# Home Altars and the Virgin of Guadalupe in *Quinceañera*: Historical and Critical Perspectives

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## Abstract

In this article I explain the historical trajectory of Guadalupan devotion as a strategic repertoire of beliefs and practices, especially the use of home altars. I investigate continuities of Guadalupan performances and representations in order to show how these are inscribed in the film, *Quinceañera*, which was produced and made in the United States.

I illustrate transformations of Marian strategies, providing four historical contexts in which the Virgin plays an important role in identity formation, cultural articulation, and resistance: pre-modern Europe (with an emphasis on late medieval Spain), colonial Mexico, modern Mexico, and the contemporary period (especially in East Los Angeles, which the film represents). I underscore the material nature of Marian devotion and the importance of objects of devotion and home altars, because they are critical for establishing and advancing connections between devotees and the Virgin.

[1] The Virgin of Guadalupe is integral to Mexican religion and culture and she plays a vital role in the lives of many Hispanics in the United States.[1] Guadalupan images are at the center of rituals and make it possible for devotees to be in touch with her and to invoke her intercession. Connections are made when her images are displayed on bodies and motor vehicles, in public spaces and churches, and in homes and yards. An industry of prints, sculptures, paintings, jewelry, and commercial products also provides a means to communicate with her. Guadalupan religion is an aesthetic and material-based enterprise involving the senses.

[2] While many of her devotees adhere to structures such as nationalism, Roman Catholic hierarchy, and Christian scriptural traditions, their devotion also allows them to transcend institutional and national boundaries and to contest and modify orthodoxies. In such cases, their devotion is strategic, and one of the most palpable strategies consists in the construction and design of personal altars where a conversation with the Virgin ensues.[2] Devotees who construct them often confront political and religious elites, countering ideologies of assimilation. Shrine construction facilitates identity and agency, especially for the disenfranchised.[3] In their resistance, Hispanic devotees obtain and share an empowering collective memory and religious identity based on their historical mestizaje, or ethnic, cultural and religious cross-pollination.[4]

[3] The Mariological tradition that Hispanics inherit stems from ancient traditions and resolutions established between pagans and Christians at the time of the conversion of the Roman Empire in the fourth century CE.[5] One continuity from antiquity still active among Hispanic devotees is the edification of altars containing religious images and memorials of their lineage.[6] In the Christian context, this device of recollection allows believers to fashion a familial plot within a Marian narrative and Christian cosmology.

[4] The Hispanic roots of Marian devotion are Iberian. A survey of the crowns of Aragon and Castile reveals a vast geography of Marian shrines “often localized in dramatic sites in the landscape,” and a distribution of portable altars, *retablos*, detailing Mary and the saints.[7] The Holy Family, the pain of the Mother (experiencing the mutilation of her son), her

intercessory role in human affairs, and the emotional dimension of believers seeking solace and consolation—these are themes incarnated in *retablos* and inscribed in Marian shrines in almost every community of the Spanish empire and its colonies.[8]

[5] In the United States, in particular Hispanic neighborhoods, Marian devotion consists of a repertoire of contestational practices. The Virgin's appearance is a continuous phenomenon where the implementation of Latino-phobic policies, often directed against working immigrants, inspire Marian reconstructions.[9] By reactivating Marian devotion and constructing altars, Hispanics advance a historical memory based on policies of occupation and a common past as mestizos enduring colonization.[10]

[6] The performances of Marian faith include liturgies, prayerful rituals, and spatial arrangements of holy objects that involve the routine or practice of veneration. This religion of sacred images entails aesthetic traditions and craftsmanship and involves all of the senses. Devotees devise routines using folk stories and modified visions of Holy Family narratives and accounts of the merciful Baby Jesus, the nurturing Mother of Heaven, and the Suffering Lord rejected by all except his mother.[11] Devotees revise orthodox models of the Virgin as the Mother of God. When believers build a shrine they access her and thus solicit membership to the chapel in heaven, for "the Eternal Feminine leads us upward."[12] Home altars are moveable and permeable, repeated aesthetic reconstructions of the Holy Family and of their respective domestic environment.

[7] Not all Hispanics, however, continue with past arrangements and ancient forms of devotion. While many Hispanics are devoted to *la virgensita* (i.e., the diminutive Virgin denoting respect and adoration), other Latino communities construct new faiths, avoiding traditional encrustations of the Roman religion.[13] Such evangelical alternatives compete with Catholic forms of piety by advancing a faith with only two biblical sacraments, baptism and the Eucharist, and without non-scriptural and sacramental disciplines requiring richly-decorated spaces and holy objects.

[8] In a recent film, *Quinceañera*, or the fifteenth birthday and coming of age celebration of a young woman, the opposition between Marian devotion and the evangelical faith brings to the foreground a shared experience of discrimination and resistance in East Los Angeles.[14] Directed by Richard Glatzer and Wash Westmoreland (both live in Echo Park) "wanted the movie to capture the spirit of the place," their goal being "that the neighborhood itself become a character in the movie."[15] The Directors' Statement begins with the claim that "*Quinceañera* is a reinvention of Kitchen Sink drama, fueled by the racial, class and sexual tensions of a working class Latino neighborhood in transition." Hoping to emulate poetic realism, they "wanted a film that celebrated the everyday, that was about small things that gradually grew large; a film that had politics that were oblique, humor that was unexpected, emotions that gained power though restraint; a film that transcended the ordinary." The filmmakers are also aware of the representation of religious imagery: "Although taking place in an Evangelical church, the event felt intrinsically Catholic, many images recalling the

Virgin Mary." The sources of these images are the garden altars and interior of Don Tomas's home.

[9] The film accentuates cultural identity and reveals subtexts of agency. The filmmakers draw from Marian motifs, especially altars and images of the Virgin of Guadalupe, the brown-skinned patroness of Mexico who appeared to the Indian, Juan Diego, in Tepeyac in 1531.[16] The film is a story about a teenage girl who plans to celebrate her *quinceañera*. It is also about her family problems involving her rejected gay cousin, both of whom find refuge in the home of their uncle, Don Tomás, who venerates the Virgin of Guadalupe. In this film the altars of Don Tomás are templates of mestizo spirituality. The filmmakers cast Don Tomás as a "real" Mexican living in occupied America trapped in an English-speaking world and forging his personal space in a rental in Echo Park where he has constructed his Marian altars.[17] The film sets up a reciprocal dynamic between Don Tomás and the Virgin, a relation that signals to the viewer religious and cultural norms of identity. Providing the material contours and landscape of *angelino* devotion, busy streets with pedestrians and Spanish signs, vendors and sidewalks of Echo Park, the filmmakers cast a group of protagonists who get in trouble while Don Tomás solicits the Virgin's intercession. Here the Virgin is at the threshold of a future where she herself may play a minor role in the lives of young Hispanics as they find alternatives such as Pentecostalism that may be more beneficial or functional.[18] *Quinceañera* represents this open-ended condition of religious choices that confront a new generation of Hispanics who can reject traditional aesthetics and Marian strategies of identity and contestation.

## The Mexicanized Virgin

[10] In order to appreciate the depth and continuity of Marian strategic devotion in *Quinceañera* I analyze the formation and trajectory of New World Mariology as the interplay and hybridization between indigenous and European religious systems.[19] I show the development of Marian devotions in Spain and colonial Mexico, providing an historical context of Marian strategies synonymous or related to Mesoamerican practices that involve the construction and decoration of altars. The film's portrayal of the Virgin of Guadalupe is a commixture of ancient strategies of resistance and procedures of identity, a cross-pollination of practices and rituals that do not produce any confusion among the devotees regarding their agency.

