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Fermenting Identities: Race and Pulque Politics in Mexico City between 1519 and 1754

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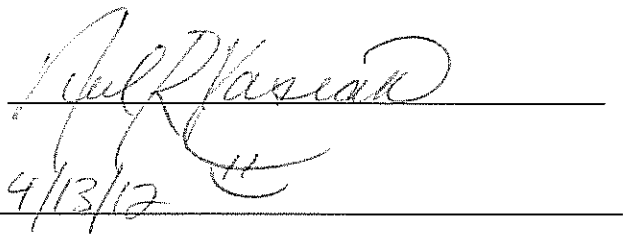
Signature 

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Fermenting Identities: Race and Pulque Politics in Mexico City between 1519 and 1754

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Dedicated to Grammy and Papa Tompkins, and Norma and Edward P. Kasiak Sr.

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Abstract

The material, symbolic and social forces that colonists and certain indigenous groups selectively reinforced manipulated and reshaped ethnic identity in New Spain. Examining pre-conquest and post-conquest perceptions of the maguey (or American agave) and pulque, the maguey's alcoholic by-product, underscores how race, ethnicity and food influenced social change after Cortés marched on Mexico. The socio-political discourse and food cultures that engulfed pulque and the maguey developed under combustible contexts. Paternalistic Spanish ideologies combined with prevailing indigenous elite strategies to create identity membership categories that defined the major negative influences in colonial culture. The deeply seated, and often misunderstood, pre-conquest symbolism inherent in the sacred maguey and pulque spearheaded many Spaniards' attacks on Indian culture. Pulque initially differentiated Indian from Spaniard and "good" Indian from "bad" Indian. However, once de facto domination progressed into the middle colonial period the pulque identities that "pulque politics" produced collapsed additional ethnic groups into a singular concept. This M.A. thesis will examine the limited historiography, translated codices, and numerous contemporary accounts that address pulque during the colonial period. Cross-examining these sources will detangle the complex forces that influenced not only "pulque politics" and its resulting identities, but also the whole gamut of ethnic identities that New Spain came to represent.

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Chapter I

Introduction

The 1692 Mexico City "*pulque* rebellion" resulted in wide spread looting and destruction. Rioters roamed the streets shouting "Long Live *Pulque*!" and "Death to the Spaniards! Death to bad government!"[1] Colonial castes and indigenous groups, known as *las castas y los indios*, rioted for close to three hours. They destroyed everything in the city plaza and set ablaze nearly all the extant symbols of Spanish government. Joined in class camaraderie and appreciation for *pulque* intoxication, these rioters briefly destabilized colonial society.[2] Once the fires were extinguished and order restored many colonial officials and clergymen overlooked relevant socio-economic concerns and blamed the revolt on the lower orders' intermingling in *las pulquerías,* the numerous taverns that served the beverage.[3] Official colonial discourse after the rebellion proposed a ban on a particular *pulque* mixture that pre-conquest Aztecs utilized in numerous religious rituals and social situations.[4] The prohibition that religious and secular elites supported aimed to decrease alcohol intoxication and bring direction to an urban culture they saw spiraling out of control. The proposed restrictions created distinct ethnic identity categories, and redefined colonial society. Mixed peoples and Indians

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[1] Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora to Admiral Andrés de Pez y Malzarraga, in *A Mexican Primary Source Reader*, ed. and trans. by Nora E. Jaffary, Edward W. Osowski and Susie S. Porter (Westview Press, 2010), 151, 153.

[2] Ibid, 153.

[3] D. Nemser, ""To Avoid This Mixture": Rethinking *Pulque* in Colonial Mexico City." *Food and Foodways* 19, no. 1-2 (Sep. 2011): 98-121.

[4]Diego Durán, *Book of the Gods and Rites and The Ancient Calendar*, ed. and trans. Fernando Horcasitas and Doris Heyden (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971), 149, 213, 215, 261, 271, 459-60.

abused "*pulque* with roots", while lighter-skinned elites responsibly consumed and valued *aguamiel* and the "white *pulque* without roots."[5] These distinct variations resulted in definitive identity categories both before and after the conquests.

The *pulque* production process incorporated and utilized a variety of material food cultures, and subsequently prescribed symbolic value to *pulque's* mother plant. The *metl*, also known as the *maguey* or American agave, maintained an important place in pre-Colombian Aztec culture specifically because *metl* cellulose provided building materials, fiber for rope and numerous other manufactures.[6] Friar Toribio Motolinía commented that, "as many things are made of [metl] as are said to be made of iron."[7] In its relatively unprocessed form, *metl* sap or *aguamiel* provided "very nourishing and wholesome" calories for the populace.[8] Once fermented, *aguamiel* produces an alcoholic beverage the Aztecs and their tributaries called *iztac octli*. The Spanish lexicon quickly changed its nomenclature to *pulque* after the conquest of Mexico.[9]

Prior to the Spanish conquests, social restrictions accompanied *pulque* use. These restrictions' effectiveness is debatable, but their presence is undeniable. Once Cortés' exploits came to a close, *pulque* consumption in Mexico skyrocketed and an ancient and revered beverage became a common local commodity that Indian, Spaniard and non-

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[5] Juan de Luzuriaga to Conde de Galve, AGI Mexico 333, fol. 337r.

[6] Toribio de Benavente and Francis Borgia Steck, *Motolinía's History of the Indians of New Spain* (Washington: Acad. of American Franciscan History, 1951) 331-3. See also Anonymous Conquistador, *A Chronicle*, ed. and trans. by Patricia de Fuentes (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993), 173 for details regarding *maguey* manufactures. The word *Maguey* was adopted from the Caribe language. *Metl* is the Nahuatl word for the agave. Virginia B. De Barrios*, A Guide to Tequila, Mezcal and Pulque* (Mexico: Editorial Minutiae Mexicana, 1971) 8-9.

[7] Benavente and Steck, 331.

[8] Ibid, 331. De Barrios, 10

[9] Benavente and Steck, 331.

Spaniard increasingly consumed, and abused.[10] Spanish elites consumed the weaker *aguamiel* or honey water, while the "other" abused the once and twice fermented versions. Diego Durán observed how Spanish drunks indulged "as much as the Indians in this cursed and diabolical vice," and erroneously claimed the Aztecs did not "know how to concoct it until the Negroes and Spaniards invented it," which misses the mark entirely.[11] While the processes for redefining the "other" identity category began shortly after first contact, *pulque*'s contributions in this process resulted in a fermenting controversy that climaxed in 1692.

The resulting *pulque* ban that officials proposed after the1692 *pulque* rebellion represents only a *single* outburst in a fermenting controversy. In historical hindsight, this situation refined identity in New Spain by lumping *pulque* abuse and numerous ethnic groups into a singular concept. During the administrative proceedings that followed the 1692 events, Spanish officials noted that "white *pulque*" and *aguamiel* possessed beneficial qualities; it maintained its pre-conquest medicinal value. [12] Officials also noted that "mixed *pulque*" symbolized all that was negative about colonial society.[13] Accordingly, this development originated in the pre-conquest and immediate post-conquest years and was not unique to the late 1690s. Conquistadores, friars, Indian nobility and secular Spanish officials often found themselves dealing with drunkenness and *pulque* in their daily lives. Even though *pulque*'s mutated meanings provided a controversial and undeniable influence on colonial Mexico politics, and despite

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[10] For details on early "*pulque* cults" see Susan Toby Evans, *Ancient Mexico and Central America Archaeology and Culture History* (Thames and Hudson Press, 2004), 366-9, 405, 472-3.
[11] Durán, Horcasitas and Heyden, 307, 309.
[12]See note #3.
[13] Durán, Horcasitas and Heyden, 310-1.

observations from scholars like Lewis Hanke that conclude such research demands attention, the early years in this fermenting controversy have received little attention.[14]

Pulque's post conquest liberation created a variety of uncontrollable public indigenous consumption practices that threatened law and order, and were in many respects alien to the colonizers. Besides the standard *maguey* sap, mixed *pulque* followed ancient recipes and included additives, such as *ocpatli*.[15] The Aztecs used these medicinal roots and herbs for centuries to increase *pulque*'s effects and potency, and enhance its spiritual connections. In New Spain the "mixed" people's drink quickly became metaphoric for entrenched "white" Spanish animosity towards the "mixed" races and *castas*. Comparing the Aztecs' traditional use of *pulque* with Spanish elites' *pulque* perceptions clarifies how colonists, creoles and natives navigated identity with food and drink cultures. Furthermore, *pulque* underscores the powerful influence that food and drink maintained over identity in colonial Mexico City. This intoxicant transformed from a religious offering and privilege for a restricted few, into a social malady that lacked its previous cultural value, restrictions, and prestige.[16] More often than not, *las castas bajas* (or lower classes) and their equivalent indigenous counterparts shared a partiality for *pulque*. Beginning in the 1520s, *pulque* repeatedly challenged secular and religious perceptions in Mexico City.[17] Anxious observations and interpretations by Franciscan friars, secular elites, conquistadores and the native landed class capture this reaction.

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[14]Lewis Hanke, "A Modest Proposal for a Moratorium on Grand Generalizations: Some Thoughts on the Black Legend" *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 51, no. 1 (Feb. 1971): 112-127

[15] Benavente and Steck, 331.

[16] William B. Taylor, *Drinking, Homicide & Rebellion in Colonial Mexican Villages* (Stanford University Press, 1979), Ch. 2 challenges these strategies' effectiveness.

[17] Cortés ordered restrictions within a few years of the conquests. See Below

During the early to middle colonial periods, individuals faced complex situations where, as Enrique Rodriguez- Alegría concludes, "eating like an Indian" influenced political and social decisions, and altered worldviews.[18] Indian culture in New Spain underwent and suffered from many injustices upon the completion of Spanish conquests in Mesoamerica. *Pulque*'s symbolic and social significances were not immune to this destructive turn of events. While Spanish religious officials attacked *pulque* on the grounds that it represented all that was negative about the "barbarous" and "brutish" pagan Indians, secular officials came to despise the substance because it evoked concerns for the social and economic consequences that emerged when *pulque* was freed from its traditional constraints.

Shortly after the conquests, colonial officials declared *pulque* abuse and Indian drunkenness a major concern and committed themselves to addressing its impacts on society. By 1580 secular concerns about the intermingling of *las castas bajas, los Indios, y la gente de color quebrado* (the lower classes, the Indians and people of mixed color), clashed with Crown concerns for colonial tax revenue. Consequently, a situation developed where elites and non-elites from both indigenous and non-indigenous populations struggled for power and prestige. At certain times *pulque* spearheaded this developing debate's negative aspects, something the 1692 riot exemplified.

Works by sixteenth century conquistadors, and Franciscan and Dominican friars developed the initial discourse on *pulque*. As a result, their dialogues maintained a steady influence over policy throughout the colonial period. One of their most influential

[18] Enrique Rodríguez-Alegría, "Eating Like an Indian: Negotiating Social Relations in the Spanish Colonies" *Current Anthropology* 46, no. 4 (Aug. /Oct. 2005): 551.

contributions to the fermenting controversy came shortly after the 1692 rebellion. Following their biased and paternalistic approaches to the "Indian question", the documents that survive from this period suggest *pulque*, Indian drunkenness and its association with idolatry became symbolic for the major problems that religious elites' faced. Secular elites joined in their concerns about *pulque* and helped create a fermenting controversy that involved persons from all colonial ethnic groups. Intermingling in *pulquerías* threatened to topple the developing social hierarchy that colonists based on ethnic and cultural characteristics in which pre-conquest substances like *pulque* willingly contributed. Concerns over indigenous rejections of Spanish religious doctrine and failures to incorporate *pulque* responsibly developed into a combined effort to curb its use and abuse in New Spain. As this debate proceeded into the seventeenth century, *pulque* became increasingly commercialized and its Europeanized commodification led to a developing lower class unification around *pulque* symbolism, *las pulque*rías *y los pulqueros*, who distributed the substance. Within a century of the conquests *pulque* created distinct identity membership categories that influenced not only Spanish official policy but also how colonists measured their efforts' success.

Some time prior to the 1624 revolt in Mexico City, *pulque* use became a symbolic expression for the lower classes, intermixing ethnic groups, crime, and all that was negative about colonial society. Rather than harboring implications solely *para los indios*, *pulque* transcended ethnic barriers, and no longer ascribed attributes to an Indian problem, but a colonial problem. Once economic tensions began to build following the turn of the seventeenth century, and the social hierarchy in Mexico began to stabilize, *pulque* proved a destabilizing force in a multitude of situations. Fermenting religious and

social animosity between elites and non-elites, and the Spanish and growing non-Spanish populations, ensured that *pulque* would alter the course of colonial identity in New Spain. This colonial development in identity contributed to the destructive rising in 1692, where rather than face a potential reality that bad governance had influenced socio-economic collapse, officials reasoned that *pulque* and its many users incited rebellion. After the 1692 insurrection, *pulque* continued its controversial climb up the list of colonial concerns. Abuse spread in both rural and urban environments, and all ethnic groups faced *pulque* politics' influences and social consequences in their daily lives.

Numerous primary sources, government records and firsthand accounts about *pulque*'s impacts on colonial culture have survived. Unfortunately, many pre-conquest Aztec codices and manuscripts did not endure the mass burnings the Spanish sponsored during the early colonial period. Nevertheless, there are a few extant documents, believed to date back to around the conquests, that capture the place *pulque* and the *maguey* held in Aztec culture. In addition, a larger sample of biased manuscripts and codices created under Spanish influence has survived. Although these documents are valuable, many of the indigenous elites who assisted in creating these documents were locked into a battle for prestige and advancement that influenced the filters they applied to different aspects of pre-conquest culture. Consequently, they tell only one side of the story, the other half of the fermenting colonial controversy surrounding *pulque* must be gleaned from a variety of secondary sources and primary source documents such as royal decrees and local ordinances, or it must be uncovered through cross-examining contemporary testimonies. These sources underscore the place *pulque* held in colonial society, and demonstrate how the substance influenced and changed identity in New

Spain. The evidence presented below suggests that *pulque* identities were dramatically reshaped after the conquests. Upon first contact these identities addressed an "Indian Problem", but as the colonial period progressed, the perceived Indian inclination for *pulque* transformed into *una problema de castas y la gente de color quebrado*.

Centuries of dealing with the public and private consequences that *pulque* inflicted fostered indigenous social restrictions. Prior to the conquests, only minor differences between urban and rural consumption restrictions defined the social hierarchies that kept indigenous alcoholism under control, and society ordered. Rather than regulate actual volume of consumption or prescribe appropriate behaviors, instead these restrictions controlled those who could consume and the acceptable contexts for binges. Once Cortés and his followers razed Mexico and supplanted the extant systems of governance and regulation, Spanish officials (including Cortés) called into question the traditional Aztec religious systems. While working class men and women from all ethnic backgrounds enthusiastically consumed *pulque* when they could obtain it, officials attacked it on all fronts. Ironically, recent historiography on New Spain has underestimated the powerful identity characteristics associated with *pulque*. Consequently, secondary sources discussing early to late sixteenth century *pulque* drunkenness are somewhat limited. Even though the available materials concentrate on the middle to late colonial periods, rather than the early colonial years, a few sources prove useful in unraveling early colonial *politica del pulque*.[19] *Pulque* politics refers to

[19] William Taylor, *Drinking, Homicide, & Rebellion in Colonial Mexican Villages* (Stanford University Press, 1979). John E. Kicza, "The *Pulque* Trade of Late Colonial Mexico City" *The Americas*, Vol. 37, no. 2 (Oct., 1980): 193. Michael C. Scardaville, "Alcohol Abuse

the dialogue and resulting discourse on *pulque* that developed amongst Spaniard, Indian and the "mixed" races. More often than not, *pulque* politics unfolded under combustible contexts that differentiated what Spaniards envisioned in New Spain with the region's social, economic and cultural realities. Essentially, *politica del pulque* refers to the processes that shaped the distinct *pulque* identity membership categories that challenged colonial officials' visions for a "virtuous" colonial society.

In Marcy Norton's revisionist narrative, *Sacred Gifts, Profane Pleasures: a history of tobacco and chocolate in the Atlantic World,* the author provides interesting observations that galvanized food's importance in Atlantic studies. Chocolate resembled and took on the life giving forces prescribed to blood in New World cultural matrices, while tobacco carried similar symbolism. Amerindian populations offered these substances ceremoniously to "thirsty" and "sensuous" gods; not to mention the "god-like" Spaniards.[20] Norton's conclusions prove useful in any *pulque* analysis because tobacco and chocolate retained similar religious significances both before and after the Tenochtitlan conquest. Although, these three substances changed dramatically under colonial rule, the differences between their cultural outcomes raise some interesting questions. The initial negative reactions to both chocolate and tobacco provide empirical proof that Europeans did not immediately recognize the aesthetic and psychoactive qualities inherent in the two substances.[21] Emulating Amerindian food culture eventually became popular in the Old World and these acquired tastes underwent complicated

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and Tavern Reform in Late Colonial Mexico City" *Hispanic American Historical Review* 60, no. 4 (Nov. 1980): 643.

[20] Marcy Norton, *Sacred Gifts, Profane Pleasures: a history of tobacco and chocolate in the Atlantic World* (Cornell University Press, 2008), 1.

