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Franciscans and Dominicans Under the Gaze of a Tlacuilo: Plural-World Dwelling in an Indian Pictorial Codex

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José Rabasa

*Franciscans and Dominicans Under the Gaze of a Tlacuilo:
Plural-World Dwelling in an Indian Pictorial Codex*



University of California, Berkeley
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PREFACE

The goal of this series is to foster scholarship on campus by providing new faculty members with the opportunity to share their research interest with their colleagues and students. We see the role of an academic library not only as a place where bibliographic materials are acquired, stored, and made accessible to the intellectual community, but also as an institution that is an active participant in the generation of knowledge.

New faculty members represent areas of scholarship the University wishes to develop or further strengthen. They are also among the best minds in their respective fields of specialization. The Morrison Library will provide an environment where the latest research trends and research questions in these areas can be presented and discussed.

Editorial Board

Introduction

It is a great pleasure to welcome you to the Inaugural Lecture of Professor José Rabasa.

The Inaugural Lecture series was established by The Library on the occasion of the installation of our late colleague, Antonio Cornejo-Polar, in the Class of 1941 World War II Memorial Chair of Spanish American Literature. As a medievalist I thoroughly approve of this new tradition, since in fact it is actually a very old academic tradition. In the Middle Ages, new professors took possession of their *cathedras* with an inaugural lecture designed to introduce them to their new colleagues and students and to demonstrate their mastery as teachers. It should be remembered that the doctorate was not a research degree but rather a teaching degree. It gave its holder the right to teach in any university—*ius ubique docendi*.

Bancroft has been participating in these lectures whenever we have new faculty members, in a variety of departments, whose fields are relevant to our collections. Bancroft is best known for its collections on California and Western history, going back to its origins as the personal collection of Hubert H. Bancroft; but it should be remembered that Bancroft had a remarkably prescient view of what this entailed. When he set to work building his collections, he soon realized that California could not be studied in isolation from Mexican history. In fact he eventually expanded the range of his library and the 40 volumes of histories to include all of western North America, from the Isthmus of Panama to Alaska and everything west of the Rockies. Thus Bancroft has extremely strong collections in the history of colonial Mexico and Guatemala.

Thus it is most fitting that we should be welcoming José Rabasa to Berkeley today. While he works in many fields, throughout his career he has circled back time and again to colonial Mexico. Professor Rabasa is a native of Mexico. He received his B.A. from the Universidad de las Américas in Cholula (Puebla), followed by graduate work at UNAM in philosophy,

and then made his way to UC Santa Cruz, where in 1985 he received his Ph.D. in the History of Consciousness program with a dissertation on "Fantasy, Errancy, and Symbolism in New Motifs: An Essay on Sixteenth-Century Spanish Historiography." Considerably transformed, this was published by the University of Oklahoma Press as *Inventing America: Spanish Historiography and the Formation of Eurocentrism*. He has in press with Duke University Press *Writing Violence on the Northern Frontier*, which focuses on the colonization of Florida and New Mexico in the sixteenth century. His production of articles and conference papers is nothing sort of astonishing, with other thirty pieces just since 1989. Let me mention a few titles to give you a sense of the breadth of his interests: "Allegories of the Atlas," "Utopian Ethnology in Las Casa's Apologética," "Writing and Evangelization in 16th-c. Mexico," "Aesthetics of Colonial Violence: The Massacre of Acoma in Gaspar de Villagra's *Historia de la nueva México*," "The Politics of Subaltern Studies," "Of Zapatismo: Reflections on the Folkloric and the Impossible in a Subaltern Insurrection."

His professional career has taken him from the University of Texas, Austin, to the University of Maryland, and, immediately before coming to Berkeley, to the University of Michigan, where, among other duties, he served as the Chair of the Department of Romance Languages. Today Professor Rabasa is going to talk about "Franciscans and Dominicans under the Gaze of a *Tlacuilo*: Plural-World Dwelling in an Indian Pictorial Codex."

Charles Faulhaber, Director
Bancroft Library

FRANCISCANS AND DOMINICANS UNDER THE
GAZE OF A *Tlacuilo*:

PLURAL-WORLD DWELLING IN AN INDIAN
PICTORIAL CODEX



Mira que los frayles y clérigos cada uno tienen su manera de penitencia; mira que los frayles de San Francisco tienen una manera de doctrina y una manera de vida y una manera de vestido y una manera de oración; y los de Sant Agustín tienen otra; y los de Santo Domingo tienen otra; y los clérigos otra . . . y así mismo era entre los que goardaban a los dioses nuestros, que los de México tenían una manera de vestido y una manera de orar . . . y otros pueblos de otra; en cada pueblo tenían una manera de sacrificios (Don Carlos de Ometochtzin, 1539)

[Consider that the friars and the secular clergy each has its own form of penance; consider that the Franciscan friars have one manner of doctrine and one way of life and one dress and one way of prayer; and the Augustinians another; and the Dominicans another; and the secular clergy another. . . and it was also like this among those who kept our gods, so that the ones from Mexico had one way of dress and prayer . . . and other towns had another; each town had its own way of sacrificing.]

According to one of the witnesses in the inquisitional trial of don Carlos Ometochtzin, this cacique of Tezcoco exposed a plural-world view in speeches to his town (*Procesos*). If there exist a variety of Catholic perspectives, Ometochtzin asks, why shouldn't they coexist with the multiple Mexican variants of the pre-Colombian period? This epistemological boldness led the Holy Office to judge and execute Ometochtzin for being an *hereje dogmatizador*, a heretical dogmatizer. One of the greatest sources of confusion among Indians in sixteenth-century central Mexico, and, perhaps, also one of the greatest impediments to a successful evangelization, were the discrepancies in the approaches to evangelization of the religious orders—differences that ultimately can be traced back to Scholastic philosophical traditions under which, just to mention the two most important orders, Franciscan and Dominican friars were trained. But these different philosophical conceptions of man and the world informed not only the missionaries' evangelical practices but also specific modes of ethnographic research.

