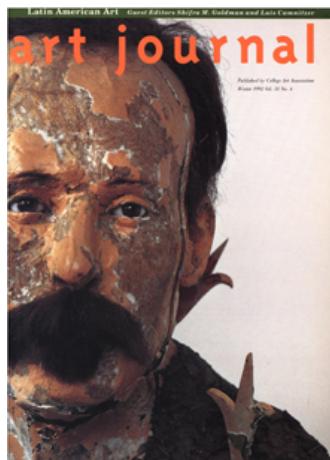


This article was downloaded by: [Indiana University Libraries]

On: 04 February 2015, At: 09:18

Publisher: Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



## Art Journal

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:  
<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rcaj20>

### The Virgin of Guadalupe

Jeanette Favrot Peterson

Published online: 07 May 2014.

To cite this article: Jeanette Favrot Peterson (1992) The Virgin of Guadalupe, Art Journal, 51:4, 39-47, DOI: [10.1080/00043249.1992.10791596](https://doi.org/10.1080/00043249.1992.10791596)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00043249.1992.10791596>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Taylor & Francis makes every effort to ensure the accuracy of all the information (the "Content") contained in the publications on our platform. However, Taylor & Francis, our agents, and our licensors make no representations or warranties whatsoever as to the accuracy, completeness, or suitability for any purpose of the Content. Any opinions and views expressed in this publication are the opinions and views of the authors, and are not the views of or endorsed by Taylor & Francis. The accuracy of the Content should not be relied upon and should be independently verified with primary sources of information. Taylor and Francis shall not be liable for any losses, actions, claims, proceedings, demands, costs, expenses, damages, and other liabilities whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with, in relation to or arising out of the use of the Content.

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden. Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at <http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions>

# *The Virgin of Guadalupe*

## Symbol of Conquest or Liberation?

Jeanette Favrot Peterson

Of the many images of the Virgin Immaculate venerated in Mexico, only the Virgin of Guadalupe has an overarching political significance. This essay will challenge two myths concerning her role as national emblem: first, that her cult spontaneously welded together all the strata of New Spain; and second, that Guadalupe from the sixteenth century on served as a symbol of freedom for the oppressed native populations. Instead, her meaning was reinterpreted for different ruling parties primarily in those times when existing sociopolitical institutions were being reconstituted.<sup>1</sup> Rather than acting as an unchanging "single Master symbol," to use Eric Wolf's words,<sup>2</sup> Guadalupe has been used alternatively, and sometimes simultaneously, as a symbol of liberation as well as one of accommodation and control. Not until the nineteenth century did Guadalupe's cult gain in strength among a largely disenfranchised population. Moreover, only in the twentieth century has her image taken on new meaning compatible with her title, "Mother of the Mexicans."

At the heart of my inquiry are the image and legend of the Virgin of Guadalupe. According to the account of the apparition, which was not recorded in a dated publication until the mid-seventeenth century, Guadalupe first appeared on December 8, 1531, on the hill of Tepeyac (now Tepeyac), to the north of Mexico City.<sup>3</sup> She showed herself to a newly Christianized native, whose baptismal name was Juan Diego. Using the Aztec language of Nahuatl, the Virgin asked that a church be erected in her honor. Juan Diego tried three times to convince Archbishop Juan de Zumárraga of this apparition. He succeeded only on the last visit to Zumárraga when roses tumbled out of his opened *tilmatli*, or cloak, and a life-sized image of the Virgin was found miraculously imprinted on its cactus-fiber cloth. Juan Diego's cloak is said to be the same painted icon that is central to the cult of the Virgin of Guadalupe, venerated today in the twentieth-century basilica that bears her name (fig. 1).

By no coincidence, Tepeyac had served as an ancient pilgrimage site dedicated to several pre-Columbian earth deities, who were referred to in the early colonial period by the generic name of Tonantzin, meaning "our revered mother."<sup>4</sup> In the ambitious program to evangelize all native



FIG. 1 *Virgin of Guadalupe*, 16th century, oil and tempera (?) on maguey cactus cloth and cotton, 69 x 41½ inches. Basilica of Guadalupe, Mexico City.