[11] The encounters between the Spanish and the Mesoamericans yielded *mestizaje* or religious, political and cultural hybridization whereby people developed strategies that drew on both Mesoamerican and European arsenals.[20] Believers transform rituals that serve their purposes and they adapt aesthetic traditions to configure narratives and world views. A commixture of traditions, Spanish and pre-Hispanic, marks a persistent feature of Mexican religion, its syncretic agenda—a blend exemplified by Don Tomás in *Quinceañera*. Pre-Hispanic images, colors, and melodies facilitated the transformation of both Christian and Native American cosmologies and myths, resulting in 'Mexicanized' representations of the divine involving the natural world, its animals, plants and landscapes.[21] Pre-conquest Indian communities had a tradition of building and decorating personal shrines, especially among the Toltecs and in the central valley of Mexico, and they continued to exercise such religious

prerogatives.[22] *Santocals* were home altars common to many Indian communities, and many of these *santocals* in post-conquest Mexico displayed images of the Virgin, revealing a complex repertoire of native motifs and Christian imagery.[23]

[12] The indigenous religion based on devotional structures dovetailed with the Spanish transportation of the cult of the saints. Christian rituals merged with pre-Hispanic practices, creating what Serge Gruzinski calls *mélanges* and what the Spanish considered "a juxtaposition or 'interposition' in which pagan elements remained discernable from Christian elements."[24] "Christian" performances took on the flavour and colour of the native world. For the first expedition under Admiral Columbus, for example, Spaniards brought with them images of the Virgin for protection, and in turn Columbus had the Taíno *cacique* wear a silver image of the Virgin, and here the European Virgin and the Indian idol were combined.[25] *Veneras* or small devotional images to the Virgin found in archeological searches were used strategically by the Spanish to engage and to communicate with indigenous peoples who recycled and distorted the orthodox as their own religion infused with native elements. Mendicants were especially careful to allow indigenous qualities to persist, permitting the continuation of Indian and pre-Hispanic festivities in order to facilitate mutual understanding by accentuating common cults and myths.

[13] Because of its malleability and activation of the senses, especially visual, the aesthetic nature of Marian devotion is ancient and continuous. The aesthetic dimension of Mariology is thus a major reason why it is a popular devotion among mestizos, which Don Tomás

exemplifies by his own Marian *mélange* containing garden altars, decorative images, and *retablo* of the Virgin of Guadalupe.[26] His devotion patterns the performances of mestizo religiousness as it had evolved since the conquest of Mexico. Mestizo rituals include Christian images and allegories harking back to pagan festivities, as well as the building of special places. Since the sixteenth century these mestizo spaces contained images of the mother goddess that some friars considered useful and that others, such as the Franciscan Bernardino de Sahagún, denounced because of the "confusion" between the Aztec goddess, *Tonantzin*, and the Virgin Mary who was venerated in the same site of a pre-Hispanic pilgrimage.[27] Mestizaje is not just about the blending of icons and myths, but also about the adoption of indigenous holy places as Mexicanized centers of popular Christian devotion. The Spanish and Indians shared sites of negotiation, especially pre-Hispanic temples and established Mexican cities. Pre-Columbian urban centers continued to function as religious encounters and areas of public venerations, facilitating Aztec and Spanish *mélanges*, resulting in the construction of sacred spaces of a 'revised' Virgin or a masquerade goddess with Christian details.

[14] The Spanish overlaid their structures and images upon pre-Columbian ceremonial temples. Spanish municipalities, therefore, became the elemental centers of social and religious life.[28] Town councils invested in the construction of the church and altars, often resulting in the destruction of pagan idols and the implementation of the daily performances of the mass and the administration of the sacraments. Just as the Spanish established towns according to the gridiron plan of rectangular blocks and open squares, they rearranged open

spaces, rebuilding ‘temples’ containing images and altar pieces of a ‘Mexicanized’ Virgin. Public structures displayed *retablos*, for example those of Xochimilco and Huexotzingo, which are plateresque pieces made in the sixteenth century, involving public investments and communal labour, thus combining Indian craftsmanship and Spanish iconography.[29] Mexican *retablos* went through a construction renaissance in which these representations were the central focus of the interior of churches, resulting in a mestizo blend, works neither purely Spanish nor Indian.[30]

[15] The Spanish established the Virgin’s role as liberator in the Americas in general. The conquest of Mexico initiated the transformation of Mesoamerica, resulting in a score of Marian devotions: *la criolla*, *la virgen de los remedios*, and *la conquistadora*.[31] The Virgin of Guadalupe was only one of many Marian representations that devotees solicited for help, and she along with other Marian cults functioned as liberators of the Indians.[32] These Spanish narrative about the conquest of Mexico as a liberation of the Mesoamericans from the tyranny of the Aztecs is based on the thesis that the Aztecs themselves were invaders who enslaved, sacrificed and introduced idolatries.[33] The Spanish considered themselves as liberators who won the support of the majority of the Mesoamericans, a support facilitated by the Virgin Mary. Just prior to the conquest of Mexico, the Spanish began to establish their hegemony by forging bonds with indigenous lords. The Cortés expedition first convinced Cacique Gordo of Cempoala that King Charles “has sent us here to put an end to your grievances and to punish the wicked, and to make sure that souls are no longer sacrificed.”[34] The first battle won by Hernán Cortés against Tabasco was on the day of the feast of the

Annunciation, *nuestra señora de marzo*, and they named that place in honor of her, *María de la victoria*.[35] Cortés forged an alliance with the Cempoalans and the Cingapacinga and followed with the destruction of indigenous idols.

[16] Along with cunning and military prowess, the Spanish spread Christian imagery, demolishing Mexican idols and enlarging a Mexican alliance to replace their demonic gods. Empowered with superior weaponry, the Spanish convinced the Totonac alliance to accept a new devotion of the "great lady, who is the mother of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom we believe and adore, so that you [the Totonac alliance] may have her as your lord and lawyer."[36] The Indians were then told to white-wash blood-stained walls and to place an image of Our Lady, with orders to keep the place swept, decorated with flowers, and to light candles on the altar.[37] The acceptance of this new religion (consisting of Marian practices and beliefs) by the Cempoalans meant the reward of royal lordship, the establishment of the Spanish justice system, and the rejection of what the Spanish labeled as Aztec tyranny.[38] No longer were the Cempoalans and the Indians of the Mesoamerica "victims" of the Aztecs, but rather they became Marian devotees and "liberated" subjects of the Spanish crown.[39]

[17] By the end of the sixteenth century the myth about the power of the Virgin over the Aztecs became inscribed in official discourse, albeit the Christianization of Mexican religion consisted of replacement, contamination, and reactivation of pagan elements.[40] The royal chronicler, Francisco López de Gómara details the power of the Virgin, describing how Cortes placed an image of the Virgin on the altar of the *templo mayor* of Tenochtitlán and

how the Virgin intervened to conquer the Aztecs.[41] In his 1621 publication, Luis de Cisneros advanced this theory of the Marian figure, *la virgen de los remedios*, replacing the Aztec goddess, Huitzilopochtli, and dominating the temple at Otoncalpulco.[42] The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin was a "pure: paradigm that influenced the Spanish Baroque and colonial *romano* (grotesque) art, providing an orthodox meaning for Mexican Indians and marking colonial indigenous-made art as Christian.[43]