One can single out at least three approaches to understanding the legacy of the Middle Ages on the missionaries: 1) Medieval texts provided rhetorical models, if not knowledge, for writing about the New World (Grafton) Thomism is assumed to have been the dominant philosophy that missionaries followed in their interpretation of Amerindian religions (McCormack) Scholasticism was a system of thought that hindered empirical observations of Amerindian cultures (Gruzinski). All these takes have made important contributions to our understanding of New World historiography. It is undeniable that in the new writing, one can trace, to borrow Anthony Grafton's term, "Ancient texts," but one could make this observation about cultural artifacts in any period of Western culture, if we soften what we mean by "Ancient" and entertain the notion that all literature consists of a series of palimpsests. If we restrict our study with Sabine McCormack to Dominicans and Jesuits in the Andes, Thomism will certainly be the dominant philosophical mode of explaining religious phenomena since the Dominicans as early as the fourteenth century had adopted it as their official philosophical doctrine, and, it was the most influential Scholastic system among the Jesuits. Observations regarding the constraints of Scholasticism on some missionaries, e.g. Las Casas, have led Serge Gruzinski to underscore the empirical, hence modern character of other missionaries like Diego Durán.

Of these three approaches, the third has the most affinities with my interest in ethnographic research, but Gruzinski's emphasis on discontinuity seems to take for granted an "empirical view" that has no connection to the Scholastic traditions in which the missionaries were trained. Rather than seeing Indians and their cultures as readily available to observation, my aim is to understand how different Scholastic traditions and thinkers informed the production of the missionaries' object of ethnographic study and the subject of conversion. Scholasticism should not be reduced to a series of dogmas, however dogmatic some versions or aspects of a particular philosopher might be, but understood as a series of concepts of the soul, epistemologies, ontologies and theories of language, very often in conflict between the different orders

and even within them. These differences comprise deep seated beliefs and forms of reasoning that ultimately entail contending philosophical anthropologies and world views.

Indians seeing through the different philosophical traditions that informed evangelical programs must have irritated the missionaries. As I have pointed out, Ometochtzin's intuition of a possible coexistence of and dwelling in several worlds led to his auto-da-fé in 1539 under the inquisitorial powers of the Franciscan Juan de Zumárraga, the first bishop of Mexico. Of all the trials in the 1530s and 40s, his punishment was the most severe. Only during the first years following the conquest do we find that resistance to Christianization and Spanish rule was punished by hanging at the scaffold or burning at the stake. Later *dogmatizadores* were subjected to expropriation, banishment in Spain, or more benign punishments like a public repentance, a whipping or a brief time in jail—long enough to learn the Creed. In the 1530s Zumárraga also played a key role in the debates over the proper administration of the sacraments, especially of baptism and matrimony. There is a paradox in Zumárraga's efforts. On the one hand, Zumárraga had no qualms about executing Ometochtzin for polygamy, dogmatizing, and questioning the Christian dogma, while on the other, he promoted the formulation of uniform practices regarding the rites of baptism and the normalization of marriage. One cannot but sense behind the rush to iron out evangelical differences an embarrassment prompted by Ometochtzin's lucid assessment of the different world views among friars and clergy. His execution certainly caused a scandal that eventually led to the demise of Zumárraga as inquisitor.

In 1539, in the aftermath of Pope Paul III's 1537 bull "*Altitudo divini consilii*," which was mainly concerned with establishing rituals that would leave no doubt regarding the differences between baptism and similar pagan rites (i.e. blessing the water, teaching the catechism, applying the chrism and the holy oil), Zumárraga had gathered the bishops of New Spain to develop a cogent policy on the sacraments. Paul III's bull made allowance for exceptions to the strict rites of baptism in cases of "urgent necessity," leaving the

definition of which to the conscience of the individual implanting the sacrament. The bishops agreed on writing a manual to prepare adults for baptism and explicitly excluded from "urgent necessity" the multitudes of Indians requesting it. Motolinía chronicles the debates, the differences, as well as the disobedience by Franciscan friars of Guacachula who baptized adults on demand: "en cinco días que estuve en el monasterio, otro sacerdote y yo bautizamos por cuenta catorce mil y doscientos y tantos poniendo a todos óleo y crisma, que no nos fue poco trabajo" [in five days that I was at the monastery another priest and I baptized up to fourteen thousand two hundred and more putting the holy oil and the chrism on all of them, not a light affair] (Parish and Weidman, 320). As far as I can gather, Motolinía was not punished for his disobedience. A manual for adults was published in Mexico in 1540 and Juan de Focher's 1544 *Echiridion baptismi adultorum et matrimonii baptissandorum* defined a Franciscan position. If Focher deems improper multitudinal baptisms and prescribes teaching the doctrine prior to baptism, what constitutes the minimal substance, length, and method of catechization continues to be a source of contention even when the different orders and secular priests had agreed on using a common *Doctrina*.

In spite of this hasty solution to the scandal, antithetic differences remain between, say, the intellectualism of the Dominican Bartolomé de las Casa's *De unico modo* (ca. 1533), which discusses at length the limits of explaining and conveying the mysteries of the Christian faith by rational means, and the pragmatics of Zumárraga's *Doctrina breve cristiana: en que en suma se contiene todo lo principal y necessario que el cristiano debe saber y obrar; y es verdadero catecismo para adultos que se han de bautizar; y para los nuevos bautizados necesario y saludable documento; y lo que mas conviene predicar y dar a entender a los indios; sin otras cosas que no tienen necesidad de saber* (ca. 1545), which, as the lengthy titles indicates, is less concerned with providing the specifics of the doctrine than with a theoretical justification of its minimalist tenets, "sin otras cosas que no tienen necesidad de saber" [without other things they have no need of knowing]. Whereas conversion for

Las Casas would entail inculcating a *habitus*, for Zumárraga catechization consists of using the doctrine to lead Indians to stutter the articles of faith—“y los indios . . . comienzen a tartamudear en ella.” Ometochtzin’s statement captures the irreconcilable world views informing the debates. His execution confirms the anxiety it provoked among the religious orders the realization that Indians were seeing through their incompatible differences. The orders could arrive at a consensus on the basic articles of faith and the baptismal rites, but not on the philosophical styles of understanding the process and meaning of conversion.

