

The Slippery Earth

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*Nahua-Christian Moral Dialogue
in Sixteenth-Century Mexico*

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1989

Louise M. Burkhart

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Tlaalahui, tlapetzcahui in tlaticpac.
It is slippery, it is slick on the earth.

—*Nahuatl proverb*

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Louise M. Burkhart

The Slippery Earth

Evangelization, Dialogue, Rhetoric

Central Mexico in the sixteenth century was the scene of a social experiment which, though hopelessly quixotic, bequeathed to modern scholarship an excellent and extensive record of intercultural contact, including the largest body of native-language texts from anywhere in the New World. Europeans here did not simply pass through and describe what they saw: they sat down with the natives and, over a period of decades, listened to them speak in their own voices while they themselves learned to answer in kind. This dialogue owes its existence to an odd mix of medieval theology, which insisted that all human souls were equal, Renaissance humanism, which suggested that something of worth might be found in another way of life, and Catholic intolerance, which justified—or excused—the study of pagan things on the grounds of facilitating their eradication. The Indians of Mexico were contacted at a time when educated, religious men of Europe could deem them worthy of the effort required to communicate with them.

On August 13, 1521, Cuauhtemoc, the last ruler of the Mexica Indians, surrendered to Hernán Cortés the island capital of Tenochtitlan. Cortés's three years of schemes and shrewd alliances had paid off, and to the possessions of Spain's young king, Charles V, newly crowned Holy Roman Emperor, was added the vast territory known in history as the Aztec Empire. The colony of New Spain was established; its capital, now Mexico City, was built upon the ruins of Tenochtitlan.

Central Mexico, the mountain-ringed Basin of Mexico and its surrounding territory (now the states of Puebla, Tlaxcala, Morelos, México, and Hidalgo), had been the seat of urban civilization since before the time of Christ. Through time, shifting political alliances periodically united the area or fragmented it among rival city-states. In periods of political upheaval, such as the fall of the ancient city of Teotihuacan, seminomadic tribes would migrate into the area from the north. These tribes brought with them the Nahuatl language, a Uto-Aztec language related to languages of the western and southwestern United States, and an origin myth about a place called Aztlan, source of the term Aztec (from *aztecatl* 'person from Aztlan') which is often used to describe these peoples. From the local inhabitants the settlers learned the arts of agriculture and civilization, and acculturated their tribal rites and deities to ancient Mesoamerican patterns.

The Mexica were the last of these immigrant groups, entering the Basin of Mexico in the twelfth century and founding their island city in about 1325. A warlike group, they synthesized their tribal cult with the Meso-American solar cult and the ancient practice of human sacrifice, inventing a militaristic ideology which eventually helped them to win hegemony over most of Mesoamerica. As their soldiers went forth to bring back captives for sacrifice, demands for tribute were imposed on the vanquished polities and wealth poured into the capital. But aside from their state cult and their politically dominant position, the Mexica were culturally very similar to the other Nahuatl-speaking peoples who surrounded them.

After the Spanish Conquest, aside from some temporary privileges granted to Cortés's closest allies, all of these peoples shared similar experiences. It is here more fitting to speak of Nahua culture, the culture of peoples speaking the Nahuatl language, than to distinguish the Mexica from their neighbors or to speak of "Aztecs"—a vague term that is better applied to the pre-Conquest Mexica empire than to the particular ethnic groups that composed, and outlived, that organization.

Located at the center of the new colony as well as the old empire, the Nahuas came into closer and more immediate contact with the Spanish colonial administration than did peoples in more isolated regions. This area was also the center of the colonial Church. It was the missionaries who entered into closest contact with the Nahuas, learning their language and attempting to understand how their culture operated. These missionaries were friars of the Mendicant orders—Franciscans, Dominicans, and Augustinians. They came to New Spain in the hope of establishing among

the Indians a new and exemplary Christian community. They believed that this could be achieved only by residing in the native communities and paying close attention to their customs, however alien or repugnant these might have seemed. Hence, they entered into a dialogue with these people, of which a fragmentary transcript survives in the missionaries' many writings.

The purpose of the dialogue—to transform the Indians into a model Christian society—was thwarted by various factors. The Nahuas resisted, actively and passively. The indigenous population was decimated by disease, overwork, and dislocation. A powerful colonial order based on an economy of exploitation was institutionalized. Religious authority was transferred from the Mendicant monastic orders to the secular Church hierarchy, while at the same time the heavy hand of the Counter-Reformation pulled the priests away from their immersion in native language and culture. What remains are the records—and the challenge they pose for turning an attempt at religious conversion into the basis for anthropological analysis.

Information on indigenous culture has permitted ethnographic studies to be written on pre-Conquest culture, with a degree of detail impressive for a culture never visited by a modern anthropologist. A very few examples are Berdan (1982), León-Portilla (1963), López Austin (1980) and Soustelle (1961). Such cultural reconstructions strive to block out European influence, to show the Indians as they "really were." The results are fascinating and are probably valid for the most part, but they tend to overlook the realities of the contact situation and their influence on the sources. Also, this emphasis on the pre-Conquest period, this quest for the authentic Indian, ignores what these sources are best suited for: the study of culture contact.

The use of colonial sources to reconstruct pre-Conquest culture is symptomatic of a general tendency within anthropology to place other cultures into an "ethnographic present" in which they are described as static, self-perpetuating systems. Fabian (1983) attributes this disposition to anthropology's need to justify itself as a science, to make of culture a passive object of inquiry on the same order as those of the natural sciences. Living societies, with whom an investigator has had extensive personal contact, are made to seem removed in time and space, objectified; the investigator's dialogue with individual people becomes his or her monologue about the "culture," now presented as a homogeneous unit.

Sahlins (1985) also criticizes the tendency to remove cultures from their

own history. He emphasizes that a culture exists in time and reveals itself through time, as its conceptual categories come into contact with an ever-changing reality and it is forced to interpret and organize that reality using whatever symbolic equipment its own past has bequeathed to it. His analysis of British-Polynesian contact shows how Polynesian culture shaped the course of that contact and was at the same time changed by it.

Nahua culture is rooted deeply in a past known only through archaeology and continues today among several hundred thousand Nahuatl-speakers. To single out the pre-Conquest "Aztec" as its quintessential representative is to perpetuate the ahistorical bias plaguing traditional anthropology. Colonial sources are best suited to the study of colonial Nahuas, and in some ways colonial Nahuas are more interesting than their predecessors. It is they who faced the greatest challenge ever presented to Nahua culture—how to make sense of an invasion by alien beings intent not only on seizing their wealth and territory but on altering their most deeply held religious beliefs. That they survived with a large part of their cultural identity intact is perhaps a more impressive achievement than the feats of the poet-kings, warriors, and scribes so beloved of pre-Conquest enthusiasts.

Even if one's goal is to discover the pre-Conquest Indian, European "influence" in the colonial texts is not simply a screen or a veneer that can be easily peeled away. It is the colonial Indians who speak through these records, Indians who are in the process of adapting to the colonial environment, not by simply adding European traits to their own cultural repertoire but by reinterpreting those traits to make them consistent with preexisting cultural models. At the same time, Nahua culture is undergoing what Sahlins (1985:ix, 31) calls a "functional revaluation of categories," the ongoing process of change that all cultures undergo through time in response to changing experiences but which becomes accelerated, and perhaps more easily observable, in a situation of contact. The Nahuas reinterpreted their own culture and their own past in the light of their new experiences and pressures; their own image of the "ancient Aztec" was in part a colonial artifact.

In discussing their culture, the colonial Nahuas did not speak freely, for Europeans created the context within which information was set down. They sought answers to particular questions, determining not only what matters would be recorded but the form the records would take. Investigators, especially those who were priests, tended to respond to what they learned about indigenous religion with shock or zeal, depending on their

own values. Even if the Indians were encouraged to be honest, they soon understood what their interlocutors thought about some of their most cherished traditions.

The records were not made immediately upon the arrival of Cortés in 1519 nor upon the fall of Tenochtitlan in 1521 but mainly during the 1530s to 1580s, while the Indians were adapting to colonization and learning at least as much about Europeans as the Europeans were learning about them. The very language of the interaction, what is now called Classical Nahuatl, was adopted from native upper-class usage and preserved by the friars; thus, its survival was a result of Nahua-European dialogue (Karttunen 1982:396–97).¹ Without taking into account the context of the dialogue, the expressions of either side cannot be interpreted accurately.

Studies of the continuities in native culture have tended to focus on the "survival" of native elements despite the appearance of Christianity, or on "syncretism" (for example, Madsen 1957, Uchmany 1980). Modern Indian religion is seen as a mixture of pre-Hispanic and European elements, a middle ground between the two cultures. While this approach has been useful in identifying the often surprising extent to which ancient beliefs survive, it does not account adequately for which kinds of elements from each culture are present, and how they came to be integrated through historical processes into a cultural system that is more than a simple sum of parts. Nor does Ingham (1986), who chooses to emphasize the Catholic character of a formerly Nahuatl-speaking community, adequately explain how the many clearly indigenous cultural elements are integrated into this Catholic structure as anything other than the shreds and patches of a vanished identity.

Gossen (1986a), in an excellent collection of essays on Mesoamerican thought, stresses the persistence of a pan-Mesoamerican ideological structure characteristic of the entire region from pre-Columbian times to the present. Culture change has been structured in terms of the system's own inner logic and without violating important symbolic precepts, such as concepts of space, time, and duality. However, the volume's five essays on Central Mexico include four on pre-Conquest thought and one based on modern ethnography; there is nothing to bridge the gap.

From the European side, Church and academic historians have long studied the conversion of the Nahuas and their neighbors. In these studies the Indians are presented as the objects of great humanistic experiments, of innovative missionary methodologies, of apocalyptic or millenarian musings, of inflexible dogmas. What the missionaries say they did or said

is accepted. Native culture is treated as a given, the inert clay that the friars tried to mold as they pleased. The missionaries' ingenious methods of introducing Christianity are described with little or no attention to the process of translation, or to the Indians as active partners in a dialogue.

In recent years a new interest in the Nahuatl language and colonial Indian society has yielded excellent work based on long-overlooked non-religious texts in Nahuatl. Legal records, municipal proceedings, land documents, and wills provide insight into the realities of Indian life in the colony not recoverable from Spanish records. They also document linguistic acculturation, filling in the "middle years" between Classical Nahuatl and its modern descendants. This category includes such works as Anderson, Berdan and Lockhart (1976); Karttunen and Lockhart (1976); Lockhart (1982); Lockhart, Berdan, and Anderson (1986); Cline and León-Portilla (1984); and articles edited by Harvey and Prem (1984).

Along with this new emphasis on colonial society has come a new interest in colonial religion, involving a critical synthesis of Church history and studies of indigenous culture. Some of the best Nahua scholars are studying Christianization. León-Portilla (1974) has looked at indigenous reactions to Christianity. Klor de Alva (1979, 1980b, 1982b, 1987b) has debunked the "spiritual conquest" legend, the claim promulgated by Ricard (1966) and others that the Indians of Mexico were quickly and easily Christianized, and has focused upon dialogical aspects of Nahua-Christian interaction from the perspective of indigenous philosophy. The *Colloquios* of Fray Bernardino de Sahagún, the most overtly dialogical text, has been translated and analyzed by Klor de Alva (1980a; 1982a); León-Portilla has brought out a facsimile edition with a Spanish translation (Sahagún 1986). Bierhorst (1985) has analyzed the *Cantares mexicanos*, the Nahuatl poems long ascribed to pre-Conquest authors, in the context of the mid-sixteenth-century cultural milieu in which they were recorded and at least partially composed and reworked. Baudot (1972, 1976, 1979, 1982, 1983) approaches Franciscan ethnography from the perspective of missionary goals and interests, applying his proficiency in Nahuatl to the study of Fray Andrés de Olmos's and Sahagún's catechistic writings. Anderson and Dibble, translators of the *Florentine Codex*, Sahagún's ethnographic encyclopedia, have shown interest in this friar's doctrinal writings as well (Anderson 1983; Dibble 1974, 1988). Todorov (1985), from outside the field, treats the conquest of Mexico from the standpoint of Indians' and Europeans' perceptions of one another, that is, the extent to which they were able to enter into a dialogue with one another. He treats the texts as

expressions of particular voices rather than as passive collections of information. For the colonial Maya also, Farriss (1984) and D. Tedlock (1985) have moved beyond the syncretic model to view religious change in terms of dialogue and creative synthesis.

The study of Nahua culture is opening up to include the missionaries—those men who, though they misunderstood so much, were more familiar with it than the modern investigator can ever be. It was they, their teachings, and the culture they represented that were posing the greatest challenge to indigenous cultural categories at the very time those categories were being described.

In order to apply an anthropological perspective to the missionaries' dialogue with the sixteenth-century Nahuas, the traditional enmity between the anthropologist and the missionary must be set aside. This is not, after all, so outrageous a proposition. Both anthropologists and missionaries engage in intercultural dialogue, in contexts where the contacted cultures tend to be in a materially and politically weak position relative to the culture represented by their visitors. Malinowski (1935:II, xxi, cited by D. Tedlock 1983:334) saw anthropologists and missionaries as "inverted twins," the missionary's role being to translate the European's point of view for the native while the anthropologist's is to translate the native point of view for Europeans. The missionaries to the Nahuas were sent to do the former but also did quite a bit of the latter, for themselves as well as for a broader European audience. Distance in time enriches their records by providing a historical perspective usually lacking in modern field studies. Their ultimate goal was to silence indigenous voices, to resolve dialogue into monologue, to replace cultural diversity with conformity. But since they themselves were silenced with the task incomplete, and since they also championed Indian rights (albeit within the colonial context), the anthropologist cannot judge them with severity.

D. Tedlock (1983:333–34) succinctly points out the flaws of the traditional approach to the ethnohistorical documents. He criticizes the rejection of whatever seems "contaminated by the presence of Spanish missionaries," as well as the general neglect of the catechistic literature written in native languages by men familiar with native customs. Such texts are significant because they "show, from both sides and with moments of thunderbolt clarity, the dialogical frontier between European and Mesoamerican cultures during the colonial period." Tedlock's work with the Quiché Maya *Popol Vuh* (1985) reveals how one can use the presence of "Christian influence" to illuminate the processes of indigenous culture.

Approaching the friars' records with attention fixed on both sides of the dialogue, one can come to understand native culture—and the friars' impact on it—better than they did themselves. Something more than a static reconstruction begins to emerge. Nahua culture becomes not simply a thing to be described but a process to be analyzed, a method for coping with experience, a dialectic by which the old accommodates new content while maintaining important aspects of its form.

It is into this context of inquiry and interpretation that the present study falls. It explores one aspect of Nahua-Christian interaction: the attempt to introduce into Nahua ideology Christian moral precepts, particularly the Christian concept of sin. It is based on the ethnographic records and the friars' doctrinal writings in Nahuatl.² This topic was chosen partly because of the texts' own emphases: the friars put a great deal of effort into making the Indians behave like moral Christians. It was considered more important that the Indians lead a simple, Christian life than that they understand Christian doctrine on a metaphysical and philosophical level. In addition, the topic was selected in reaction to the tendency for studies of Nahua culture to emphasize the world-view aspects of ideology. To borrow Geertz's phrasing (1973:93), "models of" reality (the structure of the cosmos, the organization of the calendar, descriptions of rituals) are analyzed at the expense of "models for" behavior. This position contributes to the view of indigenous culture as a static given rather than something to be adapted and manipulated by people as they faced the challenges of existence.

Moral precepts both reflect a particular world view and provide models by which one may live in accordance with that view. They are involved in the dialectic between culture and behavior. But they are not to be identified by an observation of behavior; they are, like other kinds of beliefs, part of an ideology. According to Ladd, a philosopher who studied Navajo ethics, a moral code should be investigated only through the explicit statements of informants and the logical presuppositions—conscious or otherwise—upon which those statements depend (1957:12–17). Moral concepts are an apt subject for ethnohistorical investigation, because the ethnohistorical record is in essence a collection of statements, many of them dealing explicitly or implicitly with values. The inability to observe behavior directly—and the fact that contemporary reports of behavior vary widely and are clearly biased—does not affect the validity of the study. Statements about behavior can be treated as part of the discourse rather than as an accurate reflection of reality.

Fundamental to the dialogue of evangelization was rhetoric, or the ability to use language effectively. Friars and Indians had not only to understand one another and exchange information; the former had to persuade the latter to accept new ideas and attitudes that would lead them to think and act in ways compatible with Christian doctrine. Missionaries are known to have resorted to whipping recalcitrant Indians, and even burned a few at the stake, but on the whole the friars were, for their time, a peaceable lot who preferred to do their persuading with words, with pictures explained in words, and with the example set by their own lifestyle.

From Christianity's earliest days its preachers relied upon their powers of persuasion. Saint Paul believed that "faith comes from hearing": if he could persuade his listeners to accept his doctrine, they would believe—and behave—differently from the way they had under paganism (Burke 1966:5). The same applied to the sixteenth-century missionaries. This explains why Fray Diego Valadés, a Mexican-born Franciscan who journeyed to Europe as spokesman for his order, chose to incorporate his *apología* on the Franciscans' work with the Indians into a Latin treatise on the rhetorical art, his *Rhetorica christiana* of 1579.

Christian rhetoric is what they used, but they cast it in Nahuatl terms. Evangelization had to be carried out in Nahuatl and the other native tongues: the soul-saving mission was too urgent to await the massive acculturation program that would have been necessary to impose the Spanish language on a huge native population. Learning native languages enabled the friars to gain the Indians' acceptance, but it was also a factor in the friars' downfall: having bound themselves so closely to the Indians, they raised the suspicions of colonial authorities and the leaders of the secular Church hierarchy. In an effort to avoid such suspicion a century later during missionary efforts among the Pueblo peoples, the Franciscans neither learned the native languages nor won their subjects' acceptance (see Spicer 1962).

The friars were not modern linguists; they lacked sensitivity to the relationship between language and thought, between words and mental categories. They looked for synonyms and used whatever they could find; some Spanish terms were introduced but almost always as the equivalent of something Nahuatl. The meanings of Nahuatl terms were, of course, not immutable, and they did shift somewhat under the friars' manipulation, but there was no escaping the fact that Nahuatl selected, organized, and named a different set of ideas and objects than did Spanish or Latin—and did so in harmony with a particular ideology. In addition, translation

from Spanish or Latin into Nahuatl was something quite different than translation from Latin to Spanish, or between other European tongues sharing both a common origin and a long experience in the expression of Christian doctrine.

Nahuatl not only named but persuaded in a different way from Spanish or Latin. In order to use Nahuatl effectively, to persuade as well as to explain, the friars had to adopt the rhetorical forms of expression appropriate to Nahuatl. Christian precepts had to be expressed in a way that was not only grammatically correct but that would convince Nahua listeners to accept them. To this end, friars elicited and recorded native oratory, listed the figures of speech and adages contained therein, and strove to master the elegant speaking style of the native orators. Both Olmos and Sahagún, who compiled the principal sixteenth-century collections of rhetoric, focused upon this activity quite early in their respective careers. Their interest in this material was not without precedent. St. Augustine, a teacher of rhetoric before his conversion to Christianity, expressed in his *De doctrina christiana* an interest in adapting the verbal skills of the pagans to Christian uses (Burke 1970:49).

For the Nahua, as for Mesoamerica in general, words had tremendous symbolic force. A key aspect of pan-Mesoamerican thought is, in Gossen's words (1986a:7) this "extraordinary power of spoken and written language as a symbolic entity in itself, beyond its neutral role as medium for routine communication." Rhetorical speech was sacred and was also an important method of social control: the words of elders and ancestors set forth the proper behavior of their descendants, which was to replicate the established pattern inherited from the past (Sullivan 1986). If the friars could usurp the power of those words, replacing the authority of the Indian past with that of Christianity, they would gain a significant degree of control over Indian thought and behavior, with all the social and political consequences that such control implies. The words, though, were Nahuatl words, and their symbolic power was accorded them by Nahua minds. The friars could successfully manipulate the system only by adapting to it; violation of its basic precepts would strip it of the authority the friars sought to borrow.

Based on Burke's idea of language as "entitlement," by which "the things of the world become material exemplars of the values which the tribal idiom has placed upon them" (1966:361)—that is, the words are not simply tools for naming things but ascribe culture-specific meanings and values to the things named—Crocker develops a scheme for the ethno-

graphic analysis of rhetoric (1977). It is equally applicable to ethnohistory. "Rhetorical entitlement" is the process by which someone says something about a social situation "which summarizes its moral essence in such ways as to define possible actions" (Crocker 1977:37). The situation, simply by the terms in which it is described, entails a certain moral interpretation, which, in turn, suggests appropriate behavior. Behaviors pick up morally positive or negative valuations by association with terms that carry those values.

Rhetorical statements can be interpersonal, with the speaker aiming to persuade the listener to do something, or they can refer to a social situation wider than the relationship of speaker to listener, narrating events pertaining to a third party, or even events from history or myth, and using them as a general prescription for behavior. Rhetorical devices exist also as a verbal codification of the culture's ideas and values, and can be analyzed as such even apart from their applications to particular contexts (Crocker 1977:37-38).

To be effective, a rhetorical device must be "felt" as well as "thought." That is, it must function cognitively in giving a name to a complex situation, classifying it in accordance with some ordering principle, but it must also evoke an emotional response. This depends on an interplay between external metaphors (analogies) and internal metaphors, or between metaphor and metonymy (Crocker 1977:53-58).

The terms used in this study for the various types of tropes are consistent with the classification of Sapir (1977). The term "metaphor," though often applied by rhetoricians to a broad range of tropes including synecdoche (substitution of part for whole or whole for part within a semantic domain) and metonymy (substitution of part for part within a semantic domain), is here restricted to tropes which relate elements from separate semantic domains. To illustrate these relationships with an example from Nahua-Christian discourse, the external metaphor or analogy "sin is to virtue as dirt is to cleanliness" provides a way of thinking about immoral acts by relating the domain of morality to the domain of sanitation. Within this analogy, sin is related to dirt by internal metaphor. It is this internal metaphor which is "felt," because it evokes toward sin the emotional responses evoked by dirt. This internal metaphor may in turn slip into metonymy, sin and dirt being treated as contiguous, as two elements in a single domain of dirty, contaminating phenomena. This particular analogy is explored extensively in Chapter Four.

This study focuses on how the friars attempted to convert the Nahuas

✓ by converting indigenous rhetoric to the expression of Christian moral concerns, and how Christian rhetoric was made indigenous by its adoption of Nahua form. It is organized according to principal metaphors used in indigenous moral argument which were adopted into Christianity. The following chapter summarizes mission methodology and examines how the friars handled the major problems posed by the differences between Nahua and Christian morality.

The Missionary Missionized

A paradoxical figure in Mexican history is the *Conquistador conquistado*, the Spaniard's child "conquered" by the new land, who rejects Spain for New Spain and ultimately demands independence (Keen 1971:92). One might speak in similar fashion of the missionary missionized, of the friar whose sympathies come to lie with the Indians against the colonists and the ecclesiastical hierarchy, against an Old World perceived as corrupt, and who adopts Indian ways in order to fulfill his mission. A very brief account of this man and his mission follows.

MISSION AND METHOD

Evangelization was for Spain inseparable from conquest and colonization: the Crown must have its gold but God must in return have His souls. Thus, in the early decades—until almost all the Indians had at least been baptized—the friars were ceded considerable powers. They were permitted to act as parish priests, tending congregations and administering sacraments, in addition to their usual role as teachers and healers. They held positions of bishop and archbishop and acted as Inquisitors in the absence of the Holy Office. Until after mid-century, when the *repartimiento* system of labor assignment increased Indian contact with colonists¹ and secular

priests began to oust friars, Indian interaction with Europeans was dominated by the Mendicants.

For conversion to be accomplished, Christianity had to be made appealing to the Indians. This could be achieved only by adapting it to indigenous forms of religious expression. Cortés himself showed a realization of this need when he advised Charles V that the Indians could only be converted by priests who, like their own, held to an ascetic lifestyle (Cortés 1979:203).

Such were the friars of the Mendicant orders, fresh from Observant reforms which had reemphasized ascetic principles after a period of increasing worldliness. The first official missionaries were twelve Spanish Franciscans who arrived in 1524, following a party of three Flemish Franciscans who had come unofficially the year before. The first Dominicans came in 1526, the first Augustinians in 1533. In the central Nahuatl-speaking areas, Franciscans dominated the mission in numbers and influence, developing the strategies that other orders followed after them. Dominicans were concentrated in present-day Morelos; Augustinians in present-day Hidalgo. Disputes between the orders arose from the Dominicans' greater concern with legality and orthodoxy, which conflicted with the Franciscans' simpler, more personal faith; and the Augustinians' tendency toward sumptuousness, which offended the poverty-obsessed Franciscans. All three orders left important records, but the Franciscans were by far the most prolific in both ethnographic and doctrinal writings. Figure 1 shows the locations of major Mendicant establishments in the central, most heavily missionized, predominantly Nahuatl-speaking area of Mexico.

What the Franciscans and their fellow friars desired, what they achieved, and how they lost it have attracted the attention of many scholars.² Their high educational and ethical standards, their acceptance by the Indians, their learning of the native tongues, the many churches and monasteries built for them by Indian hands, their political struggles on behalf of the Indians, their sponsorship of Indo-Christian art and literature, the suppression of their writings by Church and even Crown authorities, their eventual irrelevance as the Indians died out and secular priests took over their churches—all of this adds up to a fascinating tale of intrigue and adventure.

Because they contrast so strikingly with the colonists in their concern for the Indians, the friars have an undeniable appeal to the modern humanist and the Church historian alike. Tragic figures on a doomed mission, enjoying a brief glory before they were flattened by the relentless

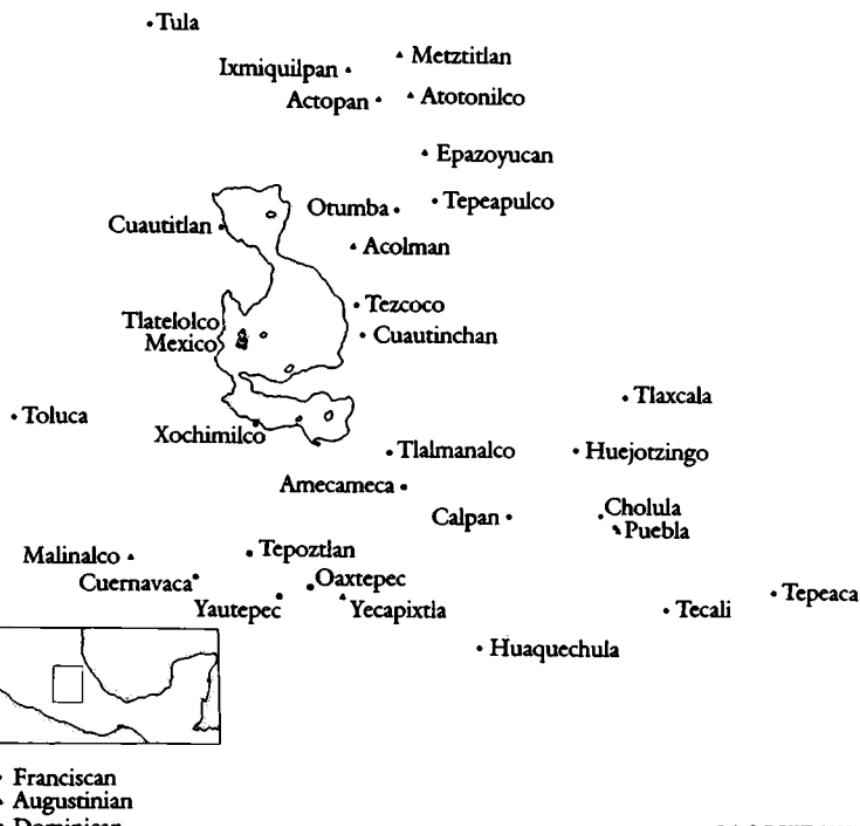


Figure 1. Map of Central Mexico, showing locations of principal Franciscan, Dominican and Augustinian establishments. (Map drawn by Anne S. Dowd.)

machine of colonialism, they seem to provide a glimpse of a Mexico—or for that matter a Third World—that might have been, had compassion prevailed over greed. Yet in their own seemingly gentle way they were as ruthless as any conquistador. They supported conquest and colonization in theory; they merely objected to its abuses.³ The utopia they sought to create was paradise as they defined it, with the Indians cast in the role of perpetual children—docile, obedient, powerless reflections of the friars' own images of themselves. Indians were barred from the priesthood as effectively as from the upper echelons of the colonial government; in the hands of the friars or of the colonists, they were deprived of self-determination.

The friars lavished on the Indians a paternal love sincere in its affect but sternly demanding in filial obedience. They viewed the Indians as basically good but errant children who, with guidance and constant supervision, could become model Christians. What the friars hated most about European culture—the power exerted by pride and greed—they found absent in Nahua culture. The emotional reserve the Nahuas shared with most Native Americans appeared to the friars as a lack of choler, the “humor” responsible for sins of anger. The Aztec sumptuary laws strictly controlled access to luxury goods, so that most people had few and humble possessions. The Nahuas’ profound religiosity was praiseworthy whatever its original object; the forms of personal devotion—fasting and other mortifications of the flesh, sexual abstinence, the adornment of temples and images—were consistent with Christianity. The Nahuas were a humble, devout, simple folk. This view altered as the mission itself began to falter: the Indians came to be seen as subtle, conspiratorial, stubborn, intractably carnal. To view them except through a screen of value judgments was impossible.

The friars’ attitude toward the Indians is expressed well in Figure 2, a woodcut from Fray Alonso de Molina’s confession manual. A Franciscan friar admonishes a penitent Indian who kneels before him in an attitude of prayer (the Indian’s ethnic identity is indicated by his mantle). The friar is raised above the Indian by a stone step as well as the bench on which he sits (wooden confessional booths were not yet in use at this time). The source of the friar’s moral authority is clear: behind him an angel stands, pointing to heaven. This authority is conveyed to the Indian through the friar’s pointed finger. The moral status of the Indian is equally clear: a demon clutches him, poised as if to drag him back into the idolatrous ways of his forebears. Such were the terms of the dialogue.

The friars’ Church gave way to the secular Church with its less educated and less austere parish priests, its tithes, its contentment with formal orthodoxy. The Mendicant orders lacked the authority to control parishes except in the context of conversion; despite the friars’ desire to maintain their position, their very success in attracting converts soon rendered them obsolete in the eyes of the ecclesiastical powers. The transferal process began in the 1550s and was largely completed in the 1570s and 1580s. Aside from the occasional and ineffectual campaign to extirpate idolatry [such as those of Ruiz de Alarcón (1982) and Villavicencio (1962)], the Indians were thenceforward left alone to practice their own version of Christianity, centered on community rituals and the saints as embodiments of the divine.



Figure 2. Indian confessing to Franciscan priest. Woodcut in Fray Alonso de Molina's *Confessionario mayor*, 1565 edition, f. 71r. (Courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University.)

Priests presided when necessary but entered into few dialogues with their subjects, satisfying themselves with the basically Christian appearance of what the Indians were doing. Thus, what the Indians adopted of Christianity was mainly what they learned in the first half-century of Spanish rule.

This study is concerned with that time period, particularly after the mid-1530s. The arrival of the Second Audiencia in 1535 and of Viceroy Mendoza in 1536 ended the violent turbulence of the immediate post-Conquest years. A stable colonial government looked favorably, at least for a while, on the friars' activities. The Franciscans' college for Indian youths, the Colegio de Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco, opened in 1536 to provide young nobles with an education in theology and the liberal arts. The Franciscans Fray Toribio de Benavente, known by his Nahuatl nickname Motolinia ("the afflicted one"), Fray Andrés de Olmos, and Fray Bernardino de Sahagún conducted their ethnographic inquiries. The exquisite *Codex Mendoza* (1938), Cruz-Badiano herbal (Cruz 1964), and other manuscript

monuments of culture contact were produced. The New World's first book, a Nahuatl catechism, was printed in 1539 (Schwaller 1973). The worst of the earlier epidemics had passed, and the rate of indigenous population decline slowed considerably until the devastating plague of 1576–79. For forty years, dialogue flourished.

The friars found many ways to make Christianity appealing to the Nahuas. The physical setting of evangelization was the churchyard or *patio* (later called the *atrio*), a walled enclosure at the center of the community, laid out according to the four directions, often upon a raised platform built for the purpose. The arrangement was not unlike the traditional sacred centers; indeed, the same building materials were reused and in some cases the same spot was retained. The priest presided from an open chapel, an open-fronted chamber facing the *patio*, incorporated into the church-monastery structure at any of several locations. The Indians thus observed the rites from outdoors as they had watched their own priests perform atop temple-pyramids. (McAndrew 1965 discusses in detail these aspects of the friars' building program.)

Fray Diego Valadés (1579), to illustrate his *Rhetorica christiana*, created an idealized portrayal of Franciscans carrying out various ministrations to the Indians in a church *patio* (Fig. 3). This engraving summarizes Franciscan activities; Indians are shown receiving each of the sacraments (except ordination), learning doctrine, penitence, and how to confess. Through the use of pictures they are taught about the creation of the world and about "all things." Indian singers practice their art; other Indians participate in a funeral procession. Couples are examined prior to marriage and their names inscribed in the church records. At the four corners friars are shown giving separate education to girls, boys, women, and men. At the bottom center they settle a dispute. Along the side margins are shown sick people being carried to the church to confess. At the center the Franciscans, led by St. Francis himself, carry the Church to the New World. From the dove of the Holy Spirit radiate lines toward the peripheral scenes, indicating the inspirational source for all of these activities.

Catholicism's emphasis on images permitted an easy transition, since native deities revealed themselves in manifold and concrete forms. Religious dramas, written in Nahuatl and acted out by Indians, adapted the medieval mystery play to the native tradition of deity impersonation, by which ritual impersonators would put on a sacred being's identity by dressing in its attributes. The Indians were permitted to sing and dance for Christ and the saints much as they had for their traditional gods: the

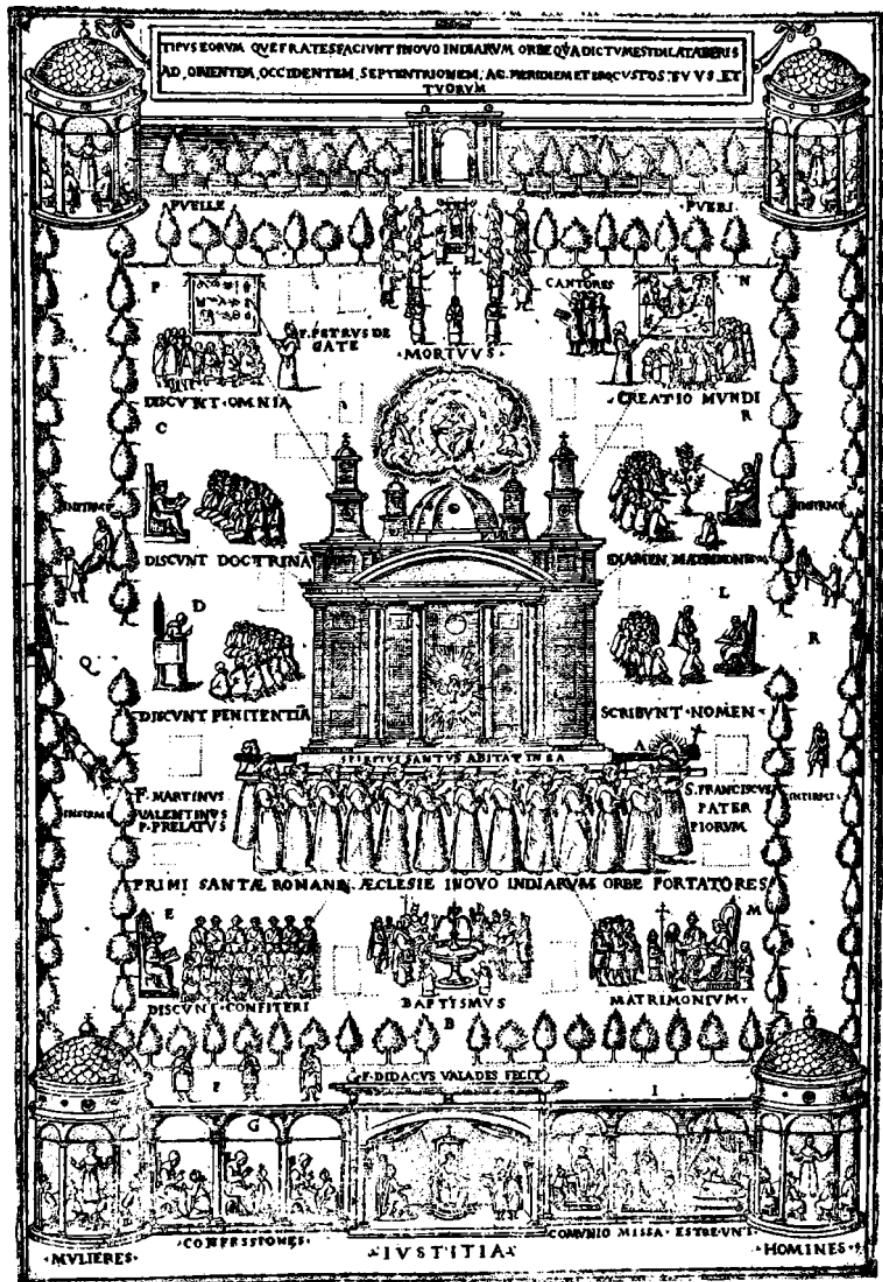


Figure 3. The idealized church patio, engraved by Fray Diego Valadés for his *Rhetorica christiana* of 1579. (Courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University.)

decision to incorporate these forms of worship into the Indian Church was a major breakthrough in attracting Indians to the faith. The friars used pictures as didactic devices (as shown in Valadés's engraving): woodcuts, paintings, and murals which adapted the native traditions of sacred picture books and architectural ornamentation to Christian themes. The friars' educational practices perpetuated the form of the indigenous schools, removing boys from their homes for a period of learning and ritual activity, while disrupting generational continuity. In their paternal role the friars usurped the native elders' authority as the repositories of wisdom (Trexler 1982). These many small continuities helped overcome and deny the major discontinuity.

The friars' ethnography was influenced by the goals of missionization. Much was missed or misinterpreted; European cultural categories were imposed haphazardly upon indigenous conceptual schemes. Aspects of native culture were sometimes redesigned as they were recorded, to make them acceptable for an Indo-Christian society (for example, Fray Francisco de las Navas's version of the native calendar; see Baudot 1983). In the prologue to his book on the virtues and vices of the people (Book X), Sahagún (1981:III, 97) states that his purpose is to help the preachers by "treating of the moral virtues according to the intelligence and practice and language that the people themselves have of them." But he structures the account according to his own categories of good and evil, asking his informants to describe a "good" and a "bad" version of each type of person (López Austin 1974:141). Stevenson (1968:102-3), following an earlier observation by Robertson (1959), links this organization to similar statements in the Franciscan Bartholomaeus Anglicus's *De proprietatibus rerum*, a popular medieval encyclopedia which influenced Sahagún's presentation of material. Such a treatment of the Nahuatl information was potentially very useful in developing manuals for confessors, but it was not something that Sahagún's informants would have generated spontaneously.

Though the friars' aim was to gain more insight into Nahua culture in order to evangelize more effectively (and also to preserve useful information), it was so difficult for them to perceive it except in their own culture's terms that the degree of understanding they were able to attain was severely limited. At the same time they simply recorded, or allowed their Nahua assistants to record, many things with little or no alteration—other than that imposed by acculturating informants and assistants. The result is a partially Christianized ethnography, corresponding to the partially Nahuatized Christianity that constituted the other side of the dialogue. All

of the texts are ambivalent to varying degrees, combining indigenous forms of discourse with forms introduced by the friars, interweaving native and imported voices so intricately that it can become very difficult to unravel them. The fallacy of forcing a strict separation between "native" and "European" texts is evident. Although it is possible to distinguish these texts according to the point of view they purport to represent, it should be kept in mind that each side was affected by continual feedback from the other.

In the friars' approach to language, an insistence on Latin grammatical categories was paralleled by a tendency to view vocabulary in European terms. They sought correspondence between their own and the Nahuatl words: their aim was translation, not linguistic investigation. A linguist would treat the Nahuatl words on their own terms, working within the language and seeking to establish the words' range of reference, denotative and connotative. A friar wanted to know if there was a Nahuatl word for "god," for "demon," and so forth. Whatever was available was shanghaied into serving Christian purposes. The friars laid claims to prudence in these matters, claims accepted by the "spiritual conquest" school of evangelization. McAndrew (1965:74), for example, states:

Cautious translators did not risk paraphrasing the specifically Christian terms for any important Christian tenet for fear of accidental unorthodoxy or heresy; instead they took over the Spanish or Latin words into otherwise Náhuatl sentences.

The friars' actual usage belies this assertion. How could they explain anything except in Nahuatl, even where they did introduce foreign words? Also, the process of linguistic acculturation is such that nouns are borrowed more easily than verbs. In Mexico, Spanish verbs were not adopted into Nahuatl until after mid-century, and this usage coincided with the increased contact with Spaniards due to *repartimiento*—not with any effort by the missionaries (Karttunen 1982; Karttunen and Lockhart 1976). The Nahuatl catechistic texts contain Spanish and Latin nouns but only Nahuatl verbs. Thus, while the things of religion could come to have foreign names, the acts of religion did not.⁴

Indigenous understanding and acceptance of Christianity varied widely, such that Klor de Alva has been able to develop a typology of reactions (1982b). The average person was expected to know by heart the basic elements of Christian doctrine: the prayers *Pater Noster*, *Ave Maria*, and *Salve Regina* in Nahuatl and Latin, the Creed, the Ten Commandments, Seven Mortal Sins, Works of Mercy, Cardinal and Theological Virtues, and so

forth, in Nahuatl.⁵ Weekly attendance at mass, sermon, and adult catechism class was mandatory, with daily catechism classes for children. Yearly confession was required, but only individuals judged to have a good understanding of the faith were admitted to communion, the number varying at the individual priest's discretion. Couples were examined on their knowledge of doctrine before being permitted to marry. Boys of the noble class received a more intensive training at boarding schools created for them within the monasteries. People in outlying communities received less attention than those in communities where the friars had permanent establishments. Exposure to Christian teaching varied widely. While active resistance to Christianity was unusual among the Nahuas, limited education and the general problem of translation and reinterpretation were common obstacles in cases where people did not adopt more than the rudiments of the new religion.

In this study I am presuming a relatively high degree of exposure and understanding typical of the urban population or residents of towns with long-standing monasteries and linguistically skilled preachers. Rural dwellers may have had a somewhat different experience of Christianity, memorizing the required elements of doctrine and fulfilling the minimal obligations of participation without ever analyzing what they had learned or integrating it with their traditional patterns of thought. Because it is these rural Nahuas who avoided acculturation sufficiently that their present-day descendants still speak Nahuatl, comparisons between present-day Nahua culture and Christian teaching as presented here should be undertaken with caution. The educational program that I describe represents the best that the friars could do while working within the Nahuatl language. The average rural commoner may have learned much less; the highly acculturated, literate, Latin-speaking noble males raised in the friars' schools and college undoubtedly learned much more.

The large corpus of Nahuatl-language catechistic texts produced by the missionaries and their students is widely scattered throughout the world's libraries. There is as yet little bibliographic control over this material; various manuscripts and books known to have been produced have left no known copies. The most typical genres of the surviving texts are the *doctrina*, or catechism of varying length containing the material to which Indians were most widely exposed, the *sermonario*, or collection of sermons for Sundays and festivals, and the *confessionario*, or manual featuring questions to ask penitent Indians and other guidelines for ministering to them. Also represented are biblical readings for Sundays and festivals, and

a variety of more innovative texts: songs, meditations, dialogues, plays, and admonitions.

These texts are attributed to individual friars, but in reality they were joint products of the friars and their Nahua interpreters and scribes, who were responsible in large part for the wording of the Nahuatl texts. Although the friars supervised the process and edited the results, the collaboration with Nahuas was essential. The friars' "voice" in the catechistic texts is thus an ambivalent one; the "Christian" texts are to this extent already Nahua-Christian. They are treated here as "Christian" because they are the official vehicles for presenting Christianity to the Nahuas. Thus, they contrast with "ethnographic" texts which purport to speak for the Nahuas, regardless of how Christianized those Nahuas had become.

Only a small selection of the available texts were used in this study. They were selected on criteria of originality, reliability, typicality, and the influence of their authors. The texts are listed and described in the Appendix.

MORAL EDUCATION

Christian morality, as taught to the Nahuas, was defined according to the Ten Commandments and the Seven Mortal Sins, which were part of the basic doctrine that everyone was expected to memorize. Elaborating on these, the friars would list all the behaviors proscribed and prescribed by each. Each mortal sin had a whole brood of equally mortal offspring, named by medieval priests as they sought to classify every conceivable offense (Tentler 1977:135–38). The Commandments, coming straight from Moses, and the Seven Mortal Sins, coming by a roundabout route from Gnostic eschatology (Bloomfield 1952), classified morality differently but were integrated and extended to cover all thoughts and deeds the Church deemed unacceptable.

The friars sought to impress the truth of these doctrines upon their charges by the same appeals to authority and fear that they used in the rest of their teachings (see Borges 1960). The authority of God, the Bible, and traditional Old World practice superseded whatever authority the native elders claimed to have, for they were ignorant of truth and deceived by the Devil. Furthermore, if the new teachings were not accepted, the Nahuas would join their ancestors in eternal suffering after death. The lives and teachings of Christ and the saints were invoked as examples of proper moral behavior; the fate of sinners was described in vivid detail.

Missionary teaching practices went beyond rote memorization and simple insistence. The doctrinal texts preserve many efforts to persuade and cajole as well as to threaten and insist. The method used was straightforward: do this or you will be punished; do this because we (or God) say so. But the language used was Nahua moral rhetoric, which skillfully manipulated metaphors aimed at inducing desired behaviors while it promoted a coherent moral conception of the human universe. Indigenous morality was backed by the authority of the elders and ancestors, but it was also accordant with a whole ideology. However successful the friars were in setting themselves up as moral authorities, they still had to adapt their teaching to native thought.

The friars tended to think in moral absolutes. The late medieval view of the world divided its moral aspects unambiguously into "virtues" and "vices"; the former were associated with Christians who served God, the latter with pagans and others who served the Devil (Caro Baroja 1965:70). The friars' thinking reflected this pattern. Doubting not that the basic tenets of their own moral system were compatible with ultimate realities, they had a limited capacity for cultural relativism. Late in the sixteenth century, Jesuit probabilists challenged the Church's moral absolutism; among the early friars, though their own theology was in a state of flux relative to the rigidity of medieval scholasticism, certain basic assumptions were not openly questioned. The role of the Devil in human affairs, the universal applicability of the Christian concept of sin (whatever the individual theologian's interpretation of that concept), the use of good and evil as universal categories—these assumptions are implicit in the friars' writings. Many aspects of indigenous culture, even though alien to Europeans, could be perceived as appropriate to their cultural context, but not if they violated beliefs that the friars held to be self-evident truths. For example, the native marriage ceremony could be accepted as creating a legitimate union, but there could be no tolerance of polygyny: God's creation of the Adam-Eve pair established a sacred and inviolable precedent for monogamy.

These absolutist aspects of the friars' thought, rather than simply augmenting their intolerance, actually had a minimizing effect on their perception of cultural diversity, just as their search for synonyms limited their perception of linguistic nuances. On certain subjects, indigenous forms of thought could be right or wrong, good or bad, but they could not be simply different. If the Nahuas had a concept of sin, it meant that their ideology contained at least this element of God-given truth, even if in its

details it differed somewhat from the corresponding Christian concept. The friars could use the native term in their teaching without being overly concerned about how well it meshed with their own concept. Such an approach facilitated dialogue, for it permitted the friars to adopt the native categories while satisfying themselves that orthodoxy was being adequately upheld.

Hence, there was nothing to prevent their adoption of native usage, once they assured themselves that it was free of idolatry. They tended to avoid very elaborate figures of speech, which they could not fully understand and which might thus conceal unorthodox meanings, but simpler tropes which they thought they understood were accepted. Style varied from straightforward narrative to the highly metaphorical, depending on the linguistic capacities of individual friars and the writing skills of their Nahua assistants. Also, there was an interplay between the desire to write clearly and the desire to replicate the rhetorical style familiar to their audience. The tendency is toward simple narrative seasoned with the occasional trope, a writing style which Bierhorst (1985:47) dubs "missionary Nahuatl," noting the "suspicious ease" with which it translates into Spanish or English. In skilled hands, however, this writing bears the same elevated formality as the texts of indigenous rhetoric or *huehuetlatolli*⁶ 'old men's speech' (for example, see Baudot 1982).

Fray Juan de Zumárraga, Mexico's first bishop and archbishop (and himself a Franciscan), in 1544 recommended simple, truthful writing without fancy rhetoric (Zumárraga 1928:78r); Sahagún (1583: prologue) expressed concern that idolatrous ideas might lurk behind poetic metaphors. The friars also recognized, however, that such metaphors might be used effectively in their preaching. Both Sahagún and Olmos made extensive records of the metaphors used in native oratory. Though there is considerable loss and reduction, various of these metaphors appear in their own and others' doctrinal writings. They must have found the tropes effective, for it would have been easier for them to compose or edit texts directly translated from Spanish or Latin. Native assistants may have shown a preference for writing that they considered stylistically appealing.

Even in direct translation, the Nahuatl words used had various denotative and connotative meanings alien to those of the terms they translated. Thus it was impossible to avoid the problem with which Zumárraga and Sahagún were concerned. When one examines even the closest parallels for Christian moral terms, parallels which the friars accepted without question, one sees the expression of indigenous concepts quite at odds

with the Christian purposes they are being forced to serve. Indigenous morality had a this-worldly rather than an other-worldly focus; its justification lay in the nature of life on earth rather than the pronouncements of a distant deity. It articulated not with a Christian world view but with basic pan-Mesoamerican religious concepts: a cosmos in delicate balance, the 260-day sacred calendar or *tonalpohualli*, capricious deities, and penitence aimed at earning favor rather than forgiveness for sins.

Basic to Christian morality was the concept of sin, which in turn was predicated on the dichotomy between good and evil, a force personified in the figure of the Devil. These concepts were alien to the Nahua mind, but the friars had no choice but to grasp the closest parallels they could find and set to work. For sin they substituted *tlatlacolli*; the acts classified as *tlatlacolli* were somewhat different under Christianity, but the nature of "sin" itself was made continuous with native thought. For the good-evil dichotomy they substituted various expressions of the Mesoamerican dialectic of order and chaos, structure and anti-structure. They elevated a category of indigenous sorcerer to the role of God's Adversary. Thus, native concepts were carried over into the most fundamental aspects of Christian moral teaching. These aspects of moral dialogue are explored below.

SIN AND DAMAGE

The friars' development of a Nahua-Christian morality rested upon their adoption of *tlatlacolli* as a synonym for sin, for the Spanish *pecado* and Latin *peccatum*. *Tlatlacolli* is the substantive form of the intransitive verb *tlatlacon*, which in turn derives from the transitive verb *itlacoa*. *Itlacoa* means "to damage, spoil or harm"; with the impersonal object prefix *tla-*, it means "to damage things (or something)." Hence *tlatlacolli*'s most literal meaning is "something damaged." Related to *itlacoa* is the intransitive or reflexive verb *itlacahui* 'to go bad, become corrupt, spoil, injure oneself.' This word and its substantive form *itlacauhqui* were used widely in Christian contexts to refer to moral corruption.

These terms had quite a broad range of meaning, as an examination of Sahagún's *Florentine Codex* and Fray Alonso de Molina's dictionary reveals. Any sort of error or misdeed could be labeled a *tlatlacolli*, from conscious moral transgressions to judicially defined crimes to accidental or unintentional damage.⁷ A weaver who tangled her weaving, a feather worker who ruined feathers, a warrior who erred in battle, a singer who

failed to harmonize, a mouse gnawing garments, hail harming crops: these are all examples of *itlacoa*-type damage (Sahagún 1953–82:X, 52, 25; XIII, 53, 56; XI, 17; 1905–08:VI, 67). To offend someone was *teyolitlacoa*, ‘to damage someone’s heart.’ Slaves were conceived of as damaged (López Austin 1980:I, 463); liberation from slavery was called a casting off of *tlatlacalli* (Molina 1970:I, 78r; II, 109r⁸). The most frequently mentioned *tlatlacalli* are sexual excesses, intoxication, and theft.

Anything displaced or off balance could be *itlacauhqui*, including a dislocated bone (Sahagún 1953–82:X, 153) or a woman in the later stages of pregnancy (Molina 1970:II, 43r). A rotten egg was *itlacauhqui* as well (Molina 1970:II, 43r). The cultural defects of non-Nahua groups were their *itlacauhqui* (Sahagún 1953–82:X, 178, 186, 189). A flaw in the weaving of a mantle was its *itlacauhqui* (Molina 1970:II, 37r). If a leader failed to perform his duties correctly his office *itlacauh* (preterit of *itlacabui*; Sahagún 1905–08:VI, 134). Spoiled maize or other rotten foodstuffs was *itlacauhqui* (Molina 1970:I, 31r; Sahagún 1953–82:X, 66). Otherwise auspicious day-signs could have negative features mixed with them, causing them to go corrupt (*itlacauhtiuh*; Sahagún 1953–82:IV, 9).

To some extent these terms are simply descriptive, with many applications falling outside what one might at first glance designate as “moral.” But Edel and Edel (1968:III) advise that apparently descriptive terms may contain elements of moral evaluation leading “directly into important aspects of moral structure and belief.” Could damage, then, have served as a unifying moral principle in the same sense that sin did in medieval Christianity? It would seem less ethnocentric to begin by treating all these sorts of damage as a single native category with general moral implications rather than singling out moral from nonmoral uses. One notes an emphasis on effect rather than cause, on the outcome of the act—that something is damaged—rather than some element inherent in the act itself. All of these types of damage represent violations of structure or continuity, be it physical integrity, social norm, or psychological state. To behave immorally is to disrupt order, to promote decay over cohesion, randomness over continuity. Entropy is the essence of immorality. Conversely, the establishment and preservation of order is the primary moral obligation and motivation—what Ladd (1957:165) terms the “ground-motive” of the ethical system. Given these assumptions, those acts culturally defined as *tlatlacalli* can be argued against on the basis of the well-being not only of the individual but also the society and the entire cosmos.

Tlatlacalli may have occupied a position in Nahua ideology analogous

to that of sin in Christian, but the terms are not synonymous. Early sixteenth-century theology was in a state of flux between medieval formulations and the Counter-Reformation's reestablishment of orthodoxy. There were variant interpretations of the concept of sin—for example, in regard to the role of unintentional acts—but in composing their catechistic texts the friars tended to fall in line with traditional formulations which contrast strikingly with the Nahua concept. The extent to which the friars diverged from this perspective in more casual contexts is difficult to say, though their acceptance of native concepts might imply a certain tolerance for variant expressions.

In its standard medieval formulation, as defined by St. Ambrose, Christian sin is restricted to “a transgression of the divine law, and disobedience to the heavenly commandments” (Aquinus 1969:59). It is confined to voluntary acts: accidents do not count and under certain conditions ignorance can excuse. Ideas of harm and disorder are involved, but the harm results from the sin and is distinct from the sin itself, while disorder is not a result but a characteristic of the act (Aquinus 1969:81–85, 129). The Dominican *Doctrina cristiana* of 1548 defines *tlatlacalli* in terms of God’s will (42r–42v):

Yn tlatlaculli tiquitoa yn icoac ytla mochiua: anoço yn icoac ytla mitoa: i anoço yn icoac ytla molnamiq’ i aqlli in ayectli in amoquimoneq’ltia in toveytlatocauh in Dios:

We say “sin” when something is done, or perhaps something is said, or perhaps something is thought, which is bad, wrong, which our great ruler God does not want.