[18] Friars converted Mesoamericans by appropriating Amerindian elements. Mendicants were especially active in Marian instruction to Mexican Indians.[44] The First Provincial Council (1555) mandated four Marian devotions of the liturgical year: the Nativity, the Annunciation, the Purification and the Assumption.[45] As early as the 1540s Spanish mendicants began to write Nahuatl pieces on the Virgin, detailing important feast days such as the Conception and the Nativity. The mendicant influence was not purely textual but also advanced through rituals, masses, processions, music, and the fine arts, including sculpture, resulting in the production of images for chapels, convents, and churches.[46]

[19] For Franciscans, the Virgin plays an important role in charity; she is the preeminent caretaker of humankind, "the North Star and guide of lost souls and hope of the afflicted."[47] Franciscan initiatives to convert included the implementation of good works, such as the virtue of charity, and one colonial feature of the implementation of charity is hospitals and schools. When the Franciscans arrived in the New World they built hospitals dedicated to

the Virgin, the "immaculate mother of mercy."[48] Mexicanized images of the Virgin decorated the interiors of hospitals and schools founded by the mendicant orders.[49]

[20] Due to the missionization of the friars and to the indigenous propensity to construct shrines, Marian altars became prevalent features of the Mexican religious landscape.[50] Chapels and associations formed around Marian celebrations and many Marian confraternities developed in the central valley of Mexico.[51] Marian pilgrimages and penitential good works from Oaxaca to New Mexico and Texas were interlinked, increasing the Christianization of mestizo and Indian devotions, resulting in the construction of shrines, and providing blueprints for altars in the American Southwest and Texas.[52]

## The Virgin of Guadalupe

[21] The story of the Virgin of Guadalupe began in Spain, where she was one of a large number of Marian cults, especially among *beatas* and nuns.[53] Established in the early fourteenth century, the Spanish legend of the Virgin of Guadalupe began on the basis of a herdsman who experienced a Marian apparition. After Mary appeared to him she left physical proof that the herdsman was not deluded. He later discovered a wooden image of the Virgin Mother with a little bell, and this material evidence was sufficient to initiate a following of devotees.[54]

[22] It was not until the seventeenth century that the cult of the Virgin of Guadalupe became the most important Marian devotion in Mexico.[55] As Mary in many of her different forms

continued to take over "pure" Indian cults, she acquired a preeminent role in Mexican and mestizo religious life. The myth of the *Guadalupana* apparition thus coalesced from a transplanted Spanish devotion to a program of Nahua Marianism, which became a sort of spiritual fever affecting everyone in the central valley of Mexico. Creole priests and ecclesiastical authorities reconstructed a mestiza Virgin, linking Spanish spiritual norms with indigenous elements.[56] In 1649 the publication of Luis Laso de la Vega's *Huey tlamahuiçoltica*, a European story written in Nahuatl, afforded an indigenist origin to the claim of the apparition of the Virgin of Guadalupe to Juan Diego in 1531.[57] By the end of the seventeenth century Marian penitential pilgrimages became religious centres, cultivating large audiences in many communities navigating outward from Tepeyac, the *axis mundi* of the Virgin of Guadalupe due to its prominence as the actual site where the Virgin appeared to Juan Diego.[58]

[23] Marian devotions took place not only in city centres but also in private residences. Demand for religious art, such as Virgin *retablos* and statutes of the saints, was extensive, partly for public spaces and partly for personal and domestic use. Many family residences where mothers raised children involve intimate and private experiences surrounded by Marian objects, such as *nacimientos*, *retablos*, and *santopans*.[59] Juan de Grijalva (d. 1638), for example, notes that Indians erected home altars filled with holy images, revealing personal configurations and a rich material culture consisting of Marian and native motifs.[60] Growing familiarity with Marian discourses spurred mestizo and indigenous families to interpret those forms, acquiring holy objects and integrating their own idols of veneration.

The diversity of Marian material culture attests to the creative process by which her devotees, who are not passive copyists, articulate motifs and fashion shrines.[61]

[24] Not only dispersed in communities and towns, Marian devotion took additional social features with contestational potencies. In the eighteenth century, Indian *cofradías* or lay brotherhoods venerated the Virgin as their patroness, and these named themselves *nuestra señora del rosario*, *santíssima virgen*, and *nuestra señora de la asunción*.[62] In addition, apparitions, such as the event of 1774 in Tlmacazapa in which the Virgin appeared in a kernel of corn, reflect an intra-community diversity of religious devotion grounded on Marian soil.[63] Native religious traditions, especially fertility rites, persisted into the eighteenth century as this exuberant passion caused local tribunals to be concerned. While inquisitors sought to contain idolatries, Marian rhetoric proved to be a mantle of protection.[64]

[25] As *Guadalupana* devotion spread, it monopolized devotion, supplanting other Marian cults and accelerating after Independence from Spain in 1821.[65] The *Guadalupana* thus became part of a national discourse shaping Mexican identity. [66] Just as the Virgin had changed Aztec society, she transformed colonial Spain by means of a similar strategy of liberation, advancing national identity under the banner of the Virgin of Guadalupe. The revolt of the *machetes* in Mexico City in 1799, and the rebellion of an Indian priest seeking to install a theocratic utopia, centered on the directives by the Virgin of Guadalupe.[67] From Mexico City, the *Guadalupana* expanded through urban networks and parochial links, and

was spread and disseminated by Creole priests who had acquired distaste for Spanish royal power.[68]

[26] After Independence, the Virgin provided a powerful national discourse and a traditional choreography of strategies for devotees to forge identity as citizens of a liberated nation. William Taylor, for example, notes the growth of the Guadalupana devotion by analyzing baptismal and property records that registered names associated with the Virgin (Maria and Guadalupe) and place names and sites, especially by non-Indians, and increasingly by Indians after 1840.[69] In these cases, European names serve to integrate Native Americans into a Christian republic.

[27] Marian discourse also provokes agency in men and women, allowing women, for instance, ritual space and power to propel themselves in political spheres and in battlefields. The Virgin appeared to women seeking to undermine the *porfiriato* dictatorship.[70] A political symbol and an active agent of social change, the Virgin made an entry into processions and popular rituals, in revolts, such as the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920) and the Cristero uprising (1926-1929), that included women as protagonists.[71]

[28] The facility by which devotees acquire information and goods about the Virgin has increased, further allowing devotees to forge their own identity as altar makers and as consumers of Marian goods. Modern media outlets disseminate knowledge about the Virgin.[72] Television programs, such as Pedro Infante's telethon soliciting funds to restore the Virgin's basilica, also represent the Marian cult, advancing an audience of devotees and

expanding the commercial base of Marian objects, as exemplified by Don Tomás and his Marian possessions.[73] An industry of Marian "relics" has flourished, including rosaries, handbags, votive candles, t-shirts, mouse pads, stickers, tote bags, camisoles, aprons, mugs, buttons, magnets, keys, bracelets, medals, watches, blankets, glow-in-the-dark figures, cards, calendars, necklaces, and statues made in China.[74]

## The Chicana Virgin

[29] A remarkable feature in *Quinceañera* is the confluence of commercialism, material religion, and Mexican-American identity. Don Tomás' altar consists of Mexican folk art, inexpensive plastic stuff and *Guadalupana* goods made in China, and family memorabilia. The repetition of images of Don Tomás' altars and their objects of devotion helps the viewer to imagine a prototype. The viewer associates these images to his mestizo nature and identity. Don Tomás' identity is further enhanced by tracking shots and long shots of sidewalks and Latino pedestrians, folk art, and street murals in East LA.[75] Once the film frames the social and cultural environment, it focuses on Don Tomás' interior and home altars that resonate with traditional features of mestizo devotion: decorative folk items, plastic "relics" and glass beads, and orthodox representations reconfigured in a private place and in a solipsistic manner. Don Tomás follows a long tradition of adopting a "foreign" conquest (e.g., Anglos in Los Angeles) and duplicating and personalizing a traditional religious landscape (for Tomás, his rustic backyard and his reconstructed altars).