peoples after the conquest, Catholic shrines were superimposed on pre-Hispanic temples. Given its traditional significance, Tepeyac would have been a logical place for a chapel or hermitage (*ermita*), probably dedicated to one of the many cults of the Virgin of the Immaculate Conception imported by the Spaniards. While scanty documentation has obscured the origins of the Guadalupe devotion, it is likely that neither

a shrine specifically dedicated to the Mexican Virgin of Guadalupe nor an image of her existed prior to 1555–56.<sup>5</sup> Iconographic and stylistic evidence suggests that the *tilmatli* icon was painted by a native artisan, perhaps as early as mid-century. By this period, one of the most common representations of the Immaculate Conception relied on the biblical text of the Apocalyptic Woman described by St. John. The creator of the Guadalupe icon appears to have used as a model a late fifteenth or early sixteenth-century engraving from the Book of Revelation.<sup>6</sup> Like the Apocalyptic Woman of Revelation 12:1, Guadalupe is “clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet.” She stands on a crescent moon, the sun’s rays creating an almond-shaped mandorla, or glory, around her, with the twelve stars that crown her head in the Bible multiplied and scattered over the surface of her blue mantle. The Virgin at Tepeyac was called Guadalupe after a popular shrine in the region of Estremadura in central Spain. Although the painted Mexican Guadalupe bears little physical resemblance to her Spanish counterpart, a diminutive sculpture of the Virgin and Child, name recognition alone insured her appeal for European and Spanish devotees.

The introduction of the Mexican Guadalupe some thirty-five years after the conquest is significant. In spite of the Catholic church’s zealous program of evangelization, by the time of the first Mexican church council in 1555, the failure to eradicate paganism had become patently clear. The hierarchy acknowledged Indian resistance to domination, both overtly in the form of uprisings and covertly in the persistence of traditional religious beliefs. Aggressive methods of indoctrination were intensified, including the substitution of new Christian saints for old gods and the incorporation of parallel beliefs and ritual. The Mexican Virgin of Guadalupe was one such fusion of an imported European Mother of God with native mother goddesses. Like the pre-Columbian earth deities, the Virgin Mary of popular Spanish Catholicism had power over fertility, disease, and natural disasters.<sup>7</sup> However, while these similarities facilitated syncretic solutions, they also undermined Christian orthodoxy. In 1576 the Franciscan friar Sahagún complained that the pilgrimages to Tepeyac were only a continuation of pre-Hispanic practices and that native worshipers consistently referred to Guadalupe as Tonantzin—a name that is still linked to Guadalupe in some regions of Mexico.<sup>8</sup> Aside from her association with a traditionally sacred space, her female gender, and her reputed powers over natural forces, the Mexican Guadalupe was an eminently European image that had little meaning for the native worshiper. The classical beauty of Spanish Marian images and the standardized Immaculate iconography were modified in the painted icon to include ashen-olive skin and straight black hair. Along with her humble attitude and pious gesture, the Virgin of Guadalupe conveniently reflected the colonial church’s image of the native population that it sought to bring under its control. By the late sixteenth century, Guadalupe’s following in both

the Indian and Spanish communities was a relatively local phenomenon, like hundreds of similar community cults.<sup>9</sup>

Guadalupe’s cult gained a wider following in the seventeenth century and can be best understood in the context of class distinctions, which were largely based on skin color. Although tragically decimated in the decades following the conquest, by the end of the colonial period the indigenous races in New Spain remained the largest ethnic group. In the late eighteenth century, four-fifths of the total population were nonwhite and most constituted the lower classes; these included the fastest-growing component, the *mestizos*, or individuals of mixed blood. The white, upper fifth of the population was composed of peninsular Spaniards, desirably nicknamed *gachupines*, and Mexican-born Spaniards, or *criollos*. This schema does not do justice to the multiple classifications, or *castas*, that ranked persons, with their attendant access to power and wealth.<sup>10</sup> Whether by birth or persuasion, the *criollo*, or creole, was intensely dedicated to the success of the new colony. Creoles were distrusted by the Spaniards, treated as second-class citizens and given inferior positions in every professional sphere. With their expanding numbers, the creoles would become the most important protagonists in the promulgation of Guadalupe as part of their ambition to create a Mexico out of New Spain.