[21] Ibid, 8.

changes and adaptations.[22] In the case of tobacco and chocolate, colonists became ardent pupils of Indian culture without the knowledge that their interactions shaped the "other" in ways that contradicted colonial separatist policies.[23] *Pulque* underwent a similar course as these substances but with a few contrasting characteristics. The syncretism associated with tobacco and chocolate spanned a wide audience. *Pulque* syncretism also defined an equally large group, but it never prevailed in the inter-Atlantic economy, though it thrived in the local economy despite efforts to discourage its availability. Ironically, the cultural synthesis that *pulque* produced during the early colonial period blurred the lines that the Spanish selectively reinforced. Even though these lines aimed to polarize the Amerindians and Spanish, colonial chocolate and tobacco material cultures verify that they often failed; the same can be said about *pulque*.[24] Like chocolate and tobacco, *pulque* politics compartmentalized elite and non-elite experiences, and defined Amerindian and European identity.[25] Like chocolate and tobacco, *pulque* had its cultural attributes defined, refined and maintained through processes of ennoblement and denoblement. All three substances codified "rites that expressed beliefs about the world" and ideas on social stratification before the conquests, and all three commodities would continue to shape identity into the colonial period.[26]

Fabiola Yolanda Orquera's use of "capital of experience" lends itself well to the dynamic *pulque* played in colonial society, because the moral economy that embodied

[22] Ibid, 7-9.
[23] Ibid, 11.
[24] Ibid, 10.
[25] Ibid, 12.
[26] Ibid, 16.

pulque politics was fed by lower class and indigenous gains in "capital of experience."[27] A complimentary concept to Pierre Bourdieu's cultural, symbolic and legitimate capitals, "capital of experience" refers to the underlying gains in power that *castas* achieve. Rather than symbolizing a correlation between age and wisdom, capital of experience gains defy age or wisdom and manifest in the psychological and emotional experiences that escape colonial officials' attentions.[28] The mental victories they achieved in the face of adversity never propagated established governance. Instead, they symbolize a "deep rejection of all that implies the perpetuation of the naturalized, daily, subliminal and physical violence" in colonial culture.[29] The potency behind this social power is "fed in secrecy" and kept hidden from the members of a dominant cognitive paradigm (i.e. Spanish/colonizers), which considers such manifestations illegitimate or irrelevant to colonial identity.[30] In many respects, the experiences inherent in colonial *pulque* culture (i.e. indigenous and disempowered participants) fit these parameters. Common meetings at local *pulquerías* or being "empowered by residual [religious] practices", reminiscent of pre-conquest Mexico allowed the indigenous and later the economically disempowered to express and regain social and intellectual freedom; even if it was only in momentary spurts.[31] As colonial New Spain developed into the middle colonial period the importance of capital of experience grew. *Pulque* often served as a common and binding force in the

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[27] Yolanda Fabiola Orquera, ""Race" and "class" in the Spanish colonies of America: a dynamic social perception," in. *Rereading the Black Legend The Discourses of Religious and Racial Difference in the Renaissance Empires* ed. Margaret Rich Greer, Walter Mignolo, and Maureen Quilligan (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007) 168.
[28] Ibid, 169
[29] Ibid
[30] Ibid
[31] Ibid

lives of the disempowered and created opportunity for gains in power. Stripping down possible methods for opposing the Crown's policies proved a recurring theme in Spanish colonial politics. *Pulque* politics reminded officials of this requirement, which often led to programs that monitored users, their industry and its impacts on society, not to mention society itself. The powers gained with capital of experience often go undetected by those in power because they fail to recognize certain particulars about how the "other" may value a commodity, person or event. *Pulque* maintained a sense of unification throughout the colonial period amongst indigenous and non-indigenous from similar lower social ranks because it extended opportunity to the poor, destitute and rebellious by feeding their stock in capital of experience. On the flip side, elites often united to combat the impacts *pulque* culture inflicted on society, despite the ignorance of the powers and freedoms gained by the indigenous and impoverished.

Numerous theories have been proposed to help explain the increases in *pulque* consumption after the conquests. In his monograph *Food, Conquest, and Colonization in Sixteenth Century Spanish America* John Super argues that increased land availability and improving socio-economic conditions and organization resulted in intensified beverage crop cultivation in Mexico. Although no consensus exists among scholars, this conclusion helps illuminate one factor that led to increased indigenous *pulque* use after the conquests.[32] Super also underscored how *pulque*'s connections to idolatry and human sacrifice increased missionaries' ambitions to control its use. [33] Unlike cacao drinks for instance, which became controversial when gourd chugging priests consumed the drink

[32] John C. Super, *Food Conquest, and Colonization in Sixteenth Century Spanish America* (University of New Mexico Press, 1988), 86.
[33] Super, 75; also see Durán discussion below.

during mass, missionaries could not condone *pulque* feasts.[34] Zealous missionaries found *pulque* symbolism too closely associated with condemned practices, but they failed to enforce the same criteria on chocolate, an equally divine Aztec substance. Although these conclusions seem credible, Super misappropriates the origins of "*pulque* politics" when he relegates its emergence to the 1540s.[35] *Pulque* politics technically began during the late 1520s when Cortés issued an edict that attempted to limit indigenous *pulque* consumption, and curb abuse.[36]

Although William Taylor's *Drinking, Homicide and Rebellion in Colonial Mexican Villages* concentrates on middle to late colonial village alcoholism, his observation pertaining to pre-conquest drinking prove valuable. Taylor warns that, at best, the observations made by Friars Sahagún, Durán and Motolinía (three sources discussed below) should be measured with skepticism, since they qualify elitist concerns more than actual drinking practices.[37] This statement proves useful in establishing *pulque* politics' origins before the 1692 riot. In fact, colonial religious elite concerns combined with indigenous elite concerns and created the bilateral platform that *pulque* politics unfolded upon. Taylor also points out that pre-conquest evidence for indigenous sobriety is thin, and more importantly, the pre-conquest drinking patterns that extended into the early colonial period correlated devotion with excessive intoxication.[38]

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[34] Beth Marie Forrest and April L. Najjaj, "Is Sipping Sin Breaking Fast? The Catholic Chocolate Controversy and the Changing World of Early Modern Spain," *Food and Foodways*, Vol. 15, 2007 :31-52

[35] Super, 73; Durán, Horcasitas and Heyden, 460.

[36] Cédula, 24 Aug 1529, AGN, Historia, vol. 573, exp. 2, fols. 6-6v, cited in Scardaville, 644.

[37] Taylor, 29.

[38] Taylor, 39, 45.

Chapter II

Readjusting Liberated *Pulque* Production and Consumption

First the Flower then *Pulque*

Since Aztec ritual utilized *pulque* for both divination and to create social hierarchies, *pulque* consumption and its associating inebriation often equated to a "pro-establishment" ideology.[39] Aztec creation myths certainly reflect this quality (see Quetzalcoatl myths and *Chimalpopoca Codex* discussion below). Timothy Mitchell's claim that indigenous Mesoamericans **did not** forget their spiritual attachment to the sacred and imbedded qualities in *pulque* proves credible at the least, and at best undeniable.[40] Since the evidence confirms that *pulque* was deeply imbedded in the cultural fabric of Aztec culture, it proves highly unlikely that indigenous populations forgot eons of symbolism in a matter of decades.

To better understand *pulque*'s significance in pre-conquest culture the actual production processes must be understood. Fermenting *pulque* can be traced to one of two likely cultural origins: either a diffusion of cultural knowledge associated with tapping palms in the tropics, or the utilization of the *quiote*, or *maguey* flower, as a foodstuff on the mainland.[41] Considering Francisco López de Gómara's sixteenth century observation that "eating the quiote and manufacturing *pulque* were not mutually

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[39] Scardaville, 644

[40] Timothy Mitchell, *Intoxicated Identities: Alcohol's Power in Mexican History and Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 21.

[41] Henry J. Bruman, *Alcohol in Ancient Mexico* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2000), 61

exclusive activities," the latter seems the most credible explanation.[42] When tracing *pulque's* roots the laborious nature associated with its production is the first point to consider; most especially the fact that only sedentary populations can invest the time and labor that *pulque* production demands. Once the predecessors of *maguey* domestication began roasting the *maguey quiote* as a semi-nomadic delicacy, they were exposed to and surly experimented with the saps that oozed during harvesting and cooking experiences. The local rodent and/or rabbit populations (considering the important connections rabbits have with *pulque* in the Aztec cosmos) may have provided additional insight into the nutritional value, and subsequently the eventual discovery of *pulque*.[43] Despite what Friar Bernardino Sahagún and his informants reported, the Huaxteca are unlikely the cultural source for *pulque*.[44] Henry J. Bruman points out that a wet climate and language inconsistencies for *maguey* terminology between the Huaxtecas and other Nahuatl speakers demonstrate their dislocation from its origins. Rather than the mythic Huaxteca region, the more likely origin is in the pre-conquest settlement Ometusco, which in Nahuatl translates to "the place of Ometochtli", or home for the *pulque* deity.[45] The settlement in question coincides with the natural arid boundaries that distinguish the

[42] Gómara, cited in Bruman, 61. See Bruman Chapter 2 for the role early mescal production had on *pulque* evolution. Essentially, mescal was supplanted in region once *pulque* discovered, however, those regions with mezcal history resorted back to that preference once Spanish distillation processes filtered throughout region.
[43] Bruman, 62; also see Patricia Rieff Anawalt, "Flopsy, Mopsy, and Tipsy," *Natural History, Vol. 106, Issue 3* (April 1997) 24, for details on the role the rabbit played in Aztec daily life.
[44] Other translations include the Cuextecatl or Huasteca.
[45] Bruman, 64.

Mesoamerican *pulque* regions; most especially fertile and conducive is the Apam Plain Region in the modern day state of Hidalgo, Mexico.[46]

The *maguey* varieties used in *pulque* production vary from squat plantings that ooze for only 20 day to the larger specimens that sap for up to six months.[47] Natural laws, geographic features and climates commonly bind these varieties to particular regions and affect their maturation rates. Maturation for many of these varieties varies from six to ten years in the Mexico Valley, fifteen years in the Mixteca region and a steady eight years in the fertile Apam region.[48] The varying growth rates consequently had impacts on the cultivation techniques and processes involved with *pulque* production. Regardless of geographic and climatic differences *pulque* production generally followed three stages; el *capazón, picazón* and the final process, *la raspa*.[49] The *capazón* stage consists of poking out the new growth in a mature *maguey* planting known as the "embryonic floral peduncle", or *quiote* base.[50] After allowing the plant a few months to heal, the *quiote* is reruptured and allowed to rot. This step produces a cavity for collection and concludes the second phase in *pulque* production, which is commonly referred in unison as *la castracion*. The actual collection of the sap is performed after *la raspa*, or scrapping of the cavity walls to the leaves stalks. This cleaning begins the sapping, and harvesters, or *tlachiqueros* repeat this process in between collection periods. *Los tlachiqueros* collect *aguamiel* throughout the plants' remaining lifespan, which can

[46] Ibid, 65.
[47] Ibid, 67.
[48] Ibid, 67-8.
[49] Ibid, 67-8
[50] Ibid, 68.

last for up to six months and produce up to 1000 liters in the larger *maguey* species.[51] What remains are the fibrous straps of cellulose that the Aztecs and their tributaries used in a variety of products from elite clothing to general building and sewing materials. Clearly, this process demands high labor inputs and included creative farming strategies, however the rewards proved worthy of the investments in time and energy.

After a *tlachiqueros* scrapes the remaining *aguamiel* from the *maguey*, the harvest will be lost without adding the *sinascle* (*xinachtli*), or "mother of *pulque*."[52] Without expediently adding this portion from previous *pulque* batches the *aguamiel* sours and will likely turn towards vinegar. After fermentation begins "there are no dead dogs, nor a bomb, that can clear a path as well as the smell of this [wine]."[53] Nonetheless, besides mental and olfactory stimulation *pulque* provides essential B nutrients, promotes a healthy colon, and combats dysentery and other stomach ailments.[54] After the conquests changed the social and economic fabrics of indigenous culture it comes as no surprise that *pulque*'s nutritional and hydration qualities proved a valuable resource for the impoverished. So where do the controversial "*pulque* roots" come into the recipe?

After fermentation commenced producers would then include local flora (or roots) that would either enhance the flavor or potency, or both. Chimalpahin cites the healing properties in this practice during an epidemic in 1595, an event that exemplifies the

[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid, 70.
[53] Gómara, cited in Bruman, 71.
[54] Bruman, 71

limited positive accounts for *pulque* on record.[55] Due to physiological variances, the results were sometimes detrimental to a consumer's health. Cortés issued an edict in 1529 that addressed this physiological phenomenon. In particular his decree outlawed the use of *cuapatle*, a tree bark known for its curative qualities, but also its fatal attributes.[56] Cortés' legal approach proved ineffective and would be echoed by officials like Joseph de la Barrera, the author of the prohibition report published after the 1692 *pulque* disturbance.[57] With such drastic variations of effects from person to person it comes as no surprise that many populations traded for particular roots and preferred certain resulting effects and flavors. These variations were exasperated after the conquest "uprooted" traditional *pulque* tribute functions and intensified its production and proto-capitalistic trade. *Pulque amarillo,* or *pulque* made from sweetened and fermented *maguey* syrup provided additional tensions between colonial officials, indigenous populations and the poor. This more potent concoction, known as *aoctli* in Nahuatl (rather than the once fermented *octli*[58]), expanded the *pulque* region. The syrup's transportability overcame *aguamiel*'s perishability.[59] Officals restricted this type of *pulque* as early as 1570, adding to the never-ending cultural significances and consequences that surrounded *pulque* and the *maguey*. An interesting list of *pulque* variations created by Navarro in 1784, captures how the flexibility inherent in raw *pulque*

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[55] Domingo Francisco de San Anton Muñon Chimalpahin Cuauhtlehuanitzin, in *Annals of His Time*, trans. and ed. by James Lockhart, Susan Schroeder and Doris Namala (Stanford University Press, 2006), 55.
[56] Taylor, 31.
[57] Bruman, 72-3.
[58] Other terminology includes: *neuctli*= finest variety of *pulque*; *tlachique=aguamiel*; *tepache*=generic term for artificially sweetened then fermented *pulque*—see Navarro list. Bruman, 72-5.
[59] Bruman, 75-6.

continued into the colonial period, and in many respects evolved under Spanish direction.[60]

Migrating populations helped recreate *pulque* meanings. Farmer populations from areas like the Cihuatecpan region, whose boundary began roughly fifty kilometers from Mexico, help unravel the causes for the dramatic increases in *pulque* consumption after the conquests.[61] Prior to Cortés' conquest the Aztecs utilized mixed agricultural strategies that terraced the *maguey* with other staple crops (mainly maize) to sustain and grow populations in hostile environments.[62] Caloric nutrients proved the most important contribution the plant offered cultivators such as the Cihuatecpan farmers. Whether in actual nutrition or better maize yields, *maguey* symbiosis made the plant an important commodity. *Maguey* products also represented valuable local trade resources and crucial components in the region's tribute system.[63] In 1603, the crown's relocation efforts resulted in the depopulation of areas like Cihuatecpan.[64] Finding financial income in a rapidly changing economy proved an unavoidable pressure for Indians. When former *maguey* farmers considered financial solutions to this dilemma, legal and illegal *pulque* production proved an enticing and realistic option. Keeping this intensive *maguey* strategy in mind, these farmers represent the probable groups involved in *pulque* production and consumption strategies after the conquests. Besides migrating farmers,

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[60] Navarro, cited in Bruman, 75.
[61] Susan T. Evans, "The Productivity of *Maguey* Terrace Agriculture in Central Mexico During the Aztec Period" *Latin American Antiquity* 1, no. 2 (Jun. 1990): 117-132. Also see John Anderies, Ben Nelson and Ann Kinzig, "Analyzing the Impact of Agave Cultivation on Famine Risk in Arid Pre-Hispanic Northern Mexico" *Human Ecology* 36, no. 3 (2008): 409-422.
[62] Evans (1990), 118.
[63] Ibid, 127.
[64] Ibid, 123 (for footnote, *Archivos General de la Nacion 1603*)

one other reason early Spanish chroniclers saw an increase in indigenous drunkenness after the conquests could very well be that the *macehuales*, or indigenous urban poor were exercising their previously restricted "religious" desires.[65] When one considers how the decimation of their religious system would have unleashed social and religious uncertainties that alcohol consumption exasperated this potential becomes especially relevant. More than likely, the *macehuales* faced, practiced and accepted the restricted alcohol practices that Sahagún and the *Mendoza Codex* reflect, but during the colonial period a much different pattern emerged.[66] See Figure One below for details on these restrictions.

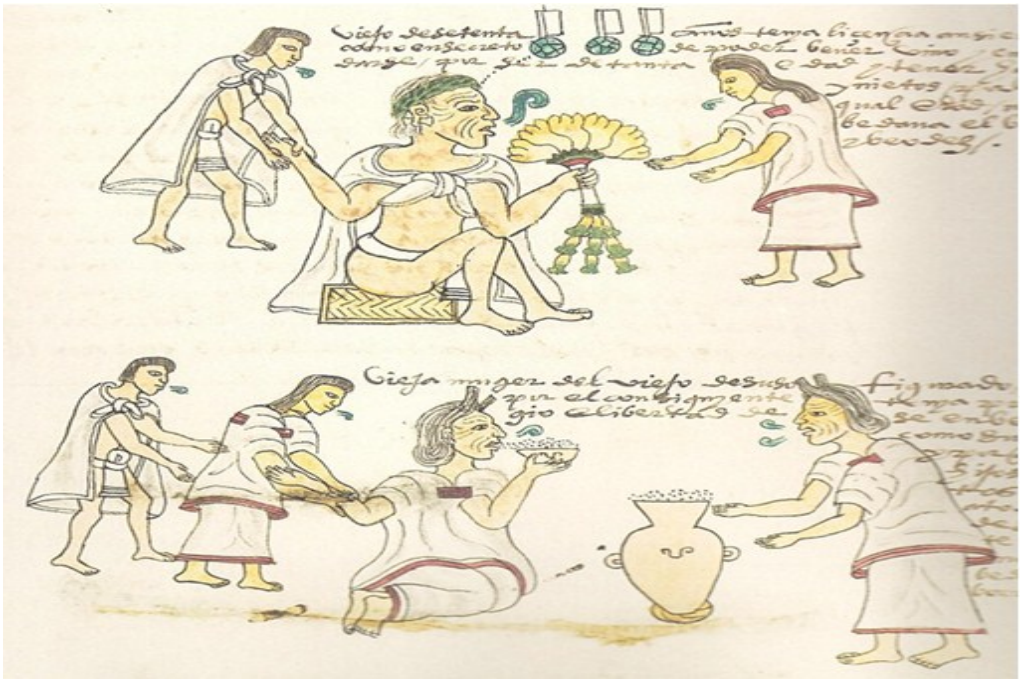

Figure 1: Post-conquest depictions of pre-conquest *pulque* control mechanisms.[67]
Source: Frances Berdan and Patricia Rieff Anawalt, *Codex Mendoza* Vol. III, fol.71r (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992) 149.

