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Transculturation and Hybridization in New World Baroque Art: A Study of a New World Identity as Defined by History and Art.

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Transculturation and Hybridization in New World Baroque Art: A Study of a New World Identity as Defined by History and Art.

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Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to analyze New World Baroque art as a medium of syncretism allowing the reconciliation and fusion of discrepant cultures. This study will explore the region of New Spain as defined by the Baroque period by analyzing Mexico as a place whose identity was defined by the transcultural and hybrid components of the Baroque and as a place where a New World Baroque aesthetic first started to appear. Transculturation and hybridization will be analyzed historically and aesthetically as factors for the creation of a New World Identity. The term New World Baroque will be used to define art in the Spanish colonies during the Baroque period, the term New Spain will be used to refer to colonial Mexico, transculturation will refer to the exchange of ideas and intermingling of cultures and hybridization will refer to the outcomes of such. This analysis will begin by providing a definition of Baroque with the purpose of establishing an understanding of the main characteristics of the movement aesthetically and chronologically. Spain will be analyzed to provide evidence of the effects of coming into contact with a multicultural society on the Baroque aesthetic; followed by a historical analysis of the events that would result in the creation of the new world. Then transculturation will be analyzed as an answer to the conquest and as guided by the Catholic Church. Then a timeline will list important events leading up to the Baroque period, and finally an exploration of hybrid art will serve to exemplify a well-established hybrid identity culminating with a brief analysis of some of Frida Kahlo's work as an embodiment of the New World Baroque aesthetic.

Chapter I: A Definition of Baroque

First it is necessary to analyze Baroque as a predecessor to New World Baroque. In this particular case, the term Baroque and what is defined as Baroque is many times neatly compacted and structured for the sake of functionality into a category ranging from the later Italian Renaissance and encompassing Mannerist qualities, to simply a time frame defined in a manner that disregards chronology and adheres to its outstanding aesthetics of excess and grandeur. The etymology of the word itself seems to escape a well-defined source as well; possibly coming from the Portuguese word for an imperfectly shaped pearl, Baroque was not used as an aesthetic label for the arts until the eighteenth century and its etymology is therefore irrelevant to the cause of its aesthetic value (Martin 11). Amorphous though this label may be, with the exception of the last chapter and its analysis of modern art, for the sake of this topic Baroque and New World Baroque will refer to the artistic trends of a period expanding roughly the entirety of the seventeenth century and some of its predominant artistic trends (Martin 12). This is done for the sake of convenience since this chronological span is an approximation that includes the gradual shift from preceding movements such as Mannerism and late High Renaissance into the resurgence of what is now considered to be Baroque and its many subdivisions. Taking into consideration the abundance of factors that comprise an artistic movement, to arrive at a well-grounded definition of what to our purpose is considered Baroque, one has to look at the movement not as a uniform well-defined style "but as the embodiment of certain widely held ideas, attitudes and assumptions" (Martin 12). Baroque then is such an extensive and fluid term that it will be analyzed as a conglomeration of the aesthetic trends, ideals, and the social state of the time.

Aesthetics

Aesthetically, Baroque art is characterized by a continuation of the desire for naturalism. Where the Renaissance looked to the classical past and its mathematically accurate, well-proportioned forms, Baroque continues this tradition, striving for even more accurate depictions directly correlated to the continuing "secularization of knowledge" (Martin 13) and scientific advancements. "The whole art of the baroque expresses an acceptance of the material world through the realistic representation of man and nature, through the affirmation of the senses and the emotions and through a new perception of space and infinity" (Martin 39). Many scholars have attempted to give more and more structure to the definition. One of the most comprehensive formulations without a doubt is by Heinrich Wölfflin, whose early analysis in the *Principles of Art History,* first published in 1915, arrives at the conclusion that Baroque is defined by a technique as much as by qualities, to put it at its simplest: a matter of linear vs. painterly. The sixteenth century artist, Wölfflin tells us, is a draftsman as opposed to the seventeenth century and its "readjustment of the eye" (Wölfflin18) concerning itself with a more painterly expression of the visual. For example, *Adam and Eve* by Albrecht Dürer (Figure 1) shows the mass of the human form as contained by an overall linearity. There is a clear consciousness in the way the edge between the black background and the flesh of the figures is being maintained. This preoccupation extends to the depiction of hair. Here we can see how some of the individual hair fibers and gold highlights are composed by long individual brushstrokes. In opposition, Ruben's *Three Graces* (Figure 2) embodies a much more permissive representation of the figure. Free expressive brushstrokes form the flesh of their bodies. The edges and contours are not demarcated by a strict use of line. Instead, because of its painterly use of the brush, the edge of the figures seamlessly merges into the background.

Figure 1 Albrecht Dürer, *Adam and Eve*, 1507.

Figure 2 Peter Paul Rubens, *The Three Graces*, 1639.

Figure 3 TIntoretto, *Pieta (Descent from the Cross)*, 1559.

In its technique, the Baroque represents an art no longer bound by a constrictive geometry still maintaining a balance in composition, preferring curvilinear forms and dynamic figures. Baroque art remains mindful of the viewer while maintaining a preoccupation with illusion as opposed to " classic art and its exhaustive revelation of the form" (Wölfflin, 196), that is to say that while technically conscious of the positioning of forms and balance, the style calls for obscuring the fact that it was arranged for contemplation: "While in classic art every resource is at the service of formal clarity, the Baroque on principle avoids making the picture look as if it

were arranged for contemplation, and could ever be exhausted in contemplation…But, to use a paradox, there is a clearness of the unclear" (Wölfflin, 197). Tintoretto's *Pieta* (Figure 3) demonstrates the dynamism of the Baroque. The composition is made up by curvilinear figures in mid action surrounded by a sea of shadows. Where Renaissance artists would have concentrated on forming an overall clearness of the subject, Tintoretto, Wölfflin tells us has "omitted, obscured, and repressed" his painting (Wölfflin 211). Under the Renaissance aesthetic Christ as the main character would have been represented with clarity and displayed in a manner that reiterates his position as the son of God. Tintoretto however has chosen to obscure his image by casting a shadow that covers most his face with the exception of the forehead and mouth. This is done to convey the emotion of suffering by highlighting the expressive features of the face. According to Wölfflin, "The seventeenth century found a beauty in the darkness which swallows up the form" (Wölfflin 196). The light in a Baroque painting was meant to dramatize the subject and to appeal to the emotional using light as an allegorical tool. Figures submerged in shadows, extreme highlights, and an emphasis on the hidden became part of a language with a symbolic meaning "including on the one hand, enlightenment, reason and truth, and on the other, evil, danger, blindness and death" (Martin 16). Paradoxical as it may seem, this combination of extreme theatricality, heavy aesthetics and a desire for naturalism is in fact linked by yet another aspect of the Baroque aesthetic, something which Martin refers to as Baroque psychology and its "preoccupation with the passions of the soul" (Martin 13). As a result of this interest with the "inner life of man" (Martin 73), the recurrent subjects of the age, mythology, religion, and portraiture were all depicted with a significant regard for emotion. Thus the exuberant nature of Baroque along with its desire for naturalism created an art of introspection interested in the portrayal of human emotion. Not an invention of the Baroque, the interest in the emotional had

previously been formulated during the Renaissance, taking inspiration from the classical rhetoric. What differentiates the Baroque expression however, is its continuity of contrast and theatricality. When translated into the Baroque aesthetic, the concept of emotion becomes heightened and dramatized, directly correlated to the contemporary interest in the scrutiny of the mind, body, and soul.