If both the Christian and Nahua concepts are viewed in broad, cross-cultural terms, analogous aspects do emerge. Fürer-Haimendorf (1974: 554) distinguishes sin from the general field of moral transgression by stating that sin “is believed to bring about consequences damaging to the transgressor whether or not his conduct becomes public or attracts any social disapproval.” Sin, along with guilt, has traditionally been associated with Western culture or with the great world religions, but Fürer-Haimendorf dissociates sin from any cultural-evolutionary scheme and treats it as an independently variable phenomenon. He defines four categories into which societies may be placed on the sole basis of the degree to which a sense of sin is present. The Nahuas most closely (though not perfectly) fit his second category:

societies which recognize that certain human activities, such as breaches of taboos, do bring about an intervention of supernatural powers, but assume that any sanctions exercised by such powers are restricted to man's fortunes in this life, and do not affect his fate after death. (Fürer-Haimendorff 1974:554)

Christianity falls into his fourth category:

societies which believe in a personal God or a number of deities acting as guardians of the moral order and rewarding or punishing man's activities in the hereafter. (Fürer-Haimendorff 1974:554)

According to this typology, the Nahuas had a partially developed sense of sin while their missionaries possessed it in its fullest expression, to the extent that it dominated their ideology.

In Nahua belief ritual breaches could bring on divine sanctions in the form of diseases (Aguirre Beltrán 1963:38–43). The most common breach was the breaking of fasts (which involved sexual as well as alimentary abstinence); the verb *itlacoa* was used in this context (for example, Sahagún 1953–82:III, 11). This belief was one of Preuss's arguments for asserting the presence of a sin concept in pre-Columbian religion (1903); Lanczkowski (1970:123) also includes ritual offenses along with more overtly moral ones in his explanation of *tlatlacalli*. Some immoral acts brought on misfortunes due less to divine punishment than to a form of possession by divine forces. But in both cases supernatural agents participate in human morality, in contrast to Fürer-Haimendorf's (1974:553–54) first category where such involvement is absent.

Thus, the *tlatlacalli* concept provided some common ground between Christian and Nahua belief. *Tlatlacalli* is sin, but not in the full extent of the Christian usage, and it has a range of meanings alien to Christianity; the concepts overlap but are not synonyms. The distinction between sanctions in this life and in the afterlife, as expressed in Fürer-Haimendorf's definitions, was of vital interest to the friars but was not used to distinguish sin from other types of misdeed.

A discussion of sin leads into a consideration of guilt and shame. Piers and Singer (1971) have refuted the classic distinction between "guilt cultures" (Western) and "shame cultures" (all others), noting that shame can be internalized, having much the same effect and appearance as guilt, and that cultures traditionally classified as "shame cultures" may in fact have a sense of guilt as well. Though psychologically distinct, guilt and shame do not constitute a very useful tool for classifying whole cultures. To cast Nahua-Christian contact in these terms would be a gross

over-simplification. Nevertheless, given the emphasis placed on these concepts in moral analysis, they may merit some attention.

Without delving too deeply into psychoanalytic concepts, shame may be characterized as deriving from a fear of contempt or, ultimately, of abandonment, while guilt derives from a fear of mutilation or annihilation (Piers and Singer 1971:29). This second type of fear certainly was present in the Nahua psyche—gods (like parents) could punish immoral acts by inflicting physical harm on the offender; on a grander scale, there was a constant fear of world annihilation. A sense of sin is evident in these contexts; perhaps a sense of guilt, or something approaching it, may be assumed. However, the need to please the capricious gods, to cajole and entertain them in order to keep their attention fixed on human welfare, was very strongly emphasized.

Christianity, with a personal deity who was vitally interested in human affairs, greatly emphasized guilt. Because of sin, everyone was guilty before God and merited annihilation. Penitence for sin, more a matter of public shaming in the early Church, had in the Middle Ages become a private affair between sinner and priest. Shame before the priest remained a desired element of penitence but guilt was more important. Sin was supposed to cause pain even if known only privately (Tentler 1977:128–30). However, such criteria do not easily distinguish guilt from internalized shame, especially for Europeans viewing Indians—people whose public behavior, let alone psychological makeup, was in many ways impenetrable. For present purposes, the idea of a basic psychological difference between Nahua and Christian mentality is rejected while noting that the sense of guilt, like that of sin, was relatively more central to Christian thought than to Nahua.

This shame-guilt question, despite its interest for anthropologists and psychoanalysts, did not trouble the friars. They adopted the Nahuatl term *pinahuiztli* as a synonym for shame (*vergüenza*), using it in the sense of public reprimand, which indeed seems an accurate interpretation. The verb form *pinabua* is often paired with the verb *ahua* ‘to chide or reprimand.’ *Pinahuiztli* has the meaning of timidity or bashfulness also. As an example of its usage in a seemingly non-ethical context, *pinahuizatl* ‘shame-water’ referred to a type of river which allegedly stopped flowing when people crossed it, as if shrinking from public scrutiny (Sahagún 1953–82:XI, 249). Although revelation of one’s misdeeds would shame a person, *pinahuiztli* is not part of the *tlatlacollis* complex.

The friars did not confuse *pinahuiztli* with guilt. Nahuatl has no sepa-

rate term for guilt—to the extent that such a concept was present it was subsumed within that of *tlatlacalli*. Rather than trying to develop a distinct concept of guilt, the friars worked within the existing system, translating *culpa* as *tlatlacalli*. The resulting identification of sin with guilt was compatible with Nahua thought but eliminated the cause-effect relation between the Christian ideas. *Mea culpa* became *notlatlacol* 'my damage,' the damage that I have done, whether to myself, to society, to God, or to cosmic order—ultimately it was all the same. The fear and uneasiness one may feel as a consequence of one's transgression inhere in the transgression itself, are part of the damage, the disturbed and disordered condition characteristic of all *tlatlacalli*. The friars concentrated on developing this fear and uneasiness into something more like their own sense of guilt by constantly stressing that one must feel pain and sorrow for one's *tlatlacalli*.

The friars' procedures must be understood in the context of contemporary theology, which took guilt more or less for granted while focusing more on the issue of attrition and contrition. Attrition is sorrow for sins stemming from fear of their consequences, accompanied by an intention not to sin again; contrition is a more sublime form of sorrow stemming from love of God and a desire not to offend him. Attrition can precede and evolve into contrition; it is a more primitive form. Attrition subsumed shame and to some extent guilt, since it covered fear of exposure and disgrace as well as fear of punishment by God (Lea 1968:II, 15).

These were important theological concepts because, after annual sacramental confession was declared mandatory in 1215, the Church had to explain why sorrow alone was insufficient to secure divine pardon. The attrition/contrition distinction was manipulated to this end. Contrition was declared essential to pardon. Since one could not be sure if one's sorrow was attrition or contrition, one could not rest assured of one's salvation. However, divine grace infused at the moment of the priest's absolution had the power to transform attrition into contrition, compensating for the penitent's imperfect sorrow. Absolution guaranteed salvation while sorrow alone did not. This view was endorsed by the Franciscan and Dominican orders. The Council of Trent, without overtly endorsing it, came close enough that subsequent theologians were justified in perpetuating it (Lea 1968:I, 102–3; II, 13–15; Tentler 1977:19–27).

The importance of sadness, more than of guilt, drew the friars' attention. Their teaching is a simplified version of contemporary doctrine. While contrition is preferred, attrition is not utterly rejected. The threat of punishment in hell, as well as shaming (whether public, before the con-

fessor, or before God), was a necessary tool for inducing moral conformity; the friars were hardly prepared to give that up in the interest of a more sublime spirituality. They encouraged people to reprimand and shame sinners. They strove to induce sorrow for sins, but without attempting to distinguish in Nahuatl between the two types of sorrow (let alone whether they derived from guilt or shame). *Tequipacholiztli* 'anguish, affliction' and *tlaocoyaliztli* 'sadness' are used interchangeably as synonyms for sadness or sorrow, translating such Spanish terms as *contrición, dolor, pena, aflicción*. Attrition receives little overt attention. After all, as long as the Indians were sad, priestly absolution would act to secure their pardon.

Fray Alonso de Escalona (n.d.:157v), the Franciscan author of an early set of sermons, teaches simply that if all the sins that sinners commit make them sad, and if they obey all the commandments (i.e., "sin no more"), they will gain eternal life. The Dominican catechism of 1548 gives remembrance of all sins, crying for them, and the intention not to sin again as prerequisites for confession without distinguishing motives for the crying phase (*Doctrina cristiana* 1944:97r–98r). Fray Domingo de la Anunciación's catechism (1565:34v), another Dominican work, states the necessity of sadness for sins without accounting for the origin or character of this sadness. Sahagún (1563:60v–61v) distinguishes "good sadness" from "bad sadness," but the contrast is between sadness for sins, for Christ's suffering, or from longing to see Christ, and sadness for worldly misfortune; he does not attempt an attrition/contrition distinction. In the *Apendiz* (1579b:14r) he contrasts "spiritual sadness" with "earthly sadness"; the former is contrition, but the latter is not necessarily attrition. Molina, in his *Confessionario mayor* (1569:13v–14r), comes closer to such a distinction, stating that the principal reason for confessing should be to please and honor God, not to escape hell, receive divine favor, or enjoy the glory of heaven. Here love of God is distinguished from fear and greed, but one type of sorrow is not distinguished from another. Where he speaks of sadness for sins, using *contrición* in Spanish and *tlatlacolnetequipacholiztli* 'sin anguish' in Nahuatl, he states that this sadness originates in fear of God and knowledge of sin (as contrition originates in attrition), but without designating this a distinct form of sadness (5r).

GOOD AND EVIL, ORDER AND CHAOS

Nahua and Christian alike dwelt at the center of a vibrant universe where struggles of cosmic scale acted themselves out. For Nahuan the basic

cosmic conflict was between order and chaos, for Christians between good and evil. Both cast light against darkness, life against death, wisdom against madness, restraint against excess. But only in Christianity was it conceived as a struggle between moral absolutes.

Because the Christian deity is omnipotent *and* benevolent, theodicy, or the defense of that benevolence in light of the existence of evil, is a difficult and unavoidable task for Christian theology (Russell 1981:16–17). The problem of evil involves Christianity in a basic contradiction with no solution; over the centuries the problem has been masked, though never really solved, by two interrelated but conflicting trends of thought. One is a flirtation with dualism within an over-arching monotheism; the other is the denial of evil's ontological status.

Exposure to dualist philosophies during Christianity's formative centuries left lasting effects. Persian Zoroastrianism had divided the cosmos into equal and opposite forces of light and darkness. Greek cosmic dualism of the Orphic and Platonic sects set spirit against matter. Jewish dualism, manifested especially in Essene and apocalyptic thought, involved a moral struggle between good and evil enacted for or in the human soul (Russell 1981:32–33). All of these oppositions became incorporated into Christianity. In the New Testament the figure of Satan, the power of darkness, appears as a counterprinciple to Christ, the power of light (Russell 1977:222). The Desert Fathers, founders of Christian monasticism and early formulators of Christian doctrine, espoused a severe asceticism that debased the material and the fleshly while exalting the spiritual. This brand of matter-spirit dualism had little to do with Christ's teachings and much to do with the ascetic Hellenistic sects competing with Christianity for adherents (Bullough 1973:III; Dodds 1965:32–35). The moral struggle for the individual soul became a basic tenet of Christian doctrine, expressed in the belief in individual demons and guardian angels as well as afterlife beliefs.

However, mainstream Christian theology always asserted the superiority of God's power and his creations to the evil forces, leaving by the wayside fully dualist sects like Gnosticism and Manichaeanism. Christianity evolved as a "semidualist" religion, characterized by a dynamic and creative tension between monism and dualism (Russell 1977:228). The pendulum never stopped swinging: the various Catharist heresies of medieval times ascribed to so profound a matter-spirit dualism that they denied the Incarnation—their Christ would not have befouled himself in earthly flesh.

Scholastic theology, led by St. Thomas Aquinas and following St.

Augustine's example, devised an ill-fitting monist disguise for the matter-spirit dualism so inextricably entrenched in Christian thought. Morality was equated with ontology, such that the most real and the most good were the same. This scheme had its roots in Plato's idealism. A moral/ontological hierarchy ranged from God—pure spirit—down through angels, humans, and animals ranked according to intelligence, then plants, inanimate objects, gross unformed matter, to total nonbeing (Russell 1968:53–54). To ascribe only limited “reality” to matter and evil is patently absurd, but the scheme provided so useful a solution to so many problems that the scholastics preferred to devote their skilled logic to concealing its flaws rather than to devising something else. The equation of evil with matter was preserved, while both were deprived of their status as cosmic forces in opposition to spirit and good. Only one universal, eternal principle existed. God was Being itself, and all lesser forms of being derived from this single source. The challenge of dualist philosophy was explained away, and a weapon was forged against heretics.⁹

Corollary to this scheme is the privation theory of evil. Since all being is good, nothing can be evil in itself. Evil exists only in the absence of good, in the turning away from good and from God. Evil increases with distance from God. Goodness, divine harmony, is the natural state of the universe; evil disrupts that harmony not as an active force but as an absence of things or conditions which ought to be present. Disorder cannot exist as an active principle, since it is merely a negation of order. The origin of evil is the will. Ideally, all creatures should choose to turn toward God, but in order for there to be a choice the option of evil has to exist. Devils and sinners have turned away from good: they are evil in that they have chosen not to be good. Since this is their own choice, evil cannot be blamed on God (Aquinas 1969; Russell 1968, 1984).

Here the cosmic struggle is not an opposition of forces but the yearning of all creatures toward their Creator, toward the perfection of the ultimate Being. The existence of free will demands of humans that they make choices; the individual must struggle to choose the good against the influence of those who have not. Life is a battle, whether one inclines toward dualism or toward the scholastics' solution. Evil cannot be denied completely. Indeed, folk belief in the Devil waxed particularly strong at the end of the Middle Ages in spite of the scholastics' arguments (Russell 1984). Under one guise or another, Christians retained their belief in the cosmic opposition of good and evil.

Nahua cosmic dualism was not cast in terms of good and evil. Despite

the many dual aspects of Nahua thought, its theology was monist. A single divine principle—*teotl*—was responsible for the nature of the cosmos, negative aspects of it as well as beneficial ones. It was a polytheist monism: that is, the divine principle manifested itself in multiple forms, some ambivalent, some expressing opposite principles in their different manifestations (Russell 1977:25). More accurate would be Klor de Alva's term *teoyism* (1979:7) (from *teoyotl*, the abstract form of *teotl*), since *teotl* could manifest itself in ritual objects, images, and human deity-impersonators—forms not necessarily consistent with the Western conception of deity.

Negative forces were not construed as enemies of goodness, nor as a turning away from good, but as essential, functional components of the cosmos. Disharmony was as necessary as harmony. Creative, ordering forces and destructive, chaotic forces were two sides of the same coin, each dependent upon the other for its functioning. There was no permanent structure, no ontological hierarchy or Great Chain of Being, but rather a process or a movement.

Order was temporary and incomplete, with chaotic forces dwelling at its interstices and peripheries. Order and chaos, structure and anti-structure, were subsumed within a larger pattern. Life came from death, creation from destruction. Unordered matter was the stuff of creation—it was not deprived of ontological status. Entropic forces eroded order, but they were themselves fertile and energizing, providing the substance for new establishments of order. This is the same sort of mythical chaos which Smith (1978:97), commenting on Eliade's work, describes as a chaos which is never overcome but "remains as a creative challenge, as a source of possibility and vitality over against, yet inextricably related to, order and the Sacred."

This is the dialectical dualism typical of Mesoamerican thought, as described by B. Tedlock (1982:42, 145–62) and D. Tedlock (1983:217; 1985:63). The opposites complement each other, existing within an overarching unity or synthesis. They cannot be reduced to an opposition between positive and negative. They contain elements of each other; thus, there is no need for mediation between them. The dualist philosophies that contributed to Christian theology posited no such synthesis; Christianity tended to assert unity by denying rather than incorporating the second element. This is an analytical dualism: dualities clash with each other. There can be mediators between them, but they cannot be resolved into a whole.

In the Nahua universe, how to align oneself with good and to avoid evil was not the basic problem of human existence. Rather, one had to

discover the proper balance between order and chaos. One had to establish and maintain the order, continuity, and stability necessary for social and cultural survival while capturing just enough fertilizing energy to ensure biological survival. Order had to be forcibly wrested from chaos and then paid for periodically through ritual sacrifices. Contact with chaos could not be severed since it was the source of life. Graulich (1983) views this cycle of debt and repayment in terms of sin and retribution. Zantwijk presents a valid criticism of this interpretation, suggesting that what Graulich sees as sin would be better described as "the basic Mesoamerican concept of the 'holy war,' the creative struggle, the essential Mesoamerican struggle for life. . ." (Comments, in Graulich 1983:583). This universe is not structured in moral terms. Human moral codes provide essential guidelines for interacting with and enduring cosmic forces, but the forces themselves are not subject to these rules. What is good or bad for humans may be meaningless to the higher powers.

The friars' writings portray a universe divided between powers of good and evil, light and darkness. Images of warfare and struggle abound. The basic goodness of creation is asserted, but mainly as a foil for the corrupting forces that plague it. For example, Fray Domingo de la Anunciación teaches that God made the world good but, because of our sins, it is against us and makes war on us (1565:56r). This attitude reflects the friars' self-conception as crusaders bringing light to the pagans, battling against the pagan gods/demons. Their emphasis on celibacy and poverty correlated with a strong inclination toward matter-spirit dualism. Here they bear perhaps a closer resemblance to the Apostles and the Desert Fathers than to the scholastics who were their more immediate forebears. Evil flourishes in their world, though less as a force in itself than as personified in its many minions: the Devil, the flesh, worldliness, sin, and sinners. In their teachings, evil appears more in the concrete than in the abstract, more in the adjective than in the noun: evil beings rather than Evil itself.

While Nahuatl is replete with terms expressing disorder and decay, it has no word for evil in the abstract sense. Terms for good and bad, right and wrong exist but are relatively concrete. "Good" was usually translated as *cualli*, derived from the passive of the verb *cua* 'to eat.' A second term used to mean "good" or "right" was *yectli*, literally meaning something finished or completed (Andrews 1975:487). Their opposites are simply their negations: *acualli* and *ayectli*. These terms had moral implications in indigenous usage. Expressions such as *cualli inyollo* 'their hearts are good'

and *yecnemilice* ‘possessor of a righteous life’ seem too common and too idiomatic to be Christian inventions. However, these terms, and their more abstract derivatives *cualiztli* and *yectiliztli* ‘goodness,’ (or *acualiztli* and *ayectiliztli* ‘badness’), were not universal evaluative categories into which all phenomena could be placed. The friars treat them as if they were.

Wickedness or perversion was often translated by the term *tlahuelilocayotl*, or *tlahueliloc* for the wicked person or in an adjectival sense. This corresponds to the abstraction “evil” no better than *acualli* does. Its root, *tlahuelli*, means anger; the term denotes frenzy or raving madness—an uncontrolled, disorderly state of emotion—rather than badness itself.

The friars insisted on Christian categories of good and evil but ended up expressing them in terms of the order-disorder dialectic. This was the only way of making their value judgments meaningful to the Nahuas, yet it effectively “Nahuatized” what they were trying to say. By placing great emphasis on certain things, they could work on altering content—for example, the punishment of sinners after death—but they were still operating within what was essentially a Mesoamerican universe.

GODS, DEVILS, AND HUMAN OWLS

The friars accepted the indigenous concept of deity, *teotl*, as a term for their own deity and an adjective for “holy.” They merely insisted that there was only one being, named Dios, or the three of the Trinity (a concept extremely difficult to explain in Nahuatl) to which the term applied. Epithets pertaining to the major indigenous deities, Tezcatlipoca in particular, were applied to the Christian God if they were compatible with his character: Ipalcemohuani ‘He by Whom One Lives,’ Tloque Nahuaque ‘Possessor of the Near, Possessor of the Surrounding,’ Ilhuicahua Tlalticpaque ‘Possessor of Heaven, Possessor of Earth’ (see Burkhart 1988). The terms *ángel* and *santo* were introduced to describe holy beings of lesser status to whom *teotl* could not properly be applied.

The indigenous deities did not, as a group, represent moral authority: there were tricksters, harlots, and drunkards as well as virtuous priests and benevolent grandmothers. The same being could incite immoral behavior and then afflict the wrongdoer. Deity, like creation itself, embodied order and disorder; the priestly culture-bearer Quetzalcoatl was forever challenged by the dissolute sorcerer Tezcatlipoca.

Christian teaching attempted to redefine *teotl* in terms of moral order while placing all the anti-structural aspects into the category of demon. Although the concept of *teotl* was adopted, all the individual beings who had been called by that term had to be stripped of their divine status. The friars, for whom devils were very real creatures, assumed that the indigenous deities were devils—not products of pagan ignorance but minions of the Prince of Darkness. And Tezcatlipoca was Lucifer himself (Burkhart 1988; Sahagún 1563:82r, 1579b:10v, 1953–82:I, 38; Weckmann 1984:I, 242).

Idolatry was occasionally explained in nondiabolic terms: for example, in Motolinia (1971:299), in Sahagún's appendix to his book on the gods (1953–82:I) and in Valadés (in Palomera 1962:226–27). The natives may have invented on their own the worship of images and the deification of natural objects, but even so these practices led to their enslavement by the Devil. The usual view, and one professed by Sahagún in other writings, attributed to Satan the origin of Nahua religion (Burkhart 1988; Klor de Alva 1982a; Sylvest 1975:48).

This diabology exercised a strong hold on the Europeans in Mexico. Olmos was so convinced of the Devil's presence among the Indians that he translated into Nahuatl Fray Martín de Castañeda's 1527 treatise on superstition and sorcery, a text based on the notion of the diabolic pact (Baudot 1972, 1979, 1983:244). Devils are everywhere in Fray Juan de Grijalva's chronicle of the Augustinians (1624). Not only the friars held this view but also conquistadors and colonial officials. Díaz del Castillo (1956:78, 206) calls the native gods devils and Tezcatlipoca the god of hell. In the *Procesos de indios* (1912) and *Relaciones geográficas* (Paso y Troncoso 1905–06), the Nahua gods are routinely referred to as devils or demons.

The terms *diablo* and *demonio*, and the names Lucifer and Satan, were introduced. However, a Nahuatl term was needed as well, one which would indicate nondivine status, malicious character, and dangerous power. *Tlacatecolotl* was selected for this function in the 1530s if not earlier.¹⁰ *Tlacatecolotl*, a compound of *tlacatl* and *tecolotl*, means "human owl." *Tecolotl* was a generic term for owl, and also referred specifically to the horned owl; the *Florentine Codex* describes its horns of feathers. The name was onomatopoeic; the owl's hoot was heard as "tecolo, tecolo, o, o" (Sahagún 1953–82:XI, 42). The term *tlacatecolotl* was not coined by the friars but referred to a particularly malevolent type of *nahualli*, or shape-changing shaman who took the form of an animal alter-ego during his or her trances. The *tlacatecolotl* inflicted sickness and death on people while

in the shape of a horned owl (López Austin 1967:87–88; Nicholson 1971:441–42).

Motolinia (1971:152), in his chapter on omens, describes the omen of the owl as the *tlacatecolotl*: a “man who goes about at night wailing or frightening [people], a fearful nocturnal man.” According to Mendieta (1980:94), this phantasm was given the owl’s name because the owl was an augury of evil. In Mesoamerica the owl is a bird of the underworld, emissary of the underworld deities (López Austin 1967:88; Tedlock 1985:158).

The *tlacatecolotl* was associated with the night, the underworld, sorcery, ghostly apparitions, human afflictions, even horns—all features of Christianity’s Devil. And it was not a *teotl*. Of all indigenous concepts, this one was undoubtedly the best choice. It solved the major problem of deifying the native gods by identifying them with something which, though having superhuman powers, was essentially human. It played a small enough role in native ideology that it could take on new meanings more readily than something that was a major focus of attention. It also diminished the Devil into something less than the immortal Adversary—it better described someone who had a pact with that being. But since there was no intermediate, mediating category in Nahua thought between god and human, to parallel Christianity’s good and fallen angels, the friars had to choose either a divine or a human being to represent both their Devil and the indigenous gods; apparently they preferred the latter option in the interest of discouraging idolatry.

In his *Historia* (1905–08:VII, 316; 1981:I, 334), Sahagún expresses the opinion that the term *tlacatecolotl* was used improperly for “devil” because it properly applied to a “necromancer or witch.” Sahagún was concerned about the perpetuation of non-Christian beliefs. His stated opposition to the use of the name Tonantzin ‘Our Revered Mother’ for Mary has often been cited: the term was used for an indigenous mother goddess; Mary was better called *inantzin dios* ‘God’s revered mother’ (1981:III, 352). However, in the doctrinal texts prepared by him and his students, the term *tlacatecolotl* is widely used, as is Tonantzin for Mary.¹¹

The Nahuas accepted the term *tlacatecolotl*. In indigenous writings the native deities are frequently referred to as *tlatlacatecolo* (plural of *tlacatecolotl*) as well as *diablos* and *demonios*, just as native artists learned to depict them like Christian devils (see Fig. 4). In the *Historia Tolteca-Chichimeca* (1976:143, 164, 207, 226, 227), the deities Quetzalcoatl, Tezcatlipoca, Huit-

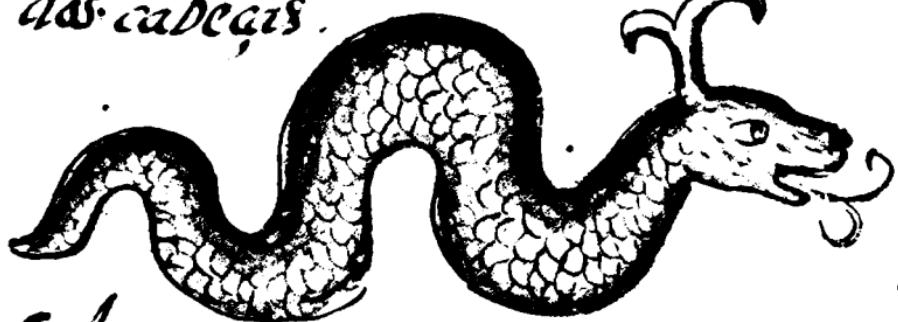


Figure 4. Four priests sacrifice a prisoner of war to "the gods," here represented by a European-style demon. Illustration in the Florentine Codex, Book VIII, 34v. (Photo from Sahagún 1979.)

zilopochtli, Itzcueye, and Camaxtli are all called *tlacatecolotl*. Chimalpahin (1889:25) calls Tezcatlipoca the great *tlacatecolotl* (implicitly identifying him as Lucifer).

Other titles were used on occasion. The Tzitzimime or Coleletin, female or androgynous numens of the western sky, the twilight, and the end of the world, were lesser deities of unpleasant character and monstrous appearance. The application of their names to the devils was sufficiently standardized that Molina (1970:I, 45r) includes them after *tlacatecolotl* in his gloss for *Diablo*. The idea of deities descending through the western sky into the underworld looked to Christian interpreters like the fall of the devils from heaven to hell; this reinforced the connection of the Tzitzimime and also gods of the underworld with the devils (*Codex Ríos*

zeor que roven los lenguas y
los cabezas.



¶ Ay l'mo serpiente eriesta tierra

Figure 5. The mazacoatl. Illustration in the Florentine Codex, Book XI, 82r. (Photo from Sahagún 1979.)

1964: plates 3, 68; *Codex Telleriano-Remensis* 1964:4v, 18v; Weckmann 1984:I, 242).

The Devil was occasionally given descriptive names such as *mictlan cue-tlachtli* 'the wolf of hell' who drives away Christian sheep (Sahagún 1563:58v); or *mictlan coatl* 'serpent of hell' (Cornyn and McAfee 1944:324; Escalona n.d.:157v, 233r, 235r). In the *Psalmodia christiana* the dragons vanquished by Saints Philip and Martha, and Lucifer's manifestation as the *draco* of Revelation 12:7 vanquished by Saint Michael, are all called *mazacoatl* 'deer serpent' (Sahagún 1583:79r-79v, 128r, 179v). This term describes a type of snake so named because it had horns like a deer's antlers. It was so large, according to the *Florentine Codex* description, that it could eat deer (Sahagún 1953-82:XI, 79).¹² Molina also attributes horns to it (Molina 1970:II, 50r). Sahagún's informants list three different types of *mazacoatl*; the third, a smaller variety, was used in an aphrodisiacal potion—it caused a man to ejaculate so much that he shriveled and died (Sahagún 1953-82:XI, 80). In appearance, this large horned creature was the closest thing to a dragon in Nahua animal taxonomy. The horns, the serpent identity, and the association with sexual excess were features appropriate to a Christian demon. Figure 5 reproduces the *Florentine Codex* illustration of the larger variety of *mazacoatl*.

Though the friars drew names for the devils from native ideology, in didactic art demons appear in forms consistent with medieval and early Renaissance art in Europe (Russell 1984; Weckmann 1984:I, 212–13): goat-like human-monsters with horns and tails, naked, sometimes female. They considered the (to them) horrid appearance of native deities an indication of their demonic nature, but these were guises of beings who really looked like ordinary devils.

SUMMARY

The Nahuas were the subjects of an intensive missionization program which aimed to transform their culture into a utopic Indian Kingdom of Christ. They all became Christians, at least nominally, but failed to yield so easily to the friars' attempt at cultural alchemy. In various ways, with or without the collusion of the friars, they managed to turn Christianity into something of their own.

The friars were obliged to accommodate their teachings to native thought categories to a greater degree than they—or their apologists—dared to admit, and even greater than they may have realized. The Indians' inability to become the model Christians their missionaries hoped for, a failure the latter attributed to the Devil's power or the Indians' weakness, was in part a result of poor communication. A significant portion of Christian doctrine was simply lost in translation.

The major obstacles to communication in the moral realm stemmed from a fundamental contrast between the monist, relatively amoral world view of the Nahuas and the dualist, morally charged world view of the missionaries. The Nahuas were not predisposed to accept good and evil as absolute principles, the material world as an evil place opposed to a morally positive spiritual plane, or the individual moral condition as the most important attribute of human beings. The friars viewed the Nahuas as being predisposed to Christianity because of the simplicity of their lifestyle, judging them by superficial attributes interpreted through a Christian screen and ignoring essential aspects of their thought system.

Terms chosen to express basic Christian moral concepts fostered continuity between traditional religion and the Nahuas' version of Christianity. The concept of *tlatlacalli*, or damage, usurped the place of sin, changing the latter concept from the cause of universal human guilt into a basic principle of the cosmic process. Good and evil were phrased metaphori-

cally in terms of the principles of order and chaos, but, since the Nahuas did not view good and evil as universal principles, such phrasings lost this aspect of their metaphorical load and became references to reality as the Nahuas already conceptualized it. The Nahua concept of deity, *teotl*, was retained in its essence if not in its object; the Devil was diminished to the status of a sorcerer—superhuman but a poor rival for Europe's Lucifer.

Centers and Peripheries

The cultural significance of boundaries or liminal zones as places of danger, places where orders—cognitive or social—may be reversed, dissolved, or restructured, is well established (Douglas 1966; Turner 1967). The Nahuas, dwelling in a world where structure exerted only partial control over anti-structure, were keenly aware of the dangers lurking in peripheral zones. Spatial center contrasted with periphery, upper world with underworld, day with night, structured time with the unstructured period between years (five unnamed days called the *nemontemi*) or between solar ages. In such a world one had to be very careful of one's position in space and time.¹

These contrasts were active in moral discourse, moral excesses being associated with liminal times and places. Christian teaching used the same contrasts in reference to sin, demons, moral temptation, punishment, and other aspects of its own negative side. This chapter considers aspects of structure and anti-structure in regard to the vertical plane of heavens and underworlds, the horizontal or terrestrial plane, and the temporal dimension.

THE VERTICAL PLANE

The friars made no attempt to teach the Nahuas a Copernican view of the cosmos. A medieval conception of a layered universe with the earth at its center corresponded to Nahua belief and suited the late-medieval version of Christian doctrine which the friars presented. In medieval thought, heaven and hell were concrete, tangible places, and so they appeared in the friars' teachings (Weckmann 1984:I, 378–79). The Nahua conception of flat layers was allowed to persist: the friars did not introduce the European notion of concentric spheres. The general Nahua plan was sufficiently compatible with Christianity, and the friars reinforced it—for example, by using a three-tiered stage for religious dramas as was done in medieval mystery plays (Horcasitas 1974:565). Heaven and hell were described as residences: they had doors; roads led to them.

The friars concentrated on imposing a Christian moral hierarchy onto this general framework. Borges (1960:328–29) notes that the missionaries' most frequent argument in favor of conversion was salvation—the threat of eternal suffering for pagans and the promise of eternal reward for good Christians. The concepts of heaven and hell were therefore of extreme importance, and vivid descriptions of these places were deemed necessary. This emphasis on individual salvation was alien to native thought; as Jiménez Moreno observes, indigenous religion focused instead on the collective preservation of cosmic order (1958:413). Thus, while the most important feature of the cosmic layering was for Christianity its soteriological aspect, for Nahuas it was the structuring itself.

According to Nahua belief the earth, itself a female deity, lay above a nine-layered underworld and beneath thirteen celestial levels, the lowest of which merged with the ocean. Different deities, some corresponding to celestial bodies, were associated with the different heavens; a dual or bisexual creator deity occupied the uppermost level. An *axis mundi* passed from here down through the center of the earth and the underworlds. At the very bottom dwelt the dual or bisexual death deity.

The numbers thirteen and nine were not selected arbitrarily. The 260-day ritual calendar or *tonalpohualli* was based on the period of human gestation, corresponding to nine lunar months. The number 260 divided by twenty (the basic unit of this vigesimal system) yields thirteen (see P. Furst 1986 on the origins of the 260-day count). The calendar was broken into a repeating sequence of twenty day-signs or *tonalli*, associated with

numerical coefficients running from one through thirteen. The lunar, nocturnal aspect of time was expressed as Nine Lords of the Night, another repeating sequence that ran alongside the day-count. Thus, days occurred in units of thirteen, nights in units of nine. The thirteen heavens shared the numerical symbolism of the day; the nine underworlds that of the night. Thus, time as well as space involved a continual counterpoint between units of thirteen and nine.

One's date of birth (and, hypothetically, of conception) in the *tonalpohualli* was one's *tonalli*: the term did not mean simply "day" or "day-sign" but designated a kind of animate force or soul which had important effects on one's character and fate. The number thirteen, reflective of cosmic order, was auspicious. The number nine was associated with sorcery and other nocturnal, disorderly factors; day-signs with this coefficient were considered inauspicious. In this sense the arrangement of the cosmos had moral implications: moral behavior was orderly and thus celestial/diurnal; immoral behavior was disorderly and hence underworldly/nocturnal.

The upper world is a place of order; the underworld exists in a peripheral relationship to it. This makes for a rather large periphery: one might prefer to view them as equal quantities in a structural opposition. But the essential feature of the underworld is its relative lack of structure; it shares the nature of other peripheries. The depiction of upper and underworld levels in the *Codex Ríos* (1964: plates 1 and 2), the only portrayal of this kind, assigns concrete phenomena to the upper levels—colors, particular deities, astronomical bodies, or atmospheric phenomena. The underworld "levels" are really a listing of the discomforts and dangers endured by the soul on the downward journey. The number nine structures the underworld only very weakly.

An essential feature of the Nahua cosmos was its animate character. Mountains, bodies of water, the wind, the moon, stars, sun, and the heavens, as well as the earth itself, were animate beings, as shown in some cases by the use of plural forms (in Nahuatl only animates take plurals) and in others by their mythical origins. There was little space for mere objects. Todorov (1984:69), analyzing Aztec communication in the context of the Spanish invasion, observes that it was oriented more toward interaction with nonhuman forces of the natural world than toward interaction among humans. When the very hills are alive, a people's place in the cosmos differs fundamentally from a world where human beings rule over a passive creation. The Nahuas did not set humanity off from the rest of nature like Christianity does. Human beings were a part of the world; the world was not something to be rejected or striven against.

Christian teaching adopted Nahuatl terms for the earth, the sky and its heavenly bodies, and the underworld, adding Spanish terms for clarification (or obfuscation) and to denote loci with no direct indigenous parallel. The number of levels was reduced, not by directly contradicting the Nahua view but by outlining the less complex Christian layout. Though the friars, in their efforts to curtail idolatry, sought to reduce the Nahua universe to passive matter, their adoption of indigenous names and plural structures worked against that goal.

Heaven was usually referred to as *ilhuicatl* ‘the sky,’ *ilhuicac* ‘in the sky,’ or *ilhuicatl itic* ‘within the sky.’ The ninefold celestial hierarchy (cherubim, seraphim, powers, virtues, etc.) was one way of internally differentiating the heavens. This hierarchy, though not systematically taught to the Indians, appears in a few doctrinal texts and in the native-authored *Colloquios* and *Cantares mexicanos* (Klor de Alva 1980a:165–67; Bierhorst 1985:339, 485). However, these are not distributed into a spatial hierarchy but are simply nine types of “good angels” (*Colloquios*), “dwellers in heaven” (*Doctrina cristiana* 1944:74v), or “people of heaven” (Sahagún 1583:173v). Even so, the association of the underworld number nine with morally positive celestial beings is striking.

The actual dwelling place of God in the highest part of heaven was occasionally given the Spanish name *Cielo Empyreo* ‘empyreal heaven,’ setting it off from the rest of *ilhuicatl*, but this usage was rare. Molina (1970:II, 37v) defines *ilhuicatlitic* as “empyreal heaven, or celestial paradise,” though the literal meaning in Nahuatl is simply “in the belly of the sky.” The net effect of Christianization was to reduce the heavens to an undifferentiated mass, lessening the role of numerical symbolism as an ordering device.

Aside from providing a home for God and the angels, the Christian *ilhuicatl* functioned as a place of reward for the souls of the virtuous. This brings up the problem of indigenous concepts of the soul. López Austin (1980:I, 223–62) identifies three Nahua soul concepts, though there may actually be four or more (Jill Furst, Jorge Klor de Alva: personal communication). Thus, the human being was not a two-part product of body and soul but a composite of several fleshly and spiritual elements. The soul that maintained an individual identity after death was the *teyolia* or *teyolitia*, associated with the heart and life force. The friars used this concept as a parallel for *ánima*, though the frequent use of *ánima* alone suggests that they did not find the native concept entirely appropriate. They often paired *ánima* with *yollotli* ‘heart,’ however, thus aligning it with this heart-based force.

The destination of the good *ánima* was described as a place of riches, beauty, purity, and light, a kingdom where the virtuous would rule forever and from which sinners were forever banned. Occasionally the New Jerusalem of the Book of Revelation (chapter 21) was described, with its jeweled walls, streets of gold, fruitful and medicinal trees, and living waters (for example, Sahagún 1563:33v, 70r; 1583:72v-76r). The descriptions would have appealed to the Nahuas' love of order, light, nobility, and beautiful and precious things, as well as evoking their image of a primordial urban utopia. The friars easily made heaven a desirable place to dwell; the difficult part was establishing who would go there.

In indigenous belief the souls (*teyolia*) of certain classes of persons dwelt in the skies after death but this reward was not consigned simply on the basis of moral merit. One's destiny was determined by one's date of birth and one's manner of death rather than one's chosen manner of life; however, one's manner of life could predispose one toward a certain type of death. To the eastern side of the sun's heaven went persons killed in battle or sacrifice. As Heyden points out (Comments, in Graulich 1983:581), this heaven was "good" not in an abstract sense but because the sun—provider of light, warmth, and growth—was there. Such death was extolled, for obvious political as well as religious reasons: to encourage men to risk their lives in battle.

According to the *Florentine Codex*'s exhortation to chastity, the sun chose sexually pure people to die in battle (Sahagún 1953:82:VI, 114). However, the goal of warfare was to take captives, not to be killed or taken captive. To be overcome in battle was debasing and humiliating. Sacrificial victims were war captives or slaves; both categories of people bore a moral stigma. They were social failures. The taint attached to them had to be ritually washed away by bathing them prior to their sacrifice and subsequent ascension.

The idea that sexually pure warriors were chosen for death is interesting in light of the relatively unrestrained sexual mores of the warriors. A socially valuable warrior becomes a sexually active one—one who, rejected by the sun, will live to fight another day. Sahagún's informants may be subtly expressing their own opinion of Christian doctrine: pure people may go to heaven, whether the sun's heaven or the friars' heaven, but here on earth they are not good for much.

The western side of the sun's heaven, where the sun descended, weakened, dimmed, and passed into the underworld, was not so pleasant. This place was populated by the souls of women who died in their first child-

birth with the child still in the womb. Such women had failed completely in the basic female function of motherhood. A child successfully delivered was to a woman as a captive was to a warrior, so that these women's status was equivalent to that of warriors who were killed or captured. The fact that illicit or excessive sexual activity was considered the usual cause of childbed difficulties increased the stigma attached to these women.

Tlalocan, the rain god's heaven, was the destination of people who drowned, were killed by lightning, or died of diseases which the Nahuas associated with water, such as leprosy, gout, and dropsy. In this case again, moral purity seems to have been a factor—the rain gods chose pure people for these afflictions because they desired them as companions (Sahagún 1953:82:VI, 115; XI, 68–69). Again, an implicit commentary on Christianity may be informing this view of who goes to heaven. Here heavenly "reward" is inflicted on people who might prefer to be left alone. People who lived long and useful lives and died in their beds had no chance of going to heaven.

The Nahua underworld was the place to which all but these exceptional individuals journeyed after death. This was not a place of punishment for sins. It was simply what its name implies: *mictlan* 'among the dead.' Falling as it did on the disorderly, nocturnal side of things it was by no means a pleasant place, but death, life's necessary counterpart, was not a pleasant state. Mictlantecuhtli, the lord of this place, and his consort or female aspect, Mictecacihuatl, were a rather grim couple, but they were deities of death, not of evil. Occupying the opposite tip of the cosmos from the creator couple, they constituted not enemies of the creators but counterparts, partners in the cosmic dance of life and death, creation and destruction.

Non-Indian observers had a limited understanding of this allocation of souls to afterlives. Muñoz Camargo (1978:130), a mestizo chronicler, stated that the natives believed in reward for the good and punishment for the bad after death. Las Casas (1967:II, 506) used the undesirable character of the underworld as a basis for asserting a pre-Columbian belief in hell. Mendieta (1980:83), following Motolinia, saw in the multiplicity of underworld levels separate places for different types of "sinners." Olmos, cited by Zorita (1909:63, 167), also identified *mictlan* with hell. According to his account, all went there forever and suffered various punishments befitting their sins.

The idea that all Indians went to hell and none to heaven suited a Christian view of pagan fate; Christianity may well have induced native

informants to exaggerate the nastiness of their underworld. The commentator of the *Codex Magliabechiano*, a text ultimately derived from Olmos's work, disputes the equation of *mictlan* with hell: telling the Indians they will go to *mictlan* for poorly observing God's faith means nothing to them because they would go there anyway. The place should be called "the home of the *tlacatecolotl*" instead (*Codex Magliabechiano* 1983:64v). The text does not argue that *mictlan* was not a place of torment—the point is that all would have suffered equally regardless of their moral status.

Despite any such caveats, in the Nahuatl doctrinal texts *mictlan* is the usual choice as a gloss for hell. Other Nahuatl names are applied, but these tend to be descriptive rather than generic and are not nearly so common as *mictlan*. The more scrupulous introduced the Spanish term *inferno* as a complement to *mictlan*, sometimes using it alone (a fairly common practice in the Dominican *doctrina*), but the latter term is ubiquitous. Christian characterization of this place lay in its description rather than its name. Baudot describes an example of this in Olmos's Nahuatl translation of Saint Vincent Ferrer's sermons on the Seven Mortal Sins. To clarify the difference between the indigenous *mictlan*, a cold place, and the Christian hell, Olmos (and/or his assistants) added a long description of the hell's fire not in Ferrer's Latin (Baudot 1983:240).

In the Christian universe there were four levels in the underworld. Although most references to the underworld refer to the deepest level, the Nahuas were taught about the others as well. Their Spanish names were given; they were described as levels or places within *mictlan* or *inferno*. The number four was important in Nahua cosmology but was representative of order; thus, it was a poor substitute for the original nine. The order in which the friars list them varies; also, they may only mention two or three depending on the context.

The least unpleasant was the limbo of the Holy Fathers, or "Bosom of Abraham," where the patriarchs, prophets, and other good persons of antiquity (a category exclusive of Indians) awaited Christ's harrowing of hell. Though not a place of suffering, it was a dark and gloomy place: *tlayohuayan mixtecomac* in Fray Domingo de la Anunciación's description (1565:25r). Now empty, the place had no direct relevance to the Indians but was mentioned in the context of Christ's descent and in outline descriptions of *mictlan*.

In purgatory saved souls did penance for absolved but unatoned sins preparatory to entering heaven. The converts were encouraged to attend well to their penances on earth, so that they would spend little or no time

there, and to pray for the souls in residence there. It was described as a place of suffering, of penances much more onerous than those required of the living. Fray Juan de la Anunciación (1577:236r) calls it *cemicac tlaybiouiltoloya*² 'the place where one is forever tormented,' even though the torments were not to last forever! According to Karttunen and Lockhart's survey of loanwords in nonreligious texts, the term "purgatory" appeared in native writings in the 1560s (1976:60). People in the flames of purgatory are portrayed in mural paintings by indigenous artists at Actopan, Hidalgo: an angel lifts to heaven one fortunate soul that presumably has managed to complete its penance.

The third section was the limbo of unbaptized children, a place safe from the fires of deeper hell but from which there was no release. The Dominican *doctrina* stresses the importance of baptizing one's children lest they die and be consigned to this place (*Doctrina cristiana* 1944:120v-121r). This was a bleak counterpart to the Nahuas' *chichihuacuahuitl* 'nursing tree' or *tonacacuahuitl* 'sustenance tree,' the tree in the creator god's heaven at whose blossoms babies' souls suckled until they could be sent to a new mother's womb. Sahagún (1579b:2r-2v) insists that there is no such place: the souls of unbaptized infants are imprisoned in limbo, those of baptized babies go to the heaven of the Christian God.

At bottom was the hell of the damned, home to demons and the souls of heretics, pagans, and sinful Christians. It was a horrid place of tortures, terrible stenches, and eternal darkness, lit only by the fires in which unfortunate souls were roasted. Since the friars relied more on the fear of hell than on the promise of heaven, descriptions and portrayals of hell are particularly vivid. Also, since *mictlan* was not nearly so dreadful, much effort was needed to change the Nahuas' conception of the place to which the name referred. To make of *mictlan* a place of immorality was fairly consistent with Nahua thought, since it was associated with night and darkness and descent and the whole chaotic side of things. More at issue was the idea of after-death punishment, that one's misdeeds have consequences totally divorced from one's experiences in life. But rather than working to alter the *tlatlacalli* concept itself, the friars concentrated on painting hell as a place to be avoided.

Techniques for describing hell varied according to the ingenuity and linguistic capabilities of the friars. The Augustinian Fray Antonio de Roa, working in the mainly Otomí area north of the Basin, felt that the Indians' simple minds would be moved more by example than by doctrine. Therefore he acted out the torments of hell upon his own body: walking on hot

coals; washing in boiling water; and having his Indian assistants choke him, whip him, and drip burning pine resin on his wounds (Grijalva 1624:102r-103v). The Franciscan Fray Luis Caldera of the Michoacan province compensated for his linguistic deficiencies by burning alive small animals in an oven; their cries of pain were to represent the anguish of sinners in hell (Ricard 1966:104).

Fortunately for man and beast, friars in the Nahuatl-speaking area had sufficient skill with words to create verbal pictures of hell and its torments. Fray Juan de la Anunciación (1577:236r) provides a typical description:

Ca in teotlamatinime quineltilia, ca in mictlan infiernos, tlalli yytic, tlalli ynepantia in ca. Ompa cate in tlatlacetecolo, yuan in tlacemixnahuatiltin in atlaneltocanime, yuan in hereges yn teotlatolytlacoani, yn quixnamiqui tlaneltoquilitzli: yuan ompa cate yn ixquichti yn ipan miqui yn temictiani tlatlaculli. Ynic yxquichti yn omote-neuhque, ompa mictlan infiernos cemicac tlayhiyouiltlozque, cenza temamauhti tetlayhiouiltiliztica, in ayc tlamiz in ayc tzonquiçaz: ca oyxnahuatiloque ayc qui-mahuiçozque yn itlatocayotzin totecuiyo DIOS.

Those who are wise in sacred things believe that *mictlan*, hell, is within the earth, in the middle of the earth. There are the *tlatlacetecolo*, and the condemned, the unbelievers and the heretics who damage the holy words, who contradict the faith. And there are all who die in mortal sin. Thus, all who were mentioned are forever tormented there in *mictlan*, hell, with very frightening torments which will never end, never cease; indeed, the condemned will never marvel at the kingdom of our lord God.

The fire of *mictlan* is such that it burns forever: the damned never turn into ash, the fire burns by the power of God with no need of fuel (245v).

Sahagún's sermons leave less to the imagination, reflecting the verbal expertise of himself and his assistants as well as his religious zeal. The sinner merits not the happiness of heaven; instead (1563:34r):

çā momaceval ý mictlā toneviztli in vel temamauhti, ca mitzquazq in oculti, tleco titlatlaz, tepuztca mitzxitilizque yvā mitzatzayanazque ý tlacatecolo, tlayouaya mixtecomac ý tonoz, tepuzmecatica tilpitoz, tichoquitztzatzitoz, tamiquiz, tapiz-miquiz, ticochmiquiz, in ixquich tetlaiyouilti ý tetoneuh techichinatz, vmpa mopā mocecýacatiz ticcemololoz, ic vmpa cemicac titlaiyouiz.

Your desert is just pain in *mictlan*. It is very frightening, for worms will eat you, in the fire you will burn, the *tlatlacetecolo* will squeeze you and rend you with metal. You will lie in darkness, in gloom, you will be tied with chains, you will lie crying out tearfully, you will be thirsty, you will be hungry, you will be sleepy. Everything that torments people, that hurts people, that afflicts people—there you will receive each one, you will roll them all together,³ thus you will suffer there forever.

In another sermon the sinner's destination is (*Sahagún* 1563:59v):

cēca amo ḥcan cēca vel cētlani, exachi coyavaticac cēca temamauhicā, tletl tēticac, cēca tlayova vel mixtecomac, yn ūpa tlayoualli vel tzitzquilo, vel matoco: auh inic cēca tlayaya inic cēca tetlaelticā vel vmpa mocemacitoc in ixquich miquizhiyaltic in vel tetzōvitec etc.

A very bad place, a great abyss, it stands wide. It is a very frightening place, it is filled with fire, it is very dark, a very gloomy place where the darkness can be held, can be touched. And it stinks so much, it is such a repulsive place; all that stinks of death, that beats one's head⁴ lies together there.

The passage is extremely complex and obviously of native authorship—this is not “missionary Nahuatl.” *Sahagún* provides himself and his readers with a key in the margin of the manuscript, explaining some of the more difficult terms.

The sermon goes on to describe the demonic residents and their activities (*Sahagún* 1563:59v):

Auh izca, in quenamique vmpa nemí tlatlatecolo, ca tzitzimime, tzitzinteneq tēxaxacaltique, camacoyauaq, tlātepuzvitzoctic, tlācocultique, tlecueçalnenepileque, ixtelexochpupol, necoc ixeq, tlācochtetechcame noviyā tequa, noviyā tequetzoma, noviyāpa tecāpaxotiuetz, intech quiquēticac yn ītzitzinte: yvā iztivivitatzpopol, quitquitinemi ý mictlā tepuzmacqvitl, ý mictlā tepuzvitzoctl, mictlā tepuztlatlilli ynic cemicac quintzatzayana in ixquichtin tlaveliloq. O ca yuhque y in tiquitocatinemi in tiquitlacamatí, in tevali titlateotocani titlatlacovani etc.

And this is what the *tlatlacetecolo* who dwell there are like. Indeed, they are Tzitzimime, they have mouths like Tzitzimime, they have mouths like huts, they have gaping mouths. They have metal bars for teeth, they have curved teeth, they have tongues of flame, their eyes are big burning embers. They have faces on both sides. Their molars are sacrificial stones. Everywhere they eat people, everywhere they bite people, everywhere they gulp people down. They have mouths on all their joints like monsters with which they chew.⁵ And they have big long nails. They go about carrying the metal *macuahuitl*⁶ of *mictlan*, the metal bar of *mictlan*, the metal wedges of *mictlan* with which they forever beat the wicked. Oh, indeed, like them are they whom you go about following, whom you obey, you, you idolater, you sinner!

These creatures combine the worst features of the indigenous Tzitzimime and the Christian devils. Some of their attributes—the eyes of burning embers, their hut-sized mouths, their long claws—are also features of the jaguar described in the *Florentine Codex* (*Sahagún* 1539–82:XI, 1). They seem to have stepped right out of a converted Nahua's nightmare.

The *Addiciones* (*Sahugún* 1579a:15v) provide yet another example of a fearsome Sahaguntine hell:

ca cenca vey vztotl, yn vmpa ca tlalli ynepantla: vel mixtecomac, vel tlaioaia, tletl ic tentica, ca nel iteilpiaiantzinco yn totecuio Dios: cenca mieccan xexeliuhtoc, tlalamátiloc, mopapanauitihu ynic motetlayhiiouiltilia yn dios yn vmpa: ca qui-miypantililia yn tlaihiouilitzli yn iuh ýtech monequi in intlatlacul:

Indeed it is a very great cave, there in the middle of the earth. It is a very gloomy place, a very dark place, it is filled with fire. Indeed, in truth it is our lord God's place of tying people. In very many places it lies divided, it lies separated, it goes passing itself many times; so God causes people to suffer there; indeed, he hits upon the suffering that is needed for their sins.

People are distributed in places of varying degrees of torment in accordance with the severity of their sins. They lie gnashing their teeth, howling like jaguars and wolves, desiring death but unable to die or to leave *mictlan* (Sahagún 1579a:16r):

Auh in tletl in vncan tetlayhiiouiltia, vel temamauhti, vel tecoco, vel tlapanauia inic tetolini: yn nican tlaticpac tletl, amo quineneulia, yn mictlan tletl, occenza tlapanauia inic tetlayhiiouilti. Auh vey cecuiztli inic tlayhiiouia in vmpa onoque: auh ynin cecuiztli, yn vmpa cecni ca, cenca quipanauia in cecuiztli in nican tlaticpac ynic ceoa, yn manel cenca vei. In vmpa infierno, cenca vei yiaializtli yn iaxtoc, in atle iuhqui nican tlaticpac yiaializtli:

And the fire there makes people suffer, it is very frightening, very painful, very surpassing as it afflicts people. Here on earth fire does not equal it, the fire in *mictlan* makes people suffer much more. And with great cold, they suffer, who lie there. And this cold, which is there in a certain place, is much colder than the cold here on earth, even if it is very great. There in hell a very great stench lies reeking; no stench here on earth is like it.

The text continues describing the torments of the damned and their howling, mocking diabolic tormenters.

Didactic art reinforced the friars' descriptions. Artists showed people trapped in hell while demons inflicted various tortures upon them. By far the most impressive surviving example is the paintings in the huge open chapel at Actopan, Hidalgo, and the cognate set at Santa María Xoxoteco, Hidalgo, both Augustinian establishments.⁷ The side walls of the chapels are covered from end to end by scenes of hell, issuing from giant serpents' mouths at the front. Here is a chamber of horrors where people are flayed, dismembered, burned, stabbed, and pincered by a legion of Boschian monster-demons. Proselytization by fear knew few limits.

Gibson (1964:100) sums up the effect of Christian teaching about heaven and hell as follows: "Heaven and hell were recognized, but with emphasis on concrete properties and with obtrusive pagan attributes."

This generalization suits Taggart's (1983:162) description of modern Nahuatl⁸ belief very well:

The Nahuatl have adopted the idea that one's destiny after death depends on moral conduct in life. Sinners end up as slaves of the devil, who lives in a cave in the forest. The less tarnished go to paradise (*Talocan*) where *milpas*⁹ grow tall, animals graze on rich pastures, and one can buy things in stores much as one does in life on earth.

Weckmann (1984:I, 378–79) notes how Mexican Catholicism retains a very medieval conception of the concrete character of heaven and hell, attributing this to early proselytization.

Returning to the sixteenth century, one may seek a more immediate native response in the *Cantares mexicanos* collection of indigenous poetic texts in Nahuatl, recorded sometime around 1580. Bierhorst (1985) argues that the bulk of these texts was composed in the mid-sixteenth century by practitioners of a nativistic cult devoted to calling back the "ghosts" of the ancestors. Although his interpretation is somewhat fanciful, that the texts are not exact renditions of pre-Conquest compositions is a valid point. Some of the songs are clearly of post-Conquest origin; the others underwent at least some degree of reworking before they were written down. Christian references are worked into the texts in such a way that Christianity is placed very much within the context of indigenous culture. The treatment of heaven and hell is of interest here.