[65] Mitchell, 21

[66] Mitchell, 21

[67]Captions read, "An Old Man seventy years old had permission, in public and in private, to drink wine and become intoxicated…because of his age he was not forbidden drinking and intoxication." (top) and, "The Old Wife of the old man drawn above…had the privilege and freedom to become intoxicated like her

Officials were forced to walk a fine line to make sure they could limit self-inflicted damage on colonial society. When the Spanish Crown began accepting new applications for taverns in Mexico City in the 1580s, it simultaneously strengthened it social and economic regulations for *pulque*. Colonial authorities comprehended the potential in *pulque* revenue and the destructive qualities associated with its distribution, which only added to the *pulque* controversy.[68] *Pulque* emerged as such an important taxed commodity that by 1629 Mexico City petitions and public works ledgers had to contemplate the reality that many *castas y indios* "depended on the sale of *pulque* for their livelihoods."[69] Mexico City and the larger surrounding districts became islands "of temporary liberty where the village rules on drinking and social respect did not apply."[70] Such a developing set of circumstances relates one component that developed into mid-1600s unrest, and the resulting rebellions. The Spanish introduction of distilled spirits, which had fewer social implications that were bound up in fading religious and social contexts added to this fermenting tension. Alternative alcoholic beverages eventually became so widely available and abused that the Crown attempted to regulate the sale of wine to Indians with strict edicts outlawing the practice in 1594, 1637 and 1640.[71] The outrageous profits that Spanish wines brought greedy merchants demonstrated that such practices were unsustainable, especially when considering the meager incomes and assets

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husband…To all those of like age, intoxication was not forbidden" (bottom). Translations in Berdan and Rieff Anawalt, Vol. IV, 147.

[68] Taylor, 36-7.

[69] Taylor, 36.

[70] Taylor, 37.

[71] Taylor, 38

of those they exploited.[72] Furthermore, these bans forced *pulque* atop the indigenous option for both hydration and intoxication.

In pointing out the stipulations the Crown outlined in their efforts to curtail the negative consequences associated with the *pulque* trade, Taylor touched on a point that needs further elaboration. His observation proves important in understanding the role women played in the *pulque* identity process, both before and after the conquests. A 1635 and 1639 regulation for the legal ratio of *pulque* distributors to local Indian residents stated that eight indigenous women were to supervise the white *pulque* distribution in the four quadrants that make up Mexico City. The orders specifically state **women**. This minor detail places women atop many components in the *pulque* economics, but interestingly they remained in the background of *pulque* politics.[73] Since women both consumed and distributed the substance this detail substantiates yet another component in the identity complex that *pulque* constructed in colonial Mexico.

Church and government officials saw indigenous binge drinking habits as more than just "uncivilized" behavior. The church saw it as a regression into idolatrous times, while secular officials considered the Indian inclination for alcohol insatiable and hazardous to Spanish life. Sixteenth and seventeenth century colonial officials often considered Indians' "extremely short on intelligence," and solely in terms of their perceived barbarity. Some church officials went as far as to claim "there is no manner of sin which will not be committed by drunken Indians," all the while there existed clear

[72] Taylor, 39.
[73] Taylor, 38.

evidence that Spaniards were committing equivalent criminal and irreligious acts.[74] As the colonial period progressed *pulque* disassociated itself from a strictly indigenous population, and became universal for a variety of ethnic groups that raised concerns such as those mentioned above. Comments like "God created wine for the enjoyment of mankind, not for drunkenness", which a Mercedarian monk made in the seventeenth century, underscore the mixed alcohol attitudes that existed in colonial Spain.[75] Nevertheless, one of the worst insults available to a Spaniard was aggressively heaving out the "drunkard" label - something that many Spanish officials would repeat under numerous contexts when addressing *pulque, las castas y los indios*.[76] Rather than maintaining a specific quality that differentiated Spaniard from Indian, the "drunkard" label eventually collapsed multiple ethnic groups into an single identity that was previously denoted solely for the "Indian problem."

Pre-conquest Aztec social restrictions aimed to control situations deemed appropriate for use, more so than the actual quantity consumed.[77] However, Taylor also missed obvious evidence that pinpoints early colonial *pulque* abuse and its origins, when he concludes changing *pulque* patterns are difficult to determine before the eighteenth century.[78] Archaeological evidence helps establish how *pulque* social patterns changed **immediately** after missionaries and colonists began negotiating social situations.

In his 2005 article *"*Eating like an Indian: Negotiating Social Relations in Spanish Colonies*"* Enrique Rodríguez-Alegría demonstrates how Spaniard and Indian elites

[74] Taylor, 43 (85n and 96n).
[75] Taylor, 41 (83n)
[76] Taylor, 41.
[77] Taylor, Ch. 2.
[78] Taylor, 34.

manipulated food cultures during post-conquest feasts. Both colonist and Indian were very much aware of the imbedded implications that food cultures possessed.[79] Both groups manipulated and utilized serving and preparation wares in ceremonious and politicized contexts. These contexts included land transactions, various economic agreements and most public feasts. Rodríguez-Alegría challenges previous scholars' emphasis on Spanish separatist ideas, and their strict enforcement in all colonial spheres, when he concludes that besides swords, gunpowder and religion, food cultures took on an important role in early colonial politics.[80] Navigating social and political relationships with food was in fact a two way street. Spanish elites enticed their indigenous equals with displays of unity, developed in conjunction with preparing, serving and consuming foods in proper indigenous contexts. Those same Spaniards attacked non-elites for associating with the "other", or participating in activities outside their elitist paradigm.[81] Simultaneously, they did not fully consider their mingling with indigenous cultures as definitive or meaningful cultural exchanges. Many Spanish elites complained about exposure to native foods during alliance meetings or important feasts, but they also became accustomed to new materials and substances in their daily lives.[82] The readjustment of *pulque*'s social and political significances took place under these contexts. Both cultures facilitated *pulque*'s evolution into a controversial colonial beverage/food. While some Spanish complained about eating native foods during feasts, the "other" indulged in unregulated *pulque* consumption and Spanish food cultures.

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[79] Rodríguez-Alegría, 551.
[80] Rodríguez-Alegría, 552.
[81] Rodríguez-Alegría, 557.
[82] Rodríguez-Alegría, 558; James Lockhart, *Of Things of the Indies* (Stanford University Press 1999), 111.

Socio-political gatherings provided ample opportunities for indigenous groups to redefine themselves and sanctioned and unsanctioned *pulque* use. This experience undermined the strength in previous *pulque* restrictions.[83]

[83] Rodríguez-Alegría (2005). Lockhart, 111.

Chapter III

Maguey Symbolism in Memory and Daily Life

Pre-Conquest *Pulque* and *Maguey* Memory

The restrictions and social hierarchies that the Aztecs and their ancestors created for *pulque* were constructed on reasonable observations and social concerns. Even though they deified the substance and gave it to their thirsty gods, their legends contained imbedded strategies for controlling and explaining abuse, and even addiction. The social warnings they constructed made it apparent that punishment accompanied abuse, since even divinity could be punished for excess.[84] Furthermore, these limitations underscore the *maguey* and *pulque*'s cultural significance.

From a cosmological point of view the Aztec cultural equation has been reduced to many similar, and often shocking, conclusions. Commenting on the relative reoccurrence of destruction in the Aztec worldview and religion, Kay Almere Read comments that "in the Mexica worlds, fertility simply does not happen without things decaying, rotting and falling apart or being smashed, broken and killed."[85] Such a conclusion places symbolic importance on material processes that take on this quality, such as in the case of *pulque*. *Pulque* permeated the Tenochca time keeping systems and feast schedule, and the coincidence between its production process and Read's claim underscores how imbedded their meanings were. While calling for extended drinking

[84]Sahagún and de Barrios, 17.
[85] Kay Almere Read, *Time and Sacrifice in the Aztecs Cosmos* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 84-5.

parties to keep the cosmos in balance was a common practice, the rot and decay that took place before these binges brings the cosmos into Aztec daily life and memory.[86] The cultural significances inherent in the *maguey* and *pulque* changed drastically after the Tenochtitlan conquest. During the Aztec period its uses seemed infinite; religious, social and hierarchical *pulque* symbolism permeated their culture. Taking a look at the surviving indigenous styled codices, and then examining how the *maguey* transformed in memory will further elucidate the important place *pulque* held in pre and post conquest Mexico City cultures.

In 1576 Sahagún acknowledged that the indigenous groups of Mesoamerica "knew and had records of the things their ancestors had done and had left in their annals more than a thousand years ago."[87] Presumably, he used these in conjunction with his informants to create his irreplaceable manuscripts. In his statement two fundamental points in understanding the Aztec pre-conquest narrative become apparent. First off, Nahuatl annals were in existence upon contact, and the content in these texts contained an authentic snapshot of pre-conquest worldviews. Second, since Spaniards had knowledge of these histories, they also carried the potential to alter the cultural rubric in which these annals were meant to refer. Although Sahagún's comment confirms the use of reference materials in his works, it also resulted in a paternalistic motivation to record and debunk these narratives for social gains in the battle against Mesoamerican idolatry. Luckily, portions of these annals survived in a form that contains very little European influence, yet still maintains an authentic Nahuatl account for Mexico and its satellite territories.

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[86] Timothy Mitchell, *Intoxicated Identities* (Routledge, 2004), 17.
[87] Bernardino Sahagún, in John Bierhorst, *History and Mythology of the Aztecs: The Codex Chimalpopoca* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1992) 5.

An interesting *maguey* inclusion in the *Chimalpopoca Codex* establishes the important place it held in the cultural memory of pre-conquest Mesoamericans. This account details the origins of certain ritualized killings. The *maguey* appears as a sort of indirect link, but nonetheless its presence highlights one way the *maguey* penetrated the Aztec worldview. Although, the actual symbolism is difficult to extract, the *maguey's* presence in the formative narrative for 'flaying' sacrificial victims proves most intriguing. Referencing both women's role in the myth and *maguey* manufactures, the texts claims the first sacrificial victim to suffer the humiliation of having her skin paraded around as an effigy was an "Otomi woman, who was washing *maguey* fibers at the river."[88] Throughout a discussion on the Tepaneca War and the sack of Cuauhtitlan [1429-30]the *maguey* served as a symbolic offering designed to end hostilities between neighboring groups. During this 22 year tribal conflict the *maguey* was planted in a market place that suffered its upheaval and removal to a neighboring town. Later in the narrative, this decision provided a symbolic message of domination for the winning party, when the Tepaneca returned after the war and finished constructing a *maguey* plantation in its stead.[89] The symbolic use of the *maguey* to iterate the outcome of a conflict places the *maguey* in a special category in the Aztec worldview.

The *maguey* contained symbolically charged attributes for warriors as well.[90] In a battle for power in Tenochtitlan Montezuma the Elder's commanders issued an interesting order in the hopes of victory, when they commanded their soldiers to collect

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[88] John Bierhorst, *History and Mythology of the Aztecs: The Codex Chimalpopoca* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1992), 40 (9:50)
[89] Bierhorst, 91-2 (41:4-42:7)
[90] Bierhorst, 111 (54:10)

and attach prickly pear and *maguey* plantings to their shields during the liberation of a neighboring town. Apparently, the inclusion of these details provides insight into the symbolic value placed on the *maguey* during times of war. Furthermore, the warrior attachment to *pulque* in times of peace appears much less confounding when such war-time actions are considered. The *maguey* in times of war also appeared in the Mesoamerican narrative during Cortés' march on Mexico. In Book 12 in the *Florentine Codex*, Sahagún captured an interesting situation that took place while Cortés marched towards Mexico. After the Spaniards turned away an Aztec emissary, Montezuma sent out "satraps of the idols, soothsayers, enchanters and necromancers" to intercept and "cast spells on the Spaniards."[91] The traveling band quickly found their journey interrupted, when they became "dumbfounded" by a "drunk man in the road."[92] He "seemed to be dressed as a Chalcan," and "feigning drunkenness."[93] The drunkard denounced both Montezuma and his servants' intentions; his words apparently touched on a soft spot in the Aztec religious ideology. The drunken man fumed about the destruction Montezuma inflicted on his people and the lands, raging on about how the ruler "has done wrong, he has abandoned the people, he has destroyed people, he has hit himself on the head and wrapped himself up in relation to people, he has mocked people and deceived them." He told them to look back on their Mexico, which "will never exist again," and when they turned and faced their beloved city, they envisioned "all the temples…and all the houses of Mexico burning." With a humbled attitude the

[91] Bernardino Sahagún, *Florentine Codex, Book 12*, ed. and trans. by James Lockhart (University of California Press, 1993), 100.
[92] Sahagún and Lockhart, 100. All remaining quotes are from the Nahuatl version.
[93] Sahagún and Lockhart, 100.

rainmakers' "hearts seemed to fail them," and they announced Montezuma needed to witness the vision, and then just as quick as the man appeared, he disappeared. [94] The disheartened group abandoned their mission, returned to Mexico, and reported their revelatory experience back to Montezuma, who "sat like someone on the verge of death; for a long time it was as though he had lost awareness."[95] The drunken rant and the rainmakers' reactions instigated the concerned ruler into action, for he ordered the roads be "closed off in various places."[96] Rather than using trees or other materials, as would be the case with later attempts at blocking the thoroughfares that led to Mexico, the Aztec subordinates used *magueys*.[97] The plants chosen for roadblocks symbolically balanced the drunken omen. Montezuma seems to have fought drunken *pulque* prophecy with its sober and symbolically charged source, the *maguey*.

The *Codex Borgias* is considered a "native-tradition" document from an unknown part of South Central Highlands; its purpose is difficult to confidently determine.[98] Probably a "prognostication tool for divining the future in various ways", the actual methods for utilizing it remain obscure. Regardless of this unfortunate conundrum, the actual content in the text provides crucial evidence that frames how important the *maguey*

[94] Sahagún and Lockhart, 102.
[95]Sahagún and Lockhart, 104.
[96]Sahagún and Lockhart, 104.
[97] See Diaz account of roadblocks during their escape and return to Mexico.
[98] The *Codex Borgias* is one on the most well preserved pre-conquest manuscripts to survive Spanish burnings. It contains calendric and cosmological depictions that capture pre-conquest Aztec concepts of time and divination. Dating to the late fifteenth, or opening years of the sixteenth century this manuscript lacks all European influences. Therefore, it serves as an excellent work to examine when addressing the place that the *maguey* and *pulque* held in Aztec daily life prior to Cortés' expedition. By examining this text in conjunction with the *Codex Chimalpopoca*, an indigenous styled codex from post-conquest period, the evolution that the *maguey* and *pulque* underwent in the cultural memory of Mexico's inhabitants (both indigenous and non-indigenous) will come into focus. The cryptic stories in the *Codex Borgias* and the mythic accounts in the *Codex Chimalpopoca* underscore how important the *maguey* and *pulque* were. They assist in establishing how colonial attitudes changed their meanings.

and *pulque* were in daily Aztec life and memory. Designed as a religious auger, or divine calculator, this text uncovers clues in the Aztec worldview that Spaniards overlooked at times, presumably because their paternalism dictated indifference. Despite its cryptic nature, and scholars' relative inability to confidently interpret its meanings, the *Borgias Codex* can easily be divided into particular sections that relate in one respect or another. For instance, while the first eight plates capture the two-hundred and sixty day Aztec calendar, the four following plates address the nomenclature for the "20 deities of the 20 Named Days."[99] Another example of this sort of stratification appears in plates 25-8, which details the five directional deities and their calendric notations.[100] The actual meanings behind the placements of these plates proves a task beyond this essay, however for the discussion at hand analyzing their content will reveal the place the *maguey* and *pulque* held in pre-conquest memory.

To better understand *maguey* and *pulque* symbolism in the Aztec calendar, ergo their daily lives, addressing the symbols used to denote time proves valuable. The Aztecs had a 260 day calendar that was broke up into twenty day cycles, a ritual cycle that utilized a 13 day schedule, and a 52 year cycle that combined both the 260 and 13 day timetables. All the calendars cycles used the same measurement units, which took the form of pictographic representations for particular flora and fauna, or representations of cognitive concepts, such as "movement." That makes a total of 20 signs to explain the passing of time. Each sign has a literal and symbolic association with either a deity, or some form of material culture, whether it is food, divine representations, etc. In regards

[99] Gisele Díaz, Alan Rodgers, and Bruce E. Byland, *The Codex Borgia: A Full-Color Restoration of the Ancient Mexican Manuscript* (New York: Dover Publications, 1993) xvii.
[100] Ibid, xxi.

to *pulque* and the *maguey* they are represented with depiction of grass and a rabbit respectively. The rabbit day sign represents Mayahuel, the goddess of *maguey*, were as a tuft of grass symbolizes *Patecatl*, the god of *pulque*.[101] Based on simple computation, during an Aztec calendar year the *maguey* and *pulque* appear twice in every 20 day cycle, or 26 times per year, which meant that roughly ten percent of the time the Aztecs represented time with symbolic *maguey* and *pulque* manifestations. In essence, Aztec cosmology forced the Aztecs to acknowledge the relative importance that these commodities held in their worldview and physical reality.