Figure 4 Techo Mudejar, Universidad de Alcala

Chapter II: Baroque in Spain

Having established a perhaps superficial idea of what Baroque is in general for the purpose of this topic, Baroque like all art movements is bound by the factor of geography. Since this is an analysis of art in the Spanish colonies, we will formulate a deeper understanding by analyzing the movement as defined by Spain. To begin with, one needs to consider Spain as a European nation regarded by the rest of the continent with an eye of exoticism perhaps motivating many studies of Spanish movements as separate from the rest of Europe. Sacheverell Sitwell continues this pattern by forming a study of what he calls "Southern Baroque Art". In his introduction to one of the four essays that make up his book, Sitwell manages to give an image of what may separate Spain as a particularly eclectic breeding ground for the transformation of ideas.

> It was a continual warfare between the wearers of glittering turbans and the cavaliers who wore helmets with glancing plumes that were a tribute, like steam to a train, of the speed and ferocity of their attack. This warfare lasted through many centuries, until the knights who wore turbans were driven out of their houses…and the plumed horsemen were left to offer up their prayers of thanksgiving for victory. This they continued to do before altars on which they expended all the energy they had displayed in battle. (Sitwell 83-4)

This of course, makes reference to the Reconquista and provides us with an image of one of the most decisive moments in Spanish history. Spain has been a country influenced by outside worlds, a pattern that has continued throughout its history. Sitwell compares the efforts of Spanish art to the bondage of slavery in what he describes as "the fulfillment of an alien mind forcing its will upon a machine-like crowd" (Sitwell 84). His comparison portrays Spain as a place heavily influenced by foreign ideas that are adopted by the local culture and transformed in a uniquely Spanish way. This aptitude for transculturation created a hybrid aesthetic within Spanish art and would eventually help facilitate the conquest of the new world. For example

*Mudéja*r art as exemplified by this ceiling in the Universidad de Alcalá (Figure 4), relies heavily on Islamic aesthetics. The ceiling continues the Islamic use of geometrical patterns for decoration and incorporates other elements like gilding, vaulting, and vibrant colors. Designed for the interior of a Christian university, the construction of an Islamic influenced ceiling shows the extent to which the two cultures had influenced and intermingled with each other.

Figure 5 Colegio Mayor de San Ildefonso, 1543, Universidad de Alcala.

However, when it comes to the origin of Spanish Baroque there seems to be a discrepancy of opinions. In *Estudios sobre el barroco* Helmut A. Hatzfeld exemplifies the conflictive views scholars have about the origins of Baroque. According to Hatzfeld, Sitwell argues that early Baroque stylistic characteristics first appeared in Spain as the translation of imported late Italian Renaissance ideas as seen on the façades of their churches as the *Plateresco*. He argues that the *Plateresco* appears in Spain as the result of the Renaissance being influenced by the Spanish factor of Moorish transculturation. He comes to the conclusion that this particularly Spanish style is in fact a form of early Baroque as shown by its ornate aesthetic of Moorish influence.

The plateresco style, which covered the simplest renaissance façade of Italian importation with the decorations and arabesques characteristically Spanish, is that not the real Baroque? And the authentic seed of this style already developed and known by the name of Baroque, the one which the Spaniards took, with infinite variants to the new world, where innumerable churches of a peculiar Baroque testify without a doubt to the enthusiastic acceptance of a national style. (Hatzfeld 18) (My own translation from Spanish).

Figure 6 Church of the Gesu, 1568, Rome.

As shown by the façade of the Universidad de Alcalá (Figure 5), the qualities of the *Plateresco* seem to be a national reaction to the Late Renaissance or an early form of Spanish Baroque. The style is used to decorate the surface of a simple Renaissance structure with floral and geometric decoration. The masonry itself uses stone and techniques reminiscent of Moorish structures. The carvings and decorative motifs are generally flat and are constricted to a geometric balance. These characteristics seem to oppose the dynamism and complexities that are now considered to be part of the Baroque aesthetic (Figure 6) but as a multicultural nation, Spain would have adapted and transformed the style giving birth to a transcultural Spanish interpretation. In opposition, Wölfflin argues that Baroque has Italian origins because it is there where the development of the style can be appreciated in a uniform manner.

> This idea is best to be obtained in Italy, because the development there fulfilled itself independently of outside influences and the general nature of the Italian character remains fully recognizable throughout. The transition from renaissance to baroque is a classic example of how a new zeitgeist enforces a new form" (Wölfflin 9).

For example, The Church of the Gesu (Figure 6) in Rome is considered to be the first Baroque church ever constructed. The façade still retains the preoccupation for geometry and proportion of the Renaissance. However, new architectural curvilinear elements such as the decorative volutes are evidence of an early Baroque where decoration transcends functionality. Also, unlike the Façade of the Universidad de Alcalá and its flat decorative motifs, the shields of the Gesu show a complex three dimensionality. Neither of their assertions is incorrect since both show evidence of Baroque as a style transformed by individual cultures. In this conflict of ideas we find evidence of Baroque as a style that is absorbed and transformed by the cultures it comes into contact with. Regardless of where it originated, in his argumentation Hatzfeld has provided us with evidence of Baroque as a transcultural style. Whether transformed by Spain's Moorish past or as a pure Italian creation, Baroque in all its forms would be part of the exchange of ideas

with the new world. The Moorish ceilings of Alcalá would eventually be recreated in the interiors of New Spain (Figure 7) and the church of the Gesu would serve as a model for cathedrals in the New World (Figure 8).

Figure 7 Catedral de Tlaxcala, 1540, Mexico.

Figure 8 Catedral Metropolitana, 1570-1813, Mexico.

Chapter III: Creating the New World

In this study Baroque has been chronologically defined as spanning the seventeenth century, a time period from 1601 to 1700. However, the history of what would be the New World starts much earlier and well before the first Europeans set foot on what they would call the Indies. I say well before the arrival of Europeans since a series of tumultuous events would first have to take place in Spain before ultimately giving birth to the new world. Before the arrival of the first Europeans the regions of the Caribbean, Central, North and South America were yet to be unified politically and terminologically under the term New World. This new territory was composed of a series of advanced civilizations, warring tribes, and sometimes isolated groups. Prior to 1492 this lack of unity and warring status also applied to the region now known as Spain. " The term Spain has been used in the past, as it is now to indicate one country, but historically many distinct and often competing territories, each with different languages made up the whole" (Trusted 19). Much of the Iberian Peninsula had been occupied by the Moors since the eighth century. Their power over the region began to diminish from the twelfth century onwards, clinging to Granada as their last fort of control. In 1492 *los Reyes Católicos* (Catholic monarchs) managed to take Granada eliminating Muslim control over the region. The marriage of Isabella of Castilla and Ferdinand of Aragon brought on a new age: their union brought together the kingdoms of Castilla and Aragon and with the expulsion of the last Nasrid rulers managed to unify Spain as a country. During the same year Christopher Columbus, seeking a new route to "India, to the island of Cipango (Japan) and to the land of the Great Khan" (Las Casas 23), would accidentally land in present day Bahamas. Also in 1492 the Jews, who were tolerated under Moorish rule, began to be expelled from the region with the exception of the *Conversos* (converted Jews).

