Cognitive Dissonance in Early Colonial Pictorial Manuscripts from Central Mexico

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the relationship between the imagery and glosses displayed on folios from the Codex Telleriano-Remensis, the Codex Magliabechiano, and the Codex Ixtilxochitl through the application of Leon Festinger’s concept of cognitive dissonance in order to introduce an alternative approach to the study of codices as points of culture contact. The work analyzes the ways in which this psychological condition manifested itself in post-contact codex production as a result of sixteenth century political and social circumstances.

Festinger (1957:14) identifies the existence of “cultural mores” as a source of potential dissonance between culturally specific consonant elements. According to this idea, a culture may dictate the acceptance of certain actions, ideas, or beliefs and the rejection of others. Thus, at places of cultural confrontation, dissonance may result as each group relies upon authorized referents to deal with the introduction of new information. Among surviving post-contact manuscripts, these three codices contain folios with both pictorial and textual descriptions of annual Nahua pre-contact festivals and their corresponding deities. This particular group of codices allows comparisons and cross-references to be made among three different interpretations of the same feasts. Each manuscript presents a unique visual and alphabetic explanation of each festival’s deities.
and celebratory activities created at different points during the sixteenth century.

According to Festinger’s concept, the divergent descriptions of the same festivals found among these folios illustrate my position that the discrepancies came from inclinations on both sides to reach levels of consonance despite the unfamiliar circumstances of culture contact.

This thesis asserts that the imagery and annotations associated with each festival became outlets for expressions of familiar forms and ideas. By locating these codices within the dynamic atmosphere of the early post-contact period, based upon their estimated dates of production, the discrepancies between the imagery and glosses serve as examples of dissonance resulting from larger sixteenth-century cultural frameworks.

The disruption and psychological discomfort experienced by natives and Europeans by Spain’s pressure to colonize and Christianize its new territory directly affected the visual organization of early colonial codices and the selective display of information presented in the folios.
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The arrival of Hernán Cortés into central Mexico in the sixteenth century brought about a wide variety of interactions between the indigenous populations and the Europeans far beyond the infamous military and spiritual conflicts of the encounter. The fall of Tenochtitlán and the spread of European diseases altered the daily lives, rituals, festivals, and traditions of the Nahuas. One of the more subtle changes, at least in comparison to the violence of the conquest, involved the indigenous traditions of pictorial representation and oral record keeping. Although the pre-contact tradition of painted codices did not disappear after the arrival of Europeans, surviving post-contact manuscripts demonstrate how new colonial conditions influenced the form.

The conquest brought two extremely different methods for recording information together: a Nahua tradition of pictorial representation and a European tradition of alphabetic text. By overlaying contrasting cultural traditions, post-contact codices created the possibility for miscommunication as each tradition catered to the needs of its respective creators and viewers. This thesis examines the relationship between the imagery and glosses displayed on folios from the Codex Telleriano-Remensis, the Codex Magliabechiano, and the Codex Ixtlilxochitl through the application of Leon Festinger’s concept of cognitive dissonance in order to introduce an alternative approach to the study of codices as points of culture contact. The work analyzes the ways in which this psychological condition manifested itself in post-contact codex production as a result of
sixteenth century political and social circumstances. The visual organization of early
colonial codices and the selective display of information presented on the folios resulted
from the disruption and psychological discomfort caused by the conquest to indigenous
and European lives as these groups dealt with the pressure of Spanish demands to
colonize and Christianize the new territory.

Among surviving post-contact manuscripts, the *Codex Telleriano-Remensis*, the
*Codex Magliabechiano*, and the *Codex Ixtlixochitl* contain folios with both pictorial and
textual descriptions of annual Nahua pre-contact festivals and their corresponding deities.
This particular group of codices allows comparisons and cross-references to be made
among three different versions of the same feasts. Each manuscript presents a unique
visual and alphabetic interpretation of the deities and celebratory activities created at
different points during the sixteenth century. The evaluation of the concepts represented
through the imagery and annotations on each folio reveals multiple and sometimes
competing cultural dialogues; cognitive dissonance resulted from the efforts of each
creator to contextualize the other’s frame of reference.

Organization of the Thesis

This thesis examines the relationships between the pictorial representations and
alphabetic glosses present on individual folios from post-contact codices. The
organization of this thesis includes a discussion of the theoretical and methodological
approach, an examination of specific folios from the codices, a discussion of the
application, and a summary of conclusions.

In Chapter Two I introduce the theoretical and methodological foundation for this
project by presenting the three theoretical concepts applied to this collection of folios. A
brief summary of the overarching theory of cognitive dissonance, introduced by Leon Festinger, leads into applications of this idea to anthropological areas in the studies of Marshall Sahlins and James Lockhart. In Chapter Three I provide detailed analyses of the imagery and glosses from a selection of folios representing indigenous deity figures from the *Codex Telleriano Remensis*, the *Codex Magliabechiano*, and the *Codex Ixtlilxochitl*. I present brief historical and physical descriptions of each codex, which are followed by detailed descriptions of the images and translations of the glosses. In Chapter Four I examine the specific application of the theory of cognitive dissonance to the folios from Chapter Three and provide conclusions for the overall project. I place each codex into its own sixteenth century historical context and evaluate the relationships between the imagery and glosses for evidence of psychological discomfort among the creators during the production process.

**Pre-Contact Central Mexico**

In a span of less than 100 years, the Mexica (pre-Hispanic Nahuas), a nomadic band of mercenaries, successfully established their population as a dominant power in the Valley of Mexico. They created an extensive, militaristic empire literally built by large amounts of tribute collected from conquered territories, which eventually attracted the attention of Hernán Cortés during his quest for wealth and prestige in the New World.

During the twelfth century, the Mexica traveled south from “an island within a lagoon” known as Aztlan, the “place of cranes,” into central Mexico, a location already inhabited by a large number of competing populations (Townsend 2000:58). According to the Mexica world view, Huitzilopochtli, a prominent deity figure, instructed the Mexica to migrate until they saw his sign for the location of their new city. According to
the visions of the deity’s priests, the “sacred spot would be marked by a large nopal
cactus upon which an eagle would perch” (Townsend 2000:64-65). The original tribe
split into two factions around AD 1345; these divisions proceeded to establish the capital
city of Tenochtitlán and the neighboring site of Tlatelolco (Coe 2002:186).

As newcomers to the area, the Mexica served as mercenaries for the Tepanec
kingdom of Atzcapotzalco in 1367 in return for protection from rival enemy territories
(Coe 2002:187). Frances Berdan (2005) divides the emergence of the Mexica empire
within the valley into two phases of adjustment and development. Berdan (2005:8) states:

From the founding of Tenochtitlán in 1325 to the time of the Spanish arrival
in 1519, the Mexica strove to carve a niche for themselves in this physical and
sociopolitical environment. Their history may be viewed as a dynamic process of
adaptation to an environment in some respects hospitable, in others, hostile. In the
first phase of this history, 1325-1428, the Mexica were subject to forces already at
play in the Basin of Mexico, and they primarily adapted to existing patterns. From
1428 to 1519, they took an aggressive, imperial position, actively shaping and
directing the course of history of much of Mesoamerica.

In order to strengthen Tenochtitlán’s political and economic power, the city joined the
Triple Alliance, a coalition between Tenochtitlán, Tetzcoco, and Tlacopan. The
establishment of this union enabled the leaders of these cities to send their armies out
beyond the boundaries of the valley to obtain long-distance resources by the sixteenth
century. Tenochtitlán established itself as the most powerful member of the coalition by
gaining control of a valuable chinampa agricultural district to the south of the city
(Townsend 2000:80). The alliance received tribute from the areas conquered by the
coalition forces. The empire became divided into 38 tributary provinces from which
various forms of payment were extracted (Calnek 1982:59). This incoming supply of
tribute payments, often in the form of labor and supplies, bolstered the economy and helped the leaders undertake massive building projects within the city.

During the establishment and growth of the Mexica empire, scribes produced a variety of painted documents, or screenfolds, to record and commemorate various aspects of Mexica social, political, and religious life. The pre-contact tradition of creating painted manuscripts belonged to the honorable profession of native scribe, the tlacuilo. This Nahuatl term means either “painter” or “scribe,” which reflects a lack of distinction between writing and painting (Peterson 1993:46). These artists recorded information through their own form of writing, a system of painted symbols and glyphs transcribed onto the stucco-coated surfaces of screenfolds-folded panels of deerskin or bark paper (Keber 1995a:108). Training for the tlacuilo profession began at an early age for the male children of the religious and political upper class who received their education in the calmecacs (schools). The curriculum at these elite schools included history, astrology, religion, and an instruction in painting to conserve the knowledge they learned (Peterson 1993:50). The calmecac education exposed elite children to the importance of pictorial representation at an early age. The Mexica’s close association between painting and writing made those members of the upper class the bearers of sacred and historical knowledge. After the conquest, the Spaniards turned toward the elite to share their cultural and artistic knowledge and selected these elite children to receive a Spanish education.

Elizabeth Hill Boone (1998:150) divides painted manuscripts into three broad categories: religious books and guides for the living, historical books, and practical documents. Among religious books, the tonalamatl, the book of the days, served as a
divination book for priests to reference, especially during the birth of a child to determine the deities and forces affecting the child’s date of birth. Historical books contained information about the origins and history of indigenous communities, such as year-count annals and *res gestae* documents, dynastic histories of ruling families (Boone 1994:55). The remaining group of practical documents included manuscripts, such as maps and lists of tribute collections.

The Mexica incorporated the production of painted manuscripts into their efforts to establish and legitimize their empire within the Valley of Mexico. Joyce Marcus (1992:54) states, “While oratorical ability was and continued to be of great importance for the Aztec ruler, once a system of writing had been developed he and his official governmental personnel had a new tool that enabled them to store information, expand record keeping, and open up new forms of communication.” This system of writing gave established and aspiring Mexica leaders a visible and easily manipulated form of propaganda to support their political aspirations. Marcus (1992:15) describes Mesoamerican writing as “both a tool and a by-product of this competition for prestige and leadership positions.”

The Mexica may have found the conscious manipulation of historical and political events particularly appealing to compensate for their mercenary origins. The Mexica made no visual distinctions between legendary events and historical facts during the production of post-contact codices. The scribes incorporated these “mytho-historical” occurrences into the vast period of time that existed before the present (Marcus 1992:52). Marcus (1992:15-16) states:
They [Mesoamerican rulers] further used writing to establish the importance of their royal ancestors; their genealogical right to rule; the date of their inauguration; their marriages to important spouses; the birth of their heirs; and the various honorific titles they could claim. We will also see that they rewrote history to their advantage; exaggerated their age; damaged or obliterated the records of some of their predecessors… claimed descent from, or a relationship to, mythical personages; altered genealogies to include themselves; and used a combination of conquest and political marriage to secure thrones for which they were never in the line of succession.

The Encounter

After joining the Triple Alliance, the Mexica empire continued to expand in size and wealth until the beginning of the sixteenth century. The city of Tenochtitlán benefited from the Mexica’s practices of conquest and forced tribute collection, but these actions generated a great deal of resentment toward the Mexica by those affected directly and indirectly. The attitudes held by these indigenous enemies to the empire would directly contribute to the fall and destruction of the city in 1521 at the hands of the Spaniards.

In 1517, Juan de Grijalva supervised the first Spanish expedition into the territory of the Mexica empire, but direct contact with the city of Tenochtitlán did not occur until Hernán Cortés and his crew arrived in 1519 (Carrasco 1992:194). According to Mexica accounts, Motecuhzoma, the *huey tlatoani* (supreme ruler), received news from messengers about the arrival of strangers along the gulf coast well before Cortés traveled inland toward the city. Some accounts state that this information brought Motecuhzoma a great deal of distress, because the year 1519 coincided with the Mexica’s belief in the return of Quetzalcoatl, a deity supposedly destined to return to the Mexica and replace the *huey tlatoani* as the rightful ruler of the territory. According to Richard Townsend (2000:20), the Mexica believed “occurrences were not unique or sequential, but were seen as episodes in an essentially cyclic concept of time and history.” If the Mexica did
associate the arrival of Cortés with the return of Quetzalcoatl, this event would have fit into the cyclical nature of history. Motecuhzoma attempted to delay the movement of Cortés by sending messengers and gifts to the coast, but his efforts failed and he eventually resigned himself to await their arrival. David Carrasco (1992:200) states, “The incarnation of Quetzalcoatl’s image in the face of Cortés persuaded Moctezuma of the imminent dislocation of the center of Mexico to Tula and the annihilation of his own image as the ruler of the empire. He was no longer worthy to be king. Cortés continues to march into Tenochtitlán and Moctezuma continues to act out the abdication of Aztec sovereignty.”

Cortés’ march toward Tenochtitlán experienced hostile attacks from various indigenous populations, but ultimately some of these encounters produced valuable allies for the Spaniards. The Tlaxcalans, a group living along the periphery of the Mexica empire, formed an alliance with Cortés in retaliation against their greatest enemy, the Mexica of Tenochtitlán. Michael Coe (2002:228) refers to the Tlaxcalans as the “deadliest enemies of the Triple Alliance” and considers their assistance to Cortés critical to the success of the conquest. The warriors of Tlaxcala served as invaluable allies to Cortés and his small group of soldiers during the siege of Tenochtitlán.

Cortés’ initial entrance into Tenochtitlán occurred under peaceful circumstances; Motecuhzoma welcomed Cortés into the city and met him along one of the causeways accompanied by lesser nobles and attendants. The organization and magnificent architectural accomplishments of the city impressed the Spaniards. In his second letter to King Charles V, Cortés states, “I will simply say that the manner of living among the people is very similar to that in Spain, and considering that this is a barbarous nation shut
off from a knowledge of the true God or communication with enlightened nations, one may well marvel at the orderliness and good government which is everywhere maintained” (Cortés 1986:93-94). Bernal Díaz del Castillo, a member of Cortés’ army and eyewitness to the conquest, also recorded his initial reactions to the city upon their approach. As they walked along the causeway to the meeting place between Motecuhzoma and Cortés, Castillo (1956:192) states, “Gazing on such wonderful sights, we did not know what to say, or whether what appeared before us was real, for on one side, on the land, there were great cities, and in the lake ever so many more, and the lake itself was crowded with canoes, and in the Causeway were many bridges at intervals, and in front of us stood the great City of Mexico.”