One of the *tlacuilos* of *Codex Telleriano Remensis* captures Dominican and Franciscan conceptions of the world, man and evangelization (Figure 1). This page demonstrates the new pictorial vocabularies the *tlacuilos* invented building on the pre-Columbian conventions to capture the new realities of the horse, the colonial institutions and differences among missionaries. *Telleriano-Remensis* consists of three main parts: 1) the sequence of feast known as the *veintena* for the months in which they fell, 2) the divinatory calendar (the *tonalamatl*), and 3) a history. The history, in turn, comprises three distinct entities: an account of the migration of the Nahuas from Aztlan, a genealogical history of the ascendancy of Mexico-Tenochtitlan, and a section covering events from the colonial period up to 1562. This juxtaposition of different kinds of texts suggests that one of the purposes for the production of *Telleriano-Remensis* was to include in one body information on different aspects of Nahua culture that otherwise could only be consulted in the different prototypes that *tlacuilos* used as models. The *tlacuilos* of *Telleriano-Remensis* move from conventional representations of history in the section corresponding to precontact to new vocabularies that codify a plurality of worlds in the section corresponding to the colonial period. With a parsimony enviable of a nominalist, the *tlacuilo* avoids essentializing Catholicism by identifying the centrality of baptism among Dominicans, (left-hand corner) and the emphasis on the sacrament of the penance among Franciscans, (right hand corner).



Figure 1
Codex Tellerino-Remensis, fol. 46r
Cliché Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris

If the knotted cincture marks a Franciscan, the Indian bending over the baptismal font and the ceremonial white dress marks a Dominican. This identification of baptism with the Dominican order might seem arbitrary, especially when we consider the well known Franciscan practice of mass baptisms where the multitudes according to their accounts reached up to fourteen thousand in one given day and one million two hundred for the period between 1524-1532 (Ricard, 174). The formal dress of the Dominican signals the debates with Franciscans over the administration of this sacrament where the Dominicans emphasized ceremony and a thorough indoctrination rather than lax catechistic preparation and multitudinous baptisms. As I have pointed out, debates over this issue raged in New Spain during the 1530s and early 1540s. In addition to the Franciscan and the Dominican this page includes images pertaining to the Mixton War, a rebellion in Nueva Galicia, which started in 1541 and lasted at least until the end of the sixteenth century. (Some scholars have argued that the so-called pacification of the Chichimeca was never complete and that the rebellion of the Cascanes, Coras, Huicholes, Zacatecos, Tepehuanes, and others—i.e. their refusal to subject themselves to Spanish or Mexican rule—has lasted up to the present.) Tenamaztle, the Lord of Nochistlan (identified by the flowering cactus, the place name of Nochistlan) figures prominently on top of the symbolic depiction of a mountainous stronghold, a *peñon*. The stronghold could actually be read alternately as the *peñon* of Nochistlan or of the Mixton, corresponding to two moments in the war. Eloise Quiñoes Keber (237) has pointed out that, if we follow Bancroft's interpretation of the term Mixton as "cats ascent," we can read the feline figure next to Antonio de Mendoza as a place name. Viceroy Mendoza, who led the decisive battles at both Nochistlan and the Mixton, appears on the other side of the cultural divide marked by the river which separates the nativist magico-religious world of Tenamaztle from the Christian world of the baptism and the *Requerimiento*. On top of the Dominican we find an image of a deceased Pedro de Alvarado, who was killed during a failed assault on Nochistlan in the early stages of the war. Alvarado is identified as *tonatiuh*, sun, a name given to him by the Nahuas in Cen-

tral Mexico during the early years of the conquest of Tenochtitlan. Alvarado, better known for the massacre of the Templo Mayor, had traveled to Nueva Galicia from Guatemala to assist in suppressing the rebellion. Alvarado is on record for arrogantly dismissing the forces of Nochistlan as “cuatro indios gatillos” [four Indian punks] (León Portilla, 25).

The insert for 1541 could very well allude to an account by Las Casas where he exposed the continued practice of baptizing without proper instruction and, adds Las Casas, “a veces medio forzado” [on occasions more or less forced] (Parish and Weidman, 101-102). As Helen Rand Parish has pointed out, this account gave place to an opinion by Francisco Vitoria, also from 1541, requiring proper indoctrination. These documents clearly indicate that the 1539 recommendations of the council of bishops were in great measure ignored by Franciscans. We can further pursue this line of association and bring to mind Las Casas’s *De unico modo*, a treatise where he argued that the only way to attract pagans to Christianity was through love. There is clearly a disjunction between the Indian bending over the baptismal font (I am always tempted to say jumping into the font) and the representation of the Mixton War. A disjunction that actually reproduces the three surviving chapters of *De unico modo*. For if chapter 5 establishes the ideal character and the disposition of Amerindians to receive the faith, and love as the only way to attract them to Christianity, chapter 6 exposes the lack of precedents that would lend support to a method where Indians would first be politically subjected and then converted. Echoing the *Requerimiento*, Las Casas explains that to demand Indians to surrender their sovereignty would only lead to war: “Et quia nemo infidelium sua sponte velit se Christiani populi vel alicuius principis eius ditioni submittere, potissime infidelium reges, esset profecto necesse devenire ad bellum” [And since no pagan would willingly subject himself to the dominion of a Christian people, or a Christian prince, especially the kings of infidels, there would inevitably have to be war] (Las Casas, 378). Las Casas goes on to argue that the effects of war would hinder evangelization since violence damages the senses and the intellect,