The meanings for these day signs changed when the Aztec changed his/her intellectual paradigm. For instance, the rabbit and grass representations change meanings when considered in a supernatural context, and not in relation to the passing of time. The rabbit's supernatural association connects itself to the powerful "Our Lord the Flayed One" who had a hand in creating sacrificial rites, were as the grass tuft takes on the supernatural forces of the "Sun God."[102] From an intellectual point of view, the differences actually associate similarities to a particular sign. For example, when contemplating the cosmos and religious ideologies, it probably proved extremely difficult to completely disassociate the "God of *Pulque*" day sign with the supernatural "Sun God."[103] The *Codex Borgias* presents the *maguey* and *pulque* in a context that suggests it was extremely difficult for Aztecs to escape the cosmological, social, and intellectual meanings behind these material substances for any given length of time. *Pulque* and the *maguey* were divine substances that forced the Aztecs to always consider their relative

[101]Also translated as Pahtecatl below.
[102] Díaz, Rodgers, and Byland, xxi.
[103] Ibid, xvi-xv

importance in their worldviews, daily lives, religious paradigm, and perhaps most demanding their subsistence and economic value.

Rather than the four cardinal directions, the Aztecs used mythic symbolism in their explanations for 'direction.' [104] In the case of what would be a European easterly direction the Aztecs utilized mixed representations of the Solar Deity and the God of *Pulque*. The *Borgias* representation reiterates how the *maguey* and *pulque* engulfed the Aztec worldview, sense of time and space, and most importantly their religious understanding of the cosmos. The Aztecs also constructed a fifty-two year cycle that started on one of four days signs. One of those four was the rabbit, so here is yet another cosmological time keeping device that held direct *maguey* symbolism. One only has to flip through the *Codex Borgias* with the knowledge of what these pictographs embody to understand the complex symbolism tied to *maguey* and *pulque*. Symbolic embodiment was a single point of controversy once the Spaniards took control of Mesoamerican cities like Mexico, and proved a fermenting component that resurfaced throughout the colonial period. Aztec attachment to this substance undoubtedly complicated their assimilation into the dominant Spanish paradigm. The *Chimalpopoca Codex* is a post-conquest text that provides additional details on the symbolic *maguey* and *pulque* evidence captured in the *Codex Borgias*. It contains one of the most authentic and complete accounts of the Nahuatl myths and legends, in Nahuatl. The Chimalpopoca text details the historical narrative for the Mexico Valley, which is of great value. Beginning in 635 A.D. and terminating with an exchange of gifts between Montezuma and Cortés (~1518) this codex contains a rare and complete narrative for the region. Relevant details on how the Aztecs

[104] Ibid, xxi-xxii.

approached and interacted with the *maguey* and *pulque* in mythic, historical and cosmological contexts abounds the text.[105] The author seemed reasonably critical of his sources, and cites when his particular knowledge was either limited or the actual details in a narrative are questionable. He disregarded those details sourced to people who "talk too much", and when his certainty is questionable he included "it is said," which resulted in a relatively objective account.[106]

Codex Chimalpopoca begins with a detailed account for Cuauhtitlan, the fourth largest district in pre-conquest Mexico, which will be discussed below in conjunction with a comparable version under European contexts. *The Legends of the Suns* on the other hand, is not a historio-mythic narrative but a collection of creation myths for the five ages. Like the *Annals of Cuauhtitlan*, the *Legends of the Suns* have overlapping concepts with other codices and texts. Nevertheless, the creationist tone in *The Legends* provides tremendous insight into the place the *maguey* and *pulque* held in the Aztec cosmos and worldview.

The Legends claim that the first four suns passed and "we who live today [have] this one," the fifth sun, "it's our sun, though what's here is [merely] its signification …and before it was the sun, its name was Nanahuatl."[107] The sun and moon personifications performed penance with thorns and needles made of minerals, which marked the beginning of Nanahuatl's journey into the sky.[108] Four long days passed and then "Nanahuatl went off to fall in the fire [i.e. the sky]. But the Moon only went to fall

[105] For complete details on content and brief summaries for the two corresponding texts see Bierhorst, 5-9.
[106] Bierhorst, 4.
[107] Bierhorst, 147 (77:27)
[108] Bierhorst, 147 (77:40)

in the ashes [i.e. night sky]."[109] After he remained stagnant in the sky for multiple days the gods sent a messenger to ask "why he doesn't move?"[110] Nanahuatl replied, "Because I'm asking for their blood, their color, their precious substance."[111] The angry gods then shot arrows at the sun to punish his insolence, and in return the sun shot flaming arrows at the gods and struck them, "and there in Teotihuacan they all died a sacrificial death. So then the [fifth] sun went into the sky." Then the moon followed suit, "and when he got to the edge of the sky, *Papaztac* came and broke his face with a rabbit pot," or *pulque* vessel.[112] To the Aztecs, the rabbit pot incident explains why they envisioned a rabbit in the moon's reflection.[113] When looking to the night sky, the myth of the moon keeps the *maguey* and *pulque* in the forefront of religious and cosmological understanding.

"How the sun demanded a drink," also provides an excellent example of *pulque*'s insertion into Aztec mythology. This story tells of the birth of four hundred Mixcoa and the subsequent birth of five more; the former group was mischievous, and the latter were divine tools for the sun and "thirsty" gods.[114] The four hundred Mixcoa were told to sacrifice blood for the sun, which they openly disregarded, and after receiving "precious darts" from the sun, the mortal Mixcoa "did not do as they were commanded. They just shot birds, they just played…and then, when they catch the jaguar" they only flattered themselves with hubris and refused to sacrifice. Their final violation came when, "they

[109] Bierhorst, 148, 77:47
[110] Bierhorst, 148, 78:1
[111] Bierhorst, 148, 78:4
[112] Bierhorst, 149, 78:16
[113] See Rieff Anawalt (1997), 24 for details on rabbit symbolism.
[114] Bierhorst, 147, 78:30

tipple on *pulque* and get completely drunk, completely intoxicated." Their actions forced the sun to command the remaining Mixcoa, born in the sacred cave, to "destroy the four hundred Mixcoa the ones who fail" to worship and sate the gods' thirst.[115] The five reaming Mixcoa fulfilled the gods' wishes and upon their brethren's destruction they sacrificed blood to the sun as requested. One of the five Mixcoa that remained under the fifth sun was Mixcoatl. Mixcoatl's powers grew after he gave the sun a drink, and with this growth came great prestige. In addition to the "Origin of the Sacred Bundle" describing how the ashes of Itzpapalotl became divine, it also defined how *pulque* symbolized an accomplishment and expression of power. Mixcoatl set out to conquer the surrounding areas with the divine sacred bundle of ashes and when he arrived in Comalteca their rulers came out "laid down food" and *pulque* to appease him, which proves a reoccurring theme throughout Aztec mythology. [116]

The *Chimalpopoca Codex* provides some of the finest reference materials for understanding pre-conquest Aztec belief systems. It helps bridge the differences between Spanish and Indian texts and historical memory. *Pulque*, its thorns and the other materials provided by the *maguey* echo throughout most Aztec influenced codices. The apparent recurrence and obvious emphasis placed on the sacred nature attached to these substances permeates the more traditional texts. We see this in both the indigenous styled and non-indigenous styled texts, but in the former they occur with a higher level of deeply imbedded symbolic meaning.

[115] Bierhorst, 150, 79:10
[116] Bierhorst, 152, 80:17

Chapter IV

Post-Conquest Memory and anti-*Pulque* Sentiments

Concerned Conquistadors and Reactionary Missionaries

Post-conquest cultural memory quickly distorted the inherent meanings behind *pulque* and *maguey* symbolism. After first contact, Spaniards took it upon themselves to eradicate Aztec religious, economic and social systems and supplant them with hybridized Old World ideologies. Like tobacco and chocolate, the conquistadores constructed the first socio-economic approaches to *pulque*, the *maguey* and Indian drunkenness. First off, this observation reveals how *pulque* politics began upon first contact, and not mid-century, and secondly it demonstrates how quick colonists noticed the symbolically charged commodities.

In his second letter to the crown, Cortés mentioned *maguey* cultivation and *pulque* production.[117] The *maguey* and *pulque* inclusion contain no references to indigenous drunkenness, however, his comments underscore the profitable value he placed on *maguey* cultivation. Cortés' did compare *pulque* with Spanish wine, but he also included distinctions that began defining the "other," which fills in an early gap in *pulque* knowledge, and establishes how the official public dialogue in this fermenting controversy first took shape. Two other conquistadores mentioned the *maguey* in pre-conquest society. Much like his Captain, Bernal Diaz also approached *maguey* cultivation through an economic scope. His final remarks on why the "true

[117] Hernan Cortés, *Five Letters 1519-1526*, trans. F. Bayard Morris (W.W. Norton and Company Inc: New York, NY, 1962), 88.

conquistadores who won New Spain and the great and strong City of Mexico, did not remain to settle in it," reveals that the surrounding *maguey* plantations did not entice some conquistadores enough to consider them a viable economic option. He plainly states, one reason that many left was due to the fact that the surrounding area offered little economic incentive for settlement.[118]

The Anonymous Conquistador provided a relatively impressive, albeit somewhat biased, ethnographic essay on Indian culture. [119] After detailing cacao consumption, the unknown author provided an analysis on the *maguey* and "another kind of wine they have."[120] After commenting briefly on *pulque*'s fermentation process the Conquistador exhibits one perspective that other landed Spaniards potentially held. He concluded that after fermenting, "they drink [*pulque*], to such excess that they do not stop until they fall to the ground drunk and senseless, and they consider it some great honor to drink very much and get drunk."[121] However, the Anonymous Conquistador failed to include *pulque* consumption during his discussion on "the manner of sacrifice", which is interesting because religious chroniclers were quick to include and emphasis the use of this beverage during idolatry sacrifices.[122] He could have claimed ignorance, but it seems the author dwelt on the perceived dishonor in drunkenness and disregarded (or misunderstood) the imbedded cultural meanings behind intoxication. Compared to

[118] Bernal Diaz, *The Conquest of New Spain*, ed. and trans. by David Carrasco (University of New Mexico Press, 2008), 318.
[119] De Fuentes, 167.
[120] De Fuentes, 173. It seems he considered *cacao* a wine beverage.
[121] De Fuentes, 173.
[122] De Fuentes, 175.

Spanish ideologies on intoxication, this comes as no surprise since indigenous alcohol use symbolized very different cultural concepts.

Aztec drunkenness ideologies show up in myth and post conquest Spanish texts under guises that seem like those in modern times. At the least these guises prescribed social regulations and cultural warnings for *pulque* use and abuse. However once Spanish conquest disrupted native religious and mythic systems, control mechanisms, such as the looming predictive threats accompanying the drunkard sign, lost validity and meaning to numerous Indian groups. Combined with cultural stresses and altered demographics, *pulque* became an unregulated physiological and psychological coping mechanism, quite unlike its previous form.[123] Sahagún, Diego Durán and Motolinía provide little evidence that suggests they viewed *pulque* in these terms.

Besides Sahagún, missionaries, such as Friar Diego Durán or Toribio Motolinía, constructed sixteenth century identities for Indian drunkenness that laid the intellectual foundations for the classist debate that followed the 1692 rebellion. Motolinía and Durán however did not favor the ethnographic objectivity that Sahagún's work frequently displays. Durán and Motolinía expressed moral objections and religious convictions that assured their works and opinions lacked the objectivity that Sahagún commonly maintained.

Diego Durán claimed that his teeth were not born in the New World, but "it was there [at Tetzcoco] that my second teeth came out."[124] Since Friar Diego arrived in the

[123] Charles Gibson, *The Aztecs under Spanish Rule* (Stanford University Press, 1964), 116 supports this thinking but he assumes the defenseless Indian had no choice or opportunity to overcome their "demoralized state".
[124]Durán, Horcasitas and Heyden, 4.

New World at a young age he became fluent in Nahuatl.[125] Durán and his parents eventually moved from Tetzcoco to Mexico City, and at age nineteen, he joined the Monastery of Santo Domingo. He became a Dominican monk on May 8, 1556, a date that marked the beginning of an extensive journey around Mesoamerica performing outspoken missionary activities.[126] Durán's treatment and biased opinion on *pulque* reveals both his upbringing and religious convictions. He often spoke outright and on numerous occasions he expressed his objections to Indian culture in ways that he regretted.[127] These qualities permeate his *Book of the Gods and Rites*.

In *Book of the Gods and Rites*, Durán condemns *pulque* use in a variety of contexts. He aggressively condemned the *calmamalihua*, a blessing where natives poured "*pulque* in all corners and the host himself takes a newly lighted firebrand", pointing it in all directions "thus taking possession of the home he built."[128] He proclaimed, "I consider [these practices] and the tolerating of them harmful; thus I fulfill my obligation in denouncing them."[129] He then reveals his true feelings on tolerating indigenous ritual declaring, "Let him not burden his conscience by feigning ignorance and consenting to these and other superstitions! Let him not consider them things of little concern! If he does not fight against them, reprehend them, showing wrath and grief over them, the natives become accustomed [to our lenience] and do things of more weight and gravity."[130] This comment was not an isolated incident. Durán repeatedly felt the need to

[125]Durán, Horcasitas and Heyden, 5.
[126] Ibid, 12.
[127] Ibid, 20-1.
[128] Ibid, 149.
[129] Ibid 149-50.
[130] Ibid, 150.

condemn *pulque* rituals, which he accomplished when discussing "the spilling on the ground of *pulque*" during the Feast of "the Heart of the Earth."[131] After slandering this and other practices for some time he makes clear that "indeed, it has been [my] effort to uproot [these beliefs]. May it please the Almighty Lord that they now be torn up, in part."[132]

While discussing the "The Knights of the Sun and how the highest authorities honored them and the other braves", Durán commented that Gray Knights, or those Knights from humble origins received the right to drink *pulque* in public. Then he snidely includes that all Indians drank in private, which contradicts the drinking restrictions mentioned above, but his inclusion that all drank in private seems to show a bias that Durán held regarding *pulque* use.[133] Through his "informed" assumptions, all Indians drank in private, which may very well have been the case, however, brash comments like these highlight a cyclical theme in his work. His opinionated and confident attitude undoubtedly began during his early years, growing up in a world were cultural change forced Indian and Spaniard to justify their actions and define the "other" in terms that reinforced their worldviews. Durán also documented the eighth festival in the Aztec astronomical year, the *Huey Tecuilhuitl*, or Great Feast of the Lords.[134] Writing in the past tense and describing how the Aztecs celebrated it "under the old law," his description includes details on the female sacrifice that represented the incarnation of the

[131] Ibid, 261.
[132] Ibid, 262.
[133] Ibid, 199.
[134] Ibid, 212.

Goddess Cihuacaoatl, or the Snake Woman.[135] He describes how great sorceries were used when a "female slave was bought, purified, and dressed in the same manner as the stone idol…She was always kept drunk, tipsy, inebriated, out of her wits. Some say that this was done with wine."[136] After an Aztec month, or twenty drunken days of purification they slaughtered the woman over four male captives, thus the offerings were sacrificed and the festivities began. This feast included "great quantities of *pulque*."[137] Not only do these *pulque* descriptions define Aztec ritual but the manner in which Durán describes them establishes his hostility towards the substance. Overt objection to *pulque* use and "showing wrath and grief" towards these substances resulted in ethnocentric dialogue on Indian *pulque* use that infected other like minds with his moral objections to indigenous drunkenness and *pulque*. Besides detailing elder and noble *pulque* use, his *pulque* prestige condemnation theme reappears when Durán writes about the demon "fanners" in the bathhouses, who "blew away illness, strengthened the flesh, and gave health and strength to the sick."[138] Non-elite fanners received "plentiful food, *pulque*, and ears of corn, depending upon the quality of each."[139] Like most rituals he mentions, Durán states "if someone should suspect or discover that the ugly and torpid" fanning custom prevailed "he would do well to prevent and punish it so as not to revive an evil of the forgotten past."[140] By doing so he also condemned *pulque* prestige. Durán's discussion on the gambling and drinking that took place on feast days also provides

[135] Ibid, 212.
[136] Ibid, 210-12.
[137] Ibid, 213.
[138] Ibid, 271.
[139] Ibid, 271.
[140] Ibid.

valuable insight on the attitudes that helped create *pulque* politics. *Pulque* became synonymous for Spanish ideas on drunkards just the same as their Indian counterparts. Furthermore, this interpretation underscores a recurring Spanish inclination to view Indian drunkenness in combination with Old World/Classical Greek attributes. When discussing the deity of wine, *Ometochtli,* Durán says "all the men and women who sold wine celebrated his rites", and they revealed to him that "Ometochtli refers to the god Bacchus and is much celebrated among them today, more than was solemnized in ancient times."[141] Durán defined Indian drunkenness in Old World terminology that sought to explain the evil "this cursed wine brings and causes in our modern times."[142] Durán reveals another socio-economic characteristic that verifies *pulque* politics' origins in the sixteenth century, not the 1690s, when he comments that mid sixteenth century *pulque* producers were fined twice a month for their occupation.[143] He harbors his usual animosity towards the substance when he states, "until these wretched people abandon this abominable vice they will never find the True Faith or knowledge of God…I consider it stupid to administer the Sacraments to [a user] until he has reformed."[144] Durán finishes his discussion on the activities associated with feasting with yet another *pulque* condemnation. He beseeches,

> His Majesty the Lord our God that He intervenes with His divine mercy to reform these creatures who are so rooted in this abominable vice. I fear, though I do not state this categorically, that, judging from the inclination that they have for it, even though they do not serve it or worship it as their ancestors did—and even though I may exaggerate, I venture to state that if an Indian, fond of this wine, saw on the one side hell itself and on the

[141] Ibid, 306.
[142] Ibid, 307.
[143] Ibid, 307.
[144] Ibid, 308.

