The Woman Who Turned Into a Jaguar, and Other Narratives of Native Women in Archives of Colonial Mexico

Lisa Sousa

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To Kevin, Isabella, and Vincenzo, with love

wife murder was harshly punished.[113] Of the twenty-five cases of spousal homicide that I examined, eight had sentences (in addition, two men maintained their innocence while deposing under torture and were officially cleared of the charges). Two of the guilty were condemned to death; three were sentenced to two hundred lashes and labor for periods of two to eight years[114]; one was banished from the community for a year; one was fined twenty pesos[115]; and one was sold into servitude for five years after he attempted to poison his wife.[116] As discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6, Spanish authorities excused murder only when a man could prove that he had caught his wife committing adultery.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Even with the introduction of Christianity, indigenous people continued to interpret the social, economic, and political significance of marriage in traditional terms. Marriage represented the transition from childhood to adulthood, and marital status and affiliation largely shaped one's social identity. Marriage enabled the establishment of new households, promoted joy in the growth of families, and provided companionship and love for husband and wife. It also formalized cooperative and reciprocal labor arrangements between a man and woman and their respective households.

To understand marital relationships in strictly economic terms is to overlook a fundamental form of expressing affection, however. Providing food or clothing for a mate strengthened emotional bonds and demonstrated concern for another's well-being. When members of households worked together or pooled their resources, they expressed social solidarity in the collective effort to survive. Finally, nobles used marriage to build alliances and enhance the political power of their lineages in colonial times.

Many couples lived in informal unions outside of wedlock and shared the expectations of married couples. The inconsistent prosecution of these couples makes it difficult to estimate how frequent such arrangements were in rural native communities, but they seem to have been common. In the cases that I located in the historical record, many couples were interracial and there may have been differences in race and status that undermined their ability or desire to marry. An existing marriage also prevented a couple from formalizing their union.

When a husband and wife (or an unmarried couple) failed to live up to their partner's ideals, their relationship could deteriorate and, in some cases, become violent. Criminal cases of assault and battery and homicide

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reveal native attitudes toward appropriate gender roles, marital relations, and the use of violence. Although in their exhortations on the permanence of marriage the friars admonished women to remain submissive to their husbands, even in cases of violence and abuse, the criminal prosecution of wife beating suggests that domestic violence, especially if deemed excessive, was not condoned or accepted (even if common) in indigenous communities.

Women's use of the criminal justice system indicates that they expected to be taken seriously and treated fairly by native and Spanish officials. By initiating a case before the community, a woman used social pressure and legal institutions to curb her husband's cruel behavior. In his comparative analysis of attitudes surrounding gendered violence in Morelos and Oaxaca, Stern detects "hints of a wider cultural affirmation of contingent right in male-female relations" in Oaxaca, a region that remained predominantly indigenous in the late colonial period.[117] My research on the earlier period reveals similar patterns, even in central Mexico. In conjunction with other sources, criminal cases provide alternative perspectives to idealized gender roles described in formal texts and enable a more comprehensive view of indigenous women's status in early Mexico.

CHAPTER FIVE

Sexual Attitudes and Concepts

On December 19, 1593, Andrea Hernández complained to Ñudzahui (Mixtec) officials and the Spanish alcalde mayor in Teposcolula that her husband, Pedro, had been having an affair with a married neighbor named Cecilia López for over a year. Other women corroborated her accusations, testifying that they had seen Pedro and Cecilia enter each other's house on many occasions and seen them sit and eat together on a *petate* (reed mat used for sleeping and sitting). Andrea also alleged that her husband and Cecilia often mistreated her because of their infidelity. The alcalde mayor warned the promiscuous pair that they would be given a hundred lashes if they were caught meeting publicly or privately ever again, but just two days later Andrea saw her husband enter Cecilia's house. Rather than bother with officials, Andrea and five other women, including her mother, went to Cecilia's house and beat her.[1]

The accusations of adultery and assault in this case from late sixteenth-century Teposcolula illustrate how sexual attitudes and mores shaped the dynamics of marriage, household, and community relations in this part of New Spain. Indigenous peoples of highland Mexico held similar beliefs about sexuality, and they shared common concerns over the perceived dangers of excess and deviation from prescribed behavior. Formal texts and speeches are especially valuable for reconstructing indigenous sexual ideology and behavior. The vast majority, written by Christianized native noblemen under the supervision of Spanish friars, are in Nahuatl and show varying degrees of Christian influence.[2] Texts written by friars and their indigenous aides reflect the Christian sexual concepts that ecclesiastics sought to impart to native peoples as part of the larger evangelization project, yet their reliance on native terminology reveals the persistence of local concepts. Colonial criminal records are more representative than these sources in terms of region, class, and gender in that they come from areas outside of central Mexico and include women and men of all social

pes. They complement the formal sources and reveal popular attitudes ncerning intimacy and desire.

This chapter examines indigenous sexual concepts, symbols, and metahors, and their evolution in contact with native Christian sexual moral-y. Multiple perspectives in the sources show that attitudes toward sex ere especially important in shaping interactions among adult men and omen and in regulating behavior within and among groups in ancient id colonial times.

SEXUAL ATTITUDES

Nahuas rarely spoke directly of sex or the body in formal speeches, preferring symbolism and nuance instead. Speeches from Nahua rituals that marked the passage from childhood to adolescence suggest that sex was een as one of the principal pleasures on earth, but it could also bring disease and social discord and therefore had to be carefully regulated.

Sexual Desires

Early colonial Nahuatl-language texts use the term *tlalticpacaiotl* (earthly pleasure) as a metaphor for sexual intercourse.[3] A sixteenth-century model speech for a ruler addressing his daughter conveys the sentiment that tlalticpacaiotl, like food, rest, and friendship, enriched life and perpetuated society:

> So that we will not forever go about weeping, so that we humans will not die of sorrow, our lord gave us laughter, sleep, and crops, the source of our health and sustenance, and finally earthly pleasure so that procreation would occur.
>
> *inic amo cemicac tichocatinemizque, inic amo titlaoculmiquizque in timaceoalti: teoatl techmomaquili in totecuio, in vetzquiztli, in cochiztli: auh ie in tonacaiutl in tochicaoaca, in tooapaoaca: auh iequene ie iehoatl in tlalticpacaiotl, inic nepixolo.*[4]

Such texts recognize the desires of both men and women. It is significant that in the speech just translated the father permits his daughter to consider sexual relations a pleasure. In fact, among the terms for female genitalia is *ipaquia* (her place of joy),[5] and one name for a courtesan is *ahuiani* (one who indulges in pleasure). Perhaps influenced by Spaniards who spoke of the *debito matrimonial* (marriage debt), Nahuas considered sexual satisfaction a marital obligation.[6] In a speech to his adolescent son, a father refers to the "earthly pleasures that you owe to your spouse" (*tlalticpacaiotl, inic timaceoalti in monamic*).[7] He warns that, because

of his inability to satisfy her needs, a wife might come to "abhor" and "detest" her husband (*ie cuel mitzihiia, ie cuel mitztlaelitta*) and even seek a lover: "Perhaps, even if it is not her intention, she will go to another; she will betray you because you have quickly ruined yourself, you have exhausted yourself" (*acaço y iatlamatia mopan iaz, mitzontlaximaz: ca nel noço otonmiciuhcapolo, ca otonmotlami*).[8]

In the Nahua father's speech are two legends that acknowledge the sexual appetites of both men and women. In one, a preconquest tale about the sustained sexual longing of women throughout their lives, two old women accused of adultery with younger men were brought before the ruler Neçahualcoyotzin, who asked how it was that they still "want earthly pleasure" (*anquinequi in tlalticpacaiotl*).[9] The women explained that, while men may become impotent, women have inside of them "a cave, an abyss, whose only function is to await that which is given, whose only function is to receive" (*ca oztotl, ca tepexitl in totech ca; ca çan tequitl imacoca quichia, ca çan tequitl tlacelia*).[10] As receptors, women were passive but not passionless. The second legend is that of an old man accused of adultery who explained that he still "required earthly pleasure" because he had been prudent in sexual relations and had not wasted his semen when he was young.[11] While the father's speech and other Nahua moralistic narratives concede the intimate desires of both men and women, they emphasize the importance of moderation.

Following Nahuatl conventions of polite discourse, the body, like the sexual act, was discussed in metaphorical terms. In the legend of the old women who committed adultery, the vagina is a cave, playing on the Mesoamerican conception of the earth as female and illuminating one dimension of "earthly pleasure." In another part of the Nahua father's speech, he says to his adolescent son, "It is as though you are a maguey, you will sprout a stalk, you will ripen" (*in ma iuhqui timetl, tiquiiotiz, titeteçaviz*).[12] Although Nahuas considered sex a tlalticpacaiotl, they also believed that it could destroy life and social relations.

Sex and Contamination

The Nahuas thought that a man had a fixed amount of semen, which he would have to expend sparingly over the course of his lifetime. Nahuatl-language speeches and texts often warn of the dangers of excessive sexual activity that would exhaust a man's supply too quickly and lead to impotence. Terms such as *mocauani* (one who is depleted) and *tlatzivi* (idle) are used to describe impotent men. Thus, a father would warn his son that he would shrivel and die if he became sexually active prematurely, just like a maguey that had been tapped too early.[13]

You are like a bored maguey, you are
Perhaps while you are still in your full
yourself, you can no longer say anythi

Auh in mahan titlachictli, in mahan
quin vel ica toquichtli, in o cuel tonm
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You are like a bored maguey, you are like a maguey: soon you will cease to flow. Perhaps while you are still in your full manhood, you already will have exhausted yourself, you can no longer say anything, no longer do anything to your spouse.

Auh in mahan titlachictli, in mahan timetl: çan cuel in timocaoaz timeia, aço quin vel ica toquichtli, in o cuel tonmotlami, in aoc cuelle tiquilvia, in aoc cuelle ticaitia monamic.[14]

In some ways, a man's marriage and his very life depended on his ability to perform sexually. It also was thought that the immoderate use of aphrodisiacs would quickly exhaust a man's semen and therefore lead to an early death.[15] Interestingly, the Nahuas recognized semen as a life-giving fluid, yet they understood it as necessary not just for creating new life but for sustaining the life of the male and his female partners.

Although moderation in sex and monogamy were the prescribed norms, polygyny and concubinage contradicted Nahua rhetoric. Despite warnings, it is clear that many did not heed recommendations of moderate sex. For example, in 1540 the Nahua cacique of Matlactlan admitted that he had five concubines living in his home and several others in different houses; native witnesses estimated that he had as many as twenty.[16] Privileged status and/or wealth may have allowed some noble and commoner men to exceed prescribed sexual norms.[17] In fact, demonstrations of virility may have symbolically enhanced political and social power.