thus corrodes the possibility of forming the *habits* necessary for understanding and accepting the tenets of Christianity. Given the wars of conquest, the real condition of Amerindians corresponds to what Frantz Fanon would diagnose as a colonial psychosis. It would then not be merely a question of preaching love to ideally suited Amerindians, but of healing and compensation, the subject of chapter 7 of *De unico modo*. Las Casas first demonstrates that the war against Indians was unjust and then ponders how to go about compensating for damages and restituting sovereignty to wronged Amerindians. One case taken to court was Tenamaztle's. After surrendering to the bishop of Guadalajara, Tenamaztle was exiled in Spain in 1552. With the assistance of Las Casas, in 1555 Tenamaztle presented at the court in Valladolid his *relación de agravios*, his account of damages, where he claimed rightful sovereignty and denounced the terror he and his people had been subjected to. Tenamaztle, however, as far as I know disappeared from the public record after 1556. We will see later on how Las Casas's fellow Dominican fray Diego de Durán constitutes the oppressed condition of the Nahuas in Central Mexico as the object of his ethnography.

Under 1543 one can mention the publication of Zumárraga's *Doctrina breve*, but as we have seen above the agreement on establishing a common doctrine was hardly an identifying trait among the Franciscans. There are other elements in the picture that manifest the *tlacuilo's* ethnographic acumen. The frontal representation of the Franciscan holding the doctrine and the scapulary suggests the centrality of penance among Franciscans. There is only one other occasion in *Telleriano-Remensis* (the depiction of Zumárraga, also a Franciscan) where a figure looks back at us from a frontal position (Figure 2). All Catholic missionaries in New Spain imparted confessions, but it is not a coincidence that the Franciscan missionaries in Mexico produced the majority of bilingual confessionary manuals in the sixteenth century and that they are known for their particularly methodical administration of this sacrament. Whereas a thorough knowledge of the catechism was a requirement for baptism among Dominicans, the Franciscans enforced

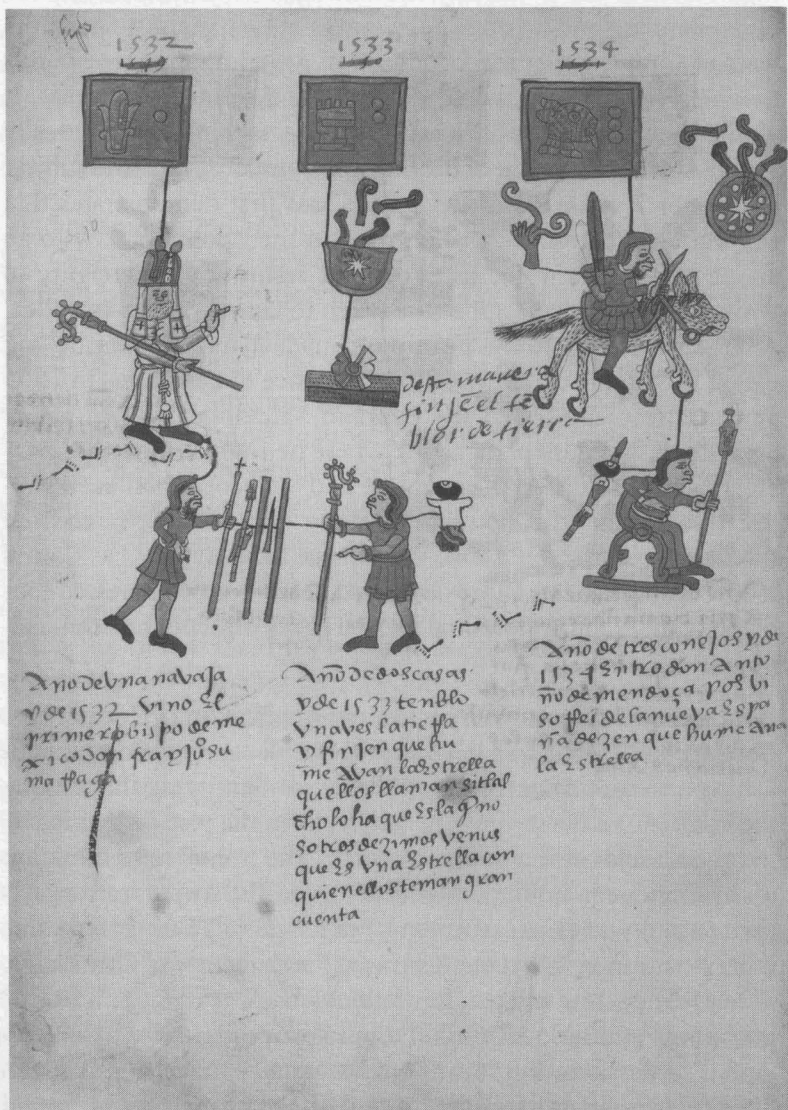


Figure 2
Codex Tellerino-Remensis, fol. 44r
Cliché Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris

post-baptismal catechization by gathering those Indians who were scheduled to confess on a given Sunday. These sessions, which first tested their knowledge of the doctrine, were followed by talks concerning the necessity, the efficacy of penance and, in what concerns the penitent, the contrition, confession and satisfaction of the assigned prayers or deeds for the absolution of the sins (Ricard, 209).

