

The Historical Legacy of La Malinche

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April 2022

To the study the history of the world, a region, or a figure is to delve into a series of factual events, and often to find connections of how they have found their place into our modern world. In studying the life of the La Malinche, a Nahua woman of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, it's found that factual events have been intertwined with fallacies and interpretations. Since Malinche left no written account of her own, her legacy has been subject for continuous reinvention. Through the analysis of early pictorials, literature, paintings, and theatrical productions, this essay elucidates La Malinche's multidimensional historical memory; how she came to be seen as the hyper-sexualized, traitorous assistant in the conquest of the Americas; how her image has been defended; and how she has continued to represent lust and cultural betrayal in contemporary Latin American communities.

Most of what we have come to understand about Malinche's childhood and her years assisting the Spanish is derived from Bernal Diaz del Castilla's *Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España* (True story of the conquest of New Spain). Diaz del Castilla was a Spanish soldier of Cortes' conquests of 1519. His account is written of his personal experiences during the conquests, yet they were not published until years after his death in 1632. In his account Diaz wrote that Malintzin was born around 1502 to a noble family as both of her parents were chiefs and Caciques in a town on the Gulf Coast of Mexico, formally known as Painala. According to Diaz, Malinche had lost her father in her early childhood years and soon after her mother remarried and had a son. To secure the family's wealth Malinche was secretly given to an Indian family of Xicalango and pronounced dead by her family, leaving her stepbrother to inherit

the assets. The family then gave Malinche to the peoples of Tabasco where she spent the rest of her childhood a slave to the Chontal Maya.<sup>1</sup>

In 1519, Hernan Cortes arrived on the shores of New Spain where he was introduced to Geronimo de Aguilar, a native of Spain who had been living in New Spain, under the power of the Indians, and could speak both Spanish and Mayan. Geronimo de Aguilar became Cortes' ally and interpreter. Soon after Cortes and his army landed on the shores of the Yucatan Peninsula the Maya presented Cortes with 20 slaves, one being seventeen-year-old Malinche. As Cortes' conquest advanced, de Aguilar's skills became limited because the Spanish were facing a new tribe, the Aztecs. Malinche, who spoke both Nahuatl, the language of the Aztec, and Mayan, became the imperative link between Cortes and the Aztec ruler Moctezuma and allowed Cortes to move forward in his conquests. (NEED SOURCE)

Malinche's linguistic skill allowed her into Cortes' inner circle, and she was lauded by Spanish for her assistance as a translator. She had converted to Christianity under the control of Cortes and received a new baptismal name: Dona Marina. This is one of the many names, along with Malinalli, Malintzin, and most famously, La Malinche, that we use to refer to her still today. Malinche's multi-faceted identity can be understood in part through the analysis of her many known names. Through the years, historians and authors have used them to piece together her early life, her dynamic relationship with and how she was conceived by both the Spanish and the Indians.

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<sup>1</sup> Bernal Díaz del Castillo, *Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España*, ed. Genaro García and Alfred Percival Maudslay (United Kingdom: Hakluyt society, 1908), 132.

In accounts written by the Spanish, she is referred to as doña Marina: doña indicating a sign of respect and Marina due to the phonetic similarities to her assumed birth name.<sup>2</sup> Historian Kristina Downs writes that based on Mesoamerican traditions her birth name would have been Malinalli based on the twelfth day of the Aztec calendar. To be named after the day of one's birth was common in Aztec culture as well as the belief that those who are born on the twelfth day of the Aztec calendar, *Malinalli*, were believed to be "rebellious, unlucky, and to have their children taken from them."<sup>3</sup> Historians Frances Karttunen and Ann McBride-Limaye write that the name Malinche could have developed from the political affiliation between her and Cortes.<sup>4</sup> Karttunen writes that that because several indigenous accounts write of Cortes and Malintzin jointly, Cortes had earned the title "Marina's Captain" which eventually became "Malinche" for short.<sup>5</sup> According to historian Camilla Townsend, the name Malinche came from a disconnect in dialect between the natives and the Spanish. Townsend's research shows that her baptismal name of "Marina" would have been pronounced "Malina" by the Nahua. The Nahua natives refer to her as "Malintzin," adding "tzin" to Malina which indicated a sign of respect. The name "Malintzin" was then heard and pronounced as "Malinche" by the Spanish.<sup>6</sup>

For many people living in Mexico today, and those who are of Mexican descent, Malinche's name is associated with hostility, passivity, and betrayal. Her various names, and

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<sup>2</sup> Kristina Downs, "Mirrored Archetypes: The Contrasting Cultural Roles of La Malinche and Pocahontas", 401.

