Herbs That Madden, Herbs That Cure:
A History of Hallucinogenic Plant Use in Colonial Mexico

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Abstract

"Herbs That Madden, Herbs That Cure: A History of Hallucinogenic Plant Use in Colonial Mexico," considers the development of the hybrid culture of hallucinogen consumption that developed in New Spain in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Indigenous, European, African, and Asian peoples participated in the unsanctioned divinatory and medicinal use of psychoactive plants such as peyote, *ololiuqui* and teonanácatl mushrooms. Knowledge exchange related to these substances implied significant inter-caste interaction and influence, to the dismay of the missionary mendicant orders and the Holy Office of the Inquisition. The perpetuation of pre-Columbian forms of hallucinogen use exacerbated the efforts of the Catholic Church to eradicate remnants of Indian idolatry. The primary hindrance faced by Spanish colonial authorities regarding hallucinogen use was that colonizers generally failed to recognize the scope and importance of sacred hallucinogenic plants for Nahua peoples. The process of recognition took nearly a century, between the conquest of 1521 and the official publication of the edict against peyote in 1620. European alcoholcentrism and the weight of Renaissance demonology in the European imagination obscured the ability to perceive and eradicate hallucinogen use amongst surviving Indian communities during the earliest decades of the Spanish colonial enterprise. Inquisition transcripts from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries demonstrate that Spanish clergy focused on the physical destruction of idols while neglecting other forms of worship such as hallucinogen use. This study traces the chronology of discourses that surrounded hallucinogen use in early modern New Spain by following the evolution of public and official discourses through European witchcraft treatises, colonial Natural Histories, Nahua codices, and Inquisition trial transcripts.

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Introduction

On April 6th, 2013 a 70-year-old Wixárika elder was arrested by the Mexican federal police in San Luis Potosi, Mexico, and charged with organized crime and drug trafficking ("Acusan a indígenas"). At the time, the elder marákame (shaman) Don Cruz Silvestre was in possession of a significant quantity of the hallucinogenic desert cactus, peyote. Following the arrest, the federal police transported Don Silvestre along with his young grandson and five other men to the Puente Grande maximum-security prison in the state of Jalisco, the same prison that the infamous drug lord Chapo Guzman escaped from in 2001. This facility houses some of Mexico's most notorious drug cartel members and violent criminals.

Don Silvestre's arrest incited outrage amongst indigenous and civil rights organizations in Mexico and around the world. Although peyote is technically an illegal drug in Mexico, traditional use by the Wixárika (of the Huichol peoples) is protected by the San Luis Potosi State Constitution, the Mexican Constitution, and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Thousands of Huichol people make the yearly peyote pilgrimage. In addition to consuming peyote on the journey, they also collect large quantities to take home to their communities for medicinal and ceremonial purposes throughout the year (Furst "To find our life" 154). In addition to legal protections regarding ceremonial use, the National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples (CDI) protects the right for the Huichol community to legally transport the hallucinogenic cactus across state lines between San Luis Potosi and Nayarit.[1] Given these legal protections, what prompted Don Silvestre's arrest and subsequent charges of drug trafficking and organized crime on this particular pilgrimage? The short answer

[1] For more on the treatment of indigenous peoples of Mexico as well as their rights, see "Evaluación de mitad de periodo…," by the CDI (Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas).

is that he was in the wrong company. However, authorities were concerned with the identity of the individuals who traveled with Don Silvestre, not because of previous drug convictions or connections to a drug cartel, but because of their ethnicity. At the time of his arrest, Don Silvestre was traveling with several non-Huichol mestizos. Because these individuals were not afforded the same consumption privileges as the Huichol, the peyote in Don Silvestre's possession went from being a protected indigenous medicine to an illegal drug.[2]

Public opinions in Mexico concerning Don Silvestre's case were divided. Contrasting views immediately saturated the online message boards of the articles that reported the incident. Most readers used the sites as platforms to express their outrage at this blatant violation of indigenous rights (Gamboa).[3] Others pointed out that the articles were one-sided since they did not emphasize that Don Silvestre's pilgrimage companions were mostly Mexican mestizos and not members of the Huichol community. Even in the eyes of some indigenous rights advocates, the inclusion of mestizos in the peyote pilgrimage constituted a perversion of traditional forms, and thus delegitimized Don Silvestre's rights to his medicine. In addition to pointing out the non-indigenous ethnicity of his companions, critics also scrutinized the quantity of the peyote in question. According to one report, the group was transporting over one hundred kilos of the hallucinogenic cactus. Authorities and the public questioned whether the peyote was truly destined for personal ceremonial Huichol use, or whether it was intended for the broader market of "peyote tourism" that draws non-indigenous nationals and foreigners to the region.[4] Despite these speculations, authorities eventually dropped the drug trafficking charges against Don Silvestre and released him from Puente Grande on April 15th, due in part to the international

[2] Don Silvestre's case is not an isolated incident. Two members of the Huichol community were arrested in June, 2015 under the same circumstances. See "La CDI contribuye con la puesta en libertad…"
[3] See also alex-mayorga's reddit blog: "Libertad para el Marakame Don Cruz Silvestre y sus acompañantes"
[4] For a recent discussion on the invasion of peyote tourism in the area, see Garcia Navarro "Mexico's Peyote Endangered by 'Drug Tourists."

attention the case received. However, upon his release, he was taken back into custody and transported to a prison in San Luis Potosi to face the lesser charge of "atentar contra la salud publica," (presenting a threat to public health).

Don Silvestre's case reveals a great deal about the present-day treatment of indigenous communities in Mexico, the legal gray area they must navigate in order to practice traditional medicine, and how public discourses concerning indigenous identity dialogue with the regulations imposed by the Mexican state. In addition to revealing much about the present, Don Silvestre's case raises questions as to the origins of the dichotomous categorization of peyote as both "indigenous medicine" and "illegal drug." How did peyote and other forms of traditional medicine come to be classified in such a way, and what are the historical roots of this categorization? More specifically, how did a concept as precarious as ethnicity become the gauge for establishing criminality related to certain medicinal plants? To answers these questions we must look to colonial history. The particularities of Don Silvestre's case can be directly traced back to attitudes, discourses, and judicial frameworks that emerged in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries when Europeans were first exposed to the wide variety of hallucinogenic plants of the Americas.

If we follow this thread, we can see the remnants of colonial policies in two key elements of Don Silvestre's case. Firstly, the use of ethnic identity (indigenous vs. non-indigenous) to establish the criminality of peyote is reminiscent of divisions implicit in the caste system of New Spain, and the concerted efforts on behalf of the Spanish colonial government to maintain those divisions. Secondly, the charge against Don Silvestre of "threatening public health," is reminiscent of the ideologies expressed in the writings of seventeenth-century Spanish clergy Hernando Ruiz de Alarcón and Jacinto de la Serna, who were some of the earliest to adamantly

condemn the medicinal uses peyote and other hallucinogens. (Quezada “Hernando” 325). To contextualize the origins of these discourses and policies, it is beneficial to begin with a brief description of the political and social entity that was New Spain and how it relates to the history and anthropology of hallucinogenic plants.

New Spain was the product of the expansion of the Spanish imperial enterprise across central Mexico in the sixteenth century. After the conquest of 1521, the Spanish crown imposed a governmental apparatus upon the existing political, social and economic structure of the Triple Alliance tributary system. Under the ultimate authority of a viceroy, the five branches of government (civil administration, judiciary, military, exchequer, and church affairs) were run by peninsular Spaniards, many who performed multiple functions (Gerhard 10). These functions included the administration of native labor forces through the *encomienda* system, which distributed natives and land amongst Spanish colonizers and conquistadors. Under the branch of church affairs, mendicant orders (Franciscans, Dominicans, Augustinians) headed the effort to convert the native populations to the Christian faith, while the Holy Office of the Inquisition policed the criminal and moral transgressions of Spanish, Africans, and those of mixed ancestry (17). Social and racial divisions were reinforced by the colonial caste system, which maintained peninsular Spaniards at the apex of social and political life. The native communities of central Mexico met this imposed Spanish system with a combination of adaptation, resistance, and acculturation (Kicza xi). This study explores how the history of hallucinogenic use in the colonial period played into these different reactions. The dynamics that arose from adaptation, resistance, and acculturation regarding hallucinogens were directly associated with the social and political stratification of the caste system in colonial Mexico.

According to the classifications of the Spanish caste system, the indigenous peoples of Mesoamerica (*indios)* were governed by a different set of legislative, judicial, and social conventions than those that applied to Spaniards (*españoles)*, Africans (*negros*), and individuals of mixed heritage *(mestizos, mulatos, etc.*). Efforts were made on every level of the five branches of the Spanish colonial government to maintain this separation. Historians refer to this phenomenon as the Two-Republic system of Spanish America, a concept used to describe the set of formal and informal policies and procedures by which Spanish colonizers intended to segregate Indians from non-Indians in the colony. There were several reasons behind this segregation, but one of the most significant was a desire to protect the integrity of the Christian faith in the face of Indian idolatry and heresy (Fisher and O'Hara 4; Israel 32). These are the historical factors that characterized the status of hallucinogens in New Spain. To fully understand the implications of these factors, it is helpful to view them from a broader anthropological perspective.

Archeologist and interdisciplinary scholar Andrew Sherratt describes the history of psychoactive substances as "a continuing process of transformation involving complex patterns of incorporation, interaction, and opposition" ("Alcohol" 15). His explanation is strikingly similar to historian John Kicza's previously summarized classification of three forms of native resilience (adaptation, resistance, and acculturation). This similarity is not gratuitous, as the use of psychoactive substances in any given culture permeates all levels of personal and social experience, and furthermore, play significant roles in the processes of adaptation, resistance, and acculturation when two cultures collide.

The consumption of hallucinogenic plants as a means to alter consciousness has been a part of the human experience since the dawn of civilization. Because of their tendency to

influence human behavior and alter belief systems, the treatment of these substances, their classification, availability, celebration, and condemnation have been in constant flux throughout history. Some communities have embraced these substances, while others reject their use and regulate or suppress their distribution (Goodman et al. "Preface" xiii). Furthermore, when two cultures with different habits of consumption come in contact with one another, the roles of these substances go through a long and complex process of adjustment. In the case of New Spain, this process involved the integration of two wildly different worldviews. On the one hand, there were Spaniards/Europeans, whose consumption of psychoactive substances were determined by the cultural importance of alcohol, and whose limited relationship with the endemic hallucinogenic plants of their homeland was framed by a fear of witchcraft. On the other hand, there was the Nahua, who like all Amerindian and pagan cultures across the globe, embraced hallucinogenic substances and situated them at the center of their religious system. The vast differences between these two communities would make for significant renegotiations of the role of hallucinogens during the colonial period.

Due to the central role that peyote and other sacred plants (peyote, *ololiuqui*, *teonanácatl* mushrooms, etc.) played in the Nahua religious system, they would be of particular concern for Spanish colonizers (Chuchiak 308). Despite the efforts of Spanish authorities to suppress the use of traditional hallucinogens, a vibrant culture of psychoactive plant consumption blossomed in New Spain. This culture of consumption, as I refer to it throughout, was inextricably linked to the religious and medicinal syncretism that developed throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Lockhart 203).

This study examines how Spanish, Amerindian, and African peoples formed a new unique relationship with traditional Mexican hallucinogenic plants in the colony. My approach

resonates most closely with Robert D. Hume's description of extrapolative analysis, which he describes as a way of writing about history that "starts from facts and documentation but goes much further into the realm of speculative analysis," and which "explores significance" as opposed to simply deducing verifiable facts (403). There are inherent dangers in this approach, as different scholars may formulate contrasting opinions based on the same textual evidence. However, I concur with Hume's assertion that despite variations in interpretation, this approach is both valuable and important, as history that relies solely on listing "facts" can be limiting. Since the aim of this study is to illustrate attitudes, consumption habits, fears, and belief systems, it requires quite a bit of interpretive analysis and speculation, but the end product allows for a deeper consideration of all the moving parts that affected hallucinogen consumption in New Spain.

Many scholars have argued that the study of psychoactive substances requires a multidisciplinary approach (González 8; López Austin, "De las enfermedades" 51; Sherratt "Introduction" 2-4). Although my approach is primarily historical, I also draw from the fields of ethnobotany and anthropology. I focus specifically on the region of New Spain and the interaction between Spanish and Nahua cultures during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. What we find in the colonial experience is a complex exchange of medicinal and divinatory knowledge characterized by different levels of acceptance, rejection, and assimilation. To study the complex culture that surrounds psychoactive plants and their roles in society, I approach it from a variety of angles, from the broad to the specific, from the communal to the deeply personal. The field of anthropology provides the general framework by which to consider psychoactive plants and their fluid roles in society. The field of history anchors this anthropological framework in the context of New Spain. Studies in ethnobotany fill in the many

gaps inherent in a purely historical perspective, by illustrating how present-day indigenous communities integrate traditional hallucinogenic plants in their belief systems. This interdisciplinary approach reveals that consumption of psychoactive plants not only persisted amongst surviving indigenous populations but also spread across all castes and creeds, evolving and adapting according to the needs of the people. Discourses intended to suppress their use also steadily developed, as institutions of authority, primarily the Holy Office of the Inquisition, struggled to suppress use. Moreover, I demonstrate that hallucinogens played a significant role in the propagation of intercaste relationships, both regarding knowledge exchange and informal, unsanctioned economies. This study follows a general chronology to show how consumption habits and the discourses that surrounded them evolved over time. Chapter 1 and 2 are dedicated to outlining the individual cultures of consumption of Spaniards and Nahua before first encounters. Chapter 3 describes the process of hybridization of the two, while Chapter 4 contains an annotated Inquisition document from 1650 that demonstrates how the hybridized habits manifested in everyday life.

Chapter 1

To shed light on the topic of hallucinogen use in colonial Mexico, it is necessary to consider the preconceived notions about psychoactive plants that colonizers brought from the Old World to the New. Chapter 1, "By the Art of the Devil: Mapping Hallucinogenic Plant Use in Early Modern Spain through Folklore and Discourses of Demonology," considers the complex status of psychoactive substance consumption in early modern Spain before first encounters. After establishing a general history of European consumption, I trace the evolution of discourses surrounding endemic hallucinogens (henbane, mandrake, belladonna and other members of the Solanaceae family) in the early modern period. The trajectory of this consideration is both

geographical and chronological, as my focus moves from the general European context at the end of the fifteenth century to how these discourses manifested in Spain in the sixteenth century.

What I demonstrate in this trajectory is that while these "bewitching herbs" were associated with sorcery and black magic, their effects were poorly understood in Europe. To root these discourses in textual evidence, I perform a close reading of segments of the *Malleus Maleficarum*, the most notorious and influential treatise on witchcraft of the early modern period, which fueled the European witch-hunt. As I move into the Spanish context, I compare the broad European scope of the *Malleus Maleficarum* to the writings of peninsular Spaniards who also wrote witchcraft treatises, Martin de Castañega and Pedro Ciruelo. This comparison demonstrates that the rhetoric of Iberian theologians obscured the importance of psychoactive plants in witchcraft treatises. Finally, I end the chapter by contrasting competing discourses in the texts of two late sixteenth century contemporaries: Martin del Rio, a theologian whose witchcraft treatise was also hugely influential, and Juan de Cárdenas, a physician who wrote of the illnesses and exotic plants of New Spain. Closing the chapter with a comparison of these two writers underscores how the disciplines of botany and theology approached hallucinogenic plants very differently in the early modern period. While botanical discourses moved towards an acknowledgment of the psychological effects of hallucinogens, theology tended to dismiss this connection, likely because it competed with the inflammatory discourses of Renaissance demonology, which depended on the physical threat of witchcraft.

Chapter 2

Chapter 2, "Sacred Hallucinogens in Pre-Columbian Nahua Communities and Beyond: Evidence of Patterns of Consumption Past and Present," traces reoccurring themes across pre-Columbian codices, colonial texts, and present-day ethnographic studies to reconstruct Nahua

consumption habits prior to first encounters. Instead of the divisive prohibition that characterized Spanish culture of consumption, in Mexico a cornucopia of psychoactive substances formed the very foundations of the Nahua religious system. In addition to their social and symbolic importance in public ritual, these sacred substances were also an important part of the therapeutic practices of Nahua *ticitls*, the shaman who treated both physical and spiritual maladies in Nahua society. Following a broad consideration of the Amerindian culture of psychoactive substance consumption, Chapter 2 focuses on particular substances (peyote, *ololiuqui*, *teonanáctl*) and textual evidence from the colonial era that reveal their importance. This includes Bernardino de Sahagún's *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España*, Toribio de Benavente Motolínia's *Historia de los indios de la Nueva España*, and Fernando Alvarado Tezozómoc's *Crónica mexicana*. To supplement the historical perspective, I reference the ethnobotany of Richard Evans Schultes and Peter Furst, amongst others. The main objective of this chapter is to illustrate the pervasive importance of hallucinogenic plants in Nahua society.

Chapter 3

Chapter 3, "The Inquisition in New Spain and Early (Mis)perceptions of Hallucinogens," considers the collision between Spanish and Nahua cultures of consumption in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. What emerged was a syncretism of habits, discourses, and attitudes that unfolded against the backdrop of caste relations and the efforts of the Church to eradicate Amerindian belief systems. However, before full-fledged prohibition in the seventeenth century, early colonizing Spaniards seemed to be unaware of the importance or scope of hallucinogens in Nahua culture. Furthermore, while mendicant orders intended to spread the Christian faith and suppress Indian idolatry, the failure to recognize this importance of hallucinogens hindered their ability to do so. Evidence of this is apparent in the early Indian Inquisition trials of the 1530s. In

addition to examining Inquisition transcripts, I also follow the evolution of discourses in the texts of colonial authors who wrote about hallucinogens. These texts demonstrate that the same alcoholcentric perspective and emphasis on demonology that affected Old World authors continued to affect those who wrote from the colony, even though their writing demonstrates a gradual awakening to the importance of these substances.

By the beginning of the seventeenth century, jurisdictional confusion over those legally categorized as *indios* lead to significant disparities in how inquisitors handled cases involving hallucinogen use, which frequently implicated members of several different castes. Inquisition records of the seventeenth centuries contain cases implicating *españoles*, *mestizos*, and *mulatos* who consumed peyote and other hallucinogens. These substances were usually acquired from *indios.* As with the contemporary case of Don Silvestre, during the early colony it was the exchange of hallucinogens between *indios* and non-*indios* that constituted the biggest problem for authorities. Despite increased prohibition, a hybridized culture of hallucinogen consumption flourished in the seventeenth century with clear European and Amerindian features.

Chapter 4

Chapter 4, "The Herb Spoke from My Breast: A Seventeenth-Century Case of Traditional Hallucinogen Use in New Spain," is a transcription and close reading of the 1650 Inquisition document that describes the experience of Ana Calderón, a member of the Spanish caste who, after drinking a mysterious hallucinogenic herb given to her by an *indio*, was miraculously cured of her long-term debilitating illness. This case includes a vivid description of her hallucinogenic trance and exemplifies the illicit market for hallucinogens in New Spain. Ana Calderón's case also demonstrates that caste relations in the colony were complex and fluid, while traditional Nahua medicine held significant social clout amongst members of the Spanish caste. These

substances had the uncanny ability to build bridges across caste lines, creating intimate economic relationships between wildly different members of colonial society.

Previous Scholarship

There is a rich body of scholarly work that addresses the question of traditional hallucinogens in the context of medicine, witchcraft, and religious syncretism in colonial Mexico. Through the analysis of primary colonial texts such as the original Nahuatl language sources of sixteenth-century Franciscan Friar and proto-ethnographer Bernardino de Sahagún, Historians Carlos Viesca Treviño, Alfredo López Austin, and Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán have made substantial contributions to the study of Nahua hallucinogenic sacred plants in religious and medicinal practices. Inga Clendinnen's *Aztec: an Interpretation* draws from the writings of Bernardino de Sahagún and Dominican Diego Durán to offer a reconstruction of daily life in Mexica society. Her work includes a consideration of the importance of psychoactive plants and how they fit into the Nahua worldview. In *Enfermedad y Maleficio*, Naomí Quezada builds on the history of Nahua medicine by considering the role of unsanctioned medical practitioners in New Spain. Although previous scholars such as Viesca Treviño and Lopez Austín have addressed Spanish perspectives in their studies of Nahua medicine, Quezada's work, in the tradition of her predecessor Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán, elaborates by incorporating the medicinal syncretism that developed between Spanish, Indian, and African peoples during the colonial era. In addition to highlighting material from colonial writers, Quezada also draws from Inquisition documents to explore the relationships between colonial subjects and the figure of the "curandero" in New Spain. *In Hall of Mirrors: Power, Witchcraft, and Caste in Colonial Mexico* Laura Lewis explores dynamics of power, caste, and witchcraft through an analysis of the common threads that emerge from Inquisition documents from the colonial period. Amir

Kashanipour's dissertation *A World of Cures: Magic and Medicine in Colonial Yucatán* also incorporates Inquisition trials as a way to root concepts of medicine and disease into the everyday experiences of colonial subjects. With regards to hallucinogens specifically, Angelica Morales Sarabia's article "The Culture of Peyote: Between Divination and Disease in Early Modern New Spain." sheds light on the dual role of peyote as divinatory aid and medicine in the early seventeenth century. Her work also considers how sixteenth-century erudite men such as royal physician Francisco Hernández, colonial physician Juán de Cárdenas and Franciscan missionary Friar Toribio de Benavente Motolínia failed to address the important role of women in hallucinogen use.[5] From the fields of ethnobotany, the work of Richard Evans Schultes and Peter Furst has shed light on the importance of these plants for indigenous communities in Mexico, while also drawing from historical references to demonstrate the resilience of native customs. In *Sueño y extasis: Vision chamánicas de los nahuas y los mayas*, Mercedes de la Garza has gathered information from across the disciplines in a comprehensive study of shamanic practices amongst the Nahua and Maya peoples, past and present. The compilation of essays *Consuming Habits: Global and Historical Perspectives on How Cultures define Drugs* edited by Jordan Goodman, Paul E. Lovejoy, and Andrew Sherratt sets the precedent for a multidisciplinary understanding of psychoactive substances in culture. These are just a sample of the many works that have influenced my approach and methodology.

This study contributes to this body of work in three ways. Firstly, it synthesizes the many threads of scholarship relating to hallucinogenic plants into one multifaceted view by streaming

[5] The writings of Francisco Hernández were compiled, translated, and published by Francsico Ximenez in 1615 under the title *Cuatro libros de la naturaleza y virtudes medicinales de las plantas y animales de la Nueva España*. Júan de Cárdenas published his *Primera parte de los problemas y secretos marauillosos de las Indias* in 1591. Torbio de Benavente Motolínia's writings appear in several editions. In this study I refer to *Historia de los indios de la Nueva España: escrita a mediados del siglo XVI* republished in 1914.

them through the framework of the anthropology of consumption (Sherratt "Introduction" 6). This approach allows for a more nuanced and flexible consideration of psychoactive plants. Secondly, it traces the trajectory of discourses regarding hallucinogens and the role they played in the processes of resistance, acculturation, and adaptation of native communities in Mexico. This study builds upon an acknowledgment of the importance of hallucinogenic substances and their role in fomenting intercaste relationships, while it also underscores the negotiations of Indian forms of power. Furthermore, it reinforces the assertions of previous scholarship that emphasize the fluidity and permeability of the caste system ((MacLachlan and Rodriguez 198). Thirdly, my research invites further inquiry into the complex world of hallucinogen use during the colonial period through the extrapolation of evidence of ritual Amerindian customs from colonial documents, where hallucinogen consumption may have been obscured by European rhetoric. The practice of Interpretation and extrapolation enhances our capacity to understand lost pre-conquest Amerindian practices, while it also sheds light on how psychoactive plants may have affected interactions between Spaniards and the native communities during conquest, colonization, and beyond.

A Note on Terminology

In this study, I use the phrases "psychoactive substances" and "hallucinogens" abundantly and interchangeably. The term "psychoactive" commonly refers to any substance that alters brain chemistry and affects perception. By definition, all hallucinogens are psychoactive substances, but not all psychoactive substances are hallucinogens. Psychoactive substances include alcohol, tobacco, and even caffeine, as well as non-hallucinogenic stimulants such as cocaine (Goodman et al. xiii). However, I use the term here in part to avoid redundancy and also because many sacred Amerindian plants are on the cusp between the two. Peyote, for example,

can cause intense emotional and physical reactions, as well as subtle visions of light and color, without provoking full-fledged hallucinations (Schultes et al. 154). I avoid the use of the word "entheogen" because the term describes present-day ritual/spiritual use of sacred hallucinogenic and psychoactive plans amongst indigenous communities (Forte 8). Throughout this study it became apparent that I needed a more fluid and ambiguous term for these substances. Because of the syncretism that affected customs related to a variety of uses, I opted for the more versatile term "hallucinogen."

I apply the terms indigenous, Indian, Amerindian, and Mesoamerican to refer to the peoples of the Americas depending on the specific context of the reference. Indigenous refers to the original peoples and customs of the Americas in a general sense; I use Indian when referencing the location of these same communities in relation to the constructs of Spanish colonial society and the caste system, Mesoamerican to refer specifically to a population in the geographical designation of pre-Columbian communities, and Nahua refers to the diverse peoples who lived in the valley of Mexico, and who are the main focus of this study. I do not use Mexica except in reference to the work of other authors, as my scope covers a variety of Nahuatl-speaking groups in central Mexico.

Chapter One

By the Art of the Devil: Mapping Hallucinogenic Plant Use in Early Modern Spain through Folklore and Discourses of Demonology

The history of psychoactive plants in Europe is best summarized as a battle between Christianity and paganism. Like every human civilization on Earth, Ancient Europe had a long history of psychoactive plant consumption that reached far back into the Neolithic age (Kennedy 6). Hallucinogens constituted an integral part of the religious belief systems of European pagan peoples. All the great civilizations of the Western world used mandrake, henbane, and belladona, amongst other psychoactive and hallucinogenic agents. This custom would all but be abolished with the rise of Christianity. In the first centuries AD, the destruction and Christianization of ancient pagan sites of worship (Heliopolis, Alexandria) came hand in hand with the ideological suppression of pagan belief systems (Hahn 335). This would include by extension an erasure of practices related to psychoactive plants. Textual evidence of prohibition in the medieval period is scarce. It is apparent, however, that the condemnation of these "demonic herbs" was the result of a prolonged process that began with the identification and categorization of paganism. The "*Indiculus superstitionum et paganiarum"* is the earliest surviving document that catalogs pagan related behaviors and beliefs. This list of thirty superstitious activates was transcribed and published for the first time in 1667 by Etienne Baluze, although it dates from the ninth century. Some scholars have cited the *Indicvlvs* as textual evidence of psychoactive plant prohibition but it does not explicitly reference any herbs.[6] It does, however, mention "diviners and sorcerers"

[6] Escohotado (174) cites this document as an edict of Chalderic III that condemns "yerbas diabólicas" but this seems to be a bibliographical error, as it did not originate from Childeric III nor does it mention any specific herbs. Etienne Baluze, who transcribed and published the *Indiculus,* categorized it under documents related to Charlemagne, (Holy Roman Emperor from 800-814).

(*De divinis vel sortilogis)* as part of the identifiable characteristics of paganism. These are the same figures that would later be closely associated with demonic herbs (Baluze col. 150-152). By the second half of the thirteenth century, Catholic Bishop Albertus Magnus made an explicit connection between henbane, necromancers, and the conjuring of demons in his botanical encyclopedia, *De vegetabilibus et plantis libri septem* (1260).[7]

Despite rhetoric against the use of henbane and other Nightshade species, the consumption of hallucinogens continued unabated throughout the medieval period. By the dawn of the early modern period the role of psychoactive plants in European society was characterized by the discord between Church prohibition and the continued consumption habits of the people. The increasing fear of witchcraft that took Europe by storm in the fifteenth century would exacerbate these tensions. There was a heightened sense of danger that surrounded ancient unsanctioned traditions, which included divinatory and medicinal treatments, the casting of spells, and the preparation of love potions and poisons (Kennedy 11). Alcohol, once having been simply one among many intoxicants of the ancient world, became the only mind-altering substance embraced by the blossoming Christian civilization (Sherratt "Alcohol" 28).

The peoples of Spain played an active role in the production and propagation of discourses that fed the relationship between early modern Europeans and psychoactive substances. These same discourses would travel across the Atlantic to the New World and affect how Spaniards related to Amerindian hallucinogens. Before venturing into the question of Spanish and Amerindian relations, however, it is essential to understand the many discursive threads that fed the Spanish culture of psychoactive plant consumption prior to first encounters.

[7] "Qui autem in nigromanticis student, tradunt characterem iusquiami pictum debere esse in homine, quando faciunt "daemonum invocations" Albertus Magnus (527). For more on Albertus Magnus and his contributions to the botanical knowledge of the thirteenth century, see Valderas Gallardo (26).

This chapter approaches the complex question of hallucinogens in early modern Spain by examining their place in society and how consumption habits, attitudes, and discourses evolved throughout history. This includes the complex relationships between authorities and the populace, between various discourses put forth by intellectuals and the beliefs and customs of the common folk. A history of these developments will culminate in the early modern period in order to demonstrate what attitudes towards hallucinogens might have looked like in Spain on the eve of imperial expansion and contact with the New World.

It is important to note that the official and popular attitudes surrounding hallucinogenic plants in early modern Spain did not form in a vacuum; they stemmed from a much broader context that included a long history of folk use and the rise of official persectution of those who practiced witchcraft. To flesh out the various threads of this background, I begin by exploring the history of hallucinogenic plants in Western Europe by considering evidence of their popular use and the place of hallucinogenic substances in the clandestine market of witchcraft. I then focus on the development of official and learned discourses through a close reading of related passages of the infamous witchcraft treatise by Heinricus Institoris and Jacobus Sprenger, the *Malleus Maleficarum* (The Hammer of Witches) of 1486.

The publication of this wildly popular and influential treatise would fuel the great European witch-hunt of the early modern period, with all its devastating effects. The text itself was widely published, translated, and distributed throughout Western Europe and served as the model for the flood of witchcraft treatises that followed, including those written in Spain in the sixteenth century. Through its wide distribution, it became the key text that aided early modern inquisitors in the identification of witchcraft and the proper judicial processes by which to try and convict potential witches. Furthermore, the *Malleus* cemented the new concept of witchcraft

in the imaginations of clergyman and layperson alike. For the purpose of this study, I focus on how the *Malleus* managed the topic of hallucinogens in the context of witchcraft. This close reading will demonstrate that the *Malleus* did not fully acknowledge the role of these plants and their effects in potential practices of witchcraft. This may seem contradictory, considering the explicit prohibitive stance that the Catholic Church took against such plants in the late medieval period. Nevertheless, while they were vilified by the Church and associated with witchcraft, their role was poorly understood. I suggest that this misunderstanding was the result of two factors: 1) the limited knowledge of early modern inquisitors and laymen concerning the physiological effects of these plants and 2) the manner in which the topic of hallucinogenic plants clashed with dominant discourses of demonology. The near omission of psychoactive plants in most witchcraft treatises is particularly striking considering the contemporary evidence of hallucinogen use in Europe. The root of these omissions is the discord between botanical knowledge of hallucinogens and discourses of demonology that fueled witchcraft treatises. While sixteenth-century botanists drew connections between hallucinogens and the fantastical activities of accused witches, their perspective was not dictated by an urgency to underscore the dangers of sorcery and demonology. The writers of witchcraft treatises, on the other hand, were motivated by a specific agenda: to make witchcraft appear as powerful and as dangerous as possible. This meant that, either consciously or not, witchcraft treatises distanced the plant from its hallucinogenic effects and instead attributed the fantastical stories of witches to the realm of the demonic. Furthermore, there was a split between those writers who emphasized the botanical qualities of plants, and those who built distance between the two. This difference in discourse would affect not only European perspectives of psychoactive plants but also how colonizing Spaniards faced new substances in the Americas (Sidky 193).

Not all scholars in the early modern period ignored the role of hallucinogenic plants in witchcraft. Homayun Sidky makes note of these "adversaries of witch-hunters," who found explanations for night flights and fantastical sexual orgies in the effects of hallucinogenic salves. Explaining the phenomena of witchcraft in such a way would undermine the discourses of witchcraft treatises, as it would minimize their status to simple delusions and superstition, a much lesser crime. The Spanish voice for this view belonged to Andrés Laguna, a physician from Segovia, who established a connection between the infamous witches salves and species of the Nightshade family (*Solanaceae*) in his commentary to his translation of Pedanius Dioscorides's *Medica materia* (1529). Laguna details an experiment in which he observed a woman throughout the night who had anointed herself with oil that, as Laguna points out, contained several hallucinogenic members of the Nightshade family. This controlled experiment demonstrated for Laguna that the plants were to blame for the fantastical stories the woman told when she awoke (Friedenwald 1039). Laguna's observations are similar to those described by Johannes Nider. Nider (1380-1438), who famously authored The *Formicarius* (1475), one of the earliest texts to discuss witchcraft, likewise claimed to have witnessed an "anointed woman" who was convinced her night flights had taken place in the flesh (Harner 253). There is an important distinction between the two, however. Nider's heavily influential observations made no explicit reference to the ingredients in the oil, and his focus was on the actions of Satan to "delude" the woman. Laguna's mid-century postulations, clearly rooted in medicinal arguments, seemed to have been the exception rather than the rule in a Europe enveloped in a growing fear of witchcraft.

On the other side of the Atlantic in New Spain, Juan de Cárdenas by the end of the sixteenth century would also make an explicit connection between New World hallucinogens and

the activities of witches. His *Primera parte de los problemas y secretos maravillosos de las indias* (1591) follows the model of philosopher Pedanius Dioscorides. In relation to psychoactive herbs, he links their effects to bodily humors and superstition (Viesca Treviño "Hechizos" 41). As I demonstrate further along in this chapter, Cárdenas's text moved towards a more holistic understanding of hallucinogens and their effect on behavior and the body. Such writings based on botanical knowledge were ultimately a struggle against the tide of widespread misinformation about hallucinogenic plants and their effects on the body.

Despite the acknowledgement on behalf of some contemporary botanists and physicians that plants may have been to blame for many imagined phenomena related to witchcraft, ideas regarding demonology eclipsed such competing claims and heavily affected the ability of both inquisitors and layman to detect and understand their effects. The writings of Martin de Castañega (1529) and Pedro Ciruelo (1530) demonstrate that Spanish witchcraft treatises, following the *Malleus Maleficarum,* lacked any substantial acknowledgement of possible botanical influences in witchcraft. What follows is a comparison of the *Malleus Maleficarum* with the texts of Spanish authors, which offers insight into the perceived swelling menace of witchcraft in the sixteenth-century Iberian Peninsula. In combination, this consideration of folklore and textual evidence will give us a general idea of hallucinogen consumption in Spain in the early modern period and a deeper understanding of the contrasting discourses that affected consumption practices. In turn, this will help explain why the majority of Spanish subjects and authorities had such difficultly recognizing and eradicating hallucinogen use when they encountered the Amerindian communities of the New World.

Hallucinogens in Europe: From Ancient Practices to Early Modern Prohibition

The history of hallucinogens in Europe is long and complex. Knowledge concerning these psychoactive plants waxed and waned over the centuries depending on their level of acceptability in each European community. Although there is some variety in plants native to Western Europe, the members of the Nightshade family were, and continue to be, the most documented hallucinogens of the continent. These include henbane or beleño negro (*Hyoscyamus albus, H. Niger*), mandrake (*Madragora officicinarum*), and deadly nightshade or belladona (*Atropa belladonna*).[8] All of these substances have relatively similar effects: in mild doses they are sedatives or mild mood-altering intoxicants; in larger doses they cause bouts of deep sleep, frequently characterized by vivid and erotic dreams. As was the case with pagan societies elsewhere in the world, the cultures of ancient Europe actively engaged in psychoactive substance use. The writings of both Pliny and Homer contain explicit references to henbane, the most popular member of the Nightshade family. Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans had knowledge of henbane and its myriad of uses as a poison, an intoxicant, pain reliever, and a facilitator of prophetic visions (Sayin 285).[9] The importance of these substances went beyond their daily use. They were also important religious symbols associated with several of the most important deities of ancient cultures.[10] Pre-Christian European societies exhibited a relative acceptance of these plants, or at the very least, an ambiguity towards the moral and ethical implications of their properties. The rise of Christianity would gradually erode this ambiguity.

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[8] See the glossaries on pages 197-199 of this study for breif references to the effects and history of European and Amerindian halluciongenic plants.

[9] See Sayin (285-290) for a description of hallucinogen use in Greek-Hellenic cultures and how psychoactive substances were incorporated into rituals, particularly Eleusinian pagan festivals: "There had always been a rumor that men and women drank a very powerful 'magical potion' during these rituals, which had similar effects as those related to the Nightshade family (let's call it 'sedated sensuality'). Most probably, these rituals were the imitation of 'Dionysian rituals' and the potion was some kind of psychoactive drink, such as absinthe (or kykeon)" (285).

[10] See Kennedy (6-11) for a comprehensive description of the Greek, Roman, and Egyptian deities associated with different hallucinogenic substances.

As was the case with so many other pagan practices, the Catholic Church steadily drove hallucinogen use underground.[11] The mounting prohibition of hallucinogens meant that attitudes towards these substances were also gradually altered and silenced. Like so many other practices attributed to witchcraft, the condemnation of hallucinogens would include a censorship which, although intended to eradicate illicit behavior amongst the growing Christian flock, would have the secondary effect of increasing the clandestine demand for these plants.

By the dawn of the early modern period, consumption of psychoactive plants took place under a thick shroud of obscurity. The occult status of these plants meant that their identification, collection, and dosage evolved into a specialized body of knowledge that was exercised in secrecy by individuals operating on the fringe of society. This specialized knowledge meant that along with potions, spells, and curses, hallucinogens were an elemental part of the clandestine economy of the early modern "witch." In a period when marginalized individuals had limited resources, knowledge of hallucinogens represented a viable opportunity for revenue and self-sufficiency. The profile of the witch or sorcerer who was suspected of engaging in these activities changed according to location and depended on which segment of the population represented the greatest threat to social order.

In the countryside, witchcraft was commonly associated with the poor, old, unwed or widowed crone. We are all familiar with the popular image of the decrepit witch, whose eyes, silver from cataracts, peer out from her dank hovel in the lonely woods to lure unsuspected innocents thither with a gesture of her knobby finger. In rural areas, persecution was concentrated on the witch's power over the forces of *maleficium* (malevolent magic).

[11] Tausiet "Ponzoña": "En realidad, se trataba de sustituir los restos de viejas costumbres y creencias, o incluso formas de vida muy cercanas al paganismo, por los valores emanados de la cada vez mas asentada alianza entre el altar y el trono. Los recién creados estados modernos deseaban imponer ahora su autoridad en un mundo diversificado y complejo" (29).

Accusations centered on an individual's ability to do harm to others, including against the bodily integrity of persons and the prosperity of crops (Tausiet *Abracadabra Omnipotens* 21). In urban areas, by contrast, this stigma fell upon immigrants from distant and mysterious lands whose strange customs and confusing language provoked discomfort in the close quarters of the city. The commonality between these two seemingly wholly dissimilar social groups is that both populations consisted of individuals who were either considered menacing because of their abnormal social status or likely to resort to clandestine activities to make a living. The fervor with which the Church persecuted these individuals stemmed from a desire to squelch all manifestations of heresy and *maleficium*. The mounting fear of *maleficium* can be traced to the Council of Basel, which helped spread the alarmist rhetoric of the inquisitor Johannes Nider concerning the threat of witchcraft (Midelfort 363).

Despite (or perhaps because of) their clandestine nature, knowledge of magical herbs during the medieval and early modern periods became increasingly specialized and intricate. This is apparent in the peculiar specificity of rituals associated with these plants, as demonstrated by Harold A. Hansen's *The Witches Garden*. Hansen's descriptions demonstrate how popular discourses concerning these plants were shaped by the specialization required for their use. Let us take, for example, the beliefs regarding mandrake. Mandrake plants was primarily known for their anthropomorphic roots, which were considered prized amulets that brought good fortune to those who possessed them. It is lesser known that this same plant has a long history of use related to witchcraft due to hallucinogenic properties. Harvesting this plant required very specific ritualized performances, which, if not followed meticulously, could result in death.[12] Hansen

[12] Hansen (30-36) bases this account on the descriptions of Greek philosopher and successor of Aristotle Theophrastus, Romano-Jewish scholar Josephus Flavius and Claudius Aelianus (Aelian) of Rome. These classic sources demonstrate the longevity of mandrake use in ancient Europe.

documents the details of these activities, gathered from a combination of classical sources and folklore. He begins by paraphrasing the writings of Theophrastus:

> First three circles must be drawn with the knife in the earth around the plant. With one's face turned towards the west, the topmost pat of the root can be cut off. Next, more of the root is uncovered, but before the last bit is cut free one must dance around it, reciting as much as on can remember of the mysteries of love. (30)

In addition to dousing the plant in urine or menstrual blood, the ritual frequently included the sacrifice an innocent dog to avoid touching the mandrake while it was still in the earth:

> …one ties up a starving dog to the root and, before moving away, sets a fragrant portion of fried meat just out of its reach. The starving animal quickly tries to get to the meat, but dies just as it draws the mandrake from the earth. The corpse should be buried where the plant was growing, and a burial ceremony should be carried out. (34)

Hansen notes that these intricate customs may have faded during the medieval period. Ample evidence suggests, however, that the elaborate superstitions surrounding mandrake persisted. For example, an association between the human-shaped plant and the gallows developed: "A radical innovation in the popular belief was that the mandrake, now also known under the name 'gallows-man' and 'dragon doll,' can only grow at the foot of the gallows and only comes up where either urine or semen from a hanged man has wetted the earth" (36). The association between recently hung criminals and mandrake added to its mystery and fueled the development of a market for this and other members of the Nightshade family. Of course, although toxic to ingest, mandrake is not deadly to the touch. Nevertheless, the elaborate nature of these rituals reveals how mandrake collectors would market them to the general population. Additionally, by

hiring an intermediary to harvest and handle the mandrake, one could reap its benefits without engaging in the imagined dangers and unpleasant acts required for its collection. As Hansen notes:

> It was not everyone's cup of tea to venture out to the gallows hill to dig mandrake from earth which also housed the moldering remains of rogues who had been hanged, beheaded or broken on the rack. Most of the people who wanted to acquire a mandrake would certainly have preferred to buy it instead. (36)

It was undoubtedly in the best interest of the marginalized individuals who knew of these herbs to hyperbolize the mystique and danger that surrounded them. By doing so, they ensured a popular reliance on their particular skill set. Not just anyone could waltz into the forest or gallows and dig up a mandrake and get away with it; it required the expertise and knowledge of one who knew how to handle these toxic magical plants.

The danger associated with such plants was not completely based on market-driven hyperbole, however. According to the same vein of folklore, the entire Nightshade family was intimately linked with death. Henbane was associated with rot due to its noxious aroma of decomposing flesh. It was said to grow particularly well under gallows, in graveyards and other areas rich with human decay. The relationship between henbane and death was also related to its high level of toxicity. Henbane's use as a mind-altering substance was exceded by its fame as a deadly poison. Belladona was also quite poisonous; swallowing a handful of belladona berries would be enough to cause death (Hansen 55; Murray 280). In addition to the potentially fatal effects of these plants, the intoxicated individual also tended to enter a deathlike sleep from which they could not be awoken, even through the most violent and abrasive measures (Cohn 219). Because of the danger inherent to the toxicity of the Nightshade family, those who retained

knowledge of the proper dosage held significant power over the consuming public. Patrons would include those in need of generally prohibited services and brews such as abortions, love potions, and poisons.[13] It was precisely the unorthodox uses of these plants that both led to their demand amongst the populace and also inspired Church suppression. As Hansen points out:

> Our forefathers certainly feared witches because of their alleged pact with the devil and their consequent malice, but they feared them just as much because they made and sold poisons and narcotic preparations to anyone who wished to buy them and had the means to pay. (21)

The use of these substances, whether as love potions, poisons, or to eliminate unwanted pregnancies not only constituted a violation of the basic principles of the Catholic faith but also was considered inherently dangerous to society. Based on the tension between popular discourses, as illustrated by Hansen's work and discourses of demonology, we can see how the black market of hallucinogens functioned in Europe prior to first encounters.