[30] The casting of *Quinceañera* reflects a Mariological discourse. The film encourages the viewer to identify two characters (María and her daughter, Magdalena) with apocryphal figures, the virgin and the prostitute. The protagonist of the film is Magdalena, the daughter of Ernesto, the patriarch whose wife, María, is chaste and obedient. Magdalena represents Malinche, the mistress of Hernán Cortés; like Malinche (who was sold into slavery) Magdalena becomes a liberated woman after being ostracized by her father. Magdalena and her boyfriend, Hernán (whose name evokes the sexual union between Hernán Cortés and Malinche), indulge in carnal pleasures but do not engage in actual sexual penetration.

[31] An important contrast to Don Tomás' altars is the religious space of Ernesto, the pastor of *la iglesia de Dios camino de santidad*, an evangelical church in Echo Park. The interior of this church, which looks more like a travel agency than a place of worship, is without Mexican tradition. There are no aesthetic markers of the Catholic religion, no statues, only the holy book and cheap metal chairs used by catering companies. The church's primary purpose is to spread the word as understood by evangelical preachers. The viewer sees *la iglesia* as part of Echo Park's commercial scene, a store front with a preacher's sermon in the soundtrack and an interior chapel dominated by the mise-en-scène of a forest. The film opens with a tight medium shot that feels more like a close-up of a photographic image of a Nordic forest covered with pine trees that extend far into off-screen space. In the middle of the frame a continuous river transects the image, evoking a sort of 'hallmark' moment of tranquility.

[32] Don Tomás' rental is the sanctuary for the rejected children, Magdalena and Carlos. The film contains the artwork of Alberto Hernandez and Liz Ryan, who crafted the home altars and *retablos* in Don Tomás' backyard. By choreographing the denouement of the protagonist, Magdalena, in the rental, the film compels the spectator to identify Don Tomás' private altars as secure, if not sacred, space filled with inexpensive objects of devotion, prints of the Virgin of Guadalupe, beaded-door separators of the *Guadalupana*, and an exterior of two altars, one with family pictures, votive candles, and icons made of plastic and glass beads, the other a portable altar with Marian plastic figures, clay statues, and candles of *el milagro del Tepeyac* (the miracle of Tepeyac), which is the original location where the Virgin appeared to Juan Diego in 1531.

[33] The visual motif of Don Tomás' sanctuary involves the image of the Virgin of Guadalupe. A repetitive imagery of the Virgin calls attention to her power as an advocate for sinners and as a marker of cultural identity and religious resistance in East LA, which the viewer registers as a changing environment due to the gentrification of Los Angeles. Through its Marian iconography, the film exposes persisting Mexican traditions, in particular the construction of home altars in Chicana neighbourhoods, amid the land development schemes of Anglo entrepreneurs and independent of the official Roman Catholic hierarchy. By short-circuiting the sacraments of the Roman church, Don Tomás catapults the outcasts into a new alliance of mutual support under the continuous gaze of the Virgin of Guadalupe, defensive of the property-hungry invaders.

[34] The subsequent sequence of related scenes conveys a devotional world that eventually serves as the escape for the rejected members of the two families. The first of these opens with the interior of Don Tomás' rental, a domestic assimilation of Mexican "relics," revealed by means of a montage consisting in close-up shots of a statue of Jesus, a wood panel of the Virgin, a statue of a mendicant (perhaps St. Francis), and a silver crucifixion with ruby-colored rosaries. Then a cut to a medium shot of Carlos leads to a series of close-up shots of him opening a miniature coffin decorated with a cross and a heart containing marijuana and rolling papers. A montage sequence exposes the interior of Don Tomás' living room, filled with inexpensive artwork, images of the Virgin of Guadalupe, a facial picture of a sorrowful Jesus Christ, a Guadalupana room divider, and a clutter of inexpensive household furniture.

[35] The role of Don Tomás as saviour is based on his adoration of the Virgin. A series of shots enhance his intervention and, by association, the Virgin's intercession. East LA, its noisy markets, the public space, are images that intrude into the private realm of the interior of Don Tomás' home. A medium shot exposes Don Tomás on the right preparing *champurrado* on the stove and on the left a vertically-lined and beaded-string room divider based on the 1743 engraving of the *patrona de México y Nueva España*.[76] In Don Tomás' home the *Guadalupana* beaded room divider denotes the Virgin's efficacy as a powerful intercessor for her devotees. Although the Virgin does not tell Don Tomás what his niece and nephew have to do to receive her help, the Virgin appears continually in an intercessory role. An exterior long shot, slightly exposing Don Tomas' home altar, presents the dangers lurking, for as Don Tomás is leaving his home, a real estate sign announces to the viewer that

the property has been sold. A red car with the new owners arrives to the scene, creating a parallel of exile between Don Tomás, who will be evicted, and Magdalena who has been rejected by her family (and who will shortly be shunned by her lover). The Virgin of Guadalupe's advocacy is not part of Magdalena's religious world; Magdalena is evangelical, and in her path toward becoming a young women (the social meaning of *quinceañera*), she transforms herself into a sinful Eve, fully responsible for her perceived indiscretions, especially after having sexual relations with Hernán, the conqueror who abandons her and rejects fatherhood.

[36] The subsequent succession of scenes illustrates developments of Magdalena's relation with Hernán, exhibiting, for example, a scene where they run through the grass with full appreciation of their carnal desires. The reappearance of the Virgin ends the frolicking. This apparition, in the form of Don Tomás' *Guadalupana* beaded room divider, is very much in line with Marian virtues about female comportment and the theme of (controlled) sexual desire. Embedded in the film's configuration of Marian aesthetics is a discourse of sexual ethics and the tensions in contemporary society of female sexuality as both liberating and imprisoning. The film explores this dichotomy as Magdalena freely enters into a romantic relationship with Hernán. She is initially respected by her friends for having a devoted boyfriend, whom she in turn tries to please. Once the pregnancy is discovered, however, she is ostracized by her father, her lover, and her friends. Only the gentle and forgiving Don Tomás welcomes her into his place of refuge, his rental sustained by Marian altars.

[37] While Hernán distances himself from the threats of female sexuality, the themes of chastity, self-sacrifice, and humility are emphasized in the scene that exposes again the *Guadalupana* door divider in Don Tomás' kitchen. In the kitchen Carlos wants to find out about Don Tomás and why he did not get married. Don Tomás responds that he could not afford to marry and had no time to pursue the woman he loved because he had to care for his mother. Tomás stands in the tradition of Marian devotees who give up worldly desires in order to dedicate themselves to an ascetic life of caring for others—an option typical of the clerical tradition of self-sacrifice, of men and women who provide alms to the less fortunate, such as the Discalced Carmelites founded by John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila. Just as John of the Cross, Don Tomás gathers in his altar a small family of social outcasts.