<sup>3</sup> Kristina Downs, "Mirrored Archetypes: The Contrasting Cultural Roles of La Malinche and Pocahontas." *Western Folklore* 67, no. 4 (2008): 401.

<sup>4</sup> Ann McBride-Limaye, "Metmorphoses of La Malinche and Mexican Cultural Identity," *Comparative Civilizations Review*, 19, no. 19 (1988): 3.

<sup>5</sup> Frances E. Karttunen, *Between Worlds: Interpreters, Guides, and Survivors*. (United States: Rutgers University Press, 1994): 9.

<sup>6</sup> Camilla Townsend, *Malintzin's Choices: An Indian Woman in the Conquest of Mexico*. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006), 73.

their various connotations, have made their way into many works through the twentieth century and into the twenty-first. Carlos Fuentes, a renowned Mexican novelist, produced the screen play *Todos los gatos son pardos* (1970), where he uses the opening scene to clarify the three names and how he felt they have affected the Mexican people. Fuentes wrote:

“Malintzin, Marina, Malinche. . . Three were your names, woman: the one they gave you your parents, the one your lover gave you, and the one your people gave you. . . Malintzin said your parents: sorceress, goddess of bad luck and blood feud. . . Marine, said your man, remembering the ocean by which he came to these lands. . . Malinche, said your people: traitor, tongue, and guide of the white man.” (pg. 13)

The idea that Malinche’s name has become an infamous slang term of his language was explicated in Octavio Paz’s novel *The Labyrinth of Solitude* (1950). He expressed Mexican hatred toward Malinche and of how Malinche’s decisions, made centuries prior to publication, were still raveled into the everyday thoughts and habits of the Mexican population. Malinche’s name has transformed into the term *malinchistas*, and according to Paz is used to refer to those who favor a culture other than their own, those “corrupted by foreign influences,” and “those who want Mexico to open itself to the outside world.”<sup>7</sup>

Malinche’s various names, and their various connotations, have made their way into many works throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty-first. Yet, despite her prominent role as translator for the Spanish during their conquest of the Aztec Empire, the idea of her as a licentious women and traitor to her culture did not erupt until centuries later. In

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<sup>7</sup> Octavio Paz, *The Labyrinth of Solitude: Life and Thought in Mexico*. (New York: Grove Press, 1961): 86.

analyzing sixteenth century indigenous codex glyphs, historian Camilla Townsend notes that artworks such as the “Texas Fragment” of the *Lienzo de Tlaxcala*, and “Mapa de San Antonio de Tepetlan”, present “a warm rendering of Malintzin” by depicting her as a noble woman.<sup>8</sup> In these pictorials Malintzin is seen wearing aristocratic attire of cloaks, beaded jewelry and braided headbands while peacefully negotiating and receiving gifts from the Tlaxcalans. In the sixteenth century Annals of Tlatelolco, the earliest Nahuatl written accounts, Malintzin is referred to as *nochpochtzin*, meaning daughter, and *cihuapilli*, meaning noble woman, by Mexica natives.<sup>9</sup> In indigenous artwork illustrating the devastation of the conquests, such as the Huamantla Codex, Malintzin is not drawn or referenced. In some indigenous accounts, Malintzin is referred to as Aguilar’s wife rather than Cortes’.<sup>10</sup> In later generations, Malintzin is still viewed as a trustworthy “mutual aid” to both the Spanish and the Tlaxcalans.<sup>11</sup>

This admiration shown for Malintzin was not exclusive to the natives but shown even more explicitly by the Spanish. Images similar to those drawn by the Tlaxcalans appeared in Spanish friar Bernadino de Sahagun’s sixteenth century Florentine Codex. In book 12, chapter 9 of the Florentine Codex, Malinche is seen again standing in between the Indians and the Spanish, interpreting plans between the two groups. Many of the other books and chapters that make up the codex include images of violence and death, Malinche is not pictured in any of these of pictorials. Malinche was written of very highly in the publications of both Castilla and Cortez

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<sup>8</sup> Camilla Townsend, *Malintzin's Choices: An Indian Woman in the Conquest of Mexico*, 84.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>10</sup> Ann McBride-Limaye, "Metmorphoses of La Malinche and Mexican Cultural Identity," (1988): 12.