The movement to associate the Mexican Guadalupe with creole interests is already apparent in the first *datable* representation of the Virgin of Guadalupe (fig. 2). The 1615–20 engraving by a Flemish artist, Samuel Stradanus (or van der Straet), was commissioned by the metropolitan archbishop, Juan Pérez de la Serna, whose arms appear at the foot, to help raise funds for a new Guadalupe basilica, which was completed in 1622. The central icon is endowed in the engraving with the features and more ample proportions of a Flemish Madonna. Eight lateral panels are ex-votos, testimonials in word and image of Guadalupe’s miraculous powers. These all record miracles worked on behalf of the ruling white class and include, in the upper left, the cure of Don Luis de Castilla, a wealthy Spaniard, and in the upper right, the escape from a riding accident of the creole son of the conquistador Don Antonio de Carvajal. Guadalupe’s intervention in young Carvajal’s fall from his horse was used to underscore the creole’s unique status, favored by the Virgin, and it remained a popular artistic theme throughout the viceregal period. The Stradanus engraving is also important for what it does not depict. None of the ex-votos represents a miracle worked by Guadalupe on behalf of her native constituency, including her cure of Juan Diego’s uncle in 1531, an event that would immediately establish her efficacy in later accounts of the apparition. These omissions lead to the conclusion that either such miracles had not yet been articulated or that they were still only part of an oral tradition. It is also possible that they were intentionally excluded from the Stradanus graphic, given its fund-raising function among the upper classes.



FIG. 2 Samuel Stradanus, *Indulgence for Alms toward the Erection of a Church Dedicated to the Virgin of Guadalupe*, ca. 1615–20, copper engraving, 12 $\frac{1}{2}$  x 8 $\frac{1}{4}$  inches. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, gift of H. H. Behrens, 1948 (48.70).



FIG. 3 Artist unknown, *Virgin of Guadalupe Flanked by St. John and Juan Diego*, 18th century, engraving. Private collection, Mexico City.

The campaign to legitimize Guadalupe as the primary Virgin Mary in New Spain began in 1648 with the first published account of the apparition by Miguel Sánchez.<sup>11</sup> He is one of four creole seventeenth-century authors referred to as the “four evangelists” for their fervor in establishing the historicity of the Virgin of Guadalupe.<sup>12</sup> In order to prove that Guadalupe was an authentically American Virgin, her appearance to poor, humble, and virtuous natives was emphasized as well as her use of the Nahuatl language. Further efforts to link Guadalupe to the indigenous cultures is evident in the frontispiece of the Sánchez publication, where the Virgin is placed on a *nopal*, or prickly pear cactus, as well as on a crescent moon.<sup>13</sup> Thereafter, scores of treatises and published sermons reveal the same mixture of nationalism and fervent *guadalupanismo*.

The Virgin's apocalyptic iconography embodied all the components of the creole program: to verify the miraculous apparitions of Guadalupe as an American phenomenon, to justify the conquest, and to glorify Mexico. The apocalyptic message is explicitly localized in Mexico in eighteenth-century graphics. In one example (fig. 3), St. John is shown recording his vision on the lower left while Juan Diego is kneeling on the lower right. Below the Virgin of Guadalupe is the Aztec's toponym for their capital city, an eagle with a

serpent standing on a cactus. In this image, Patmos is transferred to Mexico and St. John's vision of the Apocalyptic Woman is transformed into the Virgin's appearance to the faithful in the New World. Further visual links to the Book of Revelation occur in paintings of St. Michael where Guadalupe's image appears on the archangel's banner, assisting him in defeating the seven-headed dragon of evil. In a self-serving argument, the Virgin Mary as Guadalupe was said to have appeared in Mexico to help vanquish paganism; thus, the conquest was justified as due punishment for native idolatry. The creole conscience was further vindicated for overcoming heresy and reassured about a future linked to an Indian peoples whose salvation was now guaranteed because of Guadalupe's intervention. The more militant function of Guadalupe would be invoked many times over in the centuries ahead, when her banner heralded revolutionary causes.

The most important theme in the apologist publications associates the Apocalyptic Woman with the new church triumphant. For creole intellectuals, Guadalupe's apparition was an opportune sign that the Virgin Mary had chosen Mexico as her “favored city” and Mexicans as the elect. Underscoring Guadalupe's endorsement of Mexico, her image was increasingly linked to the Latin words *Non fecit taliter*



FIG. 4 Artist unknown, *Virgin of Guadalupe*, 18th century, engraving, 4 x 2½ inches. Museo de la Basílica de Guadalupe, Mexico City.



