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TAMING SAVAGE NATURE: THE BODY METAPHOR AND MATERIAL CULTURE IN THE SIXTEENTH-CENTURY CONQUEST OF NEW SPAIN

A Dissertation Presented

by

ABEL A. ALVES

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

February 1990

Department of History

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THE BODY METAPHOR AND MATERIAL CULTURE
IN THE 16TH CENTURY CONQUEST OF NEW SPAIN

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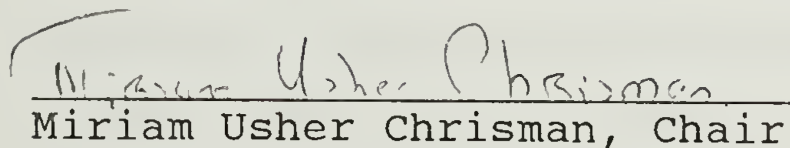
Approved as to style and content by:



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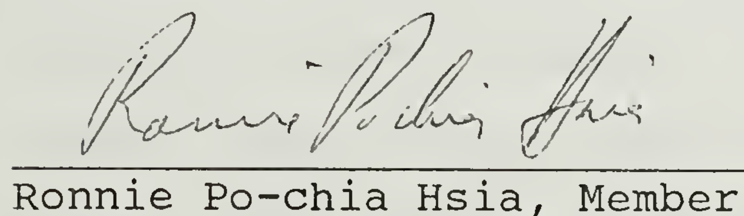

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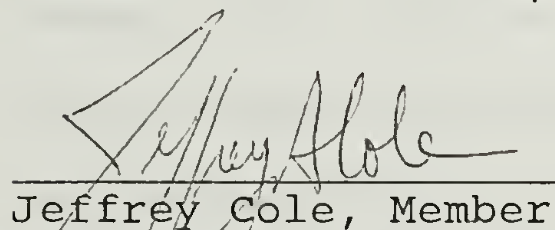

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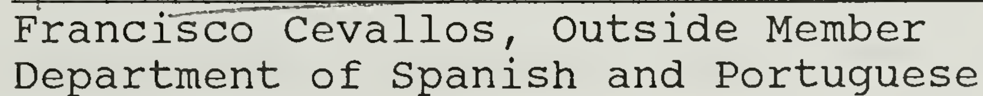

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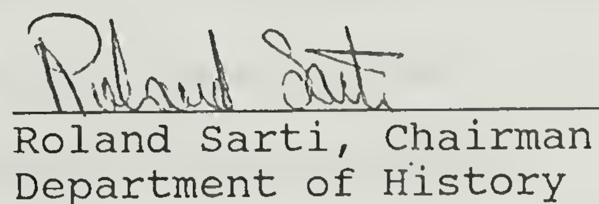

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ABSTRACT

TAMING SAVAGE NATURE: THE BODY METAPHOR AND MATERIAL CULTURE IN THE SIXTEENTH-CENTURY CONQUEST OF NEW SPAIN

FEBRUARY 1990

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This is a study of how sixteenth-century Spaniards used fundamental aspects of material culture, and the ideas and attitudes surrounding them, to subjugate the Aztec empire of Mexico. Edicts, relaciones, court decisions, letters and chronicles have been employed to discern the attitudes of the time. Those attitudes reveal that food, clothing and shelter were used both to distinguish Spaniards from Amerindians and to bind conquerors and conquered to the same social system. Principles of hierarchy and reciprocity were employed by Spaniards and Amerindians to define the appropriate customs and means of exchange in a new, syncretic culture of conquest. Together, Spaniards and Amerindians created a sixteenth-century body politic and organic society in what Europeans deemed a "New World."

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

With the opening of the sixteenth century, the European infestation of the rest of the world began in earnest. Without question, this invasion had its greatest impact on the lands penetrated by the Spanish monarchy. By mid-century, two great American empires, those of the Aztecs and Incas, had been subjugated to Spanish suzerainty, and crisis and compromise necessarily arose where Spanish and Indian cultures intersected. Much more than the mere imposition of new political institutions, the Spanish age of discovery and conquest was an effort to extend a deeply held faith in a highly exclusivist world-view and culture. In sixteenth-century Europe, that Spanish vision was threatened by the Protestant Reformation, shifting markets, economic turmoil on the Iberian peninsula, and the constant threat of Turkish invasion. Fundamental beliefs, first formulated in the Middle Ages, were challenged, but the Spaniards in the New World perceived the Americas as a *tabula rasa* upon which the fading ideals of a united Christendom might be writ anew. If Old Europe failed, perhaps a New Europe would not. Unfortunately, this New Europe included alien cultures and physical environments

totally unfamiliar to the Spaniards. Relying on Old World categories of understanding to justify their very existence, sixteenth-century Spaniards perceived the alien environment and culture as something savage that must be tamed.

This is a study of how sixteenth-century Spaniards proposed to reconstruct an ideal New Europe at the most basic levels of material culture; of how ideas shaped physical reality and were, in turn, shaped by material factors.[1] Well before an Indian was understood in his indigenous tongue or had learned Spanish, before he spoke of Christian beliefs or heresy, he was seen as a body to be fed properly, clothed, disciplined, and exploited for his labor power. Certainly, Spanish cultural truth was linked intrinsically to faith in the teachings of Roman Catholicism and to a belief in the divine election of the Spanish Crown and people to lead a crusade against heresy and infidelity, but that truth was also revealed through a series of ordinary, everyday activities. It was revealed in the preparation of meals, the wearing of clothes, and the hierarchical and reciprocal relations of individuals. In short, Spanish culture was not only to

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[1]For a similar project devoted solely to the realm of political institutions and ideas, see Colin M. MacLachlan, Spain's Empire in the New World: The Role of Ideas in Institutional and Social Change (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1988), ix-xiv.

be found in the mental realm of ideas and beliefs; it was present in the physical sphere and located by the definition and relation of bodies. Culture was a series of material and mental patterns by which a sense of belonging was communicated to its human members. Common terms of discourse--- or communication by means of language, literature, dress, ritual, institutions, and the arts--- were consistently used by Spanish conquerors to set themselves apart from the mass of conquered Indians, to allow access to Indians whom they deemed acceptable, and to eliminate aspects of the Indian cultures they found to be most reprehensible. It was in the face of alien cultures and physical environments that the Spaniards became most aware of themselves. By observing practices different from their own, they became much more capable of defining the unique and vital qualities of their own culture. This also allowed the Spaniards to identify practices similar and acceptable to their own, opening the door to the vague beginnings of cultural syncretism in the sixteenth century. Still, Spain's confrontation with difference and otherness served primarily to justify conquest: the Spaniards were upholding "Universal Truth" in the face of error.

As a result of their centuries-long Reconquest of the Iberian peninsula, Spaniards were more than equal to the practice of cultural chauvinism and cultural

syncretism. They also were well aware that culture is fundamental and all-encompassing. To defend the first Castilian grammar, by the humanist Antonio de Nebrija, a learned friar argued that a common language, or means of communication, truly binds realms. Diego Covarrubias expanded this argument to include wisdom and letters among the most effective instruments which create and sustain the greatness of kingdoms. On a less exalted plane, Spanish conquistadores like Hernán Cortés and Bernal Díaz del Castillo defined culture in terms of its material aspects--- the eating practices, clothing, and bodily needs--- which were more familiar to them than were the arts and letters. In turn, those who debated whether the Amerindians were natural slaves or fully rational human beings referred to both mental and material aspects of culture, the 1550 Valladolid debate between Bartholomé de las Casas and Juan Gines de Sepúlveda being the prime example.

Very few Spaniards consciously wrote of cultural values (as did Nebrija, Covarrubias, las Casas, and Sepúlveda), but casual reference to those values was common in the discourse of the day. Royal edicts and questionnaires, petitions to the Crown, letters, popular sermons, tax lists, wills, inventories, court records, and novels placed these debates and differences of opinion within the limitations of commonly accepted terms

of discourse. Sepúlveda and las Casas vehemently disagreed on the legitimacy of Indian lords and on the appropriate method of introducing the Indians to Christianity, but they agreed on the legitimacy of the principles of lordship, hierarchy, and estates, and on the ultimate value and truth of Christianity. In the New World, the first conquistadores and pobladores were uniformly shocked by cannibalism and human sacrifice. Indian nudity could not be accepted as an element of particular Indian cultures, but was interpretted as a sign of depravity, or of innocence comparable to that of Adam and Eve before the Fall. Bread made of manioc flour or maize was eaten, and even occasionally enjoyed, but the farming of wheat and consumption of wheaten bread was clearly linked with Spanishness and civilization. Conquerors and settlers competed to prove their value to the Crown by emphasizing their introduction of European cattle, horses, and sheep into the New World. Recognizing the value of saving their Indian laborers from the devastation wrought by European diseases, New World Spaniards also competed in performing acts of Christian charity. Wills, as well as probanzas requesting encomiendas and ennoblement, zealously listed the construction of hospitals and the distribution of alms. Works performed in the material plane reflected spiritual values and a natural adherence to the agent's

Spanish culture. Spaniards consistently recast elements of their culture in the Americas.

This study will examine the process of cultural transfer in sixteenth-century Mexico (or New Spain), where Spaniards first encountered a culture which they deemed civilized and brutal, enchanting and horrifying, similar and alien. The Spanish fear of the alien was reflected by Miguel de Cervantes, in what may be the paraphrasing of a Castilian proverb. He had Don Quixote's niece ask, "Is it not better to stay peacefully at home instead of roaming the world in search of better bread than is made of wheat, not to mention that many who go for wool come home shorn?"[2] Conquistadores and pobladores certainly roamed the world, but they did so in search of gold and land, to provide themselves with sheep, Spanish titles, and wheaten bread in abundance. Though many did come home shorn, they had not been searching for "better bread than is made of wheat." They were searching, paradoxically, for a better place or estate within a Spanish social system which, in the ideal, viewed itself as perfectly fixed and enduring.

This dissertation will probe Spanish adherence to the material aspects of their culture and their attempts to use these standards to subordinate the mass of their

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[2]Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, Don Quixote, trans. Walter Starkie (New York: Signet Classics, 1964), p. 95.

Indian servitors in Mexico and to create a small acculturated group of Indian nobles who could serve as intermediaries between them and the common macequales. As such, mentalité will be studied, but it will be approached through the prisms of institutional and cultural history, for these fields recognize the Spaniards' continued use of Indian institutions as well as the Indians' ability to employ Spanish institutions and cultural practices for their own benefit. Historiographically, the study will build upon the investigations of ritual and material culture developed by Claude Lévi-Straus, George Foster, and other anthropologists, and it will use the work of historians of like Charles Gibson, Woodrow Borah, Silvio Zavala and Lewis Hanke. The prime purpose of this study is to document the way in which Spaniards reflected their social needs in their attitudes regarding individual human and non-human bodies; how aspects of material culture, from bread to hospitals, possessed social dimensions. Since Spaniards portrayed society metaphorically as a body--- with the hierarchical interaction of the various ranks likened to the interaction of the organs of a body--- they were well prepared to discern metaphorical interpretations of material culture. Clothes made the man, defining his station in life and his culture. From the European

perspective, European agriculture and husbandry made the land fit for Europeans, and the consumption of bread and maize defined Spanish and Indian cultures at the most basic level, thus providing the most basic economic, political, and moral concerns of Mexican society. The well-fed society was the well-ordered society, and those who could not meet the standards of sixteenth-century Spanish economic production and consumption often became the candidates for the hospital, the institution which cured both the ills of the individual body and those of the body politic. Much has been made of sixteenth-century Spanish spirituality. This study will focus on the ways in which Spaniards understood their bodily needs, as they determined those basic needs in juxtaposition to an alien culture.

CHAPTER 2

THE KING'S NEW BODY

Sixteenth-century Europe was besieged by dramatic and tumultuous changes. These ranged from the rapidity of inflationary spirals to the rejection of papal authority. Scientific heresies challenged the Medieval Christian interpretation of Ptolemy and Aristotle, while, in the Germanies, both princes and peasants revolted in an attempt to reform the established social order. Sixteenth-century people were displeased with traditional scarcity and corruption, and they sought improvement on earth. This was true of both Spanish and German cities when they revolted in the 1520's. This was also true of More when he wrote his Utopia, and of Juan Luis Vives when he proposed his poor relief reforms. Popular printed sources of the time, from the pamphlets of German artisans to the picaresque novel Lazarillo de Tormes, reveal a common displeasure with the way human selfishness and sin had fouled God's plan for the world. Reformers of all stripes struck out to recapture the

meaning of the divine plan and resuscitate a dying Europe.[1]

Reform called for action as well as ideas, for attempts to reorder society and re-establish justice. For sixteenth-century Europeans, this meant rediscovering the one true course which God had set for man, in all its religious and social dimensions. On this at least, Ignatius Loyola and the Catholic reformers of Trent could agree with Martin Luther and John Calvin. Still, religious leaders were not the only ones to engage in this quest. The career of Charles V attests to this. His letters, both public and private, reveal a man who felt himself called to maintain Christian unity in the face of the Turkish threat. His rampant war expenditures demonstrate this. To fight the external Islamic threat, and the internal threat of Protestantism, Charles was more than willing to bankrupt the respublica

[1] Theodore K. Rabb, The Struggle for Stability in Early Modern Europe (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), 33-48; Pérez Zagorin, Rebels and Rulers, 1500-1660, vol. 1: Society, States, and Early Modern Revolution: Agrarian and Urban Rebellions (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 188-203, 261-2; Thomas More, Utopia, ed. Edward Surtz, S.J. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1964); Juan Luis Vives, Del Socorro de los pobres, in Obras completas, 2 vols., trans. Lorenzo Riber (Madrid: M. Aguilar, 1947-8), 1: 1356-7, 1369-71, 1374, 1378; and The Life of Lazarillo de Tormes, trans. J. Gerald Markley (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1954).

christianorum. He was not willing to sacrifice its unity, or his interpretation of its divine mission.[2]

As ruler of early sixteenth-century Spain, Charles V actively partook in extending the European reform drive to another hemisphere. The project of building a "new" Spain in the Americas was an outgrowth of sixteenth-century Europe's search for the proper order of things. Both dreamers and the dissatisfied approached the New World as a place to start afresh.[3] As the first Europeans to build permanent settlements in the Americas, the Spanish were also first to ask what constituted a _European_ settlement. By conquering lands with different people, cultures, flora, fauna and climates, the Spanish were forced to determine the elements of their culture which they considered absolutely essential to the maintenance of their "Spanishness." Individual Spaniards differed on the vital particulars of Spanish culture, but no one among them suggested abandoning Spanish ways and going native. When confronted with alien ways, be they

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[2]See _Corpus documental de Carlos V_, 5 vols., ed. Manuel Fernádez Alvarez (Salamanca: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientificas, 1973-81). "Carlos V a Alvaro de Lugo," (Ratisbon, 6 April 1532), 1: 345-6; "Carlos V a Isabel," (Ratisbon, 6 April 1532), 1: 349-52; "Carlos V a Isabel," (Ratisbon, 22 April 1532), 1: 355-8; "Carlos V a Isabel," (Ratisbon, 30 April 1532), 1: 358-9; "Testamento de Carlos V," (Brussels, 6 June 1554), 4: 69-72.

[3]Howard Mumford Jones, _O Strange New World. American Culture: The Formative Years_ (New York: Viking, 1967), 71-7, 90-7.

Jewish, Moorish, Protestant or Amerindian, Spaniards re-entrenched in defense of their own culture. They discovered themselves in the midst of chauvinism.

The Spaniards of the sixteenth century readily accepted the traditional Catholic notion that each human individual was created by God as a joining of body and soul. The flesh and bodily needs were not evil when they were disciplined and guided by the soul acting freely in accordance with Christian moral precepts. Human appetitites, from sexual desire to physical hunger and the pursuit of material possessions, were to be regulated by Christian customs such as marriage, "appropriate" dress, poor relief, and even proper eating rituals. Christian spirituality had direct impact on some of the most basic elements of culture, and being truly civilized was identified with being Christian.

In an age of faith, the disintegration of Christianity literally meant the disruption of civilization, and good Spanish Catholics could only hope that the loss of the wayward Protestants would be compensated by the extension of the Catholic interpretation of being human to new shores and new peoples. "Luther and Cortez, it was said, had been born in the same year: one to destroy the ancient Church and the other to build a new Jerusalem in the recently

conquered lands across the sea."[4] Spaniards attempted to convert Asian and Amerindian cultures to save human souls, but that also meant teaching them how Christians should act in the material world. In the Americas, where the Spanish gained enough leverage by means of force, it meant that the conquered were to learn the roles and manners expected of them in a Catholic society. They were to learn their social functions and good breeding, each individual contributing to what sixteenth-century Spaniards called the ordering of society or policía. Spanish culture was an interaction of religious beliefs, social stratification, political institutions, and commonplace activities. It became the task of the Spanish monarch to provide rational order, or policía, through proper institutions, laws, and officials. Even the Church, as a result of the patronato real, existed as an institution to be guided by the Crown's interpretation of societal needs. In the "New World," the ideas and interpretations of conquistadores, settlers, royal officials, and clerics interacted reciprocally with material reality to establish the social control of physical functions and the Spanish way of being.

The attempt to define the Spanish way of being was at the heart of the Valladolid disputation between

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[4]Lewis Hanke, All Mankind Is One (De Kalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1974), 6.

Bartolomé de las Casas and Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda. There, in 1550, Sepúlveda promoted the justice of imposing true order and social discipline on Amerindian peoples guilty of the abominations of unjust wars and conquests, idolatry, cannibalism, human sacrifice and cowardice. To be Spanish was to forcibly impose the truths of Catholic morality and social relations on infidels. In the service of extending the true and superior Spanish culture, conquest could not help but be just. Institutions like the encomienda and the enslavement of the Amerindians merely reflected the establishment of an appropriate, Spanish social order in the New World.[5]

Bartolomé de las Casas never fundamentally doubted the veracity of Spanish Catholic culture, and it was because of his interpretation of Christian culture that he eschewed violent war against the Indians. While those who knowingly rejected and directly threatened the destruction of Christianity and Christendom could be fought in a just war, the Amerindians were neither Turks nor Protestants. Entirely ignorant of the Christian

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[5]Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, Démocrates segundo o de las justas causas de la guerra contra los indios, ed. Ångel Losada (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientifícas, 1951). For more on Spanish cultural chauvinism, see Anthony Pagden, The Fall of Natural Man: The American Indian and the Origins of Comparative Ethnology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 2-14.

message and incapable of threatening European, Catholic Christendom, the Amerindians were to be taught the truth in a loving and peaceful fashion.[6] In Tierra Firme (1519-1522) and the Central American "Land of War," or Tuzulutlán, (1537-1538), las Casas had tried to teach Amerindians to accept Spanish religion, family life and agricultural methods by showing them the example of good Castilian husbandmen living in their lands.[7] In these failed attempts, as well as in his Valladolid speech, las Casas did not attack the Christian core of Spanish culture, but only the morality of the methods used to impose it on the Amerindians:

> Once we accept the principle that every good king or ruler is obliged to prefer the common good to the private good, the interest of the many to that of the few, the greater good to the lesser, and, above all else, the spread of the Catholic faith, the prosperity of the Church, and the salvation of souls, and therefore to avoid everything contrary to these and whatever could hinder them, it is absolutely clear that for no reason should he allow, for the sake of any greater, or even the greatest, public interest, the slaying of a countless number of persons so that a few may not be sacrificed to the idols. For this concerns the spread of the Christian religion, since the Indians will never accept the truth

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[6]Bartolomé de las Casas, In Defense of the Indians: The Defense of the Most Reverend Lord, Don Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, of the Order of Preachers, Late Bishop of Chiapa, Against the Persecutors and Slanderers of the Peoples of the New World Discovered Across the Seas, trans. Stafford Poole, C.M. (De Kalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1974), 178-85.

[7]Henry Raup Wagner and Helen Rand Parish, The Life and Writings of Bartolomé de las Casas (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1967), 35-45, 60-9.

> of Christianity if they are hardened (against it).[8]

Likewise, whatever he found particularly favorable among Amerindian cultures was favorable because it reflected the gospels. He judged the Indians as so docile and humble that they were naturally receptive to Christ's praise of humility as a central virtue.[9] Las Casas was a defender of the Indians, but he was a defender within the confines of Christian morality. Thus, Spaniards were told that they could only lash out at practitioners of human sacrifice if their society was completely devoid of sin, and the Valladolid speech readily noted that all men were guilty of original sin.[10]

In his Brevisima relación de la destrucción de Indias (1552), las Casas appealed to Charles' son Philip on behalf of the common good and oppressed innocents of the New World. He called the prince and all Christian princes fathers and shepherds to their people.[11] In doing this, las Casas demonstrated that he accepted the fundamental social and political assumptions of his culture. Far from being left alone, the Amerindians were to be saved by Spanish means, and taught a benevolent,

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[8]Las Casas, In Defense of the Indians, 247.

[9]Bartolomé de las Casas, Brevisima relación de la destrucción de Indias, ed. Manuel Ballesteros Gaibrois, facsimile of the Seville edition of 1552 (Madrid: Fundación Universitaria Española, 1977), aiiii[a-b].

[10]Las Casas, In Defense of the Indians, 195-9.

[11]Las Casas, Brevisima relación, aii[b]-aiii[b].

paternalistic Christianity. They were to be incorporated into Spanish-Catholic civilization. Like las Casas, the Spanish Crown never doubted the inevitability of the extension of Spanish truth. The Spanish monarchy merely explored different methods of extending that truth.

The New World venture was an attempt by the Spanish Crown, its officials and Spanish settlers to recast their visions of Spain. The extent to which the Amerindians were to be introduced to Spanish culture, and the methods which were to be used in this introduction, became a central question. Regardless of how often Spaniards perceived the Americas as a tabula rasa, the existence of the first Americans could never be denied.[12] "Spanishness," on the other hand, could be denied them, though never through rejection of the Crown's justification for conquest, the salvation of their souls. Christianization of the Indians was a given, but the extent to which they would adopt Spanish material culture was entirely another matter. The material culture of the Spaniards could be extended to favored Indians and denied others. Selective extension and denial became a Spanish attempt to control conquered Indian populations, while Indians, for their part, retained their autonomy by

[12]See Hayden White, "The Forms of Wildness," 155-80, and "The Noble Savage Theme as Fetish," 183-95, in Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978).

actively pursuing certain elements of Spanish culture and rejecting others. A reciprocal and hierarchical relation developed between Spaniards and Indians. The Christian message bound Spaniards and Indians as spiritual brothers, but Spanish Catholics saw themselves as persons consisting of both souls and bodies. Through things related to the body, as well as through spirituality, sixteenth-century Spaniards hoped to subordinate Amerindians to their sovereignty.

Unencumbered by the complete disappearance of the Amerindian population, or by the turmoil of constant warfare and rebellion, sixteenth-century Mexico, "New Spain," became one of the first laboratories for the imposition of European culture on a non-European environment. On the islands of the Antilles, Spaniards readily interpretted the semi-sedentary cultures of the Arawaks and Caribs as devoid of civilization.[13] However, the cities, political institutions, elaborate moral codes, and even the clothing of the Indians of Mexico created numerous problems. On the one hand, indigenous Mexicans appeared to be people with policía. On the other hand, practices like "idolatry" and human sacrifice marked them as savages in Spanish eyes. Pre-Columbian

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[13] Spanish documents dealing with the initial interaction of Spaniards and Caribbean Indians can be found in S. Lyman Tyler, Two Worlds: The Indian Encounter with the European, 1492-1509 (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1988).

Mexico posed the new problem of being both "savage" and "civilized," of conforming and not conforming to the Spanish world-view. This world-view was a set of cultural assumptions shared with many other Europeans of the age, and it focused on the maintenance of a Christian polity which was identified with civilization. At its very base, the sixteenth-century European world-view was implicitly an attempt to balance principles of hierarchy and reciprocity, and it mainfested itself in the use of an organic metaphor to describe the interactions of society.

Social organic thought originated in such diverse ancient sources as Plato, Aristotle, Livy, Seneca and St. Paul. In the ancient world, it was already used to describe the proper interaction of various groups and individuals in one society. Aristotle equated the polis to a biological organism in which all the diverse citizens and citizen "interest groups" must work together for the common good, just as the organs of one body fulfill their particular functions for the common health of that organism.[14] St. Paul used the body metaphor to describe the appropriate interactions of Christians, members of the same mystical body of Christ.[15] In medieval works, the body can once again be found as the

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[14]Aristotle Politics 1.1-2 (1252a-1253a).
[15]1 Corinthians 12.

socio-political metaphor of such intellectuals as St. Thomas Aquinas and John of Salisbury.[16] Ancient pagan and Christian traditions merged, and Salisbury's Policraticus presented the metaphor clearly and systematically as a central theme. Salisbury used it broadly to encompass issues of governance, social stratification and socio-economic justice. He Christianized it by making king and priests the temporal directors of the divine plan and divine justice, emulating God's cosmic role on earth:

> The place of the head in the body of the commonwealth is filled by the prince, who is subject only to God and to those who exercise His office and represent Him on earth, even as in the human body the head is quickened by the soul.... The duties of eyes, ears, and tongue are claimed by the judges and governors of provinces. Officials and soldiers correspond to the hands.... The husbandmen correspond to the feet, which always cleave to the soil, and need the more especially the care and foresight of the head since, while they walk upon the earth doing service with their bodies, they are more likely than others to stumble over stones and therefore deserve aid and protection all the more justly

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[16]For Thomas Aquinas's use of the body metaphor, see the first chapter of his On Kingship, available in The Political Ideas of St. Thomas Aquinas, ed. Dino Bigongiari (New York: Hafner Press, 1953), 175-8. For general Medieval usage of the imagery of the "mystical body of Christ" and the social organism, see Ernst H. Kantorowicz, The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), 193-232; and R. H. Tawney, Religion and the Rise of Capitalism (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1926), 14-36.

> since it is they who raise, sustain, and move forward the weight of the entire body.[17]

In late medieval and early modern Europe, the body metaphor was accepted by diverse classes and estates: from magistrates to peasants and artisans. Even when there was displeasure with the predominant order, it still remained the model by which things would be set right. Pérez Zagorin writes, "Probably it was no exaggeration to say that the communitarian image and ideal provided the most potent and widespread symbol to the rebels of the age."[18] In the German Peasant Revolt, local village artisans and clerics appealed to this communitarianism in their statements of complaint, and certainly no one would claim that they had read Aristotle or Salisbury.[19] Both the Twelve Articles and Meran Articles of 1525 demanded the restoration of the common good through the principle of love of one's neighbor. For the peasants, this meant the abolition of serfdom, the equitable regulation of rents and dues, and the removal of arbitrary criminal jurisdiction. But it did not mean the abolition of landlordship, social differences, or property. Calls for equity and the

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[17] John of Salisbury, Policraticus: The Statesman's Book, ed. Murray F. Markland (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1979), 60-1.

[18] Pérez Zagorin, Rebels and Rulers, 1500-1660, vol. 1: Society, States, and Early Modern Revolution: Agrarian and Urban Rebellions (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 261.

[19] Ibid., 193-204.

common good are vague enough to be defined in a number of different ways, but Christian teachings set certain guidelines by which peasants and the learned Thomas More equally could be enraged by excessive punishment and avaricious landlordship.[20] Social organicism was a mode of discourse which lay and learned subcultures, as well as Protestants and Catholics, used with mutual agreement. It was as much a paradigm for medieval and early modern societies as the ideal of representative democracy is for twentieth-century western societies.[21]

Like a multi-faceted jewel, this paradigm could be viewed from a number of different vantage points. As a result, interpretations of the body metaphor could vary, depending upon one's status and frame of reference within the discourse.[22] The discourse demarcated peculiar roles for its carefully defined estates or status groups. Clergymen, nobles, commoners and all the subgroups within each category had their own privileges and duties. Every estate was to theoretically submit to the authority above

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[20]Thomas More, Utopia, ed. Edward Surtz, S. J. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1964), 20-2.

[21]Abel Athouguia Alves, "The Christian Social Organism and Social Welfare: The Case of Vives, Calvin and Loyola," The Sixteenth Century Journal 20:1 (Spring, 1989): 3-21.

[22]So too interpretations within the historical discourse may vary. See Hayden White, The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 124-5, 134; and White, Tropics of Discourse, 49-57, 121-5.

it, and the Crown, the rational principle at the head of the entire organism, was to submit to the guidance of God's justice; while at the very bottom of the hierarchy, the poor were far from forgotten. In a world where food was still scarce for the lower orders and material existence a struggle for all, each estate was called to curtail its own selfish interests for the sake of the common good of the organism. The late medieval and early modern mentalité was obsessed with poor relief reforms since starvation was a visible threat to the well-being of the entire organism. It fostered both death and dissatisfaction, resulting in crime and revolt among the poor. Therefore, just as the Eucharist mystically or symbolically bound all believers in a spiritual communion, bread distributed to the poor physically bound the wounds of society. Late medieval and early modern peoples longed for tranquil communion, but, in their own terms, the avarice of the rich and the unseemly pride, lethargy and rebelliousness of the poor prevented this. The overweening self-interest of sin impeded the selfless adoption of the Christian summary of the law: the love of God and the love of neighbor. It was theoretically the vocation of every estate to observe the principles of hierarchy and reciprocity, but those closest to the head of the organism emphasized the observance of hierarchy while rebels and groups closer to the earth stressed the

principle of reciprocity in their complaints. However, the principle of the shared burden was never entirely forgotten in either instance, and Crowns were able to play on this tension to maintain their own status. Nowhere was this more evident than in sixteenth-century Spain, where the personal and bureaucratic embodiments of royal authority had to balance and satisfy an unwieldy amalgamation of realms and interests. From Naples and the Netherlands to the New World, Spanish monarchs were faced with divergent regional, religious and class interests, and troubles in the Old World helped to shape royal aspirations for the Americas.[23]

In the Castilian revolt of the comuneros of 1520-1521, the rebellious artisans, merchants and lesser nobles complained that their needs had been sacrificed to the interests of the Crown, grandees and Charles' Flemish favorites; that hierarchy had superceded reciprocity.[24] Local farmlands were being consumed by the latifundia and sheep cañadas of the grandees, while local textile producers could not compete with the prices for raw wool offered the grandee-dominated Mesta by the cities of Flanders. The comuneros wanted a representative but

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[23]Stephen Haliczer, The Comuneros of Castile. The Forging of a Revolution, 1475-1521 (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1981), 150; and Joseph Pérez, La Revolución de las comunidades de Castilla (1520-1521), 3rd ed., trans. Juan José Foci Lacasta (Madrid: Siglo XXI de España Editores, 1979), 127, 474-94.

[24]Pérez, 539-61.

oligarchic Cortes to limit a royal authority which seemed arbitrary in its grants of offices and sinecures, and the interests of local urban oligarchs were defined as the popular will and the source of royal sovereignty. The Crown's need for some secure power base forced it to turn again and again to the _grandees_' political, military and economic might, but just as the Crown crushed the _comuneros_ at Villalar so too it was able to dominate the great noble houses in a society comprised of both centrifugal and centripetal forces.[25] Politically, the Crown could not afford a relapse of the rebelliousness of the Castilian _grandees_ under Henry IV (1454-74).

Militarily, _grandee_ support helped to further such ventures as the taking of Granada and the French and Italian wars of the sixteenth century. Economically, the _grandees_' dominance in the sheepherding _Mesta_ meant that they held the controlling interest in Spain's most profitable and ruinous economic activity. Sheep literally consumed the Castilian countryside by its very roots as the _cañadas_ enveloped more and more of the Spanish heartland, and Isabella's ruinous _cédulas_ sacrificed agricultural interests and common lands to the

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[25]Haliczer, 61, 211-23.

needs of the Mesta corporation.[26] Still, the Crown did not grant the Mesta's every whim without demanding reciprocity. The Crown's reward was the loyalty of the grandees and a source of immediate profit. The Crown traditionally collected the sales taxes of servicio y montazgo, and Charles V and Philip II made the Mesta pay for past favors through a series of subsidies and forced loans.[27] Through this revenue the Crown and grandees hoped to maintain the unity and defense of Christendom against the internal threat of Protestantism and the external threat of the Turks.[28] Hegemony meant everything, and this meant that other classes could often

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[26]A 1480 cédula ordered the evacuation of enclosures set up by farmers under Henry IV, while nine years later an ordinance called the "Defense of the Cañadas" rdrew sheepwalk boundaries to expel squatting farmers. In 1491 an edict banned agricultural enclosures in Granada. Husbandmen felt abandoned. See Jaime Vincens Vives, An Economic History of Spain, trans. Frances M. López-Morillas (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 302-04.

[27]In addition, after 1550 the Mesta experienced economic decline as the rise in Castilian prices and overall inflation in the maintenance and husbanding of sheep joined royal revenue demands to make the price of Castilian wool prohibitory abroad. From 1556 to 1561, the Mesta lost 15% of its animals. Vincens Vives, 349-50.

[28]This is reflected by the number of times Charles V directly linked his revenue demands to the Turkish and Protestant threats. See the following letters found in the Corpus Documental de Carlos V: "Carlos V a D. Pedro de la Cueva," Augsburg, October 30, 1530, 1: 242-6; "Carlos V a Clemente VII," Augsburg, October 30, 1530, 1: 247-50; "Carlos V a Isabel," Spyre, December 6, 1530, 1: 256-9; "Carlos V a Alvaro de Lugo," Ratisbon, April 6, 1532, 1: 345-6; and "Carlos V a Isabel," Ratisbon, April 6, 1532, 1: 349-52.

be forced to take a back seat to the Mesta and the grandees, but could not be completely forgotten.

Stephen Haliczer has shown that even after the comunero revolt the Crown tried to promote regional commerce and manufacture within Spain.[29] While the Mesta would serve as an economic link with Charles V's prosperous dominions in the Low Countries and their cloth manufacturers, Spanish merchants and artisans were to satisfy their business needs with local markets and what New World trade they could wrest from the Flemish and Genoese in Seville.[30] In places like Ciudad Real, they retooled and revitalized economic regionalism, while in Seville and Cadíz they turned to the Atlantic trade. A ruler of much more than the Castilian realm alone, Charles V, like his most Catholic predecessors and successor, had to think of balancing the divergent interests of a rather unwieldy body. Immediately after the comunero revolt he refused to reward loyal grandees with new estates, and he was willing to eliminate tax-farming and reintroduce encabezamiento, a system by which

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[29]Haliczer, 211-23. For a case study which demonstrates a modicum of regional economic success until the full effects of onerous taxation and military expenditure became evident in the early seventeenth century, see Carla Rahn Phillips, Ciudad Real, 1500-1750: Growth, Crisis, and Readjustment in the Spanish Economy (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), 49, 53-5, 94, 113-16.

[30]Ruth Pike, Aristocrats and Traders: Sevillian Society in the Sixteenth Century (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1972), 22, 25, 44-52, 128.

town governments negotiated total sales taxes on commerce and industry. Still, the total amount paid in Castilian servicios rose from 250 million maravedis in 1525 to 454 million in 1558, as war costs bled the economy dry.[31] Through the hinderance of taxes on goods needed for the production of fine cloth, Charles V blocked the development of Castilian wool manufacturing which could compete with Flanders, but he simultaneously provided Castilian merchants and artisans with local and New World markets for their goods.[32] With the exception of the years 1521-1523 and 1550-1559, transatlantic trade boomed in the sixteenth century, as conquest and colonization demanded European goods. By the end of the century, however, the development of agriculture, food processing, and textile manufacturing in the Indies steadily decreased the demand for European goods. Economically, the organic balancing act was faltering once again.[33]

This intrinsic need for compromise was both the strength and weakness of the social organic discourse. The Mesta was enriched at the expense of agriculture, but its wealth was tapped for the common defense of Christendom. The Castilian Crown impoverished peasants by turning their lands over to the grandees' Mesta, but

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[31] Haliczer, 220-1.

[32] Pérez, 664-5.

[33] Lyle N. McAlister, Spain and Portugal in the New World, 1492-1700 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 225-6, 234-5.

it provided for the poor's most basic needs in dangerous, congested urban areas by supporting detailed methods of relief.[34] Finally, the dissatisfied and moderately affluent were provided with the possibility of escape to construct a new "old world order" in the Americas.

While the written sources of the time discuss the hierarchy, reciprocity and compromise of Christian corporatism in the abstract, the activities of early modern players demonstrate the failures and successes of the paradigm. When both Ferdinand and Charles suffered through a series of Italian alliances against the French monarchy, they truly did so for the sake of Christendom, for they identified their own interests with the best interests of Christendom.[35] The crusading zeal lived in Spain, and Spaniards expected to be rewarded by God with gold and glory. The selfish blended with the selfless, and monarchs like Charles and Philip were quite ready to bleed their patrimonies financially dry in order to maintain and extend less tangible aspects of their own lordship and the divine sovereignty as they defined it.

[34]Linda Martz, Poverty and Welfare in Habsburg Spain: The Example of Toledo (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 81, 85.

[35]"El Rey, a su embajador en Londres," March 1514, in El Testamento politico de Fernando el católico, ed. José M. Doussinague (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientificas, n. d.), 287. For this ideological defense as found in the work of one of Charles V's bureaucrats, see Alfonso de Valdés, Dialogue of Mercury and Charon, trans. Joseph V. Ricapito (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 22-35.

The indebtedness of the Spanish Crown for the sake of its crusades against Protestantism and Islam reveals that the monarchy could only consider its wealth and patrimony safe in a social milieu consecrated by Catholic ritual. Common truths and oaths allowed society to function as a unit, and justice could only be the justice of Catholic morality. Economic interests took a back seat to the defense of the society's fundamental "intangibles," for they were not seen as intangibles but as the language which created community out of a common mode of communication. In his political testament, Charles admitted that extraordinary military expenditures left him in financial need and forced him to tolerate the usurpation of some taxing powers of the royal patrimony, but he still left Philip a crusading mission:

> And watch over the liberties of Churches and ecclesiastical personages.... and be zealous and carefully observe the veneration of God; and with all your heart love Justice....[36]

In Spain, men and kingdoms still wanted to be rich and powerful, but the magical ritualism of the Catholic faith was the structural paradigm into which materialistic goals were made to fit and by which their disintegrative tendencies were controlled. The language of Catholicism was also a method of power and control,

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[36]"Testamento de Carlos V," Brussels, June 6, 1554, Corpus documental de Carlos V, 4: 75. All translations, except where indicated, are my own.

royal justice and law being representative of God's equity and justice. After all, the Crown's Inquisition was created within the bounds of Catholic discourse, and Catholicism justified its pillaging. Spaniards did not think that wealth and power could be enjoyed in the midst of chaos, and they often saw these very same factors as a source of anarchy. The powerful were called to compromise and curtail absolute arbitrariness to avoid disorder and enjoy their power. Thus, the royal secretary Alfonso de Valdés could define a king's true glory as follows:

> The tyrant seeks his own profit, while the king seeks the good of the republic. If you aim all your works at the well-being of the republic you will be a king and if you do it for yourself you will be a tyrant. Try to leave your kingdom better than you find it, and this will be your true glory.[37]

Pedro de Alcocer's Hystoria, o descripcion de la imperial cibdad de Toledo (1554) praised Ferdinand and Isabella for introducing peace and justice by taming criminal lords and expelling outsiders who did not adhere to the fundamental premises of a Catholic body politic.[38] The thought police of its day, the Holy Inquisition, was praised for its control of such viral influences as judaizers and moriscos. The Christian social organism

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[37]Valdés, 130.

[38]Pedro de Alcocer, Hystoria, o descripcion de la imperial cibdad de Toledo (Toledo: Juan Ferrer, 1554), bk. 1, ch. 117.

was to have its binary of hierarchy and reciprocity reconciled by a common faith and purpose uniting all classes and estates. Just as American workers and millionaires of the Cold War era united against a common Soviet threat, Spaniards of diverse estates and classes united behind the banner of the faith against the outsider. Late in the sixteenth century, licenciado Nicolas de Abila summarized the binding force of the Catholic faith in his Exposición del segundo mandamiento del decalogo (1596). He argued, among other things, that the Lord's name could never be taken in vain since all manners of perjury could then be committed. By binding people to their oaths and contracts, the appropriate Christian words magically created community:

> the surest foundation of human policía is faith, and constancy, which one must maintain in decrees, and in contracts among men: especially when oath-taking intervenes.... without the blessed bonds of oath-taking, the entire foundation of the republic is destroyed. For if we cannot put our faith in the oaths of Christians, in what should we confide? And therefore it is clear that perjury perverts the republic and human policía....[39]

It is therefore not surprising that Ferdinand, Charles and Philip were all obsessed with the maintenance of Christian unity. Protestantism and Turkish incursions

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[39]Nicolas de Abila, Exposición del segundo mandamiento del decalogo, y ley de Dios, e inuectiua contra el abuso del jurar, y remedio efficacissimo para desterrar del pueblo Christiano el tal abuso (Alcalá de Henares: Iuan Gracian, 1596), ch. 4, 58.

threatened both their earthly power and the divine justification of that power. The old world seemed to be tragically on the wane, burdened by its innumerable sins. A virgin new world beckoned for the first time, but, unfortunately for the Europeans, the Americas' status as a tabula rasa was more their initial hope than their eventual experience.

In Spain, the Crown's role as dispenser of divine justice was often impeded by its familial and political alliances with various great noble houses. In the New World the Castilian monarchy saw an opportunity to start afresh.[40] Even the Church, through manipulation of the patronato real extended to Ferdinand and Isabella, could be used as an instrument of conquest and consolidation. Appointed by the Crown, New World bishops served as a check on Audiencias and viceroys, while the tithe was collected by the Crown, thus serving as an added royal revenue.[41] Ideally, the New World was to embody the Crown's interpretation of the social organic discourse, but the Crown soon learned that different Spaniards took different interpretations of the ideal with them to the New World. This, in turn, recreated all the dissension

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[40] C. H. Haring, The Spanish Empire in America (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1947), 4.

[41] Colin M. MacLachlan, Spain's Empire in the New World: The Role of Ideas in Institutional and Social Change (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1988), 30.

epitomized in Spain by the Comunero Revolt of the early 1520's. The absolute implementation of hopes and dreams faltered as practice did not slavishly follow theory, but the Crown's discourse was not without its substantial impact. Differing interpretations, and even sinful revolts, were assumed in the discourse of social organism, and the Crown was essential as final arbitrator and enforcer until the Napoleonic era. To quote Colin M. MacLachlan, "The monarch's role emphasized guidance rather than authoritarian coercion."[42]

As soon as the conquistadores established rule and police, mostly at their own expense, in a given territory, they were suddenly beset by a conglomeration of privileges and duties. Nothing came without strings attached in the highly personalist, anthropomorphic sixteenth century. It was the Crown and Christianity which provided these men with the internal justification which they needed to go out and take possession of lands already in the hands of other people. For the sake of psychological comfort and the maintenance of order, the Crown was needed. Wars were only just insofar as they were part of assimilating Amerindians into the Christian body politic, and Cortés, among others, played this ritual to the hilt. Bernal Díaz wrote that Cortés was

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[42]MacLachlan, Spain's Empire in the New World, 8. Also 9-26.

aware that he would never pacify Mexico by "robbing" the Indians of their possessions.[43] Conquistadores did not see themselves as freebooters in the tradition of Robert E. Howard's Conan the Barbarian, and St. Augustine was perhaps the first to establish that the full-fledged citizens of an "evil empire" can never consider it thus from the inside. Evil is reserved for outsiders.[44]

The first explicit justification of European imperialism by means of the "white man's burden" is found in the Spanish requerimiento of 1514. Drawn up by the court jurist Palacios Rubios, the requerimiento described the Spanish New World mission as one of christianization. Truly attempting to teach Catholic cosmology in a nutshell, the Fall, salvation by baptism and faith in the power of Christ's death, the Petrine succession and the Imperial principle were all discussed by the time Coronado read his edition of the document. The Indians, like children, were threatened with Hell and "very ugly devils" if they did not accept salvation's path, but they were equally recognized as the brethren of the Spaniards, commonly descended from Adam and Eve. Coming to the Indians as brothers, the Spaniards, who brought the spriritual police of the Church and the temporal police

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[43] Bernal Díaz del Castillo, The Conquest of New Spain, trans. J. M. Cohen (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963), 58, 119.

