



# **From Moon Goddesses to Virgins: The Colonization of Yucatecan Maya Sexual Desire**

*Pete Sigal*

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For the preconquest Maya, sexuality was a part of ritual discourse and performance, and all sex acts were understood in terms of their power to create, maintain, and destroy society. As postconquest Maya adapted to life under colonial rule, they neither fully abandoned these views nor completely adopted the formulation of sexuality prescribed by Spanish Catholicism. Instead, they evolved hybridized notions of sexual desire, represented in the figure of the Virgin Mary as a sexual goddess, whose sex acts embodied both creative and destructive components.

This highly innovative book decodes the process through which this colonization of Yucatan Maya sexual desire occurred. Pete Sigal frames the discussion around a series of texts, including the *Books of Chilam Balam* and the *Ritual of the Bacabs*, that were written by seventeenth and eighteenth century Maya nobles to elucidate the history, religion, and philosophy of the Yucatecan Maya communities. Drawing on the insights of philology, discourse analysis, and deconstruction, he analyzes the sexual fantasies, fears, and desires that are presented, often unintentionally, in the "margins" of these texts and shows how they illuminate issues of colonialism, power, ritual, and gender.

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