Discovery

The pursuit of exploration was fueled by the desire to find a new route to Asia. For centuries trading had been controlled by Muslim merchants and wealth concentrated in the Italian monopolies of Genoa and Venice. "Since the time of the crusades, spices, ivory, precious metals and other luxury items from Asia and Africa were controlled by Muslim powers in the Eastern Mediterranean" (Bailey 36). Prior to the discovery of what Columbus would call the Indies, the Portuguese first sought direct access to the wealth of Asia under the reign of Prince Henry the Navigator. "The Portuguese explorer Bartoloméu Dias made a series of exploratory trips to the coast of North and West Africa…and finally rounded the Cape of Good Hope in 1487" (Bailey 36). Prior to his discovery in the name of the Spanish Crown, Columbus first appealed to the King of Portugal who found his idea too farfetched. In his *History of the Indies* Bartolomé de las Casas provides an account of Columbus, who motivated by the recent discoveries of the African Coast sought the help of a Christian monarch to fund his expedition. "So then, he made his offer to the king of Portugal and gave him reasons. *The Historia Portuguesa* says that Christopher Columbus was more talkative and self-assured, more a fantasist with his story of Cipango than a man of sound reason, and that consequently people were loath to believe him" (Las Casas, History 22). At this time it was the Portuguese and not the Spanish who were at the top of the exploration race. After being dismissed by King John II Columbus went to Portugal's jealous neighbor and under the rule of Queen Isabella of Castille, was entrusted with finding a new passage to Asia. Such was the competition of the two countries that in 1494 Pope Alexander VI set the standards for the geographical division and conversion of found territories in the Treaty of Tordesillas. This papal mandate divided newly found territories between Spain and Portugal, as defined by a "demarcation line 370 leagues west of the Cape

Verde Islands" (Trusted 19). The treaty marked territories in Africa and India as Portuguese while Spain was given the right to explore the new world. As a result Portugal controlled an Asian trading route comprised by "Goa, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Malacca in present-day Malaysia, (Bailey 37-40) and eventually Brazil. Spain on the other hand obtained the territories found in present day North, Central, and South America (except Brazil), the Caribbean, and the Philippines.

Chapter IV: Formulating Transculturation and Hybridization

By 1496 well established colonies had been settled in the Caribbean and a new age of Spanish dominance had begun to take place. But it is in 1519 that one of the most significant events for Spain and the New World would take place. Hernán Cortés, accompanied by 600 men set sail from Cuba and arrived on the shores of Veracruz (Cohen 21). Europeans and Natives had previously come into contact with each other but up to this point this interaction was limited to "nomadic or semi-nomadic peoples who lacked a political organization" (Bailey 40). Cortés had landed on the shores of a great empire of twenty million inhabitants. This discovery symbolized both the death of an empire and the birth of a new world. By 1521 the Aztec empire had been conquered. By taking advantage of the enmity of tribes subjugated by the Aztecs and in spite of the great disparity of numbers Cortés managed to bring down an empire seemingly overnight. "The Aztec empire despite its impressive appearance, was undetermined by the great hostility of the alien tribes it ruled. Due to the size of its territory, stretching from Texas to Guatemala, a uniform and satisfactory imperial policy was impossible" (Cohen 21). The discovery and subsequent downfall of this empire would only motivate others to replicate what Cortés had done. Far from Mesoamerica deeper into the continent, the Inca empire was about to experience the collision of worlds that comes with conquest. In 1531 motivated by the discovery of treasure, Francisco Pizarro would lead an exploration team deep into Peru. As opposed to its Mesoamerican counterpart the Inca Empire aided by inclement geography and quarrelsome conquistadors, would not be completely subjugated until as late as 1581.

Conquest

Though this topic concentrates on the later colonial period of the Baroque we must first analyze the process of conquest to establish the basis for transculturation by drawing a parallel between the conquest and the movements of the time: "The European conquerors and missionaries arrived in America during the height of the Renaissance. This cultural movement, which began in Italy and was refracted throughout Spain and Portugal, shaped their world-view and gave form to their first art and architecture in the New World" (Bailey 41). With the arrival of the Renaissance the Europe of the Conquista was a world influenced by the classical past, a world where conquerors found motivation and justification for their actions. Unlike the "naked Savages" (Bailey 40) they encountered in the Caribbean, the more advanced civilizations of the Aztec and the Inca enticed the imagination of Europe. They encountered well organized groups of people whom they could equate with their classical past.

> Here was a great civilization, with stone cities, monumental religious buildings and a pictographic written language. It also had an emperor, Moctezuma II whom the Spanish could easily equate with their own Charles V. More importantly perhaps for a Europe in thrall to its classical past, they were an ancient civilization. (Bailey 40).

It was this comparison to the classical that made of the treatment of the New World an ethical matter. At the time Europeans had no idea of the magnitude of their discovery. Their classicist world view motivated by the humanism of the Renaissance created a need to formulate a perspective of the natives and their civilizations. As a result two opposing views were born from the conflict. The first defended the natives because of their resemblance to the ancient civilizations Europeans were rediscovering at the time. The latter, as a continuation of the religious fervor and need for indoctrination that fueled the crusades sought to correct the errors of a people whom they saw as inferior.

Chapter V: The Church as Guide of Transculturation

Unlike the Portuguese, the Spanish concern with the treatment of the Indians was such that in 1550 a public debate was held "between Dominican missionary Bartolomé de las Casas and Juan Gines de Sepúlveda, a leading Aristotelian Humanist" (Bailey 46). However, this preoccupation came a bit too late; all expeditions to America were suspended in 1550, but by then the Aztecs had fallen, the Incas were in the process of being conquered, and many other lands were beginning to be subjugated. Las Casas represented the gentler of the two points. He embodied the classicist argument, not entirely dismissing the culture and organization of the natives. His argument did not resonate with the views most had of the Indians as children that needed to be guided and corrected. He argued that though savages, the Indians did not need to be indoctrinated into European ways, and that Spanish intervention should be limited to conversion:

> From the fact that the Indians are barbarians it does not necessarily follow that they are Incapable of government and have to be ruled by others, except to be taught about the Catholic faith and to be admitted to the holy sacraments. They are not ignorant, inhuman, or bestial. Rather, long before they had heard the word Spaniard they had properly organized states, wisely ordered by excellent laws, religion, and custom. They cultivated friendship and, bound together in common fellowship lived in populous cities in which they wisely administered the affairs of both peace and war justly and equitably, truly governed by laws that at very many points surpass ours, and could have won the admiration of the sages of Athens (Las Casas, In Defense 42).

At the same time Las Casas' argument is attributed with exaggerating the cruelty of the Spanish and with fueling the use of African Slaves, "Spanish colonists started using African slaves…because they had been captured by the Portuguese and were therefore not Spain's legal responsibility" (Bailey 47). In opposition, Sepúlveda, being a court philosopher, adhered to Aristotelian views of the time dictating the superiority of some races and the existence of others to serve as slaves. His views were in exact opposition with Las Casas', saying that the Indians were barbaric; he dismissed their social organization, government, and culture. To him, unlike

Las Casas, the Indians were completely incapable of reasoning and learning with the exception of what he calls the mechanical arts. They were inferior and therefore in a natural state to be governed and enslaved to the service of superior men. "For their own welfare, people of this kind are held by natural law to submit to the control of those who are wiser and superior…the conclusion drawn from this is that the Indians are obliged by the natural law to obey those who are outstanding in virtue and character" (Las Casas, In Defense 11). Las Casas' argument came from experience; he had been a missionary in Hispaniola and Guatemala. Sepulveda was a courtier who had never left Europe and who embodied the entitled desire for servitude of the Spanish aristocracy. This argument for a natural state of enslavement appealed particularly to the upper class who had long applied this hierarchy to the peasantry. " The idea that someone else should do the hard manual work of the world appealed strongly to sixteenth century Spaniards, who inherited a taste for martial glory and religious conquest and a distaste for physical labor…" (Hanke 12). The debate was won by Las Casas and though views of Indian inferiority were not completely eradicated, his argument gave birth to " a new European respect for high cultures such as the Aztecs and Incas who had cities and some form of written communication" (Bailey 47). His desire for understanding and respect for native peoples won him the title of *Apóstol de los Indios* (Protector of the Indians). Also, as one of the first to compile a comprehensive history of the conquest, he left behind a legacy of literature about Indian culture and life. Las Casas gave birth to a tradition of preservation and advocacy for the Indians by religious authorities.