The friars had consigned all of the Nahuas' revered ancestors to the abyss of hell, not only because all pagans belonged there but also in an effort to break the moral authority invested in elders and ancestors. In this context, the most striking aspect of the *Cantares* is their association of the Nahua ancestors, dead rulers, and heroic warriors with the heaven of the Christian God. Pagan past is united with Christian present; the discontinuity represented by the Conquest is denied. The old values of warfare and sacrifice continue to be asserted. The impact of Christian morality is negligible.

It is significant that the poets who composed these texts, or "adjusted" older texts to accommodate at least some Christian teachings, accepted the Christian heaven and hell as simple geographic loci for the dead far more readily than they accepted the idea of moral punishment. Cosmography changed before ethics. The Nahuas' slowness to accept the doctrine of reward and punishment in the afterlife necessitated the horrid descriptions and paintings to which the friars resorted; observers throughout the

sixteenth century noted a stronger preoccupation with the present life than with the one to come.

THE TERRESTRIAL PLANE

The Nahua earth was a treacherous place. Its very name connotes this character. *Tlalticpac* literally means not "on earth" but "on the point or summit of the earth," conveying the idea of a narrow place between dangers (Launey 1984). An adage recorded by Sahagún (1953–82:VI, 228) states: *Tlaalaui, tlaperzcaui in tlalticpac* 'it is slippery, it is slick on the earth.' This was said of someone who had lived a good life but then fell into some *tlatlacolli*, as if slipping in the mud. It is easy to commit immoral acts not because demons tempt or the flesh is weak or the soul corrupt, but because of the nature of things: the earth is slippery.

A father giving advice to his son would refer to the wisdom of the ancestors (Sahagún 1953–82:VI, 125):

Conjtotivi, ca tlachichiqujlco in tivi, in tinemj tlalticpac, njpa tlanj, njpa tlanj: in campa tonchicopetonjz, in campa tonchicoeoaz vmpa tonvetziz, vmpa timotepe-xiuujz

They went saying that indeed on a jagged edge we go, we live on earth. Here is down, over there is down. Wherever you go out of place to the side, wherever you take off to the side, there you will fall, there you will throw yourself over the precipice.

Misfortune came easily in the Nahua universe. Preuss (1903) saw manifested here a general fear of sin and punishment. Seler (1963:I, 26–27) is justified in rejecting Preuss's interpretation: to see all of this in terms of sin and punishment is too narrow a view. But the Nahua perspective is a moral one. The earth is "rhetorically entitled" as a dangerous place, the moral prescription being that one must act very carefully. One must be sure to live according to the guidelines established by the ancestors, for any other way might lead into the abyss.

This slippery earth was itself due to destroy creation by earthquakes sometime in the future, on the day *nahui ollin* 'Four Movement,' which came once in every 260-day cycle. Earthquakes were conceived in the same terms as uterine contractions: disorderly movements which could create but could also kill. The verbs *olini*, *olinia*, and *olinilia*, in Olmos's vocabulary, refer to miscarriage, the movement of the fetus in the womb, and

intentional abortion (Olmos 1985:46, 51, 52). For the earth, *tlalli*, to move in an earthquake was *tlalolini* (Molina 1970:II, 124r). These verbs share the same root as *ollin*. The Nahuas on that future Four Movement faced not an Antichrist but the childbirth throes of the earth beneath their feet, giving birth to chaos. The earth partakes of the nature of chaos; small wonder that life upon it should be precarious.

The Nahuas imposed structure upon this earthly plane by dividing it into quarters, each having multiple symbolic associations: deities, trees, colors, day-signs, birds, winds. One of four manifestations of the deity Tezcatlipoca was linked to each quadrant: Xipe Totec to the east, the black Tezcatlipoca (or Tezcatlipoca proper) to the north, Quetzalcoatl to the west, and Huitzilopochtli to the south. The Ixquinate or Tlazolteteo—sister-goddesses of female sexual excess—were linked to the cardinal lines, the interstices between the ordered spaces (Hunt 1977:132). In terms of moral order, the most obvious contrast lay between the east, source of the strong, pure, masculine morning sun, and the west, the feminine zone of the declining, weak, tainted afternoon sun. The west was *cihuatlampa* ‘toward the women,’ named for the Cihuateteo, the deifications of women who died in first childbirth. Like these females, the west wind was a cold, deadly force (Sahagún 1953–82:VII, 14). The color white associated with the west did not symbolize virtue; even the priestly Quetzalcoatl was a morally ambivalent figure because of his corruption by Tezcatlipoca. The north was *mictlampa*, the direction of *mictlan*, linked to the color black, the uncivilized Chichimec nomads, and the trickster Tezcatlipoca. The south, linked to the winter sun, the war god Huitzilopochtli, and deities of sensual pleasures, was also morally ambivalent. Directional symbolism provided no obvious moral hierarchy. Moral discourse paid more overt attention to the simpler opposition between center and periphery than to specific directions, though directional symbolism is implicit in some of the metaphors. For example, the rabbit and the deer, symbols of vagabondage and disobedience, had symbolic ties to the west, the region of the setting sun and morally suspect women (Burkhart 1986a).

Nahua populations placed themselves and their cult centers at the center of the earth’s surface, the navel of the earth deity. For the Mexica the Great Temple in downtown Tenochtitlan was the symbolic center. The city was itself divided into four neighborhoods corresponding to directional quadrants. *Altepeme*—towns and cities—were places of order, with swept streets, tidy rows of houses, and clearly defined social hierarchies. The space outside was liminal and dangerous. On an individual scale, one’s

house and well-swept yard represented a microcosmic establishment of order, laid out to the four directions with the fire at the center of the house.

Settled folk contrasted themselves with the seminomadic Chichimecs of the north (and of their own past). Mixcoatl, god of the transhumant tribes, is depicted in pre-Conquest pictorial manuscripts with his penis exposed and sometimes large and urinating (Seler 1963:I, 196). Nahuas, like many peoples, enjoyed casting moral aspersions upon their neighbors, justified in some cases since the ethico-legal codes of Aztec rulers were indeed quite strict. Favorite subjects for moral criticism were the Huaxtecs of the lowlands toward the Gulf of Mexico, whose fertile maize fields correlated with an over-exuberant sensuality (manifested most obviously in the absence of the loincloth from the Huaxtec man's wardrobe). Tlazol-teotl and the Ixcuiname, patrons of adulterers and promiscuous people, were considered natives of the Huaxtec region (Sullivan 1982:7-8). In the myth in which Tezcatlipoca destroys the city of Tollan (Tula), he comes to town as a Huaxtec chili-seller without loincloth (Sahagún 1953-82:III, 19). The first leader of the Huaxtecs was, according to Sahagún's Nahua informants, a drunkard who, because of his excesses, had to leave the mythical center Tamoanchan and lead his people to a peripheral territory (Sahagún 1953-82:X, 193).

Movement into and out of ordered space had powerful moral implications. The argument operates on this analogy: secure center is to dangerous periphery as moral conformity is to immorality. Internal metaphor equates immoral acts with movement into dangerous places. This metaphor is treated metonymically, such that the immoral person is actually described as someone who enters these places, as if the act of movement and the immoral deed belong to the same behavioral domain.

In moral discourse the phrase *in ie techinantitlan, in ie tequijiahuac* 'already in someone else's enclosure, already in someone else's doorway' admonished people not to behave badly lest they be driven from home to wander among strangers (Sahagún 1953-82:VI, 242). One of Sahagún's artists created drawings to illustrate some of the moral metaphors; the condition indicated by the above metaphor is depicted in Figure 6. A good woman who stayed home where she belonged was praised as *calliol-luti* 'heart of the house' and *tlaçpoalli* 'covered with ashes' from staying beside the hearth (Sahagún 1953-82:X, 11). Immoral women wandered the roads and waterways, following the "wide road" or the road of the deer and the rabbit (Sahagún 1953-82:X, 3, 55). The *Relación geográfica* of Xon-



Figure 6. "Already in someone else's enclosure." Illustration in the Florentine Codex, Book VI, 201r. (Photo from Sahagún 1979.)

otla states that, under indigenous law, not only were criminals executed but their houses were burned and their descendants banished (Paso y Troncoso 1905–06:V, 128). According to Durán (1967:I, 184), the bodies of executed adulterers were removed from the city and cast to the dogs and buzzards.

Images of falling or straying express departure from behavioral norms. Stasis, or orderly movement along a straight road, contrasts with sudden or erratic motion. This motion could be a horizontal displacement or a vertical falling. Seler (1963:II, 204, 206) interprets inverted or falling figures in the pictorial codices as sinners; though “sinner” may not be quite the right word, that they are morally suspect is clear. Tripping and stumbling, falling off precipices and into caves or torrents, appear over and over again in the written texts as metaphors for, or actual results of, moral aberration.¹⁰

The penitent wrongdoer had to reveal to Tezcatlipoca (Sahagún 1953–82:VI, 29)

Injc omallauh, injc omotepotlamj, injc omjxpantzinco tlacolo, tlaviltec: auh injc onelle motlahelnelo, injc omotlaz in anetlaxoian, in atlan, in oztoc:

how he (or she) slipped, how he tripped, how he made a detour, took a shortcut, and how he truly mixed himself with dirt, how he cast himself into the place where one does not cast oneself, underwater, into a cave.



Figure 7. The torrent and the precipice. Illustration in the Florentine Codex, Book VI, 23v. (Photo from Sahagún 1979.)

The diviner to whom this confession was made would point out to the penitent the dangerous condition this person was in, describing it as a treacherous landscape of cliffs and torrents, as depicted in Figure 7 (Sahagún 1953–82:VI, 30).

A person who corrupted others placed them in this sort of moral danger. Sahagún's "bad" grandmother (1953–82:X, 5)

tlaouicanaquia ouican tlauica, quauitl texcalli, ixtlauatl, atoiatl, tepexitl quitenamictia.

causes one to enter dangerous places, she leads one into dangerous places. She causes people to encounter the trees, the cliff, the desert, the torrent, the precipice.

The torrent-and-precipice trope was so standardized that Molina (1970:I, 22v) translates "to fall into grave sin" as *ninatoyauiā ninotepxiuia* 'I torrent myself, I precipice myself.'

Ropes and snares (*mecatl, tzonhuaztli*) also connote the danger of immoral behavior. Wandering off the secure path could lead one to be trapped like prey or eaten by wild beasts. One would follow the road of the deer and the rabbit. Or one might actually become a deer or a rabbit: timid beasts of rapid, unpredictable movement which dwell in the forest or grassland and are themselves the food of dangerous carnivores (Burkhart 1986a).

It was dangerous to stray from the road, but the road itself was no

haven. The road was called a serpent (*coatl*); the day One Serpent was a propitious day for merchants to set forth—they of all people had to be concerned with the safety of travel (Sahagún 1953–82:IX, 9, 13; XI, 269). On this day if one tripped over a stick or stone, one was likely to lose one's leg or even die (*Codex Telleriano-Remensis* 1964:14v). It is as if the road itself wounded one or, like a serpent, bit one. In a riddle recorded by Sahagún, the stone on the road "eats" or "bites" one; the road itself was called *tequatoroc* 'it lies eating (or biting) people' (Sahagún 1953–82:VI, 240; XI, 269). The taxonomy of roads in Book XI of the *Florentine Codex* contains many references to danger, even in regard to broad highways (Sahagún 1953–82:XI, 266–69). These images reinforce the dangerous character of the periphery, warning the immoral to stay at home and reform, while augmenting the glory of those virtuous persons who are capable of successfully countering the dangers.

If the road was a dangerous, liminal place, the crossroads was doubly so. The "straight and narrow" was morally positive, but bifurcation was negative. Molina (1970:I, 111) defines with the verb *maxalui* the dividing of roads at a crossroads and also a person's becoming perverted. The crossroads, *otlamaxalli*, is the "crotch of the road," with obvious sexual symbolism, as well as being simply a place of bifurcation. It was associated with illicit and excessive female sexuality, the practice of sorcery, and the underworld (Burkhart 1982). The Cihuateteo descended at crossroads to haunt people and inflict diseases on children. Illness could be cured by ritually transferring the disease into a small animal modeled of maize dough and left at the crossroads to afflict the next passerby (Aguirre Beltrán 1963:249). By a similar symbolic manipulation, the process of ritual confession involved the leaving of one's *tlatlacolli* at the crossroads shrine of the Cihuateteo or Ixcuiname (Sahagún 1953–82:I, 26–27; Seler 1963:I, 35).

The liminal character of the crossroads has impressed more than one culture: in medieval European belief, the crossroads was the place where witches and sorcerers held their meetings with the Devil (Caro Baroja 1965:73). This diabolic association in European thought could only have strengthened the immoral implications of the crossroads, as the friars studied and reacted to native belief, interpreting native religion as an invention of the Devil.

The paired terms *nextepetnalli otlamaxalli* 'ash-heap, crossroads' encapsulate the character of extrasocial, morally dangerous places. Ash, a product of fire, has aspects of centrality—the hearth lies at the center of the

house, the fire god was associated with the *axis mundi*—but it is also a type of dirt, displaced from the hearth out to the garbage heap. The crossroads is also a symbol of centrality and order—the quartering of the earthly plane—displaced into the periphery and thus made ambivalent. People lacking in moral education, who roamed about doing as they pleased, were said to have the ash heap and the crossroads as their parents (Olmos 1875:214; Sahagún 1953–82:VI, 247). A spell for attracting women, recorded in the *Códice Carolino* (1967:30), required the would-be lover to follow his victim to “the ash-heap, the crossroads,” implying that in this liminal place even an unwilling woman could be seduced.

One did not necessarily have to be displaced to the periphery: the periphery could come to the immoral person who stayed at home. The term *tetzahuitl*, often translated as “omen,” applied to anything of a frighteningly extraordinary or unexpected character. A *tetzahuitl* is an anomaly, a rupture of harmony, a little bit of chaos slipping into ordered reality.¹¹ A common type of *tetzahuitl* involved animals: if one heard their cries or they entered one’s house, it was a sign that one would suffer death or various lesser misfortunes (Sahagún 1953–82:V). Elements that belong in the periphery are here moving into human space. In at least some cases they were drawn by an immoral person, with immorality acting as a violation of cosmic order. In López Austin’s terms (1980:I, 445), “transgressions disequilibrated the body and attracted harmful supernatural energies.” If a barn owl (*chichtli* or *chiquatlí*) entered someone’s house, it was said that the person would soon commit adultery (Sahagún 1905–08:VI, 108). Mice came into the houses of adulterers and gnawed holes in their possessions (*Códice Carolino* 1967:52; Sahagún 1953–82:V, 191). If a girl in temple service indulged in sexual acts, bats would fly into the temple chambers and mice would gnaw the ritual vestments (Durán 1967:I, 27). If one came upon a type of insect called *pinahuiztli* ‘shame’ on the road or in one’s home, it meant that one would be publicly shamed for some misdeed; hence, especially circumspect behavior was required (Sahagún 1953–82:V, 169; XI, 89).

Without alluding directly to immoral behavior, the *tetzahuitl* of the horned owl (*tecolotl*), the bird associated with sorcery and the underworld, suggests a very direct attack of the periphery on one’s personal establishment of order (Sahagún 1953–82:V, 161). This bird’s call, as well as indicating the imminent demise of the hearer or the hearer’s child, augured that

aço ie tlalpoliuiz in jchan, tlalli canaoaz, atl neneciz, aacaoatimanjz¹² in qujaoatl, in jthoalli, tepantli xixitintoz, tlaujujtontoz, tlaucuelontoz, vncan nexixaloz vncan neaxixaloz, nemanaujloz, tlaçollaxoz, tequijxq’d coxontoz, tlalli ipotocatoz:

perhaps his or her house will be demolished, the earth will become thin, water will appear here and there, dry leaves will spread about the doorway, the courtyard. The walls will lie about crumbled, will lie about ruined, will lie about in pieces. There people will excrete, people will urinate, people will defecate, trash will be tossed, saltpeter will lie powdered, the earth will lie steaming.

The structuring of space was a precarious business.

Elzey, commenting on the Aztec concept of the “navel of the earth,” also notes the relationship between morality and centrality. “Sin” involved a violation of structure as well as a “moral” fault; its purification required a reassertion of structure, a symbolic return to the center. People not properly placed in the center, such as the roving prostitute, were morally tainted (Elzey 1976:322–23).

For the missionaries, the belief that the world was full of moral danger was perfectly familiar. That moral behavior was like a narrow path along which one must tread with care was an acceptable image. Olmos and Sahagún carefully recorded rhetorical exhortations about cautious movement. Tropes of falling, tripping, entering dangerous places, and becoming associated with wild animals appear in the doctrinal literature. Even though this mode of expression was not directly at odds with Christian thought, its adoption helped to perpetuate an indigenous spatial-moral orientation toward the careful balancing of complementary forces, in contrast to the Christian ideal of the total rejection of evil. In Christianity good and evil, moral and immoral are diametrically opposed: there is a good side and a bad side, a good road and a bad road, rather than a narrow ridge with danger on both sides.

Fray Juan de la Anunciación (1577:50), elaborating on the *vias tenebrosas* of Proverbs 2:13, says that sin is like a rope or snare (*ca yuhqui mecatl tzonhuaztli*). In his treatise on sorcery, Olmos states that the Devil, tempting people to sin, casts them into his snare, his net (Baudot 1979:45). Devils were often described as fierce beasts of the periphery, *tecuaniime* (literally “people-eaters”), or as inhabiting such creatures, similarly to the native *nahualli*. Olmos, for example, explains how the Devil, because he damaged his heart with sin, is now inferior to humans and appears to people in fierce beasts (*tecuaniime*), like he appeared to Eve in a snake (Baudot 1979:65). Olmos (in Baudot 1976:54) describes the “secret prostitute,” the prostitute not publicly acknowledged, as

yuhqui yn aulhauaztli anoço atlaçomulli ynic miequinti yuhqui yn atoco yuhqui
yn atla miqui. çan niman uel iuhqui yney [sic] tecochtli tdatacatli¹³ tlaxapuchtli
yehoatl yn ichtaca auiyani ynic uetziua.

like a well, a water hole, such that many, it is as if they drown, they die under the water. The secret prostitute is just like a great pit, a ditch, a hole, by which people fall.

Sahagún (1563:26r) teaches that the heart of a person who has not confessed is like a rocky place, a grassy place (*ca yuhqui tetla yuhquin çacatla*). Based on 1 Peter 2:25, he compares sinners to sheep (Sahagún 1563:59r) that have strayed into the woods or grassy places (*quauhtla çacatla*). Escalona (n.d.:236r; also 248v–249r), taking Matthew 7:13–14 as his text, describes two roads: a narrow one to heaven and a wide one to hell. Few follow the narrow road, but the wide one is well-traveled.¹⁴ Elsewhere he (Escalona n.d.: 157v) describes how one should follow the straight road, leaving the “sinful road of *mictlan*” (*mictlan tlatlacolotli*).

The *Psalmodia christiana*'s song for the festival of Mary Magdalene develops a center-periphery metaphor especially well. Christ comes into the periphery—the forest and grassland, equated with people's souls. He clears it of the grasses and stalks (sins) and transforms it into a sacred field by sowing his sacred words.¹⁵ The sinful Magdalene is described as a peripheral creature, or the periphery itself, which Christ transforms into an enclosed garden—a sacred center. The second canto reads (Sahagún 1583:118r–18v):

CEnca vel quauhtla, çacatla, vel ouicā, tequanitla, in omoçacamulhui in totecuiō: inic vñcan omusuchimiltitzino.

In ianima, in sancta María Magdalena, in oc tlatlacotinenca, iuhquin ma tolla çacatla ipan poui, coatl tequani icha.

Teutlatoltica, itemachtiltica oquimoçacamolhui, in oquimoçachitonili, çatepan vñcan oquimotoquili nepapa suchitl.

Ma tictojecteneuilica, ma ticmauiçoca in isuchitlatzīco ī totecuiō Iesu christo: vel iehoatzi oquimotequipanilhui.

Vñcan cucuepuntoc, totonatoc in nepapan teuiutica suchitl, viuitoliuh toc tlauizcaleoatoc.

In iehoatl ī teuiutica suchitepāco, inezca in Penitēcia, vñcan muchiuhtoc Castilla cempoalsuchitl, inezca in tetlaçotlaliztl, vñcan tlatlapalpoiaoatoc, auastoc in nepapan suchid.

In a very woody place, a grassy place, a very dangerous place, among the fierce beasts, our lord hoed; thus he made a flower garden there.

Saint Mary Magdalene's soul, when she was still going about sinning, is considered as a rushy place, a grassy place, the home of the serpent, the fierce beast.

With the sacred words, with his teaching he hoed, he made the grass jump. Afterwards he planted various flowers there.

Let us praise, let us marvel at the flower garden of our lord Jesus Christ. He worked very hard!

There lie blooming, lie shining the various sacred flowers. They lie bending; they lie rising like the dawn.

In a sacred way she is an enclosed flower garden, the manifestation of Penitence. There the roses lie growing—they are the symbol of love. There the various flowers lie colored red, lie fragrant.

In the following cantos Mary Magdalene becomes associated with Christ; she is at the foot of the cross—a symbolic center—when he is crucified. When he rises he appears to her first. Later she returns to the periphery, but now as a holy woman; here the Christian image of the periphery as a place of hermits and saints is invoked in contrast to the previous usage. She dwells in the woods, on a mountain, in a cave.

The woodcut that accompanies this song (Fig. 8) shows the Magdalene at her spiritual exercises in the periphery. With her flowing hair (typical of female hermits) and youthful aspect she is a beautiful woman by Spanish or Nahua standards. The small scene in the upper left refers to the legend that angels would carry her in their arms and feed her with heavenly sustenance; hence, she had no need of earthly food. She possesses sacred writings and a crucifix, Christian symbols very familiar to Indian observers.

In indigenous rhetoric horizontal space is emphasized much more than vertical space, presenting the opposite of the friars with their emphasis on heaven and hell. Though the friars employ the tropes of woods and grasslands, cliffs and torrents, ropes and snares, and wise and unwise travel, they intend them only in a purely metaphorical sense; actual displacement from the center did not indicate immorality. Sinners were people controlled by devils, people destined for hell; they would not bound away like rabbits or discover their home in ruins. That the modern Nahuatl version of hell is a cave in the forest indicates the strength of the horizontal metaphor relative to Christianity's vertical one. The Nahuas very likely "felt" the friars' spatial tropes in the same way as those of their own elders, and never lost their sense of spatial orientation.

Unlike the Christian hell, the Nahua periphery is not a place of arbitrary punishment. The immoral person is removed there as if automatically. In the periphery his or her behavior is appropriate; it is not sanctioned but is merely placed in the proper spatial context in order that the overarching spatial-moral order be upheld.

In Christian ideology the settled community was a bulwark against negative forces—but because it contained churches, not because it replicated cosmic order. Where there were crosses, churches, and—especially—transubstantiated bread and wine, demons feared to tread. Christianity's sym-



Figure 8. Mary Magdalene. Woodcut in Sahagún's *Psalmodia christiana* 1583, f. 117v. (Courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University.)

bolic center was Jerusalem, a place far from Western Europe and under the control of Islam. People saw themselves as wanderers or pilgrims in a morally tainted world; the establishment of cosmic order had to await the end of the world (Watts 1985:78). Christian communities could not be microcosmic replications of cosmic order in the same sense as Tenochtitlan and other major Mesoamerican cities.

The dangers of peripheral zones were temptations by which one might test one's moral mettle. The Devil tempted Christ in the desert; many generations of holy men and women went to be tested in similar fashion. The Desert Fathers became such in order to strive against the demons driven from the cities by the prayers of Christians (Russell 1981:166). As Christianity spread westward, the forests of Europe became the testing grounds in lieu of the deserts of the Middle East.

New Spain provided a whole new frontier for the establishment of Christian communities. Demons fled the advancing friars; they and their idolatrous followers had to take refuge in uninhabited places. Fray Juan de Grijalva's chronicle of the Augustinians (1624) relates how, finding the Basin of Mexico full of Franciscans and Dominicans, these friars concentrated their efforts in the mountainous region to the north. They found this area riddled with demons evicted from the Basin; this added difficulty rendered the missionaries' labors challenging in the extreme.

This view had some correspondence to reality, since traditional practices survived more openly in remote areas and people living near Christian establishments were obliged to hide in the forest if they chose to perform non-Christian rites. Larger towns were more likely to have friars; their residents received a more intensive indoctrination than those of smaller towns. Archbishop Montúfar claimed in 1570 that the Indians in Mexico City, who should be the best Christians, were the worst, but this claim was motivated by his hatred of the Franciscans (*Descripción del arzobispado* 1897:424).

Early colonial experience reinforced the Nahuas' conception of horizontal space. As Spaniards and mestizos gradually populated the landscape, Nahua communities became ethnic islands in a sea of often hostile neighbors. Pre-Conquest political alliances broke down, weakening the bonds between groups. While a *pax hispanica* removed some of the dangers of the periphery, these other factors acted to increase the centripetal focus of local communities.

The colonial policy of *congregación* or *reducción* concentrated the Nahuas into more nucleated settlements, for the purpose of administering them more easily and more closely supervising their behavior. This enhanced the physical contrast between center and periphery. Town planning, inspired more by native than by European models, assured that these new or reorganized settlements had central plazas for ritual and administrative functions, with straight streets leading off to the four directions. Whatever the planners' motives—neatness, administrative efficiency,

respect for Church and Crown—this layout was, in effect, a triumph for native concepts of ordered space. Symbolic “centers” were created in every town.¹⁶

Christian teaching provided only weak symbols of centrality. Jerusalem and Rome were vague, distant places of little meaning to people accustomed to a direct experience of cosmic ordering. The Garden of Eden, in Nahuatl texts given the Spanish name *paraiso terrenal* ‘terrestrial paradise,’ made an excellent symbol of centrality and order. The Dominican *doctrina* (1944:26r–26v) describes how it was divided into four parts by four rivers; it even came complete with sacred trees. Sahagún compares this paradise with Tlalocan several times in his non-doctrinal writings (Berkhart 1988). In doctrinal texts its location is vague; people have for millennia been banished from it, driven from this center to the periphery, the *Salve Regina*’s “weeping plain” or *choquizixtlahuacan* (*Códice franciscano* 1941:33).

However, each community had in its church and plaza an obvious center. Crosses, as well as being symbolic trees, suggested the quadripartite structure of space. The Aztec state cult no longer proclaimed Tenochtitlan the navel of the universe; each community in its own small way was able to order itself around its own sacred and moral center. The church and its four-sided *patio*, often with a cross in the center and small *posa* chapels at the four corners, was not at all a poor substitute for temple-pyramid and walled plaza. The sacred character of this space was upheld by its Nahua caretakers, who kept it well swept, and by ecclesiastical regulations: the first council meeting of the Mexican archdiocese (in 1555) forbade the use of church space for lay meetings, hosteling, or games, lest this cause “great scandal to these recently converted natives” (*Lorenzana* 1769:84).

The friars preferred to keep their charges safe within the towns. At the same time, the eremitic tradition led the friars to extoll the *cuauhltlan neneque* ‘dwellers in the forest,’ from John the Baptist on through the Desert Fathers and sundry other saints. Fray Juan de la Anunciación’s complete set of sermons for the saints’ festivals is an excellent source of this hagiographic material. He praises John the Baptist’s penitential lifestyle (1577:159v):

Ca quauhtla çacatla mopeṭlahuitinenca, ca amo yamāqui tilmatlí quimoquentiaya, çan tequaqua in tlaquemilí quimoquētiaya, tlalpan teuhuitlan in mocochitiaya, ynic tlamacahuaya.

Indeed, he went about uncovered in the forest, in the grassland, for he did not

wear a soft mantle, he would only wear an itchy garment. He would sleep on the ground, in the dust. Thus he would do penance.

St. Jerome's biography (Anunciación 1577:199v–200v) tells how he went to live among the hermits in the forest, then withdrew farther into the woods to a very affliction, dangerous place where he led an even more penitential existence. He fasted, slept on the ground, beat his chest, wept in a cave. Along with this lifestyle went moral purity (200r):

Yuan in yehautzin sant Hieronymo ca vel telpuchtli catca, ca vel chipauac catca yn itechpa yn ianimā yuan ytechpa yn inacayo: ypampa ca niman ayc oquimocatzauli yn inacayo in aquallalnamiquiliztica, in aquallachiualliztica.

And he, Saint Jerome, was a virgin, indeed he was very pure in regard to his soul and in regard to his body, because indeed he never dirtied his body with bad thoughts, with bad deeds.

St. Anthony's various temptations by the Devil in the forest are recounted in the preaching for his festival (Anunciación 1577:130v-31r). The saint prays to God for help in overcoming this enemy; God strengthens him and allows him to resist the temptations. For example, when the Devil appears to him in the form used to tempt young men to adultery, God shows Anthony the Devil in his true form, *ce tliltic piltontli* 'a small black child.'

Overcoming temptation was essential to leading a Christian life. Anunciación (1577:45r) explains the necessity of temptation: God wants the *tlatlacatecolo* to tempt us and he helps us to overcome them.

Moral temptation was not an indigenous concept. The friars used the verb *yeyecoa*, frequentative of *yecoa* 'to taste,' with the abstract noun form *teyeyecoliztli*. The term has the sense of "getting someone to try something"—the fruit in question may or may not be forbidden.¹⁷ In Nahua as in most cultures, people who behaved immorally were seen, in Geertz's words (1973:129), "not so much as evil as stupid, insensitive, or in the case of extreme dereliction, mad." To be moral is only to behave with common sense, to do what is obviously the desirable thing to do. Evil holds no allure so strong that one must strive against it with all one's will. The friars' teachings portray a world where exemplary individuals engage in active battle with the powers of the periphery. These powers had their parallels in indigenous thought, but there they were to be dealt with simply by avoidance or by taking ritual precautions against them. Triumph over a tempting evil was not the ultimate purpose of life.

TIME

In Mesoamerican thought time cannot be divorced from space. Spatial distance correlates with distance in time. The days of the ritual calendar are distributed through space around the four directions. Nahuatl uses the same locative suffixes for position in time as in space. Thus, for example, *tlayohuayan* can mean the time of darkness between days or between solar ages as well as the place of darkness that the Christians called hell. Time, like space, is discontinuous; there are gaps between creations, between years, between days.

The passage of time has both cyclical and linear aspects. History does not repeat itself, but the same patterns reappear; what went before is not replaced but incorporated into new but familiar sequences. B. Tedlock (1982:177) and D. Tedlock (1985:64), analyzing ancient and modern Quiché Maya thought, call this view of time "cumulative." Unique events exist, but they refer back to an age-old mythic pattern; that pattern imposes itself onto the recording of history. The gap between segments of time can be treated as an overlap, so that things can pass over from one period to the next. The boundary is not treated as an "instantaneous transition"—there is a real gap, not simply a point or line (B. Tedlock 1982:177). In Todorov's words (1984:84), there is no sense of "absolute time." The circle tends to prevail over the line; the present and the future are oriented toward patterns established in the past, granting events a certain inevitability. León-Portilla (1963:73) notes that the Nahuatl word for "true," *nelli*, is related by the root *nel-* to *nelhuayotl*, the term for beginning, root, or foundation—the truth is that which is original and stable. Umberger (1981) analyzes the particular mythic mold in which Aztec history was cast in order to be aligned with symbolically important dates. The actual sequence of events in time was less "true" than the mythical structure with which those events were supposed to coincide.

Christian time, as presented by the friars, is linear. It begins with creation and will end with the destruction of the universe, a day of judgment, and Christ's millennium. Apart from this line there is only eternity, outside of time and space. Unique events may have universal, eternal significance, marking a permanent and instantaneous transition from one state to another. There is unpredictability: Adam and Eve did not have to eat the apple; God did not have to send Christ. Any individual may end up in heaven or hell. The Christian era was seen as in some ways a fulfillment of

the Old Testament era, with events and personages that paralleled one another; however, this was not a cyclic repetition—Old Testament history was a mere shadow of the spiritual age of Christianity.¹⁸

The ritual observation of time was in itself a moral duty of Mesoamerican peoples. In the *Popol Vuh* the gods create animals before humans, but, since these creatures do not keep the days, they are consigned to the canyons and forests—the periphery (D. Tedlock 1985:78–79). Religious specialists played a crucial role in creating and maintaining cosmic order. If the ritual round with its attendant ceremonies and sacrifices was not observed properly, time could stop and a period of cosmic chaos be ushered in. Human beings and the spatiotemporal order were symbiotic: thus the nervous watching of the stars on the night of the New Fire Ceremony (which initiated a new 52-year cycle) and the belief that pregnant women (already in a disequilibrated state) would turn into fierce animals should the ceremony fail; thus the anxiety experienced during the *nemontemi* days, the five unnamed days between years, with their absence of ritual structuring.¹⁹ The official Aztec doctrine that the sun required constant feeding with human hearts to continue on its daily round was an elaboration upon this basic symbiosis between sacrifice and cosmic maintenance (Conrad and Demarest 1984:38, 47).

In the friars' universe time passed independently of human action. However, out of respect for God and saints, humans were obligated to observe a plethora of religious festivals. Every day was sacred to some saint, even if it did not have to be ritually observed. Thus, the saints'-day calendar provided the indigenous day-keeping tradition with a potential mechanism for continuity.

It was difficult for Nahua ritual specialists to relinquish their day-keeping function. Martín of Ocuituco, investigated by the Primitive Inquisition in 1539, confessed to the keeping of the native calendar (*Procesos de indios* 1912:170). Day-keeping survived through the sixteenth century in more remote Nahua areas (Ruiz de Alarcón 1982) and to the present in parts of Mesoamerica.

A few of the earlier and more utopianist Franciscans tried to merge the native and Christian calendars into something appropriate for a Nahua-Christian society; the less trustful Sahagún later attacked the confused results of this effort (Baudot 1983:462–64). Where missionization prevailed, the Christian calendar had to replace the native one.

The saints'-day calendar differed in structure and character, but for the Nahuas it functioned somewhat similarly: it provided a means of symbol-

ically structuring both the passage of time and the interaction with sacred beings. Friars taught that observation²⁰ of the Sabbath and other holy days was a moral obligation because of the third commandment. In consideration of their newness in the faith and their poverty, Indians were not required to observe as many festivals as Old Christians. Pope Paul III issued this decree out of compassion: Church "festivals" were a burden on poor folk who could ill afford to take time from their subsistence activities. Indians were required to observe all Sundays and twelve other festivals, and to fast on Lenten Fridays and at a few other times (Lorenzana 1769:68–69). Of course, this left some more days free on which the Spaniards could demand Indian labor; indeed, forced labor on holy days was a common abuse. The policy reduced the amount of religious participation the ritual-starved Indians were allowed, as well as widening the gap between Spanish Christianity and Indian Christianity.

The universe, whether Nahua or Christian, had a moral history. For Nahuas the first four solar ages were in a sense preparatory to the fifth. People were made of inferior substances and ate inferior food. Some of these folk survived in the fifth sun as fish and monkeys—an example of B. Tedlock's overlap. The people of the fifth sun were made of bone and blood and ate maize. The fifth sun culminated the evolutionary, cumulative process of the previous four, but would also terminate it. When this age ended there was to be no other. The number four symbolized wholeness: the four quadrants that composed the earth. The number five, adding the center to the four directions, was also a symbol of wholeness, but here wholeness passes into completion, fullness, and excess. There was no room for a sixth, five being already perhaps one too many.

The number five as a symbol of excess is discussed by Nicholson (1971:418) and Seler (1963:I, 109; II, 76–77). Deities associated with behavioral excesses occur in groups of five; drinking five cups of pulque leads to inebriation, but drinking only four does not. The fifth age is in this sense an "age of excess." It is in some ways superior to the previous ages, but it also contains more of the seeds of destruction, inherent chaos that threatens its survival. This is a logical Nahua solution to what in Christianity is the "problem of evil." The fifth sun was created from the deformed syphilitic Nanahuatzin, a being tainted with a good bit of moral impurity. Its dominant deity is the cosmic trickster Tezcatlipoca, not the morally restrained Quetzalcoatl. In this milieu, order is fragile; when it can no longer be maintained, the sun will die, time will stop, and a timeless chaos will take its place.

This fatalism may account for a sense of decline which otherwise would seem to contradict the climactic aspect noted above. In the past there was a "golden age" when things were better than they are. Graulich (1983) discusses these lost paradises as variations on a theme of transgression and punishment. This view, though criticized in an earlier context, is to some extent valid here. Moral failure can catalyze the transition from one time segment to another. This is a logical assumption given the belief that ritual oversights could usher in the final cataclysm.

According to the Nahuas' mythicized version of history, the fall of Tollan (Tula), the capital city of the Toltec polity which collapsed at the end of the twelfth century, was brought on by the moral corruption of its ruler, Quetzalcoatl or Huemac depending on the version. The two are structurally equivalent: Huemac is the priest-impersonator of the deity Quetzalcoatl in the *Anales de Cuauhtitlan* version (1975:12); Quetzalcoatl as a human being is a priest of the divine Quetzalcoatl. Tezcatlipoca, assisted in some versions by other trickster or sorcerer figures, tricks Quetzalcoatl/Huemac into getting drunk and/or having illicit intercourse with his own sister or with Tezcatlipoca in female disguise, or he incites an extreme and unhealthy sexual passion in the ruler's daughter. In the *Florentine Codex* version, Quetzalcoatl in effect invites this attack by peripheral forces because he and his people have become negligent (Sahagún 1953–82:III, 17). Since the victim is a priest vowed to a penitential lifestyle, these acts are violations of ritual abstinence as well as sensual excesses. The Toltecs follow their leader in committing immoral acts. The utopic kingdom of Tollan, where people were taller and better off than the Nahuas, comes to an end as the corrupted leader flees in shame, thus removing himself to the periphery where his immoral behaviors belong.²¹

The Mexica, lords of the less orderly period that followed, were plagued with a sense of inferiority and illegitimacy in relation to their Toltec predecessors. The fifth solar age²² was a time of greatness, but this time was in a sense borrowed from impending chaos. One may understandably yearn for primordial order even while enjoying the fruits of excess. Caso saw the coexistence of fatalism with the quest for power as a fundamental contradiction in Aztec culture (1953, cited in Keen 1971:475). In light of the material presented here, this apparent contradiction may be seen to be consistent with Nahua views of time.

The Quetzalcoatl who creates the humans of the fifth sun also suffers a moral taint. Fleeing *mictlan* with the bones of fourth-age humans, he is startled by quail and stumbles, falling into a hole dug at the orders of the

underworld lord Mictlantecuhtli. The bones scatter and are nibbled by the quail (*Leyenda de los Soles* 1975:121). In the *Histoire du Mechique* version, Quetzalcoatl steals one long bone. He drops it in his flight and it breaks; therefore, the people created from it lack the gigantic proportions of their predecessors (in Garibay 1979:106). Rapid movement, stumbling, falling, breaking—these are symbolic equivalents of immoral behavior. The act of stealing is itself immoral.²³ The quail had earthly and nocturnal or lunar symbolism, due, on the one hand, to "its tendency to keep close to the ground and its prolific breeding habits" (Sullivan 1982:11) and, on the other, to an association of its spotted coloration with the night sky (Seler 1963:II, 237–38). Sullivan (1982:11) derives the term *tlazolli* 'filth' (in the moral and the physical sense) from the term for quail, *zollin*, but this overlooks the long *o* in *zollin* which is lacking in *tlazolli* (Karttunen 1983:271, 348). Though the terms are etymologically distinct, their similarity in sound was certainly obvious and may have contributed to the quail's earth-and-underworld association. Quetzalcoatl has become encumbered with *tlatlacolli* and *tlazolli*, a contamination that will affect the race of humans he is about to create for the troubled fifth sun.

When Nahua peoples recounted their own histories, they began with a tale of migration out of some primordial place of origin, ending with the establishment of their current settlement. An original stability is followed by a period of disorderly wandering through space and time, living the lifestyle of the Chichimecs. This migration could be conceived as a search for the paradises Xochitlalpan and Tamoanchan, or even the "terrestrial paradise" of the friars' teachings (Lehmann and Kutscher 1958:84). Then centrality and order are reestablished in a new place that symbolically replicates the original home, as the Mexicas' island city corresponded to Aztlan.²⁴ Thus, there is a temporal as well as a spatial alternation between center and periphery, and the cycle of order and disorder occurs not only in regard to solar ages but also in the shorter term.

Crises in history could be represented as an encroachment of the periphery onto the center. The most striking example is the famine of 1450–54. Wild animals invaded the cities, seeking human prey. People left home to sell themselves as slaves to the morally inferior Totonacs and Huaxtecs—a severe humiliation and the origin of a type of hereditary slavery known as "old *tlatlacolli*" (Sahagún 1953–82:VII, 23–24). The worst year, 1454, was One Rabbit,²⁵ the year when the people were "one-rabbited" (*mocetochquique*, Sahagún 1953–82:VII, 24; *necetochhuilloc*, Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin 1889:116). This expression came to mean poverty, pes-

tilence, and servitude. One Rabbit was the day-sign of the earth (Seler 1963:I, 88); here the earth rebels against humanity by withholding her fruits. The rabbit's symbolism of peripheral immorality was discussed earlier in this chapter. The whole famine experience was morally degrading.

History as taught by the friars had a moral structure quite different from this combined order/disorder cycle and linear decline. The primordial order was irrevocably destroyed by Lucifer's rebellion. Human beings were created to fill the posts in heaven vacated by the banished demons: according to this scheme, humans would multiply indefinitely and also be immortal. Mortality originated as a punishment for the sin of Adam and Eve; death was not part of the basic cosmic balance. Banished from Eden, humans endured an age of despair and damnation. This tragic tale of decline from a perfect state is told in the *Psalmodia christiana's Tlauculcuicatl* or "lament" (Burkhart 1986b; Sahagún 1583). The human situation progressively worsens through the fall of Adam and Eve, Noah's flood, and the dividing of the languages at Babel. The coming of Christ provides the only hope of salvation for these anguished humans.

Friars identified Christ and Mary as a new Adam and Eve, the cross taking the place of Eden's Tree of Knowledge. But they reversed what Adam and Eve had done—they did not repeat the same pattern. Even with this reversal there was not a return to an original state but rather the establishment of a new scheme of things different from the preceding two. Now people were still mortal, but the souls of the good could go to heaven. The Devil—chained in *mictlan* by Christ according to some texts—was less powerful since humans could call upon Christ for spiritual strength. When the world ended, human souls would return to their bodies and be consigned forever to either heaven or hell. All decline, all suffering, was explained in terms of sin and punishment, the punishment being a sanction imposed from above. All reward was based on forgiveness and atonement.

The friars paid special attention to parallels between Nahua cosmic history and their own. Thus, the myth of the goddess Xochiquetzal in the paradisiacal Tamoanchan was seized upon as a version of Eve in Eden; the destruction by water of a previous age as a version of Noah's flood. Such parallels were obvious and were accentuated in the process of dialogue, as each side presented its mythology cast somewhat in the other's mold. Much of the variation among versions of myths is likely due to this process. It is not simply a matter of the presence or absence of Christian influence, but of a conscious or unconscious emphasis and interpretation

of the existing myths as they came to be seen in relation to Christian teaching.²⁶ Moral aspects may be stressed, or at least stated in more overtly Christian terms. For example, in the *Codex Ríos* account of the fall of Tollan, the dead giant/sorcerer is said to represent the sins of the Toltecs (1964:32–33). In the *Florentine Codex*, in which the myths are brought less into line with Christianity, this is not stated directly but there are moral implications that would have been obvious to any Nahua. The sorcerer's presence represents an invasion of order by disorder; his execution by stoning suggests immoral behavior, such as adultery, for which stoning was the usual punishment; the stench of the corpse causes death and loss of reason (Sahagún 1953–82:III, 25–26). The various and subtle moral connotations meaningful to a Nahua audience are translated into a Christian context in the simple terms of sin. Friars boiled everything down to this formula. According to Durán (1967:II, 244), the famine of 1454 was sent by God to punish the Indians "for their great abominations."

The Conquest also invoked a simple sin-and-punishment explanation from friars and other Europeans. The Nahuas themselves had moral interpretations but not in quite those terms. The *tetzahuitl* 'omens' said (in retrospect) to have surrounded the event indicated that something was rotten in the state of Mexico. One such *tetzahuitl* was a meeting of Motecuhzoma's messengers with Tezcatlipoca in the guise of a drunkard from Chalco, a city-state subject to the Mexica. The god tells them that Motecuhzoma *ca otlatlaco, ca oconcarili in maceoalli* 'indeed has damaged things, has abandoned the vassal[s]' (Sahagún 1953–82:XII, 33). This recalls Tezcatlipoca's invasion of Tollan (Tula) in the guise of an unloinclothed Huaxtec, and Quetzalcoatl/Huemac's personal responsibility for that kingdom's destruction. (Sahagún 1953:82:III, 17–18). The *tetzahuitl* of Cihuacoatl as a woman weeping for lost children, symbolically equivalent to the Cihuateteo, was another such anomalous, liminal figure representing a moral deficiency in the Aztec state. The *Colloquios* admits the possibility of negligence on the part of the Aztec leaders (Klor de Alva 1980a:118), negligence in the ritual observances that preserved fragile order.

These factors explain the transition: they create a disorderly peripheral period between Mexica and Spanish hegemony. The Nahuas' reluctance to classify all of their ancestors as sinners was discussed above in regard to the *Cantares mexicanos*. An age of sinfulness does not precede an age of virtue. Rather, the passage from one virtuous, orderly time segment to another is marked by a disorderly gap, described with the vocabulary of immorality. Once passed, the gap could be symbolically inverted and

treated as overlap. This is done in the *Cantares mexicanos* and also in later indigenous histories which project colonial elements into the pre-Conquest past (see, for example, Klor de Alva 1987a; Lockhart 1982). Conversely, for pre-Conquest elements to survive under Christianity posed no contradiction to this "cumulative" view of history. Events in Nahua time could not be watersheds.

Nahua fatalism was a fertile field for Christian apocalypticism. The destruction of the world and the Final Judgment were treated in sermons, plays, and religious art. The Franciscans' tendency to interpret their mission in eschatological terms²⁷ may have fostered an interest in this theme, but whatever one's own point of view the topic made for effective preaching. Since the Nahuas had no concept of punishment for sins after death but did believe that human acts could provoke a final cataclysm, friars may have found it more effective to associate punishment for sins with the end of the world than with individual deaths. This would have appealed also to the Nahuas' sense of collective responsibility in a way that emphasizing individual salvation did not. However, after the cataclysm, reward and punishment were still to be meted out on an individual basis.

Another aspect of the Final Judgment was the resurrection of the body and its reunion with the soul. Bones symbolized for the Nahuas not only death but life and fertility, as with the Mixtec symbolism analyzed by J. Furst (1982). With life and death in a dialectical relationship, this was a logical view. People of the fifth sun were created from the bones of a previous race; the sacred power of bones was acknowledged in the ritual treatment of the skulls and femurs of sacrificial victims. The fertility of bones was expressed very directly in the belief that semen was manufactured in the bone marrow²⁸ (López Austin 1980:I, 190). Given these beliefs, that the dead could return to life would not have seemed a revolutionary idea.²⁹

The physical character of the resurrected persons was to accord with their moral state—good people being clean, resplendent, and fragrant; bad people dirty, black, and fetid. The splitting of the soul and the body into two diametrically opposed elements, a distinction alien to the Nahuas, is replaced with something a little more in line with their conceptions.

New Spain's first large-scale religious drama was an enactment of the Final Judgment in Tlatelolco in 1531 or 1533 (Garibay 1971:II, 131; Horcasitas 1974:562). This production made quite an impression on its audience. Sahagún's native historian inserts in his dynastic list for Tlatelolco the

statement *in muchiuh tlatilulco vej tlamauiçollí vej neixcujtilli injc tlamiz cemanaoac* ‘there was done in Tlatelolco a great marvel, a great example, of how the world will end’ (Sahagún 1953–82:VIII, 8). Chimalpahin’s account of it, written about a century after the performance, recalls that *cen[c]a quimabuiçoque yc miçabnique yn Mexica* ‘the Mexica marveled at it very much, they were frightened by it’ (1889:228). A second performance is recorded for 1535, or later, at the Franciscans’ San José chapel in Mexico City. Olmos is known to have written a play on this subject. Horcasitas (1974:563–64) and Garibay (1971:II, 131) tentatively credit Olmos with the original script and identify it with a 1678 copy in the Library of Congress. Baudot (1983:142) attributes only the later performance to Olmos and considers the manuscript lost. The 1678 manuscript, by style and subject matter, clearly pertains to the early evangelization period; if not derived from Olmos’s work it may be attributed to one of his contemporaries. Horcasitas (1974:568–93) reproduces the full text of this *Juicio Final* and adds a Spanish translation.

The world’s end falls upon Lucía, a woman who neglected to marry by the Church’s sacrament, before she manages to confess her sin. Christ announces (Horcasitas 1974:578):

In axcan ca ye inman i nictlamiz, nicpoloz in cahuitl. In motenchua juicio final, in tetlatzontequiliz ilhuitl ca yuhqui ipan onictlalli i noteotenahuatiltzin, ca nitlachpanaz, ca nicchipahuaz in ilhuicac ihuan in tlaticpactli.

Today, indeed straightaway I will end, I will destroy time. It is called “Final Judgment,” the day of judging people, indeed it is as I placed it in my holy commands. Indeed I will sweep, I will purify the sky and the earth.

The good will be given heavenly riches; the bad will receive torment in *mictlan*. The dead are revived, the Antichrist comes and mocks them, then they are interviewed by Christ and Saint Michael. The bad, including Lucía, are turned over to demons. The demons thank Christ graciously for this favor and plan their torments. Satan himself appears; the condemned cry to Christ for help but are denied. Later Lucía returns wearing earrings of “fire-moths”³⁰ and serpents around neck and waist. The demons beat her and take her away. In the final scene, a priest admonishes the viewers to heed what they have seen because it is all true. He warns: *Ca mochihuatiuh in moztlá, in huipatlá in tetlatzontequilizilhuitl* ‘indeed, Judgment Day is going to happen tomorrow, the day after tomorrow.’ The phrase *in moztlá, in huipatlá* was not necessarily to be taken literally, but it did imply that

this day was imminent. Small wonder that this play, or a version of it, inspired many conversions.

So immediate a threat was less appropriate in the context of ordinary preaching to established congregations. Escalona uses the Judgment Day motif in an appeal to the Nahuas' sense of shame. Preaching about how all will be revealed when Christ comes to judge people, he states that if we did not do penance for our sins on earth, everyone will find them out and shame us greatly. Then our lord will condemn sinners to eternal fire (Escalona n.d.:121r-121v).

The Dominican *doctrina*'s explanation of the seventh Article of Faith tells how fire will fall from the sky, burning earth, sea, and sky and killing all living things. Then, after all men and women are turned to ash and dust, God will send his angels to call to the four directions of the earth, commanding the dead to arise and be judged. Souls will return to their bodies. The good will be impervious to wounds, torments, sickness, fire. They will shine brighter than the sun; their bodies will be light as air. Bad people—non-Christians and “bad” Christians—will be “heavy with sin,” sick, fetid, dirty. Christ will condemn them to hell; the earth will open and swallow them (*Doctrina cristiana* 1944:44r-48r).

Fray Juan de la Anunciación (1577:239r) uses in his teaching on this article the omens of the world's end given in Luke 21. Before the judge comes

achtopa mochiuaz, yuan neciz, tetzaumachiotl in quimitalhui. Ca in tonatiuh yx-cuicheuaz yxtliliuiz. Auh in metzli aocmo tlanextiz. Yuan yn cicitlaltin yuhqui ylhuiac paualhuetzizque. Auh in tlaticpac tlaca, ca motequipachotinemizque, yolpatzmictinemizque, ca mohottazque, aocmo vellatozque, çan yolmiquizque.

first will occur, and will appear, the ominous signs which [Christ] mentioned. Indeed, the sun will soot his face, will blacken his face. And the moon will no longer shine. And the stars, it is as though they will fall like fruit from the sky. And the people of earth, indeed they will go about anxious, they will go about anguished. Indeed they will glance around at each other, they will no longer be able to speak, they will just swoon.

Then everyone will revive to be judged. The good will be beautiful and shine more than the sun. The bad will be frightening and blacker than the night.

These accounts are not dissimilar to a version in Zumárraga's 1544 *Doctrina breve*, written in Spanish. It distinguishes four categories of the resurrected: saints, Christians who sinned but did penance, and on the bad side the very ugly and frightening non-Christians and bad Christians. For

these latter categories, demons will come with clamor and terrible instruments and haul them off to the miserable pains of hell. Each will be placed according to what his or her sins merit (Zumárraga 1928:6r-7r).

Scenes of the Final Judgment may still be viewed in stone on one of the *pasa* chapels at Calpan, Puebla, and over the north door at Huaquechula, Puebla, both Franciscan establishments.³¹ The murals at Actopan, Hidalgo, and Santa María Xoxoteco, Hidalgo (Artigas H. 1979), devote the upper panel of their center walls to this topic. Of Juan Gerson's twenty-eight *amate*-paper paintings adorning the under-choir of the Franciscan church at Tecamachalco, Puebla, seventeen illustrate passages from the Book of Revelation.³² Distant from the Nahua area but of interest nonetheless is a large mural of the Final Judgment surviving in the Augustinians' convent portal at Cuitzeo, Michoacan. These works of art date from the 1550s through the 1570s.

Thus, the Judgment was standardized as an acceptable, though hardly a ubiquitous, theme for didactic art and text throughout the evangelization period. After the turbulent period of mass conversion and political instability, this motif probably lost some of its emotive force. It may also have appealed less to friars who lacked the fascination with eschatology of men like Olmos; Sahagún's work, for example, features nothing like the dramatic *Juicio* cited above. Friars got down to the daily business of tending congregations; for succeeding generations of Nahuas, the state-endorsed fatalism of the Aztec cult became less meaningful than a more basic orientation toward cumulative time tempered, perhaps, by Christian linearity.

Individual salvation is a much more common theme: images of Christ as Judge are rare compared with those of Christ as Savior. The Nahuas' collective orientation focused upon patron saints and community festivals. The Final Judgment was something they learned about at church but, though inevitable, it was deferred to the future. It did not have to be (and could not be) continually warded off by ritual observances. Nor did it bode punishment for the whole community, but only for its immoral members.

Symbolism of creation and destruction was, for the Nahuas, replicated daily by the sun's orbit. The darkness between sunset and sunrise paralleled the darkness between solar ages. Priests had to perform penitential exercises at midnight, when the sun began its ascent, just as the gods had done penance to create the sun. The newly risen sun was pure and strong: babies were purified by washing them in the first light of dawn (Sahagún 1953-82:IV, 113). The sun's descent was a "fall" in the moral sense as well

as the physical, as symbolized by the downward motion, the company of the Cihuateteo, and the approach of darkness. One who dreamed of a solar eclipse would become blind or be sold as a slave, consequences also associated with moral failings (Sahagún 1905–08:VI, 110). Commenting on the syphilitic character of Nanahuatzin (the god who was sacrificed to become the fifth sun), Seler (1963:II, 47) suggests a daily round of purification by autosacrifice followed by contamination with “sin” during the passage through the sky or the descent. Elsewhere he notes the association of the noontime sun with the god Xochipilli, himself linked to the gods of pleasurable excesses. On passing the zenith, the sun has reached a point of excess and falls into sickness or sin; it must die, pass through the underworld, and be purified by fire in order to rise again (Seler 1960–61:IV, 60). The Tzitzimime, female monsters who would descend to earth and eat people when the world ended (*Historia de los mexicanos por sus pinturas*, in Garibay 1979), were, with the Cihuateteo, beings of the twilight. Night was, of course, dangerous and disorderly like all spatial and temporal interstices. Sorcerers and thieves plied their trades at night, such as the *temacpalitotique*, who cast a sleeping spell on people and then robbed them. These creatures of the night could be easily caught and punished if the sun rose before they had returned home (Sahagún 1953–82:IV, 101). The moon, like the night itself, was a tainted thing: when it was newly created the Tzitzimime met it at the crossroads and dressed it in rags (*Leyenda de los Soles* 1975:122; see Burkhart 1986a).

The friars portrayed Christ and his teaching as light and associated with the sun; paganism and other sins as darkness or night (Nahuatl uses the same root, the verb *yohua*, to refer to night and darkness). Heaven was light; hell was dark. The symbolism existed in Christianity: whatever additional stress the friars gave it may be accounted for by their preference for simple, concrete formulas rather than by any conscious manipulation of specifically Nahua metaphors. Here again, a Christian metaphor of good and evil coincides with Nahua concepts of cosmic order and disorder, and it is treated in the doctrinal literature in terms that posed small challenge to the basic patterns of Nahua thought.