<sup>11</sup> Camilla Townsend, 92.

himself but the way in which she was mentioned differs. Castillo expressed his fondness of Malinche:

As Dona Marina proved herself such as excellent woman and good interpreter throughout the wars in New Spain, Tlascalala and Mexico Cortes always took her with him... Dona Marina was a person of the greatest importance and was obeyed without question by the Indians throughout New Spain.<sup>12</sup>

Cortez on the other hand scarcely mentions Malintzin. He only wrote of her twice in the hundreds of pages he sent, neither of which included any indication of a personal or intimate relationship between the two.

For centuries following the conquest of Mexico, Malintzin's name was scarcely mentioned in indigenous nor Spanish sources. The lingering question when doing this research was then this: when did Malinche gain such a shameful reputation? It was not until three centuries later in 1826 when the novel *Xicotencatl* was published in Philadelphia, that Malintzin's name returned to literature.<sup>13</sup> Though it was published anonymously, Guillermo Castillo-Feliú, editor and translator of the 1999 republication, determines the probable author was Cuban Catholic priest Félix Varela.<sup>14</sup> The novel *Xicotencatl* was the initial romanticization of Malintzin and Cortes's relationship after it portrayed Malinche as a power hungry, lustful woman whose focus was solely on her life with Cortes. In the story, Malintzin is seen talking to

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<sup>12</sup> Bernal Díaz del Castillo, *Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España*, 133.

<sup>13</sup> Camilla Townsend, *Malintzin's Choices: An Indian Woman in the Conquest of Mexico*, 20.

<sup>14</sup> Félix Varela, *Xicotencatl: An Anonymous Historical Novel about the Events Leading Up to the Conquest of the Aztec Empire*, ed. Guillermo Castillo-Feliú (United States: University of Texas Press, 1999), 2.

*Xicotencatl*, the king of Tlaxcala at the time, where he is attempting to convince Malintzin that her alliance with the Spanish is dishonorable. When Xicotencatl tells Malintzin that she is delusional to be in love with a “monster,” Malintzin’s character rebuttles with “Yes, with all of my heart and soul. Yes, Xicotencatl, I love him; I love his virtues, I love his heroism...”<sup>15</sup>

This was one of many scenes in the novel where Malintzin is defending her love for Cortes and her decision to side with the Spanish. Since *Xicotencatl*, a game of tug-of-war has been played. On one side of the rope are those who support the perfidious reputation given to Malintzin and wish to blame for her role in the conquest and for the complexity of Mexico’s national identity and want those who work to defend her. On the other side is those to liberate her from the incriminating narratives.

## Literature

The myth of Malintzin continued in Henry Rider Haggards 1893 novel *Montezuma’s Daughter*. Haggard, narrating through the fictional character of Thomas Wingfield, writes that because Malintzin falls in love with Cortes, “she forgot her honor in her passion... and brought evil on her native land.”<sup>16</sup> The twentieth brought about a plethora of work that blamed Malintzin for the destruction of the native Mexica culture through her devotion to Cortes. In Gustavo A. Rodríguez’s 1935 historical monograph, titled *Doña Marina*, he writes of politician Ignacio

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 107.

<sup>16</sup> Henry Rider Haggard, *Montezuma's Daughter: A Romance*. (United States: McKinlay, Stone & Mackenzie, 1909), 3.



Ramirez's speech on Mexican Independence Day of 1861, where he Ramirez stood in front of his fellow Mexicans and urged them not to forget that the downfall of their country was the fault of Malintzin, or as refers to her as, "Cortez's whore."<sup>17</sup> Edison Marshall's novel *Cortez and Marina*, published in 1963, romanticizes the relationship, centering the entire novel on the love and tragedy between the two, portraying their relationship with Shakespearean attributes.

