel y el más hábil de los políticos" (306).¹²⁰

Tenochtitlán was expanded via wars of conquest and the sacrifice of captives. Its greatness was achieved by way of taxes. In the center of the Mexican plateau, Tenochtitlán represented "la noche y el terror" (306). Huitzilopochtli replaced Quetzalcóatl, and so that the world could continue, sacrifices were in order.

As for Moctezuma, whom Darío viewed as a symbol of poetry, Cardenal views the sovereign as the personification of Huitzilopochtli: "[d]espotismo sin resistencia, el de Moctezuma" (308). As sinister as things seem, Cardenal points out one of the internal contradictions of Aztec society: the *tlamatinimes*, the philosopher-poets, the educators who taught in the *calmécac*, the pre-Hispanic centers of instruction, and opposed the official mythology.

Cardenal describes them as anti-fascists who kept the doctrine of Quetzalcóatl alive among the people. He points out that Nezahualcóyotl had readopted the theology of Quetzalcóatl, declaring himself a follower of an invisible principle (308). Cardenal affirms that "[e]ra entre los aztecas una Teología de la Liberación / Quetzalcóatl" (310). Cardenal thus notes the similarities between liberation theology, the philosophy he personally espouses, and the ideas of the Chichimecan sovereign. Cardenal at once

contemporizes the philosophy of Nezahualcōyotl while at the same time giving historical legitimacy to liberation theology.

Nezahualpilli, the son of Nezahualcōyotl, had said that the time was close when the sons of Quetzalcōatl would come from the east and take possession of the land. This prophecy, readily repeated by the tlamatinimes, "desmoralizó a Moctezuma" (310). Quetzalcōatl had promised to return in the year of his name, 1-Cane, and 1-Cane fell precisely in 1519, the year Cortés arrived. The Aztecs wondered whether Quetzalcōatl had arrived along with Cortés. Moctezuma sent Cortés the Treasure of Quetzalcōatl. Cortés cunningly played along and pretended to be the Awaited One. Although Cardenal does not believe that Cortés was the Quetzalcōatl awaited by the Aztecs, he believes that "el cristianismo que llegó con él sí fue el perfecto cumplimiento de las misteriosas profecías" ("La religión" 5).

Cardenal mentions that Moctezuma had a troubled conscience, for he knew that the empire had violated Quetzalcōatl's doctrine. Consequently, he explained to Cortés that "[n]osotros en el transcurso del tiempo / hemos olvidado la doctrina de nuestro Señor Quetzalcōatl" (310). Cardenal uses a simile which expresses the rapidity of the destruction of the empire of the Aztecs: "[u]n viento cortante como la obsidiana sopló con la conquista," states the poet (310). In their hearts, the rulers knew that Quetzalcōatl, the liberator, would one day occupy his rightful throne (312).

Cardenal quotes an inscription from the *Museo Antropológico* in Mexico City which says: "Y ASÍ LO DECÍAN / EN TIEMPOS REMOTOS LOS ANCIANOS / QUE TODAVÍA VIVE / QUE AHORA VOLVERÁ OTRA VEZ / A GOBERNAR" (312). Capitalized by Cardenal to stress its prophetic nature which transcends history, the quotation implies that one-day, the Indians, or the oppressed in general, will reclaim what belongs to them. According to Ross, "[t]he message applies equally to the empires of the

Aztecs, the Spaniards and the United States: power is temporary, 'the throne is on loan' because true power is Quetzalcóatl's and will one day be returned to him" (3).

Cántico cósmico: cantigas 6, 15, 20, 27, 32, 37, and 43

The sense of oneness and reverence that indigenous peoples have for the Earth is found in several parts of *Cántico cósmico*, which will be discussed thematically, rather than sequentially. In "Cantiga 20: La música de las esferas" Cardenal informs us that the Araucanian Indians from Chile, the Mapuches as they call themselves, explained to Koestler-Ilg that: "[l]os no-araucanos quitaron nuestra tierra / pero no están unidos a ella con los pies desnudos" (237). In other words, even if their traditional lands have been usurped, the land still belongs to them, for they feel a sense of oneness with the Earth. A tribe of Oklahoman Indians, Cardenal explains, find signs of Wahkon-Tah in themselves, and in all that surrounds them (240). In "Cantiga 8: Condensaciones y visión de San José de Costa Rica," Cardenal echoes the Quechua-Aymara belief that human beings are the sons of the Sun, for, in fact "el calor de nuestra sangre es calor solar" (85). Like the indigenous peoples of the Americas, Cardenal feels a special sense of oneness with Mother Earth. This is demonstrated in the line, "[e]s la Tierra que canta en mí este *Cántico cósmico*" (240).

In "Cantiga 20: La música de las esferas," the poet explains how indigenous peoples imitate the movement of the universe, galaxies, and molecules in their traditional dances. Cardenal relates how the Amazonian Uitoto Indians never cease to dance even when they are not dancing, for, as they explain, they only work so that they can dance in harmony with the natural rhythm of the universe (235). Similar rituals can be found among the Navajo whose acts of devotion include verses and songs (236).

In "Cantiga 37: Cosmos como comunión," the poet discusses the Guatemalan Indian rites to awaken the moon, and so that the sun can continue functioning (462). He

mentions that among the Omahas, the sun, stars, hills, rivers, trees, and insects, are all invoked at the birth of a child (462). The Tarahumaras have dances for various animals like the turkey and the deer (462). They hold that animals perform these dances for God (462). The Tarahumaras, themselves, only imitate these movements, worshipping by way of dance (462).

In "Cantiga 20: La música de las esferas," the poet mentions that the tribe of Oklahoma Indians organized their government in accordance with the stars (240). The celestial order was also represented in their orderly buffalo hunts (241). Their songs and dances were in accord with the stars and were viewed as the language by which they could communicate with Wahkon-Tah, whose response would come via the flight of the sparrow-hawk, the whistling of the owl, and the howling of the coyote (241).

The writer also relates the words of an elderly Indian from the dusty town of San Idelfonso who believed that if hearts were pure during the ritual dances, it would rain (241). Cardenal explains that the laws of the Hopis were the same. They held that "un corazón sin inquietud / y cumplir las reglas / mantiene el orden de los astros, las lluvias, las cosechas" (241). They believed in the law of reciprocity, holding that "[l]o que hace un individuo afecta a toda la tribu / y al cosmos" (241).

The Hopis are a people admired by Cardenal for being "[p]acifistas, gandhianos desde hace 2.000 años" (241). Describing the Hopis as "gandhianos" seems like an anachronism; however, the poet utilizes the word to convey pacifism more vividly. The word "pacifist" is conceptual while "gandhianos" unites concept with action, since it is personified in the figure of a twentieth century icon. A symbol of peaceful resistance, the Hopis never signed a treaty with the United States, never declared war on anyone, not even against the United States. Cardenal sums up their worldview as "[a]rmonía cósmica, política y moral" (241).

One of the reasons that many indigenous peoples feel at one with the universe is that they believe that they originated from it. Many tribes hold that they are of extra-terrestrial origin, and that they came to the Earth from the stars. Whether these myths are literal or an indigenous version of the Garden of Eden is difficult to ascertain.

In "Cantiga 15: Nostalgias del paraíso," Cardenal discusses the indigenous belief in the Great Tree which linked humanity with the heavens. The tree that linked heaven and earth was depicted on Quetzalcóatl's clothing. The Koguis believe that in ancient times they were able to visit the highlands in the sky, something that they can no longer do.

The tribe of Oklahoman Indians believes that they came from the stars, and for this reason they used to be pure and beautiful (240). They say they used to be called Tzi-Sho (the celestial tribe). They are uncertain as to why they came down from the stars, for there is no explanation in their myths. Thinking of the legend of Adam and Even, Cardenal wonders whether Wahkon-Tah had them expelled.

In "Cantiga 20: La música de las esferas," we learn that the Tzi-Sho insist that they used to live an orderly life because they were among the stars. On Earth, they have only known "*ga-ni-tha* (chaos)" (240). Cardenal includes such words of native origin to add a degree of local color to his compositions. The Tzi-Sho hold that there were no names for things when they came to Earth (240). So the first thing they did was to give all of the animals their names (240). These Oklahoma Indians now live on a reservation without any of the animals they love and light years away from the stars (240).

The sense of loss of contact with the heavens, perhaps due to expulsion, although never elucidated, is also encountered among the Algonquin and the Ojibway. Thus, in "Cantiga 16: Lo más oscuro antes del alba," the poet explains how the Algonquins used to search on canoe for the islands of the hereafter (64). These islands, which they say they

have seen, were devoid of hunger or war (64). Cardenal relates how the Ojibway Indians lament having lost the sky (64).

In the eyes of Cardenal, God is one, the universe is one, and humanity is one. The poet seeks out the philosophical similarities between various indigenous peoples of the world, delving into the new ocean of perennial philosophy. Cardenal recognizes that Christianity shares some beliefs with primordial religions. It is for this reason that he quotes Newman who says, "[n]o es un paganismo en el cristianismo sino / cristianismo en el paganismo" (487).

Hence, rather than seeking similarities between Christianity and indigenous beliefs to facilitate the proselytizing of native peoples, the writer accepts that spirituality transcends organized religion. Instead of dividing people on the basis of dogma, he aims to unite humanity on the basis of commonalities, and the central unifying belief among all peoples is faith in God.

In "Cantiga 43: Omega," Cardenal provides the reader with numerous names of God, along with their meanings, drawn from a multitude of indigenous cultures. The widespread faith in God found throughout the world substantiates Artemidoro de Rodas' statement, "[n]o hay pueblo ateo en la tierra" (565). Cardenal implies that, in essence, all peoples originally believed in the one God. However, this belief was corrupted.

Cardenal finds that belief in the oneness of God can even be found among polytheistic peoples. As the poet explains, "[a]sí como para los puranas de la India hay 330 millones de dioses, / pero por encima de ellos hay un solo Dios" (567-68). As one reads the various names of God presented by Cardenal, one gains an insight into the mindset of distinct cultures. As a result, one comes to appreciate that relatively simple societies can develop sublime philosophies. There is therefore no link between a culture's

state of technological development and its philosophical capabilities, a point made by Cardenal when discussing the recently discovered Suiza Indians.

In "Cantiga 32: En el cielo hay cuevas de ladrones," the poet explains the sense of helplessness the Suiza Indians from the Amazon felt when they first saw airplanes. The elders stated, "[n]o sabemos ensalmos contra esas cosas" (373). The Indians from Mato Grosso asked Franz, the Swiss, if planes were aggressive, what they ate, if they drank chicha, and whether white people cut mirrors from the surface of the water. The Suiza Indians were fascinated by radio, hearing the voices of so many tribes in the world.

Although their level of technological development was inferior to the whites, they had no inferiority complex when it came to their spiritual beliefs. The Suiza Indians "consideraban a los blancos atrasados en religión./ Ignorantes de todo lo importante, los misterios que conocen ellos" (373). The writer stresses that power and technology do not make one civilized. One's level of civilization and culture is determined by one's value system.