The *Psalmodia christiana*'s songs for the Nativity of Mary skillfully manipulate the metaphors of day and night—chaotic, sinful underworld darkness and celestial, moral light. This excerpt represents missionary writing of a very high quality (Sahagún 1583:170r–171v):

In iquac tzunquiza in cemilhuitl, ca niman ioa, tlaoatimomana in cemanaoac.

In tlatequipanoliztli, auel muchiua in ioaltica: auel totlatoca i titlaca, necaltzaqualo: in tototzitzinti, motlatia, aiac naoati.

In manenemi moteca, cochi: auh in tequanime quiza, tequa: in ioaltotome, in chiquatli, in teculutli quiza, patlantinemi, tzatzitinemi.

Auh in ioaltica nemi, in nanaoalti, in tlaupuctli, in coionaoaleque, i tlamauh-tia, in tlaciuhque.

Auh in iquac in ie peoaz in cemilhuitl, in ie achito oalnezi tlaztallutl, icuepunca oalmuchiuhutiuh in cemilhuitl.

SEGVNDO Psalmo

YN iquac oualnez in tlaztallutl, in ie oallachipaoatiuh: in oochia niman iça, qui-peoaltia in intlatequipanoliz, in manenemi moquetza, quitta in itlaqual.

In tototzitzinti, niman peoa, tlatoa, patlani: auh in ioaltotome, oztoc calaqui, in otlatuic motlatia.

In teiçau, in tetlapololti poliui, in temictiani, in tetlaxinque, in ichtecque, qui-caoa in intlauelilocaio: in otlanez, otlatuic.

Tlanezia in otechmuchiuli in Dios, in vmpa Parayso terrenal, ipan otechmu-chiuli in teuiutica tlanestli, cenza vncan tipaccanemizquia.

Auh in iehoatl in achto tona in Eua, topan quoialquisti in tlatlaculioalli, otic-poloque in teuiutica tlanestli, otopenan ioac.

In ilhuicac tototzitzinti in Angelome in technontzaia, in tocniao catca, otech-dalcauique, otechihiisque.

TERCERO Psalmo

AVh in iehoanti in mictlan tequanime, in ioaltotome, in tlaueliloque tlatlacateculu oquizque, otechmotlacaoaque, oquitecuitlauiltique i tlatlaculli, yoan in tlateuto-quilitzli.

Inin tlaioalli, amo çä quezquixiuitl, ca matlactzunxiuitl, ipan vntzunxiuitl, ipan matlacpoahuiuitl in catca: vncan cenza veis in netlapololtiliztl.

In iquac omotlacatilitzino cenquizca quali ichpuchtli, in sancta Maria, teuiutica tlaztalluti oquicaco: niman ic peuhque in ilhuicac tototzitzinti, in ie cuica, in ie tlatoa.

Quitoque in Angelome, inic cenza otlamauicoque, in iquac omotlacatilitzino in cenquizca ichpuchtli in sancta Maria.

Aquin axca omotlacatilitzino, in cenza chipaoac, in cenza tlanestia, iuhquin ma ilhuicac tlaztallutl, omoquetzaco.

When a day ends, indeed then night falls, it becomes dark in the world.

Work cannot be done at night. We cannot follow the road, we people. One is enclosed in one's house. The little birds hide themselves; none speaks aloud.

The four-footed animals lie down, they sleep: but the fierce beasts come out, they eat people. The night birds, the barn owl, the horned owl emerge; they go about flying, they go about crying out.

And at night go about the shape-changers, the witches who spit fire,³³ those who have the coyote as their animal form,³⁴ they who frighten things, the diviners.³⁵

But when a day is about to begin, the splendor of dawn comes to appear a little bit, the hatching of the day goes to be made.

Second Psalm³⁶

When the splendor of dawn has come to appear, then it goes forth purifying things. They who were sleeping then awaken, they begin their work. The four-footed animals arise, they seek their food.

The little birds then begin, they speak, they fly. And the night birds enter caves; when it has dawned they hide themselves.

They who frighten people, they who confuse people disappear, the murderers, the adulterers, the thieves—they leave their wickedness when day has broken, when it has dawned.

God made us in the light, there in terrestrial Paradise, he made us in what in a sacred way is light. There we would live very happily.

But she, our first mother Eve, brought out upon us the sinful night. We lost the divine light; night fell upon us.

In heaven the little birds, the Angels who used to address us, who were our friends, deserted us, hated us.

Third Psalm

And they in *mictlan*, the fierce beasts, the night birds, the wicked ones, the *tlatlacatecolo* came out. They enslaved us; they provoked people to sin and idolatry.

This darkness, not just for a few years but for five thousand years it existed: then very great grew the confusion.

When the perfectly good maiden was born, Saint Mary, in a sacred way³⁷ the splendor of dawn came out. Thereupon the little birds in heaven began; now they sing, now they speak.

The angels said how they greatly marveled when the perfect maiden Saint Mary was born:

"Who was born today, who is very pure, very resplendent, who came rising like the splendor of dawn in heaven?"³⁸

The song creates a visually and emotionally evocative scene of night and day, using wild beasts from the spatial as well as the temporal periphery. The angels are implicitly identified with dead Aztec heroes, who in the sun's heaven took the form of birds (Sahagún 1953–82:III, 47). The night/day metaphor is extended to cover cosmic history, in keeping with Nahua conceptions of primordial darkness and chaos. The positive feelings evoked by the passage from this disorder into a new solar order are transferred to Mary.

This is a particularly beautiful passage. Fray Juan de la Anunciación's sermons (1577:188r–188v) for Mary's nativity contain an almost identical passage, apparently borrowed from the *Psalmodia* and put into a more narrative form.³⁹ The symbolism invoked here was also used in reference to Christ's birth. Baudot (1982) translates a sermon of Sahagún's on this subject with similarities to the above excerpt.

SUMMARY

Orientation in space and time was an important aspect of Nahua morality. It was less important in Christianity outside of the heaven/earth/hell structure of vertical space. On the whole, Christian teaching reinforced Nahua understandings more than it contradicted them: the underworld, the horizontal periphery, and the night were presented as dangerous and chaotic; world destruction loomed in the future. Christianity phrased the immoral aspects of peripheries directly in terms of sin. For the Nahuas these places and times bore more general implications of chaos and disintegration, of which human misdeeds were one aspect, but with sin as *tlatlacalli* Christianity became more compatible with this view.

Symbolism of centrality was applied to Christianity's sacred beings and places in ways which surely increased their appeal to the Nahua mind; likewise, the peripherality of the Devil and his cohorts suited Nahua conceptions. A stronger differentiation between morally positive and morally negative supernatural beings may have been achieved in this way.

Colonial resettlement and town planning policies joined with Christian teaching to reinforce the importance of the center in Nahua thought. The basic horizontal organization of space was retained, with the church and its *patio* at the axis in place of the temple and its plaza. The dangers of the periphery—the home of sorcerers, wild animals, and immoral people (whether Spaniards or Indians)—were more or less what they had always been.

CHAPTER 4

Purity and Pollution

The Nahuas frequently expressed moral values in terms of purity and impurity. Immorality is identified with dirt or filth. Immoral behavior is itself dirty; it also has the effect of polluting the participant. These concepts are closely related to the idea of damage: moral pollution is a form of damage; the polluting acts are *tlatlacolli*. Certain kinds of acts are emphasized, however, and there is a stronger sense of personal consequence. One does not merely damage things but becomes polluted, contagious; the acts actively disturb order rather than contributing in some general way to the entropy of the universe. Sexual transgressions are most stressed, though moral discourse can apply this terminology to any act it is seeking to discourage.

The friars found here a means of expressing their ideas of good and evil, moral and immoral, in terms which seemed to concord with their own concepts of purity and impurity.

FILTH

The basic Nahua pollution concept is *tlazolli*, defined by Molina (1970:II, 118v) as "rubbish which they throw on the dungheap." *Tlazolli* derives from the verb *izolihui* 'for things to get old, wear out,' with the reflexive or transitive form *izoloa* 'to abase oneself, to mistreat, wear out

things like clothes, books, mats, etc.' (Karttunen 1983:102). *Tlazolli* is also related to the verb *zolot* 'to become old and worn out' and the noun suffix *-zolli* 'old and worn out.' The most literal meaning, then, is of something useless, used up, something that has lost its original order or structure and has been rendered loose and undifferentiated matter. The term is used broadly to denote any sort of dirt or "matter out of place": chaff, straw, twigs, bits of hair or fiber, excrement, muck. What one sweeps up with a broom is *tlazolli*.¹

In general, *tlazolli* consists of little bits and pieces of things, which might once have belonged somewhere but now, through processes of decay, deterioration, or digestion, have become formless and unconnected; these fragments are now scattered about, interfering with things that are new and tidy. The term *tlazolli* covers a whole series of impurities used in moral discourse to connote negativity. Rags, potsherds, cobwebs, dust, mud, straw or grass, charcoal, disheveled hair, excrement, urine, vomit, nasal mucus, sweat, pus, coagulated semen, niter or saltpeter (*tequixquitl*), the dregs of pulque—anything of unpleasant odor, of rotten or formless composition, is included. The Nahuas conceived of the human body's internal structure in such a way that all parts were internally connected—what entered at one place could exit at another (López Austin 1980:I, 186; Sahagún 1953–82:XI, 152, 154, 183). This idea reinforced the symbolic connection among the various body secretions.² By extension, small creatures that live down in the dirt carried the same symbolic connotations: spiders, worms, scorpions, centipedes, toads, lizards.

The general effect of this symbolism is to induce moral repugnance by association with what is cognitively disturbing and/or physically repulsive. This kind of moral discourse uses verbal symbols the way the Ndembu, in Turner's analyses, use ritual symbols. The materials chosen as symbols are things which by their very nature attract attention because of a violation of a basic principle of order, or because of a universal human fascination with body products. These correspond to what Turner labels a sensory, organic, or orectic pole of meaning. Such materials evoke emotional responses which, through the process of ritual, become attached by juxtaposition to ideological, sociomoral, or normative concerns of the society. The moral and the material become intimately united (Turner 1967:28, 54; 1969:49; 1974:55). This association accomplishes what Durkheim (1953:36) set forth as the essential feature of moral rules: they are both obligatory and desirable.

Turner's analysis deals with cognitive and social factors of positive

moral value; the physiological factors associated with them come principally from the realm of reproduction. The *tlazolli* complex draws materials principally from the realms of excretion and decay to associate them, through the process of moral rhetoric, with negatively valued behaviors. Some of these substances have fertilizing, creative roles as well: manure used to fertilize crops was still called *tlazolli* (Molina 1970:II, 137r). But in the context of moral discourse these substances exist in excess or out of place. The forbidden is rendered undesirable, leaving the obligatory desirable by comparison. There are elements here of Turner's "liminality" and "anti-structure," not in the sense of an inversion of normal structure or a creation of "communitas," but of a very dangerous lack of structure. It is like what he describes the world of witchcraft to be: "a world of decay, where all that is normal, healthy, and ordered is reduced to chaos and 'primordial slime'" (Turner 1967:125). More strongly than *tlatlacolli*, *tlazolli* expresses the character of nature's chaotic side.

The process of living inevitably brought one into contact with *tlazolli*. Maize grew from mud, from the body of the tainted earth deity. One linked oneself with the earth by eating cultivated foods and also by acts of *tlaltecpacayotl* 'earthliness'—sexual activity. The souls of unweaned children free from these contaminations could go back up to the creator deity's heaven; others were in effect claimed by the earth and had to go down into *mictlan* (López Austin 1980:I, 357–59).

A preoccupation with filth runs through the records of Nahua culture. This appears in far too broad a range of contexts to be a product of Christian moral education; however, the friars' interest in applying native moral discourse to their own purposes accounts for the preservation of some of this information.

Abasement by association with filth was standard in ritualized discourse. A newly installed ruler would express his unworthiness by stating: *ca cujlatitlan, ca tlaçultitlan nonemja* 'indeed, I was living in the excrement, in the filth' (Sahagún 1953–82:VI, 61). Sahagún's list of insults used by the common folk includes *tatapacuitlapol* and *tzotzomacuicuitlapol*, synonyms which may be translated as "big old ragged worn-out piece of feces" (Sahagún 1905–08:VI, 174).

When the Mexica dwelt at Tizapan under Colhua supremacy (prior to the founding of Tenochtitlan), the ruler of Colhuacan sent them an offering for their new temple. According to the *Codex Aubin* (1979:45), the offering consisted of excrement. Torquemada's more extended version describes it as "a little excrement, hairs, and a dead *bobo* bird,³ all covered

with spit and phlegm and wrapped up in a dirty rag" (Torquemada 1975:83:I, 131). In the *Historia de los mexicanos por sus pinturas*, the Colhuas simply mock the Mexica by throwing straw and dirt into the new temple (in Garibay 1979:54). This pollution of sacred space, which also symbolized both moral and political superiority on the part of the Colhuas, precipitated (and justified) the outbreak of hostilities between the two groups.

Temple officials listed in the *Florentine Codex* include the *tlaçolquacujilli*, guardian of the Mecatlan temple, responsible for seizing and punishing anyone who defiled the temple by urinating there (Sahagún 1953–82:II, 211–12). When the sexually corrupt Moquihuix, ruler of Tlatelolco, was defeated by the Mexica emperor Axayacatl, it was ordered that his temple and palace remain forever torn down, dirty and covered with manure (*Anales de Cuauhtitlan* 1975:55; Alvarado Tezozomoc 1975:397).

When couriers returned to report the outcome of a battle, they came with disheveled hair in the case of defeat, tied hair and a white mantle in the case of victory (Clavijero 1982:211). The *Codex Telleriano-Remensis* (1964:17r) depicts a woman executed for adultery; her hair is wildly mussed. One of the metaphors for misbehavior that Sahagún extracted from moral discourse is *tzonpachpul, cujtlanexpul* 'big mossy-hair,'⁴ big excrement-ashes'; in other words, disheveled and filthy (Sahagún 1953–82:243). The suffix *-pol* (or *-pul*) 'big' is derogatory. The illustration accompanying this metaphor shows the rhetorician addressing an oversized and underdressed individual with unkempt hair (Fig. 9).

Girls in temple service were taught that their flesh would rot if they violated the chastity demanded of their office (Motolinia 1941:62). Such violations also manifested themselves as dust on mirrors, called the "eyes of Huitzilopochtli," kept for the purpose of ascertaining the girls' purity (Kubler and Gibson 1951:30).

Persons of noble class were considered purer (or considered themselves purer) than their vassals, who in turn were purer than slaves (López Austin 1980:I, 452). The Tlaxcalans claimed that the souls of lords became clouds, birds, and the like; the souls of commoners became weasels, stinking beetles, creatures that gave off very foul-smelling urine, and other creeping animals (Mendieta 1980:97). It was the duty of rulers to protect the purity of the state, a function expressed metaphorically as "bathing" the vassals or even as combing their hair (for example, Bautista 1600b:37v).

Inauspicious day-signs in the *tonalpohualli* were considered full of filth and dust; people born then would exhibit various moral deficiencies (Sa-



Figure 9. Admonishing the Tzonpachpul, the big mossy-haired one. Illustration in the Florentine Codex, Book VI, 20rr. (Photo from Sahagún 1979.)

hagún 1953–82:IV). Immoral people attracted dirt. If filth, cobwebs, hair, or charcoal was found in the special jars of water used in the ceremony to Ixtilton, it was a message from the god that the sponsor of the rite was an adulterer or thief (Sahagún 1953–82:I, 35). Even this limited number of examples shows that all sorts of social relations and moral states could be expressed in the symbolic terms of dirt.

Moral uprightness was associated with cleanliness and physical perfection. Esteva-Fabregat (1962:680) notes the Nahuas' preoccupation with cleanliness as a means of physical and spiritual well-being (though Nahuas would not have used these categories). *Chipahua*, meaning both "to clean" and "to purify," is a principal term here. Purity could also be defined in negative terms as the absence of any dirt. For example, the celibate lifestyle followed in the *calmecac*, the school for noble youths, is described thus: *çan njmā hatzoio, hateuhio* 'there was no sweatiness, no dustiness at all' (Sahagún 1953–82:III, 61).

Tlazolli was the province of the deities Tezcatlipoca and Tlazolteotl. Thus, it was ultimately the gods who were responsible for sex and sexual transgressions (López Austin 1980:I, 250). In Nahua ideology, male/female

deity pairs often split a single function between them; Estrada Quevedo (1962:163) suggests that the pairing of Tezcatlipoca and Tlazolteotl in this context is an expression of this principle.

Tezcatlipoca 'The Mirror's Smoke' was the Nahuas' major deity. A complex being, in many of his aspects—nocturnal sorcerer, shape-changer, destroyer of kingdoms, seducer of maidens, and generally lord of all discord—he bore an obvious relationship to the forces of pollution and chaos. Sahagún's *Memoriales en tres columnas* lists among this god's attributes *teuhltli* and *tlaçollli*, dust and filth (Sahagún 1905–08:VII, 2). The corresponding entry in the *Florentine* states: *Jn jquac nemja tlalticpac, iehoatl quijolitiaja, in teuhltli tlaçollli* 'when he used to go about on the earth, he would bring to life dust and filth' (Sahagún 1953–82:I, 5).

To be in this god's presence is to be in a dangerous place, a slippery place: *tlaalaoa, tlapetzcavi* 'it is slippery, it is slick' (Sahagún 1953–82:VI, 10). The skunk, a *tetzahuitl* that invaded people's houses and sickened them with its odor, was Tezcatlipoca's image or impersonator (*ixiptla*; Sahagún 1953–82:V, 171). When Tezcatlipoca descended to earth to wreak havoc upon Quetzalcoatl's ordered kingdom, he came down on a spider web—a bit of *tlaçollli* (Mendieta 1980:82).

Tezcatlipoca was also god of penitence—of punishment and justice—punishing people for the very acts he incited. With his magician's mirror he could see into people's hearts and determine their hidden deeds; people did penance to him lest he reveal this knowledge and subject them to public shame (Durán 1967:I, 38).

Tlazolteotl 'Filth Deity,' associated with the sensuous Huaxtecs, was the patroness of dust and filth, and of adulterers and promiscuous women—persons who were especially tainted with the stuff (Sahagún 1953–82:I, 23; Sullivan 1982). She was called Tlaelcuani 'Eater of Foul Things' because she removed people's filth from them in the indigenous confession rite. This rite, as described in the *Florentine Codex*, was conducted by her diviners, the oral confession being directed to Tezcatlipoca (Sahagún 1953–82:I, 23–27; VI, chap. 7). Tezcatlipoca and Tlazolteotl together had the power to cause immorality, punish immoral people, and remove their impurities from them. In Christian theology the Devil held sway over the first two of these activities but had nothing to do with the third.

Tlazolteotl was closely related to others of the earth-deity complex: the five Cihuateteo, whose function according to the *Primeros memoriales* was *tetlaximaliztli* 'adultery' (Sahagún 1905–08:VI, 43); the fourfold Ixquina, defender of adulterers (*Codex Ríos* 1964:plate 39); and Cihuacoatl, the childless wanderer who seduced and killed young men (Mendieta 1980:91).

Tlazolteotl's day-sign was Nine Reed; the person born then was *motqujtica tlazolli* 'entirely filth' (Sahagún 1953–82:IV, 74). People executed for adultery were dressed in her insignia (López Austin 1980:I, 379; Motolinia 1971:307).

The goddess wears unspun cotton in her headdress and carries a broom. The broom was a symbol of *tlazolli* and its removal. The unspun cotton connotes an association with spinning and weaving—activities rich in sexual connotations, though they are more properly the province of the goddess Kochiquetzal. The fact that the cotton is unspun is significant: it is soft, incoherent, unformed, but with creative potential. It is *tlazolli*. Seler (1963:I, 16) observes that, like unspun cotton, the downy legs of the vulture (an eater of rotten things) are depicted in the codices as white with acute angles painted on in black. This motif, called *tlaitzcopintli*, adorns Tlazolteotl's brooms and garments and also those of other goddesses of the earth. Figure 10 shows the *Florentine Codex*'s portrait of Tlazolteotl, with her broom, unspun-cotton headdress, and the *tlaitzcopintli* design on her clothing. Participants in Tlazolteotl's confession rite went to do penance at the crossroads shrine of the Cihuateteo, wearing a paper skirt painted in this design. They left the skirt at the shrine, symbolically abandoning their *tlazolli* at the crossroads (an appropriate place for it) and returned home denuded of filth as well as of clothing (see Sahagún 1953–82:I, 27).

Sahagún describes Tlazolteotl as "another Venus" (1981:I, 51; also Figure 10). Torquemada (1975–83:III, 100) makes the same identification, adding that she is very well named, for "a goddess of loves and sensualities, what can she be but a dirty, filthy and stained goddess?" Friars connected her with Eve, the woman who first sinned, and who like Cihuacoatl had serpent associations (for example, *Codex Ríos* 1964:plate 39). The symbolism accorded rather well with Christianity. In medieval art lust was portrayed as the "Woman with the Snakes," described by Cohn (1981:101) as

a stock figure who was at once a visual embodiment of carnal desire and an earth demon—a denizen . . . of that dark world where dwelt Satan and the Beast of the Apocalypse with their companion snakes, scorpions and toads.

Understandably, Tlazolteotl and her ilk struck the friars as morally repugnant manifestations of the Devil. Mendieta (1980:91) explained Cihuacoatl's nocturnal apparitions as "a thing which Our Lord may have permitted because of the sins of those people, giving license to the demon to transform himself."⁵

The *tlazolli* concept was connected with that of *tetzahuitl*, the omens

Tlaculteotl. es otra venus.



Capítulo doce. fo. 5.

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Figure 10. Tlazolteotl. Illustration in the Florentine Codex, Book I. (Photo from Sahagún 1979.)

and auguries that also represented an invasion of chaos into order. *Tlazolli* could augur death: a long spider web borne on the wind indicated the imminent demise of the person to whom it adhered (*Códice Carolino* 1967:55). There was a series of nocturnal phantasms called *tetzahuitl*. Some of these were said to be manifestations of Tezcatlipoca, acting in his role of nocturnal sorcerer and trickster (Sahagún 1953–82:V)—here paralleling the Devil's role as master of disguises and possibly reflecting a general “diabolization” of Tezcatlipoca as the friars tried to merge his identity with that of Lucifer.

One of these *tetzahuitl* was Cuitlapanton ‘Little One on the Excrement,’ a squat female naked figure, mashed down like dung (Fig. 11). She crept along the earth’s surface, haunting the trash heaps and the places where people went to urinate. To see her when one went out at night for that purpose meant that one would die. One could try to chase her and catch her, as the young man in the illustration appears to be doing, but she would only disappear and reappear farther off (Sahagún 1953–82:V, 179). She was a personification of *tlazolli*.

From this sort of information emerges a broader sense of *tlazolli*’s danger. Death, cosmic disturbance, filth, and immorality were intermingled in such a way that harmful forces, once unleashed, could affect anyone or anything in their path. Brooms had to be kept outside the house and away from children because of the *tlazolli* they carried; a man could seduce an unwilling woman if he collected the straws that fell from her broom when she swept (*Códice Carolino* 1967:36–37). *Tlazolli* did not necessarily attach itself only to the corrupt; it was an active force in its own right as well as an indicator of immorality.

Tlazolli was so powerful that foul odors alone could bring on sickness, loss of reason, and death. A skunk’s spray made people sick (Sahagún 1953–82:V, 171). The legends surrounding the fall of Tollan mention an anomalous being—a sorcerer in the *Florentine Codex*, in other texts a tall man lacking internal organs—which when killed by the Toltecs emitted such a terrible stench that all who smelled it died (*Leyenda de los soles* 1975:125; Sahagún 1953–82:III, 25; Torquemada 1975–83:I, 57). During the Conquest, the smoke from the Spaniard’s arquebuses was thought to stupefy people by its smell (Sahagún 1953–82:XII, 38).

This contagious aspect of pollution is quite evident in the concept of *tlazolmiquiztli* ‘filth death’ or *tlazolmiquiliztli* ‘dying of filth.’ The *Códice Carolino* (1967:46) and Ruiz de Alarcón (1982:191–92) provide the



Figure 11. Man encountering the nocturnal apparition Cuatlapan ton. Illustration in the Florentine Codex, Book V, 13r. (Photo from Sahagún 1979.)

fullest explanations of the concept; López Austin (1980:I, 261, 287–99) summarizes the data. Various misfortunes, including property damage, poverty, illness, and death, were explained as *tetzahuitl* caused by persons in a state of *tlazolli* contamination: adulterers or sexually promiscuous persons, thieves, gamblers, drunkards, or even twins and their parents. The contamination resulting from their transgressions lodged in the livers of these persons, the seat of the *ibiyotl* ‘breath’—a sort of aura or emanation that could pass out of the body through breathing (López Austin 1980:I, 261). These emanations from dirty-livered individuals were harmful to anything around them, especially the very young, and offensive to the

deities. Newly hatched turkey chicks would fall over dead if someone involved in an illicit love affair entered their coop (Sahagún 1953–82:V, 191–92). A child's illness or even excessive crying would be blamed on a parent's misdeed (*Códice Carolino* 1967:46). The spouse of such a person might also become ill and waste away (Ruiz de Alarcón 1982:192). Sexual activity during a period of ritual abstinence ruined the fast by *tlazolmiquiztli* (Sahagún 1953–82:I, 13). Damage to merchants' goods was *tlazolmiquiztli* caused by someone's fornication (*Códice Carolino* 1967:44–45; merchants were supposed to abstain from sex while on their travels into the periphery). If a mouse gnawed an article of clothing, or a mouse or bat entered a temple, this was interpreted as *tlazolmiquiztli* caused by unchastity (*Códice Carolino* 1967:52; Durán 1967:I, 27). Immoral behavior could ruin by *tlazolmiquiztli* the good fortune associated with certain day-signs; a bad ruler could harm the city with filth (Sahagún 1953–82:VI, 1, 54, 70; VI, 43). Such beliefs, in addition to explaining misfortunes, gave everyone a stake in the moral behavior of others. Social pressures could help to uphold the moral code.

In many cultures, contact with polluting forces, when these are properly manipulated, can be a source of power (Douglas 1966). The texts on Nahua culture contain much information on the ritual manipulation of dirt and cleanliness. One allowed oneself to accumulate bodily dirt, or actively dirtied oneself with specified substances (such as the black unguent employed by priests); then after a certain period of time one bathed, though perhaps only in a certain way, or at a certain place, or only certain parts of the body. The descriptions of the festivals in Sahagún (1953–82:II) and Durán (1967:I) are especially replete with this sort of material. Observations connected with mourning and with the absences of warriors or merchants also placed considerable emphasis on dirt (Alvarado Tezozomoc 1975:311, 539–40; Durán 1967:II, 155, 164–65, 288–90, 358; Sahagún 1953–82:IV, 69; IX, 9). Here dirt expresses liminality in the sense of transitional states—death and mourning, persons who leave and then return, ritual participation. These are interstices in the social and temporal fabric. Dirt and liminality are integrated with cleanliness and order in an alternating, shifting pattern, reflective of cosmic processes in general.

A full analysis of all these data would constitute a study in itself. For present purposes it suffices to note that dirt had positive functions in establishing desired ritual states—to be dirty was not necessarily to be immoral. However, the plethora of rules and taboos surrounding these practices shows that this was a very risky business. One had to be in a ritually

and morally pure state or the danger multiplied: one who was already tainted with *tlazolli* could not exert control over it. The sexual abstinence, fasting, and carefully structured activities of priests enabled them safely to encounter chaotic forces and endure states of intoxication, actions likely to send ordinary people "over the precipice."

DIRT AND CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

Christianity also used filth and purity as a conceptual mode in moral discourse. The state of sin was a state of pollution, sickness, and decay. The purity, splendor, and fragrance of Christ, Mary, angels, and saints contrasted with the filthiness, blackness, and stench of sinners and demons. Scorpions, toads, lizards, spiders, and the like were associated with the earth, dirt, and, by extension, demonic powers (Cohn 1981:86–87, 101). European witches were believed to dwell in rundown old huts, dressed in rags with their hair disheveled (Aguirre Beltrán 1963:III). Thus, the friars found in Nahua discourse familiar symbols which they avidly appropriated for their teaching, perceiving correctly that this symbolism could be effective in evoking the desired moral attitudes in their converts.

But when one examines the premises underlying these symbolic expressions, two crucial differences emerge. First, Nahuanas did not distinguish between cause and effect in the same way as Christianity. In Christian doctrine, where sin is defined as the transgression of divine law, the corruption associated with sin is an effect of the sin and not the sin itself. Furthermore, this corruption is not inherent in the nature of the sin but is a sanction, a punishment imposed from above (Augustine 1973:263). Sin is itself described as spiritual filth and corruption, but this is essentially a metonymic expression, a substitution of effect for cause. This relationship was often left implicit, such that Indians (or European peasants, for that matter) would not necessarily understand the difference.

Nahua thought mapped out a domain of *tlazolli*, contact with any part of which was intrinsically contaminating. A proscribed act did not bring on *tlazolli* as a result, let alone as an arbitrary punishment imposed from above. Rather, it was the fact that the act entailed contact with *tlazolli* which justified its prohibition or restriction. Moreover, any element or aspect of *tlazolli* could symbolize the whole domain by a synecdochic substitution of whole for part. Based on this sort of symbolic manipulation, moral discourse could argue that contact with any type of *tlazolli* could

bring the full range of *tlazolli*'s polluting impact crashing down upon the wrongdoer. Moral discourse operated not on the assumption that acts had polluting effects but on the assumption that the pollution resulting obviously and directly from the act would bring with it a host of other nasty effects.

The second difference is that Christianity treated the symbolic relationship between physical and moral pollution primarily as metaphor while Nahua ideology treated it primarily as metonym. The friars used the condition of the body as a metaphor for that of the soul. Here corruption and sickness act as metaphors for the state of the soul (extended metonymically to acts that produced that state); since the soul is immaterial, the relationship can only be metaphorical. Dirt is to the body as sin is to the soul—an analogy is drawn between separate domains.

Real dirt could in fact connote spiritual exaltation: hermits and holy beggars revealed by their filthy rags that they had achieved a spiritually sublime state. Saint Francis's fascination with poverty was of this order. For Turner (1969:96–97), such figures "symbolize the moral values of *communitas* as against the coercive power of supreme rank and office"; in his view, such symbolism is very common cross-culturally. But while aspects of it can be found in Nahua thought, Christianity's equation of a soul/body dichotomy with a good/evil dichotomy laid a particularly strong emphasis on the link between abased bodies and exalted souls. The body—created from earth and dust—is intrinsically polluted; one must reject it, striving to free oneself from its confines and demands. This difference explains why the Indians at first misunderstood Mendicant poverty, saying of the Dominicans that "they must have been great sinners, to have to live in such arduous mortification" (Alberro 1972:488, citing Dávila Padilla).

Saint Thomas Aquinas (1974:5) treats the "stain" of sin in explicitly metaphorical terms:

In its literal sense the word "stain" [*macula*] refers to physical objects, as where one bright object loses its lustre by rubbing against another object. It is by simile with this use that the term should be applied to spiritual realities.

Aquinas, in keeping with scholasticism's reduction of evil to the privation of good, considers this stain not as something added to the soul but as something removed, a reduction in the soul's natural radiance. The contrast with *tlazolli*—real, gross physical stuff that adheres to one—could hardly be more striking.

In certain contexts Christianity's body/soul analogy could be partially transformed into metonymy. Spiritual pollution could be expressed in physical illness, though at least in theory the illness was a punishment for the sin and not a natural outcome of it (see Chapter Six). Sexual sins were considered physically as well as morally polluting. It was in attitudes toward sex that Christianity's abasement of the flesh found its strongest expression. Though the medieval Church paid relatively more attention to nonsexual sins than does modern Catholicism, it was nevertheless "inordinately concerned with the sexual" (Tentler 1977:165). Sex was considered physically harmful, debilitating the body and rendering it susceptible to illness. This physical aspect could pass over into the spiritual realm: there was a "fear of moral contamination from natural physiological functions" (Tentler 1977:226–28). This is quite similar to Nahua belief—sexual excess is the class of behavior to which *tlazolli* tropes were most frequently applied.

The friars, especially the Franciscans, were at least somewhat inclined to blur the distinction between soul and body. They shared the widespread belief that the corpses of saintly individuals do not decay but remain intact and emit a pleasant "odor of sanctity." The Franciscans, notably Mendieta (1980), ascribed this phenomenon to the more illustrious among them; Grijalva (1624), however, emphasized instead that honored Augustinians died as virgins and/or were found to have been wearing chains or hair shirts against their skin.

In Nahua thought, the physical and the spiritual were not such separate domains that they could only be compared through analogy. Immaterial, nonphenomenal things were not set off from the material world but were continuous with it, integrated into a single, monist conception of reality. Abasement of the body was abasement of the whole self, not of the body without the soul. This is not to imply that they considered moral pollution exactly the same thing as physical dirt, or that moral purity could be achieved merely by frequent bathing. But the relationship among these factors was metonymic: there was a domain of dirt—*tlazolli*—which included moral pollution along with ordinary dirt. The belief that transgressions actually dirtied the liver expresses the closeness and even overlap of physical and moral pollution. Similarly, the human being constituted a single domain encompassing spiritual as well as fleshy components. Within these domains, elements were linked symbolically in such a way that, not only were some conceptualized in terms of the others (like moral pollution and physical dirt), but operations upon some could affect the

others by the "magical" principle of contiguity—Frazer's "law of contact." Elements in metonymic or synecdochic association were made to "stand for" each other as if they were metaphors. Straw or grass (*zacatl*), for example, was a synecdoche for the general domain of *tlazolli* and a metonym for moral pollution, another kind of *tlazolli*. Straws were passed through the tongue and then burned as a way of purifying oneself of misdeeds, each straw representing a single act (Durán 1967:I, 157). One's own *tlazolli*, represented metonymically by the straws, was transferred onto them through the symbolic action of the ritual of tongue sacrifice, the coating of the straws with one's own blood. This identified the straws metaphorically with the acts; the straws and the acts could then be destroyed by fire.

The sweeping up of straw was a purificatory act in a broader sense than housecleaning because straw represented the entire domain of *tlazolli* by a synecdochic substitution of part for whole. It was also a moral act in that straw, one type of *tlazolli*, represented moral pollution, another type of *tlazolli*, by a metonymic substitution of one element for another within the semantic domain of *tlazolli*. It is by such symbolic transformations that expressive acts are felt to have real effects.

A contrast with Christian usage may help to clarify these associations. The trope "you wallow in excrement" might be interpreted by a Christian to mean: "Your soul is as contaminated from your sinful acts as your body would be if you rolled around in a dungheap." A Nahua interpretation would be: "You are in a state of pollution; there is filth attached to you which is of the same order as excrement." If the situation were not remedied, this *tlazolli* might bring with it various other elements of *tlazolli*: the person might, according to moral discourse, quite literally end up poor, homeless, clad in rags, covered with dust and sweat, lying in a pile of ordure, and oozing from all orifices.

For the Nahuas, the link between the moral and physical, normative and sensory, idea and emotion, was more direct than in Christian ideology. Human beings themselves were more closely integrated with, and subject to, general cosmic processes: the Nahua self was a fragile construction whose integrity was easily disrupted by the same forces that threatened all ordered entities.⁶ The symbolic processes involved in this Nahua "closeness to nature" may from a Western perspective seem intellectually more "primitive," but they make for moral rhetoric which, because it is more emotionally and physiologically evocative, is more effective.

In the friars' hands this symbolism became Christianized to the extent

that it was applied to the soul as something distinct from the body. Friars used the term *iuhqui* 'like' or 'as if' to set up metaphorical relationships, or referred to tropes as *nezcayotl* or *machiyotl* 'manifestations' or 'signs,'⁷ with the implication that they were not to be taken literally. But such caveats are occasional—there was little to prevent an Indian attending a series of sermons from interpreting the symbolism the same way it would have been interpreted in traditional moral discourse.

Another common method for setting up these metaphors was to use the term *teoyotica* 'in a sacred way' or 'in a divine sense,' from *teoyotl*, the abstract noun form of *teotl* 'deity' or 'sacred thing' and the instrumental suffix *-(ti)ca*. *Teoyotica* could be more literally translated as "with sacredness." It implies that something is being done in accordance with divinity or through the agency of divinity. It does not do what the friars wanted it to do: to cause a statement phrased in earthly terms to apply to a separate spiritual realm. At best, the use of *teoyotica* could cast a holy aura over certain things of this world, separating things associated with the Church from less sacred referents.

There is reduction and redirection in the friars' adoption of the *tla-zolli* complex: simple terms of cleanliness and dirt appear constantly while the more complex or esoteric tropes, especially those lacking Christian parallels, are less common or are absent. Thus, there is a loss of richness, a failure to exploit the full expressive (and hence persuasive) capacity of Nahuatl. The symbols are redirected toward Christian significata: the *tla-zolli* of sin, devils, hell; the purity (*chipahualiztli*) of virtue, God, heaven. But the rhetorical method is the same: moral persuasion via the linkage of negatively valued phenomena with negative affect and positively valued phenomena with positive affect.

The Nahuas' use of the vocabulary of filth for expressing self-abasement and deviance was easily adopted by the friars. Fray Andrés de Olmos's collection of oratory is rich in this imagery (Bautista 1600b). Though not published until 1600, long after Olmos's death, the metaphorical expressions he gleaned from the texts constitute the eighth chapter of his important 1547 grammar (Olmos 1875). The orations are basically native texts from generally nonreligious contexts, but they reflect Nahua-Christian religious dialogue in that "idolatrous" references are suppressed and Christian references are added. They are not sermons but rather a reference collection for the development of a Christian preaching style consistent with native linguistic formulas. Such skilled use of Nahua oratory would, Olmos hoped, facilitate the introduction of Christianity (Baudot 1983:232–34).

A daughter deferring to her mother's wisdom speaks as follows (Bautista 1600b:21v-22r):

ca oc nipiltontli ca oc niconetontli, ca oc nitlalololohua nitapalcamahuiltia, ca oc nicnahuiltia in naxix in nocuitl, ca oc nomac niquicuiya in notēqualac in noyacacuitl:

Indeed, I am still a little child, I am still a little kid. Indeed, I still make dirtballs, I play with potsherds. Indeed, I still play with my urine, my feces. Indeed, I still roll in my hand my saliva, my nasal mucus.

This sort of self-abasement appealed to the friars because of their own emphasis on the humiliation and mortification of the flesh. That the Nahuas would not have made the same equation between debased flesh and exalted spirit was not particularly troubling to them.

Olmos included more heavily Christianized texts as well as speeches like the one cited above. An old man speaking the word of "the sole god" sounds rather like a priest (Bautista 1600b:55r):

inic ticpopohuaco ticchipahuaco in amanima, inic quitlaçaz in itzoyo in iteuhyo in iyaca in ipalanca in itech oquitlalique in tliltique in catzahuaque i tzitzimi in tlatiacatecolo:

[God's word enters us,] so we came to clean, we came to purify your souls, in order that they cast off their sweatiness, their dustiness, their stench, their rottenness, which the black ones, the dirty ones, the Tzitzimime, the *tlatiacatecolo* placed with them.

Here the soul, not the whole self, is the contaminated element.

In Olmos's grammar (1875:218) the expression "the dirty and obstinate sinner is like the pig with mud" is rendered in Nahuatl as:

Tlaçulli, teuhtli quimauilhtia, nextepeualli quimotlalilia, quimocuitlauia in çuquitl, in tapalhcatl inic moçoquipuloa, inic motapalhcaneloa, in yuh coyametl mocuilanexpuloa.

He (or she) plays with filth, dust; puts himself in charge of the ash-heap, occupies himself with mud, potsherds; thus he mixes himself with mud, thus he mixes himself with potsherds; like a peccary he rolls in excrement and ashes.

The peccary was chosen for its similarity to the pig, not for its moral connotations in Nahuatl.

Some examples from the doctrinal texts will give an idea of how the friars used such symbolism. Escalona, sermonizing on the preparation for Jesus during Advent, creates a simile between clean clothing and spiritual purity. Just as a great ruler's vassals cast off their old, worn-out mantles

and don clean ones in preparation for their lord's arrival, so must people do to be ready for Christ:

yn totlatiacol, ca ytilmaçol, in tanima: yehica ca yn tanima çenca tlatlacoltica catçauatica.

Our sins are the old, worn-out mantles of our souls, because our souls are very dirty with sin.

When these old mantles have been cast off, people's souls will be purified and they will be able to meet their lord (Escalona n.d.:124v).

For Ash Wednesday, Escalona (n.d.:159r) translates a text from Job (2:8) as: *yn iquac tlaçolpan omotlalli, caxtapalcatia⁸ quipopoaya yn temalli* 'then he sat in the filth, cleaning the pus with a potsherd.' Escalona's exegesis of the passage explains that, when one considers oneself a sinner before God, then one throws oneself in the filth. But when one does penance, one cleans the *tlatlacoltemalli* 'sin pus' with a potsherd. The potsherd is *ynezca yn tlamacevaliztli* 'the sign (or manifestation) of penitence.' Three symbols from the *tlazolli* complex—*tlazolli*, pus, and potsherd—appear in a passage based entirely on a biblical model.

Olmos's oration for the boys coming to school at the monasteries admonishes them not to return to the ways of their parents: *yehuati in teycolo in tecatzuah inic nemohuaya ye huecauh* 'that which makes people old and worn out, that which dirties people, how people used to live long ago' (Bautista 1600b:63r).

The Dominican *doctrina* (1944:75v) chastises those who go about dirty with sin (*tlatlacoltica catçauatinemi*). They offend God, or Ipalmemohuani ("He by Whom One Lives"), and they dirty, they blacken their souls and their bodies with sin (*quicatçaua quitlilova in imanima: yuan in inacaio tlatlacultica*). Molina (1569:18r) describes sins to be confessed as *motiltica, mocatzahuaca* 'your blackness, your dirtiness.' This pairing of *tliltic* and *catzahuac* is very frequent, occurring more often than the more evocative "filth, dust" pair.

Christ's manger becomes a very Nahua symbol of humility in Sahagún's *Exercicio* (1574:10r): *çacatl tlazolli yn mopehpetzin omochiuh* 'straw, filth became your bed.' In Escalona (n.d.:127r) the newborn Christ is wrapped in little rages (*tzotzomatziñtli*).

In his sermons, Sahagún tells the sinner (1563:21r):

Auh in teval titlatacoani céca tepinauhti, céca tetlaelti in itech ca māā, in yevati tlatlacolli: ý māā yuhqui tlatlacoltica papalani, tlatlacoltica temalli ytech quiça, hiyac, tetlaelti temava.

But you, you sinner, very shameful, very revolting is the sin which is with your soul. It is as if your soul is covered with wounds by sin; pus issues from it because of sin, it stinks, it disgusts people, it infects people.

The relationship is metaphorical; the imagery physiological. In another sermon (1563:iv), he compares the sinner to a pig that lies rolling "in the sin-mud" (*tlatlacolçoquititla*). Sin as mud was a familiar idea, though the Christian use of the pig as a symbol of gross carnality had to be learned.

Elsewhere Sahagún uses an agricultural metaphor. The heart of a person who has not confessed sins is rocky and grassy; his or her soul is black and dirty. This person must line up the sins and tell them to the priest, thus clearing the field of grass. Living a good Christian life is like the sowing and growing of young maize plants—but these must be weeded, as one must avoid taking pride in one's good life. Such pride is like a weed, like dust (1563:26r–26v). The same metaphor is used in Sahagún's *Exercicio*: sin is like weeds, grass, datura, thistles; virtue is like food crops (1574:2r–2v).

Lust was typically called *tlayelpaquilitzli* 'foul happiness.' *Tlayelli* refers to "something foul" or to dysentery; it derives from the verb *iyaya* 'to stink' (Karttunen 1983:102, 271). The friars may have coined the compound term; in any case, the typical expressions in native discourse were *ahui-nemiliztli* 'pleasurable living' and *tlaltecpacayotl* 'earthliness.' The friars showed much concern over sexual matters, partly because of their ascetic orientation and the Church's horror of sodomy and such acts, and partly because of the difficulty of imposing monogamy on a polygynous nobility—polygyny appearing to the friars as an expression of lust and greed rather than as an alternative pattern of family or economic organization. For example, Motolinia (1941:185) states that men find it hard to give up this custom because of their sensuality and because of the women's economic contributions.

Sexual sins were emphasized in the indigenous confession rite, probably because they were the type of *tlatlacolli* most strongly conceived of as *tlazolli*, and confession was primarily a rite of purification. As Elzey notes (1976:321–22), this has led some scholars to identify the Aztec concept of sin with sexual transgression (e.g. Pettazzoni 1926, 1930). The impurity associated with sex was especially noted, but proscribed sexual acts were not the only important category of *tlatlacolli* (see also Estrada Quevedo 1962:171).⁹

Sahagún stresses how angered God becomes over "foul happiness" (*tlayelpaquilitzli*) and how everywhere in the holy words God's angry

words and punishments are cast toward those who love dust and filth. According to Saint Paul, while many sins dirty people's souls, "foul happiness" dirties our body as well as our soul (Sahagún 1579b:3v–4v). Christ hates people who occupy themselves with "foul happiness"; such persons are black and dirty (Sahagún 1574:13r). In one of his sermons Sahagún addresses himself to five categories of sinners: the proud person, the covetous person, the person who disobeys and maligns a pious spouse,¹⁰ the lustful person, and the idolatrous person who consults a diviner when his or her child is sick. The lustful one is spoken to in terms of filth (Sahagún 1563:18r–18v):

Auh in tevali in titliltic ū ticatzavac in tlaelpaquilitzica ticpaquiltia monacayo, ipampa ū motlaelpaquiliz ticmoyolitlacahuia in t^o auh ū monamic ytech ticchiva in achivaloni yvā ticchivaltia in tliltic, i catzavac, tictlamatoq'lia yvā ticcuitlaviltia inic mitztlamatoq'liz, etc. ic titlatlacoa yvā tlatlacolli ypan tictlaçá, ticmotelchivilia in dios ū mitzcavaltia tlaelpaquilitzli in ipampa ca tlavelilocayotl etc.

And you black one, you dirty one, you please your body with foul happiness, because of your foul happiness you harm the heart of our lord. And you do to your spouse that which is undoable, and you make her (or him) black, dirty, you touch things for her and you oblige her to touch things for you, etc. Thus you sin, and you cast her into sin, you scorn God who prohibits you from foul happiness because it is wickedness.

Of exactly what this undoable act and illicit touching consisted the manuals for confessors were more explicit (such as Molina 1569), but the friars often referred to sexual acts, particularly sodomy, in terms which, though standard in European usage, would have seemed vague to the Nahuas.

According to Olmos, the Devil mocks people the most with sex (Baudot 1979:131).¹¹ He describes desire for women as enjoying *yn teuhltli yn tlaçolli yn axixtli in cuitlatl* 'dust, filth, urine, excrement' (Baudot 1979:49). Preaching against lust, Olmos advises (in Baudot 1976:42):

Quimonequiltia Dios ca yn yuh ce tlacatl quimocuitlauya yn ytilhma chipauac ynic amo motilhuiz mocatzaoaz, cenza tlapanuia yn yuh monequi quimocuilauiz yn yyolia yuan yn inacayo ynic amo axispa, cuitlapa, yn aqualhcan yn ayeccan uetziz.

God wishes that, as a person cares for his (or her) clean mantle so that it does not become black, become dirty, it is much more important that he care for his soul and his body, so that they not fall into urine, into excrement, into a bad place, into a wrong place.

Here the idea of sex as physical as well as moral pollution is expressed. Baudot (1983:240) observes how Olmos, translating directly from Latin

sermons by Saint Vincent Ferrer, substitutes the trope “urine, excrement” for Ferrer’s “evil”; Olmos (with his Nahua assistants) must have recognized that *tlazolli* tropes were more meaningful to the Nahuas than any abstract concept of evil.

Fray Domingo de la Anunciación’s *doctrina* (1565:21v) states that people must keep themselves from sin lest they stain or dirty the being and dignity of their souls and bodies. The Dominican catechism of 1548 makes an interesting use of the soul/body distinction. Instructing the Indians to hate dirtiness (*catçaualiztli*) because God hates it, it tells them not to dirty their souls with sin or their bodies with blood-letting, painting, or ear-piercing (*Doctrina cristiana* 1944:137r–137v). Different conceptions of physical cleanliness, let alone moral cleanliness, are clearly evident.

Fray Juan de la Anunciación also presents physical pollution as sin. Christ’s ascension shows that he values earthly flesh; therefore, one must not dirty one’s body with sexual sin (1577:76r). He uses the same argument in preaching about Christ’s birth: since Christ thus honored our body, you must not dirty and blacken it with “foul happiness” and dirtiness (13r). However, in another of his sermons he distinguishes between purity of the body and purity of the soul. All desire the former even though it is worthless, while the purity of a soul free from sin is precious to God (189r). Elsewhere he compares the sinner to a cripple rolling in the *teuhltli tlacolli*, the dust and filth (7r). He describes sin as dirty and ragged clothing (117r). Sins cause one to stink and rot; they rise up to God like smoke, angering him (62r–62v). Anunciación compares the heart with which there is mortal sin to a chamber pot: *ynin axixcomitl in cuitlacomitl* ‘this is a urine-jar, an excrement-jar?’ It must be cleansed so that God can fill it with his fragrant perfume or *xochiatl* ‘flower-water,’ which is his love (81r–84v). Upholding the native nobles’ view of their own relative purity, he says that, although vassals are like feet, which go about on the ground in the dust and mud, rulers should love them and not scorn them (97r). The person who lives in sin is like a pig lying submerged in the mud (165v).

A prayer to Christ, which Anunciación suggests for the person about to receive communion, expresses ritual self-abasement in the tradition of Nahua oratory (86v):

Auh ac nehuatl ac ninomati, ynic nimitznoceliliz yn ipan y sanctissimo Sacramento? ca in nehuatl ca niçoquitl ca nitlalli ca atle ypan nipohui, quenin ninotlapoz ynic nimitznoceliliz? cuix nolhuil? cuix nomaceual? ca nimā amo. Ca cenza nicatzauc, ca cenza nihyac, ca cenza nitliltic tlatlacoltica.

But who am I, who, I wonder, that I will receive you in the most holy Sacrament? Indeed I am mud, I am earth, I am worth nothing. How will I dare to receive

you? Is it perhaps my desert? Is it perhaps my merit? Not at all. For I am very dirty, I am very fetid, I am very black with sin.

For the friars the association of the body with earth and mud was not a rhetorical device but a literal description.¹² Sahagún (1563:30r) states that one should not love one's body because it is just earth and the food of worms. Anunciación's sermons for Ash Wednesday explain that the ash is a reminder that we are earth, dust, mud, and will become so again (1577:38v). In his preaching for the festival of Saint Lawrence, martyred for his faith by being roasted over a fire, Anunciación uses a metaphor of strengthening and purifying by fire. Before it is fired, a pot is weak, black, and dirty; afterwards, it is strong and pure. Similarly,

ca timochintin ticoquime, tincneneulia in coquitl amo tichicauaque in tocoquio ca yehuatl in tonacayo, yuan ca tlatlacoltica titiltilque ticatzauaque.

indeed we all are mud, we equal mud, we are not strong. Our muddiness, indeed it is our body, and with sin we are black, we are dirty.

Therefore we must be strengthened and purified by fire (1577:176r). Anunciación also describes God as a craftsman, a *toltecatzintli*, who fashions people from earth and mud like a potter makes pots (91r). In his sermon on Saint Andrew, he states that all that pertains to the body—mantles, garments, food, drink, wealth—pertains to earth, dust, filth (21rv).

It was considered a sign of the Indians' devotion that those who were admitted to communion always wore clean clothes when they took it. They were encouraged to do this. Fray Pedro de Gante tells his reader to say (1553:120r):

nicchipauaz nicpacaz yn nonacayo: yhuan yn notlatqui ale catzauc notech yez yn iquac nicceliz yn sancto sacramento.

I will purify, I will wash my body and my garments. Nothing dirty will be on me when I receive the holy sacrament.

When one eats the food of the soul, the "blessed little tortilla" (*tlateochinhualli tlaxcaltzintli*), one must be pure within oneself and on the surface (Gante 1553:43r). Molina (1569:71r) gives similar instructions. Dávila Padiña (1955:83), the Dominican chronicler, describes this as "procuring not only the cleanliness of the soul . . . but also that of the body." During the rite they "pray for a long time, asking God to purify their consciences." According to the *Códice franciscano* (1941:92), this exterior cleanliness had little to do with what God sought from people, but nevertheless it was

good that the Indians showed this reverence and set such an example for others (see also Torquemada 1975-83:V, 282).

Thus, physical cleanliness was approved as an outward expression of inward purity, a reminder of how one's soul should be, a show of devotion and respect. The link in the Nahuas' mind was likely to have been much more direct: to eat the god one must be ritually pure in all ways. The friars' attention to outward purity would have acted to inhibit the development in Nahua Christianity of the same sort of soul/body distinction that characterized formal Christian doctrine.

An excellent example of how the Nahuas made Christian purification rites their own is provided by the creole chronicler Suárez de Peralta (1878:31). He observes that Indians, on the day they are to confess, wear very dirty clothes and the women do not wash their legs as they customarily would. After the rite they wash all over very well and say that with the dirtiness they remove the sins. They go home clean, and, if they have clean clothes, they put them on. He also mentions the wearing of new or borrowed clean clothes for communion. Of all this Suárez de Peralta (1878:32) concludes, "whether what they do is true or not, God knows, but at least the appearance is good."

Since they were limited to a single soul concept, one seated in the heart, the friars could not exploit directly the Nahuas' belief in pollution of the liver and *ihiyotl*. But the close identification of the *teyolia* with the heart, similar to that of the liver with its *ihiyotl* emanations, provided a mechanism for a direct link between "spiritual" pollution and actual filth in the body. Fray Juan de la Anunciación (1577:205r) attempts to explain how one may know if one's soul is dirty, since it is not visible. He recommends a rather vague procedure: one should look into one's heart as into a mirror; there one will see that one's soul is dirty and black with sin or else one will see our lord God. The dualistic opposition between the fleshly heart and the spiritual soul, contradictory to Nahua concepts of the body, was not likely to be accepted when the friars themselves made such close identifications.

The *tlazolmiquiztli* concept was not accepted by the friars. The emotionally charged idea that one's misdeeds might harm anything around one, even one's innocent and beloved children, not through divine punishment but by creating harmful emanations, was not something the friars could appropriate despite its force as a deterrent. It was too obviously at odds with Christian doctrine. The anonymous priest whose notes on Molina's dictionary constitute the *Códice Carolino* suggests to priests that they

examine the Indians about this belief by treating it as a violation of the first and eighth commandments. False testimony is raised against innocent people in blaming them for misfortunes; even if the individuals involved had sinned, it is wrong to believe that the misfortunes were caused by their acts. Even worse, the cure for the condition involved sorcery—which automatically involved Devil-worship and hence violated the first commandment (*Códice Carolino* 1967:46).

Despite this rejection, the Nahuatl doctrinal texts examined in this study do not actively condemn the concept. They sometimes refer to the contagious power of sin (see Chapter Six), playing—perhaps intentionally—upon the fear of *tlazolli* contamination. Escalona (n.d.:233r) comes close to using the term when he states that the Devil *otechtlatlatlacolmicti* ‘killed us with *tlatlacolli*’ when Adam ate the apple; the line between *tlatlacolli* and *tlazolli* was hardly firm. However, Escalona wrote early and was perhaps less cautious in his terminology than later homilizers. But even with *tlazolmiquiztli* left outside the pale of Nahua Christianity, it was not something that would (or did) easily go away by itself. Spanish belief in the “evil eye”—a phenomenon accepted by mainstream scholastic theology—may even have reinforced indigenous belief (Aguirre Beltrán 1963:24). Modern-day Nahuas retain the concept; the belief in “bad airs” or “garbage air” still evident throughout indigenous Mesoamerica stems from the same symbolic complex (Ingham 1986:165; López Austin 1972:402, 1980:I, 294; Madsen 1965:102; Montoya Briones 1964:162, 178, 189).

BATHING AND SWEEPING

Nahua rites of purification centered on the removal of *tlazolli* by washing and sweeping. *Tlazolli* associated with body products was most obviously counteracted by bathing; the *tlazolli* of dust, straw, and other bits of out-of-place matter was effectively controlled with brooms.