> other a jug of *pulque* and was told, "Do Not drink the entire jug! If you do, hell will swallow you up!" If he so much as touched it with his mouth, his resistance would fail him.[145]

If Durán represents the naturalized novice evangelist perspective and Sahagún's descriptions and the *Mendoza Codex* are the ethnographic and objective views on *pulque*, then Motolinía represents the foreign militant expert evangelist perspective. Motolinía's view spells out only doom for all who looked at, or even considered picking up a *pulque* jug. Motolinía's comment below, and those discussed thus far, demonstrate how *pulque* and its association with idolatry and the "old law" influenced its politics and policy. Furthermore, even though the sources came from the middle to late sixteenth century the inspiration to address, condemn and relieve society of these vices stretched back to pre-conquest idolatry interpretations. Works like these demonstrate how important religious documents like the "Directorio Para Confesores (1585)" were in creating secular policy. The *"*Directorio*"* declared that a Spanish governor's duty demands "particular obligation to be diligent" in diminishing "the drunkenness of the Indians."[146] It assigned a prescribed *pulque* policy to colonial officials by stating "the governor sins gravely in [policing drunkenness] if he is not careful or pardons offenders too easily because the principal intent and obligation of those who govern in the Indies is to secure the conversion of the heathens and help them live in a Christian manner once converted."[147] Like many aspects in New Spain official colonial policy did not necessarily equate to

[145] Ibid, 310.
[146] "Directorio Para Confesores," in *Colonial Lives*, ed. and trans. by Boyer and Spurling (Oxford University Press 2000), 32.
[147] Ibid, 35.

strict observance. As the colonial saying goes "Obedezco pero no cumplo", or "I obey but I do not comply."[148]

Toribio de Motolinía's mission to the New World and his subsequent appointment to Mexico gained approval in 1523.[149] He wrote *History of the Indians of New Spain* between 1536 and 1541.[150] Consequently, his descriptions and subsequent prescriptions for curtailing *pulque* drunkenness precede Super's 1540 origin for *pulque* politics. Like Sahagún and Durán the details he includes in his *Historia* took root in post-conquest indigenous drunkenness. Like those discussed above, his works undoubtedly contributed to policies like the "Directorio." His "First Missionary Endeavors" capture an attitude that spilt over into secular interpretations and their subsequent explanations. In describing the challenging situation he and his peers faced, the vile and "diabolical" *pulque* appears. Besides mentioning psychedelic mushrooms a little later in the text, Motolinía makes it clear to his readers that *pulque* needs to accept sole liability for the idolatrous and rude behaviors that plagued the city.

> This land was a transplanted hell, seeing how its people would yell at night, some invoking the devil, others in a drunken stupor and still others singing and dancing…It is incredible how much wine they consumed at the drinking orgies which they held very often and how much one poured into his body. [T]he wine is clear and sweet, like mead. After it is boiled, it becomes somewhat thick; its odor is bad; but much worse is the odor of those who intoxicate themselves with it. They commonly began to drink in the afternoon…they drank so greedily that the wine-servers had to bestir themselves. And so meager was the food they ate that already by nightfall they were losing their senses, now falling to the ground, then lying quiet, then again singing and shouting and calling upon the demon. It was pitiful to see men, created after the image of God, becoming worse than brute animals. What was worse, they were not content with this sin

[148] This quote is compliments of Dr. David Coleman's extensive knowledge on Spanish documentary and archival history. I offer my gratuitous and humble thanks. Prsonal correspondence, 4/10/12.
[149] Benavente and Steck, 1.
[150] Ibid.

> alone, but committed many others. They struck and injured and occasionally killed one another, although they might be good friends and close relatives. Except when intoxicated, the Indians are so peaceful that, although they fight much, they merely push one another and scarcely ever shout, unless it be the women who sometimes scream during a quarrel…[151]

Motolinía wrote this account to describe what Franciscans faced in Mexico City after the conquests. His descriptions and outright condemnation for *pulque* and its users during that era underscores the immediate showdown secular and religious authorities faced after the conquests. This caption demonstrates that like Durán and Sahagún, Motolinía cast a negative shadow over *pulque* users. Like most situations in early colonial Spain, religious convictions and interpretations rarely subsumed to secular activities and very often the former preceded policy formation. With such being the case, *pulque* politics began with the words of these three religious figures and people like them. As these accounts attest *politica del pulque* began shortly after contact, and accelerated once colonial society began its hierarchical development. These opinions and observations were not created instantaneously sometime during 1540s as Super implied in his narrative.

[151] Ibid, 96-7.

Chapter V

Changing *Maguey* Memory and Fermenting Transformations

Lost Symbolism and Conflicting Narratives in Translation

Like Durán, Motolinía and the conquistadors, Sahagún produced a set of membership categories for drunkenness and drunkard Indians that other clergy and religious orders presumably exchanged and applied to society. Perceptions created by works like the *Florentine Codex* or *Codex Mendoza* were fundamental resources in compiling strategies for Indian relations. See Figure Two below for texts describing this practice

Figure 2: Post-conquest depiction of pre-conquest punishments for unsanctioned drunkenness.[152]
Source: Frances Berdan and Patricia Rieff Anawalt, *Codex Mendoza* Vol. III (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 147.

In the texts, pictograms and legend interpretations discussed above a clear pattern emerges for Indian drunkenness. At least by Sahagún and his informants' view, the

[152] Captions read, "These two figures [one not shown] mean that youths who became intoxicated with wine died for it according to their laws and customs"(left), and, "If a young woman became intoxicated with wine, they killed her according to the laws and customs of the lords of Mexico." (right). Translations in Berdan and Rieff Anawalt, Vol. IV, 147

drunkenness vice helped describe Indian history. This intellectual impression transcended itself into socio-political polices, such as the 1585 *Directorio Para Confesores* or 1692 prohibition in Mexico City.[153] His declaration that his "work was examined and approved by many in the course of many years", also hints to his potential influence on defining ethnic identity.[154] Minor differences between the *Telleriano-Remensis* and its corresponding *Vaticanus A* also highlight how the *maguey* changed in memory during the post-conquest period. Traditional Aztec cultural memory began to disintegrate shortly after the conquests. In the decades following the conquests the New World *maguey* no longer represented a sacred plant that produced divine substance, but a point of confusion between Spanish religious elites and the increasingly stressed indigenous culture. Before the conquests New World inhabitants held the *maguey* and *pulque* in such a regard that it was often difficult to escape its consequences in daily and religious life. Once the conquests paralyzed the *maguey*'s role in the Aztec cosmos, *pulque* and its mother plant became seriously intertwined with prevailing colonial attitudes.

Sahagún's essay, "About Different Kinds of Drunkards" captures how some post-conquest Nahuatls addressed pre-conquest alcoholism. Sahagún states that "on account of this sign…wine is not detrimental or contrary to some drunkards", some fall asleep, while for others, "tears begin to roll down their cheeks like threads of water, " which resembles the comment resembles the mythic Quetzalcoatl story discussed above. [155] Still other drunks were shameless and "praise[d] themselves", or they developed social

[153] See discussion below.
[154] Sahagún, Bandelier and de Bustamante, 24.
[155] Ibid.

and spousal paranoia.[156] A telling comment appears within Sahagún's ensuing descriptions. After slandering drunkards' and describing a few of the "four hundred rabbits" or four hundred feelings of intoxication, he describes the celebrations for "when the sign of Umetochtli began."[157] He declares, "those who drank wine from that stone trough", prepared in Umetochtli's honor, "were old men and old women, courageous warriors and men of war, for they thought that they might someday be made captives by their enemies, or, being on the battlefield, made captives themselves among their adversaries and so they now were enjoying themselves while they could, drinking wine…"[158] This list of patrons represents one example that reinforced previous restrictions. Sahagún provides another when he discusses how the men of worship in the house of Telpuchcalli would be stoned to death or bludgeoned before all in the house if they were guilty of intoxication.[159] Sahagún also includes concise declarations that only elders indulged in *pulque* before the conquests in his essay "the festivity celebrated on account of Christenings."[160] Sahagún repeatedly underscores how Aztec social mechanisms allowed only the elders to consume *pulque*, but the inclusion of the Telpuchcalli confirms that "underage" and unsanctioned drinking took place.

Sahagún's "Invention of *Pulque*" essay also demonstrates another way that his works and others like it, influenced *pulque* politics after the conquests. His works can be cross-examined with the more indigenous influenced works above to underscore how the two paradigms approached *pulque* after the conquests. Furthermore, it establishes a

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[156] Ibid.
[157]Sahagún, Bandelier and de Bustamante, 214.
[158]Sahagún, Bandelier and de Bustamante, 214.
[159] Sahagún, Bandelier and de Bustamante, 199.
[160] Sahagún, Bandelier and de Bustamante, 244.

baseline impression that many officials and religious leaders potentially used for interpreting *pulque*'s narrative and pre-conquest Indian society. As the legend goes, a deified woman named Mayahuel scraped the first *metl*, "but the first to discover the stalk, the root with which *pulque* is fermented, his name was Pantecatl."[161] Others learned to prepare *pulque* "on the hill called Chichinauia, and because the *pulque* foamed up, they called it Pozonaltepetl", or Hill of Foam.[162] Once they stockpiled much *pulque* on the Hill of Foam, they sent word for all the "lords, the chiefs, the elders, the experienced" to join in libation.[163] Four jars fulfilled all these legitimate *pulque* drinkers' rightful shares. However, a chief named Cuextecatl broke tradition and drank a fifth. Once he drank the fifth and became intoxicated beyond comprehension, he stripped himself naked and embarrassed himself and his tribe. "In shame Cuextecatl went away."[164] He left behind all he knew and led his people away until "they arrived at the sea's edge."[165] At this point in the myth Sahagún's informants reveal that, "They took with them entertainment, the flutes. With many things they caused pleasure. In many ways they caused heads to turn. They thus performed their sleight-of-hand tricks, they made huts burst into flame, they made water gush forth, they split themselves into pieces…But they never abandoned their shameful ways, their drunkenness." The legend then revisits the nakedness motif, commenting, "the Cuextecatl never used loincloths until the arrival of the Faith, Christianity. And because he [their chief] drank to excess, drank five *pulque*s…the

[161] Bernardino Sahagún, "The Invention of *Pulque*" ed. and trans. by Virginia Bottorff de Barrios (Mexico: Editorial Minutiae Mexicana, 1971), 14.
[162] Sahagún and de Barrios, 14.
[163] Ibid, 14-5.
[164] Ibid, 15.
[165] Ibid.

Cuextecas always move as if they were drunk…And about anyone who cannot behave properly, who lives like a drunk, it is said: He is the image of Cuextecatl"[166]

Religious knowledge and doctrine that originated prior to Sahagún's arrival to New Spain shaped his interpretations and opinions. The obvious bias in documenting primarily "landed" elitist opinions best describes both the Informants he utilized while compiling *The Florentine Codex* and the document's tone. In the *Florentine Codex*, Sahagún and his informants documented the role *pulque* played in Aztec cosmology.[167] Working with indigenous translators and intellectuals, Sahagún compiled numerous Aztec origin myths.[168] The gods Quetzalcoatl and Titlacaoan played a major part in these creation myths. According to the legend all the arts "had their origins and commencement with Quetzalcoatl."[169] In Tulla he ruled creativity and supervised the arts, precious jewels and smelting metals, which he and his vassals perfected over the years. From his perch, "they suffered no famine, nor lack of corn."[170] Quetzalcoatl offered "penance by pricking his limbs and drawing blood, with which he [forever] stained the *maguey* points."[171] Quetzalcoatl's peaceful reign in Tulla terminated, once his "penance" proved insufficient in maintaining divine harmony and Titlacaoan tricked him into drinking *pulque*. Titlacaoan claimed the drink would cure an unexpected and

[166] Ibid, 16 for both extracts.
[167] Bernardino Sahagún, *History of Ancient Mexico*, trans by Fanny Bandelier (Fisk University Press, 1932, republished, 1971), 173.
[168] Sahagún, Bandelier and De Bustamante, 21-4, for Sahagún's take on how his narrative came together with the help of both indigenous elite and non-elite.
[169] Sahagún, Bandelier and de Bustamante, 179.
[170]Sahagún, Bandelier and de Bustamante, 180.
[171] Sahagún, Bandelier and de Bustamante, 180.

uncharacteristic infirmity Quetzalcoatl suffered.[172] At first, he refused the trickster's medicine, but after a few persistent retorts, Quetzalcoatl drank the "medicine," and quickly found himself intoxicated. At first, the God of Arts felt cured, but soon after he "commenced to cry very sadly and had a turn of heart which softened so that he wanted to leave" Tulla.[173] This would not be the last time that Titlacaoan, the "old conjuror" used *pulque* to torment his divine subordinate.

After leaving Tulla and heading down the road to the Sun, flute players in tow, Titlacaoan tricked Quetzalcoatl into drinking *pulque* yet again. This time he fell asleep and left a permanent impression in some rocks near a village. Just prior to this drunken slumber, Quetzalcoatl lost all his followers to a necromancer's sorcery, which seems to symbolize (and provide) legitimate punishment for his indulgence, since he refused the elixir prior to his loss. The way Quetzalcoatl felt euphoria and then deep sorrow contains mythic symbolism for *pulque*'s qualities and establishes a "natural" Aztec association with *pulque*. Their prescribed affects were assigned divine attributes that the gods explored and developed prior to man.

Returning to the *Codex Chimalpopoca* helps uncover how regardless of indigenous and Spanish differences in understanding, *pulque* and the *maguey* were often misrepresented. The differences between accounts by elites, such as Sahagún, and the interpretation below exemplify how *pulque* symbolism and meaning was often lost in translation. By the time the "old ones knew that in the fifth age, in time of 1 Rabbit

[172]Sahagún, Bandelier and de Bustamante, 178.
[173]Sahagún, Bandelier and de Bustamante, 180-1.

[*maguey* symbolism], earth and sky were established…people had existed four times."[174] By 694, or 8 rabbit [*maguey* symbolism], the ruling lineages for the region began their separate narratives that ranged from epochs of prosperity to moments of complete destitution. Time passed and rulers came and went for these groups, all the while the mythic and mischievous Mixcoatl "who was still with them at this time," repeatedly wreaked havoc on his mortals subjects.[175] One such occurrence was Mixcoatl's involvement in the Chichimec expulsion from Cuaxoxouhcan. However, "in 1 Flint [804] the Cuauhtitlan Chichimec got themselves a ruler", Huactli.[176] The text then frames the *maguey* in its ritualized context. When it states "you must make Huactli your ruler. Go to Mecuameyocan and build a thorn house, a *maguey* house. And there you will spread the thorn mat, the *maguey* mat."[177] In this case the *maguey* mat equates to the establishment of a legitimate ruling elite. The connections between nobility and the *maguey* thorn mat refer to not only the value placed on the *maguey* for symbols of prestige, but it also sets the stage for the rise of blood sacrifice. As reflected above, Quetzalcoatl played an important role in creating certain blood rites, something the Chimalpopoca expands on much more than Sahagún's account.

The *Chimalpopoca Codex* introduces Quetzalcoatl's birth and divine existence in greater detail than Sahagún's account. The differences in these texts reflect the variance between Informant based narratives, and those created under a more traditional indigenous paradigm. In "1 Reed [843]…According to what they tell and what they say,

[174] Bierhorst, 23 (2:16)
[175] Bierhorst, 27 (2:55)
[176] Bierhorst, 27 (3:12)
[177] Bierhorst, 27 (3:16)

this was when Quetzalcoatl was born, called Topiltzin Priest Ce Acatl Quetzalcoatl."[178] The mythic hero then created four temples for penance, where he sacrificed his own blood with *maguey* thorns in exchange for his subjects' mortality and prosperity. Some years passed, and in 10 House [865], the Chichimec leader, "the ruler who did not know how to plant edible corn" died.[179] Meanwhile Quetzalcoatl began his journey towards complete and utter divination, which kicked off with an invitation by the Toltec to serve as their ruler in Tollan [Tulla].[180] In Tollan this mythic hero "introduced great riches…cacao of different colors and the different colored cotton."[181] Like the narrative discussed above this development marked the beginning of Quetzalcoatl's intoxicated downfall, however the more traditional Nahuatl version in the Chimalpopoca text tells a slightly different story.