While the Catholic Church and secular judicial bodies took an explicit stance against the use of psychoactive substances in the early modern period, it would seem that there was a failure to recognize the full extent of the role of hallucinogens in witchcraft-related practices. The prohibition of the sale and consumption of these substances and the persecution of those who marketed them went hand and hand with what seemed to be a lack of knowledge of the effects of these plants. The Church's active stance against the illicit market of hallucinogens intermingled with a failure to acknowledge the role of hallucinogens in the altered mental states of accused witches. This failure to associate the plant with its psychological effects can be better understood

[13] See Hansen (21) and Emboden (78-82) for the history of hallucinogen consumption in Europe, and most notably, the categorization of many hallucinogens as both poison and medicine, treatment that such plants have often received throughout history.

through the aforementioned example of mandrake. The dangerous qualities of this plant were more often associated with symbolic power as opposed to the effects it had on individuals as a psychoactive substance. The popularity of mandrake was not based on a celebration or even acknowledgement of the psychological effects of the plant and how these may have caused the benefits perceived by its users (finding treasure, fighting well in battle, being irresistible to the opposite sex) but instead on the power of the mandrake as a talisman (Hansen 29-41).

It seems that while the threat of hallucinogens was a very real concern in Europe, theological writers failed to explicitly outline or profile these plants or their effects, or associate them directly with such activities as night flights or shape shifting. This was possibly due to two factors: the limited botanical knowledge of the inquisitors and clergymen who wrote these treatises and the conflict that botanical influence posed to discourses of demonology that were the foundation of such writings. As an example of how a limited understanding of a plant's psychoactive effects played out in early modern Europe, there is none more enlighting than the ergot phenomenon. The centuries-long health crisis brought about by ergotism demonstrates how knowledge gaps concerning hallucinogenic traditions and physiological effects of pathogens deeply affected the European population. The members of the Nightshade family had long histories of use and bodies of knowledge behind them that can be consulted and verified. The rise and fall of ergot consumption, however, demonstrates how a population is adversely affected when knowledge of a substance, its dosage and effects are lost.

Ergot (*Claviceps purpurea*) is a fungus that grows on cereal grasses. It was specifically cultivated and used by the ancient Greeks for its hallucinogenic properties. According to the interdisciplinary observations of Richard Evans Schultes and his colleagues, it was this little parasitic fungus that was responsible for the passage into Eleusis, a practice that went on for

centuries and then was lost (Schultes et al. 102-105; Wasson 194).[14] Despite its former widespread use, knowledge concerning the ritual uses of ergot was erased from collective memory throughout the medieval period, unlike that of the members of the Nightshade family. This loss came at a great consequence for the European population when mass ergot poisoning took place through the consumption of contaminated rye and wheat. The dreaded epidemic of Saint Anthony's fire ravaged the lower classes:

> These epidemics manifested themselves in two forms: those with nervous convulsions and epileptic symptoms; those with gangrene, mummifications, atrophy and occasional loss of extremities—noses, earlobes, fingers, toes and feet. Delirium and hallucinations were common symptoms of intoxication, which was frequently fatal. (Schultes et al. 103)

The first record of this phenomenon dates from 1039 and was associated, as per its namesake, with Saint Anthony. It took over 500 years for the true cause of the epidemic to come to light when grain millers finally recognized that old moldy rye, sold to poor people, was making them sick. Even with this discovery, outbreaks continued to flare up every now and then, as recently as the twentieth century.

The horrific effects of ergot poisoning were a far cry from the ecstasy of Eleusis so valued by the ancient Greeks. While there were many differences between the sacred ecstasy of Eleusis and the horrors of Saint Anthony's fire, from religious symbolism to the perception of the mind-altering experience, all of these differences revolve around the central question of dosage. We now know that ergot contains the same alkaloids as modern day LSD, and that ergot has important medicinal properties in small doses (Kren and Cvak xi). The way European communities responded to this phenomenon, in which large portions of the population

[14] Wasson suggests, unlike Schultes et al, that hallucinogenic mushrooms rather than ergot caused Eleusis.

accidentally became intoxicated with ergot, corroborates the notion that European communities associated altered mental states with satanic influence and little else. The prescribed remedy for Saint Anthony's fire at the time was to repent one's sins and take a pilgrimage to Saint Anthony's shrine (Schultes et al. 104). The emphasis on the religious dimension of the condition may have prevented both commoners and intellectuals from connecting the experience of Saint Anthony's fire with a biological agent of any sort. Furthermore, the example of ergot demonstrates that although early modern Europeans might have associated some plants with witches and their flying ointments, there was a consistent inability to attribute altered mental states or other physiological effects to plants or fungi.

Ointments, Orgies and Night Flights: Existing Scholarship and the Profile of the Early Modern Witch

With the exception of botany-centered writings like those of Laguna and Cárdenas, understanding the role of hallucinogen use in witchcraft has been for the most part a retrospective exercise on behalf of historians and usually is presented as an informative but anachronistic collection of anecdotes. Such anecdotes coincide with the observations of Laguna and Johannes Nider regarding the use of salves or potions to induce states of delusion. They usually follow a pattern: a suspected witch claims (or admits) that she flies through the air to arrive to the witches' sabbat, a congregation presided by Satan. In order to do so, he or she consumes a substance, either orally or by anointing themselves with a mysterious unguent, and then falls into a death-like sleep that lasts for hours. Once they wake, they tell of their fantastical journey to this midnight "black mass," convinced that they have lived the experience in the flesh (Caro Baroja 147-151). The consistency in these testimonies was a key factor in the perception of the growing menace of witchcraft amongst inquisitors and would be a cornerstone of the

discourses of demonology that would fuel the witch-hunt through the early modern period. The concept of the witches' coven solidified the threat of witchcraft through the illusion of cohesion, organization, conspiracy and community among these individuals. There is debate amongst witchcraft historians as to whether a real coven of witches existed in the early modern period or whether the profile of the "witch," with all her occult activities and characteristics was a complete fabrication of early modern demonologists.[15]

The profile of the malevolent witch is a key element in understanding witchcraft treatises and how they may have eclipsed hallucinogen use in the early modern period. In his introduction to his translation to the *Malleus Maleficarum*, Christopher Mackay identifies the six characteristic behaviors of those guilty of malevolent sorcery:

1) Entering into a pact with Satan.

2) Engaging in sexual relations with Satan and other demons, engaging in unnatural sexual acts with other witches and sorcerers.

3) Aerial flight.

4) Attending an assembly presided over by Satan (the witches' sabbat).

5) Inflicting maleficent magic (*maleficium*) against members of the community.

[15] For a summary of current witchcraft scholarship, see Erik Midelfort Chapter 2: "Witchcraft," in which he describes the current antithetical arguments concerning the nature of witchcraft and how the popularity of certain theories has fluxed over the years. In this case, we see that much of the scholarship regarding hallucinogens in witchcraft has developed from Margaret A. Murray's theories. These suggested that the suspected coven of witches was, in reality, a pagan fertility cult. It would be this association with pagan rituals that promoted further investigations into the use of hallucinogens in pagan rituals as a base for witchcraft.

6) The slaughter of babies. (19)

These six characteristics describe the process by which the witch entered into a reciprocal relationship with Satan. Satan granted the witch certain unnatural powers (with God's permission) and in return, the witch promised to practice *maleficium* against fellow human beings. When read objectively and compared to the work of witchcraft historians, these behaviors can be categorized as stemming from either altered states of mind (with possible links to hallucinogens) or age-old associations with perverse, occult magic. This is the case, for example, with the descriptions of sexual perversion and the kidnapping and consumption of babies. Aside from these ancient crimes, the remaining activities of witches enter the realm of the fantastical. Several of these characteristics can be linked the consumption of hallucinogens.

Much of the existing work that suggests a connection between hallucinogens and witchcraft refers to the activities of witches' covens and their encounters or sabbats, which include night flights, sexual acts with demons and shape shifting. As is the case with all of those accused of witchcraft at the time, distinguishing between the accused individual and this "elaborated profile" of the witch mentioned above can be challenging. This profile would have been an amalgam of characteristics that combine ancient fears of essentially anti-human behavior (incest, cannibalism, infanticide) with new anxieties concerning unfamiliar or undesired members of society, such as the unwed crone living alone in the woods or the foreign immigrant in the city (Cohn xi).[16] The question addressed by scholars such as Homayun Sidky and Michael Harner is whether the profile of the malevolent witch could have stemmed from this great

[16] This perverse sexual-reproductive element is present, in accusations preceding the Early Modern concept of witchcraft. Cohn reminds us that accusations of this nature date back as far as the dawn of Christianity, when the Romans accused early Christians of these same crimes against nature. Incestuous orgies and the consumption of human flesh have long been considered anti-human activities, which is why they appeared in the profile of the witch.

misunderstanding of hallucinogenic plant consumption. In other words, they consider the possibility that all documented confessions of supposed witches involving their unnatural sexual encounters with demons and animals, exhilarating night flights and otherworldly experiences were, in actuality, hallucinogenic induced "trips."[17]

Harner draws from a series of texts to demonstrate that the ever-famous night flights were the result of hallucinogen consumption (251). In addition to the qualities of night flights that alone suggest altered states of consciousness, there is, as mentioned prior, the occasional description of the involvement of a mysterious ointment. Some of these accounts explicitly mention the hallucinogenic culprit, while others simply describe the use of an undescribed salve. The variations of description in these accounts demonstrate the fluctuating discursive distance between witchcraft-related activities and the role of hallucinogens. In *A Razor for a Goat* Elliot Rose places the use of psychoactive plants in a central role of the rituals that characterize the witches' sabbat. According to his point of view, in the early modern period the entire ritual of the sabbat revolved around the ingestion of a toxic brew most likely made from henbane. Furthermore, the hallucinatory effects of the drink would explain night flights and demonic orgies (40).

While the existing body of work concerning hallucinogens and their relationship to flying ointments and witches' salves is particularly helpful in understanding the history of hallucinogen use in a general sense, trying to locate these incidents on a timeline regarding the development of discourses is challenging. For this reason, I would like to anchor these theories in contemporary texts to see how official discourses handled the questions of hallucinogens at the time. This has

[17] Sidky addresses hallucinogens and their possible association with night flights in Chapter 7: "Hallucinogenic Drugs and Witches." Here, he gives a cross-section of the historical records of "salves" and how they were linked to mandrake, belladonna and henbane.

allowed me to trace the evolution of discourses regarding hallucinogenic plants in the early modern period. The first thing that becomes apparent in witchcraft treatises is the absence of direct references to any identified psychoactive plants.

Despite all of the existing textual evidence presented by historians that the hallucinogenic Nightshade family was recognized and prohibited in the early modern period, the quintessential manual for witch hunters during the early modern era, *The Malleus Maleficarum,* fails to mention these plants as part of the extensive and detailed profile of the "malevolent witch" described in its pages. Although it does contain references to some ointments and oils in passages regarding the imagined activities of these witches, it neither makes any explicit connections between these ointments and members of the Nightshade family nor does it acknowledge that any intoxicant could be the culprit of the inexplicable behavior described within. As we will see in in the second half of this chapter, Martin de Castañega and Pedro Ciruelo also failed to establish the connection between hallucinogenic plants and the fantastical stereotype of the witch so meticulously developed in the pages of their respective treatises.

Why did European witchcraft treatises generally fail to discuss psychoactive plants, such as the members of the Nightshade family, when they had already been generally linked to witchcraft? Was it because the theologians who wrote these treatises lacked knowledge of the physiological effects of these plants, rendering them unable to make the connection between altered mental states, perceived heretical behavior and the effects of hallucinogens? Or did they dismiss the role of plants in lieu of emphasizing satanic influence? Although it is difficult to say for certain, I propose that a consideration of both questions can reveal a great deal about why and how hallucinogens were generally omitted from these treatises. Analyzing the descriptions of the malevolent witch and her activities clarifies where plants and herbs were located in discourses

concerning witchcraft and why their effects were obscured by competing discourses. Through a comparison of the few existing plant-related entries of the *Malleus Maleficarum* to the work of contemporary scholars, we can not only read evidence of hallucinogen consumption in these activities but also recognize how discourses of demonology obscured knowledge of these plants.

The *Malleus Maleficarum*: The Hammer of Witches and the Invisibility of Psychoactive Plants

Written by two Dominican friars and published in 1486, the *Malleus Maleficarum* is by far the most recognized and referenced treatise on witchcraft from the early modern period. The profile of "diabolism" developed within its pages would come to dictate the judicial and discursive parameters of the great European witch-hunt, and the image it paints of the malevolent witch would transcend the historical scope of the witch-hunt itself, shaping cultural perceptions of witches for centuries. There is no catalogue of demonic herbs in the *Malleus*. If we were to base our understanding of early modern witchcraft solely on this treatise, it would be quite easy to dismiss the role of psychoactive plants altogether. Surely, the near omission of herbs and plants in this text may explain why they have received relatively little attention in witchcraft studies. The structure of the treatise itself may offer clues as to why a botanical appendix was not included.

The authors cite an amalgam of sources, some of which are quite unclear, but the text mainly relied on the writings of Thomas Aquinas, Saint Augustine, Johannes Nider and the Spanish inquisitor Nicholas Eymeric (Mackay 16). The structure of the text is based on the mode of the "disputed question," which presents and then disproves competing discourses regarding the nature, scope and menace of witchcraft. The main divide addressed by this mode is whether accusations of witchcraft uncovered cases of deluded superstition or whether it spoke to a sect of

Satan worshipers who performed true maleficent magic. The tendency to dismiss witchcraft as mere superstition, which the *Malleus* tried to dispute, aligned itself with the principles expressed in chapter 26, Question 5 of medieval cannon law, "*Episcopi"*.[18] The canon *Episcopi* demonstrates how ecclesiastical authorities perceived witchcraft during most of the medieval period (Midelfort 362).

The idea that witchcraft was a minor problem and mere superstition did persist to some degree through the early modern period, but it tended to be overshadowed by the onset of demonology discourses. Historian María Tausiet presents examples of cases that ended favorably for the accused, demonstrating that many secular and ecclesiastical officials were hesitant to qualify accusations as evidence of maleficent magic. This hesitation stemmed from the difficulty in proving said activities took place and also because accusations could usually be logically explained by focusing on the conflict between the accuser and the accused. On one hand, some secular and ecclesiastical courts considered that witchcraft, sometimes difficult to recognize and impossible to prove, should, in most cases, be attributed to mere superstition. Superstition, although unsavory, was considered relatively benign throughout the medieval period. In Spain, many cases stemming from accusations of witchcraft frequently ended in acquittal, demonstrating that there was still a healthy skepticism towards the existence of witchcraft. Not all who were accused were automatically found guilty. Tausiet cites a case that is an excellent example of this, which also happens to explicitly mention henbane. In this case, an accusation of necromancy and the use of henbane in Zaragoza were later dismissed as a simple domestic dispute between the accused and his wife by the episcopal court. It was resolved when the two were reconciled, and nothing more came of the supposed dark arts in which the man was

[18] See Mackay (52-55) for a complete reference guide to medieval canon law.

engaged. Furthermore, cases involving supposed acts of witchcraft were sometimes simply disputes veiled in a thin layer of superstitious language (28).

The *Malleus Maleficarum,* whose authors were both inquisitors motivated to justify a heightened menace of witchcraft, countered this perspective. One of the principle aspects of the disputes between *The Malleus* and the *canon Episcopi* was whether the suspected activities of witches actually happened on the physical plane or simply took place in the mind of individuals who had been deluded by Satan. On one hand, the *canon Episcopi* warned Christians to not believe the fantastical claims involving the supposed activities of witches. According to the guidelines of medieval canon law, to claim that witches were actually flying through the air atop demon horses and cats was superstition and heresy. Moreover, the canon *Episcopi* instructed church officials to warn their flocks against believing such things. These superstitious ideas were:

> Inflicted on the minds of the faithful not by the divine spirit but by an evil-minded spirit. For it is Satan who transforms himself into the appearances and resemblances of different persons, and by deluding in dreams the minds that he holds captive he takes them on journeys through all sorts of places off the beaten path. (Mackay 204)

The authors of the *Malleus* acknowledged this argument and took great efforts to revise this interpretation by insisting on the plausibility of these so-called unbelievable and unnatural acts. The argument presented by the *Malleus* was intent on underlining the extent of Satan's power, to

prove that the dark lord could manipulate not only the minds of his followers but also the physical world.[19]

Insisting that the activities of witches happened in the physical world and not just in the mind of deluded individuals would have the effect of further distancing the *Malleus* from recognizing the possible effect of hallucinogens in witchcraft. This may explain why there is no catalogue of demonic herbs included in the *Malleus*. The acknowledgement that plants could be directly responsible for provoking illusions of the fantastical activities characteristic of the witches' sabbat might have deflated the argument propagated by the *Malleus* regarding the extent of Satan's powers over the physical world. Blaming intoxication for these illusions takes the act out of the physical world and locates it in the mind, making the threat of witchcraft less pervasive, less ominous. In part II of the treatise, the authors of the *Malleus* cite Johannes Nider: "Without the drinking of any poison, they kill souls merely through the violence of their enchantment, that is, by taking away the soul" (Mackay 354). I do not mean to suggest that the authors intentionally conspired to hide the role of psychoactive plants in witchcraft. What I am suggesting is that the structure and argumentative mode of the *Malleus* demonstrated the discursive deficiency regarding these plants that existed amongst inquisitors at the time. Additionally, the competing discourses that emphasized the extent of Satanic influence were so strong that they eclipsed any other possible considerations.

To understand how the structured argument of the *Malleus* eclipsed the recognition of hallucinogenic influence in witchcraft, it is important to start with the base assumption it shared with the canon *Episcopi*: that Satan had full power to manipulate the minds of his followers. This assumption was problematic because it presented a catchall to explain any and all misunderstood

[19] That God permits Satan and lesser demons to perform these deeds is one of the most important assumptions of the *Malleus Maleficarum* (Mackay 24).

or unexplained altered mental states. These elements fueled discourses of demonology while simultaneously hindering the development of possible recognition of the role of hallucinogens.

In the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, Renaissance demonologists wrote of the mind as a dark and murky territory, a space where void and oblivion allowed Satan to frolic and dialogue with human beings. Armando Maggi addresses this question through his analysis of the rhetoric of Renaissance demonologists who reflected on how language facilitated the bond between Satan and his followers. In his close reading of theologian Sylvester Prierio, Maggi sheds light on the reasoning of Renaissance demonologists with regards to the extreme power that Satan had over the human mind. Once installed in the murky and mysterious space between consciousness and language, Satan could manipulate the senses (23). This idea is expressed in the *Malleus*: "He deceives them in their natural working, so that what is visible is invisible to the person, what is touchable is untouchable, what is audible is inaudible, and so on with the other senses" (Mackay 196). This perspective is further stressed by the invocation of St. Augustine's writings: "This evil creeps in through all avenues of perception. It adopts shapes, it adorns itself in colors, it clings to sounds, it subordinates itself to smells, it suffuses itself with flavors" (196). The mechanics of this disruption are, in turn, rooted in the principles of humorism. Satan is responsible for the physical manipulation of the body that causes these humors to delude the senses. The *Malleus* offers a long explanation of how evil spirits work on the humors of the body to manipulate blood and cause fantasies. This explanation demonstrates how illusions are physical in nature and hence the manipulation of the mind has its roots in the physical world.[20]

[20] The authors of the *Malleus* reference the teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas on how the movement of blood in the body and the impression of objects in waking life cause dreams to occur naturally. By extension, Satan may easily manipulate these processes (Mackay 197). Regarding hallucinogens in New Spain, this will be particularly relevant in treatises concerning New World hallucinogens, such as those written by colonial physician Juan de Cárdenas and clergyman Juan Ruiz de Alarcón in New Spain. Mackay's Chapter three argues that both would establish a link

Three Forms of Conjuring in the *Malleus Maleficarum* and the Absence of Hallucinogens

The discussion of humors and manipulation of the senses in the *Malleus* is further explained in relation to different forms of "conjuring." The authors of the *Malleus* divide these forms of conjuring into different categories, ranging from the most benign to those used by Satan. The manner in which these types of conjuring are characterized reveals a great deal about early modern beliefs regarding the demonic manipulation of the senses and how botanical knowledge was applied to the topics at the time (198).

The first category describes "illusion" performed by those who try to hide objects, including "sleight of hand" by clowns and mimes. This first manner of conjuring is relatively harmless, as human beings can perform these illusions without resorting to demonic forces. In this sense, there is an acknowledgment that human senses, sight in particular, can be manipulated by the external actions of others. This distinguishes between the actions of an entertainer, who uses skill to delight and surprise his audience, and the work of demons, which invade the body and dupe the senses through the manipulation of bodily humors.[21]

The second category describes the illusory effects produced through the virtue of natural bodies (no demonic influence). It is this category that catches the eye as it contains one of the most explicit references to the physical properties of plants that appear in the *Malleus*. Although it does not directly reference any members of the Nightshade family nor does it recognize the role of hallucinogens in witchcraft, this entry is relevant because of the subject matter. This

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between hallucinogenic herbs such as peyote and *ololiuqui* and the cooling of humors in the body. This acknowledgement of the effect of hallucinogens in the physical production of illusions would take another century to develop, which perhaps explains why it evaded the authors of the *Malleus*, who instead attributed these illusions solely to the influence of Satan or demons.

[21] See Darst (255) for Castañega's description of how women were presumed more susceptible to demonic influence because of the nature of their humors. He connects *mal de ojo* with impurities in bodily humors, directly related to menstruation.

consists of a description of "burning plants" that somehow, because of their natural properties, change the appearance of things. By analyzing how this text treats the topic of plants in relation to the creation of illusions, the scope of knowledge concerning plants in the early modern period and how they were related to discourses of witchcraft becomes clearer:

> Another [form of conjuring] may also take place without the virtue of demons, inasmuch as it takes place naturally through the virtue of natural bodies, particularly minerals. Those who posses these things are able, in accordance with a certain virtue inherent to these things, to show an object or make it appear different from the way it in fact is. Hence according to Thomas [Aquinas], and many others, the smoke of a certain plant, when it is kindled at the bottom or top, make planks appear to be snakes. (198)

This passage exemplifies early modern thought on the nature of the corporeal and demonstrates the parameters of understanding with regards to the physical properties of plants and their role in the act of "conjuring." Let us deconstruct this description. This entry references article four of question 114 of Thomas Aquinas's *Suma Theologica*, in which he considers the very question of whether demons have the power to manipulate physical bodies and/or create illusion. The *Malleus* takes up this topic to suggest that some plants, when burned, have the ability to change the appearance of things. There is no further explanation as to how the natural virtues of the plants function in relation to the creation of illusion, or how they cause planks to appear as snakes. To understand the full context of this claim and how it relates to the writing of Aquinas, it would be necessary to carefully consider the scope of botanical knowledge during the Renaissance as well as the intertextuality of the *Malleus*. With regards to hallucinogens specifically, this entry reveals just as much through what it leaves out as what it contains. There are no additional entries that offer botanical insight in the *Malleus*.

The third category of conjuring is the malevolent type, associated with demonic forces, and involves the physical aspect of manipulating the humors of the body. The *Malleus* stresses that demonic illusion happens only because God has granted Satan permission to delude his followers (Mackay 198). The *Malleus* presents a series of examples of this type of conjuring. One type of conjuring, which receives a good amount of attention in the text, is whether witches can turn men into beasts (Mackay 330). After a lengthy discussion on the properties of corporeal matter, the *Malleus* concludes that cases in which men who were allegedly turned into animals did not actually experience a physical change. Rather, the senses of those who witnessed the supposed metamorphosis had been deluded by demons (333). This elaborate description of how this category of conjuring is performed falls short of establishing cause and effect, while possible allusions to the consumption of hallucinogenic plants are absent. Nevertheless, the topic of "men being turned into beasts" has a strong connection to hallucinogen consumption.

The connection between hallucinogenic plants and shape shifting is, like the use of psychoactive plants in witchcraft-related activities, one that must be made retrospectively with the help of scholars who have worked on the subject. The effects of henbane have long been associated with provoking unusual sensations in the body and face that inspire instinctual animal behavior. In present-day studies of henbane and its possible connections to ancient practices, subjects who have taken the substance described physical effects that made them feel "animalistic," including such specific sensations as a tightening of the jaw, increased blood flow to the face, and lust.[22]

[22] See *Henbane: The Witches Brew? Sacred Weeds* (1998). This documentary chronicles experiments in henbane consumption to discover its possible relationship to witchcraft and the witches' sabbat.

Despite such evidence, there is no mention in the *Malleus* regarding henbane or its possible involvement in the conjuring that causes delusions of shape shifting. Let us consider, for example, one of the most explicit anecdotes in the *Malleus* text that portrays this deluded state:

> William tells a story about a certain man who thought he was turned into a wolf at specific times when he was lurking in caves. He entered these caves at a specific time and while he remained fixed there, he imagined that he became a wolf and went around devouring children. Since in reality it was merely a demon possessing a wolf that was doing this, he falsely thought while dreaming that he himself was going around. He remained deranged in this way until he was found lying in the forest, hallucinating. (210)

The curious anecdote of the man who thought he was a wolf and was found in the forest "hallucinating" is a prime example of how the *Malleus* neglected to explore the possibility of associating an altered mental state with hallucinogen consumption. While the subject of this story is described as "hallucinating" the text insists that the reality of the situation was not that he was deluded by any intoxicant but that rather he was deceived by a demon that had possessed a wolf. Of course, we will never know what caused the man's altered state, but we can see that the *Malleus Maleficarum* neglected to address the question of mind-altering substances in a case where such a consideration would have applied. As discussed prior, there were two main theories in Renaissance demonology to explain the phenomena of witchcraft. One was that witches were deluded, the other that the acts actually happened. The *Malleus* insists these are not mutually exclusive and that even acts of illusion were ultimately physical in nature.

In the Mind or in the Flesh: The Insistence on the Physical Reality of Witchcraft

The insistence that the activities of witches were not just illusions provoked by Satan but rather actual occurrences in the physical world pushed witchcraft discourses even farther from recognizing the role hallucinogens may have played in such reports. The description of night flights in the *Malleus* directly counters the *canon Episcopi*:

> Since being transported bodily from place to place is one of their principal actions (as is engaging in filthy carnal acts with incubus and demons), we will relate a few details about each of them, and first about their bodily transportation. Here it should be noted that, as was discussed quite often above, this transportation is subject to difficultly based on a single passage of Scripture. This is 26. Q.5 "*Episcopi"* where it is stated from the Council of Acquira, "It should not be overlooked, that certain criminal women, converting back to Satan and being led astray by the demons' illusions and fantastical images, believe and proclaim that during the nighttime hours, they ride on certain wild animals with Diana, a goddess of the pagans, or with Herodias and countless multitude of women, and pass over great stretches of land during the silence of the dead night, obeying her in all things and their mistress" and so on. "Wherefore the priests of God ought to preach to the congregation so that they know these things to be altogether false and that such fantastical images are inflicted on the minds of the faithful not by a divine but by an evil spirit. For it is Satan himself who turns himself into the appearances and resemblances of different persons, and by deluding in dreams the minds that he holds captive he takes them on journeys through all sorts of places off the beaten path," and so on. Illustrations to this effect are sometimes drawn in public sermons from the story of St. Germain, and a certain other man who kept watch on his daughter in connection with the matter, as if it were altogether impossible for these things to happen. These illustrations are applied without distinction to sorceresses and their works, as if their individual works in harming humans, domestic animals and the fruits of the Earth should not be applied to them on the ground that they are deluded about causing such harm to creatures, in the same way that they are deluded in their fantasy in terms of being transported. (293)

This passage offers a prime description of the "night flight" including the characteristics of traveling vast distance through the air, being in the company of pagan goddesses and the presence of bewitched beasts. What this description does not include is any reference to ointments or brews that can be found in other similar descriptions of the time, such as the many

anecdotes compiled by anthropologist Michael Harner. Instead, the authors of the *Malleus* present the topic of night flights as an example of how the *canon Episcopi* has erroneously categorized these actions as mere delusions. Although the *Malleus* concedes that Satan does have the power to delude, such delusion is presented as minor on the continuum of Satan's power over the physical world, a power granted by God and that "even among the good angels in heaven there is none greater than it" (297). Furthermore, according to the *Malleus*, to deny that these activities happened in the flesh was a heresy that allowed malevolent witches to go unpunished and multiply. According to this line of logic, sorceresses who had committed these heinous crimes against nature and community had a good chance of evading justice if it were assumed that they merely imagined their nightly transgressions.

Followint this dispute of the canon *Episcopi*, the authors of the *Malleus* present a body of evidence meant to prove that people can indeed be transported through the air, not only by God (as presented through Biblical examples) but also by all sorts of demons. Through a series of amusing anecdotes, the two authors explain how the latter is possible:

> There are two of us writing this treatise, and one of us has very often seen and discovered such people [necromancers]. A man who was at the time a university student and is now a priest in the diocese of Freising and is thought to still be alive would often relate that he was once carried up bodily by a demon through the air and brought to distant parts. In Oberdorf, a town near Landshut, there survives another priest, who was then a companion of that priest. With his arms stretched out, the man was transported up into the air, shouting but not wailing. (295)

By insisting that night flights, demonic orgies and the like were performed in the flesh, the authors of the *Malleus* made these crimes all the more tangible, frightening, threatening and

punishable. Once the activity was moved out of the mind and onto the physical plane, it also digressed one step further away from the association between these activities and their possible hallucinogenic origins. This suggests how the discourses of witchcraft made it difficult to associate the activities outlined in this influential treatise with hallucinogenic plants.

As we have seen, scholars such as Harner and Sidky have explored the possible connection between hallucinogens and night flights by citing recorded examples of individuals who claimed to engage in these activities. These historians present a convincing case, positing that those who believed they engaged in these activities were most likely under the influence of hallucinogens that they took topically through the use of ointments (Harner 251). The popular image of the witch riding on her broomstick gains new dimensions with the knowledge that witches used to anoint the end of their brooms with these hallucinogenic ointments and apply them vaginally. With regards to "demonic orgies" we run into another description that may reveal associations with hallucinogen consumption. Studies linking henbane to shape shifting also suggest that the herb invokes strong sexual feelings and thoughts. Harner cites the twentieth-century experiments of Karl Kiesewetter William Erich Peukert, and Gustav Schenk, three scholars who experimented with Nightshade species in an attempt to reproduce the witches' brew. They each reported experiences of flying, dancing, animal imagery and sexual debauchery (261).

So far, I have examined the topic of hallucinogens in Western Europe up through the early modern period from a broad historical perspective while concentrating textually on the *Malleus*. Acknowledging this backdrop is an important precursor to the context in which Spain developed its own discursive parameters and ideologies concerning witchcraft. A comparison between Spanish treatises and the *Malleus* reveals that contemporary Spanish theological

writings widened the knowledge gap between hallucinogenic plants and behaviors related to witchcraft. This discursive immaturity regarding hallucinogen use within Spain extended to its colonies, rendering subjects ill equipped to identify hallucinogenic plant use among the native populations of newly discovered territories.

Hallucinogens in Two Early Modern Spanish Witchcraft Treatises

By the end of the sixteenth century, the swelling perceived menace of witchcraft of the early modern period had significant implications in Spain. In his study on the history of witchraft in the Basque country, Julio Caro Baroja includes many descriptions of cases involving suspected pagan activities, such as the case of the witches of Amboto of 1500 (144). He goes on to chronicle the rise of fierce witch-hunts that took over the region throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which brought about the death of countless suspected witches. There are several cases in his study that mirror the aforementioned elaborated profile of the witch. The case of two little girls who aided in hunting the witches of Pamplona (1527), for example, includes an eyewitness account written by the inquisitor of the case, surnamed Avellaneda. He claimed that, upon attempting to apprehend a witch who was to be tortured, she "anointed herself in her usual way with a poisonous ointment which is also used to kill people" and then somehow managed to escape from a high window by floating safely to the ground outside in the company of Satan, where they both disappeared before the eyes of several witnesses (146). This supposed eyewitness account correlates with the insistence of inquisitors and the authors of the *Malleus Maleficarum* that sorcerous activities such as night flights were not based on mere delusions but actually took place in the flesh. Additionally, this is yet another example of how the role of psychoactive substances, in this case, the famous "poisonous salve" used by the witch, was overshadowed by discourses of demonology. While the salve is recognized as a conduit, a

necessary part of the ritual to invoke Satan, there is no reference to its characteristics other than being poisonous. For judicial institutions of Spain, the elaboration of poisons was one of the main concerns related to superstition and witchcraft (Tausiet *Abracadabra Omnipotens* 21).

Evidence of the intense persecution of those who engaged in witchcraft, including the elaboration and sale of poisonous brews, is clear in the writings of Maria Tausiet on the history of urban magic in Aragon. The threat of witchcraft was enough to inspire the Chapter and Council of Saragossa to suspend due process in the case of banditry and witchcraft so that those accused could be swiftly and effectively punished. The 1586 statute specifically mentions the danger of poisoners in the city (17). According to Tausiet, "…a lo largo de la Edad Moderna, las brujas y brujos, hechiceros y hechiceros, ponzoñeros y maléficos representaban un peligro incomparablemente mayor que los bandoleros mas fieros." (21). The designation of "ponzoñeros," poisoners, most likely refers to the manipulation and sale of illicit intoxicating substances of the Nightshade family. This example demonstrates that while authorities associated Nightshade poisons with witchcraft, they did not link them to altered mental states. The writings of Spanish theologians in the sixteenth century demonstrate how this paradigm was reflected in Spanish demonology.

I focus on two sixteenth-century Spanish treatises to examine the theological discourses of witchcraft in Spain and how they relate to hallucinogens: the 1529 text of Martin de Castañega and the more popular work of Pedro Ciruelo (1530). These two treatises are markedly different not only in terms of their levels of popularity but also in their approach to the perceived social threat of witchcraft. On one hand, Castañega's writings demonstrate a high level of skepticism towards the severity of witchcraft, countering the tone of the *Malleus* while aligning itself with the *cannon Episcopi*. Ciruelo, on the other hand, fully embraces the fear of diabolism established

in the *Malleus*. Despite this essential difference, both fall short of recognizing the role of hallucinogenic plants in witchcraft. These Spanish treatises obscured understanding of hallucinogens, each in their own way. Ciruelo does mention *yerbas* and *unguentos* and perfumes, but his emphasis on the threat of diabolism and the power of Satan obscures any possible botanical explanation for the related phenomena. Castañega, on the other hand, is more rational in his approach, but his reliance on Biblical evidence leads to the obstruction of any possible understanding of the botany of witchcraft.

A Franciscan friar from Logoño, Castañega published his *Tratado muy sotil y bien fundado de las supersticiones y hechicerias y vanos conjuros* in 1529. This relatively short treatise consists of twenty-four chapters that discuss various aspects of witchcraft. In his introduction to his translation of Castañega's underappreciated text, David Darst classifies Castañega's arguments as aligning with Richard Kieckhefer's description of medieval rationalism (Darst 246; Kieckhefer 38-39). As such, Castañega's treatise stands apart from other contemporary writings on witchcraft, including the *Malleus Maleficarum* and Ciruelo's subsequent work. However, even though his text is relatively rational when compared to most contemporary witchcraft treatises, it does not shed light on any potential involvement of hallucinogenic plant use in witchcraft. It is perhaps his barebones and reasonable approach to the subject that explains the omission; he relies primarily on Biblical evidence to explain possible phenomena, while arguing that witches are mostly deluded in their engagement in such fantastical activities. He does not take the further step of associating these delusions with the effects of plants or ointments. There are no mentions of *yerbas* or *unguentos* in his text.

Ciruelo's treatise is quite different from Castañega's, in that it speaks directly to the moral obligations of the Spanish laity and offers concrete guidelines to help the average citizen

avoid the temptations of witchcraft. Perhaps because of its practical applications, Ciruelo's treatise was published a dozen times over the next century, with copies disseminated throughout Spain and the colonies. This treatise enforced the vein of fear established in the *Malleus* regarding the severity of witchcraft and the importance of its recognition and eradication.[23] Although Ciruelo does mention *yerbas* and *unguentos*, his text fails to move towards an understanding of hallucinogens in a completely different way than Castañega's. Like the *Malleus*, it is precisely the emphasis on the extensive power of Satan, characteristic of Renaissance diabolism, which eclipses any possible alternative explanation for the phenomena. To demonstrate how these treatises, despite their differences, favored a movement away from hallucinogen recognition, I examine their descriptions of divination, night flights and shape shifting.

Divination

The act of divination was associated with witchcraft because it entailed the revelation of hidden knowledge. The quest for knowledge was a contentious subject as it was heretical to aspire to knowledge that only belonged to God. Furthermore, seeking knowledge of future things was a diabolical act and required allowing the Devil access to the human mind. As discussed prior, the work of Armando Maggi demonstrates that Renaissance demonologists were particularly concerned with Satan's methods of mental manipulation (2). This concept is reiterated in both Ciruelo and Castañega's treatises. What they do not mention is any possible association between the divinatory arts and the consumption of any specific plant. As we have seen from the use of hallucinogens in European witchcraft, belladona, mandrake, and henbane

[23] The fact that Ciruelo's text was popular while Castañega's treatises fell into obscurity exemplifies the discursive path Spain favored with regard to witchcraft. The fear of diabolism prevailed over rationalism, the effects of which would come to fruition in the New World. As the characteristics of diabolism became more and more elaborate and precise, the ability to recognize alternative explanations for the related phenomena fell to the wayside (Darst 245).

were frequently used to aid in the art of divination. We can also see from the way each writer constructs his argument why and how the possible association between divination and hallucinogens fell to the wayside.

Castañega's brief discussion of divination associated the activity with Satan's ability to manipulate the minds of those who engage in fortune telling: "También tienta y engaña a los que desean y procuran curiosamente saber las cosas secretas, ocultas y venideras, como se lee de Saúl, que se encomendó a aquella pitonisa, adevina o sorguina, para que le dijese cómo le sucedería en la batalla que esperaba" (20). As we can see in this reference to the story of Saul and the fortuneteller (1 Samuel 28), Castañega placed biblical evidence at the center of his approach to the subjects of witchcraft. In this passage, Saul, at war with the Philistines, visits a fortuneteller when he does not receive direct answers from God. This passage is set as the bad example for wayward Christians. Since only God can know the future, seeking the assistance of a fortuneteller implies an immediate association with Satan, for only Satan is granted permission from God to manipulate these powers. Castañega references scripture in this manner throughout the entire treatise. However, his seemingly rational and purist approach to these subjects, while avoiding the hyperbolic perspectives typical of most witchcraft treatises of the time, leaves alternative veins of knowledge unexplored, including botany. There is no reference to any botanical aids for the process of fortunetelling. Instead, Castañega emphasizes Satan's ability to tempt and deceive those who seek occult knowledge.

Oddly enough, unlike the *Malleus Maleficarum* and Castañega's treatise, Ciruelo's does mention a plethora of *yerbas*. However, the context in which these plants are discussed in Ciruelo's treatise not only neglects their hallucinogenic effects but also completely negates any possible correlation between such *yerbas* and witchcraft. The *yerbas* in Ciruelo's text appear as a

catalogue of inexpensive approved remedies that the layman should use in lieu of procuring the services of a witch. Because Ciruelo's treatise is a practical manual dedicated to assisting the layman in avoiding witchcraft, he goes into a much more detailed description of divination. His first entry related to the divinatory arts speaks directly to the relationship between the Devil and his followers. This begins with a statement that equates all magic to necromancy followed by a brief description of the ill deeds of those who enter into friendship with the Devil. The sinful nature of this relationship stems from the revelation of secrets and the exchange of favors. This entry even includes a brief mention of perfumes and herbs as part of the ceremony the necromancer learns from Satan:

> Es luego la magia o nigromancia aquella arte maldita, con que los malos hombres hacen concierto de amistad con el diablo: y procuran de hablar y platicar con él, para le demandar algunos secretos, que les revele, y para que les de favor y ayuda para alcanzar algunas cosas que ellos desean. Y para hazer estas innovaciones el diablo les tiene enseñadas ciertas palabras, que digan, y ciertas ceremonias que hagan: de sacrificios de pan y vino y viadas, de sahumerios con *diversas yerbas y perfumes*. (36, my emphasis)

Although Ciruelo mentions herbs and perfumes in this entry, he does not include any additional information about their role in the described ceremony. The ambiguous collection of "herbs and perfumes" is simply presented in conjunction with a series of elements that correspond to an inversion of the Catholic sacraments, including the transmutation of bread and wine (Rose 49-51). Furthermore, this description falls short of correlating the specific function of these substances in the divinatory ritual. A second entry in Ciruelo's text on divination goes into detail about fortunetellers and how to identify them in order to avoid their sinful services. This entry is

specifically focused on instructing the laity on how to avoid unintentionally engaging in witchcraft:

> En lengua de España estos se llaman *adevino*s, que quiere decir barruntadores de las cosas que son secretas, o que están por venir, y usan de ciertas ceremonias, y dizen algunas palabras halladas por el diablo. Y en estas palabras y ceremonias aunque los hombres no hagan pacto manifiesto con el demonio, ni lo vean ni le hablen, mas hay pacto secreto y encubierto de los tales hombres con el demonio, y en hazer y dezir estas cosas sirven al diablo como a señor. (45)

Perfumes and herbs are completely absent from this second entry. This omission is significant given the intent of this particular passage. Ciruelo's treatise instructs the laity on how to recognize the people and activities they must identify in order to avoid engaging in witchcraft. In terms of divination, he emphasizes that those who engage with *adevinos* are at equal fault, even if they have not directly summoned the Devil, seen him, or spoken to him. Ciruelo underlines the importance of avoiding the words and ceremonies of *adevinos* but fails to mention plants or substances that were popularly associated with the divinatory arts. He also omits the aforementioned inversion of Catholic rites.

Night Flights

As we have seen earlier in this chapter, night flights and the question of whether they manifest on the physical or imaginative plane is central to any treatise that attempts to explain the phenomena of witchcraft. The texts of Castañega and Ciruelo are no exception.

Castañega gives a very detailed description of night flights that omits any kind of herb, perfume or unguent:

> Es de creer que permita alguna vez que el demonio lleve por los aires a sus familiares, pues que permitió en su propia persona que así fuese llevado a los sobredichos lugares. E así parece que pues es posible y ellos mesmos lo confiesan de cómo van a tierras remotas y extrañas, deben ser creídos, aunque alguna vez y ligeramente podría ser que fuesen engañados. Para lo cual es de notar que así como leemos hallamos que el demonio y cualquier ángel bueno o malo, por su virtud y poder natural, pueden llevar a cualquier hombre, que para eso estuviese obediente, permitiéndolo Dios, por los aires, aguas y mares, así leemos que pueden estar arrebatados los sentidos fuera de sí, que llaman los doctores éxtasi; y que allí tuviesen revelaciones de grandes secretos, y de cosas que pasan en partes remotas y que pensasen que están o han estado en ellas. (43)

Here we can recognize the same rational in Castañega's treatise that was presented in the *Malleus*. His description is based on two main principles: that night flights are possible based on Biblical evidence of flight; and that altered mental states can cause the belief that one has experienced night flights without having actually engaged in them physically. While Castañega does not go on to explain the physical manipulation of bodily humors, the principal is quite similar. Although he suspects that most fantastical experiences are merely delusions, he attributes these delusions to the influence of demons and does not relate them to the consumption of any plant material.