[44] Augustine, City of God, Bk. 3, chs. 1 and 14.

of the Empire, swore to only engage in violence or war if their words were rebuked. As soon as the Indians refused the message of salvation and proper political order and civilization, the Spaniards were free to engage in just war.[45] If Bernal Díaz and Cortés can be trusted, Cortés's stock speech and sermon to the Indians followed this same pattern.[46] Words, as well as swords and guns, held the power of transformation for the Spaniards. The Crown and its minions did not even see Indian tribute and service as payment for christianization and civilization. It was part and parcel of that process. Those Indians who did not know urban life, Christ and something akin to modified lord/vassal/serf relationships were to learn them as the only proper ordering of the world after Man's Fall. The Spanish justification of conquest was so deeply engrained that the Crown, its officials and conquistadors themselves made serious attempts to check sinful avarice and rebellious independence in the New World as in the Old.

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[45]See Colección de documentos inéditos relativos al descubrimiento, conquista y organización de las antiguas posesiones españolas de América y Oceanía, 42 vols., eds. Joaquin F. Pacheco, Francisco de Cardenas and Luis Torres de Mendoza (Madrid: Manuel G. Hernandez, 1864-84), 3:369-76. Henceforth referred to as CDIR.

[46]Bernal Díaz, 80-1, 108-10, 137, 162, 166, 176-7, 220-1. Also Hernán Cortés, "The First Letter," in Letters from Mexico, trans. Anthony Pagden (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 20; "The Second Letter," 59, 71, 99.

For the troubles taken in Christianizing, and therefore properly ordering a new world, the Crown readily granted the path-breaking adelantados the use of lands, offices, Indians and other privileges. They could also name vecinos, or the full-fledged citizens of newly established Spanish towns. In return, they were expected to at least portray themselves as loyal vassals. Cortés lived up to those expectations in New Spain; Peru's Pizarro brothers and Lope de Aguirre provided numerous disappointments. The reciprocal relationship of lord and vassal was re-established in the New World in a recasting of feudal Europe, because property brought with it social responsibility and commitment. It was held in usufruct, and was not to be dispensed with as the individual pleased.[47] The individual had rights to its limited exploitation alone. Thus, the labor of encomienda, repartimiento and mita indians was constantly being limited, just as medieval guild wages and prices were meant to be just.

When Philip II planned to sell Peruvian encomenderos permanent titles, including civil and criminal jurisdiction, the Council of the Indies protested that such an action could not be taken without first calling a Peruvian cortes. The action benefitted so few at the

[47]"Información en derecho del licenciado Rojas sobre algunas provisiones del Consejo del Indias (1535)," CDIR 10: 391.

expense of the many that subjects were, by right, to be consulted on whether the common good was being poorly served. Of course, given the turbulent situation of sixteenth-century Peru, a potentially rebellious cortes was never called, "yet," according to Colin MacLachlan, "the argument had to be given serious consideration."[48] A matter of financial need, theoretically, was never meant to infringe upon the common good, which included the well-being of Amerindians held in encomienda. The Crown ultimately dispensed justice and demanded that its vassals, the conquistadores, be just to their vassals, both Spanish and Amerindian. The Laws of Burgos, the New Laws and the mita reforms of Francisco de Toledo were all born in this mentalité and its royal interpretation.

The Crown defined the responsibility of noblesse oblige in its numerous cédulas, or royal edicts. Lewis Hanke and Silvio Zavala were quite correct to root this attempt at providing the Indians with justice within the tradition of Christian humanitarianism. The Crown, in the person of Charles V, surely listened to Bartholomé de las Casas, himself an occasional member of the court. But, in purely practical terms, the efforts of the Laws of Burgos, New Laws and countless royal cédulas to establish justice through the elimination or limitation of encomienda merely recreated the divisiveness found in

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[48] MacLachlan, Spain's Empire in the New World, 25-6.

the Old World. When the New Laws of 1542 banned the inheritance of _encomienda_, they gave the impetus to Gonzalo Pizarro's Peruvian revolt and to a storm of protest in New Spain. By 1545, the Crown was forced to concede the limited inheritance of _encomienda_, but it refused to abandon its regulation of Indian labor. _Encomenderos_ were told to recognize the fact that the old European responsibilities of a lord to his servitor were not to be abandoned in the New World, though actual enforcement of _encomienda_ restrictions depended upon regional political factors.[49]

Not acting from purely altruistic motivations, the Crown, in its _cédulas_, consistently revealed that the conservation of the indigenous population was absolutely necessary to maintain the productivity of the New World. Concern was shown as early as the depopulation of the West Indies, and was maintained in cases as geographically diverse as New Spain and the silver mines of Upper Peru. The Indians were to be kept in _encomienda_ and _repartimiento_, just as defeated Moorish peasants had been kept in _encomienda_ and _repartimiento_ on the Iberian peninsula, but the _cédulas_ denounced the enslavement of these free Indians time and again. The most deplorable labor conditions, usually found in mines or in the use of Indians as beasts of burden, were strictly regulated by

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[49]Ibid., 59-61.

the Crown.[50] In New Spain, Woodrow Borah has demonstrated royal concern in the creation of a judicial appellate system which was actually employed by disgruntled Indians.[51] Identified as the Crown's poor, to be protected and provided for as the poor were in Spain, Amerindians were readily granted access to royal justice--- though, as a lower order in the organic hierarchy, their testimony weighed less than that of a Spaniard. As "poor," they were provided with hospitals possessing incomes, the just due of their estate. The sponsor of organized relief in places like Toledo and Seville, the Crown also encouraged hospital and poor relief measures in the Americas. In all these places, the sponsorship was part of a coherent paternal vision. The New World was to be made over in the semblance of the Old, and this began by re-enforcing Old World patterns of thought. The introduction of European paternalism and the discourse of social organism to the Americas was the

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[50]"Ordenanzas que se hicieron en Búrgos el año de 1512," CDIR 1:237-41; CDIR 1:256, 269, 281, 283-4, 304-05, 310-11, 368-9, 421-2; and Jeffrey A. Cole, The Potosí Mita, 1573-1700: Compulsory Indian Labor in the Andes (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), 12-14, 22.

[51]Woodrow Borah, Justice by Insurance: The General Indian Court of Colonial Mexico and the Legal Aides of the Half-Real (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983). Also see "Carta de D. Luis de Velasco, virrey de Nueva España, 26 de hebrero, 1564)," Archivo General de Indias, Cartas y expedientes de los virreyes de Nueva España (Seville: Centro Nacional de Microfilm, 1975), reel 1, number 34.

prime responsibility of the Crown's bureaucrats, its licenciados.

Sin, or self-interest, was the perpetual impediment, but earnest royal officials trusted enough in the Crown's sincerity to try to have things set right from above. Complaints buried officials of the Council of the Indies. At the time of the Pizarro-Almagro conflict in Peru, Juan Vazquez de Avila wrote, "Your Majesty's porters close the door on the eyes of the poor."[52] Concerning New Spain, Licenciado Valderuma was confident enough to write, "Justice is not as I would have it; there is a great lack of it.... and all have patrons...," and "It is said that there is great inequality in the payment of tribute, for some are poor and others rich; it is the truth, and it is one of the things I most desire to see remedied."[53] Finally, when the remedy was offered by royal bureaucrats with actual experience of the New World situation, it was highly traditional in content. In 1570, Diego de Robles recommended that nepotism, favoritism and bribery in local residencia reviews be eliminated by the Viceroy's personally sending out annual visitadores from Mexico

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[52] "Carta de Juan Vazquez de Avila, denunciando varios abusos en la gobernación de Indias (10 de febrero de 1539)," CDIR 3:88.

[53] See his two letters addressed to Philip II, CDIR 4:356-7, 375.

City.[54] Such a medieval method of correction, based on the Viceroy's assessment of personal loyalty and fealty, was nothing more than a revision of Charlemagne's missi dominici system.[55] This should not be surprising when it is understood in the context of an early modern mentalité which still looked on high for remedies to a breakdown of organic reciprocity. The learned Licenciado Rojas set the mental context for this body of bureaucrats when he wrote, "and he who is friend of his own particular interest must be, by necessity, the enemy of the common good of the republic."[56]

Magister Rojas directed his advice to the Coucil of the Indies in 1535. He eloquently reduced the royal justification of the conquest of the New World to a convenient exchange between peoples in need. Spaniards could expect Indian labor, as moderated by Indian and Spanish custom, for they were providing the Indians with good Christian police and social order, processes which necessarily imposed labor for the common good. In turn,

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[54] "Memoriales y otros papeles de Diego de Robles sobre el gobierno de Indias--- Año de 1570," CDIR, 11:5-6.

[55] Charlemagne's missi were itinerant officials commissioned to investigate the actions of local nobles through personal review. Henri Pirenne, A History of Europe, 2 vols., trans. Bernard Miall (Garden City: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1958), 1:73; and Archibald R. Lewis, Emerging Medieval Europe: A.D. 400-1000 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967), 83.

[56] "Información en derecho del licenciado Rojas sobre algunas posesiones del real consejo de Indias (1535)," CDIR, 10:381.

they could also learn from the Indians' humility and simplicity. The Indians would overcome their most corrupt practices, and the Spaniards would learn Christian service and humility.[57] As attested by Bernal Díaz, and by his own letters to Charles V, this lesson in reciprocity through the fostering of hierarchy was the hope of Cortés, as well as of Rojas.

Within the boundaries of their culture's hegemony, conquistadores and early settlers felt compelled to prove their worth to the community when they applied for encomienda grants or coats of arms. The nobility illustrated by a coat of arms was to be first illustrated in deeds. Therefore, conquistadores and pobladores trying to gain personal benefits and emoluments always felt compelled to prove in word and deed that they contributed to the common good. As royal bureaucrats curtailed their privileges, the first settlers consistently argued that they contributed more to the expansion and maintenance of royal authority than the royal bureaucracy.[58] Diverse estates and individuals were at odds over the spoils of the New World, and the Crown stood poised to benefit as the court of final

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[57] Ibid., 484-509.

[58] For examples see the appeals of Bernal Díaz de Castillo, Jerónimo López and others in Epistolario de Nueva España, 1505-1818, 16 vols., ed. Francisco del Paso y Troncoso (Mexico City: José Porrúa e hijos, 1939-1940), 6:28-36; 2:2; 5:4-22, 52-6; 1:1, 29, 122; 15:11-15, 203-04.

appeal for clashing interests, and as the conciliator of a divided house. Spaniards desired the fame and power they were accustomed to observing in Spain, and the Crown was seen as the dispenser of honor and power. Ultimately, one had to submit to the Crown like Cortés or try to become a new sovereign authority like Gonzalo Pizarro.

Licenciados and other royal bureaucrats came to the New World with a strong sense of maintaining both the principles of hierarchy and reciprocity, but they were tempted by opportunities to marry into leading New World families and make their fortunes. Sixteenth-century royal cédulas abound with prohibitions on the marriage of audiencia judges to the daughters of New World families, but two 1582 cédulas neatly summarized the theme of the century's legislation:

> From this moment forth, We order, prohibit and oppose Our Governors, Corregidores and Alcaldes mayores in Our Indies (Islands and Land of the Ocean Sea) not to marry within the district where they have jurisdiction, while serving in office, without special license from Us to them....[59]

Still, they did marry in the New World, just as they became encomenderos and property holders; from the time of a certain Bachiller Bartolomé Ortiz, abogado de los

[59]"Cédula fecha en Lisboa á veynte y seis de febrero de mill y quinientos y ochenta y dos años," CDIR, 18:149. Also "Cédula fecha en Lisboa a diez y ocho de hebrero de mill y quinientos y ochenta y dos años," CDIR, 18:147-8.

pobres, involved in the repartimiento of Hispaniola in 1514 to the mid-centiry land dealings of Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza in New Spain and Peru.

As early as 1517, the problem of maintaining impartial justice was recognized, and one of the three Hieronymite fathers sent to investigate abuses on Hispaniola wrote that the oidores of the royal audiencia must have sufficient salaries and no properties in the Indies so as to eliminate self-interest and "passion."[60] The New World, the new Eden, was to see royal justice finally firmly embedded in dispassionate reason. A 1564 cédula intended for New Spain read:

> We order...that Our oidores of the Royal Audiencia of New Spain do not enter into armadas or explorations, nor have any business of greater or lesser livestock, nor estancias, nor farms, nor any other enterprise....[61]

Other cédulas applied this ruling to New Spain and even the far-removed Ciudad de la Plata. When the Audiencia of Mexico asked if oidores could maintain recreational country houses, raise a few sheep and grow wheat for household consumption--- all not explicitly forbidden in the cédulas --- the Crown answered "no" on all counts, "that you be free from all bonds in order to

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[60]"Relación de la isla de Española (1517)," CDIR, 1:252.

[61]"Cédula del rey fecha en Aranjuez a veyntiocho de Mayo de mill y quinientos y sessenta y quatro años," CDIR, 18:36.

give better judgment."[62] Royal officials were meant to emulate the disinterested rationality of Plato's philosopher-kings, but they were very much imperfect men and sought to side-step the ideal by gaining wealth through New World "padrinos." When all was said and done, the Crown ultimately benefitted from the existence of division and corruption since injustice in the New World, as in the Old, created the need for a judge and avenger. In the words of Ferdinand and Isabella, through their secretary Fernando Alvarez de Toledo:

> The Saints have said that the Monarch is put on earth to execute Justice in God's place....Monarchs are the head of the realm....(and their) Justice possesses two principal parts: one being commutative, which is between men; the other being distributive, which consists of the honors and remunerations men grant to the Monarchs, Princes, and great Lords who possess the power (of Justice).[63]

God's will justified both the reciprocity of comutative justice and the hierarchical subordination of distributive justice. Difficulties arose in trying to maintain a balance between the two, but such difficulties were predicted by the Christian social organic discourse. Man was a recalcitrant sinner. As a result, the poor would be ignored and exploited; rebels would lash out against their superiors; and the flesh would sometimes

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[62] "Cédula del rey fecha en Valladolid a dos de Mayo de mill y quinientos y cinquenta años," CDIR, 18:45.

[63] "Confirmación de privilegios. 23 de abril de 1497," CDIR, 19:277-9.

unjustly lead the spirit. Unlike socio-political systems which promise to end all suffering through institutional reconstitution, Christian social organic discourse saw the root of socio-political problems in human nature. Legal and institutional attempts had to be made to order society and tame savage nature, but the war between the forces of order and those of chaos was to persevere until the Last Judgment. Therefore, the Crown was always ready to reform, to issue and reissue the old edicts as they were continuously disobeyed, and to continue to seriously consider itself defender of the weak. The Spanish Crown saw the quest for social justice as an ongoing process, and not one to be abandoned because institutions and laws often failed. Theirs was a willful struggle to order the human body and soul as well as the social body and soul--- to achieve the ascent of Apollonian law and order over Dionysian chaos and turmoil.[64] Bodies were to be directed by the spirit of Christianity.

In the sixteenth century, Europeans were eminently aware of their status as bodies in the material world. The four horsemen of the apocalypse--- famine, war, plague, and death--- made sure that they would not forget their physicality. From the high rate of infant mortality to the life-long threat of bad harvests and

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[64]Friedrich Nietzsche, The Birth of Tragedy, trans. Walter Kaufmann, in Basic Writings of Nietzsche (New York: Modern Library, 1968), 33-8, 124, 128-9.

diseases like smallpox, typhus, and syphilis, early modern Europeans could literally expect the destruction of their fragile flesh at any moment. Given the inconstancy of the flesh, it is not surprising that early moderns chose to discipline and control it. From the experiments of the scientific revolution to the worldly asceticism of the Protestant Reformers, Europeans desperately sought dominion over the physical world and their own bodies. In the New World, sixteenth-century Spaniards saw virgin lands in need of the discipline of European cultivation and Amerindian bodies in need of the discipline of Catholic morality and Iberian material culture. In general terms, these needs were to be met by _policía_. On the macrocosmic level, sixteenth-century _policía_ indicated social order and lawfulness; then, as now, for the individual, it meant good breeding. Not only defined by Christian spirituality, civilization (i.e., the body politic) was also identified by appropriate food, clothing, and shelter.[65] Not far removed from the needs of subsistence, the Spaniards used the manner in which they responded to these needs as a testament to their superiority and a necessary determinant of "Spanishness." Confronted with alien cultures, they became obsessed with the similarities and differences between their own culture and those of the

[65] Bernal Díaz, 26.

Amerindians. They were struck by the way bodies were dressed, the manner in which they were sustained, and the way they were cared for when ill. Hierarchical rank and status were determined by clothes and food, while the distribution of food and the care of unhealthy bodies helped to bind the community in the spirit of mutual aid. The conquest of Mexico was very much both a conquest of Indian souls and Indian bodies. The discourse and implementation of the Christian social organism could not have it otherwise.

CHAPTER 3

THE AZTEC BODY

In the early to mid-1450's the Valley of Mexico suffered from the deprivations caused by three to five years of famine. During such a period of trial, awareness of the body and its needs becomes preeminent in human consciousness. The body's fragility and interrelationship with the broader material environment becomes crystal clear. In Europe, periodic famines and plagues bred special holy rites and penances as Christian Man tried to make amends for his sins before divine and natural law. In pre-Columbian Mexico similar patterns likewise existed.

Accounts vary on the specific causes of the Valley of Mexico's Great Famine, but they all indicate immediate causes in the realm of physical nature. The Anales of Tlatelolco report five years of crop failure, originating in diseases affecting the lacustrine fauna of Lake Texcoco (an important source of Aztec protein), and followed by early and late frosts which decimated the Valley's maize plants. All this culminated in serious drought.[1] Diego Durán, for his part, ascribed the food

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[1]Nigel Davies, The Aztec Empire: The Toltec Resurgence (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), 58-9.

shortage to a lack of rain, and his Historia went on to describe epidemics among the Aztec people resulting from their weakened condition and consumption of inedible plants. He went on to report that Moctezuma I first provided relief to his people from the storage granaries which he maintained. Then, when they gave out, he provided one last feast and commended his people to seek their own salvation. According to Durán, many sold their own children into bondage, while others fell dead on the roadside while trying to escape the parched lands of Tenochtitlán. Only the precipitous return of the rains at this point saved the Aztecs from disintegrating as a people. Those who had fled Tenochtitlán returned, and many who had sold their children, especially to the Totonacs, were able to ransom them back.[2] Ironically, these tragic events followed the glorious successes of Moctezuma I in battle and conquest:

> Moctezuma...conquered and made war on all the people of Chalco; and on Quauhuauac and on all who were subject to Quauhuauac; and on Maçauacan. And in his reign there came a great famine, which spread over the land for four years. Hence was it said that all were affected by the year One Rabbit.[3]

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[2]Diego Durán, The Aztecs: The History of the Indies of New Spain, trans. Doris Heyden and Fernando Horcasitas (New York: Orion Press, 1964), 143-8.

[3]Bernardino de Sahagún, Florentine Codex: General History of the Things of New Spain, 13 vols., trans. Arthur J.O. Anderson and Charles E. Dibble (Santa Fe: Monographs of the School of American Research, 1970-82), 9:1-2. Volume and page references refer to this edition, and not to Sahagún's original twelve books in Nahuatl.

The immediate causes of the famine were acts of nature, but physical nature was, in itself, controlled by the gods. The physical was understood in reciprocal relationship with the spiritual, and in this way the Aztecs were very much like the Spaniards. Based on the accounts of his Indian informants, Diego Durán wrote that while the Aztecs were still a migratory people, sometime before 1193, they settled temporarily, sowed and reaped according to the will of their gods: "If their god decreed a good harvest, then they reaped; if he determined otherwise, they abandoned the fields."[4] When they became a sedentary people in the Valley of Mexico, they believed that the divine will could be read in the stars, an opinion also held by the many Spaniards who accepted astrology.[5] The astrological forces of the Year One Rabbit had brought famine, and the Aztecs knew their fifty-two year cycle to be the creation of divine forces. As part of creation they also knew that they played a role in its manifestation. Hence, the Year One Rabbit brought drought and famine in symmetrical relation to their own evil as a people. The macrocosm mirrored the

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[4]Durán, 15.

[5]See "The Occult Sciences: The Crown's Support and Controls," in David C. Goodman, Power and Penury: Government, Technology and Science in Philip II's Spain (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), especially 1-19.

microcosm.[6] Inappropriate acts brought castigation and pestilence. In the land of sin and evil, "Poverty, misery, uselessness prevail. Destitute are they whose tatters hang from their necks, their hips.... Verily they go skin and bones, like a skeleton."[7] The Aztecs believed they were brought low for arrogance, presumption and pride.[8] They looked to humility and social reciprocity as a cure, but they also looked to ritual cleansing before their gods. Alonso de Zorita, an oidor of the Audiencia of New Spain, wrote that the Aztecs were long-suffering, obedient and teachable: "if you blame or scold them for some negligence or vice, they display great humility and attention, and their only reply is, 'I have sinned.' The more noble they are, the more humility they display."[9] Zorita was quick to point out that this was not a function of their conversion to Christianity, for the tlatoani (the ruler of the Aztecs) did severe penance upon his election. For as long as a year or two, he served as the scapegoat for Aztec society, bearing the

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[6]Louise M. Burkhart, The Slippery Earth: Nahua-Christian Moral Dialogue in Sixteenth-Century Mexico (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1989), 132.

[7]Florentine Codex, 7:7-8.

[8]Ibid., 7:8.

[9]Alonso de Zorita, Life and Labor in Ancient Mexico: The Brief and Summary Relation of the Lords of New Spain, trans. Benjamin Keen (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1963), 94-5.

collective guilt of his people, burning incense and being pricked with maguey thorns.[10]

According to the Florentine Codex, good noblemen were expected to show humility to those of lesser rank, to the old and the poor, and the "chief speaker," or tlatoani, was expected to be a loving father to his people. On the day of his coronation, priests prayed that the gods would:

> Open his eyes, open his ears, advise him, set him upon the road.... Verily, now, inspire him, for thou makest him thy seat, for he is thy flute. Make him thy replacement, thy image. Let him not there on the reed mat, the reed seat become proud; let him not be quarrelsome. May he in peace and calm go accompanying, leading the common folk. May he not make sport of the common folk. May he not disunite the people; may he not destroy them in vain.[11]

Thus, the tlatoani, like the Spanish monarch, was to bind the social organism and promote the common good, maintaining both hierarchy and reciprocity. In his Historia, Diego Durán, like Sahagún and his informants, portrayed the tlatoani's role as that of loving father, a shelter for widows and orphans. A speech which he ascribed to an Aztec elder upon the death of the tlatoani Acamapichtli, circa 1404, is a paraphrase of the Florentine Codex's priestly prayer.[12] The tlatoani, according to Tlacaelel's funeral oration upon the death

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[10]Ibid; Burkhart, 87, 97, 130, 143.

[11]Florentine Codex, 7:19.

[12]Durán, 39-40.

of Moctezuma I, "was like one who carries a load upon his back for a time.... like a slave subjected to his master/ Sheltering and defending this republic."[13] In Alonso de Zorita's Brief and Summary Relation of the Lords of New Spain, the tlatoani was once again described in these terms. Drawing on Aztec informants, Zorita wrote that, upon his coronation, the high priest admonished the tlatoani to "Consider the honor your vassals have done you.... you must take great care of them and regard them as your sons; you must see to it that they be not offended and that the greater do not mistreat the lesser."[14] Lesser lords approached the tlatoani by beseeching him to remember his upright forefathers and to emulate them in protecting his subjects. The tlatoani was an instrument of divine justice, sent to protect the weak and punish the guilty.[15] It was his task to lead Aztec society in ritual cleansing before the gods. Such cleansing included simple acts of charity as signs of the reciprocal relations among the ranks:

> If any poor vassal, who made bold to hail the ruler, greeted him pleasingly, then [the ruler] commanded the majordomo to give him a cape, a breech clout, and a place for him to sleep, and that which he might drink and eat....[16]

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[13]Ibid., 151.
[14]Zorita, 93.
[15]Ibid., 98.
[16]Florentine Codex, 9:59.

But ritual cleansing also included bloodletting as a means of purging Aztec society of its evil. Wars were initiated to accumulate tribute for the gods: both in the form of human sacrifices to appease the bloodlust of their chief god Huitzilopochtli, and in the form of special tributary items indispensable for the lavish rites and gift-giving surrounding the veneration of Huitzilopochtli and other gods.[17] Like that of their Spanish conquerors, the Aztec world-view was a web of intricate interrelations. According to Durán, when their husbands went off to battle, Aztec women prayed that Huitzilopochtli would remember "his servant" since he had gone off to "offer blood in that sacrifice which is war."[18] By his very social nature man was doomed to sin and displease the gods. Pride and egotism were bound to interfere with the appropriate, selfless interactions of individuals and groups in society. Social disharmony was reflected in the disharmony of physical nature, and only man's penance before the divine could hope to set things right. For the Aztecs that penance was manifested in numerous feasts where food and alms were distributed and where prisoners of war were sacrificed as gifts and food for the gods. On some days as many as 2,000 to 8,000 men may have been sacrificed.[19] Aztec bodily needs and wants

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[17]Davies, 65.
[18]Durán, 203, 93.
[19]Ibid., 225.

were responded to on two levels then: before nature and the gods through rite and ritual, and before man through good governance (what the Spaniards called policía).

> 'If thou dedicatest thyself exclusively to noblity, if thou plantest not in the ridges, in the ditch, what wilt thou give one to eat? What wilt thou eat? What wilt thou drink? Where have I seen that one hath been sustained by nobility?
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> 'Note that the sustenance really favoreth us. Who is said to have called, to have named the sustenance, our bones, our flesh? For it is our nourishment, our being; it is the walking, the moving, the rejoicing, the laughing.'[20]

If Sahagún's Aztec sources are to be trusted in the Florentine Codex, the Aztecs, on the eve of the conquest, would have understood John of Salisbury. Even their appeal to the gods had its parallels in Christendom. The Crucifixion, and its reenactment in the Holy Eucharist, is a blood sacrifice; its major distinction from Aztec blood sacrifice being that the deity involved sacrifices himself to himself as man in order to end any human need to sacrifice the creatures of this world. Still, in its interpretation by Christians, Jesus's sacrifice remains a purging of sin and evil, and participation in communion is, on one level, a symbol of the Christian community's purified union before God. Besides sacrificing victims to Huitzilopochtli, the Aztecs also partook of the symbolic consumption of their chief deity on his feast

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[20] Florentine Codex, 7:90-91.

day, Panquetzaliztli. An image of Huitzilopochtli made out of amaranth seed dough was broken and consumed:

> His heart was Moctezuma's portion. And the rest of his members, which were made like his bones, were disseminated among the people; there was a distribution. Two were given the Tlatilulcans. And two were like its fundament. Also two were given the old men of the Tlatilulcan calpullis. And as many were given the people of Tenochtitlan. And of this which they ate, it was said: 'The god is eaten.' And of those who ate it, it was said: 'They keep the god.'[21]

Of course, the noblemen and leading merchants also partook of the flesh of the human sacrifices at the various Aztec feasts. Both the symbolic consumption of Huitzilopochtli and the ritual cannibalism were perceived by the Spanish clerical chroniclers as demon-inspired perversions of communion. In their own separate ways both communion and the Aztec rituals served as means to mystical union with the divine and with other members of society.

In lands beset by periodic hunger, food and eating were layered with a multiplicity of meanings. Periodically the victims of famine and food shortages themselves throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, some Spaniards, like the Aztecs, also ascribed their suffering to divine retribution for society's sins. Their response to plagues and famines included votive

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[21]Ibid., 4:6.

masses and public spectacles of penance.[22] The needs of body and spirit were inextricably linked, just as the individual and society were bound, and nature and society paralleled and reflected each other. To sixteenth-century Spaniards, acts of nature were acts of God, or of Satan. If masses could stop famine and plague, comets and the birth of deformed "monsters" were portents of famine, pestilence, war and death. The evil befalling a Christian European king could be foretold in nature, just as the Aztecs foresaw the coming of Cortés and the Spaniards in a series of evil omens.[23]

Food, clothing and shelter were central to the Aztecs' existence, as they are to the existence of any group of people, but their attitudes concerning these things were informed by much more than mere material desire. If the Spaniards came to the Americas in search of "gold, glory and God," the Aztecs had fought their wars for similar ends. And even before gold, or jadeite and feathers as the case may be, there was a need to live in an honorable, human fashion. Thus, the Aztecs and the Spaniards could communicate and understand each other's values in a number of areas. Both groups defined

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[22]See especially the work of William A. Christian, Jr., Local Religion in Sixteenth-Century Spain (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), and Apparitions in Late Medieval and Renaissance Spain (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981).

[23]Florentine Codex, 9:17.

themselves as civilized, in opposition to raw, brute nature. Yet there were unbridgeable differences. For the Spaniards, human sacrifice and ritual cannibalism were signs of barbarism and crudeness, while the Aztecs perceived them as practices of a civilized people. The Aztecs, for their part, identified the forest as "a place of verdure, of fresh green...a place whence misery comes, where it exists; a place where there is affliction.... It is a disturbing place, fearful, frightful; home of the savage beast, dwelling-place of the serpent.... There is no one; there are no people. It is desolate; it lies desolate. There is nothing edible. Misery abounds, misery emerges, misery spreads. There is no joy, no pleasure."[24] By extension, those who did live in wild places were savage "sons of dogs," dressed in skins and tanned hides instead of cloth:

> The Teochichimeca, that is to say, the real Chichimeca, or extreme Chichimeca, and also those named çacachichimeca, that is to say, those who lived on grassy plains, in the forests--- these were the ones who lived far away.... These had their homes nowhere. They only went about traveling, wandering; they went about crossing the streams....[25]

The Aztecs, like the Spaniards, had little admiration for nomadic peoples, and scorn even was directed at some settled peoples by devaluing certain aspects of their material culture as well. Thus, the

[24] Ibid., 12:105-06.
[25] Ibid., 11:171-2.

Otomí were vain and gaudy dressers, who were stupid, lazy and shiftless by Aztec assessment. They possessed maize bins and highly developed agriculture, but they swiftly used up their harvests and consumed skunks, serpents and grasshoppers. Their cloth was also of poor quality, and their liberality so self-destructive that an Aztec maxim stated, "Thou destroyest thyself just like an Otomí."[26] In short, the Aztecs were as guilty as the Spaniards of judging others by their own standards.

At its most basic level, the Aztecs, like their Iberian conquerors, defined civilization in terms of a people's material culture. Food, clothing and shelter entered into their assessment of the Chichimecas when they described their lack of fixed abode, grass huts, wild meats and skin vestments. When a word of praise was granted the Chichimecas it was done by describing them as noble savages, living a simpler, healthier and purer existence than that of the Aztecs. They were not viewed in their fullness, but as ideals. They were free of adultery, and were strong and lean as a result of their "limited food and clothing."[27] The Otomí, on the other hand, "had a civilized way of life," but they were given to decadence, the curse of a "civilized" existence, and a curse which the Aztecs feared.[28] Diego Durán's <u>Historia</u>

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[26]Ibid., 11:176-80; Burkhart, 60.
[27]Ibid., 11:172, 174.
[28]Ibid., 11:176.

relates a legendary account of how Moctezuma I sent a group of magicians to discover the land of the seven caves from which the Aztec people originally traveled. Upon arriving in the land of the seven caves, the magicians found the Aztecs who had remained, and found that they were the very same individuals who had been left behind by their ancestors. It was explained to the wizards why their people grew old and died:

> You have become old, you have become tired because of the chocolate you drink and because of the foods you eat. They have harmed and weakened you. You have been spoiled by those mantles, feathers and riches that you wear and that you have brought here. All of that has ruined you.[29]

To be overly enamored with the luxuries of civilization was to flirt with self-destruction through decadence. Thus, both the Aztecs and Spaniards could sometimes express an ambivalence where civilization was concerned. Both cultures had their Edens. When Cortés was among the Aztecs, he deemed the inhabitants of Tenochtilán a people of policía, but he also pointed to certain habits which he compared to those of the sultans' opulent courts. Thus, for both Aztecs and Spaniards, cultural embellishment quickly could become mere vanity and sin--- indigenous values being the standards of judgment.

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[29] Durán, 138.

It is valid to ask if the Aztec informants of Spanish friars like Sahagún and Durán adapted their answers to please their clerical inquisitors, thus painting Aztec culture to be as Spanish as possible. This does not seem likely however, since those things the Spaniards considered blemishes were also described in detail. Individuals like Sahagún, Motolinía, Mendieta and Durán were trying to judge Amerindian cultures by the same standards used to judge Greco-Roman culture. Spaniards understood that non-Christians could lead moral social existences if they followed the precepts of reason and natural law. The friars were searching for those aspects of Indian culture which corresponded to natural law as defined by European authors and European culture. To do this, they needed as detailed an account of the Amerindians as possible, and their chronicles range from describing mundane and acceptable customs to denouncing practices deemed bizarre and evil. The range of reaction among the authors, from degrees of approval to outright disgust, seems to point to Amerindian tales that were uncensored and frank, describing cultures which were neither completely debauched nor perfect in Spanish eyes.

The Aztecs seldom lived up to the very high standards which they set for themselves, and, like the Spaniards, they pointed to humanity's choice of evil as the reason why their society sometimes faltered. In very

general terms, the prime social evil was selfishness, the inability of an individual or group to fulfill their duty to the whole. Hierarchy and reciprocity were as important to the Aztecs as they were to the Spaniards, and in describing their society before the conquest Sahagún's Aztec interlocutors always paired a given estate's ideal with its perversion. In any given social rank, or estate, the ideal type always demonstrated consideration for the good of others, while the evil representative of the estate was concerned only with self. "The good merchant [is] a follower of the routes, a traveller [with merchandise; he is] one who sets correct prices, who gives equal value. He shows respect for things; he venerates people. The bad merchant [is] stingy, avaricious, greedy."[30] "The physician [is] a curer of people, a restorer, a provider of health.... The bad physician [is] a fraud...a killer with his medicines...."[31] Likewise, an evil and stupid craftsman is "a mocker, a petty thief, a pilferer. He acts without consideration; he deceives, he steals."[32] At the very pinacle of the hierarchy the good noble is described as he who "loves others, benefits others," and "The good

[30] Florentine Codex, 11:43.
[31] Ibid., 11:30.
[32] Ibid., 11:25.

ruler [is] a protector; one who carries [his subjects] in his arms, who unites them, who brings them together."[33]

This sense of social unity and common purpose was illustrated in the Aztecs' numerous festivals. Before Panquetzaliztli, the high festival honoring Huitzilopochtli, the Aztec priests fasted on behalf of their society, asking forgiveness of the god for any affronts to his veneration. The fasting lasted forty days and included a number of ceremonial penances, "like going naked at midnight to carry branches to the mountains."[34] Fasting was followed by feasting, as the symbolic value of food played a primary role in the communal bonding of the Aztec people. The propitiary sacrifice of captives taken in battle released the priests and the captives' captors from purgative fasting: "On ceasing to slay these unhappy ones, they started to dance and to sing, to eat and to drink, and thus the feast ended."[35] Social hierarchy was reaffirmed through Huitzilopochtli's precedence to the priests and honored warriors. The mortal elite only ate after the god quenched his thirst for blood. In this way the mortal elite demonstrated to the commoners their subordination to divine precepts. Just as Spanish society was justified by divine sanction, so too was the society of

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[33] Ibid., 11:15.
[34] Ibid., 3:27.
[35] Ibid., 3:28.

the Aztecs. Communal food-sharing likewise became a method of communal bonding. During the feast of Uey tecilhuitl, there was "eating on the part of each one. Everyone came together--- the poor of Mexico and those who tilled the fields."[36] Yet resources were scarce, and this was demonstrated through the exclusion of the last of the poor to arrive at the festivities:

> And there were some to whom nothing came...those who only came last after the others....
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> And among those with whom it was cut off there was weeping. They said:
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> 'What can we do, we who are poor? In misfortune hath the feast day come! To what avail is our misery? Miserable are our small children!'
>
> And if they saw that somewhere else perchance food was still eaten, they ran over there.[37]

The tlatoani promoted this festivity during the eighth month of the Aztec calendar as a means of providing free food in an annual period of dearth. Regardless of this social welfare measure, Sahagún's interlocutors reported that some hunger persisted. The fortunate among the poor were satiated with scraps from the tables of the rich and tortillas of green maize, the liberality of exchange from the Aztec rich to the Aztec poor helping to alleviate social dissension.

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[36]Ibid., 3:96.
[37]Ibid., 3:97-8.

Tributary exchange and the exchange of gifts during feasts promoted hierarchical and reciprocal interaction among the Aztecs, but certain uses of material culture maintained the division of Aztec society into a number of privileged groups. Where the adornment of the individual body was concerned, the Aztecs honored a number of sumptuary laws which delineated the differences among the ranks of their society.[38] In his Historia, Diego Durán wrote, that in accordance with the sumptuary laws issued under Moctezuma I and his brother Tlacaelel, only the tlatoani and Tlacaelel could be shod in the palace. Only the tlatoani could wear a gold diadem in Tenochtitlán, and he alone could wear cotton mantles with threads of different colors and featherwork. The common macequales were not allowed to wear cotton clothing under pain of death, and they were also forbidden self-adornment with gold jewelry. Clothing of maguey fiber was their lot. House construction and embellishment was also restricted so that only nobles were permitted a second story and gables.[39] At the royal palace itself, commoners were only allowed to enter to perform menial tasks, according to Durán, and different rooms and halls were maintained to receive the different ranks of the nobility. Fray Durán approvingly wrote that all this was done to

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[38]Zorita, 111.
[39]Durán, 122, 131-2.

maintain a sense of hierarchy appropriate to a social organism:

> These laws were accepted as sparks from a divine fire which the great Moctezuma had within his breast and they were issued for the health of the entire land. They were like medicine which, given in its time and season, will profit the human body and be the cause of its welfare.[40]

At festivities a strict hierarchy of service was maintained, with servants receiving the table scraps, and, throughout the year, only the noble elite enjoyed the spoils of conquest in the form of tribute and the trade in luxuries. It was a discourse of exchange and commerce which literally bound the Aztec tributary empire. The one universal item of tribute received by the Aztecs was textiles, and the textiles provided were of the finest quality, to be worn by nobles alone.[41] The anthropologist Nigel Davies writes that Aztec military ambitions focused on "preciosities" for use by the elite and in ceremonial ritual. Feathers, cacao, gold, jadeite and tuquoise (what we today would deem luxury items) were the items of preference in Aztec tributary lists.[42] To this list, Diego Durán's Historia adds "exceedingly rich mantles for the lords, differently woven and worked," high quality women's clothing, colors and dyes, building materials, cotton armor and weapons. Foodstuffs---

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[40] Ibid., 132-3.
[41] Florentine Codex, 5:117; Davies, 144-5.
[42] Davies, 135.

maize, beans, chian seeds, amaranth seeds and chili--- were provided by certain tributaries, while Chichimecas sent wild animals, including parrots, eagles, buzzards, ocelots, jaguars, wildcats, snakes, and even scorpions and spiders. "Provinces that lacked foodstuffs and clothes paid in maidens, girls and boys, who were divided among the lords--- all slaves."[43]

Some of the leading Aztec merchants even served as spies in search of these preferred items of tribute. These disguised merchants took on the appearance of the local population in order to determine the wealth of the region and its general characteristics. Upon returning to Tenochtitlán, they made their report to the principal merchants, and the wheels were set in motion for conquest if the Aztec lords found the area valuable for tributary reasons. The Aztec economy rested on trade and tribute paid in fairly moderate quantities, and the principal merchants and vanguard merchants, described as the companions of governors, were the dealers in the luxury items vital to Aztec religious ceremony: "And the merchandise of the leaders, the principal merchants, those who bathed slaves, slave dealers, was slaves...."[44] Of course, on the whole, forced trade and tribute permitted the Aztecs to balance their commercial accounts

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[43]Durán, 127-131.
[44]Florentine Codex, 10:3-18; Davies, 152-8.

with other independent Amerindian groups, and a proportion of the tributary levy provided many with labor, which actually may have benefitted the conquered Amerindian peoples to some extent, providing any surplus labor among them with the task of producing goods for their Aztec masters.[45] Upon conquering Tepeaca, the Aztecs were promised maize, chili, pumpkin seeds, cloth, sandals, deerskins, carriers, workmen and sacrificial slaves in perpetuity.[46] On his part, Moctezuma I also had something to offer Tepeaca in exchange. His councilor and brother Tlacaelel announced to the lords of Tepeaca that Moctezuma wished to bring honor to their city:

> The king also wishes that a great market place be built in Tepeaca so that all the merchants of the land may trade there on an appointed day. In this market there will be sold rich cloth, stones, jewels, feather work of different colors, gold, silver and other metals, the skins of animals such as jaguars and ocelots, cacao, fine loincloths and sandals.[47]

All this commercial exchange between conquerors and conquered came under the direct supervision of both Aztec nobles and leading merchants: "As were noblemen, so also were the merchants, capable and enterprising."[48]

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[45]Davies, 158.

[46]Durán, 100.

[47]Ibid., 102-05.

[48]Florentine Codex, 10:19. Alonso de Zorita wrote that the leading merchants were "rich and prosperous, and cherished by the rulers." See Zorita, 188.

Moctezuma assigned a noble governor to Tepeaca, while Aztec merchants were provided with a market place in which to deal. The merchants also did their part by having incited the war with Tepeaca. The killing of Aztec merchants by the Tepeacans, as well as by other potential tributary groups, was used as a justification for the conquest. Durán failed to see this, and he thought that the constant slaying of Aztec vanguard merchants was an unfortunate accident which led to wars the Aztecs did not want.[49] Zorita, on the other hand, wrote that the Aztecs possessed a series of criteria which had to be met in order to declare war justly. All the elders and warriors were convened as the _tlatoani_ proposed his reasons for waging war. Trivial reasons were rejected, but the murders of merchants or royal messengers, among other things, were grounds for just war.[50] Nigel Davies, and other contemporary anthropologists, have since demonstrated that other Indian groups viewed the Aztec vanguard merchants as precursors to invasion. The slayings often were anticipated by both sides involved.

The leading merchants were compensated for their efforts by being assigned a rank of distinction within the Aztec hierarchy. They formed a distinct order, with

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[49] Durán, 99, 105, 202, 216.
[50] Zorita, 134.

social responsibilities ascribed them that would be familiar to late medieval and early modern Spanish merchants:

> And thus was it that the work of the principal merchants became precisely that they cared for the market place. They sponsored the common folk, so that none might suffer, might be deceived, tricked, mistreated. These same pronounced judgment upon him who deceived others in the market place, who cheated him in buying and selling. Or they punished the thief. And they regulated well everything: all in the market place which was sold; what the price would be.[51]

Aside from price regulation and quality control in the market place of Tenochtitlán, the leading merchants also possessed the privilege of trying and punishing any of their own number. They could even assign the death penalty if they saw fit. In a number of ways their self-regulatory powers resembled those of a Spanish merchant guild, or consulado, which normally possessed fueros, or privileges, in the areas of justice, quality control and price regulation.[52] Of course, it could well be argued, as it has been by Américo Castro and others, that the Castilian mentalité would never identify merchants as being honorable like noblemen. This can be debated however, since Ruth Pike and others have demonstrated that Castilian nobles were not adverse to entering into

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[51] Florentine Codex, 10:24.

[52] Robert Sidney Smith, The Spanish Guild Merchant: A History of the Consulado, 1250-1700 (New York: Octagon Books, 1972).

large-scale trading ventures.[53] Sevillian nobles were involved intensely in New World shipping, and the mighty Mesta itself was a monopolistic, privileged guild of producers. The fact of the matter is that Sahagún's Indian interlocutors may have been presenting a view entirely alien to the Spaniards when they presented noblemen and merchants as being equally "capable and enterprising." But it is more likely that they held the same complex attitudes that the Spanish held, both derrogating and taking an active interest in trade. In other passages of the Florentine Codex it can be determined that the capabilities of merchants and nobles were valued at different levels. Noble warriors alone could consume the flesh of captives taken in battle. Merchants ate purchased slaves at the feast of Panquetzaliztli.[54] The social organic function of merchants was specifically to maintain the language of exchange in a society that did not benefit from the symbolism of money, as did that of the Spaniards.

The intimate relationship of the nobility and the principal merchants, or pochtecas, was reflected by the fact that the pochtecas primarily dealt in clothing

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[53]Ruth Pike, Aristocrats and Traders: Sevillian Society in the Sixteenth Century (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1972), pp. 22-6.