Nevertheless, stories of the sexual excesses of rulers sometimes served as cautionary tales. In his chronicle of the Mexica, Chimalpahin writes that the great altepetl of Tlatelolco came to an end in the year 1473 "because of concubines." Its ruler, Moquihuixtli, was married to Chalchiuhnenetzin, the sister of the ruler of Mexico Tenochtitlan, Axayacatzin, but he surrounded himself with his concubines and entirely rejected her. He took her gifts from her brother and gave them to his women, he stopped sleeping with her, and he beat her. The disgraced and downtrodden Chalchiuhnenetzin informed her brother of Moquihuixtli's abuse and of his plans to make war on the Mexica. This news angered Axayacatzin and he declared war on Tlatelolco.[18] Chimalpahin's account is a parable warning that inappropriate sexual relations, including concubinage among the nobility, could unleash social and political chaos.

As Alfredo López Austin observes, Nahuas believed that excessive sex was dangerous because during the sexual act the *tonalli* (life force) and the *ihiyotl* (breath) were liberated from the body, which left it vulnerable to illness.[19] They also prescribed moderation because they considered sex to be a source of contamination. Male and female bodies were not pollutants per se, but they carried polluting residues and odors after sex.[20]

A sixteenth-century Nahua nobleman's speech to his adolescent daughter expounds on the corrupting aspect of sexual activity: "Do not desire earthly pleasures. Do not wish to know of that which is called the place of excrement, the place of trash" (*ma çan cuel tontlaelevi in tlalticpac, ma çan cuel tontlamatiznec, in mitoa, in cuitlatitlan, in tlaçultitlan*).[21] Popular belief reflected this preoccupation. It was said that those who lived together outside of wedlock, along with adulterers, thieves, and gamblers, would contaminate ritual offerings (*quitlaçollotiz*),[22] and that pulque makers who did not abstain from sex during production would make the beverage "sour" (*xocoiaz*).[23]

The Nahua goddess of sexuality, Tlazolteotl (*tlaçolli*, trash; *teotl*, here goddess), illustrates the association between sex and contamination.[24] Tlazolteotl was also called Tlaelquani, or one who eats filth.[25] In preconquest times, adulterers confessed their transgressions to her and did penance in her honor to avoid punishment.[26] The goddess Xochiquetzal was also associated with sexual excess.[27] A depiction of Xochiquetzal-Ixnextli in the Codex Telleriano-Remensis symbolizes sexual transgression and discord (see Figure 5.1). She is seated backward on a throne with her head turned around and her hair disheveled; she is weeping. Unlike most images of central Mexican women, this one shows Xochiquetzal's breast exposed. She holds a container full of what an anonymous scribe in a Spanish gloss describes as *mierda* (excrement), representing all bodily excretions. According to native pictorial traditions, Xochiquetzal's posture and appearance represent discord.

Native artists depicted a restless, irresponsible person with his or her hands, head, and/or feet directed backward. For example, an illustration of a vagabond in the early colonial manuscript known as the Codex Mendoza shows a man with his hands and feet facing backward as if to signify that he is constantly coming and going (see Figure 5.2).[28] In her study of gender ambiguity, Cecelia Klein has shown that preconquest, colonial, and modern ethnographic sources use twisted bodies, backward-facing feet, and backward dancing and walking to represent moral disorder, evil, and a variety of illicit sexual behaviors, including adultery, homosexuality, and bisexuality.[29] This concept may also be related to the concept of double-crossing in the Nahuatl verb *maxaloa* (commit adultery) and to the reflexive form of the verb *cuepa* (turn oneself around or turn into something). *Mocuepa* is used in Nahuatl moralizing speeches such as when a Nahua father rhetorically warns his daughter "And if truly you turn yourself around, will you become a goddess?" (*Auh tla nel timocuepaz: cuix titeutiz*).[30] The term as used in the text clearly carries a sexual connotation and may suggest something similar to the English "to be twisted."[31] Unkempt hair further signifies transgression and uncivilized

Figure 5.1. Ixnextli-Xochiquetzal
transgression a
SOURCE: Codex Telleriano-Remensis, fol. 1

eman's speech to his adolescent daugh-
spect of sexual activity: "Do not desire
know of that which is called the place
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Figure 5.1. Ixnextli-Xochiquetzal as the embodiment of sexual transgression and discord

SOURCE: Codex Telleriano-Remensis, fol. 11r. Bibliothèque nationale de France.

Figure 5.2. Vagabond shown coming and going
SOURCE: Codex Mendoza, fol. 70r. Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, Ms. Arch. Selden A1. Berdan and Anawalt 1992, fol. 70r. Reproduced with permission from University of California Press Books.

behavior. The Codex Telleriano-Remensis image of Xochiquetzal can be read as the embodiment of conflict, disharmony, and sexual excess.

In a Nahuatl-language model speech, a noble warns his adolescent son about having sex with women too early:

You will interrupt your development, you will stunt your growth, your tongue will be white, your mouth will become swollen, puffed; you will go about tasting your snot; you will be pale, you will go about on earth pale; your snot will be dripping; you will go about coughing; you will be weak, weakened, emaciated; you will become a tuft of hair. You will possibly linger on earth a short time, very soon you will be old, old and wrinkled.

timozcallopuztequiz, ticacamacpil, tinenepiliztacapil tiez, ticamaçapil, ticanponaton timuchioaz moiacacuitlapil ticpalotinemiz, tipinectontli tiez, tipineoatinemiz

in tlalticpac, moiacacuitl chipintinemiz, titôtôl
tontli tiez, tiquequetotzpil, timamalichtontli tin
in tlalticpac, çan cuel iça tivevepil, tivevexoloch

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Nahuatl descriptions of prostitutes and
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titute as *tlacamicqui* (a dead person), *xoch*
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Because intercourse was considered a co
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palotinemiz, tipinectontli tiez, tipineoatinemiz

in tlalticpac, moiacacuitl chipintinemiz, titôtôlcatinemiz, tiiâiacatontli, tivivitoc-tontli tiez, tiquequetotzpil, timamalichtontli timuchioaz: hacaço ie tiquezquilvitia in tlaltïcpac, çan cuel içа tivevepil, tivevexolochton.[32]

In his treatise on native spirituality and healing, written in 1629, Ruiz de Alarcón claimed that pollution-induced diseases affected male and female adults and children; even an unborn child could be harmed in the womb.[33] These diseases fell into two main categories: *tlaçolmiquiztli* (filth-death) and *netepalhuiliztli* (the state of being dependent on someone).[34] A sexual transgressor, especially an adulterer or a man with many concubines, transmitted tlaçolmiquiztli diseases when he or she came into contact with others. The Florentine Codex records that adulterers, who were particularly dangerous because of their sexual transgressions, would kill turkey chicks with their "filth" (*quintlaçolmictia*) if they came near them.[35] Netepalhuiliztli diseases were spread by those who had become sad and melancholy from coveting another's spouse or possessions. The healing rituals for these diseases emphasized the native belief in the polluting effects of sex. The victim was purified with incense and cleansed through bathing or *tetlaçolaltiloni* (the means of washing someone with regard to filth).[36] Significantly, the curing incantations recorded by Ruiz de Alarcón were addressed to Tlazolteotl and other goddesses. Thus immoral thoughts and acts brought disease to oneself as well as to others in the household and community.[37]

Nahuatl descriptions of prostitutes and adulteresses exemplify native beliefs in the destructive effects of excessive and illicit sexuality.[38] Many of the noun constructions used metaphorically to describe prostitutes contain *micqui*, (a dead person). Nahuatl-language texts describe the prostitute as *tlacamicqui* (a dead person), *xochimicqui* (a sacrificed captive), *teomicqui* (a sacrificed captive), and *miccatzintli* (a poor dead person).[39] An adulteress also is deemed *omic, omomiquilli* (dead, a dead person).[40] These references suggest associations between a richly attired captive who impersonated a deity before his or her sacrifice and the prostitute adorned with face paint, an elegant coiffure, and perfume. According to the Florentine Codex, prostitutes, like god impersonators, were frequently intoxicated. Furthermore, both slaves and prostitutes were bought and sold in the market.

Because intercourse was considered a contaminating act, ritual preparation and penance required sexual abstinence. For some ceremonies, only priests and priestesses practiced chastity; for others all ritual participants, sometimes the entire community avoided sex. Responses to questions in the *Relaciones geográficas* regarding ancient religious customs frequently mention that men and women of the noble and commoner

classes abstained from sex to prepare themselves for spiritual exercises.[41] Reports of severe punishments for those who broke vows of chastity underscore a belief in the polluting effects of sex and the subsequent damage that prohibited intercourse might cause. Native nobles recalled that, in preconquest times, priests who failed to keep their vows were burned, strangled, or shot with arrows.[42] The *Relación* of the Bènizàa (Zapotec) community of Tecuicuilco corroborates the Nahua data, citing the case of a priest who had failed to abstain from sex and pulque and was executed.[43] While such accounts may be exaggerated in order to fashion an image of a more austere and well-ordered past, they nevertheless locate pollution in the sexual act. An investigation of religious practices in the Sierra Alta reveals the continued importance of sexual abstinence as part of ritual preparation in the Bènizàa, Ayuuk (Mixe), and Chinantec communites in the early eighteenth century.[44]

Indigenous-language sources and colonial criminal records discuss sexuality overwhelmingly in heterosexual terms and only rarely comment on homosexuality. The silence suggests a number of possibilities. We might conclude that homosexuality was not a serious moral concern or a threat to socioeconomic relations in the way that adultery was and so did not attract the attention of local officials. A second possibility is that if homosexuality was a concern, it was policed at the household, not the community, level. A third possibility is that cross-gendering and transvestism regulated homosexual relations by recasting a same-sex couple as heterosexual, although here we must be cautious not to conflate gender identity and sexual orientation. In any case, I agree with Sigal that it seems unlikely that a sexual identity equivalent to "homosexual" existed in the indigenous communities of preconquest and early colonial highland Mexico.[45]

Discussions of sex in formal texts and speeches are often couched in metaphorical terms, and sexual symbols were used in images of intimate relations to encode daily interaction between native men and women with meaning; such sexual signifiers entered into popular discussions and expressions of intimacy.

SEXUAL SYMBOLS AND METAPHORS

In indigenous metaphorical speech and iconographic systems, food and drink, flowers, feathers, and reed mats have sexual connotations. Moreover, since native peoples also sexualized communication and interaction between men and women, sight and speech were symbolically invested

with sexual potency. Preconquest and colonial visual and verbal expression reveals the richness and persistence of this symbolism.