Langer (1942:161), noting how sacred meaning so often attaches to the simple act of washing away dirt, suggests that the symbolic value of washing is so obvious that the act could be said to have a “natural meaning.” It is felt to have genuine efficacy, to be magical as well as expressive and simply physical. For the Nahuas, ritual bathing could remove at least some of the stains of immoral acts, though more complex rites were required for serious faults (Durán 1967:I, 156, 171–72). Prisoners who had been

wrongly held or who had done nothing serious bathed upon their release from jail in the clean waters of Chapultepec, Tenochtitlan's lakeshore source of pure drinking water; thus, they left off their *tlatlacalli* (Sahagún 1953–82:IV, 91). But one who committed a serious misdeed such as theft or adultery was told: *Acan atl ic timaltiz, ic timochipaoaz* 'nowhere is there water with which you will wash yourself, with which you will purify yourself' (Sahagún 1953–82:VI, 257).

Rites of passage often involved washing, to remove the pollution accruing to the liminal stage of the rite, or to the lower social status from which the individual was being elevated. Hence, slaves were bathed before sacrifice or when they gained their freedom, new rulers as part of their installation rite (Durán 1967:I, 185; Motolinia 1971:342; Ruiz de Alarcón 1982:70).

A woman about to give birth was washed and shampooed, and her house was cleaned (Sahagún 1953–82:VI, 167). In this way cleanliness and order were affirmed in preparation for the filth and danger associated with childbirth.

Divine pardon for offenses was conceived of as a metaphorical bathing. Nappatecuhtli, one of the rain gods and patron of the mat-makers, was said to bathe people and sprinkle dew upon them, pardoning their faults (Sahagún 1953–82:I, 45; Torquemada 1975–83:III, 97). The obvious purificatory action of rain was the source of this metaphorical usage. Without rain, the crops in the fields became tainted with *tlazolli*. The prayer to Tlaloc in time of drought states: *in tonacaiutl ca ie teuhpachiuhtoc, ca ie tocatzaalquijmliuhtoc* 'the crops, indeed now they lie covered with dust, they lie wrapped in spider webs' (Sahagún 1953–82:VI, 35).

An elderly dignitary spoke of divine favor in the following way, employing symbolism of the periphery as well as of dirt (Sahagún 1953–82:VI, 84):

in quijtitlan, in quauhitlan moteicnomachitia in totecujo: auh in manel cujtlatiyan, tlaçultil[an] ca vmpa moteanjlia in tlouque, naoaque ca motepapaqujlia, ca moteahaltilia:

Our lord has pity on people among the plants, among the trees, and the Possessor of the Near, Possessor of the Surrounding takes people even from amid the excrement, the filth; indeed, he bathes people, he washes people.

The prayer to Tezcatlipoca for wealth uses the same figure (Sahagún 1953–82:VI, 9).

The ruler shared this role: a representative of the deities and of the

purity of the noble class, he upheld the moral well-being of the state. On the death of a ruler, mourners beseeched Tezcatlipoca (Sahagún 1953-82:VI, 23):

motolinia in teuhio, in tlaçullo ac quipapacaz, ac cahaltiz, ac qujcujliz, ac canjliz in jhaca, in jpalanca, ac qujquanjliz, ac chico tlanaoac qujviqujliz:

The afflicted one who is full of dust, full of filth—who will bathe, who will wash him (or her)? Who will take, who will seize his stench, his rottenness? Who will take it from him, who will put it aside, away?

Funerary customs, the rites of passage into death, involved washing. Water was poured over the corpse's head. After cremation, the foul smell from the burning was ritually cleansed by pouring water on the coals. When this dried, the remains were buried (Sahagún 1953-82:III, 40-42).

The Nahuas' beliefs about the purifying effects of water interested the friars. Durán, who ascribed to the view that the Indians had undergone a previous evangelization, stated that native belief was not far wrong (Durán 1967:I, 173),

because God placed in the substance of water the virtue of the sacrament of baptism, with which we are cleansed of original sin, and in this it is seen that they had news of the things of our faith.

Torquemada (1975-83:IV, 198), however, was sure that these "blind idolaters had no knowledge of original sin." Mendieta (1980:428) was impressed by the Indians' devotion to holy water; the priests were hard pressed to keep enough in supply, as the Indians would carry it home by the jarful.

There was concern, however, over the distinction between physical and spiritual effect. Christianity's soul/body metaphor required the purificatory effect of baptism to be not a mechanical outcome of washing; rather, the presence of the Holy Spirit in the water imparted to it a spiritual efficacy distinct from the physical result (Fisher 1965:14). Torquemada (1975-83:IV, 206-9) observed that pagans—New World and Old World—believed water, because it purifies the body, purified the soul as well. This is erroneous, he stated, because sin is spiritual—it cannot be removed by something which does not touch the soul. This insistence on metaphor over metonymy deprives bathing of some of its "natural meaning."

One point in the dispute over the early baptisms, in which the Franciscans omitted some of the ritual elements generally required by the Church, was that without the full ceremony the Indians would not understand the

difference between the "washing of holy baptism" and the washings that they used in their own rites. A papal bull of 1537 established that although previous baptisms were valid, thenceforward the full ceremony had to be observed (Mendieta 1980:271).

The Nahua infant bathing rite demonstrates very well the differences between Nahua and Christian pollution beliefs. Christian baptism functioned to remove original sin, the guilt of Adam that was passed to all infants through their father's semen. Baptism eliminated the guilt, leaving the soul pure, but the propensity toward sin—often called concupiscence—remained (Aquinas 1965:11–25; Brownlee 1842:9). Nahua infant bathing also removed pollution of the forebears, leaving the child pure, but here the pollution is simply the *tiazolli* associated with the parents' sexual activity. Like all growth, conception resulted from a process of corruption, the creation of fertile filth and its transformation into new life: here, sexual fluids are transformed into fetus (López Austin 1980:I, 326, 336). In the Nahua rite, depicted in Figure 12, the midwife bathed the infant while invoking Chalchiuhlticue, the goddess of fresh water (Sahagún 1953–82:VI, 175):

Ma mjtzmopapaqujli, ma mjtzmahaltili: ma chico, tlanaoac qjvica, qujteca in catzaocaiuti, in jtechpa tiqualcujc in monan, in mota:

May she bathe you, may she wash you. May she take aside, may she put away the dirtiness which you have brought forth from your mother, your father.

Similar phrases occur throughout the midwife's address.

Concern for the effects of sexual intercourse on the fetus was expressed in the belief that, though sexual fluids were needed to form and strengthen the fetus, an excess would cause it to become coated with filth (as *tlayelli: oallaelneliubtiaz*) and possibly to adhere to the womb. The mother would then die in childbirth (Sahagún 1953–82:VI, 142; also López Austin 1980:I, 336). Here semen is the pollution itself, not the vehicle for its transmission.

Filth could also come to a child from its *tonalli*, the spiritual component associated with the ritual calendar. Infants born on inauspicious days would be bathed on a better day to try to incorporate its beneficial effects. This rite involved the pouring of water on the middle of the baby's head (*iquanepantla contequijlia in atl*; Sahagún 1953–82:VI, 202). Since the *tonalli* was seated in the head and could enter and exit through the fontanelle (López Austin 1980:I, 224–25), this may have been an attempt to purify the filth from the *tonalli* as it entered the child.

The friars called baptism *necuaatequiliztli* 'pouring water on one's head.'



Figure 12. The midwife bathes the baby boy. Illustration in the Florentine Codex, Book VI, 170r. (Photo from Sahagún 1979.)

The similarity to the native rite was unmistakable, even though the Christian rite was supposed to cleanse the *á anima* or *teyolia* and not the *tonalli*. The filth that was cleansed came from Adam and Eve. This primordial couple was referred to as *achto tonan*, *achto tota* 'our first mother, our first father' or even simply *tonan*, *tota* 'our mother, our father' (as by Escalona n.d.:244r).

Rather awkward terms were coined to express the concept of original sin: *tlatilacolpeuhcayotl* 'the beginning of sin' or 'the sinful beginning,' *tlatilacolnelhuayotl* 'the origin of sin,' *achto tlatlacolli* 'first sin,' *huehuetlatlacolli* 'old sin.' The latter term was the name given to a type of slavery in which some member of the original slave's family was obligated to serve the owner or his or her heir through the generations (Motolinia 1971:369). It

corresponded, however, to actual Christian usage, Adam's sin being called *peccatum vetus* 'old sin,' in reference to the "old" state of humanity represented by Adam but altered by Christ, the "new" Adam (Lukken 1973:355–60).

Original sin was an alien concept in that life on earth without *tlatlacalli* was inconceivable. To originate sin could not be a freely willed choice of the first humans because to live on earth, eating its fruits and reproducing, involved one inextricably in the entropic forces of nature. Babies could be cleansed of the filth of their birth, rendering them pure for a time, but this was not the original or natural condition of adults. In Christianity, complete freedom from sin is extremely difficult to achieve but it is possible.

Escalona (n.d.:149r) describes how Christ, when baptized by John the Baptist, gave water the power to destroy sins:

atlan motemoui ynic qualtiaz yn atl ynic moteochivaz, ynic poliviz yn totlatlacol.

He lowered himself under the water so that the water would become good, so that it would become holy, so our sins would be destroyed.

Commenting on Paul's statement to the Thessalonians (1 Thess. 4:7), "for God hath not called us unto uncleanness but unto holiness," Escalona (n.d.:168v) states:

ca yn toteº omitztlaxilli yn motlatlacol nequaatequiliztica ynic omitzchipahuili yn manima. Auh yntla oceppa tictatzaua yn manima: ca oceppa tiqua yn miçodal: te itechpa tiquittaz yn moneqatequiliz? ca niman atley:

Indeed our lord cast from you your sins with baptism; thus he purified your soul for you. But if again you dirty your soul, indeed again you eat your vomit, then of what advantage is your baptism? None at all.

It is purity of the soul specifically with which Escalona is concerned here.

The Dominican *Doctrina cristiana* (1944:136v), explaining the elements of the baptismal rite (the Dominicans were careful to do it properly), describes the white cloth placed over the recipient's head as

ynezca in ichipauaca yn amanima ca cenza oquimochipauili in motechipauiliani in Dios yca in iatzin.

the manifestation of the purity of your souls, which indeed God who purifies people purified with his water.

God, the text continues, who is wholly pure has purified you; now *anchipauanemizque nican tlalticpac: ytechpa in amanima yuan ytechpa in*

amonacaio ‘you will live purely here on earth, in regard to your soul and in regard to your body’ (137r). The main concern is purity of the soul, but purity of the body is also an issue.

Fray Pedro de Gante uses physical cleansing as a simile for baptism (1553:7r):

In yuhqui atl in quipaca in quichipahua in tenacayo in tiquitta çan no yuhqui in tequateqliztli in ica in ipassion in totecuiyo Jesu xpo huel ompa quichipahua i teaniman.

As water washes, purifies people’s bodies that we see, just so does baptism with the passion of our lord Jesus Christ then purify people’s souls very well.

The visible condition of the body is distinguished from the invisible condition of the soul; the relationship between them is metaphorical.

According to Molina (1569:90r), Christ on the cross washed our souls with his precious blood; similarly, with the baptism he established, our souls are purified.

Olmos’s treatise on sorcery describes how baptism places one in God’s home—a symbolic center—and purifies one; thus one is saved from the *tlazolli*-laden, peripheral devils (Baudot 1979:32):

Yntla nelli yn otimoquaatequi yn oticmocelili yn iyatçin yn iceltçin nelli Dios yn itoca baptismo sancto ynic ychantçinco omitçmotlacatilili omitçmochipahuili omitçmotlaocolili: Yoan uel yc omitzmomaquixtili yn inmacpa yn moyahuan in tqonpachpopol yn cuitlanexpopol in tequanime yn tlatlacetecolo in Diablime.

If you were truly baptized, you received the water of the sole true God, called “holy baptism.” Thus in his home he caused you to be born, he purified you, he had mercy on you. And thus indeed he saved you from the hands of your enemies, the big mossy-heads, the big excrement-ashes, the wild beasts, the *tlatlacetecolo*, the devils.

A sermon of Sahagún’s (1563:55) explains how the *tlacatecolotl* enslaved all of us when Adam sinned. But when Christ died, he tied up and imprisoned the *tlacatecolotl*, saving us. When we are baptized, the *tlacatecolotl* dies under the water and we are saved. There is an attempt to link a primordial, mythical context with the individual’s life, imparting a cosmic significance to the simple act of baptism.

The *Psalmodia christiana*, with its typically skillful use of Nahuatl, describes baptism as *chalchimmatlalatl* ‘jade-green water,’ playing upon native symbolism of centrality, perfection, and wholeness represented by jade, and the purifying role of the jade-skirted water goddess Chalchiuhtlicue

(Sahagún 1583:iv). In the Nahua infant bathing rite, the midwife cleansed the infant with the green and yellow waters. These are the same waters used by Tlazolteotl in removing people's *tlazolli* and by rulers in purifying their vassals; in one of Olmos's orations the ruler holds these waters in a jade vessel (Bautista 1600b:37v; Sahagún 1953–82:I, 23; VI, 76, 88, 108, 176). The *Psalmodia* (Sahagún 1583:13r) also describes baptism as a sweat-house, *temazcalli*.

For Fray Juan de la Anunciación, baptism is *teoyotica nealtiliztli nechipaualiztli* 'bathing oneself, purifying oneself in a sacred way' (1577:43r); he uses *teoyotica* to distinguish this act from ordinary bathing, though the Nahuas undoubtedly would have conceived of their own bathing rites as "sacred." He praises the purity of little children, urging his audience to be like them. They are pure of heart, *chipauatICA yn inyollo*; they do not get drunk or have lovers. They are like angels. They have no sin, no dirtiness, but are very pure in soul and body (1577:197v–198r). Sahagún, in the *Appendix*, recounts the old men's (the Nahua elders') belief in the purity of children and refutes it. These children were not pure because they had not been baptized. If they died, they did not become jades and turquoises, because of original sin (*ueuetlatlaculli yn itoca peccado original* 'old sin, its name is "original sin"'). The souls of unbaptized children are like coal, like clods of earth, and God imprisons them in limbo because of the sin that is with them. However, today little children who are baptized do become jades and turquoises in heaven if they die, because God washed them with his water, destroying the "old sin" (Sahagún 1579b:2r). Here Sahagún actually reinforces indigenous belief, merely inserting Christian baptism.

Sweeping was a second, and more characteristically Mesoamerican, mode of expressing the removal of *tlazolli*. Sweeping effectively moved dust, garbage, straw, ash, and similar offending substances away from the center toward the periphery where they belonged. Along with fasting and bathing—which purified the body—the sweeping of domestic and sacred spaces was a universal and indispensable element of penitential exercises.

Women and children swept the family courtyard every morning before dawn, removing the *tlazolli* that blew in during the disordered period of nighttime. This was considered a form of offering (Sahagún 1953–82:II, 199) or, in Durán's view (1967:I, 65), it was "based on some superstition." The small broom placed in an infant girl's hands during part of the Nahua rite of infant bathing symbolized her future responsibility for sweeping (Mendieta 1980:267). City streets and causeways were kept swept and clean

so that there was nothing that could cause one to trip (Motolinia 1971:207).

The pure condition of rulers was upheld by attendants who swept the road before them when they traveled. Díaz del Castillo (1956:193) describes Motecuhzoma's meeting with Cortés:

there were many other Lords who walked before the Great Montezuma, sweeping the ground where he would tread and spreading cloths on it, so that he should not tread on the earth.

Texcoco's lord Cacamatzin received similar treatment without the cloths: "they swept the ground, and removed the straws where he had to pass" (Díaz del Castillo 1956:190). The sandals worn by nobles, and forbidden to their vassals, would similarly have protected their wearers from the chance impurities of unswept turf.

Sacred spaces were kept especially tidy. Sweeping and cleaning were principal duties of girls and boys in temple service and boys in the *calmecac* school (Durán 1967:I, 24, 26; Sahagún 1953-82:III, 60, 65). The Codex Mendoza notes sweeping was the job of the *tlamacazqui*, the novice priest; priests of the higher order, such as the individual shown in Figure 13, were also responsible for sweeping or for seeing that others performed the task (Codex Mendoza 1938:62r, 63r). Ball courts were swept in preparation for a game (Sahagún 1953-82:VIII, 58).

Sahagún's informants described commendable behavior in terms of sweeping. *Tlachpanaliztli, tlacuicujiliztli* 'sweeping things, picking things up'¹³ was a metaphor for civil or temple service (Sahagún 1953-82:VI, 250). Of the good niece or nephew it was said: *ochpana, tlachpana, tlacuicui chico tlanauc* 'she or he sweeps the road, sweeps things, takes things aside, away'¹⁴ (Sahagún 1953-82:X, 4). The "true woman," *nel ciaatl*, also was devoted to these acts (Sahagún 1953-82:VI, 73). In a prayer to Tezcatlipoca, the supplicant's merit is expressed thus: *ca nitlachpana, ca nitlacuicui* 'indeed I sweep things, indeed I pick things up' (Sahagún 1953-82:III, 11). Young merchants would tell retirees who stayed behind to attend to the sweeping and cleaning and not let *tlazolli* lie cast about (Sahagún 1953-82:IV, 6). When Motecuhzoma wished to escape to Cincalco, the mythical residence of the old Toltec ruler Huemac, through his envoys he tried to persuade Huemac to accept him by offering his services as a sweeper (Alvarado Tezozomoc 1975:674).

Quetzalcoatl, god of wind, was said to be the rain gods' sweeper (*yn-tlachpancauh in tlaloque, yn aoaque, yn quijqujiauhiti*; Sahagún 1953-82:I, 9).

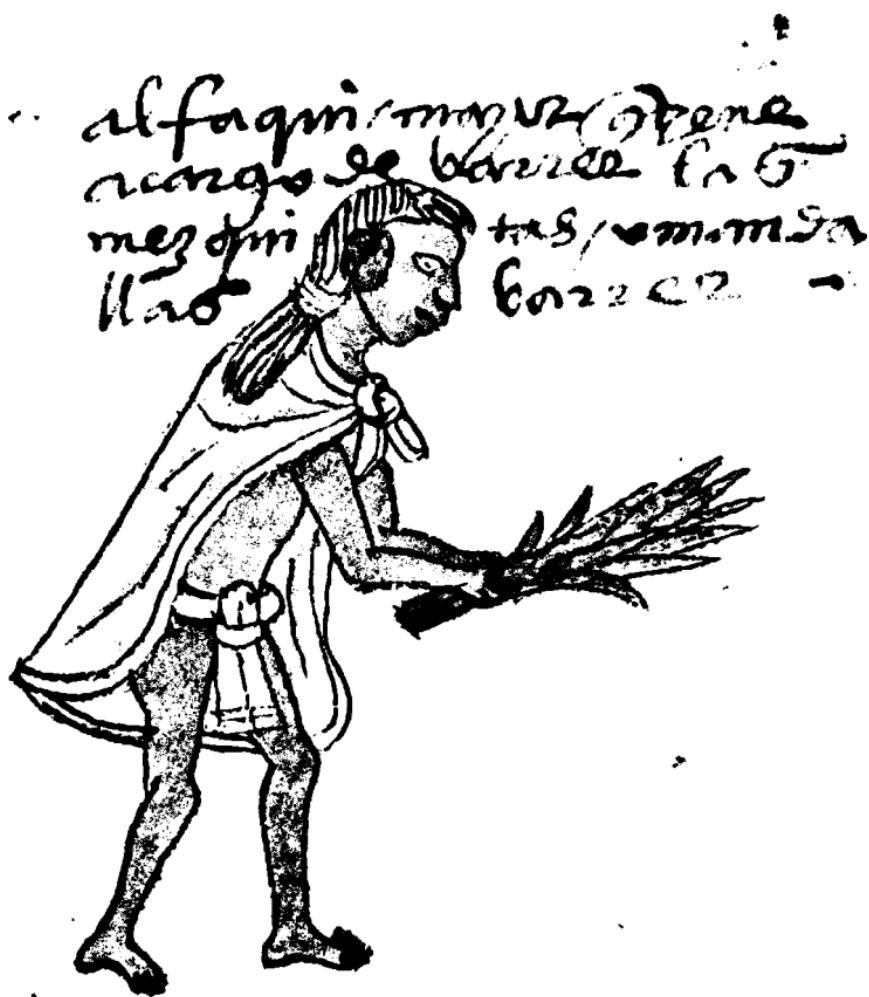


Figure 13. The "high priest" whose duty is to see that the temples are swept. Illustration in the Codex Mendoza (1938:63r). (Courtesy of Michael D. Coe, Yale University.)

Sahagún (1981:I, 45) explains that this was because of the winds and dusts that preceded the onset of the rains. The image is fitting because of Quetzalcoatl's priestly, penitential character. Tezcatlipoca brings the dust; Quetzalcoatl sweeps it away; then the rain gods send their purifying waters.

When the mat-makers held their festival to the rain god Nappatecuhtli, they spread new mats before his image and they swept and cleaned so that

not one bit of filth lay fallen about (*atle retztoc, ge tlazolli*; Sahagún 1953–82:I, 45). The ritual created an ordered center—with the four-sided mat corresponding to the four directions and with the removal of all trash—appropriate to the service of this god of cleansing rain.

The renewal of world order demanded the removal of *tlazolli*, lest the new structure be contaminated even at its inception. Therefore, during the New Fire Ceremony that ushered in a new 52-year cycle (Sahagún 1953–82:VII, 25):

nouian tlātlachpanoia, tlatetzcalolo, tlanaoac tlauico, auctle uetztoia in techachan.

Everywhere things were swept, things were swept smooth, things were carried aside, no longer did anything lie fallen in people's houses.

After the ceremony the houses were resupplied with all new utensils, mats, clothing, and so forth (Sahagún 1953:82:VII, 31).

Sweeping was intimately linked with female fertility, since *tlazolli* was a fertile force derived from the maternal earth. Goddesses conceived magically while sweeping: Huitzilopochtli, the Mexicas' tutelary deity, was conceived when Coatlicue, an aspect of the earth goddess, tucked into her skirt a clump of feathers—a bit of *tlazolli*—which she should have swept up; Quetzalcoatl was conceived when Chimalman found and swallowed a piece of jade—a symbol of purity and centrality, a result of sweeping rather than something to be swept up (Mendieta 1980:82–83; Sahagún 1953–82:III, 2). The character of the offspring expresses the same opposition: the warlike, portentous Huitzilopochtli, under whom the wild Mexica migrate from the periphery to the center; and the priestly penitent Quetzalcoatl, embodiment of the moral and social order of Tollan.

Brooms were integral to the accoutrements, and sweeping to the rites, of the earth goddesses. This could only remind the friars of European witches, who in late medieval and Renaissance descriptions had the same association with broomsticks that they have today (Caro Baroja 1965). This would have reinforced the connection the friars made between these deities and the demonic powers.

Tlazolteotl wielded a broom as well as the cleansing waters. The association is strongest in regard to Toci 'Our Grandmother,' regent of the 20-day period called Ochpaniztli 'Sweeping the Roads.' During the Ochpaniztli rites, not only was there fervent sweeping of buildings and roads, but there were mock battles in which swords (*macualnuitl*) and brooms were symbolically equated, the brooms being inverted and brandished like

swords (Durán 1967:I, 144–49; Sahagún 1953–82:II, 112). By the sweeping, it was believed, “all the evils of the town would go away” (*Codex Telleriano-Remensis* 1964:3r; according to this text the festival honored Tlazol-teotl). The broom may be seen to occupy the same place in the female domain that the sword occupies in the male domain: a weapon against peripheral dangers, a means of defending the ordered, settled space of the city. There are similarities here to the equivalences between bearing a child and taking a captive, and between death in battle and in childbirth. (Heyden 1972 discusses the Ochpaniztli rites and their emphasis on sweeping and mock battles.)

The efficacy of brooms had to do with the fact that they were themselves made of *tlazolli*—grass or straw. Filth wards off filth: one way to cure the “filth death” was to commit transgressions even worse than those of the offending party (Ruiz de Alarcón 1982:195).¹⁵

During Ochpaniztli a bundle of grass was used to represent the goddess—she was a thing of impurities. The use of straws to represent misdeeds expelled from the body was mentioned earlier in this chapter. Ochpaniztli was a harvest rite, maize an offspring of the earth. Seler (1963:I, 123) interprets the purificatory aspects of the rite as a symbolic purification of the maize, an attempt to rid it of the taint it picked up from the earth, to make it safer for human consumption. It parallels the removal of the parents’ *tlazolli* from the child in the infant bathing rite.

This orientation toward sweeping continued after Christianization. Durán (1967:I, 65) complained that women were still getting up at dawn to sweep, as indeed they still do today. Mendieta (1980:419, 429) admired the reverence shown by old people, even nobles, who kept the churches and churchyards well swept, “keeping the custom of their ancestors in the time of their unbelief, who showed their devotion by sweeping the temples.” Motolinia (1971:90) recorded that when a priest took communion to a sick person’s home, Indians would walk ahead to sweep the road.¹⁶ Serna (1953:312, 323) observed that Indians swept and cleaned their houses in preparation for deer-hunting and fishing. Montoya Briones (1964:112) relates that the present-day Nahuas of Atla bury a small broom with their dead so that they may sweep in heaven; Ingham (1986:168) has also observed ritual uses of brooms.¹⁷

Friars used the image of sweeping in their preaching, but only rarely, considering its potency as a symbol of virtue. It was easily worked into Christian thought. Motolinia, for example, approved (naively, according to later writers) of the indigenous baptismal rite, seeing the little broom

as a symbol that the baptized must "sweep and clean their consciences and souls so that Christ could come to enter through baptism" (1971:207).

The religious play of the Final Judgment ascribed to Olmos, presumably a very early text, uses the image of sweeping quite effectively (in Horcasitas 1974). Allegorical figures represent Penitence, Time, the Church, Confession, and Death; Horcasitas (1974:565) notes that this sort of personification was rare in Nahuatl theater. The representation of confession bears the name Tlachpanaliztli 'Sweeping.' This figure speaks of how it daily calls upon people to reform their sinful ways (Horcasitas 1974:570):

momoztlaye niquincuitlahuiltia ma tlachpanaca; ma ixtozocan, ma yohuatzinco mehuecan, ma tlamacehuacan, ma cecemiquican quitoznequi, ma teoyotica qui-tlachpanilican in inyollia in imanima ma mozahuacan, ma tlacualizcahuaca.

Every day I urge them that they sweep things; that they examine themselves, that they arise at dawn, that they do penance, that they prepare for death; which means, may they in a sacred way sweep their souls, their "souls,"¹⁸ may they fast, may they abstain from food.

Here sweeping as a devotional act is made to stand as a metaphor for confession, the spiritual "sweeping" of the soul. Because people persist in their corruption, Christ decides that it is time for the Final Judgment. He announces to Saint Michael (Horcasitas 1974:578):

ca nitlachpanaz, ca nicchipahuaz in ilhuicac ihuan in tlalticpactli. Ca huel otlacatzauhque in tlalticpatlaca in yolque ihuan i mimicque; pampa in imacualnemiliz.

Indeed, I shall sweep, I shall purify heaven and earth. For greatly the people of earth, the living and the dead, have dirtied things, because of their bad life.

Like Quetzalcoatl, Christ appears as a sweeper of the cosmos.

Later texts exhibit less direct adoption of the image. In Sahagún's *Exercicio* (1574:38v) preparation for communion includes sweeping, not literally but "within" the penitent, to clear away sins:

notech monequi mochi nictopehuaz in notlahtacol huel nitlaechpanaz huel nitla-cuicuiz in nihtic yhuan nitlahahuiliz nitlaatzelhuiz yn nihtic nixayotica.

It is necessary that I push away all of my sins, that I sweep well, that I pick things up well within myself and that I water things, that I sprinkle water [as if preparatory to sweeping] within myself with my tears.

Nahua ritual sweeping loses its status as a purificatory, or even a devotional act, and is converted into a metaphor for spiritual purification.¹⁹

Later in the same meditation the fate of those who fail to do this is described (Sahagún 1574:4ir-4iv):

ca yn aquique yn quimocelilia yn sanctissimo sacramento yn amo huel omocen-cauhque yn amo huel otlachpāque amo huel otlacuicuique yn imihtic yn occequi temictiani tlatlacolli çan oquicauhç ca niman ic miqui yn imanima niman ymac huetzi yn tlacatecolotl Judas yhuampohuam mochihua.

Indeed, those who receive the most holy sacrament who have not prepared themselves well, who have not swept well, who have not picked things up well within themselves, who have just left some mortal sin, indeed thereby their souls then die, then they fall into the hands of the *tlacatecolotl*, they become the companions of Judas.

In his sermons Sahagún tells the sinner to “sweep the road of your soul” (*xochpanili ý māta*): the way is obstructed with sins as if it were a road blocked with stones and trees (1563:6r–6v). Since *tetl* and *cuahuitl*, stone and tree or wood, symbolized punishment for transgressions, the image is particularly rich. In the *Psalmodia christiana* Sahagún describes Saint Clare, founder of the women’s branch of the Franciscan order, as a hard worker whose activities, like those of a virtuous Nahua woman, included sweeping and washing things (*tlachpanaia, tlapacaia*)—an example of a usage not restricted to the spiritual metaphor (Sahagún 1583:147r).

Molina, citing David in Psalm 17, uses an image of sweeping in regard to the spiritual strengthening resulting from Confirmation: God “swept all my roads” so that I may make war on my enemies (Molina 1569:87v). The passage implies a relationship between sweeping and warfare, such as was expressed in the Ochpaniztli rites. It associates the virtuous act of sweeping with the Christian God.

The Dominican *doctrina* (1944:87r) and Fray Juan de la Anunciación (1577:11v) describe the way to heaven as a swept road, *ochpantli*.

An unwillingness to accept a native concept which, unlike bathing, did not have a parallel in Christian ideology may explain why this usage is relatively rare. In native thought sweeping was felt to have a real effect in upholding moral order. In Christian thought it could be a metaphor for spiritual action, but actual sweeping could only be the show of devotion to the sacred which Mendieta so admired. An awareness of the same in regard to washing did not prevent the friars from adopting its imagery. The symbolism of bathing was inherent in orthodox Christian doctrine; symbolism of sweeping was not. Although bathing and sweeping operated in the Nahua mind on the same symbolic principles, the fact that one was

familiar to the friars and the other was not led to a more widespread acceptance and usage of the former.

CLEANLINESS AS GODLINESS

As they denigrated the devils for their filth and rottenness, the friars extolled the purity of the Christian sacred. Although in native practice one had to be ritually pure in order to approach or impersonate deities, the gods themselves were not in general conceived of as pure. The rift that Christian teaching tried to open between good God and evil Devil was likewise a rift between cleanliness and filthiness. Sacred beings are credited with a degree of purity alien to the native gods; indeed, for them to have been so pure would have robbed them of their power to disrupt and create. But as a means of attaching to the Christian beings symbolism of moral order and authority, this rhetorical mode was very useful.

Escalona describes heaven as a pure place (n.d.:128v). As Saint John says in Revelation 21:27, *ca atle tliltic ca atle catzauac calaquiz yn ilhuicac* 'nothing black, nothing dirty will enter heaven' (159v). Citing the Beatitudes from the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:8), he says (148r):

quemach uel yevantin yn chipauacayolloque, ca uel yeuātin quimotilizque yn yntouch yn dios.

Fortunate are they who are possessors of pure hearts; indeed, they will be able to see their deity, God.

One must purify one's heart with faith so that one will see Christ. The Dominican *doctrina* describes God, his home, and all who dwell there as *chipahuac* 'pure.' God is so pure that all purity in heaven and earth appears dirty (*catçauac*) by comparison (*Doctrina cristiana* 1944:14v, 15r, 16v–17r). This text also includes Saint John's statement about heaven (137v):

ca amo tley catçaualiztli amo no tley tetlahelti ōpa calaquiz in itlatocahantzincó in dios in ilhuicac.

Indeed, nothing dirty nor anything revolting will enter there in God's royal home in heaven.

The Devil, who is black, dirty, and stinking, is served with sin and dirt; however (129v):

in toueylatocauh nelli Dios ca occentlamantli inic tlayecultilo: ca yieuantin in itetcinco poui ca chipauacanemiliztica quimotlayecultilia: yuan chipauacatalna-

miquiliztca: yuan chipauacatloltica: yehica ca cenquizca chipauac in toueyteyo-cuxcatzin.

Our great ruler the true God, indeed he is served by other things. Indeed, they who pertain to him serve him with pure lives, and pure thoughts, and pure words, because our great creator is completely pure.

Fray Pedro de Gante (1553:159r) teaches that only the pure of heart may say the responses during mass. Those who go about dirty with sin—the drunkards, thieves, liars, and all who devote themselves to wickedness—may not even approach the altar until they abandon their sins.

Fray Juan de la Anunciación, in his sermons for Candlemas, includes the popular passages from Revelation 21 and the Sermon on the Mount (1577:138r):

ca amo tle tliltic, atle catzahuac, atle tetlayelti, calaquiz yn ichátzinco totecuiyo DIOS. . . . Quemmach vel yehuantin yn chipauatica yn inyollo, ca yehuantin quimacehuazque, ynic quimotilizque in totecuiyo DIOS.

Indeed, nothing black, nothing dirty, nothing revolting will enter the home of our lord God. . . . Fortunate are they whose hearts are pure; indeed, they will merit that they see our lord God.

This equation of purity of heart with purity of soul was possible because the heart was the seat of the soul and could represent it by a metonymic substitution. For the Nahuas also, the heart was the seat of the animate force or *teyolia*, though the relationship was more complex than that between container and contained. To provide life force was a function of the heart itself as well as of the animate principle dwelling within it. *Tollotl* ‘heart’ is an abstraction of the verb *yoli* ‘to come to life’; this verb is the root of *teyolia* as well. The two elements share somewhat in each other’s nature.

Anunciación plays upon Nahua aesthetics, using *teyotica* to relate the physical with the spiritual (1577:39r):

yn iquac aca anquitta in cenza chipauac in atle ytech neci catzaualiztli, ca vel anquimauicōa vel anquipaccaya yn ichipaualiz. çan no yuh mochiua teyotica, ca in totecuiyo DIOS, yn iquac quimotilia in ca chipauati ca in amanima, in atle ypan ca temictiani tlatlacolli, vel quimopaccaytilia, yuan vel quomotlaçotilia.

When you see someone who is very pure, on whom no dirtiness appears, indeed you marvel at, you see with pleasure his or her purity. Likewise it happens in a sacred way; indeed our lord God, when he sees that your souls are pure, that there is no mortal sin on them, he sees them with great pleasure, and he loves them well.

In a similar passage, *Anunciación* (1577:189r) notes how all desire purity of the body, thinking that no one will want to look at them if they are black and dirty. In the same way, purity of the soul—which does not appear on the surface—is precious to God. The Nahuas' admiration for physical purity became a metaphor for God's attitude toward spiritual purity, with an attempt to transfer that admiration from the former object to the latter.

In the *Psalmodia christiana* God, speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai, declares himself completely pure (*nicenquizca chipaoac*; Sahagún 1583:9v). Christ is described as pure and fragrant (18v). After death, Saint Francis's body remained very pure and did not rot (*amo palan*; 193v).

Among the heavenly beings, the popularity of the Marian cult ensured that Mary was particularly exalted for her purity, owing to her conception free from original sin and her perpetual virginity. This theme appears again and again in the texts. Fray Pedro de Gante (1553:73r) defines her status:

In tonantzin yn sancta Maria cenqzca ichpochtli, amo teotl çan cenqzca chipahua-cachuapilli, ca yeuatzin yn toé. Jesu xpo oqmopepenili ynic quimonantitzino mo-chipa cenqzca chipahuacayotica qmopielaya: atley yn manel çan achitzin ytech quimaxitili in tlatlacolli.

Our revered mother Saint Mary is completely virgin: she is not a god, just a completely pure noblewoman. It is she whom our lord Jesus Christ chose to become his mother. Always he kept her completely pure. No sin, not even a little one, reached her.

Fray Juan de la Anunciación's sermon (1577:179r) on the Assumption of Mary distinguishes between her nature and that of ordinary humans:

ca timuchintin ticauhthui in totlalnacayo tlallan mocauhtiuh oncan palani in yaya, tlalli mocuepa.

Indeed, we all, when we go to leave our earthen body it is placed under the ground; there it rots, it stinks, it turns into earth.

But in Mary's case, after she had been dead a little while she came back to life. She was very shiny and resplendent. Her body

amo palā amo oculoac amono tlalli mocuep, amo yhyax amono ytlacauh:

did not rot, did not fill with worms, did not turn into earth, did not stink, nor did it become corrupt.

God performed this wondrous thing because of the complete purity (*icen-quizcachipaualiz*) of her soul and body. The friar goes on to apply this lesson to his audience, exhorting them to live purely in soul and body, in order to attain favors from God. The *Psalmodia christiana*, in its songs for the Assumption, states simply that Mary's body did not become like the body of a dead person but was very pure and resplendent. When she came back to life, she was so resplendent that she outshone the moon and the sun (Sahagún 1583:153r–154r). The song for the Conception of Mary explains how she, metaphorically identified with the symbolic center terrestrial paradise,²⁰ escaped contamination with original sin (Sahagún 1583: 224r–225r):

SEGVNDO Psalmo

YN iquac oapachiuuh in cemanaoac: ca chichicatl, ca teouatl ipan omaman in tlalicipactli, ic cenca oitlacauh in tlalli, aocmo cenca vel itech muchiuia in tonacaiutl.

Vei tlatequipanoliztli itech monequi inic muchiuaz in tonacaiutl: amo iuhqui in vmpa Parayso terrenal, ca çan monomachiua in isquich vmpa muchiuhtoc.

In tlatlaculli, in oquichiuuh in achto tota, in itoca Peccado original, iuhquin ma tequisquiatl, tlaelatl in ipan poui, inic oapachiuuhque in isquichti Animasme.

Oquitlacauh in toieliz, amo iuhca in tanima: auh in tonacaio mocucuani, mi-quini: in tanima tlatlacoani, vetzini.

In manel veueinti Sanctome, ipan ouetzque in tequisquiatl, in tlaelatl, in itoca Peccado original.

çan izeltzi in iteusuchitlatzin Dios, in iehoatzi ciuapilli sancta Maria, amo itet-zinco oacic in tequisquiatl, in tlaelatl, in Peccado original.

TERCERO Psalmo

YN iuh quimopiali in Dios Parayso terrenal, in amo itech acic in tequisquiatl: çan no iuh quimopiali in totecuio Dios, in itlaçoanima, in iehoatzi ciuapilli sancta Maria.

Iehica, ca in isquich qualli, iectli, itechezinco cenquiztoc, in isquich virtudes, yoan in itetlauhtiltzin in Spiritu sancto: auh in teutzopeliliztli, in teuauiaializtli, itechezinco cenquiztoc.

Second Psalm

When the world was inundated, indeed bitter water, sea water spread upon the earth, thus the land was very damaged. Crops can no longer grow upon it well.

Great labor is required so that crops will grow. It is not so there in terrestrial Paradise, for everything that lies growing there just grows by itself.

The sin which our first father did, which is called "original sin," is considered as nitrous water, foul water, with which all souls were inundated.

It damaged our being, not so our soul, but our flesh is prone to sickness, is mortal. Our soul is a sinner, prone to fall.

Even the great saints fell into the nitrous water, the foul water, which is called "original sin." Her alone, God's sacred flower garden, the noblewoman Saint Mary, the nitrous water, the foul water, "original sin," did not reach.

Third Psalm

God so guarded terrestrial Paradise that the nitrous water did not reach it; likewise our lord God guarded the precious soul of the noblewoman Saint Mary.

Therefore, all that is good, right, lies all together with her; all the virtues, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and sacred sweetness, sacred fragrance lie all together with her.

She is, "in a sacred way," like a flower, perfectly pure. The praises of various saints, which were part of the readings for this day in many sixteenth-century editions of the Roman breviary, are included. Saint Bernard is quoted as stating (Sahagún 1583:225v):

in inacaiotzi in ciuapilli, maciui in itech oquiz in Adam, çan amo itech oací in icatzaoliz in Adam.

The body of the noblewoman, although it derived from Adam, Adam's dirt just did not reach it.

The sacred is set apart by its purity. Nahua imagery of polluting substances, in indigenous usage a means of persuading people to live rightly, is manipulated to encourage respect toward the sacred beings of Christianity.

SUMMARY

Symbolism of pollution, because of the emotive force it had in native usage, was perhaps the friars' most potent rhetorical tool for impressing their moral concepts on the Nahua mind. However, as with the *tlatlacolli* concept, the adoption of the *tlazolli* complex into Christianity created a strong continuity between native and Christian thought. The friars' association of the moral with the pure, and the immoral with the tainted, was fully consistent with Nahua thought. Their attempt utterly to reject the impure violated the Nahua sense of balance between purity and filth, but, since this rejection depended on an underlying good/evil dichotomy, it may not have come across to the Nahuas at all convincingly. Perhaps more successful was their effort to link filth with the devils and purity to morally positive Christian beings. As with center and periphery symbolism, such usage may have furthered a distinction between morally positive and morally negative supernatural beings, even if such a good/evil distinction did not pervade the whole cosmos.

The friars attempted to use filth as a metaphor for an intangible moral

pollution having no physical manifestation but pertaining to an immaterial, spiritual level of reality which existed in a dichotomous relationship with a physical world. The use of such tropes to describe a moral condition was easily accepted, but the monist character of Nahua reality and the very physiological nature of Nahua pollution beliefs caused the figures to be translated into metonymic expressions operating within a single domain of existence. Within this domain, metaphors drawn between the realms of moral and physical pollution slipped easily into metonymy because of the close links among all varieties of *tlazolli*. Persuasive as the friars' usage of pollution symbolism was—and the Nahuas' acceptance of baptism and confession as purification rites suggests that it was convincing—such tropes were operating within a Nahua frame of reference.

CHAPTER 5

Abstinence and Excess

Control of one's passions and appetites, the attainment of moral merit through self-deprivation—these were goals of the moral Nahua as well as the moral Christian. Motivations differed: the Nahua desired to maintain bodily equilibrium, avoid pollution, and obtain divine favor; the Christian aimed to overcome temptation, avoid evil, and atone for sins. Both ideologies incorporated a rationale of moderation between extremes as well as a rationale of avoidance. The former tends to be stronger in Nahua thought; the latter stronger in Christian. This chapter examines how the ideals of moderation and of penitential self-denial were expressed in the moral dialogue, with particular attention to sexual matters and those acts which Christian doctrine classified as gluttony.

“NOTHING IN EXCESS”

Nahua ethics prescribed a careful way of life to which the Delphic inscription applies well. In a slippery world filled with peripheral and polluting dangers, care must be taken lest one fall under their control. Yet at the other extreme lay sterility and stagnation: in the absence of a good/evil dualism, it is the middle way which is best. Extremes, though not necessarily to be avoided completely, must be balanced against each other;

as Klor de Alva points out, it is not so much an ethic of the "golden mean" as of an overall equilibrium (1987b).

According to Sahagún's informants, the rulers told their daughters (Sahagún 1953–82: VI, 93):

haieccan in tlalticpac, amo pacoia, amo vellamachoia: çan mjtoa ciauhcapacoia, chichinacapacoia in tlalticpac, iuh conjtotivi in vevetque: injc amo cemjcac tichocatinemjzque, injc amo titlaoculmquizque in timaceoalti: iehoatl techmomaqujli in totecujo, in vtzqujztl, in cochiztli: auh ie in tonacaiuti in tochicaoaca, in tooapaoaca: auh iequene ie iehoatl in tlalticpacaiotl, injc nepixolo.

The earth is not a good place, it is not a place of happiness, not a place of contentment. It is said that the earth is just a place of tired happiness, a place of painful happiness. As the old men go saying: so that we vassals would not live forever weeping, so that we would not die of sadness, our lord gave us laughter, sleep; and sustenance, our becoming strong, our growing up; and, moreover, earthliness [sexuality], in order that people be planted.

Ehecatl created pulque in order to give people joy—Ehecatl, an aspect of the culture-bringer Quetzalcoatl, not the discordant Tezcatlipoca (*Histoire du Mechique*, in Garibay 1979:107).¹

Life on the slippery earth has its god-given compensations, which are there to be savored provided one does so in moderation (López Austin 1980:I, 279). The term the friars used to express their concept of moderation was *tlaixyeyecoliztli*, literally, "tasting things with the eyes," or "tasting things on the surface" (from *ixtli* 'eye, face, or surface' and *yeyecoa* 'to taste or sample'): a prescription not for avoidance but for precaution, for not plunging too deeply into things.² Life is a process of give and take: in return for sustenance, joy, and children one must accept gradual contamination and disintegration; a careful lifestyle slows the process. Excess was often expressed with the verbal intensifier *tequi-*, meaning that the action of the subsequent verb is done very much or too much (there is no distinction between the "very" and the "too"). Sexual excess was expressed as *abuilenmiliztli* 'pleasurable living'; the licentious or public woman³ was an *abuiani* 'one who habitually has a good time.' Immorality stems from an inordinate focus on pleasure to the exclusion of serious pursuits, not from an evil inhering in all worldly pleasures.

Nahua children, especially those of the nobility, were (at least ideally) raised according to a strict regimen. They were expected to occupy themselves in useful labors and were given limited amounts of food (the *Codex Mendoza* gives a detailed, though perhaps exaggerated, account). Instilling filial obedience and repressing libidinal urges were obvious functions of

such a regimen, and Nahua ideology made this the sensible way to behave. The less one ate, the more slowly one became contaminated with the *tlazolli* from foods. This was particularly important for children: they were more susceptible than adults to *tlazolmiquiztli* illnesses, and earthly forces could stunt their growth. The *tonalli*, linked to the sun's warmth, was responsible for growth; any harm to the *tonalli* could disrupt that process. Thus sex, which endangered the *tonalli*, was forbidden at a young age. Children had to be lifted from the earth's surface during an earthquake or they would not grow, as though the force of the *tlazolli*-laden earth overcame the *tonalli*'s power to pull the child up from it in growth (López Austin 1980:I, 244, 274).

The corrupting effect of food is perhaps nowhere so well expressed as in Durán's account of Motecuhzoma Ilhuicamina's⁴ messengers to Coatlicue, mother of the god Huitzilopochtli, at the utopic Coatepec. Because of the rich foods they eat and the cacao they drink, and their fancy clothes, the envoys sink in the sand unable to climb the sacred mountain. The locals, who live in poverty and simplicity, do not even make footprints in the sand. Furthermore, while the Mexica have passed through many generations, these folks have not aged since Huitzilopochtli's departure (Durán 1967:II, 222–24). The Mexica have had tremendous political success, but their wealth has corrupted them, rendering them unfit for life in paradise. The tale also shows that Tenochtitlan was only a symbolic replication of the true, mythical utopic center.

Work was important because idleness dirtied the liver. Once this happened the contaminated individual would be led into a life of immoral deeds (López Austin 1980:I, 210). According to the *Codex Mendoza* (1938:69v–70r), the idle youth who failed to learn a useful trade would become a vagabond—a person of disordered peripheral movement—and would therefore end up a thief, a ball-player or a gambler at the *patolli* game.

The basic model is that of a system in equilibrium, the body as a microcosm subject to the same disorders and dangers as the universe. López Austin's (1980) analysis of Nahua body symbolism shows how pervasive and well-developed these concepts were. It can be thought of as an equilibrium between "hot" and "cold" forces; although the texts do not often speak in those terms, such an ordering is implicit and consistently expressed. Work heats one up; rest cools one. Sexual arousal is hot; its satisfaction cooling. Drinking pulque is cooling. Too little work, too much sex, too much tippling, and one has thrown oneself out of equilibrium

and into the cold clutches of *tlazolli*. Excesses in the other direction will also bring on illnesses. Hence a rationale for moderation, and also for deferred gratification: older people have stronger *tonalli* and can better afford to indulge in life's little pleasures.

Soustelle (1950) observed that there were two conflicting value systems in Aztec culture: the warrior ethic, and the ideal of control, moderation, and the "just mean." He places these in a temporal framework, assuming that the warrior ideal dominated during the Mexicas' rise to power; then, after the Empire was established, there was a change in the "collective psychology" toward this moderate ideal. This may be true of the Mexica themselves; however, the moderate ideal was not something they invented but existed alongside the warrior ethic as the "Toltec" ideal. The opposition in value systems is the same as that between order and chaos. It is inevitable, and desirable—the functioning of the state, like that of the cosmos, requires the proper balance between them.

The Aztec educational system reflected these contrasting values. Boys of the commoner class received an education directed toward warfare; noble youths often participated in warfare but their education prepared them for priestly and administrative duties as well. The behavior of the youths of commoner rank was not as strictly controlled as that of the nobles: the *Florentine Codex* describes the lifestyle in the former's schools as "not very good" (Sahagún 1953–82:III, 58). Some sexual freedom was permitted them, while denied to noble boys who were expected to maintain the purity commensurate with their rank and the strong *tonalli* required for rulership (López Austin 1980:I, 354).

Immoral behavior gave one a certain power for activities like war and gaming. Motolinia (1971:381) and Alvarado Tezozomoc (1975:228) furnish an excellent example of this. Describing the ball game, they explain that a player who put the ball through the ring (in Tezozomoc this is a hole in the ground at the court's center) was declared a thief or adulterer, who would soon die in war or in punishment for the latter offense. The fiercest warriors—and their women—were allowed to flare up and burn out quickly, as befits their function: if they were laden with peripheral and polluting stuff, all the better for them to go off and tackle foreign enemies. Thus, the *Florentine Codex* defines the tribute or duty of fierce warriors as death; those whose duty it is to rule are humble weepers and sighers (Sahagún 1953–82:VI, 110).

The records of Nahua culture stress the ideal of moderation, partly because they tend to be derived from the nobility, partly because the warrior

ethic was less relevant after the Spanish Conquest, but also because the warrior in his most extreme, his fiercest and bravest form (as exemplified by those granted the special status of "Otomí"⁵), is not so much a moral ideal as a special-function anti-ideal—immorality for a purpose.

Ideal behavior entailed not only diligence and temperance but a whole range of careful behaviors calculated to minimize one's exposure to dangerous and disintegrating forces. The importance of careful walking was noted in Chapter Three. Similar caution was encouraged in eating, speaking, sleeping, dressing, and sexual activity (Bautista 1600b; Motolinia 1971:308; Sahagún 1953–82:VI, chaps. 18–21). An adage recorded by Sahagún (1953–82:VI, 231) states: *Tlacoqualli*⁶ *in monequi* 'the middle good is necessary.' The exegesis applies this to dress: one should not wear rags (*tzotzomatli*), nor should one dress too pompously. Filth must be avoided, but one should not go too far in the opposite direction.

To care for oneself in this way showed that one honored and esteemed oneself, and this was a positive trait—not Christianity's most mortal sin of pride. Of a person who hedged his or her words, not dishonoring him- or herself by laughing and joking in public, the sages said: *mixtilia, momaviztilia* 'he or she esteems, honors, him- or herself'; this was intended in a complimentary sense (Sahagún 1953–82:VI, 248). Too much self-absorption was bad, but a moderate amount was healthy.

The friars preached moderation, though with a tendency to disvalue pleasure. Bodily desire is an enemy to be vanquished, not a need that must be cautiously satisfied in order to maintain equilibrium; the flesh must be denigrated to exalt the soul. Good and evil appear again, attempting to manipulate an order/disorder model into their terms.

Escalona asks (n.d.:197r):

yn tonacayo tlein quinequi? ca çā yeyyo yn quimicoltitinemi yn auilnemiliztli, çā tequitlaquatine Miznequi, tequicochtinemiznequi, tlauelilocatinemiznequi, auh yn totº quimonequiltia tictlacaualtizq yn tonacayo, amo ticchiuazque yn tlein quinequi:

What does our body want? Indeed, it just goes about longing for pleasurable living, it just wants to go about eating a lot, it wants to go about sleeping a lot, it wants to go about being wicked. But our lord desires that we make our body abstain, that we not do what it wants.

The soul accepts penitence in order to be saved (238v):

Auh yn tenacayo Cuix quicelia yn tlamaceualiztli? Cuix qnequi yn tlaihiyouiliztli. Ca niman amo quicelia: Ca çā pactinemiznequi, teqtlaquaznequi, tequiatliznequi, tequicochiznequi, Camo quitlacamatiznequi yn tanima.

But one's body, does it perhaps accept penitence? Does it perhaps want suffering? It does not accept it at all. It just wants to go about being happy, it wants to eat a lot, it wants to drink a lot, it wants to sleep a lot, it does not want to obey our soul.

The soul and the body battle with one another like Christ and the Devil; rather than constituting a self-regulating whole, the self is divided against itself.

In the pairing of virtues with the mortal sins that they counteract, temperance is the remedy for gluttony. According to the Dominican *doctrina*, in order that we guard ourselves and make war here on earth (1944:148r):

techmomaquia yn toucitatocauh in icuepca yn nexhuitiliztli ytoca tlayxehecoliztli ynic tlayxehecozque anoço ipan yn qualoni āoço yhualoni. Ca amo monequi ticmacazque yn toyauh in tonacayo in quexquich quinequi/ čan titlayxehecozque ynic amo techmotlacahuatiz yn diablo.

Our great ruler gives us the reversing of gluttony, called moderation, in order that we be moderate, perhaps in what is edible, or perhaps in what is potable. For it is necessary that we not give our enemy, our body, whatever it wants, that we just be moderate, lest the Devil enslave us.

For Fray Domingo de la Anunciación (1565:61r), *tlaixyeyecoliztli* is *abstinēcia*, with which gluttony and drunkenness are pushed away. In these texts it is not pleasure which is a divine gift, but rather the ability to resist pleasure. Christianity is in direct opposition to Nahua ideology.

As a remedy for lust, Olmos recommends (Baudot 1976:46):

Amo cenza tlaqualtiloz yn cauallo ynezca tenacayo inic amo mopoaz atlamatiz cuecuenotiz yn amo axixpan, cuiatlapan, tlatzolhpan, temayauiz tetlaçaz monequi ic neçaloaloz, tlaqualizcaoaloz, tlaixeeccoloz.

One will not eat very much; the fast is the body's sign that it will not esteem itself, will not be presumptuous, will not become proud, will not hurl one down, will not cast one down into the urine, the excrement, the filth; thus it is necessary that one fast, that one abstain from food, that one be moderate.

Bodily vices are interconnected: fasting from food reduces sexual passion. Whatever reasons people give for an inability to avoid lust, it is really because they do not abstain from food, they do not "taste with the eyes" (Baudot 1976:48). The ideal of moderation, which in Nahua thought

applies to sex and other pleasures as well as food, is here applied only to eating. Eating was a necessary evil, but even moderate sexual activity could be avoided.

The circumspect behavior required of young Nahuas impressed the friars. They occasionally prescribed similar behavior patterns, mainly in the interest of preserving chastity rather than maintaining an overall state of equilibrium. Olmos, drawing upon his own collection of rhetoric, advises his listener not to frequent the marketplace or remain in the streets and waterways—where lurks the *tlacatecolotl*—nor to pay great attention to bodily adornment (Baudot 1976:54).

The sixth admonition in Sahagún's *Apéndiz* (1579b:4v–6v) is an adaptation to Christian ends of the *Florentine Codex* oration for young men in the *calmecac* school (Sahagún 1953–82:VI, chap. 40). Parallel patterns of movement, dress, eating and drinking, keeping vigils, and humility before one's betters are prescribed. But instead of getting up to sweep and burn incense, the boy will get up to make the sign of the cross and pray the Christian prayers. He will honor the bishops and archbishops, the Emperor, the kings, viceroys, and dukes. He will avoid Jews, Moors, Turks, and heretics. He will not stare at women nor associate with wicked women (Anderson 1983 and Dibble 1988 discuss this text and its relation to the *Florentine*).

Sahagún and Anunciación present a model behavioral pattern for young women with a strong flavor of indigenous oratory, though adapted to their concern with chastity and to Mary as an embodiment of female virtue. In his sermon for the Conception of Mary, Sahagún (1563:93r) advises girls on how they should guard their virginity:

macayac oquichtli ixco titlachiaz macayac oquichtli tiquixvetzquiliz, macayac oquichtli ticcaquiliz yn itlatol, macayac oçhtli ticmocniuhiz. Intla itla mitzmacaz amo ticcuiz, intla itla mitzitlaniliz amo ticmacaz xicmalhui ý monacayo yoā xicmalhui ý moyollo inic atle ticchivaz iyolitlacoloca rº dios.