Merging Indian and Spanish

The struggle for control of the New World and the ethical treatment of the Indians resulted in a power structure in which the religious conversion, cultural assimilation, and preservation of the Indians and their culture was left to religious orders, whereas the conquistadors preferred forced submission and subjugation as a means to social organization. The process of transculturation and assimilation is best exemplified in post-conquest Mexico. After the fall of the Aztecs and with the completion of the conquest, the establishment of a Spanish society on a land still inhabited by a native culture called for a solution to consolidate both cultures under the Spanish imperial system. "On the one hand, the cultivated classes…tried diligently to transplant and imitate the most elaborate ways of European living" (Picón-Salas 47). On the other hand religious orders realized the importance of relating to the natives from their own cultural perspective, studying and adapting themselves to Indian ways in order to preserve their culture and to "reach the soul of the aboriginal elements"(Picón-Salas 47). Franciscans, Dominicans, Augustinians, Mercedarians, and eventually the Jesuits who were known for immersing themselves into indigenous culture were some of the orders to arrive in the new world. These missionaries embodied the Renaissance spirit of utopianism seeking to reconcile indigenous ways with European fervor: "They saw their mission as equivalent to that of Christ's Apostles among the ancients (they often arrived in groups of twelve) and saw the indigenous peoples of the Americas as lost children, pure in heart but in need of spiritual guidance" (Bailey 48). At times this guidance seemed to justify harsh treatments for the sake of conversion resulting in corporal punishments. At the same time, while some missionaries adapted to Indian culture to understand it and to find a perspective for conversion, others found it irrelevant whether the Indians understood the Catholic faith or what conversion meant. "Other missionaries

in those early days, particularly Franciscans, placed no such emphasis in a thorough education, believed in mass baptism, and sprinkled holy water over Indian heads until their strength failed" (Hanke 20). Unlike Las Casas who called for the proper instruction of the Indians into the Catholic faith, these people reduced the process of salvation and conversion to a technical process: "On one day, the Franciscans baptized 15,000 Nahua in the town of Xochimilco, so many that the friars reportedly felt that their arms would fall off" (Bailey 48). The presence of the missionaries signified the reconciliation of the two cultures. To an extent they served as moderators keeping in control the heavy hand of the conquistadors and their view of the land and people as source of wealth to be exploited and abandoned. Their position as emissaries of God put them in a position above both Indians and Spaniards. In *A Cultural History of Spanish America,* Maríano Picón-Salas describes how upon arriving in Mexico City, the Franciscans where received by a kneeling Cortés whose submission exemplified their position as representatives of a higher authority that would bring the two worlds together:

> When the first Franciscans reached Mexico City in 1524 Cortes met them on his knees at the city gates, kissed the mantle of the barefoot friars, and begged their blessings, as if to bestow all the respect of his authority and the obeisance of his sword upon the new moral force that had come to assert itself. It was then the intention of Cortes-oddly coinciding with that of an ecclesiastical organizer such as Zumarraga-that the Spaniard should not regard the Mexican land as merely the scene of a passing military adventure but rather as a place in which to settle and take root, and for the Indians to cooperate in the formation of a new society. (Picón-Salas 49).

Juan de Zumárraga like Las Casas held to the idea that the Indians were rational men capable of learning and understanding. As bishop of Mexico, Zumárraga concerned himself with the well-being of the Indians. He established schools for Indian boys and girls, commissioned books for their instruction, and dreamed of abolishing the *tamemes,* "proletarian Indians, whom the Aztec used as beasts of burden" (Picón-Salas 49).

Chapter VI: Colonial Identity

Thus a new identity began to form from the ashes of a fallen empire and the intervention of a foreign force. Between the official establishment of the viceroyalty of New Spain and the beginnings of the Baroque period many influential events for the creation of a New World identity took place. In 1531, an indigenous Virgin Mary appeared to the Indian Juan Diego symbolizing the incorporation of the native population into the Catholic faith and art. In 1536, a school for Indian boys where they would be taught Latin, painting and music was established in Tlatelolco. In 1539, the miraculous mass of St Gregory, the earliest dated feather painting incorporating Aztec techniques and Catholic subjects was commissioned by Diego de Alvarado Huanitzin, Aztec governor under Spanish colonial rule. In 1540, an Augustinian college for Purépecha Indians which included painting classes was created; the college would produce native artists such as feather painter Juan Cuiris. In 1540, Pope Paul III approved the foundation of the Jesuits. In 1540, Martin Ocelotl rebels and fails against the Spanish. In 1542, the New Laws of the Indies abolished Indian slavery. In 1545, the Council of Trent took place and the Counter Reformation against Protestantism began. In 1551, the Royal and Pontifical University of New Spain, first university in the Americas was founded in Mexico City. 1557, the first guild of painters was founded in New Spain. In 1564, Spanish born painter Andrés de la Concha finished the *retablo* at San Juan Bautista Coixtlahuaca. In 1570, a law restricting the art of gilding to masters (whites) was issued and ignored. From 1556 to 1598, Phillip II reigned as patron of the Renaissance style in Spain. In 1563, the Academia del Disegno, first academy of art in Europe was founded in Florence. In 1568, construction of the Gesu in Rome which would become a prototype for churches around the world began. In 1571, *El Santo Oficio* (Inquisition) was founded in Mexico City. In 1579, America's first black saint was born in Peru. In 1580,

Italian painter Matteo da Leccio, one of the last artists to paint the Sistine Chapel immigrated to Peru. From 1599 to 1602, Caravaggio painted three canvases in the Contarelli Chapel, ushering in the beginnings of the Baroque aesthetic. (Bailey 426-29).

This timeline provides evidence of the beginning of the colonial period before the seventeenth century. The Spanish were beginning to shape Mexico into a viceroyalty bringing with them the splendor of the courts and at the same time staying conscious of the presence of a native culture. This was a time of both cultural and ethnic hybridization. The depiction of an indigenous Virgin of Guadalupe exemplifies the desire of the Catholic Church to bridge the two cultures, giving the Indians the opportunity to see their image reflected in the colonial arts. This transformative process as exemplified by the feather paintings and *retablos* (altarpieces) by Indian artists serve as evidence that the Spanish conquest did not completely erase the Aztec identity but instead fused with it and gave birth to an art specific to the new world. The creation of schools for the specific instruction of the Indians, the creation of guilds, universities and the immigration of artists portray the New World as a place of opportunity where the arts could flourish. At the same time Europe begins to grasp the concept of a New World with the abolition of Indian slavery. The relevance of the arts is shown by the patronage of monarchs and the founding of the first academy of art in Italy. Protestantism grows; the Catholic Counter Reformation begins and helps with the development of the Baroque aesthetic.

Chapter VII: Hybrid Art

The process of invasion and colonization was not new to the Spanish crown. However, what differentiates the Spanish colonial period in New Spain (1650-1810) and for the purpose of this topic particularly the Baroque period in Mexico, is its process of transculturation and hybridization as expressed through the arts. To quote Lois Parkinson Zamora's *Inordinate Eye*: "So we approach the complex interactions among cultures that produced the visual forms of the New World Baroque, this first instance of planetary globalization in which radically different cultures met and mixed as never before in Human history" (Zamora 26). Once the Spanish established a formal government with the foundation of the viceroyalty of New Spain in 1535, a new identity started to develop. With the significant presence of religious authorities and with the process of evangelization some of the first hybrid art was of religious subjects. Religious leaders like Archbishop Juan de Zumárraga saw the importance of instructing the Indians in the arts. This served both as a way of bringing the two cultures together facilitating the process of evangelization and for its practicality since the Indians would be working as craftsmen; building, decorating churches, and making most of the utilitarian artifacts in the New world.

One of the earliest examples of such art is *The Miraculous Mass of St Gregory* (Figure 10), a copy of a German engraving (Figure 9) in the Aztec tradition of *amanteca* (feather painting). This work of art is attributed to Diego de Alvarado Huanitzin, the first *Nahua* (Aztec) governor of post-conquest Tenochtitlan under Spanish rule. He commissioned this feather painting to the Indian artist Juan Cuiris as a gift for Pope Paul III. The work represents his status as a noble; feather work was reserved to the highest of *Nahua* elites. This form of art was one of the first to be used by the Spanish as a tool for transculturation. This painting functions as an example of early hybrid art and shows the importance of the arts to the colonizing agenda of the

Spanish. The painting is an example of the Indian ruler as a representative of the Aztec identity while to the Spanish it represents an opportunity to hasten the colonization process. Though not depicting a native individual, this work of art shows that the Aztec identity was not completely lost during the conquest but was instead transformed. It exemplifies the beginning of a New World Identity in which a new faith and culture are translated into a native tradition. This example of New World art performed in an indigenous medium remains conscious of its European aesthetic, translating the lines of the original engraving into meticulously positioned overlapping feathers.