The great sorceresses who tricked Quetzalcoatl, Tezcatlipoca, Ihuimecatl and Toltecatl, opposed ritual penance for the sake of humanity. Amongst them they declared "let us brew *pulque*… [and] have him drink it and make him lose his judgment, so that he no longer performs his sacraments."[182] Tezcatlipoca also wanted the god to view his own flesh, which he eventually convinced Quetzalcoatl to confront. Before viewing his flesh however, Tezcatlipoca told the god "Know yourself, see yourself", at which point Quetzalcoatl did, and found himself frightening. This peculiar comment about knowing thyself seems to set the stage for the drunken episode that followed. Much like Sahagún's version, the Chimalpopoca text is littered with toleration and moderation prescriptions for

[178] Bierhorst, 28 (3:56)
[179] Bierhorst, 29 (4:11)
[180] Bierhorst, 29 (4:26)
[181] Bierhorst, 30 (4:53)
[182] Bierhorst, 31 (5:27)

pulque. Upon witnessing his bulging eyelids, drooping eye sockets, and "monstrous" face Quetzalcoatl dressed to dissuade his subjects from fearing his monstrosities. The tricky sorceresses fulfilled his request and he was decked out in symbolic regalia of a turquoise mask and great plumage, and most importantly, a crescent shaped nose ring that denoted a *pulque* consumer.[183] Once tricked into showing himself to his subjects the devilish agents went off to collect a great feast of "stewed greens, tomatoes, chilies, fresh corn, and beans…[and] *magueys*", and "in four days they made them into *pulque*" and returned to Tollan.[184] After feasting the tricksters "urged him once again, giving him the *pulque*."[185] The god replied, "No I mustn't drink it. I'm fasting. Is it intoxicating? Or fatal?"[186] The sorceresses convinced him to drink and upon finishing his first draught they told him ""You'll drink four." And so they gave him a fifth draught, saying "This is your portion.""[187] Shortly after his fifth, he began to sing with merriment and asked his pages, who had also drunk five draughts, to go fetch his sister, who was performing penance. She arrived and the two divine creatures drank themselves drunk. Having made themselves drunk, they no longer said, "let us do penance. No longer did they go down to the water. No longer did they go out to puncture themselves with thorns. From then on they did nothing at day break."[188] The god then became saddened by his choice and reflected with great sorrow singing, "Never a portion counted in my house. Let it be here, ah, let it be here. Alas. May the realm endure. Alas. There's only misery and

[183] Bierhorst, 32 (6:2)
[184] Bierhorst, 33 (6:16)
[185] Bierhorst, 33 (6:26)
[186] Bierhorst, 34 (6:28)
[187] Bierhorst, 34 (6:30)
[188] Bierhorst, 34-5 (6:50)

servitude. Never will I recover."[189] Like Sahagún's account, his sorrow forced him to leave Tollan. Once he departed, he prepared himself for cremation, and upon cremation he turned into the morning star, the Lord of the Dawn.[190] This version of Quetzalcoatl's intoxicated downfall resembles Sahagún's account, but the authenticity that the Chimalpopoca carries proves this account more accurate to pre-conquest traditions. Throughout the colonial period genuine authenticity became scarce and in many ways proved allusive as the period progressed. Throughout Aztec origin myths *pulque* and the *maguey* hold important significance, and frequently occur in Aztecan religious practices. Much like Figure Three from the *Mendoza Codex* below, in the Appendix for Book III in the *Florentine Codex* the m*aguey* spike theme appears in a section addressing "The Lords and prominent and mighty people who offered their sons to the house called Calmecac."

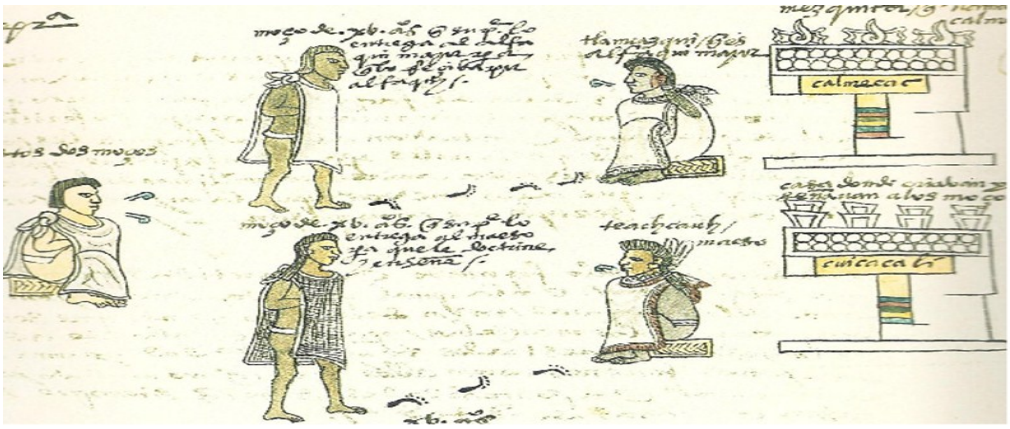

Figure 3: Depictions of fathers sending their male offspring to two prestigious schools that often denounced *pulque*, but worshipped the *maguey*.[191]
Source: Frances Berdan and Patricia Rieff Anawalt, *Codex Mendoza* Vol. III, fol.64r (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992) 129.

[189] Bierhorst, 35 (7:1)

[190] Bierhorst, 35-6 (7:27)

[191] Captions read, "Father of these two youths" (left), "[a] 15 year old youth delivered by his father to the head priest to be received as a priest" (middle top) at the "Temple called *Calmecac*" (Top Right), and "[a] 15 year-old youth delivered by his father to the teacher to be taught and instructed" (bottom middle). Translations in Berdan and Rieff Anawalt, Vol. IV, 127.

This chapter details the religious order's dedication to bloodletting and reveals the *maguey*'s important place in this process.[192] Book IV discusses the Nahuatl "art of divining…the fate of those who were born on days attributed to [Aztec] signs." A 'sub-sign' or alternative prediction for those born under the "the third sign called Cemacatl" provides insight into the social warnings that accompanied drunkenness.[193] The Aztecs considered a birth under Cemacatl good luck, "if they did not lose it by their own carelessness."[194] With this emphasis on this sign's potential, we find in the following chapter "the second house of this sign [Cemacatl,] called Umetochtli, under which the drunkards were born."[195] This subgroup explains the caveat that accompanied the Cemacatl's astrology, and details how those afflicted with this predilection are, "inclined to drink wine, and he would not look for anything else in life but wine, even upon waking in the morning he would drink it, and only crave it in order to get intoxicated; thus he would be drunk daily."[196] Sahagún's Informants reported that the Nahuatl believe, "that because a drunkard is born under the sign [Umetochtli], he cannot be cured, and they are hopeless about it, saying that he will either get drowned in some brook or legume, fall off a cliff or else some highwaymen will steal from him everything he owns, and leave him naked."[197]

[192] Sahagún, Bandelier, and De Bustamante, 198.
[193] Ibid, 211.
[194] Ibid.
[195] Ibid, 212.
[196] Ibid.
[197] Ibid, 213.

The *Telleriano-Remensis Codex*[198] and the *Codex Vaticanus A*[199] also capture how *pulque* and the *maguey* changed in colonial memory. The first reality that becomes apparent in the *Telleriano-Remensis Codex* is that its interpretations changed through time and emphasized different qualities about Quetzalcoatl, and his association with the *maguey*. The three different scribes included comments on Quetzalcoatl in terms that translated his qualities into a "Christ-like" form; suggesting that in their minds he retained an acceptable and symbolic relationship as the "patron of priests."[200] The New World god most associated with *maguey* and *pulque* became synonymous in many respects with Old World Christian religious qualities. Presumably, these priests developed a complex interpretation for the Old World religious structure to improve their indoctrination rate and increase their paternalistic religious endeavors. When considered the evidence suggests that *maguey* and *pulque* cultural evolution underwent similar ratifications as the colonial period progressed.

Folio 8v captures how the priests' interpretations changed over time and emphasized different components in the indigenous styled pictographs. Commenting on Quetzalcoatl's depiction, hand one wrote that the deity was creator of the world and the first man to walk the earth. The inscription by hand two reflects a similar cosmological interpretation that emphasizes Quetzalcoatl's influences on births during this particular *trecena*, or thirteen day calendric period.[201] De los Rios, the *Vaticanus A* compiler and

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[198] Eloise Quiñones Keber, *Codex Telleriano-Remensis: Ritual, Divination, and History in a Pictorial Aztec Manuscript* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995).
[199] *Codex Vaticanus A, Il manoscritto messicano Vaticano 3738*, commentary by Franz Ahrle (1900), Danesi, Rome; cited repeatedly in Keber.
[200] Quiñones Keber, 159, 165.
[201] Quiñones Keber, 121.

the hand responsible for scribe three, captures how his interpretations were influenced by other particulars. Whether he was simply adding to the previous scribes' comments or including relatively important information to make sense of the extant and ever-expanding cultural differences in colonial Spain is difficult to conclude. De los Rios added, "precious stone of penitence or sacrifice" to a gloss previously documented as the *chalchihuiztli*, or *maguey* spike.[202] In a corresponding *Vaticanus A* gloss, De los Rios finishes this interpretation commenting that prior to the conquests this deity received the divine credit that should be awarded to Jesus.[203] This evolving set of annotations capture how the Spanish perceptions of the deity Quetzalcoatl transformed through time. Consequently, the material culture associated with his divinity also underwent scrutiny, presumably to help convert and combat any unforeseen pagan revivals.

Folio 14r in the *Telleriano-Remensis* reflects this development as well. Apparently, some confusion over this folio exists. Essentially, the differences between the interpretations in the *Telleriano-Remensis* and the *Vaticanus A* demonstrate how Spanish religious elites used the *maguey* to explain cultural superiority and a paternalistic approach to pre-conquest culture. The confusion comes from the interpretations that are added to the Vaticanus A version of the *Telleriano-Remensis* draft for Centeotl, a deity for abundance.[204] The *Telleriano-Remensis* version depicts *Centeotl* as a homely and conservatively dressed human labeled, "the youthful maize deity… origin of the gods"[205] The common man depiction was actually meant to depict "a deity impersonator of

[202] Quiñones Keber, 165 (folio 8v).
[203] Quiñones Keber annotations for *Codex Vaticanus A* in….165.
[204] Quiñones Keber, 174.
[205] Quiñones Keber, 174.

Centeotl or a participant in a ceremony connected with Mayahuel." In Aztec mythology Mayahuel, the goddess of *pulque*, is commonly associated with "a myth that corn, cotton, and other plants grew from Centeotl's buried body."[206] With little pictographic details this interpretation trusted informant information, or it represented pure conjecture on behalf of the author. So it appears, as expected, that the interpretation Rios offered included a personal interpretation for the evidence. The real interesting point of note about this seemingly irrelevant gloss comes in the *Vaticanus A* version. As noted the *Telleriano-Remensis* manuscript provides little insight (both in literal and symbolic forms) into what this particular indigenous styled pictographs represents. However, in the more developed *Vaticanus A*, Rios comments extensively, with the help of scripture, on how the "Indians believe that Mayahuel bore Centeotl," and "the abundance attributed to *Centeotl*" equates to "the satiety or drunkenness caused by wine."[207] Rios then provides a unique interpretation (or opinion) on how an Aztec deity associated with maize (i.e. *Centeotl*), actually depicted social and cultural implications associated with *maguey*, *pulque*, and drunkenness. Essentially, the confusion that abounds the *Centeotl* interpretation and the prescription of *maguey* symbolism to a maize deity underscores an apparent misunderstanding between indigenous and non-indigenous cultural memory. This detail underscores how the *maguey* and its symbolic qualities were often distorted and transformed by Spanish religious elites. Whether for their own paternalistic endeavors, or merely by losing their meanings in translation, both reasons complicate the *pulque* narrative. These apparent misconceptions and liberal interpretations indicate just

[206] Ibid.
[207] Ibid.

how complex Aztec *pulque* and *maguey* ideologies were. Nonetheless, certain themes are distinguishable.

Potential confusions over the complex nature of the Aztec religious structure were corrected with distorted information that highlights the Spanish religious elite concerns more than accurately documenting the Aztec calendric system. Spanish chroniclers often overextended their explanations to the point that their credibility becomes questionable.[208] The *Telleriano-Remensis* confirms this point when addressing *Pahtecatl*, or the medicine lord.[209] *Pahtecatl* represented one of the four-hundred *pulque* deities that made up the *Totochtin*, or the four-hundred rabbits (another rabbit and *pulque* co-symbolism). Presented with the common *pulque* god regalia, such as shields, mantles, and (the most common *pulque* deity identifier) a crescent nose ornament, no overwhelming evidence is suggested by the pictograph.[210] Nevertheless, the interpretation for the image exemplifies the degree of variation that existed between codex interpretations, and underscores how *pulque* and the *maguey* were subject to gross inadequacies in cross-cultural understanding. Scribe two and Rios added a commentary that modern scholars have yet to interpretively connect. Rios automatically associated Mayahuel, the *pulque* deity with *Pahtecatl*, while scribe two defines *Pahtecatl* with the common roots in *pulque*.[211] In this case the *maguey* goddess and the "medicine lord" became synonymous material expressions. Since this comment was recorded later in time, he may have attained additional knowledge, or he may be highlighting how *pulque*

[208] Quiñones Keber, 177.
[209] Ibid, 177 (fol. 15v).
[210] Eduard Seler, *Gesammelte Adhandlungen zur Amerikanischen Sprach-und Altertumskunde [1902-23] 1960-1*, 3:441-442.
[211] Quiñones Keber, 177 (fol. 15v).

its roots became blurry in the Spanish perception of Indian mythology. This misidentification led to additional misinterpretations that potentially spun the *maguey* and *pulque* into terms that little resembled pre-conquest Aztec perceptions. This cultural reality is repeated in scribe two's comments that claim all births under the sign Pahtecatl "were considered good because the lord of wine ruled."[212] This interpretation for those born under a sign associated with *pulque* and the *maguey* contradicts Sahagún's alternate account for his drunken month interpretations, which again highlights the hazy and complicated cloud that the *maguey* and *pulque* resided under during the colonial period.

The *Codex Magliabechiano* provides additional information that captures how the *maguey* and *pulque* changed under colonial rule.[213] This particular codex can confidently be related to other contemporary codices, such as the *Libro de Figuras* or the *Codex Tudela*, and it predates Sahagún's *Primeros Memoriales* (c. 1559-61) and Durán's *Historia de las Yndias* (1576-81).[214] Since it pre-dates Durán's work (discussed above) by twenty-three years it proves an important piece in detangling how the *maguey* and *pulque* changed in the evolving and hybridized Meso-Spaniard colonial culture.

A few confusing points, similar to those identified in the *Telleriano-Remensis Codex*, appear in the *Magliabechiano Codex*, highlighting the complexity and distortion that influenced *maguey* and *pulque* cultural memory throughout the colonial period. In

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[212] Ibid, 177.

[213] Elizabeth Hill Boone, *The Codex Magliabechiano and the Lost Prototype of the Magliabechiano Group* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983) 5. Roughly eight documents are considered part of the Magliabechiano group. Consequently, since it contains many components that later texts copied we can assume that any included mistakes or misconceptions can be modestly multiplied, leaving additional room for misunderstandings between indigenous and European.

[214] Ibid.

particular, a mistake in accurately recording details on *Papaztec* and *Tepoztecatl*, two of the "four-hundred drunken gods" (f. 48-49), and a few seemingly irrelevant differences between the *Magliabechiano Codex* and its prototype prove interesting (f. 50-58).[215] In her 1983 synthesis of the Magliabechiano Group, Elizabeth Hill Boone performed a comparative analysis on the Magliabechiano Codex proper, a suspected prototype and the other codices that share its stylistic, interpretative and qualitative features.[216] In comparison with the prototype, the Magliabechiano scribe apparently reversed the entries for *Papaztec* and *Tepoztecatl*. First off, this seemingly innocent mistake proves detrimental to any attempts aimed at understanding the Aztec cosmological worldview, since if repeated after its creation a false religious narrative is perpetuated. Folio 48 v reads "this feast is for a demon who here is called Papaztac [Tepoztecatl], who was one of the four hundred drunken gods that the Indians had with diverse names."[217] So even in transcribing and acknowledging the complex hierarchy of *pulque* gods, the scribe still inaccurately documented the actual deity identifications. His slip may be explained by an honest mistake, but his admitted awareness and subsequent error despite his awareness suggests the scribe practiced liberal accuracy. Essentially, the scribe seemingly overlooked the importance of the rigid and precise stratification amongst the quintessential *pulque* gods; gods that possessed incredible influence over their mortal subjects. The negative impacts in this mistake are immediately revealed in the remainder of the annotation, and subsequently, the context is erroneously represented in the following eight folios. The Magliabechiano proper scribe finished his comment on their

[215] Boone, 203 (48v-49r), 204, 216 (85r).
[216] Boone, 5 for genealogy of Magliabechiano group.
[217] Boone, 203 (Fol. 48v)

diversity with "But together they were called *Totochtli*, which means rabbits. And when the Indians had harvested and gathered their corn, they became drunk and danced, invoking this demon and the others of the four hundred. Thus, for the figures that follow, they did the same."[218]

The following folio elucidates further the consequences of mislabeling *pulque* gods' names, and defining *todos los indios* with drunkard characteristics. The annotation for the figure *Tepoztecatl* should be recorded on the previous folio, but it reads "This is a figure of a great roguery that town called *Tepoztlan* had for a rite. And it was when some Indian died from drinking, the others of this town held a great feast with copper axes in their hands with which they cut firewood."[219] With such a foreign event as throwing a feast in response to an alcohol related death it proves important to **not** mix up the actual location of said event. This scribe's innocent mistake labeled a particular town with a stereotype that it potentially did not represent. Mislabeling certain *pulque* gods may have proved innocent and done little except misrepresent the Aztec cosmos (something horrible in its own right), but attaching a mistake to a community and then repeating the mistake in other texts drastically changes the *pulque* and *maguey* narrative.

The folios that succeed this mistake also accentuate how certain Spaniards approached *pulque*. A crucial component in understanding this text's impacts on identity, and others like it, lay in the negative qualities that result from overextending interpretations; in particular the author(s') preconceptions appear in the Magliabechiano. Keeping in mind the most insulting label afforded by Spaniards was the label "drunkard,"

[218] Boone, 203 (fol. 48v)
[219] Boone, 203 (fol. 49v)

folios 50v-51r are dedicated to the *pulque* god *Yauhtecatl*, 51v-52r to *Toltecatl* and 52v-53r *Pahtecatl*.[220] All carry the connotations and stereotypical details that describe them as drunkards; by consequence the scribe also insulted the cosmology and religion of the Aztecs. With annotations like "this demon is one of the four hundred drunken demons already mentioned," or "this is another of the same who were named among the drunkards," the scribes biased opinions become definitive identity characteristics. His particular definition also denotes deviant identities, which comes as no real surprise considering the paternalistic style in colonial doctrine that spells out certain consequences for *pulque* users and connects them with outlawed ideologies. In the *Magliabechiano Codex* we see the evolution of *pulque* from divine substance to a point of contention and insult between certain Spaniard and indigenous populations.