[38] While previous scenes showcase how Magdalena and Carlos were embarrassments to their respective families, later shots reveal images of the Virgin that highlight the theme of transcendence and that the pregnant fourteen-year old girl is really a virgin. Cut to a medium shot of Don Tomás' interior living room, where he is on the phone speaking to Magdalena's mother. Within this take, a range of images show a woodcut of the Virgin and a painting of Jesus. The camera then captures Carlos walking through red roses (a metaphor for the miracle of Juan Diego and the apparition of the Virgin of Guadalupe) and finding Magdalena there.

[39] The Holy Family is consolation without the outcasts knowing this. Don Tomás initiates the process by which a new family is born, Carlos and the pregnant Magdalena. The film

provides a fuller view of Don Tomás' exterior altars. At centre bottom is a *retablo* of the Virgin of Guadalupe, enclosed in a shrine reminiscent of a tropical garden, and then cut to an extension of verdure foreground exposing another shrine in the background. One altar is where Don Tomás has a collection of angels, miniature statutes of Our Lady rosaries, a plastic Jesus, stars, and photographs of Magdalena and Carlos. Cut to another part of the garden of a shrine having a crucifixion at the top of a metal frame structure with more than thirty pearls strands and crystal-beaded strings hanging vertically down. This altar validates Don Tomás status as a Marian collaborator, with special powers to direct her intercession. Functioning as both a locus of Marian power and a channel of divine assistance, Don Tomás becomes a direct pipeline between Echo Park, his lush garden, and Guadalupe's heavenly family.

[40] Once Don Tomás requests the Virgin's intercession, miracles begin to occur. Cut to the *mise-en-scène* of a television set, Carlos smoking pot, staring at the tube, and Magdalena dutifully doing her homework. After conversing they decide to investigate how a woman can get pregnant and remain a virgin. They go to a library and google "pregnant virgin." After their discovery that "immaculate conceptions" are possible, Magdalena proceeds to explain to Hernán how she could have become pregnant. Even though Hernán did not penetrate her, she noted, his ejaculation near her vaginal opening impregnated her. "I only came on your leg," Hernán adds. Embarrassed with the knowledge that she engaged in intense foreplay with Hernán, she cannot tell her father because she does not want him to know "how far" they went. Hernán promises that "if it's a boy we'll call him Jesus." These gospel references

to Jesus as a baby conceived without sex and Magdalena as a virgin with a baby highlight the dichotomy in scripture, in particular Matthew, where the family of Joseph and Mary is divinely favoured yet scorned by the authorities.

[41] The next scene juxtaposes two historical events, the *cinco de mayo* celebration of victory over the French forces in 1862 (an event restoring national confidence after the 1848 defeat and the Gadsden Purchase of 1853-54) and the past of Don Tomás who leaves his beloved Mexico because it has nothing to offer him except poverty. The outcasts gather at Don Tomás' house, celebrating *cinco de mayo*. Listening to Don Tomás, Carlos and Magdalena understand more details about how Don Tomás tried to kill himself when he was eight, hurling himself into traffic where an on-coming truck crushed him. Although no specific reference is made to the Virgin, the visual images of the Virgin inserted in this sequence suggest that he had a confirmation of Guadalupe's miracle, an intercession of her love and mercy, of her transformative power to change a boy filled with self-hate to a young man with a new-found mission to be of maximum service to those around him. Don Tomás' near-death experience rehabilitated him into a humble and compassionate *champurrado* street vendor, a person that few would consider a success story, but whose presence warms all who encountered him. His humility and benevolence is demonstrated in the scene about an Anglo woman who appreciates Don Tomás and will therefore rent out her property to Carlos and Magdalena.

[42] The presence of the Virgin in Don Tomás' home calls attention to Guadalupe's role in his own redemption. Don Tomás is an inspiration for Magdalena and Carlos to endure and to figure out a new life, it is especially the case after Don Tomás dies, for Carlos assumes the responsibility to support Magdalena who has been abandoned by Hernán. In this scene two victories strengthen the protagonists onward, a successful fight against a foreign occupation (*cinco de mayo*) and the salvation of a suicidal person (Don Tomás), all underneath the gaze of the Virgin reinforced as a power of resistance and resurrection. Don Tomás has sinned with an attempt to kill himself, but now he and his flock of unwanted children go about armed with the Virgin looking over them.

[43] Three scenes highlight how Tomás' devotion mitigates earthly transgressions. First, Carlos is responsible for the eviction, causing the owner of the property, James, to retaliate because Carlos had a furtive affair with his partner, Gary. Second, Magdalena discovers that Hernán will not keep his promise to marry her, because his mother forces him to abandon Magdalena; Hernán's mother wants him to go to college and become successful. Third, Don Tomás receives an eviction notice, a sign that his time is up. Don Tomás dies, but not before he hears confirmation from Carlos that he will care for Magdalena and her baby. It is important to keep in mind that these tragedies surrounding the eviction, and presumably the destruction or demolition of the altars, have an enigmatic dimension involving the resolution of Carlos as a jobless provider as well as a devotional dimension regarding the final scene of Magdalena having a traditional *quinceañera*. For immediately after the death of Don Tomás, when Carlos and Magdalena return to the altars, Carlos looks at the *retablos* and the family

shrine with pictures of himself and Magdalena. They weep because they have lost both Don Tomás and his shrine. For the property owner the shrine is not a threat but something mystic: "What do we do with this?", says James as Gary exposes a silence amid a shrine filled with photographs, cheap beads, and religious images.

[44] Despite the favourable outcome of the narrative, the conclusion revealing Magdalena's forgiveness by her father and Carlos' commitment to sacrifice his life for Magdalena and her baby is enigmatic. The shrine's disappearance from the lives of Carlos and Magdalena harbours a contemporary dilemma regarding traditional Marian devotion as part of Mexican identity. Although the trajectory of Marian devotion has been constitutive of religious identity in many cultural settings, it also bears an implicit relevance to evanescent communal contexts. Home shrines are labile and impermanent, but they appear with a mantle of strategic fibers or texts, colourful and solipsistic reformulations of ancient and coalescing revelations. Yet even without shrines, a figure, a rosary, a prayer, a picture or a book in the hands of a believer become vehicles of Marian reception and dissemination of her strategies and moral directives, which serve as fundamental blueprints of identities that transcend and engage the here and now. The Virgin is an emblem for the cultural world in Echo Park and the shrine of Echo Park is a microcosm of Marian devotion.

## Conclusion

[45] The Virgin is a malleable figure who inspires rich and poor people, but she displays a special concern for the disenfranchised, the *mexicanos de afuera*, such as Don Tomás whose

Marian altars constitute vital elements of his self-identity and cultural heritage. For Don Tomás, his shrine no longer has a function once he dies, and with his death the shrine as his personal reconstruction of Mary and his family of loved ones becomes ready for demolition.

[46] Yet Don Tomás signifies a perdurable trait of Guadalupan devotion, that any devotee of the Virgin can resurrect an old story and modify it by constructing an altar as a means of both self-identification with Guadalupe and communication with Marian strategies. Inscribed in images, folk art, media, music, and commercial products, Marian elements function in subversive and defensive ways. Marian devotion does not conform strictly to orthodoxy (but does so strategically) and does not require conformity to theological nuances, although Mariological doctrines such as the Immaculate Conception inform Marian representations. Believers like Don Tomás access this choreography of practices and beliefs in order to obtain divine assistance.