After Cortés and Motecuhzoma met along the causeway, the Mexica allowed the Spaniards to enter the city and watched as their huey tlaytoni became a prisoner in his own palace. Frustration with Motecuhzoma’s resigned attitude gradually infiltrated the capital and the Mexica organized an attack against the Spaniards. During a siege upon the palace, Cortés recognized a need for an escape from the city during the protection of night, but the Mexica discovered the plan. The Mexica “attacked as the Spaniards were fleeing down the Tlacopan (now Tacuba) causeway, and the route was so disastrous that it has been known ever since as la noche triste, the Night of Sorrows” (Leon-Portilla 1992:84). Despite suffering massive losses during this escape, Cortés managed to rebuild his forces and structure another attack upon the city. With the support of indigenous allies and superior weaponry, the Spaniards returned and took advantage of a disease-weakened city. The Mexica population suffered from smallpox, a virus responsible for killing large numbers of people even before Cortés arrived in the city to meet Motecuhzoma (Coe
2002:228). The union of these advantages helped Cortés successfully defeat the capital and claim its wealth only two years after his arrival to Mexico.

Spanish and Nahua Central Mexico

The dismantling process of the Mexica empire began immediately after the fall of Tenochtitlán. The conquistadores brought personal attitudes and beliefs fostered during years of reconquista in Spain and applied them to their new development process in the New World. The territory of New Spain, claimed under the flag of the Spanish Crown, experienced the colonizing efforts of Spain to spread its standards of government, religion, and language.

The establishment of the encomienda system occurred in conjunction with the distribution of rewards and payments to those conquistadors who participated in the expedition and contributed to the defeat of the Mexica. Charles Gibson’s (1964:221) examination of New Spain’s transition to Spanish governorship identifies the results: “one effect of encomienda and of other types of early Spanish control was to decentralize the imperial Aztec organization and to place emphasis on the separate town units.” This form of labor management, based upon Spanish models, already existed in the Spanish colonies of the West Indies in the sixteenth century (Gibson 1964:59). Gibson (1964:58) states, “Immediately, encomienda became the most openly exploitative of all modes of contact with Indians… Its essential feature was the official consignment of groups of Indians to privileged Spanish colonists.” This arrangement provided the Spanish owner with a personal source of labor and tribute supplied by the indigenous group. In return for this reward, the Spaniard became responsible for encouraging conversions to Christianity among the Indians to save their souls. Initially working with the Crown’s permission,
Cortés managed to organize a system of *encomienda* assignments to individual conquistadors by 1523, the same year in which the Crown decided to ban the practice. Cortés refused to follow these orders and continued to support the arrangements (Gibson 1964:59). Gibson (1964:60) believes Cortés strongly opposed the Crown’s decision, because it interfered with his personal ambition of making Tenochtitlán his own “private holding.”

Despite Cortés’ efforts, the *encomienda* system disappeared rather quickly as a result of new royal decrees and a dwindling indigenous population. By 1549, *repartimientos* replaced *encomiendas* as the officially sanctioned form of labor management around Mexico City (Lockhart 1992:430). This type of labor program organized indigenous groups according to a rotational system to fulfill the labor needs of larger projects. Under these conditions, the indigenous labor force received wages in return for their labor (Coe 2002:229). The Crown also established the offices of *corregidores*, local magistrates, around 1530 to collect tribute for the treasury offices (Gibson 1964:82).

In addition to these changes in the tribute and labor collection procedures, the religious atmosphere within the Valley of Mexico experienced radical alterations. The unification of Spain under the authority of the Roman Catholic Church directly impacted the country’s colonization efforts because Spain wanted to break the new territory’s reliance on paganism and bring salvation to New Spain. The Christians’ victory at Granada over the Muslims during the *reconquista* allowed the Christians to see “their triumph as evidence that their God actively supported their cause, a belief that they carried into battle against the native civilizations of the Americas” (Burkholder 1990:17).
Spain’s spiritual mission to bring Christianity to the indigenous populations served as important justification for colonization. Missionary groups, organized by Cardinal Jiménez de Cisneros during the Mendicant reform movement, traveled across the Atlantic to bring Christianity to New Spain (Gibson 1964:99). Robert Ricard (1966:35) states, “The missionaries, the reader is reminded, came from a country that had always been particularly touchy about orthodoxy… one in which the Inquisition had gone farther than elsewhere, one in which a king, Philip II, who came to the throne during the spiritual conquest of New Spain, wished to be the champion of the true faith in the world.”

In 1524, only a few years after the military conquest of Tenochtitlán, a group of Franciscans known as Los Doce arrived in the valley to convert the indigenous populations to Christianity. The Franciscans selected exactly 12 members according to the models set by Christ and St. Francis (Browne 2000:112). The Franciscan order “originated as a preaching and missionary group… Into the medieval and Renaissance periods, intrepid Franciscans had embarked on arduous travels to far-off countries, experienced firsthand encounters with distant cultures, and coped with the learning of difficult foreign tongues” (Keber 2002:9, 10). In central Mexico, the group promoted Christian doctrine and literacy and founded schools for the educational instruction of indigenous children of noble descent (Gibson 1964:99). Fray Bernardino de Sahagún, creator of the Florentine Codex, followed in the path of the original 12 Franciscans after being recruited for missionary work by Fray Antonio de Ciudad Rodrigo, a member of the original 12 (Nicholson 2002:22). Sahagún relied upon the assistance of indigenous assistants and scribes to complete the production of this 12-volume project. He selected
trilingual students from the Colegio de Santa Cruz in Tlatelolco, a school founded in 1536 by the Franciscan order (Keber 2002:7)

The efforts of the early missionary groups to find similarities between Nahua and Christian spiritual practices resulted in the reporting of deceptively high conversion rates to the Spanish Crown and Catholic Church. Friars such as Motolinía believed their work had successfully prompted the indigenous populations to embrace Christianity and rebuff their indigenous beliefs without much hesitation; they believed the conversion was genuine. In response to these early reactions, Nicholas Griffiths (1999:8) states, “The friars ensured that Christianity in some form would be adopted, but at the same time they inadvertently aided their subjects’ struggle for cultural survival.” This survival of indigenous religious practices surprised and shocked Sahagún after his arrival to central Mexico. A missionary quest to eliminate the hidden existence of idolatry resulted in the destruction of numerous indigenous objects, including painted manuscripts, during the installment of the first bishop of Mexico, Fray Juan de Zumárraga.

Production of Post-Contact Codices

The survival of pictorial manuscripts after the conquest depended greatly on European interest in the practice, in addition to an already established pre-contact indigenous reliance upon graphic representation for recording information. Despite the destruction of numerous codices suspected of containing idolatrous material, many Spaniards turned toward the traditions of native scribe painters and adopted their methods to suite Spanish needs. Bishop Juan de Zumárraga, known for his book burning crusade, authorized the destruction of numerous pre-contact screenfolds (Boone 1983:2). Frances Karttunen (1998:423) states, “According to Juan Bautista de Pomar, in his Relación de
Texcoco, codices that were salvaged from the destruction of the Texcocoan royal archives were later burned by the very people who held them in safekeeping for fear that Bishop Zumárraga, who conducted an inquisition in the 1530s, would regard possession of them as evidence of idolatry.” Contact with indigenous populations exposed the Spaniards to a variety of manuscript representations of rather common information, such as maps, territorial boundaries, and tribute lists (Boone 1998:150). Numerous sections of post-contact codices appear to have been produced for European purposes, yet relied heavily upon these pre-contact prototypes.

The construction of post-contact codices usually required the collaborative efforts of Nahua informants and European annotators to supply the explanations of indigenous information to European viewers in the forms of pictorial imagery and alphabetic glosses. Jeanette Peterson (1993:50) believes former calmecac students studied under the supervision of the first-generation friars in New Spain. The production of documents and murals during the early colonial period incorporated the traditional skills of the tlacuilo, the pre-contact Nahua profession of “painter” or “scribe” (Peterson 1988:285). The Franciscan and Augustinian orders in Mexico established prominent metropolitan schools of manuscript painting in Tenochtitlán, Texcoco, and Tlatelolco. Among these instructional institutions, two Franciscan schools, San José de los Naturales and Santa Cruz in Tlatelolco, became recognized as official painting schools. The supervising friars at these schools examined the work produced by their students to prevent the creation of images considered to be “injurious to God” (Peterson 1993:50). Under this type of supervision and training, the friars and Crown officials chose a select number of students to serve as assistants in the production of post-contact imagery.
Elizabeth Hill Boone (1998:156) believes the Spanish Crown took an official interest in the manuscripts for information about geography, demography, and the economy in order to establish and legitimize tax and labor requirements. The orders for the production of the *Codex Mendoza*, for example, came to Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza specifically from the Spanish Crown. He followed the instructions to complete a census for the purpose of determining potential tribute sources in areas of New Spain (Boone 1998:157). Boone (1998:158) states, “They [the Spaniards] accepted painted manuscripts as the indigenous equivalent of European books and written documents and accorded them the same status. If we can judge by the royal requests for painted tribute lists, the pictorial records were even considered more truthful than their alphabetic counterparts.” In addition to fulfilling needs of the Spanish Crown, the indigenous production of codices also caught the attention of missionaries working on behalf of the Catholic Church.

One particular example of this attraction manifested itself in the creation of Fray Bernardino de Sahagún’s encyclopedia of knowledge, the *Florentine Codex*. Under Sahagún’s supervision, scribes and annotators created a document containing both indigenous pictorial elements and Spanish glosses. Sahagún created the manuscript with dual purposes: to record cultural and spiritual information about the Nahuas and to provide a guide for other friars to recognize idolatrous behavior. The production of painted manuscripts like the *Codex Mendoza* and the *Florentine Codex* combined pictorial and textual approaches to serve Spanish needs, but also maintained a voice for the Nahuas.
CHAPTER TWO: THEORY

The co-existence of pictorial imagery and alphabetic text on folios from sixteenth and early seventeenth century codices visually represents the diverse systems of communication and documentation relied upon by the scribes and artisans involved during the production process. The folios serve as points of contact between these different traditions of expressing information and provide tangible evidence for the limitations experienced by the European and Nahua participants to create work based on their respective cultural referents.

Cognitive Dissonance

This reliance upon the familiar found in post-contact codices relates to the work of psychologist Leon Festinger (1957:2) who published his ideas surrounding the existence of “psychological discomfort” in the face of inconsistency under his theory of cognitive dissonance. Festinger (1957:3) states, “The existence of dissonance, being psychologically uncomfortable, will motivate the person to try to reduce the dissonance and achieve consonance.” This dissonance, or lack of harmony among thoughts, ideas, or beliefs, often occurs when people are exposed to new information that conflicts with the body of knowledge and opinions already held by an individual or group. “The basic background of the theory consists of the notion that the human organism tries to establish internal harmony, consistency, or congruity among his opinions, attitudes, knowledge,
and values. That is, there is a drive toward consonance among cognitions” (Festinger 1957:260).

Festinger (1957:14) identifies the existence of “cultural mores” as a source of potential dissonance between culturally specific consonant elements. For example, he identifies the emergence of psychological conflict over simple table manners by describing the acceptable and unacceptable ways to eat a piece of chicken according to a specific social framework. He states, “If a person at a formal dinner uses his hands to pick up a recalcitrant chicken bone, the knowledge of what he is doing is dissonant with the knowledge of formal dinner etiquette. The dissonance exists simply because the culture defines what is consonant and what is not” (Festinger 1957:14). According to Festinger’s idea, a culture may dictate the acceptance of certain actions, ideas, or beliefs and the rejection of others. Thus, at places of cultural confrontation, dissonance may result as each group relies upon familiar and authorized referents to deal with the introduction of new and unexpected information. Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood (1979) also examine the use of goods, including the consumption of food, as a means of expressing culturally acceptable meanings.

Structure of the Conjuncture

Marshall Sahlins’ (1981) examination of the early stages of contact between Europeans and the people of the Sandwich Islands Kingdom serves as an application of Festinger’s theory of cognitive dissonance to an anthropological study. Sahlins focuses upon the behavior and attitudes exchanged between Captain Cook and his men and the Hawaiians during their encounter. Sahlins’ analysis of this point of contact between cultures shows the emergence of dissonance as each side attempted to comprehend the
unfamiliar in familiar ways. Ideas and actions considered consonant within each cultural framework created an atmosphere of discomfort as the interaction brought the known and unknown together.

According to Sahlins (1981:50), the ways in which the different levels of Hawaiian society interacted with the Europeans were “traditionally motivated” and functioned within the “world as Hawaiians conceived it.” The Hawaiians acted according to tradition and relied upon their own referents to incorporate the arrival of Captain Cook and his men into their lives. Sahlins (1981:35) states:

Practice, rather, has its own dynamics- a “structure of the conjecture” – which meaningfully defines the persons and the objects that are parties to it… Everything that was done by the English and the Hawaiians was appropriately done, according to their own determinations of social persons, their interests and intentions. Yet the effect of thus putting culture into practice was to give some significance to the actors and actions that had not been traditionally envisioned.

For example, Sahlins describes the initial meeting between Captain Clerke and chief Kaneoneo; an encounter where the actions of both leaders followed the standards of their respective societies. According to the account, Kaneoneo ordered his canoe to move directly toward the Captain’s ship despite the presence of smaller vessels in his path. Sahlins (1981:34) describes the action as “traditional” as Kaneoneo possibly viewed Clerke as “a potential rival and danger to the Hawaiian chief as a source of desirable mana.” At the same time, Clerke’s introductory actions toward the chief remained consistent with traditional British behavior. Sahlins (1981:35) states, “Clerke’s reaction was friendly British gesture- which violated the strictest Hawaiian tabus on the person of a sacred chief.”
Sahlins (1981:33) believes Hawaiian society underwent changes and alterations as a result of its attempts to recreate itself and its traditions after this contact with Europeans. As the Hawaiians and Europeans proceeded to act within familiar realms of behavior, their interactions created circumstances outside of their initial intentions as each side attempted to process the new information. The emergence of dissonance, as a result of this exposure to unexpected interpretations, altered the original expectations of the participants as they attempted to find some degree of consonance. Regarding these reactions, Sahlins (1981:35) states, “The relationships generated in practical action, although motivated by the traditional self-conceptions of the actors, may in fact functionally revalue those conceptions. Nothing guarantees that the situations encountered in practice will stereotypically follow from the cultural categories by which the circumstances are interpreted and acted upon.”