In "Cantiga 26: En la tierra como en el cielo," the American Indian is viewed in this case as civilized, and who should become the civilizer: "[n]osotros debemos americanizar a ustedes / --dijo el indio norteamericano--. / El sistema norteamericano era / respetar cada uno la visión de su hermano" (310). Cardenal sums up the difference between the white man and the Indian in "Cantiga 27: La danza de los millones," when he explains, "[l]os cara-pálidas tienen ideas, los indios visiones" (322). Hence, in the eyes of Cardenal, white people have practical thoughts, whereas Indians have spiritual thoughts. They view the world in a different way.

CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions can be drawn from our study of the most salient indigenous elements in Cardenal's poetry:

1) Cardenal has integrated the indigenous worldview, not only into his poetry, but also into his life as a whole. He is a producer of authentic continental literature, with roots embedded in the fertile soil of the Americas.

2) Cardenal's interest in the indigenous world is a manifestation of his religious and socio-political concerns. For the poet, indigenous America is a source of poetic and socio-political inspiration. The writer aspires to create an ideal native Hispanic American culture, the fusion of three traditions: the European, the African, and the native. In the realm of economics, Inca society is an inspiration. In the realm of the spiritual as well as the social, Cardenal holds the teachings of the monotheistic philosopher-poet-king Nezahualcōyotl in high esteem. The poet is also inspired by the Cuna culture of Panama as well as the mystical worldview of the Colombian Kogui Indians from the Sierra Nevada.

3) The Amerindian world has been a source of inspiration for Cardenal and has played an important role in his poetical production since its inception. Cardenal's image of the indigenous world is based on thorough research of available data.

4) The indigenous influence in Cardenal's poetry is not merely thematic, it is also stylistic. The poet has developed a style that, although influenced by Pound, has affinities with Amerindian literature. The native American stylistic influences in Cardenal are conscious and deliberate, for they do not form part of the Spanish American literary tradition. The poet has made an effort to revitalize the indigenous literary heritage by integrating it into the mainstream of Spanish American poetry. Cardenal's aim is to breathe new life into native American literature, as well as Spanish American literature. Cardenal's appropriation of indigenous stylistic influences is so masterful that it can be stated that he has produced seemingly authentic native American literature in Spanish. It is a remarkable achievement.

5) Cardenal's poetic works synthesize the past and present as predictors of a proudly reintegrated indigenous future in the Americas.

6) On the basis of the evidence of his poetic production, we can conclude that Ernesto Cardenal has been significantly influenced by the Amerindian world, inspiring himself socio-politically, religiously, and aesthetically in the indigenous cultures of the Americas to varying degrees. The socio-political influence is the greatest, followed to a lesser degree by the religious and aesthetic influences.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The study of the indigenous presence in the poetry of Darío and Cardenal, two of the most outstanding Nicaraguan and Spanish American poets, reveals a significant feature of their work and sheds light on an important and substantially overlooked aspect of modern Spanish American poetry. The indigenous presence is pervasive in Cardenal's work and the similarities and differences between the two poets in this regard are usefully summarized in the context of the following points:

1) The Amerindian world has influenced Spanish American poets from the time of the conquest to the present and surfaces in the poetry of Creoles, mestizos, and Amerindians adhering to all of the major literary movements of the Americas. Darío and Cardenal's Amerindian-inspired poetry forms part of this long tradition. Over the centuries, one notes a shift from externalized writing to internalized writing. While the perspective of early Spanish American poets like Ercilla was evidently Hispanic, the perspective of later poets like Cardenal has been more noticeably Amerindian. Although Amerindians have not reconquered their ancestral territories, they have, to some extent, been successful at reconquering the poetry of the Americas.

2) Darío and Cardenal's interest in the indigenous world is an expression of their humanitarian concerns and a reflection of ideological influences on the poets: Martí's ideas and the *modernista* interest in the originality of America in the case of Darío; and liberation theology and humanitarian socialism in the case of Cardenal. The works of both Darío and Cardenal contain social criticism and a defense of the oppressed, which includes a vindication of Amerindian rights. Darío's socio-political commitment, however, was not as pronounced as Cardenal's.

3) Both Darío and Cardenal seem to have moved from nationalism, Central Americanism, and Pan-Americanism to advocate universal humanism. Their literary

activism in defense of Amerindians must be seen in the context of a general defense of human rights. Although Darío's social concerns were mostly expressed in his poetry, Cardenal's commitment was both literary and political, making him a veritable social activist, both in words and action.

4) Both Darío and Cardenal have expressed their admiration for the Amerindian cultures of the Americas. As he was fond of pointing out, Darío was proud of the Amerindian past as well as his Amerindian ancestry. Although not of Amerindian ancestry, Cardenal attempted to defend Amerindians and to document and preserve their cultures and teachings. From the perspective that culture is based on identity, not ancestry, he may be termed an "honorary Amerindian."

5) The Amerindian world has played a role in Darío and Cardenal's poetry since the early stages of their literary careers. Darío dealt with Nicaragua's Miskito Indians in "Canción mosquita" when he was a teenager. Cardenal dealt with Central American Indians in numerous cantos from *El estrecho dudoso* (1966). The influence of the Amerindian world is present throughout their literary careers although with one significant difference. In Cardenal's poetry, the indigenous elements are often integrated into and contribute fundamentally to the coherent form and meaning of the text. In Darío, however, in many, if not most of the poems studied, this is not necessarily the case. The indigenous world is often the nucleus of Cardenal's poetry. In the case of Darío, though, the indigenous influence is an element among others, a part of the whole, and not necessarily the core of his works.

6) Darío and Cardenal engaged in extensive research in an effort to search for and retrieve aspects of the Amerindian world and integrate them into their poetry. Darío and Cardenal acquired much of their knowledge from reading the chronicles of the conquistadors, as well as secondary sources. In the case of Cardenal, this knowledge was

broadened by personal visits to Amerindian tribes in North, Central, and South America, and by the greater availability of appropriate information in his time. Consequently, Cardenal's knowledge of the Amerindian world was more extensive than Darío's.

7) For their times, Darío and Cardenal possessed an extensive knowledge of Amerindian mythologies, as evidenced by their allusions and direct references to deities from the native pantheons. In many cases, the significance of their symbolism embraces Amerindian interpretations. For example, both poets use the symbols of the "quetzal" and the "cóndor" in an Amerindian sense.

8) Darío and Cardenal hold that the retrieval, preservation, documentation, and propagation of the indigenous past is a poetic possibility. They both appreciate the cultural richness of Amerindian culture, but also regret that much of it has fallen into oblivion as a result of the disappearance of hundreds of tribes and languages. Nevertheless, they are determined to document and promote whatever they can of the Amerindian legacy. While both Darío and Cardenal were interested in discovering "messages" from the past, Cardenal evolved to the point where he pays considerable attention to anthropological descriptions of present-day tribes in peril. In other words, while Darío's interest in the Amerindian world is mainly rooted in the past, in the civilizations of pre-Columbian America, Cardenal's interest extends also to the present.

9) Darío and Cardenal are artistically eclectic, making effective use of a religious, philosophical, and mythological *mélange*, using images, symbolism, and themes from distinct traditions. Darío would draw from and integrate various mythological traditions and religions in order to provide profundity to his poems. Cardenal, on the other hand, usually limits himself to establishing philosophical similarities between Amerindian religions and the Christian faith. However, in *Cántico cósmico*, he focuses on perennial philosophy, stressing universally shared theological beliefs. Here the poet gives weight to

indigenous ideas in his quest for transcendental truth. Darío and Cardenal's mingling of European and Amerindian philosophies also reflects the double heritage of the Americas: European and Amerindian. Neither poet was a purist; rather, they were inspired by diverse mythological sources, directly and indirectly. They accepted Amerindian mythology as an integral part of world mythology.

10) Darío and Cardenal make effective use of intertextuality. Darío's "Caupolicán" distinguished him as the first of the modern Spanish American poets to exploit the rich traditions, customs, scenarios, characters, and themes of Ercilla's *La araucana*. Darío condensed them into a densely packed poem. "Canto a la Argentina," a work which draws from Balbuena's poem, manifests his dexterity at poetic intertextuality. It was a technique which would be used extensively and effectively by Ernesto Cardenal, a veritable master of metalepsis. Cardenal draws from historical documents including: Columbus, Las Casas, Bernal Díaz, Gómara, Pedro Mártir, Oviedo, Remesal, Ixtlilxóchitl, and the book of Chilam Balam. Although Darío's work contains examples of intertextuality, Cardenal has relied upon this technique more extensively.

11) Although basing themselves, at times, on the chronicles of the conquistadors and other sources, Darío and Cardenal extensively rework their sources. They do not duplicate the sources; rather, they give them new life in innovative ways. They manipulate their sources in order to advance their arguments and to elaborate upon elements of interest. The use of sources, however, is more evident in Cardenal's work.

12) Darío and Cardenal are noted for their selective approach to the Amerindian world. At times, they seize upon an element and elaborate on it, while ignoring some of its implications. Both poets possess a keen ability to focus on a particular element in search of an ideal. The references to both conquerors and the conquered in Darío's "A Roosevelt" appears contradictory, but are, in fact, examples of the poet's search for the

heroic ideal. The same applies to Cardenal's focus on the economic system of the Incas, which impresses him; yet he ignores their polytheism, which does not appeal to him.

13) Darío and Cardenal are concerned with renewing Spanish American poetry. They reappropriate native traditions and integrate them into the body of Hispanic American Literature, creating an authentic, original, and all inclusive literature with roots in the Americas. The Amerindian influence in Darío and Cardenal is not only thematic, but it is also linguistic and stylistic. Cardenal's appropriation of indigenous elements is also interesting in light of recent debates regarding "testimonial literature." In many ways, his works are a form of testimonial literature in which he attempts to disseminate the "voice" of a previously voiceless collective popular subject: the indigenous peoples of the Americas.

In order to assist in renewing the poetic language, Darío and Cardenal sometimes employ *americanismos*, many of them words of Amerindian origin, in their poems. Cardenal creates neologisms from Amerindian words: "huitzilopochtlistas," for example. Darío and Cardenal also make effective use of carefully selected metaphors and similes inspired in Amerindian usage, as both poets desire to break away from sterile and redundant poetic expressions.

Darío's "Helios" and "Nocturno (I)" manifest possible Aztec stylistic influences. There are also similarities between "Canto de esperanza" and some passages from the book of Chilam Balam. The Amerindian stylistic influence in Cardenal's work is evident. As we have seen in this study, Cardenal is influenced by the style of Náhuatl poetry in his "Cantares" and apocalyptic Mayan literature in his Mayan poems. He revitalizes and modernizes Náhuatl and Mayan literature, making them appealing and accessible to the masses. As a result, they become a blend of both past and present. By integrating indigenous thematic, symbolic, mythological, linguistic, and stylistic influences into their

works, Darío and Cardenal helped legitimize both America and the Amerindian world as sources of poetic inspiration.