Food and Drink

Throughout Mesoamerica, native peoples associated food and drink with fertility, (re)production, and sex. The sharing of food and drink, like sex, was the foundation of intimacy between a man and a woman and a central aspect of marriage ceremonies in the communities of highland Mexico. Sahagún's Nahua informants likened sexual intercourse to eating in recalling instructional speeches, ritual preparation, and calendrical prognostications. Speaking metaphorically, Nahuas said that the masters of the youth "ate in secret" (*ichtacaquaia*) when they arranged a rendezvous with a woman.[46] Parallel phrases in speeches and texts that juxtapose eating and intercourse also conflate the two. For example, the Florentine Codex prognostication of the fate of a man born on the day of One House warns: "Perhaps he will commit adultery; perhaps he will sleep with, he will have sex with, another's woman (*cueitl, vipilli*); perhaps he will eat another's food, he will eat upon departing from another's place" (*aço tetlanximaz, aço tetlan aquiz, aço cueitl, vipilli tepan canaz, aço tetlaqualiz, tetlan quateuiz*).[47] Eating conveyed the man's inclination to commit adultery. Linguistic evidence illuminates the conceptual relationship between eating and sexual intercourse. The Nahuatl verb *yecoa* means "to taste, sample food or drink" or "to copulate with someone."[48]

Sixteenth-century models of speeches that Nahua parents delivered to their adolescent children also employed metaphors of eating for sexual relations. In one a father instructs his son to avoid excess, likening oversexed behavior to that of a dog, a symbol of lasciviousness gulping its food: "[But] you are not to waste yourself quickly; you are not to devour, to gobble earthly pleasures as though you were a dog" (*iece amo mimiciuhcapoloz, amo iuhqui tichichi, ticquativetziz, ticquetzontivetziz in tlalticpacaiotl*).[49,50] In advising his son to practice moderation, even with his wife, the father says: "Although she is your spouse, your flesh, with whom you will live, with whom you will go about, it is as with food—you are not to eat it quickly; that is to say, you are not to live in filth; you are not to give yourself to it excessively" (*ma nel monamic, monacaio, in itlan tinemiz, in itlan tiaz: in mahan tlaqualli, amo tiquiciuhcaquaz, quizoznequi, amo titlahelnemiz, amo ticmotequimacaz*).[51] Finally he speaks of sex as food when he warns his son that if he becomes incapable of satisfying his wife, he will "starve her to death" (*ticapizmictia*).[52] Food, like sex, was one of life's necessities to be shared with one's spouse. Sexual desire was like hunger—if not fulfilled, it could lead to premature death.

References to fasting and sexual abstinence in the same passages in the Florentine Codex, the *Relaciones geográficas*, and colonial criminal and Inquisition records also associate food, drink, and sex. The Florentine Codex states that before a ritual rulers, officials, and warriors fasted for five nights, during which they abstained from their wives and slept in the *calpulli* temple (a calpulli is a subunit of an altepetl).[53] Similarly, in an account of the ceremonies for Panquetzaliztli, Sahagún's informants told him that in preparation, "they greatly honored fasting. All of the people abstained, especially those who were the bathers. No one slept with a woman, and none of the women slept with a man" (*cenca quimaviztiliaia in neçaoaliztli: vel ixquich, tlacatl, motzitzquiaia: oc cenca iehoantin, in tealtique: aiac cioacochia, auh in cioa, ano ac oquichcochia*).[54] Narratives of the preparations for the feast of Quecholli also combine abstinence from sex, food, and pulque. To avoid contaminating offerings and ritual items, people fasted and abstained while they made the spears that would be used in a festival: "And when spears were being made, no one slept with a woman. And the old men did not drink pulque; they did not get drunk. They abstained; they abstained from pulque" (*Auh in iquac tlacatia mitl, aiac cioacochia; auh in vevetque, amo quia in vctli, amo tlaoanaia, motlacaoaltiaia, quimocaoaltiaia in vctli*).[55] Finally, from the Florentine Codex on the feasts of Macuilxochitl and Xochipilli: "When they were fasting, if one of us men slept with a woman, or a woman slept with a man, it was said 'they destroyed their fasting with filth'" (*yn iquac neçauililoia, intla aca toquichti ipan cioacochiz, anoço cioatl, ipan oquichcochiz: mitoaia, quintlaçulmictia, yn neçaoaliz*).[56] Sex was a food that spoiled the fast.

In addition to contaminating ritual offerings, breaking a fast or a vow of abstinence carried long-term personal consequences. Because their inability to keep ritual commitments was linked with their control of sex, women born on the day Seven Flower were warned that they would become great whores if they broke their fast.

> Indicating that it was not a good [day sign], it was said, when if some embroiderer broke her fasting, it was said, then she deserved infamy and a bad name, that she would just live in vice and become a prostitute. For it was said the embroiderers lived in great vice and became prostitutes.
>
> *auh inic amo qualli, mitoaia, iquac intla aca tlâmachchiuhqui, yneçaoaliz quitlacoaia, mitoa: vncan quimomacevia avilquizcaiotl, aviltocaitl: inic çan âavilnemiz, âavienitiz, ca mitoa, tlaquauh avilnemia, mâaviltiaia in tlamachchiuhque.*[57]

This warning is ambiguous since "fasting" could very well mean sexual abstinence. In any case, the inability of women born on Seven Flower to

fulfill their sacred obligations undermined their success as embroiderers. Images of the goddess Xochiquetzal that show her with symbols of sexual excess and of women's work embody the fate predicted for them (see Figure 5.3).

Like Sahagún's Nahua aides, native respondents to the *Relaciones geográficas* and witnesses in idolatry trials consistently equated sexual abstinence and fasting. Residents of Ucila, for example, abstained from sex and did not eat chile, salt, or any other prized foods before rituals.[58] Similarly, those of Chinantla abstained and ate only once daily for one hundred days before their principal feast.[59] In Camotlan, Chinantla, and Lalana in the Zapotec Sierra in the early eighteenth century, inhabitants also observed food restrictions and sexual prohibitions for ceremonial

Figure 5.3. Xochiquetzal with symbols of illicit sex
SOURCE: Codex Telleriano-Remensis, fol. 22v. Bibliothèque nationale de France.

purposes and the local calendar reader instructed them when to start and how long to maintain their penances.[60]

In colonial adultery investigations, Nahua, Ñudzahui, Bènizàa, and Ayuuk witnesses accused men and women who ate together of sexual intimacy. Drawing from the case that opened this chapter, two Ñudzahui women of Teposcolula testified in 1593 that Pedro Hernández and Cecilia López were certainly lovers because the women had seen them eating together.[61] Similarly, when don Agustín Maldonado and Inés Pérez were tried for adultery in the Mixtec community of Tamazulapa in 1626, one witness was convinced of their affair because he had seen them sleeping and eating together; a second said that he had seen the couple drinking together.[62] In 1657, Bènizàa residents of Lalopa, in a homicide investigation involving a local man accused of murdering his wife, testified that the man had been sexually involved with another woman because they had seen the two eating together.[63] Trying to prove his innocence, the man's mother and stepfather employed the same strategy, insisting that their son and his wife had been on good terms because they had seen the couple eat dinner together and then lie down on their mats. As for the other woman, the parents explained that she had given them food because she was their comadre and that her gesture did not reflect any intimacy with their son.

The act of eating together could intimate sexual relations even among household members. In 1667, a jealous, young Zapotec wife accused her husband of committing incest with his stepmother, offering as evidence the fact that the two routinely ate together. The man explained that he had given his stepmother tortillas and *atole* (a corn beverage) only because she was his father's wife. Local native officials took the charges seriously and investigated.[64] The symbolic significance of a shared meal shaped the daily interactions of native men and women, who had to be careful about the messages they might send if they offered food to or shared it with a member of the opposite sex other than a relative or spouse.

The linking of sex and food in native society derived in part from the duties that a husband and wife shared and the obligations that they owed each other. Food was a prized, sacred commodity.[65] Thus sharing food was an act of love and respect. Cooking meals was laborious and time-consuming for women, making food even more valuable because of the effort invested in its preparation. In 1692, a Bènizàa woman of Taguí associated labor obligations with sexual pleasure when she assaulted a woman whom she suspected of sleeping with her husband. She dragged the woman by her hair to a *metate* (grinding stone) and demanded that if she was going to have sex with her husband, she should grind maize for his tortillas, too.[66] The duties and rewards of marriage converged when it came to food and sex.

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Drinking, like eating, symbolically established and extended all social relations, but among adult men and women it took on a deeper significance. Couples often drank pulque together in their own homes or in the homes of other couples, friends, or relatives.[67] Consequently, social drinking was seen as a part of courtship.[68]

While couples ideally ate and drank in moderation, excessive drinking, like gluttony, was associated with a voracious sexual appetite and illicit sex. This is illustrated in pictorials and Nahuatl-language text descriptions of prostitutes. For example, according to the Florentine Codex, a Nahua mother reminded her adolescent daughter that only *ahuianime* (women of pleasure) indulged in pulque and jimson weed.[69] To the Nahuas, the prostitute evoked terms such as *tlahuana* (she/he gets drunk), *xocomicqui* (she/he is a drunkard), and their derivations, including *tequixocomicqui* (one who has the occupation of habitually drinking), *tlatlahuana* (she/he continually gets drunk), and *tlahuanqui* (one who gets drunk).[70]

Figure 5.4, an illustration from the Florentine Codex, shows a prostitute offering a drink to a man in exchange for money. It is a hybrid of native and Spanish sexual symbolism. As Jeanette Peterson points out, the prostitute wears red shoes, a European convention for a harlot.[71] Also, her posture mimics European poses of the time and she is facing front rather than in profile, representing the influence of three-dimensional European art style on Nahua artists. She sells her body for money, a Spanish introduction. At the same time, this image reveals underlying indigenous symbols. The couple is shown at the crossroads, a place of danger and transgression.[72] Clearly drink, sex, and the prostitute's sale of her body are all connected here, as they are in Figure 5.5, which shows an "evil youth" (*telpochtlahueliloc*) holding a jug and offering a cup to a woman. The accompanying Nahuatl text makes clear that the young scoundrel indulges in alcohol and women.[73]

Colonial criminal records from Oaxaca and central Mexico reflect many of the attitudes toward sex and seduction expressed by the Nahua writers and artists who contributed to the Florentine Codex. A 1588 case of assault against Ana Hernández Tajasos, a fifty-year-old Ñudzahui woman, took an unexpected turn when don Gabriel de Guzmán, the cacique and governor of Yanhuitlan, accused her of prostituting her own daughter.[74] A thirty-five-year-old Ñudzahui woman testified that she had seen people bringing large jugs of pulque to Ana's house and many women of loose morals drinking there. Other native witnesses also alleged that there was frequent drinking at Ana's house, proving that she was a procuress. Generally, natives who testified in adultery cases equated excessive drinking with licentiousness. In 1643, don Miguel Caros, a

Figure 5.4. Sixteenth-century prostitute, revealing the indigenous association between drinking and sex

SOURCE: Florentine Codex, bk. 10, fol. 70. Florence: Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Med. Palat. 220, c. 72. By concession of the Ministry for Heritage and Cultural Activities; further reproduction by any means is forbidden.