An interesting change in the dynamics between the common men and women of Hawaiian society began shortly after the Europeans’ arrival. Sahlins describes the emergence of sexual relations between common Hawaiian women and British sailors at the insistence of the women. The women’s attraction to the European men appears to come from the Hawaiian custom of *wawahi*, which “refers to the offering of virgin daughters to a ranking chief by prominent commoners… in the hope of bearing a child by the chief” (Sahlins 1981:40). According to the Hawaiians’ belief that Captain Cook was the returned deity Lono, the original intentions behind the women’s actions held no monetary motivation; however, the sailors responded by giving the women gifts. “They immediately gave the women’s services tangible value. Again, a structure of conjuncture: they thus defined the relation as a ‘service’” (Sahlins 1981:41). As a result of this
alteration to the original intention, Hawaiian men actually developed economic interests in these relationships because they could acquire adzes, men’s items, from their women’s sexual services (Sahlins 1981:41). Sahlins (1981:67) states, “People act upon circumstances according to their own cultural presuppositions, the socially given categories of person and things… According to the place of the received category in the cultural system as constituted, and the interests that have been affected, the system itself is more or less altered. At the extreme, what began as reproduction ends as transformation.” In this example, the women’s possible original intention to re-create the custom of wawahi with the European sailors changed as the unexpected economic benefits of the relations became evident.

Double-Mistaken Identity

The application of Festinger’s theory of cognitive dissonance to the anthropological field of ethnohistory exists in an examination of central Mexican post-contact legal procedures and terms. Ethnohistorian James Lockhart (1985) believes the interactions between Nahuas and Spaniards during the early colonial period (sixteenth century) are more than simple examples of the replacement of indigenous practices by dominant Western forms. He applies his concept of “Double Mistaken Identity” to a comparison of Nahua and Spanish concepts of public office and issues of legality. Lockhart (1985:477) states:

To give it a name, one might call it the process of Double Mistaken Identity, in which each side of the cultural exchange presumes that a given form or concept is operating in the way familiar within its own tradition and is unaware of or unimpressed by the other side’s interpretation. Spaniards could imagine that they had introduced Hispanic governance with all its paraphernalia of offices, legal procedures, and records, while the Nahuas could imagine that they were the same
collection of sovereign city states as before, with the same ruling circles and the same mechanisms of law and office holding now somewhat renamed.

Rather than subscribe to a model of displacement where European practices and values completely replaced indigenous traditions and beliefs, Lockhart addresses the conflict in terms of evidence for the maintenance of indigenous practices. In the face of coercive efforts by both the Spanish Crown and the Catholic Church, indigenous institutions achieved a certain degree of survival due to a lack of awareness or understanding on both sides.

Lockhart’s ideas suggest that both sides of the central Mexican colonial experience believed it could make reference to practices of the other to discuss supposedly commonly understood concepts, yet have no true comprehension of the other. Lockhart (1985:467) states, “The core process of interactions was one in which each side perceived a certain phenomenon in similar but far from identical ways, often without having any notion of the divergent perceptions of the other side.” For example, Lockhart identifies discrepancies between the functions associated with the Nahua and Spanish roles of the testigo, the accepted Spanish term for witness. Despite sharing this vocabulary term, each side viewed the roles of witnesses to legal documents very differently from the other. Unlike their Spanish counterparts, Nahua witnesses “not merely attested to the attaining of a formal legality through the performance of certain acts, but actually assented to the justice of the content of the proceedings” (Lockhart 1985:475). On the surface Nahuas and Spaniards used the same word for witnesses involved during legal procedures, yet both sides managed to maintain a sense of familiarity about their respective different roles of witnesses. Under such conditions, the
cognitive dissonance created through the introduction and subsequent enforcement of new legal offices and procedures quickly transformed into consonant relations as the Nahuas and Spaniards externally recognized new information but internally remained loyal to familiar interpretations.

Discussion

Unlike comparisons between the perceived understandings of legal and social practices, such as Lockhart’s (1985:474) examination of the meaning of testigo for Nahua and Spanish audiences, colonial pictorial manuscripts present the viewer with a direct juxtaposition of pictorial and alphabetic textual traditions. The use of painted manuscripts by both indigenous and European groups presents the viewer with questions about the accuracy of the correlation between images and texts. Nahuas and Spaniards faced more than just the difficulties of understanding differences in the spoken word as a result of the conquest. The creation of post-contact codices challenged each side’s interpretation of the other through both spoken and written languages. Attempts to understand foreign concepts often forced people to relate them to concepts considered equivalent comparisons. For example, Eloise Quiñones Keber (1995b) describes a portion of European glosses for an image in the Codex Vaticanus A as an “effort to get things right.” She states, “Yet, given the extensiveness of the text, it seems clear that the commentator wanted to understand, and to make understood, this perplexing culture and its expressions. Thus he tells us: their history is really our history; their ceremonies are like ours; their gods are like ours; their priests are like ours” (Keber 1995b:238). These statements reflect a genuine effort on the part of the annotator to make the concepts presented in the images familiar to the intended audience.
Closer examination of such comparisons reveals the existence of discrepancies between the pictorial and textual interpretations of supposedly the same concepts. David Carrasco (1992:12) believes scholars must apply the “hermeneutics of suspicion” to the study of post-contact products; one must recognize the intentions behind the production of colonial materials before establishing conclusive meanings. The pictorial and alphabetic information contained within the folios reflects the goals of a European agenda and exists primarily for European consumption. Carrasco (1992:6-7) states, “Between us and the pre-Columbian city and its symbols stand not just times and wear, distance and cultural diversity, and renewal within a tradition of wisdom, but also the conquest of Mexico and the invention of the American Indian.” Modifications or omissions to indigenous elements often resulted from a need to “please European eyes,” an audience largely ignorant of the lives of those native to New Spain (Carrasco 1992:15). Many of these adjustments and alterations resulted from the encounter between the collaborative efforts of the Nahua and Spanish. The presence of misinterpretations and mistaken identities are evident, but their existence is not simply the result of processing information incorrectly or insufficiently; cognitive dissonance resulted from the attempts of Nahuas and Spaniards to relate to foreign concepts in their own terms and to reach degrees of consonance despite the unfamiliar effects of contact between the Old and New Worlds.

The recognition and examination of the manifestations of psychological discomfort present in the work of Festinger, Sahlins, and Lockhart may be applied to the body of surviving post-contact codices. Festinger (1957:20) believes that a person may actively work toward reducing the amount of dissonance experienced during a situation if
a level of control exists over the environment (1957:20). The production of post-contact codices provided its participants with an environment that offered a level of control over the finished product. As creations of the early colonial period, these New World documents supplied the Nahuas and Europeans with the potential for perceived consonance amidst the dissonance produced by the conquest. The folios’ surfaces existed as physical locations for the scribes and artisans to retain identities and negotiate the interpretations of concepts. Susan Wright (1998) makes reference to these places or moments of contact between foreign ideas in her examination of the implications surrounding the use of the word “culture” by anthropologists. Wright (1998:9) discusses the limitations of past anthropological uses for the term and describes “the new idea of culture as a contested process of meaning-making.” Just like Sahlins and Lockhart, Wright identifies a quest for familiar elements during unfamiliar points of contact. In reference to a study of eighteenth and nineteenth century Hawaii, Wright (1998:9) states:

In an unbounded site, this medley of people drew on the practices of their various places of origin, in the light of their current interests….Each actor endeavored to maneuver, in unpredictable political and economic situations, to define or seize control of symbols and practices. Symbols and ideas never acquired a closed or entirely coherent set of meanings: they were polyvalent, fluid and hybridized.

The folios of post-contact codices offered the creators physical locations to approach unpredictable situations by relying upon culturally specific referents and familiar frameworks to process the great magnitude of the unfamiliar.
CHAPTER THREE: ANALYSIS

The analysis of the visual and textual information from folios within the *Codex Telleriano-Remensis*, the *Codex Magliabechiano*, and the *Codex Ixtlilxochitl* provide the viewer with a specific application of cognitive dissonance to the fields of art history and ethnohistory. This examination exposes the challenges that scribes and annotators faced during codex production, a point of direct contact between the Nahua and Spanish cultures. The information and labor required to create these manuscripts brought together two culturally specific methods of communication and frames of reference. These post-contact codices provide both indigenous and European interpretations of a single concept on the same page, but comparisons between the pictorial representations and the alphabetic glosses demonstrate how Festinger’s concept appears in the attempts of these visual and textual statements to make foreign concepts more familiar and understandable. The folios exist as tangible pieces of dissonance; the artisans and scribes worked within familiar cultural frameworks to complete the production process.

*Codex Telleriano-Remensis*

The *Codex Telleriano-Remensis* provides the viewer with a specific examination of cognitive dissonance. The codex presents both indigenous and European interpretations of the same concept on the same page but through different methods of communication. Instead of depending solely on the existence of artistic hybridity, this post-contact codex exposes the challenges that scribes and annotators faced when
attempts to make foreign concepts more familiar and understandable. Comparisons between the indigenous imagery and Spanish glosses demonstrate how Festinger’s ideas may be manifest in the visual and textual statements of post-contact codices.

The origins of the Codex Telleriano-Remensis and its original purpose are unknown today. Unlike the specific functions of the Codex Mendoza and the Florentine Codex, the goals behind the production of this codex can only be inferred by its contents. Carrasco (1992:29) places the codex in the category of “post-Columbian storybook:” a document created in an indigenous style containing pre-contact historical and cosmological information. The book contains three separate sections: the veintenas (an annual ritual calendar), the tonalamatl (a divinatory almanac), and a collection of historical annals. Keber (1995a:108) describes the format as a combination of three different types of pre-Hispanic documents into a single manuscript. She compares the presentation to a visual encyclopedia of indigenous life. The current document contains only 50 folios of European paper, because a number of pages disappeared after its completion around 1563 in Mexico. The majority of folios contain both pictorial representations and annotations. Keber (1995a:123) identifies the painting styles of two distinct artists, but she gives credit to a “main, more accomplished” artist for all the imagery in the tonalamatl and the majority of the veintena section for his knowledge of “traditional graphic conventions.” Keber (1995a:125) states, “The overall similarity in content between pre- and early post-conquest manuscripts demonstrates the continuity of many painting traditions into the early colonial period. From the beginning, format rather than content was most directly affected by European influence.”
Keber’s analysis of the glosses reveals that a number of annotators worked on the Spanish commentary without any attempt to blend the statements together. Keber (1995a:125) states, “Six annotators, four of them major (1, 2, 3, 5) supply glosses in Nahuatl and Spanish that directly identify names of figures, dates, and details, with longer explanatory annotations written in Spanish.” A “primary annotator” created an arrangement for the annotations in each section: Hand 2 worked with the *veintena* section and Hand 1 worked with the *tonalamatl* (Keber 1995a:125). The codex survives with each annotator’s remarks located exactly where they were originally placed on the page (Keber 1995a:111). She refers to this codex as a “polyvocal colonial document” for its unique and transitional arrangement (Keber 1995a:111). The gradual addition of textual information and the presence of corrections reveal how the Spanish attempted to understand the indigenous populations over time. Keber (1995a:112) believes the information came from native sources, but the texts present filtered material.

**The Veintenas**

The first section of the codex, a collection of *veintenas*, presents the viewer with a calendar of 18, 20-day ceremonies celebrated during the year. In its current condition, the *Codex Telleriano-Remensis* is missing several of the early *veintenas* from its calendar. The image of a single costumed figure usually accompanies the description of each feast. The imagery appears to be the result of efforts by two artists of differing abilities. Keber (1995a:137) believes both artists attempted to preserve a sense of pre-conquest style and avoid European artistic influences. The scribes positioned their pictorial representations in the upper, middle portions of the pages to leave space available for the glosses. The annotators provide information in the glosses about the deity and activities carried out...
during the feast (Keber 1995a:138). The areas of text are scattered across the folio around the images in a variety of different handwriting styles.

Fray Diego Durán observed and researched the spiritual lives of the Nahuas during his time in New Spain. He recorded the findings to educate a European audience about the religious practices of the New World and to alert other friars to the survival of idolatrous behavior among the indigenous populations despite conversion efforts on behalf of the Catholic Church. In Durán’s (1971) publication, *Book of the Gods and Rites and the Ancient Calendar*, he provides lengthy and highly subjective descriptions of the Nahua deities and the monthly festivals and rituals performed in their honor prior to the conquest. A large portion of his text focuses on the rituals of the *veintenas*, the 18, 20-day festivals. His descriptions provide details, although biased, about the celebrations behind the pictorial representations and alphabetic glosses included in these codices.

The thirteenth *veintena* (folio 4 recto) represents the celebration of a feast for Hueypachtli beginning on the 22nd of October (Figure 1). The scribes painted a Tlaloc-style head without a body, in profile, facing right. The elements of the mask include a goggle eye, fang, curling lip, and headdress composed of green feathers and blue streamers. The majority of the headdress is blue with some white trim and highlights of gold and red. The artists positioned the disembodied head at the top of a green bush or mountain. An area of blue, presumably representing water, lies below the green bush and appears to flow away from the green mass. White shells adorn the tips of each wave of water. White banners decorated with black markings appear to the right and left of the Tlaloc-style head on the green bush and below the head in the water.
Figure 1. Thirteenth Veintena, *Codex Telleriano-Remensis*, folio 4 recto
Editorial Notes (Keber 1995a):
[1] hand of annotator
() information deleted by annotator
[] editorial change for clarification
[...] unreadable

The transcription states:

[1] Heypachtil
[2] Entra a beynte y dos de octubre
[3] Fiesta q[ue] dize del omillamiento (asi como angel dela guarida porq[ue] cada vno) tenia su abogado el que a el le parecia y este abogado es esto como fiesta delos aboga[dos]
[2] (En este mes hazian fiesta los de matalzingo al dios suchiquecal)

Keber’s (1995a:255) translation states:

[1] Hueypachtli
[2] It begins the 22nd ( ) of October
[3] Feast that is called of humiliation (as well as of the guardian angel because each person) had his advocate, the one who seemed right to him, and this is like the feast of the advocates.
[2] (During this month the Matlazinca celebrated a feast to the god Xochiquetzal)
[3] This was the great feast of humiliation; here they celebrated the feast of all their gods or, as it were, feast of all saints

(Figure 1. continued)
Durán (1971:452) translates the name Hueypachtli, the name of the thirteenth feast, as “Great Moss.” Durán (1971:452) states:

> It was a most solemn occasion, a most magnificent affair in which the mountains and hills were honored…Beside commemorating Tlaloc, God of Lightning and Thunder, and the Goddess of the Waters and Springs, the feast was also held in honor of the Popocatépetl and the Iztaccihuatl and the other principal mountains of the land. Thus it was called Tepeihuitl, Feast of the Hills.