Ciruelo gets a bit closer to recognizing the use of plant hallucinogens in supposed night flights. His first mention of night flights, however, describes a similarly demon-induced delusion: "llevanse muchas ilusiones de las bruxas en orden a lo que ellas dizen de salir de noche y que van por los ayres, a otras casas, o lugares, y los engaños que ay en esto" (34). The second more elaborate description, however, does include the use of ointments:

> También las cosas que hacen las bruxas, o xorguinas son tan maravillosas que no le puede dar razón dellas por causas naturales, que algunas dellas se untan con unos ungüentos y dizen ciertas palabras y saltan por la chimenea del hogar, o por una ventana y van por el ayre, y en breve tiempo van a tierras muy lexos y tornan presto, diciendo las cosas que alla pasan. Otras destas en acabándole de untar y decir aquellas palabras, se caen en tierra como muertas, frias, y sin sentido alguno, aun que las quemen, o afierren no lo sienten, y dende a dos otras horas se levantan muy ligeramente y dizen muchas cosas de otras tierras y lugares donde dizen que han ydo. (16)

This description includes both possible explanations—flight as actual possibility and flight as resulting from deceived mental condition—for such unnatural aerial actions. Both possibilities, furthermore, specifically mention unguents. The first suggests that a witch has the ability to physically fly through the air. The other describes the death-like trance that deludes witches into believing that they have engaged in these activities. Ciruelo's descriptions obscure the role of hallucinogens in two ways. First, they attribute equal legitimacy to the physical plausibility of night flights and the theory that they are just imagined delusions inspired by Satan. Secondly, they neglect to explore the topic of the ointments themselves. Ciruelo does not give any indication of the ingredients or formulation of the mysterious ointment.

While Ciruelo fails to detail the ingredients of witches' ointments and brews, he includes a discussion on certain herbs related to the diagnosis and treatment of rabies. Ciruelo presents hellebore (yerba del ballestero) as a comparison to the poison that rabies introduces into the body (124). In addition to its high toxicity, hellebore (*Helleborus*) in smaller doses is also a strong hallucinogen with a long history of use in European witchcraft (Rudgley 113). There is nothing in Ciruelo's catalogue that would indicate recognition of this usage. Although Ciruelo includes a

list of inexpensive herbal remedies to treat rabies there is no catalogue of *yerbas* that the laity should avoid (130). Considering that Ciruelo's text was meant as a practical guide to assist common folk in avoiding any activities related to witchcraft, the omission of bewitching plants is quite telling. Either Ciruelo was unaware of the uses of plants in witchcraft, or, more likely, he failed to recognize the direct correlation between the effects of these plants and the behaviors he so ardently condemns in his treatise. Had Ciruelo or his contemporaries understood that these plants had a direct influence on behaviors related to witchcraft, there would undoubtedly be explicit entries against their consumption.

The treatises by Castañega and Ciruelo exemplify theological preoccupations in Spain in the middle of the sixteenth century. In these texts, we see no evidence of recognition of psychoactive plants in the vein of Andrés Laguna's contemporary assertions concerning Nightshade varieties and witches' ointment in his translation of the Greek botanist Pedanius Dioscorides's *Medica materia* (1529), as mentioned prior. This demonstrates that, although both Ciruelo and Castañega integrated medicinal theories and botanical concepts into their treatises, their focus remained on identifying and eradicating heretical practices. The intent of these texts—to identify and eradicate witchcraft—in fact obscures possible connections between hallucinogens and the activities of witchcraft. Textual evidence of the growing recognition of the effects of psychoactive plants and their role in witchcraft would come in Juan de Cárdenas's *Primera parte de los problemas y secretos maravillosos de las indias* fifty years later, from across the Atlantic.

Juan de Cárdenas vs. Martín del Río: Contrasting Discourses of Plant Magic on Either Side of the Atlantic

To contextualize competing late sixteenth-century discourses concerning witchcraft and psychoactive substances, I compare the text of Juan de Cárdenas with that of his contemporary, Martin del Río. At first glance, Cárdenas's *Primera parte* may seem to align with the writings of Castañega and Ciruelo with regards to discourses of demonology, but it becomes clear through a comparative analysis that Cárdenas succeeded in propelling discourses concerning hallucinogenic plants foreword. Meanwhile, from the Iberian Peninsula, Martin del Río simultaneously elaborated a witchcraft treatise that forced discourses concerning hallucinogenic plants into retrograde. The difference in focus and intent of these two texts, one as a Natural History, the other as a, witchcraft treatise, demonstrate how theological perspectives varied from the botanical. Even though these perspectives are not mutually exclusive, the shift in focus is clear. Cárdenas includes language of witchcraft, but he emphasizes the effect of humors in the body. Del Río, on the other hand, fully negates any inate botanical influence on sorcerous activities.

Cárdenas published his *Primera parte* in 1591, while Del Río's *Disquisitiones magicae* was published in 1595. There are several elementary differences between these texts and their authors. Juan de Cárdenas produced his catalog of New World ailments and remedies after having spent most of his life living there. Cárdenas was not a theologian but rather a doctor who practiced medicine in various settlements of New Spain, including Mexico City, Guadalajara, and Compostela (Viesca Treviño "Hechizos y hierbas" 40). He was only twenty-six when he wrote his *Primera parte*. His text outlines the natural history of the Indies as a basis for explaining the maladies that affect Spaniards who migrate there, as well those ailments that

tended to plague the native inhabitants themselves. His final chapter, "*En que se declara muy por entero si puede aver hechizos en las yervas, y que sean hechizos,"* discusses the problem of rampant superstition the doctor witnessed in the colony amongst both Spaniards and the indigenous peoples of Mexico, and specifies the role of specific hallucinogens (peyote, *ololiuqui* and *picietl)* to this problem.

Martin del Río wrote his Latin treatise on witchcraft, *Disquisitiones magicae,* from the Spanish mainland. In the tradition of Castañega and Ciruelo, Del Río's tex specifically identifies and denounces witchcraft. The heretical behaviors within include all forms of divination, superstition, alchemy, and astrology. Like Ciruelo's text, Del Río's treatise was extremely popular and enjoyed the praise of his peers. Del Río became an authority on the topic of witchcraft (Maxwell-Stewart 1, 8-9).

The difference in the professions of these two men is reflected by the difference in the focus of their texts. Although they were contemporaries, they treat the question of hallucinogens and witchcraft completely differently. In a sense, their texts are reversed. As a Catholic Jesuit, Martin del Río focuses primarily on the heretical behavior of witches and only mentions "ointments" in passing. Cárdenas, a medical doctor, analyses the superstitious tendencies of the colony's inhabitants while specifically associating such beliefs with certain herbs and the Nahua concept of "Patle" (*Pahtli*, medicine in Nahuatl). Del Río, in the tradition of Ciruelo and the *Malleus Maleficarum*, explicitly denied that any plant could posses the properties necessary to facilitate the sorcerous activities and behaviors of witches. Cárdenas, writing from the other side of the Atlantic and having witnessed to some degree the impact of traditional New World hallucinogens, made a significant step towards recognizing their effects, and by extension, the physiological effects of psychoactive plants in general.

Like their predecessors, both Cárdenas and Del Río discuss the topic of night flights. There are clear differences between the entries that demonstrate how they approach the topic of psychoactive substances completely differently. Like Castañega and Ciruelo, Del Río also postulates that witches are likely deluded in their midnight satanic escapades. Question sixteen of his treatise discusses the way witches are deceived by Satan:

> The evil spirit [Satan] can transport them [witches] without the use of an ointment, as I have said, and sometimes does so; but for various reasons he [Satan] prefers to use one. Sometimes the witches are too timid to make the venture or too weak to bear the horrible contact with Satan via the body he assumes. Sometimes he stupefies their senses by means of the ointment and persuades the poor wretches that its power is very great. On other occasions he mimics the holy sacraments instituted by God, and by these quasi-rituals imports a degree of reverence and veneration into his orgies. *The power of the ointment adds nothing to the transportation*. (94, my emphasis)

This excerpt shares many similarities with those from Castañega and Ciruelo and draws from the same themes as the *Malleus Maleficarum*. Once again, the author constructs an argument based on the power of Satan to manipulate the mind. Del Río's description differs from those of his predecessors in the extent to which he discredits the role of the ointment in these delusions. In this passage, the substance of the ointment is only effective through its symbolism. The ointment represents a tactile manifestation of Satan's power that nurtures the witch with demonic delusion. Secondly, the ointment represents the satanic inversion of the holy sacraments. Not only does Del Río omit any reference to possible psychoactive substances that gave the ointments their effects, he takes his argument one step further by explicitly denying any inherent power of the ointment itself.

The starkness of Martin del Río's perspective is clear when compared to Juan de Cárdenas's considerations. Cárdenas clearly recognized that the Nahua populations of New Spain consumed peyote and *ololiuqui* (morning glory seeds) amongst other hallucinogenic plants. Although he could not escape the discourses of demonology that characterized Renaissance demonology, he did recognize that the psychoactive plants in question had a direct effect on the consumers. In his text, he establishes a clear connection between traditional Mexican hallucinogens, the heretical behavior of the Indians of the New World, and the witches of Europe:

> …es muy gran verdad que ay yervas tan por extremo frias, que con su demasiada frialdad causan un sueño profundo, en el cual se representan a la imaginación cien mil especies de cosas diferentes, esto natural es al medicamento frigidisimo hazerlo, pero que mediante la yerva se hagan las bruxas invisibles, y que vayan en un momento por todo el mundo, y que penetren los cuerpos, y tornen a bolver al lugar do salieron, todo esto se ha de presumir antes ser por arte del demonio, que por virtud que aya en la yerva. (Cárdenas 215)

Cárdenas's ultimate conclusion is that regardless of the plant, the activities of witches are the Devil's art. However, as Mercedes de la Garza notes, although Cárdenas maintained the same basic considerations as his predecessors, his observations constituted significant strides in the understanding of hallucinogenic agents and their correlation with witchcraft: "Lo mas notable de esta obra es que el autor [Cárdenas] buscó las posibles causas naturales de los actos de hechicería, y compara a las plantas americanas, peyote, poyomate (*poyomatli*) *ololiuhqui* y piciete, con sus contrapartes europeas: la mandrágora, el beleño, y la hierba mora" (67).

Cárdenas reframes the dynamic between the powers of Satan and the powers of the plant, by attributing part of the bewitching effects to the plant itself:

> Es justo averiguar agora, si alguna yerva o rayz aya en la naturaleza, cuya virtud sea tan efficaz, y poderosa que mediante ella forcemos al demonio venga a nuestro llamado, o por ella adevinemos alguna cosa por venir. *Lo que a esto se me offrece responder es, que ay parte desto en la yerva, y parte que solo se deve atribuyr al demonio*, declaro mas esto quando vna yerva destas que agora nombre, o otra qualquiera que deve aver, semejantes en virtud, a estas, se toma por la boca, o se usa dellas, *haze la propia yerva de su virtud, y naturalmente tres cosas en el cuerpo humano,* y todo lo demás es ilusión, y obra del demonio. (215, my emphasis)

This assertion is a clear contrast to Del Río's claim that "the power of the ointment adds nothing to the transportation" (94). Like Laguna, Cárdenas draws an explicit link between activities involving conjuring, sorcery, and psychoactive substances. Although his perspective is based on the principles of humorism, his observations clearly indicate an advance in the understanding of the role of these plants both in their effects on the body and their relationship to those activities lumped together under the category of *brujería*.

Conclusion: Spanish Ideas and Attitudes Sail the Ocean Blue

The history of hallucinogenic plants in Europe, which informs us of the consumption patterns of the population and the parameters of prohibition that affected psychoactive substances, is long are complex. Scholars are just beginning to uncover the many ways in which hallucinogens affected the population of early modern Western Europe, including their now clear role in witchcraft. Patterns of public consumption illustrate the existence of a vibrant

marginalized market of witchcraft, through which individuals consumed these substances under the guidance of marginalized specialists, or witches. The Catholic Church opposed these practices with its strong prohibitive stance, while a profound misunderstanding of these plants also hindered the ability to perceive the effects of their influence. The vast knowledge gap that affected the many species of the Nightshade family is apparent in the relative omission in witchcraft treatises. The case of ergot is a clear example of how knowledge gaps affected the perception of hallucinogenic agents. As a people, early modern Europeans seemed unable to correlate the physical and mental state of the body with certain plants or fungi. The question of ergot was inextricably linked to the Catholic faith. "Saint Anthony's fire" ravaged the impoverished masses of Europe for centuries, whose only sin was eating moldy grain. This is not to say that Europe was inherently backward when it came to the body and materia medica, merely that the effects of certain plants and fungi seemed to elude both the laity and the majority of theologians, even those like Martin del Río, who was exceptionally learned.

In the following chapter, we will see how inherently different the culture of consumption of pre-Columbian Mexico was compared to Europe. There, we find a world where a group of experts also managed the majority of psychoactive substances, where various segments of the population used them for divination, medicine, and ritual. Unlike Europe, however, in the Americas, these activities were not marginalized. Rather, they constituted one of the foundations of the religious system across the Mesoamerican landscape.

Chapter Two

Sacred Hallucinogens in Pre-Columbian Nahua Communities and Beyond: Evidence of Patterns of Consumption Past and Present

In Chapter 1, I discussed the history of hallucinogenic plants in Western Europe based on the dissonance between two key elements: the persistent consumption habits of the European populace, and the increasingly prohibitive stance of the Catholic Church. On the far side of the Atlantic indigenous communities in the Americas had developed a different relationship with hallucinogenic plants by the eve of the sixteenth century. What we find in the heart of Mesoamerica is a diverse culture of psychoactive plant consumption where hallucinogens were revered as powerful catalysts for the sacred. Psychoactive substances, especially those with hallucinogenic properties, were located at the very center of the religious and ritual performances of all the great Mesoamerican communities. The Triple Alliance of the Mexica, Tepaneca, and Acolhuaque was no exception. While efforts of prohibition did exist, intoxication was monitored not because it was considered morally reprehensible, but because of the volatile sacred power it granted the individual. This difference in perspective would come to be the most notable contrasts between Amerindian and European attitudes towards mind-altering substances.

Understanding the consumption habits of the Nahua before first encounters enables us to recognize the parameters of the underlying cultural dissonance that hindered communication between the Spanish and Nahua peoples during the colonial period. The social, cultural and legislative repercussions that resulted from the clash between these essentially different cultures of consumption will be developed in subsequent chapters. Before we delve into the complexities of first encounters, it is imperative to consider the social, medicinal, and spiritual role of hallucinogens in Nahua society. This is necessary for two reasons. First, it is an opportunity to

explore the multifaceted world of Nahua hallucinogen consumption and its intersecting spiritual and medicinal dimensions. Second, it will enable us to better understand the development of anti-hallucinogen discourses that surfaced during the formation and development of New Spain.

Tracing hallucinogen use in pre-Columbian America presents a unique set of challenges in comparison to those encountered in the history of European use. In Chapter 1 confronting these problems entailed reading through the discursive contradiction that resulted from the clash between Church prohibition and the long tradition of popular hallucinogen consumption in Europe. When it comes to mapping consumption habits in the Americas, we face the challenge of reconstructing a culture of consumption that has all but disappeared. There are few primary Nahua sources that explicitly refer to hallucinogens, and much of the knowledge regarding the culture of hallucinogen consumption has been lost. For this reason, as is the case with most studies that consider pre-Columbian history, we must rely on the next best thing: texts produced in New Spain, which have the inherent disadvantage of representing the perspective of the European lettered men who wrote or commissioned them. Some historians have embraced this limitation. In *Aztecs: An Interpretation,* Inga Clendinnen recreates the daily life of the city of Tenochtitlan through an attempt to explore "some of the multiple ways in which ordinary Mexica men and women in the city streets made sense of their world" (2). Clendinnen bases this recreation on what she plainly categorizes as "scattered, fragmentary and defective texts" (1), relying primarily on Sahagún´s *Florentine Codex* and the writings of Diego Durán. Sahagún's *Florentine Codex*, though clearly the most comprehensive source for pre-Columbian Nahua culture, was the product of years of data collecting and heavy editing. Despite common praises that categorize Sahagún's work as "proto-ethnography," we must read his texts meticulously. Sahagún's Mexica assistants were mission-trained scribes in the European traditions, and his

sources were almost entirely aging Mexica men of the noble class. In his article on Nahua medicinal knowledge, López Austin reminds us that Sahagún's *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España* is not a literal translation of the information gathered from sources in Nahuatl, but rather an interpreted catalogue based on the raw Nahuatl notes.[24] He goes on to describe the elaborate process that led to the creation of *Historia general*, and the multiple Spanish quills that touched the surviving sources of his work (Nicholson 3-6). How then, can the *Florentine Codex* tell us of the experience of the common folk of Tenochtitlan? Clendinnen notes this limitation, but concludes: "Nonetheless, it allows us to hear Indian voices, however faintly, and glimpse Indian actions, however dimly" (*Aztecs* 13). This consideration is a useful method to approach other primary colonial texts as well.

The descriptions of hallucinogens offered by Spanish colonial authors shared a fundamental assumption that will appear again and again throughout this chapter: That traditional hallucinogens such as *ololiuqui*, peyote and *teonanácatl* provoked altered states that were physically and spiritually detrimental to the consumer, and the invoked visions were grotesque and terrible in nature. It may seem at first that this is an obvious universal effect of hallucinogens. As we can see through present-day anthropology and the veneration that these plants received during the pre-Columbian era, however, this is not necessarily the case. Although present-day users of traditional Mexican hallucinogens such as peyote and psilocybin mushroom (*teonanácatl*) may have difficulty putting their experiences into words, common themes include

[24] López Austin "De las enfermedades" discusses the many discrepencies between the original and the *Matritense Codices*, *Historia general*, *Primeros memoriales*, and the *Florentine Codex*: Para quien esté familiarizado con la obra del franciscano no será novedad que la *Historia general* no es traducción literal y simple de las informaciones que los indígenas le proporcionaron. No era su propósito hacerla, sino escribir una historia que tuviera como base los documentos que nacieron de las contestaciones obtenidas. Esto ha hecho que, en muchas ocasiones, la diferencia entre el dictado de los informantes de Sahagún y la *Historia general* sea grande, o que mucho de lo que en los códices se dice se omita en ésta (52).

deep feelings of spiritual fulfillment and euphoria (Schultes "An Overview" 4-5). It is noteworthy that colonial texts such as those of Bernardino de Sahagún, Francisco Hernández, Jacinto De la Serna and Toribio de Motolínia construct narratives that completely omit this aspect of the experience. Instead, what we see is a shroud of language that focuses on inebriation and demonic delusion that narrows the experience dramatically, and has clearly affected the way we perceive these substances today. For this reason, if we are to understand Nahua attitudes towards hallucinogenic substances, it is necessary to strip away deep-rooted Western perspectives on these substances, the origins of which can be traced to the colonial period of New Spain.

Inga Clendinnen's approach is helpful in reconstructing a Pre-Columbian Nahua culture of hallucinogen consumption. Like Clendinnen, I engage in an "attempt to catch attitudes and characteristic styles and emotions from scattered, fragmentary and defective texts (13)." While she constructs a vision of daily life in the city of Tenochtitlan prior to first encounters, I focus solely on hallucinogenic plant consumption amongst the Nahua during the same period. This is not to suggest that Clendinnen omits the topic. In Chapter 9, "Aesthetics," she describes the significance of psychoactive substances as they might have functioned in a Mexica worldview:

> The mushrooms the Mexica called 'the flesh of the gods' grew where they chose, but held riddling visions of what was to come. The small folded buttons of the peyote cactus growing untended in bitter and arid lands enclosed extraordinary experiences in its tough flesh. Infusions of the morning glory seed or the raw native tobacco flooded him who took them with sensations more vivid and compelling than those of the daylight world. The heart-sap of the maguey cactus thickened and clouded into the sour 'milk of the gods', drawing those who drank it to the dangerous threshold of the sacred. Everywhere

> there was clear experiential evidence of the power of the green growing things to move men's minds without their volition, and to precipitate them into contact with the sacred. (227)

Clendinnen also references the multiple social functions of ritual consumption of hallucinogens amongst the Mexica.[25] Despite recognition of their importance, Clendinnen's *Interpretation* refrains from delving deeper into the topic. This makes sense, considering the tendency of her primary sources (Sahagún and Durán) to reduce all forms of visible intoxication to the limiting language of alcohol. Sahagún, for example, frequently refers to inebriation amongst the Mexica in alcoholcentric language. In his description of sacred mushroom consumption, for example, he uses the language of alcohol to describe the ritual. (2:365) He also categorizes the elixirs consumed during the cycle of feasts described in book one as "vino," but there is no sure way to verify whether the brews he alludes to were purely alcoholic, whether they were other intoxicating brews that Sahagún did not recognize, or whether they were alcohol (pulque) based catalyst for hallucinogens.

Following the tendency established by these two colonial authors, topics related to sacred plant consumption in Clendinnen's work are framed by the question of pulque drinking (Clendinnen *Aztecs* 48). Topics such as rules of consumption, social norms, and prohibition are all related directly to alcoholic intoxication. Clendinnen is clearly aware of the limitations imposed by her primary sources. In Chapter 3, "Victims," she identifies the apparent disconnect between the clear importance of psychoactive substances and the lack of supporting evidence available in her primary sources:

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[25] As an offering between warriors and merchants (207); gender roles and power (241); use for sacrificial victims (129).

> The nomination of so few drugs used in rituals and the silence of the sources on the administering of powerful sedatives does not preclude the possibility of their extensive use. Mind-altering drugs were important to the Mexica, as to all Amerindians, who out of a relatively unpromising flora have developed an incomparably rich pharmacopoeia, especially in hallucinogens: A pharmacopoeia which could have been developed only through the most determined and intrepid experimentation. (92)

Clendinnen's work invites further inquiry into the unexplored roles of hallucinogens. Before doing so, it is imperative to recognize how discourses of alcohol of primary sources have both dominated and hindered further understanding of the topic. In both colonial texts and present-day scholarship, references to hallucinogens in Mexica culture have been passed through the alcoholcentric sieve of European perspective. This is why, for the purpose of understanding hallucinogen use before and during the colonial period of New Spain, we must supplement primary colonial texts with evidence from other fields of study. Only then can we bypass the supremacy of alcohol and arrive to a more comprehensive understanding of the role of these plants.

The fields of anthropology, ethnography and botany have recently produced a great body of work related to hallucinogens and the habits of surviving indigenous communities of the Americas. These fields can help retrospectively fill in the gaps left by primary colonial sources. Appealing to these many fields is not a novel approach. Scholars have long confronted the challenge imposed by limited and skewed primary sources by reaching across the disciplines in an effort to stitch together comprehensive answers to complex questions about pre-Columbian culture. López Austin recognized the difficulty faced by historians when he underlined the need for a multidisciplinary effort to decipher the history of Nahua medicinal knowledge (López-

Austin “De las enfermedades” 51). A generation later, Mercedes de la Garza has done just that. She cites the fields of religious history, anthropology, ethnography, epigraphy, linguistics, botanical science, pharmacology, and neurobiology to understand the role of shamanism in the pre-Columbian world (González 7). The result is a meticulous consideration of Nahua and Maya belief systems and the importance of hallucinogenic plants, both as tools and sacred symbols. Her work also presents a thorough consideration of colonial sources and a catalog of references to specific substances (De la Garza 205-311). Although De la Garza offers a complete interdisciplinary survey of hallucinogen consumption amongst the Nahua and Maya peoples, I take a step further by using her findings to form a historical perspective through close readings of primary texts.

My consideration then is somewhat of a combination of the methodologies employed by Clendinnen and De La Garza. I will begin with a broad interdisciplinary overview of traditional hallucinogenic plants in Mexico, past and present. From there I trace evidence of pre-Columbian patterns of hallucinogen consumption through close reading of primary texts. Pre-Colombian sources such as the codices and other forms of cultural production will be considered alongside later texts that emerged in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, once the colonial project was well underway: the writings of Sahagún, Hernández, De la Serna, among others.

The analysis of these texts as colonial artifacts that exemplify Spanish attitudes towards hallucinogens will be the further discussed in Chapter 3. Here, colonial texts will be used primarily in their capacity to reveal vestiges of the customs and traditions of pre-Colombian Nahua peoples. Examples pulled from these primary sources will be interwoven with recent scholarship in history, ethnobotany and anthropology. In combination, these elements will enable us to shed light on the role of hallucinogens in Nahua society, how they affected domestic and

public experiences, as well as how attitudes towards these substances morphed throughout the colonial period.

Hallucinogens in Mexico: Consumption, Scholarship, and the Shroud of Alcoholcentrism

In order to contextualize primary references, I must first establish an underlying fact about hallucinogen consumption in pre-Columbian societies: It was absolutely and undeniably rampant. While every single society in human history has practiced some form of hallucinogen consumption, none compare to the prolific use amongst communities in the Americas.[26] Schultes et al. note: "There are more plants utilized as hallucinogens in the New World than in the Old. Nearly 130 species are used in the Western Hemisphere, whereas in the Eastern Hemisphere the number reaches roughly 50" (30). Moreover, of all the hallucinogen-consuming countries of the American continent, Mexico reigns supreme. "Mexico represents without a doubt the world's richest area in diversity and use of hallucinogens in aboriginal societies" (26). Traditional Mexican hallucinogens are derived from a wide variety of plant families. Not only are there species of the Nightshade family as in Europe, but also abundant species of Morning Glory, Arum, Loosestrife, Water lily, Orchid, Club Moss, Cactus, Sunflower, Mint, Heath, Malpighia and Pea plant families, as well as several Fungi families: Agaric, Coprinaceae, and Strophariaceae (Schultes et al. 32-60).

The abundance of hallucinogenic species consumed by indigenous communities correlates with Mexico's notably high index of biodiversity. Mexico currently ranks amongst the top five regions in the world for endemism of vertebrate species and vascular plants (Brandon et al. 1404). The high level of biodiversity must be in part responsible for the proliferation of

[26] See Schultes et al. (26-30) for a survey of the geography of hallucinogens. According to Y. Umut Sayin, evidence from the Neolithic age suggests that hallucinogen consumption constitutes a common history of all humanity. He goes on to describe the many varieties of plant and fungi that were consumed across Eurasia. His article underscores how Western Europe was particularly bare when it comes to psychoactive plant consumption (278).

consumption habits that developed across the Mesoamerican landscape throughout history. Exposure to more plant varieties would presumably lead to a more complex engagement with the psychotropic qualities of native flora, but there are multiple views on this.[27] What is certain is that despite being the region par excellence in diversity of psychoactive plant consumption, we still know relatively little about the extent of hallucinogenic consumption throughout Mexico's history.

The ambiguity with which substances were described in colonial texts has had lasting effects. Today, despite the tireless work of enthobotanists, it is impossible to fully account for the width and breadth of hallucinogen use amongst the Mexica and and other Mesoamerican communities. Although we can account for a large number of Mexican hallucinogens that were consumed before and during the colonial period, there is evidence that an even greater variety of species were used, the knowledge of which has been lost. The ethnobotanical encyclopedia by Schultes et al. catalogues many of these lesser-known substances, but descriptions of their properties and uses are incomplete (65-79).[28]

Even though we cannot account for the entire lost culture of consumption in pre-Columbian Mexico, we can certainly account for its specter. Every pre-Columbian civilization had its own complex nuanced culture of hallucinogen consumption, the vestiges of which remain in surviving communities today. Of the many varieties of hallucinogens once available in

[27] According to Schultes et al., for example, the high number of classified hallucinogenic plants in Mexico stems from the early development of a culture of consumption, and not vice versa. From this point of view, disparities in hallucinogen consumption in different populations and regions are linked primarily to culture, not biology. He posits that increased biodiversity and high endemism are not appropriate indicators for whether a community will engage in hallucinogen consumption. Rather, a culture of hallucinogen consumption develops and fuels itself, self perpetuates, and leads to further habits of consumption, which include experimenting and embracing a wide variety of flora and fauna in search of hallucinogenic properties. While this is a sound concept, Schultes et al also noted that the high diversity in Mexico of hallucinogenic plants was "a phenomenon difficult to understand in view of the comparatively modest number of species comprising the flora of the country" (26). I suggest that the recent revelations on biodiversity in Mexico may allow us to reconsider this point.

[28] Schultes et al. note the scarcity of information in their overview, and emphasizes the importance of a multi-disciplined approach to filling those gaps (65).

Mexico, *ololiuqui* (*Turbina corymbosa)*, peyote (*Lophophora diffusa*) and the many species of fungi described as *teonanácatl* (flesh of the gods) have received the lion's share of attention from anthropologists, enthobotanists, and historians (158).[29] Consumption of these hallucinogens has grown steadily in the last fifty years or so, fueled by the counterculture movement of the sixties and seventies. In addition to recreational use across the world, trends in tourism in Mexico point to a growing market for more "authentic" experiences involving these substances. Whether visiting the yearly *Feria regional de hongos* in San Antonio Cuahimoloyas, Oaxaca, or being led through the desert from *Real de catorce* in search of peyote, there is an increasing interest in the spiritual and medicinal qualities of these plants.[30]

The rise in public interest in traditional psychoactive substances over the last seventy years was ushered in by an increase in scholarship, particularly in the fields of anthropology.[31] Modern-day recreational use and the illegal status of these substances certainly play a part in hindering our ability to approach these topics from a clear perspective. Categorization of substances in the legal frameworks of The United States and Mexico are deeply ingrained, and researchers across the fields struggle to work outside these stigmas.[32]

In order to properly contextualize primary sources and existing scholarship related to hallucinogens in the Mexico, we must first acknowledge the rhetoric that usually surrounds this topic, and how it has limited our understanding of hallucinogen use amongst the Nahua. The

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[29] The challenge of identification and classification of hallucinogens as described in history is illustrated by the case of *teonanáctl*. The authors give an overview of how *teonanáctl* has only recently emerged from obscurity, despite the resilient traditions of consumption that continued throughout the centuries. The name "teonanácatl" refers to almost two-dozen different species.

[30] For an example of psilocybin tourism: http://www.oaxacadream.com/articles/tourist29.html

[31] See Peter Furst, "Introduction" (ix-xii) for a detailed chronology of the anthropology of psychoactive substances. He marks the beginning of this rise in interest with the publication of Schultes's essay on Morning Glory seeds in 1919.

[32] We see this even in the medical research community. When the New York Times interviewed U.C.L.A psychiatrist Charles Grob and head of the Laboratory for Integrative Psychiatry at McLean Hospital Dr. John Halpern, on their experiments with psychedelics in the treatment of terminal patients, they both expressed the need to distance themselves from the counterculture movement of the sixties.

first, which I have briefly mentioned, is the disproportionate emphasis on alcohol. Despite this rise in scholarly interest over the last sixty years, the tendency to locate hallucinogens and other psychoactive substances in relation to alcohol persists. This alcoholcentric perspective has had the adverse effect of creating a blanket category of Nahua "intoxication" which highlights alcoholic drinks and reduces hallucinogens to footnotes.

Alcoholcentrism in scholarship is not surprising. Western civilization, after all, is fundamentally an alcoholic civilization. Andrew Sherratt discusses this point in the aptly named article "Alcohol and its Alternatives" where he traces the cultural, social, and historical importance of wine in the Mediterranean (17), as well as the long history of grain fermentation (24). The symbolic importance of alcohol in Christian Western society is indisputable. As Sherratt concludes, it is the "primary intoxicant of Western civilization" (32). R. Gordon Wasson, whose independent research has contributed greatly to ethnobotany, argues that the supremacy of alcohol in Western culture has hindered our ability to understand the role of psychoactive substances in different cultures. In his description of the importance of sacred mushrooms in Mexico he states: "We are entering upon a discussion in which the vocabulary of the English language, of any European language, is seriously deficient. For hundreds, even thousands, of years, we have thought about these things in terms of alcohol, and we now have to break the bonds imposed on us by our alcoholic obsession" (191). This "alcoholic obsession" manifests overtly in colonial primary sources, but has also clearly affected scholarship through the present day.

Henry J. Bruman's *Alcohol in Ancient Mexico* is a foundational example of how hallucinogens have been represented as secondary agents to alcohol in the field of anthropology. Bruman's fieldwork mapped patterns of traditional alcohol consumption in Mexico in the 1930s.

His detailed analysis of regions, Agave species, modes of preparation and attitudes towards inebriation is groundbreaking and unprecedented, but there were aspects of his approach that eclipsed the importance of other psychoactive substances. The primary example of this is how he categorizes hallucinogens in his study. He mentions peyote as a competing substance of choice (vs. alcohol) among some communities, but other hallucinogens are completely absent (44, 54-56). The few hallucinogenic substances that are mentioned are listed in Appendix B, under the title "Auxiliary Herbs" (103). There, peyote and other lesser-known hallucinogens appear alongside a host of other additives to alcohol, including digestive aids and other non-psychoactive medicines. When we look to the field of history, we find that existing scholarship on Mesoamerican psychoactive substances also puts an emphasis on alcohol. William B. Taylor's *Drinking, Homicide and Rebellion in Colonial Mexican Villages* offers a thorough detailed account of the culture of pulque drinking that grew exponentially during the colonial period.

Recent studies from across the disciplines have moved towards a more integral conceptualization of the roles of psychoactive substances in pre-Columbian society, but continue to locate alcohol at the center of the discourse on psychoactive plants. Carod-Artal's article, "Hallucinogenic Drugs in Pre-Columbian Mesoamerican Cultures," for example, is a concise survey of Mesoamerican psychoactive substances and primary sources. The article is divided into sections dedicated to peyote, sacred mushrooms, ololiuqui, *Salvia divinorum*, toloache, *teotlaqualli* and even bufotoxins. Even though the key word in title of the article is *Alucinógenos*, these hallucinogens are listed in descending order after a considerably longer section titled "Inebriation: *balche* and the Mayan ritual enemas" (43).

Although the emphasis on alcohol does tend to overshadow considerations of other psychoactive substances, there is also a functional explanation for why it has been so. Since Western society has a deeper understanding of alcoholic inebriation, it has become the default gateway to exploring less familiar psychoactive substances. Paradoxically, while trying to move away from alcohol, we must rely on sources that reference alcohol in order to better understand less explicit references to hallucinogens. This is the case for two reasons: First, as I have discussed here, many considerations of Amerindian attitudes towards ritual intoxication have been through the lens of alcohol, and secondly because alcohol was, and continues to be, frequently used as a catalyst for consuming hallucinogens. While mapping the behaviors and attitudes of pre-Columbian peoples in relation to psychoactive plants, it is essential that we avoid projecting our own western values upon the subject matter.

Inebriation and Morality: Recognizing the Projection of Western Values in Amerindian Patterns of Consumption

As we learn from observations within the field of anthropology, attitudes towards inebriation and intoxication are fluid across time and space (Goodman et al. xiii). Inebriated behaviors that are considered normal or ideal in one culture can seem wholly alien or undesirable in another. Western culture has a paradoxical history of simultaneously embracing and rejecting even their most venerated of psychoactive substances. Although alcohol is overwhelmingly the sanctioned psychoactive substance of choice for Western civilization, the same culture has developed a tendency to fiercely condemn excessive consumption of any kind. The figure of the drunkard is perceived to be a moral and social failure. Western civilization takes this condemnation for granted, which makes it particularly difficult to strip away when considering the psychoactive substance habits of cultures outside our own. This becomes even more

challenging with the added dimensions of distance in time and space, as we try to read through old projections of Western values upon Amerindian customs. This is the challenge of interpreting Nahua practices through the writings of Spanish colonial subjects. It raises the questions: Were the Nahua peoples just as preoccupied with excessive inebriation? How can we separate the Nahua perspective from the filters of Spanish influence, discourse, and syntax that affected the preservation and transmission of Nahua consumption habits? This leads us to grapple with one of the greatest assumptions—stemming from Sahagún's *Historia general*—about Amerindian intoxication that currently permeates primary texts and secondary sources: that inebriation was vilified and strictly prohibited under Mexica rule. A close reading of these texts reveals that this was not necessarily the case.

The vestiges of pre-Columbian attitudes towards intoxicating substances recorded in *Historia general* are complex, to say the least. Descriptions of sacred rituals that include copious and unbridled consumption of sacred mushrooms, *ololiuqui* and pulque, are alongside passages that explicitly and full-heartedly condemn intoxication of any kind. But, if we weigh these passages against each other and consider the possible cross-contamination of Spanish attitudes, we can see that both Nahua leaders and the general population had more intricate attitudes toward these substances. Here we see that these attitudes were based on the sacred role that these plants played in Nahua society.

If we were to base Nahua attitudes towards drunkenness solely on book six of *Historia general*, we could easily assume that the social expectations of pre-Columbian Nahua society mirrored the preferences for sobriety of their Spanish contemporaries (Earle 44). Chapter 14 presents the transcription of a long oration delivered by Montezuma to his people on the need to avoid, among other crimes, inebriation and adultery (2:92). Intoxicants in this passage are

passionately condemned as vile, irredeemable substances. Pulque receives the bulk of criticism, but he also goes on to condemn *tlapatl* and *mixitl*, both which are listed as inebriating substances in book eleven of *Historia general* (3: 243). The oration contains inflammatory language about the sins of "the drunkard," and vehemently underscores the complete lack of virtues of these intoxicating substances:

> Lo que principalmente os encomiendo es, que os apartéis de la borrachera, que no bebáis *uctli* [pulque] porque es como beleño que sacan al hombre de juicio, de lo cual mucho se apartaron y temieron los viejos y viejas, y lo tuvieron por cosa muy aborrecible y asquerosa, por cuya causa los senadores y señores pasados, ahorcaron á muchos, y otros quebraron las cabezas con piedras, y á otros muchos azotaron. Este es el vino que se llama *uctli* que es raíz y principio de todo mal y de toda perdición, porque él y la embriaguez son causa de toda discordia y disensión, de todas las revueltas y desasosiegos de los pueblos y reinos; es como un torbellino que todo lo revuelve y desbarata: es como una tempestad infernal que trae consigo todos los males juntos; de esta borrachera proceden todos los adulterios. (2: 94)

Considering the veneration these sacred plants receive elsewhere, the tone of Montezuma's speech seems surprising. As discussed earlier, it is necessary to read *Historia general* carefully because of its European origin. This is an example of where that origin becomes visible.[33] This passionate tirade against the evils of inebriation and its social repercussions has a series of suspicious qualities that likely point to European values of abstinence and sobriety. We are first clued in by lexicon. Montezuma's condemnation of pulque is based on similarities to *beleño*, or

[33] It would be a worthy project to compare this transcript to a literal translation of the Nahua original, and tease out the blatant European rhetoric regarding inebriation that appears in the text. Such an exercise would surely provide a substantive explanation as to why the attitude expressed in this fragment seems to clash with the overall reverence of these psychoactive substances presented elsewhere in *Historia general.*

henbane. Henbane is as species of the Nightshade family as described in Chapter 1, native to Europe, northern Africa and southwestern and central Asia (Schultes et al. 44). There is no evidence that henbane grows in Mexico. It might seem that the word *beleño* was used simply because the Castilian-speaking author/translator was applying a familiar name to an unfamiliar plant of similar characteristics. Several members of the Nightshade family grow in Mexico. The *tecomaxóchitl* flower would be the closest relative, with its large yellow blossom. The aforementioned *tlapatl* and *mixitl* are both Datura species with large trumpet shaped-blooms, distant cousins of henbane from the Nightshade family. However, both *tecomaxóchitl* and the two Datura species native to Mexico have different physical characteristics from *beleño* of Europe. Furthermore, if this text truly recorded the words of Montezuma, it would seem logical that the beleñoesque intoxicant he compares to pulque would be cited under a Nahuatl name, as is the norm elsewhere in *Historia general*. Evidence of the Europeanization of words and rituals in Sahagún's writings is not limited to the vilification of inebriants. We see it overwhelmingly in the description of sacred rituals that involve psychoactive substances. We see this most clearly in the constant references to pulque as "vino."

The dozens of references to sacred, ritual consumption in both public and private spaces of *Historia general* make us reexamine the extremity of the prohibitive stance described by Montezuma's diatribe. Elsewhere in the same source these substances are venerated, incorporated into ritual, and revered as manifestations of the spirit world. Sahagún makes numerous references to ritual consumption of "vino," and sacred mushrooms during the cycle of feasts. Of course, pulque is the substance most often described as an offering to the gods (1:35). What we find in these examples is not a complete condemnation of inebriation as we see in the previously mentioned passage of Montezuma's speech, but rather a set of restrictions put in place

to conserve the sanctity of the ritual and the symbolic importance of the substance itself. Sahagún's record of the Nahua cycle of feasts frequently states that priests and the elderly were the only ones allowed to drink "vino," during these lavish festivities (Clendinnen 48). This restriction is seconded by Diego Muñoz Camargo's description of prohibition in the city of Tlaxcala:

> (…) las borracheras eran muy prohibidas entre ellos, y no bebían vino sino los muy viejos y ancianos; y cuando un mozo lo bebía y se emborrachaba moría por ello, y ansí se daba solamente á los más viejos de la República, ó cuando se hacía alguna fiesta muy señalada se daba con mucha templanza á los hombres calificados, viejos honrados y en las cosas de la guerra jubilados. (135)

It would seem that this prohibitive stance correlates with Sahagún's description of Montezuma's speech, and the overall assumption that intoxication was strictly policed and restricted to the elderly. However, *Historia general* also details ritual occasions when every single Mexica partook of the inebriating brew: men, women, boys and girls of all ages. For example, in the description of the festival of *Tozoztli*: "El Utnsiochtlipupaztac, tenia cargo de aprestar el vino que se llamaba ticauctli, que se habia de gastar en la casa del Rey y en la fiesta de Tozoztli, y donde bebian vino hombres y mugeres, niños y niñas" (221). This suggests that intoxication was not as widely condemned as it was in European society at the time, but rather was subject to ritual control. This complex set of norms related to ritual control was likely construed as prohibition once it was interpreted through Spanish eyes.

In the example of pulque consumption dedicated to the celebration of the god Huitzilopochtli, for example, there is an emphasis on the importance of abstinence, not because

of the vile nature of pulque, but because abstaining is an essential step in preparing for its consumption during the ritual:

> Abstenianse asimismo en aquellos días de beber el pulcre [pulque] ni la miel de que se hace, ni aun mojando el dedo en ella lo llevaba á la boca, hasta tanto que el cuarto día se ensetáse con la ceremonia que arriba se dijo. Tenían por agüero, que si alguno bebía el vino aunque fuese muy poco, antes que se hiciese la ceremonia del abrimiento de las tinajas como arriba se dijo, que se le había de torcer la boca ácia un lado en pena de su pecado.(1: 38)

The physical repercussions of drinking pulque are derived from the drinker failing to respect the sacred power of the plant, not the plant itself.

Tracing the Foundation of Psychoactive Rituals Across Mexico: Three Examples of Small Scale Consumption

The projection of European condemnation of inebriants in primary texts also appears in more subtle ways that we must keep in mind while attempting to reconstruct Nahua attitudes towards psychoactive substances. One essential difference between European and Amerindian cultures of consumption is that the latter lacked notions of moderation. Amongst Amerindian communities, unbridled and unrestrained consumption was accepted and encouraged, provided that these rituals took place in the appropriate setting and were sanctioned. Surviving accounts of Amerindian ritual intoxication, whether involving alcohol, hallucinogens, or both, correlate with the findings of present-day anthropologists on this point. Here I present three accounts of customs from across the Mexican landscape from drastically different communities and time periods. The earliest is Cabeza de Vaca's account about his captors in the American Southwest, the second tells of a *balche* ritual amongst the Lacandon Mayans of southern Mexico, and the

third describes the peyote consumption of contemporary Huichol peoples of Nayarit. In combination, we will see that there were basic commonalities that the indigenous communities across Mexico shared prior to first encounters. These include, most importantly, strict ritual guidelines and unbridled intoxication. Through a consideration of the similarities that appear in these examples, we can then better understand the true nature of prohibition amongst the Nahua, who shared the basic ritual behaviors of all Amerindians when it came to psychoactive substances.