FIG. 5 Josefus de Ribera/Aragomanis, *Virgin of Guadalupe Venerated by Juan Diego and an Indian*, 1778, oil on canvas, 65 x 40½ inches. Museo de la Basílica de Guadalupe, Mexico City.

*omni nationi*, “He [the Lord] has not dealt thus with any other nation,” words from Psalm 147:20 found on engravings and paintings of Guadalupe beginning in the last quarter of the seventeenth century (fig. 4). By associating Mexico with the biblical New Jerusalem, spiritual equality with the Old World was achieved—a necessary first step in creating a religious-political foundation for an independent creole *patria*, or fatherland.

The terms *patria* and *nación* in creole rhetoric cannot be identified with modern concepts of nationhood in which the rights of all are respected, nor were they consistent with the realities of colonial society. When creole writers referred to both Indians and creoles as native-born and therefore the rightful heirs of the conquest, they retained their own preferential status. Although creoles and Indians were called “Mexicans” in this literature, the published Indian was not a contemporary but one resurrected from the glorious preconquest past. The bias against living Indians included a widespread conviction that they were predisposed to drunkenness and sodomy, victims of their own weak natures. By contrast, the mythologized Indians shown venerating the Virgin of Guadalupe in eighteenth-century paintings are heroic rein-

carnations of the noble savage, complete with the requisite feathered headdress (fig. 5). In spite of the disjunction between these fictive Indians and prevailing attitudes and conditions, they served the creole cause by endowing New World society with an appropriately illustrious past.

The civil and ecclesiastical hierarchy worked to elevate Guadalupe to a new institutional level. An opportunity was afforded them in 1737 when Guadalupe was said to have intervened collectively for “her people” during an epidemic. This virulent plague had already taken the lives of 40,000 in Mexico City and 50,000 in Puebla in eight months; one might wonder whether it had not already run its course. Several of the other images of the Virgin had been invoked before that of the Virgin of Guadalupe. Nonetheless, when her aid was sought, there was an apparent cessation of deaths, her efficacy was acclaimed, and she was converted into an official emblem. In a 1746 book by Cayetano de Cabrera y Quintero, a creole spokesman for the archbishop, an engraving shows Guadalupe enshrined in a shield floating over the stricken city (fig. 6); wealthy upper-class supplicants beseech her aid. In the accompanying Latin text, Mexico is compared to a second Rome, with an allusion to Numa Pompilius, the king



FIG. 6 Baltasar Troncoso, after José de Ibarra, *Virgin of Guadalupe Quelling the Plague of 1737 in Mexico City*, 1743, copper engraving, frontispiece in *Escudo de Armas*, by Cayetano de Cabrera y Quintero, 1746.

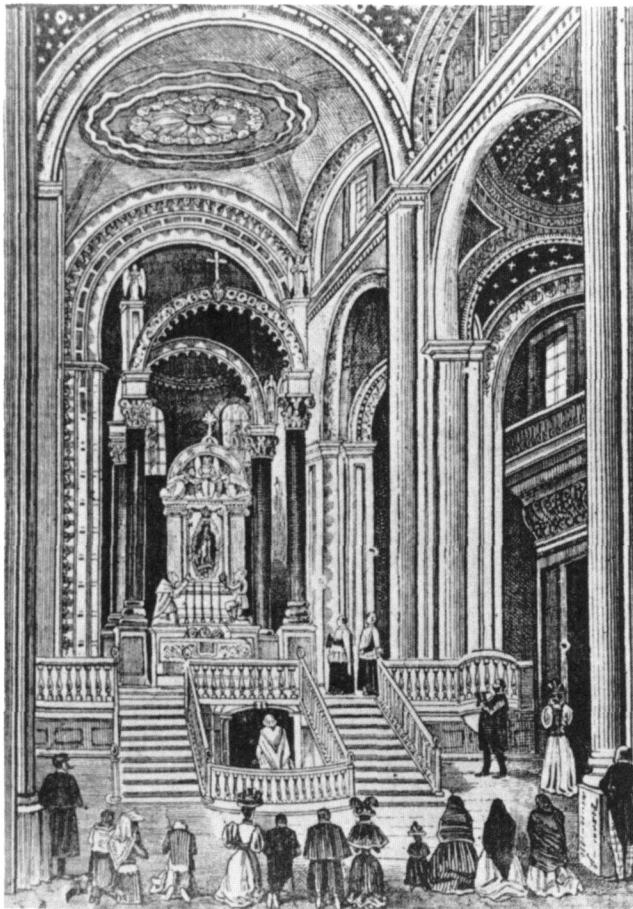


FIG. 7 José Guadalupe Posada, *Interior of the Basilica of Guadalupe*, ca. 1900, zinc etching. Private collection.