Nahua noble of Coyoacan, presented several witnesses who attested to his wife's infidelity, alleging that she had gotten drunk on pulque with don Miguel's rival.[75] Regardless of the truth of such accusations, the link between drinking and sexual impropriety in formal speeches, popular imagination, cultural practice, and legal testimony echoes Florentine Codex descriptions of prostitutes and lewd young men.

Flowers, Feathers, and Reed Mats

In metaphorical speech and iconography, flowers, feathers, and reed mats appear as symbols of potency, fertility, and (re)production.[76] As with food and drink, the enjoyment of flowers was subject to restrictions. According to the Florentine Codex, people did not deserve to smell the centers of flowers; that honor belonged to the god Titlacahuan alone.[77] Those

Figure 5.5. Sixteenth-ce who is prone to the

SOURCE: Florentine Codex, bk. 10, fo Med. Palat. 220, c. 26v. By concession o further reproducti

who violated such restrictions cl symbols of fertility and producti in speeches at native life-cycle ri spoke of children as flowers wh the marriage ceremony, telling t would have children who woul and throat" (*aço xotlaz aço cue tzinco*).[78] In some communities ers during the wedding ceremon example.[79] Late colonial paintin garlands as they leave the churc

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Figure 5.5. Sixteenth-century depiction of an evil youth who is prone to the vices of drunkenness and lust

SOURCE: Florentine Codex, bk. 10, fol. 24v. Florence: Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Med. Palat. 220, c. 26v. By concession of the Ministry for Heritage and Cultural Activities; further reproduction by any means is forbidden.

who violated such restrictions challenged the social and moral order. As symbols of fertility and productive sexuality, flower imagery was evoked in speeches at native life-cycle rituals. Nahua elders and honored guests spoke of children as flowers when they addressed a bride and groom at the marriage ceremony, telling the bride that if she were fortunate, she would have children who would "bloom and flower" from her "womb and throat" (*aço xotlaz aço cueponiz in moxillantzinco in motozcatlantzinco*).[78] In some communities, the bride and groom exchanged flowers during the wedding ceremony, as did Mixtec couples of Xalapa, for example.[79] Late colonial paintings depict native couples wearing flower garlands as they leave the church or grooms carrying flower staffs.[80]

Flowers, like food and drink, had both positive and negative connotations. While they might represent reproduction in certain contexts, they symbolized the destructive aspects of sexual excess and illicit relations in others. Nahuatl-language expressions in the Florentine Codex suggest the negative connotations in, for example, the Nahuatl phrase "I caress one

with flowers (*nictexochitzotzona*)," meaning "I seduce him/her."[81] Similarly, the expression "I destroy one with flowers (*nitexochipoloa*)" means "to entice one with drink, with food, with flowers, with tobacco, with capes, with gold."[82] In both cases, flowers signify temptation, decadence, and forbidden pleasures.

The giving of flowers as an act of intimacy appears in the historical record. When doña María, the widow of the cacique of Tetzcoco, testified against don Carlos Ometochtzin Chichimecatecuhtli in 1539, she recalled that on two or three occasions he had sent her flowers to seduce her, but claimed that she had rejected them.[83] Molina's Nahuatl dictionary includes the term *xochihuia* (from *xochitl*, flower), which means "to enchant, to seduce the woman with pleasing words in order to take her to another place, or to bewitch her."[84] A cross-dresser was also called a "possessor of flowers," or *xochihua*, and the illustration accompanying this description in the Florentine Codex shows a flower between a seated couple (see Chapter 2 for further discussion and Figure 2.8 of the cross-dresser). The Nahua association of sexual diseases with certain flowers, including the white amaryllis and the poinsettia, confirms the potentially destructive nature of flowers.[85]

Several illustrations in the Florentine Codex show prostitutes holding flowers to represent promiscuity (Figures 5.6 and 5.7).[86] Flowered clothing, although sometimes worn by indigenous men and women without inherently negative connotations, conveys overt sensuality and seduction when worn by prostitutes and the "wicked old man" (*ueue tlahueliloc*) (see Figure 5.7 and the left panel of Figure 5.8). Significantly, an illustration of the procurer depicts his enticing speech (*xochihuiliztli*) as a small flower (see the right panel of Figure 5.8 and refer to Figure 3.2). In the Nahuatl-language description of the prostitute, "she appears like a flower" (*mosuchiquetza*).[87]

Feathers, another symbol of fertility and reproduction, were used frequently in ceremonies and worn by nobles and ritual participants. Alessandra Russo has shown that feathers represented *tonalli* or a person's essence or "shadow" in preconquest and colonial featherworks and costumes.[88] Understanding feathers as a symbol of a person's essence or life force explains why in some Nahua myths they symbolize impregnation, sexual vitality, and reproduction. According to one myth, Coatlicue, a goddess and the mother of Mexica's principal god, Huitzilopochtli, became pregnant when she placed a ball of downy feathers at her waist and they slipped into her dress.[89] Nahuatl speeches, written down during the sixteenth century, were filled with feather imagery. For example, Nahua nobles customarily made speeches to young women when they became pregnant for the first time. The pregnant woman's

Figure 5.6. Prostitute holding flowers, symboli

SOURCE: Florentine Codex, bk. 10, fol. 39v. Florenc
Med. Palat. 220, c. 41v. By concession of the Ministry
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Figure 5.6. Prostitute holding flowers, symbolizing sexual excess and seduction

SOURCE: Florentine Codex, bk. 10, fol. 39v. Florence: Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Med. Palat. 220, c. 41v. By concession of the Ministry for Heritage and Cultural Activities; further reproduction by any means is forbidden.

parents congratulated her on the impending birth, telling her that the "All-Pervasive" (a term used for a deity in preconquest times and the Christian god in the colonial period) "wants to place a life inside of you, to provide you with a necklace, to provide you with a fine feather" (*a mitic quimaquiliznequi in ioliliztli; mitzmocozcaiotiliznequi, mitzmoquetzallotiliznequi*).[90] Significantly, in a late sixteenth-century description of a marriage ceremony in the Nahua community of Epazoyuca, the bride and groom were bedecked in feathers, symbolizing their association with reproduction.[91]

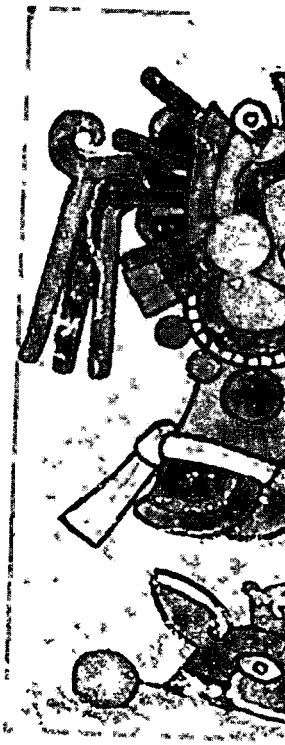
The Ñudzahui creation myth depicted in the preconquest Codex Vindobonensis shows a primordial couple establishing the first yuhuitayu on earth. Both the male and the female share the name One-Deer, and both wear ear spools, necklaces, and garments that convey their nobility and equal status. Also, their large feather headdresses represent their roles as the progenitors of the Ñudzahui deities and people (see Figure 5.9).

Figure 5.7. Prostitute holding flowers and wearing a floral garment

SOURCE: Florentine Codex, bk. 10, fol. 39v. Florence: Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Med. Palat. 220, c. 41v. By concession of the Ministry for Heritage and Cultural Activities; further reproduction by any means is forbidden.

Figure 5.8. "Wicked old man" depicted wearing a flowered cape (left) *and procurer with flowery speech* (right)

SOURCE: Florentine Codex, bk. 10, fol. 24v. Florence: Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Med. Palat. 220, c. 26v. By concession of the Ministry for Heritage and Cultural Activities; further reproduction by any means is forbidden.



Figure

SOURCE: Codex Vindobonen
Facsimile edition. Vienna: Ak
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ce: Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana,
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Figure 5.9. Ñudzahui primordial couple

SOURCE: Codex Vindobonensis Mexicanus I, obverse 51. Vienna: Osterr Nationalbibliothek. Facsimile edition. Vienna: Akademische Druckund Verlagsanstalt; Madrid: Sociedad Estatal Quinto Centenario; Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1992.

Among the most prominent fertility images in Mesoamerica is the feathered serpent, or Quetzalcoatl (Nahuatl, *quetzalli*, quetzal feather; *coatl*, snake). The extensive iconography and mythology surrounding Quetzalcoatl has numerous meanings, and in certain contexts the feathered serpent served as a sexual symbol. Scholars frequently associate Quetzalcoatl with the phallus; however, in his study of a modern Mixtec community, Monaghan finds that the people of Nuyoo associate it with female genitalia.[92] Representing the union of earth (snakes/female) and sky (birds/male), the image embodies duality and bisexuality. Significantly, in preconquest and early colonial codices it is frequently undulating through the legs of a woman, clearly connoting fertility and reproduction. Figure 5.10, from a preconquest Ñudzahui manuscript known as the Codex Nuttall, shows a woman named Three Flint who has just given birth. The newborn is still attached to her by the umbilical

Figure 5.10. Feathered serpent in birth scene from a Ñudzahui pictorial manuscript

SOURCE: Codex Nuttall, fol. 16. Facsimile edition. Vienna: Akademische Druckund Verlagsanstalt; Madrid: Sociedad Estatal Quinto Centenario; Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económico, 1992.

cord and blood pools beneath her. A feathered serpent winds around behind her and through her legs, and the position of its head mimics hers. The snake follows her as she enters the earth through a cave. In the Codex Laud, the feathered serpent appears in a scene with the goddess Tlazolteotl-Ixcuina, identified by the weaving implements in her headdress and in her hands and by the crescent moon on her skirt and her nose ornament (see Figure 5.11). The serpent passes through her legs, and the head of Ehecatl, the god of wind and a manifestation of Quetzalcoatl, peers from its mouth.[93] Ehecatl is shown adjacent to Tlazolteotl as a body of water in which the latter is submerged in a birthing position.[94]

Like flowers, feathers, food, and drink, the reed mat had a variety of meanings in native verbal and visual expression. Throughout

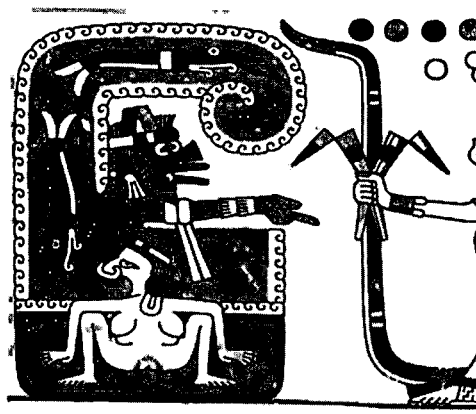

Figure 5.11. Tlazolteotl with

SOURCE: Codex Laud, fol. 32. Facsimile edition. Vienn Madrid: Sociedad Estatal Quinto Centenario; Mexico

