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perception of the event is strongly influenced by the emotions s/he seeks to release. The dominant emotion is grief, although some poems, in particular José Emilio Pacheco's 'Lectura de los "Cantares mexicanos": manuscrito de Tlatelolco',[68] reveal the narrator's shame and anger. Here the image of blood 'dirtying' the air, signifies the reality filled with violence:

> Y el olor de la sangre mojaba el aire.
> Y el olor de la sangre manchaba el aire.[69]

Religious and ritual inferences in the Tlatelolco poetry are not confined to structure but are present too in a range of images related to pagan religions and Christianity. The images of rocks and churches appear simultaneously in several poems, suggesting that the shooting has the characteristics of both Christian and pagan practices. These images tend to appear alongside references to religious practices[70] and sacrifices,[71] whether in the form of actual human sacrifice or as the symbolic offering of Christ's blood and body through the communion. Both practices, irrespective of confessional specificity, allude to the spilling of blood. However, self-sacrifice in Christianity tends to be perceived as a laudable act, whereas from the same perspective, sacrifice of another in pagan cultures is construed a savage practice. From the narrator's point of view, the victims' self-sacrifice is laudable as a Christian act, while the shooters' sacrifice of the victims is abhorred as a pagan practice; this is evident in a number of poems by Del-Río, Montemayor, Simpson, amongst others. The wordplay on the name of La Plaza de las Tres Culturas[72] supports this interpretation: in Octavio Paz's 'Intermitencias del oeste (III)', the square is called 'La Plaza de Sacrificios'[73]; Simpson refers to it as 'Plaza de Matanza'[74]; and in

68 'The Reading of the "Mexican Songs": Manuscript of Tlatelolco' (Pacheco, 88–9).
69 'And the smell of blood dampened the air. / And the smell of blood stained the air' (Pacheco, 88).
70 Becerra, 80.
71 Montemayor, 110.
72 Square of the Three Cultures.
73 'Irregularities of the West (III)', 'Sacrifice Square' (Paz, 40).

Escalante's work it appears as 'Tres Culturas de Miedo'.[75] The serendipity of the name of the square as a symbol of Mexican cultural and religious amalgamation, together with the two sides involved in the shooting, reinforces the sense of the contradictory nature of the nation's character, and suggests that society at large is responsible for and guilty of the violent event.

In Máximo Simpson's 'Tlatelolco (Cuauhtémoc)', the intrinsic link between the 1968 shooting and the Conquest is the result of a rupture in linear time:

> aquí llega Cuauhtémoc con los pies destrozados,
> aquí llega el cantor,
>
> es el cantor que vuelve,
>
> aquí llegan los muertos escondidos,
> otra vez a esta plaza,
> otra vez a este foso[76]

The quotation evokes the image of a young Aztec chief tortured and killed by the Spanish troops before the 1521 battle of Tlatelolco. The cyclical nature of violence in Mexican history is evident in the use of the verb 'vuelve', the repetition of 'otra vez' and the reference to a pit or a communal grave. The mention of Cuauhtémoc is of particular interest since it represents, according to Octavio Paz, the cult of a young god-martyr descending from prehispanic cultures as well as European Christianity:

> Es muy frecuente y constante la devoción a Cristo, el Dios hijo, el Dios joven, sobre todo como víctima redentora [...] El fervor del culto al Dios hijo podría explicarse [...] como herencia de las religiones prehispánicas.[77]

74 'Slaughter Square' (Simpson, 58).
75 'Three Cultures of Fear' (Escalante, 112).
76 'Here comes Cuauhtémoc, with his broken feet, / here comes the singer, / it is the singer who returns, / here come the hidden dead, / once again to this square, / once again to this pit' (Simpson, 59).