[47] The ancient Mariological tradition has outlasted religious systems and imperial configurations. Marian devotion is a creative process, tied to a religious dynamic that in modern times exists alongside seemingly contradictory ideologies, including the evangelical platform of the immediacy of salvation, as signified by Ernesto, whose own church is a rejection of Marian devotion. Marian devotion is an ancient celebration of creation, and the reconstruction of Marian altars continues to provide antidotes to misfortunes. For Don Tomás, his conviction provides a solution, a *Maria ex machina* reversing misfortunes and shielding Magdalena's adulthood as a single mother. Since the formation of Mariological

devotion believers have referred to their own weakness, unworthiness, and humility that have served as the entry point through which the Virgin appears into their world—virtues that Don Tomás exemplified and passed on to his adopted children, Magdalena and Carlos.

[48] The subversive element of Marian devotion is rarely a frontal attack, but such devotion simultaneously undercuts and reasserts hierarchies. In the film, a new family hierarchy is advanced: a single mother supported by her gay cousin. Their devotion, however, remains to be seen, but they do adopt Don Tomás' religious principles by which he lived: charity and the modification of self-regarding behaviors. As devotees, they can also enter into a topographical sphere of Marian strategies and delve deep into her universe where, by devotional contact, they empower themselves and resurrect an identity grounded in a profound historical context.

## Notes

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[1] The use of Hispanic is problematic because the term does not accommodate for the diversity of Latinas/os and because its application does not stem from in-group self-perception. For critique, see Suzanne Obler, *Ethnic Label, Latino Lives: Identity and the Politics of (Re)Presentation in the United States* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995).

[2] For Marian devotion in the United States, see David A. Badillo, *Latinos and the New Immigrant Church* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006). For altars, see Kay F. Turner, "Mexican American Home Altars: Towards their Interpretation," *Aztlán: A Journal of Chicano Studies* 13 (1982): 309-326.

[3] See, for example, the Asociación Tepeyac, the human rights network of *mexicanos* forging an transnational alliance: http://www.tepeyac.org/q2004.htm(accessed 12 August 2008). For family and communal identification through the Virgin and resistance, see Kristy Nabhan-Warren, *The Virgin of el Barrio: Marian Apparitions, Catholic Evangelizing, and Mexican American Activism* (New York: New York University Press, 2005).

[4] On the connection between mestizaje and religion, see Virgilio P. Elizondo, *Guadalupe: Mother of the New Creation* (New York: Orbis Books, 1997), especially chapter five, "Mestizo Christianity." For philosophical introspection on mestizaje as a instrumental category of identity formation in the United States, see Jorge J.E. Gracia, *Hispanic/Latino Identity: A Philosophical Perspective* (Malden: Blackwell, 2000), 107-121.

[5] Peter Brown, *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity: Towards a Christian Empire* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992), 152-158. For moral elements and conceptualizations, see Mary F. Foskett, *A Virgin Conceived: Mary and Classical Representations of Virginity* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002). On the impact of Antiquity, see Stephen Benko, *The Virgin Goddess: Studies in the Pagan and Christian Roots of Mariology* (New York: Brill, 1993).

[6] For Latin Roman heritage, see Gordon Laing, "The Origin of the Cult of the Lares," *Classical Philology* 16/2 (1921): 124-140; Margaret C. Waites, "The Nature of the Lares and their Representation in Roman Art," *American Journal of Archaeology* 23/3 (1920): 241-261.

[7] On the extensive landscape of shrine and altar construction in Spain, see William A. Christian Jr., *Local Religion in Sixteenth-century Spain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 22, and 72 for list of Marian chapels and vows that constituted the majority over specialist saints and Christ. For decorative arts, see Judith Berg Sobré, *Behind the Altar Table: The Development of the Painted Retable in Spain, 1350-1500* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989).

[8] On Mexican *retablos*, see Francisco José Belgodere Brito, *El Retablo de San Bernardino de Sena en Xochimilco: studio formal y simbólico-religioso* (Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1969). For Mexican Marian shrines, see Victor W. Turner and Edit L.B. Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture: Anthropological Perspectives* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), chapter two.

[9] Julia Preston, "U.S. Raids 6 Meat Plants in ID Case," and Katie Zezima, "Massachusetts Set for its Officers to Enforce Immigration Law," *New York Times* (December 13, 2006); Jerry Parker, "Mass for Lady of Guadalupe feast turns somber," *DesMoinesRegister.com News*

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(December 13, 2006). For the complex relation between immigration, religion, and political identity, see Manuel Gamio, *El inmigrante mexicano: la historia de su vida: entrevistas completas, 1926-1927* (Mexico: M.A. Porrúa, 2002; 1930).

[10] For examples, see William H. Beezley, "Home Altars: Private Reflections of Public Life," in *Home Altars of Mexico* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1997); Marie Romero Cash, *Living Shrines: Home Altars of New Mexico* (Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico Press, 1998).

[11] For overview, see Marina Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983; 1976).

[12] Jaroslav Pelikan, *Mary Through the Centuries: Her Place in the History of Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 223.

[13] For articulation of an activist and liberating Latino religiousness, see Roberto Goizueta, *Caminemos con Jesus: Towards a Hispanic/Latino Theology of Accompaniment* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1998). For alternative model of Protestant religious identity and activism, see Rudy V. Busto, *King Tiger: The Religious Vision of Reies López Tijerina* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005).

[14] The literal translation of *quinceañera* is the celebration of a young woman's fifteenth birthday. The directors of the film claim that the *quinceañera* is Aztec, but according to Stanley Brandes the *quinceañera* is a recent ritual. "Ritual Eating and Drinking in Tzintzuntzan: A Contribution to the Study of Mexican Foodways," *Western Folklore* 49/2 (April 2 1990): 163-175, 173. For analysis of Chicano gender rituals, see Karen Mary Dávalos, "'La Quinceañera': Making Gender and Ethnic Identities," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies 16/2-3: Gender, Nations, and Nationalisms* (1996): 101-127.

[15] www.sonyclassics.com/quinceanera/externalLoads/quinceanera_presskit.pdf.

[16] For historical trajectory, see David Brading, *Mexican Phoenix: Our Lady of Guadalupe, Image and Tradition Across Five Centuries* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001). For the engraving of the brown-skinned Virgin and the development of the cult, see William B. Taylor, "The Virgin of Guadalupe in New Spain: An Inquiry into the Social History of Marian Devotion," *American Ethnologist 14/1, Frontiers of Christian Evangelism* (February 1987): 9-33, 14-16.

[17] For a case study of the Virgin and Mexican immigrants in Los Angeles, see Luis D. León, "Metaphor and Place: The U.S.-Mexico Border as Center and Periphery in the Interpretation of Religion," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 67/3 (September 1999): 541-571.

[18] For a range of religious and political strategies not part of Marian praxis, see William V. Flores and Rina Benmayor, *Latino Cultural Citizenship: Claiming Identity, Space and Rights* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1977). For the alternative of evangelical faiths, from Pentecostalism to Jehovah Witnesses, which is one of the features in *Quinceañera* (the actress playing Magdalena was raised in the Jehovah faith), see Kenneth D. Gill, *Toward a Contextualized Theology for the Third World: The Emergence and Development of Jesus' Name Pentecostalism in Mexico* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1994).