Clearly, from our historical vantage point preference for one of these sacraments amount to different forms of evangelization. For the Indians, however, they meant multiple understandings of Christianity, which led Ometochtzin and other Indians to question why beliefs in their own gods and corresponding religious practices could not coexist with these conflicting Christian views. The ease and clarity with which the *tlacuilo* codes the Franciscan and Dominican orders must have been a source of annoyance and anxiety to missionaries and secular authorities, perhaps one of the reasons why the production of *Telleriano-Remensis* falls apart a few folio later when fray Pedro de los Ríos stops using color and his inscription of the dates lacks the care of the *tlacuilos* (Figure 3). We may also trace anxiety in the shoddy calligraphies, full of scratches, of the Spanish commentators, whose will to correct the Indian annotators and to qualify the information with negative observations destroys the physical and epistemological integrity of the manuscript. In a page from the *tonalamatl*, the divinatory calendar, we can observe how aesthetically repugnant calligraphies and scratches invade the pictorial text and stand in stark contrast to the alphabetical script of the Indian annotator (Figure 4). We ignore the specifics of who ordered the production of this codex and, with the exception of one of the six annotators—Pedro de los Ríos, a Dominican friar—scholars have not been able to identify the other hands. There is general agreement that the calligraphy of the two hands whose gothic scripts—patterned after Spanish printing—suggests either Indian or mestizo scribes (Quiñones Keber, 126). The encyclopedic intention of *Telleriano-Remensis* also entailed approximating a zero degree of Spanish interference, at least on the initial production of the pictorial text. Even the Indian or mestizo scribes for the most part limited them-

1559 1560 1561 49

2. casta 3. te 4. casta

atavimos años ya qui foru de la cuenta acen
 peccar de los .Lij. años esse año en ho se
 pre a ~~1559~~ de febrero. dize el año nubo
~~1559~~

o ve conejos

esse año de ve conejos el día q entraba
 una fosa se hazia ~~de un~~ la fiesta
 y esse año de 1562 a 23 de julio fue este
 fiesta dizen un a guero q el día q entraba
 esta una fosa q en las provincias de la
 mexicana a parecia en la tierra una fosa
 q se hazia de este nombre muy preciosa

Figure 3
 Codex Tellerino-Remensis, fol. 49r
 Cliché Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris

selves to identifying the feasts, gods or historical events. The inscriptions by Ríos and, perhaps, other members of his order partake of an impulse to destroy Nahua religion.

The embarrassment produced by the objectification of the evangelical programs was most likely exacerbated by the representation of the "Mixon War" below the Dominican friar. As it is well known this rebellion in Nueva Galicia was religiously motivated in the articulation of its reason as well as in its display of nativist symbols. This event is not only painted in the traditional pictorial tradition but uses a magico-religious language to express the significance of the event. The *tlacuilo* thus relativized the orders philosophico-theological traditions and inscribed the world view of the Indian rebels. In doing so, he raised the question of whether the rebellion was not a consequence of the hubris of the missionaries that could not accept the notion of multiple worlds, coexisting not just in tolerance of each other as discrete entities (say, the philosophical traditions of the Dominicans and the Franciscans, Jews, Moslems and pagans) but also in an individual consciousness without incurring contradiction. Whereas for sixteenth-century scholastic missionaries the principle of non-contradiction was the most revered rule of reasoning, colonized and subaltern groups have historically faced the necessity of existing in multiple worlds (Rabasa). Along with the principle of non-contradiction, the missionaries also shared an essentialist view of the world, notwithstanding the different scholastic philosophical doctrines that shaped their evangelical and ethnographic styles. Scholastics recognized differences between their respective world views but, as it were, agreed to contest each other's views to keep the specter of relativism at bay.

In what for lack of time can only be done in very sketchy terms, I will now outline some of the basic tenets of Thomism, the official doctrine of the Dominicans, and the philosophies of Duns Scotus and William of Ockham, two dominant thinkers among the Franciscans. Although differences regarding the concept of *habitus*, the place of the senses in the acquisition of knowledge, and the relationship between mind and language underlie Domini-

can and Franciscan approaches to evangelization, I will be mainly concerned with tracing how philosophical beliefs inform the production of Indians as anthropological objects of study. Ethical and epistemological positions are of interest only in so far as they entail a concept of man or human nature that serves as a conceptual framework that defines the ethnographic tasks of reading Nahua everyday life—i.e. identifying superstition, idolatry, or, generally, pagan beliefs in feast, dances, clothing, and language. I am not interested in the epistemology of the missionaries' research (how they defined truth), or the ethical positions (how they justified their place in the conquest), but in tracing how epistemological and ethical beliefs underlie their understanding, thinking and recording of Nahua culture as an instance of human nature. Let us assume that both Durán's and Sahagún's ethnographic methods are empirical, that they base their knowledge on the direct observation of phenomena, then, their specific approaches, topics, obsessions and styles correspond to differences in how they constitute, construct, and map reality. In the frontal representation of the Franciscans, one can trace the gaze of the *tlacuilo* looking back at the missionaries, relativizing their world view and thereby pointing to a failed conversion. The realization of a failed conversion underlies the ethnographic work of Sahagún and Durán.

Central concepts in Aquinas for understanding Durán are: 1) the Aristotelian principle that the human mind understands nothing that was not first in the senses, *nihil in intellectu quod prius non fuerit in sensu*, and its corollary that the soul never thinks without a phantasm, *nisi convertendo se ad phantasma*; and 2) the centrality of habits not only with respect to moral and theological virtues but also to knowledge and science. Following Aristotle, Aquinas explains the uniformity of our experience of the world on common sense, the faculty that sorts out sensoria according to the specific senses. Hence the implant of sense data in the mind would be uniform to all humans. There is no room for differences in cognition at the level of the phantasm outside of mental deficiencies or distortions caused by the devil. Moreover, the emphasis he places on the senses entails an understanding of the union of body and

tierra.

que calcoatl

es el principio
en el cielo
Chalchihueh
quiere decir la pie
dra preciosa de la penite
cia - sacrificio

