

Essay on aztec culture

[History](#), [Ancient History](#)



This work is a mask made of stone in the Aztec culture. The seemingly open mouth, eyes, nostrils, and ear holes all represent the figure's ability to be totally open with the Gods and connected with them. The figure is most likely not proportionally accurate due to the artist's access to tools and materials to create a realistic looking face. The purpose of this mask is to be used during rituals where members of the tribe communicate with the Gods, not only to ask for what they may need but also to thank them. During this time, it was very common for tribes like the Aztecs to rely on their God(s) for anything and everything.

A piece from the textbook that relates to the ritual object pictured above is the Kwakwaka'wakw Bird Mask. This was a mask used during ritual ceremonies that was carved out of wood and painted on with bright colors. The mask was used in ceremonies of the arrangement of marriage.

This object pays tribute to Aztec temples as it is simply a replication of one. This ceramic model has stairs leading up to the entryway of the temple, as well as an area above the entryway that recedes highly. Both of these technicalities symbolize reaching a higher power. There have been many Aztec temple models like this one created due to their idea of spreading their religion. One may have one of these in their home to remember the Aztec culture and the amount of time and effort they put into their practiced religion.

A work of art from the textbook that compares to the tribute object above is Pablita Velarde's Koshares of Taos. This piece is a watercolor painting on paper that pays tribute to the Pueblo tribe's ceremony of the winter solstice.

Each figure's bright clothing is similar of those that Native Americans would wear during a time of celebration like the one pictured in the painting.

Depicted in this piece are animals, sacrificed at the top of a pole, people dressed as clowns, and Katsina dolls, which are given to children so that they can learn the difference between those who they should be following spiritually and who they should not.

This offering is a sculpture made of basalt, hardened volcanic material used often by the Aztecs, that depicts a man holding his knees to his chest. The artist uses bas-relief, or shallow relief, to achieve the look of deep shadows along the figure's lower jaw. The figure represents a deity called the " Lord of Five Souls." There is a snake with five dots on its back circled around the figure's head - these five dots are associated with bad habits.

A work of art from the textbook similar to the piece shown above is the Llama of the Inca tribe. This piece is made of gold and silver, which is common for the Incas because they had more gold and silver in their possession than cloth. Composition-wise, the piece is very simple despite the blanket on the llama's back. The silver on the llama represents the moon's tears and the Incas used offerings like these every morning as a sacrifice to the sun. The tribe believed that the llama symbolizes fertility and has a unique association with the sun and the rain.

Thesnowshoes above were utilized as a useful article by North American Indians, instead of just for aesthetic purposes. As simple as it sounds, the purpose of these homemade shoes were to help people walk through the dense snow during the wintertime without tripping. The materials used

include wood, leather, and fiber - all found in nature or made from animal hide that the native people hunted for, themselves.

A work of art from the textbook similar to the piece shown above is the Taos Pueblo made by the Pueblo tribe. These were houses made of adobe, having the purpose of shelter for people of this tribe. The ladders around the area provided people access to the roofs or higher floors of the shelter. The roof was an area often used by tribe members to host communal gatherings. This architecture uses new media combined with the creation of traditional structures.

This Aztec artwork represents a mythological creature that has a correlation with the cosmology of the tribe's religious beliefs. The animal sculpted here is a "spider monkey," which was an meaningful symbol all across Mesoamerica during this time. This pieces' rigid surface helps to emphasize the idea of hostility. The animal wears a collar, ear ornaments, wrist and ankle bracelets that are all similar to those that the Aztecs would wear. His position depicts him sitting perched, reaching around himself to grab his own tail, with his teeth out as though he is growling. All of this body language represents aggression and symbolizes the Wind God. The base of this sculpture imitates the rattle of a serpent.

A work of art from the textbook similar to the piece shown above is The Goddess Coatlicue, a sculpture that is known as "she of the serpent skirt" because she wears a skirt of entangled snakes. The figure shown was known to have not survived an encounter of murder, hence why are there are symbols of gushing blood around her body. Her feet have claws, she wears a

skull around her necklace made of hands, and her form is immense. All of these characteristics symbolize death or the idea to stay away from her because she is powerful.

This Aztec work of art portrays a vulture having the function of a vessel. The different colors used throughout this piece create contrast between the different areas, as does the shiny surface versus the matte surface. Birds were often thought of as messengers between the living world and a higher world in this tribe. The vulture in specific is known to kill for food, which symbolizes human sacrifice. This vessel was thought to be used during ceremonies that were focused around the bird and its actions or purpose as an animal.

A work of art from the textbook similar to the piece shown above is the Grizzly Bear House-Partition Screen. The people of the Northwest Coast believed that they as humans evolved from animal-human species, hence why they use so much animal imagery throughout their artwork. This piece is made of large planks from Northwest Coast peoples' communal houses. The hole in the bottom of the composition is not only the bear's vagina, but also a hole to put one's head through - this symbolizes human birth from an animal, like the Aztecs believed their ancestors to have done. Some added imagery amongst this piece is that there are smaller bears all throughout the piece, representing how multiple pieces of one person are made up by the characteristics of others.

This artwork represents a deity in many ways. The man's mouth is stained, which is a clear representation of signifying a deity. The ceramic is covered

with a soft-colored slip for shine and patterns cover his body like tattoos, which each represent something different. The figure's eyes are seen as though they are rolling to the back of his head to depict that he is in a daze of some sort. This most likely correlates to its use, which is to pour liquids such as strong alcohol in order to have a strong communication with the Gods.

A work of art from the textbook similar to the piece shown above is the Calendar Stone. This is a functional piece that the Aztecs used to calculate time. The disk is not only meant to look like the Sun, but uses the Sun to create shadows on its bas-relief surface to depict the time. This low shallow relief is used because it creates deeper shadows. The piece is made of volcanic basalt, which was the Aztecs preferred medium. There is a face in the center of the composition that has a protruding tongue, clawed hands, and large ears which were all known to represent the God of the Sun. The viewer may be able to infer that the Aztecs felt significance with the number four, as the calendar is organized into four quadrants in many ways. One example of this is that it displays the four things that they believed to ravaged the earth, which was wind, wild animals, floods, and volcanoes. There is more imagery throughout the piece and the different quadrants as well.

This artwork represents the commemoration of an achievement, as it was sometimes awarded to people in view of specific accomplishments when it comes to war. This material, color, and luster all give emphasis to the idea that whomever is wearing the piece was powerful, wealthy, or deserving of

congratulations for an accomplishment. The snake's head includes a compelling jaw with sharp teeth and a few fangs. This piece is moveable and was thought to move with the movement of whomever was wearing it, usually nobles who would often wear on their lower lip (inserted through the lower lip. like a piercing). Gold is used as the material for this accessory, which was thought of as a gift from God.

A work of art from the textbook similar to the piece shown above is the Battle Scene, Hide Painting of the people of the Great Plains. This piece is the primal documentation of buffalo hide robes. Illustrated on this hide is a battle of the Mandan and the Sioux. The light background creates a contrast with the dark dye used to depict the people painted on the hide. This piece is used during ceremonies of achievement, where the hide is laid over the man's shoulders whose accomplishments are being celebrated. With the hide on his shoulders, the man is thought to change into a living portrayal of his adventures.