[19] On hybridization, see Néstor García Canclini, *Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity*, trans. Christopher L. Chiappari and Silvia L. López (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995; 2005), introduction.

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[20] The earliest reference to mestizos that I have found is in the records concerning the audit of Viceroy Mendoza who qualifies them as orphans fathered by Spaniards and born to Indian women. For Mendoza's *relación* of 1550 and rebuttal to the 1546 audit, see Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid, Ms. 3,042; Lewis Hanke, ed., *Los virreys españoles en América durante el gobierno de la casa de Austria*, Biblioteca de Autores Españoles 273 (Madrid: Ediciones Atlas, 1976), 38-56, 540. My assumption is that these mestizo youths navigated different worlds, maneuvering to preserve ancient beliefs and adapting new ideas and practices, learning the new tongue and using their native "idolatries" to compose a mélange and a highly personalized form of devotion. For analysis of mestizo syncretism and Amerindian idol worship, see Carmen Bernard and Serge Gruzinski, *De L'idolâtrie: une archélogie des sciences religieuses* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1988). Examples of the continuation of such idolatries, especially in the form of historical memory, see *Relaciones geográficas del siglo XVI: México*, ed. René Acuña, 3 vols., Instituto de Investigaciones Antropológicas (Mexico: Universidad Autónoma de México, 1985-1986), especially 3: 54-70. For orientation, see Howard F. Cline, "The *Relaciones Geográficas of the Spanish Indies, 1577*-1648," in *Handbook of Middle American Indians, Vol. 12: Guide to Ethnohistorical Sources, Part One*, ed. Howard F. Cline, Middle American Research Institute, Tulane University, general editor Robert Wauchope (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1972), 183-242.

[21] For the Spanish evangelization program that consisted of mutual change within a moral framework, see Louise M. Burkhart, *The Slippery Earth: Nahua-Christian Moral Dialogue in Sixteenth-Century Mexico* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1989), chapter 2, "The Missionary Missionized." For an assessment of changes and continuities of the Roman faith, see William B. Taylor, *Magistrates of the Sacred: Priests and Parishioners in Eighteenth-Century Mexico* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), chapter 3, "Issues of Local Religion." For the merging of Mexican environments and Christian structures, see Jeanette Favrot Peterson, *The Paradise Garden Murals of Malinalco: Utopia and Empire in Sixteenth-Century Mexico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993).

[22] Beezley, "Home Altars: Private Reflections of Public Life," 91. For argument on the persistence of Mesoamerican religious culture, see June Nash, "Gendered Deities and the Survival of Culture," *History of Religions* 36/4 (May 1997): 333-356.

[23] Stephanie Wood, "Adopted Saints: Christian Images in Nahua Testaments of Late Colonial Toluca," *The Americas* 47 (1991): 259-293.

[24] *The Mestizo Mind: The Intellectual Dynamics of Colonization and Globalization*, trans. Deke Dusinberr (New York: Routledge, 2002; 1999), 182.

[25] Kathleen Deagan and José María Cruxent, *Columbus's Outpost among the Taínos: Spain and America at La Isabela, 1493-1498* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 165

[26] For a study of the portability of *retablos*, especially among the migrants, see Jorge Durand and Douglas S. Massey, *Miracles on the Border: Retablos of Mexican Migrants to the United States* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1995).

[27] Gruzinski, *The Mestizo Mind*, 188-191, 190.

[28] For municipal planning, see Robert C. Smith, "Colonial Towns of Spanish and Portuguese America," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 14/4 (1955) 3-12, 3; George Kubler, *The Sixteenth-Century Architecture of Mexico* (New Haven: Yale University Press,

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1948). For continuity of Aztec monumental ceremonial centers, see David Carrasco, *City of Sacrifice: The Aztec Empire and the Role of Violence in Civilization* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1999), introduction, 130-131.

[29] Francisco José Belgodere Brito, *El retablo de San Bernardino de Sena en Xochimilco: estudio formal y simbólico-religioso* (Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1969), 9.

[30] Joseph A. Baird Jr., *Los retablos del siglo XVIII en el sur de España, Portugal y México*, trans. Rebeca Barrera de Fraga (Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1987), 133.

[31] For analysis of these Spanish developments, see Stafford Poole, C.M., *Our Lady of Guadalupe: The Origins and Sources of a Mexican National Symbol, 1531-1797* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1995), 15-25.

[32] See, for example, Francisco Cervantes de Salazar, *Crónica de la Nueva España* (1560), ed. Manuel Magallón, 2 vols. (Madrid: Atlas, 1971), 1:229: "desechando de sus cervices el yugo de servidumbre en que estaban opresos."

[33] For thesis, see the letter of Motolinía to Charles V, 2 Jan. 1555, in Toribio de Benavente Motolinía (d. 1568), *Historia de los indios de la Nueva España: relación de los ritos antiguous, idolatrías y sacrificios*, ed. Edmundo O'Gorman (Mexico: Editorial Porrúa, 1969), 205-221.

[34] Bernal Díaz del Castillo, *Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España: Manuscrito 'Guatemala'* (1568), ed. José Antonio Barbón Rodríguez (Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2005), 106-111 at 111: "nos envía para deshacer agravios y castigar a los malos, y mandar que no sacrifiquen más animas; y se les dio a entender otras muchas cosas tocantes a nuestra santa fe."

[35] Díaz, *Historia*, 83. Díaz says that the chronicler, Francisco López de Gómara, was incorrect in qualifying this battle as one advanced by the apostles St. James of Santiago and St. Peter. This site is where "se puso en el altar la santa imagen de nuestra señora, y la cruz, la qual todos adoramos." For a description of the enslavement, ravages and horrid destruction of the Aztec capital as "ten plagues," see Motolinía (d. 1568), *Memoriales, o libro de las cosas de la Nueva España y de los naturales de ella*, Serie de historiadores y cronistas de Indias 2, ed. Edmundo O'Gorman (Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, 1971), 21-31.

[36] Díaz, *Historia*, 126-127: "una gran señora que es madre de Nuestro Señor Jesucristo, en quien creemos y adoramos, para que la tengan por señora y abogada."

[37] Díaz, *Historia*, 127.

[38] Díaz, *Historia*, 123: "que aunque son indios, vieron y entendieron que la justicia es santa y buena, y que las palabras que Cortés les avía dicho, quen veníamos a desagraviar y quitar tiranías, conformaba con lo que pasó en aquella entrada, y tuviéronnos en mucho más que de antes."

[39] Note, however, the great scandal caused by Castilian conquerors who held lordship over "las personas y vidas de los indios." The Indians were subjects of the crown and not to be subjects of lords. See the letter of Sebastián Ramírez de Fuenleal (president of the appellate court of New Spain and bishop of Santo Domingo) to Charles [1532] in *Colección de Documentos para la*

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*Historia de México*, ed. Joaquín García Icazbalceta, 2 vols. (Nendeln: Kraus Reprint, 1971; 1858), 2:165-189, 167.

[40] For Spanish analysis of these "idolatries," see Motolinía, *Historia de los indios*.

[41] *Historia de la conquista de México* (1552), ed. Jorge Gurría Lacroix (Caracas: Biblioteca Ayacucho 1979), 164.

[42] *Historia del principio y origin, progresos venidas a México y milagros de la santa imagen de nuestra señora de los remedios, extramuros de México* (Mexico, 1621), 26-37; Brading, *Mexican Phoenix*, 47.