Octavio Paz's novel *The Labyrinth of Solitude* (1950) was a principal piece of literature represented Malintzin as the "Mexican Eve."<sup>18</sup> Paz writes of Malintzin's sins being the basis for the Mexico's national psyche. Along with the term *malinchista*, Paz explores the meanings and importance of the word *chingada* and the phrase "*Viva Mexico, hijos de la chingada!*" translating to "Long live Mexico, sons of a bitch!"<sup>19</sup> Paz explores the many meanings and dialects behind Chingada; as a noun Paz defines it over all as the mythical mother who was violated and defrauded; and as a verb the word denotes violence. The *hijo de la Chingada*, a term which he uses to describe the Mexican people, is the "offspring of violation."<sup>20</sup> Paz writes that the phrase is shouted when the people of Mexico want to manifest their "desire to live closed off from the outside world and above all, from the past."<sup>21</sup>

Contemporary works continue to depict her as the "evil of colonialism" and condemn her for destroying her own native peoples.<sup>22</sup> In the 1980 novel *Aztec* by Gary Jennings, as well as the

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<sup>17</sup> Norma Alarcón, "Traddutora, Traditora: A Paradigmatic Figure of Chicana Feminism." *Cultural Critique*, no. 13 (1989): 58.

<sup>18</sup> Paz, 87.

<sup>19</sup> Paz, 74.

<sup>20</sup> Paz, 79.

<sup>21</sup> Paz, 86.

<sup>22</sup> Laura Loria, *La Malinche*. (Chicago, IL: Rosen Publishing Group, 2017): 40.

1995 novel *La frontera de cristal* or *The Crystal Frontier* by Carlos Fuentes, Malintzin is once again portrayed as the traitor responsible for the divided Mexican culture.

In poetic works by Rosario Castellanos, Elena Garro and Elena Poniatowska, we see Malintzin as a liable figure who has influenced future generations people by creating this blame and hatred for the women and mothers of the Mexican culture. In Rosario Castellanos poem *La Malinche*, we see a mother loathing her own daughter because within her, she can see her own reflection and ultimately the image of Malintzin. Castellanos writes:

Cast out, expelled from the kingdom, the palace, and the warm belly  
of the woman who bore me in legitimate marriage bed, who hated me because I  
was her equal in stature and rank, who saw herself in me and hating her image  
dashed the mirror against the ground.<sup>23</sup>

The idea of marriage and motherhood was tainted in the eyes of many Mexican women because of Malintzin's son, the first mestizo, bearing from a "sexual contract."<sup>24</sup>

Still today, the name Malinche is a term for anyone of who is seen as a traitor to their heritage by favoring a foreign culture as well as an insult for women deemed "sexually charged."<sup>25</sup> Malinche is blamed for being the cause of the "dilution of Mexican cultural identity."<sup>26</sup> In a 1992 LATimes article written by Marjorie Miller, the idea of a Malinche-caused-caste system that has divided Mexico based on pure blood and mestizo, or mixed blood, citizens

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<sup>23</sup> Elba D. Birmingham-Pokorny, "La Malinche: A Feminist Perspective on Otherness in Mexican and Chicano Literature." *Confluencia* 11, no. 2 (1996): 124.

<sup>24</sup> Jean Franco, "La Malinche: from gift to sexual contract" In Mary Louise Pratt; Kathleen Newman (eds.). *Critical Passions: Selected Essays*. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999): 66–82.

<sup>25</sup> Downs, "Mirrored Archetypes", 414.

<sup>26</sup> Amanda Harris and Rolanda Romero, *Feminism, Nation and Myth: La Malinche*, 35.

is further explained. Miller quotes political journalist Jose Agustin Ortiz Pinqueti, stating, “The structure that Cortes established was apartheid--two distinct communities, one in the center, another on the margin.”<sup>27</sup>

It was not then until the 1960’s that a wave of nationalistic, feminist disapproval began to tell the in-depth story of La Malinche’s life, redefining her as a “scapegoat of an androcentric society”, rather than a traitor or sexual temptress.<sup>28</sup> Many historians noted that for every finger pointed at Malintzin, one must be pointed at the Aztec leader Moctezuma for how he ruled his army during the Spanish conquests. In her journal article *Traddutora, Traditora: A Paradigmatic Figure of Chicana Feminism*, Chicana author Norma Alarcon, describes that the use of Malintzin as a scapegoat was created by the Latin Americans during the Mexican independence movement to provide an explanation, or excuse, for why a small group of Spanish soldiers were able to conquer the entirety of the Inca and Aztec Empires.<sup>29</sup> Cortes employed Malinche for information about the indigenous culture, such as the belief that their god, Quetzalcoatl was said to be returning, and used this his advantage.<sup>30</sup> This influenced Montezuma’s poor leadership and indecisiveness on how to approach the conquerors that gave the Spanish the “political and military advantages” they needed to take the empire.<sup>31</sup> Malinche was very informed on both sides, the indigenous and the Spanish motives and capabilities, and quickly realized that the