[54]Florentine Codex, 10:45-67.

marked by the insignias of the Aztec nobility and warrior estates:

> The good principal merchant...seeks out...the fresh, the new, the good, the strong, the designed--- designed capes, capes to be worn; those of a weave not compressed; those of a ball-court eagle design, those with a sun design on them--- provided with suns; ocelot capes.--- the ocelot, the eagle stand thereon; those with a design of scattered feathers, a design of stone discs, a scattered flower design....[55]

Clothing of great value marked the Aztec nobility as a group set apart from the rest of the populace, and value was ascribed to this clothing because it was the chosen apparel of the Aztec nobility. For example, feathers received in tribute were used in warrior costumes, and the featherworkers, or amantecas, were equated with the leading merchants. The amantecas lived side-by-side with those merchants, occasionally worked at the palace itself, and were permitted to sacrifice purchased slaves. These craftsmen were so highly valued because of their indispensability, feathers being the necessary mark of distinction in any Aztec noble's vestments. When Moctezuma's messengers wished to honor Cortés as the god Quetzalcoatl, they dressed him in a "turquoise [mosaic] serpent mask with which went the quetzal feather head fan.... they laid upon his arm the shield...on whose lower rim went quetzal feathers

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[55]Ibid., 11:64.

outspread; on which went a quetzal feather flag."[56] No Aztec commoner was permitted feathers, articles of distinction worn in the public space of the temple grounds and battlefields.

The language of exchange, however, functioned on a multiplicity of levels, all the way from trade in ceremonial luxury items and slaves to local craftsmen and farmers who sold their wares in the market place. The Florentine Codex lists tortilla sellers, sellers of coarse maguey-fiber capes, gourd sellers, sandal sellers, clay workers and basket makers.[57] Zorita's Brief and Summary Relation borrowed from Cortés's second letter to the Emperor Charles V, stating that Tenochtitlán had numerous plazas open to trade: "'One of these squares is twice as large as that of Salamanca and is surrounded by arcades where there are daily more than sixty thousand souls buying and selling.'" The commodities exchanged included "'foodstuffs, jewels of gold and silver, lead, brass, copper, tin, stone, bones, shells, and feathers.'"[58]

Commerce was an ever-present thing in Aztec society-- with items like cloth and cacao often serving as media of exchange. The demand for goods fostered an increased desire for such goods acquired inexpensively by means of

[56] Ibid., 13:15.
[57] Ibid., 11:69-83.
[58] Zorita, 157.

tribute. Thus, already extant commerce and tributary relations aided the establishment of Spanish and Indian tributary relations immediately after the conquest. In theory, Aztec commoners, or _macequales_, were _calpulli_ members who cultivated inalienable common lands. In practice, they were renters who worked for the noble lord of an administrative _calpulli_. This lord, the _pilli_, was set apart as the receiver of rents.[59] The _macequales_ paid tribute in kind and personal service, while merchants and artisans paid solely in kind, except during time of war.[60] The _pillis_, according to Zorita, constituted "a class of Hidalgos and caballeros," and were free from tributary demands. On the eve of the conquest, the Aztecs of the Valley of Mexico were ready for _encomienda_ and _repartimiento_, but they were not ready for all aspects of Spanish evaluation.

The Aztecs themselves were amazed that Cortés and his fellow _conquistadores_ only placed value on gold, that they burned or ignored all the precious featherwork of which they came into possession.[61] Marked differences existed here between what the Aztecs and Spaniards considered valuable. Still, the Spaniards were primarily able to recreate the Aztec tributary language of exchange at its most fundamental levels: the demands placed by

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[59] Davies, 112, 122.
[60] Zorita, 181, 184.
[61] _Florentine Codex_, 13:48.

Aztec nobles on the production of food and clothing. The conquistadores were new pillis, but they were pillis nonetheless. The Aztecs may have marvelled at their range of strange customs and values, but they, like the Spaniards, also learned to identify similarities. Sahagún's interlocutors noted the shock experienced by Moctezuma and his emissaries when it became apparent that the Spaniards, presumed to be deities, were nauseated by food soaked in human blood.[62] Durán's Historia reports that Cortés prevented human sacrifice to be offered him; something incomprehensible if the Spaniards were gods.[63] Just as the Spaniards marveled at the manner in which Moctezuma ate and the food which he consumed, so too Moctezuma "marveled" at the Spanish food:

> And their food was like fasting food (also translated "like human food")--- very large, white; not heavy like [tortillas]; like maize stalks, good-tasting as if of maize stalk flour; a little sweet, a little honeyed. It was honeyed to eat; it was sweet to eat.[64]

Initially astounded by the fact that Quetzalcoatl and his minions did not consume human hearts and blood, the Aztec emissaries sent to Cortés's coastal encampment were forced to use simile in order to describe the Spaniards and their practices. As with the Spaniards, new demands were being placed upon their categories of

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[62] Ibid., 3:21.
[63] Durán, 276.
[64] Florentine Codex, 13:19.

understanding and their world view. An alien other's existence had to be recognized on both the levels of values and of actual practices. While the Spaniards, as conquerors, were permitted the luxury of fitting the Aztecs and the other peoples of Mexico into their world view by means of simile and the destruction of those Amerindian values and customs considered most abhorent, the Aztecs were forced to adapt and alter their world view and practices. Sahagún's Aztec interlocutors called their former gods "demons" and their ceremonies and feasts "abominations." "Idolatry and pagan superstition" could only persist in secrecy, or under the guise of Catholic feasts and rituals.[65] The reciprocity of Aztec society had to be replicated through new Spanish institutions like the cofradía and hospital. Featherwork lost its value as a luxury item of the supreme rulers. Regardless of the amount of syncretism which does occur in an instance of conquest, the conquered are doomed to lose a substantial amount of their former freedom and self-definition. Freedom of expression in the realm of material culture came to be determined by what the Spaniards deemed "good" and "bad" Indian customs. Despite all the differences, however, the Spaniards found more similarities with the Aztecs than with the Indians

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[65] Charles Gibson, The Aztecs under Spanish Rule (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964), 100-101.

of the Caribbean. The Aztecs were a people of _policía_ who understood the language of exchange. While they were decimated by Spanish disease, they were not destroyed by Spanish labor demands as were the Indians of the Caribbean. Such demands were understood.

Indian nobles and officers became the intermediaries between the _macequales_ and their new Spanish overlords in the sixteenth century. They alone were liable in instances of default, as _encomienda_ labor tribute came to replace the old Aztec system. The early demands made by Cortés and the other _encomenderos_ strained the native capacity to pay. After 1550, Crown officials came to regulate _encomienda_ with increasing success, easing the tributary burden to some extent through the regularization of amounts owed. At the same time, amounts of goods owed the native nobility in tribute were steadily reduced. Fray Diego Durán reported that, in the days of the Aztec empire, "Each one of these lords had vassals who paid tribute; they had villages, lands which were worked for them and from which they received all kinds of foodstuffs and clothing."[66] After the conquest, this tribute included anything from maize, turkeys, chilis and cacao to mantles, baskets, feathers, and even new European articles such as wheat, horse fodder and money. The _caciques_ turned somewhat to European tastes,

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[66]Durán, 72.

even as their real power was gradually being stripped away. They came to recognize that power was derived from the Europeans, and they wished to emulate the powerful in such matters as food and dress.[67] By the end of the sixteenth century Spaniards had fully replaced the Aztec lords and nobility by using the Aztec sense of hierarchical social organism. Of course, it was also their sense of society:

> It is evident that the native peoples of the conquest period were vulnerable to the Spaniards' demands for labor. Accustomed to providing their own sustenance and to both local and distant service without pay, Indians appeared to be ready to perform, and even to derive satisfaction from, occupations that were monotonous or degrading to European eyes. In Europe, unskilled mass labor carried implications of coercion or enslavement. In the Indian tradition the same mass labor, if not too onerous, might be considered rewarding as a shared and pleasurable experience.[68]

In the above passage Charles Gibson was quite correct to point out that Mexican Indians were accustomed to tributary labor, but so too were the Spaniards who had demanded it of _moriscos_ held in _encomienda_ during the _Reconquista_. However, the Spaniards' adaptation of this custom in sixteenth-century Mexico was often onerous enough to eliminate any sense of "joyful participation" which the Indians may have had. _Encomienda_ and _repartimiento_ disrupted Indian life by demanding onerous

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[67]Gibson, 194-217.
[68]Ibid., 220.

labor never before demanded by the Indian lords, and by insisting that Indians travel great distances to perform such service:

> In the old days.... Their labor was lighter, and they were well treated. They did not have to leave their homes and families, and they ate food they were accustomed to eat and at the usual hours. They did their work together and with much merriment, for they are people who do little work alone, but together they accomplish something. Six peons will not get as much done as one Spaniard, for since they do not get much food they have little stamina and do not do as much work.[69]

Alonso de Zorita even implied that social chaos and a lack of benevolent rule under the Spaniards had led to an increase of such vices as drunkenness among the Indians.[70] In a recent study, William Taylor has pointed to increased alcoholism among the Mexican Indians in the sixteenth century as a sign of despondency and a quest for escape.[71] The Spaniards and their demands were different enough to disrupt the Indians' pre-conquest lives, but the Indians could, and did, learn to function within a Spanish-dominated system.

On the primary level of mentalité and attitude regarding material culture, sixteenth-century Spaniards and Mexican Indians were far closer to each other than nineteenth-century Englishmen and Nigerians, for example.

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[69] Zorita, 203. Also 215-16, 222.
[70] Ibid., 123, 132-3.
[71] William B. Taylor, Drinking, Homicide and Rebellion in Colonial Mexican Villages (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1979), 38-9.

If the nineteenth-century Englishman were an adherent to laissez-faire capitalism and social Darwinist materialism, there could be no hope of his understanding African communalism and religion as anything but the appeal to nonexistent gods, not something real and demonic. To quote Nigel Davies:

> The Aztec past is obfuscated because our store of data, by its very nature, has to be viewed through a kind of Hispanic prism. The process at least has the saving grace that for the Spaniards the Aztecs' own approach to life was not wholly alien, since both peoples were religious fanatics; thus, to the conquerors certain aspects of the mystico-religious world view of the peoples of America were not altogether unfamiliar. But the grip of scientific materialism on the modern mind is so absolute that contemporary man--- almost regardless of political bias--- is loath to accept spiritual motivations alien to his own material cravings.[72]

The Aztecs and the Spaniards were both eminently aware of their bodies, individual and social, but this awareness was informed by a belief that bodies were the partners of things spiritual--- that the material and spiritual spheres shared reciprocal and hierarchical interaction. On the necessity and inseparability of their dualisms, at least, the Spaniards and Mexican Indians could agree. On this basis they could communicate and interact.

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[72]Davies, 7, 127.

CHAPTER 4

COMMUNITY, CONSUMPTION AND CONQUEST: SYMBOLIC EATING IN SIXTEENTH-CENTURY MEXICO

When the Spanish arrived in the Americas they brought with them their own definitive, almost dogmatic concepts of social order and the means of maintaining it. The sixteenth-century Spaniard saw civilized society as a just order defined by the laws of the Christian God and maintained by the principles of hierarchy and reciprocity. Society was perceived as a body in which the organs and members fulfill their particular functions for the sake of the common welfare at the direction of sovereign reason: "and he who only cares about his own interests, must be, by necessity, the enemy of the common good of the republic."[1] Good Iberian peasants were the feet which supported the whole; nobles and, in the New World, *conquistadores* were the protective hands; while the monarch and his officials provided balanced direction

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[1]See *Colección de documentos inéditos relativos al descubrimiento, conquista y organización de las antiguas posesiones españolas de América y Oceanía*, 42 vols., eds. Joaquin F. Pacheco, Francisco de Cardenas and Luís Torres de Mendoza (Madrid: Manuel G. Hernandez, 1864-84). Henceforth referred to as *CDIR*. The above passage is from "Información en derecho del licenciado Rojas sobre algunas provisiones del Consejo del Indias (1535)," *CDIR* 10:381. For a sixteenth-century Spanish viceroy's interpretation, see "Relación del virey don Martín Henríquez," *CDIR* 3:482. All translations, except where indicated, are my own.

and justice. In the words of Ferdinand's and Isabella's royal secretary Fernando Alvarez de Toledo:

> The Saints have said that the Monarch is put on earth to execute Justice in God's place....Monarchs are the head of the realm.... (and their) Justice possesses two principal parts: one being commutative, which is between men; the other being distributive, which consists of the honors and remunerations men grant to the Monarchs, Princes, and great Lords who possess the power (of Justice).[2]

Hernán Cortés and his conquistadores brought this concept of society with them to Mexico, the land he named "New Spain."[3] When they established the town council, or cabildo, of Villa Rica de Vera Cruz early in 1519, Cortés, as captain-general and justicia mayor, became a de facto viceroy, a regent of the Crown's authority and of God's justice.[4] Like so many others, including Columbus himself, he used European Spain and its culture

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[2]"Confirmación de privilegios. 23 de abril de 1497," CDIR 19: 277-9. For the body metaphor's medieval roots, see John of Salisbury, Policraticus: The Statesman's Book, ed. Murray F. Markland (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1979), 60-1; Ernst H. Kantorowicz, The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), 193-232; and R. H. Tawney, Religion and the Rise of Capitalism (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1926), 14-36. Also see J. H. Elliott, "Cortés, Velázquez and Charles V," in Hernán Cortés, Letters from Mexico (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), xv, xviii-xix.

[3]For Cortés's familiarity with Spanish interpretations of the meaning of "república" and the "common good," see José Valero Silva, El Legalismo de Hernán Cortés como instrumento de su conquista (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1965), 27.

[4]Francisco López de Gómara, Cortés: The Life of the Conqueror by His Secretary, trans. Lesley Byrd Simpson (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1964), 143-4.

as the standard by which to judge the New World. If the Mexican countryside was beautiful, it had to be as beautiful or perhaps even more beautiful than that of Spain,[5] and if the Mexican Indians approached civilization, it was by their favorable comparison to the Spaniards:

> I will say only that these people live almost like those in Spain, and in as much harmony and order as there, and considering that they are barbarous and so far from the knowledge of God and cut off from all civilized nations, it is truly remarkable to see what they have achieved in all things.[6]

Unprepared to find either a new world or strange people, the Spaniards applied their own standards to the world of the Amerindian. Indians, they believed, were soft wax which could be molded to form new Spaniards, virtuous, pious and civilized. According to Friar Bernardino de Sahagún, the Spanish mission was to heal and maintain the Indian social organism when it faltered. The Spaniards were to serve as doctors to the Indians'

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[5]Hernán Cortés, "Second Letter," in The Letters from Mexico, trans. Anthony Pagden (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 109. Also see the "First Letter," 29; Antonello Gerbi, Nature in the New World: From Christopher Columbus to Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, trans. Jeremy Moyle (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1985), 6, 18-19, 95-9; Fray Toribio de Benavente o Motolinía, Memoriales o libro de las cosas de la Nueva España y de los naturales de ella, ed. Edmundo O'Gorman (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1971), 240-4.

[6]Cortés, "Second Letter," 108.

social and physical needs.[7] At the most fundamental level, that included concern with food production and eating as both means of sustaining the individual organism and the social organism. Food became a major weapon in remaking the Indians, and in ascribing differences between them and the "old Spaniards." From the very beginning the Spanish were aware of the differences in the native diet, and they set about deliberately and effectively to impose new dietary regimes in the Americas. On their part, the Indians salvaged certain aspects of their culture at the cost of sometimes being labelled "inferior." As John Super states, both conquerors and conquered experienced a hybridization of their "nutritional regimes," with each party adopting foods eaten by the other group, but with staple foods, like wheat and maize, still remaining basically the same for most Spaniards and Indians.[8]

In the development of human culture, food and the rituals and prohibitions surrounding eating have always served as an important aspect of cultural self-

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[7]Bernardino de Sahagún, Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España 4 vols., ed. Angel María Garibay K. (Mexico City: Editorial Porrúa, 1956), 1:27.

[8]John C. Super, Food, Conquest, and Colonization in Sixteenth-Century Spanish America (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988), 23, 88. Also John C. Super, "The Formation of Nutritional Regimes in Colonial Latin America," in Food, Politics, and Society in Latin America, ed. John C. Super and Thomas C. Wright (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1985), 1-23.

definition.[9] Cooked food is often placed in juxtaposition to raw food as a sign of culture and civilization in contrast to crude nature.[10] Culture sets humans apart from nature by focusing on the ways in which humans harvest, transform, and consume natural elements for their sustenance; thus emphasizing the fact that men cook their food, while animals eat theirs raw. To bind and set themselves apart from other human beings, individual cultures have also emphasized appropriate rituals of food preparation and eating. When one cultural group has conquered another, these rituals have therefore served as important tools in the process of imperialism.[11] Out of necessity, as conquerors of a new people and environment, sixteenth-century Spaniards used their food rituals to set themselves apart as an elite group and to manage their new material environment.

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[9] Peter Farb and George Armelagos, Consuming Passions: The Anthropology of Eating (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1980), 3-14.

[10] Claude Lévi-Strauss has demonstrated that cooking mediates between heaven and earth, life and death, nature and society, transforming the natural into the cultural as it were. Claude Lévi-Strauss, The Raw and the Cooked, trans. John and Doreen Weightman (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), 64-5, 169; Nur Yalman, "'The Raw: the Cooked:: Nature: Culture'--- Observations on Le Cru et le cuit," in The Structural Study of Myth and Totemism, ed. Edmund Leach (London: Tavistock Publications, 1967), 71-3, 77, 85, 88.

[11] For the way in which cannibalism is used in that vein, see Bernadette Bucher, Icon and Conquest: A Structural Analysis of the Illustrations of de Bry's "Great Voyages", trans. Basia Miller Gulati (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 61-4, 104-05.

Though not environmentalists in modern terms, the Spaniards were aware of the environment and of human management of the environment. The Castilian Crown had issued edicts to alter the topography of the Spanish heartland to the benefit of Mesta sheep-raising, and at the expense of the average farmer.[12] By extension, not only did the Spaniards want to dress and christianize the Indians; they also wanted to dress the New World in proper Old World attire.[13]

As early as their experiences in the Caribbean, Spanish explorers and colonizers were struck by the foods found in the New World environment. Even men obsessed by "gold, glory, and God" needed sustenance, and an appropriate form of sustenance at that. They could completely depend on the produce of undirected Indian tributary labor, but this proved extremely difficult as

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[12] A 1480 cédula ordered the evacuation of enclosures set up by farmers under Henry IV, while nine years later an ordinance called the "Defense of the Cañadas" redrew sheepwalk boundaries to expel squatting farmers. In 1491 an edict banned agricultural enclosures in Granada. Husbandmen felt abandoned. See Jaime Vincens Vives, An Economic History of Spain, trans. Frances M. López-Morillas (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 302-04.

[13] Woodrow Borah, "America as Model: The Demographic Impact of European Expansion upon the Non-European World," XXXV Congreso Internacional de Americanistas (Mexico City: 1962); Alfred W. Crosby, Jr., The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492 (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1972), 64; and Alfred W. Crosby, Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

Indian populations declined in the Caribbean and New Spain. It also irked Spanish sensibilities to eat only the food traditionally produced by the indigenous populations, even though some Spaniards seemingly acquired a gourmet's love of the unusual and praised the taste of maize and cassava bread.[14] Others, like Las Casas, were so intent on defending Indian culture and the Americas that they deliberately praised New World foods like the peanut. Las Casas argued that the peanut was more delicious than any Spanish nut or dried fruit, but his praise was unusual and a reflection of his role as defender of the Indians. In fact, he was responding directly to Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, who described the peanut as not fit for Spanish consumption.[15] In some circles, a real debate existed, but for the most part, American foods were subordinated to European foodstuffs. Affluent Europeans, of course, craved spices and other

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[14]Reay Tannahill, Food in History (New York: Stein and Day, 1973), 245-6; and Super, Food, Conquest, and Colonization, 25-6, 32.

[15]Lewis Hanke, All Mankind Is One: A Study of the Disputation between Bartolomé de Las Casas and Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda on the Religious and Intellectual Capacity of the American Indians (De Kalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1974), 39.

exotic fare, but they freely chose the novel items to be introduced into a diet still predominantly Eurocentric.[16]

The reception of Indian foods as tribute, without Spanish control or definition of those foods, satisfied the body's hunger, but diminished the Spaniards' sense of superiority and active agency. Eating Indian foods placed them on the level of the Indians, besides offending a Spanish palate accustomed to European grains, vegetables, fruits and meats. Attempts were made to determine which New World foods were most like those of the Old World, and therefore acceptable;[17] but, from a very early date, there was discussion of transplanting European foods to the New World.

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[16]The selection and control of herbs and plants was also the case in medicine, a field which was far more open to American uniqueness than the field of culinary custom. See Guenter B. Risse, "Medicine in New Spain," in _Medicine in the New World: New Spain, New France, and New England_, ed. Ronald L. Numbers (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1987), 12-63.

[17]For example, in his "Relación del descubrimiento de las provincias de Antiocha (1540)," the _adelantado_ Jorge Robledo wrote, "In this town of Quindio one finds a yellow fruit like grapes...," _CDIR_ 2:304. Bernal Díaz also wrote of "local grapes," or granadillas, and "local cherries." Bernal Díaz del Castillo, _The Conquest of New Spain_, trans. J. M. Cohen (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963), 135, 365.

Cattle and wheat soon made their appearances in the Caribbean as a result.[18] Wheat, however, appeared only by means of transatlantic shipment since European grains, wines, and olives failed to take root in the hot Caribbean tropics.[19] As early as 1495, four caravels sailing for the Indies carried 180 cahizes (3,240 bushels) of wheat, 50 cahizes (900 bushels) of barley, 60 toneles (49.8 tons) of wine, 10 toneles (8.3 tons) of vinegar, 60 toneles (49.8 tons) of oil, 50 quintales (5,000 pounds) of figs, and ten to twelve peasant labradores.[20] In one colonial relación, the Comunero Revolt of 1521 was denounced because it interfered with

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[18]Licenciado Cuaco described Hispaniola as extremely fertile and abundant in "animales brutos," or raw nature, but the willingness and ability of Spaniards to transform this nature constantly were being criticized by royal officials. There were never enough husbandmen, and cattle were being consumed prodigally before reaching maturity. See "Al muy ilustre señor Monsieur de Xevres el licenciado Cuaco.--- de Santo Domingo de la isla Española á 22 de enero de 1518," CDIR 1:305; "Relación de Gil Gonzalez Dávila, contador del Rey, de la despoblación de la isla Española...," CDIR 1:341-2; "Relación de la isla Española enviada al Rey D. Félipe II por el licenciado Echagoian, oidor de la audiencia de Santo Domingo," CDIR 1:17; "Relación de Gil Gonzalez Dávila...de la despoblación de la isla Española...," CDIR 10:114.

[19]Crosby, The Columbian Exchange, 67-9.

[20]"Memorial de las cosas que son menester proveer luego para despacho de cuatro caravelas que vaya para las Indias. Año de 1495," CDIR 24:15-17.

Modern-day approximations of the weights and measures listed above are as follows: 1 quintal=100 pounds; 1 tonel=0.83 ton; 1 hanega=1.5 bushels; 1 cahiz=12 hanegas or 18 bushels.

the shipment of wheat flour to the New World.[21] Both royal bureaucrats and clergymen discussed the need to introduce Castilian and Andalusian peasants to teach the Indians appropriate agricultural methods, thus serving as a civilizing force in the New World.[22] In the minds of these priests and lawyers, old world agriculture and the old world peasant (at his best) were the foundations of European civilization and the body politic, and ill-fated social experiments were attempted to introduce the Indians to these fundamentals of European civilization.[23]

Although the Amerindians were seldom denied their humanity, even if labelled natural slaves, they were granted an inferior grade of humanity, and the Spaniards used their food and eating rituals to prove their bigoted

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[21] "Información de los servicios del adelantado Rodrigo de Bastidas, conquistador y pacificador de Santa Marta (22 de junio de 1521)," CDIR 2:375-6.

[22] "Al Cardenal Ximénez de Cisneros, los priores de San Gerónimo, de Santo Domingo de la isla Española á 22 de junio de 1517," CDIR 1:287; "Capítulos de carta del licenciado Alonso de Cuaco al Emperador, su fecha en Santo Domingo de la isla Española á 22 de enero de 1518," CDIR 1:292; Lewis Hanke, The Spanish Struggle for Justice in the Conquest of America (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1949), 46; and Lewis Hanke, The First Social Experiments in America: A Study in the Development of Spanish Indian Policy in the Sixteenth Century (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1935), 61-71.

[23] Julia Hirschberg, "Social Experiment in New Spain: A Prosopographical Study of the Early Settlement at Puebla de los Angeles, 1531-1534," Hispanic American Historical Review 59:1 (1979): 1-33; and Henry Raup Wagner and Helen Rand Parish, The Life and Writings of Bartolomé de las Casas (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1967), 35-45, 60-9, 83-93.

case.[24] In terms of eating, the most obvious target was cannibalism, which was constantly referred to as an horrific and debauched sign of savagery. In the Spanish frame of reference human sacrifice and cannibalism were signs of a sick social organism and justified conquest, the just war being the most obvious means of civilizing this most barbarous element.[25] Indigenous eating practices other than cannibalism could be left to the Indians to distinguish them from Spaniards, and the Spanish documents make numerous references to the fact that Indians ate differently from Europeans; but perceived similarities could also be used against the Indians. Instead of complimenting Amerindian culture, comparison to the Spaniards only reinforced Spanish prejudices by identifying the praiseworthy in New World cultures as that most like European practices. In a 1575 relación to the Audiencia de Guadalajara Juan de Miranda

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[24]Even the portrayal of the Indians as "noble savages" degraded through its imposition of civilized nobility on a perceived savage state. It was the grafting of some admirable characteristics on the fundamentally disreputable. Hayden White, "The Noble Savage: Theme as Fetish," in First Images of America: The Impact of the New World on the Old, 2 vols., eds. Fredi Chiappelli, et. al. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1976), 1:129; and Bucher, 143-4.

[25]Bernal Díaz, 131, 141, 201; Hanke, The Spanish Struggle for Justice, 120; White, 1:126; Bucher, 61-4; "Información hecha por Rodrigo de Figueroa de la población india de las islas é costa de Tierra Firme...(1520)," CDIR 1:380; "Memorial que dió el bachiller Enciso de lo ejecutado por él en defensa de los Reales derechos, en la materia de los indios," CDIR 1:449.

epitomized Spanish biases toward Indian eating practices by equating the peacefulness and civilization of estancia Indians with their cultivation of wheat and maize. He derrogated the local Indians still free of Spanish rule by identifying them as "a barbaric people, inept and incapable, since they lack fields of maize and other produce, and sustain themselves with very vile and lowly staples."[26]

Significantly, foods and eating rituals, as well as forms of political organization and worship, were more commonly used to define the Amerindians as brothers or savages than was the color of their skin. In the service of conquest and colonization, European attention first focused on political, religious and culinary aspects of culture. Among the first conquerors and colonizers of New Spain, Cortés, Bernal Díaz and others were not exceptional. Most of these first conquerors and colonizers of the mainland arrived after an initial period on the Caribbean islands. Cortés had raised European cattle for European consumption on the island of Cuba, and other members of his band had established similar agrarian and pastoral practices.[27] During the

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[26]"Relación hecha por Joan de Miranda, clerigo, al doctor Orozco, presidente de la Audiencia de Guadalajara; sobre la tierra y población que hay desde las minas de San Martín á las de Santa Barbara, que esto último entonces estaba poblada. Año de 1575," CDIR 16:566-7.

[27]Bernal Díaz, 48.

actual conquest of Mexico, they were provisioned with Indian maize and meats, but their preference, as evidenced by Bernal Díaz, was for European foods and eating habits:

> What is more, we had hardly enough to eat. I do not speak of maize-cakes, for we had plenty of them, but of nourishing food for the wounded. The wretched stuff on which we existed was a vegetable that the Indians eat called quelites, supplemented by the local cherries, while they lasted, and afterwards by prickly pears, which then came into season.[28]

More than a matter of personal taste, food preference was an intrinsic part of the Spanish concept of health and nutrition. Díaz del Castillo's complaint reveals a Spanish proclivity for high protein foods, a preference which penetrated all levels of their society. When discussing Moctezuma's food, Bernal Díaz noted that he ate "maize-cakes kneaded with eggs and other nourishing ingredients."[29] He implied that maize-cakes and fruits alone were not enough for the wounded, and the popular medical tracts of the day spoke of a need for a balance of meats, fish, fruit, and grains in the sick

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[28] Ibid., 365, 367.
[29] Ibid., 227.

person's diet.[30] If one had the means, the physician Juan de Avinón suggested daily consumption of both meat and bread for his Sevillian patients:

> Add a pound of bread and two of meat... half in the morning and half at night; and with this quantity, more or less, the health of the majority of Sevillian men can be maintained.[31]

The Spanish definition of an appropriate diet necessarily included the meats and animal products to which a Castilian herding society had grown accustomed. In the early days of encomienda in any given region, Castilian chickens were one of the first items to make an appearance as common Indian tribute; chickens being the cheapest and least labor intensive European source of protein. By the 1580's, the vast majority of Amerindian townships seem to have raised Castilian chickens and

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[30] Luys Alcanyis, Regiment de la Pestilencia (Valencia: Nicholaus Spindeler, ca. 1490), in Hispanic Culture Series, Hispanic Books Printed Before 1601, Reel 33; henceforth to be refered to as HCS. Also see Juan de Cárdenas, Primera Parte de los problemas y secretos marauillosos de las Indias (Mexico City: Pedro Ocharte, 1591), 105-126, 175, HCS Reel 27; and Juan de Avinón, Seuillana medicina, ed. Nicolás Monardes (Seville: Andres de Burgos, 1545), xvi-xxii, HCS Reel 225. For the Arabic roots of the European notion of a balanced diet, see Tannahill, 178.

[31] Avinón, xviii[b].

produced eggs.[32] Post-conquest royal ordinances for the Hospital of San Lázaro in Mexico City reveal that the indigent were expected to receive protein-rich eggs as part of their diets.[33] Thus, outcasts and the poor were also included in the "Europeanization" of Mexico's nutritional regime. The preference for European eating habits was part of the imposition of a European order since food was an intrinsic part of establishing boundaries and expectations in an hierarchical society.

From the moment he arrived in Mexico, Cortés took note of the foods produced and consumed by the Indians.[34] He also reported on the potential for conversion to Spanish methods of agriculture and husbandry:

> From here to the coast I have seen no city so fit for Spaniards to live in (i.e., Churultecal), for it has water and some common

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[32]For the appearance of chickens in New World tax lists, see "Tasaciones de los pueblos de la provincia de Yucatán," in Epistolario de Nueva España, 1505-1818, 16 vols., ed. Francisco del Paso y Troncoso (Mexico City: José Porrúa e hijos, 1939-1940), 5:103-81, 207-17; 6:73-112. Henceforth ENE. For a representative sampling of such townships in the valleys of Oaxaca and Mexico, see Papeles de Nueva España, 7 vols., ed. Francisco del Paso y Troncoso (Madrid: Sucesores de Rivadeneyra, 1905), 4: 9-44, 58-68, 100-08, 163-82, 289-300, 308-13; 5: 1-11, 55-65, 99-109, 124-82; 6: 1-5, 12-19, 31-4, 87-152, 199-208, 291-305. In the relaciones of the 1580's, the response to question twenty-seven deals with wild and domestic animals. Henceforth the Papeles de Nueva España will be referred to as PNE.

[33]"Real cédula al virrey y audiencia de la Nueva España.... Valencia, 12 de abril de 1599," in Ordenanzas de hospital de San Lázaro de México, eds. France V. Scholes and Eleanor B. Adams (Mexico City: José Porrúa e hijos, 1956), 38.

[34]Cortés, "First Letter," 30.

> lands suitable for raising cattle, which none of those we saw previously had, for there are so many people living in these parts that not one foot of land is uncultivated, and yet in many places they suffer hardships for lack of bread.[35]

Although the foods eaten might be strange and even improper, cultural similarities were still observed. One Aztec eating ritual in particular, Moctezuma's meals, struck Cortés as a strange amalgam of the proper and improper, thus emphasizing the ambiguity with which Europeans approached a new world.[36]

Impressed by the opulence with which Moctezuma was served, Cortés reported in endless detail the manner in which the Aztec tlatoani[37] ate, an observation which was then repeated in the works of Bernal Díaz and López de Gómara. The accounts vary in the number and types of dishes he was served, as well as on the number of servitors, but thematic qualities remain constant.[38]

> Each day at dawn there arrived at his house six hundred chiefs and principal persons.... When they brought food to Mutezuma they also provided for all those chiefs to each according to his rank; and their servants and followers were also given to eat.... Three or four hundred boys came bringing the dishes which, were without number, for each time he lunched or dined, he was brought every kind of food: meat, fish, fruit and vegetables.... They placed all these dishes together in a great

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[35] Cortés, "Second Letter," 75.

[36] Bucher, 153-4, 158-9.

[37] The Aztec term for their ruler, literally "he who possesses speech."

[38] Cortés, "Second Letter," 111-12; Bernal Díaz, 225-6; and López de Gómara, 143-4.

> room where he ate, which was almost always full.... One of the servants set down and removed the plates of food and called to others who were farther away for all that was required. Before and after the meal they gave him water for his hands and a towel which once used was never used again, and likewise with the plates and bowls, for when they brought more food they always used new ones, and the same with the braziers.[39]

Whatever the particulars given in the different accounts, two characteristics stand out. Moctezuma ate abundantly in public, and he shared this abundance with others according to their rank. To the Spaniards, this signified community, prosperity, reciprocity and hierarchy. Just as population concentration was regarded as a mark of civilization, so the appropriateness of Moctezuma's rituals indicated cultural achievement in the Spanish system of values. Although Cortés initially described Moctezuma's palace-life as completely alien to Spanish experience, he went on to present its wonders according to the familiar frames of reference found in the classical and popular literature of the day.[40] Although he implicitly denounced the magnificence of Moctezuma's rituals as comparable to the ceremonies of sultans and infidel lords, these analogies were still within the scope of Spanish experience.[41] The Aztecs

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[39] Cortés, "Second Letter," 111-12.

[40] Cortés, "Second Letter," 109; Anthony Pagden, "Translator's Introduction," in Hernán Cortés, Letters from Mexico, xlviii; Irving A. Leonard, Books of the Brave (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949), 50.

[40] Cortés, "Second Letter," 112.

were just as marvelous, civilized, and fascinating as the Moors of the Reconquista, but the absence of Christianity led to improper customs and some grievously abhorent behavior. In fact, Bernal Díaz, unlike Cortés and López de Gómara, introduced the specter of cannibalism into the tlatoani's table rituals by writing, "I have heard that they used to cook him the flesh of young boys."[42]

In the political sphere, the Aztecs possessed the capacity to order and rule themselves according to natural law and the common sense present in human reason, but they lacked the completion of divine revelation.[43] Moctezuma's eating habits were a reflection of this resulting correctness and incorrectness. The black and white world of Christians and infidels, good and evil, began to resemble a miasma of gray ambiguities. Moctezuma, as the kingly head of the Aztec social organism, represented all the ambiguities that Aztec society held for the Spaniards. Through the Spanish prism, he was both the diabolical chief priest of the Aztec rites of human sacrifice and the classical orator who recognized Charles V's imperial sovereignty over himself and his people.[44] In the person of Moctezuma,

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[42]Bernal Díaz, 225.

[43]Alonso de Zorita,"Breve y sumaria relación de los señores, y maneras y diferencias que habia de ellos en la Nueva España; y de la forma que han tenido y tienen en los tributos (sin fecha)," CDIR 2:16-17.

[44]Cortés, "Second Letter," 99, 106.

Aztec culture, although it held so much that was admirable to Cortés and other Spaniards, had to submit freely to the only truly appropriate culture, that of the Spaniards themselves.

Cortés' report of Moctezuma's eating was much more than a wonder tale. It was an attempt to demonstrate to sixteenth-century Spaniards the way in which the Aztec culture and social system functioned at its most basic level. Charles V, to whom the letter was addressed, would have been interested by the custom of the <u>tlatoani</u>'s public meals, and he would have seen them as eminently political rituals. In a letter written twenty-nine years later, Charles told his regents Maximilian and Mary how to govern Castile in his absence. In the midst of discussing dealings with the royal councils, frontier defense and the raising of revenue, the emperor turned to the question of public ceremony. He ordered:

> That the aforesaid Prince and Princess continue to hear public mass on Sundays and feast days, that they are seen to leave for the churches and monasteries where they will hear it, and that they eat publicly. That they hold court for some hours of the day in order to hear justly those with whom they wish to speak and receive the petitions and briefs which are given them...[45]

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[45] "Instrucciones de Carlos V a Maximiliano y María para el gobierno de Castilla," (Brussels, 29 September 1548), in <u>Corpus documental de Carlos V</u>, 5 vols., ed. Manuel Fernández Alvarez (Salamanca: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientificas, 1973-81), 3:33.

As the ordering reason and head of the society, the Spanish monarch was called to embody and illustrate appropriate moral behavior and custom. Friar Antonio de Guevara reported that Charles' wife Isabel always ate publicly, except in the winter when one sought the comfort of small heated rooms. Otherwise, prelates were present to bless her food, and she, like Moctezuma, was served in abundance before her courtiers.[46] Public eating, for Isabel and Charles, was a duty necessarily joined to other public ceremonies.

From an anthropological perspective, such linkage is quite natural since the breaking of bread or food-sharing consistently serves as a fundamental rite of covenant-making and bonding. Both the Bantu and Chinese traditionally establish covenants and contracts while eating, and the English word "companion" is itself formed from French and Latin words meaning "one who eats bread with another."[47] One need go no further in western cultures than the Bible and Homer to find examples of the symbolic linkage between social bonding and food-sharing; and in sixteenth-century Catholic and Lutheran Christianity, communion, partaking in the body and blood

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[46]Antonio de Guevara, "Letra para el marqués de los Vélez, en cual se escribe algunas nuevas de corte," (Medina del Campo, 18 July 1532), in Libro primero de las epístolas familiares de Fray Antonio de Guevara, ed. José María de Cossío (Madrid: Real Academia Española-Biblioteca Selecta de Clásicos Españoles, 1950), 114-19.

[47]Farb and Armelagos, 4.

of Christ, bound individuals to the mystical body of Christ, the Christian social organism found in 1 Corinthians 12.[48] To see the king or the representatives of his authority eat publicly, like seeing them hear mass or petitions publicly, was to see them engage in the creation and binding of community.

As a royal representative, Cortés read the requerimiento to two Aztec ambassadors after mass and sharing a meal with them--- after the communal breaking of bread as it were.[49] It was not difficult for Spaniards to see a sense of communal purpose and sharing at the tables of the Eucharist and the Crown. In fact, Friar Gerónimo de Mendieta clearly perceived the Eucharistic meal as a means of binding Spaniards and Indians to the same community, the Crown's task specifically being to call non-Christians to the Lord's Supper.[50] Christian communion, and its symbolic cannibalism, was not only expected to save individual souls; clerics like Mendieta, Sahagún, and Acosta expected it to commence the proper reordering of Indian

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[48] David W. Sabean, Power in the Blood: Popular Culture and Village Discourse in Early Modern Germany (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 37-60; and Robert Mandrou, Introduction to Modern France, 1500-1640: An Essay in Historical Psychology, trans. R. E. Hallmark (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), 14.

[49] Bernal Díaz, 189. For more on Cortés's adherence to the requerimiento, see Valero Silva, 44.

[50] Gerónimo de Mendieta, Historia Eclesíastica Indiana (Mexico City: Editorial Porrua, 1971), 24-31.

society, replacing the Indians' perverse communal eating rituals with the one true communion. Thus, Mendieta and the Jesuit Acosta noted the Mexicans' communal eating of seeds and herbs, transubstantiated into divine flesh, as a parody of the one true communion, and Sahagún cited a public religious banquet, sponsored by Aztec merchants, which involved the consumption of human flesh.[51] Symbolic and actual meals bound society, and throughout the social hierarchy of sixteenth-century Spain, nobles were expected to maintain large households. Purpose and prestige, hidalguía, were achieved by a noble's, or colonial encomendero's, capacity to maintain a casa poblada and its table. The ability to regulate organic interaction as a head was demonstrated by feeding a host of relatives, guests, lackeys, and other dependents.[52] It was therefore quite easy for Cortés and any number of Spaniards to interpret significance in the way Moctezuma ate. Their categories of understanding were bound to the

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[51]Mendieta, 107; Sahagún, 3:43-5; and Joseph de Acosta, Historia natural y moral de las Indias, ed. Edmundo O' Gorman (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Economica, 1940), 413-16.

Sahagún also listed the foods of the Aztec nobility in detail. Sahagún, 2:305-08.

[52]James Lockhart, Spanish Peru, 1532-1560: A Colonial Society (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968), 21; Marcelin Defourneaux, Daily Life in Spain in the Golden Age, trans. Newton Branch (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1979), 150-3; Colin MacLachlan and Jaime E. Rodríguez O., The Forging of the Cosmic Race: A Reinterpretation of Colonial Mexico (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1980), 210, 224-5.

social organic ideal, and even a precocious ethnologist like Bernardino de Sahagún was enculturated enough to entitle his description of the estates and classes of Aztec society "Of the Vices and Virtues of This Indian People, <u>of the Members of the Whole Body</u>, of the Illnesses and the Nations That Have Come to This Land."[53]

Ritual eating manifested both the similarity and differences between Spanish and Aztec cultures. As the <u>tlatoani</u>, or "chief speaker" of the Aztec tributary empire, Moctezuma actually symbolized for the Aztecs many of the same principles embodied by Charles V. He possessed the ability to reason and speak through language for the whole of society.[54] He spoke as society's head, and he also ate publicly to bind the society. Community was created through food-sharing, and Cortés, Bernal Díaz and López de Gómara all reported hierarchy and reciprocity present in that community. Food was shared, but always in terms of rank and hierarchy--- López de Gómara noting uniquely that Moctezuma alone was served a full meal.[55] Chieftains and their retinues were fed according to rank, while the <u>tlatoani</u> himself shared all he ate with some old men who

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[53]Sahagún, 3:95.

[54]Tzvetan Todorov, <u>The Conquest of America</u>, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Harper and Row, 1985), 79.

[55]López de Gómara, 143.

sat apart from him.[56] In all accounts, it was observed that Moctezuma was served all sorts of food ("meat, fish, fruit and vegetables") in abundance, magically creating prosperity in a land which periodically experienced dearth like sixteenth-century Spain.[57]

In Mexico, drought and famine caused starvation and death from 1450 to 1455. In Castile, poor agricultural techniques and the enclosure of arable lands for the sheep-herding activities of the Mesta generated insufficient harvests and an ever-growing population of beggars from 1502 to 1508.[58] Sixteenth-century Spaniards came to the New World to find raw abundance and fertility, but they accepted poverty as a normal aspect of life. As in Spain, poverty and famine were persistent aspects of Aztec life and culture, and, just as the Spanish elite chose to pursue its own economic interests while occasionally providing poor relief, the Aztec elite chose to hide misery behind its own prosperity. Both cultures, however, extolled the virtue of charity, had some system of poor relief, and recognized the role of charity in preventing rebellion and promoting social

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[56] Cortés, "Second Letter," 111;Bernal Díaz, 226; López de Gómara, 143-4.

[57] Woodrow Borah, New Spain's Century of Depression (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1951), 2; George C. Vaillant, Aztecs of Mexico: Origin, Rise, and Fall of the Aztec Nation (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966), 135-48; and Nigel Davies, The Aztecs: A History (London: Macmillan, 1973), 92-4.

[58] Vincens Vives, 302-04.

control.[59] Cortés saw the presence of beggars as proof that the Aztecs were civilized: "And there are many poor people who beg from the rich in the streets as the poor do in Spain and in other civilized places."[60] The lack of food among some was as much a part of the social order as the existence of hierarchy and reciprocity. Ordinances issued by Cortés after the conquest demonstrate the importance of the redistribution of bread to the Spanish community. Fixed weights and prices were to be maintained by a town board called the "Fiel," and the poor were to be sustained:

> Item: that bakeries selling bread sell it in the public plaza, and that the bread be of the weight ordained by the Council of the aforesaid town, and at the price assigned by it, and that it not be sold in any other manner; if any would sell it at less weight or higher price, they will lose (their earnings), and half will be applied to the aforementioned Fiel, and the other half to the poor of the Hospital.[61]

After the conquest of Mexico, the Spaniards maintained their interests in appropriate foods and bonding by means of sharing food. During the actual

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[59]Linda Martz, Poverty and Welfare in Habsburg Spain: The Example of Toledo (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1-46; Abel Alves, "The Christian Social Organism and Social Welfare: The Case of Vives, Calvin and Loyola," The Sixteenth Century Journal 20:1 (Spring 1989): 3-21; Sahagún, 2:321; Mendieta, 113; and Zorita, "Breve y sumaria relación," CDIR 2:20.

[60]Cortés, "Second Letter," 75.

