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Tlamatiliztli: la sabiduría del pueblo nahua. Filosofía intercultural y derecho a la tierra

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Cover Page



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English Summary

The philosophical questions addressed in this dissertation started more than ten years ago. In the early years I had no idea of the long road that such concerns would imply, nor the form they would take. In the present dissertation several ideas are examined about the scope of Nahua *tlamatiliztli* / wisdom and the production of knowledge. The lack of recognition of indigenous philosophies is an academic gap in the vast majority of universities and research institutes and the aim of this research is to contribute to face and solve this sensitive issue.

Thus, this thesis offers a general analysis of the Nahua wisdom referring to diverse concepts embedded in Nahuatl language that may contribute to our better understanding of the role of wisdom and production of knowledge in Nahua worldview, which in turn may help us to explain its social relevance and cultural continuation from the precolonial period to the present in Mexico. The study of a variety of historical sources was very useful to extend the diachronic scope of this research. Also, the development of a trans-disciplinary approach was useful in the implementation of different methodologies which comes from different areas such as: historiography, iconography, philology, sociolinguistics and hermeneutics. Two innovative issues were the implementation of a “decolonial hermeneutics” and the development of a “stratigraphy of discourse”.

This broad study of Nahua epistemology referred to by the term *tlamatiliztli* pays attention to systems of producing and transferring knowledge as well as generating meaning embedded in native ontology. The decolonizing approach gives priority to methods and concepts developed by Indigenous intellectuals and to the focus on forms of ‘collective knowledge’. A wide array of concepts coined by indigenous researchers was implemented. For instance the structure of the dissertation is grounded in the idea of an “indigenous Research Paradigm” developed by Shawn Wilson; this

paradigm is grounded in 4 areas of philosophy: methodology, epistemology, ontology and axiology.

With this idea in mind, the dissertation has been structured in two parts, the first one is divided in four chapters according to the paradigm mentioned above. The introduction presents the framework and methodologies used in the dissertation. Chapter 1 (Language, epistemology and wisdom) deals with the cognitive processes and structures embedded in Nahuatl language, especially the “difrasismos” or “parallelisms” related to wisdom found in the historical sources. Chapter 2 (Language, worldview and ontology) is devoted to the systematic analysis of the ontological metaphors embedded in the Nahuatl language. A wide array of sources was used from precolonial age to the present, in order to highlight the importance of this cultural feature. Furthermore, the study of indigenous ontology is crucial to understand the struggles of indigenous peoples for territory and the right to land.

The aim of Chapter 3 (Archaeoastronomy, mathematics and philosophy of time) is to clarify Nahua arithmetic and the algorithms used to calculate the land surfaces and the tribute as well as the astronomical movements which were the basis for the two calendars used by ancient Mexicans (the *tonalpohualli*, a 260 days calendar, and the *xiuhpohualli* a 360 plus 5 days calendar). This chapter also examines the Nahua category of “truth”: *neltiliztli*.

Finally, Chapter 4 (Communal property, citizenship and right to land) focuses on the study of indigenous axiology, which is the basis for the idea of good life or *cualli nemiliz*, paying special attention to the axiological grounds of the right to land, taking into account the spiritual relation with the land developed by indigenous peoples since ancient times. The argument again refers to a wide array of sources from precolonial times to the present.

The second part of the dissertation addresses the

role of wise men and Nahua intellectuals in the production of knowledge, using a historiographical approach and philological methodologies in order to analyse the sources. The aim of the second part is to highlight the importance of knowledge production by native intellectuals from pre-Hispanic times through the colonial period until the present; the importance of female intellectuals and ritual specialists; the principles of Indigenous methodologies.

Chapter 5 (Historiography, wise men and Nahua intellectuals) is devoted to the study of the contributions of *tlamatinimeh* or the wise men of the pre-Hispanic times according to the available historical sources. Also in this chapter a philological analysis was made of works such as (1) *Arte mexicana* written by Antonio del Rincón, especially focusing on the words related to wisdom and knowledge, (2) a brief work of Chimalpahín about the role of wise men and philosophers, (3) the *Vocabulario de voces que expresan ideas metafísicas y morales* gathered by Francisco Javier Clavijero and finally (4) the study of an unpublished manuscript of the Biblioteca Nacional de Antropología e Historia, which mentions the *yxtlamatque* or wise men from Tlaxcala, written in the XVIIIth century.

Chapter 6 (History, wise women and ritual specialists) focuses on the contribution of Nahua intellectuals in XIXth century, especially regarding issues of citizenship, the right of education, the preservation of cultural heritage and land ownership. An important aim of this chapter is to highlight the contribution of Nahua female intellectuals, because this issue has not received due recognition. It addresses the significance of the traditional knowledge of women. The last part of this chapter describes the role of ritual specialists in contemporary Nahua communities such as Acaxochitlán (Hidalgo) and Petlacala (Guerrero).

Finally, Chapter 7 (Intercultural dialogue and Nahua methodologies) focuses on the explanation of collaborative research methodologies in the study of topics that are meaningful for the development of an intercultural approach. This implies the discussion of questions related to the translation of key concepts from the western philosophical tradition into indigenous philosophies, especially those related with the concept of methodology. Different interviews with Nahua researchers, especially historians and teachers about the indigenous methodologies, especially Nahua methodology, are presented and analysed.