of Rome whose vision of a shield likewise protected his city from pestilence. It is not surprising that the cathedral chapter of Mexico City elected the Virgin of Guadalupe as its principal protectress following the epidemic. Other major cities in Mexico likewise swore allegiance to Guadalupe, until in 1746 she was instated as patroness of the entire colony of Mexico, an act that received papal confirmation in 1754. Lavish festivities honored Guadalupe's new status and likewise confirmed that of the wealthy class; among other flamboyant displays, jewelers covered their balconies with sheets of silver.<sup>14</sup>

Jacques Lafaye has written that the recognition of Guadalupe after the 1737 epidemic created a "sacred bond between all Mexicans who acknowledged themselves to be 'serfs of Guadalupe.'"<sup>15</sup> In reality, the only "serfs" remained those confined to a servile state from the time of the conquest. While Guadalupe's cult did grow gradually among all social classes, she continued to convey a paradoxical message that was manipulated for political purposes. Spanish rule in Mexico had always depended on a hierarchy of legal, civil, and ecclesiastical intermediaries through whom the Indians aired their grievances. The Virgin of Guadalupe's role as an intercessor was stressed by the church. William Taylor has shown how often in legal documents she was appealed to as a mediator between the native petitioner and higher authorities, both celestial and civil; as a "model of acceptance and legitimization of colonial authority," Guadalupe thus encouraged the status quo.<sup>16</sup> Discriminatory colonial policies were found even in the celebration of Guadalupe's annual feast day on December 12, which was restricted to the viceroy and the elite in the secular and religious hierarchy. A separate Sunday in November was instituted for the commoners.<sup>17</sup>

Foundations, chapels, and churches dedicated to Guadalupe multiplied throughout Mexico, and her image was embellished in precious settings. The basilica of Guadalupe was incorporated into the official life of Mexico City. Linked to the city by the grand *calzada*, or avenue, the basilica was used by viceroys as an honorary point of entry for most visiting dignitaries and as a burial site for important officials. In art, Guadalupe won a respected place in Christian hagiography, and God the Father himself was even represented as painting her image.<sup>18</sup> The eighteenth-century flowering of the Guadalupe cult can be tied directly to the economic prosperity of New Spain. Rich silver deposits were discovered, which, along with advances in the technology of amalgamation, created a mining boom. Although New Spain became the most prosperous of the colonies, the mother country imposed onerous taxes and monopolies on many exports. Profiting from the flourishing economy were not the creoles, but a new wave of Spaniards who once again dis-

placed creoles in the expanding colonial bureaucracy. Long-term resentment of the peninsular Spaniard was fueled into hatred. Nationalist aspirations, for which Guadalupe was used as a providential sign, were given added impetus by the North American and French revolutions.

During the 1810 War of Independence, the creoles found it expedient to side with the lower clergy, mestizos, landless farm workers, and Indians in their struggle against the *gachupines*. Guadalupe's collective role as patroness of Mexico was appealed to, and as is well known, her image was used to symbolize the insurgent movement. Less known is the fact that the instigator of independence, Father Miguel Hidalgo, was a creole priest who initially envisioned an autonomous creole kingdom. In a move calculated to attract a wider following, Hidalgo took up the banner of Guadalupe, giving the Virgin the title of "General Captain" and parading the image around each of the city plazas he entered on his march to Mexico City. Although the insurgent leader shrewdly perceived Guadalupe as a catalyst for nationalist goals and a focus for anti-Spanish sentiments, she was only one of three symbols for the insurgency; the others were Cuauhtemoc (the last and most resistant of Aztec rulers) and the Mexican eagle, likewise displayed to reinforce publicly the indigenous roots of the rebellion.<sup>19</sup>