Mesoamerica, it was a symbol of auth scripts, murals, painted ceramics, and scu on reed mats or high-backed mat "thr alike used mats to sit and sleep on. As di ple, in the marriage ceremony the mat, sy sexual intimacy. In Ñudzahui codices, ru sitting together on a reed mat and gesturi argues, in this context the mat was more ity; it represented the "conjugal bed" of t of producing heirs to the rulership. Thu mat was both a political and a social syml relationship between the royal pair.[95]

Native-language terminology makes tween sex and the mat. Verb construct based on indigenous words for mat. An "have sex," Córdova's dictionary lists *ñee*, with; and *penigonná*, woman).[96] Al similar construction, using *yuhui* (mat): Nahuatl constructions for sexual relatio plicitly, although it is implied in referenc ample, Molina lists *niteteca* (I lay somec sleep next to him/her) among terms for in express sexual intimacy by showing a m suggesting these terms.[98] In an illustration adulterous couple lies together under a bl

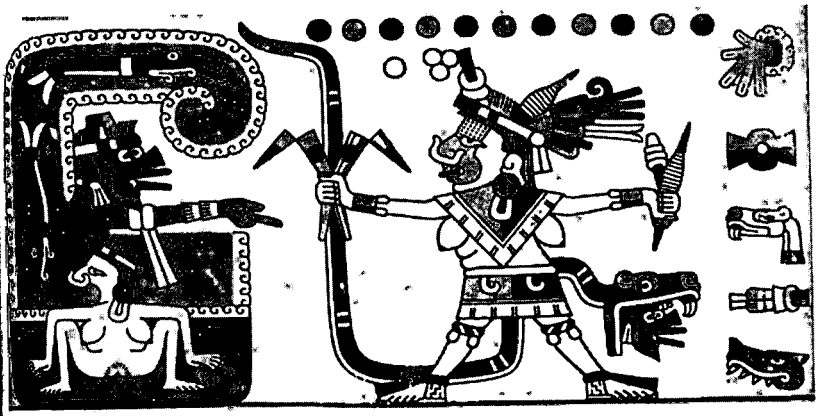

Figure 5.11. Tlazolteotl with feathered serpent

SOURCE: Codex Laud, fol. 32. Facsimile edition. Vienna: Akademische Druckund Verlagsanstalt; Madrid: Sociedad Estatal Quinto Centenario; Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económico, 1994.

Mesoamerica, it was a symbol of authority. In native pictorial manuscripts, murals, painted ceramics, and sculptures, rulers are shown seated on reed mats or high-backed mat "thrones." Nobles and commoners alike used mats to sit and sleep on. As discussed in Chapter 3, for example, in the marriage ceremony the mat, symbolized the couple's union and sexual intimacy. In Ñudzahui codices, ruling couples were often depicted sitting together on a reed mat and gesturing to one another. As Terraciano argues, in this context the mat was more than simply the seat of authority; it represented the "conjugal bed" of the ruling couple and their legacy of producing heirs to the rulership. Thus in Ñudzahui manuscripts the mat was both a political and a social symbol that represented the intimate relationship between the royal pair.[95]

Native-language terminology makes a metaphorical association between sex and the mat. Verb constructions meaning "have sex" are based on indigenous words for mat. Among Tíchazàa terms meaning "have sex," Córdova's dictionary lists *taañee penigonná* (*taha*, mat; *ñee*, with; and *penigonná*, woman).[96] Alvarado's dictionary provides a similar construction, using *yuhui* (mat): *yoyuhuindiña* (mat someone).[97] Nahuatl constructions for sexual relations do not mention the mat explicitly, although it is implied in references to the place of sleep. For example, Molina lists *niteteca* (I lay someone down) and *ytlan nicochi* (I sleep next to him/her) among terms for intercourse, and native pictorials express sexual intimacy by showing a man and woman lying together, suggesting these terms.[98] In an illustration from the Codex Mendoza, an adulterous couple lies together under a blanket facing each other, a pose

that, according to native pictorial conventions, symbolizes consent (see Figure 6.2).

According to testimony in archival records, when a man and a woman sat or lay down together on a mat, they were expressing their sexual intimacy. Thus the statements of common people provide insight into the popular understanding of these multivalent symbols. When called to testify about accusations of adultery, native witnesses sometimes evoked the image of the reed mat to suggest indiscretion. In the example from Teposcolula that opened this chapter, a witness incriminated a couple in an affair by testifying that she had seen them sitting together on a reed mat.[99] Similarly, in 1626 two witnesses in an adultery trial in Tamazulapa testified that they had seen the alleged lovers sleeping together on a petate.[100] Like couples sitting together on a mat, men and women who spoke to or looked directly at one another raised suspicions.

Speech, Sight, and Seduction

The cultures of Mesoamerica possessed rich oral traditions. Speaking was invested with considerable power, and nobles distinguished themselves from commoners by the use of reverential, metaphorical language. Colonial records attest to a highly developed genre of speech for intimacy and courtship. In some contexts, speaking represented intercourse. In a moralizing speech, a Nahua father advises his son that if he foolishly wastes his semen by indulging in sex at an early age, his later sexual performance will suffer; the time will come "when you are no longer able to say anything, no longer able to do anything to your spouse" (*in aoc cuelle tiquilvia, in aoc cuelle ticaitia monamic*), making the association between sex and speech explicit.[101] Discourses on acceptable sexual behavior and descriptions of transgressors in the Florentine Codex articulate the relationship between speech and seduction. An evil youth is characterized as a womanizer and a smooth talker. He is deemed "a keeper of mistresses, a talker; he lives in concubinage" (*mecaoa, notzale momecatia*).[102] The illustration of the prostitute in the Florentine Codex (Figure 5.4) reinforces the sexual power of speech by showing a client kneeling before and offering money to a prostitute; a speech scroll emerges from his mouth indicating that he propositions her with pleasing words. Nahuatl-language descriptions of the procurer and the procuress also emphasize their abilities to deliver arousing discourses (see Figure 5.8). In fact, it is through speech alone that the procurer is said to have led clients astray:

> The procurer is a mouse, a charmer, a windbag, an enticer, a possessor of flowers, one who seduces people with flowery words, one who flatters people with

pleasing words, one who poisons people. He entices, he poisons people; he stretches out long-winded speeches; he summons people with spells, he lays ambushes for people.

in tetlanochili quimichi tensuchitl, hecatlatole, tecoconauiani, suchioa, tetensuchiuiani, tetensuchitzotzonanii, tepauiani: tecoconauia, tepauia, hecamecatl quiteca, tenaoalnotza tetlachichiuilia.[103]

The procuress, too, uses speeches, incantations, and spells to lure clients:

She is a charmer, a sweet-talker, a smooth-talker; she is of pleasing, agreeable speech, soft-spoken. Her words are flowers, sweet, pleasing. She is an artful, skilled speaker, a master of discourse. She is one who flatters, tricks, and induces people with pleasing words; she is one who entices, entrances, and lulls people with incantations. She is a cajoler, one who summons people with spells, one who destroys people with sorcery, one who places obstacles so that others will stumble. She stretches out long-winded speeches, converses deceitfully, tricks people with pleasing words; she lulls one with words. She perverts, provokes, confuses, corrupts people; she fools people; she induces people, she induces people with spells; she lulls people with incantations; she entrances people.

tensuchitl, camasuchitl, camasuchiecacal, tenuelic, tlatoluelic, tlatoliamanqui, suchitl uelic auiiac itlatol, camatoltecatl, tentoltecatl, tentlamatini, tetencoxouiani tetensuchitzotzonani, tecoconauia, tecochtecani, tecochtlacani, tetamooalchalpoloàni, tenaoalnotzani, tenaoalpoloani, tetlanaoaltequiliani, hecamecatl quiteca: tenaoaltza, tetensuchitzotzona, tetencoxouia, teiolmalacachoa, teiollochololtia, teiolcuepa, tetlacuepilia, teca mocacaiaoa, tecoconauia, tenaoalcoconauia, tecochtlaça, tecochteca.[104]

Such long and eloquent speeches emphasize the seductive nature of speech and the power that procurers and procuresses wielded because of their command of language.

Criminal testimony from highland Mexico affirms the perceived sexual power of speech. In 1594, in the Mixtec town of Tlaxiaco, for example, an outraged husband attacked a man after his wife told him that the man "had spoken to her about love."[105] In 1650, a Nahua mother of Amanalco complained to local officials that a young married man frequently spoke to her daughter, attempting to persuade her to commit adultery with him.[106] In some criminal cases, indigenous witnesses testified about their own seduction. Couching her confession in Christian terms, a Ñudzahui widow admitted in 1630 that when she met a married man in the market "he wooed her, telling her to offend God with him . . . and as a miserable sinner she conceded to his pleasure."[107] Her testimony reflects both the influence of Christianity on popular conceptions

of sex and sin and the persistence of indigenous beliefs about the power of speech in seduction.

Speaking and sexual intimacy were so strongly associated that a husband might accuse his wife of indiscretions based solely on the fact that he had found her talking to another man. In the Nahua community of Ayapango in 1765, a noble accused his wife of committing adultery when he found her "speaking to a man in a very suspicious place," and he asked local officials to punish her.[108] In extreme cases, a jealous husband became violent, attacking his wife and her suspected lover with a club, a knife, a machete, or stones. In 1590, for example, a thirty-year-old Ñudzahui man repeatedly stabbed his wife and her sister when he found them conversing with another man.[109] The two terrified women survived the attack, but other women were not as lucky. In 1623, a Nahua cobbler killed his wife in Teposcolula because he found her "speaking" with his master.[110] The extreme violence in these cases was rare, but envy provoked by a wife's conversation with other men was not. The intense jealousy of husbands who found their wives speaking to other men underscores the intimacy of speech.

Conversely, in order to prove their innocence, those who insisted that they had been wrongly accused of adultery testified that they had never spoken to their alleged lovers. For example, in 1578, when one Ñudzahui man complained that his wife had cheated on him with a local noble, both of the accused declared that they had never had relations, nor had they ever spoken to each other.[111] Similarly, in 1612, don Agustín Maldonado and Angelina de Peralta claimed that they had remained faithful to their spouses, specifically stating that they had never "communicated" with each other.[112] The denials of native defendants do not merely assert a lack of familiarity but specifically refute charges of sexual intimacy.

Like speech, sight was invested with social and sexual power. Mesoamerican prescriptions for proper conduct regulated the act of looking between men and women, nobles and commoners. These concepts overlapped with European ideals and were especially promoted by elites. Commoners and nobles were not to look directly at the ruler, and men and women were not to make eye contact with members of the opposite sex other than their spouses. Thus a noble Nahua father warned his son that to look into the eyes of a married woman was to commit adultery:

> You are not to look at people, you are not to gaze into the eyes of people, you are not to stare, you are not to look into the face of or stare at one who is honored, especially at a woman, and finally especially at someone's wife, for it is said that he who stares at, gazes into the eyes of another's wife commits adultery.