14) Darío and Cardenal also view the Amerindian world as a source of socio-political inspiration with lessons for the present. They are critical of the conquest, its materialistic motivations, and its excesses, and sympathize with the Amerindians. Often, they find the roots of present-day problems in the mistakes of the past. In the case of Cardenal, the criticism of the past is often a veiled criticism of the present. An effective teacher, Cardenal establishes links between the past and the present to facilitate the learning process. At times, both Darío and Cardenal present Amerindian ways of life as alternatives to the dominant values of the day, thus expressing dissatisfaction with the *status quo*. The lifestyle of the Amerindians is praised by Darío in poems such as "Tutecotzimí" and "A Colón." Cardenal's Amerindian poems often deal with inspirational aspects of Toltec, Chichimecan, Cuna, Maya, Kogui, Guaraní, Native American, and Inca models. While both poets were inspired socio-politically in the Amerindian world, Darío was so inspired to a lesser extent than Cardenal who was more actively engaged in socio-political and economic matters and in proposing concrete solutions to contemporary problems.

15) Although critical of the conquest, both Darío and Cardenal are opposed to the over-generalizations of the *leyenda negra*. Both poets attempt to vindicate individuals like Las Casas who embarked on the journey to the Americas, and who were appalled at the injustices perpetrated there.

16) Darío and Cardenal are both inspired by Amerindian figures. They are both admirers of Nezahualcóyotl as a leader and as a poet. Similarly, they both appreciate the courage, dignity, and fortitude of Cuauhtémoc. However, they admire the Inca rulers for different reasons. While Darío is impressed by the material wealth of the Inca rulers,

Cardenal is impressed by the efficient socio-economic system they were responsible for developing. Darío is concerned with the product of labor while Cardenal is concerned with its process. Cardenal is also inspired by Quetzalcóatl, the priest, and Nele Kantule, the Cuna leader who is a model of how communities should be administered. Darío and Cardenal differ in their evaluation of Moctezuma. Darío views him as the symbol of Aztec civilization, whereas Cardenal views him as the symbol of despotism.

17) Neither Darío nor Cardenal believe that returning to the past will solve the problems of the present. They believe that one should return to the past in search of inspiration and socio-political models which may contribute to solving contemporary problems. They look into the past to project themselves into the future. Darío's interest tended to be theoretical and philosophical while Cardenal's was more concrete and practical.

18) Both Darío and Cardenal establish links between the Amerindian world and symbolic equivalents of the pre-Columbian state of splendor. Darío, for example, associates the major civilizations of pre-Columbian America with the Classical world or with Atlantis. Cardenal, more influenced by Christianity than the Greco-Roman world, establishes links between Amerindian mythology and biblical teachings: the Garden of Eden, the story of Cain and Abel, the flood, Jericho, David and Goliath, the stories of the prophets, and Jesus Christ.

19) Unlike Darío, Cardenal offers concrete solutions to present-day problems: the establishment of a Christian/indigenous/Marxist society. His indigenous inspiration comes from Toltec, Chichimecan, Cuna, Maya, Kogui, Guaraní, Native American, and Inca models. His Christian inspiration comes from the monastic tradition of the Catholics. His Marxist inspiration comes from the Cuban model. Politically speaking, Cardenal remains firm in his belief that communism is the culmination of social evolution.

20) Both Darío and Cardenal deal with the struggle between Christianity and paganism, truth and falsehood, belief and disbelief, and good versus evil. For Darío, the struggle is within himself, between the spirit and the flesh. For Cardenal, the struggle is between monotheism and polytheism, between Quetzalcóatl and his opponents, between Nezahualcóyotl and the Aztecs, between the oppressed and the oppressors, between the poor and the rich. It is a struggle which takes place on the world stage, and not within the poet himself.

21) Both Darío and Cardenal express their belief in the oneness of humanity and the importance of living in harmony with one's environment. Although not exclusively indigenous, pantheism and animism are pillars of Amerindian religions. In the eyes of Darío and Cardenal, God is one, the universe is one, and humanity is one. Darío's concept of oneness originates in large part from the Greco-Roman world and from the influence of the poets he admired, while Cardenal's vision of unity is mostly of Amerindian inspiration.

22) Darío and Cardenal both humanize native people through love and an appreciation of the beauty of Amerindian women. This is evident in Darío's "Chinampa," among other works, and in Cardenal's "Canto XVIII" and "Nezahualcóyotl." Darío's poetry, however, provides more examples of the universal appeal of women than does Cardenal's. This may be due to the fact that Cardenal was a man of the cloth during much of his career as a poet.

23) Darío and Cardenal view Amerindians as part of the whole, an essential element in the Spanish American fabric. They recognize the existence of Amerindians and the validity of their voices. Consequently, the voices and views of Amerindians appear in their poetry. Comprehending the beauty within diversity, they desire to enrich Spanish American culture, as opposed to assimilating Amerindians.

24) Darío and Cardenal accept miscegenation without any indication of negativity. They both recognize that the Americas are comprised of descendants of Amerindians, Africans, and Europeans, all of whom have contributed to the rich and vibrant cultures of the Americas, and all of whom should fuse what they have in common, without losing their individual identities. Darío and Cardenal share a vision of unity within diversity which can serve as a lesson for humanity.

25) In the case of Cardenal, one notes an evolution in his approach to the Amerindian theme. Instead of being at the forefront of his poetry, the indigenous presence has been synthesized into its background. In fact, the poet has succeeded in integrating the Indian voice into the chorus of Spanish American voices.

26) Considering the fact that Darío and Cardenal have been influenced aesthetically, thematically, and stylistically in the Amerindian world, one can safely conclude that they are truly "poetas de América."

27) Finally, the doors into Darío and Cardenal's Amerindian worlds have been opened by this study in the hope of stimulating further research. There are treasures still to be revealed.

END NOTES

¹ There can be no doubt that Vallejo, the grandson of two Spanish priests and two Chimu Indian women, was a metis from a biological point of view. However, the poet considered himself an Indian, although he was part Hispanic. In a note that appears in his carnet of 1936/37, he laments "la incomprensión de España sobre los escritores sudamericanos que, por miedo, no osaban ser indoamericanos, sino casi totalmente españoles," (qtd. in O'Connor 167). In the same carnet he refers to the native American tone of his works "en el estilo y en el alma" (167). He considered the Indian to be the past and the future of the Americas, as he wrote in *Mundial* in 1936: "[s]i América llega a ser el centro de la civilización futura, ello se hará a base de nuestro contacto con el pasado" (168). Vallejo felt a sense of rejection for Spanish America and emphasized that:

La versión que hay que hacer es de las obras rigurosamente indo-americanas y precolombinas. En esas obras autóctonas, sí que tenemos personalidad y soberanía ... y no debemos olvidar que, a lo largo del proceso hispanoamericanizante de nuestro pensamiento, palpita y vive y corre, de manera interminante pero indestructible, el hilo de sangre indígena, como cifra de nuestro porvenir. (qtd. in O'Connor 168)

For a study of the indigenous elements in Vallejo's poetry, please refer to: John A. Morrow, "Indígena universal: la cosmovisión autóctona en la poesía de César Vallejo," unpublished research essay, (Toronto, 1997).

² *Ayllu* is Quechua for "earth-cell" or "community."

³ Of the 769 studies on Darío published between 1963 and 1998 and included in the *MLA Bibliography*, few have dealt exclusively with the topic of nativism in his poetry, although the issue is dealt with in a few articles on "Caupolicán" as well as within

the confines of broader studies dealing with topics such as *americanismo* or miscegenation in the poet's works.

⁴ The information on myths and symbols in this study is drawn mainly from the following sources: *Encyclopedia Mythica*, online, Internet, 4 March 2000. Available: pantheon.org; *Probert Encyclopedia of Mythology*, online, Internet, 4 March 2000. Available: spaceports.com/~mprobert/; *Book of Gods, Goddesses, Heroes, and Other Characters of Mythology*, online, Internet, 4 March 2000. Available: cybercom.net; Allison Protas. *Online Symbolism Dictionary*, ed. Geoff Brown and Jamie Smith, online, Internet, 4 March 2000. Available: umich.edu/~umfandsf/symbolismproject/symbolism.html; E. Cobham Brewer, *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*, (1894), online, Internet, 4 March 2000. Available: bibliomania.com/Reference/PhraseAndFable/; *Mythology Page*, online, Internet, 4 March 2000; Thomas Bulfinch. *Bulfinch's Mythology, The Age of Fable or Stories of Gods and Heroes*, online, Internet, 4 March 2000. Available: webcom.com/shownet/medea/bulfinch/welcome.html; *Myths and Legends*, online, Internet, 4 March 2000. Available: pubpages.unh.edu/~cbsiren/myth.html; J.E. Cirlot, *A Dictionary of Symbols*, 2nd ed (New York: Dorset P, 1991); Kenneth McLeish, *Myth: Myths and Legends of the World Explored* (London: Facts on File, 1996); Larousse *World Mythology* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1965); Cecilio A. Robelo, *Diccionario de mitología náhuatl* (Mexico: Fuente Cultural, 1951).

⁵ Unless noted, all subsequent quotations from Darío's poetry or prologues are taken from *Poesías completas* (1961), edited by Méndez Plancarte, and will be identified by page number and line number, in the case of the poems, and by the page number in the case of the prefaces. Unless otherwise noted, all quotations from Darío's prose are taken from M. Sanmiguel Raimúndez's 1950-55 edition of his *Obras completas* and will be

indicated by the abbreviation "OC" followed by the volume and page number. The abbreviation OC will also be used for Martí's *Obras completas*.

⁶ The view that discourse is divorced from intention is forcefully expressed in: Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," *Contemporary Critical Theory*, ed. Dan Latimer (San Diego: HBJ, 1989) 54-59, first published in 1968.

⁷ It is difficult to find accurate statistics concerning the indigenous population of the Americas since there is no consensus among Hispanic officials as to the characteristics which define indigenous peoples. In Mexico, for example, "[o]fficial figures count as Indians only those who list themselves in censuses as speakers of Indian languages" (Brosnahan et al. 40). However, in other countries the concept of "race" exists as a cultural as well as a biological category. (Haviland 258). Censuses take into consideration the individual's racial factions, lifestyle, dress, housing, whether they wear shoes or walk barefoot, and whether they are farmers (259). If Amerindians speak Spanish, wear modern clothing, live in a non-Amerindian neighborhood, they cease to be considered indigenous regardless of the number of Amerindian genes they may have (259). As can be appreciated, the number of indigenous inhabitants of any particular country thus depends on who is conducting the census. This is the reason for such divergent statistics. Indigenous Guatemalans represent anywhere from 44 to 80% of the population depending on the source one accepts as accurate. In the case of Guatemala, Colombo's statistics are rather conservative, whereas in the case of Mexico they are somewhat more generous, or at least more reasonable. He certainly does not accept the Mexican government's belief that one must speak an Indian language to be an Indian. If one were to accept the official figures, then one would have to believe that Native Mexicans represent a mere 7% of the population, which can be contested by even a

casual observer. The point to be made here is that even according to conservative statistics there is a significant indigenous presence in Central America.

