

Religion: Aztec Style

Lowell Boileau

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“The Destruction of the Fifth Sun” is an allegory of justice based on the apocalyptic Aztec vision of the same name whereby the world and humanity ends in a cataclysm.

The central Mexican empire, dominant from 1300 to 1521, believed the doom could be delayed by daily ritualist human sacrifices in which the victims' hearts were hacked from their chests by priests and the still pounding organs held aloft to the sun thereby appeasing the gods.

A large-scale war economy evolved to satiate the voracious demands of security and continual wars and colonial conquests were fought to secure victims. Sound familiar?

In this modernized version, the day of destruction has arrived just as a victim is being led up the temple steps for sacrifice by priests, now in military garb. Avenging gods, led by the feathered serpent Quetzalcoatl the god of wind, air, and learning, with his cohorts, descend from the upper right. In the background, the two-serpent-headed god, Coatlicue, wears her traditional necklace of hands and hearts, but with a new girdle of hand grenades and mace cans.

On the crumbling steps, the reclining Chacmool gods, into whose vessels the sacrificial hearts have been placed, are revealed to be accepting gifts of contemporary materialism—cars, boats, planes, money—along with hearts.

Amid the chaos, the only one smiling is the bound victim as he watches, beaming with delight, the corrupt world collapse around him.

The mythology surrounding the Destruction of the Fifth Sun led to the downfall of the Aztecs. The Spanish conquistadors arrived in Mexico in 1519, by chance, at an astrologically significant time with traits that fulfilled many Aztec prophecies. The ensuing confusion caused Aztecs to welcome the Spaniards into their capital city whereupon the Spaniards imprisoned the emperor, Moctezuma II, and claimed the land for the Spanish crown.

Sadly, the destruction of the Aztecs did not lead to justice. Instead, an epidemic of imported diseases destroyed a third of the three million inhabitants, followed by three centuries of cruel colonial oppression.

Detroit artist Lowell Boileau is a painter, internet media artist and writer. He and Stephen Goodfellow co-created Micropointillist painting technique. His paintings and internet media art are at **LowellBoileau.com**.

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