Auh amo titehittaz, amo teixco titlachiaz, amo-titececemittaz: amo iixco, icpac titlachiaz, amo ticcecemittaz in mavizti: oc cenca ie in cioatl, oc cenca iequene iehoatl in tecioauh: ca mitoa, teixtlaxima in aquin quicecemitta, ixco tlatlachia in tecioauh.[113]

The perception that direct eye contact conveyed sexual intimacy meant that unmarried men and women had to be reserved in their interactions. Linguistic evidence from Oaxaca suggests a similar understanding of the sexual power of sight. Alvarado provides several terms in his Ñudzahui *Vocabulario* under the Spanish entry *echar los ojos en mugeres con mala intencion* (to cast one's eyes upon women with bad intentions).[114] Córdova's Tíchazàa dictionary also has an entry, *ojos desonestos luxuriosos derramados* (dishonest, lustful, darting eyes), suggesting a connection between sight and seduction.[115] An inappropriate gaze penetrated social boundaries between men and women, nobles and commoners.

Sixteenth-century Nahua legends treat sight as a sexual experience. One, from the Florentine Codex, tells of the daughter of the ruler, Huemac, who became sexually aroused when she saw a Huaxtec chile vendor walking naked in the market. Her desire became so all-consuming that Huemac had little choice but to arrange a marriage between the two, despite the fact that the Huaxtec was a social inferior.[116] Another myth tells of two messengers who were sent by the ruler Quetzalcoatl to find out who was bathing in the place where he normally bathed.[117] When the messengers reached the spot, they saw two women bathing, became distracted, and never returned. Quetzalcoatl sent another messenger who, on seeing the women, also failed to return. Such myths warn that arousal brought about through looking could prevent one from completing his or her duties.

The Florentine Codex description of the harlot also links sight and sexual desire. According to Nahua writers: "She makes herself beautiful; she arrays herself well; she is very attentive [to her appearance]. She appears like a flower, looks stylish, dresses herself stylishly; she looks at herself in a mirror, she carries a mirror in her hand" (*moieiecquetza, moiecchichioa, mocecenmati, mosuchiquetza, motopalquetza, motopalchichioa, motezcauia, matezcauia*).[118] Furthermore, she gestures with her hands, head, and eyes. Significantly, according to Sahagún's Nahua aides, "she beckons people with her eyes, she makes eyes at people, she closes one eye at one, she winks" (*teixnotza, teicopiluia, teixcapitzuia, teixcapitzaluia, teixtlaxilia*).[119] The prostitute adorns herself and uses her eyes to attract attention. The adulteress, however "blinds people" (*teixpepechoa*).[120]

Metaphors for sex and desire suggest that Mesoamericans understood sexual relations as completely sensual. All five senses—taste, smell, sight, hearing, and touch—are evoked in discussions of intimacy. Metaphors and verbs linking intercourse with eating and drinking refer to the sense of taste. The sense of smell is evoked in descriptions of the prostitute who wears perfume and the loose woman who freshens her breath by chewing chicle. Flowers in descriptions of sexual desire, and references to them incorporated in verbs related to seduction, also provide a pleasing scent, and admonitions about excessive and illicit sexual activity warn of the damaging effects of bad odors and pollution. The sense of sight emerges in descriptions of the prostitute who makes people look at her by using face paint, coloring her teeth, fixing her hair, and gesturing with her hands and eyes in the marketplace. Flowers and feathers are also worn to enhance one's appearance. Descriptions of the procuress, procurer, prostitute, and lascivious youth, who all seduce people with their speeches, refer to the sense of hearing as an arousing experience. Interestingly, touch is the most opaque sense in Nahua formal speeches and metaphors. The myth of the impregnation of Coatlicue, which describes a soft ball of feathers falling inside her dress and down along her body, is the most direct reference to tactile seduction in the texts considered so far. Nahua writings depict sexual pleasure, in moderation and with the right partner, as a fully sensual experience.

The imposition of Christianity introduced new sexual attitudes, beliefs, and practices and generated debate among those who sought to establish a native-Christian moral dialogue in New Spain.

INDIGENOUS-CHRISTIAN SEXUALITY

By the mid-sixteenth century, friars began to publish religious texts in Spanish and native languages to promote conversion. We have seen that Christian marriage was a major preoccupation of ecclesiastics engaged in the evangelizing mission. The friars appealed to native sensibilities and morality by incorporating fundamental indigenous concepts into the Christian-native marriage ceremony as long as they did not violate Christian teachings. Similarly, church texts show that friars used some indigenous sexual concepts, especially those related to pollution, in their sermons and catechisms, but refused to compromise in defining the parameters of appropriate sexual relations.

From colonial times to the present, Mesoamerican narratives on deviance and morality have been shaped by indigenous and Christian concepts. In her study of Nahuatl-language church-sponsored texts, Louise

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Burkhart describes a complex dialogue between indigenous nobles and Spanish friars that informed sixteenth-century moral discourse. In the Nahua worldview, "moral excesses [were] associated with liminal times and places."[121] Crossroads, the periphery, and things affiliated with the periphery, such as animals and insects, all signified moral danger, and night was a time of deviance and immorality.[122] Burkhart concludes that the Christian association of the Devil with the periphery and night reinforced Nahua concepts of the moral dimensions of time and space.[123]

James Taggart, in identifying many of these same concepts in his study of contemporary Nahua narrative, outlines a symbolic system of oppositional pairs that represent ethical and unethical behavior.[124] Time and space are invested with moral significance in a cosmology that combines Christian and indigenous ideology. According to Nahua belief, the sun, which in the colonial period became associated with Jesus Christ, creates moral order.[125] Because of their relationship to the sun, light, heat, and daytime have positive connotations; the center is also believed to be a place of organized, moral life. Conversely, Nahua storytellers identify deviance with the Devil, the periphery, and night (and by extension cold and darkness). Thus, as Taggart observes, "the widely held belief was that the Devil causes internal conflict in Nahuat society and is responsible for human mortality."[126] Contemporary Nahuas, like their colonial ancestors, emphasize moderation and therefore consider excessive drinking, extreme emotions, and uncontrolled sexual passions as threats to the moral order.[127]

Modern ethnography from Oaxaca reveals a comparable evolution of indigenous Christian moral ideology. According to John Monaghan, Mixtecs of Santiago Nuyoo consider Jesus and Tachi (wind, a supernatural that incorporates some aspects of the Devil) "complementary opposites" or "halves." Since the time of creation, Tachi has been the antithesis of Jesus. "Where Jesus—the Sun—grew hot (*itni*), the Tachi grew cold (*viji*). Where Jesus was truthful (*nijia*), the Tachi became deceitful (*shina'vi*). Where Jesus acted virtuously (*va'a*), the Tachi acted badly (*nduva'a*). Where the work of Jesus was good, that of the Tachi was sinful (*kuachi*) or envious (*yatuni* or *u'vini*)."[128] Jesus is associated with day; Tachi, with night.[129] Monaghan also observes a belief in the "amoral and asocial world" of the tinumi, a people who lived on the periphery in caves when there was no sun or agriculture and before people settled into households and practiced marriage. The belief that the era of the tinumi ended and Christian life began when the sun appeared confirms an association between the sun, Jesus, and moral order.[130]

In her study of ecclesiastical texts, Burkhart discusses the friars' adoption and adaptation of several Nahuatl terms to convey Christian

concepts. *Tlatlacolli* (derived from *tlatlacoa*, make a mistake) meant sin and was used in a broad sense without any clear moral connotation; it did not have *sin*'s specific meaning of having knowingly and willingly engaging in an act that violated Christian principles. The friars similarly extended Ñudzahui terms to describe Christianity in their efforts in the Mixteca Alta. Terraciano shows that the term *quachi* was used in doctrinal texts and sermons to mean sin. Like tlatlacolli, quachi had a wide array of uses but lacked a strong moral sense.

One of the earliest church texts printed in Mexico was fray Pedro de Córdova's *Christian Doctrine for the Instruction and Information of the Indians in the Manner of History*, published in Spanish in 1544. Córdova's language was direct, suggesting that the major concern at this time was conveying the basic tenets of the faith. The text itself is gendered, with all questions and warnings addressed to the male neophyte. In his discussion of the sixth commandment, that you shall not fornicate, Córdova explained that a man who even "desires" to be with another woman or who "frolics" with a woman other than his wife breaks this commandment.[131] He reiterated prohibitions against sexual desire in his brief consideration of the ninth commandment, that you shall not covet the wife of your neighbor. While it would be worse to actually lie with a married woman, simply to desire to do so would also violate the commandment.[132]

Córdova devoted a major part of his discussion of the sixth commandment to the "even greater sin" of two men lying together: "These sinners not only will go to Hell but also Justice will burn them there in a very great fire . . . Justice will destroy you and burn you and kill you if you commit this sin."[133] To emphasize the dire consequences of homosexual acts, he threatened that the punishment would continue in the afterlife: "Each one of you who commits this sin will be carried away to Hell by the devil, and because of it you will be given great torture."[134] In fact, some men had been burned at the stake in early modern Spain for being homosexuals, a sentence that was also carried out on occasion in New Spain.[135]

Molina's *Confesionario mayor* of 1569, which was to achieve major significance, was relatively early, very detailed, and written in Nahuatl, a lingua franca of highland Mexico. The text included questions for both male and female parishioners and was clearly intended as a model to be used by friars in the confessional. Molina devoted a great deal of attention to the relationship between sexual partners. As discussed in Chapter 3, in preconquest times natives married close relatives. Molina's concern with carefully enumerating forbidden relationships reflected his awareness of this practice. He warned that it was a mortal sin (*yn temictiani*

tlatlacolli) for a man to have s
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The *Confesionario* raises two
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over the next two centuries. First
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that it was a mortal sin (*yn temictiani*

tlatlacolli) for a man to have sex with a woman who was a relative through marriage or ritual kinship and that it was a violation of the sixth commandment to engage in sex with a woman who was married or single or had taken a vow of chastity, such as a widow, a nun, or a *beata* (a laywoman who had taken religious vows). Betraying a particularly Spanish perspective, Molina interrogated parishioners: "Did you have sex with some woman who was not baptized or with some Jew or Chichimec?" (*Cuix ica ytech otacic, yna y amo moquatequia ciuatl, yn judia, yn chichimecatl?*)[136] The question seems especially ridiculous considering that the former act was very common given the large percentage of the native population who remained unbaptized at this time and that the latter act was very unlikely since Jews and infidels (here Chichimecs) were prohibited from entering New Spain. Molina warned that a person who broke the commandment by having sex outside of marriage could not resume sexual relations with a spouse until absolution had been granted by a priest. Molina also asked if the sex had been consensual, expressing concern that a male parishioner had forced a woman to have sex even when she told him to stop.[137]