Pahtecatl also appears in the *Magliabechiano Codex* under suspicious contexts. The 'god of roots' annotation reads, "this was another of the four hundred whom the Indians called gods of wine and of the drunkards, Pahtecatl [he of medicine], because this wine was like medicine to them."[221] Apparently, the Magliabechiano scribe added the comparison between the intoxicant and medicinal values in *pulque* on his own accord.[222] This proves interesting because from the time of the prototype production to that of the Magliabechiano this somewhat deceiving knowledge on Pahtecatl was adapted to fit contemporary Spanish knowledge on *pulque*. By roughly 1553, the *Magliabechiano Codex*'s start date, *maguey* and *pulque* in the Aztec cultural memory had been grossly

[220] Boone, 203-4 (50v-53r)
[221] Boone, 204 (52v)
[222] Boone, 204.

distorted and the stage was set for its qualities and association with the past to be attacked by Spanish colonial officials who sought to enforce a particular identity paradigm.

The serious Spanish insult of "drunkard" began to symbolize more than just alcoholic binges by thirsty consumers but it actually provided a method for deconstructing Aztec religious and social structures. Folio 57v in the *Magliabechiano Codex* captures how this process affected *maguey* and *pulque* in colonial memory. In describing Mayahuel, the goddess of *pulque*, the scribe noted "this next demon", which actually was one of the first, "was called Mayahuel, which means *maguey*, because the juice that comes from it was an intoxicant. And they dance."[223] Since the prototype lacked any mentions of dancing under the guise of Mayahuel, the scribe must have been adding his own observations regarding his perception of how Mayahuel's fading image was addressed in the developing colonial society. The scribe also negates the positive qualities, such as the material uses or nutritional values inherent in *pulque* and the *maguey*. Quick and unilateral conclusions like this suggest that the *maguey* and *pulque* were no longer viewed within the contexts the Aztecs approached the substance, something that seems natural considering the Spanish motivations for conversion and 'improving' indigenous culture. However, if changing elite feasting patterns are considered, the complexities in cultural memory for these commodities proved major points of contentions.

The *Magliabechiano Codex* scribe demonstrates that from the point of contact *pulque* and *maguey* curiosities and concerns distracted the Spanish from accurately conceptualizing how incorporated the substance was in the Aztec tradition. The

[223] Boone, 204-5 (57v)

Magliabechiano prototype lacked annotations for folio 85r, and retained the modest label of "*pulque* feast", which depicted a simple "*Teocomitl* [jar of god]", or jar of *maguey* syrup or *aguamiel*, and contained only a few illustrated mortals celebrating.[224] The Magliabechiano scribe took the liberty of adding more celebrants and added to the annotation, "these bundles are of a root with which they made the wine they call *ocpatli*. This was the [woman] who served the wine to the others until they became drunk."[225] With little supporting evidence beyond his particular opinion this folio's additions demonstrate how colonial officials addressed *pulque* consumption in indigenous contexts. The prototype scribe lacked the knowledge the Magliabechiano scribe included, or he felt it proved irrelevant. The Magliabechiano scribe on the other hand felt the need to include details on the gender roles associated with post-conquest *pulque* consumption and an obscure comment on *ocpatli*, which suggests an increase in *pulque* awareness, and highlights a particular piece of dialogue that influenced this fermenting controversy. Subsequently, this altered gloss includes two identity building blocks, and places women in a strong position atop *pulque* politics.

Most colonial codices follow similar patterns when addressing *pulque*, *pulque* gods, and the *maguey*. Prior to the conquests the *maguey* and *pulque* permeated many aspects of Aztec and Mesoamerican life. Upon contact the shock that resulted from a swift conquest left the cultural purpose of these substances in limbo. While certain indigenous groups reevaluated their situations, many Spaniards continued their paternalistic approach to the 'pagan problem.' One component of this approach was the

[224] Boone, 216.
[225] Boone, 216 (85r)

distortion and misunderstanding of the place the *maguey* and *pulque* held in the Aztec cosmos.

Chapter VI

Exploding *Pulque* Politics: Prestige, Power and Class Divide

Spanish secular and religious elites were not the only actors in *politica del pulque*. *Pulque* politics also included an equal share of indigenous persons and influences that often become forgotten agents in *pulque* politics. Too often scholars assume that *pulque*-politicking commenced after the conquests and only contained post-conquest influences. In many respects the politics surrounding the beverage and its users prolonged particular Indian politics that manifested long before the conquests. The 1539 Inquisition trial for Don Carlos Chichimecatecotl of Texcoco, a 1553 Tlaxcala *cabildo* deliberation, and the role the *cofradias*, or indigenous religious fraternities, played in colonial events provide evidence for this important factor in *pulque* politics. These examples demonstrate how *pulque* and drunkenness came to plague both indigenous politics and cross-cultural understanding, as much as it influenced Spanish policy.

The Inquisition trial for Don Carlos or the "Chichimeca Lord" highlights how indigenous elites clashed over political and religious advancement. Francisco Maldonado, an educated Franciscan convert denounced Don Carlos before Friars Juan de Zumárraga, (the first Bishop of Mexico), Alonso de Molina and Sahagún.[226] Maldonado claimed that Don Carlos denounced the Christian Faith, and openly preached that his grandparents' worship represented the true Texcoco faith. However, in denouncing Don

[226] "The Spiritual Conquest: The Trial of Don Carlos Chichimecatecotl of Texcoco (1539)" in Nora E. Jaffary, Edward W. Osowski, and Susie S. Porter (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2010), 88. In response to his harsh treatment of Don Carlos, amongst other reasons, this trial led his removal from the position.

Carlos, Maldonado stood to gain both politically and personally. Maldonado descended from the matrilineal line of rulers that reigned in Texcoco before the Tenochtitlan conquest. Don Carlos became the first Texcoco ruler to break this tradition. His relationship to Don Alonso, the indigenous noble whose home this incident took place, confirms his place in the socio-political event.[227] Maldonado's relationship with Don Alonso by marriage and Don Carlos, his uncle, raises suspicions about his testimony. Don Alonso, the Lord of Chiconautla sought to gain lands and title if Don Carlos lost favor in the Spanish colonial system. The trial outcome confirmed this fact once the Inquisition redistributed his lands and estate after his execution.[228] Ironically, his execution contributed to Zumárraga losing his prestigious position, and broadened the controversy that resulted in Indian removal from the Regular Inquisition's jurisdiction in 1571.[229]

A trial transcript that provides a detailed account of Don Carlos's supposed Christian denunciations has survived. In his testimony, he included an interesting tangent on how Don Carlos viewed pre-conquest drunkenness's role in post-conquest society. After detailing Don Carlos's discussion on the commonalities between New World idolatry and Old World Christianity, the transcript addresses the supposed attack on Francisco's zealous faith, which ultimately drove this inquisition. During Don Alonso's feast, Don Carlos asked the rhetorical question, "Brother [Alonso], what harm do women and wine do to men?" His recorded response claimed, that "maybe the Christians do not

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[227] "Proceso inquisitorial de cacique de Tetzcoco," *Publicaciones del Archivo de Nacion, vol. 1* (Mexico: Eusebio Gomez de la Puente, 1910), 22-25, 39-44, in Ibid.
[228] "The Inquisition Seizes Don Carlos's Estate: The Oztoticpac Map (1540)," in Jaffary…, 95.
[229] Jaffary…, 90

have many women and so get drunk if the religious fathers do not intervene. Thus what these fathers make us do is not our duty and [their] law should not impede anyone from doing what he wants to do."[230] Maldonado swore before God that Don Carlos demanded "we [natives] should eat, drink, take pleasure, and get drunk as we used to do."[231] Maldonado went on to testify that Don Carlos followed up this demand with a spiteful comment. The transcript details how "Don Carlos said with a great sigh: "Who are these people that would destroy us, they who disturb and live among us, who burden us and subjugate us? This is our domain and our holding.""[232] After commenting further on his rebellious treachery, the document states that, "according to [Maldonado], Don Carlos said all of this in his speech in the presence of the witness" as well as numerous others. All witnesses were "scandalized by what Don Carlos said in his speech and attest that this is true."[233]

Apparently, Maldonado knew what to say to the Inquisition in order to produce the results he sought to gain for himself and those in his favor. In combination with the denunciations he "witnessed", referencing Don Carlos's desire to revert to previous debaucheries slammed prosperity's doors in Don Carlos's face. Consequently, this trial and others like it served the warning that any talk about the "old law's" revival faced swift and severe punishment. Whether Maldonado and the others spoke truthfully in their testimonies proves insignificant to the fact that a drunken comment sealed Don Carlos's fate. This comment aimed to raise eyebrows in the trial proceedings, and it certainly did.

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[230] Ibid, 93.
[231] Ibid, 94.
[232] Ibid.
[233] Ibid.

Since drunkenness and idolatry symbolically went hand-in-hand when Spanish religious authority addressed indigenous ritual, his tactic proved effective. In his testimony, Maldonado effectively utilized his Franciscan training and knowledge that the Christian dogma refuted idolatrous drunkenness. This inquisition transcript captures how drunkenness ideologies proved detrimental to both Spanish and indigenous elites' ambitions to convert or subvert the indigenous populous.

A 1553 Tlaxcala *cabildo* deliberation demonstrates how Spanish and indigenous elites faced *pulque* drunkenness in their daily lives. Spanish and extant Old World demands for New World products forced changes on indigenous society. The intensification and commercialization of *cochineal*, a red dye stuff exemplifies how Spanish economics inflated indigenous alcohol consumption. This particular deliberation claimed that the Tlaxcalan people "no longer want to cultivate their fields, but idly neglect them" because *cochineal* profits makes them rich and lazy.[234] The *cabildo* also claimed that *cochineal* commercialization led to increased *pulque* abuse. The deliberation contended that cochineal trade contributed to dropping church attendance amongst certain Indians who, "look only to getting their sustenance and their cacao, which makes them proud. And then later they buy *pulque* and then get drunk; all of the *cochineal* owners gather together. If they buy a turkey, they give it away for less than its price, and *pulque*, too; they lightly give away their money and cacao."[235]

These 1553 accusations against *cochineal* profits raise important points that underscore how *pulque* affected indigenous culture after the conquests. Once the

[234] "The Evils of Cochineal, Tlaxcala, Mexico (1553)", ed. and trans. by Mills, Taylor and Graham (Scholarly Resources Inc., 2002), 114.
[235] Ibid, 114.

economic and social chaos receded after the conquest, competing economic strategies and social conditions created unrest amongst the populous. *Cochineal* dependence in Tlaxcala highlights this cultural clash. Spanish demands for the dye and the exuberant profits that resulted, left many indigenous in an unfamiliar situation. Indians no longer found themselves indebted to a single market or economic condition; i.e. traditional tributary economic systems. According to this Tlaxcala deliberation, one consequence that resulted from increased economic flexibility was increased *pulque* consumption amongst its inhabitants. This situation characterizes one aspect that indigenous elites faced once the Spanish destabilized their socio-economic systems. *Pulque* abuse in monolithic farming communities created political and social situation that altered indigenous cultural cohesion. Economic, social and religious developments irreversibly changed worldviews in the New World. *Pulque* exemplifies one New World identity component that spanned all three spheres.

Another social component that affected the development of colonial Indian identity were the *cofradias,* or indigenous religious fraternities that developed as an extension of Old World religious brotherhoods.[236] These groups provided indigenous converts with an opportunity to assimilate into Spanish secular and religious culture. This inherently created distinct differences between the Christianized and idolatrous groups that composed the remaining Indian populations. These organizations served as a means for the remaining indigenous populations to regain certain powers and rights in a dominant colonial culture. The *cofradias* became a flashpoint between these surviving

[236] Amos Megged, "The Religious Context of an "Unholy Marriage": Elite Alienation and Popular Unrest in the Indigenous Communities of Chiapas, 1570-1680," *Ethnohistory*, Vol. 46, No. 1 (Winter, 1999), 149-72. Also Dr. Coleman, personal correspondence, 4/10/12.

communities and ultimately demarcated class divide as the colonial period progressed. Amongst their accomplishments, such as assimilating pre-conquest ritual with Christian doctrine or donating considerable tithes to local parishes in exchange for prestige, these groups also represented one of the only avenues that Indians could combat the encroaching Spanish settlements.[237] Being highly Christianized, these local elites made considerable gains in power after the conquests by adapting the *calpulli,* or pre-conquest system of local organization and worship to the dominant Spanish social structure.[238] Between roughly 1570 and 1680 the indigenous community in Chiapas (and presumably other areas facing similar conditions) became increasingly divided along socio-religious boundaries that resulted in one-sided gains for elites.[239] Megged comments that during these years "Spanish-Catholic *cofradias* initially reinforced…assistance and cooperation on the *calpulli* level", but as time passed this platform "became the very stage upon which diverging notions of class and cultural distinction were enacted."[240] Differentiating themselves from pre-conquest association became one means for distinguishing themselves from the lower orders. Drunkenness, and presumably *pulque*, its traditional indigenous counterpart, came under attack during a 1597 interrogation performed by parish priests.[241] These priests sought to eradicate any substantiality behind rumors of non-Christian worship in the urban areas surrounding Chiapas de los Indios. Rumors spread that Indians were getting drunk and, "abandoning themselves to divine owners of maize and earth", which were actions that proved un-Christian in both name

[237] Megged, 155, 158.
[238] Megged, 150.
[239] Megged, 159.
[240] Megged, 165.
[241] Megged, 152.

and action.[242] *Cofradias* supported the ousting of pre-conquest styled rituals and became an indigenous voice that spoke out against *pulque* use and abuse under these particular contexts. After the *pulque* riot of 1692, *cofradias*, along with non-ingenious religious elites joined secular officials in developing the resulting prohibition on *pulque*.

The Spanish invested considerable time and effort in documenting pre and post conquest indigenous culture. The evidence discussed above places the origins for the 1692 *pulque* rebellion in the early to middle sixteenth century. During that period in colonial history, *pulque*'s meaning and cultural function underwent an extreme overhaul. While assigning *pulque* politics' origin in the 1540s seems a reasonable summation, the actual historical reality that colonists and conquistadores confronted *pulque* and its symbolism upon first contact destabilizes any hopes for establishing a concrete origin.

Frantic monks and friars and concerned indigenous leaders stressed opinions on the domestic transformations that *pulque* experienced. Starting with Cortés and his conquistadores, this process continued to develop into an ethnic and cultural identity categories in New Spain. Some works proved instrumental to historians, such as Sahagún's texts or the *Codex Mendoza*, while others like Durán's or Motolinía's serve as equal reminders that the modern age began with zealous misunderstandings and ethnocentrisms. These inescapable human flaws imbedded themselves in society. Little research that documents *pulque*'s quick transformation after the conquest exists, but these texts provide insight into how quick and detrimental the process was to Indians. Misinformation and misunderstandings that began shortly after the Spanish stepped foot

[242] Megged, 152.

in Mexico shrouded this symbolic transformation. This fermenting controversy continued to plague colonial Spain into the middle and late colonial period.

Pulque Riot, or Scapegoated *Castas*?

In 1692 famine and poverty were noticeably on the rise when Mexico City witnessed an enraged and "enormous crowd of people made up not only of Indians but of people of all castas" destroy Mexico City's plaza, the Viceroy's palace and numerous other structures.[243] In the decades leading up the 1690s, a distinct commoner (both indigenous and non-indigenous) attitude spread that accused those in power of rampant exploitation and profiteering. In the spring of 1692 the socio-economic theories for the widespread poverty and famine became the riot's final catalyst. Numerous environmental developments (drought, an earthquake and solar eclipse) combined with these rumors to heighten the awareness and class consciousness that fermented in the lower *castas*. During the 1692 spring months the price of maize tripled because scarcity forced colonial officials and the *alhóndiga* (public granary) to seek shipments from hinterland sources. High transportation costs combined with an already unstable maize market to create widespread poverty and social pressures that spilled over in June, months before the next maize harvest.[244] A distribution system collapse, bad weather, and social unrest fermented with existing seventeenth century unrest, and resulted in chaos. Gains in "capital of experience" during the 1608 and 1612 conspiracies to subvert Spanish rule, a 1624 rebellion and yet another bout of social unrest in 1660s all

[243] Sigüenza in Jaffary…, 150.
[244] Cope, 131.

influenced the momentary social collapse on June, 8 1692.[245] These events coincided with the developing, and ever growing, Spanish concerns to galvanize non-Hispanics into an ordered and racially defined society. An evolving racial hierarchy and growing Spanish paranoia permeated this period in the New Spain narrative. By 1692 these fears had manifested in ideas for governance and racial theory, which the prohibition reports and motivations after the riot attest.[246]

In the aftermath of the 1692 riot, colonial officials scrambled to take control of a situation that caught them off-guard and underprepared. Colonial officials like Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora possessed a desire to exonerate themselves from any wrongdoings or possible mismanagements. Sigüenza particularly wished to free himself from accusations and rumors that Conde de Galve introduced to King Charles II. A famous letter, written by Sigüenza to Admiral Andrés de Pez y Malzárraga, survives that captures the attitudes colonial officials like Sigüenza harbored towards their subjects when faced with social unrest and rebellion. The exoneration letter demonstrates Sigüenza's need to be absolved "from [any] charges that bad government had caused the riot." Scholars like Cope have accurately concluded that his exonerations "merged into a full-fledged conspiracy theory" that centered the blame on *pulque* and *pulquería* intermixing.[247]

Throughout his letter Sigüenza repeatedly expressed views that capture mid to late seventeenth century colonial officials' attitudes towards the *castas* and vagabonds, and generally speaking, *pulque*, the *pulque*rías and all who frequented them. These dregs

[245] Cope, 18-25 and 132. Brian Philip Owensby, *Empire of Law and Indian Justice in Colonial Mexico* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2008), 256.
[246] See note #3
[247] Cope, 34, 127.

of society "taught [Indians] bad customs and idleness and other errors and vices." What complicated the circumstance and heightened Spaniard paranoia was their inability to evaluate the lower orders' hierarchy "whose numbers are unknown because of their confused ranks"[248] *Pulque*, for better or worse, often contributed to these confusions throughout the colonial period, which again hints to the stereotypes afforded *pulque* users and the existence of a fermenting controversy.