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<sup>27</sup> Marjorie Miller, Culture : Mexico Confronts Cortes--Again : It’s time to quit vilifying the Spanish ‘Father of Mexico’ and give him his due, two famous authors argue” *LA Times*, March 31, 1992.

<sup>28</sup> Downs, "Mirrored Archetypes", 401.

<sup>29</sup> Norma Alarcón, "Traddutora, Traditora: A Paradigmatic Figure of Chicana Feminism." *Cultural Critique*, no. 13 (1989): 64.

<sup>30</sup> Miguel Leon-Portilla, *The Broken Spears: The Aztec Account of the Conquest of Mexico*. ed., Lysander Kemp, and Alberto Beltrán, (United States: Beacon Press, 1992), 6.

<sup>31</sup> Candelaria, Cordelia. "La Malinche, Feminist Prototype." *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 5, no. 2 (1980): 3.

Spanish invasion was inevitable. La Malinche did not solely work against the Aztecs as she did help to negotiate between Moctezuma and Cortes. Alarcon uses philosopher René Girard's book *Violence and the Sacred* to draw connections when making the argument that Malinche, able and willing to translate between the Aztecs and the Spanish, may have evaded more violence than what would have occurred without her assistance.

In the publications of many feminist critics, a primary argument made against the idea of Malinche as a traitor asks the reader to question who exactly Malintzin was betraying. Author Kristina Downs points out that Malintzin was born an Aztec, sold by her family to the Maya, and then sold again to the Spanish at age fifteen, and so realistically, "Malinche had no homeland to betray."<sup>32</sup> Historian Frances Karttunen defines the hyper-sexualization of Malinche and the dramatization of her relationship with Cortes, arguing that her sexual and logical subjection to her owner was a "law of biology" as she was a young woman under his control.<sup>33</sup> This psychological superiority was represented in a sketch done by artist Raul Anguiano Valadez in 1953. In this image we see Cortez suited in full armor and Malinche drawn need to show her vulnerability and his patronization.<sup>34</sup> The notion that Malintzin was used rather than romantically intertwined with Cortes was detailed in Sarah Messinger Cypess's article where she notes that as soon as his conquests were done and Cortez planned to return to Spain, Malinche had "outlived her usefulness"<sup>35</sup> and her "voice and presence" in Cortez's writing "gradually diminished."<sup>36</sup> These flattering delineations of Malintzin helped to influence contemporary works such as Helen

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<sup>32</sup> Downs, "Mirrored Archetypes", 406.

<sup>33</sup> Karttunen, "Between Worlds: Interpreters, Guides, and Survivors.", 4.

<sup>34</sup> Zimányi, "Reflections on Interpreting Settings and Ethics in View of Visual Representations of La Malinche." 11.

<sup>35</sup> Patty Harrington Delaney, "José Limón's "La Malinche"." *Dance Chronicle* 26, no. 3 (2003): 280.

<sup>36</sup> Sandra Messinger Cypess, "La Malinche in Mexican Literature: From History to Myth" (University of Texas Press, 2010): 100.

Heightsman Gordon's, 2011 historical novel *Malinalli of the Fifth Sun: The Slave Girl Who Changed the Fate of Mexico and Spain*, where Malintzin is written of having left a positive legacy.<sup>37</sup>

## Artwork

Along with literature, artwork has played a principal role in continuing the mythical identity. In 1926, artist Jose Clemente Orozco painted a nude, demeaning portrait of both Malinche and Cortez. In his painting, Cortez is seen with one arm stretched in across Malintzin's chest and the arm reached across to hold Malintzin's hand as if he were protecting and consoling her all at once. The two are shown sitting closely and at their feet show a deceased native man, exaggerating the sexualization of Malinche and furthering the notion that she was a carnal, Spanish loyalist.<sup>38</sup> This painting is still displayed as part of a mural in the National Preparatory School in Mexico City.