Salvase el diu
vio

serio penite

Este que calcoatl fue el que sizen que ~~era el~~ y así
llaman Señor del viento porque sizen que este luna catecoatl
quan do nel leparegio soplo vengen seco. aeste que calcoatl
ha es te se hazian las iglesias. e se dondas. Sinda quinnan cuna
este sizen que fue el ~~que~~ el primer ~~en~~ de señores
de los trese dias que tan aqui hazian fiesta En este qual
tenblox al seotary ni que ha via desec del mundo ó traxer
este ~~de la tierra~~ ~~en~~ ~~por~~ ~~6~~ ~~dize~~
se perderido 4 vezes y se de perder o a. a

Figure 4
Codex Tellerino-Remensis, fol. 8r
Cliché Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris

soul that, in leaving no room for thought originating independently of the senses, would make the task of this life to develop habits that further spiritual perfection (Liberia, 263). By informing the body the soul completes human nature. Since the ends of man exceed what can be known by natural reason, habits leading to perfect happiness are infused by God. Spiritual deficiencies would consist of misguided or underdeveloped habits, pertaining to both natural reasoning and the supernatural gifts of the theological virtues (Aquinas, *Treatise on Habits, Summa Theologica* Q. 50 Art. 3). For Aquinas the sacraments are instrumental efficient causes of grace, hence the Indian bending over the baptismal font. But, as Las Casas would insist, there is more to conversion, to the supernatural gift of faith, than stuttering the creed.

Franciscan thinkers generally share an Augustinian-inspired emphasis on intuition as an active component in cognition. Intuition conveys an epistemology where the intellect and external objects interact in the formation of sense impressions. Intuition also enables Franciscans to develop a theory of the will and man's natural desire to love God that eschews the necessity of habit or even supernatural intervention. For Scotus, reason properly speaking belongs to the will and not the intellect. Although, as Allan Wolter has pointed out, several scholastic thinkers, notably Peter Lombard and Hugh of St. Victor, had espoused "the notion that God reveals himself in nature as well as through the Scriptures," there are two consequences to the centrality of the will in Scotus's interpretation of natural law and natural reason (Wolter, 148). First, the emphasis Scotus placed on the freedom of the will invested a personal as well as historical dimension to the otherwise impersonal understanding of natural law in Augustine's and the Stoic's *lex aeterna*. For Scotus, reason properly speaking belongs to the will and not the intellect. He bases this on the freedom of choice of "acting or not acting (liberty of contradiction) or acting now in this way, now that (liberty or contrariety)" (Wolter, 149). Thus Scotus writes: "If rational means to act with reason, then it is the will that is properly rational and it is concerned with alternatives both as regards its own actions and the actions of the powers it

controls, but the alternative it selects is not determined by its nature (as is the case of the intellect which could not determine itself to act otherwise), but acts freely” (quoted by Wolter). Humans create laws and act on them with reason, with the will. This point opens the possibility of comparative studies of laws and moral systems, which leads to a second consequence that Allan Wolter phrases in the following unequivocal terms (though, I am afraid without taking full stock of the implications): “Though [Scotus] stated the principle of the evolutionary development *Deus ordinate agens procedit de imperfecto ad perfectum* in reference to God’s supernaturally revealed law, there seems no reason why it cannot be extended to his promulgation of the law of nature as well, viz. to a gradual growth in moral awareness, protracted over periods of centuries or even millennia if you will. *In processu generationis humanae, semper crevit notitia veritatis*” (Wolter, 162). Beyond law, this *processu generations humanae* implies a development of the will’s desire for truth, that is, different states of human nature that Scotus understood in temporal terms, but that the participants in the discovery and conquest of America translated to geographic categories that included the historical difference of Amerindian peoples living in isolation from the rest of humanity.

Before moving to Franciscan and Dominican empirical anthropologies, let me briefly summarize two key notions in Ockham’s philosophy of language that played a central role in Franciscans like Bernardino de Sahagún and Alonso de Molina. For Ockham oral and written languages were arbitrary systems that had to be differentiated from mental concepts; one must underscore that Ockham did not understand writing as mere image of speech, but a specific linguistic practice. In its most basic formulation, Ockham would argue that if the names “flor” and “xochitl” in Spanish and Nahuatl differ, the mental name would be the same for subjects speaking these languages (Adams 1, 105; Libera, 352-355; Panaccio). The notion of mental concepts entails a realist epistemology. Languages can thus be categorized and evaluated in terms of their capacity not to convey the mental concept but to utter sound statements. Latin (and by extension Greek and Arabic) would

be more appropriate languages than the vernaculars for science, logic and grammar. Scientific habits entail forms of cognition that would be determined by linguistic differences. Though Ockham, as far I have been able to grasp, did not pursue the sort of understanding of language as world view that we have come to associate with Benjamin Whorf, the work of Sahagún not only investigated the different names given to things in Nahuatl but their metaphorical meaning and mental associations. Indian languages would be studied not solely to preach, confess, and translate doctrines, but as a key to the intellect and will of the people that spoke them.

Both Sahagún and Durán viewed the lucidity of Ometochtzin and the *tlacuilo* of the *Telleriano-Remensis* as an indication that the faith was superficially implanted in Mexico and that Indians were concealing their ancient ceremonies in Christians rituals, everyday practices or feast purporting to have no religious significance. For both Sahagún and Durán, Indians were liars and the task of their ethnographic research was to learn to decipher their veiled, inscribed bodies—that is, their dress, religious paraphernalia, dances, and languages. Their understanding of the lying subjects, however, is radically different and cuts across the philosophical traditions of their orders.