The *Confesionario* raises two interrelated issues that reflect Spanish preoccupations that would come to influence indigenous sexual ideology over the next two centuries. First, the doctrina emphasized the importance of a woman's virginity in several questions directed to a man concerning the status of his partner. Whereas Spaniards esteemed the ideal of female virginity before marriage, Mesoamericans did not, at least before the sixteenth century. In fact, Mesoamerican languages lack an equivalent term for *virgin*. Second, Molina asked the man whether he had seduced the woman with a pledge to marry her but then had failed to keep his promise.[138] This question reflects the importance that Spaniards placed on the marriage promise (*palabra de casamiento*). Once the couple had exchanged such a promise, they customarily began to have intercourse even though the wedding had not yet taken place. If either party reneged on the agreement, by backing out or by announcing marriage to another person, the aggrieved lover could force the other to marry. A betrayed woman could also sue a man for having taken her virginity.[139]

Like Córdova, Molina was concerned that Nahuas understand that both deeds and thoughts were to be regulated to ensure the proper expression of sexuality. In his discussion of the sixth commandment, he asked, "How many times did you think dirty thoughts of lust?" (*In iquac ąço quezquipa tiquilnamique tlahelpaquiliztlalnamiquiliztli*).[140] He focused on sexual dreams, asking whether the man spilled his seed during sleep and whether he enjoyed thinking about it on waking.[141] Whether or not a person took pleasure from sensual thoughts and dreams determined

whether the act constituted a sin. Even when men had sex with their wives, they had to monitor their thoughts. Molina warned that a man who fantasized about another woman while having sex with his wife committed a mortal sin.[142]

At the heart of these concerns was the church's contention that the fundamental purpose of sexual relations should be procreation. Sex between unmarried men and women was condemned because it would not lead to reproduction in a proper, stable family unit. Even worse, from the church's perspective, was a relationship between members of the same sex that would not lead to reproduction at all. These concerns led to a number of questions aimed at both men and women about masturbation in Molina's confessional. Intimate married relations raised additional concerns. Molina explained that a husband and wife who committed sodomy or impeded conception violated the church's teachings on procreation. Sex between a married couple was frowned on during the later stages of pregnancy for fear that the fetus would be harmed. Molina explained that it was "a very grave sin" (*vey tlatlacolli temamauhti*) if a man caused birth complications because he had insisted on having sex with his wife.[143]

Despite the aggressive conversion and evangelization tactics the friars used in the first century after contact, indigenous peoples of highland Mexico continued to struggle with fundamental aspects of confession. In part this was due to the fact that they were only required to confess once a year. In addition, many parishes were underserved, and even when a friar was present, he may have lacked adequate skills in the local native language(s) to communicate effectively. In his confessional manual, written in the early seventeenth-century, Alva revealed the frustration that friars had experienced in teaching Nahuas to confess properly. He advised that natives first reflect on their sins:

> Then begin talking to your confessor revealing your sins to him, beginning with the great and mortal sins, afterwards mentioning the small ones (perhaps you spoke ill of another or laughed at him or made jokes about him, etc.). Do not speak nonsense, do not hide and wrap up your sins with a [multitude of obscure?] words, for thus you will put your confessor in danger and the confessor will not rightly understand you, he will become impatient with it since your language is another thing altogether. Has everyone been reared and raised in it? For it is very difficult.
>
> *auh niman tipehuaz in ticpolihuiliz ticpantlaxiliz in moteyolcuiticauh yca tipehuaz in huehuei in temictiani tlatlacoli, zatepan tictenehuaz tepitoton, in azo teca otimononotz otihuetzcac oticamanalo &c. Auh ámo titlatolzaçacaz ámo tlatoltica tictlatiz ticquimiloz in motlatlacol, ca ic ticohuetiliz in moneyolcuitiliz, auh ca*

ámo melahuac mitzcaquiz in moteyo
zentlamantli in amotlatol; cuix moch
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> You natives, even though you are coha
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> confessor questions you about how ma
> reply: "Two times, three times." And
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> *In amehuantin anmaçehualtin, in man*
> *cate çe çihuatl, in çeçeyohual ytech ar*
> *teopixqui teyolcuitiani in quezquipa in*
> *ca opa, yexpa, auh huel amoçentlato*
> *anquitlacoa in ámoneyolcuitiliz.*[145]

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ámo melahuac mitzcaquiz in moteyolcuiticauh ca zan ic ticxiuhtlatiz, canel oc zentlamantli in amotlatol; cuix mochi tlacatl ipan omohuapauh omozcalti? Ca cenca ohue.[144]

Alva's admission that the Nahuatl language was "very difficult" suggests that many confessors could not understand Nahuas in the confessional. It also reflects some concern that Nahuas did not state their sins clearly, nor did they organize them according to Christian definitions of mortal and venal. Alva expressed his concerns that the confessional was ineffective in changing sexual attitudes and practices:

> You natives, even though you are cohabiting for two [or] three years already with a woman and sinning with her every day and every night, when the priest and confessor questions you about how many times you have sinned with her, you just reply: "Two times, three times." And you all make the same [sort of] confession, and with this you really damage your confession.
>
> *In amehuantin anmaçehualtin, in manel ye oxhuitl, ye xihuitl, anquimomecatititcate çe çihuatl, in çeçeyohual ytech antlatlacoticate, in iquac amechtlatlania, in teopixqui teyolcuitiani in quezquipa inahua[c] oantlatlacoque; zan anquinaquilia, ca opa, yexpa, auh huel amoçentlatol in anmochtin, auh ca yehuatl in huel ic anquitlacoa in ámoneyolcuitiliz.*[145]

We might interpret this passage as evidence of subterfuge that the Nahuas used to comply with the demands of confessing by downplaying their sins, and indeed this scenario is plausible. However, as we have seen, the rules of polite Nahuatl discourse required that Nahuas speak of sexual relations and the body in metaphorical terms. And to show respect for friars, many would have used symbolic and complex linguistic forms. There was clearly a cultural clash between the formal, coded language for sexual matters and the direct, if not crude (from the Nahua perspective), language of the friars in the confessional and the pulpit. On the most basic level as well, it suggests lingering confusion over the concept and categories of sin.

Alva warned parishioners that they should not blame others for their deeds or omit any sin that they had committed, assuring them that confession would be absolutely confidential.[146] Here he revealed a fundamental problem: if a parishioner confessed a sin and the friar assigned some forms of penance, others would discover that that person had erred. As we will see, those who acted immorally brought shame on themselves, their spouses, and members of their households. The broader social consequences of immorality and deviance in Nahua culture undermined the church's attempts to promote "individualization" in the confessional.[147]

Like Molina, Alva incorporated Nahuatl concepts of sexuality to express the seriousness of sin. He referred to the sinful dirtiness and blackness (*in icatzahuaca, in tliliuhca)* that sullied the soul and associated transgression with mud and dust: "It is also possible for me to slip and slide in the mud [of sin] and get myself more mixed up in the muck [of sin] than you" (*ca no huelitiz in nalahuaz ninoçoquipetzcoz yhuan oc qualca ninoçoquineloz in ámo tehuatl . . .*).[148] Also, he relied on the Nahua association of transgressions with stench when he spoke of sin: "Do not be afraid [or] ashamed for God has placed me here to wash away your sinful stink and rottenness" (*ámo ximomauhti ámo xipinahua, ca ic nican nechmotlalillia, in Dios in nicpapacaz in miyaca in mopalanca*).[149] The priest's absolution was a cleansing act, similar to ritual bathing in preparation for Mesoamerican ceremonies. Furthermore, in his discussion of the sixth commandment, Alva invoked Nahua concepts of sexual pleasure using the terms *aahuilnen*, *tlaticpac tlatlacolli*, and *tlailpaquiliztli*: "Have you licentiously enjoyed yourself? Have you given yourself over to earthly sin and lust?" (*Cuix otaahuilnen? Cuix otimomecati in tlalticpac tlatlacolli tlailpaquiliztli?*).[150] Significantly, he reformulated earthly pleasure (*tlalticpacayotl*) as earthly sin (*tlalticpac tlatlacolli*).

In addition, Alva employed concepts of moral time, referring to "the dark and obscure night in which you still live" (*in za ie noma tlai[o]huayan mextecomac, annemi*).[151] Christianity, he promised, would enlighten the native neophyte whom he invited into the fold: "Come, my wretched child, who the devil still today maintains in the darkness of sin and the gloom [of ignorance]" (*Tla xihualauh nopiltze, timotolinia, in oc noma ça ye axcan tlayohuayan mextecomac mitznemitia in tlacatecolotl*).[152] Drawing on the Mesoamerican worldview associating the sun with order and morality, he likened the sun to the true faith: "Ah, O foolish ones, the sun [of the true faith] has come upon you, [the true faith] has dawned on you, and you still want to live in the darkness of sin and the gloom of ignorance" (*Iho, xolopitine in axcan ye o ámopan tonac ye o [a]mopan tlathuic auh oc noma anquinequi in tlayohuayan mixticomac a[n]nemizque amicampa amotepotzco*).[153]

Like Alva's linking of the Devil with the "darkness of sin" and the "gloom of ignorance," the Florentine Codex attributed sexual misconduct to the Devil in a description and illustration of the *tetlanochili* (procuress), described with a parallel phrase as "a diablo, a tzitzimitl" (*in diablo, in tzitzimitl*); like sorcerers, supernaturals, and the Devil, she was said to "deceive," "derange," "provoke," and "destroy."[154] Figure 5.12 shows the procuress enticing a woman to commit prostitution. The Devil instructs her, even pointing to the woman who is to be deceived. By depicting the Devil as standing close behind the woman, the artist

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conveys the description in the text: "She is truly the eyes, the ears, the messenger of the Devil, of the tzitzimitl" (*uel iix, uel inacaz, uel ititlan in diablo, in tzitzimitl*).[155] The Devil is a European caricature, complete with horns, cloven hooves, a tail, and long hair, but the setting and characters are indigenous. The scene is set in the countryside, reflecting an indigenous belief in the periphery as a place of danger and transgressions. Like Christians, Mesoamericans from preconquest times to the present have associated evil with the left.[156] In Figure 5.12, the procuress approaches her victim from the left (from the viewer's perspective) and the Devil stands to the far left as the procuress points the gullible woman in that direction. This hybrid image suggests the adoption and adaptation of the Christian Devil into indigenous concepts of deviance by the last quarter of the sixteenth century, at least by the artists of the Florentine Codex.