In 1933, French artist Jean Charlot produced a lithograph titled *La Malinche*. In it a young Malintzin is pictured in dancing with a sword in one hand and a baby rattle in the other, depicting the violence that Malintzin was involved in at such a young age. This painting has also been seen to represent the offspring that that came from Malintzin and Cortez and how they were born into a world where they had to defend themselves against outside cultures. A 1939 painting by Antonio Ruiz, *El sueño de la Malinche*, translated "The Dream of Malinche", shows a sleeping Malintzin with the city landscape of Mexico painted along the curvature of her side body. This painting represents the notion that the nation of Mexico, and what it has become, has

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<sup>37</sup> Helen Heightsman Gordon, *Malinalli of the Fifth Sun: The Slave Girl Who Changed the Fate of Mexico and Spain*. (United States: iUniverse, 2011)

<sup>38</sup> Bernard Myers and Federico Alvarez. "JOSE CLEMENTE OROZCO." *Artes De México*, no. 25 (1958): 23.

been “built upon the ‘ground’ laid by Malinche’s actions.”<sup>39</sup> In 1941, Jesus de la Helguera released a mystical painting with similar a theme. In his portrait, Malinche is shown riding horseback with Cortez, taking the reins, and guiding the Spanish through the forests of Mexico.<sup>40</sup> In 2011 Rafael Uriegas painting, *El Manto de la Malinche*, shows that the pejorative artwork of Malinche has yet to falter. In this painting Malinche is seen in distress, daydreaming about the brutal killings that she has been tied to due to her alliance with the Spanish.<sup>41</sup> Malinche’s legacy is still being used to explain the “fragmented identity” of Mexico.<sup>42</sup>

This hatred for the connection of Malinche to the identification of Mexican culture was seen in earlier 1982 when a statue of Malinche, Cortes, and their son Martin was assembled at the village of Coyoacán in Mexico City to represent the mestizo population of Mexico. It did not take long for the Mexican citizens to rebuke the idea of Cortes and Malinche representing their own, and protest erupted. The statue remained throughout the protest until sometime in the last decade when the figure of Cortes and Malintzin’s son Martin was stolen from the monument. Though it is still unsolved where and exactly why the statue of the child went missing, due to earlier protest of the same statue, it is assumed that it was an act of expression toward Mexican nationalism.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Antonio Ruíz, *El sueño de la Malinche* [“The Dream of Malinche”]. Oil on canvas, Galería de Arte Mexicano, Mexico City, 1939.

<sup>40</sup> Krisztina Zimányi, “Reflections on Interpreting Settings and Ethics in View of Visual Representations of La Malinche.” *The International Journal for Translation & Interpreting Research* 7, no. 2 (2015): 11-12.

<sup>41</sup> Zimányi, “Reflections on Interpreting Settings and Ethics in View of Visual Representations of La Malinche.” 12.

<sup>42</sup> Townsend, *Malintzin's Choices: An Indian Woman in the Conquest of Mexico*, p.21.

<sup>43</sup> Destry Maria Sibley, “A Lesson from Mexico: How to Forgive Historical Wrongs to Do Right in the Present.” *National Geographic*, January 29, 2018.

## Theatre and Dance

Moving further into the 20th century, theatre and film became an outlet that creatives used to tell Malinche's story, or the many painted versions of it. It appears the 400 years between Malintzin's death and the modern era only fueled more curiosity, creativity, and hatred for Malintzin and her life. The plays and films examined in this essay were written for various reasons and with many different themes and artistic goals. Yet, like many of the other mediums explored, these performances can be divided into two categories; those written to bash Malinche and blame for her role in the conquest and for the complexity of Mexico's national identity, and those to liberate her from the incriminating narratives created since the publication of novel *Xicoténcatl*.

Performances written to liberate Malinche included Jesus Sotelo Inclan's *Malintzin* (1957), Celestino Gorostiza's *La Malinche* (1958), and Rodolfo Usigli's *Corona de Fuego* (1961). These playwrights were some of the pioneers that showcased the creation of the mestizo on stage by focusing less on the brutality of the conquest or the decline of an indigenous people, but the creation of a new race. Both Jesus Sotelo Inclan's *Malintzin* (1957) Celestino Gorostiza's *La Malinche* (1958) focus on Malinche as a mother and tell her story as a celebration of new life. These playwrights didn't see Malintzin's creation of the mestizo race as an expulsion of the culture's origins but a new era of nationality.