You will look at no man's face, you will smile at no man, you will listen to no man's words, you will befriend no man. If he gives you something you will not take it, if he asks you for something you will not give it. Protect your body and protect your heart so that you do nothing that is an offense to our lord God.

Parents should guard and punish their daughters

inic amo in ixpá motemazque oquichtli amo teixpá maaltizque, amo quiztinemizque amo vetcatinemizque, amo maaviltitinemizque.

so that they do not take a sweatbath in front of a man, they do not bathe in front of people, they do not go about going out, they do not go about laughing, they do not go about enjoying themselves.

And Anunciación, on the Visitation of Mary, tells girls to follow her example (1577:165r):

Macamo tepan xiquiztinemican macamo xitecalpanotinēca, macamo tianquizco xi-huecauacan, macamo tetlā ximotlatlalicā, macamo otica ximoquetzacā, macamo xiquinnonotzacan in oquichtin, macamo xiteixhuetzquilican.

Do not go about passing by people, do not go about from house to house. Do not linger in the marketplace, do not sit here and there among people, do not stand in the road, do not address men, do not smile at people.

The difference in motivation between this and native oratory is revealed where Anunciación says of Mary (1577:165r):

Auh yn iquac moquixtitzino çan micihuititia mocxitotoquiltitia, ynic amo ytoz:

And when she went out she just rushed, she just hurried her feet, so that she would not be seen.

She kept her head down and did not look at people. The Nahua mother told her daughter *not* to “hurry her feet” very much (*amo cenza tixxitotocaz*) but to walk steadily and deliberately, and neither lower her head nor raise it (Sahagún 1953–82:VI, 100). Hurrying is uncautious; rapid movement is risky and stirs up dust.⁷ Preoccupied with chastity, the friars violated the ideal of moderation at the same time that they endorsed *tlaixyeyecoliztli*.

Molina’s discussion (1569:115r–115v) of temperance presents a somewhat more moderate view. He asks the confessing Nahua whether he or she was moderate (*tiquixyehoco*) in bodily comforts, including food, drink, and clothing; then whether *tiquixyehoco ym motlaelpaqiliz* ‘you moderated your foul happiness,’ in having intercourse with his or her spouse. Then he inquires whether the penitent was immoderate in performing penances, so greatly afflicting his or her body with fasts, vigils and self-flagellation that it became sick. For it is necessary that *yxquich tiquixyehecoz* ‘you moderate everything,’ for the body is but weak earth and mud, however fervent the soul’s desire. Though based on a soul/body model, and seemingly intended to counter the severe penitential exercises to which the Nahuas were partial, the passage is consistent with Nahua ideals.

Sahagún’s sermons (1563:10v) compare the lazy person who oversleeps (*titequicochini titlatzirini* ‘you sleep too much, you are lazy’), while good

people get up to pray and attend mass, with a pig. This person is threatened not with some natural physiological outcome of idleness but with punishment by the *tzacatecolotl*, who will blind, dirty and blacken the sleepyhead.

Native concerns are placed in a Christian context when Sahagún (1563:76v) warns those who eat too much, get drunk, and overly adorn themselves that the poor, to whom they failed to be charitable, will accuse them before God of thus squandering his possessions.

Describing Christ as someone who wept a lot and never laughed, Sahagún (1563:77v–78r) enumerates various situations in which it is sinful to laugh: when laughing at sinners, the poor, an enemy, a friend, a parent, a priest; in the marketplace, in church, on the street; during a procession, during mass or catechism; while eating; when being praised or reproved. He also lists occasions on which it is licit to laugh, such as when greeting a friend, but he leaves little room for spontaneous gladness. In the *Apéndiz* (1579b:14r) he states outright that much laughter and much earthly happiness (as opposed to happiness in heaven, for which one must wait until after death) offend God.

Sahagún teaches in the *Addiciones* (1579a:10v) how to care for one's body, with charity and moderation. In order that one's body will obey one's soul, which in turn will obey God, one must give it just a moderate amount of food, and also water, mantles, garments, and medicine when it is sick. One must make it do labor, lessons, devotions, and prayers, and one must punish it if it wants to oversleep or esteem itself. One must not follow the example of those who overeat, get drunk, adorn themselves, and live lustfully, for they are following the road to *mictlan*. If one indulges one's body by overeating, drinking too much, oversleeping, or seeking embroidered mantles which one does not need, then it is clear that one loves one's body and not one's soul; this love is *itzlacauhltica*, misplaced or corrupt (1579a:13r). The goal of temperance is to subject the body to the soul, not to create a balanced equilibrium.

The abstinences and penances of saints were used as a model which the Indians should follow. The *Psalmodia christiana* text on Saint Clare contrasts her lifestyle with that of indigenous noblewomen (Sahagún 1583:146v–147v). Sahagún here draws upon his ethnographic work, particularly the description of the adornments of the noblewomen in the *Flor-entine Codex* (Sahagún 1953–82:VIII, 47–48). Noblewomen love good, flavorful foods and drinks, but Clare drank only water and ate only old tortillas and crusts of bread. In regard to dress:

In tlamachcueitl, iscoliuuhqui, quappachtenacazio, cacamuliuuhqui in ciuapipilti: auh in sancta Clara aiapupulli in oquimotlatquiti.

Tlamachuipilli, çolupilli, coiochcauipilli, nepapan tlaçouipilli in quiueinequi in ciuapipilti: auh in itlaçō in Dios, in sancta Clara, çan tequaqua tilmatli in comaqui, in itoca Cilicio.

Noblewomen [love] decorated skirts, with the curved eye design, with the brown cornerstone design, with the bedspread design. But Saint Clare dressed in coarse garments.

Noblewomen highly esteem decorated blouses, quail blouses, coyote fur blouses, various precious blouses. But God's beloved Saint Clare just put on an itchy mantle, called a hair shirt.

No "middle good" in dressing here—the more ragged and uncomfortable the clothing, the more virtuous was the wearer. The text continues:

MOTzoniectia, tlaamelaoa, moxeloazuia, mamouia, mastlaoa, tliaicatequi, quijsaicanepanoa in intzon, motzotzonquaquauhtia, inic muchichiua, in cemanaoac ciua: auh in sancta Clara, castultica in moxintiuia: çan no iuh quichiua in axca in ipilhoa.

Moxaoa, mistlapaloatzaluia, mistecuauia, motlannochezuia in tlatlacoani ciua: auh in itlaçō Dios in sancta Clara mistlapachotinenca.

Quiquitzinemi, vtli quitotocatinemi, caltzalan quiztinemi, tianquizco teistla quiztinemi, inic motenectia, motallani in ciua: auh in sancta Clara çan mocaltzacu.

They fix their hair, they curl it, they part it, they shampoo, they comb their hair, they cut it to the nose, they cut it to meet the nose, they fix their hair like horns: thus do the women of the world adorn themselves. But Saint Clare cut off her hair when she was fifteen. Her children [Franciscan nuns] today do likewise.

They make themselves up, they paint their faces with red powder, they paint their faces with yellow ochre, they color their teeth with cochineal, the sinful women. But God's beloved Saint Clare went about with her face lowered.

They are continually going out, they follow the roads about, they pass out among the houses, they go around in front of people in the marketplace, thus do the women make people desire them. They wish to be seen. But Saint Clare just enclosed herself.

Virtuous women have no hair at all, never look at people, and never go outside.

To the Nahua mind, there was nothing immoral about the personal adornments of the noblewomen; it was only in the context of Nahua-Christian interaction that they took on this character. Arvey (1988) describes the same process in regard to the treatment of "immoral" women in Sahagún's book on the "virtues and vices" of the people (1953-82:X). The hairstyles, dress, and cosmetics ascribed to these women connoted the excess sensuality and vanity associated with prostitutes in European cul-

ture and offensive to Franciscan taste. These were, however, as Arvey documents, the ordinary adornments of indigenous women.

The *Psalmodia christiana* (Sahagún 1583:81r) says of Saint James that he never drank wine or anything intoxicating, and he never ate meat. Fray Juan de la Anunciación (1577:160v) says of John the Baptist, elaborating on the biblical prophecy "he . . . shall drink neither wine nor strong drink" (Luke 1:15):

ayc oquic vino, amono quia in xococtli, in texococtli, in ayocli, in matzaoctli, in capulocli, in tlaoloctli, yn ixquich nepapan octli atle niman quic.

he never drank wine, nor did he drink hog-plum pulque, *texocotl*⁸ pulque, squash pulque, pineapple pulque, American-cherry pulque, dried-maize pulque, all the various pulques, he never drank any at all.

An ideal of total abstinence is presented, outlawing Spanish wine as well as all of Ehecatl's fermented gifts.

Anunciación recommends the scorning of earthliness. When the *tlacatecolotl* makes one think of overeating or drinking alcohol, one should think of Christ, hungry and thirsty, suffering on the cross. Good Christians greatly afflict their bodies with penances (none of Molina's caution here) while bad Christians give their bodies what they want: overeating, sleep, drinking alcohol, lustful living, and other "undoable" things (1577:152r). Elsewhere, giving "moderation" (*tlaxxyecoliztlí*), glossed in Spanish as *téplança*, as the virtue opposed to gluttony, he states that moderate eating and drinking is not a sin (1577:264r).

Recorded resistance to Christianity sometimes focused on the friars' denial of earthly pleasure. Martín Ocelotl, a Texcocan tried for sorcery by the Primitive Inquisition in 1536, was accused of countering Christian teaching with the assertion that, since we are born to die and there is no pleasure after death, one should take pleasure while alive. The pleasures mentioned are eating, drinking, having relations with one's neighbors' wives, and taking one's neighbors' goods (León-Portilla 1974:27; *Procesos de Indios* 1912:21). The latter three actions being more strongly controlled under indigenous law than under Christian, this is clearly an argument against Christianity, not simply an assertion of Nahua ideology. Lords of Tlaxcala, according to Muñoz Camargo (1978:164–65; León-Portilla 1974:27), thought the three Flemish friars who came in 1523 to be mad or sick, for at all hours they wept and cried out. They were without sense, for they did not seek pleasure and contentment but sadness and solitude.

To be always sad and afflicted violated the ideal of equilibrium. To be comfortable and idle did likewise. The *Relaciones geográficas*⁹ from

Nahuatl-speaking communities, collected between 1579 and 1582, reveal the pervasiveness and persistence of indigenous behavioral ideals even after the breakdown of the social controls that upheld them (Bernal 1957; Paso y Troncoso 1905–06:V, VI, VII). Over and over again, the native elders who served the Spanish officials as ethnographic informants explain the Indians' high mortality and morbidity rates (in the wake of the 1576–79 plague) in terms of the ease of post-Conquest life. To claim that the lives of Indians in 1579 were easy is obviously absurd: what these elders lament is the loss of the strict, ordered regimen of daily life. Nowadays people eat too many meals and too much meat, they drink too much, they marry too young, they wear too many and too warm clothes, they sleep in beds with blankets instead of on the floor, they do not work hard enough. Thus dissipated, they easily sicken and die. One *Relación* mentions the "sins of their ancestors," one "God's will" (Paso y Troncoso 1905–06:VI, 147; VII, 22), but a definite consensus existed in strikingly similar accounts from many different towns.

What is most interesting about this information is not that indigenous concepts were retained in spite of changed social circumstances, but that those changed circumstances were explained in terms of pre-existing ideology, were made to fit an extant pattern—the same pattern seen in the account of Motecuhzoma Ilhuicamina's envoys to Coatepec. Also, some of the behaviors in question were actually encouraged by friars and colonists: early marriage, to create new laborers and to forestall fornication (Carrasco 1975:197); additional clothing for modesty's sake. Wool from Spanish sheep replaced thinner cotton garb; its wear was imposed on the Indians to support Spanish sheep-herding interests. Though violating the indigenous ideal, these were not sins in the Spaniards' book.

Europeans explained the Indians' sufferings in terms of divine punishment for sin; the Indians represented in the *Relaciones geográficas* blamed neither God nor the colonists but rather their own actions, of which these consequences were the natural result. The moral wisdom and authority of the ancestors is upheld even in the disintegration of the lifestyle those ancestors endorsed. This is some of the best evidence that Christianization failed to alter the Nahuas' basic moral orientation.

PENANCE AND MERIT

In Christianity, acts of self-abasement and devotion were essential to the forgiveness of sins. Penitent individuals had to perform acts of penance

as part of the process of salvation from sin. Contrition, expressed in weeping and sighing while one contemplated one's offenses, was to precede confession. When one confessed, the priest assigned penances to be done afterwards. Absolution removed the guilt of sin, the *culpa*, but one still had to "pay" for one's offenses in order to remove the *poena*, or penalty (Lea 1968:I, 143; II, 160, 206). These penances had to be completed in purgatory if one failed to do so during life. Through the Middle Ages, this component of forgiveness became less and less emphasized, and with the rampant provision of indulgences—which were commutations of penance—people could pass through life into heaven with minimal mortifications.

The friars, being of an ascetic bent, emphasized the importance of penance. The Nahua concept they adopted for this was *tlamacehualiztli* 'the meriting of things,' from the verb *macehua*, defined by Molina as "to obtain or deserve what is desired" (1970:II, 50). The Nahuas and their gods coexisted in a relationship of reciprocity, a contract: if humans behaved in socially and ritually prescribed fashion, the gods were expected to grant them the things that they thereby merited. Christians, utterly undeserving, depended upon God's emotional attachment to them, which could not be earned but only mercifully bestowed. The friars understood that *tlamacehualiztli* involved the idea of merit and they used it also in this sense. For example, Sahagún (1563:62r) states that on Judgment Day God will give to each *ylamaceval*, his or her merit or desert, happiness for the good and suffering for the bad. However, they showed no reserve in equating *tlamacehualiztli* with their own concept of penance.

Tlamacehualiztli has less in common with Christian penance than with concepts in other religions where the gods are not moral guardians. For example, Fürer-Haimendorf says of the Hindu concept *tapas*, referring to the austerities of ascetics (1974:549–50):

It is tempting to equate *tapas* with "penance" for there are situations in which austerities are undertaken with the specific purpose of eliminating the results of sin, but *tapas* is used also to gain power or to achieve other ends of a non-moral nature.

The same could be said of *tlamacehualiztli*.

The friars were impressed by the fact that penitential exercises were a major component of Nahua rituals, including those rites specifically directed toward casting off *tlatlacalli* or purification from *tlazolli*. Whether attributed to previous evangelization, diabolic imitation, or some sort of

natural virtue,¹⁰ and in spite of the fact that they were directed toward earthly rather than heavenly ends, these practices were avidly observed and described by all the major chroniclers. And *tlamacehualiztli*, despite the wider range and divergent character of its meanings, appears throughout the doctrinal corpus as the Nahua-Christian version of penance.

Punishing the body in order to tame it, expressing sorrow and repentance for one's sins, carrying out penalties for offenses committed: these were purposes of Christian penance. Traditional Nahua penances expressed humility and subservience to the gods, the payment of debt owed to them, in a manner not wholly alien to Christian thought (apart from the absence of love in the relationship, and the presence of a great deal of blood). But in many ways the acts accord with the concepts of the body discussed in the preceding section. The aim was not to subjugate the material flesh but to manipulate the powers it possessed. By abstaining from food, alcohol and sex, by not sleeping, by not washing one's head (where the *tonalli* was housed), one preserved or enhanced one's integrity, one's energy, one's "heat," one's links to the principles of order and stability as opposed to the cold, earthly, filthy powers of disorder (see López Austin 1980:I, 348).

Hence Quetzalcoatl, lord of the primordial ordered center Tollan (Tula), was conceived of as the founder and embodiment of the penitential lifestyle. So penitent was he described to be that those who believed in previous evangelization took him for the Christian apostle—Saint Thomas, perhaps—responsible for that mission (e.g., Durán 1967:I, 9–11; on the issue of earlier evangelization see Lafaye 1976).

Quetzalcoatl brought on his own downfall when he broke his vow of ritual abstinence (see Chapter Three). A similar fate befell Yappan, a young man devoted to penances, who is seduced by the goddess Xochiquetzal and then turned into a scorpion—a thing of *tlazolli*—by Yaotl (Tezcatlipoca) as punishment (Ruiz de Alarcón 1982:293–95). It is as though extremes of penance invite attacks from the other side, in order to maintain overall balance.

Nahua participation in penitential exercises varied with the ritual round and with the age, status, and condition of the individual. Priests and rulers, young people in temple service or in the *calmecac* school, persons attempting to counteract the effects of a filth-laden *tonalli*, persons repairing the ill effects of immoral deeds, and lay participants in calendrical rituals all showed particular devotion to *tlamacehualiztli*. Prudent persons performed daily acts of sweeping, incense-burning, bloodletting, and bathing

in order to merit the gods' benevolence; in times of crisis such activities were avidly pursued (on penitential practices see especially Durán 1967:I; Sahagún 1953-82:II, III, IV).

On the whole, the Nahuas' devotion to penance met with the friars' approval. The Church condoned fasting and sexual abstinence at ritually important times, and the Nahuas adapted their abstinences to the Christian calendar. For example, Motolinia (1941:155) attributed to their veneration for the cross the fact that many people fasted and abstained from sex on Fridays; Mendieta (1980:433) mentions the practice of sexual abstinence on Palm Sunday. Suárez de Peralta (1878:31) records the Indians' sexual abstinence in connection with communion. The light penances typically prescribed by the late medieval Church failed to satisfy many persons: they complained if their confessor did not order them to fast and flog themselves (Motolinia 1971:137). Self-flagellation made a convenient substitute for bloodletting: to bleed oneself with thorns was declared idolatrous, but to flog oneself until the blood came showed devotion to Christ. Nahuas often practiced this without being told to by confessors (Motolinia 1971:137; Mendieta 1980:290-91). The author of the *Códice Carolino* (1967:33) states that he once saw Indians flogging themselves on Holy Thursday throw the whips they had used at the foot of a cross, saying that "there their sins went away." This is strongly reminiscent of indigenous confessional practices, in which misdeeds were symbolically abandoned at the crossroads following penitential exercises.

Because the friars did not distinguish *culpa* from other aspects of *tlatlacolli*, there was little distinction between sin as destroyed by absolution and sin as destroyed by penance. To pardon someone in Nahuatl is *tetlapoplnia* 'to destroy things in regard to someone'—a mechanical process without the emotional component of Christianity's "forgiveness." The adoption of this terminology into Christian usage further preserved the contractual character of human-deity relations implicit in the *tlamacehuatlitzli* concept.

Escalona (n.d.:121r-121v) advises people to complete their penances on earth so that they will not be shamed and cursed for their sins at the time of the Final Judgment. Fortunate are they whose sins were destroyed by their penances, *yn tlamaceualiztica opoliuh yn intlatlacol*. For Ash Wednesday, Escalona writes of the necessity of sadness for sins. By sinning you gave your heart to the *tlacatecolotl* and you placed it amid sin, *tlatlacoltlan*. In order to turn your life toward God you must take it from sin and place it *tlamacevaliztitlan* 'amid penance.' Since your body was happy

with sinful happiness, it must be afflicted with fasting, *neçavaliztca*¹¹ (157r).

In his lengthy sermons for the first Sunday in Lent, Escalona asserts that penitential exercises alone do not ensure salvation. It is necessary first to stop sinning. Otherwise, even if you fast, flog yourself, and are merciful to others, *avel titlamaceuaz* ‘you will not be able to do penance’ (or ‘to merit things’; 161r). Here Escalona defines *penitentia* as *tlaocoyaliztli choquitzli ypampa yn tlatlacolli* ‘sadness, weeping, because of sin.’ People do these things to pacify God because they have offended him, but if one continues to sin it will not work (161r–164v). What in Nahua religion is a perfectly normal and acceptable alternation between abstinence and indulgence, yielding an overall equilibrium, is here rejected. There is a good pattern of behavior and a bad pattern; one should choose the former to the exclusion of the latter. The bad person enslaved by the *tlacatecolotl* cannot leave sin. Even if he or she does penance (*tlamacevaz*), God will not thereby pardon him or her (*ca amo yc quitlapopolhuiz*) because he or she does not want to scorn his or her sins (162v).

Christ’s fasting destroyed the sin of “our first father,” who had offended our lord with eating (*qualtiliztca oquimoyollitlacallnui yn tote*). In this way our lord showed us that all sins are destroyed with penance (*Tc otechititi yn tote ca yn ixquich yn tlatlacolli, tlamacevaliztca polivi*; Escalona n.d.:163v). Jonah saved the city of Nineveh by warning the people that they would all perish if they did not leave their sins and do penance. They did so, and because of their penance God had mercy on them and destroyed their sins (163v). Lazarus provided another example: he went to heaven because he went about afflicted, doing penance and fasting (*moto-litininenca, tlamaceuhtinēca, moçauhtinēca*), while the rich man who ate a lot and wrapped himself in soft mantles went to *mictlan* (163v–164r). Again Escalona stresses the importance of penance and fasting—following Christ’s example—in order to pertain to God once again. One must never again do the sins that one had gone about doing (168r).

Penance destroys all sin. This translates easily into the Nahua belief that “meriting things” restores equilibrium, corrects the damage resulting from *tlatlacolli*, “reheats” one after excess contact with *tlazolli*. At the same time, it is asserted that one is either a good penitent or a bad sinner, and only the penances of the former are worth anything. In Nahua ideology the acts themselves have value and efficacy regardless of who does them, or whether the person intends to sin no more.

The Dominican *doctrina* pairs *tlamaceualiztli* with *penitencia* in its Na-

huatl text (1944:passim, esp. 10r, 43r). Abstinence of a familiar sort is prescribed for those who will receive Confirmation: they must not eat, and *amo niman anmaltizque anoço anmotemazque anoço amamouizque* 'you will not bathe at all, or perhaps take a sweatbath or perhaps shampoo' (96v). The usual acts are assigned in regard to confession: remembering all sins, weeping over them, intending not to sin again, confessing to the priest and doing what he orders—for what is not paid for now will have to be paid for in purgatory (97r–99r).

Fray Pedro de Gante (1553:2v–3r, 35r, 44r) also equates *penitencia* with *tlamacehualiztli*, and speaks of payment (*tlaxtlahualliztli*) and the intention never again to sin. Failure to do *tlamacehualiztli* for one's mortal sins will condemn one to *mictlan*. According to Fray Domingo de la Anunciación (1565:20r), when we do penance here on earth, God destroys for us all our sins.

Molina (1569:70v–71r) lists among the physical preparations for communion one day of complete fasting and two or three days of sexual abstinence. This is a much milder abstinence than typically required before major native ceremonies, but at least it corresponds in the prescribed acts. Not to fast when the Church commands it is a mortal sin (66v). These Church-related fasts provided something of the same ritual structuring as had the traditional calendrical rites.

Sahagún speaks of the necessity of penance. Without it, everyone will perish. Penance is corrupted (*ylacavi*) by two things: impatience or irritation and self-esteem or hypocrisy. Impatient persons who wonder whether God will indeed pardon them are reassured with the example of Jonah and Nineveh. Those people were sad, fasted, wore coarse mantles, and wept, devoting themselves to penance, and indeed, God therefore pardoned them. If one does penance—fasting or flogging oneself—in order to be seen and honored, one corrupts one's penance and one's sins are not destroyed but increased. For penance done correctly, the reward is eternal happiness in heaven with God, Christ, Mary and all the angels (Sahagún 1563:30r–31r). The angels rejoice greatly when a sinner does penance on account of his or her sins (*tlamacea in ipampa itlatlacol*; 1563:37r–37v).

The penances of idolaters are of no avail (Sahagún 1563:62v):

Ca cequítin amo tlaneltocaznequi, amo quiximatiznequi yn íteouh intlatocauh in ítemaquixticauh. In yevátin y miectlamátlí quichiva ynic quitlayecoltia yteova, ca tlamana, tlatlatlauhtia tlamacea, choca, quitlaiyoviltia in ínacayo in ipápa intecova, iný ca cā nē polivi, ca tlacatecolutl ipanpa in quichiva, ca amo quiximati y nelli teotl.

Indeed, some do not want to believe in, do not want to know their god, their ruler, their savior. These do many things, with which they serve their gods, for they make offerings, they pray, they do penance, they weep, they cause their bodies to suffer on account of their gods. This indeed is just in vain, it is lost, for they do it on account of the *tlacatecolotl*, for they do not know the true god.

Sahagún's ethnographic knowledge serves him well here. He then describes a second group: people who have accepted the true god but do not want to leave their sins. They do many good things: they fast (*mocava*), go to Mass, confess—but all in vain. A third group has given up sin, but these people do not want to do penance. They think that their sins were destroyed because they confessed; they do not know how frightening is our lord's judgment. To such a person Sahagún says that it is necessary to fast, to flog yourself, to cause your body to suffer on account of your sins. Otherwise, the person will be in purgatory for very many years, for there one must do penance seven years for each mortal sin (this was the Church's standard allotment).

In the *Apéndiz* (1579b:10v–11r) Sahagún describes the primordial origin of *tlamacehuatlitzli*. After Lucifer—here given the Tezcatlipocan epithet Titlacahuan ‘We are his Slaves’—and his allies were cast from heaven to be forever condemned to hell, he conquered “our first father,” “our first mother,” and all of their children. However, people were not condemned as were the devils. God admonished the first father and mother to do penance on account of their sin. If they do penance well they will be pardoned, and will go to heaven to take possession of the rulership that would have been the devils’.

In various contexts in the *Apéndiz* Sahagún attempts to distinguish among earthly and divine or heavenly varieties of sadness and happiness. The same man who declared that Christ never laughed here opposes excessive sadness. The purpose of the *Apéndiz* is to reveal, and refute, “secrets” of native customs and language (1579a:iv). Here Sahagún is concerned over the differences between indigenous penitential practices and those of the Church; his distinction among types of sadness and happiness constitutes a rather weak attempt to express that distinction.

In the *Apéndiz*'s fifth admonition Sahagún recounts how the Nahua elders valued the penances of little children; these were believed to please the gods because of the children's purity. But the penances of little children—even if the children have been purified by Christian baptism—are not pleasing to God because small children are not prudent. They are not capable of knowing right from wrong. Even if they do good deeds like fasting and weeping it serves no purpose because they have not

intentionally chosen good over evil (1579b:ir). Neither was the sexual abstinence of the indigenous priests of any value to God because it was done in service to the devils (1579b:iv).

The seventh admonition returns to the topic of children's penances. In contrast to the sixth admonition, which merely reworks to Christian ends the lifestyle condoned for youths (old enough, in Christian eyes, to know right from wrong), here Sahagún zealously condemns the Nahuas' treatment of small children. The *calmecac* school was called the house of sadness, the house of weeping, the house of penance. The little children there were terribly afflicted and made to weep, rising at night to offer incense to the idols. The Devil rejoiced in their sadness and weeping because it was done in vain, not for the proper purpose of atoning for sin. The penances were not really penances but just torments of *mictlan* (*ca amo tlamacehualiztli can mictlan tonchimiztli*; 1579b:12r). The little children had to go hungry, to sleep on the floor with no covers; they were given nothing but an old tortilla. The devils taught this affliction of the body to the old men. God does not want it to be done like this. One must suffer for one's sins, but only for one's sins, and as part of the process of confession. In contrast, men and women who live in God's temple-houses (friars and nuns) are happy, occupying themselves in holy things, rejoicing in service to God. Saint Francis used to admonish people who went about sad—they should confess their sins and then be happy (1579b:iiir–12v).

Sahagún, in full awareness of the differences between indigenous *tlamacehualiztli* and Christian usage of the term, thus rejects the Nahuas' practice of general penance, done to please the gods and merit their favors rather than to atone for sins. It is wrong to do penance *except* for sins. Such *tlamacehualiztli* is not genuine *tlamacehualiztli*—the term has been usurped by Christianity so that the meaning intended in Christian teaching is supposed to have replaced the original meaning. A further irony is the fact that at the time of Sahagún's writing (1579), Nahuas throughout Central Mexico were blaming their high death rate on their failure to carry out the acts which Sahagún here condemns. What to the friar were Devil-inspired acts of child abuse were to the Nahuas a means of ensuring health and long life.¹²

Fray Juan de la Anunciación advises, in reference to Judgment Day, that one follow David's example and judge oneself (Psalm 118). When one has judged, sentenced, and penanced oneself, doing penance with fasting, flagellation, confession, prayer, and sadness, one will be saved from God's judgment (1577:2v). Penance purifies the soul (11v). The pardoning of sins

is granted to all sinners who cry out to God, are anguished because of their sins, reform their lives, and perform the sacrament of *tlamaceualiztli penitencia*, confessing before the confessor (244r).

Anunciación preaches that, lest one become an idolater, one should take Saint Peter as an example. He despised all earthliness. Through humility, patience, pure living, penance, fasting, prayer, faith, and other good things he deserved (*oquicnopilhui*) rulership in heaven (1577:163r). The text does not say that he did these things in atonement for his own sins: the friars do condone a generally penitential lifestyle even while they stress the relationship between sin and penance. In spite of Sahagún's "spiritual happiness," the friars' overall message is rather gloomy. They do not make any consistent distinction between penance in the Nahua style and in their own—the *Apéndiz*, a late text that was suppressed and mutilated, is an exception.

The frequent emphasis on weeping as an element of penitential practices accords with native custom and with contemporary practice in Spain. Christian (1982:107) describes how tears shed in contemplation of Christ's Passion were believed effective in purging sin; this was in Spain "the great spiritual exercise of the sixteenth century." Weeping was a penance; it was also a means of purification by water; it was also medicinal. On Ash Wednesday, Christ, according to Anunciación (1577:40r), requires that one wash the dirtiness from one's soul with tears. As water is necessary for fish to live, tears are necessary for the sinner's soul so that it does not die forever (205r).

Anunciación, as was often done, equates *nezahualiztli* simply with fasting from food, as required on certain Church festivals, not including other abstinences. He enumerates who must do this: everyone between the ages of 21 and 60 except for the sick and the pregnant (1577:255r). The penances of children (and even of youths who, though morally responsible, are physically unfinished) are not required. Christian penance was a way for the fit to serve God, not a way for the young and the afflicted to attain and preserve good physical condition. The commandment against killing precluded demands that could physically endanger people.

On the whole, Christian rituals and doctrine permitted the Nahuas' concern with *tlamaceualiztli* to be expressed and retained. They were obliged to give up some of the more severe practices associated with an educational system and a priesthood that could not coexist with Christianity. But Christianity reinforced the belief that penances destroyed one's misdeeds and earned one divine favor, and that a failure to do sufficient

penance could bring on misfortune. Christian teaching emphasized punishment after death, but earthly sanctions—such as the threatened destruction of Nineveh—were included as well. The de-emphasis on penance by the young contradicted native belief, but at the same time yielded an explanatory mechanism for post-Conquest physical decline.

VIRGINITY, SEX, AND MARRIAGE

Given their beliefs about pollution and immoderation, moralists, both Nahua and Christian, showed special concern with the control of sexuality. But here a Nahua ideal of moderation conflicts most strongly with a Christian ideal of abstinence. Aguirre Beltrán (1963:169) considers Christian sexual mores to be the component of European culture to which the Indians showed the most resistance. The friars' dialogue with the Nahuas on this subject throws into high relief the differences between the two moral systems and shows how fervently the friars pursued their goal of obliterating sensuality.

The Nahua adolescent, if prudent, and especially if he or she was involved in temple service, remained celibate. Such abstinence was called *mopializtli* 'keeping oneself' or *chipahuacanemiliztli* 'pure living.' However, Nahuatl has no word for virgin: *ichpochtli* and *telpochtli* apply to post-pubescent girls and boys who have not yet taken on adult status, regardless of their sexual condition. To express the idea of virginity it was necessary to modify these terms with qualifiers, as in *oc uel ichpochtli* 'still really a girl' (Molina 1970:I, 117v), or to resort to metaphor, such as using jade, a symbol of purity and wholeness, for a virgin girl—hence Molina's *oc chalchiuitl* 'still jade' (1970:II, 75r). Such purity was esteemed, but it was not the essential feature of a young person's character.

The importance of pre-marital sexual abstinence varied between classes, noble youths having, of course, to emphasize their purity respective to commoners. Customs varied in different places. But it was quite normal for unwed couples to join in a free union called *nemecatiliztli* 'tying oneself' (concubinage to the Christians), later marrying if they so chose (Motolinia 1971:323). According to Durán (1967:I, 77), such a couple would marry if they had a child; otherwise the boy could leave the girl and tie himself with another. The *Códice Carolino* (1967:26) and Durán (1967:I, 57) indicate a concern with virginity, at least in cases where the couple had not been "tied." According to these sources, if on her wedding night a

bride proved not a virgin, at the subsequent wedding banquet the food would be served in broken or perforated dishes, in order to shame her family for guarding her so poorly.

One attained adulthood not with sexual initiation but with marriage and the establishment of a family. One passed gradually from being a *tel-pochtli* or *ichpochtli* to being an adult man or woman, an *oquichtli* or *cihuatl* (see López Austin 1980:I, 320–28 on the stages of life). The young wife expecting her first child is still called *ichpochtli* in the *Florentine Codex* oration to her (Sahagún 1953–82:VI, chap. 24).

Marriage was an important rite of passage involving careful attention to penance and purification. Before consummating the union, the couple spent four days fasting and without bathing. They slept together on the fourth night, and the next day they were bathed and dressed in clean clothes. If charcoal or ash (*tlazolli*) was then found in their chamber it boded a troubled marriage; a seed augured good fortune (Mendieta 1980:127–28; Motolinia 1971:318; Torquemada 1975–83:IV, 158–59).

For all but priests, marriage was the expected course of life, and celibacy was reproved (López Austin 1980:I, 344). Boys and girls who completed their temple service were then free to marry (with due permission and ceremony). This change in status was marked, according to Durán (1967:I, 45), in this way: at the end of the Toxcatl festival the boys and girls in service through the preceding year would leave the temple, and the boys from the schools would gather to pelt them with balls of rushes (i.e., *tlazolli*), “making fun of them for leaving the service of the idol, with liberty to do whatever they want now.” A boy who reached this age and did not want to marry was considered “bad and infamous” (Las Casas 1967:II, 25–26). Marriage in the late teens and early twenties was standard, though according to the *Relaciones geográficas* it could be as late as thirty in some areas (though this could reflect an idealization of the past). Noble men could take additional women, whom they did not marry with full ceremony; however, the unions were socially recognized and accepted. According to Motolinia (1971:323) these women were called *cihuancemactli* ‘given women’ if the man asked for them, or *tlacibuaantin* ‘seized women’ if he simply took them.

According to all accounts, adultery was considered one of the most serious offenses and was severely punished. Similar controls extended to abortion, both the woman and the doctor supplying the abortifacient subject to the death penalty.¹³ A woman who practiced adultery, bore children outside of a socially recognized union, and had abortions was called a

tetzauhcibuatl ‘ominous woman’; such a person endangered others and was feared (López Austin 1980:I, 346; Sahagún 1953–82:X, 56).

Those who were successful in having children were honored and praised (Durán 1967:I, 77). Sterility, a likely fate of those born on the day-sign *tecpatl* ‘flint,’ and thus infertile like flinty soil, drove people to commit many misdeeds (Durán 1967:I, 231). According to Suárez de Peralta (1878:279), sterile people were sacrificed because “they served only to occupy the world and not increase it.” Homosexuality, male and female, was reportedly sanctioned with death.

Fully grown persons within socially recognized unions were thus encouraged to participate in the moderate amounts of sexual activity required to conceive, mold, and strengthen infants, and to maintain their own equilibrium between the states of desire and satisfaction. It was dangerous not to have intercourse when one’s desire was strong; the interruption of intercourse, precluding the “cooling” effects of orgasm (male and female), was dangerous and could bring on disease due to *tonalli* loss (López Austin 1980:I, 244, 333).

Too much intercourse could harm a fetus after it was fully formed; it would also cause men to sicken and die, to dry out like a maguey plant from which the juice has been drained, or like a mantle which has been washed and then tightly wrung. Such a man could no longer satisfy his wife, and she would despise him and be driven to adultery. However, if a man waited until he was fully grown and then indulged only moderately, he could remain sexually functional into old age. This view of male sexuality¹⁴ is from the *Florentine Codex* exhortation to chastity (Sahagún 1953–82:VI, chap. 21), a text which comes as close as any that purports to speak in an indigenous voice to expressing Christianity’s grave concern with chastity. Yet the text seems almost calculated to contradict Christian teaching in defense of indigenous concepts of sexuality. Chastity here is not an end in itself, but a means for a young man to ensure his future health and potency, the fidelity of a contented wife, and the bearing of numerous and strong babies, over the course of his adult life.

Against this philosophy the friars exerted the full force of Christianity’s heavy emphasis on celibacy. The official view, as reaffirmed by the Council of Trent in 1563, was that “virginity or celibacy is better and more conducive to happiness than marriage” (Brownlee 1842:89). The Church’s attitude toward sex during this period, within and outside of marriage, is well covered by Tentler (1977:163–231). The only sexual expression permitted was vaginal intercourse by a married couple, and even this was only toler-

ated, not condoned. The less pleasure sustained during sex the better; if it was possible one ought to experience no pleasure at all. Marital sex was permitted for the purposes of begetting children and of preventing weakly fleshed persons from committing sins of fornication, masturbation, or worse. Because of the latter purpose, married persons had to submit to their partners' demands even if they themselves preferred continence; this was the "conjugal debt." The sacramental nature of marriage exempted these acts from being classed, with all other sexual thoughts and deeds, as sin.

The rationale for reserving semen to procreative acts was not that one might otherwise run out of it. The scholastics' view, as put forth by Aquinas (1928:113–14), was that the "disordinate discharge of semen" hindered human existence, depriving potential persons of life; such seemed to him a sin second only to murder. Abstinence should be "reasonable"; excessive detachment from all sexual feeling was itself a sin, "insensibility." But if done in reason, abstinence gave a person a "special resemblance to the godhead"; this was why virgins were said to be like angels. Prolonged abstinence resulted in a diminishing of desire—not, as the Nahuas would have it, an increasing disequilibrium (Aquinas 1928:155).

Though a man may not run out of semen, its discharge weakened the body and shortened the life span. As the medieval Franciscan encyclopedist Bartholomaeus Anglicus explains it, sperm is manufactured from good blood which would otherwise nourish the body; its loss results in pallor and weakness, as if forty times so much blood had been lost (Bartholomaeus Anglicus 1975:1103–4). This is slightly closer to Nahua conceptions, but it is unlikely that the Franciscan was concerned with the possibility of impotence.

Due to the concerns and hazards of monasticism, carnal sins, including gluttony along with lust, had long been separated from spiritual sins, though their relative significance had shifted over the centuries (Bloomfield 1952). In the late Middle Ages, spiritual sins were considered more serious and incurred greater guilt, but carnal sins resulted in greater shame (Aquinas 1969:73). Clemen (1912:64) notes that lists of vices in the New Testament always begin with sexual sins. The lists made by the friars carried nearly as strong an emphasis, perhaps due partly to the friars' (at least the Franciscans') desire to recreate the Apostolic Church, but also due to their view of the Indians and to the Nahuas' own emphases.

The friars preached often on God's love for virgins and virginity, the virginity of Mary, Joseph, and other saints, and the sinfulness of sexual

activity outside the conjugal act. The problem of language led to some awkward statements, since it is often lifelong adolescence, *telpochotl* or *ichpochotl*, which they condone, not lifelong celibacy. Sahagún (1981:III, 353) reported the case of the town of San Juan Tianquizmanalco where, because the preachers emphasized that the town's patron saint was a "virgin," *telpochtli*, the people identified him with the ancient Telpochtli and held festivals to the old god in the guise of Saint John. Telpochtli was a young warrior aspect of Tezcatlipoca, among whose virtues celibacy surely did not number.

The friars' emphasis on the virgin birth of Christ had an impact upon the myth of Huitzilopochtli's magical conception. Coatlicue, who in the *Florentine Codex* version is already the mother of Coyolxauhqui and her 400 brothers (Sahagún 1953-82:III, 2), in other versions is a virgin. Motolinia (1971:53), for example, mentions the birth of Huitzilopochtli "of the virgin." In the *Historia de los mexicanos por sus pinturas* the 400 are men created by Tezcatlipoca, and Coatlicue is a virgin (in Garibay 1979:43). Mendieta (1980:538-39), discussing indigenous beliefs that corresponded to Christianity, gives this account:

They had notice also of the embassy that the angel made to Our Lady, by a metaphor, saying that something very white like bird feathers fell from the sky, and a virgin bent down and took it up and placed it in her womb and became pregnant, but they did not know how to say what the one she gave birth to became.

Here Huitzilopochtli is suppressed in order to stress the parallel; the bit of *tlazolli* that was Huitzilopochtli's father is implicitly identified with the dove of the Holy Spirit. The desire to find parallels, combined with the problem of the term *ichpochtli*—which not only did not mean "virgin" but was also a name for the earth goddess in her nubile aspect—accounts for these variations. Chimalman, Quetzalcoatl's mother, is turned into a virgin in the *Codex Telleriano-Remensis* (1964:8v). While she indeed may have had no previous offspring, this is another example of the same phenomenon. Given Quetzalcoatl's saintly character, it was especially fitting that the friars interpret the accounts of his conception as implying his mother's virginity.

The elimination of concubinage was a major concern of the friars, especially in the early years. Treating *nemecatiliztli* 'tying oneself' as a sin of lust, Escalona (n.d.:136v) contrasts the lovers in his audience with the virginal Saint John, who never had a concubine. Wicked, lustful ones who do not want to leave their women cannot be saved. Such a person pertains not to God but to the *tlacatecolotl* (167v).

The Dominican *doctrina* (1944:123r–123v) includes a lengthy sermon on virginity. Christ chose Mary as his mother in order to show how he loves virginity—as *ichpochyotl* ‘girlhood’—and pure living. Those who have never had sexual relations, who want to live always as virgins (*uel telpuch-nemiznequi anoço uel ichpuchnemiznequi*), greatly serve God. Therefore one must scorn *nacayopapaquiliztli* ‘bodily happiness’ and all dirtiness. The text goes on (123v–124r) to extoll those who live in this way, who are called *virgenes* (the use of the Spanish term suggests an awareness of the terminological problem), and those who were martyred for pure living. Later, discussing the mortal sin of lust, the text states (147r) that one must completely forget and despise *yn ixquich ahauilnemiliztli yuan yn ixq'ch c-a-t-quailiztli* ‘all pleasurable living and all dirtiness’.

Fray Pedro de Gante (1553:12v) likewise praises *ichpochyotl* and *telpochyotl*. “Our precious mother” Saint Mary is always a complete girl, *mochipa cen-quieca ychpochtli*; that is, eternally virgin (26r). The commandment against adultery precludes dirty lustful living as well as adultery. The married person will have relations only with his or her spouse. The unmarried will not “tie” themselves, will touch no one of either gender nor the genitals of animals, will not masturbate or speak dirty words (39r–39v). Similarly, under the mortal sin of lust the following activities are prohibited: taking pleasure with women, “tying” oneself—especially with a virgin; adultery; relations with a close relative,¹⁵ a *compadre* or a godchild, a daughter-in-law, someone pertaining to the Church, unbaptized women, or a prostitute; and touching animals’ genitals. One who merely desires such things sins with his or her desire (*itlanequiliztica*) (Gante 1553:52v–53r). *Telpochyotl* and *ichpochyotl*, called *virgineme* (Nahuatlization for “virgins”), were made so that many would follow this example and live purely and chastely (77v).

Olmos, in his sermon on lust (Baudot 1976:42), states outright that it is a sin to have sexual relations: *yn iquac uel tetech axioa ynic mochiuz tlatlaculli* ‘when one has intercourse with someone, thereby a sin will be made.’ Lustful thoughts as well as deeds are sins; thus one sins with one’s heart (*yn ica yyolo*; 42–44). He classifies lust, according to Church practice, into seven categories: fornication, as “pleasurable living” (*aauiLNemiliztli*); adultery (*teflaximaliztli*); incest, “when one has relations with a close relative”; *stupro*, or relations with a virgin, called in Nahuatl *texapotlaliztli* ‘perforating someone’; rape, when a woman is robbed; sodomy (*tecuilontiliztli*); and sacrilege, “if one has relations with someone in the temple” (44).

Fray Domingo de la Anunciación (1565:14r–15v) expresses Mary’s virgin condition by calling her *mochipa huell nelli ychpochtli* ‘always a real true girl’;

Christ's birth did not destroy her *ichpochyotzin* 'revered girlhood.' Elsewhere the friar calls her *mochipa cemicac ychpochtli* 'always forever a girl'; her *ychpuchyotzin* 'girlhood' was not damaged (*ytlacauh*; 21v–22r). Christ went into her and out of her without damaging her girlhood, or her girlish flesh, *ichpochmacayotzin*. From this constant usage, it is likely that *ichpochtli* did pick up a connotation of sexual innocence.

Molina (1569:17v) cites Saint Gregory's admonition to admire the cleanliness of those who scorn *tlahelpaquiliztli* 'foul happiness.' One should not marry because of *tlahelpaquiliztli* but because of chastity, *nepiyeliztli* 'keeping oneself.'¹⁶ After marriage one will not "tie oneself" or commit adultery or dirty oneself with "foul happiness" (53v–54r). The confessing penitent is questioned on whether he or she loved the pure life and chastity (116r).

Sahagún states that marriage is necessary in order that one not live wickedly (1563:13v). He lists a number of conditions that render a marriage sinful and damaged: if one had relations with one's wife before marriage; if one lied about an old wife and took a young one; if one married a close relative; or, if one did not confess before marriage. Those who are not yet married are reminded that one marries not because of "foul happiness" but only for parenthood and "keeping oneself" (19v–20r). As an example of a good marriage, Sahagún describes that of Joseph and Mary, both of whom remained virgins all their lives, marrying only in obedience to God (98r–98v). This aspect of Joseph's life is stressed also in the *Psalmodia*'s songs for his day (1583:51v–53r). Mary's virginity is praised extensively in the sermons, the *Exercicio* and the *Psalmodia* (1563:93r–94r; 1574:10v; 1583:49v–53r). Saint Catherine is praised for scorning marriage, in addition to scorning all "earthliness" (1583:211r–214v).

Sahagún (1563:93r), addressing the young woman who has lost her virginity, preaches:¹⁷

Oticpolo in ygracia in dios in ticomotalli ý tlatlaculli oticopeuh in angel motepixcauh ye umitzhuicatinemi in tlacateculutl ý oc tichpuchtli intech tipui in ichpupucthi: ý axcan ie intech tipui in avianime ý oc tichpuchtli ý moiollo in quima tevcuitlatl tlaqotli cadca, auh in axca iuhqui cuitlacumitl muchiuhtica. In oc tipuchtli tieneneviliaya ý xuchtli cenza qualli cenza aviac: ý axcā ca tlaqolli tienenevilia. In iaxcatzin dios ý mitzmomaquili iehoatl in mochpucho oticmaca in diablo o motlaveliltic.

You lost the grace of God, you placed yourself in sin, you pushed away your guardian angel. Already the *tlacatecolotl* carries you about. When you were still a girl (*ichpochtli*) you pertained to the girls; now you already pertain to the promis-

cuous women. When you were still a girl your heart knew that it was gold, precious, but now it is like a chamber pot. When you were still a girl you were equal to a very good, very fragrant flower. Now you are just equal to filth. God's possession, which he gave you, your girlhood, you gave to the Devil. Oh how wretched you are!

As mentioned previously, Sahagún in the *Apéndiz* (1579b:ir–iv) rejects the celibacy demanded of indigenous priests because it was not done in service to God. Acts alone are not efficacious, but require a certain condition and direction of the soul. Though the “old men” loved pure living and chastity, they mixed it with many lies: Sahagún may well be thinking here of material such as the *Florentine* exhortation to chastity. God loves pure living and chastity. The first to keep his virginity (*omopix in uel tel-puchtli* ‘he kept himself a real youth’) was Abel, whom God therefore cherished and favored. Other famous virgins are extolled: John the Baptist, John the Evangelist (whom God favored with apocalyptic visions that he did not reveal to the other Apostles), Mary, Saint Paul, Christ. Many men and women have followed this example and remain virgins, such as people in monasteries but also some married people (Sahagún 1579b:2v–3v).

Fray Juan de la Anunciación (1577:16v) says that the lustful man or woman, *abuilenemi* ‘one who lives pleasurable,’ is called a pig.¹⁸ He gives the reasons for marriage as *inic teoyotica nemiz* ‘in order that one live in a sacred way’ and parenthood; “foul happiness” is not a reason (23v). Where he lists the sacraments he gives the purpose of marriage as *ynic tlapibuiazq̄ miequiazq̄ in tlalticpac tlaca* ‘so that the people of earth will increase, will become many’ (260r). The virginity of Joseph and Mary is stressed; they married only so that the Jews would not dishonor her for having a child out of wedlock (145v). The sermons on Saints John the Baptist, John the Evangelist, Luke, and James the Less note their virginity (16iv, 216v, 203r, 150v).

The Indians received a dual message: virginity and celibacy were the preferred mode of life, yet they were encouraged to marry young and were barred from the priesthood and the veil. Policies of the colonial administration and of the Church emphasized the conjugal relationship: tribute was assessed according to the number of married males; the authority of tradition could be subverted by breaking down the consanguineal family system (see Carrasco 1975:197; Spicer 1962:471). Indians had to confess before marriage; it became a contract between the couple and the Church rather than between families. Thus, priestly control over the Indians’ personal and family lives was upheld. Figure 14, from Molina’s *confessionario*,



Figure 14. A Franciscan joins an Indian couple in marriage. Woodcut in Fray Alonso de Molina's *Confessionario mayor*, 1565 edition, f. 57r. (Courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University.)

depicts an Indian wedding, presided over by a Franciscan priest.¹⁹ Once baptized, this was the only way Indian couples could contract a union that would be legally recognized in colonial society.

Non-Indians believed that Indians would fall into sexual sin if they were left to their own devices. Archbishop Montúfar, though he had political purposes for such a view (the poorer the Indians' Christianity, the stronger the argument for tithing them to support the Church), expressed a common opinion when he wrote: "this people is very inclined to vices"; their flesh is weak, the little clothing they wear facilitates sexual acts; they have little or no resistance to women (*Descripción del arzobispado* 1897:426). According to the *Códice franciscano* (1941:97), the Indians are by nature unsuited to the priesthood and will remain so until God sees fit to alter their being and capacity. Archbishop Zumárraga, disappointed with the boys of the Franciscan college, who would have been the first Indian priests, wrote to Charles V: "they tend toward marriage rather than toward continence" (García Icazbalceta 1947:III, 204).

When speaking of marriage, the doctrinal texts stress the contradictory goals of sexual abstinence and children. The *Códice franciscano* (1941:95), explaining what the Indians are taught, gives a more extensive list of rea-

sons for marriage: the growth of love and communication among people; children; continence, or, at least, the restriction of sexual activity to marriage; and mutual help, consolation, and animation. The middle two (children and continence) tend to be stressed in the actual teaching, perhaps reflecting conflicting concerns with the Indians' sexuality and with their declining population—more pressing concerns than "communication."

In Europe the Church's emphasis on celibacy functioned to uphold the authority of the priesthood. Also, in late medieval Europe there was such a scarcity of property that many people could not afford to set up their own households until late in life, if ever. Given traditional Christian morality—which could hardly have tolerated alternative, non-procreative expressions of sexuality—the Church's high praise for lifelong celibacy was suited to socioeconomic conditions (Tentler 1977:220–22). In New Spain the upholding of priestly authority had great importance: in the missionaries' idealized world, they were the morally superior guardians of their errant but basically good Indian children who, incapable of celibacy, were to follow the inferior but acceptable course of marriage. The promotion of celibacy was irrelevant in New Spain because of Indian depopulation; in this context the friars' emphasis on abstinence actually contradicts their best interest: should the Indians die out they themselves would become superfluous.

All things considered, the Nahuas' sexual ethic of marriage and moderation was better suited to the colonial political and socioeconomic context. But the friars' European background and education precluded its acceptance. While they taught that marital sex for purposes of procreation was not a sin, they surrounded sexuality with such an aura of filth and wickedness that the overall message was one of condoning an ethic of abstinence rather than one of moderation.

THE FIFTH MORTAL SIN

Excessive eating and drinking fell into the Christian category of gluttony. This included alcoholic inebriation. Eating and drinking to maintain the body were not sinful, but to partake in excess, to seek unhealthy foods for pleasure, or to impose dietary restrictions such as those of Leviticus was sinful (Aquinas 1928:122–23). Such acts exhibited unnecessary concern with the body and thus, like sexuality for all but procreative purposes, were *perforce* rejected under Christianity's rule of spirit over flesh.

Both overeating and intoxication violated the Nahuas' ideal of moder-

ation, but they were not classified together. Inebriation outside of approved social or ritual contexts was a serious crime which could be punished by death. Lists of vices tended to include drunkenness along with "pleasurable living" or adultery and theft; propensity toward drunkenness was a common outcome of a poor *tonalli*. Overeating received nowhere near as much attention. But the friars, constrained by the Seven Mortal Sins classification, were obliged to treat inebriation as a sub-class of gluttony.

Eating too much or too fast, like too rapid movement, was a disorderly form of behavior that associated one with filth and with peoples and beasts of the periphery. One term for the glutton was *tlacazolli*, composed of *tlacatl* 'person' and the suffix -*zolli* 'old and worn out' from the *tlazolli* complex. The glutton was someone prematurely aging and disintegrating; this reflects the belief that the *tlazolli* in foods has a contaminating and disordering effect on the body. A woman with very large breasts was called a *tlacazolchichibnuale* 'possessor of glutinous breasts,' which suggested inordinate consumption (Molina 1970:II, 115r). A severe form of syphilis was called *tlacazolnanahuatl* 'glutton pox'²⁰ (Molina 1970:II, 115r), suggesting that it either had a causal link to overeating or resulted from glutinous indulgence in sex, as is warned against in the *Florentine Codex* exhortation to chastity (Sahagún 1953-82:VI, 116). Also, the *tlalquequetzal* plant was a medicine for overeating as well as for coughing—two forms of disorderly oral conduct (Sahagún 1953-82:XI, 193).

One of the faults of the Otomí, viewed by the Nahuas as a morally inferior peripheral people, was that they carelessly ate up all their maize harvest right away and then had to revert to wild foods (Sahagún 1953-82:X, 179-80). The eating habits of certain animals went against the Nahuas' sense of propriety. The *cuitlamiztli* 'excrement puma' probably received that name because it was considered a glutton (*xixicujn*): when it caught a deer it would eat the whole thing, eating too much of it (*quijete-quijqua*; Sahagún 1953-82:XI, 6). The coati (*pezotl*) was another great eater; to say *nipeçoti* 'I become a coati' was a way of saying that one was a gluttonous, intemperate eater (Sahagún 1953-82:XI, 10). The pig, introduced from Spain, was in Nahuatl called *pitzotl*. The *Florentine Codex* explains that this was because of the smacking noise it makes when it eats, as if it "kisses itself," *mopitzoa* (Sahagún 1953-82:XI, 10). Karttunen (1983:198) relates *pitzoa* with *pitzabnua* 'to become thin,' suggesting that it has to do here with the puckering of the lips. In contrast to these animals, the description of the noble jaguar emphasizes its careful eating habits (Sahagún 1953-82:XI, 1).

Molina (1970:I, 66r; II, 26v) gives *cuetzpal* 'lizard' as a metaphor for glutton, and *cuetzpalti* 'to become a lizard' for *glotonear*. The lizard is a creature of the earth's surface, and in iconographic contexts was associated with the earth deity, with fertility and sexuality (Seler 1963:I, 13, 44, 77). This suggests another link between eating and sexuality, activities which involved contact with *tlazolli* and were to be indulged in with moderation.

Overeating violated not only the ideal of careful behavior but also the equilibrium of the body, by causing it to swell up. Gluttons were equated with victims of dropsy, both called *itexihui*²¹ (Molina 1970:II, 42v). Here the act of eating is not even the relevant point, but the fact that the body has become awry. This is well illustrated by the *Florentine Codex*'s description of the *teopochotl* tree, a variety of ceiba (Sahagún 1953–82:XI, 215–16). If a diminutive person ate the seeds or sap of this massive tree, he or she would grow and put on weight; these substances were also useful in fattening up animals. But if a normal person partook of it, it would cause the person's flesh to swell up. He or she would become a *tlacaçolcuitlapol* 'big gluttonous excrement.' The person would become fat and lumpy, sluggish and also filthy. The person would lie panting, eating excessively; his or her body would fall apart and hands and feet would burst. The willful pursuit of carnal pleasure, essential to the Christian definition of gluttony, is strikingly absent here.