Durán attributes the Indian's superficial faith to an inborn wretchedness, a poverty of spirit and gloomy temperament—a consequence of the social conditions in which they lived both before and after the conquest (Durán, *Historia* 1, 5). He compares the Nahuas to Spanish peasants who could also have weak intellects, but whose faith would nevertheless be solidly implanted, “creyendo firmemente aquello que les enseñaron sus padres, y lo que tiene y cree la Santa Madre Iglesia” [since they believe firmly what their parents taught them and what is believed and sustained by our Holy Mother church] (*ibid.* 4; Durán, *Books*, 52). Contrary to Spanish peasants who would simply respond to questions regarding the faith by saying “why not?” or “that’s the way it is,” Indians, like Ometochtzin and the *tlacuilo*, would press them to answer why is there only one god or set of beliefs, rather than a plurality of truths that could include their own. Actually, by the

time Durán writes in the 1570s, this sort of defiance had gone underground—hence his explanation of lying as timidity, wretchedness, and so on. Ultimately, for Durán the underlying reason for the Indians' travails and afflictions “es tener la imaginativa tan lastimada y enflaquecida, con tanto miedo, que todas las cosas que no tienen muy tratadas y conocidas las aprenden como dañosas y temerosas: así como las fieras cuando son acosadas, que todo les amedrenta y hace huir” [is that their spirit has been so hurt, so crippled, that they live in fear. They look upon everything unfamiliar or unknown as harmful and fearful to them. They are like wild animals which when hunted, are intimidated by everything and forced to flight] (ibid. 4-5; ibid. 53). Horcaistas's and Hayden's translation of *imaginativa lastimada* as “hurt spirit” fails to capture the Thomist terminology and understanding of the imagination as a faculty belonging to the interior senses. The “*imaginativa lastimada*” entails lacking proper habits and dispositions which preclude Indians from receiving the Sacraments properly, and consequently “es menester especial favor del Espíritu Santo” [it would be necessary to receive the special grace of the Holy Spirit] (ibid. 78; ibid. 150). Clearly, Durán's Nahuas are no longer the ideal Amerindians of chapter 5 of Las Casas's *De unico modo*, but subjects in need of healing and remedies to compensate the injustices committed against them. Durán constitutes his ethnographic object of study as wounded subjects, but he lacks the moral outrage of Las Casas.

If the identification of pre-Columbian beliefs and the variations Indians have invented in their practices since the conquest are central to Durán's ethnography, he is at least equally concerned with the proliferation of new superstitions. Habit leads Indians not only to fear the new, but also to generate new superstitions. As long as the old habits remained, Indians were condemned to be irremediable idolaters and fabricators of superstition: “poniendo y fingiendo superstición en las cosas que de suyo no tienen mal; hasta en horadar las orejas y poner zarcillos a las niñas y mujeres han introducido superstición” [making up and inventing superstition in things which in themselves are not evil. They have even

introduced superstitious beliefs even in perforating and the placing earrings on women and girls] (ibid.; ibid.). But there is perhaps no place more indicative of age-old habit barring a solid implantation of the faith than in the often quoted passage where Durán questions an Indian as to why he collected a great amount of money only to offer a fiesta and spend it all, to which the Indian answered: "Padre, no te espantes, pues todavía estamos *nepantla*" [Father, do not be astonished; we are still *nepantla*] (ibid., 237; ibid., 410). In response to queries about what he meant by *nepantla*, the Indian explained to Durán that "como no estaban aún bien arraigados en la fe, que no me espantase; de manera que aún estaban neutros, que ni bien acudían a la una ley, ni a la otra, o por mejor decir, que creían en dios y que juntamente acudían a sus costumbres antiguas y ritos comunes" [since the people were not rooted in the faith, I should not marvel that they were neuters, that they neither followed one religion nor the other. Or better said, they believed in God and also followed their ancient costumes and common rites] (ibid.; ibid.). What for Durán means a weak standing in the faith, for the Indians signifies the compatibility of both worlds. Durán at one point seems to accept the inevitability of Indians mixing the two religions as he joins a procession where instead of candles they were carrying flowers, introducing an old practice into a Christian feast: "Véolo y callo, porque veo pasar a todos por ello, y también tomo mi baculo de rosas, como los demás" [I see these things and I am silent, since I realize that everyone feigns ignorance. So I pick up my staff of flowers like the rest] (ibid. 41; ibid. 103). Even when Durán identifies the old gods his method places greater emphasis on the new modes of celebrating than in accurately recording the pre-Colombian prototype, as can be perceived in the representation of Quetzalcoatl (Figure 5) which marks a radical departure from the traditional style in *Telleriano-Remensis* (Figure 4). The naturalistic depiction of a god in the mode of a human should not be read as misrepresentation but as an image that would fulfill the function of serving to identify Indians dressed as the god in real feasts, "es de saber que aquellos representan dioses y a éstos iban haciendo la fiesta y baile, interior y exteriormente" [be aware that these men represent Gods, that



Figure 5
Diego de Durán. Historia de las Indias de Nueva España e
Islas de Tierra Firme. vol.2, plate 13

the feast is for them, both inwardly and outwardly] (ibid. 18; ibid. 72). Like all missionaries, at least partly because of demands by the Crown, Durán insisted that the friars must learn Indian languages to be able to preach and confess Indians effectively. But unlike Franciscans like Sahagún and Molina, he did not see language as a key to understanding and assessing the mentality of the Nahuas. The end point in Durán's research is the beginning for his Franciscan counterparts: "Estos conjuros andan escritos y los he tenido en mi poder y pudiéralos poner aquí, si fuera cosa que importara. Pero, además de no ser necesario en nuestra lengua, vueltos, son disparates" [These incantations have been written down, and I have had them in my hands, and I could set them down here if they were important. Aside from their not being necessary, however, once they have been translated into our language they become nonsensical] (ibid. 79; my translation).