[61]"Ordenanzas locales dadas por Hernando Cortés para que por ellas se rixan e gobiernen los vezinos, moradores, estantes e habitantes de las Villas pobladas e las demás que en adelante se poblaren," CDIR 40:179-80.

conquest, they were forced to make do with maize, but once victorious they wanted to taste Castilian bread again and enjoy a prosperity defined in Castilian terms. The Jesuit Joseph de Acosta's Historia natural y moral de las Indias (1589) shows that the Castilian hierarchy of food was firmly rooted in a belief that God created plants principally for the sustenance of humanity:

> Lastly, the Creator gave all lands their own form of "governance" (i.e., physical maintenance); to this sphere (Europe) he granted wheat, which is the principal sustenance of men; to that of the Indies he granted maize, which after wheat holds the second place in the sustaining of men and animals.[62]

In "fuerza y sustento," maize was not considered inferior to wheat by Acosta, but to the European palate it was "hot and gross," causing skin irritation in those who ate it without care.[63] Maize was for Indian palates, a means of sustenance inferior to wheat simply because it was not of the Old World. Acosta believed that the introduction of Old World plants and animals to the Americas benefited the Indies far more than American flora and fauna benefited Europe. New World plants, he reported, failed to prosper in Spain, but wheat, barley, all sorts of vegetables, sheep, cattle, goats, horses,

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[62] Acosta, 267, 265-7.
[63] Ibid., 265.

cats, and pigs did well when introduced to the Americas.[64]

Regardless of Acosta's claims, Spaniards had to struggle to control the new American environments and foster the growth of the European plants they preferred. Viceroys Mendoza and Velasco in their relaciones of 1550 and 1559 noted the production of more wheat as one of the chief goals of the growing Spanish colony.[65] Mendoza gave wheat production priority over the raising of livestock, arguing that Indians should learn wheat cultivation and practice it as commonly as they practiced the cultivation of maize.[66] In fact, the Spanish were successful. By 1535, Mexico had exported wheat to the Antilles and Tierra Firme, and by 1575, the Atlixco

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[64]Ibid., 311-22.

[65]François Chevalier, Land and Society in Colonial Mexico: The Great Hacienda, trans. Alvin Eustis, ed. Lesley Byrd Simpson (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1970), 51-2; "Relación, apuntamientos y avisos, que por mandado de S. M. dió D. Antonio de Mendoza, virey de Nueva-España á D. Luís de Velasco," CDIR 6:492. Also see the following documents on the importance of introducing Old World plants and animals to the New World: "Carta a la reina, de fray Luís de Fuensalida, guardián del convento de religiosos franciscanos de México... pide que se mande ovejas merinas y olivos y que todas las naos de España traigan plantas...De México, a 22 de mayo de 1531," ENE 2:33-5; "Relación de los vecinos que había en la Ciudad de los Angeles el año de 1534. 20 de abril.--- (Sigue una información de las plantaciones hechos por algunas de dichos vecinos, de viñas y árboles)," ENE 3:137-44.

[66]"Lo que el Visorey e gobernador de la Nueva Spaña y sus provincias...a de hazer...de mas de lo contenido en los poderes y comisiones que lleva..., CDIR 23: 530, 534.

Valley alone produced 100,000 hanegas (150,000 bushels) of wheat a year.[67]

Wheat production was imperative since its consumption separated Spaniards from the mass of Indians, while acceptance of Spanish dietary patterns admitted the Indian elite to Spanish culture and the Spanish community. After Cortés and other early inhabitants of New Spain introduced European grains, fruits, vegetables and livestock, acculturated, affluent Indians throughout the Spanish empire began to produce and consume wheat, sheep, goats and wine. Among acculturated Indians, Don Pedro Moctezuma described his possessions in Tula as "certain livestock estancias of sheep and goats, and fields of wheat and maize"--- a mixture of European and Indian foodstuffs that can also be found in tributary lists of the Indian governor of Coyoacán, don Juan de Guzmán.[68] Listing the tribute owed him in the mid-sixteenth century, don Juan ordered that "those who cultivate the fields at Cimatlan and Mixcoac are to reap wheat at Atepocaapan (for a week)."[69] He continued to

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[67]Crosby, The Columbian Exchange, 70.

[68]Ibid., 127-34, 51-2; "Testamento y fundación de mayoazgo otorgado por D. Pedro Montezuma en 8 de setiembre de 1570," CDIR 6:85.

[69]"Some perquisites of don Juan de Guzmán, governor of Coyoacan, mid-sixteenth century," in Beyond the Codices: The Nahua View of Colonial Mexico, translated and edited by Arthur J. O. Anderson, Frances Berdan, and James Lockhart (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1976), 154-5.

receive most of his tributary foods in indigenous produce, but his reception of European crops demonstrates that they developed a market among powerful Indians who served as intermediaries with the Spaniards. The Indian elites were required to adopt certain aspects of Spanish material culture in order to properly assimilate with their superiors.

The Spaniards, for their part, demanded wheat, horse fodder, and European animals in the tribute ascribed to them, while still receiving the largest percentage of their tribute in maize and other native produce which could be sold and redistributed to Amerindian commoners. The tribute due Cortés, the Marqués del Valle, from the towns of Coyoacán and Atlacubaya amounted to a yearly payment of 2000 hanegas (3,000 bushels) of maize and 600 (900) of wheat.[70] Don Juan de Guzmán, the Indian cacique, received 400 hanegas (600 bushels) of maize and 200 (300) of wheat in a 1553 accounting from the same towns.[71] In Toluca, Cortés tried a similar mixed tribute

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[70]"Visitas a la villa de Coyoacán, del marqués del Valle, a mediados del siglo XVI, 1551, 1553, 1564," in Tributos y servicios personales de indios para Hernán Cortés y su familia, ed. Silvio Zavala (Mexico City: Archivo General de la Nación, 1984), 250.

[71]Ibid., 253.

in maize and wheat, but was foiled by frost's destruction of the wheat crop.[72]

Epidemic disease and the persistent decrease of the indigenous population made the direct organization of agricultural production for Europeans, by Europeans, imperative.[73] Still, Indians persisted in their own cultural hybridization with mixed results. Some European practices exacerbated the post-conquest decline of the Indian population. Indiscriminate pasturing of European cattle on Indian arable lands, for example, was partially responsible for decreases in the production of staple crops by the indigenes--- and created legal conflict

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[72] "Pleito contra el licenciado Juan Ortiz de Matiengo y Diego Delgadillo, para recuperar la renta del pueblo de Toluca que...habían dado a García del Pilar durante la ausencia de Cortés en España (año de 1531)," Tributos y servicios personales de indios para Hernán Cortés y su familia, 70-4.

[73] With no immunological resistance to European diseases such as smallpox and typhus, Indian populations decreased astronomically after the conquest. In the valley of Mexico alone, Woodrow Borah and Sherburne F. Cook estimated a population of 25 million in 1519, but only 1.9 million Indians in 1580. See The Cambridge History of Latin America, Vol. 1: Colonial Latin America, ed. Leslie Bethell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 212; Borah, New Spain's Century of Depression, 19, 25, 30; and Super, Food, Conquest, and Colonization, 27, 36.

between the Europeans and their subjects.[74] On the other hand, hungry for protein which could not be produced in abundant quantities by the native beans, domesticated fowl, fly eggs, turkey eggs, and table dogs, Indian communities engaged early on in sheep and cattle ranching. In 1547, for instance, Tlaxcala's cabildo reported the sale of 580 municipally owned muttons, and, by 1580, some Spanish observers noted substantial consumption of European meats by the Indians.[75] A Spanish description of Chichicapa and its subject towns reported that the naturales consumed large quantities of meat, while one of Tepevçila indicated Indian management of European livestock.[76] An abundance of European chickens were reported throughout the valleys of Mexico and Oaxaca, but sheep and goats were also reported of a number of Indian townships: from Tilantongo, Mitlantongo, Tamazola, Tetípac, Nochiztlán and Mitla in the bishopric

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[74]Charles Gibson, The Aztecs under Spanish Rule (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964), 280-2;"Pleito de Alonso Morcillo, vecino de Oaxaca, contra Hernán Cortés y los indios de Etla, para prohibir que los indios cultiven en la vecindad de la estancia de Morcillo (año de 1537)," Tributos y servicios personales de indios para Hernán Cortés y su familia, 121-40; Woodrow Borah, Justice by Insurance The General Indian Court of Colonial Mexico and the Legal Aides of the Half-Real (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983); Super, Food, Conquest, and Colonization, 55-6; and Crosby, The Columbian Exchange, 99.

[75]"Municipal Council Records, Tlaxcala, 1547," in Beyond the Codices, 124-5.

[76]"Relación de Chichicapa y su partido (15 Mayo, 1580)," PNE 4: 119; "Relación de Papaloticpac y su partido (7-11 Deciembre, 1579)," PNE 4: 96.

of Antequerra to Totolapa, Yetecomac, Gueypuchtla, Tecpatepec, Chiconauhtla and Zayula in the bishopric of Mexico City.[77] Bovine livestock even made an appearance in Spanish reports on Tamazola, Mitlantongo and Tilantongo. And in the Mexican valley towns of Tetela and Ueyapán, the corregidor Cristóbal Godínez Maldondo emphasized that the Amerindians possessed quite a few head of cattle.[78]

Often enough, Spaniards saw this Indian interest in European livestock as an illegitimate encroachment by the mass of Indians on their control of European material culture. The fleece and meat of sheep were sold locally, but hides and tallow of cattle were in demand in larger Mexican and European markets, and Spanish cattlemen were quite unwilling to have Indian ranching increase and compete in their markets. As a result, slaughterhouses

[77] "Relación de Tilantongo y su partido (1 Noviembre, 1579)," PNE 4: 75; "Relación de Mitlantongo (12 Nobienbre, 1579)," PNE 4: 79; "Relación de Tamazola (16 Nobienbre, 1579)," PNE 4: 84; "Relación de Tetípac (15 Abril, 1580)," PNE 4: 113; "Relación de Nochiztlan (9-11 Abril, 1581)," PNE 4: 210; "Relación de Tlacolula y Mitla (12-23 Agosto, 1580)," PNE 4: 150; "Relación de Totolapa y su partido (4 Septiembre, 1579)," PNE 6: 10; "Descripción del pueblo de Yetecomac y su tierra (10 Octubre, 1579- 24 Marzo, 1580)," PNE 6: 23; "Descripción del pueblo de Gueypuchtla y su tierra (10 Octubre, 1579- 24 Marzo, 1580)," PNE 6: 30; "Descripción del pueblo de Tecpatepec y su tierra (10 Octubre, 1579- 24 Marzo, 1580)," PNE 6: 37; "Relación de Chiconauhtla y su partido (21 Enero, 1580)," PNE 6: 175; "Relación de Zayula (3 Febrero, 1580)," PNE 6: 181.

[78] "Relación de Tetela y Ueyapan (20 junio, 1581)," PNE 6: 288.

without viceregal consent were prohibited in Indian towns after 1560. At the same time, to the benefit of the Europeans, Spanish-owned cattle were allowed to destroy the base of Indian sustenance, literally trampling countless maize fields.[79] In return, Indians may have benefited from the protein provided by cheap meat, but the extent to which Spanish regulations interfered with Indian meat consumption and whether meat was adequately distributed throughout the Indian community has not yet been determined.[80] Whether they did more to benefit or disrupt Indian nutrition, Spanish livestock were a vital element of the newly dominant culture. Conquest meant that Amerindians were dominated by Spanish cattle as an aspect of Spanish cultural imperialism.

The late sixteenth-century relaciones geográficas from the New World further demonstrate the Spanish preoccupation with the production of European foodstuffs and the cultural integration of the American environment. Originated by Juan de Ovando, president of the Council of the Indies as of 1571, the Ordenanzas Ovandinas (1570-3) called for a systematic exploration of the environmental and social accomplishments of the Spaniards in the New World to determine what was needed to maintain good

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[79] Vaillant, 140-2; Gibson, 346.

[80] Super, Food, Conquest, and Colonization, 56-7; and Gibson, 566-7, ch 12 n 87.

government and social order in the Americas.[81] The corregidores and cabildos of American towns were required to give their views in reports called relaciones. From 1577 to 1581, the first relaciones began to arrive in Madrid, and in 1604, the conde de Lemus, then president of the Council, revised the royal questionnaire to include 355 questions, numbers 170 and 171 specifically dealing with the cultivation of European grains and fruits.[82] It was the Spanish mission, in accordance with Genesis 1.26, to rationally order and subdue New World nature, to tame the land to meet Old World standards.

In the early 1580's, among forty-three relaciones of the central region of New Spain that specifically mention wheat, twenty-six report the successful raising of wheat in Indian townships. Six relaciones--- those of Xalapa de la Veracruz, Chicoaloapa, Yetecomac, the mines of Tasco, çoyatitlanapa and Papaloticpac and its partido--- specifically state that wheat could be grown if the Indians so desired, while eleven townships' relaciones report that it was impossible to engage in wheat agriculture because of inappropriate soil and climatic

[81]"Ordenanzas de Su Magestad hechas para los nuevos descubrimientos, conquistas y pacificaciones.--- Julio de 1573," CDIR 16:142-87. See especially 147-8.

[82]"Interrogatorio para todas las ciudades, villas y lugares...de las Indias Occidentales...," CDIR 9:68-9; and José Urbano Martínez Carreras, "Las 'Relaciones' de Indias," in Relaciones Geográficas de Indias--- Perú, 3 vols., ed. Marcos Jiménez de la Espada (Madrid: Ediciones Atlas, 1965), xlvii-lii.

conditions.[83] A major complaint of the Spanish corregidores and alcaldes mayores writing the reports was that the Indians could raise much more wheat, and barley, if they were so inclined. Cultural preferences for maize seem to have interferred with Spanish desires. Thus, Papaloticpac and its partido reported that wheat could be raised there, but was not, because a Spanish population was lacking and the Indians failed to appreciate the

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[83]The relaciones referred to all date from 1579 to 1582, with the exception of Villa Rica de Veracruz, which issued a relación in 1571. All these relaciones can be found in the Papeles de Nueva España. They are as follows.

Towns growing wheat: Tezcatepec, PNE 6: 31-4; Gueypuchtla y su tierra, PNE 6: 26-31; Tequizistlan, PNE 6: 209-36; San Esteuan, PNE 5: 151-7; Nochiztlan, PNE 4: 206-12; Tetípac, PNE 4: 109-14; Totolapa y su partido, PNE 6: 6-11; Nexapa, PNE 4: 29-44; Guaxilotitlan, PNE 4: 196-205; Coatepec y su partido, PNE 6: 39-65; Petlaltzingo, PNE 5: 69-74; Taliztaca, PNE 4: 177-82; Mitlantongo, PNE 4: 77-82; Tilantongo, PNE 4: 69-77; Texapa, PNE 4: 53-7; Ueipuchtla y su partido, PNE 6: 12-19; Chiconauhtla y su partido, PNE 6: 167-77; Tetela y Ueyapan, PNE 6: 283-90; Tepepulco, PNE 6: 291-305; Zayula, PNE 6: 178-81; Tepeaca, PNE 5: 12-45; Tetela, caueçera de obispado de Tlaxcala, PNE 5: 143-50; Chilapa, PNE 5: 174-82; Macuilsúchil, PNE 4: 100-08; Ocopetlayuca, PNE 6: 251-62; Ycxitlan, PNE 5: 74-7.

Towns which could grow wheat: Xalapa de la Veracruz, PNE 5: 99-105; Chicoaloapa, subjeto de Coatepec, PNE 6: 79-86; Yetecomac, PNE 6: 19-23; Las minas de Tasco, PNE 6: 263-82; çoyatitlanapa, PNE 5: 89-93; Papaloticpac y su partido, PNE 4: 88-99.

Towns incapable of growing wheat: Villa Rica de Veracruz, PNE 5: 189-201; Tecpatepec, subjeto de Ueipuchtla, PNE 6: 34-8; Texaluca, PNE 5: 84-8; las minas de Zumpango, PNE 6: 313-22; San Miguel Capulapa, subjeto de Tetela, PNE 5: 157-63; San Francisco çuçumbra, subjeto de Tetela, PNE 5: 163-7; San Juan Tututla, subjeto de Tetela, PNE 5: 167-73; Cuicatlan, PNE 4: 183-9; Ucila, PNE 4: 45-52; Iztepexi, PNE 4: 9-23; Piastla, PNE 5: 77-80.

benefits of wheat.[84] In Yetecomac, barley and wheat could be raised, but the naturales had not planted the cereals in forty years, ever since the death of their Spanish encomendero eliminated demand.[85] In Tetípac, the Spanish observer wrote, "Wheat grows in this town and its subject villages... and it would grow in great quantity if the naturales devoted themselves to it," and, in Tepepulco, it was reported that wheat grew well but was grown and used sparingly.[86] Spanish demand and a pronounced Spanish presence were central to an Indian town's production of wheat:

> Wheat and barley give very high yields. In this town (Coatepec) and its territory there are thirteen Spanish farmers, who have their farmlands dedicated to wheat and produce great quantities; and the Indians have begun to sow it.[87]

And:

> This province of Tepeaca yields, in season, more than enough wheat. There is a valley named San Pablo where there are sixty Spanish farmers who sow, with oxen, two hundred to three hundred and four hundred hanegas of wheat; and they cultivate and harvest it with Indians. In this valley, every year they

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[84]"Relación de Papaloticpac y su partido (7-11 Deciembre, 1579), PNE 4: 92.

[85]"Descripción del pueblo de Yetecomac y su tierra (10 Octubre, 1579- 24 Marzo, 1580)," PNE 6: 22.

[86]"Relación de Tetícpac (15 Abril, 1580)," PNE 4: 112; "Relación de Tepepulco (15 Abril, 1581)," PNE 6: 301.

[87]"Relación de Coatepec y su partido (16 Noviembre, 1579)," PNE 6: 61.

> commonly harvest seventy to eighty thousand hanegas of wheat....[88]

At times, however, Spanish demand and coerced and cajoled Indian labor were not enough. In Iztepexi, priests made attempts to grow wheat, but these attempts failed for climatic reasons; while in San Miguel Capulapa and San Francisco çuçumbra, mountainous terrain interferred with wheat agriculture, and, in the mining region of Zumpango, it was too hot for wheat production.[89]

Later relaciones for the northern and central regions of New Spain also reveal the extent to which Castilian agriculture prospered in the Mexican environment. To the northeast of Mexico City Tampico and Panúco disclosed that no wheat or Spanish fruit grew in their hot climates. Wheat flour had to be imported from the capital, Puebla de los Angeles, Veracruz and Campeche to satisfy Spanish consumers.[90] But, more typically, to the far northwest in Nueva Galicia, Nuestra Señora de los Cacatecas reported the production of European grains and

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[88]"Relación de Tepeaca y su partido (4-20 Febrero, 1580)," PNE 5: 37-8.

[89]"Relación de Iztepexi (27-30 Agosto, 1579)," PNE 4: 20; "San Miguel Capulapa (20-29 Octubre, 1581)," PNE 5: 162, 166-7; "Relación de las minas de Zumpango (10 Marzo, 1582)," PNE 6: 314..

[90]"Descripción de la villa de Panúco (sin fecha)," CDIR 9:134, 141; "Descripción de los pueblos de la provincia de Panúco (sin fecha)," CDIR 9:153; "Descripción de la villa de Tampico (sin fecha)," CDIR 9:171; and Crosby, The Columbian Exchange, 65.

fruits.[91] Still further north in Nueva Viscaya, la Villa de Nombre de Dios was described as fertile land with a climate like that of Seville and the capacity to grow wheat and Castilian fruits as well as maize and beans.[92]

In the densely populated central regions of Mexico, wheat agriculture had taken root at a fairly early date, thus explaining the ability of Mexico City and Puebla de los Angeles to export wheat to areas like Panúco which could not grow the grain. Wheat agriculture was proudly reported for Michoacán, and Motolinía even made a special point of praising Michoacán's ability to produce European plants:

> Because of the fertility of this land and the mildness of its climate, many Spanish plants and trees have grown and multiplied--- trees of cold as well as hot lands, and vineyards. Here there are many mulberry-trees, and already many of them begin to produce silk.... Wheat grows very well, and increases geometrically....[93]

In the relaciones of 1609, the Oaxacan town of Miaguatlán reported a lack of Castilian fruits and livestock, but stated that the local Zapotec Indians harvested wheat with their maize, beans and chili.[94] The Indian inhabitants of colonial Culhuacán cultivated European fruit trees, and the nobles of the Texcoco

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[91]"Descripción de Nuestra Señora de los Cacatecas (1608)," CDIR 9:180-01.

[92]"Descripción de la Villa de Nombre de Dios...en Mayo de 1608," CDIR 9: 232, 235, 243.

[93]Motolinía, 280.

[94]"Relación de Miguatlan y su partido (Febrero de 1609)," CDIR 9:220.

region engaged in this practice for sale and profit as early as twenty years after the conquest.[95] At the same time, the Texcocan Indians maintained their traditional dietary patterns. This, in itself, reflected a method of cultural resistance following the Spanish conquest. Profit was one thing, drastically changing one's food habits another.

In areas like Oaxaca, the common Indians adopted some Spanish ways, but refused to produce many European foods on the lands which they continued to hold. Thus, Spaniards were forced to take up farming with Indian labor to satisfy their own cultural needs.[96] Such a pattern was also observable in the Valley of Mexico. There, Indian traditions, the higher price of wheat, and the fact that Indian wheat production was subject to tithing while maize was not, all operated to make maize and other indigenous foods far more attractive to the Indians than European foods and the European tax obligations attached to them.[97] Maize agriculture remained the base agrarian economic activity throughout central Mexico, land of sedentary, urban Indians: "Looking to the Indian world's economic, political, and

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[95]S. L. Cline, Colonial Culhuacan, 1580-1600: A Social History of an Aztec Town (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1986), 139.

[96]William B. Taylor, Landlord and Peasant in Colonial Oaxaca (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972), 5.

[97]Gibson, 322-3.

religious institutions, the pictures remain the same--- a successful graft onto living stock, then relative stasis. The markets changed least. They continued to be village markets...."[98] Conversely, where Indians were not sedentary in pre-conquest times, and were not abundantly present after the conquest, European foods came to dominate the geographical region. Thus, northern Mexico became "white Mexico." The great haciendas of the north produced cattle and wheat, and the extant records of the Zacatecas mines demonstrate that white miners and acculturated Indians consumed far more wheat than maize.[99] But even in the north, maize often sold at much lower prices than wheat. The Nueva Viscayan cabildo of la Villa de Nombre de Dios reported wheat prices at three or four pesos per hanega, while maize sold for literally half that price.[100] In Nuestra Señora de los Cacatecas, wheat and flour from the valley of Artizo sold at four pesos per hanega, maize at two to six pesos.[101]

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[98]James Lockhart, "Capital and Province, Spaniard and Indian: The Example of Late Sixteenth-Century Toluca," in Ida Altman and James Lockhart, eds., Provinces of Early Mexico: Variants of Spanish American Regional Evolution (Los Angeles: UCLA Latin American Center Publications, 1976), 114-15; Gibson, 311-12.

[99]Chevalier, 59-114; P. J. Bakewell, Silver Mining and Society in Colonial Mexico: Zacatecas, 1546-1700 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 59-68.

[100]"Descripción de la Villa de Nombre de Dios...en Mayo de 1608," CDIR 9:243.

[101]"Descripción de Nuestra Señora de los Cacatecas (1608)," CDIR 9:206.

The Spaniards destroyed the Aztec imperial rituals of human sacrifice and cannibalism, but did not eliminate those aspects of Indian culture which were not offensive to their moral and religious beliefs.[102] Thus, both Spaniards and Indians were partially satisfied. By eating differently from the Indians, the Spaniards felt superior. By eating differently from the Spaniards, the Indians felt that they had retained a vital, basic aspect of their culture and world.[103] While old pre-Columbian religious practices and spiritual values blended with the new Christian faith,[104] the most basic aspect of community and hearth, eating, remained in many ways relatively untouched for conquerors and conquered. Dietary syncretism occurred, but very slowly, unless pressured by need. In Spain itself, only peasants of the most marginal agricultural regions experimented with maize. Thus, the semi-nomadic herdsmen of the northern province of Santander came to rely on maize as a staple crop as early as the seventeenth century. Still, even in that northern region, in the more fertile, more settled Valdemora, wheat remained the cereal of choice for

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[102]Taylor, Landlord and Peasant, 35.

[103]Crosby, The Columbian Exchange, 74.

[104]Nancy M. Farriss, Maya Society under Colonial Rule: The Collective Enterprise of Survival (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 292-4; George M. Foster, Culture and Conquest: America's Spanish Heritage (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1960), 158-66; and S. L. Cline, 23, 25, 35, 41, 139.

bread.[105] In other areas of Spain and Europe, the spread of New World crops to the Old World was far from rapid, and both maize and the potato had widespread success only among the European poor in the eighteenth century.[106] In Mexico, Amerindians craved European beef and mutton, but they also still purchased dog meat, despite its high price in comparison with beef. When they accepted items of European diet, it was often disastrous, as in the case of the introduction of European wine and liquor.[107]

Culture determined the Spanish New World hierarchy of the ethnic ranks, or castas, and food is a pre-eminent aspect of culture.[108] From the Spanish perspective, consumers of Indian foods remained crude and part of

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[105] Susan Tax Freeman, The Pasiegos: Spaniards in No Man's Land (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 50-1; Susan Tax Freeman, Neighbors: The Social Contract in a Castillian Hamlet (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 27.

[106] Fernand Braudel, The Structures of Everyday Life: The Limits of the Possible, Vol. 1: Civilization and Capitalism, 15th-18th Century, trans. Siân Reynolds (New York: Harper and Row, 1981), 164-70; and Crosby, The Columbian Exchange, 178, 183.

[107] Gibson, 566-7, ch 12 n 87; "El Marqués de Villamanrique, virrey de Nueva España, al rey, 20 de julio 1587," Archivo General de Indias, Cartas y expedientes de los virreyes de Nueva España (Seville: Centro Nacional de Microfilm, 1975), reel 3, number 19; and William B. Taylor, Drinking, Homicide and Rebellion in Colonial Mexican Villages (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1979), 38-9.

[108] Lyle N. McAlister, "Social Structure and Social Change in New Spain," The Hispanic American Historical Review 43:3 (August, 1963), 354-8. For a reduction of culture to economic status, see Woodrow Borah, "Race and Class in Mexico," The Pacific Historical Review 23:4 (November, 1954), 332-4, 342.

savage nature, while other Indians--- the nobility, concubines, and the mestizo children of Spaniards and their mistresses--- became part of Spanish civilization through spoken communication and the silent language of ritual. To help bind Spaniards, Spanish towns maintained their fiestas, in which eating represented a major portion of the ceremony and enjoyment, and their hospitals, which provided health care and food to the poor, thus binding them to the community and alleviating some social tension and discontent.[109] Likewise, traditional Indian fiestas persisted, and Indian communal lands and community chests cared for the Indian poor in at least some areas.[110]

In the conquest and colonization of New Spain, the Spanish attitude towards food reveals a number of fundamental themes of the sixteenth-century Spanish mentalité. Foremost among them are a social organic vision and a sense of cultural superiority. Like the

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[109] On fiestas, see Foster, 167, 206, 218-19, 225; and Freeman, Neighbors, 90-3. Spaniards took great pride in their New World hospitals, seeing them as sure signs of a caring Christian community. See Motolinía, Pt. 1, ch. 51; "Carta al rey del arzobispo de México sobre el patronato y administración del Hospital Real de aquella ciudad.--- México, 31 de marzo de 1566," ENE 10:130-1; "Descripción de Nuestra Señora de los Cacatecas (1608)," CDIR 9:191; and Risse, "Medicine in New Spain," in Medicine in the New World, 37-42.

[110] Murdo J. MacLeod, "The Social and Economic Roles of Indian Cofradías in Colonial Chiapas," in The Church and Society in Latin America, ed. Jeffrey A. Cole (New Orleans: Tulane University Press, 1984), 73-96; Farriss, 266-70; Gibson, 132-3.

Aztec cosmology, the Spanish world-view was predominantly closed to anything outside its cultural experience. Amerindians had to be understood as "man before the fall," the ten lost tribes of Israel, demonic heathens, Aristotle's natural slaves--- or as incomplete Europeans.[111] They could not be understood in the terms of cultural relativism as nothing more or less than Amerindians. A sense of adhering to the one true culture bound Spaniards in the midst of an alien people, and it forced them to demand European foods. Domination and control of New Spain meant that Mexican lands necessarily had to be tamed and disciplined. Spanish foods were to be grown to bind Spanish community by means of ritual eating. In his observations on Aztec eating and his later ranching and agrarian activities, this was clearly a central mission of Cortés. The soul of the body politic was to be animated by God's laws and justice, but its physical body also had to be maintained by the appropriate aspects of material culture.

Imperialistic cultures of conquest must retain a sense of uniqueness in order to maintain a sense of superiority. The Spanish way of eating commmunicated civilization, hierarchy and reciprocity. It bound Spaniards together, and made Indians alien outsiders,

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[111]Lewis Hanke, Aristotle and the American Indians: A Study in Race Prejudice in the Modern World (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1959).

members of the república de los indios. Spaniards remarked that maize was fed to mules as well as Indians.[112] It was the raw stuff of savage nature, while, to Indians, it was the base of civilization.[113] In short, maize signified both the savage and the civilized, the raw and the cooked. Although Moctezuma's eating rituals often paralleled Spanish custom, the Spanish never forgot that he ate the wrong foods--- from maize to human flesh. Convinced of their superiority, Europeans have consistently tried to alter physical nature to suit their ideals.[114] For Spaniards in Mexico, this included the raising of cattle and the growing of wheat, grapes, and other crops alien to the environment. European man was not meant to fit into an indigenous ecosystem. That was for the natives, not for those who were given dominion over nature in the Book of Genesis. From its inception European expansionism attempted to "tame savage nature," not to accept cultural and environmental diversity.[115]

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[112] Bakewell, 63.

[113] Lévi-Strauss, The Raw and the Cooked, 169; Vaillant, 133, 135; Victor von Hagen, The Aztec: Man and Tribe (New York: Mentor Books, 1961), 68, 72.

[114] Hannah Arendt, "Thinking," in The Life of the Mind, ed. Mary McCarthy (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1978), 23-6, 54-5.

[115] A recent study which deals with European ecological imperialism in broad terms is Alfred W. Crosby's Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

CHAPTER 5

FASHIONING THE BODY: CLOTHING, SHELTER AND COMMUNITY IN SIXTEENTH-CENTURY MEXICO

When sixteenth-century Spaniards observed Amerindians, they saw incomplete people. In the Americas, Spaniards perceived their divine mission as the introduction of Amerindian peoples to the proper ordering of society, human individuals and nature. Amerindian souls required the saving message of Christianity, and Indian bodies needed proper disciplining in accordance with the moral precepts of Christian civilization. In turn, Christian civilization called for the elimination of those physical acts deemed shameful by it, but the Spaniards were very careful to retain enough observable material differences between themselves and the indigenous populations, just as the Indians were loathe to abandon all aspects of their culture. The introduction of Amerindians to Spanish customs was a function both of what the Spaniards chose to give and what the Indians chose to receive; and it began with the subjugation of Indian bodies to the Spaniards' interpretation of Christian morality. On a very visible level, the bodily application of Christian precepts

focused on the issue of appropriate uniformity and distinction in clothing and construction.

The first Spaniards to arrive in the New World were not humanists or intellectuals. As a result, they did not define or judge Indian culture on the basis of art and literature, but on the basis of clothing, shelter, and food. Clothing and shelter, the protection of bodies from the forces of nature, became an indicator of how civilized Indians were in Spanish eyes--- literally of how well they had shut themselves off from brute nature. Civilization meant the improved protection of bodies from heat, rain, cold, and "base" animal drives. Where Indians were poorly clad, they were either perceived as representatives of humanity before the Fall or as examples of mankind at its most lewd and lascivious. In actuality, Indian nudity revealed the cultural taboos of the first Europeans to make contact with peoples who often required no clothing for protection. In the Brazilian tropics, the chronicler of Pero Alvares Cabral's expedition of 1500, Pero Vaz de Caminha, noted that the innocence of the Brazilian Indians was such that Adam's could not have been greater. Still, the Portuguese attempted to clothe the Indians, especially a naked young woman who "disturbed" the sailors while they

were hearing mass.[1] The Indians were ingenuous to European customs and eroticism. Spanish, as well as Portuguese, explorers would not leave them so.

A relación described the Indians of Florida as being without gold, silver or pearls, miserable, deceitful, treacherous and naked.[2] As late as 1583, the Indians of the Conchas River were "desnudos" and sustained themselves on "roots and other things of little sustenance."[3] Clothing deemed appropriate by the Spaniards became the fastest and simplest method of judging Indians to be political and civilized. A lack of clothing was associated with a lack of civilization and wealth. Clad Indians only required Christians to explain why men and women lived together in law and order, and why they were clothed. Naked Indians required proper dress in Spanish eyes, and even las Casas, the great defender of the Indians, in his Brevisima Relación of 1552, made an effort to explain how Indians generally

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[1] John Hemming, Red Gold: The Conquest of the Brazilian Indians (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), 3-4.

[2] "Memoria de las cosas y costa y indios de la Florida," Coleccion de documentos inéditos relativos al descubrimiento, conquista y organización de las antiguas posesiones españolas de América y Oceanía, 42 vols., eds. Joaquin F. Pacheco, Francisco de Cárdenas and Luís Torres de Mendoza (Madrid: Manuel G. Hernandez, 1864-84), 5: 545. Henceforth referred to as CDIR.

[3] "Testimonio dado en Méjico sobre el descubrimiento de doscientas leguas adelante, de las minas de Santa Bárbola, Gobernacion de Diego de Ibarra.... (1582-83)," CDIR 15: 81, 90.

covered their genitals.[4] Sixteenth-century Spaniards defined animals as naked, eating roots. Humans were clothed.

The conquerors of Mexico brought these prejudices and taboos with them, but they were pleased to find that the Amerindians of Mexico were unlike those of the Caribbean islands. Bernal Díaz del Castillo, foot soldier and chronicler of Cortés's expedition, wrote:

> These Indians wore cotton shirts made in the shape of jackets, and covered their private parts with narrow cloths which they called masteles. We considered them a more civilized people than the Cubans. For they went about naked, except for the women, who wore cotton cloths that came down to their thighs.[5]

This passage describes Bernal Díaz's first encounter with Indians of the Mexican mainland during his participation in the 1517 expedition of Francisco Hernández. Immediately, the indigenous population of the Mexican coast was determined to be "more civilized" than that of Cuba, and this was made clear by their homes as well as by their clothing. Bernal Díaz recorded that six miles from the coast the Hernández expedition sighted a large town which they dubbed Great Cairo since they had never seen one as large in Cuba or Hispaniola.[6] Urban

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[4]Bartolomé de las Casas, Brevisima Relación de la Destrucción de Indias, ed. Manuel Ballesteros Gaibrois (Madrid: Fundación Universitaria Española, 1977), aiiii[b].

[5]Bernal Díaz del Castillo, The Conquest of New Spain, trans. J. M. Cohen (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963), 18.

[6]Ibid., 17.

settlement and a lack of nudity were so linked to the Spanish concept of civilization that Spaniards invented these two factors when they were not there. In his fabricated description of the seven cities of Cibola, Fray Márcos de Niza followed the same formula as Bernal Díaz. The Indians of fabulous Cibola were identified as civilized because of their vast populations, well ordered streets, large houses, and elaborate dress.[7] In the realm of empirical reality, the same pattern was also followed by Hernán Cortés.

In a letter to Charles V dated July 10, 1519, Cortés provided a relatively detailed description of the clothing worn from the cape of Yucatán to the vicinity of Villa Rica de Vera Cruz. He mentioned the basic male vestments as a loincloth and thin mantle "decorated in a Moorish fashion," and like the men of Cabral's Brazilian expedition, he paid close attention to the dress of female Indians:

> The common women wear highly colored mantles from the waist to the feet, and others which cover their breasts, leaving the rest uncovered. The women of rank wear skirts of very thin cotton, which are very loose-fitting and decorated and cut in the manner of a rochet.[8]

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[7] "Descubrimiento de las siete ciudades, por el P. Fr. Márcos de Niza (2 Setiembre, 1539)," CDIR 3: 336, 343.

[8] Hernán Cortés, "First Letter," in Letters from Mexico, trans. Anthony Pagden (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 30.

Bernal Díaz and Cortés were representative of the Spanish reaction to Indian clothing customs. Clothing was not seen primarily as a form of protection from the elements, but as protection from illicit sexual urges. Spaniards were fallen men in their own eyes, and they sought kinship with people who also denigrated their bodies and its needs. This extended beyond sexuality since Bernal Díaz, when describing the marketplace of Tenochtitlán, made a special point of elaborately apologizing for his recording the sale of human excrement "for the manufacture of salt and curing of skins."[9] The Indians of Mexico, therefore, had an inkling of "appropriateness" in their attitudes toward the human body, but this appropriate behavior, behavior comparable to that of the Spaniards, was mixed with a certain alien otherness which could only be labelled inappropriate by the closed Spanish mentalité. Spaniards were fascinated by both the similarities and differences between their culture and those of the Amerindians of Mexico. In the description of male Indian dress in Cortés's letter to Charles V, the differences are first alluded to in his comparison of Amerindian dyeing to that of the Moors. The Moors were the most alien culture with which the Spaniards had long-term experience, and Cortés was quite given to use analogy to the Moors when he could not

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[9]Bernal Díaz, 233.

defend Amerindian custom. When he saw enough similarity, the Amerindians were readily compared to Spaniards, but their differences, comparable to the customs of the infidel Moors, justified the conquest of a heathen people by Christians.

Cortés, his secretary and biographer López de Gómara, and Bernal Díaz all were impressed by the luxury which surrounded the Indian prince Moctezuma. They mentioned that he never used the same towel or dressed in the same clothes twice, and that he was approached with complete obeissance, the Aztec nobles averting their faces in his presence.[10] This led Cortés, and others, to draw analogies between Moctezuma and Oriental despots, Sahagún even reviving the ancient Persian title of "satrap" to identify Moctezuma's subordinate chieftains.[11] The conquistador could easily accept noble privilege, but he could not accept the virtual deification of the prince; that was something he reserved for the Christian God. Cortés's Spanish society was continuously trying to regulate luxury through ever-

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[10]Cortés, "Second Letter," 112; Bernal Díaz, 225; Francisco López de Gómara, Cortés: The Life of the Conqueror by His Secretary, trans. Lesley Byrd Simpson (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1964), 143.

[11]Bernardino de Sahagún, Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España, 4 vols., ed. Angel María Garibay K. (Mexico City: Editorial Porrúa, 1956), Bk. 12, ch. 19.

failing sumptuary laws,[12] and he did not have the time or inclination to seek out similar attempts among the Aztecs. He judged excessive opulence as a weakness in the cultures of the Aztecs and the other newly conquered Indians of Mexico, just as he judged human sacrifice and cannibalism as erroneous rituals.[13] Though the Indians of Mexico were on the right path in matters of dress, they were still not correct in matters of ritual interpretation or the "refinements" of bodily adornment.

In describing the Indians of coastal Mexico, Cortés took time to mention how they "deformed" their appearance by splitting their lips to the gums and wearing obsidian and gold lip plugs.[14] As such, their splendor and conceptions of beauty were so strange that the Spaniards judged them signs of ugliness. Nowhere was this ugliness more perverse than when it blended with symbolic dress which could be both understood and admired by the Spaniards. The native priests of Mexico provided a case in point, and Bernal Díaz described them by linking both

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[12]In a 1529 letter to the Castilian Crown, Bishop Zumarraga argued the moral and hierarchical need for Mexican sumptuary laws. "Carta á su magestad del electo obispo de Méjico, D. Juan de Zumarraga, en que refiere la conquista que hizo de aquella tierra Hernán Cortés....(27 de Agosto de 1529)," CDIR 13:170-71. Also see Jean Hippolyte Mariéjol, The Spain of Ferdinand and Isabella, trans. Benjamin Keen (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1961), 216-17.

[13]Cortés, "First Letter," 35-6; and "Second Letter," 106, 146, 251.

[14]Cortés, "First Letter," 30.

proper and improper characteristics. These priests, whom Bernal Díaz called papas, "wore black cloaks like those of canons," and sometimes small hoods "like Dominicans," but they also wore hair, matted in human blood, to their feet, and: "Their ears were cut to pieces as a sacrifice, and they smelt of sulphur. But they also smelt of something worse: of decaying flesh."[15] Not only were they practitioners of human sacrifice. Bernal Díaz identified them as sodomites as well. Legally banned from marriage in del Castillo's account, they were a foul parody of the Roman Catholic priesthood in their appearance and behavior. The similarities of chastity and somber black dress were also noted by Cortés, but the conqueror of Mexico limited his dissimilarities to the long, tangled hair of the papas. To him, idol worship alone was enough to make the papas false priests, and, in general, he did not enjoy ennumerating the "failings" of the people of Mexico.[16] In fact, the custom of human sacrifice was mentioned sparingly by Cortés, but he did use it to invalidate the Indians' otherwise impressive achievements in the building arts.

Cortés and Bernal Díaz both were ready to point out that the Indians' most striking architectural achievements, the adornment of their urban centers, were

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[15]Bernal Díaz, 123-4, 173, 240.
[16]Cortés, "Second Letter," 72, 105.

also the sites of foul human sacrifices. Mesoamerican temples were admired for their size and grandeur, but their religious functions bespoke of error and barbarism to the sixteenth-century Spanish mentalité.[17] On the other hand, the private homes of the nobility posed less of a threat to the first conquistadores. Cortés readily praised the homes of the Aztec nobility for their furnishings, kitchens, corridors, and gardens. On observing the Yztapalapa homes of Moctezuma's brother Cuitláhuac, Cortés regarded them "as good as the best in Spain; that is, in respect of size and workmanship both in their masonry and woodwork and their floors, and furnishings for every sort of household task." However, he noted that they lacked the ostentation of which Spaniards approved, namely reliefs and works of art to which they were accustomed in the homes of the rich.[18] He likewise remarked on the beautiful homes of Moctezuma's "vassals" in Tenochtitlán, on their immense rooms and pleasant gardens.[19] Bernal Díaz, mercenary that he was, paid special attention to Tenochtitlán's royal storehouses, but he also described the temple of Huitzilpochtli in detail as a slaughterhouse where innocents were offered to demons, and then eaten by the

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[17] Cortés, "First Letter," 35; "Second Letter," 105-06; and Bernal Díaz, 238-40.

[18] Cortés, "Second Letter," 82.

[19] Ibid., 107.

papas. He "always called that building Hell."[20] As with clothing, the conquistadores were once again impressed by the Mexican Indians' ability to shelter themselves with great skill and art from the brutalities of nature, but, as with clothing, Amerindian buildings were both a sign of civilized culture and innappropriate behavior among the Indians. Things as seemingly innocuous as shelter and clothing became tools to justify and impose imperialism, and the friar-chroniclers of the history of sixteenth-century New Spain, for all their admiration of Indian culture, proved no exception to this rule.

The Franciscans Bernardino de Sahagún and Gerónimo de Mendieta, as well as the Jesuit Joseph de Acosta, all discussed the ritual use of clothing in their chronicles. As men who wore ceremonial vestments themselves, it is not surprising that they should touch upon this aspect of human adornment. However, the tenor of their argument quickly became the perverse and inappropriate use the Indians made of such adornment, ceremonial dress being primarily linked to acts of human sacrifice in all these works. The Aztecs were shown as reserving their best clothing and their greatest building achievements, their temples, for acts of idolatry and cruelty. In detail, Sahagún described the clothing and plumage worn by various ranks of Aztec men and women at sacrificial

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[20] Bernal Díaz, 227-39, 218.

feasts, while both he and Acosta noted that even the statues of gods like Quetzalcoatl were dressed in shirts and headdresses--- Acosta describing Quetzalcoatl's headdress as similar to a papal miter.[21] The Jesuit also took time to note that Aztec priests wore vestments similar to those of Catholic ceremony, including a short alb with an ornamental fringe.[22] Sahagún, for his part, noted the various states of dress and undress among human sacrifices themselves, remarking that they were exceptionally well-dressed, and well-fed, while awaiting death, but naked during an actual instance of sacrifice (the feast of the tenth month or Xocotl Huetzi):

> because they no longer had need of vestments, nor anything else, since presently they would have to die, naked they awaited death....[23]

During the act of human sacrifice, Mexican Indians shed both clothing and civilization. Not only linked with death, nudity was linked with the barbarism of natural, uncivilized states in the sixteenth-century Spanish mentalité. In the Aztec case, it was linked to the perverse state of a culture that could spill so much blood, dress so well, and construct such beautiful edifices as their temples, all for the sake of idols and

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[21]Sahagún, Historia, 1:177, 181, 45, 69-70; Joseph de Acosta, Historia natural y moral de las Indias, ed. Edmundo O' Gorman (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Economica, 1940), 371.