The alternation between abstinence and indulgence, by which one maintained equilibrium and marked the ritual passage of time, was expressed in fasting and feasting behaviors. For example, those who did a year's penance in order to participate in the ritual eating of the amaranth-seed image of Huitzilopochtli had a feast at the end of the year and drank pulque (Sahagún 1953–82:III, 9). Drinking bouts accompanied the Ochpaniztli rite (*Codex Magliabechiano* 1983:38v). Muñoz Camargo (1978:135) noted that distinguished men were permitted to drink moderately during festivals. The *Codex Magliabechiano* (1983:40v) describes the Tlahuicas' *pillahuana*, rite of children's drinking, carried out as part of the Hueypachtli observations.

Inebriation merits special attention because of its cultural and social importance before and after the Conquest. There was a clear distinction between simply drinking alcohol, *tlahuana*, and drinking to inebriation, *ibuinti*, the latter applying also to intoxication from mushrooms, datura, peyote, or other substances. In many social and ritual contexts no drinking at all was allowed, in others drinking without intoxication (such as that permitted the elderly), and in a few intoxication was called for. For example, during the Panquetzalitzli festival the "fifth pulque"—the fifth cup

which intoxicated while four did not—was drunk; merchants at their banquets ate mushrooms in order to see visions (Sahagún 1905–08:VI, 6; 1953–82:IX, 39).

In general, inebriation was viewed as a very dangerous activity. The many gods of pulque would take control—one would become impoverished, filthy, lost in the periphery. Of the drunkard it was said (Sahagún 1953–82:IV, 13):

Ça can vettitihu, ça can popoliviz, ça can mjuijz, ça can quauhtenvetziz: aço cana motepexiviz, motlaxapuchhujz, matlanviz, matoiaviz, atlan mjuijz.

He (or she) will just go falling somewhere, he will just perish somewhere, he will just die somewhere, he will just collapse somewhere. Or perhaps he will cast himself off of a precipice, he will drop himself in a hole, he will throw himself underwater, he will throw himself into the torrent, he will die underwater.

The fate of this individual is depicted in Figure 15.

The dangerous results of intoxication are also described well in Olmos's oration of the father to his son. If the boy does not follow his father's advice (Bautista 1600b:13v)

ca huel tehuatl molhuil momahcehual muchihuaz i mixitl in tlapatl, in octli in nanacatl in tiquiz, in ticquaz inic tihuintiz inic timotlapololtiz inic aoc ticmatiz in timomayahui in tlexochquauhco, in tecomalco, in atoyac in tepoxic in timocalaqz, in tzonhuazco im mecac, inic aocmo ticmatiz inic ticmonamictiz i tetl in quahuitl, in xixtli cuitlatl, inic teixco teycpac tinemiz, inic timochocholtiz, inic timoquaquauhtiz, inic ticmonamictiz in tochtli im maçatl yohui, inic timocalaquiz in quauhtla in çacatla.

indeed, your reward, your merit will be that you will drink, you will eat jimson-weed, datura, pulque, mushrooms; thus you will become inebriated, thus you will become intoxicated, thus you will no longer know that you hurl yourself down in the ashes, in the cooking-pot, in the torrent, from the precipice, that you enter the snare, the rope; thus you will no longer know how you encounter the stone, the wood, excrement, feces, how you live in front of people, on top of people,²² how you become hardened, how you encounter the road of the rabbit, the deer, how you enter the forest, the grassy place.

In Sahagún's book on virtues and vices (1953–82:X), intoxication is listed among the attributes of many of the "bad" people. According to Motolinia (1971:362), a drunkard's house would be demolished since such a person was not worthy of having a house in the town: he or she belonged in the periphery.

The *Florentine Codex* address of the new ruler to the citizens does for drunkenness what the exhortation to chastity does for lust: it demon-



Figure 15. The fate of the drunkard. Illustration in the Florentine Codex, Book IV, 13v. (Photo from Sahagún 1979.)

strates how vices of great relevance in the early colonial context may be effectively argued against in Nahuatl. The text expresses a causal relationship between inebriation and other vices such as adultery, theft, bragging, gluttony, and lying. The drunkard has no possessions, wind swirls through his home, his children are thin, stained with excrement, clad in rags. He may hang himself, hurl himself from a precipice, lie crawling on the road, be seized, imprisoned, or punished by stoning, hanging, or being shot with arrows (Sahagún 1953–82:VI, 68–70).

With the breakdown of traditional social controls and the regulation

provided by the ritual calendar, and the various stresses experienced under colonialism, alcoholism became rampant. To the friars this was another sign of the Indians' weak nature. It was also an excuse for their failure to become model Christians: they would be good if only they did not drink. Motolinia (1941:118) wrote, "drunkenness was very general, and the root of many other sins, one who avoided it lived very virtuously." To Durán (1967:I, 240) the Indians were so susceptible to drunkenness that it was easier for them to repress lust—that most tempting of Christian sins—than to abstain from drinking. His explanation was that the Devil, having lost them to Christianity, retained his mastery through the "snare" of drunkenness. To drunkenness, and its too lenient punishment, Sahagún (1981:III, 159) attributed the Indians' unfitness for public office and the priesthood. The Spanish officials in the *Relaciones geográficas* (Paso y Troncoso 1905–06), the secular priests in the *Descripción del arzobispado* (1897) and Suárez de Peralta in his chronicle (1878:19–20) all corroborate the friars' concern with this problem.

In part, what bothered the Spaniards when the Indians drank was that they often did so to get drunk. Gibson (1964:133) observes how community festivals, celebrated with drunkenness and license, acted as collective release mechanisms and expressions of community identity (also Taylor 1979:39–40). As is typical with such rites of reversal, the normal rules of behavior are reversed or obliterated; for the Nahuas drunkenness represented, replicated, and called into being the chaotic, unordered, peripheral, and fertilely filthy aspect of their world. To Spaniards, for whom it was licit to drink moderately of wine on a daily basis, this periodic excess seemed sinful (see Taylor 1979:41).

Overeating was not one of the friars' major concerns, though they were obliged to discuss it along with the other mortal sins. The example of penitent Lazarus and the gluttonous rich man was frequently employed, as by Escalona (n.d.:164r, cited previously) and Sahagún (1563:18r).

The Dominican *doctrina* (1944:147v) translates gluttony as *nexhuitiliztli* 'filling oneself' from the verb *ischui*, and as *tlauanaliztli* 'drinking alcohol.' Fray Juan Bautista (1600a:77r–77v) advised fellow priests that they should distinguish between *tlahuana*, which referred simply to drinking alcohol, and drinking to inebriation, *ibuinti*. This was a common misunderstanding, and worked against the establishment of a distinction between non-sinful moderation and sinful excess.

Gante (1553:54v) refers to gluttony as *tequitlaqualiztli xixicuinyotl* 'eating too much, gluttony.' Its offspring include eating, not purely, but just in

dirt. Fray Domingo de la Anunciación (1565:58v) defines gluttony, *nexchni-tiliztli* 'filling oneself,' as

vei yyeleuiloca tequitlaqualiztli tequiatliliztli, tlauanaliztli yn vel yc cocolizcuihua, yuan yn vel yc netlapololtilo.

the great desiring of eating too much, drinking too much, drinking alcohol, such that one becomes sick and such that one becomes confused.

Molina gives a more extensive account of this sin (1569:81v-82v). Gluttony he glosses as *xixicuiyotl*, gluttony of food as *tequitlaqualiztli* 'eating too much.' The penitent is questioned as to whether he or she drank very much alcohol, or perhaps became intoxicated and confused. *Ihuinti* and *xocomiqui* 'to die of fruit' cover intoxication with other substances in addition to alcohol. Molina asks whether the person in this state became sick, so that he or she could not pray or work, or fell into some mortal sin: a major danger of inebriation is its results, not merely the disorder inherent in the condition. He asks if the person ate many foods only for the purpose of *tlahelpaquilitzli* 'foul happiness,' the term usually equated with lust. The penitent is also questioned about partaking of intoxicating mushrooms, *ololiuhqui* (the beverage made with morning glory seeds), or other intoxicating things. Molina also asks about the eating of human flesh, or of maize that was cooked with it; this is a *tetzaughtlatlacolli*, a frightful and ominous sin. Finally, the friar asks whether the penitent took great pleasure in eating, taking his or her intestines as a god (*ticmoteotica mocuitlaxcol*).

Sahagún (1563:2r) compares the person who becomes fat, overeats, oversleeps, and drinks alcohol with a pig fattened by the *tlacatecolotl* for slaughter. He includes overeating and drinking alcohol (*in tequitlatliztli*, *in tlavanaliztli*) along with the usual lust as causes for God's destruction of Sodom and the cities on the plain. The pig, even though not an indigenous animal, is used aptly here because of the Nahuas' attention to its manner of eating.

Sahagún objected not only to overeating but to various components of the indigenous diet, attributing what he saw as the Spaniards' superior intelligence and physical condition to the foods they ate. He admonishes his listeners (1563:38r):

Ca yeuatl in quiqua Castillā tlaca: yeica ca q̄lli in itlaq̄l inic movapava, chicauaque yvā chipauaq̄z yvā tlamatini ca quimpaleuiya in qualli tlaq̄lli: ca no yuh āmochivazq̄ intla anquiquazque intlaqual, yvā intla anquimalhuizq̄ amonacayo in iuh qui-
malhuia. Ma xicmocuitlavicā in Castillā tlaolli inic āquiquazq̄ castillā tlaxcalli: xi-

quīnemiticā in ichcāme in pitzome in quaquaveq̄ ca q̄lli in īacayo. Macamo anquiquaz̄ in īacayo chichime, in quimichi in epatl etc. Ca amo q̄loni, in tlein amo quicua Castillā tlaca amo āquiquaz̄, ca yevātin vel quimati in tlein q̄loni etc.

That which the Castilian people eat, because it is good food, that with which they are raised, they are strong and pure and wise. Indeed, good food helps them. You will become the same way if you eat their food, and if you are careful with your bodies as they are. Raise Castilian maize [wheat] so that you may eat Castilian tortillas [bread]. Raise sheep, pigs, cattle, for their flesh is good. May you not eat the flesh of dogs, mice, skunks, etc. For it is not edible. You will not eat what the Castilian people do not eat, for they know well what is edible.

Without actually condemning indigenous practices as sinful, Sahagún implies that simply eating native foods results in the same sort of inferior condition that the Nahuas would have attributed to overindulgence in any sort of food. In European eyes, the eating of dogs, mice, and other disapproved foods indicated a lack of reason and civility; truly civilized persons ate the domesticated animals raised for this purpose and discriminated sharply between these foods and categories of wild, unclean, or otherwise improper foods (Pagden 1982:87–88). Sahagún's statement also demonstrates a common contradiction in the friars' view of native culture: they purport to admire the Indians' "simple" lifestyle, including their light garments and maize-and-bean-based diet, but at the same time they express a desire to make them over in a Spanish image, so that they may become respectable citizens in Spanish eyes.

Fray Juan de la Anunciación shows relatively more concern with drunkenness than do early writers such as Escalona. This suggests that the friars' concern with particular sins may have altered over the years as the immediate problems of polygyny and idolatry were resolved and alcohol consumption increased. In his Christmas sermons Anunciación states that not going to the church due to eating too much or drinking too much alcohol damages (*quitlacoa*) and dishonors Christ's birth (1577:13r). He states that the drunkard—as *tlauanqui* 'one who drinks alcohol' and *xocomicqui* 'one who dies of fruit'—is called the "*tlacatecolotl*'s vomit" (16v). The *tlacatecolotl* tries to destroy people's Lenten penances; he wants them to dirty their souls *taelpaquilitzica tequitlaqualitzica tlauanalitzica* 'with foul pleasure, with overeating, with drinking alcohol' (41r). To guard against drinking, one should contemplate Christ's Passion: the Jews made him drink bitter water and sour wine; the drinking of alcohol is like bitter water to him (61r–61v).

Anunciación skillfully compares sin itself with inebriation, drawing in symbolism of the periphery (71r):

Ca yuhquiama tlahuauqui in oyhuintic, yn iquac otli quitocatiuh aocmo quimati campa yauh, aocmo no quimati yn aço canapa mococoz, in anoço motepexihuiz. No yuhque yn aqualtin in ayectin yn tlatlacultica yhuintitinemi.

Indeed, like a drunkard who has become intoxicated, who when he (or she) goes following a road no longer knows where he is going, nor any longer knows if perhaps he will be sick somewhere, or perhaps will throw himself over a precipice; like this the bad, the unrighteous go about intoxicated with sin.

The drinker (*tlahuauqui*) destroys his or her understanding and happy life (112v).

Preaching on John the Baptist, Anunciación compares the *tequitlaquani* 'overeater' and the *moxhuitianí* 'one who fills oneself' with a latrine, *axix-calli* 'urine-house,' the stench of which beats people's noses. Overeating causes one to desire sin. Overeating and gluttony, *in tequitlaqualiztli in xixicuinyotl*, destroy the soul's understanding and thought, so that it goes to *mictlan*. The overeater breaks the commands of the Church by not fasting when required. The friar then shifts to a more specific focus on alcohol. John the Baptist, who never drank wine or pulque, should be taken as an example, and not those who devote themselves to *teuhltli tlaçolli* 'dust, filth'—this trope here referring to gluttony, or perhaps carnality in general, rather than to sexuality. Such persons only work their intestines, only go about seeking the drinking of too much alcohol, *tequitlauanaliztli*. Drinking destroys the memory. The drinker does not remember anything good. When intoxicated (*xocomiqui*) he or she is like a deer—used here simply to represent an irrational beast and without any awareness of the specific symbolic associations this timid, peripheral animal had for the Nahua (see Burkhart 1986a). Drinking destroys the senses, loosens the tongue, incites one toward lust. It weakens and damages (*quitlacoa*) the body, diminishes life, and destroys health. One who cannot abstain from drinking will go to *mictlan*. One who becomes intoxicated commits a mortal sin; he or she kills the body and also the soul, casting it into *mictlan* (160v–161r).

Using drunkenness figuratively, Anunciación describes sin as a chalice possessed by the *tlacatecolotl*. Like a thief who wants to steal a piece of jade from a merchant, the *tlacatecolotl* tries first to get one drunk with his chalice, his wine, which is earthly happiness, lustful living, drinking of alcohol, and the other sins, and then he steals one's soul (169r–169v).

The association of gluttony, or inebriation in particular, with excess, with peripherality, and with filth is consistent with indigenous philosophy; threats of hell and the total denigration of pleasure are not. Later in the century Fray Juan Bautista observed the prevalence in many places of

this philosophy: "let us eat and drink while we live; will we perhaps eat and drink in *ximohuayan?*"²³ Bautista objects to this not because it shows devotion to the flesh but because it implies disbelief in the afterlife (1600a:54r–54v). However, it is clearly another example of the Nahuas' insistence upon the value of earthly pleasures.

As one cannot assume the absence of a moral rule simply from its frequent violation, one cannot judge the efficacy of the friars' preaching on this matter simply from the fact that inebriation was rampant. Too many other factors were pressuring the Nahuas into this behavior pattern. Aside from being a response to abuse by colonists, disease, changes in family, class and community structure, and the introduction of Spanish wine and brandy—to which the traditional restraints on pulque consumption did not necessarily apply—drunkenness was a form of rebellion against Spanish or Church authority. Taylor's study of colonial alcohol consumption, though focused primarily on the later colonial period, thoroughly explores the various social, economic, and political factors involved in the Indians' drinking patterns (1979, see especially 34–45). Given the Nahuas' view of a cosmos divided between order and chaos, in an unstable and rapidly changing social context perhaps the disorder inherent in states of inebriation was somehow perceived as a logical mode of behavior.

SUMMARY

Though the Nahuas viewed the world as a dangerous, slippery place, they attempted to live within it, not to reject it. Their way of coming to terms with the nature of their world was to condone an ethos of moderation, a balance between order and chaos replicating that of the universe as a whole. Humanity, though enjoying some divine patronage and protection, was—like divinity itself—a part of the world and subject to its rules. The friars placed a continual emphasis on abstinence and self-abasement. Though they sometimes tried to phrase their preaching in terms of "moderation," for them moderation meant not doing too much of a bad thing; for the Nahuas it meant not doing too much of anything.

One of the friars' most striking failures was their inability to impose chastity and temperance, as they defined these virtues, on their Nahua subjects. The Nahuas' behavior had something to do with the breakdown of the Aztec legal system and something to do with their status as a subjugated and exploited people. Yet the collegiates who chose marriage over

continence and the villagers who drank heavily during festivals were also asserting the traditional value system, in which excess had its place as well as abstinence, and the wisest course was one that mediated or alternated between the two. The decline in health due to disease, displacement, and forced labor was attributed to behavioral excesses—as defined by Nahua morality rather than Christian. Aside from the refocusing of penitential acts upon Christianity's sacred beings and ceremonies, the friars' efforts had little effect.

Health and Sickness

Relating morality to the condition of the body is an effective device for ethical argument. The threat of illness can act as a deterrent, while moral lapses can provide explanations for physical ills. In Nahua thought, morality and health were closely linked: acts classed as immoral were physically debilitating; ritual breaches could be punished with disease. With Christianity's soul/body dichotomy, disease functioned in morality principally as a metaphor for sin. However, sin could have a metonymic link with disease, disease being at times a punishment for sin. Even here, though, it is an arbitrary rather than a natural connection. This chapter explores various aspects of morality's physical manifestations, comparing Nahua and Christian usage and examining the friars' efforts to persuade in these terms.

MORAL ASPECTS OF ETIOLOGY

Aguirre Beltrán (1963:27) describes the "etiology of sin" characteristic of sixteenth-century Spanish medicine. Epidemics—including those suffered by the Indians—were always attributed to divine punishment; individual illnesses could have the same cause. Church doctrine, established in the thirteenth century and reaffirmed in the sixteenth, held that the sick

should confess before seeking medical help. This would prevent their dying in mortal sin, should the condition prove fatal, and if the illness was a punishment for sin confession would suffice to heal it. Doctors were actually subject to excommunication if they treated a patient who had not yet confessed (Lea 1968:I, 262–63). The influential fifteenth-century theologian Jean Gerson, in a work republished in Mexico in 1544, asserts: “the corporal sickness often comes from the spiritual one” (Gerson 1949:28r–28v).

The connection between sin and illness is deeply rooted in Christian thought. The Bible and other early texts frequently apply disease metaphors to sin; the adoption of purification rites into early Christianity depended on this close connection (Bloomfield 1952:28). The idea that after the Fall humanity was in a generally diseased condition, both physically and spiritually, is common in the writings of the Church Fathers (Lukken 1973:297). In the New Testament, the patristic literature and the Church liturgy, Christ is presented as a physician and the redemption as a medical curing (Lukken 1973:299–302). In medieval belief, baptism was thought to cure physical and mental ills as well as spiritual corruption (Russell 1984:127).

In Nahua belief *tlatlacolli*, such as the breaking of a ritual taboo or prescription, could anger the gods so that they punished the miscreant with disease, certain deities being associated with particular diseases (Aguirre Beltrán 1963:38–44; Durán 1967:I, 156; Sahagún 1953–82:III, 11–12). Just as penitential “meriting” ensured health and well-being, failure to merit things by proper ritual observances could cause disease. Don Carlos of Texcoco, the native ruler burned by the Primitive Inquisition, was reported to have performed sacrifices in order to prevent pestilences (Suárez de Peralta 1878:279). Ruiz de Alarcón (1982:205) recorded that Indians blamed sicknesses on the anger of a saint, due perhaps to boys urinating in the chapel or to failure to observe a saint’s festival.

Exposure to *tlazolli* could bring on illness more directly. Tlazolteotl, goddess of filth, was also goddess of medicine: this demonstrates how closely *tlazolli* and its purification were identified with sickness and its cure (Aguirre Beltrán 1963:44). Sodomy, excess sexual activity, or sexual activity while in a physically weak condition could bring on illness; for example, a man who had too much intercourse would suffer a disease characterized by excessive fat loss (*Codex Magliabechiano* 1983:65v; López Austin 1980:I, 244; Molina 1970:II, 22v; Sahagún 1953–82:XI).

Purification rites were common cures. Illnesses resulting from the “filth

death" were cured by a ceremony called *tetlazolaltiloni* 'that which washes away one's filth' (López Austin 1980:I, 299). The sweat bath, a common remedy, presumably derived its healing properties from the assumption that the removal of sweat, a form of *tlazolli*, from the body would have purificatory effects like the washing away of dirt. Sick persons, if they recovered, would describe their cure metaphorically as a bathing in the waters of Chapultepec (Sahagún 1953-82:VI, 232), thus expressing a similar sense of their contamination as the criminals who bathed there upon their release. After Christianization, the Nahuas purified their sick by having them drink holy water supplied by the friars (Mendieta 1980:428).

The association of sickness with immorality has been evident in previous chapters: it is merely one more manifestation of the order/disorder model. Immoderation, exposure to *tlazolli*, and other forms of disorder are causes of illness; illness belongs to the domain of disorder. Merely falling, tripping or being knocked down could bring serious illness upon an otherwise prudent and moral person (López Austin 1980:I, 404; Sahagún 1953-82:VI, 228; X, 162). People already sick were especially susceptible to chaotic forces. A sick person who saw a snake or scorpion *tetzabuítli* would die; if a healthy person encountered it a sick family member would die (Motolinia 1971:152).

Sickness could be associated with *tonalli* loss; it could also be conceived of as a foreign element in the body, an invasion of a disorderly element into the body's structure, destroying its equilibrium. Cure by sucking out small objects (Aguirre Beltrán 1963:52), purification by bathing or sweating, or transference of illness into a dog modelled of maize dough (Motolinia 1941:147-48) demonstrate this idea of disease. In either case, it is the violation of order and equilibrium that is manifested in sickness.

Speaking one's misdeeds aloud could help in recovering from illness, a practice strikingly similar on the surface to Christian belief. Again, the aim is to eliminate harmful things in the body. By speaking them aloud, one symbolically ejects the immoral deeds that have disturbed one's inner equilibrium (according to Pettazzoni 1930, this is the premise upon which all "primitive" confession rites operate). Doctors advised the seriously ill and the infertile to confess any misdeeds; this was considered the "principal medicine" (Mendieta 1980:281). A woman undergoing a difficult labor was ordered by the midwife to name any men other than her husband with whom she had had sexual relations (Gómez de Orozco 1945:55). Since adultery was a major cause of childbed problems, confession acted to restore the internal order damaged by such indiscretions so that the child could emerge more easily.

These links between morality and etiology provided a common ground for preaching in terms of disease. That Christian sins could cause diseases and confession could help to cure them made sense to the Nahuas. However, most of the friars' use of disease imagery emphasized metaphor over these metonymic expressions. Sin as a metaphorical disease of the soul was a much more common image than the Nahua cause-effect relationship that viewed *tlatlacolli* as a cause of bodily disease. Even punishment for sin was usually expressed by the friars as harm to the soul rather than to the body.

SIN AS ILLNESS

Mendieta (1980:626) describes the basic medical metaphor employed by the friars. When Fray Francisco Jiménez arrived in a town, he began by explaining to the inhabitants that he had come to give "the medicines necessary for the health of souls to those who were spiritually ailing." The Nahuatl texts abound with similar imagery. Sin as sickness, Christ as healer, the sacraments (confession in particular) as medicines are particularly common metaphors.

Escalona states that Christ came to cure our souls, *quimopatilico yn tanta* (n.d.:144v). He describes (152r) Christ's healing of a sick and injured person. Christ's healings of physical ills form the earthly parallel for his role as a spiritual healer, but these are not always clearly distinguished. The healing of this person's sores is described as a cleansing or purification (*ochipauac*), an example of the link between disease symptoms and *tlatzolli*.

In a sermon for Lent, Escalona preaches on the soul being sick with sin, and how to cure it (n.d.:172v). Weeping destroys sin; tears are a medicine for the soul's sickness (183v–184v). He elaborates on the image of the sick soul as a metaphor for confession. If one is very sick, with rottenness and pus, and there is a curer who can heal the illness, one will willingly show one's symptoms to this curer. Escalona tells his listeners that their souls are very sick with sin, and it is necessary to show this rottenness to the curer, the priest, in order that their souls recover (185r).

The heavily Christianized section of Olmos's *huehuetlatolli* includes an oration on how the doctor must cure and console the sick. The doctor must urge the patient to seek confession, to reveal to the priest how his or her soul is sick with filth (*tlagolli*; Bautista 1600b:68r). Even if a person's body is healed, the soul will never get well if the person does not confess (69r). A sermon about baptism declares that before baptism the Tzitzimitl, Satan, was in the listener's soul, the soul was in darkness and was sick.

Upon baptism, Christ made his home within the soul, illuminated it with his holy light, and healed it with his grace (71r–71v).

The Dominican *doctrina* describes Christ's role as healer in both physical and spiritual terms (*Doctrina cristiana* 1944:90v):

ca oq'ualmihuallitcino in dios tetatcin in itlaçopiltcin Jesu xpo nican tlalticpac in quinmopatilitcino in cocuxque. Yeuantin tlatacoanime notlaçopilhuane tlatiacol-tica cocoxiticatca: i oquinmopatilico yn toueytlatoauh i Jesu xpo.

Indeed, God the father sent his precious [or legitimate] son Jesus Christ here on earth; he cured the sick. They, the sinners, oh my dear children, were sick with sin. Our great ruler Jesus Christ cured them.

God's grace is like a medicine (*yuhqui patcintli*; 91r); Christ instituted the sacraments *inic patiz in toyollia yn tanima itechpa in tlatlacolcocoliztli* 'so that our souls would recover from sin-sickness' (91v). Baptism, confirmation and confession are separately described as cures for souls sick with sin (93v–97r). Here sickness is a metaphor; Christ's role as curer of the sick is comparable to but not identified with his role as founder of the sacraments. Caring for the sick, one of the works of mercy, includes caring for one's own soul when it is sick with sin, so that it is cured by God's grace in confession (115v).

Fray Domingo de la Anunciación (1565:33v) identifies the sacrament of penitence as a medicine left by Christ for people's souls against the sickness of sins (*ypahtica tanima, ynuicpa tlatlacolcocoliztli* 'our souls' medicine, against sin-sickness'). To those sick with sin, everything in the world, including good food as well as bad, is harmful and afflicting (Anunciación 1565:56r–56v): sinners are *like* sick people; they are not literally sick.

Molina (1569:32r) questions the doctor on whether he or she makes people confess before treating them, for this is an order of the Church. He admits the healthful effects of sweatbaths, examining owners of sweat-houses to make sure they permit bathing only for the sick, who need it: though he surely means physical sickness and would not conceive of this as a remedy for spiritual or moral ills (40r). In confession, God acts as a great doctor, healing the wounds of sin (119v).

For Sahagún, original sin is a sickness that causes people's hearts to be *itlacauhtica* 'damaged or displaced' when they come to life. Christ gave us a heavenly medicine, his grace, to heal our hearts; this stress on the heart rather than the soul confines the image to the bodily realm. Baptism heals original sin; the other sacraments heal personal sins (1563:12r–12v). Cir-

circumcision was the medicine that God gave Abraham to cure original sin (14r). Sin is the disease of our souls, which only God can cure. Baptism cures original sin, marriage cures lust. Diligent people quickly seek medicine if they sin; they confess and are cured before the sickness becomes big (21r).

Sahagún tells sinful people that their souls are as if covered with wounds, oozing pus, and stinking. He tells the drunkard that he or she is a leper; his or her soul is covered with sores. The lustful person has a great sickness with his or her soul, as do the thief and the liar. All these sinners must go to the priest and reveal their rottenness and stench, and they will be cured (1563:21r–21v). Reproofs for sin are like medicine that the sick person must drink, even if it is bitter (61v–62r).

The ten lepers cured by Christ (in the Bible, Luke 17:14) are, for Sahagún, a sign or representation (*inezca*) of sinners. Mortal sin is with their souls, manifested in their leprosy: this implies a direct, metonymic connection between their moral and physical states. Christ orders them to go to the priests; this means that sinners must go confess to a priest in order to be healed (1563:81r–81v).

The *Psalmodia christiana* gives *teuiutica nepapan patli* ‘the various spiritual medicines’ for the sacrament of penitence (Sahagún 1583:13r). Sahagún draws a parallel between physical sickness in the Old Testament and spiritual sickness in the New. God, angered by the sins of the children of Israel, punished them with illness. Moses, by following God’s instructions, saved his people from this affliction. Christ has a similar role in saving our souls from sin (83r–84r). Idolatry originated with the confusion of the languages at Babel. When God wanted to cure the resulting damage of the world (*quimopatiliz in itlacauhca in cemanaoac*), he miraculously taught the Apostles the different languages in the world (176v–177r). The sin of idolatry is here a disease or corruption to be healed.

Fray Juan de la Anunciación describes God as a *nelli ticitzintli* ‘true doctor’ who cures souls (1577:7r). The soul of the sinner is as though *palani* ‘full of sores’ because of sin; mortal sin is considered as a great sickness. Showing one’s sores to the doctor, God, is confessing one’s sins. The myrrh brought by the third of the Magi is described as a bitter medicine which represents penance (*tlamaceualiztli*; 18v). Confession and penance are the healing of the soul (25r). The souls of sinners are sick and rotten with sin. Christ came to heal them; with him is the cure and purification of their souls (25v). Christ is the true healer and doctor; it is a great sin for Christians who are sick to call upon the native curer and not

Christ: here Christ's healing power is applied to specifically physical ailments (47r). Anunciación also describes Christ's disciples as doctors who cure souls of sin (64v). The different sins are different diseases of the soul (65r). Sacramental confession is an *ylnuicac pahtli* 'heavenly medicine' (258v).

The ten lepers—whom Anunciación calls *nanahuatin* 'pustuled ones,' connoting syphilis—represent sinners; their cure represents confession (105v). The sin/sickness relationship is metaphorical. Elsewhere, however, Anunciación does express the idea of a direct connection between physical sickness and sin. When Christ heals the invalid brought to him on a pallet (in Matthew 9:2–7), he first heals the man's soul to remove *icocolizpeuhcayo in tlatlacolli* 'the origin of his sickness, sin,' and then he heals the man's body (114v).

In these texts, sin is sometimes a cause of bodily illness but primarily threatens the soul. There is no consistent identification of particular sins with particular diseases. It is mainly the soul that becomes diseased, rotten, covered with wounds. These statements play upon the Nahuas' sense of a connection between moral fortitude and physical well-being, but attempt to transfer this concern for the body into a concern for the soul.

DEFORMITY

In addition to disease, various physical handicaps and deformities were associated with immorality in Nahua and Christian thought. The Nahua gods punished wrongdoers with blindness, crippling, and paralysis as well as sickness, filth, and poverty (for example, Sahagún 1953–82:VI, 27, 217). The "merit" of the bad ruler was blindness and paralysis as well as rags and refuse (Sahagún 1953–82:VI, 18, 42, 44). The young man who had too much sexual intercourse would be so weakened that he would have to crawl on all fours (Sahagún 1953–82:VI, 118). Merchants were told that, if they failed to obey the admonitions of their elders, they would become blind and crippled (Sahagún 1953–82:IX, 56). If a pulque-maker tasted the product during the ritual abstinence demanded for the Tepictoton festival, his or her mouth would become twisted (Sahagún 1953–82:I, 23).

Physical defects pertained to the realm of chaos and filth. Tezcatlipoca, during his destruction of Tollan, is sent to war; the Toltecs abandon him with a group of dwarves and cripples, hoping that the enemies will kill him in this defenseless condition. Assisted by these liminal beings, how-

ever, Tezcatlipoca conquers the enemies and saves the Toltec soldiers who, perhaps because of their moral uprightness, were not such successful warriors (Sahagún 1953–82:III, 21–22). This demonstrates the power of chaotic elements, and the association of physically deformed persons with the Tezcatlipocan side of things.

Tezcatlipoca's personification as *Itztlacoliuhqui*, god of frost—falling, like *tlazolli*, on the cold, earthly side of the hot-cold system—was portrayed with his eyes covered. The codices *Ríos* and *Telleriano-Remensis* call him the lord of sin and blindness. Their descriptions are heavily Christianized, but a connection between this cold, blind god and moral wrong is clear: convicted adulterers were executed before his image (*Codex Ríos* 1964:plate 37; *Codex Telleriano-Remensis* 1964:16v). Nanahuatzin, the poor syphilitic who became the sun after purification, is depicted in the codices as physically deformed; this is another expression of his liminality (Seler 1963:I, 149–150).

The Nahuas' physical ideal was the *tlacamelabuac* 'human straightened one,' the person without scars or blemishes, with a well-formed body, neither too fat nor too thin. Such individuals were especially sought after for impersonating major deities and as slaves to be purchased for sacrifice (Durán 1967:I, 63, 182; Sahagún 1953–82:I, 19; II, 64; IX, 46). The term is applied to some of the "good" persons in Sahagún's book on human virtues and vices (e.g. 1953–82:X, 13, 46). An infant whose mother, while pregnant, witnessed a lunar eclipse—a dangerous, chaotic thing—would not be *tlacamelabuac* (Sahagún 1953–82:VII, 9). In the exhortation to chastity, pure-living persons are described as jades and turquoises with no blotches or blemishes (Sahagún 1953–82:VI, 113).

This "straightness" applied to one's internal structure as well as one's outward appearance. In regard to moral character, the heart in particular had to be properly placed.¹ "Turning someone's heart" (*teyolcuepaliztli*) expressed the idea of perversion (Molina 1970:II, 94v). Sahagún's "bad noble" has a crooked, bent, and twisted heart (*iollochico*, *iollonecuil*, *iollocuecuech*; 1953–82:X, 19). In Sahagún's admonition of a ruler to his daughter, the girl is praised for the condition of her heart: it is still a jade, a turquoise, nowhere twisted, still whole and complete (1953–82:VI, 96).

The friars relate blindness to sin not as one defect or disorder to another, but as metaphor. Sinful persons are as if blind; they cannot see the truth, cannot see the error of their ways, but there is nothing wrong with their eyes. According to Escalona, preaching during Advent, those who have not prepared to meet their lord have just gone about blind

(n.d.:124v). If one does not love God and keep his commands, because sin is with one, one's enemy the *tlacatecolotl* has blinded one (139v). Fray Pedro de Gante (1553:53v) states that lust blinds people the most of all the mortal sins. Sahagún (1563:85r) writes of sinners who go about blind with sin, loving sin more than God, and the body more than the soul.

Fray Juan de la Anunciación states that sin is blindness. Seeking Christ on the road, as did the blind man who wished to be healed, is confession (1577:36v). Blindness is the manifestation (*ynnezca*) of sinners, those who dwell in darkness (38r). The mute person possessed by the *tlacatecolotl*, whom Christ healed, represents the soul of the sinner with its mortal sin (48v). Blindness, deafness, and muteness are equated with sin, to be cured by confession (49v). Blindness, along with stench and rottenness, characterize the sinner (8rv). The deaf-mute healed by Christ at Sidon also represents the sinner, who is mute and deaf because of sin. Addressing his listeners, Anunciación adds that not long ago this same miracle was performed on them. They were mute and deaf, but now they can hear the holy words, and the "song of the holy words" is sung (102v–103r). Obviously, a special kind of muteness and deafness is intended.

Describing a sinful man, Anunciación (1577:107r) says that his heart is *ytlacauhqui* 'damaged or displaced' and he is not *tlacamelabnuac*. This rather directly physical description is not typical of the text. When a sinner commits a sin, he or she becomes like a *vilantli* 'a cripple who crawls on all fours.' He or she crawls on the ground, rolling in the filth and dust (7r): here physical deformity is skillfully linked to pollution, though the whole trope is a metaphor not meant to describe the sinner's physical state.

Along with Mary's purity went physical perfection and integrity. Sahagún's *Exercicio* (1574:20v–21r) compares her to a precious jade or turquoise, complete, with no blemishes or sins. Using the image of the stalk and the flower from Isaiah, the *Psalmodia* (1583:123r) describes Mary as a holy stalk, very straight (*melaoc*), nowhere bifurcated (*maxaltic*). Such imagery, like her association with purity, acted to enhance her moral status in Nahua opinions.

Here again, the texts occasionally make references that could be construed to imply a direct connection between moral and physical states. However, the friars' main intention is to establish the spiritual realm as something both separate from and superior to the physical realm. But by failing to assert this consistently, and by applying tropes likely to be understood metonymically, the Christian ideas are made to conform to Nahua models. At the same time, Nahua moral attitudes are manipulated in such

a way as to attach positive affect to morally positive Christian subjects and negative affect to negatively valued ones.

INFECTION

The infectious nature of *tlazolli*, as expressed in the *tlazolmiquiztli* concept, was discussed in Chapter Four. The friars also ascribe an infectious character to immoral acts. But, because their view is based on a metaphorical link between sickness and sin, this infection results not in disease but in participation in sin. Here sin acts like disease; it does not cause disease. This aspect of the friars' moral arguments is related to the idea of temptation: exposure to another's sin will incite someone to participate who, if free from bad examples, would be able to resist sin.

In Olmos's *huelnuelatolli*, the mother admonishes her daughter (Bautista 1600b:18v):

Yhuan ma tiquimmocniuhti in iztlacatinime in ichtequinime, in ahuiyanime in cacalacque, in tlatzihuunime, inic ahmo mitzmahuazque inic ahmo mitzxoxazq, çan xiquixcahui in calihtic, in tleyn ticchihuaz.

And do not befriend the liars, the thieves, the promiscuous women, the rascous ones,² the lazy, so that they do not infect you, so that they do not bewitch you. Just devote yourself to what you will do inside the house.

The danger posed by contact with immoral persons is not described as participation in sin.

Escalona (n.d.:167r) advises the baptized man on how to act with family members. He should honor his parents and love his wife and children. But if they provoke him to sin, he must go away from them. He must scorn anyone who induces him to sin, *ynic amo mitzmauaz* 'lest he or she infect you.'

In his treatise on sorcery, Olmos describes the Devil's activity (Baudot 1979:61):

Yc huel macho ca yehuatl quitemachtia quiteylhuia anoço quitecuitlauiltia yn tiltic in catçauac tlatolli, anoço nemiliztli *ynic temaua tecatçaua uel ic neci cenza amo qualli.*

Thus it is well known that he teaches people, he speaks to people, or perhaps provokes people with black, dirty words, or perhaps [black, dirty] living; thus he infects people, thus he dirties people, thus it is quite clear that he is very bad.

What is implied here is not a physiological contamination but the learning of evil deeds.

Olmos's sermon on lust tells how the secret prostitute endangers good women (Baudot 1976:54):

Yequene yntla analozque yn ichtacanemiliauiyanime, ic tlatzontequililozque ynic amo temaoazque ynic amo tetlapopolhtizque ynic amo yntech concavazque in axixtli cuiatl yn tluelillocayotl yn cequinti çua yn qualli yyollo y uel monemitiah. Yn ichtacaauiyani yuhqui yn ichcatl yn papalini in quimaoa cequintin yntlacamo totocoz quiçaz micuxniz. Yequene yn auiyanime yuhqui yn xocotl palanqui inic itlacauy yn qualli xocotl.

Moreover, if the secretly-living prostitutes will be seized, thus they will be sentenced, lest they infect people, lest they destroy people, lest they go leaving urine, excrement with other women who are good of heart, who live well. The secret prostitute is like a sheep full of sores that infects the others if it is not separated from them. Moreover, prostitutes are like a rotten fruit by which good fruit goes bad.

Olmos does not state outright that the danger is that good women will themselves commit sexual sins, not that they will be infected with disease. The former is obviously what the friar had in mind, but the passage as it stands admits of either a Christian or a Nahua interpretation.

Sahagún's sermon for the third Sunday after Pentecost takes as its text Matthew 8:2, about the leper who comes to Christ saying "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." The introductory section of the sermon discusses infectious diseases such as syphilis (*nanavatl*) and leprosy (*teo-coeoliztli*), and how afflicting and shameful they are (Sahagún 1563:20r-20v). It is typical of the doctrinal literature to focus on these diseases, reflective of European concerns, rather than the sorts of epidemic diseases that were wiping out the Indians. Sahagún then makes a direct connection between sinning and infection, telling parents to admonish their children to stay away from promiscuous women and prostitutes, for they infect people. One who has relations with them will contract syphilis. In the following sections of this sermon, the "infection" becomes a metaphor for the spread of sinfulness. Sahagún accuses the drunkard and the lustful person of infecting others with sin and "killing" them (1563:21r): he means killing their souls but does not state so directly. People must protect themselves against sinners *inic amo techmavazq amo intech titixcuitizq* 'lest they infect us, lest we take them as examples' (21v). The infection is manifested in sinful behavior, not disease symptoms. In the *Apéndiz* (1579b:6v) Saha-

gún singles out Jews, Moors, Turks, and heretics, as well as fellow Christians who are sinners, as persons to be avoided *ynic amo mitz mavazque yn ica ynaqual nemiliz* 'lest they infect you with their bad living.'

In his discussion of the ten lepers, Fray Juan de la Anunciación (1577:105v-106r) explains how, following the laws of Leviticus, lepers were obliged to stay away from people so they would not infect anyone. Someone who sins in people's presence is like a leper. It is necessary that he or she be separated from people lest he or she infect them with bad living or be followed as an example. Here as well, disease is a metaphor for sin.

HEART-STRAIGHTENING

The indigenous confession rite was called *neyolmelahualiztli* 'straightening one's heart.' This purification rite resulted in a restoration of internal order, expressed in the idea that the heart was returned to its proper position. Such equilibrium was equivalent to good health. The friars adopted this term to refer to Christian confession. In so doing, they not only fomented an identification, in form and function, between the Nahua and the Christian rite, thus aiding in the new rite's acceptance, but also implicitly accepted Nahua concepts of the body and its relationship to morality.

In Christian ideology the heart and soul were closely linked, the heart being the seat of the soul, but this identification was limited by the soul's immateriality. The Nahuas posited a closer identification between the heart and the animate principle, both being centered on the idea of *yol-*, a vital force activating both the mind and the body (see López Austin 1980:I, 187–88). The friars' preference for their own term for soul, *ánima*, over the Nahuatl *teyolitla* and its variants (*teyolia*, *yollia*, etc.), reflects their concern with the differentiation between spirit and matter. But in accepting the term *neyolmelahualiztli*, they reduce the division between body and soul and imply that confession acted to correct a concrete bodily condition rather than some abstract state of the soul.

In addition to the confession rite, the idea of heart-straightening appears in indigenous usage in the context of the merchants' slave sacrifices (Sahagún 1953–82:IX, 56, 59). When merchants purchased slaves to bathe and offer in sacrifice, at one point in the ceremony the slaves were placed on reed mats at the entrance to the offerer's house. Guests coming in for

a banquet would see them there. This was called *teiolmelaoa* 'it straightens people's hearts.' The offering of slaves seemingly had a beneficial effect for all concerned, the slaves' purification substituting symbolically for that of the merchants and their families.

The friars were impressed by the Nahuas' acceptance of and devotion to sacramental confession (e.g. Dávila Padilla 1955:81; Mendieta 1980:282–83; Motolinia 1941:131–37, 149, 185; 1971:129).³ Many confessed very well, following the Ten Commandments. Some brought their sins written down or painted with hieroglyphs. They confessed frequently, often traveling great distances to do so. When a priest visited a community, the Indians would bring out the sick and the lame to confess; sick children would ask to be taken to church to confess (Mendieta 1980:283). One may imagine that they granted greater relevance than the friars to the curative properties of confession. Durán (1967:I, 262) discusses problems with Indian confession. For example, the Indians do not always exhibit repentance and the intention to reform their behavior: elements irrelevant to the efficacy of indigenous confession. With confession presented to them as a cure for ills of all sorts, and specifically as a way to repair internal disruptions, it is not surprising that the Nahuas would participate avidly, nor that they would interpret the sacrament as comparable to their own rites.

This sacrament is referred to as confession or as penitence (*confesión, penitencia*), the latter term typically rendered into Nahuatl as *tlamacehualiztli* and the former as either *neyolmelahualiztli* or *neyolcuitiliztli*. Where the actual oral confession element of the rite is referred to, one of these two terms is always used, *neyolmelahualiztli* being the more common choice. *Neyolcuitiliztli*, from *cuitia*, the causative form of *cui* 'to take,' bears a more general sense of admitting things, perhaps of taking things out from one's heart or interior, than the more specialized and ritualized *neyolmelahualiztli*. Both terms, however, refer to some sort of operation upon the heart, a physical rather than a purely spiritual or mental behavior. *Neyolcuitiliztli* could imply that one's misdeeds are being taken out of one's heart by the act of oral admission, thus rendering the heart free of such disorderly obstructions and having much the same effect as "straightening" it. This accords well with Nahua perceptions of the efficacy of oral confession.

The Spanish or Latin terms for the sacrament are sometimes introduced into the Nahuatl texts, but the verb "to confess" had always to be expressed in Nahuatl, with either *yolmelabra* or *yolcuitia*. In this situation, indigenous conceptions were easily maintained.

Klor de Alva (1987b) discusses how alien to Nahua concepts of the self was the style of discourse demanded by Catholic confession, which presupposed a soul/body opposition. To make a "good" and complete confession demanded a level of acculturation that typified only a small minority of Nahuas. The simplicity of the confessions that they did make, which were probably formulaic recitals based either on what they had picked up from the priests or on traditional practices, led some priests to be impressed by their relative "innocence"; others, like Sahagún, realized that they were not making "good" confessions. To the extent that unacculturated Nahuas participated willingly in this rite, they could only have been using it for their own purposes.

SUMMARY

The friars' attempt to use sickness as a metaphor for sin was successful to the extent that Nahua ideology associated sickness with the domain of immorality. But in Nahua thought moral misdeeds caused disease; conditions of disease or other physical deficiencies were aspects of a person's moral condition. Sin as a spiritual version of earthly disease was an alien idea. One could be "metaphorically" sick, but this did not mean that the soul was sick while the body was healthy, but simply that immorality was "like" sickness, and could stand for it symbolically as well as cause it.

Because the friars themselves shared somewhat in the Nahua view that immorality could cause physical disease, and failed to distinguish consistently between that and the more orthodox view, Nahua etiological concepts could easily be retained. Confession as "heart-straightening" became a ritual operation upon one's physical condition, a condition not semantically distinct in Nahua thought from the spiritual condition.

Christianity Conquered

The encounter between Nahua morality and sixteenth-century Spanish Catholicism brought into contact two very different ways of looking at the world and at humanity's place within it. The friars were confronted with an impossible challenge—the remaking of an entire culture in their own image. They responded by, to some extent, remaking themselves: the encounter could not help but expand their own sensitivity to human diversity; the molding of their Christianity to fit the Nahua context demanded a doctrinal flexibility which, though they rarely admitted it to non-Indian audiences, is clearly evident in their Nahuatl writings. On the whole, the friars managed to content themselves with an Indian Christianity that was hardly orthodox; the Nahuas, on the whole, were able to become just Christian enough to get by in the colonial social and political setting without compromising their basic ideological and moral orientation. Perhaps the close emotional bond between friars and Indians was in part a reflection of this complicity: they were partners in the creation of their own society, different from European society and from that of the colonists and mestizos around them.

THE DIALOGICAL FRONTIER

The catechistic literature in Nahuatl is not simply a body of Christian writings; it is the residue of a dynamic interaction between European and Nahua culture. The attempt to synthesize Nahua thought categories with Christian ideology throws into high relief the contrasts between the two cultural systems by demonstrating which concepts passed easily across the cultural barrier, which were transformed in the process of their translation, and at which points Christianity was or was not willing to compromise its orthodoxy in order to adapt itself to indigenous expression. This is the "dialogical frontier" identified by D. Tedlock (1983:334).

A fundamental difference between Nahua and Christian thought was the contrast between Nahua monism and a Christian world view that distinguished between spiritual and material worlds or levels of reality. The preceding chapters have shown the various implications this contrast had for moral indoctrination. The Nahuas did not conceive of a life of the soul utterly distinct from that of the body; metaphors the friars drew between spiritual and material domains translated as metonyms linking elements within a single domain of reality. This is not to suggest that the Nahuas were incapable of adopting a Christian world view—some of them did become fully acculturated—but for the population as a whole the friars were too few, themselves too immersed in native culture, and the level of indoctrination too rudimentary for such a fundamental shift in world view to be effected.

The friars perceived the relationship between their own and Nahua morality principally in terms of parallelism and diabology, and, beyond their respect for the Nahuas' general religiosity, with attention mainly to content. Things that meshed well with Christianity were elements of truth which the Nahuas, even in their paganism, had discovered; for anything unacceptable the Devil, or the Indians' weak nature, could be held responsible. Indigenous morality as a coherent system having its own internal logic and differing from Christianity in its very underpinnings—regardless of its content—was a perspective difficult for the sixteenth-century observer to achieve. Even for those few who may have achieved it, to devise a method for systematically altering that morality into a Christian form was an impossible feat of cultural engineering.

In general terms, Nahua and Christian (sixteenth-century Catholic) religion correspond, respectively, to the "archaic" and "historic" stages or

types of religion as defined by Bellah (1964). Archaic religions, in Bellah's scheme, are typified by cults involving gods, priests and sacrifice, with sacrifice acting as a means of communication with the sacred. The world view is monist, though the universe tends to be hierarchical and complexly structured. On the social level, as Bellah describes it (1964:365):

The individual and his society are seen as merged in a natural-divine cosmos. Traditional social structures and social practices are considered to be grounded in the divinely instituted cosmic order and there is little tension between religious demand and social conformity.

Historic religions, such as Islam, Buddhism, and Catholic Christianity, differ from archaic religions mainly in the introduction of a dualist orientation. A transcendentalism setting the supernatural world apart from the material world characterizes the world view; ritual centers on salvation rather than sacrifice. An ethic of world rejection is typical of these religions. In regard to concepts of human nature, Bellah states (1964:367):

Devaluation of the empirical world and the empirical self highlights the conception of a responsible self, a core self or true self, deeper than the flux of everyday experience, facing a reality over against itself, a reality which has a consistency belied by the fluctuations of mere sensory impressions. Primitive man can only accept the world in its manifold givenness. Archaic man can through sacrifice fulfill his obligations and attain peace with the gods. But the historic religions promise man for the first time that he can understand the fundamental structure of reality and through salvation participate actively in it.

The transition from an archaic to a historic type of religion is associated, in Bellah's scheme, with widespread literacy, a differentiation between urban and rural lower classes, and between political and religious leadership. Archaic elements may persist, particularly among the peasantry (Bellah 1964:367-68).

This characterization of Nahua and Christian religion according to Bellah's outline is not included in order to place the two religions within an evolutionary framework, but in order to stress that these are not just different religions but different kinds of religion. The frontier between them is of a different order than that between Christianity and Islam, or between Nahua (or Mesoamerican) religion and that of Peru or, for that matter, ancient Mesopotamia or ancient China. The problem of translation was complicated by more than the fact that the two peoples spoke unrelated languages.

For the Nahuas to have shifted to a historic religious orientation would

have required a degree of acculturation available only to urban elites. The bulk of the population remained a largely rural peasantry among whom literacy was the province of a few specialists (see Karttunen 1982) and whose varieties of contact with Europeans were limited. They became the "archaic" peasantry within a "historic" society.

Christianity as presented at the dialogical frontier did not constitute a coherent, internally consistent system but, rather, a hodgepodge of concepts—shreds of Christian orthodoxy and patches of Nahuatl meaning. Not only was the whole religion confused, but its presentation varied from friar to friar and even from one sermon to the next. The concept of *tlatlacollí* simply did not fit with the concept of individual moral responsibility. The friars' talk of filth, penance, and peripheral dangers resembled indigenous discourse while their talk of love and salvation did not, and since the former concepts were interpreted in ways consistent with indigenous thought, the latter concepts could make little sense in relation to them. Christian purification rites reiterated too neatly their Nahua cognates to be perceived as linked to a whole different kind of reality. The differences between the two world views were not consistently stated and stressed in terms that would have made them clear to the Nahua.

It is widely understood that part of Christianity's appeal was that it somehow filled a vacuum created by the abolition of the traditional ritual round. Had it been possible to present Christianity as a coherent, fully logical, and meaningful system, perhaps it would have been possible for the converts, their world view menaced by the upheavals of the Conquest, to have been seduced into a sincere acceptance of Christianity. But Christianity did not offer such a complete alternative, and the continuities between traditional thought and the dialogical frontier were such that Christianity did not simply fulfill the Nahua's need for a religion but allowed for the perpetuation of their kind of religion.

The hybrid Nahua-Christian religion represented at the dialogical frontier tended to blend the two cultures in such a way that Nahua structures and functions imposed themselves upon Christian content. The basic organization of the cosmos, of time and space, of order and disorder were maintained. The upper world became peopled with saints rather than *teteo*, with the saints filling the same cult roles; the underworld with *tlatlacateco* rather than the similarly peripheral underworld deities. Penitential rites were connected with the Christian calendar but continued to serve the purpose of achieving merit. Christian purification rites functioned to remove *tlazolli* and restore order. Salvation failed to displace the basically

custodial focus of Nahua ritual and the this-worldly concerns of its participants.

In this subjugation of content to form, an important mechanism was the transformation of metaphor to metonym as Christian transcendentalism crossed the dialogical frontier into Nahua monism. Things which, in Christianity, were ultimate truths became logical impossibilities in the absence of a dualist premise. It was much easier for the Nahuas to reject these impossibilities, or to rephrase them in Nahua terms, than to accept them and all they implied. The logical structure of the universe remained Nahua; Christian elements transformed to fit this logic—to express symbolic relationships that made sense in a Nahua context—could be accepted because they no longer challenged the very nature of reality.

The dialogical frontier, then, is not the locus of syncretism, for syncretism implies a resolution of contradictions, a half-way meeting between complementary elements. A religion combining equal parts of Christianity and Nahua belief could not function as a cultural system: there is no neutral middle ground between a sacrifice-oriented monism and a soteriologically-oriented matter/spirit dualism. To be caught between is to be in the anomic, disorienting position which León-Portilla (1974:24) and Klor de Alva (1982b:353–54), inspired by a passage in Durán (1967:I, 237), label “nepantlism,” after the Nahuatl *nepantla* ‘in the middle.’ From this confused standpoint, the premises of Christianity were not understood and therefore only superficial aspects of Christian rites could be incorporated into one’s own religion (Klor de Alva 1982b:354). Nepantlism was resolved by combining a Christian surface with a Nahua structure. The result was “syncretic” in the sense that it combined elements of both cultures, but not in the sense of a simple sum of parts, nor of attaining a true synthesis. The frontier was a liminal zone full of contradictions and inconsistencies. The friars were unable to weave of it a whole cloth; the Nahuas could take from it only threads with which to mend the fabric, torn by the Conquest, of their own belief system.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SERMONS

The persuasiveness of the friars’ rhetoric depended upon their ability to borrow tropes from indigenous moral philosophy and apply them to Christian ends. Certain limitations inhered in such a procedure. If Nahua ideology was too drastically altered by Christian influence or other hazards

of colonialism, those tropes would become disconnected from any coherent belief system and would lose the very authority the friars sought to usurp. Within a slightly Christianized but still basically indigenous ideology, the friars could make at least some impression on their audience. Had Nahua ideology disintegrated, the friars could not have rebuilt it from the ground up in a Christian image, whatever their millennial illusions to the contrary. Small changes were really in the best interest of both sides. The friars' capability to undermine indigenous ideology was, in any case, restricted by the limited ability of most of them—those who were not great scholars, humanists, and ethnographers—to understand it. The destruction of the Aztec state cult, the one realm in which the "spiritual conquest" was truly successful, did not threaten the Nahuas' basic moral orientation.

The Aztec state cult itself had constituted a religious change, an innovation emphasizing the solar cult and large-scale human sacrifice. This change in cult practice was closely associated with the Mexicas' rise to political supremacy. Conrad and Demarest's analysis of the role of religious change in Aztec (and Inca) politics (1984) discusses the kinds of change which were successfully implemented. Their study, though dealing with pre-Conquest history, has interesting implications for the colonial situation as well.