Hidalgo's successor, a mestizo priest, Father José María Morelos, required all Mexican patriots to wear the emblem of Guadalupe. Royalists identified, then shot, insurgents by their devotion to Guadalupe and desecrated the image by wearing it on the soles of their shoes.<sup>20</sup> Morelos proposed a radical program of land reform that benefited native-born groups, primarily mestizos and Indians, both referred to as "Americanos." Although ultimately doomed as too visionary, Morelos's programs were the first to associate Guadalupe with a more democratic definition of national privilege. Even so, the War of Independence was not yet truly an Indian phenomenon, and Guadalupe's cult continued to be promoted primarily by the creole intellectuals.<sup>21</sup> Guadalupe's following did not become firmly entrenched and pervasive until after 1828, when Hidalgo was enshrined as a hero; his name was added to the cult center around Tepeyac when the Villa of Guadalupe was changed to Guadalupe Hidalgo, and Mexico's first president was inspired to call himself Guadalupe Hidalgo.

The universality of Guadalupe's cult, however, obscured the harsh reality of a neglected and impoverished native population for whom independence yielded few gains. In addition to being a lucrative source of revenue for the church at the official level, the cult of Guadalupe was still paternalistic and exclusionary vis-à-vis its Indian policies. No event better demonstrates this than the pontifical crown-

ing of the Virgin of Guadalupe as Queen of the Americas on October 12, 1895. The coronation was choreographed to include primarily the upper echelons of the hierarchy, including forty bishops. With the exception of a token representation of natives from Juan Diego's town of Cuautitlán, the absence of Indians was notable. The expense and elitism of the ceremony and subsequent banquet were lambasted as politically motivated by certain journalists and members of the House of Deputies.<sup>22</sup>

Even nineteenth-century liberals continued to maintain a colonial attitude that whitewashed discrimination, as exemplified by two men otherwise known for their trenchant social criticism. The journalist Ignacio Manuel Altamirano and the graphic artist José Guadalupe Posada romanticize their descriptions of pilgrims at Guadalupe's basilica. When describing the contemporary devotion to Guadalupe, Altamirano writes that the celebrants include "all classes of the new Republic, all the castes who live in our new democracy, and all the costumes of our civilization . . . no one is the exception, no one is distinct: it is equality before the Virgin; it is a national idolatry."<sup>23</sup> A similarly rose-colored interpretation can be seen in Posada's broadsheet, where barefoot and well-heeled devotees kneel together and piety to Guadalupe is seemingly without socioeconomic pretensions (fig. 7).

Elsewhere Altamirano had claimed, "Mexicans adore the Virgin . . . those who profess Catholic ideas, for religious motives; the liberals, as a reminder of the 1810 banner; the Indians, because she is their only goddess; . . . and everyone considers her as a symbol essentially Mexican."<sup>24</sup> Altamirano's observation that Guadalupe continued to act as the Indians' "only goddess" is revealing. The nineteenth-century priesthood, like the Franciscan friar Sahagún in the late sixteenth century, was very much aware of surviving pre-Hispanic elements in popular religion.<sup>25</sup> In spite of the waning of practicing Catholicism from 1850 on, there was a growth in the belief in miracles. Guadalupe's apparition was seen several times; once she appeared as if painted on a cliff in Jalisco, and once on the leaf of a maguey plant near Mexico City.<sup>26</sup> Long associated with agriculture and pulque, the Virgin of Guadalupe was still sometimes called the "Mother of Maguey."<sup>27</sup>

Patriotism was again allied with religion during the tumultuous revolutionary decade following 1910. The most notorious leaders of the rebel armies, Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata, both invoked the Virgin of Guadalupe in support of their cause. Zapatistas wore her image in the band of their wide-brimmed hats. Only when affiliated with profound social and agrarian reforms did Guadalupe's image become a viable symbol of freedom for all classes.<sup>28</sup> The

myth of the “Indian Virgin” did not become consonant with reality until some four hundred years after Guadalupe’s first apparition in Mexico. The legislated separation of church and state marked an end to her role as an institutional insignia, and she passed into the realm of popular culture.