⁸ As Nigolian has pointed out, "[m]any descendants of the Aztecs still live in small villages around Mexico City, speak their ancestral language, and often combine their Christian faith with ancient traditions to form a distinctive style of Mexican Catholicism" (428-29). John P. Whales has also noted that in Mexico "idols persisted behind altars, in spirit if not in wood or stone. An idol found behind an altar in one church was removed and put in a museum. The Indians stopped coming to that shrine. Even today the native gods refuse to stay dead. In a remote village church, men in tunics and sandals kneel on the earthen floor before carved wooden images of Christian *santos*, then stand in the doorway to invoke ancestral gods" (355). In Elizabeth Benson's *The Maya World* we learn that "[t]he everyday life of the [Mayan] peasant centered around the rain, sun and wind gods, who were--and still are--invoked when the fields are cut, burned, and planted, and while the crop is growing" (111) [our italics]. Robin Ridington also explains that "Native people adopted many elements of Christianity but also retained many of their own spiritual traditions, sometimes covertly" (1211). The *Larousse World Mythology* points out that "[i]n spite of four centuries of Christianity Quechua and Aymara Indians from Peru and Bolivia continue to make offerings to spirits they feel are all around them intervening in their daily lives" (Grimal 481). The issue of religious syncretism is also dealt with in Jacques Emile Monast's *On les croyait chrétiens, les Aymaras*. It is also dealt with in Dario's short story "Huitzilopochtli" where Father Reguera explains that "con la cruz hemos hecho aquí muy poco, y por dentro y por fuera el alma y las formas de los primitivos ídolos nos vencen" (*Cuentos y prosas* 129).

⁹ Vallejo found Unamuno's statement so offensive, that he refused to be introduced to him (Fuentes 21 n. 4).

¹⁰ At least, this is the view expressed by progressive thinkers including José Martí (Cuba, 1853-1895) and Manuel González Prada (Peru, 1848-1918). Their allegiance was to the Americas first and foremost. They identified with Amerindians and defended their rights. Their vision of the Americas included the aboriginal element. See, González Prada (350-55).

¹¹ The critic seems to be following Rousseau's term.

¹² During the first half of the past century there were more speakers of native languages in Mexico than Spanish-speakers. The speakers of indigenous languages formed 73% of the population (Suárez 170). In 1930 there only remained 16% who spoke native tongues; in 1960 there were 8.3% and in 1990 a mere 7.2% (King 96). At this rate, all indigenous languages will disappear from the Mexican territory within one hundred years unless appropriate steps are taken to protect them (Demonte and Garza Cuarón 413). Nevertheless, no effective steps are being taken.

¹³ José Santos Zelaya was loved by the Nicaraguan people. He attempted to improve life for all, not only the rich. He improved education and foreign trade. He built bridges, roads, and government buildings. Political rights were extended to all citizens, including women. During Zelaya's reign, slavery was abolished. One of his policies involved reducing and eliminating the timber and mining concessions granted to foreign multinational corporations.

¹⁴ In *Del chorro de la fuente*, one finds a poem to "La revolución francesa."

¹⁵ For example, Ellis dedicates an entire chapter to "Socio-Political Considerations" in his *Critical Approaches to Rubén Darío*. The critic also considers

Darío's social consciousness in "Martí, Darío y la definición del Modernismo" *Recreaciones: Ensayos sobre la obra de Rubén Darío*, ed. Ivan A. Schulman (Hanover: Norte, 1992): 189-212. An appreciation of the importance of the socio-political element is also manifest in Ellis' "Un análisis estructural del poema 'A Roosevelt'" *Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos* 211 (1967) 523-28.

¹⁶ As Darío explained in the "Prefacio" to *Cantos de vida y esperanza* (1905), "[y]o no soy un poeta para las muchedumbres. Pero sé que indefectiblemente tengo que ir a ellas" (*Poesías* 704). Darío recognized that not all of his poetry was accessible or appealing to the masses. It does not mean that he was not concerned about them. As Darío stated in *El viaje a Nicaragua*, "[y]o he luchado y vivido, no por los Gobiernos, sino por la Patria" (*OC* 3: 1108)

¹⁷ In *Historia de mis libros*, Darío explains that "Sonatina" "contiene el sueño cordial de toda adolescente, de toda mujer que aguarda el instante amoroso. Es el deseo íntimo, la melancolía ansiosa, y es, por fin, la esperanza" (*OC* 1: 208). In *Rubén Darío, poeta trágico*, Alberto Acereda suggests that the princess in "Sonatina" may represent the poet's soul (63).

¹⁸ The song "Comandante Carlos Fonseca" can be found on the following record. *Guitarra armada (Armed Guitar): Music of the Sandinista Guerrillas*, Rounder Records, 1988. The chorus of the song in question goes as follows: "Comandante Carlos, Carlos Fonseca / Tayacán vencedor de la muerte / Novio de la patria rojinegra / Nicaragua entera te grita ¡Presente!" [our emphasis].

¹⁹ When one reads Darío's journalism dealing with U.S. intervention in Central America one gets the impression that the poet is stating that: "if Nicaragua falls, all others will fall." In "La invasión anglosajona: Centro América yanqui," Darío expresses the fear

that if the United States constructed a canal through Panama, as was considered at the time, the result would be the progressive Americanization of Central America (130, 134). Although he points out the positive points of North American influence, he fears that it will be at the expense of Spanish American culture (135).

²⁰ According to Jackson, "[m]ucho quiso Martí a los negros y en la misma medida y correspondencia fue querido por ellos. También Rubén Darío, americano como él, lleno de fe en la fraternidad humana, y detestando como el cubano, toda forma de opresión tuvo por ellos un especial afecto" (416). "El talento de los negros" is a vindication of blacks by Darío. See *Escritos dispersos de Rubén Darío*, vol. 1, 295-99. Darío spoke positively of Antonio Maceo, the Afro-Cuban guerrilla general, and of the revolutionary predisposition of Cubans of African ancestry. The poet said that: "[l]a gente de color estará, a no dudarlo, de parte de los revolucionarios. Más aún: hay muchos revolucionarios de color" (*Escritos dispersos*, vol. 2, 15-17). Darío also advocated the emancipation of black slaves. As Jackson states: "[n]umerosos textos nos revelan que Darío estaba muy atento a la labor humanitaria de quienes trabajaban contra de la esclavitud negra, y los aplaudía, expresando así sus propios sentimientos en favor de la justicia y la fraternidad humana" (415). For more information about Darío and black people, see also René Durand, *La négritude dans l'oeuvre poétique de Rubén Darío*. In *Darío, Cernuda y otros temas poéticos*, Gastón Baquero expresses a view diametrically opposed to those of Jackson and Durand, holding that "Rubén Darío ... tenía por los negros el desprecio habitual de la sociedad hispanoamericana de su tiempo" (222). As Ellis points out that "[w]hile it can hardly be denied that Baquero's view is sustainable by an essay like Darío's "La raza de Cham" and that consequently there is some

inconsistency in Darío's position, it would seem that the burden of his preoccupation with the subject shows a sensitive concern for the well-being of black people" (*Critical* 72).

Like Martí, Darío was also interested in Amerindian literature and appears to have admired the work of Daniel G. Brinton, the North American ethnologist and linguist who first translated some of the ancient Amerindian literature. Both Martí and Darío published their views on the *Güegüence*, the *Popul Vuh* and the *Ollantay*, among other indigenous works. In Martí's case one has but to point to articles such as "Arte aborigen," "Una comedia indígena: El güegüence," "La cronología prehistórica de América: Daniel G. Brinton," and "El Popul Vuh de los quichés: páginas del libro de José Milla." In the case of Darío one finds *El viaje a Nicaragua*, "El folklore de la América Central" and "Exposición colombina" from *Páginas del arte* among others.

²¹ As Darío stated: "¡Oh, Cuba! ¡Eres muy bella, ciertamente, y hacen gloriosa obra los hijos tuyos que luchan porque te quieren libre ... mas la sangre de Martí no te pertenecía; pertenecía a toda una raza, a todo un continente; pertenecía a una briosa juventud que pierde en él quizá al primero de sus maestros; pertenecía al porvenir!" (*OC* 2: 483).

²² The article "José Martí, poeta" is incomplete in both the *Obras completas* and the *Escritos dispersos*. Hence, both must be used in conjunction.

²³ Darío held Bolívar in high esteem. In "Al libertador Bolívar" from *La iniciación melódica*, he calls him "semi-dios, no hombre" (line 78). In the poem "Himno a Bolívar" found in *Poesías desconocidas completas*, Darío describes Bolívar in the following terms: "en su brazo hay ardores de guerra / y en su frente vislumbre de Dios" (lines 3-4). The poet admired Bolívar's epic struggle for Spanish American independence. This view, however, is not shared by all Amerindians. According to Wankar, the

revolutionary, yet revisionist, Indian ideologist, Bolívar was an Indian killer: "[l]a inmensa mayor parte de oficiales y jefes de los ejércitos 'libertadores' sirvieron en los ejércitos españoles. Allí, todos incluso Bolívar aprendieron a matar, luchando contra la resistencia india" (119). Also see the chapter "Los criollos se emancipan: Siglo XIX" (107-121).

²⁴ In *Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España*, Bernal Díaz del Castillo recalled the sight of Tenochtitlán in the following words: "[v]imos cosas tan admirables no sabíamos qué decir, o si era verdad lo que por delante parecía" (148).

²⁵ In "Flores" from *Canto a la Argentina y otros poemas*, Darío says that "los versos son flores rimadas" (line 32). In other words: poetry may be perceived as the incarnation of Xochiquetzal, the Aztec flower-goddess. Interestingly enough, Xochiquetzal is also the goddess of sexual license.

²⁶ Among Darío's works of Oriental influence, several deal, to differing degrees, with the Islamic world in particular. They include: "La cabeza dei rawí" and "Alí" from *Epístolas y poemas* (1885); and "Pórtico" from *Prosas profanas* (1901). Note the beautiful description of the *adhan*, the Muslim call to prayer, found in the chapter "Tánger" from *Tierras solares*:

El canto o más bien recitado del muezzin, es de esas cosas que no se olvidan cuando se las oye. En lo profundo de la sombra nocturna, o a la hora del crepúsculo, o bajo la maravillosa luna que brilla sobre zafiro celeste, su voz, en un ritmo repetido y único, confía al viento y promulga al mundo que Alah es grande. Esta campana humana que llama a la oración y que recuerda a las razas más creyentes del orbe la omnipotencia del Dios poderoso, es de lo más impresionante intelectualmente que se puede todavía encontrar sobre la faz de la tierra, de la

tierra árida de destrucciones mentales, seca de vientos de filosofía, y que casi no halla en donde resguardar el resto de las creencias y de amables ilusiones divinas que han sido por tantos siglos el sostén y la gracia del espíritu de los pueblos. (*OC* 3: 956)

²⁷ Darío refers to Columbus in various poems including: "Mensajero sublime," and "A la República Dominicana" in *Del chorro de la fuente*; "Momotombo" from *El canto errante*, and "A Roosevelt" from *Cantos de vida y esperanza*.