Cabeza de Vaca's *Naufragios* (1555) contains one of the earliest European descriptions of an Amerindian hallucinogenic ritual. This account narrates the ritual drinking of a tea made from the boiled toasted leaves of an oak-like bush, possibly the Texas Mountain Laurel, which produces the potent hallucinogenic mescal bean (Adovasio and Fry 94). Cabeza de Vaca emphasizes the important ritual performance that went along with the consumption of this hallucinogen. Certain behaviors of women, for example, were severely punished during the three-day ritual:

> …cuando las mujeres oyen estas voces, luego se paran sin osarse mudar, y aunque estén mucho cargadas, no osan hacer otra cosa, y si acaso alguna de ellas se mueve, la deshonran y la dan de palos, y con muy gran enojo derraman el agua [intoxicante] que tienen para beber, y la que han bebido la tornan a lanzar lo cual ellos hacen muy ligeramente y sin pena alguna. La razón de la costumbre dan ellos, y dicen que si cuando ellos quieren beber aquella agua las mujeres se mueven de donde les toma la voz, que en aquella agua se les mete en el cuerpo una cosa mala y que dende apoco les hace morir. (98)

The necessity for womenfolk to remain immobile during a certain part of the ritual seems bizarre, particularly to our modern Western sensibilities. It clearly reveals that certain behavioral norms were strictly enforced during this ritual. It's impossible to determine whether Cabeza de Vaca's account is correct or complete, but we can confidently use this account as an example of the absence of concepts of moderation in intoxicating Amerindian rituals. After describing the strict norms surrounding the preparation of the brew, Cabeza de Vaca indicated that: "…están bebiéndola tres días sin comer, y cada día bebe cada uno arroba y media de ella, y cuando las mujeres están con su costumbre no buscan de comer más de para si solas, porque ninguna otra persona come de lo que ellas traen" (98). If we are to believe Cabeza de Vaca, each participant drank an arroba and a half of this intoxicating brew each day. An arroba is an archaic unit of measurement used in Spain to measure liquid volume, usually oil or wine. Depending on the region of Spain, arrobas could hold anywhere from six to sixteen liters of fluid. In Cadiz, where Cabeza de Vaca was born, an arroba of wine was equivalent to 7.922 liters. An arroba and a half would have been several gallons of hallucinogenic tea (*Real orden)*. Of course, we must take into consideration that Cabeza de Vaca may have hyperbolized his estimations of quantities. What is clear is that, regardless of the actual volume of hallucinogenic liquid consumed, it was copious enough to leave an impression on the captive Spaniard. We can see this trend of unbridled consumption in much later accounts from small communities in southern Mexico, which also include the practice of fasting.

Tozzer's early twentieth-century record of the ritual consumption of *balche* amongst the Lacandones of Chiapas, descendents of the Maya, is an example of how unmeasured intoxication was encouraged, and in some cases obligatory during rituals. Tozzer emphasizes the precision and care that was given to every aspect of the yearly renewal ceremony amongst this particular

community of Lacandones, the *caribals* of Lake Petha. The series of rites took more than a month. One of the final episodes of this ritual involved the abundant and unmeasured drinking of *balche*:

> After the gourds given to the participants are emptied, they are refilled by the leader from the jar in front of him. No order seems now to be observed in the drinking. Some drink jicara after jicara almost without stopping. Every one, with the exception of a few of the women, seems to think it his duty to become intoxicated. The younger boys are no exception to the rule. Many are naturally sick, but this seems only to be a reason for drinking more. (136)

Although Tozzer's account involves an alcoholic drink, similar rituals involving copious consumption of hallucinogens are also present amongst modern-day indigenous communities of Mexico. Peter Furst's 1966 account of a Huichol peyote pilgrimage for example, describes a late night ritual in which "another gourd had been filled with peyote cut into small pieces, and the initiates were not allowed to rise until they had emptied it" ("To find our life" 178). Furst notes that the following night "…was passed in singing and dancing around the ceremonial fire, chewing peyote in astounding quantities and listening to the ancient stories" (181).

These examples, though describing the habits of communities from far ends of Mexico and spanning across the centuries, demonstrate the continuity of Amerindian values, and how they contrast with European attitudes towards inebriation. Clearly, communities across Mesoamerica highly valued psychoactive experiences. These experiences overwhelmingly involved copious and unmeasured consumption. This ubiquitous acceptance of unbridled consumption seems to contradict the aforementioned speech by Montezuma recorded in *Historia general,* which condemned any and all forms of inebriation of alcohol and hallucinogenic

substances. To account for the apparent contradiction between an embrace of psychoactive experiences on one hand, and the apparent prohibition described in *Historia general* and other colonial texts, we must consider how Amerindian attitudes and practices were altered and adapted in the context of the great city of Tenochtitlan, once they were magnified and put in the urban context of the Triple Alliance.

Hallucinogens Under Empire: Prohibition, Social Control and Fear of the Sacred

The previous three examples (Cabeza de Vaca's account, Tozzer's description of *balche*-drinking among the *caribals*, and the Huichol peyote ceremony) describe rituals of small kin-based communities in Mexico, across space and time. The underlying similarities in the narratives can be interpreted as the foundation for an Amerindian culture of consumption. The question we face when applying the consistencies we see there to the Nahua peoples is one of scale and urban context. In small indigenous communities, male heads of household and familiar elders and shaman direct ceremonial rites. In the heart of the Triple Alliance—and also true of the Ancient Maya—this responsibility was magnified, and fell instead on a complex network of priests. This is one important distinction that helps explain the prohibition that is documented in *Historia general* regarding psychoactive plant consumption. In his observation of the ritual performances of the *caribals*, Tozzer notes: "One is not surprised to find that the Lacandones of the present time seem to have no priests. The religion has ceased to be in any way national, and the function of the priest is carried out by the head of the family in each encampment as in the most primitive forms of human society" (104). Small-scale local traditions like those of the *caribals* and Huichol have survived the rise and fall of the Great Mesoamerican empires, and demonstrate the deepest roots of ritual religious systems. In the urban setting of Tenochtitlan, the roles and functions associated with these traditions, as well as the traditions themselves were

expanded and specialized, were adjusted to serve the function of the Triple Alliance. It was in the context of the rise of the Great Tenochtitlan that prohibition and social control would infiltrate the use of psychoactive plants. Furthermore, the excerpts mentioned above that seem to reveal prohibition, such as Montezuma's *Historia general* speech, may have originated less from a condemnation of hallucinogenic substances or unbridled intoxication, and more from an effort to control the expanding intricate religious systems of the diverse communities who lived in the city.

By the sixteenth century, the Mexica of the Triple Alliance had taken more than wealth from the communities in their extensive tributary system; they had also had gathered traditions, customs, and sacred symbols from across the vast Mesoamerican landscape. Clendinnen describes the Mexica of Tenochtitlan as "ardent archaizers…they were ready borrowers, too, claiming dances and ritual forms, even formulations of sacred powers, from other and lesser peoples, pouring wealth and invention into their increasingly flamboyant ceremonial" (10). Hallucinogenic plants, which brought the consumer closer to the sacred, would naturally be part of these claimed ritual forms and sacred powers. Sacred mushrooms from the Zapotec peoples of southern Oaxaca, peyote of the Chichimeca from the deserts of the north, *ololiuqui* and *picietl* (native tobacco) from closer to home, they were all present in the great city. Given the power inherent in these sacred plants, the Mexica clergy attempted to control their use through prescribed rituals. Dobkin del Rio's interpretation of ritual hallucinogen use underscores this apparent control:

> The Aztecs used four hallucinogenic drugs not only as a means to communicate with the supernatural, but as an important part of their war-related activities and as a part of their human sacrificial ceremonies. To some degree, as we will see shortly, plant

> hallucinogens played an important role in facilitating political alliances between great states which made up the confederated Aztec Empire. *An important group of clergy were engaged in religious activities and were in control of hallucinogenic drug use*. (138, my emphasis)

I suggest that we could modify this idea and reveal the true status of hallucinogens by noting that clergy *attempted* to control hallucinogenic drug use, but did not always succeed. The reason that clergy would attempt to control psychoactive plants was directly related to their sacred power. Clendinnen's discussion on the intricacies of social hierarchy in Tenochtitlan describes how uncontrolled and unsanctioned behavior—with regards to awakening or corrupting the sacred—was considered a dangerous and punishable offense. The strict code of conduct regarding inebriation governing the people of Tenochtitlan was part of a continuum of social norms that resulted from an underlying fear of the sacred. This lead to a systematic ritualization of all activities that had the potential to excite the spirit world. Sex, childbirth, death and inebriation, all represented punctures in the "delicate membrane," that separated the spirit world from human reality: "States of exaltation, of abrogation of the self—drunkenness, the ecstasy of extreme anger or excitement, warriors in the rage of battle, women caught up in the compelling rhythm of childbirth—brought the sacred dangerously near, and so necessitated properly delicate handing through the application of ritual controls" (51). Unsanctioned intoxication represented a disruption of both the intricate power structure of the religious ritual system of the Empire and a provocation of the spirit world.

The public performance of executions of citizens who engaged in unsanctioned inebriation demonstrates that substances were not completely under the control of the clergy. Public intoxication was punishable by death as described by Montezuma's aforementioned

speech. Clendinnen describes the gruesome repercussions for cases of public inebriation: "Those selected to die were led with wrists bound to the middle of the marketplace, subjected to a long oration from the judges and then had their skulls smashed in by the cudgel-wielding executioners" (49). The Mexica elite attempted to control the behavior of the citizens of Tenochtitlan with these bloody displays, but ultimately: "…Moctezoma and his judges knew they were trying to net a tiger" (49). Executions for public inebriation were an attempt to control the uncontrollable, since intoxication from sacred plants inevitable spilled over into every aspect of life in Tenochtitlan.

The inability to control all volatile aspects of the sacred explains the dichotomy of attitudes towards psychoactive substances that we see in *Historia general*. The need for social control required a dramatic stance on these powerful substances, which included the condemnation of inebriation and the public execution of those who consumed these substances outside the sanctioned ritual use. Furthermore, it was the veneration of these substances, and not their condemnation, that formulated the parameters of prohibition.

Beyond the scope of Sahagún's writings, sources that are strictly pre-Columbian, which inherently predate any Spanish influence or loss in translation to Castilian, display significantly less contradiction when it comes to psychoactive substances. References to hallucinogenic rituals in these sources tend to underscore the importance of hallucinogens in the Nahua religious system, as opposed to the dangers inherent in consumption of inebriants. This becomes particularly clear through a consideration of the *Codex Borgia*, and how implicit and explicit references to sacred plants contributed to Nahua rituals.

Nahua Ritual Hallucinogen Use: Evidence in the Pre-Columbian Material Culture

Surviving codices, murals, and sculptures offer the purest manifestation of pre-Colombian representations and attitudes towards hallucinogens. Prior to the arrival of the Spaniards, large collections, or *amoxcalli* housed sacred texts. Juan de Zumárraga, the first Bishop of Mexico, ordered most of these to be burned, along with so many pre-Colombian idols and religious relics. Because of this, only sixteen codices of this kind survived the conquest. The *Codex Borgia* in particular has prompted scholars to consider the possible representation of ritual hallucinogen use. The exact origin and date of this manuscript, which consists of 76 folded painted pages or plates are unknown (Gutiérrez Solana 15; Díaz and Rodgers xiv). The most accepted theory is that it was produced in the southern region of the Puebla-Tlaxcala Valley during the late Post classic period (Díaz and Rogers xiii; Milbrath 157). While the origin of this text speaks to its legitimacy as an expression of Pre-Columbian culture, scholars have yet to unravel all the mysterious themes represented therein. The *Codex* follows the 260-day Nahua ritual calendar and displays detailed recognizable representations of Nahua deities. Tláloc, the Nahua rain god frequently associated with hallucinogenic trances and teonanácatl mushrooms in particular, makes several appearances (De la Garza 68). One of the clearest references to the ritual is an illustration of the *juego de pelota*. There is one particular series of the *Codex,* plates 29-46, which continues to baffle historians when it comes to the possible representation of ritual hallucinogenic trances. Gutiérrez describes this segment as follows: “En cada una de estas páginas se nos presentan alucinantes escenas que muestran una prodigiosa imaginación o quizá una mente afectada por la ingestión de los hongos sagrados. Es bien sabido que los pueblos prehispánicos comían hongos alucinantes con fines principalmente rituales” (39). Gutiérrez does

not delve deeper into the possible association between hallucinogen use and the otherworldly images in this segment of the *Codex Borgia*.

Interpretations of the 29-46 sequence vary in their focus and scope. Bruce E. Byland interprets the sequence as seasonal rituals or rites, others focus on astronomical imagery related to the cycles of Venus.[34] Milbrath suggests that 29-46 represents events related to the movement of Venus divided in the eighteen *veintenas* (twenty-day months) in a single calendar year. Below I take a closer look at some of the iconography of plates 29-46, how it has been interpreted in the past, and how individual representations may suggest allusions to hallucinogenic rituals.

My reading of the possible presence of hallucinogens in this segment does not negate other interpretations. I do not advocate for a wildly new interpretation of this sequence by suggesting that the entire narrative is intended to illustrate a hallucinogenic-induced trance. Rather, I would like to explore the possibility that hallucinogens may have played a role in the journey represented in this sequence, whether it represents a series of rituals, the representation of a "real-time" astronomical event involving the phases of Venus, or a combination of the two. It is the underlying presence of hallucinogens in pre-Columbian sources that I would like to uncover, to understand how these substances were employed as vehicles for the divine.

Unlike the other sections of the *Codex Borgia* that follow a calendric form, the 29-46 section is structured as a narrative. Byland has titled the series, "A Long Supernatural Journey and Ritual Sequence." The orientation of the plates is unlike other sections of the codex. With regard to theme, it displays a series of rituals encompassing the supernatural and the mundane world. A series of images represent possible altered states induced by sacred plants, particularly when considered in conjunction the *veintena* festivals represented in this sequence, and the

[34] Milbrath gives a thorough overview of scholarship dedicated to this mysterious sequence and the multiple interpretations that have developed over the years (161-170).

associated deities and symbols identified by Milbrath. On the first plate (29), Byland describes, "…a large blue vessel from which emerges a dark foamy substance. From this substance emerge numerous animate creatures who are characterized as winds by the Quetzalcoatl features they display" (xxiii). This image of a mysterious brew begins the narrative that takes the personage, "Stripe-Eye," (Quetzalcoatl) through the series of rituals that follow. The contents of the vessel are unclear. However, Milbrath identifies them as the burning heart of Quetzalcoatl, symbolizing the transformation of Venus in winter (165). To add to Milbrath's reading, I suggest that the i bubbling brew of smoking hearts at the beginning of this sequence could also be an allusion to rituals and rites involving hallucinogens.

In addition to the mysterious imagery of a bubbling brew from which mysterious creatures emerge to begin the journey, the presence of certain deities—Tláloc, Xochipilli and Xochiquetzal— in this sequence alludes to hallucinogenic ritual use. De la Garza recognizes these deities as the most frequently associated with hallucinogens by the Nahua:

> Para los nahuas, las principales plantas sagradas, así como los hongos divinos, están por lo general relacionados con el dios Tláloc porque nacen en tiempo de lluvias; así se asocian siempre con el agua y la humedad. Pero también se relacionan con Xochipilli, deidad de las flores, la música y el canto, y con Xochiquetzal, compañera o el aspecto femenino de aquel. (68)

De la Garza reminds us that because of his association with the rainy season, Tláloc was the deity most closely associated with sacred hallucinogenic plants. On plate 30, immediately following the representation of the blue vessel, four Tláloc figures sit on the corners of the enclosure (see Figure 1). This is just one of numerous appearances that Tláloc makes in this section. The Tlálocs have noteworthy plant-related characteristics. Byland mentions that the four

Tlálocs are each adorned with different trees, but refrains from analyzing the images further (xxiii). One of the Tlalocs in particular appears to be sprouting a vine with yellow blossoms from his back. This blossoming vine is similar to those that sprout from the back of the deity on the mural of Tlalocan in Tepantitla, Estado de México. See Figures 2 and 3.

Figure 1. Plate 30 of the Codex Borgia displaying four Tlálocs, one in each corner, with trees and flower vines sprouting from their backs (famsi).

Figure 2. (Left) Detail of *Codex Borgia* Plate 30. Tláloc with yellow flower vine sprouting from his back (famsi).

Figure 3. Detail of original mural of Tlalocan yellow flower. (Browder)

Figure 4. Reproduction of Mural of Tlalócan. Note the similarity in composition with the Tláloc of Figure 2. (Artstor)

Scholars have long recognized the strong allusions to hallucinogenic plants present in Mural of Tlalócan. This pre-Columbian relic, represented here in figure 4 in its restauration, contains many floral images that could be related to different hallucinogens. (De la Garza 73-76). The possibility that these are a reference to a hallucinogenic vine becomes even stronger when we consider the close association that is made between Tláloc and Xochipilli immediately prior to this famous sequence. On plate 28, the image immediately preceding the aforementioned section, Tláloc is represented wearing Xochipilli's face paint (Byland xxiii). Xochipilli, "The ecstatic Prince of Flowers," also appears as one of the six deities assisting Stripe-Eye in the ritual on plate 39. In the general sense, the representation of Tláloc wearing Xochipilli face paint is not unusual. It was common in representations for Nahua deities to wear each other's vestments or display characteristics of one another. This is evident not only in the codices, but in all manifestations of Nahua religious symbolism. For our purpose of mapping hallucinogen use in section 29-46 of the *Codex Borgia*, the fact that Tláloc appears as Xochipilli to introduce this mysterious sequence is significant because of the close associations that both deities share with sacred hallucinogenic plants.

Xochipilli has long been identified with hallucinogens in Nahua iconography. A famous sculpture of the deity recovered from the base of the Popocatepetl volcano, now housed in the National Museum of Anthropology in Mexico, sits cross-legged in an apparent trance, baring the unmistakable engravings of hallucinogenic plants and mushrooms across on his body (Schultes et al. 62) Xochipilli appears in other sections of the *Codex Borgia* as Macuilxóchitl, or five Flowers, the calendar name of the deity. De la Garza recognizes the link between Macuilxóchitl and hallucinogenic plants based on the representation on plate 72 of the Códex Borgia. Macuilxóchitl is featured with a *cuetzpalin* lizard for a phallus, and a flower blooming from his

mouth. The *cuetzpalin* is a creature closely associated with the sacred hallucinogen, *ololiuqui*. In addition to analysing the association with this lizard, De la Garza explores the nature of the flower blooming from his mouth. She identifies it as *maculxóchitl* (*Tagetes canulata)*, of the same genus as the *yauhtli* flower, a sacred hallucinogenic herb of great importance to the Nahua (87).

Plate 44 of the sequence brings together the figure of Tláloc and Xochiquetzal, goddess of the moon, and the female counterpart to Xochipilli. According to Milbrath, the image represents the *Atamalcualizti* ceremony, which celebrates, among other deities, Xochiquetzal and the birth of Cintéotl-Venus from the sacred tree of Tamoanchan (169). The sacred tree of Tamoanchan is of primary importance in Nahua religious symbolism. The tree is represented in bloom, with a bleeding split across its trunk. From this wound sprouted some of the most important Nahua gods.

De la Garza's work on the symbolism of the Tamoanchan tree, and the possible representation of sacred plants associated with this tree, is helpful in establishing a model for analyzing the iconography in the codices. She draws from a variety of sources to support her interpretation of the strong association between the Tamoanchan tree and hallucinogenic plants: "Las plantas sagradas fueron tan importantes en la religión náhuatl, que parecen estar en el origen de los dioses mismos, como lo expresa la idea del árbol sagrado de Tamoanchan, herido a la mitad del tronco, del que surgieron los dioses" (70). In addition to appearing in the *Codex Borgia*, the Tamoanchan tree appears represented in the *Telleriano*, *Vaticano-Rios* and *Laud* codices. The variations in the buds and flowers that appear in various representations of the tree may allude to different sacred hallucinogenic plants. In some drawings, the buds are clearly blossoms, and resemble a species of Datura, like the *tecomaxóchitl* flower, (*Solandra*

brevicalyx), a highly hallucinogenic golden trumpet-shaped bloom of the Nightshade family that is still worshiped by indigenous communities in Mexico (Schultes et al. 73). She also accounts for the variation in representations of buds on the Tamoanchan tree across the codices by associating them to different sacred hallucinogenic plants. On plate 66 of the *Codex Borgia* and plates 34 and 38 of *Codex Laud*, for example, the Tamoanchan tree seems to be blooming with perfectly round bulbs instead of flowers. This suggests the possibility that these are representations of sacred mushrooms, *teonanácatl* (De la Garza 71).

Through a consideration of the complex iconography that appears in the 29-46 sequence of the *Codex Borgia*, it becomes clear that we have only begun to scratch the surface of the possible implicit and explicit representations of hallucinogenic plants in pre-Columbian sources. Because of the complexity and fluidity of the Nahua religious system, mapping hallucinogen use requires exploration of the network of meaning that existed between plants, deities, cosmic forces and the individual. The matrix of associations expands exponentially; psychoactive plants are everywhere. The ubiquitous presences of psychoactive substances becomes even more clear when we consider that, aside from permeating the ritual performances of clergy under the Triple Alliance, hallucinogens also were common household remedies for both physical and supernatural maladies.

The *Ticitl* Is in: Hallucinogens as Medicine and Divinatory Aids in Nahua Society

Juliana González establishes that hallucinogenic experiences were a central part of both aspects of Mesoamerican religion—the outward manifestation of faith, the mythical logos of pre-Columbian societies, as well as the private, dark experience of the supernatural, based on an intimate relationships with familiar shamans in domestic spaces (10). In these domestic spaces, Mexica clergy had less control over the consumption and symbolic use of sacred plants.

Psychoactive plants were consumed frequently and abundantly, within and without the sanctioned religious performances of the Triple Alliance. Evidence of what we may call domestic use of hallucinogens is rather abundant, though not as explicit or as concisely cited as the aforementioned ritual use. The medicinal hallucinogen played an important role in reestablishing the balance between the ailment, the individual, and the world of the gods. Understanding the role of these plants as medicine will help clarify how they functioned in the greater context of a Nahua "cosmovision" (Diaz et al 35). De la Garza discuses the multiple facets of these substances, and how the Nahua peoples used them:

> Además de emplearse para provocar el trance extático, los alucinógenos y estimulantes tuvieron un importante valor terapéutico y eran usados en especial para aliviar el dolor en enfermedades consideradas del tipo acuático, que se creía eran enviadas por Tláloc. Son enfermedades de origen "frío", como la gota, que se aliviaba con el *toloatzin*, *tlápatl* y los *teonanáctl*, entre otros alucinógenos. (68)

López Austin offers insight into the use of these substances as medicine through his literal translation of the original Nahua notes that Sahagún collected for his writings on medicinal plants and practices. His work remedies the omissions and heavy editing that characterize the surviving Castilian manuscripts that contain Sahagún's work: The Codex *Matrinense, Florentine Codex*, and *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España.* In this medicinal catalog, we find many of the same substances that appear in Sahagún's "Plantas que embriagan," as well as several other known hallucinogenic agents that he omitted from said chapter. For example, *picietl*, a strain of native tobacco and potent hallucinogen, was used to treat a variety of physical ailments. In addition to combatting fatigue, it was also used to drain abbesses, alleviate headaches, clear the sinuses, and remove cysts (López Austin "De las enfermedades" 59, 75).

Ololiuqui and *tzitzintlapatl* were effective in alleviating pain brought on by gout (López Austin "De las enfermedades" 91; Sahagún 3:242). In *Historia general* the dreaded *atlepatli* is a deadly plant, vicious enough to kill men and beast that drink its brew and blister skin on contact, but was also a potent remedy to alleviate *ziotl* (pox) and kill ringworm (López Austin "De las enfermedades" 89). Similarly, *teonanácatl* mushrooms and peyote, two of the most notorious hallucinogens, were used in small doses to control fevers and alleviate the discomforts caused by chills (López Austin "De las plantas" 135).

The inclusion of medicinal properties of inebriating plants in *Historia general* is an example of the Spanish effort to catalogue and usurp the luscious pharmacopeia of the New World. As Rebecca Earle has noted, while Spaniards where suspicious of how barbaric New World foods would affect European bodies, they embraced indigenous medicinal remedies full-heartedly (Earle 110). This produced a conflicting profile for psychoactive substances. On one hand, they were desirable because of their curative properties. On the other, they were suspect because of their intoxicating effect. This conflict is exemplified in the dichotomous format used to describe all inebriating plants in *Historia general*. The description of the Datura species *tlapatl,* otherwise known as "Higuera del infierno," for example, demonstrates this seemingly contrasting classification:

> Hay otra yerba que se llama *tlapatl* es como mata, cría unas cabezuelas sin espinas como limones, tiene la cáscara verde, las hojas anchóelas, las flores blancas, la semilla negra y hedionda, quita la gana de comer á los que la toman, emborrachan y enloquece perpetuamente. Esta semilla es buena contra la gota, untando con ella donde está el dolor; también ella es dañosa como la misma semilla. (3: 241-143)

All the descriptions of inebriating plants in this section follow this pattern. Purely negative intoxicating side effects are interlaced with medicinal virtues. The duality of these plants from the Spanish point of view led to conflicts during the colonial period, which we will delve into in Chapter 3. Here, I examine the duality of these plants through Nahua medicinal use of hallucinogens, and how these ambiguous plants affected the individual's relationship to the natural world. The therapeutic use of hallucinogenic plants was an aspect of the dual nature that the Mexica attributed to divine forces. De la Garza discuses medicinal uses of scopolamine, an alkaloid with medicinal properties found in species of Datura such as *tlapatl* and *toloatzin*:

> Los nahuas no sabían nada sobre la escopolamina, ni podemos suponer que pensaran que eran las sustancias químicas de las plantas las que quitaban el dolor; sabían que esas plantas aliviaban esas enfermedades y seguramente creían que lo hacían por ser plantas sagradas del mismo dios que provocaba la enfermedad; o sea, eran vehículos de la misma energía divina. (69)

As vehicles for the divine, these powerful plants had the ability to cure and to curse, to be both the cause of an ailment and the remedy, to act as the line of communication by which the individual sent his plea for relief to the world of sacred forces. To ensure the integrity of such a delicate divine transaction, it was often necessary to enlist the services of specialists.

In order to manage the potential volatility of interactions with divine energy, individuals employed the assistance of specialized intermediaries who could navigate the precipitous frontier between the mundane world and the sacred. The demand for such services must have been high, as there was a whole network of secondary practitioners who managed psychoactive substances and their medicinal properties: midwives, physicians and dozens of categories of sorcerers who operated on the local, personal level (Clendinnen 54-55). De la Garza refers to these figures

under the umbrella of "shamans," to describe the many individuals who conducted a series of religious, divinatory, and medicinal services amongst the Nahua peoples:

> "…había otros hombres religiosos dedicados ante todo a los ritos privados, principalmente de adivinación y de curación…parecen haber practicado el éxtasis no sólo para comunicarse con los dioses, como los demás sacerdotes, sino también para adivinar, curar, manejar las fuerzas de la naturaleza, proyectar parte de su espíritu entre otros seres y causar mágicamente daños a los demás." (46)

We see these types of designations in *Codex Matrinense* and *Historia general: Tlamatini, Nahualli, tlacatecóatl, teciuhtlazqui* and *ticitl* to name a few (De la Garza 47-57). Many of these figures can be directly or indirectly linked to hallucinogen use, as consumption of these plants was one of the preferred methods to reaching ecstasy. We also find allusions to shape shifting and transmutation (such as the *nahualli* and the owl-man, *tlacatecoatl*) that were linked to sorcerous activities, the netherworld and divination.

Sahagún's description of practitioners underscored the dichotomy of the virtues of medicine and the demonization of divinatory practices. We see this clearly exemplified in his description of medicine men and women in Book X. In the descriptions of *medicos* and *médicas*, Sahagún profiles those who cure physical maladies as good doctors, while those who employ *berbages* (brews) and rites are reduced to superstitious devil-worshiping quacks (3: 33; 3:21-22).

Sahagún's description of medicine folk is clearly filtered through the European perspective of sorcery and witchcraft. This bias likely eclipsed the ability to fully catalog the activities of these shamans, the place they held in society, as well as their methods of healing. By lifting the veil of this European filter however, we can complement Sahagún's *Historia general*

to understand how these intermediaries functioned in Nahua society, and how they employed hallucinogens as treatments. Let us begin with the role of the *ticitl*.

Ticitl was specifically a reference to the one who practiced *ticiotl*, or medicine. As masters of herbs and remedies, *ticitls* naturally would have been those who employed psychoactive substances to alleviate physical maladies, such as the aforementioned use of *tlapatl* for gout relief, peyote and *teonanácatl* for fever, etc. This association between *ticitl* medicine men and psychoactive plants was not always explicit in colonial sources. According to Sahagún's sources, for example, those who practiced medicines were simply described as "buen conocedor de las propiedades de las yerbas, piedras, arboles y raíces," but the entry does not indicate what particular plants the *ticitl* uses, or their psychoactive status (1:21). Jacinto de la Serna expands upon this general designation by outlining the many methods of curing employed by these shaman: "…a unos las ventosas, a otros la lanceta, a otros las hierbas, el peyote, el ololiuhqui, el estaphiate y otras yerbas" (65). In addition to bloodletting through lancing and suction cup therapy, De la Serna lists a series of strong psychoactive substances as primary healing tools for *ticitls*. As we have seen, peyote and *ololiuqui* are two of the most well known hallucinogens, and estafiate or Mexican Mugwort (*Artemisia mexicana*) is a lesser-known potent psychoactive (Schultes et al. 98).

The therapeutic and intoxicating duality of these substances meant that those specialized in physical maladies also were responsible for straightening out maladies in the spirit realm. Individuals approached these two kinds of maladies differently, even though they frequently used the same plant. Physical maladies were relieved by the specific properties of the plant, while the supernatural implied the use of conjures, spells, and rites that included consumption both on behalf of the *ticitl* and the patient. However, distinguishing between these two kinds of

therapies is problematic because it corresponds to the same erroneous binary of "medico bueno" vs. "hechicero embustero" projected by our European sources. Clearly, in reality, the lines between these treatment profiles in Nahua society were blurred. Alonso de Molina's early Castilian-Nahua dictionary accounts for this duality. *Ticitl* is listed as both "medico" and "adivino," while *ticiotl* (medicine) is also defined as the art of "adivinar" (167, 7). The art of prophecy and divination, furthermore, was inextricably linked to the medicinal skill set of the *ticitl*. De la Garza gives a survey of the many methods employed for divination, which included the use of hallucinogens:

> La adivinación o *tlapoalitzli* era una parte esencial de las funciones chamánicas nahuas. Se ejercía principalmente con base en el calendario ritual y en los agüeros y pronósticos ya establecidos, a través se los cuales se podía predecir el futuro. (…) formas de adivinación eran: mirar una escudilla de agua, lo que hacia el *atlahuetlachixque*; echar granos de maíz, atar cuerdas en presencia del consultante, interpretar los sueños e ingerir hongos y plantas alucinógenas. (54)

The use of hallucinogens for divinatory purposes to cure physical and spiritual maladies did not end with the arrival of the Spanish. Rather, as we will see in Chapter 3, consumption continued throughout the colonial period, in what appears to be a hybrid pattern of consumption characterized by European demands and traditional Nahua uses (De la Garza 85).

To exemplify the many aforementioned uses of Nahua hallucinogens, the following section is dedicated to establishing profiles for the three most notorious: *ololiuqui,* peyote and teonanácatl. These outlines will include brief summaries on colonial references, as well as ethnographical work on how consumption of each persists in present-day communities. We see

evidence of ritual, medicinal and divinatory use that persisted throughout the colonial period and beyond, albeit transformed by European perspectives and consumption demands.

Ololiuqui: Beware the Bite of the Green Serpent

The black seed of the unassuming Morning Glory vine (*Turbina corymbosa* or *Rivea corymbosa*) is among the most cited, vilified and celebrated of the Mexican hallucinogens. Along with peyote and *teonanácatl*, *ololiuqui* remains one of the most popular hallucinogens still consumed in present-day Mexico (Schultes 26). Despite it's notoriety, the bulk of reliable information on *ololiuqui* is relatively scarce (Schultes et al. 173). Ethnographic writing on *ololiuqui* demonstrates the challenge of applying Western scientific classification to Amerindian hallucinogens (60). De la Garza references the disparities between Nahua and Western scientific classification, and concludes that it is preferable to describe "*ololiuquis"* plural, as opposed to attempting to pinpoint one particular genus (83). Confusion surrounding one of the most recognized hallucinogens of the Mesoamerican pharmacopeia hints at the general lack of consensus regarding the classification of traditional hallucinogens.

Despite the lack of consensus regarding *ololiuqui*, the divinatory importance of these dark, lentil-sized seeds is indisputable in both historic and present-day sources. It is clear from history that Mexica clergy used *ololiuqui* to preform ceremonial rites of divination in rituals of the cycle of feasts. Evidence also indicates that it was one of the herbs frequently used by *ticitls* for private divinatory and medicinal purposes. Sahagún begins his chapter on inebriating herbs with a long description of *ololiuqui*:

> Hay una yerba que se llama *coatlxoxouhqui*, y cría una semilla que se dice *ololiuhqui*; esta semilla emborracha y enloquece, danla por bebedizos para hacer daño á los que quieren mal, y los que la comen paréceles que ven visiones y cosas espantables: danla á

> comer ó á beber, los hechiceros ó los que aborrecen á algunos para dáñarlos. Esta yerba es medicinal, y su semilla usase para la gota moliéndola y poniéndola en el lugar donde está. (3:241)

As with the previously mentioned *tlapatl* flower, the format that Sahagún used to describe *ololiuqui* includes both its noxious intoxicating effects and its virtuous medicinal uses. Francisco de Hernández presents a similar vision in his description of *ololiuqui* in Chapter XIII of his catalogue of *yerbas*. He begins with the physical attributes of the plant, followed by a list of its medicinal uses, and concludes with a description of its negative and intoxicating effects. Although Sahagún's description paints *ololiuqui* intoxication in a clearly negative light, Hernández takes the air of condemnation even further by including an explicit allusion to the link between *ololiuqui* and the act of communicating with the devil:

> Tambien [la planta] bevida provoca a luxuria, es de sabor y temperatura aguda y muy caliente. Antiguamente los sacerdotes de los ydolos que querian tratar con el demonio y tener respuestas de sus dudas comian desta planta para tornarse locos y para ver mil fantasmas (78).

Both texts describe the visions triggered by *ololiuqui* as detrimental ("frightening things," "a thousand ghosts"). Their descriptions differ slightly, however, in the profile and motive of those who consume and administer the substance. Sahagún's reference to those who maliciously feed *ololiuqui* to "those they wish to harm" is relatively vague, and refrains from designating social position, occupation, or gender. Hernández, on the other hand, refers specifically to *sacerdotes,* a title that implies religious and social distinction. In his description, the agent is not administering *ololiuqui* to passive recipients or victims, but rather consuming the substance themselves in order to bring about visions of the future.

These classifications are products of the European Spanish perspectives on satanic influence and divination discussed in Chapter 1. Despite this clear bias, these two references can be useful in illustrating the variety of uses of *ololiuqui* in pre-Columbian Nahua society. On one hand, we can interpret Sahagún´s description as referring to the work of local *ticitls*, lower level shaman that worked directly with the general population. Hernández's text, on the other hand, aligns with the ritual performance of the Mexica clergy, who consumed the substance to facilitate divination, "*tener respuestas de sus dudas*"(78). In combination, these two descriptions illustrate the two sides of *ololiuqui* use in the Nahua religious system. What we lack from these descriptions, however, is an accurate depiction of Nahua attitudes towards these rituals.

To further illustrate how the Nahua may have conceived of *ololiuqui*, we can compare Sahagún and Hernández's descriptions to present-day consumption rites amongst communities in southern Mexico. The name of Morning Glory seeds in the living Chinantec language, spoken in northern Oaxaca, (A-mu-kia) translates specifically to "medicine for divination" (Schultes et al. 173).. Their rituals involving Morning Glory seeds demonstrate how the categories of medicine and divinatory aid continue to converge in present-day uses, and may be a strong indication of how they were perceived in the past:

> Thirteen seeds are usually ground up and drunk with water or in an alcoholic beverage. Intoxication rapidly begins and leads to visual hallucinations. There may be an intervening stage of giddiness, followed by lassitude, euphoria, and drowsiness and somnambulistic narcosis. The visions are often grotesque, portraying people or events. The natives say the intoxication lasts three hours and seldom has unpleasant aftereffects. (174)

There is an essential similarity between this description and those of Sahagún and Hernández

almost five centuries earlier—both include "grotesque visions." This contemporary description provides a nuanced perspective of *ololiuqui* use that might get us closer to understanding the customs and attitudes of the ancient Nahua than that provided by the two learned Spaniards. While Sahagún and Hernández center on the negative and demonic aspect of visions, here we find an emphasis on the curative powers of the seed. A second example is the present-day use of *tlitlilztin*, a species of Morning Glory closely related to *ololiuqui*, consumed by present-day Zapotec communities in Oaxaca under the name *badoh negro*:

> As with *Turbina* [Ololiuqui], Badoh Negro seeds are ground and placed in a gourd with water. The solid particles are strained out and the liquid is drunk. Revelations of the cause of illness or divinations are provided during the intoxication by "intermediaries"—the fantastical *baduwin*, or two little girls in white who appear during the séance. (175)

The presence of the *baduwin* girls who guide the patient through the hallucinogenic experience is a theme akin to the description of *teonanácatl* as the embodiment of ethereal children who act as intermediaries between the patient and the spirit world (Schultes et al. 150). Ethereal intermediaries are not always described as children. They frequently appear in both present-day rituals and colonial texts, and have different profiles and specific functions. De la Serna, for example, describes the personification of *ololiuqui* as an old man who appears and reveals secrets to the inebriated patient (206). Note the emphasis placed upon the correlation between divination and cure in the use of *ololiuqui*. This demonstrates that when it comes to therapeutic use of the these plants, it is impossible to strip the divinatory from the medicinal, which was no doubt the case for pre-Columbian Nahua communities.

That Little White Cactus from the North: Peyote Amongst the Nahua

Peyote is, undeniably, the most notorious and celebrated of all the American

hallucinogens (Schultes et al. 62). Manifestations in twentieth-century popular culture of this little desert cactus are plentiful. In addition to the recreational popularity of its derivative, mescaline, the traditional use of peyote has garnered plenty of attention, as well. Through their fight to consume peyote, The Native American Church has brought the topic of psychoactive substances and their legality to the forefront of the struggle for religious freedom in the US. Frameworks of Western medicine and law have made distinguishing between these religious rites and drug abuse difficult, even for healthcare professionals (Jones 277). In Mexico, peyote is ritually consumed by many indigenous communities, most notably the Huichol peoples. The peyote rituals of the Huichol have remained relatively intact since the discovery and conquest of the Americas (Furst "To Find Our Life" 137). Ethnobotanists and anthropologists agree: peyote use has expanded, flourished, and persisted, with a history that reaches back as far as 7,000 years (Schultes et al. 145). The conflict over peyote and its use is also one of the most documented during the colonial period. Although other hallucinogens were prohibited, as we can see with the previous examples of *ololiuqui*, the 1620 edict against peyote demonstrates that eradicating peyote use was of particular concern for the Catholic Church in their efforts to promote moral rectitude in the colony (Leopold 324).

In comparison to the shortage of information concerning most traditional hallucinogens that were consumed by pre-Colombian communities, the scholarship on peyote is relatively abundant. This can be attributed, in part, to the current popularity of this hallucinogen. A comparatively higher number of colonial texts also describe this particular cactus, many times in conjunction with *ololiuqui*. Sahagún's *Historia general* emphasizes the origin of the cactus through a sketch of the Chichimeca communities of the North, who consumed the cactus as a form of protection from danger and fear:

> Hay otra yerba como tunas de tierra, se llama *peiotl*, es blanca, hácese acia la parte del norte, los que la comen ó beben vén visiones espantosas ó irrisibles; dura esta borrachera dos ó tres días y después se quita; es común manjar de los chichimecas, pues los mantiene y da ánimo para pelear y no tener miedo, ni sed ni hambre, y dicen que los guarda de todo peligro. (3:241)

Sahagún's description uses the language of alcoholic inebriation to describe peyote. According to this passage, it provokes frightening and absurd images, and intoxication lasts two to three days. This text is rather limited, however, as it does not give any indication of the ritual itself. Because of the described function (to become invincible in battle), we can infer that the portrayed consumption was a part of the ritual performances of the Chichimecas. Jacinto de la Serna's description of peyote offered a more detailed account of a peyote ritual, most likely more akin to small-scale domestic use on behalf of a *ticitl*:

> El modo de tomar esta bebida es, señalar el día, el que la ha de beber, informándose muy bien de la causa, porque se ha de tomar, si es por enfermedad, o por cosa hurtada, o perdida, o por saber si lo que se padece, es hechizo, y de quién se tiene la sospecha; y aderezan el oratorio de la casa con mucha decencia, como si esperaran la visita de una gran persona, todo enramado, y perfumado. (205)

Ritual norms for private peyote use reveal similar medicinal and divinatory purposes as those related to *ololiuqui*. In this example, we see the blurring of the line between the medicinal and the divinatory, as discussed earlier in this chapter concerning the role of *ticitls* in Nahua society. Hallucinogens aided in the treatment of physical and spiritual maladies, but these were frequently two sides of the same coin.

Teonanácatl: **The Flesh of the Gods**

Communities in Mexico and Central American have been consuming psilocybin mushrooms for thousands of years. Evidence of the existence of a mushroom cult by way of archeological artifacts has been recovered in Mexico and Guatemala from the late formative period. At least twenty-four species of these fungi are employed at the present time in southern Mexico (Schultes et al. 26) They are frequently referenced in contemporary enthnobotany, and have consistently grown in popularity for present-day recreational use in Western societies. In Mexico, these mushrooms have gained fame and notoriety, thanks in large part, to the prominence of the Mazatec medicine woman, María Sabina. Known to her admirers as the priestess of the mushrooms, María Sabina's teachings have inspired ethnobotanists, anthropologists, and laymen to inquire into the traditional spiritual and medicinal uses of psilocybin mushrooms. María Sabina famously referred to psilocybin as her "niños santos" (Estrada 49). The description of these mushrooms as "children" who guide the consumer through altered mental states correlates with the beliefs related to *ololiuqui.* In both, it is the figures of children who assist in the quest to finding lost items, discover hidden truths, or diagnose an ailment.[35]

The popular counterculture movement of 1960s adopted the psilocybin mushroom as a mascot, representative of all things psychedelic. Simultaneously, the history of sacred mushroom consumption amongst the communities of Mexico, both past and present, has become a point of interest in scholarship. R. Gordon Wasson, ethnomycologist, was one of the first scholars to address contemporary psilocybin mushroom consumption and bring the topic to Western

[35] The association between hallucinogenic substances and "child guides" is a phenomenon that deserves more exploration, particularly in what it reveals about how these experiences are coded. In some descriptions of *ololiuqui,* for example, the guide that appears to the vision seeker is an old man, a personification of the seed.

scholarship. He also was one of the first Americans to travel to Oaxaca, Mexico, and consume mushrooms with María Sabina (Wasson 191). Wasson spent a lifetime dedicated to writing about hallucinogenic mushrooms from all over the globe and their role in pagan religions. Hallucinogenic mushrooms are one of the most frequently mentioned of the pre-Columbian psychedelics, and seem to have made a strong impression on Spanish colonists and writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Teonanácatl makes an appearance in several of the colonial texts devoted to the history, customs, and pharmacopeia of the Indian communities of New Spain.[36] Here I will discuss three: Sahagún's *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España*, Torbino de Motolínia's *Historia de los indios de la Nueva España*, and Fernando Alvarado Tezozomoc 's *Crónica mexicana*. These texts present a gradation of the many colonial perspectives on *teonanácatl*. Although the first two are products of Spanish quills, an analysis of their representation of *teonanácatl* is helpful when compared to Tezozómoc's Nahua-centred perspective. I begin with Sahagún's text, which acts as a sort of intermediary between the other two. Although it was produced from a European perspective, like all of Sahagún's proto-ethnograpy, Nahua sources are at its base. Motolinía's description of *teonanácatl*, on the other hand, is an example of an unadulterated Spanish impression of the sacred mushroom ritual. It predates the other two texts and also demonstrates the extreme anxiety that Nahua heretical behaviour caused in the hearts and minds of Franciscan friars. Tezozómoc, a member of the Nahua nobility and direct decedent of Moctezoma II, offers a different perspective of *teonanácatl* in *Crónica mexicana.* The hallucinogen appears several times in the context of ritual and celebratory consumption. Together, these three texts will

[36] See De la Garza (76-81) for a comprehensive summary of primary sources regarding the different species of *teonanácatl*.

demonstrate the parameters of European and Nahua perspectives, and help illustrate how *teonanácatl* was used prior to first encounters.