More contemporary plays such as Rosarios Castellano's *El Eterno Femenino* (1974), and Victor Hugo Rascon Banda's *La Malinche* (2000) focused their work on Malintzin's role in how the Mexica people view themselves and their country. Both artists however used a more satirical

humor that invited the audience to find comedic relief in some of the more stringent, misogynistic interpretations of Malinche's story. Castellanos tells a brilliant story of Lupita, a young Mexican woman who is trapped in the idea that Mexican women are to serve their husbands happily and without question. Castellano relates the relationship between Cortes and Malintzin to the lack of romance between married couples in contemporary Mexico. In the play the main character Lupita is at the beauty salon preparing for her wedding day. Lupita dozes off and has dreams of many infamous women throughout history. In her dreams, Lupita meets Malintzin, where she asks her to tell of the love between her and Cortez, or as she refers to him as, "the white bearded man who came across the ocean." Malinche then replies, "In love? What does that mean?"<sup>44</sup> The concept of love and romance is discussed between characters, noting that it was never something that Cortes practiced and nor something that he imported to America during his conquests. Like in her poem prior mentioned, Castellano's is referring to the fact that Malintzin stood by Cortes and even brought a baby into the world him without any love or support.

In the journal article *Feminism, Nation and Myth: La Malinche*, authors Rolando Romero and Amanda Harris analyze Victor Hugo Rascon Banda's play *Malinche* (2002), writing that it "blames Malinche's legacy for the Mexicans culture preference of Halloween to the Day of the Dead, the Mall to the Market, "Happy Birthday" song to Las Mananitas, hamburgers to tacos."<sup>45</sup>

Now, over 500 years since the conquests of Mexica, La Malinche's true role, identity, and intentions continue to be debated. Her name has been slandered, her life has been criticized,

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<sup>44</sup> Rosario Castellanos, "A Rosario Castellanos Reader: An Anthology of Her Poetry, Short Fiction, Essays, and Drama. n.p.: University of Texas Press, 2010): 324.

<sup>45</sup>Amanda Harris and Rolanda Romero, *Feminism, Nation and Myth: La Malinche* (United States: Arte Público Press, 2005), 35.



and her story has been mythicized by means of literature, art, and theater. These sources have carried Malinche's multidimensional legacy through history, helped to identify just how she became known as the hyper-sexualized, traitorous assistant in the conquest of America, and how she has continued to represent lust and cultural betrayal in Latin American communities today.

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### **Paintings**

Ruíz, Antonio. *El sueño de la Malinche* ["The Dream of Malinche"]. Oil on canvas, Galería de Arte Mexicano, Mexico City, 1939.