According to his descriptions, during this festival the Nahua created small amaranth dough models of mountains and placed them in special places within their homes. They decorated these figurines with facial features and pieces of “native paper which was similar to cheap tan paper, estraza, with designs in black rubber paint” (Durán 1971:453). The Nahua provided these models with offerings and ultimately cut them apart as a sacrifice to be eaten for “medicinal qualities” (Durán 1971:453).

Keber (1995a:146) translates the name Hueypachtli as the “Great Pachtli Plant.” She interprets the representation of the deity’s head as Tlaloque, the assistants of Tlaloc living inside and around mountaintops. The imagery of the green mountain shape relates to the feast of Tepeihuitl, a festival in honor of mountains and hills. The annotator’s reference to the feast of the advocates probably refers to the large number of rain and mountain deities involved during Tepeihuitl. Furthermore, references to the Christian Holy Day of “All Saints” attempt to make this indigenous concept more familiar to European audiences by equating it to a European tradition (Keber 1995a:146). This effort to translate an indigenous festival into Christian terms corresponds to Lockhart’s idea of double mistaken identity. The pictorial representations provide an indigenous audience, or at least someone familiar with indigenous traditions, information about the
significance of the rain and mountain deities. The glosses, however, equate the role of these advocates and guardian angels to Christian saints.

The sixteenth veintena (folio 5 verso) presents the feast for Atemoztli beginning on the 20th of December (Figure 2). The imagery resembles the folio of Hueypachtli with another representation of a Tlaloc-style head. The head faces right, in profile, and wears a Tlaloc mask with a goggle eye, fang, curling lip and headdress of feathers. Two sets of blue streamers with white edges extend out from the back of the headdress. The head lacks a body once again, but is located at the end of a stream of water. The water appears to flow down from the left and then curve upwards to the right until it connects with the disembodied head. The artist painted the figures with clear, black outlines and filled the forms with a variety of colors. The majority of the Tlaloc head is blue with some red and gold areas. The artists painted the water blue with black lines to show the ripples and movement of the water. White shells appear at the edges of each extension of water.

Durán (1971:461) translated the sixteenth month commemorating the feast of Atemoztli as “Coming Down of the Waters.” Durán (1971:461-62) states:

Thus the feast at the beginning of the sixteenth month commemorated the descent of Huitzilopochtli to the world… It was believed that a child came down from heaven. This infant was called Water, as can be understood from the Nahuatl name for it. Let us remember that Atemoztli means Coming Down of the Waters. Atl means ‘water,’ temo signifies ‘to descend,’ and thus is composed the term atemoztli, which we have explained. Thus the natives indicated that the purpose of this feast was a plea for water in the springtime.

This festival demanded the Nahuas wait and watch for the arrival of the water. Durán (1971:462) compared this behavior to the Christian observances for the holiday of Christmas Eve.
Figure 2. Sixteenth Veintena, *Codex Telleriano-Remensis*, folio 5 verso
Editorial Notes (Keber 1995a):
[1] hand of annotator
( ) information deleted by annotator
[ ] editorial change for clarification
[...] unreadable

The transcription states:

[1] Atemoztli
[2] Entra a onze de diziembre
[3] XX
   En este mes celebraba[n] la fiesta del abajamiento delas aguas del
dilubio y por esto le hazia[n] fiesta
   mes por marabilla lluebe y asi le pintan con un rio q[ue] va de cayda y
   lo tiene debaxo delos pies)
   peligro del dilubio

Keber’s (1995a:256) translation states:

[1] Atemotztli
[2] It begins the 11th () of December
[3] 20th [of December]
   During this month they celebrated the feast of the descent of the
   floodwaters, and for this reason had a feast.
[2] (Atemoztli means descent of the waters, for during this month it rains
   greatly; and thus they depict him with a descending river, which he had
   under his feet.)
[3] I say [it means] when the earth was already exposed or when it was no
   longer in danger from the flood.

(Figure 2. continued)
Keber interprets the name of the festival as the “Descent of the Water.” She believes the imagery refers to the role of the Tlaloque for their assistance in producing rain (Keber 1995a:149). The annotators for this section do not seem to agree with their interpretations of the meaning of the festival. The glosses present the festival as both a celebration of an abundance of floodwaters and as a feast to commemorate the end of a flood. Keber believes the annotators’ interpretations of the magnitude of water as floodwaters, rather than simply rain, may refer to the floods that destroyed the Nahua’s fourth world. Irene Nicholson (1967:53) refers to this world as the “fourth Sun” and states, “Last of the four Suns was the Sun of Water, during which the fishes of the sea were created. But this Sun perished by flood.” Within her discussion, Keber (1995a:149) references the biblical deluge as well, but places greater emphasis on the more mythological indigenous meaning.

The Tonalamatl

The second section of the codex includes portions of the tonalamatl, a divinatory manual. Keber considers the survival of the “book of days” surprising, because most Christian missionaries and ecclesiastics considered divination a suspicious and threatening activity. A combination of the Spaniards’ linear concept of time and Catholic monotheism would have required the rejection of an indigenous polytheistic order (Keber 1995a:153). This document separates time into 20, 13-day divinatory periods known as trecenas. The scribes placed each series of 13 days across two facing folios with depictions of the supernatural forces that influenced each trecena under the corresponding series of days. On each pair of folios, the scribes painted the major trecena deity on the left page and a subsidiary figure on the right page. All of the deities are
represented as single, full-length figures positioned in profile poses. They are dressed with unique costumes, ornaments, and face paint to help the viewer identify each deity and festival. Keber (1995a:158) believes these supernatural figures are the most elegantly drawn and painted imagery of the entire *Codex Telleriano-Remensis*. Unlike other surviving *tonalamatls*, the codex includes Spanish glosses in addition to the pictorial representations on the folios. Keber (1995a:161) believes the glosses seem very vague in terms of providing information about the festivals and appear to concentrate more on events that could be related to Christianity and European examples.

The fourteenth *trecena* (folio 18 recto) dedicated to the deities of Xipe Totec and Quetzalcoatl currently exists as an incomplete divinatory period with the loss of the Xipe Totec folio. The scribes presented Xipe Totec as the primary deity of the *trecena*, but only the companion image of Quezalcoatl corresponding to days 6-13 remains (Figure 3). The imagery depicts a serpent, in profile, wearing a plumed headdress and facing left. The serpent rears up on its belly with an open mouth and exposed fangs and appears to be eating a human figure. Almost all of the human body is visible outside the serpent’s mouth except for the head, which has already entered into the gaping mouth of the serpent. The artist’s preference for the use of clear, black outlines and a lack of contour for the figures seems to correspond to pre-conquest pictorial traditions. The scribe filled the serpent’s outline with the vibrant colors of gold, red, green, and blue. Most of the serpent’s body is green, while thick lines of gold and red follow along the lines of the belly. Green feathers fill out the plumes of the headdress and the shape of a bloody knife emerges from a few green tail feathers. The scribe completed the human figure mainly with a dark orange color, contrasted with white for a loin cloth. In comparison to the
Figure 3. Fourteenth Trecena, *Codex Telleriano-Remensis*, folio 18 recto
Editorial Notes (Keber 1995a):
[1]  hand of annotator
( )  information deleted by annotator
[ ]  editorial change for clarification
[...]  unreadable

The transcription states:

Esta es la culebra queçalcoatl
Para dar a ente[n]der q[ue] es la fiesta de [temer] pinta[n] este drago[n] q[ue]
se esta comiendo vn hombre

Keber’s (1995:265) translation states:

This is the serpent Quetzalcoatl
To express that it is the feast of fear they depict this dragon devouring a man.
large amount of space allotted to the glosses, the deity image does not dominate the page. The artist placed the imagery into the niche created by the right angle of the calendar and left the remaining space on the page open for textual commentary.

This folio presents a level of miscommunication between the imagery and the glosses. The scribe created an image of the deity Quetzalcoatl, the feathered serpent, as a snake dressed with a headdress of green feathers. The line of text above its head clearly identifies the figure as a serpent, but the annotation below the figure compares the image to the European concept of a dragon. The use of this term caters to the needs of a European audience by referring to a familiar creature of fantasy. A dragon relates more to images of knights on horseback or the courage of Christian saints than to the significant role Quetzalcoatl played in indigenous lives. According to Keber’s interpretation of the imagery, the combination of snake and quetzal bird features creates a sense of unity between terrestrial and celestial forces. The Nahua related these forces to a cycle of creativity and fertility where the cosmos required sacrificial death as a prelude to continued rebirth (Keber 1995a:181). The ideas behind this imagery present a much more complicated and meaningful message for an indigenous audience than the glosses attempt to interpret for European viewers. It is impossible to determine how much information was given to the annotators about the *trecena*, but the focus of the text greatly diminishes the ideological significance surrounding this period of days.

The images of two deities, Xolotl and Tlachitonatiuh, represent the sixteenth *trecena* on opposite folios. The artist painted Xolotl, the patron deity, on the left page underneath the first five days of the period. The figure kneels in a profile position facing the deity on the right page. Xolotl, the monster, appears to have a human face and body
and holds a serpent. The figure wears a mask with certain features possibly related to Tlaloc, such as a goggle eye and curling lip below the nose. Tlachitonatiuh (folio 20 recto), the subsidiary deity, appears in profile from the mouth of the earth monster (Figure 4). The upper torso of the figure faces left and seems to be emerging or descending into the open mouth of the monster. The figure wears a Tlaloc mask similar to Xolotl and a feathered headdress consisting of green plumes and orange and white streamers. A gold disk rests on its back. The head of a snake emerges from the headdress in profile facing right. The earth monster squats below the deity in a frontal position with both pairs of legs and arms visible to the viewer. Its mouth opens upward and is filled with white fangs. The artist decorated portions of the monster’s body with brown and gold and painted the tips of the claws red. The arrangement of the information leaves the majority of the space for the text and restricts the imagery to the niche underneath the sixth to thirteenth days of the trecena.

In this trecena, discrepancies exist between the imagery and the glosses and the pictorial representation of the earth monster appears to be completely overlooked by the annotators. Keber (1995a:184) considers this image a rare example of the personification of the earth monster swallowing the setting sun for it to travel through the underworld until its re-emergence at dawn. The glosses fail to provide the reader with any information about the terms listed to the side of the figure or the significance of the monster’s mouth. The annotations only seem to convey information about an everyday observance of the setting sun rather than provide insight into the significance of the trecena or the earth monster for the indigenous population.
Figure 4. Sixteenth Trecena, Codex Telleriano-Remensis, folio 20 recto
Editorial Notes (Keber 1995a):
[1]  hand of annotator
( )  information deleted by annotator
[ ]  editorial change for clarification
[...]  unreadable

The transcription states:

[2]  El que nacía en 7 [ayub] sería rico y hombre de consejo
[3]  El mundo propiamente
   Sol
   Tierra
   Tinieblas
[3]  Tlalchitonatio (los rayos del sol hazia abajo) propiame[n]te entre la luz
   y las tinieblas […] y asi le pinta[n] el sol sobre los onbros y la muerte
   debaxo de los pies como aqui parece. Dizen q[ue] es esto el
   escalentamiento o calor q[ue] da el sol a la tierra. Dizen q[ue] cua[n]do
   el sol se pone q[ue] va a lumbrar a los muertos

Keber’s (1995:266) translation states:

[2]  One born on 7 winds [7 Wind] would be rich and an adviser
[3]  The world, properly speaking
   Sun
   Earth
   Darkness
[3]  Tlalchitonatiuh (the rays of the sun descending), that is, between the
   light and darkness. ( ) And thus they depict the sun on his shoulders
   and death below his feet, as shown here. They say that this is the
   warmth or heat that the sun sheds on the earth; they say that when the
   sun sets it goes to give light to the dead.

(Figure 4. continued)
The Magliabechiano Group

The *Codex Magliabechiano* belongs to the Magliabechiano Group, a collection of eight post-contact codices linked to one another by a common prototype. According to Boone (1983:3), an anonymous friar working in central Mexico oversaw the production of a lost prototype, the source of the Magliabechiano Group, at some point between 1529 and 1533. The friar selected one or more indigenous artists to create pictorial representations of religious and ritual information “to record and to assist other Europeans in understanding the preconquest religious and calendrical tenets of Central Mexico” (Boone 1983:4). Boone believes the original prototype may have been one of the earliest post-contact manuscripts to document aspects of indigenous life; the friar’s efforts to create this European learning tool preceded many conquistador accounts of the conquest (Boone 1983:4).

The original prototype received a great deal of attention upon completion, because it prompted the gradual production of the Magliabechiano Group beginning in the sixteenth century and continuing into the eighteenth. Regarding the first duplication, Boone (1983:5) states, “Shortly after the creation of this codex, an almost identical copy was made, this now-lost copy being known through catalogue descriptions as the *Libro de Figuras.*” The prototype and the *Libro de Figuras* served as the foundation for the group; subsequently these documents became models for later direct and indirect reproductions. Boone (1983:6) considers the *Codex Magliabechiano*, a direct copy of the *Libro de Figuras* made during the sixteenth century, to be “the most accurate existing copy of the original. The Magliabechiano manuscript was derived only indirectly from
the prototype, having been copied from the *Libro de Figuras*, which was itself a copy. But the *Libro de Figuras* was a nearly identical replication of the prototype, and the *Codex Magliabechnano* is a very close copy of the *Libro de Figuras.*”

**The Codex Maglibechiano**

Boone (1983:7) calls the sixteenth century *Codex Magliabechniano* “a faithful copy of an even earlier ethnological codex” and describes its structure as a group of 92 numbered folios providing a collection of illustrations accompanied by Spanish glosses “that present diverse aspects of the preconquest intellectual culture.” The existence of both visual and alphabetic descriptions of Mexican life presents another opportunity for the application of the concept of cognitive dissonance. Examinations of the imagery and annotations show the interpretations the artists and scribes created for the subject matter they encountered and processed.

The specific identities of the creators of this codex and the precise reasons behind its production remain unknown, much like the mysterious origins of the *Codex Telleriano-Remensis*. Among the 92 folios included within the manuscript, the *Codex Magliabechniano* contains a section of pictorial representations accompanied by descriptive alphabetic texts for the veintena cycle, the series of 20-day festivals celebrated annually during the Nahua calendrical year. Unlike the *Codex Telleriano-Remensis*, the imagery and glosses in the *Codex Maglibechiano* exist on separate folios. Each pair of folios presents the image of the deity on the recto, or right folio, while the glosses are on the facing page, the verso. The width of each page is much greater than the height; this layout allowed the artists to create imagery that could dominate an entire folio without taking away space for the descriptive text. Based upon an analysis of the
watermarks, the European paper used within this codex dates to the middle of the sixteenth century and appears to be similar to the type of paper used to create European manuscripts during the years of 1532-1545 (Boone 1983:20).