²⁸ It is important to remember that America is not the original name of the continent. Native peoples called the continent *Abya Yala* or "The Great Island" in their distinctive languages. Columbus was not even aware of the name "America." That name was given to the continent in honor of the Italian explorer Amerigo Vespucci by the geographers of the Saint-Dié monastery in their *Cosmographiae Introductio* of 1507 (Varela Bueno 108-17.)

²⁹ In fact, the association nature=mother has a long tradition tracing back to ancient Greece. In his *Silvas americanas*, Andrés Bello deals with "la materna tierra" (1: 111). He also makes the association America=wife: "América, del Sol joven esposa, / del antiguo Oceano hija postrera" (Part 2: p. 150). The symbol of the French Republic is a woman tearing off her shirt. During the struggle for Spanish American independence the image of the woman was also used to represent the Americas.

³⁰ See p. 50 of *The Conquest of Eden* by Paiewonsky for a unsettling example and p. 199 of Columbus' *Los cuatro viajes* for an allusion to such practices.

³¹ He complains about the fratricidal wars in which brothers massacre each other. His lament may encompass the Mexican Civil War in which the conservatives and the liberals fought each other (1858-61), the Argentine Civil War between the Unitarians and

the Federalists (1829-52), the war in which Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay fought Paraguay (1865-70), to the war between Peru and Bolivia (1836-39), and to the War of the Pacific (1879-83), to the civil wars in Venezuela and to all those revolutions that had occurred and were occurring throughout Latin America. Darío's concern for the state of violence in Latin America is shown in his article "Panamericanismo," published in *La caravana pasa*. He complains that Spanish American nations "de la misma lengua y de la misma raza continúan ofreciendo el triste espectáculo de hermanos enemigos, siempre listos a despedazarse" (OC 3: 843). As can be appreciated, the stanza as a whole can be seen as a plea for peace and Spanish American unity. After all, as Edelberto Torres has so accurately noted: "[l]a paz es un *leitmotif* en la poesía de Darío" (591).

³² Ellis provides us with a presentation and evaluation of the theories of racial determinism advanced by Cabezas, Bowra, and Torres-Ríoeseo, in his *Critical Approaches to Rubén Darío* (22-23). After considering their arguments, Ellis concludes that "[n]either Indian blood nor Black blood nor tropical climate explains adequately any characteristic of Darío's poetry. The human range of attitudes toward literature and talents for creating literature is not circumscribed by race or by climate" (23).

³³ In "France-Amérique" from *Canto a la Argentina* (1914) Darío uses the figure of the sun and war-god to paint a horrific picture of war:

Là-bas, dans l'épouvante et l'injure et la haine,
 les chasseurs de la mort ont sonné l'hallali,
 et, de nouveau soufflant sa venimeuse haleine,
 on croirait voir la bouche d'Huitzilopochtli. (lines 5-8)

³⁴ It is medically established that mestizos have greater resistance to European diseases than pure Indians (Gerhard 23). Miscegenation is the norm in Mexico, for

example, where a new culture was created. Franco believes that "[t]he criteria by which modern Mexicans judge Indians are cultural and linguistic" (271). José Martí understood the fallacy of splintering humankind into various distinct races. The concept of race, he believed, was a contributing factor in the development of racism. Hence, he opposed the concept of race and advocated its abandonment. Martí held the notion that without races, there could be no racism: "[n]o hay odio de razas, porque no hay razas" ("Nuestra América," *OC* 6: 22). But the issue of miscegenation is much more complex. In many cases, Spanish Americans, including Mexicans, often reject their Amerindian heritage. Even in Mexico, where supposedly people are judged "culturally" and "linguistically," there is overt discrimination towards individuals with indigenous features. Such people are noticeably absent in the mass media. The standards of beauty in Mexico, as in much of Spanish America, tend to favor the European. The whiter the better: blue eyes, blond hair, and pale skin.

³⁵ Animistic ideas are expressed by Quirón in Darío's poem "Coloquio de los centauros," when he states that "sobre el mundo tiene un ánima todo" (5:801) and "[l]as cosas tienen un ser vital" (5: 796). Skyrme has pointed out "Darío's belief in universal animism" (*Rubén Darío* 88).

³⁶ One has but to read Fray Bartolomé de las Casas' *Tratados* to get an idea of the magnitude of the atrocities.

³⁷ A parallel can be drawn between the relationship between Spanish Americans and Spaniards and the relationship between Quebeckers and France. The French-speaking North Americans are not "French," although their ancestors came from France between 1608 and 1760. The people of Quebec are culturally distinct from the people of France. Many Quebeckers feel a certain bond with France because it is their ancestral homeland,

because they once shared a common history, because they speak the same language. But they are different. They do not form an entity with the French. The same applies to Spanish America. But since both Spanish Americans and Spaniards have so much in common, there exist firm grounds on which to build ties of cooperation.

³⁸ Martín's claim that in this line Darío "fustiga los enemigos de la tradición hispánica" is not altogether satisfying (168).

³⁹ Marasso has cited the influence of the Apocalypse and the gospels according to John and Luke (177).

⁴⁰ The following quotes are from Barrera Vázquez's edition of the *Chilam Balam*. Martín also stresses the similarity between the following poems and the books of Chilam Balam. In "Salutación del optimista" from *Canto de vida y esperanza* (1905) we read:

Siéntense sordos ímpetus en las entrañas del mundo,
la inminencia de algo fatal hoy conmueve la tierra;
fuertes colosos caen, se desbandan bicéfalas águilas,
y algo se inicia como vasto social cataclismo
sobre la faz del orbe. (lines 23-27)

Then, in "Santa Elena de Montenegro" from *Poema del otoño* (1910), the poet expresses the following:

hora de terror milenario,
hora de sangre, hora de osario...
Tiemblan pueblos en desvarío
de hambre, de terror y de frío ...
Falta la terrible trompeta,
Mas oye el alma del poeta

crujir los huesos del planeta.

Al ruido terráqueo, un ruido

se agrega, profundo, inoído...

Viene de lo desconocido. (lines 2-3, 16-17, 28-33)

In the *Libros de Chilam Balam*, one reads the following sobre prophecies regarding the conquest:

será el tiempo de los grandes amontonamientos de calaveras, y del amanecer y del permanecer alertas cuando vengan las grandes destrucciones de las albarradas y será rellena la superficie del tronco de la ceiba. Será el tiempo de la pelea violenta, el tiempo en que arda el fuego en medio del corazón del país llano, en que ardan la tierra y el cielo, en que haya que tomarse el espanto como alimento; el tiempo en que se implore a los cielos. (199)

Martín also quotes the following from the same Mayan texts:

Come, come, tienes pan,

bebe, bebe, tienes agua;

en ese día el polvo se apodera de la tierra,

en ese día la peste cubre una faz de la tierra,

en ese día se levanta una nube,

en ese día un hombre fuerte se apodera del país,

en ese día las casas en ruinas,

en ese día la tierna hoja es destruida,

en ese día hay tres signos en el árbol,

en ese día tres generaciones penden allí;

en ese día se levanta la bandera del combate,

y se dispersan (los hombres) lejos, por los bosques. (200)

Although not conclusive, the similarities Martín offers are nonetheless suggestive.

⁴¹ Racial memories seem to be at work in purebred working dogs of all breeds, most of which demonstrate innate abilities in certain fields of work, such as guarding, herding, hunting and retrieval, typically without need of training.

⁴² In "Bouquet" from *Del chorro de la fuente* (1886-1916) the poet states that: "[y]o soy pagano. / Soy sacerdote del amor humano / en el altar de la mujer hermosa" (lines 37-39).

⁴³ Darío was a man who appreciated the beauty, and the sexual appeal, of women of all races, demonstrating a liberal attitude not altogether common in a day and age when slavery still existed and racism was often institutionalized. This aspect of the poet can most readily be grasped from the poem "Divagación" from *Prosas profanas*. His attraction to black women is manifest in "La negra dominga" from *Del chorro de la fuente* and in the story of the beautiful black woman from *la rue Parquet* related by Cabezas (158). His appreciation of Amerindian women is expressed in *Historia de mis libros* where he explains how he saw "algunas mujeres de la raza india de Nicaragua, que es la más bella que conozco; todas lucían, muy morenas, por estar vestidas de un blanco inmaculado, y los cabellos muy negros y los ojos como llamas, tomaban con eso un relieve encantador" (*OC* 3: 475). In the article "Naturaleza tropical" included in *Mundo adelante*, Darío focuses on a topless adolescent Amerindian girl whose "pechos menudos" "temblaban firmes y nacientes, en el florecimiento de sus catorce años" (*OC* 4: 475).

Much has been said about Darío's sensuality. Martín holds that Darío was "un hombre ... con mucho de la sensibilidad de los indios aborígenes, apasionados, *sensuales*

y enigmáticos" [emphasis ours]. Although several scholars consider sensuality a distinctive trait of indigenous peoples, such stereotypes should be cast aside for sensuality is a universal human characteristic. Furthermore, as Skyrme has pointed out, "it would be a mistake to take Darío's eroticism literally. In almost all of his love poems the language of passion expresses a deep-seated mysticism" (*Rubén Darío* 27). Paz expressed the same view in *Cuadrivio* where he pointed out Darío's "misticismo erótico" (57). The mystical nature of Darío's eroticism is manifest in "Ite, missa est" where the poet equates the celebration of the eucharist with the sexual act: "su espíritu es la hostia de mi amorosa misa" (639: line 3).

⁴⁴ The word "sun" is often capitalized in Darío's prose and poetry. Note the following poems, among others: "Desengaño" (line 25), "Ante la estatua de Morazán" (line 5), and "A unos ojos" (line 18) from *La iniciación melódica*; "Cantos de vida y esperanza" (line 104), "Salutación a Leonardo" (line 66), "A Roosevelt" (line 45), and "Madrigal exaltado" (line 16) from *Cantos de vida y esperanza*; "Canto a la Argentina" (line 483) from the self-titled book of poems; "El sueño del Inca" (line 10, 13), "A Bolivia" (line 13, 14), and "Envío de Atalanta" (line 25) from *Del chorro de la fuente*.

⁴⁵ Ugarte's opinion resembles Darío's. Expressing his admiration for the United States, he said that "[a] pesar del renombre de yancóforo que se me ha hecho, leyenda falsa como tantas otras, no he sido nunca enemigo de esa gran nación.... Nadie admira más que yo la grandeza de los Estados Unidos y pocos tendrán una noción más clara de la necesidad de relacionarnos con ellos en los desarrollos de la vida futura; pero esto ha de realizarse sobre una plataforma de equidad" (2-3).

⁴⁶ Nicolás Guillén, the revolutionary Cuban poet, would also use this image to describe the U.S.A. in his poem "Semsemayá" from *West Indies Ltd.*

⁴⁷ In his study, Forcadas points out the thematic and stylistic similarities between Balbuena's *La grandeza mexicana* and Darío's *Canto a la Argentina*.