Sahagún's description of psylocibin mushrooms in the chapter "De ciertas hierbas que emborrachan," is based on the medicine/intoxicant dichotomy that we see with most of his descriptions in *Historia general* (3:241). Here the sacred mushrooms are listed as *teonanácatl,* just as in Motolínia's text, but they receive a variety of names and spelling variations depending on the source. In *Crónica Mexicana* by Fernando Alvarado de Tezozómoc, they are *Cuauhnanacatl.* The root of both names (*nanacatl)*, is what appears consistent, in Nahuatl, "flesh of the gods:"

> Hay unos honguillos en esta tierra que se llaman teonanácatl, críanse debajo del heno en los campos ó páramos: son redondos, tienen el pie altillo, delgado y redondo, comidos son de mal sabor, dañan la garganta y emborrachan: son medicinales contra las calenturas y la gota: hanse de comer dos ó tres no mas: los que los comen ven visiones y sienten bascas en el corazón, á los que comen muchos de ellos provocan á lujuria, y aunque sean pocos. (Sahagún 3:243)

Following a brief physical description of the mushrooms and their flavor, they are described first by their intoxicating characteristics, then by their medicinal uses. Following this is a dosage warning, along with the undesirable effects of eating too many mushrooms: They provoke lust and anxiety. This particular entry makes no note of their ritual use, unlike Motolínia's observations.

Toribio Benevante de Motolínia was a Franciscan friar who arrived with the first wave of missionaries to New Spain in 1524. He assisted in the establishment of several missions in Nicaragua and Guatemala before settling as prelate in the convent of Tlaxcala in central México.

His *Historia de los indios de la Nueva España* (1541) is among the earliest Spanish accounts of Indian customs.[37] Motolinía's text does not follow the same pattern as Sahagún's. It does not include descriptions of the medicinal properties of plants. By cataloging the traditions of the Indians of New Spain, he offers a chronicle of the conversion efforts of the first Franciscan monks who penetrated the wilds of the Indies. The evangelization of the native communities is described in detail, along with the painstaking efforts exerted by the Franciscans in their effort to eradicate heresy (11). Motolínia's text contains a plethora of cultural information about the different Indian groups he encountered: festivities, marriage customs, details about child-rearing, the treatment of slaves, disciplinary and judicial processes, etc. Amongst the chapters dedicated to these customs, a handful of references describe the flora used by these communities. Chapter 56 is dedicated to cataloguing the "riches" of the landscape and mentions some trees and plants amongst other lucrative resources including dyes, silks, and honey (156). Chapter 19 of Part II describes the many uses of the maguey plant (315). While his writings do not contain a catalog of herbs per se, a series of descriptions of the many idolatrous behaviors of the Nahua illustrate their festivals and sacrificial habits. *Teonanácatl* mushrooms are catalogued strictly in relation to inebriation and idolatry. This account is subordinate to a long narrative of rampant alcoholic inebriation, and describes a particularly horrific perspective of *teonanácatl*:

> Tenían otra manera de embriaguez que los hacía más crueles: era con unos hongos o setas pequeñas, que en esta tierra los hay como en Castilla; mas los de esta tierra son de tal calidad, que comidos crudos y por ser amargos, beben tras ellos o comen con ellos un poco de miel de abejas; y de allí a poco rato veían mil visiones, en especial culebras, y como salían fuera de todo sentido parecíales que las piernas y el cuerpo tenían llenos de

[37] Joaquín García Icazbalceta dates this version of the manuscript 1541 which he published in 1881, although there are other versions of the texts See Icazbalceta: Introducción.

> gusanos que los comían vivos, y así medio rabiando se salían fuera de casa, deseando que alguno los matase; y con esta bestial embriaguez y trabajo que sentían, acontecía alguna vez ahorcarse, y también eran contra los otros más crueles. A estos hongos llaman en su lengua teonanacatl, que quiere decir carne de Dios, o del demonio que ellos adoraban: y de la dicha manera con aquel amargo manjar su cruel Dios los comulgaba. (21)

This episode correlates with several aspects of Sahagún's text. Both feature intoxication, the abrasive bitter flavor of the mushrooms, and the onset of visions. However, Motolínia's account is, by contrast, significantly more sensationalized. From the onset, the effect of the mushrooms is consistently aligned with the heavy discourses of idolatry and demonology. After describing the "cruelty" that these mushrooms provoke, Motolínia goes on to draw a comparison between these "*setas*" and those that grow in Castile. Unlike the mushrooms of Castile, which by comparison are innocuous, those that grow in the earth of the New World are sinister, poison, demonic. The visions invoked by their bitter flesh are riddled with horrific images; snakes plague those under the influence as they watch worms devour their torsos and legs. The text goes on to describe a rather violent reaction to the experience, as intoxicated persons beg for death to escape the nightmare of their visions. He then explains the namesake of *teonanácatl*, immediately imposing a correction to the mistaken perspective of the Nahua. These are not flesh of God, but rather, flesh of the Devil. In this passage Motolínia manages to underline both the moral shortcomings of the Nahua (their rampant inebriation) and their natural inclination for demonic behavior. Motolínia's description demonstrates the anxieties of early Franciscans charged with the conversion of Indian communities of New Spain. The emphasis on the contrast between Castile/New World mushrooms demonstrates that New World is the territory of Satan. The images of putrid flesh being devoured by worms and snakes correspond to contemporary

Catholic concepts of Hell. Although there are clear indications from present-day testimonies as well as colonial texts that some consumers of *teonanácatl* experienced a wide variety of emotions and sensations, colonial sources such as those of Motolínia and Sahagún inhibit a deeper understanding of what these mushrooms represented for the Nahua and other native communities of the territories of New Spain.

To offer an alternative view of how these mushrooms were consumed prior to first encounters, Fernando Alvarado Tezozómoc's *Crónica mexicana* (1598) demonstrates how the Nahua elite consumed sacred mushrooms during the festivities of the high lords of Tenochtitlan. Chapter 58 titled *De cómo para celebrar el lavatorio de pies do Tizoczic Chalchiuctonac, fueron sacrificados los cautivos de Meztitlan y Huaxtecas,* contains one of several passages that describe the consumption of *teonanácatl:*

> […] luego por mandado del viejo Cihuacoatl dieron á los convidados hongos montecinos á comer, con que se embriagan, que llaman cuauhnanácatl, y habiendo comido comenzaron el canto con muy alto punto, que retumbaba la gran plaza, y después de un rato les volvieron á dar de comer de los hongos borrachos, que comiendo dos ó tres de aquellos, mojados en una poca de miel, quedaban tan borrachos y perdidos, que no sabían de sí. (450)

Many aspects of this text demonstrate a hybridity between Nahua customs and Old World discourses. As a bilingual bicultural inhabitant of New Spain, Tezozómoc could not be completely free of European influence or Castilian semantics (Acosta 48). In this passage he defaults to the discourse of alcoholic inebriation to describe the intoxicated state of ritual participants who consume *teonanácatl* ("drunken mushrooms") while the consumers are "drunk and lost," to the point that they are completely out of their senses. However, under this thin layer

of Castilian language we find clues that point to the underlying ritual importance of *teonanácatl* in the Nahua religion. The selection describing *Teonanácatl* is a small part of a long description of an opulent ritual performance that included elaborate ceremonial garb, dancing, and singing. The consumption of sacred mushrooms in all the examples drawn from *Crónica mexicana* precede intricate ritual performances, many of which include call and response, chanting, dancing and in this particular case, human sacrifice of war captives.[38] This particular fragment chronicles the victory of Tizoczic *Chalchiuctonac,* the head war chief of the Mexica between 1482-1486, over the military forces from Huasteca and Metztitlán.[39] Through this example we observe that the mushrooms—although they provoked inebriation—were part of a structured ritual performance. This is a clear example of how *teonanácatl* factored into the official religious system of the Nahua, but also characterized notions of hospitality and ostentatiousness amongst the Mexica elite.

Conclusion: Hallucinogens on the Eve of Spanish Conquest

This chapter has portrayed Nahua hallucinogen consumption from a variety of angles and scopes. From the broadest perspective, I established the foundations of an Amerindian culture of consumption, and how it differed from the contemporary culture of consumption in Europe. Prior to first encounters, communities of all sizes across the American landscape partook in many forms of ritual inebriation, be it through hallucinogens, fermented alcohol, or both. Many of these rituals continue today. Although these ritual intoxications belong to particular communities, there are some aspects they have in common: consumption is highly ritualized, moderation is completely absent, and forms of prohibition surrounding these rituals are fueled by

[38] See also (388) and (495) of *Crónica mexicana* for similar descriptions of ritual intoxication through *teonanácatl* consumption.
[39] See Berdan and Anawalt, *The Codex Mendoza* (2:20-21) for more on Tizoc (Tizoczic *Chalchiuctonac*) his reign, and his conquests.

a reverence for the sacred. This is the Amerindian culture of consumption painted in the broadest strokes. When the focus is specifically on the Nahua, we find a culture where the qualities universal to Amerindian consumption patterns were magnified and complicated. This complication was due to the rise of the Triple Alliance and the usurpation of sacred forms from across the tributary system, and beyond. In the urban space of Tenochtitlan, the consumption of traditional hallucinogens was a part of daily life. They were used in the rituals performed by Mexica clergy, and on a local, personal level through the assistance of medicinal/divinatory aid of *ticitls*. Although inebriation technically was restricted, all evidence suggests that consumption was widespread. The many dimensions of hallucinogen use as it existed for the Nahua were in full display when Hernán Cortés arrived to Tenochtitlan in 1521. Sacred plants were ubiquitous: in the art of the murals and statues, in the stalls of the market place, in the great gardens of Montezuma and certainly in the temples. Despite that these sacred plants were everywhere, the Spaniards made no note of them; they were so present as to have become invisible.

Chapter Three

When Cultures of Consumption Collide: (Mis)Perceptions of Traditional Hallucinogen Use and the Role of the Inquisition in New Spain

When two communities with significantly different cultures of consumption come in contact with one another, as was the case with the conquest and colonization of the Americas, the result is a complex and sometimes violent renegotiation of the role of psychoactive substances. Anthropologist Andrew Sherratt describes the history of psychoactive plants in terms of "incorporation, interaction and opposition" (15). Although renegotiations involving these three patterns would manifest in many different ways across the diverse landscape of New Spain, they revolved around one primary factor: the status of New World sacred plants as medicine both on the physical plane (as treatments for the ailing body) and in the realm of the preternatural (as divinatory aids). The hybridized culture of consumption that developed during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in New Spain would entail a complex realignment of both medicinal and divinatory uses of hallucinogens, which would have lasting effects on religious beliefs, caste relations, perceptions of witchcraft, and economies.

At the time of discovery the territory of New Spain encompassed a great variety of landscapes, from the deserts of the North to the lush jungles of the South. A network of communities populated these territories that each had nuanced cultures of hallucinogen consumption. As we have seen from the work of Mercedes de la Garza and Carlos Viesca Treviño, for Amerindians, including the Nahua, traditional sacred herbs such as *ololiuqui* and *teonanácatl* were at the very center of religious experience in both public and private spheres. While Triple Alliance religious leaders and the elite utilized these plants for ritual performances, they were also viable treatment options offered by local medicine men, *ticitls*. Inebriation,

whether reached through sacred plants, pulque or a combination of the two, was venerated. In many cases, prohibition meant that only elite members of the community were allowed to engage in such activities. The prohibition of intoxication except for a privileged minority stemmed from the belief that it granted access to the sacred realm, a power that required discipline and knowledge (Clendinnen 48). These are, in the broadest strokes, the foundations of the culture of consumption that had developed in central Mexico in the early sixteenth century, on the eve of conquest.

When the Spanish arrived to the shores of Veracruz, they brought with them a general disdain for intoxication, an alcoholcentric culture of consumption, and a comparatively tenuous relationship with the psychoactive plants of their native Europe. The species of the Nightshade family that would have been familiar to the average Spaniard were a meager lot in comparison to the lengthy list of psychoactive species abundantly available in the New World. In addition to volume, Spanish and Mesoamerican religious authorities respectively treated psychoactive plants and their use completely differently. The Catholic Church had long labeled henbane, belladonna, and mandrake amongst other plants as "demonic herbs" and adamantly rejected their use, despite having a general misunderstanding of their effects. In contrast, *teonanácatl* was "the flesh of the gods" for the Nahua and served as a catalyst for the sacred in ritual performances by the ruling elite in the context of the Mexica Triple Alliance and beyond (De la Garza 79).

This chapter presents an overview of the integration of these two cultures of consumption. I will begin by considering the broader themes that affected the exchange of Spanish and Nahua consumption habits, grounded primarily in the reconciliation of divergent attitudes towards medicine and divination. I focus on hallucinogen use in central Mexico during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. References to outlying provinces (Yucatán to the South,

the Chichimeca territories to the North) will be comparative, to demonstrate how dynamics developed differently for indigenous communities who were able to maintain the bulk of their customs due to less extensive Spanish influence. Nancy M. Farriss discusses this point with regards to the Mayan peoples of the Yucatan peninsula, where the process of colonization in the sixteenth century was much slower than in central Mexico (52). After this broad thematic overview, I will then root the medicine/divinatory aid duality in the discourses of colonial texts produced by New Spain's intelligentsia in the first 150 years of the colonial era. To this end, a chronology of the writings of Sahagún, Cárdenas, Hernández, Ruiz de Alarcón and De la Serna will serve two purposes. Firstly, it indicates the evolution of discourses concerning hallucinogenic plants amongst erudite writers of the colony. In the late sixteenth century (Sahagún, Cárdenas, Hernández), there was a certain ambiguity inherent in the descriptions of mind-altering substances. These writers gave weight to both the potential medicinal properties of the newly discovered plants and the unsavory uses aligned with divinatory acts (witchcraft). Secondly, these texts also demonstrate how Old World discourses of demonology and alcoholic inebriation continued to influence perceptions and categorizations of New World psychoactive plants. Following a brief chronology of these texts, I will then shift from the writings of the elite to the consumption habits of commoners by analyzing Inquisition records. These documents offer a window into the everyday practices of the ordinary people. They also demonstrate how the language of alcoholic inebriation and preoccupations with demonology affected perceptions of hallucinogenic behaviors, whether those European eyes and minds understood what they were witnessing or not. Beginning with the earliest Inquisition cases brought against Indian *caciques* (1520-1540), we will first see how clergymen and laymen alike frequently failed to recognize Amerindian hallucinogen use or its importance. Subsequent records from the early and mid-

seventeenth century then offer concrete expressions of the blossoming culture of consumption that spread throughout New Spain, affecting every caste.

In combination, the survey of common threads in erudite texts and Inquisition cases demonstrates the process by which Nahua and Spanish cultures of consumption became hybridized. The general timeline is as follows: first, there was a relative inability, with few exceptions, on behalf of the Spanish to distinguish or categorize the use of psychoactive substances amongst Indians (the 1530s).[40] The tendency to overlook hallucinogenic rituals was followed by their recognition and subsequent categorization by a handful of erudite writers (1570s-1600). At the turn of the century, an increased syncretism of consumption habits coincided with the full-fledged prohibition of peyote and related herbs (1620). Despite prohibition, by the mid-seventeenth century, hallucinogenic customs had spread across the entire cultural landscape of New Spain, regardless of class or creed (1650-1700). This hybridized culture blossomed from the demands of the common folk, desperate as they were to ease the many hardships of colonial life.

Divinatory Aid and Medicine: Foundations for a Hybrid Culture of Consumption

Before outlining the chronology of primary colonial texts that discuss hallucinogens, it is helpful to consider the main themes inherent in the syncretized culture of consumption that developed in the first 150 years of New Spain. These themes had to do with the dual function of hallucinogens as both medicine and divinatory aids. For the Nahua, as we saw in Chapter 2, the

[40] The exceptions are related to *teonanácatl* mushrooms. In the 1530s, Fray Motolinía recognized the consumption of intoxicating mushrooms amongst several native communities. There is also one early Indian Inquisition case where *teonanácatl* is mentioned by name. I found these *teonanácatl* cases to be the exception to the general tendency of early misinterpretation of intoxicated behaviors. In many other processes, it is abundantly clear that Spanish witnesses were unfamiliar or unaware of the importance of psychoactive plants in/for…. I am inclined to believe that there was a quality of *teonanácatl* that stood out to Spaniards more than other psychoactive plants. This may have been as simple, perhaps, as being members of the mushroom genus and therefore more recognizable.

medicinal use of hallucinogens was inextricably linked to the divinatory; in other words, the medicinal was divinatory. Psychoactive substances were considered *pahtli* (medicine) regardless of whether they were used to heal the body or the spirit. The acceptance of this duality clashed with the perspective of Spanish ecclesiastical and secular authorities, which placed very different values on medicine and divinatory acts, as we will see from the Natural Histories of the erudite colonial authors below. This must have been quite a conundrum for missionaries, inquisitors, and Spanish physicians alike. On the one hand, these plants were potentially valuable, life-saving medicines, while on the other they were dangerous divinatory aids that reinforced idolatry amongst the natives and heresy across the castes. Eventually, the fear of the divinatory would overshadow medicinal possibilities, and the Church would explicitly prohibit these plants (1620) (Leonard 324). The process by which this medicinal-divinatory duality became a dichotomy is apparent both in the shift in focus of official discourses in the seventeenth century and Inquisition cases involving hallucinogen consumers. As the years passed and these plants were increasingly recognized and categorized, the Holy Office placed greater importance on divinatory (demonic) associations with hallucinogenic plants and considered these detrimental enough to trivialize their medicinal potential. Meanwhile, as we can see from Inquisition records common folk continued to use hallucinogens in both capacities.

Furthermore, the underlying commonalities that linked Spanish and Nahua cultures of consumption did not reside in official stances or policies but in the consumption habits of the common folk. Amerindian and European commoners alike shared a taste for divinatory traditions, whether sanctioned or not. The Nahua maintained traces of their pre-Columbian traditions, while the Spanish laity brought their Old World divinatory desires to the New. It would not be hard to imagine that demand for divinatory services (and medicine, for that matter)

would be particularly high in the colonial period. The harsh realities of colonial life, which included bouts of mysterious illness and death, drastic shifts in fortune, fluctuating authoritative powers, and exposure to a myriad of foreign elements, meant that the experience of the average colonial subject was rife with uncertainties. Across the diverse political and social landscape desire to alleviate anxieties through divinatory aids brought together Indians, Africans, mixed blood castes, and Spaniards. Just as in the Iberian Peninsula, anxieties and desires regarding hallucinogens varied greatly within the Spanish population of New Spain. Many Spanish commoners that arrived to the colony brought with them a propensity to indulge in the instant gratification provided by magical practices. They still craved the specialties of those marginalized old crones and foreigners who marketed "magical" services in their homeland. Across the Atlantic, these demands would adapt to the new landscape of the Americas, where a host of Nahua medicine folk offered slightly different remedies than those available in Europe.

In early modern Spain demand for magical practices frequently fell into two main categories divided along gender lines (Tausiet, *Abracadabra Omnipotens* 39). Women tended to seek out spells or charms to snare a love interest while men were keener on becoming rich through the discovery of hidden treasures. Both categories, regardless of gender tendencies, were dedicated to the attainment of material wellbeing. These magical services in the Old World had evolved from a tradition of complex rituals and practices, which in many cases did not include the use of European psychoactive plants. Divinatory practices in Europe were far less likely to involve psychoactive substances. A common form of magic for those who desired material gain, for example, was the use of a magic circle. Old World witches and necromancers supposedly used this spell to summon and control demons to do their supernatural bidding, disclose the location of treasures, or invade the heart of a love interest. The magic circle incantation required

a long and complicated ritual that required fasting on behalf of the necromancer, meditating, and avoidance of alcohol, but not the use of psychoactive plants (Tausiet, *Abracadabra Omnipotens* 45). When demand for these "get rich quick" and "love" spells came to the New World, the power that consumers had attributed to the European witch or necromancer was now transferred to the Indian, armed with his magnificent collection of bewitching herbs. As we saw from Chapter 2, the Nahua had many forms of divination. Of these, the use of psychoactive plants was one of the most important. When European demands met with native divinatory practices, peyote, *ololiuqui*, and other traditional hallucinogens would increasingly creep into the consumption habits of non-Indians as the colonial project unfolded. The common ground of divination was the foundation upon which these two communities developed a hybridized culture of consumption with a complexity unique to New Spain.

Demand for divinatory aids went hand in hand with an increase in medicinal consumption of traditional hallucinogens by non-Indians. Along with strictly divinatory uses that catered to the needs of Spaniards, there is evidence in Inquisition records that points to the resilience of certain pre-Columbian traditions that preserve the essential duality of sacred psychoactive plants. Despite the survival of traditional forms, the drastic fluctuations in the population during the first one hundred years of the colonial project surely had an effect on the evolution of these hallucinogenic traditions. A series of European-introduced diseases decimated Indian peoples, reducing the population from an estimated 22,000,000 to less than one million by 1620 (Gerhard 23). This dramatic loss of life took with it many traditional practices and forms knowledge, which would have included standard medicinal and divinatory practices. The decimation of Indian peoples undoubtedly had an impact on how surviving *ticitls* (medicine men) used hallucinogens. A loss of population likely also affected how they shared sacred

knowledge with non-Indians. In addition to general population loss, Nahua forms of hallucinogen consumption were also directly affected by the extent to which they interacted with Spanish and mixed-blood castes.

During this time of rapid decline in the Indian population, the surviving communities were exposed to varying degrees of Spanish influence depending on their geographical location. Major urban centers that housed the greatest concentrations of Spanish blood, (Mexico City, Acapulco, Puebla, Vera Cruz Nueva, Zacatula), would see cross-cultural influences develop very differently compared to more isolated regions where local native populations had significantly less interaction with Spaniards (Gerhard 26). One exemplary case of the latter is the Huichol peoples of the Sierra Madre Occidental (*Nayarit*) who never underwent a rigorous conversion project due to the remote location of their settlements.[41] The preserved peyote traditions of the Huichol, which have remained relatively unchanged since pre-Columbian times, make the syncretism that developed in central Mexico that much more apparent. In comparison to the Chichimecas of the North, whose civilization was less comparable to the Euroepean model, the sedentary communities of central Mexico were easier to integrate into the colonial project. Proximity and accessibility certainly were a factor, but the Triple Alliance also had the structures of civility that colonizers adapted more easily to Spanish rule (Lewis 28). As communities adapted and integrated Christianity into their belief systems, so were they able to transmit their surviving forms of knowledge to non-Indians. Nahua hallucinogenic practices, because of the enticing universality of their uses (to aid in curing the body and the supernatural), would lead to a complex market for these herbs.

[41] Since Jesuits were unwilling to make the perilous journey to their villages, exposure remained limited, and to this day, the Huichol people represent one of the few communities in Modern Mexico that has maintained their belief system free of significant syncretism. One of the core elements of their belief system is the sacred peyote. See Furst (142-150) for a description of peyote use and failed Jesuit attempts at converting the Huichol of Nayarit.

To better understand how the black market for hallucinogenic services developed throughout the colonial period, it is helpful to apply Laura Lewis's framework regarding the power dynamic between the sanctioned and unsanctioned worlds of New Spain. The sanctioned realm represented the world right side up, where a subject's proximity to "Spanishness" determined their place in society and their power. In the sanctioned world the Iberian-born Spaniard of pure Christian blood was located at the apex of social, religious, and commercial life in the colony. At its polar opposite was the Indian, governed by an inverted set of values. Castes of mixed blood, including those of African descent, enjoyed a certain amount of mobility between the two, depending on personal associations, ancestry, and fluid forms of social proximity.

Although the Spaniard and Indian castes existed in opposition, they also constituted a reflection of one another. The world of the Indian was an inversion of the Spanish world; it was a world of witchcraft, where "Indianness" constituted power and the values of the Catholic faith and civil order were overlooked. As Lewis explains, these two worlds, while apparently in opposition to one another, sustained one another's existence (13). This framework is helpful in considering how the dynamics of power across the castes manifested through the exchange of hallucinogenic knowledge and practices in New Spain. Traditional hallucinogenic plants were vile in the world of the sanctioned; in the unsanctioned world, on the other hand, these same plants were highly valued catalysts of magic, a desirable resource that provided relief to a population fraught with uncertainties. New World hallucinogens gave the suffering population of the colony what the Catholic faith could not. This lead to a complex black market of witchcraft that grew throughout the seventeenth century, as more and more factions of society participated in its proliferation. The diverse population of New Spain increasingly developed a taste for

traditional Nahua *pahtli*, medicines that had the power to solve problems both in the physical and spiritual world. The Church fought against these trends, but there were a series of factors that hindered their ability to suppress such practices. Firstly, because they were slow-going in recognizing and categorizing hallucinogens in the early years of the colonial enterprise, blinded as they were by discourses of alcohol and demonology. The inability to categorize, monitor, and suppress pre-Columbian rituals during the early years is evident in the efforts of the missionaries who were charged with the indoctrination of the native populations of New Spain.

Idols and Alcohol: Discourses That Obscured the Importance of Amerindian Psychoactive Rituals in the Sixteenth Century

The inability to suppress hallucinogenic practices in the first fifty years of the colonial enterprise can be reduced to two key factors: an emphasis on idolatry; and narrow perspectives on inebriation. The Dominican and Franciscan missionaries who arrived in New Spain in the 1520s and 30s were intent on stomping out the demonic influence inherent in Indian idolatry, while they also recognized the propensity for indigenous communities to engage in rampant inebriation.[42] Despite identifying these two aspects of indigenous behavior that required correcting, missionaries were ill equipped to address the significant connection between the two, which hindered their ability to eradicate the behavior. Cases of the early Indian Inquisition demonstrate an obsession with discovering and destroying Indian idols.[43] The problem for inquisitors and missionaries was the enormous difference between what Europeans perceived as

[42] See especially Dominican friar Tomas Ortiz's 1525 speech before the Council of the Indies in which he described the mysterious brews that native communities used for rampant intoxication. These were derived from various "yerbas" (Anghiera 274).

[43] Idolatry was the main concern of Franciscan and Dominican missionaries in the New World. However, the intense focus on the physical destruction of idols, which remained at the center of early Indian inquisitions, seemed to have kept missionaries and inquisitors from discovering other sources of power that fueled Indian belief systems. The emphasis on idol destruction is clear in all the cases compiled by González Obregón.

secular drunkenness and the ritual intoxication that characterized Amerindian cultures of consumption. European categorizations of alcoholic inebriation as a moral failure tended to eclipse the nature behind Indian behaviors and practices, making them all the more challenging to perceive and understand. In combination, this die-hard focus on destroying idols and the misperception of intoxication obscured the importance of ritual inebriation, allowing such practices to continue amongst the Indian population, and eventually spread to the other castes of New Spain throughout the seventeenth century.

The case of the early Franciscan missionaries in Maní, Yucatán, is an example that illustrates how Spaniards were frequently unable to detect and categorize Amerindian behavior, particularly as it related to ritual intoxication. After years of applying their conversion tactics of word and example, the Franciscan missionaries of Maní eventually recurred to physical torture when they discovered that their baptized Indian subjects continued to engage heavily in pre-conquest heretical and idolatrous behavior. The ensuing measures culminated in Fray Diego de Landa's episcopal Inquisition against the Indians of Yucatán in 1562, which included the torture of 4,500 Indians in a three-month period and several dozen deaths. Inga Clendinnen suggests that to contextualize the disastrous result of this violent effort of conversion, ethnohistorians and anthropologists must consider Spanish missionaries as subjects of study alongside their recently baptized Indian flocks ("Disciplining the Indians" 27). She focuses on the contrast between the prescribed methods of the Franciscans and how they increasingly replaced peaceful means of instruction with the more drastic methods of torture. The violence of the Franciscans was controversial, particularly for an order instructed to guide solely by eloquence and example. Clendinnen's approach to understanding the Franciscans as subjects of anthropological study is helpful in considering their perspective on inebriation.

The use of violence on behalf of the Franciscans can be attributed, in part, to their inability to detect the full scope of idolatrous behavior amongst their newly converted flocks. Many of these behaviors had to do with intoxication. Clendinnen demonstrates that the European perspective on alcoholic inebriation may have prevented missionaries from realizing that Indians continued to practice their religious traditions under the guise of the "minor offense" of alcoholic inebriation. What the Franciscans thought was unruly, immoral behavior (inebriation) was an assertion of pre-Columbian religious systems (ritual consumption of both alcohol and hallucinogens). From the European perspective, drunkenness was a moral weakness but not associated with heretical behavior. De Landa focused his episcopal Inquisition on finding and destroying idols. Although idols were tangible representations of surviving pre-Columbian belief systems, the focus on destroying these idols took precedent over other manifestations of religious practices that persevered amongst Amerindian communities (44).

Hallucinogens and psychoactive substances enabled the preservation of belief systems, or at least, played a more significant part in their preservation than previously thought. Under the guise of simple inebriation a full range of traditions rooted in pre-Columbian belief systems were being preserved right under the prying eyes of Franciscan missionaries, so zealous in their efforts to eradicate Indian idolatry. The survival of these practices to the present day, as evident in the extensive body of ethnographic and anthropological evidence of ritual hallucinogen and alcohol use across Mexico, is a testament to the continuity of their use throughout the colonial period. Although the case presented by Inga Clendinnen focuses on the Mayan Indians, her consideration of the perspective of Franciscan missionaries is helpful in understanding how Spanish perspectives on alcohol and idolatry affected the detection of these customs in the early years of New Spain. These perspectives would characterize the discursive threads that bound

learned erudite discourses and the quotidian experiences of the general population in the colony. They appear in most cited primary colonial texts that describe hallucinogens as well as in Inquisition records.

Somewhere Between Medicine and Sorcery: A Chronology of References to Traditional Hallucinogens in New Spain 1550-1700

Hallucinogen consumption during the first fifty years of New Spain has received little attention from historians. The near omission of accounts is due in part to the scarcity of primary sources that reference psychoactive plant consumption during the earliest years of the colony. Except for Motolinía's observations of the *teonanácatl* ritual and Cabeza de Vaca's account of the ceremony he witnessed during his eight years in captivity in the American Southwest, there are very few explicit references to hallucinogen use, particularly in the central valley of Mexico. As we have seen previously in Chapter 2, the fields of anthropology and ethnobotany have produced a good portion of the available material on Nahua hallucinogens. These studies frequently reference a handful of primary sources from the colonial era, including the writings of Hernández, Sahagún, Cárdenas, De la Serna, and Ruiz de Alarcón. Although anthropological and ethnobotanical studies frequently cite these sources to illustrate pre-Columbian hallucinogen use, the chronology of these texts, their primary focus, and the discursive differences between them tend to fall to the wayside. De la Garza, for example, draws from a combination of these texts to argue that Spaniards both condemned ritual hallucinogen practices and associated them with Old World intoxicating plants (70). This assertion, while accurate in retrospect, falls short of considering the nuanced process by which this general Spanish attitude developed and ignores how associations between hallucinogens and witchcraft waxed and waned throughout the colonial period. While erudite Spaniards eventually drew connections between traditional

Mexican hallucinogens and those of the Old World, this was part of an elaborate process of perceiving and categorizing substances that took years to develop and shifted depending on the specific intent of each author.

A general consideration of the chronology of these texts will enable a better understanding of the discourses that remained consistent concerning hallucinogens, as well as those that slowly and subtly evolved over time. Of course, I do not attempt to encapsulate the entirety of Spanish thinking on hallucinogens through my analysis of these texts. They constitute, after all, only five texts derived from materials gathered by five men and span over a century and a half. Attitudes towards hallucinogens and the ability to perceive their many uses and roles were diverse and fluid throughout the colonial period. However, because these are the most frequently cited sources on hallucinogens, I find that a consideration of their chronology is helpful in fleshing out the many underlying discourses they share. To this end, I will consider these texts synchronically in two clusters. The first will emphasize the references by Sahagún, Cárdenas and Hernández, all written during the second half of the sixteenth century. While there were contemporary texts that described the botany of the New World, I focus on these writers because all three men lived in New Spain and had direct contact with surviving Nahua populations.[44] The second pair of texts I will consider are the writings of Ruiz de Alarcón and De la Serna from the middle of the seventeenth century. A consideration of these two clusters of texts will illustrate how knowledge concerning hallucinogenic plants and practices evolved from

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[44] A more thorough consideration of perspectives on New World botany would include *Historia medicinal de las cosas que se traen de nuestras Indias Occidentales que sirven de medicina* (year of publication) by Nicolás de Monardes. Monardes, a Sevillian physician, never ventured to the New World, but his *Historia médica* was a primary text in early modern botany. While a consideration of Monardes and his contemporaries who wrote on New World *materia médica* must be left for a later project, it would include a consideration of Garcia de Orta's *Colóquios dos simples e droga e cousas medicinais da India* (1563) and Cristóbal Acosta's *Tratado de las drogas y medicinas de las indias orientales* (1578).

the Spanish perspective as associations between these plants and demonology became stronger.

The commercialization of new medicine was a significant driver in the quest for resources during the conquest and early colonial project. The texts of Sahagún, Cárdenas, and Hernández share central discourses and themes that, although presented differently, are all tethered to the measuring stick by which colonizers considered hallucinogenic plants in the early years of the New Spain: the dichotomy of these "sacred plants" as both potential medicine and demonic divinatory aid. While condemning their heretical divinatory use, the authors also left some room (although to varying degrees) for their redemption as potential medicines. The power of New World medicines to cure Old World maladies was an exciting advancement for European botany. While Spaniards were weary of the atmosphere, foodstuff, and peoples of the Americas, they perceived medicinal plants quite differently (Earle 110). Daniela Bleichmar describes the importance of New World *materia medica* in her study of the Sevillian physician Nicolás Monardes (1508-1588) and his *Historia medicinal de las cosas que se traen de nuestras Indias Occidentales que sirven en medicina*. Monardes never ventured into the Americas; his interest in New World botany was mainly scientific and commercial. For this reason, I have not included his text in this consideration. However, his book is essential in illustrating European perspectives on *materia medica*. Bleichmar's study offers valuable insight into the role of medicinal plants in the commercial world of the conquest and colonization of the Americas and the broad interest in discovering, cataloging, and exploiting New World medicines, even by those who would not benefit directly from their commercial exploitation (34).

The potential value of New World medicines influenced the texts by Sahagún, Hernández, and Cárdenas, who were intent on cataloging the pharmacopeia of the New World. This interest in *materia medica* manifests in the varying degree of ambivalence they each

demonstrate towards hallucinogenic plants, as apparent in the case of Sahagún and Hernández. Cárdenas, of the three, shows his weariness of these herbs quite emphatically as he pays less attention to their medicinal attributes. Hernández and Sahagún, however, acknowledge both the idolatrous and divinatory uses they of these plants, as well as their medicinal potential. This ambivalence was in many ways unprecedented, as writers did not necessarily afford the same considerations to Old World hallucinogens.

Old World species of Nightshade (mandrake, henbane, belladonna, etc.) had very few acknowledged medicinal properties in the early modern period. The most recognizable use for these plants, as we saw in Chapter 1, was the clandestine elaboration of love potions and poisons. In smaller doses, they were painkillers and muscle relaxers (Schultes et al. 87). Furthermore, although Nightshade species had some medicinal value in Europe, they paled in comparison to the great hallucinogenic pharmacopeia of the American hallucinogens and their variety of uses. *Ticitls* and other shamans across Mesoamerica used Mexican hallucinogenic plants to treat a host of physical maladies ranging from fever to gout, to respiratory infections, to swelling and skin irritations such as ringworm. These medicinal possibilities, however, would only vindicate sacred plants to a degree. In all of these texts, in addition to an acknowledgment of their therapeutic potential, there is also a stern rejection of their divinatory and idolatrous uses. Cárdenas, compared to the Sahagún and Hernández, demonstrates this condemnation most fiercely, perhaps because he had the most direct experience with a variety of patients who used these herbs for divinatory purposes. Even so, the botanical ambiguity of New World hallucinogens as medicine and demonic herbs took some time to work out. The passage of the years and the discovery of continued Indian idolatry would eventually cause the negative

association of divinatory arts to undermine the potential medicinal value of these plants, as we see with the texts of De la Serna and Ruiz de Alarcón produced in the seventeenth century.

A Franciscan and Two Doctors Walk Into a Bar: The Writings of Bernardino de Sahagún, Francisco Hernández and Juan de Cárdenas on Hallucinogenic Plants in New Spain

The most frequently cited sources for pre-Columbian hallucinogens stem from the writings of Bernardino de Sahagún. Although there were sources that preceded his work (Motolinía's is one example, which mentions *teonanácatl* mushrooms), Sahagún's methodology of cataloging Nahua customs continues to be the quintessential source for citing most aspects of pre-Columbian culture, including hallucinogenic customs. It is the most complete and, as Sahaguntine scholars remind us, the most objective of colonial texts (Klor de Alva, "Sahagún" 34). This apparent objectivity can be attributed to Sahagún's meticulous methodology. Sahagún, unlike the first generation of missionaries that preceded him, developed a system of data collection through the use of Nahua informants and scribes instead of relying solely on his own observations. As we have seen in Chapter 2, despite this methodology, Sahagún's text was not completely free of the discourses of alcohol and demonology that plagued his contemporaries. He frequently recurred to the language of alcohol to refer to the intoxication provoked by hallucinogenic plants. Descriptions of *teonanácatl* and peyote in his writings are framed in terms of "borrachera" and are taken by natives "en lugar de vino" (3: 118).[45] In terms of demonology, Sahagún generally avoids explicit allusions to demonic forces when referring to Nahua ceremonies, with a few exceptions. However, he does associate some Nahua hallucinogenic

[45] There are many references to ritual inebriation that refer to fermented agave/maguey (pulque) as "vino." Although this association between a familiar and unfamiliar alcoholic drink may seem logical, it further demonstrates how Old World customs were cast upon the new, while differences were left at the wayside.

activities with sorcery and *hechiceros*.[46]

This final volume of his *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España* consists of a catalog of the abundant flora and fauna of New Spain. Chapter VII, "De las yerbas" narrows the topic to medicinal plant species. The very first subcategory of the chapter is titled "De ciertas yerbas que emborrachan". This section lists eleven plants, including peyote, *ololiuqui*, and *teonanácatl* mushrooms. The descriptions of these "inebriating herbs" include their potential medicinal and toxic properties as well as their suspected links to Nahua sorcery (3: 241). This section of Sahagún's writing has three functions. It serves to catalog the mysterious New World plants with medicinal properties, to pinpoint possible toxins, and to register heretical behavior associated with these substances. Medicinal uses are intertwined with toxic properties. Although it is apparent from the title that Sahagún acknowledged the inebriating and toxic effects of these plants, he gave equal weight and space to list their particular medicinal properties. Dating the impact of Sahagún's writing is tricky, considering the timeline of his work. Although Sahagún had already compiled some portions of text, Francisco de Toral did not officially commission his investigations into Nahua culture until 1558. The Council of Indies confiscated a considerable part of his work in 1577.[47] His investigations likely preceded those of his two contemporaries mentioned above.

Francisco Hernández's catalog of the plants of New Spain *De la naturaleza, y virtudes de las plantas, y animales que están recevidos en el uso de medicina en la Nueva España* was translated from Latin and published in 1615, nearly thirty years after his death in 1587. In

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[46] Although Sahagún does not link hallucinogens directly to demonology, he does make a very explicit association between types of Nahua sorcerers and Old World associations with witchcraft and sorcery. For example, his definition of the "Naoalli" (nagual) is very similar to a European necromancer (who masters spells and "sucks" children). He also gives a description of another manner of sorcerer that he simply names as "Nigromántico," who has the ability to shape shift into an animal (Sahagún, *Historia general* 3: 22-23).

[47] For a chronology of Sahagún's texts, including the timeline of *Primeros memoriales* and the *Florentine Codex*, see Nicholson (3). The Council prompted its confiscation in 1577 because of the possible dangers the existence of such a text might pose to the Catholic faith. See Jiménez Moreno XLIII.

Chapter 2, I present Hernández's text as a contrast to the Nahua perspective on the uses of *ololiuqui* to demonstrate how we can read between the lines of the Spanish text to perceive the traditional Nahua use buried therein. For the purpose of this chapter, his text serves as an example of how the educated class of New Spain handled the blossoming European consideration of these plants and the dichotomy of inebriating-sorcery/medicine. Hernández, unlike Sahagún, was not interested in cataloging Nahua culture for the purpose of indoctrinating the peoples of New Spain to Catholicism. His interests were purely medicinal; he was to report back to King Philip II on the botanical wonders of the New World. Hernández was the first royal protomédico appointed in 1570 (Lanning 337). Francisco Ximénez compiled and translated his work into the annotated Castilian version of 1615. There, we see that Hernández did not categorize hallucinogenic plants together in one category of "inebriating herbs" as was the case with Sahagún's writings. The entry on *ololiuqui*, for example, appears sandwiched between *mecaxuchitl* and *poztecpatli*, two non-psychoactive medicinal plants. *Mecaxuchitl* is a digestive aid and anecdote that also prompted menstruation and brought on early labor in the event of a stillbirth. The leaves of the *Poztecpatli* plant were used to alleviate joint and tendon pain. *Ololiuqui* appears in the same manner as the other two plants: a physical description of the herb precedes medicinal properties. It is a pain reliever, a cure for eye infections, flatulence, broken bones, diseases caused by "cold" humors, etc. (Hernández 77). The entry includes adverse effects associated with witchcraft at the end, followed by a note that states that there is no need to indicate where the *ololiuqui* plant grows, as it would be harmful to Spaniards, presumably due to its intoxicating and bewitching properties. José Ramírez suggests in his early twentieth-century writings on Hernández that this afterward is likely an interjection from Ximénez's perspective, demonstrating the growing preoccupation that Spanish learned men and clergy of

New Spain had with these plants (170). Between Hernández's seven-year exploratory expedition (1570-1577) and Ximénez's 1615 translation, a generation of exposure to Indian idolatry had perhaps prompted the translator to add the equivalent to an early modern warning label to *ololiuqui's* description. The desire to impede "Spaniards" from knowing where the plant grew corresponds with a theme in the writings of Cárdenas, who recognized the dangers of Nahua "curanderos" and the treatments they prescribed involving the divinatory use of peyote and *ololiuqui* amongst castes beyond the Indians of the colony (Viesca Treviño "Hechizos y Hierbas" 43).