In the face of pressures to acculturate, many Mexican-Americans in the United States have chosen to maintain the Virgin of Guadalupe as a powerful symbol to create communal solidarity. The revived festivities on December 12 throughout the Southwest proclaim loyalties that are at once religious, social, and national. Societies of Guadalupanas march together, displaying on their banners the image of Guadalupe in the green and red colors of the Mexican flag. When painted on advertisements, calendars, cars, and outdoor walls, Guadalupe is also a declarative emblem that identifies that object or place with a specific ethnicity (fig. 8).<sup>29</sup> In public murals and posters, her figure is one of several instantly recognizable symbols to express Mexicanismo. Guadalupe’s revolutionary meaning has also been revived. To profess his personal faith and refute charges of Communist leanings, activist César Chavez chose her as one of the principal symbols for the farmworkers’ strike in the 1960s.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, however, artists began challenging as stereotypical a certain repertoire of images, including the Virgin of Guadalupe. For Chicana artists in particular, the call to develop an independent

iconography and style has meant contesting the powerful place of Guadalupe in their upbringing. Beginning in 1978, Yolanda Lopez conceived of a series of paintings and collages that convert the passive, colonial Guadalupe into a more relevant role model for women. Superimposing her own image as a runner over the symbolic attributes of the Virgin, Lopez activates the traditionally submissive figure (fig. 9). Other artists have used the Guadalupe image to condemn harshly the church’s noninvolvement in critical social issues or have satirized her canonical role. There is an ongoing attempt to rediscover the original (read “indigenous”) meaning of Guadalupe, depicting her as an embodiment of Tonantzintlacozellicue, goddess of the cosmos, sacred guardian and mother image for the Mexican nation.

In her role as intercessor, the Virgin of Guadalupe was a model of mediation that sanctioned secular channels of colonial rule. At the same time, the apocalyptic iconography of Guadalupe promised a new beginning for an ambitious creole constituency. This providential symbolism was not extended to include mestizos and Indians until the nineteenth century, and the promise of freedom did not become social reality until after the twentieth-century revolution. Today, the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe remains deeply embedded in the ethnic identity of peoples of Mexican descent; considered

FIG. 8 Artist/s unknown, *Guadalupe with Mexican-American Community*, 1973, detail of mural. Freeway ramp, Logan Heights, San Diego.





FIG. 9 Yolanda Lopez, *Self-Portrait as Jogger with Symbols of Guadalupe*, 1978, oil and pastel on paper, 26 x 22 inches. Collection of the artist.

"beyond being Catholic—she has been integrated into the Chicano cultural space."<sup>30</sup> However pervasive her folk manifestations may be, certain Mexican-American artists have challenged the image they associate with colonial institutions, gender discrimination, and the passivity of the Catholic church. In short, the Virgin of Guadalupe is still perceived as both a symbol heralding freedom and a signifier of submission. That she continues not only to establish parameters of national identity but also to convey dissent testifies to the potency of the image.