⁴⁸ One wonders whether the "lora" may be a reference to Flaubert. In fact, one of his *Trois contes* deals with a parrot.

⁴⁹ A valid contrast between Darío and Cardenal would be the actual extent of their knowledge of the pre-Columbian past. Although Darío had read many chronicles, in Cardenal's time much more material was available.

⁵⁰ Even Pablo Antonio Cuadra, perhaps the only important Nicaraguan writer to oppose the Sandinista revolution, has never, to our knowledge, cast doubt on the sincerity of the poet's humanitarian concerns. He also spoke positively of Cardenal's solidarity with the oppressed of the Earth (19).

⁵¹ Robert Pring-Mill also stresses that "one must never forget that he is above all a Spanish-American 'committed poet'-- indeed the foremost one since Pablo Neruda" ("Cardenal's Treatment" 53).

⁵² As Jonathan Cohen explains, if we examine Cardenal's poetry chronologically "it reveals his development as a poet motivated by an ever-widening notion of love: at first of women; then of the tropics, the lakes, everything that is Nicaragua; and finally of God" (3).

⁵³ Merton's ideas, as expressed in an unpublished letter written in December 1958, reflect virtually all the important themes in Cardenal's post-Trappist poetry (White 178-79).

⁵⁴ As Cardenal himself expressed in the poem "Epistle to José Coronel Urtecho," "[t]hey've told me I talk only about politics now. / It's not about politics but about

Revolution / which for me is the same thing as the kingdom of God" (qtd. in Pring-Mill, *Zero Hour* xxi).

As the poet explained, "[c]reo que la poesía es más duradera que otra clase de mensaje. Por eso busco decir más con la poesía que con otras cosas. A mí me interesa la poesía como medio, como se dice en inglés 'mass medium'. Me parece que su impacto es más profundo que el del periódico, el de la radio o la televisión." (qtd. in Borgeson, *Hacia* 143).

⁵⁵ In fact, by 1977, the community of Solentiname had virtually become an F.S.L.N. cell, and most of its younger members joined the attack on the National Guard garrison at San Carlos, an island port at the head of the Río San Juan.

⁵⁶ As Cardenal explained, "in India, even after Gandhi's struggle, the people were still miserable. Whereas in China a different kind of struggle had brought freedom for the people" (Randall interview 107). He also realized that "in Nicaragua an armed struggle was becoming more and more necessary" (Salmon xx).

⁵⁷ Cardenal declared that: "[h]e conocido a un santo. Pero a un santo que, como yo, cree en la guerra santa contra los opresores" (*El Mensaje del Islam* 59).

⁵⁸ Pring Mill would have us believe that Cardenal was both a "saint" (*Zero Hour* vii,xvii) and a "prophet" (vii), while José M. Valverde considers him a prophet (12).

⁵⁹ As Pring-Mill states, "el empeño cardenaliano ha sido declaradamente cristiano a lo largo de la mayor parte de su vida" (qtd. in González-Balado 15). Seconding this view is Salmon's statement that "Ernesto Cardenal is profoundly Christian" (xxvi).

⁶⁰ As Maria Enrica Castiglioni explains:

La ricerca di una matrice culturale in grado di restituire dignità storica, oltre che umana, al popolo acculturato dal dominio di potenze straniere costituisce per

Cardenal la traccia fondamentale che lo orienterà, a partire dai primi poemi storici, verso un infaticabile lavoro di riscoperta e "attualizzazione" dei miti precolombiani, contribuendo così ad imporre la "visione dei vinti" quale chiave di interpretazione della storia prima della conquista (107).

⁶¹ Pring-Mill claims that Cardenal totally rejects the use of metaphor. This is incorrect; see, for example: "cielos tranquilos" (*Los ovis* 360), "[g]eneración de Monos" (368), "el maligno Xoo Tiburón" (356), and "[e]l agua ya no canta en los canales" (376), among others.

⁶² Birgitta Leander lists many of the more characteristic metaphors used in Náhuatl. Some of these include: *in chachihuitl in quetzalli*--"jade and fine feathers"--which means "beauty;" *in tlilli in tlapalli*--"black and red ink" which signifies "knowledge;" *in ehecatl in chichinzatli*--"wind and heat"--identified with "sensual delights" and *tlayolteuviani*--"he who 'goddens' things in his heart"--representing "the artist" (61-62).

⁶³ Carlos Villanes and Isabel Córdova describe the Aztecs as "un pueblo de oradores" (41).

⁶⁴ Among the canonical works the poet uses, Williams mentions Columbus's *Diario de navegación*, Bartolomé de Las Casas' *Historia de las Indias*, Bernal Díaz del Castillo's *Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España*, Francisco López de Gómara's *Historia general de las Indias*, Pedro Mártir de Anglerías' *Décadas del Orbe Novo*, Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo's *Historia general y natural de las Indias*, Antonio de Remesal's *Historia general de las Indias y particular de la gobernación de Chiapas y Guatemala* (xiii).

⁶⁵ "Relación Décimotercera" by Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxóchitl is an example, as is the *Colección de documentos inéditos de Indias*, and the *Documentos para la historia de Nicaragua* (Colección Somoza) (xiii).

⁶⁶ According to Williams, the use of the technically non-historical book of *Chilam Balam* is significant "because it marks the presence of the oracular or prophetic discourse and reveals the poem's mythic and Providential dimension" (xiii). The utilization of Las Casas, Ixtlilxóchitl, and the *Book of Chilam Balam* is significant, and indicates a desire to project a more balanced perspective of the subject at hand.

⁶⁷ A *katún* is a chronological period or cycle of 24 years in the time cycle of the Mayan calendar.

⁶⁸ Rivera explains that Mediz Bolio, as well as many other research scholars, "ha tomado la decisión de asimilar la pretendida divinidad prehispánica al ser supremo predicado por los conquistadores, lo que resulta justo si se tienen en cuenta los contextos en donde aparecen las menciones a Hunab Ku y el hecho que otros informes omiten por completo su nombre" (162, note 38).

As can be appreciated, the segment of Mayan scripture in question may be construed to be a forgery on the part of a Spanish clergyman or Spanish-speaking Indian convert attempting to manipulate the *Chilam Balam* for the advancement of Christianity. Although the bulk of the collection of eighteen manuscripts of *Chilam Balam* seems to have been written prior to the Spanish conquest, several, however, also contain Christian rites and legends of Spanish influence and origins (Salmon 412).

By the time the various books reached their final format, the original Mayan scriptures had long been burned. The task of interpolating the roots of Christian beliefs into Mayan mythology was thus facilitated. No Indian would have the audacity to

challenge the wording of the new text for fear of being denounced as pagan and consequently put to the sword. Even if the forgeries were noticeable to the natives of the time, it was hoped that succeeding generations would have forgotten so much of their original beliefs that they could be deceived into accepting these *post-factum* prophetic fabrications. However, this has not been the case. To this day, many Mayan Indians view the *Popul Vuh* and the *Chilam Balam* with some scepticism.

⁶⁹ The *leyenda negra* refers to the alleged exaggeration of the atrocities of the Spanish conquerors. Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas is considered by many Spaniards to be the Father of the *leyenda negra*.

⁷⁰ The *Pax Iroquois* was a confederacy of North American Indian tribes founded (c. 1570) to eliminate incessant intertribal warfare and cannibalism. It included the Mohawk, Onaida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca, and later the Tuscarora and other tribes who occupied the region between Virginia and Ontario (16th c.-18th c.).

⁷¹ In "La economía de Tahuantinsuyu," Cardenal is impressed by the efficient social order responsible for creating such a magnificent city perched on a mountain top. Neruda, on the other hands, erroneously accuses the Incas of using slaves to construct the city (*Poesía*, Vol. 2, *Alturas*, Canto X, line 29).

⁷² In the United States, the bison is often called the buffalo, although it is not closely related to the true buffalo found in Africa. Zoologists prefer the term bison. *Wildlife Fact File*, "American Bison," (U.S.A.: BV/IMP, mcmxci) card 13.

⁷³ Cardenal describes the Indians as "aquella grandiosa Confederación de tribus / pobres / harapientas, hippies" (*Los ovnis* 148). In the same fashion that Andrew Lloyd Webber's musical *Jesus Christ Superstar* attempted to associate Jesus with the hippie

movement, the poet has striven to do likewise with the Native Americans. Cardenal helps modernize the image of Jesus by viewing him as a social activist.

⁷⁴ Believing that no Indian had the right to hand over land to the whites because the land belonged to all Indians and all tribes, Tecumseh refused to sign the Treaty at Fort Greenville (1795) after Little Turtle's War (1790-1794) (427). He almost succeeded in uniting tribes around the country, "desde los Grandes Lagos hasta México" (Cardenal, *Los ovnis* 148). However, the momentum of Tecumseh's rebellion was broken by William Henry Harrison (1773-1841), Governor of the Indiana Territory, after the attack he ordered on Prophetstown, the village of Tenskwatawai, Tecumseh's brother. Harrison told the State Department that he feared Tecumseh would build "un imperio como el de Moctezuma o / los incas" (Cardenal, *Los ovnis* 148).

⁷⁵ According to the *Larousse World Mythology*, Tloque Nahuaque was also known as Ipalnemoani "He by whom we live" (Grimal 460). As an act of defiance against the official Aztec religion, Nezahualcōyotl constructed a pyramid for the Unknown God "[p]recisamente enfrente de la del Huitzilopochtli-Nazi" (Cardenal, *Los ovnis* 218). Huitzilopochtli is labelled as a Nazi god due to his almost insatiable appetite for human blood. As Pring-Mill explains, "Huitzilopochtli was the most bloodthirsty of all Aztec gods (at the dedication of whose temple in 1487, literally thousands of sacrificial victims had their hearts torn out)" ("Cardenal's Treatment" 66). As the critic explains, since Huitzilopochtli's bloodthirsty nature is common knowledge in Mesoamerica, Cardenal only needed to add the adjective to juxtapose the holocausts, and so, by implication, the régimes (66).

⁷⁶ Salmon explains that Tlacaélel is

[o]ne of the most controversial characters in the Aztec world.... He influenced governmental affairs from 1435 to 1480 to such a degree that he became a legendary character, dominated by superstition. The cruel nature of Aztec religion is attributed principally to him. His legacy was not only greater organization of economic expansion, but human sacrifice as well. He was also responsible for the oppression of the people by both religious superstition and political totalitarianism. (428-29)

⁷⁷ In fact, Leander had to rely on a photocopy of the 1723 edition (47). According to Torquemada, one of Nezahualcōyotl's subjects was condemned to death for some crime and had to appear before the King. While on his way to Texcoco,

fue componiendo un canto, porque era un gran poeta, en el cual representaba su inocencia y engrandecía la misericordia del rey. Y cuando iba llegando a su presencia, lo comenzó a cantar, de lo que gustó mucho Nezahualcoyotl, porque también lo era y componía muy elegantemente. (Torquemada, vol. I: 165)

According to Leander:

El rey quedó tan impresionado por la belleza del canto que había compuesto el condenado a muerte, que no sólo le perdonó la vida, sino que según cuenta la leyenda, le ofreció en matrimonio a una de sus hijas. (47)

⁷⁸ "No fue partidario de la civilización / recibida indiscriminadamente / ni de la posición tradicionalista extrema / de no recibir nada de los *waga* sino: asimilar todo lo beneficioso de la civilización / conservando todo lo valioso de los indios" (34).