Boone (1983:21) identifies the collaborative efforts of two artists and one scribe to duplicate the images and text from the *Libro de Figuras*. She differentiates the artistic styles through an examination of the unique approaches Artist A and Artist B apply to the lines, proportions and paraphernalia of each deity figure. Boone (1983:28) states, “Artist A, probably an Indian artist trained fully in the native tradition, copied his source with great precision… Artist B, who was somewhat familiar with both indigenous and European iconographies and painting styles, reproduced the illustrations in the *Libro de Figuras* with slightly less fidelity.” The stylistic approach of Artist A adhered closely to the pre-contact style of painting with clear outlines and flat areas of color. Artist B, probably another indigenous artist, maintained pre-contact artistic traditions, but “was capable of using the fundamental illusionistic devices of European painting” (Boone 1983:26). The presence of three-dimensional objects, such as mats and boxes, under deity figures and the attempts at perspective reflect the effects of these divergent influences upon Artist B’s painting style. The annotator, Scribe A, also created a relatively accurate copy of the Spanish glosses from the *Libro de Figuras*. Boone (1983:186) describes the texts and glosses as “faithful to their source,” but identifies small differences primarily in the form of additional information. She states, “The scribe distinguishes himself with minor embellishments, such as the addition of the phrase ‘la figura es la siguiente’ after each text, and with the insertion of extra pronunciation guides to some of the Nahuatl words” (Boone 1983:186).
Imagery relating to the sixth feast (folio 34 recto) presents the viewer with a visual representation of the feast for Etzalcualiztli (Figure 5). The corresponding Spanish glosses (folio 33 verso) appear on the facing folio (Figure 6) and allow the pictorial representation to dominate the space of the page. On this folio, a human body with a Tlaloc-style head stands in a frontal pose with each arm clearly shown extending out from the body; the figure’s legs and head remain in a profile position facing right. The figure stands on a green mat or box divided into thin, horizontal registers by fine black lines. Tlaloc elements dominate the facial features of the figure; an extended blue curling nose, a blue goggle eye, and a row of fanged white teeth bordered by red along the lip. The headdress is predominately blue with a black design that runs horizontally across the figure’s head and extends onto the back flap. Above the blue portion, a row of white feathers extends upwards and two longer, green plumes continue out in both directions. A green covering with a band of red and white trim falls across the figure’s shoulders. Small, white circular ornaments hang from the edges of the trim. Underneath the green covering, the figure wears a blue shirt and blue, pleated skirt separated by a red belt. The figure also wears blue sandals with red ties.

To the right, the figure holds in the left hand a long, green stalk with yellow corn kernels emerging from the top. To the left, the figure holds in the right hand a staff with two tiers. The figure wears two bracelets on the right wrist, one red and one white. A series of gold circles and small blue banners with white edges decorated the level of each tier. A larger blue banner trimmed in white hangs from the base of the staff. To the far right, beyond the green stalk, a gold container floats in a vacant space on the folio. This
Figure 5. Sixth Feast, *Codex Magliabechiano*, folio 34 recto
Esta es la fiesta a la que llaman escala saltita que quiere decir comida de coatl. Queda de comidas a hacer cocido. Ellos monan que ella se honra que era quícal coatl. Queda de que dirigir. Se llama lula. Era este Dios del ayre


la figura es la siguiente.
Esta es la fiesta que llaman ecacoliztli que quiere dezir comida de ecatl que es vna manera de comida de mahiz cozido. El demonio que se honra era queçalcoatl que quiere dezir culebra de pluma rica. Era este dios del ayre y dezian ser amigo o pariente de otro que se llamaa tlaloc y hermano de otro que se llamaa xuboltl. El qual pone en los juegos de pelota pintado o de bulto. Y tambien este queçalcoatl para su inuocacione en esta fiesta. Los yndios cozian mucho mahiz e frisoles ellos llama[n] poçole. Pintan este sobre vn manojo de juncos. En esta fiesta los yndios se sacrificauan de sus naturas que ellos llamauan mote pulicho, que quiere dezir esta suziedad sacrificada. Dizen algunos que esto hazian porque su dios tuviese por bien de darles generaçion. En esta fiesta tambien los maceguales tomauan las coas o palos con que cabauan los mahizes y arymadas en pie a la pared a cadauno segun era pequena o grande le ponian en vnas hojas de mahiz de aquel poçole o mahiz cozido y en esta fiesta ofreçian al demonio nfnos reobres que ellos llaman teyçoque es vn rrito que ellos tienen. do conbidauan a los parjentes a comer como vstan los cristianos en el babtismo de sus hijos

Boone’s (1983:194) translation states:
This is the feast that they called Etzalcualiztli, which means meal of etzalli that is a type of food of cooked corn. The demon who was honored during it was Quetzalcoatl, which means richly plumed serpent. He was the god of the wind and was said to be a friend or relative of another [god] who was called Tlaloc and brother of another [god] who was called Xolotl, he who they put in the ball games painted or carved in relief. And also [for] this Quetzalcoatl, for his invocation in this feast, the Indians cooked much corn and beans which they call pozolli. They paint this [pozolli] upon a bundle of reeds. In this feast the Indians sacrificed from their genitals, calling [the feast] motepolizo, which means filth is sacrificed. Some say that they did this because their god considered it fitting to give them descendants. Also in this feast the macehuales [commoners] took the hoes or poles with which they dug corn and placed them standing together against the wall, each one according to whether it was small or large. They put the pozolli or cooked corn in some leaves of corn. And in this feast they offered infants to the demon. They called [this rite] Teizoque, which is a rite that they have when they invited the relatives to eat, as the Christians do at the baptism of their children.
vessel is filled with small circles that rest beneath the arch of the largest handle. Three smaller handles emerge from the walls of the vessel.

Durán (1971:430) translates the name of the sixth feast of the year, the festival of Etzalcualiztli, as the “Day of Eating Cooked Corn and Beans.” Durán (1971:430-31) states:

The first day of the sixth month [is] Etzalcualiztli, which means Day on Which Etzalli is Allowed to be Eaten… In the first place, it was at this time that rain began to fall copiously and that corn and other plants were growing and were beginning to bear fruit. Thus the sign of this day was shown, proud and handsome, as a hand holding a cornstalk in the water. This denoted fertility and predicted a good season, since the water had come at the proper time. Another hand held a small pot, which meant that the people could eat without fear of that food of bean and corn.

According to Durán (1971:431), the Nahua indulged in combined servings of corn and beans and the farmers paid homage to their agricultural tools. He refers to these festivities as “ridiculous heathen ceremonies” (Durán 1971:433).

In contrast to the visual image of a single deity figure, these glosses refer to relationships among three different deities: Quetzalcoatl, Tlaloc, and Xolotl. A major discrepancy between the imagery and glosses involves the textual reference to Quetzalcoatl, the honored “demon” of the festival, and the visual portrayal of Tlaloc.

Regarding the veintena section of the Codex Magliabechiano, Boone (1983:184) states, “The deities drawn in this section may also differ from those named in the texts as the major gods of the feasts, for the text to the sixth feast says that Quetzalcoatl was honored during Etzalcualiztli, although the deity Tlaloc is pictured.” The iconographic details of the fangs, goggle eye, and curling lip clearly depict Tlaloc rather than Quetzalcoatl, the
plumed serpent deity. The annotators also compare the feasting held during the rite of “Teizoque” to the family-oriented celebrations of Christian baptisms.

Nicholson (2002:78) describes some of the activities performed during the feast of Etzalcualiztli as follows: “collecting reeds and weaving them into seats and mats; offering and feasting on etzalli (maize and bean porridge); dancing (by the lords) with maize stalks and etzalli-filled pots; making offerings to agricultural implements; and sacrificing impersonators of Tlaloque and the water goddess Chalchiuhtlicue, their bodies buried not cremated.” Nicholson (2002:88) examines the colors and iconography present in the imagery of the Etzalcualiztli veintena from the Codex Magliabechiano. Among the elements he (Nicholson 2002:88) identifies are the “blue paper regalia, including his heron feather headdress (aztatzontli) garnished with the quetzalmiahuatl.” He (Nicholson 2002:88) recognizes the stalk of corn held by the deity in one hand, a “staff (oztopilli) decorated with flower-filled paper cups” present in the other hand, and a “handled etzalomictl” located to the deity’s side.

The thirteenth feast (folio 41 recto) provides imagery for the feast of Hueypachtli (Figure 7). The glosses (folio 40 verso) appear on the page opposite the imagery (Figure 8). Unlike the previous folio image containing a single deity figure, the imagery for this festival illustrates many of the activities performed during the feast. These figures appear to float on the page due to a lack of geographical or architectural settings to establish their location and relationships to one another. On the left side of the composition, a large human figure stands in profile facing the right. The figure extends both arms away from his body toward the right and holds a bundle of red material or a red bag in one hand. The figure’s face is decorated with a large blue nose plug and circular blue ear flares.
Figure 7. Thirteenth Feast, *Codex Magliabechnano*, folio 41 recto
Esta fiesta llamaban los indios fiesta grande. Alas y en esta fiesta, diga era fiesta del pueblo. Y por esto pintaban una cuesta, encima una cuesta, la cual cubrían demasía armados, que ellos, coaltica qui pepe Aroa, este diablo se llamaba subhi que call, y acaso fícan una vendía. Y en este mes no días celebraban otra fiesta, llamaban pilawana quiere de tía borrada delos niños por prensa, los niños bailaban con las niñas. Y el uno al otro se daban abueces hasta entonces que se ydes comían el uno al otro. Sus fiestas y farrinches estos yndios eran ya grandecillos, de nueve o diez años. Esta sensa antigua usana priuer salmente, sino en las tierra suizas. Y son tierra llanas de regoci. a di calienta el sol.

la figura esta siguiente.
Boone’s (1983:225) transcription states:

Esta fiesta llamavan los yndios huepachtli. que quiere dezir grande yetua. de las q en estotra fiesta dize era fiesta del pueblo. y por esto pintauan vna cuesta. y encima vna culebra. la qual cubrian de masa de tamales. que ellos. coaltica quipepechoa. y este diablo se llamava suchiquecala. y sacreficauan vna yndia. y en este mesmo dia celebrauan. otra fiesta q se llamaua pilauana quiere dezir borrachera de los ninos por q en ella. los ninos bailauan con las ninas. y el vno otro de dauan a beuer hasta enborracharse y des comedian el vno al otro. sus fealdades y fornicos estos yndios eran ya grandezillos. de nueve o diez anos. esta Vllaquia no se usaua Vniversalmente. sino en los tlalhuicas. q son tierras llana de Regadio. do calienta el sol. la figura es las siguiente

Boone’s (1983:197) translation states:

This feast the Indians called Hueypachtli, which means great grass, of those that [were] in this other feast, which was said to be the feast of the town. And because of this they painted a hill and on top a snake, which they covered with dough of tamales that they [called] coaltica quipepechoa [serpent of paste]. And this devil they called Xochiquetzal [quetzal flower]. And they sacrificed an Indian woman. And on this same day they celebrated another feast that they called Pilahuana, which means drunkenness of the children, because during it the boys danced with the girls. And they all drank until they were drunk, and afterward they committed abominations and fornications with one another. These Indians were already of age by nine or ten years. This roguery was not done universally, but only in the Tlahuicas, which are plains of irrigated land where the sun is hot.

(Figure 8. continued)
A large red, white and blue headdress trimmed with gold edges extends upwards from the top of the head. A triangular section of red material with white edges extends out from the back of the headdress and a single green plume extends out from the top. Red material lined with blue trim and gold circular ornaments covers the figure’s shoulders. Underneath this material, a large gold disk hangs below the neck and covers the chest. The figure wears a red skirt and white sandals with red ties.

In the upper right portion of the folio, a brown snake with a white underbelly sits in profile facing the left. A forked red tongue extends from its mouth and blue highlights accent the area around its eyes. Thin bands of white and red encircle the snake’s neck and tail, and an additional small section of blue material extends out from the tip of the tail. The artist placed the snake on top of a green mound, possibly either a bush or mountain; two horizontal lines, one red and one white, decorate the base of this green shape. The snake faces a small bundle of five green leaves or plumes floating in the center of the folio. The plumes emerge from a gold object at the center, which rests upon a base of two horizontal lines, similar to those at the base of the snake’s green mound.

In the lower right portion of the folio, two small male and female figures stand facing one another in profile. These figures are depicted on a much smaller scale than the figure on the left and also have much paler skin tones of light brown. The man wears a thin red headband over his hair and a red and white checkered necklace or band around his neck and shoulders. His clothing consists of a simple white loincloth and white sandals with red ties. The woman has her hair pulled back on top of her head with some red material and two white feathers or extensions. She wears a plain white shirt and skirt and white sandals with red ties. Both figures hold small green bowls in one hand.
extended away from their bodies and toward each other. They hold the bowls close to their mouths; a small trail of black dots extends between the top of the bowls and their mouths as if they are consuming the food or beverage.

The sixteenth feast (folio 44 recto) provides the viewer with a pictorial representation of the feast for Atemotztli (Figure 9). The glosses (folio 43 verso) appear on the page opposite the imagery (Figure 10). On this folio, a human figure with a Tlaloc-style head sits on a box or platform in profile facing the right. The Tlaloc elements imitate the imagery from the feast for Etzalcualitzli very closely: an extended blue, curling nose, blue goggle eye and row of white fanged teeth lined with red along the lip. A greenish-gray plumed headdress decorated with black designs rests atop the figure’s head with three different colored rows of feathers. A short row of vertical red feathers forms a horizontal band along the top of the headdress, while a taller row of white feathers emerges from this base of red. Two long, green plumes tied to the front of the headdress form the third grouping of feathers. A triangular section of greenish-gray material covered with the corresponding black design extends out from the back of the headdress. Two circles, one red and one white, also appear on the figure’s face possibly as earflares.