Figure 9 Israhel van Meckenen, *Mass of St Gregory*, 1490-5.

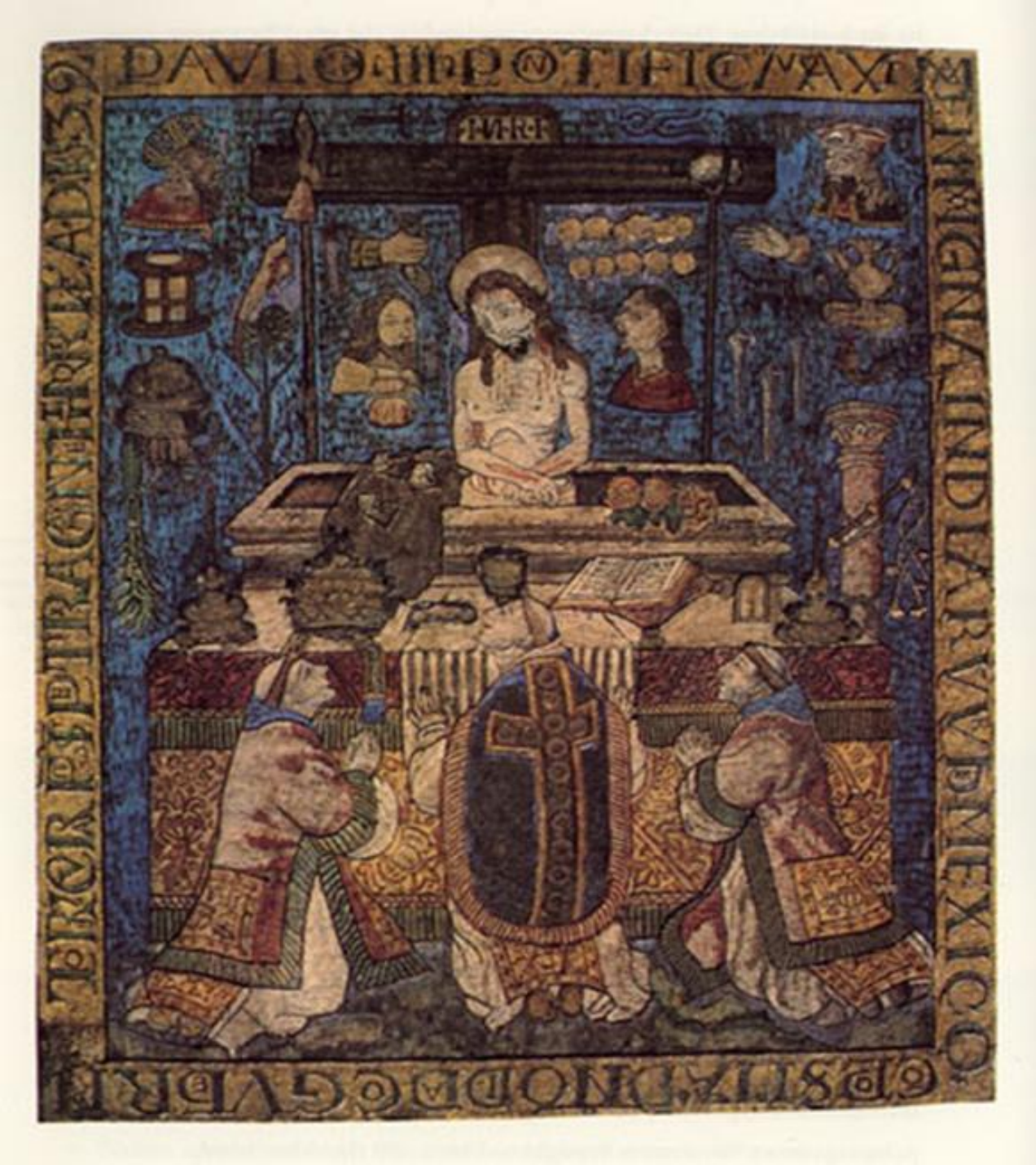

Figure 10 Juan Cuiris, *The Miraculous Mass of St Gregory*, 1539.

In comparison, the sixteenth century fresco of San Miguel Arcángel Itzmiquilpan (Figure 12) shows a much more indigenous interpretation of European art. The fresco displays Indian warriors intertwined in decorative foliage. What stands out from the work is that in their effort to Europeanize the image of the Aztec warrior the artists have created a completely new aesthetic. Their new interpretation of indigenous subjects attempts to imitate the accurate proportions of European art, transcending the disproportionate flat depictions of the human body as seen in Aztec codices (Figure 13). With figures dressed in full warrior regalia, the artists have paid particular attention to the accuracy with which the weapons and garbs are being depicted. By trying to imitate the European style of the time, the artists have managed to interpret an early form of Baroque. The faces of the warriors appear to show emotion, while their dynamic poses show transcendence from the monolithic aesthetic of the Aztec (Figure 13). At times the presence of the warriors appears secondary to the exuberant foliage that surrounds them. The hybridization process also extends to this decoration. The artists' interpretation mixes Aztec forms reminiscent of the ones found in Aztec temples with European curvilinear flowers, leaves and mythicized animals (Figure 11). The presence of such for the purpose of decoration resembles the heavy aesthetic that is often attributed to the Baroque. The depiction of indigenous subjects by *tlacuilos* (Indian artists) for the interior of an Augustinian monastery works not only as an example of transculturation but also as evidence of a discrepant view. "Once again, the familiar irony: the friars acknowledged and extended the artistic tradition of the *tlacuilos* while working to erase their cultural memory. And the second irony: indigenous cultures refuse erasure" (Zamora 24).

Figure 12 San Miguel Arcángel Itzmiquilpan fresco, 1570s, Mexico.

Figure 11 Detail of San Miguel Arcángel Itzmiquilpan fresco, 1570s, Mexico.

Figure 13 *Codex Mendoza*, Sixteenth Century, Mexico.

Attributed to the seventeenth century, the mural reliefs of The Chapel of *Santa María Tonantzintla* (Figure 14) display an example of the development of Baroque as interpreted by indigenous artists. Here we find a well-established aesthetic of New World Baroque: "A profusion of leaves, flowers, and tropical fruit, weave a cosmic space for winged cherubs and wide eyed Indian boys" (Zamora 24). This chapel shows a Baroque filtered through an Indian aesthetic. Opulent gilded images are surrounded by brightly colored native fruits and flowers. The artists dismiss the pictorial hierarchy set by European art intermingling saints and Indians,

paying no attention to the relevance of proportion. Zamora quotes Robert Harbison saying that unlike Spanish artists, the Indians were not as familiar with biblical subjects and therefore their depiction of such was limited to literal interpretations as decoration, and were not mindful of the importance of saints and cherubs as central characters over decorative motives. "Robert Harbison, in his study *Reflections of Baroque*, speculates that Mexican artists could not have been much moved by the prescribed biblical narratives, and so diverted their energies into nonnarrative decoration" (Zamora 24). As a result this disproportionate view of decoration over narrative heightened the Baroque aesthetic in the new world.

> The feeling is seen in the readdressing of balances and reassigning of importance. The little saints can look particularly puny perched in the marvelous gold forest of retable, as if they have climbed up for the view…Sometimes while examining these staggering products of enthusiasm the feeling comes over that Christian imagery had been swamped by something else" (Harbison). Whether swamped or heightened, the something else that animates the folk Baroque of Santa María Tonanzintal also animates the high baroque in much of Latin America (Zamora 25).