The attitudes mentioned above permeate Sigüenza' narrative for the 1692 rebellion. He provides numerous examples that capture how diverse and complicated this hierarchy became by the 1690s. In many officials' eyes the lack of cooperation by these groups made positive social and civil reform difficult, and reform needed to happen before colonial society could move forward without major revolts or social disruptions, which after 1692 became a fruitless endeavor.[249] The first hint to displacing blame in Sigüenza's attitudes comes when he addressed how members in Conde de Galve's church accused him of mismanaging the tense situation. Sigüenza wrote how "a not very indistinct number arose among the women…as he entered the church: they were…cursing him in an ugly fashion attributing the shortage of corn and high price of bread to neglect and poor management on his part," and presumably Sigüenza's as

[248] "Coleccion de documentos para la historia de la formacion social de Hispano-america", ed. Richard Konetzke, 3 Vols. (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientificas, 1953-1962), I: 513. Archivo Historico del Instituto Nacional de Antopologia e Historia, Coleccion Antigua 253, "Itinerario de las provincias, obispados, ciudades, villas y lugares del distrito de la Inquisicion de Mexico, 1654," fol. 14.

[249] For analysis of late colonial period rebellions see Anthony Mc Farlane, "Rebellions in Late Colonial Spanish America: A Comparative Perspective," *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, Vol. 14, No.3 (Sep., 1995): 313-338.

well.[250] This provides the first glimpse of how this riot crossed gender barriers. Women were involved and influenced the events as much as their male counterparts. In 1608 the death of a slave woman by the hands of her master led the public protest against official policy.[251] Like the 1608 and 1611 conspiracies, the death of a female *casta* proved a tipping point in 1692, when a very unwell elderly woman, under suspicious contexts for her body never appeared after the riot, sparked the explosive riot.

After the *alhóndiga* protests ceased on the morning of the riot, a woman in poor health remained behind. Suffering from malnutrition, something officials presumably were to blame, Escalante y Mendoza, the fiscal or attorney general, sent her on her way after prescribing her wine for her ailments.[252] Sigüenza then claimed that a known group of market thieves "attracted them [the rioters] to their cause by carrying into that place [alhóndiga and plaza] the indian woman they pretended had died."[253] In an interesting choice of narrative Sigüenza chose to quickly insert a comment regarding how rather than an ailing woman's suffering, *pulque* and the *pulquerías* were to blame for the destruction that followed. Following his comments on the woman "they pretended had died", Sigüenza confidently claimed that the "evidence proves that Indians were there, but they were not alone. Many others who frequented *pulquerías* were mixed in with them, and

[250] "Letter from Don Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora to Admiral Pez Recounting the Corn Riot in Mexico City, June 8, 1692." In Irving A. Leonard, *Don Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora, a Mexican Savant of the Seventeenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1929), 243, 251-2.
[251] Cope, 18, 134 (the remaining AGI citations are found in Cope)
[252] Cope, 134.
[253] Sigüenza y Góngora in Jaffary…, 152.

these," as if speaking for all of them, "had encouraged the Indians days earlier [in] what they wanted to do and what they were to steal on this occasion."[254]

As another witness indicated, a group of *castas* and Indians carried the dying woman through the plaza seeking justice for her death. He claimed "they said she was going to die and that she had been cudgeled at the *alhóndiga*, from which they carried her toward the Cathedral…toward the cemetery where there was a Dominican padre who…spent a brief period with her…"[255] Yet another witness, Miguel Gonzales told a different story. Much like Sigüenza's claim, this account demonstrates why many colonial officials declared the riot a conspiracy, and may uncover why the *pulque*rías were targeted. Gonzales told investigators that he knew some 'loyal' students who exchanged heated words with the growing rabble. His account states they told the crowd "This woman's not very dead for she's blinking a little and is swallowing saliva!" A disgruntled Indian woman then shouted "What do you know about dead people, you stupid dogs of students? Now all of you in Mexico City will be dead like she is!" Gonzales claimed that, "an honest fellow who was there related this to me and he assured me…that not only what [was said] was true, but that shortly before he heard the "dead" woman tell them to carry her well…this is what the Indians are like."[256] Regardless of particulars mentioned by witnesses this woman **was** the final catalyst. Furthermore, the differences in witness accounts demonstrate the varying opinions for the riot's origins, but officials' attachment to the *pulque* fallout hints to their perceived notions for its origins.

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[254] Sigüenza in Cope, 134
[255] AGI, Partonato, leg. 226, no. 1. R.9, fol. 12r.
[256] Sigüenza y Góngora, in Leonard, 253.

Another witness in the riot claimed that before stones were thrown the increasingly excited mob consisted of only "fifty or sixty persons of different races, the majority Indians." Another witness claimed "one hundred fifty Indians, *mestizos* and *mullatoes* among them, and also four or five Spaniards" composed the crowd.[257] This group then carried the woman to the archbishop's home where he advised them "to go to the Palace and let the Viceroy give them justice", which followed the normal chain of command for colonial grievances.[258] The advice proved poor and yielded little consolation, which tipped the scales of revolt in favor of the incited rabble.[259] Sigüenza pointed out that the Viceroy's life may have been preserved by "his great piety" for he was at a church reflecting on the day's celebrations for the Octave of Corpus Christi.[260] The march to the palace brings the narrative up to approximately 5:30 pm, which is around the time the previously restrained crowd unleashed its fury on Mexico City. A witness later commented that from this time on "at every moment the numbers of rioters grew!"[261] What followed was a destructive two to three hour span of burning and looting merchant stalls and numerous government building and estates.

In the aftermath, officials sought to find the leaders for the revolt, which in their minds were clearly *las castas*, *los indios* y *las pulquerías*. Testimonies like Felipe de la Cruz, an arsonist who pled guilty in the court proceedings that followed, presumably influenced this decision. Cruz claimed he overheard plots for destruction in the *pulque*rías. Other witnesses provided different scenarios that added to the apparent

[257] AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, no. 1, r. 2, fol. 14r and 16r.
[258] AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, no. 1, r.25, carta 2, fol. 2.
[259] Cope, 136.
[260] Sigüenza y Góngora, in Leonard, 252.
[261] AGI, Patronato, Leg. 226, no.1, r.2, fols. 14r and 17.

confusion that officials experienced after the riot subsided. The opinions that Jose Ramos submitted after being interrogated painted a different picture for the riot's origins and leaders. Ramos detailed his version by stating, "On the afternoon of the riot the Indians gathered behind the palace…. The first to meet were about eight Indians from the barrio of Santiago, all with capes [i.e. nobility]; at about five o'clock they were all complaining that maize was expensive and that they had gone without all afternoon. Many others began to gather, coming from different places…and everyone who was there said with one voice, "let's go burn the palace.""[262] Such additions to the narrative influenced conspiracy theorists. They found a solution to their questions about who started the riot and how their networks functioned; *pulque*rías and *pulque* users turned out to suffer the most severe punishments after this conspiracy theory developed. Douglas R. Cope accurately concludes "all castas were suspected of criminal leanings (as were frequenters of *pulque*rías)."[263] Since many eyewitnesses claimed that "this rebellion did not come from the *pulque*ría but from the alhóndiga", why did officials attack *pulque*?

The multipronged attack by multiple groups of rioters, at different times during the riot caused eyewitness accounts to conflict. Essentially, while one group shouted "Long Live *Pulque*!" and looted, another equally enraged group shouted "Death to Bad Government," and burned the Royal Palace. This leads one to believe the riot contained multiple groups of participants from different backgrounds that all shared interests in the extant unrest.[264] Presuming the difference in statements distinguishes particular groups, one prong in this attack came from excited *pulque* users who spilled into the streets once

[262] AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, no. 1, r. 9, fol. 44.
[263] Cope, 141.
[264] Cope, 145.

the violence began. This prong came under great duress after the riot, when officials began picking up the pieces of what remained unburned and left standing. The recovery of looted goods and the resulting Spanish backlash to the riot was both swift and severe.[265] Executions began within three days following the riot, with some sentences being carried out before other investigations even began. [266] Likewise, during the investigations "no innocent bystander category existed."[267]

In the opening comments in his exoneration letter Sigüenza reveals two rather crucial hints as to the purpose of his letter. The first regards his tactic of placing blame on someone other than himself, or his brethren elites. He opens his letter with "I nearly missed what happened this past afternoon because I was at home with my books."[268] From this comment it becomes apparent that Sigüenza sought to present himself as a studious and righteous *vecino*, who regularly practiced his studies into the evening. The comment that follows however hints to what he considered the original source of the disturbance. He claimed innocence when it came to having prior knowledge of the episode "until a breathless servant came in and called loudly to me, "Sir! There is a riot!""[269] Sigüenza, the luminary and pre-conquest "historian" claimed in his previous line in the letter that he went unaware of the building tensions and claimed that "although I had heard some racket in the street, I thought nothing of it, for it was normal to hear such noise because we were often vexed by the constant drunkenness of the Indians."[270]

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[265] Cope, 150.
[266] Ibid, 154.
[267] Ibid, 155.
[268] Sigüenza in Jaffary…, 150.
[269] Sigüenza in Jaffary…, 150.
[270] Ibid.

Much like Motolinía's impression of Mexico City, Sigüenza confirms that the attitude the former harbored did not subside with time. It seems that Sigüenza, and officials like him extended the immediate post-conquest concerns that addressed Indian drunkenness. His claims that non-Indians incited the indigenous population during the days leading up to the riot show that he considered many more ethnicities were now under the *pulque* identity umbrella. Consequently, this highlights that elite officials had by the 1690s compounded aspects of the Indian question, particularly those concerning *pulque* and drunkenness, with other *castas* and ethnic groups who lacked this label in the past.

Chapter VII

Epilogue:
Returning to anti-Drunkard Discourse;
Secular or Religious anti-*Pulque* Doctrine?

Like many of the actors discussed above, Sigüenza was a deeply religious man who had a long list of official job titles in Mexico City. The duties mainly entailed religious duties associated with religious positions, which included appointments as a priest, an almoner, and *corregidor general*, or Inquisitional book examiner. Due to his choices in career paths we can assume that besides his daily interactions and knowledge base for indigenous pre-conquest history he utilized religious doctrine and prevailing religious edicts to construct his interpretations on society. People like Sigüenza read and were aware of the tenets included in the "General Edict of Faith," which the Crown issued repeatedly throughout the colonial period.[271] In the edict previous Franciscans and various Catholic ideologies emerge as policy. These policies developed during the immediate post-conquest period and were heavily influenced by writers like Duran and Motolinía. Certain violations included in the edicts help explain why Sigüenza, and others like him, who attacked *las castas* and *pulque* after the 1692 riot. Religious edicts and motivations overpowered objectivity in the religious elites attempts to assimilate and turn the Indians and mixed races into 'good Christians.'

[271] "General Edict of Faith (16-18th centuries)," Bancroft Library, "Disposiciones varias. Mexico, etc., 1756-1843," F 1203 D 5; "Compenido, y sumario del edicto genral de la fe, y casos en el contenidos," in Jaffary…, 121. Translated by editors. Although this example comes from the reign of Charles V (1700-46), the content changed little from seventeenth century edicts.

Three particular notes in this general edict detail the mental and cultural framework that people like Sigüenza drew on during their daily lives. Edict twelve through fourteen highlights how liberal religious officials were acting on their intuitions concerning anti-religious behavior; something *pulque* abuse and the *castas* that abused it were most especially susceptible. The edict states that to be religious in the Crown's eyes, its subjects must keep vigilant and report when "astrologists or diviners, or those believing superstitions" have been spotted in society and daily life. *Pulque* use would have qualified under this stipulation, especially when used in its traditional religious or social contexts. Honorable Christians in New Spain should also keep vigilant for those who used "magic arts, curses, spells, omens, dreams…or invocation of demons…for divining, or to find stolen goods…or to predict the future."[272] Edict nineteen proves especially interesting when considering the attitudes extended to *pulque* and its users. Honorable Spaniards and colonial conformists should most especially stay vigilant for those who drink, "or give to others certain drinks of herbs and roots…or by another name, with which they deceive and daze the senses, and the fantastical representations that they then see, they judge and publish afterwards to be revelations or certain notices of that which will happen."[273] Examined together, it becomes easy to envision this edict's impacts on religious and secular elites, and the devoted converts that Sigüenza interacted with. Subsequently, it helped define his, and others', ideas for vagrancy, crime and drunkenness. One can easily imagine how elite officials considered these superstitious acts to be a rampant problem in gathering spots like the *pulque*rías. This

[272] Ibid, 122.
[273] Ibid, 123.

document helps uncover how the religious motivations for conversion and fulfilling the Crown's legal claim to the New World, helped create identity. As time passed, the identity attributes ascribed to *pulque* users in the immediate post-conquest period, i.e. Indians, began defining the 'others' from different ethnic groups. Religious motivations essentially resulted in the grouping of all negative ethnic population into a single entity. Documents like the "Edict of Faith" provided officials with the necessary ammunition to differentiate 'good' and 'bad' identity, and allowed Spaniards and Christianized non-Spaniards justify their *pulque* condemnations. With the help and approval of this document, and many other like it, *pulque* helped these officials categorize and make sense of the changing demographics in New Spain.

Duran's professed concerns about idolatry revivals under altered forms combined with royal decrees to create a tense stance on *pulque*. Such realization led religious elites to reengage approaches to detecting and eliminating idolatry. This revival, or reemergence of underlying themes in colonial Spain, resulted in publication of documents designed to combat this growing concern. [274] The 1656 "Treatise of the Superstitions, Idolatry, Witchcraft, Rites and other Gentile Customs of the Aboriginal Races of Mexico" is a perfect example of this colonial discourse. Jacinto de la Serna, the author of the "Treatise", details the various contentious points he considered alarming. Based on many of the reasons described above, *pulque* and its presumed stereotypes appear in his work. *Pulque*'s first appearance comes under a suspicious guise. After commenting on the failures of past priests whose teaching did not reach them as was necessary," the

[274] Jacinto de la Serna, "Treatise of the Superstitions, Idolatry, Witchcraft, Rites and other Gentile Customs of the Aboriginal Races of Mexico", ed. and trans. by Jaffary, 133.

infamous Huasteca appear as an example of those "who remained in darkness and error."[275] As outlined above the Huasteca were inaccurately ascribed the title of *pulque* creators by many Spanish accounts, because they had a long history of public intoxication, which Sahagún documented and perpetuated as truth. Considering the Spanish reputational colonial narratives and the contemporary experiences discussed above, the Huasteca may have been included specifically because of their idolatrous *pulque* rituals. De la Serna detailed how "to better conceal their deception and poison, they gild it, mixing their rites and idolatrous ceremonies with good, holy things, joining light with darkness to Christ with reverence", venerating Christian divinity, "together with their idols."[276] He then comments that "their concealment and dissimulation is so advanced that they perform the holy sacraments, while at the same time [they] makes sacrifices to fire, sacrificing hens and animals, spilling *pulque* in their presence, offering them food and drink, attributing to them any sickness that afflicts them, asking for their favor and assistance to prevent sickness from coming and giving them thanks if they obtain what they ask for."[277]

In many respects, both the "Treatise" and "The Edict of Faith" provide insight into how colonial attitudes changed little after the immediate post-conquest years. Both documents buttressed extant daily experiences and influenced both public and private policy. *Pulque* began its cultural evolution as a divine and idolatrous substance that the Aztecs included in numerous aspects of daily and religious life, which became apparent to Spanish officials upon contact. In their attempts to create a stabile colonial culture

[275] Ibid, 134.
[276] Ibid, 134.
[277] Ibid.

they sought to eliminate *pulque*'s idolatrous attachments. These processes eventually led to realizations that *pulque* politics slowly incorporated non-indigenous groups and complicated colonial identity categories. When the colonial period began *pulque* identities tended to differentiate Spaniard from Indian, but as the period progressed these identities transcended ethnic boundaries and subsequently collapsed multiple ethnic groups into a singular concept. Examining the consequences for violating *Las Ordenanzas de Pulquerías*, or regulations issued by secular authorities to control the distribution and internal functions for the *pulque*rías, highlights how involved *pulque* became in the identities *de las castas bajas y la gente de quebrado.*

The ordinances in question come from a 1752 edict, which based their regulations upon sixteenth century documents.[278] The actual content is not necessarily important, however the repeated inclusions of ethnic terminology in its regulations demonstrates the racial division that surrounded colonial New Spain. The fact that racial descriptions litter these documents underscores how finite the Crown had to be in ascribing class identity categories in their regulations. The repeated racial epitaphs included in the glosses in this document differentiate identity membership categories that *pulque* and the *pulque*rías influenced. *Pulquerías* evolved into social gathering spots that extended pre-conquest systems for discussing prevailing socio-economic attitudes. Increased problems with drunkenness in the *pulquerías* and the resulting regulations demonstrate that beyond

[278] "Ordenanzas de *Pulquerías* de Mexico," in "Ordenanzas mandadas observar por el Exmô. señor Marqués de Mancera en 26 de Julio de 1671", retrieved on March 30, 2012 from the Library of Congress @ [http://international.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?intldl/esbib:@OR(@field(NUMBER+@od1(llesp+0005_0179)))]

providing social environs for the poor, they simultaneously became definitive characteristics in the race and class hierarchies in colonial Spain.

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