[43] For its dissemination, see Suzanne L. Stratton, *The Immaculate Conception in Spanish Art* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), especially under the regency of Cisneros and its subsequent propagation, 35-37.

[44] Poole, *Our Lady of Guadalupe*, 87-99.

[45] Taylor, *Magistrates of the Sacred*, 280.

[46] Inga Clendinnen, "Ways to the Sacred: Reconstructing 'Religion' in Sixteenth-Century Mexico," *History and Anthropology* 5 (1990): 105-141.

[47] Motolinía, *Historia de los Indios*, 19.

[48] Josefina Muriel, *Hospitales de la Nueva España*, 2 vols. (Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1990-91; 1956), vol. 1.

[49] Note, for example, the "hospital real de la purísima concepción" among other buildings that contained Mexicanized paintings (e.g., *prodigiosa imagen de nuestra señora la virgin María*), "Jurisdicción de Santiago de Queretaro, 15 July 1743," in Francisco de Solano et al, ed., *Relaciones geográficas del arzobispado de México, 1743*, 2 vols., Colección Tierra Nueva e Cielo Nuevo, 28 (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1988), 1:241-286, 266, 258.

[50] Taylor, *Magistrates of the Sacred*, 281-282.

[51] Serge Gruzinski, "Indian Confraternities, Brotherhoods and *Mayordomías* in Central New Spain: A List of Questions for the Historian and the Anthropologist," *The Indian Community of Colonial Mexico*, eds. Arij Ouweneel and Simon Miler (Amsterdam: CEDLA, 1990), 205-223.

[52] For case study and coverage of Guadalupan 'expansionism', see Timothy Matovina, *Guadalupe and her Faithful: Latino Catholics in San Antonio, from Colonial Origins to the Present* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), chapter three, "Patroness of *la frontera*, 1731-1836."

[53] For analysis of the diversity of Marian devotion and the role of women, see Ronald E. Surtz, *Writing Women in Late Medieval and Early Modern Spain: The Mothers of Saint Teresa of Avila* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995).

[54] Gretchen D. Starr-LeBeau, *In the Shadow of the Virgin: Inquisitors, Friars and Conversos in Guadalupe, Spain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 16-17; Peter Linehan, "The Beginnings of Santa María de Guadalupe and the Direction of Fourteenth Century Castile," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 36 (1985), 284-304; William A. Christian Jr., *Apparitions in Late Medieval and Renaissance Spain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 88-92.

[55] Poole, *Our Lady of Guadalupe*, introduction.

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[56] For text, see Miguel Sánchez, *Imagen de la Virgen María, Madre de Dios de Guadalupe, milagrosamente aparecida en al ciudad de Mexico, celebrada en su historia, con la profecía del capítulo doce del Apocalípsis* (Mexico, 1648).

[57] Louise M. Burkhart, *Before Guadalupe: The Virgin Mary in Early Colonial Nahuatl Literature* (Albany: Institute for Mesoamerican Studies, University at Albany, 2001), 2; Luis Laso de la Vega, *The Story of Guadalupe: Luis Laso de la Vega's Huey tlamahuiçoltica of 1649*, ed. and trans. Lisa Sousa, Stafford Poole, James Lockhart (Los Angeles: The University of California Press, 1998). For analysis of the construction of the Juan Diego apparition myth, see Poole, *Our Lady of Guadalupe*.

[58] Charles Gibson, *The Aztecs under Spanish Rule: A History of the Indians of the Valley of Mexico, 1519-1810* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964), 133.

[59] See, for example, Linda A. Curcio-Nagy, "Rosa de Escalante's Private Party: Popular Female Religiosity in Colonial Mexico City," *Women in the Inquisition: Spain and the New World*, ed. Mary E. Giles (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 254-269, 258-259.

[60] Brading, *Mexican Phoenix*, 46, citing Juan de Grijalva, *Crónica de la orden de N.P.S. Agustín en la provincias de la Nueva España* (Mexico, 1624), 42.

[61] For examples, see William H. Beezley, "Home Altars: Private Reflections of Public Life," in *Home Altars of Mexico*, 91-107

[62] Robert Haskett, *Indigenous Rulers: An Ethnohistory of Town Government in Colonial Cuernavaca* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1991), 18.

[63] William B. Taylor, "Documents: Our Lady in the Kernal of Corn, 1774," *The Americas* 59/4 (April 2003): 559-570.

[64] Taylor, *Magistrates*, 69.

[65] Matt S. Meier, "María insurgente," *Historia Mexicana* 23 (1974): 466-482, 479. For overview, see Luis Villoro, *El proceso ideológico de la Revolución de la Independencia* (Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1967).

[66] For argument about the integration and development of indigenous and Spanish elements into a national identity, see Jacques Lafaye, *Quetzalcóatl y Guadalupe: la formación de la conciencia nacional en México*, trans. Ida Vitale and Fulgencia López Vidarte (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1985; 1977).

[67] Taylor, "The Virgin of Guadalupe in New Spain," 21.

[68] Victor Turner, *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974), 98-155, 104-105.

[69] *Magistrates of the Sacred*, 289-291.

[70] Alex Nava, "Teresa Urrea: Mexican Mystic, Healer, and Apocalyptic Revolutionary," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 73/2 (June 2005): 497-519.

[71] For the Virgin and the Revolution, see Matthew Butler, "The Church in 'Red Mexico': Michoacán Catholics and the Mexican Revolution, 1920-1929" *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 55/3 (July 2004): 520-541, 528. On the Mexican Revolution as a rebellion against the ecclesiastical hierarchy and the elite system, see William K. Meyers, "Seasons of Rebellion: Nature, Organization of Cotton Production, and the Dynamics of Revolution in La Laguna, Mexico, 1910-1916," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 30/1 (Feb. 1998): 63-94, 91. For

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women revolutionaries, especially visual data, see Elena Poniatowska, *Las soldaderas* (Mexico: Ediciones Era, 1999). For analysis of women and the Revolution, see Carlos Monsiváis, "When Gender Can't Be Seen amid the Symbols: Women and the Mexican Revolution," *Sex in Revolution: Gender, Politics, and Power in Modern Mexico*, ed. Jocelyn Olcott, Mary Kay Vaughan, and Gabriela Cano (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 1-19.

[72] For argument of how popular media teach people about the past (as opposed to written texts), see Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *The Past Within Us: Media, Memory, History* (New York: Verso, 2005).

[73] For Pedro Infante's campaign, see Anne Rubenstein, "Mass Media and Popular Culture in the Postrevolutionary Era," in *The Oxford History of Mexico*, ed. Michael C. Meyer and William H. Beezley ((New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 637-670, 654.

[74] On the formation of this devotion, especially on the basis of the first "relics," see Jeanette Favrot, "Creating the Virgin of Guadalupe: The Cloth, the Artists, and Sources in Sixteenth-Century New Spain," *The Americas* 61/4 (April 2005): 571-610.

[75] For analysis of the repository of memory in street murals, see Eve Simpson, "Chicano Street Murals: A Sociological Perspective," *The Journal of Popular Culture* 13/3 (Spring 1980): 516-525.

[76] For analysis of the religious and political context that lead to *Guadalupana* devotion and its artistic impact in the 1770s, see Pierre Ragon, "Los santos patronos de las ciudades del México central (Siglos XVI y XVII)," *Historia Mexicana* 52/2 (October-December 2002): 361-389.