Sahagún's project takes on the issue of the obscurity of Nahuatl. For him, as for his fellow Franciscan Molina (1571), the study of Nahuatl, in Molina's words, aspired to "descubrir los secretos que ayenla lengua, la cual es tan copiosa, tan elegante, y de tanto artificio y primor en sus metaphoras y maneras de dezir" [discover the secrets of the tongue, which is so rich, so elegant, with so much art in its metaphors and manners of speech] (Molina np; my translation). Sahagún would generally agree with Molina's praise of Nahuatl but he also foregrounds the obscurity of language with an understanding that goes beyond the nonsensical or childishness of Durán's assessment of incantations, especially when translated to Spanish. Sahagún's views on the lack of transparency in language would seem to build on Ockham's distinction between mental names and the arbitrary nature of vocal and written terms. In clearing up the obscurity of language Sahagún aspires to access mental discourse—to unmask liars, to confess—but also to understand conceptual subtleties in Nahua metaphysics and mappings of the body (Klor de Alva; López Austin). If Durán's paintings were mainly concerned with documenting the apparel of the ancient gods that would enable missionaries to identify individuals performing in feasts, Sahagún's inclusion of paintings forms part of the project to



Figure 6
Bernardino de Sahagún, *Primeros memoriales*.
Codice Matritense del Palacio Real de Madrid, fol. 254r

collect samples of Nahuatl speech. Although the painting of what the gods ate in *Primero memoriales* (Figure 6), as in the work of Durán, could serve to identify ancient rituals still practiced, or individuals bearing the attributes of gods, say of Quetzalcoatl (the second figure from the top in the column on the right), painting as a form of writing partakes of the same impulse that constituted the study of language as an investigation into the mind of the Nahuas: “[T]odas las cosas que conferimos, me las dieron por pinturas, que aquella era la escritura, que ellos antiguamente vsauan: y los gramaticos las declararon en su lengua, escrijiendo la declaration al pie de la pintura” [They gave all the matters we discussed in pictures, for that was the writing they employed in ancient times. And the grammarians explained them in their languages, writing the explanation at the bottom of the painting] (Sahagún, *Florentine* 1, 54). The grammarians were Indians who had been trained in grammar, natural science and logic at the College of Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco, and spoke Nahuatl, Spanish and Latin. The research process would go from painting to oral text to alphabetical writing; each of these forms, in turn, beyond serving to identify veiled practices, provided keys to understand and evaluate how the Nahuas perceived and articulated the objective world—their *quilates*, their carats, in Sahagún’s lingo. For the most part, Sahagún’s assessment of the intellect of the Nahuas is positive; he is less enthusiastic about their will.

If in other places Sahagún speaks of the Nahuas as lacking writing, these are incidental comments that hardly reflect some sort of ideological negation of or blindness towards writing practices among the Nahuas. He is clearly more interested in using paintings/writings to understand the mentality of the Nahuas than in casting them as intellectual inferiors because they lacked an alphabet. Sahagún ascribes the failed conversion to moral weakness. In terms of Scotus’s view of historical evolution, Sahagún considered the Nahuas had a very undeveloped will: “aviendo visto por experiencia la dureça de la gente” [having seen from experience the hardness of heart of this people]. The *dureça de la gente* led Sahagún to speculate that the Nahuas would completely revert to paganism within fifty years if the Spaniards abandoned the New

World (ibid. 98). Rather than seeing this disposition in terms of damaged intellectual faculties, Sahagún finds a conspiracy to deceive the Spaniards from the start. The Nahuas willfully deceived the missionaries when they were first asked at the beginning of the evangelization if they accepted the Christian tenets. Central to this submission to the new church was the required belief in one god and the wholesale repudiation of their world. It is not a question of not fully understanding the doctrine of one god but of refusing to accept it and lying.

To Ometochtzin and the *tlacuilo* of the *Telleriano-Remensis* the missionaries espoused different worlds that they felt could coexist with an equally plural set of indigenous world views. This capacity to dwell or at least to conceive the coexistence of a plurality of equally valid worlds was unacceptable to the missionaries even though they understood that Nahua culture consisted of deep-seated habits that could not be shed overnight (Durán) or of languages that held the secrets to forms of conceiving the world (Sahagún). They saw the multiplicity but could only accept one world in spite of the irreducible differences in the philosophical traditions of Franciscans and Dominicans. Sixteenth-century Nahuas, on the other hand, seem to have grasped the value of accepting the notion of a plurality of worlds that cannot be simply subsumed into one or another by a process of translation or by inclusion in terms of complexity (cf. Spinoza and Dreyfus, 1996).

If the texts of Ometochtzin and the *tlacuilo* partake of a fabric of rebellion, resistance and subversion, the concept of plural-world dwelling liberates us from the moral that exclusively values cultural artifacts in which one can find acts of resistance. *Telleriano-Remensis* exemplifies the capacity to create a discursive space that does not react to, instead adopts elements from Western codes to communicate the specificity of a plurality of worlds. We never find the *tlacuilo* situating himself in opposition to alphabetical writing or Renaissance pictorial perspective. The frontal image of the Franciscan captures the individualism enforced by the confession, but beyond the inquisitorial vigilance we ought to imagine the *tlacuilo* looking back at us from the past with an ironic smile

that brags of his ability to codify in his own pictorial language a Western cultural modality by means of a symbolic use of perspective. We witness the delineation of borders and a plurality of worlds but not a transitional existence nor a demand for recognition. Secular and religious authorities *recognized* all too well the *tlacuilo's* as well as Ometochtzin's historical and epistemological lucidity—but it blinded them. Colonial discourse, moreover, aspires to create intermediary subjects, states of *nepantla* according to the Nahuatl expression, and persecutes those who like Ometochtzin refused to think of themselves within a master/slave dialectic. However, the concept of *nepantla*, neither here nor there, neither in the ancient order nor in the Christian, can also be understood in terms of *a-not-being-really-convinced-of-the-necessity-of-dwelling-in-only-one-world*. The exteriority and incommensurability of the subaltern world engenders fear of insurrection (the war of the Mixton or the Zapatista uprising today), as well as anxiety in the face of epistemological lucidity that captures the relativity of Western forms of life—not by denying their truth but by inhabiting them and acting on them without abdicating one's own.

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