Aside from this native interpretation of religious aesthetics, what sets apart this church from others as an example of New World Baroque is that within its exuberant decoration we find Indian faces (Figure 15). Like the earlier frescos of *San Miguel Arcángel Itzquimilpan*, the plaster figures that cover this church are not the first to depict Indian images inside a church. However, in *Santa María Tonantzintla* we find that the images of dark-skinned Indian figures are on par with blue eyed pale-skinned cherubs (Figure 16). Through their ignorance of the Catholic faith, and their disregard of the importance of pictorial hierarchy, the artists of this church have unknowingly managed to create a statement for transculturation and hybridization; the concept of inclusivity at the core of New World Baroque.

Figure 14 Santa María Tonantzintla, Seventeenth Century, Mexico

Figure 15 Mural reliefs, Santa María Tonantzintla. Seventeenth Century, Mexico

Figure 16 Mural Reliefs, Santa María Tonantzintla, Seventeenth Century, Mexico.

Figure 17 Virgen de Guadalupe, Sixteenth Century, Mexico.

Chapter VIII: Hybrid Iconography

The image of the *Virgen de Guadalupe* (Figure 17), perhaps the most important display of a hybrid identity, began with her supposed apparition to the Indian Juan Diego in 1531. Her image embodies the concept of a New World identity exemplifying the rhetoric of transculturation and hybridization that would extend to the Baroque period. The Virgin of Guadalupe, now synonymous with the Mexican Catholic faith, comes from a long tradition of pre-Hispanic idolatry and cultural assimilation by the Catholic Church. Prior to the arrival of the Spanish, the Aztecs worshiped idols in natural settings. With the conversion of the indigenous population the process of transculturation gave birth to a new pagan interpretation of Catholic worship. This hybrid form of veneration was repressed by the Church. "Over three centuries of colonial rule we find innumerable petitions by indigenous converts asking that worship be allowed in caves or mountain retreats" (Zamora 23). The Church of course disapproved, believing the practice retained too much Indian paganism. However the practice continued with some reporting the apparition of Catholic images; most were dismissed and those who made such reports were often punished--that is, until the miraculous case of the Indian convert Cuauhtlacoatzin or Juan Diego. The event has become an emblem of a New World identity in which the places and characters of the story function as symbols. The apparition takes place in Tepeyac, a site near the former Tenochtitlan dedicated to the goddess Tonantzin (Tonantzin meaning mother). It is here where Juan Diego would be instructed by the Virgin to go talk to Church leaders so that a church may be built in her honor. He is received by Archbishop Juan de Zumárraga who dismisses his story and sends him to go get physical proof. The Virgin tells him where to find Castilian roses to take to the Archbishop as evidence. Juan Diego returns and

opens his *tilma* (cloak worn by Indians) to reveal the roses and behind them an image of the Virgin miraculously imprinted on the *tilma*, finally providing enough evidence for Zumárraga.

The legend of the apparition and the creation of the painting exemplify the Church's desire to consolidate the pagan Aztec tradition of worship with Catholic iconography. Furthermore the image of the Virgin as a dark-skinned Indian conversing with a convert in his native tongue on sacred Aztec ground shows evidence of the incorporation of the Indians into the New World identity. The Church was very conscious of the power of symbols both to the Catholic faith and to the Aztec tradition. Thus the image of the goddess Tonantzin, mother of the Aztecs is translated into Christianity with the Virgin of Guadalupe as the outcome. The location of the event atop a hill formerly venerated as sacred by the Indians, and eventually the construction of a church on the site are to an extent part of the iconoclastic Spanish tradition in which the demolition of iconic landmarks and the construction of churches in their place served to symbolize cultural subjugation (such as Roman temples, mosques, and in the New World pyramids). What makes this case not entirely iconoclastic is that unlike previous cases the construction of this church seems to be a strategy of hybridization by the Catholic Church in which the claims of Catholic apparitions by Indians are no longer ignored but used to advance conversion an transculturation, merging the concept of an Indian goddess with the Catholic veneration of the Virgin Mary.

Baroque Empiricism

The arrival of the Baroque period created a need for an empirical interpretation of the miracle. As a result a text recording the event appeared and a new aesthetic of how the miracle should be depicted was born. The story of the apparition was recorded in the *Nican Mopohua,* a

text possibly written by a priest named Miguel Sánchez in 1648, providing a verbatim record of the conversation between the Virgin and Juan Diego. This account written almost entirely in Náhuatl emphasizes its authenticity as an account taken from the actual conversation between the Virgin and the convert. "The title consists of the first two words of the Náhuatl account, which mean *aqui se narra* (here it is told), a title that emphasizes the essential orality of this text about a visual image" (Zamora 49). The text seems to have been created to provide structure to the miracle. The event is no longer dependent on oral history alone, it is recorded and organized for an almost catechistic purpose at par with biblical text. "The Virgin's words in this document are considered by believers to be something close to holy writ; as in the bible, sentences are printed in numbered verses" (Zamora 49).

Figure 18 Manuel Arellano, *La Virgen de Guadalupe*, 1691, Mexico.

Visually, the need to justify and explain the event gave birth to a new aesthetic in which the depiction of the apparition was often accompanied by small narrative illustrations (Figure 18), or depictions of God or Christ in the process of painting the imprint on the *tilma* (Figure 19). In the early seventeenth century, representations of the Virgin began to include what are called *vistas*, miniature "views" of the hill at Tepeyac" (Zamora 47). These *vistas* provided evidence explaining the process of the apparition. They allowed the viewer to appreciate the Virgin as an icon, but also to recognize the symbols within the story: the roses, the hill, the *tilma*. These images served a didactic purpose, allowing the indigenous population to recognize Catholic imagery they could equate with pagan symbolism. The *vistas* often included the Basilica of Guadalupe (1695-1709) which the Spanish used to credit their "program of evangelization" (Zamora 47) by comparing it to the temple of Solomon. "Thus *vistas* referred not only to the indigenous context of the apparition but also to the metaphoric substitution of Mexico for Jerusalem, and Mexicans for the Israelites as God's chosen people" (Zamora 47). The empiricism of the Baroque revised the story of the apparition and gave it a new interpretation. The image itself was not to be venerated as an idol separate from the concept of the Virgin Mary as the mother of Christ. And though the apparition on the *tilma* was that of the Virgin and though the event took place to provide proof of her presence, under the Catholic dogma such an assertion is incorrect. As a result a tradition of paintings depicting God or Christ as the creators was born. "According to official Catholic doctrine, it would be God who brought her into presence by re-presenting her" (Zamora 52). This methodology reconciled the apparition of this New World icon with its Catholic origins creating a balance between its pagan essence and its Christian didacticism.

This example from 1653 by an anonymous artist depicts God in the process of painting the image on the *tilma.* In its technique, the painting presents the characteristics of the Baroque aesthetic (an aesthetic perhaps limited to the skills of an anonymous Indian painter). The painting displays a theatrical representation of the moment in which the painting was created. The skillful hand of God paints the image of the Virgin lifted by angels amid the clouds of heaven. The painting seems to be permeated by an overall contrast between light and dark with the exception of the Virgin who is symbolically highlighted by a radiating light. Christ is depicted in a dynamic pose as if just having entered the frame, ushering in the good news of the Virgin. His expression shows a dignified enthusiasm as opposed to God the father who appears concentrated on the painting process. The figures are arranged in a triangular

Figure 19 Anon., God Eternal Painting the Image of the Virgin of Guadalupe, 1653, Mexico.

composition in which the foreground is occupied by angels holding the banner, two cherubs, and the figures of God and Christ. The eye follows the curvilinear figures of the composition created by the angel hiding under the *tilma* and extending to the flowing robes of Christ in the upper right hand corner. Symbolically the painting is meant to emphasize the event as a miraculous occurrence solely dependent on God's desire. The presence of God as the source of the image does not entirely discredit the Virgin as part of the event. However, it functions as a tool to emphasize its Catholic nature and places a secondary emphasis on the Indian essence of the Virgin. Next to him, Christ holds a symbolic Castilian rose. In this case the rose as a non-native flower seems to represent the Spanish presence over the Indian identity; especially since the image of Juan Diego is absent from the painting. The *tilma* is no longer attached physically or ideologically to Juan Diego. It is now separate from the image of the Indian suspended by an easel of angels representing the control of the Church over the miracle. At the bottom two angels hold a banner with the inscription *Non fecit taliter omni nationi* (He did not act in such a way for every nation), pointing out the importance of Mexico as a chosen nation.