The figure’s shoulders are covered with a piece of gray material trimmed with a red border and white circular decorations. Underneath this covering, the figure wears a blue shirt and skirt separated by a red belt. A large, gold disk hangs directly below the shoulders covering the figure’s entire chest. Back flaps made of the greenish-gray headdress material emerge from the back of the figure. The two rectangular sections of material are covered with the black designs and trimmed with a white border along the
Figure 9. Sixteenth Feast, *Codex Magliabechiano*, folio 44 recto
Esta fiesta llamabaatemuestra, quiere decir bajamiento de agua, por
ella pedían asustos agua para comenzar asentarse los mahí-izes
el demonio y en ella se festiava, sellamaúa tla loco, quiere se
fue con tierra, por su influencia, eran ento quacia en la tierra
esta fiesta por las mayor parte, si acuían los caciques y senores
que los señores sacarían en las que estás esclavos, no se cían più
males, y en el agua a haguarán niños, entregar lá les diese, este agua.
Esta fiesta se llamaba Atemoztle que quiere decir bajamiento de agua. Porque en ella pedían a su dios agua para comenzar asentir los maíces el domonio que en ella se festesaua se llamaua Tlaloc. Que quiere decir con tierra porque su influencia era en lo que veía en la tierra esta fiesta por la mayor parte hazían los caciques y señores y estos señores sacrificarían en las questas esclavos y ofrecían plumajes. Y en el agua ahoguauan niños en lugar que les diese su dios agua.

Boone’s (1983:198-99) translation states:

This feast they called Atemotzti, which means falling of water, because during it they asked their god for water in order to begin sowing the corn. The demon who was feasted during it was called Tlaloc, which means with earth, because his influence was in that which was born in the earth. This feast was held mainly by the chiefs and lords. And these lords sacrificed slaves in the hills and offered feathers. And in the water they drowned children in the place that their god might give them water.
bottom edges. The figure wears white sandals with red ties and sits upon a blue box decorated with a row of white semi-circular ornamentation.

The figure extends one arm out away from the body and holds a double-tiered staff painted in blue, green, and gold. Small gold circles decorate the top of each tier and two small green banners trimmed with white extend from the top tier. A series of eight white circles attached to blue triangular extensions float in front of the figure. These circles surround the space to the left and right of the staff.

The imagery for this festival depicts Tlaloc, the deity of rain, but the addition of select artistic elements reveals the influence of Western painting styles on the production of post-contact codices. Boone (1983:185) states, “Magliabechiano Artist B did add an extra accessory figure to the scenes of the tenth and eleventh feasts… and he painted stools or chairs drawn with an attempt at European perspective beneath the figures of the deities of folios 29 recto, 33 recto, 37 recto, 44 recto, and 46 recto, thereby transforming the pose of the figures from a pre-conquest ‘pin-wheel’ stance to a seated position.” The presence of the box or platform underneath the figure eliminates the pre-contact indigenous preference for figures that appear to float on the page. The feast of Atemoztli included a “fast of Tlaloc priests; rubber-spattered paper banners offered to Tlaloque; tzoalli (maize dough) images of mountain; fertility deities prepared, ‘sacrificed’ with weaving swords, and eaten; children sacrificed by drowning; slaves sacrificed on hilltops; and food offerings in miniature vessels” (Nicholson 2002:78). Nicholson (2002:93) identifies the blue clothing and circular gold disk worn by the Atemoztli figure among the veintenas of the Codex Magliabechiano. The figure holds an “oztopilli” in one hand
amidst the falling rain and sits upon a “quadrangular seat decorated with the ‘precious,’ or jewel, motif.”

**Codex Ixtlilxochitl**

Among the eight manuscripts of the Magliabechiano Group, the *Codex Ixtlilxochitl*, like the *Codex Magliabechiano*, exists as a copied version of the lost prototype. As a part of the Goupil-Aubin Collection in Paris, this codex received its name from its “presumed author: the chronicler Don Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl, who bequeathed it with all his papers to Don Juan de Alva Ixtilixochitl” (Durand-Forest 1976: 34-35). Jacqueline de Durand-Forest (1976) estimates the age of the manuscript through an examination of the handwriting styles and the watermarks. She believes the handwriting script included within the veintena section dates to the mid-sixteenth to early seventeenth century. She confirms this time period with the presence of two distinct types of watermarks imprinted on the folios; these marks appeared in Mexican documents during the late sixteenth century (Durand-Forest 1976:35). The document contains 27 folios of European paper divided into three separate sections: a series of illustrated monthly festivals accompanied by Spanish text, representations of four Tetzcocan lords, Tlaloc and the Templo Mayor, and a calendar of the religious festivals without illustrations (Durand-Forest 1976:35). The first group of 11 folios contains the only information in this codex derived from the Magliabechiano Group prototype. These pages include images and descriptive texts pertaining to the gods, rites, and feasts of the 18 monthly festivals and two death rites (Boone 1983:102). The imagery appears in the upper, middle portion of the folios, while the majority of the annotations fill the remaining space. This visual configuration presents the viewer with another opportunity
to apply the concept of cognitive dissonance through an examination of these

The folios provide tangible evidence for the artisans’

The creative approach to the pictorial representations from the first section

presents elements from both indigenous and European artistic styles. Durand-Forest

(1976:35) states, “The rigid line of the native tradition as well as the cursive contour line

of European influence are noticeable.” Boone (1983:103) believes a single artist

completed all the imagery for the first section and unsuccessfully attempted to copy the

indigenous style of “flat colors outlined in black.” She describes the imagery as a

“degeneration” of the indigenous pictorial style and believes the artists produced figures

suffering from a “loss of iconographic clarity” (Boone 1983:34). Boone (1983:34) notes

the presence of distorted figures and unclear costume elements; she associates these

problems with the creators: historians or secretaries who produced “ethnohistoric
documents containing information on a culture that had ceased to exist.” The deity

figures with human features appear “awkward and boneless” and the iconography seems
to be presented “ambiguously” (Boone 1983:103).

Boone associates the glosses and texts written in the *Codex Ixtilxochitl* with a

single scribe who appears to have copied the information from other sources. She

believes the scribe was uncomfortable with the material and “ignorant of the meaning of

the texts” (Boone 1983:105), because of the frequent presence of misspelled Nahuatl

names. Robertson (1959) believes the figures may have been completed at a later date

than currently accepted based on the styles of the figures and script. He states, “We
suggest this on the basis of inadequate handling of the forms of native traditional
religious art, iconography, and also on the basis of the handwriting of the commentary
which is taller, thinner, clearer, and more easily read than the sixteenth-century script of
Magliabecchiano and Tudela” (Robertson 1959:132) Unlike the Codex Telleriano-
Remensis and the Codex Maglibechiano, this codex also includes translations of the
festival names in Otomí and “an idiom related to the Huastec” in addition to Nahuatl
(Durand-Forest 1976:35).

The sixth feast (folio 96 verso) presents the viewer with imagery for the feast of
Etzalcualiztli (Figure 11). The image of a single standing human figure with a Tlaloc-
style head exists in the upper, middle portion of the folio. This location leaves the
majority of the folio surface available for the Spanish commentary below the image. The
imagery from this folio is very similar to the sixth feast from the Codex Maglibechiano,
but the artwork is much less detailed and precise.

The figure’s torso is positioned in a frontal pose with both arms extended away
from the body, while the legs and head remain in a profile position facing the right. The
Tlaloc imagery includes a blue curling nose, white goggle eye, and two white fangs. The
facial decorations also include a large, red circular ear flare located near the end of the
curling lip. A rigid diagonal line extends from the end of the nose; a small white circle
decorated with several blue rectangular segments hangs from the edge of this line. The
figure wears a short headdress consisting of a blue horizontal band above the goggle eye
and a matching blue triangular section trimmed in red extending from the back of the
figure’s head. A row of white semi-circles or short feathers with little detail extend from
the blue horizontal band. Four taller green feathers stand above this row and two longer

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Figure 11. Sixth Feast, *Codex Ixtilxochitl*, folio 96 verso
... (Figure 11. continued)
The transcription states:
A nuebe de junio
Etzatlcoaltzli
Amab,
Esta es la fiesta que llamaban etzalcoliztli, que quiere desir comida de ezatl, que es vna manera de comida de mais cosido. El demonio que en ella honrraba era quezalcoatl que quiere desir culebra de pluma Rica. Era este Dios del ayre, y desian que era amigo o pariente de otro que se que llamaba tlaloc, y hermano de otro que se llamaba popotl, el qual ponian en los juegos de pelota, pintado o de bulto. Y tambien este quezalcoatl, para su ynbocasion cosian muncho mays y frijoles, que llaman pocole, pintaban a este sobre vn manojo de juncos en esta fiesta sacrificaban los yndios de sus naturas que llamaban motepolizo, que quiere decir esta susiedad sacrificada. Disen algunos que esto asian porque su Dios tubiese por bien de darles generasion, En esta fiesta tambien los maceguales tomaban las coas o palos con quecaban y arrimada senpre a la pared a cada uno segun era pequeña u grande, le ponian en unas ojas de maiz de aquel pozole y en esta fiesta ofresian al demonio los niños rresien nasidos que ellos llamaban [...] Rito que ellos tenian y conbidaban a los parientes a comer como vsan los christianos en el Bautismo de sus hijos

The translation states:
The ninth of June
Etzalcoatliztli
Amab
This is the feast they called Etzalcualiztli, which means meal of etzalli that is a type of food of cooked corn. The demon honored during it was Quetzalcoatl, which means richly plumed serpent. He was the god of air, and they said that he was a, friend or relative of another who they called Tlaloc, and brother of another who was called xolotl, which they put in the ball games painted or carved in relief. And also this Quetzalcoatl, for his invocation they cooked much corn and beans, which they call pozole. They painted this on a bundle of reeds. In this feast the Indians sacrificed from their genitals which they called motepolizo which means this sacrificed filth. Some say that they did this so that their god considered it good to give them descendants. In this feast the maceguales also took hoes or poles with which they dug and brought always closer against the wall each one according to whether it was small or large. They put it on some leaves of corn of that pozole. And in this feast they offered newborns to the demon that they called [...] a rite that they had and invited the relatives to eat like the Christians do at the baptism of their children.
green plumes extend out from the front of the headdress. A reddish-orange back flap hangs down from the headdress along the back of the figure. A segment of white material decorated with red circles at the edges covers the figure’s shoulders below the neck. Underneath this covering, the figure wears a blue shirt and a blue skirt trimmed with red. It appears as if the artist included sandals on the figure’s feet, but the straps and ties on the sandals lack detail and precision.

The figure extends his left arm away from the body toward the right and holds a green stalk with multiple leaves. Two red extensions with frayed edges extend out from the stalk amidst the leaves. In the right arm, extended toward the left, the figure holds the base of a green two-tiered staff. Rows of small gold circles and small red banners decorate each tier of the staff. The figure stands on a double-tiered white platform. The box or pair of steps is outlined in gray and divided into two horizontal levels. To the far right of the image, a gold vessel containing small white circles with a large semi-circular handle floats near the feet of the deity.

The thirteenth feast (folio 100 recto) depicts imagery related to the festival from Hueypachtli (Figure 12). The upper half of the folio contains a similar layout to the Codex Maglibechiano representation with multiple figures floating across the page without geographical or architectural settings. The artist placed the images in the top portion of the folio to leave space for the Spanish commentary underneath.

On the left side of the composition, a large human figure stands in profile facing the right. The figure wears an elaborate headdress made of horizontal sections of white, red, and gray. A horizontal row of gold semi-circular objects decorates the top, along with a single green plume. A large triangular section of red material trimmed in white
Figure 12. Thirteenth Feast, *Codex Ixtilxochitl*, folio 100 recto
(Figure 12. continued)
The transcription (Boone’s 1983:225) states:

Esta fiesta la llamaban gueypachtli que significa los hilos pardos que crean los arboles contenidos en la plana antes de esta que la llamaban mayor que la otra era fiesta del pueblo y pintaban vna questa y ensima della vna culebra y la cubrian de masa de tamales que llamaban cohaltica quipepechoa y este diablo se llamaba zuchiquetzale y sacrificaban vna yndia y este mismo dia celebraban otra fiesta que llamaban pilaguana que quiere desir borrachera de los ninos por que en ella los ninos de nuebe or dies anos baylaban con las ninas y vnas otras se dauan de beber asta enborracharse y despues comedian otros pecados y esto no jeneral en todos que solo lo husaban los tlalguicaz que es en tierra caliente en llanos de rregadio

The translation states:

This feast was called Hueypachtil, which means the brown-grey threads that are raised by the trees restrained in the plains. Before this one that they called bigger than the other, there was feast of the town. And they painted a hill and on it, a snake, and they covered it with a dough of tamales which they called cohaltica quipepechoa. This devil was called Zuchiquetzale and they sacrificed a female Indian and the same day they celebrated another feast which they called pilaguana which means drunkenness of the children because during it children of nine or ten years old danced with girls and they gave each other to drink until they got drunk, afterward they committed other sins. And this was not general for all of them, but performed by the tlalguicaz, which are in warm lands on irrigation plains.

(Figure 12. continued)
extends out from the back of the figure’s head. The figure’s gold-orange face is decorated
with a long, gray bar, or nose plug, and a circular gray ear flare. The figure’s costume is
predominately red, but an arc of gray material accented with red circular decorations
along the edges covers his shoulders. A large gold disk hangs on his chest in the area
between the shoulder wrap and belt. The figure wears a red shirt and skirt underneath the
gray material; the skirt is decorated with a square of blue material containing a white and
gold design. Red sandals adorn the figure’s gold-orange feet. The figure extends both
arms away from his body toward the right. He wears red bracelets on both wrists and
holds a red bag or staff decorated in gold trim in one hand.

In the upper right section of the page, a gold snake sits in profile facing the left
atop a green bush or mountain. A series of black semi-circular designs decorate its body
and a long, forked red tongue emerges from its mouth. The snake wears a red and gold
band around its neck and a gold plume extends from its tail. A red and gold horizontal bar
sits at the base of the green bush. The snake looks toward a white vessel floating in the
center of the page. The vessel sits upon a red and gold bow-tie shaped base and a single
green plume extends from its top.

The lower right section of the composition contains two figures, a man and
woman, standing in profile facing one another. These figures are drawn on a much
smaller scale than the figure on the left and their skin color is a much paler shade of
orange compared to the gold-orange tones of the larger figure. The male figure on the left
wears a red headband over his dark, short hair and a red and white checkered necklace or
wrap falls across his shoulders. He wears a simple white loincloth and white sandals with
red ties. The female figure on the right wears a white covering on top of her head with
her dark hair pulled back. She wears a simple white dress, which covers her arms and a white skirt trimmed with gold. She also wears white sandals with red ties. Both figures extend one arm away from their bodies and hold large green goblets or chalices in their hands. The edges of the goblets are red, and small black dots float above the top rims; a similar sets of black dots float around the mouths of both figures.

The sixteenth feast (folio 101 verso) presents imagery for the festival of Atemoztli (Figure 13). A single figure sits or crouches in profile facing the right in the upper, middle portion of the folio. The figure extends one arm away from his body toward the right and his legs are bent.