Cárdenas published *Primera parte de los problemas y secretos maravillosos de las Indias* in 1591. This catalogue of American maladies and remedies illustrates the concerns of a young doctor as he confronted the particularities of treating patients in New Spain. The final chapter of his text, "En que se declara muy por entero si puede aver hechizos en las yervas, y que sean hechizos," employs the principles of humorism to explain how some plants, including peyote and *ololiuqui,* may facilitate demonic possession. In comparison to Sahagún's text, which only lists brief descriptions of these herbs, Cárdenas develops a more in-depth analysis of their physiological effects, with the added social dimension of superstition as it manifested in the colony. In his prologue, he claims to follow the examples of Hippocrates, Galileo, and Aristotle. As Viesca Treviño points out, Cárdenas made important strides in connecting witchcraft to the effects of psychoactive plants (42). Although his intent is mostly medical, his language reflects the distinctive stamp of demonology, as Cárdenas cannot help but reflect the dominant discourses of his time. An association with witchcraft is emphasized in the persistent repetition of the language of "hechizos" as well as his assertion that only God could grant the Devil the power to reveal secrets through divinatory practices. He dedicates a significant portion of the

introduction of the chapter on bewitching herbs to criticizing the propensity of "hechiceria" amongst colonial subjects. Cárdenas justifies his need to address this issue based on the sheer number of heretical and backward ideas regarding sorcery that his many patients express in his everyday practice:

> Oygo dezir cada dia dos mil quentos, y otras tantas historias, patrañas, y vanidades acerca de que enhechizaron a uno, y del otro que echo una bolsa de gusanos con un bevedizo, o patle que le dieron, y no cessa aqui el negocio, sino que tambien os querran hazer en creyente, que ay yervas, polvos, y rayzes que tienen tal propiedad, que con ellas puedan hazer que dos personas se quieran bien, o que se aborrezcan, y otras que son bastantes a mudar la condición, o a hazer a un hombre dichoso, o mal afortunado, y no solo se persuade a creer esto el ignorante vulgo, pero tambien creen, é imaginan (mayormente gente barbara y torpe) que se toman yervas, y bevedizos para adivinar lo porvenir, (negocio solo reservado a Dios). (208)

Although Cárdenas recognized individual psychoactive plants (peyote, *ololiuqui*, *picietl*), and goes on to describe them in detail, here he groups them together under the single catchall category of witchcraft. There is one development that appears in Cárdenas's writing that does not factor into those of Sahagún and Hernández: concrete evidence of the incipient syncretism of habits across the castes of New Spain. Cárdenas chronicles traces of the spread of Amerindian hallucinogens to non-Indians. We can detect Intercaste influence in his subtle distinction between "ignorant common folk" ("ignorante vulgo") and "barbarous and stupid" persons ("gente bárbara y torpe"). These two factions of undesirables reference 1) Ignorant folks of all wakes of life and castes, likely including Spanish commoners and 2) the barbarous and naturally inferior peoples, an explicit reference to uncivilized Indians and African slaves. Both groups,

whether Spanish or barbarous, were implicated in this reprehensible behavior; both propagated a misguided belief in "hechizos" and the use of "yervas, polvos, y rayzes" for medicinal and divinatory purposes.

The writings of Sahagún, Hernández, and Cárdenas illustrate the discourses that linked medicine and divination to Mexican hallucinogens at the end of the sixteenth century. In conjunction, they demonstrate how colonizers regarded hallucinogens with a relative level of ambiguity in first encounters, with almost equal weight given to their divinatory and medicinal purposes amongst the Nahua (Sahagún and Hernández). At the same time, there was an incipient anxiety that Nahua behavior patterns may influence Spaniards and other non-Indian castes with regards to the consumption of these plants (Cárdenas). In the seventeenth century, the frequently cited writings of Hernando Ruiz de Alarcón and Jacinto de La Serna demonstrate that these anxieties heightened, while discourse shifted noticeably away from an ambiguous representation of these plants, focusing more intently on the divinatory. Both Ruiz de Alarcón and De la Serna frame hallucinogens purely in the context of Indian idolatry and the potential danger that Indian hallucinogenic rituals could cause amongst the non-Indian castes.

Ruiz de Alarcón and Jacinto de La Serna: Blossoming Recognition of the Spread of Hallucinogens Across the Castes

In 1629, just over a century into the colonial enterprise, Hernando Ruiz de Alarcón wrote his *Tratado de las supersticiones y costumbres gentílicas que hoy viven entre los indios naturales de esta Nueva España*. In 1624, the Archbishop Don Fransisco Manso de Zuñiga asked him to conduct the interrogations that would lead to this treatise (Quezada "Hernando Ruiz" 324). A prominent clergyman of the Order of Saint Augustine, Ruiz de Alarcón was also granted the title of *ministro de indios* and shared many biographical similarities characteristics with

Bernardino de Sahagún. Like Sahagún, he spent years studying the customs and language of Nahua peoples in central Mexico. His writings preserve the ritual forms conducted by medicine men and women who continued to practice traditional medicine. The treatise describes intricate ritual processes, including divinatory and healing practices, and the specific prayers that went along with each. Like Sahagún, the primary purpose of his investigations was not to record these traditions in written form in the name of cultural preservation but rather to document Indian idolatry to facilitate its eradication. His writings on *ololiuqui*, peyote, and *picietl* exclusively link these substances with idolatry, inebriation, and the conjuring the devil. Unlike Sahagún, Ruiz de Alarcón does not include the potential medicinal value of hallucinogenic plants in his treatise and his focus is quite narrow. The three plants he mentions –*ololiuqui*, peyote and *picietl*– were primary hallucinogens but constituted only a minute fraction of the many plants used by the Nahua. One section encompasses most of the medicinal properties that appear in his treatise. There, hallucinogens are a way to control fevers, "calenturas" (186). The description is a sharp contrast to the more thorough medicinal descriptions of Hernández and Sahagún. His comments on *ololiuqui* and peyote, for example, are part of a longer description of Indian rituals involving divination practices but do not include the many medicinal uses:

> Las sobredichas cosas tienen y adoran por dios, y el ololuhqui es un género de semilla como lantejas, que la produce un género de hiedra desta tierra, y bebida esta semilla priva del juicio, porque es muy vehemente; y por este medio comunican al demonio, porque les suele hablar cuando están privados del juicio con la dicha bebida, y engañarlos con diferentes apariencias, y ellos lo atribuyen a la deidad que dicen está en la dicha semilla llamada ololiuhqui o cuexpalli que es una misma cosa. (25)

> …el consultor esta fuera de si, que entonces creen que el tal ololiuhqui o peyote les esta reuelando lo que desean saber; en pasandosele al tal la embriaguez o priuacion de juicio, sale contando dos mil patrañas, entre las quales el demonio suele reboluer algunas verdades, con que de todo punto los tiene engañados o embaucados. (39)

These entries focus exclusively on divinatory aids and make an explicit connection with the conjuring of the Devil. Ruiz de Alarcón's preoccupation with divinatory rituals is reminiscent of the anxieties expressed by Cárdenas thirty years prior. Alarcón's language emphasizes that the medicine men are "deprived of judgment" (privados de juicio) under the influence, which opens the gateway to demonic influence (25).

Ruiz de Alarcón was ardent in his efforts to eradicate traces of pre-Columbian Nahua traditions amongst the surviving Indian populations of New Spain. Like Jacinto de la Serna, he was involved in the *extirpación de idolatría* campaigns of the early seventeenth century, a revitalized effort on behalf of the clergy to suppress surviving Indian customs (González Martínez 89). In 1614 Ruiz de Alarcón was accused before the Inquisition of "processing Indians" in acts of faith in the same manner as the Holy Office (Quezada 327). This was problematic because Ruiz de Alarcón was not an inquisitor and the Indian caste had, at least on paper, been excluded from the jurisdiction of the Inquisition since 1571. Although the Holy Office never pursued his case, the incident demonstrates the extent of Ruiz de Alarcón's zealous intent to suppress Indian idolatry. His efforts, however, were not only in the interest of saving the souls of converted Indians who had fallen into possible heresy and apostasy. Amongst those who participated in the extirpation of the early seventeenth century, there was a genuine concern that surviving Nahua practices would infiltrate the Spanish caste. The treatise has indications that this contamination, or hybridization of consumption habits, had already taken place. The general

description of divination rituals bears the mark of syncretized European and Amerindian customs:

> Si la consulta es sobre cosa perdida o hurtada o por mujer que se ausentó de su marido, o cosa semejante, aquí entra el don de la falsa profecía, y el adivinar como queda apuntado en los tratados precedentes, y el adivinanza, se hace por una de dos vías: o por sortilegio, o bebiendo para este fin el peyote o el ololiuhqui o el tabaco, o mandando que otro lo beba, y dando el orden que en ello se debe tener, y en todo ello va ilícito el pacto con el demonio, el cual por medio de las dichas bebidas muchas veces se les aparece y les habla haciéndoles entender que el que les habla es el ololiuhqui o peyote o cualquier otro brebaje que hubieren bebido para el dicho fin, y la lastima es que así a este como a los mismos embusteros los creen muchos, mejor que a los predicadores evangélicos. (147)

In this fragment, Ruiz de Alarcón cites several examples of divinatory acts. These demands, however, do not exclusively reflect pre-Columbian Nahua traditions. They are strikingly similar to the two gender-specific motives for divinatory aids that were popular in Europe (Tausiet, *Abracadabra Omnipotens* 39-132). These consisted of the search for hidden objects of value (*cosa perdida, hurtado*) and love and subjection magic (*mujer que se ausentó de su marido*). The presence of these two examples that can be tied back to European concepts of magic demonstrate that there was already a level of hybridization regarding hallucinogenic/divinatory practices in the 1620s, only years after the edict against peyote and related herbs had made its way across New Spain.

Jacinto de la Serna, like Ruiz de Alarcón, was heavily involved in the extirpation efforts, and he too wrote an extensive treatise specifically dedicated to cataloging Indian idolatry to facilitate its recognition and eradication. He completed his *Manual de ministros de indios para el*

conocimiento de sus idolatrías y extirpación de ellas before 1656. There are few known facts about De la Serna's background. After studying theology at the Colegio Mayor de Santa María de Todos Santos, he occupied several prominent positions in the early half of the seventeenth century (González Martínez 89-90). His many stints as the parish priest of some of the central cathedrals and institutions in the colony—including the University of Mexico—coincided with his extensive involvement in the extirpation efforts. In his prologue to his *Manual*, he indicates that the problem with Indian idolatry lies not only with the persistence of old pre-Christian practices but also that baptized Indians were engaging full-heartedly in their ancient traditions under the guise of the Christian faith (24). In his article on De la Serna's writings and the extirpation efforts in Mexico and Peru, Jesus González-Martínez indicates that the preoccupation that led to the revitalized anti-idolatry efforts of the early seventeenth century stemmed from the degree of syncretism that was developing between ancient Nahua traditions and Christianity (92). As De la Serna pointed out, baptized Indians seemed to have little trouble taking the sacrament and participating in Church life while continuing to worship idols and engage in divinatory practices. Many of these practices depended on the continued use of hallucinogenic plants.

De la Serna dedicates a considerable portion of his treatise to the many uses of hallucinogens amongst the Nahua. Like his predecessors, he focuses primarily on *ololiuqui* and peyote. In his text there is a continuation of the narrowing focus of anti-hallucinogen discourses, as many sacred plants fell to the wayside. De la Serna's treatise is very similar to Ruiz de Alarcón's, with one important distinction. Ruiz de Alarcón dedicated one chapter of his treatise to medicinal practices. Chapter 29, "De la cura y los embustes para las calenturas", describes the use of different superstitious remedies, including peyote and *ololiuqui*, to cure illnesses (172). De

la Serna writes more extensively on the topic of medicine and makes a concerted effort to catalog and qualify all forms of Nahua medicine as superstitious quackery. The relative ambiguity concerning medicinal value that characterized the early writings of Hernández and Sahagún in the sixteenth century does not appear. In Ruiz de Alarcón's text, the medicinal/divination dichotomy of hallucinogenic plants collapses in on itself. *Ololiuqui*, peyote, and related herbs are categorized as catalysts of idolatry, regardless of whether they are for divinatory purposes or medicine. The emphasis on idolatry is consistent throughout De la Serna's entire treatise. In Chapter 4.2, "Los instrumentos de sus curaciones", De la Serna lists hallucinogens as one of the many treatment methods used by Nahua *ticitls* (65). While we can read this entry as an acknowledgment of the plurality of therapeutic treatments mastered by the Nahua, it is framed purely as idolatry. Directly after describing hallucinogens as a treatment, De la Serna goes on to illustrate how delusion and quackery characterize all medicinal practices amongst the Nahua, precisely because they are so close to divinatory practices. *Ololiuqui* and peyote receive no acknowledgment as cures for physical maladies; they are diagnostic tools that Nahua medicine men use to delude their patients into believing that they have discovered the cause of illness. Furthermore, although these plants had a wide variety of medicinal uses for physical maladies amongst the Nahua, both De la Serna and Ruiz de Alarcón eliminate this dimension from their treatise, framing the plants entirely in the context of idolatry.

The texts of Ruiz de Alarcón and De la Serna illustrate the state of discourses concerning hallucinogenic plants in the Americas in the second half of the seventeenth century. The pioneering, humanist spirit that fueled the first years of botanical inquiry in the colonial project had given way to the anxieties of the Catholic Church, manifest in the extirpation efforts. The developing syncretism in consumption habits that was spreading across the castes fueled these

growing anxieties. While these texts reveal a great deal about how erudite theologians and physicians viewed pre-Columbian hallucinogenic practices and their dangers for the general population, they are limited in their ability to illustrate the everyday experiences of colonial subjects. For this reason, it is helpful to recur to Inquisition trials. Because of their capacity to shed light on the quotidian, inquisitorial trials are valuable resources that shed light on traditional hallucinogen use during the conquest and early colonial period. These records demonstrate that before, during, and after traditional hallucinogens were a topic of interest amongst erudite writers, a culture of consumption amongst Nahua peoples not only continued to exist but slowly and surely evolved as the demands of new communities converged in the colony.

The Holy Office of The Inquisition in New Spain: An Overview

The branch of the Holy Office of the Inquisition in New Spain was not formally established until 1571. For the first fifty years of the colonial project, the responsibility of enforcing morality and trying transgressors fell to bishops, prelates, and apostolic commissaries, during the period categorized as the episcopal Inquisition (1521-1571). In these formative years, Indians were tried and processed in the same manner as heretics and criminals from any other social group. In fact, the very first inquisitorial proceeding in New Spain implicated an Indian man in 1522 accused of concubinage.[48] With the establishment of the Inquisition by Philip II's royal decree in 1571, the Indian caste was officially exempt from the jurisdiction of the Holy Office and placed under the control of the vicar-general of the corresponding diocese or archdiocese (Greenleaf "The Inquisition and the Indians" 141).

Despite the apparent clarity of Philip II's decree, the role of the Inquisition in the colony regarding Indian matters was much more complex. The extensive work of Richard Greenleaf has demonstrated that jurisdiction over Indian transgressions was a muddled affair at best ("The

[48] GD061 Inquisición, vol. 1, Doc 1, Año: 1522.

Inquisition and the Indians of New Spain" 141-143). Although Indian cases technically fell outside Inquisition jurisdiction, the bishopric that handled Indian cases maintained parallel procedures, titles, and even at times shared functionaries with the Holy Office. In addition to this inherent blurring between the powers and responsibilities of these two bodies, the Holy Office continued to trace and document Indian idolatry and heresy. Based on this jurisdictional confusion, it is not surprising that the Inquisition records of the AGN (Archivo General de la in Mexico City include accusations against Indians, who were frequently implicated along with colonial subjects from other castes. Inquisitional records demonstrate that there was a significant level of cross-caste influence with regards to traditional hallucinogenic customs and behaviors. By the end of the sixteenth century, both the regular and secular branches of the Church were grasping the importance of these herbs. Inquisition trials of the seventeenth century demonstrate that there were legitimate foundations for the fears of syncretism expressed in the writings of theologians and physicians such as Cárdenas, De la Serna, and Alarcón.

Far from being a mere extension of Church authority, the reach of the Holy Office extended far beyond crimes against the faith to encompass all aspects of civil disobedience.[49] Cases involving traditional Amerindian hallucinogens begin to appear in significant numbers around the middle of the seventeenth century, implicating persons from across the castes. John F. Chuchiak IV discusses this topic in his collection of Inquisition documents from the Holy Office in New Spain. He includes the transcripts of two cases that involve investigations into the use of *pipiltzintzintli.*[50] The first describes the use of the plant amongst the indigenous population of

[49] See Chuchiak for more on the Inquisition and Witchcraft, (7), the reach of the Inquisition (5), and a summary of the history, structures and functions of the Holy Office of New Spain (8). In the chapter on Hallucinogens (308) "Trials and Testimonies against the Use of Peyote and Other Herbs and Plants for Divination," the introduction frames the growing concern on behalf of the Church regarding hallucinogenic herbs, which culminated in the publication of the edict against peyote use in 1620.

[50] The herb *pipiltzintzintli* has yet to be properly identified but is most closely associated with *Salvia divinorum*. See De la Garza (300).

Tepepan and Xochimilco in 1698. The other was a case from 1704 when a mulato woman named María used the same substance in Texcoco. Although these are excellent examples of how the Holy Office struggled with hallucinogens in the colonial period, they represent a minuscule and relatively late sample of surviving hallucinogenic traditions in the colony. To get a broader perspective of the consumption patterns of the common folk, it is helpful to establish a chronology of Inquisition trials parallel to our previous consideration of the writings of colonial authors. This timeline will provide a more in-depth perspective of how Nahua peoples continued to use these substances for medicinal and divinatory purposes and how Spaniards and other castes slowly adopted hallucinogenic practices throughout the colonial period.

To better understand the process by which Mexican hallucinogens made their way into the Spanish imagination, it is helpful to go back to the murky beginnings of New Spain, with examples of Indian inquisitorial proceedings of the 1530s. I will examine two: the trial of the two Indian sorcerers Tacatetl and Tanixtetl (1536), and the case against the *cacique* Cristobal, his wife Catalina and brother Martín (1539). Both cases are framed based on the discourses of inebriation and demonology while hallucinogens themselves went undetected. Due to their inebriated and idolatrous behaviors, the accused in these cases would be part of the small group of indigenous individuals tried during the episcopal Indian Inquisition of Fray Juan de Zumárraga between 1536-1540 (Greenleaf, *Zumarraga and the Indian Inquisition* 14). I discovered these trials in *Procesos de indios idólatras y hechiceros,* a compilation of early inquisitions collected and published by the Mexican government in 1912.[51] As the first bishop of

[51] The introduction to these transcripts, written by famed Mexican historian Luis González Obregón, describes the trials of indigenous leaders in the 1530's as an unavoidable war between well-intentioned friars and Aztec dark lords who battled over the souls of the neophyte masses of New Spain (VI-VII). Although he briefly mentions the impediments caused by clerical hypocrisy during early conversions, he refrains from commenting on the extent of their perversity, which appears explicitly exemplified in the text. The last case in the collection involves the aforementioned Father Diego Díaz, accused of 1) the murder of the Indian Francisco, whom he buried under the stairs of the jail where he reportedly kept a large number of Indians incarcerated and 2) concubinage involving 21

Mexico, Zumárraga's aggressive campaign to stamp out Indian idolatry occurred before there was an official Holy Office of the Inquisition of New Spain, which was established years later by Philip II in 1571 (Greenleaf, "The Inquisition and the Indians" 141).

With regard to hallucinogens, early Indian trials are prime examples of how the clash between Amerindian and European cultures of consumption affected the daily lives of subjects during the early years of the colony. They unveil a critical point in colonial history before the two cultures of consumption began to intermingle throughout the colonial period. On one side, there is the world of the Spaniards, who act exclusively as inquisitors and witnesses in these cases. On the other side, there is the Nahua, who continues to engage in his pre-Columbian customs, including the consumption of hallucinogens. These early trials shed light on the pre-syncretic cultures of the colony.

The Case of Tacatetl and Tanixtetl, Drunken Sorcery and Sacrifice in Tlanacopan

In 1536 two Christian Indians, Tacatetl and Tanixtetl, were accused of sorcery and drunkenness in the town of Talnacop. Peter Gerhard lists one Lorenzo Suárez who held an encomienda listed as "Tlanocopan" located in the Tetepango Hueypustla jurisdiction in the 1530's (297).[52] The encomienda was located in the current state of Hidalgo, in the jurisdiction of Tetepango Hueypustla. The region, adjacent to the Valley of Mexico, was densely populated with Nahua and Otomí-speaking communities. Although it was relatively close to Mexico City,

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Indian women, one of which was his own daughter (Gonzalez Obregón 238-256). González Obregón fails to mention a fundamental piece of information: that Fray Juan de Zumárraga would be removed from his position as apostolic inquisitor because of the perceived overzealousness with which he persecuted the accused Indians in such cases. Historians now recognize a direct link between the famous case against Don Carlos Ometochtli Chichimecateuctli of Texcoco (the grandson of Nezahuacoyotl) that concluded with the *cacique* being burned at the stake and Zumárraga's fall from grace. For more on Zumárraga's Inquisition see Greenleaf's *Zummárga and the Mexican Inquisition* Chapter 4. In addition, Patricia Lopes Don's article, "The 1539 Inquisition and Trial" is an excellent micro-historical reading of Don Carlos's case.

[52] David Wright-Carr identifies the village as Tlalhuacpan, which bordered Mizquiahuala, Axacuba, and Actopan (44).

the Spanish population was very limited at the time this trial took place (Gerhard 295). The encomendero/accuser in the case was the Portuguese Lorenzo Suárez.

Lorenzo Suárez tells the story of how he hunted down two of his Indians, the idolatrous Tacatetl and Tanixtetl, with the reluctant help of Diego Xiutl, a third Indian under his charge, and a Spaniard, Pedro Borjes. Suárez suspected the missing men of engaging in sacrifices related to an unspecified Nahua feast. After guiding the encomendero aimlessly through the countryside all night and receiving severe threats, Diego Xiutl finally brought the two men to the isolated location of a midnight ritual. Although the culprits fled before the witnesses could identify them, the text gives a description of the many things Suárez and Borjes found at the location: "…hallaron allí muchos palos, papeles, púas de maguey, y copal, y navajas, y vestiduras de ídolos, y plumas, y hierba que se llama yautle y sahumerios y incensarios; todos puestos en un Cú de dentro y de fuera, y cántaros de pulcre, y comida y cacao, y otros géneros de cacaos, y géneros de bebidas" (González Obrégon 3). Included in this list of items related to the ritual, is what Suárez described simply as "an herb called yautle." As presented by the text, it would seem that this plant, although implicated in the ritual, was no more than an idolatrous prop alongside feathers and foodstuffs. However, the herb in question, *yauhtli* (*Tagetes lucida*), had a variety of uses in Nahua medicine and worship. In addition to being burned as incense during rituals, it was also a potent hallucinogenic (De la Garza 310). Present-day indigenous communities of Mexico such as the Huichol of Nayarit continue to consume this plant in combination with tobacco for its intense psychoactive effects (Siegel et al. 19). It is apparent that these uses were unknown to the two Iberian witnesses, or at least, they had failed to understand the extent of their importance in the interrupted ritual. Both men focused on unearthing two dominating perceived manifestations of idolatry: the presence of actual idols and the evidence of human sacrifice. This focus obscured

their ability to recognize the importance of other elements involved in the ritual, including *yauhtli*.

The mutual focus of the testimonies of Suárez and Borjes is to establish Tlacatetl and Tanixtetl as head "predicadores," "papas" and "sacrificadores." These categories correlate with the discourse of demonology that shaped early Spanish perceptions of the Nahua religious system. From the perspective of these early conquistadors and colonizers, Satan's influence over Amerindians was a significant threat that manifested through real, tangible consequences (Cañizars-Esguerra 12). In a landscape where colonizers perceived demons and forces of evil to be very real, explicit evidence such as the blood of sacrifice and physical manifestations of pre-Columbian deities would take precedent over inconspicuous elements, such as the possible function of unfamiliar herbs in ritual practices.

Along with the discovery of the ritual site, Suárez and Borjes also found two young Indian men who were "sacrificados por las piernas" (2). These young men stated that Tlacatetl and Tanixtetl had forced them to participate in the ritual, with the intention of inducting them into their idolatrous priesthood against the boys' will. The two sacrificial victims then led them to a cave where Suárez found nine large stone idols. The testimony of Pedro Borjes puts special emphasis on this occurrence. Unlike Suárez, Borjes does not include the itemized list of artifacts located at the scene of the ritual. His declaration, instead, describes the sacrificial blood of the victims and the stone idols: "...los tomaron haciendo sacrificios, con mucha sangre derramada en muchos palos, hierbas, papel, y en piedras, y que la sangre estaba fresca; y que de allí fue con el muchacho este testigo á una cueva, donde halló muchos ídolos y máscaras con sangre" (4). The presence of fresh sacrificial blood in the cave, smeared all over sticks, herbs, rocks, and masks is

a chilling description and emphasizes the inherent danger of Indian idolatry from the Spanish perspective.

In addition to descriptions of sacrifice, blood, and idol worship, the language of alcoholic intoxication also appears in the testimonies Suárez and Borjes. Borjes ends his declaration before the Holy Office with a summary of his prior knowledge of the reputation of the two offenders:

> Preguntado, si ha oído decir á algunas personas, que sean dignas de creer, que el dicho Tlacatetl y Tanixtetl son sacrificadores y papas, dixo: que al cacique de Titalaquia, donde este testigo fue corregidor, ha oído decir que el dicho Tacatetl es sacrificador, borracho y que tiene muchas mujeres; y que ha oído decir este testigo á muchas indias é indios, que se hace tigre y que es mal hombre y hechicero. (5)

Tlacatetl was not only a leader of idolatrous worship; he was also guilty of the highly offensive sins of concubinage and drunkenness. The discourse of alcohol appears in the most damning possible manner. This is a significant contrast with the case of the *yauhtli* herb mentioned prior, which is essentially swept aside as a minute detail. This fragment also reveals another significant detail about Tlacatetl: his alleged ability to morph into an animal.[53]

The association between shape shifting and witchcraft is well established in the European context and was also an important characteristic of many *ticitls* in the Nahua religious system (De la Garza 46). In both the European and Amerindian contexts there is strong evidence that hallucinogenic plants were directly related to the concept of shape shifting. In the study of past and present Nahua culture, historians and ethnographers associate this phenomenon with the term *nahualismo* (Carreón Flores and Camacho Ibarra 204). In the case of Tlacatetl and

[53] For a good summary on the different Nahua shape shifting medicine men, see De la Garza (46-48). For a more detailed description of the figure of the Nahualli in the context of other types of *ticitls,* see Lopez Austín "Cuarenta clases de magos" (95). *In Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España*, Sahagún defines the "Naoalli" as a sorcerer very akin to the European tradition and cites the shape shifter likewise under the title of "Nigromántico" (III: 22-23).

Tanixtetl, the element of *nahualismo* directly relates to accusations of intoxication. The two Indian boys, victims of the sacrificial bloodletting, indicated that they had personally witnessed the accused transform into a variety of different animals:

> Preguntados, si vieron al dicho Tlacatetl and Tanixtetl tornar tigre, dixeron: que los habían visto estos declarantes tigres, y adives, y puercos, y perros; preguntados, cómo lo hacían, dijeron que con unos patles y cosas que hacían; y que los dichos Tlacatetl and Tanixtetl les decían á estos declarantes que no lo dixesen á los xpianos, que bastaba que ellos lo supiesen, y que si lo decían los matarían; y que cuando los frailes iban allá emborrachaban á la gente porque no dixesen nada. (González Obregón 7)

There are several noteworthy details of this passage that make a strong case for the presence of hallucinogenic elements. According to this declaration, when asked how the accused engaged in shape shifting, they claimed that they did so through "patles" and "things they did." Patle is *pahtli*, which in Nahua means medicine, unguent, potion, or poison.[54] Within the Nahua religious and medicinal system, hallucinogens frequently fell within this ambiguous territory, and it is possible that the *pahtli* in question was a hallucinogenic brew. After this indirect reference to possible ritual hallucinogen consumption, the declaration of the two boys engages the language of alcoholic intoxication. They claimed that the sorcerers Tlacatetl and Tanixtetl intoxicated community members to keep them from divulging their activities to "xpianos," Christians. There are no additional details concerning the kinds of intoxication that possibly took place. With regards to the figure of the *nahualli*, the sense of coercion implicit in the manipulation of the

[54] "Pahtli." Nahuatl Dictionary.http://whp.uoregon.edu/dictionaries/nahuatl/index.lasso. Web. Jan 2017

community aligns with the ambivalent nature of the shape-shifting sorcerer, as described by Francisco Rojas González (361).

Based on the testimonies of Suárez, Borjes, the two Indian boys and several others, Tlacatetl and Tanixtetl were sentenced to walk in a public procession from the jail to the town church, bound by the neck and dressed in penitential garb. They were to profess their sins, both in their native tongue and Spanish. Once they arrived at the church, they two men were to be flogged by the executioner before circling the church, beating themselves while repenting their sins. They were then to be confined to a monastery for three months so that they could receive proper instruction in the Christian faith (González Obregón 14). Considering the fate of other *caciques* during Juan de Zumarraga's early Indian Inquisition, Tanixtetl and Tlacatetl punishment was not quite as severe.

The testimonies of Tlacatetl and Tanixtetl shed light on a variety of problems faced by the Spanish clergy in their attempt to indoctrinate the Indian communities of New Spain. Each document begins by listing several interpreters who are entrusted to translate for the two men. Through these many interpreters, both men indicated that they had been baptized Christians for two years or less; both openly admitted to recognizing and keeping idols and further declared that all the local community leaders did the same. When the inquisitor asked Tanixtetl if he would like to entrust his defense to a Christian man to speak on his behalf, he declared that he did not even know one (11). This case illustrates the underlying failures in communication that permeated the inquisitorial process. It also offers a small example of the resilience of pre-Columbian practices as they continued in New Spain, a decade after the conquest in an area peripheral to the center of Spanish influence. In this context, hallucinogenic rituals managed to slip below the radar of inquisitors, who were so focused on idolatry and sacrifice that they were

unable to detect the subtler aspects of Nahua worship. Even when witnesses identified an herb, the actual function of the herb was completely lost in the dominant rhetoric of demonology that preoccupied inquisitors and missionaries of the early years of the colony.

A few years after the trial of Tacatetl and Tanixtetl, an Indian *cacique* of Ocuituco named Cristobal was also tried for idolatry and inebriation. The encomienda of Ocuituco was located in the jurisdiction of Cuautla Amilpas. Originally belonging to the Marquesado de Oaxaca held by Hernán Córtes, it was granted to Bishop Juan de Zumárraga in 1539 (Gerhard 91). Ocuituco, like Tlanacopan in the previous case, lay beyond the settlements of the central valley that were densely populated by Spaniards. Natives in Ocuituco, furthermore, had limited exposure to Spanish influence, despite the efforts of several mendicant orders to establish monasteries there in the second half of the sixteenth century (93). Cristobal's trial is a prime case study for understanding the perceptions of hallucinogens in the early colonial era. The Spaniards who acted as witnesses and inquisitors in his trial completely failed to recognize the importance of a Nahua hallucinogenic ritual due to an intense focus on idols and drunkenness.

The Sad and Incredible Tale of (not so) Innocent Cristobal and His Heartless Inquisitors

Cristobal's trial record indicates that on the night of Quasimodo Sunday 1539, scarcely eighteen years after Hernán Cortes and his men had reduced the great city of Tenochtitlan to a pile of rubble, Father Diego Díaz was startled by the boisterous singing and chanting of a mob that was forming between the huts of the Indian dwellings of the encomienda. When he emerged from his quarters, he crossed path with Alonso de Liñán and Luis Álvarez, two fellow Spaniards. The men stood aghast at the vision before them; the natives of the encomienda, all baptized Christians, were spilling out of their modest dwellings to join in a frenzy of idolatrous chanting and dancing. Father Díaz ordered in vain that they return to their houses and go to sleep, but they

continued to dance and sing; their torches so bright, in the words of Álvarez, they turned the night into day (González Obregón 164). Leading the heathen procession, at moments collapsing into the outreached arms of the ecstatic crowd, at others, dancing, wailing and laughing in the same breath, was Cristobal. He wore a rose garland around his neck and held a single flower in each hand. Diego Díaz and Alonso de Liñán later testified that Cristobal was drunk, or as Liñán described him, "como borracho" (166). I suggest that Cristobal may have been under the influence of hallucinogens but that Díaz and Liñan were unable to recognize his symptoms, given their unfamiliarity with the use of such substances in *Nahua* spiritual customs.

Cristobal's trial has not received very much attention from historians. In comparison to other high-profile cases such as those of Don Carlos and Martin Ocelotl, the story about a drunken elderly *cacique* from Ocuituco admittedly lacks splendor. However, this case lends itself well to the purpose of this study because it illustrates how Spaniards' inability to comprehend Nahua hallucinogenic practices represented a significant obstacle in their attempts to curtail Indian idolatry. The case of this idolatrous inebriated *cacique* demonstrates the substantial difference between European and Amerindian perceptions of psychoactive plants. Despite having spent almost twenty years living amongst Nahua peoples, the Spaniards who witnessed Cristobal's intoxication potentially failed to recognize the role of traditional hallucinogens. Idolatry and alcohol dominate every aspect of this case.

On August 21st, four months after his incarceration, Cristobal was brought in shackles from his jail cell to appear before the clergyman Juan González to confess his sins against the Catholic Church. Seven of Cristobal's servants had previously testified about the private and elaborate ceremonies that Cristobal and his wife Catalina performed every seven and twenty days. During these ceremonies, they worshiped fire and stars, sacrificed chickens, made tamales

from their bleeding carcasses and drank large quantities of *uctli* (pulque), among other elaborate rituals (González Obregón 142-146). The striking similarity between the servants' declarations suggests that inquisitors asked them a series of very leading questions concerning Cristobal's borrachera and his daily offerings to idols. The very nature of the line of questioning in this process demonstrates how hallucinogens may have evaded the perception of Spaniards. By focusing inquiries on the discourse of alcohol, inquisitors hindered their ability to detect whether alternative substances might have been the culprits of Cristobal's intoxicated behavior. If we read between the lines of this case, the possible influence of hallucinogens emerges. To flesh out the many pieces of evidence that point to possible psychoactive plant use, I compare Cristobal's behavior to the writings of Bernardino de Sahagún. His description of the Nahua cycle of feasts and related hallucinogenic practices will shed light on the rituals described in Cristobal's trial. A comparison between these texts will enable us to decipher a more accurate interpretation of Cristobal's intoxicated behavior and how possible hallucinogen use went unperceived by the Spaniards who testified in this case.

Bernardino de Sahagún's *Historia general* and Cristobal's Quasimodo Sunday

Because of the importance of Sahagún's *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España*, it is easy to forget that this collection of Nahua customs, and rituals went through a long and adventurous existence from its inception as a weapon against idolatry, to its early years as a collection of disjointed manuscripts, and finally to the elaboration of the well-edited versions known today as the *Florentine Codex*. Published for the first time in the nineteenth century, Sahagún's text led a life that rivaled those of the great conquistadors themselves. Where conquistadors subdued bodies, *Historia general* was a means to capture their souls. In his own famous words, Sahagún would compare his work to that of a doctor who needs to understand an

ailment before providing a remedy (1: xiii). In this case, the ailment was idolatry. In practical terms, Sahagún's catalog intended to aid mendicant missionaries and other Church officials in recognizing and profiling Nahua behavior (Leon Portilla 112). Retrospectively speaking, such a resource would have been extremely useful in the early inquisitions of indigenous leaders such as Cristobal.

Unfortunately, neither Father Diego Díaz nor Juan Zumárraga would have anything similar to *Historia general* at their disposal when building their cases against Cristobal and other indigenous leaders. At that time, a young Bernardino de Sahagún had not yet begun his famous investigations into Nahua culture. Having recently acquired his knowledge of Nahuatl, he participated in Juan de Zumárraga's episcopal Inquisition as an interpreter in cases against Indian idolaters. There is no indication that Sahagún was directly involved in Cristobal's trial. However, he did participate in the case against Don Carlos Ometochtzin of Texcoco (Leon-Portilla 83-84). The fact that he participated in Zumárraga's fierce crusade before writing *Historia general* is a compelling biographical detail that should not be overlooked. It would be appropriate to keep his experience as an Inquisition interpreter in mind when considering *Historia general*, instead of focusing exclusively on his anachronistic role as ethnographer. It would not be farfetched to imagine that the frustrations inherent in Sahagún's role as an interpreter in these trials may have played a part in the later elaboration of his life project. The production of such a document would provide a frame of reference by which clergymen could measure not only how the Nahua behaved, but also what they were willing to reveal about their behavior. Surely, had Diego Díaz had such a catalog at his disposal, it would have aided in deciphering the midnight ritual he and the other Spaniards witnessed on Quasimodo Sunday. Fortunately for those of us who are privileged enough to have both texts at our disposal, this comparison is now possible.

By following Sahagún's calculations of the Aztec calendar, we can deduce that the Quasimodo Sunday in question (in this case, April 13th, 1539) coincided with the beginning of the 5th month of the Aztec calendar, Tóxcatl (1: 55). *Historia general* describes the celebration of this month in great detail, and notes that it tends to fall very close to Easter. Several aspects of Sahagún's description parallel the testimonies provided by witnesses summoned in the case against Cristobal, which lend themselves particularly well to unraveling further possible evidence of his hallucinogen use.

Firstly, let us consider the similarities between Cristobal's trial (*proceso*) and the embodiment of the god Tezcatlipoca as described in Sahágun's Tóxcatl entry. Both, as we will see, wear flower garlands around their necks while holding a flower in each hand. Secondly, the text describes the corresponding social ritual of singing, dancing, call and response between the embodied Tezcatlipoca and the crowd.

Proceso:

> …Llegados vieron que venía el dicho Xpobal muy desatinado y fuera de seso, con una guirnalda de rosas y dos súchiles en las manos, bailando y cantando, y dos indios que le traían del brazo para que no se cayese, y mucha cantidad de gente del pueblo había salido á las voces y cánticas que el dicho Xpobal traía…(González Obregón 166)

Historia general:

> …dende á un año [el hombre que representaba a Tezcatlipoca] andaba por todo el pueblo muy ataviado con flores en la mano, y con personas que le acompañaban: saludaba á los que topaba graciosamente: todos sabían que era aquel la imágen de *Tezcatlipoca*, y se postraban delante de él, y le adoraban donde quiera que lo encontraban. (1: 56)

> …después de haberle ataviado de ricos atavíos, poníanle una guirnalda de flores que llaman *izquixóchitl*, y un sartal largo de las mismas colgado desde el hombro al sobaco…(1: 102)

There are definite symbolic similarities between the two. One aspect of the ritual described by Sahagún is a description of the use of "cañas de humo" during the Tóxcatl celebration: "…Y para que supiese tomar y traer las cañas de humo y las flores, según que se acostumbra entre los señores y palacios; enseñable a ir chupando el humo, y oliendo las flores…" (134). "Cañas de humo" appear frequently in Sahagún's text. Fernando Ortiz has surveyed Sahagún's text and found associations between these "cañas de humo" and the powerful hallucinogen *picietl* (176). *Picietl*, a variety of wild tobacco, was one of the most powerful hallucinogens consumed in Nahua culture. It has received relatively little attention because of its association with present-day tobacco (Elferink 430). Even though the Spaniards who testified against Cristobal do not mention these artifacts, his servants include descriptions of *humos* in their accounts of his idolatrous behavior.

Whether it was *picietl* or a combination of alcohol and *ololiuqui*, peyote or *teonanácatl*, the description given by Alonso de Liñán of Cristobal's intoxication suggests the possibility that perhaps the *cacique* was under the influence of hallucinogens. The description of Cristobal's erratic behavior is very similar to hallucinogenic mushroom rituals described in various segments of Sahagún's text:

Proceso:

> …Antes [Cristobal] cantaba y bailaba más y *decía muchas cosas y desatinos*, a las veces cantando, otras veces llorando y bailando, y el dicho padre Diego Díaz le mandó encerrar con el otro hermano suyo sobredicho, *los cuales estuvieron*

> *cantando y llorando y riendo y dando voces y diciendo desatinos hasta casi el día*. (166, my empasis)

Historia general:

> Aquellos honguillos los comían con miel, y cuando ya se comenzaban a escalentar con ellos, comenzaban á bailar, algunos cantaban, otros lloraban porque ya estaban borrachos con los honguillos, y algunos no querían cantar, sino sentábanse en sus aposentos, y estábanse allí como pensativos. (2: 366)

There is also an excerpt in Sahagún's writings regarding the Chichimeca people and their use of hallucinogenic mushrooms that contains similar themes:

> …Ellos mismos descubrieron, y usaron primero la raíz que llaman *peiotl*, y los que la comían y tomaban, la usaban en lugar de vino, y lo mismo hacían de los que llaman *nanácatl* que son los hongos malos que emborrachan también como el vino; y se juntaban en un llano después de haberlo bebido, donde bailaban y cantaban de noche y de día á su placer, y esto el primer día, porque el siguiente, lloraban todos mucho, y decían que se limpiaban y lavaban los ojos y caras con sus lágrimas. (3: 118)

These examples highlight the similarities between Sahagún's descriptions of hallucinogen-induced behavior and the testimonies in Cristobal's case. The general descriptions of the Tóxcatl celebration in *Historia general* manifested in the flesh by way of Cristobal's intoxicated display. Like the imagined hypothetical subjects in Sahagún's *Historia general*, Cristobal's behavior reveals that he is under the influence of psychoactive substances that have quite different effects than those commonly associated with alcohol. The language used to describe these states in both texts demonstrates that the discourse of alcohol—a drug with which Spaniards were much more familiar—eclipsed and neutralized the perception and detection of other intoxicants.

Furthermore, the focus on idolatry and inebriation also explains why it would take almost another century for anti-hallucinogen discourses to fully develop both within the context of the Inquisition (the edict against peyote of 1620) and in the writings of physicians and theologians.

Based on the testimonies against them, Cristobal, his wife Catalina, and his brother Martín were all convicted of idolatry. On October 12th 1539, they were taken from their prison cells and forced to walk barefoot to the main Cathedral in Mexico City, where they stood before the congregation during the entirety of Mass while holding lit candles in their bare hands. The next day, they were taken through the streets so that they could confess their sins in public and received one hundred lashings. After this penitence, Cristobal and Martín were both sentenced to work in the silver mines. Martín received a sentence of two years of servitude while Cristobal would serve three, in chains (González Obregón 171-172).

The inquisitorial records described here are just two examples of early episcopal Indian inquisitions that contain evidence of undetected Nahua hallucinogen use. The emphasis in both trials was the inebriation of the accused and the collection and destruction of surviving idols in their possession. The public nature of the punishment in each case was intended to illustrate to the Indian public of New Spain the dangers of continuing their idolatrous behavior. Nevertheless, it is clear that such measures had little effect on curbing the persistence of Nahua rites and religious expressions. By 1571, Indians were exempt from the jurisdiction of the Holy Office, and the bishopric handled their transgressions. While different judicial bodies technically governed Indians and non-Indians in the seventeenth century, the hybridization of consumption habits between the castes became more intricate.

Hallucinogen Use Across Castes: Syncretism and Witchcraft in New Spain

While the sixteenth-century Inquisition trials examined previously offer plenty of insight into the religious hallucinogenic customs of the Nahua, they focus solely on the heretical intoxicated behavior of *indios*. To better understand how Nahua traditions persisted, evolved, and changed during the colonial period, it is necessary to acknowledge the extensive cross-caste interactions that surrounded traditional Nahua hallucinogens. These exchanges were directly related to the religious syncretism that developed in New Spain. Scholars have yet to fully explore the extent and implication of this hybrid culture of consumption. Comprehensive studies in ethnobotany and history such as those of De la Garza and the work of Richard Evans Schultes and Peter Furst focus on the continuity of indigenous traditions. These studies successfully illustrate the resilience of indigenous hallucinogenic customs and their present-day syncretic qualities but tend to sidestep the topic of intercaste use. While subversive religious activities were undoubtedly a vital dimension of hallucinogen consumption during the colonial period, seventeenth-century Inquisition trials demonstrate that Indians and mixed-blood castes shared these practices across caste lines. The Inquisition records of the AGN include cases of hallucinogen consumption implicating all the castes, including *españoles, mestizos, mulatos, negros,* and *chinos*. The diversity of peoples that came together in New Spain developed a complex syncretic culture of consumption strongly grounded in the traditions of the surviving Mesoamerican population. Since sacred hallucinogenic plants played a central role in the Mesoamerican religious system, it is not surprising that the customs and traditions surrounding these substances would be significant factors in the religious syncretism that characterized the shifting belief systems of the colony.