Chapter IX: Castas

With the increase of intermarriage the hybridization process extended to the people of New Spain. As a result, Baroque empiricism gave birth to a new social structure that would extend to the eighteenth century. The dwindling of racial boundaries created a new need for structure and control, as a result the system of *castas* (castes) was created. This system identified and positioned individuals in a social hierarchy according to their ethnic background. Peninsular Spaniards and Criollos born in the colony were at the top, while "Everyone else in colonial society was categorized as one of many *castas,* mostly persons of racial mixed ancestry…" (Bailey 68). Out of this movement a series of works known as *casta* paintings became a trend of the time. The paintings depict these categories with "Zoological" (Bailey 68) precision reflecting the contemporary interest in scientific scrutiny. This concept of taxonomy and *pureza de sangre* (blood purity) also appealed to the Spanish preoccupation with lineage. This concept was born from the Reconquista and the creation of a new Spanish identity at a time when the Moors and the Jews were being expelled. Those whose stayed and converted constantly had to prove their allegiance to the crown and their adherence to the Catholic faith. As a result Spanish society, though hybrid and multicultural; held in high regard the content of one's lineage.

Figure 20 Luis de Mena, Casta Painting, 1750, Mexico.

The multiculturalism of the New World created a perfect opportunity for this obsessive need for classification. The social structure was composed of the *Peninsulares*, Spaniards born in the Iberian Peninsula who immigrated to the new world, followed by the *Criollos*, Spaniards born in the colonies. Purely European, these two groups occupied the highest social status. Everyone under them was of a different race or mixed ancestry and was classified as a *casta*. Some of the most common ones included: a person of mixed Spanish and Indian ancestry denominated as a *Mestizo*; the product of a Spaniard and a Mestizo was a *Castizo*; African and Spaniard, *Mulato;* Indian and African, *Zambo*; Spaniard and Mulatto, *Morisco;* Spaniard and Morisco, *Albino torno-atrás*; Mestizo and Indian, *Lobo*; Indian and Lobo, Indian.

This *Casta* painting by Luis de Mena exemplifies the zoological specificity in which the races tended to be depicted (Figure 20). The subjects are arranged hierarchically, with the offspring of the two purest races occupying the first of the height panels. This exemplifies how purity of blood within a race was regarded above the quality of the collective group. These two individuals occupy the first panel because they represent the purest forms of their races, showing how society preferred a pure-blooded individual regardless of how inferior their race itself was regarded. The first panel depicts the *Mestizo* as the offspring of a pure-blooded panish mother and a pure-blooded Indian father. The hierarchical structure extends to the panel in the symbolic manner in which each of the subjects is being depicted. As the white progenitor, the mother is shown wearing European clothing that identifies her as a member of the upper class. The Indian portrayed next to her is shown with the dignified expression of a noble savage. This continues the theme of *Pureza de Sangre*. He is still an Indian and therefore inferior but because he is a pure-blooded Indian he is portrayed as noble and dignified. He is shown wearing primitive clothing not as an equal counterpart to his Spanish wife but as more of a stereotype representing

the overall idea of an Indian. Therefore this depiction does not represent a feasible union in which the two occupy an equal social position. Instead the panel functions as a representation of the collective identity of each of the individuals' races with the rest of the panels scrutinizing and dissecting the different results of these unions. With the exception of the fourth panel, the rest of the *castas* depict the outcome of mixed *castas* with Spaniards or other mixed individuals. Panel four shows the only other offspring of two pure-blooded individuals. However since the union being depicted is that of an African and a Spaniard their relevance is secondary to those panels depicting people of Indian and or Spanish ancestry exemplifying the position of the Indian identity above all other races but still below the Spaniards.

Above, an image of the Virgen de Guadalupe looks down as if to approve of these unions. Her presence validates the creation of this hybrid society. She is present in the painting not only as a validating symbol but as an icon of transculturation. As a "transcultural artifact par excellence" (Zamora 49), the concept of the Virgin unifies the content of the painting representing the idea of a multicultural *mestizo* (mixed) society. To her right and left, vistas representing colonial life provide more evidence of a multicultural society. These images show the colonial structure created by Baroque empiricism. The left *vista* depicts the Basilica of Guadalupe as a unifying symbol of the Catholic faith in the colonies. Built by the Church on the site of the miracle, it serves to represent the position of religion as a guide of transculturation. Outside the Church a group of native dancers perform a dance in the Virgin's honor. This native tradition that continues to this day represents the mutual acceptance of transculturation. An exchange in which Catholic European concepts and Native traditions mutually shape each other and give birth to a new identity much like the racial *mestizaje* (mixing) depicted in the panels below. The vista on the right provides a utopian vision of everyday life in the colonies. It depicts

people strolling alongside a lake in a world where everyone has a place. The boats at a distance serve as symbols; Spanish galleons next to Aztec boats represent the union of cultures coexisting side by side. At the bottom of the painting a display of tropical fruits native to the colonies portrays the New World as a fertile place for the seed of transculturation to give birth to a new hybrid identity.

Chapter X: Conclusion

Baroque art is fluid and inclusive and thus used by discrepant cultures as a harmonizing tool. In a culture such as that of New Spain and eventually Mexico, the Baroque became the embodiment of the hybrid. Its inclusive aesthetic served to represent the indigenous and the Spanish, the Pagan and the Catholic, the hybrid in art and the *mestizo* in race. Imported by the Spanish, (a hybrid culture themselves) the use of the Baroque aesthetic proved crucial to the creation of a Mexican identity. As exemplified by Frida Kahlo's work, Baroque art as the creator of an identity unites cultures and transcends time periods. The Baroque, Zamora tells us, though part of a historical period, it is not limited to the seventeenth century, it is instead more of a spirit as first theorized by Alejo Carpentier: "This strategy reflects Carpentier's insight that the Baroque is not just a historical period but also a spirit, a way of knowing and being in the world…" (Zamora 168). This Baroque essence is exemplified in the works of Frida Kahlo, one of the artists attributed with formulating and interpreting a new post-revolutionary Mexican identity. In her depiction of the self, Kahlo embodies a Baroque hybrid mentality. The seventeenth century's "Passions of the Soul", religious, and indigenous subjects all appear in her portraiture. In *Diego y Yo* (Figure 21) her teary-eyed expression conveys her sadness; the image of Diego Rivera on her forehead serves as a literal expression of her "inner life". The physical manifestation of a concept such as the image on her forehead is synonymous with the apparition of the Virgen on Juan Diego's *tilma*. In *Mis abuelos, Mis padres y yo* (Figure 22), she depicts herself as a hybrid, product of the union of her Mexican mother and her European father. The manner in which she displays her heritage is also reminiscent of a *casta* painting, dissecting and depicting the process of her creation. In *Las dos Fridas* (Figure 23) she paints herself as a transcultural object. Two Fridas share one bloodline. One dressed in European clothing holds the

hand of her Indigenous counterpart representing the ideological and ethnic union of the Mexican identity.

