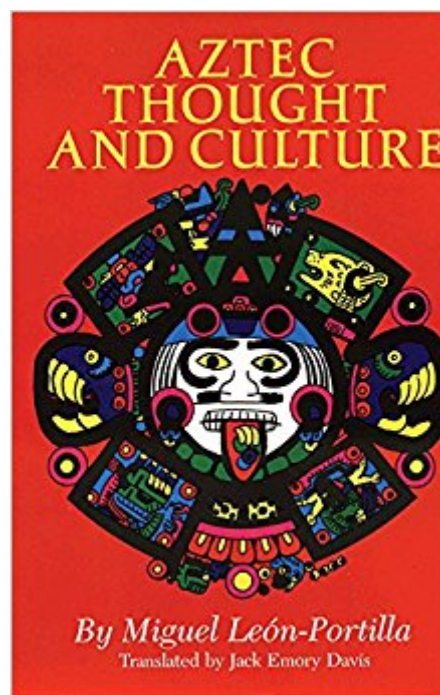


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# Aztec Thought And Culture: A Study Of The Ancient Nahuatl Mind (The Civilization Of The American Indian Series)



## Synopsis

For at least two millennia before the advent of the Spaniards in 1519, there was a flourishing civilization in central Mexico. During that long span of time a cultural evolution took place which saw a high development of the arts and literature, the formulation of complex religious doctrines, systems of education, and diverse political and social organization. The rich documentation concerning these people, commonly called Aztecs, includes, in addition to a few codices written before the Conquest, thousands of folios in the Nahuatl or Aztec language written by natives after the Conquest. Adapting the Latin alphabet, which they had been taught by the missionary friars, to their native tongue, they recorded poems, chronicles, and traditions. The fundamental concepts of ancient Mexico presented and examined in this book have been taken from more than ninety original Aztec documents. They concern the origin of the universe and of life, conjectures on the mystery of God, the possibility of comprehending things beyond the realm of experience, life after death, and the meaning of education, history, and art. The philosophy of the Nahuatl wise men, which probably stemmed from the ancient doctrines and traditions of the Teotihuacans and Toltecs, quite often reveals profound intuition and in some instances is remarkably

modern. This English edition is not a direct translation of the original Spanish, but an adaptation and rewriting of the text for the English-speaking reader.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Director of the Inter-American Indian Institute in Mexico City, Miguel Le n-Portilla is a significant

young Mexican scholar. He holds B.A. and M.A. degrees (summa cum laude) from Loyola University at Los Angeles and the Ph.D. from the National University of Mexico. *La filosofía nahua: estudiada en sus fuentes*, the Spanish version of this book, received high praise from both Mexican and American scholars. Jack Emory Davis, associate professor of Romance languages at the University of Arizona, prepared the original translation. He holds M.A. and Ph.D. degree from Tulane University.

Leon-Portilla successfully demonstrates that there was a class of professional intellectuals in Nahua society appropriately described as "philosophers" (the *tlamatinime*), and sketches in broad terms the parameters of their thought. I felt, however, that this book is in effect only half of the book that should have been written, because of the way Leon-Portilla undervalues Nahua theology. His monotheizing reduction of the Nahua pantheon means that he removes the content of Nahua thought and leaves only the form, if that. It does not seem to occur to him that theological structures can provide the basis for philosophical reflection; instead, he assumes that philosophy and theology must be in opposition. This is clearly a projection of philosophy's situation in the Christian and Muslim world, but Leon-Portilla offers no evidence that a similar tension existed in Nahua society. This inability to question his own presuppositions is a serious defect in an otherwise bold, important book which does make a real contribution to the project of expanding the boundaries of philosophy beyond the European tradition. I'm rating it slightly higher than I otherwise might, because the effort to do this sort of thing is not made often enough.

Half ways through. Taking my time. Absorbing. If you are truly interested in the ancient Aztec though this is the book to plough thru. You don't read it like a novel. You take your time with it

I love Leon-Portilla's careful analysis of all things Aztec. I have only read parts of this text over the past 35 years, but always enjoy thinking about how they were and are in a culture that still gives value in our society of today.

Powerful book.

The seller (Librarymadames) described this item's condition as "very good", in reality it was absolutely pristine. no markings on the interior, crisp pages, rigid and undamaged binding and best of all, that new book smell. Delivery was also prompt. As for the book itself, In my opinion Miguel

Leon-Portilla is the author to consult for anything regarding the Aztecs. His works are all impeccably well researched and easy to read, useful on a recreational and scholarly level. It is also worth noting that, as a work originally written in Spanish, this English Language Translation has been handled skillfully and with great success. If you're interested in learning more about the Aztecs, and the Nahua in general, than any school outside of Mexico itself will teach you than read this book, and follow it up with "Broken Spears" and "15 Poets of the Aztec World" by the same author.

My son loves it

Very good information. I am very happy.

Excellent reference on the thinking and culture of much maligned society.

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