Richard Greenleaf distinguishes between two main schools of thought in scholarship regarding the extent of religious syncretism in New Spain. There are those scholars who propagate the idea of an organic syncretism, in which the many beliefs of Amerindians, Europeans, and Africans found common ground but were ultimately controlled by the Catholic Church. The other school frames the relationship differently, proposing that the preservation of Mesoamerican values and practices occurred under the thin guise of Spanish forms of worship but that actual syncretism was minimal ("Persistence of Native Values" 352). If we are to consider this debate with regard to hallucinogenic plants, Inquisition records seem to support the former rather than the latter argument. Although surviving Nahua peoples undoubtedly engaged in subversive behaviors as they fought to preserve Mesoamerican belief systems, the diversity of castes that were jointly implicated in hallucinogen-related Inquisition trials is an indication of significant inter-caste religious influence.

Inquisition trial manuscripts from the AGN suggest that on the one hand, surviving Nahua communities transmitted the metaphysical foundations of their pre-Columbian belief systems through the perpetuation of traditional hallucinogen use. On the other, the demand for divinatory practices from European and African peoples living in the colony influenced the practices of surviving Amerindians who possessed knowledge of hallucinogenic plants. The common ground where these many cultural forces met was the universal underlying concept of divination. Records indicate that while caste and creed may have divided the wildly different peoples living together in New Spain, they all shared a thirst for divinatory practices. This demand for the occult by way of divination was the result of unanswered questions, doubts, and uncertainties that went unquenched by the teachings of the Catholic Church or other sanctioned means.

The school of thought that supports the idea of an organic religious syncretism correlates with James Lockhart's work on postconquest Nahua history. Based on Nahuatl language sources, Lockhart outlines the evolution of religious customs that developed amongst the Nahua as they adapted to the Catholic tradition. In his view, it is problematic to reduce the process of syncretism to the simplified paradigm of Nahua resistance versus Spanish efforts of Catholic conversion. Primary Nahuatl language sources demonstrate that there was a far more nuanced reaction to Catholic indoctrination than this model provides. Lockhart postulates that the preexisting structures of the Nahua religious system facilitated the advent of the Catholic faith. The Nahua were accustomed to the long-established convention amongst Mesoamerican communities of adopting the gods of the conqueror with the understanding that they could also maintain their traditions and beliefs (203). Furthermore, communities fully embraced religious hybridity. For Nahua communities, the Christian tradition was not, as from the Spanish perspective, naturally at odds with their preconquest religious system, and they could, with careful processes of accommodation and negotiation, absorb Catholicism into the spiritual life of the community.

The religious hybridity embraced by the Nahua was not the ideal for the authorities of the Catholic Church. Undeniably, there were instances of tolerance amongst many Franciscans and Dominicans that allowed for newly baptized Nahua to leave their pagan rituals over time. This tolerance waned as the indoctrination project progressed and was steadily replaced by an urgency to eradicate heretical behavior in all of its identifiable forms, as we see in the extirpation efforts of the seventeenth century (González Martinez 91). Furthermore, the main problem for the clergy was not that newly baptized Indians rejected the Catholic faith but rather that they preserved their traditional belief systems in tandem (92). As we can see from Lockhart's studies

of original Nahuatl source texts, traditional Mexican hallucinogens played a role in the resilience of this hybridity.

Lockhart very briefly mentions the topic of *ololiuqui* and peyote in his study on postconquest Nahua history in the context of the postconquest resilience of Nahua religious customs. Apparently, it was not unusual to find peyote and *ololiuqui* as offerings at Christian altars (259). Naomi Quezada indicates, furthermore, that hallucinogens were associated with Catholic figures; peyote was associated with the Holy Trinity and Jesus Christ, *ololiuqui* with the Virgin Mary (*Enfermedad y Maleficio* 48). This hybridity of Nahua practices and Catholic symbols demonstrates the important role of hallucinogenic plants in the religious syncretism that developed in New Spain. Baptized Nahua, who had embraced Christianity, continued to infuse hallucinogenic traditions into their newly acquired Catholic faith. An example of how this manifested in everyday situations is apparent in the religious undertones of the 1650 Inquisition accusation against Ana Calderón, transcribed in Chapter 4 of this study. As we will see, the Nahua medicine man that treated Ana's illness with hallucinogens navigated both Christian and Nahua belief systems simultaneously. Nevertheless, Catholic clergy categorized the syncretism embraced by the Nahua as witchcraft, heresy, and idolatry. The association between pagan Nahua traditions and witchcraft, however, was not a phenomenon exclusively propagated by Church condemnation. In fact, the very same rhetoric that condemned Nahua customs by aligning them with witchcraft had the adverse effect of legitimizing them in the unsanctioned realm.

The topic of witchcraft and its social function in the New World has been the focus of several excellent studies, many which rely on evidence from Inquisition trials. For example, Laura Lewis uses Inquisition trials to explore witchcraft, caste, and the social and political

implications of inter-caste relationships of power in New Spain. Milena M. Hurtado et al. approach the topic through a close reading of the 1667 Inquisition process of a Catalina Miranda, a woman tried and convicted of witchcraft. These studies have helped to shed light on the pervasive influence of witchcraft discourses and traditional hallucinogens on colonial society.

Members of all castes seemed to recognize the inherent power of Nahua rituals due to their proximity to the preternatural. This power was transferable based on approximations to Indianness and was available to anyone who engaged in heretical activities related to pre-Columbian superstition. Lewis refers to the case of Francisco del Castillo Maldonado, a Spanish corregidor who was accused, amongst other sorcerous activities, of consuming both peyote and *ololiuqui* (106). As both a Spaniard and official representative of the Crown, Francisco's case demonstrates the level of influence that Nahua ritual forms could have on non-Indian castes. Although the Inquisition eventually tried him for these behaviors, he had clearly benefited from his proximity to Indianness. The sacredness of peyote and *ololiuqui* in the Nahua belief system contributed to his perceived power.

Use of Peyote and *Ololiuqui* in Seventeenth Century New Spain

The black market for hallucinogens that developed throughout the seventeenth century in New Spain was a hybrid of European demands for divinatory aids and pre-Columbian religious and medicinal practices. Lewis has pointed out that between Indians and Peninsular Spaniards, each of whom represented an extreme of the colonial social spectrum, mixed blood castes acted as catalysts for the integration of traditional Amerindian practices, "while simultaneously reaffirming social hierarchy" (Lewis 8). The same applied to the interactions and exchanges inherent in the black market of witchcraft. Angélica Morales Sarabia discusses this point in relation to domestic peyote use on behalf of, mulato women (*mulatas*) in seventeenth century

New Spain. According to her observations women played a significant role in intercaste use due to the nature of their interaction within domestic spaces (32). Like Lewis and Morales Sarabía, I have found that Inquisition trials reveal a great deal about the patterns of divinatory and medicinal hallucinogen use in seventeenth century New Spain.

A close reading of seventeenth-century Inquisition case titles can shed light on caste relations and negotiations of power in the realm of the unsanctioned. The range of dynamics in these cases demonstrates the extent of religious syncretism that affected hallucinogen use. It also shows that divination and medicinal uses of hallucinogens were not always mutually exclusive. Although divination was a primary part of the profile of traditional Nahua *ticitls*, the motives for divination in these cases (search for missing persons, livestock, revealing the future, etc.) were akin to the treasure hunting and wealth accumulation spells that had long been associated with the occult in Europe (Tausiet, *Abracadabra Omnipotens* 39-132). Once this particular demand for divinatory use was transferred from the Spanish to the American landscape and infused with Nahua tradition, these spells were in many cases replaced by the consumption of hallucinogens. Divinatory acts in the Spanish witchcraft tradition became hallucinogenic acts in New Spain.

There were a great variety of hallucinogenic rituals employed by Nahua medicine men to treat ailments during the colonial period. Based on the texts of Spanish writers living in New Spain from the sixteenth and seventeenth century, Mercedes de la Garza has summarized the many themes that consistently appear in descriptions of these rituals. This model, which coincides with the observations of Ruiz de Alarcón and De la Serna, is a helpful tool for deciphering the titles of Inquisition trials:

> Se fijaba un día propicio, de acuerdo con lo que se pretendía saber: la causa de enfermedad, sitio donde se hayaban cosas robadas causante del hechizo, paradero de una

> mujer adúltera o de una persona extraviada...Luego el *paini* [*ticitl]* se encerraba solo y en silencio en el aposento y bebía el alucinógeno, preparado por una persona ritualmente pura. (68)

Ololiuqui and peyote, two of the substances most condemned by the aforementioned clergymen Hernando Ruiz de Alarcón and Jacinto de la Serna, are the two hallucinogens that appear most frequently in the records of the AGN. In many cases both herbs appear together. The divinatory potential of *ololiuqui* and peyote made these herbs a commodity for European and African peoples during the colony. The available cases involving *ololiuqui* in the AGN are relatively limited, but they do suggest that the divinatory uses of this herb seem to have overshadowed its medicinal properties, at least from the perspective of the Inquisition. The following are examples of cases involving *ololiuqui*:

> *Cristobal de alzate hizo tomar el ololuique, para saber de unos animales perdidos*. Atzcapotzalco. (Inq vol. 1552, exp. sn, f 200, 1626)
>
> *Testificación contra da. Maria de Castro, y un indio que tomo el oliuluque para adivinar en donde estaba la hija de la primera y asi lo adivino. Mexico* (Inq vol. 342, exp. 15, f 15,1622)
>
> *Proceso contra da. Maria de luna, porque toma la yerba ololiuqui, para saber lo pasado y lo venidero*. 1690 (Inq vol. 435, exp. 6, f 12 A, 1690) [55]

These cases exemplify the hybridized culture of consumption that developed in New Spain and retains both the pre-Columbian shamanic traits as well as the demands of a colonial public influenced by a European/Spanish culture of consumption. The case of Cristobal de Alzate contains a reoccurring theme that appears in many Inquisition transcripts regarding *ololiuqui* and

[55] References to inquisition documents are based on two databases: My own compilation of peyote and *ololiuqui* trials and the digital catalog of AGN records developed by Linda Arnold.

other hallucinogens: the urgency to find missing or stolen livestock. The identity and caste of exactly who consumed the *ololiuqui* on his behalf is not clear from this entry. While it would also not be safe to assume, without a detailed survey of the case, that it was a Nahua *ticitl* who performed the ceremony, the divinatory theme of this use contains both Nahua and European traits. Regarding Nahua influence, the motive is consistent with descriptions of Nahua rituals such as those described by Hernández of Nahua priests who consumed *ololiuqui* to *tener respuestas a sus dudas* (78). The case of Maria de Castro is a second example of this, also aligning with De la Garza's description of the use of hallucinogens to find missing persons. Maria de Castro's case is also an explicit example of inter-caste hallucinogen use. De Castro went to a *ticitl,* who consumed the substance on her behalf, to answer a divinatory question regarding her missing daughter. The case of Maria de la Luna, meanwhile, hints at the expanding scope of traditional hallucinogen use amongst the castes throughout the seventeenth century. Here Hernández's previously mentioned description of *ololiuqui* use by Mexica priests is applied to a colonial subject outside the Indian caste. Maria de la Luna consumes the *ololiuqui* herself, to know things both past and future (*lo pasado y lo venidero*).

The earliest mention of peyote I have found in the Inquisition records of the AGN, arguably the most recognized of the Amerindian hallucinogens, is the 1566 accusation of the Tomas de Lorrio. This Spanish man was accused of speaking about peyote use, which was apparently prohibited (Inq vol. 5, exp. 14, f 1,1566).[56] Following this early evidence of small-scale prohibition, there is another large gap in the available references. A formal edict recognizing and prohibiting the consumption of peyote would not appear until 1620.[57] Based on

[56] This was before the establishment of the Holy Office, when the Bishopric was responsible for conducting inquisitions. This prohibition was likely a local mandate.
[57] See Irving, Leonard, "Peyote and the Mexican Inquisition, 1620" for a transcription and translation of the edict. Quezada cites an earlier edict of 1617 that condemned peyote in relation to withcraft and divinatory acts

the scarcity of textual evidence of hallucinogen consumption before this increase in cases, one might wrongly assume that hallucinogenic plant use was uncommon during the early colonial period. Given its continual use by Nahua peoples for ceremonial purposes, this was evidently not the case. It is more plausible that hallucinogen consumption persisted during this time, when it began to spread amongst the castes.

True to its status as the most recognized and vilified hallucinogen of the colonial period, peyote appears in a comparatively high number of Inquisition transcripts. Since the Indian caste fell outside the jurisdiction of the Inquisition at the end of the sixteenth century, the cases I will examine here are not intended to illustrate traditional Nahua practices. Rather, they reveal a great deal about the syncretism that resulted from the clash between European/Spanish and Amerindian/Nahua cultures of consumption. In these cases, we do not see a full illustration of indigenous practices but rather detect vestiges of those practices and how they intermingled with the wants and desires of colonial subjects. The aforementioned pre-Columbian duality of spiritual and medicinal healing begins to split, as medicinal uses were eclipsed by the sensationalist rhetoric against divinatory practices that fueled the prohibition of peyote and other sacred plants. However, while these cases do not offer great insight into Nahua practices, the abundant descriptions of peyote amongst other castes demonstrate that its use persisted, expanded, and adjusted to new market demands during the colonial period.

The following examples demonstrate that the divinatory uses of peyote seemed to have increasingly overshadowed its medicinal properties as New Spain developed. This could be the result of a few different factors. One possibility is that therapeutic use persisted throughout the colonial period but did not appear as frequently or explicitly in Inquisition documents. This

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(*Enfermedad y Maleficio* 46). The fact that three years later a more thoroguh and explicit edict was produced demonstrates the growing anxieties on behalf of the Church regarding peyote.

possibility is rooted in the gray area that resulted from the aforementioned dual status of hallucinogens as both potential medicine and demonic inebriant from the Spanish perspective. We can see an example of this gray area in two particular Inquisition documents. Both cases are from 1621, scarcely a year after the publication and initial dissemination of the edict against peyote. In the first case, a Spanish clergyman from Michoacán solicits clarification from the Holy Office regarding the parameters of peyote prohibition and whether medicinal use on behalf of someone from the Indian caste is a punishable offense or not, while the second is a general inquiry concering the medicinal use of the plant:

> *Carta de Antonio [Meneses] dando a conocer que dio la lectura y publicación del edicto de fe, y pregunta si el que un indio enfermo usara el peyote como remedio, estás faltando en algo, pues no lo hizo con intensión y sólo como medicamentos. San Johan Parangaricutio.* (Inq vol. 1579 A, exp. 73, f 1, 1621)
>
> *Consulta sobre si se puede tomar la raiz de peyote como medicina. michoacan*. (Inq vol. 486, exp. 77, f 417, 1621)

The wording in the first case title suggests that beyond establishing an inquiry, this is a petition to exonerate the individual based on the combination of his caste (*Indio*) and intention (medicinal use).[58]

Questions like the prior examples pertaining to medicinal use are far and few between in the Inquisitional record of the AGN. The cases that do appear frequently in the record are those addressing the use of peyote based on its divinatory properties. Like ololiuqui, this included the search for missing persons and items of value. Here we see a few examples:

> *Declaración de Pedro Despinossa sobre una mujer llamada Juana y por otro nombre*

[58] This case is a concrete example of how the scrutiny of the Catholic Church towards hallucinogens for spiritual and physical healing played out. The full text of this document has not yet been transcribed or examined. It is worthy of future study as an example of how these dichotomies were handled by the Holy Office.

Jacinta, por haber bebido peyote y haber visto a unos vejitos, y preguntarles por la ubicación de su esposo ausente. San Luis Potosí. (Inq vol. 1573, exp. 90, 1626)

Dos cartas de fray Rodrigo Alonso, calificador del Santo Oficio en Texcoco, solicitando licencia para absolver a una mujer que molio peyote para unos hombres que buscaban minas. (supersticiones.) Texcoco. (Inq vol. 373, exp. 3, 1631)

Información contra Juan, negro, y su mujer Isabel, por haber tomado el peyote para averiguar de un hurto. Valladolid. (Inq vol. 346, exp. 11,1623.)

Denuncia de Antonio de Ibarra en contra de un chino esclavo de Martin de Aguilus y un mulato por beber peyote para descubrir las cosas robadas. (Inq vol.1568 B, exp. 328, 1656)

Información contra Magdalena, mulata libre, por haber tomado el peyote para saber si estaba preñada. Cuautla en las Amilpas. (Inq vol. 302, exp. 8 G, 1614)

The first example, as demonstrated previously with cases involving *ololiuqui*, involves the search for missing persons. In this case Juana/Jacinta took peyote and encountered two elders who revealed the location of her wayward husband. Fray Rodrigo's 1631 letters (the first case mentioned above) asking to absolve a woman for grinding peyote on behalf of men in search of viable mining locations illustrates an important dimension of hallucinogen use in the colony. In this case, a woman has prepared a traditional hallucinogen (peyote) for prospectors, not to cure a physical or spiritual malady, but rather to aid in their search for riches. The search for riches and "hurtos" appears frequently in the record, as in the case of Juan and Isabel. A similar example that describes the search for a missing item is the case of the unnamed *chino esclavo* and the *mulato*. These men search for a stolen silver platter, which was apparently recovered thanks to their hallucinogen-induced sleuth work. The legal caste designation of these two men

demonstrates how hallucinogens use frequently included non-Indian castes and intercaste consumption. The case of the *chino esclavo* is particularly compelling, as there are very few cases in the record involving hallucinogen use by this particular social group. This individual was likely of Filipino or Chinese origin. Peter Gerhard indicates that a community of Filipinos settled in Acapulco in 1567 (25). Jonathan Israel also notes that many individuals of Asian origin came to the New World as slaves to Spaniards throughout the seventeenth century (75). There are also indications that peyote had made it to the Philippines as early as 1621. In a folio of correspondence from the authorities of the Philippines and the Holy Office in Mexico City, amongst trials, accusations, and documents, is an explicit mention of peyote and the edict against it. How and under what circumstances the little Mexican desert cactus made it across the pacific, how it was consumed, and how Filipino communities may have adopted its use is warrant of further inquiry. (Inq. vol. 336, exp1, 1621).

The third case of the unfortunate Magdalena of Cuautla reveals how traditional use of hallucinogens translated when adopted by non-indigenous communities in the colonial period. In this case, Magdalena, a *mulata* woman, consumed peyote as a means to discover whether she was pregnant or not. On one hand, the use is divinatory, akin to traditional use in the sense that Magdalena clearly is looking for answers. On the other, her inquiry is medicinal. I further explore the case of Magdalena in Chapter 4.

These cases exemplify early patterns of nuanced hallucinogen use in New Spain across the castes and display the many threads of Nahua and European tradition that manifested in psychoactive plant use during the colony. In Nahua customs, *ololiuqui* and peyote could reveal the nature of one's illness or detect whether an ailment was the result of a curse. In addition to these divinatory revelations related to spiritual and physical wellbeing, there were also those uses

that could be described as "practical." These include the ability to reveal stolen or lost items or missing people and to show the future. These uses align more directly with European traditions related to witchcraft.

Conclusion: The Learned and the Common, the Medicinal and the Divinatory, Botany and Belief

This chapter has demonstrated the many intersecting factors that contributed to the creation of a singularly New Spanish culture of psychoactive plant consumption between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. We see here the continuity between the discourses of learned Spaniards in medicine and theology and how they evolved in the first 150 years of the colonial project. While weariness towards Indian idolatry shaped the anti-hallucinogen discourses of Spanish writers in the sixteenth century, the potential of Amerindian *materia medica* allowed room for a certain degree of ambiguity towards sacred Nahua plants. By the seventeenth century, most of what was written about these plants had expanded tremendously, but the perspective had also shifted away from the medicinal side towards a discourse of demonic divination. In Inquisition trials, we see how these changes affected the categorization of trials against peyote and *ololiuqui* consumers. In the early years of conquest and colonization, the discourses of demonology and alcoholic intoxication also profoundly affected the conceptualization of sacred plants and associated Nahua ritual forms. The language of inebriation framed learned discourses and Inquisition trials alike. While learned authors increasingly awoke to the importance and implicit threat of hallucinogens in the colony, the diverse population of common folk awoke to them as well, but in the capacity of consumers.

In Mexico City, the primary focus of the following chapter, the syncretism between Amerindian and European cultures of consumption would become even more complex as the

colonial project advanced with the ever-increasing mestizaje and the arrival of African slaves. Attitudes regarding hallucinogens, divinatory aids and medicine varied considerably from caste to caste and across the diverse landscapes of New Spain. The Spanish systems of morality and medicinal knowledge were upset by the consumption desires of Spanish commoners themselves, who found in New World hallucinogens the same tempting dark arts available for consumption across Europe and in Spain. Furthermore, those who were inclined to practice witchcraft found in Nahua hallucinogenic rituals new sources of power derived from their proximity to the perceived supernatural powers inherent in "Indianness" (Lewis 105). The appetite of the increasingly diverse population for divinatory and medicinal purposes led to a disruption in the power structures of New Spain. By embracing hallucinogens, Spanish subjects and mixed blood castes not only challenged Church authority but also placed value on Indian forms of knowledge. In Chapter 4, the case of Ana de Calderón demonstrates how these values were negotiated with regard to Church authority, the consumption habits of the public, and the surviving medicinal practices of Nahua *ticitls*.

Chapter Four

The Herb Spoke From My Breast: A Seventeenth-Century Case of Traditional Hallucinogen Use in New Spain

In Chapter 3, I demonstrate that sixteenth and seventeenth-century Inquisition records are particularly helpful in shedding light on the complex culture of hallucinogen consumption that arose from the encounter between Spanish, Nahua, and African peoples. Traditional practices involving Mexican hallucinogens persisted amongst native communities, while new hybrid forms of consumption fueled cross-caste relationships. These relationships involved the exchange of medicinal and divinatory knowledge. Throughout this study, I have demonstrated how the dual role of hallucinogens in pre-Colombian Nahua society was forcedly split by European categorizations into the dichotomy of medicine and divinatory aid. As demonstrated in Chapter 3, colonial authorities strictly rejected the divinatory qualities of these plants from the onset, based on associations with sorcery and witchcraft. Medicinal use of psychoactive substances, on the other hand, had a more complex trajectory in the eyes of Spanish colonizers. What started as relative ambivalence on behalf of sixteenth-century learned men who cataloged New World *materia medica* (Francisco de Hernández, Bernardino de Sahagún) became full fledged condemnation in the eyes of seventeenth-century clergy (Hernando Ruiz de Alarcón, Jacinto de la Serna). Despite this condemnation and the disapproval of the Holy Office of the Inquisition, members of different castes became active agents in generating and propagating an unsanctioned market for traditional hallucinogens.

Most of the Inquisition records available in the AGN (Archivo General de la Nación) that describe peyote and *ololiuqui* focus specifically on divinatory use, while cases of medicinal use

are few and far between. According to surviving Inquisition records, accused peyote and *ololiuqui* consumers used traditional hallucinogens primarily as a means to solve mysteries. Usually, these mysteries involved the unknown location of riches or people. Hidden treasure, the location of mines, and the recovery of stolen goods were common motivations for divinatory hallucinogen use. Morales Sarabia (32) also points out that common themes for women involved locating the whereabouts of gallivanting spouses or wayward offspring, as we saw with the case of Jacinta in Chapter 3 (Inq vol. 1573, exp. 90,1626). *Españoles, mestizos, mulatos, chinos*, and *indios* of both genders were implicated in these accusations and trials. Cases of this nature fit very neatly into the category of the strictly divinatory, as they do not suggest, at least on the surface, any medicinal qualities of the sacred plant. This does not imply that medicinal use of Nahua hallucinogens waned during the colonial period. The emphasis on the divinatory is likely more an indication of the anxieties of inquisitors rather than a true reflection of the consumption habits of the public. There are many cases that exemplify the persistence of medicinal use. In order to uncover these uses, it is sometimes necessary to read between the lines of Inquisition records that at first glance seem to focus on the divinatory. Through this reading it becomes clear that in addition to using Nahua sacred plants as divinatory aids, Spaniards, Africans, and mixed-blood castes also engaged in traditional pre-Columbian consumption habits. These included healing rituals in which the divinatory and the medicinal were one.

Evidence of the underlying resilience of the medicine/divinatory aid duality that characterized pre-Columbian hallucinogen consumption is apparent in several Inquisition cases. One example is the case of Magdalena, the free mulato woman who, as we saw in Chapter 3, took peyote to find out if she was pregnant (Inq vol. 302, exp. 8G, 1614). The formal accusation against Magdalena characterizes her peyote use as a prohibited divinatory act (related to

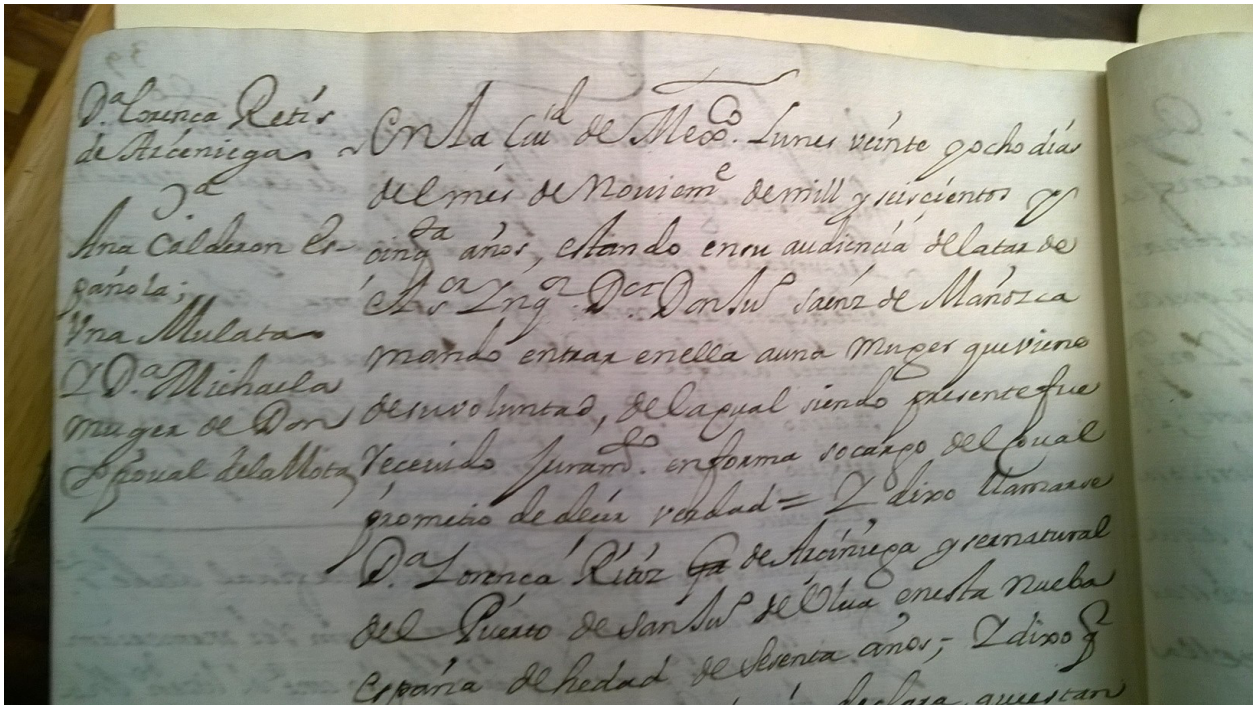
witchcraft) without relating it in anyway to her physical, medical situation. If we consider this aspect of her case in comparison to the aforementioned cases of divinatory use, differences begin to appear. Noemí Quezada reminds us that during the colonial period, Nahua curanderos continued to use hallucinogens primarily as a diagnostic tool (*Enfermedad y Maleficio* 46). Magdalena was in need of a diagnosis for her possible pregnancy. Furthermore, Although Madgalena's accusation was framed primarily as divinatory, in this respect it was also medicinal. This demonstrates that this practice persisted, even as it was adopted and possibly altered over time.

A close consideration of a seventeenth-century Inquisition case will shed light on the complex social dynamics that revolved around this dual hallucinogen use during the colonial period. This chapter consists of the transcription of Inquisition testimonies from 1650 that accuse three women—Ana Calderón, Michaela de la Mota and an anonymous *mulata*—of soliciting the services of a Nahua medicine man. What follows, in essence, is the story of women who consumed hallucinogens under the treatment of an Indian man, both as medicine and divinatory aids. This case demonstrates that although divinatory use may have appeared more frequently in the Inquisition record, traditional Mexican hallucinogens maintained their pre-Columbian duality throughout the seventeenth century.

I came across this case amongst the loose folios of the Inquisition records in the AGN in Mexico City. It has not been previously published, annotated, or transcribed. I have taken the liberty of modernizing some of the spelling for comprehension, as well as writing out some of the shorthand. The transcription is based solely on my photographs taken of the original text at the AGN on two separate research trips in 2015. The two testimonies that make up the original document, that of Lorenza Retíz de Arceniega and her daughter, María Hurtado de Arceniega,

are nearly identical. I transcribed both to maintain the integrity and form of the original document.

My transcription follows the example of many excellent studies that use Inquisition trials to shed light on witchcraft, caste, and traditional medicine in New Spain. The work of Noemí Quezada, Laura Lewis, and Hurtado et al. are a few examples. Morales Sarabia's work is particularly enlightening with regards to hallucinogens. Her close consideration of the trial of Petrona Babtista, a mulato woman accused of peyote use in Michoacán, highlights the social implications of hallucinogen use amongst mixed-blood castes, as well as the role of women in the proliferation of peyote use in the domestic sphere (32). The novelty of Ana Calderón's case lies in the nature of the implicated caste. The hallucinogen consumption described in this accusation involves mostly Spaniards, some of which represent the highest rungs of society in New Spain.



Accusation (Introduction)

Doña Lorenza Retíz de Arceniega Contra Ana Calderón, Española, una Mulata y Doña Michaela Mujer de Don Cristóbal de la Mota

En la ciudad de México lunes veinte y ocho días del mes de noviembre de mil seiscientos y cincuenta años, habiendo en su audiencia delante de el Sr Inquisidor Don Juan Sáenz de Mañozca mando entrar en ella una mujer que vino de su voluntad, de la que siendo presente fue recibido juramento en forma so cargo del cual prometió de decir verdad y dijo llamarse Doña Lorenza Retíz de Arceniega y ser natural del puerto de san Juan de Ulúa[59] en esta Nueva España de edad de sesenta años y dijo: que por descargo de conciencia declara que estando abra quince días a lo que se quiere acordar de visita con Luisa de Calderón que estaba enferma en cama en la misma casa donde vive esta declarante en la calle de Espíritu Santo frontero donde hoy vive el alcalde de corte Don Pedro de Oroz[60] y aunque había gente no se reparo más que en dos hijas de la enferma llamadas María y Ana de Colmenares que no sabe si estuvieron atentas a lo que dijo, y doña María Hurtado de Arceniega, su hija, entró Ana Calderón hermana de la enferma y por haberla visto había dos años flaquísima y con muchos achaques le dijo esta declarante que se holgaba de verla tan buena, gorda y hermosa, a la que respondió: Señora los doctores me mataban, Dios le de salud a un indio que me dio a beber una yerba, la cual así que la bebí por la mañana me suspendí sin cerrar los ojos y me vi en la gloria donde vide a la Virgen Santísima con el niño Jesús en los brazos vuelta de lado jugando con él y luego volví la cabeza y vide a Dios Señor con muchos ángeles delante muy lindos y muy gorditos jugando de unos con otros delante de él y todo lo que vide era muy lindo y no dormía que los ojos los tenia abiertos y la yerba me dijo detrás del pecho (que la oyó hablar) bien puedes estar contenta que ahora sanarás y que se

[59] The port of San Juan de Ulua was located in Vera Cruz Nueva, on the gulf coast of Mexico (Gerhard 361).
[60] See Bakewell for a reference to Don Pedro de Oroz is referenced as "Alcalde de Crimen de la Audiencia de México" (198).

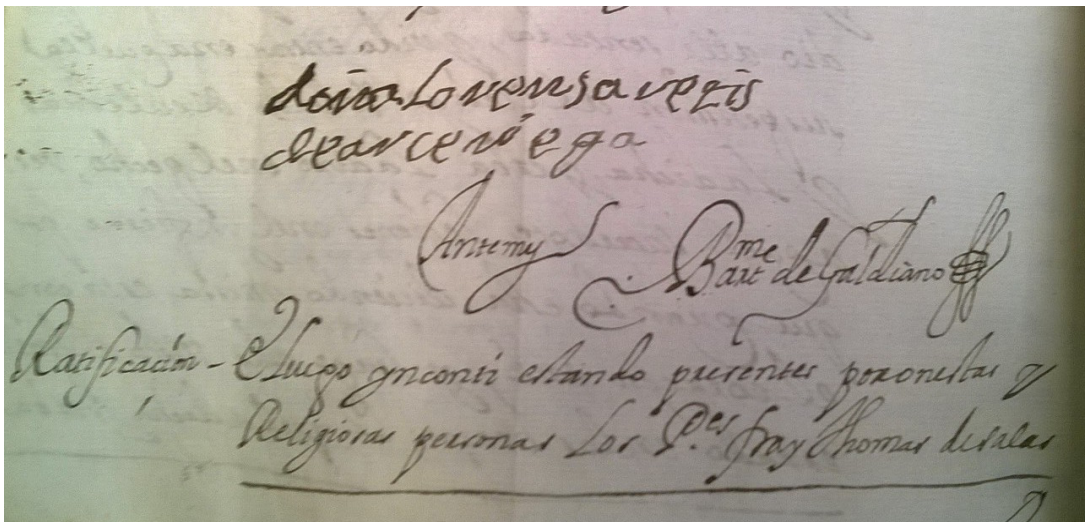
había estado en esta suspensión sin comer hasta las cinco de la tarde, y que a esta hora entro el indio y que había sido tanto el gusto que ella había sentido de verle que se sentó encima de la cama y le abrazo, y le había dicho el dicho indio espérate que mas falta y enjuagándose la boca la había dicho mire que no tengo cosa en ella y chupó dicho indio de un cuadril [61] en que ella tenia el dolor y la saco en la boca y la fue echando una escudilla de sangre sin lanceta ni otra cosa con que quedo muy buena y alentada, de que esta y su hija (porque la enferma estaba con terribles dolores y no atendía) se rieron diciéndole que no confiare de aquellas cosas porque era vedado todo por la Inquisición, a que respondió la dicha Ana Calderón: Señora no es como el peyote, que con ese ven cosas malas, y yo con esto vi cosas buenas; a que le replicó esta declarante pues si vio cosas tan buenas por que no se estuvo allá y ella le respondió que como había de ver cosas malas vi cosas buenas y no le parezca a V.M. que es malo lo que este indio hace, que ya le han tenido los señores inquisidores allá y lo han examinado, y en una enfermedad que al señor inquisidor apostado le hizo echar una culebra; y a una mulata sin nombrarla que fue a buscar a este indio y estaba bullida le dio a beber esta yerba y le hizo echar un pato graznando como en la laguna y doce huevos y no se ría V.M. de lo que oye hablando con esta declarante: que hace milagrosas curas y que a una monja de la concepción, sin nombrarla, la había hecho echar cuatro de aquellos que echan sangre y les viene su regla, que llaman ajolotes de la laguna, y que un gatito chiquitito aullando, y había sanado a dos frailes de San Agustín y otro de San Francisco, sin nombrarlos ni de que enfermedad, y que una señora casada Doña Michaela, mujer del secretario Don Cristóbal de la Mota, se había valido de este indio, llamándole y diciéndole que en que pararía por que estaba muy afligida de que no llegase a noticia de su marido los amores que tenia con dos personas, que era el uno un sobrino del provisor Barrientos y el otro un

61 Cuadril, (Cadri) Hip bone.

fraile sin nombrarlo, diciendo esto con gran desenfado la dicha Ana Calderón, y que le había respondido el dicho indio el suceso que has de tener ahora lo veras, siéntate en esa silla y la dio a beber dicha yerba y ella se suspendió allí sentada y vido entrar en aquella suspensión al clérigo rodeado de culebras y la dicha yerba le dijo en el pecho, ves, aquel sacerdote lo tienes en el infierno, por que cuando esta diciendo misa, esta con el corazón en ti, y luego había visto a dicho fraile herrado en los brazos, y que la dicha yerba la dijo: vete a tus haciendas porque presto has de tener un suceso muy desdichado; el cual había sucedido y que ya lo sabían las que allí estaban presentes, aquí respondió esta declarante que ni aun esto había oído; y la dicha Ana Calderón dijo que era muy grande el aquieto y desdicha en que estaba la dicha señora; y que no conoce al dicho indio, ni le dio mas noticia de él la dicha Ana Calderón, y que esta es la verdad so cargo del juramento que tiene hecho, y habiéndose leído dijo estar bien escrito y asentado y lo firmo encargosele el decreto prometiólo, y con que fue mandada ratificar al pie de este dicho, atento a ser persona anciana y de calidad para no andar volviendo a este santo oficio.

Doña Lorenza Retíz de Arceniega

Ante mi, Bartolomé de Galdiano



Signature of Doña Lorenza Retíz de Arceniega

Ratificación: E luego incontinenti mando entrar el dicho señor Inquisidor en dicha audiencia a Doña María Hurtado de Arceniega, citad por la dicha Doña Lorenza Retíz de Arceniega su madre de la cual siendo presente fue recibido juramento en forma de derecho, so cargo del cual prometió de decir verdad, y dijo ser natural de esta ciudad de México de estado doncella de edad de diez y nueve años y que había venido en compañía de la dicha su madre a declarar lo que ambas les había pasado y oído a una mujer española la vecina de esta ciudad, movida del escrúpulo de su conciencia y que lo que pasa es que estando abra quince días a lo que se quiera acordad de visita con su madre, Doña Lorenza Retíz de Arceniega; en casa de Luisa Calderón que estaba enferma, en cama en casa de esta declarante en un cuarto de dicha casa, que es en la calle del espíritu santo frontero donde hoy vive el Alcalde Don Pedro de Oroz. Y que aunque había gente no reparo más que en dos hijas de la enferma llamadas María y Ana de Colmenares, que no sabe si estuvieron atentas a lo que dirá que entro Ana Calderón hermana de la enferma y por haberla visto había dos años flaquísima y con muchos achaques, Le dijo esta declarante se holgaba de verla tan buena gorda y hermosa a que respondió señora los doctores me mataban, Dios le de salud a un indio que me dio a beber una yerba, la cual así que la bebí por la mañana me suspendí sin cerrar los ojos me vi en la gloria, donde vi a la Virgen Santísima con el niño Jesús, en los brazos vuelta de lado jugando con el y luego volví la cabeza y vide a nuestro señor con muchos ángeles delante muy lindos y muy gorditos jugando unos con otros delante de él, y todo lo que vide era muy lindo, y no dormía que los ojos tenia abiertos y la yerba me dijo detrás del pecho (que la oyó hablar) bien puede estar contenta que ahora sanarás y que se había estado en esta suspensión sin comer hasta las cinco de la tarde; Y que a esta hora entró el indio y que había sido tanto el gusto que ella había sentido de verle, que se sentó encima de la cama y le abrazó; y la había dicho el dicho indio espérate que mas falta y enjuagándose la boca la había

dicho, mire que no tengo cosa en ella y le chupo dicho indo en un cuadril en que ella tenia el dolor, y la sacó en la boca, y la fue echando una escudilla de sangre, sin lanceta ni otra cosa, con que quedó muy buena y alentada; de que esta declarante y su madre (porque la enferma estaba con terribles dolores y no atendía) se rieron, diciéndole que no tratase de aquellas cosas, porque era vedado todo por la Inquisición; a que respondió la dicha Ana Calderón; Señora, no es esto como el peyote, que con ese ven cosas malas, y yo con esto vi cosas buenas a que le replico esta declarante, pues si vio cosas tan buenas para que no se estuvo allá, y que le respondió que como había de ver cosas malas vi cosas buenas, y no le parezca a V.M que es malo lo que este indio hace, que ya le han tenido los señores inquisidores allá y lo han examinado, y en una enfermedad que el señor inquisidor Argos tuvo, le hizo echar una culebra y a una mulata sin nombrarla que fue a buscar a este indio, y estaba tullida, le dio a beber esta yerba, y le hizo echar un pato graznando como en la laguna, y doce huevos, y no se ría V.M. de lo que oye hablando con esta declarante y su madre que hace milagrosas curas, y que a una monja de la concepción, sin nombrarla, le había hecho echar cuatro de aquellos que echan sangre y les viene su regla que llaman ajolotes de la laguna, y un gatito chiquito aullando, y había sanado a dos frailes de San Agustín y a otro de San Francisco, sin nombrarlos, ni de que enfermedad, y que una señora casada Doña Michaela mujer del secretario Don Cristóbal de la Mota, se había valido de este indio llamándole y diciéndole que en que pararía por que estaba muy afligida de que no llegase a noticia de su marido los amores que tenía con dos personas, que era el uno un sobrino del provisor Barrientos y el otro un fraile, sin nombrarlo diciendo esto con gran desenfado la dicha Ana Calderón; y que la había respondido el dicho indio, el suceso que has de tener ahora lo verás, siéntate en esa silla y la dio a beber dicha yerba, y ella se suspendió allí sentada y vido entrar en aquella suspensión al clérigo rodeado de culebras; y la dicha yerba le dijo en el pecho,

ves ver a aquel sacerdote lo tienes en el infierno porque cuando esta diciendo misa esta con el corazón en ti, y luego había visto al fraile herrado en los brazos y que la dicha yerba la dijo vete a tus haciendas quítate de aquí por que presto as de tener un suceso muy desdichado, el cual había sucedido y que ya lo sabían las que allí estaban presentes, a que respondió esta declarante que ni aun esto había oído, y la dicha Ana Calderón dijo que era muy grande el aprieto y desdicha en que estaba la dicha señora y que no conoce al dicho indio, ni le dio mas noticia de la dicha Ana Calderón y que esta es la verdad so cargo del juramento que tiene hecho, y habiéndosele leído, dijo estar bien escrito y asentado, y lo firmó, encargosele el secreto y lo prometió con que fue mandada ratificar al pie de este dicho atento, a ser doncella muy recogida y no poder volver a este santo oficio.