⁷⁹ According to John Gerassi, before his death in 1956 Anastasio Somoza "accumulated a \$200 million grafted fortune that included a sugar mill, cement plant, and cotton gin, sugar, cotton and coffee plantations, thousands of top farmlands, and

thousands of cattle, newspapers, the country's only TV station, and radio station, and an airline, and steamship company" (175). The younger Somoza made \$12 million dollars a year buying the blood of his people and selling it abroad at a 300% mark-up (*Third World Traveler TWT*). In 1972, after an earthquake killed and wounded hundreds of thousands of Nicaraguans, "Somoza had his National Guard seize \$30 million in international relief supplies and sold them to the highest bidder" (*TWT*).

⁸⁰ The poet has admitted that he was always obsessed with his hatred of Somoza (Randall 97).

⁸¹ As recently declassified documents demonstrate, the CIA has a long tradition of supporting dictators, as well as forming, training and funding death squads throughout the world. Information regarding the recently declassified documents concerning death squads supported by the CIA can be found on the following site: "CIA Base," online, Internet, 4 March 2000. Another source is: "Guatemala: CIA Agents Worked Inside Death Squad," online, Internet, 15 April 1998. The following documentary also contains up-to-date information regarding the new security threats faced by the CIA with the discovery of its involvement with Guatemalan death squads: *The CIA: America's Secret Warriors*, dir. Marc Levin, Discovery Channel, 2 May 1998. Another good source regarding CIA involvement in Guatemala is: William Blum, *Killing Hope*, online, Internet, 4 March 2000. Noam Chomski is also a good source on the issue, particularly: *The Culture of Terrorism* (London: Pluto, 1988). An extensive list of U.S.-backed dictators linked to the CIA can be found at the following site: *Third World Traveler (TWT)*, "Friendly Dictators," online, Internet, 4 March 2000.

⁸² Guatemala's massive debt to the United States and US-influenced international financial institutions has cost Guatemala its economic as well as political autonomy

(EPOCA 7). Debt equals dependency, and dependency leads to exploitation. In 1990, Guatemala's external debt was calculated to be 2.179 billion dollars (Colombo 384).

⁸³ In 1987, "the U.S. and Guatemalan governments commenced a drug eradication program using U.S. pilots and planes to spray herbicides on allegedly burgeoning fields of opium and marijuana in northern and central Guatemala" (EPOCA 13). Although the DEA claims that only the herbicide Roundup (glyphosate) is used during aerial sprayings, others sources have reported the use of 2, 4D, and highly toxic chemicals such as paraquat and 2, 4, 5-T.13. Human deaths, deformed children, ulcerations, an increase in infant mortality, deaths of entire herds of livestock, destruction of entire crops as well as honey bees, and widespread defoliation in the Petén region have all been reported as a result of the sprayings.

Evidence is mounting that the major drug plantations in Guatemala are owned, operated, and protected by the military. According to one news service, marijuana grown in eastern Petén near the border of Belize is on lands belonging to army officers. Guatemala also seems to have become an alternative to Panama as a transfer point for cocaine from Colombia to the U.S. One Guatemalan judge revealed the existence of 28 clandestine airstrips in the province of Retalhuleu used to transport cocaine to the United States. The U.S. media has reported that Guatemalan military officers have been found transporting cocaine overland through the country. One DEA officer even admitted that Guatemala's military intelligence is the main drug trafficker.

Activists argue that the sprayings are concentrated in areas of guerrilla activity and serve primarily to support the government's counterinsurgency policy. Critics hold that the U.S. drug war is being waged arm-in-arm with Guatemala's military intelligence division, the G-2 that is notoriously connected with death squads.

The claims that U.S. intelligence has been funding Guatemalan counterinsurgency operations with profits made from drug trafficking is interesting in light of recent allegations that the CIA was involved in introducing crack cocaine in African-American ghettos and using the profit to fund the Contra war against the Sandinista government. Details on this topic can be found in the following sources: *The CIA: America's Secret Warriors*, dir. Marc Leven, *Discovery Channel*, 2 May 1998; "Farrakhan Considers Law Suit Over CIA Drug Allegations," WBC News Center, (Oct. 15 1996), online, Internet, 4 March 2000; *Sandinistas vs. the Contras (U.S. Client Army)*, online, Internet, 23 Aug. 1998; and the original *Mercury* newspaper articles that initiated the controversy: "The Series: Dark Alliance," *Mercury*, (Aug. 18-20 1996), online, Internet, 4 March 2000. The *Mercury* newspaper was pressured to recant their claims about CIA culpability for the crack crisis. The original articles, and their subsequent dismissal, are found on the *Mercury* web page.

Besides the chemical application used to allegedly combat the drug-trade, one must also consider the damage caused by the excessive use of pesticides on agricultural land. "The level of pesticide spraying is the highest in the world," reported the New York Times in 1977, "and little concern is shown for the people who live near the cotton fields ... 30 or 40 people per day are treated for pesticide poisoning in season" (Blum, online, Internet, 4 Apr. 1998). Many of the chemicals sprayed in Guatemala are illegal to use in the United States. Guatemala has the dubious distinction of registering the highest levels of DDT in mother's milk and human flesh (EPOCA 6). In the 1980s, an average of 88 pesticide poisonings was reported per month in Guatemala. The unreported poisonings are estimated to be much higher.

⁸⁴ The CIA-backed invasion of Guatemala in 1954 was prompted by Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán's land reform plan which involved the redistribution of 160,000 to 210,000 acres of uncultivated United Fruit Co. land (Tooley 2; EPOCA 5). The United Fruit Co., along with the CIA, was instrumental in the overthrow of the president of Guatemala (Salmon 431). At the time, the United Fruit Co. was the largest landowner and foreign company in the country. It owned 550,000 acres of the national territory, controlling 40,000 jobs, holding \$60 million in investments, and owning 887 miles of railway track in Guatemala (EPOCA 5). It is no wonder that Central Americans popularly call the company *el Pulpo*--the octopus (Salmon 431). Even though the Arbenz government was committed to compensate the United Fruit Co. for the repossessed land, the U.S. State Department labelled his regime "communist" (Tooley 2).

⁸⁵ According to a 1983 U.S. Agency for International Development report, "the amount of idle, arable land on large land holdings in the country nearly matches the amount of land needed for the landless population--about 1.2 million hectares" (Tooley 5). Despite the existence of unused, fertile land, and despite a widespread call for land reform, "every government in Guatemala since 1954 has opposed land reform" (5).

⁸⁶ In his "Canto Nacional a Nicaragua" from *Canto a un país que nace* (1978), Cardenal effectively uses the technique of optimistic comparative juxtaposition which involves juxtaposing, linking, and comparing the quetzal with the Sandinistas, both of which cannot live in a state of subjugation. He establishes certain common characteristics between nature and man, especially liberty: "[s]on las selvas del quetzal que no sabe vivir cautivo / el habitat del quetzal, y de los sandinistas."

⁸⁷ Ah Kin (Ah Kinchil) is the Mayan sun god who controls drought and disease. His name means "He of the Sun" (*Encyclopedia Mythica*: s.v. "Ah Kin"). The Mayan sun

god is also known by the name of Ahau-Kin, the "Lord of the Sun Face," who possesses both diurnal and nocturnal aspects. In his diurnal manifestation, "the sun god was often depicted with some jaguar features" (s.v. "Ahau-Kin). However, "between sunset and sunrise he actually became the Jaguar god, the Lord of the underworld, as he traveled from west to east through the lower regions of the world" (s.v. "Ahau-Kin"). The Mayan sun god is also known as Kinich Ahau, as well as Ah Xoc Kin (*Religion: The Mayan Gods*: s.v. "sun god"). In this latter manifestation, he was also associated with poetry and music (s.v. "sun god").

⁸⁸ The Mayan deities who protect people in their daily lives and guard the community against external threats are known as Balam, literally "Jaguar" (*Encyclopedia Mythica*: "Balam"). The Balam are depicted at times like guardian spirits (Salmon 414).

⁸⁹ Cardenal includes him on his list of evildoers because of the liberal concessions Ubico made to U.S. enterprises and for changing the constitution twice in order to prolong his term in office. It was under Ubico that the United Fruit Co. gained control of forty-two per cent of Guatemala's land, exempt from taxes and import duties (Tooley 2).

⁹⁰ This particular fish leaves the ocean and travels into fresh water. It has been found far up the Mississippi River and is considered dangerous.

⁹¹ The U.S. Marines "invaded Nicaragua in 1912, and stayed until 1933, fighting but never defeating the revolutionary Augusto Sandino. They created the Nicaraguan National Guard and installed Anastasio Somoza in power. After signing a truce, Sandino was assassinated by Somoza. Franklin Roosevelt admitted that Somoza was an American agent when he stated that "Somoza may be a son-of-a-bitch, but he's our son-of-a-bitch." Corruption, torture, and murder of dissidents continued for 45 years under two generations of Somozas. (*TWT*: "Anastasio Somoza, Sr. and Jr.").

⁹² Henry Ford is the personification of capitalism; however, he also embodies an ideology despised by Cardenal: fascism. Henry Ford was a good friend of Hitler's. His anti-Semitic book, *The International Jew*, is said to have inspired Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. The *Führer* kept a photograph of Ford in his office, and Ford was one of only four foreigners to receive Germany's highest civilian award. *TWT*: "Adolf Hitler."

⁹³ Cardenal is one of the few recognized poets who can get away with profanity in his poetry. He is a poet more inclined to the use of vulgarisms than euphemisms.

⁹⁴ When Cardenal was asked if he thought that whores were impure, he replied that "[y]o considero que la impureza es la del sistema que hace posible la prostitución de nuestras hermanas mujeres" (González-Balado 25). As a result of the triumph of the Sandinista revolution, the exploitation of women in advertizing was forbidden, as was pornography, which was deemed degrading and exploitative of women.

⁹⁵ Estimates of the pre-Columbian population of the Americas in 1492 differ, from as low as 8.4 million to a maximum of 112.5 million inhabitants. The estimates of 22 million for Mexico proposed by the Berkely school, 6 million inhabitants for Peru as calculated by OXFAM, and 11 million people in what are now Canada and the United States seem reasonable (Gerhard: figure 1; OXFAM 7; Angélica Morrow 40). Factoring in the Caribbean, Central America, and the rest of the South America, excluding Peru, a total population of 80 million inhabitants seems plausible.

⁹⁶ Cardenal has expressed these views in his "respuestas," where he explains the purpose of his art:

He querido decir ... que América Latina tiene un tesoro en sus culturas y sus razas indígenas, y que la revolución es nuestro futuro, he condenado las opresiones de los hombres, y he afirmado que después de la muerte no se ha acabado la vida, y

que--como ha dicho Coronel--la revolución no termina con la muerte. (*Hacia* 368).