The Mexica elite were successful in instituting religious changes only when those changes were compatible with existing religious institutions and traditional mythology (Conrad and Demarest 1984:47). The innovators had to work within the existing system; changes that had no ties with tradition could not be implemented. Successful ideological adaptations fell into two main categories: "manipulations of the upper pantheons and reworkings of ancient, basic institutions" (Conrad and Demarest 1984:180). The upper pantheon was reworked to give the sun a degree of prominence it had not previously enjoyed, while the Mexicas' tutelary deity, Huitzilopochtli, was identified with both the sun and the ancient and powerful Tezcatlipoca. These manipulations did not constitute the introduction of a wholly new and unfamiliar sort of deity. The ancient institution of sacrifice was reworked to grant the Mexica cult of heart-sacrifice a special role in maintaining cosmic order, thus validating—and necessitating—Mexica imperialism. But sacrifice had always served a custodial function; human sacrifice as practiced by the Aztecs was simply an old institution adapted to new political ends.

If these conclusions hold for the introduction of Christianity, one would predict that the friars' success might be limited to contexts where

their attempted innovations fell into these categories, or at least could be so construed by the Nahuas. And indeed, such seems to have been the case. Christian teaching was effective only to the extent that it was compatible (or appeared in translation to be compatible) with preexisting belief and practice. Changes in the pantheon involved much more reworking than replacement: Christ, Mary, and other saints gave new identities to Nahua sacred beings just as Huitzilopochtli had taken on part of Tezcatlipoca's identity, though the new personages tended to have morally positive (or negative) rather than amoral or ambivalent characters. The ancient institutions of sacrifice, penitence and purification were reworked while remaining the basic forms of religious action. The idea that Christian confession "cures" the heart or soul was easy to accept; that it worked on some immaterial, spiritual level was incompatible with traditional thought and was not accepted. The idea that one should do penance on Christian holy days was compatible with traditional thought; that such penance functioned to prevent suffering after death was not compatible.

Another conclusion of Conrad and Demarest's analysis (1984:177–78) is that the changes, to be successful, had to be adaptive in social, economic and political terms. The religious changes introduced by the Mexica helped them to gain hegemony over most of Mesoamerica. Likewise, the modified Christianity practiced by the colonial Nahuas had advantages outside the religious context. It granted them an identity within the Christian sociopolitical milieu of the colony. It also enabled them to maintain a community identity, focused on the local saint, that promoted social cohesion in the face of Spanish racism and exploitation. That preserving the community took precedence over individual salvation represents a continuity with traditional thought which was also adaptive under changed social conditions.

The friars' rhetoric, while it adopted various tropes from indigenous moral discourse, differed from it in significant ways. There was an overall reduction and simplification: many of the available figures of speech were rarely or never used. The friars' teachings must therefore have seemed monotonous, repetitive, and uninventive relative to the discourse of the Nahua elders.

Crocker's (1977) typology of rhetorical situations (see Chapter One) provides a second way of examining the difference between the two rhetorical styles. Indigenous rhetoric emphasized interpersonal persuasion, with a tendency to relate the prescribed or proscribed behaviors to fundamental facts about reality, often expressed in the form of proverbs, and

calling upon the wisdom of the ancestors. The friars also engaged in much interpersonal discourse ("you should do this, you should not do that") but tended to validate their statements by referring to third-person events: Christ's parables, the lives of the saints, the experiences of biblical personages. God, not the ancestors, was invoked as the infallible moral authority. The events of Nahua mythology were rarely invoked in moral discourse because deities simply were not morally responsible actors: morality was a human adaptation rather than a divine pronouncement.¹ Assuming that Nahua rhetoricians had developed the style of argument most effective within their cultural context, the friars' divergence from this pattern may have weakened the effectiveness of their teaching.

Even where the friars attached effective, emotive tropes to their moral arguments, the ability of those tropes to accomplish their intended purpose had inherent limitations. The good/evil dichotomy basic to the friars' moral orientation approached the dualist, transcendental structure of their world view: the material world was largely equated with the principle of evil; the spiritual world was closely associated with the principle of good.

The order/chaos dichotomy which the friars used to express these oppositions simply did not "entitle" the universe in the same way as their own good/evil model. Given good/evil dualism, the obvious moral prescription is to avoid evil as much as possible: such action is the logical way to behave and moral discourse has only to define what is evil. But without that dualism as a basic premise, the rest does not logically follow. The universe, as entitled by an order/chaos model, does not preclude the possibility of benefits accruing from the chaotic side. Chaos is not all bad. Behaviors disapproved of by the friars, such as sexual activity and ritual drunkenness, served positive purposes according to the indigenous world view. The friars could link such behaviors to the chaotic side of nature as often and as convincingly as they were able without ever persuading the Nahuas that the behaviors should be totally avoided.

Viewing the friars' "success" objectively, one might praise them for their ability to establish continuities between Nahua thought and Christianity, however intended or unintended those continuities may have been. In this way the friars mollified the impact of the new religion, limiting the cultural breakdown that the Nahuas might otherwise have suffered. "Pure" Christianity would have had little meaning for the Nahuas. By allowing their teachings to be shaped by indigenous culture, the friars assured that Christianity in some form would be adopted; at the same time they inadvertently aided their subjects' struggle for cultural survival.

CULTURAL SURVIVAL ON THE SLIPPERY EARTH

Even where a relatively high degree of exposure to Christian teaching existed, it would have been fairly easy for the Nahuas to accept what appeared to be compatible with their own conceptions, and to ignore or reinterpret the rest. Despite the incorporation of many Christian elements, the belief system of the majority of Nahuas remained essentially untouched. The Nahuas remained culturally distinct from the Spanish and mestizo population; their separate (and unequal) status was enforced by colonial policies, but their identity within that status derived from pre-Conquest culture and the particular dynamics of its interaction with Christianity. Reports on continuing "pagan" practices, from the *procesos* of the Primitive Inquisition (*Procesos de indios* 1912), through colonial treatises on idolatry such as those of Ruiz de Alarcón (1982) and Villavicencio (1692), into modern ethnography (e.g. Montoya Briones 1964; Taggart 1983), reveal the persistence of sacrificial and penitential complexes, pollution beliefs, and the traditional spatiotemporal orientation. Farriss (1984:8), in an analysis of Maya cultural survival, proposes the existence of a stable, central core of beliefs which

provide not only the principles according to which change will take place but also the measure of its extent; they indicate whether we are dealing merely with variations on a theme or an altogether new theme.

Thought somewhat less successful than the Mayas, among whom the missionaries simply did not have the numbers and influence that they enjoyed in Central Mexico, the Nahuas managed to make of Christianity a variation rather than a new composition.

Klor de Alva (1979, 1982b) observes that the "little tradition," as opposed to the elite state cult, survived the missionization process fairly well. The most common response to Christianity was an incomplete conversion complex in which Christian elements were only superficially incorporated into the culture (Klor de Alva 1982b:356). This sort of culture change, in which native form and function are retained, is a testament to the adaptability and resilience of a religious system under conditions which would seem to pose a serious threat to its survival. A distinction between this sort of religious change and that occurring at a deeper, structural level clearly must be made in studies of culture change. An analogy to the process of linguistic acculturation, in which incorporation of loanwords occurs much more readily than shifts in grammatical structure, may be appropriate (in

the case of Nahuatl, Karttunen and Lockhart 1976 describe the sequence of linguistic changes).

Nahua experiences under colonial rule did not pose an impossible challenge to the explanatory powers of traditional belief. Sin, the Christians' explanation for all misfortune, was not needed as an explanatory device. The fifth age was a time of relative chaos: the Mexica could not have expected their political order to persist indefinitely. The earth was a slippery place where misfortunes easily befell one regardless of one's precautions: the fact of the Conquest did not demand the premise of Indian sinfulness.

Increased participation in behaviors considered immoral under both moral systems—most notably drunkenness—was not necessarily indicative of cultural breakdown. With the gradual decline of the elite class, with its claims to moral purity and its authoritative position relative to commoners, it was logical and predictable that such behavior would increase. The colonial Nahuas were all *motolinia*, poor and afflicted—a position recognized by Spanish authorities in the latter sixteenth century as all Indians came to be granted the special legal protection accorded to *miserabiles*, the wretched of the earth (Borah 1983:80–82). Such a status was associated in indigenous thought with a morally wretched condition: as wealth and rank were commensurate with moral purity, poverty and baseness were commensurate with contamination. High rates of alcoholism, disease, and death were only to be expected among people in this condition.

The friars' usurpation of the elders' moral authority further validated moral and physical decline. With the breakdown of the ascetic lifestyle condoned by tradition, it was only natural that living conditions in this slippery world would begin to deteriorate.

For those Nahuas who managed to survive physically in spite of epidemics, hard labor, poverty, and other colonial dangers the Nahua interpretation of Christianity provided a means of adapting to their social situation while continuing to make sense of the world in Nahua terms. In a colonial social order structured upon Indian servitude, even complete acculturation would not have brought social equality—there was more to be lost than to be gained in relinquishing one's cultural identity. The friars' acceptance of Nahuaized Christianity constituted an implicit patronage of Nahua cultural continuity. The earth was perhaps more slippery than ever, but for those who could retain their balance it remained a Nahua earth.

Appendix

Catalog of Nahuatl Doctrinal Sources

The Nahuatl catechistic literature comprises an immense corpus of books and manuscripts. Many of the latter are, unfortunately, anonymous and undated; some of the former have left no surviving copies. For purposes of this study, a restricted number of texts has been consulted. These include at least one representative from each of the three Mendicant orders, and are confined to texts with a reliable authorial and temporal context. Emphasis is on texts composed for the Nahua mission rather than translations of Old World materials (such as various extant translations of biblical texts), though a sample of Fray Andrés de Olmos's translated texts was included because of his influential status. The texts range in date of composition from the 1530s through the 1570s.

1. Anunciación, Fray Domingo de la. *Doctrina Xpiana breve y cōpendiosa por vía de dialogo entre vn maestro y vn discípulo.*

Published by Pedro Ocharte in 1565, Anunciación's *doctrina* is a bilingual text with Spanish and Nahuatl versions in parallel columns. It is composed as a dialogue between a teacher and a pupil. It is printed in quarto, in gothic type, with 84 leaves, and is dedicated to Archbishop Montúfar. There is one woodcut, at the end of the volume: a scene of the Virgin and Child with a pope, a prince, and a Moorish soldier. The book is catalogued by García Icazbalceta (1954, #45), Medina (1908, #47), Valtón (1933, #15), and Wagner (1940, #45). Wagner lists six known copies.

Anunciación was born in Fuenteovejuna, Spain, in 1510. He voyaged to New Spain in 1528, and took the Dominican habit in Mexico City in 1531 or 1532. Aside from participating in an unsuccessful mission to Florida, Anunciación spent the

rest of his life in New Spain, working principally with Indians. It was said that he baptized over 100,000. He died in 1591 (García Icazbalceta 1954:193-99).

Dávila Padilla (1955:606) describes Anunciación's procedure for composing Nahuatl preaching materials. He wrote the text in Spanish, then, with an interpreter, translated it clause by clause into Nahuatl, then memorized it for preaching. According to Dávila Padilla, "the natives were amazed to see him in such a short time make such long arguments in their language." The same chronicler attributes to Anunciación the destruction of the Ometochtl statue in Tepoztlán, that community's principal cult image (1955:67).

In 1554, while prior of the Dominican convent in Chimalhuacan, Anunciación wrote a *relación* defending the local Indian communities against tribute demands which had become excessive due to population decline (see Keen in Zorita 1963:282-85).

Two of the secular priests reporting in the 1570 *Descripción del arzobispado* mention that they were using Anunciación's *doctrina* to minister to their Nahuatl-speaking parishioners (*Descripción del arzobispado* 1897:211, 256).

The copy used here is in the possession of the Biblioteca Nacional de México.

2. Anunciación, Fray Juan de la. *Sermonario en lengua Mexicana*.

Fray Juan de la Anunciación's book was published by Antonio Ricardo in 1577. It is the most complete religious treatise from this time period. Two Nahuatl sermons are included for every Sunday of the year. Following these sermons are a *santoral* combining hagiographic and doctrinal material for 64 saints' festivals, a calendar of saints' days, and a bilingual catechism. Comprising 267 leaves in quarto, the book is printed in small roman type (except for the Spanish version of the catechism, which is in large type). There are three different woodcuts of Saint Augustine. The book is catalogued by García Icazbalceta (1954, #85 [#73 in the first edition]), Medina (1908, #78), Valtón (1933, #64) and Wagner (1940, #73).

Anunciación was born in Granada in 1514; he became an Augustinian friar in Mexico in 1554 (García Icazbalceta 1954:282). According to the Augustinian chronicler Fray Juan de Grijalva, Anunciación was one of the "essential" friars of his order and a master of the Nahuatl language. His book was so useful that it was "like the grammar (*como el Arte*) for those who preach and administer" (Grijalva 1624:207v). Though the book is highly original, Sahaguntine influence is evident in places: Anunciación apparently had access to a manuscript copy of the *Psalmodia christiana*. Anunciación died in approximately 1594.

The copy of Anunciación's book used here is in the Biblioteca Nacional de México. The Spanish version of Anunciación's brief catechism has been published by Durán (1984).

3. Dominican friars. *Doctrina christiana en lengua Española y Mexicana*.

Printed in 1548 by Juan Pablos, this volume has been published in facsimile by Ediciones Cultura Hispánica (with the title in modern orthography). The text is bilingual, with Spanish and Nahuatl in parallel columns. It is printed in quarto, in gothic type, with 154 leaves. There are various small woodcuts in the first ten folios; the title page bears a woodcut of the Dominican shield. The book is cata-

logged by García Icazbalceta (1954, #15), Medina (1908, #13), and Wagner (1940, #15). Wagner lists only three surviving copies.

The text derives from a Spanish *doctrina* written by Fray Pedro de Córdoba, a Dominican, and a leader of that order's protests against colonial abuses in Santo Domingo. Córdoba's text is reproduced in Durán (1984) and has been translated into English by Stoudemire (Córdoba 1970).

Manuscript copies of Córdoba's composition were widely used in Spanish missions for twenty or more years before it was printed in Mexico City in 1544. The ecclesiastical council of 1546 condoned its use in Indian indoctrination. The Dominicans in Mexico City revised it slightly to fit the local context and added a Nahuatl translation for the 1548 printing (Córdoba 1970:13; Kobayashi 1974:327). The volume was reprinted in 1550. Its use among secular clergy is reported in the *Descripción del arzobispado* (1897:132, 170).

4. Escalona, Fray Alonso de. *Sermones en mexicano*.

Escalona's sermons were never published. They survive in manuscript form in the Biblioteca Nacional de México, manuscript 1482, where they are bound together with a set of sermons attributed to Sahagún (see below, number 9). The first page of the volume refers to the Escalona section as follows: "then another Advent and the rest, which are festivals and dominicals of the lord and it is language of padre fray Alonso de Escalona." Escalona's text begins on folio 119 of the manuscript, with the beginning of Advent, and ends with Pentecost on folio 263. An index of the text lists sermons for ten additional occasions, but these last folios (approximately 30) are missing. As Baudot discovered (1982:128), the Sahaguntine section may be dated to 1588 by a reference to that number of years having elapsed since Christ's birth. Since the entire manuscript appears to have been produced as a unit, with continuity in pagination and scribes, this is a probable date for the Escalona section as well. Through folio 30, the Sahagún section is a faithful copy of earlier material surviving elsewhere—the Ayer collection *Sermones* (the remainder of the section is based on some other document). Thus, it is likely that the copy of Escalona's text reproduces his writing with few if any modifications.

According to Mendieta's biography of him (1980:667–74), Fray Alonso de Escalona was born in Escalona, near Toledo. He became a Franciscan at age eighteen, and came to New Spain in 1531. He spent three years in Tlaxcala, quickly mastering Nahuatl, and wrote sermons that many preachers made use of, because until then no others had been written. This suggests a mid-1530s composition of the sermons. They were later translated into Achí for use in Guatemala.

Escalona participated in an aborted attempt by a group of Franciscans to establish a new province. These friars were disillusioned because the rigor of Franciscan poverty had declined in the central (Mexico City-based) province. Finding no suitable locus for their establishment, the men returned. Later, Escalona engaged in missionary work in Guatemala, learning the local Indian language at age 75. He died in 1584 at age 88 (implying a birthdate of 1496 and migration at age 35).

Mendieta characterizes Escalona as the consummate Franciscan: traveling everywhere on his own bare feet, never drinking wine, wearing a cassock of sackcloth with no tunic or hat, and mending his own coarse underclothes. Every Holy

Thursday he would flagellate himself at the pulpit, preaching to the Indians on the Passion. His prayer for rain ended a drought. As evidence of his saintliness, his body after death was more beautiful than in life, with no odor of decay. Pieces of his habit were found to have healing properties.

5. Gante, Fray Pedro de. *Doctrina christiana en lengua mexicana*.

This *doctrina* was printed by Juan Pablos in 1553. A small book, it is printed in octavo, in gothic type, and is 164 leaves in length. It is composed as a series of questions and answers. It contains various woodcuts of religious scenes. The book is catalogued by García Icazbalceta (1954, #20 [#19 in the first edition]), Medina (1908, #20) and Wagner (1940, #19). Only three surviving copies are known. A facsimile has been published in Mexico (Gante 1981).

Gante was one of the three pioneer Flemish Franciscans who came to New Spain in 1523. He was born in 1479 or 1480 and was related in some unknown way to Charles V. He remained a lay brother throughout his life, but was very influential. An accomplished speaker of Nahuatl, Gante devoted his career to Indian education. At his school in the Franciscans' Mexico City Indian chapel, San José de los Naturales, he taught generations of young Nahuas to read, write, sing, paint, and engage in various vocational arts. The incorporation of song and dance into the Indian Church was Gante's innovation: he composed the first Nahuatl hymn and gave the Indians religious designs they could paint on the mantles they wore while dancing. He published a *doctrina* as early as 1528 (printed in Antwerp), but no copies of this early text survive. He died in 1572 and was deeply mourned by the Indians. They asked the Franciscans to allow them to bury Gante in the Indian chapel, and were granted this privilege (García Icazbalceta 1954:90–99; Mendieta 1980:607–11). Gante's name is mentioned in the *Cantares mexicanos* (Bierhorst 1985).

Consulted for this study was the Newberry Library's badly damaged copy, supplemented by that institution's microfilm of the University of Texas copy.

6. Molina, Fray Alonso de. *Confessionario mayor en la lengua Mexicana y Castellana*.

Molina's confession manual, along with a short version called the *Confessionario breve*, was published in 1565 by Antonio Espinosa and reprinted in 1569. Pedro Ballí's press issued a third edition of the *breve* in 1577 and of the *mayor* in 1578. The text of the *mayor* is in quarto, in gothic type, with 124 leaves. It is a bilingual text, with Spanish and Nahuatl in parallel columns. There are 28 woodcuts, some of them duplicates, as well as a woodcut of the Crucifixion on the title page. The book is catalogued by García Icazbalceta (1954, #45 [#44 in the first edition]), Medina (1908, #49), Valtón (1933, #9) and Wagner (1940, #44). Wagner lists twelve known copies in ten libraries. Until Fray Juan Bautista's *Confessionario* was printed in 1599, Molina's works were the only published confession manuals in Nahuatl.

Molina, the Franciscans' star linguist, joined the Franciscans as an interpreter when he was still a young boy, having learned Nahuatl from his Indian playmates. Though born in Spain, he came to the colony as a child; his widowed mother allowed the friars virtually to adopt him. He joined the order when he was of age

and conducted a prolific, if uneventful, career. He died in 1585. A probable birthdate is 1513 or 1514 (García Icazbalceta 1954:287-88; Mendieta 1980:685).

The copy used in this study is the 1569 edition in the Biblioteca Nacional de México. A facsimile of this edition has been published by the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. The Spanish section has been published by Durán (1984).

7. Olmos, Fray Andrés de. *Los siete sermones principales sobre los siete pecados mortales.*

A translation of material by Saint Vincent Ferrer, Olmos's treatise on the mortal sins is housed in the Biblioteca Nacional de México, folios 313 to 387 of manuscript 1488. It is dated 1551-52. Only the sermon on lust, published by Baudot (1976), has been consulted here.

A native of Burgos, the Franciscan Olmos came to New Spain in 1528 with Bishop Zumárraga, whom he had assisted in an anti-witchcraft campaign in Viscaya and Navarra. Olmos had a vigorous career, active in areas on the fringes of Spanish control and hazardous to the missionary.

As well as producing doctrinal texts and his collection of oratory, Olmos was an accomplished ethnographer and linguist. His ethnographic work is lost; the information survives only in the many other texts based at least partially on his work (see Boone in *Codex Magliabechiano* 1983; Wilkerson 1974). In addition to Nahuatl, Olmos mastered Huaxtec and Totonac and published in them. He died in 1571; his fellow friars then noted an "odor of sanctity" attached to the objects with which he had celebrated mass (Mendieta 1980:650-51).

8. Olmos, Fray Andrés de. *Tratado de hechicerías y sortilegios.*

Olmos's treatise on sorcery follows his sermons on the mortal sins, occupying folios 388 to 407 in the Biblioteca Nacional de México's manuscript 1488. It bears the date 1553. The text, with a French translation, has been published by Baudot (1979). It is a revised translation of a treatise by the Spanish Franciscan Martín de Castañega published in 1529 (see Baudot 1972:351-52 and his introduction to the *Tratado*). Olmos's tendency to translate rather than compose original texts partly accounts for his long bibliography.

9. Sahagún, Fray Bernardino de. *Sermones de dominicas y de santos.*

Sahagún, of all the friars, requires the least introduction. His status as the foremost ethnographer of the Nahuas adds a special importance to his doctrinal writings, diverse and fascinating as they are in their own right. Sahagún was born in Sahagún, Spain (near León), about 1499, joined the Franciscans in Salamanca, where he was a student at the university, and came to New Spain in 1529. In linguistic ability, his contemporaries ranked him with Molina in the highest category. He died in 1590. For further details of his life and work Nicolau D'Olwer (1952), Nicolau D'Olwer and Cline (1973), the volume edited by Edmonson (1974), and the new volume edited by Klor de Alva, Nicholson, and Quiñones Keber (1988) may be consulted.

Sahagún's sermons, manuscript 1485 of the Newberry Library's Ayer Collection, bear the following title written in Sahagún's hand (in Spanish):

There follow some sermons of dominicals and of saints in the Mexican language, not translated from any *sermonario* but newly composed to the measure of the Indians' capacity: brief in material and in language congruent, graceful and plain, easy to understand for all those who hear them, high and low, nobles and vassals, men and women.

He dates the original composition as 1540, its final emendation as 1563. A reference to the time elapsed since Christ's birth gives 748 years: there is apparently a scribal error in the Nahuatl numeration substituting a "one" for a "three" (in reference to the 400-year period or *tzontli*); the sum should read 1548. Sahagún's date of 1540 may be only an approximation, or this manuscript may be a 1548 copy of the 1540 original.

The manuscript contains 98 folio-sized leaves, made from sheets of maguey paper folded in half and sewn into signatures. The Sunday sermons, arranged with an introduction and three parts for each week, run through folio 87 to the nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost, then some pages are missing; folio 88 preserves the last part of the final week's sermon. A Nahuatl note in Sahagún's hand, with his signature, marks the end of the dominical section. A fragment of a *Sanctoral* begins on folio 90. Sermons for only a few saints' festivals survive: Andrew, the Conception of Mary (this is badly mutilated), the Expectation of Mary, Thomas, Stephen, the beginning of the text for John; then pages are missing up to a fragmentary text for Joseph, which completes what is left of the manuscript.

The manuscript is in one hand, except for substantial marginal notes added in Sahagún's hand, and a few notes in a third hand. Sahagún's notes comprise two sets, identifiable because of the change in the friar's handwriting when he was in his sixties and afflicted with palsy. One set was added sometime after the manuscript's original composition; the second set in 1563 when Sahagún added his title.

The set of sermons bearing Sahagún's name in the Biblioteca Nacional de México (manuscript 1482; see number 4, above) reproduces the Newberry Library text, without incorporating any of Sahagún's notes and corrections, through folio 30. Thereafter, it diverges completely. Without further analysis it is impossible to say whether the rest of the text is indeed Sahagún's or if the work of some other author was incorporated. Mendieta's statement that Sahagún wrote "doubled" sermons (*sermones que escribió doblados de todo el año*; 1980: 663) suggests that he may have written two sets of sermons, but this does not explain why the Biblioteca Nacional manuscript combines two different sets. For the present study, only the Ayer manuscript was used.

. . .

10. Sahagún, Fray Bernardino de. *Exercicio en lengua mexicana*.

Manuscript 1484 of the Newberry Library's Ayer Collection is a set of spiritual "exercises" or texts for prayer and meditation, divided according to the days of the week. There is some biblical translation; most of the text consists of explanations of doctrine and New Testament events, with prayers to be recited on each day of the week. The format is unique in the doctrinal corpus. The Ayer manuscript bears no trace of Sahagún's own pen, but closes with a copy of a first-person statement and signature of Sahagún's. This statement explains how Sahagún found the text among the Indians, containing so many errors and incongruities that it needed to

be rewritten. The date is given as 1574. All in one hand, the text comprises 43 leaves in quarto.

11. Sahagún, Fray Bernardino de. *Addiciones* to the *Postilla*.

Manuscripts 1486a and 1486b of the Newberry Library's Ayer Collection are two copies of the same text, dated 1579, on the subject of the theological virtues. A corrected version of 1486b, 1486a has Nahuatl chapter headings pasted over original Spanish ones, and slightly altered chapter divisions. It is seventeen leaves in length, with Sahagún's signature at the end. The *Postilla* was first composed in 1558–1560, then corrected and recopied in 1567–1569 (García Icazbalceta 1954:338; Nicolau D'Olwer 1952:45, 71). The prologue to the *Addiciones* begins: "Having added these 26 additions to this *Postilla*" (iv), without specifying whether they were composed in 1579 or earlier. Of exactly which doctrinal text(s), extant or lost, the so-called *Postilla* was to consist is unclear (see Anderson 1983 for a discussion of this problem). The lost or dismantled *Postilla*, these *Addiciones* and the *Apendiz* were submitted for publication as a single volume, which would have been printed in 1583 but was suppressed (Nicolau D'Olwer 1952:108).

12. Sahagún, Fray Bernardino de. *Apendiz* to the *Postilla*.

Manuscripts 1486c and 1486d of the Newberry Library's Ayer Collection constitute a single continuous narrative; a miscollation creates an appearance of discontinuity. In the present study the pagination error is corrected and the folios are cited as if numbered in correct order, as a single text. The text is fourteen leaves in length. The prologue of the *Addiciones* (iv) states that the *Apendiz* was added to the *Postilla* in 1579, and that it consists of seven "collations" in Nahuatl containing many secrets about the customs and language of the natives. As it is intended only for the enlightenment of priests, there should not be any opposition to its containing "antiquities." The first four "collations," referred to in the text itself as *tenonotzaliztli* 'admonitions,' are missing. Part, probably most, of the fifth and all of the last two survive.

13. Sahagún, Fray Bernardino de. *Psalmodia christiana y sermonario de los sanctos del año*.

The only work that Sahagún saw published, it was written in 1558–60, revised in 1569, approved for publication in 1578, and printed by Pedro Ocharte in 1583 (Nicolau D'Olwer 1952:109). As Sahagún explains in the prologue, it consists of songs on Christian themes composed for the Indians to sing in their religious dances conducted on Church festivals throughout the year. Sahagún objected to the songs that they were singing because these were thought to contain elements of pre-Conquest religion which the friars were unable to detect. The new songs were widely distributed and used before they finally reached the printing press.

The work is printed in quarto, in roman type, with 236 leaves. There are 54 woodcuts, some of them duplicates; the title page bears the same Crucifixion woodcut as Molina's *Confessionario*. Marginal notes in Latin occur frequently in

the text; they derive from biblical texts, hymns, antiphons, responsories, and other materials in the Latin liturgy. The book is catalogued by García Icazbalceta (1954, #105 [#92 in the first edition]), Medina (1908, #98) and Wagner (1940, #92). Wagner lists eight known copies. A microfilm of the John Carter Brown Library's copy was used for this study.

Notes to Chapters

Chapter One: Evangelization, Dialogue, Rhetoric

1. Hence the odd statement in the *Códice franciscano* that Sahagún and Molina spoke "better" Nahuatl than the Indians (1941:61): their speech was based on formal, elite speaking styles that contrasted with colloquial, common speech.
2. The ethnographic records are fairly well known and are discussed and catalogued in the "Guide to Ethnohistorical Sources" in the *Handbook of Middle American Indians* (1964–76: vols. 12–15). The doctrinal texts used are catalogued in the Appendix.

Chapter Two: The Missionary Missionized

1. Under this system, communities were required to supply a set number of workers to labor in Spanish mines, factories, or on farms and public projects. This replaced the system of *encomienda*, wherein the Indian communities paid tribute in goods to designated Spaniards, necessitating less interpersonal contact.
2. The bibliography of evangelization is quite extensive. The brief account given in this chapter draws very summarily upon a variety of sources. The list that follows is by no means exhaustive, but it includes major primary and secondary sources, old "classics" as well as recent reanalyses: Bataillon 1982; Baudot 1983; Borges 1960; *Códice franciscano* 1941; Cuevas 1923–32; Dávila Padilla 1955; articles edited by Edmonson 1974; Focher 1960; García Icazbalceta 1947; Gibson 1964, 1967; Gómez Canedo 1977; Greenleaf 1969; Klor de Alva 1979, 1982a, b; Kobayashi 1974; Kubler 1948; McAndrew 1965; Mendieta 1980; Motolinia 1941, 1971; Palmera 1962; Phelan 1970; Ricard 1966; Steck 1944; Sylvest 1975; Trexler 1982; Uchman 1980; Vetancurt 1971; Weckmann 1984.

3. The Franciscans opposed Fray Bartolomé de las Casas's anti-colonial crusade; in their eyes conquest and colonization were necessary adjuncts to the propagation of the faith. Motolinia's letter to Charles V, in which he criticizes las Casas, expresses these sentiments clearly (in Motolinia 1971).

4. Robles (1964) compiles many of the terms used in Nahuatl for the nouns of Christianity. There is little analysis, but the list is useful.

5. According to Kamen (1983:186), in the mid-sixteenth century a large proportion of Old Christians in Spain were ignorant of the Creed and other basic statements of the Church. The Council of Trent's declaration that parish priests ought to preach a sermon at Sunday mass was considered an innovation and an imposition (Kamen 1983:182). In exposure to actual orthodox Christian doctrine (as opposed to folk practice), converted Nahuas did not lag behind Christians of Spain.

6. Nahuatl words are given without indications of glottal stops or vowel length; these phonemes were not systematically transcribed in the sixteenth century and their placement is often a matter of conjecture. Spellings are standardized, but where a text is being quoted the orthography of the text is reproduced; this accounts for apparent inconsistencies in spelling. Word division is modified to correspond to modern grammatical categories.

All translations from non-English texts are by the author unless otherwise noted.

7. This lack of distinction between intentional and unintentional "sin" is also noted by Pettazzoni (1926, 1930). Based on a cross-cultural study of confession rites, he considers this typical of "primitive" societies. It is also typical of peasant Christianity in Europe (Klor de Alva:personal communication).

8. In citing Molina's dictionary, the Spanish-to-Nahuatl section is treated as volume I, the Nahuatl-to-Spanish section as volume II, since the sections are paginated separately.

Campbell (1985) has produced a morphologically organized edition of Molina's work, grouping together all the dictionary entries that contain each individual morpheme. This is very useful for establishing the range of meanings of indigenous concepts, including their Church usages. The *tlatlacolli* complex is listed on pages 129-30, under the heading *itlacakhuī*.

9. It is worth noting that Augustine began his religious career as a Manichaean and that the Dominican order, to which Aquinas belonged, was founded in reaction to the Albigensian heresy—a Catharist movement.

10. As Klor de Alva notes (1982a:171), the term is absent from the *Colloquios*, a text which was at least intended to reproduce the earliest dialogues between friars and Nahuas. Nor does it appear in the *Juicio Final* or the *Sacrificio de Isaac*, two Nahuatl religious dramas allegedly written in the 1530s (Horcasitas 1974). However, it is used in the *huehuetlatolli* texts recorded by Olmos between 1533 and 1539 (Baudot 1983:227; Bautista 1600b).

11. Throughout Sahagún's sermons, the *Ave María* is introduced with a call to pray to "our revered mother Mary" (1563).

12. Dibble and Anderson, based on Martín del Campo, suggest a species identification as *Crotalus cerastes* (in Sahagún 1953-82:XI, 79).

Chapter Three: Centers and Peripheries

i. This concern may be seen in the language as well. The Nahuatl verbal system makes considerable use of tense and directional markers—whether the subject is “going” or “coming” while an action is performed. This would seem to correlate with a general cultural emphasis on spatiotemporal orientation.

2. Read *tlaybiuilitloyan*.

3. Molina (1970:II, 16v) defines *cemololoa* as “to pay for all that others did or committed.” Since this is inappropriate in the context of a sinner being punished for his or her own faults, a more literal translation is given (from *cem* ‘one, entirely, wholly’; *ololoa* ‘to roll something into a ball’ [Karttunen 1983:29, 178]).

4. This phrase is glossed in Spanish in the text as: “that makes one lose one’s senses with a terrible pain as if someone gives a great blow to the head.”

5. This is Sahagún’s gloss for the phrase *intech quiquenticac yn intzitzinte[n?]*.

6. The indigenous weapon made of a length of wood with obsidian blades inserted along its edges. A metal one suggests a Spanish sword.

7. The Xoxoteco murals are published by Artigas H. (1979); Reyes-Valerio (1978) reproduces one of the walls at Actopan (plate 59).

8. The Nahuatl, speakers of a dialect of Nahuatl, live in the state of Puebla.

9. *Milpa*: horticultural plot, from Nahuatl *milli* ‘field’ and *-pa* ‘upon’.

10. This immoral aspect of falling applies also to the sun’s descent into the underworld: on its downward journey it is morally tainted. That entry into the underworld took the form of a descent is another indication of the generally chaotic and immoral nature of that place.

11. The various *tetzahuitl* said to have preceded the Conquest did not merely presage a future event: they were signs that the universe was awry and anything could happen. (Indeed, it had to have been awry for the Conquest to occur.) The friars saw *tetzahuitl* as omens and auguries in the Old World sense—passive indicators of future events. Belief in such auguries was widespread in contemporary Spain (Grajales Ramos 1949:28). Some types, including the omens of the Conquest, the friars took seriously as divine messages. Grijalva (1624:64v–68r) describes the prodigious signs that appeared in the sky when the New Laws of 1542 were issued, prognosticating troubles for the young colony. However, the friars dismissed the more mundane *tetzahuitl* of animals and objects as superstition and demonic trickery. Molina’s confession manual includes questions on whether the penitent subscribed to such beliefs (1569:20v–21r).

12. Read *acabuaultimaniz*, from *acabualli*, dried plant material used as kindling.

13. Read *tlatacaxtli*.

14. The image of the “wide road” appears in “ethnographic” discourse as well. Sahagún’s “bad” mother shows people the road of the rabbit and the deer, and the wide road, *patlauac vtlí* (1953–82:X, 1). The wide road may connote moral danger because it incorporates a broader and hence more uneven or precipitous space, not necessarily because it is more easily followed or leads to a particular place. The road of the rabbit and deer suggests erratic trails wandering about the periphery.

15. This image of Christ as a gardener in connection with Mary Magdalene

may derive from John 20:15, where the Magdalene mistakes the risen Christ for a gardener.

16. In later years Nahuas conflated the time before *congregación* and conversion with the nomadic Chichimec stage of their pre-Conquest history, equating nomadism with paganism and sedentism with Christianity and the Spanish king (Lockhart 1982). The basic center-periphery model, corresponding to moral status (Christian and non-Christian), is imposed on a more complex history.

17. *Tecoa* was also used to refer to sexual intercourse, an example of the common association of sex with eating. Although this may link the term to sexual mores, it still bears no relation to the Christian concept of temptation.

18. Christian time could even be conceived of as cyclical, as in St. Bonaventure's theology of history, but this cycle was not repeatable and Christ stood in the center of it as a unique event dividing the first half from the second (Ratzinger 1971).

19. The Mesoamerican year consisted of eighteen twenty-day "months"; to approximate this to the true solar year, five extra days were inserted at the end of each year. Playing no part in the intricate ritual round of the 360-day cycle, these days were truly a "time out of time." The New Fire Ceremony, the transition from one 52-year cycle to the next, was fraught with danger because the sun could simply fail to come up again if the ceremony was not handled properly.

20. Observation consisted of fasting from meat, refraining from labor, and attending mass. Sexual activity was discouraged as well.

21. This is a summary of material in *Anales de Cuauhtitlan* 1975; *Codex Ríos* 1964; Sahagún 1953-82:III; Torquemada 1975-83:III.

This myth may be interpreted as a casting into mythological terms of the Mexicas' own history. A peripheral people themselves, they came into Central Mexico at the end of Toltec hegemony, gained social legitimacy by marrying the daughters of Toltec rulers, and eventually took advantage of the lack of centralized power to found their own empire.

22. The fifth age does not correspond to post-Toltec history; its origin is shrouded more deeply in the mythical past. However, some of the contrasts the Mexica drew between the Toltecs and themselves follow the same pattern as those between earlier ages and the fifth age in general.

23. In the sense that all order must be "stolen" from chaos—here represented by *mictlan* and its lord—it automatically bears a moral stain; hence, the preoccupation with "repayment" by sacrifice.

24. This concept of the city as a primordial utopian paradigm is explored thoroughly by Carrasco (1982).

25. Years were given the name of the day in the 260-day cycle on which they began; the 365-day and 260-day cycles interlocked in such a way that this day fell always on the day-sign Rabbit, House, Reed, or Flint, each of these signs occurring thirteen times in each 52-year period.

26. A good example of "Christian influence" is the survival of human couples from one solar age to the next, as in the *Telleriano-Remensis*. Seler treats this as a Christian addition: in the "original" versions all humans perished (1960-61:IV, 51-52). Graulich (1983 and elsewhere) denies the importance of Christian influence on the myths, stressing their internal consistency and following the Lévi-Straussian

dictum that all versions of a myth are equally valid. Zantwijk would modify this approach, granting significance to matters of emphasis and elimination even if the myth's basic character remains (Comments, in Graulich 1983:583). In a historical situation where the forces affecting native thought are so well known, more can be learned of how myth "works" if the differences among versions are taken into account and not reduced to a universal structure that reveals nothing new. It is productive to analyze how the myths remain true to native thought even while Christian elements are worked in, as D. Tedlock does for the *Popol Vuh* (1985). In Seler's example, survival of world destruction may have something to do with Noah, but in other versions people do survive as fish or monkeys, and later races are created from the bones—symbolic of generation—of earlier people. There is overlap as well as gap between ages; to accept that people might even survive in human form did not really violate indigenous belief.

27. A number of the Franciscans believed that the end of the world was approaching, interpreting the discovery of America and conversion of the Indians as events reserved by God for these final days. The Antichrist—Luther—had already appeared in Europe. On this millenarian aspect of Franciscan ideology, see Phelan (1970) or Baudot (1983).

28. *Omjcel* is the gloss for "semen" in the *Florentine Codex* (Sahagún 1953-82:X, 130). Though not listed there, the same name probably applied to vaginal secretions as well. These were considered equivalent to semen, both being called *tlacaxinachtli*, 'human seed' (López Austin 1980:I, 190).

29. It is, in fact, quite overt in the *Popol Vuh*: the hero twins return to life when their ground bones are tossed in a river; there is also the famed scene of dismemberment and restoration (D. Tedlock 1985:149, 153).

30. *Tlepapalotl*, the moth that flies into the fire and dies, was used in indigenous moral discourse to denote the angry person who seeks conflict with others and ends up shamed, afflicted or even executed (Sahagún 1953-82:VI, 225). Here the *telepapalotl* becomes one of the instruments of torture in a fiery hell, symbolizing Lucía's punishment as well as the rashness of her behavior.

31. Reyes-Valerio illustrates these sculptures, also depicting a sixteenth-century engraving which is a possible model for the Calpan frieze (1978:plates 113, 130-132, 144).

32. Gerson belonged to the indigenous nobility of Tecamachalco. His paintings are reproduced in a number of sources. The most complete are Camelo Arredondo et al. (1964), which has almost all of the paintings, a map of their arrangement, and biblical engravings on which they were modeled; and Fondo Editorial de la Plástica Mexicana (1972), a collection of splendid color photos of most of the paintings.

33. The *tlahuijochtin* were witches who went about the mountains at night ejecting fire from their mouths, frightening their enemies so that they went mad or died; or they were shape-changers who took the form of fire (López Austin 1967:93).

34. According to the *Florentine Codex*, Tezcatlipoca often used the coyote as his *nabualli*. He appeared to people on the road in this form; this was a *tetzabuittl* indicating thieves or other dangers ahead (Sahagún 1953-82:V, 180).

35. *Tlaciuhque* were respected diviners, interpreters of signs, curers of disease,

finders of lost souls or objects (López Austin 1967:101–2). Their inclusion here shows how the friars classed all native religious practitioners as evil sorcerers.

36. The cantos or verses of the *Psalmodia* are called psalms, though they only occasionally incorporate material from the book of Psalms.

37. *Teoyotica* ‘in a sacred way’ or ‘in a divine sense’ was often used when the friars wished to use the material world as a metaphor for the spiritual world. Here Mary’s birth, like the light in which humans are created (in the preceding canto) is not to be literally identified as a dawning; rather, it is like a “spiritual” dawning. The Nahuatl does not really convey this—it merely casts an aura of holiness over the event.

38. A Latin note in the margin of the text reads: *Quae est ista quae progreditur, quasi aurora.* This line, from the Song of Songs 6:9, is part of an antiphon used in the Church liturgy for Marian festivals.

39. Anunciación’s work was published earlier than the *Psalmodia*, but the latter text had been circulating in manuscript form since the early 1560s (see Appendix).

Chapter Four: Purity and Pollution

1. For a full range of related terms and their English meanings, see Campbell’s entries under *izoliui* and *zolli* (1985:155, 444).

2. Among the body products, blood is conspicuously absent. A positive symbol, blood differs from the others in that its emission is controlled, done intentionally in the rite of bloodletting. It does not issue from a permanent rupture in the body’s structure. Its red color tied it to life, the east, the strong, pure rising sun. Blood out of its normal place was negative: bloody diarrhea was *tlayelli*, a word also meaning “something foul”; the word for placenta was *tlayellotl* ‘foulness’ (*tlaellotl* in Molina 1970:II, 120v). One might expect menstrual blood to be an exception also; however, it apparently was not considered impure (López Austin 1980:I, 194).

3. *Momotus mexicanus*, a timid, slow-moving bird of warm regions, which nests in holes in the ground (Santamaría 1974:138). Its anomalous pattern of movement and its association with the earth’s surface explain its status as *tlazolli*.

4. *Pachtli* refers to useless or parasitic plants, such as mistletoe or Spanish moss, or plant refuse such as hay (Karttunen 1983:183). “Mossy” is used here for lack of a closer English equivalent. “Mussed” or “disheveled” conveys the same idea but without the plant element.

5. In Quiché Maya belief, the gods of filth were Trash Master and his companion Stab Master. Their duty was “to catch up with people whenever they have filth or grime in the doorway of the house, the patio of the house.” Such a person was then stabbed, and crawled on the ground and died (D. Tedlock 1985:107).

6. Klor de Alva (1987b) discusses the Nahua conception of the self in contrast to the Christian.

7. *Nezzayotl* is the abstract noun form of the verb *nezi* ‘to appear.’ In the texts it usually occurs in the possessive form *inezca*, the “appearing” or “manifestation” of something. (“Nouns of quality” ending in *-cayotl* usually go to *-ca* in the pos-

sessive form; Launey 1979:I, 286). The relationship between an object and its *nez-cayotl* is more direct and causal than that between a symbol and its vehicle. *Machiyotl* is an abstract noun form of *macho*, the passive form of the verb *mati* 'to know.' The literal meaning is something like "its being known." Here again there is a sense of something hidden appearing on the surface, of the revelation of an internal state—the items in question being in a metonymic rather than metaphorical relationship.

8. Read *caxtапalcatlca*.

9. According to Taggart (1983:175), the present-day Nahuatl of the Sierra de Puebla emphasize sexual sins: *tatakol* refers primarily to sexual intercourse outside of marriage. The extent to which this emphasis derives from Christian teaching or from the traditional *tlazolli* complex is difficult to determine.

10. How to handle situations in which a converted Indian was wed to one who was not posed complex problems for the friar. As a general rule, such a marriage was accepted if contracted before either partner's conversion and if the non-Christian spouse agreed not to interfere with the other's worship. Fray Juan Focher (1960), the Franciscans' expert on marriage, prescribed what should be done in every conceivable situation.

11. This opinion was standard. Aquinas wrote that the Devil rejoices most in sins of lust because of their tenacity—people find it very hard to give them up (1969:75). Also, it was believed that Satan had been granted license by God to intervene especially in this realm (Tentler 1977:165-66).

12. The *Popol Vuh*'s treatment of the creation of humans, as analyzed by D. Tedlock (1985:79, 257-58), shows that the Quiché considered this element of Christian doctrine preposterous. The man created of earth and mud is senseless, does not speak, has a twisted face, cannot walk or reproduce, crumbles and dissolves in water.

13. *Cuicui*, the frequentive of *cui* 'to take,' has the meanings "to take something away" and "to clean up a surface" (Karttunen 1983:71).

14. *Chico* means "crooked" or "on one side"; *tlanahuac* means "around" or "on all sides." Combined with *tlacuicui*, the image is of picking things up and removing them from the center to the sides.

15. In the formerly Nahuatl-speaking community studied by Ingham, evil-eye sickness is cured with garbage, hair, and underwear; prostitutes and murderers are the ideal choices as godparents for a *susto*-curing ceremony (Ingham 1986:76, 172). These diseases have historic roots in *tlazolli* diseases; filthy things and filthy people help to drive them away.

16. It is typical of the Franciscans to accept what the more orthodox Durán rejects.

17. According to D. Tedlock's Quiché informant Andrés Xiloj, the agents of the underworld can best be kept from one's house through rigorous sweeping and trash removal (1985:270; see above, note 5).

18. Here is an example of the fairly common pairing of Nahuatl and Spanish/Latin terms for the heart-based soul. The metaphorical nature of the sweeping is doubly expressed: sweeping "in a sacred way" and sweeping of the soul, which is not the same as what one does with a broom.

19. The idea of internal purification as a metaphorical "sweeping" is expressed in Nahua medical beliefs. For example, the opossum tail used as an expectorant "sweeps" away bowel obstructions (Sahagún 1953-82:XI, 12). Here the obstruction is, nevertheless, physical and not spiritual.

20. This identification would have been based on the "enclosed garden," *hortus conclusus*, of the Song of Songs (4:12), which was often used as a figure for Mary.

Chapter Five: Abstinence and Excess

1. A similar philosophy is reflected in the *Popol Vuh*. After the gods dull the vision of the first men, who had been able to see everything, they create women so that the men will be happy in spite of the diminished existence that will be theirs on earth (D. Tedlock 1985:167).

2. *Tlaxiyeyecoliztli* has the same root, *yeycoa*, as the terms the friars used to express the idea of moral temptation. Its appearance in a totally different context here further indicates how alien that idea was to the Nahuas: the friars are stretching indigenous concepts to cover situations outside of their original range of reference.

3. As Arvey (1988) observes, whether commercial prostitution existed in pre-Conquest times is unclear. The public women who consorted with the warriors were called *ahuijanime*; the term was applied to prostitutes by the friars and was used to describe women with that role in colonial society.

4. Great-grandfather and namesake of the famous "Montezuma" of the Conquest period.

5. So named after the Otomí ethnic group which lived on the northern edge of the Nahuatl-speaking area. The Nahuas considered the Otomí to be crude and uncivilized—characteristics of mighty warriors.

6. From *tlaco* 'middle, center, half' and *cuali* 'something good' (Karttunen 1983:260; 59).

7. In Sahagún's list of the deities and their attributes, it is said that the swift Painal stirs up dust and earth in his running (1905-08:VII, 2). There is a direct link between immoderately rapid movement and the creation of *tlazolli*. In the *Florentine Codex* account of the confession rite, one of the metaphors used for the penitent's *tlatlacalli* is *vitlallotl* (Sahagún 1953-82:I, 24). The *vitlallotl* is a bird, which Hernández (1959:III, 330) describes as being unable to fly well but such a swift runner that it can outdistance the fastest horses. This would seem to indicate the roadrunner or a similar bird: a bird not only anomalous in its flying but an inordinately rapid runner and a stirrer up of dust.

8. Fruit of the tree *Crataegus mexicana*; *tejocote* in Mexican Spanish.

9. These are answers to a questionnaire sent out by Philip II to gather information about his realms.

10. Sahagún (1981:I, 55) states that the Indians had a belief in the necessity of confession in *lumine naturali* 'in natural light' rather than because of previous evangelization.

11. The term I am translating as "fasting," *nezahualiztli*, in native usage involved restrictions on eating but also bathing, sex, etc.—it was a general penance.

Fasting from food was indicated with the terms *tzacatlacualiztli* ‘eating at midday,’ limiting oneself to one daily meal; and *tacualizcabnualiztli* ‘leaving eating,’ an unspecified abstinence from food. The doctrinal texts tend to use *nezahualiztli* in regard to Church-ordered fasting from food, ignoring its other meanings, though *tacualizcabnualiztli* is often used as well.

12. Sahagún lamented the breakdown of the strict indigenous behavioral regimen, blaming it on the Spaniards’ desire to cast down all native customs regardless of their value. He believed that the friars themselves had been too lenient with the native youth. This was one reason why even the monastery-trained boys were so morally lax as to be unfit for the priesthood (1981:III, 158–59). However, judging from the opinions expressed here, he would not have imposed this strictness on the youngest ones but only on the adolescents.

13. Some good sources on Aztec law are the *Historia de los mexicanos por sus pinturas* (in Garibay 1979), *Estas son las leyes* (1891), Motolinia (1971), Las Casas (1967), Alva Ixtlilxochitl (1975). Offner (1983) presents a comparative legal analysis. The sources tend to be very consistent regarding the strict penalties enforced for sexual offenses. Such penalties functioned to uphold the authority of the Aztec state, but they were based on the moral concerns important to the culture. It is possible that the special attention to sexual matters in these records is in part an effort by Nahuas and Spanish apologists to make pre-Conquest culture seem commendable to Europeans.

14. The concerns of women were somewhat different since they need not be concerned about fluid loss through ejaculation. Rather, death in childbirth due to excess sexual fluids gluing the fetus to the uterus was a concern, as was the moral stigma attached to the *abuiani*, the promiscuous woman who wandered the periphery. Such women had important social and ritual roles (Arvey 1988), but they were clearly associated with the disorderly side of nature.

15. Incest restrictions were milder for Christianized Indians than for Old Christians, but they still excluded many partners acceptable under indigenous law.

16. A distinction should be noted between chastity, which can include licit sexual activity within marriage, and celibacy, which is complete abstinence. *Nepitaliztli* ‘keeping oneself’ would seem to refer to celibacy, though the friars used it in contexts where they clearly meant to include conjugal relations.

17. This is a fragmentary passage, written in Sahagún’s hand (an earlier, stronger hand, not the spidery hand of his 1563 notes), from the sermons on the Conception of Mary. Grammatical errors and peculiar orthography suggest the absence of any Nahua assistant. The passage is a continuation from an excised folio; for some reason the entire set of sermons for this festival has been cut out or crossed over with diagonal lines. This looks like Sahagún’s own doing, though the material here is not inconsistent with the rest of his sermons. One conceivable explanation is that he eventually decided to omit this festival because of opposition to the Guadalupe cult, which focused on an image of the Immaculate Conception. However, songs for this occasion are included in his *Psalmodia christiana*, which was submitted for publication in 1569, after Sahagún’s 1563 editing of the sermons.

18. In medieval usage, the pig was a symbol of female sexuality (Russell 1984:67).

19. The artist has given the two Indian men Spanish-style beards, probably

based on a European model; however, their mantles indicate that they are Indians. The embroidered hem of the bride's blouse and skirt also suggest Indian clothing.

20. *Nanahuatl*, though glossed by Molina as "buboies," the swollen lymph glands associated especially with the bubonic plague (1970:II, 63r), appears rather to have referred more generally to sores or pustules on the skin, particularly those resulting from syphilis.

21. From *itett* 'belly'; *xibui* is not in the dictionaries.
22. In other words, "make a spectacle of yourself."
23. The "place where one is shorn," a term for the underworld common in some texts, such as in the *Cantares mexicanos*, but rare in the friars' usage.

Chapter Six: Health and Sickness

1. It is possible that pollution affected primarily the liver while displacement affected primarily the heart, but this is somewhat speculative.
2. From *cacalaca* 'to rattle' [?].
3. This is, of course, their own somewhat idealized view. At the peak of Mendicant activity, there was undoubtedly a high rate of participation in Christian rites. However, Indian participation in Church activities declined markedly in the later sixteenth century. Montúfar, though his claims may be exaggerated for political purposes, in 1570 lamented the failure of many Indians to confess (*Descripción del arzobispado* 1897:425). Sahagún, in 1576, wrote of the difficulty involved in inducing the Indians to confess and take communion properly (1981:III, 163).

Chapter Seven: Christianity Conquered

1. It is conceivable, however, that such references were suppressed in the recorded oratory because it was intended to serve as a reference guide for Christian preaching.

Glossary of Nahuatl Terms

The following is a list of important Nahuatl terms used in this book. It is intended for the nonspecialist; those seeking a fuller analysis of the terms, including the presence of long vowels or glottal stops, may refer to Karttunen (1983) or Andrews (1975).

Ahuilnemiliztli: the pursuit of pleasure, sensuality, sexual indulgence; in Christian usage, lust or sexual sins; literally, "pleasurable living"

Chipahua: to cleanse or purify

Chipahualiztli: cleanliness, purity

Huehuetlatolli: native oratory, the words of elders and ancestors; literally, "old men's speech"

Ichpochtli: adolescent girl, young woman; in Christian usage, virgin

Ichpochyotl or Ichpochotl: girlhood, young womanhood; in Christian usage, virginity

Ihuinti: to become inebriated or intoxicated

Ilhuicatl: sky, heaven

Itlacahui: to become damaged, displaced, or corrupt

Itlacauhqui: damaged, displaced, corrupt

Itlacoa: to damage, break

Mictlan: among the dead, the underworld; in Christian usage, hell

Nahualli: a shaman who takes the form of an animal alter-ego during trance

Nemecatiliztli: an informal but socially recognized heterosexual union; in Christian usage, concubinage; literally, "tying oneself"

Nemontemi: the five unnamed days added to the 360-day year to approximate the solar year; literally, "they go by filled uselessly"

Nepializtli: sexual abstinence, celibacy; literally, "keeping oneself"

Neyolmelahualiztli: heart-straightening, ritual confession

Nezahualiztli: fasting, generally including sexual abstinence and other penitential exercises

Tecuani: wild animal; literally "people-eater"

Telpochtli: youth, young man; in Christian usage, virgin male

Telpochyotl or Telpochotl: boyhood, young manhood; in Christian usage, male virginity

Teotl (pl. Teteo): deity, sacred thing

Teoyotica: in a divine or sacred way; in Christian usage, spiritually

Tetzahuitl: omen, augury, portent, unexpected event, something out of place

Teyolia: spiritual agent or soul residing in heart and passing to afterworld

Tlacatecolotl (pl. Tlatlacatecolo): a dangerous shaman or sorcerer; in Christian usage, devil or demon; literally, "human horned owl"

Tlahuana: to drink alcoholic beverages

Tlahuanaliztli: the drinking of alcoholic beverages

Tlahueliloc: insane, raving mad; in Christian usage, wicked

Tlaixyeyecoliztli: moderation, precaution; literally, "tasting things with the eyes" or "testing the surface of things"

Tlalticpac: on earth; literally, "on the summit of the land"

Tlalticpaccayotl: sexuality; literally, "earthliness"

Tlamacechualiztli: the meriting of things; penitential practices

Tlatlacolli: misdeed, act that causes damage; in Christian usage, sin

Tlayelli: something foul and dirty

Tlayelpaquiliztli: literally, "foul happiness"; in Christian usage, lust

Tlazolli: filth, garbage, things that are old and worn out, "matter out of place"

Tlazolmiquiztli: illness or death caused by someone in a state of pollution; literally, "filth-death"

Tonalli: a day in the 260-day ritual calendar; a spiritual agent, residing in the head and related to the sun and heat, which determined an individual's character and fate

Tonalpohualli: the 260-day ritual calendar

Yollod or Yollotli: heart

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