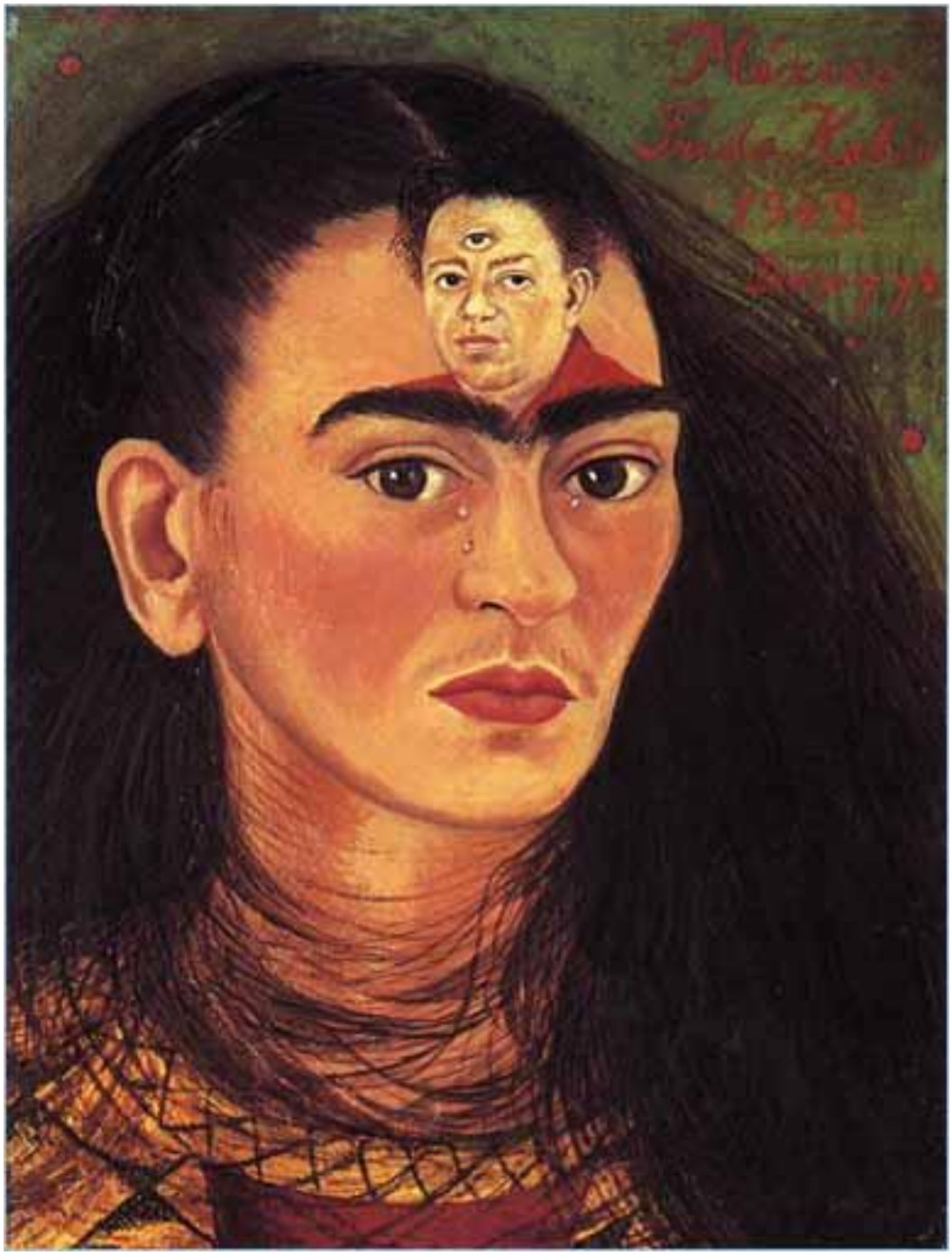

Figure 21 Frida Kahlo, Diego y Yo, 1949, Mexico.

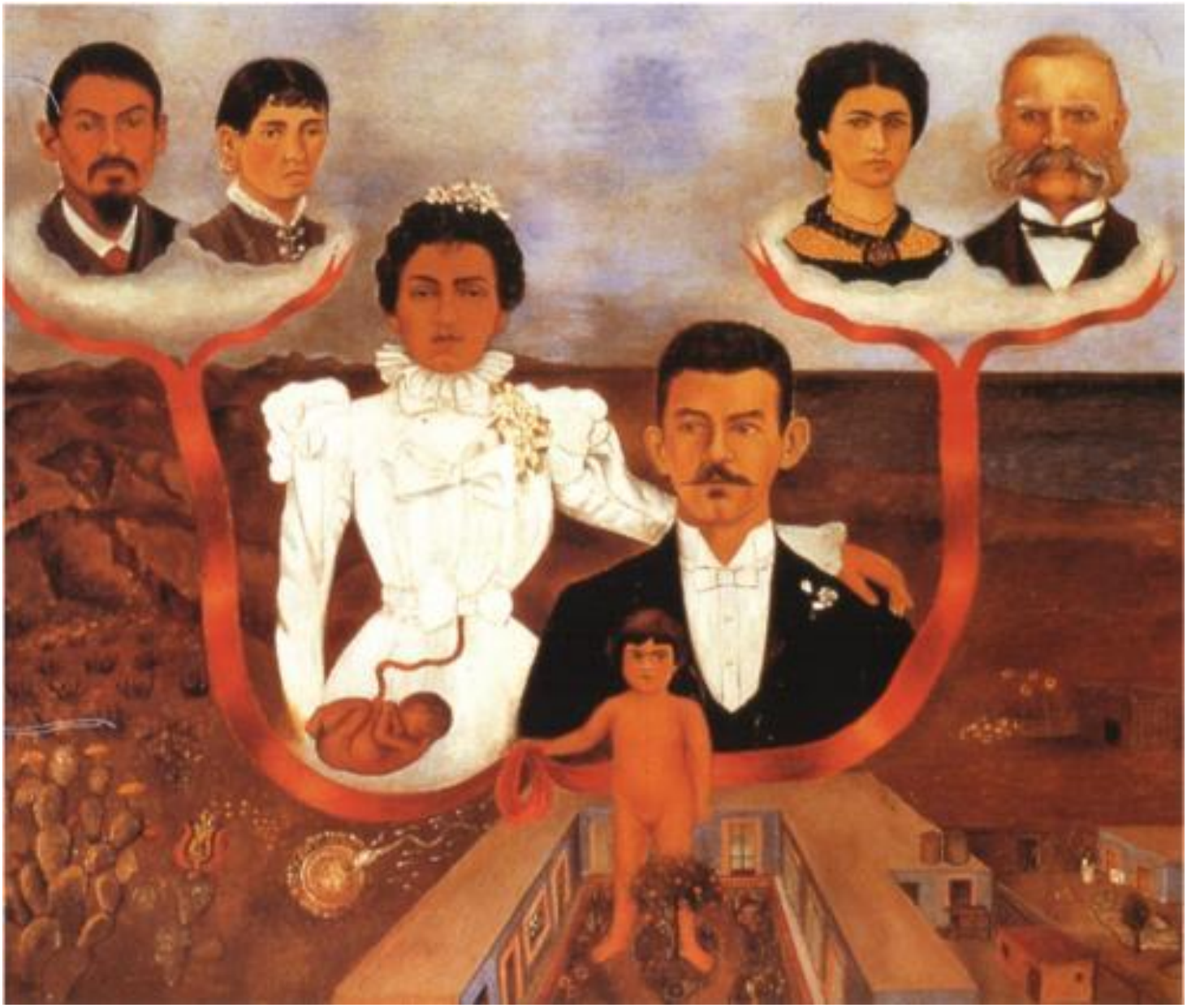

Figure 22 Frida Kahlo, *Mis abuelos, mis padres y yo*, 1936, Mexico.

Figure 23 Frida Kahlo, Las dos Fridas, 1939, Mexico.

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