[22]Acosta, 404.

[23]Sahagún, Historia, 1:187, 169.

demons. The intricacy of the temples did not hide their prime function to Sahagún, Mendieta, and Acosta. They were the places of naked savagery described by the conquistadores, and Mendieta compared the legendary attempts of Cholula to construct a temple-pyramid reaching the heavens with those of the citizens of Babel. Ultimately, Mendieta's "one true God" confounded both attempts.[24] Shocked by the number and methods of Aztec human sacrifices, Acosta wrote about them to show the power of Satan and of spriritual evil in the material world:

> And in order to show you the great misfortune of these people blinded by the Demon, I will refer extensively to the inhuman practice which they had in this place.[25]

Using their own terms and definitions, Spaniards could recognize the incongrueties of barbarism and civilization existing side-by-side in Aztec culture. Given their own cultural limitations, they generally could not see any in their own society, nor in themselves when they massacred Aztec nobles and priests at one of their religious ceremonies--- nor could they see them in

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[24]Gerónimo de Mendieta, Historia Eclesíastica Indiana (Mexico City: Editorial Porrua, 1971), 86-7.

[25]Acosta, 403.

the activities of the Holy Inquisition.[26] Spanish violence was just and justified by the Spaniards' own familiarity with it. In their minds, the familiar culture was fundamentally the true culture.

In his Historia eclesiástica indiana, Mendieta took the time to present the obvious solution to inappropriate ritual dress and construction among the Indians of Mesoamerica. He argued that Indian material culture was taking the right turn since the post-conquest Indians of Mexico were demonstrating their new-found Christian faith through the sponsorship and construction of numerous churches.[27] Their former devotion to "false" gods was transferred to the "Spanish truth," and, in the 1570's, even Cholula, that former Babel, supported more than thirty friars in its monastery of San Francisco de los Angeles.[28] Churches were rightfully replacing the bloody temples as a visible sign of the triumph of Spanish culture. Still, Sahagún, Acosta, and Mendieta all firmly

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[26]Bernardino de Sahagún, Florentine Codex: General History of the Things of New Spain, 13 vols., trans. Arthur J.O. Anderson and Charles E. Dibble (Santa Fe: Monographs of the School of American Research, 1970-82), Book 12, chapter 20. On the pedantic function of the Inquisition, see Sara T. Nalle, "Inquisitors, Priests, and the People During the Catholic Reformation in Spain," The Sixteenth Century Journal 18:4 (Winter, 1987): 557-83. For a dissenting view, see Henry Kamen, "Toleration and Dissent in Sixteenth-Century Spain: The Alternative Tradition," The Sixteenth Century Journal 19:1 (Spring, 1988): 3-23.

[27]Mendieta, 421-9.

[28]Ibid., 423.

agreed that Indian culture did not warrant complete destruction. Acosta argued that the Indians of Mexico possessed a substantial understanding of law and order, or policía, and Sahagún felt that the Spaniards were called to cure a diseased social organism, not kill it.[29] Certain aspects of Indian culture were to be corrected, but the fundamentals, including those in the areas of clothing and construction, could remain the same.

On a very basic level of material culture, that of trade and exchange, the Spanish chroniclers noted that the Indians of Mexico were prepared for the infiltration of Spanish ways. Moreover, where clothing was concerned, the adoption of certain Indian practices actually proved beneficial to the Spaniards. A hybridization of cultures occured where cotton was concerned. Though much given to arguing the inferiority of New World plants, Joseph de Acosta could not fail to praise cotton as "one of the greatest benefits the Indies have."[30] Given to flourishing in hot climates, cotton thread could be woven fine or coarse, thus serving the needs of both rich and poor where wool and flax failed to flourish.[31] Recognized by individuals like Friar Motolinía as a variety of tribute payment in pre-Columbian times, cotton cloth, in the form of mantas, persisted as a type of

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[29]Acosta, 447, 471-2; Sahagún, Historia, 1:27.
[30]Acosta, 290, 311.
[31]Ibid., 290-01.

tribute payment after the conquest of Mexico.[32] Spaniards immediately grasped that the demands of tributary imperialism could be easily understood by the Indians of Mexico. The sixteenth-century chroniclers noted that, in pre-Columbian times, clothing was sold and exchanged, thus presenting evidence for the existence of economic order and policía.[33] Though they failed in matters of ritual adornment, the Aztecs and other tribes of Mexico were judged somewhat civilized since they possessed clothes and understood tributary exchange.

In an attempt to regulate prices and prevent hoarding, Mexico City's cabildo, as the local defender of the body politic's common good, issued a May 16, 1533 ordinance which required all commercial purchasers of tributary items to declare the exact amount and condition of the items purchased for resale. These goods could be either perishable or imperishable, food or articles of

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[32]"Pleito contra el licenciado Juan Ortiz de Matiengo y Diego Delgadillo, para recuperar la renta del pueblo de Toluca que...habían dado a García del Pilar durante la ausencia de Cortés en España (año de 1531)," in Tributos y servicios personales de indios para Hernán Cortés y su familia, ed. Silvio Zavala (Mexico City: Archivo General de la Nación, 1984), 67-81; and "Precios de la ropa de Cuernavaca, 1535....Comercio de productos del tributo en la ciudad de México," in Tributos y servicios personales de indios para Hernán Cortés y su familia, 115-19.

[33]Sahagún, Historia, 3:134-5; Fray Toribio de Benavente o Motolinía, Memoriales o libro de las cosas de la Nueva España y de los naturales de ella, ed. Edmundo O'Gorman (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1971), 373.

clothing and household use. If the latter, the vecinos of the capital were to be provided with six days in which to purchase the goods to the exclusion of all other customers. If the former, they were to be provided with three days. Since this was a standard corporate privilege of the time for an elite in good standing, the Audiencia of New Spain approved this legislation, and provided future historians with a source of information regarding clothing sales.

On June 1, 1535, in concordance with the cabildo's ordinance, Gregorio Ruiz, regidor of Mexico City, recorded the arrival of tributary goods purchased from Hernán Cortés by a merchant named Juan Marín. The tribute came from the Indian townships of Cuernavaca, Yautepeque, Guastepeque and Acapistla, and foremost among the items of tribute were articles of clothing in great demand in Mexico City. The capital's vecinos had replaced Moctezuma and his fellow Aztec lords as the recipients of tributary clothes, with Spanish merchants replacing the merchants who once sold cloth in the marketplaces of Tenochtitlán. According to the testimony of June 1, Marín's business revolved around the resale of shirts (camisas), shifts (naguas), half-cloaks (mantas) and coverlets (colchas). The quantities involved were substantial, Cortés's tribute being as much as 234 cargas (approximately 1400 bushels) of mantas from Cuernavaca

and 96 cargas (approximately 575 bushels) of mantas from Guastepeque. Finished shirts and shifts were received in much smaller quantities--- only five cargas total (approximately 30 bushels) from Cuernavaca, Guastepeque and Yautepeque combined. Still, the value of shirts and shifts made up for the lack of quantity. Rodrigo de Baeza reported that Marín paid 25 gold pesos for each carga of shirts and shifts, but only four and a half gold pesos for each carga of ropa de mantas. A number of witnesses reported that he resold the mantas at six and a half gold pesos for each carga.[34] With the primary producers providing the articles of resale at no cost, a substantial profit could be turned by all Spaniards involved. The Crown, through its Audiencia in this case, approved of the profit-making economic exchange of manufactured products. In Spain, despite the Comunero Revolt, Charles V did not destroy Castilian textile manufacture deliberately. Rather, he tried to make a privileged place for it, just as his predecessors had made one for the Mesta.[35] In Mexico, Cortés possessed his tributary privileges; the vecinos of Mexico City possessed their privileges as a consumer elite; and the merchant Juan Marín could engage in resale at a profit.

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[34] Tributos, Zavala (ed.), 115-55.

[35] Stephen Haliczer, The Comuneros of Castile. The Forging of a Revolution, 1475-1521 (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1981), 211-23.

An organic system of hierarchy, exchange and reciprocity was thus administered by the Crown and its officials in the New World, as it had been in the Old.

As late as 1604, royal enquiries into the affairs of the New World linked the importance of clothing to trade and "Europeanization." In that year, the Council of the Indies' questionnaire asked: "What clothing is manufactured in this town, and what livestock are raised;" "How many stores of Spanish clothing (are there);" "How many of local clothing, and of what types;" "How many textile obrajes and fulleries does this town have in its district;" and "What quality of woolens, serges and sackcloth do they manufacture every year, and what is the quality and price of each thing?"[36]

In places as far removed as the Yucatán, Indian mantas came to be collected as a standard form of tribute. There, the tributary records for 1549-1551 reveal that anywhere from 60 to 1200 mantas were collected annually as the produce of encomienda labor. Each manta was valued at two tomines, and individual encomenderos like Cisneros, a vecino of San Francisco de Campeche, could expect 120 mantas from the Indians of

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[36]"Interrogatorio para todas las ciudades, villas y lugares...de las Indias Occidentales...," CDIR 9:63, 66, 70.

Axaba and 250 _mantas_ from Ixpona.[37] Only the Crown and individuals of reputation could hope to rival the amount of _mantas_ collected by Cortés for resale in Mexico City. In the Yucatán, a man identified as Peralvárez (most likely Pedro de Alvarado) received 1200 _mantas_ from Ocova, and His Majesty was due annual amounts of 1030 _mantas_ from Telchiqui, 470 from Quibil, 400 from Taxan, 250 from çabanal, 120 from Nolo, and as little as 60 from Yaxcocul.[38] A crucial qualification to all these collections, however, was that the _mantas_ delivered by the Indians be "of those they are accustomed to give." Thus, the Mexican Indians' custom of tributary payment in cloth and textiles provided the Spaniards with a means of easily introducing the commercial exchange of manufactured goods from the very start. To the benefit of both Spanish and Indian elites, the language of exchange was understood by all parties involved in Mexico, including the Amerindian commoners.

Interestingly enough, Alonso de Zorita, _oidor_ of the Audiencia of New Spain, strongly argued that tributary payments in cloth only provided hardship for the Indian commoners. Each piece of tribute cloth was worth far

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[37] "Tasaciones de los pueblos de la provincia de Yucatán," in _Epistolario de Nueva España, 1505-1818_, 16 vols., ed. Francisco del Paso y Troncoso (Mexico City: José Porrúa e hijos, 1939-1940), 6:91-2. Henceforth _ENE_.

[38] Ibid., 5:141, 123-4, 119-20, 126, 119, 120-01, 120.

more in time and labor than other tribute demanded from the Indians, and the poor and women who manufactured the cloth spoiled many pieces because of the great pressure under which they worked. Zorita stated that:

> It is no argument to say, as some do, that there will be a shortage of cloth if this tribute is not paid; it is better that there be a shortage of cloth than a shortage of people. Besides, there is always cloth available in those areas where the Indians are accustomed to make cloth; they make it for themselves and also take it to sell in places where it is not made. There are many cloth merchants, both Indians and Spaniards.[39]

Rather than a forced exchange based on tributary relations, Zorita's argument contained the seeds of a free market in the cloth trade. As such, he was presenting a position anathema to a cosmology which emphasized hierarchical control from above. Rather than being "free," exchange was meant to reflect and support the social organism's established ranks and privileges. Free trade would have provided a means of leveling estates which simply could not be allowed. If the higher ranks were meant to provide order, rationality and equitable justice, the lower ranks were meant to provide sustenance. In this manner, the social organic discourse understood economics, and Spaniards and Indians both understood each other's economic values.

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[39]Alonso de Zorita, Life and Labor in Ancient Mexico: The Brief and Summary Relation of the Lords of New Spain, trans. Benjamin Keen (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1963), 253.

This mutual economic understanding was true to such a great extent that the Indian beneficiaries of the system, the caciques or chieftains, were often accused of greater exploitation of their fellow Indians than the Spaniards themselves. Tribute and trade, which had existed under the Aztecs and persisted under the Spaniards, created a sort of modus vivendi for conquerors and conquered--- one which focused on the economic value and ideas surrounding cloth. In Europe, issues surrounding the manufacture and sale of textiles had already been a determining factor in such events as the Hundred Years' War and the Spanish Comunero Revolt. In describing the marketplace of Tenochtitlán, Bernal Díaz could write:

> Let us begin with the dealers in gold, silver, and precious stones, feathers, cloaks, and embroidered goods.... Next there were those who sold coarser cloth, and cotton goods and fabrics made of twisted thread. In this way you could see every kind of merchandise to be found anywhere in New Spain, laid out in the same way as goods are laid out in my own district of Medina del Campo, a centre for fairs, where each line of stalls has its own particular sort. So it was in this great market. There were those who sold sisal cloth and ropes and the sandals they wear on their feet, which are made from the same plant.[40]

The exchange of finished products on a massively organized scale pointed to a culture that was developing beyond subsistence agrarian activities and developing

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[40]Bernal Díaz, 232.

more and more specialization in labor and service. That not everyone was producing their own clothing was a sure sign of such "advanced development" in the sixteenth-century Spanish mentalité of conquest. Likewise, the Aztec wearing of clothes was linked to their denunciation of adultery, lascivious behavior and homosexuality. By seeing something of themselves in the Aztecs, the Spaniards recognized what they deemed civilization and culture, law and order: in one word, policía. Tenochtitlán was like the Castilian trading center of Medina del Campo.

Paradoxically, the production of cloth in Mexico often indicated barbarism as well as civilization. Though cotton cloth was used by Spaniards, many among them desired the familiar feel of woolen textiles. Thus, when the experimental city of Puebla de los Angeles was founded in 1532, some of the new pobladores established obrajes, or textile manufacturies, to produce coarse and fine woolen cloth. Indians accounted for little consumption at the early stages of wool-market development, and the non-Indian population, estimated by Borah and Cook at 90,000 around 1580, accounted for the growth in demand. Until the eighteenth-century Bourbon reforms, the obrajes produced the woolen cloth desired by Spanish colonists in New Spain, as well as producing

goods for contraband trade with the Spaniards of Peru.[41] By 1580, 300,000 pounds of wool was produced annually by a Mexican Mesta, and Puebla had as many as forty obrajes employing 12,000 workers. Mexico City ranked second with thirty-five obrajes, while the cities of Querétaro, Valladolid, Texcoco and Tlaxcala also boasted their own textile industries.[42] These indutries suffered after 1590, as increased restrictions in trade, a shortage of Indian labor and the development of a Peruvian industry cut into the Mexican markets. Still, production continued, and, by 1661, black slaves accounted for nearly sixty per cent of the work force in Puebla's obrajes, replacing an Indian labor force decimated by disease and protected by the Crown from some of the most brutalizing aspects of the obrajes.[43]

Prior to 1661, many native Mexicans were condemned to the barbarism of employment in an obraje, where hunger and shackles were often enough the rule, and, in the 1600's, average earnings for wage labor did not reach two reales per day.[44] Initially, encomienda and repartimiento Indians were used as a tributary labor force, but when the Crown outlawed personal service as a

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[41]Salvucci, 149, 3-9.

[42]Colin MacLachlan and Jaime E. Rodríguez O., The Forging of the Cosmic Race: A Reinterpretation of Colonial Mexico (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1980), 187-92.

[43]Salvucci, 135-7, 131, 110.

[44]Ibid., 109, 125.

form of tribute in 1549, more and more _encomenderos_ demanded tributary payment in cloth, as Cortés already did in the 1530's. Finally, other Spaniards set up _obrajes_ employing African and Asian slaves, as well as a paid labor force consisting of _mulatos_, _mestizos_ and free Indians. Spanish demand made the _obraje_ a fixture of the sixteenth century, and many free Indian towns set up their own _obrajes de comunidad_ to satisfy Spanish tributary demands in kind. At the same time, Indians also began to use the heavier woolens preferred by Europeans.[45] Revealed by las Casas and others as exceptionally brutal enterprises, where the labor force was often enchained and physically mistreated, the monarchy continued to issue _cédulas_ which stated, "In no way are Indians permitted to work in textile _obrajes_."[46] Still, the work persisted since, on one level, Spanish superiority had to be identified by Spanish woolens.

In the meantime, the arrival of luxury woolens from Europe never completely ceased. The high transportation costs between Spain and New Spain limited the amount of Old World woolens which could be imported, but these costs did not limit demand. In fact, Old World clothing still arrived in New Spain, but, in 1587, Viceroy Villamanrique complained that merchants charged

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[45] MacLachlan and Rodríguez, 187-92.

[46] "Sobre las Cédulas del servicio personal de los indios (sin fecha)," _CDIR_ 6:118.

outrageously exhorbitant prices for these goods in high demand.[47] Spaniards still wished to dress like Spaniards in a New World, and that meant the wearing of woolens whenever possible. It also meant the relegation of cotton mantas to Indian bodies, and Indians largely produced their own clothing at home.[48] By the 1640's, even moderately sized stores in the mining regions of northern Mexico were well stocked with woolens and items of Cordoban leather. Mexican leather shoes were clearly distinguished from the Cordoban in the inventories, and it was considered worthwhile to identify as little as two and one-half ounces of thread as being "fine Portuguese thread."[49] The homeland, the old continent, imposed value on goods, reassigning values to New World wares.

The Spanish conquest of New Spain served as a transformation of ideas, values and material culture. Not only were the gods and religious rituals of the native Americans attacked; their clothing was also devalued by a new system of ranks which placed the wearers of Spanish dress at the top of a pyramid of social stratification. Early modern European sumptuary

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[47]"Al Rey de virrey Villamanrique (11 Hebrero 1587)," Archivo General de Indias, Carta y expedientes de los virreyes de Nueva España (Seville: Centro Nacional de Microfilm, 1975), reel 4, number 1.

[48]Salvucci, 19.

[49]Peter Boyd-Bowman, "Two Country Stores in XVIIth Century Mexico," The Americas 28:3 (January, 1972): 237-251.

laws provided for the easy identification of rank by means of clothes. In 1529, Bishop Juan de Zumarraga clearly saw an hierarchical, as well as a moral, reason for the introduction of sumptuary laws to Mexico.[50] For proper order to be maintained in a society of ranks, people could not be allowed to live above their vocational station. Among other things, clothes had to be appropriately distributed according to rank. Clothes did not make the man, but clothes identified the man. What had once been valued by the Aztec elite as a luxury item, feathered cloaks, soon came to mean little in the values ascribed by the new Spanish elite. At its base, the language of exchange remained the same, but not a few nuances were introduced with the introduction of a new elite at the top. The visible symbols of power were redefined. This was clearly illustrated by the fact that Indian _caciques_, the intermediaries between the _república de los españoles_ and the _república de los indios_, petitioned for the right to wear Spanish noble dress and swords as natural lords of the land: a privilege often granted them as loyal servants of the Crown.[51] The

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[50]"Carta á su magestad del electo obispo de Méjico, D. Juan de Zumarraga, en que refiere la conquista que hizo de aquella tierra Hernan Cortés...(27 Agosto 1529)," _CDIR_ 13: 170-01.

[51]Numerous examples may be found among the documents of the Mexican National Archives. Archivo General de la Nación, Fondo _Indios_, volumen 4, exp. 170-180, f. 55[a]-56[a]; volumen 6, 1[a] parte, volumen 6, exp. 223-224 and 273, f. 57[a] and 74[a-b].

Spanish conquest meant an identification of Spanish clothes with wealth and power, a transformation by which the Indian _manta_ and _sarape_ became stigmas in a system of hierarchical symbols which placed the signs deemed Spanish at the very top--- at least from the Spanish rulers' perspective. The quetzal feather, a symbol of power to the Aztecs, no longer had the same immense value after the fall of Tenochtitlán.

Spanish _corregidores_ were primarily responsible for the gathering of information in the _relaciones_, and although they asked their questions of older Indian nobles, the "progress" in clothing and civilization after the Spanish conquest must be seen as a sign of self-congratulatory flattery on the part of the Spanish _mentalité_. Amerindian clothing before the conquest often was described as relatively poor when compared to Spanish clothing, but, at the same time, extremely hierarchical within its own confines. Unlike Cortés and Bernal Díaz, who compared the clothed Indians of Mexico to the "naked" Indians of the Caribbean, the _corregidores_ of the 1580's, were often much harsher in their assessment of pre-Columbian dress. Time ensuing between the 1520's and 1580's had clothed the Amerindian populations of the Caribbean basin and New Spain in accordance with Spanish tastes. Therefore, common reports of the 1580's refer to pre-Columbian Mexican Indians as "_desnudos_," even though

the men wore maxtles (loin cloths) and mantas, and the women covered their breasts. Approximately five leagues from Tlaxcala, on October 29, 1581, Tetela issued a very standard report. The corregidor Jhoan Gonçales stated that, prior to the conquest, the local inhabitants went about naked, with only some mantas to cover themselves.[52] In the Valley of Mexico, the alcalde mayor Alonso de Contreras Figueroa reported that the Indians of the cabecera Ueipuchtla "went about naked with only some bandages worn in the manner of breeches, and mantas of cotton and maguey fiber, which is like Castilian angero."[53] When women's clothing is mentioned, as in the case of Atitalaquia and its subject towns, special note is made of feminine modesty: "and in order to cover the breasts and the rest of the body, they made a dress which, among them, is called a guipil."[54]

Even descriptions which fail to use the word "desnudo" often speak volumes in their choice of words. In his relaciones for Yscateupa (Ichcateopán) and its partido, Captain Lucas Pinto, corregidor, reported that the men of Tzicaputzalco wore "only a manta on top and

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[52]"Caueçera de Tetela," in Papeles de Nueva España, 7 vols., ed. Francisco del Paso y Troncoso (Madrid: Sucesores de Rivadeneyra, 1905), 5: 148. Henceforth Papeles de Nueva España will be referred to as PNE.

[53]Angero was a coarse cloth which originated in Anjou, France. "Relación de Ueipuchtla y su partido (10 Octubre, 1579- 24 Marzo, 1580)," PNE 6: 16.

[54]"Relación de Atitalaquia y su partido (22 Febrero, 1580)," PNE 6: 206.

some pañetes with which they covered their shame."[55] He reported that the Indians of Alaustlán "formerly went about dressed with only a manta," and, finally, those of Quatepeque "went about naked in times of peace with only a short cloak bound at the shoulder and some pañetes."[56] In Tlacotepeque, also a subject town of Yscateupa, the male Indians wore mantas and pañetes, "without wearing anything else."[57] In these relaciones done under Pinto's direction from October 12 to December 1, 1579, it appears that "only" ("sola") and "without wearing anything else" ("sin traer otra cosa") are meant to bear the same connotation as "naked" ("desnudo"). Much had changed between Bernal Díaz's fundamental praise of Mexican Indian clothing practices and Pinto's selection of words.

The officials of the imperium expressed Spanish cultural superiority by noting that the indigenous populations of Mexico had taken to covering more of their bodies in the manner of Spaniards. Ironically, even though the Spaniards themselves recognized a strict hierarchy in clothing (one often reinforced by sumptuary laws), Crown officials occasionally argued that the adoption of Spanish patterns in dress had helped to level distinctions within Amerindian communities. Reporting on

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[55] "Tzicaputzalco (12 Octubre, 1579- 1 Diciembre, 1579)," PNE 6: 96.

[56] "Alaustlan," PNE 6: 102; and "Quatepeque," PNE 6: 119.

[57] "Tlacotepeque," PNE 6: 124.

the towns of Tequizistlán, Aculma, San Juan Teutihuacán and Tepexa in the Valley of Mexico, the corregidor Francisco de Castañeda followed a simple formula in which he described the relative richness in the dress of principales vis-à-vis the simplicity of the commoners' clothing prior to the conquest:

> in time of peace the principales commonly wore delicate maxtles and mantas of maguey fiber, but on feast days they dressed in decorated cotton mantas, and when they went outdoors, for protection from the sun, they each took a fan of feathers. All the macequales wore only a rough manta of maguey fiber and a maxtle....[58]

Jhoan Gonçales, the same corregidor who reported on Tetela, wrote of pre-Columbian hierarchical distinctions between the señores and macequales of Xonotla, describing the rich mantas and feathers of the principales.[59] For Castañeda and Gonçales, the male Indians' adoption of clothing for their legs and upper torsos represented a victory of Spanish culture and a levelling of Indian society: "and now everyone generally wears shirts, mantas and breeches of cotton...."[60] In Oaxaca, other corregidores noted this imperial victory, stating that the Indians continued to wear mantas, but that they were no longer naked.[61] In the 1580's, Indians uniformly wore

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[58]"Aculma (22 Febrero, 1580- 1 Marzo, 1580)," PNE 6: 217. Also see PNE 6: 224, 229, 235.

[59]"Relación de Xonotla y Tetela (20 y 29 Octubre, 1581)," PNE 5: 128.

[60]"Aculma," PNE 6: 217. Also "Xonotla," PNE 5: 129.

[61]"Relación de Papaloticpac y su partido (7- 11 Diciembre, 1579)," PNE 4: 90-1.

"shirts like Spaniards," "Castilian shirts," "and some (wear) Castilian clothes."[62] In Textiles and Capitalism in Mexico, Richard Salvucci notes that Spaniards lifted Aztec prohibitions on the wearing of cotton clothing by commoners, and macequales seized the opportunity to abandon uncomfortable maguey fiber and dress like principales whenever they could.[63]

Despite a trend towards levelling in matters of clothing, distictions still persisted within an Indian community experiencing flux. In Oaxacan Macuilsúchil, the corregidor Gaspar Asensio declared that only some Indians wore European-style dress, indicating that others may not have yet adopted vestments approved by the Spaniards.[64] The levelling function of "shirts and breeches" may have been limited to spots like Aculma, but in The Aztecs Under Spanish Rule, Charles Gibson demonstrates that the native nobility, by 1580, had lost many of the tributary privileges granted it immediately following the conquest. As Indian labor became a scarcer commodity due to the ravages of plague and pestilence, the demands of Indian noblemen were often sacrificed to satisfy Spanish labor demands. Thus a real leveling

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[62] "Relación de Taliztaca (12 Septiembre, 1580)," PNE 4: 179; "Relación de Macuilsúchil y su partido (9 Abrill, 1580)," PNE 4: 106.

[63] Richard J. Salvucci, Textiles and Capitalism in Mexico: An Economic History of the Obrajes, 1539-1840 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 29.

[64] "Macuilsúchil," PNE 4: 106.

within the Indian population was occurring by the 1580's. Not all Indian noblemen may have been able to maintain distinctions in dress vis-à-vis the common macequales.

The impoverishment of the Indian nobility was growing, but it was not universal. In Tepuztlán, twelve leagues from Mexico City, Indians who possessed the means wore "cleverly painted mantas," "linen and cotton shirts," and "linen breeches."[65] Unsurprisingly, this financial capability was most often reserved for the remaining Indian nobility and new classes of Indian elite labor. In the Oaxacan cabecera of Chichicapa, the Indians wore camysas (shirts), çaraguelles (breeches), sayos (loose coats), capotes (short cloaks), and sombreros (hats), "especially the caciques, some of whom dress like Spaniards."[66] In Guaxilotitlán, jubones (doublets), sayos and jaquetas de algodon (cotton jackets) were primarily the clothing of principales. "Indians of little means" wore breeches, woolen jackets and woolen mantas.[67] Likewise, the wives of the nobility were described as having huipiles (dresses) and naguas (shifts) which were more finely wrought and luxurious

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[65] "Relación de la Villa de Tepuztlan (19 Septiembre, 1580)," PNE 6: 243.

[66] "Relación de Chichicapa y su partido (15 Mayo, 1580)," PNE 4: 118.

[67] "Relación de Guaxilotitlan (10 Marzo, 1581)," PNE 4: 200.

than those of the average Indian woman.[68] Finally, in prosperous fishing, farming and manufacturing communities like Tlacotalpán, Tustla and Cotlastla (all approximately seventy leagues from Mexico City), many Indians seem to have adopted Spanish dress in its most formal sense. The mantas, çaraquelles, camisas, jubones and sombreros of the Indian peasant were superceded by ropa de Castilla which Spaniards traded for fish, agrarian crops and native textiles.[69] The implication is that the inhabitants of Tlacotalpán and its two subject towns of Tustla and Cotlastla did not want to wear the clothing which Spaniards had deemed acceptable for the Indian peasantry, clothing which was like that of the Spaniards but simple enough in its "pajama-like appearance" so as to differentiate finely dressed Spaniards from the Indian masses. More affluent Indians aspired to full-fledged "Spanishness" and all the privileges attached. This was also true of the Indian miners of Tasco, twenty-two leagues from Mexico City. Earning a decent wage for skilled labor, Indian miners, "who work among Spaniards in the mines," were dressed like Spaniards. Perhaps feeling the need to still draw a distinction between Spaniards and Indians, the region's alcalde mayor, Pedro

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[68]"Tepuztlan," PNE 6: 243; "Coatepec y su partido (3 Diciembre, 1579)," PNE 6: 56.

[69]"Relación de Tlacotalpan y su partido (18-22 Febrero, 1580)," PNE 5: 2-3.

de Ledesma, wrote, "(the miners) dress like Spaniards, but imperfectly so."[70]

No matter what they did, Mexican Indians could never truly reach the pinacle which Spaniards reserved for themselves. Their clothed bodies became more amenable to Spanish taste, but their bodies were meant to be stigmatized as vessels of an inferior sort, just as their understanding was so often identified as inferior: "by chance the more talented Indian will be like a Spanish boy, eight or ten years of age."[71] Everyday in the New World, Spaniards lived the Valladolid debate of Las Casas and Sepúlveda. The Indians--- their mental, physical and spiritual status--- confused the Spaniards and questioned their entire world view. The Spaniards generally responded by identifying the aspects of their world view which they would not abandon, learning to adapt and even discard nonessentials. Of course, individual Spaniards could differ on particulars within these broad categories, but they remained within these confines. In matters of dressing the Indians appropriately, perhaps no one spoke more eloquently than Juan de la Vega, the now forgotten <u>corregidor</u> of Ocopetlayuca. In 1580, the Indians of this town, eighteen leagues from Mexico City,

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[70] "Relación de las minas de Tasco (1 Enero- 6 Marzo, 1581)," <u>PNE</u> 6: 278.

[71] "Las minas de Tasco," <u>PNE</u> 6: 265.

wore clothing "in the style of moriscos of Granada."[72] In their dress, even after the conquest, de la Vega thus noted that Amerindians still combined the familiar and the alien, the acceptable and the unacceptable. They were like the somewhat exotic, somewhat questionable moriscos of familiar Spain. To resort to Lévi-Strauss's terminology, they were "semi-cooked," semi-civilized by Spanish standards. In many ways this is where many Spaniards wished the Indians to remain: in constant need of Spanish supervision.

The transformation of visible symbols, the conquest of one set of values by another, was in no place more evident than in the reconstruction of public space. At the heart of the matter, the Spanish church and plaza replaced Indian pyramids and ceremonial structures. Throughout the sixteenth century, from the construction of Villa Rica de Vera Cruz in 1519 to the early seventeenth-century reports of town cabildos, numerous Spaniards in positions of authority focused on the importance of the plaza or town square. In the standard lay-out of a sixteenth-century Spanish city, the main plaza was a central, open urban space from which the town's main streets radiated. It was encircled by the symbols of royal, ecclesiastical and corporate authority:

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[72] "Relación de Ocopetlayuca (6 Octubre, 1580)," PNE 6: 258.

the cathedral, the general hospital, the jail and any number of governmental buildings for audiencias and cabildos (depending on the size and importance of the town).

According to the Reformation historian Bernd Moeller, sixteenth-century cities often portrayed themselves as hierarchical and reciprocal corporate entities, with various estates functioning in unison for the common good of the whole.[73] In Spain, this perspective was clearly evident in the thoughts and actions of the comuneros of the early 1520's. To many in the sixteenth century, towns were microcosmic social organisms, reflecting, through their functions, the functioning of an entire realm under the Crown and God's divine and natural laws. The plaza, with its carefully selected buildings, virtually illustrated this theory of society and governance. The properly functioning Christian society was to be guided by God's divine justice, a point made quite evident in Juan Luis Vives's allegorical Temple of the Laws (1519). The Spanish humanist wrote of a city of justice, peace and humanity in which the highest turret proved to be the "tower of

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[73] Bernd Moeller, Imperial Cities and the Reformation: Three Essays, trans. H. C. Erik Midelfort and Mark U. Edwards (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), 62, 69.

divine justice," pointing its way to heaven.[74] Thus, every plaza had its cathedral or church to ensure urban adherence to divine rite and neighborly love. Since the idealized European society of the period was to be ruled by both a sword of divine law and a sword of civil law, the Crown's officers also had buildings on the plaza. Finally, early modern Europeans recognized that a societal organism could "take ill," and they provided space for two sites of healing and purging: the hospital, of which more will be said later, and the jail. In 1525, Hernán Cortés wrote a letter which described what must be done for the "good treatment" of the Indians of Trujillo and La Natividad de Nuestra Señora. Among numerous suggestions to his lieutenant, all to provide the Indians with policía, he wrote:

> Item: Begin immediately, with much dilligence, to clean the site of this aforesaid town, which I left planned, and after the cleaning, following the plan which I left made, mark out the public places that are indicated on it, like the Plaza and Church, the Town Hall, prison, slaughterhouse, hospital (and) commerce house, (all) according to what I indicated....[75]

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[74]Juan Luis Vives, Templo de los leyes, in Obras completas, 2 vols., trans. Lorenzo Riber (Madrid: M. Agilar, 1947-8), 1: 681-2.

[75]"Carta de Hernando Cortés a Hernando de Saavedra (1525)," CDIR 40: 191-2; Louise M. Burkhart, The Slippery Earth: Nahua-Christian Moral Dialogue in Sixteenth-Century Mexico (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1989), 86.

The plaza and its surrounding buildings were meant to visually define all aspects of Spanish authority to newly conquered Indians. As a result, it is not surprising that churches and cathedrals were constructed on the sites of old Indian places of worship, often with building stones which had been used in the Indian temples' construction. This was true of the Cathedral of Mexico City, which was built in part of paving blocks from the Aztec temple preccinct, and of the Franciscan church of Tlatelolco, which stands on the platform of the great pyramid-temple described by Bernal Díaz.[76] Spaniards deliberately transformed the Aztecs' centers of spiritual power in order to assert the superiority of their own spiritual power. Churches quite literally became fortresses of Spanish authority. In many areas, the churches were fortified and built in a massive, almost Romanesque, style to provide protection to Spanish _vecinos_ in case of Indian attack. Needing a stronghold in the days following conquest, _conquistadores_ put their faith in God's house. The symbolism was not accidental.

The _conquistadores_ also put their faith in the punitive aspect of civil law however. As early as the construction of Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz, Bernal Díaz noted the attention that was paid to constructing a

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[76] George Kubler, _Mexican Architecture of the Sixteenth Century_, 2 vols. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948), 1: 163.

pillory in the plaza and a gallows outside the town.[77] The early modern Christian social organism was meant to provide for the "common good" of its members. On one level, this meant the reciprocity of charity, as represented by the relief of the poor and the construction of hospitals to treat the sick and the hungry. On another, there was the maintenance of hierarchical order and the prevention of disruptive activities. Audiencia and cabildo buildings, prisons, pillories and gallows were the final expressions of civil power. If one ignored the confines of his station by theft, murder and generally infringing upon the privileges and status of others, one could expect just punishment and retribution. European authorities deliberately made gallows and places of punishment extremely public, for, as Michel Foucault has written:

> In the ceremonies of public execution, the main character was the people, whose real and immediate presence was required for the performance. An execution that was known to be taking place, but which did so in secret, would scarcely have had any meaning. The aim was to make an example, not only by making people aware that the slightest offence was likely to be punished, but by arousing feelings of terror by the spectacle of power letting its anger fall upon the guilty person.[78]

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[77] Bernal Díaz, 102.

[78] Michel Foucault, Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage, 1979), 57-8.

During the actual conquest, Spaniards experienced the terror of watching their captured comrades and Indian allies sacrificed to Aztec gods.[79] After the conquest, they used terror to their own advantage by constructing permanent places of public punishment, execution and dismemberment. The last Aztec emperor, or tlatoani, Cuahtémoc himself, became a public example by means of his public execution for conspiracy during Cortés's march to Honduras. Countless others, both European and Indian, shared similar fates for the sake of maintaining public order, though the ruling Spaniards were quite willing to lessen the severity of punishment for a república de los indios not completely aware of the fine points of Spanish law and custom:

> Recognizing the weakness of these naturales and the facility with which they have committed crimes, and that at present it has not been convenient to execute upon them the severity of the law, nor has it been to leave them unpunished, it appeared to us that the crimes deserving death be commuted to enslavement... but according to the new law, which prohibits their enslavement for whatever reason or crime, we have relinquished that manner of punishment until consulting with Your Majesty on whether to execute the severity of the law or condemn them to temporal service without branding their faces....[80]

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[79]Bernal Díaz, 305-06.

[80]"Carta al rey, del presidente y oidores de la Audiencia de México, consultando ciertas dudas sobre el castigo de los indios, libertad de los esclavos (y otras cosas)...--- De México, a 20 de febrero de 1548," ENE 5:87.

Though the Mexican Indians were judged by many Spaniards as knowing the general terms of <u>policía</u>, those Spaniards in positions of authority grew quite aware of subtle distinctions between Iberian and Mexican laws and customs. The fundamental question was forever one of recognizing similarity and difference.

In 1573, the <u>Ordenanzas Ovandinas</u> reiterated royal concern for the appropriate definition of public space by issuing special instructions on the establishment and maintenance of all new settlements:

> Very high places are not to be selected, for they are barraged by the winds and difficult to service; neither are very low places, for they are very unhealthy.
>
> Coastal places are not to be seleted for townships because of the danger presented them by corsairs; and because of not being so healthful, and because their people do not give themselves to tilling and cultivating the land, nor to the establishment of good customs. Only a few good and principal ports are to be populated, as they are necessary for the settlement, commerce and defense of any land.[81]

As revealed by these statements, urban health and morals were primary concerns of the Castilian monarchy. Long before the hospital and the prison were to be applied as purgatives, preventive measures were to be

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[81]"Ordenanzas de Su Magestad hechas para los nuevos descubrimientos, conquistas y pacificaciones.--- Julio de 1573," <u>CDIR</u> 16:155, 173-4. Also see "Lo que el Visorey é Gobernador de la Nueva Spaña y sus Provincias y Presidente de la Audiencia Real que rreside en la Ciudad de México, a de hazer en dicha Tierra, demas de lo contenido en los Poderes y Comisiones que lleva, por mandado de S.M. (Año de 1550)," <u>CDIR</u> 23:534-5.

taken. Chief among them was to be the impact of public space in the plaza mayor. Dominated by "the sanctuaries of the Church," the ideal plaza was also to be surrounded by the Casa Real (Crown offices), Casa de Concejo y Cabildo (Town Hall) and: "The hospital for the poor and uncontagious sick is to be placed near the church...."[82] The Crown proceeded to decree what had already been enforced by Hernán Cortés, creating visible signs and symbols of Spanish majesty in order to introduce the Amerindians to Spanish culture and policía. An urban-agrarian people who gathered in walled cities for defense against the Moors, the Spaniards literally identified civilization with city-dwelling. Their New World mission included the settlement of non-sedentary Indians in reducciones and the maintenance of already existing Indian towns. A beautiful and grand plaza mayor was meant to illustrate the Spanish mission to convert the Indians to Christianity and civilize them. That mission was summarized for encomenderos as follows:

> Spaniards who are granted Indians in encomienda are asked to carefully settle those Indians in townships, and to build churches in them in order to cathecize them (the Indians) and teach them policía.[83]

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[82] "Ordenanzas...hechas...Julio de 1573," CDIR 16:175-6.

[83] "Ordenanzas...hechas...Julio de 1573," CDIR 16:186.

By 1608, the existence of plazas and clean, well-ordered streets, as well as churches, hospitals and other public buildings, proved this facet of the Spanish mission a success in places as far north as the Nueva Viscayan Villa de Nombre de Dios.[84] Following the precedent set by Ovando, the conde de Lemus, president of the Council of the Indies in 1604, issued 355 questions on the condition of Spanish and Indian settlements in the New World. Questions 12-18 specifically dealt with the physical layout of the town and with the quality of its edifices.[85] Under the heading of "that which concerns morality and politics," town cabildos and local officials reported on the existence or nonexistence of governmental facilities and ecclesiastical structures, as well as on the condition of local housing. Certain Indian towns---like Coatlán, near the Oaxacan town of Miaguatlán, and the Otomí pueblo of Guauchinango--- were described as having "very humble houses and edifices."[86] In Miaguatlán, "The Crown and municipal houses are low and humble, and there is not one (building) in that town that

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[84]"Descripción de la Villa de Nombre de Dios...en Mayo de 1608," CDIR 9:231-47.

[85]"Interrogatorio para todas las ciudades, villas y lugares...de las Indias Occidentales...," CDIR 9:59-60.

[86]"Descripción del Pueblo de Guauchinango y otros pueblos de su jurisdicción (1609)," CDIR 9:122;"Descripción del Pueblo de Coatlán (1609)," CDIR 9:388.

is_not."[87] On the other hand, the Indians of Tanteyuc were praised for having good, strong public buildings.[88] Civilization and city-dwelling were equated and defined in Spanish terms, and the pobladores of Panúco and its environs were quick to identify themselves as Spanish and civilized/urbanized:

> The streets are ordinarily clear of grass, in such a way that one can easily walk in them. The royal edifices are enclosed with a wooden and mud fence: having their doors and windows, kitchen and stable: serving as quarters for the town council. There is also a hostelery for muleteers and a rectory enclosed with the same fence as the royal edifices.... Thus, the houses of the Spaniards, like those of the naturales, are made of clay and wood, erected on forked poles and posts, with wooden ceilings covered in straw: they are all low, and most of them have their door facing the sea, where the breeze is, in order to enjoy the coolness and protect against the heat of the town. Some houses have gardens....[89]

In general terms, Indian homes were of "stone and adobe" or "adobe and thatch," but distinctions in the elaborateness of the design were, of course, a function of wealth. By means of their wealth and power (still extant in the sixteenth century), caciques and principales were able to emulate the Spaniards, thus serving as "proper" intermediaries between Spanish lords and Indian tributaries. By means of outward signs, the

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[87]"Descripción del partido de Miahuatlan (Febrero, 1609)," PNE 4: 293.

[88]"Descripción de los pueblos de la provincia de Panúco (sin fecha)," CDIR 9:156.

[89]"Descripción de la villa de Panúco (sin fecha)," CDIR 9:138-9.

Spaniards could understand the nobility as people of greater policía and razon than the common folk. Early relaciones from Coatepec in the Valley of Mexico and Xuchitepec in Oaxaca verify this. In Coatepec, the corregidor Cristóbal de Salazar wrote:

> The structure and framework of the houses that the naturales have are...(of) adobe walls: the ceilings are flat: some principales and caciques who have the means decorate and build them in the manner that Spaniards decorate them, because they have curiosidad (inquisitiveness)....[90]

And in Xuchitepec, houses were:

> of straw and cane surfaces, very small after the fashion of pigsties in Spain...and other Indians, ladinos, make houses finished in adobe and wood and sealed with clay....[91]

Quite simply, "yndios ladinos," those adopting Spanish culture, seem to have been those nobles who still possessed the means, and who were therefore considered "inquisitive" by the Spaniards. The average macequale lived like a Spanish pig. Other Oaxacan relaciones, for the towns of Chichicapa and Guaxilotitlán, reveal even more Spanish prejudices where Indian homes were concerned. In both towns, adobe structures were described as short and of short duration; houses in Chichicapa lasting only fifteen to twenty years.[92]

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[90] "Coatepec," PNE 6: 62-3.

[91] "Relación de Xuchitepec (23- 29 Agosto, 1579)," PNE 4: 28.

[92] "Chichicapa," PNE 4: 119; also see "Guaxilotitlan," PNE 4: 204.

Elsewhere in Oaxaca, Cuicatlán suffered the indignity of having low houses which were also mostly constructed "of straw," as were the houses in Atlatlauca and Malinaltepec.[93] In Santiago de Nexapa, the houses were constructed of adobe walls and "covered with thatch." The relación reports that they could have been constructed of "lime and quarrystone and pine," but the poverty of the few Spaniards living there prevented such efforts. Spanish poverty also impeded the development of wheat agriculture among Indians who were described as phlegmatic, dirty and drunken.[94] Far from being exceptional, descriptions similar to those given of Nexapa's houses were also given of the houses of Iztepexi, Tepeaca, Ahuatlán, Texaluca, çoyatitlanapa, Coatzinco, Xonotla, Tetela and Chilapa in the diocese of Tlaxcala; and of Macuilsúchil and Tlacolula in the diocese of Antequerra.[95] In the Tlaxcalan diocese, the alcalde mayor of the cabecera Tepeaca, Jorge çeron

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[93] "Relación de Cuicatlan (15 Septiembre, 1580)," PNE 4: 188; "Relación de Atlatlauca y Malinaltepec (8 Septiembre, 1580)," PNE 4: 175.