Doña María Hurtado de Arceniega

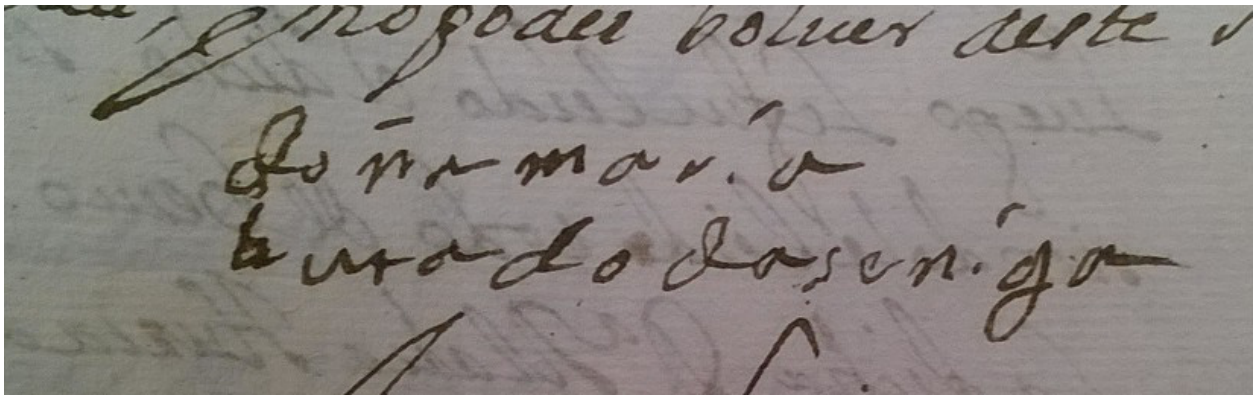
Ante mi Bartolomé de Galdiano

Ratificación: E luego Incontinenti estando presentes por honestas y religiosas personas los padres fray Thomas de Salas y Fray Diego Piquero, presbíteros de la orden del señor santo domingo que tiene jurado el secreto, fue recibido juramento de la dicha Doña María Hurtado de Arceniega so cargo del cual prometió de decir verdad, fuele dicho que se le hace saber que el promotor fiscal de este santo oficio la presenta por testigo *ad perpetuam rei memoriam*, y en caso necesario para el juicio plenario, contra la dicha Ana Calderón, dicha mulata y a dicha Michaela mujer de Don Cristóbal de la Mota, que este atenta y se leyera su dicho y si en el tuviere que alterar, añadir, o enmendar, y lo haga de manera que en todo diga verdad y reafirme y ratifique en ella, por lo que lo que ahora dijese pasara prejuicio a la dicha Ana Calderón, y dicha mulata, y dicha Doña Michaela mujer del secretario Don Cristóbal de la Mota; y luego le fue leído el dicho su dicho discurso y siendo le leído todo de verbo adberbum y habiendo la

dicha Doña María Hurtado de Arceniega dicho que lo había oído y entendido, dijo que aquello era su dicho, y ella lo había dicho según se le había leído, y estaba bien escrito y asentado y no había que alterar añadir ni enmendar porque como estaba escrito era verdad y en ello se afirmaba y afirmo, ratificaba y ratificó, y siendo necesario lo decía de nuevo contra las dichas personas y no por odio sino por el descargo de conciencia; y la dicha Ana Calderón estaba en su entero juicio y decía lo referido muy deberás y con todo desenfado encargosele el secreto en forma, prometiólo, y lo firmo y con tanto fue mandada salir de la dicha audiencia

Doña María Hurtado de Arceniega

Ante mi, Bartolomé de Galdiano



Signature of Doña María Hurtado de Aceniega

<u>Analysis</u>

This case consists of the recorded testimonies of two women: Doña Lorenza de Arceniega, a sixty-year-old Spanish woman, and her daughter, nineteen-year old Doña María Hurtado de Arceniega. Three women are implicated in the formal accusation. First, there is Ana Calderón, a fellow Spanish woman and sister of Luisa de Calderón, who lived at the same domicile as Doña Lorenza on Espiritu Santo Street. The second was an unnamed mulato woman, and the third was another Spanish woman, Doña Michaela, the wife of public official (secretario)

Don Cristobal de la Mota.[62] According to Doña Lorenza and María's testimonies, what these three women have in common is that they purportedly consumed a mysterious unspecified "yerba" under the guidance of an equally mysterious unnamed Indian man. The recorded testimonies of Lorenza and her daughter María are nearly identical and based on a single exchange between the two women and the accused Ana Calderón two weeks prior. From here on, I will refer to the case based solely on the revelations of these testimonies that may possibly deviate greatly from reality. As Morales Sarabia points out, one must always be aware of the inherent danger in Inquisition documents regarding their accuracy and veracity (22). Furthermore, references to Ana Calderón's claims, attitudes and actions are to be understood purely through the filter of the testimonies of these two women, as recorded before the inquisitor. Unfortunately, I was not able to locate any additional documents that supplement this particular case in the archive that can corroborate or contest the testimonies of the two women. It is unclear whether the case moved forward to formal charges against the accused, or if it was one of the many accusations that the Holy Office decided not to pursue, possibly because of the jurisdictional confusion regarding Indian transgressions (Chuchiak 308). Even so, this text is extremely helpful in highlighting the attitudes and discourses that surrounded traditional hallucinogen use in the mid seventeenth century, roughly thirty years after the edict against peyote had first been published. In order to better flesh out the many aspects of Lorenza and María's declarations, I consider them in the greater contexts of medicine in the colony, the social hierarchy of New Spain, and the manifestation of unsanctioned power that affected both.

The testimonies of the Arceniega mother/daughter duo form a cohesive narrative describing a conversation they shared with Ana Calderón. On the day of the exchange, Lorenza

[62] Don Cristobal de la Mota y Osorio is listed as the secretario in the minutes of the town hall council meetings in the 1640s. See *Actas Antiguas de Cabildo* (287, 379).

and María had come to call on their neighbor, Ana's ill bedridden sister, Luisa. Luisa was suffering particularly badly from her ailments, and was not able to receive visitors. To pass the time, the two Arceniega women began a conversation with Ana, who had also previously been ill. Doña Lorenza marveled at Ana's appearance and complements her beauty and robustness. The last time that the two women had met two years prior, Ana had been extremely ill and gaunt, suffering from a number of ailments. Ana's response and the conversation that ensued would be the basis for their entire accusations against Ana, a *mulata*, and Doña Michaela. The first thing that Ana did to explain her state of health was to condemn the doctors of the colony. This is a pivotal point, as it draws attention to the frequent frustrations of colonial subjects who had very little in the way of medical resources at their disposal. This was due to the notoriously low number of qualified doctors that worked in New Spain and the failures of the royal protomedicato to regulate practitioners.

Medical Care in The Colony: The Protomedicato of New Spain, Curanderos and *Ticitls*

Upon receiving the compliment on her robust beauty from Lorenza, Ana purportedly exclaimed, " doctors were killing me!" before she showered praise and blessings on the Indian who cured her maladies. This exclamation, short as it was, brings the topic of medical practices in New Spain to the forefront of her case and invites a consideration of how the average subject in New Spain dealt with disease, what medical services were like in New Spain, and why members from every caste turned to Indian traditional medicine for treatment. John Lanning demonstrates that medical service in New Spain, like many of the colonial systems, was sound and structured in theory but inconsistent and problematic in practice.

Each viceroyalty of Spanish America had a protomedicato, which consisted of a council appointed by the king entrusted with the supervision of appropriate medical procedures, the

qualifications of acting physicians, and the apothecaries that dispensed remedies to the public. The two main missions of the council were to foster public health through the promotion of sanctioned medical practices and suppress perceived quackery (11). In practice, the protomedicato was ineffectual because it was insufficient. This was mainly due to the shortage of qualified physicians (137). Although there was a system put in place for training and vetting new doctors, the demand for medical attention in the colony far exceeded their numbers. In addition to a shortage of physicians, the expanding population meant the protomedicato's ability to supervise practices and services became even more diluted as the years progressed. The rampant number of unlicensed physicians was a primary concern but proved impossible to curb. Because of the shortage of doctors the protomedicato frequently had to turn a blind eye to the unlicensed practices in their jurisdiction. The case of "Dr." De la Torre is a prime example of an unlicensed practitioner who was at first penalized by the protomedicato, but then allowed to continue his practice due to a scarcity of competent physicians (139).

Due to the lack of physicians approved by the protomedicato, local unlicensed physicians such as De la Torre (curanderos) answered to the demands of the common people and practiced freely (135). The rampant spread of curanderos was even more difficult to suppress in rural areas (136). A double standard developed between remote Indian towns and urban spaces where the largest concentration of Spanish subjects resided. In the city, where our case takes place, the presence of the protomedicato and the reach of its authority was no doubt at its strongest. The physicians practicing in Mexico City would be the most likely to be approved and monitored by the protomedicato. Even so, it would be impossible to assess their effectiveness, or know what kind of service the average Spanish subject, such as Ana Calderón, would have received in the city.

It is not clear in this document whether the doctors that were purportedly "killing" Ana were licensed by the protomedicato or not. It is entirely possible that, due to the shortage of official physicians, she had received treatment from unlicensed curanderos of dubious quality. As Lanning points out, these were frequently either former attendants of licensed physicians or nurses who had second-hand experience with medicine. Many were barely literate (143). The inadequacies of unlicensed curanderos frequently lead to disastrous consequences for patients, prompting the disciplinary arm of the protomedicato to act. Lanning gives several examples of cases in which curanderos and curanderas were tried for practicing illegally, most of which were only taken to trial after dire consequences (148-151).

Considering the many problems that affected medical care, it is not surprising that the average colonial subject had no choice but to seek treatments that differed greatly from sanctioned medical practices. Traditional Nahua medicine made up the bulk of the mixed bag of alternative remedies in the colony (Quezada *Enfermedad y Maleficio* 45). Anthropologist Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán notes that indigenous forms of medicine superseded competing remedies and were preferred to their European counterparts (115). Ana's preference for Indian medicine is clear in her juxtaposition of "doctores," which we can assume refers to those who practiced non-indigenous European style medicine, and the Indian who finally cured her ailment. The perceived effectiveness of the Indian's methods demonstrates the resilience of traditional forms of Nahua medicine, even in the urban space of Mexico City where the influence of the royal protomedicato was most powerful. Because they were central to Nahua medicinal practices, hallucinogens were deeply implicated in this perception.

Seventeenth-Century Public Perspectives of Traditional Hallucinogens in New Spain

Throughout this study, I have maintained that demonology and alcoholcentrism obscured

the average Spaniard's ability to understand hallucinogen use during the earliest years of the colonial enterprise. The exchange between Doña Lorenza, María and Ana Calderón is an example of how the same discourses of demonology that kept many sixteenth century colonists from understanding hallucinogens continued to permeate attitudes towards these plants in the seventeenth century. According to concepts of Renaissance demonology as presented in Chapter 1, visions are strong indicators of potential satanic influence. The apparition of figures, even those that appear to be holy, are evidence of Satan's ability to delude the mind (Mackay 198; Cárdenas 215). These concepts were not isolated to the intellectual grappling of theologians and inquisitors. They also manifested in public attitudes concerning these plants and the nature of visions, as clear in the antagonistic stance of Doña Lorenza and María. The Arceniegas argued that any invocation of visions, such as those experienced by Ana during her treatment with the Nahua *ticitl*, must be demonic in nature. In refute, Ana presented the positive, holy nature of her visions as proof of their legitimacy. It is clear from the contrast between Ana's view and that of the Arceniega women that attitudes towards psychoactive plants and their physiological effects differed greatly amongst the people of New Spain. These attitudes and levels of understanding are illustrated by the way the topic of peyote, the most notorious of the colonial hallucinogens, was presented in these testimonies.

Although we cannot assume anything about the consumption habits of the three Spanish women, it is apparent that Ana, Lorenza, and María were familiar enough with peyote to know that it induced visions and that it was a prohibited substance. Ana brings up peyote when Lorenza and María suggested that the Inquisition would frown upon the treatments she received from the Nahua *ticitl*. Ana's reported response tied the negative association with peyote to its prohibition when she insists that those who consume the cactus "see bad things" (*ven cosas*

malas).

In contrast to her representation of peyote, Ana embraces and defends the herb provided by the Indian, citing both the extremely positive visions she experienced (*vi cosas buenas*), and its apparent effectiveness. It also helped her argument that the herb in question remained protected by anonymity. There is never any mention of a name, description, or any kind of categorization that could tell us of its origin. The mysterious substance is simply *la dicha yerba*. It seems, furthermore, that Ana was comfortable discussing and defending the herb, solely due to the fact that it was not peyote. By juxtaposing the herb with the prohibited peyote, Ana distances her experience from any possible demonic associations as well as possible violations against the mandates of the Holy Office.

The logic underlying the contrast between peyote and the mystery herb reveals a great deal about how Early Modern subjects of New Spain might have thought about and used Indian remedies and psychoactive substances. There appeared to be an ambivalence surrounding colonial perceptions of these substances prior to their explicit prohibition by the Church in edicts of 1617 and 1620 (Quezada *Enfermedad y Maleficio* 46; Leopold 324) . According to Ana's apparent stance, it was not all vision-inducing herbs or Indian medicinal practices that were dangerous, but rather only those particular substances that had been explicitly prohibited by the Holy Office. Beyond demonstrating Ana's personal view on the topic, this may also hint at the greater context of lay attitudes in New Spain regarding traditional sacred plants and how they were used before and after the explicit prohibition.

There were very few accusations in the AGN involving peyote that predate the publication of the edict of 1620. Between 1566 and 1620 there were only seven cases that implicated peyote. Many of the titles of these cases do not give details as to how or why the

accused consumed or administered the peyote, and the task of transcribing and interpreting these cases must be left for a later project. However, the titles of the cases alone reveal the parameters of prohibition and how members of different castes perceived peyote.

AGN Peyote Accusations 1566-1620

Caste	Year	Description	Document
español	1566	*Denuncia y penitencia contra Tomas de Lorrio, estante en el Real del Panuco, por haber hablado sobre el peyote que estaba prohibido. Zacatecas*	Inq vol 5, exp. 14
mulata	1614	*Denuncia contra una mulata por tomar peyote y cuatro oraciones que remite a el cura de Tepoztlán.*	Inq vol 301, exp. 10
mulata	1614	*Información contra Magdalena, Mulata libre, por haber tomado el peyote para saber si estaba preñada. Cuautla en las Amilpas.*	Inq vol 302, exp. 8 G
no caste	1615	*Testificación contra Pedro Sánchez, por tomar peyote*	Inq vol. 308 (1), exp. 112
no caste	1617	*Testificación contra Ana de Angulo porque mando poner unas tijeras abiertas debajo del colchón de una parturienta, para que no tuviera entuertos y por tomar peyote. Manila*	Inq vol. 293.1, exp. 73
mulata	1618	*Testificación contra Petrona Galarza por dar a tomar el peyote a varias personas*	Inq vol. 317, exp. 21
mulata	1618	*Testificación contra Luisa de Estrada, mulata libre, por usar el peyote*	Inq vol. 317, exp. 22

The earliest document that mentions peyote in the AGN Inquisition records is a testimony against Tomas de Lorrio who was accused of praising peyote. The cases that followed implicated mostly mulato women between 1614-1618. These documents demonstrate that the consumption habits of colonial subjects reflected the divinatory aid/medicine duality of pre-Columbian tradition, while they also began to blend with European practices. In 1617, Ana de Angulo—a midwife—was accused of superstition for taking peyote and putting open scissors under the bed of a laboring mother in order to "cut" her post partum pain. Considering Magdalena's1614 pregnancy related case, it would not be a stretch to suggest that peyote had a variety of uses associated with midwifery and childbirth. The adoption of Nahua medicine in obstetrics is not

surprising, as the practice received very little attention from the royal protomedicato. The few licensed physicians who practiced in the colony were much more interested in the lucrative field of surgery than women's health, and practices were poorly regulated. As a result, obstetrics was left to the devices of Spanish, mulato, and mestizo women who had received little or no medical training (Lanning 298). Furthermore, naturally high demand for birth-related services would lead the practice to incorporate a variety of unsanctioned remedies and treatments. As Lanning points out, malpractice in midwifery was often associated with superstition, which is why transgressions were handled by the Holy Office instead of the protomedicato (298). In the case of Ana de Angulo we can see traces of the syncretism between Old World superstitions (the scissors under the bed) and New World herbalism (the use of peyote). Furthermore, although peyote may very well have had medicinal applications in obstetrics, the value of peyote in its capacity of medicine was once again obscured due to its association with superstition and divination.

As apparent in the Inquisition record, the publication of the edict against peyote in 1620 brought in its wake a flood of accusations. This sudden increase in cases clearly stemmed from the dissemination of the edict, but the starkness of the contrast before and after its publication is noteworthy, considering that the Church had already prohibited all demonic plants in 1617 (Quezada *Enfermedad y Maleficio* 46). This sudden spike in cases demonstrates that before its publication, there was likely a certain degree of apathy that surrounded the cactus and its many medicinal uses, similar to what Ana expressed about her unnamed herb. It took an explicit edict to solidify the notoriety of peyote in the public imagination.

With regards to the testimonies of the Arceniega women, it is apparent that the herb described in Ana Calderón's alleged statements fulfills both the role of medicine and divinatory

aid. Ana Calderón seemed very intent on establishing the legitimacy of her experience and the success of her medicinal use of the plant. Ana defense of the Indian medicine man and his unnamed herb depends on a three key factors: The heavenly nature of her visions, the positive effect of the treatment, and the seemingly abundant set of success stories that tie him to important members of the Spanish caste.

The Visions of Ana Calderón and Michaela De La Mota

One of the ways in which Ana Calderón legitimizes her hallucinogen use is by pointing out the difference between her personal experience and the visions of Michaela de la Mota. Juxtaposing her visions to those of Michaela legitimize the herb by establishing its ambivalence. In other words, the Indian was not simply going around deluding folks with a magic herb that somehow invoked gorgeous images of heaven. Rather, what she saw through this herb was specific to her ailment and her moral character. Since she sought a cure for her debilitating and persistent physical malady, and perhaps, because she was worthy, her visions were entirely healing and soothing: "todo lo que vide era muy lindo." In this glimpse of heaven, she saw the Virgin Mary lying on her side playing with the baby Jesus. Upon turning her head, she saw God himself, surrounded by beautiful fat frolicking cherubs. These visions were supplemented with an auditory hallucination of a voice that spoke from her breast. The herb told her to rejoice, for she was cured. When she emerged from her daylong "suspension with eyes open," the visions caused her such an overwhelming sense of joy that she hugged the Indian when he came to her bedside.

Ana's description, the nature of her visions, and the emotions they evoked were extremely different from what the Arceniega testimonies reveal about Michaela de la Mota. According to Ana, Michaela did not experience visions of heaven that soothed her soul, and

there were no fat beautiful angels or visions of the Blessed Virgin with the baby Jesus. Instead of apparitions of heaven, the herb summoned horrific anxiety-provoking images of hell, and the words spoken to her by the herb (also from within her breast) were distressing, cautionary and extremely chastising.

The importance of the heaven/hell dichotomy in Ana's juxtaposition of her personal visions and those of Michaela de la Mota legitimizes her experience because it associates the herb with the principles of the Catholic faith. From Ana's perspective, the herb and the Indian are doing God's work. This dual acceptance of Nahua medicinal treatments and Christian symbols and signs corresponds with the syncretism that developed through the colonial period. James Lockhart discusses how Nahua communities appropriated aspects of the Catholic faith into their traditions, while also infusing their newly acquired Christian faith with pre-Colombian hallucinogens (259). Anthropologist Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán highlighted the association between peyote and divine Catholic including the Virgin Mary and the Holy Trinity (148). This association also appears in the writings of Hernando Ruiz de Alarcón's *Tratado de las supersticiones y costumbres gentílicas que hoy viven entre los indios naturales de esta Nueva España.* Ruiz de Alarcón's denouncement of "medicos embusteros" reveals the increasing syncretism that pervaded Nahua medicinal practices in the seventeenth century. Sacred plants were attributed personal characteristics through their ability to directly communicate with the patient, and given divine status. Treatise VI, Chapter I is titled *De los que llaman en la lengua «ticitl» quiere decir medico o adivino* describes the figure of the Nahua *ticitl*:

> …de aquí es estar asentado entre los indios que es bastante uno destos que se llama tizitl, para remedio de cualquier necesidad y trabajo por grande que sea, porque si se trata de enfermedad, le atribuyen el conocimiento de la medicina; si de tener enojado a Dios

> Nuestro Señor, o a la Santísima Virgen, o a alguno de los santos, le hacen poderoso para desenojarle: pues que si responden que el trabajo o la enfermedad es el ololiuhqui enojado, el peyote o los dioses silvestres (a quien ellos llaman ouican chaneque), o cosa semejante, entran las suplicas y los presentes al tal tizitl para que las desenoje y aplaque…(147)

This segment exemplifies Lockhart's observations about how Nahua healers absorbed Catholic signs and divine figures into their practices (259). The dual pre-Columbian function of the *ticitl* as a specialist in the ailments of the body and the soul are evident. Peyote and *ololiuqui* are attributed characteristics equivalent to God and the Virgin Mary. Aguirre Beltrán notes that a key element of Nahua medicinal tradition was that illnesses were most frequently attributed to the wrath of the gods (38). Although there is no explicit link in Ana's case between the herb and a specific divine figure, the many characteristics of the unnamed plant suggest such an association. In addition to invoking visions of heaven and hell, the herb is also equally benevolent and wrathful akin to a divine Catholic figure.[63]

The experiences of Ana and Michaela are firmly rooted in their personal Catholic religious belief systems; The visions of each correlate with her respective moral character. Ana allegedly represents herself as a victim of perpetual physical agony who is finally granted miraculous relief. The herb's message to Ana was a soothing and comforting reinforcement of her Catholic belief system. Michaela, on the other hand, faced the wrath of the divine figure/herb due to her immoral behavior and the nature of her inquiry. Unlike Ana, Michaela was not

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[63] The personification of hallucinogens and the ability to communicate with the herb is a theme that has been previously studied in peyote Inquisition trials by Morales Sarabia. She describes the case of the mulato woman Petrona Babtista and her perpetual peyote habit. In that case, peyote addressed Petrona directly, answering her many questions concerning her husband's infidelities (Morales Sarabia 33; Inq vol. 340, exp. 5, f 13, 1630). A similar example of personification appears in Ana Calderón's case. The unnamed herb spoke directly to both Spanish women during their visions.

attempting to cure a persistent physical malady, but rather approached the Indian in need of a divinatory aid to help unravel the precarious situation brought on by her extramarital affairs. Specifically, she needed to know whether her husband would find out about her indiscretions. Her experience was also a reinforcement of Catholic signs and symbols. Upon entering the same suspended state described by Ana, Michaela saw her priest lover enter the room surrounded by vipers. The herb then spoke from her chest, not with soothing words like those spoken to Ana, but with a warning: Their affair had the priest shackled in hell, since his heart was not present in his priestly duties, but set on her.

This juxtaposition of the two extremes experienced by these women, in which one saw heaven and the other saw hell, functions as a way that Ana claims legitimacy with her experience and infuses her recovery with meaning. The herb is a revealer of truth. It is also significant that Ana makes such efforts not only to legitimize her visions by comparing them to those of Michaela de la Mota, but that Michaela herself is a fellow Spanish woman. This is an indication that Ana appealed to the inherent power of caste to legitimize her experience with the herb.

Innocent by Association: Consumption of Hallucinogens Across the Spanish Caste

Ana Calderón mentions several individuals who received treatment from the Indian. The list of persons implicated in Ana's case is remarkable considering their social, political, and religious positions. They represent a diverse section of the Spanish caste, elite representatives of both the religious and secular governing bodies of the colony.

The first person implicated in Ana's story is an inquisitor, who "expelled" (le hizo echar) a snake from his body under the Indian's care. The testimony goes on to describe Ana's accolades for the Indian's numerous miraculous cures, which had helped an unnamed nun of the order of the Immaculate Conception "expel" four axolotls and a tiny mewing kitten from her

body. The Indian had also cured two unnamed friars from the orders of St. Augustine and St. Francis of unspecified ailments. All of these individuals belonged to the Spanish caste.

Despite the numerous Spaniards mentioned in Ana Calderón's purported descriptions of the *ticitl*'s curing abilities, only three people are implicated in the formal accusation brought by the Arceniega women: Ana, the unnamed *mulata*, and Michaela de la Mota. The tie that binds these three individuals together is that they were the only three who explicitly consumed the herb, according to the testimonies. The other Spanish persons, in addition to being members of religious orders, were not charged according to the formal accusation. This is surprising considering they had allegedly entrusted their health to the superstitious treatments of the Indian as well. Perhaps there was something about the use of the herb in particular that made the transgressions of the three implicated women that much more severe.

Ana's insistence on the popularity of the Indian's remedies amongst fellow Spaniards establishes her legitimacy. Laura Lewis explores the topic of caste and power through the analysis of the 1655 Inquisition trial of Adriana Ruiz de Cabrera, a free black woman accused of witchcraft. In that case, two free black women, the accuser and the accused, each used discourses of caste to simultaneous legitimize her position and delegitimize the other. As Lewis points out, Adriana uses her proximity to "Spanishness" to legitimize her defense and dispel rumors of witchcraft. Simultaneously, Ana María, her accuser, attempts to delegitimize Adriana by highlighting her close friendship with an Indian woman (3).

As a Spanish woman, Ana's task was different from that of Adriana and Ana María. Whereas Ana María and Adriana both put emphasis on intercaste ties to establish legitimacy, Ana Calderón cited her own caste to legitimize her involvement with the Indian. By stressing the *ticitl*'s relationship to numerous important members of the Spanish caste, Ana Calderón

simultaneously elevates the Indian and his services through his proximity to Spanishness, while also legitimizing her experience. This proximity to Spanishness correlates with the religious tones of Ana's visions. Furthermore, the Indian not only served and cured many Spanish individuals, but his remedies, from her point of view, correlate with the principles of the Church. The Arceniega women clearly disagreed, which is why they denounce her before the Holy Office in the first place.

If we apply Lewis's model of the sanctioned vs. the unsanctioned domains of New Spain, in which Spanishness and orthodoxy determined the world of the sanctioned, while Indianness and witchcraft determined the unsanctioned, we uncover even more nuances in this case. Ana and the Arceniega women were all members of the Spanish caste and they invoke the power of caste and Spanishness as instruments of legitimacy. What we see in the contradiction between their points of view is a disagreement on what belongs to the sanctioned and the unsanctioned world. For Ana, the Indian is sanctioned because of his association with Spaniards and the nature of her heavenly visions. The Arceniega women clearly categorize Ana's behavior and the Indian's treatments as nefarious. They are manifestations of Indianness and witchcraft, belonging to the unsanctioned domain.

Hallucinogens, Creatures, and Incision-Free Bloodletting: a Nahua Medicine Man and His Treatments

As discussed in Chapter 2, medicinal practices in pre-Colombian Nahua culture were based on the services provided by a network of specialized practitioners who treated both the physical and spiritual body (López Austin "Cuarenta clases de magos" 87). This duality was an important aspect of the Nahua view on health and illness. The body—a microcosm—was meant to be in a state of balance; the spiritual and the physical body were one. According to the

observations of Carlos Viesca Treviño, the Nahua considered the human body the center of the universe, where the celestial and the underworld aligned. The meeting place of these two forces was the diaphragm. Above the diaphragm the organs were connected to the air, the sky, and the cosmos, culminating in the top of the head, the *ilhuícatl,* which corresponded with heaven. Below the diaphragm the abdominal cavity and its many organs linked the human to the earth. Illnesses manifested in both the physical and the spiritual world. It was the *ticitl'*s responsibility to consider the balance between these forces, as well as the many connections between the physical body of each human being and the universe. (Viesca Treviño "Medicine in Ancient Mesoamerica" 260).

To better understand the nature of the treatments provided by the Indian man who cured Ana Calderón, we can compare them to different *ticitls* in Nahua culture as described by Aguirre Beltrán, Lopéz Austin and Quezada. In addition to administering the hallucinogenic brew, The Indian allegedly sucked blood from Ana's hipbone without making an incision. Aguirre Beltrán describes such a practitioner as *tetlacuicuiliani*, or "medico chupador…que por medio de la succión extrae la enfermedad" (39). López Austin describes this figure as a *techichinani,* "el que chupa a la gente." this particular kind of *ticitl* apparently chewed the hallucinogenic herb estafiate (*Artemisia mexicana*) before sucking illness, rot, and blood from the body ("Cuarenta clases" 110). Quezada describes this same figure through a comparison to seventeenth-century Inquisition documents. Extrapolated from testimonies and confessions, the descriptions collected by Quezada share many similarities with the Arceniega testimony, particularly in relation to the treatment of suctioning illness from the body and the expulsion of objects and animals (*Enfermedad y Maleficio* 90).

The stories in the Arceniega testimony overwhelmingly place emphasis on the expulsion

of objects and live creatures from the body. The text does not specify how these creatures are expelled, but there are two possibilities that can shed light on this phenomenon. One possibility is that the expulsion is related to vomiting. There is evidence from various sources that indicates that the verb *echar* was associated specifically with the act of vomiting. The definition of the verb from Baltasar Henríquez's 1679 Latin-Castilian dictionary includes two entries that suggest this association: *echar de sí*, and *echar algo tusiendo* both have to do with expelling something from the body, the second more specifically by way of the mouth (Henríquez 175,1). Jacinto de la Serna's *Manual de ministros de indios para el conocimiento de sus idolatrías y extirpación de ellas* describes an episode in which he cures an Indian woman by having her drink water containing the bone of a saint's finger. After drinking the brew the Indian woman vomits a small bloody wool satchel filled with hair and burnt eggshells. The description uses the verb "echar." [64] Based on these examples, there is good reason to assume that *echar* in this sense refers to vomiting. However, it is also a possibility that the verb *echar* refers not to the action of the patient but rather the *ticitl*. *Echar* could be a reference to what the medicine man spits out after "suctioning" the body of the patient. Quezada's description of the *techichinani* includes a reference to an Inquisition case in which the accused *curandero* admitted that he held objects in his mouth to delude patients into thinking he had suctioned them from their bodies (91). It is notable that the Arceniega testimonies underscore Ana's insistence that the Indian made a point to show that he had nothing in his mouth before sucking the blood from her hipbone.

The tactics of the Indian are very similar to descriptions of psychic surgery, a Filipino practice that drew increased attention from the international medical community in the twentieth

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[64] Pudo pasar la noche con alivio, y otro día como a las once del día le acometió aquel mal como la primera, y segunda vez; y dándole gana de trocar, persona de toda satisfacción, que cuidaba de ella le llegó un vaso, en que trocase, y *en el vómito echó un pedazo de lana como atado*, y de una parte estaba ensangrentado como si estuviera pegado a la carne, y dentro había carbón, cáscaras de huevos quemadas, y cabellos. (65)

century. In psychic surgery a spiritual healer applies pressure to a diseased body part and miraculously extracts organs, matter, or blood without making an incision or leaving a scar. In their study on twentieth-century psychic surgery performed by the Union Spiritista Cristiana de Filipinas, Stephen Allison and H. Newton Malony explain that the practice dates back over 2,000 years and adopted characteristics of Roman Catholicism with the arrival of the Spaniards. In addition to the physical aspect of this process, it usually involves an altered mental state achieved through meditation. In this out-of-body experience, the patient is directed through their healing process by spiritual guides. The underlying importance of present-day Filipino psychic surgery is not just to heal the body, but also strengthen the bonds between the patient and their faith (49). While modern medicine characterizes this practice as quackery and a simple case of clever sleight of hand on behalf of the practitioners, testimonies of patients attribute miraculous results to these procedures (Singer 443). The parallels between the treatments offered by the seventeenth century *ticitl* in Ana's case and modern descriptions of psychic surgery are considerable. It is difficult to determine the nature of Ana's particular illness. What we can take from the testimony is that the Indian apparently sucked a large amount of blood out of her hip without making any incision in her skin. Like modern psychic surgery, Ana's treatment also included a meditative state that reinforced her faith and lead her to her path of healing. Instead of spiritual guides in the form of ancestors, as is the case with present-day Filipino psychic surgery, the guide in this case is the herb that speaks from her chest.

Conclusion

The case of Ana Calderón sheds light on the complexity of hallucinogen consumption in seventeenth century New Spain. Medicinal and divinatory uses fostered strong bonds between individuals of different castes. The needs of a growing population underserved by the sanctioned

medical services of the protomedicato lead to an increased demand for alternative forms of healing, while surviving traditions of Nahua *ticitils* filled the void. Hallucinogens played an important role in the treatments offered by *ticitls*, which maintained many pre-Columbian characteristics. The inclusion of Catholic signs and figures demonstrates the extent to which hallucinogens factored in to the religious syncretism that developed during the colonial period. Although the entire document is based on hearsay, it reveals a great deal about how Spanish colonial subjects thought about traditional Nahua medicine, religious visions, and their social position in relation to other members of the Spanish caste.

The case also reveals a great deal about how the average Spanish subject perceived hallucinogens in New Spain. Although the Arceniega women never identify the specific plant in question, peyote, the explicitly prohibited herb, serves as the point of comparison by which to judge its validity. The anonymity of the plant and Indian are noteworthy. It is not clear whether Ana Calderón simply did not tell the women the name of the plant, or whether she herself was ignorant of its origin. It is possible, furthermore, that the medicine man did not reveal the nature of his remedies even to his patients. This raises questions as to the potential level of secrecy that *ticitls* may have used during the colonial period to safeguard their methods and practices. Certainly, like the black magic practitioners of Early modern Europe who specialized in the collection and administration of hallucinogenic herbs, *ticitls* of the New World were not likely always eager to share their secrets, likely for reasons of economic self preservation and concern about the integrity of the treatment and the plant. The existence of extensive sixteenth-century catalogues of New World *materia medica,* such as those compiled by Francisco Hernández and Bernardino de Sahagún, gives the impression that native informants willingly shared their comprehensive medicinal knowledge with Spaniards. In her study on the impact of Nicolás

Monardes's sixteenth-century *Historia medicinal de las cosas que se traen de nuestras Indias Occidentales que sirven en medicina,* Daniela Bleichmar demonstrates the difficultly that many colonizers faced while attempting to collect information about New World pharmacopeia. Indigenous peoples were not always willing to share their knowledge with Spaniards, and frequently reacted with hostility towards those who divulged medicinal secrets (95). It is impossible to read the motives and attitudes of the Nahua medicine man described in the Arceniega testimonies, just as its impossible to know the motives of the Arceniega women who accuse Ana Calderón. What is clear from this case is that the use of hallucinogens during the seventeenth century was an important catalyst for intercaste exchange, religious syncretism, and the preservation of Nahua traditions.

Epilogue

Incorporation, Interaction, and Opposition

To finalize this study, I would like to return to Andrew Sherratt's description of the history of psychoactive substances as "a continuing process of transformation, involving complex patterns of incorporation, interaction, and opposition" ("Alcohol" 15). Throughout this project, I have explored the nuances of these complex patterns and how they molded the hybrid culture of hallucinogen consumption that developed in colonial Mexico during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This process of development is based on interaction, the most neutral and ambiguous of the three forms of contact, while each stage tends to highlight either incorporation or opposition. For example, Chapter 1 describes the relationship between the general public of early modern Spain and the endemic hallucinogens of Europe. This was clearly a relationship marked by opposition, as the mandates of the Catholic Church against these plants were at odds with the consumption habits of the people, which contained vestiges of ancient pagan practices.

The vibrant hallucinogenic culture that developed in pre-Columbian Mesoamerica explored in Chapter 2 is a story, primarily, of incorporation. Hallucinogens were embraced both by the authorities of the Triple Alliance and the general population. The predominantly Nahuatl-speaking communities of central Mexico had a long tradition of incorporating the sacred rites and ritual forms of their neighbors into their belief system, which included the use of hallucinogenic plants. In Chapter 3, incorporation and opposition appear as equal forces that describe the complex integration of these two cultures of consumption. The conflict between Spanish authorities and the consumption habits of the Spanish public became even more complex as forms of Mesoamerican hallucinogenic medicinal and divinatory aids became available. The marginalized sorcerer or witch of early modern Europe who dealt in poisons,

magic circles, and love spells was replaced by the Nahua *ticitl*. Furthermore, Spaniards, Africans, and Asians incorporated Mexican hallucinogens into their consumption habits. At the same time, Nahua peoples incorporated Catholic symbols into their religious belief system, resulting in a syncretism that featured sacred plants such as peyote and *ololiuqui* as divine figures that stood alongside God and the Virgin Mary. Spanish authorities, in their efforts to segregate Indian populations from other colonial subjects and contain their idolatrous behavior, may have fueled hallucinogen use. Jurisdictional confusion kept many inquisitorial trials from moving forward, as was likely the case with Ana Calderón of Chapter 4.

Finally, I suggest that Sherratt's quote on the history of psychoactive plants is equally fit to describe the way in which this project continues to unfold. It has certainly been an experience of incorporation, interaction, and opposition in its own right, and it is undeniably "a continuing process of transformation" (15). There is a great abundance of potential material that has yet to be explored with regards to tracing pre-Columbian hallucinogenic plant use that I have not included here. I will name just a few topics worthy of further inquiry.

One of the most significant omissions in this study is the perception of hallucinogens during the conquest. This period requires particular attention regarding hallucinogenic plants and first encounters. The *Cartas de relación* written from Hernán Cortés to Holy Roman Emperor Charles V as well as Bernal Díaz del Castillo's *Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España* combined with the Nahuatl sources compiled in Miguel León Portilla's *Vision de los vencidos* may reveal previously unearthed indirect references to hallucinogenic rituals. For example, in the notorious incident of the Templo Mayor massacre, when Pedro de Alvarado ordered the killing of the high lords of Tenochtitlan, they were celebrating the festival of Tóxcatl (León Portilla 101). As we have seen from Cristobal's case in Chapter 3 and the associations

between Nahua deities and hallucinogens in Chapter 2, it is very likely that the consumption of *tenonanácatl* mushrooms or any number of Nahua sacred plants took place. It is also likely that, as we saw from Fernando Tezozómoc's relation of *tenonánactl* sharing amongst Mexica lords during festivals and feasts, that the Spaniards were offered these substances. How would it alter our perception of the Templo Mayor massacre if we were to question the influence of psychoactive substances on the actions of Pedro de Alvarado and his men during this episode? What can it tell us about questions of Spanish and indigenous agency during the conquest?

I briefly touch on the writings of Toribio Benavente de Motolinía in Chapter 2 and 3 as an example of Spanish perspectives of *teonanácatl* mushrooms, but his manuscript deserves significantly more attention. As a member of what Klor de Alva labels "the first wave of amateur field investigators," his observations on the ritual customs cover the territory spanning from present-day Nicaragua to the city of Tenochtitlan in central Mexico (34 "Sahagún"). Although his work is framed by his efforts to indoctrinate Amerindian peoples, his early entries on *teonanácatl* reveal a great deal about European concepts of demonology and idolatry related to hallucinogenic rituals.

A fourth direction in which I would like to take this research is to deepen the analysis of Sahaguntine texts to extrapolate more obscure forms of hallucinogen consumption. For example, the description of the Nahua feast Etzalcualiztli appears to contain a reference to ritual baths in hallucinogenic datura-infused waters (1:116). This mode of consumption, by which hallucinogens are absorbed through the skin, has yet to be fully considered as it pertains to Nahua customs and further underscores the pervasive nature of hallucinogenic rituals in the cycle of feasts.

The influence of African and Asian peoples upon the culture of consumption of New Spain deserves considerably more attention as well. In Chapter 3 I briefly touched on the Filipino communities that settled in Acapulco, where there was also a significant African population (Gerhard 25). The consumption habits amongst Asian and African communities on the pacific coast surely manifested in very different ways compared to Mexico City or Veracruz based purely on population demographics.

And finally, to return to present-day cases such as the arrest of marákame Don Silvestre of the Wixárika people, it is worthy to continue exploration of the discourses –public, judicial and legislative– that currently affect indigenous communities in regards to hallucinogen use. By mapping the collision between European and Amerindian habits in New Spain, this study has only begun to scratch the surface of this complex question. The role of psychoactive substances in the past can divulge a great deal about the present. The legal handling of traditional forms of medicine is of particular relevance in the tumultuous political climate of today, in which indigenous communities across the Americas and the world are asserting their rights to self-preservation and cultural autonomy.

Glossaries

European Psychoactive Substances (Referenced)

Common Name(s)	Botanical Name	Effects/History/Usage	Source(s)
belladonna (belladona)	*Atropa belladonna*	Like henbane and mandrake, belladonna (deadly nightshade) contains the alkaloids atropine, hyoscyamin and scopalamine. In small doses cause euphoria, feelings of timelessness, deep sleep and erotic dreams. Used as an aphrodisiac and cosmetic for it effect of dilating the pupils. Causes the feeling of being able to fly in when combined with oil (basis for witches' ointment)	Harner (55); Schultes et al.(68-69, 86-91; Wink and Van Wyk (62)
ergot (cornezuelo)	*Claviceps purpurea*	Fungus that grows on wheat and rye. Used by Greeks to induce hallucinations to reach Eleusis. Highly toxic in large doses. Outbreaks of ergotism caused St. Anthony's fire epidemic in the Middle Ages. In small doses causes hallucinations. In large doses causes vomiting, thirst, confusion, atrophy, loses of extremities. Currently used in several medicinal treatments.	Schultes et al. (69, 102-105;, Wink and Van Wyk (90)
Hellebore (yerba ballestra)	*(genus) Helleborus*	Herbaceous Perennials. Helleborus species are all toxic, *Helleborus niger* most closely associated with witchcraft. Contains the alkaloids celliamine and sprintilline, which cause excitation of the motor centers of the brain. Large doses cause death by respiratory arrest.	Rudgley (113); Wink and Van Wyk (139)
henbane, (beleño negro)	*Hyoscycamus albus, H. Niger*	Member of the Solanaceae family along with belladonna and mandrake. in small doses causes hallucinations, euphoria, confusion, unconsciousness. Also used as a painkiller since ancient time. The most notorious and well documented of the European hallucinogens. Used in unguents and smoked.	Harner (49); Schultes et al. (70-71, 86-91); Wink and Van Wyk (145)
mandrake (mandragora)	*Madragora officicinarum*	Effects very similar to belladonna and henbane. Main alkaloid is scopolamine. Used in witches brew and as an aphrodisiac. In small doses is a sedative, causes confusion, hallucinations, euphoria, insomnia. High doses causes death by paralysis.	Harner (30; Schultes et al. (72-73, 86-91), Wink and Van Wyk (167)

Mexican Psychoactive Substances (Referenced)

Common Name	Botanical Name	Name Variations	Effects/Usage/History	Source(s)
estafiate, Mexican mugwort	*Artemisia mexicana*	Iztauhyatl, Sal amarga, Mexican mugwort	Nahua uses included several medicinal and divinatory uses. contains the monoterpene thujone which causes hallucinations. Basis for absinth. Sexual stimulant that can cause unpleasant visions.	De la Garza (290), Schultes et al. (98), Wink and Van Wyk 58
macuilxóchitl	*Tagetes canulata*		Aphrodisac with many medicinal properties. Closely related to yauhtli flower.	De la Garza (291)
míxitl	*Datura discoflor*		Related to toloatzin.	De la Garza (291)
octli	derived from *Agave americana*	pulque, uctli, pulcre	Fermented juice of the agave. Sacred alcoholic drink for the Nahua, with ritual importance. Used frequently as a catalyst for hallucinogenic plants	De la Garza (292); Bruman (61-82)
ololiuqui	*Turbina corymbosa, Rivea corymbosa*	ololiuhqui, coaxihuitl, badoh	Morning glory seeds are collected and ground and added to beverages, usually water or alcohol. Provokes strong visual and auditory hallucinations. contains ergoline alkaloids, closely related to LSD.	De la Garza (294-296, Schultes et al. (74, 170-175)
peyote	*Lophophora diffusa*	péyotl,Rosa María, Raiz del diablo	The main compound of peyote, mescaline, has very strong psychadelic properties. Widely used by the ancient Nahua and present-day indigenous communties across Mexico, including the Huichol.	De la Garza (296); Schultes et al. (47, 144-155) Wink and Van Wyk 162
picietl	*Nicotiana rustica*	tabaco, nicociana, hierba sagrada	There are 66 varieties of Nicotiana in the New World, many of which are hallucinogenic. picietl is much stronger than its cousin, *nicotiana tabacum*, (tobacco) which was absorbed into European consumption.	De la Garza (296); Wink and Van Wyk (176-177)
toloatzin	*Datura inoxia*	tlapatl, toloache	One of the most potent of the Nahua sacred plants. Pain reliever that causes delerum and visions in higher doses. Present-day Tarahumara consume the flower in tesquino, a fermented corn drink. Related to Euroasian Thorn-apple (Datura stramonium)	De la Garza (307); Schultes et al. (41); Wink and Van Wyk (106)

Mexican Psychoactive Substances (Cont.)

teonanácatl	*Psilocybe mexicana*	nanáctl, niños santos, hongo divino, apipil, xochinanactl	One of the primary sacred substances for the ancient Nahua, this variety of mushrooms is currently consumed across Mexico, especially by the Mazatec in Oaxaca. Causes psychedelic effects and hallucinations that last for 4-12 hours. Can cause euphoria and erotic feelings, as well as anxiety, loss of personality and delirium.	De la Garza (304); Schultes et al. (158-163); Wink and Van Wyk (194)
yauhtli	*Tagetes lucida*	hierba de nubes, Amarillo espiritado	Strongly scented perennial herb. Induces visions when smoked with picietl. Added to fermented corn beer or pulque.	De la Garza (310); Schultes et al. (58)

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