## Appendix

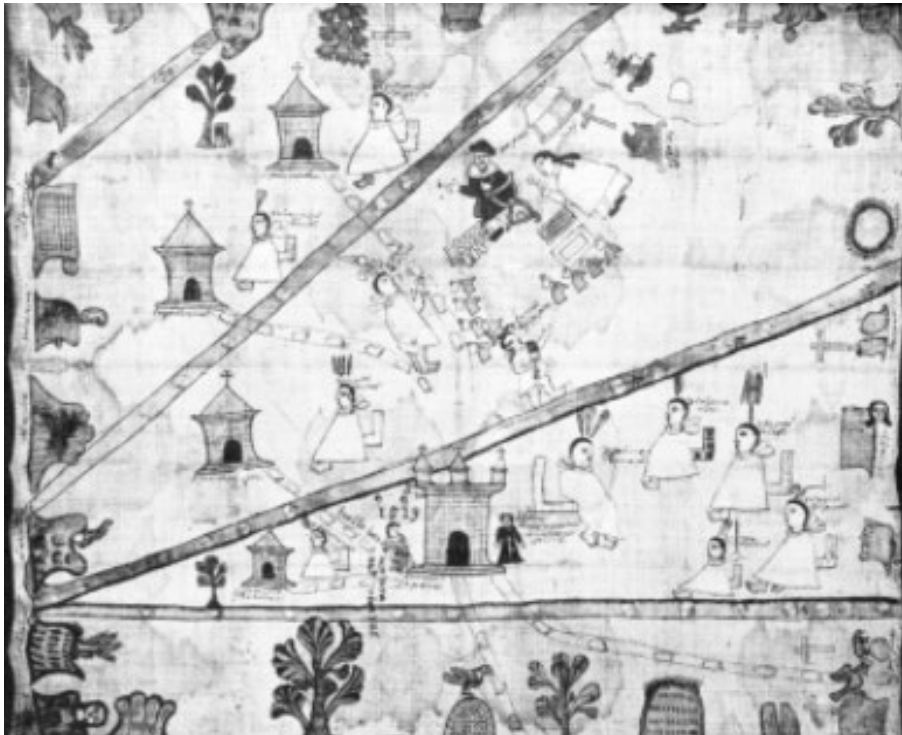
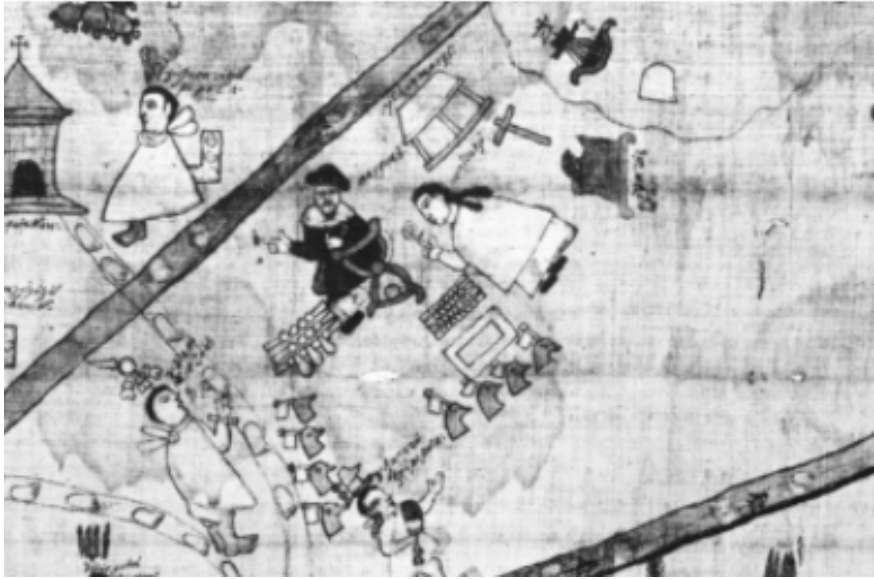
1. <i>Texas Fragment of the Lienzo de Tlaxcala</i>	4
2. <i>Mapa de San Antonio de Tepetlan</i>	4
3. Bernadino de Sahagun, <i>Florentine Codex</i>	4
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8. Rafael Uriegas, <i>El Manto de la Malinche</i>	11



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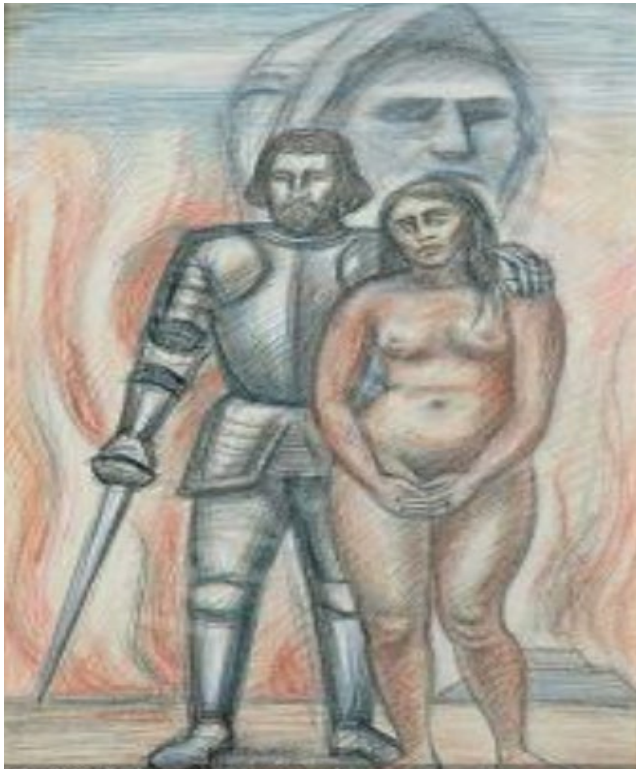
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