⁹⁷ "Antes estuvieron poblados esos llanos con muchas tribus ya desaparecidas, de las que casi no se sabe nada. Desaparecieron los tamanachi, los guamos, los achaguas y los otomacos" ("Los yaruros" 275): "[a]ntes esos llanos tuvieron muchas otras tribus / de las que casi no se sabe nada. Desaparecieron / los tamanachi, los guamos, los achaguas, los otomacos" (*Los ovnis* 80); "[s]ólo los yaruros son *Pumeh* ... y los que no son indios los llaman con el nombre español de 'rationales.' Los 'rationales' los habían explotado siempre y les quitaban sus mujeres" (275): "[s]ólo ellos son *Pumeh*. A los blancos / dan el nombre español de *rationales*. Los racionales / los habían explotado siempre y les quitaban sus mujeres" (80); "[u]n tiempo ellos eran muchos, le dijeron también a Petrullo (276): "[u]n tiempo ellos eran muchos, le dijeron a Petrullo" (80); "le pidieron a Petrullo una foto de Fuma [sic] o de la tierra de Kuma" (276): "[p]idieron al antropólogo una foto de Kuma o la Tierra de Kuma" (82); "[e]ra difícil hacerlos hablar de sus otras creencias, porque la vida para los yaruros en este mundo había prácticamente cesado. Como grupo, su voluntad de vivir había terminado" (279): "[e]ra difícil que hablaran de sus otras creencias / porque la vida para ellos en este mundo había prácticamente cesado. / Como grupo su voluntad de vivir había terminado. Veían inútil / tratar de mantener su cultura en contra de los racionales" (84); "[l]a muerte no la temían, sino era una cosa que deseaban" (280): "[l]a muerte no la temían sino era cosa que deseaban" (86); "[n]inguna explicación tenían de la superioridad de los blancos sobre ellos, a no ser por la maldad de los blancos" (281): "[n]inguna explicación tenían de la superioridad de los blancos / a no ser por la maldad de los blancos" (86); "los yaruros eran realmente un pueblo de místicos....

Estaban obsesionados por el cielo" (286): "[u]n pueblo de místicos, obsesionados por el cielo" (86).

⁹⁸ This comment can be found in Marx's *Contribution to a Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law. Introduction* (1844). See, Marx and Engels' Writings, online, Internet, 4 March 2000. Available: eserver.org/marx.

⁹⁹ This is in line with the F.S.L.N's position regarding religion (Borge 105-11). In fact, when asked whether one could be a Marxist and believe in God, the poet replied: "[s]í, con tal de que se crea en el Dios verdadero y no en un ídolo y con tal que se crea en un cristianismo auténtico y no en una religión alienante y opio del pueblo" (González-Balado 22).

¹⁰⁰ As is well known, Arcadia symbolized the harmony and simplicity of an imagined Golden Age in the pastoral verse of the classical poets, e.g., Virgil's *Eclogues*.

¹⁰¹ This view can be found in: Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "Proletarians and Communists," *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (1848), online, Internet, 4 March 2000. His opposition to traditional law, morality, and religion can also be found in the section on "Bourgeois and Proletarians" in the same book.

¹⁰² Of German descent, Stroessner was a great admirer of Nazism. His support for the fascist philosophy manifested itself in his ruthless methods as well as the refuge he gave numerous Nazi war criminals, such as Josef Mengele. The Paraguayan military emulated the genocidal campaigns of the Nazis. The native Ache Indians were deemed an impediment to progress represented by American and European corporations who planned to exploit the nation's forests, mines, and grazing lands. The Indians were thus hunted down, parents killed, and children sold into slavery. Survivors were herded into

reservations headed by American fundamentalist missionaries, some of whom participated in the hunts (*TWT*: "Alfredo Stroessner").

¹⁰³ Constance Classen explains that Incarri's body could be interpreted as symbolizing the body of the cosmos. The head that is kept captive by the Spanish, in this case, would represent the Upper World. The body, which must grow and be united with the head, if cosmic order is to be restored, would represent the Earth and the Andean people themselves (144).

The legends of Incarri and Vichama manifest notable similarities. In the latter, Pachacamac dismembers Vichama, whose parts are buried but are later reconstituted to create a new deity (Paz Varias 19). The myth of Incarri, which is essentially the vision of the conquered, was uncovered by José María Arguedas in 1956 and has since been discovered within the underlying mythic structure in many Andean communities (Salmon 416). Through the oral tradition of the *amauta*, "the Andean mythic cyclical time of return has been combined with the historical eschatological Christian image of millennial 'final judgement' " (xxvii). Incarri is the awaited savior of the Andean people: similar to Maitreya for the Buddhists, the Messiah for the Jews, and the Mahdi for the Muslims.

¹⁰⁴ The Cuban director Sergio Giral has produced an outstanding film on the life of the Inca leader, entitled *Tupac Amaru*.

¹⁰⁵ The poet seems to be comparing the state of ancient Peru with the present-day plight of the country. According to Amnesty International, the Peruvian Armed Forces were responsible for 13,859 political assassinations from 1980-1992. It is therefore evident why many people despise the Peruvian Army.

¹⁰⁶ Nearly forty per cent of Peruvian children under six years old suffer from chronic malnutrition and one in nine die by the age of five (Strong 72).

¹⁰⁷ Cardenal's belief in the communism of the Incas may have been influenced by Louis Baudin's *El imperio socialista de los incas*. In fact, he refers to the work in "Economía de Tahuantinsuyu" (*Los ovnis* 382). This view of the Incas has been shared by many of Spanish America's greatest writers and thinkers, including Manuel González Prada, José Carlos Mariátegui, César Vallejo, and Pablo Neruda.

¹⁰⁸ Both stories deal with two brothers who lived in ancient times. One brother was good and the other was bad. One was generous and the other was selfish. One was close to the divine and the other was a rebel. Both stories deal with a division. In the Kogui version, the elder brother remained in the Americas while the younger brother established himself overseas. In the biblical version, "Cain went away from the Lord's presence and lived in a land called 'Wandering,' which is east of Eden" (Genesis 4:16). According to the Kogui story, the descendants of the younger brothers were bad and the descendants of the elder brother were good. Although Abel had no descendants, Adam and Eve had another son to replace him. His name was Seth and his descendants were pious. According to the Bible, "[i]t was then that the people began using the Lord's holy name in worship" (Genesis 4: 25-26). The reader will note that the element of murder is conspicuously absent in the Kogui legend.

¹⁰⁹ A detailed account of the massacre can be found in Elena Poniatowska, *La noche de Tlatelolco: testimonios de historia oral*.

¹¹⁰ This appears to be a revised position, for in a previous article, Pring-Mill stated that the poem "does depend on serious archaeological studies" (*Apocalypse* xiv).

¹¹¹ This nostalgic evocation, based on Morley's vision of the Classic Maya, was credible at the time Cardenal wrote the poem. However, since then, advances in the deciphering of Mayan inscriptions (together with the reinterpretation of Mayan

iconography) have shown that even the Classic city-states were bloodthirsty: "regionally oriented, dynastic and warlike" and full of monuments which were "glorifications of individual kings" (rather than "abstract representations of calendar priests") (Pring-Mill, "Cardenal's Treatment" 59). The violent rivalry between the Quichés and the Kakchiqueles is legendary.

¹¹² In this case, Cardenal's claim is unsubstantiated. The Maize god was youthful, yet powerless by himself. He depended on Chac, the Rain god, for protection. The Maize god's fortunes and misfortunes were decided by the control of rain and drought. He suffered greatly when the Death god exercised drought and famine (*Religion: The Mayan Gods*: "maize god").

¹¹³ Instead of attempting to prohibit indigenous religious and cultural expressions, clergymen in New Spain preferred to superimpose Christian concepts on pre-Columbian forms (Ravizc 40). Gods became saints, and calendrical celebrations were conveyed to saints' days and to Christian holidays (40). As Arroniz explains, "[s]obre el modelo ancestral de los indígenas, expresión estética de su regocijo y adoración a sus dioses, van los religiosos europeos a tratar de injertar la nueva doctrina, utilizando de alguna manera, aun confusa, las raíces profundas de esas manifestaciones idolátricas" (32). Clergymen in colonial Mexico took advantage of superficial similarities between Aztec and Christian beliefs. The Nahuas were familiar with sacrifice (Ravizc 1-2). Their religious practices also included baptism (Surtz 343, note 29), confession, communion, and penitence: essential elements of the Catholic faith which were pointed out by Mendieta, Acosta, Durán, and Sahagún (Sten 164). The missionaries in New Mexico were aware that a foreign symbol would be a feeble one for the natives (Arroniz 80). Hence, they stressed the parallel rites found in both Aztec and Christian religions that included processions,

songs, offerings, and fasts (Sten 168). These similarities facilitated the Indians' acceptance of Catholicism (168).

¹¹⁴ Cardenal's interest in Quetzalcóatl is not recent. In 1966 the writer published two articles on Quetzalcóatl: "Quetzalcóatl" and "La religión de Quetzalcóatl."

¹¹⁵ The feminist-pagan link is discussed in: Judith S. Antonelli, "Beyond Nostalgia: Rethinking the Goddess," *On The Issues Online*, vol. 6, no. 3 (Summer 1997): online, Internet, 4 March 2000.

¹¹⁶ The worship of Mary and the Church's position on the practice can be found in: Michael J. Sheehan, "Do Catholics Really Worship the Virgin Mary?," *Why Be a Catholic?*, online, Internet, 9 May 1998.

¹¹⁷ According to the *Larousse World Mythology*, Quetzalcóatl "always betrayed the greatest aversion to human sacrifice" (468). According to Aztec sources, "[w]hen Quetzalcoatl was alive, demons tried to trick him several times, so that he would make human sacrifice and kill men. But he never yielded or consented, for he loved his vassals well" (468).

¹¹⁸ Cardenal was perhaps inclined to assume this posture in an attempt to halt the spread of Mormonism in the Americas. As is well known, the Mormons claim that Quetzalcóatl was Jesus Christ who appeared to the Indians of the Americas after his resurrection.

¹¹⁹ Cardenal seems to establish a parallel between the followers of Quetzalcóatl and the refugee crisis that has plagued the twentieth century. Throughout the second half of the century, millions of South Americans and Central Americans have been forced to flee their countries to escape political persecution.

¹²⁰ The poet may be alluding to the Evangelical Christian façade the Guatemalan dictator Efraín Ríos Montt gave to his campaign against the Mayan Indians. The writer thus opposes the exploitation of religion by violators of human rights. As an advocate of liberation theology, Cardenal views Jesus as a socially conscious religious figure, sincerely concerned with the plight of the poor and the downtrodden. Ross, however, feels that these verses deal with a more immediate issue: the slaughter of Nicaraguan civilians by the U.S.-supported Contras, supposedly done in the name of "God and democracy" (3). Although this interpretation is plausible, we are inclined to believe that the poet's scope is much broader.

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