[94] "Relación de Nexapa (12 Septiembre, 1579- 20 Abril, 1580)," PNE 4: 43, 31-2.

[95] "Relación de Iztepexi (27- 30 Agosto, 1579)," PNE 4: 13; "Relación de Tepeaca y su partido (4- 20 Febrero, 1580)," PNE 5: 41; "Relación de Ahuatlan y su partido (19- 24 Agosto, 1581)," PNE 5: 84, 88, 93, 97; "Relación de Xonotla y Tetela (20- 29 Octubre, 1581)," PNE 5: 130, 150; "Relación de Chilapa (21 Febrero, 1582)," PNE 5: 181; "Relación de Macuilsúchil y su partido (9 Abrill, 1580)," PNE 4: 107; "Relación de Tlacolula y Mitla (12- 23 Agosto, 1580)," PNE 4: 150.

Carvajal, reported, "The form and structure of the houses of this province are commonly very small and low...made of adobe...and covered with light wood and thatch....[96] Wretched "bohíos de paja" (straw huts) were described as common domiciles in çoyatitlanapa and Coatzinco.[97]

Indian houses were described similarly in the Valley of Mexico. In the cabecera of Yscateupa (Ichcateopán) and the twelve towns of its partido, terms used to describe the homes of the indigenous population included: "bajas," "de piedra y adobe" and "pequeñas."[98] The small size and humble state of macequale dwellings were also crucial categories of identification for Spaniards reporting from Axocupán, Yetecomac, Chiconauhtla, Zayula, Mexicatzinco, Atitalaquia, the mines of Tasco, Tetela, Ueyapán, Tepepulco and Cuauhquilpán: "the houses are low, of adobe and thatch, and very small, so that one enters them with difficulty for their being so narrow and low."[99] In describing the "ruines edifiçios" of the

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[96]"Tepeaca," PNE 5: 41.

[97]"Ahuatlan y su partido," PNE 5: 93, 97.

[98]"Ichcateopan y su partido," PNE 5: 92-3, 99, 105, 112-13, 121, 126, 131, 136, 143, 148, 151.

[99]"Relación de Zayula (3 Febrero, 1580)," PNE 6: 181. Also see "Relación de Ueipuchtla y su partido (10 Octubre, 1579- 24 Marzo, 1580)," PNE 6: 18-19, 23; "Relación de Chiconauhtla y su partido (21 Enero, 1580)," PNE 6: 176; "Relación de Mexicatzinco (7 Febrero, 1580)," PNE 6: 197; "Relación de Atitalaquia y su partido (22 Febrero, 1580)," PNE 6: 207; "Relación de las minas de Tasco (1 Enero, 1581)," PNE 6: 281; "Relación de Tetela y Ueyapan (20 Junio, 1581)," PNE 6: 288; "Relación de Tepepulco (15 Abril, 1581)," PNE 6: 301; "Relación de Cuauhquilpan (9 Octubre, 1581)," PNE 6: 311.

common Indians, Spanish officials described the decadence of a pre-Columbian class structure which had come to be determined by Spanish categories:

> in structure and contrivance the houses of the common maceguales follow the fashion of their antiquity, and the principales who can build their houses according to our use, with stone and lime which are brought from outside this district (i.e., Tepepulco), and crafted wood, (do).[100]

Likewise, the overall layout of a town came to be judged by its similarity to Spanish towns, the mining town of Zumpango receiving praise for being well-ordered "like Spanish towns," and unlike the Oaxacan town of Coatlán:

> (Coatlán) does not have the form of a town by being situated on the back of one hill and the slope of another. The houses are spread out, and near the church a modest site serves as a plaza. The houses that are in the layout of the town number thirty-three.
>
> The town does not have royal buildings nor any edifice that is not very humble. There are some Community buildings, where Indians hold their cabildos (town meetings).[101]

Some Indians possessed characteristics needed to be deemed "like the Spanish" and "civilized," but Indians like those of sterile and cold Ocelotepeque reflected the conditions of their natural environment:

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[100]"Relación de Tepepulco (15 Abril, 1581)," PNE 6: 301. Also see "Tetela y Ueyapan," PNE 6: 288; "las minas de Tasco," PNE 6: 281.

[101]"Relación del pueblo de Coatlan (Abril 1609)," PNE 6: 310; "Relación de las minas de Zumpango (10 Marzo, 1582)," PNE 6: 315.

> In this town there are no streets, nor (is there) a plaza for (its) being situated in some hills, and thus the houses are separated from one another, because there is no more level ground after the site occupied by the Church.
>
> In this town there are no royal buildings, nor a town hall, nor any edifice of moderate size: when justice comes to it, it lodges at the house of the curate.[102]

Though the Indians of Ocelotepeque were not described as desnudos (nudity being foolhardy in their cold, mountainous environment), they were "guilty" of speaking "a very coarse and corrupt Zapoteca."[103] They lived in such a remote area that they virtually lacked policía and served no one: "they do not know employment, nor do they occupy themselves in cultivating the land, nor do they raise livestock, because no one exerts himself in this town."[104] Appropriate housing then, like appropriate clothing, served as a Spanish category of understanding and a basis for prejudicial assessment.

Frightened and intimidated by the unfamiliar and the alien, sixteenth-century conquistadores and pobladores were initially pleased to find the Indians of Mexico relatively well housed and clad. This provided an opportunity for mutual communication, including some understanding regarding the language of economic exchange. The production of clothing for sale was

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[102]"Relación del pueblo de Ocelotepeque (Marzo, 1609)," CDIR 9:226-7. Also PNE 4:304.

[103]Ibid., CDIR 9:226.

[104]Ibid., CDIR 9:229.

understood by both Spaniards and Aztecs, just as the covering of genitals and female breasts was understood by both cultures. Likewise, the two cultures used clothing in a ritualistic fashion which went beyond the simple need to protect the body from natural forces. Cortés is reported to have deliberately dressed to impress Spaniards and Indians on a number of different occasions: "He wore a plume of feathers, with a medallion and a gold chain, and a velvet cloak trimmed with loops of gold. In fact he looked like a bold and gallant captain."[105] Thus, the way in which a body was clad became a public expression of rank and purpose from the first moments of the conquest of Mexico to the adoption of Spanish clothes by Indian caciques. The manner in which a body was shielded from the natural elements became an expression of culture and the most basic manifestation of public space. If public space is a place where society reveals its most basic processes and structures through signs, symbols and discourse, then buildings, another method of shielding bodies from the elements, also fulfilled their public role during the conquest. Quite simply, the Aztec temples and palaces were replaced by Spanish churches and official buildings. Once again, starting with Cortés, this form of shielding the body bore its symbolic and ceremonial value. At the founding of Villa Rica de la

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[105]Bernal Díaz, 47.

Vera Cruz, the <u>conquistadores</u> "planned a church, a market-place, arsenals, and all other features of a town, and built a fort. Cortés himself was the first to start carrying earth and stones and to dig the foundations."[106] The Spaniards wanted their most basic actions to be visible, for they were eloquent reassurances, to the Spaniards themselves, of the value of Spanish culture. Faced with the alien, Spaniards revelled in the aspects of their culture which could be most taken for granted since they were the most common. Clothing, shelter and food took on new meaning as signs of "Spanishness" in the midst of alien challenges.

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[106] Ibid., 114.

CHAPTER 6

HEALING THE BODY: MEDICAL POLICE AND POOR RELIEF, THE FOLLOW-UP TO PREVENTIVE MEDICINE

Within the confines of social organic discourse, the sixteenth-century hospital was a most public and communal entity. In the words of a 1582 real cédula confirming the 1572 establishment of the second leprosarium of San Lázaro in Mexico City: "It is a most laudable custom in all well-ordered republics to avoid carefully all things which can be harmful to corporal as well as spiritual health...."[1] In both Spain and New Spain, the Crown thus envisioned the hospital as a place where spiritual and bodily ills which threatened the entire social organism could be arrested, eliminated, isolated, and perhaps even cured. At the founding of any particular hospital, the medical and material mission was necessarily linked to

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[1]"Real cédula para que...sean bien curados y gobernados los pobres al Hospital de San Lázaro de México de la Nueva España. Lisboa, 11 de junio de 1582," Ordenanzas del Hospital de San Lázaro de México, France V. Scholes and Eleanor B. Adams, eds. (Mexico City: José Porrua é hijos, 1956), 15. Also Archivo General de Indias, Cartas y expedientes de los virreyes de Nueva España (Seville: Centro Nacional de Microfilm, 1975), reel 2, number 31-A. Henceforth AGI. All translations, except where indicated, are my own.

The first San Lázaro was founded sometime between 1521 and 1524 by Hernán Cortés, and was defunct by the 1530's. See Josefina Muriel, Hospitales de la Nueva España, 2 vols. (Mexico City: Editorial Jus, 1956-60), 1:49-50.

and imbued with spiritual and moral values. Christian values of brotherly love demanded the care of the unfortunate and impoverished. Public health concerns demanded the isolation of the diseased. Medicine and religion combined to preserve the Spaniards' fundamental world view and metaphor, the Christian social organism.[2]

Unfortunately for those who wished to maintain a static ontology in the face of change, the European "discovery" of a New World and its indigenous medicinal practices and plants helped to open medical discourse to a collection of new cures and solutions. The Hippocratic and Galenic traditions were challenged by Amerindian medical practices never witnessed by the Greeks and Romans. Medical men readily adopted the new practices to increase their curative powers and social prestige, while, at the same time, trying to fit the new and unfamiliar into their old categories of understanding. By extension, they began to interpret the hospital's prime function as being a place of material healing, never fully forgetting its mission of Christian charity, but relegating the spiritual mission to the background. Just as the Copernican revolution led to an increase in

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[2]For a discussion of the hospital's use in the acculturation of the Indians of New Spain, see Cecilia Barba, "Un acercamiento a la metología de colonización: la primitiva obra hospitalaria de los franciscanos en la Nueva España," in The Church and Society in Latin America, ed. Jeffrey A. Cole (New Orleans: Tulane University Press, 1984), 53-71.

the number of confrontations between speculative theology and theoretical science, this new applied medicine challenged the previously undisputed primacy of charity and applied religion.

Traditionally, the curative and material role of hospitals was less important than their spiritual end, the provision of Christian charity. In a history of Toledo dedicated to King Philip II, "the embodiment of the entire Spanish patria" according to the book's author Pedro de Alcocer, six chapters of the second book described the city's hospitals:

> where they perform works of great service to Our Lord, curing, sustaining, clothing and housing the poor and the sick, and marrying female orphans in need.[3]

These spiritual and material goals were linked in Toledo, the center of hospital reform in old world Spain. The Toledan hospital of Santiago, specializing in the treatment of syphilis, was carefully placed on the outskirts of the city, as was usual in other urban areas. In this manner, attempts were made to protect the material well-being of the community by preventing the spread of a disease recognized as contagious. Likewise, spiritual goals were fostered, and Alcocer was quick to point out that penance and indulgences could be earned by

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[3]Pedro de Alcocer, Hystoria, o descrpcion de la imperial cibdad de Toledo (Toledo: Juan Ferrer, 1554), p. 118[b], in the Hispanic Culture Series' Hispanic Books Printed Before 1601, Reel 33. Henceforth HCS.

dying in a hospital or by visiting the sick and performing works of charity there.[4] In typical sixteenth-century Catholic fashion, poor relief and social welfare practices merged with medical pursuits at the Toledan Ospital del Nucio:

> And in addition to the great service it does Our Lord by curing the sick, this Hospital also does another very great one, clothing and sustaining in it 12 poor old men who have fallen into need, giving them a home and their necessities before they die, when others will enter in their place.[5]

In sixteenth-century Toledo, urban and royal officials, private donors, clerical administrators and lay doctors joined in the founding and maintenance of hospitals. In these places of confinement, the physical and spiritual threats posed to the common good and social order by disease and poverty were isolated. Hospitals were the homes of outcasts, from the leper, the syphilitic and the madman to the impoverished old man. They freed society of the marginal who belonged to no recognized order, class or estate with its own particular vocation to be fulfilled for the common good of all estates.[6] Yet, they also played broader roles. In the words of the 1582 cédula which recognized the founding of Mexico City's San Lázaro, hospitals were meant to be

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[4] Ibid, p. 119[a].
[5] Ibid., p. 120[b].
[6] Linda Martz, Poverty and Welfare in Habsburg Spain: The Example of Toledo (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 19-21, 32-4, 70-2, 64.

places where the poor, even lepers, were to learn the value of Christian virtues and communal life. Miguel Giginta, a canon of the cathedral of Elna, had envisioned this ideal, and had wandered the Iberian peninsula from 1576 to 1588 in an attempt to persuade temporal and spiritual authorities to support his hospitals. There, as he described in Tratado de remedio de los pobres (1579), the poor became a religious community. They were to be provided with adequate living quarters, food, edifying leadership, and employment in the hope that they would become contented citizens of the Christian commonwealth.[7] In the idiom of the day, hospitals provided temporal and spiritual police, or, in modern terms, order. They had a dual function--- to cure social as well as physical ailments. As a result, the spiritual and moral welfare of the patient was often more important than physical healing and interest in administrative detail.[8]

In Mexico City's San Lázaro, the social function of the poor lepers[9] was made clear, and they were actually granted an estate, or rank, vital to the maintenance of the body metaphor. The real cédula of June 11, 1582 recognized them as Christ's poor, the least of his

[7]Ibid., 67-70.
[8]Ibid., 1-46.
[9]Here the term "leper" is being used in its sixteenth-century sense, to signify anyone with a skin disease thought to be leprosy and contagious.

brethren spoken of with fondness in the gospels. Thus, the lepers were the objects of the good works of the Christian community, as well as exemplars of Christian poverty and communalism. The lepers were expected to pray, to work if sufficiently able-bodied, and to live chastely if unmarried.[10] Chapter seven of the cédula also decreed that they live communally, sharing all goods and owning no private property.[11] In return for fulfilling these duties, like all other estates, the lepers of the San Lázaro received privileges. They were provided with such necessities as clothing and two meals a day. The doctor assigned to the San Lázaro was to care for the lepers with diligence, thinking of their honored position as Christ's beloved poor, placing their interests before his own honor and position as a physician.[12] For, as stated in the cédula, if the Mosaic law merely isolated lepers to protect the community from contagion, the New Testament's ordinances decreed that the powerful and prosperous should provide for the weak.[13] In the preface to the edict, the Crown explicitly stated its mission to provide for the physical well-being of the spiritually weak Amerindians so they might better serve their creator and the divinely

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[10]"Real cédula..., 11 de junio de 1582," Ordenanzas del Hospital de San Lázaro, 21-2, 27-8.

[11]Ibid., 23-4, 37-9.

[12]Ibid., 25.

[13]Ibid., 16-17.

ordained terrestrial order. More than a mere reflection of Spanish practice in the Old World, the establishment of New World hospitals was part of the Spanish attempt to tame the "savage" body. On this point, the eighteenth-century biographer of Vasco de Quiroga, founder of two Mexican pueblo-hospitals, was quite clear. Don Vasco found his Indians in utter misery, "scattered, naked and so hungry," and he used his hospitals to teach them Christian doctrine, "civilizing them with social morality."[14] In the words of Don Vasco himself, the Indians required good police:

> And...everything transpired among them as among barbarous and ignorant people, scattered and without law, without having the order of good policía, which is all that I decree, and without which nothing, no human intercourse, can be well-ordered and without corruption.[15]

The first attempt to subordinate Amerindians to these European institutions was on the island of Hispaniola. In 1502, Isabella of Castile instructed Governor Nicolás de Ovando "to build hospitals where the poor can be housed and cured, whether Christians or Indians." By 1503, the governor had erected the Hospital

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[14] Juan José Moreno, Fragmentos de la vida y virtudes del v. ilmo. y rmo. Sr. Dr. D. Vasco de Quriroga, in Don Vasco de Quiroga: Documentos ed. Rafael Aguayo Spencer (Mexico City: Editorial Polis, 1939), 29-30. Also, Vasco de Quiroga, Información en derecho del lic. Quiroga sobre algunas provisiones del Real Consejo de Indias, in Vasco de Quiroga: Documentos, 389-90.

[15] Quiroga, Información, in Vasco de Quiroga: Documentos, 343.

of San Nicolás, soon to be followed by San Andrés in 1512.[16] Therefore, when Hernán Cortés founded the first general hospital in New Spain sometime before 1524, he had ample precedent. In accordance with the wishes of Queen Isabella, this Mexico City hospital, named Hospital de la Limpia y Pura Concepción de Nuestra Señora y Jesús Nazareno, was designed to care for both Spaniards and Indians. The common medical knowledge of the day was considered, and diseases thought to be contagious or dangerous, like leprosy and syphilis, were excluded from treatment at this general hospital.[17] Such a practice followed the popular Spanish pattern set at Seville, the port of departure for Cortés and so many conquistadores, where one hospital was maintained for contagious diseases and another for noncontagious ones. In his ordinances of 1573 Juan de Ovando, president of the Council of the Indies, made this practice official policy by decreeing that general hospitals for noncontagious diseases were to be located near the central plaza, while hospitals specializing in contagious illnesses were to be placed on the outskirts of town, "in a place where no hurtful wind

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[16]Muriel, 1:34.
[17]Ibid., 1:37-48.

passing it can injure the remaining population."[18] Prompted by the Hippocratic notion that miasma, or bad airs, caused disease, the Ordenanzas Ovandinas stressed that health factors be taken into account when sites were selected for towns or other habitations. Above all else, disease-bringing winds were to be avoided:[19]

> The hospital for the poor and noncontagious sick is to be placed near the Church, and set apart from it; for the contagious sick, build a hospital in a place where no hurtful wind passing it can injure the remaining population; and if you were to construct it in an elevated place, it would be better.[20]

Cortés financed the first hospital in Mexico City out of his own personal wealth as a pious act of penance and charity. He provided for the hospital's initial endowment by donating one thousand ducats, and his will made elaborate arrangements for a permanent endowment, detailing which of his estates were to sustain the hospital and the type of staff that the hospital was to

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[18] "Ordenanzas de Su Magestad hechas para los nuevos descubrimientos, conquistas y pacificaciones. Julio de 1573," Colección de documentos inéditos relativos al descubrimiento, conquista y organización de las antiguas posesiones españolas de América y Oceanía, 42 vols., eds. Joaquin F. Pacheco, Francisco de Cárdenas and Luís Torres de Mendoza (Madrid: Manuel G. Hernández, 1864-84), 16:176. Henceforth CDIR.

[19] Ibid., 153, 155.

[20] Ibid., 176; Guenter B. Risse, "Medicine in New Spain," in Medicine in the New World: New Spain, New France, and New England, Ronald L. Numbers, ed. (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1987), 38; Gordon Schendel, et. al., Medicine in Mexico: From Aztec Herbs to Betatrons (Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1968), 95.

maintain.[21] In this task he was joined by a number of his fellow conquistadores, and, together, they established a cofradía to supervise the management of the hospital's estates and rents. Private charity was the chief source of hospital support, but the generosity of individual donors like Cortés was complemented by royal support. Portions of church revenues and tithes granted the Crown through the patronato real were often channeled to the support of hospitals, along with subsidies derived from Indian tribute and profits from royal pharmacies and monopolies.[22] On October 7, 1541, Charles V ordered, "That Hospitals be founded in all the Cities of Spaniards and Indians....where the sick poor will be cured and Christian charity will be exercised."[23] Likewise, the Marqués de Villamanrique, viceroy of New Spain from 1585 to 1590, noted that hospitals were to provide physical care and spiritual comfort to poor Indians and Spaniards alike. Like Charles earlier in the century, he cited the Crown's special role as combatting those selfish interests which would defraud hospitals of their endowments, and, in a series of ordinances for the

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[21]"Descripción. Hospitales de la Ciudad de México (16 Henero 1570)," in Papeles de Nueva España, 7 vols., ed. Francisco del Paso y Troncoso (Madrid: Sucesores de Rivadeneyra, 1905), 3:23. Henceforth PNE. Also Schendel, 90; Muriel, 1:40-43.

[22]Risse, 37-8; Aristides A. Moll, Aesculapius in Latin America (Philadelphia and London: W. B. Saunders Company, 1944), 139; and Martz, 81.

[23]Schendel, 95.

convalescent hospitals of Mexico City, he specifically demanded the maintenance of clear and precise account books to eliminate the opportunity for fraud. He also emphasized that hospitals were called to provide the blessed sacrament to the dying and isolate contagious patients from other sufferers. Therefore, as late as 1587, Philip II and his royal deputies attempted to respect Charles V's ordinance of 1541.[24]

The hospital blurred twentieth-century distinctions between public and private space, for the sixteenth-century Spaniard could only think of his role in the context of his publicly recognizable honor, his family's prestige, and his place in Christian salvation history. Hospitals were acts of faith by which the private, individual character and belief of the wealthy and powerful were made public. They were active responses to the metaphor belabored in the New Testament's Epistle of St. James: "A body dies when it is separated from the spirit, and in the same way faith is dead if it is separated from good deeds."[25]

The hospital tried to serve the needs of both body and soul. In New Spain this meant trying to ameliorate

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[24]"Carta al rey del Marqués de Villamanrique, 28 de abril de 1587," AGI, reel 3, numbers 11, 11-D. For more on Philip's support of hospital ventures, see David C. Goodman, Power and Penury: Government, Technology and Science in Philip II's Spain (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 209-15.

[25]James 2.26.

the effect of such newly arrived European diseases as smallpox on the Amerindian population. It also meant combating the devastating effects of syphilis and leprosy throughout the multiracial population. During the mysterious cocoliztle epidemic of 1576, Viceroy Martín Enríquez (1568-80) not only noted its devastation among the laboring population in general, and the mining population in particular, he linked discussion of the effects of epidemics to the discussion of commercial and agricultural matters, thus revealing the status of Indians, blacks, mestizos and mulatos as economic units of production. The Crown necessarily had to support charitable hospitals in an attempt to combat the decimation of economic activity in the New World. The Crown's Christian mission and economic interest were not mutually exclusive.[26]

Attempting to construct community under the most adverse conditions, the hospital was the preferred fortress from which to combat social disintegration. By alleviating the dissatisfaction of the poor with material relief, it was a safety-valve against rebellion. In New Spain, Indians who lost the comfort of traditional community through the devastation of epidemics or the demands of encomenderos could flee to the hospitals as a

[26] "Carta al rey de Martín Enríquez, virrey de Nueva España, 6 de diciembre de 1580," AGI, reel 2, number 30.

refuge readily provided by some of their Spanish lords. According to Vasco de Quiroga, the Mexican pueblo-hospitals which he founded were meant to use all their lands, rents, and endowments to benefit these impoverished Indians:

> for the maintenance and indoctrination of spiritual as well as civic morality and the good <u>policía</u> of poor Indians and miserable persons--- wards, widows, orphans and <u>mestizos</u> whom their mothers would have killed for not being able to raise them in their great poverty and misery....[27]

Beneficial for both Spaniards and Indians, hospitals proliferated in the sixteenth-century Hispanic world, and by the beginning of the seventeenth-century, there were approximately one hundred twenty-eight hospitals in New Spain, strategically located in the <u>cabeceras</u> and most densely populated areas.[28] <u>Cabildos</u> in towns like Nuestra Señora de los Cacatecas and Nombre de Dios were proud to relate their prosperity and charity by describing their hospitals. Cacatecas readily identified itself as a healthful city with little need for a hospital, but it still possessed two: the Spanish hospital of Veracruz and the Indian institution of San Francisco. Founded by a Spaniard named Diego Hernández de Silva, Veracruz had no lands, rents, or incomes other than charitable donations. The Indian hospital was

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[27]Quiroga, <u>Información</u>, in <u>Don Vasco de Quiroga: Documentos</u>, 276.

[28]Risse, 41-2.

administered by Franciscans and only four years old, Veracruz being a full thirty years old.[29] In Nueva Viscaya, Nombre de Dios reported one desegregated Hospital de la Caridad with an income derived from landed rents, but without any patients.[30] Proliferating rapidly, with variable financing, Mexican hospitals often proved to be social and medical experiments of questionable success.

Still, the Crown experimented, and hospitals became a testing ground of the degree to which Spanish and Amerindian cultures would integrate. Some institutions were established in accordance with Isabella's demands that they fully serve both whites and Indians, while most treated only one of the races. As late as 1580, the hospital of Xalapa de la Vera Cruz, half-way between the port of Vera Cruz and Mexico City, treated both "Spanish passengers who come from Spain with the flotillas" and "the Indians who sicken in their service as porters and drivers...."[31] But as early as 1530, Friar Gerónimo de Mendieta noted that the Crown authorized the construction of the Hospital Real de San José de los Naturales (to be staffed by Mexico City's Franciscan friars)--- its

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[29] "Descripción de Nuestra Señora de los Cacatecas (1608)," CDIR 9:191.

[30] "Descripción de la Villa de Nombre de Dios...en Mayo de 1608," CDIR 9:246-7; Muriel 1:269-70.

[31] "Relación de Xalapa de la Veracruz (20 Octubre 1580)," PNE 5:105.

expressed purpose, to care for Indians.[32] Likewise, the Hospital de San Juan de Dios, founded in 1534 and also known as the Hospital of the Love of God, only cared for Spaniards suffering from syphilis, and a 1572 royal <u>cédula</u> approved the establishment of a hospital to care for <u>mulatos</u>.[33]

As the sixteenth-century progressed in New Spain, hospital segregation came to mirror the segregation of the republics of Spaniards and Indians both inside and outside the Valley of Mexico.[34] Indian communities learned to care for their own poor and sick by means of the charity of lay mutual aid corporations called <u>cofradías</u> and the produce of communal lands managed by town <u>cabildos</u>. For times of hardship, the magistrates of the <u>cabildo</u> kept communal funds in designated <u>cajas de communidad</u>. The brotherhoods, or <u>cofradías</u>, venerated the cult of a particular patron saint, while retaining a portion of communal produce to be used for good works.

Rather than depending on irregular donations and endowments from prosperous Spaniards, Amerindian communities retained their own autonomy through the local management of poor relief and hospital funds, a

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[32]Gerónimo de Mendieta, <u>Historia ecclesiastica indiana</u> (Mexico City: Editorial Porrúa, 1971), Bk. 4, chap. 30.

[33]"Real cédula de 23 de abril de 1572," <u>AGI</u>, reel 1, number 82; "Descripción. Hospitales de la ciudad de México," <u>PNE</u> 3: 23-5.

[34]Schendel, 88-94.

communitarian mission with antecedents in pre-Columbian times.[35] Ironically, Spaniards saw Amerindian enthusiasm for hospitals as a sign of the sincerity of their conversion. The maintenance of a hospital was a work by which the faith of a cofradía was known, and the Crown's Council of the Indies was actively interested in the existence of cajas de communidad, requesting information on their activities in the relaciones of local cabildos.[36] Action in the material world revealed spriritual motivation:

> And as God grants them new grace each day, and as they come to learn God's law, and this same God being charity and love, they who once sacrificed men now in many places build hospitals where they console and cure the sick and poor. In spite of giving so little, of many small donations, constantly given, a large sum is amassed in such a way that the hospitals are well-provided, and they who know how to serve so well that it appears they were born for this lack nothing, and now and then go in search of the sick throughout the province.[37]

Motolinía, the author of the above passage, went on to describe the maintenance of an Indian hospital, the

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[35] Woodrow Borah, "Social Welfare and Social Obligation in New Spain: A Tentative Argument," University of California Center for Latin American Studies Reprint No. 282 (Berkeley, 1966), 53; and Murdo J. MacLeod, "The Social and Economic Roles of Indian Cofradias in Colonial Chiapas," in The Church and Society in Colonial Latin America, 73-96.

[36] "Interrogatorio para todas las ciudades, villas y lugares...de las Indias Occidentales," CDIR 9:62.

[37] Fray Toribio de Benavente o Motolinía, Memoriales o libro de las cosas de la Nueva España y de los naturales de ella, ed. Edmundo O'Gorman (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1971), 159-60.

Hospital de la Encarnación, founded in the city of Tlaxcala in 1536. In this hospital, one-hundred thirty of the indigent sick were treated and maintained by the generous gifts of their fellow Indians. On Easter Sunday of that year, the Tlaxcalans donated maize, beans, turkeys, and European sheep and pigs. The offerings were so steady that seven months later, the hospital's endowment was already worth a thousand pesos in land and livestock.[38]

When Amerindians remained dependent on Spanish charity, instead of expressing their own agency, they often found themselves in precarious situations.[39] The royal hospital of San José de los Naturales was founded in 1530 to care for Mexico City's Indian population, but its doors were closed by 1550. Only persistent complaints by viceroys, bishops, and audiencias led to increased participation by the Crown to maintain this foundation.[40] The royal coffers provided an initial sum of two thousand pesos and an additional annual rent of 400 pesos.[41] Although hospitals were considered

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[38]Ibid., 160.

[39]John C. Super, Food, Conquest, and Colonization in Sixteenth-Century Spanish America (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988), 85.

[40]Muriel, 1:115-130; and "Carta al rey del arzobispo de México, sobre el patronato y administración del Hospital Real de aquella ciudad.--- México, 31 de marzo de 1566," in ENE 10:130-1.

[41]"Descripción. Hospitales de la ciudad de México," PNE 3:25.

necessary to the maintenance of a community, the financial support of hospitals remained voluntary, and they were utterly at the mercy of irregular endowments. Often, they were founded with great fanfare, but later provided with inadequate funds to insure their continued existence.

Still, by 1600, there were twelve hospitals in the area surrounding Mexico City, seventy-two in Michoacán, and nine in Colima in the far west. Royal questionnaires on the progress of the New World possessions asked about the existence and status of hospitals for Europeans and Indians. In 1604, the Council of the Indies, for example, requested information from New World cabildos on the number and types of hospitals in any given area, their origin and income, and the salaries of the permanent staff. The Crown was also interested in the number of patients that the American hospitals could accomodate and whether their capacity to perform good works had grown or diminished since their particular founding dates.[42] In response, New World cabildos provided more or less detailed information, even if it was to report the absence of hospitals, as in the case of

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[42]"Interrogatorio para todas las ciudades, villas y lugares...de las Indias Occidentales...," CDIR 9:77.

towns under the jurisdiction of Panúco, ten leagues from Tampico.[43]

The Crown, for its part, continued to encourage hospital charities by itself engaging in them. A 1556 _cédula_ expanded and rebuilt the Hospital Real for Indians in Mexico City. With eight wards, the establishment accomodated more than two-hundred poor and destitute Amerindians. Five chaplains, two physicians, two surgeons, and various apprentices served as staff. In 1587, an order of Viceroy Villamanrique promoted the institution's support by having each Indian town of New Spain provide the Hospital Real with one _hanega_ of maize out of every one-hundred tributary _hanegas_ collected.[44] This was the _medio real de hospital_, allowing the monarchy to care for the "Crown's poor" with the poor's own resources. It eventually became a standard clause in the instructions of provincial governors.

Elsewhere, Franciscans and Augustinians ran hospitals exclusively for Indians, and the Tlaxcalan Hospital de la Encarnación was joined by the Michoacán hospitals of Tiripetio (1537), Uruapán (1561), Taximaroa (1580), San Martín Turundero (1595), Cuitzeo (1550),

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[43]"Descripción de los pueblos de la provincia de Panuco (sin fecha)," _CDIR_ 9:154. For some quick references to the existence or nonexistence of hospitals and their endowments, see _CDIR_ 9:106-107, 125, 154, 191, 246, 346, 385, 451.

[44]An _hanega_= 1.5 bushels.

Peribán (1541), and Tarecuato (1541). All were supported by the contributions of Indian cofradías and community chests.[45]

The actual medical benefits of the hospitals to Amerindian populations is debatable. Racked by European diseases such as smallpox in 1520 and typhus in 1530, Mexican Indian populations decreased as European medicine proved impotent in the face of mass epidemics. If the estimates of Borah and Cook are accurate, epidemic and pandemic disease reduced the population of central Mexico from approximately 25 million on the eve of the conquest to 16.8 million in 1523.[46] European hospitals, upon which the New World hospitals were patterned, tried to isolate diseases thought to be contagious from noncontagious patients, but the most basic elements of modern hygiene were ignored. Visiting physicians and surgeons failed to wash hands and implements as they

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[45]Risse, 38-40; Borah, 54.

[46]Woodrow Borah and Sherburne F. Cook, "New Demographic Research on the Sixteenth Century in Mexico," in Latin American History: Essays on Its Study and Teaching, 1898-1965, ed. Howard F. Cline (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1967), 2:717-22.

Of course, these figures are hotly contested. Still, estimates of the pre-Columbian population of the western hemisphere range from 8.4 million to 100 million, with Angel Rosenblat estimating a population of only 4 million for central Mexico on the eve of the conquest. See Angel Rosenblat, "The Population of Hispaniola at the Time of Columbus," in The Native Population of the Americas in 1492, ed. William M. Denevan (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1976), 45. Also see Woodrow Borah's "Estimating the Unknown," 30 (in the same collection).

travelled from patient to patient, firmly believing that bad air, not actual contact, transmitted disease. In the Toledan Hospital of Tavera between 1559 and 1649, the average percentage of mortality was only 16.4, but years of epidemic sickness and grain shortage witnessed much higher rates: 26.7 in 1595, 30.2 in 1598, and 28.7 in 1600. The Toledan hospitals were well-organized enough to respond to the periodic subsistence crises which struck the city, but they could not hold famine and disease at bay indefinitely.[47] In the Americas:

> Whether removing the sick to hospitals decreased the spread of disease among the remaining population remains unclear. Nevertheless, the comfort, rest, and nourishment given to those hospitalized probably saved many lives by improving their nutrition and resistance to disease. Above all, hospital care for the Indians bolstered morale in times of hunger and despair, abuse and pain.[48]

Hospitals for the Indians even occasionally became the sites of social experimentation, places where society's sins and ills would be cured once and for all. Thus, Vasco de Quiroga (1477-1565), a judge of the second Mexican audiencia, hoped to ameliorate the abuses suffered by the Indians at the hands of their Spanish encomenderos. Influenced by Thomas More's Utopia, he advocated the reconstitution and purification of society, using the Amerindians as virgin raw material. To the

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[47] Martz, 219-22; Schendel, 96.
[48] Risse, 42.

benefit of their bodies and souls, the Amerindians were to learn Christian doctrine and productive labor.[49] His plans called for the creation of isolated Indian pueblos consisting of 6,000 extended families of ten to sixteen married couples of the same lineage.[50] Christian morality would be supervised by the friars and lay Spaniards in charge of the facilities, while the biological epidemics so devastating to the Indian community would be combatted at a hospital for contagious diseases. The hospital was to be administered by a superintendent or mayordomo, a dispensero or full-time dispenser of first aid, a physician, surgeon, and apothecary.[51] Having gained royal approval, Quiroga actually started a crusade to construct these utopias with the founding, near the capital, of the Hospital de Santa Fé de México in 1531. In 1534, the founding of a more celebrated pueblo, the Hospital de Santa Fé de la Laguna, near Lake Patzcuano, followed. Both settlements were populated with young, acculturated Indians who had been raised in Spanish monasteries, and with poor, orphaned, dislocated, and sick Indians who had suffered from epidemics and the exploitation of encomenderos. Quiroga's work attracted both royal and private support,

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[49]Quiroga, "Reglas y ordenanzas para el gobierno de los hospitales de Santa Fe de Mexico y Michoacán," in Don Vasco de Quiroga: Documentos, 250-252.

[50]Ibid., 258-259.

[51]Ibid., 262-263.

and he was rewarded in 1536 by being appointed bishop of the new diocese of Michoacán. Seventeen years after his death, in 1580, his pueblo hospitals still existed, though the total number of inhabitants had steadily declined. At about that time, Santa Fé de México reported approximately 120 families, while Santa Fé de la Laguna reported 100. Still, the experiments were successful enough to attract rich endowments and the envy of powerful authorities. In 1572, the urban magistrates of Mexico City tried to take over the administration of Santa Fé de México on the grounds that Quiroga's will was not being followed, and that the hospital had only cared for a handful of sick inhabitants and a few nonresidents in the preceding months of that year. The Council of the Indies rejected this argument, but it is clear that Quiroga's hospitals were far more successful at converting and educating the Indians to the fine points of social police in Christendom than they were at the provision of health care, necessarily limited as they were by the knowledge of that time.[52]

Yet:

> The hospitals of New Spain occasionally fostered medical science by furnishing patient populations for clinical experimentation with

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[52] Ibid., 40-41; Fintan B. Warren, Vasco de Quiroga and his Pueblo-Hospitals of Santa Fe (Washington, D.C.: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1963); and Silvio Zavala, La "Utopia" de Tomás Moro en la Nueva España (Mexico City: El Colegio Nacional, 1950).

> native remedies. They also furthered the study of anatomy and pathology by allowing autopsies to be performed on deceased patients, and, more important, they counterbalanced the scholasticism of the universities by providing physicians with practical clinical experience.[53]

Created to fulfill the social welfare obligations of Christians, hospitals became sites where medical technique received the attention necessary to foster the improvement of humane conditions for the indigent sick. As such, they often served as empirical counterweights to a theoretical medicine steeped in the Hippocratic and Galenic corpus. In the New World, the adoption of Amerindian medical practices and medicinal plants assisted in the general sixteenth- and seventeenth-century undermining of traditional scientific discourse.

The medicine taught at early modern universities was still primarily based upon the Hippocratic corpus, the works of Galen, Aristotelian science, and Arabic commentaries on these ancient sources. The individual human body was seen as a microcosmic reproduction of a greater cosmos composed of the traditional elements of earth, air, fire, and water. The qualities of heat, wetness, cold, and dryness found in the four elements were also found in the composite humors, or vital fluids, of the human body. Blood, intrinsically hot and wet, had qualities analogous to the element air; yellow bile, hot

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[53]Risse, 42; Schendel, 87-88.

and dry, was comparable to fire; black bile was perceived as dry and cold like earth; and phlegm was compared to water in being wet and cold. Bodily health was a balance of the four humors, and the healthy diet was a balance of hot, cold, wet, and, dry foods--- of meat, grains, vegetables, milk products, and fruits. Illness was caused by the ascendancy of one humor at the expense of the others.[54] In political and social organization, God had decreed that the estates of man were to work together for the common good; in medicine the humors were perceived as working in unison for the common good of the organism. Science, as well as political and social organization, was shaped by a metaphor of organicism, hierarchy and reciprocity; and by a purposeful, teleological cosmos.[55]

Sixteenth-century medical tracts and hospitals were directed at restoring balance to the humors, just as political tracts and practice aimed at maintaining and

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[54]Juan de Cárdenas, Primera Parte de los problemas y secretos marauillosos de las Indias (Mexico City: Pedro Ochante, 1591), 105-126, 175, in the Hispanic Culture Series' Hispanic Books Printed Before 1601, Reel 27; Luys Alcanyis, Regiment de la pestilencia (Valencia: Nicholaus Spindeler, ca.1490), HCS Reel 33; Juan de Avinón, Seuillana medicina, ed. Nicolás Monardes (Seville: Andres de Burgos, 1545), xvi-xxii, HCS Reel 225; and Charles Singer and E. Ashworth Underwood, A Short History of Medicine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), 27-47.

[55]Andres Velasquez, Libro de lo melancholia, en el qval se trata de la natvraleza desta enfermedad, assi llamada melancholia, y de sus causas y simptomas (Seville: Hernando Díaz, 1585), 19[a], HCS Reel 74.

restoring the balance among the estates. Balance and order were the key themes in both cases. In its political and social function, the hospital tried to find a purpose in society for the poor, the sick, and the outcast. This was merely epitomized by Vasco de Quiroga's experiments, just as the bond which united social and scientific ends was epitomized by his elevation to the bishopric of Michoacán. The Christian mythos and the ordinances of the Judaeo-Christian God created the ultimate justification for politics, science, social welfare, and all earthly activities. Twentieth-century distinctions were nonexistant to sixteenth-century paradigms, and God was truly the cause of all things.

The writings of sixteenth-century medicine traditionally paid homage to man's place within the divine cosmic plan. In some cases, it was even argued that the best way and time to heal individuals could be read in the stars, some physicians and astrologers writing that God's created harmony was so detailed that the celestial order and individual humans experienced

empathetic and predictable patterns of development.[56] The universe was so ordered that if God had created a poison or venomous animal, he also surely provided an antidote in the immediate vicinity of that threat. Sixteenth-century Spaniards thus saw themselves as part of their environment. They understood that environment to include wheat and cattle for the body's nourishment, and Christianity and police for the soul's sustenance, but they also expected it to always resemble the wide-open plains and plateaus of Castile and the Valley of Mexico. Hot regions with salty soil were to be avoided for a number of reasons. Wheat did not grow in such areas; cattle died; and Hippocratic medicine taught, on the basis of experience, that diseases flourished. The Hippocratic corpus itself argued that colonies were to be avoided in these places since hot and wet climates produced "bad air" or miasma. Such climates could cause all sorts of fevers and imbalances in the humors, and endemic and epidemic disease could lead to social instability.[57] The cabildo of San Estéban de Panuco

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[56]As late as 1607, this view was prevalent enough in Mexico City to warrant publication of Juan de Barrios' attack on the astrological notion of critical days for the healing of patients. He argued that the difficulty in empirically finding cures often led men to seek occult solutions. Still, he sided with observation and experimentation. Juan de Barrios, De la Verdadera Medicina, astrologia, y cirvgia (Mexico City, 1607), 43[b]-52[a], HCS Reel 333.

[57]George Rosen, A History of Public Health (New York: MD Publications, 1958), 33-4, 70, 103-04.

confirmed this view by reporting a normally hot climate in which north winds brought colds, fevers, coughs, and all sorts of pulmonary ailments.[58]

The first licensed Spanish doctors in the New World were well versed in the traditional texts, but quite unprepared to face the challenge of medical practices and medicinal plants that did not fit into Old World categories. Their first reaction was to defend their world view and the paradigmatic procedures in which they were trained.[59]

In this sense, it was quite fitting that the first medical work published in New Spain was an erudite, Latin recapitulation of classical and Islamic medicine. Francisco Bravo's Opera Medicinalia (1570) served the function of introducing the accepted medical canon to Mexico. Though interested in the nature and properties of New World flora like sarsaparilla, Bravo focused on such topics as the Hippocratic doctrines of critical days and on miasmatic exhalations as the cause of disease in the Valley of Mexico.[60]

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[58]"Descripción de la villa de Panuco," CDIR 9:133, 136.

[59]For a detailed study of the manner in which theoretical paradigms determine experimentation in science, see Thomas S. Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970).

[60]Risse, 45.

Just as epicycles were used by astronomers to explain the retrograde motion of the planets relative to a stationary earth in the Ptolemaic system, so too doctors tried to understand New World medicinal practices and plants by means of analogy to the teachings of Old World medicine.[61] Fairly early on, however, medical writers began to argue that some New World plants and practices were far more efficacious than those of Europe. In their desire to heal by means of experience and experiment, the ultimate aim of the entire Hippocratic corpus, doctors, and those nonprofessionals interested in medicine, sometimes were more willing to accept novelty than other Europeans. They began to admit that some things in the Americas could not be made to fit into the Hippocratic and Galenic discourses, and that some Amerindian practices were far superior to European ones. Without being fully conscious of it, they were

[61]Any system, like the Ptolemaic, with the earth as the center of the universe, runs into grave difficulties explaining the fact that a number of planets seemingly reverse their orbits around the earth. In fact, they are orbitting around the sun at a much slower rate than the earth, and our planet catches them and proceeds to pass them in their orbits. Epicycles literally had the planets going around in circles that were tangential to their orbit around the earth. This all proved to be a very complicated attempt to salvage an unworkable system, one that was finally surpassed by Copernican heliocentricism. See Marie Boas, The Scientific Renaissance, 1450-1630 (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1962), 39-49.

undermining the traditional Judaeo-Christian/Greco-Roman cosmos.