Elsewhere, to show that people associated the Devil with jealousy, sexual tension, drinking, and violence, I use criminal cases from indigenous

Figure 5.12. Tetlanochili, or procuress

SOURCE: Florentine Codex, bk. 10, fol. 41, Florence: Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Med. Palat. 220, c. 43. By concession of the Ministry for Heritage and Cultural Activities; further reproduction by any means is forbidden.

communities of central Mexico and Oaxaca in which native defendants attributed their devious acts to the Devil's deception.[157] The statements of indigenous defendants and witnesses in colonial records preserve the spontaneous words of common people rather than the speech of educated nobles who contributed to the production of formal texts under the supervision of friars. There is the possibility that Spanish lawyers prompted their clients to invoke God and the Devil in their confessions to win sympathy from Spanish judges; however, this excuse did not provide extenuating circumstances. By comparing references to the Devil in archival documents with descriptions of antisocial and immoral behavior in formal native-language sources, I show how ordinary indigenous men and women imagined the Devil as a continuation of their belief in supernaturals, including the *tlacatecolotl* (Nahuatl for a type of sorcerer; literally owl person) and *tzitzimitl* (Nahuatl for a lesser deity associated with the western sky that visited earth to torment people).[158] A few detailed examples demonstrate how indigenous people sometimes blamed the Devil for distorting reality and for inspiring suspicions, anger, and hate when conflicts did occur.

Two uxoricide trials illustrate popular conceptions of the Devil's dementing influences. The first is a case introduced in Chapter 3 involving Martín Tilantzin, a Nahua from Acatepec, who in 1558 confessed that he had murdered his wife of approximately fifteen years and the mother of his two children.[159] Martín admitted that he followed his wife to her cacao orchard and confronted her with his suspicion that she had become pregnant "by three men who had had dealings with her."[160] In the heat of argument, he took off his belt and used it to hang his wife, leaving her body in the countryside, where it was later discovered by a man hunting rabbits. One of the arresting officials attempted to account for this brutal crime by blaming the murderer's malicious thoughts and acts on the Devil, who must have tricked Martín into hating his wife. By this account, only a generation after the introduction of Christianity, the Devil had been invested with the power to deceive, to inspire destructive emotions, and to provoke violence, at least in the center of New Spain where Spanish influence was most profound in this early period.

Although separated by considerable time and distance, a similar case occurred in Lalopa in 1657, when a woman appeared before Bènizàa officials and accused her son-in-law, Jacinto Manzano, of killing her daughter, María de Vargas.[161] Apparently, the couple had not lived together for some time. Her mother became alarmed when Jacinto sent someone to her house one morning to ask if María, who was nine months pregnant, had given birth, because she knew that her daughter had agreed to meet Jacinto the night before. Local authorities arrested Jacinto, but he refused

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to cooperate. After holding him in jail for a few days, they whipped him as they questioned him. Jacinto eventually confessed to the crime and led authorities to María's body. He admitted that he had lured his wife to the countryside on the night of the murder by suggesting that they go to the remote shrine (*ermita*) of Our Lady to light candles so that the Virgin would protect her during childbirth. On the way, the Devil "persuaded" him that he had not fathered the child that she was carrying, and with that thought he strangled her and threw her body into a ravine.

Both cases demonstrate that native witnesses and defendants blamed the Devil for inspiring jealousy and convincing men to commit murder. They also link the Devil to the murderers' own adulterous relations and desires to escape their marriages. Betraying their sexual double standards, Martín Tilantzin and Jacinto Manzano, men who suspected the worst of their wives, admitted to having had intimate relationships with other women. Several witnesses in the case against Martín recalled that he had repeatedly approached native officials, asking them to terminate his marriage so that he could marry a woman in a neighboring community. His inability to persuade them and his desire for his mistress, it was said, caused him to detest his wife. Similar statements were made in the case against Jacinto. Don Juan de la Cruz, the governor and cacique of Lalopa, testified that when asked why he had killed María, Jacinto replied "that he had no other cause or basis than the temptation of the demon, who had tempted him for four years."[162] Don Juan explained that Jacinto had mistreated his wife and carried on an affair with María Sánchez, for which he had been punished repeatedly. Sexual temptation and jealousy, both inspired by the Devil, had led to discord and violence.

The testimony of indigenous men and women in criminal records reveals the extent to which illicit sexual relations came to be understood within a Christian-native moral ideology. Even though many friars were skeptical about the impact that Christian morality was having on the native population, criminal testimony suggests that many men and women classified certain behaviors as violations of the church's teachings. When Spanish officials investigated an assault in Yanhuitlan in 1588, several witnesses denounced one of the defendants, Ana Tajasos, as a procuress who prostituted women from her home. Inés Hernández described Ana as a "bad Christian of bad living and ill-repute" who was the reason that "many people had committed sins in offense of God, Our lord."[163]

Occasionally, indigenous defendants framed their confessions of deviant or immoral behavior in Christian terms. Andrea Hernández, a thirty-year-old widow, admitted that she sold pulque from her home in Teposcolula; she insisted, however, that she did so to earn money to raise her many children, not "to offend God," as the friars would have asserted

in their sermons.[164] When witnesses spoke of "offending God," they often referred to adultery.

Christian concepts such as sin, temptation, and weakness of the flesh also enter the archival discourse on crime and morality. When Pedro López Hordónez confessed his infidelity, he drew on a Christian moral framework, describing himself as "a weak man, tempted by the flesh," and he swore that he would never reunite with his lover and "offend God" with her again.[165] Juana de Trujillo, a twenty-six year-old widow, used similar language when she admitted to her affair with the married Andrés de Sosa in 1630. She explained that he had courted her, asking to "offend God with her" and that "as a miserable sinner" she conceded to his wishes. She described her relationship with him as an offense against God, internalizing church doctrine when she called herself a miserable sinner. When Andrés killed the official who had caught the lovers together in a cave, Juana looked on in horror. She criticized Andrés, telling him that he had committed "a great sin" by taking the official's life and vowing to tell the truth about him.[166]

When María García testified about a murder that was committed in Tamazulapa, she said she had walked in on the defendant and found him holding an axe and standing over the bodies of his wife and another man lying on the floor covered in blood. He told her that he had found the man on top of his wife "committing a sin."[167] In the Chinantec community of Teotalsingo, indigenous witnesses testifying that a local man was having an affair with his mother-in-law adopted a Christian framework by stating that he had "offended God" with her in the cactus field behind the house.[168] In Xinastla, in 1695, Pedro Martín attacked his lover, María López, a twenty-four year-old widow, when she told him that she wanted to end their adulterous relationship because she planned to marry another man. María admitted that as a "weak" person, she had become involved with Pedro, but she insisted that she wanted to serve God by marrying. Pedro stated that he flew into a jealous rage when María rejected him and insisted that she "no longer wanted to offend God" with him. She even "swore to God and the cross" that she wanted to marry another man and end her relationship with Pedro. Her testimony suggests that indigenous women and men had absorbed the Christian message that marriage regulated sexual relations and served God.[169]

CONCLUDING REMARKS

As in preconquest times, indigenous parents in colonial Mexico delivered moralistic speeches about sexuality to their adolescent children. These

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speeches and the language used to describe sexual relations in archival records reveal an entire cultural complex of intimate behavior. The principal concern in the texts was the necessity for moderation in sexual relations. Excessive intercourse, adulterous relations, and the use of aphrodisiacs could all lead to impotence, illness, and violence. Flowers, food, feathers, speech, and sight were invoked in metaphors and as symbols to represent sexuality in alphabetic and pictorial texts, and they continued to resonate in the narratives and actions of indigenous people in colonial times.

Clearly, Christian concepts of sin, temptation, and the Devil seeped into the narratives of indigenous people who described illicit sexual relations and crime. However, this was a slow and limited process, and we would be remiss to assume that Christian ideology entirely eclipsed indigenous concepts of morality and sexuality. As Sigal points out in his study of sexuality in Nahua ritual and cosmology, modern scholars have placed too much emphasis on the ability of friars to change ideas and practices through the confessional. By the friars' own admission, the sacrament of confession had limited effect on indigenous concepts of appropriate behavior in large part because of differences in cultural attitudes, reliance on native ideas in the Nahua-Christian moral dialogue, sporadic contact between priests and parishioners, and the inability of many confessors to master native languages. Spanish Christian moral and sexual values influenced, but did not completely change, indigenous attitudes and practices.

relationship was in jeopardy because he had been imprisoned for stealing a mule. Marcial describes his shock as Catalina transformed into a jaguar and then back again into his wife. He recalls that he recognized her by her huipilli and her market basket, suggesting the ways in which the body and social identity were constructed through clothing and labor (local native officials later confirmed her identity by her dress and basket when they found her body in a ravine). Marcial remembers hearing a voice speaking to him in Zapotec, so he is familiar with ancient beliefs in nahualli and shape-shifting, but he holds a rosary and makes his appeal to Spanish authorities in court.

Archival narratives such as Marcial's suggest that relationships between men and women could be complex and even contentious. Over the course of the colonial period, profound social, political, economic, and cultural change would distort the idealized portrayals of social relations of earlier texts and images, even as many fundamental principles, concepts, and practices continued to shape indigenous gender relations in highland Mexico.

EPILOGUE

The century that followed the period of this study (1750–1850) was a time of dramatic change in colonial Mexico. The Bourbon Reforms increased taxes and reorganized the colonial administrative system. Independence ushered in a century of political turmoil, economic decline, and "liberal" reform. Many indigenous communities and individuals were dispossessed of their lands, and many men and women in performing wage labor were reduced to debt peonage.

The Mexican Revolution (1910–1920) initiated sweeping changes that included land reform, protection of labor, and the expansion of education, but native women seem to have been the last to benefit from them. Revolutionary programs redistributed land to male heads of household, and women continued to make up the largest portion of the illiterate population in Mexico throughout the twentieth century. Neoliberal policies implemented at the end of the century appear to have only made matters worse for indigenous working-class Mexicans. Commenting on the impact of these neoliberal reforms, María Luisa, a worker in a Tijuana maquiladora who earns about forty-three dollars a week, remarks:

> Everything has gone up in price, and we neither organize ourselves nor protest. The Indians of Mexico used to complain, and it wasn't possible to get away with such injustice because people knew that, even if it was only with sticks, the Indians were going to fight and defend their rights. But now it's like we are asleep. With impunity they devalue the money on us, and nobody says a thing.[4]

María Luisa's statement associates memories of native struggles against oppression and exploitation with Mexican history. However, the participation of indigenous women in acts of resistance remains little recognized and little understood.

Perhaps knowing some of the history of native women's status and responsibilities and their participation in acts of civil disobedience helps to explain the prominent role that women played in the Zapatista Army and in many other social movements at the turn of the twentieth century. It is interesting that, according to the Revolutionary Women's Laws, "Women will have the *rights* and *obligations* elaborated in the revolutionary laws and regulations." In fact, the idea of rights and obligations as an essential aspect of community membership is an ancient native concept, and the struggle to defend them has had a long historical trajectory among indigenous Mexican women. In Chiapas, Oaxaca, Tehuantepec, Guerrero, Nayarit, and many other places, indigenous women are struggling for social, economic, and political justice today just as they did in the past.