#### Notes

1. The premise that the Virgin of Guadalupe conveys a paradoxical message was influenced by two important sources: Jacques Lafaye, *Quetzalcoatl and Guadalupe: The Formation of Mexican National Consciousness, 1532–1815*, trans. Benjamin Keen (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976); and William Taylor, "The Virgin of Guadalupe in New Spain: An Inquiry into the Social History of Marian Devotion," *American Ethnologist* 14, no. 1 (February 1987): 9–33. The term "symbol of liberation" was applied to Guadalupe by Taylor, 20. This paper has also benefited from discussions with Stacie Widdifield and Lynn Shafer in 1987 and from written exchanges with Stafford Poole, C.M., in 1990.
2. Eric R. Wolf, "The Virgin of Guadalupe: A Mexican National Symbol," *Journal of American Folklore* 71 (1958): 34–39.
3. Considerable scholarship either endorses or refutes the reliability of early apparition accounts. According to apparitionists, the germinal source is a Nahuatl document titled *Nican Mopohua* (Here is Recounted), often attributed to a sixteenth-century native scribe, Antonio Valeriano. Both the authorship and dating of the *Nican Mopohua* are contested; the first securely dated account of the apparition legend does not appear until 1648. A valuable anthology of primary documents is in Ernesto de la Torre Villar and Ramiro Navarro, *Testimonios históricos guadalupanos* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1982).
4. Tonantzin is one of several names associated with an Aztec female earth-and-fertility deity complex whose members included Toci (Our Grandmother) and Cihuacoatl (Woman-Serpent). It is not clear whether the appellation Tonantzin is pre-Hispanic in origin or a postconquest construct to facilitate merger with the reverential names given the Virgin Mary.
5. See Edmundo O'Gorman, *Destierro de sombras* (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1986), 7–21, 67–91. The origins of the shrine, its dedication, and the exact nature of the original cult image (sculpture, print, or painting?) have been embroiled in polemic from the time of Francisco de Bustamante's iconoclastic sermon and subsequent testimonials, referred to collectively as the "Información de 1556." On this, see Torre Villar and Navarro, *Testimonios*, 36–141.
6. Elisa Vargas Lugo suggests Albrecht Dürer's 1498 woodcut of the Apocalyptic Woman; "Iconología guadalupana," in *Imágenes guadalupanas: Cuatro siglos* (Mexico City: Imprenta Madero, 1988), 60. I am currently investigating graphic and mural prototypes for the Guadalupe icon.
7. Similarities in the structural patterns of Spanish and Mexican Marian legends are discussed by William Christian, *Apparitions in Late Medieval and Renaissance Spain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 4, 18–21; Victor Turner and Edith Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), 40–52; and Anna-Britta Hellborn, "Las apariciones de la Virgen de Guadalupe en México y en España," *Ethnos* 1–2 (1964): 58–72.
8. Bernardino de Sahagún, *Florentine Codex: Introductory Volume*, trans. and ed. Arthur J. O. Anderson and Charles Dibble (Santa Fe: School of American Research and University of Utah, 1982), 90.
9. See Viceroy Martín Enríquez's letter written to Philip II in 1575, cited in Torre Villar and Navarro, *Testimonios*, 148–49. On the timing and extent of Guadalupe's following, Taylor, "The Virgin of Guadalupe," 15–19, concludes that not until the eighteenth century did devotion to her penetrate beyond the capital into the provinces.
10. On miscegenation, see Michael C. Meyer and William L. Sherman, *The Course of Mexican History*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), chaps. 12, 15, 21.
11. Reprinted in Torre Villar and Navarro, *Testimonios*, 152–260.
12. The other three were Luis Lasso de la Vega (1649), Luis Becerra Tanco (1666), and Francisco de Florencia, S.J. (1688); see Francisco de la Maza, *El guadalupanismo mexicano* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1981 [1953]), 54–97.
13. The Sánchez frontispiece is illustrated in *Album conmemorativo del 450 aniversario de las apariciones de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe* (Mexico City: Ediciones Buena Nueva, 1981), fig. 17. The nopal cactus is an Aztec symbol for Tenochtitlán.
14. See p. 592 in Francisco Javier Clavijero's essay on Guadalupe's cult in 1782, in Torre Villar and Navarro, *Testimonios*, 578–98.
15. Lafaye, *Quetzalcoatl and Guadalupe*, 255.
16. Taylor, "The Virgin of Guadalupe," 20.
17. Clavijero, in Torre Villar and Navarro, *Testimonios*, 593.
18. For God the Father Painting the Virgin of Guadalupe, see *Album conmemorativo*, figs. 85, 86.
19. Matt S. Meier, "María insurgente," *Historia Mexicana* 23, no. 3 (January–March 1974): 469–71.
20. Torre Villar and Navarro, *Testimonios*, 1014–15, n. 6; and Meier, "María insurgente," 473–76.
21. Taylor, "The Virgin of Guadalupe," 23–24, has shown that the Hidalgo movement was based in the Bajío region north of Mexico City, an area that had the fewest Indians.
22. See Moisés González Navarro, *El Porfiriato: La vida social*, vol. 4 of *Historia moderna de México* (Mexico City: Edición Hermes, 1970), 469.
23. Torre Villar and Navarro, *Testimonios*, 1129 (author's translation).
24. Ibid., 1209–10 (author's translation).
25. González Navarro, *El Porfiriato*, 455–69.
26. Ibid., 452–54.
27. Taylor, "The Virgin of Guadalupe," 19.
28. On the social and agrarian reforms that ultimately brought the Indians of Mexico into the mainstream of national life, see Meyer and Sherman, *The Course of Mexican History*, chaps. 33–36.
29. See also Shifra M. Goldman, "The Iconography of Chicano Self-Determination: Race, Ethnicity, and Class," *Art Journal* 49, no. 2 (1990): 167–73.
30. Amalia Mesa-Bains, personal communication, 1987.

---

JEANETTE FAVROT PETERSON, *assistant professor of art history, University of California, Santa Barbara, is the author of The Paradise Garden Murals of Malinalco: Utopia and Imperial Policy in Sixteenth-century Mexico (1992).*