Just as Cortés admired Mexican architecture and certain aspects of Amerindian social development, so too he was more than willing to use indigenous medicine when it seemed effective and no European alternatives were at hand.[62] However, as soon as the time came for settling his New Spain, he turned to Spanish methods of organizing health care, the hospital being the primary case-in-point. Still, Aztec medicine found its advocates, and friars like Motolinía and Sahagún were among the first to come to praise its benefits in print:

> They have their physicians, experienced naturales who know how to apply many herbs and medicines, which suffice for them; and there are some among them of such experience that many ancient and grave illnesses, which have caused Spaniards to suffer without cure for countless years, are cured by them.[63]

Using the same basic principles as the Hippocratic appeal to medicine based on experience, Motolinía judged Aztec medicine superior to European medicine in certain areas. Similarly, the empirical underpinnings of the Hippocratic and Galenic methods would lead Spanish

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[62]Hernán Cortés, "Second Letter," in The Letters from Mexico, trans. Anthony Pagden (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 142-144.

[63]Motolinía, 160. Also see Bernardino de Sahagún, Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España, 4 vols., ed. Angel María Garibay K. (Mexico City: Editorial Porrúa, 1956), Libro Décimo, Cap. XIV. "Mujeres de baja condición," 3:129; Libro Décimo, Cap. XXVIII. "Enfermedades del cuerpo humano," 3:168-183.

physicians and surgeons to challenge their traditional cosmology.

By the 1570's, only fifty years after the conquest of Mexico, the Crown was quite ready to foster empirical research in medicine. The years 1565-1574 saw the publication of the three volumes of Nicolás Monardes' Historia medicinal. These books presented detailed descriptions of the medicinal value of various New World plants and herbs, as well as the healing qualities of snow and the bezoar stones produced in the bladders of American animals. Monardes used the general structure of a Galenic catalogue of medicinal plants to discuss plants Galen had never known. His own knowledge of the plants came from his thirty-year use of them as a practicing physician in Seville, the port of entry for New World goods. In an introductory statement by King Philip II, his original two volumes were granted a six-year monopoly on the "sale" of information regarding the medicinal value of plants and animals in the Indies. The royal commision of approval was given for this work which went on to popularize the curative powers of guaiacum, tobacco, and sarsaparilla.

Monardes began his first book with a description of the Western Indies as incredibly rich, yielding new lands, new precious stones and metals, and new medical

cures for Spain and the whole world.[64] He perceived the New World as new, but the ancient philosopher Aristotle made it possible for him to accept the possibility of completely new regions with flora never before seen by Europeans:

> As the Philosopher says, all lands do not have the same plants and fruits, and one region or land bears certain trees, plants and fruits which another does not bear.[65]

Among these plants peculiar to the New World were guaiacum, sarsparilla, and tobacco. Both guaiacum and sarsparilla were praised by Monardes for their efficacy in treating syphilis (las bubas). Like Motolinía and Sahagún, the Sevillan physician not only esteemed New World medicinal plants; he also praised the effectiveness of Amerindian medical practice, writing:

> Since a Spaniard suffered great pain from syphilis given to him by an Indian, the Indian who was of the physicians of that land gave him Guayacan water (i.e., guaiacum), which not only stopped the pain which he suffered, but cured him of the evil....[66]

Monardes accepted the scientific assumptions of his day. If God had created such a deadly disease as syphilis among the Amerindians, he must have also necessarily provided those same Indians with the cure. A

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[64]Nicolás Monardes, Dos Libros, el vno que trata de todas las cosas que traen de nuestras Indias Occidentales, que siruen al uso de la medicina, y el otro que trata de la piedra bezaar, y de la yerua escuerçonera (Seville: Hernando Díaz, 1569), Av[a], HCS Reel 225.

[65]Ibid., Av[b].

[66]Ibid, Dii[a].

benevolent God was not expected to abandon the human race to utter misery, and Amerindians were definitely fully human in Monardes' estimation, though he wavered between viewing them as equals and interpreting their cultures as barbaric. At times, he described their doctors as knowledgeable fellow practitioners of the medical arts, while, on occasion, he referred to Amerindians in general as "these barbarous peoples."[67]

The Indians were especially praised for their use of tobacco to treat head ailments, asthma, and fatigue. Monardes compared the sot weed to opium in its ability to relax its users euphorically after a hard day's work. As a result, he prescribed the drug for both encomienda Indians and black slaves.[68] Of course, twentieth-century science has proven tobacco to be a poison, not a panacea, and has refuted the efficacy of guaiacum and sarsparilla in curing syphilis. Still, Monardes stood at the cutting edge of scientific investigation in his day by presenting a series of case histories and experimental results to argue for the benefits of new drugs not found in the Hippocratic-Galenic canon. In this fashion he stepped outside the accepted circle of definition and interpretation, even though his conclusions were often

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[67] Nicolás Monardes, Segunda Parte del libro de las cosas que se traen de nuestras Indias Occidentales, que siruen al uso de medicina (Seville: Alonso Escriuano, 1571), 23, HCS, Reel 225.

[68] Ibid., 7-23.

erroneous and the organizational structure of his Historia medicinal was patterned on the traditional medieval catalogue of medicinal plants and herbs. Monardes had new, tangible drugs with which to experiment, not fabulous tales from Pliny. He may have described all new American drugs in terms of the Galenic qualities of dryness, wetness, heat, and cold, but, above all else, he claimed the primacy of the empirical evidence of case studies. He knew that sarsparilla was an effective treatment for syphilis and other diseases because he had used it effectively in sixteen years of medical practice.[69] Nicolás Monardes (together with Paracelsus, old world surgeons and other early moderns) helped to discard old medieval paradigms by bringing new remedies and techniques into the old hegemonic discourse. New wine would eventually rupture the old wine skins. A New World demanded new interpretation.[70]

Always searching for practical results and opportunities to extend its power, the sixteenth-century Spanish Crown and its New World officials took part in promoting the broadening of medical knowledge, just as

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[69] Monardes, Dos Libros, Fi[b].

[70] Alfred W. Crosby, The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492 (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1972), 9. For a discussion of how the boundaries of medical debate were also being questioned in the Old World, see Miriam Usher Chrisman, Lay Culture, Learned Culture: Books and Social Change in Strasbourg, 1480-1599 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1982), 170-181.

they actively supported the reform of poor relief, that other facet of the hospital. Medicine was perceived as a "social science" since it involved the health of the public. For the Crown, regulation of the common good necessarily included regulation of medical practice. Thus, the Ordenanzas Ovandinas (1570-73) and the 1604 questionnaire sent out by the conde de Lemus asked for a description of the most common illnesses in the Americas, and of the local herbs, roots, and minerals by which they could be cured.[71] A few corregidores and cabildos were happy to comply with this request. Panuco, for example, mentioned the Indian use of chili, hot honey, and sarsaparilla to cure pulmonary illnesses, but other cabildos remained silent on this specialized matter, and some individuals, like Xonotla's corregidor, Jhoan Gonçales, admitted their ignorance.[72] Of Indian herbal cures, Gonçales wrote:

> And they cure themselves with many herbs that they raise in the mountains and crags; of the names, I can not recall since they are very different from the herbs of Spain.[73]

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[71] "Interrogatorio para todas las ciudades, villas y lugares...de las Indias Occidentales...," CDIR 9:67.

[72] "Descripción de la villa de Panuco (sin fecha)," CDIR 9:136. Also see "Relación de Cuzcatlan (26 Octubre, 1580)," PNE 5:52; "Relación de Ahuatlan y su partido (19-24 Agosto, 1581)," PNE 5:96; "Caueçera de Tetela, obispado de Tlaxcala (20-29 Octubre, 1581)," PNE 5:149; "Relación de Tetela y Ueyapan, obispado de México (20 junio, 1581)," PNE 6:288.

[73] "Relación de Xonotla y Tetela (20-29 Octubre, 1581)," PNE 5:141.

For Gonçales, a man of no medical training, New World herbs and cures may have been hopelessly different from those of Spain, but for trained physicians and surgeons the New World was carefully formulated within the confines of Old World constructs. This was true of the mental categories by which physicians and surgeons first came to understand the New World, but it was also true of their institutional and professional organization. Medical practice in New Spain was organized along lines similar to those established in Castile; the New World yet again being perceived as a *tabula rasa* waiting to have a perfected vision of Spain inscribed upon it. In 1525, the municipal magistrates of Mexico City appointed the barber-surgeon Francisco de Soto the first *protomédico* of New Spain. His task, similar to that of Castilian *protomédicos*, was to regulate medical practice, to grant licenses to practitioners, and to maintain and improve public health. In 1527, the *licenciado* Pedro López assumed that position, and with its inception, the *Audiencia* of Mexico assumed control of the *protomedicato*.

The sponsor of an alchemical laboratory in his own palace, Philip II, in 1571, placed the capstone on royal supervision of medicine in New Spain by appointing one of his own court physicians, Francisco Hernández (1517-1587), as a special *protomédico* with powers to study all

plants of medicinal value in the colony. Hernández also could direct medical examinations and issue licenses, but only with the approval of Mexico City's audiencia. Soon learning that the audiencia was quite unwilling to allow him to issue licenses in lieu of the protomédicos it had appointed, he turned all his attention to the experimental and exploratory aspects of his mission.

Some time around 1574, Hernández visited the Hospital de Santa Cruz, established in 1569 at Huaxtepec by Bernardino Alvarez. The physicians at that hospital used native plants to treat a variety of diseases, including syphilis, and Hernández used his experience there to write his Nova Plantarvm, Animalivm Mexicanorvm Historia.[74] Like Monardes, he explained Aztec medicine in terms of humoral pathology and was openly critical of the indigenous healers' inability to use European medical discourse. Hernández found great value in the New World's flora and fauna, but value was determined in European terms for European benefit.[75] Commissioned by the Spanish Crown, and representative of Spanish culture, Hernández had great difficulty in accepting Indian medicinal practice on its own terms. Like Monardes, he

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[74]Francisco Hernández, Nova Plantarvm, Animalivm et Mineralivm Mexicanorvm Historia (Rome: Sumptibus Blasij Deuersini, & Zanobij Masotti Bibliopolarum, MDCLI), HCS Reel 469.

[75]Ibid., 228, 247.

could only accept innovation within the terms of his training and categories of understanding.[76]

Physicians and surgeons with a lifetime of experience in New Spain were even more capable of combining Spanish and Indian knowledge. Martín de la Cruz, an Indian physician who was a teacher at the Imperial College of Santa Cruz of Tlaltelalco, composed an Aztec herbal in 1552. This herbal has come to be known as the Vatican Library's Badianus Manuscript, its pages preserving Aztec herbal pharmaceutical treatments in the original Nahuatl and in Juan Badiano's Latin translation.[77] In turn, the work of another long-time resident of New Spain, the Spanish physician-turned-friar, Augustín Farfán, recommended native plants as substitutes for scarce European pharmaceuticals. In his <u>Tractado brebe de anathomia y chirurgia</u> (1579) and its revision, <u>Tractado brebe de medicina</u> (1592), Farfán prescribed approximately sixty indigenous drugs, including pulverized avocado pits as an antidiarrheic; chili, vanilla, and rhubarb as purgatives; hot chocolate as a laxative; copal as an astringent resin; and sarsaparilla as a diaphoretic. He was actively interested in devising effective daily cures. For those with weak stomachs he prescribed a diet of light meats

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[76]Risse, 29-31, 40, 44; Goodman, 234-8.
[77]Schendel, 46.

such as chicken and goat, fresh eggs, and warm cinnamon-flavored water in place of wine. Of course, guaiacum appeared as the cure for syphilis.[78]

Farfán's willingness to explore and experiment was firmly rooted in the case-study method of Hippocratic medicine, but his enthusiasm for the new could also lead to the gradual deterioration of the accepted norms of ancient European biology and medicine, as new observations challenged the conclusions reached by the original Greco-Roman empiricism.

In two other works published in sixteenth-century Mexico-City, the experience of the clinic began to challenge accepted theories. These were the barber-surgeon Alonso López de Hinojosos' Suma y recopilación de cirugía (1578) and the physician Juan de Cárdenas' Primera parte de los problemas y secretos marauillosos de las Indias (1591). With López de Hinojosos and Cárdenas, Mexican medical books began to reflect what Michel Foucault studied as the process and growth of the clinical experience in medicine. This included the observation of case studies, the performance of autopsies and detailed diagnoses, and the experimental use of new

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[78]Augustín Farfán, Tractado brebe de medicina, y de todas las enfermedades (Mexico City: Pedro Ocharte, 1592), 3[b]-4[a], 87[a]-89[b], 90[a]-93[a], 161[a]; and Risse, 48-9.

drugs.[79] It was medical empiricism based on sensory observation and the interpretation of that observation.

Employed as a barber-surgeon and phlebotomist at both the Hospital Real de los Naturales and the Hospital de la Concepción de Nuestra Señora, López de Hinojosos based his surgical treatise in large part on the medieval works of Guy de Chauliac, but he deplored the use of medieval medical jargon. He wrote in simple Spanish so that his work would be of use to those who lived in isolated areas, and he engaged in a number of autopsies under the direction of Francisco Hernández to determine the cause of the cocoliztle epidemic of 1576 (an unidentified pestilence which devastated the Indian population of Mexico City). López prescribed such Indian remedies as theriac, a panacea containing opiates, alcohol, and fifty other compounds, as well as coanenepilli, a root with antispasmodic and antimalarial properties. Joining the Jesuits as a brother in 1585, López's 1578 treatise strikes the modern reader by the ambiguity of some of its language. When discussing the cocoliztle of 1576, for example, López casually noted that the Archbishop of Mexico City cared more for the salvation of the Indians than for their bodily health.

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[79]Michel Foucault, The Birth of the Clinic, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Vintage, 1975), 4-20.

The twentieth-century reader will never know if this was meant as a sarcastic attack or a word of praise.[80]

However, the same reader can be certain that Juan de Cárdenas was testing the chains which bound him. Disease-ridden airs, the traditional miasma, still appeared as the cause of both endemic diseases and epidemics in Cardenás' work.[81] The good doctor took time to explore the medicinal benefits of new plants such as cacao and chili peppers, but he did so within the confines of humoral pathology.[82] Like Monardes, he argued for the benefits of tobacco, extending the argument to coca in a chapter entitled "Why Coca and Tobacco, When Taken Orally, Give Strength and Sustenance to the Body."[83] More importantly, however, Cárdenas was exceptional in posing a direct challenge to miasmatic causality--- one that he was not fully aware of, given his general acceptance of that theory.

In discussing baldness in Indians and Spaniards in the New World, Cárdenas cited several diseases as causes which could be traced back to miasmas, but he also listed other environmental factors and causes not linked to bad airs. Among Spaniards, hair loss could result from "the

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[80]Risse, 47-8.

[81]Juan de Cárdenas, Primera parte de los problemas y secretos marauillosos de las Indias (Mexico City: Casa de Pedro Ocharte, 1591), 57-8, HCS, 27.

[82]Ibid., pp. 105-113, 124-126.

[83]Ibid., pp. 132-138.

contagious evil of syphilis," which was recognized as a result of sexual intercourse.[84] Among Indians, however, a lack of abundant facial hair was linked to "seminal reasons" found in the engendering male parent:

> Turning to the second question on the problem of the cause of beardlessness, or the sparseness of beards among Indians, I respond that the growth of a beard is an accident like color that follows the semblance to one's parents, that is to say, that just as a black father naturally generates a black son, and a white a white son, likewise is the growth of a beard, that if the father is smooth-skinned and without a beard, like the Indian is, so too is the son...and they will be so in any province of the world where they should live, and this is because they are, since birth, without a beard.[85]

According to Cárdenas then, Indians are born "beardless" as a result of a property or accident intrinsically linked to their nature as Indians. A change of environment would not change the Indian's beardlessness. Like Darwin with his mysterious causal "sports," Cárdenas' observations led him to approach the veil behind which the principles of genetics were hidden. While Paracelsus used occult language to try to capture the newness of his medical hypotheses, Cárdenas resorted to old Aristotelian terms like "accident" to describe dependent characteristics. A product of his time, Cárdenas cannot be blamed for this. If the historian is not to accept false progressivism, he should merely

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[84] Ibid., p. 185[b].
[85] Ibid., pp. 187[b]-188[a].

record the manner in which Cárdenas pressed the interpretive limits of his day.

As illustrated by Luis Alcañiz's Regiment de la pestilencia (ca. 1490), a proper diet was readily accepted as an appropriate means to combat disease. Cárdenas took this commonly held notion and boldly dared to expand its impact in the realm of public health. Not only did he see poor diet as contributing to baldness among Spaniards,[86] he saw it as an important contributing factor to the shorter life expectancy of Spaniards in the New World. After acknowledging that violence, disease, and the hot, humid climates of the Indies were major factors in the early deaths of Spaniards, Cárdenas went on to attack the nutritional value of American foodstuffs, arguing that Europeans could only grow weak on a diet of American foods. Unfortunately, Cárdenas failed to list the foods to which he was referring, and the reader is left to wonder if he wrote of native American foods like maize or of all foodstuffs, including European plants and cattle, raised in a New World environment.[87] Once again, the error of the conclusions does not discount the value of the observation and speculation. The conquistadores and friars craved European grains and proteins. Cárdenas believed that a

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[86] Ibid., p. 185^b.
[87] Ibid., pp. 174^b-175^b.

European diet would maintain the health of Europeans. Along with the ideals of religion and politics, the Spaniards were determined to maintain the roots of their sustaining material culture. Over the centuries, they had created their cultural values, and, by the sixteenth century, they were products of this culture. Their very bodies, individual and social, were crafted by their cultural norms in sickness and in health.

Ideally, the sixteenth-century hospital was a place where physical diseases and the ills of society were to be healed. Christian faith was to be demonstrated through works directed at feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and healing the sick. Made to house men and women in need, hospitals in Mexico became laboratories for social and scientific experimentation. The focus of utopian development for Vasco de Quiroga, they were the source of clinical experience for Francisco Hernández and Alonso López de Hinojosos. As demonstrated by the Ordinances for the Hospital de San Lázaro, the Crown perceived the official mission of Spanish hospitals as both the provision of treatment and the social education of the indigent sick. The future bifurcation of this mission by nineteenth- and twentieth-century states was already evident in the separate paths taken by Quiroga and Hernández, but total divorce of the social welfare

and medical aspects of the hospital could not finally occur until the abandonment of the Hippocratic-Galenic discourse in medicine. Humoral pathology in medicine was too linked to a macrocosmic view that included the intimate influence of the stars, airs, and food on individual human bodies. As such, it agreed that each individual human body was only one part of a much larger organic system, a system even recreated by a series of tables and charts appended to Hernández's Nova Plantarvm, Animalivm et Mineralivm.[88] God regulated the cosmos with purpose, and medicine was merely a part of police, of the social regulation of mankind. Mimesis functioned reciprocally, and if society was a body, so too the human body was a society. Hierarchy and reciprocity existed between the four principal parts of the body: the Galenic head, heart, liver, and generative organs.[89] In turn, these organs were provided with police and government, "The physical cause of eating is gouierno...."[90] Constantly given to analogical, holistic thought, the sixteenth-century Spanish mind drew analogies between the medical uses of New and Old World plants, comparing

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[88]Hernández, Nova Plantarvm, Animalivm et Mineralivm Mexicanorvm Historia, pp. 903-951.

[89]Velasquez, Libro de la melancholia, pp. 12-23.

[90]Literally "government," the maintenance and ordering of the body, or hygenic and biological policía. Avinón, xvi.

tobacco, coca, and opium, among other things.[91] A twentieth-century relativist mind may find it hard to believe that Spaniards would observe new plants and new medical treatments only to fit them into old categories of understanding, but they were also quite capable of taking unique Amerindian cultures and trying to make them conform to European social, and even utopian, visions. Spanish rule did not always provide enough food for the Indians, but it did provide new diseases like smallpox and typhus. The deprivation and suffering of Indian bodies was a constant truth which Spaniards could not ignore, and the hospital became the Spanish method of treating poverty and illness in the New World, just as it had been in the Old. Through cofradías and cajas de communidad, Indians manipulated European hospital structures so as to make them fit into their own traditions, but they were surely forced into acts of manipulation and surreptition. A conquered people, they could not even fully escape the products of Spanish culture in poverty, sickness, and death.

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[91] Monardes, Segunda Parte, 7-23; Hernádez Nova Plantarvm, Animalivm et Mineralivm Mexicanorvm Historia, 173-175; and Cardenas, 132^{b}-138^{b}.

CHAPTER 7

THE QUEST FOR JUSTICE: THE BODY REGULATES ITS FUNCTIONS

On January 21, 1592, Don Luis de Velasco, viceroy of New Spain, formally recognized that Spaniards demanded excessive tribute from their Indian vassals, in this case Castilian chickens. Addressing the naturales of Malinalco, he wrote that Indians suffered a great scarcity of chickens throughout the Valley of Mexico. Appealing to the abstract principle of "justice," he proposed that the tributaries of Malinalco pay the Spaniards in reales rather than ganado menor, or lesser livestock.[1] This seemingly simple court decision was rooted in the complexity of the sixteenth-century Spanish mentalité. Sensing that the chicken increased vitality, Amerindians demanded this European source of protein. Velasco, as representative of the King's justice, could not possibly deny the Crown's poor subjects the benefits of Castilian chickens. His solution provided for the exchange of symbols of value, rather than the actual exchange of goods produced by the primary economic sector. The use of money, a symbolic language of exchange, was to somehow save the indigenous population

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[1]Archivo General de la Nación, Fondo Indios, volumen 6, 1[a] parte, exp. 41, f. 10[a]. Henceforth AGN.

from want, need and real suffering. How the _reales_ were to be accumulated was never addressed. Velasco's main concern was the recasting of the social organic nexus of hierarchy and reciprocity so as to provide the balance referred to as justice. Legal proceedings, like the medical and charitable cures found in hospitals, were meant to restore social and individual bodies to their proper functioning. From the end of January until mid-April, 1592, Velasco set about enacting the Spanish ideal in a series of cases which concerned the fundamental needs of human bodies and the symbolic value attached to them.

A series of decisions were handed down in order to protect the Amerindians from the ravages of Spanish and Indian greed. On January 23, the _corregidor_ Joan de Vallende was ordered by the viceroy to stop the devastation of Indian maize and vegetable fields by the mares, stallions, she-asses and other livestock of the _estancias_ of Joan Gutiérrez and the _regidor_ Francisco Verarano. In defense of the indigenous population of Chichicapa, the _corregidor_ was expected to keep a close watch of the _estancias_ belonging to Verarano: San Miguel, Santiago, San Joan and Santanna. The Indians were to continue their payment of tributary honey and silk to Spaniards, but the Spanish desire for physical luxury was not to interfere with the basic necessities of

macequales.[2] Similarly, the fields of common Indians in Toluca were not to be disturbed by the livestock of the Indian _principales_ of Tlatelulco, and the livestock of _estancias_ belonging to Francisco Péres were not to destroy the agricultural produce of the Indians of Guexoano.[3] In Tecama (eight leagues to the northeast of Mexico City), Spaniards were again making excessive tributary demands in wheat, maize, coin and labor, and Velasco decreed that Indians were to be freed from all duties as porters and were to be allowed to sell their wheat and maize in order to earn money in order to pay their tribute exclusively in coin.[4] Other cases demonstrate the Crown's practical definition of justice as the balancing of interests in terms of hierarchy and reciprocity by decreeing the roles to be played by the bureaucratic "arms" of the body politic. In Tepozcolula, perjudicial Spaniards, causing disorder in the Indian township, were banned from it. Velasco argued that the Crown had banned all wayward Spanish interlopers and freebooters from Indian townships in order to conserve "quietude and good police in the republic of the

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[2] _AGN_, Fondo _Indios_, volumen 6, 1[a] parte, exp. 56, f. 13[a].

[3] Decisions rendered sometime in February of 1592. _AGN_, Fondo _Indios_, volumen 6, 1[a] parte, exp. 118, f. 28[a] and exp. 172, f. 44[a].

[4] A decision rendered sometime in February of 1592. _AGN_, Fondo _Indios_, volumen 6, 1[a] parte, exp. 222, f. 57[a].

Indians."[5] In Coyoacán, the Indian alcaldes mayores were to retain their privileges to sell honey and other things, but, in Tecama, the principales naturales were reminded that it was prohibited to use the lands of the cajas de communidad for personal benefit.[6] In summation, these three decisions restated the all-important Spanish principles of hierarchy and reciprocity. Neither Spaniards nor Indian nobles were to abuse Indian commoners, who could expect their basic life sustenance would be provided them by the body politic, in times of need by cajas de communidad. In turn, the rights and privileges of all natural and official lords, whether Spanish or Amerindian, were to be respected. This is what the Spaniards meant by policía, and its maintenance was reflected in apparel as well as in food.

On March 11, 1592, Viceroy Velasco granted two Indian caciques, Don Geronimo de la Cruz of Ycpatepec and Don Pedro Ximenez of Tepeaca, the privilege of riding a horse and carrying a sword.[7] On April 14, Don Migo Hernandez, cacique and principal indio of Teutitlan, was also granted this privilege.[8] In doing this, Velasco was

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[5]March 10, 1592. AGN, Fondo Indios, volumen 6, 1[a] parte, exp. 220, f. 56[b].

[6]January 23, 1592. AGN, Fondo Indios, volumen 6, 1[a] parte, exp. 52, f. 12[a].

[7]AGN, Fondo Indios, volumen 6, 1[a] parte, exp. 223-224, 57[a].

[8]AGN, Fondo Indios, volumen 6, 1[a] parte, exp. 273, f. 74[a-b].

providing these Indians with the outward signs of their acceptance by the Spanish nobility. By carrying a sword and riding horseback, they were recast as noble in the Spanish mode, as intermediaries between the conquerors and the conquered macequales. The number of Indian caciques granted these privileges was great. On the same day in July of 1589, Velasco had bestowed these honors on eleven dons.[9] They had become like the Spaniards and unlike other Indians, and they were at least wealthy enough to maintain a horse at a time when, according to Charles Gibson, most Indian caciques were experiencing a decline in power and wealth.[10]

The late sixteenth-century decline in Indian power may, in fact, be reflected by Velasco's decisions from January 21 to April 14 of 1592. One hundred years after the "discovery of a New World," the representatives of the Spanish Crown still found it necessary to protect Indian privileges and lands. This implies that the lands and privileges were constantly being violated. Unfortunately, although the decisions of viceroys and audiencias may have favored Indians on numerous occasions, there is very little substantial evidence of

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[9]AGN, Fondo Indios, volumen 4, exp. 170-180, f. 55[a]-56[a].

[10]Charles Gibson, The Aztecs under Spanish Rule (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964), 194-217.

their actual enforcement.[11] In a political society which lived by the principle of "obedezco pero no cumplo," the compliance with and enforcement of a superior's orders were not always guaranteed. It is only by inference that we can determine the successful protection of Indian privilege--- inference such as the continued ownership of the vast majority of lands by Indians in the Valley of Oaxaca well into the nineteenth century.[12] All in all, the enforcement of Viceroy Velasco's 1592 decisions was probably a story of mixed results, depending on the zeal, or lack thereof, of local Spanish corregidores. Theory seldom recreates itself perfectly in the world of practical affairs, but it certainly does have its impact, whether beneficial or detrimental.

The development of legal protection of the Indians was slow. In 1551, the Audiencia of Mexico devoted one-half its time to suits involving Indians. By 1554, the Audiencia's fiscal, or Crown attorney, was entrusted with the task of defending Amerindians before the highest court in New Spain, but he was so preoccupied with cases involving the royal hacienda that this function was

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[11]Woodrow Borah, Justice by Insurance: The General Indian Court of Colonial Mexico and the Legal Aides of the Half-Real (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983), 139, 156.

[12]"At most, Spanish estates accounted for one-third of the land in Oaxaca, and the largest holdings were suited only to grazing." William B. Taylor, Landlord and Peasant in Colonial Oaxaca (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972), 163. Also see 43, 67, 82-4, 107-08, 199.

inadequately discharged. As a result, Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza (1535-1550) and his successor, the first Luis de Velasco (1550-1564), started the practice of hearing Indian complaints in a viceregal court. Indians were uncertain as to where they should take their complaints, with the jurisdiction of the viceroy and the audiencia intersecting, but they knew they were guaranteed justice by the Crown as the _república de los indios_. Not until the 1590's was the son of the first Viceroy Velasco, our Luis de Velasco (1590-1595), able to establish a special bureaucracy within the viceregal administration to deal with Indian legal complaints. He created the General Indian Court of New Spain, with its salaried _defensor de los indios_, _letrado_, and _avogado_. Indians were free of the payment of fees, unless they were entire towns or _caciques_, and a general tax was levied on Indian townships to provide for the expenses of the court. Procedurally, one of the most important issues dealt with by the Court was the question of _amparo_.

The writ of _amparo_ protected the possession of land or the exercise of some function as a traditional and hereditary privilege. To defend their lands and the subsistence of their bodies from Spanish infringements, and the infringements of other Indians, quite a few towns argued that _amparo_ recognized their usage of lands traditionally cultivated by their fathers and

grandfathers. The cases dealing with the writ of amparo were numerous and have been explored by Borah in Justice by Insurance: The General Indian Court of Colonial Mexico and the Legal Aides of the Half-Real.[13] Supporting the argument of this study, many cases dealt with issues of Indian food production and physical maintenance.

Prior to the establishment of Velasco's General Indian Court, in 1561, the principales and naturales of Atzcapotzalco brought suit before the Audiencia of Mexico City in a case of disputed water rights. Under the leadership of their Indian governor Don Baltazar Hernández, the inhabitants of Atzcapotzalco claimed hereditary right to the use of water found on estancia lands belonging to the Indians of Santiago de Tlaltelolco.[14] Hoping to attain the privileged status of miserables[15] in the eyes of the Crown, the plaintiffs argued that they were so poor that they lacked a caja de communidad. It was obviously hoped that royal officials, as defenders of the principle of reciprocity in theory and of the poor and downtrodden in practice, would thus lend a sympathetic ear. For two entire years, the Audiencia heard evidence and testimony, while constantly

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[13]Borah, Justice by Insurance, 25, 52-5, 63-78, 91-4, 104-05, 144-74.

[14]AGN, Fondo Tierras, volumen 1, 1[a] parte, exp. 17, f. 22[a-b].

[15]A legal term referring to the poor in need of the Crown's protection and assistance.

being bombarded by pleas for justice presented by the Spanish lawyers representing Atzcapotzalco and Santiago de Tlaltelolco, Cristóbal de Pérez and Jhoan de Salazar respectively. Finally, on October 14, 1563, the oidores of Mexico City's Audiencia decided in favor of the governors and Indians of Santiago de Tlaltelolco; the major factor in the decision was testimony from neighboring Indian townships which supported the cabecera's case against the smaller Atzcapotzalco. The Indians of Atzcapotzalco were ordered to desist from squatting on the estancias belonging to Tlaltelolco, and from using any water found on those estancias.[16] The ganado mayor of a wealthier Indian township had triumphed over the seemingly urgent water needs of a poorer Indian group. One immediately wonders if Santiago de Tlaltelolco, as a cabecera (or town with administrative jurisdiction over anumber of other Indian habitations), was able to sway the testimony of subordinate towns. Such matters can only be left to speculation, but the skill with which Indians employed the Spanish legal system stands as factual testimony to their participation in the conquest as both active agents and victims. It also demonstrates a familiarity with ajudication which dated back to the Aztecs and their use of professional

[16]AGN, Fondo Tierras, volumen 1, 1[a] parte, exp. 160, f. 165[a]-182[a].

judges, testimony, contract law and numerous other elements of legal discourse.[17] The case of Atzcapotzalco also illustrates that while Indians maintained a preference for maize over wheat, the more affluent among them were just as enthusiastic for the raising of cattle and sheep as the Spaniards were. Interestingly enough, while Spaniards were often ordered to remove their ganado mayor from occupied Indian lands, Santiago de Tlaltelolco's livestock was protected at the expense of the water needs of Atzcapotzalco.

Immediately following the Audiencia's decision, Tlaltelolco sued Atzcapotzalco for damages, and Cristóbal de Pérez emphasized Atzcapotzalco's need yet again.[18] The Audiencia only reaffirmed its decision, but the appeals continued, showing the willingness of both Tlaltelolco and Atzcapotzalco to work within the legal system.[19] On July 24, 1565, the fiscal, Dr. Cespedes, issued an order that the estancia of Santa Anna was to be respected as land belonging to Santiago de Tlaltelolco.[20]

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[17]Bernardino de Sahagún, Florentine Codex: General History of the Things of New Spain, 13 vols., trans. Arthur J. O. Anderson and Charles E. Dibble (Santa Fe: Monographs of the School of American Research, 1970-82), 4:9; 9:41-3, 54-5; 10:23-4. Volume and page references refer to this edition, and not to Sahagún's original twelve books in Nahuatl.

[18]AGN, Fondo Tierras, volumen 1, 1[a] parte, exp. 167-168, f. 189[a]-190[b].

[19]AGN, Fondo Tierras, volumen 1, 1[a] parte, exp. 174-176, f. 196[a]-198[a].

[20]AGN, Fondo Tierras, volumen 1, 2[a] parte, exp. 248, f. 5[a].

This was also the case with the <u>estancias</u> of San Juan and Santa Cruz.[21] Appeals still continued, and Dr. Cespedes had to reaffirm the decision against Atzcapotzalco on April 11, 1567, with a final reaffirmation being issued by Mexico City's <u>Audiencia</u> on July 1, 1569![22] In the final reaffirmation, it was determined that justice was served by respecting Santiago de Tlaltelolco's claim to the <u>estancias</u> of San Juan and Santa Cruz. In court, the <u>ganado mayor</u> of an Indian <u>cabecera</u> had won a final victory, but one wonders if squatters from Atzcapotzalco continued to infringe upon the lands of Tlaltelolco. Official decisions and their enforcement were two separate matters entirely.

Just as the <u>relaciones geográficas</u> of the early 1600's marked a solidification of the Spanish conquest, so too the regular functioning of the General Indian Court marked a sort of normalization in the Spanish-Indian cultural exchange. Officials were kept on salary to ensure an appropriate balance in the recognition of Spanish and Indian interests in the body politic. One such official was a solicitor of the court named Joseph de Sali. In 1616, and throughout his long career, Sali experienced the actual process of Indian agency as it

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[21] <u>AGN</u>, Fondo <u>Tierras</u>, volumen 1, 2[a] parte, exp. 267, f. 14[a]-15[a].

[22] <u>AGN</u>, Fondo <u>Tierras</u>, volumen 1, 2[a] parte, exp. 284, f. 32[a] and exp. 462, f. 204[a].

tried to maintain some autonomy within the confines of the Spanish imperium. On March 4, 1616, Sali presented the complaints of the Indian towns of Jecalpa, Huauchinantla, Mitepec and Tamazula in the province of Teotlalco, now in southwestern Puebla. It seems that Spanish ranchers, in imitation of the noble sheepherders the Castilian Mesta, permitted their cattle to invade native lands, where they proceeded to eat fruit trees and crops. The Amerindians requested both payment for damages and the right to kill any invading cattle in the future. The viceroy not only granted this request; he ordered that any future offenders be fined for the expenses of the General Indian Court, and that the local alcalde mayor send testimony of compliance within twenty days.[23] This case was typical of the continued courtroom success experienced by Sali throughout his career. On March 12 of the same year, Sali dealt with the delicate issue of clerical versus lay authority. Arguing on behalf of the Indians of San Juan Coscomatepec, who claimed to be poor and worn out by burdens, Sali asked for a viceregal decree forbidding their mistreatment by the local curate. The viceroy granted this decree, but he also stressed that proceedings for damages against the

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[23] AGN, Fondo Indios, volumen 7, exp. 30, f. 14[a-b]. The idea to review the cases of Joseph de Sali came from his constant appearance in Woodrow Borah's Justice by Insurance, 121-226.

curate would have to continue in the episcopal court of Puebla, where they were already being heard.[24] On September 3, he merely acted as the agent of three Indians of Santa María Azompa in the Valley of Oaxaca. They had bought land from a principal, and the viceregal court approved the sale since it was "among Indians."[25]

Throughout his career, Sali dealt with issues of land ownership among the Indians. By extension he was dealing with issues concerning Indian sustenance and the maintenance of the república de los indios, with the practical application of policía and justicía. Official Spanish policy never denied the Indians food, but it did regulate the types of food they could produce and consume. Of course, this was blatantly apparent in the prohibitions enforced against cannibalism, but it was also present in the wheat tithes which may have made maize financially, as well as gastronomically, more acceptable to Indian palates. Restrictions on Indian slaughterhouses were also enacted, though it seems they failed to curtail Indian meat consumption in practice.[26]

In actual practice, the exchange and marketing of Indian foodstuffs also became a matter of Spanish jurisprudence. On March 24, 1616, Joseph de Sali represented San Nicolás Cuitlatetelco, subject town of

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[24] AGN, Fondo Indios, volumen 7, exp. 31, f. 15[a].
[25] AGN, Fondo Indios, volumen 7, exp. 104, f. 51[a-b].
[26] Gibson, 346.

Mezquique. The Indians explained that custom provided that the town market be held every Saturday behind the church, but certain Spaniards and Indians were planning to move the market for their own benefit. Explicitly appealing to the writ of amparo, Sali successfully defended the rights of the town market against any interference.[27] In 1633, Sali dealt with similar issues when the local alcalde mayor of Atorpay and Chicuasontepec, in the province of Veracruz, was accused, together with other residents, of seizing Indian produce and paying lower than market price. The viceregal court ordered him to desist from this, and from forcing Indians to fish for him without pay.[28] The New World social organism was regulated carefully in all the sustaining processes which maintained its health. This was seen as the appropriate role of reason and the head. Sali served as an instrument of the Crown's reason.

Joseph de Sali was also involved in disputes concerning that critical nexus of Iberian-Indian exchange and interchange: the manufacturing of cloth. On April 8, 1633, he represented Juan Miguel and his wife, Indians of the barrio of Santa Anna of Puebla, who complained that the obrajero Alonso Moreno had kept them prisoner for over two years to pay a debt accrued through the expenses

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[27] AGN, Fondo Indios, volumen 7, exp. 36, f. 17[a-b].

[28] September 6, 1633. AGN, Fondo Indios, volumen 7, exp. 142-148, f. 77[b]-82[b].

of their marriage. They were forced to work day and night, as well as on feast days, in clear violation of restrictions imposed upon the forced labor of Amerindians in obrajes. Of course, the viceregal court, in its quest for justice, ordered the immediate release of these Indians, who had obviously already paid any debt accrued.[29] Once again, Sali had fulfilled his role as tribune to the least of Christ's brethren. More than Sepúlveda's Treatise on the Just Causes of War with the Indians, the actions of men like Sali, no doubt, helped to ease a Spanish conscience racked by questions of the justice of conquest and imperialism. If the Spaniards could point to themselves as just rulers of a healthy social organism, then their conquest was justified. If they saw only the deaths, drunkenness and diseases prevalent among Amerindians, then their imperium was a sinful thing.

The Spanish quest for justice in the Americas was quite real, but it normally was not a quest for utopia. There was room for the experiments of a Vasco de Quiroga, but most Spaniards took a far more cynical attitude, expecting sinful shortcomings on the part of both Spaniards and Indians. While Las Casas may have painted the Indians as too saintly, and Sepúlveda as too demonic, Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza, as a practical man of

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[29] AGN, Fondo Indios, volumen 10, exp. 149, f. 83[a-b].

affairs, steered a middle course accepted by many Crown officials. In the _relación_ to his successor, he wrote:

> Some will tell Your Lordship that the Indians are simple and humble people without malice, pride, or covetousness. Others will insist upon the opposite, and claim that they are very rich and lazy and do not wish to cultivate their lands. Do not believe one group or the other. Rather deal with the Indians as with any other people, without making special rules, and with caution for the devices of third parties....[30]

Justice in the Americas was to be the balancing act that it already was in Spain, with hierarchy and reciprocity serving as the antipodes, and privileges granted by _amparo_ serving as weights and counterweights. Equilibrium under God's absolute laws was a goal seldom achieved, but it was pursued with no false hopes. Privileges were granted and restricted so as to serve the common good of all. Thus, on February 20, 1590, the second Viceroy Velasco did both in pursuit of the common good, just as any monarch would. He granted Don Joseph Sanchez, a _principal_ of Guatinchan (in the _partido_ of Puebla de los Angeles), the privileges and responsibilities of maintaining "_haciendas y grangerias_," of living wheresoever he wished, and of paying tribute so as to maintain _doctrineros_ to instruct the local Indian population in the faith. He also forbade the governors and _principales_ of Guatinchan from the forced sale of

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[30]Quoted in Borah, _Justice by Insurance_, 67.

meat to local macequales.[31] In doing this, he was merely following a tradtion established by Mendoza and carried on by future viceroys.

Although tradition clearly accepted the regulation of the social organism from above, it did not try to eliminate all initiative from below, as do modern totalitarian systems. As has been demonstrated, cofradías were used by Amerindians to regulate and control festivals and the redistribution of wealth in their own local communities.[32] Far from being illicit and a form of rebellion, these bodies, though deplored by local curates, were officially sanctioned by viceroys. As late as February 4, 1619, Don Diego Fernández de Córdoba gave license for the Indians of Tehuacán (in the southeast of the present-day state of Puebla) to form the Cofradía de la Limpia Concepción.[33] The Habsburg tradition of "absolutism" allowed for compromise, leeway and some initiative from below, hence the famous "obedezco pero no cumplo." Neither a society of the free or the enslaved, New Spain was a society of the privileged. Only the centralizing Bourbon reforms of the late eighteenth century and the laissez-faire liberal

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[31] AGN, Fondo Indios, volumen 4, exp. 276-277, f. 83[b]-84[a].

[32] Murdo J. MacLeod, "The Social and Economic Roles of Indian Cofradias in Colonial Chiapas," in The Church and Society in Colonial Latin America, ed. Jeffrey A. Cole (New Orleans: Tulane University Press, 1984), 73-96.

[33] AGN, Fondo Indios, volumen 7, exp. 351, f. 170[a].

principles of La Reforma later disrupted this, with the culminating blow being the late nineteenth century's disintegration of communally held ejido lands and privileges.

The dramatic transformation from Indian-held lands to ever-growing latifundia was most drastic after New Spain had become the independent state of Mexico. The Ley Lerdo of 1856, with its opposition to all corporately held land, especially paved the way for the demise of the communally held Indian ejido, vital to both husbandry and agriculture. In this, it was aided and abetted by the Porfiriato's land laws and railroad development at the expense of peasant agriculture. The Mexican Indians' devastating loss of lands in the nineteenth century is well recorded by such historians as John H. Coatsworth, and there is no need to review this history here.[34] But there is a need to recognize how the Spanish monarchy's conception of the social organism blended nicely with already extant Indian views on the subject, and how the introduction of laissez-faire principles in the nineteenth century may have been far more devastating to the native population than any colonial economic measures. Such things are extremely difficult to determine, especially when the enforcement of decisions

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[34] John H. Coatsworth, Growth Against Development (De Kalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1981).

arrived at in colonial courts cannot be fully known, but the known instances of decline in Indian landownership after La Reforma may be evidence enough. The social organism's quest for justice was recast in liberal terms by nineteenth-century leaders. Corporate privileges became individual rights, and a greater mental gap thereby was created between whites and Indians.

The case of Atlatlauhca stands as a prime example of the Spanish social organism's functioning in New Spain, and of its eventual demise. On December 10, 1538, the licenciado Jhoan de Salazar, on behalf of the cacique Don Diego de Gusmán, demanded justice of Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza for the Indians of San Matheo Atlatlauhca. He stated that for many years the Indians had held land in common as the heirs of their forefathers. This ejidal land was being violated by Spaniards and their livestock, causing incredible damage to fields cultivated by the Indians for their sustenance, the sustenance of their livestock and the payment of their tribute. Salazar demanded a merced, or privileged favor, of Viceroy Mendoza, granting this land in perpetuity to the township of Atlatlauhca.[35] In January of 1539, Mendoza granted just title to the Indians, forbidding the forced

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[35] AGN, Fondo Tierras, volumen 11, 1[a] parte, exp. 2, f. 24[a]-36[b].

alienation or sale of the traditional lands of Atlatlauhca:

> and, at present, in the name of His Majesty, we grant the said lands as a merced so that you can raise your livestock and cultivate your fields on them without impediment....[36]

The merced had been granted, and what followed shows the difficulty with which Crown officials enforced such grants, but it also demonstrates the serious efforts made by the Crown. On January 15, 1544, Mendoza forbade the Spaniard Tomas de Rijoles from establishing an estancia on land granted Atlatlauhca in perpetuity.[37] Thirty years later, on February 9, 1564, the first Viceory Luis de Velasco was also compelled to reiterate the merced, banning some herders and blacks from the hereditary lands of Atlatlauhca.[38] In turn, the merced was yet again defended in 1598 and 1714.[39] The Spaniards of New Spain were not living in a perfect world, and, as a result, their laws and edicts were broken, just as ours are today. Still, these legal ideals were recorded, and, in the case of Atlatlauhca, it appears that viceroys were

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[36] AGN, Fondo Tierras, volumen 11, 1ª parte, exp. 2, f. 27ª-b.