The figure’s Tlaloc-style head includes the standard Tlaloc iconography: a blue goggle eye, a blue curling nose, and the presence of three white fangs appearing from the open red lips of the figure. Two circular ear flares or decorations, one red and one gold, decorate the figure’s face as well. The majority of the figure’s headdress consists of rows of colored feathers positioned above a dark horizontal band directly above the goggle eye. A group of dark red feathers makes up the shortest row from which the middle row of taller gold, gray, and white feathers stretches upwards. The tallest feather, a single dark red plume, extends out from the front of the headdress and curves slightly backwards.

A piece of red material trimmed with white semi-circular extensions and gold circular decorations drapes around the figure’s shoulders beneath his neck. Underneath this wrap, the figure wears a red and white vertically striped shirt and skirt; the bottom edge of the skirt is trimmed in red. A gold braided belt encircles the figure’s waist and gold sandals with red ties decorate the figure’s feet. A large piece of black rectangular material, presumably a back flap, hangs down along the figure’s back. The bottom
Figure 13. Sixteenth Feast, *Codex Ixtlixochitl*, folio 101 verso
(Figure 13. continued)
The transcription (Lorena Mihok 2005) states:

A xxvi de diciembre
Atemotztli
quesa

Esta fiesta se llamaba atemoztle que quiere decir baxamiento de agua porque en ella pedian agua afe dios para comensar a senbrar los mayes. El demonio que en ella se festesaba se llamaba tlaloc que quiere decir con tierra porque su ynfluensia era en lo que nacia en la tierra. Esta fiesta hasian por la major parte los caziques y senores y estos senores sacrificaban en las cuestas esclavos y ofresian plumases y en el agua agaban ninos en senal que les diese sua agua.

The translation (Lorena Mihok 2005) states:

The twenty-sixth of December
Atemotztli
quesa

This festival they called atemotztli, which means falling of water because during it they asked for water from their god to begin to sow the corn. The demon which they feasted during it was called tlaloc which means with earth because his influence was in that which was born in the earth. This feast was done for the most part by the chiefs and lords and these lords sacrificed slaves in the hills and offered feathers. And in the water they drowned children as a sign that god give them water.
portion of the back flap matches the red and white stripes of the costume with the addition of gold trim.

The figure holds a black double-tiered staff in his extended arm. Each tier of the staff is decorated with small gold circles and small red banners or feathers. Five circular blue objects float in the space to the right of the figure; three blue circles exist above his arm and two float below. Small sections of frayed blue material are attached to each circle.
CHAPTER FOUR: DISCUSSION

Spain’s political and social conditions at the time of the conquest directly impacted the country’s colonization efforts and affected finished products, such as painted codices, created in the New World yet intended for Old World audiences. The influence of Christianity cannot be ignored as numerous sixteenth century documents emerged under the direction of missionaries. Louise Burkhart (1989:15) states, “Evangelization was for Spain inseparable from conquest and colonization: the Crown must have its gold but God must in return have His souls.” This missionary quest began as soon as Hernán Cortés entered into the Nahuas’ lives; his desire to expedite the conquest process manifested itself in his efforts to advance his personal Christian convictions through the conversion of Motecuhzoma (Ricard 1966:19). His behavior and beliefs reflected Spain’s political and religious attitudes and set the tone for later missionary work and manuscript production. Details from the visual and textual interpretations of veintena and trecena information relate to the sixteenth century spiritual struggles of the European colonizers. Due to the large role the Mendicant Orders played in the production of post-contact codices, their gradually changing attitudes and roles, largely dictated by the Spanish Crown and Catholic Church, seem to have directly contributed to the levels of dissonance reached between the imagery and glosses.

Regarding the educational and instructional role of the missionaries, Burkhart (1989:22) states:
The friars’ ethnography was influenced by the goals of missionization. Much was missed or misinterpreted; European cultural categories were imposed haphazardly upon indigenous conceptual schemes… Though the friars’ aim was to gain more insight into Nahua culture in order to evangelize more effectively (and also to preserve useful information), it was so difficult for them to perceive it except in their own culture’s terms that the degree of understanding they were able to attain was severely limited. At the same time they simply recorded, or allowed their Nahua assistants to record, many things with little or not alteration-other than that imposed by acculturating informants and assistants.

Anonymous artisans and scribes created the *Codex Magliabechiano* around 1550, approximately 30 years after the fall of Tenochtitlán. The overall presentation of the veintena festivals presented through the images and glosses appears to correspond to the missionary strategies of the Mendicant orders during the first half of the sixteenth century. Despite its mid-sixteenth century completion date, the pictorial and textual contents of the *Codex Magliabechiano* were copied from the *Libro de Figuras*, an earlier document produced sometime between 1528 and 1553. During these years, Franciscan, Dominican, and Augustinian friars optimistically worked to introduce and educate the indigenous populations in the beliefs of Christianity. These early members of the Mendicant orders felt confident in their conversion and baptism efforts and considered the indigenous populations to be innocent and easily impressionable. Burkhart (1989:44) states, “The friars viewed the Nahuas as being predisposed to Christianity because of the simplicity of their lifestyle, judging them by superficial attributes interpreted through a Christian screen and ignoring essential aspects of their thought system.” Disgusted by the prideful and greedy tendencies of European culture, the friars interpreted the Nahuas’ pre-contact enforcement of sumptuary laws, restricted access to luxury goods, as a sign of their inherent nature as simple and generous people (Burkhart 1989:18).
The friars initially treated the indigenous populations as “basically good but errant children who, with guidance and constant supervision, could become model Christians” (Burkhart 1989:18). With a great deal of confidence in their conversion efforts, the friars proceeded to open schools and conduct massive numbers of baptisms. With the approval of the Spanish Crown, the Franciscans established the Colegio de Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco in 1536 to educate the descendants of Nahua nobility in theology and the liberal arts (Burkhart 1989:19). Members of the Mendicant Orders created manuscripts for instructional purposes within Mexico and for transport back to Spain to provide their European audience with information about their work in the New World. In 1542, Motolinía dispatched his manuscript, the Historia de los indios de la Nueva Espana, to update the Spanish Crown on the friars’ completely “successful” missionary endeavors (Browne 2000:104).

The Libro de Figuras, from which the contents of the Codex Magliabechiano were copied, existed as the original copy of the early sixteenth-century instructional prototype for friars. The supervising friar over production wanted the manuscript’s visual and alphabetic information to educate members of the religious orders in the identification of idolatrous behavior. Despite the variety of deity figures and celebrations included within the three veintena feasts in the Codex Magliabechniano, the images and glosses maintain a somewhat standard approach to the festivals. The glosses, written in Spanish and intended for a European audience, repeatedly describe the veintena deities as demons or devils and relate the sacrificial activities to the indigenous populations’ veneration of these figures. For example, text from the sixth feast, the festival of Etzalcualitzli, states, “The demon who was honored during it was Quetzalcoatl, which
means richly plumed serpent” (Boone 1983:194). Another statement from the feast of Hueypachtl states, “And this devil they called Xochiquetzal [quetzal flower]” (Boone 1983:197). The alphabetic interpretations of these feasts emphasize major physical activities performed during the celebrations; the scribes portray scenes of death and sacrifice and describe the participants making these offerings. For example, a portion of the glosses describing the feast of Atemoztli states, “This feast was held mainly by the chiefs and lords. And these lords sacrificed slaves in the hills and offered feathers. And in the water they drowned children in the place that their god might give them water” (Boone 1983:199). During the feast of Etzalcualiztli the text states, “And in this feast they offered infants to the demon” (Boone 1983:194).

The emphasis on this terminology fits into the early Mendicant strategy for conversion very well. The devil served as a useful tool for the friars; their certainty of his existence in the New World allowed them to blame the Nahuas’ seemingly barbaric actions on the devil’s duplicity. Burkhart (1989:40) states, “The friars, for whom devils were very real creatures, assumed that the indigenous deities were devils- not products of pagan ignorance but minions of the Prince of Darkness…The natives may have invented on their own the worship of images and the deification of natural objects, but even so these practices led to their enslavement by the Devil… This diabolology exercised a strong hold on the Europeans in Mexico.” The friars defended their belief in the innocence of the indigenous populations by associating the idolatry they found with the presence of the devil’s deception. The friars relied upon the existence of the devil in the New World to protect the indigenous populations; they created an image of the Nahuas as innocent people, completely capable of acting as Christians, but deceived into behaving
unacceptably by the devil’s treachery (Browne 2000:186). “For Europeans like Sahagún, the devil served as a vehicle for salvaging the dignity and humanity of the indigenous population. The indigenous population was viewed as emerging from an era of diabolic deception under the guidance of the missionaries rather than as remaining trapped in the chains of the inherent deficiencies most Spaniards attributed to the Nahuas by the end of the sixteenth century” (Browne 2000:189-90).

By describing the deity figures from the pictorial representation as demons, the friars could maintain their belief in the innocent nature of the Nahuas and blame their actions on the devil’s trickery. Browne (2000: 185-86) states, “Like many of his contemporaries, Sahagún used the devil to explain the existence of what seemed like unimaginable evil indigenous practices, such as institutionalized human sacrifice. As John Elliott has noted, this enabled the friars to shift the blame for idolatry away from ideas of inherent deficiencies and toward the deceptive powers of the devil.” Their emphasis upon the actions involved during the ceremonies also posited the idea that the core of the devil’s influence resulted in physical activities rather than spiritual thoughts; this portrayal supported missionary work with the incentive that actions may be altered and controlled. These textual descriptions enabled the Mendicants to bring a degree of harmony and familiarity into a psychologically uncomfortable situation.

Unlike the directed intentions of the glosses for a Christian European audience, the pictorial representations actually allow space for both Spanish and Nahua participants to confront the dissonance of cultural contact. Much like Sahlins’ assessment of the contact between Europeans and Hawaiians as a place for the existence of the “structure of the conjuncture,” the energies invested into the production of these images created a point
of contact where both sides of the interaction could express themselves in familiar ways in unfamiliar surroundings. The incorporation of European artistic elements into the imagery served the needs of the friars by providing visual support for the glosses’ interpretations of the festivals. The pictorial representations depict the deities as human figures; the artisans gave the gods arms with clearly delineated fingers and fingernails and legs with defined feet and toes. The Hueyapachtli deity (folio 41 recto) maintains a human face, while the images of Etzalcualiztli (folio 34 recto) and Atemoztli (folio 44 recto) appear with Tlaloc-style facial features and headdresses. Despite this difference, all three bodies and pairs of appendages remain recognizably human. The artists painted the deity impersonators in either standing or seated profile positions and placed personalized accessories in the gods’ outstretched arms. In his examination of the European-influenced imagery present in Fray Bernardino de Sahagún’s work, Browne (2000:169) states:

It is easy to see why the increased humanization - by Western standards - of the deity images would appeal to Sahagún. Even though the deity images of the Primeros memoriales could easily be depictions of deity-impersonators, to European eyes the individualized images in the Florentine Codex emphasize more the idea of ordinary human beings “dressed up” like gods. In Book I of the Florentine Codex, for example, the Nahua informants - presumably eager to please the friars - emphasize that some of the old gods like Huitzilopochtli were “only men” (e.g., FC I:i). Sahagún and his companions could easily have perceived - if only unconsciously - the indigenous imitation of European artistic techniques as a way of unmasking the deity-impersonators.

By representing the demons as humanized figures, the perceived discomfort produced by the exposure to Nahua culture became much less threatening and more controllable. These human figures may have helped the friars to explain visually how the indigenous populations lacked any true form of religion. By connecting the textual references to demons with images of people disguised by masks and cloaks, the veintena
folios provided its European audience with the visual clues to identify an idolatrous presence. In their humanized forms, the costumes and actions associated with deity-impersonators appeared as temporary, superficial conditions; ordinary people, rather than supernatural or god-like beings, existed under these disguises. By perpetuating this interpretation as a learning tool, the friars may have stripped the festivals of their indigenous spiritual significance by simplifying them into removable, tangible costumes and controllable actions. Mendicant members may have promoted the effectiveness of their conversion efforts by portraying the Nahuas as simple people, enchanted by demons into wearing strange costumes, and living without the presence of a true spiritual guide, like God, in their lives.

In spite of the adjustments made to the images as a result of the format switch from screenfold to codex, and the supervision of a friar over production, the imagery from the *Codex Magliabechiano* maintains elements of pre-contact indigenous iconography. The figures display numerous indigenous painting traits: flat areas of color, clear outlines, and an absence of geographical or landscape settings that make the deity figures appear to float on the folios. The festivals of Etzalcualiztli (folio 34 recto) and Atemoztli (folio 44 recto) present clearly identifiable traits for Tlaloc, fangs, and a curling nose and lip, while the feast of Hueypachtli (41 recto) includes a visual reference to Coatepec, Serpent Mountain, in the imagery of a snake placed upon a mountain. Despite the humanization of the figures, the imagery may visually display the pivotal roles deity-impersonators played during *veintena* festivals. Unlike the less threatening perception of humanized figures to Europeans, the Nahuas believed the people selected as impersonators literally ascended to a divine level. Browne (2000:171) states, “Deity-
impersonators were not impersonators in the modern, almost pejorative sense of the word. Through their impersonation, human beings became one with the omnipresent gods and affirmed their collective place in a mythic cosmic order.” In this way, the folios provided visual spaces for the survival of indigenous spirituality. The pictorial representations of deity figures preserved the familiarity of Nahua beliefs while simultaneously allowing the Spaniards to interpret deity-impersonators in their own familiar terms. Browne (2000:170) also states, “In medieval iconography, saints seldom look truly human because they are modeled after the invisible reality of a typos hieros. This idea is still ingrained enough in Western consciousness to provoke the assumption that the very human mundaneness or realism of the deity images in the Florentine Codex reveals their lack of true divinity- but could it be otherwise?"

Skepticism about the effectiveness of the Mendicant orders’ efforts began to appear by the middle of the sixteenth century. Browne (2000) identifies numerous changes ordered by the Spanish Crown to the religious practices of New Spain in 1555. He describes the ecclesiastical efforts to confiscate “sermons written in an indigenous language” and “to instigate the careful regulation of indigenous displays of their Christian faith” (Browne 2000:111). The friars’ instruction of the Nahuas in Christian doctrine diminished over time as they were gradually replaced with secular priests between the 1550s and 1580s (Burkhart 1989:18). Concern for the salvation of indigenous souls and for the social and religious promotion of indigenous members within their own communities started to wane as the friars’ numbers dwindled. “Most Spaniards in sixteenth-century New Spain were not overly concerned with the true conversion of the Nahuas unless it somehow played into their more worldly objectives” (Browne
Whereas the manuscripts created under the supervision of the first Mendicant orders attempted to identify idolatrous Nahua behavior with the deceptive tricks of the Devil, some codices from the middle of the century appear to lack these early missionary fears of perpetuating and preserving threatening pre-contact traditions.