[37] AGN, Fondo Tierras, volumen 11, 1ª parte, exp. 2, f. 32ª. Also AGN, Fondo Mercedes, volumen 2, f. 246 vuelta.

[38] AGN, Fondo Tierras, volumen 11, 1ª parte, exp. 2, f. 32ª-33ª. Also AGN, Fondo Mercedes, volumen 7, f. 359 vuelta.

[39] AGN, Fondo Tierras, volumen 11, 1ª parte, exp. 2, f. 33ª-35ª. Also AGN, Fondo Mercedes, volumen 21, f. 323 vuelta; and AGN, Fondo Mercedes, volumen 61, f. 243 vuelta.

willing to respect these principles for nearly two hundred years. Perhaps even more importantly, the Indians of Atlatlauhca trusted in the enforcement of Spanish law as a defense over this same period of time. Despite all their imperfections, the processes of the social organism were being used by both rulers and subjects. Obviously then, they were understood in some manner by both rulers and subjects. On September 3, 1853 (three years before the Ley Lerdo went into effect), the principales of Atlatlauhca made a final pathetic plea to have the ancient privileges of their ejido recognized by the government of independent Mexico.[40] The response of the government is not recorded, and neither is any indication of government interest in the case. In power, Mexican criollos abandoned social organicism for the principles of liberalism. They decimated the actual ejido, and left it a utopian dream to be revived during the Mexican Revolution as one of the principles of zapatismo.

In colonial times, the Spanish quest for justice demonstrated the seriousness with which many Spaniards accepted principles of legalism and social organicism. The customary Indian claims to communal lands were "legalized" in Spanish eyes by means of the Crown's

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[40] AGN, Fondo Tierras, volumen 11, 1ª parte, exp. 2, f. 36ᵃ⁻ᵇ.

social discourse. Mexican Indians, who had adhered to a similar discourse before the conquest, actively participated in the construction of this synthetic hegemony. Social limitations on behavior were arrived at through compromise as well as coercion, with Amerindians being far more than docile lumps of clay to be manipulated and abused at the hands of brutal Spanish masters. A thoroughly human, though not always humane, social system was constructed in sixteenth-century New Spain. Rather than being a society of wasteful exploitation, as the Black Legend would have it, New Spain was being made into a productive body politic in which principles of hierarchy and reciprocity were to assure the common good. Indian land was stolen and abused by Spaniards, but the Spanish Crown made innumerable efforts to curb the victimization of the Amerindians and provide for the basic sustenance of their bodily and spiritual needs. At the same time, Amerindians learned to use Spanish methods to defend themselves. Cultural imperialism obviously took place, but not without resistance and complicity on the part of the Spaniards' conquered subjects. The Spanish social organism functioned as anticipated by Crown officials, and New Spain functioned as a viable society.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

By the end of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth, European intellectuals saw the necessity of encompassing a much larger world when discussing matters of custom. The culture shock first encountered by Spanish *conquistadores* and *pobladores* had reached the studies of men like Montaigne and Francisco Suárez. Although Thomas More was quite aware of the Americas when he wrote his *Utopia*, in 1518 the "New" World was very much a *tabula rasa* to the intellectuals of Europe. They could write of European dreams and ambitions run wild in a seemingly virgin land, just as their settler-counterparts in the newly discovered lands could try to build on European hopes and desires. By 1600, however, the realities of cultural diversity and European shortcomings were more and more evident to the European intellectual elite when it considered the New World, and a number of factors made this so.

The work of Bartolomé de las Casas and other "defenders of the Indians" had made the achievements of Indian cultures, and the shortcomings of Spanish culture, quite apparent, but their tracts were not the only reality checks present by the end of the sixteenth

century. The Castilian Crown itself, in its role as arbiter of societal disputes, had researched the condition of New Spain and other new world kingdoms with exceptional thoroughness. From the first _relaciones_ and viceregal reports to the responses to the _Ordenanzas Ovandinas_, the Spanish monarchy had learned to accept New Spain and its other American possessions as subject to the same problems of corruption and dissension as Castile and Aragón. However, the Crown had also learned of cultural and customary differences between Spaniards and Amerindians, and of the way those differences could be used to create a system of checks and balances between overly ambitious conquerors and the conquered. If common Indians wished to continue to eat foods to which they were accustomed, this modicum of comfort could be allowed them. If their _caciques_ wished to dress and eat like their conquerors, this could be allowed them as intermediaries between Spanish tributary demands and Indian execution of those demands. If local Indian communities wished to use _cofradías_ and other Spanish methods of poor relief and religious observance to bolster Amerindian communalism, this too was permissible. Likewise, European demands for wheat and meat, churches and clothes, were met. The Crown learned to satisfy and dominate a hybrid culture by adapting its institutions and laws to it. The Christian truth was never to be

abandoned, just as Spaniards would never abandon the most basic aspects of their material culture. At the same time, those fundamental aspects proved to be those most closely bound to the spiritual facet of that Spanish culture. Cannibalism and homosexuality were always foremost when eating and lasciviousness were discussed, and "good customs" were defined consistently as those taught by the Roman Catholic Church. In turn, Spaniards were to use institutions like encomienda to teach the Indians:

> If, according to the quality, conditions and ability of the said Indians, the aforesaid religious or priests determine that it best serves God and the good of the said Indians that they be granted in encomienda to the Christians, then we order it so that they abandon their vices, especially homosexuality and the eating of human flesh, in order to be instructed and taught good customs and our Faith and Christian doctrine, in order to live in policía....[1]

The European individual and society were both spiritual and physical, and the Spanish Crown,

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[1]"Capitulacion que se tomó con Francisco de Montejo para la conquista de Yucatan (1526)," CDIR 22:220. Also see "Capitulacion que se tomó con Pánfilo de Narvaez, para la conquista del Rio de las Palmas (1526)," CDIR 22:239-41; "Capitulacion que se tomó con Pedro de Alvarado, sobre el descubrimiento de las Islas del Mar del Sur (1532)," CDIR 22:317; "Idem que se tomó con Diego Gutierrez sobre la conquista de Veragua (1540)," CDIR 23:85, 93; and "Lo que Licenciado Rodrigo de Figueroa, Juez de Residencia en la Isla Spañola, a de saber, para la informacion que toca a la materia de los indios, y lo que a de hacer en este camino, por mandado de S.M. (1518)," CDIR 23:333. All translations, except where indicated, are my own.

functioning as societal reason, was called to regulate bodily demands by constantly referring to spiritual needs. Bread and correct eating rituals created an abstract sense of community, through both poor relief and the public eating of leading officials. Clothes, properly employed, combatted the lascivious desires of the flesh. Public buildings and appropriate architectural constructions, especially churches, symbolized a spiritual conquest, and public hospitals treated both sick bodies and sick souls. Sixteenth-century Spaniards knew of the satisfaction of the soul's needs through physical, material works. Their lives were holistic dualities, and, in New Spain, they were further complicated by confrontation with a culture that was somewhat like their own and somewhat different. As a conquering agent, building on the previous experience of the Reconquista, the Crown was forced to distinguish appropriate and acceptable Amerindian customs from those deemed evil by the Christian world-view. It was forced to impose what it deemed essential to Christian civilization, while still preserving enough differences among the Amerindians to employ them as a distinct counterbalance to Spanish conquistadores and encomenderos. Since the Bible did not mention or denounce maize, and the Indians truly often preferred maize to wheat, the native Mexicans would be mostly maize

eaters. Spaniards, on the other hand, could provide themselves with wheat, and could call the Indians mules for eating maize. Such distinctions created division and justified the Crown's existence. They were deemed appropriate according to the thought of those who reasoned and rationalized for Europe.

At its heart, the Valladolid debate of 1550 was an attempt to define rationally good and bad customs, appropriate social organization, and human culture itself. Bartolomé de las Casas and Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda debated whether Amerindians were fully rational beings, and rationality was to be demonstrated or disproven by means of examples taken from Amerindian customs. Valladolid asked whether Indian cultures were intrinsically corrupt because of customs and practices which flew in the face of Christian and Greco-Roman morality. Las Casas determined that they were not, while Sepúlveda reasoned the opposite. Eurocentric to the core, Sepúlveda could find nothing good among the diverse Amerindian cultures of the New World, while Las Casas spent his time carefully distinguishing the good from the bad. Not wanting New World foods to be considered inferior to those of the Old World, he argued for the nutritional value of the peanut, describing it as more

delicious than any Spanish nut or dried fruit.[2] Not wanting the "evil" custom of human sacrifice to be used against the Indians, he compared this practice to those of Greco-Roman paganism.[3] Reason was employed by both parties to justify positions which were arrived at through emotional and volitional inclination. This Humean appreciation of reason as the tool of emotional choice may also be applied to Spanish intellectuals in the New World--- intellectuals who reiterated the cultural issues of the Valladolid debate.

As at Valladolid, Spanish intellectuals in the New World debated whether Indian customs and cultures were fundamentally "good" or "bad." In his retirement from service as an oidor of the Audiencia of New Spain, Alonso de Zorita wrote his Brief and Summary Relation of the Lords of New Spain and his History of New Spain. Both works, written in Spain between 1567 and 1585, attempted to distinguish between those aspects of Aztec culture which were most acceptable by European standards and those which were abhorent according to the principles of Judaeo-Christian and Greco-Roman morality. Often called a moderate Las Casian, Zorita tried to salvage what he

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[2]Lewis Hanke, All Mankind Is One: A Study of the Disputation between Bartolomé de Las Casas and Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda on the Religious and Intellectual Capacity of the American Indians (De Kalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1974), 39.

[3]Ibid., 99.

perceived as the good qualities inherent in Aztec social organization, material culture and ritual. Like Sahagún, he saw the Spanish mission in the New World as one of healing a sick body politic. He emphasized that the Indians were fully rational in their discourse, though not as "systematic" as a university-trained Spaniard might like.[4] They were not licentious in their infidelity, and Zorita explicitly wrote that Spaniards who had "made a deep study of Indian customs" knew this.[5] On the other hand, the official chronicler of Mexico City, Francisco Cervantes de Salazar, in his Chronicle of New Spain, composed between 1560 and 1575, emphasized the fundamental, innate barbarism of Aztec culture. Like Sepúlveda, he set out to prove the case for just war in such a fashion that the Indians could not be defended or valorized in any way. Both men had received humanist training and were members of the intellectual elite. Their works, like the debate at Valladolid, show the extent to which that elite was divided in the face of new cultures--- the extent to which reason was employed to defend contradictory opinions, further undermining an already weakened Christian and Platonic-Aristotelian belief in one truth. The attempt to distinguish between

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[4]Alonso de Zorita, Life and Labor in Ancient Mexico: The Brief and Summary Relation of the Lords of New Spain, trans. Benjamin Keen (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1963), 140-01, 97-8.

[5]Ibid., 132.

"good" and "bad" customs was a desperate effort to find that elusive universal truth.

Like Sepúlveda and López de Gómara, Zorita viewed the conquest of the New World as just and divinely ordained since it prepared the way for the evangelization of the Indians. It saved them from all the "bad" customs of their religions and integrated them into a far healthier body politic. Still, this could never justify Spanish crimes against the Indians since all human practices were to be judged by the same divine and natural law. The Aztecs were not inferior but comparable to the Greeks and Romans before they were enlightened by Christianity. Many aspects of their cultures were praiseworthy, but others were deplorable in the light of Christian standards. As a humanist, Zorita judged the Aztecs from both the perspective of universal history and that of universal truth. By the first standard, he found them quite human, rational and even admirable. By the latter criterion, he found them capable of both moral and immoral actions, but this was true of all human cultures. Christianity would provide the Aztecs with an opportunity to improve their customs, just as it had provided that opportunity for Greeks, Romans and Spaniards.[6] To Zorita, like Las Casas, the tragic irony of the situation

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[6]Ralph H. Vigil, Alonso de Zorita: Royal Judge and Christian Humanist, 1512-1585 (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), 273-83.

was that evil and avaricious Spaniards, conquistadores and encomenderos, were left with the task of teaching the Aztecs, who had been blinded by idolatry. Rather than using the existing Aztec social system, the Spaniards had disrupted all order and policía with their conquest. Zorita felt that their tributary demands were excessive when compared with those of the Aztec lords:

> Since their appetite and greed were their only measure and rule, they demanded all they could in tribute, personal services, and slaves, never caring whether the Indians were able to comply. One can judge from this whether care was taken that the Indians pay no greater tribute than they had been accustomed to pay their lords.[7]

This disruption was augmented by the way in which Indians were removed from their native towns.[8] Under the Aztec lords, tributary payment was a good custom which provided order and policía.[9] Indian laws, though harsh, reenforced this pattern:[10]

> One who knows the ancient system of government and justice of those people, how they enforced their laws and reared their children in the time of their heathendom, and how they live now that they are Christians, will understand how little justification have those who deny them any intelligence and will allow them no human trait other than the shape of men.[11]

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[7] Zorita, Brief and Summary Relation of the Lords of New Spain, 201-02. Also pp. 203 and 222.

[8] Ibid., 216.

[9] Ibid., 186.

[10] Ibid., 130-5.

[11] Ibid., 169.

Rather than building on the good customs which the Aztecs possessed, such as laws against adultery, sodomy, bestiality and drunkenness, the Spaniards were destroying good Indian customs with the bad.[12] Spaniards were even blamed for inciting _macequales_ to rise up against their natural lords, demanding lands and rights which were not theirs.[13] In final analysis, Zorita believed that Spaniards were destroying the moral fiber of the Aztec social organism, while, at the same time, failing to present a healthy alternative. Above all else, Spaniards were failing to adhere to good, moderate customs regarding tribute and exchange. Ignoring the moderate sums of tribute extracted by the former Aztec lords, the Spaniards were bleeding the Aztec body dry and indirectly causing such symptoms of social decay as drunkenness:

> No harmony remains among the Indians of New Spain because the commoners have lost all feeling of shame as concerns their lords and principales.... Withal, it is most necessary for the spiritual and temporal welfare of these people that they be well governed.... For the common people are like children, and having lost their fear and sense of shame, they lose all the good that was implanted in them. Only those whom they fear and respect will they obey.... That is why the lords and principales are so necessary, for they alone understand and know how to deal with the Indian commoners.[14]

It was impossible to respect the Spanish _encomenderos_, their servants and their black slaves.

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[12]Ibid., 130-01.
[13]Ibid., 121.
[14]Ibid., 117-18.

This motley crew trampled on Indian fields; prevented them "from selling their produce to whom they please and at their own price"; and "set the Indians bad examples." They interfered with Indian religious instruction by occupying the Indians in their own service and selling them "wine and other unnecessary things."[15] On an intermediate level, corrupt Indian officials of lower social standing than the natural lords were placed in positions of power, organizing the repartimiento, among other things. These officials, unlike the natural lords (who loved their vassals like children), stole all they could.[16] The Spaniards and their rule were a greater pestilence than smallpox in Zorita's estimation, but his analysis was complex enough to see this decay as a process which accelerated over the course of the sixteenth century as more and more Spanish encomenderos and crown officials undermined the original economic and political authority of the Aztec lords. Immediately following Cortés's conquest, good policía was still maintained since "the mode of government of the natives was retained and continued for some years."[17] This allowed the good moral and material customs of a Christian civilization an opportunity to be grafted unto what was already good in Indian culture.

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[15] Ibid., 248.
[16] Ibid., 178, 121.
[17] Ibid., 113.

Like Las Casas, and quoting from Motolinía, Zorita argued that the Indians were not as avaricious as the Spaniards, being content with very little in terms of material possessions: "'Their food is very poor, and so is their dress.'"[18] Ironically, Zorita fell into the very same trap he tried to avoid--- that of judging Aztec culture and customs on the basis of European mores. Employing common European metaphors, Zorita compared Indian commoners to children in need of benevolent parents. The best Indian customs were those that resembled the values of primitive Christianity. As we have seen, Aztec tribute literally focused on luxury items, though many of the items would not have been perceived in this way by Europeans. Zorita failed to recognize the Aztec craving for feathers as greed, though he did find Cortés's denunciation of Aztec barbarism as self-interested, especially after the conqueror found so many of their qualities and customs admirable.[19] Ultimately, Zorita, defender of the Indians, could not peer out beyong the limits of his categories of understanding. On one occasion, he wrote that a religious, probably Fray Andrés de Olmos, experimented with "substituting the name of the true God and of Our Lord" for all the names of the diverse deities in Indian

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[18]Ibid., 164.
[19]Ibid., 170.

discourse. To Zorita, this proved that Indian discourse only faltered on matters of revelation, and that the Indians were "not so dull-witted as some would make them out to be."[20] Indian customs and practices were "good" when they came closest to Zorita's idealized vision of man before the Fall.[21] His Indians were part civilized men, part noble savages, as he showed the vestiges of a "civilized" man's ambivalence towards civilization.

Francisco Cervantes de Salazar possessed none of that ambivalence, often contradicting claims made by Zorita. Though he admitted that even barbarous nations could produce some good men, and civilized nations some bad ones, he argued that the Indians of New Spain were basically barbarous, their very adherence to rite and ceremony being used against them (while, at the same time, failing to note the rites and rituals of Spanish culture):

> The Indians, then, in general, are friends of novelties; they believe superficially; they are pusilanimous; they have no reckoning of honor.... (they are) so given to ceremonies, that for this reason many affirm their lineage descends from the Jews; they are faint-hearted.... They seldom preserve friendships.[22]

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[20] Ibid., 140.

[21] Ibid., 168.

[22] Francisco Cervantes de Salazar, Crónica de la Nueva España (Madrid: Hispanic Society of America, 1914), 30-1.

Their idolatry so completely blinded them to good custom that they committed abominable acts which Zorita had specifically said they punished most severely in their legislation: "At these sacrifices and celebrations there was such great drunkenness that their mothers and daughters, in abhorence to natural law, which many of the wild animals do not violate, had carnal relations (with them)."[23] In fact, after the Spanish conquest, rather than being the victims of Spanish tributary demands and land seizure, the Indians diabolically manipulated the Spanish legal system to their advantage. They deliberately planted maize fields near Spanish livestock estancias so that they could then sue the Spaniards for any damages caused their livestock.[24]

Cervantes de Salazar's anti-Indian stance was so extreme and unsubstantiated that its veracity must be questioned. If Spanish judges ruled in favor of the Indians in the courts, it was because they were blindly sympathetic to all Indian claims. Any cruelty committed in Cortés's sacking of Tenochtitlán was committed by the Indian allies, and not the Spaniards, who tried to restrain the Indians' subhuman cruelty.[25] In short, Indian customs and practices were all fundamentally corrupt and abominable. The Indians themselves could

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[23]Ibid., 35.
[24]Ibid., 31.
[25]Ibid., 737-9.

only be saved by means of Cortés's self-proclaimed evangelical mission.[26] Like Sepúlveda, Cervantes de Salazar rated the Spanish conquest of the New World as a vast humanitarian effort to save a dehumanized people.

The debate surrounding Indian customs and culture reflected all the passion present in issues of particular economic and political importance. Values ascribed to Indian ways had their influence on the treatment of Indians and on royal edicts such as the New Laws of 1542. Rejecting the "just war" matrix as an excuse for enslaving the Amerindians, the New Laws were partially the result of Las Casas' direct influence on Charles V. His far-reaching defense of Indian culture and customs led to the Crown's "problem-specific response," an attack on encomienda which only prospered when it was politically and economically feasible.[27] Ideas, therefore, truly interacted with the fundamentally material elements of reality. A particular reasoned argument, a particular turn of phrase, could help or hinder someone's economic and social interests. The Indian question was a "hot" issue which could only be tempered by means of abstraction. By the late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-centuries, the ferocity of the

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[26] Ibid., 184-5, 213-14.

[27] Colin M. MacLachlan, Spain's Empire in the New World: The Role of Ideas in Institutional and Social Change (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1988), 58-61.

original debates was so tamed. By empirically experiencing completely alien customs, and thereby becoming aware that theirs was not the only world view, Europeans were able to deal with the concept of "custom" in a broad, abstract way. Islam and Protestantism could be explained away as heresy, while Judaism and Greco-Roman culture belonged to past ages, but the culture of the Aztecs, as well as those of the Incas, Chinese and Japanese, could not easily be explained away by use of Catholic Spanish categories. A great deal of effort and imagination was expended to make Amerindians descendants of the ten lost tribes of Israel. Even more effort would be expended by European intellectuals as they took the first faltering steps to critical evaluation of their own culture by <u>trying</u> to set up universal categories of cultural and customary definition which would be equally applicable to all cultures. At the forefront of these efforts stood Francisco Suárez and Michel de Montaigne.

In 1612, the Spanish Jesuit Francisco Suárez dedicated the entire seventh book of his <u>A Treatise on Laws and God the Lawgiver</u> to an explanation "Of Unwritten Law which Is Called Custom." Suárez approved of Thomas Aquinas' definition of custom as "'the frequency of free

actions all performed in the same way'."[28] He added that custom can never appropriately be established by compulsion or fear, and distinguished between such actions performed by an individual or group which cannot enact laws and by a community possessing the power of making laws--- between private and public custom.[29] This, in turn, led to further distinctions where public custom is concerned. Although public custom may conform with the ius gentium, or law of the particular community, it may in fact be illicit from the perspective of natural law, the body of absolute truths discernible by "human reason" alone, and established by God to regulate the universe:

> A custom contrary to the law of nature is not worthy of the name of custom; it rather merits that given it in the language of the laws--- a corruption. It can, therefore, have no effect as law....[30]

Of course, a custom contrary to divine law, as revealed in scripture, also held no legitimate authority.[31] "On the contrary, however, that custom will

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[28]Francisco Suárez. A Treatise on Laws and God the Lawgiver. Selections translated in Selections from Three Works of Francisco Suárez, S. J., 2 vols., trans. Gwladys L. Williams, Ammi Brown and John Waldron (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1944), 449.

[29]Ibid., 551-2, 459-63.

[30]Ibid., 464. For a more contemporary distinction of "The Rule of Law Versus the Order of Custom," see Stanley Diamond, In Search of the Primitive: A Critique of Civilization (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, 1974), 255-80.

[31]Ibid., 471.

be judged reasonable which will not be contrary either to divine or to natural law...."[32] The function of a people's laws then, if they are to be properly subordinate to divine and natural law, is to condemn bad custom at all times.[33] By extension the society which does not condemn wicked custom is corrupt.

Although the whole of Suárez's argument derived from the traditional authority found in classical and canonical sources, his scholastic presentation was extremely relevant to a Europe suffering a number of challenges to its Medieval customs and traditions. In the sixteenth century, Catholic rites, once assumed to be universally applicable among those calling themselves Christians, were challenged as never before by the Protestant Reformation. At the same time, Europeans became aware of such Amerindian customs as cannibalism and human sacrifice--- customs not even practiced by the "infidel" Moslems. Suárez's dedication of an entire book to custom and its legislation offered great appeal to a Spanish and Catholic world seemingly attacked on all sides. The "human reason" which would define appropriate custom in accordance with natural and divine laws was, of course, a Spanish Christian interpretation of human reason, and of natural and divine law as defined by

[32] Ibid., 493.
[33] Ibid., 495.

individuals like Thomas Aquinas and Francisco de Vitoria, not John Calvin and Martin Luther. On one level then, Suárez's work was the final abstract justification of Spanish attempts to legislate appropriate canonical and civil customs.[34] It tried to set general guidelines in the hope of eliminating the need for any future Valladolid debates. On the plane of legal abstraction, Suárez, like las Casas and Sepúlveda, was fascinated by the legitimacy and illegitimacy of customs adhered to by particular peoples.

While Spaniards persisted in trying to define the appropriate world-view, the existence of the Americas in all their diversity also stimulated and abetted a sceptical trend in European thought. At the end of the sixteenth century, Michel Montaigne surfaced as the harbinger of modern European self-criticism. Living in a France torn between the customs and rites of Catholics and Protestant Huguenots, Montaigne opted for a position sceptical of all European traditions. To justify his stance, he turned to the Americas and its people, while simultaneously appealing to a universal, natural law that was broader than mere European law and custom:

> Since everything under the heavens, as Holy Writ declares, is subject to the same laws, in

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[34]Ibid., 474-6, 497-500; Anthony Pagden, The Fall of Natural Man: The American Indian and the Origins of Comparative Ethnology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 60, 100-06.

> questions like those, where we must distinguish between natural laws and those which are man-made, scholars generally turn for evidence to the general order of the world, in which there can be no disguises.[35]

Taking this as his fundamental premise, Montaigne could not justify the cannibalism found among certain Amerindian groups without reservations, but he could present Amerindian cannibalism as justified within the Indians' own world-view. Arguing that one of the central ethical virtues of cannibals was "resolution in battle," their consumption of captives then made sense "as a measure of extreme vengeance" taken upon the enemy.[36] The action was barbarous in that it did not follow the "laws of reason," but it was just by the standards of nature and original human simplicity, just as nudity was also justified by these standards (i.e., with skin alone providing adequate protection in hot climates).[37] Drawing comparison to the political and religious turmoil of sixteenth-century Europe, Montaigne could only conclude:

> I consider it more barbarous to eat a man alive than to eat him dead; to tear by rack and torture a body still full of feeling, to roast it by degrees, and then give it to be trampled and eaten by dogs and swine--- a practice which we have not only read about but seen within recent memory, not between ancient enemies, but between neighbours and fellow-citizens and,

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[35]Michel Montaigne, Essays, trans. J. M. Cohen (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1958), 120.

[36]Ibid., 112-13.

[37]Ibid., 109, 114, 120.

> what is worse, under the cloak of piety and religion--- than to roast and eat a man after he is dead.[38]

Ironically, this European sceptic, like so many since him, fell into the trap of romanticizing aboriginal customs in order to better criticize what he considered wretched in his own society. Like las Casas and Sepúlveda before him, Michel Montaigne used Amerindian societies to support his own ethical preconceptions. According to Claude Lévi-Strauss, one of the central features of anthropological cultural relativism is the reservation of moral judgment.[39] Circa 1600, no one in Europe was willing to reserve ethical judgment, not even Montaigne. The gentleman of Bordeaux was only unique in his preference for what he himself called "primitive." Like las Casas, he helped to create the tradition of the "noble savage," a tradition developed further by Rousseau and other Enlightenment thinkers. Unlike las Casas, he failed to seek the beauties of primitive Christianity among the Amerindians. The spiritual fundamentals of traditional Europe's world-view were still alive to the Dominican monk. To Montaigne, Machiavelli, Cellini, and other early modern European individualists and egoists,

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[38] Ibid., 113.

[39] Claude Lévi-Strauss, The View from Afar, trans. Joachim Neugroschel and Phoebe Hoss (New York: Basic Books, 1987), 27.

the vision of the Christian social organism was already dead.

In New Spain, the Castilian monarchy desperately tried to make that vision a reality. Charles V, Philip II, and their officials tried to perfect a method of social organization that had been sorely tested by the Comunero Revolt of 1520-1521. Force and police power would help to uphold the political and social system, but they could never be enough. Rhetoric, ideas, beliefs, and the occasional fruit of these beliefs created a modicum of trust in the society, which, in turn, led to participation by both Spaniards and Indians. The fact that the Spaniards believed that their Christianity would be known by its works led to a series of actions to prove their beliefs. Christianity necessarily had its material manifestation, and this direction of the physical by the spiritual necessarily led to the attempt to reinterpret and "tame" New World physical reality in the light of Christianity and its social premises. _Conquistadores_ and _pobladores_ spent the sixteenth century searching for gold and silver, but that was only one aspect of their search for what was necessary to them as Christian persons, consisting of body and soul. Spanish food, clothing and shelter, as well as Spanish religion, were all transported to Mexico in order to make it a "New Spain." Spanish hospitals arose to heal the social organism and

individual organisms when they took ill. In addition to this, a viceroy and other royal officials arrived to regulate society as the King himself did in Spain. In a vacuum, old Spain literally could have been recreated, but Mexico was no vacuum. The existence of Amerindians with their own cultures, and their own policía, made the Spanish project much more complex. In response, the monarchy and many Spaniards agonized over the extent to which Indian culture would be displaced. The Indians, for their part, were not mindless cattle, and they further complicated matters by actively accepting, rejecting, and refashioning aspects of Spanish culture.

From Cortés's first Indian allies to Don Pedro Moctezuma and hundreds of other caciques, the indigenous Mexicans recognized a number of advantages to Spanish rule. Even Indian commoners tried to exploit advantages found in the Spanish social system and in Spanish material culture. They used the Spanish courts of appeals to register complaints against the encroachments of Spaniards. They employed religious cofradías and charitable hospitals to combat poverty, disease, and social decay. At the most fundamental level of material culture, they ate Spanish cattle and sheep, supplementing their diet with new sources of protein, while still preferring more costly canine meat at their markets. Just as the Spaniards were unwilling to abandon wheat and

Christianity, their body and soul, Indians persisted in seeing maize as the staff of life, while numerous studies have shown how native religious observance became integrated into Christianity. Among the Mayas of the Yucatán, Christ was Kulkulcán.[40] To the Indians of central and northern Mexico, the Virgin of Guadalupe took on some of the characteristics of the Aztec fertility goddess. The Indians of Mexico did not abandon the struggle for autonomy and power after the capture of Cuauhtémoc. They persevered within a Spanish system.

When Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza realized that the encomenderos refused to take their military obligations to the Crown seriously, he turned successfully to the Crown's Indian allies. During the rebellion of the Indians of Nueva Galicia, the Mixton War of 1541, Mendoza had no choice but to take the field with three hundred Spanish horsemen and thousands of Indian warriors. This combined force of Spaniards and Indians triumphed, and Mendoza acquired all the evidence needed to judge the Amerindians as good as Spaniards in certain areas. In fact Colin MacLachlan and Jaime Rodríguez argue that the loyalty of central Mexico's Indians may have helped influence the Crown to issue the New Laws of 1542: "The monarch's authority indeed could be based on the loyalty

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[40] Nancy M. Farriss, Maya Society under Colonial Rule: The Collective Enterprise of Survival (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 292-4.

of the indigenous population, which could be manipulated to balance the power of the Spanish settlers and their descendants."[41] The Mixton War was to New Spain what the Comunero Revolt had been to old Spain: an opportunity for the Crown to express its adherence to the theory of the body politic by regulating the interaction of the body's organs. The overarching metaphor was once again present in the political sphere as it was in the legislation and adaptation of custom and material culture.

To the northwest of Mexico City, the Indians of Nueva Galicia suffered excessive cruelty and mistreatment at the hands of their encomenderos. Whether this was because the northern encomenderos considered them less civilized than the Aztecs of the Valley of Mexico is pure speculation. Most likely, the distance from Mexico City and the Crown's regulatory function freed the encomenderos to express the full extent of their cruelty. Nuño de Guzmán, as governor of Nueva Galicia, had ignored infractions of the Laws of Burgos. As a result, an Indian revolt flared up in 1538 in the northern region about Jocototlán. In 1542, while Antonio de Mendoza was viceroy of New Spain, general discontent flared once again in what has come to be known as the Mixton War.

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[41] Colin MacLachlan and Jaime E. Rodríguez O., The Forging of the Cosmic Race: A Reinterpretation of Colonial Mexico (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1980), 99.

Indians in such townships as Jalisco, Suchipila, Tepestistaque and Jalpa were won over to a revolt which promised to restore their old ways. The rebels made a point of renouncing their Christianity and reviving human sacrifice and the worship of such gods as Tlatl. At Cuina and other locations, temples were even rededicated. However, a desire to restore pre-Columbian culture does not appear to have been the only reason for revolt, since there are records of some Indians defending their paternalistically benevolent _encomenderos_. The misrule of the majority of the _encomenderos_ and the complicity of the regional royal officials seem to have been the determining factors.

Where the Indians saw the Spanish social organism operating in closer proximity to the ideal they granted their full allegiance to it. Ultimately, Mendoza could not have put down the Nueva Galician revolt without the support of his Indian allies. When he led his army through Michoacán to Jalisco, Mendoza had anywhere from 10,000 to 60,000 Indian allies in the ranks. The Spaniards only numbered from 180 to 500. Mendoza was a master of the Spanish Crown's method of political manipulation. He proceeded to put down the revolt by means of compromise and concession, as well as conquest. To encourage support among Indian _caciques_, he granted them permission to ride horses and carry Spanish weapons

for the first time in New Spain. He massacred and enslaved the inhabitants of Cuina, where he found clear evidence of native religious practices, but elsewhere he prefaced every siege with peace parleys conducted by Miguel de Ibarra, Fray Antonio de Segovia and Fray Juan de San Román. At the final siege of the peñol of Mixton, he granted clemency to the neighboring town of Teul, when its warriors deserted to his forces. After the fall of Mixton, where approximately 50- to 100,000 warriors were gathered under Tenamaxtli, the backbone of the Mixton revolt was broken, and other towns merely capitulated upon hearing Mendoza's terms. The viceroy successfully used Indian against Indian by granting concessions throughout the ranks of the social organism. He returned home to Mexico City as a proven just warrior, only to hear of the Almagro revolt in Peru. He was "scandalized" at the "diabolical" murder of Francisco Pizarro, the Crown's chosen representative, and he offered ships, men and artillery to aid Vaca de Castro in quelling the Peruvian rebellion.[42] Like Cortés before him, Mendoza was fundamentally the king's man. Having just undergone an Indian revolt, he knew enough not to enforce the details of the New Laws of 1542, while simultaneously hearing Indian complaints in his general court. He did

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[42]Arthur Scott Aiton, Antonio de Mendoza: First Viceroy of New Spain (New York: Russell and Russell, 1967), 137-58 and 98-9.

not wish to incite a revolt of the Spanish encomenderos similar to the one he deplored in Peru, but he also did not wish to lose Indian support for the Crown. Like the Spanish King himself, the viceroy's task was to balance, to the best of his ability, the interests of disparate groups. The old world theory and practice of government had been transplanted to the New World.

Without a doubt, imperialism does victimize through the imposition of a conqueror's central truths on a conquered people. However, the conquered people in general, and their leaders in particular, are also capable of participating in their own subjugation--- and in methods of resistance that fall short of violent revolution. Indian caciques willingly entered the Spanish tributary structure, sometimes becoming the Indians' most oppressive lords, sometimes becoming their ardent defenders. The caciques actively chose to become acculturated, eating like Europeans and requesting the right to European clothing and coats of arms. As we have seen with European meats, common Indians fought to adopt what they saw as beneficial in European ways, including the worship of a triumphant Christian God, and they retained Indian customs they deemed vital, often hiding them behind a European veneer. In any event, paternalistically protected from the horrors of the Spanish Inquisition, the Amerindians no longer had to

fear a religious reign of terror similar to the Aztecs' practice of "flower wars" and tributary human sacrifice. When Spanish domination became too onerous, the Indians with land and policía resorted to legal appeals. When one reads the exhortations to obey the law found in Aztec documentation, one realizes that such behavior was only natural. After all, the Nahuatl speakers of central Mexico took pride in not being "sons of dogs," the literal translation of what they called the nomads of the north: chichimecas.

The Spaniards too were not unaffected by this encounter of alien cultures. As the dominating conquerors, they actively resisted Indian modification of things most basic to their world-view. In the face of the other, they reasserted and refined their world-view, but that does not mean that the discovery of America had no impact on Europeans. It only means that the first reaction of the Europeans studied herein was to fit American novelties into models and categories with which they were already familiar. They said that America was and would be "like Europe," but in their inability to ignore new customs, new flora and new fauna--- a new physical environment--- they admitted that America was not merely another Europe. Simile and metaphor are aspects of analogy, and similarity between two objects necessarily implies dissimilarity. Similarity is not

sameness or identification, and, as a result, all analogies limp. Sixteenth-century Spaniards resorted to analogy in describing New Spain in an attempt to make differences more palatable. They tried to rebuild an idealized Europe in the New World for the same reason. Still, the differences were too glaring to be completely ignored.

Cannibalism, idolatry and human sacrifice justified the destruction of the pre-Columbian world, but the apparent successes of medicinal herbs only found in the New World called into question the primacy of Europe and European ways. Just as the Amerindians were willing to adopt European protein-rich foods because of their obvious benefits, European Spaniards were willing to adopt Amerindian medicinal herbs when they brought true or perceived benefits. For Spaniards and Indians both, fundamental world-views made room for nuances that represented pragmatic success. Potatoes, chocolate, tobacco and maize failed to take root in sixteenth-century Spain, but medicines like guaiacum and sarsaparilla were an entirely different story.

Syphilis was a devastating new disease, and it demanded an effective new cure to re-establish the ultimate truth of God's benevolent providence. As a result, Nicolás Monardes and other physicians were quite willing to make room for new cures in their old

Hippocratic cosmos. In fact, the Hippocratic quest for improved results necessarily left medical science open to novelty, forcing it to actively accept novelty if it bore success. In the hospital, that arena of science and religion, the Spanish clinician began to seek bodily salvation, without necessarily focusing on spiritual salvation as well. The dualistic social organic discourse ironically began to falter in the place that was expected to heal individual and societal decay. Victims of the mysterious cocoliztle could not be saved by the hospital, and the poor often only received the slightest material relief. While the Crown and Church continued to emphasize the spiritual and physical missions of the hospital, medical professionals, like Cárdenas and Bravo, began to grow more and more concerned about the hospital's inability to save lives. The Crown's attempt to be all things to all men, to uphold both humanity's spiritual and physical needs, ultimately led to dissatisfaction on all fronts. A politics of "corporate consensus" meant that diverse groups were deliberately held in check, especially where interests clashed. The doctors' option, to solely focus on bodily needs, could not be allowed since the Church's religious and charitable conception of "hospital" would be ignored. A feasible goal for the hospital was lost in the tension between its religious and medical functions.

Feasible goals for the entire body politic were often lost as the tensions between groups immobilized the possibility for successful innovation. The Laws of Burgos and New Laws of 1542 could not be fully enforced for fear of offending the Spanish encomenderos. Spanish courts defended Indian lands in fear of the growing power of encomenderos. The Crown and its officials were immobilized as tractable compromisers, not as intractactable tyrants. Even in the vital economic sphere, New World officials began to look the other way in order to benefit local commerce and industry, failing to enforce every Spanish monopoly and commercial edict. Paradoxically, social organic discourse would not budge on the Christian foundations of its terms, but it was constructed to forever compromise within the boundaries of its accepted norms; namely, those of the hierarchy and reciprocity foreordained by God. Spanish imperialism in the sixteenth century proved to be a bundle of contradictions.

Not only was the Spanish imperialist project constructed on a discourse of compromise and contradiction. The contradiction was consciously summarized by the Spaniards in the famous viceregal statement, "Obedezco, pero no cumplo." New World officials were expected to act pragmatically but think dogmatically. At the same time, they were called to love

the Amerindians as younger brethren and children, and to despise them as demonic infidels. From its very start, the Spanish version of European imperialism was an ambivalent venture, a debate. Spaniards did not conquer the Americas without questioning the justice of their own actions. They had no desire to be an empire deemed evil by Christian moral precepts. European imperialism was to be the adoption of the "white man's burden," not the enslavement of foreign peoples, cultures and environments. Unfortunately, belief in a beneficent mission did not eliminate actual brutalities. It only put a check on the worst excesses, as the Spanish sought "justice" in their New World ventures. For better or worse, these early European imperialists were dissatisfied with themselves and the world. They sought both personal economic improvement and spiritual improvement, a better life in this world and the next. New World silver would purchase luxuries; medicines would cure disease; and good deeds would purchase God's indulgence. Dissatisfaction with Europe forced these European Spaniards to "discover" a New World and a New Spain. In their discovery and conquest they transplanted their own dissatisfaction to new venues.

In <u>The Labyrinth of Solitude</u>, the Mexican poet and political theorist Octavio Paz argues that the act of conquest made Mexicans rootless by ripping away their

traditional Amerindian cosmos and introducing the conflict of Spanish and Indian ways. Responding to this, Mexicans have constantly sought out myths of redemption to shape their world and their future. Ritual and fiestas have become the means by which Mexicans seek to construct a sense of community and common purpose, but these rituals only further heighten the conflict between present-day Mexico's Amerindian and Spanish roots. In Paz's words, Mexicans hate themselves for being both rapists and rape victims, for trying to be a mestizo culture of conquerors and conquered. The irony is that they have no other choice since that is the history they have made for themselves. It is a history of dissatisfaction on both the material and spiritual levels of existence: "Mexicanism is a way of not being ourselves, a way of life that is not our own."[43] Mexicans want the material progress citizens of the United States revel in, but they also wish to transcend "the sterility of the bourgeois world" through acceptance of a world of myth and redemption:

> A fiesta is more than a date or anniversary. It does not celebrate an event: it reproduces it. Chronometric time is destroyed and the eternal present--- for a brief but immeasurable period--- is reinstated. The fiesta becomes the creator of time; repition becomes conception. The golden age returns. Whenever

[43]Octavio Paz, The Labyrinth of Solitude: Life and Thought in Mexico, trans. Lysander Kemp (New York: Grove Press, 1961), 169.

> the priest officiates in the Mystery of the Holy Mass, Christ descends to the here and now, giving himself to man and saving the world.[44]

When the Christian myth is no longer accepted, the myth of Zapatista peasant collectivism and the Revolution of 1910 takes its place. The colonial period marked Mexico with a series of dualisms it has been incapable of rejecting, and these conflicts seek resolution in mythic redemption. Paz writes of Sor Juana trying to reconcile her sensuous, poetic drives with her spirituality.[45] This essay has also focused on attempted reconciliations and compromises in the sixteenth century, the beginning of mestizo Mexico. While the Crown and its officials worked to balance Indian and Spanish interests, some Spaniards sought redemption as a means of transcending contemporary problems. Hospitals, from Vasco de Quiroga's utopic projects to the most mundane ones, were active attempts at healing rifts between the spiritual, physical, Indian and Spanish aspects of New Spanish culture. They fell short of succeeding, and New Spain, at the end of the sixteenth century, remained a house divided, and paradoxically united by means of an organic world-view which recognized division as necessary. A search for balance in the midst of compromise, conflict

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[44]Ibid., 209-10. Also see 20, 24, 47, 208-12, 72-88.

[45]Ibid., 108-13.

and dissatisfaction became the Mexican way as individuals were forced to recognize the existenc of the "Other."

While citizens of the United States have adopted the myth of the melting pot, and its creation of one homogeneous culture, Mexicans, from the very start, have wrestled with the problem of cultural diversity. This has been a legacy left them by their Spanish and Indian forebearers. Both groups were trapped in a process of defining themselves and their cultures in the face of the other. Aspects of material culture and religion divided Spaniards from Indians, while shared cultural traits allowed for discourse between the Old and New Worlds. The Spanish noted that the Aztecs possessed policía like themselves, and Spanish and Aztec methods of rulership and public morality ultimately gave birth to a united Mexico. Still, the unity was tenuous and built on a Spanish acceptance of disunity:

> The character of the Conquest is equally complex from the point of view expressed in the various accounts by the Spaniards. Everything is contradictory. Like the reconquest of Spain, it was both a private undertaking and a national accomplishment. Cortés and the Cid fought on their own responsibility and against the will of their superiors, but in the name of--- and on behalf of--- the kings.[46]

And:

> If Mexico was born in the sixteenth century, we must agree that it was the child of a double

[46] Ibid., 97.

> violence, imperial and unifying; that of the Aztecs and that of the Spaniards.[47]

"If Mexico was born in the sixteenth century," it was born a corporate entity composed of diverse groups struggling for the common good. Daily practices, more than abstract religious and political beliefs, helped to distinguish and differentiate Spanish and Indian cultures in Mexico. The myths and beliefs of these cultures were known by day-to-day material practices such as eating and the wearing of clothes. The spirit of a social organism was known by its deeds. The beliefs and practices of alien cultures were first defined by the language of bodies, something much more easily grasped than either Spanish or Nahuatl. The final and ultimate contradiction of sixteenth-century Mexico is therefore quite clear. The Spanish mission, and justification of conquest, claimed to be primarily spiritual, but this spriritual mission could only manifest itself in physical acts. The social organism, on both the individual and collective levels, was an act of material manifestation. Not only did language try to express difficult political ideas by means of organic analogy; bodies, through their actions, "spoke" politically and socially:

> The body exists, and gives weight and shape to our existence. It causes us pain and gives us pleasure; it is not a suit of clothes we are in the habit of wearing, not something apart from

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[47]Ibid., 100. Also 99.

us: we <u>are</u> our bodies. But we are frightened by other people's glances, because the body reveals rather than hides our private selves.[48]

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[48] Ibid., 35.

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