During this time, a group of anonymous artisans and scribes created the *Codex Telleriano-Remensis* around 1563. Unlike the folios from the *Codex Magliabechiano*, this later manuscript presents dramatically different pictorial and textual interpretations of the *veintena* festivals. Compared to the earlier codex, these later images and glosses present the viewer with a somewhat unique approach and tone. Although the precise purpose of the document is unknown, the emphasis upon the identification and elimination of idolatry from earlier in the century seems to be missing. The codex appears to record and relate to the details of the festivals without a desire to condemn the participants or activities. Without bearing the responsibility of producing an instructional tool for friars, the creators of this codex may have experienced the freedom to record and describe aspects of indigenous life for a European audience devoid of judgment.

The glosses from the *Codex Telleriano-Remensis* omit any references to the roles of demons or devils; these terms do not appear on the selected folios. Instead of identifying the deity figures as demons, the glosses focus upon comparing the purposes of the festivals to concepts a Christian European reader might understand. For example, the second gloss from the feast of Hueypachtli (folio 4 recto) states, “This was the great feast of humiliation; here they celebrated the feast of all their gods or, as it were, feast of all saints” (Keber 1995a:255). For the feast of Atemoztli (folio 5 verso) the gloss reads, “Atemoztli means descent of the waters, for during this month it rains greatly; and thus
they depict him with a descending river, which he has under his feet’ (Keber 1995a: 256). The glosses within the *trecena* section of the codex also maintain this interpretive attitude. The text from the sixteenth *trecena* (folio 20 recto) states, “Tlachitonatiuh (the rays of the sun descending) that is, between the light and darkness. And thus they depict the sun on his shoulders and death below his feet, as shown here. They say that this is the warmth or heat that the sun sheds on the earth; they say that when the sun sets it goes to give light to the dead” (Keber 1995a:266). The annotators replaced references to sacrificial rituals, demons, and offerings with more positive explanations of the celebrations. For example, the scribes avoid descriptions of the sacrifice of a woman during the feast of HueySpain and the drowning of children during the feast of Atemoztli.

Radical differences also exist between the pictorial representations of the deity figures in the *Codex Telleriano-Remensis* and the *Codex Magliabechiano*. Abstract iconography and disjointed figures appear to replace a prior emphasis upon the humanized forms of the deities. Disembodied heads and fragmented imagery pictorially represented on the *veintena* folios in the *Codex Telleriano-Remensis* provide a stark contrast to the complete, full-standing, costume-wearing human figures from the *Codex Magliabechiano*. The later imagery focuses on the disembodied head of Tlaloc for the festivals of both HueySpain and Atemoztli. Instead of dressing a human figure with a Tlaloc-style mask, these images position an entire Tlaloc-style head at the top of a green mountain for the feast of HueySpain and at the end of a stream of water for the feast of Atemoztli. This approach to the imagery no longer allows the viewer to interpret the deity
as a superficial being; the simplified head eliminates the tangible, controllable aspects of the celebration and implies a much greater spiritual significance.

The *Codex Ixtilxochitl*, another painted book from the *Magliabechiano Group*, appeared around 1600 as an indirect copy of the lost prototype. As a member of this family of related manuscripts, the visual and textual information contained within this codex imitate the interpretations found within the *Codex Magliabechiano* very closely. The codex contains a much smaller number of folios, but the existing representations of the *veintena* festivals appear to mimic the terminology and painting style used in the earlier document.

The glosses appear to describe the *veintena* feasts with an emphasis on the presence of demons and their influence over the Nahuas’ actions, similar to the *Codex Magliabechiano* interpretations. The exact vocabulary and phrases used to convey the ritual activities vary upon comparison with the earlier codex, but the overall tone directed toward the events remains the same. For example, a portion of the glosses from the feast of Atemotztli (folio 101 verso) states, “Most of the feast was done by the chiefs and lords and these lords sacrificed slaves in the hills and offered feathers and in the water they drowned children.” A phrase included within the description of the feast of Hueypachtli (folio 100 recto) states, “And this devil was called xuchiquetzale and they sacrificed a female Indian.” Except for rather minor discrepancies, the alphabetic glosses refer to the deities as demons and emphasize the violent actions of the Nahuas during the feast. Since the source of the *veintena* information contained within the *Codex Ixtilxochitl* came from a copy of the *Magliabechiano Group* prototype, the instructional manuscript, this type of condemning narrative seems appropriate.
The reduced degree of detail and precision applied to the pictorial representations of the three *veintena* festivals presents a major contrast to the clear forms and iconography present in the earlier manuscript, the *Codex Magliabechiano*. The gradual evolution of the visual imagery may correspond to the ever changing dynamics between the Spanish Crown and Catholic Church and the indigenous populations. By the mid to late sixteenth century, a realization developed among Europeans regarding the large numbers of false conversions after it became apparent that significant elements of indigenous spirituality survived despite the missionary efforts. Ricard (1966:35) describes the emergence of a “violent antinative reaction” among Franciscans around 1570. Fray Bernardino de Sahagún, one of the most active friars in New Spain, acknowledged the failure of the early Mendicant Orders to eliminate the Nahuas’ non-Christian practices. Unlike Motolinía’s earlier accounts of successful conversion practices in 1542, Sahagún’s *Arte adivinatoria*, a written statement from 1585, depicts a completely different religious atmosphere. Browne (2000:105) describes Sahagún’s work as the “clearest statement that exists of his pessimism and despair concerning the mission in New Spain.” Ricard (1966:35) states:

> The missionaries, the reader is reminded, came from a country that had always been particularly touchy about orthodoxy, one that had shown a profound horror of heresy, one in which the Inquisition has gone farther that elsewhere, one in which a king, Philip II, who came to the throne during the spiritual conquest of New Spain, wished to be the champion of the true faith in the world…It is easy to see why the phobia about heresy that raged in Spain was exaggerated in America among the religious who were perpetually in contact with a pagan civilization.

The devil still maintained his presence in New Spain.

The seemingly careless painting style found among the images in the *Codex Ixtlixochitl* may have been intentional rather than sloppy, second-hand copies of earlier
Magliabechiano Group manuscripts. Revelations about the false conversions may have given rise to a fear of perpetuating pagan rites through the preservation of indigenous pictorial writing in post-contact codices. Among the veintena folios, the iconography contains minimal detail; the elements appear blurry and difficult to read while the colors are uneven and distorted compared to the Codex Magliabechiano images. For example, the sandals worn by the deity during the festival of Etzalcualitzli (folio 96 verso) in the Codex Ixtlilxochitl display shoddily drawn straps and ties in comparison to the crisp lines present in the representation of the same celebration in the Codex Magliabechiano. By designing images that are difficult to read, the creators prevent the preservation of indigenous religion; iconographic features perceived as remnants of paganism by Christian Europeans.

Dramatic examples of such alterations occur among the three codices in their representations of Atemotztli. The Atemotztli imagery from the Codex Telleriano-Remensis provides the viewer with the most abstract visual representation: a disembodied Tlaloc-style head placed at the end of a stream of flowing blue water. As previously discussed, this mid-sixteenth century codex appears to have been produced without the burden of serving as an instructional manual or visual warning of the presence of paganism.

The major shift in the pictorial representation of Atemotztli appears between the two Magliabechiano Group manuscripts, the Codex Magliabechiano and the Codex Ixtlilxochitl. Despite their existence as indirect copies of the same prototype, these manuscripts present very different depictions of the same deity. These changes to the outward appearances of the figures seem unusual when the glosses imitate each other so
closely. The Codex Magliabechiano presents a humanized figure of Tlaloc (folio 44 recto); the deity sits upon a box in profile with recognizable human arms and legs. The artists limited the Tlaloc iconography to the details of the figure’s mask and headdress. The artists involved with the Codex Ixtlilxochitl transform Tlaloc into a frightening animal-like figure without any recognizable human traits. Unlike the lighter skin color and orderly fangs of the earlier Tlaloc image, the late sixteenth century painting for the Atemotztli feast (101 verso) confronts the viewer with dark blackish skin color and prominent, exaggerated fangs. This menacing creature may relate the overall frustration and fear experienced by the friars and priests by the end of the century.

Conclusion

This thesis provides an examination of folios from the Codex Telleriano-Remensis, the Codex Magliabechiano, and the Codex Ixtlilxochitl through the application of Leon Festinger’s concept of cognitive dissonance in order to introduce an alternative approach to the study of culture contact. The work analyzes the ways in which this psychological condition manifested itself in post-contact codex production as a result of sixteenth century political and social circumstances. Post-contact codices containing visual and textual descriptions of pre-contact Nahua spiritual entities and events exist as tangible applications of the concept presented within the theoretical work of Festinger. By locating these codices within the dynamic atmosphere of the early post-contact period, based upon their estimated dates of production, the discrepancies between the imagery and glosses serve as examples of dissonance resulting from the larger sixteenth century cultural framework. As points of culture contact between the Nahua and Spanish participants, these codices’ folios expose relationships existing between the imagery and
texts that reflect Festinger’s (1957:2) assertions about the existence of “psychological discomfort” under his theory of cognitive dissonance. The codices served as physical meeting grounds for the scribes and annotators to confront the confusing and unknown aspects of the conquest.

The application of Festinger’s concept of cognitive dissonance to post-contact codices provides an example for the reassessment of the interactions and products that resulted from contact between the Old and New Worlds. By applying Festinger’s ideas, the existence of discrepancies between different descriptions of the same feasts and deities seem to be the result of the overall discomfort created by the conquest rather than simple instances of miscommunication or absences of information. Festinger (1957:14) discusses how each culture defines what it accepts as consonant information and subsequently rejects what it considers too unfamiliar or uncomfortable as dissonant. According to this concept, the divergent descriptions of the same festivals found among the folios in the Codex Telleriano-Remensis, the Codex Magliabechiano, and the Codex Ixtlilxochitl came from natural inclinations on both sides to reach levels of consonance despite the unfamiliar circumstances. The imagery and annotations became outlets for expressions of familiar forms and ideas. The imagery retained degrees of indigenous identity, even when altered, while the texts allowed for European translations of foreign events and entities. As demonstrated in this thesis, the folios do not provide unaltered glimpses into pre-contact Nahua life nor simple misinterpretations of information. Through the application of Festinger’s concept, the combination of images and glosses found on the folios supplies modern audiences with visible interpretations of culture contact; the codices give the encounter a visual form that simply did not exist prior to
contact. This work with post-contact codices suggests the possibility for broadening current opinions surrounding artifacts and accounts from the central Nahuan colonial period by bringing Festinger’s concept of psychological discomfort into the analyses of points of culture contact.

The analyses of painted codices also tie directly into the anthropological studies of Marshall Sahlins and James Lockhart. Sahlins (1981:35) identifies the “structure of conjuncture” as a place where traditional ideas and behaviors gradually absorb new meanings during moments of culture contact because all participants interpret foreign actions in respectively familiar ways. This concept applies to the production of post-contact codices because the physical production process literally brought two distinct methods for communication together: the Nahua tradition of pictorial representation and the European tradition of alphabetic text. Each style of communication proceeded to produce descriptions of festivals and deities according to respective cultural standards, yet their meeting produced original results in the form of the painted colonial codices. These manuscripts provide tangible reflections of the rapidly changing political and social conditions in sixteenth century central Mexico as a result of the conquest, particularly those circumstances revolving around the friars’ positions in the New World. The missionaries’ early efforts to visually document and describe aspects of pre-contact Nahua life progressively became attempts to defend their presence and authority in the New World to the Spanish Crown. The codices became places of culture transformation where Sahlins (1981:67) states that, “What began as reproduction ends as transformation.” Pressured by Spain to prove the effectiveness of their conversion efforts,
but also plagued by their fear of preserving idolatrous information, the friars supervised
the creation of the images and annotations within the manuscripts to justify their work.

Furthermore, as the creators of these forms of communication proceeded to
function within their respective frameworks, the scribes and annotators continued to
interpret information in traditionally acceptable ways, whether it resulted in incorrect or
consciously altered meanings. Despite the accuracy of the finished products, the
completed images and glosses translate into examples of Lockhart’s (1985) double-
mistaken identities. By retaining consonant ideas and forms, all participants could
continue to discuss the same subjects during moments of culture contact without “having
any notion of the divergent perceptions of the other side” (Lockhart 1985:467).
According to this concept, the discrepancies between the images and glosses in post-
contact codices appear as natural attempts by both Nahuas and Spaniards to rely upon
familiar interpretations during the confusion of the early sixteenth century.

Painted codices bring lasting visual interpretations of culture contact into
sixteenth century discussions unlike Sahlin’s emphasis on the immediacy of face-to-face
interactions and Lockhart’s study of the emergence of mistaken identities during colonial
legal proceedings. As physical documents, these manuscripts provided the participants
with a different type of space for contact and reaction apart from Sahlins’ and Lockhart’s
exchanges. Central Mexican codices emerged as new types of documents from the
effects of the conquest and the political and social demands of the sixteenth century. This
thesis presents the folios as visual manifestations of the conquest; the codices reveal the
artistic and textual selections made by the creators to document information according to
the social conditions of the time. The imagery and glosses required an initial exposure to
the subject matter and the subsequent translation of the details once the artisan or scribe
interpreted the information. By identifying changing visual and textual interpretations of
the same indigenous festivals through the sixteenth century, the creators’ attempts to
selectively preserve, omit, or alter the content become more apparent.

Comparisons between the images and glosses from the Codex Telleriano-
Remensis, the Codex Magliabechiano, and the Codex Ixtilxochitl provide an opportunity
to evaluate the application of Festinger’s theory of “cognitive dissonance,” Sahlins’
concept of the “structure of conjuncture,” and Lockhart’s idea of “double mistaken
identity” to post-contact codices. As surviving early sixteenth century manuscripts, these
codices represent the simultaneous preservation of an indigenous tradition and the
misrepresentation of indigenous beliefs. The foundation for the imagery comes from the
Nahua pre-contact tradition of pictorial representation while the presence of the glosses
comes from the annotators’ need to cater to a European audience. The joint creation of
post-contact codices challenged the Spaniards and Nahuas with moments of dissonance,
which resulted in divergent interpretations of the other through both visual and textual
descriptions.
References Cited


